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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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At a crossroads

The road to Sri Lanka's economic recovery will have to pass through political change

The widespread public unrest in Sri Lanka has taken on the dimensions of a political revolution of great import. It is apparent that it is driven by popular anger and a collective will that straddles all ethnicities. For a country once seen as having irreconcilable ethnic divisions, there is hope that the people will recognise the real provenance of their travails – an apathetic political leadership that wields great power without much accountability – as they come together on the streets to demand change and relief. The people seem to be demanding a wholesale regime change, and not tweaks. As the protests escalate, the administration of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and the government of his elder brother, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, seem to have lost public support and the confidence of their political allies. The Opposition has rejected the President's call for a multi-party Cabinet, key allies such as the Sri Lanka Freedom Party have walked out of the ruling coalition, and the newly appointed Finance Minister did not deem it prudent to take charge. It is an unusual stalemate on the political front, as it is clear that nothing short of the resignation of the Rajapaksa brothers will assuage public anger; but, at the same time, it is unclear if anyone will be willing to take charge amidst a seemingly insurmountable economic crisis. As over 40 legislators have walked out of the ruling alliance, the present regime faces a loss of majority in Parliament. The real question is whether the Opposition will be willing to form an alternative dispensation.

The urgency of the situation is beyond doubt. The country needs an economic recovery plan to approach international lenders and bring about macro-economic stability. And a concerned and accountable regime needs to be in place for this. Economists have suggested that Sri Lanka may need a bridge loan while an external debt restructuring plan is put in place, but much depends on whether there is a credible leadership. Sri Lanka is at a crossroads. Going one way may lead to a debt trap, sovereign default and possible bankruptcy. On the other hand, the present unrest provides an extraordinary opportunity to change its political and administrative paradigm. Bloated government, excessive security expenditure, the profligate ways of those in power, lack of attention to domestic production and centralisation of decision-making have all contributed to the mess. Much of this needs to change. No more should majoritarian mobilisation be allowed to cover up political and economic failures. An inclusive outlook has to be fostered. The people will have to realise that voting on emotional issues related to race and religion only helps the ruling class and seldom benefits them. Only such a momentous change on the political and social level will lead to their economic emancipation.

Bill in Lok Sabha to ban WMD funding

Provision to freeze financial assets

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar on Tuesday introduced a Bill in the Lok Sabha that seeks to ban funding of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and empowers the Centre to freeze and seize financial assets of people involved in such activities.

Amid sloganeering by Opposition members over repeated fuel price hikes, Mr. Jaishankar introduced the Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Bill, which also fulfils India's international obligations pertaining to weapons of mass destruction.

Earlier law

The earlier law of 2005 regarding WMDs and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) only banned their manufacture.

The Minister said that the United Nations Security Council's targeted financial sanctions and the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force have mandated against financing of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.

The Bill seeks to insert a



S. Jaishankar

new Section 12A in the existing law which states that “no person shall finance any activity which is prohibited under this Act, or under the United Nations (Security Council) Act, 1947 or any other relevant Act for the time being in force, or by an order issued under any such Act, in relation to weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems”.

The Bill would give the government powers to “freeze, seize or attach funds or other financial assets or economic resources owned or controlled, wholly or jointly, directly or indirectly, by such person; or held by or on behalf of, or at the direction of, such person; or derived or generated from the funds or other assets owned or controlled, directly or indirectly, by such person”.

Gotabaya govt. loses majority in Parliament

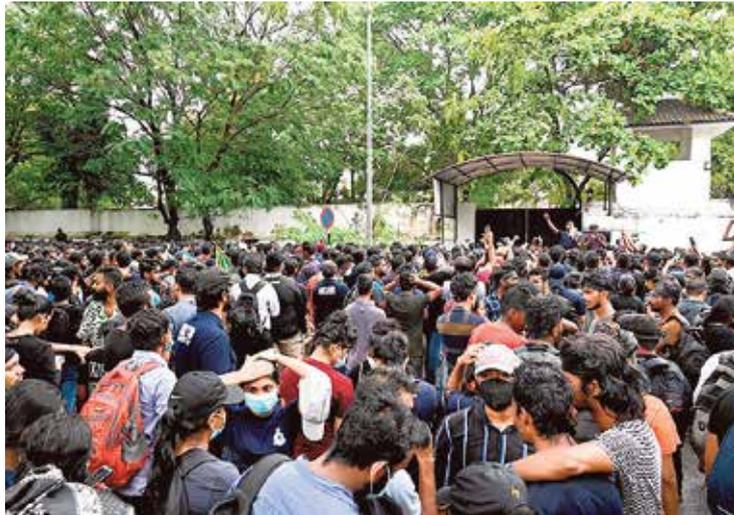
Over 40 MPs of Sri Lanka's ruling alliance sit separately

