



Current Affairs of the Day

GS II

- Taskforce on marriage age submits the report to PMO
- CVC presses for expeditious disposal of vigilance cases
- 'India, China may take lead in Asia's Covid vaccination plans'

GS III

- 'Land under PLA control since 1959'
- Centre's affidavit pushes for wide roads



Taskforce on marriage age submits the report to PMO

Issues: marriageable age links to maternal health, education (GS 2)

News: The task force set up to take a relook at the age of marriage for women has submitted its report to the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

Highlights:

1. Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Independence Day speech last year spoke about a panel formed to decide on the "right age of marriage" for women.
2. The Finance Minister in her Budget speech last year proposed a panel on the "age of a girl entering motherhood" to lower maternal mortality rates and improve nutrition levels.
3. But when the decision to appoint a task force was announced, its terms of reference included examining "the correlation of age of marriage and motherhood" with health and nutritional status of mothers and infants.
4. Women's rights activists have opposed the suggestion of raising the age of marriage from 18 to 21 for women and have cited evidence to show that such a move may be used to incarcerate young adults marrying without parents' consent.

CVC presses for expeditious disposal of vigilance cases

Issues: Probity in governance, Corruption (GS 2, GS 4)

Bottom line: 'Delay giving undue advantage or harassment to those charged'

Highlights:

1. The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has directed all Ministries/Departments of the Union government to strictly adhere to the time limits for various stages of disciplinary proceedings in vigilance cases.
2. In a circular issued on December 30, 2020, to all Chief Vigilance Officers, the central agency expressed concern that despite clear guidelines issued by the CVC and the Department of Personnel & Training, investigators were not adhering to the prescribed time limit, resulting in investigations taking a much longer time.
3. Any delay in finalisation of such matters is neither in the interest of the organisation nor that of the employee concerned.



4. Undue delay, on one hand, provided prolonged opportunities to a corrupt public servant to indulge in inappropriate activities.
5. On the other hand, any unwarranted delay in the conclusion of vigilance related matters is detrimental for an honest public servant, who may have got involved in a vigilance case, due to various reasons.

'India, China may take lead in Asia's Covid vaccination plans'

Issues: Soft power, Export economy, Geopolitics (GS 2)

News: India and China are expected to take the lead in driving Asia's vaccination plan efforts, even as third waves of infections and stringent measures to curb fresh COVID-19 cases in Japan, South Korea and some South-East Asian Nations remain a dampener for Asia's uneven economic recovery, Moody's Analytics said in a note.

Highlights:

1. Terming India's beginning of the vaccination programme a 'crucial development' for Asia, the firm said that the country's advances on this front would soften the severity of the pandemic in Asia, especially as India is the second most-impacted country after the U.S.
2. As the largest producer of vaccines in the world, with 60% of the global share, India is well-positioned to use its existing manufacturing capabilities to contribute to mass vaccine production and distribution needs for other countries in addition to meeting its domestic requirements.
3. With exports of the COVID-19 vaccines expected to begin soon, India looks set to take the lead in driving the region's distribution efforts in the months ahead.

Mains:

1. COVID-19 has presented India with a unique geopolitical opportunity to restore trust and confidence as a leader in South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean region. Discuss.



'Land under PLA control since 1959'

Issues: Boundary management, ecologically fragile area and National Security (GS 3)

News: The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Monday said it was aware of infrastructure construction by China in the past several years "along the Line of Actual Control (LAC)" and that India has also stepped up its construction. The statement came after a report by NDTV showed satellite images of a new Chinese settlement in Arunachal Pradesh.

Highlights:

1. This is the first time the government has acknowledged Chinese construction, although official sources say the land has been under the Chinese People's Liberation Army's (PLA) control since 1959.
2. Satellite images show the construction of a big village on the banks of Tsari Chu river in Upper Subansiri district between November 2019 and November 2020.
3. Stating that the government remains committed to the objective of creating infrastructure along with the border areas for the improvement of the livelihood of its citizens, including in Arunachal Pradesh.
4. The government keeps a constant watch on all developments having a bearing on India's security and takes all the necessary measures to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity.
5. India, too, has stepped up border infrastructure, including the construction of roads and bridges among others, which it added has provided "much-needed connectivity to the local population along the border."

Centre's affidavit pushes for wide roads

News: The Central government supported the majority view taken by the Supreme Court's Char Dham High-Powered Committee (HPC) for the necessity of broadening the Himalayan feeder roads to India-China border in order to facilitate troop movement.

Highlights:

1. A circular of the Ministry of Road and Transport and Highways (MoRTH) fixed the carriageway width of the feeder roads at seven-metre with a paved shoulder spanning 1.5 metres on either side.



2. The minority view, however, said the circular needed a rethink considering its “long-term impacts on the fragile Himalayan terrain and sensitive ecosystem”.
3. The Forces have to take heavy vehicles, tanks, self-propelled artillery and troops to the Indo-China border. It is the specific need of the Armed Forces to defend the country against any possible external aggression at the northern border.

Mains:

1. Competing National security interests in the Hindu Kush Himalayan Region (HKH) have long term ecological repercussions. Elaborate and suggest a way forward for ecological security in the region.