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DAILY NEWS ANALYSIS

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FOREWORD

We, at Team Vedhik is happy to introduce a new initiative - "Daily Current Affairs_The Hindu" compilations to help you with UPSC Civil Services Examination preparation. We believe this initiative - "Daily Current Affairs_The Hindu" would help students, especially beginners save time and streamline their preparations with regard to Current Affairs. A content page and an Appendix has been added segregating and mapping the content to the syllabus.

It is an appreciable efforts by Vedhik IAS Academy helping aspirants of UPSC Civil Services Examinations. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Babu Sebastian, former VC - MG University in extending all support to this endeavour. Finally I also extend my thanks to thank Ms. Shilpa Sasidharan and Mr. Shahul Hameed for their assistance in the preparing the compilations.

We welcome your valuable comments so that further improvement may be made in the forthcoming material. We look forward to feedback, comments and suggestions on how to improve and add value for students. Every care has been taken to avoid typing errors and if any reader comes across any such error, the authors shall feel obliged if they are informed at their Email ID.

CONTENTS

- GSP 01 D Editorials -The fragility of the Northeast's integration
- GSP 01 D Editorials -The temples that Jawaharlal Nehru built
- GSP 02 A Editorials -The controversial visit of a Chinese vessel to Hambantota
- GSP 02 A News -India gifts Dornier aircraft to Sri Lanka
- GSP 02 C Editorials -The conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh
- GSP 02 C News - China sees surprise rate cut as economic data disappoints
- GSP 02 E News - Fundamental duties key to social transformation
- GSP 02 M Editorials -The shackles of 1861 need to go
- GSP 02 O News -Panel moots district-level survey to bring more children into adoption ambit
- GSP 03 A News - 'States signal intent to raise capex spend

The fragility of the Northeast's integration

The idea of India is under transformation again, and any return to 'mainstream versus sub-stream friction' spells danger



PRADIP PHANJOUBAM

The integration of Northeast India into mainstream Indian life has been on the national agenda from the very start of India's journey as an independent nation. The region has always been seen to be somewhat alien and needing assimilation, which found (and finds) reflection in administrative terms too. Two such measures, on opposite ends of the spectrum, should characterise this predicament: the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution introduced in 1949 and the draconian Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), promulgated in 1958. Seventy-five years after Independence, the question is how successful has this integration been?

'Excluded' areas

The British had also considered leaving this "Mongolian Fringe" – a term British India Foreign Secretary Olaf Caroe coined in a paper in 1940 – as a Crown Colony. This entity was to be a combination of hill regions of the Northeast and Upper Burma. The Governor of Assam, Robert Reid, flagged this in a 22-page note in 1937 titled 'A Note on the Future of the Present Excluded, Partially Excluded and Tribal Areas of Assam', by saying people here, "neither racially, historically, culturally, nor linguistically", had any affinity with the rest of India. There were other similar thoughts too as David R. Syiemlieh documents in his *On the Edge of Empire: Four British Plans for North East India 1941-1947*.

These "Excluded" and "Partially Excluded" areas Reid mentions, were constituted largely of the unadministered hills of Assam separated from its revenue plains by an "Inner Line" created by the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation 1873,

and this was a year before Assam was separated from Bengal and made a Chief Commissioner's Province. Earlier, Assam was annexed into British Bengal after the First Anglo Burmese War 1824-26 and the signing of the Treaty of Yandabo.

The Sixth Schedule

British Assam was virtually the entire Northeast of today, excluding two kingdoms, Tripura and Manipur. In these kingdoms too, though no Inner Line was introduced, the British brought in similar administrative mechanisms separating "excluded" hills from the revenue plains. In Tripura, the plains of Chakla Roshanabad were annexed to British Bengal and the Tripura kings were allowed to be landowners there but not claim sovereignty over them. In Manipur, the hills and the central revenue plains of the Imphal valley came to be treated as separate administrative regions in 1907.

The Crown Colony plan was ultimately dropped on grounds of administrative feasibility. Reid's idea probably was also influenced by a memorandum to the Simon Commission in 1929 by a nascent Naga nationalist body, Naga Club, which argued that Nagas were not Indians. Interestingly, the Crown Colony bears resemblance to the notion of "Zomia", conceived by Willem van Schendel and popularised by James C. Scott in 'The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia'. This complex mosaic of ethnicities was what India inherited.

The Sixth Schedule was independent India's first administrative instrument for undivided Assam's tribal belt. The works of Verrier Elwin, British-born Indian anthropologist, who advocated for tribals to be encouraged to live by their own geniuses, were its inspiration. The Schedules mandated the formation of Autonomous District Councils in which, among others, tribal customary laws were given legitimacy.

The Naga Hills refused the Sixth



BITU BAL KONWAR

Schedule and would have nothing less than sovereignty. A powerful insurgency resulted, and in its wake, AFSPA, with sweeping powers given to the armed forces. As an overture of pacification, the Naga Hills district was merged with the adjacent Mon and Tuensang subdivision of the North Eastern Frontier Agency (NEFA), or today's Arunachal Pradesh, to form a separate Nagaland State in 1963.

India 75

Naga insurgency, however, raged on in different avatars. A peace negotiation has been in progress for the last 25 years, and the hope is that this would culminate in a lasting settlement.

In 1972, most of these autonomous regions were bifurcated from Assam. Meghalaya became a State, while Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram were made Union Territories. The latter two were upgraded to States in 1987. Tripura and Manipur, which were made Part-C States after merger with India in 1949, were also upgraded to States in 1972.

