



Indian Military Dependence on Russian Equipments

Why in News

According to the **Military Balance 2021**, India's present military arsenal is heavily stocked with **Russian-made or Russian-designed equipment**.

- The Military Balance is the **International Institute for Strategic Studies'** (global think tank) **annual assessment** of the military capabilities and defence economics of 171 countries worldwide.

Key Points

▪ About the Report:

- There has been a considerable drop in India's dependence on arms and equipment from Russia.
 - However, the **Indian military cannot operate effectively without Russian-supplied equipment** and will continue to rely on its weapons systems in the near and middle terms.
- The report is crucial in the pretext of the **US administration's review of [Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act \(CAATSA\)](#)**.
 - The CAATSA seeks to impose sanctions against the country buying military arms from Russia.
 - India's plan to purchase **[Russian-made S-400 air defense systems](#)**, which could trigger **US sanctions under Section 231 of CAATSA**.

▪ India-Russia's Military Relations:

- **Indian Dependence:** According to **[Stockholm International Peace Research Institute \(SIPRI\)](#)**, since 2010, Russia has been the source of nearly two-thirds (62%) of all Indian arms imports.
 - Further, India has been the largest Russian arms importer, accounting for nearly one-third (32%) of all Russian arms exports.
- **Favourable Russian Military Exports to India:** Much of Russia's influence in India comes through its willingness to provide weapons systems and technologies that no other country will export to India.
 - The **US only provides non-lethal defence technology** like **C-130j Super Hercules, C-13 Globemaster, [P-8i Poseidon](#)** etc, while **Russia provides high-end technology** like **[Brahmos](#) supersonic missile, S-400 anti-missile system**.
 - Russia also continues to offer advanced weapons platforms **at relatively attractive rates**.
- **Army Cooperation:** Around 10,000 pieces of military hardware are procured from Russia.
 - The **[Indian Army's main battle tank](#)** force is composed predominantly of Russian T-72M1 (66%) and T-90S (30%).

- India is negotiating on the price of **AK103 rifles** for **Make in India**.
- **Naval Cooperation:** Indian Navy's sole operational aircraft carrier is a refurbished Soviet-era ship (**INS Vikramaditya**). The Navy's fighter fleet comprises **43 MiG-29K**.
 - Four of the Navy's 10 **guided-missile destroyers** are **Russian Kashin class**, and six of its 17 frigates are **Russian Talwar class**.
 - The Navy's sole nuclear-powered submarine is on lease from Russia, and eight of the service's 14 other submarines are **Russian-origin Kilo class**.
- **Air Force Cooperation:** The Indian Air Force's 667-plane FGA (Fighter Ground Attack) fleet is 71% Russian-origin (39% Su-30s (**Sukhoi**), 22% MiG-21s, 9% MiG-29s).
 - All six of the service's air tankers are **Russian-made Il-78s**.
- **Missile Cooperation:** The country's only nuclear-capable supersonic cruise missile, **BrahMos**, is produced by a joint venture with Russia.
 - The S-400 Air Defence Missile Systems is expected to be delivered by 2021.
- **Military Exercises:** India and Russia conduct the **INDRA series** of military exercises, which began in 2003. However, the first joint Tri-Services Exercise was conducted in 2017.

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The Russian Front
Russia still remains India's top weapons supplier and this complicates the relationship with the US

INKED DEALS

- \$5.4 bn** contract for **S-400** missile system
- \$3 bn** pact to lease another **nuclear attack submarine**
- \$2 bn** contract to buy **4 frigates**

IN THE PIPELINE

- \$1 bn+** deal for **AK-203 assault rifles** to be made in partnership with the Ordnance Factory Board
- \$1 bn** for **Kamov Ka-226 choppers** to be made in partnership with Hindustan Aeronautics
- \$1 bn** worth of emergency supplies, including **ammunition, missiles, assault rifles and anti-tank systems**

Way Forward

- **Russia's closeness with China and Pakistan** has raised concerns for India. However, this closeness is tactical, mainly induced due to western sanctions, whereas Russia-India partnership is strategic.
 - This is because Russia always saw **India as a balancer** against growing Chinese assertiveness.

- India can widen its **procurement basket and can remain close to Russia** for its strategic programmes and joint development of weapon systems.
 - Thus, **decoupling India's choice of arms suppliers** from the strategic relationship it has forged with the US is the way ahead.

[Source: IE](#)

US' CAATSA and Russia's S-400

Why in News

The US lawmakers continue to voice their support for a sanctions waiver from [Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act \(CAATSA\)](#) for India.

