

VEDHIK  
**DAJLY NEWS**  
**ANALYSIS**

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## **FOREWORD**

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

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

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

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# Assam, Meghalaya to end border dispute by Jan. 21

## Shah to seal deal on six of the 12 areas

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
GUWAHATI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah is expected to seal the final agreement to end the dispute in six areas of the Assam-Meghalaya boundary ahead of Meghalaya's 50th Statehood Day celebration on January 21.

There are 12 areas of differences along the inter-State border. But the two north-eastern neighbours had agreed to resolve six "relatively less complicated" areas first.

### Crucial talks

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and his Meghalaya counterpart Conrad K. Sangma had a crucial fourth round of talks in Guwahati on Wednesday and discussed the findings of the regional committees of the two States.

Assam and Meghalaya had formed three regional committees each to inspect the disputed areas and record the views of the local residents.

Each committee corresponds to a district on either side of the boundary.

"We have more or less arrived at an agreement in these six areas inspected by the regional committees. Both the Chief Ministers have directed the respective governments to submit the detailed reports," Prestone



Amit Shah

Tynsong, Meghalaya's Deputy Chief Minister, who attended the meeting, said.

### 'Final round'

"Both the Chief Ministers will hold a final round of talks before meeting the Union Home Minister. Hopefully, the stakeholders of both the States will see a final agreement before January 21," the Deputy Chief Minister added.

Mr. Sarma said the two States have almost resolved the boundary issue in the six areas.

"We have scheduled a meeting with the leaders of the Opposition parties, student and social organisations on January 18 to incorporate their views. The border dispute should end soon if we come to a consensus," he said.

# Reaping India's demographic dividend

India has a unique opportunity to develop and grow richer before ageing sets in



RAKESH SARWAL  
& SRIRAM HARIDASS

A nation's growth requires the productive contribution of all segments of society, particularly the children and the youth, who need to be provided opportunities for self-expression. Household and national investments in children and youth yield long-term returns in terms of high productivity of the economically active population till they enter the elderly cohort.

## Fertility decline

As fertility declines, the share of the young population falls and that of the older, dependent population rises. If the fertility decline is rapid, the increase in the population of working ages is substantial yielding the 'demographic dividend'. The smaller share of children in the population enables higher investment per child. Therefore, the future entrants in the labour force can have better productivity and thus boost income. With the passage of time, the share of the older population rises and that of the working age population begins to fall and hence the dividend is available for a period of time, 'the window of demographic opportunity'.

However, realisation of the benefits of potential demographic dividend is not automatic and thus presents many challenges. Without proper policies, the increase in the working-age population may lead to rising unemployment, fueling economic and social risks. This calls for forward-looking policies incorporating population dynamics, education and skills, healthcare, gender sensitivity, and providing rights and choices to the younger generation.

With falling fertility (currently 2.0), rising median age (from 24 years in 2011, 29 years now and expected to be 36 years by 2036), a falling dependency ratio (expected to decrease from 65% to 54% in the coming decade taking 15-59 years as the working age population), India is in the middle of a demographic transition. This provides a window of op-



Students paint a wall at Kannagi Nagar, Thoraipakkam, Chennai. ■ THE HINDU

portunity towards faster economic growth. India has already begun to get the dividend. In India, the benefit to the GDP from demographic transition has been lower than its peers in Asia and is already tapering. Hence, there is an urgency to take appropriate policy measures.

## Forward-looking policies

Countries like Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea have already shown us how demographic dividend can be reaped to achieve incredible economic growth by adopting forward-looking policies and programmes to empower the youth in terms of their education, skills and health choices. There are important lessons from these countries for India.

The first is to undertake an updated National Transfer Accounts (NTA) assessment. Using NTA methodologies by Lee and Chen (2011-12) and M.R. Narayana (2021), we find that India's per capita consumption pattern is way lower than that of other Asian countries. A child in India consumes around 60% of the consumption by an adult aged between 20 and 64, while a child in China consumes about 85% of a prime-age adult's consumption. The NTA data for India needs to be updated to capture the progress made on such investments since 2011-12. State-specific NTAs need to be calculated every year and States need to be ranked for investing in the youth.

The second is to invest more in children and adolescents. India ranks poorly in Asia in terms of private and public human capital spending. It needs to invest more in children and adolescents, particularly in

nutrition and learning during early childhood. Given that India's workforce starts at a younger age, a greater focus needs to be on transitioning from secondary education to universal skilling and entrepreneurship, as done in South Korea.

The third is to make health investments. Health spending has not kept pace with India's economic growth. The public spending on health has remained flat at around 1% of GDP. Evidence suggests that better health facilitates improved economic production. Hence, it is important to draft policies to promote health during the demographic dividend. We need more finance for health as well as better health facilities from the available funding.

The fourth is to make reproductive healthcare services accessible on a rights-based approach. We need to provide universal access to high-quality primary education and basic healthcare. The unmet need for family planning in India at 9.4% as per the latest National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-21) is high as compared to 3.3% in China and 6.6% in South Korea, which needs to be bridged.

