



4th India-EU Urban Forum

[Source: PIB](#)

The **4th India-EU Urban Forum**, held in New Delhi has strengthened **India-EU collaboration on sustainable urban development**.

India-EU Urban Forum:

- **About:**
 - It is a high-level platform for **dialogue and collaboration** between India and the European Union (EU) on **smart and sustainable urbanization**, established as part of the **2017 Joint Declaration on Partnership for Smart and Sustainable Urbanization**.
- **Objective:**
 - It facilitates **discussions among officials, experts, and stakeholders** to exchange best practices, policies, and innovative solutions for sustainable urban development.
- **Focus Areas:**
 - **Urban Alliance & Integrated Approaches, Innovation & Circularity, and Inclusive Urban Mobility.**
 - It aligns with the [EU's Global Gateway Strategy](#) (for sustainable investments) and **India's urban development missions** (such as **Smart Cities Mission**).
- **Support to India:**
 - Since 2017, Europe has **supported 40+ Indian cities** in **climate-smart development, mobility, waste management, and climate action** and invested **over INR 9000 crores**.

Government Initiatives Related to Urban Areas:

- [Smart Cities](#)
- [AMRUT Mission](#)
- [Aspirational Blocks Programme](#)

Read More: [Revitalizing India's Urban Landscape](#)

DRC Conflict and M23 Militia

[Source: TH](#)

The ongoing conflict in **the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** has escalated with the **M23 militia**, backed by **Rwanda**, capturing the mineral-rich city of [Goma](#).

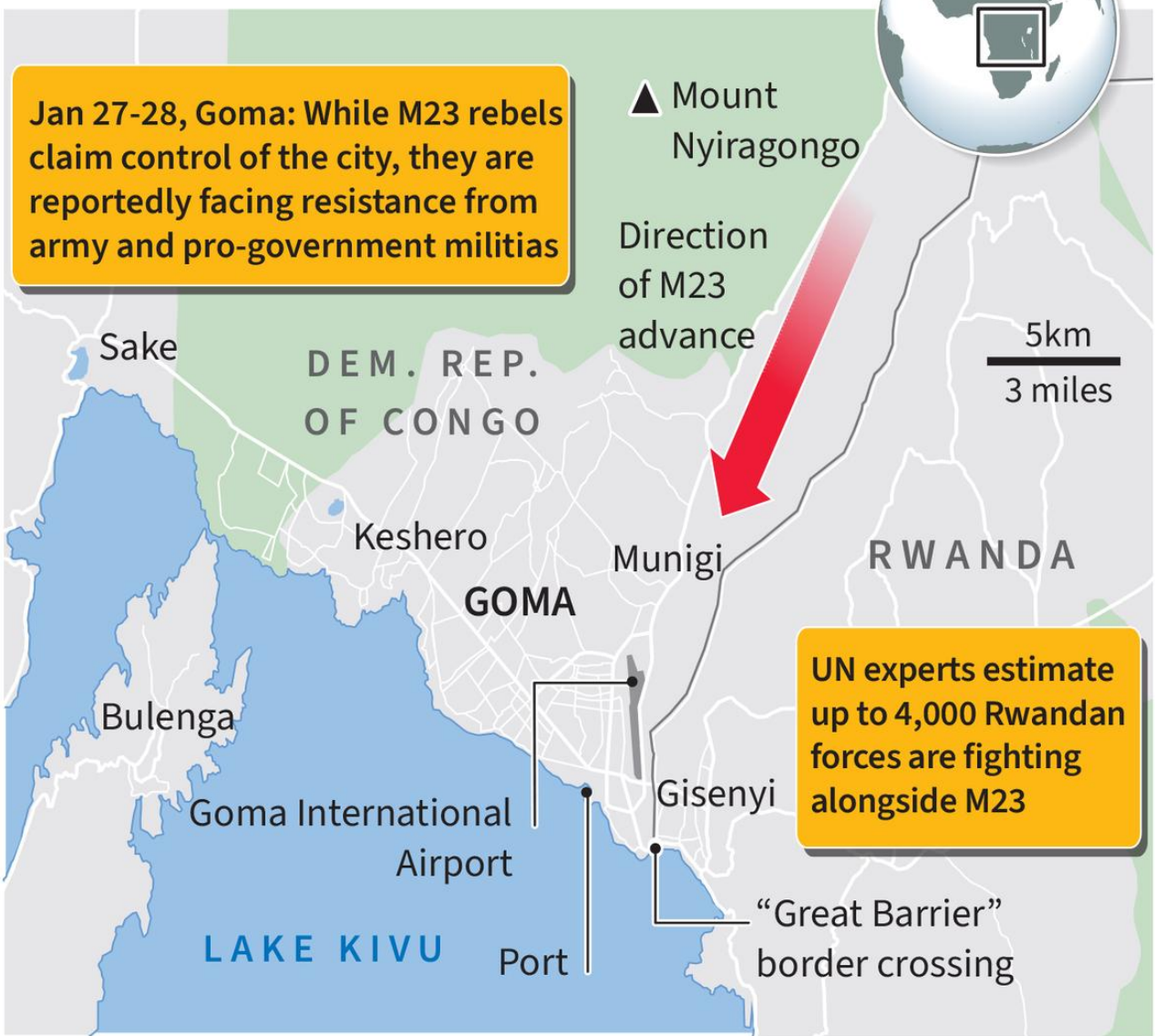
- The conflict has resulted in **2,900 deaths**, displaced nearly **700,000 people**, and spread to **South Kivu province**, a region rich in resources.

