

**05 Aug 2025**

## **1. Sixth Anniversary of Article 370 Abrogation: PM Announces New Development Package for J&K, Source: PIB (Press Information Bureau)**

**Context:** On the sixth anniversary of the abrogation of Article 370 and the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories, the Prime Minister of India addressed a public rally in Srinagar. He announced a new comprehensive development package, "Naya Savera 2.0," worth ₹50,000 crore, aimed at bolstering infrastructure, tourism, and youth employment in the region. The package focuses on establishing new industrial estates, upgrading highway connectivity to remote areas like Gurez and Karnah, and setting up a dedicated AI and Data Science Centre of Excellence at the University of Kashmir.



### **Significance:**

- This announcement is significant as it marks the government's continued focus on integrating J&K's economy with the rest of the country.
- The emphasis on new-age sectors like AI signals a shift from traditional economic drivers. For the local population, it promises enhanced job opportunities and better infrastructure.
- For the nation, it is a reaffirmation of the government's commitment to its policy on Jammu and Kashmir, showcasing developmental progress as a key metric of success post-2019.
- The timing, on the anniversary, is politically symbolic, aiming to project a narrative of positive transformation.

**05 Aug 2025**

**Analysis:**

- While the government highlights impressive statistics on tourist arrivals and investment proposals, challenges remain.
- The security situation, though improved, continues to be a concern, with sporadic incidents of targeted violence.
- The political vacuum, with the absence of an elected assembly for an extended period, is a major point of criticism.
- The success of "Naya Savera 2.0" will depend not just on fund allocation but on efficient, transparent implementation on the ground and the ability to create sustainable local employment.
- Critics argue that economic development, while crucial, cannot be a substitute for the restoration of the complete political process, including statehood, which remains a key demand of regional political parties.

**UPSC Syllabus Correlation:**

**GS Paper 2:** Indian Constitution, Federalism, Governance; **GS Paper 3:** Security Challenges.

**05 Aug 2025**

## **2. Supreme Court Collegium Recommends First-Ever AI Specialist for High Court Judgeship, Source: The Indian Express**

**Context:** The Supreme Court Collegium, led by the Chief Justice of India, has recommended the appointment of a leading technology law expert and Artificial Intelligence (AI) specialist to the bench of the Delhi High Court. If cleared by the government, this would be the first time a judge with explicit and deep expertise in AI and emerging technologies is appointed to a High Court. The recommended candidate has extensively published on the legal and ethical implications of AI, data privacy, and algorithmic bias.



### **Significance:**

- This recommendation is a significant and forward-looking move, acknowledging the increasing penetration of technology in all aspects of life and the resultant legal complexities.
- Courts are already grappling with cases involving digital evidence, cryptocurrency disputes, intellectual property in AI-generated content, and platform liability.
- Having a judge with domain expertise will immensely strengthen the judiciary's capacity to adjudicate such complex matters.
- It signals a recognition that future jurisprudence will require a sophisticated understanding of technology.



**05 Aug 2025**

**Analysis:**

- The move reflects the judiciary's adaptation to the 21st century. While laudable, it also raises questions about the criteria for judicial appointments.
- Should domain expertise in specific fields like economics, technology, or medicine become a more common consideration for the bench?
- This appointment could set a precedent for other High Courts and even the Supreme Court to actively seek out specialists to handle the evolving nature of litigation.
- The challenge will be to balance this specialized knowledge with the foundational principles of law and justice that every judge must possess.
- It also subtly underscores the need for continuous training and capacity building for all existing judges on issues of emerging technology.

