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DAILY NEWS ANALYSIS

30 - MAY - 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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The return of the great power rivalries

The post-Cold War period of peace in Europe is more an aberration than norm in the continent's history of conflicts



STANLY JOHNY

Herr von Tschirschky, a diplomat and politician in imperial Germany, said on New Year's Day 1906 in Hamburg: "Germany's policy always had been, and would be, to try to frustrate any coalition between two states which might result in damaging Germany's interests and prestige; and Germany... would not hesitate to take such steps as she thought proper to break up the coalition." Tschirschky, who would become Foreign Secretary in two weeks, was referring to the Franco-British Entente and Germany's growing concerns about it.

The security situation in Europe was undergoing massive changes. The Russian power had collapsed in its far east after the war with Japan in 1904-05. Faced with the erosion of Russian influence and the rise of Wilhelmine Germany, which together threatened to alter Europe's balance of power, France and Britain, competing colonial powers, came together. France had already reached an alliance with Russia. The three would later form the Triple Entente, triggering a dangerous security competition in Europe with the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy), which would eventually lead to the First World War in 1914.

Similarities from the past

There are similarities between events in Europe today and what happened in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. What triggered the great power security competition in the run-up to the First World War was the phenomenal rise of Wilhelmine Germany as a military and industrial power and the regional hegemony's response

to it. When Otto von Bismarck became the Minister-President of Prussia in September 1862, there was no unified German state. Prussia was part of the loose, ineffective German Confederation. Bismarck adopted an aggressive foreign policy, fought and won three wars – with Denmark, Austria and France – destroyed the confederation, established a stronger and larger German Reich that replaced Prussia.

In the last 20 years of Bismarck's reign, Germany, and Europe at large, saw relative peace. That was not because the Chancellor had turned a peacenik but because he was constrained by the geopolitical realities of Europe. Bismarck stayed focused on transforming Germany internally in his last two decades. It was on the foundation Bismarck built that Wilhelmine Germany turned to *weltpolitik* in the early 20th century, seeking global domination.

If Bismarck inherited a weak, loosely connected group of German speaking entities in 1862, Russian President Vladimir Putin got a Russia in 2000 that was a pale shadow of what was the Soviet Union. Russia had lost huge swathes of territories, its economy was in a free fall, its currency had crashed, the living standards of millions of Russians had collapsed and the global stature of the country, which had been one of the two pillars of the post-War global order for almost half a century, had fallen. Bismarck spent his years in power expanding the borders of Germany and building a stronger state and economy. His successors took it further to challenge the existing great powers in Europe. The post-Cold War Russia initially stayed focused on the restoration of the state and the economy, and then sought to expand its borders and challenge the continent's balance of power – first the Crimean annexation and now the Ukraine invasion.

The existing great powers in Eu-



rope saw Germany as a threat to Europe's balance of power and joined hands to contain its rise. Germany, on the other side, saw the formation of the Entente as an existential threat and took steps to weaken the alliance (The 1905 and 1911 Morocco crises and the German intervention in the Bosnia crisis in 1908). The parallels are hardly to be missed. If Germany was seen as a revisionist power back then, Vladimir Putin's Russia is today's revisionist power in Europe. If Germany felt insecure by the Triple Entente, as Tschirschky warned in 1906, Russia has constantly voiced concerns about the eastward expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). If the Entente countries looked at the rise of Germany as a threat to European power balance, the western alliance continued to see modern Russia as a security challenge, even after the collapse of the Soviet Union. While NATO's expansion deepened Russia's security concerns, driving it into aggressive moves, Russia's aggression has strengthened NATO's resolve to expand further into Russia's neighbourhood.

On 'offensive realism'

The behaviour of 20th century Germany and 21st century Russia can best be explained using what John Mearsheimer calls "offensive realism". Offensive realists argue that "revisionist powers" tend to use force to rewrite the balance of power if they find the circumstances are favourable, while the

status quo powers, or the existing regional hegemony, would seek to thwart any new country attaining more power at their expense. The result of this type of competition is permanent rivalry and conflict. Look at Mr. Putin's offensive moves. He sent troops to Georgia, practically ending that country's NATO ambitions. He took Crimea without fighting a war. He sent troops to Syria not just to save the regime of Bashar al-Assad and protect Russia's Mediterranean naval base in Tartus but also to neutralise Turkey and Israel, both Syria's neighbours. He reinforced Russia's primacy in Central Asia by bringing peace to the Nagorno-Karabakh and dispatching forces to restore order in Kazakhstan. These successes probably raised the confidence of Russia, prompting its leaders to believe that it was finally strong enough to change Europe's balance of power forcefully. Then, Russia invaded Ukraine.