THE M23 MILITIA

- One of about 100 armed factions vying for a foothold in mineral-rich eastern DRC
- Rwandan-backed group which consists primarily of Tutsis who failed to integrate into the Congolese army
- Led major insurgency against the DRC government in 2012, took up arms again in 2022. The group is estimated to have 6,500 fighters



Jan 27-28, Goma: While M23 rebels claim control of the city, they are reportedly facing resistance from army and pro-government militias



- Latest rebel advance has forced thousands to flee Goma. The city of two million people is a vital humanitarian aid hub for the region
- The UN and other global powers fear that the conflict could spiral into a regional war similar to those of 1996-1997 and 1998-2003

- **M23 Formed in 2012** after the failure of a **2009 peace agreement** between the **DRC government and Tutsi-led National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP)**.
 - M23 claims to protect **Tutsis** in DRC, while **Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR)** fights for **Hutus**.
 - Hutu-Tutsi conflicts have existed since **Belgian and German colonial rule**, with Tutsis favored in governance.
- **Rwandan Genocide (1994)** was a **mass killing of the Tutsi ethnic group** by **Hutu extremists** in **Rwanda**.
- The DRC supplies **40%** of the world's **Coltan**, used to make **Tantalum** capacitors for electronics due to its **high charge retention**.

Read More: [Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo \(DRC\)](#)

Arabian Leopards

Source: [DTE](#)

A study published on **World Arabian Leopard Day (10th February 2025)** confirmed the presence of the **Arabian leopard** in Oman's **Nejd plateau**, contrary to earlier beliefs of local extinction due to **hunting and habitat loss**.

Arabian Leopard (*Panthera pardus nimr*):

- **Key Characteristics:** It is among the **smallest leopard subspecies**, with **males weighing 30-40 kg** and **females 25-35 kg**.
 - It has **pale buff-colored fur with small, closely spaced rosettes**.
- **Habitat & Population:** Native to the **Arabian Peninsula**. Found in isolated pockets across **Saudi Arabia, Oman, Yemen, and the UAE**.
 - The global wild population is estimated to be **100-120 individuals**, with the largest group in **southern Oman**.
- **IUCN Status:** [Critically Endangered](#)
- **Threats:**
 - **Habitat loss** due to **urbanization, farming, and overgrazing**.
 - **Poaching and illegal wildlife trade**.
 - **Declining prey populations**, leading to food scarcity.

Nejd Plateau:

- The **Nejd Plateau** in **Dhofar, Oman**, is a **dry region** with **plateaus, wadis, and low cliffs**.
 - Wadis are **low-lying valleys** that are **usually dry, except during the rainy season**

Leopard Population in India (2024):

- **Total:** 13,874 (1.08% annual growth since 2018).
- **Highest population:** **Madhya Pradesh**, followed by **Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu**.
- **Conservation Status:** [IUCN Red List](#) (Vulnerable), [CITES](#) (Appendix-I) and [Indian Wildlife \(Protection\) Act](#) (Schedule-I).