- In October 2018, India signed a 5.43 billion USD deal with Russia for the [S-400 Triumf missile system](#) despite objections from the US and the threat of sanctions under CAATSA. India is likely to **begin taking delivery** of the S-400 missile defence system from Russia **in November 2021**.

Key Points

▪ About the US' CAATSA:

- **US Law:** It is a US federal law **enacted in 2017**. The Act **empowers the US President to impose at least five of the 12 listed sanctions on persons** engaged in a **"significant transaction" with Russian defence and intelligence sectors**.
 - Its "ultimate goal", "is to **prevent revenue from flowing to the Russian Government**."
 - Besides Russia, **CAATSA is aimed at enforcing sanctions against Iran and North Korea**.
- **Types of Sanctions:** The CAATSA contains 12 types of sanctions. There are **only two sanctions that may impact either India-Russia relations or India-US relations**.
 - **Prohibition of Banking transactions:** The first of these, which is likely to have an impact on India-Russia relations, is the **"Prohibition of Banking transactions"**.
 - This would mean difficulties for India in making payments in US Dollars to Russia for the purchase of the S-400 systems.
 - **Export Sanction:** The second sanction will have greater consequences for India-US relations.
 - This is the **"export sanction"** which has the potential to completely derail the [India-US Strategic and Defence partnership](#), as it will deny the license for, and export of, any items controlled by the US.
- **Waiver Criteria:** The US President was given the authority in 2018 to waive CAATSA sanctions on a **case-by-case basis**.

▪ Russia's S-400 Triumf Missile System:

- **About:**
 - It is a **mobile, Surface-to-Air Missile system (SAM) designed by Russia**.

- It is the most dangerous operationally deployed **Modern Long-Range SAM (MLR SAM)** in the world, considered **much ahead of the [US-developed Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system \(THAAD\)](#)**.
- It integrates a multifunction radar, autonomous detection and targeting systems, anti-aircraft missile systems, launchers, and command and control centre.
 - It is capable of firing three types of missiles to create a layered defence.
- The system can **engage all types of aerial targets including aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV)** and **[ballistic and cruise missiles](#)** within the range of 400km, at an altitude of up to 30km.
- The system can track 100 airborne targets and engage six of them simultaneously.
- **Significance for India:**
 - From India's point of view, **China is also buying the system**. In 2015, China signed an agreement with Russia to purchase six battalions of the system. Its delivery began in January 2018.
 - China's acquisition of the S-400 system has been viewed as a "game changer" in the region. However, its effectiveness against India is limited.
 - India's acquisition is **crucial to counter attacks in a [two-front war](#)**, including even high-end F-35 US fighter aircraft.

India-US Defence Cooperation

- Both countries signed the '**New Framework for India-US Defense Relations**' in 2005, which was further updated for 10 years in 2015.
 - The USA recognised India as a **Major Defence Partner** in 2016.
 - The designation allows India to **buy more advanced and sensitive technologies from America** at par with that of the US's closest allies and partners.
- India and US inked important defence pacts in the last few years and also formalised the four nation alliance of **[QUAD](#)** (India, US, Japan and Australia).
- **[Four Foundational Defence Agreements](#):**
 - Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geospatial Intelligence (BECA).
 - General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA).
 - Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA).
 - Communication Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA).
- **US Military Equipment in India:** Indian Air Force's C-17 heavy-lifters, Apache attack helicopters and C-130J special operations aircraft, India's Navy's P-8I surveillance aircraft and the Indian Army's M-777 ultra-light howitzers.
- **Defence Exercises:**
 - **[Malabar exercise](#)** (Quadrilateral naval exercise of India, USA, Japan and Australia) , **[Yudh Abhyas](#)** (Army); Cope India (Air Force); **[Vajra Prahar](#)** (Special Forces).

India & the US

A snapshot of key agreements and weapon sales in the works:

KEY FACTS

Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (2016):

Gives access to each other's military and civil facilities for repairs, supplies and refuelling

Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (2018):

Gives India access to real-time imagery, military data and intercepts

Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (2020) :

Would give India access to a database of global maps critical for precise targeting and operational planning

THE WEAPONS

India has significantly increased US-origin weapons in its inventory. Apart from purchasing radar systems, aircraft & choppers, rifles and missiles are in the pipeline:

The National Advanced Surface to Air Missile System: To protect the national capital from all air threats

P-8: To bolster the navy's submarine hunting and maritime patrol capabilities

Fighter Planes: The US is pitching the **F-15EX**, the F-21 and the F/A-18 Super Hornets for the IAF and the carrier-borne F/A-18 Super Hornets for the navy

Armed Drones: A version of the Sea Guardian

Way Forward

- Russia always saw India as a balancer that's why Russia facilitated India's inclusion into [Shanghai Cooperation Organisation \(SCO\)](#) and formation of [Russia-India-China \(RIC\) grouping](#).
 - India today is in a unique position where it has a favourable relation with all great powers, and she must leverage this position to help in building a peaceful world order.
- The defence procurement for India has become significant amid deadly clashes with [China on Line of Actual Control \(LAC\)](#). Further, Russia is an all weather defence partner of India.
 - However, India **needs to balance its relation with both Russia and USA**, so that its national interest is not compromised.
- It **needs to develop closer ties with the United States**, which could balance any moves towards a strategic partnership between China and Russia.

