



# Daily Current Affairs



## To The Point by Dhananjay Gautam

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## 1 PM-DevINE: Accelerating Development in the North East Region

**Context:** The government recently announced in the Rajya Sabha that **35 projects worth 4857.11 crore** under the **PM-DevINE scheme** have been sanctioned, including seven key initiatives introduced in the **Union Budget 2022-23**.

**What is the PM-DevINE Scheme?**

**Overview:**

**PM-DevINE** (Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East Region) is a **Central Sector Scheme** launched in the **Union Budget 2022-23**. Its purpose is to foster **rapid and inclusive development** in the **North East Region (NER)**. Approved on **12th October 2022**, the scheme has a financial allocation of **6600 crore** for the period **2022-23 to 2025-26**.

**Key Features:**

- **Implementation:** Managed by the **Ministry of Development of the North Eastern Region (MDoNER)** to address region-specific challenges and ensure efficient execution.
- **Infrastructure Focus:**
  - **17 infrastructure projects** worth 2806.65 crore have been approved.
  - Aligns with **PM GatiShakti**, emphasizing seamless connectivity across the NER.
- **Social and Livelihood Priorities:**
  - Supports projects addressing **critical social challenges**.
  - Promotes **sustainable livelihood opportunities** for **youth and women**, enabling greater participation in regional development.
- **Bridging Disparities:** Addresses gaps in sectors not covered by other government schemes, ensuring **balanced development**.

**Achievements Under PM-DevINE:**

- **35 Projects Approved:** Total worth 4857.11 crore, including cancer care facilities, university upgrades, and radiation oncology centers.
- **Road Connectivity:** New roads connecting remote villages, reducing travel time, and boosting local economies.
- **Smart Water Supply Systems:** Over **1 lakh residents** benefited from integrated drinking water systems.

**Ineligible Projects:**

- Projects involving **Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT)** or those offering long-term individual benefits.
- Administrative buildings, government offices, or sectors already addressed by **existing MDoNER schemes** or listed in the **Negative List**.

**Other Development Initiatives in the North East:**

### 1. Infrastructure Development

- **Bharatmala Pariyojana**, **Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Project**, and the **India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway** improve **regional and international connectivity**, enhancing trade and economic growth.
- The **Regional Connectivity Scheme (UDAN)** makes air travel affordable and accessible, linking remote areas of the NER.

### 2. Industrial Growth

- **North East Industrial Development Scheme (NEIDS)** (2017–2022): Provides **incentives to MSMEs**, boosting employment and industrial growth.
- **UNNATI Scheme (2024):** Focuses on **industrialization**, offering benefits such as **capital investment support** and **interest subventions**.

### 3. Agriculture and Environment

- **National Bamboo Mission:** Promotes sustainable bamboo development.





- **North Eastern Region Agri-Commodity e-Connect (NE-RACE):** Connects farmers with global markets, increasing agricultural incomes.

#### 4. Digital Transformation and Innovation

- **Digital North East Vision 2022:** Utilizes **digital technologies** to transform lives and improve governance.
- **North East Science and Technology Cluster (NEST):** Encourages grassroots innovations and eco-friendly technological solutions.

#### 5. Tourism, Culture, and Entrepreneurship

- **Swadesh Darshan Scheme:** Develops **tourism circuits** to showcase the region's natural beauty and heritage, boosting **eco-tourism**.
- Cultural festivals like the **Hornbill Festival**, **Pang Lhabsol**, and the **Ashtalakshmi Mahotsav** promote local traditions, handicrafts, and tourism.

#### Conclusion:

The **PM-DevINE scheme**, alongside other government initiatives, is a transformative step towards creating a more connected, prosperous, and self-reliant **North East Region**. With a focus on **infrastructure**, **livelihoods**, and **regional balance**, the initiative is set to unlock the untapped potential of the NER and integrate it seamlessly into the national growth narrative.



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## Collapse of France's Government: A Political Crisis Unfolds

**Context:** French Prime Minister Michel Barnier resigned following a **no-confidence vote**, triggered by an unlikely alliance of **far-right and leftist lawmakers**. This marks the **first government collapse via no-confidence** in over six decades, leaving France in a **political crisis** just three months after the government took office.



