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DAILY NEWS **ANALYSIS**

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FOREWORD

We, at Team Vedhik is happy to introduce a new initiative - "Vedhik - Daily News Analysis (DNA)_The Hindu" compilations to help you with UPSC Civil Services Examination preparation. We believe this initiative - "Vedhik - Daily News Analysis (DNA)_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 Haameed 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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World is in crisis and it's not clear how long it will last, says Modi

Global south does not have an adequate voice in global governance, says PM and promises that India will amplify it during G-20 presidency

Kallol Bhattacharjee

NEW DELHI

The world is facing a lasting crisis and there is no clarity about how long this “state of instability” will last, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday, inaugurating the Voice of the Global South Summit.

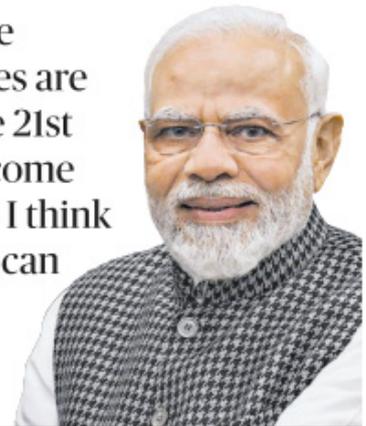
The global south does not have an adequate voice in the “eight-decade-old model of global governance” and it should shape the “emerging order,” Mr. Modi said.

He added that the countries of the global south would drive the world economy in the 21st century.

“Most of the global challenges have not been creat-

 Today, most of these advanced economies are slowing down. Clearly, in the 21st century, global growth will come from countries of the south. I think that if we work together, we can set the global agenda

NARENDRA MODI
Prime Minister



ed by the global south. But they affect us more. We have seen this in the impact of the COVID pandemic, climate change, terrorism and even the Ukraine conflict. The search for solutions also does not factor in our role or our voice,” the Prime Minister said.

He was addressing the

two-day virtual summit that saw participation from Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, and the leaders of a number of other countries, including Vietnam.

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‘Why have an elected government in Delhi if Centre calls the shots?’

CJI asks while hearing the dispute between AAP's Delhi govt. and Union govt.; Centre says it's necessary to have control over city's bureaucrats

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

What is the point of having an elected government in Delhi if the administration of the national capital is supposed to be carried out at the “beck-and-call” of the Centre, a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court asked the Union Government on Thursday.

A five-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud is hearing a dispute between the Aam Admi Party regime and the Centre over who has control over civil servants allocated to the various departments of the Delhi government.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said the Centre retained administrative control over the bureaucrats but the “functional control” was left to the Ministers in charge of the respective departments in which the civil servants served.

Chief Justice Chandrachud said such an interpretation would present an anomalous situation.

“Suppose an office is not discharging its functions properly. If the Centre retains the administrative control, that is, powers of appointments,



Solicitor General told the SC Bench headed by CJI D.Y. Chandrachud (in pic) that Centre retained administrative control over the city's bureaucrats but the ‘functional control’ was with city's Ministers. PTI

transfers, postings, etc... the Delhi government will have no role? It cannot shift this officer and get someone else? Can that be?” the CJI asked Mr. Mehta

The Solicitor General said in such cases the Delhi government or the Minister concerned could write to the Lieutenant-Governor, who would forward the complaint to the cadre-controlling authority at the Centre for action.

Mr. Mehta said the L-G was an ‘administrator’ in every term though his nomenclature was different.

The law officer said it was necessary for the Centre to retain disciplinary control over bureaucrats in the national capital, considering the fact that there may be sensitive

problems, including terrorism activities, which may require a national outlook and cooperation with the neighbouring States.

“Union Territories are extensions of the Union government by definition. The very purpose of demarcating a particular geographical area as a Union Territory suggests that the Union itself wants to administer it through its officers... Hence all Union Territories are administered by central services officers,” Mr. Mehta submitted.