Amidst these, the national identity question remained incompletely resolved and insurgencies spawned and spread even in States such as Assam and Manipur where the emotional gulf with mainstream India had seemingly narrowed. The hegemonic suspicion of the Indian state of the "Mongolian Fringe", and reciprocal fear of

the latter of being forced out of their traditional worlds to be overwhelmed by a cultural and population deluge from the mainstream, persisted. Every deviation from national norms in the region came to be attributed to machinations by unseen "foreign hands"; likewise, every nationalising project tended to be seen on the other side as insidious cultural aggression.

Inclusion by accommodation

But as India gained confidence and shed its insecurities of further balkanisation after its traumatic Partition experience, the outlook towards national identity and nationalism underwent moderations, inclining towards a constitutional definition of these understandings rather than it being cultural. National integration also came to be more about the mainstream broadening to accommodate all other streams within the national territory, rather than requiring the latter to leave their streams to join the mainstream.

The changes the North Eastern Council (NEC) went through can be read as a demonstration of this. This institution was founded in 1971 as an advisory body. Initially, its members were Governors of the Northeast States, thereby remaining as the ears and eyes of the Centre. Its original pledge too made security the primary concern. In 2002, the act that brought NEC to life was amended. From an advisory role, it became an infrastructure planning body for the region. Sikkim was also brought into its fold. Significantly, its executive structure expanded to include Chief Ministers of these States, linking it to the aspirations of local electorates.

Likewise, DoNER was created in the Union Government in 2001, and in 2004 it was upgraded to a full-fledged Ministry. The paranoid suspicion of a "foreign hand" too has all but disappeared, and, earlier, in 1991, India's Look East Policy was born with the stated objective of linking the Northeast with the vibrant economies of South

East Asia. In 2010, a protected area regime that had restricted visits to Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram by foreigners was relaxed. Although unsuccessful, there was even a judicial commission constituted in 2004 to recommend a way to repeal or else "humanise" AFSPA. The new optimism was palpable. Indeed, it would not be unreasonable to presume this was the "moral imagination" of John Paul Lederach at work, resulting in the visible ebbing of many insurgencies in the region today.

Now, an unsettling question

But the idea of India is transforming again under the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in New Delhi, indicating a return to a rigid understanding by the Indian mainstream. The unsettling question is would this mean a return to the mainstream versus sub-stream friction? The BJP, today has a strong presence in the Northeast. The party is in power in Assam, Tripura, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh but what needs to be remembered is that electoral politics in the region has been less about ideology and more about aligning with the party in power at the Centre. Grass-root sentiments do not always reflect in this, and are supported by two examples. Assam vehemently opposed the BJP-sponsored Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), yet the electorate returned the BJP to power. In Manipur, AFSPA remains an emotive issue, yet the BJP which did not even mention AFSPA in its election manifesto was voted back. This disconnect between the grass-roots and electoral politics being what it is, there is no guarantee that the BJP's party ideology has harnessed or sublimated the undercurrents of gut politics in the region. If unmindful, the potential for trouble in the CAA, AFSPA or other counter-cultures the region is known for, can flare up again regardless of the party in power.

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The temples that Jawaharlal Nehru built

Nehru's luminous legacy is deeply laid in India's growth story since Independence



C. SARAT CHANDRAN

As India celebrates 75 years of Independence, Indians will see this as an occasion to recall Jawaharlal Nehru's immortal speech, "A Tryst with Destiny", delivered on the night of August 14, 1947, and its haunting poetic expressions – "At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India awakes to life and freedom." For most, that speech and the man who spoke those words symbolised the spirit of a new nation just born. For them, some of the recent attempts to undermine Nehru's place in history may seem like a minor distraction.

Vision of a modern nation

Nehru's luminous legacy is deeply laid in India's growth story since Independence. In May this year, when the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) launched India's largest public issue and collected ₹21,000 crore from the market, the nation was aware that this was a Nehruvian institution established in the early years of independent India. Equally, when we look at the celebrated names of global CEOs and corporate leaders, we can recognise many of them as Nehru's 'children', as they were educated at the iconic Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and

Indian Institutes of Management (IIM).

In 1947, Nehru, as Prime Minister, inherited an India that was politically shattered, socially divided and emotionally devastated. Yet, with restraint and self-confidence, he steered the country through those turbulent times and laid out the vision of a modern, progressive nation that quietly earned the respect of the global community.

Ideas and institutions

Nehru's vision of India was anchored in a set of ideas such as democracy, secularism, inclusive economic growth, free press and non-alignment in international affairs and also in institutions that would lay the foundation for India's future growth. These institutions touched every kind of economic activity, ranging from agriculture to aviation and space research. An agnostic Nehru described them as "the temples of modern India". There were around 75 of these institutions including the Bhakra-Nangal dam, Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, the LIC, the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation, Indian Oil Corporation, the National Library of India and the National Institute of Design. Nehru saw them occupying the commanding heights of a stable, self-sustaining economy with people's welfare as their central mission. Nehru's inclusive vision ensured that these institutions spanned the entire social spectrum. When the IITs were



THE HINDU PHOTO ARCHIVES/PIB DEFENCE WING

planned, Nehru also established a network of Kendriya Vidyalayas. Along with large projects in steel and petroleum, Nehru saw the importance of promoting small and cottage industries and set up the Khadi and Village Industries Commission. When Bhilai, Durgapur and Rourkela were taking shape as functional townships, the Prime Minister also felt the need for a well-designed, modern city and thus was born Chandigarh. Chandigarh was perhaps India's first 'smart city' when that term was not yet fashionable.

