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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.

CONTENTS

- News - Pakistan SC restores Parliament; orders no-trust vote tomorrow GSP 02 A
- Editorials - Beyond Border-Gavaskar GSP 02 B
- News - India-U.S. 2+2 will discuss key issues, says MEA GSP 02 B
- News - Russia suspended from rights council Part I GSP 02 B
- News - Russia suspended from rights council Part II GSP 02 B
- Editorials - Ukraine and the anatomy of India's neutrality GSP 02 C
- Editorials India's position on Russia affecting its relationship with the U.S. GSP 02 C
- News - Around 100 pensions 'donated' GSP 02 M
- News - GatiShakti, PLI will offset global headwinds, spur growth FinMin GSP 03 D
- News - Defence Ministry issues indigenisation list GSP 03 M

Pakistan SC restores Parliament; orders no-trust vote tomorrow

Bench declares as unconstitutional the controversial ruling by Deputy Speaker

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ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's Supreme Court on Thursday struck down National Assembly Deputy Speaker Qasim Suri's move to dismiss a no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Imran Khan, in a major blow to the cricketer-turned politician, and ordered that Parliament be restored.

Mr. Suri, who is associated with Mr. Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, on April 3 dismissed the no-confidence motion against the premier claiming that it was linked to a "foreign conspiracy" to topple the government and hence was not maintainable. Minutes later, President Arif Alvi dissolved the National Assembly on the advice of Prime Minister Khan who had effectively lost the majority.

Chief Justice Bandial, who is heading a five-member Bench, declared as unconstitutional the controversial ruling by the Deputy Speaker. In a unanimous verdict, the Bench also declared dissolution of Parliament as



Law prevails: Riot policemen guarding the premises of the Supreme Court in Islamabad during Thursday's hearing. ■ AFP

unconstitutional.

The Bench restored Parliament and declared the advice by Mr. Khan to President Alvi to dissolve the Assembly as unconstitutional. The court ordered the Speaker to call the session of the Assembly on April 9 at 10 a.m. to organise the no-confidence vote.

The Opposition has said it has 172 votes in the 340-seat House to oust Mr. Khan, after several members of his own party and a key coalition partner defected.

Security in and around

the apex court was beefed up. Riot police forces were deployed outside the court building.

During the hearing, the Chief Justice noted that the Deputy Speaker's ruling was prima facie a violation of Article 95.

Shehbaz's view sought

Apart from leading lawyers representing various parties, the court called at the rostrum Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz president and main Opposition leader, and asked about

his view on the way forward in the wake of uncertainty due to the dissolution of the Assembly and announcement of fresh elections.

Mr. Shehbaz asked how the Opposition leaders could take part in the election after being labelled as "traitors". He left it to the court to decide but urged that rule of law should be adhered to and added that "we cannot face even our families after being called as traitors".

He was referring to the ruling by the Deputy Speaker that the no-confidence motion was linked to a so-called "foreign conspiracy". With the court ruling against the Deputy Speaker, Parliament is likely to reconvene and hold the no-confidence vote against Mr. Khan.

The latest political chaos has spilled over to the country's largest province of Punjab, where 60% of Pakistan's 220 million people live and where Mr. Khan's ally for chief provincial minister was denied the post on Wednesday, after his political opposition voted in their own candidate.

Beyond Border-Gavaskar

Periodic reappraisal of the economic gains from the trade pact with Australia is pragmatic

The India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) signed last week is a key step in enhancing bilateral economic ties between the two major Indian Ocean littoral states and reflects the growing strategic alignment between New Delhi and Canberra. While India's strongest ties with Australia had hitherto largely centred around their common colonial legacy of cricket, best exemplified in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, a more contemporary shared vision has emerged around the mutual need to strengthen their strategic and trade engagement. This was manifested in the June 2020 virtual summit when Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Scott Morrison decided to elevate the relationship to the level of a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Defence and strategic ties have gained significant traction and the latest ECTA has been hammered out in just six months since negotiations restarted in end-September. Envisaged as an 'early-harvest' agreement, the ECTA covers the gamut of economic and commercial relations including trade in goods and services, rules of origin, technical barriers to trade, dispute settlement and customs procedures. Targeting a goal of doubling bilateral trade to about \$50 billion in five years, from the \$27.5 billion logged in 2021, the partners have set about dismantling or lowering tariff barriers. While Australia has agreed to eliminate tariffs on more than 96% of Indian exports, including several labour-intensive industries, India will allow the duty-free entry of 85% of Australian goods exports by value from day one and within the next 10 years cut tariffs to zero on another 5% of Australian merchandise.

