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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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Shringla calls for alignment between UN and LAS

Foreign Secretary spotlights Middle East peace process while batting for a two-state solution in Israel-Palestine conflict

SUHASINI HAIDAR
SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON DC

Speaking at a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) meeting on cooperation between the United Nations (UN) and the League of Arab States (LAS), Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla said India and the Arab world share a “civilisational relationship”, as he welcomed the normalisation of relations between countries in the region and reiterated India’s support for a two-state (Palestine and Israel) solution.

Officials said the Foreign Secretary’s visit to the United

Nations to attend the meeting was an indicator of the close relations India shares with the United Arab Emirates, given that the session about UN cooperation with the League of Arab Nations is a “signature event” of the UAE’s presidency this month at the Security Council.

However, Mr. Shringla’s visit to New York amidst the ongoing war in Ukraine has fuelled speculation that he would also take part in discussions at the United Nations about the way forward in the crisis.

At the UNSC meeting on the LAS, Mr. Shringla called



Harsh Shringla

for greater policy alignment between the UN and LAS, fostered by regular and frequent consultations.

He also suggested compre-

hensive coordination at the field level and emphasised post-conflict peace building via reconstruction and economic development. Mr. Shringla suggested that all efforts ensure regional stability with a special focus on the welfare of women and minorities.

“Both organisations must take concerted efforts to support the reactivation of the Middle East peace process in line with a two-state solution,” Mr. Shringla said.

Even as the UNSC meeting was under way on Wednesday, a parallel session of the UNGA (a resumption of the

Emergency Special Session from earlier in March) began.

Ukraine introduced a draft resolution, proposed by France and Mexico, “Human consequences of the aggression against Ukraine”, which holds Russia responsible for the crisis in Ukraine. Another draft UNGA resolution, sponsored by South Africa, a BRICS member country, calls for “an immediate cessation of hostilities by all parties in the conflict”, without naming Russia.

The Modi government has refused to support any resolution at UN bodies that criti-

cises Russia, and has suggested that it is considering a Russian offer of more oil at discounted prices.

Coaxing India

Diplomatic sources confirmed that the surge in number of visitors to Delhi by European and U.S. allies was mainly aimed at trying to ensure that the Modi government shifts its position on the Ukraine issue.

“A vote in favour of one of the resolutions would be a sign that New Delhi is willing to shift its position,” said a diplomat, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

Tracking the persistent growth of China

In the post-pandemic era, the country is positioning itself to cause an unprecedented change in industrialisation



M. SURESH BABU

“When the wind of change blows, some build walls, while others build windmills.” In his speech during the plenary session on ‘The Global Impact of China’s Economic Transformation’, Li Keqiang, Premier of the People’s Republic of China lobbed this idea of facing volatile economic situations. He was speaking at the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos on January 21, 2015.

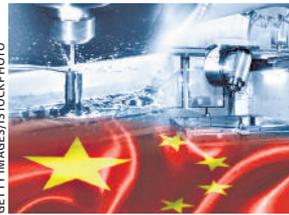
Evident in the numbers

Since then turbulent winds have blown in the form of trade wars and the COVID-19 crisis, and China has perhaps created more windmills. In 2020, when other economies were struggling to cope with the effects of the novel coronavirus pandemic, China’s manufacturing output was \$3.854 trillion, registering an increase from the previous year. According to official data from China’s National Bureau of Statistics, China’s economy grew by 8.1% in 2021, aided by growth in industrial production. The gross domestic product (GDP) growth in the fourth quarter was 4%, faster than the 3.6% forecast by a Reuters poll. Industrial production rose by 4.3% in December 2021 compared to 2020. Fixed asset investment for 2021 grew by

4.9%, surpassing expectations of 4.8% growth. Investment in manufacturing grew by 13.5% in 2021 from a year ago, with that in special purpose machinery rising the most – up by 24.3% on a year-on-year basis. In 2021, overall retail sales grew by 12.5% from the prior year’s contraction, and also bettered the levels in 2019. China’s gross domestic product grew by 2.2% in 2020 from the previous year, according to media reports.

No ‘de-factorisation’

The discourse that emerged in 2021 was that a cocktail of COVID-19, geopolitical tensions and high tariffs would move factories away from the so-called ‘world’s factory’. There was expectation that the \$4 trillion worth of manufacturing which is happening in China (which is more than the GDP of India), would get dispersed to new locations. The epicentre would shift to new settings and the scramble for a share in the manufacturing pie could result in the rise of the rest. Even a small share could yield benefits for other emerging economies as China accounts for about 30% of global manufacturing (equal to that of the United States, Japan and Germany put together). This could also open up new avenues for trade for them as China was the world’s biggest exporter in 2020-21, accounting for 13% of world exports and 18% of world market capitalisation. While the rest of the world debated and waited for the next mega trend that was to come, ‘the de-factorisation of China’, the Chinese economy seems to have reco-



GETTY IMAGES/STOCKPHOTO

vered from a short-lived pandemic blip.

When Chinese President Xi Jinping flagged the idea of ‘dual circulation’, two elements of the strategy were clear. First, there would be more reliance on ‘internal circulation’, which is the domestic cycle of production, distribution and consumption supported by innovation and upgrading in the economy. This was identified as the route for development. Second, the ‘external circulation’ intended to hasten the process of surplus accumulation would lose its primacy over time and only play a supplemental role. The centrepiece of this strategy was that China would continue its emphasis on industrialisation and cut its dependence on global trade and markets. The two circuits are expected to complement each other.

It’s ‘advanced manufacturing’

Quite contrary to the conventional linear models of growth through industrialisation was the significance of manufacturing fading overtime and services rising to predominance; China is stimulating overall growth by catalysing the industrial sector, pursuing a radical shift in its approach. China is using its increasingly skilled la-

bour force and strategic raw materials to enhance its already highly developed manufacturing capabilities. This is pushing industrialisation toward ‘advanced manufacturing’ and higher levels of automation, which have been boosted by its world-beating adoption of artificial intelligence (AI). The effect of such a strategy is that Chinese manufacturing is moving toward a new kind of predominance in growing sectors that are less exposed to lower cost competition. These are the high-tech production sectors, which demand sophistication and reliability along with cost efficiency.

