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DAILY NEWS ANALYSIS

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FOREWORD

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

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

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

CONTENTS

- GSP 01 A News - A century later, Nizam's sword set to return to India Part I
- GSP 01 A News - A century later, Nizam's sword set to return to India Part II
- GSP 02 E Editorials - The ambit of fraternity and the wages of oblivion
- GSP 02 E News - Will EWS quota cut share of pie of those competing on merit, asks CJ
- GSP 02 M Editorials - Rules for identifying criminals
- GSP 03 A Editorials - Trade tactics
- GSP 03 A News - ADB pares India FY23 GDP growth forecast to 7%, from 7.5%
- GSP 03 A News - Bank GNPA's may hit decadal low of 4% in FY24 Crisil Ratings
- GSP 03 A News - Cabinet approves uniform 50% support for chip, display units
- GSP 03 A News - Recession unlikely to hit India, as it's 'not so coupled' with global economy S&P
- GSP 03 A News - With ₹ 19,500-crore PLI plan, sun shines on solar cell units
- GSP 03 K News - At international meet, a push for framework on farmers' rights
- GSP 03 L News - ISRO successfully tests hybrid propulsion system, to aid future technologies
- GSP 03 U Editorials - A risky new status quo
- GSP 03 W News - Bihar free of Naxal presence; the fight is in the last stages in Jharkhand, says CRPF chief
- GSP 03 W News - NSCN(I-M) seeks meet with PM over Naga issue

A century later, Nizam's sword set to return to India

SPECIAL

Serish Nanisetti

HYDERABAD

A 14th-century ceremonial sword that was sold in Hyderabad to a British General in the early 20th century is set to return to India. The sword is among the seven objects being repatriated by Glasgow Life, which manages Glasgow's museums.

While the objects were described as stolen, the acquisition document for the sword says it was purchased from Maharaja Kishen Pershad.

Bought in 1905

Jonathon Reilly, communications officer of Glasgow Life, said: "The *tulwar*



Back soon: The 14th-century serpent-shaped sword on display during a transfer of ownership ceremony in Glasgow last month.

(sword) was purchased in 1905 by General Sir Archibald Hunter, Commander-in-Chief, Bombay Command (1903-1907), from Maharaja Sir Kishen Pershad Bahadur Yamin us-Sultanat, the Prime Minister of Hyderabad. The *tulwar* was donated by Sir Hunter's nephew, Mr. Ar-

chibald Hunter Service, to Glasgow Life museums' collections in 1978."

The sword, shaped like a snake, has serrated edges and a damascene pattern, with gold etchings of an elephant and tigers.

CONTINUED ON

» PAGE 12

Nizam's sword set to return to India

According to the museum documentation, the sword was “exhibited by Mahbub Ali Khan, Asaf Jah VI, Nizam of Hyderabad (1896-1911) at the 1903 Delhi or Imperial Durbar, a ceremonial reception held to commemorate the coronation of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra as Emperor and Empress of India”.

“The Salar Jung Museum in Hyderabad is the perfect repository for the sword as it is from this region. However, we are yet to get intimation about the repatriated object,” says SJM director A. Nagender Reddy. The SJM has a gallery dedicated to arms and armoury that has swords, knives, and battle axes belonging to the Mughals, Nizams and other rulers of India.

How this ceremonial sword exhibited by Nizam Osman Ali Khan was later sold by his prime minister Maharaja Kishen Pershad remains a mystery. “The affection Mahbub Ali Khan had for Maharaja Kishen Pershad is well known. The Maharaja was wealthy. He might have gifted the sword to the British officer,” says historian Sajjad Shahid.

Kishen Pershad hailed from the family of Maharaja Chandoo Lal, who was the prime minister for Nizam Sikander Jah twice. Kishen Pershad was known for his munificence where he was known to throw out coins to people chasing his motorcar.

The ambit of fraternity and the wages of oblivion

These principles of liberty equality and fraternity are not to be treated as separate items in a trinity. They form a union of trinity in the sense that to divorce one from the other is to defeat the very purpose of democracy,' said B.R. Ambedkar in the Constituent Assembly, in 1949.

It is often forgotten that 'fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation' is, along with Justice, Liberty and Equality, among the basic values inscribed in the Preamble of the Constitution of India whose first line asserts, 'We, the People of India' have solemnly resolved to 'secure' to all the citizens of India.