But one major difference between the era of Wilhelmine Germany and modern Russia is that there were no well-defined international laws in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The international system has evolved ever since. But its basic instincts, as realists would argue, have not changed much. Mr. Putin's Russia is not the first country that violated the sovereignty of a weaker power and flouted international laws in the "rules-based" order. Nor will it be the last. As the Athenians told the Melians during the Peloponnesian War, "the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must".

Security competition

As the Ukraine war grinds into its fourth month, there are no clear winners in Europe. Russia apparently had two strategic objectives in Ukraine – one, to expand Russian borders and create a buffer. And two, to reinforce Russia's deterrence against NATO. While Russia has succeeded, though slowly,

in expanding its borders by capturing almost all of Ukraine's east, the war has backfired on its second objective – Russia's inability to clinch a quick outright victory in Ukraine and the tactical retreats it has already made have invariably dealt a blow to the perception of Russian power that existed before the war. This has strengthened NATO, driving even Sweden and Finland into its arms. Besides, the economic sanctions would leave a long-term hole in Russia's economy.

But a Russia that is bogged down in Ukraine and encircled by NATO need not enhance Europe's security. Russia's advances in Ukraine may have been slow; it seemed ready to fight a war of attrition like the long wars European countries fought against each other in the past. And despite the strong resistance it faced in Ukraine, Russia remains too strong a military and geopolitical power to be brushed aside. As Henry Kissinger said at Davos, Russia had been and would remain an important element in the European state system.

The prospects are bleak. There will not be peace in Europe unless either Russia accepts its diminished role and goes into another spell of strategic retreat (like it did after the disintegration of the Soviet Union), or Europe and the West in general accommodate Russia's security concerns. Both look unrealistic as of today. This means that even if the war in Ukraine comes to an end, the security contest in Europe would continue. The post-Cold War period of relative peace and stability in Europe, anchored in liberal internationalism, was an aberration rather than a norm in the continent's long history of conflicts. And what makes the latest round of great power rivalry more dangerous is that there are nuclear weapons on both sides.

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Monsoon sets in over Kerala

10 of the 14 monitoring stations recorded 2.5 mm or more of rainfall, says IMD

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

The monsoon has reached Kerala, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Sunday. While this is three days before the usual onset date of June 1, it is two days later than what the IMD forecast on May 13.

Rainfall is not the only criterion that the IMD relies on to declare the monsoon's onset. Windspeeds of a minimum strength and depth in the atmosphere, the outgoing longwave radiation, which is a measure of cloudiness, and rainfall appearing to be consistent and well distributed over Kerala, are important criteria.

Until Saturday, most of these parameters – except sufficient rainfall over Kerala – were fulfilled.

“There has been wides-



Season starts: Workers using coir to build the roof of a tourist boat at Marine Drive in Kochi on Sunday. ■ THULASI KAKKAT

pread rainfall activity over Kerala during the past 24 hours and out of the 14 rainfall monitoring stations for declaring onset of the monsoon over Kerala, 10 have received rainfall of 2.5 mm or more. Thus, all the conditions for onset of monsoon over Kerala have been satisfied today, the 29th May

2022,” said a statement from the IMD.

In the days ahead, the southwest monsoon is expected to advance to “...remaining parts of Kerala, some more parts of Tamil Nadu, some parts of Karnataka, and some more parts of south and Central Bay of Bengal, some parts of north-

east Bay of Bengal and north-eastern States during next 3-4 days,” it added.

Rainfall delayed

Last year too, the monsoon had been forecast to arrive by May 31 but officially landed on June 3 after which the progress was slow.

The IMD used a specialised weather model to forecast the monsoon onset over Kerala and the forecast date had a built-in four-day margin of error.

Except for 2015, the monsoon had arrived within the four-day window of the date forecast by the IMD from 2005 to 2021, the department said.

The IMD has forecast the June-September monsoon to be normal with rainfall likely to be 99% of the historical normal.

China's 'inevitable' global dominance

The Chinese assert that the allies and partners of the U.S. cannot count on U.S. power to deter China



SHYAM SARAN

Learning Mandarin in Hong Kong in 1971 soon after he joined the Indian Foreign Service opened "a whole new and fascinating world" for Shyam Saran. "I was coming face to face with a civilization with a long and varied history, a philosophical and cultural heritage of enormous richness, and a view of the world quite distinct and indeed different from others," he writes in the introduction to his new book, How China Sees India and the World. Saran spent six years in China in two stints and witnessed its "rapid and far-reaching transformation". China is today the world's second largest economy after the U.S., and is already a leader in new-age technologies like artificial intelligence, quantum computing and space exploration. He explains why despite India and China being roughly at the same economic level once, India is now a "retreating image in China's rear-view mirror." An excerpt:

