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First Edition: January 2026

Printed and published by PrepAlpine

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS DATED 26.01.2026

GS Paper II: Polity

1. Governor's Address to the State Legislature: Constitutional Scheme and Emerging Issues

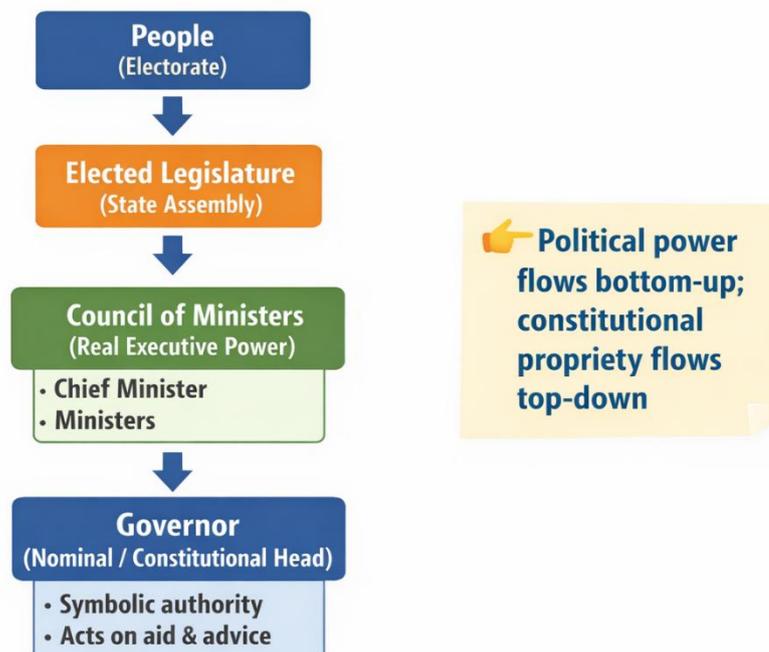
a. Governor in the Constitutional Framework

India follows a parliamentary system of government at both the Union and State levels. Under this system, real executive power vests in the Council of Ministers, headed by the Prime Minister at the Union level and the Chief Minister at the State level. The President and the Governor function as constitutional or nominal heads, symbolising the authority of the State rather than exercising political power.

This arrangement reflects a foundational principle of parliamentary democracy: political authority flows from the elected legislature, while constitutional heads ensure continuity, legality, and constitutional propriety.

Accordingly, the Governor is expected to act strictly within constitutional limits and almost invariably on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers. The Governor's Address to the State Legislature must therefore be understood within this broader constitutional framework of limited discretion and democratic accountability.

Governor in India's Parliamentary System



b. Nature and Purpose of the Governor's Address

The Governor's Address is a formal constitutional communication through which the policies, priorities, and legislative agenda of the elected State government are placed before the legislature.

Its purpose is threefold:

Informative Function

- It appraises legislators of the government’s proposed policies and programmes for the coming year or term.

Deliberative Function

- It provides a structured basis for debate through the Motion of Thanks, allowing members to scrutinise, criticise, or endorse government commitments.

Accountability Function

- It reinforces the principle of executive responsibility to the legislature, which lies at the heart of parliamentary governance.

Crucially, the address does not reflect the personal views of the Governor. In constitutional substance, it is the statement of the elected government, delivered through the Governor as a constitutional formality.

c. Constitutional Provisions Governing the Address

The Constitution deals with the Governor’s Address primarily under Articles 175 and 176, each serving a distinct purpose.

i. Article 175: Discretionary Address

Article 175 empowers the Governor to address:

- The Legislative Assembly, or
- Both Houses in States with bicameral legislatures

Such an address may be delivered at any time.

However, this provision:

- Is discretionary, not mandatory
- Is rarely invoked in practice
- Does not relate to the annual or post-election policy statement

Therefore, Article 175 must not be confused with the mandatory constitutional address under Article 176.

ii. Article 176: Mandatory Address

Article 176 occupies a central position in the constitutional scheme. It mandates that the Governor shall address the State Legislature:

- At the commencement of the first session after a general election to the Legislative Assembly
- At the commencement of the first session of every calendar year

The use of the word “shall” makes this obligation constitutionally binding.

