

Criminalize Marital Rape

❖ Context:

- The Supreme Court of India has scheduled a hearing for a series of petitions seeking to criminalize marital rape.



Key Highlights:

- The petitions challenge the constitutionality of the marital rape exception under **Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC)**, which states that sexual intercourse or sexual acts by a man with his wife, who is not a minor, is not rape.
- The set of pleas are PILs filed against the IPC provision and have argued that it **discriminates against married women** who are sexually assaulted by their husbands.
- One of the petitions has been filed in relation to the Delhi High Court's split verdict on the issue, and another has been filed by a man against the Karnataka High Court verdict that allowed his prosecution for allegedly raping his wife.

❖ What is Marital Rape?

- Marital rape refers to **non-consensual sexual activity between spouses**.
- It is considered a form of domestic violence and sexual abuse.
- In many countries, including some developed nations, marital rape is not criminalized, and laws do not recognize it as a crime.
- The **United Nations** has recognized marital rape as a **human rights violation**, and several countries have reformed their laws to criminalize it.

INDIA CAN LEARN FROM THESE COUNTRIES

US	BRITAIN	BHUTAN
 Marital rape became a crime in every state by 1993. Punishment: Most states penalise marital rape like any other rape —with fines (that could exceed \$50,000) and prison terms (varying between several years and life in prison without parole).	 In 1991, rape within marriage became a crime. The 2003 Sexual Offences Act clarified the law, giving consent a legal definition in England and Wales. Punishment: The accused will face five years prison.	 Marital rape is considered an offence and a petty misdemeanour. Punishment: Marital rape is punishable by a minimum prison term of one year and a maximum term of three years.

Defamation and Disqualification of an MP Convicted for an Offence

❖ Context

- Recently, a political party leader and MP was held guilty and sentenced to two years in jail in a 2019 defamation case over his remarks about PM of India by a court in Gujarat's Surat.

❖ Key Highlights:

- The court of Chief Judicial Magistrate held him guilty under **Indian Penal Code sections 499 and 500**.
- Court **granted him bail** and suspended the sentence for 30 days to allow him to appeal in a higher court.

❖ The Disqualification of an MP Convicted for an Offence:

- The disqualification of an MP convicted for an offence can happen in **two instances**.
- **First**, if the offence for which he is convicted is listed in **Section 8(1) of the Representation of the People Act of 1951**.
- **This includes offences such as :**
 - **Section 153A**- Offence of promoting enmity between different groups on ground of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony or
 - **Section 171E**- Offence of bribery or
 - **Section 171F**- Offence of undue influence or personation at an election and a few others.
- Second, if the lawmaker is convicted for any other offence but is **sentenced for a period of two years or more**.
- **Section 8(3) of the RPA** mandates that an MP can be disqualified if convicted & sentenced to **not less than 2 years of imprisonment**.
- However, the section also states that the **disqualification takes effect only "after three months have elapsed" from the date of conviction**.
- Within that period, convicted MP can file an appeal against the sentence before the High Court.

❖ Defamation

- Defamation is a **wrong that deals with damage caused to a person's reputation**.
- In India, defamation **can both be a civil wrong and a criminal offence**, depending on the objective they seek to achieve.

- A civil wrong sees a wrong being redressed with monetary compensation, while a **criminal law seeks to punish a wrongdoer** and send a message to others not to commit such acts, with a jail term.
- In a criminal case, defamation has to be established beyond reasonable doubt but in a civil defamation suit, damages can be awarded based on probabilities.
- **Section 499 of the IPC :**
 - It defines what amounts to criminal defamation and subsequent provisions define its punishment.
 - **Section 499** elaborates on how defamation could be through words – spoken or intended to be read, through signs, and also through visible representations.
 - These can either be published or spoken about a person with the intention of damaging reputation of that person, or with the knowledge or reason to believe that the imputation will harm his reputation.
- **Section 500 of the IPC :** It stipulates **imprisonment of up to two years**, with or without a fine for someone held guilty of criminal defamation.

