



Abortion Law

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ABORTION LAW

Abortion is the deliberate termination of a pregnancy, typically performed during the first 28 weeks of gestation.



Abortion Law in India

■ Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860 (Section 312)

- ↳ **Criminalized:** Voluntarily abortion
- ↳ **Exception:** To save mother's life
- ↳ **Punishment:** Imprisonment or fines or both

■ The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act (MTP), 1971

- ↳ **Based on:** Shantilal Shah Committee, 1964
- ↳ **Ground for Legalised Abortion:**
 - ↳ Marital rape
 - ↳ Safeguarding women's physical & mental health
 - ↳ Reduce maternal mortality
 - ↳ Children with physical or mental abnormalities
 - ↳ Pregnancies from rape or contraceptive failure

■ The MTP Amendment Act, 2021

- ↳ Allowed abortion irrespective of marital status
- ↳ **Eligibility Criteria for Legal Abortion:**
 - ↳ Survivors of sexual assault, rape, incest or minors
 - ↳ Change of marital status during pregnancy (widowhood & divorce)
 - ↳ Women with physical or mental disabilities (as per Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016)
 - ↳ Foetal malformation or risk abnormalities in child
 - ↳ Pregnant women in disasters/ emergencies

■ Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) vs. the Union of India Case, 2017

- ↳ The Supreme Court recognized reproductive choices of women as **part of personal liberty under Article 21.**

Time Since Conception	MTP Act, 1971	MTP (Amendment) Act, 2021
Up to 12 weeks	On the advice of one doctor	On advice of one doctor
12 to 20 weeks	On advice of two doctors	On advice of one doctor
20 to 24 weeks	Not allowed	On advice of two doctors for special categories of pregnant women
More than 24 weeks	Not allowed	On advice of medical board in case of substantial fetal abnormality
Any time during the pregnancy	On advice of one doctor, if immediately necessary to save pregnant woman's life	On advice of one doctor, if immediately necessary to save pregnant woman's life

Abortion in Other Countries

■ Countries Criminalized Abortion

- ↳ **Total Ban:** Andorra, Malta & the Vatican State
- ↳ **Ban with Certain Exceptions:** Poland, Brazil, Chile and Argentina

■ Countries Legalized Abortion

- ↳ **France** is only country to **guarantee voluntarily abortion as constitutional right**

↳ Ireland:

- ↳ **Condition:** Within 12 weeks of pregnancy
- ↳ **Punishment:** 14 years of imprisonment

↳ New Zealand:

- ↳ **Condition:**
 - ↳ Within 20 weeks of pregnancy (if life at risk)
 - ↳ Approval of two doctors mandatory



Drishti IAS

Read More: [Abortion Law](#), [Journey of Abortion Law in India](#), [Abortion Law in India](#), [Article 21](#), [The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Amendment Act, 2021](#)

Indian Ocean Warming Accelerates

For Prelims: [Global warming](#), [Indian Ocean](#), [Heatwave state](#), [Coral bleaching](#), [Seagrass](#), [Kelp forests](#), [Fisheries sector](#), [Indian Ocean Dipole \(IOD\)](#)

For Mains: [Reasons for Ocean Warming](#), [Heatwaves and Effects](#), [Sea Level Rise](#)

Source: [TH](#)

Why in News?

Recently, an **Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM)**, Pune indicates a tenfold increase in [marine heatwaves](#), potentially intensifying [cyclones](#), with a rise from 20 days to 220–250 days per year.

What are the Key Findings of the Report?

- **Increase in Ocean Temperature:**
 - **Rapid Warming:** The [Indian Ocean's](#) temperature has risen by 1.2°C from 1950 to 2020 and is projected to increase further by 1.7°C to 3.8°C from 2020 to 2100.
 - **Marine Heatwaves:** Predictions indicate an **increase in [marine heatwave](#)** days from an average of 20 days per year to 220–250 days per year.
 - These heatwaves are linked to **quicker [cyclone formation](#)** and can lead to a nearly permanent heatwave state in the [tropical Indian Ocean](#).
 - The frequent and intense heat waves are likely to accelerate [coral bleaching](#), destruction of [seagrass](#), and loss of [kelp forests](#), which are crucial to the fisheries sector.
- **Changes in Heat Content of the Ocean:**
 - **Deep Ocean Warming:** The increase in temperature extends beyond the surface down to depths of 2,000 meters, escalating the overall heat content of the ocean.
 - The heat content of the Indian Ocean is currently increasing at a rate of 4.5 zetta-joules per decade and is expected to grow at a rate of 16–22 zetta-joules per decade in the future.
 - **Energy Comparison:** The projected increase in **heat content** is likened to the energy released by **one Hiroshima atomic bomb detonation every second, continuously for ten years**.
- **Sea-Level Rise and Thermal Expansion:**
 - Increasing heat content leads to sea-level rise primarily through thermal expansion, which accounts for over **half of the [sea-level rise](#)** in the Indian Ocean, surpassing the effects of glacier and sea-ice melting.
- **Changes in Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) and Monsoon Patterns:**
 - **IOD Alterations:** Due to the rise in the ocean's heat content [Indian Ocean Dipole](#), a significant factor in determining monsoon strength, is likely to experience a 66% increase in **extreme events** and a 52% decrease in moderate events by the end of the 21st century.
 - **Implications for Monsoons:** These changes are critical as positive phases of the dipole, characterized by warmer temperatures in the western half, are favourable for the [summer monsoon](#).
- **Future Outlook:**
 - Despite ongoing heatwaves, an "above-normal" monsoon is expected for June-September 2024 partially due to a positive phase of the IOD.

Difference Between Land Heatwave and Marine Heatwave

Feature	Land Heatwave	Marine Heatwave
Medium	Air temperature	Ocean surface water
Duration	Days or weeks	Weeks or months
Identification	Exceeds high-temperature threshold	Abnormally high sea surface temperatures
Impacts	Heat stress, dehydration, wildfires, power outages	Disrupted marine ecosystems, harm to marine life, influences weather patterns (potentially intensifying cyclones)

How do Rising Sea Levels Impact India?

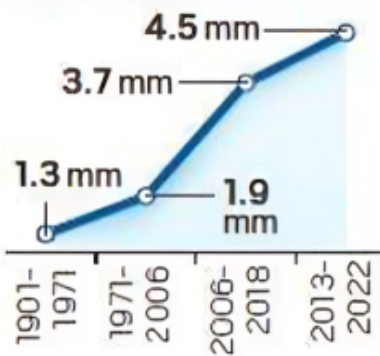
- **Rate of Sea Level Rise:**
 - According to the [Ministry of Earth Sciences](#), on average, the sea level along the Indian coast was observed to be **rising at a rate of about 1.7 mm/year** during the last century (1900-2000).
 - **A 3 cm sea level rise could cause** the sea to intrude inland by about 17 meters.
- **India is more Susceptible:**
 - India is most vulnerable to the compounding impacts of sea level rise.
 - In the Indian Ocean half of the sea level rise is due to the volume of water expanding since the ocean is warming up rapidly. The contribution from [glacier melt](#) is not as high.
 - The Indian Ocean is the **fastest-warming ocean** in terms of surface warming.
- **Implications:**
 - India is facing compound [extreme events](#) along our coastline. **Cyclones** are intensifying rapidly due to **more moisture** and heat from **ocean warming**.
 - The amount of flooding also increases because storm surges are compounding sea level rise decade by decade.
 - Cyclones are bringing more rain than earlier.
 - [Super Cyclone Amphan \(2020\)](#) caused large-scale flooding and inundated tens of km inland with saline water intruding.
 - Over time, the [Indus](#), [Ganga](#), and [Brahmaputra](#) rivers may shrink, and rising sea levels combined with a deep intrusion of saltwater will make large parts of their huge deltas simply uninhabitable.

