

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.

CONTENTS

- News - Heritage and progress now go side by side in India, says Modi Part 1
GSP 01 A
- News- Heritage and progress now go side by side in India, says Modi Part 2
GSP 01 A
- Editorials - A global gateway to creating links, not dependencies
GSP 02 C
- Editorials - Fathoming the new world disorder
GSP 02 C
- News - Central Asian leaders invited for R-Day
GSP 02 C
- News - India lays emphasis on UNCLOS
GSP 02 C

CONTENTS

- News - Call from within judiciary to change collegium system
GSP 02 I
- News - SEBI's algo-trading plan can hit growth brokers
GSP 03 L
- News - Supersonic missile-assisted torpedo system tested DRDO
GSP 03 L
- News - Inflation spikes to 4.91% in November Part 1
GSP 03 A
- News - Inflation spikes to 4.91% in November Part 2
GSP 03A
- News - Home truths on climate change
GSP 03 P

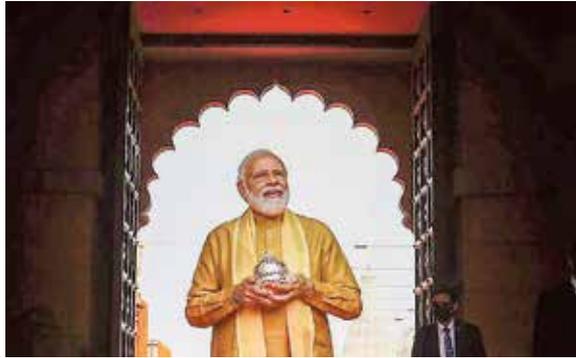
Heritage and progress now go side by side in India, says Modi

Slavery had hit our confidence, he says at opening of Kashi Vishwanath Corridor

DAMINI NATH
VARANASI

After a dip in the Ganga and rituals inside the temple, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday inaugurated the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor that connects the temple to the banks of the river, terming it a “symbol of Sanatan culture of India”.

He said India today had begun to come out from the effects of slavery. “The long period of slavery broke our self-confidence in such a way that we lost faith in our own creation. Today, from this 1,000-year-old Kashi, I call upon every countryman – create with full confidence, innovate, do it in an innova-



Link to the past: PM Narendra Modi at the inauguration of the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor in Varanasi on Monday. ■PTI

tive way,” Mr. Modi said. Today’s India had both *virasat* (heritage) and *vikas* (progress).

“Today’s India not only

beautifies Somnath temple, but also lays thousands of kilometres of optical fibre in the sea. Today’s India not only renovates Kedarnath

temple, but is preparing to send Indians to space. Today’s India is not only making a Ram Temple in Ayodhya, but is also making medical colleges in every district. Today’s India is not only giving the Vishwanath temple a grand look, but making crores of houses for the poor,” Mr. Modi said.

On a two-day visit to his Lok Sabha constituency of Varanasi, Mr. Modi was greeted by several supporters. After taking a dip at Lalita Ghat, he walked up the red carpet to the newly constructed corridor.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8
ANOTHER REPORT ► PAGE 9

Heritage and progress now go side by side: PM

After the rituals, Mr. Modi had a photo-op with construction workers who had worked on the project.

Addressing a gathering of around 3,000 people, including Hindu religious heads from across the country, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, BJP president J.P. Nadda and other party functionaries, Mr. Modi said Varanasi or Kashi had resisted invaders through the ages. He said the city was witness to the atrocities of Aurangzeb, but the soil of India was different from rest of the world adding that Kashi had seen “sultanates” rise and fall.

Speaking a few sentences in Tamil, Kannada and in a local dialect, Mr. Modi said the Kashi Vishwanath tem-

ple was dear to people. Varanasi had been the city where Adi Shankaracharya was inspired by a Dom king to unite the country, he said. The Doms have historically carried out cremations at the ghats of Varanasi.

Taking a dig at critics, Mr. Modi said some people had doubted that Varanasi could see any change when he first became its MP in 2014. He said whenever Kashi took a new turn, it changed the fate of the country.