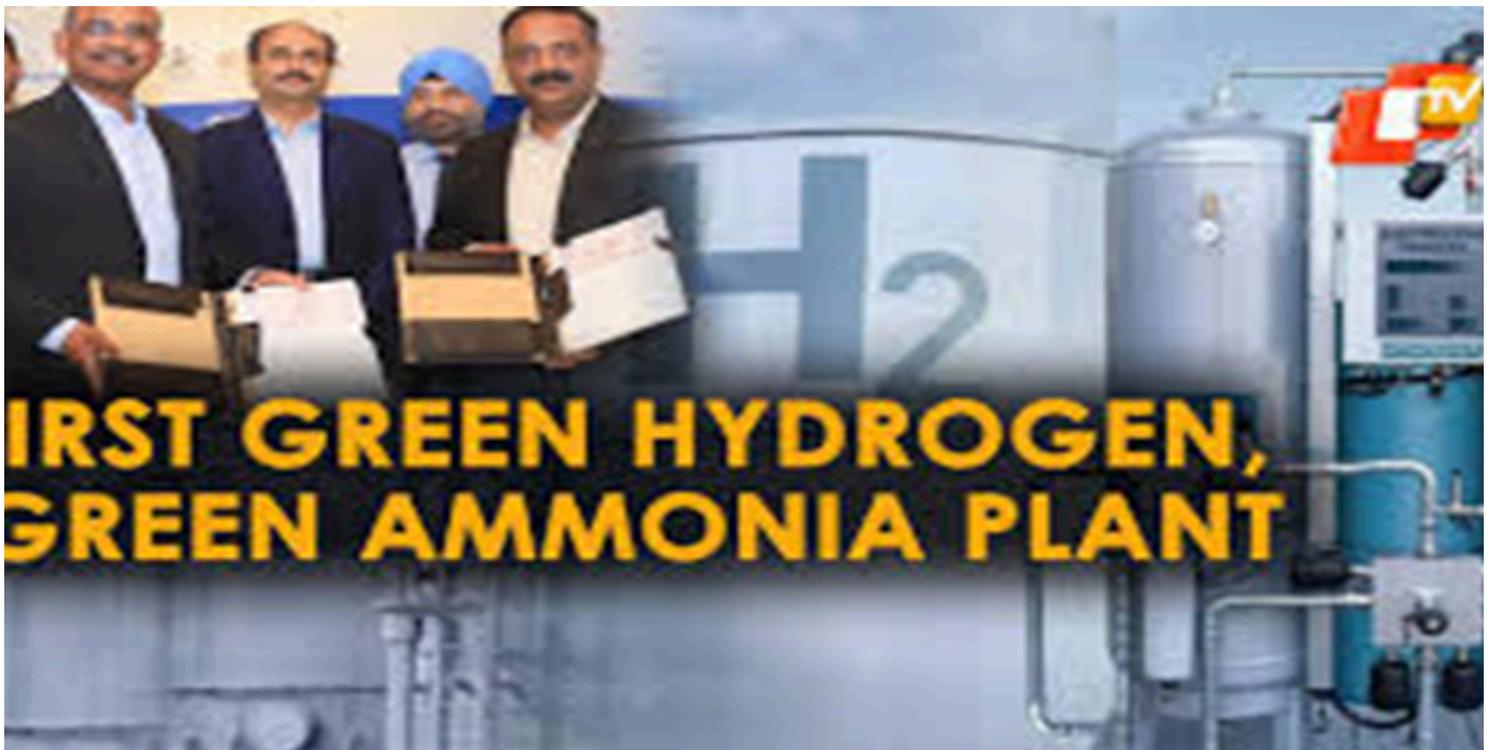
**UPSC Syllabus Correlation:**

**GS Paper 2:** Judiciary, Governance, Role of ICT.

**05 Aug 2025**

### **3. National Green Hydrogen Mission: First Large-Scale Green Ammonia Plant Commissioned in Odisha, Source: The Economic Times**

**Context:** In a major boost to India's clean energy ambitions, the country's first large-scale green ammonia production plant was commissioned today in Paradip, Odisha. The plant, developed by a consortium of an Indian energy major and a European firm, will use renewable energy from a dedicated solar park to produce green hydrogen through electrolysis, which is then synthesized into green ammonia. The initial capacity is 0.5 million tonnes per annum, with a significant portion earmarked for export to Japan and South Korea.



#### **Significance:**

- This is a tangible outcome of the National Green Hydrogen Mission, launched in 2023.
- It demonstrates the commercial viability of green hydrogen and its derivatives in India. Green ammonia is crucial for decarbonizing hard-to-abate sectors like fertilizers, shipping, and power generation.
- The project positions India as a potential global hub for green hydrogen production and export, leveraging its abundant solar energy resources.
- This will help reduce India's import bill for natural gas (used for conventional ammonia) and fertilizers, while contributing significantly to its Net Zero goals.