Two of these institutions deserve special mention: the Election Commission of India and the Planning Commission. They relate to the fundamentals of the Nehruvian vision: the triumph of democracy along with development. Nehru's institutions flourished under the management of a group of accomplished persons who shared his idealism and his vision of a modern India. These were people of stature and high learning. They were technocrats, scientists and

professionals with impressive records of past achievements. They included Homi Bhabha, Vikram Sarabhai, P.C. Mahalanobis, Verghese Kurien, S.S. Bhatnagar, S. Bhagavantam and C.D. Deshmukh. Each of them steered the fortunes of the project under them with high professional standards, laying down benchmarks for the performance of the project and identifying second layers of leadership for the project's future growth. Many of these institutions, over the years, rose to global standards. Indian Oil became the first Indian company to be listed in the Fortune 100, in 2014. Amul emerged as the country's best known consumer brand and India became the largest milk-producer in the world.

Shifts in the economy

Prime Minister Nehru's 17-year rule set the stage for momentum in the Indian economy and his management model became a template for many succeeding Prime Ministers. This was a period which saw seismic shifts in the Indian economy. The Green Revolution which transformed India from a basket case to a grain-exporting nation, the telephone revolution that changed the telephone from being a symbol of elite lifestyle to mass ownership, and the digital revolution which turned India into a global technology hub all played out one after another. And then came the momentous reforms in 1991 under Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao which transformed the economy into an open, liberal

and largely market-driven regime.

The success of these missions owed a great deal to the Nehruvian model, with several scientists and technocrats playing a central role in these accomplishments, such as M.S. Swaminathan, Sam Pitroda, Dr. Manmohan Singh and Nandan Nilekani. Collectively, these shifts have lifted over 300 million Indians above the poverty line and heralded the arrival of a modern, diversified globally connected economy with a significant digital component.

Now, well into the third decade of the 21st century, India is widely recognised as the fastest-growing large economy of the world. It is an incredible transformation in scale and depth to unfold in 75 years. It all began with one man's dream and the many shrines of growth and development that he built. Their enduring impact reaffirms Nehru's place in history. Among the political leaders of the newly independent nations of the 20th century, Nehru stands out as a unique personality who combined intellectual stature with mass popularity. The Economist in a widely-read obituary titled "World Without Nehru", on May 30, 1964, observed, "Throughout the long years of his premiership, he retained his magical grip on the great masses of people." That equation, which an Indian Prime Minister had with his people, remains unequalled and untested till now.

C. Sarat Chandran is Senior Fellow, London School of Economics

EXPLAINER

The controversial visit of a Chinese vessel to Hambantota

What kind of ship is the Yuan Wang 5? Why is its presence in the Indian Ocean a cause of concern for India?

MEERA SRINIVASAN

The story so far: On August 13, Sri Lanka approved the arrival of a Chinese satellite-tracking vessel to its southern Chinese-funded Hambantota port. It was the second approval from the island nation's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, after it first cleared the visit on July 12. In the weeks in between, India raised concerns over the ship's visit with President Ranil Wickremesinghe, and officially commented on it, while Indian media splashed headlines of a "Chinese spy ship" hovering in the Indian Ocean. Caught in a delicate diplomatic and geopolitical spot, Colombo gave its nod after "extensive consultations" with "all parties".

What is the vessel?

Yuan Wang 5 was described by the Sri Lankan government as a "scientific research ship". The BRISL (Belt & Road Initiative Sri Lanka), a Colombo-based organisation studying China's ambitious connectivity project, was the first to draw attention to the visit in a Twitter post late July. It said that the Yuan Wang 5 will conduct "satellite control and research tracking in the northwestern part of the

Indian Ocean Region" through August and September. Vessels of the Yuan Wang class are said to be used for tracking and supporting satellite as well as intercontinental ballistic missiles by the People's Liberation Army Strategic Support Force.

How have different countries reacted?

India has expressed its concern over the Chinese vessel visit. The spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs commented twice on the issue.

Addressing the weekly media conference in New Delhi, the official initially stated that India "carefully monitors any development having a bearing on its security and economic interests" and later said that they were "rejecting insinuations" that Sri Lanka was "pressured". After India raised the matter with President Ranil Wickremesinghe, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar took it up with his Sri Lankan counterpart Ali Sabry on the side-lines of the recent ASEAN summit in Cambodia. In a similar bilateral meeting in Phnom Penh, U. S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken too raised the issue with Mr. Sabry, *The Hindu* reliably learned from



The Yuan Wang 5 vessel.

official sources in Colombo.

At the same forum, Mr. Sabry reportedly discussed the matter with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, sources said. An official statement said the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister firmly backed the 'One China Policy' that President Wickremesinghe earlier endorsed. The developments showed that Colombo was caught between the U.S. and India on the one hand, and China on the other. That too at a time when the Sri Lankan government is counting on all their support as the island nation, hit by a devastating economic crisis, embarks on debt restructuring ahead of a promised International

Monetary Fund (IMF) package.

How did China respond?

China reacted strongly after Sri Lanka, following concerns voiced by India, requested China to defer the visit of the vessel "in light of the need for further consultations". Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said, "I have noted relevant reports and would like to stress two points. First, Sri Lanka is a transportation hub in the Indian Ocean. Scientific research vessels from various countries including China have made port calls in Sri Lanka for replenishment. China always exercises freedom of the high seas in accordance with the law and fully respects coastal countries' jurisdiction over scientific research activities in waters under their jurisdiction. Second, Sri Lanka is a sovereign country. It has the right to develop relations with other countries based on its development interests. To have normal cooperation is the independent choice made by our two countries. It serves the shared interests of both sides and does not target any third party." Without directly referring to India, he added that it was "completely unjustified for certain countries to cite

the so-called 'security concerns' to pressure Sri Lanka."

