



**VEDHIK**  
**IAS ACADEMY**  
*The New Learning Mantra*

# VEDHIK

## DAILY NEWS ANALYSIS

10 - M A Y - 2022

## **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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# 'Asani' set to weaken near Odisha coast

Cyclonic storm triggers heavy rain on east coast; 11 stranded fishermen rescued

THE HINDU BUREAU  
KOLKATA/BHUBANESWAR

Severe cyclonic storm 'Asani', which is moving towards the east coast, packing winds above 105 kmph and setting off heavy rain, is likely to recurve in a north-eastward direction and weaken gradually into a cyclonic storm, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Monday.

According to the IMD, the storm, lying over west-central and adjoining South Bay of Bengal, moved nearly north-westwards with a speed of 16 kmph in six hours and lay centred over west-central Bay of Bengal about 860 km west-north-west of Port Blair (Andaman Islands), 410 km southeast of

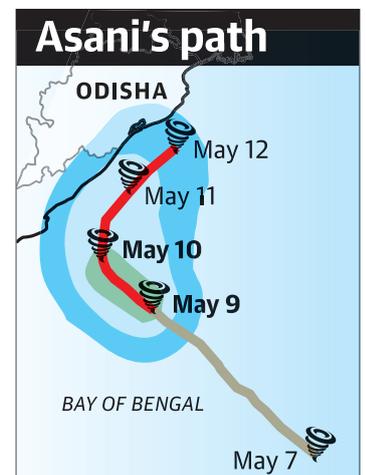


**Unsafe shore:** Fishermen carrying nets to safety as strong winds lashed the Visakhapatnam coast on Monday. ■ K.R. DEEPAK

Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh) and 590 km south of Puri (Odisha).

"It is very likely to move north-westwards till May 10 and reach west-central and adjoining northwest Bay of Bengal off north Andhra Pra-

desh and Odisha coasts. Thereafter, it is very likely to recurve north-northeastwards and move towards north-west Bay of Bengal off Odisha coast. It is likely to weaken gradually into a cyclonic storm in the next 24 hours,"



the IMD said in a bulletin.

In Odisha, 11 fishermen stranded on a boat that developed a snag were airlifted by a helicopter of the Indian Coast Guard off Ganjam.

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# 'Asani' set to weaken near Odisha coast

In Odisha, a yellow warning has been issued for districts such as Ganjam, Khordha, Puri, Jagatsinghpur, Gajapati and Cuttack.

In West Bengal, Kolkata and adjoining areas received a heavy spell of rain on Monday morning. Mamata Banerjee on Monday postponed her visits scheduled from May 10 to 12.

In Andhra Pradesh, Visakhapatnam city and the neighbouring coastal dis-

tricts of Vizianagaram and Srikakulam, have been experiencing strong winds since afternoon on Monday. Heavy rain is likely at one or two places over Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, East and West Godavari districts till Tuesday morning. The Tirupati district administration on Sunday night opened a control room at the Mandal Revenue Office at Tada.

*(With inputs from A.P. Bureau and PTI)*

# A dissonance in India-German ties

Whether the PM's visit to Germany changed the perception about India's stand on Ukraine assumes critical importance



SHANTHIE MARIET D'SOUZA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Germany on May 2 came at a critical time, shaped by the ongoing Ukraine war. In recent times, New Delhi has been at its assertive best. Even as the United States and the European nations have applied sanctions on Moscow and provided military aid to Ukraine, New Delhi has refused to play ball. It has not only avoided condemning Moscow by abstaining in the United Nations (UN) on critical votes on the war but has also continued to engage with Moscow to increase its import of cheap crude. Its long-standing and traditional defence links with Russia remain intact. Such moves have raised eyebrows and attracted some amount of criticism from the West. New Delhi, however, insists that its position on the war is non-partisan and should be appreciated by its allies and friends.

