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ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

**Science
Reporter**



MK Yadav Sir

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Removing exotic plants will ensure food for wild animals, finds study

The Hindu Bureau
IDUKKI

Removing exotic plants from forest areas will help ensure food for wild elephants at Chinnakkanal in Munnar, says a study by the Kerala State Forest Protective Staff Organisation, an association of frontline forest officers.

A group of ground forest team, including deputy rangers, watchers, and a protection watchers team, visited Chinnakkanal recently and interacted with local people and panchayat officials about steps to mitigate human-elephant conflict in the region.

KSFPSO district secre-



Preventive measures: Wild elephants roaming in a Eucalyptus plantation at Idukki's Chinnakkanal. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

tary Santhosh P.G. says removing exotic species such as *Acacia mearnsii* (black wattle) and eucalyptus from forests is vital to addressing the problems.

"In many areas in forests filled with exotic trees, no other plants are grow-

ing. Wild animals, including elephants, are unable to move through these areas. If these areas change to natural grasslands, it will ensure food and water for wild elephants. The report will be submitted to the government soon," he says.

"The Chinnakkanal landscape is overrun by West Indian Lantana (kongini), inhibiting the growth of other species and restricting access to animals," says Mr. Santhosh.

According to officials, 19 wild elephants, including two tuskers Chakkakompan and Muriyalan Kompan, five male calves, and 12 female elephants, have been confined to the Chinnakkanal landscape. An expert panel appointed by the High Court to address human-animal conflict in the region has recommended reopening the elephant corridor from Anayirankal to Old Devikulam in Munnar for facilitating the movement of elephants.

Context: A recent study by the Kerala State Forest Protective Staff Organization suggests that removing exotic plants from forest areas in Chinnakkanal, Munnar will aid in securing food sources for wild elephants.

Exotic Plants

- **About:** An exotic plant is one that is not native to an area, but which may survive and reproduce here, displacing native species and altering natural systems.
 - **Also known as:** Alien, nonnative, nonindigenous, or introduced species, inhabit regions beyond their natural geographic range.
- **Examples:** Aglaonema, Calathea Peacock Plant, Pachira Money plant, The PPP or the Philodendron Pink Princess Plant, Peace Lilies, Snake Plant etc.

- **Factors contributing to growth of exotic plants:** Absence of Natural Predators, High Reproductive Capacity, Efficient Seed Dispersal Mechanisms, Production of Toxins or Defensive Structures, Asexual Reproduction Capability

Effects of an exotic plant

- **Main Threat to Biodiversity:** Exotic species pose a significant threat to biodiversity by disrupting natural ecosystems' structure and function.
- **Ecological Services:** Despite their threat, exotic species can occasionally offer ecological services like seed dispersal.
- **Disruption of Mutualistic Interactions:** The focus of our assessment was on examining the mechanisms behind the disruption of mutualistic plant-disperser interactions.

Cryptogenic Species: Within marine science, species introduced through human activities such as exploration and trade blur the distinction between native and exotic, leading to a category known as cryptogenic.

How to decide domestic violence damages: injury or ability to pay?

KHADIA KHAN
NEW DELHI, MAY 2

SHOULD THE quantum of compensation in cases of domestic violence be determined by the degree of violence suffered by the victim or the ability of the perpetrator to pay? This is the question before the Supreme Court, which issued notice in the case last week.

The petitioner has moved the top court against orders passed by the Bombay High Court and the trial court directing him to pay Rs 3 crore to his wife under Section 22 of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (DV Act). On April 26, a Bench of Justices Hishmah Khan and Parvath Kumar Mishra noted "the fundamental question" raised by counsel for petitioner "is whether the compensation awarded should co-relate to the degree of domestic violence suffered by the victim or is it to be linked to the financial status of the guilty party".

Domestic violence

The DV Act is intended to "provide for

more effective protection of the rights of women guaranteed under the Constitution who are victims of violence of any kind occurring within the family and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto".

Under Section 3 of the Act, "any act, omission, commission or conduct of the respondent" that "harms or injures or endangers the health, safety, life, limb or well-being, whether mental or physical, of the aggrieved person or tends to do so and includes causing physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal and emotional abuse and economic abuse", constitutes domestic violence.

"Harass[ing], harm[ing], injur[ing] or endanger[ing] the aggrieved person, in consequence or any other person related to her to meet any unlawful demand for any dowry or other property or valuable security" also amounts to domestic violence.

