

US SUPREME COURT OVERTURNS ABORTION RIGHTS

SYLLABUS: GS PAPER-II (EFFECT OF POLICIES & POLITICS OF DEVELOPED & DEVELOPING NATIONS ON INDIA)

CONTEXT: In a significant curtailment of women's rights, the U.S Supreme Court overturned **Roe v. Wade**, a 1973 landmark decision giving women in America the right to have an abortion before the foetus is viable outside the womb — before the 24–28 week mark.

- Abortion rights, which have been available to women for over two generations — will now be determined by individual States.

GENESIS OF ABORTION LAWS IN INDIA

- In the wake of a high number of induced abortions in the country during the 1960s, **Shantilal Shah Committee** was constituted by the Union government to **deliberate on the legalization of abortion in the country.**
- In order to reduce maternal mortality owing to unsafe abortions, **the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act (MTP)** was brought into force in 1971.

The MTP Act 1971 and The MTP Act Amendments 2021

	MTP Act 1971	The MTP Amendment Act 2021
Indications (Contraceptive failure)	Only applies to married women	Unmarried women are also covered
Gestational Age Limit	20 weeks for all indications	24 weeks for rape survivors Beyond 24 weeks for substantial fetal abnormalities
Medical practitioner opinions required before termination	One RMP till 12 weeks Two RMPs till 20 weeks	One RMP till 20 weeks Two RMPs 20-24 weeks Medical Board approval after 24 weeks
Breach of the woman's confidentiality	Fine up to Rs 1000	Fine and/or Imprisonment of 1 year

EVOLUTION OF MTP ACT FROM 1971 TO 2021

- The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act 1971 in India stipulated a ceiling of 20 weeks for termination of pregnancy on certain grounds, beyond which abortion of a foetus was statutorily impermissible.
- The latest amendment to MTP Act was made in 2021. The new Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Act 2021 expands the access to safe and legal abortion services on therapeutic, eugenic, humanitarian and social grounds to ensure universal access to comprehensive care.

KEY PROVISIONS OF MTP (AMENDMENT) ACT 2021

- **Extended length for termination of pregnancy:** The Act increases the gestation period of women seeking abortion up from 20 weeks to 24 weeks.
- **Cases of special categories of women:** It allows abortion to be done on the advice of one doctor up to 20 weeks, and two doctors in the case of certain special categories of women

between 20 and 24 weeks.

The “special categories of women” include rape survivors, victims of incest, the differently-abled and minors.

In case of the gestational period beyond 24 weeks, pregnancy may be terminated only in cases of substantial foetal abnormalities diagnosed by the Medical Board or if there is a threat to the life of the mother.

Opinion of only one provider will be required up to 20 weeks of gestation and two providers for termination of pregnancy of 20–24 weeks of gestation.

- **Failure of Contraceptive:** It allows unmarried women also to terminate a pregnancy in case of failure of the contraceptive method or device.
The ground of failure of contraceptives can now be used for abortion up to 20 weeks.
- **Setup of Medical Boards:** All state and union territory governments will constitute a Medical Board.
The Board will decide if pregnancy may be terminated after 24 weeks due to substantial foetal abnormalities.
- **Ensuring confidentiality/privacy of Pregnant Women:** Name and other particulars of a woman whose pregnancy has been terminated shall not be disclosed other than to a person authorized in any law for the time being in force.
- **Requirement of doctors:** Opinion of only one doctor will be required up to 20 weeks of gestation and two doctors for termination of pregnancy of 20–24 weeks of gestation.

CRITICISM AGAINST THE ABORTION LAWS

- **Abortion to be performed by doctors:** The Act require abortion to be performed only by doctors with specialization in gynaecology or obstetrics . There is a 70% shortage of such doctors in community health centers in rural areas. Thus, pregnant women may continue to find it difficult to access facilities for safe abortions.
- The Act allows abortion after 24 weeks only in cases where a Medical Board diagnoses substantial foetal abnormalities. This implies that for a case requiring abortion due to rape, that exceeds 24- weeks, the only recourse remains through a Writ Petition.

INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING

SYLLABUS: GS PAPER-II (HEALTH)

CONTEXT: International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking is observed to make people aware of the hazardous impacts of drug abuse on the society and to create a world without it.

FACTS

- By resolution 42/112 of 7 December 1987, the General Assembly decided to observe 26 June as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking as an expression of its determination to strengthen action and cooperation to achieve the goal of an international society free of drug abuse.
- This year the theme is “**Addressing drug challenges in health and humanitarian crises**”. The theme has been selected in the wake of widespread humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and Ukraine even as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to be a major health crisis.
- The focus of United Nations Office On Drug And Crime (UNODC) is to spread awareness about it so that a world free of drug abuse can be created. The motive is to fight off misinformation by sharing facts and by providing methods of treatment, prevention and care.

INDIA–BANGLADESH BILATERAL RELATIONS

SYLLABUS: GS PAPER-II (INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS–INDIA & ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD)

CONTEXT: The seventh round of India–Bangladesh Joint Consultative Commission (JCC) was held in New Delhi.

BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND BANGLADESH

Current status of the relationship

- India–Bangladesh relations today are deeper than any other strategic partnership. The relationship rests on two pillars of India's diplomacy– **Neighbourhood First Policy** and the **Act East Policy**.
- The spirit of friendship, understanding and mutual respect engendered during the liberation of Bangladesh continues to permeate different aspects of this relationship.
- Bangladesh is India's biggest development partner and the largest trading partner in South Asia. It is contributing to economic prosperity and supply chain resilience in the region and beyond.

Trade

- Bangladesh is India's biggest trade partner in South Asia. India's exports to Bangladesh for financial year 2020–21 (April–March) stood at US 8.6 billion USD and imports from Bangladesh for the same period stood at US 1.28 Billion USD.
- Bangladesh enjoys **Duty-Free and Quota Free access** given to its exports by India under South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) since 2011.

Defence cooperation

- Navies of both the nations for the first time participated in an IN–BN Bilateral Exercise at Vishakhapatnam in October 2019. The maiden edition of this bilateral exercise was held after the second edition of CORPAT exercise conducted by the Indian and Bangladeshi navy.
- India and Bangladesh have inked a MOU that will allow India to setup a coastal surveillance system radar in Bangladesh. This will be useful amid growing terror threats via seas and growing presence of China in the Bay of Bengal region.
- Various Joint exercises of Army (Exercise Sampriti) and Navy (Exercise Milan) take place between the two countries.

Energy cooperation

- This has become one of the hallmarks of India– Bangladesh relations. Bangladesh is currently importing 1160 MW of power from India.
- Bangladesh has offered two Special Economic Zones (SEZ) for investment by private Indian companies in **Bheramara, Kushtia and the coastal Mongla belt in Bagerhat**. Reliance Power has signed an agreement to invest US \$3 billion to set up a 3000 MW power plant and a floating liquified natural gas import terminal in Bangladesh.
- A 130 km India–Bangladesh friendship pipeline project connecting **Siliguri in West Bengal of India and Parbatipur in Dinajpur district of Bangladesh** was inaugurated in September 2018.

Connectivity

- The north eastern states are land-locked & have shorter route to sea through Bangladesh. Transit agreement with Bangladesh will spur socio-economic development and integration of North–East India.
- India–Bangladesh Friendship Bridge–1, also known as **Feni Bridge** is being constructed that will connect **Tripura with Chittagong port of Bangladesh**.
- Both countries jointly inaugurated the newly restored railway link between Haldibari (India) and Chilahati (Bangladesh).

CHALLENGES IN INDIA–BANGLADESH RELATION

The following are the irritants and challenges between the two nations:

- **China Factor** : Over 25 energy projects, including Bangladesh's second nuclear power plant and the Bangabandhu communication satellite, are being funded by China. Many port development projects are underway. China's One Belt One Road initiative has also entrapped Bangladesh, and China's proximity to India causes security worries.