Barnier now holds the distinction of being **France's shortest-serving Prime Minister** in modern history. Until a new government is formed, his administration will function in a **caretaker capacity**. **President Emmanuel Macron** is set to address the nation regarding the next steps.

**France's Electoral System:****System of Governance:**

France operates under a **semi-presidential system**, established by the **Fifth Republic in 1958**. This hybrid model blends **presidential** and **parliamentary systems**, with shared powers between the **President** and the **Prime Minister**.

- **President:** Handles **foreign policy** and **strategic decisions**.
- **Prime Minister:** Manages **domestic policies** and **parliamentary affairs**.

**Parliamentary Structure;**

- **National Assembly:** The lower house, comprising **577 deputies**, elected for a five-year term via a **two-round voting system**.
- **Senate:** The upper house, whose members are indirectly elected by a local **electoral college**.

**Key Roles in Governance:**

- **President's Powers:**
  - Appoints the Prime Minister.
  - Commands the armed forces.
  - Can dissolve the National Assembly.
  - Holds emergency powers under **Article 16** of the Constitution.
- **Prime Minister's Role:**
  - Implements laws and oversees ministries.
  - Accountable to the National Assembly.

**Prime Minister Appointment Process:**

- The **President appoints the Prime Minister** without requiring National Assembly approval, though the PM must command a **majority in the Assembly** for legislative stability.
- The PM's government can be forced to resign via a **no-confidence vote**.

**Background of France's Current Political Crisis:**

**Dissolution of Parliament:** Political instability arose when **President Macron dissolved parliament** in June following **centrist losses** in the European Parliament elections.

**Fragmented Political Landscape:**

The subsequent elections created a **deeply divided parliament**, with three nearly equal blocs:

1. **Left-wing coalition (NFP):** Emerged as the largest group but was denied the chance to form a government.
2. **Centrist and center-right alliance:** Formed a fragile government under Barnier.
3. **Far-right bloc:** Held significant sway in legislative decisions.

Barnier's appointment created a **"cohabitation" scenario**, where the **Prime Minister and President** come from opposing parties.

**Barnier's Strategy:**

To gain support, Barnier adopted rhetoric addressing issues like **crime, immigration, and economic relief**. However, his strategies failed to secure stable backing.



## Why Did the Government Fall?

### Trigger: Austerity Budget:

- The crisis began when **leftist lawmakers proposed a no-confidence motion** in response to Barnier's controversial **austerity budget**, which aimed to save **€60 billion** through **spending cuts and tax hikes**.
- To bypass parliamentary approval, Barnier invoked **Article 49.3** of the Constitution, escalating tensions and sparking the no-confidence vote.

### What Does This Mean for France?

1. **Political Uncertainty:** The government's collapse has left France in a **state of limbo**, with concerns over functioning without a stable government or a finalized **2025 budget**. This instability has shaken investor confidence, briefly driving **France's borrowing costs** above **Greece's**.
2. **Emergency Budget Provisions:** Despite the turmoil, France's Constitution allows a **caretaker government** to implement emergency measures, including extending the previous year's budget, ensuring continuity in **public sector salaries** and avoiding a **US-style government shutdown**.
3. **Broader Impact on the EU:** The political crisis in France adds to the European Union's challenges, including:
  - **Germany's coalition government collapse.**
  - Concerns about maintaining EU unity amidst the possible return of **Donald Trump to the US Presidency.**

### Conclusion:

The fall of France's government underscores the fragility of its political landscape, with implications reaching beyond national borders. As President Macron works to stabilize the situation, this crisis serves as a stark reminder of the challenges in navigating a fragmented democracy amidst global economic and political pressures.

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## PM e-VIDYA: Revolutionizing Digital Education in India

**Context:** The Union Minister for Education recently inaugurated **PM e-VIDYA DTH 24x7 Channel No. 31**, dedicated to **Indian Sign Language (ISL)**, in New Delhi. This initiative marks a significant step toward inclusive education for students with hearing impairments.

