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Edition: International Table of Contents

Page 01: GS 3 : Indian Economy : Infrastructure

The Government of India has notified the Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Electric Passenger Cars in India, which permits foreign EV manufacturers to import up to 8,000 electric cars per year at a reduced customs duty of 15%, down from the prevailing 70–100%, if they commit to invest ₹4,150 crore in domestic EV production. This step aligns with the government's goal of fostering domestic manufacturing while also boosting EV adoption.

Centre will allow import of EVs at 15% to promote domestic manufacturing

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Centre on Monday notified the guidelines to promote domestic manufacturing of electric cars, significantly lowering import duty for foreign manufacturers which pledge to invest in domestic electric vehicle production.

Carmakers will be permitted to import up to 8,000 electric vehicles at a reduced duty rate of 15%, compared with the current 70-100%, provided they commit to invest ₹4,150 crore in local EV manufacturing. They will be required to begin operations within three years of receiving approval and must meet specified local content requirements. The detailed guidelines for the Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Electric Passenger Cars in India comes 15 months after the government announced its import policy.

Plugging in: Under the policy, domestic manufacturers can import vehicles at a concessional 15% duty. NAGARA GOPAL

During the release of the guidelines, Union Heavy Industries and Steel Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy said the global EV giant Tesla was not interested in manufacturing cars in India. "Tesla... They are more [interested] only to start showrooms. They are not interested to [start] manufacturing in India," Mr. Kumaraswamy said.

The scheme allows EV manufacturers to import completely built-up cars with a minimum cost-insurance-freight value of $35,000 at a reduced customs duty of 15% for five years from the date of the application approval. The maximum number of electric four-wheelers allowed to be imported at the reduced customs duty will be 8,000 units a year.

In a departure from the 2024 version of the policy, the Union government has also allowed brownfield investments following protests from domestic manufacturers such as Maruti Suzuki India and Tata Motors.

(With PTI inputs)

Key Highlights:

- **Duty Concession:** The policy slashes the import duty on EVs to 15% for manufacturers investing significantly in local production.

- **Investment Clause:** Companies must invest ₹4,150 crore and begin operations within 3 years of receiving approval.
- **Localisation Norms:** They must adhere to phased manufacturing and domestic value addition norms.
- **Brownfield Investment Allowed:** The revised policy now includes brownfield investments, following opposition from domestic players who feared unfair competition from foreign EV makers like Tesla.
- **Tesla's Reluctance:** Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy stated Tesla is not inclined to manufacture in India but rather open showrooms, raising concerns about genuine investment intentions.

Analysis:

- **Balancing Act:** The policy is a fine balance between encouraging foreign direct investment (FDI) and protecting domestic industries. By enforcing investment and localisation commitments, the scheme discourages mere market access without local economic contribution.
- **Push to EV Ecosystem:** The move could jumpstart India's EV ecosystem by attracting global players, bringing in advanced technology, supply chains, and employment. However, it could also test the competitiveness of Indian firms already in the sector.
- **Brownfield Inclusion:** Allowing brownfield investment can accelerate the development of the EV sector by leveraging existing infrastructure, but it may also give foreign players a quicker entry route than greenfield projects.
- **Strategic Caution:** The policy includes a cap on import volumes (8,000 units/year), ensuring that the domestic market is not flooded with cheaper imports that could undermine local players.

Conclusion:

This EV import and manufacturing policy reflects India’s pragmatic approach to industrial growth, green mobility, and strategic foreign investment. While it opens doors for global giants, it also ensures commitment to Make in India. The challenge lies in enforcing localisation norms, nurturing domestic players, and preventing India from becoming a mere consumer market for foreign brands.

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques : Discuss the implications of India’s recent policy to allow concessional import of electric vehicles on domestic manufacturing and foreign investment. How can the policy strike a balance between attracting global players and supporting domestic industries?**(250 words)**

Page 07: GS 3: Environment and Ecology : Climate Change

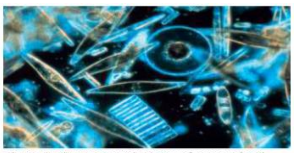
A recent study published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences reveals that industrial pollution, particularly anthropogenic iron emissions, is altering the marine nutrient cycle. The findings indicate that iron pollution, especially from East Asia, is enhancing phytoplankton blooms in spring, but at the cost of rapid nutrient depletion—threatening long-term ocean productivity and marine ecosystems.

