

Population boon or bane



- China is projected to hand over the baton of the most populous country to India by mid-2023.
- United Nations reports suggest that India will have a population of 142.86 crore by mid-2023, which is 2.9 million higher than China's population of 142.57 crore.
- Population in itself is not a burden. Instead, it is the nature of population growth, size, and composition that decides when a population becomes a "resource" or a "burden".
- The population is a resource as long as the country's carrying capacity is intact. Carrying capacity is not just per capita availability of natural resources;
- It is a dynamic concept that changes according to changing technology, and the efficiency of the production and consumption systems of a country.
- With a total fertility rate of 2.0 in 2023, India is already at replacement level fertility, meaning two children replacing their parents.
- This indicates that the population is on a path toward stabilization.
- However, it continues to experience positive growth, but in a decelerated mode until 2064, from which point it will become negative growth. The peak of India's population size will be around 169.6 crores in 2063.
- With 68% of the working-age population in 2023, the country continues to have a demographic window of opportunity for the next 35 years to reap an economic dividend.
- There are four key mechanisms that translate a demographic bonus into an economic dividend: employment, education and skills, health conditions, and governance
- A relatively younger population of India provides higher support ratios there is a lesser disease, disability, and caring burden.
- India's opportunity must be looked at in comparison to the consequences of population decline and aging across some countries that include Japan, China, the United States, and other major economies.
- India has the potential to become a worldwide market for both production and consumption, with lower manufacturing costs due to a

relatively cheaper workforce. This is very much evident in India's IT sector.

- Available demographic opportunity in the form of a greater share of the working-age population has the potential to boost per capita GDP by an additional 43% by 2061, provided the socio-economic and political enabling environment is conducive.

THE HINDU

BJI Forum



- The third India-Japan Intellectual Dialogue (April 11–12, 2023), hosted by the Asian Confluence (ASCON), in Agartala, Tripura, was an ideal opportunity to assess the evolving thinking of experts and policymakers.

- It showed that the current decade may produce path-breaking changes in the northeast, bringing the troika of Bangladesh, India, and Japan closer.
- One of the most important projects is the development of the Matarbari Deep Sea Port (DSP) on the southeastern coast of Bangladesh. It is being constructed with Japanese assistance and is scheduled to be operational in 2027.
- A recent ASCON study envisages this port to be "a game changer".
- To be optimally viable, the port will have to cater to the needs of Bangladesh and India's northeast. The long-term vision is for Bangladesh and the northeast to become a hub and key industrial corridor of this region, serving a population of 220 million.
- The northeast is blessed with vast natural resources. Its strategic location, sharing borders with Nepal, Bhutan, China, Bangladesh, and Myanmar, is an asset.
- Creating value chains and manufacturing products should encompass diverse sectors such as agro-processing, man-made fibers, handicrafts, assembly of two-wheelers and perhaps mobile phones, and pharmaceuticals.

- The goal of connecting a large part of South Asia with Southeast Asia requires an astute pilot. This leadership can come from the triad of Bangladesh, India, and Japan (BIJ).
- A BIJ Forum should be launched first at the level of Foreign Ministers, a move that will be welcome in the northeast.

THE HINDU

MiCA

- The European Parliament, the legislative body of the 27-country block European Union, has approved the world's first set of comprehensive rules to bring largely unregulated cryptocurrency markets under the ambit of regulation by government authorities.
- The regulation called the Markets in Crypto Assets (MiCA), will come into force after formal approval by member states.

Why regulation?

- Having a comprehensive framework like MiCA for 27 countries in Europe not only harmonizes the crypto industry but also gives the EU a competitive edge in its growth compared to the U.S. or the U.K. which lack regulatory clarity.

What kind of assets will MiCA cover?

- The MiCA legislation will apply to 'crypto assets', which are broadly defined in the text as "a digital representation of a value or a right that uses cryptography for security and is in the form of a coin or a token or any other digital medium which may be transferred and stored electronically, using distributed ledger technology or similar technology.
- As for the assets that will be out of MiCA's scope, it will not regulate digital assets that would qualify as transferable securities and function like shares or their equivalent and other crypto assets that already qualify as financial instruments under existing regulation. It will also for the most part, exclude nonfungible tokens (NFTs).
- What are the new rules? MiCA will impose compliance on the issuers of crypto assets, who are defined as the "legal person who offers to the public any type of crypto assets". It will apply to crypto asset service providers (CASPs) providing one or more of these services.



