



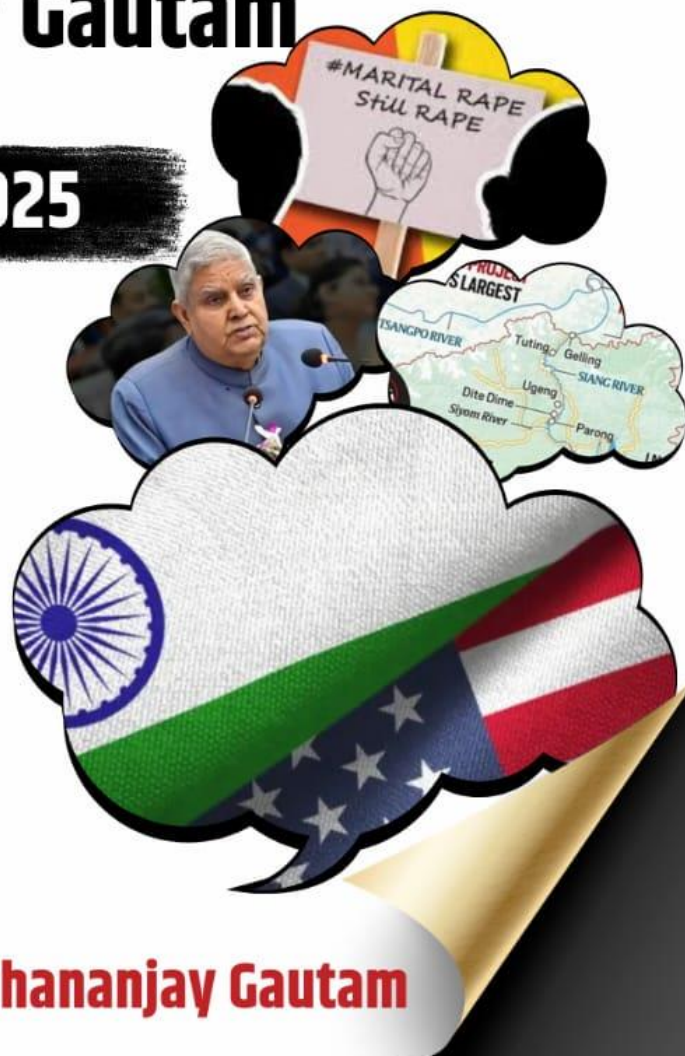
# Daily Current Affairs



## To The Point by Dhananjay Gautam

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## 1 China's Mega-Dam on Brahmaputra Sparks Environmental and Geopolitical Concerns

**Context:** China's plan to build the **world's largest hydropower dam** on the **Brahmaputra River**, known as **Yarlung Tsangpo** in Tibet, has raised **major concerns** among **India and Bangladesh**, both of which depend on the river for **water security, agriculture, and livelihoods**.

### China's Ambitious Mega-Dam Project:

- **Capacity:** 60 GW (Three times larger than China's **Three Gorges Dam**)
- **Estimated Cost:** \$137 billion
- **Location:** Great Bend of the **Brahmaputra River** in **Medog County, Tibet**
- **Part of China's Plan to Achieve Carbon Neutrality by 2060**



China has a history of **building large dams**, including the **Three Gorges Dam (Yangtze)** and **Zangmu Dam (Yarlung Tsangpo)**. This project, however, is on an **unprecedented scale**, sparking fears over **environmental damage and water security** for downstream nations.

### Brahmaputra River: A Lifeline for Millions

- **Origin:** **Tibet (Yarlung Tsangpo)**
- **India:** Becomes **Siang** in **Arunachal Pradesh**, later joining **Dibang and Lohit** tributaries to form the **Brahmaputra in Assam**
- **Bangladesh:** Flows into Bangladesh before merging with the **Bay of Bengal**
- **Bhutan:** Though the main river doesn't flow through Bhutan, **96% of Bhutan's landmass** falls within its basin.

The **Brahmaputra River** is crucial for **agriculture, fisheries, and livelihoods** across its basin, making China's **upstream damming a major concern** for downstream nations.

### Why China's Mega-Dam Project Is a Serious Concern:

#### 1. Environmental & Ecological Threats:

##### Disrupted Water Flow & Reduced Sediment Deposits

- The Brahmaputra carries **nutrient-rich sediments** that fertilize farmlands in **India and Bangladesh**.
- China's **massive dams trap these sediments**, leading to **declining soil fertility** and threatening **agricultural output**.

