

### INDUS WATERS TREATY (IWT)

- IWT was **signed in 1960 between India and Pakistan** and was **brokered by the World Bank**, which too is a signatory to the treaty.
- The treaty **fixed the rights and obligations of both countries** concerning the use of the waters of the Indus River system.
- It gives **control over the waters of the three ‘eastern rivers’ -the Beas, Ravi, and Sutlej - to India**, while control over the waters of the three ‘western rivers’ -the Indus, Chenab, and Jhelum - to Pakistan.
- The treaty **allows India to use the western river waters for limited irrigation use and unlimited non-consumptive use for such applications as power generation, navigation, fish culture, etc.**
- It lays down detailed regulations for India in building projects over the western rivers.

### **A Background of Conflict over IWT**

- **Indian Decision to Modify IWT**
    - In January, India announced the **desire to modify the 62-year-old IWT with Pakistan**, citing what it called Pakistan's unwillingness to find a solution to disputes over the Kishanganga and Ratle hydropower projects, both in J&K.
    - Two hydroelectric power projects, one on the **Kishanganga** river (a tributary of the Jhelum), and the other on the **Chenab** (Ratle), have been the subject of a prolonged controversy.
    - India called for **modifications to the treaty as per Article XII (3) of the IWT** which specify that provisions of the treaty may from time to time be modified for any specific purpose between the two Governments.
  - **Pakistan’s Decision to Approach Arbitration Court:** Pakistan initiated arbitration at the PCA to address the interpretation and application of the IWT to certain design elements of two run-of-river hydroelectric projects.
  - **India’s Objection to Arbitration**
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- India protested Pakistan’s “unilateral” decision to approach a court of arbitration at The Hague in the Netherlands.
- India raised objections as it views that the **Court of Arbitration is not competent to consider the questions put to it by Pakistan** and that such questions should instead be decided through the neutral expert process.

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## DELIMITATION

### What is Delimitation?

- According to the Election Commission, the word ‘delimitation’ is defined as “**the act or process of fixing limits/boundaries of territorial constituencies in a country or a province having a legislative body**”.
- In the Indian context, the exercise of redrawing the boundaries of Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly Constituencies in a region is known as delimitation.
- In this process, the number of seats allocated to a particular state/UT in Lok Sabha or in the Legislative Assembly may vary.

### Why is it needed?

- Delimitation helps in redrawing the boundaries (based on the data of the last Census) in such a way that the population of all the constituencies, as far as practicable, remain equal throughout the State/UT.
- It ensures a fair division of geographical areas so that all political parties or candidates contesting elections **have a level playing field in terms of a number of voters**.

### What are the Constitutional Provisions regarding delimitation in India?

- **Article 82** and **Article 170** of the Constitution empowers the Parliament to readjust the allocation of seats in the Lok Sabha and the Legislative Assemblies of States respectively, after every census.

- Accordingly, the Parliament enacts a Delimitation Commission Act and an independent high-powered panel known as the **Delimitation Commission** is constituted to carry out the exercise of delimitation.
- The Parliament has enacted the Delimitation Commission Acts in **1952, 1962, 1972** and **2002** for this purpose.
  - There was no Delimitation Commission Act after the 1981 and 1991 census.
- The present delimitation of constituencies has been done on the basis of 2001 census data under the provisions of **Delimitation Commission Act, 2002**.
- The next Delimitation Commission will be set up after 2026.
- Further, **Article 330** and **Article 332** of the Constitution provide for re-fixing the number of seats reserved for **Scheduled Castes (SCs)** and **Scheduled Tribes (STs)** in the Lok Sabha and the Legislative Assemblies of the states, on the basis of the 2001 census.

### What is Delimitation Commission?

- The Delimitation Commission is a high-powered committee entrusted with the task of drawing and redrawing of boundaries of different constituencies for state assembly and Lok Sabha election.
- It is appointed by the President and works in collaboration with the Election Commission.

### The Commission consists of –

- A retired or working Supreme Court Judge (chairperson)
- Election Commissioner
- Concerned State Election Commissioners
- The Commission's orders have the force of law and **cannot be called in question before any court**.
- The Commission's orders are laid before the Lok Sabha and the legislative assemblies concerned, but they cannot effect any modifications in the orders.

