

## Current Affairs - 28 January 2025

### UTTARAKHAND ADOPTS UNIFORM CIVIL CODE

Uttarakhand government officially implemented the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) on January 27, 2025, making it the first Indian state to adopt the UCC post-Independence.

The UCC, which excludes Scheduled Tribes and natives who have migrated out of the state, was passed by the State Assembly in February 2024.

#### Uniform Civil Code (UCC)

- The Uniform Civil Code is a law that seeks to establish a common set of legal provisions for all citizens, regardless of religion or community.
- It will standardise marriage, divorce, inheritance, property rights, and adoption laws.

#### Key highlights of Uttarakhand's UCC

- UCC as a constitutional measure aims to eliminate discrimination and ensure women's empowerment.
- It promotes equality and does not discriminate based on gender, caste, or religion.
- Scheduled Tribes, as defined under Article 342 of the Constitution, have been exempted from the UCC to protect their rights.
- **Key Features of the UCC**
  - **Banned Practices:** Prohibits halala, iddat, and talaq from Muslim Personal Law.
  - **Equal Rights for Women:** Ensures equal property and inheritance rights.
  - **Mandatory Online Registrations:** Marriage, divorce, and live-in relationships must be registered on the government portal [ucc.uk.gov.in](https://ucc.uk.gov.in).
- **Marriage Laws**
  - Legal marriage age: 21 years for men and 18 years for women.
  - Mandatory marriage registration.
  - Prohibits polygamy, child marriage, and triple talaq.
- **Inheritance and Property Rights**
  - Equal inheritance rights for sons and daughters.

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- Recognizes children of live-in couples as "legitimate," granting them equal inheritance rights.
- **UCC Online Portal**
  - **Aadhaar-Based Verification:** Ensures user authenticity.
  - **Multilingual Translation:** AI-based service translates content into 22 languages.
  - **Integrated Database:** Linked with 13 government departments, including police and courts.
  - **Tatkal Facility:** Emergency processing available for a nominal fee.
- **Registration Deadlines**
  - **Marriages Since 2010:** Must be registered within six months.
  - **New Marriages:** Register within 60 days of marriage.
  - **Live-In Relationships:** Register within one month of UCC implementation.
- **Live-In Relationship Rules**
  - Mandatory registration for couples aged 21 and above.
    - Parental consent required for couples under 21 years.
  - Applicable to Uttarakhand residents, including those in live-in relationships outside the state.
  - **Termination:** Can be applied for online or offline, requiring mutual consent.
  - **Pregnancy Notification:** Mandatory to report pregnancy within 30 days of childbirth.
  - **Housing Rights:** Landlords cannot deny housing to registered live-in couples.
- **Penalties for Violations**
  - Initial warnings for non-compliance.
  - Fines for repeated violations.

### Conclusion

The UCC aims to abolish practices like halala, polygamy, child marriage, and triple talaq, fostering equality among citizens. By removing gender biases in inheritance laws and legitimizing live-in children, it seeks to promote gender equality.

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### INDIA AND CHINA: REVIVING BILATERAL TIES THROUGH DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION

After three months of negotiations, India and China have agreed to concrete measures to resume direct flights, visas, a number of exchanges, and the Mansarovar Yatra for pilgrims this summer.

#### Key Agreements and Initiatives:

- During the high-level meetings, both nations agreed on several initiatives aimed at rebuilding trust and enhancing collaboration:
  - **Resumption of Kailash Mansarovar Yatra:** Scheduled for the summer of 2025, this pilgrimage holds significant cultural and religious importance for Indian devotees.
  - **Direct Flights and Visa Services:** Both sides committed to restoring air connectivity between major cities and facilitating visas for media, think tanks, and business representatives.
  - **Hydrological Data Sharing:** Dialogues will resume under the India-China Expert Level Mechanism to discuss data sharing on trans-border rivers, a critical issue for downstream water management.

#### Focus on Economic and Trade Relations:

- Despite record **trade volumes exceeding \$125 billion in 2023**, tensions persist due to restrictions imposed by both countries.
- India expressed concerns over China's curbs on pharmaceutical and high-tech exports, while China raised issues regarding India's investment policies and regulatory hurdles for Chinese businesses.
- A joint statement emphasized the need for **long-term policy transparency and predictability** in economic and trade relations.
- By addressing these concerns, both countries aim to foster a more balanced trade partnership.

