

VEDHIK
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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.

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India needs a national vision

Only then will there be coherence in multi-sectoral and multi-ministerial policymaking and execution



MANMOHAN BAHADUR

“All the world knows, gentlemen, that we are building a new navy... Well, when we get our navy, what are we going to do with it,” asked Alfred T. Mahan, the great Naval strategist, in 1892 at the U.S. Naval War College. This is a question we can ask in India where piecemeal announcements are made in various sectors without a stated national vision. There is no overarching official document to guide policy and decision-making.

Lessons from China

What do other nations do? In 2015, China released a ‘Made in China 2025’ document that envisaged a 10-year plan for development of 10 key high-tech industries, the larger aim being to reduce dependence on foreign technology. The target is to be 70% self-sufficient by 2025 and to achieve a dominant position globally by 2049, the centenary of the People’s Republic of China. China’s 2019 defence white paper stated that by 2035, the armed forces would complete the “modernisation of national defence and the military” and by 2049, “fully transform the peoples armed forces into world-class forces.” The fifth plenum of the Chinese Communist Party re-emphasised China’s goal of becoming a modern socialist society by 2049.

Western nations, too, periodically release vision documents – defence reviews, security strategies et al. Shell-shocked by the advances made by the USSR in space exploration in the 1950s and early 1960s, U.S. President John F. Kennedy enunciated in May 1961 the American vision to put a man on the moon by the end of the decade. Scientists were given a 10-year time frame, were supported financially and they met the national goal. In August 2018, India announced its aim of sending astronauts into space by 2022. Where are we? India carried out only two space launches in 2021 (of which one failed) while China set a world record of 47.

India must learn from China. While unleashing his path-breaking economic reforms in the 1980s, Deng Xiaoping asked his countrymen to “hide your capability and bide your time.” With single-minded conviction and a national vision of regaining China’s lost glory, all policies and actions were focused towards first augmenting national power by accretion in economic capability. This central direction, and monitoring, is visible even now as Beijing goes about its

Made in China 2025 plan, a long-term space exploration programme, and a military technology enhancement vision.

India seems to announce a programme first and then go overboard with it. And even as the Aatmanirbhar campaign hogs the headlines, it would only be nationalistic to ask whether everything needs to be 100% Indian. Is it even possible in this era of niche technologies being protected by nations, which makes international cooperation the way out? For sure, a number of projects are indeed being developed indigenously. For instance, advancements in the UAV and drone industry, in the private sector, are truly riveting; and radars and missiles are achievements of the Defence Research and Development Organisation. But while there are success stories, it is dangerous for the environment to be pushed into a make-believe world of faux grandeur and equally hazardous that a feeling of being powerful allowed to creep in. Being powerful is having the ability to create and sustain an outcome. This requires depth in a nation’s capacity to not only be self-sufficient in focal spheres necessary for daily subsistence but to buttress steps undertaken to project national power to safeguard national interests. We announced that India was the world’s vaccine capital, but when it came to delivery, New Delhi reneged on its promise to supply COVID-19 vaccines; our ‘power’ became suspect in the eyes of our friends.

Three-step process

If we continue in an unplanned manner, we are doomed to doing *jugaad*. The very fact that every emergency, *without exception* (Kargil, Mumbai 26/11, Doklam, Uri, Pulwama), has resulted in the despatch of high-powered teams to make emergency purchases of arms and ammunition shows that the lack of a national vision is costing us dearly; no wonder we get fleeced in such transactions. So, the need of the hour is to formulate an all-encompassing document to enable coherence in multi-sectoral and multi-ministerial policymaking and execution. Clarity will emerge only when the national vision document is drafted and put through a three-step process. First, adequate time should be given to experts to draft it. Second, the ‘vision’ should be put through an economic and technological analysis grinder to ensure that it is a realistic national dream. Third, the plan should be implemented by a body of experts that has the confidence of the leadership on both sides of the political aisle; a lack of political continuum would be a non-starter for achieving the grand national vision.

Air Vice Marshal Manmohan Bahadur is former Addl DG, Centre for Air Power Studies; views are personal

Pakistan sends India a plea by Hindu body for air pilgrimage

Officials in Delhi, Islamabad cautious, say government clearances may take time

SUHASINI HAIDAR
JAGRITI CHANDRA
NEW DELHI

Despite a complete standstill in trade and travel between India and Pakistan, a new proposal by the Pakistan Hindu Council to allow Hindu, Muslim and Sikh pilgrims to travel by air has been forwarded by the government in Islamabad to authorities in New Delhi.