The law defines an "aggrieved person" as "any woman who is, or has been, in a domestic relationship with the respondent and who alleges to have been subjected to any act of domestic violence by the respondent".

Compensation, relief

Under Section 22 ("Compensation or relief"), "in addition to other reliefs", a "Magistrate may, pass an order directing the respondent to pay compensation and damages for the injuries, including mental torture and emotional distress, caused by the acts of domestic violence committed by that respondent".

Section 12 allows an aggrieved person or anyone on their behalf to apply to a Magistrate for one or more reliefs under the Act, including "a relief for issuance of an order for payment of compensation or damages without prejudice to the right to institute a suit for compensation or damages for the injuries caused by the acts of domestic violence committed by the respondent".

Petitioner's argument
Senior advocate Madhavi Divan, representing the husband, raised a question regarding the quantum of compensation (Rs 3 crore) awarded to the wife under Section

22 of the DV Act.

According to the order, counsel submitted that the compensation "should be related to the damages, injuries including mental torture and emotional distress caused by the act of the spouse, and cannot relate to the standard of living of the parties".

Divan argued that while the standard of living criteria can perhaps be made applicable in cases of maintenance under Section 20 of the Act, in this case, the compensation awarded under Section 22 has been "based on the petitioner's annual income, who is a US citizen, for the year 2008-2009".

Section 20 of the DV Act, "Monetary reliefs" allows the magistrate, while disposing of an application for relief under Section 12, to "direct the respondent to pay monetary relief to meet the expenses incurred and losses suffered by the aggrieved person and any child of the aggrieved person" where the monetary relief is "adequate, fair and reasonable and consistent with the standard of living to which the aggrieved

person is accustomed". The magistrate can either "order an appropriate lump sum payment or monthly payments of maintenance, as the nature and circumstances of the case may require".

Deciding compensation

In 2008, the Delhi High Court in *Chaturbhuj vs. Sita Bai* held that the object of maintenance proceedings is not to punish a person for his past neglect but to prevent the destitution of a deserted wife by providing her food, clothing, and shelter through a speedy remedy.

In 2017, in *Kalyan Dey Chowdhury vs. Rita Dey Chowdhury Nee Nandy*, the Supreme Court ruled that the "amount of permanent alimony awarded to the wife must be befitting the status of the parties and the capacity of the spouse to pay maintenance". The court also relied on its 1970 ruling in *Dr. Kulbhushan Kumar vs. Raj Kumari*, where it held that 25% of the husband's net salary would be just and proper to be awarded as maintenance to the respondent-wife. Advocate Saumya Kapoor told The

Indian Express that while Section 20 provides for compensation for all the losses of the aggrieved person, Section 22 exists to compensate only for the exact injury. "The payment under Section 22 is punitive in nature. However, the objective of paying compensation is not to put the offender in penury but to set an example and act as a deterrent," Kapoor said.

According to Kapoor, since maintenance and compensation are governed by different sections of the Act, "there exists a big gap of legal knowledge in the computation of damages". Due to the absence of clear precedents, "propositions of law from maintenance cases" are often borrowed and applied to DV cases, he said.

Advocate Dharmender Arya, who takes up family law cases, said damages are usually computed on the basis of both injuries suffered by the victim, as well as the financial status of the parties. "The court has the discretionary power to decide this value. Often, it goes case by case, taking into account the victim and the husband's status, and the kind of violence inflicted," Arya said.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT, 2005 (Syllabus GS Paper 2 – Polity)

Domestic Violence Act, 2005

- **About:** The DV Act aims to safeguard the rights of women as per the Constitution, particularly within familial contexts, addressing various forms of violence.
- **Defining Domestic Violence:** Actions or behaviors by the respondent that endanger the mental, physical, or emotional well-being of the victim, including physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, and economic abuse, constitute domestic violence.
- **Dowry-Related Offenses:** Coercing the victim or her relatives for dowry or other property through harassment, harm, or endangerment falls within the purview of domestic violence.
- **Aggrieved Person:** The law recognizes any woman in or previously in a domestic relationship with the respondent who alleges experiencing domestic violence as an aggrieved person.
- **Compensation, relief:** Section 22 of the Domestic Violence Act permits Magistrates to issue compensation orders in addition to other reliefs.
 - Magistrates are empowered to direct the respondent to pay compensation and damages for various injuries, including mental torture and emotional distress resulting from domestic violence acts.
- **Section 12:** It enables an aggrieved person or their representative to apply for multiple reliefs under the Act.
- **Section 20 of the DV Act ("Monetary reliefs"):** Allows the magistrate, while disposing of an application for relief under Section 12, to "direct the respondent to pay monetary relief to meet the expenses incurred and losses suffered by the aggrieved person and any child of the aggrieved person" where the monetary relief is "adequate, fair and reasonable and consistent with the standard of living to which the aggrieved person is accustomed".