What is Sri Lanka's stand?

Sri Lanka's Foreign Affairs Ministry said: "having considered all material in place, on 13 August 2022 the clearance to the Embassy of the People's Republic of China was conveyed for the deferred arrival of the vessel from 16-22 August 2022." The announcement meant that the controversial vessel visit, earlier scheduled for August 11, was effectively postponed by five days, while its week-long duration remained as was earlier planned.

The developments were "in light of certain concerns raised with the Ministry", it said, without naming India in its statement. Sri Lanka's popular weekend newspaper *Sunday Times* reported that the U.S. and Indian envoys were asked to provide "concrete reasons" for their objections. "Not satisfied with the reasons being sufficient to refuse entry to the Chinese vessel, the Government decided to inform the Chinese embassy in Colombo to inform the ship to continue its journey to Hambantota," a news report published on August 14 said.

THE GIST

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India gifts Dornier aircraft to Sri Lanka

Colombo had requested two of them in 2018; another to arrive within two years

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

India on Monday handed over a Dornier aircraft to Sri Lanka in the presence of President Ranil Wickremesinghe, reaffirming its security ties with the island nation.

Vice-Admiral S.N. Ghormade and High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka, Gopal Baglay, were in attendance at the handover event held on Monday, along with dignitaries of the Government and armed forces of Sri Lanka, including the Defence Secretary, CDS and the Commanders of Sri Lanka Army, Navy and Air Force.

“Security of India and Sri Lanka are enhanced by mutual understanding, mutual trust and cooperation. Gifting of Dornier 228 is India’s latest contribution to this cause,” High Commissioner Baglay said on Monday, a day before the arrival of a Chinese space and satellite tracking vessel that India has



Security boost: Water jets welcoming the Dornier aircraft at the Sri Lankan Air Force base in Katunayake on Monday. ■ AFP

voiced concern over. Despite New Delhi conveying its apprehensions at high levels, including to Mr. Wickremesinghe, Colombo has cleared the visit of the Chinese vessel, after requesting its arrival be deferred by five days.

The gifting of the Dornier aircraft to the Sri Lanka Air Force “is of relevance to and a step to meet its requirements for maritime safety and security,” the Indian High Commission said in a tweet, adding: “It is an example of India’s strength, ad-

ding to the strength of its friends and neighbours, including those in Indian Ocean Region and the Bay of Bengal, such as Sri Lanka”.

‘Benefit to people’

The capability of the aircraft to undertake search and rescue operations “exemplifies its direct benefit to the people”, the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement. “The gift to the people of Sri Lanka will equip the country to contribute more towards the security of the Indian

Ocean Region at large,” the Ministry said.

In a solemn wreath laying ceremony at the IPKF Memorial, Vice-Admiral Ghormade paid homage to the brave Indian soldiers who sacrificed their lives to bring lasting peace in Sri Lanka.

Last week, Sri Lanka Air Force announced that the Indian Air force was gifting it a Dornier 228 Maritime Patrol Aircraft, while noting another aircraft would be donated within two years. The Indian gift was in response to a request from the Sri Lankan government in 2018 for two Dornier Reconnaissance Aircraft to enhance the maritime surveillance capabilities of the island nation, the Sri Lanka Air Force said.

Sri Lanka is a member of the ‘Colombo Security Conclave’, that began as a trilateral initiative involving India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, and later included Mauritius, for maritime cooperation in the region.

EXPLAINER

The conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh

What are the various unresolved issues between Armenia and Azerbaijan which has led to consistent ceasefire violations?

ABIGAIL MIRIAM FERNANDEZ

The story so far: The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh has been at the centre of three major wars and multiple clashes for decades. The recent flare-up began on August 3 after Azerbaijan claimed that it had captured the territory in Karabakh in a retaliatory campaign, after an Armenian attack killed one Azerbaijani soldier.

What happened?

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict remains stalemated despite the several ceasefire agreements reached in the past. Both Baku and Yerevan claim absolute historic ownership of the region which is located within the boundaries of Azerbaijan but populated largely by ethnic Armenians.

The major issues between the two countries include delimiting the border between them, the nature of new transportation corridors in the region, the future of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh as well as the transfer of prisoners of war and other detainees.

The presence of Russian peacekeeping forces in the region has also become a matter of concern as their mandate is yet to be defined. The frustration over the peacekeeping forces has intensified due to their inaction in stopping ceasefire violations.

What does the 2020 agreement say?

The nine-point agreement of November 10, 2020 was signed by Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, and Russian President Vladimir Putin. The agreement imposed an immediate ceasefire, a timeline for withdrawal from Azerbaijan's occupied regions, the introduction of Russian peacekeepers, and the need for new transport corridors. However, this failed to initiate a peace agreement because it altered the power balance between the two countries and lacked clarity on several issues resulting in the subsequent ceasefire violations on both sides.

Why are ceasefire agreements not working?

The recurring ceasefire violations have been

triggered due to several unresolved issues. The major issues include delimiting the border between the two countries, the nature of new transportation corridors in the region, and the future of Nagorno-Karabakh and its current ethnic Armenian population.

