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DAILY 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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World shocked by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine

Eight killed, nine wounded, says Ukraine official

REUTERS
MOSCOW/KIEV

Russia launched an all-out invasion of Ukraine by land, air and sea on Thursday, the biggest attack by one state against another in Europe since the Second World War and confirmation of the worst fears of the West.

Russian missiles rained down on Ukrainian cities, much to the shock of international community. Ukraine reported columns of troops pouring across its borders into the eastern Chernihiv, Kharkiv and Luhansk regions, and landing by sea at the cities of Odessa and Mariupol in the south.

Explosions could be heard before dawn in the Ukrainian capital Kiev. Gunfire rattled out near the main airport.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky said Kremlin leader Vladimir Putin's aim was to destroy his state. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said on Twitter: "This is a war of aggression. Ukraine will defend itself and will win. The world can and must stop Putin."

At least eight people had



Cost of war: Firefighters try to douse fire set off by Russian bombings on the eastern Ukraine town of Chuguiiv on Wednesday. • AFP

been killed and nine were wounded by the Russian shelling, an adviser to the Ukrainian Minister of Internal Affairs said.

Putin's defence

Mr. Putin declared in a televised address that he had ordered "a special military operation" to protect people, including Russian citizens who had been subjected to "genocide" in Ukraine, an accusation the West has long

described as absurd propaganda. "And for this we will strive for the demilitarisation and denazification of Ukraine," Mr. Putin said.

Russia's Defence Ministry said its military destroyed 83 Ukrainian land-based targets and achieved all its goals in Ukraine for Thursday, the Interfax news agency said.

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World shocked by Russia's invasion

Three hours after Mr. Putin gave his order, Russia's Defence Ministry said it had taken out military infrastructure at Ukrainian air bases and degraded its air defences, Russian media reported.

Earlier, Ukrainian media reported that military command centres in Kiev and the city of Kharkiv in the northeast had been struck by missiles, while Russian troops had landed in the southern port cities of Odessa and Mariupol.

A Reuters witness later heard three loud blasts in Mariupol. Russian-backed

separatists in the east later said they had captured two towns, the RIA news agency reported. There was no immediate comment by authorities in Ukraine.

Russia announced it was shutting all shipping in the Azov Sea. Russia controls the strait leading into the sea where Ukraine has ports including Mariupol.

Global stocks and U.S. bond yields dived, while the dollar and gold rocketed higher after Mr. Putin's address. Brent oil surged past \$100/barrel for the first time since 2014.

Russia's NATO problem

Putin seems unwilling to engage
to address Russian security concerns

Russia's unjustifiable incursion into Ukraine following weeks of military troop build-up on their shared border has drastically raised tensions in the region with broader ripple effects across the world, particularly for NATO countries and others with strategic connections to the two nations. Reports said that several Ukrainian cities, including capital Kyiv came under attack on Thursday morning, even as the UN Security Council held an emergency meeting to stop the invasion. U.S. President Joe Biden and the NATO and European Commission leadership vowed to impose "severe sanctions" on Russia. This round of sanctions will overlay prior economic penalties imposed on Russian entities and individuals close to the political leadership, and they are expected to include cutting off top Russian banks from the financial system, halting technology exports, and directly targeting the Russian President. Moscow can hardly be surprised at this backlash, for it has shown little sympathy toward the idea of engaging diplomatically on the Ukraine question to address Russian security concerns. Ever since Russia began amassing troops on the Ukrainian border, the U.S., NATO, and Europe have sought to press for diplomatic solutions. This includes direct U.S.-Russia negotiations, and French President Macron's meeting with Mr. Putin.

While the sense of frustration in western capitals over Mr. Putin's intractability and aggression are palpable, and the use of severe sanctions stemming from that is a strategic inevitability, it is unlikely that the prospect of escalating violence and a devastating toll on human life and property in Ukraine can be ruled out until Mr. Putin's broader questions on NATO are answered. At the heart of his fears is the prospect of Ukraine joining NATO and NATO troops potentially stationed at the border with Russia. NATO's historical record, of its penchant for expansionism, has likely fuelled such insecurities. After the dissolution of the former Soviet Union, the Eastern European military alliance, NATO, and Russia in 1997 signed the "Founding Act" on mutual relations, cooperation, and security. Disregarding the spirit of this agreement, NATO quietly underwent five rounds of enlargement during the 1990s, pulling former Soviet Union countries into its orbit. Cooperative exchanges, communications hotlines, and Cold War fail-safes such as arms control verification have fallen by the wayside, even more since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. It may be the case that owing to Mr. Putin's failure to develop Russia into an economic powerhouse that naturally attracted neighbouring countries and international capital to itself partly explains Moscow's deflection of attention to strategic questions relating to NATO and Russia's territorial integrity. But unless western nations give assurances to Mr. Putin that NATO will not seek to relentlessly expand its footprint eastwards, Moscow will have little incentive to return to the negotiating table. But Russia and Mr. Putin must realise that war is not the means to peace and security.

The Russian Aggression on Ukraine and International Law

What principles of International law are Russia breaking by its actions in eastern Ukraine?

THE GIST

PUSHKAR ANAND
VISHVA SINGH

■ Yesterday, Russia launched a full-scale invasion on Ukraine. The Russian actions have been widely condemned and raise several questions concerning violation of international law.