Fifth, education is an enabler to bridge gender differentials. The gender inequality of education is a concern. In India, boys are more likely to be enrolled in secondary and tertiary school than girls. In the Philippines, China and Thailand, it is the reverse. In Japan, South Korea, and Indonesia, the gender differences are rather minimal. This needs to be reversed.

Sixth, India needs to increase female workforce participation in the economy. As of 2019, 20.3% of women were working or looking for

work, down from 34.1% in 2003-04. New skills and opportunities for women and girls befitting their participation in a \$3 trillion economy is urgently needed. For example, a girl who passes Class 10 needs more choices to learn skills that will help her find appropriate work. She will need safe transport to travel to work. Finding work will likely delay her age of marriage and make her participate in the economy more productively, as also exercise her rights and choices. South Korea's female workforce participation rate of 50% has been built on i) legally compulsory gender budgeting to analyse gender disaggregated data and its impact on policies, ii) increasing childcare benefits, and iii) boosting tax incentives for part-time work. It is predicted that if all women engaged in domestic duties in India who are willing to work had a job, female labour force participation would increase by about 20%.

Seventh, India needs to address the diversity between States. While India is a young country, the status and pace of population ageing vary among States. Southern States, which are advanced in demographic transition, already have a higher percentage of older people. These differences in age structure reflect differences in economic development and health - and remind us of States' very different starting points at the outset of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals Agenda. But this also offers boundless opportunities for States to work together, especially on demographic transition, with the north-central region as the reservoir of India's workforce.

Eight, a new federal approach to governance reforms for demographic dividend will need to be put in place for policy coordination between States on various emerging population issues such as migration, ageing, skilling, female workforce participation and urbanisation. Inter-ministerial coordination for strategic planning, investment, monitoring and course correction should be an important feature of this governance arrangement.

*Rakesh Sarwal is a civil servant and has a Doctorate in Public Health from Johns Hopkins University; Sriram Haridass is UNFPA Representative India and Country Director Bhutan a.i. Views are personal*

# Hong Kong to list out more national security offences

‘Local legislation’ meeting city’s constitution to be created

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

HONG KONG

Hong Kong will draw up a host of new national security crimes, the city’s leader said on Wednesday, as she presided over the first session of a new “patriots only” legislature scrubbed of political opposition.

The current national security law defines four crimes – secession, subversion, terrorism and colluding with foreign forces – and offenders can face up to life in prison.

But on Wednesday, Chief Executive Carrie Lam confirmed that her government would create new “local legislation” that meets Article 23 of Hong Kong’s mini-constitution, which calls for the city to pass its own national security laws.

## Constitutional duty

“Article 23 legislative work is part of Hong Kong’s constitutional duty and cannot be further delayed,” Ms. Lam



**New chapter:** Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam speaking at the Legislative Council on Wednesday. ■ AP

told lawmakers, adding that the government aimed to publish a draft by June.

Ms. Lam did not outline what the new crimes would be. But the specific offences Article 23 lists are treason, secession, sedition, subversion and theft of state secrets. It also includes prohibiting any foreign political organisations from conducting activities in Hong Kong or local political organisations establishing ties with similar overseas bodies.

It is unlikely the city government will face much op-

position in passing the new law. On Wednesday, Ms. Lam said it would be difficult for the new national security Bill to be completed by the end of her first term, meaning the legislation will probably fall to her successor.

Addressing a chamber, Ms. Lam praised Beijing’s security law.

“Its function now is to act as an anchor to guarantee stability, to let people know there are consequences,” she told lawmakers, adding the new legislation would be similarly “well written”.

# Talking to Russia

NATO must warn Putin against any European misadventure, and also calm his nerves

The Geneva talks between the United States and Russia were, not surprisingly, inconclusive. It was practically impossible for the former Cold War rivals to iron out their differences in the first round at a time when tensions are running high in Europe, especially over Ukraine. But the fact that hurried talks were held between the two powers and they agreed to continue the negotiations to discuss both the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's expansion and Russia's troop mobilisation is itself a welcome step. The U.S. was actually forced to come to the table by President Vladimir Putin, who has amassed about 100,000 troops along Russia's border with Ukraine. The Kremlin has also issued a host of demands to the West that sought to stop NATO's further expansion into Eastern Europe and roll back the alliance's military presence to 1990 levels. Now, the deadlock is that the U.S. has publicly said that it will not shut NATO's door on potential future members. And nobody knows what Mr. Putin would do if the talks collapse. By forcing the U.S. to come to the table to discuss NATO's expansion – an issue which Moscow has been complaining about for years – Mr. Putin has scored the first victory. But it would be naive of him to believe that the Russian demands would be accepted by the West without any resistance. So, the challenge for both sides is to find common ground.

