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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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Repairing the complex India-Nepal relationship

There needs to be quiet dialogue to resolve their many differences, with New Delhi needing to be sensitive and generous



RAKESH SOOD

The Nepal Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, paid a long-awaited visit to India last week (April 1-3). Sworn in in July 2021, this was his first bilateral visit abroad, in keeping with tradition. The outcome might appear modest but what is significant is that India and Nepal effectively managed to steer clear of divisive issues. At 75, Mr. Deuba is a political veteran and first became Prime Minister in 1995. Now in his fifth stint, he is no stranger to the complex relationship between the two countries.

Positive outcomes

Among the highlights was the operationalisation of the 35 kilometre cross-border rail link from Jayanagar (Bihar) to Kurtha (Nepal). Two further phases will extend it to Bijalpura and Bardibas. The ₹787 crore project had been ready for over a year but operationalisation was held up because of the necessary administrative requirements in Nepal to set up a company that could recruit staff. The Konkan Railway Corporation will provide the necessary technical support initially.

The second project that was inaugurated was the 90 km long 132 kV double circuit transmission line connecting Tila (Solukhumbu) to Mirchaiya (Siraha) close to the Indian border. Constructed with an Exim Bank concessional loan of ₹200 crore, there are a dozen hydroelectric projects planned in the Solu corridor for which the Nepal Electricity Authority has concluded PPAs of 325 MW.

In addition, agreements providing technical cooperation in the railway sector, Nepal's induction into the International Solar Alliance, and between Indian Oil

Corporation and Nepal Oil Corporation on ensuring regular supplies of petroleum products were also signed.

The Mahakali Treaty, signed in 1996 during Mr. Deuba's first visit as Prime Minister, covers the Sarada and Tanakpur barrages as well as the 6,700 MW (approximately) Pancheshwar Multipurpose project. Both sides have agreed to push for an early finalisation of the detailed project report. The ambitious \$7 billion project needs political will to move it forward. The joint vision statement on power sector cooperation recognises the opportunities for joint development power generation projects together with cross border transmission linkages and coordination between the national grids; it can provide the momentum.

On February 27, Mr. Deuba pushed through the ratification of the agreement with the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), despite the reservations of his coalition partners, the Maoists and the UML (Unified-Socialist). The agreement provides a grant of \$500 million for building 318 km of high voltage transmission lines along with sub-stations and the maintenance of 300 km of the East-West highway. The Chinese Embassy in Kathmandu had actively sought to sabotage the agreement by planting stories that it was part of the U.S.'s Indo-Pacific strategy aimed at containing China. The agreement had been signed in 2017, during Mr. Deuba's fourth stint as Prime Minister, and was awaiting ratification. Together with the Pancheshwar project, it provides welcome synergy.

China's growing role

During the monarchy, China maintained a link with the Palace and its concerns were primarily related to keeping tabs on the Tibetan refugee community. With the abolition of the monarchy, China has shifted attention to the political parties and to institutions such as the Army and Armed Police Force and considers Nepal an important



element in its growing South Asian footprint.

In recent years, India's relations with Nepal have had both 'highs' and 'lows'. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has often spoken of the "neighbourhood first" policy. He started with a highly successful visit in August 2014 but then saw the relationship take a nosedive in 2015, with India first getting blamed for interfering in the Constitution drafting process and then for an "unofficial blockade" that generated widespread resentment against India. It reinforced the notion that Nepali nationalism and anti-Indianism were two sides of the same coin that Mr. Deuba's predecessor, Mr. K.P. Sharma Oli, exploited successfully.

In 2016, Mr. Oli visited Beijing to negotiate an Agreement on Transit Transportation. Three years later, a Protocol was concluded with China providing access to four sea ports and three land ports. The first ever visit of the Chinese Defence Minister took place in March 2017, followed by joint military exercises a month later. A military grant of \$32 million was also announced.

China has overtaken India as the largest source of foreign direct investment. In 2019, China's President Xi Jinping visited Kathmandu. Annual development assistance has been hiked to \$120 million. Today, China is also engaged with airport expansion projects at Pokhara and Lumbini. Rather than compete with China, India needs to up its own game.

The growing Chinese presence means that India cannot afford to

let issues linger but reach out actively to find resolution.

Managing differences

Over the years, a number of differences have emerged between India and Nepal that need attention. The political narrative has changed in both countries and these issues can no longer be swept under the carpet or subsumed by invoking a 'special relationship' based on ties of a shared culture, language and religion. Part of the success of Mr. Deuba's visit was that none of the differences was allowed to dominate the visit. Yet, to build upon the positive mood, it is necessary these issues be discussed, behind closed doors and at Track 2 and Track 1.5 channels.

As one of the oldest bonds, the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship was originally sought by the Nepali authorities in 1949 to continue the special links they had with British India. It provides for an open border and for Nepali nationals to have the right to work in India. But today, it is viewed as a sign of an unequal relationship, and an Indian imposition. The idea of revising and updating it has found mention in Joint Statements since the mid-1990s. It has been discussed sporadically, but in a desultory manner, by the Foreign Secretaries in 1997, and even at the ministerial level at the 2014 Joint Commission.

In 2016, an eight-member Eminent Persons Group was set up to discuss it. The report is available with both governments but the perception in Kathmandu is that it should be formally presented to the two governments. As long as it is clearly understood that this is only a report by well-intentioned experts in their individual capacity and not binding on governments, it should be possible for the two Foreign Ministers to acknowledge it publicly. It could even be made public to kickstart Track 2 conversations.

Demonetisation is another irritant. In November 2016, India

withdrew ₹15.44 trillion of high value (₹1,000 and ₹500) currency notes. Today, over ₹15.3 trillion has been returned in the form of fresh currency. Yet, many Nepali nationals who were legally entitled to hold ₹25,000 of Indian currency (given that the Nepali rupee is pegged to the Indian rupee) were left high and dry. The Nepal Rashtra Bank, which is the central bank, holds ₹7 crore and estimates of public holdings are ₹500 crore. After more than five years, it should certainly be possible to resolve this to mutual satisfaction.

