

NEWS TODAY

Ministry of Mines reclassifies Barytes, Felspar, Mica, and Quartz as 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**.

- A mineral is a **natural substance of organic or inorganic origin** with definite chemical and physical properties.

Reason for reclassification

- **Quartz, Felspar and Mica are found in pegmatite rocks**, which are an important source of many critical minerals.
 - ⊕ Previously, when lease was granted as minor minerals, associated **critical minerals were not reported or extracted**.
 - ⊕ These minerals have vital roles in various **new technologies, in energy transition, spacecraft industries, healthcare sector, etc.**
- **Baryte** often occurs as concretions and vein fillings in **limestone and dolostone**.
 - ⊕ It is found in association with **ores of Antimony, Cobalt, Copper, Lead, Manganese and Silver**.
 - ⊕ It has **various industrial applications** which is used for oil and gas drilling, electronics, TV screens, rubber, glass, ceramics, paint, radiation shielding and medical applications.
- Once categorized as major minerals, there would be an increase in **exploration and scientific mining of these minerals** which are an **important source of many critical minerals**.

Major and Minor Minerals

- **Major minerals are those specified in the schedule** appended in the **Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) (MMDR) Act, 1957**.
- **The MMDR Act, 1957 defines "Minor Minerals"** as building stones, gravel, clay, sand, and other Central Government-notified minerals.
 - ⊕ **Minor mineral administration and regulation fall to state governments.**

External Affairs Minister (EAM) Highlights Plurilateralism as Key to Resolving Strained International Order

At the **G20 session on 'Global Geopolitical Situation'**, EAM criticized dysfunctional multilateralism and emphasized plurilateralism for inclusive, transparent global cooperation to address global trust deficits.

About Plurilateralism

- **Definition:** Plurilateralism is a **governance strategy** where a **subset of countries within a larger multilateral framework come together** to negotiate agreements on **specific issues**.
- **Plurilateralism vs. Multilateralism**
 - ⊕ Unlike Plurilateralism, **Multilateralism** involves agreements **among all or most members** of the international community (e.g., WTO, UN treaties).
 - ⊕ Plurilateralism is **agile and targeted**, contrasting with **multilateralism's inclusive** but often **gridlocked consensus**.

Causal Factors for Rise in Plurilateralism

- **Faster Decision-Making:** Avoids delays from broad multilateral talks. **E.g., The Multi-party Interim Appeal Arrangement (MPIA)** was created to address the dysfunction of the WTO's Appellate Body
- **Focus on Specific Issues:** Enables targeted collaboration in key areas. **E.g., The Minerals Security Partnership (MSP)** is a U.S.-led initiative to secure critical mineral supply chains and reduce reliance on China.
- **Bypass Multilateral Stalemates:** Helps overcome deadlocks in global institutions. **E.g., WTO Doha Round** failure led to Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs).
- **Strategic Alliances and Geopolitical Shifts:** Countries are forming strategic alliances through plurilateral agreements to enhance cooperation in trade, technology, and security. **E.g., AUKUS.**

India and the Shift Towards Plurilateralism



Strategic Partnerships

India joins US-led Quad while maintaining the **Russia-India-China (RIC) Strategic Triangle**, showcasing diplomatic agility.



Sectoral Leadership

India leads sectoral plurilateral initiatives. **E.g., The International Solar Alliance (2016)**



Crisis Management

Plurilateralism allows India to engage all stakeholders without taking sides, enhancing diplomatic credibility.

E.g., India maintains strong ties with conflicting powers in the Ukraine war and West Asia



India's Plurilateral Strategy

"Engage America, manage China, cultivate Europe, reassure Russia, bring Japan into play"

"The India Way" by S. Jaishankar

Govt to set up Deregulation Commission to Reduce State's Role in Governance: Prime Minister

PM also emphasized government efforts through the **Jan Vishwas Bill 2.0** to cut bureaucratic hurdles by reducing **regulatory burdens**.