According to sources, the proposal was sent to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) by the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi on behalf of the Pakistan Hindu Council (PHC) chief patron, Ramesh Vankwani, asking that two chartered flights of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) carrying pilgrims be allowed to fly from Lahore and Karachi to destinations in India this Saturday.

However, the sources struck a cautious note, saying that the proposal, which was only received on Monday, had still to receive many clearances in New Delhi.

The MEA did not respond to enquiries about whether permissions were likely within the next few days, or at all. A senior official of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) also said “no request has been received from the airline at present”.

Officials also pointed to



Faith tourism: A file photo of devotees from Pakistan at the shrine of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti in Ajmer. ■PTI

the fact that Pakistan denied overflight permission to Srinagar-Sharjah flights that began last November, and India refused to allow PIA flights to take Indian pilgrims to Pakistan in December, to stress that the proposal would need a political push on both sides.

Only land route now

If clearances are received, this would be the first PIA flight to travel to India since operations were suspended in 2019, and the first ever such flight carrying pilgrims from either side since 1947. At present, groups of Indian and Pakistani pilgrims who still visit each other's countries under a 1974 protocol exchange agreement, travel by road over the Wagah-Atari border.

In all, nearly 170 pilgrims,

mostly Muslim, and 20 Hindu pilgrims would be facilitated by the PHC, that signed an MoU with PIA in December 2021 to organise a number of “faith tourism initiatives”. Among the early initiatives, the council said it had facilitated two groups of Hindu pilgrims from the U.K., the UAE, Spain and other countries in the past few weeks, who were flown to Peshawar via PIA charters to visit the Shri Paramhans Maharaj Mandir in the remote Khyber Pakhtunkhwa district of Teri. The Indian pilgrims crossed over at Wagah by foot and then flew to Peshawar from Lahore.

“I am very hopeful we can conduct this reciprocal visit by air for Pakistanis wishing to travel to the Ajmer Sharif, Nizamuddin Auliya Dargah and other shrines, and take

the first such flight myself,” Mr. Vankwani told *The Hindu* in a telephone interview, saying that he had received many enquiries from pilgrims eager to take the chartered flights.

Four-day tour

According to the programme drawn up, the pilgrims would take a tour to India from January 29 to February 1, including visits to Jaipur, Ajmer, Delhi, Agra and Haridwar.

Mr. Vankwani, who is also a legislator from the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf party, said he had discussed with Pakistani officials the possibility of allowing Air India flights from India. If permitted by both sides, these flights would carry Indian Hindu pilgrims to Peshawar for the Paramhans Mandir and to Karachi for the Hinglaj Mata Mandir.

The erstwhile “Indian Airlines” last flew to Pakistan in March 2008.

“Someone needs to break the deadlock [between India and Pakistan],” Mr. Vankwani said. “Looking at how other such conflicts in the world were resolved, we hope to make a start with faith tourism, and go on to more tourism, and then even trade and [regular] travel.”

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China sends 52 aircraft towards Taiwan zone

Taipei scrambles jets, issues warnings

ANANTH KRISHNAN
HONG KONG

China's Air Force sent 52 aircraft towards Taiwan on Sunday and Monday in its latest show of force aimed at the island, prompting jets to be scrambled in response.

Taiwan's Defence Ministry said 39 PLA aircraft had entered Taiwan's air defence identification zone (ADIZ) on Sunday, while 13 more aircraft did so on Monday. The first group included 34 J-16 fighters jets, four electronic warfare planes and one H-6 bomber, while on Monday there were 10 J-16s, two H-6 bombers and one Y-8 anti-submarine aircraft.

The Ministry said Taiwan had scrambled jets and issued radio warnings in response.

China has in the past sent aircraft into Taiwan's ADIZ – but short of entering Taiwan's airspace – as a show of force or signalling often coinciding with political developments or military exercises.

October last year saw an unprecedented rise in aerial incursions into the ADIZ, and after a record 56 aircraft flew into the ADIZ on a single day last year, Taiwan's Defence Minister was prompted to describe the cross-strait situation as the most strained he had seen in 40 years.

U.S.-Japan drills

Reports in the Chinese media suggested the latest ae-



AJ-16 fighter jet prepares for takeoff at a training base in Ningbo. • AP

rial intrusions into the ADIZ may have been timed to coincide with recently concluded U.S.-Japan drills. Last year, the intrusions coincided with China's National Day on October 1 and ahead of the "double ten" National Day celebrated in Taiwan on October 10.