That the negotiators adopted a pragmatic tack is evident in the way contentious issues such as the dairy sector, a politically significant export industry in Australia, were set aside for separate resolution at later talks. A key area that has been included is the movement of 'natural persons', which is inextricably linked to fostering closer people-to-people links and is an imperative in efforts to promote bilateral trade in services. The agreement aims to support access for a range of Australian and Indian skilled service providers, investors, and business visitors and also, crucially, seeks to address an area linked to another major Australian export – education. Canberra has now agreed, on a reciprocal basis, to ease visa restrictions, enabling students at varied levels of higher education to stay on for periods ranging from 18 months to four years to pursue work opportunities on a temporary basis. Arguably the best feature of the ECTA though is the incorporation of a compulsory review mechanism at the end of 15 years. With past FTAs having proved less than beneficial to domestic industry, India's negotiators have set a meaningful precedent in including the feature to periodically reappraise the economic gains from such trade pacts.

India-U.S. 2+2 will discuss key issues, says MEA

Disagreement over New Delhi's position on Russia continues

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will visit the United States for the "2+2" dialogue with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin in Washington DC on April 11, the Ministry of External Affairs announced on Thursday.

The meeting will be held days after the U.S. Deputy National Security Adviser Daleep Singh conveyed to

the Indian side that there would be "consequences" for continuing energy trade in local currency with Russia against the backdrop of Moscow's military campaign in Ukraine.

"The dialogue would enable both sides to undertake a comprehensive review of cross-cutting issues in the India-U.S. bilateral agenda related to foreign policy, defence and security with the objective of providing strategic guidance and vision for further consolidating the re-



lationship," the Ministry of External Affairs said. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar is expected to meet members of the Biden Administration during the visit.

The announcement from the U.S. State Department emphasised the role of de-

mocratic values and expanding defence partnership between the two sides covering areas such as cybersecurity and public health. It said, "The relationship between the world's largest democracies is built on a foundation of common values and resi-

lient democratic institutions, and the shared Indo-Pacific interests of a rules-based international order that safeguards sovereignty and territorial integrity, upholds human rights and expands regional and global peace and prosperity."

Mr. Austin said in a statement that the upcoming meeting would feature talks about the defence cooperation between the two sides for a "free and open Indo-Pacific region".

The upcoming meeting between the two sets of Ministers will be held against the backdrop of a series of comments from the United

States about India's continued neutrality in the face of Russian military operation against Ukraine.

Mr. Biden's top economic adviser Brian Deese has warned of "significant and long-term consequences" if India continued to pursue the current policy of purchasing energy from Russia despite western sanctions on the latter.

During the media briefing on Thursday, the official spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs Arindam Bagchi did not comment on what sort of consequences the U.S. could discuss with Indian diplomats.

Russia suspended from rights council

India abstains from vote at UNGA

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON DC

Russia's membership to the Human Rights Council (HRC), to which it was elected in 2020, was suspended on Thursday after the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) voted, 93 to 24, with 58 abstentions, including India, to adopt a resolution suspending Moscow from the UN body.

The resolution, 'Suspension of the rights of membership of the Russian Federation in the Human Rights Council', was proposed by a group of countries that included Ukraine, the U.S., the EU, several Latin American countries and required a two-thirds majority of those present and voting for adoption. Abstentions do not count in the tally of those 'present and voting'. India abstained for reasons of "substance and process", its Permanent Representative to the UN (UNPR), T.S. Tirumurti, said.

India's stand

"We firmly believe that all decisions should be taken fully respecting due process as all our democratic polity



The Russian delegation reacts to the vote at the General Assembly. ■ REUTERS

and structures enjoin us to do so. This applies to international organisations as well, particularly the United Nations," Mr. Tirumurti said during his 'Explanation of Vote' speech at the UNGA.

