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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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Language no bar

States speaking languages other than Hindi should be free to use English as link language

Union Home Minister Amit Shah's statement on making Hindi the language of communication for people of non-Hindi speaking areas or States was absolutely unnecessary. As the chairman of the Parliamentary Official Language Committee, he is duty bound to promote the spread of the Hindi language. But, the impression his speech generated at the 37th meeting of the panel in New Delhi last week is that he wanted to impose the language. Calling for the use of an Indian language among people who spoke languages other than Hindi, Mr. Shah said Hindi should be accepted as an alternative to English and not to local languages. It is up to the people of any two non-Hindi speaking areas or States to decide what their language of communication should be. If they are comfortable with English, which is also a global language, the Centre has no business in advising them to abandon English and take to any other language or Hindi, as done in this case. Mr. Shah's observations presuppose the position that English is not an Indian language. What he seems to have overlooked is that English has been recognised as an Indian language as much as Tamil or Telugu or Hindi have. This recognition is also due to the Sahitya Akademi, a central institution working for literary dialogue in the country. The Akademi, under the control of the Ministry of Culture, has, among others, been giving away annual awards for the best works of English, of course authored by Indians. Besides, the advantage that English gives to India has to be kept in mind. As pointed out by the president of the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee, D.K. Shivakumar, Bengaluru became India's IT capital because of English. It would be befitting for a person holding the office of Union Home Minister to shed any aversion to English, which has been a unifying force in a vast and diverse society such as India.

Expectedly, Mr. Shah's statement has been condemned politically, especially by the non-BJP Opposition parties. Even the AIADMK, a party that has been friendly to the BJP, has issued a statement through its coordinator and former Chief Minister, O. Panneerselvam, who expressed his disapproval of any move to "impose Hindi." But, most significantly, it is Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin who rightly lashed out at Mr. Shah for seeking to create a "single identity," which, Mr. Stalin has pointed out, will not create unity. It is nobody's case that Indian languages, let alone Hindi, should not be nurtured and promoted. They all deserve the support of the state. Those in power should also follow up their words with substantive measures towards this direction. But, at the same time, no room should be given for any perception that the promotion drive will be at the cost of English. Respect for multiculturalism and a pluralistic identity is a quality that the political class, particularly those in power, should imbibe. Mr. Shah would do very well if he demonstrates, through words and actions, that he has that quality in abundance.

EXPLAINER

The no-confidence vote in Pakistan

Why was the strictly stipulated Assembly session delayed? What lies ahead for the neighbouring country?

THE GIST

■ The National Assembly Secretariat of Pakistan has accepted nomination papers of the joint Opposition candidate Shehbaz Sharif, and that of PTI's Shah Mahmood Qureshi. Voting is set to begin on Monday at 2 p.m.

■ Now ousted PM Imran Khan maintains that there is a "regime change operation" underway against him at the behest of the United States. The U.S. has categorically denied these claims. 174 votes were cast against Mr. Khan in a no-confidence vote in the Assembly on April 10.

■ Mr. Shehbaz Sharif and his son Hamza Sharif are due to appear before a special court on Monday in a case of money laundering brought against them by the federal authorities in 2019. Both he and his son had been arrested in the case, and are now out on bail.

SUHASINI HAIDAR

The story so far: For the fourth time in a week, Pakistan will awake to the possibility of a new Prime Minister being chosen by the National Assembly, after surprise moves by now-ousted Prime Minister Imran Khan and his party the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), ensured delay after delay in the process of the election of the new PM originally scheduled for April 3, then stipulated under a Supreme Court order to have been held on April 9, is now due to be taken up on Monday.

According to state-run media, the National Assembly Secretariat has accepted nomination papers of Shehbaz Sharif, the joint Opposition candidate of Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) and that of Shah Mahmood Qureshi, PTI Vice Chairman and Mr. Khan's Foreign Minister, to be voted on Monday at 2 p.m.

Why didn't the vote for the new PM take place over the weekend?

Despite very specific stipulations by the Supreme Court on convening the Assembly no-confidence motion vote against Khan no later than 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, the Assembly speaker Asad Qaiser first allowed a lengthy debate on the "foreign conspiracy" allegations levelled by Mr. Khan. In a national address on April 3, Mr. Khan alleged that there was a "regime change operation" underway against him at the behest of the United States. He even named U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu for threatening Pakistan's Ambassador to the U.S. with consequences for Pakistan if Mr. Khan was allowed to win the confidence vote. In the Assembly, Mr. Qureshi claimed that U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan also called Pakistani National Security Adviser Moeed Yusuf, to tell him to stop Mr. Khan from visiting Russia on February 24.

