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## Current Affairs - 01 February 2025

### DEVI AHILYABAI HOLKAR



- Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar (31 May 1725 – 13 August 1795) was the **Holkar Queen** of the **Maratha Malwa kingdom**, India.
- Under her rule Malwa enjoyed relative peace, prosperity, and stability, and her capital, Maheshwar, was turned into an oasis of literary, musical, artistic, and industrial pursuits.

#### • **Military contribution**

- She was military-trained under her father-in-law **Malhar Rao Holkar** and personally led armies into battle.
- She appointed **Tukojirao Holkar** as the Chief of Army.

#### • **Administration**

- She held daily **public audiences** to help redress the problems of the common man.
- She earned a reputation for **administering justice fairly** during her rule, without partiality or partisanship. **Ex:** She sentenced her only son, **found guilty of a capital offense**, to death by being crushed by an elephant.
- She also made some landmark decisions during her reign, including the **removal of traditional law confiscating the property of childless widows**.
- **Promotion of craft:** She established a **textile industry in Maheshwar**, which today is very famous for its Maheshwari sarees.

#### **Cultural contribution**

- She welcomed stalwarts such as Marathi poet Moropant, Shahir Ananta Gandhi, and Sanskrit scholar Khushali Ram into her capital.
- She was a great pioneer and **builder of Hindu temples**.
- She built hundreds of temples and **Dharmashalas throughout India**.



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- Her most notable contribution was the **renovation and repair** of the famous **Kashi Vishwanath Temple in 1780**.
  - She passed away on **August 13, 1795**, at the age of seventy.
  - **Titles:** **John Keay**, the British historian, gave the queen the title of ‘**The Philosopher Queen**’.
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### OCEAN COORDINATION MECHANISM



**Ocean Coordination Mechanism** was conceived under the **10-year CLME+ Strategic Action Program (CLME+ SAP)**, endorsed by countries in the Wider Caribbean in 2014.

- Its purpose is to establish a collaborative governance framework for the **sustainable management of marine resources**.
- **Aim:** To coordinate and streamline actions **addressing critical marine issues** such as sustainable fisheries, ecosystem restoration, pollution control, blue carbon development, marine spatial planning, and the establishment of marine protected areas.
- It solidifies a transformative effort to **enhance integrated ocean governance** in the Wider **Caribbean region**, including the **North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystem**.
- It is designed to foster collaboration among countries, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), and key stakeholders.
- **Funding:** It will receive funding from the **Global Environment Facility (GEF)** through the \$15 million UNDP/GEF PROCARIBE+ Project for the **period 2024–2028**.

**Significance:** The OCM is pivotal in addressing the Ocean-Climate-Biodiversity nexus by facilitating cross-country and cross-institutional collaboration. It ensures the **sustainable development of the blue economy** while prioritizing the needs of the most vulnerable communities.

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### TELECOM DISPUTES SETTLEMENT AND APPELLATE TRIBUNAL



TRAI  
TELECOM DISPUTES SETTLEMENT & APPELLATE TRIBUNAL  
TDSAT

- It was established by amending the **TRAI Act of 1997** in the year **2000**.
- It was set up to **adjudicate disputes and dispose of appeals** with a view to protect the interests of **service providers and consumers** of the telecom sector and to promote and ensure orderly growth of the telecom sector.
- **Composition of TDSAT**
  - It consists of a **Chairperson and two Members** appointed by the Central Government.
- **Eligibility:**
  - **Chairperson:** The **Chairperson** should be or should have been a **Judge of the Supreme Court or the Chief Justice of a High Court**.
  - **Other member:** They should have held the post of **Secretary to the Government of India** or any equivalent post in the Central Government or the State Government for a period of **not less than two years** or a person who is well versed in the field of technology, telecommunication, industry, commerce or administration.
- **Tenure of office:** The Chairperson of the tribunal shall hold office for a term of **maximum four years or till the age of seventy years**, whichever is earlier.
  - Other members hold office for **four years** or till the age **sixty-five years**, whichever is earlier.
- **Powers and Jurisdiction of TDSAT**
  - It exercises jurisdiction over **Telecom, Broadcasting, IT and Airport tariff matters** under the TRAI Act, 1997, the Information Technology Act, 2008 and the Airport Economic Regulatory Authority of India Act, 2008.

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- It exercises **original as well as appellate jurisdiction** in regard to Telecom, Broadcasting and Airport tariff matters.
- In regard to **Cyber matters** the Tribunal exercises **only the appellate jurisdiction**.
- In January 2004, the Government included **broadcasting and cable services** also within the purview of TRAI Act. After coming into force of the relevant provisions of the Finance Act 2017, the jurisdiction of TDSAT stands extended to matters that lay before the Cyber Appellate Tribunal and also the Airport Economic Regulatory Authority Appellate Tribunal.

### WHAT ARE ULTRA-PROCESSED FOODS (UPFS)?



- UPFs refer to **food products** that have been **significantly altered from their original form** through various industrial processes.
- These foods typically contain numerous ingredients that are not commonly used in home cooking, such as **artificial flavors, colors, preservatives, sweeteners, emulsifiers, and other additives** designed to **enhance flavor, texture, and shelf life**.
- Consuming high amounts of UPF has been **linked to chronic health conditions**—cardiovascular disease, obesity, colorectal cancer, among others.

