

Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2025 Introduced in Lok Sabha

Bill aims to bolster India's mineral sector, secure supply chains for critical resources, and align with the **National Critical Mineral Mission** amidst global disruptions and import reliance.

Key Highlights of Amendments

- **National Mineral Exploration and Development Trust (NMEDT):** National Mineral Exploration Trust is renamed NMEDT, with its **mandate** to include offshore and international exploration for critical minerals.
 - ⊖ To fund NMEDT, contribution from mining leaseholders will increase from **2% to 3% of royalty payable**.
- **Establishment of "Mineral Exchanges":** These are **electronic trading platforms** for minerals, concentrates, and processed forms, including metals.
 - ⊖ These exchanges aim to create a transparent, dynamic market for price discovery.
- **Incentivizing Critical Mineral Extraction:** Bill simplifies the **inclusion of new minerals in existing mining leases**.
 - ⊖ There will be **no additional royalty payments for critical minerals** listed in the **Seventh Schedule or Part D of the First Schedule** when included in an existing lease.
- **A One-Time Extension of Mining Lease Areas is Permitted:** Up to **10% for deep-seated minerals** (below 200 meters) and **30%** for composite licenses.
- **Removal of Cap on Sale from Captive Mines:** The **50 per cent cap** on mineral sales from captive mines (**Owned and Operated by a company for its own exclusive use**) is removed.
 - ⊖ State governments are also permitted to authorise the **sale of old mineral dumps**.

National Sport Governance Bill and National Anti-Doping Amendment Bill Passed in Lok Sabha

National Sports Governance Bill seeks to **regulate various sports administrators in India**, While National Anti-Doping Amendment Bill provides greater **"Operational Independence"** to the country's **National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA)** as prescribed by **World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)**.

Key Highlights of Sport Governance Bill

- **Establishment of the National Sports Bodies (NSBs)** for their respective recognized sports organizations:
 - ⊖ **National Olympic Committee (NOC):** Sole governing body for Olympic sports in India.
 - ⊖ **National Paralympic Committee (NPC):** Sole governing body for Paralympic sports.
 - ⊖ **Other Bodies:** National Sports Federation (NSF) & Regional Sports Federation (RSF).
- **National Sports Board (NSB):** It will have power to grant recognition to any sports organization as a National Sports Body.
 - ⊖ The Chairperson and Members of NSB will be **appointed by the Central Government**.
- **National Sports Tribunal:** To ensure speedy resolution of sports-related disputes.
 - ⊖ Civil courts have no jurisdiction over matters under the Tribunal's purview.
- **Oversight of Elections:** Central government will establish a national panel of electoral officers to oversee elections of national sports bodies.
- **Powers of the Central Government:** Central government may exempt a national body or its affiliates from any provision of Bill, if necessary in public interest for promotion of that sport.

Key Highlights of National Anti-Doping (Amendment) Bill, 2025

- **Central government empowered to constitute the Appeal Panel:** Appeal Panel to hear appeals against decisions of the Disciplinary Panel.
- **Enhanced operational independence:** Of National Anti-Doping Appeal Panel and National Anti-Doping Agency to ensure autonomy in their decisions.
- **Aligns provisions of National Anti-Doping Act, 2022 with World Anti-Doping Code:**
 - ⊖ Provide that such of the **provisions of the World Anti-Doping Code** as are set out in the Schedule shall have the force of law in India.

Report on the Evolving Role of the CCI in the Economy, particularly in the Digital Landscape

It is released by the **Standing Committee on Finance**, and noted that the existing **Ex-Post Competition Act, 2002**, is ill-equipped to deal with digital market.

- **The Competition (Amendment) Act, 2023**, introduced provisions like **Deal Value Thresholds (DVT)**, **Settlement and Commitment Mechanisms**, etc, to deal complexities of the digital market.
- The CCI has also recently constituted a **Digital Markets Division (DMD)**.

