



World Population Day 2024

[Source: TH](#)

World Population Day is observed on **11th July every year** to **raise awareness about global population issues** and the **importance of reproductive health and rights**. It was established by the **United Nations** in **1989**.

▪ History:

- In 1989, the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** proposed that July 11th be designated as World Population Day to draw global attention to the urgency and significance of population-related issues.
- UNDP was inspired by the public interest and awareness that was created by "**Five Billion Day**" on **11th July 1987 when the world's population reached 5 billion**.

▪ Theme:

- The theme of this 2024 WPD is "**Leave no one behind, count everyone**".

- In 2011, the global population reached the 7 billion mark, it stands at almost **7.9 billion in 2021**, and it's **expected to grow to around 8.5 billion in 2030**, 9.7 billion in 2050, and 10.9 billion in 2100.
 - According to the **UN's World Population dashboard**, **India's population 2024** stands at slightly over **1.428 billion**.

Read more: [World Population Day](#)

NTCA's Plan on Relocation of Villages

[Source: IE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** has urged **state wildlife departments** to develop a comprehensive timeline and action plan for the relocation of villages situated within the **core tiger habitats**.

What is NTCA's Villages Relocation Plan?

▪ About Core Areas:

- **Wildlife Protection (Amendment) Act, 2006** emphasises the need for **undisturbed areas** to support viable tiger breeding populations.
 - **Core or critical tiger habitats** refer to areas within tiger reserves that are kept untouched to ensure the survival of breeding tiger populations.
- The NTCA's focus is on the **55 notified tiger reserves in India**, where approximately 600 villages (64,801 families) currently reside within **core tiger habitats**.

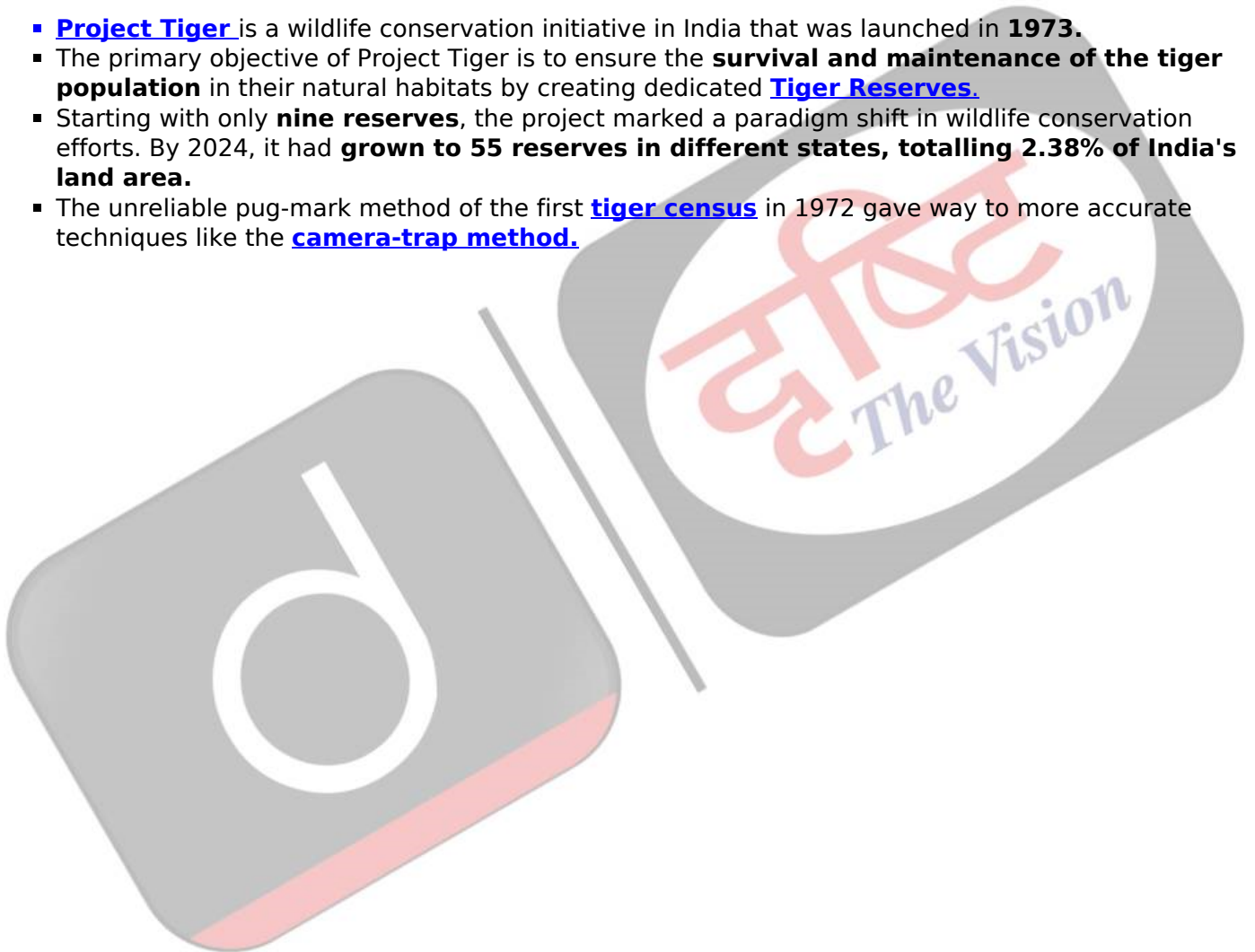
▪ Voluntary Village Relocation Program (VVRP):

- **Voluntary Village Relocation Program (VVRP)** has twin objectives of **empowering the local communities** by giving access to development opportunities and **creating inviolate space for tigers** so that both can **co-occur in harmony**.
 - Relocations must be **voluntary** and based on the informed consent of **gram sabhas and families involved** and **Forest rights of Scheduled Tribes and other forest dwellers** must be recognised and settled.
- **Compensation:** Families can choose between **financial compensation (Rs 15 lakh per family) or a resettlement package** (including land, housing, and basic amenities).
- **Issues With Relocation Plan:** The NTCA's relocation package falls short of the legal standards set by the **Land Acquisition Act, 2013**.
 - NTCA does not comply with the legal requirement of the **Land Acquisition Act, 2013**, which has special provisions to provide resettlement and rehabilitation to ST communities and forest dwellers.