##### Increased Risk of Flash Floods:

- **Sudden water releases** from Chinese reservoirs can **trigger devastating floods** in **Arunachal Pradesh and Assam**.
- There have been past incidents where **unannounced water discharges** caused **deaths and widespread destruction**.

##### Threat to Biodiversity:

- **Fluctuating water levels** could **harm aquatic species**, including the **Gangetic dolphin**, and disrupt breeding cycles of fish.

##### Impact of Climate Change & Glacial Melt:

- The **Tibetan Plateau**, called the "**Third Pole**", contains vast glaciers that regulate **global climate patterns**.
- Large-scale damming could **alter natural water cycles**, worsening **climate change effects**.

##### Seismic Risks & Geological Instability:

- The dam is being built in a **highly earthquake-prone region**.
- A **massive earthquake or landslide** could cause a **dam collapse**, leading to a **catastrophic flood disaster** in downstream areas.

## 2. Geopolitical Tensions & Strategic Concerns:

### China's Control Over Brahmaputra: A Water Weapon?

- India fears China could **manipulate water flow**, creating **artificial droughts or floods** in the region.
- This raises concerns about **water being used as a strategic weapon** in times of conflict.

### Legal & Diplomatic Hurdles:

- China is **not a signatory** to the **UN Convention on Transboundary Watercourses (1997)**, which ensures **equitable water-sharing**.
- India and China have an **Expert Level Mechanism (ELM)** since 2006, but **no binding treaty** exists on water-sharing.

### Regional Water Conflicts:

- China has also **built dams on the Mekong River**, affecting countries like **Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand**.
- Similar concerns have been raised by **Southeast Asian nations** over **reduced water availability** due to China's damming policies.

### Economic & Social Impact on India and Bangladesh:

- **Forced relocation of communities** due to changing river courses.
- **Disruptions in irrigation and fishing**, leading to **food insecurity**.

### How India Can Respond:

#### Boosting Domestic Water Infrastructure:

- India is accelerating **hydropower projects in Arunachal Pradesh**, including the **Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP)**, to ensure **water security and energy independence**.

#### Strengthening Diplomatic Alliances:

- India is working with **Bangladesh and other regional players** to create a **united front on transboundary water management**.

#### Enhancing Satellite Surveillance & Early Warning Systems:

- **Advanced satellite monitoring** can help track **Chinese dam activities** in real-time.
- **Improved flood prediction models** will allow better disaster preparedness.

#### Pushing for International Legal Frameworks:

- India can advocate for **global agreements on river-sharing** and seek **international arbitration** to counter China's unilateral control.

### Conclusion:

China's **mega-dam project on the Brahmaputra** poses **serious environmental, economic, and geopolitical threats** to **India, Bangladesh, and the broader region**.

While China claims the dam is part of its **clean energy goals**, its **potential consequences—flood risks, ecological damage, and strategic water control—cannot be ignored**.

India must **act decisively** through **infrastructure development, diplomatic pressure, and advanced monitoring** to safeguard its **water security and regional stability**.



## 2 Draft Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2025: Key Highlights and Implications

**Context:** The **Government of India** is set to introduce amendments to the **Advocates Act, 1961**, aiming to **modernize and strengthen the legal framework** governing the legal profession in the country.

### About the Bill:

- The **Advocates Act, 1961**, originally enacted to **regulate the legal profession**, ensures **client protection** and maintains **disciplinary standards** through the **Bar Council of India (BCI)** and **State Bar Councils**.
- While **law firms** in India are already governed as **corporate entities**, **foreign lawyers** have not been previously recognized under the Act.
- The **Department of Legal Affairs** has prepared the **Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2025**, along with a **comparative statement** outlining **existing provisions and proposed changes**.
- A major highlight of the bill is that it **opens the doors for foreign law firms and lawyers** to operate in India.



### Key Features of the Bill:

#### 1. Strengthening the Role of the Bar Council of India (BCI):

- The **BCI will have expanded regulatory powers**, including overseeing **law firms operating across multiple states**.
- The **central government** will have the **authority to override BCI regulations** if they conflict with government policies.

#### 2. Framework for Foreign Law Firms:

- The amendments propose a **structured regulatory framework** for **foreign law firms** looking to enter the Indian market.
- This move aims to **align India's legal profession with global best practices** and facilitate **cross-border legal collaboration**.

