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DAILY NEWS ANALYSIS

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FOREWORD

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

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

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

CONTENTS

- GSP 01 P Editorials - It's time to discuss depopulation
- GSP 02 A Editorials - Xi's Congress rhetoric powers the PLA's march ahead
- GSP 02 A News - China's anti-lockdown protests spread to dozens of campuses
Part I
- GSP 02 A News - China's anti-lockdown protests spread to dozens of campuses
Part II
- GSP 02 A News - Egyptian President Sisi to be chief guest at Republic Day celebrations Part I.png
- GSP 02 A News - Egyptian President Sisi to be chief guest at Republic Day celebrations Part II
- GSP 02 A News - 'Invitation from India as a G-20 guest shows growing importance of Bangladesh economy'
- GSP 02 B News - G-20 presidency is an opportunity to focus on global good Modi
Part I
- GSP 02 E Editorials - Toward legalising same-sex marriage
- GSP 02 K Editorials - Shifts unexplained
- GSP 03 P News - Two cheetahs moved into acclimatisation enclosure
- GSP 03 T News - India, Australia wargames to begin today
- GSP 03 U News - Nagaland group to raise its bifurcation bid with Shah

It's time to discuss depopulation

Two weeks ago, when the world population touched eight billion, several headlines focused on how India was the largest contributor to the last billion and is set to surpass China as the world's most populous nation by 2023. China's population has begun to decline, while India's population is expected to grow for another 40 years, they said. But missing in this conversation is the real threat of depopulation that parts of India too face, and the country's complete lack of preparedness to deal with it.

By current United Nations estimates, India's population will begin to decline only in 2063, by which time it will be just shy of 1.7 billion. The world's population is expected to grow until 2086. Given that China's population has begun to decline, these estimates about India have led to alarmist calls for restrictions on family sizes. Such remarks have increasingly assumed an anti-Muslim tone.

On the other hand, demographers, policy experts and politicians in countries such as Japan, South Korea and Europe, which are experiencing falling fertility and nearing the inflection point of population declines, are beginning to talk about what the future holds and whether reversal is possible. However, the global conversation around depopulation is missing some key elements. Without talking about equitable sharing of housework; access to subsidised childcare that allows women to have families as well as a career; and lowered barriers to immigration to enable entry to working-age people from countries which aren't yet in population decline, the narrative can sometimes be tinged with anti-feminism and ethnic superiority. And that is precisely why India needs to step into and have this conversation.

Fertility in India

It is now well-established that fertility in India is falling along



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Rates of fertility are falling fast enough in parts of India that population declines are on the horizon

expected lines as a direct result of rising incomes and greater female access to health and education. India's total fertility rate is now below the replacement rate of fertility. However, what needs more urgent policy intervention is the fact that parts of India have not only achieved replacement fertility, but have been below the replacement rate for so long that they are at the cusp of real declines in population. Kerala, which achieved replacement fertility in 1998, and Tamil Nadu, which achieved this in 2000, are examples. Moreover, even in States with relatively high fertility, many cities have been at the replacement rate or below the replacement rate for over a decade, if not more; the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) estimated India's urban fertility rate in 2019-21 to be 1.6, which places it next to the U.K.

Yet, India, especially States and cities with below-replacement fertility, is not having the urgent conversation that the U.K. is having about what a future with an ageing population and a declining workforce is going to look like. In the next four years, both Tamil Nadu and Kerala will see the first absolute declines in their working-age populations in their histories. With falling mortality (barring the pandemic), the total population of these States will continue to grow for the next few decades, which means that fewer working-age people must support more elderly people than ever before. Among the female elderly in particular, economic dependence is a serious concern.