China sees Taiwan as its province, although both have been ruled separately since the end of the Chinese civil war in 1949. Ties have plummeted and Beijing has stepped up pressure, including by weaning away the few remaining countries that maintain formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan, after the election of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and Tsai Ing-wen in 2016. Ms. Tsai was re-elected as President for a second term after a landslide win in 2020.

Beijing has accused the DPP of pursuing "independence", while Ms. Tsai has said Taiwan only wishes to maintain the current status quo and would "prevent the status quo of being unilaterally altered" by Beijing.

Pakistan sends plea by Hindu body for flights

Trade between India and Pakistan has been suspended since August 2019, after the Pakistani government took a number of retaliatory actions to protest New Delhi's amendment of Article 370 and other measures in Jammu and Kashmir.

Even an Indian request to send 500,000 MT of wheat as humanitarian aid to Afghanistan via the Wagah border has been awaiting Pakistani clearances for several months, although reports suggest this could come through within the next week.

The religious pilgrimage exchanges, which now also include the opening of the Kartarpur corridor for Sikh pilgrims, are among the few

India-Pakistan confidence-building measures (CBMs) that continue to exist, with hundreds of visas issued by both sides each year for groups of Hindu, Sikh and Muslim pilgrims.

The other CBMs that are still maintained include an agreement to exchange lists of prisoners held by both sides of each other's citizens, and lists of nuclear installations that are handed over on New Year's day every year.

However, the two countries have no direct travel or trade relations, and their missions in Delhi and Islamabad, which have been significantly downsized, do not have High Commissioners at present.

Amid Ukraine crisis, NATO sends planes, ships to eastern Europe

U.S., Britain and Australia order diplomats' families to leave Kiev

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BRUSSELS

NATO allies have put forces on standby and sent ships and fighter jets to bolster Europe's eastern defences as tensions soar over Russia's military buildup around Ukraine, the alliance said Monday.

Tensions have soared over Russia's deployment of some 1,00,000 troops and heavy armour at its neighbour's borders, despite the Kremlin's insistence it is not planning a new incursion.

The U.S., Britain and Australia ordered diplomats' families to leave Kiev, while France told its citizens to avoid non-essential travel to Ukraine.

But both Kiev and the European Union's foreign poli-



New measures: NATO allies have put forces on standby and are reinforcing eastern Europe with more ships and jets. ■ AFP

cy chief said any withdrawal of diplomatic personnel appeared premature, amid doubts over how imminent any attack could be.

Top U.S. diplomat Antony Blinken was to dial in to a meeting of EU counterparts in Brussels to brief them on his meeting Friday with Rus-

sian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, where the two sides failed to make a breakthrough but agreed to keep talking.

The U.S. is trying to marshal its allies to prepare an unprecedented package of sanctions for Moscow if it sends in more of its forces.

The U.S.-led NATO alliance said its members were placing troops "on standby" and sending ships and jets to bolster eastern Europe's defences in response to the Russian buildup, pointing to recent decisions by Denmark, Spain and the Netherlands to mobilise forces.

'Will defend allies'

"NATO will continue to take all necessary measures to protect and defend all allies," NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said.

The Kremlin accused the alliance of ramping up tensions through "information hysteria" and "concrete actions", adding that the risk of an offensive by Ukrainian troops against pro-Russia separatists was "very high."

EXPLAINER

The after-effects of misplaced comments

What has led to the resignation of Germany's navy chief? Has it caused a rift between Germany and Ukraine?

SAMPATH G.

The story so far: Germany's navy chief Vice Admiral Kay-Achim Schönbach resigned from his post on January 22, after his remarks on Ukraine and Russian President Vladimir Putin at an event in New Delhi triggered a political controversy back home in Germany and a diplomatic incident with Ukraine.

What did he say?

Speaking at an interactive session at the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDS), New Delhi, on January 21, Schönbach, commenting on fears of Russia invading Ukraine, said, "Does Russia really want a small and tiny strip of Ukraine soil to integrate into their country? No, this is nonsense. Putin is probably putting pressure because he can do it and he splits EU opinion. What he really wants is respect." He went on to add, "If I was asked, it is easy to give him [Putin] the respect he really demands and probably also deserves. Russia is an old country, Russia is an important country... We need Russia against

The official position of both Germany and NATO has been that Russia is solely responsible for military escalation at the Ukrainian border.

China." He also said that Crimea (which Russia annexed in 2014) is "gone" and is "not coming back". Essentially, his remarks indicated a softer position on Putin and Ukraine, which is at variance with the official stance of both Germany and NATO (Germany is a part of NATO).

What was the reaction to Schönbach's remarks?

