The Hindu Important News Articles For UPSC CSE

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Page 03:GS II :International Relations/ Preliminary Examination

Following the recent visit of Bangladesh's Prime Minister Tarique Rahman to China, where both nations discussed the 'Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project' (TRCMRP), India has issued its response. The Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) clarified that India's development assistance to Bangladesh operates on a "mutually agreed roadmap," and India will take into account all relevant developments in the region while shaping its overall approach toward the Teesta River project.

Key Points & Analysis

1. Geopolitical Tussle over the Teesta Project

- **China's Entry:** Bangladesh had initiated talks with China for the restoration and management of the Teesta River during Sheikh Hasina's tenure itself. During PM Tarique Rahman's recent visit to Beijing, a decision was made to move forward with the feasibility report of this project.
- **India's Stance:** In June 2024 (during Sheikh Hasina's visit to India), India and Bangladesh issued a joint statement wherein India committed to providing assistance for the "conservation and management" of the Teesta River within Bangladesh. India remains strategically cautious about Chinese influence in this highly sensitive region, which is located in close proximity to the Siliguri Corridor (popularly known as the 'Chicken's Neck').

Will factor all related developments in approach to Teesta issue: India

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

Days after Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman visited China where the two sides discussed the Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project (TRCMRP), India on Friday said its development assistance to projects in Bangladesh work on the basis of a "mutually agreed roadmap", and that India will consider "all related developments" in formulating an "overall approach" to the Teesta river-related project.

The issue came up during a press briefing when the official spokesperson of the External Affairs Ministry, Randhir Jaiswal, was asked a question on whether the Bangladesh-China decision to have a feasibility report on the TRCMRP will impact India's projects in Bangladesh. "India's development assistance for projects in Bangladesh is based on a mutually agreed road map, which is regularly reviewed. Our views on the Teesta river project have been previously conveyed to the Bangladesh side. We will factor all related developments in our overall approach to the Teesta issue," said Mr. Jaiswal.

Officials later clarified that India's statement did not indicate any displeasure at Bangladesh's decision to go ahead with discussing the Teesta project with China as India-Bangladesh ties stand on their own merit.

The sharing of the Teesta river water has been under discussion between India and Bangladesh for decades but since 2011, the two neighbours have remained in a deadlock with regards to an agreement.

Bangladesh started discussions with China on building a restoration and management project along the river during Sheikh Hasina's prime ministership. In 2024, India shared its plans on the river with Ms. Hasina when then Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra had visited Dhaka. In June that year, Ms. Hasina paid a visit to India when a joint statement mentioned that India would provide assistance for "conservation and management" of the Teesta river inside Bangladesh.

Ms. Hasina's government was toppled in a public uprising in August 2024 and subsequently discussions did not take place during the 15-month long interim government.

While the Teesta issue has received attention during Tarique Rahman's China visit in the last week of June, there are big ticket issues in India-Bangladesh ties that require attention. Diplomats here have pointed out that the renewal of the Ganga water treaty is one such matter that requires urgent attention as the agreement has to be renewed by December 31 this year.

Pristine waters: A view of the Teesta river at Sevok, some 20 km from Siliguri. AFP

2. India's Official Statement and Bilateral Maturity

- **Shared Roadmap:** According to MEA Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, India-Bangladesh development cooperation is anchored in regular reviews and mutual consensus. India has already communicated its perspectives on the Teesta issue to Bangladesh.
- **Mature Ties:** Indian officials later clarified that India's statement does not signify discontent regarding the Bangladesh-China dialogues. The relationship between India and Bangladesh is inherently robust and independent of any third country.

3. Historical Background and Deadlock of the Teesta Dispute

- **Decades-Long Impasse:** Negotiations over the sharing of Teesta River waters between India and Bangladesh have been ongoing for decades, but the issue has been completely deadlocked since 2011.
- **Domestic Political Hurdles:** An interim agreement was on the verge of being signed in 2011; however, it had to be deferred due to staunch opposition from the West Bengal state government, as the agriculture of West Bengal's northern districts is heavily dependent on Teesta waters.
- **Impact of Political Instability:** Following the collapse of the Sheikh Hasina government in August 2024, no substantive talks could take place between India and Bangladesh during the 15-month interim government, leading to a policy vacuum.

4. Upcoming Major Challenge: Renewal of the Ganga Water Treaty

- **Timeline Pressures:** Diplomats have underscored that beyond the Teesta dispute, a more critical and sensitive issue confronting both nations is the renewal of the Ganga Water Treaty.
- **Water Diplomacy Test:** This historic agreement is scheduled to expire on December 31, 2026. Therefore, securing an amicable and time-bound renewal before the end of this year will serve as the ultimate test of water diplomacy for both nations.

Strategic Significance for India

- **Security and the Chicken's Neck Corridor:** The Teesta River flows extremely close to India's Siliguri Corridor, which connects the North-Eastern states with the rest of India. The deployment of Chinese engineers or infrastructure in this zone poses sensitive challenges to India's national security.
- **Neighbourhood First Policy:** Despite the regime change in Bangladesh (the transition from Sheikh Hasina to the Tarique Rahman government), India must sustain its development projects and soft power footprint there to prevent China from gaining a strategic edge.

Way Forward

- **Proactive Water Diplomacy:** Instead of relying purely on technical or defensive reactions regarding the Teesta River, India should present Bangladesh with a superior, ecologically sustainable, and more economically viable alternative.
- **State-Center Coordination:** To resolve the Teesta dispute and successfully renew the Ganga Water Treaty, the Central Government must take key riparian states like West Bengal into confidence, ensuring that internal political friction does not stall bilateral ties.
- **Time-bound Implementation:** The only effective way to balance Chinese ingress into Bangladesh is for India to ground and execute its announced "conservation and management" projects without any administrative delays.

