

05 July 2025

1. Centre Releases ‘National Mission for Foundational Literacy and Numeracy’ Five-Year Progress Report, Source: Ministry of Education

Context: The Ministry of Education today released a comprehensive five-year progress report on the 'National Mission for Foundational Literacy and Numeracy' (FLN), a cornerstone of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The report indicates significant, albeit uneven, progress across states in achieving the goal of universal foundational literacy and numeracy for all children up to Grade 3 by 2027. According to the report, the national average for Grade 3 students meeting the FLN benchmarks has improved from 35% in 2021 to 55% in 2025.



Analysis

- The dissenting opinion, however, argued that Article 44 (Directive Principles) provides a clear mandate for the state to secure a UCC and that individual rights must be balanced with the constitutional goal of fostering national integration and gender justice.
- The minority judges opined that personal laws are not immune to legislative reform.
- Citing the complexity and profound constitutional questions involved, the bench has referred the matter to a larger nine-judge bench for a more definitive pronouncement on the scope and limitations of a national UCC.
- The decision has been cautiously welcomed by legal experts, who see it as a move to prevent judicial overreach while reminding the legislature of its constitutional obligations.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 2: Indian Constitution—historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions, and basic structure. Separation of powers between various organs. Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges, and issues arising out of these.

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2. Government Achieves 70% of FY26 Disinvestment Target with Strategic Sale of BEML, Source: Hindustan Times

Context: The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) announced today that the government has successfully completed the strategic sale of its 26% stake in defence PSU, BEML Ltd. (formerly Bharat Earth Movers Limited). The stake was acquired by a consortium led by a prominent Indian industrial house for approximately ₹6,500 crore. With this transaction, the government has realized ₹42,000 crore from disinvestment in the first quarter of FY 2025-26, achieving 70% of its ambitious annual target of ₹60,000 crore.



Analysis

- This move is part of the government's broader policy to privatize non-strategic PSUs and unlock their value, while using the proceeds to fund social sector schemes and reduce fiscal deficit.
- The sale of BEML, which manufactures a diverse range of heavy earth-moving equipment and defence vehicles, is considered significant as it signals the government's commitment to strategic reforms even in sensitive sectors.
- The Finance Ministry stated that the new management is expected to bring in technological expertise and operational efficiencies, boosting BEML's competitiveness in both domestic and international markets.
- The deal is expected to provide a major boost to investor sentiment regarding the government's privatization pipeline.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 3 (Indian Economy): Mobilization of resources; Government Budgeting; Investment models.

05 July 2025

3. Delhi-Varanasi High-Speed Rail Corridor: Land Acquisition Crosses 80% Mark

Source: Hindustan Times

Context: The National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) has announced that land acquisition for the ambitious 865-km Delhi-Varanasi High-Speed Rail (DVHSR) corridor has crossed the 80% milestone. Officials confirmed that the acquisition is nearly complete in Uttar Pradesh, with efforts being expedited in the National Capital Region. This progress paves the way for the initiation of civil construction tenders for the main line later this year.



Analysis

- The DVHSR project, part of the National Infrastructure Pipeline, aims to connect the national capital with the spiritual city of Varanasi in just over three hours, with trains running at a maximum speed of 320 km/h.
- The corridor will pass through major cities like Noida, Agra, Lucknow, and Prayagraj, significantly boosting economic activity and tourism in the entire belt.
- The project is being developed using indigenous technology to a large extent, in line with the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative, unlike the Mumbai-Ahmedabad corridor, which is based on Japanese Shinkansen technology.
- The completion of this project is expected to be a game-changer for transportation infrastructure in North India, providing a fast, safe, and green alternative to air and road travel.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 3: Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways, etc.

