



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 29-05-2026

Mapping Perspective

1. Mekedatu Project

Prelims Perspective

2. Algoza
3. Justice (Retd.) Prakash Prabhakar Naolekar Committee

Mains Perspective

4. Article 142
5. India-US Critical Minerals Framework

Mekedatu Project

Syllabus: GS-1; Environment & Ecology / Inter-State River Water Disputes / Infrastructure

Context

The Supreme Court recently dismissed Tamil Nadu's review petition against Karnataka's proposed **Mekedatu Balancing Reservoir cum Drinking Water Project**.



About Mekedatu Project

- The **Mekedatu Project** is a **multi-purpose project** aimed at **drinking water supply** and **hydroelectric power generation**.
- It is proposed near **Kanakapura** in **Ramanagara district, Karnataka**, around **90 km from Bengaluru**.
- The project is located at the **confluence** of the Cauvery River and its tributary Arkavathi River.

Key Features

- Construction of a **99-metre-high concrete gravity dam**.
- **735-metre-long reservoir structure**.
- Includes an **underground powerhouse** and **water conductor system**.
- Planned storage capacity of **67 tmcft of water**.

- Expected to generate **400 MW of power** while supplying drinking water to **Bengaluru**.

Environmental Concerns

- May submerge over **5,000 hectares** within the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Concerns regarding **ecological impact** and **wildlife habitat loss**.

Inter-State Dispute

- **Tamil Nadu** opposes the project fearing reduction in **downstream Cauvery water flow**.
- Tamil Nadu argues Mokedatu is the last **free-flowing point** before Cauvery enters the state.
- **Karnataka** maintains the project is primarily for **drinking water supply** and **regulated water management**.

Algoza

Syllabus: GS-1; Art & Culture – Indian Folk Music and Traditional Instruments

Context

Recently, Rajasthan's celebrated folk artist Taga Ram Bheel received the **Padma Shri** in Art for preserving and promoting the traditional desert folk instrument, the **Algoza**.



About Algoza

- **Algoza** is a traditional pair of **woodwind instruments** associated with **Rajasthan, Punjab, Sindh**, and parts of western India and Pakistan.
- It is regarded as one of India's **oldest surviving folk wind instruments** and is closely linked with **desert folk traditions**.
- The name "Algoza" refers to "**two flutes**" because it consists of **two wooden pipes** played simultaneously.

How is it Played?

- One pipe plays the **melody**, while the other provides a continuous **drone/rhythmic accompaniment**, creating a **layered hypnotic sound**.
- Musicians use the difficult technique of **circular breathing**, enabling **uninterrupted music** without pausing for breath.
- Rapid breathing and quick recapturing of breath generate the instrument's characteristic **swinging and meditative rhythm**.

Justice (Retd.) Prakash Prabhakar Naolekar Committee

Syllabus: GS-2; Polity & Governance – Committees, Internal Security, Migration Issues

Context

The Centre recently constituted a high-level committee under Prakash Prabhakar Naolekar to examine **demographic changes** arising from **illegal immigration** and other "unnatural causes".

About the Committee

- It is a **five-member high-level committee** tasked with assessing **demographic changes across India**.
- The committee is chaired by **Justice (Retd.) Prakash Prabhakar Naolekar**.
- Members include:
 - **Census Commissioner of India**
 - Durga Shankar Mishra
 - Balaji Srivastava
 - Shamika Ravi

- The **Joint Secretary (Foreigners-I), Ministry of Home Affairs** will function as the **Member Secretary**.

Mandate

- Study patterns of **demographic changes** across India.
- Identify causes, including **illegal immigration** and other contributing factors.
- Recommend **legal, administrative, and policy measures**.
- The committee is expected to submit its report within **one year**.

Article 142

Syllabus: GS-2: Indian Polity and Constitution

Context:

Recently, the Supreme Court in **In Re: Phalodi Accident vs. NHAI and Others (2025)** took *suo motu* cognisance of two road accidents and recognised the **Right to Safe Travel on National Highways** as part of Article 21 (Right to Life). The Court invoked **Article 142** to issue directions aimed at improving road safety.