First, the issue of delineating the shared international border. Following the 2020 agreement, a substantial amount of territory was handed over from Armenian Karabakh to Azerbaijan making the once soft border between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, a hard international border. However, Armenia and Azerbaijan have never agreed upon a boundary between them in the past and the 2020 ceasefire statement did not make it clear on how exactly the border should be drawn out.

Second, the dispute over transport routes. The overland route that goes from Stepanakert (a city within the Nagorno-Karabakh region) to Armenia has become an issue between the two countries. The 2020 agreement states that the parties should build an alternative road within three years, after which the Russian peacekeepers deployed along the current route would relocate to the new one. Presently, there is only one road which is the Lachin corridor, which runs past the outposts through Azerbaijan's mountainous Lachin region to Shusha, which Azerbaijani forces retook in the 2020 war. The construction of the road would allow Azerbaijan to take back control of Lachin city and surrounding areas.

However, Azerbaijan has accused Armenia of stalling operations of laying its several-kilometre section of the new road.

Third, the difference over the status of Nagorno-Karabakh. The ethnically Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, which is also known as the Republic of Artsakh, has expressed frustration over Armenia's willingness to make concessions to Azerbaijan as part of a larger prospective peace settlement. While Armenia supports the aspirations for independence of Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan seeks to preserve its national and territorial integrity.

According to the 2020 agreement, point one claims that the parties to the conflict must "stop in their current positions" while point four states that the Russian peacekeeping forces would be deployed concurrently with the withdrawal of the

Armenian troops. However, the two sides interpret these points differently with Armenia stating that the first point allows them to keep their forces in Karabakh and that they have complied with the fourth point by withdrawing armed forces from the seven Azerbaijani districts around Karabakh. Conversely, Azerbaijan says that Armenian forces should have withdrawn from Karabakh as soon as the Russians were deployed on the ground, arguing that the force is illegal and has urged the Russian peacekeepers to disarm it.

Fourth, the dispute over the exchange of prisoners. According to the eighth point, the two sides were to exchange prisoners of war, hostages and other detained persons, and dead bodies. While there has been a series of prisoner exchanges in the last two years, the Azerbaijan side still has many captives while Armenia has just a few.

What about the negotiations?

Since 2020, the negotiation process has been slow. The diplomatic initiative taken by Armenia and Azerbaijan has not yielded any substantial gains with both sides accusing each other of delaying negotiations. It was only in 2022, two years after the war, that the two leaders expressed their intention to discuss a peace plan for Nagorno-Karabakh. The two leaders met in Brussels during which Azerbaijan voiced its frustration that subsequent diplomacy has moved too slowly, claiming that Armenia was prolonging the negotiations with the aim of waiting for the geopolitical situation to change in their favour. Meanwhile, PM Pashinyan has received domestic criticism that he was preparing to compromise on the status of Nagorno-Karabakh. Thus, the negotiations between the two countries are nowhere close to reaching a peace agreement.

What is Russia's role?

The presence of Russian peacekeeping forces in the region has also become a matter of concern. According to points three and four of the 2020 agreement, the Russian peacekeeping forces are to be deployed for five years making it the first time Russian troops were deployed on the ground in almost thirty years. However, their mandate is yet to be defined, questioning their presence in the region. Additionally, the



frustration over the peacekeeping forces has intensified due to their inaction in stopping ceasefire violations.

Will the ceasefire hold?

While the 2020 agreement has the potential to open opportunities for new transport connections and economic cooperation, the discord between Armenia and Azerbaijan would hinder this process. Further, the agreement has been criticised for being biased. Apart from this, the agreement also fails to address unresolved issues between the two countries. Thus, until these lacunae are filled the recurring ceasefire violations are likely to continue.

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No end in sight: An unexploded rocket in the Nagorno-Karabakh region's main city of Stepanakert during the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the disputed region on October 6, 2020. AFP

China sees surprise rate cut as economic data disappoints

People's Bank of China cuts rates to revive credit demand

REUTERS

BEIJING

China's economy unexpectedly slowed in July, data showed on Monday, with factory and retail activity squeezed by Beijing's zero-COVID policy and a property crisis, while the central bank surprised markets with rate cuts to revive demand.

Industrial output grew 3.8% in July from a year earlier, after expanding 3.9% in June, data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) showed. That compared with a 4.6% increase expected in a Reuters poll.

Retail sales, which only turned positive in June, rose 2.7% from a year earlier, missing analysts' forecast for 5%



growth and slower than the 3.1% seen in June.

The world's second-biggest economy narrowly escaped a contraction in the June quarter.

However, risks to growth abound as many Chinese cities, including manufacturing hubs and popular tourist spots, imposed lockdown measures in July after fresh

outbreaks of the more transmissible Omicron variant.

"All economic data disappointed in July, with the exception being exports," said Nie Wen, Shanghai-based economist at Hwabao Trust. "Loan demand from the real economy remained weak, suggesting cautious outlook for the months ahead."

In order to prop up growth, the central bank on Monday unexpectedly lowered interest rates on key lending facilities for the second time this year.

New yuan loans tumbled by more than expected in July as companies and consumers stayed wary of taking on fresh debt, data showed on Friday.

‘Fundamental duties key to social transformation’

CJI Ramana remembers Pingali

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India (CJI) N.V. Ramana on Monday said fundamental duties in the Constitution are not merely to serve a “pedantic or technical” purpose, they are meant to guide citizens engineer a social transformation.

“Our Constitution is the fundamental document which regulates the relationship between the citizens and the government. While it has granted us inalienable rights, it places upon us certain fundamental duties. The fundamental duties are not merely pedantic or technical. They were incorporated as the key to social transformation,” Chief Justice Ramana said in his Independence Day address at the Supreme Court.

