



Current Affairs of the Day

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'China ties hit like never before'

Context: The comments by Mr Jaishankar came against the backdrop of the over seven-month-long military stand-off between India and China at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.

Highlights:

1. According to External Affairs Minister China had given India “five differing explanations” for deploying large forces at the LAC, adding this violation of bilateral pacts had “very significantly damaged their relationship that is now at its most difficult phase” in the last 30-40 years.
2. He said multiple agreements between the two sides were inked from 1993 with a commitment that both parties would not bring large forces to the border areas.
3. We are very clear that maintaining peace and tranquillity along the LAC is the basis for the rest of the relationship to progress.

Background: Galwan Valley clashes





Quad is U.S. anti-China game: Russia

Russia hit out at the four-nation quadrilateral strategic dialogue or Quad, calling it a “devious policy” by western powers to engage India in “anti-China games”. While Moscow has expressed concerns about the U.S. Indo-Pacific policy and criticised the Quad, comprising the U.S., Australia, Japan and India, as a “divisive” and “exclusivist” concept, this is the first time it has suggested that India-Russia ties could be affected by it.

Highlights: Russian remarks

1. West is attempting to undermine Russian close partnership and privileged relations with India.
2. The U.S. and European countries were trying to “restore” the unipolar model with U.S. leadership, but that other powers or poles such as Russia and China would not be “subordinate to it”.
3. The “U.S.-led West” had launched what Russia called a “game” that seeks to “isolate” Russia, as well as China.

Concerns:

1. Former diplomats suggested that the remarks signalled gaps in understanding between Moscow and New Delhi.
2. India Failed to convey to Russia India’s point of view and its security concerns about Indo- Pacific and the Quad
3. Also, India had not expressed concerns about Russia’s growing strategic ties with China publicly.
4. If Russia is concerned about the U.S. pulling India into its orbit, it should express some public concern about China’s unacceptable territorial aggression against India.

Background: In the past month, India hosted military exercises with all the members of the Quad, and signed the final pending ‘foundational agreement’ BECA, which facilitates Indian and U.S. militaries in sharing intelligence. The incoming Biden administration is also expected to press harder on India against its purchase of the S-400 anti-missile system from Russia, which could attract U.S. sanctions.



Cabinet nod for public WiFi networks



The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a proposal for setting up public WiFi hotspots across the country via public data offices or PDOs, which could even be a Kirana shop or a Paan shop. The move will bring a massive **Data Revolution** in the country.

Salient Features:

This Public Wi-Fi Access Network Interface will be known as PM-WANI. PM-WANI ecosystem will be operated by different players as described herein under:

1. Public Data Office (PDO): It will establish, maintain, and operate only WANI compliant Wi-Fi Access Points and deliver broadband services to subscribers.
2. Public Data Office Aggregator (PDOA): It will be an aggregator of PDOs and perform the functions relating to Authorization and Accounting.
3. App Provider: It will develop an App to register users and discover WANI compliant Wi-Fi hotspots in the nearby area and display the same within the App for accessing the internet service.
4. Central Registry: It will maintain the details of App Providers, PDOAs, and PDOs. To begin with, the Central Registry will be maintained by C-DoT.
5. While no registration would be required for PDOs, PDOAs and App Providers will get themselves registered with DoT through the online registration portal



Significance:

1. The move, aimed at helping accelerate the uptake of broadband Internet services through WiFi, will not require the PDOs/PDOAs to get a license or pay a fee.
2. Availability and use of Broadband through WiFi will enhance incomes, employment, quality of life, ease of doing business etc.
3. PM-WANI is going to be a powerful transformative digital platform to empower ordinary Indian. it offers a lot of scope for various sectors, particularly education.

Background:

According to TRAI, in most major economies, for 50%-70% of their total usage time, mobile users use WiFi technology to communicate. However, in India, this figure is less than 10%. Service providers had in 2018 stated that they aimed to provide 5 lakh hotspots by March 31, 2019, and 10 lakh hotspots by September 30, 2019. However, these targets have not been achieved.

