



## Current Affairs of the Day

### GS paper - II

- World's largest vaccination programme begins today
- Nepal raises Kalapani boundary issue with India

### GS Paper - III

- Trade with China shrank in 2020, deficit at five-year low



## World's largest vaccination programme begins today

### Highlights:

1. The world's largest vaccination programme will begin at a total of 3,006 session sites across all the States and the Union Territories, which will be connected

### Calling the shots

The Health Ministry has ruled out certain population groups from the administration of the COVID-19 vaccine. A lowdown:



#### WHO SHOULD NOT BE VACCINATED

- Those aged 18 or below
- Pregnant and lactating women
- People with a history of allergic reaction to COVID-19 vaccine or to vaccines in general or injectable therapies, pharmaceutical products and food items

#### WHO ARE PERMITTED

(apart from the general population)

- People with a history of COVID-19 infection
- Those with a history of chronic diseases and co-morbidities
- People who have immunodeficiency or HIV, and patients on immunosuppression drugs

virtually throughout the exercise. Nearly 100 beneficiaries will receive the vaccine at each of the session sites on Saturday.

2. A dedicated 24x7 call centre — 1075 — has been set up to address queries related to the pandemic and the vaccine roll-out.
3. Adequate doses of both the vaccines — Covishield and Covaxin — had been delivered across the country. The CoWIN system is the online digital platform that will be used to drive the vaccination programme.
4. Healthcare workers, both in the government and private sectors, including Integrated Child Development Services workers, will receive the vaccine in the first phase.
5. The vaccination drive, where the beneficiaries currently will not have a choice between the two vaccines, has been planned in a phased manner after identifying the priority groups.

### Contraindication Caution

1. The Health Ministry has also issued a three-page letter to the States/UTs regarding contraindications and factsheets for the vaccines, indicating that the jab to be administered with caution in persons with a history of any bleeding disorder.



- The letter further added that persons with COVID-19 infection history and those with a history of chronic illness are not a contraindication for the vaccine.
- Persons with immunodeficiency, HIV, patients on immuno-suppression due to any condition — the response of COVID-19 vaccination may be less in these individuals.

### CoWin

- The CoWin platform will facilitate real-time information of vaccine stocks, storage temperature and individualized tracking of beneficiaries for COVID-19 vaccine. This digital platform will assist programme managers across National, State, and District levels while conducting vaccination sessions.

### Additional Information:

In medicine, a contraindication is a condition or factor that serves as a reason to withhold a certain medical treatment due to the harm that it would cause the patient.

## Nepal raises Kalapani boundary issue with India

Nepal has raised the Kalapani boundary dispute with India during the Joint Commission meeting, and Kathmandu wished to find a solution to the matter urgently. Also, the statement from Nepal said that both the teams “discussed the review of the Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1950”.

**Background:** An argument has erupted between India and Nepal, after an 80 km new road between Dharchula to Lipulekh, the border pass near the

### TRI-JUNCTION TROUBLE



- Nepal has two tri-junctions with India and China
  - The one in dispute now is Lipulekh in Kalapani, at the border of Uttarakhand with Nepal
  - In 1816, the Sugauli Treaty signed by Nepal and British India identified Kali river as
- Nepal's boundary with India
- Nepal claims the river to Kalapani's west is the main Kali, and thus Nepal has territorial rights to it
  - India holds that a ridgeline to Kalapani's east is the border, thus Kalapani falls within its territory



trijunction with Tibet and Nepal, was inaugurated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. The road is expected to be used by the Indian pilgrims visiting Kailash-Mansarovar, some 90 km from the pass, as well as the local traders, Lipulekh being one of the three authorised land ports between India and China. The Lipulekh pass is a far western point near Kalapani, a disputed border area between Nepal and India. Both India and Nepal claim Kalapani as an integral part of their territory.

### What is India's stand?

1. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has termed Nepal's action 'unilateral act' when it incorporated Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh, and Kalapani, in its revised maps. These areas have always been part of the Indian Territory.



While Blue alignment and source are claimed by Nepal, effectively with such alignment Nepal claims Limpiyadhura, Kalapani and Lipulekh being part of its territory. However, India refers to red alignment and source for the Kali river.

2. Indian army has had its base in Kalapani since the 1950s. In the trade agreements between India and China, the Lipulekh pass was clearly mentioned.
3. Therefore, the claim of Nepal is not supported either by actual control or legal historical documents.
4. India has urged Nepal to resolve the matters through diplomatic dialogues and to create a positive atmosphere.
5. India has urged Nepal to refrain from such unjustified cartographic assertion and respect India's sovereignty and territorial integrity.