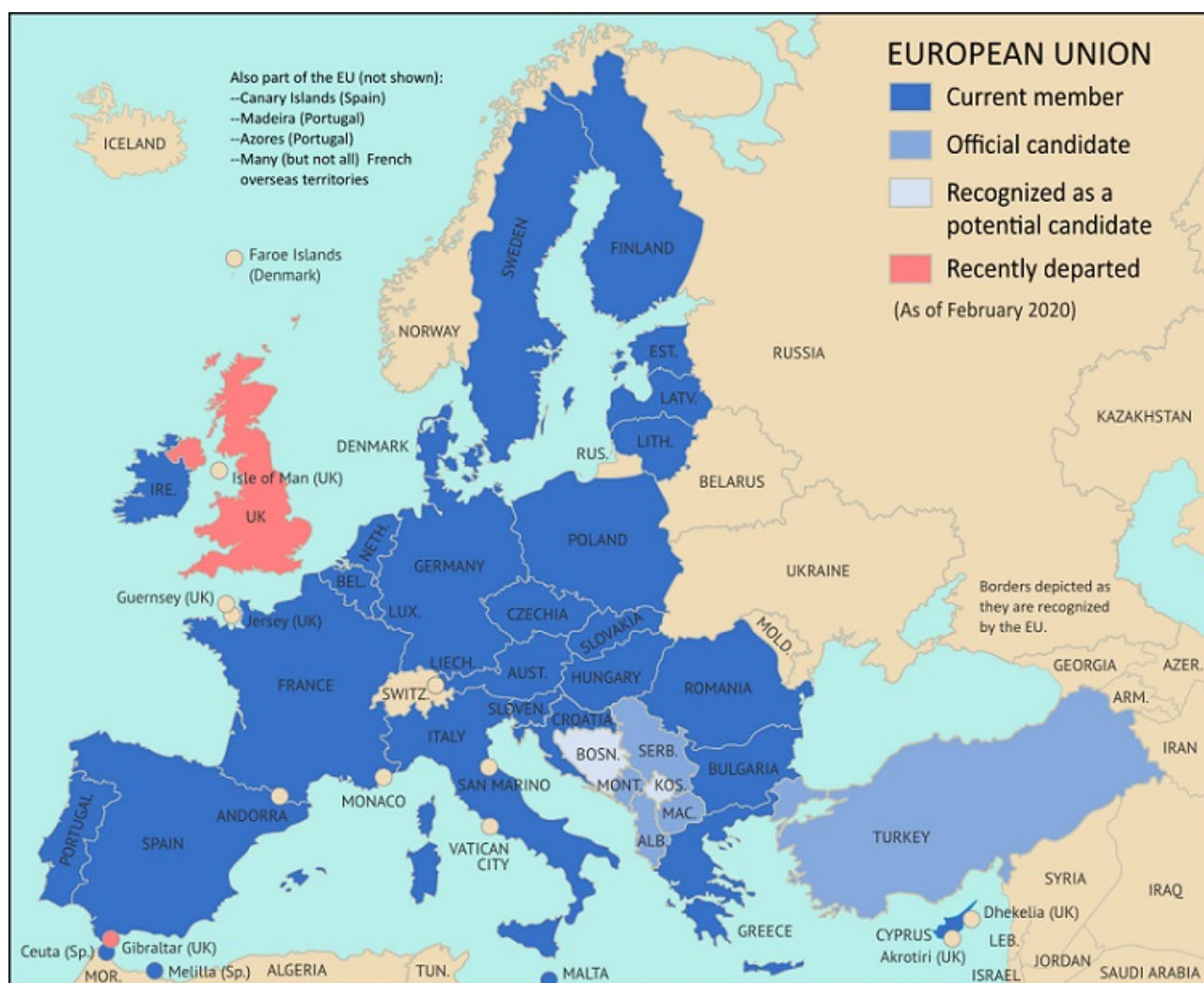
[Source: TH](#)

Renegotiation of BTIA: India-EU

Why in News

Recently, government officials have revealed that India and the [European Union \(EU\)](#) are set to resume negotiations for a **Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA)**. The BTIA talks have been suspended since 2013.