As traditional Chinese industries confront rising labour costs due to demographic changes, a widespread application of AI has emerged as an alternative to reduce operational costs and enhance efficiency. The result is a slow but drastic transformation of China’s factories – from sweatshops to shop floors of the fourth Industrial Revolution through digitising and automation. The recent economic recovery has been aided by a massive adoption of artificial intelligence. China has a significant lead over the rest of the world in AI patent applications and had overtaken the U.S. in 2014. It has also surpassed the U.S. in terms of the number of AI research publications and journal citations, according to a media report.

The manufacturing sector in China is witnessing a wave of automation and AI infusion across sectors. During the pandemic there has been a surge in the use of a combination of software, hard-

ware and robotics. Interestingly it is not just start-ups that are leading this; even established market leaders are also increasing the uptake of AI. For example, the Hangzhou-based EP Equipment, a nearly 30-year-old manufacturer of lithium-powered warehouse forklifts, has launched autonomous models that are able to manoeuvre themselves in factories and on warehouse floors. The Yutong Group, a leading bus manufacturer with over 50 years of experience, has come out with a driverless Mini Robobus on the streets of three cities, says a media report. The increased role of robots and AI in manufacturing is slowly spreading to design, delivery and even marketing. The net effect of it is that total costs would eventually be reduced to a small increment over the cost of materials.

In the post-pandemic era, China is positioning itself in the forefront in manifesting an unprecedented change in industrialisation. It might take years for the rest of the emerging economies to shift gears to move to such a phase of industrial production. As an early mover, ‘China is laying the groundwork for setting itself up to be a leader’. There seems to be a realisation that not only how much an economy manufactures but also how adroitly it does it matters in the new era. It looks like the dividends are already evident in the GDP numbers.

M. Suresh Babu is professor of economics at IIT Madras. The views expressed are personal

Chinese FM to meet Jaishankar, Doval

LAC resolution, Ukraine crisis on agenda; meeting with PM still under discussion, say officials

SUHASINI HAIDAR
ANANTH KRISHNAN
NEW DELHI/HONG KONG

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi is expected to land in Delhi on Thursday evening for the first such visit by a Chinese official since PLA transgressions at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in April 2020 led to a standstill in political ties.

Official sources confirming the plans said all preparations have been made and Mr. Wang is expected to meet External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval on Friday to discuss the way forward on the LAC issue, the war in Ukraine and the BRICS process.

However, it is still unclear whether he will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the day-long visit, after which he is due to fly to Kathmandu.

While Mr. Wang has met Mr. Jaishankar twice in the past two years and attended the Russia-India-China trilateral virtual meeting along with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, there has been no direct contact bet-



Vital meet: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. ■ FILE PHOTO

ween Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Chinese leadership including President Xi Jinping since China's aggression across the LAC.

Remarks on Kashmir

The visit has been kept under wraps, say sources, amid differences over the agenda and scheduling issues during a busy time in New Delhi, and the meeting with Mr. Modi is still "under discussion". The Ministry of External Affairs has made no formal comment on the impending visit thus far. Asked on Wednesday, Chi-

na's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin told presspersons, "I have no information to offer at this moment."

The MEA did, however, hit out at Mr. Wang's remarks during his speech to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in Pakistan on Tuesday when he said "on Kashmir, we have heard again today the calls of many of our Islamic friends and China shares the same hope".

"We reject the uncalled reference," MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said, adding that matters relating to

Kashmir "are entirely the internal affairs of India" and "other countries including China have no *locus standi* to comment".

Normalcy in relationship

The decision to host Mr. Wang in Delhi is a departure from the government position thus far that normalcy in the relationship can only follow a complete de-escalation and disengagement at the LAC.

However, officials said they have made it clear that the unresolved LAC crisis remains the most important issue on the agenda, to the exclusion of all others, with some hoping that the ministerial-level talks will jump start the disengagement process that has been stalled.

The 15th round of military-level talks, on March 11, did not achieve a breakthrough though both sides said the talks were positive.

Both sides have differed on the way forward. India has said normalcy is not possible without peace on the LAC, while China has called for the border to be put in an 'appropriate' place and

not dominate the relationship, a message that Mr. Wang is likely to repeat in New Delhi

The Chinese side is likely to highlight the Ukraine crisis and the shared interests of India and China to help resolve it. Hu Shisheng, Director of the Institute of South Asian Studies at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, told *The Hindu* that it was "time for us two giants to do something out of the box". "India's stand is very similar with China's...Both China and India don't want to see a much weakened, isolated Russia, which means a more vulnerable regional and global order. We have stakes in a stable and not so isolated Russia, and we need to see what we two can do for ending this crisis."

Mr. Wang's visit is also likely to focus on the role of the five-nation Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa process in the current crisis, and is likely to deliver an invitation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a BRICS summit that is due to be held in China later this year.

Indians tighten belts as Ukraine war drives up prices of necessities

Consumers feel bite as companies pass on a surge in costs; hit on consumption comes even as economy battles to recover from pandemic

REUTERS
NEW DELHI

Many Indians are cutting down on fried food and even vegetables as the Ukraine war inflates the prices of items from edible oils to fuel, threatening a sputtering recovery in the consumption-based economy after two years battling COVID-19.

Consumers are feeling the bite as companies pass on a surge in costs since the invasion, battling the first increases in five months this week in the prices of diesel and petrol, as well as more expensive vegetable oils.

"God only knows how we will manage this level of price rise," said Indrani Majumdar, the sole earner in a family of four in the eastern

city of Kolkata, adding that the past two years of the pandemic had brought a halving in salaries.

These days her family eats more boiled food to save on edible oil, she said. It is just one of almost a dozen homes where people said they were taking similar steps.

India's economy expanded at a pace slower than expected in the quarter from October to December, and economists forecast a further dent to growth in the current one, as high fuel prices bring a jump in inflation.

Private consumption contributes the largest share of gross domestic output, at almost 60%.

But since the February 24 invasion, Indian firms have



Tough calls: Since Feb. 24, Indian firms have raised prices of milk, instant noodles and other items by 5-20%. • FILE PHOTO

raised prices of milk, instant noodles, chicken and other items by about 5% to 20%.