On the boundaries

In 2019, Mr. Oli, facing domestic opposition within his party, needed a distraction and found one in the form of the Kalapani boundary issue. These boundaries had been fixed in 1816 by the British, and India inherited the areas over which the British had exercised territorial control in 1947. While 98% of the India-Nepal boundary was demarcated, two areas, Susta and Kalapani remained in limbo. In November 2019, India issued new maps following the division of the State of Jammu and Kashmir as Union Territories, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. Though the new Indian map did not affect the India-Nepal boundary in any material way, Mr. Oli expanded the Kalapani area dispute. By whipping up nationalist sentiment, he got a new map of Nepal endorsed by the legislature through a constitutional amendment. While it did not alter the situation on the ground, it soured relations with India and added a new and emotive irritant.

The need today is to avoid rhetoric on territorial nationalism and lay the groundwork for quiet dialogue where both sides display sensitivity as they explore what is feasible. India needs to be a sensitive and generous partner for the "neighbourhood first" policy to take root.

Rakesh Sood is a former Ambassador to Nepal and presently Distinguished Fellow at the Observer Research Foundation

‘Gotabaya has no reason to resign’

President was elected by 6.9 mn. people: chief whip

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa “has no reason” to resign, the chief government whip told Sri Lankan Parliament on Wednesday, as citizens’ protests expand, now with state sector workers too demanding his resignation.

“The President has been given a mandate by 6.9 million voters. He does not need to resign,” said Johnston Fernando, who was among the four Ministers that Mr. Gotabaya recently re-appointed to a “new Cabinet”, after members of the old Cabinet resigned *en masse*.



Tide of discontent: Police officers try to stop medical students protesting outside the Health Ministry in Colombo. ■ AFP

In his first initiative yet to address the economic crisis after citizens’ protests erupted, President Gotabaya on Wednesday appointed a panel of eminent Sri Lankan economists to advise him on

debt restructuring and recovery, a statement said.

The “Presidential Advisory Group on Multilateral Engagement and Debt Sustainability” includes Indrajit Coomaraswamy, former Go-

vernor of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, Shanta Devarajan, former Chief Economist with the World Bank and Sharmini Coorey, a former Deputy Director at the IMF, the Presidential Media Division said.

The ruling Rajapaksa clan faces unprecedented public criticism as Sri Lanka battles severe shortage of fuel, food and medicines among other essentials, during one of its worst economic downturns.

Mr. Gotabaya’s government lost its majority in Parliament on Tuesday, as over 40 MPs from his party and its coalition partners sat separately, distancing themselves from the unpopular administration.

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Gotabaya has no reason to resign, says chief whip

The widespread public anger, over the government's 'mishandling' of a grave economic crisis gripping the country, first manifested in pocket protests by citizens that began over a month ago.

Over the last two weeks, the agitations escalated and the call for the resignation of President Gotabaya, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and their family members grew louder.

Parliament convened on Wednesday to debate the crisis.

Commencing the debate,

Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena said, "Sri Lanka is facing the worst economic crisis in history, but it is just the beginning."

As citizens face enormous hardship owing to the stifling shortages, he said experts have warned of a severe food shortage.

"The food, gas and electricity shortages will get worse. There will be very acute food shortages and starvation," Mr. Abeywardena said, urging parliamentarians to set aside political differences and respond collectively to the crisis.

Sending a strategic message

The footings for stronger India-Australia ties have been set



LISA SINGH & AMITABH MATTOO

At a recent meeting in New Delhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was almost forced to give a brief lecture on geological history to his colleagues while highlighting the importance of integrating the Indian and Australian economies in contemporary times. By way of a metaphor, he pointed out how India and Australia were part of the same supercontinent, the Gondwanaland, until both drifted apart during the Jurassic age. For a variety of reasons, almost till the beginning of this century, New Delhi and Canberra remained apart much after the original tectonic shifts had originally split them.

A historic deal

A pivotal moment in history for the two countries was struck on April 2, when Australia and India struck a trade deal after two decades of efforts. Mr. Modi described it as a “watershed moment for bilateral relations”. The India-Australia Economic Co-operation and Trade Agreement (IndAus ECTA) eliminates tariffs on more than 85% of Australian goods exports to India (valued at more than \$12.6 billion a year).

With a GDP expected to grow at 9% in 2021-22, India is the world’s fastest growing major economy. Today, the growth opportunities for Australian businesses are larger in India than in any other market. Over the five years leading up to the pandemic, two-way trade and investment between Australia and India doubled. Now, IndAus ECTA is “expected to increase bilateral trade from AUD\$36.7 billion to AUD\$60 billion,” according to Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal.

Through IndAus ECTA, tariffs on a range of Australian exports to India, including coal, lentils, sheep meat, wool, lobsters and rare earths, will be eliminated. The deal also includes a phased reduction of tariffs on wine and agricultural products including avocados, cherries, nuts and blueberries. This is welcoming news to Australian businesses, particularly in the face of economic sanctions on a range of Australian produce they faced from China last year.

The deal also extends to enhancing services exports and strengthening our people-to-people links, including a quota for chefs and yoga teachers, post-study work visa of 2-4 years for Indian students on a reciprocal basis, mutual recognition of professional services and other licensed/regulated occupations, and work and holiday visa arrangements for young professionals. The

role of the Indian diaspora as a key national economic asset should not be underestimated in this deal. Data from the India Economic Strategy Update confirm that nearly one in five overseas students in Australia are from India, making full fee-paying Indian students the largest group of overseas students.

But as a former Indian Ambassador to Australia tweeted, it is the strategic message of this ECTA that is as important as its economic content. With the turbulence faced by both nations in the Indo-Pacific region, the convergence of economic and geopolitical risks is real. ECTA is a clear response to those changing dynamics that both countries face. And the fact that India today counts on the support of Australia through the Quad and maritime security and now through a trade agreement shows the diversification of its strategic and economic approach.

