



CURRENT AFFAIRS FEBRUARY 2026

1. 16th Finance Commission

Why in News?

The report of the 16th Finance Commission was tabled in Parliament.

Key Facts

- Chairman: Dr. Arvind Panagariya
- Constitutional Basis: Article 280
- Tenure: 2026–2031

Core Functions

- Distribution of taxes between Centre and States (Vertical Devolution)
- Distribution of taxes among States (Horizontal Devolution)
- Recommending grants-in-aid under Article 275

Key Recommendations

- 41% tax devolution to States (same as 15th Finance Commission)
- Increased focus on:
 - Urban and rural local bodies
 - Disaster management
- New criteria introduced:
 - Contribution to GDP
 - Forest cover expansion

Legal and Constitutional Aspects

- Finance Commission is a constitutional body
- Its recommendations are advisory and not binding

Issues

- Increasing share of cesses and surcharges not shared with States
- Growing Centre–State fiscal tensions

2. Urbanisation in India (Governance Perspective)

Why in News?

Union Budget 2026–27 prioritised provisions for Urban Local Bodies (ULBs).

Key Highlights

- Development of City Economic Regions (CERs)
- Focus on Tier-II and Tier-III cities
- Incentives for Municipal Bonds

Definition of Urban Area

- Population greater than 5,000
- At least 75% of male employment in non-agricultural activities
- Population density of at least 400 persons per sq. km

Governance Issues

- Weak financial and functional autonomy of ULBs
- Heavy dependence on State governments
- Weak mayoral system and lack of executive authority

Constitutional Link

- 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992

3. Rural Transformation through Decentralization

Why in News?

There has been a significant increase in budget allocation for rural development and decentralisation.

Constitutional Basis

- 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992
- Added Part IX to the Constitution

Key Features



- Three-tier Panchayati Raj system
- Establishment of State Finance Commission
- Reservation for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and women

Important Constitutional Provisions

- Article 40: Organisation of village panchayats
- Article 243: Powers and responsibilities of Panchayats

Significance

- Strengthens grassroots democracy
- Enhances participation of women
- Contributes to poverty reduction

Issues

- Inadequate devolution of:
 - Funds
 - Functions
 - Functionaries

4. Freebies

Why in News?

The Supreme Court raised concerns regarding the increasing trend of freebies by States.

Meaning

Freebies refer to goods or services provided free of cost by governments, such as:

- Free electricity
- Free water
- Loan waivers

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- Directive Principles of State Policy:
 - Article 38
 - Article 39



- Article 41
- Representation of the People Act, 1951 (Section 123) – relates to bribery
- Subramaniam Balaji v. State of Tamil Nadu (2013) – upheld welfare distribution

Debate on Freebies

Advantages:

- Promotes welfare and social equity
- Supports vulnerable sections

Disadvantages:

- Increases fiscal burden
- Distorts electoral competition
- May reduce economic productivity

Key Concept

- Distinction between long-term welfare and short-term populism

5. PM RAHAT Scheme

Why in News?

The Government approved the launch of the PM RAHAT scheme.

Objective

To provide cashless treatment to road accident victims during the “golden hour”.

Key Features

- Coverage up to Rs. 1.5 lakh per victim
- Applicable for first 7 days after the accident
- Includes both insured and uninsured cases

Implementation

- Ministry: Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
- Fund: Motor Vehicle Accident Fund

Additional Features

- Integrated with 112 Emergency Response System
- Covers hit-and-run cases

Legal Relevance

- Linked to Article 21 (Right to Life)
- Strengthens road safety framework

6. Corruption Perception Index (CPI)

Why in News?

India's rank improved in the Corruption Perception Index 2025.

Key Points

- Released annually by Transparency International
- Ranks countries based on perceived levels of public sector corruption
- Score ranges from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean)

Features

- Composite index based on multiple surveys and assessments
- Does not measure actual corruption, only perception

Key Highlights

- India's rank improved to 91st
- Denmark ranked first

7. Gender Budget

Why in News?

Share of Gender Budget in the Union Budget has increased.