Key Points of the Study:

- **Iron as a Double-Edged Sword:** Iron is a critical micronutrient for phytoplankton, and increased iron input from pollution boosts their growth. However, this leads to overconsumption of nitrates, a key macronutrient, especially in the North Pacific Ocean.
- **Data & Methods:** The research used field data (2016–2019), satellite imaging (chlorophyll-a), and gene expression studies to track iron's effects on phytoplankton and nutrient depletion.
- **Anthropogenic Iron:** Nearly 39% of surface iron during spring is attributed to human-induced pollution, mainly carried by East Asian aerosols through westerly winds.
- **Ecological Impact:** Phytoplankton form the base of the marine food chain. Their altered distribution affects all marine life, potentially leading to ecosystem collapse in certain regions.
- **Widening Nutrient-Poor Zones:** Continuous iron pollution, combined with climate change-driven warming and ocean stratification, is expanding nitrogen-limited zones, making them biologically less productive.

Analysis:

- **Anthropogenic Intervention in Natural Cycles:** This study underscores how human emissions can disrupt delicate ecological balances, causing unintended consequences even when they temporarily enhance productivity.
- **Climate Change Synergy:** The impact of iron pollution is compounded by global warming, which reduces vertical mixing in oceans (stratification), making nutrient replenishment harder and intensifying nitrogen scarcity.
- **Threat to Marine Biodiversity & Economy:** Marine biodiversity, including fish populations vital for food and livelihood, is at risk. Ecosystem shifts can severely affect fisheries, coastal economies, and global food security.



Phytoplankton are at the base of marine food chains. NOAA

Phytoplankton overfed on iron, depleting ocean nutrients faster

Vasudevan Mukunth

A new study has unearthed strong observational evidence that industrial pollution is altering nutrient cycles and ecosystem boundaries in the ocean.

According to the researchers, from across institutions in the U.S., iron released due to human activities enhances spring phytoplankton blooms as well as speeds up the rate at which nutrients are consumed. The changes may work in synergy with climate-driven ocean warming and stratification, speeding up the transition to nutrient-poor conditions across broader swaths of the ocean, they added.

The team published its findings in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* on June 2.

The authors conducted four oceanographic expeditions between 2016 and 2019 to measure dissolved iron and its isotopic composition in the north Pacific Ocean. They also used satellite observations and gene expression analyses to understand the biological responses to the element's presence.

The team collected data during three springtime cruises in 2016, 2017, and 2019 and one autumnal cruise in 2018 to track seasonal changes in iron chemistry. Team members measured the amount of dissolved iron in the water and its isotopic composition using trace-metal clean techniques and mass spectrometry. They also analysed metatranscriptomic data from phytoplankton samples to look for the expression of genes associated with iron stress — bio-physiological changes induced by exposure to the element.

Satellite data were used to assess long-term changes in phytoplankton distribution and productivity. The team focused especially on chlorophyll-a levels, for which they used data "produced by the Ocean Colour Climate Change Initiative" of the European Space Agency, according to the paper. The Initiative "integrates observations across multiple

Iron released by human activities speeds up the rate at which nutrients are consumed. This may speed up the transition to nutrient-poor conditions across broader swaths of the ocean

ocean colour platforms to form a continuous 26-year record."

This way, the team reported that about 39% of surface ocean iron during spring comes from atmospheric pollution, particularly emissions from East Asia. They found this "anthropogenic iron" has a distinct isotopic signature that makes it traceable in seawater. Its input peaked during spring, when westerly winds have been known to carry aerosols across the Pacific Ocean.

The predictably higher iron concentration in spring appeared to make the phytoplankton more productive, especially that north of the transition zone chlorophyll front (TZCF) — the boundary between nutrient-rich and nutrient-poor waters.

The greater access to iron enhanced the growth of the phytoplankton, which consumed more nitrates. The team wrote in its paper, "Over the past 25 years, increasing anthropogenic iron input appears to have stimulated springtime phytoplankton growth, ultimately leading to faster depletion of ... nitrate. Thus, large-scale iron pollution may be increasing the prevalence of nitrogen limitation," expanding the size of the nutrient-poor part of the ocean. The retreat of an ecosystem boundary can have severe ecological and socioeconomic consequences. Phytoplankton are at the base of marine food chains, so a change in their distribution will affect zooplankton, fish, and larger predators like seabirds and whales. Species that can't migrate or adapt fast enough may decline or go extinct.

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- **Scientific Tools & Collaboration:** The use of satellite data, isotopic tracking, and molecular biology showcases how interdisciplinary science is crucial for understanding large-scale environmental changes.

Conclusion:

- The study offers critical insights into how airborne industrial pollution is accelerating the transformation of ocean ecosystems. While iron boosts short-term phytoplankton growth, it leads to long-term nutrient exhaustion, endangering marine biodiversity and ecological balance. It calls for urgent global regulation of atmospheric emissions and integrated ocean-climate policy frameworks.

