



PRECURE COMPILATION FOR 2020

2nd Week of June
(8th June to 13th June)

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Indo- China border dispute at Pangong Tso

- In the aftermath of Chinese incursion, **high level military dialogue was conducted between the two sides at the border outpost of Maldo** on the Chinese side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) - the de facto border between the two countries. Most of 3,488km-long (2,167 miles) border between the two countries is disputed and non-demarcated. Retired Northern Army Commander Lt Gen DS Hooda described the high-level talks as "unprecedented".
- The year 2020 witnesses clashes between India and China in four main areas in the two sectors- Ladakh and Sikkim. The four sites of confrontation include Demchok to the South, the Fingers region on the Eastern banks of the high-altitude Pangong Lake, Darbuk-Shayok-Daulat Beg Oldie road in the Galwan River basin and the Gogra post.
- While : India and China have "slightly" pulled back their troops from three of the confrontation sites in Ladakh, there has been no change in the ground position at Pangong Tso where Chinese soldiers have occupied the entire area from "**Finger-4 to 8**" (mountainous spurs separated by a distance of 8 kms) to block all Indian patrols since early-May.
- The barren mountains on the lake's northern bank, called the **Chang Chenmo**, jut forward in major spurs, which the Army calls "fingers". India claims that the LAC is coterminous with Finger 8, but it physically controls area only up to Finger 4.
- Chinese border posts are at Finger 8, while it believes that the LAC passes through Finger 2. Around six years ago, the Chinese had attempted a permanent construction at Finger 4 which was demolished after Indians strongly objected to it. The fracas between Indian and Chinese soldiers in May 2020 happened in this general area at Finger 5, which led to "disengagement" between the two sides. The Chinese then stopped the Indian soldiers moving beyond Finger 2.



Issue at Pangong Tso

- The LAC mostly passes on the land, but Pangong Tso is a unique case where it passes through the water as well. The points in the water at which the Indian claim ends and Chinese claim begins are not agreed upon mutually. Most of the clashes between the two armies occur in the disputed portion of the lake. As things stand, 45 km-long western portion of the lake is under Indian control, while the rest is under China's control.
- **Pangong Tso lake in eastern Ladakh** has often been in the news, most famously during the Doklam standoff in 2017. In the Ladakhi language, **Pangong means extensive concavity, and Tso is lake in Tibetan. Pangong Tso is a long narrow, deep, endorheic** (landlocked) lake situated at a height of more than 14,000 ft in the Ladakh Himalayas. The legendary 19th century Dogra General Zorawar Singh is said to have trained his

soldiers and horses on the frozen Pangong lake before invading Tibet.



Tactical significance

- By itself, the lake does not have major tactical significance. But it lies in the path of the **Chushul approach**, one of the main approaches that China can use for an offensive into Indian-held territory.
- Indian assessments show that a major Chinese offensive, if it comes, will flow across both the north and south of the lake. During the 1962 war, this was where China launched its main offensive — the Indian Army fought heroically at **Rezang La**. Not far away, to the north of the lake, is the Army's Dhan Singh Thapa post, named after Major Dhan Singh Thapa who was awarded the country's highest gallantry award, the Param Vir Chakra. Major Thapa and his platoon were manning Sirijap-1 outpost which was essential for the defence of **Chushul airfield**.
- Over the years, the Chinese have built motorable roads along their banks of the Pangong Tso. At the People's Liberation Army's Huangyangtan base at Minningzhen, southwest of Yinchuan, the capital of China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, stands a massive to-scale model of this disputed area in Aksai Chin. It points to the importance accorded by the Chinese to the area.
- In 1999, when the Army unit from the area was moved to Kargil for Operation Vijay, China took the opportunity to build 5 km of road inside Indian Territory along the lake's bank. The 1999 road added to the extensive network of roads built by the Chinese in the area, which connect with each other and to the G219 Karakoram Highway.
- Even during peacetime, the difference in perception over where the LAC lies on the northern bank of the lake, makes this contested terrain.
- China and India have built an elaborate framework of confidence-building measures for border management. In 2019, they unveiled a new program to attempt "**coordinated patrolling**" for the first time in a relatively peaceful portion of the LAC in eastern Arunachal Pradesh. The overall framework has succeeded for several decades in preventing any mass casualties or deadly confrontations at the LAC. However, it has not prevented an increase in the number of intrusions and confrontations in recent years, to judge from the quickened tempo of standoffs and stone-pelting incidents.

ENVIRONMENT

<https://youtu.be/q9pyay6bl5A>

Environmental Performance Index

- EPI is a **biennial index** prepared by **Yale University and Columbia University in collaboration with the World Economic Forum.**
- India secured **168th rank** in the 12th edition of the Environment Performance Index (EPI) 2020.
- India's rank was 177th in 2018.
- It offers a scorecard that highlights leaders and laggards in environmental performance and provides practical guidance for countries that aspire to move toward a sustainable future.
- EPI Index 2020 measured the environmental performance of **180 countries.**
- The index considered 32 indicators of environmental performance and included 10-year trends in environmental performance at the national and global levels.
- **Denmark topped** the index.
- India scored 27.6 out of 100 in the 2020 EPI index and its performance was **worse than all South Asian countries, except Afghanistan.**
- **India scored below the regional (South-Asia) average score on all five key parameters** on environmental health, including air quality, sanitation and drinking water, heavy metals and waste management.