Estimated to cost ₹800 crore, the portion of the corridor opened on Monday was the first phase of the project. The gateway to the river and the steps going to the ghat would be completed in the coming months, according to officials.

A global gateway to creating links, not dependencies

With its new Global Gateway strategy, the European Union is showing how it can aid investors, partners and people



JOSEP BORRELL FONTELLES & JUTTA URPIILAINEN

In May this year at the Leader's Meeting in Porto, the European Union (EU) and India adopted the Connectivity Partnership, expanding our cooperation across the digital, energy, transport, and people-to-people sectors. Our partnership is centred on transparency, sustainability, equity and inclusivity for the benefit of both regions, in order to create links, not dependencies.

What exists and more

With India, we already have a strong ongoing collaboration on sustainable infrastructure. For instance, the European Investment Bank (EIB) has financed over €4.31 billion in the country since 1993, including significant connectivity projects. New operations are in the pipeline, such as further EIB investments in urban metro systems.

The EU is working in the same spirit across the world. Earlier this year, the EU and Brazil inaugurated a new fibre-optic cable to carry terabytes of data faster and more securely between our two continents. This helps scientists in Europe and Latin America to work together, on issues from climate modelling to disaster mitigation. The cable starts in the EU, where the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) became the

gold standard of data protection, and ends in Brazil, which recently introduced a similar law. The cable links two continents together building a data economy that respects the privacy of its citizens' data. This is how Europe approaches connectivity – bringing partners together without creating unwanted dependencies.

In Africa

Last week, the EIB and the cooperation agencies of France, Spain and Germany joined the European Commission in Togo to identify projects to finance in the energy, transport and digital sectors. During the mission, the EIB signed a €100 million credit line to support African small and medium businesses to recover from the pandemic and to seize growth opportunities from the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

These are just examples of what we call Team Europe, bringing together all those who work with our partners to support the green and digital transition.

Since the start of the von der Leyen Commission, the twin transitions of green and digital in Europe have been at the forefront. With the new Global Gateway strategy, the EU continues to promote the green and digital transition at the global level.

In a world of interdependence, where supply chains are showing their fragility, we know how important connectivity is. We have also seen how the links that connect us can also be weaponised. Data flows, energy supplies, rare earths, vaccines and semi-conductors are all instruments of power



GETTY IMAGES/STOCKPHOTO

in today's world. Which is why we need to ensure that global connectivity and access to these flows is based on rules and international standards.

While flows in goods may be ideologically neutral, the rules which govern them are intertwined with political values. Particularly in the digital domain, Europe and other democracies must ensure that the standards of the future reflect our core values.

No 'debt traps'

Europe wants to reduce excessive dependencies and be more autonomous in areas such as the production of computer chips. Our autonomy is reinforced if all our partners have alternatives when making their investment decisions. Europe's calling card and offer to our partner countries to address infrastructure investment needs is financially, socially, and environmentally sustainable connectivity. No 'white elephants' and no 'debt traps', but projects that are sustainable and serve the needs of local populations.

For Europe to master the connectivity challenge, it needs not

only principles and frameworks but also adequate resources and clear priorities.

First, we will use the resources of Team Europe, the EU and its Member States in a smarter, more efficient way. The Global Gateway will mobilise investments of more than €300 billion in public and private funds for global infrastructure development between 2021 and 2027, financing the climate and digital transition, as well as health, education and research. We will mobilise half of the investments with the help of the EU budget and the other half indicates the planned investments from European financial institutions and Member States' development finance institutions.

We have remodelled our financial tools to provide the firepower that can blend loans and grants and provide the guarantees needed today. We put in place mechanisms to filter out abnormally low tenders and protect against offers that benefit from distortive foreign subsidies, which undermine the level playing field. We will also ensure that EU internal programmes – InvestEU, our research programme, Horizon Europe and the Connecting Europe Facility – will support Global Gateway, alongside Member States' development banks, national promotional banks and export credit agencies.