UPSC MainsPractice Question

Ques: Anthropogenic activities are increasingly altering natural nutrient cycles in the ocean. Discuss the ecological consequences of such disruptions, with reference to recent research on iron-induced phytoplankton blooms.**(250 Words)**

Page : 08 :GS 3 : Disaster Management

The southwest monsoon has brought severe flooding, landslides, and destruction across the northeastern States of India, especially Assam, Tripura, and Sikkim, with significant loss of lives, displacement, and infrastructure damage. Despite forecasts of below-normal rainfall, the base level of precipitation in the region remains high, highlighting the persistent vulnerability of Northeast India to monsoon-related disasters.

Key Issues Highlighted:

- **Multiple Rivers in Spate:** In Assam, over 10 rivers breached danger levels, affecting 3 lakh+ people across 19 districts.
- **Loss of Life and Property:** Over 50 deaths have been reported across the region due to floods, landslides, and lightning by the end of May.
- **Infrastructure Collapse:** Key roads have been blocked, especially in North Sikkim, isolating tourists and locals.
- **Geographic & Climatic Vulnerability:** The Bay of Bengal branch of the monsoon strikes the Northeast early, often causing flash floods and soil erosion.
- **Chronic Underdevelopment:** Poor infrastructure and delayed disaster response are compounded by inadequate long-term planning.
- **Dual Monsoon Exposure:** The region experiences a second monsoon (Oct-Dec), increasing year-long flood risk.

Analysis:

- **Recurring Pattern of Neglect:** Despite facing annual devastation, disaster preparedness and resilient infrastructure investment in the Northeast remain insufficient.
- **Ecological Fragility:** The region's hilly terrain, high rainfall, deforestation, and loose soils contribute to landslides and flash floods, which require localized mitigation strategies.
- **Need for Integrated Planning:** A long-term climate-adaptive development strategy involving the Centre, State governments, IMD, NDMA, and ecological experts is essential.
- **Focus on Resilience:** Infrastructure such as early warning systems, embankments, climate-resilient roads, and river management projects must be prioritised.

Monsoon woes

Northeast States need a long-term plan to deal with floods

The southwest monsoon has made a torrential entry and, expectedly, has wreaked considerable havoc. While the monsoon's advent from Kerala, and its subsequent journey northwards, is a cause for celebration, given its association with the economy, this is only one branch of the monsoon – the Arabian Sea branch. A day or two after its onset over Kerala, and sometimes simultaneously, the Bay of Bengal branch of the monsoon makes its way from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and enters the northeastern States first before bringing in rains to the eastern States. Frequently, however, this eastern onset is accompanied by destruction from floods and landslides. This year has been one such instance.

In Assam, 10 major rivers were flowing above their danger-level mark and in all, more than three lakh people across 19 districts of Assam have been affected in a wave of floods that has disrupted everyday lives. Tripura also witnessed heavy to very heavy rainfall across many districts over the weekend and is expected to receive an extremely heavy downpour for most of the week. The death toll in rain-induced landslides, floods, flash floods, and lightning across the northeastern region was 30 until May 29 and on a single day, May 31, 22 people had lost their lives according to official estimates. In North Sikkim, landslides have marooned about 1,500 tourists with arterial roads getting blocked from incessant rains. A bus plunged into the swollen Teesta river, killing at least two people, with the rest of the passengers missing. This is only June and history has it that with the monsoon expected to be 'above normal', it would not be a stretch to expect a spate of disasters. To be sure, the India Meteorological Department expects that the northeastern States will likely get less than their normal quota of rain, but the base level of monsoon rains in these States is higher than many States in India. This is a reason why extremely heavy rain and associated damage are a hardwired feature of the monsoon in the northeastern States, even in a year of relative scarcity. The northeastern States also experience a smaller monsoon, between October to December, and thus it becomes all the more essential to craft a plan that accounts for the region's year-long vulnerability. Historically, infrastructure development in these States has not kept pace with the rest of the country. While challenging geographical conditions are a major reason for this, there needs to be a systematic review involving all the affected States and the Centre to evaluate a sustainable long-term plan to reduce fatalities and the widespread destruction annually.

- **Balancing Development with Ecology:** Any push for connectivity and infrastructure must be ecologically sustainable to avoid exacerbating disaster risks.

Conclusion:

- The monsoon floods in the Northeast are not just natural events but predictable annual crises. They demand more than reactive measures — they require a forward-looking, climate-resilient, and region-specific disaster management strategy. Without this, the region will continue to face rising human and economic costs every year.