Meaning

- A budgeting approach to assess how government expenditure impacts gender equality

Features

- Not a separate budget, but a gender-based analysis of the existing budget
- Adopted in India in 2005

Components

- Part A: Schemes with 100% allocation for women
- Part B: Schemes with at least 30% allocation for women

Institutional Mechanism

- Gender Budget Cells in ministries
- Implemented under Mission Shakti

8. Removal of Lok Sabha Speaker

Why in News?

A resolution was moved for the removal of the Lok Sabha Speaker.

Constitutional Provision

- Article 94 of the Constitution

Procedure

- Speaker can be removed by a resolution passed by a majority of all the then members of the Lok Sabha
- 14 days' notice is required

Key Point

- Speaker does not preside over the sitting when the resolution for removal is under consideration

9. Motion of Thanks



Why in News?

Disruptions in Parliament affected the Motion of Thanks.

Constitutional Provision

- Article 87

Meaning

- A formal motion moved in Parliament to thank the President for the address

Features

- Discussed in both Houses of Parliament
- Allows members to discuss government policies

Key Point

- Its passage signifies the confidence of the House in the government

10. NOTA (None of the Above)

Why in News?

Debate around electoral reforms and voter choice.

Meaning

- Option available to voters to reject all candidates

Legal Basis

- Introduced by Supreme Court judgment in PUCL v. Union of India (2013)

Features

- Available in EVMs
- Ensures secrecy of voting

Key Point



- Even if NOTA gets the highest votes, the candidate with the next highest votes wins
-

11. Right to Recall

Why in News?

Renewed discussions on accountability of elected representatives.

Meaning

- Right of voters to remove elected representatives before the end of their term

Status in India

- Not available at the national level
- Exists in limited form at the local body level in some states

Issues

- May lead to political instability
 - Risk of misuse
-

12. Article 3 of the Constitution

Why in News?

Discussions related to reorganisation of states.

Provision

- Parliament has the power to:
 - Form new states
 - Alter boundaries
 - Change names of existing states

Procedure

- President refers the Bill to the concerned State Legislature for its views
 - Parliament is not bound by the State's opinion
-

Key Point

- Ensures flexibility in India's federal structure
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13. Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority (FNTA)

Why in News?

Proposal for creation of a special administrative body in Nagaland.

Objective

- To provide greater autonomy to eastern Nagaland region

Features

- Autonomous administrative structure
- Focus on development and governance

Significance

- Addresses regional imbalance
 - Strengthens decentralisation
-

14. Global Trading System

Why in News?

Recent developments in global trade and supply chains have highlighted challenges to the multilateral trading system.

Meaning

- The global trading system refers to the set of rules, institutions, and agreements governing international trade

Key Institution

- World Trade Organization (WTO)



Features

- Based on principles of:
 - Non-discrimination (Most Favoured Nation)
 - Transparency
 - Free and fair trade

Issues

- Rise of protectionism
- Trade wars and geopolitical tensions
- Weak dispute settlement mechanism of WTO

India's Perspective

- Supports multilateralism
- Advocates for fair treatment of developing countries
- Emphasises food security and public stockholding

15. India–France Relations

Why in News?

Strengthening of bilateral ties between India and France.

Key Areas of Cooperation

- Defence:
 - Rafale aircraft deal
- Indo-Pacific cooperation
- Space collaboration
- Civil nuclear energy

Strategic Importance

- France is a key partner in the Indo-Pacific region
- Shared commitment to strategic autonomy

16. India–US Trade Agreement



Why in News?

India and the United States signed a landmark trade agreement.

Key Features

- Focus on:
 - Trade facilitation
 - Market access
 - Supply chain resilience

Significance

- Strengthens economic ties
- Boosts bilateral trade
- Enhances cooperation in strategic sectors

17. India–GCC Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

Why in News?

Terms of Reference finalised for India–GCC FTA negotiations.