The source of Russia's staunch opposition to NATO is its deep insecurity. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, a substantially weakened Russian Federation saw NATO's continued expansion into Eastern Europe as a violation of the post-Cold War consensus. Russia responded militarily in 2008 when Georgia was considering joining NATO, and in 2014, it took Crimea from Ukraine after the pro-Russian regime in Kiev was toppled by protests. On the other side, the West sees Russia as an aggressive, abrasive and destabilising giant that breathes down the neck of Europe. In hindsight, both NATO's expansions and Russia's military responses are driving instability in Eastern Europe. Finding a solution to the crisis will not be easy. It depends on whether both sides are able to get out of their Cold War mentality and build mutual confidence in bilateral relations. For all practical purposes, Ukraine and Georgia, both faced with separatist conflicts, cannot join NATO in the foreseeable future. NATO could use this reality as a policy promise to calm Russian nerves. Mr. Putin, on the other hand, is also in a tough spot. Russia is still battling with the economic costs of his Crimea annexation, which has left a wide chasm in Russia's ties with Europe. Further aggression against Ukraine might serve his tactical interests but could deal a deadly blow to any plan to bring the Russia-Europe ties back on track. A war is in nobody's interests. Russia and the West should keep that in mind when they sit down for the next round of talks.

# Hate speech: SC seeks response from govt.

Notices issued to MHA, police chiefs of Delhi, Uttarakhand

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

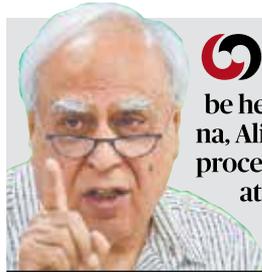
The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the police chiefs of Delhi and Uttarakhand to respond to petitions that people accused of delivering hate speeches at a Dharam Sansad organised in Haridwar have not been arrested yet.

A Bench led by Chief Justice N.V. Ramana issued notice even as petitioners contended that the declarations of communal hatred made by the speakers at Haridwar and in Delhi were unlike anything seen or heard before. They had made “open calls for the extermination of an entire religious community”, senior advocates Kapil Sibal and Indira Jaising submitted.

“There is no law for this kind of hate speech,” Mr. Sibal said. He said the incident took a different colour from even the past instances of mob lynchings.

The senior lawyer said more of these ‘Dharam Sansads’ had been organised. The next was on January 23 at Aligarh in Uttar Pradesh, he said.

“If this court does not take quick steps, ‘Dharam Sansads’ would be held in Una, Kurukshetra, Dasna,



**“If this court does not take quick steps, Dharam Sansads would be held in Una, Kurukshetra, Dasna, Aligarh and in States where the process of election is going on... The atmosphere of the entire country will be vitiated**

**KAPIL SIBAL**, Counsel for petitioners

**“There are enough provisions of the law [against hate speech] and there are our judgments... Mr. Kapil Sibal submits that some more events are being planned, in which there may be a possibility of certain inflammatory speeches. If that is so, the petitioners are at liberty to bring them to the notice of the local authorities**

**SUPREME COURT**



Aligarh and in States where the process of election is going on. The atmosphere of the entire country will be vitiated. No arrests have taken place,” Mr. Sibal submitted.

## **Appeal for early hearing**

The senior lawyer asked the court to list the case on Monday, especially in light of the event to be held on January 23.

However, the court said Monday would not be possible. The Bench advised the petitioners to make a representation to the local authorities, making their apprehensions clear that speeches in these ‘Dharam Sansads’

may run the risk of violating the penal law against hate and were against the judgments of the Supreme Court.

The Bench, during the hearing, noted that hate speech had been the subject of several petitions already pending with another Bench of the court. If that was so, this case ought to be tagged with the earlier ones before the other Bench.

The CJI, however, said the Haridwar hate speech case would be listed 10 days later, either separately or with the earlier cases.

**CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8**

# Act now, recast the selection process of the ECs

A multi-institutional, bipartisan committee will ensure a transparent exercise, given the quasi-judicial nature of the ECI



M.V. RAJEEV GOWDA & AIMAN HASHMI

Reports of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and his Election Commissioner colleagues ‘attending’ an ‘informal’ meeting with the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, late last year, has brought renewed focus on the independence and the impartiality of the Election Commission of India (ECI). The CEC’s initial hesitation when ‘summoned’ was appropriate given that the ECI is a constitutionally mandated body that should maintain its distance from the Executive, in perception and reality.

## Charges levelled

Over the last seven years, the ECI has faced multiple accusations of favouring the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). For instance, the Citizens’ Commission on Elections (CCE), chaired by the retired Supreme Court judge, Justice Madan B. Lokur, in its report titled “An Enquiry into India’s Election System”, has highlighted several instances of inaction on the part of the ECI while conducting the 2019 general election. The Government was also accused of hounding (now former) Election Commissioner Ashok Lavasa when he favoured taking action against the Prime Minister for violations of

electoral codes of conduct.

Given that the ECI is the institutional keystone holding up the edifice of Indian democracy, we suggest that changes in the appointment process for Election Commissioners can strengthen the ECI’s independence, neutrality and transparency. The appointment of Election Commissioners falls within the purview of Article 324(2) of the Constitution, which establishes the institution. Pertinently, it contains a ‘subject to’ clause which provides that both the number and tenure of the Election Commissioners shall be “subject to the provisions of any law made in that behalf by Parliament, be made by the President”.

This ‘subject to’ clause was introduced, in the words of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, to “prevent either a fool or knave or a person who is likely to be under the thumb of the Executive”. It was left to Parliament to enact legislation regarding the appointment of Election Commissioners. Apart from enacting a law in 1991, which was subsequently amended to enlarge the number of Election Commissioners from one to three, Parliament has so far not enacted any changes to the appointment process.