Project Tiger

- **Project Tiger** is a wildlife conservation initiative in India that was launched in **1973**.
- The primary objective of Project Tiger is to ensure the **survival and maintenance of the tiger population** in their natural habitats by creating dedicated **Tiger Reserves**.
- Starting with only **nine reserves**, the project marked a paradigm shift in wildlife conservation efforts. By 2024, it had **grown to 55 reserves in different states, totalling 2.38% of India's land area**.
- The unreliable pug-mark method of the first **tiger census** in 1972 gave way to more accurate techniques like the **camera-trap method**.

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WILDLIFE CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

Constitutional Provisions for Wildlife

42nd Amendment

Act, 1976: Forests & Protection of Wild Animals and Birds (moved from State to Concurrent List)

Article

48 A: State shall endeavor to protect & improve environment and safeguard forests and wildlife of country

Article

51 A (g): Fundamental duty to protect & improve natural environment including forests and Wildlife

Legal Frameworks

Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972

Biological Diversity Act, 2002

Major Conservation Initiatives

Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats (IDWH):

- Financial assistance provided to State/UT Governments for protection and conservation of wildlife
- A Centrally Sponsored Scheme

National Wildlife Action Plan (2017-2031)

Guidelines for Eco-tourism in Protected Areas

Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation

Wildlife Crime Control Bureau: To combat wildlife-related crimes

Wildlife Division (MoEFCC):

- Policy and law for conservation of biodiversity and Protected Area network
- Technical and financial support to the State/ UTs under IDWH, Central Zoo Authority and Wildlife Institute of India

Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB):

Collection, collation of intelligence & its dissemination, establishment of centralized Wild Life crime databank, coordination etc.

Wildlife Crime Control:

- Operation Save Kurma
- Operation Thunderbird

Species-Specific Initiatives

- Protection and conservation of Greater Adjutant in Gangetic riverine tract
- Dolphin Conservation in Non-Protected Area Segment of Ganga River
- Conservation Breeding Centre for Wild water buffalo (2020)
- Recovery programme for Snow leopard (2009)
- Recovery programme for Vultures (2006)
- Project Elephant (1992)
- Project Tiger/National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) (1973)

India's Collaboration with Global Wildlife Conservation Efforts

- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- World Heritage Convention
- Ramsar Convention
- The Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network (TRAFFIC)
- United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)
- International Whaling Commission (IWC)
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- Global Tiger Forum (GTF)



Drishti IAS

Read more: [Wildlife Protection Act, 1972](#), [Forest Rights Act](#), [National Tiger Conservation Authority](#)

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q1. 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)

Q2. Consider the following statements: (2018)

1. The definition of "Critical Wildlife Habitat" is incorporated in the Forest Rights Act, 2006.
2. For the first time in India, Baigas have been given Habitat Rights.
3. Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change officially decides and declares Habitat Rights for Primitive and Vulnerable Tribal Groups in any part of India.

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: (a)

Gold Smuggling at China Border

[Source: TH](#)

Recently, the [Indo-Tibetan Border Police \(ITBP\)](#) under the **operation Jazba** arrested two men near the [China border in Eastern Ladakh](#) for allegedly smuggling 108 kg of gold biscuits from China.

- While smuggling of smaller items was common, it was the first time that an alleged gold smuggling racket was exposed in the area which was **the largest haul of gold ever by ITBP**.
- ITBP is authorised to **carry out search and seizures** by the **Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** and also incorporated in **the ITBP Act** to exercise the **powers of Customs on the border** to keep a check on smuggling activities.

CENTRAL ARMED POLICE FORCES (CAPF)

The CAPF includes the seven security forces in India functioning under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Assam Rifles (AR)

- ↳ **Origin:** 1835, as militia called 'Cachar Levy'
- ↳ **Erstwhile objective:** To protect British Tea estates
- ↳ **Current Objectives:**
 - ↳ Conducting anti-terrorist operations in NER
 - ↳ Ensuring security at India-China and India-Myanmar borders
- ↳ **Imp Role in:**
 - ↳ Sino-India War 1962
 - ↳ Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) to Sri Lanka (1987)

Due to long association with tribal belts, Assam Rifles are also called 'Friends of the North East'

Border Security Force (BSF)

- ↳ **Origin:** 1965
- ↳ **Objectives:**
 - ↳ Securing land borders with Pakistan and Bangladesh
 - ↳ Also performing Anti-Infiltration in Kashmir Valley
 - ↳ Counter Insurgency in NER
 - ↳ Anti-Naxal Operations in Odisha and Chhattisgarh
- ↳ **Wings:** Air wing, marine wing, an artillery regiment, and commando units

BSF is India's First Line of Defence and the world's largest border guarding force

Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)

- ↳ **Pre-Independence Origin:** 1939 (Crown Representative's Police)
- ↳ **Post Independence:** 1949 - under CRPF Act, became Central Reserve Police Force
- ↳ **Objective:** Crowd control, riot control, counter militancy/insurgency operations, etc.