- However, at [India-EU Leaders' Meeting](#) earlier this year, both countries agreed to relaunch free trade negotiations for the BTIA and also adopted a Connectivity Partnership.



Key Points

- **About BTIA:**
 - **Background:** India and EU had launched talks for having a wide-ranging [Free Trade Agreement \(FTA\)](#), officially called broad-based BTIA, long ago in 2007.
 - The BTIA was proposed to encompass trade in goods, services and investments.
 - However, the talks stalled in 2013 over differences on market access and movement of professionals.
 - **Scope:** The EU was India's largest trading partner in goods 2019-20, ahead of China and the US, with total trade close to USD 90 billion.

- With the signing of the BTIA , India and the EU expect to promote bilateral trade by removing barriers to trade in goods and services and investment across all sectors of the economy.
- **Challenges:** Pursuit of self-reliance has been accelerated by the Covid-19 crisis under the [Atmanirbhar Bharat Mission](#). This is perceived by the European Union as India's “**protectionist stance**”.
- **India may find it difficult to meet the sustainable standards in labour and environment** on which the EU now lays greater emphasis.
- **Significance:** India seeks to signal that it means business and is **not averse to signing trade agreements after it opted out of the [Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership \(RCEP\)](#)** at the last moment.
- The **EU, in turn, wants to diversify its value chain away from China to India** and, hence, there is interest on its part also to have a trade agreement with India.
- **Connectivity Roadmap:**
 - **More than Physical Connectivity:** It is an ambitious and comprehensive connectivity project, which not only focuses on physical infrastructure but also envisages enhancing digital, energy, transport and people-to-people connectivity.
 - **Components:** India-EU connectivity roadmap covers three main areas — trade and investment, science and technology and [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDG\)](#).
 - **Regional and Multi Stakeholder Approach:** The focus areas were connectivity within the country, building connectivity with Europe and in that process work with other countries in South Asia and [Info-Pacific](#).
 - It will catalyse private and public financing for connectivity projects.
 - **Counterfoil to BRI:** The report titled India-EU Connectivity: Partnership for Development, Demand and Democracy’ underlines that the connectivity road map indirectly seeks to counterfoil China’s [Belt and Road Initiative \(BRI\)](#).
 - As it stressed on principles like democracy, rule of law, inclusiveness and transparency and avoiding debt trap.

Way Forward

- **Geo-Economic Cooperation:** India can pursue EU countries to engage in Indo-pacific narrative, geo-economically if not from security prism.
 - It can mobilise massive economic resources for sustainable development of regional infrastructure, wield political influence and leverage its significant soft power to shape the Indo-Pacific discourse.
- **Finalisation of Indo-EU BTIA Treaty:** India and the European Union have been negotiating a free trade deal, but it is pending since 2007.
 - Therefore, for closer convergence between India and the EU, both should engage in finalisation of the trade deal as soon as possible.
- **Collaborating With Important Players:** French President Emmanuel Macron’s visit to India in early 2018 unveiled an expansive framework for revitalising the strategic partnership.
 - [India’s partnership with France](#) now has a strong regional anchor in the Indo-Pacific narrative.
 - India is also engaged in negotiations for [a trade pact with the UK](#).

[Source: TH](#)

G20 Climate Risk Atlas

Why in News

Recently, a report named **G20 Climate Risk Atlas** from the **Euro-Mediterranean Center on Climate Change** (CMCC) has said that **G20 (Group of 20) countries** including the wealthiest like the US, European countries, and Australia will bear extreme impacts of **climate change** over the coming years.

- The **first study of its kind**, it provides climate scenarios, information, data and future changes in climate across the G20 countries.
- The report came two days ahead of the **G20 summit in Rome** at the end of October 2021.

Key Points

▪ Impact on G20 Countries:

◦ Heatwaves:

- **Heatwaves** could last at least ten times longer in all G20 countries, with heatwaves in Argentina, Brazil and Indonesia lasting over 60 times longer by 2050.
 - In Australia, **bushfires**, **coastal floods** and **hurricanes** could raise **insurance** costs and reduce property values by 611 billion Australian Dollars by 2050.

◦ GDP Loss:

- **GDP (Gross Domestic product)** losses due to climate damage in G20 countries increase each year, rising to at least 4% annually by 2050. This can reach over 8% by 2100, equivalent to twice the bloc's economic losses from **Covid-19**.
 - Some countries will be even worse hit, such as Canada, which could see at least a 4% decrease in its GDP by 2050 and over 13% by 2100.

