

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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Cuffed and collared

Myanmar's junta is attempting to break the spirit of the people by jailing their leaders

The sentencing of Myanmar leaders to four years in prison on two separate charges on Monday, by a court run by the military junta, appears to be just the first of a number of sentences aimed at putting State Councillor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, President Win Myint and other government leaders in custody for decades. The verdicts that relate to cases dealing with “incitement against the military” and for “breaching Covid laws” are frighteningly farcical. One relates to speeches made during protests against the military’s decision to dismiss the results of last November’s elections, which Ms. Suu Kyi’s party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), clearly won. The other, even more ridiculous, is for breaching COVID-19 protocols at an election rally when she was photographed wearing both a face mask and a shield throughout her campaign. The sentences, and the ones that will follow, are meant not only to ensure an end to the NLD and Ms. Suu Kyi’s public life but are also part of an effort to break the spirit of democratic groups. Over the past eight months since the military coup in February, more than 1,300 civilians protesting the military’s actions have been killed, and thousands including the entire NLD government arrested, with detentions, trials and sentences carried out in secret. In more evidence of the military’s brutality, three people were reportedly mowed down by a military vehicle on Sunday, when they took part in a peaceful protest.

The military’s messaging is not aimed only domestically, however. Its actions are meant to challenge the international community as well, which has failed to take any action against Myanmar’s leadership in the past few years: first on its ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya that drove a million out to refugee camps in Bangladesh (which the NLD government was complicit in), and then its actions against the democratically elected government itself. Since February, the UN Security Council has done little other than issuing statements appealing for an end to the violence and the restoration of democracy, and to suspend the nation’s UN seat. While China, which has deep links with the military and a considerable investment in the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor, has sought to protect the junta from sanctions, the U.S. has proven ineffective in ensuring a different outcome as well. It is ironic that Ms. Suu Kyi’s sentencing comes in a week when the U.S. hosts a “Summit for Democracy”. The Modi government too, given its worries about losing a foothold in the neighbourhood, and its need for cooperation with the Myanmar military over the restive North-eastern border, has chosen silence over any serious attempt to change the course of events in Myanmar. Much like its inability to influence outcomes in Afghanistan, India’s ineffectual posture over the developments in Myanmar could also cause it considerable reputational damage as a regional leader.

'China is more confrontational than in the past'

Existing border agreements are no longer adequate, says former Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao

ANANTH KRISHNAN
HONG KONG

The deterioration in India's relations with China today is "much worse" than what followed previous border crises such as the years-long stand-off at Sumdorong Chu in Arunachal Pradesh in 1986, with China adopting a much more "confrontational" approach, according to former Foreign Secretary and Ambassador to China Nirupama Rao.

Further transgressions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), where China's incursions starting in April 2020 triggered an as yet unresolved crisis, cannot be ruled out with past border agreements, designed to keep the peace, no longer adequate, Ms. Rao told *The Hindu*, speaking in an interview about her new book *"The Fractured Himalaya: India, Tibet, China 1949-1962."*

"In 1986, the Chinese intrusion into the Wangdung area in Tawang district of

Arunachal Pradesh made relations slide back and deteriorate. The deterioration today, however, is much worse," Ms. Rao said.

"Today, we are dealing with a much more assertive, much more militarily powerful China, and a very, very hyper nationalistic China. Their whole approach to these contested areas is far more confrontational than it was in Sumdorong Chu."

Ms. Rao, who was involved in the process of both sides coming up with four border agreements to keep the peace starting in 1993, said the arrangements had come under stress since 2010 with the growing strength of both countries and capacities to patrol in contested areas. In June 2020, 20 Indian soldiers and at least four Chinese soldiers were killed in a clash in Galwan Valley which marked the worst violence since 1967.

Since then, both sides



Nirupama Rao

have disengaged in some areas but talks to do so in other hot-spots remain deadlocked, with Indian officials saying China has been dragging its feet to disengage. The prospect of de-escalation also appears remote with thousands of troops still present in forward areas in Ladakh. The PLA is also bolstering infrastructure closer to the LAC, not just in Ladakh but also in the eastern sector.

"We are now faced with a

situation where we can have such potential clashes, god forbid, in many other contested areas, too, unless there is a process of disengagement and de-escalation that both sides have the political vision, willingness and courage to do, and I don't see that happening at the moment." Past agreements, she said, "definitely served their purpose but they were not adequate".

Proper reading

The former Foreign Secretary said she was motivated to write the history of the crucial 13 years in India's relations with China leading up to 1962 to enable a younger demographic to have a proper reading of history and "approach the issue with both reason and imagination."

"If you don't understand the history, you will keep repeating the same shibboleths and make the same missteps and miscalcula-

tions all over again," Ms. Rao said. On the Tibet factor in India-China relations, which the book deals with in detail, Ms. Rao said while India, and almost every country in the world, sees Tibet as a part of China, India has an interest in helping preserve Tibet's cultural and civilisational identity, which has been fostered through the presence of the Dalai Lama and a large Tibetan community in India.

On the question of the Dalai Lama's succession, Ms. Rao said while she hoped the Dalai Lama lives "for as long as possible" and while China had indicated "in no uncertain terms" that it would determine the next Dalai Lama, she hoped the Chinese "could be more responsive and more empathetic to the sentiments of the Tibetan people when it comes to the question of succession".

