

Why china drill in Taiwan Strait?

- There are three areas the Chinese have built capabilities in order to successfully prosecute an invasion of Taiwan.
- The first of these is China's air assault capabilities consisting of rotary and fixed wing aircraft for an invasion of Taiwan.
- The second is in the area of missile capabilities.
- The third is the PLA's Joint Logistic Support Force (PLAJLSF).
- The PLA fired several long-range missiles of the Dong-Feng (DF) class in the vicinity of the islands of Matsu, Wuqiu, and Dongying.
- The purpose was to test whether the PLA's missile brigades could coordinate missile strikes and carry out post-attack battle damage assessment
- The Dongfeng series, typically abbreviated as "DF missiles", are a family of short, medium, intermediate-range and intercontinental ballistic missiles operated by the Chinese People's Liberation Army Rocket Force.



- The PLA is working on the creation of a logistics network that is capable of time-sensitive responses that combine speed, precision and efficiency.
- Relying heavily on its Beidou Satellite Navigation System, the PLAJLSF is trying to ensure communications and coordination between spread out mobile units on the battlefield.

THE HINDU

Women participation in STEM

- The Government of India has been ramping up efforts to remove gender inequality by providing incentives for women's higher education.
- Some of these initiatives such as the Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions (GATI), i.e., a pilot project under the Department of Science and Technology to promote gender equity in science and technology, and Knowledge Involvement in Research Advancement through Nurturing

(KIRAN), i.e., a plan under the Department of Science and Technology again to encourage women scientists in science and technology and also preventing women scientists from giving up research due to family reasons, are noteworthy.

- Some institutions are setting up creches so that the scientist mothers can carry on with their research work uninterrupted
- According to available UNESCO data on some selected countries, India is at the lowest position, having only 14% female researchers working in STEM areas. But India is not very far behind many advanced countries in this aspect.
- For example, Japan has only 16% female researchers, the Netherlands 26%, the United States 39%. In India, about 43% of women constitute the graduate population in STEM, which is one of the highest in the world, but there is a downside to this; only 14% of women join academic institutions and universities.
- Although male and female participation in graduate studies is comparable, the participation of women in research has dropped significantly (27% female as compared to 73% male).
- Thus, the visibility of female faculty in universities and research institutes is significantly lower.
- According to a report published recently, at most STEM institutes, women occupy 20% of all professorial positions
- The number of women in senior management positions in the corporate sector in India is 39%, which is higher than the global average.
- Number of women CEOs in Fortune 500 companies is 15% while female board members in the management of private enterprises has been growing from 15% (2016), 16.9% (2018) to 19.7% in 2022.

- Encouraging the participation of women in the workforce in the private sector with the adoption of various schemes for women began long ago when compared to the initiatives taken by the Government of India in recent years.
- Various schemes such as flexi-hour work time, re-joining the workforce after an interim break, sections operated only by women, etc. were introduced in private enterprises as early as the 1990s with the benefits being reaped now.

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Central civil service conduct rule 1964

- Rule 5. TAKING PART IN POLITICS AND ELECTIONS:
- No Government servant shall be a member of, or be otherwise associated with, any political party or any organisation which takes part in politics nor shall he take part in, subscribe in aid of, or assist in any other manner, any political movement or activity.
- It shall be the duty of every Government servant to endeavour to prevent any member of his family from taking part in, subscribing in aid of, or assisting in any other manner any movement or activity which is,

or tends directly or indirectly to be, subversive of the Government as by law established and where a Government servant is unable to prevent a member of his family from taking part in, or subscribing in aid of, or assisting in any other manner, any such movement or activity, he shall make a report to that effect to the Government.

- If any question arises whether a party is a political party or whether any organisation takes part in politics or whether any movement or activity falls within the scope of sub-rule (2), the decision of the Government thereon shall be final.
- No Government servant shall canvass or otherwise interfere with, or use his influence in connection with or take part in an election to any legislature or local authority:

Provided that -

- A Government servant qualified to vote at such election may exercise his right to vote, but where he does so, he shall give no indication of the manner in which he proposes to vote or has voted;
- A Government servant shall not be deemed to have contravened the provisions of this sub-rule by reason only that he assists in the conduct of an election in the due performance

of a duty imposed on him by or under any law for the time being in force.

- Rule 9. CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT:
- No Government servant shall, in any radio broadcast, telecast through any electronic media or in any document published in his own name or anonymously, pseudonymously or in the name of any other person or in any communication to the press or in any public utterance, make any statement of fact or opinion -
- Which has the effect of an adverse criticism of any current or recent policy or action of the Central Government or a State Government:
- Provided that in the case of any Government servant included in any category of Government servants specified in the second proviso to sub-rule (3) of rule 1, nothing contained in this clause shall apply to bonafide expression of views by him as an office-bearer of a trade union or association of Government servants for the purpose of safeguarding the conditions of service of such Government servants or for securing an improvement thereof; or
- Which is capable of embarrassing the relations between the Central

Government and the Government of any State; or

- Which is capable of embarrassing the relations between the Central Government and the Government of any foreign State;
- Provided that nothing in this rule shall apply to any statements made or views expressed by a Government servant in his official capacity or in the due performance of the duties assigned to him.