Conclusion

Water cooperation over the Teesta and Ganga rivers is not merely an exercise in hydro-politics; it is a vital mechanism to bridge deep-seated strategic distrust between India and Bangladesh. Amidst shifting geopolitical alignments across South Asia and the wider Indo-Pacific, India must engage constructively with the new government in Bangladesh to ensure that Dhaka does not pivot entirely toward Beijing to fulfill its development imperatives.

UPSC Prelims Exam Study Questions

Question:Which of the following issues are significant in the context of India-Bangladesh water cooperation?

1. River water sharing
2. Flood management
3. River conservation
4. Water quality monitoring

Select the correct answer—

(a) **1** and **2** only

(b) **2** and **3** only

(c) **1**, **3** and **4** only

(d) **1**, **2**, **3** and **4**

Ans: (d**)**

UPSC Mains Practice Questions

Question: Analyze the strategic implications of China's growing role in India-Bangladesh relations. What adjustments should India make to its regional strategy?(**10Marks, 150Words)**

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Page 06:GS II : Social Justice / Preliminary Examination

Amidst the escalating burden of cancer cases in India, this article strongly advocates for declaring cancer a 'Notifiable Disease' on a nationwide scale. Currently, the Union Health Ministry's conventional stance dictates that only communicable (infectious) diseases are notified at the national level. However, the landscape is shifting at the state level; recently, Telangana became the 17th state to join the list by notifying cancer within its jurisdiction. The core premise of the article is that to make the national cancer control program truly effective, there is an urgent need to adopt this state-led model across the country.

Key Points & Analysis

1. Current System & Data Gaps

- **Limited Coverage:** Presently, the central government relies primarily on two mechanisms to enumerate cancer cases—'Population-Based Cancer Registries' and 'Hospital-Based Cancer Registries'.
- **Urban and Government Skew:** These registries collectively cover a mere 10% to 16% of India's total population. Furthermore, this data exhibits an overwhelming skew toward urban pockets and public sector healthcare facilities, leaving the real disease burden of rural and semi-urban landscapes completely unaccounted for.
- **Untapped Private Sector Data:** A massive share of cancer care in India is delivered by the private healthcare sector, yet the critical clinical data from this sector fails to be systematically captured in these state registries.

2. Alarming Projections of Cancer Cases

- **Surge of Over 74%:** According to projections by the 'Global Cancer Observatory'—an affiliate of the World Health Organization (WHO)—India is expected to witness an addition of 1.05 million cancer cases between 2022 (1.41 million cases) and 2045 (2.46 million cases). This marks a staggering increase of over 74%.
- **Shifting Demographic Triggers:** Key drivers propelling this rapidly expanding public health crisis include a rising life span, an aging demographic profile, rapid lifestyle changes, and altered dietary habits.

3. Need & Benefits of Making Cancer a 'Notifiable Disease'

- **Vanguard Action for Public Health:** Once a disease is legally classified as 'notifiable', it becomes a statutory obligation for every medical practitioner and hospital—whether public or private—to report every newly diagnosed case to state

Counting cancer

Making cancer a notifiable disease at the national level is the way forward

What's good for the goose is surely good for the geese. What the States will benefit from, the country could too. In India, cancer is not a notifiable disease at the national level, keeping with the Health Ministry's position that such notification is only for communicable diseases. Population-based cancer registries and hospital-based cancer registries are currently the only national tool at the disposal of the Centre to count cancer cases. Unfortunately, these registries cover about 10%-16 % of the population, and have an urban, government health care set-up skew. However, several States have taken the lead on this front, making cancer a notifiable disease within their boundaries. Telangana is the latest to join the list of States that have made cancer a notifiable disease, bringing the total number of States doing so to 17.

With the Global Cancer Observatory (affiliated to the World Health Organization) projecting an estimated increase of 1.05 million cases between 2022 (1.41 million) and 2045 (2.46 million), the rise is expected to be a staggering over 74%. Given these projections, thanks to an increasing life span and ageing demographics, changes in lifestyle and diet, it becomes all the more important to be armed with data and get ready for vanguard action from a public health point of view. While State action can, to an extent, solve the data question, any benefit thus derived from notifying health authorities of every single case of cancer, it cannot become a rubric by which the nation can contour its cancer control programme. Apart from existing registries covering mostly urban and semi-urban posts, care in India is also delivered in good measure through the private sector and that data set is not uniformly captured. The Indian government must pay heed to its own counsel, the Indian Council of Medical Research, National Centre for Disease Informatics and Research (now ICMR-NINE) had recommended that cancer be made a notifiable disease years ago. It is a fact that establishing cancer as a notifiable disease will mean a sudden increase in the number of cases being recorded, but it must not be considered a liability. Instead, it is merely part of the process of crafting a studied, and evidence-based response – health care and information, education, and communication (IEC) – to cancer at the country level. While bold advances in research and treatment methodologies have retrieved cancer from the fear and the utter helplessness surrounding it, the heart of the issue remains the lack of data. Taking lessons from the States, the Centre must recalibrate and make cancer a notifiable disease in India.

health authorities.

- **Evidence-Based Response:** Notifying cancer at the national level will equip the country with a precise, granular, and comprehensive dataset. Based on this evidence, the government can systematically expand healthcare infrastructure and design highly targeted 'Information, Education, and Communication' (IEC) awareness campaigns.
- **Institutional Backing:** Premier research bodies such as the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the National Centre for Disease Informatics and Research (ICMR-NCDIR) had recommended that the government declare cancer a notifiable disease years ago.

4. Facing Challenges: Administrative Liability vs. Solution

- **Sudden Spike in Reported Cases:** An immediate fallout of making cancer a notifiable disease will be an exponential, sudden jump in the absolute number of recorded cases.
- **A Positive Policy Outlook:** Policymakers must resist viewing this surge as an administrative failure or an unbearable liability. Instead, it should be welcomed as the foundational step toward acknowledging a real crisis and structuring a resilient national counter-strategy.