Against this backdrop, both States will also need to re-examine the continued sustainability of low in-migration. In 2011, the median Tamilian was 10 years older than the median Bihari. By 2036, they will be separated by over 12 years and the median Tamilian will be over 40 years old; the working-age population of the future will skew northwards. Yet, even though political and popular rhetoric in Tamil Nadu and Kerala often

makes it appear as if these States are facing a surge of migrants from the poorer, more populous northern States, the fact is that both States had negative net migration rates, which means they sent out more migrants than they received, as of 2011, the most recent year for which this data are available. This will make access to working-age persons notably different from the situation in other States with low fertility. These include Delhi and Karnataka which are both net recipients of migrants, and will not confront population decline in the near future (though the future is uncertain given strident nativist political rhetoric across India).

Three challenges

A depopulating future poses at least three unique challenges to India. First, a skewed sex ratio remains a danger. As the latest round of the NFHS showed, families with at least one son are less likely to want more children than families with just one daughter. Second, the stark differences between northern and southern States in terms of basic literacy as well as enrolment in higher education, including in technical fields, will mean that workers from the southern States are not automatically replaceable. Third, the sharp anti-Muslim tone in the conversation has remained even though fertility between Hindus and Muslims is converging.

Conversations around fertility reductions in the southern States are often framed around the price that these States are having to pay in relation to others in terms of the share of federal tax receipts or political representation. But there is also the question of the price their own citizens will have to bear in terms of economic productivity and welfare sustainability. With decades of focus on lowering fertility, the conversation in India is stuck in a rut. It is for the southern States to break away from this outmoded, data-free rhetoric and join the global conversation on depopulation.

Xi's Congress rhetoric powers the PLA's march ahead

The developments in the wake of the 20th Party Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), China's rise, its domestic debates and agenda merit a closer examination of the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) role as a geopolitical actor.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, who made history with his unprecedented third term in office at the Party Congress in October, told the Chinese elite at the quinquennial gathering that it was important to further expedite military modernisation to make it a world-class force. He underscored that the PLA should be able to stage military operations quickly and have the "ability to win local wars". On the issue of Taiwan's reunification, Mr. Xi asserted that while China would make efforts to bring back the territory peacefully, it could deploy military means to achieve its aims. Furthermore, Mr. Xi proclaimed that he would ensure "total reunification of China". More recently, he told United States President Joe Biden (during their first in-person meeting at the sidelines of the G20 leaders' summit in Indonesia) that Taiwan was the core of China's core interests. Having cranked up the rhetoric, Mr. Xi will have to deliver on Taiwan. In this endeavour, the PLA will be an important component.

Strategic shift

This year, Mr. Xi completes a decade at the helm of the Central Military Commission (CMC), a body that oversees the CPC's vast military. In different phases, he has brought about changes to the CMC's structure and troop units and reconstituted command theatres. Its naval fleet is larger than America's, and has improved the capabilities of its navy personnel through participation in anti-piracy missions. China made forays into building capacities so as to fight on new battlefronts such as space and cyberspace with the constitution of the Strategic Support



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China's military overhaul is also connected to its ambition to elbow out the United States as a global power

Force. The PLA Rocket Force, which was upgraded to a full military service branch in 2016, is in charge of China's land-based nuclear and conventional missile forces. There has been a change in approach to military education and hiring talent with the PLA, increasingly seeking out university students with a background in "skills needed to supplement war effort" namely engineering, communications, Internet, and drone operations. Reports also emerged that China was engaging air force pilots of western nations to train its personnel by offering them huge sums of money so as to understand how foreign defence services operate and fine-tune Chinese air force capabilities. The tactics learnt through such means could come in handy in case of an invasion of Taiwan.

According to defence experts, Mr. Xi's reforms, in which the land-based army has been pruned in favour of improving aerial, naval and strategic service branches, constitute the largest overhaul of the PLA since the 1990s in a bid to mould the military into a modern force. The motivation for this military transformation may have something to do with Mr. Xi's background. Around the time of the Sino-Vietnamese war, Mr. Xi served as then Defence Minister Geng Biao's secretary in the CMC, allowing him to witness at close quarters the PLA's shortcomings and deficiencies.

