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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.

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Bangladesh on path of modernisation: Rajnath

He says Pakistan should learn from India's eastern neighbour

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

Lauding the socio-economic development ushered in by Bangladesh, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday said Pakistan should introspect and learn a lot of things from India's eastern neighbour.

"One of our neighbouring countries is struggling with religious fanaticism, bigotry and narrow-mindedness. The country itself is struggling with poverty, unemployment and terrorism and sometimes it tries to harass India also. That country needs to introspect and learn a lot from Bangladesh," he said at an event in Kolkata. While Mr. Singh did not name Pakistan, his remarks



The P17A stealth frigate 'Dunagiri' ship built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders Limited (GRSE), after its launch in Kolkata. (Right) Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh launches the ship in presence of Navy Chief Admiral R. Hari Kumar. •PTI



were clearly directed at the western neighbour.

The Defence Minister said India, as a neighbour, was happy that Bangladesh was moving fast on the path of development. Mr. Singh said Bangladesh had shunned religious fanaticism and taken the path to modernisation, moderation and secularism. "The kind of socio-economic development ushered in by

Bangladesh is an example for several countries in the world," he said.

Mr. Singh expressed hope that in times to come, Bangladesh would reach greater heights. "India has stood by Bangladesh in sectors such as health, education, economy, connectivity, and security and will continue to do so in the future," he added.

The remarks by the De-

fence Minister come at a time when Bangladesh is celebrating 50 years of its Independence.

Mr. Singh was in Kolkata to attend the launch of 'Dunagiri', a Project 17A frigate at Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Limited. "If India is increasing its strength, it is not only for itself but also for its friends," the Defence Minis-

ter said, adding that India wanted friendly ties with all its neighbours. Regarding the crisis in Sri Lanka, Mr. Singh said India was trying to extend all possible help. "We are aware of the difficult times through which Sri Lanka is passing through. COVID-19 has affected us also. Despite that, we are extending all possible help to our friend Sri Lanka," he said.

Gotabaya quits, Ranil sworn in as Acting President of Sri Lanka

Members of Parliament prepare to elect a new President through secret ballot

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

Gotabaya Rajapaksa has officially resigned as Sri Lanka's President, the Parliamentary Speaker announced on Friday, ending days of uncertainty since the deposed leader fled the island amid monumental public protests over an economic crisis gripping the country. "I have accepted the resignation," Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardana told reporters.

Hours later, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe was sworn in as Acting President as per the Constitution, even as members of Parliament prepare to elect a new President from among themselves through a secret ballot. "I hope to complete the process of electing a new President within seven days," Mr. Abeywardana said. Parliament is scheduled to convene on Saturday to initiate the process.

Sri Lanka urgently needs a new President and a government in place to address the worsening economic crisis that has disrupted supply of essentials, including fuel, food and medicines.

According to the Sri Lankan Constitution, if the office of the President falls vacant, a new President must be elected through Parliament within one month. Acting



Heralding a change: Demonstrators celebrating at the Presidential Secretariat after the Speaker announced the resignation of Gotabaya Rajapaksa in Colombo on Friday. ■ REUTERS

President Mr. Wickremesinghe, according to political sources, has set his sights on the country's top office that has eluded him in his nearly half-century career in national politics.

Significantly, the Rajapaksas' ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP or People's Front) has a majority in the legislature, while Mr. Wickremesinghe is the sole member of his United National Party (UNP) in Parliament. Mr. Wickremesinghe is yet to make an official announcement on his plans, but MPs from different parties told *The Hindu* that frantic discussions were on to

garner support for him.

Should Mr. Wickremesinghe contest, he will face long-time Rajapaksa loyalist Dullas Alahapperuma, who sits in an "independent group" in Parliament. Declaring his candidacy, the senior legislator from the southern Matara district sought the support of fellow MPs, "who believe Sri Lanka needs to embark on a new, constructive course."

Meanwhile, Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa also said he was running for the presidency, despite it being an "uphill struggle".