India and China were roughly at the same economic level in 1978, with similar GDP and per capita income. Though China began to grow much faster thereafter, the gap between the two countries was not very significant even a decade later, when the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi paid a historic visit to Beijing in December 1988. It was then possible for Deng Xiaoping to declare that there could not be an Asian Century without India and China growing together and playing a resurgent role. The surge in India's GDP growth as a result of its own economic reforms and liberalisation policies adopted in the early 1990s expanded India's political and economic profile. At the turn of the century, India was behind China but was seen as shrinking the gap. In the period 2003-2007, India's growth rate accelerated while China's began to slow down. This was the brief period when India's diplomatic options multiplied. It was able to leverage the advance of its relations with one major power to promote its relations with other major powers, thereby expanding its strategic



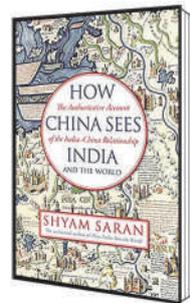
AFP

space.

Border dispute

During the visit of the Indian Prime Minister [Atal Bihari] Vajpayee to China in 2003, two important decisions were taken. One, the two countries agreed to seek an early political solution to the India-China border dispute, instituting regular negotiations at the level of Special Representatives of their respective leaders. The Chinese side also conveyed its recognition of Sikkim as a State of India. It had not accepted the accession of the State to the Indian Union in 1975 and its maps had continued to depict it [Sikkim] as an independent country. The backdrop to these important decisions was the recognition that relations between the two large emerging economies had now acquired a global and strategic dimension, going beyond their bilateral relations. It was, therefore, important to resolve the long-standing border issue in order to enable the two countries to cooperate more closely in the shaping of the emerging regional and global architecture.

This development was carried forward during the subsequent visit of Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao to India in April 2005. As Foreign Secretary, I was closely associated with the visit. The Chinese were already aware that India was negotiating a civil nuclear cooperation agreement with the U.S., which would greatly enhance India's diplomatic profile and significantly strengthen the India-U.S. partnership. This encouraged the Chinese to balance this development by upgrading their own relations with India, and this increased India's



■ **How China sees India and the World**
Shyam Saran
Juggernaut
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room for manoeuvre vis-à-vis China. At their meeting, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and [Premier] Wen Jiabao reached a broad consensus on the following lines: One, that China was not a threat to India and India was not a threat to China; Two, that there was enough space in Asia and the world for the simultaneous growth of both India and China; Three, that India was an economic opportunity for China, and China likewise an economic opportunity for India; Four, that as two large and emerging economies the two countries, by working together, could exercise significant influence on the existing global regimes in different domains and could shape new global regimes in emerging domains such as climate change, cyber space and outer space; Five, that India-China relations having thus acquired a global and strategic dimension and in order to enable them to work more effectively together, it was important to resolve the India-China border issue at an early date.

Impact of financial crisis

The global financial and economic crisis had a major impact on the further development of India-China

relations. Just as the asymmetry between the U.S. and China began to shrink in the aftermath of the crisis, the asymmetry between India and China, which had been shrinking earlier, began to expand once again. India's GDP growth decelerated and has averaged about 6-7 per cent per annum since then. China has maintained the same rate of growth as India, but on a much larger base than India's. This asymmetry of power began to be reflected in China showing less sensitivity to India's interests, its steady economic and political penetration of countries in India's periphery and a lower threshold of tolerance to closer relations between India and the U.S. In conversations at non-official meetings, Chinese scholars would often draw attention to the fact that China's economy was five times the size of India's and this could not but reflect in the nature of India-China relations. The implication of such a statement was that India should accept its diminished ranking in the Chinese perception and defer to Chinese interests.

Stepping out of line - a line drawn by China - would invite punitive reactions, and that too is evident in the more recent Chinese moves against India, including its more aggressive posture at the India-China border, where relative peace and tranquillity had prevailed over the past several decades. In 2005, China was willing to make some concessions to India in order to forestall an incipient Indo-U.S. alliance that could be threatening to China. Its reaction to the Quad, which is a coalition of India, Australia, Japan and the U.S., which could constrain China in the Indo-Pacific, is to dismiss its relevance and to adopt an even more threatening posture towards the coalition partners.

In the aftermath of the global financial and economic crisis of 2008, the Chinese assessment is that the U.S. is a declining power, that its credibility is eroded and, importantly, that its will to exercise power has also diminished. It is a power in retreat and, therefore, allies and partners of the U.S., the Chinese assert, cannot count on U.S. power to deter China. A narrative is being built on the inevitability of Chinese regional, and eventually global, dominance, which it would be futile to resist.

Excerpted with permission from Juggernaut Books

Flight with 22 passengers goes missing after take-off in Nepal

Four Indians among passengers; bad weather hits rescue

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KATHMANDU

The fate of 22 people, including four members of an Indian family, on board a Nepali airlines flight remained unclear as bad weather and blankets of clouds made it difficult to locate the aircraft that went missing on Sunday in the mountainous region of the Himalayan nation minutes after taking off from the tourist city of Pokhara, officials said.

The condition of the plane belonging to Tara Air that took off at 10.15 a.m. from Pokhara, 200 km east of Kathmandu, is unknown till now, the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) said in a statement.

The turboprop Twin Otter 9N-AET plane had four Indian nationals, two Germans and 13 Nepalese passengers,



Gloom of uncertainty: Relatives of passengers on board the Twin Otter plane outside the Pokhara airport on Sunday. ■ AFP

besides a three-member Nepalese crew, said Sudarshan Bartaula, a spokesperson at the airlines.

The plane was flying from Pokhara to Jomsom, a popular tourist town in central Nepal.

Family from Thane

The airline issued the list of passengers which identified

four Indians as Ashok Kumar Tripathy, his wife Vaibhavi Bandekar (Tripathy) and their children Dhanush and Ritika. The family resides in Thane near Mumbai.

An Army helicopter as well as private choppers were taking part in the search, it said.

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Passengers disembark the Maitree Express train in Kolkata on Sunday. ■PTI

India-Bangladesh train services resume after 2 years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA

Passenger train services between India and Bangladesh resumed on Sunday after an over two-year gap due to the pandemic with the flagging off the Bandhan Express from Kolkata station on way to Khulna in the neighbouring country, an Eastern Railway (ER) official said here.

Maitree Express is also scheduled to resume services between Kolkata and Dhaka on Sunday and will travel to the Bangladesh capital on Monday morning on the first journey from here since March 2020, he said.

“Passenger train services between India and Bangladesh, which were stopped for over two years due to the pandemic, resumed with the flagging off the Bandhan Express from Kolkata station at 7.10 a.m.,” ER spokesperson Ekalavya Chakraborty said.

While the Bandhan Express between Kolkata and Khulna runs two days a week, Maitree Express connecting Kolkata with Dhaka is a five-day service.

Comfortable, affordable

Mr. Chakraborty said people on both sides of the border are excited about the resumption of the train services, which are fully booked for the next few days. “With the comfort of train travel and a convenient time schedule along with affordability, people prefer this mode of transport over others such as bus and air,” he said.

The trains have a capacity of around 450 passengers and have air-conditioned chair car and executive class categories, he said.

India-Bangladesh train connectivity through West Bengal will receive another boost from June 1 with the inauguration of Mitali Express between New Jalpaiguri and Dhaka, Mr. Chakraborty said.

The new service will also boost tourism in northern West Bengal as many travellers from Bangladesh show a keen interest in exploring the Darjeeling Hills and the forests and tea gardens of Dooars in the foothills, he said.

Deepening strategic commitment

China is not only the glue that holds the Quad together; it is also the fuel that may drive the grouping's inner consolidation



RAJIV BHATIA

The Quad (the U.S., India, Japan and Australia) held its second in-person leaders' summit in Tokyo on May 24. It has emerged stronger and clearer in its strategy and goals for the security and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific. The efforts by the Quad countries should be viewed not only from the prism of the summits, but also from the wider context of international developments and the continuing process of consolidation of the bilateral relations within, especially U.S.-India ties.

Beyond Ukraine

This is the second interaction of the Quad leaders held after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. That war has no end in sight. With India abstaining from most anti-Russia voting in multilateral bodies, experts in India worried about the impact of Ukraine on the Indo-Pacific region, particularly U.S.-India ties. Some feared that Prime Minister Narendra Modi would face new and intense pressure in Tokyo from the U.S. to condemn Russia. Others argued that the U.S. understood India's nuanced position on Ukraine and may refocus on China's strategic game in the region.

The latter interpretation proved correct. India and the U.S. agreed to disagree on Ukraine, but showed full readiness to further strengthen the Quad and their bilateral cooperation, which, U.S. President Joe Biden said, he was "committed to making...among the closest we have on Earth." With China, he has moved beyond the traditional U.S. stance of 'strategic ambiguity' and pointedly referred to Ukraine to stress that China's armed action against Taiwan would be unacceptable and attract a military response.

