



CURRENT AFFAIRS: FEBRUARY 2025

GOVT TO SET UP DEREGULATION COMMISSION

Prime Minister announced that Government will set up Deregulation Commission to Reduce State's role in governance

- PM also emphasized government efforts through the Jan Vishwas Bill 2.0 to cut bureaucratic hurdles by reducing regulatory burdens.
- Jan Vishwas Bill 2.0: Announced in the Union Budget 2025-26. It aims to decriminalize over 100 outdated legal provisions to enhance ease of doing business.

About Deregulation

- Definition: Deregulation is reduction or elimination of government oversight of an industry.
- Global Deregulation Initiatives: - US: Department of Government Efficiency (DoGE); UK: Better Regulation Framework; New Zealand: Ministry of Regulation.

Significance of Deregulations in Fueling Economic Activity

- **Boosts Growth:** India needs to increase investment from 31% to 35% of GDP for 8% growth. Deregulation attracts investments.
 - o E.g., Japan and China achieved high growth through deregulation.
- **Enhance Economic Freedom:** Deregulation removes bureaucratic hurdles, fostering competition.
 - o E.g., Jan Vishwas Act 2023 decriminalized 183 provisions across 42 central Acts, easing business compliances.
- **Reduces MSME Compliance Costs:** MSMEs, lacks resources to navigate regulations, benefit from deregulation.
 - o E.g., Haryana & Tamil Nadu amended building regulations to ease compliance for small businesses.



- **Enhances Competitive Federalism:** States learn from each other's deregulation efforts to improve industrial activity.

- o E.g., Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka & Haryana relaxed prohibitions on women working night shifts, boosting employment opportunities.

PRESIDENT'S RULE IN MANIPUR

President of India issued Proclamation imposing President's rule in Manipur.

- This is the 11th (last being in 2001-02) such imposition in the state placing the state assembly under suspended animation.

About President's Rule

- **Constitution:** Article 356, provides for the imposition of President's Rule in the State if the President, based on the report from the State Governor, is satisfied that the government of the State cannot be carried in accordance with the Constitutional provisions.

- o Additionally, Article 365 provides that if a State fails to comply with any Union directions under constitutional provisions, the President may declare a "Constitutional Emergency.

- **Duration and Approval:** As per Article 356 (3), it shall cease to operate at the expiration of two months unless approved by both the Houses of Parliament by simple majority.

- o If approved, can be extended to six months with the maximum extensions of 3 years (parliamentary approval every 6 months).

- **Revocation:** By the President by a subsequent proclamation.

- **Consequences:**

- o The President acquires extraordinary powers, with the Governor, on her behalf, administering the State with assistance from the Chief Secretary or advisers appointed by the President.

- o President can transfer State Legislature's powers to Parliament.

- o It does not impact the functioning of the High Court.

S R Bommai Vs Union of India (1994)



Supreme Court held that the proclamation under **Article 356** was subject to **judicial review**.



The President can **only dissolve a state legislative assembly** after Parliament's approval of the proclamation, and **until then, the assembly remains suspended**.

UNION CABINET APPROVES THE REVISED WAQF (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

In revised bill suggestions of Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) have been incorporated as per reports.

- Earlier, amendments were made in 2013 based on the recommendations of the High-Level Committee under the chairmanship of Justice (Retired) Rajinder Sachar and the Report of the JPC.

About Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024

- **Objective:** To amend the Waqf Act, 1995, to improve regulation of Waqf properties.
- **Key Provisions:**
 - o Inclusive composition of Waqf Management: Involvement of Muslim women and Muslim OBC in Management (Central Waqf Council and State Waqf Boards).
- 📌 **Central Waqf Council:** Statutory body established in 1964, to oversee and advise state-level Waqf Boards across India. It does not exercise direct control over waqf property itself.
- 📌 **State Waqf Board:** It has superintendence over maintenance and administration of Waqf properties.
 - o Appeal on orders of Tribunals: Tribunal's orders may be appealed in the High Court within 90 days.
 - o Others: Using technology to improve registration, Separate Waqf Boards for the Aghakhani and Bohra communities, etc.



What is 'Waqf'?