Ukraine was furious. On January 22, Ukraine's Foreign Ministry summoned the German Ambassador in Kiev, Anka Feldhusen, and conveyed "the categorical unacceptability" of the German naval chief's comments. Ukraine's foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba tweeted, "Recent statements by Germany about the impossibility of transferring defence weapons to Ukraine [a reference to Germany's reported blocking of Estonia's bid to send German-made arms to Ukraine]...the futility of returning Crimea...do not correspond to the level of our relations." He further said, "The German partners must stop undermining unity with



such words and actions and encouraging Vladimir Putin to launch a new attack on Ukraine."

Germany moved quickly into damage control mode. Its Ministry of Defence distanced itself from Schönbach's comments, stating that they in "no way correspond to the position of the [German government] in terms of content and choice of words." Subsequently, Schönbach himself backtracked from his comments, describing it a "mistake". In a tweet, he said, "My defence policy remarks during a talk session at a think tank in India reflected my personal opinion in that moment. They in no way reflect the official position of the defence ministry."

What is Germany's official position on Ukraine and Putin?

The official position of both Germany and NATO has been that Russia is solely responsible for military escalation at the Ukrainian border and must immediately dial down its troop count, which is estimated to be around 1,00,000. NATO as well as senior members of the German government have been warning Russia of "severe consequences" if it were to invade Ukraine.

Their official position also holds that Russia should end its occupation of Crimea, which the West sees as part of Ukrainian territory.

Why have Schönbach's comments created such a furor?

Analysts believe that the German Vice Admiral's remarks have evoked strong reactions because – unlike what diplomats are usually allowed to say – they contain an element of unpalatable truth, specifically with regard to an abiding discrepancy between the positions of NATO and Germany.

While the U.S. and NATO tend to see Russia predominantly through a monochromatic lens of geopolitical rivalry, as a regional hegemon threatening their supremacy in Europe, Germany, though a NATO member, also considers Russia as a much needed partner for economic growth.

What's at stake economically for Germany vis-à-vis Russia?

Germany, Europe's economic powerhouse, is in the process of weaning itself off coal as well as nuclear energy. The Nord Stream-2 pipeline – which would double the volume of gas supplied by Russia's Gazprom to

Germany – is a potential game changer when it comes to energy security. At present, the construction of the pipeline is complete but it needs multiple clearances to become operational. If Russia invades Ukraine, Germany would be under tremendous pressure from the U.S. to put Nord Stream-2 in cold storage. Yet, at the same time, Europe is witnessing soaring gas prices, and Germany, which is facing an energy crunch, is wary of annoying Kremlin. These conflicting pressures and the resulting confusion could be one of the reasons for the different voices coming from the German government.

What next?

The German official who made the seemingly conciliatory remarks about Putin is no longer in his job. Germany would hope that this should be enough to pacify its allies, including Ukraine. But the dissonance that Schönbach's remarks point to has not gone away.

Germany's economic self-interest would dictate that it does everything possible to ensure that the West/NATO and Russia meet halfway on the Ukraine situation and avoid an outright invasion of Ukraine.

At the crossroads: Flags of Germany and the European Union wave in the wind at the German embassy in Kiev, Ukraine.

REUTERS

THE GIST

■ Germany's navy chief Vice Admiral Kay-Achim Schönbach resigned from his post on January 22, after his remarks praising Russian President Vladimir Putin at an interactive session at the MP-IDS, New Delhi caused a diplomatic crisis.

■ Ukraine's foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba responded that German partners must stop undermining unity with such words and actions. Germany quickly distanced itself from the comments and stated that there has been no change in their official position on the Ukrainian border build-up.

■ The German Vice Admiral's remarks have evoked strong reactions because they contain an element of truth, specifically with regard to the discrepancy between the positions of NATO and Germany. While the U.S. and NATO tend to see Russia predominantly as a regional hegemon, Germany, though a NATO member, also considers Russia a much needed partner for economic growth.