#### 3. Government's Increased Role in the BCI:

- The **central government will be empowered to nominate up to three members** to the **Bar Council of India**.
- These members will join existing officials like the **Attorney General and Solicitor General**.
- **Section 49B** grants the **central government** the right to **issue directives** to the BCI for effective implementation of the Act.

#### 4. Regulation of Strikes and Boycotts by Lawyers:

- **Section 35A** prohibits lawyers from **going on strike or boycotting court proceedings** if it **disrupts judicial functions**.
- Lawyers may, however, engage in **symbolic protests or one-day strikes**, provided they **do not affect clients' rights**.

#### 5. Transfer of Bar Council Registration:



- Advocates wishing to **transfer their registration from one state bar council to another** will be required to **pay a prescribed fee** and obtain **BCI approval**.

#### 6. Disqualification for Advocates with Serious Convictions:

- Advocates **convicted of offenses** carrying a **minimum sentence of three years** will be **removed from the state roll**, subject to **confirmation by the High Court or Supreme Court**.

#### 7. Expanded Definitions in Legal Profession:

- The definition of a **law graduate** now includes individuals obtaining **law degrees from institutions recognized by the BCI**.
- The term “**legal practitioner**” is broadened to **include corporate lawyers and lawyers working with foreign law firms**.

#### 8. Stricter Punishment for Unauthorized Legal Practice:

- **Practicing law without authorization** will now attract **harsher penalties**.
- The punishment has been **increased from six months to one year of imprisonment** and/or a **fine of up to 2 lakh**.

#### Conclusion:

The **Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2025** is a **significant step** in modernizing India's legal profession. By **introducing regulatory changes, expanding definitions, and allowing foreign legal entities**, the government aims to **make India's legal system more robust, transparent, and globally competitive**.

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## 3 Trump's Reciprocal Tariffs: Impact on India's Economy & Atmanirbhar Bharat

**Context:** US President **Donald Trump** has announced plans to implement **reciprocal tariffs** on all countries, set to take effect after **April 1st**. This move could **disrupt global trade**, potentially reversing progress made over the past century and undermining **World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements**. By targeting **both allies and rivals**, Trump is signaling a major shift in **international trade policies**.



### What Are Reciprocal Tariffs?

**Tariffs** are taxes imposed by a country on **imported goods**, making them more expensive for domestic buyers.

### The Move Towards Free Trade

Since **World War II**, global economies have embraced **free trade**, recognizing that open markets lead to **economic prosperity**. Agreements like **GATT** and the **WTO** allowed **developing nations**, including **India**, to impose **higher tariffs** to protect local industries from competition with **highly industrialized nations**.

### Trump's Shift to Reciprocal Tariffs:

Trump's "**reciprocal tariffs**" policy aims to end **preferential treatment** for any country. Under this system, the **US will impose the same level of tariffs** on imports as other nations place on US exports. Trump argues that this method is **fairer** and reduces the need for **complex trade agreements**, overriding decades of **global trade norms** designed to protect **developing economies**.

### How Will Reciprocal Tariffs Be Calculated?

The **final methodology** for calculating **reciprocal tariffs** is still under development, with the **US trade department** expected to finalize country-specific rates by **April**.

### Beyond Just Matching Tariffs:

Instead of simply mirroring **import duties**, the **US will factor in subsidies** and financial assistance that other governments provide to their **export industries**. For instance, if India offers **subsidies** to certain sectors, the US may impose **higher tariffs** on those products to create a "**level playing field**."

### Impact on Developing Countries:

If this policy is enforced strictly, **developing nations** like India—which offer **significant subsidies**—could face **higher tariffs** on their goods entering the US market.

**For example:** Between **2022 and 2024**, India allocated **\$1 billion (₹8,700 crore)** under the **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme** to boost **mobile phone exports**. Since the **PLI scheme** is essentially a **subsidy**, it could prompt the US to **increase tariffs** on Indian-made **electronics and other subsidized goods**.

### Why Is Trump Imposing Reciprocal Tariffs?

Trump's decision is driven by **multiple factors**, not just a desire to target specific countries.

### Targeting Allies & Competitors Alike:

While **China** remains America's **biggest trade rival**, Trump has also criticized **allies like Canada, Mexico, and the EU**, accusing them of **unfair trade practices**.