## For a nuanced stance

However, assertive media and conference statements by India's External Affairs Minister notwithstanding, there is growing recognition in India's strategic circles that New Delhi has to bring in more nuance to its approach with Europe. Given India's stature, being completely isolated by the

West is certainly not a best-case scenario. However, with an assertive China on the world stage and in particular, at the border with India, New Delhi needs to manage a delicate balancing act while asserting its right to pursue its national interests and strategic autonomy in foreign policy. Mr. Modi's three-nation Europe tour (May 2-4) needs to be contextualised with these factors in the backdrop.

There is a clear, albeit delayed, move toward a unified response *vis-à-vis* Russia in Europe. Its significant reliance on Russian gas and crude notwithstanding, condemnation of Moscow's moves in Ukraine is near unanimous in Europe. Not surprisingly, India's abstention in the UN votes and its continuation of its relationship with Russia have raised quite a few hackles in Germany. In private as well as public discussions, India's role as a major power and largest democracy are being brought to the forefront and there is a growing expectation that India needs to make a shift from its position on Russia and join hands with the European countries and the U.S. in protecting democracy in need. Amidst these expectations and pressure tactics, whether the Prime Minister's visit to Germany helped change the perception and bridge the gap that has been growing, assumes critical importance.

Mr. Modi's visit took place during the first term of the German Chancellor, Olaf Scholz. Prior to Mr. Modi's visit, the Chancellor had visited Japan, in his first visit to Asia. This is construed as a sign of Germany reaching out to other



GETTY IMAGES

Asian powers and building on democratic alliances as an outcome of its Indo-Pacific guidelines. These two meetings had raised, albeit mistakenly, expectations among some analysts here in Germany of a democratic dividend that may lead to a convergence of views and possibly policies on Russia between the two countries. As proved by the Ukraine war, however, New Delhi has chosen to prioritise its interests over pursuing a policy that is shaped by common democratic values that define Germany, Japan and India.

## The China factor

In fact, for several years now, Indian policies have resisted promoting democracy in the neighbourhood and have instead opted to deal with *de facto* powers. Afghanistan, where India is still reluctant to do business with the Taliban, is probably an aberration. On the other hand, India's policy towards Myanmar's junta is defined by this pragmatism. Therefore, the democratic rationale of a convergence of interests to protect democratic values is hardly a strong binding chord between In-

dia and Germany. The geopolitical convergence of countering the rise of China particularly in the Indo-Pacific seems to be a more compelling necessity rather than the ideational and normative aspects of protecting democratic norms and values.

## Engagement with Europe

New Delhi's objective is multifaceted as far as its relations with Europe in general and Germany in particular is concerned. So far, it has not revised its position on Russia and Ukraine, by continuing to underline its unequivocal condemnation of the violence. However, unlike the West, India makes it clear that irrespective of its position on a solitary issue of geopolitical relevance, which the former may find difficult to reconcile with, the bilateral engagement with countries such as Germany, France and Denmark remains at the top of its priority. The purpose of such a policy is clearly to present itself as not being isolated but as a swing power that can move deftly on the geopolitical and diplomatic chessboard.

Towards this direction, the holding of the sixth India-Germany Inter-Governmental Consultations (IGC), a biennial format which India conducts with Germany, assumed critical importance. India attaches significant importance to the 'long-standing commercial ties' with Germany, an important pillar of the 'Strategic Partnership', which the two nations entered into in 2000. The idea, therefore, is to highlight a convergence of issues of econom-

ics, technology and climate change (low hanging fruits), in spite of the intensifying dissonance on democratic and strategic issues. That remains the crux of the Indian approach.

## Room for full ties

It remains a fact that India-Germany relations have yet to achieve their full potential. One of the factors for that, possibly, is the lack of understanding of each other's strategic cultures and domestic politics. It is doubtful that Mr. Modi's visit changed any of that, particularly in the absence of any media interaction and strategic communication. Germany has invited Mr. Modi to the G-7 meeting in June this year, construed as a bid to wean India away from its position on Russia. However, while the attempt may not be successful, it is certainly a pointer to the emerging multipolarity in the international system, which provides space for major powers such as Germany and India to play a greater role in bringing peace and stability in other theatres, particularly in Afghanistan and the Indo-Pacific. In times of shifting geopolitical alliances and realignments, India and Germany can emerge as important poles in shaping the new world order.

