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**IAS ACADEMY**

*The New Learning Mantra*



# VEDHIK

## DAILY NEWS ANALYSIS

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## **FOREWORD**

We, at Team Vedhik is happy to introduce a new initiative - "Daily Current Affairs\_The Hindu" compilations to help you with UPSC Civil Services Examination preparation. We believe this initiative - "Daily Current Affairs\_The Hindu" would help students, especially beginners save time and streamline their preparations with regard to Current Affairs. A content page and an Appendix has been added segregating and mapping the content to the syllabus.

It is an appreciable efforts by Vedhik IAS Academy helping aspirants of UPSC Civil Services Examinations. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Babu Sebastian, former VC - MG University in extending all support to this endeavour. Finally I also extend my thanks to thank Ms. Shilpa Sasidharan and Mr. Shahul Hameed for their assistance in the preparing the compilations.

We welcome your valuable comments so that further improvement may be made in the forthcoming material. We look forward to feedback, comments and suggestions on how to improve and add value for students. Every care has been taken to avoid typing errors and if any reader comes across any such error, the authors shall feel obliged if they are informed at their Email ID.

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# China sanctions Pelosi, suspends key U.S. talks

Beijing continues live fire drills in 6 regions around Taiwan

ANANTH KRISHNAN  
BEIJING

China on Friday said it would sanction U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi for her visit to Taiwan this week, as well as cancel or suspend eight key dialogue mechanisms with the U.S.

The measures came as the Chinese military continued for a second day its live fire drills in six regions surrounding Taiwan. The military exercises, which have effectively blockaded the waters and airspace in the six regions and resulted in major disruptions to shipping and flights to Taiwan, will continue until Sunday.

Taiwan's Military of National Defence said it had tracked 13 Chinese naval vessels and 68 PLA (People's Liberation Army) aircraft crossing the median line, calling it "highly provocative".

China's Foreign Ministry said Ms. Pelosi had "insisted on visiting China's Taiwan region" in "disregard of China's grave concerns and firm opposition". "In response to Pelosi's egregious provocation," a statement said, "China decides to adopt sanctions on Pelosi and her immediate family members in accordance with relevant laws of the People's Republic of China." The statement did



**Show of strength:** A PLA aircraft taking off for military exercises in the waters around Taiwan. ■REUTERS

not specify what exactly the sanctions would entail.

## Envoy summoned

The visit has also brought wider ramifications for China-U.S. relations. Washington on Friday said it had summoned the Chinese envoy, Qin Gang, and issued a demarche over China's military exercises, which have for the first time seen the Chinese military fire missiles over Taiwan.

Beijing said it would cancel three key bilateral military dialogue mechanisms and suspend five others. The three cancelled dialogues – a Theatre Commanders meet, Defence Policy Coordination Talks, and talks under the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement

(MMCA) – underlined the further eroding trust between the two militaries and the closure of channels that were designed to increase communication.

Beijing said it would also suspend bilateral talks on climate change, as well as put on hold cooperation on the repatriation of illegal immigrants, legal assistance in criminal matters, transnational crimes, and counternarcotics. China's State media on Friday continued to highlight the military's exercises, and reported that the PLA had sent an aircraft carrier group featuring at least one nuclear-powered submarine to the drills.

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# China sanctions Pelosi, suspends key U.S. talks

In a televised address, Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen described the firing of missiles into “some of the busiest transportation corridors in the world” as “dangerous” and “irresponsible”.

China has defended the exercises as a countermeasure to Ms. Pelosi’s visit, the most high-level from the U.S. to Taiwan in 25 years. Chinese analysts have said the exercises were aimed at sending a message to both

Taiwan and the U.S. by bringing in a new normal in increased military activity around Taiwan.

The drills marked the first firing of conventional missiles over Taiwan as well as aircraft and warships crossing the median line in the Taiwan Strait. The exercises, analysts said, had laid the groundwork for future blockades and area denial for foreign warships that might intervene in a future conflict.

# Privilege of MPs does not extend to criminal cases, says Venkaiah

'Wrong notion about immunity from action by agencies when House session is on'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu said on Friday that members have a wrong notion that they have a privilege from action by the investigating agencies while the session is on.

The Congress has been protesting against the alleged misuse of Central agencies such as the Enforcement Directorate (ED), the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Income Tax Department by the government to "frame" political rivals.