UPSCMainsPractice Question

Ques:The Northeast region of India is highly vulnerable to monsoon-related disasters. Examine the underlying causes and suggest long-term measures for building climate and disaster resilience in the region.(250 Words)

Page 09 : GS 2 : International Relations

In a compelling opinion piece, former Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao argues for a strategic shift in India's foreign policy narrative, urging that India must move beyond the historical India-Pakistan dyad and instead embrace its Indo-Pacific identity, treating Pakistan as a tactical irritant, not a strategic peer. The article underlines the need to reframe India's geopolitical posture by prioritizing multilateral partnerships and regional stability, especially in light of the China-Pakistan axis.

India's strategic arc must leave Pakistan behind

Nirupama Rao

Former Foreign Secretary. Follow her on X @NMenonRao

The Indo-Pacific is the central geopolitical theatre of the Asian century. The global order is fragmenting as the U.S. recalibrates its strategic focus, and it is often said that Asia must assume responsibility for its own future. Robust guardrails for peace, not only among the great powers but also to contain peripheral disrupters, are required. A major task is to recalibrate the India-China-Pakistan triangle where India and China must assume the role of stabilisers, while Pakistan must be managed as a strategic irritant, not a geopolitical peer.

The India-Pakistan relationship has dominated South Asian security discourse for decades now. This 'dyad' is the inheritance of history, not a reflection of strategic parity. The global architecture today demands that India reframe itself – not as Pakistan's rival, but as a source of Indo-Pacific stability. Shifts in both strategy and narrative are required here: where Pakistan is engaged functionally but never allowed to shape India's broader posture.

The Pakistan challenge

Pakistan is a nuclear-armed state with a history of exporting instability and operating as a proxy for China's tactical goals. It is the perennial disruptor. Its structural asymmetry derives from its dependence on China for military, economic, and diplomatic sustenance. India must highlight this in international fora.

India's choice must be to pursue a policy of calibrated containment of Pakistan. Engagement should be minimal, transactional, and never allow for equivalence. Limiting interactions of high visibility and the avoidance of rhetorical excess denies Pakistan the legitimacy it seeks.

Pakistan is a predatory state that feeds not only on its neighbours but also on its people, but India cannot afford the illusion of a Great Wall to shut it out. The bottom line is that as long as the India-Pakistan conflict remains unresolved or is combustible, it will compromise India's ascent to great power status. The key is not to solve the problem on Pakistan's terms, but to contain it and remove it from the strategic core.

China is the true peer rival; Pakistan must be the manageable risk

The China-Pakistan axis is no conventional alliance but a transactional entente where China uses Pakistan as an asymmetric lever against India. The challenge for India is to strategically decouple this partnership by treating China as a systemic peer competitor and Pakistan as a tactical irritant. They cannot be allowed to merge into a single strategic front in perception or in policy. India has done well to diplomatically expose the imbalanced nature of the China-Pakistan relationship. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is a textbook case of neocolonialism. Pakistan's agency is drained by its over-dependence on Chinese loans, weapons, and diplomatic cover. India must spotlight this reality globally.

India's operational strategy must ensure it is never compelled to fight both adversaries simultaneously. This requires flexible deterrence, investment in rapid mobility, intelligence infrastructure, and expanded, dynamic maritime partnerships. A two-front threat must be met with multi-domain preparedness. Always remember that power derives from strategic composure.

Narrative warfare is critical. Frame the China-Pakistan relationship as a challenge to regional autonomy – where sovereignty is traded for tactical advantage. In this projection, India assumes a leading role as a builder of institutions, the defender of multilateralism, and a responsible stakeholder in the Indo-Pacific's maritime and continental theatres.

Asia and Asians must be the principal stakeholders for their region's security architecture. Asia must construct its own guardrails, balancing continental and maritime interests, and not outsource stability to external powers. India and China bear a special responsibility here – not as rivals, but as co-architects of regional order.

No such balance can be sustained if either side enables peripheral destabilisers. Pakistan cannot be the prism through which the India-China relationship is viewed. The region must accept the reality: Pakistan is no strategic pole but a security concern. In South Asia, India is the continental power with maritime dominance. Stability in Asia demands that this distinction be institutionalised.

India-Pakistan engagement must not be proscribed, but it must be without illusion. Maintain hotlines, backchannels, and functional diplomacy to avoid miscalculation. Keep the conflict cold, and always below the threshold of defining India's strategic bandwidth. Great powers cannot be defined only by what they oppose, but by the upholding of balance and stability.

