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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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India will send humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, says MEA

Will help evacuate people from India's neighbourhood stranded in Ukraine: PM

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
DINAKAR PERI
NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his second meeting on the Ukraine crisis in a day, on Monday evening said that the Indian government would extend help in evacuating those from India's neighbourhood and from developing countries who find themselves stranded in war-torn Ukraine. He also said that the first batch of humanitarian aid to Ukraine would be dispatched as early as Tuesday morning.

PM Modi also spoke with H.E. Nicolae-Ionel Ciucă, Prime Minister of Romania and Eduard Heger, PM of the Slovak Republic, thanking both leaders in helping to evacuate of Indian citizens from Ukraine and for permitting special evacuation flights under Operation Ganga

A statement from the Ministry of External Affairs said: "Guided by India's motto of the world being one family, PM Narendra Modi stat-



Anxious moments: Indians waiting for transport at the Medyka pedestrian border crossing in eastern Poland on Sunday. ■ AFP

ed that India will help people from neighbouring countries and developing countries stranded in Ukraine."

Sources said that this was done as reports said that many people from countries in the subcontinent and other non-European nations were stranded at the borders of Ukraine. "Following a request from the Ambassador of Ukraine, India will send humanitarian assistance, including medicines, to Ukraine," said Arindam Bagchi, Official Spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs.

"I was assured by Foreign Secretary Shringla that the request for humanitarian assistance would be addressed very quickly," Ukrainian Ambassador Igor Polikha told *The Hindu*. Indian officials did not specify the timeline of the delivery of the humanitarian consignment but maintained that the Ukrainian side urgently required several items such as medicines and critical care items and had handed over a list to the Indian side.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Polikha addressed the media and urged parents and fami-

ly members of Indian students to not panic. He said the reports of Ukrainian soldiers and border guards misbehaving with Indian students were not correct. "There are long queues at border crossings (with Poland and Romania). Pregnant children and even foreign diplomats are stuck in queue," Mr. Polikha said assuring that the Ukrainian side was cooperating with the Indian officials to ensure evacuation of the stranded Indians and that there was no discrimination being displayed to the Indian nationals.

Mr. Bagchi announced that apart from the existing evacuation routes through the border crossings along Ukraine-Poland and Ukraine-Romania, a new route had been opened through the border with Moldova.

He assured that the evacuation plan – Operation Ganga – was entirely funded by the Indian government and that the evacuees were not required to pay any money.

Debunking Russia's international law justifications

The grounds on which the Russian President has tried to justify Moscow's illegal actions against Ukraine are erroneous



PRABHASH RANJAN &
ACHYUTH ANIL

Notwithstanding the spin offered by international relations experts on the Russia-Ukraine crisis, the unequivocal truth is this. The Russian invasion of Ukraine is a brutal murder of the United Nations (UN) Charter and several other tenets of international law. Ironically, Russian President Vladimir Putin has invoked international law to justify Moscow's barefaced illegal actions. But these justifications are erroneous.

Recognition of territories

Three days before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russia recognised the supposedly independent territories of Donetsk and Luhansk in eastern Ukraine and signed treaties of friendship with these entities paving the way for Russian troops moving in as "peacekeepers". In doing so, Russia seems to rely on the controversial theory of remedial secession, which posits the unilateral secession of a territory from the parent state in the most extreme cases. However, international law, beyond the context of decolonisation, does not recognise a general right to unilateral secession within the principle of self-determination. Even if an arguable case could be made for remedial secession, it requires a very high threshold such as severe violations of human rights and systemic

oppression of ethnic Russians by Ukraine. Russia's claims of the genocide of ethnic Russians are not backed by any evidence. Ukraine has moved the International Court of Justice on the issue of alleged genocide. In any case, Ukraine expressly agreed to recognise the autonomy of Donetsk and Luhansk under the Minsk Accords with Russia, thereby promising to protect the right to self-determination of these territories. Therefore, Russia's claims have no basis in international law. In recognising the statehood of Donetsk and Luhansk, Russia has violated Article 2(4) of the UN Charter by undermining Ukraine's territorial integrity.

