

INTERNATIONAL RELATION**EMERGENCY IN SRI LANKA**

Sri Lanka's President declared an Emergency as thousands of people came out on the streets to protest the crippling power cuts and shortages of essential commodities caused by the country's economic meltdown.

What triggered the crisis?

- Sri Lanka's economic crisis can be traced to two key developments in the immediate past.
 - ❖ The Easter Sunday bombings of 2019 that deterred tourists.
 - ❖ The pandemic since early 2020 that stalled recovery and further drained the economy.

History of Emergencies

- Emergency was first imposed in 1958 after Sri Lanka embraced the Sinhala Only language policy, and off and on from 1971 onward, when the left-wing Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna mounted its first insurrection.
- Sri Lanka was under a near continuous state of Emergency for 27 years from the anti-Tamil riots of 1983 to 2011 with brief respites in 1989 and 2001.
- Emergency in 2018 was imposed to contain anti-Muslim violence in some parts of the country that led to the deaths of two people, acts of arson, and damage to property.
- This is the second time within a year that an Emergency has been declared.
 - ❖ Last year it was to deal with hoarding of essential commodities when the economic crisis had begun to manifest itself in all its severity.

Process of declaring an Emergency in Sri Lanka

- The power to declare a state of Emergency is vested in the President, who is the head of government, under Article 155 of the Constitution.
- The 1947 Public Security Ordinance (PSO) provides the legal framework for the proclamation of Emergency.
 - ❖ Under the ordinance, a state of Emergency can be proclaimed "where the President is of the opinion that it is expedient to do so in the interests of public security and the preservation of public order or for the maintenance of supplies and services essential to the life of the community."
- The PSO empowers the President to frame Emergency regulations for detention, taking possession of property or undertaking; authorisation to enter and search any premises; for amending any law, suspending the operation of any law, and for applying any law with or without modification, without reference to Parliament.
 - ❖ The regulations can override all existing laws.
- The Emergency (Miscellaneous Provisions and Powers) Regulations (EMPPR), give special powers of search, arrest, and detention to the national security forces and law enforcement agencies.
- There is also the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act of 1979, which has remained on the books even after the civil war has ended.
 - ❖ In response to international criticism, the government recently amended this Act, but not enough to satisfy domestic or international critics.

Role of Parliament

- Emergency regulations are valid for a month, but the President must seek ratification for the proclamation or extension beyond a month, every 14 days.
 - ❖ The Emergency lapses if it is not brought before Parliament.
- Although the 1978 Constitution limits parliamentary debate on a proclamation's validity and does not enable it to debate the actual emergency regulations.
 - ❖ The PSO does have a provision under which Parliament may revoke, alter, or amend a regulation through a resolution.

Scope of restrictions

- Freedom of thought and conscience: the prohibition of torture, and the right to be heard at a fair trial by a competent court are not subject to any restriction and are thereby to be considered absolute, these therefore may never be restricted by Emergency Regulations.
- The fundamental rights that may be restricted in the interests of national security and public order are:
 - ❖ The presumption of innocence

- ❖ The burden of proof, and retroactive penal sanctions
- ❖ Equality before the law and non-discrimination
- ❖ The ordinary procedure for arrests and judicial sanction for detention
- ❖ The fundamental rights to freedom of expression, assembly, association, movement, occupation, religion, culture and language.

- The Constitution says nothing about the extent to which these rights might be restricted.

Major issues/ Challenges faced by Sri Lanka

- Organic agricultural policy: It cut the government's tax revenue substantially and rushed into an 'organic only' agricultural policy that will likely slash this year's harvest by half.
- Policy failure: The weak and debt-ridden economy with the lingering strain of the pandemic and ill-advised policies accelerated the downward spiral.
- COVID-19 hit Sri Lanka's key foreign revenue earning sectors hard.
- Earnings from tourism, exports, and worker remittances fell sharply in the last two years.
- Country could not stop importing essentials and its dollar account began dwindling.
- Fast draining foreign reserves, a glaring trade deficit, and a related Balance of Payments problem came as crucial signals.
- Huge foreign loan obligations and the drop in domestic production compounded the economic strain.
 - ❖ Without enough dollars to pay for the country's high import bill, Sri Lanka continued facing a severe shortage of essentials from fuel, cooking gas, and staple food grains to medicines.
- Lack of essentials: Consumers could not find the most basic things such as petrol, LPG cylinders, kerosene, or milk in the market.
- The value of the Sri Lankan rupee has dropped to 300 against a U.S. dollar putting importers in a difficult spot.
- For the average citizen contending with COVID-induced salary cuts and job losses, the soaring living costs have brought more agony.