India, the architect

Accordingly, India must invest in alternative strategic triangles – with France and UAE, with the U.S. and Japan, with Australia and Indonesia – that reflect its wider engagements, and devalue Pakistan's centrality. These are not just alliances of interest but coalitions that build a compelling narrative. They project India as the architect, the builder of a forward-looking strategic arc, and not trapped in a legacy conflict.

Ultimately, the message must be clear: India's rise is not contingent on Pakistan's fall, but on India's ability to prevent Pakistan from shaping our national trajectory. China is the true peer rival; Pakistan must be the manageable risk. Strategic maturity lies in quiet, determined deterrence without chest-thumping. This is the essence of great power behaviour. For India, the Indo-Pacific expanse beckons and is its true habitat, where partnerships elevate, not entangle.

Key Strategic Insights:

- **De-hyphenation of Pakistan:** India should avoid letting Pakistan define its regional posture. Engagement should be transactional, minimal, and without equivalence.
- **Reframing the Triangle:** The India-China-Pakistan triangle must be recalibrated — with India and China as stabilizers, and Pakistan managed as a destabilizing outlier.
- **China-Pakistan Axis:** This alliance is transactional, not strategic. India must expose its asymmetry, particularly through platforms highlighting China's neo-colonial role in Pakistan (e.g., CPEC).
- **Narrative Warfare:** India should shape the discourse globally — portraying itself as a responsible stakeholder, institution-builder, and guardian of Indo-Pacific autonomy.
- **Strategic Triangles:** India must invest in alternative alliances (e.g., India–France–UAE, India–US–Japan) to dilute Pakistan's centrality and project itself as a global player.
- **Two-Front Challenge:** India must be prepared for multi-domain warfare, maintain flexible deterrence, and avoid being trapped into simultaneous conflicts with China and Pakistan.

Analysis:

- **Strategic Clarity:** The article reinforces the idea that strategic maturity lies in restraint, composure, and a focus on long-term national interests, not reactive rivalry with Pakistan.
- **Relevance to India's Great Power Ambitions:** As India aspires for a greater global role, its foreign policy must shed the baggage of legacy conflicts and demonstrate regional leadership and global responsibility.
- **Managing Risks, Not Rivalries:** Pakistan must be contained, not elevated, in Indian strategic thought. This prevents resource diversion and keeps India focused on larger regional dynamics, especially vis-à-vis China.
- **Strategic Narrative as Diplomacy:** Soft power and narrative-building are as important as military deterrence — a vital lesson in an era of information warfare and perception diplomacy.

Conclusion:

- India's rise as a major power in the Indo-Pacific cannot be tied down by the historical baggage of its rivalry with Pakistan. Instead, it must craft a forward-looking strategic arc, grounded in maritime partnerships, institutional leadership, and strategic composure. Pakistan should remain a manageable risk, not a core focus, and India must step into its role as a regional stabiliser and global player with clarity and confidence.

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques: India's strategic future lies in the Indo-Pacific, not in the legacy rivalry with Pakistan. Critically examine this statement in the context of evolving regional geopolitics and India's foreign policy priorities.(**250 words)**

Page 10 : GS 2 : Indian Polity

Manipur has been under President's Rule since February 2025 due to worsening law and order and political instability. A delegation of MLAs recently urged the Governor to facilitate government formation. This has revived debates on the constitutional provisions, past misuse, and judicial scrutiny of Article 356, which allows for President's Rule in states.

How is President's Rule imposed?

What does Article 356 of the Constitution stipulate? How have different Governors dealt with dissolving Legislative Assemblies after President's Rule has been invoked? When did the Supreme Court first intervene in the decision of the Union government to impose President's rule?

EXPLAINER

Rangarajan. R

The story so far:

A delegation of 10 MLAs from the Manipur Assembly met the Governor of the State and pressed for the formation of a viable government in Manipur that has been under President's Rule since February 2025.

What is President's Rule?

Article 356 is invoked to impose President's Rule in a State after removing the State government. While there are duties cast on federal governments in the U.S. and Australia to protect the States, their constitutions do not have any provision for removing State governments. Under Article 356, the President (Central government) may take over the governance of a State when it cannot be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. The President can make such a proclamation based on a receipt of report from the Governor of a State or otherwise. The latter situation may arise under Article 365 due to failure of a State to comply with or give effect to any directions of the Union government.

The proclamation of President's Rule must be approved by both Houses of Parliament within two months from the date of its issue by a simple majority. Once approved by Parliament, the President's Rule continues for six months, from the date of proclamation, unless revoked earlier. It can be extended for a further period of six months at a time by an approval of both the Houses of Parliament by a simple majority. The President's Rule cannot extend beyond a period of three years in total.