Our framers imagined a nation, where citizens are aware, alert and able to make the right decisions,

the Chief Justice said. Highlighting the spirit of unity in diversity, the CJI said “our system will truly belong to the people when we honor and cherish our diversity”.

Chief Justice Ramana remembered the freedom fighter and Gandhian, Keertiseshulu Sri Pingali Venkayya, who “designed the pride and identity of Independent India, our National Flag”.

The CJI said the apex court has inherited the backlog of nearly a year on the account of pandemic and resultant lockdowns.

“In the last 16 months, we could physically assemble for only 55 days. I wish situation was different and we could be more productive. It is just and natural for people to have high expectations, but regrettably, the forces of nature were against us. I hope in near future, situation will become normal and courts will function to the full potential,” the CJI said.

The shackles of 1861 need to go

Though much has changed, attention needs to be paid to lingering issues in India's police agency



R.K. VIJ

As India is celebrating 75 years of Independence, the police continue to be in the public gaze, most often for antagonistic reasons. Criminal laws and procedures, though modified, and the shadows of India's colonial legacy do not appear to leave the police agency any time soon.

Changes to the IPC

India's parliamentarians rose to the occasion and passed The Probation of Offenders Act, 1958, with an objective more to reform, rather than punish, offenders. Realising the urgent need to check the social evil of dowry, the Dowry Prohibition Act was passed in 1961. More revolutionary changes were made in the Indian Penal Code (IPC) in 1983 and 1986 and by introducing Sections 498A (cruelty by husband and his relatives) and 304B (dowry death) along with certain amendments in the Evidence Act. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, was enacted in 1989.

The definition of rape has been widened and offences related to sexual assault made tougher. Comprehensive laws such as the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, have been enacted. Electronic documents and signatures have been given legal sanctity to facilitate online transactions and check cyber-crime under the Information Technology Act of 2000. The National Investigation Agency was constituted in 2008 (after the deadly 26/11 terror attacks in Mumbai) to investigate and prosecute offences affecting national security. All these statutes have added a progressive and more humane chapter to the history of our criminal justice system.

The constitutional courts have also made far-reaching contributions. By reading down Section 377 of the IPC, the Supreme Court granted relief to the LGBTQ+ community. Custodial torture and sexual harassment of women have been held to be violations of fundamental rights. The ju-



SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

risprudence of providing compensation to victims of crime has evolved over time. The right to privacy has been recognised as a fundamental right. The demon of 'sedition' (Section 124A), which was brought into the IPC in 1870 to suppress the national movement, has recently been caged by the Supreme Court so that its constitutionality can be decided and its alleged misuse be curbed.

Attempts have been made to blend some elements of the inquisitorial system into the (prevalent) adversarial system by making judicial inquiry into custodial death and custodial rape mandatory and dig out the truth to punish the guilty. However, the police continue to be haunted by allegations of being a brute force. The trust deficit does not appear to have bridged despite the power to arrest having been curtailed, the use of handcuffs restrained, the presence of a lawyer permitted during interrogation, CCTV cameras installed in the police stations, and human rights bodies allowed to keep a constant eye. Lawmakers are still reluctant and the judiciary apprehensive about making voluntary confessions before a police officer admissible.

Many committees have been constituted and recommendations made to reform the criminal justice system in general and the police in particular, but to no avail. The latest in focus is the Supreme Court order in *Prakash Singh v. Union of India* (2006). The poor and tardy compliance with the directives has been explained in the book, *The Struggle for Police Reforms in India: Ruler's Police to People's Police*. This public interest litigation was filed with an objective of transforming 'a ruler's police into a people's police'. The writer, Prakash Singh, has said that even the directive of separating investigation from law and order, which only required a

sanction of a few more posts, was not implemented by States and Union Territories in the true spirit. Despite 'Police' being a State subject, no State government has given due attention to police reforms so far. Though the Police Act of 1861 was made applicable to all provinces after the 1902-03 Commission's recommendations, no State or UT has adopted the Model Police Act drafted by Soli J. Sorabjee.

Though there was no connection between the magistrates and the police in the system established in England from 1829 onwards, the mutiny made this arrangement possible for the purpose of utilising the police primarily for the maintenance of British rule in India. All such provisions, despite having outlived their purpose long ago, still continue to exist not only in the States' Police Acts but also in the criminal codes. It is no wonder then that the District Superintendent of Police is unable to transfer his Station House Officers without the approval of the District Magistrate in U.P.; the performance appraisal report of a Superintendent of Police is still written by the District Magistrate in some States (including Chhattisgarh) despite the Supreme Court's directions to the contrary; and the introduction of the police commissionerate system in metropolitan areas (as per the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code) is always resisted tooth and nail.

Years of significance

The year 1861 was a turning point for the police in India. Though the process of drafting the IPC had begun much earlier in 1834, the revolt of 1857 gave a fillip to the drafting of the Police Act and laid the foundation for an organised police force, albeit a weak one. The main objective then was to use the police as a weapon of

repression and strengthen the hold the British had over India. The prevention (and detection) of crime was never their priority. Most of the constabulary was illiterate and not paid even a 'living wage'. It was therefore not surprising that Andrew H.L. Fraser, who headed the Police Commission (1902-03), concluded that the "police force is far from efficient; it is defective in training and organisation ... it is generally regarded as corrupt and oppressive; and it has utterly failed to secure the confidence and cordial co-operation of people".