Key Issues Highlighted

- **Anti-Competitive Practices:** Dominant firms employ **self-preferencing**, **predatory pricing**, **tying/bundling**, and **stifling innovation**.
- **Regulatory Limitations:**
 - ⊖ **Institutional Capacity:** CCI faces significant **human resource vacancies** (only 113 out of 195 sanctioned posts filled), lack of **specialized technical expertise** (e.g., AI).
 - ⊖ **Enforcement Effectiveness:** CCI-imposed penalties (Rs. 18,512.28 crore out of Rs. 20,350.46 crore) are **stayed or dismissed** by appellate courts.
 - ⊖ **Digital Competition Bill Concerns:** Broad thresholds, absence of a **rebuttal mechanism**, and potential overlap with the **Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDP Act)**.
 - ⊖ **MSME Vulnerability:** The **DVT** of Rs. 2000 crore raises concerns about unchecked **MSME** acquisitions.

About Competition Commission of India (CCI)

- **Established:** In 2003, under the **Competition Act, 2002** but became operation from 2009.
- **Composition:** Chairperson and 6 Members appointed by the Central Government.
- **Functions:**
 - ⊖ To eliminate practices, having **adverse effect on competition**, **promote and sustain competition**, **protect the interests of consumers** and ensure **freedom of trade**.
 - ⊖ It is also required to **give opinion on competition issues** on a reference received from a statutory authority established under any law.

Key Recommendations

- **Enforcement & Digital Bill:** Reduce litigation delays via robust legal defence and the **25% pre-deposit for appeals**.
- **Protect MSMEs:** Review the **DVT** for MSMEs and boost investigations into **predatory pricing**.
- **Proactive Approach:** Expand **market studies** (e.g., on AI) and deepen **consumer welfare** integration, focusing on data privacy.
- **Policy Framework:** Implement the **National Competition Policy (NCP)**.

Supreme Court Issues Directions to Control Menace of Stray Dogs in National Capital Region (NCR)

Directions in **Suo Motu Case** include **dedicated force for immediate pick up**, **creation of dog shelters**, **creation of helpline**, **vaccine availability** and **legal consequences** for those obstructing directions.

Problem of Stray Dogs

- India has a nearly 1.5 crore stray dog population (**2019 livestock census**).
- ⊖ Dogs are the main source of **Rabies (Vaccine-preventable, zoonotic, viral disease)**, India accounts for **36% of the world's rabies deaths**.

Legal and Judicial Provisions related to Stray Dogs in India

- **Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023** under Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 seek to control stray dog populations through **sterilisation**, and curbs spread of rabies by **vaccination**.
- **Court Judgements:** Supreme Court, in **Jallikattu Case 2014**, has interpreted the right to life and liberty (**Article 21**) as extending to animals as well.
 - ⊖ **People for Elimination of Stray Trouble v. Animal Welfare Board of India:** SC suspended the killing of all street dogs, including troublemakers.
- **Constitution: Article 243W** mandates municipalities to control stray dog population while **Article 51A(g)** places a fundamental duty on citizens "to have compassion for living creatures".

Challenges in Controlling Stray Dog Populations

- **Lack of adequate infrastructure:** Especially in terms of animal birth control centres and shortage of trained veterinary professionals.
- **Low availability of Anti-Rabies Vaccine (ARV)** and **Rabies Immunoglobulin (RIG)** in primary care centres.
- **Ethical Issues:** E.g. Conflict between Animal welfare and public/human safety.

Conclusion

A balanced approach addressing issue of stray dog may involve intensive sterilization, vaccination, developing dedicated shelter facilities and redefining relationships with dogs (e.g. service dogs).

RBI simplifies process for opening Special Vostro Rupee Accounts (SVRA)

RBI removes **prior approval requirements for banks to open SRVAs**, speeding up rupee-based trade settlements and supporting the internationalisation of the Indian Rupee.

- Vostro Account refers to a **foreign bank's account held in a domestic bank** in the local currency.
 - ⊖ E.g., If a US bank (Citibank) holds an account in an Indian bank (SBI) in INR, it is SBI's Vostro Account.
- On the other hand, Nostro Account refers to a **domestic bank's account held in a foreign bank** in the currency of the overseas country.

Internationalization of Currency: It refers to the process by which a country's **national currency is used beyond its borders for international trade, finance, and as a reserve currency**.