“Then what is the point of having an elected government? If the administration is to be carried out at the beck-and-call of the Union government, why have an elected government?” the CJI said.

Capital stalemate

Governance is the casualty in the conflict between CM and LG in Delhi

The victory of the Aam Aadmi Party in the recent Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) elections has added a fresh backdrop to the unceasing face-off between the Lieutenant Governor of the National Capital Territory and the elected government. Several Governors, who are all too eager to further the Bharatiya Janata Party's politics, confront elected Chief Ministers from Opposition parties, but Delhi's case is unique, given the vast executive power at the command of the Lieutenant Governor. The most recent flashpoint between Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena came ahead of the January 6 election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the MCD, when Mr. Saxena appointed 10 aldermen and a BJP councillor to preside over the polls. The AAP alleged that Mr. Saxena had bypassed the tradition of appointing the senior-most councillor as the presiding officer. It has alleged that the aldermen appointed by Mr. Saxena were given voting rights in violation of the MCD Act, a question that remains unclarified. The party has pointed out that the Lieutenant Governor is ignoring the Council of Ministers and issuing orders to the bureaucracy directly on all matters, regardless of the division of power established by the Supreme Court between the two entities.

Technically, the Lieutenant Governor has executive control over only the three reserved subjects of police, public order and land; all other subjects (transferred subjects) lie with the elected government. But by virtue of being in control of the bureaucracy, and exercising the power to transfer, suspend or take any action against any employee of the Delhi government, the Lieutenant Governor's authority extends beyond those. As its earlier interventions have not settled the dispute between the Lieutenant Governor and the elected government, the Supreme Court is currently examining the question afresh. Meanwhile, the relations between the Chief Minister and the Lieutenant Governor are sliding further. The Lieutenant Governor sought a meeting with the Chief Minister, but then refused to give him time. Till October, the Lieutenant Governor and the Chief Minister used to have weekly meetings. The Supreme Court's calls for statesmanship and wisdom by actors have not resolved the stalemate, which is seriously impacting governance in the national capital. The heightened political competition between the AAP and the BJP has worsened the situation, but the root of it all is the legal ambiguity that needs to be dispelled.

A Governor and a Chief Minister at loggerheads

What led Tamil Nadu Governor R. N. Ravi to walk out of the Assembly? Have there been similar incidents in the past? How does the Constitution lay down the powers of the Governor? Is there a solution on the cards?

Sandeep Phukan

The story so far:

The Tamil Nadu Assembly witnessed dramatic scenes on January 9. When the Governor skipped portions of the address that was prepared and approved by the State Cabinet, including references to political stalwarts from the State and the Dravidian model of governance, Chief Minister M. K. Stalin moved a resolution to expunge all deviations made by Mr. Ravi and only take the prepared speech for the records. Subsequently, Mr. Ravi walked out of the Assembly.

Is the Governor bound to follow the directions of the State government? Article 154 of the Constitution says "the executive power of the State shall be vested in the Governor and shall be

exercised by him either directly or through officers subordinate to him in accordance with this Constitution". However, Article 163 states that the Governor shall exercise his functions with the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers except for functions which require his discretion.

Further, Art 163 (2) states, "If any question arises whether any matter is or is not a matter as respects which the Governor is by or under this Constitution required to act in his discretion, the decision of the Governor in his discretion shall be final".

The 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976, had made ministerial advice binding on the President but no such provision has been made for the Governor. The Supreme Court of India, however, has in several landmark judgements defined limits of the

discretionary powers.

In the 2016 Nabam Rebia judgement, a five-judge Bench led by then Chief Justice of India, J. S. Khehar, said that Article 163 of the Constitution does not give the Governor a "general discretionary power to act against or without the advice of his council of ministers".

In the Shamsheer Singh & Anr versus State Of Punjab (1974), a seven-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court said that the President and the Governor shall exercise their formal powers in accordance with the advice of their Ministers other than in some exceptional situations.