Ambitions post Party Congress

China's military overhaul is also connected to its ambition to elbow out the U.S. as a global power. Thus, attaining dominance in the air, space and cyber domains, allows China to project power in the region and protect its interests overseas. In this mission, it is borrowing from the western template. The ascendancy of the U.S. as a world power in the 1940s and the geopolitics of West Asia where America's rival, the Soviet Union, began to take interest led to an increased U.S. army presence in hydrocarbon-rich Saudi Arabia.

China is similarly broadening its ties to archipelago nations in the southern Pacific Ocean such as the Solomon Islands for geopolitical reasons. A Europe thrown into turmoil due to the war in Ukraine has meant that China sees it prudent to expand into the Solomon Islands for its Belt and Road Initiative and constructing special economic zones. An economic investment fetching good returns is incumbent on political stability, in addition to other variables. This seems to be the reasoning for the security pact recently inked between China and the Solomon Islands. Picture this – on the pretext of protecting Chinese projects and personnel stationed on the islands, China's police-military personnel get a toehold on the islands. China then makes inroads into the islands' security establishment by indoctrinating law-enforcement officials through training programmes conducted on the mainland, and socialises its political elite through bribery and corruption before taking over. This is not a dystopian fantasy, but a reality that is unfolding right now.

Implications for India

As China's military reforms have rolled out, there has been a commensurate increase in its aggression and expansion as evidenced in phases such as the declaration of an Air Defence Identification Zone over the East China Sea, reclamation of islands in the South China Sea, followed by construction of military infrastructure there. Even as China seeks to dial down tensions along the border and create an impression of bonhomie, it is building infrastructure along the Indian border. New Delhi must not get lulled into complacency by these optics or Chinese sophistry. The first stop in China's journey to become a global power is becoming a regional hegemon in Asia. This will mean that it will have to deal with India soon or later.

'Invitation from India as a G-20 guest shows growing importance of Bangladesh economy'

Bangladesh is seeking more energy from India and refined crude from Russia, says its Deputy Foreign Minister Shahriar Alam; on strain in ties with the US and the European Union, he says Dhaka is not going to succumb to any pressure, and dismisses concerns raised over attacks on minorities

INTERVIEW

Shahriar Alam

Suhasini Haidar
DHAKA

Out of all of India's neighbours, the Indian government has invited only Bangladesh as one of 10 guest countries during its presidency of the G-20 beginning on December 1. Ties are likely to strengthen as a result of the invitation, which comes amid a number of energy and connectivity projects between the two countries, says Bangladesh's Deputy Foreign Minister Shahriar Alam, who speaks about plans to source energy needs from Russia, for the first time, and a possible strain in ties with the West.

What are the issues you would like to see on the G-20 agenda next year?

We are grateful to India for inviting Bangladesh. The invitation also shows the growing importance of Bangladesh as one of the world's fastest growing economies – already the

41st largest economy, which is going to be the 32nd largest by 2030. Bangladesh would like to share its experience with other member states on climate change. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Prime Minister Narendra Modi have identified poverty as the most common enemy. I think climate change and economic prosperity for our citizens are the priorities for us.

During Ms. Hasina's visit in September, India and Bangladesh agreed to a number of energy projects, including a high-speed-diesel pipeline. What is the progress in these agreements?

The pipeline is one of them. The other major one is the Rooppur nuclear power plant that we are setting up with the help of Russian technology and funding. India is funding under an LOC (Line of Credit) the distribution, the transmission lines, alongside Bangladesh's own funding. The Adani electricity plant [in Jharkhand] is ready for integration on December 16, and during this time of power shortage



or energy shortages in the oil market, that will surely help. We are also working with India on proposals for renewable energy, bringing solar energy from the Indian grid.

There are also reports of Russian energy supplies coming to Bangladesh – is that something also that you are speaking to India about?

