

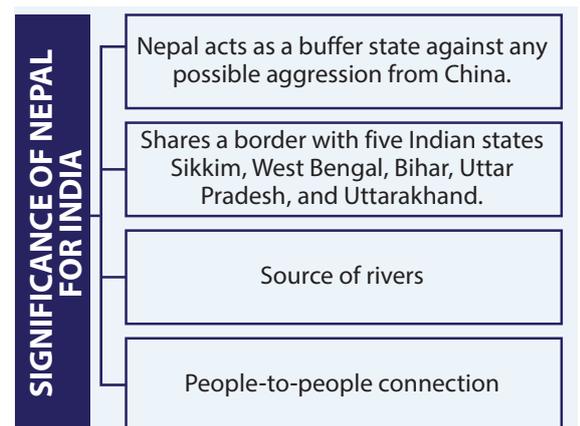
# NEWS TODAY

## LAW COMMISSION RECOMMENDS RETENTION OF SEDITION LAW IN INDIA

- The **Law Commission** in its **279th report** stated that **Section 124A** needs to be **retained** in the **Indian Penal Code (IPC)** through certain amendments.
- **Recommendations on Sedition**
  - **Sedition being a colonial law** not a **valid ground for its repeal**.
  - It should be **made punishable with life imprisonment or for a term up to 7 years** or with a fine.
  - FIR be **filed only after preliminary inquiry and permission from the government** by amending **Section 154 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**.
  - Amend Section 124A to **align with Kedar Nath's Case (1962)** which underlines the presence of a tendency to incite violence as a precondition to invoke the clause.
- **IPC defines sedition** as offense: bringing hatred/contempt, exciting disaffection towards the established government by law by:
  - words, either spoken or written.
  - signs.
  - visible representation, or otherwise.
- **Sedition** is a **cognizable, non-bailable, and non-compoundable offenses**, entailing life imprisonment as maximum punishment, with or without a fine.
  - In **May 2022 (SG Vombatkere vs UOI)**, **SC had held that sedition law should be effectively kept** in abeyance till the Union government reconsiders the provision.

## INDIA, NEPAL SIGNED PACT ON INFRASTRUCTURE AND CROSS-BORDER ENERGY

- Both sides highlighted that the India-Nepal **Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950** forms the basis of relations between the two countries.
  - The treaty talks about the **common treatment of Indian and Nepali citizens in the two countries**: residence, property, business, and movement.
- **Key Highlights**
  - **Infrastructure:**
    - Agreements between NHPC and VUCL (Vidyut Utpadan Company Ltd), Nepal, for the **development of the Phukot Karnali Hydroelectric Project**.
    - Project Development Agreement for the **Lower Arun Hydroelectric Project between SJVN (India)** and the Investment Board of Nepal.
    - India set a target of **importing 10,000 MW of electricity from Nepal**.
    - Phase-II facilities under **Motihari-Amlekhgunj Petroleum Pipeline**.
  - **Connectivity:**
    - 35-km cross-border railway line linking Jaynagar in Bihar to Kurtha in Nepal.
    - **Signed the Revised Transit Agreement (1992)** that will help Nepal access to India's inland waterways.
    - Inaugurated the Indian Railway cargo train from Bathnaha in India to Nepal Customs Yard.
  - **Others**
    - Nepal signed a framework to join the **India-led International Solar Alliance**.
    - To set up a **fertilizer plant in Nepal**.
    - **Integrated Check posts** at Rupaidiha in India and Nepalgunj in Nepal.



# ARREST WARRANT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT (ICC)

- South Africa is thinking about legal options if Russian President, **the subject of a war crimes arrest warrant issued by the ICC**, did attend the BRICS summit.
  - As a member of the ICC, South Africa would **theoretically be required to arrest Russian President if he attended**.
  - **States Parties to the Rome Statute have a legal obligation to cooperate.**

## • About ICC (HQ- Hague, Netherlands)

- It is an **international court to investigate and prosecute individuals** accused of serious international crimes: **genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and aggression**.
- It was established by the **Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in 1998**.
- It has **jurisdiction only over crimes committed after July 1, 2002**, when the Rome Statute entered into force.
- The Court **does not have its own police force. Accordingly, it relies on State cooperation, which is essential to the arrest and surrender of suspects**.
- **There are 123 countries party to the Rome Statute.**
  - **Countries that never signed the treaty:** India, China, Iraq, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, etc
  - **Countries signed but not ratified the treaty:** Egypt, Iran, Israel, Russia, the United States, etc.

# INDIA APPEALS TO WTO OVER DISPUTED ICT TARIFFS ON MOBILE PHONES

- European Union, Chinese Taipei, and Japan raised the issue that **India violated its zero-tariff commitment under the Information Technology Agreement (ITA)** under the multilateral trade body.
  - India, which is a **signatory to the 1996 ITA**, is required to eliminate tariffs on a range of products, including mobile handsets.
  - However, India **claimed that at the time of signing the ITA**, products such as smartphones did not exist, and hence, not bound to eliminate tariffs on such items.
  - The appeal filed is only against the order on the dispute with Japan.

