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UKRAINE-RUSSIA CONFLICT

The UN Security Council has expressed “deep concern” over the “maintenance of peace and security” in Ukraine and backed efforts by Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to find a peaceful solution.

About:

UNSC issued a unanimous statement on the conflict for the first time since the February 24 invasion by Russia. The recent statement does not use the terms “war” or “conflict” for Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, only recalling “that all member-states have undertaken, under the Charter of the United Nations, the obligation to settle their international disputes by peaceful means”. The Security Council requested the Secretary-General to brief the Security Council in due course after the adoption of the statement, which was initiated by Norway and Mexico. India strongly condemned the killing of civilians in Bucha and supported the call for an independent investigation. India also supports all efforts to alleviate the suffering of the people of Ukraine.

SEDITION

A 1962 Constitution Bench judgment of the Supreme Court, which upheld the validity of the sedition law, “must be treated as a binding precedent” that has withstood the test of time, the Centre told the Supreme Court.

About:

The 1962 KedarNath verdict allowed Section 124A (sedition) to continue to be part of the Indian Penal Code though it limited its applicability to “activities involving incitement to violence or intention or tendency to create public disorder or cause disturbance of public peace”. Instances of abuse of Section 124A did not justify reconsideration of a binding judgment upholding the sedition law. The remedy would lie in preventing such abuse on a case-to-case basis, the Centre said. A clutch of petitions by senior journalists and prominent bodies and personalities has challenged the legality of the colonial law. They have argued that the law of sedition is being rampantly misused by the government to curb fundamental rights of life, dignity, personal liberty, and the freedoms to protest and dissent. They said the Kedar Nath judgment had only covered how sedition affected free speech and expression enshrined in Article 19(1)(a) and did not touch upon how the provision would snuff out the right to life (Article 21) and right to equal treatment (Article 14).

CAPF PUNARVAAS

The Ministry of Home Affairs under the directions of the Union Home Minister, Amit Shah has launched ‘CAPF Punarvaas’, through the Welfare & Rehabilitation Board (WARB).

About:

This has been launched with an aim to facilitate retired Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) and Assam Rifle personnel to secure employment with private security agencies. The portal will help retired personnel seeking re-employment to find an appropriate match by uploading their personal details on the WARB website along with their area of expertise and preferred employment location. The Ministry of Home Affairs also runs a portal under Private Security Agencies Regulation Act (PSARA) for the registration of Private Security Agencies (PSAs). Both websites have now been interlinked whereby the database of retired CAPFs personnel who have applied on ‘CAPF Punarvaas’ can be accessed by PSAs through PSARA website resulting in a single platform for both job seekers and job providers. This new initiative of Ministry of Home Affairs provides access to the data base under ‘CAPFs Punarvaas’ to PSAs digitally.

VIRTUAL PRIVATE NETWORK (VPN)

Virtual private network (VPN) service providers are up in arms against a new directive of The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team or Cert-In, a wing of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

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About:

The new directive mandates they must maintain all customer data for five years. VPN service providers have said the new directive would mean a total loss of privacy for the users—one of the most important unique selling points of such services.

IP address

Any and all devices connected to the internet are a part of a large network of computers, servers and other devices spread across the world. To identify each device connected to the internet, service providers globally assign a unique address to each such device called the internet protocol address or IP address. It is this IP address that helps websites, law enforcement agencies and even companies track down individual users and their accurate location.

PULSARS

An object that astronomers thought was a distant galaxy has now been discovered as the brightest extra-galactic pulsar ever seen.

About:

This pulsar could be the most luminous one ever found- 10 times brighter than any other detected. The newly found pulsar – called PSR J0523–7125 – is located well beyond the limits of the Milky Way within the Large Magellanic Cloud. A pulsar (from pulsating radio source) is a neutron star that rotates quickly and releases two polarised radio lights. The beams create a unique timing and polarisation signature as they burst across space. Pulsars are among the few celestial objects that emit circular polarised light.

Three distinct classes of pulsars are currently known to astronomers, according to the source of the power of the electromagnetic radiation:

rotation-powered pulsars, where the loss of rotational energy of the star provides the power, accretion-powered pulsars, where the gravitational potential energy of accreted matter is the power source (producing X-rays that are observable from the Earth), magnetars, where the decay of an extremely strong magnetic field provides the electromagnetic power.

LA NINA

In most years, meteorologists consider the La Nina to be a friend of India.

About:

The phenomenon associated with below normal sea surface temperatures in the eastern and central Pacific Ocean, makes the summer monsoon wetter and the winter colder unlike its evil twin, the El Nino, or a warming phenomenon that frequently dries up monsoon rains over India. This year, however, the La Nina is being blamed for worsening perhaps the longest spell of heatwaves from March to April in north, west and Central India. Formally known as the El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO), the La Nina-El Nino phenomenon follows a periodic pattern that roughly lasts three years.

During a La Nina winter, a north-south pressure pattern sets up over India and normally this influences the trade winds that bring rains to India. However, because the La Nina didn't peak, the sea surface temperatures continued to be cold and this drove hot westerly winds and blasts of hot air from the Middle East into Pakistan and India.

APPOINTMENT OF SUPREME COURT JUDGES

Gauhati High Court Chief Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia and Gujarat High Court Judge Justice Jamshed Burjor Pardiwala have been appointed judges of the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court will have its full sanctioned strength of 34 judges until the retirement of Justice Vineet Saran on May 10.

About:

Articles 124(2) and 217 of the Constitution governs the appointment of judges to the Supreme Court and High Courts respectively. Under both provisions, the President has the power to make the appointments "after consultation with

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such of the Judges of the Supreme Court and of the High Courts in the States as the President may deem necessary". In three cases — which came to be known as the Judges Cases — in 1981, 1993 and 1998, the Supreme Court evolved the collegium system for appointing judges.



DOMESTIC LPG CYLINDER PRICE HIKED

Households will now have to spend more on liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), as national oil marketing companies on May 7 increased the price of the 14.2-kg cylinder by ₹50.

About:

The revision by Indian Oil Corporation, BPCL and HPCL, which command a lion's share of the domestic LPG market in India, follows a more than ₹100 increase in the commercial 19-kg cylinder price on May 1. The second such revision in under two months, the increase pushes up the price of a domestic cylinder of cooking gas to more than ₹1,000 in Chennai and Kolkata, while taking it to ₹999.50 in Delhi and Mumbai. Coming at a time when household budgets are already strained by the rising prices of daily-use items from milk to edible oil as well as the increased spending on commutes due to high petrol and diesel prices, the LPG price increase is bound to add to the stress for consumers. Increase in the price of domestic LPG comes amid a firming up of crude oil prices since the Russia-Ukraine war began.