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Ranil sworn in as Acting President of Sri Lanka

In his first statement as Acting President, Mr. Wickremesinghe vowed to “re-implement” the 19th Amendment, referring to a 2015 legislation that clipped the Executive’s powers, in turn empowering Parliament. Urging political parties to agree on an all-party government, he said: “Put aside your personal ambitions. Put the needs of the country first.” He emphasised the need for law and order, days after empowering the military to keep them under check. “There are groups that are trying to set the country on fire through fascist methods by suppressing democracy,” he said.

Earlier, Mr. Premadasa was said to be exploring the possibility of teaming up with Mr. Alahapperuma, possibly as PM, but “things are still very fluid,” an opposition legislator said, requesting anonymity. A secret ballot complicates the

exercise, the MP explained, as there was no way to tell which way a legislator voted, despite promising support for one of the two candidates.

Irrespective of who is elected, the new President will have an unenviable task of taking urgent and likely harsh measures to arrest the country’s rapid economic decline.

The change at the country’s helm was sparked by the storming of the President’s office and home last weekend by protesters, that forced Mr. Gotabaya to flee for his life, first to the Maldives and later to Singapore, where he is currently located. Public fury against Mr. Gotabaya and his family members, who held prominent positions of power in the government, surged this year as citizens suffocated amid crippling shortages and soaring living costs that, they said, his government failed to address.

Iran, Belarus to be newest SCO members

With the expansion, China and Russia are looking to frame the grouping as a counter to the West

ANANTH KRISHNAN
BEIJING

Iran and Belarus are likely to be the two newest additions to the China and Russia-backed Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) grouping, officials said on Friday.

Expanding the group is among the issues that leaders of the grouping, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping are likely to discuss at the SCO summit in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, in September.

The current SCO Secretary, General Zhang Ming, a veteran Chinese diplomat, told reporters on Friday the grouping hopes for an in-person summit in Uzbekistan, which could see Mr. Modi meet with Mr. Xi for the first time since 2019.

“So far, all participating countries have confirmed the attendance of their leaders but the format of atten-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the SCO Summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, in this file photo. •PTI

dance is not finalised. All wish to switch to the traditional way of meeting which is more efficient,” said Mr. Zhang, who recently visited Samarkand and said the facilities for the summit would be constructed by the end of this month. “At the same time, the epidemic situation is changing and there are new variants emerging,” he said, adding a note of caution, with last year’s summit held virtually on account of

COVID-19.

China, Russia and four Central Asian states – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan – were the founding members of the SCO, while India and Pakistan joined the grouping in 2017 in its first round of expansion. Last year’s summit in Dushanbe agreed for Iran to join, while Belarus has also begun the membership process.

“In the Samarkand sum-

mit, we expect the leadership to adopt a document on the obligations Iran must fulfil to gain membership. The legal procedures of Belarus’s accession are also about to start. We need to build consensus on the acceptance of Belarus,” Mr. Zhang said. “The significance of this round of expansion is that it shows the SCO’s rising international influence and that the principles of the SCO charter are being widely accepted.”

Sharp contrast

China and Russia are looking to frame the grouping as a counter to the West – particularly after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine – and Mr. Zhang sought to draw a sharp contrast between the SCO and NATO.

“There has been discussion in the international arena that the trend of non-alignment is back,” he said. “The expansion of NATO is totally different as the SCO is

a cooperative organisation based on non-alignment and not targeting a third party. NATO is based on Cold War thinking. The logic of NATO is creating new enemies to sustain its own existence.”

He said the SCO “believes one should not build its safety at the expense of other countries”, a statement China has used previously to blame NATO for the Ukraine crisis. Mr. Zhang also hit out at “small circles” – a term China has used in the past to criticise the Quad – underlining India’s somewhat unique position in the SCO, whose two most important members, China and Russia, are increasingly positioning the grouping directly at odds with the West.

India will host the SCO summit next year, and Varanasi has been selected as the SCO region’s first “Tourism and Cultural Capital”, Mr. Zhang said, a title it will hold next year coinciding with India chairing the grouping.

The Ukraine war and the return to Euro-centrism

The political and military aftermath of the conflict could set the stage for the return of a Euro-centric world order



HAPPYMON JACOB

For centuries, Europe imagined itself to be the centre of the world – its order, politics and culture. Decolonisation, the emergence of the United States as the western world's sole superpower, and the rise of the rest dramatically diminished the centuries old domination of the European states and their ability to shape the world in their own image. The contemporary international order is hardly Euro-centric: dominated by the U.S., and challenged by rising great powers or superpowers, it is moving toward a multipolar order wherein Europe's system shaping capabilities have been rather limited. Or so it has been until now.