Though the Commission felt the urgent need of introducing radical reforms, the recommendations made were not revolutionary in character. Except for the introduction of the post of direct sub-inspectors (for police stations) and the rank of deputy superintendent of police for natives, not much was accepted and implemented by the Secretary of State on account of financial constraints. The Commission's recommendation of providing quarters to sub-inspectors and officers of lower rank in each province was accepted. The status of inspectors was on a par with Tehsildars. The Commission was against the application of statistical tests to judge the work of police officers. Most importantly, its report was discussed in detail, agreed upon major issues in principle, and accepted partially due to economic factors.

Since much water has flown under the bridge since 1861, serious attention is needed to address impending issues. While some police reforms may require additional funding, much of the trust deficit can be bridged by improving soft skills and ensuring investigation in an impartial manner. Unwanted and mechanical arrests need to be stopped. More offences can be made bailable and more brought under the ambit of compounding to lighten the burden on jails. Most of it can be achieved through proper training. The use of technology and forensic techniques must be encouraged to enhance the quality of evidence. Specialised wings need to be established to deal with newer types of crime. The police should be accountable only for their constitutional goal of establishing the rule of law. The shackles of 1861 must go.

R.K. Vij is a former Special Director General of Police of Chhattisgarh. Views are personal

Panel moots district-level survey to bring more children into adoption ambit

Experts stress on the need to look beyond custodial requirements of children and focus on rights, bringing more children in need into government's safety net

JAGRITI CHANDRA
NEW DELHI

In a country with millions of orphans, there are only 2,430 children available for adoption while the number of parents desiring to bring home a child is growing rapidly. To address this paradox, a Parliamentary panel has recommended district-level surveys to proactively identify orphaned and abandoned children.

A report recently tabled on "Review of Guardianship and Adoption Laws" in Parliament by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances and Law and Justice has said, "it is important to get a true picture of number of children who are orphaned/abandoned through a district-level survey and the da-

ta needs to be updated on a regular basis."

It has suggested that a monthly meeting chaired by the District Magistrate should be held in every district to "ensure that orphan and abandoned children found begging in streets are produced before the Child Welfare Committee and are made available for adoption at the earliest."

According to the report, there were 27,939 prospective parents registered with the Child Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) as on December 2021, up from nearly 18,000 in 2017. In comparison, though there were a total 6,996 orphaned, abandoned and surrendered children residing in childcare institutions considered adoptable, only



Many in need: There were 27,939 prospective parents registered with the Child Adoption Resource Authority as on December 2021. • AFP

2,430 were declared "legally free" for adoption by Child Welfare Committees. The waiting time for adoption too has increased to three years from one year in the past five years. The total number of children adopted

in 2021-2022 was only 3,175.

Experts say the reason there are only 2,430 children found to be legally free for adoption in a country with an estimated 3.1 crore orphans (defined in the report as loss of either or both

parent) according to the 2020 Orphan Report of IHH Humanitarian and Social Research Center (INSAMER) is because of the failure to bring more children in need of care into the government's safety net. And that

is why they welcome the suggestion for a district-level survey, but call for a need to exercise caution.

Call for caution

"The point should not be to track more children and put them into adoption, but to not leave children out of the safety net...otherwise poor people will have their children snatched away. We have to provide a family for a child, not vice versa," says child rights and adoption expert Nilima Mehta.

There are 6,525 child care institutions registered under the Juvenile Justice Act as on September 30, 2021, according to the government's reply in the Lok Sabha. Why then are there only 6,996 identified as adoptable?

A mapping exercise of childcare institutions by the Women and Child Development Ministry in its report in 2018 found that of the total 3.7 lakh children in need of care and protection in these homes, the largest category of children were

SPECIAL

those who had a single parent at 32% or 1.2 lakh children, while those without any parent were just 11% or 41,730 out of the total.

"Children in CCIs are there for various reasons such as for shelter or protection or care or for whatever reason their family is not able to look after them. These are used by vulnerable families more as hostels or spaces where there is ac-

cess to education, food, shelter and clothing," says Dr. Mehta.

Dr. Mehta says in order to link children to nurturing families there is a need for a paradigm shift that looks beyond "custodial" needs such as food and shelter and focuses on their rights.

"Many children are under parental care, but not optimal care. There are parents abusing their own children or neglecting them. We must have a zero tolerance towards abuse, violence, exploitation and neglect of children and then have an adequate safety net so that they get the help they need. The failure to do so also leads to malpractices, which is what the centralisation of adoptions in 2015 aimed to curb," she says.

'States signal intent to raise capex spend'

NIPFP analysis of budgets shows 18 major States looking to rein in revenue deficits this fiscal year

VIKAS DHOOT
NEW DELHI

States aim to ramp up capital spending and rein in revenue deficits this year as they chart a return to fiscal consolidation following the pandemic shock, and have even factored in the loss of GST Compensation from the Centre, an analysis of States' 2022-23 budgets shows.

A study of 18 major States' budgets by the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP) shows that although they have factored in slower growth this year, the States aim to reduce revenue spending by 0.13% of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) and increase capex by 0.24% of GSDP.

As per their budget estimates, the States aim to increase revenue spending by



Wider stimulus: States aim to increase capital spending by an aggregate ₹1.21 lakh crore in 2022-23. ■ AFP

an aggregate ₹3.5 lakh crore and capital expenditure by ₹1.21 lakh crore in 2022-23. If successful, this would help increase the share of States' capital spending marginally from the 2-2.5% of GSDP levels that it has been hovering around for long, according

to the study's author.