05 July 2025

4. India and Bangladesh Inaugurate Joint River Management and Data Sharing Centre, Source: The Hindu

Context: In a significant step towards strengthening bilateral ties, the Prime Ministers of India and Bangladesh today virtually inaugurated the 'Ganga-Brahmaputra Joint River Management and Data Sharing Centre' in Dhaka. This state-of-the-art facility will serve as the nodal agency for real-time data sharing on water flow, silt deposition, and pollution levels for over 54 transboundary rivers, including the Teesta. The centre aims to enhance cooperation in flood forecasting, sustainable water resource management, and navigation.



Analysis

- The establishment of this centre was a key outcome of the bilateral summit held last year and is seen as a major confidence-building measure, especially in the context of the long-pending Teesta water-sharing agreement.
- India's External Affairs Minister, present at the inauguration in Dhaka, stated that the centre embodies the spirit of "cooperative federalism and neighbourhood first," promoting a science-based approach to a historically sensitive issue.
- This initiative is expected to mitigate the impact of floods in both countries, improve irrigation planning for millions of farmers, and provide a structured platform for resolving water-related disputes, further deepening the strategic partnership between New Delhi and Dhaka.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 2 (International Relations): India and its neighborhood- relations; Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

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5. India Abstains on UNSC Resolution on 'Climate Security', Calls for Differentiated Responsibilities, Source: Indian Express

Context: India yesterday abstained from voting on a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution that sought to formally link climate change to international peace and security. The resolution, which was ultimately vetoed by Russia, was co-sponsored by several Western nations and aimed to empower the UNSC to intervene in situations where climate change is deemed a "threat multiplier."



Analysis

- India's Permanent Representative to the UN, in her explanation of the vote, reiterated New Delhi's long-standing position that the UNSC is not the appropriate forum to discuss climate change.
- She argued that such a move would "securitize" a development issue and shift the focus away from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which is the primary and most inclusive platform for climate action.
- India contended that the resolution could create a pretext for developed countries to interfere in the domestic policies of developing nations, undermining the principles of 'Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities' (CBDR-RC).
- India's stance highlights the persistent divide between developed and developing countries on how to frame and address the global climate crisis.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 2 (International Relations): Important International institutions, agencies, and fora- their structure, mandate.

GS Paper 3 (Environment): Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation; Climate Change.

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6. G20 Finance Ministers' Meet: India Pushes for Global Framework on Crypto Asset Regulation, Source: Economic Times

Context: At the ongoing G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, India has strongly advocated for the swift implementation of a coordinated global framework for regulating crypto assets. The Indian delegation, led by the Finance Minister, presented a paper highlighting the macroeconomic and financial stability risks posed by the volatile and speculative nature of unbacked crypto assets.



Analysis

- Building on the consensus achieved during its own G20 presidency in 2023, India urged member nations to move beyond discussion and towards concrete action based on the IMF-FSB Synthesis Paper.
- The key proposals include mandatory information sharing between jurisdictions to combat money laundering and terror financing, a common global standard for classifying crypto assets, and robust investor protection norms.
- While major economies like the US and EU acknowledged the need for regulation, disagreements persist on the degree of stringency, with some favouring a more innovation-friendly approach.
- India's persistent push underscores its cautious stance on private cryptocurrencies and its preference for a globally harmonized regulatory landscape to prevent regulatory arbitrage.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 2 (International Relations): Bilateral, regional, and global groupings and agreements involving India.

GS Paper 3 (Indian Economy/S&T): Challenges to internal security through communication networks; Awareness in the fields of IT.

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7. India-UAE CEPA: Bilateral Trade Crosses \$100 Billion Mark in Second Year

Source: Hindustan Times

Context: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry today released data showing that bilateral trade between India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has surpassed the \$100 billion mark for the fiscal year 2024-25. This significant achievement comes just two years after the implementation of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in May 2022. The trade figure represents a nearly 20% increase over the previous fiscal year.



Analysis

- The CEPA, a landmark trade agreement, has been instrumental in this growth by providing preferential market access for over 90% of tariff lines.
- Indian exports of gems and jewellery, engineering goods, pharmaceuticals, and agricultural products have seen a substantial surge.
- Simultaneously, the UAE has solidified its position as one of India's top sources for crude oil and a key investment partner, with significant inflows into India's infrastructure, renewable energy, and technology sectors.
- The success of the India-UAE CEPA is being hailed as a model for future free trade agreements that India is negotiating with other key partners like the UK and the EU, demonstrating the tangible economic benefits of strategic trade liberalisation.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 2 (International Relations): Bilateral agreements involving India.