When the [Ukraine] war broke out, [and sanctions began] Russian energy sounded like a very cheap option, and India has made very good use of that. So we explored [importing Russian oil] but unfortunately, Bangladesh has just one large refinery, and that is not suitable for

Russian crude. So that's not going to happen. What we are discussing with the Russians now is the supply of refined products, and Russian LNG.

Could this impact ties with the U.S. and EU countries, that have seen some strain over human rights issues?

Energy and food are considered to be essential commodities that a nation is entitled to procure in its interests. Beyond that, we have defence cooperation with Russia, and these are historical, need-based, and bilateral in nature. I wouldn't call it a strain [in ties with the West]. Our engagement, bilateral engagement with the U.S., has increased, and we have

a dialogue on promoting private sectors, which we could only do if we had some comfort in the relationship. On some of the comments [made by the U.S., EU, and Japan about Bangladesh], I think we made our position absolutely clear that... Ambassadors and foreign diplomats should be mindful of their duties, and limitations and boundaries...We are not going to succumb to any pressure.

Bangladesh Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan recently met with Indian Home Minister Amit Shah, who raised concerns over attacks on the minority Hindu community in Bangladesh. What is your response?

During [Durga] Puja this year, Bangladesh had the highest number of about 32,000 *mandaps* (*pan-dals*). I represent a constituency of 10-plus percentage of Hindu community and I see growth in number of minorities every year. When there was an incident [attack] last year, Prime Minister Hasina herself paid a visit to the spot and we pursued an inqui-

ry. We have seen [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] governments that promoted fundamentalism and extreme right-wing ideas. But I think Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was successful in bringing that harmony back and we have conveyed that.

You are saying that it's a problem of the past. Yet in its affidavit on the Citizenship Amendment Act just a few weeks ago, the Indian government said that Bangladesh, like Afghanistan and Pakistan, does not protect its minorities. How do you respond?

I can't respond to what [the Indian government] says in court. We will only voice our opinion if they raise it with us. The court order is the [Indian] government's problem, they are the ones who will have to communicate this to us, and then only we will react. In this world of eight billion people, there will always be some issues somewhere. But it's how the government is reacting, and whether enough policies are in place to ensure that rights of all individual is upheld.

China's anti-lockdown protests spread to dozens of campuses

'We need democracy, rule of law, and freedom of expression,' chant students at Tsinghua University in Beijing, Chinese president Xi Jinping's alma mater; call for an end to lockdowns and mass testing gathers steam on social media

Ananth Krishnan
BEIJING

Protests in China against the government's harsh COVID-19 lockdown measures continued to intensify over the weekend, spreading to dozens of university campuses around the country in an unprecedented challenge to the Communist Party, on a scale unseen in decades.

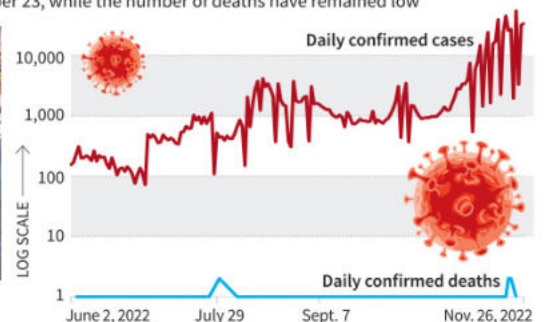
These protests were triggered by widespread anger at the death of at least 10 people in a fire in an apartment in the western city of Urumqi, with delays in extinguishing the blaze widely seen by the public as a result of lockdown policies. The protests have coincided with a record outbreak of COVID

Cases spiral in China

New COVID-19 cases crossed the 55,000 mark in China on November 23, while the number of deaths have remained low



Police officers confront a man as people block Shanghai's Wulumuqi Street in protest against China's zero-COVID policy. AFP



cases across China in recent days, which have brought fresh lockdowns. The National Health Commission on Sunday reported more than 39,500 cases, the highest since the pandemic began.