An export credit facility

Of course, capital from the private sector will remain the biggest source of investment in infrastructure. That is why we are exploring the possibility of establishing a European Export Credit Facility to complement the existing export

credit arrangements at the Member State level. This would help ensure a more level-playing field for EU businesses in third country markets, where they increasingly have to compete with foreign competitors that receive large support from their governments.

Second, on the priorities, Global Gateway has identified a number of flagship projects. These include the extension to the BELLA (Building the Europe Link to Latin America) cable to the rest of the Latin America, as part of the EU-LAC Digital Alliance; the expansion of the Trans-European Network to improve transport links with the Eastern Partnership and Western Balkan countries and scaled-up funding for the Erasmus+ student exchange programme worldwide. In Africa, along with support for new strategic transport corridors, the EU will mobilise €2.4 billion grants for Sub-Saharan Africa and over €1 billion for North Africa to support renewable energy and the production of renewable hydrogen, which can help meet the EU's projected demand for clean energy and help partners to do the same.

At heart, the Global Gateway is about demonstrating how democratic values offer certainty and fairness for investors, sustainability for partners and long-term benefits for people around the world. The EU and India can be leaders in this endeavour.

Josep Borrell Fontelles is High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/VP of the European Commission. Jutta Urpilainen is European Commissioner for International Partnerships

Fathoming the new world disorder

It is pegged to the American withdrawal from Afghanistan, a development with a far-reaching impact on global politics



STANLY JOHNY

The year 2021 will most likely go down in history as one of the pivotal years in the post-Cold War period. It may be too early to say how the American withdrawal from Afghanistan would shape regional geopolitics in Asia and the great power contest between the United States and its competitors. But it is certainly one of those developments that will have a far-reaching impact on global politics. There are two dominant narratives about the American withdrawal. One is that the U.S. exited the country on its own will as it is undertaking a larger realignment in its foreign policy. This argument rejects any comparison between the American pull-back from Vietnam in 1975 and its retreat from Afghanistan this year. The other one is that the U.S. failed to win the war in Afghanistan and, like in the case of Vietnam, was forced to withdraw from the country. This writer, who wrote in these pages in February 2019 that “America has lost the Afghan war”, shares the second view. The reorientation that is under way in American foreign policy, focused on China, certainly played a role in the Afghan withdrawal. But that does not obscure the fact that the world’s most powerful military and economic power failed to win the war in Afghanistan against the Taliban even after fighting them for 20 years.

Examples from history

Superpowers suffering military setbacks at the hands of weaker forces would create a perception

of great power fatigue, if not weakness, that would prompt both their allies and rivals to rethink their strategic assessments. There are ample examples in history. Take the post-War world. Britain, whose imperial glory came to an end with the Second World War, took time to come to terms with that reality. Joined by France, it backed Israel’s misadventure in the Suez in 1956, only to be repudiated by the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Despite making military advances, the Anglo-French-Israeli troops had to withdraw from the Suez and Sinai of Egypt – a development that many historians believe marked the end of British influence in the region. Britain has never got West Asia back.

In the 1970s, the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam was read in Moscow as a weak moment for the Western bloc in the Cold War. It prompted the Soviets to act more aggressively. In 1978, communists, backed by the Soviet Union, seized power in Kabul and a year later, Moscow sent troops to Afghanistan, orchestrated a coup and installed an ally in Kabul’s presidential palace. The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in February 1989, after failing to defeat the Mujahideen and Islamist guerillas who were backed by the U.S., Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, dealt a fatal blow to the Soviet power. Within months, communist regimes in Eastern Europe started crumbling, eventually leading to the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

This is not to argue that the U.S. is facing an immediate threat to its superpower status. With seamless access to the world’s two vast oceans and definite borders and a continent under its command, the U.S. is far more powerful and agile than the U.K. of 1956 and the Soviet Union of 1989. But the gradual erosion of the U.S.’s ability in shaping geopolitical outcomes in far-



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

way regions has already shaken up the structures of American unipolarity. The Afghan withdrawal was not an isolated incident. In Iraq and Libya, it failed to establish political stability and order after invasions. It could not stop Russia taking Crimea from Ukraine in 2014. In Syria, it was outmanoeuvred by Vladimir Putin. Finally, the way American troops were withdrawn from Afghanistan and the return of the Taliban to power strengthened this perception of great power fatigue and emboldened America’s rivals to openly challenge the U.S.-centric “rules-based order.”