RISE IN SEA-LEVEL OVER THE YEARS

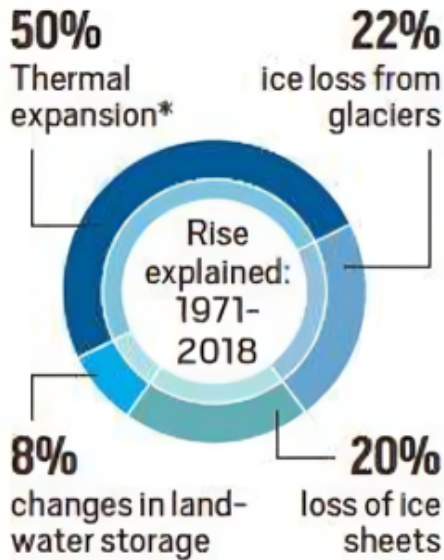
WHAT

0.20 METRES
Global mean sea-level rise from 1901 to 2018

AVERAGE RATE OF RISE ANNUALLY



WHY



*when water gets warmer, it causes volume of water to increase

HOW

"There is a risk of a much higher sea-level rise due to potential intrusion of sea water under the Antarctic glaciers, as NASA has demonstrated in its recent published scientific studies.... Human influence was very likely the main driver of these increases (in sea level) since at least 1971."

NOW

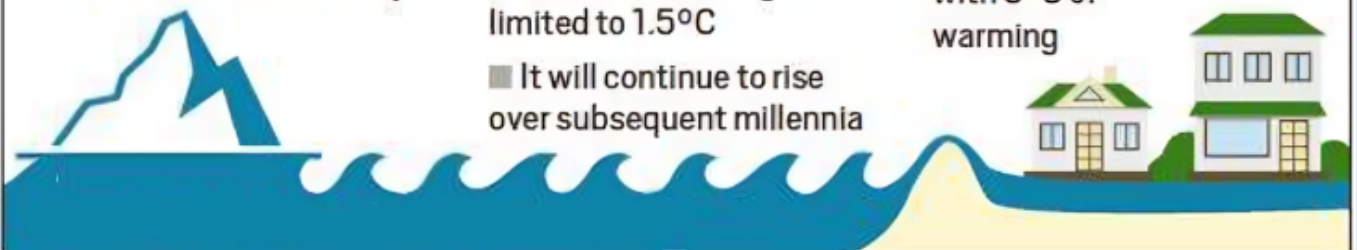
■ WMO finds it is virtually certain that global mean sea-level will continue to rise over the 21st century

■ Over the next 2,000 years, global mean sea-level will rise by about 2 to 3 metres if warming is limited to 1.5°C

■ It will continue to rise over subsequent millennia

■ Will rise 2 to 6 metres if limited to 2°C

■ Rise 19 to 22 metres with 5°C of warming



Steps Taken by India

- **Monitoring and Research:**
 - [Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services \(INCOIS\)](#)
- **Cyclone Preparedness:**
 - [National Disaster Management Authority \(NDMA\)](#)
 - [IMD Cyclone Warnings](#)
- **Additional Measures:**
 - [National Missions on Climate Change](#)
 - [Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure](#)
 - [Renewable Energy Target](#)
 - [National Hydrogen Mission](#)
 - [Amrit Dharohar Scheme](#)

What are the Ways to Tackle the Threat of Marine Heatwaves and Intensifying Cyclones?

- **Mitigation Strategies:**
 - **Emission Reduction Strategies:** Adopt and advocate for policies similar to the **European Union's Emissions Trading System (ETS)**.
 - The ETS is a cap-and-trade scheme that incentivises industries to reduce [greenhouse gas emissions](#), combating the root cause of marine heat waves.
 - **Renewable Energy Integration:** Invest in and promote renewable energy sources like Germany's transition towards solar and wind power.
 - This reduces dependence on fossil fuels and lessens the long-term impact on ocean temperatures.
- **Early Warning Systems and Preparedness:**
 - **Advanced Monitoring:** Emulate programs like Australia's **Integrated Marine Observing System (IMOS)**.
 - IMOS utilises a network of buoys, ships, and satellites to collect real-time oceanographic data, providing crucial insights into marine heat waves and cyclone development.
 - **Predictive Modeling:** Leverage advancements like the **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA)** hurricane seasonal outlooks.
 - By statistically analysing atmospheric and oceanic data, NOAA provides forecasts for cyclone activity, allowing for better preparedness.
- **Coastal Resilience Measures:**
 - **Mangrove Restoration:** Implement initiatives like **Bangladesh's efforts** to restore mangrove forests.
 - Mangroves act as [natural barriers](#), mitigating storm surges and protecting coastal communities from cyclones.
 - **Infrastructure Improvements:** Strive for advancements akin to the Netherlands' **robust seawall network**.
 - Well-maintained seawalls and levees can significantly reduce cyclone damage to coastal infrastructure and settlements.
- **International Collaboration:**
 - **Data Sharing and Research:** Foster open exchange of scientific data, similar to the **Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS)**.
 - GOOS facilitates international collaboration in ocean observations, leading to a better understanding of marine heatwaves and cyclone development.
 - **Capacity Building:** Provide **technical and financial assistance** to developing countries, akin to the [World Meteorological Organization's \(WMO\)](#) Tropical Cyclone Programme.
 - This program equips vulnerable nations with resources and expertise to prepare for and respond to cyclones.

Drishti Mains Question:

Q. Discuss the implications of the projected increase in marine heatwaves in the Indian Ocean on cyclone formation and intensity. How can such projections inform climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies in the Indian Ocean region? (250 words)

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims:

Q. Stiglitz Commission established by the President of the United Nations General Assembly was in the international news. The commission was supposed to deal with (2010)

(a) The challenges posed by the impending global climate change and prepare a road map

(b) The workings of the global financial systems and to explore ways and means to secure a more sustainable global order

(c) Global terrorism and prepare a global action plan for the mitigation of terrorism

(d) Expansion of the United Nations Security Council in the present global scenario

Ans: (b)

Mains:

Q. 'Climate change' is a global problem. How India will be affected by climate change? How Himalayan and coastal states of India will be affected by climate change? (2017)

Japan's Shifting Diplomatic Posture

For Prelims: [India-Japan Defence Exercises](#), G-20, [QUAD](#), G-4

For Mains: Significance of changing diplomatic posture of Japan, Challenges in India-Japan Relationship

Source: [IE](#)

Why in News?

In the recent past of changing geopolitics, the world is witnessing a turning point as Japan, long a symbol of post-war pacifism, strengthens its military capabilities. This transformation has the potential to significantly alter the balance of power in Asia and beyond.

What are the Key Facts About the Japan's Diplomatic Posture?

▪ **Japan's Diplomatic Journey Before World War II:**

- **Seclusion (1600s-1850s):**
 - For over 200 years, Japan remained largely closed off from the world. This **policy of isolation aimed to preserve social order and prevent foreign influence.**
- **Catching Up (1850s-1900s):**
 - The arrival of **Portuguese Commodore Perry's "Black Ships" in 1853** forced Japan out of its self-imposed seclusion. The Japanese government aimed to:
 - They **modernised the military and adopted Western technology** to become a strong nation .
 - Japan renegotiated previous treaties to regain control of its trade and foreign policy.
- **Aggressive Stance (1900s-1930s):**
 - Despite its victories, Japan wasn't treated as a full equal by Western powers, particularly regarding racial equality (e.g., rejection of the racial equality clause in the Treaty of Versailles).
 - This frustration with the West fueled a shift towards aggressive expansionism like the militaristic takeover of Manchuria in 1931, formed **the Axis Alliance before World War II etc.**
 - This sense of disrespect and a desire to challenge the Western-dominated world

order ultimately led Japan down a path of militaristic conquest that culminated in [World War II](#).