The U.S. has categorically denied the claims. As the day wore on, with no end to the lengthy speeches, it seemed the PTI

government would not allow the vote, and rumours went rife through Pakistan's capital, including one that Mr. Khan was dismissing the Army Chief, and another that the Army was gathering forces to take Mr. Khan out forcibly.

In a strange coincidence, Mr. Sharif and his son Hamza Sharif, who is in the running as the next CM of Punjab, are due to appear before a special court for indictment on Monday

Neither proved true however, and minutes before the Supreme Court-laid midnight deadline, the Speaker announced the no-confidence vote. In all, 174 votes were cast against Mr. Khan, two more than the majority mark in the 342-seat Assembly. Speaker Asad Qaiser then stepped down, and it wasn't until Sunday that nominations could be called for and scrutinised by the Assembly secretariat.

Does the Opposition have the numbers?

Not since former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's assassination have the two main Opposition parties, which have ruled Pakistan at different times – the PML-N and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) – formed a government together. After 2008, when the party leaders Nawaz Sharif and Asif Ali Zardari fell apart, they attempted to form the Pakistan Democracy Movement (PDM) with a number of other parties, but Mr. Zardari soon walked out of that. This time around, the PPP and the PML-N are joined in the effort to oust Mr. Khan with religious parties as well as more secular and regional parties from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Greeting the Assembly after the no-confidence vote, Mr. Zardari's son Bilawal Bhutto took a dig at Mr. Khan's promise of a "Naya Pakistan", which often translated into rejecting and criticising Pakistan's older and more established leaders. "Welcome back to Purang (Old) Pakistan," he said. In a new

government under Shehbaz Sharif, all eyes will be on whether Mr. Bhutto will be in the cabinet, with some even speculating a stint in the Foreign Office, even as the new Prime Minister deals with the mammoth challenges, of managing such a massive coalition of parties.

How has Imran Khan reacted to the defeat?

Mr. Khan, who had walked out of the Assembly with his party members before the confidence vote on Saturday, surfaced for party meetings on Sunday. In a tweet, he indicated that he planned to return to the streets to protest what he still maintains is a "foreign conspiracy of regime change". "Pakistan became an independent state in 1947; but the freedom struggle begins again today," Mr. Khan wrote.

Meanwhile PTI senior leader and former Information Minister Fawad Chaudhary indicated that the entire party would resign from the Assembly on Monday, and it remains to be seen if that threat is carried out. The new government elected would, in the absence of any other legal and political hurdles, remain in office for more than a year, with the current Assembly set to be dissolved on or before August 13, 2023, and general elections held by October 2023.

What other challenges would Shehbaz Sharif, if elected, face?

In a strange coincidence, Mr. Shehbaz Sharif and his son Hamza Sharif, who is in the running as the next Chief Minister of Punjab, are also due to appear before a special court for indictment on Monday, the same day he expects to be elected in the National Assembly.

Mr. Sharif and his son have rejected the allegations in the case that was brought against them by federal authorities in 2019 for "money laundering" – an amount totalling PKR 14 billion (\$75 million). Mr. Shehbaz Sharif called the "money laundering case" registered in the U.K. a



political conspiracy by Mr. Khan. Both he and his son had been arrested in the case, and are now out on bail. Significantly, within hours of Mr. Khan losing the vote, the chief investigating officer in the case went on leave, anticipating a "certain transfer" if the government were to change. While the case itself may not pose much of a problem for Mr. Sharif, there are a number of other challenges any new government must face in terms of stemming the losses in the Pakistani economy, dealing with the situation in Afghanistan, terrorism domestically, and rebuilding ties with countries like India and the U.S., which have been in a state of disrepair during Mr. Khan's tenure.

Man down: Supporters of Opposition parties celebrate the ouster of Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan in Karachi on April 10. •AFP

Shehbaz nominated for PM post

Imran's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party to protest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's Opposition leader Shehbaz Sharif was on Sunday nominated for the post of Prime Minister after the ouster of Imran Khan, whose party threatened to withdraw its lawmakers from Parliament if the former Punjab Chief Minister was allowed to contest the election for the top post on Monday.