A deal despite challenges

Yet the Russian invasion of Ukraine remains a ‘balancing act’ for India. Half of its arms imports come from Russia and some 70% of its military hardware is Russian-made. The need for India’s military diversification is now greater than ever. Australia is limited in its delivery on this front. And whilst India would no doubt like to rely less on Russia, the U.S. is not stepping up to supply India with its latest missiles.

It is a testament to the growing resilience and bandwidth of bilateral ties that despite differences over India’s reticence in condemning the war in Ukraine and its purchase of heavily discounted Russian oil, the trade deal was brought to a closure with remarkable alacrity. In the past, Canberra’s fierce response to India’s 1988 nuclear tests and the Indian media’s over-the-top reaction to attacks on Indian students in Melbourne in 2009-2010 had almost derailed ties.

While both countries have come from different places, they seem to have arrived at the same place, practising economic liberalisation at their own pace. Hailing from opposite sides of power blocs during the Cold War, they now have shared norms and democratic principles and support a rules-based order. While they will continue to face headwinds that create new geopolitical and economic uncertainties, the footings for a stronger relationship have been set. Their mutual commitment to economic advancement through IndAus ECTA is symbolic of how far the relationship has come. That means the future for both nations’ peoples is full of promise and opportunity.

Lisa Singh is CEO, Australia India Institute (AII), former senator for Tasmania and the first woman of Indian heritage to be elected to the federal parliament; Amitabh Mattoo is Professor at JNU, Honorary Professor, University of Melbourne, and founding Director of the AII

India offers help to end Russia-Ukraine conflict

Russia is 'very important partner': External Affairs Minister

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

India will be “glad” to help in bringing about a resolution for the crisis in Ukraine, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said on Wednesday. Speaking in the Lok Sabha during a discussion under Rule 193 regarding the crisis in Ukraine and its implications, Dr. Jaishankar said that Russia is “a very important partner” but also held that India is against the conflict. He acknowledged the support from Russia, Ukraine and even Indian nationals based in Eastern Europe during Operation Ganga to evacuate Indian students from Ukraine.

“In terms of diplomacy, India continues to press forcefully for an immediate cessation of hostilities and an end to violence. We encourage talks between Ukraine and Russia, including at the level of their Presidents. The Prime Minister has spoken to them both. This was precisely the message that was conveyed to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov when he was in Delhi. If India can be of any assistance



Danger zone: Residents fleeing homes after Russian shelling in the Donbass region in eastern Ukraine on Wednesday. ■ AFP

in this matter, we will be glad to contribute,” he said.

‘Stabilising transactions’
“Our effort today is to stabilise economic transactions between India and Russia because this is very important for us. Russia is a very important partner in a variety of areas,” Dr. Jaishankar said, indirectly referring to the crucial role Russia plays in India’s defence sector.

Russia continues to remain the largest arms sup-

plier to India despite strong competition from France, Israel, the United States and other western countries. The specific remarks on economic ties with Russia came after Congress MP Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury sought an explanation on how India would conduct business with Russia as it was hit by western sanctions.

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**U.S. TO IMPOSE MORE
SANCTIONS ▶ PAGE 13**

India offers help to end Russia-Ukraine conflict

“At the moment, there is an inter-Ministerial group, which is led by the Finance Ministry, which is seeing how the payments issue can be best addressed. There are experiences from the past which are relevant in this regard,” Dr. Jaishankar said, indicating at the pivotal role the Finance Ministry will play in ensuring a smooth channel for transactions with Russia.

Dr. Jaishankar conveyed India’s strong opposition to the ongoing conflict. “We believe no solution can be arrived at by shedding blood and at the cost of innocent lives. In this day and age, dialogue and diplomacy are the right answers to any dispute and this should be borne in mind. If India has chosen a side – it is the side of peace and it is for an immediate end to violence. This is our principled stand and it has consistently guided our position in international forums and debates, including in the United Nations.”

The Minister also reiterated India’s commitment to supply humanitarian goods to Ukraine. He stated that the Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine, Yulia Svyrydenko, had requested him over a telephone call for more medical supplies to deal with the crisis.

The Minister pointed to the non-military fallout of the crisis, which has affected a wide spectrum of economic activities like the energy and fertilisers sectors, and said the government is trying to ensure food security for common people in the country as well as in countries abroad. As part of the government’s response to the crisis, he assured, India will step forward to meet “global demands for food, grains and other materials”.

The Minister said that the conflict in Ukraine, which was invaded by Russia on February 24, posed a unique challenge in evacuating Indian students trapped in Kharkiv, Sumy and Kyiv, among other locations.

Centre says it has no data on phone tapping

CIC rules information not exempted under Right to Information Act, Ministry says records destroyed every six months

S. VIJAY KUMAR
CHENNAI

Even as the controversy over the alleged deployment of Pegasus spyware by the Union government to snoop on top politicians, journalists and others refuses to die down, the Union Home Ministry has sprung a surprise saying it maintains no data of lawful interceptions made by authorised intelligence and law-enforcing agencies.

In a written submission before the Central Information Commission, the Ministry said it was unable to provide information called for by an applicant on the details of phone tapping by 10 agencies during a certain period, saying it does not maintain any statistical information or data related to lawful interception and monitoring and that the desired information is not available.

The Ministry made it clear that such records were weeded out every six months in compliance with provisions under Section 5(2) of the Telegraph Act,

1885, and Section 69 of the Information Technology Act, 2000. The subject matter being highly classified information, minimal records were maintained and statistical data was not compiled.

The Ministry, in its affidavit to the CIC, said records pertaining to directions for interception and of the intercepted messages were destroyed every six months unless such data was required for functional requirement.

Explaining the power of interception in larger national interest in preventing terrorism, drug trafficking and busting of narcotic drugs racket, it placed reliance on a list of cases where major cases were detected or cracked by the use of the laid-down procedure of interception.

