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1. National Health Authority Releases Framework for Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission 2.0, Source: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Context: The National Health Authority (NHA) today released the final framework for the second phase of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM 2.0). The new phase will focus on driving adoption of Ayushman Bharat Health Accounts (ABHA) to 80% of the population by 2028 and will introduce AI-based tools for preliminary diagnosis and clinical decision support for primary healthcare workers.



Significance:

- ABDM 2.0 aims to move beyond creating digital infrastructure to actively using it to improve health outcomes.
- The integration of AI tools at the primary healthcare level could help in the early detection of diseases and reduce the burden on specialists.
- The emphasis on linking ABHA with public health insurance schemes will streamline claim processing and reduce fraud.
- This represents a strategic shift towards a more integrated, proactive, and data-driven public health system.



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Analysis:

- The biggest challenge for ABDM 2.0 will be ensuring data privacy and security, especially with the introduction of AI.
- The framework proposes a 'federated architecture' where data remains with the respective hospitals and a consent-based sharing mechanism, but its implementation will be complex.
- Another hurdle is the digital divide; ensuring that the benefits reach the rural and elderly population, who may lack digital literacy or access, will require significant on-ground efforts and an assisted-mode service delivery model.
- Interoperability between various government and private healthcare IT systems remains a work in progress.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 2: Social Justice - Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources; Government policies and interventions.



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2. India-UK FTA: Final Round of Talks Begins in London Amidst Sticking Points

Source: The Hindu

Context: The 18th and what is being billed as the "final" round of negotiations for the much-anticipated India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) began in London today. India's Commerce Minister is leading the delegation, indicating a high-level political push to conclude the deal, which has been under negotiation for over three years.



Significance:

- A successful FTA would be a major economic and diplomatic victory for both nations.
- For India, it would provide enhanced market access for its textiles, pharmaceuticals, and skilled professionals.
- For the UK, post-Brexit, it offers a crucial trade alliance with one of the world's fastest-growing major economies, with potential gains for its Scotch whisky, automotive, and financial services sectors.



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Analysis:

- Despite the political will, significant differences remain. Key sticking points include the UK's demand for sharp tariff cuts on automobiles and Scotch whisky, which India is resisting to protect its domestic industry.
- India, on the other hand, is pushing for a more liberal visa regime for its students and professionals, a politically sensitive issue in the UK.
- The chapter on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), particularly concerning data exclusivity for pharmaceuticals, is another area of contention.
- Reaching a "win-win" consensus will require both sides to show flexibility and make politically difficult compromises in these final stages.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 2: International Relations - Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.



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3. Smart Cities Mission 2.0 to Focus on 500 Tier-2 and Tier-3 Cities

Source: Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

Context: The Union Cabinet has approved the launch of the Smart Cities Mission 2.0, which will extend the program to 500 new Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities across the country. The second phase, with an initial outlay of ₹2 lakh crore over five years, will focus on sustainable development, climate resilience, and improving the "ease of living" in smaller urban centres.



Significance:

- The launch of SCM 2.0 signifies a strategic shift in India's urban development policy.
- While the first phase focused on 100 larger cities, the new phase acknowledges the rapid and often unplanned growth occurring in smaller cities.
- By focusing on these emerging economic hubs, the government aims to create a more balanced urban growth model and reduce the migratory pressure on megacities.



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Analysis:

- The lessons learned from the first phase will be crucial. SCM 1.0 faced challenges related to funding, the capacity of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), and citizen participation. SCM 2.0 aims to address this with a more flexible funding model and a strong emphasis on capacity building at the municipal level.
- The focus on climate resilience is particularly important, as many of these smaller cities are highly vulnerable to extreme weather events.
- The success of the mission will hinge on the ability of state governments and ULBs to create bankable projects and effectively utilize the allocated funds.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 1: Urbanization - Urbanization, its problems and their remedies.

GS Paper 2: Governance - Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors.