The responsibility of the individual citizen

B.R. Ambedkar provided its rationale with remarkable foresight: 'We must begin by acknowledging the fact there is a complete absence of two things in Indian society. One of these is equality' and as a result of it we would enter into 'a life of contradictions' on January 26, 1950.

However, practical adherence to this commitment was given shape only by the Forty-Second Amendment (1976) in Article 51A (e) on Fundamental Duties.

It makes it the duty of every citizen of India 'to promote harmony and the spirit of common among all the people of India, transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities.

Significantly, the responsibility for bringing this about does not rest with the state but seems to be the responsibility of the individual citizen. We, therefore, need to comprehend the meaning



Hamid Ansari

is the former Vice President of India, 2007-2017

It is often forgotten that 'fraternity' is among the basic values inscribed in the Preamble of the Constitution of India

and relevance of this pious wish. How has it become a political principle of relevance?

A poet summed it up neatly: *Unka jo aqeeda hai who ahl-e-sayaaasat jaanen; Mera paigham mohabbat hai, jahaan tak pahunche* (The politicians' creed, the politicians know/ (Mine is the message of love, be it heard afar)

The idea of fraternity is based on the view that people have responsibilities to each other. It was defined after the French Revolution in the following terms: 'Do not do to others what you would not want them to do to you; do constantly to others the good which you would wish to receive from them.' The vagueness of the definition suggests that, despite its place in the revolutionary slogan, the idea of fraternity was not clearly understood. It is generally seen as an emotion rather than a principle.

In the Indian context however, as understood and articulated by B.R. Ambedkar, there is a sense of the imperative in the emotion. This is reflected in the wording of this section of the Preamble where the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation both necessitate this emotion, and thereby lend a sense of urgency to it. It thus becomes an essential ingredient of citizenship that can be evaded or neglected at the cost of the concept itself.

The shape of inequality

An aggravating factor, often overlooked, is the shape that inequality takes in different segments of our society. It is economic on one plane; on others it is regional, caste and religious. Some are spelt out, others understated, still others assumed. Sociologists have identified nine categories of people who are determined to be socially and/or politically and/or economically excluded. These particularly include Dalits, Adivasis, women and religious minorities.

Recent studies on religious minorities who constitute around 20% of India's population have traced discrimination relating to them to perceptions that relate to the very origins of thinking that brought about the partition of August 1947. They argue that violence was not merely accidental but integral to the foundation of the nation and that the need for fraternity coexisted with the imperative need for restoring social cohesion in segments of society.

Much blame for the haste displayed by decision-makers has been written about on the basis of the documentation made available subsequently and, at this distance of time, its validity cannot be dismissed altogether.

A primary concern of the Constitution-makers related to cohesion and integration of the units of

the new Republic formally described as 'A Union of States'. In the words of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, 'the inspiration and the stimulus came from above rather than from below and unless the transplanted growth takes a healthy root in the soil, there will be a danger of collapse and chaos.' This was amplified by V.P. Menon as the integration 'of the minds of the people'.

In a speech in the Constituent Assembly on December 22, 1952, B.R. Ambedkar dwelt on what he called 'Conditions Precedent for the Successful Working of Democracy'. He listed these as: absence of glaring inequalities; presence of an opposition; equality of law and administration; observance of constitutional morality; avoidance of tyranny of majority over minority; a functioning of moral order in society, and public conscience.

Over time, uneven development has characterised the States of the Indian Union. Regional and linguistic diversity characterises them. And so does uneven economic development and progress, resulting in uneven levels of education, employment, social cohesion and contentment.

Question for the leadership

Seventy-five years on, a candid assessment of the state of the Republic makes us cogitate on evidence of regional diversity, assertion of linguistic identity and emergence of diverging political orientations. While the first two are physical and social realities, the third is a product of thriving diversity. Each is real, each is also disconcerting from the viewpoint of federal governance hitherto practised, and each seeks accommodation in a divergent framework.

Where does this take fraternity? Article 51A(e) of the Constitution does not differentiate between citizens on any of the categories mentioned above and makes it an all-encompassing duty. Its ambit therefore is universal; its observance, by the same logic, has to begin at the base of the ladder of citizenship rather than the top but does not spare the leadership from the obligation to promote and practise it.