The central driving force of the Quad is to counter China's growing expansionism and belligerence. The grouping's diplomatic device of defining its *raison d'être* without ever using the word 'China' was best reflected in the 'Quad Joint Leaders' Statement' which reads, "We reaffirm our resolve to uphold the international rules-based order where countries are free from all forms of military, economic and political coercion." Thus, China is not only the glue that holds the Quad together; it is also the fuel that may, through Beijing's bad behaviour in the future, drive the grouping's inner consolidation, as shown by an expanding agenda.

The Quad agenda now covers nine sectors: vaccine partnership and health securi-

ty, climate action, critical and emerging technologies, cooperation on infrastructure, cyber security, space cooperation, education and people-to-people ties, maritime domain awareness, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. The Quad claims to have established "a positive and practical agenda" in year one; in year two, it will focus on "delivery." This needs to be watched.

Not all commitments have been met. The promise of making available at least one billion COVID-19 vaccine doses to Indo-Pacific countries has fallen short. Excluding what the Quad countries contributed to COVAX, just 25% have been delivered to the region so far. This needs to be expanded rapidly. Meanwhile, Quad experts have begun planning ways to enhance capacity for early detection and monitoring of "new and emerging pathogens with pandemic potential."

On infrastructure, a new commitment was made at Tokyo for the Quad to extend over \$50 billion in investment and assistance to the Indo-Pacific countries over the next five years. While the focus is on the ASEAN countries and the Pacific Island States, a part of this funding should perhaps reach the Indian Ocean region too, with its touch points in Africa. The Common Statement of Principles on Critical Technology Supply Chains is significant, as it concerns cooperation on semiconductors.

The atmospherics of the summit improved significantly after the launch of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) a day earlier. The joint announcement was made by the Quad, seven ASEAN member-states (excluding Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos), South Korea and New Zealand. The plan is to prepare their economies for the future by conducting negotiations on the pillars of trade; supply chains; tax and anti-corruption and clean energy; decarbonisation and infrastructure. The IPEF is ambitious, but doable.

India's plan

India's constructive participation in the Tokyo summit and agreement to join IPEF demonstrated commitment to strengthening its strategic partnerships in order to push back China's dominance. At the same time, New Delhi has agreed to the expansion of BRICS membership. This simultaneous engagement with the Quad and BRICS is New Delhi's strategic autonomy in full play. India's presidency of the G20 in 2023 and the likelihood of India hosting the Quad summit in 2024 will ensure that it follows a calibrated policy and stays on track, as every major step will attract international attention.

Rajiv Bhatia is Distinguished Fellow, Gateway House and a former Ambassador

Building peace and prosperity with strong BRICS

The BRICS partnership is 'walking together to walk far' to build a community with a shared future for mankind



SUN WEIDONG

As an old Chinese saying goes, nothing can separate people with common goals and ideals; not even mountains and seas. Sixteen years after its creation, BRICS has become an important platform for win-win cooperation among China, India, Russia, Brazil and South Africa, and a significant force for the evolution of international order, the improvement of global governance and the promotion of common development.

Since China took over the BRICS chairmanship at the beginning of this year, we have worked together with BRICS partners to press ahead with cooperation in political security, economy and finance, people-to-people exchanges, public health and other realms. More than 50 important events have been held, contributing to significant progress in various cooperative fields.

On May 19, Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered a video address at the virtual meeting of BRICS Foreign Ministers. The BRICS Foreign Ministers issued a joint statement. And the first dialogue of Foreign Ministers between BRICS and emerging markets and developing countries was held.

The world today witnesses increasing factors of instability, uncertainty and insecurity. It is of great significance for the BRICS Foreign Ministers' meeting to reach consensus and outcomes on multiple important issues con-

cerning global security and development, which made political preparations for the 14th BRICS summit.

The BRICS Foreign Ministers' meeting indicated that BRICS countries will strengthen solidarity and cooperation in the face of challenges with firm conviction, and take real actions to promote peace and development, and uphold fairness and justice. We will inject more BRICS strength into global development, and speak with a louder BRICS voice to uphold the common interests of the developing countries.

Upholding universal security

BRICS countries should be builders of universal security. Cold-war mentality and bloc confrontation pose grave threats to world peace and security. Seeking one's own security at the expense of others' will only create new tensions and risks. President Xi Jinping put forward the Global Security Initiative, pointing out the way to make up the peace deficit and solve the global security dilemma. It is important to respect and guarantee the security of every country, replace confrontation and alliance with dialogue and partnership, and promote the building of a balanced, effective and sustainable regional security architecture.

BRICS countries need to strengthen political mutual trust and security cooperation, maintain communication and coordination on major international and regional issues, accommodate each other's core interests and major concerns, respect each other's sovereignty, security and development interests, oppose hegemonism and power politics, and work together to build a global community of security for all.