The address under Article 176:

- Is prepared and approved by the Council of Ministers
- Is formally delivered by the Governor
- Is followed by a Motion of Thanks, which opens the government’s policies to legislative debate

This process converts the Address into a vital instrument of democratic accountability and legislative oversight.

d. Constitutional Convention Governing the Address

Over decades of parliamentary practice, a clear convention has evolved regarding the Governor's Address.

Under this convention:

Nature of the Role

- The Governor reads the address exactly as approved by the Council of Ministers

Limits on Intervention

- The Governor does not add, omit, or modify any portion
- Personal disagreement with policy is constitutionally irrelevant

Forum for Disagreement

- Policy disagreements are resolved within the legislature, not by the Governor

This convention safeguards:

- The political neutrality of the Governor
- Respect for the electoral mandate
- The smooth functioning of parliamentary democracy

e. Judicial Interpretation and Limits on the Governor

i. Shamsher Singh v. State of Punjab (1974)

The Supreme Court held that:

- The Governor is a constitutional head, not an alternative executive authority
- Executive powers must be exercised on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers, except in narrowly defined situations
- Personal discretion is exceptional and cannot become the norm

This reasoning applies squarely to the Governor's role under Article 176.

ii. Nabam Rebia v. Deputy Speaker (2016)

The Court further clarified that:

- The Governor must not act in a manner that destabilises an elected government
- Constitutional powers must be exercised with restraint, neutrality, and constitutional morality

Any conduct that substitutes personal judgment for elected authority is constitutionally impermissible.

f. Emerging Deviations in Practice

In recent years, particularly in certain Opposition-ruled States, the following deviations have been observed:

- Failure to deliver the mandatory address
- Selective omission of cabinet-approved portions
- Refusal to read the approved text in full
- Substitution of the address with personal remarks or commentary

These actions represent departures from both constitutional text and settled conventions.

g. Constitutional Concerns Raised by Such Deviations

These practices are constitutionally problematic for multiple reasons:

Violation of Article 176

- The duty to address the legislature is mandatory, leaving no scope for refusal

Breach of Parliamentary Principle

- The Governor has no veto or policy-filtering role at this stage

Federal Implications

- Such conduct weakens federal balance
- It undermines executive accountability to the legislature
- It politicises a constitutionally neutral office

If normalised, these deviations risk converting the Governor into a political actor, contrary to constitutional design.

h. Governor's Oath and Constitutional Morality

Under Article 159, the Governor swears to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution and the law.

Disregarding mandatory duties or settled conventions:

- Violates the spirit of the oath
- Erodes trust between constitutional institutions
- Breaches the principle of constitutional morality, which demands fidelity not only to the text but also to constitutional values

i. Observations of Reform Commissions

Sarkaria Commission (1988)

The Commission emphasised that the Governor must:

- Act strictly as a constitutional head
- Maintain political neutrality
- Respect constitutional conventions
- Promote cooperative federalism

Punchhi Commission (2010)

The Commission recommended:

- Consultation with the Chief Minister in Governor's appointment
- A restrained and non-confrontational role within the federal structure

These recommendations aim to restore trust and institutional harmony.

j. Way Forward

A sustainable resolution lies in constitutional discipline, not political confrontation. This requires:

- Strict adherence to Article 176
- Faithful implementation of Supreme Court judgments
- Revival and respect for constitutional conventions
- Serious consideration of reform commission recommendations

Such measures are essential for strengthening cooperative federalism and democratic institutions.

Conclusion

The Governor's Address is a constitutional instrument of democratic accountability, not a platform for individual discretion. Its legitimacy flows from the electoral mandate, and its effectiveness depends on neutrality, restraint, and constitutional fidelity.

Preserving the sanctity of this institution is indispensable for the health of India's federal and parliamentary democracy.

