

08/02/24 - 16/02/24

# CURRENT AFFAIRS



**HUMAN  
ORGAN**  
FOR TRANSPLANT

# INDIA SUSPENDS FREE MOVEMENT REGIME WITH MYANMAR



- The Government of India has decided to scrap the Free Movement Regime (FMR) along the Myanmar border.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has recommended the immediate suspension of FMR.

## What is the Free Movement Regime between India and Myanmar?

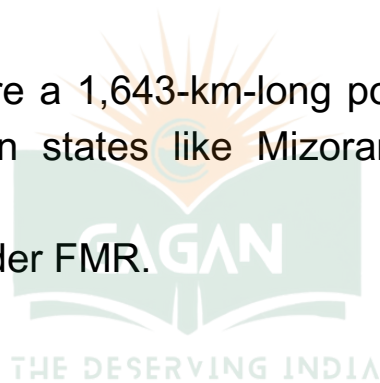
- The FMR came into existence in 2018 as a part of India's Act East policy.
- It allows cross-border movement up to 16 km without a visa.
- The agreement was brought to facilitate local border trade, improve access to education and healthcare for border residents, and strengthen diplomatic ties.
- Under the agreement, individuals were also allowed up to two weeks in the neighbouring country by getting a one-year border pass.

## **Reasons for Suspension**

- The FMR was abolished between India and Myanmar to ensure the internal security of the country and to maintain the demographic structure of India's North Eastern States
- The Manipur CM has often blamed the FMR for the ongoing ethnic violence between the tribal Kuki-Zo and the Meitei communities in the State.
- The tribal Zo people have a major presence in Manipur and Mizoram, as well as in parts of Assam and Nagaland, and adjoining areas of Bangladesh and Myanmar.
- Similarly, Nagas live in Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, and Assam, as well as in neighbouring Myanmar.
- The Meitei groups also allege that narcotics are being smuggled into India taking advantage of the unfenced international border.