Are non-BJP-ruled States on a collision course with the Governor's office? In most non-BJP States, the elected governments and the Governor's office have been on a constant collision course.

In October, Governor Arif Mohammad Khan, as Chancellor of State universities, asked 11 Vice-Chancellors to resign citing irregularities in their appointments. The Pinarayi Vijayan-led Left Democratic Front government hit back by passing a Bill that removed the Governor as the Chancellor of the State universities.

In Telangana, Governor Tamilisai Soundarajan and Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao have often engaged in public sparring.

When Maharashtra was ruled by the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), a coalition formed by Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena, Congress, and the Nationalist Congress Party, the MVA government clashed with Governor B. S. Koshiyari over their choice of the Assembly Speaker.

What is the way out?

Several experts panels were set up to suggest to improve Centre-State relations. Most of these reports have advocated for appointing non-political Governors through independent mechanisms after consultations with the concerned Chief Ministers. The Sarkaria Commission had pointed out that the role of the Governor "is to see that a government is formed and not to try to form a government". However, the recommendations of these reports have not been taken up by any government so far.

THE GIST

Tamil Nadu Governor R. N. Ravi walked out of the Assembly after Chief Minister M. K. Stalin said only the portions of the Governor's speech prepared and approved by the State Cabinet. Deviations from the original text would be expunged.

The 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976, had made ministerial advice binding on the President but no such provision has been made for the Governor. The Supreme Court of India, however, has in several landmark judgements defined limits of the discretionary powers.

Non-BJP State governments have alleged that these constant face-offs have resulted in delays in getting gubernatorial assent for Bills passed by the Assembly and have affected governance.

Entering a year of uncertainty

Soothsayers seldom read the future correctly, especially in the realm of geopolitics. Quite a few soothsayers, however, were partially right at the beginning of 2022 when they said that uncertainty and impermanence would dictate the course of world events that year. The year did witness a spike in geopolitical challenges and risks, but no one predicted that 2022 would be a year that would put the world to test.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict, which erupted in February 2022, has become a major disruptor of the existing order. In turn, it has led to one of the largest population shifts in modern times. With hindsight, however, some of this could have been anticipated. By mid-2021, Russia had begun a major build-up around Ukraine and in December 2021, Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a list of new security guarantees it wanted from the U.S. and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), including a promise not to expand the alliance eastward.

What possibly could not have been anticipated was the extraordinary display of Ukrainian nationalism, and the swift response of the West, including NATO and the U.S., in rallying behind Ukraine and extending military and other types of cooperation. All said, even today few experts are able to fully comprehend what all this presages or what lies in the future.

Fallouts of the war

It might, therefore, be intriguing to make a comparison with the situation that prevailed during World War I, especially in 1916. Back then, the risk of escalation both horizontally and vertically was underplayed. It might be useful to heed the lessons from that time. In the present case, any escalation vertically would mean the use of nuclear weapons. Any escalation horizontally would mean opening new fronts. As in 1916, there are many 'unknowns' today. Unexpected incidents could result in dangerous outcomes. The spectre of an all-out war is ominously present.

There could be several other fallouts as well. Already, the 'proxy war' between the U.S.,



M.K. Narayanan

is a former Director, Intelligence Bureau, a former National Security Adviser, and a former Governor of West Bengal

For India, the altered shape of the international order leaves little room for comfort

Europe and NATO on the one hand, and Russia on the other, is having a major fallout in the economic realm. The incessant imposition of sanctions by the West and its allies on Russia, the barring of Russian banks from SWIFT, and the freezing of Russian foreign assets have all provoked an energy crisis. This is accompanied by the soaring prices of oil, with Russia using oil as a weapon. The full extent of this is yet to be properly understood, but what it does portend is the possibility of a wider conflagration.