The three challengers

Almost four months after its withdrawal from Afghanistan, the U.S. is already facing intense geopolitical competition from three of its rivals. Russia has amassed about 175,000 troops on its border with Ukraine. Western intelligence agencies claim that Russian President Vladimir Putin could order an invasion of Ukraine, which the Kremlin sees, as scholars at Carnegie observed, “as a Western aircraft carrier parked just across southern Russia”. Mr. Putin has also backed Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko over the refugee crisis on the Polish border of

the European Union. From the migrant crisis in Belarus to the troop mobilisation in Ukraine, Mr. Putin is unmistakably sending a message to the West that the region stretching from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, the eastern flank of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, is a Russian sphere of influence.

Cut to West Asia. Iran, which has stepped up its nuclear programme after the Trump administration unilaterally withdrew the U.S. from the 2015 nuclear deal, has refused to hold direct talks with the U.S. The Biden administration has promised to lift nuclear sanctions on Iran if the Islamic Republic returns to the deal. But Iran insists that the U.S. should first remove the sanctions and give assurance that a future President would not violate the terms of the agreement. As both sides stick to their positions, the attempts to revive the agreement through talks in Vienna have hit a stone wall, with risks of a collapse.

Enter the South China Sea. China is sending dozens of fighter jets into the so-called Taiwan Air Defence Identification Zone almost on a weekly basis, triggering speculation on whether Beijing was considering taking the self-ruled island by force. As the U.S. is trying to shift its focus to the Indo-Pacific region to tackle China’s rise (Mr. Biden announced the AUKUS partnership – trilateral security pact between Australia, the United Kingdom and the U.S. – within two weeks of America’s Afghan pull-out), China is becoming more and more assertive in its periphery, seeking strategic depth.

Tough choices

The U.S. is facing tough choices. The pivot to Asia has limited America’s options elsewhere. For example, what could the U.S. do to deter Mr. Putin from making the next military move in Europe. Mr.

Biden has understandably ruled out a military confrontation with Russia over Ukraine. What the U.S. and its European allies could possibly do is to impose harsher sanctions on Russia. But sanctions slapped on Russia after the Crimean annexation in 2014 did little to deter Mr. Putin from taking more military steps. Economic sanctions will also drive Russia further into the Chinese embrace, strengthening the Eurasian partnership, which the U.S., during the Cold War, saw as a critical challenge to American interests. With regard to Iran, if the U.S. blinks first and lifts the sanctions, it could be read as another sign of weakness. If it does not and if the Vienna talks collapse, Iran could continue to enrich uranium to a higher purity, attaining a de facto nuclear power status without a bomb (like Japan), which would be against America’s declared goals in West Asia.

The Afghan withdrawal and the downsizing in West Asia suggest that America’s strategic focus has shifted towards China. Ideally, the U.S. would not prefer to get involved in another conflict as the structures of the new Cold War are taking shape – this explains the reluctance to use hard power. But the inconclusive wars the U.S. fought in recent years and the associated great power fatigue have opened up space for its regional rivals, who are trying to maximise their influence, even at the risk of triggering more conflicts. This transition, from American unipolarity into something that is still unknown, has put America in a strategic dilemma: Should it stay focused on China, preparing itself for the next bipolar contest; or continue to act as a global policeman of the liberal order that is under attack from multiple fronts?

