

Prelim Bits 09-05-2024 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Pregnant Persons

Supreme Court has recently used the term pregnant persons instead of pregnant woman or pregnant girl in one of its judgements.

- **Pregnant persons-** The court said that pregnancy in addition to women it can also be experienced by some non-binary people and transgender men among other gender identities.
- **Consent to abort-** In case there is a divergence in the opinion of a pregnant person and her guardian, the opinion of the minor or mentally ill pregnant person must be taken into consideration as an important aspect in enabling the court to arrive at a just conclusion.
- **Pregnancy termination** -The court emphasized the importance of the pregnant person's consent even if they are minor or mentally ill, in decisions about terminating a pregnancy beyond 24 weeks.
- **Women's rights-** The ruling underscores the court's recognition of reproductive autonomy and right to bodily integrity prioritizing the individual's choice over other's opinion in such matters.
- **Medical Termination Pregnancy Act, 1971-** The court said that the medical board formed to evaluate the termination of pregnancy beyond 24 weeks must consider the overall physical and emotional well-being of the pregnant individual.



- **Section 3(2-B) of MTP Act, 1971-** It allows termination of pregnancy of more than 24 weeks if certain conditions are met, including the risk to the life or health of the pregnant woman, or the likelihood of serious physical or mental abnormalities in the unborn child.
- **Arbitrary-** The court questions whether the provision unduly favours the consideration of foetal abnormalities over other factors, such as instances of rape, especially when involving minors.
- **Inclusivity-** This ruling aligns with the court's recent decisions to extend abortion rights to all women, regardless of marital status, up to 24 weeks of gestation

Quick facts

Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971

- **About-** MTP law is an exception to the IPC provisions and allows abortion until 20 weeks of pregnancy.
- **Gestational limitation-** The pregnancy can be terminated for any of the above reasons, on the opinion of a single registered medical practitioner up to 20 weeks of the gestational age.
- **Extended gestational limit-** The opinion of two registered medical practitioners is required for pregnancy termination from 20 to 24 weeks.
- **Applicability-** The extended gestational limit is applicable to certain categories of women - survivor of sexual assault or rape, minors, change of marital status during the ongoing pregnancy, major physical disabilities, mentally-ill, pregnancy in humanitarian settings or disaster.
- **Beyond 24 weeks-** Any decision for termination of pregnancy beyond 24 weeks gestational age, can be taken by a Medical Board as set up in each State.
- **Consent-** The termination of pregnancy cannot be done in the absence of the consent of the pregnant person, irrespective of age and mental health.
- **Exception-** The law provides that where it is immediately necessary to save the life of the pregnant woman, the pregnancy can be terminated at any time by a single registered medical practitioner.

Reference

1. [Indian Express- SC used the term pregnant person](#)
2. [Tribune India- SC ignites gender debate](#)

Non-Market Economies

Vietnam wants US to change its 'non-market economy' status to "market economy"

- **About-** Nonmarket economy country is any foreign country that does not operate on market principles of cost or pricing structures, leading to sales that do not reflect a product's fair value.
- **Criteria-** United States designates a country as a non-market economy based on several factors.
- **Currency convertibility-** Whether the country's currency can be exchanged freely on the international market.
- **Free bargaining for wages-** If wage rates result from free bargaining between labour and management.
- **Foreign investment-** The extent to which joint ventures or other forms of foreign investment are permitted.
- **Role of government-** Whether the government owns or controls the means of production.
- **Resource allocation-** If the state controls the allocation of resources and price and output decisions
- **Anti-dumping duties-** The non-market economy label allows the US to impose "anti-dumping" duties on goods imported from designated countries.
- **Surrogate country prices-** The duties are calculated based on comparison with the export prices in a third market economy country, which serves as a surrogate to estimate

what the price of the product would be under market-based principles.

- **Impact**-NME status have significant implications such as
 - Imposition of anti-dumping duties on imports of that country
 - Trade barriers such as strict regulations
 - Affect investment climate of the country
 - Strain political and diplomatic relations between affected country and the US.
 - Undermine competitiveness of affected country's exports

Anti-Dumping Duty

- **Dumping**- It is a process where a company exports a product at a price that is significantly lower than the price it normally charges in its domestic market.
- **Protectionist tariff**- It is imposed by a country on foreign imports that it believes as being dumped.
- **Aim**- To ensure fair competition and protect domestic industries from potential harm caused by imported goods sold at artificially low prices.
- **WTO trade rules**- It include international regulation of anti-dumping measures.

Reference

[Indian Express- Vietnam wants to change its non-market economy status](#)

Effects of LPG price hikes

ACCESS survey highlighted that the cost of LPG was a significant obstacle for its adoption among rural poor households in India.

- **Findings**- The data from the 2014-2015 ACCESS survey, conducted by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water, found LPG's cost to be the foremost barrier to its adoption and continued use in rural poor households.
- **Hike in LPG prices**- In 2022, India reportedly had some of the highest LPG prices among 54 countries, around ₹300/litre.
- **Usage of solid cooking fuel**- Due to high cost of LPG, 750 million Indians primarily use solid cooking fuels — wood, dung, agricultural residues, coal, and charcoal every day.
- **Impact**-Solid cooking fuels are associated with innumerable health hazards and socio-economic and environmental impacts.
- **Fuelwood dependence**- A study highlighted the reliance of Jalpaiguri's communities in West Bengal on forests for fuelwood due to the high cost of commercial LPG cylinders and low income from tea estate work.