PANTHERA PARDUS FUSCA

INDIAN LEOPARD

Highly adaptable big cat can live close to humans

<p>POPULATION around 7,910 (2014 census in surveyed areas); thought to be around 12,000-14,000 across India</p>	<p>WEIGHT 50-77 kg (males); 29-34 kg (females)</p>	<p>GEOGRAPHIC RANGE Indian subcontinent (all states), Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, China</p>	<p>HABITAT Forest, shrubland, savanna, grassland, rocky areas, mountains, desert</p>
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Large head, powerful jaws

Have an easily recognisable sawing/rasping call

Coats have black rosettes

Each coat pattern is unique and makes individuals identifiable





EAT

- True carnivores that are excellent ambush predators
- Feed on anything they can overpower, from mid-size ungulates, to domestic livestock, dogs, birds, and rodents

ACTIVITY

- Mostly solitary, nocturnal creatures, also seen at dusk and dawn in forests. Entirely nocturnal close to human presence
- Territorial.
- Leopard densities can reach 5 animals per 100 sq km in densely populated human landscapes like western India

BLACK PANTHER

- Dark morphs or black leopards, often called black panthers, are the same species, but with recessive melanistic genes
- Spots are hidden under the dark coat

CUBS

- Females usually give birth to two cubs after a gestation period of 90-105 days
- Only the female cares for the cubs, who remain with the mother for about 1.5-2 years

AGILE CAT

- Excellent at climbing trees
- Can run down a tree head-first
- Can carry large prey up a tree to protect it from other carnivores including tigers and wild dogs

THREATS

- A TRAFFIC study reports that between 2001-2010 at least **2 leopards were killed each week** for the illegal wildlife trade in India
- Population has declined by **75-90%** in the last two centuries
- **Poisoning** and retaliatory killing
- **Poaching** for pelts and body parts.
- Become **roadkill** when roads and highways run through forests
- Conflict with **livestock herders**
- **Hunting**

PROTECTION STATUS:
VULNERABLE on the IUCN Red List

Read More: [Status of Leopards in India 2022](#)

High-Entropy Alloy for Hydrogen Production

Source: [BL](#)

Researchers have developed a **high-entropy alloy (HEA) catalyst** for **water electrolysis, enhancing hydrogen production** while **reducing dependence on costly materials like platinum** for clean energy generation.

- **Alloys & High-Entropy Alloys (HEAs):** Alloys are metallic substances composed of **2 or more elements**, while **HEAs** are advanced **metallic alloys** materials with **5 or more elements** mixed in **equal or similar proportions**.
 - **HEA catalyst** consists of **platinum, palladium, cobalt, nickel, and manganese**.
- HEAs possess **high strength, corrosion, and wear resistance**, ensuring durability.

HEA Role in Electrolysis:

- In electrolysis, a **catalyst (like platinum)** is used which reduces the minimum amount of energy required to start a chemical reaction (**activation energy**), **accelerating water splitting** into **hydrogen and oxygen**.
- The HEA catalyst **reduces platinum use by 7 times** improving efficiency over pure platinum, and remains stable for **100+ hours in alkaline seawater**, enabling **cost-effective hydrogen production**.

Read More: [Green Hydrogen and Carbon-Neutral Future](#)

President's Rule in Manipur

For Prelims: [President's Rule](#), [Article 356](#), [Kuki-Zo and Meitei](#), [Article 355](#), [Governor](#), [Simple Majority](#), [44th Amendment Act, 1978](#), [National Emergency](#), [Election Commission](#), [State Consolidated Fund](#)

For Mains: Constitutional provisions regarding President's rule and judicial interpretation.

[Source: IE](#)

Why in News?

The Centre has imposed the [President's rule](#) in Manipur under [Article 356](#) of the **Indian Constitution** and suspended the state assembly after the **resignation** of its **Chief Minister**.

How President's Rule Can Help in Resolving Conflict in Manipur?

- **Neutral Administration:** Central rule will remove **allegations of biased handling of ethnic violence**, protecting both [Kuki-Zo and Meitei](#) communities.
 - Governor-supervised central forces can **prevent ethnic clashes** and maintain law & order in the state.
- **Electoral Stability:** Prevents governance erosion by **ending internal disputes** within the ruling party.
- **Rehabilitation:** Ensures **fair relief and rehabilitation** for 60,000 displaced people in camps for over 20 months.

[Click Here to Read: What led to the Manipur Unrest?](#)

What is the President's Rule?

- **About: President's Rule** refers to the suspension of a **state government** and its **legislative assembly**, placing the state under the **direct control of the central government**.
 - It is imposed under [Article 356](#) of the **Indian Constitution**.
- **Constitutional Basis:** [Article 355](#) mandates the Central government to ensure that every state functions as per the Constitution.
 - If a state government **fails to function as per constitution**, the Centre can **intervene** under [Article 356](#) by imposing **President's Rule**.
 - President's Rule is also known as **State Emergency** or **Constitutional Emergency**.
- **Grounds for Proclamation:**
 - [Article 356](#): The President can impose President's Rule if a **situation arises** where the state government **cannot function as per the Constitution**. This can be done:
 - On the recommendation of the [Governor](#).
 - On the **President's discretion**, even without the Governor's report.
 - [Article 365](#): If a state **fails to comply with the Centre's directions**, the President can declare that its government **cannot function constitutionally**.
- **Parliamentary Approval:** A **proclamation of President's Rule** must be approved by **both Houses of Parliament** within **two months**.

