



● POLITY

● ECONOMICS

● TECHNOLOGY

● ECOLOGY

Modi meets Putin, offers all help to end conflict

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a bilateral meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin during the 16th BRICS summit at Kazan extended full support for the restoration of peace between Ukraine and Russia and is committed to providing “all possible assistance” to end the crisis. The Prime Minister expressed his deep concern over the escalating conflict and reiterated India’s call for the protection of civilians and emphasised the need for dialogue and diplomacy.

The BRICS summit in Kazan is the first occasion when the

grouping will convene in its expanded shape that it acquired after the Johannesburg summit in 2023. Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the UAE were ratified to join BRICS in Johannesburg and the process of new members’ admission was completed on January 1, 2024.

Russia is hosting the 16th BRICS summit against the backdrop of the conflicts in the Gaza Strip and Ukraine. Mr. Modi was received by Rustam Minnikhanov, head of the Republic of Tatarstan, and given a traditional Tatar welcome at Kazan, capital of Tatarstan.

Mr. Modi later met Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and called for the de-escalation of tensions in the West Asian region. , Mr. Modi discussed the Chabahar port, the North-South Transport Corridor, and the situation in Afghanistan.

India and Russia will hold the 25th session of the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on trade, technical and cultural cooperation in November in New Delhi and that India will soon be opening two new consulates in Kazan and Yekaterinburg.



VEDHIK
IAS ACADEMY
The New Learning Mantra

START YOUR JOURNEY WITH THE
BEST

INDIA'S TOP MOST CIVIL SERVANTS FOR COACHING

Navy has set up two task forces to develop niche technologies: Vice-Admiral

INTERNAL SECURITY



The Indian Navy has set up two special task forces headed by Rear Admirals for imbibing and inducting niche technologies not only to plug the capability gaps but also to acquire the next level of technologies. These task forces are in addition to the Navy's Technology Development Accelerator Cell (TDAC).

The special task forces are looking at fuses, radars, quantum computing, interface devices, electronic and weapon technologies, and indigenisation of ammunition. The TDAC would continue the process of engaging with start-ups and MSMEs, while the special task forces would work in smaller areas but hopefully with quicker turnaround times.

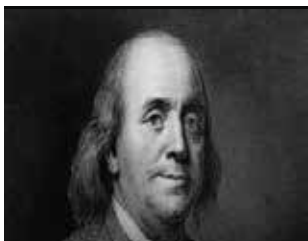
India's fourth nuclear submarine launched with advanced arms

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

India's fourth nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN), referred to as S4*, bigger and more capable than the first, INS Arihant (S2) was launched into water at the Ship Building Centre in Visakhapatnam last week.

India currently has two SSBNs operational. INS Arihant was quietly commissioned into service in August 2016. The second SSBN, INS Arighaat (S3), was commissioned end-August. The third SSBN Aridhman (S4) is currently undergoing sea trials and is expected to be commissioned into service next year.

INS Arihant is presently armed with 750 km range K-15 SLBM. The S4* carries the advanced 3,500 km range SLBM K-4, that was tested for the first time in 2020. The K-4 will be the mainstay of India's undersea nuclear deterrence as it provides standoff capability, to launch nuclear weapons while submerged in Indian waters, till a 5,000 km range SLBM is developed and fielded.



"If you invest more in your education, then you are likely to get more interest in it."