Conclusion

While milestones in medical research and advanced treatment methodologies have significantly diluted the sense of absolute dread and helplessness traditionally associated with cancer, the weakest link in this battle remains the profound lack of accurate data. The bold regulatory interventions executed by various states prove that notifying cancer is administratively viable and policy-wise rewarding.

The central government must shed its rigid, orthodox paradigm that confines notification strictly to communicable diseases. If India is to shield its future generations from this projected 74% catastrophic surge, it must arm itself with the weapon of comprehensive data. The time is ripe for the Centre to learn from state-level dynamics and declare cancer a notifiable disease nationally, paving the way for a robust, data-driven, and inclusive cancer control roadmap.

UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Question: Consider the following statements regarding a 'Notifiable Disease'—

1. Once a disease is declared notifiable, it is mandatory to report every confirmed case to the concerned health authority.

2. A notifiable disease can only be an infectious disease.

3. The objective of notification is to strengthen disease surveillance and public health policy.

Select the correct answer using the code given below—

(a) 1 and 3 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 2 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: a)

UPSC Mains Practice Questions

Question: "The success of cancer control depends more on effective disease surveillance than on treatment." In light of this statement, examine the need to declare cancer a notifiable disease at the national level in India.**(10 Marks, 150 Words)**

Page 07 :GS II :Indian Polity / Preliminary Examination

The Central Board of Secondary Education's (CBSE) directive to implement the 'Three-Language Formula' under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 from Class 6, starting in the academic session 2026-27, has sparked a new linguistic controversy and widespread confusion among schools, parents, and diplomatic circles across the country. The core stipulation of this policy is that out of the three languages studied by students, at least two must be native Indian languages (Bhartiya Bhasha). Consequently, teaching foreign languages (such as French and German) as a third language in English-medium schools is under threat, leading to policy crises including curriculum disruption and teacher layoffs.

CBSE directed all affiliated schools to implement the three-language formula under NEP 2020, from Class 6. The policy requires that two of the three languages be native Indian languages. Students attend school for the new academic year. LH. MA

Inside India's language conundrum

The CBSE's move to implement the National Education Policy 2020's three-language formula from Class 6 has caused confusion across the country. The transition has led to teacher losses, curriculum disruptions, and concerns from parents, students, and foreign embassies. **Maitri Porecha** reports on the many challenges in implementing the three-language formula in a country as diverse as India

When the summer break came to an end, 10-year-old Adya Pandey, a Class 6 student of Seth Anandram Jaipuria School in Greater Noida West, packed her bag for school. She stuffed a bunch of books inside, including her French textbook, but then, on a sudden realisation, pulled it out and tossed it on the table.

"It hasn't sunk in yet that I won't be studying French at school any more," she said.

Adya, who studies in an English-medium school, had been learning French and Hindi. She had chosen French as her third language a year ago, when she was in Class 5. In April, when the academic session of 2026-27 began, she attended French classes at school and diligently finished studying three chapters from her textbook.

However, in the same month, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) directed all affiliated schools, with altogether about 40 lakh children, to implement the three-language formula under the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, from Class 6. The policy requires that two of the three languages be native Indian languages (*Bhartiya Bhasha*).

Following this, many English-medium schools, including Adya's, issued circulars in May saying they would discontinue foreign languages such as French as the third language. The CBSE also considers English a foreign language, despite it being one of the 22 official languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

In place of foreign languages, many schools decided to offer Sanskrit as the third language. A circular from Delhi Public School in Greater Noida West explained, "Because of the linguistic diversity of our learners, implementation of any other native Indian language is not logistically viable. Therefore, as a school, we have decided to offer Sanskrit as the third language."

Adya said she was shocked to receive a circular from her school asking students to stop learning German and French at school. "Around 25 of us had chosen French, 20 had opted for German, and only 15 had chosen Sanskrit. Now, all 60 of us will have to learn Sanskrit," she said.

Her mother, Monika, said that Sanskrit has become largely obsolete today. "Adya can fluently recite shlokas from Hindu scriptures such as the *Ramcharitmanas* and the *Hanuman Chalisa*. These are the values we inculcate at home, but I believe learning a foreign language will help her from a career perspective," said Monika.

The three-language formula proposed by the NEP, 2020, which mandates that students learn at least two native Indian languages, has departed from the previous policy of 1968, which had emphasised the study of Hindi, English, and a modern Indian language (preferably one of the southern languages) in Hindi-speaking States, and Hindi, English, and a regional language in the non-Hindi speaking States.

The hasty roll-out of the policy, and the subsequent change in rules by the government, have caused chaos in CBSE schools across the country, with parents and students struggling with curriculum shifts and shortage of teachers.

> Adya can fluently recite shlokas from Hindu scriptures. These are the values we inculcate at home, but I believe learning a foreign language will help her from a career perspective.
> MONIKA
> Mother of Adya Pandey, a Class 6 CBSE student

Backlash and brief respite

Rami, 12, is a Class 8 student at Delhi Public School, Vasant Kunj. She was admitted under the Economically Weaker Section quota and has been studying French for the last four years. Her father, Nawaz, works as a driver, while her mother, Saraswati, takes up cooking and housekeeping jobs to help support the family.

In May, Nawaj was among the many parents who moved the Supreme Court challenging another CBSE circular, issued on May 15. It stated that all Class 9 students — including those who had previously been studying foreign languages — would instead study three languages, two of which must be native to India. Until this circular was issued, Class 9 students were required to study only two languages.

Although the directive applied only to Class 9, many schools forced students in Classes 7 and 8 to drop foreign languages as well, say parents. After the Court refused to stay the CBSE circular, the hopes of students of continuing to study the foreign language of their choice were dashed.

