

● POLITY

● ECONOMICS

● TECHNOLOGY

● ECOLOGY

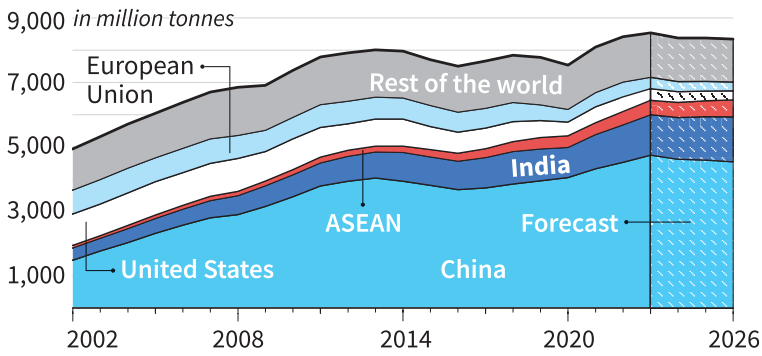
**ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT**

## GLOBAL COAL DEMAND LIKELY TO DECLINE 2.3% BY 2026: IEA

**CONTEXT:** A report by the International Energy Agency (IEA) expect the global demand for coal to decline by 2026, despite production of coal reaching a record this year.

### Coal consumption

Global coal consumption is expected to remain over 8 billion tonnes through 2026. The chart shows the appetite for the fuel



Coal, the most important energy source for electricity generation, steel-making, and cement production, is also the largest source of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from human activity. China, India, and Indonesia — the three largest coal producers globally — account for more than 70% of the world's coal production. A little over half the world's coal demand comes from China.

The global consumption is expected to remain well over 8 billion tonnes through 2026. Coal emissions must decline nearly 95 % between 2020 and 2050 to have a chance at keeping temperatures from rising beyond 1.50 C by the end of the century.

Coal-fired generation is likely to be pushed into a downward trajectory from 2024, with nuclear generation, set to see moderate increase, especially in China, India, and the European Union. Coal demand in China is expected to fall in 2024 and plateau in 2026 leading to an overall 2.3 % fall in global coal demand by 2026. The decline is more structural, driven by the formidable and sustained expansion of clean energy technologies expected to aid renewable power generation.

The demand in the European Union and United States is expected to drop by 20 % each, it is expected to rise by 8 % in India and 5 % in China in 2023 due to demand for electricity and diminished generation of hydroelectric power. The decline is expected to be due to a shift towards renewable energy and

plateauing demand in China. The report, released on December 15, sees the global demand for coal rising by 1.4 % in 2023, surpassing 8.5 billion tonnes for the first time.

**HISTORY, ART AND CULTURE**

## 'KASHI TAMIL SANGAMAM IS STRENGTHENING IDEA OF EK BHARAT SHRESHTHA BHARAT'

**CONTEXT:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the second edition of the Kashi Tamil Sangamam at the Namoo Ghat. The programme, organised by the Ministry of Education, celebrates, reaffirms and rediscovers the age-old links between Tamil Nadu and Varanasi.



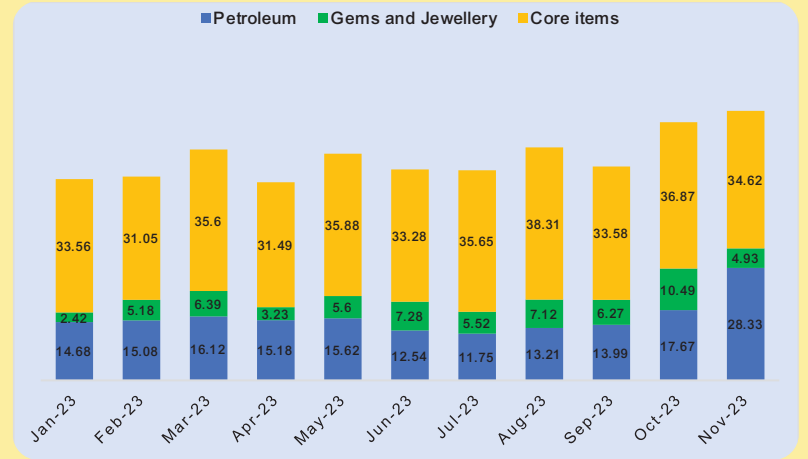
PM Modi during the inauguration of the Kashi Tamil Sangamam at Namoo Ghat in Varanasi on Sunday. PTI