The Congress members had on Thursday forced adjournments in the Upper House when Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge said he had received summons from the ED to appear before the agency even while the House was in session. Priyanka Chaturvedi of the Shiv Sena too raised the issue of the arrest of Sanjay Raut by the ED saying that the Chairman should have

 **No member should avoid appearing before any investigating agency when she or he is called upon to do so by citing reason of House duty. As lawmakers, it is our bounden duty to respect the law and legal procedures**

**M. VENKAIAH NAIDU**, Rajya Sabha Chairman



been apprised of the situation.

On Friday too, protests by the Congress members on the issue led to an adjournment by nearly 30 minutes.

As the House assembled, Mr. Naidu said, "Going by what has happened in the past few days, I want to clarify one thing that there is a wrong notion among the members that they have a privilege from action by agencies while the session is on."

He said he had examined all the precedents and under Article 105 of the Constitution, MPs enjoyed certain privileges so that they can

perform their parliamentary duties without any hindrance. "One of the privileges is that a Member of Parliament cannot be arrested in a civil case, 40 days before the commencement of the session or committee meeting and 40 days thereafter. This privilege is already incorporated under section 135A of the Civil Procedure Code.

However, in criminal matters, MPs are not on a different footing than a common citizen. "It means that an MP does not enjoy any immunity from being arrested in a criminal case during the session or otherwise," Mr. Naidu said.

He recounted a ruling given in 1966 by Dr. Zakir Husain that said, "Members of Parliament do enjoy certain privileges so that they can perform their duties. One such privilege is freedom from arrest when Parliament is in session. This privilege of freedom from arrest is limited only to civil cases and has not been allowed to interfere in the administration of criminal proceedings."

Mr. Naidu asked the members to recall an observation made earlier by him in which he said, "No member should avoid appearing before any investigating agency when she or he is called upon to do so by citing reason of House duty. As lawmakers, it is our bounden duty to respect the law and legal procedures. It applies to all, in all cases, because you can only inform that the House is in session, seeking further date, but you cannot avoid the enforcement agencies or their summons or notices."

# Addressing the challenges in new-age digital commerce

Online Dispute Resolution, or ODR, can help mitigate litigation risk and provide insights into consumer problems



BHAVEN SHAH &  
SIDHARTH KAPOOR

India's consumer behaviour has experienced a radical transformation at the most fundamental levels. The rise in smartphone use fuelled by affordable data plans has catalysed an online revolution in the country. The novel coronavirus pandemic has further accelerated the process of digital inclusion, and it is now not only routine to transact online and have food, personal care items or anything else delivered at the one's doorstep, but it is also common to learn online, have medical consultations online, and even resolve disputes online.

These realisations have given India the opportunity to disrupt the status quo with its innovative abilities. Systems such as the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) and Aadhaar, the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission have reengineered markets.

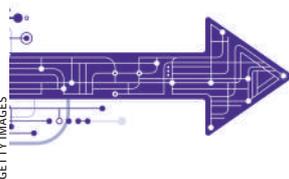
Despite the rapid advancement of digital platforms on the one hand and the pervasiveness of the Internet-enabled phone on the other, small enterprises such as local *kirana* stores have not gained from this. Online purchases from "near and now" inventory from the local store remain in a digital vacuum. This is because, to sell on numerous platforms, sellers must

maintain a separate infrastructure, which only adds costs and limits participation. The distinct terms and conditions of each platform further limit the sellers' flexibility. Consequently, small and medium-sized businesses have lost their freedom to choose and participate in the country's e-commerce system at their will and on their terms. Alarming, centralising digital commerce transactions on a single platform creates a single point of failure.

## Wider choice and access

Given this objective, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) of the Government of India established the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) to level the playing field by developing open e-commerce and enabling access to small businesses and dealers. The ONDC network makes it possible for products and services from all participating e-commerce platforms to be displayed in search results across all network apps. For instance, a consumer shopping for a product on an e-commerce app named "X" would also receive results from e-commerce app named "Y", if both X and Y integrated their platforms with the ONDC. This achieves the dual objective of wider choice for consumers on the one hand and access to a wider consumer base for sellers on the other.