### Trump's Obsession with Trade Deficits:

Trump strongly opposes **trade deficits**, which occur when a country **imports more than it exports**.

- The **US trade deficit** is nearing **\$1 trillion**.
- **China** enjoys a **trade surplus of over \$1 trillion**. Trump views this as proof that the **world is "cheating" the US** by not engaging in **fair trade**.

**How Trump Plans to Fix the Trade Deficit:**

- **Forcing Countries to Import More US Goods** – Encouraging nations to **buy American** to balance trade.
- **Compelling Foreign Companies to Manufacture in the US** – Raising tariffs to **make it costlier for foreign firms to export**, pushing them to **set up factories in the US instead**.

**Impact of Reciprocal Tariffs on India:**

Since **India has traditionally imposed higher tariffs** on US goods, it is expected to be **one of the most affected nations**.

**India-US Trade Snapshot (April–Nov 2024):**

- **Total Bilateral Trade: \$82.52 billion**
- **India's Exports to the US: \$52.89 billion**
- **India's Imports from the US: \$29.63 billion**
- **Trade Surplus (India's Favor): \$23.26 billion**

**Sectors Most at Risk:**

Higher US tariffs could negatively impact **key Indian exports**, including:

- **Food Products**
- **Textiles & Apparel**
- **Electrical Machinery**
- **Gems & Jewelry**
- **Pharmaceuticals**
- **Automobiles**

**Increase in US Imports to India:**

To **reduce the trade gap**, India may be pressured to **import more US goods**, such as:

- **Defense Equipment**
- **Crude Oil**
- **Consumer Goods**

**Rupee Depreciation Risk:**

Higher **US imports** will increase demand for **US dollars**, potentially leading to a **weaker Indian rupee**.

**Impact on Domestic Consumption & GDP Growth:****Final Thoughts:**

Trump's **reciprocal tariffs policy** could reshape **India-US trade relations**, bringing **both challenges and opportunities**.

While **some sectors might benefit**, the **threat to India's exports and Atmanirbhar Bharat cannot be ignored**. Going forward, India must **strategically navigate these trade barriers** to protect **economic interests** while ensuring **stronger engagement with global markets**.



## 4 Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDKY)

**Context:** The Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDKY) was unveiled by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman during the Union Budget. This initiative is designed to revolutionize agricultural practices in 100 districts across India, taking inspiration from the Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) launched in 2018.



### How PMDKY Will Be Implemented:

PMDKY is structured similarly to ADP but focuses exclusively on agriculture. The 100 target districts will be identified based on the following key parameters:

- Low agricultural productivity
- Moderate cropping intensity
- Below-average access to credit for farmers

The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare is currently analyzing agricultural data to select the districts that will benefit the most. Funding for the scheme will be pooled from existing agricultural and allied sector programs, including those under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying.

### Objectives of PMDKY:

The primary goal of PMDKY is to boost rural prosperity by modernizing farming practices. The scheme focuses on:

1. Enhancing agricultural productivity through modern techniques.
2. Encouraging crop diversification and sustainable farming methods.
3. Expanding post-harvest storage facilities at panchayat and block levels.
4. Improving irrigation infrastructure for efficient water use.
5. Ensuring access to short-term and long-term credit for farmers.

### Understanding Cropping Intensity:

#### What is Cropping Intensity?

Cropping intensity is a key agricultural metric that measures the efficient use of land. It is calculated as the percentage of the gross cropped area relative to the net area sown.

- It indicates how many crops are grown on a piece of land within one agricultural year.
- India's cropping intensity in 2021-22 stood at 155%, a major jump from 111% in 1950-51.

### PMDKY and the Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP):

#### What is ADP?

The Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) was introduced in January 2018 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to accelerate development in 112 of India's most underdeveloped districts.

#### The 3Cs Approach of ADP:

The program's success is driven by three fundamental principles:

1. Convergence – Aligning Central and State government schemes.





2. **Collaboration** – Engaging government officers at **district, state, and national levels**.
3. **Competition** – Ranking districts based on their **monthly progress**.