Use of force

The Russian illegality has not been restricted to just this. The Russian missile strikes in Ukraine including on non-military objects and the Russian forces marching through Ukrainian soil are a ruthless exhibition of the use of force in international relations, which Article 2(4) of the UN Charter proscribes. Bizarrely, Mr. Putin claims that he is acting in self-defence as per Article 51 of the UN Charter. Article 51 recognises the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence in the case of an armed attack by one state against another state. However, Ukraine has not launched an "armed attack" against Russia warranting defensive strikes. Moreover, there was no "imminent" threat from Ukraine that would have justified Russia's actions even under the arguable theory of anticipatory self-defence in international law. The right to collective self-defence under Article 51 exists only for states. Donetsk and Luhansk are not



states under international law. Moreover, Ukraine did not attack these purportedly independent states. Even assuming that legitimate grounds for self-defence exist, nothing in Article 51 or customary international law permits a disproportionate action in self-defence, such as a full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Mr. Putin's despicable actions are tantamount to committing the crime of aggression as defined under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). The Rome Statute in Article 8bis (2) defines an act of aggression to mean any use of force against the sovereignty, territorial integrity, or political independence of another state. Ideally, the aggressor state and its leaders should face international criminal responsibility for aggression. However, the ICC is unable to exercise jurisdiction unless both the aggressor and victim states are party to the Rome Statute. With Russia and Ukraine not being a party, the likelihood of legal accountability to the actions of Russia is slim.

On 'R2P'

Mr. Putin also indirectly invoked the controversial doctrine of hu-

manitarian intervention, also termed Responsibility to Protect (R2P), in international law for its actions in Ukraine. R2P stems from every state's responsibility to protect its population from gross violations of human rights and the international community's responsibility in assisting states to fulfil such responsibility. Controversially, this principle has been stretched to justify the use of force by third states in the territory of a state which has failed in its duty to protect its citizens. Such actions may or may not be authorised by the UN Security Council (UNSC); the 2011 military intervention in Libya received UN authorisation, while the 1995 North Atlantic Treaty Organization bombing of Bosnian Serbs did not. However, the R2P doctrine remains disputed in international law. Even if it exists, there is no evidence that ethnic Russians in Ukraine are facing atrocities that merit a humanitarian intervention of the scale that Russia has launched. The irony of Russia invoking the R2P doctrine for its Ukrainian invasion, in the same declaration criticising the West for R2P in Libya and the former Yugoslavia, is lost in hubris.

Russia's revisionism

It will be futile to look at the current crisis through the narrow lens of black letter law alone without expounding the ideational moorings of Russia's approach. The Kremlin believes that the world is divided into spheres of influence. Thus, one needs to distinguish between countries that are truly sovereign and countries that possess nominal or limited sovereignty. Russia views Ukraine as an entity that possesses limited

sovereignty. The global community should take note of Mr. Putin's precarious game of resurrecting a 'Russian empire' that could topple the very foundations on which the post-World War rule-based international order has been laboriously built. This is part of the Russian approach toward international law which believes that the basis of international law is not universal but cultural and civilisational distinctness.

Rooted in Russia's cultural and civilisational exceptionalism is the emphasis on statism. Indeed, Putin's Russia has doubled down on statism in international law through institutionalising several mechanisms. For example, Russia has created a constitutional apparatus to denounce international human rights law, by empowering the Russian Constitutional Court to invalidate any judgment by any human rights mechanism (including the European Court of Human Rights), if they are found to be inconsistent with the Russian constitution.

History tells us humanity has suffered at the hands of hyper-masculine autocratic leaders who set out on the path of achieving mythical civilisational greatness. The global community should collectively ensure that this is not repeated. International law should be marshalled to constrain arbitrary state power and check imperial designs. Or else the sustenance of a rule-based international order shall remain a pipe dream.

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Fighting in Ukraine must stop: UN chief

Ukraine, Russia spar at UN General Assembly meet

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

“Enough is enough,” said UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, addressing the UN General Assembly (UNGA), hearing a resolution to condemn Russia’s attack on Ukraine as he called for an immediate cessation of violence and withdrawal of Russia’s military from Ukrainian territory.

“The fighting in Ukraine must stop,” Mr. Guterres said. “We are facing a tragedy for Ukraine, but also a major regional crisis with potentially disastrous implications for us all.”