"States have resumed following the path of fiscal consolidation post COVID-19 and success in achieving revenue as well as expenditure targets set in the budget of 2022-23 could help them control deficits and debts,"

NIPFP associate professor Sacchidananda Mukherjee concluded on the basis of the 18 States' budget math.

The States studied are Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Haryana, Odisha, Punjab, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Jharkhand and Rajasthan.

On a combined basis, these States have pegged GSDP growth at current market prices at 12.1%, compared with 14% in 2021-22 as per revised estimates and 3.6% in the COVID-hit 2020-21.

"In budget estimates of 2022-23, except Goa, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, all States project a fall in growth rate of GSDP," the paper's author noted, adding that States had

adopted a cautious approach in projecting their budget estimates for 2022-23.

'Signs of improvement'

While their consolidated fiscal deficit in 2022-23 is projected at 3.29% of GSDP, in line with the Finance Commission's prescribed glide path of 3.3%, they aim to cut the share of revenue deficit sharply from 50.3% in 2020-21, to 16%. Revenue deficit accounted for 32.4% of fiscal deficit in 2021-22.

State finances showed signs of improvement in 2021-22 after two consecutive years of fiscal stress, aided by improved revenue mobilisation which helped States increase spending as well as reduce revenue and fiscal deficits in 2021-22, the NIPFP study noted.

General Studies Paper I

A	History of Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of art forms, literature and architecture from ancient to modern times;
B	Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present-significant events, personalities, issues;
C	Freedom struggle-its various stages and important contributors / contributions from different parts of the country;
D	Post-independence consolidation and reorganization within the country;
E	History of the world will include events from 18 th century such as industrial revolution, world wars, re-drawing of national boundaries, colonization, decolonization,
F	Political philosophies like communism, capitalism, socialism etc.-their forms and effect on the society
G	Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India;
H	Effects of globalization on Indian society;
I	Role of women and women's organization;
J	Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism
K	Salient features of world's physical geography;
L	Geographical features and their location- changes in critical geographical features (including water bodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes;
M	Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclone etc.
N	Distribution of key natural resources across the world (including South Asia and the Indian subcontinent);
O	Factors responsible for the location of primary, secondary, and tertiary sector industries in various parts of the world (including India);
P	Population and associated issues;
Q	Urbanization, their problems and their remedies

General Studies Paper II

A	India and its neighbourhood- relations;
B	Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate;
C	Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests;
D	Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.
E	Indian Constitution, historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure;
F	Comparison of the Indian Constitutional scheme with other countries;
G	Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein; Inclusive growth and issues arising from it;
H	Parliament and State Legislatures - structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these;
I	Structure, organization and functioning of the executive and the judiciary, Ministries and Departments;

J	Separation of powers between various organs dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions;
K	Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional bodies;
L	Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies;
M	Mechanisms, laws, institutions and bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections;
N	Salient features of the Representation of People's Act;
O	Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance- applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential;
P	Citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures;
Q	Issues relating to poverty and hunger,
R	Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States, Performance of these schemes;
S	Issues relating to development and management of social sector / services relating to education and human resources;
T	Issues relating to development and management of social sector / services relating to health
General Studies Paper III	
A	Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment;
B	Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth;
C	Inclusive growth and issues arising from it;
D	Infrastructure Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc. Government budgeting;
E	Land reforms in India
F	Major crops, cropping patterns in various parts of the country, different types of irrigation and irrigation systems;
G	Storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints;
H	e-technology in the aid of farmers; Technology Missions; Economics of Animal-Rearing.
I	Issues of buffer stocks and food security, Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping;
J	Food processing and related industries in India – scope and significance, location, upstream and downstream requirements, supply chain management;
K	Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices
L	Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology;
M	Indigenization of technology and developing new technology;
N	Developments and their applications and effects in everyday life;
O	Issues relating to intellectual property rights
P	Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment
Q	Disaster and disaster management
R	Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security;
S	Money-laundering and its prevention;

T	Various forces and their mandate;
U	Security challenges and their management in border areas;
V	Linkages of organized crime with terrorism;
W	Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security;
X	Linkages between development and spread of extremism.
General Studies Paper IV	
A	Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of Ethics in human actions;
B	Dimensions of ethics;
C	Ethics in private and public relationships. Human Values - lessons from the lives and teachings of great leaders, reformers and administrators;
D	Role of family, society and educational institutions in inculcating values.
E	Attitude: Content, structure, function; its influence and relation with thought and behaviour;
F	Moral and political attitudes;
G	Social influence and persuasion.
H	Aptitude and foundational values for Civil Service , integrity, impartiality and non-partisanship, objectivity, dedication to public service, empathy, tolerance and compassion towards the weaker sections.
I	Emotional intelligence-concepts, and their utilities and application in administration and governance.
J	Contributions of moral thinkers and philosophers from India and world.
K	Public/Civil service values and Ethics in Public administration: Status and problems;
L	Ethical concerns and dilemmas in government and private institutions;
M	Laws, rules, regulations and conscience as
N	sources of ethical guidance;
O	Accountability and ethical governance; strengthening of ethical and moral values in governance; ethical issues in international relations and funding;
P	Corporate governance.
Q	Probity in Governance: Concept of public service;
R	Philosophical basis of governance and probity;
S	Information sharing and transparency in government, Right to Information, Codes of Ethics, Codes of Conduct, Citizen's Charters, Work culture, Quality of service delivery, Utilization of public funds, challenges of corruption.
T	Case Studies on above issues.