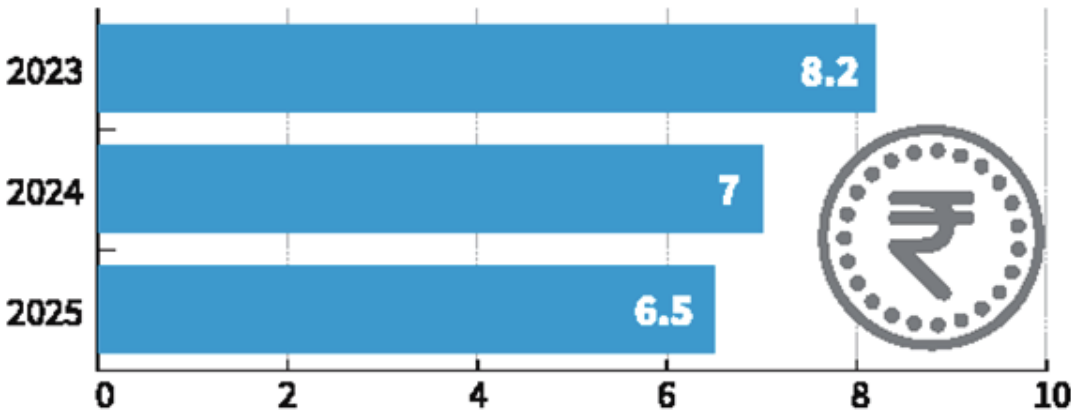
—Benjamin Franklin

IMF retains India's growth projection at 7% for FY25

ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

Growth decelerates

The chart shows India's growth rate in 2023 and its projected growth rates in 2024 and 2025, as per the International Monetary Fund's World Economic Outlook report



The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its latest World Economic Outlook (WEO) maintained its June growth rate projections for India at 7 % in the current fiscal year ending March 31, 2025 and 6.5 % in the next fiscal year (FY2025-26).

The moderation in domestic growth rate from 8.2 % in 2023 with exhaustion of pent-up demand accumulated during the pandemic, as the economy reconnects with its potential. The U.S. is projected to grow at 2.8 % this year and 2.2 % next year, an upward revision from

the July WEO update.

The global output was expected to grow at 3.2 % in 2024 as well as 2025. Globally, inflation has been on the way down which had touched 9.4 % in the third quarter of 2022, expected to be 3.5% by the end of 2025. The global battle against inflation has largely been won, even though price pressures persist in some countries. A global recession has been avoided through the disinflationary process, despite a synchronised tightening of monetary conditions. However, downside risks now dominate the outlook. The IMF Chief Economist identified worsening of geopolitical risks with the potential for escalation of regional conflicts, and its adverse impacts upon the commodity markets since the previous WEO releases in April and June this year. The Russia-Ukraine war continues and the conflict in West Asia has intensified, including in Lebanon, in recent weeks.

The IMF Chief Economist also identified growing protectionist policies as one of the risks. Also, monetary policy remaining too tight in some countries for too long and this impacting labour markets was a risk. Sovereign debt stress and activity in China being weak were some of the other risks that he listed. The IMF recommended a 'triple policy pivot' to respond to the "relatively mediocre" growth rate, of 3.2% over the medium term. The first is moving to a neutral monetary policy stance, a process under way in many countries. The second is the need to build fiscal buffers after years of a loose fiscal policy. The third is structural reforms to increase growth and productivity, coping with ageing populations and younger people looking for opportunities in some parts of the world, tackling the climate transition and increasing resilience.

"Doing nothing is very hard to do. You never know when you're finished."—Leslie Nielsen

India, Pakistan renew Kartarpur Corridor pact

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

India and Pakistan on Tuesday agreed to renew their agreement for another five years to operate the Kartarpur Corridor to ensure “uninterrupted operation of the Corridor for use by the pilgrims from India to visit the holy Gurdwara in Pakistan”. The agreement, signed on 24 October 2019 facilitate the visit of pilgrims from India to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur, Narowal, Pakistan through the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor.

Pakistan levies a service fee of \$ 20 (approximately ₹1,680) per pilgrim. Pakistan has maintained that it needs to levy the charges as it has spent the bulk of the estimated \$17 million cost of refurbishing the Gurdwara.

India and Singapore to explore joint development, production of equipment for armed forces

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

India and Singapore during the sixth India-Singapore Defence Ministerial Dialogue in New Delhi, co-chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and visiting Singaporean counterpart Ng Eng Hen agreed to extend the existing bilateral agreement on ‘Joint Military Training-Army’ for the next five years and also look at co-development and co-production of defence equipment.

Both sides agreed to enhance industry cooperation, including exploring collaboration in niche domains such as automation and Artificial Intelligence, being natural partners for commencing co-development and co-production of defence equipment. Both Ministers acknowledged the deep and long-standing bilateral defence relations based on shared outlook on regional peace, stability and security.