▪ **Japan's Diplomatic Journey After World War II:**

- After the **defeat of Japan in World War II**, the United States led the Allies in the occupation and rehabilitation of the Japanese state. Thus, Japan embraced a **policy of pacifism**.
- Military spending was strictly limited, and the nation focused on rebuilding its economy. This strategy proved wildly successful, propelling [Japan](#) to become the world's second-largest economy by the 1970s.
- Over the recent decades, Japan has undergone a significant **shift in its diplomatic posture**, moving away from strict post-war pacifism and towards a more assertive role on the world stage.

What Factors led Japan to Change its Diplomatic Posture?

▪ **External Factors:**

- **China's Rise:** China's growing military power and **assertive claims in the East China Sea**, particularly regarding disputed territories like the [Senkaku Islands](#), have created a sense of urgency for Japan to strengthen its defences.
- **North Korean Threat:** North Korea's continued **development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles** remains a major security concern for Japan.
- **Uncertain US Commitment:** The **perceived erosion of US commitment to Asian security** under the Trump administration, along with the **rise of isolationist tendencies in the US**, has pushed Japan to become **more self-reliant** in its defence.
 - Examples include the **failure of USA's Middle East policy in maintaining peace**.

▪ **Internal Factors:**

- **Conservative Resurgence:** A growing number of **conservative voices** in Japan advocate for a **more active security role** and argue that Japan, as a "normal power," has a responsibility to contribute to regional stability and defend its interests.
- **Pacifist Fatigue:** Decades of relying solely on the US for security have led some to question the sustainability of this approach, especially in the face of a changing regional landscape.

How is Japan Changing its Diplomatic Posture?

▪ **Manifestations of Change:**

- **Increased Defence Spending:** Japan has **significantly increased its defence budget**, ending the self-imposed cap of 1% of GDP.
 - From 1960 to 2020, Japan's military spending remained at or **below 1% of GDP**
- **Military Buildup:** Japan is **acquiring new military capabilities**, including offensive weapons like cruise missiles, and easing restrictions on arms exports.
 - Prime Minister Kishida announced that Japan will **increase annual defence spending to 2% of GDP by 2027**.
- **Deeper Security Cooperation with the Allies:** Japan is working closely with the **US on joint military exercises** and exploring deeper integration of command structures.
 - The Key **Japan-US joint military exercises** are Keen Sword, Orient Shield, and Valiant Shield (a ballistic missile defence-focused exercise).
 - The **Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP)** is a multinational initiative led by the **United Kingdom, Japan, and Italy** to jointly develop a sixth-generation stealth fighter by 2035.
 - Also, Japan has decided to **ease its strict defence export rules**, allowing it to **collaborate with Britain and Italy** to build a next-generation fighter jet for export under certain conditions.

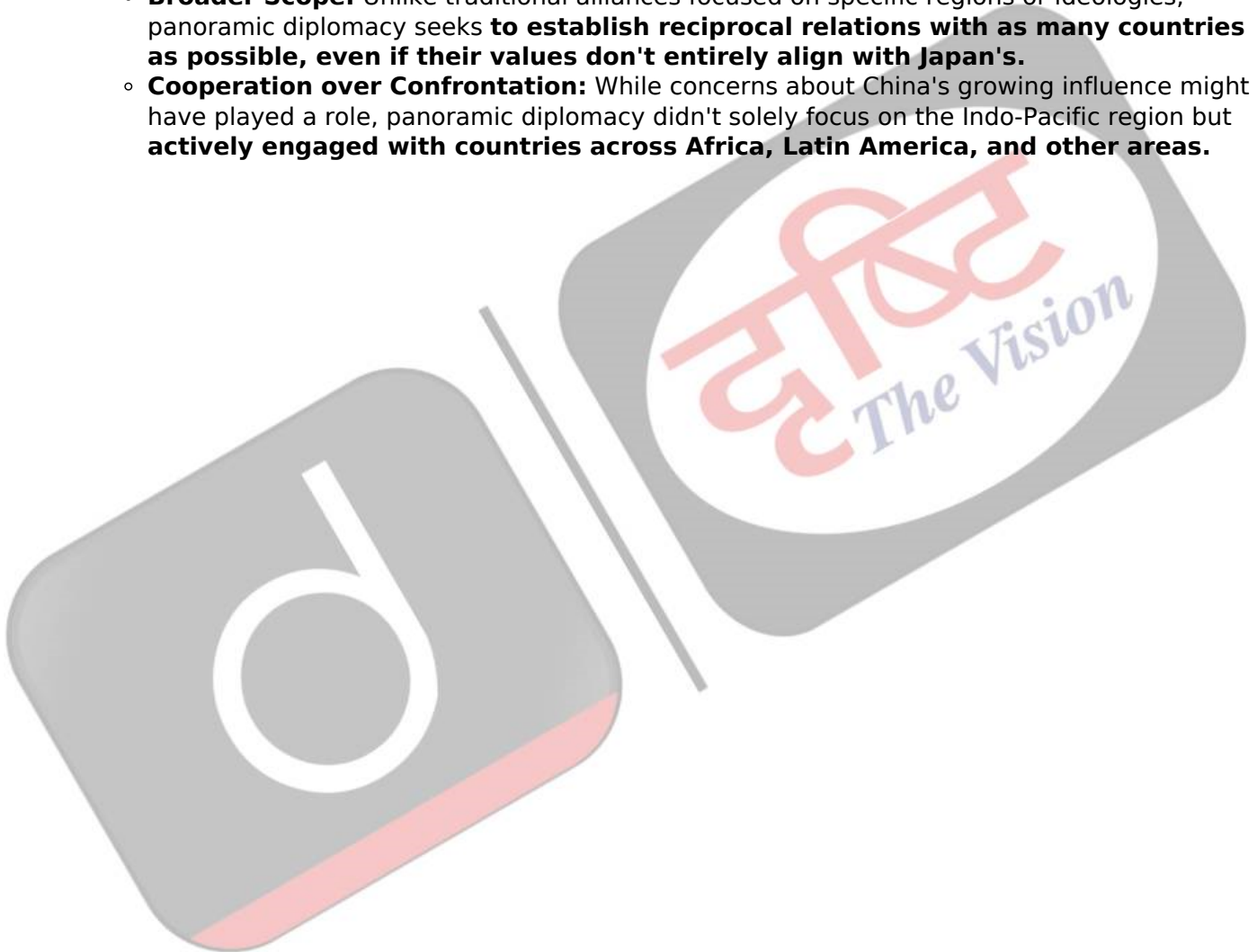
▪ **Active Regional Diplomacy:** Japan is strengthening its relationships with other regional powers like **India and Australia**, promoting a "**free and open Indo-Pacific**" vision.

- **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD):** A **strategic security dialogue involving Japan, the US, India, and Australia** to address regional security concerns.
- **Pacific Island Forum (PIF):** Japan actively engages with **Pacific Island nations**, offering development assistance and fostering closer ties.

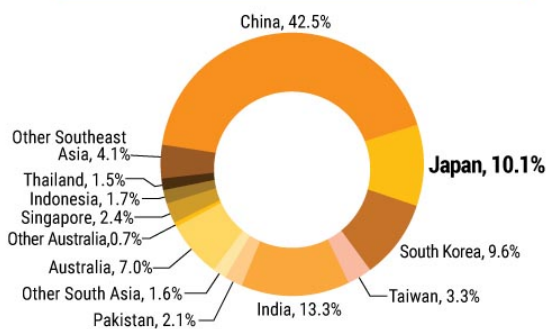
- Support for Ukraine: Japan's strong stance in support of Ukraine against Russia is seen as a signal of its commitment to upholding international norms and deterring similar aggression in Asia.
- **Shifting Stance on Historical Issues:** Japan is attempting to **reconcile with South Korea**, a historical adversary, in an effort to create a more cohesive regional security architecture.