(Listen to the full conversation on our *The Hindu* On Books podcast: <https://bit.ly/NirupamaRao>)

Suu Kyi sentenced to four years in prison

Myanmar junta chief Min Aung Hlaing later reduced the ousted leader's jail sentence to two years

REUTERS
YANGON

The junta in Myanmar jailed ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi on Monday for four years for incitement against the military and breaching COVID-19 rules, the first of a series of possible sentences that could see the Nobel laureate imprisoned for decades.

Ms. Suu Kyi, 76, has been detained since the Generals staged a coup and ousted her Government on February 1, ending the Southeast Asian country's brief period of democracy. She has since been hit with a series of charges, including violating the official secrets act, illegally importing walkie talkies and electoral fraud.

On Monday, Ms. Suu Kyi was sentenced to two years for incitement against the military and another two



A file photo of protesters holding portraits of Aung San Suu Kyi at an anti-coup demonstration in Mandalay. ■AP

years for breaching a natural disaster law relating to COVID-19, junta spokesman Zaw Min Tun said. Former President Win Myint was also initially jailed for four years on the same charges.

Later in the day, junta chief Min Aung Hlaing "pardoned" the sentences of

both to "two years imprisonment", according to a statement read out on state TV. The incitement conviction related to statements Ms. Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party published shortly after the coup condemning the takeover.

The COVID charge is

linked to last year's election, which the NLD won in a landslide, but the details are not clear with the government imposing a gag order on the court proceedings.

Journalists have been barred from attending the special court hearings in Naypyidaw and Ms. Suu Kyi's lawyers were recently banned from speaking to the media.

UN slams jail term

U.N. human rights chief Michelle Bachelet on Monday denounced a four-year jail term handed down to Myanmar's ousted leader Suu Kyi after a "sham trial" and called for her immediate release.

The conviction of Ms. Suu Kyi "closes yet another door to political dialogue" in Myanmar, where the military took power on February 1,

and "will only deepen rejection of the coup", Ms. Bachelet said in a statement in Geneva.

A court jailed Ms. Suu Kyi for four years on Monday on charges of incitement and breaching coronavirus restrictions, said a source in a case that critics described as "farfetched".

Dr. Sasa, a spokesperson for Myanmar's shadow civilian government set up following the coup, called on the international community to step up sanctions against Myanmar's military rulers.

Western countries have demanded Ms. Suu Kyi's release and condemned the violence since the coup in which some 1,300 people have been killed, according to rights groups.

The EU's top diplomat condemned the verdict as "politically motivated".

Will deepen ties with Bangladesh: Modi

Maitri Divas will set the stage for several engagements between the two nations

KALLOL BHATTACHARJEE
NEW DELHI

India would further "expand and deepen" ties with Bangladesh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday, marking Maitri Divas that commemorates the day when India recognised Bangladesh as an independent country in 1971.

Addressing an event organised jointly at the Indian Council of World Affairs, former Information Minister of Bangladesh Hasanul Haq Inu recollected the struggle to liberate Bangladesh from Pakistan and urged both countries to remain vigilant against the "communal bomb".

Mr. Modi said in his public message, "Today India and Bangladesh commemorate Maitri Divas. We jointly recall and celebrate the foundations of our 50 years of friendship. I look forward to continue working with H.E. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to further expand and deepen our ties."

The war to liberate Bangladesh began on December 3, 1971 and ended with the signing of the Instrument of Surrender by Pakistani General A.A.K. Niazi on December 16. Three days after the beginning of the war, the Government of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi recognised Bangladesh as an indepen-

I remember with great gratitude the sacrifices of the members of the Indian armed forces and its people in our liberation war

SHEIKH HASINA
Bangladesh PM

dent nation.

The message of Maitri Divas set the stage for several bilateral engagements, including the visit of President Ram Nath Kovind on December 16 to celebrate the Victory Day. Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla will visit Dhaka on Tuesday.

"I remember with great gratitude the sacrifices of the

members of the Indian armed forces and its people in our liberation war. Today our great partnership has matured, taking dynamic, comprehensive and strategic shape," Ms. Hasina said.

Mr. Inu said both sides should ensure that the border was policed without the use of firearms. "We need to fix our priorities. We need to remove irritants. I do humbly say that the border is an irritation for both of us," he stated, hinting at the frequent killing of Bangladesh civilians at the border. He asked both countries to harness natural resources to defeat poverty and communal forces.

Expanding India's engagement envelope with Russia

Beyond existing fields such as defence and energy, there are other areas which can help deepen their links



RAJEEV RANJAN CHATURVEDY

Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to New Delhi for the 21st India-Russia Summit meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlights the constant efforts by both leaders to nurture and to provide further impetus to the 'India-Russia Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership'. In the new grammar of multipolarity and globalisation, it is of utmost importance for dependable partners to ensure enduring sensitivity to their mutual interests.

Strategic partnership

More importantly, the robust partnership between India and Russia has come out of the shackles of the Cold War inheritance. A practical and result-oriented approach will pave the way for the most reliable partnership. The Putin-Modi meeting in an atmosphere of unprecedented regional and global transformations can ensure not only a new lease of life but can also generate more vitality to this trust-worthy camaraderie.