About 800 million of a population of almost 1.4 billion received free govern-

ment supplies of staple foods during the pandemic, and even small price rises now can hurt their budgets.

Families' finances could stay anaemic for the third

year in a row, warned Pronab Sen, formerly India's chief statistician.

"The process of rebuilding savings was only beginning post the pandemic," he added. "Because of this latest shock, they will have to cut back on consumption."

Darkening picture

Surging global prices of crude have prompted companies in the import-dependent nation to raise retail prices of petrol and diesel twice this week. India imports 85% of its crude oil, the price of which has risen by almost 50% this year.

India is also the biggest importer of edible oil, buying almost 60% of its needs.

But the price of palm, the

country's most widely consumed edible oil, has jumped 45% this year. And supplies of sunflower oil, which Ukraine and Russia produce in large quantities, have been disrupted.

Some wholesalers said their sales of edible oil had fallen by a quarter in the past month as prices rose.

These factors contributed to keeping India's retail inflation in February above the central bank's upper tolerance threshold of 6% for the second month in a row, while the wholesale rate was more than 13%.

"The timing of input price inflation could not have been worse in the context of a slowing consumption trend," financial services firm Jeffer-

ies said in a note.

Vegetable sales hit

The Confederation of All India Traders estimates input costs for makers of consumer durables and fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) to rise another 10% to 15% this month as fuel prices rise, an expense destined to be passed on to the final consumer.

In Kolkata, vegetable vendor Debashis Dhara said higher transport costs would bump up vegetable prices by a further 5% this week. His sales have already halved since February.

"This kind of price rise is forcing us to cut down consumption," said Archana Pawar, a housewife in Mumbai.

EXPLAINER

Sri Lanka's aggravating economic crisis

Why did the island nation reach this point? How has India extended support and assistance to its neighbour?

MEERA SRINIVASAN

The story so far: Sri Lanka's economic crisis is aggravating rapidly, putting citizens through enormous hardship. Over the weekend, at least two senior citizens died while waiting in long queues to buy fuel; the price of cooking gas spiked to LKR 4,199 (roughly ₹1,150), the price of the widely used milk powder shot up by LKR 600 a kg, and authorities were forced to cancel school examinations for millions of students, due to a shortage of paper.

Why are prices soaring and why is there a shortage?

Sri Lanka is in the grips of one of its worst economic meltdowns in history. The first wave of the pandemic in 2020 offered early and sure signs of the distress – when thousands of Sri Lankan labourers in West Asian countries were left stranded and returned jobless; garment factories and tea estates in Sri Lanka could not function, as infections raged in clusters, and thousands of youth lost their jobs in cities as establishments abruptly sacked them or shut down. It meant that all key foreign exchange earning sectors, such as exports and remittances, along with tourism, were brutally hit.

Fears of a sovereign default rose by the end of 2021, with the country's foreign reserves plummeting to \$1.6 billion, and deadlines for repaying external loans looming.

The lack of a comprehensive strategy to respond to the crisis then, coupled with certain policy decisions last year – including the government's abrupt switch to organic farming – widely deemed “ill-advised”, further aggravated the problem. In August last year, the government declared emergency regulations for the distribution of essential food items, amid wide import restrictions to save dollars which in turn led to consequent market irregularities, and

reported hoarding.

Fears of a sovereign default rose by the end of 2021, with the country's foreign reserves plummeting to \$1.6 billion, and deadlines for repaying external loans looming. But Sri Lanka managed to keep its unblemished foreign debt servicing record. All the same, without enough dollars to import essentials such as food, fuel, and medicines, the year 2022 began on a rather challenging note, marked by further shortages and an economic upheaval.

What is happening on the ground?

At the macro-economic level, all indicators are worrisome. The Sri Lankan rupee, that authorities floated this month, has fallen to nearly 265 against the U.S. dollar. Consumer Price inflation is at 16.8% and foreign reserves stood at \$2.31 billion at the end of February. Sri Lanka must repay foreign debt totalling nearly \$7 billion this year and continue importing essentials from its dwindling dollar account. In a recent address to the country, President Rajapaksa said Sri Lanka will incur an import bill of \$22 billion this year, resulting in a trade deficit of \$10 billion.

For citizens, this means long waits in queues for fuel, a shortage of cooking gas, contending with prolonged power cuts in many localities and struggles to find medicines for patients. In families of working people, the crisis is translating to cutting down on milk for children, eating fewer meals, or going to bed hungry.

Is there resistance?

Yes, both citizens and different segments of the political opposition are taking to the streets, demanding that President Rajapaksa go home. Many media houses are criticising the government, while social media pages are rife with memes and sharp commentary on the Rajapaksas.

What is the government's response?

“This crisis was not created by me,” President Rajapaksa has said, pointing to challenges that arose due to the pandemic.

Despite many economists putting forward support from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as the “only option” for the government, the establishment was reluctant until recently when mounting protests and criticism forced the government into a policy U-turn. The government is now in talks with the IMF to “to find a way to pay off our annual loan instalments, sovereign bonds”, Mr. Rajapaksa said. It remains to be seen how the IMF will support Sri Lanka at this juncture, and to what extent its support might help the country cope with the crisis. Colombo has also sought support from various bilateral partners, including India, by way of loans, currency swaps, and credit lines for import of essentials.

How is India helping?

Beginning January 2022, India has extended assistance totalling \$ 2.4 billion – including an \$400 million RBI currency swap, a \$500 million loan deferment, and credit lines for importing food, fuel, and medicines. Of this, a billion-dollar credit line was finalised last week, during Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa's visit to New Delhi. “Neighbourhood first. India stands with Sri Lanka. \$1 billion credit line signed for supply of essential commodities. Key element of the package of support extended by India,” External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said in a tweet.

Meanwhile, China is considering Sri Lanka's recent request for further \$2.5 billion assistance, in addition to the \$2.8 billion Beijing has extended since the outbreak of the pandemic, the Chinese Ambassador in Colombo told a media conference.

How is India's assistance being viewed in Sri Lanka?