◦ Sea Level Rise:

- The **sea level rise** could wreck coastal infrastructure within 30 years, with Japan set to lose 404 billion euro and South Africa 815 million euro by 2050, on a high emissions pathway.

◦ Flooding

- Expected annual damages from **riverine flooding** by 2050 are estimated to be **376.4 billion Euro** under a low emissions scenario and rise to 585.6 billion EUR under a high emissions scenario.

▪ Impact on India:

◦ Emission Scenarios:

- **Low Emission** (emissions lower than in present):
 - Projected **temperature** variations will remain contained **under 1.5 degree celsius , both by 2050 and 2100**.
- **Medium Emission** (same as present):
 - Between 2036 and 2065, the maximum temperature of the warmest month in India could **rise by at least 1.2 degree celsius in a medium emission pathway**.

- **High Emission** (higher than present):
 - By 2050 under a high emission scenario **average temperature could rise to 2 degree celsius.**
- **Rainfall:**
 - **Annual rainfall** is likely to record a **steep increase by 2050 with an 8% to 19.3% increase in all emission scenarios.**
- **Economic Impact:**
 - In India, declines in **rice and wheat** yields due to climate change could lead to economic losses between 43 and 81 billion EUR (or 1.8-3.4% of (GDP) by 2050.
 - **Water demand for agriculture is likely to rise** around about 29% by 2050 – meaning yield losses are likely to be underestimated.
- **Heatwaves:**
 - Heatwaves in India will last 25 times longer by 2036-2065 if emissions are high (4°C), over five times longer if global temperature rise is constrained to about 2°C, and one and a half times longer if emissions are very low and temperature rise only reaches 1.5°C.
- **Agricultural Drought:**
 - On a pathway to 4°C global heating, **agricultural drought will become 48% more frequent** by 2036-2065.
 - On a 2°C pathway (the maximum temperature agreed by the **Paris Agreement**) this drops to 20% more frequent, and constraining temperature rise to 1.5°C (the aspirational goal of the Paris Agreement), agricultural drought will still be 13% more frequent.
- **Flooding:**
 - Under **18 million Indians could be at risk of river flooding** by 2050 if emissions are high, compared to 1.3 million today.
- **Labour:**
 - Total **labour is expected to decline by 13.4%** under a low emissions scenario by 2050 due to the increase in heat, and by 24% under a medium emissions scenario by 2080.
- **Food Security:**
 - In India, **declines in rice and wheat production could spark economic losses** of up to Euros 81 billion by 2050 and a loss of 15% of farmers' incomes by 2100.

Way Forward

- The window to act is closing fast. As the **G20 countries incentivize economic recovery from Covid-19** and prepare climate plans ahead of COP26, they face an urgent choice to protect the global economy and make a rapid transition to a **low-carbon future**; or derail the global economy by pursuing polluting policies.
 - It's time for the **G20 to make its economic agenda a climate agenda. Rapid action is needed to tackle emissions** and adapt to climate change will limit the severe impacts of climate change.
 - G20 governments should listen to science and put the world on a path to a **better, fairer and more stable future.**
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Deputy Speaker Election

Why in News

Recently, an MLA from UP was elected Deputy Speaker of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly.

- **Article 93** of the Constitution provides for the election of both the [Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha](#).
- **Article 178** contains the corresponding position for **Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of a state**.

Key Points

▪ Deputy Speaker:

◦ Elected By:

- The **Deputy Speaker is elected by the Lok Sabha** from amongst its members right after the election of the Speaker has taken place.
- The **date of election of the Deputy Speaker is fixed by the Speaker** (date of election of the Speaker is fixed by the President).
- The institutions of **Speaker and Deputy Speaker originated in India** in 1921 under the provisions of the **Government of India Act of 1919 (Montague-Chelmsford Reforms)**.

- At that time, the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker were called the President and Deputy President respectively and the same nomenclature continued till 1947.

◦ Time Frame & Rules of Election:

- The practice in **both Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies** has been **to elect the Speaker during the (mostly short) first session of the new House** usually on the third day after oath-taking and affirmations take place over the first two days.
- The **election of the Deputy Speaker usually takes place in the second session**, even though there is no bar on having this election too in the first session of the new Lok Sabha/Assembly.
- But the **election of Deputy Speaker is generally not delayed** beyond the second session without genuine and unavoidable constraints.
- In Lok Sabha, the **election of Deputy Speaker** is governed by **Rule 8 of The Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha**.

- Once elected, the **Deputy Speaker usually continues in office** until the dissolution of the House.