In a reference to President Vladimir Putin’s decision to place Russian nuclear weapons on a more elevated alert, and Belarus President Lukashenko’s decision to reverse his country’s non-nuclear status, Mr. Guterres said the “mere idea of a nuclear conflict is simply inconceivable,” adding that, “Nothing can justify the use of nuclear weapons.”

Shortly after Mr. Guterres spoke, the representatives of Ukraine and Russia sparred at the session, presided over by President of the General Assembly and Maldivian Foreign Minister Abdullah Shahid. Ukraine’s Ambassador to the UN Sergiy Kyslytsya called Russia’s actions and nuclear announcement



Fleeing home: People from Ukraine waiting at a railway station in Poland. ■ GETTY IMAGES

“madness”, and warned that “if Ukraine does not survive, the UN will not survive”.

Russian Ambassador to the UN Vassily Nebenzia alleged that it was Ukraine and not Russia that had begun “these hostilities”, claiming that the Ukrainian government had planted the “roots of the crisis” and had not implemented the 2015 Minsk agreement.

The resolution on Ukraine, which is being heard at the Eleventh Emergency Special session of the UNGA, was mandated by the UN Security Council (UNSC), after a U.S.-led effort to criticise Russia at the UNSC in resolution 8979 was vetoed by the Russian representative. India, along with China and the

United Arab Emirates, had abstained from that vote.

India likely to abstain

India is widely expected to also abstain from the resolution at the UNGA, which is a considerably tougher and lengthier version of UNSC 8979, although officials said they would take a final call based on the text. India may, however, be more inclined to support another resolution due to be discussed at the UNSC on Monday night on ensuring humanitarian access for civilians and refugees, the officials said. The government has said safety of Indian citizens fleeing the violence in Ukraine is its “topmost” priority.

The UNGA resolution is

expected to be voted sometime on Tuesday, after over 100 listed speakers, including India, make their statements. According to a draft circulated before the discussion, if passed, the UNGA would “deplore in the strongest terms” Russian “aggression” on Ukraine, demand a complete withdrawal of troops, and a reversal of the Russian decision to recognise the enclaves of Donetsk and Luhansk. It also demands an immediate return to talks, and for all parties to allow and facilitate “rapid, safe and unhindered” access for all civilians to humanitarian assistance.

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Quad grouping is a diplomatic arrangement: U.S. Commander

Efforts on to increase collaborations between four Navies, says Admiral Paparo

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

Terming the Quad grouping as a “diplomatic arrangement”, visiting U.S. Pacific Fleet Commander Admiral Samuel J. Paparo said that strategy always follows policy and the four Navies have embarked upon an effort to increase the “total sum of our collaboration at sea with particular focus on information sharing, maritime patrol, undersea domain awareness” and all the elements a Naval power can bring upon to bear.

Admiral Paparo is on a visit to India from February 25 to 28 coinciding with the biennial multilateral exercise Milan 2020 underway in the port city of Visakhapatnam and was a speaker at the international maritime seminar held on Sunday as part of the exercise.

On Monday, he held discussions with Navy chief Admiral R. Hari Kumar in the



Joining hands: Chief of Naval Staff Admiral R. Hari Kumar with Admiral Samuel J. Paparo in New Delhi. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

national capital. “It is also a bourne of the necessity of the common values the four Quad nations hold, as maritime democracies and the growing threats to the free and open Indo-Pacific,” Admiral Paparo said speaking at the seminar.

Emerging challenges

Stating that within Quad one can see the geography of the interests and how the strategy will follow the policy, and so the increasing numbers of

exercises, increasing information sharing and “greater amount of combining networks to enable those”.

On his interaction with Admiral Hari Kumar, the Navy said in a statement that among issues discussed were avenues to strengthen the growing cooperation between the two Navies, deal with “challenges emerging on the maritime front, and enhance collaboration and interoperability to ensure maritime security in the In-

dian Ocean Region (IOR).”

Speaking at the seminar, the Chief of Australian Navy Vice-Admiral Michael Noonan too termed the Quad as an important “diplomatic construct” and has seen significant interactions between the four countries most recently between the four Foreign Ministers in Melbourne.

Vice-Admiral Noonan too met Admiral Hari Kumar on Monday and the Navy said he was provided a broad overview of “regional security dynamics and the operational aspects” in recent times, particularly those related to delivering Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief to friendly foreign countries, conducting counter piracy operations, enhancing maritime safety and security in the region, and strengthening foreign cooperation, with special emphasis on India-Australia cooperation.

