



Current Affairs of the Day

GS Paper I

- Telangana temple gets World Heritage tag

GS Paper II

- 35% of govt. schools, anganwadis have no tap water
- Today's Kisan Sansad at Jantar Mantar will be an all-woman affair
- PM calls for a 'unite India movement'
- 'Centralisation not a risk worth taking'
- China, Pak. outline 'joint action' to align Afghanistan strategies
- 'China's wolf warrior approach is here to stay'

GS Paper III

- Deal on Gogra, Hot Springs likely soon



Telangana temple gets World Heritage tag

In a major diplomatic triumph, the 13th-century Ramappa temple in Palampet, Telangana, was declared as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Highlights:

1. The nomination for a World Heritage Site for the Ramappa and Kakatiya temples was made in 2014. The site was in the reckoning for inscription in 2020 but the WHC meeting was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Built by Racherla Senapati Rudrayya, a general of Kakatiya king Ganapatideva, in the 13th century, the main temple is flanked by the collapsed structures of the Kateshwarayya and Kameshwarayya temples in Palampet, about 220 km from Hyderabad.
3. The temple, known for its exquisite craftsmanship and delicate relief work, is a savvy blend of technical know-how and materials of its time. The foundation is built with the “sandbox technique”, the flooring is granite and the pillars are basalt. The lower part of the temple is red sandstone while the white gopuram is built with light bricks that reportedly float on water.

35% of govt. schools, anganwadis have no tap water

Over a third of government schools and anganwadis still do not have tap water access even 10 months after the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) launched a 100-day campaign to provide the facility. There has been minimal progress since a Parliamentary Standing Committee pulled up the JJM in a March report, pointing out the importance of repeated washing of hands as part of COVID-19 safety protocols for schools to reopen.

Highlights:

1. The 100-day campaign to achieve 100% coverage, and provide potable piped water supply for drinking and cooking purposes as well as tap water for handwashing and in toilets in every school, Anganwadi and ashramshala or residential tribal school, was launched on October 2, 2020. At the time, about 40% of schools and anganwadis already had tap water access.
2. Almost four months after that extended deadline, the JJM is yet to achieve its goals.



3. In fact, there is a wide disparity among States, with a few laggards pulling down the national average, despite the fact that nine states and Union Territories have already achieved 100% coverage.
4. In Jharkhand and West Bengal, less than 15% of schools and less than 10% of anganwadis have tap water access. On the other hand, 80% of the schools in Uttar Pradesh have access to tap water.

Today's Kisan Sansad at Jantar Mantar will be an all-woman affair

When farmers return to Jantar Mantar to continue their parallel parliament protest, the participants will look different from their counterparts inside Parliament as well as the delegates of previous Kisan Sansads in one major way: they will all be women.

Highlights:

1. The Mahila Kisan Sansad will reflect the key role that women play in Indian agriculture and their critical role in the ongoing movement too. Convoys of women farmers from various districts are reaching the morchas for the Mahila Kisan Sansad.
2. According to Census data, 30% of all cultivators and 43% of all agricultural labourers are women, though few of them have land rights in their own names.
3. However, few women have been in the leadership of the movement. None of the SKM's nine core committee members is women, nor are the leaders of the individual unions that make up the platform.

PM calls for a 'unite India movement'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has urged Indians to participate in the "Amrit Mahotsav" launched to mark the 75th year of Independence, asking citizens to forge a unity of purpose or "Bharat Jodo Andolan" in the same manner as Mahatma Gandhi's "Quit India" or "Bharat Chhodo Andolan".

Highlights:

1. Many programmes in connection with Amrit Mahotsav were being run, the Prime Minister said, adding that the Ministry of Culture had started an



initiative to have a maximum number of Indians sing the national anthem together.

2. Noting that on July 26 the nation would mark Kargil Vijay Diwas, the Prime Minister asked the people of the country to pay tributes to those who made the nation proud in 1999.
3. In the broadcast, he also cited a study done by MyGov to highlight that out of those sending messages and suggestions for Mann Ki Baat, close to 75% were below 35 years.
4. I view this as a very good indicator. Mann Ki Baat is a medium that has positivity, sensitivity. In Mann Ki Baat, we talk about positive things; its character is collective.

‘Centralisation not a risk worth taking’

Fourteenth Finance Commission Chairman Y.V. Reddy said that the Centre did not support States enough at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, resorting to “burden-sharing” instead.

Highlights:

1. Warning against a growing tendency towards centralisation even on State subjects under the Constitution, Dr Reddy said the idea of different development models adopted by States is no longer on the table under the Narendra Modi government and there is a worrying asymmetry between the responsibilities of States and the resources available to them.
2. There is an impression gained that the Central government feels it can do a better job in regard to various activities even if they are in the State list.
3. On fiscal federalism too, the Fifteenth Finance Commission recommendations were accepted but not fully implemented and its terms of references were controversial,” he said, adding that the States’ borrowing limits have also been made conditional which is a “real problem”.
4. There is a rebalancing going on between the State and the market and also between the Centre and States in India, but in the process of rebalancing, we should not underestimate the strong sub-national sentiment within loyalty to the country.