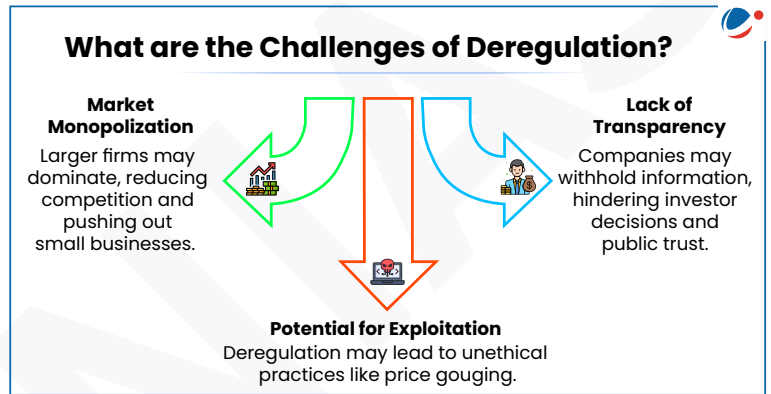
- **Jan Vishwas Bill 2.0:** Announced in the **Union Budget 2025-26**. It aims to **decriminalize over 100 outdated legal provisions** to enhance **ease of doing business**.

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.
 - ⊕ **E.g., Japan and China** achieved high growth through deregulation.
- **Enhance Economic Freedom:** Deregulation removes bureaucratic hurdles, fostering competition.
 - ⊕ **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.
 - ⊕ **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.
 - ⊕ **E.g., Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka & Haryana** relaxed prohibitions on women working night shifts, boosting employment opportunities.



Chief Justice of Delhi High Court emphasizes Judiciary's role in Modern Constitutionalism

While delivering a lecture, he also emphasized on the need to **differentiate between having a Constitution and practising constitutionalism**.

What is Constitutionalism?

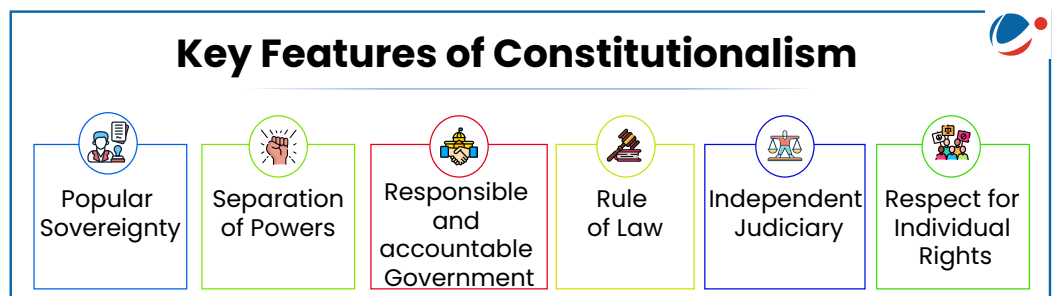
- It is an idea that **government can and should be legally limited in its powers**, and that its authority or **legitimacy depends on its observing these limitations**.
- Judiciary's played key role in evolving modern constitutionalism in India through **progressive interpretation of constitution** such as articulation of rights of LGBT community in **Navtej Singh Johar & Ors. vs. Uol Case (2018)**.

Constitutionalism in India

- **Supremacy of the Constitution:** Indian Constitution is the supreme law of the land, and all laws and policies must conform to it. (**Article 13**)
- **Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles:** Protect individual liberties and guide the governance to promote social justice.
- **Basic Structure doctrine [Kesavananda Bharati Case (1973)]:** Ensures that the fundamental principles of the Constitution cannot be altered even through amendments.

Emerging trends in Constitutionalism

- **'Internationalization' of Constitutional Laws:** Transfer of constitutional functions from national to international level. **e.g., Market access rights and level-playing fields through Most Favored Nation clauses.**
- **'Constitutionalization' of International Laws:** Increasing importance of non-state actors such as international NGOs, MNCs, etc., are challenging the role of state as the exclusive subject of international law.



RBI Deputy Governor warns against 'Reckless Financialization'

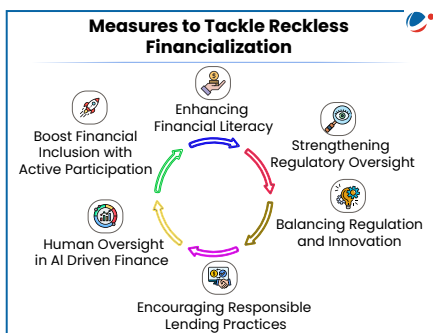
While cautioning against excessive financialization, he also stated that the **temptation of short-term gains in financial market** can easily overshadow the **long-term financial security of individuals**.

What is Financialization?