Steps taken by India to increase LPG distribution in rural areas

- **Rajiv Gandhi Gramin LPG Vitrak scheme**- It was launched in 2009 with the aim to increase LPG distribution in remote rural areas of India focusing on establishing LPG distribution centres.
- **PAHAL Scheme**- It was launched in 2015, it introduced direct benefit transfers (DBT) for LPG subsidies.
- **Surya Nutan** - It is an indigenous, stationary, rechargeable and kitchen-based indoor solar cooking platform developed by Indian Oil Corporation and Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana**- It was launched in 2016 with the aim to replace solid and other biomass-based polluting cooking fuels used in urban and rural households in India with Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG).

Suitable alternatives

- **Affordability of LPG**- Subsidies and targeted financial assistance can help make LPG more accessible to low-income households.
- **Promote efficient stoves**- Encouraging the adoption of efficient cooking stoves can help reduce the overall demand for fuelwood and LPG while improving energy efficiency.
- **Diversify energy sources**- Exploring and promoting alternative energy sources for cooking, such as biogas or solar-powered cookers, can help reduce reliance on both LPG and solid fuels.
- **Sustainable forest management**- Collaborating with local communities and authorities to implement sustainable forest management practices is crucial for preserving forests and biodiversity while meeting the energy needs of rural populations.
- **Policy development**- Policies should consider the needs of marginalized communities, environmental sustainability, and long-term socio-economic development goals.

Reference

[The Hindu- Socio-ecological effects of LPG price hike](#)

World Migration Report 2024

As per UN report India sets record with over USD 111 bn in remittances in 2022

- **Released by**- International Organization for Migration (IOM), UN related organization.
- **Publication**- Biennial (every 2 years), since 2000.
- **Record remittance**- In 2022, *India* become the 1st country to have surpassed USD 111 billion in remittances.
- **Leading recipient**- India was the leading recipient of remittances in 2010, 2015, and 2020, with figures steadily climbing to reach the unprecedented USD 111.22 billion mark in 2022.
- **Top recipient countries**- The leading countries in receiving remittances in 2023 are India, Mexico, China, Philippines and France.

These diasporas are dispersed across countries such as the United Arab Emirates, the United States, and Saudi Arabia

- **Southern Asia's inflow**- Countries like *India, Pakistan and Bangladesh* have seen a significant remittance inflows, highlighting the importance of labour migration from the region.
- **Gulf states**- Countries like *UAE, Kuwait, and Qatar* have a high percentage of migrant workers compared to their national populations, with the *2022 football World Cup* highlighting the reliance on migrant labour in these regions.
- **India**- It is the origin of the largest number of international migrants with a diaspora of approximately 18 million individuals and ranks 13th in the destination country.
- **Work nature**- The migrants from countries such as India, Egypt, Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Kenya mostly work in sectors such as *construction, hospitality, security, domestic work and retail*.
- **International migration corridor**- India features prominently in international migration corridors, with significant migration flows observed between India and the United Arab Emirates, the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Bangladesh.
- **Impact of pandemic**- The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted internal labour migration in India, leading to a substantial shift in workforce dynamics.
- **Reverse migration**-The lockdowns and restrictions imposed to control the spread of the virus caused a 'crisis of mobility'.
- **Decline in workforce**- There has been a decline of almost 10% in blue-collar workforce mobility towards cities, which has drastically cut the labour supply for major industries.
- **Challenges**- Despite the financial benefits, migrants from these countries face risks such as exploitation, debt, xenophobia and workplace abuses.

References

1. [The Print- India sets record remittances in UN report](#)
2. [IOM- World Migration Report 2024](#)

U.N. Counter-Terrorism Trust Fund

India recently contributed 5,00,000 dollars to U.N. Counter-Terrorism Trust Fund

- **Origin**- It was established in 2009 and transferred to UN Office of Counter- Terrorism (UNOCT) in 2017.
- **UNOCT**- It was launched in 2017, considered as the first major institutional reform in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.
- **India**- It has contributed around 5,00,000 dollars to U.N. Counter Terrorism Trust Fund, it underscores India's strong commitment to support multilateral efforts to combat terrorism globally.
- **Support programs**- The funds are intended to support the UN's global programs particularly those focused on Countering Finance of Terrorism and Countering

Terrorist Travel Programme (CTTP).

- **Countering Terrorist Travel Programme**- It was launched in 2019 assists UN member countries to enhance their responsibilities to detect and counter terrorists and serious by collecting and using
 - Advanced Passenger Information
 - Passenger Name Record data
- **Countering Finance of Terrorism**- It was launched in 2020 that focus on broad range of topics such as protecting non-profit organization sector, sharing financial intelligence, promoting public-private partnerships etc., identified by Financial Action Task Force.
- **Purpose**- CTTP and CFT are aimed at building capacities of the member states of eastern and southern Africa to combat the critical issues of financing of terrorism and prevent the movement and travel of terrorists.

References

1. [The Hindu- India contributes to UN counter terrorism fund](#)
2. [UN- Counterterrorism funding](#)