**Analysis:**

- The commissioning of this plant is a proof-of-concept for the entire green hydrogen value chain in India.
- However, the key challenge remains the cost of production. The cost of green hydrogen is still higher than grey hydrogen (produced from fossil fuels).
- The success of the National Green Hydrogen Mission hinges on bringing down the cost of electrolyzers and renewable electricity.
- The government's production-linked incentives (PLI) are vital in this regard.
- Ensuring a robust domestic market, alongside exports, will be crucial for creating economies of scale.
- This project will serve as a valuable case study for addressing the technical and financial challenges of scaling up the green hydrogen economy.

**05 Aug 2025**

#### **4. BIMSTEC Summit Concludes in Dhaka with Pact on Coastal Shipping**

**Source: The Indian Express**

**Context:** The 7th Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Summit concluded in Dhaka, Bangladesh, today, with the member states signing a landmark agreement on coastal shipping. The pact aims to streamline customs procedures, reduce paperwork, and facilitate the seamless movement of cargo vessels within 20 nautical miles of the coastline of member nations. India's Prime Minister reiterated India's commitment to a "prosperous and connected" Bay of Bengal region.



#### **Significance:**

- The Coastal Shipping Agreement is a major step towards enhancing regional connectivity and trade, a core objective of BIMSTEC.
- It will significantly reduce transportation costs and time compared to road and rail, boosting intra-regional trade, which is currently far below its potential.
- This strengthens BIMSTEC's credentials as a viable platform for regional cooperation, particularly as SAARC remains dysfunctional.
- For India, it aligns perfectly with its 'Act East' and 'Neighbourhood First' policies, deepening economic integration with South and Southeast Asian neighbours.

**05 Aug 2025**

**Analysis:**

- While the pact is a positive development, its effective implementation will be key.
- This requires member states to upgrade their port infrastructure, harmonize regulations, and establish efficient digital clearance systems.
- Beyond shipping, progress in other key areas like the BIMSTEC Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and energy grid connectivity has been slow.
- Security cooperation, especially in maritime security and counter-terrorism, is another area where the grouping needs to show more concrete results.
- The challenge for BIMSTEC is to translate its vision and agreements into tangible projects that deliver economic benefits to the people of the region, thereby cementing its relevance as a dynamic regional organization.

**UPSC Syllabus Correlation:**

**GS Paper 2:** International Relations, Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings.

**05 Aug 2025**

## 5. Government Launches 'PM-DAKSH 2.0' to Upskill 5 Million Gig Economy Workers, Source: Hindustan Times

**Context:** The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has launched the second phase of its flagship skilling program, PM-DAKSH (Pradhan Mantri Dakshta Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi) 2.0. The new phase specifically targets 5 million workers in the gig and platform economy over the next three years. The program will offer short-term courses in digital literacy, financial management, customer service, and platform-specific technical skills, along with social security benefits like insurance and provident fund access linked to the e-Shram portal.



### Significance:

- This is a major policy intervention recognizing the size and importance of India's gig economy, which employs millions in ride-hailing, food delivery, and e-commerce logistics.
- It addresses a key vulnerability of gig workers: the lack of a clear path for skill progression and the absence of a social safety net.
- By providing upskilling opportunities and linking them to social security, the government aims to formalize this segment of the workforce to some extent and improve their long-term earning potential.

**05 Aug 2025**

**Analysis:**

- The initiative is a positive step, but faces implementation challenges. Reaching a fragmented and mobile workforce will require strong partnerships with the aggregator platforms themselves.
- The quality and relevance of the training modules will be critical to ensure actual skill enhancement rather than just certification.
- The most contentious issue, the legal status of gig workers (as 'employees' or 'partners'), remains unaddressed by this scheme.
- While PM-DAKSH 2.0 focuses on skilling and welfare, the larger debate on providing gig workers with labour rights, minimum wage protection, and collective bargaining power, as envisaged in the Code on Social Security, continues.
- The scheme is a welfare measure, not a substitute for comprehensive labour law reform for this sector.