■ The principle of non-intervention is enshrined in article 2(4) of the UN Charter. It requires states to refrain from using force or threat of using force against territorial integrity or political independence of any state. The Russian attack on Ukraine is violative of this principle, and amounts to aggression under international law. Russia's desire to keep Ukraine out of NATO is a prime reason for its use of force against Ukraine.

■ Russia has claimed it is acting in self-defence as Ukraine could acquire nuclear weapons with the help of its western allies. However, the International Court of Justice in the Legality of Threat of Nuclear Weapons case held that mere possession of nuclear weapons does not constitute a threat. Further, mere membership in a defence alliance like NATO can also not be considered a threat of aggression.

The story so far: The annexation of Crimea in 2014 by Russia, following the removal of Victor Yanukovich as the President, was the first major military flare-up in the Russo-Ukrainian relations. The Crimean annexation by Russia was met with imposition of sanctions. However, Russia is still in occupation of Crimea, and post 2014 its activities have centred around fomenting separatists in eastern Ukraine. In January 2021, the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky appealed the U.S. to let it join NATO, following which Russia started amassing troops near the borders of eastern Ukraine. Tensions escalated quickly from December 2021 when Russia demanded NATO to give up its military activities in eastern Europe and Ukraine, followed by a Russian cyberattack on the Ukrainian government website. On 22 February, Russia recognised the self-declared Donetsk and Luhansk republics in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine, and sent Russian troops to these territories. Finally, yesterday, Russia launched a full-scale invasion on Ukraine. The Russian actions have been condemned widely and raise several questions concerning violation of international law.

How is Russia violating the UN Charter? The principle of non-intervention in domestic affairs is the foundational principle on which existing international order is based. The principle is enshrined in article 2(4) of the UN Charter requiring states to refrain from using force or threat of using force against territorial integrity or political independence of any state. It prohibits any kind of forcible trespassing in the territory of another state, even if it is for temporary or

limited operations such as an 'in and out' operation. The Russian attack on Ukraine is violative of the non-intervention principle, and amounts to aggression under international law.

The UN General Assembly Resolution 3314 (1974) defines aggression as the use of armed force by a state against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of another state. Additionally, allowing one's territory to be used by another state for aggression against a third state, also qualifies as an act of aggression. Accordingly, Belarus can also be held responsible for aggression as it has allowed its territory to be used by Russia for attacking Ukraine. Aggression is also considered an international crime under customary international law and the Rome statute establishing the International Criminal Court.

Russia's desire to keep Ukraine out of NATO is a prime reason for its use of force against Ukraine. This is violative of Ukraine's political independence under article 2(4) as Ukraine being a sovereign state is free to decide which organisations it wants to join. Also, by resorting to use of force, Russia has violated article 2(3) which requires the states to settle their dispute by peaceful means in order to preserve international peace and security.

What about the principle of self-defence?

In face of the use of force by Russia, Ukraine has the right to self-defence under international law. The UN Charter under article 51 authorises a state to resort to individual or collective self-defence, until the Security Council takes steps to ensure international peace and security. In this case, it seems implausible for the UNSC to



War-torn: Damaged radar arrays and other equipment are seen at the Ukrainian military facility outside Mariupol, Ukraine on February 24, 2022.

arrive at a decision as Russia is a permanent member and has veto power. However, Ukraine has a right under international law to request assistance from other states in form of military assistance, supply of weapons etc.

On the other hand, Russia has also claimed that it is acting in self-defence. This claim is questionable, as there has been no use of force, or such threats against Russia by Ukraine. It has been claimed by Russia that Ukraine may acquire nuclear weapons with the help of western allies. However, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Legality of Threat of Nuclear Weapons case held that mere possession of nuclear weapons does not necessarily constitute a threat.

Thus, even if Ukraine has, or were to

acquire nuclear weapons in the future, it does not become a ground for invoking self-defence by Russia. Further, mere membership in a defence alliance such as NATO cannot necessarily be considered as a threat of aggression against Russia. Thus, here too Russia cannot invoke self-defence.

Russia can also not invoke anticipatory self-defence as such invocation according to the Caroline test would require that the necessity of self-defence was instant, overwhelming, leaving no choice of means, and no moment for deliberation. However, this is not the case with Russia.

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Shaking up Europe's security architecture

An order that does not accommodate Russia's concerns through genuine negotiation cannot be stable in the long term

ture of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and U.S. policies.

Russia has repeatedly articulated its grievances: that NATO's expansion violated promises made prior to the breakup of the Soviet Union; that Ukraine's accession to NATO would cross Russia's red lines; and that NATO's strategic posture poses a continuing security threat to Russia.

NATO's expansion as a politico-military alliance, even after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, was at the U.S.'s initiative. It was intended to temper European ambitions for strategic autonomy from the sole superpower and to counter Russia's resurgence. Recent experience shows it may not be succeeding in either goal.

NATO's weakened glue

NATO countries today span a geography of uneven economic development and a diversity of political traditions and historical consciousness. Moreover, the original glue that held NATO together – ideological solidarity (free world against communist expansion) and an existential military threat – dissolved with the collapse of communism and the Warsaw Pact. There is no ideology to oppose and threat perceptions vary, depending on geographical location and historical experience. This heterogeneity means a diversity of interests. American leadership has normally succeeded in papering over differences, but the growing ambitions of countries is making this increasingly difficult.

The current crisis in Ukraine has illustrated the divisions, and



exposed the limitations of the U.S.'s ability to bridge them. The irony is that the divisions are of the U.S.'s making. Its pressure on NATO in 2008 to recognise Ukraine's membership aspirations and its encouragement for a change of government in Kyiv in 2014, provoked the Russian annexation of Crimea. The subsequent armed separatist movement in eastern Ukraine (Donbas) led to the Minsk accords of 2014-15, which provided for a special status for this region within Ukraine.

Ukraine considers this an unfair outcome, and the U.S. has supported its efforts to reinterpret the accords to its advantage. While some European countries supported this line, France and Germany – which brokered these agreements – have periodically tried to progress implementation, in the effort to break the impasse and resume normal engagement with Russia, which serves their economic interests.

In recent months, the U.S. signalled that it would support the full implementation of the Minsk accords, but apparently found it difficult to shake the entrenched interests sufficiently to make it happen. This may have finally convinced Mr. Putin that his concerns

would not be met through negotiations.

Energy security

U.S. interests have also divided NATO on energy security. For Germany, the Nord Stream 2 (NS2) Russia-Germany gas pipeline is the cheapest source of gas for its industry. Others deem it a geopolitical project, increasing European dependence on Russian energy. This argument masks self-serving interests. Ukraine fears the diminution of gas transit revenues, and also that if its importance for gas transit declines, so will Europe's support in its disputes with Russia. The U.S.'s "geopolitical" argument against NS2 dovetails neatly with its commercial interest in exporting LNG to Europe, reinforced by U.S. legislation for sanctions against companies building gas pipelines from Russia. Increasing LNG exports to Europe is explicitly stated as a motivation for the sanctions. European countries that oppose NS2 are ramping up their LNG import infrastructure to increase imports from the U.S.

The manner in which NATO countries implement the promised harsh sanctions against Russia will demonstrate whether, how much and for how long, this crisis will keep them united.

It is too early to say what Mr. Putin's endgame is, and how costly this adventure will be, in terms of lives and destruction, as well as in its political and economic impact. Without justifying the manner in which Russia has chosen to "right" the perceived "wrongs", it has to be said that this crisis results from a broken security architecture in Europe. A sustainable security or-

der has to reflect current realities: it cannot be simply an outgrowth of the Cold War order, and it has to be driven from within. Also, a European order that does not accommodate Russia's concerns through genuine negotiation cannot be stable in the long term. France's President Emmanuel Macron has been making this point forcefully, arguing for Europe to regain its strategic autonomy. He has called NATO "brain-dead" and said that Europe, as a "geopolitical power" should control its own destiny, regaining "military sovereignty" and re-opening a dialogue with Russia, managing the misgivings of post-Soviet countries.

Outlook for India

India has to brace itself for some immediate challenges flowing from the Russian actions. It will have to balance the pressure from one strategic partner to condemn the violation of international law, with that from another to understand its legitimate concerns. We were there in 2014, and managed the pressures. As Russia-West confrontation sharpens further, the U.S. Administration's intensified engagement in Europe will inevitably dilute its focus on the Indo-Pacific, causing India to make some tactical calibration of actions in its neighbourhood. Geopolitics, however, is a long game, and the larger context of the U.S.-China rivalry could, at some point in the not too distant future, reopen the question of how Russia fits into the European security order.

P.S. Raghavan is a former Ambassador to Russia and former Chairman of the National Security Advisory Board

P.S. RAGHAVAN

The commencement of Russian military action in Ukraine brings down the curtain on the first act of a bizarre drama that has been playing out over the past eight months. At the heart of it is the instability in the post-Cold War security order.

The first act began with a meeting between U.S. President Biden and Russia's President Vladimir Putin in June last year, promising to reverse seven years of relentless U.S.-Russia acrimony. Mr. Biden's decision to reach out to Mr. Putin signalled a U.S. geopolitical rebalancing, seeking a *modus vivendi* with Russia and disengagement from conflicts in Europe and West Asia, to enable a sharper U.S. focus on domestic challenges and the external challenge from its principal strategic adversary, China.

These were Putin's terms

Mr. Putin saw this reengagement as an opportunity to revive Russia's flagging economy and expand its freedom of political action globally.

However, he wanted this engagement on equal terms. Russia would cooperate in this geopolitical rebalancing if its concerns are met, so that it does not constantly have to counter moves to probe its territorial integrity and constrain its external influence – which is how Russia sees the strategic pos-

Jaishankar speaks to EU, U.K. Ministers

Calls to change stance grow louder

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar returned from a visit to Europe on Thursday morning to the news of the Russian attacks on Ukraine and the diplomatic fallout.

He also took a number of calls from European leaders pressing the need for India to change its position, which has thus far not criticised Russia's actions, and in particular, support a UNSC (United Nations Security Council) resolution and vote expected on Friday.