Ukraine's situation, India's national interest

While India needs to remind Russia that its actions violate the BRICS Delhi resolution, the UN can assist Ukraine



SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY

The Russian President, Vladimir Putin, in his televised speech on the night of February 21, 2022, had announced a “special military operation to protect people who have been abused by the genocide of the Kyiv regime for eight years.” Mr. Putin further said: “We will strive for the demilitarization and de-Nazification of Ukraine, as well bring to justice those who committed numerous bloody crimes against civilians.” Who is ‘We’? In the 21st century, why is Mr. Putin using despicable 19th century Imperialist language?

A belief without basis

There is, or was, however no genocide in Ukraine proved by any documented report. Moreover, the Ukrainian government is nowhere close to be legitimately called “Nazi”. For example, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is a Jew. He is also proud of his Jewish grandfather who had fought against Hitler’s German army. In fact, Mr. Putin’s actions during the last few days are making Mr. Putin himself sound more like the hated Nazis. As of now, Russian bombs are pounding Ukraine. Russian soldiers are pouring into Ukraine. The only question on everyone’s lips is: “Why? What does Russia hope to accomplish with this bloody invasion?” The Ukrainian people from the very top, from President Zelensky himself, have

decided to fight and Russian troop movement is thus down to a crawl and behind announced schedule.

Mr. Putin seems to believe that “Ukraine is an illegitimate country that exists on land that is historically and rightfully Russia’s”. But even the most biased Russian history book does not suggest even remotely this outrageous Nazi-like belief of Mr. Putin.

Thus, the talk of a “de-Nazification” of the Russian establishment, while absurd at the factual level, nonetheless reveals that Mr. Putin is “acting on his long-held autocratic belief that the Ukrainian government has no right to exist”. His ultimate goal seems to be to make Ukraine into a vassal of his future as yet imaginary, Russian-led Soviet Empire.

In his earlier 2005 Declaration, Mr. Putin had stated that “the collapse of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster”. There are not many takers for this view even inside Russia. “The most relevant formulation, for the purposes of understanding the current invasion, however came in Mr. Putin’s inflammatory speech on Ukraine policy delivered on February 20 last, in which the central contention of his address is that Ukraine and Russia are, in historical terms, essentially inseparable. Mr. Putin’s narrative is twisted history: It is simply incorrect to say that Ukraine has had no independent national identity that is separate from Russia”.

The Narendra Modi government had decided to abstain on the vote on the United Nations Security Council Resolution (moved by the United States and its allies against Russia over the Ukraine invasion). But Prime Minister Modi



GETTY IMAGES

should surely recognise that BRICS, in its New Delhi Declaration (paragraph 22 in the XIII BRICS Summit), had resolved that the five BRICS nations were opposed to the unilateral use of force against any state, and wanted all disputes resolved by peaceful means, and categorically ruled out the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State (September 9, 2021).

The BRICS Delhi resolution

The text adopted was as follows: “We (BRICS) underscore the inadmissibility of the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes and principles of United Nations.”

Thus, the New Delhi BRICS Declaration commits to resolving all disputes by peaceful means and is opposed to unilateral use of force against any state. Russia by invading Ukraine has violated that resolution to which India also was a prominent party.

This declaration was in fact approved and signed by Russia in the presence of Mr. Putin along with China’s President Xi Jinping. Yet, six months later, Russia, a foun-

der-member of BRICS, has forgotten that resolution by Russia’s unilateral illegal violent military action against Ukraine.

That is why I have been advocating, since long, for India walking out of BRICS since I had earlier apprehended the coming collapse of BRICS. In 2015 I had declined Prime Minister Modi’s offer to me, conveyed by Bharatiya Janata Party leader Amit Shah in the presence of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh representative, of accepting to become the first President of the BRICS Bank. I conveyed to the Prime Minister directly later that China would soon be turning hostile to India, and BRICS would lose credibility. Today the invasion and aggression against Ukraine has in effect cremated the spirit of BRICS.