**UPSC Syllabus Correlation:**

**GS Paper 2:** Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections; **GS Paper 3:** Indian Economy, Employment.

**05 Aug 2025**

## 6. India Pledges \$2 Billion for Africa's 'Great Green Wall' Initiative

**Source: The Hindu**

**Context:** At the India-Africa Climate Dialogue held in New Delhi, India announced a significant financial pledge of \$2 billion over the next five years to support the African Union-led 'Great Green Wall' initiative. This ambitious project aims to restore 100 million hectares of degraded land across the Sahel region by planting a mosaic of trees, grasslands, and vegetation, combating desertification and climate change. The Indian contribution will focus on providing technical expertise, satellite monitoring support, and funding for community-led afforestation projects.



### Significance:

- This pledge is a powerful statement of South-South cooperation and cements India's role as a leader of the Global South.
- It demonstrates India's commitment to global climate action beyond its domestic NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions).
- By supporting a project in the Sahel, one of the world's most climate-vulnerable regions, India is extending its development partnership with Africa into the critical domain of climate adaptation and resilience.
- This move strengthens diplomatic ties and builds considerable goodwill with African nations.

**05 Aug 2025**

**Analysis:**

- India's support, particularly its expertise in dryland farming, watershed management (like the work done by ICRISAT), and space-based land-use monitoring via ISRO, can provide immense value to the Great Green Wall project.
- The initiative has faced challenges related to funding, security, and coordination since its inception. India's involvement could inject new momentum.
- This is also a smart diplomatic move, enhancing India's influence in a continent where other global powers are also vying for strategic partnerships.
- The success of this pledge will depend on the creation of effective delivery mechanisms that ensure the funds and technology reach the ground and empower local communities.

**UPSC Syllabus Correlation:**

**GS Paper 2:** International Relations; **GS Paper 3:** Environment, Conservation.

**05 Aug 2025**

## **7. Phase-II of Single-Use Plastic Ban Comes into Force, Thicker Carry Bags Mandated, Source: The Indian Express**

**Context:** The second, more stringent phase of the nationwide ban on Single-Use Plastics (SUPs) has come into effect today. This phase expands the list of banned items to include plastic sachets below a certain volume and multi-layer packaging without a clear recycling pathway. Furthermore, the rules now mandate that all plastic carry bags must have a minimum thickness of 150 microns, up from the previous 120-micron limit, to encourage reuse and make recycling more viable.



### **Significance:**

- This move signals the government's resolve to tackle the plastic pollution crisis. Banning low-value, hard-to-recycle items like small sachets targets a major source of litter and environmental damage.
- Increasing the thickness of carry bags is based on the 'polluter pays' principle, making them more expensive and theoretically discouraging their casual use while improving their recyclability.
- This is a critical step towards building a circular economy for plastics.



**05 Aug 2025**

**Analysis:**

- The success of the ban hinges on strict enforcement by municipal bodies and state pollution control boards, which have been a weak link in the past.
- A major challenge will be the availability of affordable and scalable alternatives for consumers and small businesses, especially for products sold in sachets.
- The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry will need to innovate rapidly to comply with the new packaging norms.
- While the ban is a necessary supply-side intervention, it must be complemented by sustained public awareness campaigns to drive a behavioural shift towards reducing consumption and improving waste segregation at the source.
- Without a robust waste management and recycling infrastructure, the ban alone will have limited impact.

**UPSC Syllabus Correlation:**

**GS Paper 3:** Environment, Conservation, Pollution.

**05 Aug 2025**

## **8. Centre Approves New 'Blue Revolution 2.0' with Focus on Seaweed Cultivation**

**Source: PIB**

**Context:** The Union Cabinet has approved a new scheme, "Blue Revolution 2.0: The Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana-Next Generation" (PMMSY-NG), with an outlay of ₹25,000 crore. A key new component of this scheme is a massive thrust on commercial seaweed cultivation, with dedicated funds for creating 'Seaweed Parks' in coastal states like Tamil Nadu and Gujarat and providing subsidies to fisherfolk, especially women's self-help groups (SHGs), to take up cultivation.



### **Significance:**

- This policy signals a strategic diversification of India's blue economy beyond traditional fishing.
- Seaweed is a versatile resource with applications in food, fertilizers, biofuels, and pharmaceuticals (as a source of agar and carrageenan).
- Promoting its cultivation provides an alternative and climate-resilient livelihood for coastal communities, reducing pressure on over-exploited fish stocks.
- It is also an eco-friendly activity, as seaweed absorbs carbon dioxide and can help de-acidify ocean water.