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Central Asian leaders invited for R-Day

If they accept, this will be the first time all five countries will attend Republic Day parade together

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

India is awaiting responses from leaders of five Central Asian nations to an invitation to attend as chief guests of Republic Day, with the details expected to be finalised during a ministerial-level meeting of the India-Central Asia Foreign Ministers' dialogue, which External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar will host this weekend in Delhi.

Officials confirmed that the External Affairs Ministry has reached out to the Governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to confirm their attendance, as is the protocol for Republic Day guests before a formal invitation is handed over.

According to the officials, uncertainty over the COVID-19 situation, as well as the extra coordination required for multiple invitations, has led to the delay in



Glory day: The invite for Republic Day celebrations has diplomatic undertones. ■ FILE PHOTO

the process of the invitations, which is normally wrapped up by December each year.

If they accept, this will be the first time all five countries will attend the Republic Day parade together, though Kazakhstan's former President Nursultan Nazarbayev

was the chief guest in 2009.

Sources told *The Hindu* that one of the five Central Asian members has yet to respond, and a final decision on the collective invitation will be taken once the last holdout was resolved, as it is expected to be by December 18, when Mr. Jaishankar is

hosting the third India-Central Asia Dialogue.

Diplomats said the invitation was part of India's reach-out to the former Soviet States, that intensified since 2015, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited all five capitals.

India joined the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in 2017, which all Central Asian States other than Turkmenistan are members of.

The India-Central Asia dialogue was launched in 2019, and in July this year, Mr. Jaishankar attended the Central Asia-South Asia connectivity conference.

Maritime connectivity

"The invitation is also a signal that India wants to increase its links to the region, where land connectivity has been difficult due to Pakistan's [obstructive] position," former Ambassador to Tash-

kent Vinod Kumar told *The Hindu*. "Maritime connectivity remains important, and the Republic Day meeting will help strengthen India's initiatives through Chabahar and through the International North South Transport Corridor," he added.

The move to invite Presidents Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of Kazakhstan, Sadyr Japarov of Kyrgyzstan, Emomali Rahmon of Tajikistan, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov of Turkmenistan, and Shavkat Mirziyoyev of Uzbekistan, is also part of the Modi government's attempts to bring together immediate neighbours and "far neighbours" in a group format on multiple occasions.

Mr. Modi invited SAARC and BIMSTEC group leaders to his swearing in ceremonies in 2014 and 2019 respectively, and invited 10 leaders of the ASEAN as Republic Day guests in 2018.

India lays emphasis on UNCLOS

Govt. says committed to promoting a free, open, rules-based order rooted in law

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India remained committed to promoting a free, open and rules-based order rooted in international law and undaunted by coercion, the Centre informed Parliament on Monday while reiterating support for the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

"Government of India is committed to safeguarding maritime interests and strengthening security in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) to ensure a favourable and positive maritime environment," Minister of State for Defence Ajay Bhatt said in a written reply in the Lok Sabha.

India also supported free-



Charting new course: India supported freedom of navigation and overflight and unimpeded commerce. ■ FILE PHOTO

dom of navigation and overflight, and unimpeded commerce based on the principles of international law, reflected notably in the UNCLOS 1982. As a State party to the UNCLOS, India promoted utmost respect for

the UNCLOS, which established the international legal order of the seas and oceans, the statement said.

India developed its maritime cooperation with regional partners in consonance with the

Government's vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR), Mr. Bhatt said. The steps taken include 'Mission based Deployments' of naval ships and aircraft to enhance Maritime Domain Awareness, promote maritime security and address contingencies that may arise, he stated.

Joint exercises

In addition, India proactively engaged with regional and extra-regional maritime forces through multilateral exercises, joint surveillance, coordinated patrols among others to promote maritime security in the region in an inclusive and cooperative manner, the statement added.

'Call from within judiciary to change collegium system'

Draft for bringing transparency submitted by Government to Supreme Court pending, says Law Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Union Law Minister Kiren Rijju told the Rajya Sabha on Monday that there was a call from within the judiciary and parliamentarians to change the collegium system for appointment of judges. He said a draft memorandum of procedure for bringing transparency and accountability to the system was submitted by the Government to the Supreme Court, and it was pending.