The ONDC began its pilot in five cities in April 2022, i.e., New Delhi, Bengaluru, Coimbatore, Bhopal and Shillong. Currently, the pilot has expanded to 18 cities, and there are immediate plans to add



more cities. With India's e-commerce industry set to reach \$200 billion by 2027, this shift from a platform-centric paradigm to democratisation of the nation's online market will catalyse the inclusion of millions of small business owners and *kirana* businesses.

## Better outcomes

Disputes will be the obvious by-product of this e-commerce revolution. Therefore, it is imperative to support this initiative with a modern-day, cost-effective, timely and high-speed dispute resolution system. The framework must adequately and efficiently cater to facets such as participants residing or operating in different geographic regions and the mass prevalence of low-value online transactions. Online Dispute Resolution, or ODR as it is popularly called, has the propensity to work alongside the incumbent setup and deliver quick, affordable and enforceable outcomes. The ODR is not restricted to the use of legal mechanisms such as mediation, conciliation and arbitration in an online environment but can be tailored for the specific use case keeping the participants in mind. While the ODR commonly involves case management systems, integration of communication technologies such as email, SMS, WhatsApp, In-

teractive Voice Response, audio/video conferencing, overtime and with appropriate data sets in place, it can also involve advanced automation, the use of technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning to enable resolutions at the same time as it would take to initiate a transaction over the network.

From making dispute resolution simple to handling complex multi-party disputes; from 24x7 accessibility from the remotest regions to availability in regional languages; from enabling a safe and secure online infrastructure to ensuring minimal touchpoints, the ODR can not only digitise the entire value chain but can also facilitate an enhanced user experience.

Many e-commerce companies have turned to the ODR with the realisation that in order to maximise transactions it is important to ensure a positive dispute resolution experience. For example, the eBay Resolution Center uses the ODR and resolves over 60 million disputes between small traders every year through a platform that enables dealers and purchasers to directly communicate and, for the most part, without the assistance of a third party. Alibaba, one of the world's largest retailers and e-commerce companies, too has adopted the ODR to resolve disputes arising out of transactions over the platform.

## There is growing adoption

The ODR is no more a distant dream for India as well. Governments, regulators and private enterprises have been adopting and encouraging its use. For instance,

the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has mandated platforms in the UPI ecosystem to adopt the ODR for complaints and grievances connected to failed transactions. Ingram, SEBI SCORES (or the Securities and Exchange Board of India SEBI Complaints REDress System), RBI CMS (or the Reserve Bank of India Complaint Management System), MahaRERA (or the Maharashtra Real Estate Regulatory Authority), MSME Samadhaan (or the Micro Small and Medium Enterprises Delayed Payment Monitoring System), and RTIOnline (or the Right to Information Online) are other examples of ODR systems that are widely used in the country.

The ODR will help mitigate litigation risk and provide valuable insights into problems faced by consumers. The courts and consumer forums can do away with matters which do not warrant their intervention, thus easing the judicial logjam. Consumers are provided with another choice for effective redress of their grievances, thereby building trust, confidence and brand loyalty. A dispute resolution framework that includes a customised ODR process can play a role in the network achieving its steep five-year target of adding \$48 billion in gross merchandise value to India's e-commerce market, a network of 90 crore buyers and 12 crore sellers with the least hiccups.

*Bhaven Shah is the co-founder of Presolv360, an online dispute resolution company. Sidharth Kapoor is an advocate at the Delhi High Court and works with Presolv360*

# Banks cannot always rely on RBI to fund credit offtake: Das

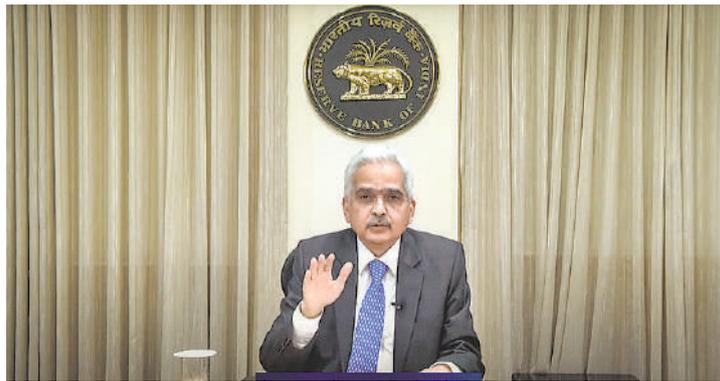
Lenders need to mobilise more deposits to aid credit growth, says RBI Governor

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das on Friday said banks could not perennially rely on the central bank's money to support credit offtake and needed to mobilise more deposits to aid credit growth.

