Taiwan passed a controversial bill on Tuesday aimed at countering China’s influence on the selfruled island, less than two weeks before it goes to the polls to elect a new President.

What is the Bill about?

- The “anti-infiltration Bill” pushed by President TsaiIngwen’s Beijingsceptic ruling party became law despite strong objection from the Opposition Kuomintang (KMT) party.
- It bans “hostile” foreign forces from activities such as campaigning, lobbying, making political donations, disrupting social order or spreading disinformation related to elections. Violators face a maximum fiveyear prison term and a fine of up to around $3,32,000.

What is the reason behind the passage of the Bill

- The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) govt. said it passed the Bill to prevent China, which is Taiwan’s only threat, from using its sharp power and its capital to pollute, manipulate or sabotage Taiwan’s democratic activities.
- The Mainland Affairs Council, Taiwan’s top China policymaking body, said the new law would help strengthen the island’s “democratic defences”.

China’s response

- In Beijing, the Taiwan Affairs Office lashed out at the DPP over the new law.
- “The DPP imposes ‘Green Terror’ for its political and election gains to damage crossstrait exchanges while creating hostility and confrontation between the two sides,” office spokeswoman Zhu Fenglian said, according to the Xinhua news agency.
- China still sees self-ruling, democratic Taiwan as part of its territory and has vowed to one day reunify it — by force if necessary.
Background

- Taiwan holds a presidential vote on Jan. 11 with President Tsai Ing-wen hoping to win re-election. She has repeatedly mentioned what she sees as the threat of China as a warning to voters.
- Tsai’s ruling Democratic Progressive Party is pro-independence, although she has said she wants to maintain the status quo with China but will defend Taiwan’s security and democracy.
- **Democratic Taiwan** is claimed by China as a wayward province and is the Communist Party’s most sensitive and important territorial issue. China has threatened to attack if Taiwan moves toward formal independence.
- President Xi Jinping said in January that China reserves the right to use force to bring Taiwan under its control but will strive to achieve peaceful “reunification”.

One China Policy

The One-China policy refers to the policy or view that there is only one state called "China", despite the existence of two governments that claim to be "China".

- As a policy, this means that countries seeking diplomatic relations with People's Republic of China (PRC, Mainland China) must break official relations with the Republic of China (ROC, Taiwan) and vice versa.
- The One China policy is different from the "One China principle", which is the principle that insists both Taiwan and mainland China are inalienable parts of a single China.

What is the ‘One China’ principle?

The principle affirms **Chinese sovereignty over Taiwan** and is the cornerstone of bilateral diplomatic relations between Washington and Beijing.

- Any country that wants to establish political and diplomatic relations with China must agree to adhere to this principle and not recognise Taiwan as an independent country.
- Currently, 21 states recognize Taiwan as a sovereign country. **India does not maintain any diplomatic ties with the Taiwan.**
In practice, the ‘One China’ principle is a stabilisation mechanism that preserves the status quo over Taiwan’s political status while allowing it to function as an independent economic, civic and administrative entity.

Since 1979, Taiwan has had to negotiate its ‘international living space’ but it has largely honoured the ‘One China’ principle.