The National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Bill passed by both the Houses of Parliament

was declared *ultra vires* by the Supreme Court in 2015.

"There is a call from several quarters to bring transparency to the appointment of judges. Till 1993, the appointments were taken place as per the Constitution, the President of India appointed the judges in consultation with the SC. Soon this changed and from 1998, the collegium system kicked in. So consultation was changed to concurrence... the nation should introspect on this important issue," Mr. Rijju said.

He said the Government should carry out its duty dili-

gently in consultation with the top court.

'Not a challenge'

"If the Government considers a particular person is not fit to be an SC or HC judge, how can we be forced to appoint that person...my words should not be construed as a challenge to the judiciary. If we are not crossing the line, then others should also not come in our way," he said.

He said the Government had written to the Chief Justices of all High Courts to include names of members from the reserved categories while recommending names

for appointment as judges.

John Brittas of the CPI(M) said it had been six years since the court struck down the NJAC, but "this Government has found it convenient and expedient so that there is a barter". "The Government has successfully spiked the appointments of those who are inconvenient to them. And the Government has been sitting on the proposals of the collegium whenever they find certain names who are *persona non grata* for them. Some judges are transferred for unknown reasons as a punishment. But some Chief Justice open-

ly speaks against secularism and thus the Constitution. No age criterion for becoming judges, some are rejected for want of age, some are appointed overnight," he said.

Mr. Rijju was participating in a discussion in the Rajya Sabha on a Bill that clarifies the process to count the age of retired judges to determine when they will get enhanced pension. The Bill was passed by voice vote in the Upper House. The High Court and Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Amendment Bill, 2021 was passed earlier by the Lok Sabha.

SEBI's algo-trading plan can hit growth: brokers

'Proposed norms difficult to execute'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Markets regulator SEBI's proposal of treating all orders emanating from application programming interface (API) as algorithmic – or algo – orders can restrict growth of such trading in India, brokerage houses said.

In market parlance, algo trading refers to any order that is generated using automated execution logic.

Vikas Singhania, CEO, TradeSmart, said that regulating the nascent algo market is the need of the hour, especially since the media has reported a number of cases of retail clients losing money based on false promises made by vendors.



"However, in its attempt to weed a few bad cases, SEBI is putting in hurdles that can restrict the growth of algo trading in India. It will be difficult for brokers to provide APIs if the conditions mentioned in the consultation paper are implemented." However, Rahul Shah, co-head, research, Equity-master, said the proposal would go some way in ensuring nobody is able to game the system.

Supersonic missile-assisted torpedo system tested: DRDO

It's designed to enhance anti-submarine warfare capability

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A supersonic missile-assisted torpedo system developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) was successfully launched from Wheeler Island in Odisha on Monday.

“The system is a next-generation missile-based stand-off torpedo delivery system. During the mission, full-range capability of the missile was successfully demonstrated. The system has been designed to enhance anti-submarine warfare capability far beyond the conventional range of the torpedo,” the DRDO said in a statement.

It was a textbook launch,



The torpedo launched from Wheeler Island in Odisha on Monday. ■PTI

where the entire trajectory was monitored by the electro-optic telemetry system, various range radars, includ-

ing the down-range instrumentation and down-range ships, the DRDO said. The missile carried a torpedo, parachute delivery system and release mechanisms.

This canister-based missile system consists of advanced technologies – two-stage solid propulsion, electro-mechanical actuators and precision inertial navigation.

The missile is launched from a ground mobile launcher and it can cover a range of distances.

While a number of DRDO laboratories developed various technologies for this system, industry participated in the development and production of various subsystems, the statement said.

Inflation spikes to 4.91% in November

These ranged from 0.2% for education to a sharp 0.9% for personal care and effects, underscoring the growing price pressures in the economy.