The process of electing the new leader of the House began on Sunday after Mr. Khan was removed from office through a no-confidence vote, becoming the first premier in the country's history



Clamour for change: Opposition supporters celebrating the ouster of PM Imran Khan in Karachi on Sunday. ■ AP

to be sent home after losing the trust of the House.

The joint Opposition – a rainbow of socialist, liberal and radically religious parties – has nominated Mr. Sharif, 70, for the post while

ex-Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi was named by Mr. Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) as its candidate.

The nomination papers of Mr. Sharif, Pakistan Muslim

League-Nawaz (PML-N) president, have been accepted by the National Assembly Secretariat after objections raised by the PTI were rejected.

Mr. Qureshi's nomination papers were also accepted.

Senior PTI leader Babar Awan challenged Mr. Sharif's candidature, saying that the PML-N chief faced several court cases.

The PTI has decided to withdraw its lawmakers from the National Assembly and launch a movement against the new upcoming government, which is likely to be headed by Mr. Sharif, who has served as the Chief Minister of Punjab three times.

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Shehbaz nominated for Prime Minister's post

"The core committee has recommended to Imran Khan that we should resign from the Assemblies. We are starting from the National Assembly. If our objections against Shehbaz Sharif's nomination papers are not [entertained], we will submit the resignations tomorrow [Monday]," PTI leader and former Minister Fawad Chaudhry told reporters after the party held a core committee meeting at the residence of Mr. Khan.

Mr. Khan's successor will be elected in the National Assembly on Monday and a special session has been summoned. In the House of 342, the winner would need 172 votes to become the new Prime Minister.

On Sunday, the Opposition mustered 174 votes to oust Mr. Khan. Mr. Sharif is expected to be elected the new Leader of the House.

In 2019, the National Accountability Bureau had arrested Mr. Shehbaz and his son, Hamza Sharif, accusing them of money laundering.

It will be a real challenge for Mr. Sharif to shepherd the motley herd that also includes four Independent candidates and allow Parliament to complete its five-year term that will end in August next year.

'No grudges'

Before filing nomination, Mr. Sharif offered "special thanks" to those who stood up "for the Constitution!" "I don't want to go back to the bitterness of the past. We want to forget them and move forward. We will not take revenge or do injustice; we will not send people to jail for no reason, law and justice will take its course,"

he told the National Assembly early Sunday.

Ex-President and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) co-chair Asif Ali Zardari had proposed Mr. Sharif's name for Prime Minister in a joint Opposition meeting.

Mr. Zardari's son Bilawal Bhutto is likely to be appointed as the new Foreign Minister.

According to media reports, in the run-up to the no-trust vote, Mr. Khan made a botched attempt to replace Army chief Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa to bring someone more pliant and sympathetic to his idea of "foreign conspiracy" and cling on to power.

Uninvited guests

BBC Urdu reported that a helicopter carrying "two uninvited guests" landed in the PM House on Saturday night and they met alone Mr. Khan for 45 minutes.

No details were provided about the meeting but it was not held in a cordial atmosphere, it said.

"The Prime Minister had issued orders an hour ago to remove one of the high officials who came to meet him. So the uninvited arrival of these guests was unexpected for the Prime Minister. Mr. Khan was waiting for a helicopter but those arriving on the helicopter were against his estimate and expectations," it said.

The *BBC* did not identify the "uninvited guest" but the choice of words, tenor and tone of the report unmistakably show that they could be Gen. Bajwa and ISI chief Lt. Gen. Nadeem Ahmed Anjum. The army's media wing termed it "baseless and a pack of lies".

Ukraine crisis to headline India-U.S. '2+2' meet

Defence, science and technology, climate and public health, building supply chains are high on agenda

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
DINAKAR PERI
WASHINGTON DC/ NEW DELHI

India and the U.S. will hold their fourth annual "2+2" Defence and Foreign Ministry dialogue in Washington on Monday, with the Russian invasion of Ukraine looming over the discussions and occupying a prominent place on the agenda.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, who arrived in Washington on Saturday night, and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, scheduled to arrive on Sunday, will meet their counterparts, Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin, in the first such dialogue of the Biden administration.

The last meeting in this format was in October 2020.

The agenda for discussion is broad, reflecting the breadth of the "Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership" between the two countries. The two sides will discuss defence, science and technology (particularly emerging technology), climate and public health (particularly cooperation on managing the COVID-19 pandemic), fortifying and

building supply chains, as well as people-to-people ties, as per the readouts of the talks from the U.S. State and Defence Departments.