The resolution is to be brought by the U.S. and European allies, affirming the "territorial integrity of Ukraine", according to sources. "Discussed the grave situation in Ukraine and how India could contribute to de-escalation efforts," Mr. Jaishankar tweeted about the call with European Union (EU) High Representative (HR/VP) Josep Borrell Fontelles, whose call was followed by the United Kingdom Foreign Secretary Liz Truss. The EU, the U.K. and U.S. have announced an "unprecedented package of sanctions" against Russia, and have each separately expressed their hopes that India would also support their positions.

In briefings ahead of Mr. Jaishankar's visit to Germany and France last week, European diplomats had stressed that India would need to "pick a side" in the event of a Russian invasion or military attack on Ukraine.

To begin with, India must consider its response to the resolution on Russian actions that the U.S. proposes



S. Jaishankar

to table along with allies, which would include a condemnation of the airstrikes ordered by President Putin, an immediate ceasefire and withdrawal of troops, as well as possibly put to vote proposed punitive action, including strict financial sanctions.

While the condemnation and actions will undoubtedly be vetoed by Russia, which is also at present holding the Presidency of the UNSC, all eyes will be on where countries like India will vote. In three statements made at the UN thus far, India has refrained from any criticism of Russian actions. It also abstained on a vote to discuss the situation in Ukraine earlier this month, which was welcomed by Russian officials.

Officials have thus far explained India's stand as a "principled position" based on pushing for diplomacy to resolve the situation.

"The deterioration of the security situation in Europe is a result of mismanagement or breakdown in big power relations. India should not be expected to pay the price for the failures of their policies," former Indian Ambassador to Russia Venkatesh Verma told *The Hindu*.

China says it 'understands' Russia's 'legitimate security concerns'

Wang speaks to Lavrov hours after invasion of Ukraine

ANANTH KRISHNAN
HONG KONG

China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi told his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov on Thursday that Beijing "understands" Moscow's "legitimate security concerns". The comments from Mr. Wang in a phone call on Thursday underlined Beijing's broad backing to Russia on the Ukraine issue, even as its diplomats have called for a return to diplomacy. The diplomatic process, however, lies completely derailed following Russia's invasion.

Beijing hasn't explicitly endorsed or criticised Russia's actions, although Mr.

Wang's comments may be perceived as implicitly offering support. In the phone call, Mr. Wang said "China always respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries." "At the same time," he added, "the Ukraine issue has a complex and specific historical latitude and longitude, and China understands Russia's legitimate security concerns."

He also criticised NATO and called for a "balanced, effective and sustainable European security mechanism" which "completely abandons the Cold War mentality".

China's media broadly

backed Russia and focused much of its coverage on NATO and Russia's broader security concerns.

"I believe Russia's military operation is a reaction of Moscow toward Western countries' exerting pressure on Russia for a long time, showing that Moscow can't tolerate anymore," Yang Jin, a scholar at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, was quoted as saying by the Communist Party-run *Global Times*.

The Chinese Embassy in Ukraine, meanwhile, warned citizens to stay home but has not indicated any plans to evacuate them.

Modi talks to Putin, calls for ceasefire

He appeals for return to dialogue; safe exit of Indian citizens from conflict zone 'highest priority': PMO

DINAKAR PERI
KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi appealed for an immediate ceasefire and a return to dialogue in a conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday night, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said in a statement.

Mr. Putin "briefed" Mr. Modi about the Russian decision to attack several locations in Ukraine, the PMO said, adding that the safe exit of Indian citizens from the conflict zone was India's "highest priority".

Honest dialogue

"Prime Minister Modi reiterated his long-standing conviction that the differences between Russia and the NATO group can only be resolved through honest and sincere dialogue," said the statement. "The Prime Minister also sensitised the Russian President to India's concerns regarding the safe-



Earnest appeal: Prime Minister Narendra Modi with President of Russian Federation Vladimir Putin. • FILE PHOTO

ty of the Indian citizens in Ukraine, especially students, and conveyed that India attaches the highest priority to their safe exit and return to India," it said.

At a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security in Delhi, Mr. Modi reiterated that the safety of Indians in the conflict zone was the "topmost concern", and reviewed the government's arrangements for trying to

bring Indians stranded there back, Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla said.

Earlier the Ukrainian envoy to India had forcefully pressed for India's mediation to stop the bloodshed.

Envoy's plea

"We are deeply dissatisfied with the Indian position. Already 10-15 people were killed. We are asking.. pleading for the strong voice of In-

dia. In this case Prime Minister Modi can address Mr. Putin. He can address our President. This is not the time for protocol-bound statements. Your officials said they are closely watching the situation. This means nothing. India is the founder of non-alignment. We plead for the support of India. It's the moment of truth and moment of destiny," said Ambassador Igor Polikha of Ukraine, urging Mr. Modi to personally initiate dialogue with Mr. Putin to halt the Russian military advances.

However, Mr. Shringla said no disappointment had been conveyed by the Ukrainian officials to India.

Mr. Polikha confirmed that Russia has launched military assault from three sides and that ground invasion had also begun early on Thursday.

Ambassador Polikha said there was a possibility of the conflict turning into a bigger

war in the coming days.

The Russian side claimed that the strikes are being carried out with "high-precision weapons" to minimise civilian casualties.

'Expressed concern'

But the Ukrainian envoy expressed concern about the safety of the civilians and Indian students under the shadow of the conflict, saying that precision weapons cannot guarantee safety in such a vast conflict and pressed for urgent intervention from the international community, NATO, EU and India.