Late on Saturday night,

crowds gathered in Shanghai, on Urumqi Road, to mourn the victims of the fire. Videos on social media showed protesters calling for an end to lockdowns and mass testing. Some raised slogans against China's president

Xi Jinping and the ruling Communist Party. Several hundred people gathered in Beijing on Sunday night for a rare protest. Some laid out candles to mourn those in Urumqi, while others chanted, "We don't want COVID tests, we want

freedom!" A large police presence was deployed around the protest that took place near the Liangma river in the heart of the capital.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

China protests spread to dozens of campuses

Protests this weekend spread to over 50 Chinese college campuses, according to a list shared online and dozens of protest videos shared on social media. In the elite Tsinghua University in the heart of the Chinese capital, Mr. Xi's alma mater, students gathered on Sunday, chanting: "We need democracy, rule of law, and freedom of expression!"

"We haven't seen scenes like this since 1989," a veteran Chinese journalist told *The Hindu*, referring to the Tiananmen Square protests.

This weekend, thousands of students gathered across the country, from Sichuan University in the West to Nanjing Communications University in the east. While local protests against issues ranging from land grabs to environmental pollution are not uncommon in China, what is now unprecedented is a national-level protest on the same issue, and carried out in direct opposition to a Central government policy. Only last month, Mr. Xi defended the zero-COVID policy at the Party Congress that marked the start of his third term.

If the scenes from around campuses were certainly unprecedented, less clear is the road ahead. On Sunday, the Communist Party's official newspaper *People's Daily* declared that the government would continue to firmly adhere to the zero-COVID policy, even as anger grows at the economic and social costs, and questions mount as to how the rest of the world has left China behind in emerging from the pandemic.

Chinese health experts have told State media that the country could not afford to open up, given the vast elderly population, and the stress on its medical system that could face a collapse. China could face millions of deaths, with only 40% of the above-80 population having completed three doses of Chinese vaccines, needed to prevent hospitalisation and death. There has not been any recent attempt, however, to revive the booster campaign. That has taken a backseat, with healthcare resources devoted to lockdowns and testing instead.

Yet at the same time, millions of Chinese have struggled under the continuing weight of the zero-COVID regime. Continuing lockdowns have decimated livelihoods and the economy. University students have been particularly badly affected, spending months either in online learning or confined to their dormitories, and facing on graduation arguably the worst job prospects in China's reform era. "Our youth has been stolen," said one comment online. Thousands of students expressed their sentiment by carrying blank sheets of white paper as they gathered in their campuses, or posting blank images online to show solidarity with the protesters.

Egyptian President Sisi to be chief guest at Republic Day celebrations

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Egyptian President Abdel Fateh el-Sisi will be the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations in January 2023, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced on Sunday.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar visited Egypt in October when he referred to the “very good personal relationship” between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Mr. Sisi.

“India and Egypt enjoy warm and friendly relations based on civilisational and deep-rooted people-to-people ties.

Both countries are celebrating the 75th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations this year,” an official press release from the Ministry

Republic Day guests

Egyptian President Abdel Fateh el-Sisi will be India’s chief guest for the 2023 Republic Day celebrations. A look at chief guests down the years

Year	Guest
2023	Egyptian President Abdel Fateh el-Sisi
2020	Brazilian President Jair Messias Bolsonaro
2019	South African President Cyril Ramaphosa
2018	10 heads of state of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) members
2017	UAE Crown Prince Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan
2016	French President Francois Hollande

pointed out.

Egypt and India were founding members of the movement for non-alignment in international affairs during the 1950s and Egyptian leaders have traditionally maintained cordial ties with New Delhi. Mr. Sisi attended the India

Africa Forum Summit along with other heads of states and governments of Africa from October 26 to 29 in 2015.

The two countries are reinventing a trusted bilateral relationship through newer initiatives such as green energy. In July this

year, Egypt signed a Memorandum of Understanding with India’s ReNew Power for \$8 billion to build a clean hydrogen facility in the Suez Canal Economic Zone.