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### Enhancing People-to-People Ties:

- As part of the **75th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2025**, India and China plan to organize cultural events, media exchanges, and academic collaborations. These initiatives aim to restore mutual trust and foster deeper understanding among citizens.

### Challenges in Bilateral Relations:

- While the agreements mark a positive step, several challenges remain:
  - **Border Issues:** The LAC dispute and unresolved de-escalation measures continue to strain relations.
  - **Strategic Distrust:** Historical tensions and competing geopolitical interests in the Indo-Pacific region contribute to mutual suspicion.
  - **Economic Barriers:** Trade imbalances and protectionist policies hinder seamless economic collaboration.

### Path Forward: Building Sustainable Partnerships

- Chinese Foreign Minister emphasized the importance of reducing “mutual suspicion and estrangement” to strengthen bilateral ties.
- Similarly, Indian officials highlighted the need for mutual respect, sensitivity, and shared interests to sustain long-term cooperation.
- Key areas of focus include:
  - **Maritime Cooperation:** Enhancing collaboration in the Indo-Pacific to ensure regional stability.
  - **Technology and Innovation:** Promoting joint research and innovation in fields like renewable energy and healthcare.
  - **Cultural Diplomacy:** Leveraging shared heritage to foster goodwill.

### Conclusion:

- The renewed dialogues between India and China represent a significant step toward stabilizing a complex relationship.
- By addressing underlying issues and prioritizing constructive engagement, India and China can pave the way for a more harmonious and prosperous future.

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### PRADHAN MANTRI FASAL BIMA YOJANA (PMFBY)



- Launched on 18th February 2016, PMFBY is a **crop insurance scheme** by the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation, and Farmers' Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture.
- It aims to provide financial protection to farmers against crop loss due to natural disasters (hail, drought, famine), pests, and diseases.
- It provides crop insurance at a cost-effective premium to all Indian farmers.
- It is implemented through a network of insurance companies and banks.
- **Eligibility:**
  - All farmers, including sharecroppers and tenant farmers, growing the notified crops in the notified areas are eligible for coverage.
    - **Compulsory Component:** All farmers availing Seasonal Agricultural Operations (SAO) loans from Financial Institutions (i.e. loanee farmers) for the notified crops would be covered compulsorily.
    - **Voluntary Component:** The Scheme would be optional for the non-loanee farmers.
  - Farmers must have an **insurable interest** in the insured crops.
  - Farmers **must possess** a valid and **authenticated land ownership certificate** or a valid **land tenure agreement**.
  - Farmers must not have received compensation for the same crop loss from any other medium or source.
  - **Special efforts** shall be made to ensure maximum coverage of SC/ST/Women farmers under the scheme.
- **Budget allocation and utilization** under this scheme should be in proportion to land holdings of SC/ ST/ General along with women in the respective State cluster.

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### Benefits of the Scheme:

- **Affordable Premiums:**
  - The maximum premium payable by the farmer will be 2% for the Kharif food and oilseed crops.
  - For rabi food and oilseed crops, it is 1.5% and for yearly commercial or horticultural crops it will be 5%.
  - The remaining premium is subsidized by the government.
  - For the farmers in the North-Eastern States, Jammu, Kashmir, and Himachal Pradesh, the government also pays the entire premium.
- **Comprehensive Coverage:**
  - The scheme covers **natural disasters** (droughts, floods), **pests, and diseases**.
  - **Post-harvest losses due to local risks like hailstorms and landslides** are also included.
  - Loss or **damage** to notified insured crops **due to war, nuclear risks, malicious damage** and other preventable risks is **excluded** from the scope of coverage.
- **Timely Compensation:** PMFBY aims to **process claims within two months of the harvest** to ensure that farmers get the compensation quickly, preventing them from falling into debt traps.
- **Technology-Driven Implementation:**
  - PMFBY integrates advanced technologies like **satellite imaging, drones**, and mobile apps for **precise estimation of crop loss**, ensuring accurate claim settlements.
  - The **National Crop Insurance Portal (NCIP)** digitizes processes for seamless farmer-insurer-bank interaction. **YES-TECH (Yield Estimation System Based on Technology)** ensures **remote sensing based accurate yield estimation**, while **CROPIC (Collection of Real-time photos and Observations of Crops)** uses **geotagged photos** to verify crops for precise damage assessment.