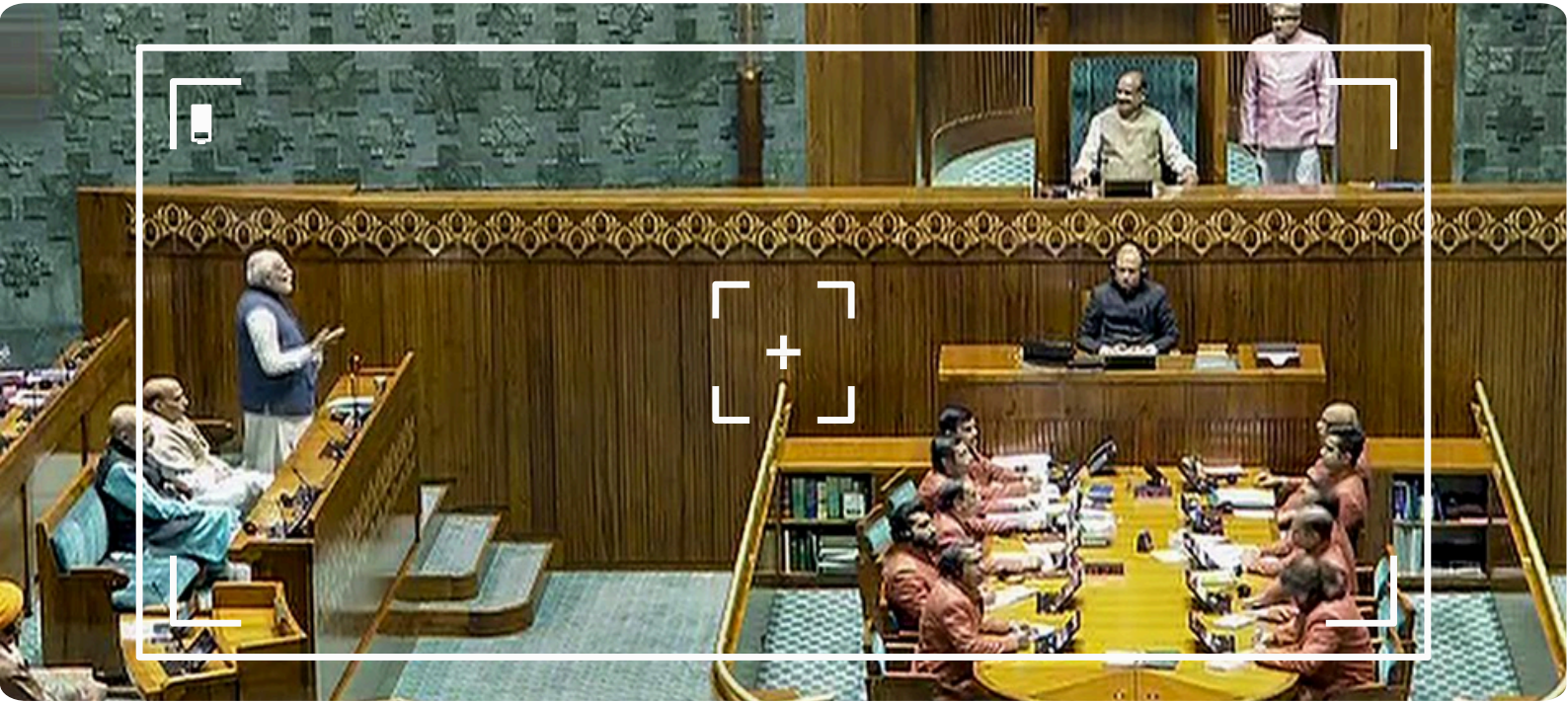
## **India-Myanmar Border**

- India and Myanmar share a 1,643-km-long porous border which is shared by multiple North Indian states like Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh.
- All these states were under FMR.





# AVERAGE ANNUAL SITTING DAYS IN LS DOWN TO 55



- According to a statistical study of Parliament from June 2019 to February 2024 by the non-profit PRS Legislative Research, the 17th Lok Sabha, which concluded recently, sat only for 55 days on average in a year.

## Key Points

- The 17th Lok Sabha held 274 sittings.
- The four previous Lok Sabhas, all of which were dissolved before the stipulated five-year period, had fewer sittings.
- One of the explanations for the drop in sittings is the pandemic, though it does not explain why 11 out of the 15 sessions held during this Lok Sabha were adjourned early, resulting in the cancellation of 40 scheduled sittings.
- Different reasons were cited for each cancellation. Out of the five years, Parliament sat for the lowest number of days — 33 in total — in 2020.



- The 17th Lok Sabha was the first ever to function without a Deputy Speaker, a constitutionally mandated position.
- Article 93 of the Constitution requires that the Lok Sabha elect a Speaker and a Deputy Speaker as soon as possible.

## **Passing Bills**

- According to the study, 58% of Bills were passed within two weeks of their introduction. The J&K Reorganisation Bill, 2019 and the Women's Reservation Bill, 2023 were passed within two days of their introduction.
- Thirty-five per cent of Bills were passed with less than an hour of discussion in Lok Sabha. The corresponding figure for Rajya Sabha was 34.
- Only 16% of the Bills were referred to Standing Committees for Parliamentary scrutiny.
- In all, 729 Private Member Bills (PMB) were introduced in the 17th Lok Sabha, which is higher than all the previous Lok Sabhas except the 16th. However, only two of them were discussed.
- In the same period, 705 PMBs were introduced in Rajya Sabha, and 14 were discussed.
- Till date, only 14 PMBs have been passed and received assent. None have been passed in both Houses since 1970.

# SECURING FOREIGN ORGAN TRANSPLANTS



- Aimed at preventing any possible commercial dealings in organ or tissue transplantation of foreigners, the Health Secretary alerted the Ministry of External Affairs of possible violations and asked support to establish systems for monitoring the process.
- The Health Ministry said many foreign nationals were coming to India for various types of organ transplantation.
- They could be a prospective recipient or donor of organs and might be visiting on a medical/attendant visa.

THE DESERVING INDIA

## Indian Policy

- India has now adopted the “One Nation, One Policy” for organ donation and transplantation.
- Under the policy, it has been decided to remove the requirement of

domicile of the State for registration of patients requiring organ transplantation from deceased donors.

