



China's Stapled Visas

For Prelims: Stapled Visas, McMahon Line, Line of Actual Control (LAC)

For Mains: Concept of stapled visas, China's unilateral claim to Arunachal Pradesh as South Tibet.

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

Recently, India withdrew its **eight-athlete 'Wushu' martial arts athletes contingent from the Summer World University Games** in Chengdu, China. The move came in response to **China's issuance of stapled visas to three athletes from the Indian team**, all of whom were from Arunachal Pradesh.

- The practice of issuing **stapled visas started around 2005**, and China has consistently issued such visas to residents of Arunachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.

What are Stapled Visas?

- A stapled visa is an **unstamped piece of paper attached to a passport** with staples or a pin.
- Unlike regular visas that are **affixed and stamped directly on the passport**, stapled visas are detachable.
- The issuance of stapled visas is part of [China's ongoing territorial disputes with India over Arunachal Pradesh](#).
- The **stapled visas are considered valid by China**, but **India refuses to accept** them as legitimate travel documents.

Note:

- Passports and visas enable authorized, secure international travel, reflecting nation-state sovereignty and control over borders.
 - Passports signify identity and citizenship, while **visas grant entry permissions to specific destinations**.
 - A passport is issued by the **birth country or current country of residence**. A visa is issued by an **Embassy/Consulate representing a foreign country**.

Why China Issued Stapled Visas?

- **Dispute Over Sovereignty:**
 - China disputes India's sovereignty over Arunachal Pradesh and challenges the **legitimacy of the McMahon Line**, the boundary **between Tibet and British India**, agreed upon in

the **Simla Convention of 1914**.

- The disagreement over the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)** lies at the heart of Chinese claims on the disputed territory and leads to repeated transgressions into Indian territory.
- **Unilateral Claim to Indian Territory:**
 - China claims approximately **90,000 sq km of Arunachal Pradesh** as part of its territory, **referring to it as "Zangnan" or "South Tibet"** in Chinese maps.
 - It issues lists of **Chinese names for places in Arunachal Pradesh** and periodically underlines its unilateral claim to Indian territory.
- **Undermining India's Sovereignty:**
 - Issuing stapled visas to Indian nationals from Arunachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir is part of **China's efforts to undermine India's sovereignty over these regions**.
 - China's actions are seen as **attempts to challenge India's control** and authority over parts of its own territory.

What are the Impacts and Concerns Regarding Stapled Visas?

- Stapled visas create confusion and uncertainty for travellers, as their validity and acceptance vary.
- India consistently rejects the validity of stapled visas and protests against their issuance.
- These actions by China contribute to diplomatic tensions between the two nations and complicate bilateral relations.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Mains

Q. "China is using its economic relations and positive trade surplus as tools to develop potential military power status in Asia". In the light of this statement, discuss its impact on India as her neighbour. **(2017)**

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