GETTY IMAGES

BRICS countries should be contributors of common development. The COVID-19 pandemic threatens to derail the world economy. The irresponsible macro-economic and monetary policies of certain countries have aggravated the uncertainties and imbalances of economic recovery. President Xi Jinping's Global Development Initiative gives priority to development, embraces the people-centered core concept, and calls for more robust, greener and more sound global development. It provides a Chinese solution to global development problems and has been widely echoed by the international community.

Facing the rising tide of de-globalisation and the increase of unilateral sanctions and technology barriers, BRICS countries should enhance mutually-beneficial cooperation in supply chains, energy, food and financial resilience, take solid steps to implement the Global Development Initiative, foster an open world economy and create a favourable environment for common development.

On health

BRICS countries should be pioneers of cooperation in COVID-19 pandemic management. The international pandemic response is at a critical moment, and we should not give up half way. President Xi

Jinping has called for accelerating the building of a global community of health for all, and has advocated a coordinated international approach to the pandemic and the improvement of global health governance. India's vision of 'One Earth, One Health' also contributes to multilateral cooperation on public health. BRICS countries should fully leverage their respective strengths, and jointly promote the development of global health governance in a direction in favour of developing countries. We should make good use of the BRICS Vaccine Research and Development Center, establish a BRICS early warning mechanism for preventing large-scale infectious diseases, and provide high-quality public goods for global health governance cooperation.

A governance philosophy

BRICS countries should be leaders of global governance. Global challenges are emerging one after another. Only by coordinating global actions can we properly cope with them. "Small circles" cannot solve the "big challenges" facing the whole world. BRICS countries should firmly safeguard the international system, with the United Nations at its core and the international order underpinned by international law, and ensure that international affairs have participation by all, international rules are formulated by all, and development outcomes are shared by all. We should embrace a global governance philosophy that emphasises extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, enhance unity and cooperation with emerging markets and developing countries, and increase the voice in global governance.

It is especially commendable

that the first dialogue of Foreign Ministers between BRICS and emerging markets and developing countries sent out the message of supporting multilateralism, supporting anti-pandemic cooperation, supporting common development, and supporting solidarity and cooperation. All parties to the dialogue support and advocate the 'BRICS plus' cooperation model, which is a platform born for cooperation and thrives on development. We should explore the 'BRICS plus' cooperation at more levels, in more areas and in a wider scope. China proposes to launch the BRICS expansion process and discuss standards and procedures for expansion in order to build consensus step-by-step. This will increase BRICS countries' representation and influence and make greater contributions to world peace and development.

As an old saying goes, if you want to walk fast, walk alone. If you want to walk far, walk together. Since the establishment of the BRICS mechanism, it has been closely connected with the destiny of emerging markets and developing countries. China is always a member of the family of the developing world, and will always stand alongside developing countries. We will endeavour to translate the BRICS spirit of openness, inclusiveness and win-win cooperation into concrete actions, deepen the BRICS partnership centering on the theme of 'forming a high-quality partnership to jointly create a new era of global development'; we will make unrelenting efforts to build a community with a shared future for mankind.

Sun Weidong is China's Ambassador to India

U.S. becomes India's biggest trading partner at \$119 billion

India's commerce with China stands at \$115 bn in 2021-22

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The U.S. surpassed China to become India's top trading partner in 2021-22, reflecting strengthening economic ties between the two countries.

According to data with the Commerce Ministry, the bilateral trade between the U.S. and India stood at \$119.42 billion in 2021-22 as against \$80.51 billion in 2020-21. Exports to the U.S. increased to \$76.11 billion in 2021-22 from \$51.62 billion in the previous fiscal year, while imports rose to \$43.31 billion from about \$29 billion.

During 2021-22, India's two-way commerce with China aggregated at \$115.42 billion as compared to \$86.4

billion in 2020-21, the data showed. Exports to China marginally increased to \$21.25 billion last fiscal year from \$21.18 billion in 2020-21, while imports jumped to \$94.16 billion from about \$65.21 billion in 2020-21. Trade gap rose to \$72.91 billion in 2021-22 from \$44 billion in the previous fiscal year.

Trade experts believe that the trend of increasing bilateral trade with the U.S. will continue in the coming years also as New Delhi and Washington are engaged in strengthening economic ties. Federation of Indian Export Organisations vice-president Khalid Khan said India is emerging as a trusted trading partner and global

firms are reducing their dependence on China for their supplies and are diversifying business into other countries like India.

"India has joined a U.S.-led initiative to set up an Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) and this move would help boost economic ties further," Mr. Khan said.