POCSO Act's objective can't be ignored: SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday said the objective of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act could not be ignored merely because child marriages continue, or worse still, abusers marry their minor victims to escape conviction.

"What is the assurance that he will not abandon her after avoiding conviction?" Justice A.S. Oka

asked in court.

The top court was dealing with the case of kidnap and rape of a 14-year-old girl in West Bengal. Her mother had registered an FIR. However, she is currently living with her child and the accused, whom the trial court had convicted under the POCSO Act.

Deciding his appeal against conviction, the Calcutta High Court, in October last year, had acquitted the 20-year-old man, concluding that both had been romantically linked.

POCSO Rules 2020

- **Police Verification**: Provision for mandatory police verification of staff in schools and care homes.
- **Age-Appropriate**: Emphasis on imparting age-appropriate child rights education.
- **Child Pornography**: Requirement for reporting any receipt or knowledge of child pornography to authorities.
 - Reporting to be directed to the Special Juvenile Police Unit (SJPU), police, or cybercrime portal.
- **Child Protection Policy**: Directive for State Governments to formulate a comprehensive child protection policy.

Context: The Supreme Court recently emphasized that the objectives of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act cannot be overlooked, especially as perpetrators resort to marrying their minor victims to evade punishment, despite the persistence of child marriages.

Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012.

- **About**: This Act comprehensively outlines different categories of sexual offenses directed at children and imposes severe penalties on those found guilty of such crimes.
- **Establishment**: 2012
- **Salient features**:
 - **Gender neutral**: The Act is gender neutral and regards the best interests and welfare of the child as a matter of paramount importance at every stage so as to ensure the healthy physical, emotional, intellectual and social development of the child.
 - **Child definition**: Any person below the age of 18.
 - **Forms of abuse**: It defines different forms of sexual abuse, including penetrative and non-penetrative assault, as well as sexual harassment and pornography, and deems a sexual assault to be "aggravated" under certain circumstances.
 - **Stringent Punishment**: The Act prescribes stringent punishment graded as per the gravity of the offence, with a maximum term of rigorous imprisonment for life, and fine.
 - **Child pornography**: It defines "child pornography" as any visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct involving a child which include photograph, video, digital or computer-generated image indistinguishable from an actual child, and image created, adapted, or modified, but appear to depict a child.

Reserve 33% of bar body posts for women: SC

News Delhi: Supreme Court Thursday directed that at least one-third of posts in the executive committee of Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) should be reserved for women. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and K V Viswanathan passed direction granting reservation for women lawyers for polls scheduled this month.

The court directed that a minimum of three out of nine seats in the executive committee and at least two out of six senior executive members be reserved for women members of the Bar. It said that at least one post of office-bearer shall be reserved for women exclusively by turn and on rotation basis, and for the ensuing 2024-2025 election, the post of treasurer of the executive committee be reserved for women. TNN

Context: The Supreme Court recently mandated that at least one-third of positions on the executive committee of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) be allocated for women.

Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA)

- **Legal Status:** Registered under the "Societies Registration Act-XXI of 1860".
- **Objectives:**
 - To promote union and cooperation among the advocates practicing in the court and other association and advocates;
 - To promote and maintain high standards of profession among members of the Bar.
 - To watch the state of law, progress of legislation and administration of justice and to take such steps as may be necessary for their progress and reform;
 - To express opinion on proposed legislation and other matters of interest and to make representation in respect thereof;
 - To take necessary steps to prevent and remedy any abuse of law or mal-administration of justice;
 - To promote the welfare of the members of the association.
- **Membership:** Subject to the provisions of Rules, **every Advocate entitled to practice law, shall be eligible for Membership to the Association.**
 - An applicant found suitable for membership is initially **granted temporary membership for two years.**
 - Upon completion of the temporary membership period, **eligible temporary members may apply for regular membership.**
- **Executive Committee:** It is responsible for managing the association's affairs. The composition of the Executive Committee includes the following positions:
 - President, Vice-President, Secretary and 15 Members, of whom at least 6 must hold the designation of Senior Advocates.
- **Landmark Period: 1970-1980:** Notably, during this era, the Association witnessed significant legal developments, including the pivotal Keshavananda Bharati case, which established limitations on Parliament's power to amend the Constitution.