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# Amid rising violence, Mahinda Rajapaksa quits as Sri Lanka PM

Resignation accepted, Cabinet dissolved; three die in clashes, buildings torched

MEERA SRINIVASAN  
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa resigned on Monday, his office said, hours after his supporters brutally assaulted peaceful anti-government protesters amid a worsening economic crisis in the island.

The resignation was accepted, according to a gazette notification, and consequently, the Cabinet stands dissolved as per the Sri Lankan Constitution.

Three persons died outside the capital in ensuing clashes, while at least 150 were injured in Colombo. Government MP Amara-keerthi Athukorala reportedly



**Raging dissent:** Vehicles set ablaze in front of outgoing PM Mahinda Rajapaksa's official residence in Colombo. ■ AFP

shot two persons and then himself after being surrounded by a mob in the neighbouring Gampaha district, the police told AFP. Homes of several ruling par-

ty lawmakers were torched, while some among anti-government protesters assaulted government supporters who turned up in Colombo, amid escalating violence on

the streets.

An AFP reporter said shots were fired from inside the Sri Lankan Prime Minister's official residence Temple Trees, as thousands of protesters breached the main gate and torched a truck at the entrance. The police also fired tear gas to push back protesters retaliating against an attack on them earlier in the day by those loyal to Mr. Mahinda.

Police sources confirmed that shots were fired in the air to prevent the crowd breaching the inner security ring of the residence where Mr. Mahinda was holed up.

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# Mahinda resigns as Sri Lanka Prime Minister

Witnesses saw several tear gas cannisters hit the U.S. embassy compound located across from the residence, which is a key symbol of state power in the south Asian island.

Violence escalated outside capital Colombo, with several incidents of vandalism and torching of government lawmakers' homes reported. A mob targeted the controversial Rajapaksa memorial monument in Medamulana, the ruling clan's ancestral village in the southern Hambantota district, and razed it to the ground, according to the police. The Rajapaksas' ancestral home was also set on fire. The destruction of this monument was symbolic of the anger that people in a Rajapaksa stronghold feel against Mr. Mahinda, who they once revered and propelled to Presidency for two successive terms.

The agitations intensified last week, in the wake of a worsening crisis for which demonstrators blame the rul-

ing Rajapaksa brothers.

Earlier, addressing supporters at Temple Trees, Mr. Mahinda said he was "willing to make any sacrifice for the people of the country." Soon after the meeting, the supporters were seen pulling down tents of protesters in front of Temple Trees, and they soon proceeded north towards the Presidential Secretariat where they demolished several tents. They torched a library set up in the area and injured several protesters.

Video footage of men carrying poles and savagely assaulting young protesters went viral on Sri Lankan social media.

Both President Gotabaya and Mr. Mahinda condemned the violence on Twitter, only to be slammed by critics.

On Monday evening, massive crowds descended at Galle Face, defying the curfew, to express solidarity with the protesters.

*(With inputs from AFP)*

# Supreme Court stays HC proceedings in IT Rule cases

Top court lists case for further hearing on May 19

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday stayed proceedings in various High Courts on petitions challenging the efficacy of the regulatory frameworks for social media and over-the-top (OTT) platforms under the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021 and the Cable Television Networks (Amendment) Rules 2021.

“We direct stay of further proceedings pending before the High Courts in the respective cases or to be filed hereafter until the next date



of hearing involving a challenge to the IT Rules or Cable TV (Amendment) Rules, which are the subject matter of proceedings in these cases,” a Bench of Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and A.S. Oka observed in the order.

The Bench listed the case for further hearing on May 19. The court also listed sep-

arately in the same day another batch of petitions highlighting the increasingly strident presence of hate in the media.

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta said he would file a chart of cases challenging the IT and Cable TV Rules. Mr. Mehta said the government has also come up with further regulations for OTT platforms, online platforms, intermediaries, and online news. The government had in 2021 asked the apex court to transfer cases challenging the IT Rules from various High Courts to the Supreme Court for an authoritative pronouncement.