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Ban on single use plastic

- Since July 1, 2022, India has banned the manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale, and use of single-use plastic (SUP) items with low utility and high littering potential.
- India is a party to the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA).

Why are single-use plastics harmful?

- The purpose of single-use plastics is to use them once or for a short period of time before disposing of them.
- Plastic waste has drastic impacts on the environment and human health.
- There is a greater likelihood of single-use plastic products ending up in the sea than reusable ones.

What is the impact on the environment?

- Littered single-use plastic items have an adverse effect on both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.
- All countries face a major environmental challenge due to pollution caused by single-use plastic items.
- India piloted a resolution on single-use plastics pollution at the 4th United Nations Environment Assembly in 2019, recognising the urgent need for the global community to address this issue.
- India is not the first country to ban single-use plastics.
- Bangladesh became the first country to ban thin plastic bags in 2002; New Zealand banned plastic bags in July 2019.
- China had issued a ban on plastic bags in 2020 with a phased implementation.
- As of July 2019, 68 countries have plastic bag bans with varying degrees of enforcement.
- What are the plastic waste management rules in India?
- With effect from September 30, 2021, the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021, prohibited the manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale, and use of plastic carry bags whose thickness is less than 75 microns.
- From December 31, 2022, plastic carry bags whose thickness is less than 120 microns will be banned.
- It means that the ban does not cover all plastic bags; however, it requires the manufacturers to produce plastic bags thicker than 75 microns which was earlier 50 microns.
- The notification clearly mentioned that plastic or PVC banners/hoardings should have more than 100 microns in thickness, and non-woven plastic (polypropylene) must be more than 60 GSM (grams per square metre).
- Non-woven plastic bags have a cloth-like texture but are counted among plastics. Still, plastic or PET bottles, counted among the most recyclable types of plastic, have been left out of the scope of the ban.
- In addition, the Indian government has taken steps to promote innovation and create an ecosystem for accelerated adoption and availability of alternatives across the country.
- To ensure the effective enforcement of the ban, national and State-level control rooms will be established, as well as special enforcement teams for the purpose of checking the

illegal sale and use of single-use plastics.

- To prevent the movement of banned single-use plastic items between States and Union Territories, border checkpoints have been established.
- In an effort to empower citizens to help curb the plastic menace, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has launched a grievance redressal application.
- The Government has been taking measures for awareness generation towards the elimination of single-use plastics
- The awareness campaign has brought together entrepreneurs and start-ups, industry, Central, State and local Governments, regulatory bodies, experts, citizen organisations, R&D and academic institutions.

What is the role of the manufacturer?

- In addition, the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change notified the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2022 on February 16, 2022. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is the responsibility of a producer for the environmentally sound management of the product until the end of its life.

- The guidelines provide a framework to strengthen the circular economy of plastic packaging waste, promote the development of new alternatives to plastic packaging and provide the next steps for moving towards sustainable plastic packaging by businesses.
- Now the challenge is to see how the local level authorities will enforce the ban in accordance with the guidelines.
- Banned items such as earbuds with plastic sticks, plastic sticks for balloons, etc., are non-branded items and it is difficult to find out who the manufacturer is and who is accountable for selling because these items will be available in the market even after the issuing of guidelines.

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SC relaxed ban on iron ore mining

- The story so far: On August 26, 2022, the Supreme Court raised the ceiling limit of iron ore mining for Ballari (from 28 MMT to 35 MMT), Chitradurga and Tumakuru districts (from 7 MMT to 15 MMT collectively) in Karnataka, saying that the conservation of ecology and environment must go hand in hand

with the spirit of economic development.

What did the Supreme Court rule?

- Through its two orders this year, the top Court ruled that it was necessary to create a level playing field for the mines situated in the three districts with those in the rest of the country.
- Taking cognisance of the course correction by the government, it relaxed its 2011 order since the situation had now “changed for the better”.
- However, the Court has reserved its judgment on the complete removal of ceiling limits on iron ore mining.

What are the implications?

- India’s efforts to clean up illegal mining and export of iron ore, left steel producers in the lurch after 2011.
- With closure of mines, steel mills faced raw material shortages forcing them to import, thereby opening up the country to business for iron ore giants from outside India.
- India exports its low-grade ore mainly to China.
- Hence, resuming exports in Karnataka would lower supplies to the local market and benefit Chinese steelmakers, the Indian Steel Association has argued.

- The restrictions on production and sale had also affected lakhs of mining dependants in Karnataka making their livelihood uncertain.
- The Court order may offer them some respite.

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Vostok 2022

- An Indian Army contingent comprising troops from 7/8 Gurkha Rifles is participating in the multilateral strategic and command exercise ‘Vostok-2022’ which commenced at the training grounds of the eastern military district in Russia.
- The exercise also includes participation by the Chinese People’s Liberation Army.
- “The exercise is aimed at interaction and coordination amongst other participating military contingents and observers,”
- Russia has stated that Vostok-2022 will be conducted in two phases.
- Participating contingents include observers from the Collective Security Treaty Organisation, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and other partner states including Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Laos,

Mongolia, Nicaragua, Syria and Tajikistan.

- India also defended its participation in the exercises in response to U.S. criticism.
- “India has been regularly participating in multilateral exercises in Russia, along with a number of other countries,”

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