India-Russia relations have withstood the test of time and the

ever-shifting nature of national interests. Relations between the two countries have deepened with time irrespective of the quagmire of realpolitik. This exceptional resilience is built on the firm foundation of strategic national interest and the synergy of geopolitics.

In the post-Cold War era, India has emerged as an economic powerhouse and a key stakeholder in today's global debate by its climate change, international trade, or the menace of terrorism. Russia with its global status and presence presents a win-win situation for deeper cooperation. This relation between both countries has evolved with time, deepening the integration and widening the breadth of the relation.

A structure in place

Russia has been one of India's closest friends and allies with the signing of the "Declaration on the India-Russia Strategic Partnership" in October 2000 which unlocked new opportunities in strategic, science and technology, space, energy, nuclear ties, trade and commerce, culture and a people-to-people connect. For smooth functioning of this strategic partnership, it was governed by an institutionalised dialogue mechanism involving key stakeholders at the political and official levels. Mr. Putin's visit to India in December 2010 heralded a new chapter in India-Russia relations when the Stra-



FILE PHOTO/REUTERS

tegic Partnership was elevated to the level of a "Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership".

Convergence and divergence

India and Russia have much convergence spanning different sectors. Russia is the key and principal supplier of arms and armaments to the Indian armed forces accounting for over 60% of weapons. It comprises the whole gamut covering the Indian Army, Indian Air Force and Indian Navy. India recently inducted the S-400 Triumf missile systems. Sukhoi Su-30 fighter aircraft, T-90 tanks, and the Talwar and the Krivak class stealth frigates are key weapons in the armoury of the Indian armed forces. The India-Russia defence cooperation has evolved from a buyer-seller model to new areas of military-technical collaboration. The BrahMos missile system was a successful collaboration

of joint research, development, and production. Science and technology, nuclear, energy, space have been key driving forces. But changes in interests and capabilities being fuelled by geopolitical differences are widening the divergence between India and Russia. In terms of geostrategy, Russia is aligned with China and India is more anchored toward the United States. This dissonance was apparent in the Indian and Russian approach over Afghanistan.

Bilateral trade has seen the two countries progressing from defence and energy to IT, pharmaceuticals, agro-industries, mineral and metallurgy, fertilizers, and infrastructure projects. India-Russia trade was valued at the U.S.\$10.11 billion in 2019-20, but is not a true reflection of the potential that can be harnessed.

Stability and diversity

The '2+2' mechanism has become the standard framework of cooperation to widen collaboration. The inaugural '2+2' dialogue between the Foreign and Defence Ministers of the two countries promises to provide new vitality to the special and privileged strategic partnership. The uniqueness of this approach not only ensures result-oriented cooperation but also deliberates upon regional and global matters of mutual concerns and interests. At a time when global politics is in a state of flux, it

becomes more important to have compatibility with geopolitical and geoeconomic realities along with the trust of the leadership. Therefore, this evolving political framework provides the necessary agility to the relationship in fine-tuning their differences and deepening their bonds. The Modi-Putin meeting has sent the unambiguous signal to the world that the India-Russia partnership is an incredible friendship ensuring stability and diversity.

Defence, trade and investment, energy, and science and technology may be part of the agenda, but India and Russia need to work together in a trilateral manner or using other flexible frameworks, particularly in Southeast Asia and Central Asia. Their growing collaboration can be a force of stability and will bring more diversity to the region while strengthening multilateralism.

Second, the two countries also need to look at peoples' power – youth exchanges as well as deeper links in various fields including sport, culture, spiritual and religious studies.

Finally, Buddhism can be an area where both countries can expand their interaction, where peace and sustainability can act as a balm in this turbulent world.

Rajeev Ranjan Chaturvedi is Associate Professor at Nalanda University, Rajgir, Bihar. The views expressed are personal

The way to tackle malnutrition

It is high time that the process of monitoring nutrition got importance over survey outcomes



K.R. ANTONY

The National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-5 shows negligible gains in nutritional outcomes among under-five children. There has been tardy progress in reducing undernutrition, wasting and stunting. It is a national shame that even now, 35.5% of under-five children are stunted and 19.3% are wasted. Childhood anaemia has worsened from NFHS-4. Anaemia among adolescent girls and women aged 15-49 has also worsened. Though institutional delivery has gone up, early initiation of breastfeeding is static. If we are serious about a healthy new generation, we must ensure proper nutrition and growth.

While we need to monitor data for programmatic evaluation and correction, the question is, what type of data do we need to help starving children? Is it data on how much food is supplied, served and consumed or data on what went wrong and the prevalence of weight loss and growth stagnation? Do we need output or impact data or input and process data with their quality parameters?

We need to monitor the input and process indicators. That is how we can rectify past mistakes. Data generated quickly can lead to mid-course corrections. Data-driven planning and strategies lead to good governance with accountability.