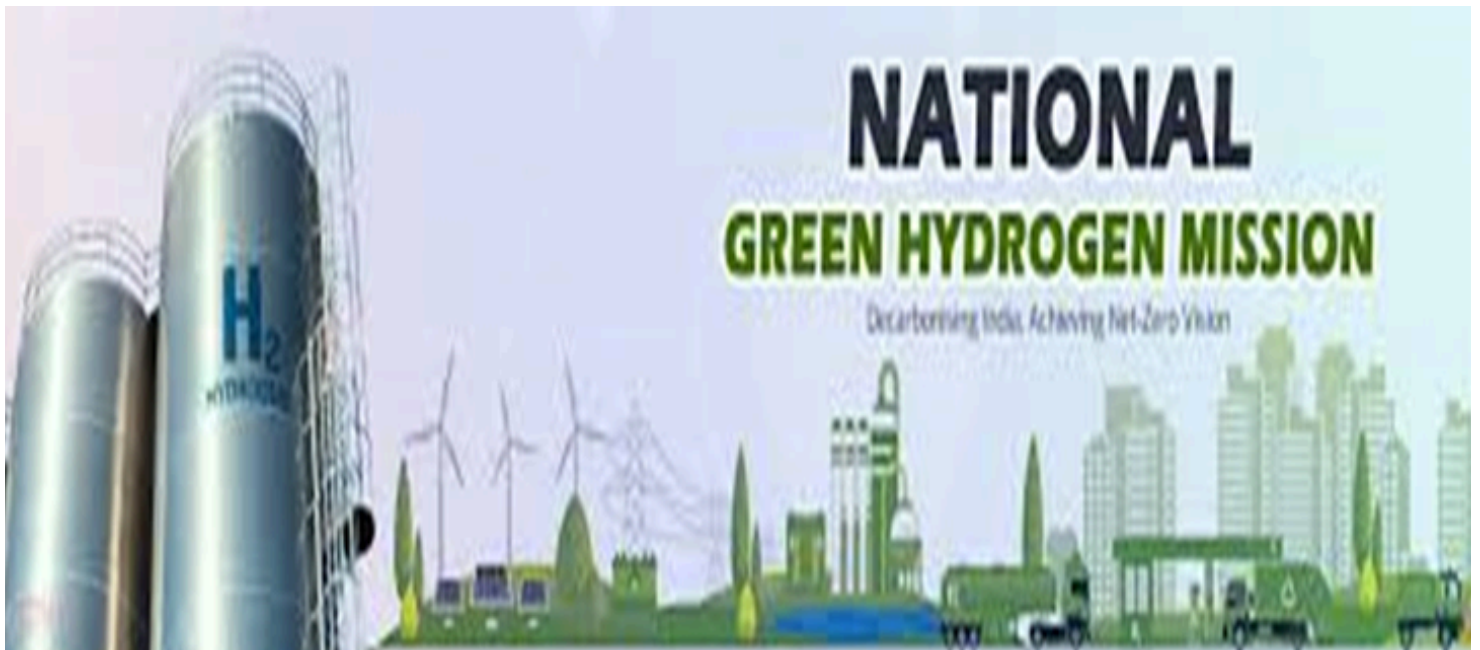


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4. Progress on National Mission on Green Hydrogen Reviewed

Source: PIB (Ministry of New and Renewable Energy)

Context: The Prime Minister's Office today held a high-level meeting to review the progress of the National Green Hydrogen Mission. The review noted that India is on track to achieve its initial target of 5 MMT (Million Metric Tonnes) per annum of green hydrogen production capacity by 2030, with several large-scale production facilities now under construction in states like Gujarat and Odisha.



Significance:

- The progress of this mission is vital for India's long-term energy security and climate goals. Green hydrogen is seen as a key decarbonisation agent for hard-to-abate sectors like steel, cement, and heavy transport.
- Achieving self-sufficiency in green hydrogen will drastically reduce India's import bill for fossil fuels and position it as a potential global hub for hydrogen production and export.



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Analysis:

- While production capacity is growing, the key challenge remains the high cost of green hydrogen compared to conventional 'grey' hydrogen produced from natural gas.
- The review focused on strategies to bring down the cost, including reducing the cost of electrolyzers through the PLI scheme, providing access to low-cost renewable energy, and developing a robust domestic supply chain.
- Creating demand by mandating green hydrogen consumption in certain industries (e.g., fertilizers, refineries) is the next critical policy step.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 3: Economy & Environment - Infrastructure: Energy; Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation.



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5. Parliamentary Panel Calls for Comprehensive Review of National Education Policy 2020 Implementation, Source: The Hindu

Context: The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports, in its report tabled today, has called for a comprehensive, independent review of the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The panel highlighted significant disparities among states in adopting the new curricular frameworks and language policies.



Significance:

- Five years after the NEP was announced, this report provides a critical reality check.
- It underscores the challenges in translating a visionary policy document into on-ground action across a diverse country.
- The committee's recommendations for a mid-course correction and greater financial support from the Centre to states could influence the future trajectory of educational reforms in India.



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Analysis:

- The report points to several bottlenecks: a severe shortage of trained teachers, inadequate digital infrastructure in rural schools, and a lack of consensus on the three-language formula in several states.
- The ambitious goal of raising public spending on education to 6% of GDP remains elusive.
- The panel has urged the government to create a clear roadmap with measurable outcomes and timelines, moving beyond policy pronouncements to focus on robust implementation and monitoring mechanisms.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 2: Social Justice - Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.