The U.S., which has had an uneven relationship with the HRC itself (having quit it under the Trump administration only to rejoin it last year) had been a driving force behind the resolution.

"If India has chosen any side, it is the side of peace. And it is for an immediate end to violence," Mr. Tirumurti said, calling for diplomacy.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 10

UKRAINE SEEKS ARMS ► PAGE 13

Russia suspended from rights council

Thursday's UNGA action was India's third abstention on votes regarding the HRC. The first two abstentions were around the setting up of a Commission of Inquiry, on March 4, to look into violations of human rights and international law in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Thursday's resolution sought the suspension of Russia from the HRC, and accused Moscow of "gross and systematic violations and abuses of human rights".

The HRC is a UN body, comprising 47 states, that describes itself as "responsible for the promotion and protection of all human rights around the globe".

Ukraine's appeal

Addressing the Assembly before the vote, Ukraine's UNPR, Sergiy Kyslytsya urged member-states to vote for the resolution.

Several countries opposed the resolution on the grounds that it had been put to vote before an indepen-

dent inquiry had presented its findings. Some countries, like India, were of the view that adopting the resolution would violate due process and impact the credibility of the organisation.

In addition to the Commission of Inquiry, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, as well as various UN countries, including India, had called for an independent inquiry into the brutal killing of civilians in the Bucha suburb of Kyiv.

Following the resolution's adoption, Russia's representative called it "illegitimate and politically motivated". Russia also announced that it would be "ending" or "suspending" its membership from the Council.

"The vote at the UNGA was difficult for India as it subverts and short circuits the whole Human Rights Council-led process," former Indian UNPR Asoke Mukerji said.

(With Suhasini Haidar in New Delhi)

Ukraine and the anatomy of India's neutrality

Nehru's axiom continues to guide New Delhi's approach to conflicts, especially those involving its partners



STANLY JOHNY

In 1957, a year after the Soviet intervention in Hungary, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru explained in Parliament why India took a non-condemnatory approach. "There are many things happening in the world from year to year and day to day, which we have disliked intensely. We have not condemned them... because when one is trying to solve a problem, it doesn't help calling names and condemning." Nehru's axiom has continued to guide India's approach to conflicts, especially those involving its partners. Be it the Soviet interventions in Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968) or Afghanistan (1979), or the American invasion of Iraq (2003), India has more or less followed this line. Its response to Russia's invasion on Ukraine – condemnation of the civilian killings without any name calling, and abstention from UN votes – is not fundamentally different from this historically cautious neutrality.

Nor is India's position isolated. South Africa, another major democracy, abstained from the UN votes that sought to condemn Russia. The United Arab Emirates, a close American ally in the Gulf that hosts thousands of U.S. troops, abstained from a vote in the UN Security Council. Israel, the U.S.'s closest ally in West Asia, condemned the Russian attack but refused to join the sanctions regime and said no to sending its defence systems to Ukraine. Turkey, a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) ally, did the same and is mediating between Ukraine and Russia. But none of these countries has come under the kind of

pressure and public criticism from the West that India has. U.S. President Joe Biden said India's position was "somewhat shaky". His Deputy National Security Adviser for International Economics, Daleep Singh, who was in New Delhi on a visit recently, warned India of "consequences" if it conducts trade with Russia circumventing American sanctions. Why this selective targeting?

Analysing the reasons

There could be three broad reasons – political, economic and strategic. From a political point of view, the West has carefully tried to construct a narrative that Russian President Vladimir Putin's attack on Ukraine is an assault on what U.S. President Joe Biden calls "the free world". This narrative would look weak if the world's largest democracy (India) sits out of the West-led bid to punish the Russians. From an economic point of view, sanctions on Russia were imposed largely by western countries. Only three Asian nations have backed the sanctions – Japan, South Korea and Singapore. China, the world's second largest economy, would not abide by the American sanctions. If India also continues to trade with Russia, working around the payment curbs, that would invariably blunt the effect of the sanctions on the Russian economy.