Has this been done in practice? How often have social and political leaders of opinion promoted fraternity, incidentally or specifically, locally, within the region or nationally? The record is depressing; hence the ease with which non-fraternal patterns of behaviour seem to emerge in our society. Does this promote national integration, rhetoric apart? Was the bloodshed of 1947 ('10 million or one in every 35 persons in the subcontinent') a forerunner of lesser ones that followed?



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Will EWS quota cut share of pie of those competing on merit, asks CJI

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Has the government ended up “diminishing” the opportunities of candidates who compete for jobs and seats in government institutions purely on merit by carving out a 10% quota for economically weaker sections (EWS) from the general category, a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court asked the Centre on Wednesday.

A five-judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India U.U. Lalit said 50% academic seats and jobs in the general category were open to all, including the creamy layer of the Other Backward Classes (OBC), Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and forward classes.

The court questioned



the necessity for the state’s “affirmative action” to carve out an EWS quota from the general or unreserved category. The Bench noted that those in the general category who were below the poverty line came to only one-sixth of the total general population.

The questions came after Attorney-General K.K. Venugopal, for the Centre, submitted that the EWS quota was not an “addi-

 By taking 10% of this 50% and reducing it to 40%, are you not diminishing the chances of a meritorious candidate to compete in that arena?

U.U. LALIT
Chief Justice of India

tion” to the 50% caste-based quota already available to backward classes, but was cut from the remaining 50% seats in the “general, open or non-reserved category”.

“The 50% available in the general category is open to all. Anybody – be they from the SC, ST or OBC or non-reserved classes – can compete purely on the basis of merit. By taking 10% of this 50% and reducing it to 40%, are you

not diminishing the chances of a meritorious candidate to compete in that arena? Are you not reducing the share of the pie for those persons who could have competed on the basis of their own individual merit and got the seats?” the Chief Justice asked Mr. Venugopal.

The EWS quota, introduced through the 103rd Constitutional Amendment, excludes the poorest of the poor among the OBC/ST/SC communities, saying they already have access to the 50% quota for backward classes.

But the court pointed out that the creamy layer members of the OBC communities would be competing in the general category. Taking 10% from the open category would affect them too.

Rules for identifying criminals

What do the recently notified rules of the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022 state? Is there scope for misuse?

EXPLAINER

Vijaita Singh

The story so far:

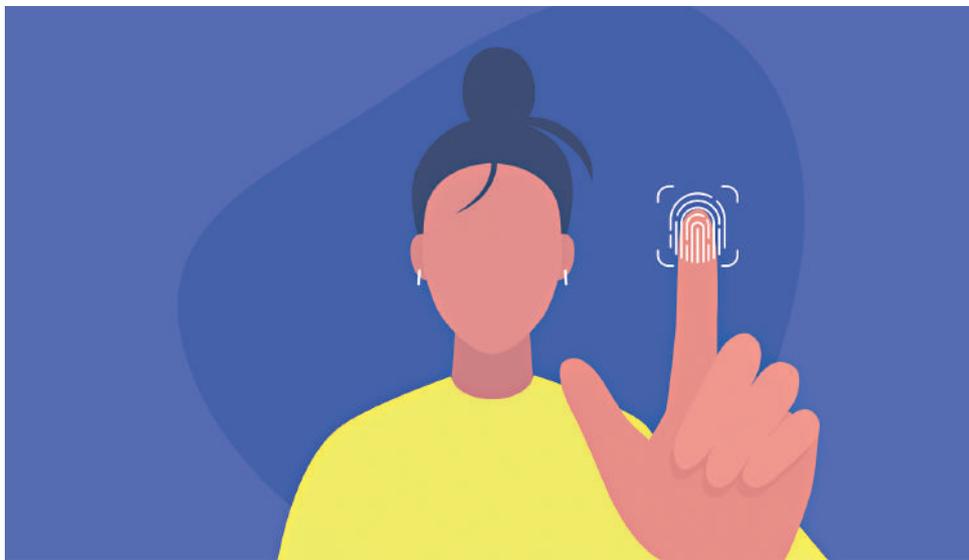
On September 19, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) notified the rules governing The Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022. The Act was passed in March by the Parliament. Until rules are notified, an Act cannot be implemented or come into force. The legislation would enable police and central investigating agencies to collect, store and analyse physical and biological samples including retina and iris scan of arrested persons.