The leadership has thanked India for the timely assistance, but there is growing scepticism in Sri Lankan media and some sections, over Indian assistance “being tied” to New Delhi inking key infrastructure projects in the island nation in the recent



past – mainly the strategic Trincomalee Oil Tank Farm project; the National Thermal Power Corporation's recent agreement with Ceylon Electricity Board to set up a solar power plant in Sampur, in Sri Lanka's eastern Trincomalee district; and two renewable energy projects in northern Sri Lanka, with investment from India's Adani Group.

The weekend newspaper *Sunday Times* took an editorial position that New Delhi was resorting to “diplomatic blackmail”, while cartoonists have depicted Sri Lankan leaders trading crucial energy projects for emergency financial assistance from India. The political opposition has accused the Adani Group of entering Sri Lanka through the “back door”, avoiding competitive bids and due process.

In limbo: A child waiting to buy kerosene with his mother at a fuel station in Colombo, Sri Lanka on March 18, 2022. *REUTERS

THE GIST

■ The economic meltdown started during the first wave of the pandemic in 2020 when key foreign exchange earning sectors, such as exports and remittances, along with tourism, were brutally hit.

■ The Sri Lankan rupee has fallen to nearly 265 against the U.S. dollar. Consumer Price inflation is at 16.8% and Sri Lanka has to repay foreign debt totalling nearly \$7 billion this year and continue importing essentials from its dwindling dollar account.

■ Beginning January 2022, India has extended assistance totalling \$2.4 billion to its neighbour. However, there is growing scepticism in Sri Lankan media over Indian assistance “being tied” to New Delhi inking key infrastructure projects in the island nation.

EXPLAINER

The controversy over the proposed Mekedatu water project

Why is the drinking water project a source of confrontation? Why are both parties unable to come to a settlement?

SHARATH S. SRIVATSA
T. RAMAKRISHNAN

The story so far: The stage appears set for a summer of discontent yet again, as Karnataka and Tamil Nadu are heading for a political confrontation over the Mekedatu drinking water project across river Cauvery, proposed by the former. Within days of Tamil Nadu Assembly's resolution against the project, Karnataka's legislative assembly is set to counter it with a resolution seeking the project's early implementation and clearances from the Centre.

As Karnataka heads into an election year in 2023, the Mekedatu issue has been resonating within Karnataka and in Tamil Nadu as well. With Cauvery being an emotive issue that binds people in the Cauvery basin districts in Old Mysore region, Mekedatu is likely to impact election results.

In Karnataka, the latest development on Cauvery has brought together the political class across parties, which were divided over the issue just a month ago by accusing each other of delaying the project. The BJP government was on tenterhooks after Congress took out a 170-km padayatra from Mekedatu to Bengaluru seeking the project's early implementation. They also accused the Centre of delaying the project for political gains in Tamil Nadu. The padayatra was dubbed by the ruling dispensation as a political tool to consolidate the dominant Vokkaliga votes in the Old Mysore region who lean towards the regional party Janata Dal (Secular).

However, closing ranks, leaders of BJP, Congress and JD (S) have objected to the Tamil Nadu Assembly's resolution as they see it as an "interference" in a project that has been proposed within the jurisdictional limits of Karnataka. With the Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai taking the lead by announcing piloting of a resolution, parties feel that it was "unfair" on the part of Tamil Nadu, which has implemented drinking water projects across Cauvery in its territorial jurisdiction, to oppose a drinking water project proposed by Karnataka.

As far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, it has

executed drinking water supply projects from what is available to it, without seeking to make any additional claim.

What is the project?

Originally mooted in 1948, Mekedatu (which translates as Goat's crossing) is a drinking water cum power generation project across river Cauvery. Karnataka gave the project shape after the final award of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal was notified in February 2013 allocating the riparian states their shares. After a pre-feasibility study report was submitted in 2018, the State submitted a detailed project report to the Central Water Commission in 2019. The ₹9,000 crore balancing reservoir at Mekedatu on the Karnataka-Tamil Nadu border envisages impounding of 67.15 tmc (thousand million cubic) ft. of water. The project, which will involve submergence of nearly 5,100 hectares of forest in Cauvery wildlife sanctuary hosting rich flora and fauna, will help the state in utilising the additional 4.75 tmc ft. of water allocated by Supreme Court in 2018 for consumptive use for drinking purpose for Bengaluru and neighbouring areas. Karnataka's share in the award has been decided at 284.75 tmc ft. In July 2019, the Expert Appraisal Committee on River Valley and Hydroelectric Projects constituted by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has said the proposal could be reconsidered only after Tamil Nadu and Karnataka reach an "amicable solution."

How will it benefit Karnataka?

The water from Mekedatu is to be pumped to quench the thirst of the burgeoning population of Bengaluru which is estimated to be around 1.3 crore. Currently, more than 30% of Bengaluru is dependent on borewell water. Ramanagara and Bengaluru rural districts will also benefit. Along with the 5th stage of the Cauvery Water Supply Scheme, which will be completed shortly, the water from Mekedatu is projected to meet the water requirement of the State capital for the next 30 years. Besides, there are also plans to generate 400 MW of power. The

revenue earned from power generation is expected to compensate the Government its investment on the project within a few years. Karnataka argues that the reservoir will also help to ensure monthly flow stipulated in the award for Tamil Nadu rather than harm the neighbouring State's interest in any way.

What is the current status?

The project is now before the Cauvery Water Management Authority. The Authority is exploring the possibility of having an exclusive discussion on the project, when the matter is sub judice. Apart from writing to the Centre to withdraw the permission given to prepare the detailed project report (DPR), Tamil Nadu has also filed a petition before the Supreme Court, explaining its objections against the project. The Centre and Karnataka have also filed counter affidavits.

What is Karnataka's stand?

Karnataka says that there is no case for Tamil Nadu after its share of 177.75 tmc ft. of water is ensured at the inter-State border gauging centre at Biligundlu. Also, the project falls inside the jurisdictional limit of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu's permission is not needed. The State also argues that since there is no stay in any court for the project, Karnataka can go ahead. On utilising the surplus water, Karnataka says that any allocation in this sphere should be done after hydrology studies to ascertain the quantum of excess water available in the basin.

Why is Tamil Nadu opposed to it?