"We are not dictating to our friends. We are pleading that you can provide us military, diplomatic or any other kind of assistance," said Mr. Polikha, considered an expert on Indian and south Asian affairs.

He said very few countries in the world could influence Russia and India was one of those nations with special ties with Moscow.

they attempt to leave Kiev city. • AP/AFR

Ukrainians wake up to thunder of war

After Russian invasion, smoke rose from across cities, desperate people rushed to buy fuel, flee to safety

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KIEV

The missile fragment pierced the ceiling of Mikhail Shcherbakov's apartment in Kharkiv, Ukraine's second largest city. A Russian attack, after weeks of warnings, had hit home.

"I heard noise and woke up. I realised it sounded like artillery," Mr. Shcherbakov said. He jumped from the couch and ran to wake his mother, and something exploded behind him.

The missile left a nearby computer and teacup shrouded with dust, instant artefacts of Europe's latest crisis.

At dawn on Thursday, Ukrainians' uneasy efforts at normality were shattered. Smoke rose from cities, even well away from the country's disputed eastern border.

'Worst sunrise'

"Today I had the worst sunrise in my life," said another Kharkiv resident, who gave her name only as Sasha. She rushed to her balcony and realised the sounds that had woken her weren't fireworks.

Ukraine rocked

Russia has launched an all-out invasion of Ukraine by land, air and sea in the biggest attack by one state against another in Europe since Second World War



In grief: A man sits outside his destroyed building in the eastern Ukraine town of Chuhuiv on Thursday. • AFP

Farther from the border, a morning commute transformed into chaos, with lines of cars waiting at fuel stations or fleeing from the capital, Kiev. People carrying luggage took shelter in the subway, unsure of where to go.

Some panicked. Others clung to routine, with irritation.

"I'm not afraid. I'm going to work. The only unusual thing is that you can't find a taxi in Kiev," one resident complained, as air raid sirens wailed.

Many seemed unsure how to react. Kiev's main street, Khreshchatyk, rippled with anxiety as people checked their phones. Some walked their dogs or waved at

Explosions reported → Russian military incursions reported



Sources: Reuters, AP, AFP, BBC

© GRAPHIC NEWS

friends. "I'm not scared at the moment. Maybe I'll be scared later," resident Maxim Prudskoi said.

Some residents waited at bus stops, seemingly on their way to work, while others rushed to leave the city that is only about 15 km from the front line with the Donets People's Republic, one of two separatist-held areas re-

cognised by Russian President Vladimir Putin as independent this week in a prelude to the attack.

As the day progressed, alarm rose across Ukraine. People crowded grocery stores. In Kharkiv, worried residents inspected fragments of military hardware strewn across a children's playground.

SC clears decks for release of *Gangubai Kathiawadi*

Petitioner claimed the film has defamed his mother

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday ruled in favour of freedom of expression in the movies by dismissing a plea to stay the release of *Gangubai Kathiawadi*, a film by Sanjay Leela Bhansali.

A Bench led by Justice Indira Banerjee refused to accept the allegation made by a man, who claimed to be Kathiawadi's adoptive son, that the film defamed his mother.

Based on book

Appearing for Mr. Bhansali, senior advocate Aryama Sundaram and advocate Rohini Musa, countered that the film, rather than demeaning its central character and heroine, glorified



her. The film is based on the book *Mafia Queens of Bombay* published in 2011.

"This is about the rise of a woman and nobody thinks that the film is defamatory," Mr. Sundaram argued.

Mr. Sundaram reminded the court about its own landmark judgment in the case of *S. Rangarajan v Jagjivan Ram* in 1989, regarding the film *Ore Oru Gramathile*,

which had held that freedom of expression was sacrosanct and cannot be suppressed.

No evidence

The senior lawyer argued there was no *prima facie* evidence to prove that the petitioner, Babuji Shah, was indeed Kathiawadi's adoptive son. Mr. Sundaram contended that the cause of action extinguished with the death of the person.

The apex court had earlier suggested a change in the film's title.

However, Mr. Sundaram, on Thursday, informed the court that the film has already been cleared by the Central Board of Film Certification. The name has been published and widely advertised months ago.

Is the new economy creating new jobs?

PARLEY

Startups can create high-quality jobs, which have a flywheel effect, but their mandate is not job creation

India has added over 10 unicorns (privately held startup companies valued at over a billion dollars) so far this year, which is a rate of nearly one every five days. This comes after a record year of new unicorns (44 in 2021), which pushed India up to the third place globally, after the U.S. and China, in the Hurun Global Unicorn Index 2021. But what exactly does a unicorn valuation mean for the larger economy, and how do these technology-driven startups influence the employment scenario in the country? **Thillai Rajan** and **P.K. Jayadevan** discuss this question in a conversation moderated by **P.J. George**. Edited excerpts:

India has added 10 unicorns in just over 50 days this year, which is the highest rate so far for the country. What do you think are the fundamental reasons for this high rate now, and is it sustainable over time?

Thillai Rajan: I was looking at the unicorns that have emerged from India so far, and the number seemed to be 91. The first unicorn emerged in 2011. From 2014, the number started to grow. In 2020, we had 10; and in 2021, there were 44. I'll give another example here: In 1953, two people climbed Mount Everest. Today, we have 500 to 600 every year. Becoming a unicorn is, in some cases, like scaling a summit.