Strategically, this is the most important global crisis since the end of the Cold War. India has improved its strategic partnership with the U.S., and the West in general, over the last 30 years, while at the same time retaining warm ties with Russia. This balancing was not tested in the recent past. But with the Russian attack on Ukraine and the near-total breakdown in ties between Russia and the West, countries such as India are now faced with a difficult choice of picking a side. Given the transformation of India's partner-



AFP

ship with the U.S., which also sees New Delhi as a counterweight to China in the Indo-Pacific region, many expected India to give up its strategic autonomy and take a stand that aligns with that of the West. It did not happen.

How India sees the war

These arguments are valid from a western point of view, but they also overlook India's position on this conflict. There are serious points of difference. The global order is witnessing rapid changes. If the Georgia war in 2008 and the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 were early signs of this shift, then the American withdrawal from Afghanistan, leaving the country to the mercy of the Taliban after fighting the Islamists for 20 years, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine mark the sharpest manifestations of the new global disorder. When India looks at the world, it sees three great powers and several middle powers. The U.S. remains the world's pre-eminent power but with its ability to shape global geopolitical outcomes substantially diminished. China is rising fast and is seeking to, as Rush Doshi argues in *The Long Game*, blunt America's existing power and displace the American order at the global level. Russia is a wounded bear with an imperial nostalgia. It is economically weak but in terms of land mass and military might, it remains a superpower. Of these three, sans any moral judgments, two are India's

partners and one is a competitor. The question India (itself a middle power) faces is why it should take a side in a confrontation that is unfolding in Europe between two of its partners, which could eventually leave its competitor stronger. Here, neutrality is the best among the bad options.

Moreover, every country formulates its foreign policy based on its national interests, not merely on moral commitments. The U.S.-led NATO bombed Yugoslavia for 78 days in 1999 when it thought the campaign would serve the interests of American leadership in the post-Cold War world. It invaded Iraq in 2003 because it wanted to reshape West Asia. It destroyed the state of Libya when it decided to do so. The U.S. is now seeking to punish Russia not primarily out of its moral commitments (which at best is selective) but because the crisis in Ukraine has opened opportunities for the U.S. to weaken Russia, its biggest rival in Europe. But India's national interests are not aligned with this line. Indian interests are not served with a weakened, isolated Russia. On the contrary, India needs Russia not only for defence and energy purchases but also for geopolitical reasons. India is as much a continental power as it is a maritime power. While close ties with the U.S., Japan and Australia are important for India's maritime security and interests, ties with Russia, Iran and the Central Asian countries are important for its continental security and interests, especially after the U.S.'s ignominious withdrawal from Afghanistan.

The tragedy of Ukraine

Lastly, the West is not an innocent bystander in the whole Ukraine crisis. Ukraine was promised NATO membership in 2008 which it never got. The promise itself was enough to shake up Russia's security calculations and Moscow

moved aggressively, annexing Crimea and supporting militancy in Donbas. The U.S. continued to provide money and limited weapons to Kyiv but never took any meaningful measure to bolster Ukraine's deterrence against Russia. If Mr. Putin's forces went into Ukraine, it is because he thought that NATO would not be in a position to defend a country that was not a member of the alliance. While Ukrainian pushback has denied Russia its early military objectives in Ukraine, Moscow might succeed in getting Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky to accept neutrality and might also end up controlling more Ukrainian territories than it did before February 24. That is the tragedy of Ukraine. So, the West not only failed to deter Mr. Putin, but its limited responses to his war are also pushing Russia deeper into the Chinese embrace. Here, should India accelerate this embrace by toeing the anti-Russian Western line or retain its terms of engagement with Moscow which could allow Russia to diversify its Asian relations? India has opted for the second option.

India is not a client state of any great power (even client states have not joined the sanctions regime). It is not a member of any alliance system – the Quad (India, Australia, Japan and the U.S.) is not an alliance. Like any other country, India also retains the right to take policies based on pragmatic realism and its core national interests. And India thinks that a neutral position anchored in strategic autonomy which keeps channels open with both sides is what serves its interests. It does not mean that India supports the war. It has not. The U.S., India's most important strategic partner, does not seem to appreciate these nuances. At least the public statements from Washington suggest that.

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Is India's position on Russia affecting its relationship with the U.S.?