Note:

- Japan has displayed a "**panoramic diplomacy**" under the late Prime Minister Abe Shinzo, expanding its global visibility and normalising its security policy.
- The term "**panoramic diplomacy**" translates to "**diplomacy that takes a panoramic perspective of the world map**" or "diplomacy with panoramic views."
- It emphasises a proactive and multifaceted approach to international relations, aiming to build strong ties with a wide range of countries.
- **Key Characteristics:**
 - **Broader Scope:** Unlike traditional alliances focused on specific regions or ideologies, panoramic diplomacy seeks **to establish reciprocal relations with as many countries as possible, even if their values don't entirely align with Japan's.**
 - **Cooperation over Confrontation:** While concerns about China's growing influence might have played a role, panoramic diplomacy didn't solely focus on the Indo-Pacific region but **actively engaged with countries across Africa, Latin America, and other areas.**



ASIAN MILITARY EXPENDITURE, 2021



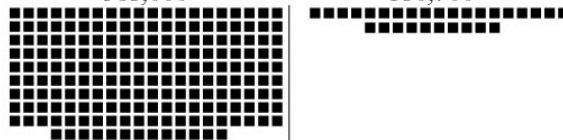
MODERN DEFENSE IN JAPAN

ACTIVE-DUTY ARMED FORCES

CHINA ■ = 5,000 personnel JAPAN

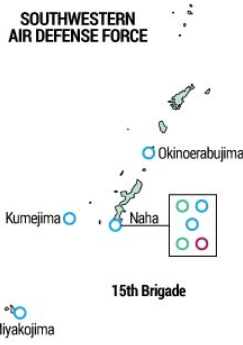
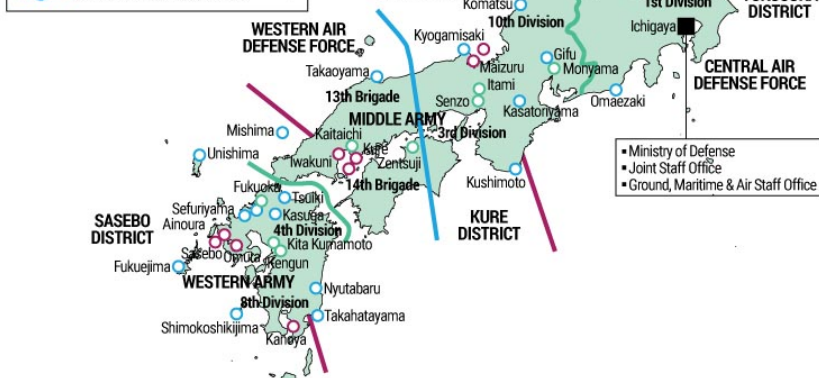
2,035,000 TOTAL 247,150

965,000 GROUND FORCES 150,700



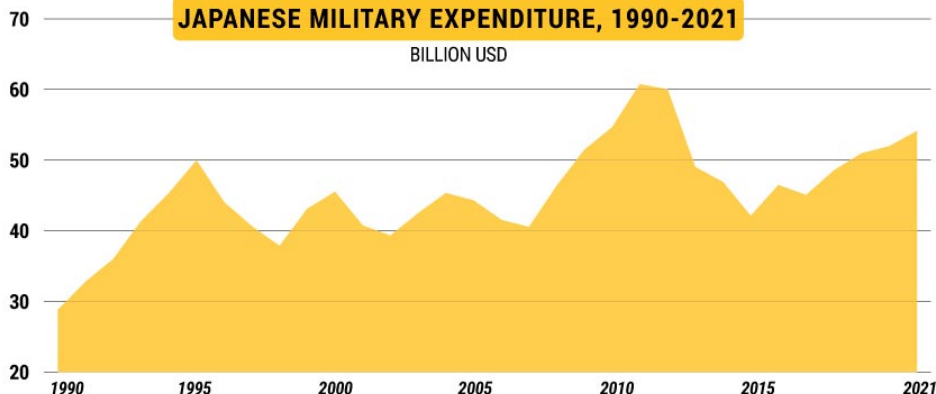
LOCATION OF PRINCIPLE SDF UNITS

- Ground Self-Defense Force
- Maritime Self-Defense Force
- Air Self-Defense Force



JAPANESE MILITARY EXPENDITURE, 1990-2021

BILLION USD



How Japan's Changing Posture will Affect Indian Interest?

▪ Potential Benefits:

- **Countering China:** Both India and Japan see **China as a strategic concern**. Japan's increased military capabilities and focus on the Indo-Pacific could strengthen the ability of both countries to deter Chinese aggression.
 - **Both India and Japan** are members of [Quad grouping](#), [G20 and G-4](#), [International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor \(ITER\)](#).
 - The **India-Japan Act East Forum** was established in 2017 which aims to provide a platform for India-Japan collaboration under the fabric of **India's "Act East Policy"** and **Japan's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy"**.
- **Enhanced Security Cooperation:** The new strategy emphasises cooperation with **like-minded countries like India**. This could lead to **more joint military exercises**,

technology sharing, and potentially relaxed export restrictions on Japanese defence equipment for India.

- Japan is one of the few countries with whom India has **2+2 ministerial dialogue**.
- India and Japan's defence forces also organise a series of bilateral exercises such as **JIMEX (naval)**, **Malabar exercise (Naval Exercise)**, **'Veer Guardian'** and **SHINYUU Maitri** (Air Force), and **Dharma Guardian (Army)**.
- **Infrastructure Development:** The new **Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA) Loan framework** for strategic purposes could provide India with much-needed funding for infrastructure projects in border areas with China. This would improve India's defence preparedness and connectivity.
 - **India** has been the **largest recipient** of the **Japanese ODA Loan framework** for the past decades.
 - **Delhi Metro** is one of the most successful examples of **Japanese cooperation** through the utilisation of ODA.
 - India's **Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC)** project is funded by a soft loan provided by the Japan International Cooperation Agency.
- **Economic Cooperation:** A stronger Japan could be a more reliable economic partner for India, potentially leading to increased trade and investment.
 - **Japan's bilateral trade** with India **totalled USD 20.57 billion** during FY 2021-22. India was the 18th largest trading partner for Japan, and Japan was the 12th largest trading partner for India in 2020.
- **Potential Challenges:**
 - **Competition:** Both India and Japan are developing long-range strike capabilities. This could lead to an arms race in the region, potentially straining resources.
 - Competition between Japan and India to **export defence equipment** in common nature of market and allies like Africa, Philippines and South America might harm India's interests in the long run.
 - **Diplomatic Challenges:** It might become challenging for India to balance more **assertive powers** in competing blocks like the **Quad grouping** and **BRICS**.
 - **Ideological Conflicts:** Ideological conflicts may arise in areas such as human rights, nuclear proliferation, and international interventions, where India's stance can differ from Japanese stance.

Conclusion

- Japan's diplomatic shift has significant implications for Asia and the world. It will likely lead to a more multipolar regional order, with Japan playing a more prominent role in shaping security dynamics.
- The impact of Japan's dynamic posture on India depends on how effectively both countries manage the relationship. There's significant potential for increased security and economic cooperation, but challenges around competition, affordability, and strategic alignment need to be addressed for a mutually beneficial outcome.

Drishti Mains Question:

Discuss about Japan's changing political stance in recent decades. How Japan's changing posture will affect Indian interests?

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q1. In which one of the following groups are all four countries members of G20? (2020)

- (a) Argentina, Mexico, South Africa and Turkey
- (b) Australia, Canada, Malaysia and New Zealand
- (c) Brazil, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam

(d) Indonesia, Japan, Singapore and South Korea

Ans: (a)

Exp:

- The G20 comprises Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, EU, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, UK and USA. Hence Option(a) is correct

Mains:

Q. Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) is transforming itself into a trade bloc from a military alliance, in present times Discuss. **(2020).**

India's De-globalised Food Inflation

For Prelims: [Food inflation](#), [UN Food and Agriculture Organization](#), [Black Sea Grain Initiative](#), [Biofuel production](#), [Edible oils](#), [Export Ban on Non-basmati white rice](#), [Imported inflation](#)

For Mains: Factors Contributing to the Drop in Global Food Prices, Factors Responsible for India's De-globalised Food Inflation

Source: IE

Why in News?