India and the U.S. will continue their "close consultations on the consequences of President Putin's brutal war against Ukraine and mitigating the impact by addressing energy and food prices", White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said on Friday. India has raised the issue of commodity price impacts of the war, including at the United Nations. It has also purchased oil at a discounted price from Moscow – a move that has ruffled feathers in the Biden administration. The U.S. has said it is willing to help provide alternatives to India's sourcing of oil from Moscow – which accounts for 1-2% of its energy imports. This is likely to feature in the week's discussions.

Defence deals

In addition to meeting in the "2+2" format, the Defence and Foreign Ministry principals will hold bilateral meetings with their own counterparts on Monday.

Several big-ticket defence deals are in the pipeline, es-



Deferred event: S. Jaishankar is set to meet Antony Blinken during the meeting that begins today. ■ FILE PHOTO

pecially for the Navy. The purchase of 30 Predator armed drones for the three Services is in advanced stages but has been delayed pending approval from the Defence Acquisition Council.

Another major deal is a Navy tender for around 26 deck-based fighter aircraft for its existing *INS Vikramaditya* and the indigenous aircraft carrier *Vikrant*, which is scheduled to be commissioned in August.

A deal for six more P-8I maritime patrol aircraft is in the works, while the Navy will start receiving the first

batch of three MH-60R multi-role helicopters in June, contracted as part of a deal for 24 helicopters.

While the U.S. Congress is in recess, Mr. Jaishankar is expected to meet officials in the executive branch of the U.S. government, specifically members of the Biden Cabinet. India's U.S. Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu and his team have been reaching out to U.S. officials and Members of Congress to explain and manage differences in the relative positions the two countries have on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Mr.

Jaishankar is expected to build on these efforts during these talks.

On this list of Cabinet meetings is United States Trade Representative (USTR) Katherine Tai – who has led the U.S. side as India and the U.S. relaunched their Trade Policy Forum after four years last November to progress the bilateral trade relationship.

Also on the cards is a meeting between Mr. Jaishankar and U.S. Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo.

In addition to interactions at think tanks, a visit by Mr. Jaishankar to Howard University in DC is on the schedule, a U.S. government source indicated to *The Hindu*. The university is a "Historically Black College and University (HBCU)", an organisation that educated African American students prior to 1964, during the segregation era. It is also the alma mater of powerful Washington residents, notably Vice-President Kamala Harris and Gregory Meeks. *The Hindu* has learnt that a meeting between the External Affairs Minister and National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan is also in the works.

India's role in a disordered world

New Delhi can play an important role in shaping a new, more democratic, world order



ARUN MAIRA

Western nations want to throw Russia out of the G-20. China has opposed them. India will be chair of the G-20 from December 1, 2022. The world is greatly disordered. What should India stand for?

Institutions of global governance have failed to unite the world. Summit after summit has produced mostly hot air in trying to resolve the global climate crisis. Vaccines were hoarded by rich countries in the COVID-19 pandemic: poor countries starved. The World Trade Organization (WTO) was already in the intensive care unit before the novel coronavirus pandemic, with rich and poor countries unable to agree on equitable rules, when COVID-19 froze global supply chains. The war in Ukraine in February 2022 has put the final nail in the coffin of the boundary-less global economy that seemed to be emerging with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Undemocratic architecture

Millions of civilians died in the Second World War. European cities were razed by carpet bombing. The war ended with two nuclear bombs to terrorise the Japanese government into submission, erasing two Japanese cities and killing thousands of civilians. Never again, the victors vowed.

New institutions for global governance were established – the United Nations and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to provide finance to build

the economies of all countries to eliminate poverty. However, the victors retained their veto power within the United Nations Security Council to determine when force can be used to keep the world in order, and to prevent the proliferation of nuclear power outside their small circle because they could not trust other countries to use it wisely! They also control the World Bank, the IMF, and the WTO.

The UN General Assembly meets every year – now 193 nations strong. It passes many resolutions to address global problems – hunger, poverty, women's rights, terrorism, climate change, etc. However, "might is right": members of the Security Council retain their right to deny the democratic will of the Assembly when it does not suit them. Global governance is not democratic. If the leader of any member country overrules resolutions of its own parliament, he would be branded an undemocratic dictator. Armed interventions and sanctions imposed on countries, authorised by the Security Council to restore democracy in other countries, make a mockery of global democracy.