The case arises out of a petition calling for the number of lawful interceptions made by 10 agencies between January 1, 2016 and December 27, 2018. The Ministry's Public Information Officer and the First Appellate Authority de-

 **Records pertaining to directions for interception and of the intercepted messages were destroyed every six months unless such data was required for functional requirement ... Since information sought is not available as on date, the same cannot be provided**

MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

clined the information sought by claiming exemption under Section 8(1)(a), (g) and (h) of the RTI Act, 2005.

However, the CIC, in its May 2021 order, made it clear that the information called for by the petitioner was not exempted under Section 8 or 9 of the Act since it was mere disclosure of statistical information. "Since the Appellant has not sought any personally identifiable information in respect of any individual, or

even the locations in which the orders under Section 69 of the IT Act were passed, there is no question of endangering the life or physical safety of any person. The information sought by the Appellant does not seek disclosure of any assistance given in confidence for law enforcement and security purposes either," Chief Information Commissioner Y.K. Sinha wrote and remanded the case back to the FAA, Joint Secretary, Cyber & Information Security, MHA, to revisit the matter and pass orders.

Change of stance

Complying with the CIC order, the FAA passed an order a couple of months later, this time not claiming exemption under the Act from disclosure of information called for by the petitioner, but on the grounds that the information was destroyed and hence not available.

The FAA also contended that "on the surface, any statistical data may seem benign, but when data is aggre-

gated, analysed and interpreted with respect to context, its sensitivity escalates. Therefore, deniability of statistical information should be seen in the wider context of totality of fact and circumstances of the case and not in isolation".

Highly classified

Justifying the non-availability of information sought by the petitioner, the FAA said lawful interception and monitoring was governed by Section 5(2) of the Telegraph Act, 1885, and Section 69 of the Information Technology Act, 2000. "These are highly classified information and therefore minimal records are maintained... Since information sought is not available as on date, the same cannot be provided."

Aggrieved by the second decision of the FAA, the petitioner moved the CIC challenging it. After hearing both sides, Mr. Sinha ruled on January 28, 2022 that the information sought in the case, though not exempted under

Section 8 or 9 of the RTI Act, was not held by or under the control of the public authority.

Such information falls within the exclusive jurisdiction of the specified 10 agencies empowered to utilise and exercise the powers under Section 69 of the Information Technology Act, 2000, subject to approval of the competent authority as per the provisions of law, rules and Standard Operating Procedure.

Therefore, the Ministry could not be considered the actual custodian of information nor responsible for dissemination of the information under the purview of the RTI Act.

The CIC directed the PIO to submit an affidavit affirming that the Ministry does not maintain any statistical information/data, related to lawful interception and monitoring and that the desired information was not available as on date and hence the same cannot be provided to the petitioner.

Criminal Procedure Bill cleared, Shah says no risk to privacy

Home Minister says data collected will be protected

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha on Wednesday passed the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Bill, 2022, which seeks to authorise the collection, storage and analysis of biometric samples of convicts and others involved in criminal matters.

The Lok Sabha passed the Bill on Monday.

Replying to the discussion on the Bill, Home Minister Amit Shah said the data collected would be protected and shared through a secure mechanism so that people's privacy was not risked.

He explained that the Bill had the objectives of increasing the rate of conviction and forensic capacity and collecting scientific evidence, eliminating third degree methods against those accused of crimes.

Stating that politics should be kept out while considering security concerns of the citizens of the country, Mr. Shah said, "Don't we want to move on? Won't we think of the coun-



Formulating law: Amit Shah speaking in the Rajya Sabha during the Budget Session of Parliament on Wednesday. ■PTI

try amidst the *gulli-danda* of politics? Politics should not be done on the question of public safety, punishment to the guilty."

"We will ensure that the political agitators do not have to give their physical and biological samples. But if leaders are arrested in a criminal case, they will have to give their samples," the Home Minister added.

Congress leader P. Chidambaram said that Bill was unconstitutional and it violated the liberty, privacy and dignity of people. "The Bill wasn't referred to a select committee," he said adding

that the government had not taken into account the historic verdicts of the Supreme Court in Selvi and Puttaswamy cases.

"In the Selvi case, the court said that polygraphy, narcoanalysis and brain electrical activation profile (BEAP) violate an individual's rights," Mr. Chidambaram said.

CPI MP Binoy Viswam said the Bill was draconian, and added that the Centre wanted to threaten everybody. "You want to take away all the human rights. This government has no regard for freedom," he said.

A candid conversation about the 'caged parrot'

If the CBI is to tread the path of virtue, it should have a strong leader with a distinct belief in the law and ethics



R.K. RAGHAVAN

The Chief Justice of India (CJI), Justice N.V. Ramana, must be lauded for his candid appraisal recently of the pathetic state of India's investigating agencies. Last week in Delhi, while delivering the annual (and the 19th edition) D.P. Kohli Memorial Talk organised by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the CJI minced no words in condemning the utter subordination of agencies to the executive and its disastrous consequences for the cause of justice.

D.P. Kohli was the first Director of the CBI after the agency was renamed the CBI in 1963 from the earlier Special Police Establishment. A man of impeccable character, he was faceless and fearless, and a model to be emulated by his successors.

Judiciary's gaze is crucial

The CJI has not said anything new at the lecture that we in India do not already know. But coming as it did from the head of the Indian judiciary, his stern warning that investigating agencies will pay a heavy price for their utter willingness to stoop to please politicians should be taken seriously by all outfits, especially the CBI, which has had a patchy record with regard to political interference in sensitive investigations. The CJI called upon investigators to stand

up to unethical pressures in order not to betray the trust reposed in them by the public. He even dropped a hint that if middle- and senior-level investigators deviated from the path of objectivity and neutrality, they would pay for it dearly. We have already seen how the Supreme Court of India and High Courts have often admonished investigators for their sloppiness and deviation from ethics. Therefore, we need a strong Supreme Court and equally strong High Courts to keep our investigators on the straight and narrow path.