In 2023, world food prices dropped significantly from their 2022 highs. However, India's [food inflation](#) remained high at **9.5% in December 2023**, contrasting with global deflation of **-10.1%**.

- The [UN Food and Agriculture Organization's \(FAO\)](#) food price index averaged **143.7 points** in 2022, but fell to 124 points in 2023, a decline of 13.7%.

What Factors are Contributing to the Drop in Global Food Prices?

- **Abundant Supply of Key Crops:** Bumper harvests of major crops like [wheat](#) in 2023 led to a **surplus in the global market**.
 - This abundance contrasts with concerns in **2022**, when worries about supply disruptions due to the war in **Ukraine**, a major grain exporter, caused prices to spike.
- **Improved Supply from Russia and Ukraine:** Despite the disruption of the [Black Sea Grain Initiative](#) in July 2023, both Russia and Ukraine have managed to maintain wheat exports.
 - This continued flow of grain from the region has helped to alleviate some of the supply anxieties.
- **Lower Demand for Vegetable Oils:** The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization **Vegetable Price Index** saw the biggest drop in 2023, falling by 32.7%.
 - This decline is due to a combination of factors, including improved vegetable oil supplies and a **decrease in its use for [biofuel production](#)**.
 - As more oil becomes available for food purposes, and less is diverted for biofuels, the overall demand for vegetable oil goes down, leading to lower prices.

- **Slowing Demand:** High inflation and fears of an economic recession have dampened consumer demand in many parts of the world, including in major food-importing regions, leading to a **decline in import demand for certain food commodities** and putting downward pressure on global prices.

Why is India Experiencing High Food Inflation Despite Falling Global Food Prices?

- **Limited Transmission of Global Prices:** While global food prices fell, India's food prices stayed elevated due to **limited transmission of international prices to domestic markets**.
 - India's import dependence is significant only for [edible oils](#) (**60% of consumption**) and pulses.
 - For most other agri-commodities, including **cereals, sugar, dairy, and fruits and vegetables**, India is self-sufficient or an exporter.
- **Export Bans and Import Duties:** The Indian government imposed bans on exports of certain food items like **wheat, non-basmati white rice, sugar, and onions** and provided **import duty waivers on others**, effectively reducing global market influences on domestic prices.
- **Domestic Production Challenges:** Issues like weather conditions affecting crop yields, particularly for **cereals, pulses, and sugar**, contributed to supply shortages and higher prices domestically.
 - Cereal and pulse inflation stood at **9.9% and 20.7%** year-on-year, respectively, in December 2023.
- **Low Stock Levels:** Low stock levels for commodities like **wheat and sugar** further exacerbated price pressures.

Note:

- India remains largely unaffected by international supply chain disruption due to issues in the Red Sea route because imports of arhar and urad primarily come from **Mozambique, Tanzania, Malawi, and Myanmar**, bypassing the recently disrupted **Suez waterway-Red Sea route**.
- Masoor from **Australia and Canada** takes the North Pacific-Indian Ocean route.
- In edible oils, imports from **Indonesia, Malaysia, Argentina, and Brazil** through the South Atlantic and Indian Ocean remain **unaffected by the Houthi conflict**.
- Also, declining global prices, such as Russian wheat at USD 240-245 per tonne and Indonesian palm oil at USD 940 per tonne, have eliminated the risk of imported inflation in India.

What is Imported Inflation?

- **About:** [Imported inflation](#) refers to the rise in prices of goods and services in a country due to an increase in the price or cost of imports.
 - To maintain profit margins, companies often pass on the increased import costs to consumers by raising the prices of their goods and services.
- **Responsible Factors:**
 - **Currency Depreciation Factor:** A [depreciation](#) in a country's currency is often seen as the primary driver of imported inflation.
 - When a currency depreciates, more local currency is required to purchase foreign goods or services, effectively increasing import costs.
 - The [Asian Development Bank](#) recently warned that India could face **imported inflation** due to a potential rupee depreciation amid rising interest rates in the West.
 - **Rising Import Costs Without Currency Depreciation:** Even without currency depreciation, a rise in import costs due to factors like an **increase in international crude oil prices** can lead to imported inflation.
 - This is a **variant of [cost-push inflation](#)**, which states that rising input costs can cause inflation in the prices of final goods and services.

How Food Inflation is Calculated in India?

- **About:** Food inflation in India is primarily measured by the [Consumer Price Index \(CPI\) for Food and Beverages](#). CPI is a key measure of inflation in India that tracks the changes in the prices paid by typical consumers for a basket of goods and services over time.
- **Recent Trends:** Food has a weight of 45.9% in the **consumer price index** but its contribution to overall inflation has increased from **48%** in April 2022 to **67%** in November 2023.
 - The government's first [Household Consumption Survey](#) released recently showed that food's share of the rural consumption basket fell **below 50%** for the first time to 46% and to 39% for urban consumers.
 - According to the RBI, about **90% of food inflation** is determined by **non-cyclical factors** like the weather, supply conditions, international prices and availability.
 - On average, however, 10% of food inflation is driven by demand factors with significant time variation.

How India can Address Food Inflation Effectively?

- **Increase Agricultural Productivity:** Investing in agricultural infrastructure, technology, and research to **improve crop yields and reduce production costs** can boost supply and stabilise prices.
- **Efficient Supply Chain Management:** Enhancing **logistics, storage facilities, and distribution networks** can reduce wastage and ensure a steady supply of food items to the market, mitigating price fluctuations.
- **Diversification of Agriculture:** Promoting diversification by encouraging the **cultivation of a variety of crops** and supporting alternative farming practices can reduce reliance on a few commodities and balance market dynamics.
- **Price Monitoring and Regulation:** Monitoring food prices regularly and **implementing effective price regulation** mechanisms can prevent price manipulation and ensure fair pricing for consumers and producers alike.
- **Climate Resilience:** Addressing climate change challenges through sustainable farming practices, water management strategies, and crop diversification can reduce production risks and enhance food security in the long term.

Drishti Mains Question:

What are the key factors driving India's de-globalised food inflation trend, and what strategies can be implemented to address this disparity in the context of the country's economy?

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q 1. Consider the following statements: (2020)

1. The weightage of food in Consumer Price Index (CPI) is higher than that in Wholesale Price Index (WPI).
2. The WPI does not capture changes in the prices of services, which CPI does.
3. The Reserve Bank of India has now adopted WPI as its key measure of inflation and to decide on changing the key policy rates.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans: (a)

Mains

Q. There is also a point of view that Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMCs) set up under the State Acts have not only impeded the development of agriculture but also have been the cause of food inflation in India. Critically examine. **(2014)**

Unclassed Forests in India

For Prelims: [Unclassed Forests](#), [Supreme Court of India](#), [Forest \(Conservation\) Act Amendment \(FCAA\) 2023](#), [Forest Rights Act of 2006](#)

For Mains: Implications of the FCCA (2023), Enforcement Mechanisms in Safeguarding Unclassed Forests

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

Recently, in compliance with the [Supreme Court](#) order, the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) uploaded the various **State Expert Committee (SEC) reports on its website**.

- This interim order was in response to a public interest litigation challenging the **constitutionality of the [Forest \(Conservation\) Act Amendment \(FCAA\) 2023](#)**.
- A key concern in the petition was that the **status of [unclassified forests](#)**, which were to be identified by the state SEC reports, wasn't known or if they had been identified at all.