# We will reconsider sedition law: Centre

## Affidavit in SC indicates shift in stance

**KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL**  
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Monday informed the Supreme Court of its decision to “reexamine” and “reconsider” the sedition law in the background of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s belief that the nation should work harder to shed “colonial baggage”, including outdated laws, while celebrating 75 years of Independence under the banner of ‘Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav’.

“The Government of India, being fully cognisant of various views being expressed on the subject of sedition and also having

considered the concerns of civil liberties and human rights, while committed to maintain and protect the sovereignty and integrity of this great nation, has decided to reexamine and reconsider the provisions of Section 124A (sedition) of the Indian Penal Code, which can only be done before the competent forum,” a seven-paragraph affidavit said.

### **‘Appropriate forum’**

The Home Ministry urged the court to wait till the government completes the exercise of reconsideration of the law before “appropriate forum”.

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# We will reconsider sedition law: Centre

The affidavit has been filed just a few days after the government submitted a note in the Supreme Court supporting a 60-year-old Supreme Court judgment upholding the validity of the sedition law.

Giving an insight into its rather radical shifting of position, the Ministry on Monday referred to the “clear and unequivocal” views expressed by the Prime Minister in favour of “protection of civil liberties and respect for human rights”. The government note submitted earlier had urged the court to accept its 1962 verdict on sedition law as a “binding precedent”. The Centre had advised a case-to-case examination of the abuse of sedition law instead of upending it entirely.

Attorney General of India K.K. Venugopal, called in to assist the top court in the capacity of his office, too had upheld the six-decade-old

case law as the “last word on the law of sedition”.

Monday’s affidavit, filed through the Ministry’s Additional Secretary Mrityunjay Kumar Narayan, pointed out: “He [Prime Minister] has repeatedly said that one of India’s strengths is the diverse thought streams that beautifully flourish in our country.”

The affidavit referred to the Prime Minister’s push to shed the colonial load. “The Honourable Prime Minister believes that at a time when our nation is marking *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav*, we need to, as a nation, work even harder to shed colonial baggage that has passed its utility, which includes outdated colonial laws and practices,” the government affidavit noted. The affidavit drew attention to how the government got rid of offences which created “mindless hindrances” to people and had scrapped 1,500 outmoded laws since 2014-15.

# ‘No area of business reserved for public firms’

## FM flags opportunity for private sector

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
COIMBATORE

The private sector can now invest in any sector where there is opportunity, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Monday. This follows her 2021 Budget announcement that there would be no area reserved only for the public sector.

Presenting the “Startup Dhruv Awards” at a function organised by the StartUps Academy, she said the public sector would be present in strategically important and national security-related areas. But, the private sector could be present here too, she pointed out.

To unleash the natural capabilities and strengths in the country, it was felt that a policy change was needed,



Nirmala Sitharaman

paving the way for the 2021 Union Budget decision to open up all sectors for private sector participation.

Anticipating that only large-scale operations might happen with this too, and since MSMEs were the “real big strength” of the country and the backbone of the economy, MSMEs are supported, Ms. Sitharaman pointed out.

# Govt. said to urge Reserve Bank to help push bond yields lower

‘Buying back government bonds or open-market operations are options’

REUTERS  
NEW DELHI

The government has asked the central bank to either buy back government bonds or conduct open market operations to cool yields that have hit their highest since 2019, as inflation risks push foreign investors to sell, a government source told Reuters on Monday.

The 10-year benchmark bond ended at 7.46%, after earlier reaching a high of 7.49%. “The discussion with the RBI (Reserve Bank of India) is at an advanced stage as current yields are not at comfortable levels,” the government official, with direct knowledge of the mat-



**A fork in the road:** The Centre’s nudge could complicate RBI’s attempts to withdraw liquidity from the market. ■ REUTERS

ter, said on condition of anonymity. The official said government expects the RBI to conduct a switch operation, offering investors a chance to exchange their short-dated bonds for debt

with a longer maturity, or to buy back government bonds within the next two weeks.