GS Paper II: International Relations

2. India-UAE Relations: Stability, Substance and Strategic Partnership

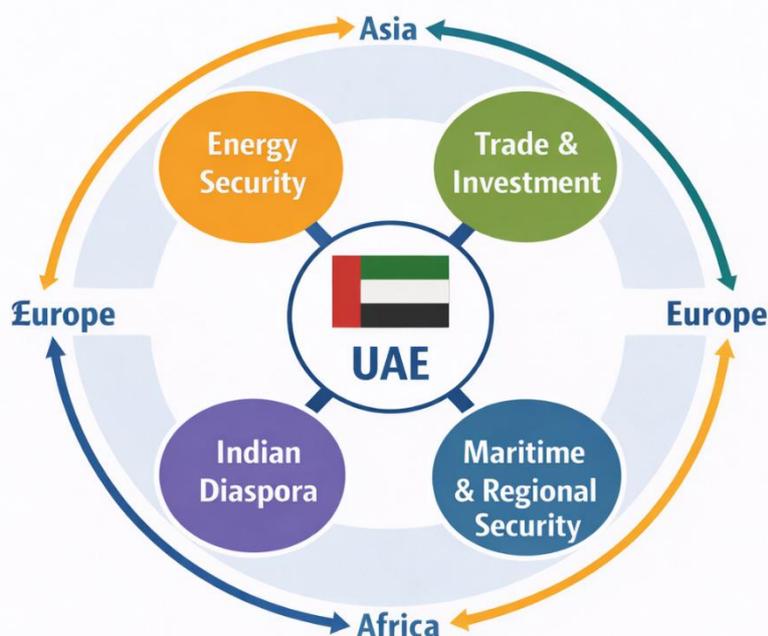
a. Place of the UAE in India's West Asia Policy

West Asia occupies a position of enduring strategic importance in India's foreign policy due to its centrality to energy security, expanding trade and investment linkages, the presence of a large Indian diaspora, and its influence over regional and maritime security dynamics.

Within this region, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) holds a particularly significant place. Unlike several other West Asian states, the UAE combines economic strength with political stability, follows a relatively autonomous and pragmatic foreign policy, and functions as a major logistics, financial, and connectivity hub linking Asia, Africa, and Europe.

As a result, India-UAE relations have evolved into one of India's most stable, dependable, and multi-dimensional partnerships in West Asia, forming a core pillar of India's regional engagement.

UAE: A Pillar of India's West Asia Policy



b. Core Character of India-UAE Relations

The bilateral relationship is defined by three interlinked characteristics.

Stability

- Cooperation has remained consistent despite changes in political leadership, regional conflicts, and global economic uncertainty
- This stability is rooted in institutional mechanisms, not personality-driven diplomacy

Depth and Substance

- Engagement spans trade, energy, defence, infrastructure, technology, and finance
- The relationship goes far beyond symbolic or episodic cooperation

Strategic Orientation

- Focus on long-term regional stability and economic resilience
- Emphasis on shared security concerns rather than short-term transactional gains

c. Evolution of Bilateral Engagement

In its earlier phase, India–UAE relations were largely economic and community-centric.

Initial Phase

- Oil and gas trade
- Commercial activity centred on Dubai
- Welfare of the Indian diaspora in the Gulf

Contemporary Phase

- Expansion into defence cooperation
- Infrastructure development and investment
- Advanced technology, energy transition, and regional connectivity

This transformation reflects:

- India's growing economic and strategic profile
- The UAE's ambition to emerge as a global economic and strategic hub

The partnership has thus shifted from a limited transactional relationship to a comprehensive strategic partnership.

d. Political and Strategic Convergence

India and the UAE share convergence on key political principles that provide a stable normative foundation for cooperation.

Shared Political Outlook

- Respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity
- Non-interference in internal affairs

Counter-Terrorism Cooperation

- Firm opposition to terrorism in all its forms
- Rejection of state support, financing, or safe havens for terrorist groups

This shared stance strengthens mutual trust and directly advances India's security interests in West Asia and beyond.

e. Defence and Security Cooperation

Defence cooperation has gained prominence amid changing security dynamics in West Asia and the growing strategic importance of the Indian Ocean–Gulf region.

Areas of Cooperation

- Regular defence dialogues
- Joint training and capacity-building initiatives
- Emerging cooperation in defence technology and manufacturing

Maritime Security

- Shared interest in secure sea lanes
- Protection of critical energy and trade routes

The UAE is increasingly emerging as one of India's most important defence partners in the Gulf region, reflecting the maturity of the strategic relationship.

f. Trade and Economic Relations

The UAE is among India's largest trading partners, with bilateral trade covering a wide range of sectors.