- If President's Rule is declared when the **Lok Sabha is dissolved, or if it dissolves within two months without approving** the proclamation, it remains **valid until 30 days after the Lok Sabha reconvenes**, provided the **Rajya Sabha approves** it during this period.
- Approving or extending the President's Rule requires a **simple majority** in Parliament (majority of members present and voting).
- **Duration:** President's Rule lasts **six months** initially and can be extended **up to 3 years** with Parliament's approval every six months.
 - The **44th Amendment Act, 1978** allows extending President's Rule **beyond one year only if:**
 - **National Emergency is in force** across India or in any part of the state.
 - The **Election Commission certifies** that elections to the state assembly cannot be held due to difficulties.
 - For extension of President's Rule **beyond 3 years**, constitutional amendment is required. E.g., **67th Amendment Act, 1990** and **68th Amendment Act, 1991** was enacted to extend President's Rule beyond 3 years in Punjab during **Punjab insurgency**.
- **Impacts:** The **President assumes extraordinary powers** when the President's Rule is imposed.
 - **Executive Powers:** The President takes over state functions, with the **Governor administering** on their behalf, assisted by the **Chief Secretary** and appointed advisors.
 - **Legislative Powers:** The State Legislature is **suspended or dissolved**, with **Parliament** exercising its powers or delegating law-making authority to the President or a specified body.
 - Laws made during the President's Rule remain in force **unless repealed by the state legislature**.
 - **Financial Control:** The President **can authorize expenditure** from the **State Consolidated Fund** until it is approved by Parliament.
- **Revocation:** The **President can revoke President's Rule anytime** without parliamentary approval.

What is the Supreme Court's Stand on Imposition of President's Rule?

- **SR Bommai Case, 1994:** The Supreme Court (SC) ruled that **Article 356 is subject to judicial review**, and state government's dismissal must be based on a **floor test**, **not the Governor's opinion**.
- **Sarbananda Sonowal Case, 2005:** Article 355's scope was **broadened**, enabling the Union to take **wider actions to uphold state governance** and constitutional principles.
- **Rameshwar Prasad Case, 2006:** The SC condemned the Bihar Assembly's dissolution **without a floor test** and criticized the **political misuse of Article 356**.
 - **Article 356 cannot** be used to combat social evils like **defection**.
 - Immunity under **Article 361** does **not prevent** the court from reviewing the **validity of actions**.

Click Here to Read: [Proper and Improper Use of Article 356](#)

What are the Recommendations Regarding Imposition of President's Rule?

- **Sarkaria Commission (1987):** It recommended using **Article 356 sparingly**, only as a **last resort** when all **alternatives fail** to resolve a state's constitutional breakdown.
- **Punchhi Commission (2010):** It proposed "**localizing emergency provisions**" under Articles 355 and 356, allowing Governor's rule localised areas, like a **district or parts of it** for **up to 3 months**.

- **National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC, 2000): Article 356 should not be deleted**, but it must be **used sparingly** and only as a remedy of the **last resort**.
 - President's Rule may continue even **without an emergency if elections cannot be held**. Article 356 should be **amended accordingly**.
- **Inter-State Council (Article 263):** The Governor's report recommending imposition of President's rule should be **detailed and explanatory**.
 - The state at fault should **receive a warning before President's Rule** is imposed.
 - A **special majority** should be required for ratifying the proposal to impose **President's Rule**.

Click Here to Read: [Sarkaria Commission](#), [Punchhi Commission](#), [Venkatachaliah Commission \(NCRWC\)](#)

Conclusion

The imposition of President's Rule in Manipur aims to **restore stability** by ensuring **neutral governance, maintaining law and order, and facilitating political dialogue**. However, past judicial rulings and commission recommendations highlight the need for **cautious and minimal use of Article 356** to prevent political misuse and uphold federalism.

Drishti Mains Question:

Discuss the constitutional provisions and judicial interpretations regarding the imposition of President's Rule in India.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. If the President of India exercises his power as provided under Article 356 of the Constitution in respect of a particular State, then (2018)

- (a) the Assembly of the State is automatically dissolved.
- (b) the powers of the Legislature of that State shall be exercisable by or under the authority of the Parliament.
- (c) Article 19 is suspended in that State.
- (d) the President can make laws relating to that State.

Ans: (b)

Mains

Q. Under what circumstances can the Financial Emergency be proclaimed by the President of India? What consequences follow when such a declaration remains in force? (2018)

