



PM Modi Flags Off Four New Vande Bharat Trains | Uttar Pradesh | 08 Nov 2025

Why in News?

On 8th November 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off four new Vande Bharat Express trains from Varanasi, marking another major milestone in India’s mission to deliver world-class, high-speed, and comfortable train travel.

Key Points

- **Vande Bharat Express:** It was launched in 2019 (first route: New Delhi-Varanasi) under *Make in India* initiative.
 - It is developed by Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Chennai.
- **Features:**
 - Equipped with [Kavach safety system](#), regenerative braking, GPS display, Wi-Fi, and CCTV surveillance.
 - Designed for 180 km/h; operational up to 160 km/h.
 - Fully air-conditioned semi-high-speed trainset with reclining seats, automatic doors, and infotainment system.
 - Operates on 65+ routes across India (as of Nov 2025).
 - Enhances regional connectivity, boosts tourism, promotes [Aatmanirbhar Bharat](#), and represents India’s leap toward sustainable, modern rail transport.
- **New Routes and Impact Overview:**

Route	Impacts
Banaras-Khajuraho	Establishes <i>direct connectivity</i> between sacred and cultural destinations like Varanasi, Prayagraj, Chitrakoot , and Khajuraho (UNESCO World Heritage Site) .
Lucknow-Saharanpur	Improves connectivity for Lucknow, Sitapur, Bareilly, Moradabad, Bijnor, and Saharanpur .
Firozpur-Delhi	Strengthens trade and mobility between Delhi and major Punjab cities like Firozpur, Bathinda, and Patiala .
Ernakulam-Bengaluru	Links key IT and commercial hubs across Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka .

Why in News?

The **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** released its **Emissions Gap Report 2025**, titled *"Off Target"*, warning that current **climate pledges under the Paris Agreement** are insufficient to meet the 1.5°C target.

Key Points

- **Projected Warming Levels:**
 - Under the current policies, the world is projected to warm by approximately **2.8°C by 2100**.
 - If all **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** are fully implemented, the projected warming could be reduced to around **2.3-2.5°C** by the end of the century.
 - Only a **marginal improvement** from last year's (2024) estimate of **2.6-2.8°C**, showing limited new ambition.
- **Influencing Factors:**
 - **Methodological adjustments** improved projections by 0.1°C.
 - **US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement** expected to offset the same 0.1°C gain.
- **Reduction Targets by 2035:**
 - To limit global warming to **2°C**, global greenhouse gas emissions must decline by **35% below 2019 levels by 2035**.
 - To achieve the more ambitious **1.5°C target**, emissions need to fall by **55% below 2019 levels** within the same period.
 - However, **UNEP warns that a temporary overshoot of the 1.5°C threshold is very likely within the next decade**, underscoring the urgency for deeper and faster emission cuts.
- **Positive Indicators:**
 - Projected temperature rise has dropped from **3-3.5°C (2015)** to around **2.5°C (2025)**, reflecting progress since the **Paris Agreement**.
 - **Solar and wind** technologies are rapidly scaling, cutting deployment costs globally.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

- Established in **1972**, following the **UN Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm)**.
- **Headquarters:** Nairobi, Kenya
- Acts as the **leading global environmental authority**, coordinating international environmental efforts and assisting nations in implementing sustainable policies.
- **Flagship Reports:**
 - Emissions Gap Report
 - Adaptation Gap Report
 - Global Environment Outlook (GEO)

State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) 2025 Report | National Current Affairs | 08 Nov 2025

Why in News?

The **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** has released the State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) 2025 report titled **"Addressing Land Degradation Across Landholding Scales"**.

Key Points

- **Key Findings:**
 - **Global Cropland Decline:** Around **20% of global croplands** show declining productivity due to soil erosion, nutrient depletion, and loss of organic carbon.
 - **Regional Impact:** Asia and Africa are the **most affected**, with severe yield gaps (up to 70% below potential levels) in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.
 - **India's Status:** India recorded **one of the highest yield gaps globally**, attributed to land misuse and declining soil fertility.
 - **Key Drivers:** Deforestation (90% of forest loss), monocropping, excessive fertilizer use, unsustainable irrigation, and poor soil management.
- **Land Degradation:**
 - **Land degradation** is defined as the **long-term decline in land's ability to provide essential ecosystem services**, caused by natural processes and human actions like **deforestation**, overgrazing, and unsustainable irrigation.
- **Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN):**
 - It refers to a global goal aimed at ensuring that the **amount and quality of land resources remain stable or improve over time**.
 - The concept was adopted under the **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)** in **2015** as part of the **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15.3**.
 - **Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Hierarchy:** Avoid > Reduce > Reverse land degradation- a core FAO principle to restore ecological balance.

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

- The **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** was **established in 1945**.
- It is **headquartered in Rome, Italy**.
- It functions as a **specialized agency of the United Nations**.
- It has **194 member countries**, including the **European Union**.
- It aims to **end hunger, improve nutrition, ensure food security, and promote sustainable agriculture**.
- **Flagship Reports:**
 - State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA)
 - State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI)
 - State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA)
 - State of the World's Forests (SOFO)
- **India and FAO:** India is a founding member; FAO supports India's National Food Security Mission, Soil Health Card Scheme, and Sustainable Land Management initiatives.