PARLEY

While India has explained its stand on the war and its ties with Russia, the U.S. remains 'disappointed'

Last week, India's strategic partner, the United States, warned of consequences for any country, including India, which conducts local currency transactions through Russia's central bank or constructs a payment mechanism that subverts or circumvents the U.S.'s sanctions against Russia. India's consistent neutral position on Russia's invasion of Ukraine, informed by its choices, has antagonised many countries, including the U.S. Will the U.S.-India relationship come under strain? In a conversation moderated by **Suhasini Haidar**, Lisa Curtis and Syed Akbaruddin weigh in on India's non-aligned position on the war. Edited excerpts:



Lisa Curtis is Senior Fellow and Director of the Indo-Pacific Security Program at the Center for a New American Security. She earlier served in the U.S. White House as a Senior Director at the National Security Council

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has said India is on the side of peace in the Ukraine conflict, indicating that India is taking a neutral position. Is that how it is being perceived?

Lisa Curtis: There is a slight difference between the view of the American public, which is one of frustration, confusion and lack of appreciation for India's position, and the view of the Joe Biden administration. As somebody who has followed the U.S.-India relationship for 25 years, I've been disappointed by India's lack of condemnation of Russia, and its seeming lack of appreciation for the U.S.'s deep security interests in Europe and the horrific war that Russia has waged on Ukraine. That said, the Biden administration has taken the long view of India and places high value on the strategic partnership with India. New Delhi is playing a central role in the U.S.'s Indo-Pacific strategy and its approach to China. Where you see a lot of frustration coming from U.S. Congressional members, you see a much more patient approach from the Biden administration. But I wonder how long the administration's forbearance can last, unless we see some kind of shift in India's position, which perhaps we're starting to see, with the recent reports of civilian casualties. This is a welcome change. But how far India will adjust its position, we don't know.

Syed Akbaruddin: I would term

India's position as evolving. If you look at where we began and where we are today, we've traversed a fairly long path. If you look at the first couple of statements that India made, there was not even a reference to international law, or to violation of territorial integrity and sovereignty. For any observer of Indian foreign policy, it is clear that India's position is evolving: it is now repeatedly criticising the transgression of international law and violation of territorial integrity and sovereignty. There is regret for the outbreak of hostilities. All these statements, without naming [Russia], are clearly aimed at indicating unhappiness towards what Russia has done. Not only does the latest statement [on Bucha] condemn civilian killings, but for the first time in recent memory, India has supported an independent inquiry.

When it comes to conflict, there have been many instances where India remained quiet and stayed neutral, including the one in Hungary in 1956, or in the Czech Republic (then Czechoslovakia) and in Afghanistan in 1979. Perhaps you can call it hedging. Perhaps you can call it playing safe. But there is a trajectory and history to this approach.

LC: It is not just Western countries that have condemned Russia's actions; over 140 nations voted to condemn Russia's actions in the United Nations General Assembly. India is isolated in its position of abstaining from condemning Russia's actions in any way. While India may consider its position to be neutral, I think the rest of the world, or at least most of the rest of the world, sees India as being supportive of Russia.

The U.S. has carved out waivers for Europe on energy purchases given the continent's dependence on Russia, but not for India's defence dependency. Isn't there a double standard here?

LC: The U.S. understands that India still relies on Russian military equipment for 60-70% of its military needs. The U.S. also understands that India is under threat from China. Only two years ago, India faced a



major crisis with 20 Indian soldiers being killed on the border, the first time it faced a loss of lives on the India-China border in many decades. If the India-China border issue heats up again, obviously India is going to rely on its military supplies from Russia. The U.S. understands that.

If India were to take advantage of discounted Russian oil, if it were to substantially increase its oil imports from Russia, I think that would be difficult for U.S. officials to understand. What would not be understood is if India takes advantage of the situation and props up the Russian economy at a time when the rest of the world is trying to isolate Russia. If India is seen as trying to skirt those sanctions, there would be a lot of frustration with India.

SA: What the U.S. calls "sanctions" are, in reality, in diplomatic terminology, "unilateral coercive economic measures". These have sanctity in U.S. laws. They also have sanctity in European Union laws. But from a perspective of international law, they do not have any legal backing. These are measures promulgated by the U.S. and the EU after consultations, after carving out what exceptions they would like, because these adversely affect their economy. So, you don't have measures against uranium imported by the U.S., against oil imported by Europe, or gas imported by Europe because it's understandable — these would give their economy a shock. In comparison, what has been the level of coordination and consultation with India for its economic needs? Let's not forget: India is still a developing country with huge economic needs. We are still just on the verge of coming out of the COVID-19-related economic

You don't have [unilateral coercive economic] measures against uranium imported by the U.S. or against oil and gas imported by Europe. In comparison, what has been the level of coordination and consultation with India for its economic needs?