The request from the government could complicate the RBI’s policy of withdrawing liquidity from the mar-

ket, which marks a shift away from the ultra-loose monetary stance it took during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The RBI surprised markets last week by raising its key interest rate by 40 basis points to 4.40% to fight inflation – its first increase in nearly four years.

Foreign portfolio investors have sold \$697 million of government securities since April 1 and \$1.18 billion this year, traders said.

India’s forex reserves fell \$2.7 billion to \$597.73 billion on April 29, RBI data showed, marking the eighth straight week of declines and the first time falling below \$600 billion in a year.

# LIC IPO subscribed 2.95 times

Issue subscribed to largely by domestic investors: DIPAM

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
MUMBAI / NEW DELHI

The Initial Public Offering (IPO) of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) was subscribed 2.95 times as bids closed on the final day of the offer, according to data from stock exchanges.

The portion reserved for eligible policyholders was subscribed 6.12 times and that for eligible employees was subscribed 4.4 times, while the retail category witnessed 1.99 times subscription; the non-institutional category was subscribed 2.91 times and qualified institutional buyers subscribed 2.83 times.

The offer received bids for 47,83,67,010 shares against the offer size of 16,20,78,067 equity shares, excluding shares meant for anchor in-



vestors, as per data available at 7 pm on the stock exchanges showed.

The offer is expected to yield about ₹20,500 crore to the exchequer, top Finance Ministry officials said.

“The offer... has met with a tremendous success with a good response from all categories of investors, including policyholders and retail investors,” Tuhin Kanta Pandey, Secretary, Department

of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) said at a press conference. The government is offloading 3.5% of its stake in the firm, whose shares are to be listed on the stock exchanges on May 17.

Asserting that the issue was largely subscribed to by domestic investors, the Mr. Pandey said it could be considered an example of ‘Atma-Nirbhar Bharat’ that such a large issue has been organised smoothly with investors across the country showing the capacity to deliver “rather than depend on foreign... investors”. Though the issue size was pegged at ₹21,000 crore, the government expects to raise ₹20,500 crore from the IPO because of the discounts offered to retail investors and policyholders.

# Rupee hits a new low amid dollar outflow

LALATENDU MISHRA

MUMBAI

The rupee on Monday fell to an all-time low of 77.44 against the U.S. dollar due to a sell-off in equities amid concerns over weakening global growth prospects, outflow of the dollar and on fears of further monetary tightening by central banks to counter rising inflation. The previous closing low for the rupee was 77.09, seen on March 7.

“A sell-off in the global equity markets which was triggered by the hike in interest rates by the U.S. Federal Reserve, the war in Europe and growth concerns in China due to the COVID-19, led to the rupee depreciation,” Emkay Global Financial Services said.

# Powering up after the power crisis shock

A lesson is that demand growth projections and supply arrangements need to become central to the regulatory process



AJAY SHANKAR

The power crisis has taken us by surprise. The question in everyone's mind is: where did we go wrong? And who slipped up? Clearly, there was complacency as the power supply position was comfortable for some years; there was 'surplus' capacity. Then there were stranded coal- and gas-based power plants which had become non-performing assets. It was, however, not appreciated that electricity demand growth had been lower than expected, due to slower and less energy-intensive economic growth. The robust economic recovery after two waves of COVID-19 and the unexpected heat wave have brought back power cuts. The Government is undertaking emergency measures such as cancelling passenger trains so as to be able to get the Indian Railways to transport more coal to power plants, and issuing directives to use more imported coal to tide over the supply shortfall.

## Nature of consumer demand

Taking a holistic view of responsibilities in the supply chain would be helpful in avoiding such recurrences. Under the Electricity Act, it is the responsibility of the Distribution Licensee/Company (Discom) to provide reliable quality and round-the-clock electricity to all consumers to meet full de-

mand. To do so, they enter into contracts with a number of generating companies in order to ensure adequate supply. These Discoms work under the oversight of the State Electricity Regulatory Commissions.