GCC Members

- Saudi Arabia
- UAE
- Qatar
- Kuwait
- Oman
- Bahrain

Objectives

- Reduce tariffs
- Increase trade and investment
- Strengthen energy and economic ties

Significance

- GCC is a major source of energy imports for India



- Large Indian diaspora in the region
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18. Prime Minister's Visits

(a) Visit to Israel

Key Highlights

- Strengthening defence and technology cooperation
- Focus on innovation, agriculture, and water management

Significance

- Israel is a key partner in defence and technology
-

(b) Visit to Malaysia

Key Highlights

- Enhancement of trade and investment ties
- Cooperation in digital economy and infrastructure

Significance

- Important partner in ASEAN region
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(c) Visit to Brazil

Key Highlights

- Focus on trade, agriculture, and energy cooperation
- Strengthening South-South cooperation

Significance

- Brazil is a key BRICS partner

(d) Visit to Seychelles

Key Highlights

- Maritime security cooperation
- Development assistance

Significance

- Strategic importance in the Indian Ocean region

19. Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)

Why in News?

Recent activities and cooperation initiatives under IONS.

Meaning

- A forum for cooperation among navies of Indian Ocean littoral states

Objectives

- Enhance maritime security
- Promote cooperation and information sharing

Significance

- Strengthens India's role in the Indian Ocean

20. Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)

Why in News?

Continued international cooperation for maritime security.

Meaning

- A multinational naval partnership



Objectives

- Counter piracy
- Ensure maritime security
- Combat illegal activities at sea

Significance

- Enhances global maritime cooperation
- Supports stability in key sea lanes

21. Ease of Doing Business in India

Why in News?

Efforts continue to improve the business environment and attract investment.

Meaning

- Refers to the regulatory and policy environment affecting the ease of starting and operating businesses

Key Factors

- Starting a business
- Getting permits and licenses
- Access to credit
- Tax compliance
- Contract enforcement

Government Initiatives

- Simplification of compliance procedures
- Digitisation of services
- Decriminalisation of minor economic offences

Significance

- Promotes investment
- Enhances competitiveness
- Supports economic growth

22. Manufacturing Sector in India

Why in News?

Policy focus on strengthening domestic manufacturing.

Importance

- Contributes to GDP and employment
- Reduces dependence on imports
- Boosts exports

Key Initiatives

- Make in India
- Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme

Issues

- Infrastructure gaps
- High logistics costs
- Skill shortages

23. MSMEs in India

Why in News?

Focus on strengthening Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

Definition

- Classified based on investment and turnover criteria

Role in Economy

- Major source of employment
- Significant contribution to GDP and exports

Challenges



- Limited access to credit
- Technological constraints
- Market access issues

Government Support

- Credit guarantee schemes
- Digital platforms
- Skill development initiatives

24. Startup Recognition Framework

Why in News?

Reforms in startup recognition and support ecosystem.

Meaning

- Framework to identify and support startups under government schemes

Key Features

- Recognition by DPIIT
- Tax exemptions and incentives
- Access to funding and incubation support

Significance

- Promotes innovation
- Encourages entrepreneurship
- Supports job creation

25. Asset Monetisation

Why in News?

Government focus on monetising public assets to raise resources.

Meaning



- Unlocking value of public assets by leasing them to private entities

Features

- Ownership remains with the government
- Revenue generated through private sector participation

Examples

- Roads
- Railways
- Airports

Significance

- Generates funds for infrastructure development
- Improves efficiency of asset utilisation

26. Female Labour Force Participation

Why in News?

Attention on improving women's participation in the workforce.

Meaning

- Percentage of women engaged in or seeking employment

Issues

- Social norms and gender roles
- Safety concerns
- Lack of skill development opportunities

Measures

- Skill training programs
- Flexible work policies
- Support for women entrepreneurship

Significance



- Enhances economic growth
- Promotes gender equality

27. Lakhpati Didi Scheme

Why in News?

Government initiative to empower rural women economically.

Objective

- To enable women in Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to earn an annual income of at least Rs. 1 lakh

Features

- Skill development and capacity building
- Financial assistance and credit support
- Promotion of entrepreneurship

Significance

- Strengthens rural economy
- Enhances women's financial independence

28. Electronics Components Manufacturing Scheme

Why in News?