- It refers to the **increasing influence of financial motives, markets, instruments, actors, and institutions** in both domestic and international economies.
- It also describes **moving investments away from traditional, 'physical' asset** (like real estate, gold) towards **'financial assets'** (like mutual funds).
- Reckless financialization, however, can create **systemic risks such as market volatility, increased debt and default risks, loss of trust, etc.**, as seen during the **2008 global financial crisis**.

Reasons for rise in Reckless Financialization

- Excessive Credit Availability:** Easy access to unsecured loans and margin trading fuels speculation.
- Derivative Euphoria:** Complex financial instruments drive aggressive trading and market volatility.
- Proliferation of High-Frequency Trading (HFT):** Algorithmic trading accelerates market movements, often beyond rational levels.
- Financial Illiteracy:** Retail investors engage in speculation without understanding risks.
- Short-term Profit Focus:** Quick gains overshadow long-term financial security.
- Technological Risks:** AI-driven trading lacks explainability, increasing systemic risks.
- Peer Pressure in Retail Investing:** **Social media influences and 'herd mentality'** push inexperienced investors into speculative trading.



Global Glacier Loss Accelerates Sea Level Rise

A study published in Nature has found that **melting glaciers** have contributed nearly **2 cm to global sea level rise** since the start of the 21st century.

Other Key Findings:

- Massive Ice Loss:** Glaciers lost ~270 billion tonnes of ice annually for 25 years (2000-2023).
- The largest contributors to glacier mass loss:** Alaska, Canadian Arctic, Peripheral glaciers in Greenland, Southern Andes.

About Sea-Level Rise

- Definition:** Sea level rise is an increase in the ocean's surface height relative to the land in a particular location.
- Two primary reasons for Sea-Level Rise:**
 - Glacial and Ice Sheet Melting:** Glaciers and ice sheets lose mass due to rising global temperatures.
 - Thermal Expansion:** As ocean temperatures rise, seawater expands, leading to an increase in volume.

Consequences of Sea-Level Rise

- Storm Surges and Natural Disasters:** Higher-sea levels intensify storm surges and coastal flooding.
- Human Settlements:** 15% resided within just 10 km of a water body, making them vulnerable.
- Freshwater Contamination:** Rising seas contaminate freshwater supplies, affecting agriculture and drinking water sources.
- Coastal Flooding:** Rising seas threaten low-lying areas, with 630 million people at risk of annual flooding by 2100.

Threats Due to Sea Level Rise in India

- Land Loss:** Between 1990 and 2016, West Bengal lost approximately 99 sq km of land due to sea-level rise.
- Coastal Cities:** Mumbai, with the highest Sea-Level rise, faces increased risk of flooding and infrastructure damage.
- Displacement:** 29% of India's population lives within 50 km of coastline, making them vulnerable to displacement.
- Freshwater Resources:** Rising sea levels contribute to saltwater intrusion, threatening freshwater supplies in cities like Chennai and Kolkata.

Also In News

NCISM

NCISM has concluded the first phase of the 'desh Ka Prakriti Parikshan Abhiyaan' with Historic Five Guinness World Records.

About NCISM

- About:** NCISM is a **statutory body** constituted under the **National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Act, 2020**.
- Composition:** It consists of **29 members**, appointed by the central government.
- Ministry:** Ministry of Ayush
- NCISM aims to:**
 - Improve:** Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, and Sowa-Rigpa (AUS&SR) medical education and ensure a sufficient, qualified workforce accessible to all.
 - Promote:** Research-driven AUS&SR practice and transparent institutional assessment,
 - Regulate:** AUS&SR standards through registration, ethical guidelines, and grievance redressal.



Bay of Bengal Inter-Governmental Organisation

India Assumes Chairmanship of **BOBP-IGO**.

About BOBP-IGO

- Genesis:** 2003
- Purpose:** It is an Inter-Governmental Organisation promoting cooperation and providing technical advisory for sustainable coastal fisheries in the Bay of Bengal region.
- Members:** Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka.
 - Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand are cooperating non-contracting parties.
- Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem Project II:**
 - Purpose:** Addresses issues related to the overexploitation of marine living resources, the degradation and loss of critical habitats and water pollution.
 - Tenure:** Five-year project (2023-2028) with funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF).



Currency Buy/ Sell Swap

RBI plans \$10 billion **dollar-Re swap** to improve liquidity.