Government's response in improving the situation

- Credit from other countries: India which has extended \$2.4 billion this year, and China, which is considering a fresh request for \$2.5 billion assistance, in addition to the \$2.8 billion it has extended since the pandemic broke out.
- IMF programme: The government has decided to negotiate an International Monetary Fund programme, while seeking support from other multilateral and bilateral sources.

How does the Sri Lanka crisis affect India?

- India has indicated it would meet the request for the new credit line, to be used for importing essential items such as rice, wheat flour, pulses, sugar and medicines.
- India extended a \$400-million currency swap and a \$500-million credit line for fuel purchases to Sri Lanka.
- India has also sent around four consignments of 40,000 metric tonnes of diesel to mitigate the spike in power cuts in Sri Lanka.
- India also sent 40,000 tonnes of rice in prompt shipments to Sri Lanka.
- India is also dependent on the Colombo port: for global trade as 60 per cent of India's trans-shipment is handled by the port.
- Trade: India has been one of the largest trading partners of Sri Lanka, and one of the top tourism sources.
 - ❖ India has annual exports of \$4.8 billion to Sri Lanka, which account for 1.3 per cent of its total exports.
- India has also invested in areas of tourism, real estate, manufacturing, communications, petroleum retail etc in the country.
- Economic Aspects: India was one of the biggest sources of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Sri Lanka.
 - ❖ Some of the biggest companies in the country have invested in Sri Lanka.
- Threat of Chinese Influence: Sri Lankan government has asked for a 2.5 Bn USD emergency aid from China, there is a threat that China may gain its influence in the island country.

- Refugee Crisis: India witnessed that whenever there is a political or social crisis in Sri Lanka, a large number of refugees come from the Sinhala Land to India through Palk strait & Gulf of Munnar.
- Rise of Rebel Groups in Sri Lanka: This economic crisis may give a new life to already redundant rebels who are trying to find a cause to fuel up the issue.
- Humanitarian Crisis: India is the only immediate neighbour of Sri Lanka and as we see, there is a bigger threat of large-scale humanitarian crisis looming over the country.

Way forward

But even with all this help, Sri Lanka can barely manage. Recovery will neither be fast nor easy.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM

1. BIHAR VIDYAPEETH

Recently, Bihar Vidyapeeth was finally cleared of encroachments on the orders of the Patna High Court, putting an end to litigations stretching over five decades.

About Bihar Vidyapeeth

- It was established during the freedom struggle as National University by Mahatma Gandhi, Moulana Mazharaul Haque, Dr Rajendra Prasad and the other similar leading luminaries of the country in 1921. It was planned under Mahatma Gandhi's guidance.
- It is a charitable non-profit organisation registered under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 of the Legislative Council of India.
- It is a chain of 'national' educational centres in the country for primary, secondary and higher education, with truly Indian ethos, compatible with India's rural-based economy and imbued with patriotic ideology.

Aims and objectives:

- It aims at developing a cadre of quality world class teachers who can effectively implement the educational process for knowledge based creative society.
- It aims at providing skills to people for effective vocational engagements, the entrepreneurial and innovative potential of people.
- It also aims to construct a creative environment for nation builders.

2. LOOK OUT NOTICE

Recently, Journalist Rana Ayyub was stopped in Mumbai based on a look out circular (LOC) issued by the ED, which is investigating her in a case of alleged money laundering.

What is Look Out Circular (LOC)?