War and insecurity in Europe

The political and military aftermath of Russia's war on Ukraine could potentially tilt the current global balance and take us back to a Euro-centric world order, albeit far less powerful and dominating than its earlier avatars. For sure, the U.S. continues to dominate the trans-Atlantic security landscape and this is likely to remain so. And yet, the new security consciousness in Europe will reduce Washington's ability to continue as the fulcrum of the trans-Atlantic strategic imagination.

Second, if Donald Trump returns to the White House in 2024, the Europeans are likely to take their own security far more seriously. In any case, there is little doubt that Europe, going forward, will emerge as a major locus of trans-Atlantic security imagina-

tion. The process has clearly begun. If wars have the potential to shape international orders, it is Europe's turn to shape the world, once again. The United States, fatigued from the Iraq and Afghan wars, does not appear to be keen on another round of wars and military engagements. But the mood in Europe seems to be changing; there is a shift in narrative from pacifism to insecurity-induced militarism. And that is where the shape of the international system could well be decided.

The Russian aggression against Ukraine has led to an unmissable feeling of insecurity in Europe, particularly in Germany where this writer recently spent a week talking to officials, parliamentarians, journalists and members of the strategic community. It is as if Europe has been rudely woken up from its lazy slumber and sweet dreams about lasting peace and the virtues of pacifism. A pervasive sense of what some described as "existential insecurity" has brought about a renewed enthusiasm about the future of the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The European Union (EU) Commission in Brussels has backed Kyiv's bid for EU candidature, and the 30-state military alliance, NATO, has two more members in its fold (Finland and Sweden) all thanks to what the Europeans call "Putin's" war in Ukraine (they make a careful distinction between Russia and Vladimir Putin).

This new military unity is not just words, but is backed with political commitment and financial resources from the world's richest economies. Berlin, for instance, has decided to spend an additional €100 billion for defence over and above its €50 billion annual expenditure on defence. It is set to announce a new national security strategy early next year, and the



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

hope of 'changing Russia through trade' is no longer popular amongst most German policy makers and thinkers. While there is a deep sense of insecurity and vulnerability in contemporary Europe, there is also the belief that NATO and the EU will see better days going forward. To that extent, many consider Mr. Putin's Ukraine war as a blessing in disguise.

Impact on institutions

Germany, the engine of this new security thinking in Europe, is coming out of its self-image of being a pacifist nation. In his address in late February to the German Parliament, Germany's new Chancellor Olaf Scholz called the February 24 invasion of Ukraine a *Zeitenwende* (revolution) in the history of post-war Europe. A country that has for two decades spent no more than 1.3% on defence will now spend more than 2% to beef up its defence.

Notably, there appears little faith in the United Nations or the UN Security Council anymore in Berlin, they have decided to put their faith in a revitalised EU and NATO. It is interesting to note how quickly Europe's trust in democratic global institutions weakened in the face of a war that a non-EU/NATO member is fighting in its neighbourhood.

European states are deeply worried about globalisation-induced vulnerability and this has set in a rethink about the inherent problems of indiscriminate globalisation. What this turn away from

multilateralism in favour of 'Europeanism' will do is to further undercut global institutions.

The combined effect of European re-militarisation (however modest it may be for now), its loss of faith in multilateral institutions, and the increased salience of the EU and NATO will be the unchecked emergence of Europe as an even stronger regulatory, norm/standard-setting superpower backed with military power. The EU already has a worryingly disproportionate ability to set standards for the rest of the world. Instruments such as the Digital Services Act and the Digital Assets Act or its human rights standards will be unilaterally adopted, and will be unavoidable by other parts of the world. While these instruments and standards may in themselves be progressive and unobjectionable for the most part, the problem is with the process which is unilateral and Euro-centric. There is an irrefutable ethical problem in a democratic Europe using non-democratic processes to adopt seemingly progressive measures for the rest of us.