“By casting the Ukrainian regime in the most negative possible light – and officially linking Russia’s official war aims to ‘de-Nazification’ and ‘demilitarization’ – Mr. Putin is all but openly acting on his belief, that Ukraine is not a legitimate sovereign state, into aggressive action. The Russian case for the war is thus built on an unwitting lie about Ukraine’s history”, as an article says.

The path for New Delhi

From this juncture onwards, India has to take stock since the apparent goal of India becoming a “Viswa Guru” is now, at best, a mirage. From Jawaharlal Nehru onwards, India has failed to become one since it cannot be a reality in the present global dispensation. Instead, India needs friends and collaborators but without bowing before any country.

One way for India to begin as-

serting itself is to suggest to Russia to withdraw its armed forces from the entire Ukraine in keeping with the aforementioned Delhi Resolution of BRICS. If Russia does not give weight to India’s suggestion, the Modi government should announce in the UN General Assembly, consideration of the U.S. proposed Draft Resolution; India would vote for it after the United Nations General Assembly adopts any reasonable amendments proposed.

India should also urge the United States to re-structure the objectives and the priorities of the Quad, outline a clear strategy to achieve the objectives, and mobilise the resources required.

For India, a President Xi-led China is a hostile nation directly, and in global competition. India is potentially capable of meeting this Chinese threat – a threat that is evident by China grabbing 50,000 square kilometres of Indian territory.

The potential strength of India can become actual capability with a little help from the United States. As for Russia, its position in global affairs will depend on the outcome of the Ukraine invasion. At present Russia is falling behind its announced schedule. Ukraine has by its bravery caused delays in Russia’s schedule. With help from members of the United Nations, Ukraine can become the David against the Russian Goliath and become a free democratic nation again.

Subramanian Swamy, a PhD in Economics from Harvard, has been in Parliament for six terms. He was also a Union Cabinet Minister of Commerce and Law & Justice

Counting the costs

Talks to end the war are a must as sanctions on Russia will hurt the wider world

Saturday's announcement by the U.S., the U.K. and European allies, including France and Germany, of a raft of 'further restrictive economic measures' to increase the costs on Russia for its invasion of Ukraine has just raised the risks of a more widespread economic fallout from this war. With a view to further isolating Russia from the international financial system, the western allies decided to block 'selected' Russian banks from the SWIFT messaging system used to validate and complete international payment transactions. They also resolved to impose restrictions on the Russian central bank's ability to access and deploy the country's 'war chest' of an estimated \$630 billion in foreign exchange reserves. The immediate impact of these moves on Russia's economy and financial markets have manifested in a sharp depreciation in the value of the rouble – the currency tumbled almost 30% intraday to a record low against the dollar in Asian trading on Monday and has weakened about 26% so far in 2022. They also forced the country's central bank to more than double its benchmark interest rate to 20%, the highest in almost two decades, and impose controls on capital flows. Russia's largest lender Sberbank found its European arm facing a run on its deposits, which the European Central Bank warned could lead to the unit's 'failure'. With Russians waiting in long queues outside ATMs on fears of likely cash shortages, the country's citizens face the real prospect of runaway inflation.

But the economic costs of Vladimir Putin's unilateral decision to embark on what he called a 'special military operation' to describe Russia's all-out invasion of its western neighbour last week are already being felt worldwide. European banks and companies with significant business exposure to Russia have taken a beating on the bourses given the extent to which the sharp escalation in the sanctions is certain to hurt their operations and revenues. And though the western allies have carefully avoided any mention so far on closing the tap on Russia's massive exports of oil and gas that contribute substantially to the country's current-account surplus, concerns about possible disruptions to shipments from the world's second-largest producer of oil have pushed the price of Brent crude futures well above \$100 a barrel. With most large European economies majorly reliant on energy supplies from Russia, the spectre of rising energy costs fanning a bruising acceleration in inflation in Europe and worldwide is very real. At a time when a durable recovery from the shock of the COVID-19 pandemic is yet to take hold, the war initiated by Russia, and the consequent sanctions on it, especially if widened to cover countries that seek to bypass the sanctions regime, pose a challenge to the global economy that Rabobank's economists projected could be 'so bad' as to be unquantifiable. Expedient negotiations to end the conflict are the only way forward.