- An LOC is issued to make sure that an individual who is absconding or wanted by law enforcement agencies is not able to leave the country.
- It is mostly used at immigration checkpoints at international airports and seaports by the immigration branch.
- In certain cases, the police can approach a court asking for the restriction of a person's movement outside the country, when that person is a suspect and there is an apprehension that they may not join the investigation at a later stage.
- The subject of an LOC can challenge the circular and get relief from a court.
- **Issued by:**
 - ❖ An LOC can be initiated by a large number of authorised officers, including an officer not below the rank of deputy secretary, an officer not below the rank of joint secretary in the state government, a district magistrate or superintendent of police, designated officers of various law enforcing and security agencies, a designated officer of Interpol, an officer not below the rank of additional director in the Serious Fraud Investigation Office, and the Ministry of Corporate Affairs
 - ❖ In 2018, the government also empowered the heads of public sector banks to directly request the authorities to issue an LOC against wilful defaulters to prevent them from leaving the country.
 - So now, an officer not below the rank of chairman/managing director/chief executive of any public sector bank can make a request.
- An LOC can be modified/deleted/withdrawn by the Bureau of Immigration only on the specific request of the authorised originator on whose request the LOC was issued.

Does an LOC lead to arrest?

Not necessarily. LOCs can be of several types.

- They can seek to merely stop a person against whom the circular has been issued from travelling outside the country, to prevent a person from entering the country, or inform the concerned investigation agencies.
- The proforma of the LOC also contains a request to detain the individual at the local police/investigation agency, which generally leads to arrest.

3. BROADCAST SEVA PORTAL

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has launched the Broadcast Seva (BS) Portal.

Broadcast Seva Portal

About:

- It is a 360 degree digital solution that will facilitate stakeholders in seeking permissions, applying for registration, tracking applications, calculating fees and executing payments.
- This simple and user-friendly web portal provides a broadcaster with an end-to-end solution with just a click of a mouse.

Significance:

- The portal would reduce the turnaround time of applications and help the applicants track the progress made.
- It would minimise human interface that was earlier required and add to the capacity building of the Ministry.
- It would facilitate the stakeholders in seeking permissions, applying for registration, tracking applications, calculating fees and executing payments.
- It would bring transparency, accountability and responsiveness in the ecosystem and all information would be available on a single dashboard.
- The ease of doing business will get promoted with its launch.
- It will boost the business environment and empower the entire broadcast sector by directly benefiting more than 900 Satellite TV Channels, 70 Teleport operators, 1700 Multi-service operators, 350 Community Radio Stations (CRS), and 380 Private FM Channels and others.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Q1. Russo-Indian relations have been historically stable. But in light of recent developments—including India's closer ties with the United States and Russia's invasion of Ukraine—India's ability to deftly balance Moscow with the West may be tested like never before. Critically analyse. (250 words)

Introduction

Russia's war on Ukraine has decisively shaped international opinion. Indian foreign policy is also going to be affected in a profound manner. While there has always remained a pro-Russian popular sentiment in India, rooted in Moscow's support during the Cold War era, particularly against the pro-Pakistani diplomatic activism by powerful Western countries in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), a majority of Indians today seem taken aback by Russia's misadventure against a sovereign country.

Body

Background: Russia-Ukraine war

- The increasing aggression on part of Russia started with news of eastward expansion of NATO, especially Ukraine's membership to NATO. This would mean deployment of western missiles and weapons in Russia backyard and its borders.
- Russian President Vladimir Putin has played a major move by announcing formal recognition for the Donbas region enclaves (Oblasts) of Donetsk and Luhansk in Eastern Ukraine, one which changes the course of the present diplomatic efforts.
- Post this, Russian troops have started full scale invasion and have reached the capital city Kyiv.

Complex issues facing India while balancing Moscow and the West

- 'China' problem: There are understandable reasons for India's (subtle) pro-Russia position.
 - ❖ An aggressive Russia is a problem for the U.S. and the West, not for India.
 - ❖ North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) expansion is Russia's problem, not India's.
 - ❖ India's problem is China, and it needs both the U.S./the West and Russia to deal with the "China problem"
- Geopolitics rather than emotions: There is today a sobering recognition in New Delhi about the weakening of the U.S.-led global order and the rise of China as a counter-pole, geographically located right next to India.