What is the legislation about?

The Act seeks to repeal the Identification of Prisoners Act, 1920, which is over 100-years-old. The old Act's scope was limited to capturing of finger impression, foot-print impressions and photographs of convicted prisoners and certain category of arrested and non-convicted persons on the orders of a Magistrate.

The Statement of Objects and Reasons of the bill when it was introduced in Parliament said that new "measurement" techniques being used in advanced countries are giving credible and reliable results and are recognised world over. It said that the 1920 Act does not provide for taking these body measurements as many of the techniques and technologies had not been developed then. The Act empowers a Magistrate to direct any person to give measurements, which till now was reserved for convicts and those involved in heinous crimes. It also enables the police upto the rank of a Head Constable to take measurements of any person who resists or refuses to give measurements.

As per the rules, "measurements" include finger-impressions, palm-print, foot-print, photographs, iris and retina scan, physical, biological samples and their analysis, behavioural attributes including signatures, handwriting or any other examination referred to in Section 53 or Section



53A of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974). Though it has not been specified, analysis of biological samples could also include DNA profiling.

What about concerns that the Act will be misused?

When the Bill was debated in Parliament in March this year, the Opposition members termed it "unconstitutional" and an attack on privacy as it allowed the record of samples of even political detainees.

However, the rules notified on September 19 state that samples of those detained under preventive Sections such as 107, 108, 109, 110, 144, 145 and 151 of the CrPC shall not be taken unless such person is charged or arrested in connection with any other offence punishable under any other law. It can also be taken if a person has been ordered to give security for his good behaviour for maintaining peace un-

der Section 117 of the said Code for a proceeding under the said Sections.

The rules do not mention the procedure to be adopted for convicted persons.

Who will be the repository of the data?

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) under MHA will be the one-stop agency for storing and preserving the data of arrested persons. The State governments can also store the data, but it shall provide compatible application programming interfaces for sharing the measurements or record of measurements with the NCRB. The rules state that the NCRB will issue Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for collection of measurements which would include specifications of the equipment or devices to be used, specifications and the digital and physical format of the measurements etc. The rules said that in

case any measurement is collected in physical form or in a non-standard digital format, it shall be converted into standard digital format and thereafter uploaded in the database as per the SOP. Only authorised users could upload the measurements in the central database in an encrypted format.

What are the provisions for destruction of records in case a suspect is acquitted?

The procedure for destruction and disposal of records are yet to be specified by the NCRB. The rules state that any request for destruction of records shall be made to the Nodal Officer who is to be nominated by the respective State Government. The nodal officer will recommend the destruction after verifying that such record of measurements is not linked with any other criminal cases.

THE GIST

On September 19, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) notified the rules governing The Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022. The Act was passed in March by the Parliament. Until rules are notified, an Act cannot be implemented or come into force.

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Trade tactics

Foreign trade policy revamp comes amid stuttering growth in key markets

The Government will release a new foreign trade policy in the coming week, that could include measures to help push up goods and services exports as well as rein in the runaway import bill. The current trade policy was introduced in 2015. When its five-year term ended a week after the national lockdown to curb the pandemic, it was extended for a year considering the extenuating circumstances. However, the old policy's extensions beyond March 2021, especially the current six-month stretch that drags its end-date to September 30, are not as understandable. Beginning the new policy in the middle of a financial year, unlike the traditional clean slate in a new fiscal year, is not ideal. Moreover, exports have been one of the few growth engines firing up the post-COVID recovery, so putting off a policy to bolster outbound shipments was baffling. Enunciating India's strategy to cash in on a world seeking to become less dependent on China would also enable exporters (and importers) to plan their investments ahead. Last January, a WTO-compliant export incentive scheme was kicked off to refund domestic taxes to exporters, but the rates were only notified months later with a few sectors left out. Despite this completely avoidable uncertainty, goods exports touched a record \$422 billion in 2021-22.