With higher incomes and the consequent increase in the use of air-conditioners and other electrical appliances, the nature of electricity demand is undergoing a qualitative transformation with rising daily and seasonal peaks, and spikes on very hot or cold days. This will only increase in the years ahead.

## Towards reliable supply

While demand prediction is inherently uncertain, the questions to ask are whether Discoms have been making and updating their demand growth projections and scenarios over the medium term with adequate supply arrangements in a robust manner. And whether State Regulatory Commissions have been demanding these and scrutinising them transparently. This needs to become central to the regulatory process. Ensuring reliable supply to meet unanticipated peaks, as have occurred now, requires making supply arrangements with reserve margins that are adequate. These would be expensive just as backup private captive diesel generation is. The Regulatory Commissions need to provide for such expensive peaking power arrangements in the tariffs they approve. It is also time to move towards separate peaking power procurement contracts in addition to the present system of long-term thermal power contracts. Once things have set-



AFP

tled, it would also be useful to see in a granular manner where generators have defaulted contractually in supplying power to Discoms, and where Coal India or the Indian Railways have been in default. There may be a case for tightening their contractual terms with enforceable financial penalties.

Further, a transition to demand-based time of day rates of electricity for generators as well as consumers would help. These should be brought in by the Regulatory Commissions. Peak demand moderation and flattening of the demand curve through a change in consumer behaviour is feasible with smart meters. But this would take place only with a strong price signal, a large differential in peak and off-peak rates. This differential needs to be so wide that large consumers find it worthwhile to put in sensors and timers, and use cheap electricity at around 3 a.m. to switch on geysers and washing machines, and to raise air conditioner temperature settings by 2°-3° Celsius in the afternoon on hot days when the electricity is expensive. A very high level of reliability has higher costs, contracts

for unexpected peak demand. The requirement of backup power will keep rising as the share of uncertain renewable generation grows. Specific options need to be transparently evaluated and decisions taken. The consumer, the political class and the Regulatory Commissions have the collective responsibility for optimal decisions for reliable supply rather than the short-term comfort of minimal or no tariff increases resulting in the consequences that we are now witnessing.

## Subsidies and politics

Free supply of electricity to farmers and households up to a specified level is not a problem as long as State governments pay for it as provided in the Act, and the Regulatory Commissions do not at the same time act from a political point of view and shy away from determining cost-reflective tariffs. The problem is the absence of meaningful political discussion on the relative benefits from subsidies in different areas and their affordability.

While the problem of delayed payments by Discoms is getting highlighted and needs to be resolved with a sense of urgency, the coal supply problem is not due to this. Coal India is not short of cash to be able to increase production. It should do so faster. Coal India needs to create capacities to rapidly ramp up production; and the Railways need to carry larger quantities of coal when demand surges, as has happened now. Extreme weather events will increase in intensity and frequency due to climate change. These capacity cushions have to be created at the

earliest and paid for.

## Some solutions

There is idle but expensive generating capacity available – about 15-20 GW of gas-based power plants which can run on imported liquefied natural gas, and 6 GW-8 GW of thermal plants which can run on imported coal. The exercise of the option of buying electricity from these plants and having no power cuts would provide immediate relief. But where an across-the-board increase in rates may not appear feasible, consumers who are willing to pay more could be kept free of power cuts with purchase and supply of more expensive electricity generated from imported coal and gas. This willingness could be conveyed through resident welfare/ industries associations. They could pay for this through a peak demand surcharge in their bills. The Regulatory Commission could undertake subsequent scrutiny to see that the surcharge has been computed correctly.

To improve reliability, Discoms, with the approval of the Regulatory Commissions, need to go in for bids for storage. It may even turn out to be the cheaper option in the short run to meet peaking power needs. Large-scale grid storage is in any case essential to achieve the goals for 2030 – of creating 500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity including 450 GW of renewables.