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### WASP-127B



It is a **large gaseous exoplanet**, located in our **Milky Way galaxy**.

- It is approximately 520 light-years from the earth in a tight orbit around a star similar to our sun.
  - It **orbits** its star roughly every four days at just about 5% of the distance between the earth and the sun, leaving it **scorched by stellar radiation**.
  - Like our moon is to the earth, **one side** of WASP-127b **perpetually faces its star**—the **day side**. The other side always faces away—the night side.
  - Its atmosphere is about 1,127 degrees Celsius, with its polar regions less hot than the rest.
  - Its diameter is about **30% larger than Jupiter's**, but its **mass is only about 16%** that of **Jupiter's**, making it **one of the puffiest planets** ever observed.
  - Like Jupiter, WASP-127b is **composed mainly of hydrogen and helium**, but its atmosphere also contains traces of more complex molecules such as carbon monoxide and water.
  - It is a **gas giant planet**, which means that it has **no rocky or solid surface beneath its atmospheric layers**.
  - The **supersonic jet stream winds circling WASP-127b** at its equator are the fastest of their kind on any known planet.
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### WETLAND ACCREDITED CITIES



- It is a **voluntary accreditation scheme**, which provides an opportunity for cities that value their **natural or human-made wetlands** to **gain international recognition** and positive publicity for their efforts.
  - It was approved during the Ramsar Convention COP12 held in **the year 2015**.
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- It aims to further promote the conservation and wise use of urban and peri-urban wetlands, as well as sustainable socio-economic benefits for local populations.
- It recognizes cities that have taken exceptional steps to safeguard their urban wetlands.
- To be formally accredited, a candidate for WCA should satisfy the standards used to implement each of the six international criteria mentioned in **Operational Guidance for WCA of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands**.
- The accreditation is **valid for 6 years**, after which it **must be renewed**, providing that it continues to fill each of the 6 criteria.
- Since Ramsar COP13, 74 cities from **17 countries** have been officially recognized as "Wetland Cities".

### PARIS AI SUMMIT

Amid concerns over regulating AI without stifling innovation, global leaders will meet in Paris on February 10 for a two-day AI Action Summit.

This builds on the **2023 AI Safety Summit in Bletchley Park**, which focused on "doomsday" concerns and resulted in 25 states, including the US and China, signing the Bletchley Declaration on AI Safety.

Additionally, the **2024 Seoul summit** saw 16 leading AI companies voluntarily commit to transparent AI development.

### **2023 Bletchley Declaration**

- The UK-hosted AI Safety Summit led 28 countries and the EU to adopt the Bletchley Declaration, addressing AI's promises and risks.
- It emphasizes aligning AI with human intent, safeguarding rights, and ensuring safety, ethics, and accountability.
- It highlights civil society's role and developers' responsibility for testing and mitigating AI risks.



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### 2024 AI Seoul Summit

- The 2024 AI Seoul Summit was a two-day event that took place in May 2024.
- The summit was co-hosted by the Republic of Korea and the UK government.
- The summit's goal was to advance global discussions on AI safety, innovation, and inclusivity. The summit confirmed a shared understanding of the opportunities and risks posed by AI. It set minimum guardrails for AI use.
- It established a roadmap for ensuring AI safety.

### About Paris AI Summit

- The Paris AI Summit, an initiative of French President Emmanuel Macron, focuses on global AI governance, innovation, and advancing public interest.
- Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will co-chair the summit and has accepted the invitation to attend.
- **Key Objectives**
  - The summit aims to tackle the concentration of power in the AI market, particularly concerning foundational models controlled by companies like Microsoft, Alphabet, Amazon, and Meta.
- **China's Rapid AI Advancements**
  - China's significant AI progress remains a key topic of concern.
  - Despite US efforts to curtail its advancements, Chinese firms like DeepSeek have demonstrated cost-effective foundational AI models that rival OpenAI's o1 reasoning model in math, coding, and reasoning benchmarks.
  - Similarly, Alibaba released a new AI model, reportedly comparable to OpenAI's GPT-o1 series, showcasing China's competitive edge in AI development.
- **India: Emphasis on Safety and Trust**
  - India advocates for AI to ensure safety, trust, and ethical use, while also recognizing its transformative potential.
  - The government emphasizes addressing the "weaponization" of technologies like social media to create a secure digital landscape.