Benefits of International of Currency

- **Reduces Requirement of Forex Reserves:** In convertible currencies to manage external vulnerabilities.
- **Enhanced Financial Market Development:** Broadens and Deepens **domestic financial markets through availability of more financial instruments**.
- **Economic Autonomy:** Governments can finance deficits by **issuing debt in their own currency internationally** instead of foreign currency debt.
- **Reduced Exchange Rate Risk:** Exporters and Importers can **invoice and transact in their own currency, reducing vulnerability to currency fluctuations**.

Other Steps taken for Internationalization of Rupee

- Internationalization of **Indian Payment Infrastructure** i.e. UPI.
- Issuance of **Rupee-Denominated Bonds** i.e. Masala Bonds.
- RBI has signed **MoU with the central banks** of the United Arab Emirates, Indonesia and Maldives to encourage cross-border transactions in local currencies.
- **Bilateral Currency Swap Agreements**.

Lok Sabha passed the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2025 and the Income-Tax (No.2) Bill, 2025

New bills introduced with the aim of consolidation, simplification, and amendment of income-tax laws and **the Income Tax Act, 1961. Income-Tax Bill, 2025**

- **Objective:** Over 6 decades of amendments have made the **1961 Act Cumbersome and Complex**, reducing administrative efficiency; the **Income-Tax Bill, 2025** seeks to simplify and modernise it.
- **Key features:**
 - ⊖ **Deduction** available to **companies** as well.
 - ⊖ **Family Pension & Gratuity Deductions** extended to family members.
 - ⊖ **Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT) & Alternate Minimum Tax (AMT):**
 - ◆ Separated into two subsections.
 - ◆ AMT applies **only to non-corporates** claiming deductions.
 - ◆ **Limited Liability Partnership (LLPs)** with only capital gains income exempt from AMT if **no deductions are claimed**.
 - ⊖ **Digital Economy Support:** Adds "profession" to mandate **electronic payment modes** for professionals with receipts exceeding ₹50 crore.
 - ⊖ **Simplified Tax Language:** Easier drafting and improved cross-referencing.
 - ⊖ **Updated Definitions:** "Capital asset," "micro and small enterprises," "beneficial owner."

Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2025

- **Amend:** The Income-tax Act, 1961 and The Finance Act, 2025.
- **Objective:** To provide income tax exemptions and benefits under new developments.
- **Major reforms:**
 - ⊖ **Unified Pension Scheme (UPS):** Tax exemptions aligned with New Pension Scheme benefits.
 - ⊖ **Foreign Investment Relief:** Direct tax relief to Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia & subsidiaries.
 - ⊖ **Search Cases:** Streamlining treatment of pending assessments/reassessments in block assessment procedures.

Also in News



Eutelsat OneWeb

Nelco, a Tata Group company, has partnered with Eutelsat to provide OneWeb LEO satellite connectivity across India.

About Eutelsat One Web

- It is a subsidiary of the French group Eutelsat providing **broadband satellite Internet services** using a **network of Low-Earth Orbit (LEO) satellites**.
 - ⊖ LEO encompasses Earth-centered orbits with **altitudes of 2,000 km or less**.
- India's **Bharti Enterprises serves as a major investor and shareholder** in OneWeb.
- **Significance:** Strengthen India's digital infrastructure, national security, reliable connectivity in underserved areas.



Wallacean hominids

Scientists find possible artefacts of oldest known **Wallacean hominids** in Indonesia's Sulawesi Island.

About Wallacean hominids

- These **earliest Wallacean humans** (Pre-historic persons known as **Homo Erectus**), thought to have only settled in **Indonesia's Flores Island and Philippines' Luzon Island** around 1.02 million years ago and thought to be incapable of distant sea travel.
 - ⊖ **Wallacea** (named after **Naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace**) is a **region in Eastern Indonesia** including several islands such as Sulawesi, Lombok, Flores, Timor, Sumbawa that lie between Borneo and Java and Australia and New Guinea.



Registered Unrecognized Political Parties (RUPP)

Election Commission of India (ECI) has identified another 476 RUPP for possible de-listing as part of its process to clean up the electoral system.

