



THE HINDU



GS Paper 2-Governance

Strife-hit Manipur put under President's Rule

President Droupadi Murmu issues proclamation under Article 356 after receiving a report from Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla; Assembly under suspended animation, not dissolved, says State govt.

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Four days after Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh resigned, President's Rule was imposed on Thursday in the northeastern State that has been affected by ethnic violence for the past two years.

President Droupadi Murmu issued a proclamation under Article 356 of the Constitution after receiving a report from Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla.

The order said she was

Repeating history

Manipur holds the record for the most instances of President's Rule

■ This marks the 11th time President's Rule has been imposed

■ The latest instance was 277 days from June 2, 2001, to March 6, 2002

■ The first was for 66 days from January 12 to March 19, 1967

■ The longest was for 2 years and 157 days from October 17, 1969, to March 22, 1972



■ Rishang Keishing of the Congress became the first Chief Minister to complete his full term. Okram Ibobi Singh of Congress was the first Chief Minister to finish not one but three terms

proved by resolutions of both Houses of Parliament.

A political crisis had emerged in the State after Mr. Singh stepped down on February 9 following a meeting with Home Minister Amit Shah. The BJP State leadership failed to reach a consensus on an alternative leadership to replace Mr. Singh.

More than 250 people have been killed and around 60,000 people displaced in the ethnic violence between the tribal Kuki-Zo and the Meitei people in the State that erupt-

sembly will be under suspended animation".

The Assembly has not

an hour after both Houses of Parliament were adjourned till March 10 at the

KEY POINTS

- President Droupadi Murmu imposed President's Rule in Manipur due to ongoing ethnic violence, based on a report from Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla.
- The proclamation was made under Article 356 of the Constitution.
- Article 356(3) requires the proclamation to be presented to Parliament and will end after two months unless approved by both Houses. President's Rule can last up to six months at a time, with a maximum duration of three years.





GS Paper 1-Places in news



Restricted zone: The West Bengal government has put up barricades so that people don't approach the confluence of the Ganga and the sea from the front of the Kapil Muni temple. DEBASISH BHADURI

Pilgrims meet climate change on an island

gets submerged. "I have regular arguments with my mother-in-law. I tell her I do not want to rear chicken anymore," Mehruan says, pointing at the coop next to the pond and a couple of chickens that walk around her house.

A few houses away lives Bilasini Bar, 37, who is chopping pumpkin for lunch. Her home has no concrete roof. Her 19-year-old son dropped out of school a few years ago. Like Mehruan, Bar is worried that when the next cyclone strikes, she will have to move with her goats. "We have to work daily to feed ourselves. The mela means nothing much to us," she says.

Saddam Gazi, 26, stays with his mother Sakila Bibi in a house that is hardly 50 metres from the sea. A graduate in English from Sagar Mahavidyalaya, Gazi works as a pathology technician and collects blood samples from the island to make a living.

A cricket enthusiast, Gazi says rising sea levels are reducing employment opportunities for the youth on the island, and many of them have to migrate to other States for work. No one wants to set up a business on land that may be submerged. A few years ago, a concrete embankment was erected, clearing the mangroves, but this was washed away by cyclones, leaving the people more exposed to the sea.

Now, between the sea and the modest houses of Mehruan, Bar, and Gazi is an earthen embankment. It is covered with geotextiles, which are synthetic materials used in construction. The local fishermen have spread their fishing nets on it to dry. The smell of dried fish fills the air.

Dipak Maity, 42, a fisherman, says the administration has prohibited them from taking motorised fishing boats into the water from January 5 to 20 on account of the heavy movement of pilgrims across the water.

Along one corner of the earthen embankment, a few mangrove trees stand and fishermen leave their boats in their shade.

"When the embankments were made a few years ago, all the mangroves were cut to make way for big vehicles. The areas behind the mangroves have remained unaffected by the tidal surge," Maity says, highlighting the importance of natural barriers.

Centre vs State

As Makar Sankranti draws to a close, the State government starts paring itself on the back. Biswas claims that the number of pilgrims has



KEY POINTS

- Sagar Island, located in the Bay of Bengal, consists of 43 villages and is known for its religious significance, particularly during the Makar Sankranti festival.
- The Kapil Muni Temple attracts millions of pilgrims annually for the Gangasagar Mela, a major religious event. The island faces severe climate change impacts.





THE HINDU



GS Paper 1-Places

What is happening in the DRC?

Why did the M23 militia capture the city of Goma which lies in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo? Does Rwanda have any stake in the rebel group's actions in the DRC? Did the conflict in the region start with the Rwandan genocide? Why is Goma coveted by rebel groups and governments?