The way forward

So, what can we do? After monitoring the successful initiation of breastfeeding in the hospital, anganwadi workers, ASHA workers and Auxiliary Nurse Midwives must continue to monitor exclusive breastfeeding till the infant is six months old. Then they must record the timely initiation of complementary feeding with soft gruel. If this step is missed, growth faltering starts. And this is the critical period of growth that we cannot afford to compromise on. We must also ensure that there is take-home ration for under-three children through the regular supply of supplementary nutrition from the Integrated Child Development Services. We also need to know whether anganwadis are intermittently closed without any valid reason; whether the supervisors are erratic in field monitoring; how we can capture the regularity and quantity of dry rations supplied to anganwadi centres and schools for mid-day meals;

whether there is live web-based centrally monitorable data on the movement of dry rations to anganwadis and schools; whether parents and teachers can monitor the serving of hot, cooked meals; whether self-help groups of women are involved in preparing the menu and procuring locally available vegetables, grains and millets to ensure dietary diversification and whether eggs are being denied or stopped for sociopolitical reasons.

What goes into the family pot is also important. This depends on what parents can earn, and their purchasing capacity. So, it is important to monitor the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme workdays as well as the wages earned in areas where droughts frequently recur; where there is mass migration; and where there is prevalence of high malnutrition. The National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau was shut down some years ago. So, we don't know what families can afford to cook and what they are cooking.

Monitoring PDS

Real-time monitoring of the Public Distribution System (PDS) will go a long way in ensuring food at the family level. Except in a few States where web-based portals are functioning, there is no monitoring of when PDS shops are open as well as the quantity and quality of dry rations supplied. Unfortunately, PDS is a hunger-mitigation mechanism; it does not enable nutrition security. The aim of the National Food Security Act of 2013 is to ensure that nobody goes to bed hungry and there is no starvation. The PDS is focused on procuring wheat and rice through the Food Corporation of India to distribute to families. Cereals fill the stomach and hunger is averted, but not malnutrition.

There seems to be an aversion to facts and to reality that demands immediate action. Many established surveys seem to have methodological errors. The Consumer Expenditure Survey results of 2017-18, for instance, were withheld.

Both Poshan Abhiyan and the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana need to be monitored with the help of the community to ensure sustainable nutrition security.

Little of what is happening in the field right now reaches programme managers and policymakers for timely action. So, what is the point of crying over spilt milk? Malnourished children do not need repeated surveys that confirm our apathy and heartless inaction.

K.R. Antony is a pediatrician, former health and nutrition specialist for UNICEF and Independent Monitor, National Health Mission, based in Kochi. Views are personal

Basking in reflected glory

It is a cause for concern that those trained in India go abroad to become hugely successful



G.R. GOPINATH

"Wow!" I said when news flashed that one more Indian, Parag Agrawal, from one of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) had been appointed the CEO of Twitter, a global technology behemoth that is shaping opinions, politics and the lives of people around the world. Is this a cause for joy? Did the hearts of Indians swell with pride? Indeed. Which parent won't rejoice at such an achievement? Is there any alma mater which will not be proud of students like Mr. Agrawal?

A mass exodus

Yet, there was something troubling, a vague disquiet about this achievement. Can India rightfully bask in the reflected glory of those who left its shores and rose to the very pinnacle of their profession in a foreign land? Is this not the U.S.'s achievement? Is it not the fertile ecosystem of the U.S. that helps spot talent and allows people to rise to the top? The U.S. has its dark spots but it holds a promise to millions, even penniless immigrants, that they can achieve their wildest dreams if they reach there. It is this America of opportunities that has beckoned millions of migrants over two centuries – not just Indians but people from every nook and corner of the world.

Mr. Agrawal's journey has been similar to that of many Indians before him who we have admired over the years. Many CEOs are from the IITs and other well-known engineering colleges. After graduation, they headed to the U.S. and graduated from great universities like Harvard, MIT, Stanford, and Cornell. Indra Nooyi (PepsiCo), Sundar Pichai (Alphabet and Google), Satya Nadella (Microsoft), Arvind Krishna (IBM), Ivan Menezes (Diageo), Vasant Narasimhan (Novartis), Punit Renjen (DeLotte) and Ajay Banga (Mastercard) are some of those who rose to the pinnacle of their companies. There are thousands of successful techies in smaller companies who also migrated to lead a gilded life.



File photo of Sundar Pichai in California. • REUTERS

Technology dominates our business and life. Those who lead tech companies are the new rock stars and demigods of the modern world. They have eclipsed the old-world magnates of steel, oil, and automobiles – men like Paul Getty, Andrew Carnegie and Henry Ford. But there are also other Indian migrants who have distinguished themselves in the U.S. in the fields of management education, science, medicine, and economics, among others. The number of leading physicians in medical schools and hospitals, investment bankers, and professors in academia boggles the mind. But the loftiest stars among them are the Indian-origin Nobel Laureates in physics, chemistry, medicine and economics who pursued their higher education in the U.S. and settled there.

The troubling question is, why do our brightest minds fly to the West soon after graduation and mostly to the U.S.? The exodus from our premier institutions started in the late-1960s when private sector companies were few and there were few good jobs available in staid public sector undertakings. The government provided only a few hundred coveted positions each year in the Indian Foreign Service, Indian Administrative Service, and Indian Police Service. The rest joined revenue and allied services and lower-level grades which offered security and sinecure.

The exodus continues. Even as we fellow Indians feel a sense of pride at

the prosperity of the Indian community in the U.S., we cannot but help feel a tinge of sadness too. India, even after over seven decades of independence, is mired in poverty and inequality while our most gifted head for the West.