What Did the SEC Reports Reveal?

- **Highlights:**
 - No state provided verifiable data on the identification, status, and location of unclassified forests.
 - Seven states and Union Territories (Goa, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal) **did not even constitute the SEC**.
 - Only 17 out of 23 states submitted reports in line with the Supreme Court's directives.
 - **Most states relied on existing data** from forest and revenue departments, without undertaking ground-truthing or physical surveys and demarcation of unclassified forest lands have not been conducted in most states.
 - There is a lack of clarity on the geographic location and classification of these forests.
 - Many states' reports showed significant discrepancies with the data from the [Forest Survey of India \(FSI\)](#).
 - For example, **Gujarat's SEC report** stated unclassified forests of 192.24 sq. km, while the FSI reported 4,577 sq. km.
 - Similarly, Assam, where the SEC report states the extent of unclassified forest area to be 5,893.99 sq. km whereas the FSI has reported 8,532 sq. km.
 - **Only nine states provided the extent of unclassified forests**, while others shared data on different types of forest areas without clarity.
 - Some states detailed the extent of degraded, cleared, or encroached forests, but

this information varies across reports.

- There is a lack of clarity regarding the extraction of data from available records and the geographical location of forests, with no available **topo sheet identification maps (a map showing a region's natural and manmade features)**.
- **Consequences:**
 - The hasty and incomplete nature of the SEC reports is likely to have resulted in the **large-scale destruction of unclassified forests**.
 - For example, **Kerala's SEC did not include the Pallivasal unreserve**, an ecologically fragile area in Munnar, which was also devastated during the **2018 floods**.
 - The report also failed to mention the **Chinnakanal unreserve**, an important **elephant corridor in Munnar** that is now overrun by intensive commercial tourism, leading to many instances of **human-elephant conflicts**.
 - The failure to comprehensively identify and protect these forests undermines the **1996 Godavarman judgement** and the **Indian Forest Policy's goal of achieving 33.3% forest cover in the plains and 66.6% in the hills**.
 - The **Forest Survey of India's 2021 report** shows an overall 21% forest cover (which experts have disputed) in the country and 40% in hills. Approximately 900 sq. km has been lost in the last cycle of the Survey's review.

What are Unclassified Forests?

- **Legal Protection:**
 - Unclassified forests, also known as **deemed forests**, enjoy legal protection under the landmark case **T.N. Godavarman Thirumulkpad vs Union Of India & Ors(1996)**.
- **Definition:**
 - They encompass various types of land, including those belonging to forests, revenue, railways, government entities, community forests, or private ownership.
 - Despite their diverse ownership, these **forests are not officially notified under the Indian Forest Act**, though the area has forest type vegetation.
- **Identification Process:**
 - State Expert Committees (SECs) were tasked with identifying unclassified forests across the country.
 - Identification involved examining available records such as Forest Working Plans and Revenue land records, as well as physically identifying land patches with forest characteristics.
- **Implications of FCAA:**
 - The **Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act, 2023**, which came into force in December 2023, introduced significant changes to the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 (FCA).
 - The amendment **narrowed the coverage of the FCA to two types of lands:**
 - Areas officially declared or notified as forests under the Indian Forest Act, 1927, or other relevant legislation.
 - Lands recorded as forests in government records since 25th October 1980.
 - **FCAA, 2023** raised concerns about the loss of legal protection for unclassified forests, potentially leading to their diversion for non-forest use.
 - Under the FCAA, **unclassified forests would require Central government approval for any diversion**, even if not officially notified.
- **Challenges:**
 - **Legal Protection:**
 - With the enactment of the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act, unclassified forests risk losing their legal protection, leading to their diversion for **non-forest use**.
 - **Impact on Forest-Dwelling Communities:**
 - The Amendment Act's failure to recognise '**deemed forests**' as **subject to the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act,1980** undermines the **rights of forest-dwelling communities**.
 - Forest land classified as 'deemed forests' can be diverted without the consent of Gram Sabhas, violating their rights recognised under the **Forest Rights Act of 2006**.
 - **Environmental and Ecological Concerns:**

- The Act's narrow definition of forests based on legal status overlooks ecological considerations, leading to potential degradation and loss of biodiversity in unclassified forest areas.

T.N. Godavarman Thirumulkpad vs Union Of India & Ors Case, 1996

- In 1995, T.N. Godavarman Thirumulkpad filed a [writ petition](#) with the **Supreme Court of India** to protect the **Nilgiris forest land** from illegal deforestation.
- The Court issued detailed directions for the **sustainable use of forests** and the Court emphasised that **any area defined as a forest, regardless of ownership, would be subject to the Forest Conservation Act, of 1980.**
 - This new interpretation prevented **states from de-reserving protected forests for non-forestry use without permission.**
- One of the key directions was that all forest activities throughout the country must cease without specific approval from the Central Government.

Way Forward

- Ensure strict compliance with the **T.N. Godavarman Thirumulkpad vs Union Of India Case, 1996**, ruling to protect all forest types, including unclassified forests.
- Mandate physical surveys and ground-truthing to accurately identify and map unclassified forests.
 - Address discrepancies between SEC reports and FSI data through cross-verification and updating records.
- Implement **penalties for states and Union Territories that fail to constitute SECs** or provide accurate data on unclassified forests.
- Establish a robust monitoring system to track progress towards these targets and adjust strategies as needed.

Drishti Mains Question:

Q. Critically analyse the implications of the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act, 2023, on the protection and management of unclassified forests in India.

Read more: [SC's Interim Order on the Forest Conservation Act 2023](#), [Forest Conservation Amendment Bill 2023](#), [Global Forest Watch \(GFW\)](#)

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Consider the following statements: (2019)

1. As per recent amendment to the Indian Forest Act, 1927, forest dwellers have the right to fell the bamboos grown on forest areas.
2. As per the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, bamboo is a minor forest produce.
3. The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 allows ownership of minor forest produce to forest dwellers.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (b)

Q. At the national level, which ministry is the nodal agency to ensure effective implementation of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006? (2021)

(a) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

(b) Ministry of Panchayati Raj

(c) Ministry of Rural Development

(d) Ministry of Tribal Affairs

Ans: (d)

Q. A particular State in India has the following characteristics: (2012)

1. It is located on the same latitude which passes through northern Rajasthan.
2. It has over 80% of its area under forest cover.
3. Over 12% of forest cover constitutes the Protected Area Network in this State.

Which one among the following States has all the above characteristics?

(a) Arunachal Pradesh

(b) Assam

(c) Himachal Pradesh

(d) Uttarakhand

Ans: (a)

Mains:

Q. The most significant achievement of modern law in India is the constitutionalisation of environmental problems by the Supreme Court." Discuss this statement with the help of relevant case laws. (2022)

High Court Upholds Debtors' Right to Travel

For Prelims: [Fundamental Rights](#), [Article 21](#), [Supreme Court](#), [Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018](#), [Article 14](#), [Reserve Bank of India](#), [Money laundering](#)

For Mains: Framework governing loan defaulters in India, Measures aim to balance the interests of lenders and borrowers

Source: IE

Why in News?

The Bombay High Court ruled that [public sector banks \(PSBs\)](#) cannot request **Look Out Circulars (LOCs)** against [loan defaulters](#).

- The court set aside the central government's **Office Memoranda (OM)** empowering PSBs to do so. The court stated that these tactics violate [fundamental rights](#) guaranteed under the Constitution.

Note:

- LOC is a circular letter used by authorities in India to check whether a travelling person is wanted by the police.

Why did the High Court Rule Against Banks Restricting Debtors' Travel?