Background – India’s Road Safety Crisis

- National Highways constitute only about **2% of total roads**, but account for nearly **30% of road fatalities**.
- Around **26,770 deaths** occurred on National Highways in the first half of 2025.
- Government target: **50% reduction in road accidents by 2030**.
- Strategy based on the **4 Es**:
 - Education
 - Engineering
 - Enforcement
 - Emergency Medical Services

What is Article 142?

Constitutional Provision

Article 142(1) empowers the Supreme Court to pass any decree or order necessary for **“complete justice”** in any matter pending before it.

Article 142: Complete Justice Doctrine

Key Features

- Extraordinary and residuary constitutional power.
- Enables the Court to act even when:
 - existing laws are inadequate,
 - procedural rules create obstacles,
 - legal vacuum exists.
- Designed as a **constitutional safety valve** to prevent injustice.

Nature of the Power

- Inherent to the Supreme Court's constitutional role.
- Not dependent on statutory authority.
- Allows flexibility beyond strict procedural limitations.
- Intended to ensure **substantive justice**, not merely procedural compliance.

Conditions Generally Associated with Invocation

- Presence of a **manifest injustice/error**.
- Non-intervention would lead to a **travesty of justice**.

Important Judicial Interpretations

Delhi Judicial Service Association vs. State of Gujarat

- Held that Article 142 powers are of a "different level and quality".
- Ordinary statutory restrictions cannot curtail constitutional powers under Article 142.

Canara Bank vs. Debasis Das

- Emphasised that justice may arise from:
 - legal justice, or
 - natural justice.
- If legal justice fails, natural justice should prevail.

Hitesh Bhatnagar vs. Deepa Bhatnagar

- Stressed that Article 142 is an extraordinary jurisdiction.
- Must be exercised with great caution.

Why is "Complete Justice" Necessary?

- Laws are framed at a particular historical moment.
- Social realities evolve faster than legislation.

Situations where legal gaps may arise

- Live-in relationships
- LGBTQ+ rights
- Environmental crises
- Digital privacy issues

In such circumstances, Article 142 enables the Supreme Court to bridge the gap between:

- **formal legal justice** and
- **substantive real-world justice.**

Can High Courts Exercise Similar Powers?

Anil Kumar Jain vs. Maya Jain

- Supreme Court clarified that High Court powers under Article 226 are **not equivalent** to Article 142 powers.
- High Courts can provide justice, but within comparatively narrower limits.

Key Difference

- Difference is of **scope and degree**, not of the objective of justice itself.

Article 142 and Separation of Powers Debate

Criticism – Judicial Overreach

Critics argue that:

- Supreme Court sometimes bypasses statutory procedures.
- Judiciary may intrude into Executive or Legislative domains.
- Unelected judges may effectively shape policy.

Counter-Argument – Judicial Activism

Supporters contend that:

- Article 142 enables proactive constitutional governance.
- Courts intervene mainly when:
 - legislative vacuum exists, or
 - executive failure persists.
- Objective is protection of constitutional morality and rights, not power usurpation.

Significance of Article 142

- Protects constitutional rights in exceptional situations.

- Helps fill legislative and procedural gaps.
- Strengthens citizens' access to substantive justice.
- Reinforces the Supreme Court's role as guardian of the Constitution.

Concerns

- Possibility of subjective judicial discretion.
- Risk of weakening separation of powers.
- Lack of clearly codified limits.
- May create tensions with democratic accountability.

Conclusion

Article 142 represents a unique constitutional mechanism enabling the Supreme Court to ensure that justice is not defeated by procedural or legislative limitations. While concerns regarding judicial overreach remain valid, the provision continues to serve as an essential tool for protecting constitutional values and addressing evolving societal challenges.

India-US Critical Minerals Framework

Syllabus: GS-2: International Relations – Bilateral Relations

Context:

India and the United States launched the **Transforming Relationship Utilizing Strategic Technology (TRUST) Initiative** during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Washington, D.C. to deepen cooperation in **critical minerals, advanced technologies, and strategic supply chains**.

The initiative particularly focuses on the **recovery, processing, recycling, and supply-chain resilience** of critical minerals such as **lithium** and **rare earth elements (REEs)**.