Some change

There is no denying the fact that the CBI has been grossly misused by successive governments. This is why in December 1997, another fearless judge, Justice J.S. Verma had lambasted the then CBI Director in the so-called Hawala case, rebuking him for stalling the investigation at will, thereby sending inappropriate signals to his subordinates in the crucial investigation.

Justice Verma was so provoked by state of affairs that he went on to prescribe a new clinical procedure for the selection of the CBI chief, giving him also a much needed and fixed tenure of two years during which he could not be removed by the government. It may not be an exaggeration to say that earlier, CBI Directors were changed at will almost like how one would wear new garments every day. This mandatory tenure was meant to insulate the CBI Director from the caprice of the executive. This process has since been expanded to include the CJI



in the selection panel.

It will be incorrect to assert that all this has transformed the CBI into an apolitical and objective body. Meticulous supervision by the Supreme Court in some important cases has made more than a marginal difference to the honesty of investigation. There is palpable fear among CBI officers that the judiciary could intervene were an aggrieved person to prove that an investigator had been arbitrary and dishonest. It will be unfair to the CBI to say that its investigation has not acquired any greater uprightness than before even after the many reprimands it had received from the higher judiciary. My view is also that the allegation of political interference has been blown out of proportion, because only about 10% of cases handled by the CBI have political overtones.

A bright spot and lows

The CBI now has some of the brightest Indian Police Service officers in its higher echelons. None of them may be expected to be reckless and sacrifice their careers by bending to unethical pressures from their Director or from the government's echelons. However, it is not enough if the middle-rung supervisors alone are straightfor-

ward. There needs to be a strong and virtuous leader who will not only be honest but also stick his neck out to protect his deputies if and when confronted by an unscrupulous political heavyweight. If the CBI has to tread the path of virtue, it should have the strongest leader with a distinct belief in the law and ethics.

Unfortunately, in recent years, at least two Directors brought ignominy to the CBI. This has proved that whatever the courts may do to enforce discipline and adherence to the law, there are the odd leaders who could subvert the system. Little can be done to move away from this unfortunate situation unless there are bold and enlightened persons heading investigation agencies, and who will be firm with the executive if it tries to intimidate junior officers.

My own experience is that if one stands up and explains to a Prime Minister why a particular course of action suggested by a junior Minister or someone in the ruling party was unacceptable, then one has shown the right path to one's subordinates within the organisation. It is equally true that a Prime Minister will support you nine times out of 10 if you present your view in a rational and reasonable manner. If a Director is unable to display even this element of courage he should not be heading the organisation. If this honest approach to investigation does not get fused internally, mere tinkering with the criminal law and the procedure to appoint heads of important criminal justice organisations will be of no avail.

It is not that the CJI and the oth-

er judges are unaware of some investigating officers swerving from the right path at the instance of a small-time politician. But they are helpless in their efforts to stem the rot because many in the higher judiciary do not want to exceed their brief and upset things.

There have also been some big fish who have been caught in the net of investigators – a former Chief Minister of Bihar and a former Home Minister of Maharashtra, are examples. But given the magnitude of the problem, the steps taken so far to check dishonesty in the higher echelons of the government are only cosmetic. This is why I am still cynical: however much the judiciary stands by law enforcement outfits, little will change in terms of the public servant (including popular and elected Ministers) curbing the unabated corruption in the country.

What is needed

Finally, I do not endorse the CJI's proposal of an umbrella organisation that will oversee all investigating agencies. This idea was meant to avoid having multiple agencies looking into the same set of allegations. Apart from its impracticality, such a novel body could generate its own problems – of turf wars and ego clashes. I would rather have the focus on weeding out the dishonest among officers and rewarding those who have shown and proven themselves to be honest and professionally innovative.

R.K. Raghavan is a former CBI Director who now teaches Policing and Criminal Justice at the Jindal Global University, Sonapat, Haryana

Safety first

The Dam Safety Authority might be able to monitor safety aspects of Mullaperiyar dam

The Central Water Commission (CWC)'s proposal to let the Mullaperiyar dam's Supervisory Committee continue for a year essentially means status quo continues. The proposal makes the Chief Secretaries of Tamil Nadu and Kerala accountable and provides for the participation of technical experts as panel members. The proposed arrangement, presented before the Supreme Court on Tuesday, has become necessary as the CWC is of the view that the National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA), the regulatory body envisaged under the recently enacted Dam Safety Act, will require one year to become fully functional. On Thursday, the two States are expected to inform the Court of their response. Given the features of the 126-year-old Mullaperiyar dam and the controversies surrounding its lime and mortar structure, both States would have nothing much to complain about regarding sticking to the existing arrangement for some more time although they differ in the way they approach the dam. Located in Kerala, it is used by TN for multiple purposes. While TN is keen on getting the strengthening work completed to raise the water level to 152 ft from 142 ft, Kerala wants a new dam built. In the backdrop of landslides in Kerala after heavy rain, fears, though misplaced, have arisen over the dam's structural stability. Regardless of these apprehensions being addressed through technical and scientific bodies, the issue of safety crops up time and again. What this underlines is that there should be no room for complacency about the dam's safety. It is for this purpose that the apex court too has been addressing the issue of having a stronger institutional mechanism than the existing Supervisory Committee which has been rendered almost toothless.

Ideally speaking, the authority would have been well suited to handle issues concerning the Mullaperiyar, as the Act empowers the body to perform the role of the State Dam Safety Organisation (SDSO) in this context because the NDSA assumes the role of SDSO for a dam located in one State and owned by another. But, as more time is required to have the authority fully in place, the Centre has chosen to rely on the existing structure, with the respective Chief Secretaries being made accountable. With a sub-committee functioning under the Supervisory Committee and one more panel under the National Disaster Management Authority, the oversight mechanism appears to be fine. Still, however well-designed the scheme might be, it is for the authorities to make sure their actions instil public confidence during the monsoon, when the issue of safety in Kerala acquires precedence. It is also their duty to ensure there is no panic and to deal with scaremongers.