Diplomats reconvene for Iran nuclear talks

Tehran says it awaits West's 'political decisions'; France calls for restoring agreement soon

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ASSOCIATED PRESS
PARIS

Diplomats from Iran and world powers reconvened in Vienna on Monday to seek a deal reviving Tehran's 2015 nuclear accord, with pressure mounting for results soon.

Among them was Iran's chief negotiator, Ali Bagheri Kani, who returned to Vienna after consultations with his government in Teheran over the weekend.

The other parties to the agreement are Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China. The United States has participated indirectly in the talks because it withdrew from the accord in 2018 under then President Donald Trump. President Joe Biden has signalled that he wants to re-join the deal.



Ali Bagheri Kani

The accord, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, granted Iran sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear programme.

Under Trump, the U.S. reimposed heavy sanctions on Iran. Tehran has responded by increasing the purity and amounts of uranium it enriches and stock-

piles, in breach of the accord.

Officials say that the talks are reaching their final stage, though it's unclear how long that might take. The negotiations have dragged on for months, punctuated by a long gap last year caused by the arrival of a hard-line new government in Iran.

The three Western European participants have been warning for a while that time is running out for a successful conclusion of the talks. They have argued that the accord will soon become an "empty shell" in light of Iran stepping up its nuclear programme.

Iran insists that its programme is peaceful.

"Unfortunately, Western sides and the U.S. haven't still made their political decisions on several remaining issues," Foreign

Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said at his weekly press conference.

These issues are "in the fields of removal of sanctions, guarantees and some political claims about Iran's peaceful nuclear programme", he said.

Iran has also restricted some inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency, the UN's nuclear watchdog.

France said on Monday it was "critical" that negotiators trying to restore a 2015 deal over Iran's nuclear programme reach agreement this week.

All sides have signalled progress in the talks being held in Vienna, but Iran has said that the West still needs to decide on some key issues. "There is a critical urgency to conclude the negotiations this week," a Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said.

Turkey may block access to Russian warships

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ISTANBUL

Turkey on Sunday officially recognised Russia's attacks on Ukraine as a "state of war" and said it was implementing an international treaty giving Ankara the power to limit warships' passage through the strategic Dardanelles and Bosphorus straits.

Ankara had called the Russian invasion a "military operation", but Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said: "It's no longer a military operation but a state of war," in an interview with CNN

Turk television.

"In this case, of course, whichever of them, it can be Russia or Ukraine, we apply the Montreux agreement," he added.

The 1936 Montreux Convention governs the free movement of commercial ships in peacetime through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles straits and grants Turkey the right to block warships in wartime if threatened.

Ukraine has officially asked Turkey to close the Dardanelles strait – and thus access to the

Black Sea – to Russian ships.

NATO member Turkey, which has strong ties with both Russia and Ukraine, did not immediately

respond to this request.

"It should not be involved in the war after declaring it will return to the base and passing through the Bosphorus," the minister said.

Turkey has strong relations with both Russia and Ukraine and has offered to host talks between their leaders.

"We have repeatedly called for a diplomatic solution, but the war is a reality right now," President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's top press aide Fahrettin Altun tweeted on Sunday.

GDP to grow at 8.9% in 2021-22 instead of 9.2%

Oil price shocks may dent recovery

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India's gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to grow at 8.9% in 2021-22 instead of the 9.2% estimated earlier, with year-on-year growth during October-December 2021 slipping to 5.4% from 8.5% in the previous quarter, as per the second advance national income estimates released on Monday.

Gross Value-Added (GVA) in the economy is expected to grow by 8.3% this financial year, from a 4.8% contraction in 2020-21, the National Statistical Office (NSO) said. Barring the contact-intensive segment of trade, hotels, transport, communication & services related to broadcasting, all sectors are expected to surpass pre-pandemic GVA levels this year.

India's GDP shrunk 6.6%

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in 2020-21, with the first half of the year recording a sharp contraction before GDP resurfaced to clock 0.7% growth in the October-December 2020 quarter.

Economists expect the full year growth hopes for this year to be pared further from the 8.9% projected by the NSO, especially in light of the high oil prices as well as inflation trajectories.