**What is PM e-VIDYA?**

**Introduction:**

- **Launched on 17th May 2020** under the **Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan**, PM e-VIDYA aims to bridge the **digital divide** and promote **quality education** across India.
- The program is designed to provide **multi-modal access** to learning resources and minimize learning gaps, ensuring **inclusivity** and **equality** in education.



**Alignment with NEP 2020:**

- The initiative supports the goals of the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, emphasizing equitable access to **high-quality education**.
- By leveraging technology, PM e-VIDYA ensures that students, especially those in **rural and remote areas**, benefit from an extensive array of **digital content**.

**Key Components of PM e-VIDYA:**

**1. DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for School Education):**

- A **national digital platform** offering **e-content** for students and teachers.
- Features **QR-coded Energized Textbooks** for all grades, aligning with the concept of "**One Nation, One Digital Platform**".

**2. PM e-VIDYA DTH TV Channels:**

- Originally launched with **12 DTH channels**, the program has now expanded to **200 channels**, covering classes **1 to 12** in multiple **Indian languages**.
- This ensures that students from various linguistic and regional backgrounds have access to supplementary education.

**3. SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds):**

- A **national MOOC platform** offering courses for **higher education** and **school-level content (Classes 9–12)** via NIOS and NCERT.
- Features over **10,000 courses**, with **credit transfer provisions** and an active enrollment of **4.1 lakh students** for NCERT courses.

**4. Radio, Community Radio, and CBSE Podcast - Shiksha Vani:** Educational content is broadcast through **radio** and **podcasts**, reaching students in areas with limited or no **internet connectivity**.

**5. e-Content for Teachers:**

- Includes a range of **interactive videos**, **audiobooks**, and **digital tools** for teacher education.
- Features quizzes and activities to enhance teaching and learning experiences.

**How PM e-VIDYA is Transforming Education:**

- **Accessibility for All:** Focuses on **inclusive education** by reaching students in underserved areas and catering to those with special needs.
- **Multi-Mode Learning:** Combines **digital platforms**, **on-air programs**, and **offline resources** to make education accessible anytime, anywhere.
- **Expanding Educational Horizons:** Offers **regional language support**, enabling students across states to benefit from personalized learning content.

**Conclusion:**

PM e-VIDYA is a groundbreaking initiative that embodies the vision of "**Education for All**" by integrating technology, inclusivity, and innovation. With its **multi-modal learning approach**, it not only addresses the challenges of accessibility but also paves the way for a **digitally empowered** education system in India.

## 4 NHAH Contractor Rating System: Ensuring Excellence in Highway Development

**Context:** The National Highway Authority of India (NHAH) has introduced a new **Contractor Rating System** to evaluate the performance of concessionaires responsible for the construction and maintenance of National Highways.

**About the NHAH Contractor Rating System:**

**Overview:**

- This system provides a **detailed methodology** for assessing concessionaires, aimed at promoting **accountability** and improving the quality of **highway infrastructure**.
- Concessionaires will be **evaluated every six months**, and their ratings will be published on the **NHAH website** and its social media platforms.



**Assessment Methodology:**

**1. Performance Metrics**

The evaluation is based on:

- **Pavement Condition Index (PCI):** A scientific metric ranging from **0 to 100**, assessing the pavement's condition from 'Excellent' to 'Failed' as per **IRC 82:2023 guidelines**.
- **Defect Rectification Compliance:** Tracked digitally via the **NHAH One App**, which monitors over **95 defect types**.

**2. Weightage Allocation:**

- **80% weightage:** Based on the **PCI score**.
- **20% weightage:** Based on compliance data from the **NHAH One App**.

**3. PCI Calculation Parameters:**

PCI is determined using six functional criteria:

- **Roughness**
- **Potholes**
- **Cracking**
- **Ravelling**
- **Rut Depth**
- **Patchwork**

**Technology Involved:** Advanced tools like **Laser Crack Measurement Systems** and **Network Survey Vehicles (NSV)** are used to gather data, which is processed centrally under NHAH's supervision.