#### Characteristics of UPFS:

- **High levels of added sugar, fat, and salt:** These ingredients are often added to enhance taste and appeal, but they can contribute to various health issues, including obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.
- **Low nutritional value:** Despite being calorie-dense, UPFs generally lack essential nutrients, such as vitamins, minerals, and fiber.
- **Extensive use of additives:** These foods often contain synthetic ingredients that are not typically found in traditional or minimally processed foods.

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- **Highly palatable and convenient:** They are designed to be easy to consume and highly appealing, which can lead to overconsumption.

### List of Foods Classified as UPF:

- According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), UPFs include **commercially produced bread, breakfast cereals**, cakes, chips, biscuits, fries, jams, **sauces, mayonnaise**, commercially produced ice cream, protein packs powders, peanut butter, soy chunks, tofu, **frozen foods with additives**, commercially produced cheese, butter, paneer with additives, meats, **plant-based meats, refined flours of cereals, millets and legumes**, **energy drinks, health drinks added to milk**, beverages, and fruit juices.
  - The group also includes many culinary ingredients such as **cooking oils, refined sugars, salt and spices**, since cosmetic food additives such as artificial colours and emulsifiers are often used in their processing.
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### WHAT ARE MICROPLASTICS?



- Microplastics are **small pieces of plastics**, usually **smaller than 5 mm**.
- They are **persistent, very mobile** and hard to remove from nature.
- There are **two categories** of microplastics: primary and secondary.
- **Primary microplastics** are **tiny particles designed for commercial use**, such as cosmetics, as well as microfibers shed from clothing and other textiles, such as fishing nets.
  - They **enter the environment directly** through any of various channels—for example, product use, unintentional loss from spills during manufacturing or transport, or abrasion during washing.

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- **Secondary microplastics** are particles that result from the breakdown of larger plastic items, such as water bottles.
  - This **breakdown is caused by exposure to environmental factors**, mainly the sun's radiation and ocean waves.

### Impacts:

- Once in the environment, microplastics **do not biodegrade** and tend to **accumulate and persist**.
  - They can be ingested by marine organisms, leading to potential **harm to aquatic life and bioaccumulation along the food chain**.
  - They can also **carry toxic chemicals and pollutants**, posing additional risks to organisms and ecosystems.
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### A NOTE FOR NEW DELHI ON DEALING WITH 'TRUMPERICA'

#### Context

- The **inauguration of Donald Trump as President of the United States** marked a **dramatic shift in American policy**, characterised by sweeping executive orders, stringent immigration measures, aggressive trade policies, and a focus on artificial intelligence (AI).
- While these policies align with Trump's vision of 'America First,' **they have profound implications for global geopolitics, particularly for India**.
- The **trajectory of U.S.-India relations**, which had been on an upward trend for over two decades, **now faces challenges that require careful diplomatic navigation**.

#### Immigration Crackdown and Its Repercussions

- **Mass Deportations and Economic Consequences**
  - Trump's administration has taken a **hardline approach to deporting illegal immigrants**, a move that will affect a significant number of Indians.



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- According to Pew Research estimates, around 725,000 Indians are undocumented in the U.S., making them one of the largest immigrant groups at risk of deportation.
- Additionally, more than 18,000 Indians are currently in detention centres, awaiting removal.
- If the Trump administration escalates deportation flights, as it did in its first term, India will face multiple economic and social challenges.

### Repercussions on India

- **Loss of Remittances**
  - India will lose a substantial source of remittances, as many undocumented immigrants send money back home to support their families.
- **Employment Challenges for Deported Individuals**
  - The return of thousands of deported individuals will add pressure to India's already-strained job market.
- **Economic Effect**
  - Trump's use of economic coercion to enforce compliance on immigration policies is a growing concern.
  - His administration has already demonstrated a willingness to impose heavy tariffs on countries that refuse to accept deported nationals.

### The Way Forward for India to Deal with Trumperica

- While the symbolic aspects of the U.S.-India relationship remain strong, the economic realities suggest a more cautious approach.
- India must engage in proactive diplomacy to mitigate the effects of restrictive immigration policies, protect its trade interests against tariff threats, and prepare for the disruptive impact of AI on its workforce.

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- **Expanding job opportunities at home:** With skilled professionals facing difficulties in the U.S., India must strengthen its startup ecosystem, technology sector, and manufacturing industries to absorb returning talent.
- **Reforming higher education:** India should enhance the quality of STEM education and research opportunities to ensure that students who cannot go abroad still have world-class educational prospects.
- **Strengthening diplomatic efforts:** India must negotiate with the U.S. to secure better visa policies, especially for skilled professionals, students, and family reunifications.

### WHAT IS FINANCIALISATION?



The Economic Survey 2024-25 has warned that excessive financialisation can harm the economy, with potentially severe consequences for a low-middle-income country like India.

- Financialization refers to the **increasing influence of financial motives, markets, instruments, actors, and institutions in both domestic and international economies.**
- It involves the **growing dominance of finance tools in firm management, the impact of financial markets on decision-making,** and the significance of the global financial system in **capital distribution worldwide.**
- It represents the **shift from traditional industrial or productive activities** (like manufacturing) **to financial activities** that involve the trading, management, and speculation of financial assets.
- Financialization **transforms the functioning of the economic system at both the macro and micro levels.**

Its **principal impacts** are

- Elevate the significance of the financial sector relative to the real sector;
- **Transfer income from the real sector to the financial sector;**





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- **Increase income inequality** and contribute to **wage stagnation**.
  - Financialization operates through three different conduits: changes in the structure and operation of financial markets, changes in the behavior of non-financial corporations, and changes in economic policy.
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