Tamil Nadu feels that Karnataka, through the project, will impound and divert flows from "uncontrolled catchments" to it, a component which was taken into account by the Tribunal in the 2007 order while arriving at the water allocation plan for the State. As per an estimate, around 80 tmc ft of water flows annually to Tamil Nadu, thanks to the catchments including the area between Kabini dam in Karnataka and Billigundulu gauging site on the inter-State border, and the area between Krishnaraja Sagar dam in



Karnataka and the gauging site. As the upper riparian State has adequate infrastructure even now to address the water needs of Bengaluru, there is no need for the Mekedatu project, according to Tamil Nadu. Mekedatu also does not find mention in the Tribunal's final order or the Supreme Court judgement. Besides, given the unpleasant experiences that it has had with Karnataka in securing its share of the Cauvery water, as per the monthly schedule of water release, Tamil Nadu is wary of assurances from the other side.

Site of tension: The view of the spot identified by the Karnataka Government for the Mekedatu project. •THE HINDU

Is Karnataka ready for negotiation?

No. A recent suggestion by the Union Water Resources Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat for a negotiated settlement raised a storm in Karnataka's political circles and the State Water Resources Minister Govind Karjol met him to reiterate the State's stand. Karnataka has said that there is no scope for negotiation in any interstate river water sharing issue where the tribunal award has been concluded and Karnataka's right on water has been established after the award has been gazetted.

THE GIST

■ Karnataka and Tamil Nadu are at loggerheads over the Mekedatu drinking water project across river Cauvery. Tamil Nadu's Assembly has passed a resolution against the project, while Karnataka's legislative assembly is set to counter it with a resolution seeking the project's early implementation and clearance.

■ Mekedatu is a drinking water cum power generation project proposed by Karnataka across the river Cauvery. The ₹9,000 crore balancing reservoir at Mekedatu on the Karnataka-Tamil Nadu border envisages impounding of 67.15 tmc (thousand million cubic feet) ft. of water.

■ Karnataka has argued that since the project falls inside its own jurisdictional limit, Tamil Nadu's permission is not needed.

Article 355 needed in Bengal: Adhir

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The law and order situation in West Bengal is completely broken and Article 355 should be invoked to ensure the State is governed as per the provisions of the Constitution, Congress leader in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said in a letter to President Ram Nath Kovind on Wednesday in the wake of Birbhum violence.

The Congress leader, who is also the party's chief in West Bengal, said the law and order machinery had broken down in the State and there have been as many as 26 political murders last month.

'Not political'

Responding to it, Trinamool Congress leader Sudip Bandyopadhyay said whatever happened in Birbhum had nothing to do with any political fight and noted that around 20 people have been arrested by the State police in connection with the incident. "Please don't do politics over this issue," said Mr. Bandyopadhyay.



Abating hunger: Government primary school students taking their mid day meals at Khammam, Telangana. • FILE PHOTO

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The nutrition fallout of school closures

COVID-19 has exacerbated the problem of child hunger and malnutrition

THE GIST

JAYASHREE B.
R. GOPINATH
BHAVANI R.V.

Congress leader Sonia Gandhi has recently asked the government to re-start the mid-day meals in reopening schools and to ensure that the meals provided are cooked and nutritious. In this article dated November 3, 2020, Jayashree B, R. Gopinath and Bhavani R.V. explain how the pandemic had adversely affected the prime source of health and nutrition for schoolchildren.

As many as 116 million children – actually, 116 million hungry children – is the number of children we are looking at when we consider the indefinite school closure in India. The largest school-feeding programme in the world, that has undoubtedly played an extremely significant role in increasing nutrition and learning among schoolgoing children, has been one of the casualties of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The flagship report of The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020, released by the Food and Agriculture Organization in partnership with other UN organisations, painted a worrying picture, including the impact of COVID-19 on closure of schools and school meals. A real-time monitoring tool estimated that as of April 2020, the peak of school closures, 369 million children globally were losing out on school meals, a bulk of whom were in India.

Pressing issue

The recent Global Hunger Index (GHI) report for 2020 ranks India at 94 out of 107 countries and in the category 'serious', behind our neighbours Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. The index is a combination of indicators of undernutrition in the population and wasting (low weight for height), stunting (low height for age), and mortality in children below five years of age. We are already far out in terms of achieving the 'Zero Hunger' goal, and in the absence of urgent measures to address the problem both through necessary administrative measures and their effective delivery, the situation will only worsen. To place the urgency in context, a report by the International Labour Organization and the UNICEF, on COVID-19 and child labour, cautions that unless school services and social security are universally strengthened, there is a risk that some children may not even return to schools when they reopen.

A mid-day meal in India should provide 450 Kcal of energy, a minimum of 12 grams of proteins, including adequate quantities of micronutrients like iron, folic acid, Vitamin-A, etc., according to the mid-day meal scheme (MDMS) guidelines, 2006. This is approximately one-third of the nutritional requirement of the

child, with all school-going children from classes I to VIII in government and government-aided schools being eligible. However, many research reports, and even the Joint Review Mission of MDMS, 2015-16 noted that many children reach school on an empty stomach, making the school's mid-day meal a major source of nutrition for children, particularly those from vulnerable communities. Further, these reports highlight the importance of innovative strategies to improve nutrition quality and food diversity under the MDM. This was insisted upon by NITI Aayog and the World Food Programme in their report on Food and Nutrition Security in India (2019). Many state governments, like Tamil Nadu (a pioneering state in MDMS) and Puducherry introduced innovations to convert MDMS into a Nutritious Meal Programme.

In orders in March and April 2020, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and closure of schools, the Government of India announced that the usual hot-cooked mid-day meal or an equivalent food security allowance/dry ration would be provided to all eligible school-going children even during vacation, to ensure that their immunity and nutrition is not compromised. Nearly three months into this decision, States were still struggling to implement this.

According to the Food Corporation of India's (FCI) food grain bulletin, the offtake of grains under MDMS from FCI during April and May, 2020 was 221.312 thousand tonnes. This was 60 thousand tonnes, or 22%, lower than the corresponding offtake during April and May, 2019 (281.932 thousand tonnes). There were 23 States and Union Territories that reported a decline in the grain offtake from FCI in April-May 2020, compared with corresponding months in 2019. The State of Bihar, for instance, which lifted 44.585 thousand tonnes in April and May 2019, had no offtake during these two months in 2020.

Data and media reports indicate that dry ration distributions in lieu of school meals are irregular. Further, since the distribution of dry ration started only in late May, a few experts – like Dipa Sinha of Ambedkar University – advocating on children's issues are calling for immediate distribution of the April quota, to which the children are entitled.

The other worrying angle to the lack of school meals and functioning schools is the fact that there are reports of children engaging in labour to supplement the fall in family incomes in vulnerable households. In July this year, the Madras High Court also took cognisance of the issue and asked the Tamil Nadu government to respond on the subject of how, with schools closed, the nutritional needs of children were being fulfilled. While many State governments have now initiated dry rations provision in lieu of

school meals, there are still challenges for this to be fulfilled in ensuring last-mile delivery. Ensuring functioning of MDMS during the pandemic period, where children are under threat of nutrition and food insecurity, must be high priority. Serving hot meals, at the children's homes or even at the centre, may have challenges in the present scenario. Even States like Tamil Nadu, with a relatively good infrastructure for the MDMS, are unable to serve the mandated 'hot cooked meal' during the lockdown for multiple reasons.

Innovative strategies

Local smallholder farmers' involvement in school feeding is suggested by experts, such as Basanta Kumar Kar, who has been at the helm of many nutrition initiatives. He suggests a livelihood model that links local smallholder farmers with the mid-day meal system for the supply of cereals, vegetables, and eggs, while meeting protein and hidden hunger needs, which could diversify production and farming systems, transform rural livelihoods and the local economy, and fulfill the 'Atmanirbhar Poshan' (nutritional self-sufficiency) agenda. The COVID-19 crisis has also brought home the need for such decentralised models and local supply chains.

There are also new initiatives such as the School Nutrition (Kitchen) Garden under MDMS to provide fresh vegetables for mid-day meals. Besides ensuring these are functional, what can be done, in addition, is that hot meals can be provided to eligible children with a plan to prepare and distribute the meal in the school mid-day meal centre. This is similar to free urban canteens or community kitchens for the elderly and others in distress in States like Odisha. Also, adequate awareness about the availability of the scheme is needed. Thirdly, locally produced vegetables and fruits may be added to the MDMS, also providing an income to local farmers. Besides, distribution of eggs where feasible (and where a State provision is already there) can be carried out. Most of all, the missed mid-day meal entitlement for April may be provided to children as dry ration with retrospective effect.

Across the country and the world, innovative learning methods are being adopted to ensure children's education outcomes. The GHI report calls for effective delivery of social protection programmes. With continuing uncertainty regarding the reopening of schools, innovation is similarly required to ensure that not just food, but nutrition is delivered regularly to millions of children. For many of them, that one hot-cooked meal was probably the best meal of the day.

Bhavani R.V. has contributed to this article. The authors work with the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation

Global uncertainties, India's growth prospects

Normalisation of the economy has been disturbed and the growth objective would be served by apt fiscal policy moves



C. RANGARAJAN &
D.K. SRIVASTAVA

On February 28, 2022, the National Statistical Office (NSO) released India's GDP data for Q3 of 2021-22 along with Second Advance Estimates (SAE) for 2021-22. Post COVID-19, the normalisation of the Indian economy has now been disturbed by the ongoing geopolitical uncertainties.

Growth performance

In the COVID-19 year of 2020-21, both real GDP and GVA contracted by minus 6.6% and minus 4.8%, respectively. The NSO's SAE show that real GDP and GVA growth are estimated to recover to 8.9% and 8.3%, respectively, in 2021-22. Despite this improvement, the magnitude of real GDP at ₹147.7 lakh crore in 2021-22 is only marginally higher than the corresponding level of ₹145.2 lakh crore in 2019-20. The NSO's GDP data highlights that in 2021-22, the nominal GDP growth at 19.4% is significantly higher than the real GDP growth due to an inordinately high implicit price deflator (IPD)-based inflation rate of 9.6%. Monetary policy authorities need to take note of this.

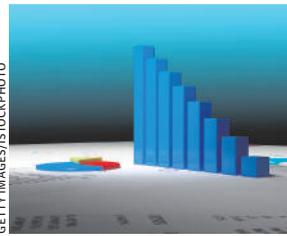
The magnitudes of all demand components in 2021-22 have surpassed their corresponding levels in 2019-20. However, the growth of consumption and investment demand – as measured by private final consumption expenditure (PFCE) and gross fixed capital for-

mation (GFCF) in 2021-22 over 2019-20 is only 1.2% and 2.6%, respectively, suggesting sluggish revival in domestic demand. On the output side, the 2021-22 magnitude of the trade, transport *et al* sector, which has many contact-intensive segments, has remained below its corresponding level in 2019-20 by ₹2.9 lakh crore. Growth in the construction sector in 2021-22 was at only 1.9% over 2019-20.

On a quarterly basis, both GDP and GVA show normalising growth with waning base effects. Real GDP growth moderated from 20.3% in Q1 to 5.4% in Q3 of 2021-22. Similarly, real GVA growth also fell from 18.4% to 4.7% over this period. The implied Q4 GDP and GVA growth rates are estimated to be even lower at 4.8% and 4.1%, respectively. Thus, without a base effect, quarterly growth performance appears to be averaging at less than 5%. Assuming some base effects to continue in the first two quarters, the annual growth in 2022-23 may not be more than 7%. Even this may not be realised due to the ongoing geopolitical conflict.