Key Objectives of TRUST Initiative

Strengthening Critical Mineral Supply Chains

- Promote cooperation in:
 - Exploration
 - Extraction
 - Processing
 - Recycling
 - Recovery of strategic minerals

- Reduce overdependence on China-dominated supply chains.

Reducing Barriers to Technology Transfer

- Streamline regulations for:
 - Innovation
 - Strategic technologies
 - Industrial collaboration

Addressing Export Controls

- Facilitate smoother trade and commercial exchange in sensitive sectors.

Enhancing High-Tech Commerce

- Expand India-US cooperation in:
 - AI
 - Semiconductors
 - Quantum computing
 - Biotechnology
 - Defence
 - Space technologies

Focus on Critical Minerals

Important Minerals Covered

- Lithium
- Rare Earth Elements (REEs)
- Cobalt
- Nickel
- Gallium
- Indium
- Scandium

Importance

These minerals are essential for:

- Electric vehicles (EVs)
- Battery storage systems

- Semiconductors
- AI hardware
- Defence systems
- Renewable energy technologies
- Aerospace and space applications

Rare Earth Elements (REEs)

About REEs

- Group of **17 metallic elements** including:
 - Lanthanides
 - Scandium
 - Yttrium
- Despite the name, many are relatively abundant but difficult to process economically.

Strategic Uses

| Element | Application |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Neodymium, Praseodymium | High-performance magnets |
| Lithium, Cobalt, Nickel | Advanced batteries |
| Gallium, Indium | Semiconductors |
| Europium, Terbium | Medical imaging |
| Scandium | Aerospace alloys |

Why the TRUST Initiative is Important

Strategic Significance

- Strengthens India-US strategic partnership.
- Supports resilient and secure supply chains.
- Helps India reduce import dependence.

Countering China's Dominance

- China controls nearly:
 - 70% of global REE production

- Major global processing infrastructure
- TRUST aims to diversify global sourcing networks.

Economic Significance

- Boosts domestic manufacturing under:
 - Make in India
 - Energy transition goals
- Supports EV ecosystem and clean energy industries.

Technological Significance

- Enhances collaboration in frontier technologies.
- Encourages R&D and private-sector participation.

Alignment with Global Frameworks

Minerals Security Partnership (MSP)

Minerals Security Partnership

- India joined in 2023.
- US-led initiative to secure responsible mineral supply chains.

Minerals Security Finance Network

- Supports financing for strategic mineral projects globally.

Difference from Multilateral Frameworks

- TRUST is a **bilateral mechanism**.
- Allows:
 - Faster implementation
 - Deeper strategic coordination
 - Flexible policy alignment

India's National Critical Minerals Mission (NCMM)

Approved

- January 2024

Budget

- ₹16,300 crore over 7 years

Allocations

| Purpose | Allocation |
|----------------------|--------------|
| Exploration | ₹7,000 crore |
| Recycling incentives | ₹1,500 crore |

US Programmes Supporting TRUST

Critical Minerals and Materials (CMM) Programme – 2020

- Allocation: \$675 million
- Focus:
 - Diversified supply chains
 - Circular economy

Battery and Critical Mineral Recycling Programme – 2024

- Grants worth \$125 million
- Focus on battery reuse and recycling R&D

TRUST vs iCET

iCET

Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology

- Launched in 2022
- Focus:
 - Defence technologies
 - Semiconductors
 - AI
 - Wireless communication

TRUST

- Broader scope:
 - Critical minerals
 - Strategic supply chains
 - Processing and recycling ecosystems
 - Industrial cooperation

Pharmaceutical Supply Chain Dimension

Importance

- APIs require minerals such as:
 - Lithium
 - Magnesium
 - Zinc
 - Selenium

Relevance for India

- India is the world's second-largest API manufacturer after China.
- Pharma exports to the US form a major share of bilateral trade.

Challenges

- Heavy Chinese dominance in processing capacity.
- Environmental concerns in mining and extraction.
- Technology gaps in refining and recycling.
- Lack of access to some US tax incentives under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

Conclusion

The India-US TRUST Initiative represents a major step toward building resilient, diversified, and secure supply chains for critical minerals and strategic technologies. It strengthens India's technological and industrial capabilities while deepening strategic cooperation with the United States in an increasingly competitive geopolitical environment.