Asiatic Lions

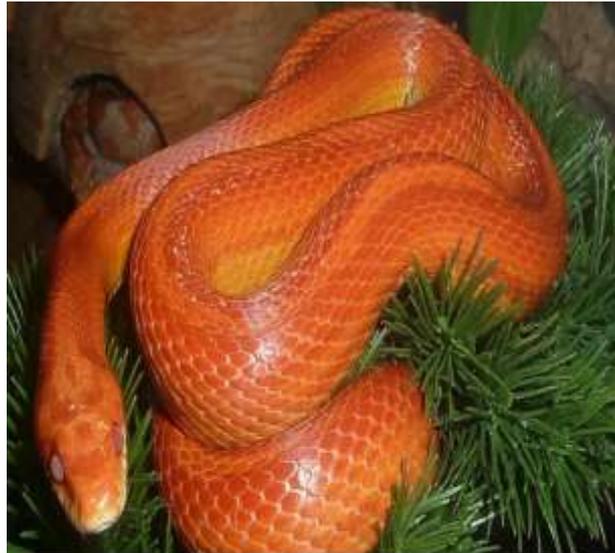
- Recently, the Gujarat Forest Department has announced an **increase in the population of Asiatic lions in the Gir forest region.**
- Total **674 lions** were recorded compared to the 523 in the Lion Census of 2015.
- The lion population has grown by **almost 29%** from the last count in 2015.
- The lion population in the state of Gujarat has **doubled** since 2001.
- Moreover, the distribution of the lions has expanded from 22,000 sq. km in 2015 to 30,000 sq. km in 2020.
- Thus, the **geographical distribution area** for Gir forests's lions has been **increased by 36%**

Sunderbans Damaged

- **About 28% of the Sunderbans** has been damaged by **Cyclone Amphan** at the launch of a drive for planting mangroves and trees to mark World Environment Day.
- 1,200 sq km of the 4,263 sq km forests had been **"destroyed"**.
- **Trees turned yellow and red** after the cyclone mostly due to salinity and trees can only survive if the salinity of the soil comes down.
- The Indian Sunderbans, an area south of the Dampier Hodges line, is spread over 9,630 sq km, of which the mangrove forest accounts for 4,263 sq km.
- **Dampier Hodges line** is an imaginary line, passing through 24 Parganas South and North districts (West Bengal) which indicates the northern-most limits of the estuarine zone affected by tidal fluctuations.
- The **damage has been much on the Indian side** of the Sundarbans and not on the Bangladesh side.

Advisory to Import Live Exotic Animals

- The **Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)** on June 1, 2020, issued an advisory to **streamline and formalise the process of importing live exotic animals.**
- The advisory has defined them as those that are mentioned under the **Appendices of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)**, but not under the schedules of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
- Many exotic species of birds, reptiles and amphibians are imported into India for **commercial purposes.**
- The **major reason** for issuing the advisory is to regulate trade because the issue of zoonotic diseases is linked to wildlife.
- With this advisory, it will be known how many such exotic animals are there in the country.



- The **advisory** has provisions for import and disclosure of exotic animals and their progeny already in India.
- A person **trying to import a live exotic animal** will have to submit an application for grant of a licence to the DGFT, under the provisions of the advisory.
- The importer will also have to attach a **No Objection Certificate (NOC) of the chief wildlife warden** of the state concerned along with the application.
- For those people who have already imported exotic animals, a declaration will have to be made within six months, which wouldn't require submissions on the provenance of the animal.
- However, if the declaration is made after six months, documents will have to be submitted.

“Healthy and Energy Efficient Buildings” Initiative

- On occasion of World Environment Day, **Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), a joint venture of PSUs under Ministry of Power**, in partnership with the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) MAITREE program, launched the **“Healthy and Energy Efficient Buildings” initiative** that will pioneer **ways to make workplaces healthier and greener.**
- The **Market Integration and Transformation Program for Energy Efficiency (MAITREE)**, under which this initiative has been launched, is a part of the **US-India bilateral Partnership** between the Ministry of Power and USAID and is aimed at accelerating the **adoption of cost-effective energy efficiency** as a standard practice within buildings, and specifically focuses on cooling.
- As part of this pilot, “Healthy and Energy Efficient Buildings” Initiative, **EESL has taken the leadership** by being the first to implement this framework in its own offices.
- This initiative is addressing the challenges of **retrofitting existing buildings and air conditioning systems** so that they are both healthy and energy efficient.
- Poor air quality has been a concern in India for quite some time and has become more important in light of the COVID pandemic.
- As people return to their offices and public spaces, **maintaining good indoor air quality** is essential for occupant comfort, well-being, productivity and the overall public health.
- Most buildings in India are **not equipped** to establish and maintain healthy indoor air quality and need to be upgraded.
- Such retrofit measures, like increasing outside air and additional filtration in the air conditioning system, typically come at the cost of occupant comfort and increased energy use.
- **Nor are there standardized approaches** to retrofitting.
- The EESL office pilot will address this problem by developing specifications for future use in other buildings throughout the country, as well as aid in evaluating the effectiveness and cost benefits of various technologies and their short and long-term impacts on air quality, comfort, and energy use.

I Commit initiative

- The **iCommit initiative** was launched on the occasion of the World Environment day (5th June).
- The initiative is driven by **Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL)**, under the administration of the **Ministry of Power**, Government of India.
- iCommit initiative is centred around the idea of **building an energy resilient future**.
- It is a clarion call to all stakeholders and individuals to continue moving towards energy efficiency, renewable energy, and sustainability to create a robust and resilient energy system in the future.
- The **prerequisite** for this goal is to create a flexible and agile power system.
- A **healthy power sector** can help the nation in meeting the objective of energy access and security for all.
- It seeks to bring together a **diverse spectrum of government and private players to build a new energy future for India**.

World Oceans Day

- World Oceans Day is celebrated every year on **8th June** to create **awareness** about the **benefits that mankind gets from the ocean**.
- The Day was designated by the **United Nations General Assembly in 2008**.
- The **theme** of the World Oceans Day 2020 is 'Innovation for a Sustainable Ocean'.