

SUPREME COURT AXES 51-YEAR-OLD CURB, SINGLE WOMEN GET EQUAL ABORTION RIGHTS

In News:

- In a landmark decision, which coincided with the International Safe Abortion Day, the Supreme Court of India (SC) granted unmarried and single women with pregnancies ranging from 20 to 24 weeks access to safe and legal abortion care on par with married women.
- The SC loosened the stranglehold of a 51-year-old abortion law - the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act of 1971 and its Rules of 2003, which prohibit unmarried women between 20 and 24 weeks pregnant from aborting with the assistance of registered medical practitioners.

The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act:

- **The MTP Act, 1971:**
 - It was introduced **to liberalise access to abortion** since the restrictive criminal provision (in the IPC) was leading to women using unsafe and dangerous methods for termination of pregnancy.
 - The Act allowed termination of pregnancy by a medical practitioner in **two stages**.
 - For termination of pregnancy up to 12 weeks from conception, the opinion of one doctor was required.
 - For pregnancies between 12 and 20 weeks old, the opinion of two doctors was required.
 - In the second case, **the doctors must determine** if the continuation of the pregnancy would involve a risk to the pregnant woman's life or the child would suffer physical or mental abnormalities.
- **The MTP (Amendment) Act, 2021:**
 - The law allowed for a termination under the opinion of **one doctor** for pregnancies **up to 20 weeks**.
 - For pregnancies between 20 and 24 weeks, the amended law requires the opinion of **two doctors**.

- The government has issued the new **Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Rules, 2021**, which define the situations that define eligibility criteria for termination of pregnancy up to twenty-four weeks, as opposed to the previous upper limit of 20 weeks.
 - **For the second category (I.e. 20- 24 weeks)**, the amended act and the **MTP (Amendment) Rules, 2021**, specified **seven categories** (Survivors of sexual assault or rape or incest; Minors; etc) of women who would be eligible for seeking termination of pregnancy, for a period of up to 24 weeks.
 - While the law recognizes changes in a pregnant woman's relationship status with her spouse (in the case of divorce and widowhood), **it does not address the situation for unmarried women** between 20 - 24 weeks pregnant.
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50 ICONIC INDIAN TEXTILES

UNESCO released a list of 50 exclusive and iconic heritage textile crafts of the country.



About:

- Toda embroidery and Sungadi from Tamil Nadu, Himroo from Hyderabad, and Bandha tie and dye from Sambalpur in Odisha were some of the textiles that made the cut.
 - Some of the iconic handcrafted textiles documented from north India are Khes from Panipat, Chamba rumals from Himachal Pradesh, Thigma or wool tie and dye from Ladakh, and Awadh Jamdani from Varanasi.
 - From the south, Ilkal and Lambadi or Banjara embroidery from Karnataka, Sikalnayakanpet Kalamkari from Thanjavur have been included.
 - Kunbi weaves from Goa, Mashru weaves and Patola from Gujarat, Himroo from Maharashtra and Garad-Koirial from West Bengal also find a place among the 50 iconic textiles.
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GLOBAL INNOVATION INDEX 2022

India has climbed to the 40th rank in the Global Innovation Index of World Intellectual Property Organization. This is a huge leap of 41 places in 7 years.



About:

- The World Intellectual Property Organization yesterday released the Global Innovation Index 2022 in which Switzerland has emerged as the world's most innovative economy for the 12th consecutive year.
- Switzerland leads globally in innovation outputs, and specifically in patents by origin, software spending, high-tech manufacturing, production, and export complexity. The second position was secured by the US followed by Sweden, the UK, and the Netherlands.

SIX AIRBAG RULES FOR PASSENGER CARS

The government has deferred a proposal to make six airbags mandatory in cars by one year to 1st of October 2023.



About:

- The decision has been taken considering the global supply chain constraints being faced by the auto industry and its impact on the macroeconomic scenario.
- The government had earlier planned to make six airbags mandatory in eight-seater vehicles for enhanced safety of occupants from October 1, 2022.

OPERATION GARUDA



The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has launched a multi-phase Operation GARUDA to dismantle drug networks with international linkages.

About:

- The CBI is doing this in close coordination with enforcement actions across international jurisdictions through INTERPOL and Narcotics Control Bureau with special focus on Indian Ocean Region.
- Operation GARUDA seeks to target drug networks with international footprints for action against handlers, operatives, production zones and support elements.
- During the Operation, searches, seizures and arrests were carried out across multiple states and UTs in the country. Apart from CBI and NCB, eight states and UT Police including Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Delhi and Manipur have also participated in this Operation.