Rakesh Mohan Joshi, Director of the Indian Institute of Plantation Management, Bangalore, too said that India is the fastest growing market economy with unparalleled demographic dividend and provides enormous opportunities for the U.S. and Indian firms for technology transfer, manufacturing, trade and investment.

Absolution

India needs a law to make compensation for unlawful arrest a statutory right

Shoddy investigation is one thing, but a malicious and motivated probe is quite another. The probe conducted by former Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) official Sameer Wankhede into a purported tip-off about consumption of drugs on board a cruise ship, in October 2021, seems to fall in the latter category. The raid on the vessel resulted in seizure of narcotic substances and the arrest of several people, including Aryan Khan, son of Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan. Even though nothing was seized from Mr. Khan, the agency made sensational claims in court about his being part of an international drug trafficking network and, quite strangely, cited messages purportedly exchanged on WhatsApp as 'evidence'. By the time he obtained bail weeks later, the case had all the makings of a witch-hunt. A special investigation team from Delhi, which took over the case after allegations of extortion surfaced against Mr. Wankhede, has now cited lapses in the initial investigation and the lack of prosecutable evidence, and absolved Mr. Khan and five others and excluded them from the charge sheet filed recently. The lapses include failure to video-graph the search of the ship, not conducting a medical examination to prove consumption, and examining Mr. Khan's phone and reading messages on it without any legal basis.

It is good that the agency made amends for the mischief done by the initial set of investigators by applying the standard of 'proof beyond reasonable doubt' while presenting its final report. At the same time, the NCB has to re-examine its priorities. It is an elite agency in the fight against international trafficking in narcotic and psychotropic substances. Its primary focus ought to be on trans-national smuggling networks, while the job of pursuing drug peddlers and raiding rave parties must be left to the local police. While strict disciplinary action is warranted if any officer is found involved in 'fixing' someone, it is also time that the Government came out with a legal framework for compensating those jailed without proof. The country does not have a law on the grant of compensation to those maliciously prosecuted. However, constitutional courts do exercise their vast powers sometimes to award monetary recompense; the remedy of a civil suit is also available in law, but it is time-consuming. The Law Commission of India has recommended enactment of a law to make compensation in such cases an enforceable right. Currently, Section 358 of the Cr.P.C. provides for a paltry fine to be imposed on a person on whose complaint a person is arrested without sufficient grounds. Such provisions should be expanded to cover just compensation by the state for unnecessary arrests. It is a sobering thought to note that even people with celebrity status and vast resources are not insulated from the misuse of police powers, even while recognising that it is still possible to vindicate one's innocence and force the establishment to adopt a course correction.

Centre retracts caution on Aadhaar photocopies

UIDAI had warned against sharing them to avoid 'misuse'

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

Two days after issuing an advisory cautioning people against sharing a photocopy of their Aadhaar card, the Union government on Sunday withdrew the notification, claiming it could be "misinterpreted".

A reading of tweets, past and present, of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), which manages Aadhaar, shows the about-turn reveals confusion on its policy on photocopies of Aadhaar.

The Bengaluru Regional Office of the UIDAI, on May 27, published a notification asking people not to share photocopies of their Aadhaar card as it could be "misused".

In its withdrawal statement on Sunday, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), the parent body of the UIDAI, said the authority had advised Aadhaar card holders only to exercise "normal prudence" in using and sharing their Aadhaar numbers and that its Bangalore subsidiary's advisory – now withdrawn – was in the context of an attempt to misuse an Aadhaar card using a photocopy.

"Aadhaar identity authentication ecosystem has pro-

What is a masked Aadhaar?

An Aadhaar number consists of 12 digits. Masking an Aadhaar number means replacing the first eight digits with some characters like "xxxx-xxxx" while only the last four digits of the original number are visible

HOW TO DOWNLOAD A MASKED AADHAAR?

Downloading an electronic version of masked Aadhaar card is a five-step process

1. Go to the link <https://eaadhaar.uidai.gov.in/genericDownloadAadhaar>
2. Type your Aadhaar card number and enter the captcha



3. There will be an option "Do you want a masked Aadhaar". Select it
4. Enter the OTP received on your mobile phone
5. Verify and download your masked Aadhaar card

vided adequate features for protecting and safeguarding the identity and privacy of the Aadhaar holder," the statement added.

Past flip-flops

The warning and withdrawal seems to be part of a series of such flip-flops. On November 11, 2016, the UIDAI from its official handle tweeted: "We urge you to be very discreet abt [about] your Aadhaar and other identity documents. Do not share the document no. [number] or a printed copy with anyone."

Then, on multiple occasions, the authority said publicly that without biometric information, Aadhaar details could not be used to impersonate a person. However, it was said that since the

Aadhaar card is a document with details of personal information, it is akin to giving out a mobile phone number, bank account number or PAN and ought to be "ordinarily protected" to ensure a person's privacy.