- Now such patients will be able to go to any State and register themselves for organ transplantation.
- As per the new government guidelines, the upper age limit of 65 years for eligibility for registration to receive deceased donor organs has been removed.
- Now, a person of any age can register for receiving deceased donor organs.
- As per the data available with NOTTO, 15,561 organ transplants took place in the country in the calendar year 2022.

### **National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO)**

- NOTTO is a National level organisation set up under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- It has following two divisions:
  - National Human Organ and Tissue Removal and Storage Network
  - National Biomaterial Centre.
- National Network division of NOTTO functions as the apex centre for all Indian activities for procurement, distribution and registry of organs and tissues donation and transplantation in the country.



# VEDANTA STERLITE COPPER PLANT



- Recently, the Supreme Court proposed forming a “non-partisan” committee to objectively evaluate environmental concerns and to suggest additional conditions, if any, for reopening the Vedanta Sterlite’s copper plant at Thoothukudi.

## Key Points

- The copper smelting plant was permanently shut down on the orders of the Tamil Nadu government six years ago on grounds of pollution.
- The 2018 closure of the plant was preceded by nearly 30 years of local protests, which had even led to an incident of police firing.
- Vedanta has moved the court against the closure.
- The Court said that in case the panel recommends re-opening, Vedanta cannot resume operations with the 2018 standards.

- It urged both the State and Vedanta to suggest modalities and domain experts for the panel by the next hearing.