The United States, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Japan, West Germany and Canada formed the G7 in 1976 'so that the noncommunist powers could come together to discuss economic concerns, which at the time included inflation and recession following the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) oil embargo'. The European Union was invited to attend in 1977. Russia joined in 1998 – and 'its inclusion was meant as a signal of cooperation between East and West after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991'. However, Russia was thrown out in 2014 when it invaded the Crimea. China was never a member.

The rapid spread of global finance and trade after the victory



GETTY IMAGES/STOCKPHOTO

of the Washington Consensus in 1991, created instabilities in developing countries. After the Asian financial crisis, the G20 was formed in 1999 with the aim of discussing policies in order to achieve international financial stability. Russia and China are members. Now western nations want to throw Russia out of the G-20. China has opposed them. India will be chair of the G-20 from December 2022, or will it be G-19 then? Meanwhile, India is being hectorated by officials from the U.S. and the U.K. to support their sanctions on Russia. India has so far refused to be cowed down.

Inequalities have only risen

The belief that unfettered flows of finance and trade across national borders will lift people in all poor countries out of poverty and make the world flatter in terms of inequality has failed. Inequalities have increased within countries and amongst them too. Citizens are reacting everywhere. Even in democratic countries such as the U.S., demands are increasing for more "socialism" and less unbounded capitalism. Strong leaders who put the interests of their own countries first are gaining power through elections – in Turkey, Hungary, Poland, Russia, and even India. Donald Trump had once too.

Free market capitalism is not

ideologically compatible with a genuine democracy. Capitalist institutions are governed by the fundamental principle of 'property rights': decision rights in capitalist enterprises are allocated in proportion to property owned. Whereas, genuine democracies are founded on the principle of equal human rights. All western electoral systems – in Britain, the U.S., and Europe, began centuries ago with rights to vote limited to property owners only. Universal adult franchise, wherein all humans have equal votes whether they are billionaires or paupers, is a more recent development in the West. In many western countries, women and racial minorities were given even *de jure* equal voting rights only in the last century, and continue their struggles for *de facto* equality in their societies.

Social tensions

The rules of governance of capitalist and democratic institutions have always been in tension within societies. Capitalist institutions want to be unfettered by democratic regulations to make it easier to do business. Democratic institutions want to rein in the competitive animal spirits, red in tooth and claw, of capitalism to create a more compassionate capitalism that improves the world for everyone, not only for financial investors. The simultaneous imposition of free markets and elections in countries "liberated" from communism or socialism by the U.S. has invariably increased inequalities and increased social tensions and sectarian conflicts, which more elections cannot resolve democratically.

This is the story of Iraq, Afghanistan, Russia, and even Chile, which was once the showcase of the western model of liberal capitalism. When social tensions increase too much, elections often produce populist socialists such as Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, or cap-

italist autocrats such as Vladimir Putin in Russia. The West does not like either sort when they stand up against the Washington-controlled "North Atlantic" hegemony of the world. Though capitalist dictators such as Augusto Pinochet in Chile, and the monarchies of the Gulf/West Asia can be their good friends. Even Chinese communists were tolerated so long as they were not a threat to U.S. power.

Redistribution of power

Power accumulates in societies by the principle of "cumulative causation". Those who already have more power, from greater wealth or more education, will use their power to not only improve the rules of the game – ostensibly to improve the world for everyone – but also to ensure they remain in power. Redistribution of *de facto* power within a society must often precede the redistribution of assets of wealth and education that are the sources of power. Those who have power will resist losing it. That is the natural order. Violent internal revolutions and anti-colonial movements are the means of changing power equations, as are armed wars even between rich countries in Europe.

All violence must stop. To prevent violence, it is essential that global governance becomes genuinely democratic. Countries must not attack each other. But they must be given the freedom to evolve their own democracies and economies and not be dictated to by others. The hypocrisy of undemocratic global dictators using their financial powers to impose sanctions (which are weapons of mass destruction that harm innocent civilians), to bring down their opponents, must stop. Calling on a democratic country such as India, to take their side, must also end.

Arun Maira is the author of *A Billion Fireflies: Critical Conversations to Shape a New Post-pandemic World*

Modi, Biden to discuss bilateral ties at summit

Countries' differing stance on Ukraine is likely to come up

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Joseph Biden will hold a virtual meeting prior to the "2+2" Foreign and Defence ministerial meeting in Washington on Monday, to discuss bilateral relations and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the U.S. White House announced on Sunday. However, while the White House said President Biden would speak about "the consequences of Russia's brutal war against Ukraine", the MEA did not refer directly to discussions about the conflict, where the U.S. and India have differences in their positions.

