

**04 July 2025**

## **1. Supreme Court Delivers Split Verdict on UCC Framework; Refers Matter to Larger Bench, Source: The Hindu**

**News:** In a significant judicial development, a five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court of India delivered a split 3:2 verdict on a batch of petitions challenging the legislative competence of Parliament to enact a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) framework. The majority opinion, authored by the Chief Justice, affirmed that while Parliament possesses the authority to legislate on personal laws under the Concurrent List, any such law must meticulously pass the "basic structure" test and ensure the protection of fundamental rights, especially Articles 25 and 26 concerning religious freedom. The majority of judges held that a "one-size-fits-all" approach might be constitutionally untenable and suggested a "gradualist and consultative" path.



### **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. President Approves National Water Governance Bill, 2025

**Source: PIB (Press Information Bureau)**

**News:** The President of India has given assent to the landmark National Water Governance Bill, 2025, which aims to create a comprehensive legal framework for water management and resolve inter-state water disputes. The Act, passed by Parliament in the recent Monsoon Session, establishes a new hierarchical structure for water governance. At the apex is the National Water Authority (NWA), an empowered body tasked with policy formulation, data management, and ensuring the sustainable and equitable use of water resources across the country. The Act also provides for the creation of River Basin Organisations (RBOs) for major inter-state rivers, which will be responsible for preparing and implementing basin-level management plans.



### Analysis

- A key feature of the Act is the overhaul of the dispute resolution mechanism. It dissolves existing tribunals over a phased period and establishes a permanent, three-tiered Inter-State River Water Disputes Tribunal with a strict timeline for adjudication.
- The Act emphasizes the "ecological-flow" concept for rivers and mandates the preparation of a national water security plan every five years.
- The Ministry of Jal Shakti stated that this legislation marks a paradigm shift from a construction-centric approach to an integrated water resource management model, crucial for India's water security in the face of climate change.

### UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

**GS Paper 2:** Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels, and challenges therein. Statutory, regulatory, and various quasi-judicial bodies.

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### **3. India and ASEAN Announce Joint Task Force on Maritime Security and Blue Economy, Source: The Indian Express**

**News:** In a major boost to the Act East Policy, India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have announced the formation of a Joint Task Force on Maritime Security and the Blue Economy. The decision was finalized during the India-ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting held in Jakarta. The task force will focus on enhancing cooperation in combating piracy, illegal fishing, and drug trafficking in the Indo-Pacific region. It will also work towards creating a common framework for the sustainable exploitation of marine resources, promoting green shipping corridors, and sharing real-time maritime domain awareness data.



#### **Analysis**

- This move is seen as a strategic response to the increasing militarization and non-traditional security threats in the South China Sea and the wider Indian Ocean Region.
- An official from the Ministry of External Affairs stated that the initiative aligns with India's SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) vision and ASEAN's Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP).
- The task force will have representatives from the navies, coast guards, and foreign ministries of all member states. Its first mandate will be to draft a 10-year action plan, with a focus on capacity building, joint patrols, and developing common communication protocols.
- This deepens the India-ASEAN strategic partnership beyond trade into a more robust security architecture.

#### **UPSC Syllabus Correlation:**

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

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#### **4. Government Launches 'Samudra-Vikas' Scheme to Boost Coastal Economic Zones, Source: Hindustan Times**

**News:** The Union Cabinet has approved the 'Samudra Vikas' scheme, a new flagship program with an outlay of ₹75,000 crore over five years, aimed at developing Coastal Economic Zones (CEZs) and enhancing India's blue economy. The scheme, which subsumes and expands upon the Sagarmala programme, focuses on creating integrated industrial and maritime clusters along the coastline. The objective is to leverage ports as catalysts for industrial development, reduce logistics costs, and generate large-scale employment in coastal states. Under the scheme, 14 CEZs have been identified for holistic development.