In conjunction

Individual obligation is meaningful only when rights are guaranteed by the state

The evolution of a democratic society is centred around the expansion of rights – civil, political, economic and cultural, leading to the empowerment of people. Democratic nations respect individual and group rights for moral and instrumental reasons. Duties, both legal and moral, are cherished in order to reinforce those rights. The obligations of the individual to the collective must be understood in that context; rights and duties complement each other, just as responsibility comes with freedom. Prime Minister Narendra Modi sought to suggest a dichotomy between the rights and duties of citizens when he said last week that the country had wasted a lot of time “fighting for rights” and “neglecting one’s duties”. His speech was not the first time that he or other Hindutva protagonists have called for a foregrounding of duties over rights. Service and the sacrifices of nameless and faceless nation-builders have formed the bedrock of the modern Indian Republic, but their sacrifices were indeed for rights, dignity and autonomy. Any notion of rights and duties being adversarial or hierarchical is sophistic. The Indian Constitution enshrines equality and freedom as fundamental rights, along with the right against exploitation, freedom of religion, cultural and educational rights, and the right to constitutional remedies. The deepening of Indian democracy has led to an expansion of rights – education, information, privacy, etc. are now legally guaranteed rights. The state’s fidelity to these rights is tenuous at best. Citizens are generally duty-bound to protect the integrity and the sovereignty of the country, and this is true for India though there is no conscription. Other constitutional duties expected include a duty to promote harmony and brotherhood, and to develop scientific temper, humanism and a spirit of inquiry.

Any shift in state policy emphasis from rights to duties will be absurd and a disservice to many for whom the realisation of even fundamental rights is still a work in progress. An enlightened citizenry is critical to progress and good governance. But duty is not something that the citizens owe to the state. The obligation of individual citizens to the collective pursuit of a nation can be meaningful when their rights are guaranteed by the state. The citizen has a right to use a public road, and a duty to obey traffic rules. The right and the duty are meaningful only in conjunction. The Prime Minister’s comments come against this backdrop – formal and informal restrictions on the rights of citizens are on the rise along with coercive powers of the state. The emphasis on duty along with the de-emphasis of rights also raises the spectre of a descent into pre-Republican norms in social relations. The celebration of India as a traditionally duty-driven society carries with it the inescapable connotation of an exploitative division of labour and norms that are antithetical to constitutionalism. Needless to say, that is not progress.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Rights, duties and the Constitution

It is only after a guarantee of the sum of all promised by the Constitution that citizens can be asked to do their duty

THE GIST

■ As citizens, there exists a wide range of duties owed both to the state and to other individuals. We have a legal duty to pay our taxes, to refrain from committing violence against our fellow-citizens, and to follow other laws that Parliament has enacted. At any given time, we are already following a host of duties, which guide and constrain how we may behave. This is the price that must be paid for living in society.

■ Rights follow a different logic entirely. They rest on the twin principles of anti-dehumanisation and anti-hierarchy. In its essence, it means every human being no matter who they were or what they did had a claim to basic dignity and equality that no state could take away, no matter what the provocation. One did not have to successfully perform any duty, or meet a threshold of worthiness to qualify for rights.

■ One should not conflate duty and rights. Traditions that invoke the language of duty in order to subordinate or efface the individual in the face of the collective (whether state or community) should not be tolerated. It is always critical to remember Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's words in the Constituent Assembly: that the fundamental unit of the Constitution remains the individual.

GAUTAM BHATIA

Addressing a virtual gathering of Brahma Kumaris' year-long programme of events as part of the Government's celebration of 75 years of Independence, Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsa, Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated that the focus on fighting for rights and forgetting of duties in the last 75 years made India 'weak'. He said the next 25 years would be a period for hard work, sacrifice and "tapasya" (penance). In this article dated February 26, 2020, Gautam Bhatia explains how only through the guarantee of fundamental rights can fulfilment of duties be expected from citizens.

At the height of the Emergency, Indira Gandhi's government enacted sweeping changes to the Constitution, through the 42nd Amendment. These changes were intended to entrench the supremacy of the Government, permanently muzzle the courts, and weaken the constitutional system of checks and balances which was designed to avoid concentration and abuse of power. And in the Amendment's Statement of Objects and Reasons, one line stands out: "... it is also proposed to specify the fundamental duties of the citizens and make special provisions for dealing with anti-national activities."

"Fundamental duties" and "anti-national activities" came into the world fused at the hip. And while Indira Gandhi's Emergency regime has long been consigned to the dustbin of history, its legacies endure. "Anti-national" has become a boundlessly manipulable word, that, in the spirit of Humpty Dumpty, can mean whatever those in power want it to mean. "Fundamental duties" have been making a comeback as well: at an International Judicial Conference 2020 this weekend, the Chief Justice of India, S.A. Bobde, drew attention to the Constitution's Fundamental Duties chapter. He then went further, and citing Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*, observed that "real rights are a result of [the] performance of duty."

There is, of course, an intuitive plausibility to the CJF's words. They conjure up the image of the ungrateful and selfish citizen, happy to pluck the fruits of civilisation, but unwilling to do their bit to water the tree. Nonetheless, despite its plausibility, this conflation of rights and duties ought to be resisted.

Web of duties

The first thing to note is that as citizens, there exists a wide range of duties that bind us in everyday life. These duties are owed both to the state, and to other individuals. We have a legal duty to pay our taxes, to refrain from committing violence against our fellow-citizens, and to follow other laws that Parliament has enacted. Breach of these legal duties triggers financial consequences (fines), or even time in jail. At any given time, therefore, we are already following a host of duties, which guide and constrain how we may

behave. This is the price that must be paid for living in society, and it is a price that nobody, at least, in principle, objects to paying.

Our duties and the consequences we bear for failing to keep them therefore exist as a self-contained whole. They follow a simple logic: that peaceful co-existence requires a degree of self-sacrifice, and that if necessary, this must be enforced through the set of sanctions.

The logic of rights

Rights, on the other hand, follow a different logic entirely. This is a logic that is best understood through history. At the time of the framing of the Indian Constitution and its chapter on Fundamental Rights, there were two important concerns animating the Constituent Assembly. The first was that under the colonial regime, Indians had been treated as subjects. Their interests did not count, their voices were unheard, and in some cases – for example, the "Criminal Tribes" – they were treated as less than human. Apart from the long and brutal history of colonialism, the framers also had before them the recent example of the Holocaust, where the dignity of more than six million people had been stripped before their eventual genocide.

The first role of the fundamental rights chapter, therefore, was to stand as a bulwark against dehumanisation. Every human being no matter who they were or what they did had a claim to basic dignity and equality that no state could take away, no matter what the provocation. One did not have to successfully perform any duty, or meet a threshold of worthiness, to qualify as a rights bearer. It was simply what it meant to be human.

Second, the framers were also aware that they were inheriting a deeply stratified and riven society. The colonial regime had not been the only oppressor; the axes of gender, caste and religion had all served to keep masses of individuals in permanent conditions of subordination and degradation. The second role of rights, thus, was to stand against hierarchy. Through guarantees against forced labour, against "untouchability", against discriminatory access to public spaces, and others, fundamental rights were meant to play an equalising and democratising role throughout society, and to protect individuals against the depredations visited on them by their fellow human-beings.

The twin principles of anti-dehumanisation and anti-hierarchy reveal the transformative purpose of the fundamental rights chapter: the recognition that true democracy could not exist without ensuring that at a basic level, the dignity and equality of individuals was protected, both from the state as well as from social majorities. It was only with these guarantees could an individual rise from the status of subject to that of citizen. And, as should be clear by now, it was only after that transformation had been wrought, that the

question of duties could even arise.

This is not to suggest, of course, that duties are unimportant. As indicated above, duties exist in every sphere of society. Moreover, the language of duties can play an important role in a society that continues to be divided and unequal: in such a society, those who possess or benefit from entrenched structural and institutional power (starting with the state, and going downwards) certainly have a "duty" not to use that power to the detriment of those upon whom they wield it. That is precisely what the guarantees against "untouchability", forced labour, and discriminatory access in the Constitution seek to accomplish.

Issue lies in conflation

The problem, however, lies in the conflation of rights and duties. As Samuel Moyn points out in an illuminating article in *The Boston Review*, "the rhetoric of duties has often been deployed euphemistically by those whose true purpose is a return to tradition won by limiting the rights of others". Moyn's target here are traditions that invoke the language of duty (often alongside terms such as "community" or "family") in order to subordinate or efface the individual in the face of the collective (whether state or community). In that context, it is always critical to remember Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's words in the Constituent Assembly (which were also cited by the CJ in his speech): that the fundamental unit of the Constitution remains the individual.

If the position of the individual and the Constitution's commitment to combating hierarchy is kept in mind, then the language of duties can be understood in its proper context. Without that, however, we risk going astray. A good example of this is a Supreme Court judgment from the early 1980s, which upheld the differential treatment of male and female flight attendants on the ground that women had a "duty" to ensure the "good upbringing of children" and to ensure the success of the "family planning program" for the country.

The judgment is a stark reminder that without the moral compass of rights and their place in the transformative Constitutional scheme the language of duties can lead to unpleasant consequences. It can end up entrenching existing power structures by placing the burden of "duties" upon those that are already vulnerable and marginalised. It is for this reason that, at the end of the day, the Constitution, a charter of liberation, is fundamentally about rights. It is only after guarantee to all the full sum of humanity, dignity, equality, and freedom promised by the Constitution, that we can ask of them to do their duty.

Perhaps, then, it is time to update *Hind Swaraj* for the constitutional age: "real duties are the result of the fulfillment of rights".