He said banks had already begun to pass on the increase in repo rates to depositors and that the trend was expected to continue.

"When there is a credit offtake, banks can sustain and support that credit offtake only if they have higher deposits," Mr. Das told reporters during the post-policy meeting. "They cannot be relying on the central bank money on a perennial basis



**Ripple effect:** Banks have already started to raise deposit rates and the trend is expected to continue, says Das ■PTI

to support credit offtake ... they have to mobilise their own resources and funds."

### Third in a row

Friday's increase in the repo rate by 50 bps to 5.4% was the third increase in a row by

the RBI since May in its fight against inflation which has been hovering above the central bank's upper tolerance band of 4-6%. Retail inflation was 7.01% for June.

In May, RBI had raised the repo rate by 40 basis points

(bps) and increased it again by 50 bps in June.

RBI Deputy Governor Michael Patra said there had been very aggressive deposit mobilisation starting with bulk deposits. "We expect deposit mobilisation to catch up with the credit very quickly," he said.

In the fortnight ended July 15, bank credit grew 12.89% and deposits by 8.35%.

Asked whether there was concern about higher amounts of bad loans being written off by banks, compared with recoveries and upgradation, Deputy Governor M.K. Jain clarified that these were prudential write-offs without forgoing the right to recovery.

# 'Rate hike may hit home sales'

Costlier loans, rising input costs to impact sales: Anarock

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India's decision to raise interest rates will impact housing sales, according to top officials of real estate consulting firms and developers.

"With the hike of 50 bps in policy rates, home loan lending rates would now edge further into the red zone," said Anuj Puri, chairman, Anarock Group.

"This whammy comes along with the inflationary trends of primary raw materials, including cement, steel, labour that have recently led to a rise in property prices. Together, these factors will impact residential sales," he added.

"For the real estate sector specifically, the third subsequent rate rise will



mean a deterioration of affordability and may impact homebuyers' sentiments," said Shishir Bajjal, CMD, Knight Frank India.

## **Shrinking affordability**

"With the cumulative rate hikes until today, assuming complete transmission, a prospective homebuyer's affordability shrinks by around 11% (i.e. the ability to purchase a house of ₹1 crore value shrinks to ₹89

lakh now)," he added. Developers were likely to undertake mitigating measures to soften the blow on homebuyer affordability.

"There has been an increase in appetite for home ownership post the pandemic, and with the upcoming festive season, it might generally withstand the marginal changes in loan rates," said Anshuman Magazine, chairman and CEO - India, South East Asia, Middle East & Africa, CBRE.

"Sales in the real estate sector are mainly funded through retail financial institutions and we expect that marginal changes will have a minimal impact on buying decisions," said M. Murali, CMD, Shriram Properties Ltd.

# RBI move shows intent to bring down inflation, says SBI's Khara

## Retaining FY23 growth outlook encouraging: FICCI chief

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
MUMBAI

State Bank of India (SBI) chairman Dinesh Khara said the RBI policy statement reaffirmed the commitment to bring inflation down further and ensure financial stability in markets.

"RBI... has harmonised key measures, ensuring the economy remains cushioned to the maximum extent from the impact of inflation in everyday lives," Mr. Khara said.

"Developmental measures are largely aimed at ensuring broad-based participation in G-Secs and the foreign exchange market," he added.

Yes Bank chief economist

 **Moderation in commodity prices may offer some respite on inflation**

SANJIV MEHTA  
FICCI president

Indranil Pan said with the trajectory of CPI inflation pointing downwards, he expected the RBI to moderate the pace of rate increases and "raise the repo rate by 25-35 bps in September and 25 bps in December to 5.9-6% and pause thereafter to assess the growth-inflation dynamics".

Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) president Sanjiv Mehta said inflation had been above the comfort

range of the central bank but, "the recent moderation in global commodity prices should hopefully offer some respite going ahead".

**'Uncertainty remains'**

"Uncertainty on the external front remains," Mr. Mehta said. "Nonetheless, the central bank has retained the growth forecast... at 7.2% – which is encouraging."