**Performance-Based Development:**

The ranking system evaluates districts on **49 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** spread across **five major socio-economic sectors**:

1. **Health & Nutrition**
2. **Education**
3. **Agriculture & Water Resources**
4. **Financial Inclusion & Skill Development**
5. **Infrastructure Development**

**Conclusion:**

The **PMDKY initiative** is set to **redefine India's agricultural landscape** by targeting **low-performing districts** and providing **strategic interventions** to improve **productivity, sustainability, and farmer prosperity**. By adopting **ADP's data-driven approach**, the program aims to create a **self-sufficient agricultural ecosystem**, reinforcing **India's vision for rural development and food security**.

  
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## 5 Vice-President Questions CJI's Role in Executive Appointments

**Context:** Vice-President **Jagdeep Dhankhar** has raised concerns over the **involvement of the Chief Justice of India (CJI)** in executive appointments, particularly in the selection of the **CBI Director**. He questioned the **legal basis** for this practice and stressed the importance of maintaining the **separation of powers** in India's democratic framework.



### Understanding Separation of Powers:

The **separation of powers** is a fundamental principle that ensures the division of government functions into three distinct branches:

- **Executive** – Implements laws
- **Legislature** – Makes laws
- **Judiciary** – Interprets laws

This principle establishes a system of **checks and balances** to prevent any single branch from becoming too powerful or interfering with the others. The **Indian Constitution** upholds this doctrine to ensure **democratic governance and the rule of law**.

### Separation of Powers in Practice:

While the doctrine is fundamental, in India, it is not **absolute** but rather ensures **coordination** between the branches. Some areas where this overlap is evident include:

- **Judicial Appointments** – The **Collegium System** allows judicial appointments by the **Executive**, in consultation with the **Judiciary**.
- **Legislative-Executive Overlap** – The **President's power to issue ordinances** gives the **Executive** a role in lawmaking.

### Challenges to Separation of Powers:

Despite its importance, certain issues pose challenges to this principle:

#### Judicial Activism:

At times, the **Judiciary intervenes** in matters traditionally under the **Executive or Legislature**, such as governance policies and environmental decisions, raising concerns about **judicial overreach**.

#### Executive Influence on the Judiciary:

The **Executive** may attempt to **influence judicial appointments** or **interfere in judicial matters**, as seen in debates over the **Collegium system**.

### Key Constitutional Provisions:

- **Article 50** – Directs the **State** to ensure the separation of the **Judiciary from the Executive**.
- **Articles 74 & 163** – Courts **cannot question the advice** given by the **Council of Ministers** to the President or Governor.
- **Articles 122 & 212** – Courts **cannot challenge the validity** of **Parliamentary and Legislative proceedings**.
- **Articles 121 & 211** – Parliament and State Legislatures **cannot discuss the judicial conduct** of Supreme Court and High Court judges unless for impeachment.



- **Article 361** – Provides **immunity** to the **President and Governors** from legal accountability for their official actions.

## Appointment of CBI Director:

The **Lokpal Act (2014)** established a committee for appointing the **CBI Director**, comprising:

- **Prime Minister (Chairperson)**
- **Leader of the Opposition** or **Leader of the largest opposition party**
- **Chief Justice of India** or a **Supreme Court Judge** nominated by the CJI

The Vice-President's remarks bring renewed attention to the **delicate balance** between the **Judiciary and Executive**, sparking debate over the **separation of powers** in India's governance system.



## 6 Marital Rape in India: Legal and Social Debate

**Context:** In the **Gorakhnath Sharma vs. State of Chhattisgarh (2019)** case, the **Chhattisgarh High Court (HC)** ruled that a husband **cannot be charged with rape or unnatural sex** with his wife if she is **above 15 years of age**, regardless of consent.

The court's decision was based on **Exception 2 under Section 375 of the IPC**, which grants husbands **immunity from rape charges** unless the wife is **under 15 years old**.



### Understanding Marital Rape:

#### Definition:

Marital rape refers to **forced sex or sexual assault** within a marriage, a form of **intimate partner violence**. Unlike many other countries, it is **not a criminal offense in India**.

However, if a couple is **married but living separately**, the **husband can be convicted of rape** if his wife **does not consent** to sexual intercourse.

### Legal Provisions in India:

- **Section 375 (2) of IPC:** States that **sexual intercourse between a husband and wife is not considered rape** if the wife is **15 years or older**.
- **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS):** Retains the **exemption for husbands**, but **raises the age of consent to 18**, aligning with the **SC's ruling in Independent Thought vs. Union of India (2017)**.
- **Domestic Violence Act, 2005:** While **marital rape is not criminalized**, a woman can seek **legal protection** against **sexual abuse, humiliation, or violation of dignity** under this act.