When Non-Resident Indians – accomplished economists, scientists or CEOs – lecture India on what it should do to become a developed economy or how it should achieve equitable growth to alleviate poverty, there is a widespread feeling that they have lost their rights to give us such advice, even if it is sincere and well-intended, as they don't live here. We who live here have to fight our battles and our injustice and make India a better place.

An insecure diaspora

But there is another lot of Indians too, millions of ordinary ones, largely in the U.S., who, cut off from their moorings and culture, turn inwards by building temples and forming regional as well as religious associations. This is an insecure diaspora which is not fully assimilated into the adopted westernised society and also alienated from its Indian roots. These NRIs have become more and more jingoistic and find false pride in spreading fake messages about ancient Hindu mythology – messages that Indians invented plastic surgery or rocketry or airplanes much before the West – and exhorting Hindus in India to be proud of their heritage

and religion and guard against becoming a minority in their own nation. In doing so, they forget that they themselves are a minority in an alien land. At times like this, we feel a tinge of shame.

Seshadri Kumar, an IIT graduate from Bombay, with an MTech and PhD from the U.S., who returned to India, wrote recently in *The Wire* that it is not surprising that a "dozen of the top CEOs in the world come from a country with 18% of the world's population." He wrote: "So forgive me if I don't join the celebrations. But you know who should really be proud. The Chinese. Because Chinese people did not need to go to the U.S. to rise to the top. They were able to create success stories for themselves sitting in China. And unlike Indians, who are merely CEOs of companies founded by Americans, like Google, Microsoft and Twitter, the Chinese entrepreneurs founded world beating companies in China – Alibaba, Tencent, Didi, Xiaomi, Great Wall Motors, Huawei, ZTE, Foxconn and many others. When Indians do that, I'll join the party."

That should wake up policymakers. What is India doing wrong? The greater glory is not in training engineers to become CEOs in the U.S. but in enabling a conducive ecosystem in India that creates world-beating companies and in building institutions that can produce Nobel Laureates. How can India create a climate that will prevent its best minds from going to foreign lands? The U.S., a nation of immigrants, is a capitalist, market-driven democracy. China is a communist country that has embraced capitalism along with authoritarianism and snuffed out freedom. Both have built a great economy and eliminated poverty. Which of these should India emulate? How can it progress while preserving its diversity and vibrant democracy? Should we not feel remorse that we have failed our youth who do not see a future here and fly to the U.S. after graduation? Shouldn't we reflect about our own migrants and minorities and about their status in our society? Perhaps India is poor not because of a lack of resources or want of talent but because of its policies, polity and politics.

G.R. Gopinath is farmer, soldier and entrepreneur

Afforestation funds released to States

It's part of tranche collected as environmental compensation from industry

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) has so far disbursed ₹48,606 crore to 32 States, according to a response by the Environment Ministry in the Lok Sabha on Monday.

In August 2019, the Ministry said it had transferred ₹47,436 crore to 27 States for afforestation. CAMPA funds are part of long-pending dues of the Compensatory Afforestation Fund (CAF), a ₹54,000-crore tranche collected for nearly a decade as environmental compensation from industry, which



Green zone: CAMPA funds must be used for conservation work such as afforestation and soil protection. • FILE PHOTO

has razed forest land for its business plans.

By comparison, the Centre had collected ₹9,656 crore from the States from Jan 2019 to March 2020, the

Monday statement from Lok Sabha noted. States have their own established monitoring mechanism to check if the funds are being used for their intended purpose. The

Centre also has its own monitoring scheme and approves funds for use by States.

Chhattisgarh and Odisha have had the maximum amount transferred to them, or close to ₹5,700 crore each followed by Jharkhand and Maharashtra at around ₹3,000 crore.

The CAF Act 2016, which came into being more than a decade since it was devised, established an independent authority – the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority – to execute the fund.

However, it was not until last August that the rules governing the management of the fund were finalised.

End the impunity

The botched Army operation in Nagaland is yet another reason why AFSPA should go

Notwithstanding the rationale provided by the Union Government and the armed forces for the horrific killing of six coal miners and the deaths of nine civilians and a soldier in the aftermath of the incident in Mon district, the residents of Nagaland, and indeed many in North-east India, will only read this incident as an outcome of impunity accorded by the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, or AFSPA. It is no wonder that two Chief Ministers – Conrad Sangma of Meghalaya and Neiphiu Rio of Nagaland – have immediately demanded its repeal; the Act remains in place in Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, three districts of Arunachal Pradesh, and areas falling within the jurisdiction of eight police stations of the State bordering Assam, with the authority to use force or open fire to maintain public order in “disturbed areas”. The firing on the vehicle carrying the coal miners in Oting village, home to the Konyak Naga community, was carried out by soldiers of the ‘21 Para Commando Unit’, and attributed to a case of mistaken identity. This action should be problematic even within the purview of AFSPA, as soldiers who open fire can do so only after warning the person found in contravention of the law. The Army’s and later Union Minister of Home Amit Shah’s contention that the vehicle was shot at only after the miners refused to “cooperate” when asked to stop seems incongruous as this was not an action at the Myanmar border seeking to take on armed infiltrators but an operation well within the country’s boundaries. That an ambush was purportedly laid on insurgents of the NSCN (Khaplang-Yung Aung) faction following an intelligence input and yet a civilian vehicle which offered no hostility was fired upon, suggests that the armed forces were too trigger-happy and showed barely any intent in securing order, which is the purpose of their presence in the region.