Kashi Tamil Sangamam strengthen the idea of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat', reaffirming the emotional and creative bond shared by Kashi and Tamil Nadu since time immemorial. Simultaneous Tamil translation of Mr. Modi's speech was done through Bhashini, an artificial intelligence-based language platform launched by the government in 2022, for those in the audience who understood Tamil.

**Adi Shankara:** A pivotal figure in Indian history, Adi Shankara (788-820 CE) was revered as a philosopher, theologian, and spiritual leader who left an indelible mark on Hinduism. His contributions were monumental, revitalizing and solidifying the foundations of Advaita Vedanta, a school of thought emphasizing the non-duality of Brahman, the ultimate reality. He mastered the Vedas and other scriptures by the age of eight and renounced worldly life to take up sannyasa (monasticism) at the young age of twelve. Under the tutelage

of Govinda Bhagavatpada, Shankara delved deeper into Advaita Vedanta, eventually becoming its foremost champion.

**Ramanuja Acharya:** A philosopher, bhakti yogi, and social reformer, Ramanuja (1017-1137 CE) was an influential philosopher, theologian, and social reformer within the Sri Vaishnava tradition of Hinduism. Born in Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu, he displayed his intellectual and spiritual aptitude at a young age. Initially drawn to Advaita Vedanta, Ramanuja's encounter with Yamunacharya, a Sri Vaishnava scholar, led him to embrace Vishishtadvaita, a school of thought emphasizing qualified non-duality. Vishishtadvaita posits that Brahman, the ultimate reality, is both immanent and transcendent, possessing infinite attributes (Vishishta). These attributes manifest as Vishnu, the personal God, and souls (jivas) existing in eternal relationship with Vishnu. Ramanuja countered Advaita's concept of Maya as absolute illusion, arguing for the real existence and value of the physical world and individual souls. He advocated for Bhakti (devotion) to Vishnu as the primary path to salvation, emphasizing love and surrender over mere intellectual realization. His seminal works, like the Bhashya ("commentary") on the Brahma Sutra and the Bhagavad Gita, meticulously elucidated Vishishtadvaita and challenged rival philosophies.



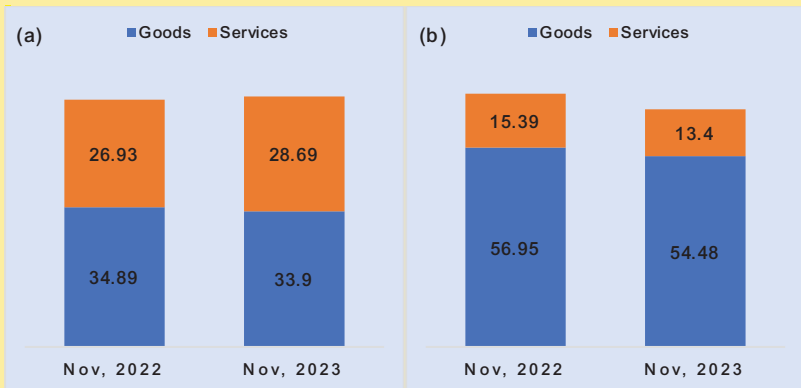
**FIGURE:** Bar chart representation of the import profile of Indian imports. Gems & Jewellery\*: Gold, Silver & Pearls, precious & Semi-precious stones.