November's inflation is within the central bank's target range of 2% to 6%, but on the higher side of the tolerance band, Knight Frank India research director Vivek Rathi noted. Fuel and transport costs remained the main constituents that pushed the level higher in this reading as these categories exert cost pressure on various input items, he pointed out.

Inflation in food prices paid by consumers more than doubled from 0.85% in October to 1.87% in November, with oil and fats infla-

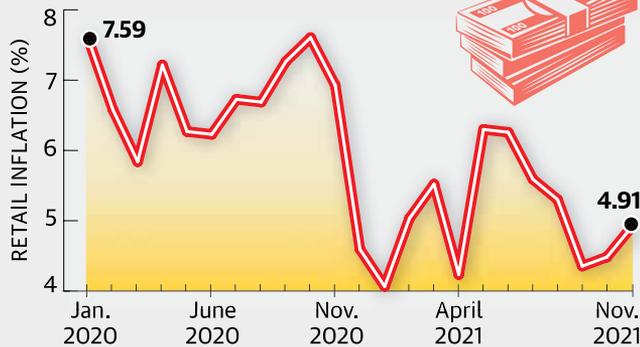
tion moderating only mildly from 33.5% in October to 29.7%. However, except for tomatoes and vegetables, prices of many food items corrected downwards.

Relative to urban denizens, rural India faced a more moderate rise from 4.07% in October to 4.29% in November, as per official data from the National Statistical Office.

Even as economists are worried that the base effects from last year's inflation trends will turn unfavourable in coming months, most agreed there is little chance of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) shifting from its accommodative monetary policy stance in favour of growth to focus on higher inflation.

Trending upwards

After falling for four consecutive months, retail inflation in India is on the rise for the second-straight month in November 2021



Inflation spikes to 4.91% in November

Vegetable prices jump 7.45%

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India's retail inflation hardened for the second month in a row in November, touching 4.91% from 4.48% recorded in October, with urban parts experiencing a sharper rise in prices at a pace of 5.54% and vegetable prices jumping 7.45% from the previous month.

Transport and communication inflation eased only marginally to 10.02% in November, from 10.9% in the previous month, despite tax cuts on petrol and diesel announced by the Centre in the first week of the month, followed by most States paring their own fuel duties in subsequent weeks.

This suggests that upward price pressures persist, owing to the rise in input and commodity costs, as reflected in the wholesale

price inflation touching a five-month high of 12.54% in October. November's wholesale price trends are to be released this Wednesday.

Input pressures

"With input price pressures forcing producers to raise prices in many sectors, the November retail inflation accelerated slightly faster than we had expected, shrugging off the favourable base effect and the cut in fuel taxes," said ICRA chief economist Aditi Nayar.

The fuel tax cuts helped douse the transport and communications inflation by 0.6% on a month-on-month basis, but all the other categories of miscellaneous items displayed a hefty sequential rise, Ms. Nayar said.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

Home truths on climate change

There is a gap between what the government says on the international stage and what it does at home



BRINDA KARAT

At the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP26) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the developed countries, which continue to be the most responsible for the destruction of the biosphere, resorted to their usual tactics of bullying the less developed world to accept higher targets for controlling greenhouse emissions when they haven't done so themselves. In fact, they have failed to even implement their earlier commitments towards funds and technology transfer.

The reasons for the climate crisis affecting the world can be found in the reckless drive for profit maximisation by global capitalism led by the U.S. and its developed country allies. This has resulted in ecological destruction in the name of development. The effort in Glasgow was to push 'net zero' emissions by 2050 as a standard across countries, without taking into account the cumulative emissions for which the Global North is mainly responsible. The effort by some to equate India and other developing countries with the U.S. and Europe as the worst "emitters" is also misplaced precisely for this reason of cumulative emissions. In its model of country-wise cumulative emissions, carbonbrief.org uses population as a factor in its report of October 5, 2021. It finds that "the U.S., Russia, the U.K., Japan and Canada account for 10% of the world's population, but 39% of cumulative emissions", while China, India, Brazil and Indonesia account for 42% of the world's population but just 23% of cumulative emissions.