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Least Developed Countries (LDCs)



❖ Context

- On December 13th, this year, **Bhutan** will graduate from the United Nations (UN) list of Least Developed Countries (LDC), making e **seventh nation to do so**.

❖ Key Highlights:

- This means that Bhutan has made significant strides in terms of economic, social, and human development, and its per capita income has surpassed the threshold required for LDC status.

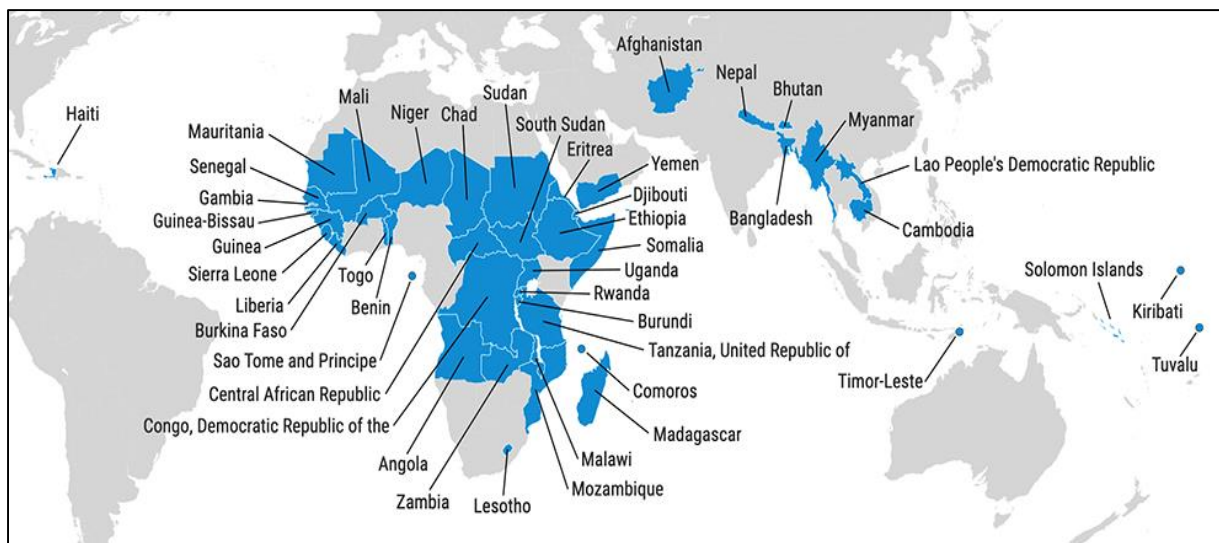
❖ Significance of LDC Status:

- Being a Least Developed Country (LDC) comes with **economic benefits** such as duty-free and quota-free (DFQF) access to developed countries' markets, allowing for increased exports and access to new markets, which can lead to economic development
- LDCs are also **eligible for loans** with special terms for development, including lower interest rates and longer repayment times.
- **Additionally, Official Development Assistance (ODA)** or "aid" is available to support LDCs in meeting their fundamental needs, promoting sustainable economic growth, and fighting poverty.

❖ Least Developed Countries (LDCs)

- The Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are developing countries that have the **lowest indicators of socioeconomic development**.

- The United Nations (UN) has identified **three criteria for a country to be classified as an LDC**.
 - It must have a **gross national income (GNI) per capita** below the threshold of USD 1,230 over a three-year average.
 - It must **perform poorly on a composite human assets index** based on indicators including nutrition, health, and education.
 - The country must demonstrate **economic vulnerability** such as being prone to natural disasters and possessing structural economic constraints.
- The concept of LDCs was first developed in the late **1960s** and was officially codified under UN resolution 2768 passed in November 1971.
- Currently, **there are 46 countries that qualify as LDCs**, and they are reviewed on a three-year basis by the UN.
 - Of those, 33 are from Africa, nine are from Asia, three are from the Pacific, and one is from the Caribbean.