The problem of Rohingya refugees: Bangladesh is home to around 11 million Rohingya Muslims. The Myanmar catastrophe has spurred their departure. India has cordial connections with Myanmar and Bangladesh and does not want to jeopardize such relationships. Apart from carrying out 'Mission Insaniyat,' a humanitarian aid operation, India has no direct involvement in resolving the conflict. As a result, there has been a significant divergence in bilateral ties with Bangladesh.

- **Security in the Border Regions:** The Border Security Force (BSF) has recently targeted and gunned down traffickers and illegal migrants from Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, this has sparked a public outcry and Bangladesh Rifles have shot down Indian service members belonging to the BSF without provocation. Several commentators have linked this current religious indoctrination to the influence of the infamous ISI on the Bangladeshi military.
- **Teesta River Dispute:** Teesta is a tributary of the Ganges and begins in Sikkim before making its way through Bengal and Bangladesh. India has a 55 percent share of the river's water.
- Bangladesh wants a more significant proportion than it already receives.
- The river is Bangladesh's fourth largest transboundary river.
- In Bangladesh, the Teesta floodplain comprises 2,750 square kilometers for irrigation and fishing.
- 83 percent of the river's watershed – the land region where water accumulates – is in India, while 17 percent is in Bangladesh.

PRELIMS FACTS

JYOTIRGAMAYA FESTIVAL

- Jyotirgamaya Festival is a unique festival to showcase the talent of rare musical instruments from across the country, including street performers, train entertainers, performers attached to temples.
- It was organized on the occasion of World Music Day as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of India's independence.
- **Organizing Body:** Jyotirgamaya Festival is being organized by Sangeet Natak Akademi on the occasion of World Music Day.
- **Significance:** The Jyotirgamaya festival envisages sensitizing people about the need to safeguard the craft of making as well as the skill of playing rare musical instruments, and to give a voice to 'unheard' artistes who hardly ever see the limelight.

WORLD MUSIC DAY

- **Background:** World Music Day was first celebrated as Fête de la Musique in France in 1982.
- **About:** International Music Day or World Music Day is annually observed on 21 June to honour musicians and singers. It also encourages young and amateur musicians to give a live demonstration of their talent to audiences.
- **World Music Day 2022 Theme:** The theme for the World Music Day 2022 is "Music on the intersections".

UDAIPUR'S "BIRD VILLAGE" TO BE DECLARED WETLAND

- Recognized as the "bird village", **Menar** in Udaipur district is set to be notified as

Rajasthan's new wetland.

- This will pave the way for getting the Ramsar site status for this rural heartland of the Mewar region.
- The two lakes in the village – **the Brahma and Dhandh** – play host to a large number of migratory birds in the winter season every year.

More than 150 species of local and migratory birds inhabit the two lakes in the winter season. They include greater **flamingo, white-tailed lapwing, pelican, marsh harrier, bar headed goose, common teal, greenshank, pintail, wagtail, green sandpiper and red-wattled lapwing.**

At present, Rajasthan has two wetlands recognized as Ramsar sites – **Keoladeo Ghana in Bharatpur district and Sambhar Salt Lake in Jaipur district.**

HERMIT

- Hermit is a new **spyware** with the capability to affect both Android and iOS devices.
- It is a commercial spyware known to be used by governments with victims in Kazakhstan, Italy and Northern Syria.
- Spyware is a malicious software or malware installed on a computing device to steal sensitive information through covert data transmission.

SUNSPOT

- A sunspot called, AR3038, grew to almost twice its size in a span of 24 hours.
- A Sunspot is an area on the Sun that appears dark on the surface and is relatively cooler than surrounding parts.
- These spots, are the visible markers of the Sun's magnetic field, which forms a blanket that protects the solar system from harmful cosmic radiation.
- Magnetic field lines near sunspots can cause a sudden explosion of energy called a **solar flare.**