EXPLAINER

Adithya Narayan

The story so far:

The crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is back in the spotlight after the M23 militia, backed by eastern neighbour Rwanda, captured the mineral-rich city of Goma, which lies on the border between the two countries. UN estimates suggest that the fighting, which began in January, has taken the lives of more than 2,900 people, displaced close to 7,00,000 and injured many more. Since then, clashes have spread to the south of the border with the rebels eyeing Bukavu, the capital of the South Kivu province – another resource-rich region that is situated in the east of the DRC.

What is the history of the region?

While the root cause of the crisis is generally attributed to the 1994 Rwandan genocide, the region has been beset with conflict between the Hutus and Tutsis

A city under siege

The M23 militia, backed by eastern neighbour Rwanda, captured the mineral-rich city of Goma, which lies on the border between Rwanda and the DRC. The region has been beset with conflict between the Hutus and Tutsis since colonial times

THE M23 MILITIA

- One of about 100 armed factions vying for a foothold in mineral-rich eastern DRC
- Rwandan-backed group which consists primarily of Tutsis who failed to integrate into the Congolese army
- Led major insurgency against the DRC government in 2012, took up arms again in 2022. The group is estimated to have 6,500 fighters



Jan 27-28, Goma: While M23 rebels claim control of the city, they are reportedly facing resistance from army and pro-government militias

▲ Mount Nyiragongo

Direction



THE GIST

DRC President Felix Tshisekedi called the capture of Goma "an act of war". Paul Kagame, while never admitting to complicity in the M23's actions, has issued remarks time and again, that hint at the M23's legitimacy.

Imperialist powers such as Germany and Belgium ruled over Rwanda through a Tutsi monarchy in which local administrative roles were occupied by members of the Tutsi minority, ensuring better prospects for the group. This did not sit well with the Hutus who eventually called for a 'revolution' in 1959.

In April 1994, when an aircraft carrying Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana and his

KEY POINTS

1. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is Africa's second-largest country, with over 80 million people.

- Its capital, Kinshasa, is one of Africa's largest cities. Nine nations border the DRC: Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.





GS Paper 2(IR)

22 gates allow free movement along Myanmar border

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

As many as 22 out of 43 crossing points along the Myanmar border under the revised Free Movement Regime (FMR) agreement have started functioning, said a senior government official on Thursday. At least 10 border gates, to regulate the movement of people living within 10 km of the India-Myanmar bor-

organisations (EAOs) and the military junta.

The 43 crossing points were finalised by the MHA as per the revised guidelines and Assam Rifles has been entrusted with the task of monitoring the movement of people from across the border.

After the Myanmar military took over the country following a coup on February 1, 2021, over 40,000 refugees belonging to the

KEY POINTS

- FMR was brought in place in 1968 due to ethnic and familial relations between people on either side of the largely unfenced north-eastern border. Initially the territorial limit of free movement was 40 km, which was reduced to 16 km in 2004 and in 2016 additional regulations were enforced. It has now reduced to 10 km





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GS Paper 1-Culture

Ministry of Education



Kashi Tamil Sangamam 3.0 to be inaugurated on 15th February

The first team of delegates flagged off at Chennai

Theme of KTS 3.0 will be Sage Agasthyar

1st time the participants of KTS 3.0 to experience Mahakumbh and visit Ram Mandir at Ayodhya

Posted On: 13 FEB 2025 7:24PM by PIB Delhi

KEY POINTS

- Kashi Tamil Sangamam 3.0, focusing on Maharishi Agasthyar, Mahakumbh, and Ayodhya Dham, aims to strengthen cultural ties between Tamil Nadu and Kashi.
- Organized by the Ministry of Education with various ministries and UP Government, it provides a platform for cultural exchange. Aligning with NEP 2020, it integrates traditional and modern knowledge. Implemented by IIT Madras and BHU.





GS Paper 2(IR)

President Trump Announces F-35 Stealth Fighter Deal With India



KEY POINTS

- US President Donald Trump highlighted the strong bond between the US and India, with agreements on energy, nuclear technology, and defense, including F-35 fighters.
- Both nations will work together on the India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor and counterterrorism





GS Paper 2(Governance)

Union Minister S.P. Singh Baghel Releases Devolution Index Report



KEY POINTS

- Minister S.P. Singh Baghel launched the "Devolution Index Report 2024," evaluating Panchayats on six key dimensions: Framework, Functions, Finances, Functionaries, Capacity Building, and Accountability. The report assesses decentralization progress and Panchayat autonomy across India.
- It aims to strengthen cooperative federalism and local governance, helping States improve and adopt best practices

1.

Panchayati raj



सत्यमेव जयते

GS Paper 2(IR)

Defence to energy, deepening of India-France ties amid geopolitical shifts

EXPERT
EXPLAINS



GULSHAN SACHDEVA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited France from February 10 to 12 at the invitation of French President Emmanuel Macron. It was a very significant visit — this is why.