(Gautam Bhatia is a Delhi-based lawyer)

Marital rape: Centre seeks time in HC

Not possible to respond immediately when there is no imminent threat: S-G

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Centre on Monday told the Delhi High Court that the issue of criminalisation of marital rape involves “family issues” and the dignity of a woman and cannot be looked at from a “microscopic angle”. Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, urged the High Court to allow a “reasonable time” to place the position of the government after consultation with the stakeholders.

“Your lordships are not just deciding the statutory or constitutional validity of a provision. It may not be looked at from that microscopic angle...Here, the dig-



The Delhi High Court said the issue of marital rape cannot be kept hanging.

nity of a woman is at stake. There are family issues. There would be several considerations which would weigh with the government to take a position,” the Solic-

itor-General said.

“It would not be possible for the Centre to respond immediately, particularly when there is no imminent threat that something is going to happen to someone. I would reiterate my request that we would need a reasonable time.” A Bench of Justice Rajiv Shakdher and Justice C Hari Shankar, hearing a batch of petitions challenging the provision in law that makes an exception for marital rape, said this issue cannot be kept hanging.

“For some people and here, there is a live case [of one of the petitioners], every day matters for a simple reason that some say this abuse is happening, maybe not re-

ported but this is happening. Now it can’t be our answer that listen it has been there for 100 years now what is the urgency,” the court said.

Striking down exception

In India, marital rape is not defined in any statute or law. The NGOs RIT Foundation and All India Democratic Women’s Association a man and a woman are seeking striking down of the exception granted to husbands. The exception says sexual intercourse by a man with his wife aged 15 years or above is not rape even if it is without her consent.

In October 2017, the Supreme Court increased it to 18 years.

Dealing with the macroeconomic uncertainties

The Union Budget needs to maintain an accommodative fiscal stance to support the sustainability of economic growth



LEKHA CHAKRABORTY & HARIKRISHNAN S.

Macroeconomic uncertainties are mounting. Against the backdrop of possible interest rate hikes by the U.S. Federal Reserve and the taper tantrum, there is pressure on the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to increase its interest rates to prevent capital outflows. The monetary policy corridor is still “accommodative” to support the growth recovery. Globally, central banks have started increasing the interest rates. However, we need to wait for the Monetary Policy Committee meeting in February 2022 to understand the RBI’s decisions regarding policy rates.

Inflationary pressures

Inflationary pressures are also high. In India, the wholesale price index (WPI) inflation rose to a record high of 14.32% in November 2021 as per the data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The WPI decreased slightly to 13.56% in December 2021. The consumer price index (CPI) inflation now is 5.03%, though that is still within the comfort zone of the inflation targeting framework en-

visaged in India’s new monetary framework. The official nominal inflation anchor in India is 4%, with a band of variations of ± 2 . It has been argued that the inflation we are currently experiencing is transitory in nature due to supply chain disruptions and volatile energy and food prices.

Absorbing the excess liquidity that was injected to stimulate growth as part of the pandemic response is crucial to reversing trends in non performing assets (NPAs). The RBI Financial Stability Report, published on December 29, 2021, revealed a possible worsening of the gross non performing asset (GNPA) ratio of scheduled commercial banks – from 6.9% in September 2021 to 9.5% by September 2022 – under a “severe stress scenario” estimates.

The RBI has not yet formally announced any “normalization” procedure, though absorption of excess liquidity was attempted by increasing the cut-off yield rate of variable rate reverse repo (VRRR) to 3.99%, and curtailing the government securities acquisition programme.

Interest rates structure

The structure of interest rates is also a matter of concern. The call money market rates are below the repo rate. The bond yields are increasing ahead of the Union Budget 2022-23. The cut off yield rate of 10-year benchmark bond is as high as 6.63%. The rise in bond



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yields will result in higher borrowing costs for the Government.

Given these macroeconomic uncertainties, maintaining an accommodative fiscal policy stance in the upcoming Union Budget for FY23 is crucial for a sustainable recovery. The fiscal deficit as a percentage of GDP rose to 9.5% in 2021-22 (revised estimates). The RBI estimates suggest that revenue deficit pre-empted about 70% of the gross fiscal deficit during the period 2018-19 to 2019-20, and increased further to 79% in 2020-21 (revised estimates) and 76% in 2021-22 (Budget estimates).

Any attempt at fiscal consolidation at this juncture employing capital expenditure compression rather than a tax buoyancy path can adversely affect economic growth. Public investment – infrastructure investment in particular – is a major growth driver through “crowding-in” of private corporate investment.

Omicron is a reminder that the

COVID-19 pandemic is still not over. Public spending on health by the Union government is still below 1% of GDP, though the estimate has increased from 0.2% of GDP in 2020-21 (revised estimates) to 0.4% of GDP in 2021-22 (Budget estimates). Strengthening investments in the health-care sector is crucial at this juncture as a prolonged lockdown can accentuate the current humanitarian crisis and deepen economic disruptions.