What has been the history?

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar during the Constituent Assembly debates wished that Article 356 would never be called into operation and that it would remain a dead letter. However, it has been a travesty that Article 356 was misused on several occasions, removing elected governments that enjoyed majority in the States, violating constitutional principles and federalism. Reasons varied from loss in Lok Sabha elections to deterioration of law and order. When it comes to the dissolution of the Legislative Assembly after imposition of President's Rule, there has been no uniformity in the approach. More than constitutional principles, it was political expediency that drove such decisions in the past.

In rage: Women protest against the President's Rule imposed in Manipur, in Imphal West on May 27. ANI

Various Governors have adopted different approaches in similar situations in regard to the dissolution of the Legislative Assembly. The advice of a Chief Minister, enjoying majority support in the Assembly, is normally binding on the Governor. However, where the Chief Minister had lost such support, some Governors have refused to dissolve the Legislative Assembly on his/her advice, while others in similar situations, accepted the advice, and dissolved the Assembly. The Assembly was dissolved in Kerala (1970) and in Punjab (1971) on the advice of the Chief Minister whose claim to majority support was doubtful. However, in more or less similar circumstances in Punjab (1967), Uttar Pradesh (1968), Madhya Pradesh (1969), and Orissa (1971), the Legislative Assembly was not dissolved immediately based on the outgoing Ministry's advice. Attempts were made to install alternative Ministries.

What have the courts ruled?

The Supreme Court and High Courts during the first four decades after Independence refrained from interfering in the decision of the Centre to impose President's Rule in States. It was only after a categorical judgment of the Supreme Court in the *S. R. Bommai* case (1994), that misuse of Article 356 has been restricted. The court in this judgment held that Article 356 should be imposed only in the event of a breakdown of constitutional machinery as distinguished from an ordinary breakdown of law and order. It also held that imposition of President's Rule is subject to judicial review and should not be misused for political reasons. It further ruled that till Parliament approves the imposition of President's Rule, the Legislative Assembly should not be dissolved, and can be only kept under suspended animation.

The higher judiciary has been a watchdog, since the *S. R. Bommai* case, against the arbitrary use of Article 356. Notably in the case of Bihar (2005), Uttarakhand (2016) and Arunachal Pradesh (2016), the courts have struck down the wrongful imposition of President's Rule.

When can it be revoked?

If President's Rule is imposed because of the lack of a government with majority, then usually fresh elections are held. After elections, the President's Rule is revoked and a popularly elected government takes over the governance of the State. Manipur was placed under President's Rule in February 2025 due to the deteriorating security situation and consequent political developments in the State. The assembly, whose five-year term ends in March 2027, has been kept under suspended animation. Considering that more than 18 months are left before the assembly term expires, it would be prudent to install a government that enjoys the confidence of the assembly. More importantly, it should enjoy the confidence of different sections of society of the State.

Rangarajan.R is a former IAS officer and author of 'Courseware on Polity Simplified'. He currently trains at Officers IAS Academy. Views expressed are personal.

THE GIST

- Dr. B.R. Ambedkar during the Constituent Assembly debates wished that Article 356 would never be called into operation and that it would remain a dead letter.
- The proclamation of President's Rule must be approved by both Houses of Parliament within two months from the date of its issue by a simple majority.
- The Supreme Court and High Courts during the first four decades after Independence refrained from interfering in the decision of the Centre to impose President's Rule in States.

Key Constitutional and Political Issues:

- **Article 356 Provisions:**
  - Invoked when the State government cannot be run in accordance with the Constitution.

- Based on the Governor's report or Union's own assessment.
- Must be ratified by Parliament within two months, and renewed every six months, up to three years.

- **Misuse in History:**
  - Though Dr. B.R. Ambedkar hoped Article 356 would remain a "dead letter", it was misused, especially to dismiss opposition-ruled State governments.
  - Dismissals often occurred not due to constitutional breakdown, but due to political motivations, such as losses in Lok Sabha elections.
- **Inconsistent Practices by Governors:**
  - Some dissolved assemblies even when majority claims were uncertain (e.g., Kerala 1970, Punjab 1971), while others tried to install alternative governments (e.g., UP 1968, MP 1969).
- **Judicial Check – S.R. Bommai Case (1994):**
  - **A landmark ruling that:**
    - Restricted arbitrary use of Article 356.
    - Asserted that breakdown of constitutional machinery, not just law and order, is the threshold.
    - President's Rule is subject to judicial review.
    - The Legislative Assembly must remain suspended (not dissolved) until Parliament approval is obtained.
  - Since then, courts have struck down invalid impositions, e.g., Bihar (2005), Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh (2016).
- **Current Manipur Situation:**
  - Assembly kept under suspended animation (term ends in March 2027).
  - Constitutional prudence requires forming a government with legislative and social legitimacy, rather than continuing President's Rule indefinitely.