August's goods trade deficit was moderated by nearly three billion dollars, with the overall export-import tally seeing revisions of \$ 5 billion. The magnitude of upward revision in the monthly merchandise trade deficit has averaged around \$ 1.5 billion since July compared to an average of \$ 0.5 billion in the first quarter of 2023-24. At the risk of repeating the obvious, the government must get a better grip on the data it bases its decisions on. Officials hope for an uptick in exports in the final quarter of the year, citing similar trends in recent years. Global demand is expected to ramp up in 2024, with the World Trade Organization expecting global trade flows to strengthen in 2024 and the US Federal Reserve signalling interest rate cuts that other central banks.

**ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT**

**A CLOUDY HORIZON**

**CONTEXT:** India's goods exports retreated into contraction in November, dipping 2.8 %, they were higher than October's tally, lowest in 12 months, yet denoted a year-on-year uptick unlike in November.



**FIGURE:** (L) Column chart representation of monthly value of exports of goods and services. (R) Column chart representation of monthly value of imports of goods and services.

The significant dip in imports in November can be attributed to factors like a decline in discretionary demand for high-value goods such as gems and jewellery and the global dip in prices of key items like petroleum products. Economists expect the deficit to stay range-bound between \$ 20 billion and 25 billion through the remaining four months of the year.

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## ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

## MODI INAUGURATES SURAT DIAMOND BOURSE IN GUJARAT, SAYS IT WILL ADD 1.5 LAKH MORE JOBS

**CONTEXT:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Surat Diamond Bourse (SDB), the world's largest and modern centre for international diamond and jewellery business, at a time when the diamond industry is passing through its worst crisis due to the global economic slowdown and G-7 countries' tough stand on Russian diamonds.



Standing tall: The Surat Diamond Bourse that was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday. PTI

The Surat Diamond Bourse (SDB) building is the world's largest office complex with over 67 lakh square feet of floor area spread in nine 15-storey interconnected towers with offices ranging from 300 ft<sup>2</sup> to 7,5000 ft<sup>2</sup>. It is aimed at shifting the diamond trading business from Mumbai to Surat, which is the hub of diamond cutting and polishing with thousands of factories across the city.

Surat diamond industry provides employment to around 8 lakh people, and with the coming up of the new diamond bourse, 1.5 lakh more jobs will be added. At the SDB, besides offices of trading of cut and polished diamonds and agents dealing with import of rough stones from international markets, 27 retail jewellery outlets will also be opened to complete the value chain of diamond jewellery.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

## INDIGENOUSLY BUILT UNIT-4 AT KAKRAPAR ATTAINS CRITICALITY

**CONTEXT:** The fourth unit of the Kakrapar Atomic Power Project (KAPP) in Gujarat started controlled fission chain reaction and thus became critical at 1.17 a.m. on Sunday. The reactor's first criticality was ascertained after it met all the conditions set out by the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB), India's nuclear safety watchdog.



Moving forward: The third and fourth nuclear reactors with their containment domes (extreme left) at Kakrapar in Gujarat. Their cooling towers are visible. NPCIL

The 700-MWe Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) at Kakrapar Atomic Power Station are the largest indigenous nuclear power reactors to be built by Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd. (NPCIL), a public sector undertaking of the Department of Atomic Energy. The Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) use natural uranium as fuel and heavy water as coolant and moderator. The NPCIL is already operating indigenous PHWRs with 220-MWe and 540-MWe capacity at other facilities.

The Kakrapar Atomic Power Station already has two operating PHWRs with a capacity of 220 MWe each, called KAPS-1 and -2. The indigenously built 700-MWe pressurised heavy water reactors have many advanced safety features, including among others a steel-lining from the floor to the wall and a passive decay heat removal system to cool the fuel core.

The NPCIL at present operates 23 nuclear electricity reactors with a total capacity of 7,480 MWe. It has nine units, including KAPP-4, under construction while 10 more reactors, with a total capacity of 7,000 MWe, are in the pre-project phase.