## The judiciary could act

In the face of legislative inaction, there is now a possibility that the judiciary will force Parliament’s hand. Three writ petitions, with one pending since 2015, are urging the Supreme Court to declare that the current practice of appointment of Election Commissioners by the Centre violates Articles 14,



SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

324(2), and democracy as a basic feature of the Constitution. These petitions argue for an independent system for appointment of Election Commissioners, as recommended by previous Law Commission and various committee reports.

In 1975, the Justice Tarkunde Committee recommended that Election Commissioners be appointed on the advice of a committee comprising the Prime Minister, the Lok Sabha Opposition Leader and the Chief Justice of India. This was reiterated by the Dinesh Goswami Committee in 1990 and the Law Commission in 2015. The Fourth Report (2007; <https://bit.ly/3HYhS7P>) of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission (<https://bit.ly/3nkzwl1>) additionally recommended that the Law Minister and the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha be included in such a Collegium.

## The nature of the ECI

Precedent does exist in the case of *Roger Mathew vs South Indian Bank Ltd.*, to argue against the Executive being the sole appointer for a quasi-judicial body. The pending writ petitions, therefore, argue

that the “Election Commission is not only responsible for conducting free and fair elections but it also renders a quasi-judicial function between the various political parties including the ruling government and other parties. Accordingly, the Executive cannot be a sole participant in the appointment of members of Election Commission as it gives unfettered discretion to the ruling party to choose someone whose loyalty to it is ensured and thereby renders the selection process vulnerable to manipulation”.

Hence, establishing a multi-institutional, bipartisan committee for the fair and transparent selection of Election Commissioners can enhance the perceived and actual independence of the ECI. Such a procedure is already followed with regard to other constitutional and statutory authorities such as the Chief Information Commissioner, the Lokpal, the Central Vigilance Commissioner, and the Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation. The quasi-judicial nature of the ECI’s functions makes it especially important that the appointments process conform to the strictest democratic principles.

The Executive’s role in the current appointment process has come under judicial scrutiny over its lack of transparency. *Anoop Baranwal vs Union of India, Ministry of Law and Justice Secretary* (WP (C) 104/2015) which has been pending since 2015, and referred to a Constitution Bench in 2018, has raised this very demand for a Collegium system for the ECI.

Even though it was listed multiple times in 2020, it is yet to reach the hearing stage. A Bench comprising the then Chief Justice of India, J.S. Khehar and Justice D.Y. Chandrachud had also noted in 2017 that “The Election Commissioners supervise and hold elections across the Country, and this is the significance of their office, and their selection has to be made in the most transparent manner.” The Bench referred to the mandate of Article 324(2) of the Constitution to state that, “it is expected from Parliament to make the law, but it has not been made.”

## Advice for Parliament

Parliament would do well to pre-empt judicial strictures by going ahead and formulating a law that establishes a multi-institutional, bipartisan Collegium to select Election Commissioners. Separation of powers is the gold standard for governments across the world. The ECI’s constitutional responsibilities require a fair and transparent appointment process that is beyond reproach, which will reaffirm our faith in this vital pillar of our polity. The existing veil over the appointment process of Election Commissioners potentially undermines the very structure on which our democratic aspirations rest.

M.V. Rajeev Gowda is Chairman, All India Congress Committee (AICC) Research Department and a former Member of Parliament. Aiman Hashmi is a Judicial Law Clerk and Legal Researcher at the Supreme Court of India. The views expressed are personal

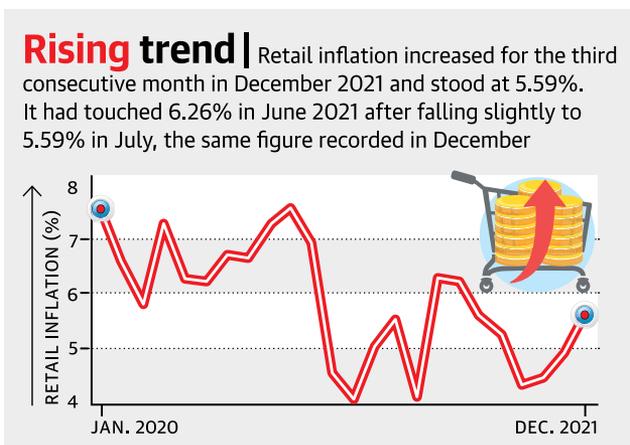
# Retail inflation accelerates to 5.59%

Industrial output growth slows to 1.4% in Nov.: NSO

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

Retail inflation quickened to 5.59% in December due to an uptick in food prices, while India's industrial output grew at a subdued 1.4% in November 2021, according to data from the National Statistical Office (NSO).

The inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) compares with 4.91% seen a month earlier and 4.59% in December 2020. Consumer



food price inflation accelerated to 4.05% in December, as against 1.87% seen in November 2021.

CPI inflation surged to a six-month high, said Aditi Nayar, chief economist at rating agency ICRA. The in-

crease relative to the previous month was primarily led by food and beverages, and clothing and footwear, with a welcome moderation in the prints for fuel and light, she added.

Ms. Nayar pointed out that the unfavourable base led the inflation for food and beverages to jump to 4.5% in December from 2.6% in November, driven by vegetables and eggs, and that early data pointed towards a 'broad-based moderation in prices of many food items' this month.

**CONTINUED ON** ▶ PAGE 8

# Retail inflation accelerates to 5.59%

“Moreover, the area sown under rabi crops rose 0.9% year-on-year as on January 7, 2022, with a healthy growth in oilseeds offsetting the decline in other crops.” However, heavy rainfall in some States amid the widening of State-wise restrictions following a surge in COVID-19 cases could create some supply chain disruptions, Ms. Nayar pointed out. “We expect the inflation for food and beverages to exceed 5% in the ongoing quarter,” she said.

Muted growth in industrial output in November compares with the 3.2% growth seen a month earlier. Within the overall output, production in the manufacturing sector grew 0.9% in November compared with a contraction of 1.6% a year earlier and growth of 2% in October 2021. Mining output rose 5% compared with growth of 11.4% a month earlier. Electricity generation increased 2.1% as against growth of 3.1% in November.

The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) was still at

95.8% of the pre-COVID level as all the sectors were below the pre-COVID level (February 2020) in November 2021, observed Sunil Kumar Sinha, principal economist at India Ratings and Research.

The rise in COVID-19 cases and subsequent government restrictions would not only accentuate the uncertainty but would adversely impact the normalisation of economic activities, he said.

Rajani Sinha, chief economist and national director, Research, Knight Frank India, said there could be a further weakening of growth in the next few months as the economy grapples with Omicron concerns and supply disruptions. “The latest economic indicators are pointing towards urgent need for demand stimulation measures to sustain the economic recovery. In the upcoming Union Budget, the government should look at measures to boost private consumption, which can be the bellwether of India’s economic recovery,” she said.

# Establishing India's Apple

For India to be a research and development-driven economy, universities play an indispensable role



**BINAY PANDA**

This month, the U.S. tech company Apple reached the \$3 trillion-mark in market capitalisation. This made it wealthier than most countries. The question is: can or will India be able to produce a company like Apple? The answer is 'no' – not until we turn our university campuses into powerful economic accelerators. But how? This will require an understanding of how innovation works. For that, we need to get into how a research- and development-driven economy works and the universities' indispensable role in it.

## **The foundation**

Innovation requires establishing ecosystems, which requires building institutional frameworks and research infrastructure. To build ecosystems, we should start by connecting institutions nearby. Facilitating easy access to tools and equipment for each others' students and faculty, creating an open, inclusive atmosphere, and encompassing each other's strengths should follow that. Building research infrastructure should be envisioned for an ecosystem rather than an institution. Such a system will use optimal resources. The initial funding to build large research infrastructures needs to come from the public exchequer. Government funding is the initiator of turning ideas into workable solutions in science and technology-led innovation. Once kick-started, the start-up companies need to be financed by private investors, like angel investors and venture capitalists. Fostering innovation goes beyond making the physical infrastructure and providing access. It includes having excellent tech transfer offices, access to legal counsel and law firms, funding opportunities outside the government, and most importantly, having world-class faculty members.

Tech transfer offices and incubators play a vital role in commercialising technologies. Their part is to make sure that the universities are incentivised while providing a physical space with technical and legal help for individual faculty-driven innovations to get commercialised. To do this, they need to build independent mechanism(s) for their governance, funding, and a competitive process of licensing inventions to third parties. University incubators need the freedom to operate and to establish linkages with funders, both government and private, to raise funds to support start-up companies within

their ecosystem. They need to draw mechanisms to be incentivised back too. Finally, the tech transfer offices need to formulate clear guidelines regarding ownership rights on inventions coming out from the universities.

Proper legal frameworks are needed for university-driven innovation to mature. After consultations and modifications, Parliament needs to pass the Protection and Utilization of Public Funded Intellectual Property Bill (PUPFIP), 2008. Although there are other policies and guidelines, making PUPFIP a law will help formulate a clear and uniform set of rules and remove the universities' lack of clarity on intellectual property rights to commercialise inventions from government-funded research programmes. Apart from infrastructure, funding, and legal help, the innovation ecosystems need early adopters to risk their time and energy to take products and solutions to the broader masses.

## **A broader reach**

While STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) subjects will lead innovation out of the university campuses, it is essential to broaden the reach to cover all streams within the liberal arts. Universities need to engage a broader group with integrated curricula incorporating all disciplines' best practices. Additionally, the university curricula need to get away from focusing exclusively on awarding degrees on broad subjects to providing vocational training towards developing students' skills for a specific task. Focusing on innovation must not take our minds away from problems in fundamental sciences or other streams. Funding for applied sciences should not be at the cost of fundamental sciences.

With the market caps of many technology-driven companies ranking in the top 20 of global GDP alongside the nation-states, universities can play a significant role in fostering the economies of all nations. The time has come for the universities in India to provide value outside of their traditional niche of creating knowledge and teaching. Sustained public funding to build world-class research and development infrastructure and hiring the best faculty in our university system are the first steps to realising this dream. Equally important is encouraging and providing the faculty the freedom to dive more into the space without sacrificing critical thinking. This will propel 'innovation quotient' to be used as a defining parameter for ranking universities rather than parameters like the size of the graduating class and faculty-to-student ratio.