CRPF is the principle central police force for internal security

Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)

- ↳ **Origin:** 1962
- ↳ **Objectives:**
 - ↳ Deployed on border from Karakoram Pass (Ladakh) to Jachep La (Arunachal Pradesh) (~3488 km of Indo-China Border)
 - ↳ Manning Border Outposts on altitudes 9000 ft - 18700 ft in Western, Middle and Eastern sectors of Indo-China Border

ITBP is India's specialised mountain force & the first responder to natural disasters

National Security Guard (NSG)

- ↳ **Origin:** 1984 (came into being in 1986), following Operation Blue Star
- ↳ **Objectives:** Counter-terrorism unit/Federal Contingency Force
- ↳ **Task-oriented Force - Two complementary elements:**
 - ↳ Special Action Group (SAG)
 - ↳ Special Ranger Groups (SRG)

Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)

- ↳ **Origin:** 1963
- ↳ **Objectives:**
 - ↳ Guarding Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan borders
 - ↳ Enhance border security, curb trans-border crimes, prevent unauthorised entry/exit, halt smuggling, etc.

Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)

- ↳ **Origin:** Central Industrial Security Force Act, 1968
- ↳ **Objectives:** Ensuring security of major critical infrastructure installations

CISF is the sole CAPF unit with a specialised fire wing



Read more: [Countering the Menace of Smuggling](#)

Global Reports on Trans Fats and Insufficient Physical Activity

For Prelims: [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), [Trans fats](#), [Bad Cholesterol \(LDL\)](#), [Eat Right Movement](#), [Heart Attack](#), [Diabetes](#), [Food Safety and Standards Authority of India \(FSSAI\)](#), [REPLACE](#)

For Mains: [Impacts of Trans Fat](#), [Challenges in Eliminating Trans Fat](#), [Initiatives to Eliminate Trans Fat](#).

[Source: WHO](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) has published the **fifth milestone report** on progress towards **global trans fat elimination**, covering the period from 2018–2023.

- In another development, a study was published in the **Lancet Global Health journal** that indicates almost 50% of adults in India engaged in **insufficient levels of physical activity** in 2022.

What are the Key Highlights of the WHO Report on Trans Fat?

- Industrially produced TFA is identified as a major contributor to heart disease. **TFA offers no nutritional benefits and is detrimental to public health.**
- In 2018, WHO set a **target to eliminate TFA** from the global food supply **by the end of 2023**. Even though the target has not been fully met, there has been remarkable progress made and **sustained elimination would be achieved by 2025**.
- **By 2023, WHO's REPLACE action framework facilitated widespread adoption of best-practice policies in 53 countries, impacting 3.7 billion people, a substantial increase from 6% coverage five years earlier.**
- WHO initiated a **Validation Programme** to recognise countries achieving TFA elimination goals. Denmark, Lithuania, Poland, Saudi Arabia, and Thailand were the **first to receive** the TFA Validation Certificate.
- WHO recommends all countries **enact and enforce best-practice policies**, engage in the Validation Programme, and encourage **companies to reformulate products** to eliminate TFA globally.
 - **Implementing best practice policies** in just eight additional countries, (including Azerbaijan and China) would **eliminate 90% of the global TFA burden**.

What are the Highlights of the Lancet Paper on Insufficient Physical Activity?


- The definition of insufficient physical activity is **not performing at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity** per week.
- Globally, about a **third (31.3%) of adults** were **insufficiently physically active** in 2022, up from 26.4% in 2010.
- South Asia ranks **second highest globally** in terms of insufficient physical activity among adults, following the high-income Asia Pacific region. In India, 57% of women were found to be insufficiently physically active, compared to 42% of men.
 - Projections indicate that **by 2030, 60% of Indian adults** could be insufficiently active if current trends persist.
- Physical inactivity increases the **risk of non-communicable diseases** such as diabetes and heart disease. Rising physical inactivity, along with **sedentary lifestyles**, contributes to the increasing prevalence of these diseases and burdens healthcare systems.

Note

- A 2023 study by the [Indian Council of Medical Research](#)-India Diabetes (ICMR-INDIAB) estimated that in 2021, India had:
 - 101 million people with diabetes.
 - 315 million people with hypertension.
 - 254 million people with obesity.
 - 185 million people with high levels of LDL or 'bad' cholesterol.

Trans Fats

- **Trans fats**, or trans-fatty acids, are **unsaturated fatty acids** that come from either natural or industrial sources.
- Naturally occurring trans-fat comes from **ruminants (cows and sheep)**.
- Industrially-produced trans-fat is formed in an **industrial process** that adds hydrogen to vegetable oil converting the liquid into a solid, resulting in “partially hydrogenated” oil .



TRANS FATTY ACIDS (TFA)

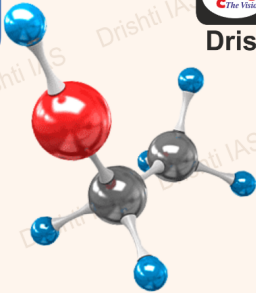
These are unsaturated fatty acids that come from either natural or industrial sources.

FATS

✗ Trans Fats

✗ Saturated Fats

✓ Unsaturated Fats



Fat	A major source of energy and helps body absorb vitamin
Unsaturated Fats	Good fats; usually come in the form of liquid oils, not solid fats. • From Plants (Vegetable oil, nuts, seeds)
Saturated Fats	Not as harmful as trans fats if consumed in moderation; generally take a solid form • From red meat, butter, cheese, coconut oil, palm oil

- **Natural TFA:**
 - Beef fat and dairy fat in small amounts
- **Industrial TFA:**
 - Trans fats, also called partially hydrogenated oils, are created when hydrogen is added to vegetable oil to make it more solid.
 - E.g. Vanaspati, margarine and bakery shortenings
- **Issue Associated:**
 - Most harmful fats, increase disease risk, even if consumed in small quantities
 - ↑bad LDL (low-density lipoprotein) and ↓ good HDL

DEBATE ON TRANS FATS

ARGUMENTS FOR:

- **Natural form** of trans fat **not** harmful to humans
- **Cheap and easy substitute** of Pure Ghee
- **Preserves food** for longer duration

ARGUMENTS AGAINST:

- Worst type of fat for the heart, blood vessels, rest of the body
- Associated with obesity, infertility, certain types of cancers, high B.P.
- Saturated vegetable fats like palm, palm kernel, and coconut oils can be suitable alternatives

WHO estimates that 50,00,000 lives are lost due to premature deaths from coronary heart disease which are attributable to consumption of trans-fats.