Implications for the rest

So, what does this mean for the rest of the world? The recent statements emanating from Europe that 'democracies' should come together to defeat a non-democratic aggressor is a taste of the things to come: a euro-centric worldview of 'friends and enemies' will define its engagement with the rest of the world. India is a friend, but its take on the Ukraine war is not friendly enough for Europe!

Receding multilateralism and rising Euro-centrism would invariably mean that norm setting and system-shaping discussions are likely to be conducted by Europeans, among Europeans, for Europeans and non-Europeans, lead-

ing to fewer consultations and even lesser consensus with the rest of the international community. The EU will lead the way in setting standards for the rest of us and we will have little option but to follow that. For sure, Europe will seek partners around the world: to create a Euro-centric world order, not a truly global world order.

This unilateral attempt to 'shape the world' in its image will also be portrayed as an attempt to counter Chinese attempts at global domination. When presented as such, countries such as India will face a clear dilemma: to politically and normatively oppose the setting of the global agenda by Europeans or to be practical about it and jump on the European bandwagon.

Seen as Europe's war

The key message from the European narratives about the Ukraine war is that European states would want to see their wars and conflicts as threatening international stability and the 'rules-based' global order. Needless to mention that there is little recognition in the West today that the global non-West's political priorities are altogether different – from addressing abject poverty and underdevelopment to managing social cohesion and local conflicts. The genuine surprise in western capitals today at the lack of interest in other parts of the world about the Russian aggression in Europe, and the consequent unease about the lack of empathy from the rest of the world, is indicative of the inherent Euro-centric view of the European nations about the world.

Happymon Jacob is Associate Professor, Centre for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Stamp out this hate speech manufacturing network

The online trolling of the judiciary is a new low, highlighting a sustained and organised campaign of intimidation



COLIN GONSALVES

The recent ferocious attack on a judge of the Supreme Court of India by the IT cell of a prominent national political party has given the impression that there are a significant number of people opposed to the scathing judicial criticism of the former national spokesperson of the Bharatiya Janata Party, Nupur Sharma, for her remarks on the Prophet. Rather, it may well be that an overwhelming part of all religious communities would feel a sense of pride that a person of his standing would stand up to the tyranny of groups engaging in hate speech.

Pertinent questions

The criticism delivered from the Bench for the first time showed that some judges indeed have a spine and are capable of speaking the truth to power. Particularly at this time when Government interference with the judiciary is at its height (with transfers and supersessions of independent-minded judges), the pungent and fully justified remarks of the judge were like a fresh wind blowing through the country and the judiciary, and boosted the confidence of judges to stand up to executive excesses.

Equally important, the events of the past few days and the un-

couth trolling of the judge raise very important questions relating to the ever-growing tendency by the Government to intimidate the judiciary. The questions that arise are: Who are these groups that attack democratic-minded individuals who speak out against injustice? Does the Government have an underground network which operates as an arm of the Government? And, are they financially supported and ideologically encouraged to engage in hate speech? Finally, what should the judiciary do to stamp out organised hate speech of this kind, whether it be against journalists, political opponents of the Government or the judiciary?

Growth, political support

In her book, *I am a Troll*, Swati Chaturvedi describes Internet trolls as persons who sow discord through inflammatory comments on the Internet. She traces the growth of this network from the early 2000s and attributes its steep upward curve to the support it received from a senior political leader in Government. 'Rightwing propaganda websites constantly peddle hate tweets and slander journalists. They are backed up by coordinated hashtag campaigns where anonymous Twitter handles retweet the same tweet continuously until trending begins'.

She gives instances of tweets of 'gory cow slaughter and imaginary instances of love jihad'. Some of them 'mock women who face sexual abuse and harassment.' They did not spare their own party lead-

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO



er, Maneka Gandhi, when she set up a helpline called '#IAMTrolledHelp'.

A Twitter handle from this group engaged in sustained abuse of a well-known female broadcast journalist. Another hosted a photoshopped picture of a female actor when she joined the Aam Aadmi Party. One of this network asked for 'execution of undertrials without due process saying that the State should not bother to arrest suspects but kill in cold blood'. An extreme episode was when a Congress spokesperson 'was threatened with Nirbhaya-style rape by trolls'. In the context of pellet blinding in Kashmir, there were trolls who called for 'mass murder of Kashmiris, and the dropping of a bomb on a funeral procession'.