The first unicorn in India was In-Mobi. It took the company about five years to achieve unicorn status in 2011. The second unicorn was Flipkart. That company also took about four to five years to achieve unicorn status. Hasura, which is the latest unicorn, also took about five years. Hence, the process of becoming a unicorn has not eased. But [unicorn status] has become a big motivator for entrepreneurs, and it's a summit that they would all like to scale. More and more entrepreneurs are aiming for unicorn status and this is one of the fundamental reasons, from the demand side, for the higher numbers.

Now, look at it from the supply side. Unicorns are essentially venture capitalist-funded companies, which have reached a \$1 billion valuation. If you look at the growth in

venture capitalist funding, between 2011 and 2020, the compounded annual growth rate was 76%. Over 10,000 companies were funded in those 10 years, and people expect this number to grow because of the potential in the economy. The growth might taper off over a period of time, but it is going to be there. A proportion of these companies are going to become unicorns. Hence, when the base is increasing, the number of unicorns is also going to be increasing.

Now, let's look at the environment. January 16 has been named as National Startup Day. If there is national priority in terms of identifying, sustaining, supporting and recognising startups, that is going to lead to an increase in numbers; more unicorns are going to come.

However, the growth rate in the number of unicorns between 2020 and 2021 was in excess of 300% and that is unlikely to be sustained. In the financial markets, everything is in terms of cycles. We had the largest number of IPOs in 2007, that is 108. In 2010, there were 66 and in 2021, 63. In between these years, there were some very deep valleys. The same is going to be the case with unicorns as well.

If you look at the number of industry classes that we have in India, there are about 302 as per company registration. These industry classes represent very strong areas of economic activity. If on an average we take that there is a potential for three unicorns to emerge in each of these industry classes, we are talking about 1,000 unicorns. That is a strong potential for the growth to continue. It may not be the strong growth that we see today, but there will be growth as long as the country's economy is growing and venture capitalist funding is growing.

P.K. Jayadevan: When Professor Rajan was talking about Mount Everest, it reminded me of an example that we used to talk about at Freshworks, the Chennai-based company that went for IPO last year. We kept talking about how Roger Bannister ran the four first four-minute mile many years ago and then we saw many more people do it. Now, you have more experienced coaches,



and the ecosystem is more supportive. That is pretty much what is happening now in the startup space. Companies that are solving real problems with real customers should be the real winners. As for the unicorn valuations, they are outcomes of bets that venture capitalists submit, and they understand the risks involved. The valuations can go up and down since they have a lot to do with macroeconomic factors, cost of capital, demand, and supply. But fundamentally, good companies are being built out of India, and that's why you will see valuations going up, and when it is north of a billion, we have a unicorn.

I just want to add a few things to what Professor Rajan said. First, India is an open market with a fairly stable democracy, and having startups as a national priority is a big headwind. There are some kinks that need to be ironed out, but the fact remains that it is one of the largest markets in the world. Second, we have great data penetration. The cost of accessing the Internet is very low, and the consumer base has become very big. The hope is that someday, all of these consumers will add up to a domestic market, which is big enough for these startups to make windfall returns. It means the startups will essentially tap into that consumer base using digital technologies. Third, we saw some really good IPOs in the last few years. Zomato and Freshworks are great examples. Underlying all these companies is

What do you think will be the impact of the startups on the country's employment scene? How do you think startups will change the nature of employment?

PJK: Directionally, it is true that startups have created jobs. Freshworks started with a few dozen employees and by the time it went public, there were 3,000. With that IPO, about 500 people became 'crorepatis'. I personally know of dozens of people who have gone out and started their own companies with team sizes of five to 10. Many of them have enough capital and they understand the market. So, the hope is that they will create high-quality jobs and it will become a virtuous cycle. These are niche, high-paying jobs and in the larger scheme of things, the numbers may not be high. But these are high-quality jobs which have a flywheel effect, which means employees will start their own companies or invest in newer startups and riskier ideas, and make bolder bets on innovation.

The question of mid-level, white collar jobs has been around for a long time. Automation will shift some of these jobs elsewhere, but I wouldn't say it's killing those jobs. In a country like India, which has access to the Internet and the global market, it is a net positive as we can participate in this labour market as it becomes more and more remote.

TR: What is the mandate for startups? Is it essentially innovation and growth. Through innovation and growth, they are able to create an impact. To achieve this growth and ability to innovate, startups take the help of technology or people. There are some startups which will really take the help of a lot of people, like food delivery aggregators. There are certain startups where growth will result in substantial job creation. There will also be certain startups which are largely technology-driven, where the employment opportunity might not be very high, but if the startups are going to result in growth, this can, as Jayadevan put it, have a flywheel effect, which can create a lot of employment either directly or indirectly.

But the mandate for startups is not really in terms of creating jobs unlike what the government does or

a public sector enterprise does, where job creation is an important metric. For a startup, it is a metric that is useful but it's probably not a target.

Having said that, we also need to see where the requirement is. Job creation is an important requirement for economic growth. Jobs are like a pyramid, which is always broader at the bottom. We need to be creating more jobs at the bottom so that the pyramid is stable. If startups are creating more jobs at the base of the pyramid, they are then catering to the requirement of the hour.