EFFORTS TO REDUCE TFA INTAKE:

- **By FSSAI:**
 - Goal of “Freedom from Trans Fat @75”
 - “Trans Fat Free” logo - Voluntary labelling to promote TFA-free products
 - “Heart Attack Rewind” - Mass media campaign to eliminate industrially produced trans fats

- **By WHO:**
 - **REPLACE Campaign** - Eliminate industrially produced trans fats by 2023
 - **Recommendation**- Set limits on industrially produced trans fat or ban partially hydrogenated oils

India's Initiatives to Promote Healthy Lifestyle

- [‘Khelo India’ Scheme](#)
- [Scheme of Assistance to National Sports Federations \(NSFs\)](#)
- [Eat Right India Movement](#)
- [Fit India movement](#)

What can be done to Ensure a Healthier Lifestyle among the Population?

- Check food labels for "**partially hydrogenated oils**" which **indicate trans fats** and choose healthy fats like **olive oil, avocado, nuts**, and fatty fish.
- Aim for at least **150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise** or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity exercise **per week as recommended by WHO**. Break up sedentary time with short walks or stretches throughout the day.
- **Encourage opportunities for women to participate in physical activity**, like safe walking paths and women-only fitness classes. Promote the health benefits of exercise specifically for women.
- **Raise awareness about the dangers of trans fats** and the importance of physical activity through educational campaigns. Partner with schools, workplaces, and community centres to spread the message.
- **Advocate for stronger government regulations** to limit trans fats in processed foods. Support policies that promote physical activity like walkable neighbourhoods and public recreation facilities.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question(PYQ)

Prelims:

Q. A company marketing food products advertises that its items do not contain trans-fats. What does this campaign signify to the customers? (2011)

1. The food products are not made out of hydrogenated oils.
2. The food products are not made out of animal fats/ oils.
3. The oils used are not likely to damage the cardiovascular health of the consumers.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans: (c)

India-Austria Relations

For Prelims: [UNFCCC](#), [UNCLOS](#), [India-Middle East-Europe Corridor](#), [Green Hydrogen Mission](#), [Industry 4.0](#), [European Union](#), [Green Hydrogen Mission](#)

For Mains: India-Austria Relations, Bilateral Relations and Diplomatic Milestones

Why in News?

The Prime Minister of India paid an official visit to Austria, this was the **first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Austria in 41 years**, marking the 75th year of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

- The visit aimed to elevate bilateral relations to new heights through enhanced cooperation in various sectors, including technology, economy, and global security.

Note

In June 1955, PM [Jawaharlal Nehru](#) paid a State visit to Austria, roughly one month after it had gained full independence through the conclusion of the **State Treaty**. Nehru's was the first State visit of a foreign leader to newly independent Austria.

What are the Key Highlights of the Prime Minister's visit to Austria?

- **Support for Indo-Pacific Stability:** Both nations reaffirmed their commitment to a free and open [Indo-Pacific region](#), ensuring maritime security and adhering to international laws such as [United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea \(UNCLOS\)](#).
- **Political and Security Cooperation:** Discussions included assessments of developments in Europe and West Asia, with a shared focus on restoring peace and adherence to international law, notably concerning the Ukraine conflict.
 - The leaders welcomed the launch of the [India-Middle East-Europe Corridor \(IMEC\)](#) and Austria's interest to engage with this initiative.
- **Economic Collaboration:** The leaders agreed on a future-oriented economic partnership focusing on **green and digital technologies**, infrastructure, [renewable energy](#), and smart cities.
 - The **first high-level bilateral Business Forum** was convened, promoting partnerships across sectors and encouraging CEO-level interactions to explore new opportunities.
- **Climate Commitments:** Recognizing their commitments under the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#), both countries pledged to collaborate on **renewable energy**, with a specific focus on **Austria's Hydrogen Strategy and India's Green Hydrogen Mission**.
 - As parties to the UNFCCC and committed to limiting the [global temperature increase to below 2°C](#), leaders acknowledged the importance of reducing climate change risks.
 - They noted the **EU's target for climate neutrality by 2050, Austria's goal for 2040, and India's aim for net zero emissions by 2070**.
- **Technology and Innovation:** Initiatives such as the Start-Up Bridge and exchanges under Austria's Global Incubator Network and India's Start-Up India were highlighted as crucial for fostering innovation and entrepreneurship.
 - They also acknowledged the increasing importance of [digital technologies in industrial processes \(Industry 4.0\)](#), including in the sustainable economy.
- **Cultural Exchanges:** Acknowledging the role of cultural diplomacy, efforts to promote [yoga, Ayurveda](#), and other cultural exchanges were emphasised.
- **Multilateral Cooperation:** Both leaders reiterated their commitment to multilateralism and supported comprehensive reforms of the [United Nations](#). India reiterated its support for **Austria's UNSC candidature for the term 2027-28**, while Austria expressed its support for **India's candidature for the period 2028-29**.
 - India invited Austria to join the [International Solar Alliance \(ISA\)](#), highlighting collaboration in renewable energy and sustainable development.

How have India-Austria Relations been so Far?