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## INTERNAL SECURITY

## CYBERTHREATS: CENTRE SETS UP SECURE E-MAIL NETWORK FOR STAFF OF CRITICAL DEPARTMENTS

**CONTEXT:** The Centre has set up a secure e-mail network that works on Zero Trust Authentication (ZTA) for 10,000 users in critical Ministries and departments in the wake of cyberattacks.

The measures to strengthen cybersecurity come in the wake of multiple cyberattack attempts to target critical installations and government websites such as the November 23, 2022 cyberattack at the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences in the national capital. Two-factor authentication, facial recognition or biometrics is required has been activated other than passwords, besides recording and monitoring log-in and log-out times.

In February this year, Digital India Corporation (DIC), a not-for-profit company set up by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) invited bids from private players to select cloud service providers to “operate, manage and migrate existing projects as well as future projects.” The DIC is currently working on various projects of national importance such as Digilocker, Poshan Tracker, MyScheme, Umang, APISetu, NCW, Kisan Sarathi, Academic Bank of Credits, etc., which run on cloud services provided by Amazon Web Services.

The scope of the bid also included migrating the e-mail services of government employees to a private player, currently handled by the NIC. The government has selected Chennai-based business solutions provider Zoho to handle the e-mail services.

The NIC has also implemented an e-office with government offices being encouraged to go fully digital. The e-office has been adopted fully in 75 Ministries.

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## POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

## AN UPHILL STRUGGLE TO GROW THE FOREST RIGHTS ACT

**CONTEXT:** On December 18, 2006, the Rajya Sabha endorsed the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, commonly known as the Forest Rights Act, or FRA enacted by the Lok Sabha.

### Historic injustices

The colonial Indian Forest Act, 1878 was passed and the takeover of India's forests began. The Imperial Forest Department was established to harvest and transform the forest to maximise timber and revenue, and was also tasked with protecting 'state' property against local communities, now deemed trespassers.

The shifting cultivation was banned, seeing forests primarily as a timber resource. The survey and settlement of agricultural lands was incomplete and biased in favour of the state. 'Forest villages' were created, wherein forest land was leased for agriculture to (mostly Adivasi) households in return for compulsory (virtually bonded) labour to ensure labour for forestry operations. Since forests were now state property, all access to forest produce was limited, temporary and chargeable, and always at the mercy of the forest bureaucracy that was armed with police powers. Any concessions to local livelihood needs were termed 'privileges' that could be modified or withdrawn any time. The local community had no right to manage the forest, as the state logged valuable forests and made heavily used forest de facto open-access.

### FOREST RIGHTS ACT, 2006

- **MANDATE:** Grants legal recognition to the rights of traditional forest dwelling communities.
- **RIGHTS UNDER THE ACT**
- **TITLE RIGHTS:** Ownership to land farmed by tribals or forest dwellers as on 13 December 2005, subject to a maximum of 4 hectares;
- **UTILISATION RIGHTS:** Rights over Minor Forest Produce (including ownership), to grazing areas, to pastoralist routes, etc.
- **RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS:** Rehabilitation in case of illegal eviction or forced displacement; and to basic amenities, subject to restrictions for forest protection.
- **FOREST MANAGEMENT RIGHTS:** Protect forests and wildlife.

### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Forest Dwelling Scheduled Tribe (FDST) (Section 2(c) of Forest Rights Act (FRA))
  - Must be a Scheduled Tribe in the area where the right is claimed; and
  - Primarily resided in forest or forests land prior to

13-12-2005; and

- Depend on the forest or forests land for bonafide livelihood needs.
- **Other Traditional Forest Dweller (OTFD)**
  - Primarily resided in forest or forests land for three generations (75 years) prior to 13-12-2005.
  - Depend on the forest or forests land for bonafide livelihood needs.