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa lost his parliamentary majority on Tuesday, as a group of lawmakers from the ruling party and its allies sat independently in the House, deserting the government that faces enormous public criticism for "mishandling" the country's economic crisis. In another inflexion point in the crisis, newly appointed Finance Minister Ali Sabry resigned from the Cabinet barely 24 hours after taking charge.

Over 40 MPs, including from key ally, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), quit the ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP or People's Front)-led alliance, and the government lost its majority in the 225-member legislature. Their defection signalled the collapse of the government's popularity that, in 2020, fetched it a formidable two-thirds majority. However, there is no vote of confidence scheduled yet to test the strength of the government or Opposition.

In his address to Parliament on Tuesday, Leader of the Opposition Sajith Premadasa blamed the government for the current crisis, and said it was time for the country to abolish Executive Presidency that allows the



Dissent at doorstep: People protesting in front of Sri Lanka PM Mahinda Rajapaksa's house in Colombo on Tuesday. ■ AFP

President sweeping powers to take unilateral decisions. Opposition legislator and Jaffna MP M.A. Sumanthiran too intervened, challenging the government to put its recently imposed Emergency regulations to vote in the House, as is mandated in the Constitution.

Revokes Emergency

However, Mr. Gotabaya revoked the Emergency late on Tuesday, ahead of a possible vote on it.

Parliament will convene on Wednesday to debate the country's economic crisis that has resulted in severe shortage of essentials for citizens and skyrocketing prices. It has also led to a spontaneous eruption of street protests, with citizens de-

manding that the President step down.

Mr. Gotabaya's attempt to appoint a "new" Cabinet after the mass resignations on Sunday appeared to have backfired, with Mr. Sabry resigning barely 24 hours after his appointment. The Secretary to the Treasury and Finance Ministry also quit on Tuesday, resulting in two key positions falling vacant amid the economic crisis.

Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund from which Sri Lanka has sought support, on Tuesday said it is monitoring the developments "very closely" amid the growing public unrest, *Reuters* reported.

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EDITORIAL ► PAGE 6

Gotabaya govt. loses majority in Parliament

“IMF staff is looking forward to program discussions with the authorities, including during the visit of the newly appointed Finance Minister to Washington later this month,” IMF’s Sri Lanka mission chief was quoted as saying.

However, with Mr. Sabry’s resignation, Sri Lanka does not have a Finance Minister as of Tuesday.

On Tuesday, citizens and professionals including health workers, lawyers, continued agitating at different locations, including outside Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa’s private resident, asking the Rajapaksas to resign immediately. As protests swell in different parts of the country, despite the police attempting to disperse crowds with water cannons and tear gas

in some areas, the Ministry of Defence urged citizens not to resort to violence.

“I further emphasize that the security forces will act to maintain peace and also will not hesitate to enforce law against those involving in violence,” said General GDH Kamal Gunaratne (Retd), Secretary, Ministry of Defence in a statement.

The UN on Tuesday expressed concern over “excessive and unwarranted police violence” against protesters. Recalling the report of the UN Human Rights Chief, a spokesman said in a statement: “the drift towards militarisation and the weakening of institutional checks and balances in Sri Lanka have affected the State’s ability to effectively tackle the economic crisis.”