This year, the Government expects goods exports to hit at least \$450 billion, but growth has slipped to the low single digits over July and August, while imports have been over \$60 billion each month since March. A global growth slowdown and recession fears in Europe and the U.S. do not augur well; and though order books are still full, many buyers are seeking to defer deliveries. The new policy will have to find ways to provide a leg-up to exports and address some of industry's key concerns, including a buffer against rising interest rates. With revenues buoyant, it is also time to reconsider the stance to exclude key growth sectors such as pharma, chemicals, and iron and steel from the duty remission scheme. Having decided to keep away from the trade track of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for now, assertions that the Government has 'no bandwidth' left for new free trade pact negotiations though more countries are wooing it, and is seeking to slow talks with the Gulf Cooperation Council, are unnecessary. If there is a genuine constraint, a solution must be sought, perhaps, by roping in economic policy makers with residual bandwidth. But surely, there are better ways to drive home India's rising clout than by driving away potential partner countries, however small.

ADB pares India FY23 GDP growth forecast to 7%, from 7.5%

Lender says inflation has been more persistent than expected leading to sharper monetary tightening, and eroding consumers' purchasing power

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) cut its forecast for India's economic growth in 2022-23 to 7%, from 7.5% estimated in April, terming it a "modest downward revision" driven by higher-than-anticipated inflation and monetary tightening.

The lender also raised its inflation projection for India for this year to 6.7%, and widened the current account deficit (CAD) estimate to 3.8% of GDP. The ADB sees the CAD narrowing to 2.1% of GDP in 2023-24, while inflation is anticipated to slow to 5.8% as demand pressures from strengthening economic activity are seen offset by easing supply bottlenecks.

India's first-quarter growth of 13.5% reflected strong growth in services, but GDP growth forecasts were being revised downward as price pressures were expected to adversely impact domestic consumption and sluggish global demand and elevated oil prices would likely be a drag on net exports, the bank said. The ADB pegs FY24 growth at 7.2%.

Observing that inflation had turned out to be more persistent than expected, and led to a sharp tightening in monetary policy, the



Consumption dampener: ADB sees sticky core inflation adversely impacting spending over next 2 years if wages don't adjust. K.V.S. GIRI

ADB said price gains were eroding consumers' purchasing power. "Sticky core inflation will adversely impact spending over the next two years if wages fail to adjust," it warned.

"Subsidised fertiliser and gas, the free food distribution programme, and the excise duty cuts will help offset some of the effects of high inflation on consumers, but the tax on packaged food products will likely be a burden on consumers already dealing with rising inflation," the ADB noted in its update.

China concerns

China's economy would grow 3.3% in 2022, slower than the rest of developing Asia for the first time in three decades, the ADB said in an update to its Asia Development Outlook

(ADO) on Wednesday, less than the 5% forecast earlier, marred by lockdowns triggered by its zero-COVID strategy, property sector problems and weaker external demand.

South Asia outlook

The lower growth outlook for India along with a sharp contraction in Sri Lanka would translate into slower growth for South Asia, at 6.5% in 2022, from 7% projected earlier, the Asian lender said. India accounts for 80% of the region's economy.

The ADB also expects inflation in South Asia to be pushed up by higher energy and food costs to 8.1% in 2022, faster than the 6.5% estimated earlier.

"The revision mainly reflects the pattern of inflation in India," it added.

Bank GNPA's may hit decadal low of 4% in FY24: Crisil Ratings

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The gross non-performing assets (GNPAs) of banks is expected to improve 90 basis points (bps) to 5% this fiscal year-on-year, and another 100 bps to a decadal low of 4% by March 31, 2024, riding on post-pandemic economic recovery and higher credit growth, Crisil Ratings said.

The asset quality of the banking sector would also benefit from the proposed sale of NPAs to the National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd. (NARCL), it said.

Gross NPAs in MSME segment may rise to 10-11% by March 2024 from 9.3% as on March 31, 2022

However, not all segments would perform equally well, the agency said, adding the biggest improvement would be seen in the corporate segment, where gross NPAs may drop below 2% next fiscal from 16% as on March 31, 2018. Gross NPAs in the MSME segment may rise to 10-11% by March 2024 from 9.3% as on March 31, 2022.

Cabinet approves uniform 50% support for chip, display units

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved uniform fiscal support of 50% project cost for all technology formats for chip fabrication units under the scheme for development of semiconductor and display manufacturing.

The Cabinet had in December approved the programme for the sector with an outlay of ₹76,000 crore.

“Given the niche technology... the modified programme will also provide fiscal support of 50% of

The government said that the changes would help expedite investments in the semiconductor sector

capital expenditure in pari-passu mode for setting up of compound semiconductors / silicon photonics / sensors / discrete semiconductors fabs,” the Centre said in a statement.