Push to strengthen domestic electronics manufacturing.

Objective

- To promote manufacturing of electronic components in India

Features

- Incentives for domestic production
- Support for supply chain development

Significance

- Reduces import dependence
- Strengthens electronics ecosystem
- Supports Make in India initiative

29. Merchandise Trade Indices

Why in News?

Recent data on trade performance highlighted changes in merchandise trade indices.

Meaning

- Indicators used to measure the performance of a country's exports and imports of goods

Types

- Export Index
- Import Index
- Terms of Trade

Significance

- Helps assess trade trends
- Useful for policy formulation

30. Advance Pricing Agreement (APA)

Why in News?

Increase in the number of APAs signed by India.

Meaning

- An agreement between a taxpayer and tax authorities to determine transfer pricing methodology in advance

Objective

- To avoid disputes related to transfer pricing

Features

- Can be unilateral, bilateral, or multilateral
- Provides certainty to taxpayers

Significance

- Reduces litigation
- Improves ease of doing business

31. Debt-to-GDP Ratio

Why in News?

Discussions on fiscal health and sustainability.

Meaning

- Ratio of a country's total public debt to its Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

Importance

- Indicates the ability of a country to repay its debt

Key Point

- A higher ratio may indicate higher financial risk
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32. Liberalized Remittance Scheme (LRS)

Why in News?

Updates related to outward remittances by individuals.

Meaning



- Scheme allowing Indian residents to remit money abroad for permitted purposes

Regulator

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

Uses

- Education
- Travel
- Investment

Limit

- Subject to an annual cap per individual

33. Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS)

Why in News?

Focus on strengthening rural credit systems.

Meaning

- Grassroots-level cooperative credit institutions

Role

- Provide short-term credit to farmers
- Support agricultural activities

Significance

- Strengthens rural economy
- Promotes financial inclusion

34. Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS)

Why in News?

Expansion of high-speed regional transit networks.

Meaning

- High-speed rail-based commuter transit system

Features

- Connects major urban centres with surrounding regions
- Faster than conventional metro systems

Example

- Delhi–Meerut RRTS corridor

Significance

- Reduces travel time
- Promotes regional development

35. Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS)

Why in News?

Growing focus on technologies to reduce carbon emissions and combat climate change.

Meaning

- A technology that captures carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from industrial sources and either:
 - Stores it underground, or
 - Utilises it for industrial purposes

Components

- Capture: Collecting CO₂ from emission sources
- Utilisation: Using CO₂ in products or processes
- Storage: Injecting CO₂ into geological formations

Significance



- Helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Supports climate change mitigation
- Assists in achieving net-zero targets

Challenges

- High cost
- Technological limitations
- Storage risks

36. River Pollution in India

Why in News?

Concerns over increasing pollution levels in major rivers.

Causes

- Industrial discharge
- Domestic sewage
- Agricultural runoff
- Religious and cultural activities

Impacts

- Threat to aquatic ecosystems
- Health hazards
- Reduced availability of clean water

Government Initiatives

- Namami Gange Programme
- National River Conservation Plan

Issues

- Poor enforcement of regulations
- Inadequate sewage treatment infrastructure

37. Paris Agreement (Article 6.4 Mechanism)

Why in News?

Discussions on global carbon markets under the Paris Agreement.

Meaning

- A mechanism under the Paris Agreement to facilitate carbon trading

Objective

- To reduce global greenhouse gas emissions
- Promote sustainable development

Features

- Allows countries to trade carbon credits
- Replaces the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)

38. Great Nicobar Project

Why in News?

Environmental concerns regarding the mega infrastructure project.

Location

- Great Nicobar Island, Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Features

- Development of port, airport, and infrastructure

Concerns

- Deforestation
- Threat to biodiversity
- Impact on indigenous communities

39. Rat-hole Mining

Why in News?

Continued debate over unsafe mining practices.

Meaning

- A method of mining involving digging narrow tunnels

Location

- Commonly practised in Meghalaya

Issues

- Dangerous working conditions
- Environmental degradation
- Violation of safety norms

40. Fishing Cat

Why in News?