"The two leaders will review ongoing bilateral cooperation and exchange views on recent developments in South Asia, the Indo-Pacific region and global issues of mutual interest," the MEA statement said. Dramatic developments have been seen in South Asia, both in Pakistan, where Prime Minister



Common ground: Joe Biden and Narendra Modi will hold a virtual meeting prior to the "2+2" dialogue. ■ FILE PHOTO

Imran Khan's government was ousted over the weekend, and Sri Lanka, where massive protests over the economy are challenging the Rajapaksa government.

The White House listed amongst subjects for discussion cooperation on ending the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, global economy, and "upholding a free, open, rules-based international order to bolster security, democracy, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific", as well as developing the "Indo-Pacific Economic Framework" on infrastructure expected to be announced

during the "2+2" meeting.

"President Biden will continue our close consultations on the consequences of Russia's war against Ukraine and mitigating its impact on global food supply and commodity markets," the White House statement added.

Delhi visits aplenty

The Modi-Biden summit via videoconference, which was not announced earlier, follows a number of visits by senior U.S. officials to Delhi to discuss India's position on the Russian war in Ukraine, and signs of a strain in ties over the issue.

SC underscores need for a holistic picture of convicts facing death penalty

'Mitigating investigators' could offer judges a wide-angle view of a prisoner's life experiences to help determine the punishment in a particular case

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

A man condemned to death for the brutal gang rape of a seven-year-old girl in Madhya Pradesh has turned the spotlight on a question that has haunted trial judges – do they really know the person they send to the gallows?

For decades, sentencing hearings have covered only basic details such as the convict's immediate family structure, educational qualifications and work before the arrest. No effort was made to consider information pivotal for mitigation such as adverse childhood experiences, multi-generational history of physical and mental health issues, exposure to traumatic

events and other familial, social and cultural factors crucial to undertaking an individualised sentencing enquiry.

In the present case of Irfan, alias Bhay Mevati, the trial court sentenced him to death just hours after it found him guilty of the gang rape in 2018.

It was a case in which the death penalty was awarded, though the child did not die. When the case came up in appeal, the Madhya Pradesh High Court reasoned that the death penalty was an effective deterrent in view of the alarming rise in sexual abuse of children. However, a Supreme Court Bench, led by Justice U.U. Lalit, has taken on record extensive investigation

undertaken by C.P. Shruthi, a "mitigation investigator" at Project 39A of the National Law University, Delhi.

Ms. Shruthi's interviews with a cross-section of people from Irfan's past – from his schoolteachers, friends and family members – revealed his early exposure to dire poverty, structural exclusion and work in an adult environment at a very young age. Her investigation brought to light the fact that Irfan had witnessed "multiple traumatic events in the immediate family and the community".

These details, which were not examined by the trial judge before sentencing Irfan to death, have led the Supreme Court to consider the role of mitigating investi-



gators, who are professionals qualified in social work, sociology, anthropology, criminology, psychology and other social sciences, in uncovering mitigating circumstances which would help courts determine the punishment.

The court has sought the assistance of Attorney-General K.K. Venugopal and appointed senior advocate Siddharth Dave and advocate K. Parameshwar *amici curiae* in the case.

"Every circumstance which has the potential of being a mitigating circumstance, while considering whether death sentence be

SPECIAL

imposed or not, must necessarily be considered by the court," Justice Lalit, heading a three-judge Bench, noted in the order.

Though death is seen as a fit punishment in only the rarest of the rare cases, even in those cases, the courts should be well informed

about the person they are considering sentencing to death.

'Unhindered access'

Highlighting the vital part a mitigation investigator could play in the cause of fair justice, the Bench observed that if a competent person was given unhindered access to interview an accused facing the death penalty, even at the beginning of the trial, a "comprehensive analysis can then be projected at a stage when the matter is considered from the standpoint whether death sentence be imposed or not".

In fact, Irfan's lawyer, advocate Irshad Hanif, had approached the Supreme Court after the Central Jail

authorities in Ujjain refused Ms. Shruthi permission to interview Irfan, saying only "legal advisers" were allowed to meet condemned prisoners.

The top court ordered the prison officials to allow her to talk to the condemned man away from their earshot.

"While the state has unhindered access to the accused within their custody, effective and meaningful access for the defence to collect mitigation material by meeting their client is restricted by the state," advocate Hanif argued.

