



Current Affairs of the Day

GS Paper - I

- Stopping hate on television is essential to prevent riots:
SC

GS Paper - II

- Jaishankar suggests way forward for China ties

GS Paper - III

- RTI reveals MoEF&CC cleared 3 highway proposals disregarding WII's views
- Environment min to rank and award national parks, zoos every year: Javadekar

Prelims

- New Zealand tops COVID-19 performance ranking



Stopping hate on television is essential to prevent riots: SC

The Supreme Court on Thursday said stopping hate on television was as essential for law and order as arming policemen with lathis and putting up barricades to prevent the spread of violence and riots. Which is an indirect reference to politicized media and ubiquitous propaganda running on Television.

Highlights:

1. Control over certain kinds of news which agitate people to violence and riots is a law and order problem. Preventing it is as powerful as putting up barricades. Preventing instigation is as important as providing lathis to policemen.
2. People can take any tone on TV as long as they don't incite violence, hatred, communal riots. We are interested only with people instigating and inciting violence and riots. These are situations which cause loss of lives and property. That is what we are worried about, Chief Justice Bobde explained.
3. Fair and truthful reporting normally is not a problem. The problem is when it [broadcast, programmes] is used to agitate others. There are broadcasts, programmes that definitely have the effect of instigating people, not just against one community, but any community.
4. The hearing was based on a batch of petitions, including one filed by Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, which alleged that certain sections of the media communalised the Tablighi Jamaat congregation by linking it to a spike in the spread of COVID-19 infection.

Jaishankar suggests way forward for China ties

External Affairs Minister said that recognition of "mutual respect, mutual sensitivity and mutual interests" was key to repairing India-China relations, after what he called a year of "exceptional stress" in a relationship "profoundly disturbed" by the border crisis.

Chinese aggression:

1. China's actions last year had "not only signalled a disregard for commitments about minimising troop levels" but also "showed a willingness to breach the peace and tranquillity" on the border that had been the foundation for the relationship.



2. Twenty Indian soldiers, and an unknown number of Chinese soldiers, lost their lives in a clash last year in the Galwan Valley.
3. This was why last year's events, the Minister said, had so profoundly disturbed the relationship, impacting public and political opinion.

Confrontation and Competition

He cited as examples China's issuing of stapled visas to Indian citizens from Jammu and Kashmir in 2010, a reluctance from China to deal with some of India's military commands, China's opposition to India's membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the UN Security Council as a permanent member, the blocking of UN listings of Pakistani terrorists, and the China Pakistan Economic Corridor, a flagship project under China's Belt and Road Initiative, violating India's sovereignty in J&K.

Border infrastructure

Over the years there was no significant progress of arriving at a common understanding of the alignment of the LAC, while there was "increasing construction of border infrastructure, especially on the Chinese side." India had recently made efforts to reduce the considerable infrastructure gap.



Source: Adapted from State Department & Natural Earth



Way Forward: Three Mutual and Eight Broad Proposals

1. The External Affairs Minister suggested “three mutuals” and “eight broad propositions” as a way forward for the relationship. “Mutual respect, mutual sensitivity and mutual interests” were “determining factors”.
2. The first proposition, he said, was that agreements already reached must be adhered to in their entirety, both in letter and spirit.
3. Both sides also needed to strictly observe and respect the LAC, and any attempt to unilaterally change the status quo was completely unacceptable.
4. Peace and tranquillity in border areas was the basis for the development of the relationship in other domains. If that was disturbed, he said, the rest of the relationship would be too.
5. The fourth proposition, he said, was that while both remain committed to a multipolar world, they should recognise that a multipolar Asia was one of its essential constituents.
6. While each state had its interests, concerns and priorities, sensitivities to them could not be one-sided and relations were reciprocal in nature. As rising powers, neither should ignore the other’s set of aspirations, he added.
7. While there will always be divergence and differences, their management is essential to ties.

RTI reveals MoEF&CC cleared 3 highway proposals disregarding WII’s views

The Union government has approved forest land diversion for three highway proposals in Rajasthan’s Ranthambhore and Mukundara Tiger Reserves, disregarding the Wildlife Institute of India (WII)’s views, a Right to Information (RTI) application by Down To Earth has revealed.

Highlights:

1. The proposals are part of the eight-lane Delhi-Mumbai Greenfield Highway project under Bharatmala. They pertain to three stretches of the Greenfield Highway.