Conservation concerns regarding this species.

Type

- Medium-sized wild cat

Habitat

- Wetlands and mangroves

Status

- Listed as Vulnerable (IUCN Red List)

Importance

- Indicator of healthy wetland ecosystems

41. Peatlands

Why in News?

Recognition of their role in climate regulation.

Meaning

- Wetland ecosystems with accumulated organic matter (peat)

Importance

- Major carbon sinks
- Help in climate regulation

Threats

- Drainage
- Agriculture
- Urbanisation

42. Bee Corridors

Why in News?

Initiatives to support pollinator conservation.

Meaning

- Protected pathways to support movement and survival of bees

Importance

- Essential for pollination
- Supports biodiversity and agriculture



43. Dowry in India

Why in News?

The issue of dowry continues to be a significant social concern, with ongoing cases and legal scrutiny.

Meaning

- Dowry refers to any property or valuable security given or agreed to be given directly or indirectly:
 - By one party to a marriage to the other party, or
 - By parents or relatives of either party

Legal Framework

- Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
- Indian Penal Code (IPC):
 - Section 304B: Dowry death
 - Section 498A: Cruelty by husband or relatives
- Indian Evidence Act:
 - Presumption as to dowry death (Section 113B)

Issues

- Persistence of social norms supporting dowry
- Underreporting of cases
- Misuse of legal provisions in some cases

Impact

- Violence against women
- Financial burden on families
- Gender inequality

Measures

- Legal enforcement of anti-dowry laws
- Awareness and social reform initiatives
- Women empowerment and education

44. AI Impact Summit 2026

Why in News?

The AI Impact Summit 2026 highlighted the growing role of Artificial Intelligence in various sectors.

Objective

- To discuss the impact of AI on economies, governance, and society

Key Focus Areas

- Ethical use of AI
- Regulation and governance frameworks
- AI for public service delivery

Significance

- Promotes responsible AI development
- Encourages international cooperation
- Supports innovation and economic growth

45. Artificial Intelligence in Governance, Healthcare and Agriculture

Why in News?

Increased adoption of AI across key sectors.

Applications

Governance

- Data-driven decision making
- Improved public service delivery
- Predictive analytics for policy planning

Healthcare

- Early disease detection
- Medical diagnostics



- Telemedicine and remote care

Agriculture

- Crop monitoring
- Precision farming
- Weather prediction and advisory services

Challenges

- Data privacy concerns
- Ethical issues
- Lack of regulatory clarity

Significance

- Enhances efficiency and productivity
- Improves service delivery
- Supports sustainable development

46. National Quantum Mission

Why in News?

Government initiatives to advance quantum technology in India.

Objective

- To develop quantum technologies such as:
 - Quantum computing
 - Quantum communication
 - Quantum sensing

Key Features

- Development of secure communication systems
- Promotion of research and innovation
- Collaboration between academia and industry

Significance

- Strengthens technological capabilities
- Enhances national security
- Positions India in emerging technologies

47. LIGO (Gravitational Waves)

Why in News?

Developments related to gravitational wave research and observatories.

Meaning

- LIGO (Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory) detects gravitational waves

Gravitational Waves

- Ripples in spacetime caused by massive cosmic events

Features

- Uses laser interferometry to detect waves
- Extremely sensitive instruments

Significance

- Helps in understanding the universe
- Confirms predictions of Einstein's theory of relativity
- Advances astrophysics research

48. Bharat GI

Why in News?

Initiatives to promote and protect Geographical Indications (GI) in India.

Meaning



- Geographical Indication (GI) is a tag used for products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or reputation due to that origin

Legal Framework

- Governed by the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999

Features

- Protects traditional products and knowledge
- Prevents misuse of regional product names

Examples

- Darjeeling Tea
- Banarasi Saree

Significance

- Promotes local artisans and producers
- Enhances export potential
- Preserves cultural heritage

49. Tamil Brahmi Script

Why in News?

Renewed interest in ancient Indian scripts and inscriptions.