In a separate note to the Supreme Court, Mr. Hanif wrote that mitigatory factors were not meant to justify the offence. Instead, they draw

a complete picture of the prisoner, which are not limited to pre-natal details, formative years, developmental history, educational history, occupational history, trauma, care, inter-generational history of physical and mental health and so on. It would also encompass the prisoner's conduct in jail, appreciation of the wrongfulness of his act, cognition, emotional and psychological state.

He referred to the Supreme Court's judgment in the Bachan Singh case that courts should not only consider the particular crime but also the circumstances of the criminal.

The court has listed the case for April 22.

Price mix-up mars third dose roll-out

Some hospitals opt to wait for clarity

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

Cases of over-charging and confusion about the new government guidelines on pricing marred the first day of the COVID precaution dose vaccine roll-out for the 18-plus population across the country even as some private centres opted to wait for clarity.

The Union Health Ministry earlier this week announced that precaution doses of COVID vaccines – Covaxin and Covishield – would be made available to all adults at private vaccination centres at ₹225.

Price compensation

Following this announcement, vaccine manufacturers Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech announced that private hospitals should make available their vaccines at the revised rate effective April 10, 2022.

“The price differential with any existing stocks of Covaxin in private hospitals shall be compensated in the form of additional doses,” said Bharat Biotech.

Serum Institute of India in a tweet on Sunday said:



Precaution dose being administered at a private hospital in Delhi on Sunday.

■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

“The price differential for the existing usable stocks of Covishield shall be compensated in the form of cost-free doses. Due process will be informed to all private hospitals soon.”

Both the companies assured the government that adequate vaccine stocks were available to meet the demands in India.

In the national capital Delhi, while some centres were found charging the pre-revised rates on Sunday morning, this was corrected by the afternoon after the manufacturers’ directive reached the centres.

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**GROWING ANGER IN SHANGHAI
OVER LOCKDOWN ▶ PAGE 13**

Price mix-up mars third dose roll-out

“As the government has allowed booking via app and on-site registration, so we are servicing both Covishield and Covaxin. In terms of vaccination, we have a capacity of 150-200 vaccinations per day. As for the pricing, we will follow the government guideline and notification for the vaccination cost,” said Dr. Partha Sarathi Goswami, head of Medical Services, HCMCT Manipal Hospital, Delhi.

Stating that the roll-out of precautionary dose for the 18+ population will start at its centre from April 11, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, Delhi, in a statement said both Covaxin and Covishield shall be available for the people under this age bracket who have completed 9 months post the administration of their second dose.

“Vaccine will be administered at revised rates, but as per the directives of the government,” it said.

“The revised-rates are already effective since Sunday morning and are reflected in our billing system at Rainbow Children’s Hospital. All the billing today happened as per revised rates. At our centre, the cost of vaccination for both Covishield and Covaxin stands at ₹386.25. There was no delay in the implementation of revised rates,” said Dinesh Vashisht, VP Operations, Madhukar Rainbow children hospital, Delhi.

Waiting for clarity

MGM Healthcare, Chennai, said it had opted to wait for clarity and that they still had not opened the slots as their vaccination centre was closed on Sunday.

The Hospital added that “those wanting to get the dose should enquire about availability and cost later this week when clear orders are received for this cohort”.

There are also centres that are providing vaccines free of cost as part of the corporate social responsibility programmes. Mr. Rajiv

Goyal, vice-president, operations, QRG Super Speciality Hospital, Faridabad, said that adhering to the recent government guidelines of providing booster doses for COVID-19 the hospital is providing it for free for the public at large.

“The free COVID-19 vaccination drive ‘CO-Winner’ was launched in July 2021 and we are still continuing with it. We have already successfully administered more than 1 lakh COVID vaccines through our corporate social responsibility programs of Escorts Limited and QRG Super Speciality Hospital as its health medical partner,” Mr. Goyal said.

Dose for age group 18+ is going to be available only in private hospitals. Charges of vaccination have also been slashed, said Dr. Anjali Kaul, medical superintendent, Artemis Hospitals, Gurugram.

Lukewarm response

Meanwhile, most private vaccination centres in Chennai saw a lukewarm response from the public for the precaution doses for the 18 to 59 group. “Only around 10 people in the age group took the precaution dose on Sunday,” a spokesperson for one of the major hospitals in the city said. While there were reports earlier on Sunday that the private hospitals continued to charge the old rate, hospitals *The Hindu* contacted later in the day said they will be charging only the revised price going forward.