Do you think that the Indian startup sector is overvalued?

TR: In financial markets, asset prices are very dynamic and sentiments can play a very important role in valuation. When sentiments are good, the valuation seems to be on the higher side. There is a dominant view that asset prices today are inflated, not just for startups but in the overall stock market. I think I would subscribe to this dominant view that the asset prices today do not reflect true values, but then that's the nature of the financial markets.

I think angel investors and high net worth investors looking to invest in startups are very aware of the risks and cycles of the stock markets and these valuations and will be able to bear it. They will understand the risks of these valuations because many of them are knowledgeable investors.

PJK: I think there is froth in the market. But venture capital is risk capital, and people who allocate a portion of their wealth into venture capital understand the risks well. I think we also underestimate the genius of the markets. They know exactly which companies are just fiction and which companies are actually churning out profits and having good cash flows. Companies that don't have great fundamentals will be weeded out. There are no two ways about it. If there is no path to profitability, if there is no cash flow being generated, then you are looking at companies that have not fundamentally discovered a business model or a problem that they really want to solve, even after being in existence for many years.



Thillai Rajan is Professor, Department of Management Studies, IIT-M, and cofounder, YNOS Venture Engine



P.K. Jayadevan is author and former startup founder



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Ploughing a new channel for India's food systems

The siloed approach of 'agriculture' serving 'food security' needs to give way to a science-society-policy interface



MANISH ANAND &
S. VIJAY KUMAR

In an effort to spur national and regional action to deliver the United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through transforming food systems, the UN Food Systems Summit called for action by governments in five areas: nourish all people; boost nature-based solutions; advance equitable livelihoods, decent work and empowered communities; build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stresses; and accelerate the means of implementation. Such a transformation in the Indian context would involve enhancing interfaces between the spheres of science, society and policy, focusing on sustainability, resource efficiency and circularity.

Mix of science and policy

An active science-society-policy interface negated the prevailing negative atmosphere of the 1960s when the inability to feed a growing population was propounded in two notable books: *The Population Bomb* by Paul Ehrlich, and *Famine 1975!* by brothers William and Paul Paddock. India's Green Revolution in the 1960s, enabling food security and addressing widespread hunger and poverty, was achieved not only through science and technology and the development of improved high-yielding varieties of rice and wheat but also through policy measures and development of institutional structure. It included a vast agricultural research and technology transfer system at the national, regional, State and local

levels. The Training & Visit (T&V) system introduced in the 1970s with World Bank assistance was key to the science-society interface as it established a cadre of agriculture extension specialists at the local level.

Although India is now self-sufficient in food grains production in the macro sense, it has about a quarter of the world's food insecure people, a pointer to the amount of food necessary to allow all income groups to reach the caloric target (2,400 kcal in rural and 2,100 kcal in the urban set-up). Nutrition indicators have marginally improved over the years. However, macro- and micronutrient malnutrition is widespread, with 18.7% of women and 16.2% of men unable to access enough food to meet basic nutritional needs, and over 32% of children below five years still underweight as per the recently released fifth National Family Health Survey (2019-2021) phase 2 compendium.

India is ranked 101 out of 116 countries in the Global Hunger Index, 2021. Not surprisingly, widespread concerns about poverty, malnutrition and the need for a second Green Revolution are being made in tandem. The country faces the dual challenge of achieving 'nutrition security', as well as addressing declining land productivity, land degradation and loss of ecological services with change in land use.

Need for 'transition'

The siloed approach of 'agriculture' serving 'food security' needs must give way to 'food systems' for 'sustainability' and 'better nutrition' and embrace the range of activities and actors involved in food production, aggregation, processing, distribution and consumption embedded in their socio-economic and physical context.



An important takeaway from the Green Revolution-era is that for science to be relevant to societal outcomes, it has to be planned and executed within the theory of change. The necessary behavioural changes in adopting the improved seeds and practices brought about by the T&V system in the 1960s enabled science to steer the process of change. In the context of the intensifying economic, environmental and climate challenges and crisis, the need of the hour is a good theory of transition encompassing the spatial, social and scientific dimensions, supported by policy incentives and mechanisms for achieving a sustainable, resilient and food secure agriculture. Else Ehrlich's nuanced prediction, following the success of the Green Revolution, that humanity has postponed its tryst with disaster might come true. A theory of change ought to bring the focus back on sustainability, resource efficiency and circularity as the central pillars towards transforming food systems.

Enhancing sustainability

An agro-climatic approach to agricultural development is important for sustainability and better nutrition. Harnessing the spatial diversity of agricultural production systems adopting the principles of sustainability, resource efficiency and circularity could correct the limitations and unintended conse-

quences of the Green Revolution. These are the loss of indigenous landraces, soil nutrients depletion, groundwater stress, excessive use of agrochemicals and its residual presence in foods and environment, income gap between large, marginal and small farmers, and the gap between irrigated and rain-fed areas.

Data compiled in the agro-climatic zones reports of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and the erstwhile Planning Commission of India reveal enormous potential for crop diversification and precision for enhanced crop productivity based on soil type, climate (temperature and rainfall), and captive water resources. The livelihood of more than half of India's working population is linked to agriculture and allied activities; the sector has a direct influence on the health and nutrition status of dependent communities. Thus, the focus should be on improving farmers' competitiveness, supporting business growth in the rural economy, and incentivising farmers to improve the environment. It is assumed that a meticulous review of agro-climatic zones could make smallholders farming a profitable business, enhancing agricultural efficiency and socio-economic development, as well as sustainability.