In the middle

On the Ukraine war India must fulfil its responsibilities as a non-aligned democracy

Forty days into the war in Ukraine, India's role appears to be more relevant than other countries may have expected, evident from the stream of dignitaries from overseas over the past two weeks. Most were from countries that are a part of the U.S. and EU-led sanctions regime against Russia. Their messages were three-pronged: asking India to change its vote at the UN, where it has abstained from all resolutions critical of Russia's invasion; to request that India not "accelerate" its purchases of Russian oil being offered at discount; and to discourage India from using the rupee-rouble national currency-based payment mechanisms that could subvert "backfilling sanctions". The messages got sharper and more public as it became clear that New Delhi would also host Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, and officials from the West hoped to turn India's position to their side. However, the red carpet welcome he received, including a cordial meeting with the Prime Minister, appeared to make it clear that New Delhi is not amenable to the pressure. The External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar, and the Finance Minister also reinforced the position of the Indian "national interest", given that European countries have yet to curtail oil intakes from Russia. It is likely that the U.S. will make another attempt to veer the Government off its chosen course when Mr. Jaishankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh visit Washington for the "2+2" meetings, where a possible waiver of CAATSA sanctions against India for the purchase of the Russian S-400 systems will also be discussed. The U.S. is also keen to squeeze Russia on the multilateral stage, with proposals to exclude it from the G-20 summit this year, and suspend it from the Human Rights Council.

While the Government cannot be faulted for its refusal to bow to external pressure, it must consider the importance of remaining flexible on what its stand both at the UN and in bilateral conversations is going to be, given the ground situation in Ukraine. Reports of gross human rights violations blamed on the Russian army could change the complexion of the war, and India's call for an independent enquiry into the allegations is an important intervention. In addition, the U.S. and the EU are likely to tighten economic sanctions, as the current restrictions have not made Russia reconsider its course. With Russia unlikely to relinquish areas of Eastern Ukraine, and its western rivals not likely to let up their counter-measures, New Delhi must realise that its value to the two sides will last while it remains uncommitted to either side. This will require having a keen eye on rapid developments in the theatre of war, an ear on what partners on both sides plan next, and the ability to keep its mind open on where India's responsibilities, as a global democracy, and a truly non-aligned power, lie.

'Let dam committee continue for a year'

Centre presents before SC interim Mullaperiyar plan

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Centre on Tuesday suggested to the Supreme Court to let the Mullaperiyar dam supervisory committee continue for a year, by which time the National Dam Safety Authority under the new Dam Safety Act will become fully functional.

"During the period of one year, when the National Dam Safety Authority becomes fully functional, the Supervi-

 **Once the National Dam Safety Authority is fully functional, the functions of the supervisory committee will be taken over by the authority and the committee can be dissolved**

UNION GOVT. IN SUPREME COURT



sory Committee on Mullaperiyar Dam may continue its functioning as per the existing mandate in regulating the operations of the dam," a note submitted by the Centre, represented by Additional Solicitor General Aish-

warya Bhati, said.

The Centre suggested that the Chief Secretaries of Tamil Nadu and Kerala be made accountable in order to ensure that the decisions of the supervisory committee on the maintenance and

safety of the dam are duly complied with by the two States. "To address the technical concerns of both the States, their Chief Secretaries may be requested to nominate technical experts to attend the meetings conducted by the supervisory committee," the Centre recommended.

Once the National Dam Safety Authority is fully functional, the functions of the supervisory committee would be taken over by the authority and the committee could be dissolved.

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Let dam panel continue for a year: Centre

A Bench led by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar gave Kerala and Tamil Nadu time till Thursday to study the proposal made by the Centre and respond to it.

The Dam Safety Act of 2021 has come as a panacea to end the prolonged and bitter legal battle over Mullaperiyar dam between Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The 2021 Act comprehensively provides for surveillance, inspection, operation and maintenance to prevent disasters caused by dams.

Moreover, the central statute, which came into force in December last year, mandates the setting up of two

specialised bodies, National Committee on Dam Safety and the National Dam Safety Authority, to evolve policies, recommend regulations for dam safety standards and resolve disputes between States.

Kerala and Tamil Nadu have been trading allegations against each other over the safety of the Mullaperiyar dam. While Kerala claims the 126-year-old dam is unsafe a threat to thousands of people living downstream, Tamil Nadu, argues that the dam is so strong that the height of water level could even be increased to 152 feet.