GS Paper 3 (Indian Economy): Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, and growth.

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8. NGT Directs Central Pollution Control Board to Implement Graded Response for River Pollution, Source: The Hindu

Context: Taking suo motu cognizance of alarming pollution levels in several Indian rivers post-monsoon, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) today directed the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to formulate and implement a 'Graded Response Action Plan' (GRAP) for river pollution. This directive mirrors the successful GRAP model used to combat air pollution in the Delhi-NCR region.



Analysis

- The NGT bench, headed by its Chairperson, observed that despite numerous government schemes like the Namami Gange, pollution from industrial effluents, untreated sewage, and agricultural runoff continues to plague major rivers.
- The proposed GRAP for rivers would mandate a series of escalating actions based on real-time water quality monitoring. For instance, if the Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) level crosses a certain threshold, it would trigger an automatic temporary shutdown of polluting industries along the stretch, a ban on a specific list of activities, and increased fines.
- The NGT has given the CPCB and the Jal Shakti Ministry six months to frame the plan in consultation with state pollution control boards, emphasizing the need for a dynamic and accountable mechanism to protect the nation's water bodies.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 3 (Environment): Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

GS Paper 2 (Governance): Statutory, regulatory, and various quasi-judicial bodies (NGT, CPCB).

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9. Single-Use Plastic Ban Phase III: Government Notifies Ban on PVC Banners and Cutlery, Source: PIB

Context: The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has issued a notification for the third phase of the single-use plastic (SUP) ban, which will come into effect from January 1, 2026. The new notification expands the list of prohibited items to include Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) banners less than 100 microns, plastic cutlery (forks, spoons, knives), and plastic sticks for balloons and candies. This move aims to further curb the generation of plastic waste that is difficult to collect and recycle.



Analysis

- The government has provided a six-month window for the industry to transition to sustainable alternatives like cloth, paper, or biodegradable materials.
- To support this transition, the notification also details a support mechanism, including subsidies for MSMEs manufacturing eco-friendly alternatives and an expanded Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) framework.
- The Central Pollution Control Board has been tasked with launching a nationwide awareness campaign and ensuring strict enforcement through state-level bodies.
- This phased approach to eliminating SUPs is part of India's commitment to combat plastic pollution, in line with its Nationally Determined Contributions and the global push for a legally binding treaty on plastics.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 3 (Environment): Conservation, environmental pollution, and degradation.

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10. Skill India Mission 3.0: Focus on AI, Drone Technology, and Green Jobs **Source: Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship**

Context: The government today launched the third iteration of its flagship skilling program, "Skill India Mission 3.0." The new phase marks a significant strategic shift from traditional job roles to futuristic skills in high-demand sectors. The primary focus of Mission 3.0 will be on developing a skilled workforce in areas such as Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning, Drone Operations & Maintenance, Green Energy (solar panel installation, EV maintenance), and Advanced Manufacturing.

Skill India Mission **Transforming your Future**



Analysis

- Under the new framework, the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) will collaborate with industry leaders and international educational institutions to design cutting-edge curricula and establish over 100 'Centres of Excellence' across the country.
- A key feature of Mission 3.0 is the introduction of 'Skill Vouchers,' a credit-based system allowing individuals to choose courses from accredited private and public training providers, promoting flexibility and lifelong learning.
- The government has allocated ₹15,000 crore for the next three years to train 5 million youths under this new phase, aiming to align India's demographic dividend with the evolving needs of the global economy.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 2 (Social Justice/Governance): Issues relating to development and management of Human Resources; Government policies and interventions.

GS Paper 3 (Indian Economy): Indian Economy and issues relating to employment; Effects of liberalization on the economy.

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