Analysis:

- **Constitutional Morality & Federalism:** Article 356 remains a powerful but dangerous tool. While it ensures continuity of governance, its misuse can erode federal trust and democratic processes.
- **Role of Governor:** The Governor's discretion must be exercised with constitutional neutrality, not partisan bias, especially when deciding on dissolving or keeping assemblies.
- **Judiciary as Guardian:** Post-Bommai jurisprudence is a vital safeguard against Executive overreach. However, vigilant application of the doctrine remains necessary.
- **Revival of Elected Government:** In the case of Manipur, efforts must be made to restore a representative government, especially since significant time remains in the current Assembly's term.

Conclusion:

- The use of Article 356 should be governed by constitutional propriety, not political expediency. The experience since the Bommai judgment shows how judicial oversight, transparent governance, and

federal ethics can prevent misuse. In Manipur's case, democratic restoration must take precedence over prolonged central rule.

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques: Discuss the constitutional safeguards and judicial interventions related to the imposition of President's Rule under Article 356. In light of recent developments, evaluate the relevance of the S.R. Bommai judgment in protecting India's federal structure.**(250 words)**

Page : 08 Editorial Analysis

Strengthening the U.S.-India subsea cable agenda

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Bilateral commercial engagement between India and the United States is accelerating across multiple fronts, not limited to an imminent trade agreement. The two administrations are working closely on strategic sectors, with a shared understanding of the need to diversify and de-risk technology supply chains in an increasingly volatile world. This includes efforts to finesse the Technology for Resilient, Open and Unified Security and Trust (TRUST) framework – the spiritual successor to the U.S.-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology, or iCET.

Later this year, United States President Donald Trump is expected to visit India for the Quad (India, Australia, Japan, U.S.) Summit. The first tranche of a bilateral trade agreement between India and the U.S. will be signed in advance of this summit, which will set a solid baseline of deepened cooperation across digital technologies and markets.

Amidst these developments, subsea cables – the physical backbone of the global Internet – are emerging as an area of focus. They carry over 95% of international data traffic, enabling nearly all digital interactions. Once these cables reach land, they either connect directly to users or link to the data centres that power cloud services and critical infrastructure. China's rapid expansion of subsea infrastructure across the Indo-Pacific through its Digital Silk Road Initiative underscores the strategic importance of trusted alternatives.

Part of global public good

A strong India-American pledge to develop resilient, secure subsea systems would serve as a global public good. The TRUST framework recognises India's growing role as a net security provider in the Indo-Pacific, while also advancing plans to invest in regional subsea cable infrastructure using trusted vendors. India hosts around 17 subsea cables, with a few more under construction. But these are cumulatively less than Singapore's 26, despite its much smaller size. This must change because we are well-positioned to become a regional connectivity hub. We have all the necessary ingredients: a sprawling 11,098-kilometre coastline, a central location in the Indo-Pacific, and a fast-growing digital economy.

India's coastline accounts for nearly two-thirds of its boundary. Yet, 15 of the country's 17 international subsea cables converge on a six-kilometre stretch in Mumbai. Cable landing stations, coastline facilities that connect subsea cables to terrestrial networks, are concentrated in five cities: Mumbai, Chennai, Kochi, Tuticorin, and Thiruvanathapuram. Continued diversification of network infrastructure is in order since disruptions in one region, such as natural calamities, human error or sabotage, can have devastating implications.

A spread-out network of landing stations would also increase redundancy – which is the ability of a network to reroute data across other links when there is a disruption. In 2024, Houthi rebels allegedly damaged subsea cables in the Red Sea. Indian operators were forced to reroute traffic to other cable systems to avoid disruption. A similar disruption closer to home could lead to breakdowns in both domestic and international communications.

Potential as a transit hub

Subsea cable routes tend to mirror historical maritime trade routes. Positioned between Europe, Southeast Asia, and Africa, India sits near key maritime choke points – the Strait of Hormuz, the Strait of Malacca and Bab-el-Mandeb. This makes the country a natural hub for global cable networks.

India is also situated at the centre of a region with the fastest broadband expansion, serving rising demand in dynamic economies across Africa and Asia, including Indonesia. It serves as a key junction for nearly all Africa-Asia and Europe-Asia submarine cables. Enhanced connectivity is also important for serving surging domestic demand. India's bandwidth requirement is projected to grow at 38% between 2021 and 2028, fuelled by rising consumption and data centre investments.