*Binay Panda is a Professor at JNU, New Delhi*

# A quest for social consensus against hate speech

It requires consistent legal implementation over time and daily conversations that society needs to have



GAUTAM BHATIA

On January 12, 2022, the Supreme Court of India agreed to hear petitions asking for legal action to be taken against the organisers of, and speakers at, the 'Haridwar Dharm Sansad', held in Uttarakhand. During this 'Dharm Sansad' that had taken place between December 17 and 19, 2021, numerous speeches had been made. These speeches ranged from open calls to violence ("... waging a war that would be more gruesome than 1857" or "if you want to eliminate their [i.e., Muslim] population, then kill them"), to the economic and social boycott of Muslims ("... there is no Muslim buyer here, so throw that [Muslim] vendor out"), and to dog whistles (such as drawing comparisons to the ethnic cleansing of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar).

Before the Supreme Court, it was argued that the reason why the Court needed to take up the issue was that despite first information reports having been registered in the aftermath of the event, no arrests had been made. Meanwhile, in the aftermath of a similar 'Dharm Sansad' in Chhattisgarh, the State police arrested one Kalicharan Maharaj, who had accused Gandhi of destroying India, and praised Nathuram Godse for assassinating him.

While it may rightly be pointed out that political patronage and ideological complicity are responsible for this contrast, there re-

mains a deeper problem: and that is, the absence of any legal or social consensus around what constitutes "hate speech".

To start with, it is evident that the statements for which Kalicharan Maharaj has been arrested – no matter how personally distasteful they might be – do not, or at least should not, constitute illegal speech. The fact that Gandhi is a towering figure in Indian history does not preclude individuals from expressing repugnant views about him and the circumstances of his assassination. On the other end of the spectrum, it is clear that direct calls to violence – such as taking up arms and killing Muslims – are not, and ought not to be, protected under the right to free speech. No society can survive for long when incitement to violence is normalised, and enjoys legal impunity.

## Strengthens and entrenches

However, there are a range of cases – many of them at the forefront in the 'Haridwar Dharm Sansad' – that present more difficult problems. As societies around the world have long understood, the harm in hate speech is not simply restricted to direct and proximate calls to violence. Hate speech works in more insidious ways, creating a climate that strengthens existing prejudices and entrenches already existing discrimination. A good example of this is the history of anti-Semitism in Europe. While anti-Semitism took its most ghastly form in frequent pogroms and – ultimately – the Holocaust, on a daily level, it took the form of inculcating in society a "cultural common sense" about the Jewish people. This "cultural common sense" traded on stereotypes and



GETTY IMAGES/STOCKPHOTO

social prejudice, and justified ongoing discrimination, social and economic boycotts, and ghettoisation, on a day-to-day level. The end result of this – which is the continued subordination of a section of society – can be accomplished without direct calls to violence.

This is why – with the exception of the United States of America – most societies define hate speech in terms of both inciting violence, but also, inciting discrimination. This is why, for example, calls to socially boycott a community (as advocated for at the 'Dharm Sansad') fall within most definitions of hate speech. This understanding of hate speech is informed by a long history where violence and discrimination have often blurred into each other, and where hate speech has not merely set the stage for future violence but has also been weaponised in its own right to further entrench and endorse inequality and subordination.

## Key problems

It is here that three further problems arise. The first is specific to India. Our laws – as they stand – are unequipped to deal with the challenges of hate speech. The laws commonly invoked in such cases are Section 295A (blasphemy) and Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code (creating enmity bet-

ween classes of people). Hate speech, however, is most certainly not the same as blasphemy; nor is it captured by a vague phrase, "enmity between classes". Hate speech is speech that targets people based on their identity, and calls for violence or discrimination against people because of their identity. The Supreme Court has gestured towards this understanding of hate speech, both in prior judgments, and in the ongoing case involving Sudarshan TV. More clarity, however, is needed.

The second problem is that hate speech, by its very nature, will not always trumpet itself to be hate speech. Rather, it will often assume plausible deniability – as has been seen in the Haridwar case, where statements, worded with the right degree of ambiguity, are now being defended as calls to self-defence rather than calls to violence.

Here again, the history of anti-Semitism in Europe is instructive. Over a long time, a number of visual and verbal cues were developed that everyone knew referred to the Jewish community, to the point where it was no longer necessary to take the community by name. These included, for example, hooked noses and drooping eyelids, and a grasping nature, among others. Indirect hate speech of this kind is known as a "dog-whistle": while it may escape the attention of an external observer, both the speaker and the listener know what – and who – is being referred to. In the Haridwar case, for example, veiled references about what was done to the Rohingyas fall within the definition of dog whistling. Any comprehensive understanding of hate speech is a matter of judgment, and must take

into account its ambiguous and slippery nature.

