

VEDHIK
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ANALYSIS
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FOREWORD

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

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

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

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EU plans €300 billion infra fund to counter China's BRI

It aims at mobilising public and private investments by 2027

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BRUSSELS

The European Commission announced on Wednesday a plan to mobilise €300 billion (\$340 billion) in public and private infrastructure investment around the world, a move seen as a response to China's Belt and Road strategy.

"Global Gateway will aim at mobilising investments of up to 300 billion euros between 2021 and 2027... bringing together resources of the EU, member states, European financial institutions and national development finance institutions," a commission document said.

Global Gateway

The Global Gateway plan does not mention China's rival and longer-standing international infrastructure

strategy by name – but EU chief Ursula von der Leyen called it a "roadmap for major investment in infrastructure development around the world."

The money to be made available will not come from EU and member state coffers, and the plan will need funding from international institutions and from the private sector if it is to get anywhere near its target.

China launched its global investment strategy known as Belt and Road, a flagship project of President Xi Jinping, in 2013. Beijing has said it had invested \$139.8 billion by 2020, including \$22.5 billion last year alone.

Officially, it aims to develop land and sea infrastructure to better connect China to Asia, Europe and Africa for trade and development,

and it has found many partners around the world.

The West, however, sees it as a tool for China to influence poorer countries. They criticise Beijing for inciting emerging economies to take on too much debt, and allege the secretive tender process is prone to corruption.

China argues that it respects its partners' sovereignty while providing loans that benefit joint projects, while critics say Beijing's contractual terms ignore abuses of human, labour and environmental rights.

The EU strategy is an offshoot of a plan by G7 countries to offer developing countries an alternative to Belt and Road Initiative, presented in June at the industrial powers' summit in Cornwall.

India joins G20's Troika with Indonesia and Italy

It is set to take over presidency in 2022

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India on Wednesday joined the G20 'Troika'.

With this move, India has started the procedure for taking over the G20 presidency next year. Troika refers to the top grouping within the G20 that consists of the current, previous and the incoming presidencies – Indonesia, Italy and India.

"India will assume the G20 presidency on December 1, 2022 from Indonesia, and will convene the G20 Leaders' Summit for the first time in India in 2023," the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement.

Italy hosted the G20 summit during October 30-31 that was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi where India had raised the issue of Afghanistan's future following the takeover by the Taliban.

Indonesia took over the G20 presidency on Wednesday. In the coming months, Indonesia will hold rounds of discussion at various levels among the members of



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Indonesian President Joko Widodo at the recent G20 summit.

the G20 before convening the G20 Leaders' Summit scheduled for October 30-31, 2022. Next year's summit will be organised along the overall theme of "Recover Together, Recover Stronger".

"As a Troika member, India will work closely with Indonesia and Italy to ensure consistency and continuity of the G20's agenda," the Ministry of External Affairs said.

In border stand-off, a manufactured refugee crisis

This issue concerning the EU, Poland, Belarus, Russia and Ukraine subserves aspects of their foreign, domestic agendas



KRISHNAN SRINIVASAN

Tensions have flared in Eastern Europe and on the Belarusian-Polish border with thousands of asylum seekers attempting to enter Poland, which constitutes the external border of the European Union (EU). Belarus is accused of permitting visa-free entry to refugees, in particular Kurds, from the war-torn West Asia and encouraging their passage to the EU border. Since the EU's external border constitutes its only line of defence against unwanted migrants, Poland used water cannon and tear gas to repel the asylum-seekers, and except for the gravely ill, those who breached the border have been pushed back. In freezing conditions, some 15 or more refugees have died. This crisis and escalation of rhetoric between the EU, Poland, Belarus, Russia and Ukraine subserves aspects of the foreign and domestic agendas of all these governments.

For Belarus President Aleksander Lukashenko, under sanctions by the EU since last year's election

when he secured a sixth dubious term, this is brinkmanship with both the EU and Russia. Belarus has economic and military alliances with Russia, effectively making it the Russian last frontier against an encroaching North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). While Belarus is entirely dependent on Russia, this does not preclude a client state from proving a difficult partner. North Korea is troublesome for China, Haiti for the United States, and there are other examples nearer home. Mr. Lukashenko even threatened to block the pipeline transporting Russian gas through Belarus to the EU, a threat speedily negated by Moscow.

A focus on the EU

President Lukashenko denies inviting migrants to Belarus, instead blaming the EU for closing its borders. He seeks to pressure the EU with a scenario akin the 2015 refugee crisis, when the EU gave money and non-financial incentives to Turkey and certain Libyan warlords to restrain the migration exodus. Finding these tactics blocked, he proposed that Germany take in 2,000 refugees while 7,000 others would be repatriated, but this was rejected, and the majority of migrants are refusing to go home.

Politicians in West and East Europe accuse Moscow as instigator



of the crisis amid claims that Russia is about to invade Ukraine. It defies logic why Russia would stage a crisis with Germany, the destination of the asylum seekers, and invade Ukraine, when procedures are afoot to certify Nord Stream 2, a pipeline to deliver gas to the EU bypassing Ukraine and Belarus. The argument of instigating Russia into reckless action involving Belarus and Ukraine in order to derail Nord Stream 2 makes much more sense, particularly from an American viewpoint.

After initially declaring that it saw no evidence of Russian mobilisation, Ukraine changed tack and endorsed NATO claims of an imminent invasion. Russian grievances concern the use of Turkish-built drones in the Donbass breakaway provinces of Donetsk and Luhansk, and provocative NATO activities close to its land and sea

borders. The 2015 Minsk agreement was designed to end the conflict in Donbass through provincial elections, decentralisation and the restoration of socio-economic relations between Kiev and the breakaway self-styled republics, but there has been no constitutional amendment, no elections, and Donbass is subject to an economic blockade.

Moscow has evidently lost hope in Kiev observing the Minsk agreement for substantial regional autonomy. Russian President Vladimir Putin's decree of 2019 allowed Donbass people to claim Russian citizenship, and the latest Kremlin moves to integrate Donbass economically, will turn Ukraine's east, like Crimea, slowly into a de facto Russian region.

Warsaw's stance

Poland seems the unwilling victim of the tactics of Belarus, but the refugee crisis is a godsend for Warsaw when both Poland and the EU are entangled in a bitter dispute over the rule of law after Poland's Constitutional Tribunal invalidated some provisions of the EU Treaty. Contrary to EU's principles, Warsaw promotes 'traditional values' which include homophobic legislation, LGBT-free zones and a ban on abortions. Poland has imposed a ban on journalists and NGOs within three kilometres of

its frontier, and is under criticism from human rights groups and the Council of Europe, but the tension affords Warsaw scope to boost anti-Russian rhetoric and proclaim itself a defender of Europe, despite anti-immigrant tirades being a staple of its far-right politics. The border problem also gives the EU the opportunity to prove its worth to Poland by extending its fulsome support.

The larger issue

The crisis on the Belarus-Poland border is symptomatic of the wider refugee problem. In recent months the United States has turned away Haitians, Thailand Burmese, India Rohingya and Afghans. More than 25,000 people arrived in Britain by sea this year, causing British Prime Minister Boris Johnson to fulminate against France's failure to stem the refugees of whom 27 drowned recently.

The migrant crisis is not confined to a few countries, has led to wars like the one between India and Pakistan 50 years ago, and requires corrective action at the transnational level. There are now an estimated 26 million refugees in the world and no country has a credible record on this issue.

Krishnan Srinivasan is a former Foreign Secretary

Point of disorder

Disruption of proceedings, suspension of MPs undermine parliamentary democracy equally

The suspension of 12 Opposition Members of Parliament from the Rajya Sabha for the entire winter session of Parliament, evidently an extreme step by Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu, has turned the spotlight on the use of disruption of proceedings as a parliamentary tactic. The Government and the Opposition should try and work a way out of this situation, but that may not resolve the underlying affliction of perennial conflict between the two sides. A guiding principle of parliamentary proceedings is that the majority, i.e. the Government, will have its way, and the minority, the Opposition, will have its say. This principle has been observed in its violation in India for several years now. As the principal Opposition in the years leading up to 2014, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) so disrupted Parliament that a majority government was rendered dysfunctional for years; since 2014, in power, the BJP has tinkered with parliamentary processes in a way that the Opposition has been pinned down. Bills are passed in a hurry and even amidst din; the scrutiny of Bills by committees and debates are few and far between. Also, the decision to suspend Members for their conduct in the previous monsoon session at the beginning of a new session seems excessively punitive. This is no defence of disruption in general or the behaviour of the particular MPs, but the punishment is only worsening the conflict, and not facilitating debate.