The Indian entity, backed by the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority and Goldman Sachs, is expected to produce 2,20,000 tonnes of clean fuel annually at the Egyptian facility.

Egypt, along with Bangladesh, the United Arab Emirates, Mauritius, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman, Singapore and Spain, is among the guest countries invited to attend next year’s G-20 summit that will be conducted under India’s presidency.

CONTINUED ON
» **PAGE 10**

Egypt President to be chief guest

“This is the first time that the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt will be the Chief Guest at our Republic Day,” the MEA said in its announcement. The late Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak had visited India in 2008 when the UPA Government had awarded him the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding.

G-20 presidency is an opportunity to focus on global good: Modi

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that assuming the G-20 presidency was a huge opportunity for India and that the country must utilise it by focusing on the global good. He said this during his monthly radio broadcast, *Mann Ki Baat*.

“India will assume presidency of the powerful grouping G-20 on December 1. For India, it is a huge opportunity. India must utilise the opportunity of G-20 leadership by focusing on global good and welfare,” he said. “Be it peace or unity, sensitivity towards environment or sustainable development, India has solutions to challenges related to all such things,” he said.

The PM mentioned that he received a handwoven G-20 logo woven by Yeldhi



Narendra Modi

Hariprasad of Sircilla district in Telangana, along with a letter stating that it was a matter of great pride for India to host the G-20 summit next year. “I was very happy to see how connected even a person sitting in a district in Telangana could feel with a summit like G-20,” he said, adding that he had received messages from people across India expressing similar sentiments.

BANGLADESH AND G-20

» PAGE 12

Toward legalising same-sex marriage

How do the fresh pleas in the Supreme Court seek to recognise same-sex marriage? What are the existing rights of LGBTQIA+ people in India? Which are the judgments being cited by the petitioners? Where do other countries stand on same-sex marriage?

EXPLAINER

Diksha Munjal
Privali Prakash

The story so far:

A Supreme Court Bench led by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud on November 25, issued notices to the Centre and the Attorney General of India, seeking their response to two petitions filed by gay couples to allow solemnisation of same-sex marriage under the Special Marriage Act, (SMA) 1954.

What do the petitions say?

The SMA provides a civil form of marriage for couples who cannot marry under their personal law, and both the recent pleas seek to recognise same-sex marriage in relation to this Act and not personal laws.

The first petition was filed by two men, Supriyo Chakraborty and Abhay Dang, who have been a couple for 10 years. Their petition argued that the SMA was “ultra vires” the Constitution “to the extent it discriminates between same-sex couples and opposite-sex couples”. It stated that the Act denied same-sex couples both “legal rights as well as the social recognition and status” that came from marriage. Senior Advocates Niraj Kishan Kaul and Menaka Guruswamy for the petitioners said that about 15 legislations which guaranteed the rights of wages, gratuity, adoption, surrogacy and so on were not available to LGBTQ+ citizens. The petitioners emphasised that the SMA “ought to apply to a marriage between any two persons, regardless of their gender identity and sexual orientation”.

The other petition was filed by a same-sex couple of 17 years – Parth Phiroze Mehrotra and Uday Raj Anand. Their counsel, Senior Advocate Mukul Rohatgi, argued that the recognition of same-sex marriage was only a “sequel” or a continuation of the *Navtej Singh Johar* judgment of 2018 (decriminalising homosexuality) and the *Puttaswamy* judgment of 2017 (affirming the Right to Privacy as a funda-



The next step: The Queer Pride March in 2019, New Delhi. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

mental right). Mr. Rohatgi said the petition did not touch on personal laws but only sought to make the 1954 Act “gender-neutral”. Their plea pointed out that while Section 4 of the SMA permitted the solemnisation of marriage between any two persons, a subsequent section placed restrictions. It said: “The use, in Section 4(c) of the words ‘male’ and ‘female’, as well as the use of gendered language such as the terms ‘husband/wife’ and ‘bride/bridegroom’ in other sections of the Act, limit the access to marriage to a couple comprising one ‘male’ and one ‘female’.”