On the RBI's decision to enable Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS) to accept cross-border inward bill payments, Pranay Jhaveri, MD – India & South Asia, Euronet Worldwide, said, "It is a step in the right direction... as it may get additional foreign exchange into the country".

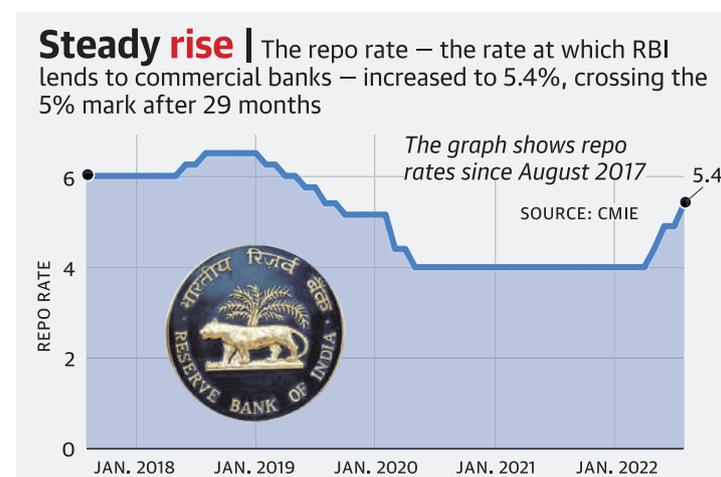
# RBI raises rates, vows nimble policy

Policy repo rate raised by 50 basis points to 5.4%

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
MUMBAI

With inflation remaining at 'elevated levels', the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India unanimously decided to raise the policy repo rate by 50 basis points (bps) to 5.4%.

"Inflation is projected to remain above the upper tolerance level of 6% through the first three quarters of 2022-23, entailing the risk of destabilising inflation expectations and triggering second round effects," the MPC said in a statement, explaining the rationale for its decision on Friday. "Given the elevated level of inflation and resilience in domestic economic activity... further calibrated monetary policy action is needed to contain inflationary pressures, pull



back headline inflation within the tolerance band closer to the target, and keep inflation expectations anchored so as to ensure that growth is sustained," it added.

The MPC also said it would remain focused on

"withdrawal of accommodation" to ensure that inflation remains within the target, while supporting growth.

The RBI retained its inflation and GDP growth projections for the current fiscal year ending in March 2023 at 6.7% and 7.2%, respectively.

Addressing a press conference, Governor Shaktikanta Das said the RBI would use a "whatever-it-takes" approach to ensure a safe and soft landing for the economy despite the uncertainties.

The policy response to the unfolding economic situation would be "calibrated, measured and nimble", Mr. Das said.

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# RBI raises repo rates, vows nimble policy



“In an ocean of high turbulence... Indian economy is an island of microeconomic and financial stability,” Mr. Das asserted.

“Economic growth is resilient and all this [financial stability, microeconomic stability, resilience of growth] has become possible despite two Black Swan events [pandemic and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine] happening one after the other and despite multiple shocks,” Mr. Das said.

Observing that there were signs that Consumer Price inflation (CPI) had peaked and was expected to moderate going into the fourth quarter, Mr. Das said, “but inflation still remains at

uncomfortable and unacceptably high levels.”

“And therefore, monetary policy has to act as there are also several uncertainties clouding the outlook,” he added.

Mr. Das said the excess liquidity in the system was being gradually brought down.

On the external sector, Mr. Das said the Current Account Deficit (CAD) would remain within manageable limits and the RBI had the ability to finance the CAD. “The forex reserves remain strong and RBI will effectively deal with excess volatility of the exchange rate and the umbrella remains strong,” he added.