Ajay Shankar is a Distinguished Fellow at The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI). He has worked for many years in the Power Ministry, dealing with reforms and the Electricity Act 2003. The views expressed are personal

# Operation Dudhi: Assam Rifles honours surviving soldiers

A team of 15 soldiers killed 72 extremists

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
GUWAHATI

The paramilitary Assam Rifles on Monday felicitated the surviving soldiers of Operation Dudhi, marked in the country's defence history as India's most successful counter-insurgency operation more than 30 years ago.

A team of 15 soldiers of the Assam Rifles' 7th Battalion led by Naib Subedar Padam Bahadur Chhetri had on May 5, 1991, gunned down 72 Pakistan-trained extremists and captured 13



The Assam Rifles honouring the heroes of Operation Dudhi in Shillong on Monday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

others at 14,000 ft in J&K.

Two Assam Rifles soldiers – riflemen Kameshwar Prasad and Ram Kumar Arya – died during the six-hour gun battle.

“Our Director-General, Lt. Gen. P.C. Nair, had met

some of the heroes of Op Dudhi during a recent trip to Nepal and thought of felicitating them for their outstanding feat that is yet to be matched. They were honoured in Shillong today,” a spokesperson said.

# ‘China’s intent is to keep boundary issue alive’

Army chief says India’s aim and intention in eastern Ladakh is to restore the status quo ante prior to April 2020

DINAKAR PERI  
NEW DELHI

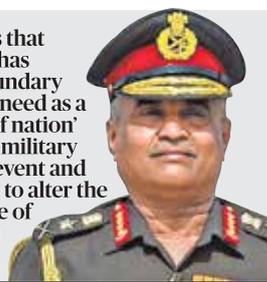
The basic issue with China remains resolution of the border and what is seen is China’s intent to keep “the boundary issue alive”, according to Army chief Gen. Manoj Pande. In eastern Ladakh, India’s aim and intention, as far as the situation is concerned, is to restore the status quo ante prior to April 2020, he said in an interaction with a group of journalists on Monday.

On the impact of the Ukraine war, he observed that the foremost one was the relevance of conventional wars still remained and they need not necessarily be short and swift. He acknowledged that the Army’s supply chains were impacted to “some extent” but asserted that there was sufficient stock to last for a “reasonable” period of time.

“The first and foremost challenge is the resolution of the situations along the borders prevailing since April/May 2020. Our aim and in-

**What we see is that China’s intent has been to keep the boundary issue alive. What we need as a country is a ‘whole of nation’ approach and in the military domain, this is to prevent and counter any attempt to alter the status quo at the Line of Actual Control (LAC)**

GENERAL MANOJ PANDE  
CHIEF OF THE ARMY STAFF



tention as far as the situation is concerned is to restore the status quo ante prior to April 2020 in eastern Ladakh. Our intention is also re-establish the trust and tranquillity on both sides,” Gen. Pande said. “It cannot be a one-way affair. Efforts should be made from the sides.”

On relations with China, he said the basic issue remained the resolution of the border matter. “What we see is that China’s intent has been to keep the boundary issue alive. What we need as a country is a ‘whole of nation’ approach and in the military domain, this is to

prevent and counter any attempt to alter the status quo at the Line of Actual Control (LAC).”

## Important lessons

To a question from *The Hindu* on the impact of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war on the Indian Army’s preparedness, he stated that it had important lessons. The foremost was that the relevance of a conventional war still remained. “We are seeing many platforms – artillery guns, air defence guns, rockets, missiles and tanks being employed in this war in one way or the other. It also tells us

that wars need not be necessarily be short and swift. It could prolong in a manner the current conflict is.”

The second important lesson would be to try and be self-reliant in terms of weapons, armaments, equipment and spares from outside. “We are dependent on certain weapon systems specially in the area of air defence, rockets, missiles and certain tanks from Russia and Ukraine,” he noted. Increasing the self-reliance and decreasing the dependence on outside sources was an important lesson. “We have already started this, in keeping with the Make in India initiative as also to attain ‘Aatmanirbharta,’” he explained.