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6. Supreme Court Refers Pleas Challenging Places of Worship Act, 1991 to a 7-Judge Bench, Source: The Indian Express

Context: A 5-judge Constitution bench of the Supreme Court today referred a batch of petitions challenging the constitutional validity of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, to a larger 7-judge bench. The court noted that the matter involves substantial questions of law concerning secularism, judicial review, and the basic structure of the Constitution.



Significance:

- This is a major legal development with profound socio-political implications.
- The 1991 Act freezes the religious character of all places of worship as they existed on August 15, 1947 (with the Ram Janmabhoomi site being the only exception).
- The petitions argue that the Act bars judicial remedy for communities to reclaim their places of worship, which they allege were destroyed or converted in the past.
- The outcome of this case could redefine the legal framework governing religious disputes in India.



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Analysis:

- The decision to refer the case to a larger bench indicates the Supreme Court's view of the gravity and complexity of the issue.
- The core legal question is whether the Act violates the fundamental rights to equality and religion, and whether it infringes upon the basic structure of the Constitution by curtailing the power of judicial review.
- The court will have to balance the principles of secularism and historical justice.
- The hearing and the eventual judgment will be closely watched, as it has the potential to either settle or reignite several long-standing religious disputes across the country.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

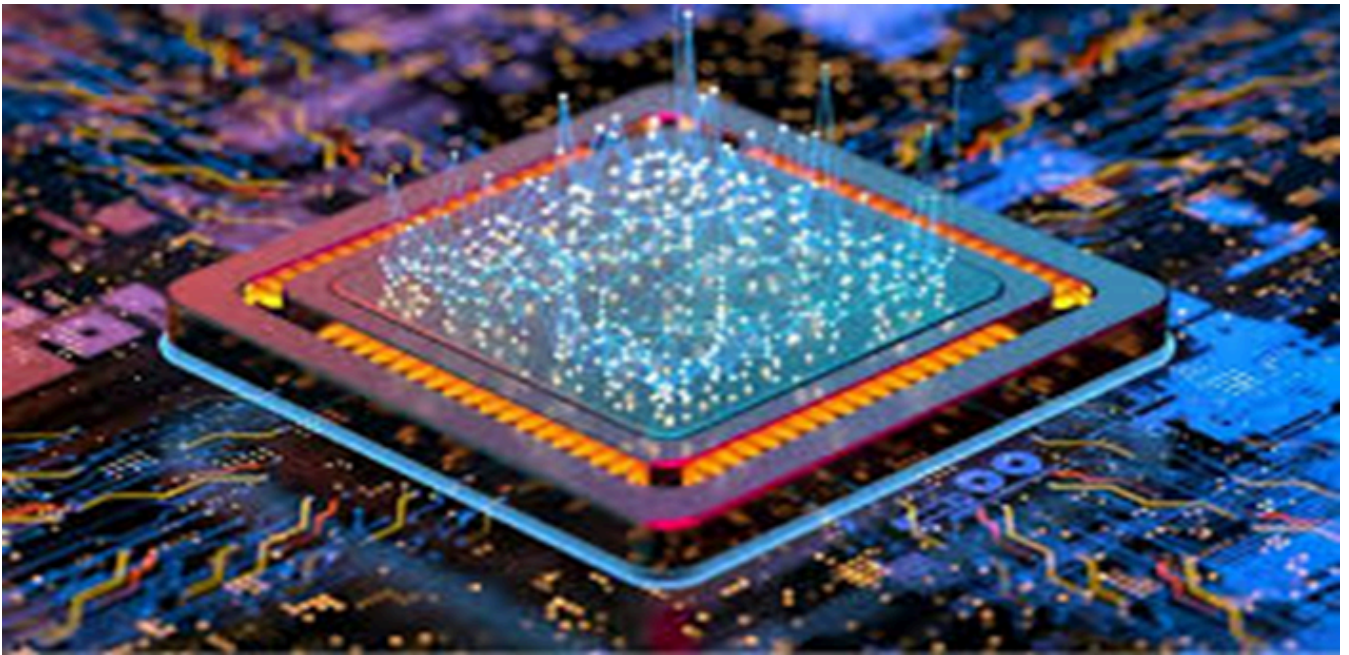
GS Paper 2: Polity - Indian Constitution—historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure; Structure, organization and functioning of the Judiciary.



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7. India's Semiconductor Mission: First Fab Unit in Gujarat to Begin Commercial Production by Q2 2026, Source: Economic Times

Context: The Union Minister for Electronics and IT announced today that construction of India's first large-scale semiconductor fabrication plant in Dholera, Gujarat, is proceeding ahead of schedule. The plant, a joint venture between an Indian conglomerate and a Taiwanese tech firm, is expected to commence commercial production of 40nm and 28nm nodes by the second quarter of 2026.