THE CHALLENGES AHEAD FOR GENERAL CHAUHAN

Context

- The Government has recently appointed former Eastern Army Commander Lt. General Anil Chauhan as the next Chief of Defense Staff (CDS) ending a nine-month-long vacancy
- The CDS post has been vacant since the death of the country's first CDS Gen. Bipin Rawat in a helicopter crash in December 2021.

About new CDS Anil Chauhan

- **Regiment:** Lt Gen Chauhan (retd) is from the 11 Gorkha Rifles, the same regiment of Gen Rawat.
 - He is the first retired three-star officer to return to service in four-star rank
- **Military advisor:** He has been serving as the military adviser in the National Security Council Secretariat, after his retirement as the Eastern Army Commander in 2021.

About Chief of Defense Staff (CDS)

- **Eligibility:** Recently, the Government amended Service Rules of the Army, Navy and Air Force allowing retired Service Chiefs and three star rank officers eligible for consideration to the country's top military post.

- However, the condition was imposed on age limit that the retired officer should not have attained 62 years on the date of appointment.
- He is not eligible to hold any government office after demitting (resigning) as the CDS.
- **Recommendation:** Creation of the post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) was recommended by the **Kargil Review Committee** after the end of the Kargil War.
- The **Naresh Chandra task force** (2012) and the Lieutenant General **B. Shekatkar Committee** (2016) had also recommended the post of CDS
- **Designations:** The CDS is a four-star General/Officer who acts as the Principal Military Advisor to the Defence Minister on all tri-services (Army, Navy and Indian Air Force) matters.
- CDS acts as the permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (CSC) which will also have three service chiefs as members.
- He also heads the newly created Department of Military Affairs (DMA) in the Ministry of Defense.
- The CDS is also bestowed the rank of Secretary within the DoD (Department of Defense)
- **Mandate:** The broad mandate of the CDS includes bringing about “jointness” in “operations, logistics, transport, training, support services, communications, repairs and maintenance of the three Services.
- He is also mandated to foster better cooperation between the Ministry of Defense bureaucracy and the Armed services.
- **Functions:** The CDS is vested with critical functions as follows:
 - Fostering greater operational synergy between the three service branches of the Indian military
 - Keeping inter-service frictions to a minimum
 - The CDS is also vested with the authority to provide directives to the three chiefs
 - He will also perform an advisory role in the Nuclear Command Authority (NCA)
 - Maintain synergy between Armed forces and Government to accelerate the process of decision-making.

Major task ahead

- **Actualising theatre commands:** An integrated theatre command envisages a unified command of the three Services, under a single commander, for geographical theatres (areas) that are of strategic and security concern.
 - Earlier CDS General Rawat was pushing forward this ambitious plan to reorganize armed forces and bring in synergy and efficiency.
 - This task now falls on the new CDS to build consensus, act as link between the three services and take the reorganisation process forward.
- **Bold decision making:** The three services have expressed concerns about how theaterisation might dilute the role of the service chiefs and the integration has thus been stuck due to differences between them.
 - However, In case of disagreement and hesitance amid smooth transition management in the structural changes, new CDS should not shy away from taking strong decisions.
- **Indigenization push:** The war in Ukraine has added urgency on the need to indigenise critical military technologies and systems and reduce dependence on imports.
 - It remains to be seen how Russia’s war in Ukraine affects India’s procurement, what diversification India might bring in its hardware purchases, and role of new CDS in all this.
 - Also new CDS would experience this year’s defence expo, to be held in Gandhinagar, for the first time as an India-only affair.
- **Rationalize defense expenditure:** A crucial function of CDS will be “prioritising” the capital acquisition proposals of individual services and ensure that the “defence rupee” is spent judiciously on warfare-capabilities considered vital for national military power.
- **Readying for NextGen warfare:** Cyber warfare coupled with information warfare is going to be an omnipresent disruptor amongst adversaries. The new CDS will thus face critical challenge to synergise the efforts of three services and coordinate with agencies at apex level dealing with cyber security management.
- **Manpower reform :** The new CDS role as Secretary, Department of Military Affairs, will also demand attention for issues of manpower reform.
 - For instance, earlier CDS had proposed to increase retirement age of officers and jawans from technical branches to retain highly skilled manpower in technical branches.



CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK



- **Dealing with multi-domain warfare:** The multi-domain warfare entails countering an adversary capable in all domains [air, land, maritime, space, and cyberspace] in both competition and armed conflict.
 - The future wars will also have applicability of many elements like diplomacy, economy, intelligence, cyberspace, energy, environment, water etc., thus synergizing the military power through CDS with other instruments of power is crucial.
 - **New world order strategy:** Owing to reconfiguration of groupings and alliances consequent to Ukraine war, single point military advice will be critical in deciding India's stand in each case.
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