CBI not under Centre's control, we can't supervise probe: Govt to SC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MAY 2

The Centre on Thursday told the Supreme Court that the CBI is not under its control and the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) "does not exercise any functional control over the CBI as far as investigation of cases is concerned".

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta conveyed this to a bench of Justices B R Gavai and Sandeep Mentha while putting across the Centre's preliminary objections to the suit filed by the West Bengal government against the agency continuing to register and investigate cases in the state after November 16, 2018, despite the government withdrawing the general consent to it.

The S-G said, "The assertion of the plaintiff that as per the Allocation of Business Rules of the

Union Government, the CBI falls under the DoPT is wholly irrelevant as the department does not exercise any functional control over the CBI as far as investigation of cases is concerned... The said allocation is merely as a cadre-controlling authority and the same does not in any manner make the CBI a part of the legal person of the DoPT or the Union of India." He said the "CBI cannot be considered a 'part' or a Department of Government of India as it is a statutory body under Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946".

Mehta submitted that the CBI "is an independent legal person and has a separate legal identity outside the Union of India..." and "the same is in fact a product of the judgments of" the SC "wherein the CBI was vested with a separate legal and functional identity".

The S-G said the "Union of India has neither registered any

case in... West Bengal, neither can it register any case, nor has it been investigating any case (registered by the Union)". "Yet, as is evident from the prayers extracted above, each and every prayer in the present suit is directed either towards restraining the Union of India from investigating any case or towards quashing cases where the Union of India has allegedly registered FIRs".

The senior law officer pointed out that two other petitions dealing with the "same subject matter" are pending before the Calcutta High Court and the Supreme Court and that the latter was filed by the state itself. He added that "in view of the pendency of the same subject matter, no other jurisdictions "under the provisions of the Constitution of India", the present suit under Article 131 is not maintainable".

The hearing will continue next week.

Context: The Centre recently informed the Supreme Court that the CBI operates independently, stating that the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) lacks functional control over the CBI's case investigations.

Central Bureau of Investigation

- **Origin:** The CBI was established as the Special Police Establishment in 1941, to investigate cases of corruption in the procurement during the Second World War.
- **Formalised agency:** to investigate allegations of corruption in various wings of the Government of India by enacting the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946.
 - The CBI is not a statutory body but derives its power to investigate from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946.
- **Establishment of the CBI:** In 1963, the CBI was established by the Government of India with a view to investigate serious crimes and maintain integrity in administration.
 - The establishment of the CBI was recommended by the Santhanam Committee on Prevention of Corruption (1962–1964).

- **Composition:** There shall be a director of CBI who heads the department.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Under the superintendence of the Department of Personnel, Ministry of Personnel, Pension & Public Grievances which falls under the prime minister's office.

Functions

- Its primary objective involves conducting investigations into violent crimes using a robust system and advanced technology.
- Its role extends to addressing and countering cybercrimes and crimes related to social platforms.
- Its presence serves to assist, oversee, and provide backing to law enforcement agencies when handling complex and high-profile cases.
- The agency is responsible for probing cases involving corruption, bribery, misconduct, and misbehavior among federal government employees.

Supersonic Missile-Assisted Release of Torpedo system successfully flight-tested by DRDO off the Odisha coast

Context: DRDO successfully flight tested the Supersonic Missile-Assisted Release of Torpedo (SMART) system from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha.