EXPLAINER

The Indian Antarctic Bill and its various provisions

What are the objectives of the draft? What has India achieved with respect to Antarctic research and exploration?

JACOB KOSHY

The story so far: The Union government on Friday introduced the Indian Antarctic Bill, 2022, that aims to lay down a set of rules to regulate a range of activities on territories in Antarctica where India has set up research stations.

What does the Antarctic Bill envisage?

Introduced by Union Science Minister, Jitendra Singh in the Lok Sabha, the Bill envisages regulating visits and activities to Antarctica as well as potential disputes that may arise among those present on the continent. It also prescribes penal provisions for certain serious violations. If the Bill were to become law, private tours and expeditions to Antarctica would be prohibited without a permit or the written authorisation by a member country. A member country is one of the 54 signatories of the Antarctic Treaty signed in 1959 – India joined the Treaty System in 1983.

The Bill also lays out a structure for government officials to inspect a vessel and conduct checks of research facilities. The draft also directs the creation of a fund called the Antarctic fund that will be used for protecting the Antarctic environment. The Bill extends the jurisdiction of Indian courts to Antarctica and lays out penal provision for crimes on the continent by Indian citizens, foreign citizens who are a part of Indian

expeditions, or are in the precincts of Indian research stations.

Following its first expedition to Antarctica in 1982, India has now established two standing research stations, Bharati and Maitri, at Antarctica. Both these places are permanently manned by researchers. The Bill also establishes a 'Committee on Antarctic Governance and Environmental Protection'. The Bill prohibits mining, dredging and activities that threaten the pristine conditions of the continent. It bans any person, vessel or aircraft from disposing waste in Antarctica and bars the testing of nuclear devices.

Why was this Bill necessary?

Mr. Singh remarked in Parliament that India had been a signatory to the Antarctic Treaty since 1983, which obliged it to specify a set of laws governing portions of the continent where it had its research bases. "Antarctica is a no man's land...It isn't that doesn't belong to it....the question is in the territory involving India's research stations, if some unlawful activity happens, how to check it? The Treaty made it mandatory for the 54 signatory countries to specify laws governing territories on which their stations are located. China has five, Russia has five, we have two," said Mr. Singh. India is also signatory to treaties such as the Convention on the Conservation of



The Bharati Research station being established in Antarctica in 2012. • THE HINDU

Antarctic Marine Living Resources and the the Protocol on the Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty – both of which enjoin India to help preserve the pristine nature of the continent.

"There is growing concern over preserving the pristine Antarctic environment and ocean around Antarctica from exploitation of marine living resources and human presence in Antarctica... India organises regular Antarctic expeditions and many persons from India visit Antarctica every year as tourists. In the future, the private ship and aviation industry will also start

operations and promote tourism and fishing in Antarctica, which needs to be regulated. The continuing and growing presence of Indian scientists in Antarctica warrants a domestic legislation on Antarctica consistent with its obligations as a member of the Antarctic Treaty. This is also in sync with the emergence of India as a global leader on important international fronts," the text of the Bill notes.

What is the history of the Antarctic Treaty?

The Antarctic Treaty came into force on

June 23, 1961 after ratification by the 12 countries then active in Antarctic science.

The Treaty covers the area south of 60°S latitude. Its key objectives are to demilitarise Antarctica, to establish it as a zone free of nuclear tests and the disposal of radioactive waste, and to ensure that it is used for peaceful purposes only; to promote international scientific cooperation in Antarctica and to set aside disputes over territorial sovereignty.

Of the 54 signatory countries, 29 have 'consultative' status that give them voting rights. The Treaty parties meet each year at the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting. They have adopted over 300 recommendations and negotiated separate international agreements. These, together with the original Treaty, provide the rules which govern activities in the Antarctic. Collectively they are known as the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS).

What research does India conduct at Antarctica?

India has organised 37 expeditions to Antarctica. The major thrust areas of the Indian Antarctic Programme are climate processes and links to climate change, environmental processes and conservation and polar technology. The operational expenditure of the Antarctic expedition is ₹90-110 crore annually depending on the projects and services.

