



## Current Affairs of the Day

### GS Paper III

- China raising new units near borders
- Grey matter loss is seen after COVID
- ‘Climate crisis to hit sooner than feared’
- CCI probes Google for ‘unfair’ business practices
- High raw material prices threaten the survival of MSMEs



## China raising new units near borders

1. China is raising new militia units comprising local Tibetan youth for high-altitude warfare near Eastern Ladakh, the site of the recent border tensions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), as well as near its borders with Sikkim and Bhutan, intelligence intercepts have revealed.
2. The new units named Mimang Cheton are presently undergoing training, and are to be deployed mostly in upper Himalayan ranges, both in the eastern and western sectors of the India-China border.
3. It is learnt that two batches of the Mimang Cheton have completed training and have been deployed along with various locations in the Chumbi valley, including Yadong, which borders Sikkim and Bhutan, Cheema, Rinchengang, PB Thang and Phari. A second batch is undergoing training at Phari, which is near Sikkim.
4. Available information indicates that the units are also being deployed at Rutog in Tibet, near the Pangong Tso (lake) in eastern Ladakh.
5. Recent reports appearing in China's state media suggest the militia has been used to transport supplies to PLA troops stationed at Rutog. The new units will be used for high-altitude warfare as well for surveillance and for ensuring supplies to PLA troops.
6. The units are being trained by the PLA, but personnel are yet to get uniforms or ranks. The new Mimang Cheton units mirror India's elite and decades-old Special Frontier Force consisting of persons of Tibetan origin.

## Grey matter loss is seen after COVID

1. The loss of smell and taste, which is among the most common symptoms associated with coronavirus infection, is writ large in the brain, says a study that scanned brain images from a group of volunteers to compare changes before and after COVID-19.
2. The study, which is yet to be peer-reviewed, was able to paint a picture of a distinct loss of grey matter, in regions of the brain associated with smell and taste in those who had tested positive for the coronavirus compared to those who hadn't.
3. The loss of grey matter in memory-related regions of the brain may in turn increase the risk of these patients of developing dementia in the longer term.



## 'Climate crisis to hit sooner than feared'

1. Climate change will fundamentally reshape life on Earth in the coming decades, even if humans can tame planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions, according to a landmark draft report from the UN's climate science advisers.
2. Earlier models predicted that we were not likely to see Earth-altering climate change before 2100. But the UN draft report says that prolonged warming even beyond the threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius could produce "progressively serious, centuries' long and, in some cases, irreversible consequences".
3. Dangerous thresholds are closer than once thought, and dire consequences stemming from decades of carbon pollution are unavoidable in the short term.

## CCI probes Google for 'unfair' business practices

1. The Competition Commission has ordered a detailed probe against Google for alleged anti-competitive practices in the smart television operating systems market in the country.
2. After assessing a complaint, the watchdog had reached the prima facie view that Google was dominant in the relevant market for licensable smart TV device operating systems in India.
3. In a 24-page order, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) said that prima facie mandatory pre-installation of all the Google applications under the Television App Distribution Agreement (TADA) amounts to imposition of unfair conditions on the smart TV device manufacturers.
4. This is in contravention of Section 4(2)(a) of the Competition Act, the regulator said, adding that it also "amounts to prima facie leveraging of Google's dominance in Play Store to protect the relevant markets such as online video hosting services offered by YouTube, etc.".
5. Section 4 of the Act pertains to abuse of dominant position. A Google spokesperson said, "We are confident that our smart TV licensing practices are in compliance with all applicable competition laws."



## High raw material prices threaten the survival of MSMEs

1. A steep increase in raw material prices in the last few months threatens the survival of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the manufacturing sector, the All India Council of Associations of MSMEs said.
2. The council, which has about 170 MSME associations from different states as its members, pointed out that copper prices had increased by 110% this month compared with April last year. Prices of aluminium alloy had risen 94%, mild steel plates by 82% and CRCA sheets by 96%.
3. The MSMEs faced working capital erosion because of the high cost of inputs. While the units supplying to public sector undertakings (PSUs) were unable to get a revision in prices of their products, the open market was unable to take the full impact of high raw material prices, the council said.
4. In spite of a drop in demand due to lockdown, prices are on the upswing, particularly steel, pig iron and other raw materials.
5. It urged the government to set up a mechanism to ensure raw-material-price-stability for MSMEs. The PSUs should allow MSMEs to cancel orders without imposing a penalty and permit them to quote revised prices.
6. The government should also allow the import of all steel materials based on cost and quality requirements at nil duty and ban the export of iron ore and steel products, it added.