When journalist Gauri Lankesh was killed in Bengaluru in 2017, a Twitter handle followed by leaders of the party in power tweeted a message that had much profanity. Other journalists were also threatened that they were 'going the Gauri Lankesh way'.

The Wire reported that a network of 757 Twitter accounts was used to mount attacks against Mohammed Zubair (co-founder of fact-checking website Alt News)

and the website, and that the recovery email id for the anonymous Twitter handle was that of a youth leader of the party in power. These accounts revealed sub accounts 'which exhibited multiple characteristics associated with bot-like and inauthentic behaviour posting more than 500 times a day at all hours of the day'. The purpose was to manipulate public perception about the arrest of Mr. Zubair.

Similar targeting processes were managed by 'Tek Fog' (a 'sophisticated app used by online operatives to hijack major social media and encrypted messaging platforms'); over eight lakh hostile replies were sent out to tweets by women journalists, of which over five lakh were classified as 'offensive'. The Wire commented that the handlers of 'Tek Fog' are politically aligned and that is why 'India's political elite are silent'. One of the hashtags amplified by these operatives 'reached an audience of around eight crore users'. News-landry has reported that this 'well-oiled propaganda machine churned out fake videos and mass tweet links to gear up for Twitter storms'.

An 'attack factory' at work

Online abuse has often led to actual violence as in the case of the attack on a prominent lawyer by persons who barged into his office. This is not surprising because, as reported by Ms. Chaturvedi, 'office bearers of the party in power have publicly supported these trolls'.

The IT cell of the Government has seen its activity expand with the induction of many volunteers and paid workers. Ms. Chaturvedi has reported that the party in power has 'created a bank of thousands of dormant Twitter accounts' to be used for 'synchronized tweeting' and 'storms'. The party also has 'bots created by the central IT Cell which tweets out identical messages simultaneously' so that they 'look like a real user'. These volunteers and employees 'were given a hit list of mainstream journalists who needed to be constantly attacked'. One of the India's most prominent and respected female journalists was attacked in 'filthy terms' and given 'rape threats'. These volunteers and employees use virtual private networks (VPNs) to 'hide the actual location of the user'.

Going back to the incident of Nupur Sharma in the Supreme Court, it is imperative that the Court understands that the country stands with the judiciary. The hate speech tweets are manufactured by a factory of a political party that produces millions of hate speeches. A criminal investigation by an independent special investigation team of the police is called for. Prosecution must follow. This hate speech manufacturing network must be crushed. This is vital for democracy to survive and for the judiciary not to be intimidated.

Colin Gonsalves is a senior advocate practising in the Supreme Court of India. The views expressed are personal

Ban on dharnas in Parliament precinct sets off a controversy

Opposition alleges clampdown on dissent; Om Birla says circular is routine

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A fresh bulletin from the Parliament secretariat ahead of the monsoon session of Parliament prohibiting the members from using the premises for “demonstration, dharna, strike, fast or for the purpose of performing any religious ceremony,” has raised a furore with the Opposition members calling it yet another attempt to bulldoze dissent.

Intervening in the debate, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla sent out a statement saying these circulars are routinely issued. Mr. Birla also urged members to maintain the dignity of Parliament by not using routine information for creating news. The parliamentary officials released copies of similar advisories issued during the Congress-led UPA government.

Congress general secre-



A view of the Parliament House in New Delhi. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

tary (communication) Jairam Ramesh launched a broadside at the government calling it “vishguru’s” latest salvo: “D(h)arna Mana Hai!” a play on Darna Mana Hai (Not allowed to be afraid). Replying to Mr. Ramesh’s tweet, Trinamool Congress’s Rajya Sabha floor leader Derek O’Brien said, “Every year they issue these notices in #Parliament bulletins. Demonstrations, dharnas, strikes, fast are part of legiti-

mate parliamentary tactics to register protest. No stopping us. However, can you please update me. Didn’t SOMEONE conduct a religious ceremony recently?”