The scheme had attracted many global semiconductor players and the changes would help expedite investments in chip manufacturing, it added.

Recession unlikely to hit India, as it's 'not so coupled' with global economy: S&P

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

Global rating agency S&P on Wednesday said even though the U.S. and the Euro zone are headed towards recession, India is unlikely to face the impact given the “not so coupled” nature of its economy with the global economy.

“Indian economy is a lot decoupled from the global economy than we normally think of, given its large domestic demand, even though you [India] are a net importer of energy. But



India has enough forex reserves and your companies have managed to maintain healthy balance sheets

PAUL F. GRUENWALD
S&P global chief economist and MD

you have enough forex reserves on one hand and your companies have managed to maintain healthy balance sheets,” Paul F. Gruenwald, S&P global

chief economist and MD, told reporters. In fact, India was never coupled fully with the global economy and so is relatively independent of global markets, he said, adding that a lot depends on how global fund flows behave if there is a recession in the U.S. and Europe.

Their inflation numbers continue to dodge monetary actions by their central banks as the gap between the U.S. core inflation target and the actual number is three times at 6%.

With ₹19,500-crore PLI plan, sun shines on solar cell units

The project is expected to save India close to ₹1.37 trillion in imports; Ministry of New and Renewable Energy is also anticipating direct investments of around ₹94,000 crore for the project

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

The Cabinet on Wednesday cleared a ₹19,500-crore production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme to incentivise manufacture of domestic solar cell modules to reduce the industry's reliance on Chinese-made panels. This follows the ₹4,500-crore tranche cleared in November 2020.

Bidders for projects will be given PLI to set up and run manufacturing facilities that will span the entire production cycle of modules from making the polysilicon cells, ingots, wafers and panels to assembling modules that are used to produce electricity.

The PLI will be disbursed to firms after they set up their manufacturing units and the money disbursed over five years.

Officials from the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, the nodal body tasked with administering the programme, estimate manufacturing capacity worth 65,000 MW of fully and partially integrated solar PV modules to be installed over five years.

The bulk of the alloca-



Bright and clean: The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy estimates installation of manufacturing capacity worth 65,000 MW in five years. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

tion, of nearly ₹12,000 crore, is to incentivise the setting up of integrated manufacturing facilities because there is no installed capacity in India to manufacture polysilicone and wafers (the raw material for solar panels).

This would bring in a direct investment of around ₹94,000 crore, directly employ about 1,95,000 persons and indirectly around 7,80,000 persons. It would save India close to ₹1.37 trillion in imports, they estimated.

India has committed, as part of climate commitments, to a target of installing 5,00,000 MW of electricity capacity from

non-fossil fuel-based sources by 2030 and this translates to 280,000 MW to 300,000 MW from solar electricity alone. "We would need nearly 30-35 GW (IGW = 1000 MW) of modules. With these schemes, we expect to have 70-80 GW of capacity, which would take care of our domestic requirements as well as exports," Indu Shekhar Chaturvedi, Secretary, MNRE said.

At international meet, a push for framework on farmers' rights

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

On the second day of the governing body meeting of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), the issue of farmers' rights remained the focal point of discussions.

The Union Agriculture Ministry said India stood for the creation of an option for implementation of farmers rights, and proposed that use of Global Information System (GIS) for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture needs capacity building among contracting parties.

The Centre said an expert group on farmers rights was constituted in 2017 with efforts taken by India and the country led the group as co-chair.

"India ensured discussion of the group even during pandemic and prepared a set of options and future process for implementing farmers rights in any country," the release said.

India also pushed for the revival of enhancement of multilateral system as from 2019, all formal meetings of the ITPGRFA were suspended.

"India along with Switzerland organised an infor-

India wants continued efforts towards sustainable use of plant genetic resources

mal meeting at UN-Geneva and prepared a document for the ninth meeting of the general body to deliberate. As a result, a Contact Group is constituted under the co-chairmanship of India to decide the future process," the release added.

Use of GIS

India also called for capacity building to use the GIS on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. "India, as member of the Scientific Advisory Committee, proposed that use of GLIS needs capacity building among contracting parties," the release said.

It also mentioned that the country wants continued efforts towards conservation and sustainable use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. "India, as member of Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use, proposed joint programs with international and regional organisations/institutes to fulfil this agenda," the Centre said.