- ❖ S. withdrawal from the region and its decline as the principal system shaper has complicated India's place in regional geopolitics.
- ❖ Neighbouring China as the rising superpower and Russia as its strategic ally challenging the U.S.-led global order at a time when China has time and again acted on its aggressive intentions vis-à-vis India, and when India is closest to the U.S. than ever before in its history, throws up a unique and unprecedented challenge for India.
- Beyond all weather friendship: For India, Russian ties are important. It must be recalled that Ukraine was against India during 1998 nuclear tests and had spoken against India with issue of Kashmir.
 - ❖ India's Russia tilt should be seen not just as a product of its time-tested friendship with Moscow but also as a geopolitical necessity.
 - ❖ If in the future there is Chinese aggression or Pakistan tries adventurism on India, India will need all hands on the deck. Russia being the most important.
- Russia's support to solve continental problems: There is an emerging dualism in contemporary Indian strategic Weltanschauung: the predicament of a continental space that is reeling under immense pressure from China, Pakistan and Taliban-led Afghanistan adding to its strategic claustrophobia; and, the emergence of a maritime sphere which presents an opportunity to break out of the same.
- Defence supplies: New Delhi needs Moscow's assistance to manage its continental difficulties through defence supplies, helping it 'return' to central Asia, working together at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) or exploring opportunities for collaboration in Afghanistan.
 - ❖ Russia, to put it rather bluntly, is perhaps India's only partner of consequence in the entire Asian continental stretch.
 - ❖ Therefore, having Russia on its side is crucial for India, more than ever.
 - ❖ Moscow may or may not be able to moderate Chinese antagonism towards New Delhi, but an India-Russia strategic partnership may be able to temper New Delhi's growing isolation in a rather friendless region.

Way forward for India

- India's past record has been maintaining balance between the West and Russia. On January 31, India abstained on a procedural vote on whether to discuss the issue of Ukraine.
- New Delhi had then articulated its position on "legitimate security interests" that echoed with a nuanced tilt towards the Russian position, and had abstained along with Kenya and Gabon.
- Despite abstention, India has reiterated and has called for cessation of violence in no ambiguous terms.
- India has also quoted the international charter on sovereignty, highlighting that all nations must respect the same, intended towards Russia.
- For India, Russian ties are important. It must be recalled that Ukraine was against India during 1998 nuclear tests and had spoken against India with issue of Kashmir.
- Hence strategic autonomy is the way forward as India has been doing.

Conclusion

India's position also shows the unmistakable indication that when it comes to geopolitics, New Delhi will choose interests over principles. And yet, a careful reading of India's statements and positions taken over the past few days also demonstrates a certain amount of discomfort in having to choose interests over principles.

However, New Delhi's response to the recent crisis, especially its "explanation of vote" at the UNSC indicates a careful recourse to the principle of strategic autonomy: India will make caveated statements and will not be pressured by either party. In that sense, India's indirect support to the Russian position is not a product of Russian pressure but the result of a desire to safeguard its own interests. Neighbours believe in its nuclear doctrine through effective confidence building measures.

DAILY QUIZ

Q1. With reference to Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), consider the following statements:

1. It was established by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 1988.
2. It provides governments at all levels with scientific information that they can use to develop climate policies.

3. It does not itself engage in scientific research.
Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 2 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3**

Q2. With reference to facial recognition technology, consider the following statements:

- 1. Digi Yatra Initiative is making use of FRT to make air travel easier.
- 2. Variation in light intensity majority affects the quality of FRT.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) Neither 1 nor 2
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 2 both**
- (d) only 1

Q3. Consider the following statements

- 1. Capital punishment in India is a legal penalty.
- 2. The Indian Penal Code in accordance with the provisions enshrined in the Constitution of India provided for awarding of capital punishment for certain specific offences.

Which of the given above statements is/are correct?

- (a) Neither 1 nor 2
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 2 only**
- (d) only 1

Q4. With reference to Look Out Circular (LOC), consider the following statements:

- 1. It is issued to stop absconding individuals from leaving the country.
- 2. It is mostly used at immigration checkpoints at international airports and seaports.
- 3. It can only be initiated by an officer not below the rank of deputy secretary.
- 4. can not be modified by the Bureau of Immigration .

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 2 and 4 only
- (c) 1 and 2 only**
- (d) 1, 3 and 4

Q5. India conducts a joint military exercise named “Mitra Shakti” with which country?

- (a) Thailand
- (b) Bangladesh
- (c) Sri lanka**
- (d) France