Parliament is the platform where the executive is held accountable to the representatives of the people. That is where people's representatives raise matters of public concern and seek the Government's attention. The trend of weakening that process in the name of efficiency is not merely undermining the spirit of democracy; it is also landing the Government itself in a difficult spot as the mayhem that followed the hurried passage of three controversial farm laws last year shows. Parliamentary debates should not be viewed as a distraction or waste of time; they are a barometer of public mood and must be respected as such, by both the ruling side and the Opposition. Disruption as a brief, momentary reaction to a situation that demands debate is understandable, but as a sustained strategy, it is self-defeating. The absence of the Opposition will only leave the Government even more unchecked. It was the BJP's Arun Jaitley who theorised on the legitimacy of disruptions as a parliamentary instrument. It is time to shun that idea. The Government must make amends to restore the function of Parliament by deferring to parliamentary mechanisms, and also through informal channels of communication with the Opposition.

Bill to regulate IVF clinics passed in Lok Sabha

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill, 2020, that proposes the establishment of a national registry and registration authority for all clinics and medical professionals serving in the field.

Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, while moving the Bill for passage, said several suggestions of the Standing Committee have been considered by the Government to improve the legislation. The Bill seeks to regulate and supervise Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) clinics and

ART banks, prevent misuse, adopt safe and ethical practice and so on.

"Many such ART clinics have been running without regulation. A need was felt for regulation of such clinics as there are implications on health of those who undertake the procedure," Mr. Mandaviya told the House.

Opening the debate, Congress's Karti Chidambaram said this law is Victorian as it does not include lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender people (LGBTQ) or single men for exercising the right. He also urged the Government to consider supporting poor childless parents to take ART's help.

Road to recovery

Policy makers must boost demand-supportive measures to ensure recovery sustains

The latest GDP and GVA estimates from the National Statistical Office have affirmed that the economy is now on the path to recovery after last fiscal's record contraction. Second quarter gross domestic product expanded 8.4%, rebounding from the year-earlier period's 7.4% contraction. While the statistical advantage from the base effect surely aided the expansion, the economy appears to have gathered just enough momentum for GDP to post a marginal 0.3% growth even when compared with the second quarter of the pre-pandemic 2019-20 fiscal year. The gross value added figures, which capture the extent of activity across the eight major formal sectors of the real economy, too underscore the improvement, with the July-September 2021 GVA figure of ₹32.89-lakh crore registering a 0.5% expansion from the July-September period of 2019. Five of the eight sectors posted growth not just from the year-earlier quarter but also surpassed the pre-COVID-19 performance. Manufacturing, which has the second-largest share of GVA, appears to have regained traction and was the bulwark of GVA, logging a 3.9% expansion from the pre-pandemic second quarter of fiscal 2020. The key employment-providing services categories, however, are yet to fully recover from the pandemic's devastating impact, and along with construction, another major provider of jobs, lagged pre-pandemic levels by a cumulative ₹77,000 crore. With the potential impact of the Omicron variant a big unknown, the outlook here may stay hazy for now.

A disaggregated view of the GDP data also reveals areas of concern that could undermine the recovery. Private final consumption expenditure that measures spending on everything from essentials to luxury goods and the entire gamut of services by all consumers, and has the largest share of GDP at 55%, is still treading water. The uncertainty induced by the pandemic, coupled with reduced or lost incomes, continues to depress demand and is mirrored in consumer spending still remaining 3.5% shy of the pre-COVID level. Government consumption spending, which has often been a reliable alternative source of demand with a capacity to serve as a multiplier, is also well below the fiscal 2020 second quarter, possibly by design as the Centre seeks to consolidate its fiscal position. Unless aggregate demand strengthens, the heartening uptick in business investment, as reflected in the 11% year-on-year jump in gross fixed capital formation, could come to naught with capacity additions remaining underutilised and corporate captains yet again tightening their purse strings. Manufacturing PMI data by IHS Markit has another salutary warning: rising input costs could force manufacturers to raise prices adding to the general inflationary pressures in the economy and undermine the recovery. Policy makers need to ramp up demand-supportive measures including increasing government spending to ensure that the recovery sustains and gains traction.

OECD cuts world growth outlook on Omicron fears

Global economy seen growing by 5.6%

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) warned on Wednesday that the Omicron variant threatens the global economic recovery as it lowered the growth outlook for 2021 and appealed for a swifter roll-out of COVID vaccines.

The global economy is now expected to expand by 5.6% this year, down from an earlier forecast of 5.7%, the OECD said in its updated economic outlook which warns that low vaccination areas could create "breeding grounds" for deadlier virus mutations. Its forecast



for 2022 remains unchanged at 4.5%, but the report was released only days after Omicron was detected.

"We are concerned that the new variant of the virus is further adding to the already high levels of uncertainty and risks, and that could be a threat to the recovery," OECD chief economist Laurence Boone said.