▪ Legal Challenge:

- LOCs were issued by the **Bureau of Immigration** of the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** based on Office Memoranda (OM) from 27th October 2010.
- In September 2018, amendments to the OM were introduced, authorising the issuance of a LOC to prevent individuals from travelling abroad **if their departure was harmful to the country's "economic interest"**.
 - It empowered PSB officials (managing director and chief executive officers) to request immigration authorities to issue LOCs against default borrowers.
 - The default borrowers included **not only the borrowers but also the guarantors for repayment of loans**, and the principal officers or directors of corporate entities in debt.

▪ Petitioners' Argument:

- Petitioners contended that the OMs infringed upon fundamental rights, **including the right to life with dignity under Article 21**.
- They argued that the government created an improper classification between public and private banks, regulated by the [Reserve Bank of India \(RBI\)](#).
- Petitioners argued that the **"economic interest of India"** cannot be the same as the **"financial interests" of a PSB**.

▪ Centre's Submission:

- The MHA argued that the circulars contained necessary "checks and balances" for **deprivation of life or personal liberty**, as required by the established legal procedure.

▪ Court Stance:

- The court referring to the case *Viraj Chetan Shah v Union Of India & Anr, 2024*, noted that the **government failed to prove debt recovery due to the person being denied permission to travel abroad**.
 - It criticised the use of LOCs as a strong-arm tactic to bypass legal proceedings, which PSBs see as inconveniences and irritants.
- It emphasised that the **fundamental right to travel abroad cannot be curtailed by executive action without a government statute**.
- The court also expressed concern that PSBs were given unilateral power in debt recovery, effectively making them judge and executioner. It found it incomprehensible that **bank officials were elevated to the same status as high-ranking police officers**.
- The court found if a borrower **solely deals with non-PSBs, no LOC can be issued**, but even one PSB involvement poses a risk.
 - The court dismissed the differentiation between PSB and private bank borrowers as arbitrary. Considered invalid **under Article 14**, the court deemed the inclusion of only PSBs in the LOC provision arbitrary.

▪ Implications of the Verdict:

- The ruling does not affect existing restraint orders issued by competent authorities.
- Banks can still seek orders from courts or tribunals to restrain individuals from travelling abroad but cannot ask the centre to issue **Look Out Circulars**.
- Banks can also invoke powers under the [Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, of 2018](#) to

- recover the loan.
- The judgement will not prevent the central government from framing an appropriate law consistent with Article 21 of the Constitution.

Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018.

- It provides measures to deter fugitive economic offenders from evading the process of law in India by staying outside the jurisdiction of Indian courts, to preserve the sanctity of the rule of law in India and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
- It empowers authorities for non-conviction-based attachment and confiscation of proceeds of crime and properties and assets of a 'fugitive economic offender', against whom a warrant for arrest about a **Scheduled Offence has been issued by any court in India** and who has left the country to avoid criminal prosecution or judicial processes.
 - An individual is declared a **Fugitive Economic Offender (FEO)** if an arrest warrant has been issued for committing an offence specified under the Act, and the total value of the offence is **at least Rs 100 crore**.
- Offences listed in the act include **counterfeiting government stamps** or currency, cheque dishonour, **money laundering**, and transactions defrauding creditors.

What are the Legal Rights of the Defaulters?

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) directed banks and finance companies to undertake **compromise settlements or technical write-offs** on accounts categorised as wilful defaulters or fraud.
 - **Wilful offenders or companies** involved in fraud will no longer face prejudice from lenders due to criminal proceedings against them.
- Borrowers who have undergone compromise settlements can apply for fresh loans after a **minimum cooling period of at least 12 months**.
 - Regulated banks and finance companies have the flexibility to stipulate higher cooling periods in line with their board-approved policies.
- The legal rights of defaulters in India include the **right to receive a notice, fair debt collection practices, grievance redressal, seek legal assistance, and fair credit reporting**.

Drishiti Mains Question:

Q. Discuss the legal and regulatory framework governing loan defaulters in India. Analyse the role of public sector banks in dealing with default cases and the challenges they face in debt recovery.

Q. How are banking reforms aligning with broader financial inclusion goals while tackling the issue of loan defaults?

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. With reference to the governance of public sector banking in India, consider the following statements: (2018)

1. Capital infusion into public sector banks by the Government of India has steadily increased in the last decade.
2. To put the public sector banks in order, the merger of associate banks with the parent State Bank of India has been affected.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only

(b) 2 only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (b)

Bima Vistaar

[Source: IE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the [Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India \(IRDAI\)](#) has proposed to **price Bima Vistaar**, its ambitious all-in-one affordable insurance mass product aimed at the rural areas of the country, at Rs 1,500 per policy.

What is Bima Vistaar?

▪ About:

- Bima Vistaar, which is part of the [Bima Trinity](#). The first-of-its-kind all-in-one affordable insurance product, Bima Vistaar will offer **life, health and property cover**.
 - The product has been designed to provide a basic social safety net cover with combined features of **life, health, personal accident and property insurance**.

▪ Key Features:

- The product includes Life cover premium of Rs 820, Health cover Rs 500, Personal accident cover at Rs 100, and Property cover at Rs 80.
- If taken for the entire family on a floater basis, the policy will cost Rs 2,420, with an additional Rs 900 charged for the rest of the family members.
- The sum assured for life, personal accident, and property covers is Rs 2 lakh each, while the health cover (hospital cash) offers a sum assured of Rs 500 for 10 days, with a maximum amount of Rs 5,000 available without producing bills or documents.
- Agents selling Bima Vistaar policies stand to earn a commission of 10%, incentivising wider distribution and adoption of the product.

▪ Benefits for Broader Insurance Landscape in India:

- Bima Vistaar is expected to provide a reliable insurance solution at a reasonable cost, thereby promoting **financial inclusion**.
- Bima Vistaar policy underscores its importance in safeguarding individuals and families against various risks and uncertainties.
- It is considered a mass product for **increasing insurance penetration in the country**, it is expected that, unlike **micro insurance products**, it will generate a large sales volume.

▪ Future Prospects:

- IRDAI, along with the **General Insurance Council (GIC)** and [Life Insurance Council \(LIC\)](#), is working towards creating a "**Bima Trinity**" - **Bima Sugam (digital platform)**, **Bima Vistaar (product)**, and Bima Vahak (women-centric distribution channel) - to effectively distribute and promote these products.
 - The competitive pricing and comprehensive coverage of Bima Vistaar are expected to make it a viable and sustainable solution in the long run.

Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)

- The (IRDAI) is an **autonomous and statutory body** formed under the **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act, 1999 (IRDA Act, 1999)**. It is responsible for managing and regulating the insurance and reinsurance industry in India.
- It is a 10-member body- a chairman, five full-time members and four part-time members. **Headquartered in Hyderabad.**
- **The Role of IRDAI:**
- It has to protect the interests of insurance policyholders and ensure that they are treated in a just manner. It also has to monitor policy issuers to ensure that the common man's interests are not subverted.

History of India's Insurance Industry

- In 1950, the Government of India nationalised India's insurance industry and established the **Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India**.
- In the 1990s, the government decided to open up the insurance sector to private players. A committee was set up to propose reforms and the IRDAI was formed.
- **In 2000**, when the market was opened up, foreign firms were allowed to buy up to **26% stake in Indian insurance companies**.
 - Later, **foreign direct investment** in the insurance sector was capped at 49%.
- In the financial year 2022-23 (FY23), India's overall insurance penetration was **down at 4% from the level of 4.2% in FY22**, according to a **Swiss Re Sigma report**. This is much below the **global insurance penetration of 6.8%**.
 - In FY23, the insurance density in India increased from USD 91 in FY22 to USD 92.
 - Insurance density is the **ratio of insurance premiums collected by insurance companies** to the total population of a country, usually expressed in US dollars.

Read more: [No Age Bar for Health Insurance in India](#)

IREDA Gets Navratna Status

[Source: LM](#)

[Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency \(IREDA\)](#) achieves a significant milestone as it attains '[Navratna](#)' status from the [Department of Public Enterprises](#).