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[INDIA SECURES 80<sup>TH</sup> RANK ON HENLEY PASSPORT INDEX](#)

## Why in News?

- Recently, the Henley Passport Index 2023 was published by the consultancy firm named ‘**Henley & Partners**’.

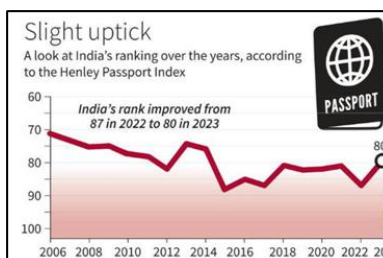


### About Henley Passport Index:

- Henley Passport Index is a global ranking of countries according to the travel freedom for their citizens.
- It started in **2006** as **Henley & Partners Visa Restrictions Index (HVRI)**.
- It is the ranking of all the world’s passports according to the number of destinations their holders can access without a prior visa.
- The index includes **199 different passports and 227 different travel destinations**.
  - The number of countries that a specific passport can access becomes its visa-free 'score'.
- In collaboration with the **International Air Transport Association (IATA)**, and based on official data from their global database, Henley & Partners analyses the visa regulations of all the countries and territories in the world.

### Henley Passport Index 2023:

- As per the 2023 rankings, Japan has been replaced by **Singapore**, which is now officially the most powerful passport in the world.



- Citizens of Singapore can visit 192 travel destinations out of 227 around the world visa-free.
- Germany, Italy, and Spain occupy the second place.
- Japan, which occupied the top position on the Henley Passport Index for five years, dropped to the third place.
- Alongside Japan at the third position are Austria, Finland, France, Luxembourg, South Korea, and Sweden.
- India** –
  - India has climbed seven places on Henley Passport Index 2023 to **80<sup>th</sup> rank** from 87 last year.
  - Indian citizens can now enjoy visa-free access to 57 destinations.

- In 2014, India ranked 76 with 52 countries allowing Indian passport holders visa free access but its performance has not been linear.
- It ranked 88 in 2015 (visa free access to 51 countries), 85 in 2016, 87 in 2017, 81 in 2018, 82 in 2019 and 2020, and 81 in 2021.

### ‘Most Open’ Countries:

- This Index measures how many nations does a country allow visa-free access to.
- The Top 20 ‘most open’ countries are all small island nations or African states, except for Cambodia.
- There are 12 completely open countries that offer visa-free or visa-on-arrival entry to all 198 passports in the world (not counting their own).
- Here, **India was ranked 94 out of a total of 97 ranks for allowing only four countries visa-free access.**
- At the bottom of the Index were four countries for scoring zero for not permitting visa-free access for any passport — namely, **Afghanistan, North Korea, Papua New Guinea, and Turkmenistan.**

### About International Air Transport Association (IATA):

- IATA is a trade association of the world's airlines founded in **1945**.
- **Objective:** To support airline activity and helps formulate industry policy and standards.
- **Headquarters:** Montreal, Canada

### BHOOMI SAMMAN AWARDS



Recently, the President of India presented the “Bhoomi Samman” 2023 at a function organised by the Union Ministry of Rural Development in New Delhi

- The 9 state Secretaries and 68 District Collectors were presented with “Bhoomi Samman awards who have excelled in achieving saturation of the core components of Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP).

## Bhoomi Samman Awards:

- It aims to acknowledge and encourage outstanding performance in the implementation of the **Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP)**.
- Madhya Pradesh has secured the first position in the field of Digital India Land Records modernization in the country.
- 15 districts of Madhya Pradesh have been **awarded Platinum Grading** for 100 percent achievement in all the components of Digital India Land Records Management Programme.
- It is a fine example of Centre-State cooperative federalism based on trust and partnership, as the grading system is largely based on reports and inputs of the States/UTs in the core components of computerization and digitization of land records.