Crude upsurge impact

It is difficult to arrive at precise estimates of the impact of the increase in global crude prices, but some idea can be provided using the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s recent estimates (2021) of the growth and inflation effects of an increase of U.S.\$10/bbl., *ceteris paribus*. The estimated impact is a reduction in real GDP growth by 27 basis points and an increase in CPI inflation by 40 basis points. This is based on using the baseline global crude price level of U.S.\$75/bbl. For the full year of 2022-23, we may consider an average global



crude price of U.S.\$100/bbl. as a benchmark, although in the short run, it has already surged to U.S.\$123.21/bbl. (average Brent crude price for the week ending March 7, 2022). An increase of U.S.\$25/bbl. from the baseline price of U.S.\$75/bbl. would lead to an estimated reduction in growth of 0.7% points and an increase in inflation of nearly 1% point. With reference to baseline growth for 2022-23 at 7% and CPI inflation at 5%, the revised levels of these may be put at 6.3% and 6%, respectively, due to the impact of crude price upsurge by an assumed margin of U.S.\$25/bbl. through the year. The impact would be much larger if the margin of increase is enhanced. If the prices of other imported commodities also increase, the inflation impact will be higher.

Other challenges

In regard to fiscal implications, reference may be made to the budgeted nominal GDP growth forecast for 2022-23 at 11.1%. Assuming a revised real growth component of 6.3% and an IPD-based inflation component of 6.5%, which may be slightly higher than the corresponding CPI inflation, we may have a revised nominal GDP growth close to 13.0%. Applying on this, a tax buoyancy of 1, the resultant Centre's gross tax revenues (GTR) would be higher than the budgeted magnitude of ₹27.6 lakh

crore by a margin of about ₹3.2 lakh crore. Alongside, there would also be increases in some components of expenditures linked to prices of petroleum products, including petroleum and fertilizer subsidies. The Government should attempt to keep the fiscal deficit at the budgeted level.

Other economic challenges emanating from global uncertainties may include a worsening of the current account balance due to higher import bills with a depreciating rupee. A study by the RBI in 2019 had estimated an increase in the current account deficit (CAD) following a U.S.\$10/bbl. increase in global crude price, to be nearly 0.4% points of GDP. Thus, for an increase of U.S.\$25/bbl. in global crude prices, the CAD may increase by 1% point of GDP. The RBI Professional Forecasters Survey's median estimate of CAD at 1.9% of GDP for 2022-23 may have to be revised upwards to 2.9%.

There would also be some sectoral supply-side bottlenecks and cost escalation. Sectors that draw heavily on petroleum products, such as fertilizers, iron and steel foundries, transportation, construction and coal, would be adversely affected. Due to the discontinuation of transactions through SWIFT, there would be some disruption in trade to and from Russia and Ukraine. However, the respective shares of imports and exports from these countries relative to India's overall imports and exports are limited. There would also be some adverse effects with regard to financial flows. Net foreign portfolio investment (FPI) outflows during October to December 2021 increased to U.S.\$6.3 billion. Net foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows have also been falling during this period

although they have remained positive.

Policymakers may have to exercise a critical choice regarding who bears the burden of higher prices of petroleum products in India among consumers and industrial users, oil marketing companies and the Government. If the oil marketing companies are not allowed to raise prices of petroleum products, the bill for oil sector-linked subsidies would go up. If the central and State governments reduce excise duty and value-added tax (VAT) on petroleum products, their tax revenues would be adversely affected. If, on the other hand, the burden of higher prices is largely passed on to the consumers and industrial users, the already weak investment and private consumption would suffer further. If growth is to be revived, maximum attention should be paid to supporting consumption growth and reducing the cost of industrial inputs with a view to improving capacity utilisation. The Government may have to strike an appropriate balance among these options.

As developed countries are being forced to raise their interest rates and inflationary pressures continue to mount in India and abroad, the RBI may find it advisable to raise the policy rate with a view to stemming inflationary pressures and outward flow of the U.S. dollar even as the growth objective would be served by fiscal policy initiatives.

C. Rangarajan is former Chairman, Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council and former Governor, Reserve Bank of India. D.K. Srivastava is former Director and Honorary Professor, Madras School of Economics. The views expressed are personal

Exports cross \$400-bn annual target as goods shipments jump

Prime Minister congratulates farmers, weavers and MSMEs on the achievement

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

India's annual goods exports crossed the \$400-billion mark for the first time ever, the government announced on Wednesday, buoyed by an increase in shipments of merchandise, including engineering products, apparel and garments, gems and jewellery and petroleum products.

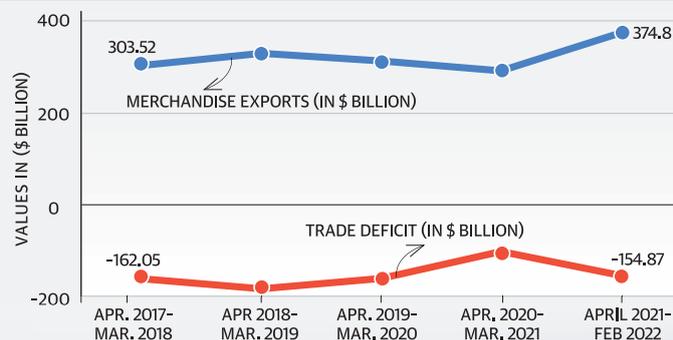
Marking the "first time ever" development, Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated the manufacturers, farmers and weavers for achieving this target.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal asserted that neither the COVID-19 pandemic nor the global uncertainties following the Ukraine crisis had affected India's ability to reach its export goals.

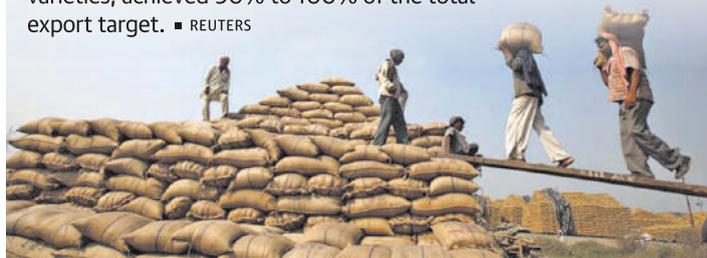
Milestone, says Modi

"India set an ambitious target of \$400 billion of goods exports and achieves this target for the first time ever. This is a key milestone in our Aatmanirbhar Bharat journey," Mr. Modi said in a

Export surge | India's merchandise exports have reached \$400 billion in FY22, nine days ahead of the target after registering a dip in FY21 due to the pandemic. Despite the surge, India's balance of trade remains negative



Agri boost: Rice, both basmati and non-basmati varieties, achieved 90% to 100% of the total export target. ■ REUTERS



message.