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GDP likely to grow at 8.9% in 2021-22 instead of 9.2%

"While an adverse base was expected to flatten growth in the third quarter (Q3, 2021-22), the initial estimates of the NSO are sorely below our expectations, with a marginal rise in manufacturing and a contraction in construction that is surprising despite the heavy rainfall in the southern states," said Aditi Nayar, chief economist at ICRA

Bank of Baroda chief economist Madan Sabnavis also flagged the meagre 0.2% growth in manufacturing in Q3 as 'a disappointment' especially since corporates have established healthy growth in profits. "This means the unorganised sector and small and medium enterprises have still not gotten up," he said, further expressing concern about

the dipping share of household consumption.

"To achieve 8.9% growth, the GDP has to grow 4.8% in the fourth quarter, which looks challenging given the considerable restrictions posed by the pandemic's third wave, the ongoing geopolitical tensions and persistent supply challenges in areas like coal, power and semiconductors," said M. Govinda Rao, chief economic advisor at Brickwork Ratings, adding that higher crude oil prices may compel a revisit of these GDP estimates for the year.

The GDP growth rates for the first and second quarters of 2021-22 were revised upwards marginally by the NSO from 20.1% to 20.3% and 8.4% to 8.5%, respectively.

Adopt Gati Shakti, Modi tells States, private sector

Portal will be ready by March-end

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday urged State governments as well as private sector to adopt the Gati Shakti portal to plan infrastructure projects and develop special economic zones.

In October last year, the government announced PM Gati Shakti programme under which a portal would be set up to bring 16 Ministries together for integrated planning and implementation of infrastructure connectivity projects. The portal is expected to be ready by March end.

"More than 400 data layers are now available on the portal which give information on not just the existing and proposed infrastructure projects but also on forest land and available industrial estate," Mr. Modi said at a post-Budget webinar on Gati Shakti organised by the Commerce Ministry.

The Prime Minister said that the government's ex-



Narendra Modi

penditure on developing infrastructure had grown four fold since 2013-2014.

"In the year 2013-14, the direct capital expenditure of the Government of India was about 1.75 lakh crore rupees, which has increased to ₹7.5 lakh crore in the year 2022-23. This will lead to greater investments and job creation," he said.

Mr. Modi said that the Unified Logistic Interface Platform (ULIP) will also integrate 24 digital systems of six Ministries and will help in reducing logistics cost in the country which today stood at 13-14% of the GDP and was much higher than some of the developed countries.

After Russian attack, world's largest cargo plane may never fly again

The 6-engine, 84-metre-long Antonov An-225 aircraft, known as 'Mriya', with its 32-wheel landing gear, first took to the skies in 1988

MURALI N. KRISHNASWAMY

An aviation wonder and the world's largest cargo aircraft, the Antonov An-225, has been "destroyed" in an attack on its base at Hostomel/Gostomel airport in Ukraine.

Concern grew over the fate of the giant plane after Russian troops began moving into Ukraine, and there were reports of attacks on the airport and its vicinity around February 24, leading to aviation chatter on social media over the last 48 hours about damage, which was largely speculative and based on grainy images of the airport and its hangars.

Confirming the development

in an e-mail from Kyiv, Ukraine, to *The Hindu* on Monday, the Commercial Director of Antonov Airlines, said, "Today the fact was confirmed that as a result of [the] attack and capture of Ukrainian civil Kyiv-Antonov airport (Gostomel) by Russian troops, the largest aircraft in the world, [the] An-225 Mriya, was damaged and burned down. The aircraft was at the home base in Ukraine for maintenance. The loss of this unique aircraft, which was the real piece of technical art, is a great loss not only for [the] Antonov Company and Ukraine, but for the entire aviation world." No other details were shared.

Known formally as the "Cosack", its North Atlantic Treaty



King of the skies: The Antonov An-225 aircraft as it prepares to land at Israel's Ben Gurion International Airport in Lod. •AFP

Organization (NATO) operating code, the world knew the "super-heavy transport plane" better by its Ukrainian name, "Mri-

ya", or "the Dream".

The six-engine 84-metre-long behemoth, with its 32-wheel landing gear, had its first flight

on December 21, 1988, built mainly for the transportation of the Buran shuttle orbiter and components of the Energiya carrier rocket. After an uncertain future following the breakup of the USSR, the aircraft bounced back and reinvented itself to don a variety of roles – and creating cargo transportation records – leaving spectators spellbound with its appearances across the world. It underwent extensive technical upgrades as well.