Have similar petitions been filed?

There are currently a total of nine petitions pending before the High Court of Delhi and Kerala, seeking to recognise same-sex marriages under Acts such as the SMA, the Foreign Marriage Act and codified personal laws. On Friday, the Supreme Court Bench of CJI Chandrachud and Justice Himma Koli transferred the various pending issues before High Courts to itself.

One of the new petitions also placed

emphasis on another important judgment of the apex court. In the *NALSA vs Union of India* judgment (2014), the Court had said that non-binary individuals were protected under the Constitution and fundamental rights such as equality, non-discrimination, life, freedom and so on could not be restricted to those who were biologically male or female.

What is the government's stand?

Late last year, while responding to the pleas seeking recognition of same-sex marriages in the Delhi High Court, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta for the Centre had said that as per the law, marriage was permissible between a “biological man” and “biological woman”. In its affidavit opposing the pleas, the Centre had said: “The acceptance of the institution of marriage between two individuals of the same gender is neither recognised nor accepted in any uncodified personal laws or any codified statutory laws”. It also argued against the urgency of the pleas by saying nobody was “dying” in the absence of a marriage

certificate.

What about other countries?

A total of 32 countries around the world have legalised same-sex marriages, some through legislation while others through judicial pronouncements. Many countries first recognised same-sex civil unions as the escalatory step to recognise homosexual marriage. Civil unions or partnerships are similar arrangements as marriages which provide legal recognition of unmarried couples of the same or opposite sex in order to grant them some of the rights that come with marriage – such as inheritance, medical benefits, employee benefits to spouses, managing joint taxes and finances, and in some cases even adoption. The Netherlands was the first country in 2001 to legalise same-sex marriage by amending one line in its civil marriage law. In some countries, the decriminalisation of homosexuality was not followed for years by the recognition of same-sex marriage, for instance, in the U.S. the former happened in 2003 while the latter in 2015.

THE GIST

▼ A Supreme Court Bench on November 25, issued notices to the Centre and the Attorney General of India, seeking their response to two petitions filed to allow solemnisation of same-sex marriage under the Special Marriage Act.

▼ One of the petitions argues that the recognition of same-sex marriage was only a “sequel” or a continuation of the *Navtej Singh Johar* judgment of 2018 (decriminalising homosexuality) and the *Puttaswamy* judgment of 2017 (affirming the Right to Privacy as a fundamental right).

▼ Solicitor General Tushar Mehta for the Centre had said that as per the law, marriage was permissible between a “biological man” and “biological woman”.

Shifts unexplained

System of shuffling High Court judges without consent needs reconsideration

The common criticism that the functioning of the Collegium system of judicial appointments is opaque, and sometimes arbitrary, seems to hold greater validity in the matter of transfers of judges from one High Court to another. A recent round of transfers – among the dozens that have been effected in the last few years – has brought the controversial issue to the fore again. The list included three judges from the Telangana High Court, and two each from the Madras and Andhra Pradesh High Courts. Conspicuously absent was the name of Justice Nikhil S. Kariel, a Gujarat High Court judge whose proposed transfer was strongly opposed by the bar in that State. Lawyers took up the issue in support of Justice Kariel, as well as Justice A. Abhish-ek Reddy of the Telangana High Court, and the Chief Justice of India met with representatives of the Bar from both States. Yet, the transfer of Justice Kariel alone did not materialise, while the transfers of other judges were notified. If reports that the Gujarat High Court Chief Justice was unaware of the impending transfer of Justice Kariel are correct, it bodes ill for the legitimacy of transfer proposals. No good message is being sent if it is perceived that the Collegium heeds the demand made by one set of lawyers, but ignores that of another group.