THE GIST

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Rajya Sabha passes Bill on Delhi municipal corporations

It will ensure a robust set-up, says government; this is a Kejriwal-phobia Bill, says AAP MP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha on Tuesday passed the Delhi Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2022, which is aimed at unifying the three municipal corporations in the city to ensure a “robust set-up for synergised and strategic

planning and optimal utilisation of resources”.

The Lok Sabha passed the Bill, which seeks to amend the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act of 1957, on March 30. Introducing the Bill in the Rajya Sabha, Home Minister Amit Shah said it will unify the North, South and East

municipal corporations, and accused the AAP government in Delhi of meting out “stepmotherly” treatment to the three civic bodies for political reasons.

The Home Minister also said the trifurcation of the erstwhile Municipal Corporation of Delhi was done in a

hurry in 2012 which led to an imbalance. “I searched the reason for which the municipal body was divided but no reason was available in any file,” he said, adding that the objective was probably known only to the people who had brought it.

AAP Rajya Sabha MP San-

jay Singh questioned the timing of the introduction of the Bill. “Why did the Modi government wait till now to unify the MCDs? This is a Kejriwal-phobia Bill. The Centre stopped the Election Commission from announcing the dates for the civic body polls for Delhi,” he said.

SC to soon take up case against poll bonds scheme

The matter has been pending for a year without a hearing

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana on Tuesday told advocate Prashant Bhushan that the court had wanted to take up a long-pending challenge against the government's electoral bonds scheme, but the COVID-19 pandemic played spoilsport in the matter.

Mr. Bhushan, who represents the petitioner Association for Democratic Reforms, informed the CJI that the case had been pending for a year without a hearing.

Unlimited donations

The electoral bonds scheme and amendments in the Finance Act of 2017 allows for "unlimited donations from individuals and foreign companies to political parties without any record of the sources of funding".

The exchange between the Chief Justice of India and the lawyer happened when the latter made an oral mentioning for early listing of the case for hearing.



"Let us see, we will take up the matter," the Chief Justice said. Mr. Bhushan had similarly sought an urgent hearing last October.

'Transparency in funds'

The government has, however, justified the scheme, saying it will promote transparency in funding and donation received by political parties. It had defended the scheme as a measure to eradicate black money in political funding.

"They [bonds] can be encashed by an eligible political party only through their

bank accounts with the authorised bank. The bonds do not have the name of the donor or the receiving political party, and only carry a unique hidden alphanumeric serial number as an in-built security feature," the government's 21-page affidavit had said.

The government had described the scheme as an "electoral reform" in a country moving towards a "cash-less-digital economy".

'Anonymity legalised'

However, the Election Commission of India filed an affidavit in 2019, saying the government's scheme for political funding has legalised anonymity.

Electoral bonds protect the identity of political donors and parties receiving the contributions.

Donors who contribute less than ₹20,000 to political parties through purchase of electoral bonds need not provide their identity details, such as Permanent Account Number (PAN).

The CUET mandate warrants cautious implementation

The UGC ought to have taken universities into confidence and given due consideration to their concerns



FURQAN QAMAR

Central universities may have been caught unawares when the University Grants Commission, or UGC (which looks into the 'coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of university education in India'), made it mandatory from this year for them to admit students in their undergraduate programmes solely on the basis and merit of scores in the Central University Entrance Test (CUET). They have little time to lose if they want to salvage their academic session. The National Testing Agency (NTA) of the Ministry of Higher Education, which has the responsibility of conducting the entrance tests for all the Central universities for the academic session 2022-23, has announced the details of the test. Registration began from April 2 and the application window will end on April 30. The test is tentatively scheduled for mid-July.

Few central universities appear ready to guide prospective students about certain essential details that they need while registering for the test. Students must know which language to choose. Since they can appear in a maximum of six out of the 27 domain knowledge subjects, they must know which are the ones which would be required by a university for admission to different courses. Universities with much larger

numbers of undergraduate programmes need to take a cautious and careful call in this regard.

Cutting no ice

Central universities, apparently, have no option but to follow the mandate. A few that mustered the courage to seek an exemption have been denied this. The idea of academic autonomy and the argument that formalisation, uniformity, and standardisation often pull down quality to the lowest common denominator are unlikely to impress. The odds are stacked against them.