"Aadhaar as an identity document by its very nature needs to be shared openly with others as and when required for," said a tweet by the UIDAI on March 17, 2018.

The May 27, 2022 notification advised against using a public computer to download electronic versions of the Aadhaar. Only those organisations with a "user licence" from the UIDAI could use Aadhaar for establishing a person's identity.

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Ambitious future: Nirmala Sitharaman speaks during the third Natural Allies in Development and Interdependence (NADI) conclave, in Guwahati on Sunday. ■ PTI

‘Projects worth ₹1.34 lakh cr. to boost northeast connectivity’

Pumping money to develop rail, road, air networks: Nirmala

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GUWAHATI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday said the Centre is implementing various rail, road and air connectivity projects worth ₹1,34,200 crore in Northeast India. Addressing the “Natural Allies in Development and Interdependence (NADI)” conclave here, she said the Union government had been pumping in huge money to develop a number of infrastructure projects throughout the region.

“We are carrying out 20 railway projects worth ₹74,000 crore for 2,011 km, which are spread across the northeast,” Ms. Sitharaman said.

The Centre is also developing 4,000 km of roads in the region at a total cost of ₹58,000 crore, she added.

“There are 15 ongoing air connectivity projects in the northeast, costing around ₹2,200 crore,” the Finance Minister said. However, she did not mention the completion period for these projects. Ms. Sitharaman said the number of ‘Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Routes’ had been increased to 10 from the existing eight.

“These Protocol Routes are reviewed every five years. There was a review in May 2022,” she said.

Improved connectivity

The Union Minister said the national waterways on the Ganga, the Brahmaputra and the Barak were being developed. She said India and Bangladesh had 50 riverine systems which could be leveraged for all types of transportation as the cost of travel through water was the

least when compared to air, road and rail networks.

“The government is further developing the National Waterways (NW)-1 on the Ganga, NW-2 on the Brahmaputra and NW-16 on the Barak,” Ms. Sitharaman said. She said the entire area between Sadiya and Dhubri in Assam along the Brahmaputra was being developed for better connectivity.

The Eastern Waterways Connectivity Transport Grid, once completed, will offer seamless connectivity not only between the northeast and the rest of India but also on the subcontinent, she said.

The Central government is developing several projects focusing on power transmission and distribution, mobile networks, and broadband connectivity in the region, she said.

Paying a price

Vaccines, antivirals for monkeypox must be made available in endemic countries in Africa

In three weeks since the first case of monkeypox infection was confirmed on May 7 in the U.K. in a person who had just arrived from Nigeria (where the outbreak has been continuing since September 2017) the virus has spread to at least 21 countries and infected 226 people, mainly in Europe and North America. The U.K., which is the hardest hit, has reported 106 lab-confirmed cases as of May 26. As per WHO, more cases can be expected as surveillance expands; scientists believe the virus has been spreading under the radar for some time. For instance, a person in Canada had symptoms of monkeypox on April 29, though it was not tested at that time. Similarly, the monkeypox genome sequence first shared by Portugal was from a sample collected on May 4 but was not tested for monkeypox till the U.K. reported the first case. All the 21 countries that have reported at least one case are non-endemic for monkeypox, raising concerns about the fast spread of the virus, by far the largest outbreak in humans outside Africa. Two rave parties in Spain and Belgium have been super-spreader events. Nigeria has reported 231 confirmed cases and eight deaths since 2017, with 15 cases reported this year till April 30. There have been a few instances of exportation to non-endemic countries from Nigeria since 2017, and eight such instances in all from the endemic countries in Central and West Africa. However, human-to-human transmission in non-endemic countries has been very limited, if at all, in the past.

Despite the first case in humans being reported in 1970, and the virus becoming endemic in about a dozen countries in Africa, very little attention has been paid to study the virus characteristics, the host animal, and the modes of transmission. However, in September 2019, the FDA approved a vaccine, and two antivirals approved for treating smallpox have shown promise in animal studies. It is unclear how long it would take to contain the outbreak. Meanwhile, there is a potential risk of the virus jumping from humans to animals, which may make it endemic in these countries. While China was rightly criticised for keeping the SARS-CoV-2 outbreak a secret for weeks, the developed countries have paid scant attention to stop the outbreak in Nigeria. The low mortality rate of about 1% for the virus clade now in circulation in Europe and North America, the slow rate of mutation, the relative ease of stopping the virus spread, and the availability of vaccines should not be a reason once more to ignore the virus spread in Nigeria. Instead, it should spur more research on the virus and make vaccines and antivirals available in Nigeria and other endemic countries in Africa.

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.