#### PROCESS OF RECOGNITION OF RIGHTS:

- **GRAM SABHA / VILLAGE ASSEMBLY:** Adopt a resolution recommending recognition of rights of Forest Dwelling Scheduled Tribe (FDST) and Other Forest Dwelling Scheduled Tribe (FDST) over resources.
- **SUB-DIVISION (OR TALUKA) SCREENING COMMITTEES:** Screening and granting approvals of the recommendations of the Gram Sabha / Village Assembly Hear appeals over the recommendations of the Gram Sabha / Village Assembly. The screening committees consist of three government officials (Forest, Revenue and Tribal Welfare departments) and three elected members of the local body at that level.
- **DISTRICT LEVEL SCREENING COMMITTEES:** Screening and granting approvals of the recommendations of the taluka level screening committees Hear appeals over the recommendations of the taluka level screening committees. The screening committees consist of three government officials (Forest, Revenue and Tribal Welfare departments) and three elected members of the local body at that level.

The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 (FCA) forcibly resettled lakhs of communities for creating sanctuaries and national parks. The FRA is remarkable because it first of all acknowledges these historical (colonial) injustices and their continuation post-Independence. Redress then takes three broad forms. The issue of so-called 'encroachments' is addressed through recognising individual forest rights (IFRs) to continue habitation and cultivation or other activities that existed before December 2005. Forest villages are to be converted into revenue villages after full rights recognition. The issue of access and control is addressed by recognising the rights of village communities to access and use forests and to own and sell minor forest produce, and, most importantly, to manage forests within their customary boundaries, including in sanctuaries and national parks. This is the most far-reaching provision in the FRA, as it ensures decentralised forest governance, linking management authority and responsibility to community rights.

Finally, the Act lays down a democratic procedure for identifying whether and where wildlife conservation may require curtailing or extinguishing community rights. Simultaneously, having community rights over a forest translates ipso facto into the community having a say in, if not veto over, any diversion of that forest and a right to compensation if diverted. This right was reaffirmed by the Supreme Court in the Niyamgiri case, and although the Forest Conservation Rules 2022 and FCA Amendment 2023 seek to bypass this right, States can still put in place such consent mechanisms.

#### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

## THE STORMY RED SEA, THE COMPLEXITIES OF GLOBAL EVENTS

**CONTEXT:** The Yemen-based and Iran-aligned Houthi militia announced its foray into Israel - Palestine war supporting the people of Gaza, bringing the critical waterways of the Red Sea, which connects the Suez Canal, into the middle of the conflict. The Suez by itself carries nearly 15 % of all global trade between the West and the East.

In mid-November, the Houthis released a video of armed men in a helicopter raiding a cargo vessel that reportedly had Israeli links, which was travelling through the Red Sea towards India. While the Strait of Hormuz on the other side of the region, bordering Iran, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq, and Qatar, is seen as a major geopolitical chokepoint, the Red Sea is increasingly being seen as an alternative. Saudi Arabia's new futuristic city of Neom, a pet project of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman which represents the rapidly changing face of the kingdom, is based off the coast of the Red Sea from where vast amounts of oil are also shipped.

Since the incident in November, the number of commercial vessels facing Houthi aggression has only increased, and cases are being reported on a near daily basis. The United States has been at the forefront of deploying military capacity towards the Red Sea to counter the threats in the form of drones, missiles that now include longer-range ones, and direct operations by the group's military cadre. The U.S. has now called upon partners to deploy a multinational task force around the narrow Bab al-Mandab Strait between Yemen, Djibouti (which hosts the military bases of the U.S., China, Japan, Italy, and France), and Eritrea. The Houthis have showcased an eclectic mix of military capability, including torpedoes and missiles with up to 1,000 km range capability. As of 2022, the Houthis are known to have acquired eight different types of missiles into their arsenal compared to just three previously, which had less than 50 km range and were acquired in the 1990s.