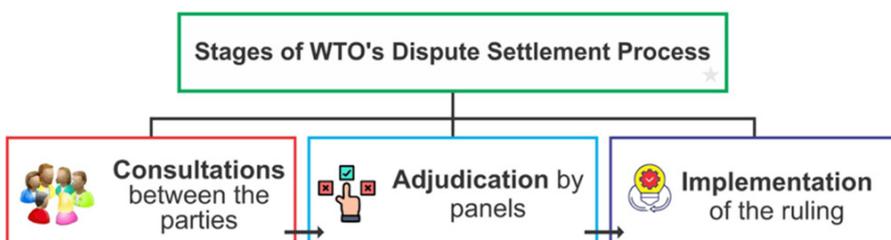
## • About ITA

- It is a **plurilateral agreement** of the WTO.
- It covers a **large number of high-technology products**, including computers, telecommunication equipment, semiconductors, semiconductor manufacturing, etc.
- It covers **81 WTO members, which account for approximately 97 percent** of world trade in information technology products.

## • Dispute resolution in WTO

- There are two main ways to settle a dispute once a complaint has been filed in WTO:
  - **Parties find a mutually agreed solution**, particularly during the phase of bilateral consultations.
  - **Through adjudication**, including the subsequent implementation of the panel and Appellate Body reports.

### Stages of WTO's Dispute Settlement Process



## SOURCES OF CASES BEFORE THE COURT:

- Member country can refer situation within its territory to the court.
- **UN Security Council can refer to a situation** in this all-UN Member States must cooperate regardless of party status.
- **Prosecutor can initiate an investigation** into member state.

# CENTRE TO RECRUIT SENIOR OFFICERS THROUGH LATERAL ENTRY MODE

- The **Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT)** has asked the **Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)** to induct these senior officers from the private sector.
  - Lateral entry is referred to as the **appointment of private sector specialists** in government departments.
  - This is the **4th such lateral entry initiative** since it was introduced in 2018.
  - Idea has been advocated by **Surinder Nath Committee (2003), Hota Committee (2004)** and **Second ARC (2008)**.
  - **NITI Aayog, in its three-year Action Agenda (2017–2020)**, recommended the induction of personnel at middle and senior management levels in the central government.
- **Arguments in favour:**
  - Twin objective of **bringing in fresh talent** as well as augment the **availability of manpower**.
  - **Domain expertise** synthesised with the **multi-sectoral wisdom** of the permanent civil service may help in producing a **better output**.
  - **Increasing complexity in governance** due to **factors like digitalization** of governance, financial frauds, **cybercrime**.
    - It will increase **efficiency** by imparting competition within the governance.
- **Arguments against:**
  - Difficulty in adjusting to the **bureaucratic work culture**.
  - Short tenures are **not conducive to hold accountability**.
  - Lack of **field experience**.

## ALSO IN NEWS

**PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) Yojana**

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) **celebrated 3 years journey of PM SVANidhi**.
  - The government also launched a **PM SVANidhi mobile app for street vendors**, to ease the loan application process.
- **About PM SVANidhi**
  - **Type:** Central Sector Scheme.
  - **Ministry:** Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
  - **Objectives:** To facilitate collateral free working capital loans of up to INR10,000/- of one-year tenure, to approximately 50 lakh street vendors.

**Gift tax**

- CBDT exempted **buyers from gift tax when they acquire equity shares in public-sector units (PSUs) through strategic disinvestment**.
- **About Gift tax:**
  - A "gift" can be in the form of **money and movable/immovable property** that an individual receives from another individual or organization **without making a payment**.
  - Before the amendment, **the difference in book value and fair market value was considered deemed income for the buyer under Section 56(2)(x) of the Income Tax Act**.
  - For the buyer, the **difference is treated as deemed income, which gets taxed** at the rate applicable to the individual.
- **The relaxation will stay as long as the strategic investor retains at least 51 per cent** in the PSU after the takeover.

**The World of Work report**

- **The International Labour Organisation (ILO)** has released its 11th edition of the World of Work report.
- **Key highlight**
  - **Uneven impact of the polycrisis** (simultaneous occurrence of several catastrophic events like the war in Ukraine and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic)
  - **The projected global unemployment rate** for 2023 is expected to fall below pre-pandemic levels.
  - The ILO has introduced a **new indicator called the jobs gap**. This encompasses all individuals who desire employment but are currently jobless.