The Government has promised an inquiry by a Special Investigation Team. It is clear that the continued reliance on AFSPA as a way to impose public order must be brought to a halt and the long-pending demand for its repeal acceded to. Unfortunately, the incident could put a spanner in the Naga peace talks between the Government and the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN-IM) and seven Naga National Political Groups for a solution that has been in the works. The secretive nature of the talks, largely due to the Government’s smoke and mirrors approach to the Peace Accord, has not helped matters either. An approach that shows genuine remorse for the actions, brings the culprits to book and seeks rapprochement with the Konyak Nagas through compensation for the violence, besides a renewed purpose to conclude the peace talks with the Naga groups, is now the only imperative.

Highly invasive snail spotted in Kerala

Physella acuta is host to worms that can cause food-borne diseases, rashes

TIKI RAJWI
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A tiny snail with a striking, pellucid, golden-yellow shell found in the Edappally canal in Kochi has been flagged as an invasive species that could play havoc with native ecosystems.

Having spotted it during a biodiversity impact assessment study, researchers of the Department of Marine Biology, Microbiology, and Biochemistry of the Cochin University of Science and Technology (CuUSAT) identified it as the acute bladder snail *Physella acuta*, globally branded as highly invasive.

This is the first time this snail has been reported in Kerala, according to the research team. What makes its discovery worrying is that it



Researchers found 23 acute bladder snails during study.

plays host to worms that can cause food-borne diseases and skin itches in humans. Moreover, its rapid growth rate, air-breathing capability, and tolerance to pollution makes the *Physella acuta* a potential competitor to native fauna.

The findings by S. Bijoy

Nandan, Dean, Faculty of Marine Sciences; postdoctoral fellows P.R. Jayachandran, R. Radhika, B.P. Aneesh, K.S. Santu, and research scholar M. Jima have been detailed in the scientific journal *Proceedings of the Zoological Society*.

The team recovered 23 live specimens from the Eroor part of the Edappally canal during the biodiversity impact assessment for the Integrated Urban Regeneration and Water Transport System (IURWTS) in Kochi.

First described by J.P.R. Draparnaud in 1805, *Physella acuta* is considered native to North America but is now found in all continents except Antarctica. It was first reported in India in the early 1990s. It is believed to have

reached Kerala through the aquarium trade, a major vector for invasive species. In the Edappally canal, the snail had made its home in a highly polluted stretch plagued by high sedimentation, untreated sewage, effluents, construction waste and a thick growth of invasive aquatic weeds.

Small in size, the snail can grow to 16 mm in height and 9 mm in width. *Physella acuta* is easily identified by its sinistral (left-opening aperture) shell. Its good looks make this snail a favourite of aquariums, but Dr. Jayachandran is quick to add a warning note. “Special care should be taken while dealing with this snail and it should not be kept in home aquariums,” he said.

EXPLAINER

Naga peace talks at an impasse

What is the status of Naga peace talks? Is the stalemate over NSCN(I-M) demanding a separate flag and constitution?

VIJAYTA SINGH

The story so far: On December 4, six villagers returning from a coal mine were killed in an operation by para commandos in Nagaland's Mon district. Seven more were killed in Army firing after protests broke out. Home Minister Amit Shah told Parliament on Monday that it was a case of "mistaken identity." Nagaland and Naga-inhabited areas in neighbouring States saw a shutdown on Monday with a strong demand to repeal the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act or AFSPA, which gives unbridled power to the armed forces to conduct operations.

Will the incident impact ongoing talks?

The Government is engaged in discussions with the Isak-Muivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM) and seven Naga National Political Groups (NNPGs) to find a solution to the Naga political issue. The Isak-Muivah faction, the key player in the Naga peace talks, described the incident in Mon as a "black day" for Nagas.

The NSCN-IM, one of the largest Naga groups, has been demanding 'Greater Nagaland' or Nagalim, an extension of

Nagaland's borders by including Naga-dominated areas in neighbouring Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh and uniting 1.2 million Nagas. The Centre has said there will be no disintegration of the States of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur to merge Naga-inhabited areas with the existing State of Nagaland. More than hundred rounds of talks spanning over 24 years have taken place so far. The NSCN(I-M) first signed a ceasefire agreement in 1997. The group was formed in 1980 to oppose the Shillong Accord signed by the then Naga National Council (NNC) with the Central Government to bring peace in Nagaland.

What was signed in 2015?

A year after the Narendra Modi led BJP Government came to power, the NSCN(I-M) group signed a framework agreement on August 3, 2015 to end the decades-old Naga strife. The then Joint Intelligence Chief and interlocutor for Naga peace talks, R.N. Ravi, signed the agreement on behalf of the Centre and was later appointed as Nagaland's Governor in 2019. The move was seen as an effort to steer the Naga talks to a conclusion. In 2020, the NSCN(I-M) demanded the removal of Mr. Ravi



For sovereignty: The NSCN(I-M) has been demanding the formation of Greater Nagaland for decades. •THE HINDU

accusing him of "high handedness" and tweaking the agreement to mislead other Naga groups. Home Minister Shah then roped in Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and two IB officers to continue the negotiation. One of the officers, A.K. Mishra, who retired as special director last year, was appointed as an adviser in the Home Ministry to continue the talks.