SC cautions Centre on bringing Acts without funds

Court hears plea filed by NGO over lack of protection officers and shelter homes in many States

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Creating rights with gusto through new welfare Acts would become mere lip service unless their financial impact was kept in mind, the Supreme Court cautioned the Centre on Wednesday.

The court's oral remark referred to how the government promised dedicated protection officers and shelter homes for women who suffered domestic abuse but has not delivered yet.

Yet again, the government

enacted the law on the right to education but did not have funds to build the sufficient number of schools or pay decent salaries to teachers working in the programme.

As a result, a three-judge Bench led by Justice U.U. Lalit said, the court was flooded with litigation.

"Revenue officials double up as 'protection officers' under the Domestic Violence Act when the training for these protection officers is completely different...

Look at the Right to Education law, where are the schools? You have appointed people as *shiksha mitra* and *shiksha karmi* and pay them ₹5,000. They come to court seeking parity in pay. So, whenever you bring in an Act, keep the financial impact in mind... When any legislation is enacted, its financial impact has to be assessed... Otherwise, all this becomes only lip-service... You create a right and the courts are left in difficulty," Justice Lalit addressed

the Centre, represented by Additional Solicitor-General Aishwarya Bhati.

The court was hearing a writ petition filed by an NGO, 'We the Women of India', about the lack of protection officers and shelter homes' infrastructure in various States as promised under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence (DV) Act of 2005.

Advocate Shobha Gupta, for the NGO, said shelter homes were an essential part of the Act.

Justice S. Ravindra Bhat, who is also part of the Bench along with Justice P.S. Narasimha, said the Centre, as a nodal agency under the law, should conduct a statistical assessment of the number of protection officers and how many/the kind of infrastructure required for shelter homes in different States.

The court also asked the government to provide details of the nature of Central programmes/plans outlining assistance to support the efforts under the DV Act.

EXPLAINER

Reorganising Andhra Pradesh: districts to match LS constituencies

What is the objective of having 13 new districts in the State? How is the administration planning to execute this major revamp?

V. RAGHAVENDRA

The story so far: On Monday, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy inaugurated 13 new districts, pointing out that the main objective was to take the administration to the people's doorsteps. During his 2019 election campaign, Mr. Reddy had promised that if elected to power, his government would create new districts based on parliamentary constituencies in the State. The total number of districts has gone up to 26; and Andhra Pradesh has 25 Lok Sabha constituencies. Districts were last reorganised in the 1970s, when Prakasam and Vizianagaram came into existence in the unified State of Andhra Pradesh, which was formed in 1956.

Why has the government set up new districts?

During the election campaign, Mr. Jagan Mohan Reddy promised to create new districts in order to take the administration to the grassroots level. The government had received over 17,500 representations from the people and decided on the new districts by taking their demands into account. The primary objective, according to the Chief Minister,



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy after virtually inaugurating 13 new districts from his camp office on April 4. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

is to take a substantial leap in efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goals. He said the performance of collectors would be assessed on the basis of steps taken by them to achieve the goals. The new districts are Parvathipuram Manyam, Alluri Sitharama Raju, Anakapalli, Kakinada, Konaseema, Eluru, NTR, Palnadu, Bapatla, Nandyal, Annamayya, Tirupati and Sri Satya Sai. Collectors and SPs in all the new

districts assumed charge on Monday and the distribution of staff is almost completed.

Who will the new districts serve?

As far as the new districts are concerned, Mr. Jagan Mohan Reddy claimed that the distance from the remote and border villages to the district headquarters has been reduced. Each of the 26 districts now has six to eight Assembly

constituencies – Andhra has 175 Assembly seats.

His assertion is that the new districts will be manageable, unlike the old ones, with an average population of 19.07 lakh each compared to the average of 38.15 lakh as per the 2011 Census. He drew a comparison with Telangana among other States, saying it has 33 districts for a population of nearly 3.85 crore. The Chief Minister said with a population of 4.90 crore as per the 2011 Census, Andhra required more districts.

As a prelude to the formation of new districts, the government had established ward and village secretariats in October 2019 and on Monday, apart from the 13 new districts, 21 additional revenue divisions have been formed, taking their total number to 72.

Each district is coterminous with a Lok Sabha constituency. The Araku-ST constituency is the lone exception with two districts namely Alluri Sitharama Raju and Parvathipuram Manyam, keeping the needs of the vast tribal population in mind.

How will the new district administration function?

On the infrastructure front, transit

accommodation has been provided to collectors and Superintendents of Police (SPs) and efforts are underway to build integrated administrative complexes on 15 acres in each one of the new districts. The idea is to have all offices i.e. offices of the collectors, SPs and heads of the district departments in one place to ensure that the people do not face any inconvenience.

The final designs of the office complexes will be ready by the end of April, by which time tenders for their construction will be invited.

What happened to the 'three capitals' plan?

The Chief Minister had also proposed 'three capitals' as a decentralisation move a few months after his party swept to power. But after facing massive protests, the government scrapped the AP Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Act, 2020, and AP Capital Region Development Authority Repeal Act, 2020, for the development of three capitals – Amaravati (legislative), Visakhapatnam (executive) and Kurnool (judicial). Mr. Jagan Mohan Reddy has promised to introduce a more comprehensive Bill.

THE GIST

■ The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister inaugurated 13 new districts with the objective to take administration to the people's doorsteps. The intention was to match each Lok Sabha constituency with one district.

■ The CM asserted that the new districts will be manageable, unlike the old ones, with an average population of 19.07 lakh each compared to the average of 38.15 lakh as per the 2011 Census. With a population of 4.90 crore, Andhra requires more districts, he said.

■ The Araku-ST constituency, which has two districts, is the only exception as the vast tribal population needs to be properly accommodated.