Singapore has played a key role in promoting economic cooperation and cultural ties, and developing strategic connectivity with countries in the region against the backdrop of India marking a decade of its Act East policy. The two countries elevated their bilateral relationship to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership recently during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the city-state.

Reliance Infra arm to invest ₹10,000 cr. in ammunition, explosives unit in Maharashtra

INTERNAL SECURITY

Reliance Infrastructure Ltd. of the Anil Ambani-led Reliance Group would set up an integrated project for making explosives, ammunition and small arms at Ratnagiri in Maharashtra. Reliance Infrastructure said it will invest more than ₹10,000 crore over the next 10 years in this project, which will produce an ammunition range that includes small, medium, large caliber and Terminally-Guided Munition (TGM). The small arms portfolio will address export markets, both civil and military applications.

This project will be undertaken by Reliance Infrastructure-promoted Reliance Defence Ltd. The firm said it has been allotted 1,000 acres of land in Watad Industrial Area of Ratnagiri, to develop Dhirubhai Ambani Defence City (DADC). The Corridor would be the ‘largest greenfield project’ in the defence sector in India ‘by any private sector company’, the firm noted.

Potential joint ventures

The proposed projects envisage potential joint ventures with up to six leading global defence companies. Reliance Infrastructure's wholly owned subsidiaries Jai Armaments Ltd. and Reliance Defence Ltd. already have licences from the Government of India for manufacturing of arms and ammunition. R-Infra also has joint ventures in place with French defence firms Dassault Aviation and Thales.

'Steel import curbs to dent MSMEs' ability to compete'

ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

Even as the Union government is actively considering the imposition of additional duties to curb the influx of imports of cheaper steel into the country that are hurting domestic steel producers, a key exporters' body has urged the Centre to desist from such protectionist measures as they would impact smaller engineering firms' competitiveness.

EETPC India, which represents producers of engineering goods that account for a quarter of India's merchandise exports, has flagged that domestic steel output, that has increased by about 5% between April and August, has not kept pace with consumption which climbed 13.8%, making steel imports imperative.

China imports up

While finished steel imports from China have risen 31.7%, imports from Japan (up 130%), and Vietnam (52%) have also grown. Without access to affordable inputs like steel, the ambitious "Make in India" initiative, particularly in high-value sectors, will face considerable challenges, it cautioned, mooted the need to keep domestic steel prices competitive.

Price differential

The price differential between Chinese steel and Indian-produced steel is significant," EETPC chairman ArThis price advantage enables downstream industries, especially MSMEs, to remain competitive in domestic and global markets," he added.

Hezbollah says it fired volley of rockets at 3 bases in Israel

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Hezbollah fired rockets at two bases near the Israeli city of Tel Aviv and a naval base west of Haifa on Tuesday morning just hours before U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Israel to make another push for an elusive ceasefire.

After a heavy night of Israeli strikes on Lebanon's south and the southern suburbs of its capital Beirut, Hezbollah fired rockets at the Gilot base used by Unit 8200 of Israeli military intelligence, and the Nirit area in Tel Aviv's suburbs. The group also fired rockets at a naval base outside the port city of Haifa further north. There were no reports of casualties. Israeli authorities said air sirens were activated in areas southeast of Tel Aviv due to one projectile identified crossing from Lebanon and falling in an open area. Other sirens sounded in Tel Aviv. Mr. Blinken's trip to the region is his 11th since the attack on Israel by Hamas on October 7, 2023, that triggered the Gaza war.

Mr. Blinken urged Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to seize on the killing of Hamas's leader to work towards a ceasefire in Gaza, also calling for more aid to reach the war-battered territory. He also again called for a "diplomatic resolution" in Lebanon and compliance with a UN resolution that ended an Israel-Hezbollah war in 2006.