Supersonic Missile Assisted Release of Torpedo (SMART)

- **Developed by:** The Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) engineered the SMART for the Indian Navy.
- **Objective:** To bolster the Indian Navy's anti-submarine warfare capabilities, extending beyond the typical range of lightweight torpedoes.
- **Features**
 - The missile boasts a two-stage solid propulsion system, electromechanical actuator system, and precision inertial navigation system.
 - **Launch Capabilities:** The SMART system can be deployed from surface ships or truck-based coastal batteries, ensuring versatility in launch platforms.
 - **Propellant Composition:** Fueled by solid propellant and powered by a silver zinc battery, the SMART is engineered for efficiency and reliability.
 - **Range:** 643 km, the SMART can carry a lightweight torpedo equipped with a 50 kg high explosive warhead up to 20 km.
 - **Acoustic Homing:** Utilizing acoustic signals from the target, the SMART employs acoustic homing to guide itself effectively to its destination.
 - **Guidance System:** Armed with an inertial navigation system (INS), the SMART offers real-time course corrections and target updates via datalink.

Ajrakh from Kutch gets GI tag



GI Tag

- **About:** It is a symbol used on items that come from a particular geographical area and have qualities or a reputation linked to that place of origin.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- **Tenure:** 10 Years

Context: Recently, the Controller General of Patents, Designs, and Trademarks (CGPDTM) awarded the Geographical Indication (GI) certificate to the traditional artisans of 'Kutch Ajrakh,' originating from Gujarat's vibrant Kutch region.,

Kutch Ajrakh

- **About:** The Ajrakh textile craft boasts a millennia-long legacy, deeply woven into the cultural fabric of Gujarat, particularly Sindh, Barmer, and Kutch.
- **Hand-Block Printing:** Ajrakh involves a meticulous process of hand-block printing on treated cotton cloth, resulting in intricate designs rich in symbolism and history.
- **Introduced by:** This craft was introduced to the Kutch region over 400 years ago by the Sindhi Muslim community.
- **Origin of the Name:** The name "Ajrakh" finds its roots in "Azrak," meaning indigo, a prominent dye used to achieve the characteristic blue color.
- **Symbolic Color Palette:** Traditionally, Ajrakh prints use three colors: blue symbolizing the sky, red representing the land and fire, and white signifying the stars.
- **Natural Dyes and Washing Ritual:** The textiles are treated with natural dyes derived from vegetables and minerals, undergoing a rigorous washing cycle eight times.
- **Nomadic Communities:** Nomadic pastoralist and agricultural communities like the Rabaris, Maldharis, and Ahirs traditionally incorporate Ajrakh printed cloth into their attire, using it for turbans, lungis, or stoles.

USCIRF is biased and has a political agenda: MEA

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

India on Thursday hit out at the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), and said that it is trying to “interfere” in the Indian election process. Speaking to the media during the weekly interaction, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal described the U.S. government entity, which came out with a report on religious freedom earlier this week, as a “biased organisation with a political agenda”.

The report had demanded that India should be declared by the U.S. government as a “country of particular concern” because of what it described as “particularly severe religious freedom violations”.

Context: India recently criticized the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), accusing it of attempting to interfere in the Indian election process.

U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)

- **About:** USCIRF was established by the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA), tasked with monitoring the global status of religious freedom.
- **Monitoring Role:** It actively monitors the universal right to freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) outside the United States.
- **Headquarters:** Washington DC.
- **Policy Recommendations:** The commission formulates policy recommendations directed towards the President, Secretary of State, and Congress based on its observations..
- **Composition:** The commission maintains a bipartisan composition to ensure diverse perspectives, supported by a non-partisan professional staff.

Religious Freedom

- Inherent in religious freedom is the right to believe or not believe as one's conscience leads, and live out one's beliefs openly, peacefully, and without fear.
- Freedom of religion or belief is an expansive right that includes the freedoms of thought, conscience, expression, association, and assembly.

India's demographic dividend will eventually dwindle: ADB

Old age dependency ratio expected to be over 30% by 2050 vs less than 20% in 2022

Gireesh Chandra Prasad
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TBILISI, GEORGIA

Ageing population is turning out to be a challenge for developing Asia and the Pacific and it could reduce the demographic dividend of countries with younger population such as India and Indonesia, over the coming years, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said in a report released here on Thursday. However, there is an opportunity to get more productivity out of older persons, a silver dividend, ADB said.

The ADB report titled *Aging Well in Asia: Asian Development Policy Report 2024* released at the multilateral body's 57th annual meeting highlighted that the share of people aged 60 years and more over those in the 15-59 years of age, called old age dependency ratio, is set to increase significantly for the region, including for India, by 2050

from the levels seen in 2022. For India, old age dependency ratio, which was a little less than 20% in 2022, is expected to be over 30% by 2050, the report said, using an analysis of United Nations data. India is already the most populous nation in the world.