Cattle, buffalo meat residue found in Indus Valley vessels

A new study has found the presence of animal products, including cattle and buffalo meat, in ceramic vessels dating back about 4,600 years at seven Indus Valley Civilisation sites in present-day Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

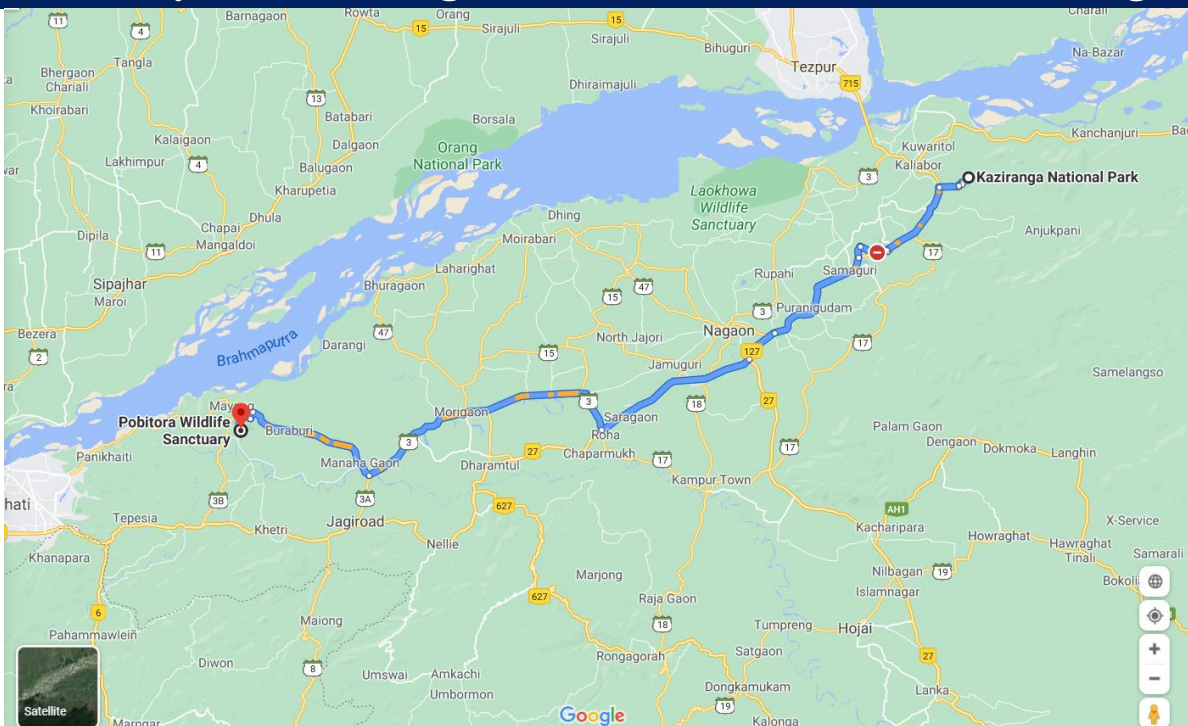
Highlights:

1. About 50-60% of domestic animal bones found at Indus Valley sites come from cattle/buffalo. The high proportions of cattle bones may suggest a cultural preference for beef consumption across Indus populations.
2. Study of lipid residues in Indus pottery shows the dominance of animal products in vessels, such as the meat of non-ruminant animals like pigs, ruminant animals like cattle or buffalo and sheep or goat, as well as dairy products.
3. Lipids are relatively less prone to degradation and have been discovered in pottery from archaeological contexts around the world.



4. While cattle bones have been found in large numbers at Indus Valley sites, the study found little evidence of dairy products. However, there could be regional differences as a recent study of vessels in Gujarat had found evidence of dairy products.

Too many cattle robbing rhinos of nutrition in 'Mini Kaziranga'



Too many cattle are robbing the one-horned rhinos of Assam's Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, referred to as 'Mini Kaziranga' for similar features, of their nutritious food.

Highlights:

1. One of the factors behind the crisis of nutritional grass in Pobitora is the competition from some 10,000 cattle that graze on the fringes of the sanctuary measuring 38.81 sq km on paper but with only 16 sq km for an estimated 102 rhinos to inhabit.
2. Non-rejuvenation of nutritious grass due to change in flood pattern has also combined with the expansion of woodland in the sanctuary, leaving the rhinos with less than 8 sq km of grassland to feed on.