Significance:

- This marks a critical turning point in India's quest for semiconductor self-reliance.
- The successful establishment of a commercial fab unit will reduce India's heavy dependence on imports for critical electronic components, bolstering its economic and national security.
- It will create a virtuous cycle, attracting further investment in the semiconductor ecosystem, including in design, assembly, and testing (ATMP) units.



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Analysis:

- While this is a significant achievement, India still has a long way to go. The initial production will be in mature nodes (28nm and above), not the cutting-edge nodes used in high-end smartphones and processors.
- The challenge is to move up the value chain. This requires sustained policy support, massive investment, and, most importantly, the development of a highly skilled talent pool.
- The government's focus on creating a curriculum and training centres for semiconductor engineering will be crucial for the long-term success of the India Semiconductor Mission.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 3: Economy & S&T - Effects of liberalization on the economy; Indigenization of technology and developing new technology; Infrastructure.



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8. Centre Launches 'PM Matsya Kisan Samriddhi Yojana'

Source: PIB (Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying)

Context: The government today launched a new sub-scheme under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) called the 'PM Matsya Kisan Samriddhi Yojana'. This scheme is specifically designed to support small and marginal fish farmers and fish workers by providing them with formal credit, insurance, and support for technology adoption.



Significance:

- This scheme aims to address the key vulnerabilities of the small-scale fisheries sector, which contributes significantly to production but often remains outside the formal financial system.
- By providing targeted support, the government hopes to boost productivity, reduce post-harvest losses, and improve the livelihoods of millions of fishers, thereby furthering the goals of the Blue Revolution.



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Analysis:

- The success of the scheme will depend on its last-mile delivery.
- Reaching millions of dispersed fish farmers and workers with formal credit requires close coordination between the fisheries department and banking institutions like NABARD and RRBs.
- The insurance component is crucial, as fish farmers are highly vulnerable to diseases and climate-related shocks.
- Integrating technology, such as cage culture and biofloc farming, at the small-scale level will require extensive training and extension services.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 3: Indian Economy - Economics of animal-rearing; Food processing and related industries in India- scope and significance, location, upstream and downstream requirements, supply chain management.



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9. Measles-Rubella Outbreak in Four States; Health Ministry Rushes Central Teams, Source: Hindustan Times

Context: The Union Health Ministry has rushed high-level multi-disciplinary teams to four states—Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam, and Nagaland—following a significant outbreak of Measles and Rubella cases. The outbreaks have been linked to low vaccination coverage, particularly a drop in the uptake of the second dose of the MR vaccine in several districts.



Significance:

- The outbreak is a setback to India's goal of eliminating Measles and Rubella by 2026.
- It highlights persistent gaps in routine immunization coverage, which were exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic and have not fully recovered in some pockets.
- It serves as a stark reminder that vaccine-preventable diseases can re-emerge quickly if immunization efforts falter.



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Analysis:

- The problem is multi-faceted, involving vaccine hesitancy, misinformation, and logistical challenges in reaching remote populations.
- The central teams are tasked with assisting state health authorities in outbreak investigation, strengthening surveillance, and launching catch-up vaccination drives.
- The focus will be on community engagement and building trust to counter misinformation.
- The outbreak underscores the critical need for a robust, real-time immunization data monitoring system to quickly identify and address gaps in vaccine coverage before they lead to large-scale outbreaks.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 2: Social Justice - Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health.



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10. National E-waste Policy 2.0: Draft Proposes 'Right to Repair' Framework

Source: The Indian Express

Context: The Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has released the draft National E-waste Policy 2.0 for public comments. A key and novel feature of the draft policy is the introduction of a "Right to Repair" framework, which would mandate manufacturers of electronic goods to provide consumers and third-party repairers with access to spare parts, tools, and diagnostic information.



Significance:

- The introduction of a 'Right to Repair' is a revolutionary step for consumer rights and environmental sustainability in India.
- It aims to counter the culture of "planned obsolescence," extend the life of electronic devices, and reduce the generation of electronic waste—the fastest-growing waste stream in the country.
- This can also create a new ecosystem of local repair jobs.



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Analysis:

- The policy will face strong resistance from large electronics manufacturers, who often rely on proprietary parts and authorized service networks as a revenue stream.
- They are likely to raise concerns about safety, quality control, and intellectual property rights.
- The government will need to create a robust regulatory framework that balances consumer rights with manufacturers' concerns.
- The success of the policy will also depend on creating standards for repair quality and ensuring that the framework doesn't lead to a proliferation of unsafe or substandard repairs.
- This policy, if enacted, could fundamentally change our relationship with the electronic devices we use daily.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 3: Environment & Economy - Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment; Indigenization of technology.

GS Paper 4: Ethics - Corporate Governance (relevance of consumer rights).