Transfer of judges may be needed for exchange of talent across the country and to prevent the emergence of local cliques in the judiciary. However, the power of transfer has always been seen as a possible threat to judicial independence. Even under the Collegium system, it seems it is difficult to dispel the impression that the threat of transfer hangs over every judge's head. The Memorandum of Procedure is clear that a judge's consent is not necessary to effect a transfer. The current norm is that all transfers ought to be in public interest, that is, for better administration of justice throughout the country. It also says the personal factors of the judge, including his preference of places, should invariably be taken into account. No one knows if these requirements are fulfilled in each case. Why a puisne judge should be shifted to another State without being made a Chief Justice is seldom explained. Usually, it sets off speculation that the reasons are either allegations against the judge or the discomfiture that his judicial orders are causing to the government. Disclosure of the actual reason may not always be possible. However, it hardly needs to be stressed that transfer cannot be used as a punitive step. The time may have come for a complete review of the provisions for transfer of High Court judges.



Two cheetahs moved into acclimatisation enclosure

Two cheetahs in Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh's Sheopur were moved from the quarantine zone to the larger acclimatisation enclosure on Sunday, which took the total number of big cats in the latter area to five, an official said. Eight cheetahs arrived in the State from Namibia in southern Africa on September 17 as part the ambitious reintroduction project of the species and were released into the quarantine zone by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "Female cheetahs Asha and Tbilisi joined males Obaan, Alton, and Freddie in the larger enclosure," said Kuno Divisional Forest Officer Prakash Kumar Verma. PTI

India, Australia wargames to begin today

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI

A bilateral training exercise between India and Australian armies will kick-start in Rajasthan from Monday, the Defence Ministry said.

‘Austra Hind 22’ is scheduled to take place at Mahajan Field Firing Ranges from November 28 to December 11.

It will be a yearly event conducted alternatively in India and Australia.

Nagaland group to raise its bifurcation bid with Shah

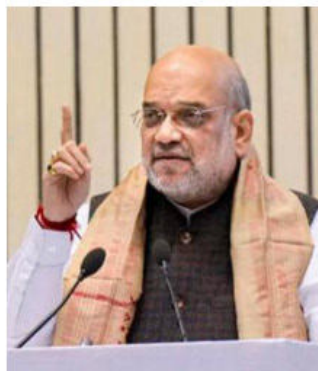
The Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation has decided not to participate in the Hornbill Festival and threatened to boycott the 2023 Assembly election in the State if its demand is not fulfilled

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Leaders of a group representing six districts seeking to break away from Nagaland are scheduled to discuss its Statehood demand with Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi on December 3.

A spokesperson of the Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation (ENPO) said Mr. Shah has invited a team to discuss the Statehood demand for six of Nagaland's 16 districts.

Six major tribes dominating these districts have been demanding the creation of 'Frontier Nagaland'



Amit Shah

to be free from "decades of neglect".

To skip festival

The ENPO had earlier decided not to participate in the State's flagship Hornbill Festival that starts on December 1. The annual

festival at Kisama near State capital Kohima showcases the culture and tradition of all the ethnic communities of Nagaland.

Nagaland's Chief Secretary, J. Alam, said the government had requested the ENPO and all the associated tribal leaders to reconsider their decision. The government is awaiting a positive response from them, Mr. Alam added.

Launching its Statehood demand in August, the ENPO threatened to boycott the 2023 Assembly election in the State if its demand for the bifurcation of Nagaland was not fulfilled. "If the Centre fails to res-

pond to our appeal, we shall ask all our 20 elected representatives (MLAs) to resign," the spokesperson said.

Nagaland has a total of 60 Assembly seats and 20 of these are in six districts – Kiphire, Longleng, Mon, Noklak, Shamator and Tuensang.

The ruling Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) has 15 of these seats, ally Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has four, and one MLA is Independent. The NDPP has 42 MLAs in the State Assembly, the BJP has 12, and the Naga People's Front has four, while two are Independents.

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.