On June 25, however, following a backlash, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan clarified that the CBSE would relax its requirement for the present students of Classes 7, 8, and 9 to switch abruptly, mid-session, from studying a foreign language to studying a native Indian one. However, Classes 7, 8, and 9 students will still have to study a third language native to India.

For instance, if a student studying in an English-medium school chose French as her second language, she would, as per the May circular, have had to drop French and learn two languages native to India. But following the clarification, she can continue learning French but will still have to study a native tongue, which can be Hindi or any other regional language.

Rami falls under this category. "I am glad I can continue learning the language I have been learning since Class 4," she said.

This indecisiveness on the part of the Ministry of Education regarding the language policy has caused confusion across schools. After the CBSE stated that Class 9 students would have to switch mid-session from foreign to native languages, many schools, such as Heritage Xperiential Learning School in Gurugram, either let go of their foreign language teachers or reassigned them to teach other subjects.

A principal from a private CBSE English-medium school in Mangaluru, Karnataka, said, "Earlier, we offered French, but after the CBSE circular in May, we let go of the French teacher. We also had an option for students to learn Konkani, but since we could not find a qualified Konkani teacher, we dropped it from the list. Now, we offer only English, Hindi, Kannada, and Sanskrit."

Around 40 lakh students study across various CBSE schools in India.

CBSE-affiliated schools in Puducherry had dropped French from the 2026-27 curriculum. This raised concerns over the livelihoods of French teachers in the Union Territory where French enjoys constitutional recognition.

Foreign languages impacted

According to data accessed by *The Hindu*, about 4.5 lakh students in India study French in school, while nearly 1.5 lakh learn German. In many schools, students begin learning these foreign languages as early as Classes 4, 5, or 6.

CBSE has stated that it has relaxed norms only for students in Classes 7, 8, and 9 who have already chosen a foreign language, but students in Class 6 will have to opt to learn three languages, of which two will have to be native to India. This essentially means that foreign language teaching will eventually be phased out of CBSE schools.

This decision has ruffled feathers in diplomatic circles. Sources said that the German and French embassies, which invest "significant funds" running into millions of euros in developing teaching infrastructure, preparing course materials, training teachers, and conducting language exams jointly "pushed back" against the Indian government's decision. A spokesperson of the German embassy said to *The Hindu*, "The embassy has confirmed that it is in contact with the Indian government on the issue."

The Centre's decision to reduce the role of foreign languages such as French and German in schools appears to be at odds with its broader efforts to strengthen educational and diplomatic ties with European countries.

Earlier this year, during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Germany, he and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz noted the growing number of Indian students pursuing higher education in Germany and welcomed the creation of an Indo-German Comprehensive Roadmap on Higher Education, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs.

"Germany is an attractive market for skilled Indian labour and there is an ambitious plan in place there for the migration of skilled labour," said a source. "Learning German is important for this community. How can you fulfil their ambitions if you don't support foreign language learning?"

Anuradha Karkun, a French language trainer and teacher based in the National Capital Region, said, "Students perceive learning foreign languages like French and German useful as it also helps them gain admission in renowned universities abroad. A working knowledge of the country's language in which a student wishes to pursue higher education is favourable even if the course is being taught in English."

Karkun is also a qualified examiner for the Diplôme d'Études en Langue Française (DELF). The DELF and the DALF (Diplôme Approfondi de Langue Française) are official international French language diplomas issued by the French Ministry of Education and are recognised for study, work, and immigration in French-speaking countries.

She explained that DELF certificates are in high demand among school students. According to data cited by *The Hindu*, around 11,000 candidates take the DELF examinations each year, including about 4,000 students who appear for DELF Junior, designed for school learners.

"Candidates as young as 11 years old (Class 6) prepare for DELF A1 levels," said Karkun. "By the time they are in Class 12, many progress to fairly advanced levels of B2. Early learning is made possible because they are already studying French at school. Learning a foreign language, in this case French, enables students to gain a broader intercultural world view empowering them as future ambassadors of India and global citizens."

The cost of compulsion

The NEP 2020 states that it offers greater flexibility in the three-language formula and that no language will be imposed on any State. It says that the three languages learned by students will be determined by the choices of States, regions, and the students themselves, provided that at least two of the three languages are native to India.

However, data indicate that the implementation of the three-language policy varies widely across States. According to an analysis of the share of schools based on languages taught at the primary stage (Classes 1-5), conducted by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in 2009, Hindi-speaking States largely opt for Sanskrit as the third language in school. This is the last such data available on language preferences in schools across India, as no follow-up survey was conducted by the NCERT. It is not available in the public domain and was accessed by *The Hindu* through sources.

This is largely why implementation of the three-language formula under the NEP, 2020, has seen intense political opposition from some States. Tamil Nadu's resistance to learning three languages dates back to the pre-Independence era. The 1968 draft of the NEP proposed that regions in southern India learn a north Indian language, and vice versa, in order to foster "national integration"; however, Tamil Nadu rejected this position and excluded the proposed introduction of Hindi from its curriculum. Six decades later, little has changed. Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay has said that students in the State will learn only two languages, with Tamil and English being the primary choices.

Anita Rampal, who was Professor and Dean at the Faculty of Education, Delhi University, said Tamil Nadu's two-language formula is not, as is often assumed, Tamil and English, but rather the mother tongue and English. "It is important to note that even after the implementation of the Tamil Nadu Tamil Learning Act, 2006, and the Tamil Nadu Tamil Learning Rules, 2012, minority-language schools, such as Urdu schools, are exempted from learning Tamil," she explained.

Even States such as Kerala, which have generally supported the three-language formula, are now facing uncertainty over the latest CBSE decision. Many elite and private CBSE schools in Kerala previously allowed students to opt for popular foreign languages such as French, German, or Arabic — sometimes in place of Hindi or Malayalam — given the State's strong links with the Gulf region. This will no longer be possible in the coming years as the CBSE is set to implement the revised three-language framework prospectively from Class 6 in the 2026-27 academic year, eventually extending it to Class 10 by 2030-31.