- Refers to **properties dedicated exclusively for religious or charitable purposes** under **Islamic law**, and any **other use or sale** of the property is **prohibited**.
- Waqf properties are **bestowed upon Allah** and are **managed and administered by an appointed 'mutawalli'**.
- **Waqf Boards** currently control **8.7 lakh properties** spanning **9.4 lakh acres** across India. India has the **largest waqf holding in the World**.

BIMSTEC

Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has hosted the first-ever Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Youth Summit in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

- Its goal is to strengthen youth collaboration across region and facilitating exchange of youth-led initiatives among BIMSTEC Member Countries.

About BIMSTEC (Secretariat: Dhaka, Bangladesh)

- Genesis: Established in 1997 with the signing of Bangkok Declaration.
- Members: Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, Nepal, Bhutan.
- Objective: Promote rapid economic development, social progress, and ensure peace and stability across Bay of Bengal region.
- 7 focus area: Trade; Environment and Climate Change; Security; Agriculture and Food Security; People-to-People Contact; Science, Technology, and Innovation; Connectivity.

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

USA President signed an executive order sanctioning International Criminal Court (ICC).

- The order imposes financial and visa restrictions on individuals and their families who assist in ICC investigations of American citizens or allies such as Israel.

International Criminal Court (Headquarter: Hague, Netherlands)



- It is the world's first permanent international criminal court.
- Founding Treaty: Rome Statute (adopted in 1998 entered into force in 2002).
- Type of Crimes dealt: Genocide, War Crimes, Crimes against Humanity & Crime of Aggression.
- Membership: 125 countries
 - India, Israel, the US, Russia and China are not parties to the Rome Statute.
 - Recent Members: Malaysia (2019) Ukraine (2025).
- Management: The Assembly of States Parties is the Court's management oversight and legislative body.
 - It is composed of representatives of the States which have ratified or acceded to Rome Statute.
- Official languages: English, French, Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish.

Structural Issues in functioning of ICC

- High dependence on state cooperation as it lacks executive power for arrests and evidence collection.
- Political Pressure: It often gets caught between power politics and human rights and is often used by some States for targeting opponents.

MAJOR AND MINOR MINERALS

The Ministry of Mines has reclassified Barytes, Felspar, Mica, and Quartz from minor minerals to major minerals.

- This move follows the recent approval of the National Critical Mineral Mission by the Union Cabinet.
- Reclassification is based on recommendations from an Inter-Ministerial Committee led by Dr. V. K. Saraswat.



Reason for Reclassification

- The decision to shift these minerals to the major minerals category is based on their association with critical minerals and their importance in various high-tech industries.

International Collaborations & Trade Agreements

- **Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL)**, 2019: A joint venture company of Ministry of Mines to acquire critical minerals globally.

- o KABIL has engagements with countries like Argentina, Australia etc.

- **Minerals Security Partnership (MSP)**: India joined the US-led initiative to ensure a stable critical minerals supply chain in 2023.

- o Critical minerals are those minerals that are essential for economic development and national security (Ministry of Mines).

- **Quartz, Felspar, and Mica in Pegmatite Rocks**

- o These minerals are found in pegmatite rocks, which also contain essential critical minerals like Beryl, Lithium, Niobium, Tantalum, Molybdenum, Tin, Titanium, and Tungsten

- o Earlier, when these minerals were leased as minor minerals, leaseholders did not report or extract the critical minerals present

- **Baryte and its Industrial Significance**

- o Baryte often occurs in concretions and vein fillings in limestone and dolostone, alongside ores of Antimony, Cobalt, Copper, Lead, Manganese, and Silver

- o It has extensive industrial applications in oil and gas drilling

SOLAR ENERGY IN INDIA

India has achieved a historic milestone by surpassing 100 GW of installed solar power capacity.



- As of January, 2025, India's total solar capacity installed stands at 100.33 GW with remarkable growth trajectory

- o 84.10 GW is under implementation and an additional 47.49 GW under tendering.

STUBBLE BURNING

A parliamentary standing committee has recommended introducing a minimum support price (MSP) for paddy residue to discourage stubble burning, one of the main causes of air pollution in Delhi.

- The recommendations were made by the Committee on Subordinate Legislation which examined the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas (Imposition, Collection and Utilization of Environmental Compensation for Stubble Burning) Rules, 2023.
- The rules were notified under the CAQM Act, 2021 to deal with the problem of stubble burning and fulfil the provision of Section 15 of the Act.