# Sticking to commitments

India must set an example by balancing energy use and climate goals

**A**head of the 27th Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC (COP 27), in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, in November, the Union Cabinet has approved India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), a formal statement detailing its action plan to address climate change. The 2015 Paris Agreement requires countries to spell out a pathway to ensure the globe does not heat beyond 2°C, and endeavour to keep it below 1.5°C by 2100. The subsequent COPs are a quibbling arena where countries coax, cajole and make compromises on the cuts they can undertake over multi-decadal timelines with the least impact on their developmental priorities. While the end product of the COP is a joint agreement, signed by all member countries, the real business begins after, where countries must submit NDCs every five years, mapping what will be done post 2020 to stem fossil-fuel emissions. India's first NDC, in 2015, specified eight targets, the most salient of them being reducing the emissions intensity of GDP by 33%-35% (of 2005 levels) by 2030, having 40% of its installed electricity capacity sourced from renewable energy, and creating an additional carbon sink of 2.5-3 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent through forest and tree cover by 2030. Being a large, populous country, India has high net emissions but low per-capita emissions. It has also, by participating in COPs for decades, made the case that the existing climate crisis is largely due to industrialisation by the U.S. and developed European countries since 1850. However, years of negotiations, international pressure and clearer evidence of the multi-dimensional impact from climate change have seen India agree to move away from fossil fuels over time.

At COP 26 in Glasgow in 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid out five commitments, or 'Panchamrit', as the Government references it, which included India increasing its non-fossil energy capacity to 500 GW by 2030 and achieving "Net Zero" by 2070, or no net carbon dioxide emitted from energy sources. However, the press statement on the Cabinet decision was silent on whether India would cut emissions by a billion tons and on creating carbon sinks. While India is within its right to specify its emissions pathway, it should not – at any forum – promise more than what it can deliver as this undermines the moral authority that India brings to future negotiations. India has expressed its intent, via several legislations, to use energy efficiently and many of its biggest corporations have committed to shifting away from polluting energy sources. Going ahead, these should be grounds for India, at its pace, to be an exemplar for balancing energy use, development and meeting climate goals.

## A fresh opportunity

Bill's withdrawal is a chance to check lacunae,  
but a data protection law brooks no delay

The stated reason for the Government's withdrawal of the Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019, was that it will come up with a "comprehensive legal framework" on data privacy and Internet regulation. The Government has averred that a new draft will be in sync with the principles of privacy, in line with Supreme Court guidelines based on the landmark judgment on privacy, i.e., *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy vs Union of India*, and would consider the Joint Committee of Parliament's recommendations on the framework to regulate the digital ecosystem. The 2019 Bill had been rightly criticised by stakeholders, including Justice B.N. Srikrishna – he chaired a committee of experts that had authored a draft bill in 2018 – for overemphasising the national security angle, among other reasons. The 2019 Bill diverged from the Srikrishna Committee Draft in the selection of the chairperson and members of the Data Protection Authority (DPA) that shall protect the interests of data principals, and in the leeway given to the Union government to exempt its agencies from the application of the Act. The 2018 draft Bill allowed for judicial oversight in the selection process for the DPA, while the 2019 Bill limited the composition to the executive. The 2018 Bill allowed for exemptions to be granted to state institutions from acquiring informed consent from data principals or to process data in the case of matters relating only to the "security of the state"; it also called for a law to provide for "parliamentary oversight and judicial approval of non-consensual access to personal data". In contrast, the 2019 Bill added "public order" as a reason to exempt a government agency from the Act, besides only providing for these reasons to be recorded in writing.

By choosing to withdraw the Bill, it is unclear whether the Government would address the demand for a realignment of the legislation with the 2018 draft Bill that came about after extensive consultations with civil society. Or whether this would be more in line with the JPC report, which has also been criticised by civil society for retaining provisions that allow the Government access to private data of citizens without sufficient safeguards. Dissent notes to the JPC report, by Congress MP Jairam Ramesh for example, went on to criticise the leeway granted to the Government on exemptions and how the ground of "public order" and not "security of the state" was liable for misuse. It is not clear if the Bill's withdrawal is linked to opposition to mandatory "data localisation" from multinational Internet companies. Meanwhile, the lack of a proper data protection law in the country is an anomaly when compared with major countries. If the Government is indeed committed to a comprehensive legal framework on data privacy and protection, it must revert to the baseline provided in the Justice Srikrishna Committee recommendations and enact a law within a reasonable timeline.

# Bill to punish 'religious animosity' mooted in LS

## It calls for body to monitor publishers

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

NEW DELHI

BJP MP Sunil Kumar Singh on Friday introduced a private member's Bill in the Lok Sabha to set up an agency which will be devoted to the prohibition of publication and dissemination of objectionable material on religion, with punitive action for such publication being no less than two years and up to five years imprisonment, and to derecognise any publisher or advertising agency involved in it.