As far as the immediate impact was concerned, he said, “the supply chain of certain spares and ammunition has got impacted to some extent, but we have adequate stocks to last for a reasonable period of time.” They were also looking at certain alternative mitigation

measures and identifying alternative sources from friendly foreign countries, while in the long term, this was also an opportunity for the private industry to step up production and meet the requirements.

The third important issue was the aspect of non-contact or non-kinetic warfare and the lesson had come out “loud and clear”. Elaborating, he asserted that “be it the cyber domain or information domain, we have seen the battle of narratives has been used to gain advantage over the adversary. We need to increasingly focus on the new domains of warfare, focus on capability development.”

In the broader scenario, Gen. Pande said, the emerging geopolitical order was something that should be monitored very closely in terms of realignment and in terms of new alliances. That was something which would perhaps be much clear once the conflict ended.

On the situation in eastern

Ladakh, he pointed out that through dialogue at the Corps Commander level between the two countries “many friction areas have been resolved after talking to each other” and the balance areas could “only be resolved through dialogue”.

“It is good that we are talking to and engaging with each other. Our troops continue to hold important positions along the LAC,” he stressed. The guidance to the troops was to “have a firm and resolute” posture to “prevent any efforts to alter the status quo.”

The Army had reoriented its troops from the west to the northern borders since the stand-off. There was a “re-appraisal and re-assessment” of the preparedness. “We have a ‘robust posture’ on the LAC and ‘adequate forces to deal with all contingencies.’”

In this direction, he said, the Army had to remain prepared to face a variety of challenges on the entire spectrum.

# Alarm bells

Sikh separatism is now feeble,  
but vigilance is essential

Symbols of Sikh separatism that appeared at the Himachal Pradesh Assembly complex in Dharamshala on Sunday suggest that forces promoting it are active and capable of mischief. Purported flags of imaginary Khalistan were put up on the gate of the complex, and slogans scrawled on the walls. The State police chief has set up a special investigation team and ordered heightened vigil at the borders. On the same day, the police in Punjab said they had averted a terror attack after arresting two men, said to be Khalistani sympathisers, with explosives in Tarn Taran district. A U.S.-based Khalistani separatist has been charged in Himachal Pradesh under the UAPA and the Indian Penal Code. Opposition parties in the State, the Congress and AAP, have used the incident to make a case against the ruling BJP, months ahead of the Assembly election. Comparable rhetoric had shadowed the recent election in Punjab, where political opponents accused one another of being sympathetic to separatists. That was avoidable loose talk on a sensitive topic. Sikh separatism, and the accompanying terrorism supported by Pakistan, was snuffed out by the Indian state decades ago, but at a huge human and political cost. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated and the sectarian violence against the Sikh community that followed in different places deepened the fault lines. Those wounds continue to fester, and care must be taken by the state, political actors and community leaders to ensure that history does not repeat itself as yet another tragedy.

A separatist plan to hold a referendum on Khalistan in Himachal Pradesh is laughable, but vigilance is essential. The groups that call for Khalistan are based abroad, and command little respect in the Sikh mainstream at the moment. They campaign among the Sikh diaspora, alleging mistreatment of the community by the Indian state. They have a favourable environment though. Domestic divisions in India, exacerbated by the politics and policy of the ruling BJP, are echoing among the diaspora in the U.S., Canada, Europe and Australia. Religious minorities and Dalits have been disconnected from the diaspora mobilisation of the Indian government. Hindutva affiliates helm Indian diaspora politics. This provides an opening for India's enemies to inflame passions. Fortunately for India, there are not many takers for such propaganda among the Sikh community. But thoughtless comments and campaigns against the community, particularly when they are led by powerful political actors, can trigger serious reactions. In its desperation to delegitimise the farm agitation, the BJP tacitly supported campaigns that portrayed Sikh protesters as anti-nationals inspired by foreign countries. Though isolated and feeble, Sikh separatism continues to flicker. It must serve as a constant reminder for social cohesion and impartial state policy.

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 <sup>th</sup> 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.
<b>General Studies Paper IV</b>	
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.