Looking inward

To find sustainable solutions, in addition to resisting the imperialist mindset of the developed world, we have to also look at the internal policies of the governments of developing countries. Most of these governments are committed to capitalist appropriation of natural and national resources. For example, the official delega-



A coal mine near Dhanbad, Jharkhand. ■ AP

tion from India may have fought hard to protect sovereign decisions on the use of fossil-based energy requirements from the hypocritical demands of the Global North for additional commitments against use of coal. But in India, the government's coal use policy is driven by its determination to hand over mineral resources, including coal, to the corporate sector. Even as India boasts of switching to solar energy to meet its emission control targets, it is privatising the coal industry, auctioning coal mines and encouraging open cast mines without the guarantee of end use, but for commercialisation and export. Thus, on the Glasgow stage, India's ruling regime wears the crown of a developing country fighting against the aggression of developed countries on climate change responsibilities, but policies at home reflect the interests of domestic and foreign capital – coal is used as a commodity for profit, not necessarily for any development purposes.

It is a similar story on the declaration signed by over 140 countries to "halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030." India did not sign the agreement on the ground that the declaration linked trade to land use and trade falls under the purview of the World Trade Organization. However, within India, the promotion of policies towards corporatisation of agriculture and the encouragement to contract farming on conditions set by big agri-businesses

undermines food security. The pursuit of such policies domestically damages the credibility of India's stand on international platforms.

The same declaration has important commitments to "recognise and (extend) support to smallholders, indigenous peoples and local communities." It was convenient for the government not to sign this since it is following policies that are opposed to these commitments. In a slew of amendments proposed to existing laws and policies, the government has moved to monetise, privatise, commercialise and even militarise forests, trampling over the recognised rights of forest communities and specifically tribal communities. These measures are reflected in the proposed Forest Policy of 2018, the suggested amendments to the Forest Act of 1927, the amendments to the Forest (Conservation) Act of 1980, amendments to the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act of 1957, the changes proposed to the Coal Bearing Areas (Acquisition and Development) Act of 1957, and the adoption of the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Rules. All these changes strip the Gram Sabhas of any voice in decision-making processes, even though they are affected directly, and make it easier to handover forests to the private sector. These policies have accentuated the diversion of forests for a variety of projects. From 2013-2019, it is estimated that 96% of tree cover loss occurred

in natural forests. On the other hand, the Forest Rights Act of 2006, which recognises the rights and duties of Adivasis and traditional forest-dwelling communities, is being diluted with a high rejection of claims.

Setting an example

In the 2015 COP in Paris, the Government of India had promised that it would develop carbon sinks to the equivalent of 2 billion to 3 billion tonnes of CO₂ by 2030. The government set up a Green Mission for the regeneration of forests, afforestation, additional forest and tree cover, and so on. The Estimates Committee of Parliament in its 2018-2019 report on progress towards these goals slammed the government stating that it "deplores the way that an issue pertaining to the existence of the earth is being handled." The report stated that to fulfil the promise of sequestering the CO₂ target, 30 million hectares of land are required to plant indigenous trees, not monocultures or plantations as is being done at present. Where will this land come from? Planting trees along national highways or along railway tracks as is being planned will be a very small component of the required target. At present, the lands of forest-dwelling communities are being forcibly taken away and used for plantations. The Gram Sabhas are not being consulted. The method of making those communities which have the least responsibility for carbon emissions pay with their lands and livelihoods is embedded in India's climate change strategies as far as forest policies are concerned.

The clear gap between what is portrayed as a nationalist fight on the international stage and what is followed at home is even more stark with the present regime. The government must reverse its pro-corporate policies reflected in privatisation. It needs to call off its undeclared war on the Forest Rights Act and constitutional provisions that protect Adivasi communities. It is only with the cooperation of those who have protected forests that India can make a real contribution in the efforts to control climate change and be an example to the rest of the world.

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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.