For State Board schools, Telangana has typically followed the three-language policy, with an emphasis on the mandatory learning of Telugu. Alongside Telugu, students can choose any two languages from English, Hindi, and Urdu.

However, policies that mandate language instruction often face resistance, and the Telangana Compulsory Teaching and Learning of Telugu in Schools) Act, 2018, is no exception.

"We were unable to fully implement the policy, especially due to resistance from students and schools, and failed to meet central and international boards, since its enactment in 2018," said a senior official in the Telangana School Education Department. The latest CBSE directive on the mandatory three-language policy for Class 6 has now opened the way for the State government to fully implement the aforementioned Act.

The infrastructure hurdle

Mostly, challenges in implementing the three-language formula arise from a lack of adequately trained teachers and the unavailability of learning material across regional languages.

According to the Unified District Information System for Education 2023-24, the government's primary management information system for school education, 58.6% schools across India teach three languages. The rest (38.4%) teach either one or two languages.

The State Board in Uttar Pradesh, for instance, had expressed interest in introducing the three-language formula for students from Class 9 onwards last year. However, officials told *The Hindu* that the policy has not been implemented in the academic years 2025-26 and 2026-27. In the case of south Indian languages, State Education Department officials said there are very few available teachers. "We had 17 students of Kannada, 10 students of Tamil, and 133 students of Telugu registered with us in the academic year 2025-26. These students appeared as private candidates and prepared on their own for language exams," said Bhagwati Singh, Secretary, Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad, the State Board of U.P. entrusted to conduct exams for Classes 10 and 12.

Nagaland in the north-east, which has a distinct socio-linguistic context, has also expressed resistance to the three-language formula. This is partly because the State and Centre have yet to provide adequate learning infrastructure for classrooms comprising children from over 30 different linguistic backgrounds.

"Nagaland students find it difficult to follow Hindi," said a principal of a CBSE school in Nagaland. "Schools in Nagaland seeking a workable path within the current policy framework are facing a difficult dilemma and are converging on a troubling default — Sanskrit. We respect Sanskrit as a language of immense historical and classical value. But we must be candid: for children of Nagaland, studying Sanskrit as their third language will not help them connect with their Angami grandmother, their Konyak grandfather, or the oral stories of their own community."

With inputs from B. Pradeep in Hyderabad, Mousam Kumar in Uttar Pradesh, and Rashmi Patil in Mangaluru

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> PRINCIPAL
> CBSE school, Nagaland

Key Points & Analysis

1. The New System vs. The Old System (NEP 2020 vs. 1968 Policy)

- **Provisions of NEP 2020:** Three languages will be mandatory from Class 6, out of which two must be Indian. The CBSE considers English a 'Foreign Language' (even though the original text incorrectly implies it is an administrative language included in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution). As a result, the traditional option of (English + one Indian language + one foreign language) has been eliminated in English-medium schools. They are now compelled to choose two Indian languages (e.g., Hindi and Sanskrit).
- **Difference in the 1968 Policy:** The 1968 three-language formula provisioned for (Hindi, English, and a modern Indian language—preferably a Southern language) in Hindi-speaking states, and (a regional language, English, and Hindi) in non-Hindi speaking states. The new policy has severely restricted the space for foreign languages.

2. Impact on Foreign Languages and Diplomatic Pushback

- **Data and Infrastructure:** Approximately 4.5 lakh students learn French and 1.5 lakh learn German in India. Removing foreign languages from Class 6 and relegating them to merely elective subjects will gradually phase out this academic stream.

- **Diplomatic Protest:** The embassies of Germany and France have raised objections against the Indian government's decision. These countries have invested millions of euros in language teaching infrastructure, teacher training, and certification examinations (like DELF Junior) in India.

- **Contradiction with Global Ambitions:** On one hand, the Indian government is signing pacts like the 'Indo-German Migration and Mobility Agreement' to facilitate the movement of a skilled Indian workforce abroad; on the other hand, discouraging these languages at the school level directly impacts students' prospects as global citizens and their chances of admission into foreign universities.

3. The Default Option of 'Sanskrit' and Logical Challenges

- **Lack of Resources:** Despite claims of promoting linguistic diversity, most English-medium schools have imposed Sanskrit as the default third language due to logistical constraints, rather than offering a variety of regional Indian languages (like Tamil, Kannada, or Telugu).

- **Questioning Practical Relevance:** Parents and experts argue that while Sanskrit holds immense historical and cultural significance, it does not offer the same career-building utility in the contemporary global economy as foreign languages do.

4. Political and Regional Opposition from States (Federal & Regional Conflict)

- **Tamil Nadu's 'Two-Language' Model:** Tamil Nadu has fiercely opposed the three-language formula (historically viewed as the imposition of Hindi) since pre-independence times. The state government has firmly stated that they will stick exclusively to the 'Two-Language Formula' (Tamil and English / Mother Tongue and English).

- **Kerala and Telangana:** In states like Kerala, which have deep economic ties with Gulf countries and where Arabic, French, or German were preferred in schools, this decision has created massive uncertainty. Meanwhile, Telangana is utilizing this CBSE directive as an opportunity to enforce its own 'Mandatory Telugu Act 2018'.

- **Unique Challenge in the Northeast (Nagaland):** In states like Nagaland, which boast over 30 distinct local tribal languages, it is exceptionally difficult for children to learn Hindi or Sanskrit. Sociologists argue that imposing Sanskrit on children in Nagaland alienates them from the oral traditions and cultural narratives of their own local communities and grandparents.

5. Infrastructure Hurdles

- **Shortage of Teachers:** In large states like Uttar Pradesh, if a student genuinely wishes to study Kannada or Tamil, the state board simply lacks the available teaching faculty. Students are often forced to prepare entirely on their own as 'Private Candidates'.