Meaning

- An ancient script used to write early Tamil language

Time Period

- Around 3rd century BCE onwards

Features

- Derived from the Brahmi script

- Found in inscriptions in South India

Significance

- Provides insights into early Tamil culture and history
- Important for understanding linguistic development

50. Ol Chiki Script

Why in News?

Recognition and promotion of tribal languages and scripts.

Meaning

- A script used for writing the Santali language

Developed By

- Pandit Raghunath Murmu

Features

- Specifically designed for Santali phonetics
- Not derived from other major Indian scripts

Significance

- Promotes tribal identity and culture
- Supports preservation of indigenous languages

51. Ethics of War

Why in News?

Ongoing global conflicts have raised ethical concerns regarding conduct during war.

Meaning



- Ethics of war deals with moral principles governing:
 - Justification of war
 - Conduct during war

Key Principles

Jus ad Bellum (Right to go to war)

- Just cause
- Legitimate authority
- Last resort
- Proportionality

Jus in Bello (Conduct in war)

- Distinction between combatants and civilians
- Proportional use of force
- Avoidance of unnecessary suffering

Legal Framework

- Geneva Conventions
- International Humanitarian Law (IHL)

Issues

- Civilian casualties
- Use of advanced weapons
- Human rights violations

Significance

- Promotes accountability
- Protects human dignity even during conflict

52. Ethics of AI Autonomy

Why in News?

Growing use of autonomous AI systems has raised ethical concerns.



Meaning

- Concerns the ethical implications of machines making decisions without human intervention

Key Issues

- Accountability: Who is responsible for AI decisions
- Bias and discrimination
- Transparency and explainability
- Privacy concerns

Areas of Concern

- Autonomous weapons
- Decision-making in healthcare
- Surveillance systems

Principles for Ethical AI

- Human oversight
- Fairness and non-discrimination
- Transparency
- Safety and reliability

Significance

- Ensures responsible use of technology
- Protects fundamental rights
- Builds trust in AI systems

53. PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana

Why in News?

The government is promoting rooftop solar adoption under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana.

Objective



- To provide free or affordable electricity to households through rooftop solar installations

Key Features

- Financial assistance/subsidy for installing rooftop solar panels
- Targeted at residential households
- Aims to provide up to 300 units of free electricity per month

Implementation

- Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
- Implemented in coordination with State governments and DISCOMs

Benefits

- Reduces electricity bills
- Promotes renewable energy usage
- Reduces dependence on fossil fuels

Significance

- Supports India's clean energy transition
- Contributes to climate change mitigation
- Encourages sustainable development

PLACES IN NEWS

Great Nicobar Island

Why in News?

Development of a mega infrastructure project has raised environmental concerns.

Location

- Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Bay of Bengal)

Key Points

- Strategically located near major international shipping routes



- Rich biodiversity and ecological significance
-

Arctic Region

Why in News?

Increased geopolitical and environmental attention on the Arctic.

Location

- Northernmost region of the Earth, surrounding the Arctic Ocean

Key Points

- Rich in natural resources
 - Impacted significantly by climate change
 - Strategic importance for global powers
-

Indian Ocean Region (IOR)

Why in News?

Growing focus on maritime security and cooperation.

Location

- Third largest ocean, bordered by Asia, Africa, and Australia

Key Points

- Major global trade routes pass through this region
 - Important for India's strategic and economic interests
-

Meghalaya

Why in News?



Rat-hole mining practices continue to raise environmental concerns.

Location

- Northeastern state of India

Key Points

- Known for coal deposits
- Issues related to unregulated mining

Kerala

Why in News?

Urbanisation patterns and governance issues discussed.

Location

- Southern state of India

Key Points

- High level of human development
- Unique pattern of dispersed urbanisation

Nagaland (Eastern Region)

Why in News?

Demand for creation of Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority (FNTA).

Location

- Northeastern state of India

Key Points

- Eastern region is relatively underdeveloped



- Demand for greater autonomy

Paris (France)

Why in News?

Related to the Paris Agreement and global climate negotiations.

Location

- Capital of France

Key Points

- Site of the Paris Agreement (2015)
- Important centre for global climate diplomacy