Exports dip widening trade deficit to a record \$23.27 bn

Imports exceed \$50 billion for a third straight month

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India's merchandise exports slipped below the \$30-billion mark for the first time in eight months in November to \$29.88 billion, even as imports rose sharply, taking the monthly trade deficit to a fresh high.

Imports outpaced exports, jumping 38% from pre-COVID levels compared with the 16% increase in exports, though they moderated slightly month-on-month to \$53.1 billion from \$55.4 billion in October.

The trade deficit widened to a fresh record of \$23.27 billion, from \$19.9 billion in the previous month. This is almost 83% higher than the



November 2019 levels. The previous highest monthly trade deficit of \$22.6 billion was recorded in September.

'Worrying deficit'

The trade deficit from April to November 2021 is now close to \$122 billion, 7.5% over the same period in FY20. The sharp 16% sequential slide in exports led to a flare-

up in the trade deficit to a record-high, and the three months since September have now recorded a deficit of \$65 billion, which is worrying, said ICRA chief economist Aditi Nayar. Imports, she pointed out, had exceeded \$50 billion in each of these months.

"Holidays in the festive season have substantially dented the momentum in merchandise exports in November, bringing them down to the lowest level of FY22. We are cautiously optimistic that export momentum will revive, although the uncertainty engendered by the Omicron variant poses a concern regarding the immediate outlook," she said.

India-China trade deficit was \$30 bn in April-Sept.

Exports stood at \$12.26 bn, says Patel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

India's trade deficit with China stood at \$30.07 billion during April-September 2021, Parliament was informed on Wednesday.

India's exports to China during the April-September 2021 period were \$12.26 billion, while imports aggregated to \$42.33 billion, according to data given by Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Anupriya Patel in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

She said the imports from China had increased from \$60.41 billion in 2014-15 to \$65.21 billion in 2020-21, exhibiting an increase of 7.94% over six years. However, the imports were static between

Imports from China were static between 2019-20 and 2020-21

ANUPRIYA PATEL
MoS, Commerce and Industry

2019-20 and 2020-21, she said. "The government has made sustained efforts to achieve a more balanced trade with China, including bilateral engagements to address the non-tariff barriers on Indian exports to China," Ms. Patel said.

Schemes like the production-linked incentive scheme will help promote domestic manufacturing capacities and attract investments and reduce dependency on imports from China, the Minister said.

'Cyberattacks hit 26,000 Indian sites in 10 months'

Hidden servers help veil identity: MoS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Almost 26,000 Indian websites have been hacked into in the 10-month period ended October, Parliament was informed on Wednesday.

"CERT-In has reported that a total number of 17,560, 24,768, 26,121 and 25,870 Indian websites were hacked during the years 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 (up to October), respectively," Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar said in a written reply to Lok Sabha.

The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) is mandated to track and monitor cybersecurity incidents in India.

"There have been at-



tempts from time to time to launch cyberattacks on Indian cyberspace... attackers are compromising computer systems located in different parts of the world and use masquerading techniques and hidden servers to hide the identity of actual systems from which the attacks are being launched," the Minister said in his reply to the lower house.

General Studies Paper I	
A	History of Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of art forms, literature and architecture from ancient to modern times;
B	Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present-significant events, personalities, issues;
C	Freedom struggle-its various stages and important contributors / contributions from different parts of the country;
D	Post-independence consolidation and reorganization within the country;
E	History of the world will include events from 18 th century such as industrial revolution, world wars, re-drawal of national boundaries, colonization, decolonization,
F	Political philosophies like communism, capitalism, socialism etc.-their forms and effect on the society
G	Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India;
H	Effects of globalization on Indian society;
I	Role of women and women's organization;
J	Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism
K	Salient features of world's physical geography;
L	Geographical features and their location- changes in critical geographical features (including water bodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes;
M	Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclone etc.
N	Distribution of key natural resources across the world (including South Asia and the Indian subcontinent);
O	Factors responsible for the location of primary, secondary, and tertiary sector industries in various parts of the world (including India);
P	Population and associated issues;
Q	Urbanization, their problems and their remedies
General Studies Paper II	
A	India and its neighbourhood- relations;
B	Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate;
C	Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests;
D	Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.
E	Indian Constitution, historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure;
F	Comparison of the Indian Constitutional scheme with other countries;
G	Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein; Inclusive growth and issues arising from it;
H	Parliament and State Legislatures - structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these;
I	Structure, organization and functioning of the executive and the judiciary, Ministries and Departments;

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

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