## Key facts about DILRMP

- It is a **central sector scheme** being implemented by the Department of Land Resources under the **Ministry of Rural Development**.
- **Aim:** It attempts to build upon the commonalities that exist in the arena of land records in various States to develop an appropriate Integrated Land Information Management System (ILIMS) across the country.
- The ILIMS integrates all the processes and lands records databases with the banks, financial institutions, circle rates, Registration Offices and other sectors.
- **Major components:** Computerization of land records, Survey/re-survey, Computerization of Registration.

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## SOVEREIGN GREEN BONDS

Recently, the Chairman of Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) said the regulator is keen on pension funds investing in sovereign green bonds (SGBs).



### Why in news?

- The Government of India is expected to issue sovereign green bonds in the



second half of the current financial year as part of the overall market borrowing programme.

## About Sovereign Green Bonds:

- These are bonds issued by any **sovereign entity, inter-governmental groups** or alliances and corporates.
- **Aim:** The proceeds of the bonds are **utilised for projects** classified as **environmentally sustainable**.
- These are issued with **longer maturity period**.
- In India, the **framework for the sovereign green bond** was issued by the government on **November 9, 2022**.

## Key Facts about the PFRDA

- It is a **statutory regulatory body** set up under PFRDA Act **enacted in 2014**.
- **Objective:** To promote old age income security by establishing, developing, and regulating pension funds and to protect the interests of subscribers to schemes of pension funds and related matters.
- **Composition:** It consists of a **Chairperson and not more than six members**, of whom at least three shall be Whole-Time Members, to be appointed by the Central Government.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Finance.
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **Functions:**
  - **Regulate National Pension System (NPS)** and other pension schemes to which PFRDA Act applies.
  - Establish, develop and regulate pension funds.
  - Protect the interest of pension fund subscribers.
  - Register and regulate intermediaries.
  - Laying down norms for **management of corpus of pension funds**.
  - Establish grievance redressal mechanism for subscribers.
  - Settle disputes among intermediaries and also between intermediaries and subscribers.

## COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CGRFA)

Recently, delegates from across the world have gathered at the 19th session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) in Rome, Italy.



### About CGRFA:

- It is the only permanent **intergovernmental** body that deals with all components of **biodiversity for food and agriculture**.
- It was established in 1983.
- **Aim:** To reach international consensus on policies for the **sustainable use and conservation of genetic resources** for food and agriculture and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from their use.
- **Member:** It has 179 countries as its members.
- **India is also a member** of this commission.
- **Functions:**
  - The intergovernmental body guides the preparation of **periodic global assessments** of the status and trends of **genetic resources and biodiversity** for food and agriculture.
  - It also develops global plans of action, codes of conduct or other policy instruments and monitors their implementation.
- Some of the Commission's landmark achievements include: the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA).

### What is ITPGRFA?

- It was adopted by the Thirty-First Session of the Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the **United Nations on 3 November 2001**.
- **The Treaty aims at:**
  - Recognizing the enormous contribution of farmers to the diversity of crops that feed the world.



- Establishing a **global system to provide farmers, plant breeders and scientists** with access to plant genetic materials.
  - Ensuring that recipients share benefits they derive from the use of these genetic materials with the countries where they have been originated.
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## WHO ARE ARHTIYAS?

The arhtiyas recently threatened to go on indefinite strike in the major fruit mandis in Himachal Pradesh to protest against the government's decision to sell apples by weight.



"Arhtiyas" refers to **commission agents or middlemen in the agricultural sector.**

- **Primary Functions:**

- **Procurement:** Arhtiyas procure agricultural produce from farmers either directly from the farm or at local agricultural markets (mandis).
  - **Financial Services:** They often provide credit to farmers to meet their immediate financial needs, including inputs for the next cropping season or personal expenses.
  - **Storage:** Arhtiyas may offer warehousing facilities for the storage of agricultural commodities.
  - **Marketing:** They facilitate the sale of agricultural produce to wholesale buyers, such as government agencies or private traders, on behalf of the farmers.
  - **Commission:** Arhtiyas charge a commission for their services, usually a percentage of the transaction value. The commission rates can vary depending on the region, crop, and prevailing market conditions.
  - They play a significant role in the traditional agricultural marketing system, particularly in states like Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh.
  - Arhtiyas are an integral part of the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) system in India.
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