SYED AKBARUDDIN

shock. Petrol prices have now increased by leaps and bounds. Food prices are increasing. For a developing country to absorb these shocks is a much more difficult task than for well-to-do European economies. Yet, carve-outs have been provided for them, not us. These discussions should take place quietly and these issues worked out behind the scenes rather than people coming to India and saying there will be "consequences". It's not a very comfortable feeling when your strategic partner comes and makes these statements in public. Frankly, the amount of oil that India imports from the Russian Federation is very small. This can easily be worked out because it has been worked out in previous cases with Venezuela, with Iran, where the consumption in India was larger. It requires a little bit more of nimble diplomacy to try and address these things. And these are addressable issues.

LC: I'd like to ask a question: if the U.S. had done nothing when Russia invaded Ukraine, if it had not imposed sanctions and let Russia get away with just taking over a country just because it has more military might... What do you think that would have done to China's calculation and its ability to do something

aggressive with Taiwan or create another border crisis with India? If nobody stands up for the territorial sovereignty of other countries, you're simply going to have a world where might is right.

SA: I don't think it is India's case that what Russia has done is right. What is India's case is what we term as collateral damage to other countries like India. And all we are asking is for the U.S. to be mindful of that. Because when countries do these things unilaterally, it does impact other countries, and as strategic partners, we have a right to request them to be more understanding of our needs than they have been.

So, is India's position on Russia and on the Ukraine war impacting India-U.S. ties? What do you expect from the '2+2' Ministerial meeting in Washington next week?

LC: It is an opportunity for the two countries to further discuss their differences over Russia and elaborate on the bilateral agenda in terms of the progress that has been made on new initiatives. Though behind closed doors, they'll have an opportunity to have deep discussions about Russia. It is well timed, and the tenor of those talks will be a good indicator of the overall direction of the strategic partnership and will tell us whether the strains of the sharply divergent views over Russia are going to have a long-term impact on the partnership.

One point in India's own interest: Russia, which is going to face these crushing sanctions, will not be a dependable partner for India. This is a fact that Indian officials will have to start absorbing. February 24 [when Russia invaded Ukraine] changed everything. It led to a tectonic shift in geopolitical developments. And I think India has been slow to realise this. If there is just some hint that India recognises the changed situation with regard to Russia, that would be helpful for the U.S.-India bilateral relationship.

SA: India's relations with the U.S. are expansive and cover a large number of issues. And the trajectory is pretty clear. It's only the pace at which India has to move which is in question. But as we all know, these changes [diversifying defence

purchases] take time. Also, technology that is available from one partner may not be available from the other partner. But it is clear that the trajectory that we've seen for several years will continue. You can see it in terms of our orientation, in areas such as where Indian students go to study; who India's main sources of investment are; where technology is coming from. The 2+2 meeting is a good opportunity to work on other aspects of this relationship while exchanging views quietly, as strategic partners should, in areas where they may not see eye to eye.

What about the U.S.'s future focus? Will the war in Europe take the focus away from the Indo-Pacific and the Quad?

SA: I see the Quad as a partnership in non-traditional areas of security, and this current situation has demonstrated to us how security is not only on the battlefield, but in a vast array of non-traditional areas that we need to start looking at. Quad was a forerunner on mobility, climate change, health, technology and maritime security, but it has a much larger expanse. If we see the noise that some are making [China], that Quad is an "Asian NATO", obviously it is causing concern in sections about where the Quad is heading. I think the Quad members are clear about how they need to focus on non-traditional areas of cooperation, which have a security dimension, and strengthen that security. In many ways, the situation in Europe makes us all understand the need for greater cooperation in these areas, should there be a situation where all of us are challenged in the Indo-Pacific as well.