Over the borderline

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

China's confirmation on Tuesday of an agreement to resolve its four-year military standoff with India, as announced by Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Monday, is welcome news, given the possibilities it opens up for bilateral ties. Since April 2020, when China suddenly transgressed along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), followed by India's counter-deployment, bilateral relations had ground to a halt. Anger in India, over the June 2020 Galwan clashes in which 20 Indian soldiers were killed, justifiably brimmed over, and despite steps to avoid further violence and disengagement at five friction points, mistrust over whether the PLA would revert to positions prior to 2020 or "status quo ante" remained. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's statement that China has agreed to restore troops to pre-2020 levels and positions must be verified, but it is indeed a positive move if true. The announcement of the agreement on "patrolling arrangements" came just ahead of the BRICS Summit in Russia which Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping are attending, setting the stage for a possible formal interaction for the first time since 2020. Prior to this, the leaders had close engagement in 18 one-on-one meetings from 2014-19 including two intense retreats in Wuhan and Mamallapuram. Since 2020 they have held informal chats, on summit sidelines. Though trade ties remained at record highs, relations in areas including investment, travel and visas were snapped. It remains to be seen whether these will recover.

The government must ensure that the "next steps" Mr. Misri referred to are carried out in as transparent a manner as possible so as to engender trust in the process. This is important as even though China insists that its troops are in its own territory and Mr. Modi has said that "no one has come in or taken Indian posts", the perception is that Chinese troops have in fact occupied more Indian land than before, and have denied Indian soldiers patrolling rights and villagers in Eastern Ladakh access to their grazing lands. The government's repeated refusal to fully brief Parliament or to allow media access to the forward areas has added to misgivings over the situation on the ground. It is necessary to demonstrate that the Chinese troops have indeed vacated the forward areas. Premature exclamations of success or the chest-thumping witnessed after the 2017 Doklam disengagement are best avoided, as China doubled down on its presence on the plateau subsequently. Proceeding with caution while learning from past lessons is the best way forward. The two sides will need to discuss whether the old framework of the 1993 Border Peace and Tranquillity Agreement and the 2013 Border Defence Cooperation Agreement still hold, or whether a new modus vivendi is needed to manage their differences over the border from this point on.

West versus the rest

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

India has strongly denied Charges levelled against India by the United States and Canada regarding New Delhi's alleged covert operations targeted at individuals designated terrorists and said that it is not its policy to indulge in such acts. The onus is on the U.S. and Canada to provide any evidence that suggests official Indian sanction to the alleged plots. Even a cursory overview of the U.S.'s conduct in countries hostile and friendly to it would reveal a long record of its interference in their domestic affairs. Covert operations have been a part of U.S. strategy in European countries that are treaty allies and friendly partners, not to mention countries that are its declared enemies. India's enhanced engagement with its diaspora in the West and domestic political calculations in these countries could be among them.

The historic view of western conduct apart, the facts and the circumstances of the controversy are

indicative of a continued western insensitivity towards India's security concerns. Open calls for violence against India, brazen threats to blow up aircraft, and public celebrations of past violence against India are being tolerated in the name of free speech. Indian missions have come under attack from Khalistan proponents in 'Five Eyes' countries. It is notable that all this is happening even as the West is debating whether free speech protections extend to hate speech. Most democracies face turmoil, which calls for new norms and standards, nationally and internationally. Indian immigrants form a considerable percentage of the new citizens in western countries, a trend that will hold for decades. This diaspora can contribute to the continuing vibrancy of western societies, but it also holds the risk of conflict. The India-West partnership is critical for democracy and progress in the current century. Mutual recognition of each other's concerns and priorities is essential for this.

On Section 6A of the Citizenship Act

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court on October 18 upheld the constitutional validity of Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955 which laid out an exclusive regime for migrants in Assam from erstwhile East Pakistan (present Bangladesh) to obtain Indian citizenship as long as they entered India before March 25, 1971.

What does Section 6A stipulate?

Section 6A originates from the "Assam Accord", a political settlement signed on August 15, 1985, between the Rajiv Gandhi-led Congress government and Assam's student groups, following a six-year-long agitation against the influx of undocumented migrants from Bangladesh into Assam. It established a framework for granting or denying Indian citizenship to migrants in Assam based on a cut-off date — March 25, 1971. The date marked the onset of the genocide in East Pakistan, leading to the Bangladesh Liberation War and the eventual creation of Bangladesh. The conflict drove millions of Bengalis to flee East Pakistan and seek refuge in Assam, which shares a 263-km border with Bangladesh. Accordingly, all those who entered the State after March 25, 1971, would be treated as foreigners and deported in accordance with law.