The ripple effects of the recent developments in Europe are evident. Some of this is occurring well beyond European shores. China-Russia relations are a case in point. China has chosen this time to deepen its strategic ties with Russia. Both countries have said their "relations are enjoying the best period in their history". Furthermore, in the light of the heightened concerns of the West over Taiwan, newer alignments are becoming evident across Asia.

Increase in defence spending

As 2023 has dawned and the arc of instability increases, what is also becoming evident is a massive increase in defence spending by almost every country – notwithstanding the economic stress they all confront. Estimated spending on defence across the globe is understood to have crossed \$2 trillion in 2022, and is expected to increase substantially in 2023. European countries, such as Germany and France, have announced substantial increases in defence spending. Japan has already declared that it would raise its defence budget to 2% of its GDP, in view of the threats posed by China and North Korea. India, one of the world's leaders in defence spending, can be expected to follow suit.

Increased defence budgets are threatening to alter the nature of defence relationships and, in turn, what is propounded as strategic autonomy. New strategic alignments could unsettle the current world order, putting paid to previous beliefs in the virtue of non-adherence to a particular bloc, and ideas such as non-alignment. This year could, hence, well be the year in which many past ideas regarding economic, technological and financial autonomy may come to be altered or given up. The pace of history will accelerate in 2023, with the war in Ukraine being a major contributory factor.

A case in point may be India's reliance on Russian military equipment, which has been New Delhi's sheet anchor for many years. This could change with Russian equipment faring poorly against the latest Western weaponry in the Ukraine conflict; India may well consider looking elsewhere for future defence supplies. India's current shift from a professed policy of non-alignment to multi-alignment can possibly help it widen the arc of its defence ties. Groups such as the Quad (U.S., Australia, Japan and India) may, going forward, gain greater salience in India's defence architecture, given the increased tensions between India and China. India's

defence ties with France, especially in the area of state-of-the-art defence equipment, appear set to grow in 2023.

Consequent to this, many other changes can be anticipated. Terms like strategic autonomy have already lost their meaning given the fact that the war in Ukraine has brought home to Europe and other countries the fact that Ukraine, or for that matter any other country in Europe, could not have withstood the Russian offensive without the U.S. and NATO. The same conclusion is likely to dictate the thinking of countries in Asia when confronting major "bullies" like China.

India's neighbourhood

Going ahead, and apart from Europe, China, India and parts of Asia are likely to face major headwinds. For China, controlling COVID-19 and managing the fallout of its economic downturn would be the main challenges. Consequently, it is unlikely that China would unilaterally provoke a conflict or take a provocative posture vis-à-vis its neighbours this year. Nevertheless, Taiwan and any breaching of the First Island Chain will remain China's top priority.

For India, the altered shape of the international order leaves little room for comfort. The China-Russia entente creates a dent in India's long-standing strategic relationship with Russia, the impact of which could be far reaching. Meanwhile, the absence of settled borders with both China and Pakistan will continue to plague India. Many areas along the China-India border will remain live, and incidents such as the recent one in Yangtse could be repeated, but a major conflict appears unlikely. Pakistan, mired in its own internal problems and economic difficulties, is unlikely to pose a major threat in 2023. Nevertheless, Pakistan's provocations and use of terror modules are likely to continue, leading to sporadic attacks in Jammu and Kashmir.

During 2023, India will also find itself hemmed in by other problems that have emerged in South Asia. In Nepal, the new government appears tilted towards China and could become a problem. Afghanistan under the Taliban will remain an issue, but more problematic is the rising curve of terrorist activity emanating from there, spearheaded by groups such as the Islamic State-Khorasan Province (ISIS-K). India's relations with both Sri Lanka and Bangladesh appear delicately poised, and will require employing deft diplomacy. This year may not, however, see major changes in India's relationship with most countries of West Asia. It may test whether India's long-term preference for a non-interventionist strategic culture is paying dividends in its neighbourhood or not.