About Registered Unrecognized Political Parties (RUPP)

- RUPPs are political parties **registered with the ECI but lack recognition** as State or National parties.
- **Legal Provisions & Guidelines:**
 - ⊕ **Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (RPA, 1951)** specifies the criteria that a political party must register itself with the ECI.
 - ⊕ ECI lacks the authority to de-register any political party under RPA as established in the case of **Indian National Congress versus Institute of Social Welfare (2002)**.
 - ⊕ However, as per **Guidelines for registration of Political Parties**, parties not contesting elections for 6 consecutive years can be removed from the register.



National Medical Register

The Union Minister has clarified that National Medical Register **ID registration is voluntary**.

About National Medical Register

- **Section 31(1) of The National Medical Commission Act, 2019** provides that the **Ethics and Medical Registration Board (EMRB)** shall maintain a National Register.
- It contains the name, address, and all recognized qualifications possessed by a licensed medical practitioner.
- It aims to avoid **duplication and provide public access to doctor information**.
- This will be a dynamic database **for all allopathic registered doctors in India**.
 - ⊕ Some data made public while **sensitive information is restricted** to specified individuals and institutions.



National Anubhav Awards

Anubhav Awards celebrating **10 years** of contribution (2015–2025).

About National Anubhav Awards

- **By:** Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare
- **Aim:** To document India's administrative history through memoirs of retired employees via Anubhav Portal.
- **Eligibility:** Employees retiring within next 8 months or retired within last 3 years can submit write-ups.



UNDP Equator Initiative Award

Bibi Fatima Women's self-help group (**SHG**) from a small village in Dharwad district has bagged the 'Equator Initiative Award'.

About UNDP Equator Initiative Award

- Presented biennially under the Equator Initiative of **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**.
- **The Equator Initiative** provides opportunities for Indigenous Peoples and local communities to address land degradation, biodiversity conservation and livelihood improvement.
- It is also referred to as the **Nobel Prize for Biodiversity Conservation**.

About Bibi Fatima SHG

- The group introduced **millet-based mixed cropping** on rainfed farms, promoted **climate-resilient farming systems**, practised livestock rearing and horticulture and popularised millets.



Mahadayi River

Centre extended the tenure of Mahadayi water tribunal for one year under **Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956**.

- Tribunal was constituted in **Nov. 2010** for adjudicating the dispute over river water sharing among Goa, Maharashtra and Karnataka.

About Mahadayi River or Mandovi River

- **Origin:** Western Ghats (At Khanpur: Belgaum-Karnataka)
- **Flows into:** Arabian Sea (at Panji)- west flowing river.
- **Known as:** Mahadayi in Karnataka and Mhadei in Goa.
- **Important Tributaries of Mandovi River:** Sarang, Mahainada, Udel, Lohi, Velvota Bicholim, Mapuce, Nanoda and Khandepar.
- **Basin area:** Goa (78%), Karnataka (18%), Maharashtra (4%).



Etalin Hydroelectric Project

An expert panel of the **Union Environment Ministry** has recommended **environmental clearance** for the Etalin Hydroelectric Project.

About Etalin Hydroelectric Project

- **Location:** In Arunachal Pradesh's Dibang valley, part of the Eastern Himalaya **Global Biodiversity Hotspot**.
- **Rivers:** Concrete gravity dams on the Dri and Tangon rivers.
 - ⊕ The Dri River joins the Tangon near Etalin village to form the **Dibang River** downstream.
- **Capacity:** 3,097 MW.
- **Concerns:** The project will divert about **1,175 hectares of diverse forest types**, including sub-tropical pine, wet evergreen, semi-evergreen, montane wet temperate, and moist alpine scrub forests.

Place in News



Australia (Capital: Canberra)

Chief of Australian Army, commences four-day visit to India.

Political Features

- Located between the **Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean**.
- Australia is separated from **Indonesia** by **Timor & Arafura seas** (northwest), from **Papua New Guinea** by **Coral Sea & Torres Strait** (northeast).

Geographic Features:

- **Climate:** Climates ranging from **tropical in the north** to **arid deserts in the interior** and **temperate coastal regions in the south**.
- **Natural Resources:** Bauxite, coal, iron ore, copper, tin, gold, silver, uranium, nickel, tungsten, diamonds, natural gas, petroleum.
- Australia is the **flattest continent on earth** and is also the only continent **without any glaciers**.



AHMEDABAD



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI



SIKAR