## Court's gaze is important

The third problem is perhaps the most difficult and intractable. As we have seen above, no matter how precise and how definite we try to make our concept of hate speech, it will inevitably reflect individual judgment. If, therefore, social and legal norms against hate speech are to be implemented without descending into pure subjectivity, what is needed first is a social consensus about what kind of speech is beyond the pale. In Europe, for example, Holocaust denial is an offence and is enforced with a degree of success precisely because there is a pre-existing social consensus about the moral abhorrence of the Holocaust, and the determination not to see it repeated. Social consensus allows us to discount whataboutery, and also distinguish cases of hate speech from other forms of confrontational or agitational speech – that often comes from hitherto marginalised classes – which nonetheless deserves to belong to the marketplace of ideas.

Achieving this social consensus is an immense task, and will require both consistent legal implementation over time, but also daily conversations that we, as a society (and especially, the socially privileged classes) need to have among ourselves. However, here, as in many other cases, circumstances have made it possible for the Supreme Court to initiate that much-needed conversation. For these reasons, its intervention in the 'Haridwar Dharm Sansad' case will be an important one.

Gautam Bhatia is a Delhi-based lawyer

# Panel seeks response on app

## Congress leader Anand Sharma writes to Home Secretary

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

NEW DELHI

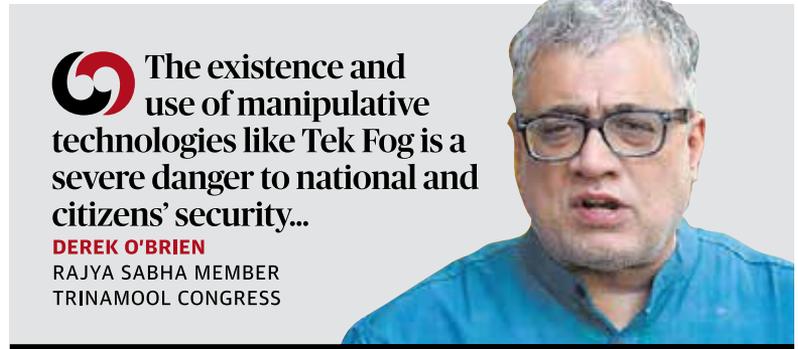
The Parliamentary Standing Committee (PSC) on Home Affairs, headed by Congress leader Anand Sharma, has written to the Union Home Secretary to provide information on the Tek Fog app allegedly used to manipulate social media trends.

Confirming that Mr. Sharma has written to the Union Home Secretary, a source on Wednesday told *The Hindu* that the head of the parliamentary panel on Home Affairs asked the Home Ministry to coordinate with other Ministries concerned and submit a response to the panel by January 20.

The parliamentary panel, thereafter, plans to take up the issue for discussion, the source said.

### News report

Mr. Sharma's move comes after the Trinamool Congress leader in the Rajya Sabha, Derek O'Brien, citing a



report in the news portal, *The Wire*, demanded a meeting of the parliamentary panel on Home Affairs and wrote to Mr. Sharma.

On January 6, *The Wire* had reported that people associated with the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) IT cell were purportedly using the Tek Fog app to take control of inactive WhatsApp accounts, send messages to frequently contacted numbers, and "hijack" trending topics on social media platforms like Twitter.

In his letter to Mr. Sharma, the Trinamool Congress leader wrote, "The existence and usage of manipulative tech-

nologies like Tek Fog is a severe danger to national and citizens' security, a violation of our Fundamental Rights to Privacy and Free Speech, an exploitation of public discourse, and a defilement of the country's democracy and security."

### Probe sought

Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury too is said to have written to Mr. Sharma to ask for a meeting on Tek Fog app.

Separately, the Editors Guild of India had issued a statement in which it urged the Supreme Court to take note and order a probe.

# Threat remains in eastern Ladakh: Army chief

Talks with Chinese side are going on which shows that we can resolve our differences through dialogue: Gen. Naravane

**DINAKAR PERI**  
NEW DELHI

As India and China held the 14th round of Corps Commander-level talks on Wednesday, Army chief Gen. Manoj Naravane said that while there has been partial disengagement in eastern Ladakh, the threat has by no means reduced and the Army has bolstered its position “manifold” in the last year and half.

He also said the new Chinese border law that came into effect on January 1 is unlikely to have any military ramifications and if any, the Army is adequately prepared to handle them.

“Force levels are more or less the same and from our side enhanced. Threat assessment and internal deliberations have resulted in re-organisation and realignment of forces, in keeping with the Army’s mandate, of ensuring our territorial integrity. And this also caters for the major augmentation that has taken place in the PLA forces and their infrastructure,” Gen. Naravane said at the annual press conference ahead of Army Day which was held in virtual format for

the first time.

On the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) going forward, Gen. Naravane said the deployment of a large number of PLA forces by the Chinese in eastern Ladakh was the root cause of the situation which developed.

“Now that they are there and have made a lot of infrastructure, it remains to be seen whether they will permanently station themselves there or whether they will be amenable to some kind of de-induction in the times to come,” he said.

## Steps for de-induction

He said any de-induction will have to follow a few laid-out steps, which first comprises disengagement in the friction areas along the LAC, confidence building, followed by de-escalation which is moving back to the depth areas and de-induction can take place “only after that”, which is when troops would move back to their permanent locations.