The institutions of national importance (INIs), i.e., the Indian Institutes of Technology, the Indian Institutes of Information Technology, the National Institutes of Technology, and the Indian Institutes of Management, already admit students on the basis of a single common entrance examination, either exclusively or in combination of past academic records. The Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (autonomous institutions under the Ministry of Education) are probably the only exception to follow a holistic approach. Since a significant proportion of INIs are ranked higher in national and world rankings than the central universities, none is likely to heed their cry that the CUET would lower their standards and quality.

Despite reservations by a few States, particularly Tamil Nadu, and also many self-financed private and minority medical colleges, the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (undergraduate), or NEET, has become obligatory for admission into medical pro-



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

grammes in all kinds and types of institutions across the country. Further, 12 central universities have been admitting students on the basis of a single common entrance test. Eight deemed universities have already consented to follow CUET scores and chances are that the remaining ones would also fall in line, as they are directly regulated by the UGC.

The arguments that entrance tests undermine the importance of board examinations and distract students from their studies in schools were given a goodbye a long time ago by the central universities themselves. Most admit students on the basis of their own entrance tests, often programme by programme. The CUET may find favour with students for it might widen their academic choices and save them the cost, the hassle and the inconvenience of attempting many different tests, though they might realise later that the Central Board of Secondary Education-based test may pose a huge disadvantage to an overwhelmingly large number of students from the State Boards.

Concerns about the quality of the tests arising on account of the autonomy, competence, credibility and expertise of the NTA (which were pointed out so well in the National Education Policy (NEP

2020), may also not find many takers as only a few central universities would be able to show the validity, the reliability and the consistency of their own entrance tests. The NTA may have faltered in maintaining rigour, resulting in the leakage of national level tests, but universities too may not be able to prove that they have been very successful in having a fool-proof system to design and conduct their own entrance tests.

The only large central university that has been admitting students on the basis of board marks so far has had its share of troubles. It has been criticised for fixing the cutoffs at such absurd levels that even those scoring centum were unsure of joining a college or course of their first choice.

Respecting autonomy

This is not to argue that the CUET is the best method. World-class universities and the countries in which they are situated do not insist on admitting students singularly on the quantitative score of a common test. Instead, respecting the idea of academic autonomy, they grant their faculty the freedom to evolve holistic criteria for admission.

The NEP 2020 too while mentioning the need for 'a common principle for entrance examination' had emphasised the point that it should be done 'with due regard to the diversity and university autonomy'. Further, the policy mentions in no uncertain terms that 'it would be left to the individual universities and colleges to use NTA assessments for their admissions'.

Since the world is yet to invent a

single best method of doing anything, the best possible method needs to be evolved through discussions, deliberations and in consultation with the stakeholders. It would have certainly been better, and in good taste, had the UGC taken the universities into confidence and given due consideration to their concerns.

The centrally-funded technical educational institutions, central universities, and deemed universities, put together, account for a mere 5.08% enrolment in higher education. The remainder, 94.92%, are in self-financed State private and public funded State universities, and their colleges.

As the UGC contemplates making the CUET mandatory for admission in all higher educational institutions across the country, it must realise that the anxieties, compulsions, concerns and realities of the State sector may be very different. Besides, higher education being in the concurrent list and, thus, a joint responsibility of the Union and State governments warrants that the States are taken into confidence before their institutions are subjected to a single common entrance test.

Finally, regulatory reforms, in particular the establishment of the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), as prescribed by the NEP 2020, need to be expedited, as there is a built-in consultative mechanism in the form of the General Education Council (GEC), for the speedy and thoughtful implementation of the NEP.

Furqan Qamar is former Adviser (Education) in the Planning Commission. The views expressed are personal

'BrahMos sale to Philippines a bilateral deal'

Envoy says though Russia was part of its development, its sale is a transaction between two countries

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

While the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile was a joint development between India and Russia, the sale of the systems to the Philippines was a transaction between the two countries, and India would be able to move ahead on a "bilateral basis", Indian Ambassador to the Philippines Shambhu Kumaran has said, amid the global developments following the Russian war in Ukraine.

The Philippines was also given a clarification on the accidental BrahMos missile launch recently.