About Stubble Burning

- A stubble burn refers to the act of setting on fire straw that has been left over after the harvest of grains, such as paddy, wheat, etc.
- Stubble burning (parali) is used to remove Paddy crop residues from fields in preparation for sowing wheat, which is done around the end of September and the beginning of November.

- o Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh are the primary states where this practice is prevalent during this time of year.

- Reasons for stubble burning: Cheaper than alternative disposal methods, weed management, pest control etc.

WETLAND ACCREDITED CITIES

Indore and Udaipur have become the first two Indian cities to make it to the global list of accredited wetland cities under Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

- **Indore:** Sirpur Lake (Ramsar Site) recognised for water bird congregation and is being developed as a bird sanctuary.
- **Udaipur:** Surrounded by five major wetlands, namely, Pichola, Fateh Sagar, Rang Sagar, Swaroop Sagar, and Doodh Talai.

FOUR MORE WETLANDS INCLUDED UNDER THE RAMSAR CONVENTION

This has increased wetlands tally from 85 to 89, highest in Asia, third globally. Wetlands have been added from Tamil Nadu, Sikkim and Jharkhand.

- Tamil Nadu leads with 20 Ramsar sites, the highest among Indian states.
- Sikkim and Jharkhand have added their first Ramsar sites.

INLAND MANGROVE OF GUNERI

Gujarat has notified "Inland Mangrove of Guneri" in the District of Kutch as a Biodiversity Heritage Site (BHS).

- It is Gujarat's first Biodiversity Heritage Site.
- Notified in accordance with the Biodiversity Act, 2002.

About Inland Mangrove of Guneri

- Guneri mangroves grow 45km from Arabian Sea and 4km from Kori Creek, representing a rare inland ecosystem.
 - o Unlike conventional mangrove ecosystems, this site does not receive tidal water inflow and lacks muddy or swampy conditions.
- It is reportedly one of only eight of its kind across the world.
- Area houses around 20 migratory and 25 resident migratory avifaunal species.

CASPIAN SEA

Environmental activists raised concerns over the rapidly declining water levels in the Caspian Sea.

- It has already lost nearly 31,000 square km since 2005.

About Caspian Sea

- It is the largest enclosed water body in the world.
- The sea is bordered by five countries: Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Russia, Turkmenistan, and Iran.

o Kazakhstan has the longest coastline along the Caspian Sea.



- Its oil reserves are estimated at 48 billion barrels.
- Reasons for declining water level: The climate crisis, excessive water use for agriculture, and pollution from nuclear waste, industry and poor urban planning, etc.

EU AI ACT BECOMES APPLICABLE

Rules on AI Literacy and Prohibited Systems under the European Union AI Act became applicable.

- Under the new AI literacy obligations, providers and deployers will be required to ensure a sufficient level of AI literacy for their staff and other persons working with AI systems.

About European Union AI Act

- **Genesis:** The AI Act is the first-ever legal framework on AI, which entered into force in 2024 (will be fully implemented by 2026).
- **Approach:** The act takes a risk-based approach to regulation, applying different rules to AI according to the risk they pose.
- **Prohibitions:** The Act list AI prohibited practices (see image), emphasizing the importance of ethics, safety and transparency.

GENE BANK FOR CROPS GERmplasm

Union Budget 2025-26 announced setting up of second National Gene Bank, comprising a million germplasm lines for future food and nutritional security.

- A gene bank is a repository of genetic material, such as seeds, pollen or tissue samples to protect them from potential extinction.

About First National Gene Bank

- First National Gene Bank was set up in 1996 by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research- National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (ICAR-NBPGR) in New Delhi.
- This bank comprises 12 regional stations across the country for collection and storage of vital crop germplasms.
 - o These germplasms are the genetic constituents of plants or animals that are used in research, conservation and crop breeding.

CHINA'S EAST CREATES NEW RECORD IN FUSION REACTION

China's Experimental Advanced Superconducting Tokamak (EAST) created new record in Fusion reaction.

- EAST, also known as China's Artificial Sun, maintained a steady-state high-confinement plasma operation for 1000+ seconds reaching a temperature of 100 million °C.



- A tokamak is a machine that confines a plasma using magnetic fields in a donut shape to harness the energy of fusion.