Countering Beijing's influence in the Indo-Pacific is an enduring American policy stance. India's digital infrastructure, particularly subsea cables, is a front line asset that requires greater fortification, in this context.

Steps needed

For its part, India must lower entry barriers to greater investment. The licensing regime for undersea cables remains prohibitively complex and must be reformed. Cables need upwards of 50 clearances from multiple Ministries. Further, India continues to rely on foreign-flagged cable repair ships, primarily based out of Singapore and Dubai. These vessels typically take between three to five months to respond to outages – delays driven by long travel times and a cumbersome clearance process involving customs, naval permissions, and crew approvals. These lags are a commercial liability.

America also needs to step up investments in critical digital infrastructure in the Indo-Pacific. This includes inward concessional finance, technical assistance for cable route diversification and cybersecurity, and encouraging U.S. firms to take anchor positions in cable projects. An example is Meta's multi-year investment in a 50,000-kilometre undersea cable project to enhance Indian Ocean connectivity, highlighted in the United States-India Joint Leaders' Statement (February 2025). The project is set to begin soon and will connect five continents. Supporting the development of a domestic subsea cable repair ecosystem, including depot infrastructure and Indian-flagged vessels, should also find mention under the TRUST framework.

Finally, enhanced subsea cable collaboration will complement the broader U.S.-India trade deal currently being negotiated since it is also premised on more dynamic technology cooperation. Swift action on these fronts will improve the region's digital resilience and advance shared strategic and commercial goals.

It is crucial to improving the region's digital resilience and advancing shared strategic and commercial goals

Paper 02 :International Relations

UPSC Mains Practice Question:Subsea cable infrastructure is emerging as a critical strategic asset in the Indo-Pacific. Examine the opportunities and challenges for India in becoming a regional digital connectivity hub. How can Indo-U.S. cooperation strengthen India's role in this domain?(250 words)

Context :

As U.S.-India strategic and technological ties deepen under frameworks like iCET and TRUST, subsea cable infrastructure has emerged as a critical area for bilateral cooperation. Subsea cables carry over 95% of global internet traffic and are vital for digital connectivity, cybersecurity, and economic growth. India's geographical advantage in the Indo-Pacific gives it immense potential to become a regional connectivity hub, but infrastructure limitations and regulatory hurdles remain.

Key Strategic and Technological Issues:

- **Geopolitical Significance:**
  - Subsea cables are increasingly seen as strategic assets amid the global digital rivalry, especially with China's expansion through its Digital Silk Road.
  - The U.S. aims to counter Chinese influence by partnering with India on trusted digital infrastructure.
- **India's Missed Potential:**
  - Despite a long coastline and strategic location, India hosts only 17 cable landing stations, with heavy congestion in Mumbai.
  - Compared to smaller countries like Singapore (26 cables), India underutilizes its connectivity potential.
- **Need for Diversification:**
  - Current cable infrastructure is geographically concentrated, making it vulnerable to disruptions (e.g., natural disasters, sabotage).
  - Redundancy through dispersed landing stations is essential for resilient digital infrastructure.
- **Infrastructure & Regulatory Gaps:**
  - India faces high entry barriers, with 50+ clearances required to lay cables.
  - Repair capability is weak due to reliance on foreign-flagged repair ships, leading to delays in restoring connectivity.

- **Strategic Investment and U.S. Role:**
  - The U.S. can support India via technical assistance, concessional finance, and by encouraging private sector participation (e.g., Meta's upcoming 50,000-km undersea cable).
  - The TRUST framework should support a domestic cable repair ecosystem in India.

Mians Analysis:

- Subsea cables are the 'invisible arteries' of the digital economy and national security. In the Indo-Pacific context, they are geostrategic infrastructure, not just commercial assets.
- A stronger U.S.-India collaboration will not only de-risk critical supply chains, but also reinforce digital sovereignty and regional stability.
- India must act swiftly to reduce its regulatory burden, incentivize private players, and build a repair and maintenance ecosystem domestically.
- This sector ties together foreign policy, cyber strategy, and digital economy – making it a key test case for 21st-century strategic cooperation.

Conclusion:

- Subsea cables offer a tangible opportunity for India-U.S. strategic convergence in the Indo-Pacific. With China expanding its digital footprint, it is imperative for India to strengthen its undersea infrastructure, backed by policy reform, private investment, and international cooperation. Enhancing digital resilience through subsea cable expansion is not only about connectivity, but also about geopolitical leverage and long-term digital security.