ISRO successfully tests hybrid propulsion system, to aid future technologies

The Hindu Bureau

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said on Wednesday that it successfully demonstrated a hybrid propulsion system that used a solid fuel and liquid oxidiser.

The hybrid motor was tested at the ISRO Propulsion Complex, Mahendragiri, on Tuesday evening. The hybrid system is more efficient, “greener” and safer to handle, and paves the way for new propulsion technologies for future missions, the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), which tested it with support from the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC), said.

In the ground-based test, the flight equivalent 30 kN hybrid motor used HTPB-based (hydroxyl-ter-



The propulsion system used a solid fuel and liquid oxidiser. ISRO

minated polybutadiene) aluminised solid fuel and liquid oxygen (LOX) as oxidiser. The test was performed for 15 seconds on a 300-mm sounding rocket motor.

Conventional HTPB-based solid propellant motors used in rockets use ammonium perchlorate as oxidiser. In rocket engines, oxidisers supply the oxy-

gen needed for combustion.

While both HTPB and LOX are green, the cryogenic LOX is safer to handle. And unlike conventional solid motors, the hybrid technology permits restarting and throttling capabilities on the motor. The use of liquids facilitates throttling and control over the flow rate of LOX.

A risky new status quo

India and China appear to be mending fences, gingerly. Relations have been icy since China launched multiple incursions across the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh in mid-2020. After years of inconclusive military talks and halting “disengagement” from sites of confrontation, the rivals made inching progress last week. They completed disengagement in an area known as Patrolling Point 15 (PP15), pulling troops back to create a demilitarised buffer zone, and their leaders met in person at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Samarkand.

The tentative conciliatory steps between two nuclear-armed rivals are important; but they also carry risks, especially for India.

Despite the latest round of disengagement, the LAC remains deeply unsettled. Observers have pointed out that the buffer zones produced by the crisis inhibit India’s ability to patrol its own territory. And India and China have tacitly agreed to postpone settlement at two other confrontation sites, including a particularly tactically valuable area known as Depsang. The buffer zones and Depsang’s status both suit China’s objectives because they limit India’s military activities near the LAC, which analysts judge had partly motivated China’s initial incursions in 2020.

Similarly, the military threat on the border is not only undiminished, but has actually grown over the course of the crisis. The reinforcements that each side deployed since 2020 have not returned to garrison. Even if future rounds of talks continue “disengagement and de-escalation,” and reduce those forces, returning to the status quo ante is now impossible. Both sides have raced to build permanent military infrastructure near the border, to help them surge forces to the border. Unsurprisingly, China seems to have outpaced India in building these roads,



Arzan Tarapore

is a South Asia Research Scholar at the Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Centre at Stanford University

The tentative conciliatory steps between nuclear-armed rivals at the LAC are important, but come with riders for India

helipads, and communications nodes.

China still claims Arunachal Pradesh as its own, and just as it has pressed its maritime claims once its growing capabilities permit, its military build-up may portend increasing pressure in coming years. Even without a deliberate attack, the increasing capabilities and mobility on both sides of the border means that a crisis can more quickly escalate to a large military stand-off anywhere on the LAC, and possibly even trigger a conflict.

Strategic implications

As vexatious as the tactical picture may be on the border, the strategic implications are more dire. For over two years, the land border has become the overwhelming priority in India’s military competition with China. India has reassigned one of three originally Pakistan-facing Strike Corps to the China front. It has deployed its newest artillery, fighter jets, and drones to the China border.

At the same time, India has not significantly improved its capabilities or posture in the Indian Ocean region. Granted, a suite of impressive new capabilities – from cruise missile-equipped fighters and U.S.-origin naval helicopters to a brand-new indigenously-built aircraft carrier – are inching towards fruition. But these

programmes were all initiated before the border crisis, when the Indian military was incrementally modernising its capabilities for the Indian Ocean.

Whether or not by design, this must delight Beijing. As India and China jostle for security and influence in Asia, the contest in the Indian Ocean will inevitably intensify. Their respective capabilities to project military force across the Ocean, to coerce or defend smaller regional States, and to establish an enduring strategic presence there, will determine the Asian balance of power. With the border crisis, China seems to have successfully fixed India’s gaze to the land border, at the expense of that more consequential competition over the Indian Ocean.