Bringing down the fiscal deficit now can be detrimental to economic growth recovery. The plausible “fiscal risks” arising from the mounting public debt and deficits need to be tackled with a medium-term road map of fiscal consolidation, as instantaneous deficit reduction can affect the sustainable growth recovery process.

When credit-linked economic stimulus has an uneven impact on growth recovery, the significance of fiscal dominance cannot be undermined. We argue that the upcoming Union Budget for 2022-23 should maintain an accommodative fiscal stance in order to support the sustainability of the economic growth process and also for financing human development, which is crucial in the time of a pandemic.

Address unemployment

Rising unemployment needs to be addressed through an urgent policy response that strengthens job

guarantee programmes. The welfare models of the Government in providing food security to poor households and designing gender budgeting in energy infrastructure are also welcome. However, we need to go further to strengthen social sector policies in the time of a pandemic. To deal with these issues and more, maintaining an accommodative fiscal policy stance in the upcoming Union Budget for 2022-23 is crucial.

The advance GDP estimates released by the National Statistical Office on January 7, 2022, revealed that India’s GDP growth rate will be 9.2% in FY22. In FY21 it was 7.3%. However, this growth estimate is lower than that published by the RBI in December 2021, which was 9.5%. The growth in nominal GDP is estimated to be 17.6%. These GDP estimates published ahead of the announcement of the Union Budget 2022-23 are significant as they will be used for projections – including those for the fiscal deficit – in the upcoming Budget. How India emerges from the pandemic to meet these estimates will depend largely on an accommodative fiscal policy stance when monetary policy has limitations in triggering the growth recovery.

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'India can make \$300-bn electronics by 2026'

Challenges must be overcome: report

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Given the 'unforeseen and unprecedented' challenges brought by the pandemic, India is likely to achieve electronics production of \$300 billion by 2026, lower than the target of \$400 billion by 2025 set as per the National Policy on Electronics (NPE) 2019, according to a vision document.

The document was released by Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) in association with the India Cellular & Electronics Association (ICEA).

However, the reduced target still aims for a 400% increase from the current level, the document noted, adding that electronics manufacturing had grown from \$37.1 billion in 2015-16 to \$67.3 billion in 2020-21



"There are various challenges being faced by the industry across qualitative (non-tariff, infrastructure related) and quantitative (tariff, free trade agreements etc.) aspects and need to be addressed in toto to ensure that manufacturing in India is resilient, globally competitive and able to undertake operations at massive scale," as per the document.

100 terrorists waiting across border: BSF

'Overall situation peaceful since ceasefire agreement with Pakistan, infiltration bids on the wane'

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

The Border Security Force (BSF) on Monday said more than 100 terrorists were present at launch pads across the border, waiting to infiltrate into Jammu and Kashmir.

However, it added that the overall situation along the Line of Control has been peaceful since the ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan in 2021.

"Overall peaceful scenario was observed along the LoC in J&K post the ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan in 2021. However, there are reports that around 104 to 135 terrorist



Constant vigil: BSF personnel patrolling on the International Border in Jammu on Monday ahead of Republic Day. ■PTI

are present at launching pads waiting to infiltrate [into J&K]," Inspector-General of BSF, Kashmir, Raja Babu Singh said in Srinagar.

He said a heightened vigil

was being maintained after a few local guides crossed the LoC. "We have the numbers of the guides who have crossed the LoC. We are maintaining a vigil on them

and their families. The job of these guides is to bring groups of militants along. We have seen how our alert troops spot them and neutralise, as one such infiltrator was killed on January 2 [in north Kashmir]," Mr. Babu said.

He said infiltration along the LoC was showing a downward trend. "From 130 infiltration bids in 2019, it came down to 36 bids in 2020 and 31 in 2021," the BSF officer said.

However, he added that there were inputs that 138-145 youth were last year indoctrinated to join militant outfits. "Last year, we managed to foil three infiltration

bids and pushed back around 21 infiltrators," he added. The BSF is manning 343.9 km of the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir. "Out of 343 km, 96 km is being guarded exclusively by the BSF. Also, 52 companies were being deputed in Kashmir Valley," he added.

He said the security forces were having "successful results" due to the new synergy between the security agencies in Kashmir. Stating that drones were a "real threat", the BSF officer said, "We are procuring our own drones to counter the drone threat. Besides, a series of measures are in place to deal with drone threats."

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-drawal 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.