The provision also conferred Indian citizenship upon migrants of "Indian origin" who entered Assam before January 1, 1966, and had been "ordinarily resident" in the State since then. Meanwhile, those who arrived between January 1, 1966, and March 24, 1971, were granted the full rights of Indian citizens, except for voting rights, which were withheld for a decade.

Why was it challenged?

The petitioners, including the NGO Assam Public Works and the Assam Sanmilita Mahasangha, contended that setting a different cut-off date for citizenship in Assam is discriminatory and violates the right to equality enshrined in Article 14 of the Constitution. Concerns were also raised about the provision's inconsistency with Articles 6 and 7, which regulate citizenship pertaining to Partition-era migration for the rest of the country. Article 6 grants citizenship to individuals who migrated to India from Pakistan before July 19, 1948, provided they have resided in the country since then. Meanwhile, Article 7 denies citizenship to those who moved to Pakistan after March 1, 1947, while allowing it for those who returned to India under a permit for resettlement or permanent return.

They also claimed the provision resulted in a "perceptible change in the demographic pattern of the State," thereby violating the cultural and linguistic rights of the "indigenous" population of Assam, as guaranteed under Article 29. This, they argued, constituted both "external aggression" and "internal disturbance" under Article 355 of the Constitution, thereby imposing an obligation upon the Union

government to protect the State.

What did the majority rule?

Both Justices Kant and Chandrachud upheld the differentiated treatment of Assam under Section 6A, citing the region's unique historical and political considerations. They reasoned that the provision does not violate the equality clause under Article 14, as it represents Parliament's careful balancing act between its humanitarian approach toward Bangladeshi immigrants and the significant strain their mass exodus has imposed on Assam's economic and cultural resources.

The majority also opined that Section 6A is not inconsistent with the citizenship provisions in Articles 6 and 7 of the Constitution. The Chief Justice pointed out that while these Articles establish a cut-off date for conferring citizenship at the commencement of the Constitution— January 26, 1950 — Section 6A specifically addresses individuals not covered by these two provisions. Justice Kant concurred, asserting that Section 6A aligns with the constitutional philosophy of Articles 6 and 7, as it is rooted in the “same underlying policy of granting citizenship to the people of Indian origin migrating from Pakistan due to political disturbances in a foreign territory”. Both judges also concluded that Article 11 of the Constitution grants Parliament substantial flexibility in formulating laws related to citizenship, including the authority to establish conditions for granting citizenship that may differ from those outlined in Articles 6 and 7.

Adopting a multicultural and pluralistic interpretation of Article 29, the judges further observed that Section 6A does not violate the cultural rights of the “indigenous” Assamese people. They reasoned that while the Article aims to “conserve” the culture of a specific group, it does not preclude the coexistence of other cultures. In fact, Justice Kant highlighted that such grievances may stem from the failure of authorities to implement the other leg of Section 6A — specifically, the deportation of individuals who migrated to Assam after the cut-off date. He accordingly urged the Chief Justice to constitute a Bench to monitor the identification, detection and deportation of illegal immigrants in the State in a time-bound manner.

Both the judges also noted that “external aggression” referred to military actions and did not cover within its ambit humanitarian migration driven by economic or other distress. Accordingly, they found no breach of the Union's duty under Article 355. The Chief Justice further cautioned that allowing the Union to exercise such “emergency powers” would be detrimental to federalism and could undermine the constitutional status of States.

Why did Justice Pardiwala dissent?

In a sharply reasoned dissent, Justice Pardiwala declared Section 6A unconstitutional, effective only from the date of the judgment. He reasoned that while the provision may have been justifiable at the time of its enactment, its failure to curb illegal migration in Assam had rendered it inconsistent with constitutional principles over time. He also noted that the lack of a sunset clause on the application of Section 6A incentivises illegal immigration and exacerbates demographic imbalances in the region. The judge further highlighted that Section 6A does not allow for self-declaration or voluntary identification as a foreigner thereby leaving the detection process entirely reliant on state intervention. He concluded that this marked a clear departure from the scheme of the Citizenship Act and Articles 6 and 7 of the Constitution, which allow citizenship to be acquired through registration.