Trade Composition

- Petroleum products
- Gems and jewellery
- Engineering goods and food products
- Expanding range of manufactured items

Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)

- Provides a predictable, rules-based trade framework
- Facilitates market access and supply-chain integration
- Enhances ease of doing business

For India, CEPA supports export diversification, reduces exposure to global trade disruptions, and builds long-term business confidence.

g. Investment and Infrastructure Cooperation

Investment cooperation represents one of the most strategic dimensions of the relationship.

Role of UAE Capital

- Sovereign wealth funds as sources of long-term, patient capital
- Focus on productive and infrastructure-oriented investments

Key Sectors

- Ports and logistics
- Airports and industrial corridors
- Smart cities and energy infrastructure

These investments align with India's developmental priorities and indicate a partnership based on strategic trust, not short-term financial returns.

h. Logistics, Connectivity and Trade Facilitation

Both countries are working to enhance connectivity and logistics efficiency.

Complementary Strengths

- UAE as a global logistics and trans-shipment hub
- India as a major production and consumption economy

Key Initiatives

- Trade facilitation centres for Indian exporters
- Digital platforms for logistics management
- Connectivity projects linking India with West Asia, Africa, and Europe

These initiatives integrate bilateral ties into broader regional and global trade networks.

i. Energy and Clean Energy Cooperation

Energy remains a central pillar of India-UAE relations.

Conventional Energy

- Long-term oil and LNG supply arrangements
- Contribution to India's energy security and price stability

Clean and Nuclear Energy

- Cooperation in civil nuclear energy
- Advanced reactor technology and safety practices
- Collaboration in clean and renewable energy

This supports India's transition towards a diversified and low-carbon energy mix.

j. Technology, Finance and Emerging Areas

The relationship is expanding into high-growth and future-oriented domains.

Technology Cooperation

- Artificial intelligence
- Digital infrastructure
- Advanced computing

Financial Integration

- Expansion of UAE financial institutions in India
- Support for international financial centres
- Improved access to global capital for Indian firms

These areas enhance economic resilience and long-term competitiveness.

k. Strategic Significance for India

The India-UAE partnership:

- Enhances India's influence in West Asia
- Supports India's pursuit of strategic autonomy
- Provides economic and energy resilience

Unlike rigid alliance structures, the partnership allows India to engage with multiple regional actors while avoiding entanglement in regional rivalries. It fits well with India's approach of balanced, issue-based cooperation.

Conclusion

India-UAE relations represent a model of stable, pragmatic, and forward-looking partnership in West Asia. Anchored in mutual trust and shared interests, the relationship combines economic depth, strategic cooperation, and regional connectivity.

In a region often marked by volatility, the India-UAE partnership stands out as a reliable and enduring pillar of India's West Asia strategy, directly supporting India's long-term economic and strategic objectives.

Reader's Note — About This Current Affairs Compilation

Dear Aspirant,

This document is part of the PrepAlpine Current Affairs Series — designed to bring clarity, structure, and precision to your daily UPSC learning.

While every effort has been made to balance depth with brevity, please keep the following in mind:

1. Orientation & Purpose

This compilation is curated primarily from the UPSC Mains perspective — with emphasis on conceptual clarity, analytical depth, and interlinkages across GS papers.

However, the PrepAlpine team is simultaneously developing a dedicated Prelims-focused Current Affairs Series, designed for:

- factual coverage
- data recall
- Prelims-style MCQs
- objective pattern analysis

This Prelims Edition will be released separately as a standalone publication.

2. Content Length

Some sections may feel shorter or longer depending on topic relevance and news density. To fit your personal preference, you may freely resize or summarize sections using any LLM tool (ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, etc.) at your convenience.

3. Format Flexibility

The formatting combines:

- paragraphs
- lists
- tables
- visual cues

—all optimised for retention.

If you prefer a specific style (lists → paras, paras → tables, etc.), feel free to convert using any free LLM.

4. Monthly Current Affairs Release

The complete Monthly Current Affairs Module will be released soon, optimized to a compact 100–150 pages — comprehensive yet concise, exam-ready, and revision-efficient.

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