- **Teacher Layoffs:** Due to the sudden and rushed implementation of the policy, many schools have fired their foreign language teachers mid-session or forcibly transferred them to other subjects, thereby jeopardizing their livelihoods.

Conclusion

Education is a subject on the Concurrent List, and in a highly diverse, multilingual country like India, forcibly or hastily implementing any rigid linguistic policy runs counter to the spirit of 'Cooperative Federalism' and the ultimate interests of the students.

Promoting 'Indian Languages' to strengthen India's cultural identity is undoubtedly a commendable endeavor, but it must not come at the cost of global opportunities. The government should adopt a flexible approach that champions genuine 'Linguistic Pluralism', where students are encouraged to learn Indian languages alongside diplomatically and economically significant foreign languages. The fundamental objective of education should be to make citizens globally competitive, rather than stunting their learning capacity through strict administrative compulsion.

UPSC Prelims Exam Study Questions

Question: What is the primary objective of the 'Three-Language Formula'?

(a) To promote English education only

(b) To encourage linguistic diversity, national unity, and multilingualism

(c) To implement a uniform language across all states

(d) To make the study of foreign languages mandatory only

Ans: b)

UPSC Mains Exam Study Questions

Question: Briefly describe the key features and objectives of the Three-Language Formula under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.**(10 Marks, 150 Words)**

In News :GS II :International Relations / Preliminary Examination

16th India-Japan Annual Summit

The 16th India-Japan Annual Summit was hosted in New Delhi. This summit provided a crucial platform to further strengthen the "Special Strategic and Global Partnership" between the two nations. The primary focus of the deliberations remained on defense co-development, clean energy, and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

1. Key Outcomes of the Summit

Defense and Security Cooperation

- **UNICORN Project:** The two countries reached a principled consensus on the remaining technical aspects of the UNICORN (Unified Complex Radio Antenna) project. This marks the first-ever defense co-development program between the two nations.
- **Military Expansion:** Agreement was reached to enhance maritime security, naval Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO), Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), and joint military exercises.

- **Ministerial Dialogue:** It was decided to convene the fourth 'India-Japan 2+2 Ministerial Meeting' toward the end of the year 2026.

Economic Security and Supply Chains

- **Joint Declaration:** A joint declaration on Economic Security Cooperation was adopted, focusing heavily on semiconductors, critical minerals, ICT, clean energy, and pharmaceuticals.
- **Reducing Dependency:** Both sides expressed a firm commitment to building secure and diversified supply chains to mitigate dependence on a single nation (China) and to counter economic coercion.

Energy Security and Clean Energy Partnership

- **CBG Initiative:** The 'India-Japan Cooperative Biogas Development (CBG) Initiative' was launched to realize the target of establishing 1,000 biogas and organic fertilizer plants across India.
- **Green Technology:** Cooperation will be accelerated in green hydrogen, clean ammonia, solar PV, and nuclear energy. Japan also reiterated its staunch support for securing India's full membership in the International Energy Agency (IEA).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Emerging Technologies

- **AI Strategic Dialogue:** The inaugural 'India-Japan AI Strategic Dialogue' was launched, accompanied by a joint statement advocating for responsible AI governance and secure digital infrastructure.

Trade, Investment, and Industrial Cooperation

- **₹10 Trillion Investment Target:** Both nations agreed to fast-track the achievement of this massive Japanese investment target and to accelerate the review of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).
- **$10 Billion Package:** A Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) was inked securing a $10 billion investment package.

Indo-Pacific and Global Cooperation

- **FOIP Vision:** The mutual commitment to a 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' was reaffirmed, which aligns perfectly with India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) and the MAHASAGAR vision.
- **Trilateral Talks:** The launch of a Track 1.5 policy dialogue between India, Japan, and the Philippines was announced, marking a fresh front in regional maritime security.
- **Disaster Management:** Japan will back India's bid to host the Fourth UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction scheduled for 2030.

2. Present Status of India-Japan Relations

Historical and Strategic Evolution

- **Journey of Ties:** Diplomatic ties initiated in 1952 evolved into a 'Global Partnership' in 2000, 'Annual Summits' in 2006, and graduated to a 'Special Strategic and Global Partnership' in 2014.
- **Strategic Forums:** Security architecture has been robustly reinforced through the 'Act East Forum' (2017) and the 'Quad' grouping. To streamline logistics cooperation, the 'Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA)' was signed in 2020.

Economic and Commercial Relations

- **Trade Dynamics:** In the financial year 2025-26, bilateral trade stood at $27.48 billion (India's exports: $6.04 billion, imports: $21.44 billion).
- **FDI and Ranking:** Japan is the 5th largest investor in India. Nationally, Japan ranks as India's 10th largest trading partner, while India is Japan's 14th largest.
- **Infrastructure Support (ODA):** Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA) is driving India's mega-infrastructure projects, including the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (MAHSR/Bullet Train) and various corridors of the Delhi Metro.

Space and Human Resources

- **LUPEX Mission:** ISRO and JAXA are collaboratively working on the Lunar Polar Exploration (LUPEX) mission, scheduled for 2026-27, to explore the South Pole of the Moon.
- **Human Capital:** Currently, around 59,000 Indian nationals reside in Japan. Skilled Indian professionals are being seamlessly deployed to Japan under the 'Specified Skilled Worker' (SSW) program.