The child at the centre

Mission Vatsalya must bring together services and structures to help children in distress

Schemes designed for social good do well on intent, but their success depends on whether they are built on principles of sustainability and work within structures of accountability. While the Centre's intent to provide 'integrated benefits to children and women' is behind the comprehensive revamping of the Department of Women and Children's schemes, is this a rejig constructed with rules that will ensure maximising benefit for shareholders – women and children? Mission Vatsalya, which has been operationalised, is one of the new triad of schemes along with Mission Shakti, and Poshan 2.0, that aims at securing a healthy and happy childhood for every child. Components under Mission Vatsalya include statutory bodies; service delivery structures; institutional care/services; non-institutional community-based care; emergency outreach services; training and capacity building. The impact of this on one of the pillars of India's child protection services, the ChildLine, has been giving child rights activists sleepless nights. ChildLine (1098), the 24-hour toll free helpline for children in distress, will be manned by the Home Affairs Ministry under Mission Vatsalya, Union Minister Smriti Irani said last year, citing the need to 'preserve data sensitivity'.

ChildLine has been in operation for over 25 years, growing gradually to become one of the largest global networks to assist and rescue children in distress. It has functioned as a public-private partnership between the government and civil society organisations to provide a first-responder safety net, and kick start the process of rescue and rehabilitation of children. A road map to implement the scheme is not yet available, but it is understood that police personnel will first answer the call, handing over implementation to NGOs later. This flies in the face of the facts invoked while setting up the ChildLine in 1996 – children do not feel comfortable confiding in police personnel. It also sought to reduce the burden on the police force, by invoking their assistance only if the circumstances necessitated it. This was proven beyond doubt during a short-lived experiment in Chennai around 2003 when ChildLine calls were diverted to All Women Police Stations (AWPS) – they were inundated with calls, hampering regular work. Sometimes, all the children wanted was to spend some time talking to someone, or they were making multiple blank calls before they picked up the courage to tell all. In many cases, police intervention was not needed at all. The old system was hurriedly revived, and order restored. The Centre will do well to incorporate these responses as it sets out a road map for a key aspect of child protection. Above all, it must consider the issue from the perspective of the key beneficiary of this scheme – the child – and make sure that his/her safety, security and happiness are ensured in a bond born of trust, necessarily going beyond the letter of the law.

Imports zoom 55% to hit record \$610 bn in FY22

Trade deficit widens to \$192 bn, March saw \$40.4 bn exports

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India's merchandise imports in FY22 hit a record \$610.2 billion, an increase of 54.7% over the previous year and 28.6% higher than pre-COVID level of FY20 as per preliminary trade data for March released by the Commerce Ministry on Monday.

Imports in March 2022 grew 20.8% from a year earlier to \$59.07 billion, and rose 87.7% from the March 2020 level.

Exports for the month were worth \$40.38 billion, taking the deficit for the month to \$18.7 billion.

With exports of almost \$418 billion in FY22, the trade deficit for the year was



The current account deficit is likely to have receded to under \$19 bn in the March quarter, says ICRA's Nayar. ■ DEEPAK K.R.

\$192.4 billion, 87.5% above the FY21 level and 19.3% over the pre-pandemic level.

“The trade deficit for non-oil and non-gold/jewellery items stood at \$55 billion or 1.7% of GDP in FY22, accounting for around one

quarter of the total merchandise trade deficit,” said ICRA chief economist Aditi Nayar, who expects the current account deficit to have narrowed to less than \$19 billion in the January-March 2022 quarter.

EXPLAINER

The HDFC Ltd.-HDFC Bank merger

What is the financial rationale of this amalgamation? Is the stage set for more mega deals?

SURESH SESHADRI

THE GIST

■ Mortgage lender HDFC Ltd. and India's largest private sector bank HDFC Bank on Monday announced a mega merger. Under the terms of the deal, HDFC Bank will be 100% owned by public shareholders, while existing shareholders of HDFC Ltd. will own 41% stake in HDFC Bank.

■ Post-merger, the mortgage lending business gets access to HDFC Bank's CASA (current and savings accounts) deposits, which are lower cost funds. For HDFC Bank, every home loan customer can be tapped to become a bank customer.

■ The regulatory framework of the NBFC (non-banking financial company) industry has been moving closer to harmonise with the banking sector's regulatory framework. If you are a large NBFC, it makes more sense to be merged with a bank because banks are more tightly regulated and have far more oversight of the RBI.

The story so far: Mortgage lender HDFC Ltd. and India's largest private sector bank HDFC Bank on Monday announced a mega merger.

The amalgamation will create a financial behemoth that is expected to better tap the rising demand for credit.

Under the terms of the deal, which is one of the biggest in the Indian financial sector, HDFC Bank will be 100% owned by public shareholders, while existing shareholders of HDFC Ltd. will own 41% stake in HDFC Bank.

What are the terms of the merger?

The two companies have announced that their respective boards have approved the amalgamation. Subsequently, the merger has to go through a series of regulatory approvals.

It also has to get approval from shareholders of both companies. At this moment what has been announced by the two entities is that it's an all-share deal, so there's no cash transaction involved.

The terms of the share swap are such that shareholders of HDFC Ltd. will receive 42 shares of HDFC Bank for every 25 shares they hold in HDFC Ltd.

Post-merger HDFC Ltd. will no longer be a separate mortgage lender, it will get folded into the bank. The bank, which is the offspring of HDFC Ltd. and the older legacy entity, is the one which is acquiring the mortgage lender. With its acquisition of the mortgage lender, it also acquires all its subsidiaries, which includes a general insurance company, a life insurance company, and an asset management company.

What happens to existing customers and employees?

As far as customers are concerned, HDFC Ltd.'s customers will become the bank's customers as well. As for employees, HDFC Bank is planning to absorb and retain all the employees.

Neither of the entities are very heavy on employee numbers and have been fairly conservative in their employee sizes.

At the press conference to announce the merger, HDFC chairman Deepak Parekh specifically said that the employees of HDFC Ltd. will become part of the bank.