#### **Analysis**

- Key components of 'Samudra Vikas' include port modernization and mechanization, development of coastal transport infrastructure, including ro-ro and ferry services, and promotion of marine-based industries like aquaculture, seaweed cultivation, and shipbuilding.
- A significant portion of the fund is allocated for skill development programs tailored for coastal communities.
- The Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways stated that the scheme is designed to improve the global competitiveness of Indian exports by creating a seamless and efficient logistics chain.
- It is a critical component of India's ambition to become a leading maritime nation and is expected to significantly boost the GDP contribution of the blue economy.

#### **UPSC Syllabus Correlation:**

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

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## **5. Government Releases 'Himalayan Fragility Assessment Report 2025'; Recommends Moratorium on Large Hydel Projects, Source: The Indian Express**

**News:** A high-level committee constituted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change today released the "Himalayan Fragility Assessment Report 2025," a comprehensive study on the impact of climate change and unregulated development in the Indian Himalayan Region. The report paints a grim picture, highlighting an accelerated rate of glacial melt, a significant increase in the frequency of extreme weather events like glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) and landslides, and severe biodiversity loss. It establishes a direct correlation between large-scale infrastructure projects and increased geological instability in several ecologically sensitive zones.



### **Analysis**

- Among its most stringent recommendations, the panel has called for an immediate moratorium on the approval of new large hydroelectric projects (above 25 MW) in the upper reaches of the Himalayas.
- It advocates for a shift towards smaller, run-of-the-river projects and a greater focus on non-hydro renewable energy sources like solar and wind.
- The report also calls for a new, legally-binding framework for cumulative impact assessment of all infrastructure projects in the region and the creation of a dedicated 'Himalayan States Climate Adaptation Fund'.
- The recommendations have sparked a debate between environmentalists, who have welcomed the report, and developmental agencies, who have raised concerns about energy security.

### **UPSC Syllabus Correlation:**

**GS Paper 3:** Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

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## **6. Indian Army Inducts First Squadron of 'Zorawar' Light Tanks for High-Altitude Warfare, Source: Hindustan Times**

**News:** In a significant boost to its mountain warfare capabilities, the Indian Army has formally inducted the first squadron of the indigenous 'Zorawar' light tanks. The induction ceremony took place at a high-altitude location in the Northern sector, attended by the Chief of Army Staff and senior officials from the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). Developed jointly by DRDO and Larsen & Toubro (L&T), the 'Zorawar' is a 25-ton tank specifically designed for agility and manoeuvrability in mountainous terrain, a lesson learned from the ongoing standoff with China in Eastern Ladakh.



### **Analysis**

- The tank is equipped with state-of-the-art technologies, including a high-power-to-weight ratio engine, advanced fire control systems, and Artificial Intelligence-based surveillance capabilities.
- Unlike the heavier T-72 and T-90 main battle tanks, 'Zorawar' can be easily transported and deployed in narrow valleys and high-altitude passes.
- The Army Chief stated that the induction of 'Zorawar' provides a "quantum jump" in the Army's ability to counter threats in the mountains and provides a versatile platform for both offensive and defensive operations.
- This marks a major success for the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative in the defence sector, with plans to induct over 300 more such tanks in the coming years.

### **UPSC Syllabus Correlation:**

**GS Paper 3:** Security challenges and their management in border areas; linkages of organized crime with terrorism. Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate. Indigenization of technology.

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## **7. National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) Launches AI-Powered Disease Surveillance Platform 'PRAHARI', Source: PIB (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare)**

**News:** The Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare today launched 'PRAHARI' (Pandemic Ready AI-based Health Alert and Response Interface), a next-generation AI-powered disease surveillance platform developed by the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). This platform integrates real-time data from various sources, including the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), hospital records, laboratory reports, and even non-traditional sources like social media and news reports, to detect disease outbreaks at a very early stage. PRAHARI uses advanced machine learning algorithms to identify anomalous clusters of symptoms and predict potential hotspots for communicable diseases.



### **Analysis**

- The system is designed to provide automated alerts to state and district surveillance units, enabling rapid response and containment measures.
- It also features a genomic sequencing dashboard that tracks the evolution of pathogens like influenza and SARS-CoV-2 in real-time.
- Officials state that PRAHARI will be a game-changer in India's fight against epidemics and future pandemics, moving the country from a reactive to a predictive public health model.
- The platform is a key component of the Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM) and reflects India's commitment to leveraging technology for public health.