Saudi Arabia Riyadh has in fact called for "restraint" by Washington DC in taking any military action directly against the Houthis. With the Saudis having launched a war against the Houthis in Yemen in 2015, one that technically is still under way, the kingdom is now holding talks with the group's leadership on the back of the Saudi-Iran détente brokered by China earlier this year. According to recent data published by Arab Barometer, a quantitative research institute on the Middle East (West Asia), Beijing's balanced stance on the ongoing Gaza crisis has found a positive response among Arabs on the back of the near-complete support given to the Israeli military campaign by the U.S. President, Joe Biden.

#### Impact on Asian economies

A volatile security scenario in the Red Sea will have a global impact, specifically for Asian economies such as India,

Japan, South Korea, and China. In the Persian Gulf, India has operationalised military capacities under Operation Sankalp since 2019, where the Indian Navy began escorting India-flagged ships, specifically oil tankers. Japan has worked its diplomatic channels directly with Tehran while South Korea has also experienced tensions with Iran over its ships travelling through the region.

In 2012, India joined China, Japan, and South Korea for coordinated joint patrols in the Gulf of Aden. All states took point by rotation in leading these patrols, of course at a time when global geopolitics looked very different. While Beijing's position in such multilateral engagements is near improbable today, New Delhi, Tokyo and Seoul continue to have common security concerns as net importers of oil and gas from the region, which automatically places them as stakeholders in West Asian security both strategically and kinetically.

### Role of non-state actors

Through the current churn in the global geopolitical order, there is one major trend that states must factor into their calculus: that non-state militant actors are strengthening in agency, both politically and militarily, and often as part of state-promoted designs to secure short-term gains for long-term strategic victories. These are the fundamentals at play in an area such as the Red Sea which, in capitals such as New Delhi, do not enjoy the luxury of space in security debates. However, in an increasingly interconnected world colliding with an increasingly challenged stability of the western-led international security order, a more progressive, nimble, and practical development and deployment of power will have to be accepted to address challenges beyond the comforts of self-defined areas of interests.

Baranwal in 2015 pleaded for the Supreme Court to issue directions to set up an independent, collegium-like system for the appointment of the CEC and ECs. The Supreme Court in March 2023, held that there has been a legislative vacuum due to the absence of any law by Parliament with respect to the appointment of the CEC and EC. The Supreme Court drew reference to various other institutions supporting constitutional democracy that have independent mechanisms for the appointment of its head/members like the National and State Human Rights Commission, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Information Commission, Lokpal etc.

In the past, the Dinesh Goswami Committee on Electoral Reforms (1990) and the Law Commission in its 255th report on Electoral Reforms (2015), had suggested that the CEC and ECs should be appointed by a committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice of India (CJI) and the Leader of the Opposition or the largest Opposition party in the Lok Sabha. The Supreme Court, exercising its powers under Article 142 laid down that the CEC and ECs shall be appointed by a committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the CJI and the Leader of the Opposition or the largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha.

### What does the proposed law provide?

The CEC and other ECs shall be appointed from persons who are holding or have held a post equivalent to the rank of Secretary to the Government of India. There shall be a search committee headed by the Minister of Law and Justice, who shall prepare a panel of five persons for consideration to the selection committee. The CEC and EC shall be appointed by the President on the recommendation of this selection committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and a Union Cabinet Minister to be nominated by the Prime Minister. It is for the first time that the Parliament is proposing a structured mechanism for identification of suitable persons for the post of CEC and EC. The bill removes the CJI from the selection process that was laid down in the Anoop Baranwal case.

### What are the best practices globally?

In South Africa, the President of the Constitutional Court, representatives of the Human rights Court and gender equality are involved. In the U.K., the House of Commons approves the candidates, whereas in the U.S., the appointment is by the President and confirmed by the Senate. While the proposed Bill moves the appointment process from just an executive decision to a committee-based selection, it is still tilted in favour of an incumbent government.

## POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

# ON SELECTING ELECTION COMMISSIONERS

**CONTEXT:** On December 12, the Rajya Sabha passed The Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Office and Terms of Office) Bill, 2023. The Bill is likely to be enacted into a law after being passed by the Lok Sabha in the current winter session.