### Key Judicial Rulings on Marital Rape:

#### Independent Thought vs. Union of India (2017):

- The **Supreme Court struck down Exception 2 of Section 375 IPC** (Section 63 of BNS) for **wives aged 15-18**, declaring **sexual intercourse with minor wives as rape**.
- The ruling deemed this exception **arbitrary and unconstitutional**, violating **Articles 14 (equality), 15 (non-discrimination), and 21 (right to life and dignity)**.
- It upheld that the **POCSO Act, 2012**, which criminalizes **sexual intercourse with minors**, prevails over the IPC, making **child marriage no defense for rape**.

#### KS Puttaswamy Case (2017):

- Established **sexual autonomy** as an integral part of **privacy rights**.

### Other Recent High Court Rulings:

- **Bombay High Court (2023):** Declared **consensual sex with a minor wife as rape**, rejecting **consent as a valid defense**.
- **Madhya Pradesh High Court (2024):** Ruled that **unnatural sex with a wife does not constitute rape**, stating that the **wife's consent is irrelevant** in such cases.

### Judicial Rulings on Unnatural Sex:

**Navtej Singh Johar Case (2018):** The **Supreme Court decriminalized consensual homosexuality** by partially striking down **Section 377 IPC**.

### Government's Position on Marital Rape:

The **Ministry of Home Affairs** informed the **Supreme Court** that while a **husband cannot force his wife** into sexual relations, labeling it as **rape is too harsh and disproportionate**.

### Arguments For and Against Criminalizing Marital Rape:

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### Arguments Supporting Criminalization:

1. **Violation of Autonomy:** Every individual has the **right to refuse sex**, even in marriage.
2. **Supreme Court's Stand:** The **Independent Thought case (2017)** recognized **marital rape for minors**, reinforcing the principle of **consent**.
3. **Equality Before Law:** Exempting husbands from rape laws **violates constitutional rights** under **Articles 14, 15, and 21**.
4. **POCSO & Child Protection:** If **non-consensual sex with minors is a crime**, the same standard should apply to **married adults**.

### Arguments Against Criminalization:

1. **Threat to Marriage:** Criminalizing **marital rape** may **destabilize relationships** and lead to **misuse of laws**.
2. **Existing Laws Are Sufficient:** **Domestic violence laws** already offer **protection from sexual harassment** within marriage.
3. **Risk of Misuse:** There is a **possibility of false allegations** in **divorce and child custody cases**.
4. **Social & Cultural Norms:** In many societies, marriage is traditionally linked to **sexual relations**, making legal reforms complex.
5. **Legislative Decision:** The government argues that **courts should not interfere**, as **marital rape laws should be decided by the legislature**.

### Marital Rape Laws Across the World:

- **Criminalized in 77 countries**, recognized under **general sexual assault laws** in 74 nations, and **decriminalized or given immunity in 34 nations**.
- **Illegal in 50 U.S. states**, as well as in **Canada, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Israel, France, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and several others**.
- The **UK removed the marital rape exception in 1991**, despite the **IPC being originally based on British law**.

### What Can Be Done to Address Marital Rape?

#### Jaya Jaitley Committee Recommendations:

- **Increase the legal marriage age for women from 18 to 21**, promoting **gender equality** and **reducing non-consensual sex risks**.

#### Legislative Reforms:

- **Amend the BNS to remove marital rape immunity** and legally recognize **spousal consent**.

#### Alternative Legal Frameworks:

- **Expand the Domestic Violence Act, 2005**, explicitly **including marital sexual violence** with stronger **civil remedies** such as **restraining orders and compensation**.

#### Adopting Global Best Practices:

- India can **study legal frameworks** from the **UK, Canada, and Australia** to craft **culturally adaptive marital rape laws** while balancing **human rights with socio-cultural realities**.

### Conclusion:

The **criminalization of marital rape** remains a **complex issue**, balancing **individual rights, legal equality, and cultural traditions**. While **many countries** have recognized **spousal consent as essential**, India still provides **legal immunity to husbands**.

With **growing judicial emphasis on autonomy and dignity**, the debate continues. Whether through **legislative action or judicial intervention**, legal clarity is essential to protect **the fundamental rights of women** while addressing **societal concerns**.

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