All indications are that while terrorism will remain an omnipresent threat this year, major terror attacks may not occur. Nevertheless, the Islamic State, mainly the ISIS-K, has shown signs of revival and its role and activity in Afghanistan are the proverbial tip of the iceberg. Hence, the world may need to be on its guard in 2023.



Under Constitution, law declared by the Supreme Court is binding on all

NEWS ANALYSIS

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The public criticism aired by Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar on the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) judgment may be seen as comments by a high constitutional authority against “the law of the land”.

The Supreme Court has held that its judicial pronouncements lay down the law. Article 141 of the Constitution mandates that a law declared by the Supreme Court is binding on all courts, even the Supreme Court.

This is what the court has been trying to convey to the government and high constitutional authorities like Mr. Dhankhar in its oral observations and orders recently. That is, as long as the NJAC judgment, which upholds the Collegium system of judicial appointments, exists, the court is bound to comply with the verdict. Parliament is free to bring a new law on judicial appointments, possibly through a Constitution amendment, but that too will be subject to judicial review.

A Bench of Justices S.K. Kaul and A.S. Oka has told the Attorney-General to advise the government and constitutional authorities

Core characteristics

The Basic Structure concept emerged in the *Kesavananda Bharati* judgment. The Basic Structure cannot be found in any particular Article and goes beyond the written word of the constitutional text

- It denotes a set of principles which links all the provisions and makes the Constitution an organic whole. Parliament is limited from making amendments which affect these core values or the Basic Structure of the Constitution

- Each judge on the *Kesavananda Bharati* judgment had his own take of the Constitution's basic/essential features



- These features included supremacy of the Constitution, separation of powers between the legislature, executive and the judiciary, and democratic character of the polity

that “it is necessary that all follow the law as laid down by this court; otherwise sections of society may decide to follow their own course...”

Now, Mr. Dhankhar had remarked that judicial review, as in the case of the NJAC law, diluted parliamentary sovereignty. He had used terms such as “one-upmanship”. He had said he did not “subscribe” to the landmark *Kesavananda Bharati* judgment of 1973 which had propounded the idea of the Basic Structure, upheld judicial review and limited the Parliament's power under Article 368 to amend the Constitution.

‘Checks and balances’

Yet, the very same *Kesavananda Bharati* verdict had

made it clear that judicial review is not a means to usurp parliamentary sovereignty but only part of a “system of checks and balances” to ensure constitutional functionalities do not exceed their limits.

“We are unable to see how the power of judicial review makes the judiciary supreme in any sense of the word. This power is of paramount importance in a federal Constitution. Indeed, it has been said that the heart and core of a democracy lies in the judicial process,” the top court had observed in the *Kesavananda Bharati* judgment.

A classic observation in this regard was made by Chief Justice Patanjali Shastri way back in 1952 in *State of Madras versus V.G. Row*.

He said judicial review

was undertaken by the courts “not out of any desire to tilt at legislative authority in a crusader's spirit, but in discharge of a duty plainly laid down upon them by the Constitution”. His words were reproduced by Chief Justice J.S. Khehar in his lead opinion for the Constitution Bench in the NJAC case in October 2015.

A reading of the NJAC judgment showed how the court had discussed instances when political parties, through Parliament, had intruded in the court's power of judicial review. The 42nd Constitution amendment introduced during the Emergency period was one. His statement that Constitution amendments constituted the “will of the people” has been repeated by successive governments in court.

“The same argument had been repeatedly rejected by this court. Article 368 postulates only a ‘procedure’ for amendment of the Constitution. The same could not be treated as a ‘power’ vested in Parliament to amend the Constitution so as to alter the ‘core’ of the Constitution, which has also been described as the ‘basic features/basic structure’ of the Constitution,” the NJAC judgment had said, while upholding judicial independence as a basic feature of the Constitution.

Industrial output rebounded to 7.1% growth in Nov. after Oct. contraction

First uptick in output of consumer durables, non-durables after a streak of contractions, production grew across all six sub-sectors for the first time since June 2022; in comparison, October had seen just two sectors registering expansions

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

India's industrial output bounced back to post 7.1% growth in November 2022, after shrinking 4.2% in October as per revised estimates.