3. Key Challenges in the Relationship

Area of Challenge	Core Issue
Trade Deficit	The total bilateral trade of $27 billion remains far below potential and is heavily skewed in favor of Japan.
Project Delays	Flagship infrastructure projects like the Bullet Train (MAHSR) are experiencing persistent timelines delays due to local land acquisition hurdles and regional political disputes.
Sluggish Pace of	The 'Asia-Africa Growth Corridor' (AAGC), envisioned as a direct alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), has slowed down considerably due to the lack of a robust, dedicated funding

Area of Challenge	Core Issue
AAGC	mechanism.
Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs)	Indian agricultural exports and generic pharmaceutical formulations face entry issues in Japanese markets due to stringent local regulations and phytosanitary measures.
Strategic Divergence	On the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Japan stands aligned with the G7 sanctions framework, whereas India maintains its 'Strategic Autonomy', choosing to sustain its core defense and energy ties with Russia.
Cultural and Language Barriers	Despite Japan facing a severe demographic crisis (an aging population), skilled Indian professionals are unable to relocate to their optimum potential due to steep linguistic barriers.

4. Way Forward: Measures to Strengthen Ties

- **Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs):** To eliminate non-tariff barriers impeding the pharma and agricultural sectors, MRAs must be implemented swiftly under the existing CEPA framework.
- **Joint Sovereign Infrastructure Fund:** A dedicated India-Japan funding apparatus should be instituted to inject momentum into Global South connectivity initiatives and stalled AAGC projects.
- **Modernizing the Skill Pipeline:** Specialized 'Centers of Excellence' (CoEs) should be established within India to cater to advanced manufacturing and semiconductor verticals. The bilateral target to send 5 lakh Indian students and workers to Japan over the next 5 years must be pursued aggressively.
- **Minilateral Frameworks:** Smaller, dynamic subgroupings like India-Japan-Philippines (for maritime safety) and India-Japan-Australia (for critical mineral supply chains) must be reinforced to sidestep the systemic inertia of larger, bureaucratic multilateral forums.
- **Cultural Diplomacy 2.0:** Bilateral engagement must transcend the traditional parameters of "Buddhism and Yoga." Indian youth should be proactively prepared, both linguistically and technically, to match rigorous Japanese corporate standards.

Conclusion

The India-Japan relationship has successfully transitioned from being anchored merely in "shared values" to being driven by concrete "shared economic and security interests." This alignment stands as a formidable pillar of stability and rules-based order across the wider Indo-Pacific region in the 21st century.

UPSC Prelims Exam Study Questions

Question: What is the primary objective of the India-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)?

(a) To enhance defense cooperation only

(b) Nuclear energy cooperation only

(c) To promote trade, investment, and economic cooperation

(d) Cultural exchange only

Ans: c)

UPSC Mains Practice Questions

Question: Briefly outline the key features of the India-Japan 'Special Strategic and Global Partnership'.**(10 Marks, 150 Words)**

Building water security in a rapidly drying India

Nitin Bassi

Fellow at the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW)

The monsoon cannot fix India's water problem; policy could

Indian cities – from Bengaluru to Mussoorie (Uttarakhand) – are reeling under severe water stress. June saw a monsoon rainfall deficit of over 40%. Delhi is facing a severe shortage, and water supply has plummeted to about 70% of the total demand of 1,250 million gallons per day. Research by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) further finds that 11 out of 15 major river basins in India are experiencing water stress, with annual water availability below 1,700 m^3 per person. Several of them, including the Krishna, Cauvery, Mahi, and Tapi basins, are below the water scarcity threshold of 1,000 m^3 per person.

A recent report by the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH) warns of global water bankruptcy. Several river basins are polluted and closed, with no outflow to the sea. Aquifers are being depleted beyond safe limits. Nearly three-quarters of the global population lives in water-insecure countries, with four billion people facing severe water scarcity for at least one month a year.

Water infrastructure gaps

India has an uneven distribution of water resources. With 4% of the world's water resources supporting 18% of the population, historically, the country has lived and grown with water uncertainty. While schemes such as the Jal Jeevan Mission and Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana have helped develop water supply infrastructure, concerns remain regarding the poor upkeep of existing infrastructure, inadequate wastewater treatment facilities, substantial conveyance losses, high levels of water pollution, and low cost recovery.

There are four interrelated actions that can help India navigate the 'state of bankruptcy' to become water secure.

First, invest in climate-proofing water systems through granular climate risk assessments of water infrastructure and services. The CEEW's analysis of India's urban flood risk management shows that such assessments help prioritise investments in high to very high-risk locations, including coastal and low-lying areas such as Thane (Maharashtra) and Navsari (Gujarat), or areas with critical infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, and electricity grids, as seen in Ahmedabad. These assessments are especially important for cash-strapped urban local bodies and panchayats. Cities should leverage existing mechanisms like the Urban Challenge Fund (UCF) to finance them–for instance, Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh) recently secured ₹1,501 crore under the UCF for water supply and drainage, part of which could support water risk assessments.

Second, enable water reuse for non-potable purposes in urban areas. Shifting from a linear to a circular approach to water use is essential to reduce pressure on freshwater resources. Used water can be treated and reused for activities such as car washing, landscaping, and cooling data centres. City-level reuse planning is key to achieving this. The Thane Municipal Corporation is adopting a scientific approach to scale up treated wastewater reuse, including for construction, to reduce its annual freshwater deficit of 53 million litres per day and generate revenue. According to CEEW analysis, the economic opportunity from the sale of treated wastewater could reach ₹3 lakh crore and generate 1,00,000 additional jobs by 2047.

Third, scale up micro-irrigation systems, including drip and sprinkler technologies that deliver water to crops more efficiently than flood irrigation. Expanding these systems beyond the current 20% coverage of India's potential 72 million hectares of irrigated area requires large-scale interventions. First, the CEEW's Gujarat research shows that micro-irrigation subsidies should be redesigned for small and marginal farmers by using 0.4 hectares instead of one hectare as the base unit. Second, farmers need support to shift to low-water, higher-value crops such as horticulture and oilseeds to recover costs, as seen in Andhra Pradesh's Rayalaseema region. Third, low-cost insurance with faster claims, including through a strengthened Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, can help smallholders manage climate and crop risks.