◦ Term of Office and Removal:

- Like the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker **remains in office usually during the life of the Lok Sabha (5 years)**.
- The **Deputy Speaker may vacate his/her office earlier** in any of the following three cases:
 - If he ceases to be a member of the Lok Sabha.
 - If he resigns by writing to the Speaker.
 - If he is **removed by a resolution passed by a majority of all the then members of the Lok Sabha**.

- Such a resolution can be moved only after giving 14 days' advance notice.

- **In the case of the State Assembly**, the removal process is the same as that of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha.
- **Responsibilities and Powers (Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha):**
 - Under **Article 95** of the constitution, the Deputy Speaker **performs the duties of the Speaker's office** when it is vacant.
 - He/She also **acts as the Speaker when the latter is absent** from the sitting of the House.
 - He/She also **presides over the joint sitting** of both the Houses of Parliament, in case the Speaker is absent from such a sitting.
 - The Deputy Speaker has one special privilege, that is, **whenever he/she is appointed as a member of a parliamentary committee**, he/she automatically becomes its chairman.
- **Deputy Speaker and Tenth Schedule (Exception):**
 - **Para 5 of the Tenth Schedule** (commonly known as the anti-defection law) says that **a person who has been elected Speaker/ Deputy Speaker shall not be disqualified:**
 - If he, by reason of his election to that office, **voluntarily gives up the membership of the political party** to which he belonged immediately before such election,
 - **And does not**, so long as he continues to hold such office thereafter, **rejoin that political party** or become a member of another political party.
 - This **exemption applies to the** Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman, Chairman/ Deputy Chairman of a state Legislative Council, and Speaker/ Deputy Speaker of a state Legislative Assembly as well.

[Source: IE](#)

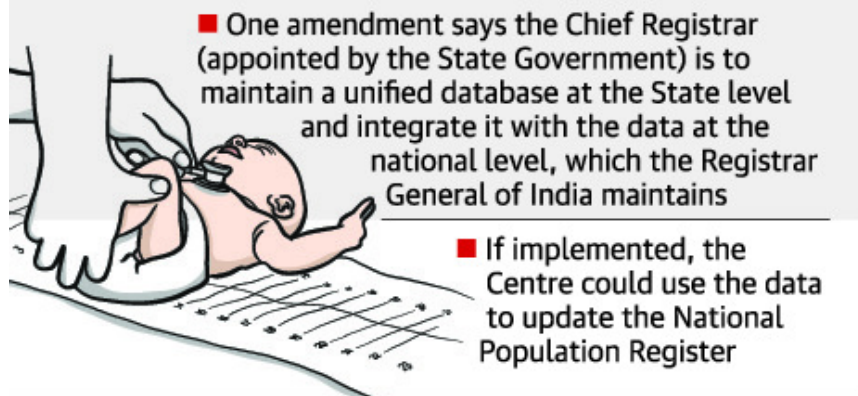
Registration of Births and Deaths Act (RBD), 1969

Why in News

Recently, the Centre has proposed amendments to the **Registration of Births and Deaths Act (RBD), 1969**.

- It will enable it to “maintain the database of registered birth and deaths at the national level”.

Repository of data | A look at some of the proposed amendments to the Registration of Births and Deaths Act (RBD), 1969



Key Points

■ Registration of Birth and Death:

- Registration of Births and Deaths in India is **mandatory with the enactment of Registration of Births and Deaths (RBD), Act 1969** and is done as per the place of occurrence of the event.
- With a view to **simplify the provisions of various sections** of the existing RBD Act, 1969 and to **make it people friendly**, the amendment has been proposed.

■ Proposed Amendments:

◦ Chief Registrar to maintain Unified Data:

- The **Chief Registrar (appointed by the States)** would maintain a unified database at the State level and integrate it with the data at the “national level,” maintained by the [Registrar General of India \(RGI\)](#) (under the Ministry of Home Affairs) .

- **Presently**, the registration of births and deaths is done by the **local registrar appointed by States**.

◦ Special Sub-Registrars:

- The appointment of “**Special Sub-Registrars**, in the event of **disaster**, with any or all of his powers and duties for on the spot registration of deaths and issuance of extract thereof, as may be prescribed.”

■ Expected Use of the Data:

- To update the [National Population Register](#) (Citizenship Act, 1955) and the electoral register (Registration of Electors Rules, 1960), and [Aadhaar](#) (Aadhaar Act, 2016), [ration card](#) (National Food Security Act, 2013), passport (Passport Act) and driving licence databases ([Motor Vehicles \(Amendment\) Act, 2019](#)).
- The NPR already has a **database of 119 crore residents** and under the Citizenship Rules, 2003, it is the first step towards the creation of the [National Register of Citizens \(NRC\)](#).
- The **NPR update** and the **first phase of Census** will be conducted simultaneously by the RGI.

