

## Preventing trafficking

The Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill of 2018 addresses one of the most pervasive yet invisible crimes affecting the most vulnerable persons, especially women and children. There has been no specific law to deal with human trafficking, which is considered the third largest organised crime violating basic human rights.

The Bill addresses, among other things, aggravated trafficking for forced labour, begging, trafficking by administering chemical substances or hormones to a person for the purpose of early sexual maturity, trafficking of a woman or child for the purpose of marriage or under the pretext of marriage or after marriage. The proposed law also punishes promotion or facilitation of human trafficking by, for instance, manufacturing fake certificates.

The Bill ensures confidentiality of victims and witnesses, a time-bound trial, and repatriation of victims. It also provides for simultaneous measures to be taken for the rehabilitation of victims along with the trial. The victims are entitled to interim relief immediately within 30 days to address their physical and mental trauma, and further appropriate relief within 60 days from the date of filing of the charge sheet.

The Bill provides for the creation of a rehabilitation fund to be used for the physical, psychological and social well-being of the victim, including education, skill development, health care and psychological support, legal aid, and safe accommodation. The law demands that special courts be set up to ensure speedy trial.

The Bill creates dedicated institutional mechanisms at the district, State and Central levels. These will be responsible for prevention, protection, investigation and rehabilitation work related to trafficking. The National Investigation Agency will perform the tasks of the Anti-Trafficking Bureau at the national level under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Punishment under the proposed law ranges from a rigorous minimum of 10 years to life and a fine not less than 1 lakh. The Bill also provides for the attachment and forfeiture of property and proceeds for crime. In transnational crimes, the national anti-trafficking bureau would coordinate with authorities in foreign countries and international organisations to facilitate investigation and trial proceedings. This includes coordinating with authorities in other countries.

The India-Japan economic relationship remains underwhelming in relation to strategic ties

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