"There has been a sud-

den rise in the case of publication and dissemination of objectionable material on religion in the country. Certain mischievous elements try to hurt the religious sentiments of citizens of the country with support from certain publishers and advertising agencies," the Bill states.

The bill is interesting in that it comes at a time when several cases have been filed in different parts of the country over hurting the religious sentiments of one group or the other.

# SC asks Centre to follow up on its lynching ruling

## Plea seeks to stop attacks on Christians

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

Hearing a plea to intervene against attacks on Christian establishments across the country, the Supreme Court on Friday asked the Centre to find out whether States are following its 2018 judgment which puts the onus on the police to prevent communal violence and lynchings.

The query from a Bench led by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud came in response to a petition filed by Archbishop of Bangalore Diocese Dr. Peter Machado, represented by senior advocate Colin Gonsalves, who submitted that there were around 505 attacks on the religious community in the past several months alone.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, for the Centre, sought time to file a preliminary affidavit. The court

gave the government till Monday.

“We had laid a framework to deal with such cases in the Tehseen Poonawala judgment. We want to know whether our directions in the judgment are being followed by States... That will be our key area of focus,” Justice Chandrachud addressed Mr. Mehta.

Mr. Gonsalves said the judgment was in the context of lynchings. “What we want is a similar decision. It can be done by tweaking that judgment,” he suggested.

The July 2018 judgment had laid down several preventive, remedial and punitive measures to combat the crime of lynching. Condemning mob lynchings as “horrendous acts of mobocracy”, the court had asked the Parliament to make lynching a separate offence.

# Lessons for India from the Taiwan standoff

New Delhi must note that Taiwan's close economic links with China have not stopped Taipei from asserting its rights



HAPPYMON JACOB

The brief visit by the United States House Speaker, Nancy Pelosi, to Taiwan, against stern warnings issued by China, has the potential to increase the already deteriorating relationship between the U.S. and China, with major implications for Taiwan. For China, its claims about a rising superpower might ring hollow if it is unable to unify its claimed territories, in particular Taiwan. For the U.S., it is about re-establishing steadily-diminishing American credibility in the eyes of its friends and foes. For Taiwan, it is about standing up to Chinese bullying and making its red lines clear to Beijing. The crisis that began with the visit of Ms. Pelosi to Taipei is still unfolding and there is little clarity today on how it will wind down even though it is unlikely to lead to a full-scale invasion of Taiwan or a war between China and the U.S.

For those of us in India watching the events as they unfold around Taiwan, there are valuable lessons to be learnt. To begin with, consider this. A small island of 23 million people has decided to stand up to one of the strongest military and economic powers on the planet, braving existential consequences. India is a far more powerful nation armed with nuclear weapons and with a 1.4 million standing military against whom China has only marginal territorial claims. And yet, India continues to be hesitant about calling China's bluff.

To be fair, there is growing recognition in New Delhi that it is important to meet the challenge posed by a belligerent China, but there appears to be a lack of clarity

on how to meet this challenge. To that extent, the Taiwan crisis offers New Delhi three lessons, at the very least.

## Unambiguous messaging

The most important lesson from the Taiwan standoff for policymakers in New Delhi is the importance of articulating red lines and sovereign positions in an unambiguous manner. New Delhi needs to unambiguously highlight the threat from China and the sources of such a threat. Any absence of such clarity will be cleverly utilised by Beijing to push Indian limits, as we have already seen. More pertinently, Beijing, like everyone else analysing the Indian reactions to the standoff at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in 2020, realises that one of the major reasons behind New Delhi's rather muddled articulation of the Chinese aggression two years ago is domestic political calculations.

Till date, India's leadership has not clarified to the country what really went on at the border in 2020 and whether China continues to be in illegal occupation of Indian territory. When domestic political calculations prevent India's leaders from acknowledging the China threat, it provides Beijing the cover of ambiguity to pursue its territorial claims *vis-à-vis* India.

Moreover, Chinese Psy-Ops will continue to exploit the absence of a national position or narrative in India about the threat that China poses. Even worse, ambiguous messaging by India also confuses its friends in the international community: If India does not clearly articulate that China is in illegal occupation of its territory, how can it expect its friends in the international community to support India diplomatically or otherwise? In other words, India's current policy of 'hide and seek' *vis-à-vis* China amounts to poor messaging, and confusing to its own people as well as the larger in-



ternational community, and is therefore counterproductive.