5. The United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government's decade in office saw the emergence of different development models among States, as their governance capabilities matured and policies unique to their needs were adopted.
6. He stressed that pressures and tensions between the Centre and States may be counterproductive.
7. The basic problem is centralisation in a diverse country can produce risks that are not worth taking, he said, stressing that the underlying logic for India's federal structure is to recognise the diversity of States in order to strengthen national unity.

China, Pak. outline 'joint action' to align Afghanistan strategies

China and Pakistan said they would more closely cooperate and work together in Afghanistan amid the changing situation in the country, as their Foreign Ministers proposed building the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) into "a hub of regional connectivity".

Highlights:

1. China and Pakistan outlined a five-point joint plan on working in Afghanistan, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said in a statement.
2. China described the current situation as arriving "at an important juncture" as he criticised "the hasty U.S. withdrawal of troops" for having "neither fulfilled the purpose of fighting terrorism nor brought peace to Afghanistan but created a new security black hole," the statement said.
3. China outlined "joint actions" in five areas, starting with "the immediate priority of avoiding the expansion of war and preventing Afghanistan from falling into a full-scale civil war." The second focus would be to promote the intra-Afghan negotiations between Kabul and the Taliban and establish "a broad and inclusive political structure".
4. The third joint action would be "to resolutely combat terrorist forces". The fourth joint action would be to "promote cooperation among Afghanistan's neighbours" and "explore the construction of a platform for cooperation among them". Both would also more closely work on international fora on the Afghan issue.



5. Both sides, in a “joint press release” issued after the talks that were put out by Pakistan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “reaffirmed their commitment to facilitate and support ‘Afghan-led and Afghan-owned’ peace and reconciliation process” and “their support for the peaceful reconstruction of Afghanistan”.

‘China’s wolf warrior approach is here to stay’

India is perhaps the best example of how this approach has backfired by pushing it much closer to the U.S. and alienating a billion plus-person economy.

Wolf warrior diplomacy

1. China’s assertive new diplomatic approach in the Xi Jinping era has come to be dubbed “wolf warrior diplomacy”, marked by a muscular posture in pursuing China’s interests.
2. The approach is not exactly new and is rooted in the Communist Party’s history. The current state of relations with India, he says, is “the best example” of how it has often backfired although, he argues, wolf warrior diplomacy is likely here to stay.
3. Xi Jinping is both a cause and a consequence of changes that have taken place in China. The new assertive turn in Chinese diplomacy really started in 2008-09 in the wake of the global financial crisis. China had just hosted the Olympics. The West’s response to the financial crisis was sluggish and China’s was very, very decisive.
4. There’s a refrain I heard quite a lot in Beijing that you can’t hide an elephant. The idea is China has gotten too big to really take that kind of low profile that it had in the past.
5. In the grand scheme of things, I find it really hard to come up with any kind of net positive assessment of it. It’s one of the factors which has contributed to this incredible decline in global perceptions of China in Pew polling that we’ll have seen recently.

India is perhaps the best example of where this approach has kind of backfired. Wolf warrior tactics, combined with, of course, great military assertiveness on the China-India border, has ended up pushing India much closer to the U.S., and alienating a billion plus-person economy, an emerging power on the global stage with good relations with the United States, and that shares a border with China.



Deal on Gogra, Hot Springs likely soon

India and China are set to hold the 12th round of Corps Commander-level talks aimed at resolving the stand-off in eastern Ladakh soon, and an agreement for disengagement at Gogra and Hot Springs is likely to be reached.

Highlights:

1. The two sides are also looking at a Major general-level talk to be held after the 12th round of talks, a second official said. India and China have two hotlines for communication at Chushul and Daulat Beg Oldi.
2. While disengagement was completed on both banks of Pangong Tso in February, the other friction points that remain to be resolved are Gogra and Hot Springs, Demchok and Depsang. The buffer zones established in some places as part of earlier talks remain in place.
3. In eastern Ladakh, India and China have two mutually agreed disputed areas — Trig Heights and Demchok — and 10 areas of differing perception. Officials said since the stand-off last year, additional five friction points have emerged.
4. These are Km 120 in the Galwan area, Patrolling Points 15 and 17, and Rechin La and Rezag La on the South Bank of the Pangong Tso, the second official said.
5. China wants de-escalation first and disengagement later which is not acceptable to India as they can bring back troops and equipment much faster than we can do.
6. For India, the area is cut off for several months a year which is not the case with China. Both the Zoji La and Rohtang passes were kept open longer than usual last year due to the stand-off and are available for seven or eight months.
7. Construction work on several tunnels is underway on a priority basis, including at Baralacha La and Tanglang La, among others, the officials said.

LAC becoming LoC:

1. However, at least two officials said the Line of Actual Control (LAC) will not become like the Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan with very close deployments by both sides.
2. The LAC will not become like the LoC. But the force levels have gone up as the trust is lost. All agreements are broken,” the first official stated. New protocols have to be worked out, another official stated.