A spokesperson for Kauvery Hospitals said it will be administering doses as per the revised rate of ₹225 per dose along with the service charge of ₹150.

A spokesperson for another hospitals group said it was assessing the situation against the backdrop of the decision of the manufacturers of Covishield and Covaxin to compensate for the stock procured earlier. “We will ensure that the public benefit from the reduction in the rate,” the spokesperson said.

Belated pivot

Without curbing inflation, the RBI will not be able to promote sustainable growth

The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee has rather belatedly acknowledged that its primary remit is, after all, to ensure price stability. Addressing the media on Friday after announcing the MPC's first monetary policy review of the new fiscal year, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das was emphatic in stating that "in the sequence of priorities, we have now put inflation before growth". More than three years after it prioritised growth over price stability – in February 2019, and well before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic – the RBI has pivoted back to putting the horse before the cart, best reflected in the central bank's own words on monetary policy goals: "Price stability is a necessary precondition to sustainable growth". That it has taken the outbreak of war in Europe, with its accompanying commodity price shocks to remind the RBI of the imperative centrality of price stability is a salutary reminder that monetary policymakers can ill afford to be complacent when it comes to inflation. Less than two months after it rather sanguinely projected inflation to average 4.5% in the fiscal year to March 2023, the MPC has raised the forecast by a substantial 120 basis points to 5.7%. And this even as it cut its earlier projection for real GDP growth in the current fiscal by 60 basis points to 7.2%. The RBI also made it clear that while it had left benchmark interest rates and its accommodative policy stance unchanged for now, the time had come to commence the "withdrawal of accommodation".

To be sure, Russia's invasion of Ukraine was still two weeks in the future the last time the RBI's rate-setting panel finalised its policy review. And yet, the price of crude oil, which Mr. Das cited as the key factor that had necessitated the revision of the inflation projection and the pivot, had already been on the boil since December. In fact, the lone dissenter on the MPC on the issue of the policy stance in February, Jayanth Varma, had stressed the need to look ahead at the likely state of the economy at least three to four quarters later and shift to a 'neutral' stance given that monetary policy acts with a lag. The RBI's Deputy Governor overseeing monetary policy, Michael Patra, had on the other hand at the last MPC meeting starkly warned that, "central banks have a choice: either accept higher inflation for some time or be prepared to be accountable for destroying demand". With the RBI's own quarterly projections for inflation now presaging the possibility of a policy failure by way of three consecutive quarters of inflation above the 6% upper bound, policymakers have clearly realised any further delay in changing tack would risk leaving the economy with neither growth nor price stability.

NSCN(K) seeks united push for solution

Head of the Khaplang group advocates a ‘common draft for all Naga groups’

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The chief of the Khaplang faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, or NSCN(K), has said a solution to the “Indo-Naga political issue” would be possible if all the Naga political groups come together with a common draft.

New Delhi has been holding peace parleys simultaneously with the Isak-Muivah faction of the NSCN, or NSCN (I-M), and the Naga National Political Groups (NNPGs) comprising at least seven other extremist groups, including the NSCN(K).

The peace process has been stuck on the issues of a separate flag and separate constitution insisted upon by the NSCN(I-M). The NNPGs do not have these preconditions.

Value of unity

The Centre had signed the Framework Agreement with the NSCN(I-M) in August 2015 and the Agreed Position with the Naga National Political Groups in November 2017.

“An early solution will depend on whether it will be based on the Framework Agreement or the Agreed Po-

sition,” NSCN(K) president Niki Sumi told the *Nagaland Post*, adding that the desired solution would be possible if the NSCN(I-M) and the NNPGs come up with an inclusive common draft.

“If all the entities are really fighting for the betterment of the Nagas, they should come together to usher in a solution the Nagas require. The government of India is unlikely to take steps if the Nagas do not voice their desire as one,” he said.

Mr. Sumi’s view attains significance ahead of the visit of a delegation of Nagaland MLAs to Delhi on Mon-

day to meet Union Ministers and central leaders of various political parties.

The delegation led by Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio and his predecessor T.R. Zeliang is expected to push for the formulation of a solution to the vexed Naga political issue at the earliest.

Mr. Rio is said to have said at a meeting of the Parliamentary Committee of the Nagaland Assembly on Saturday that it would be difficult for the political parties to approach the 2023 State polls without anything to show on the “Naga political issue” front.

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.