Why is there a stalemate?

After inking the framework with the NSCN(I-M), Mr. Ravi signed a preamble in

November 2017 with the NNPGs and made them a party in the Naga peace deal.

Following the breakdown of talks with Mr. Ravi, the NSCN(I-M) for the first time on August 11, 2020, released the details of the 2015 framework agreement, till then a secret document. It accused Mr. Ravi of deleting a key word from the original document and sharing the modified version with other Naga groups. The agreement released by the group talked about "sharing the sovereign power" and provide for an "enduring inclusive new relationship of peaceful co-existence of the two entities." It claimed that Mr. Ravi, "craftily deleted the word 'new' from the original" to justify his own narrative. The NSCN(I-M) said the word 'new' is politically sensitive as it goes to define the meaning of peaceful co-existence of the two entities (two sovereign powers). The group has been demanding a separate flag and a constitution. The framework agreement said, "Both sides have understood each other's respective positions and are cognisant of the universal principle that in a democracy sovereignty lies with the people. Accordingly, the Govt. of India and the NSCN, respecting people's wishes for

sharing the sovereign power as defined in the competencies, reached an agreement on the 3rd August, 2015 as an honourable solution." The NSCN(I-M) said Mr. Ravi insulted them when he reportedly told them that "this can be understood even by Class VII students that it means acceptance of the Indian Constitution". In June 2020, Mr. Ravi had also written to Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio that "over half a dozen organized armed gangs were brazenly running their respective 'so called governments' challenging the legitimacy of the State Government." Mr. Ravi resigned as interlocutor on September 22, a few days after he was appointed as Tamil Nadu Governor. He continues to advise the Government on Naga talks.

Mr. Mishra continues the dialogue with the NSCN(I-M), NNPGs and the other stakeholders. The hushed negotiations have not been made public but it is understood that there is a stalemate on the NSCN(I-M)'s demand for a separate flag and constitution. A working member of the NNPG told *The Hindu*, "We have conveyed all our demands to the Government of India, the delay is at their end. They have to come up with a solution."

THE GIST

■ The killing of 13 civilians by the Armed forces in Nagaland have put the spotlight back on the stalemate between the NSCN-IM and seven NNPGs with the Union of India.

■ The NSCN-IM has been demanding 'Greater Nagaland', an extension of Nagaland's borders by including Naga-dominated areas of neighbouring States. Multiple rounds of talks have taken place so far. Finally, a framework agreement was signed on August 3, 2015 to end the decades-old Naga strife.

■ In 2020, the NSCN(I-M) alleged that the original agreement was tweaked to mislead other Naga groups which resulted in a breakdown of talks.

SC's 1997 verdict laid down guidelines for use of AFSPA

Court advocated restraint and use of minimum force

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The investigation into the Army's botched operation in Nagaland may have to provide answers to whether a 1997 Supreme Court judgment advocating "caution and use of minimum force against our own people" in AFSPA regions was followed or not.

The November 1997 judgment of a Constitution Bench in *Naga People's Movement for Human Rights vs Union of India* held that the power under Section 4(a) of the AFSPA to use deadly force should be employed only under "certain circumstances".

The court noted that the "power to cause death is relational to maintenance of public order in a disturbed area and is to be exercised under definite circumstances".

These preconditions in-



The court had asked for a high-level body to declare an area 'disturbed'.

clude a declaration by a high-level authority that an area is "disturbed". The officer concerned decides to use deadly force on the opinion that it is "necessary" to maintain public order. But he has to give "due warning" first. The persons against whom the action was taken by the armed forces should have been "acting in contravention of any law or order for the time being in force in the disturbed area".

A July 2016 judgment authored by Justice Madan B. Lokur in Extra Judicial Execution Victim Families Association quoted the "Ten Commandments" issued by the Chief of the Army Staff for operations in disturbed areas.

"Remember that the people you are dealing with are your own countrymen. All your conduct must be dictated by this one significant consideration," the court had quoted from the Commandments.

One of the Commandments exhorted personnel to "be compassionate, help the people and win their hearts and minds. Employ all resources under your command to improve their living conditions".

The judgment ended with the final Commandment to "uphold Dharma and take pride in your country and the Army".

Nagaland CM calls for scrapping of AFSPA

Neiphiu Rio attends funeral of 14 civilians killed in Mon

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Two days after a botched ambush by 21 Para Commando unit in Nagaland's Mon district, Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio has called for scrapping of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act.

He reminded the Centre of the criticism India had earned globally for the "draconian Act" after laying a wreath on the mortal remains of 14 civilians in the district headquarters of Mon on Monday.

The funeral was conducted amid a six-hour shutdown across the Naga-inhabited areas, called by the Naga Students' Federation in protest against the killings.

He criticised the Union Government for extending the "disturbed area" tag on Nagaland every year to prolong the AFSPA despite a



Honouring the dead: Neiphiu Rio reminded the Centre of the criticism India earned globally for the 'draconian Act'. •PTI

ceasefire agreement for almost 25 years.

His Meghalaya counterpart Conrad K. Sangma demanded the repeal of the AFSPA as did Rajgor Dal president and MLA Akhil Gogoi and the Asom Jatiya Parishad.