- IREDA was set up in 1987 as a non-banking financial institution, it operates under the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy** and promotes and develops projects related to [renewable energy](#) sources.
- **Navratna Privileges:** Firms with Navratna status can undertake investments up to Rs 1,000 crore without central authority approval, allocate 30% of net worth annually, and engage in joint ventures and overseas subsidiaries.
- **Qualification Criteria:** Companies must attain **Miniratna Category-I designation** and be listed in Schedule A of CPSEs to qualify for Navratna status.

Classification of CPSEs

Category	Launch	Criteria	Examples
Maharatna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maharatna Scheme was introduced for CPSEs in May, 2010, in order to empower mega CPSEs to expand their operations and emerge as global giants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Having Navratna status. ○ Listed on Indian stock exchange with minimum prescribed public shareholding under Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) regulations. ○ An average annual turnover of more than Rs. 25,000 crore during the last 3 years. ○ An average annual net worth of more than Rs. 15,000 crore during the last 3 years. ○ An average annual net profit after tax of more than Rs. 5,000 crore during the last 3 years. ○ Should have significant global presence/international operations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited, Coal India Limited, GAIL (India) Limited, etc.
Navratna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Navratna Scheme was introduced in 1997 in order to identify CPSEs that enjoy comparative advantages in their respective sectors and to support them in their drive to become global players. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Miniratna Category – I and Schedule ‘A’ CPSEs, which have obtained ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’ rating under the Memorandum of Understanding system in three of the last five years, and have composite score of 60 or above in the six selected performance parameters, namely, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Net profit to net worth. ○ Manpower cost to total cost of production/services. ○ Profit before depreciation, interest and taxes to capital employed. ○ Profit before interest and taxes to turnover. ○ Earning per share. ○ Inter-sectoral performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bharat Electronics Limited, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, etc.
Miniratna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Miniratna scheme was introduced in 1997 in pursuance of the policy objective to make the public sector more efficient and competitive and to grant enhanced autonomy and delegation of powers to the profit-making public sector enterprises. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Miniratna Category-I: The CPSEs which have made profit in the last three years continuously, pre-tax profit is Rs.30 crores or more in at least one of the three years and have a positive net worth are eligible to be considered for grant of Miniratna-I status. ○ Miniratna Category-II: The CPSEs which have made profit for the last three years continuously and have a positive net worth are eligible to be considered for grant of Miniratna-II status. ○ Miniratna CPSEs should have not defaulted in the repayment of loans/interest payment on any loans due to the Government. ○ Miniratna CPSEs shall not depend upon budgetary support or Government guarantees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Category-I: Airports Authority of India, Antrix Corporation Limited, etc. ○ Category-II: Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India, Bharat Pumps & Compressors Limited, etc.

Read more: [Sectors of Indian Economy](#), [India's Renewable Energy Vision: IREDA](#)

Goldman Environmental Prize 2024

Source: IE

Alok Shukla, a forest and tribal rights activist, has been awarded the prestigious [Goldman Environmental Prize 2024](#) for his successful campaign that saved **4.45 lakh acres of biodiversity-rich forests** from 21 planned [coal mines in Chhattisgarh's Hasdeo Aranya region](#).

- The forest of the Hasdeo Aranya is spread over 1.70 lakh hectares across the districts of Korba, Surajpur, and Surguja in Chhattisgarh, known as the "**lungs of Chhattisgarh**", with rich biodiversity and home to **25 endangered species**, 92 bird species, and 167 rare and medicinal plant species.
- The **Hasdeo River**, which flows into the [Mahanadi River](#), is fed by these forests and supplies water to the **Hasdeo Bango reservoir**, irrigating 741,000 acres of farmland.
 - Chhattisgarh, where 44% of the land is forested, has the **third largest forest coverage in India**.
 - Furthermore, nearly 15,000 Indigenous peoples rely on the Hasdeo Aranya forests for their livelihood, cultural heritage, and food.
- The Goldman Environmental Prize also known as the **Green Nobel Awards** awarded by the Goldman Environmental Foundation. The Prize was founded by **Richard and Rhonda Goldman in 1989**.
 - It recognises grassroots environmental leaders from six regions (Asia, Africa, Europe, North America, South and Central America) and lastly, islands and island nations.
 - The winners are selected by an international jury and awarded USD 200,000 as prize money.

Read more: [Protests in Chhattisgarh Over Coal Mining](#)

AI-powered Election Outreach

Source: [IE](#)

As the ongoing Lok Sabha elections in India unfold the use of technologies like [artificial intelligence \(AI\)](#) and [augmented reality \(AR\)](#) is rapidly transforming how politicians interact with and reach out to potential voters.

- **AI-generated Conversation:** It involves **generating the realistic-sounding voice of a local leader** to make calls to voters and respond to their issues using a generative AI and making promises to improve the situation.
- **Augmented Reality Rallies:** Political parties use AR technology to create computer-generated images of politicians delivering messages to voters in their real-world environment, accessed through QR codes.
- **Social Media Deepfakes:** [AI-generated deepfakes](#) of politicians and bollywood celebrities are being used on social media and messaging platforms to deliver positive and negative messages to sway voter sentiment.
- **Concerns about Literacy and Transparency:** The widespread use of these technologies raises concerns about the potential for misinformation and the need for greater transparency, especially in a country with a large and diverse population of internet users with varying degrees of digital literacy.

Read more: [Deepfakes: Opportunities, Threats, and Regulation](#), [Artificial intelligence](#)

Plato and the Avars

Source: [DTE](#)

Recent scientific advances have uncovered **Plato's burial site** and shed light on the **Avars'** historical significance, unveiling two intriguing past chapters.

- Plato (427-348 BCE), a prominent philosopher from Greece, was a student of Socrates (470-399 BCE) and a teacher of Aristotle (384-322 BCE).
 - In North India and Pakistan, they are known as 'Sukraat', 'Aflatoon', and 'Arastu' respectively.
 - Ancient **papyrus scrolls** (writing material used in ancient Egypt and the Mediterranean) discovered in the 18th century from Herculaneum unveiled Plato's burial in **Athens' Academia garden.**
- Avars, a dominant power in eastern central Europe from the late 6th century CE to the early 9th century.
 - The Avars originated from eastern central Asia and settled in the Carpathian Basin. The researchers collected DNA from Avar cemeteries and used a method called **ancIBD** to investigate the social practices of the Avars.
 - ancIBD detects **Identity-by-Descent (IBD) segments** in ancient human DNA (aDNA). IBD segments are long DNA sequences shared between two individuals and are a signal for recent genealogical connections.
 - The findings reveal that **Avars avoid cousin marriage** and have minimal intermarriage with non-Avars.
 - They practised **Levirate unions** (a widow married a male from the family of her deceased spouse), which is not common in Europe but were an **established feature of steppe peoples from Asia** and had a strict **patrilineal structure.**

Hangor Class Submarine

[Source: TH](#)

Recently, China has launched the first of eight Hangor-class submarines being built for Pakistan. It is a **diesel-electric attack submarine.**

- It is bigger than **the Indian Navy's Kalvari class submarines**, with a displacement of 2,800 tons compared to 1,775 tons for the Kalvari class.
- The Hangor class has **Air independent propulsion (AIP).**
 - AIP allows submarines to stay submerged for longer periods.
 - AIP is planned to be installed on the first Scorpene class submarine **INS Kalvari** in 2024.
- In terms of armament, both carry **torpedoes and anti-ship missiles**, The Kalvari class likely has more modern and battle-tested armament.
- The bigger size of the Hangor class may hamper **its manoeuvrability in littoral waters** compared to the **smaller Kalvari class.**



Read more: [Air Independent Propulsion for Diesel Electric Submarines](#)

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/current-affairs-news-analysis-editorials/news-analysis/01-05-2024/print>