### What does the Constitution say?

Article 324 provides for the composition of the Election Commission of India (ECI). It consists of the CEC and two other ECs. The Constitution provides that the appointment of the CEC and EC shall, subject to the provisions of any law made by Parliament, be made by the President. While the existing parliamentary law provides for their conditions of service, it is silent with respect to appointments. The appointments till date are made by the President, that is the Central Government and there is no mechanism for ensuring independence during the appointment process.

### What did the Supreme Court rule?

A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by Anoop

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## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

# AN OVERVIEW OF THE EUROPEAN UNION'S ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ACT

**CONTEXT:** The European Union's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Act is a significant legislative initiative aimed at regulating artificial intelligence technologies within the EU. The EU seeks to strike a balance between fostering innovation and ensuring ethical and responsible AI development with the growing influence of AI across various sectors.

The objectives of the EU AI Act are to create a regulatory framework for AI technologies, mitigate risks associated with AI systems, and establish clear guidelines for developers, users, and regulators. The act aims to ensure the responsible use of AI by protecting fundamental rights and promoting transparency in AI applications.

## The strengths of the Act

The legislation follows a risk-based approach categorising AI applications into different risk levels, ranging from unacceptable to low.

1. Enables tailored regulations, with higher-risk applications subject to more stringent requirements.
2. Acknowledges AI technologies' diverse potential impact on society.
3. Explicitly prohibits certain AI practices deemed unacceptable, such as social credit scoring systems for government purposes, predictive policing applications, and AI systems that manipulate individuals such as emotional recognition systems at work or in education.
4. Assessment processes conducted by third-party entities for higher-risk AI applications like medical devices, biometric identification, and access to justice and services.

The EU AI Act emphasises transparency and accountability in AI development and deployment.

1. Requires developers to provide clear information about the capabilities and limitations of AI systems, enabling users to make informed decisions.
2. Mandates the developers to maintain comprehensive documentation to facilitate regulatory oversight.
3. Introduces the concept of independent conformity assessment to ensure compliance with the regulations.

## The limitations

The stringent regulations in the EU may hinder the competitiveness of European businesses in the global AI market. The Act aims to ensure ethical AI practices, some fear that overly restrictive measures could stifle innovation and drive AI development outside the EU. Additionally, compliance with the EU AI Act may impose a significant burden on smaller businesses and start-ups. The resources required for conformity assessments and documentation may disproportionately affect smaller players in the AI industry,

potentially limiting their ability to compete with larger, more established counterparts. Striking the right balance between regulation and fostering innovation is crucial, with critics arguing that the EU AI Act may lean too heavily towards stringent controls.

## The potential implications

The EU AI Act is likely to have a global impact, influencing the development and deployment of AI technologies beyond the EU's borders. As a major economic bloc, the EU's regulatory framework may set a precedent for other regions, shaping the trajectory of AI development on a global scale, just like the MiCa regulation did for crypto-assets.

By prioritising ethical considerations and fundamental rights, the EU AI Act contributes to the establishment of global norms for AI development. And the impact on innovation and competitiveness will depend on the balance struck by the EU between regulation and fostering a conducive environment for AI development.

It encourages collaboration and cooperation between regulatory authorities, fostering a unified approach to AI regulation. International collaboration in regulating AI technologies is essential to address global challenges and ensure consistent standards across borders.

## The administrative side

Any individual has the right to report instances of non-compliance. The EU member states' market surveillance authorities will be responsible for enforcing the AI Act. There will be specific limits on fines applicable to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and start-ups. The EU will establish a centralised 'AI office' and 'AI Board.' In case businesses do not adhere to the EU AI Act, fines could range from \$8 million to almost \$38 million, depending on the nature of the violation and the company's size. For instance, fines may amount to up to 1.5% of the global annual turnover or €7.5 million for providing incorrect information, up to 3% of the global annual turnover or €15 million for general violations, and up to 7% of the global annual turnover or €35 million for prohibited AI violations.