Indian landing

It made its maiden landing in India, in May 2016, at Hyderabad's Shamshabad airport while en route to Perth to deliver a 117-tonne power generator

(from Prague, the Czech Republic) to a mine in Australia. It played an important role too in the COVID-19 fight, ferrying nearly 100 tonnes of medicines, laboratory kits, medical masks and personal protective equipment in various missions across Europe, Canada and to Africa. It was even chartered to transport 'Puma' helicopters from Kabul to the U.K. after U.S. ended its mission in Afghanistan.

There is much speculation about happens next. If the "Mriya" cannot be repaired – aviation sources estimate it to be \$3 billion – there is some hope left in the form of a second but unfinished fuselage that lies in an undisclosed warehouse in Ukraine.

IPCC warns of multiple climate hazards

All States will be hit if emissions increase: report

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The world faces unavoidable multiple climate hazards over the next two decades with global warming of 1.5°C, and even temporarily exceeding this warming level would mean additional, severe impacts, some of which will be irreversible, according to a report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that was made public on Monday.

“This report is a dire warning about the consequences of inaction,” said Hoesung Lee, Chair of the IPCC. “It shows that climate change is a grave and mounting threat to our well-being and a healthy planet. Our ac-



High-risk zones: Floodwaters gush down a hilly region in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand in 2019. ■PTI

tions today will shape how people adapt and nature responds to increasing climate risks.”

Human-induced climate change, including more frequent and intense extreme events, has caused widespread adverse impacts and damage to nature and people. Some development and adaptation efforts have re-

duced vulnerability. Across sectors and regions, the most vulnerable people and systems are observed to be disproportionately affected. The rise in weather and climate extremes have led to some irreversible impacts as natural and human systems are pushed beyond their ability to adapt, according to an accompanying statement

from IPCC authors, who include scientists from India.

Lucknow and Patna, according to one of several studies cited in the IPCC report, are among the cities predicted to reach wet-bulb temperature (a metric of humidity) of 35°C if emissions continued to rise. Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Mumbai, Indore, and Ahmedabad are identified as at risk of reaching wet-bulb temperatures of 32-34°C with continued emissions. Overall, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab will be the most severely affected, but if emissions keep rising, all States will have regions that experience wet-bulb temperature of 30°C or more by the end of the century.

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IPCC warns of multiple climate hazards

At the COP26 summit in Glasgow last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared that India will achieve net zero emissions latest by 2070, that is, there will be no net carbon emissions. By 2030 India would also ensure 50% of its energy will be from renewable energy sources.

India will reduce its carbon emissions until 2030 by a billion tonnes and cut its emissions intensity per unit of GDP by less than 45%. India would also install 500 Gigawatt of renewable energy by 2030, a 50 gigawatt increase from its existing targets, he added.

According to the IPCC report, global sea levels will likely rise 44-76 cm this century if governments meet their current emission-cutting pledges. With faster emission cuts, the increase could be limited to 28-55 cm.

But with higher emissions, and if ice sheets collapse more quickly than expected, sea levels could rise as much as 2 m this century and 5 m by 2150.

“It is expected that by 2050, we would reach 1.5 degrees Celsius. Even the slightest change in climate will have a long-lasting impact on the Himalayan region due to its fragile ecology. There would be a rapid increase in incidents like the Chamoli disaster and extreme weather events like

heavy precipitation that we saw in Himachal and Uttarakhand this year,” said Anjal Prakash, Research Director of Bharti Institute of Public Policy at ISB and lead author of the chapter on cities, settlement and key infrastructure and cross chapter paper on mountains.

“The latest IPCC report, in particular, worries me on three counts. We now have high confidence that the accelerating climate crisis is increasing water-related diseases. Second, we have high confidence that climate change will severely impact food production and food security. Third, droughts and heatwaves will trigger biodiversity loss, as well as human migration. To combat this surge of crises, developing countries like India will need to significantly scale up their adaptive capacity,” said Arunabha Ghosh, CEO, Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), a think tank.

The IPCC authors noted that while progress in adaptation planning and implementation has been observed across all sectors and regions, generating multiple benefits, it was unevenly distributed with observed adaptation gaps.

Many initiatives prioritise immediate and near-term climate risk reduction which reduces the opportunity for transformational adaptation, they noted.

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.