## Appeasement is bad strategy

Taiwan could have avoided the ongoing confrontation and the economic blockade during Chinese retaliatory military exercises around its territory by avoiding Ms. Pelosi's visit to Taipei, or perhaps even keeping it low key. Instead, it chose to go ahead with the visit, with high-profile meetings and statements in full public view, thereby making it clear to China that it is unwilling to back down from its declared aims, no matter what the consequences were. Appeasement of China, Taiwan knows, is not the answer to Beijing's aggression.

China today is a revisionist power, challenging the regional order; is intent on using force to meet its strategic objectives, and is desirous of reshaping the regional balance of power to suit its interests. With such a power, appeasement might work in the short term, but will invariably backfire over the long term. If so, we in India may be guilty of playing into Chinese hands by committing four mistakes.

First, India's policy of meeting/hosting Chinese leaders while the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) continue(d) to violate established territorial norms on the LAC is a deeply flawed one. Recall the stand-off at Demchok and Chumar during Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to India in 2014, and the visit of the Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, earlier this year, to India again, even as Chinese troops continue to be in occupation of Indian territory. While one

could argue that diplomacy must go on despite the problems on the border, there is indeed a danger of Beijing viewing such diplomacy as examples of India's acquiescence despite provocations.

The second mistake is unilaterally catering to Chinese sensitivities even during the standoffs between the two militaries. For instance, the parliamentary delegation visits and legislature-level dialogues between India and Taiwan have not taken place since 2017, coinciding with the Doklam standoff which took place that year. Why bother respecting Chinese political sensitivities around Taiwan or Tibet when it is in illegal occupation of Indian territory, and seeks more territory from India?

The third mistake was the soft-peddling of the Quad (Australia, Japan, India and the United States) when China objected to it. During the 2000s, India (as well as Australia) decided to soft-peddle the Quad in the face of strong Chinese objections. It is only in the last two years or so that we have witnessed renewed enthusiasm around the Quad. In retrospect, appeasing Beijing by almost abandoning the Quad was bad strategy.

Perhaps the gravest mistake India has made has been the non-acknowledgement of the PLA's intrusion into Indian territory in 2020, and its capture and occupation of Indian territory along the LAC since. Let us be clear: unwilling to acknowledge China's illegal occupation of Indian territory along the LAC, for whatever reason, amounts to an ill-advised appeasement strategy, which must end.

## Flawed argument

It is often argued that the growing economic and trading relationship between India and China is reason enough to ensure that tensions between the two sides do not escalate, and that the two sides must find ways of co-existing peacefully. While it appears to be a sound ar-

gument, let me pose that argument somewhat differently: is the economic relationship reason enough for India to continue to ignore recurring Chinese incursions on the LAC and keep making territorial compromises? Put differently, given that the economic relationship is a two-way process and that, as a matter of fact, the trade deficit is in China's favour, China too has a lot to lose from a damaged trade relationship with India. More so, if the Taiwan example (as well as the India-China standoff in 2020) is anything to go by, trade can continue to take place despite tensions and without India making any compromises *vis-à-vis* its sovereign claims.

Consider this. Mainland China is Taiwan's largest trading partner, and China has an annual trade deficit of around \$80 billion to \$130 billion with Taiwan. More so, investments from Taiwan to China were to the tune of \$198.3 billion by 2021, whereas investments from mainland China to Taiwan were only \$2.5 billion from 2009 to 2021. In other words, Taiwan knows that despite the sabre-rattling by Beijing, given the economic interdependence between the two sides, China is unlikely to stop trading with Taiwan for, after all, China is dependent on the semi-conductors produced in Taiwan in a big way.

In other words, the close economic relationship with China has not stopped Taiwan from asserting its rights, nor has it backed down under Chinese threats. So, should India, a far bigger economy and a military power, buckle under Chinese pressure worrying about the economic relationship with China? India for sure should do business with China, but not on China's own terms.

Happymon Jacob is Associate Professor, Centre for International Politics, Organisation and Disarmament, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

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| 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;  |
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| J                         | Separation of powers between various organs dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions;   |
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| F                               | Moral and political attitudes;   |
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| J                               | Contributions of moral thinkers and philosophers from India and world.   |
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