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- The regulation prescribes different sets of requirements for CASPs depending on the type of crypto assets. The base regime will require every CASP to get incorporated as a legal entity in the EU.
- They can get authorized in any one member country and will be allowed to conduct their services across the 27 countries' Practices in place.
- They will then be supervised by regulators like the European Banking Authority and the European Securities and Markets Authority, who will ensure that the companies have the required risk management and corporate governance
- Besides authorization, service providers of stable-coins also have to furnish key information in the form of a white paper mentioning the details of the crypto product and the main participants in the company,
- Another legislation passed with MiCA requires crypto companies to send information of senders and recipients of crypto assets to their

local anti-money laundering authority, to prevent laundering and terror financing activities.

How is crypto regulated in India?

- India is yet to have a comprehensive regulatory framework for crypto assets. Draft legislation on the same is reportedly in the works.
- A full-fledged regulation aside, the Indian government has taken certain steps to bring cryptocurrencies under the ambit of specific authorities and taxation.
- In the Union Budget for 2022, the Finance Ministry said that cryptocurrency trading in India has seen a “phenomenal increase” and imposed a 30% tax on income from the “transfer of any virtual digital asset.”
- The National Commission for Protection of Children (NCPCR) has recently issued guidelines for conducting a preliminary assessment by the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) under Section 15 of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 (JJ Act, 2015).
- This preliminary assessment is to ascertain whether a juvenile can be tried as an adult. Replacing the Juvenile Justice Act, of 2000, the 2015 Act, for the first time, provided for trying juveniles in the age group

of 16-18 as adults in cases of heinous offenses.

How does a child get tried as an adult?

- The Act has categorized the offenses committed by children into three categories petty offenses, serious offenses, and heinous offenses.
- Section 15 of the JJ Act provides that in case of a heinous offence alleged to have been committed by a child, who has completed or is above the age of sixteen years, the Board shall conduct a preliminary assessment regarding his mental and physical capacity to commit such offence, ability to understand the consequences of the offense and the circumstances in which he allegedly committed the offense.
- Section 18 (3) of the Act further suggests that, if the Board, after preliminary assessment under section 15 passes an order that there is a need for a trial of the said child as an adult, then the Board may order the transfer of the case to the Children's Court having jurisdiction to try such offences.
- The guidelines further make it clear that the JJB shall be responsible for the preliminary assessment and provide the child, the child's family, and their counsel a copy of the order

- The NCPCR is under a statutory obligation under Section 109 of the JJ Act, 2015 to monitor the proper implementation of the provisions of the Act.

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Lock Bit

What is Lock-Bit ransomware?

First reported in September 2019 and dubbed the "abcd" virus, due to the file extension used when encrypting victims' files, the Lock-Bit ransomware is designed to infiltrate victims' systems and encrypt important files.

- The virus is categorized as a "crypto-virus" due to its requests for payment in cryptocurrency to decrypt files on the victim's device of victims who refuse to meet their demands, as part of their business model.
- The ransomware is therefore typically deployed against victims who feel hindered enough by the disruption to pay heavy sums in exchange for access to the files and can afford to do so. The gang behind the Lock-Bit ransomware reportedly maintains a dark web portal to recruit members and release data.
- Ransomware has targeted Windows, Linux, and VMware ESXi servers.

- However, Lock Bit is now working to create encryptors targeting Macs for the first time.

government to serve a geopolitical agenda.

THE HINDU

Dedollarisation

- Dedollarisation refers to the deposing of the U.S. dollar from the reserve currency status it enjoys globally.
- Some of the factors supposedly indicating a shift towards de-dollarisation are the U.S. dollar has depreciated against most major currencies and has declined by more than 10% in the past six months against the euro (due to growth expectations favouring the EU).
- Also, the price of gold has rallied in the past six months even though the Federal Reserve raised interest rates relentlessly.
- Russia and China buying large amounts of gold have been cited as the reason for the rally (a move seen to be a retaliation against the U.S. dollar).
- Those forecasting a global trend towards de-dollarisation also cite the sanctions the U.S. and its allies have levied against Russia due to the latter's invasion of Ukraine.
- The reasoning being countries would prefer to distance themselves from a currency weaponized by the