Mr. O’Brien’s Lok Sabha colleague Mahua Moitra elaborated further.

“By the way honourable MP Varanasi performed a religious ceremony on top of new Parliament building just four days ago,” Ms. Moitra tweeted, without naming

Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

‘Muzzling India’s soul’

CPI(M) General Secretary Sitaram Yechury called the circular an attempt to “muzzle the soul of India.” “The more useless the government, the more cowardly it is. Such dictatorial orders mock democracy. Protesting in the Parliament House complex is a political right of the MPs,” Mr. Yechury tweeted.

Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Manoj K Jha said orders like these undermine the very idea of disagreements, which are essential to parliamentary democracy. “This order is bizarre and shocking. I would urge the government, please stop this brutal assault on the right to protest. We are moving towards Sri Lanka if we continue like this,” Mr. Jha said.

IIT-M ranked country's top higher education institute

JNU, Jamia Millia find place in NIRF's list of best varsities

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI


The Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (IIT-M), is yet again the top higher educational institute in the country followed by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, and IIT Bombay, according to the Ministry of Education's National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2022.

Among the universities, IISc, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Jamia Millia Islamia, Jadavpur University and Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham were among the top five. And among the top five colleges in the country are Miranda House, Hindu College, Presidency College, Loyola College and Lady Shri Ram College for Women.

The top five medical institutes are All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh, Christian Medical College, Vellore, National Institute of Mental Health & Neuro Sciences, Bengaluru, and Banaras Hindu University. The top five management institutes are Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad, IIM Bengaluru, IIM Kolkata, IIT Delhi and IIM Kozhikode.

This is the seventh consecutive edition of NIRF. It ranks colleges, universities

Report card
A look at the top 10 educational institutions in India, according to Ministry of Education's National Institutional Ranking Framework 2022



Rank	Institution	Score
1	Indian Institute of Technology, Madras	87.59
2	Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru	83.57
3	Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay	82.35
4	Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi	82.22
5	Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur	77.83
6	Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur	75.94
7	Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee	71.48
8	Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati	69.75
9	All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi	69.57
10	Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi	67.25

and research institutions and also provides an overall ranking of all of them combined. Institutes are also ranked across seven subject domains, namely engineering, management, pharmacy, law, medical, architecture and dental.

Accreditation must

A total of 4,786 institutions were evaluated on five parameters – teaching, learning and resources (TLR); research and professional practice; graduation outcome; outreach; and inclusivity and perception.

Education Minister Dhar-

mendra Pradhan said at an event held to launch the rankings that accreditation and assessment of every higher education institution will be made mandatory and all institutions will have to be part of the NIRF ranking system. He said the two accreditation systems – NAAC and NBA – will be merged and institutes will need to have either NAAC accreditation or NIRF rank to be able to get government funds. He also said soon, there will be a system for accreditation of schools in the country.

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Deficit doubts

Fretting about current account deficit is warranted; fiscal space must be reassessed

In its latest review of the economy encompassing the period from June till July 10, the Finance Ministry is sanguine about India's economic recovery and has asserted that major macro-economic risks have subsided over the past six weeks. The Government's cautious optimism is tinged with impending concerns of a speedier tightening of monetary policies by the U.S. Federal Reserve and the resultant dip in asset markets, which can mar sentiment and consumption, on top of persistent geopolitical strife. But for now, interest rate hikes and measures to curtail the outflow of dollars announced by the central bank, with several steps from the government such as the imposition of windfall taxes and higher import duties on forex-drainers like gold, have been credited for lifting some of the dark clouds over the economy. Despite excise duty cuts on petrol and diesel, the Ministry believes India's fiscal math for the year will not unravel thanks to the recent tax levies, and healthy Goods and Services Tax collections (that could get healthier as some GST rate hikes kick in from Monday). Industrial metal prices slipping to 16-month lows, prices for some food items falling off their peaks and crude oil prices descending in the face of fears of a recession in many developed nations, have helped. However, if these fears do not translate into 'a sustained and meaningful' drop in food and energy prices, India's current account deficit will deteriorate in 2022-23 on account of costlier imports and tepid exports on the merchandise account, the Ministry has cautioned.