## What are diplomatic undercurrents in the issue?

1. The cartographic reassertion refers to two things: there is a growing anti-India sentiment in Nepal, and second Nepal has tacit support from China.
2. Being cornered globally, China is now using its weight on influential countries like India to moderate their position on China being responsible for the coronavirus pandemic. It is also asserting pressure on countries like Nepal where Beijing is considered to be a big donor.
3. Nepal is being cajoled to pick issues with India and it finds it easy to position China to oppose India's historical, cultural and geographical weight on Kathmandu, which that country sees as a real challenge.
4. The issue of boundary demarcation in the Lipulekh area of India-China-Nepal trijunction has been lingering for decades. India should have taken care to resolve this issue much earlier. Nepal has been able to convert a non-issue into a hot issue, which Indian diplomats should have visualised long ago. Especially when Nepal is looking towards China for deeper engagement and ignoring its centuries-old cultural and social relationships with India.
5. There seems to be a national consensus in Nepal over disputes with India. Anti India demonstrations in Nepal is a regular phenomenon and India will have to delicately manage the issue at the highest diplomatic level. India will have to see that China is not able to exploit the anti – Indian sentiments in Nepal.

## Trade with China shrank in 2020, deficit at five-year low

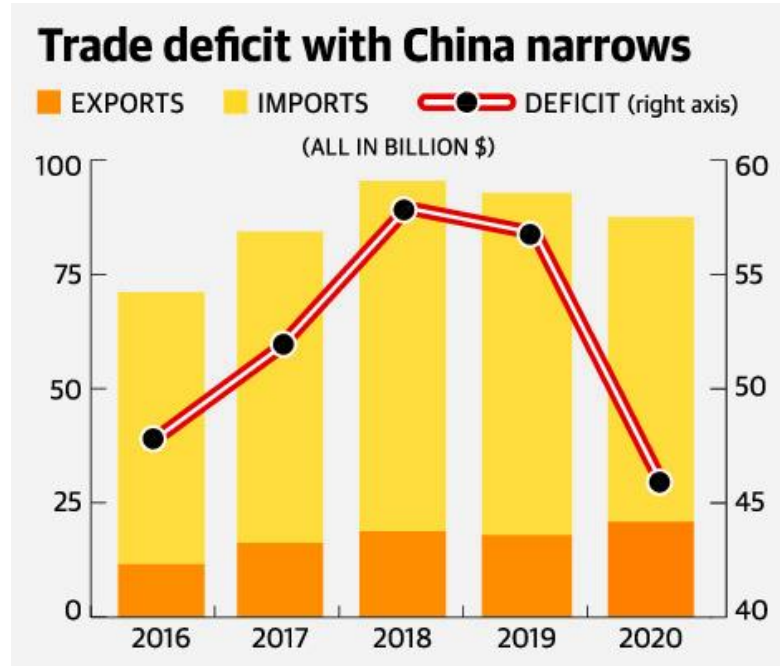
India's trade with China declined last year to the lowest level since 2017, with the trade deficit narrowing to a five-year low as the country imported far fewer goods from its northern neighbour.

### Highlights:

1. Bilateral trade slid 5.6% to \$87.6 billion, according to new figures from China's General Administration of Customs (GAC). India's imports from China shrank by 10.8% to \$66.7 billion, marking the lowest level of inbound shipments since 2016.
2. India's exports to China, however, jumped 16%, crossing the \$20 billion-mark for the first time to a record high of \$20.86 billion. The trade deficit, a source of friction in bilateral ties, shrank to \$45.8 billion, the lowest level since 2015.



3. While there was no immediate break-up of the data for 2020, India's biggest import in 2019 was electrical machinery and equipment, worth \$20.17 billion. Other major imports in 2019 were organic chemicals (\$8.39 billion) and fertilisers (\$1.67 billion), while India's top exports that year were iron ore, organic chemicals, cotton and unfinished diamonds.



SOURCE: GENERAL ADMINISTRATION OF CUSTOMS, CHINA

4. The drop in India's imports from China largely mirrored a decline in overall inbound shipments last year as domestic demand slumped in the wake of the pandemic.
5. That makes it difficult to determine whether 2020 is an exception or marks a turn away from the recent pattern of India's trade with China, especially since there is, as yet, no evidence to suggest India has replaced its import dependence on China by either sourcing those goods elsewhere or manufacturing them at home.

### Chinese exceptionalism: 'Positive growth'

China was "the world's only major economy to have registered positive growth in foreign trade in goods," said Li Kuiwen, spokesperson of the GAC, with China's foreign trade and exports in the first 10 months of the year accounting for a record 12.8% and 14.2% share of the global totals, respectively.

### Mains:

Q1. Import dependence on China creates various strategic challenges for India. Suggest measures to reduce import dependence on china without compromising on competitiveness.