- **Political Relations:** Diplomatic relations established in 1949. 75th year of bilateral relations to be observed from November 2023 - November 2024.
 - India played a significant role in Austria's negotiations with the Soviet Union for independence in 1955.
- **Economic Cooperation:** Austria, one of the richest countries in the [European Union](#), is an important link for India in its relationship with Europe, especially with countries of central and Eastern Europe.
 - The **Indo-Austrian Joint Economic Commission (JEC)** established in 1983 provides a forum for bilateral interaction between the governmental Ministries and Chambers of Commerce and Industry.
 - In 2021, Indian exports to Austria totaled USD 1.29 billion, while imports from Austria were USD 1.18 billion, resulting in a balanced bilateral trade valued at USD 2.47 billion.
 - **By 2022, bilateral trade reached USD 2.84 billion, marking a 14.97% rise from the previous year.**
 - **Key Indian exports:** Electronic goods, apparel, textiles, footwear, rubber articles, vehicles & railway parts
 - **Key Austrian exports to India:** Machinery, mechanical appliances, railway parts, iron and steel
- **Space: Austria's first two satellites, TUGSAT-1/BRITE and UniBRITE, were launched from [India's Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota](#), in 2013.**
- **Culture:** The Indo-Austrian cultural relationship dates back to the 16th century when Balthasar Springer travelled from Tyrol to India in 1505. The teaching of [Sanskrit](#) at Vienna University started in 1845 and a high point was reached in 1880 with the foundation of an independent chair for Indology.
 - [Rabindranath Tagore, Nobel Laureate](#), visited Vienna in 1921 and 1926, fostering significant cultural and intellectual exchanges through his lectures on topics like "The Religion of the Forest," emphasising nature, union, and compassion.
 - **Ayurveda and Yoga have gained popularity in Austria**, with numerous Yoga schools in Vienna.

Austria

- Austria is a country located in southern Central Europe. It **borders eight countries** namely, Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Italy, Switzerland and Lichtenstein.
 - Austria is a highly mountainous country due to its position within the **Alps mountain range**. The Austrian Alps, also known as the Central Alps, form the country's backbone.
- **Capital:** Vienna
- **Membership in International Organizations:** Austria has been a member of the **European Union (EU)** since 1995. In addition Austria is also a member of the following organisations: [OECD \(Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development\)](#), [WTO \(World Trade Organization\)](#), [IMF \(International Monetary Funds\)](#), and [WHO \(World Health Organisation\)](#).



Drishti Mains Question:

Q. Discuss the evolution of India-Austria relations, highlighting the key milestones and areas of cooperation.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Consider the following statements: (2023)

The ‘Stability and Growth Pact’ of the European Union is a treaty that

1. limits the levels of the budgetary deficit of the countries of the European Union
2. makes the countries of the European Union to share their infrastructure facilities
3. enables the countries of the European Union to share their technologies

How many of the above statements are correct

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Ans: (a)

Successful Launch of Ariane 6 Rocket

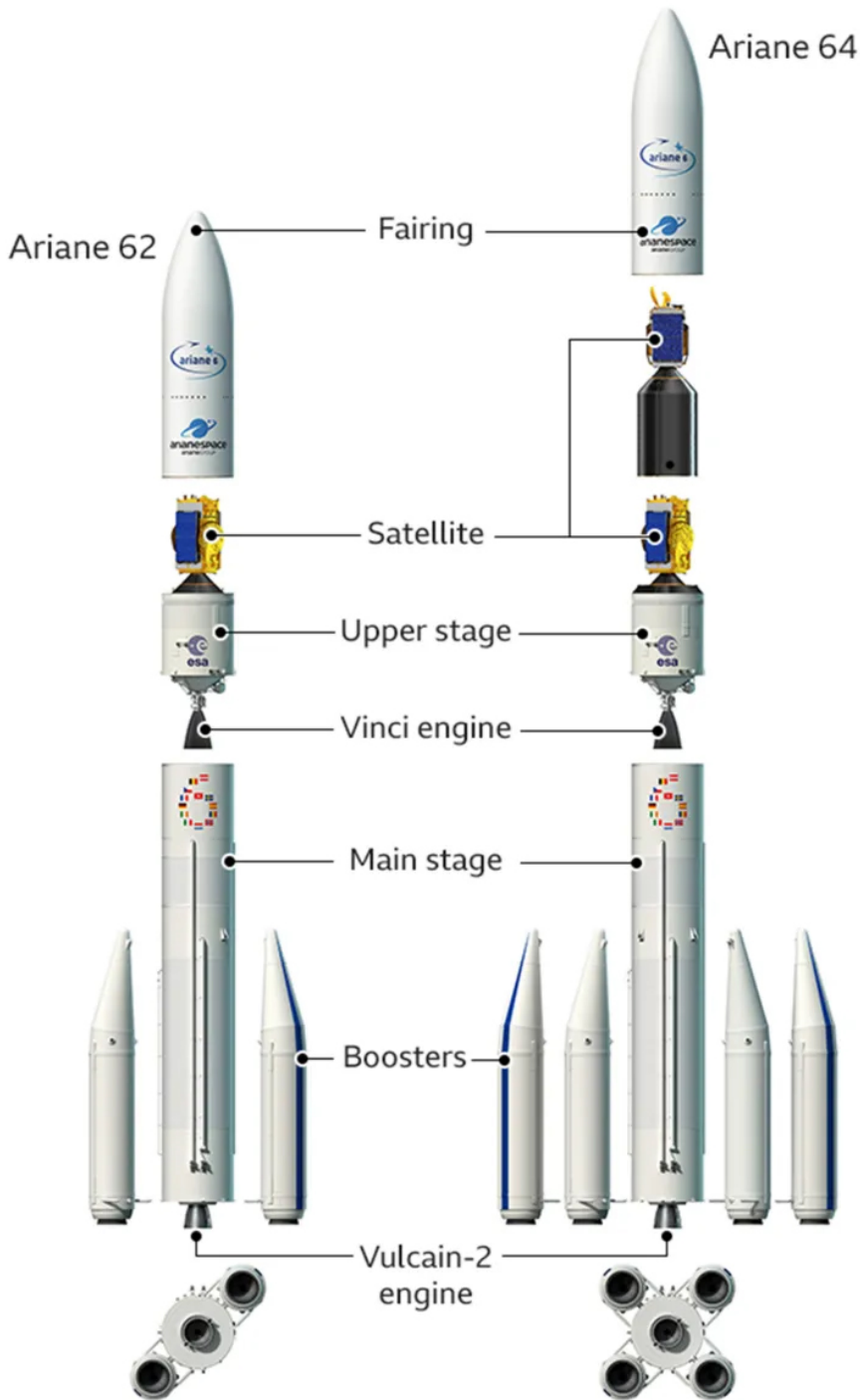
[Source: TH](#)