### **UPSC Syllabus Correlation:**

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

**GS Paper 3:** Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

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## **8. NITI Aayog's Five-Year Review of NEP 2020 Highlights Gains in Foundational Literacy, Flags Teacher Training Gaps, Source: The Indian Express**

**News:** NITI Aayog today released its comprehensive five-year progress report on the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The report, titled "Transforming Education: The NEP Journey 2020-2025," lauded the significant strides made in improving foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) through the NIPUN Bharat mission. It noted a marked improvement in enrollment in early childhood care and education (ECCE) and the successful rollout of the Academic Bank of Credits in over 500 universities. The introduction of multidisciplinary curricula and vocational education at the school level was also highlighted as a major achievement.



### **Analysis**

- However, the report also flagged several critical challenges. The foremost among these is the slow pace of comprehensive teacher training and continuous professional development, which it identified as a key bottleneck for effective policy implementation.
- The report pointed to a persistent digital divide, which hampers the equitable delivery of tech-enabled education.
- It called for a substantial increase in public investment in education to meet the NEP's target of 6% of GDP.
- The Aayog has recommended the creation of a dedicated National Teacher Training Mission and a renewed push for public-private partnerships to bridge infrastructure and technology gaps.

### **UPSC Syllabus Correlation:**

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

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## **9. National Commission for Women Report Reveals Alarming Rise in Cybercrimes Against Women, Source: Hindustan Times**

**News:** A new report released by the National Commission for Women (NCW), titled "Safety in Cyberspace: A Gendered Perspective," has revealed a startling 40% increase in reported cybercrimes against women over the past two years. The report, based on data from the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal and complaints received by the NCW, identifies cyberstalking, online harassment, morphing of images, and 'sextortion' as the most prevalent forms of offenses. It highlights the particular vulnerability of women in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities, who often lack the digital literacy and resources to seek help.



### **Analysis**

- The NCW Chairperson stated that the rapid expansion of internet access, while beneficial, has also created new avenues for gender-based violence.
- The report criticizes the slow response time of social media intermediaries in taking down malicious content and the low conviction rate in cybercrime cases.
- Key recommendations include strengthening the Information Technology Act, 2000, to include more stringent penalties, conducting massive digital literacy campaigns focused on online safety, and setting up dedicated, women-run cyber police cells in every district.
- The report urges a multi-stakeholder approach involving law enforcement, tech companies, and civil society to make the internet a safer space for women.

### **UPSC Syllabus Correlation:**

**GS Paper 1:** Social empowerment.

**GS Paper 2:** Issues relating to the development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources. Mechanisms, laws, institutions, and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

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## **10. Centre to Launch 'PARAMAPARA' Scheme for Digitizing and Preserving Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Source: PIB (Ministry of Culture)**

**News:** The Ministry of Culture, in collaboration with the Ministry of Ayush, has announced the launch of a new national mission called 'PARAMAPARA' (Platform for Archiving, Research and Augmentation of Millennial Ancient and Regional Arts). The scheme aims to create a comprehensive digital repository of India's vast and diverse indigenous knowledge systems. This includes traditional medicine practices, agricultural techniques, water conservation methods, metallurgical skills, and folklore. The mission will involve creating a national portal and a network of institutional hubs to document, digitize, and scientifically validate this knowledge.



### **Analysis**

- A key objective of the scheme is to protect this heritage from being lost and to prevent bio-piracy and misappropriation of traditional knowledge through proper documentation and intellectual property protection.
- The government will partner with universities, local communities, and traditional knowledge holders to collect and catalogue this information.
- The 'PARAMAPARA' portal will be made accessible to researchers, policymakers, and the public, with an aim to integrate relevant and validated knowledge into modern applications in fields like healthcare, agriculture, and sustainable development.
- The scheme is seen as a vital step in preserving India's intangible cultural heritage for future generations.

### **UPSC Syllabus Correlation:**

**GS Paper 1:** Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, literature, and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

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