DigiClaim

❖ Context

- Recently Agriculture Minister launched DigiClaim for the disbursement of claims by farmers through National Crop Insurance Portal.



❖ Key Highlights:

- It was launched under the ambit of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana.
- With the launch of a DigiClaim Module, the insurance claims of over **rupees 1260 crore** have been disbursed to insured farmers of six states.
- The states are **Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand and Haryana**.

❖ Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana

- PMFBY is a crop insurance scheme launched by the Government of India in 2016.
- It is aimed at providing **insurance coverage** and financial support to farmers in the event of crop failure due to natural calamities, pests, and diseases.

- The scheme is voluntary for farmers and is implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
- Under the PMFBY, farmers pay a premium of only 2% of the sum insured for Kharif crops, **1.5% for Rabi crops, and 5% for horticulture crops**.
- The remaining premium is paid by the government. The sum insured is determined based on the yield of the crop in the previous five years.
- In case of crop loss, the farmer will receive compensation based on the difference between the threshold yield and the actual yield.
- The claims will be settled within **two months of the harvest season**.
- The scheme also provides a bonus to farmers who have not made any claims for a specified period.
- The PMFBY aims to provide financial support to farmers and reduce the risks associated with agriculture.

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Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

❖ Context:

- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has released its Synthesis Report for the Sixth Assessment Cycle, which **emphasises the need for urgent climate action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions** and adapt to human-caused climate change.



❖ About IPCC:

- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is a scientific body established by the United Nations (UN) in **1988** to provide objective and comprehensive scientific assessments of climate change and its potential **environmental and socio-economic impacts**.
- The IPCC operates through a process of regular assessments, which involve **hundreds of scientists** from around the world and are reviewed by governments and experts.
- The IPCC's assessments have been instrumental in shaping international policy responses to climate change, including the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement**.

❖ Key Highlights of Report:

- The report highlights the urgency of drastically reducing greenhouse gas emissions to limit global temperature rise to **1.5°C from pre-industrial levels**, set by the Paris Agreement.

- The report also draws attention to the **economic losses and damages** incurred due to climate change, stressing the need for financial resolution for a more equitable world.
- The report suggests climate-resilient development that will not only mitigate the effects of climate change but also provide wider benefits.
- The report also foregrounds the role of financial investments to achieve climate goals and encourages public funding through central banks, governments, and financial regulators to reduce emissions, scale up climate resilience, and protect low-income and marginalised communities.

❖ Implications For India:

- With a large vulnerable population, India needs to prioritise grants and policies that focus on adapting to the effects of climate change.
- India's priority should be to **minimise loss and damage in terms of lives**, livelihood and biodiversity, and accelerate equitable action mitigation and adaptation.
- As a developing country, India can lower **its per-capita emissions through** energy efficiency policies already being implemented in almost every sector.

News in Between the Lines

Guillotine



❖ Context

- Amidst the ongoing stalemate in Parliament, some MPs said the **government may guillotine the demands for grants and pass the Finance Bill without any discussion in the Lok Sabha**.

❖ Guillotine:

- A guillotine is an apparatus designed for efficiently carrying out executions by beheading.
- **Guillotine' In Legislative Parlance** : In legislative parlance, to "guillotine" means **to bunch together and fast-track the passage of financial business**.
 - It is a fairly **common procedural exercise in Lok Sabha** during the Budget Session. After the Budget is presented, Parliament goes into recess for about three weeks, during which time the House Standing Committees examine Demands for Grants for various Ministries, and prepare reports.
 - After Parliament reassembles, the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) draws up a schedule for discussions on the Demands for Grants.
 - Given the limitation of time, the House cannot take up the expenditure demands of all Ministries; therefore the BAC identifies some important Ministries for discussions.
 - It usually lists Demands for Grants of the Ministries of Home, Defence, External Affairs, Agriculture, Rural Development and Human Resource Development.
 - Members utilise the opportunity to discuss the policies and working of Ministries.
 - Once the House is done with these debates, the Speaker applies the "guillotine", and all outstanding demands for grants are put to vote at once.
 - **This usually happens on the last day** earmarked for the discussion on the **Budget**. The intention is to ensure **timely passage of the Finance Bill**, marking the completion of the legislative exercise with regard to the Budget.