[Source: TH](#)

Water Level in Mullaperiyar Dam

Why in News

Recently, the [Supreme Court](#) has **directed the Supervisory Committee** to take an immediate and firm decision on the **maximum water level** that can be maintained at [Mullaperiyar dam](#) amidst torrential rains in Kerala.

- The [Ministry of Jal Shakti](#) has constituted a **three-member Supervisory Committee** to settle the issue of Mullaperiyar dam between Kerala and Tamil Nadu.



Key Points

- **About:**
 - **Centre of a Decades-old Dispute:**
 - **For Kerala**, where it is situated, the dam presents a **threat to lakhs living downstream**,
 - **For Tamil Nadu**, which controls the dam, the water it provides is the **lifeline of people in five districts**.
 - **Reasons for Recent Revival of the Dispute:**
 - Recently, **heavy rains have increased water flow** in Mullaperiyar dam. The excess water from Mullaperiyar **can flow to downstream Idukki reservoir**, which **can lead to floods**.
 - The **SC in 2018** had agreed that the **water level in the Mullaperiyar reservoir should be maintained two or three feet below the permissible limit of 142 feet** as an immediate precaution to guard against floods or other disasters.
- **Mullaperiyar Dam:**
 - It is located on the **confluence of the Mullayar and Periyar rivers** in Kerala's Idukki district.
 - The reservoir is **within the [Periyar Tiger Reserve](#)**.
 - It is **operated and maintained by Tamil Nadu** for meeting the drinking water and irrigation requirements of five of its southern districts.

- According to a 999-year lease agreement made during British rule the operational rights were handed over to Tamil Nadu.
- The water diverted from the reservoir is first used for **power generation in lower Periyar (by Tamil Nadu)** before **flowing into the Suruliyar, a tributary of [Vaigai river](#)**, and then for **irrigating nearly 2.08 lakh hectares in Theni and four other districts** farther away.

Periyar River

- The Periyar River is the **longest river in the state of Kerala** with a length of 244 km.
- It is also known as '**Lifeline of Kerala**' as it is one of the few perennial rivers in the state.
- Periyar River **originates from Sivagiri hills of [Western Ghats](#), in Tamil Nadu** and flows through the Periyar National Park.
- The main **tributaries of Periyar** are **Muthirapuzha, Mullayar, Cheruthoni, Perinjankutti.**

Idukki Dam

- It is **located in Kerala** (168.91 m). The dam stands **between the two mountains - Kuravanmala (839 m) and Kurathimala (925 m).**
- It is **one of the highest arch dams in Asia** and **third tallest arch dam.**
- It is **built on the Periyar River**, in the **ravine between the Kuravan and Kurathi Hills** in Kerala.
- It was constructed and is **owned by the Kerala State Electricity Board.** It supports a 780 MW hydroelectric power station.

[Source: TH](#)

OPV Sarthak

Why in News

Recently, an [Offshore Patrol Vessel](#) (OPV), Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS) [Sarthak](#) has been commissioned and dedicated to the nation at Goa by the [Indian Coast Guard](#).

Key Points

- **About:**



- It is a 105-meter-long ship displacing 2,450 tons and is propelled **by two 9,100 kilowatt diesel engines** designed to **attain a maximum speed of 26 knots**.
- It is **4th in the series of five OPVs**. And will significantly **boost the maritime safety and security of the nation**.
 - OPVs are **long-range surface ships**, capable of operation in **maritime zones of India**, including island territories with helicopter operation capabilities.
 - Their roles **include coastal and offshore patrolling**, policing maritime zones of India, control and surveillance, anti-smuggling and anti-piracy operations with limited wartime roles.
- **Development:**
 - It has been designed & built indigenously by M/s **Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL)** in line with the government's vision of '**Make in India**'.
 - It has about **70% indigenous content**, thus providing the necessary fillip to the Indian shipbuilding industry and a giant leap towards achieving '**Atmanirbar Bharat**'.
- **Features:**
 - It has state-of-the-art **Navigation and Communication equipment, sensors and machinery**.
 - It is capable of carrying **a twin-engine helicopter**, four high speed boats and one inflatable boat for swift boarding and Search & Rescue operations.
 - It is also capable of **carrying limited pollution response equipment** to undertake **oil spill pollution** response at sea.
- **Utility:**
 - It will be deployed extensively for **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)** surveillance, **Coastal Security** and other duties as enshrined in the **Coast Guard** charter of duties, to safeguard the maritime interests of the Nation.
- **Other OPVs:**
 - **Sajag**
 - **Vigraha**
 - **Yard 45006 VAJRA**
 - **Varaha**