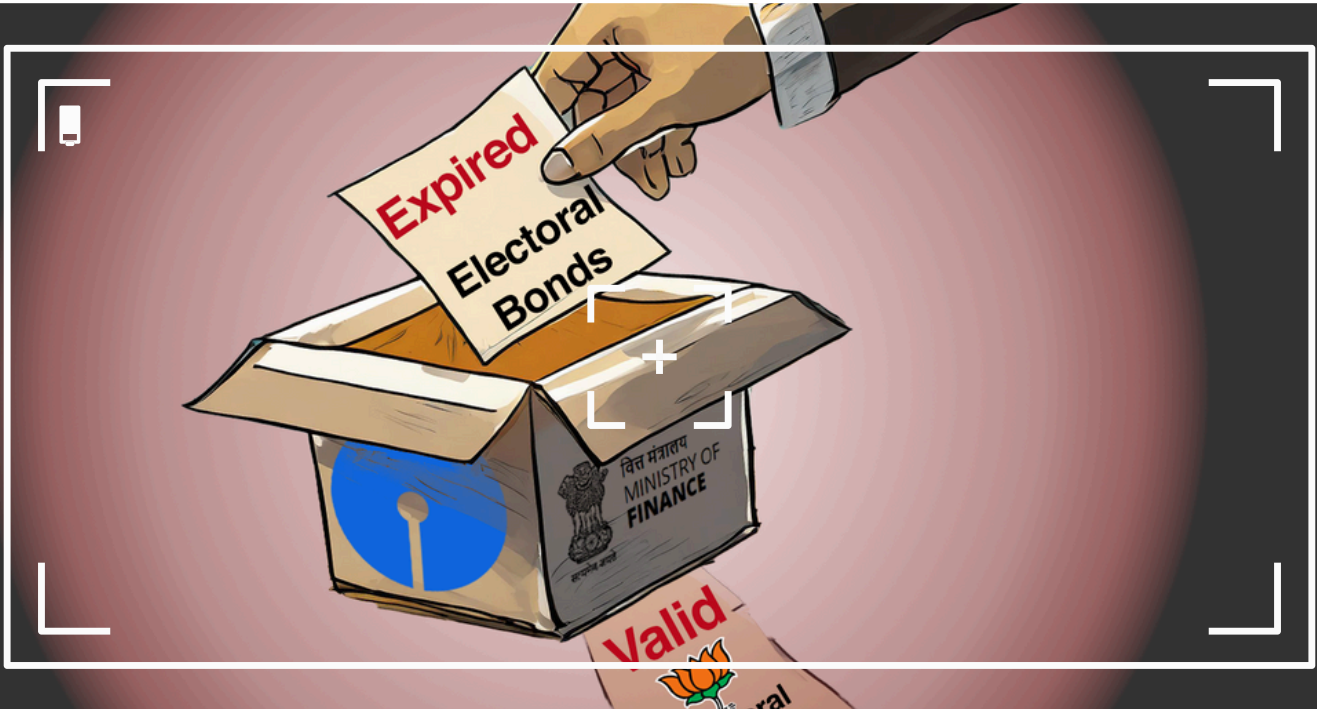
### **About Copper**

- Copper is a soft, malleable, and ductile metal with very high thermal and electrical conductivity.
- Copper is one of the few metals that occurs in nature in directly usable metallic form (native metals) and is an important non-ferrous base metal having wide industrial applications, ranging from defence, space programme, railways, power cables, mint, telecommunication cables, etc.
- India is not self-sufficient in the production of copper ore.
- In addition to domestic production of ore and concentrates, India imports copper concentrates for its smelters.
- Chile is the top copper producer in the world, with 27% of global copper production.

### **Copper Deposits in India**

- Copper Deposits mainly occur in Singhbhum district in Jharkhand, Balaghat district in Madhya Pradesh and Jhunjhunu and Alwar districts in Rajasthan.
- Minor Producers of Copper: Agnigundala in Guntur District (Andhra Pradesh), Chitradurg and Hasan districts (Karnataka) and South Arcot district (Tamil Nadu).

# SUPREME COURT STRIKES DOWN ELECTORAL BONDS SCHEME



- In a landmark verdict, the Supreme Court recently struck down the electoral bonds scheme, calling it “unconstitutional”.

## Key Points

- Stating that information about funding to political parties is essential for electoral choices, the apex court held that the scheme violates the right to information under Section 19(1)(a).
- The Supreme Court directed the State Bank of India (SBI) not to issue any more of these bonds and to submit details of all such bonds purchased since the apex court’s interim order of April 12, 2019 to Election Commission.
- The five-judge Constitutional bench ruled that changes in law permitting unlimited funding to political parties is arbitrary.



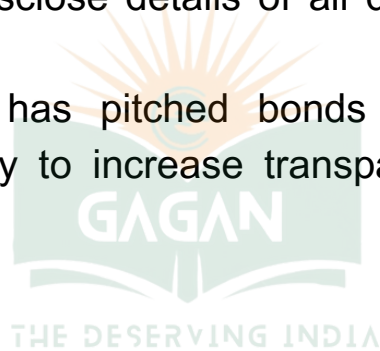
- The constitutional bench, comprising Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, Justices Sanjiv Khanna, BR Gavai, JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, reserved its verdict on the matter on November 2 last year.

### **What Are Electoral Bonds?**

- Electoral bonds are interest-free bearer instruments that are essentially used to donate money anonymously to political parties.
- The scheme was first announced in the 2017 Union Budget speech when Late Arun Jaitley was the Finance Minister.

### **Concerns Regarding Electoral Bonds**

- The primary concern raised by transparency activists is that voters can no longer know which individual, company, or organisation has funded which party and to what extent.
- Earlier parties had to disclose details of all donors who have contributed more than Rs 20,000.
- The Centre, however, has pitched bonds as an alternative to cash donations and as a way to increase transparency and accountability in political funding.



# GLOBAL PULSES CONFERENCE



- The Global Pulses Conference suggested that India augment production of pulses to meet the nutritional requirements.
- Key Points
- The Indian Government emphasised India's commitment to farmers by ensuring an MSP that guarantees a 50% profit over the production cost.
- An impressive 60% growth in pulses production over the last decade was revealed citing significant increases in MSP for various pulses, such as 117% for masoor, 90% for moong, 75% for chana dal, and 60% for toor and urad.

## Global Pulses Conference

- The Global Pulses Conference is an annual meeting of pulses producers, processors and traders.

- The 2024 conference is jointly organised by National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED) NAFED and the Global Pulse Confederation (GPC).
- It underscores the objective to position pulses as a global dietary staple.
- Pulses Production in India
- India is the largest producer (25% of global production), consumer (27% of world consumption) and importer (14%) of pulses in the world.
- Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka are the top five pulses-producing states.
- India has achieved self-reliance in chickpeas and other pulses, with efforts ongoing to address minor deficiencies in pigeon peas and black gram.
- The government aims for self-sufficiency in pulses by 2027, focusing on seed variety enhancement and expanding cultivation of tur and black gram.