Recently, **the European Space Agency (ESA)** successfully launched the **Ariane 6 rocket**, for the first time, from **French Guiana**, marking Europe's return to independent space access after delays and setbacks.

- It is the latest rocket in **Europe's Ariane** rocket series (taking over from **Ariane 5**) that can launch missions from **low-Earth orbit** and farther out into **deep space**.
 - **Ariane-5 Rocket** has been used to launch **ISRO's communication satellites** like **GSAT-11**, **GSAT-30**, **GSAT-31**, **ESA's Juice mission** and **NASA's James Webb Space Telescope (JWST)**.
- This debut flight carried **nine cubesats** into orbit, including **NASA's CubeSat Radio Interferometry Experiment (CURIE)** and other satellites studying **Earth's climate and weather**.
- The **Vinci engine** used in the upper stage is designed to restart repeatedly, allowing the operating agency to place payloads into several different orbits.
- **29 missions** will be launched by **Ariane 6** over the next several years and aims for up to 12 flights a year.



Europe's new rocket: Ariane 6



Ariane 62

Height: From 56m
 Launch weight: 540 tonnes
 Payloads:
 To geostationary orbit:
 Up to 4,500kg
 To Low-Earth orbit:
 10,300kg

Ariane 64

Height: Up to 62m
 Launch weight: 870 tonnes
 Payloads:
 To geostationary orbit:
 Up to 11,500kg
 To Low-Earth orbit:
 21,600kg

Read more: [European Space Agency's Juice Mission](#)

High Seas Treaty

For Prelims: [Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction \(BBNJ\) Agreement](#), High Seas Treaty, [UN Convention on the Law of the Sea \(UNCLOS\)](#), 1958 Geneva Convention on the High Seas, [Exclusive Economic Zone](#), climate change, [El Nino](#), Ocean Acidification, [Environmental Impact Assessments \(EIA\)](#), [Security and Growth for All in the Region \(SAGAR\)](#), [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDG\)](#).

For Mains: Treaty on the High Seas, Significance for India and the World

[Source: IE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, India has decided to endorse and approve the [Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction \(BBNJ\) Agreement](#) also called **High Seas Treaty**.

- This global agreement is designed to **safeguard high seas marine biodiversity** through collaboration at international level and it will **operate within the framework** of the [United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea \(UNCLOS\)](#).

What are High Seas?

▪ About:

- According to the [1958 Geneva Convention](#) on the High Seas, parts of the sea that are not included in the territorial waters or the internal waters of a country are known as the high seas.
- It is the area **beyond** a country's [Exclusive Economic Zone](#) (that extends up to **200 nautical miles** from the coastline) and till where a nation has jurisdiction over living and non-living resources.
- **No country** is responsible for the management and protection of resources on the high seas.

▪ Significance:

- The high seas cover **over 64%** of the world's oceans and **50%** of the Earth's surface, making them vital for marine life.
- They are home to around **270,000 known species**, with many yet to be discovered.
- The high seas **regulate climate, absorb carbon, store solar radiation, and distribute heat**, crucial for planetary stability and mitigating **climate change**.
- They are essential for human survival, providing resources like **seafood, raw materials, genetic and medicinal resources**.

▪ Threats:

- They absorb heat from the atmosphere and are affected by phenomena like the [El Nino](#), and ocean [acidification](#) which is endangering marine flora and fauna.
 - Several thousand marine species are at risk of extinction by 2100 if current warming and acidification trends continue.

- **Anthropogenic pressures** on the high seas include seabed mining, noise pollution, chemical and [oil spills](#) and fires, disposal of untreated waste (including antibiotics), overfishing, introduction of invasive species, and coastal pollution.
- Despite these threats, **only about 1% of the high seas** are currently protected.

What is the High Seas Treaty?

▪ About:

- It is formally called the **Agreement on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction**. In short, known as **BBJN** or **High Seas Treaty**.
- It is a new **international legal framework** under [UNCLOS](#) for maintaining the ecological health of the oceans.
- The treaty was **negotiated in 2023** and is meant to reduce pollution, and promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and other marine resources in ocean waters outside the national jurisdiction of any country.

▪ Key Objectives:

- **Conservation and Protection of Marine Ecology:** This includes the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) where activities would be regulated to conserve the marine ecosystem.
- **Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits of Marine Resources:** The treaty aims to ensure that the benefits from commercially valuable ocean organisms, either through scientific research or commercial exploitation, are shared equally among all countries.
- **Mandatory [Environmental Impact Assessments \(EIA\)](#):** The treaty makes it mandatory to conduct **prior EIA** for any activity that could potentially pollute or damage the marine ecosystem, **even if the activity is within a country's national jurisdiction** but the impact is expected in the high seas.
- **Capacity Building and Transfer of Marine Technologies:** This will help developing countries to fully utilise the benefits of the oceans while also contributing to their conservation.