LC: I think the focus on economic and technology cooperation, vaccines, infrastructure, space... all of those working groups that have been established will continue. I think the question will be: if India continues to rely on Russian military equipment for most of its needs, if it prioritises relations with Russia, which is increasingly becoming almost a pariah state, that could impact the strategic cooperation of the four nations in the future. And it could impinge on cooperation on maritime security, maritime domain awareness, intelligence sharing within the Quad.



Scan the QR code to listen to the full interview online

Around 100 pensions 'donated'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Union Labour and Employment Ministry's donate-a-pension initiative, launched on March 7, had received contributions from "around 100" individuals or employers on behalf of unorganised workers till March 31, the Ministry said in a reply to the Rajya Sabha on Thursday.

The scheme allows employers to pay a minimum of a year's contributions under the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan, a pension scheme for unorganised workers, on behalf of employees or any other eligible worker.

Minister of State for Labour and Employment Rameswar Teli said in response to a question in the Rajya Sabha that the donors could pay a minimum of a year's contribution, which ranged from ₹660 to ₹2,400, depending on the age of the worker.

GatiShakti, PLI will offset global headwinds, spur growth: FinMin

‘Impact of geopolitical tensions on food, fertilizer, oil prices clouding prospects’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

GatiShakti and the production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes will offset global headwinds and drive investment, resulting in high post-recovery growth for the Indian economy, the Finance Ministry said in a report.

Geopolitical conflicts and their consequent impact on food, fertilizer and crude oil prices cast a cloud on the growth outlook globally, the Ministry observed in its monthly Economic Review.

India may feel its impact although the magnitude will, of course, depend on how long the dislocations in energy and food markets persist in the financial year and how



Pump priming: GatiShakti, PLI schemes will drive investment thus helping deliver high growth, says FinMin. ■SUDHAKARA JAIN

resilient India's economy is to mitigate the impact, the Ministry pointed out, adding that transient shocks may not have a big effect on real growth and inflation.

“Offsetting these potential headwinds, GatiShakti and

Production Linked Incentive Schemes will drive investment, which will combine with supply chains strengthened by structural reforms... years to deliver high post-recovery growth for the Indian economy,” it said.

With growing evidence of improving labour force participation and declining unemployment rate, and the ‘government’s commitment to provide support’ to the economically poor, the growth path ahead would likely be a more inclusive one, the Ministry said.

PMI Services had also stayed in the expansionary zone for eight months on the back of e-toll collection, e-waybills, railway freight and air cargo, among others, complementing the robust manufacturing sector, the Ministry noted.

Private consumption may be beginning to perk up, it said, adding UPI transaction values had doubled in FY22.

Defence Ministry issues indigenisation list

Various equipment, platforms named

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

Self-reliance did not mean working in isolation from the rest of the world, but working in the country itself with their active participation and support, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Thursday after formally releasing the third positive indigenisation list of 101 pieces of equipment and platforms, which the Services can procure only from the domestic industry.

The list includes naval utility helicopters, light tanks, small unmanned aerial vehicles and anti-ship missiles.

At the event, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) handed over 30 Transfer of Technology (ToT) agreements to 25 Indian industries for transfer of 21 technologies developed by 16 DRDO labs across the country.

Agreements signed

“The release of this list shows the fast pace of our self-reliance in the defence sector. This list is planned to be implemented from December 2022 till December 2027,” Mr. Singh said.

The DRDO stated that so far it had entered into more than 1430 ToT agreements with industries all over the country, out of which, 450 have been signed in the past two years.

One of the big-ticket items on the list is naval utility helicopters, the procure-



Rajnath Singh

ment of which was to be processed through the Strategic Partnership route and has been hanging fire for over a couple of years now. This is now expected to go to Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL).

Big systems in list

Other big systems on the list include sensors, weapons and ammunitions, rockets, patrol vessels, anti-ship missile, anti-radiation missile and several others which, Mr. Singh said, would fulfil the requirements of the armed forces.

The items on the lists cannot be imported by the Services and should be sourced from within the country.

Since the announcement of the lists, contracts worth ₹54,000 crore have been signed for domestic procurement and orders worth ₹4.5 lakh crore were expected to be placed in the next 5 to 7 years, Mr. Singh stated.

Like in the two earlier lists, special focus has been given to import substitution for ammunition in the third list, a defence official said.

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.