Younger economies such as India and Indonesia will continue to enjoy sizable demographic dividends, albeit dwindling ones, the report said. According to an analysis

quoted by ADB, the change in old-age dependency ratio will reduce India's GDP growth per capita by 0.053 percentage point in the 2031-2040 period. For China, it would be a reduction of 0.211 percentage points in the period.

The report also said that overall, the analysis

resoundingly confirmed the conventional wisdom that the demographic tailwinds that helped propel developing Asia's past economic growth will turn into demographic headwinds in the coming decades, but promoting the well-being of old people, especially, their health, can significantly increase their capacity to work.

ADB's senior economist Aiko Kikawa, co-author of the report, said at a briefing that the economic growth rates of countries could

benefit if untapped work capacity of people in the age group of 60-69 years is tapped. For example, India could see an improvement of 1.5 percentage point in GDP growth rate in terms of 'silver dividend' if the untapped work capacity is utilized.

The reporter is in Tbilisi at the invitation of ADB.

The change in old-age dependency ratio will reduce India's GDP growth per capita by 0.053 percentage point in the 2031-2040 period

Asian Development Bank (ADB)

- **About:** ADB is a regional development bank that provides loans for development projects in its member countries.
- **Formation:** 1966.
- **Objective:** It envisions a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty in the region.
- **Headquarters:** Manila, Philippines.
- **Members:** 68 members including India, China, and Pakistan.

Context: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) recently released a report stating that the ageing population poses a challenge for developing Asia and the Pacific, potentially diminishing the demographic dividend in countries like India and Indonesia with younger populations.

Key Points of Aging Well in Asia: Asian Development Policy Report 2024

- **Aging Population:** The old age dependency ratio, representing people aged 60 years and older compared to those aged 15-59, is projected to notably rise by 2050 compared to 2022 levels.
- **Regional Impact:** This increase is anticipated not only for India but also for the broader region, as per the analysis of United Nations data.
- **Indian Scenario:** India's old age dependency ratio, slightly under 20% in 2022, is forecasted to surpass 30% by 2050, highlighting a significant demographic shift.
 - India, already the world's most populous nation, faces additional challenges with this demographic transition.
- **Future Aging Population:** Over the next 25-30 years, India is poised to transition from having a predominantly middle-aged working population to a significant portion being elderly, akin to the aging populations in China and Japan.

IREDA Share Jumps Over 10% As It Attains 'Navratna Status'. Exclusive: IREDA CMD Pradip Kumar

Context: Recently, Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency public sector undertaking company was granted 'Navratna status' from the department of public enterprises.

Navratna Status

- **Origin:** The government introduced the Navratna scheme in 1997.
- **Categories of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs):** Maharatna, Navratna, and Miniratna.
- **Objectives:** Under this scheme, the Boards of Navratna CPSEs have been delegated enhanced powers in the areas of:
 - Capital expenditure
 - Investment in joint ventures/subsidiaries
 - Mergers & acquisitions
 - Human resources management, etc.
- **Eligibility criteria for grant of Navratna status:** The CPSEs which are Miniratna I, Schedule 'A' and have obtained 'excellent' or 'very good' MOU rating in three of the last five years and have a 'Composite Score' of performance to be 60 or above in six identified performance parameters are eligible to be considered for grant of Navratna status. The parameters are:
 - Net Profit to Net worth
 - Manpower Cost to total Cost of Production or Cost of Services
 - Profit Before Depreciation Interest and Taxes(PBDIT) to Capital employed
 - Profit before interest and tax (PBIT) to Turnover
 - Earning Per Share
 - Inter Sectoral Performance

Benefits of Navratna Status:

- **Financial Independence:** Navratna companies enjoy greater financial independence. They can invest up to ₹1,000 crore without seeking approval from the central government.
- **Investment Flexibility:** They are allowed to invest up to 15% of their net worth on a single project, or 30% of their net worth in a given year, subject to a cap of ₹1,000 crore.
- **Capital Expenditure Freedom:** Navratna companies have the freedom to incur capital expenditure on purchasing new items or replacements without any monetary ceiling.
- **Strategic Alliances:** They can enter into technology joint ventures or strategic alliances to further their business goals.

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