▪ Signing and Ratification:

- Till June 2024, 91 countries have **signed** the treaty so far, with 8 of them having **ratified** it. It will become legally binding 120 days after 60 countries ratify it.
 - **Ratification** is the process by which a **country agrees to be legally bound to the provisions of an international law**, while signing indicates agreement without legal obligation until ratification occurs. The process for ratification varies by country.

UN HIGH SEAS TREATY

aka BBNJ (Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction) Agreement

For the first time, UN members have agreed on a unified (legally-binding) treaty to protect biodiversity in the high seas

High Seas (HS)

All the saltwater bodies across Earth that aren't part of territorial sea/internal waters of a state

Need to Protect HS

- Only 1.2% of HSs are currently protected
- 10% of global marine species at risk of extinction
- High exploitation due to commercial fishing, mining, acidification, pollution

Background of Treaty

Demand for an updated framework to protect marine life in the High Seas, is about 20 years-old

The last int'l agreement on ocean protection was UNCLOS signed in 1982

This treaty is the 3rd "implementing agreement" under UNCLOS

KEY FEATURES

- Create a new body to manage conservation of ocean life and establish marine protected areas in the high seas
- Estd. ground rules for conducting EIAs for commercial activities in oceans

KEY PLAYERS

EU, US, UK and China (in brokering the deal)

SIGNIFICANCE

- Achieving the 30x30 Target set at UN CBD COP15
- Legal protection of 2/3rd of the ocean (+ livelihoods of coastal communities)
- Comprehensive protection of endangered species/habitats on >40% of Earth's surface

ROADBLOCK

How to fairly share marine genetic resources (MGR) & eventual profits among developed/developing nations



Ocean ecosystems produce half the oxygen we breathe, represent 95% of the planet's biosphere and soak up CO₂ (world's largest carbon sink)

What is the Significance of the High Seas Treaty?

▪ Addressing the "Global Commons" Challenge:

- The high seas, covering **64%** of the ocean, are a global commons, leading to **resource overexploitation, biodiversity loss and environmental challenges**.
 - The UN estimates that approximately **17 million tonnes of plastics** were dumped into the oceans in **2021**, with this amount expected to increase in the coming years.
- This treaty has been compared to the **2015 Paris Agreement** on climate change. It could lead to the protection of the vast ocean and the sustainable use of marine resources.

▪ Complementing UNCLOS:

- BBNJ is in line with the principles of the **UNCLOS**, which forms the overarching legal framework for the oceans.
 - **UNCLOS** sets general principles for equitable access, resource usage, and biodiversity protection in oceans but **lacks specific implementation guidelines**.
 - The **High Seas Treaty will address this gap**, serving as an **implementing agreement** under UNCLOS once it comes into force.

- It will provide a **legal mechanism** to create and manage marine protected areas in the high seas.
- It will ensure the **equitable and sustainable use of marine resources**, balancing the interests of developed and developing countries.

- **Combating Emerging Threats:**

- The treaty addresses emerging challenges such as deep-sea mining, ocean acidification, and plastic pollution, which pose grave threats to the health and resilience of the high seas ecosystems.

- **Strengthening International Cooperation:**

- By establishing a robust institutional framework and decision-making processes, the High Seas Treaty facilitates **greater international cooperation** and **coordination** in ocean governance.

- **Contribution to [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDG\)](#):**

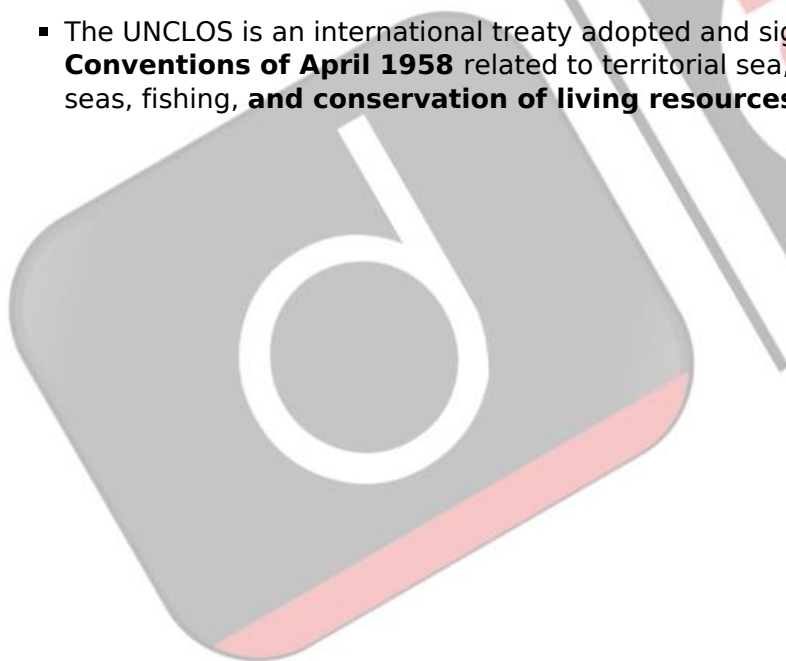
- The successful implementation of this treaty will significantly contribute to the achievement of **SDG 14 (Life Below Water)**.

- **Significance for India:**

- **Global Leadership:** India's commitment to ocean governance and marine resource sustainability such as establishing **[Marine Protected Areas \(MPA\)](#)** underscores its global leadership and makes it an environmental champion.
- **Domestic Policy:** The treaty's **EIA** mandate India to align its maritime policies, promoting responsible international cooperation.
- **Economic Benefits:** Provisions on benefit-sharing from marine genetic resources align with **India's Blue Economy** goals, offering potential economic gains.
- **Strategic Considerations:** Ratifying the treaty strengthens India's Indo-Pacific position, supporting a sustainable maritime environment through the **[SAGAR](#)** initiative.