Significance of this achievement:

- Step towards fusion-based nuclear reactors which can act as alternatives to other sources of clean energy such as wind, solar etc.;
- Can address world energy crisis & problem of climate change

100TH LAUNCH OF INDIAN SPACE RESEARCH ORGANISATION (ISRO) FROM SRIHARIKOTA

The ISRO successfully placed the NVS-02 satellite into Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit using GSLV-F15 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh

- GSLV-F15 Vehicle is a three stage launch vehicle with a third-stage CUS 15 cryogenic engine.
- The NVS-02 is the second satellite in the NVS series, and part of India's Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC).

What is NavIC?

- **About:** It is a regional navigation satellite system (erstwhile known as Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System) launched by ISRO.
- **NavIC Network:** NavIC is designed with a constellation of 7 satellites of which 3 satellites placed in geostationary orbit & 4 satellites are placed in inclined geosynchronous orbit.
- **NavIC Services:** Standard Position Service (SPS) for civilian users & Restricted Service for strategic users.
- **Coverage Area:** India and a region up to 1500 km beyond Indian boundary.
- **Accuracy:** NavIC's SPS offer accuracy of better than 20 meters and a timing accuracy of better than 40 nanoseconds.

- **Other:** NavIC SPS signals are interoperable with the other global navigation satellite system (GNSS) signals i.e., GPS (of USA), GLONASS (Russia), Galileo (European Union) & BeiDou (China).

SHATAVARI

The Ministry of AYUSH has launched a campaign titled "Shatavari –For Better Health" to increase awareness about Shatavari's health benefits.

About Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*)

- Shatavari, meaning "curer of a hundred diseases"
- It is a medicinal woody climber growing to 1-2 m in height.
- Uses: Dried roots, leaves are used as a drug in Ayurvedic medicine
- Habitat: Low altitudes in shade and in tropical climates.
 - It is spread across Asia, Australia and Africa.
- Health Benefits: Improves female reproductive health, hormonal balance, ulcer healing effect, promotes vitality and longevity, imparts immunity, treating nervous disorders etc.

VIJAY DURG (FORT WILLIAM)

Fort William in Kolkata, the headquarters of the Eastern Army Command, recently renamed as Vijay Durg.

About Vijay Durg

- It was named after King William III of England.
 - "Renaming to 'Vijay Durg' pays homage to the oldest fort on Maharashtra's Sindhudurg coast, which served as naval base during Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's reign"
- It is located on the banks of the river Hoogly.



- Black Hole Tragedy took place on June 20, 1756 in Fort William.

o Nawab Siraj-ud-Daula imprisoned British captives in a tiny cell overnight, causing many deaths from suffocation and extreme heat, it is known as Black Hole Tragedy

PADMA AWARDS

Ministry of Home Affairs has announced Padma Awards 2025 on Republic day.

About Padma Awards

- Instituted in 1954, they are one of the highest civilian Awards of country.
- Conferred by President at Rashtrapati Bhawan in three categories, namely:
 - o Padma Vibhushan: For exceptional and distinguished service.
 - o Padma Bhushan: For distinguished service of high order.
 - o Padma Shri: For distinguished service in any field.
- Awards are given in various disciplines/ fields of activities, viz. art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service, etc.
- Except for interruptions in 1978, 1979 and between 1993 and 1997, every year the names of the recipients are announced on Republic Day eve.
- Padma award is just an honor. No cash allowance or any facility/benefit in terms of concession etc. in rail/air travel is attached to these awards.

SAHITYA ACADEMY AWARD

Recently, Chaman Arora was awarded Sahitya Akademi Award 2024 in Dogri (Spoken in parts of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab) for his book “Ik Hor Ashwthama”.

About Sahitya Academy Awards

- Genesis: Inaugurated in 1954 and given by the Sahitya Akademi (an autonomous body under Union Ministry of Culture).

- o First Awards were given in 1955.

- Awarded to the most outstanding books of literary merit published in any of the major Indian languages recognised by the Akademi.

- o Languages recognized by the Akademi include 22 Languages listed under the Schedule VIII of the Constitution and English and Rajasthani

- Award is in the form of a shanku containing an engraved copper-plaque and a payment of ₹ 1,00,000/-