Close water data gaps

Finally, generate data at the river basin level to improve decision-making. India has good data on water availability, but limited data on withdrawals, losses, and consumption at the basin scale. This makes it difficult to assess actual water use, gauge efficiency gains, or allocate water judiciously – often leading one sector to gain at the expense of others, while the lack of data encourages "free riding", with users extracting as much as the source allows. Artificial Intelligence-based monitoring of water conveyance infrastructure can help detect and measure losses and also generate data. Cities such as Delhi and Bhubaneswar (Odisha) are installing smart bulk water meters to identify and reduce physical losses during distribution. Equally important is analysing end-user consumption by scaling up smart metering and using advanced water accounting tools. India's rollout of over 4.93 crore smart electricity meters can serve as a model for the water sector.

Water is an economic resource – it powers lives, livelihoods, and ecosystems. Reversing water bankruptcy will be the foundation of social welfare. Political will, transparent governance, and societal trust are the levers. Pull them, and India can still turn the tide toward a water-secure future.

The views expressed are personal

GS Paper III:Environment

UPSC Mains Exam Practice Questions: Briefly outline the key features of the India-Japan 'Special Strategic and Global Partnership'.(**15 Marks, 250 Words)**

Context : India is currently enduring one of its most severe water crises in history, with 18% of the global population having access to only 4% of the world's total freshwater resources. Recently, during the month of June, a deficit of over 40% was

recorded in monsoon rainfall. Consequently, massive metropolitan areas like Delhi and Bengaluru, as well as hill stations like Mussoorie, are facing acute water stress.

According to the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), 11 out of India's 15 major river basins are already water-stressed, while rivers like Krishna, Cauvery, and Mahi have breached critical scarcity levels (dropping below 1,000 m^3 per capita). In light of the United Nations University (UNU-INWEH) warning of a looming global 'Water Bankruptcy', India urgently needs to radically overhaul its water security policies.

Key Points: Water Infrastructure Gaps in India

- **Inequity in Distribution:** The spatial (geographic) and temporal (seasonal) distribution of water resources across India is highly unequal.
- **Lack of Maintenance:** While central flagship schemes like the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) and PM Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) have successfully built vast physical infrastructure, the long-term asset upkeep remains suboptimal.
- **Deficit in Wastewater Treatment:** A significant volume of urban sewage and industrial effluent is discharged directly into water bodies without treatment, polluting nearly 70% of the country's surface water.
- **Massive Conveyance Losses:** Due to aging pipeline networks and leaks, approximately 40% of the municipal water supply is lost in transit as Non-Revenue Water (NRW).
- **Low Cost Recovery:** The absence of rational and realistic pricing for water services strains the financial autonomy of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs).

4 Critical CEEW Suggestions to Counter Water Bankruptcy

1. Climate-Proofing Water Systems

- To build resilient infrastructure, local administrations must conduct granular climate risk assessments.
- Infrastructure investments should prioritize low-lying coastal zones (such as Thane and Navsari) and critical public utilities (schools, hospitals, and power grids).
- Financially strained local bodies can utilize the 'Urban Challenge Fund' (UCF) to bridge funding gaps, mimicking Visakhapatnam's recent model of securing ₹1,501 crore for comprehensive water supply and drainage works.

2. Recycling and Reusing Used Water in Urban Areas

- Municipalities must transition away from a linear approach ("take-use-discharge") to a circular economy paradigm ("recycle and reuse").
- Treated wastewater should be mandatorily diverted to non-potable applications such as civic gardening, commercial car washing, construction activities, and cooling industrial data centers.

- The Thane Municipal Corporation is successfully implementing this methodology to narrow its daily water demand deficit. CEEW estimates that commercializing treated water could unlock an economic opportunity worth ₹3 lakh crore and generate 100,000 additional jobs by 2047.

3. Scaling Up Micro-Irrigation Systems

- Out of India's potential 72 million hectares of net irrigated area, only 20% currently deploys efficient drip and sprinkler technologies. Expanding this footprint requires three critical interventions:
    - **Restructuring Subsidies:** Based on a CEEW study in Gujarat, the eligibility threshold for small and marginal farmers should be rationalized to 0.4 hectares instead of the rigid 1-hectare baseline.
    - **Crop Diversification:** Farmers should be incentivized to transition from water-guzzling crops like paddy and sugarcane to low-water, high-value alternatives like horticulture and oilseeds (as successfully demonstrated in Rayalaseema, Andhra Pradesh).
    - **Risk Mitigation:** Strengthening the 'Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana' to deliver swift and low-friction insurance claims will give farmers the confidence to adopt new irrigation paradigms without fear of crop failure.

4. Closing Water Data Gaps at the River Basin Level

- While India maintains aggregate data on water availability, it lacks precise, real-time data regarding water withdrawal, actual consumption, and losses at the individual river basin level. This data vacuum encourages unregulated extraction (free-riding).
- **AI and Smart Metering:** Deploying Artificial Intelligence (AI) monitoring frameworks and smart bulk water meters can accurately track and detect infrastructure leakages, as currently piloted in Delhi and Bhubaneswar.
- Just as India has successfully rolled out over 4.93 crore smart electricity meters to reform the power sector, a similar smart metering model must be integrated into municipal water networks to precisely measure consumer end-use.

Conclusion

Water is not merely a natural commodity; it is a priceless economic and social resource that forms the backbone of India's macroeconomic growth, rural livelihoods, and ecological balance. To safeguard the nation against imminent water bankruptcy and secure public welfare, policy focus must move beyond short-term infrastructure fixes toward long-term structural reforms.

Unwavering political will, transparent governance, and the integration of societal trust into policymaking are the prime engines that will drive India toward a water-secure future. Implementing these measures in a timely manner will not only insulate our urban centers from hitting a catastrophic 'Day Zero' scenario but will also guide agriculture and industry onto a path of sustainable development.

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