"I did have an opportunity to speak to Philippines De-



Defence deal: The BrahMos supersonic cruise missile was a joint development between India and Russia. ■ FILE PHOTO

fence Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and our Ministry of Defence has clarified... There was a query and we responded with the fact there was no technical issue as far as we could understand it. There is an inquiry

under way, we will have that cleared once the information is available," Mr. Kumaran said.

Stating that the decision to purchase it by Philippines was a high political decision, the Envoy said it was ena-

bled by a combination of factors, but driven by the political understanding between the two countries.

'A frontline system'

Elaborating he said that the first agreement was signed only in March last year, a second agreement in November and the deal was signed this January. "This is a frontline system in the Indian defence forces and the fact that we are willing to share was appreciated by the Philippines," Mr. Kumaran explained. "There is definitely in terms of the Philippines self-defence national security requirements, a clear requirement on the part of

their armed force of this capability."

To a question if China may have an issue with the sale, the envoy referred to a Philippines statement that it saw it as a self-defence platform and so he did not see "how this can be a concern in other capitals."

Referring to interest from the Philippines in acquiring other defence equipment, he said discussions were on for systems related to aerospace and Navy. He said Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. had offered to do a technical briefing on the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft Tejas and there was a "degree of interest" from Manila.

‘IPCC report endorses India’s position on climate finance’

Climate change is a global action problem, says Bhupender

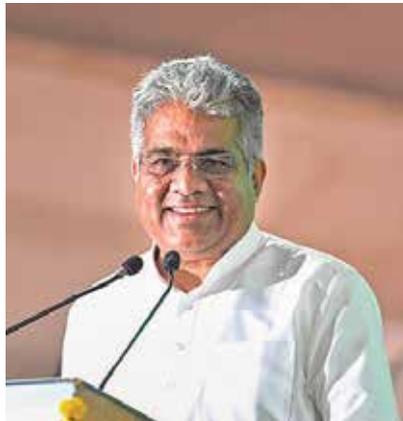
JACOB KOSHY

NEW DELHI

The Monday report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) endorses India’s position on the need for scale, scope and speed in climate finance, Union Environment Minister, Bhupender Yadav said in a prepared statement on Tuesday.

Limiting global warming would require major transitions in the energy sector and would mean drastic reduction of fossil fuel use, widespread electrification, improved energy efficiency, and the use of alternative fuels, the authors of the study warned.

“India firmly believes that climate change is a global collective action problem that can be solved only



Bhupender Yadav

through international cooperation and multilateralism. India will continue to be the voice of ambition as well as champion of equity on behalf of developing countries,” Mr. Yadav said at an event organised by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) on minimising plastic pollution.

The IPCC report focused on mitigation, or what could

be done to reduce emissions to keep the globe on track to ensure that temperature did not exceed over two degrees Celsius – and strive to keep it below 1.5 degrees Celsius – by the end of the century.

Close to 80% of the total carbon budget for ensuring temperature did not exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius and 66% of the carbon budget for preventing an overshoot over 2 degrees Celsius had been used up. Half the global population, the vast majority of the developing world, was responsible for only 14% of global emissions, Mr. Yadav noted.

“India believes that the utilisation of resources must be made on mindful and deliberate utilisation and not mindless and destructive consumption,” he added.

I&B Ministry blocks 22 YouTube news channels

Four of them were run from Pakistan

DEVESH K. PANDEY
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (I&B) has ordered the blocking of 22 YouTube-based news channels, four of which were being run from Pakistan and the rest from India under the IT Rules, 2021.

These channels had a cumulative viewership of about 262 crore and were being used to spread fake news on sensitive issues relating to national security and foreign relations, I&B Minister Anurag Singh Thakur said on Tuesday.

Mr. Thakur said some of them were spreading misin-

formation on the Ukraine-Russia conflict, COVID-19 and other issues that were directly impacting India. While all the previously blocked 56 YouTube channels were from Pakistan, the latest list comprises 18 from India.

This is the first time action has been taken against Indian YouTube news publishers since the notification of the IT Rules, 2021.

Three Twitter accounts of the blocked YouTube channels, a news website and its Facebook account being operated from Pakistan have also been blocked.