**Rating and Categories:**

- Contractors will be scored on a scale of **0 to 100**.
- Those scoring **below 70** will be classified as **non-performers** and will be **ineligible for new projects** until their ratings improve.

**Two-Level Assessment:**

- 1. Project Level:** Performance evaluated for individual projects.
- 2. Concessionaire Level:** Overall performance assessment across projects.

The ratings will be reviewed every six months, incorporating **NSV survey data** and compliance records from the **NHAH One App**.

**Significance of the Rating System:**

- 1. Enhancing Accountability:** The system ensures concessionaires are held accountable for delivering high-quality infrastructure and timely maintenance.
- 2. Improved Travel Experience:** By focusing on **safer and smoother highways**, the system aims to provide a **seamless travel experience** for road users.
- 3. Promoting Transparency:** Publicly accessible ratings encourage **transparency** and motivate contractors to prioritize **performance excellence**.

The **NHAH Contractor Rating System** is a progressive step toward maintaining **world-class highway standards**, ensuring that India's road infrastructure continues to meet the needs of a growing nation.

## 5 Uproar Over Hindi and Sanskrit Names for Bills in Parliament

**Context:** A heated debate has erupted in Parliament over the government's decision to use **Hindi and Sanskrit names** for new legislative Bills. Opposition MPs have criticized the move, accusing the government of **Hindi imposition** and violating **constitutional provisions**.



The controversy was ignited during discussions on the **Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak** (Indian Aircraft Bill), sparking strong objections from various political parties.

**Opposition's Concerns:****1. Alleged Violation of Article 348:**

- **Article 348(1B)** of the Indian Constitution mandates that the **authoritative text of laws** should be in English.
- The Opposition argued that naming Bills in **Hindi or Sanskrit** could be seen as a breach of this constitutional requirement.

**2. Imposition of Hindi:**

- Opposition MPs claimed the move reflects **Hindi imposition**, disregarding India's **linguistic diversity**.
- With nearly **60% of India's population** speaking non-Hindi languages, naming Bills in Hindi or Sanskrit risks **excluding non-Hindi speakers**.

**3. Practical Challenges:**

- MPs raised concerns over the **pronunciation difficulties** associated with Hindi titles.
- They questioned the rationale behind using **Hindi names with English script**, further complicating accessibility for non-Hindi speakers.

**Government's Defense:****1. Celebration of Heritage:**

- The government dismissed the allegations as a reflection of a **colonial-era mindset**, defending the use of Hindi names as a way to honor India's **cultural pride and linguistic heritage**.
- Terms like "**Bharatiya**" (**Indian**) and "**Vayu**" (**air**) are common across many Indian languages, symbolizing **linguistic unity** rather than division.

**2. Inclusivity of Language:**

- The government emphasized that many Indian languages, including **Telugu**, share similar words, making these terms **universally relatable** across India.

**Constitutional Provisions on Language:****Key Articles from the Indian Constitution:**

- **Article 348(1):** All proceedings in the **Supreme Court and High Courts** shall be conducted in English unless Parliament provides otherwise.
- **Article 348(2):** States may authorize the use of Hindi or another local language for High Court proceedings, subject to **Presidential approval**, but **judgments and decrees** must still be issued in **English**.

**Status Quo:**

- Despite provisions allowing for changes, no law has been enacted by Parliament to alter the **primacy of English** in court and legal proceedings.

**Key Issues in the Debate:**

1. **Linguistic Diversity:** India's **22 official languages** and numerous dialects make language a sensitive issue. Critics argue that prioritizing **Hindi and Sanskrit** undermines the **pluralistic ethos** of the nation.
2. **Compliance with Article 348:** While the **text of Bills remains in English**, the use of Hindi or Sanskrit for naming them raises questions about adherence to constitutional provisions.





3. **Balancing Unity and Diversity:** The debate underscores the challenge of balancing **national unity** with the **linguistic diversity** that is central to India's identity.

**Conclusion:**

The controversy over **naming Bills in Hindi and Sanskrit** highlights the complexities of governing a **multilingual nation** like India. While the government sees it as a step toward celebrating **cultural heritage**, the Opposition perceives it as a threat to the nation's **linguistic harmony**.

This debate reinforces the need for **inclusive language policies** that respect **India's diversity** while promoting **national unity**.



## 6 Including Non-Mineralised Areas in Mining Leases

**Context:** Recently, the Centre has allowed state governments to include non-mineralised areas within existing mining leases for dumping mine waste and overburden, aiming to streamline operations and address industry challenges. This move is a clarification under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957.



**What are the Supreme Court Rulings for Regulating Mining and Minerals? Centre's Authority Over Mining:**

- In 1989, a landmark ruling in the **India Cement Ltd. v. the state of Tamil Nadu** case established the Centre's primary authority over mining regulation via the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, and Entry 54 of the Union List.
- The **State of Orissa v. M.A. Tulloch & Co.** case further clarified that states could only collect royalties, not impose additional taxes.
- July 2024 saw the Supreme Court overturn the 1989 verdict, affirming states' authority to tax mineral rights under Entry 50 of List II (State List), although this raised concerns about potential federal disruptions in mineral pricing and development.
- **Goa Foundation v. Union of India, 2014:** The Court ruled against dumping mine waste outside valid lease areas, emphasizing the need for environmental compliance.

**Recent Developments: The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2023:** Focuses on critical minerals such as lithium, graphite, cobalt, and rare earth elements, paving the way for private sector exploration and reducing import dependence for these crucial resources.

**Implications of the Recent Inclusion of Non-Mineralised Areas:**

**Streamlined Operations:**

- **Inclusion** of non-mineralised areas within mining leases ensures efficient management of overburden and waste.
- **Overburden**, consisting of rocks, soil, and materials removed to access minerals, must be properly managed for safe mining practices.

**Compliance with Supreme Court Rulings:** This move aligns with the 2014 Supreme Court ruling, which prohibited dumping outside valid lease areas, ensuring environmental protection.

**Efficient Land Utilisation:** Non-mineralised areas lacking significant mineral deposits can be allocated by state governments for waste disposal, streamlining operations without the need for separate auctions.

**Industry Growth:**

- Eases operational hurdles, fostering sustainable mineral extraction and growth in the mining sector.
- States can allocate contiguous or non-contiguous non-mineralised areas for waste management if it benefits mineral development, offering operational flexibility.

**Safeguards Against Misuse:**

- States must verify non-mineralised areas, consult the Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM) for extent determination, and notify IBM about supplementary leases, preventing illegal mineral extraction.

The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957

**Pivotal Legislation:**

- Aimed at developing India's mining sector, conserving minerals, and ensuring transparency and efficiency in exploitation.

**Amendments Over the Years:**

- **2015 Amendment:** Introduced Auction Method for transparency, District Mineral Foundation (DMF) for mining-affected areas, National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET) to boost exploration, and stricter penalties for illegal mining.



- **2021 Amendment:** Allowed **captive mines** to sell up to **50%** of annual production in the open market.
- **2023 Amendment:** Focuses on **reducing import dependence** and **engaging junior mining companies** in exploring **deep-seated** and **critical minerals**.

#### Economic and Environmental Impact:

- **Encourages private sector participation** in **exploration** and **extraction**, supporting **India's energy transition** and commitment to **net-zero emissions by 2070**.

#### Significance of India's Mineral Policy:

##### Economic Governance:

- **Streamlines the allocation** and **utilisation** of **mineral resources**, fostering **sustainable** and **economic growth**.

##### Sustainable Resource Management:

- Ensures **environmental** and **social safeguards** in **mining operations**, aligning with **Supreme Court rulings** and **constitutional provisions**.

##### Environmental Regulations:

- **Protects non-lease areas** from unauthorized **mining activities**, preserving **biodiversity** and **environmental integrity**.

##### Key Takeaways:

- The recent inclusion of non-mineralised areas in mining leases represents a significant shift in **India's mineral policy**, balancing **economic development** with **environmental sustainability**. This aligns with the country's broader goals of **economic governance** and **net-zero emissions**.

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