Disengagement at PP15, and especially continued “disengagement and de-escalation,” has the potential to ameliorate this strategic trap. A progressively less urgent threat will tempt New Delhi to de-emphasise military readiness on the border. This could be a golden opportunity for Indian planners to work towards long-term military modernisation and political influence across the Indian Ocean region. But a likelier and riskier outcome is that decision makers will prioritise other, more politically salient issues, like gaining quick wins in the campaign for *Atmanirbharta* in defence industry – which may come at the expense of modernisation.

Paradoxically, then, a cooling crisis on the border may teach India the wrong lesson: that the short-term expedient of greater readiness is enough to see off the Chinese threat. In fact, and especially for the strategic prize of the Indian Ocean region, the challenge posed by China cannot be met without long-term growth in Indian national capacity. That, in turn, requires coherent strategic assessments and the political will to balance readiness with modernisation.



AFP

Bihar free of Naxal presence; the fight is in the last stages in Jharkhand, says CRPF chief

Hotbeds of left-wing extremism have been cleared in three States, says Kuldieep Singh; Operations Octopus, Double Bull, Thunderstorm and Chakarbandha led to the arrest or surrender of 592; Maoists using improvised grenade launchers

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Kuldieep Singh, Director-General, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), said on Wednesday that Bihar was free of left-wing extremism now and security forces had made inroads into areas in Jharkhand that were once inaccessible due to the presence of Maoists.

Mr. Singh said the fight was in its final stages, and the number of districts affected by violence stood at 39, down from 60 in 2010. He said the number of most affected districts, accounting for 90% of the violent incidents, had reduced from 35 in 2015 to 25 in 2021. These districts are mostly in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Maharashtra, Telengana and Andhra Pradesh.

Mr. Singh said that considerable success was achieved in 2022 in Bihar, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh as the CRPF launched Operation Octopus, Operation Double Bull, Opera-



Into the lair: An anti-Naxal operation 'Octopus' being carried out by security forces in the heavily mined 'Burha Pahar' hill range on Chhattisgarh-Jharkhand boundary on September. 15. V.V. KRISHNAN

tion Thunderstorm and Operation Chakarbandha in the three States. The operations led to the arrest or surrender of 592 Maoists.

Security camps

"Barring stray elements or extortionists, we can say that Bihar is completely free of Naxals. In Jharkhand too, we reached the top of the Budha Pahar area for the first time on September 5. This was an

area under the control of the Maoists so far, we have established a security camp there and road construction has also started," Mr. Singh said at a press conference. He said that in Chakarbandha in Bihar, an area of 8x7 km had been cleared of Maoist presence and in the Budha Pahar area, around 4x3 km had been cleared. A helicopter landed in Budha Pahar for the first time in September.

The officer said that since 2019, a unique policy has been adopted against Maoists and in the past four years, the Union Home Ministry had provided ₹4,000 crore to the CRPF to purchase the latest weapons and equipment. The CRPF was one of the largest Central armed police forces deployed in the affected States.

Mr. Singh said that in all,

20 forward operating bases or security camps have been established in Jharkhand and 11 bases had come up only in the past six months.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah tweeted, "For the first time, permanent camps of security forces have been established by successfully evacuating Maoists from the inaccessible areas of Budha Pahar, Chakarbandha and Bhimabandh." The Minister said the Ministry's "zero tolerance" to terrorism and left-wing extremism would continue, and the fight would intensify.

Mr. Singh said Maoists were using improvised grenade launchers to target security camps in Chhattisgarh. "The grenade launchers are assembled locally in a factory. The camps were attacked 28 times by the launchers this year," he said.

He said in Jharkhand, security forces recovered a U.S.-made rifle but Maoists mostly used country-made weapons or those snatched from security forces.

NSCN(I-M) seeks meet with PM over Naga issue

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI

The Naga insurgent group NSCN(I-M) on Wednesday held a meeting with a government representative in an effort to find a permanent solution to the decades-old vexed problem, officials said.

An NSCN(I-M) delegation, led by senior leader V.S. Atem, met interlocutor A.K. Mishra at an undisclosed location in the national capital. The participants discussed the rebel group's core demands, including a separate flag for the Nagas. The dialogue remained inconclusive and is likely to resume on Thursday, an official privy to the talks said. The delegation also requested for a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

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.