**Fraud Analysis by RBI**

- **According to annual RBI report**, over the last three years **private sector banks reported maximum number of frauds, public sector banks continued to contribute maximum to the fraud amount**.
  - Frauds have occurred predominantly in digital payments (card/internet) **in terms of number**.
  - **In terms of value**, frauds have been in the loan portfolio (advances category).
- **Strategy to deal with fraud**
  - **Strengthening and enhancement of early warning signal (EWS) and Fraud Risk Management System (FRMS)**.
  - **Market risk** - conducting scenario analysis and providing an input for system stress test (Utkarsh 2.0).

**Desiccation-tolerant vascular (DT) plants**

- New study discovers **62 desiccation-tolerant vascular plant species in India's Western Ghats**, having applications in agriculture.
  - DT Plants **are plants that are capable to withstand extreme dehydration**, losing up to **95% of their water content**, and they revive themselves once water is available again.
  - **Plants resistant to desiccation** are commonly known as **"resurrection plants"** (vascular and non-vascular plants).
- In tropical regions, they are the **predominant occupants of rock outcrops**.
  - Rock outcrops are visible exposures of **bedrock or other geologic formations at the surface of the Earth**.

 <p><b>The Draft Aircraft Bill, 2023</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Civil Aviation Ministry has prepared the draft after <b>reviewing the existing Aircraft Act, 1934</b>.</li><li>• <b>Aim:</b> To have an Act to make better provisions for regulation and control of the design, manufacture, possession, etc. It also seeks to bring India in line with the Chicago Convention.</li><li>• India is member of <b>Convention on International Civil Aviation, 1944 (also known as Chicago Convention)</b>.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ It aim to achieve the sustainable growth of the global civil aviation system.</li></ul></li></ul>
 <p><b>Sal seeds</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Odisha government decided to <b>procure sal seeds (<i>Shorea robusta</i>) from nine districts</b>.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Odisha account for 25% of sal seeds production in the country.</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Key Features</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ The sal tree is <b>native to India, Myanmar and Nepal</b>.</li><li>➤ It occurs in <b>tropical deciduous dry forests</b> and in evergreen moist forests.</li><li>➤ It is <b>resistant to fire</b>, thus often a dominant tree in Indian forests.</li><li>➤ <b>Soil:</b> deep, sandy, moist soils.</li><li>➤ <b>Classified under the Minor Forest Produce and state government provides Minimum Support Price.</b></li></ul></li></ul>
 <p><b>MH-60R Romeo helicopter</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Indian Navy achieved a unique feat after an <b>MH-60 'Romeo' multi-mission helicopter landed on the indigenously-built aircraft carrier INS Vikrant</b>.</li><li>• <b>About MH-60R helicopter:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Manufactured by Lockheed Martin Corporation, it is an <b>all-weather helicopter</b> designed to support multiple missions with <b>state-of-the-art avionics and sensors</b>.</li><li>➤ It is a versatile platform known for its exceptional <b>Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW), surveillance, anti-shipping, and search and rescue capabilities</b>.</li></ul></li></ul>
 <p><b>Press Information Bureau (PIB)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Press Information Bureau (PIB) <b>marked its centennial anniversary</b></li><li>• <b>About Press Information Bureau (PIB)</b></li></ul> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"><p style="text-align: center;"><b>Press Information Bureau (PIB)</b> </p><p><b>About :</b> <b>Nodal agency</b> of the Government of India to <b>disseminate information to the print and electronic media</b> on government policies, programmes etc.</p><p><b>Genesis:</b></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Set up as a <b>temporary cell</b> (under then British government) in 1919. In 1923, the bureau was <b>made permanent</b> as the Bureau of Public Information.</li><li>◦ It acquired its present <b>name in 1946</b>, and became a <b>department of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting</b> after 1947.</li></ul><p><b>Headed by:</b> <b>Principal Director General</b> (Media &amp; Communication) who is assisted by a Director General and <b>eight Additional Director Generals</b>.</p><p><b>Functions:</b> Activities can be broadly <b>classified in three Categories:</b> Information, Education &amp; Communication; Feedback and Accreditation &amp; Special Services.</p></div>
 <p><b>Golconda Fort</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Ministry of Culture celebrated the <b>Telangana Formation Day at Golconda Fort</b> (located in Hyderabad city) in Telangana.</li><li>• <b>About Golconda Fort:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ The history of Golconda Fort goes back to <b>early 13th century</b>, when it was <b>ruled by the Kakatiya's</b> followed by <b>Qutub Shahi kings</b> (ruled the region in 16th and 17th century).</li><li>➤ Qutb Shahi Sultans developed the present architecture, a <b>gigantic granite stronghold</b>.</li><li>➤ Golconda was the <b>principal capital of the Qutub Shahi kings</b>.</li><li>➤ <b>Acoustical effects</b> at Fateh Darwaza (Victory gate) is one among the many famous engineering marvels at Golconda.</li></ul></li></ul>