

Lifetime status of 'Cabinet minister'

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In news—The High Court of Bombay at Goa said that “arguable issues have been raised” in a Public interest litigation (PIL) challenging the “lifetime status of the rank of Cabinet minister” accorded to Pratapsingh Rane, a six-time Chief Minister of Goa and a legislator for a full 50 years.

More information on the issue-

- In January 2022, the Chief Minister of Goa had announced that the state Cabinet had taken a decision to accord this special status to Rane.
- The Cabinet had also decided that in future also, those who complete 50 years and hold posts like CM and Speaker, like Pratapsingh Rane, will be given the Cabinet status even after their retirement.
- The PIL, challenging the decision to grant such a status to Rane, said that this is the **first time in the country that any state government had taken such a step.**
- The PIL urged the High Court to quash the January 7 notification of the government under which Rane was conferred with the “lifetime status of the rank of cabinet minister”.
- It has contended that Goa has a 12-member Cabinet, and the conferment of Cabinet status on Rane results in the number of Cabinet ranks rising to 13, which exceeds the ceiling mandated by the Constitution.
- The Constitution (91st Amendment) Act, 2003 inserted clause 1A in Article 164, which says “the total number of Ministers, including the Chief Minister, in the Council of Ministers in a State shall not exceed fifteen per cent of the total number of members of the Legislative Assembly of that State... provided that the

number of Ministers, including the Chief Minister in a State shall not be less than twelve”.

- The PIL has stated that the very purpose of the **91st Amendment** was to prevent jumbo Cabinets and the resultant drain on the public exchequer, and the lifetime status granted to Rane was a “back door entry in wilful disobedience of the mandate of law”.