The EU's AI Act represents a significant step towards regulating AI technologies responsibly and ethically. While it addresses key concerns associated with AI, such as transparency, accountability, and risk mitigation, there are challenges and potential drawbacks that need careful consideration. The global impact of the EU AI Act and its potential to shape international norms make it a landmark initiative in the ongoing discourse on the responsible development and deployment of artificial intelligence.



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

# UNEMPLOYMENT REMAINS A CONCERN POST-PANDEMIC

## The never-ending job hunt

The tables are based on data collated from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy



**Awaiting opportunities:** People wait in line in front of the Puducherry Employment Exchange to register and update their profiles. KUMAR S.S.

**Table 1:** The table shows the year-wise labour force participation rate (LFPR) in India

Year	All			Urban			Rural		
	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
2016-17	46.2	74.3	14.9	44.7	72.6	14.6	47	75.1	15.1
2017-18	43.7	72.4	11.8	42	70.5	11.1	44.6	73.4	12.2
2018-19	42.9	71.7	10.9	41.2	69.5	10.3	43.7	72.8	11.3
2019-20	42.7	71.2	10.8	40.6	68.5	9.4	43.8	72.5	11.6
2020-21	40.0	67.2	9.2	37.4	64.2	7.3	41.4	68.7	10.2
2021-22	40.1	67.0	9.2	37.6	64.4	7	41.4	68.3	10.4
2022-23	39.5	66	8.7	37.5	64.1	6.9	40.5	66.9	9.7

**Table 2:** The table shows the year-wise unemployment rate (UR), which is the share of unemployed persons in the labour force

Year	All			Urban			Rural		
	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
2016-17	7.4	5.1	20.4	8.9	5.7	26.2	6.7	4.8	17.5
2017-18	4.7	3.7	11.2	5.2	3.9	13.8	4.5	3.7	10
2018-19	6.3	5.1	14.6	6.9	5.3	18.7	6	5	12.7
2019-20	7.5	6.1	17.1	8.6	6.6	24.3	6.9	5.9	14.1
2020-21	8.8	8	15.4	9.6	8.4	21.3	8.4	7.8	13.2
2021-22	7.7	6.9	13.6	8.3	7.1	20.5	7.4	6.9	11.2
2022-23	7.6	6.6	15.5	8.3	7	21.3	7.2	6.5	13.3

T= Total, M= Male, F=Female

**Table 3:** The table shows the LFPR and UR for all the quarters ending September between 2016 and 2023

Quarter ended	LFPR			UR		
	T	U	R	T	U	R
Sept. 2016	47	45.3	47.9	8.9	10.8	8
Sept. 2017	43.3	41.4	44.3	4.1	4.9	3.7
Sept. 2018	42.8	40.9	43.8	6.1	6.7	5.8
Sept. 2019	42.8	40.7	43.9	7.6	9.1	6.8
Sept. 2020	40.7	38.0	42.0	7.3	9.1	6.5
Sept. 2021	40.5	37.7	41.9	7.3	8.9	6.6
Sept. 2022	39.1	36.8	40.2	7.1	8.4	6.5
Sept. 2023	40.2	38.7	41	8.1	9.2	7.5

**Table 4:** The table shows the LFPR and UR for all the November months between 2019 and 2023

Month	LFPR			UR		
	T	U	R	T	U	R
Nov. 2019	42.3	40.3	43.3	7.2	8.9	6.5
Nov. 2020	40.1	37.1	41.6	6.5	7.1	6.2
Nov. 2021	40.2	37.5	41.6	7	8.2	6.4
Nov. 2022	39.6	37.8	40.6	8	8.9	7.6
Nov. 2023	41.1	38.9	42.3	9.2	9.4	9.1

T= Total, U= Urban, R=Rural





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