India's high import dependence for fuel means oil price trajectories affect most macro parameters, including inflation, growth, current account balances, fiscal management and the rupee. And economic policymakers are rightfully concerned about the current account deficit (CAD) widening sharply from the 1.2% of GDP last year. There is a vicious circle at work here that may take a while to break. Slowing exports and costlier inelastic imports of oil have triggered record merchandise trade deficits for two consecutive months, exacerbating the CAD which is tripping the rupee, making imports even costlier and widening the CAD further. The CAD may have hit 2.7% of GDP in the first quarter, some reckon, but if developed economies slow down as expected and shale oil supplies pick up, crude oil prices could drop lower and the full-year deficit may improve. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has assured the country of a pointed 'item by item' attack on inflation to ensure growth prospects are not hindered. If the fiscal deficit is not a concern, and tax revenues may, in fact, overshoot Budget estimates owing to high inflation, the Government can consider reviewing its fiscal capacity and think of more measures to stimulate growth and mitigate the detrimental effects of high inflation and interest rates on consumption and investments.

Public capex plan key to long-term growth: FM

‘Govt. raised capex by 35.4% for FY23’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday said India’s long-term growth prospects were embedded in public capital expenditure programmes.

Ms. Sitharaman, attending the third G20 Finance Ministers and central bank Governors meeting hosted by Indonesia in Bali, also said evidence-based policy making was vital for resilient economic systems.

The government has laid stress on capital expenditure to push economic growth hit by the pandemic. It is expected that higher public spending will crowd in private investment.

Ms. Sitharaman raised capital expenditure (capex)



Nirmala Sitharaman ■ AFP

by 35.4% for the financial year 2022-23 to ₹7.5 lakh crore to continue the public investment-led recovery of the pandemic-battered economy. The capex last year was ₹5.5 lakh crore.

She also highlighted that sustainable global recovery should be pivoted on climate actions and that the focus needed to be on scaling up climate finance and propelling green transitions.

Rupee's slide to inflate import, global travel bills

Overseas education too turns costlier

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The rupee nearing 80 to a U.S. dollar will make import of items – from crude oil to electronic goods – as well as overseas education and foreign travel costlier while raising fears that the inflation situation could worsen.

The impact of a depreciating rupee is on importers who will have to shell out more for the same quantity and price. The rupee, which on Thursday closed at an all-time low of 79.99 to a dollar, recovered 17 paise to end at 79.82 on Friday.

The basket of Indian imports includes crude oil, coal, plastic material, chemicals, electronic goods, vegetable oil, fertilizer, machinery, gold, pearls,

precious and semi-precious stones, and iron and steel.

Ajay Sahai, Director General of exporters' body FIEO, said the rupee touching 80 against the U.S. dollar would raise India's import bill and would make containing inflation a more difficult task.

A weaker rupee also means foreign education becoming more expensive.

Students not only have to shell out more rupees for every dollar of fees at foreign institutions, but they also have to contend with costlier education loans, following interest rate increases by the RBI. With the pandemic receding, travel for work and leisure has risen. This too would become more expensive.

‘Allow us to export grains from public stock to needy nations’

WTO showing hesitation in lifting export curbs: Sitharaman

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Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman asked the World Trade Organization (WTO) to allow India to export foodgrains from its public stockholding to nations which are facing food crisis.

She was speaking at a seminar on ‘Strengthening global collaboration for tackling food insecurity’ on the sidelines of the third G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) meeting in Bali, Indonesia.

As per WTO norms, countries are not allowed to export foodgrains from public stock holdings as they are procured at subsidised rates.

“WTO’s restriction is that



grains so procured cannot be brought to the market to export,” Ms. Sitharaman said. “It is a condition which exists from the Uruguay Round days. We have repeatedly said that (surplus) than what we have for our small farmers... we are quite willing to trade.”

She said that India could help in reducing hunger or

food insecurity but there was hesitation on the part of the WTO.

Many countries in the world are currently facing food shortages due to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

A group of about 70-80 countries, led by Singapore, is pushing member-countries of the WTO to accept binding commitments of not extending export restrictions on the foodgrains procured under the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).

Some members, however, have voiced concerns regarding a blanket exemption for WFP food purchases due to domestic food security considerations.

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.