Keeping policy in mind

Strengthening and shortening food supply chains, reinforcing regional food systems, food processing, agricultural resilience and sustainability in a climate-changing world will require prioritising research and investments along these lines. A stress status of the natural resource base – soil and water in different agro-climatic zones – will help understand the micro as well as meso-level interventions needed with regard to

technologies, extension activities and policies. Lastly, infrastructure and institutions supporting producers, agripreneurs and agri micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in their production value chain are central to the transition.

This should be aligned to the national and State policy priorities such as the National Policy guidelines 2012 of the Ministry of Agriculture for the promotion of farmer producer organisations, and the National Resource Efficiency Policy of 2019 of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. It would encourage a resource efficient and circular economy for production, processing and storage techniques of food products through renewable energy solutions, reduction of supply chains and inputs (materials, water, and energy). It would also ensure the efficient use of by-products, thereby creating value while using fewer inputs and generating less waste for long term and large-scale impact.

Evidence has to be generated not only on the effects of food systems on economic, environmental and social outcomes and their co-benefits and trade-offs but also on understanding the levers of change and how to operate them. Clearly, science, society and policy have a lot to gain from an effective interface encompassing the range of actors and institutions in the food value-chain and a multidisciplinary and holistic approach, along with a greater emphasis on policy design, management and behavioural change.

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U.S. group hacked Indian research institutes: China firm

Websites of Institute of Microbial Technology, Indian Academy of Sciences, Banaras Hindu University among those reportedly compromised

ANANTH KRISHNAN
HONG KONG

A new report from a Beijing-based cybersecurity firm said hackers linked with the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) were found to have inserted "covert backdoors" that may have given them access to sensitive information in dozens of countries, including India, Russia, China and Japan.

Among the reportedly compromised websites listed in the report were those linked to one of India's top microbial research labs – the Institute of Microbial Tech-

nology (IMTech) under the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research – as well as the Indian Academy of Sciences in Bengaluru. Websites linked to Banaras Hindu University were also listed as being hacked into.

'Backdoors found'

The Beijing-based cybersecurity firm Pangu Lab released a technical report explaining how it had found the backdoors and linked it to "unique identifiers in the operating manuals of the NSA" that had come to light in the 2013 leak of NSA files



by insiders.

"In 2016 and 2017," the report said, "the 'Shadow Brokers' published two batches of hacking files claimed to be used by 'The

Equation Group'. In these hacking files, researchers from Pangu Lab found the private key that can be used to remotely trigger the backdoor Bvp47...a hacker tool belonging to 'The Equation Group'. Through further research, the researchers found that the multiple procedures and attack operation manuals disclosed by the 'Shadow Brokers' are completely consistent with the only identifier used in the NSA network attack platform operation manual exposed by CIA analyst Snowden in the PRISM incident in

2013." The report, which explained the technicalities of how the backdoor worked, said this was "a backdoor communication technology that has never been seen before, implying an organisation with strong technical capabilities behind it".

"As an advanced attack tool, Bvp47 has allowed the world to see its complexity," it said. "What is shocking is that after analysis, it has been realised that it may have existed for more than 10 years."

The report listed dozens of sites – many universities

and scientific research institutes – that had reportedly been compromised in countries, including both U.S. adversaries and allies and partners, ranging from India and Japan to China and Russia.

The report is being framed by the Chinese media as a rebuttal to U.S. allegations of Chinese cyber-hacking.

China-linked cyberattacks have targeted a number of U.S. institutions and become a thorny issue in U.S.-China relations.

Indian agencies have re-

ported cyber attacks from China targeting a wide range of institutions, including government departments.

The Union Power Ministry said last year that "state-sponsored" Chinese hacker groups had targeted various Indian power centres but added that the groups have been thwarted after government cyber agencies warned about their activities.

This followed a report from a U.S. cybersecurity firm linking an outage in Mumbai in 2020 to hacking attacks by China-linked groups.

Air control must for operations at all levels, says IAF chief

'Growth of aviation had revolutionised character of warfare'

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

China's latest demonstration of physically moving one of its disabled satellites into the graveyard orbit was bringing in newer threats in the race to weaponise the space domain, "hitherto considered relatively safe", the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal (ACM) V.R. Chaudhari said on Thursday. "Control of air has become a prerequisite for conduct of operations at all levels. Aerospace power

continues to evolve and mutate, primarily fuelled by induction of new technology, emergence of new threats and evolution of new paradigms for war fighting," he said.

The unparalleled growth of aviation had revolutionised the character of warfare, he said at the 13th Jumbo Majumdar international seminar organised by the Centre for Air Power Studies.

"The inherent speed, reach, responsiveness and accuracy of air power make it a

preferred choice for most operations. No other field has seen such a rapid transformation in technology as air power has seen in the last 120 years of its existence," he pointed out.

Technology in this domain was niche, proprietary and often under tight State control, he said. The other challenge was to develop doctrines, training philosophy and concepts of operations. It would require joint planning and execution of plans.

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.