“The manner in which the provision is worded, counter-serves the very purpose of its enactment, which is the speedy and effective identification of foreigners of the 1966-71 stream, their deletion from the electoral rolls, registration with the registering authority and conferring of regular citizenship”, the dissent noted.

What are the potential ramifications?

The March 25, 1971, cut-off date endorsed by the majority serves as the foundation for the

contentious National Register of Citizens which was prepared in 2019 following the top court's directives. Although the register is yet to be implemented, it has identified 19 lakh residents (5.77% of Assam's population) as potential non-citizens. Moreover, the ruling bolsters the long-standing demand of Assamese organisations to repeal the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 (CAA), which sets December 31, 2014, as the cut-off date for granting citizenship to non-Muslim migrants who illegally entered India from Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Critics argue that by prescribing a different timeline, the CAA creates a loophole that exempts Bengali Hindus who migrated to Assam from Bangladesh after 1971 from the application of Section 6A.

Why are Big Tech companies such as Google scouting for nuclear power?

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

On October 14, Google announced the "first corporate agreement" to buy nuclear energy from multiple Small Modular Reactors (SMR) developed by Kairos Power that would provide 500 MW of carbon-free power to the U.S. electricity grid by 2035. OpenAI CEO Sam Altman backed the nuclear Startup Oklo, which aims to build a commercial micro reactor in Idaho and have it operational in 2027. Mr. Altman also invested in the nuclear fusion company Helion in 2021. Microsoft's deal with Constellation aims to start Unit 1 of nuclear power generation facility at Three Mile Island. Tech Giants see the next generation nuclear reactors as a way to power global data centres and its offices with the help of clean energy. Smaller sizes and modular designs further help the tech giant in faster deployment cycles. Existing U.S. nuclear plants prevent almost 500 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions each year — the equivalent of taking 100 million cars off the roads.

Why nuclear energy?

Training AI models, ensuring that they remain always online, and maintaining growing data centres are energy-hungry tasks. In a 2024 Environmental Report, Google admitted that its total global Greenhouse Gas Emissions rose by 13 % in 2023 year-over-year, pointing to the "challenge of reducing emissions while compute intensity increases and we grow our technical infrastructure investment to support this AI transition."

Which companies are partnering with nuclear reactor makers?

On September 20, Microsoft and Constellation signed a 20-year power purchase agreement intended to launch the Crane Clean Energy Center (CCEC) and restart the Three Mile Island Unit 1. The deal should add around 835 MW of carbon-free energy to the grid, according to Constellation's statement. "This agreement is a major milestone in Microsoft's efforts to help decarbonise the grid in support of our commitment to become carbon negative," said Bobby Hollis, Microsoft's VP of Energy, at the time. Amazon also announced that it signed three new agreements to support nuclear energy projects, such as the construction of SMRs. In Washington, it partnered with Energy Northwest. It is further making an investment in SMR reactors and fuel developer X-energy, and partnering with Dominion Energy in Virginia. "We also previously signed an agreement to co-locate a data centre facility next to the Talen Energy's nuclear facility in Pennsylvania, which will directly power our data centres with carbon-free energy, and helps preserve this existing reactor," Amazon said in a blog post.

WE AIM TO INSPIRE YOU



VEDHIK

IAS ACADEMY

The New Learning Mantra

START YOUR JOURNEY WITH THE BEST

**INDIA'S
TOP MOST
CIVIL SERVANTS
FOR COACHING**

www.vedhikiasacademy.org

Head Office:

Vedhik IAS Academy
Mercy Estate,
MG Road, Ravipuram,
Ernakulam-682 015,

Corporate office:

Vedhik IAS Academy
Samkalp Bhawan, Plot No.15,
Sector 4, Rama Krishna Puram,
New Delhi, Delhi-110022

Regional office

Vedhik IAS Academy
202, Raheja Chambers, 12,
Museum Road. Bangalore -
560001. Karnataka, India.

GCC Office:

Bobscoedu,

Bobsco Trading & Contracting Co. W. L . L
Office 22, Dream Tower 1,
Road: 2701, Adliya, Kingdom of Bahrain
www.bobscoedu.com