Is it worth going through this exercise, which is going to take about 18 months or so to fructify? What is the rationale for it?

Every merger, when it involves two entities, takes a certain amount of time. But because both these entities are of the same house or group, this will not be too much of a challenge for them. As both HDFC Ltd. and HDFC Bank have largely had a fairly conservative lending culture, both reasonably customer-friendly, customer-centric, culturally, there wouldn't be a big challenge. The integration part of it would only be a matter of ensuring that everything is seamless and smooth, getting the books mapped on to each other, and the IT systems merging with each other and so on.

From a perspective of the rationale of the merger, Mr. Parekh said a few things, one of which was that in recent years, the evolution of the regulatory framework for the NBFC (non-banking financial company) industry has been gradually moving closer, to harmonise with the banking sector's regulatory framework. Earlier, NBFCs had a fairly different and a far more loose sort of framework for lending and deposits. This led to issues in the industry with some NBFCs struggling and going under or being taken over by others. The Reserve Bank of India has over the years been tightening the regulatory structures for the NBFC industry. Mr. Parekh specified that the regulatory environment has been harmonised to the point where it makes sense, and the RBI too is likely to be happy. If you are a large NBFC with the sort of size that say HDFC Ltd. has, it makes more sense for it to be merged with a bank because the banks are much more tightly regulated and have far more oversight of the RBI.

As Basel III norms for capital adequacy are in place, the NPA (non-performing asset) book is very closely monitored. Even from a regulatory perspective, the RBI is unlikely to be unhappy to see this merger going through because it wants NBFCs to be tightly regulated. And if you are a part of a bank, you will be better regulated.

What is in it for HDFC Ltd. and HDFC Bank?

Post-merger, the mortgage lender, HDFC Ltd., gets access to HDFC Bank's CASA (current and savings accounts) deposits,

which are lower cost funds. For the mortgage lending business, the capital cost will come down. As the capital cost comes down, automatically it will have the ability to lend at a finer rate. For HDFC Bank, every home loan customer can be tapped to become a bank customer.

Was there any pressure or immediate requirement for the merger?

The competition in the housing finance space has increased, say from 30 years ago, when HDFC Ltd. was one among a handful of housing finance entities. Now entities providing loans for housing have gone up substantially. The larger ones are LIC Housing Finance, PNB Housing, Bank of Baroda Housing etc. SBI too has a housing business. Banks have also been lending through subsidiaries – Canfin Homes is Canara Bank's housing finance subsidiary. So, in a sense for HDFC, it makes sense that HDFC Ltd. and HDFC Bank are under the same roof because if you are lending from a banking perspective, it makes it easier for your cost of funds to come down as your balance sheet size grows. When you are raising capital, your cost of capital also comes down.

For HDFC Bank, it's about getting access to a large base of customers for cross-selling purposes. For HDFC Ltd., or the mortgage lending business, it's primarily about the lower cost of capital.

Does a larger balance sheet help in terms of the NPA situation?

As far as HDFC Bank is concerned, bad loans are not a major pressure point because it has been a conservative lender compared to competitors. They have always shied away from big ticket lending to corporates. Most of their lending is to retail borrowers. As for HDFC Ltd., there might have been some pressure on home loans during the pandemic but based on what they have disclosed so far, it is not a major pressure point either. Also, the merger with the bank sort of helps alleviate any upcoming pressure.

Will the lending pattern change?

Infrastructure lending has been a serious problem in India. With the government making it clear that there is need for funding the infrastructure segment, we will have to



Fast fusion: HDFC chairman Deepak Parekh speaks during the media briefing about the merger, in Mumbai on April 4. •AFP

wait and see whether the merged entity has the expertise to lend to infrastructure projects, which is a risky proposition. They do have a large volume of funds, and if they see specific opportunities with good entrepreneurs and good government projects, they may go for it.

What will be the impact of this deal?

It's possible that we might see more NBFCs seeking to merge with banks. There is already talk of the number of banks coming down. So in some ways, HDFC Bank's merger with HDFC Ltd. may be a precursor to what is going to happen in the state-run banking space, where the government has said it is going to reduce the number of public sector banks.



Clouded outlook: If inflation continues to quicken sales may slow, or possibly even contract, says De Lima. ■ REUTERS

Manufacturing slows to 6-month low: PMI

‘Inflation worries impact confidence’

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The S&P Global India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers’ Index (PMI) slid to 54 in March from 54.9 in February, with both production and sales growing at the slowest pace in six months, and inflation concerns driving down firms’ business confidence to the lowest level in two years.

A reading of 50 indicates no change in business activity levels. New export orders received by Indian goods producers declined modestly during March, ending an eight-month growth streak.

“The slowdown was accompanied by an intensification of inflationary pressures, although the rate of increase in input costs remained below those seen towards the end of 2021,” Pollyanna De Lima, economics associate director at S&P Global, said. Specifically, prices for chemicals, energy, fabric, foodstuff and metals were higher than in February and the overall rate of inflation faced by producers quickened.

“Output prices rose in March as goods producers sought to share a part of the additional input cost burden with customers, taking

the charge inflation to a five-month high,” S&P Global said. “For now, demand has been sufficiently strong to withstand price hikes, but should inflation continue to gather pace we may see a more significant slowdown, if not an outright contraction in sales,” observed Ms. De Lima.

‘New job hopes dim’

After three successive months of shedding jobs, the manufacturing sector saw ‘a broad stabilisation in headcounts’ but firms indicated that payroll numbers were sufficient to cope with current requirements, dampening prospects for new job additions.

Anecdotal evidence indicated that inflation concerns and economic uncertainty dampened overall confidence, S&P Global said in a note on the index which is based on responses from 400 manufacturers and adjusted for seasonal variations thereafter.

Additional input purchases in March grew at the weakest pace since August 2021, but was still ‘marked’. Yet, pre-production inventories rose for the ninth month in a row, recording a sharper and quicker uptick than February.

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.