- It is a **financial tool used to manage liquidity in the banking system.**

About Buy/Sell Swap

- **Buy Phase:** The RBI buys US dollars from banks in exchange for Indian Rupees. This increases the Rupee liquidity in the banking system.
- **Sell Phase:** After a specified period (in this case, three years), the RBI sells the same amount of US dollars back to the banks and receives the Indian Rupees in return.



Bharat Tech Triumph Program

Bharat Tech Triumph Program has been launched to support digital and online gaming in India.

About Bharat Tech Triumph Program

- **Launched by:** Interactive Entertainment and Innovation Council (IEIC), in partnership with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB),
- **Objective:** To identify and showcase India's gaming talent on the international stage.
- It will provide Indian innovators with a **global platform** to highlight their expertise and expand **India's presence in the international gaming industry.**



DBIM

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) introduces Digital Brand Identity Manual (DBIM) to harmonize the government's Digital presence.

About Digital Brand Identity Manual (DBIM)

- The initiative **focuses on simplifying and standardizing government websites.**
- **Aim:** To ensure that citizens from **diverse backgrounds** can easily **navigate and access essential government services.**
- **Objective:** To Enhance service delivery, and ensure consistent messaging across ministries, making government priorities more transparent.
- **Significance:** Will enhance the government's **"Minimum Government, Maximum Governance"** approach by introducing **"Uniform Governance"**.



Extinction Filtering

A study finds that human activities outside protected areas drive biodiversity loss, with "extinction filtering" causing the disappearance of sensitive species.

About Extinction filtering

- **Extinction filtering** is the process where species sensitive to human disturbance disappear, leaving only those **capable of surviving in degraded landscapes.**
- This pattern of **biodiversity loss**, results in a **less diverse and more uniform mix** of species in tropical forests.
- **Concern:** Over time, this **weakens entire ecosystems and reduces their ability to recover from environmental changes.**



Perovskite LEDs

Novel technique unearthed to enhance **next-generation lighting through Perovskite Light Emitting Diodes (PeLEDs).**

About Perovskite LEDs (PeLEDs)

- It combines the advantages of Organic LEDs (OLEDs) and Quantum dot LED (QLEDs), reducing their sensitivity to heat and moisture, as well as colour instability, paving the way for efficient, durable optoelectronic devices.
 - ⊖ **OLEDs** are monolithic, solid-state devices that typically consist of a **series of organic thin films sandwiched between two thin-film conductive electrodes.**
 - ⊖ **QLED** display technology that **utilizes quantum dots**, which are semiconductor nanocrystals, to produce vibrant and high-quality images.



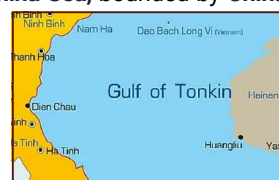
Gulf of Tonkin

Recently, Vietnamese government published **map of its Gulf of Tonkin baseline.**

- Baselines are used to **determine limits to territorial waters and exclusive economic zones.**

About Gulf of Tonkin

- Vietnam shares a **maritime border with China** in Gulf of Tonkin.
- It is the **northwest arm of the South China Sea**, bounded by **China** (north and east), **Hainan Island** (east), and **northern Vietnam** (west).
- It receives the Red River, and its **main ports include Ben Thuy and Haiphong** in northern Vietnam and **Beihai (Pakhoi)** in China.



Place in News



Australia (Capital: Canberra)

The External Affairs Minister discussed issues related to the Indo-Pacific region with his Australian counterparts.

Physical Features:

- Australia is unique as it is **both a country and a continent**, entirely surrounded by the Indian and Pacific Oceans, with no land borders.
- **Maritime Borders:** **Indian Ocean** (west and south), **Pacific Ocean** (east), **Coral Sea** (northeast), **Timor Sea** (northwest), **Arafura Sea** (north), and **Tasman Sea** (southeast).

Geographical features:

- **Australia is the world's smallest, flattest, and (after Antarctica) driest continent**
- **Major Rivers:** Murray (longest) and Darling.
- **Lake Eyre Basin** is one of the world's largest internally draining river systems.
- **Other Notable Features:**
 - ⊖ **Great Barrier Reef** (largest coral reef, off Queensland).
 - ⊖ **Great Dividing Range** (mountain range along the east coast)



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI