

POLITY

PRE-CONTEXT

DELIMITATION COMMISSION

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 1, 8.

News: "Karnataka CM slams Union Home Minister remarks on delimitation."

News: "Counting matters."

What is Delimitation?

- Delimitation refers to **redrawing electoral boundaries** to reflect population changes and ensure balanced representation.
- **Art.82 and 170:** empower Parliament to readjust the allocation of seats in the Lok Sabha and the Legislative Assemblies of States, respectively, after every census.

About Delimitation Commission:

- Delimitation Commission is a **statutory body**, established under Delimitation Commission Act.
- Appointed by **President of India**.
- **Composition:**
 - **Chairman:** A retired or working Supreme Court Judge
 - **Members:** Election Commissioner, Concerned State Election Commissioners.
- **Powers:**
 - Orders of delimitation commission are laid before the **Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies, but they can't modify them.**
 - It's **orders cannot be called into question before any court.**

Delimitation commissions after Independence:

- **1952, 1962, 1972, 2002, 2020** (for few States).
 - **Delimitation commissions are backed by Statute** Eg. Delimitation Commission Act, 1952, Delimitation Act, 2002.
- **42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976:** Imposed a **freeze on the delimitation process until** the results of the **2001 Census**.
 - The freezing of delimitation was done to prevent states that were effective in population control from being disincentivized.
- **84th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002:**
 - The total number of existing seats in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies is to **remain unaltered until the first census after 2026.**
 - Till then allocation of seats in the Lok Sabha to the states is based on 1971 census.
- **87th Amendment Act of 2003:**
 - Provided delimitation of constituencies on the basis of 2001 census.
- **Delimitation Commission (2020):**
 - This Delimitation Commission was **set up under Delimitation Act, 2002.**
 - Delimitation in the **UT of Jammu and Kashmir and the northeastern States of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, and Nagaland.**

28 FEB 2025

POLITY

PRE-CONTEXT

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 8.

News: "A process where free and fair elections will be a casualty."

Context: SC said the order would hold good until a law was made by Parliament. However, when the law was passed, the Centre replaced the CJI with a Union Minister as the third member of the panel, giving the government a dominant role in the appointment process. On February 17, the panel will select a name from a list of five pre-pared by a search committee.

Election Commission of India (ECI)

- ECI is a permanent and an independent body established by Constitution to ensure Free & fair Elections in the country under **Art.324**.
- **Conducts elections to Parliament, State legislature, President, Vice President.**
- **Strength of ECI not specified by Constitution** & left at discretion of President.

Appointment of CEC and ECs

According to Constitution:

- President of India appoints the CEC & two ECs or their appointment is "subject to any law to be made by Parliament".

New Law made by Parliament:

- **CEC and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023.**
 - **Qualification:**
 - CEC and ECs shall be appointed from amongst persons who are holding or have held a **post equivalent to the rank of Secretary to the Government of India** and Persons who have knowledge of and experience in management and conduct of elections.
 - **Search Committee:**
 - **Headed by the Minister of Law and Justice** and comprising two other members not below the rank of Secretary to the Government of India, shall **prepare a panel of five persons** for consideration of the Selection Committee.
 - **Selection Committee:**
 - **CEC & ECs shall be appointed by the President** on the **recommendation of a Selection Committee** consisting of:
 - Prime Minister—Chairperson.
 - Leader of Opposition in the House.
 - Union Cabinet Minister to be **nominated by the Prime Minister.**
 - **Term of CEC and EC: 6 years** or till he/she attains **age of 65 years.**
 - **Resignation:** CEC or an EC may, at any time, **resign** their office by writing under their hand addressed **to the President.**
 - Both CEC and ECs shall **not be eligible for re-appointment.**
 - **Salary of CEC and ECs:** is equal to the salary of a Judge of the Supreme Court.

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Removal:

- Removal grounds of CEC similar to judge of Supreme Court (*ground of proved misbehaviour or incapacity*).
- Election Commissioner(ECs) or a Regional Commissioner shall not be removed from office *except on the recommendation of the CEC*.
- Security of tenure: *only to CEC* under Election Commission Act 1991.

Other:

- Both CEC, ECs are equal powers in functioning.
- Constitution not debarred from further appointment.
- 61CAA: lowered voting age from 21 to 18.

Powers

Administrative Powers:

- Determines territorial areas of electoral constituencies.
- Preparation of Electoral rolls & notifying Election dates.
- Recognition of Political Parties and allocating symbols.
- Determine Code of Conduct during Election period.

Advisory Powers:

- To President: on disqualification of MPs & MLAs & Holding elections in a state under President rule.
- To SC & HC: in matters related to Post-election disputes between candidates and Political parties.

Quasi-judicial Powers:

- Settling disputes related to Recognition of political parties and w.r.t Election symbols.

Challenges

Challenges to ECI (Institutional):

- Issues of impartiality in appointment of Election Commissioners by Central govt.
- Lack statutory powers: like, to enforce *Model Code of Conduct, internal democracy in parties, to deregister political party*.
- Election Commissioners lack security of tenure, which hinders their independence in their work.
- Partisanship issues: Eg. ECs having ties with particular political party – *CEC 2009 in writing to President*.
- No ban on post retirement office holdings: by of CEC and ECs.
- No Suo-Motu Legislation powers in matters related to elections.

28 FEB 2025

GEOGRAPHY

PRE-CONTEXT

KABIL & NATIONAL CRITICAL MINERAL MISSION

THE HINDU, P.NO: 15.

News: "India scouting for critical mineral assets in 4 countries' "

Context: The govt on Thursday said the country is scouting for mining and exploration of critical mineral assets in Congo, Zambia, Tanzania and Australia.

Khanij Bidesh India Ltd.(KABIL):

- A joint venture company aimed to ensure a consistent supply of critical and strategic minerals to the Indian domestic market.
- It is registered under *Companies Act 2013*.
- It sought mineral security through agreements and acquisitions via govt-to-govt, govt-to-business, and business-to-business routes.
- **KABIL signed a MoU with Australia** for a critical mineral (*cobalt and Lithium*) investment partnership.
- **KABIL signed pacts** with Latin America's *Lithium Triangle (Argentina, Chile, and Bolivia)*.
 - KABIL, has acquired an area of about 15703 Ha in the *Catamarca province of Argentina*, for exploration and mining of Lithium.
- **India and Kazakhstan** formed a joint venture, to produce *titanium slag* in India.

India is heavily dependent on imports of critical minerals such as Lithium, Nickel, Cobalt etc resulted an import cost of Rs.35,000 crore in FY 2023.

About National Critical Mineral Mission:

- It will encompass all stages of the value chain, including mineral exploration, mining, beneficiation, processing, and recovery from end-of-life products.
- To intensify the exploration of critical minerals *within the country and in its offshore areas*.
- To fast track regulatory approval process for critical mineral mining projects.
- Encourage Indian PSUs and private sector companies to *acquire critical mineral assets abroad* and enhance trade with resource-rich countries.
- Provisions for setting up of mineral processing parks and supporting the recycling of critical minerals.

Note: Government of India eliminated customs duties on the majority of critical minerals in Union budget 2024-25.

Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act 1957:

Schedule 1

Critical and Strategic Minerals.

- Identified by *Ministry of Mines*.
- **Auction mining lease and composite licence** for certain critical minerals is *exclusively reserved for Central Govt*.
- Critical minerals are essential for our country's economic development and national security.
 - Eg. such as *molybdenum, rhenium, tungsten, cadmium, indium, gallium, graphite, vanadium, rare earth elements (REE), etc*.
- Minerals of lithium, beryllium, titanium, niobium, tantalum and zirconium were *delisted from Atomic Minerals* and *allowed Private Sector to mine them*.



- FDI allowed under 'Government route' *only for titanium* mining and its separation from minerals bearing it and its ores.

Atomic Minerals:

- **Private Sector is banned**, these minerals are reserved exclusively for government entities.
 - Rare earths, containing uranium and Thorium.
 - Phosphorites containing uranium.
 - Beach sand minerals etc.
- *FDI not allowed.*

Metallic and Non Metallic Minerals:

- **Metallic:** Bauxite, Chrome ore, Copper ore, Gold, Iron ore, Lead, Manganese ore, Zinc.
- **Non-Metallic:** Asbestos, Precious stones.
- **Private Sector is allowed** through auctions (post-2015 amendment).
- **100% FDI** is allowed under '*Automatic*' route.

Energy/ Hydrocarbon Minerals:

- Coal and Lignite.
- Private Sector allowed.
- **100% FDI** under '*Automatic*' route.

28 FEB 2025

BIODIVERSITY

PRE-CONTEXT

OLIVE RIDLEY TURTLE

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 14.

News: "India's Olive Ridley turtle numbers improve, but climate skews sex ratio."

About Olive Ridley Turtle:

- A significant marine reptile both ecologically and culturally.
- **Protection:**
 - IUCN (VU), CITES I (Appendix I), WLPA 1972 (Schedule 1).
- **Omnivorous:** Primarily feeds on jellyfish, crustaceans, and various invertebrates. Occasionally consumes algae and other plant matter.
- **Distinctive features:** *Leopard like spot patterns* on shell.
- **Sexual Dimorphism:** Females are generally larger than males.
- **Long-lived:** Can live up to 50 years or more in the wild.
- **Synchronous Nesting:** Known for mass nesting events called "*Arribada*", where thousands of females come ashore simultaneously to lay eggs.
- **Distribution:**
 - Found in **warm and tropical waters** of the Pacific, Indian, and Atlantic Oceans.
 - **India (across Coastline):**
 - *Gahirmatha Beach (Odisha):* The world's largest known nesting site for Olive Ridley turtles.
 - Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh).

28 FEB 2025

ENVIRONMENT

PRE-CONTEXT

TOXINS OF BHOPAL DISASTER

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 14.

News: "Bhopal toxic waste:SC not to intervene High Court order"

Context: Forty years after the Bhopal disaster on December 2-3, 1984, Chemical waste weighing 337 tonnes from the factory premises, was transported to Pithampur, an industrial town 35 km from Indore, for disposal at an incineration facility.

Toxins:

- **Methylisocyanate (MIC):** doesn't have a particular smell at lower concentrations at which other gases may become noticeable but it *can irritate the eyes*.
- **Arsenic, Chromium, Nickel:** cancers of the urinary bladder and lungs etc.
- **Mercury:** Mercury has been known to damage multiple organs even at low concentrations.
- **Persistent Organic Pollutants(POPs):** refer to organic compounds that don't break down easily, cancer, allergies and hypersensitivity, damage.
- **Method of Disposal chosen: Incineration.**
 - **Incineration:** a waste treatment process that involves burning waste materials at high temperatures in presence of oxygen.
 - **Incineration creates or releases harmful chemicals and pollutants like:**
 - **Air Pollutants:** Particulate Matter, Ash, can cause lung and heart diseases.
 - **Heavy metals:** such as lead and Mercury, can cause neurological diseases.
 - **Toxic chemicals:** Dioxins, per- and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) substances, can cause cancers etc.
- **Other types of Thermal processing of waste:**
 - **Pyrolysis:** converts waste into carbon-rich char and hydrocarbon-rich off-gas *without oxygen*.
 - **Gasification:** *Converts waste into syngas* at high temperatures *using air or steam*.

28 FEB 2025



Thank you!