Exports had reached \$331.02 billion in the pre-pandemic fiscal year of 2018-19. Shipments have so far increased by \$25.19 billion during the month of March and by March 31, the total figure is expected to be \$410 billion, the government said.

Commenting on the development, Mr. Goyal said the boost in the exports was likely to bolster India's position in the ongoing negotiations for Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with several trade partners.

Noting that the agriculture sector too had recorded

its highest-ever export during 2021-22 with the help of export of "rice, marine products, wheat, spices and sugar", Mr. Goyal termed the development a "Made in India blockbuster" and a "collective show of strength".

"A country which is self-confident, which provides for its needs where people respect domestically made products – and we are able to work with the rest of the world from a position of strength and are able to take on challenges of all sorts and compete on the strength of our farmers who toil day and night to produce truly exotic and wonderful fruits and vegetables and our fishermen who go out into the sea... it's truly a time for all of us to reflect on our strengths and our future," said Mr. Goyal, who dedicated the achievement to everyone in "Team India".

Collaborative effort

The Minister attributed the success to the coordination between the government, the industry and various Ministries, including the diplomatic arm.

'PLI share in key sector capex set to be 13-15% over 3-4 years'

Crisil sees 60% of capex, spending occurring over FY23-26

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme will account for 13-15% of the average annual investment spending in key industrial sectors over the next three-four years, according to a report by Crisil.

Since its unveiling in March 2020, the PLI scheme has been announced for 15 sectors, involving government incentives to the tune of ₹1.93 lakh crore.

Of this, 50-60% is to be spent on sectors with domestic manufacturing and export focus, and the rest on import localisation. "Implementation of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI)



scheme will lead to a potential capital expenditure (capex) of ₹2.5-3 lakh crore over the scheme period and will account for 13-15% of average annual investment spending in key industrial sectors over the next 3-4 years," the rating agency said in a report released on Wednesday.

PLI is now poised for rapid on-the-ground execu-

tion, with almost 60% of the capex already approved and major spending set to occur over FY23-FY26.

While capex in mobile, pharma and telecom sectors has kicked off, that in capital-intensive sectors such as automobile and solar photovoltaics – which account for 70% of committed investment – will begin from April, Crisil said.

The scheme has received interest from more than 900 players, of which about 350 have got approval.

Crisil director Hetal Gandhi said about 55% of committed investments is expected to be 'green', in sectors such as electric vehicles and solar photovoltaics.

EXPLAINER

The Artemis programme, NASA's new moon mission

How will the next generation of lunar exploration operate and what are its objectives?

PRIVALI PRAKASH

The story so far: On March 17, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) rolled out its Artemis I moon mission to the launchpad for testing at the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, United States. The Space Launch System (SLS) rocket and Orion capsule of the mission were hurled out to the launchpad by NASA's Crawler-Transporter 2 vehicle.

What is the Artemis mission? NASA's Artemis mission is touted as the next generation of lunar exploration, and is named after the twin sister of Apollo from Greek mythology. Artemis is also the goddess of the moon.

Artemis I is the first of NASA's deep space exploration systems. It is an uncrewed space mission where the spacecraft will launch on SLS – the most powerful rocket in the world – and travel 2,80,000 miles from the earth for over four to six weeks during the course of the mission. The Orion spacecraft is going to remain in space without docking to a space station, longer than any ship for astronauts has ever done before.

The SLS rocket has been designed for



Lift-off: NASA's Space Launch System rocket Artemis I rolls out from the Vehicle Assembly Building at Kennedy Space Center on March 17, 2022. **AP**

space missions beyond the low-earth orbit and can carry crew or cargo to the moon and beyond. With the Artemis programme, NASA aims to land humans on the moon by 2024, and it also plans to land the first woman and first person of colour on the moon.

With this mission, NASA aims to contribute to scientific discovery and economic benefits and inspire a new generation of explorers.

NASA will establish an Artemis Base Camp on the surface and a gateway in the lunar orbit to aid exploration by robots

and astronauts. The gateway is a critical component of NASA's sustainable lunar operations and will serve as a multi-purpose outpost orbiting the moon.

Other space agencies are also involved in the Artemis programme. The Canadian Space Agency has committed to providing advanced robotics for the gateway, and the European Space Agency will provide the International Habitat and the ESPRIT module, which will deliver additional communications capabilities among other things. The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency plans to contribute habitation components and logistics resupply.

What is the mission trajectory?

SLS and Orion under Artemis I will be launched from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, U.S. in the summer of 2022. The spacecraft will deploy the interim cryogenic propulsion stage (ICPS), a liquid oxygen/liquid hydrogen-based propulsion system that will give Orion the thrust needed to leave the earth's orbit and travel towards the moon.

On its way to the moon, Orion will be propelled by a service module provided by the European Space Agency (ESA). The spacecraft will communicate with

the control centre back on Earth through the deep-space network. It will fly around 100 km above the surface of the moon and use its gravitational pull to propel Orion into an opposite deep orbit around 70,000 km from the moon, where it will stay for approximately six days. The aim of the exercise is to collect data and to allow mission controllers to assess the performance of the spacecraft.

To re-enter the earth's atmosphere, Orion will do a close flyby within less than 100 km of the moon's surface and use both the service module and the moon's gravity to accelerate back towards the earth. The mission will end with the spacecraft's ability to return safely to the earth.

What are the future missions in the Artemis programme?

The second flight under the programme will have crew on board and will test Orion's critical systems with humans onboard. Eventually, the learnings from the Artemis programme will be utilised to send the first astronauts to Mars. NASA plans on using the lunar orbit to gain the necessary experience to extend human exploration of space farther into the solar system.

THE GIST

■ Artemis I is an uncrewed space mission where the spacecraft will launch on SLS – the most powerful rocket in the world – and travel 2,80,000 miles from the earth for over four to six weeks.

■ NASA will a gateway in the lunar orbit to aid exploration by robots and astronauts. It is touted as a critical component of NASA's sustainable lunar operations and will serve as a multi-purpose outpost orbiting the moon.

■ The learnings from the Artemis programme will be utilised to send the first astronauts to Mars.

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.