Trump factor, global shifts

The PM's visit had two key dimensions: the AI Action Summit which he co-chaired with President Macron, and consolidating India-France ties, which were elevated to the strategic partnership level in 1998. The two countries also reviewed the 'Horizon 2047' Roadmap agreed two years ago.

However, the next leg of the PM's trip, to the United States, also influenced the visit. While France and other European nations have spent months preparing to navigate the "Trump factor", the shocks already ap-

pear far greater than anticipated. US President Donald Trump's phone call with Russia's President Vladimir Putin has rattled European capitals that have strongly opposed the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Trump's action spotlights the inherent risks of Europe's strategic dependence on the US.

National identity and strategic independence are at the heart of French foreign policy. The Russian aggression against Ukraine, however, pushed such ideas to the background. Finland and Sweden joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) following the invasion of Ukraine. But with Trump in the White House, EU nations may be forced to reassess their strategic autonomy and defence preparedness.

French views have traditionally converged with the Indian preference for a multipolar world, making India a reliable partner for France. Additionally, the two countries share a strong commitment to addressing climate change. With Trump having announced the withdrawal of the US from the Paris Agreement, France could look to India for even closer collaboration in this area.

Defence and connectivity

Unlike commercial exchanges, defence ties between countries carry a political dimension, and reflect an understanding of their respective geopolitical landscapes. Over the years, alongside Russia, France has been a key and reliable source of defence equipment for India. Such supplies also provide the exporting country with a degree of political leverage and directly impact the importing nation's defence preparedness.

For New Delhi, trust also stems from the fact that France was among the few Western nations that refrained from imposing sanctions on India following the Pokhran-II nuclear tests of 1998. Since then, the two countries have collaborated closely at nearly all multilateral forums, including the UN Security Council. There has also been convergence in security and economic interests in the Indo-Pacific.

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, France was among the top three global arms exporters between 2019 and 2023. Following the Ukraine war, France also figured in the list of the top three destinations

for Indian defence exports in 2023-24. Last year, India and France also agreed on a Defence Industrial Roadmap to deepen co-operation. The Scorpene submarine project, additional purchases of Rafale jets and helicopters, as well as efforts toward indigenous production are ongoing under this framework.

The indigenisation process is crucial for India's defence modernisation and diversification of supplies. India has offered France the Defence Research and Development Organisation's Pinaka multi-barrel rocket launcher during this visit.

According to the joint statement, the two leaders agreed to work together more closely on implementing the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor that was first discussed on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in New Delhi in 2023. It has been planned to include an Eastern Corridor connecting India to the Gulf region, and a Northern Corridor connecting the Gulf region to Europe. It will comprise a railway, a ship-rail transit network, and supplementing road transport routes.

EXPLAINED
GLOBAL

The IMEC aims to provide India with an alternative route to Europe. Despite the challenging security situation in the Middle East, several European nations are eager to position themselves as key connectors. During the visit, France proposed Marseille, located on the Mediterranean Sea, as a strategic hub for the project. Though multimodal transport corridors face greater logistical challenges than direct shipping routes, prevailing geopolitical uncertainties mean that India and most European nations will likely continue favouring multiple connectivity options, making IMEC an attractive option.

Nuclear energy, roadblocks

France is a pioneer in civil nuclear energy, with around 70% of its electricity being derived from nuclear power.

Both leaders stressed that nuclear energy is an "essential part of the energy mix" to enhance energy security and transition towards a low-carbon economy. France has offered to build nuclear power reactors in Jaitapur, Maharashtra. However, these projects have faced challenges such as high costs and unresolved technical and legal issues.

Under India's Civil Liability for Nuclear Damages Act, 2010, a mechanism was laid down for compensating victims for damage caused by a potential nuclear accident, and ascertaining liability. Foreign players have cited this as a roadblock to their entry.

With the Indian government now planning amendments to both the 2010 Act and the Atomic Energy Act, 1962, the interest among French nuclear power companies could be renewed.

However, the focus is now shifting to Small Modular Reactor (SMR) and Advanced Modular Reactor (AMR) technologies. These smaller reactors have important advantages, requiring lesser physical space and lower capital investment. In the Union Budget presented on February 1, a Nuclear Energy Mission worth Rs 20,000 crore was announced for the research and development of SMRs. India and France have signed a letter of intent over cooperation on AMRs and SMRs during the visit.

Prof Gulshan Sachdeva is Chief Coordinator, DAKSHIN – Global South Centre of Excellence, RIS at New Delhi and Professor of European Studies at JNU

KEY POINTS

- Prime Minister Modi visited France from 10–12 February 2025, co-chairing the AI Action Summit and discussing stronger India–France ties in AI, defence, space, and sustainability. Key highlights included launching the India–France Year of Innovation, enhancing defence collaboration, and advancing the India–Middle East–Europe Corridor