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6G



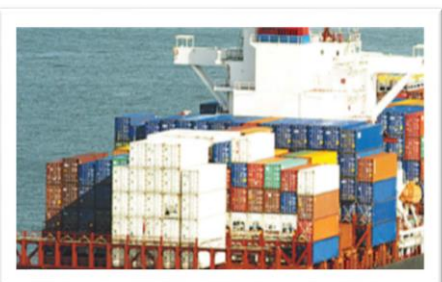
❖ Context

- Recently, Prime Minister of India unveiled a vision **document for rollout of 6G communications technology in India by 2030.**

❖ About 6G:

- While, technically, **6G does not exist today**, it has been conceived as a far superior technology promising **internet speeds up to 100 times faster than 5G.**
- PM of India had formally launched 5G services in October 2022 and said at the time that India should be ready to launch 6G services in the next 10 years.
- As opposed to 5G, which at its peak can offer internet speeds up to 10 gigabits per second, 6G promises to offer ultra-low latency with speeds up to 1 terabits per second.
- As per the vision document, 6G use cases will include remote-controlled factories, constantly communicating self-driven cars & smart wearables taking inputs directly from human senses. However, while 6G promises growth, it will simultaneously have to be balanced with sustainability since most 6G supporting communication devices will be battery-powered and can have a significant carbon footprint.

Bay of Bengal-Northeast Industrial Value Chain



❖ Context

- The Japanese Prime Minister recently announced an ambitious connectivity project called the '**Bay of Bengal-Northeast Industrial Value Chain**' during his visit to India.

❖ Key Highlights:

- The project aims to create a new industrial and manufacturing zone that includes **Bangladesh and India's Northeast**, in order to attract regional investment from markets such as Thailand.
- Japan plans to coordinate regional connectivity and infrastructure development efforts, linking them to provide an infrastructural base necessary to attract private investment to Bangladesh and the Northeast.
- Additionally, it is proposed that the three capitals work together to reduce policy barriers to investments.
- The project is seen as strategically relevant to counter **China's economic heft** in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific generally.

Euoplos Dignitas



❖ Context

- A new and large species of spider has been found living in Queensland.

❖ Key Highlights:

- Euoplos dignita is a large spider, with females growing up to 2 inches long and males having a "striking honey-red" carapace and legs.
- The species is in need of protection, as its habitat has been cleared for agriculture or highly disturbed, which is extremely destructive for trapdoor spiders, their burrows, and their habitat's integrity.

Solomon Islands



❖ Context

- Recently, a state-backed Chinese company has won a contract to develop a key port in the Solomon Islands, a major victory in Beijing's quest to gain a strategic toe-hold in the South Pacific.

❖ About Solomon Island:

- Solomon Islands is a **sovereign country consisting of 6-major islands** and over 900 smaller islands in Oceania, to the east of Papua New Guinea & northwest of Vanuatu.
- Its **capital, Honiara**, is located on the **largest island, Guadalcanal.**
- The **country takes its name from the Solomon Islands archipelago**, which is a collection of Melanesian islands that also includes the North Solomon Islands (a part of Papua New Guinea).
- It excludes outlying islands, such as the Santa Cruz Islands and Rennell and Bellona.
- More than 90% of the islanders are ethnic Melanesians.
- Once a British protectorate, the Solomon Islands achieved independence as a republic in 1978.
- English is the official language, but Pijin is the common language for the majority of people.

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