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)

- The UNCLOS is an international treaty adopted and signed in 1982, **replacing the 4 Geneva Conventions of April 1958** related to territorial sea, contiguous zone, continental shelf, high seas, fishing, **and conservation of living resources on the high seas.**



UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA (UNCLOS)

The 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), also called Constitution for the oceans, has 168 parties, and sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out.



The Convention has created three new institutions on the International level

THE INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA 01



An independent judicial body. It has jurisdiction over any dispute concerning the interpretation or application of the Convention, and over all matters specifically provided for in any other agreement which confers jurisdiction on the Tribunal

02 THE INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY

ISA has the mandate to ensure the effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects that may arise from deep-seabed related activities

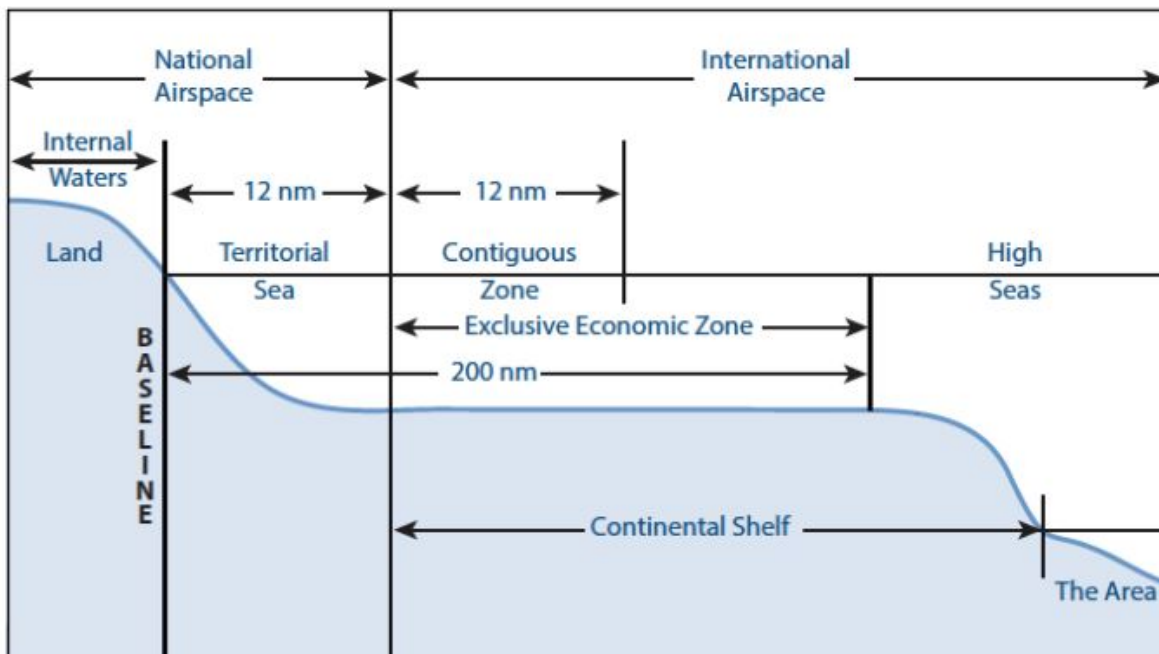


THE COMMISSION ON THE LIMITS OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF 03



To facilitate the implementation of the UNCLOS in respect of the establishment of the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles (M) from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured

- It divides oceans into 5 main zones:



What are the Other Conventions related to Seas?

- **Convention on Continental Shelf, 1964:** It defines and delimits the rights of States to explore and exploit the natural resources of the continental shelf.
- **Convention on Fishing and Conservation of Living Resources of the High Seas, 1966:** It was designed to solve the problems involved in the conservation of living resources of the high seas, considering that because of the development of modern technology some of these resources are in danger of being overexploited.
- **London convention 1972:** Its objective is to promote the effective control of all sources of marine pollution and to take all practicable steps to prevent pollution of the sea by dumping of wastes and other matters.

MARPOL Convention (1973): It covers pollution of the marine environment by ships from operational or accidental causes.

- It lists various forms of marine pollution **caused by oil, noxious liquid substances, harmful substances** in packaged form, sewage and garbage from ships, etc.

Way Forward

- **National governments should adopt and ratify** the agreement for the High Seas Treaty to take effect. Cooperation across all sectors globally is **crucial to ensure the treaty's successful implementation** and monitoring for the benefit of ocean life and human well-being.
- By adopting the High Seas Treaty, India and the world can mitigate the impact of shipping and fishing, **fostering a sustainable blue economy that benefits both the economy and marine ecosystems.**
- The **treaty offers India a chance to showcase its commitment** to ocean conservation and assume a **leadership role in global high seas protection**, strengthening its maritime reputation.

Conclusion

The **High Seas Treaty** represents a landmark agreement in global ocean governance. India's decision to ratify the treaty is a significant step that could have far-reaching implications for the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources worldwide.

Drishti Mains Question

What is the High Seas Treaty and how this will help in better conservation and governance of the marine ecosystem and economy.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. With reference to the 'Trans-Pacific Partnership', consider the following statements: (2016)

1. It is an agreement among all the Pacific Rim countries except China and Russia.
2. It is a strategic alliance for the purpose of maritime security only.

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: (d)

Q. With reference to 'Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC)', consider the following statements: (2015)

1. It was established very recently in response to incidents of piracy and accidents of oil spills.
2. It is an alliance meant for maritime security only.

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: (d)

Mains

Q. With respect to the South China sea, maritime territorial disputes and rising tension affirm the need for safeguarding maritime security to ensure freedom of navigation and overflight throughout the region. In this context, discuss the bilateral issues between India and China. (2014)