The jump was aided by a base effect as November 2021 had clocked just 1% growth, but also marked a 6% uptick in output levels over October 2022, when the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) had recorded its lowest reading since November 2021.

After having contracted

Output surge

Index of Industrial Production showed a clawback in November, but metrics were aided by a low base effect from the year-earlier period



- Manufacturing grew 6.1% from Nov. 2021, and rose 6.55% sequentially
- Mining output growth accelerated from 2.5% in Oct. to 9.7%
- Power generation climbed 12.7% in Nov., but total generation was 1.5% lower than in the previous month

almost 6% in October, manufacturing output rebounded to 6.1% year-on-year growth, and logged a 6.55% sequential expansion.

Mining output growth accelerated, from 2.5% in October, to 9.7%.

Electricity generation rose 12.7% in November,

from just 1.2% year-on-year growth in October, but total generation shrank 1.5% from the preceding month.

'Capital goods surge'

On end-use basis, production grew for all six sub-sectors for the first time since June, compared with just two sectors in October.

Consumer non-durables output grew 8.9% in November after four months of contraction, with production hitting the highest level since December 2021. Consumer durables output rebounded to grow 5.1% after three

months of contraction, but was boosted by the base effect of a 5.7% dip in November 2021. Capital goods, which had contracted 1.7% in October, bounced up 20.7% in November and were 11.1% higher sequentially. India Ratings and Research economists warned that recovery in factory output had a long way to go and would need more policy support.

"The output levels of intermediate goods and consumer durables are less than pre-COVID levels," said Sunil Kumar Sinha and Paras Jasrai.

Missing doctors: CHCs face 80% shortfall of specialists, show Health Ministry data

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

India is reeling under an acute shortage of specialist doctors, with a shortfall of nearly 80% of the required specialists at Community Health Centres (CHCs), reveals the Rural Health Statistics report published by the Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry on Thursday.

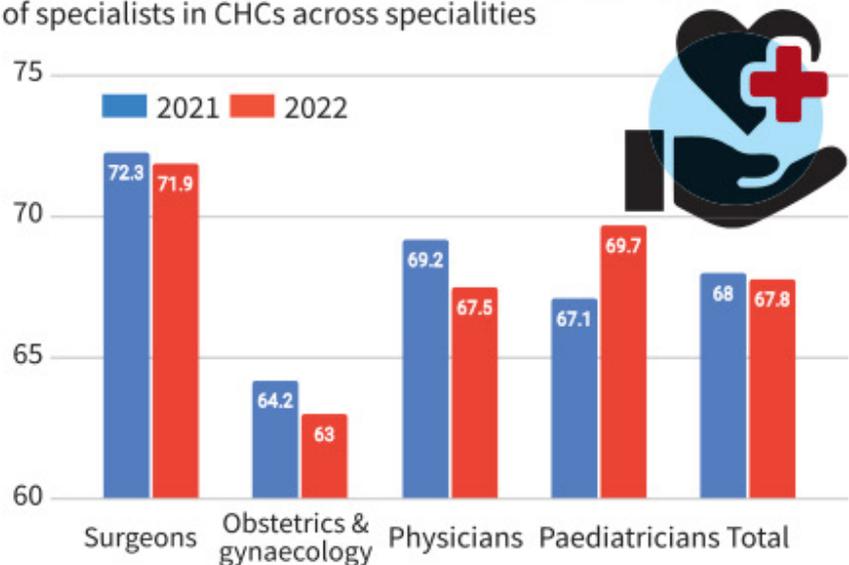
The CHCs are 30-bed block-level health facilities which are ideally supposed to provide basic care related to surgery, gynaecology, paediatrics and general medicine.