**Analysis:**

- The potential for seaweed cultivation in India is vast, given its long coastline, but it remains a nascent industry.
- The success of this scheme will depend on overcoming several challenges. This includes developing high-yield seed stock, establishing efficient post-harvest processing and supply chains, and creating market linkages for the final products.
- The involvement of women's SHGs is a socially positive step that can lead to their economic empowerment.
- The 'Seaweed Park' concept, intended to provide one-stop access to technology, processing, and marketing, could be a game-changer if implemented effectively.
- This initiative aligns with the goal of doubling farmers' (and fishers') income and building a sustainable blue economy.

**UPSC Syllabus Correlation:**

**GS Paper 3:** Indian Economy, Food Processing, Economics of Animal-Rearing.

**05 Aug 2025**

## **9. India's Cheetah Reintroduction Project: First Indian-Born Cubs Sighted in Kuno National Park, Source: The Hindu**

**Context:** In a moment of significant cheer for wildlife conservationists, forest officials at Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh have confirmed the first-ever sighting of cheetah cubs born to a second-generation, Indian-born female. The mother herself was part of the first litter born on Indian soil in early 2024. The new litter of four cubs appears healthy and is being monitored remotely to minimize human disturbance.



### **Significance:**

- This is a landmark milestone for Project Cheetah, one of the world's most ambitious species reintroduction programs.
- The birth of second-generation cubs is a strong indicator that the cheetahs are adapting to Indian conditions and are able to successfully reproduce in the wild.
- It demonstrates that the habitat in Kuno is conducive to sustaining a breeding population.
- This success validates the scientific strategy behind the project and provides a major morale boost after the initial setbacks and mortality of some of the translocated cheetahs from Africa.

**05 Aug 2025**

**Analysis:**

- While this is a celebratory moment, the long-term success of the project is still not guaranteed.
- The key challenges remain ensuring a sufficient prey base, managing human-wildlife conflict as the cheetah population expands and disperses, and maintaining genetic diversity in the long run.
- The project has been criticized by some ecologists as a 'vanity project'. However, this event strengthens the government's and conservationists' case that the project is a viable effort to restore a lost keystone species to India's grasslands.
- The survival of these cubs to adulthood and their subsequent breeding will be the next critical test for the project.

**UPSC Syllabus Correlation:**

**GS Paper 3:** Environment, Conservation, Biodiversity.

**05 Aug 2025**

## **10. Indian Railways Launches 'Project Swarna Rath' for Upgrading Rajdhani and Shatabdi Coaches, Source: PIB**

**Context:** The Ministry of Railways has launched a new initiative, 'Project Swarna Rath' (Golden Chariot), aimed at a comprehensive upgrade of the coaches of all Rajdhani and Shatabdi Express trains across the country. The project, with an initial budget of ₹5,000 crore, will focus on enhancing passenger comfort, safety, and aesthetics. Upgrades include ergonomically designed seats, improved bio-toilets, GPS-based passenger information systems, on-board Wi-Fi with infotainment services, and CCTV cameras in all coaches.



### **Significance:**

- This project is a targeted effort to improve the passenger experience on India's premier train services, which face increasing competition from airlines.
- It goes beyond the earlier upgrades by focusing on a complete overhaul rather than piecemeal changes.
- By improving safety and comfort, Indian Railways aims to retain and attract high-fare-paying passengers, which is crucial for its financial health.
- The project will also give a boost to domestic manufacturing of railway components and systems.

**Analysis:**

- 'Project Swarna Rath' is a part of Indian Railways' broader strategy of segmenting its services and modernizing its fleet, which includes the rollout of Vande Bharat trains on one hand and the upgrading of conventional trains on the other.
- The challenge will be to execute the project on time and across the entire fleet without major disruptions to train schedules.
- Maintaining the upgraded coaches will be equally important, requiring a shift in maintenance practices and passenger behaviour.
- While this project focuses on premium trains, critics point out the urgent need for similar, if not as extensive, upgrades to the coaches used by the vast majority of non-premium passengers to improve safety and hygiene standards across the board.

**UPSC Syllabus Correlation:**

**GS Paper 3: Infrastructure: Railways.**