Mr. Rio said the Centre and the State Government had announced a total ex-gratia of ₹16 lakh for each of the deceased and ₹1.5 lakh for each injured.

Wangmo Konyak, the secretary of Konyak Union, said Mon would shut down on Tuesday in protest against the killings and the district would observe seven days of mourning. "There may not be any shutdown beyond Tuesday," he told *The Hindu*. The rest of Nagaland continued to simmer.

The Nagaland Government suspended all cultural performances of the popular Hornbill Festival on Monday.

MPs in LS condemn Nagaland killings

Lawmakers demand compensation for victims of botched Army operation, call for repeal of AFSPA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Cutting across party lines, Lok Sabha members on Monday condemned the death of 14 civilians in Nagaland following a botched Army operation, with some Opposition MPs calling for the repeal of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA).

Speaking during Zero Hour, the MPs called for compensation for those affected, and raised concern that the Army had mistaken unarmed civilians for terrorists.

Nagaland MP Tokheho Yephthomi of the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party, an ally of the BJP, told the House that a group of daily wage workers who were returning to their village were killed by 21 Para Commando unit, reportedly after information that some NSCN(K) terrorists were travelling in the area.

"They got the information



First-hand account: Nagaland MP Tokheho Yephthomi speaking in the Lok Sabha on Monday. •PTI

that the undergrounds were moving in two-three vehicles, whereas those eight people were moving in a pick-up mini truck. When the 21 Paratroopers approached them, they indiscriminately fired upon them and killed six of them on the spot in the mini truck. The other two were seriously injured," Mr Yephthomi said.

He said the bodies of the six workers were shifted to

another mini-truck and covered with tarpaulin.

When the villagers protested and tried to take back the bodies, there was a scuffle and the villagers set fire to three vehicles of the security forces, the MP said. The forces then fired and killed seven more people, he said.

"I think, there is the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act in the State. But this Act has not given powers to

the armed forces to indiscriminately kill the public," Mr. Yephthomi said.

He said while the State Government had announced a ₹5 lakh ex gratia, the Centre should give compensation as the 21 Paratroopers were under its control.

Gaurav Gogoi, Congress MP from Assam, said December 4 and 5 would be considered black days in the history of Nagaland.

"The death of Indian civilians on the basis of inaccurate intelligence inputs is highly condemnable. The question on everyone's mind is how come a group of unarmed civilians, unarmed labourers could not be distinguished from hardcore militants," Mr. Gogoi said.

DMK MP T.R. Baalu called for an inquiry and compensation for the victims' kin. Trinamool MP Sudip Bandyopadhyay said the killings of labourers and one soldier was "painful". NCP MP Supriya Sule said ₹25 lakh compensation was not enough and that it should be ₹50 lakh to ₹1 crore, including for the soldier who lost his life.

While Congress MP Pradyut Bordoloi called for an "amendment" to the AFSPA, AIMIM MP Asaduddin Owaisi said the Act should be repealed.

Congress MP Manish Tewari called for an impartial judicial inquiry by a High Court judge.

Naga killings point to AFSPA pitfalls

They threaten to cast a shadow on the 24-year-old Naga peace process

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

The killing of civilians in a botched ambush by the armed forces in Nagaland's Mon district on Saturday and its violent fallout have put the spotlight on the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act of 1958.

Viewed as a draconian law in Northeast India, a region troubled by extremism, the AFSPA gives the armed forces the power to maintain public order in "disturbed areas". It gives the armed forces the authority to use force or even open fire after warning a person found to be in contravention of the law.

The AFSPA also lets the armed forces arrest a person and enter or search premises without a warrant and ban the possession of firearms if "reasonable suspicion exists".

In the northeast, the AFSPA is in force in Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, the Tirap, Changlang and Longding



Fresh wounds: The funeral of the 14 civilians killed during a botched Army operation, being held in Mon on Monday. •PTI

districts of Arunachal Pradesh and areas falling within the jurisdiction of eight police stations of the State bordering Assam. For Jammu and Kashmir, the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act, 1990, is in force.

The Union Home Ministry extended the AFSPA for the umpteenth time through a notification on June 30 by declaring Nagaland a "disturbed area" and citing "dangerous condition".

Binalakshmi Nepram, ac-

tivist and founder of Manipur Gun Survivors' Network, said the massacre was a reminder of how the AFSPA was a blot on India's pride as the world's largest democracy. "The call for repealing AFSPA is not anti-national. The British left India in 1947 and colonial laws such as AFSPA must also go," she said.

Unprecedented scale

Monalisa Changkija, author and founder-editor of Dimapur-based *Nagaland Page* agreed.

She said the Mon massacre, the kind Nagaland did not witness even during the days of conflict, would have a bearing on the peace process.

Chuba Ozukum, adviser to Naga Hoho, the apex body of all Naga tribes, said, "The AFSPA gives the armed forces the licence to kill. And when they carry out such shameful operations without keeping the local police in the loop, as has been the practice for long, it gives the message that the Centre just does not care about the peace process," he said.

Mr. Ozukum said one least expected such an operation in the eastern part of Nagaland that has been friendlier with the Centre than the other parts of the Naga-inhabited areas. "The mindless killings have only indicated that the political negotiations [peace process] have no future. The Government of India is not conveying that it is going to accept or recognise our rights," he said.

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.