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General Studies Paper I	
A	History of Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of art forms, literature and architecture from ancient to modern times;
B	Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present-significant events, personalities, issues;
C	Freedom struggle-its various stages and important contributors / contributions from different parts of the country;
D	Post-independence consolidation and reorganization within the country;
E	History of the world will include events from 18 th century such as industrial revolution, world wars, re-drawing of national boundaries, colonization, decolonization,
F	Political philosophies like communism, capitalism, socialism etc.-their forms and effect on the society
G	Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India;
H	Effects of globalization on Indian society;
I	Role of women and women's organization;
J	Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism
K	Salient features of world's physical geography;
L	Geographical features and their location- changes in critical geographical features (including water bodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes;
M	Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclone etc.
N	Distribution of key natural resources across the world (including South Asia and the Indian subcontinent);
O	Factors responsible for the location of primary, secondary, and tertiary sector industries in various parts of the world (including India);
P	Population and associated issues;
Q	Urbanization, their problems and their remedies
General Studies Paper II	
A	India and its neighbourhood- relations;
B	Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate;
C	Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests;
D	Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.
E	Indian Constitution, historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure;
F	Comparison of the Indian Constitutional scheme with other countries;
G	Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein; Inclusive growth and issues arising from it;
H	Parliament and State Legislatures - structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these;
I	Structure, organization and functioning of the executive and the judiciary, Ministries and Departments;

J	Separation of powers between various organs dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions;
K	Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional bodies;
L	Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies;
M	Mechanisms, laws, institutions and bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections;
N	Salient features of the Representation of People's Act;
O	Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance- applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential;
P	Citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures;
Q	Issues relating to poverty and hunger,
R	Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States, Performance of these schemes;
S	Issues relating to development and management of social sector / services relating to education and human resources;
T	Issues relating to development and management of social sector / services relating to health
General Studies Paper III	
A	Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment;
B	Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth;
C	Inclusive growth and issues arising from it;
D	Infrastructure Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc. Government budgeting;
E	Land reforms in India
F	Major crops, cropping patterns in various parts of the country, different types of irrigation and irrigation systems;
G	Storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints;
H	e-technology in the aid of farmers; Technology Missions; Economics of Animal-Rearing.
I	Issues of buffer stocks and food security, Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping;
J	Food processing and related industries in India – scope and significance, location, upstream and downstream requirements, supply chain management;
K	Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices
L	Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology;
M	Indigenization of technology and developing new technology;
N	Developments and their applications and effects in everyday life;
O	Issues relating to intellectual property rights
P	Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment
Q	Disaster and disaster management
R	Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security;
S	Money-laundering and its prevention;

T	Various forces and their mandate;
U	Security challenges and their management in border areas;
V	Linkages of organized crime with terrorism;
W	Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security;
X	Linkages between development and spread of extremism.
General Studies Paper IV	
A	Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of Ethics in human actions;
B	Dimensions of ethics;
C	Ethics in private and public relationships. Human Values - lessons from the lives and teachings of great leaders, reformers and administrators;
D	Role of family, society and educational institutions in inculcating values.
E	Attitude: Content, structure, function; its influence and relation with thought and behaviour;
F	Moral and political attitudes;
G	Social influence and persuasion.
H	Aptitude and foundational values for Civil Service , integrity, impartiality and non-partisanship, objectivity, dedication to public service, empathy, tolerance and compassion towards the weaker sections.
I	Emotional intelligence-concepts, and their utilities and application in administration and governance.
J	Contributions of moral thinkers and philosophers from India and world.
K	Public/Civil service values and Ethics in Public administration: Status and problems;
L	Ethical concerns and dilemmas in government and private institutions;
M	Laws, rules, regulations and conscience as
N	sources of ethical guidance;
O	Accountability and ethical governance; strengthening of ethical and moral values in governance; ethical issues in international relations and funding;
P	Corporate governance.
Q	Probity in Governance: Concept of public service;
R	Philosophical basis of governance and probity;
S	Information sharing and transparency in government, Right to Information, Codes of Ethics, Codes of Conduct, Citizen's Charters, Work culture, Quality of service delivery, Utilization of public funds, challenges of corruption.
T	Case Studies on above issues.