The report points out that there is a shortfall of specialist doctors, including surgeons (83.2%), obstetricians and gynaecologists (74.2%), physicians (79.1%) and paediatricians (81.6%).

There are 6,064 CHCs across India, and the Health Ministry has been unsuccessful in meeting the requirement for spe-

Glaring gap

Overall, 67.8% sanctioned posts of specialists at Community Health Care Centres in India are vacant, according to Rural Health Statistics 2021-22. The chart shows vacancies (in %) of specialists in CHCs across specialities



cialist doctors in most of these centres. This is despite the fact that in 2005, the number of specialist doctors in the CHCs was 3,550, which has seen a 25% increase to 4,485 in 2022. However, with the number of CHCs growing, the requirement for specialists required to make the centres functional has also increased. “Requirements of specialist doctors

in CHCs has increased by 63.8%, whereas there is only an increase of 26.3% in the actual number of in-position specialists,” the report notes.

Apart from specialist doctors, there is a shortage of women health workers and auxiliary nursing midwives, with up to 14.4% of these posts lying vacant in primary health centres and sub-centres.

Minority notification: Centre submits views of States to SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal

NEW DELHI

The Delhi government has suggested that the Centre can grant “migrated minority” status to Hindus who have moved to the national capital from places such as Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh where they are a religious minority.

The suggestion is part of a compilation of views collected by the Centre from 24 States on whether religious and linguistic minority communities should be identified and notified by the Union or the respective

States. It is part of an affidavit submitted by the Centre in the Supreme Court.

Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Jains and Zoroastrians (Parsis) have been notified as minority communities under Section 2 (c) of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) Act, 1992.

As per the Census 2011, minorities make up about 19.3% of the total population of the country.

“The followers of Hinduism are not the religious minority in the NCT of Delhi but the Central government may declare the ‘migrated minority’ status to

the followers of Hinduism who are the religious minority in their origin State (i.e., Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, etc) and residing in Delhi after migration from their home State,” the Centre’s note in the court quotes the Delhi government.

Tamil Nadu is clear that the identification and notification of religious and linguistic minorities should be made at the State level.

The suggestions have come on a petition in the court challenging the “exclusive” power given to the Centre to notify a minority community.

Judiciary, legislature should respect boundaries set by the Constitution'

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR

Virtually endorsing Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar's remarks on judicial overreach, the presiding officers of the Legislative Assemblies and Councils on Thursday recognised the separate powers of the judiciary and the legislature, and said they should "respect" the boundaries provided by the Constitution.

A resolution passed at the conclusion of the 83rd All India Presiding Officers' Conference said that it reaffirmed its complete faith in the primacy of the people of India in law-making



Presiding officers of State Assemblies and Councils at the conference on Thursday. TWITTER/@OMBIRLAKOTA

ing through the legislative bodies of the nation.

"Legislature is supreme. It has the right to make laws and because it has the right to make laws, it is expected that all institutions

remain within their boundaries," Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said.

Code of conduct

The resolution passed by the conference on Thurs-

day sought a code of conduct to rule the behaviour of legislators in Assemblies, Councils and Parliament.

It resolved that Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business of legislative bodies must be reviewed comprehensively, and model uniform Rules be formulated incorporating best practices in order to secure greater participation of members and more productive functioning of the Houses of legislature.

The resolution also asked parties to build a consensus against any disruption in the Houses of legislature, particularly during Question Hour.

India has made marked progress in LAC infra development: Army chief

From creating 6,000 km of border roads to improving all-weather connectivity in regions of Ladakh and Kameng, the Army has expanded infrastructure on this side of the Line of Actual Control with China, says General Manoj Pande

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

While there are reports of infrastructure build-up on the Chinese side, what does not come to the fore is what infrastructure has been developed on our side, Army chief General Manoj Pande said on Thursday, stating that there has been “marked improvement” and there are plans for all-weather connectivity and alternative connectivity.