Indian Coast Guard

- It is an Armed Force, Search and Rescue and Maritime Law Enforcement agency under the Ministry of Defence. It is **headquartered in New Delhi**.
- It was established **in August 1978 by the Coast Guard Act, 1978** as an independent Armed force of India.
 - The concept of forming ICG came into **being after the 1971 war**. The blueprint for a multidimensional Coast Guard was conceived by the visionary **Rustamji Committee**.
- It has jurisdiction over the territorial waters of India including contiguous zone and **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)**.
- It is responsible for marine environment protection in maritime zones of India and is coordinating authority for response to **oil spills** in Indian waters.

Source: PIB

Assistance to Disabled Persons Scheme

Why in News

Recently, a Samajik Adhikarita Shivir (social empowerment camp) for distribution of aids and assistive devices to [Divyangjan](#) under the [ADIP \(Assistance to Disabled Persons\) Scheme](#) was organised in Punjab.

- **Divyangjan or Divyang:** Earlier, in 2015 the Prime Minister decided that persons with disabilities should no longer be referred to as disabled persons or viklang (someone with non-functional body parts) instead they will be referred to as Divyangjan or Divyang (**one with a divine body**).

Key Points

▪ About:

◦ Ministry:

- **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** is the Nodal ministry
- It has been in operation **since 1981**.

◦ Definition:

- The scheme follows the definitions of various types of disabilities as given in the **Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) (PWD) Act 1995**.

- The PWD Act was replaced by the [Right of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016](#).

◦ Objective:

- To **assist the needy disabled persons** in procuring durable, sophisticated and scientifically manufactured, modern, standard aids and appliances that can **promote their physical, social and psychological rehabilitation** by reducing the effects of disabilities and enhancing their economic potential.

◦ Grants:

- Grants-in-aid are **released to various implementing agencies** (Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India, National Institutes, Composite Regional Centres, District Disability Rehabilitation Centres, State Handicapped Development Corporations, [Non-governmental Organizations \(NGOs\)](#), etc.) for purchase and distribution of aids and assistive devices.

◦ Assistance:

- Aids/appliances **which do not cost more than Rs. 10,000 are covered under the Scheme** for single disability.
- However, in **some cases the limit would be raised to Rs.12,000**. In the case of multiple disabilities, the limit will apply to individual items separately in case more than one aid/appliance is required.
- **Full cost of aid/appliance is provided if the income is up to Rs. 15,000 per month and 50% of the cost of aid/appliance is provided if the income is between Rs. 15,001 to Rs. 20,000 per month.**

▪ Other Related Initiatives:

- [Accessible India Campaign: Creation of Accessible Environment for PwDs:](#)
- [DeenDayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme:](#)

- [National Fellowship for Students with Disabilities.](#)
- [Unique Disability Identification Project:](#)
- [International Day of Persons with Disabilities:](#)
- **Initiatives for Mental Health:**
 - [National Mental Health Programme.](#)
 - [KIRAN: Mental Health Rehabilitation Helpline.](#)

[Source: PIB](#)

Indian Telegraph Right of Way (Amendment) Rules, 2021

Why in News

Recently, the Central Government has notified the **Indian Telegraph Right of Way (Amendment) Rules, 2021.**

- The rule aims to incorporate the provisions related to **nominal one-time compensation and uniform procedure for establishment of Overground Telegraph Line** in the Indian Telegraph Right of Way Rules, 2016.

Key Points

- **About:**

- **Compensation:** The amount of one-time compensation for establishment of an overground telegraph line will be **a maximum one thousand rupees per kilometre.**
- **Right of Way (RoW):** These amendments will ease RoW related permission procedures for establishment and augmentation of digital communications infrastructure across the country.
 - Earlier, the RoW Rules had covered only underground Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) and mobile towers.
- **Fees:** There will be **no fee other than Administrative fee and Restoration charges** for establishing, maintaining, transferring or shifting the underground and overground telegraph infrastructure.

- **Significance:**

- The [digital divide](#) between **rural-urban** and **rich-poor** will be bridged, in line with the [Digital India mission](#) and [BharatNet project](#).
- [E-governance](#) and financial inclusion will be strengthened.
- [Doing business](#) will be easy.
- [Information and communication needs](#) of citizens and enterprises will be fulfilled (including **5G**).
- The dream of India's transition to a [digitally empowered economy](#) and society will be translated into reality.

[Source: PIB](#)

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