2. In addition to Ranthambore and Mukundara, the proposed highways will cut across the Gandhi Sagar, Bhainsrorgarh and National Chambal Sanctuaries in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.
3. The WII warned the government that the highways would fragment wildlife habitat in the two reserves, the subsequent anthropogenic disturbances and road kills will not only impact tigers but a host of other wildlife including Indian wolf, striped hyena, leopard, caracal, chinkara, chital, and sambar and sloth bear.
4. Besides the tiger reserves, the highways will also cut across one of the last remaining strongholds of critically endangered gharials.
5. The project site in question in Ranthambore recorded tiger presence and is a functional dispersal route between Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve and Ramgarh Vishdhari Wildlife Sanctuary in Bundi, Rajasthan.
6. According to WII, any further disturbances in this fragile ecosystem might collapse the old connectivity. Loss of connectivity was likely to decrease the gene flow, increase the stress and vulnerability of the Ranthambhore tiger population and prove detrimental to their population.
7. The highway will severely affect the meta-population structure and the long-term persistence of tigers in the landscape. The semi-arid zone tiger populations (of Ranthambhore) are most vulnerable to extinction due to habitat loss and population decline. Therefore, the further disturbance caused by the highway will be detrimental to the tiger population.

Environment min to rank and award national parks, zoos every year: Javadekar

Highlights:

1. The ministry released Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE) of 146 National Park and Wildlife Sanctuaries in the Country. Top and Bottom 5 NP and WLS in terms of management are given in the table.
2. The Minister asserted that 70% of the global tiger population, 70% of Asiatic lions and more than 60% of leopards population in India is a certificate of India's thriving biodiversity. India has achieved what other countries could not.



- MEE of protected areas has emerged as a key tool for the governments and international bodies to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the protected area management systems. It was used over the years for monitoring and enhancing the performance of Tiger reserves in India.
- The results of the present assessment are encouraging with an overall mean MEE score of 62.01% which is higher than the global mean of 56%.
- The Environment Minister also launched the Management Effectiveness Evaluation of Indian zoos framework which proposes guidelines, criteria and indicators for the evaluation of zoos of the country.
- From 2021, 10 best National Parks, five coastal and marine parks and the top five zoos in the country will be ranked and awarded every year.
- India has a network of 903 protected areas covering about 5% of the total geographical area of the country.

State	NP&WLS	%	Rating
Top five scored NP&WLS			
West Bengal	Jaldapara NP	80.83	Very Good
West Bengal	Raiganj WLS	81.03	Very Good
Himachal Pradesh	Sainj WLS	82.50	Very Good
Himachal Pradesh	Great Himalayan NP	84.17	Very Good
Himachal Pradesh	Tirthan WLS	84.17	Very Good
Bottom five scored NP&WLS			
Uttar Pradesh	Turtle WLS	26.66	Poor
Haryana	Khaparwas WLS	29.17	Poor
Rajasthan	Ramsagar WLS	29.31	Poor
Assam	Pani-Dihing Bird WLS	31.66	Poor
Uttar Pradesh	Jai Prakash Narayan (Surhatal) Bird WLS	31.67	Poor

New Zealand tops COVID-19 performance ranking

New Zealand and Vietnam have ranked the best-performing countries in their response to the pandemic, according to a COVID-19 “performance index” put together by the Lowy Institute, an Australian think tank, which sought to assess



the impact of geography, political systems and economic development in assessing outcomes.

Highlights:

1. The index, which was based on six different indicators, including confirmed cases and deaths per million people and the scale of testing, sought “to gauge the relative performance of countries”, assessing 98 countries.
2. Fewer reported cases and deaths, both in aggregate and per capita terms, point towards a better response to the virus. More tests conducted on a per capita basis reveal a more accurate picture of the extent of the pandemic at the national level. Lower rates of positive tests, meanwhile, indicate greater degrees of control over the transmission of COVID-19.
3. India ranked 86 out of 98 countries, while the U.S. stood at 94 and Brazil at the bottom of the index. Sri Lanka was the best faring nation in South Asia, ranking 10.
4. The think tank said China was not included due to a lack of publicly available data on testing.
5. Population size had a huge impact on response. The level of economic development and regime-type were less significant than expected.
6. In general, countries with smaller populations, cohesive societies, and capable institutions have a comparative advantage in dealing with a global crisis such as a pandemic.