Terming the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China “stable but unpredictable”, he said that in terms of numbers, there has been a slight increase in the number of Chinese troops opposite the Army’s Eastern Command, which he said came for training and have remained. He said five of the seven flash-



Annual ritual: Army Chief General Manoj Pande addressing the Annual Press Conference in New Delhi on Thursday. R.V. MOORTHY

points have been resolved with the ongoing talks at various levels.

Elaborating on infrastructure development, Gen. Pande said in the past five years, the Border Roads Organisation has constructed close to 6,000 km of roads; of this, 2,100 km has been along the northern borders. As for the upgrade of bridges, needed to carry guns and tanks, as much as 7,450 metres of them were con-

structed, he stated.

“The frontier road, which runs a total of 1,800 km, will connect various valleys in Arunachal Pradesh. The plan has been reenergised and funding has been assigned. Some work on it is already under way,” General Pande said.

There is the aspect of all-weather connectivity in both Ladakh and Kameng in Arunachal, he further stated. In Ladakh, there is the Zojila tunnel and the Z-

Morh tunnel, which will link the valley to Ladakh and will be operationalised by the end of the year.

For connectivity to Leh from the other side, Atal tunnel is well known. There is also the Shinku la tunnel along the Nemu-Padam-Daricha road, which again is in the final stages of approval, Gen. Pande noted. “Once this happens, there will be all-weather connectivity from both sides to Ladakh.”

Speaking about Arunachal, he said there is also better all-weather connectivity to Tawang or Kameng sector. The Sela tunnel is likely to get operational by the middle of the year and one bridge further South at Nechipu near Bomdila.

“In the context of habitats, especially Eastern Ladakh, we have close to 55,000 troops for whom habitat has been complet-

ed,” he shared. There has also been covered heated accommodation for 400-odd guns and 500 A-vehicles, he added.

Looking for alternatives

The Army has carried out an assessment on the reliance on some of the Soviet and Russian-origin equipment in its inventory in the backdrop of the war in Ukraine and is trying to identify alternative sources for spares and ammunition that has been impacted, Gen. Pande said.

About steps taken to address this issue, he said, “We got a waiver and sanction to procure, even if it is ex-imports, for the next two or three years. We have 40 such cases, including spares and ammunition, largely pertaining to air defence and tank fleet. We are looking at how the sustenance requirement is met.”

Vegetable prices help cool inflation

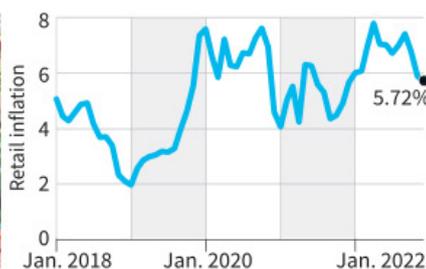
Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

A steep 15.1% fall in vegetable prices in December 2022 drove down India's retail inflation to a 12-month low of 5.72% – keeping it below the central bank's 6% tolerance threshold for the second straight month after a ten-month streak above it.

There was, however, little relief beyond vegetables as inflation in food items such as cereals, milk, spices accelerated further to 13.8%, 8.5% and 20.3%, respectively. For rural con-

Price gains ease

India's annual retail inflation slowed to 5.72% in December, remaining below Reserve Bank of India's upper tolerance limit of 6% for the second consecutive month



sumers, inflation remained high at 6.05%, with food prices rising over 5%, compared to just 2.8% in urban India.

“Excluding vegetables, retail inflation actually rose to 7.2% in December from 7% in November – led by rising prices of cereals,

pulses, milk, meat and fish, and fuel,” said Crisil chief economist Dharmakirti Joshi.

Core inflation, which excludes food and energy, also hardened to 6.1% from 6% in November, which Mr. Joshi termed the “biggest worry”.

Among services, inflation remained high for personal care and effects (8.1%), household goods and services (7.43%), miscellaneous and health services (6.1%).

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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.
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P	Population and associated issues;
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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
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E	Land reforms in India
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