“Whatever we decide to do, will be based on the principle of mutual and equal security. Till we reach there,

**Whatever we decide to do, will be based on the principle of mutual and equal security. Till we reach there, we will have to be prepared to stay there for as long as required**

**GEN. MANOJ NARAVANE**  
Army chief



we will have to be prepared to stay there for as long as required.”

Gen. Naravane said that in the last year and half since the standoff, the forces’ capabilities on the northern borders have gone up manifold and they are better prepared to meet any challenge.

“This also gave us an opportunity to review our operational plans and based on that a lot of activities were undertaken to augment our capabilities not only in eastern Ladakh but all along the northern front,” he said.

## Response to attempts

He said it was clear that the Army’s response to Chinese attempts to unilaterally change the status quo was robust and India was able to thwart this design. “Re-

orientation of additional forces to the northern borders has been carried out while retaining our capability for punitive strikes on the western front.”

Stating that it was not only augmentation of forces but also of infrastructure, weapons and equipment, Gen. Naravane said they had inducted additional troops, made various infrastructure and billeting facilities for 25,000 additional troops which had gone into that area in addition to roads, tunnels and storage facilities for ammunition and fuel.

On the possibility of a conflict, he said they are prepared for whatever is thrown at them.

“War or conflict is always an instrument of last resort. But if resorted to, we will

come out victorious,” he asserted. To questions on the 14th senior military commander level talks, Gen. Naravane said it was a good thing the talks are going on which shows that we can resolve our differences through dialogue.

## 14th round of talks

Stating that expecting every round of talks will have an outcome was unreasonable, the Army chief said talks help both sides understand each other’s viewpoints, perceptions and differences go down with each meeting. “Then, we reach an agreement, which is based on mutual and equitable security and is acceptable to both sides and is a win-win for both,” he said.

A number of rounds will be required to deal with the situation and resolve them one at a time, he said adding, once the remaining issues at Hot Springs are resolved they will “look at other issues which predate the current standoff”.

On the new Chinese border law, the Army chief said the Ministry of External Affairs has also made it clear

that this it will have no bearing on the bilateral relations between India and China and India does not accept it as such.

“We have many other agreements and protocols which predate this law and any law which is not legally tenable and not in keeping with the other agreements we’ve had in the past, obviously cannot be binding on us,” he said.

## Military ramifications

As far as military ramifications are concerned, he said they are still looking into that aspect. “Should there be any likely fallout in the military domain, we are more than adequately prepared to deal with it with whatever steps we have taken and rebalancing we have carried out.”

Asked about the demilitarisation of the Siachen glacier, Gen. Naravane said the situation on the world’s highest battlefield has occurred because of Pakistan’s unilateral attempts. We are not averse to demilitarisation of the Siachen glacier, but a precondition is acceptance of Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL) in the process, he added.

# Somanath appointed new Chairman of ISRO

He played a major role in development of the GSLV Mk-III

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Eminent rocket scientist S. Somanath has been appointed Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Space Secretary.

Dr. Somanath is taking over the reins of ISRO at a critical juncture when sweeping reforms and critical missions are set to define the forward journey of the storied space agency.

Commenting on his priorities, Dr. Somanath told *The Hindu* that space sector reforms, which involves hand-holding the private sector and start-ups so that they emerge as key partners in the sector's development, find a top spot on his list.

"We have to hold their hand and support them to come up. The idea is that the space ecosystem should become more vibrant, economically viable and self-sustaining. IN-SPACe is defining a new model, which is also designed to expand our space economy. The ₹16,000-crore space economy that we have in India today should grow to a ₹60,000-crore space economy," said Dr. Somanath, who has been serving as the Director of the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) and



S. Somanath

the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (IIST).

The senior space scientist is also taking over at a time when ISRO has numerous missions and projects – the Gaganyaan human space-flight mission included – waiting in the wings. Further, the COVID-19 has played havoc with ISRO's schedules over the past two years, setting another challenge.

Looking back, Dr. Somanath recalls his younger days, when, as a student, he developed a keen passion for space technology. He joined the VSSC in the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) project in 1985, after obtaining his B.Tech. in mechanical engineering from the TKM College of Engineering, Kollam, and a Mas-

ter's in aerospace engineering from the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore with specialisation in structures, dynamics and control.

Dr. Somanath has played a major role in the development of the PSLV and the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mk-III (GSLV Mk-III). He joined the GSLV Mk-III project in 2003, and served as Project Director from 2010 to 2014. "Somanath is an expert in the area of system engineering of launch vehicles. His contributions in PSLV and GSLV MkIII were in their overall architecture, propulsion stages design, structural and structural dynamics designs, separation systems, vehicle integration and integration procedures development," according to ISRO.

Later on, he had a two-and-a-half-year stint as Director, Liquid Systems Propulsion Centre (LPSC), Valiamala, where he contributed to the development of the indigenous cryogenic stages for the GSLV. Dr. Somanath took over as the Director, VSSC, in January 2018.

Dr. Somanath's wife Valsala is employed in the GST Department, Kerala. They have a daughter, Malika, and a son, Madhav, both of whom are engineers.

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 <sup>th</sup> 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.
<b>General Studies Paper IV</b>	
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.