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✎ WHY IN NEWS

March 10, 2026 connected four policy-heavy themes: an upgraded strategic partnership with Finland, the evolving governance architecture of Digital India, the humanitarian cost of explosive weapons in cities under an emerging international political declaration, and India's new standards for green ammonia and green methanol.

INDIA-FINLAND RELATIONS SHOW THE VALUE OF FOCUSED MIDDLE-POWER PARTNERSHIPS

India-Finland relations may not attract the same attention as ties with the United States or Russia, but they matter because they are built on complementary strengths. The two countries have recently elevated their relationship to a “**Strategic Partnership in Digitalisation and Sustainability**”, following discussions between **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** and **Finnish President Alexander Stubb**.

Finland is important in **clean technology, telecommunications** (especially **6G research**), **education, circular economy approaches**, and high-end manufacturing, while India offers scale, talent, markets, and digital public infrastructure. Bilateral trade stood at approximately **USD 0.5 billion** (India's exports to Finland) and **USD 0.8 billion** (Finland's exports to India) in FY2025, with both countries setting a target to **double bilateral trade by 2030**. A **Joint Working Group on Digitalisation** and a **Joint Task Force on 6G Telecommunications** have been established. The **13th Foreign Office Consultations** were held in Helsinki in **November 2025**.

For UPSC, such partnerships show how India's foreign policy often advances through issue-based cooperation with technologically advanced middle powers, covering AI, quantum computing, semiconductors, sustainability, and education reform.

DIGITAL INDIA IS NOW ABOUT GOVERNANCE ARCHITECTURE, NOT ONLY DIGITISATION

The **Digital India** initiative, launched on **1 July 2015** by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has evolved from a programme focused on internet access into a larger governance framework built around **digital public infrastructure (DPI)**, service delivery, identity (Aadhaar), payments (UPI), and state capacity. In **2023**, the Union Cabinet approved an **expansion of Digital India** with an outlay of **Rs 14,903 crore**.

India's DPI stack — **Aadhaar** (over 1.3 billion enrolments), **UPI** (processing over 10 billion transactions per month), **DigiLocker**, **UMANG**, and **CoWIN** — has been recognised internationally, including at the **G20 New Delhi Summit (2023)** where India championed the concept of DPI for development.

The deeper policy question is no longer whether digitalisation is useful, but how to make it inclusive, secure, and accountable. Digital systems can reduce leakages and improve convenience, but they can also create exclusion when access, language, authentication, or grievance redress fail. That tension makes Digital India relevant for both governance and ethics-oriented answers.

EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS IN POPULATED AREAS RAISE SERIOUS HUMANITARIAN-LAW CONCERNS

The use of **explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA)** has emerged as a major international humanitarian concern. The **Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas** was adopted on **18 November 2022** in **Dublin, Ireland**, with **83 states** signing it initially. As of December 2025, **90 states** have endorsed the declaration.

This is the first formal international recognition that the use of explosive weapons in populated areas is the **leading cause of civilian casualties** in armed conflict. The declaration commits endorsing states to developing national policies, gathering data on humanitarian impacts, and providing victim assistance. However, it is a **political declaration, not a legally binding treaty**.

For UPSC, the topic matters because it brings together **international humanitarian law (IHL)**, **civilian protection**, **urban warfare**, and the limits of military necessity. It also shows that the true cost of conflict is measured not only in immediate casualties but in long-term damage to health systems, education, and urban recovery.

GREEN AMMONIA AND GREEN METHANOL ARE BECOMING IMPORTANT ENERGY

CARRIERS

As the energy transition deepens, **green ammonia** and **green methanol** are attracting policy attention as fuels and feedstocks that can support sectors difficult to decarbonise through direct electrification. On **27 February 2026**, India notified the **Green Ammonia and Green Methanol Standards** under the **National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM)**, defining emission thresholds: Green Ammonia must have total non-biogenic greenhouse gas emissions of not more than **0.38 kg CO₂ equivalent per kg**, and Green Methanol not more than **0.44 kg CO₂ equivalent per kg**.

The **National Green Hydrogen Mission**, approved by the Union Cabinet on **4 January 2023** with an outlay of **Rs 19,744 crore** (FY 2023-24 to FY 2029-30), targets production of **5 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA) of green hydrogen by 2030**, with an associated renewable energy capacity addition of about **125 GW**. Green ammonia and green methanol are key derivatives in this mission, with applications in **shipping decarbonisation** (replacing ~300 million tonnes of fuel oil globally per year), **fertiliser production**, and **industrial energy**. The global green methanol market is projected to reach **6-12 MMTPA** operational capacity by 2030.

UPSC RELEVANCE

India-Finland Strategic Partnership; Digital India (1 July 2015); DPI, UPI, Aadhaar; EWIPA Political Declaration (Dublin, 2022); green ammonia/methanol standards (Feb 2026); NGHM (Jan 2023, Rs 19,744 crore).

MAINS GS-2:

Digital governance and international cooperation.

MAINS GS-3:

Urban conflict/IHL, energy transition, green hydrogen economy.

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INDIA-FINLAND RELATIONS:

Elevated to “**Strategic Partnership in Digitalisation and Sustainability**”

Key leaders: PM Modi and President Alexander Stubb

Joint Working Group on Digitalisation; Joint Task Force on 6G

India’s exports to Finland: ~**USD 0.5 billion** (FY2025)

Finland’s exports to India: ~**USD 0.8 billion** (FY2025)

Target: double bilateral trade by **2030**

13th Foreign Office Consultations: **November 2025**, Helsinki

DIGITAL INDIA:

Launched: **1 July 2015**

2023 expansion outlay: **Rs 14,903 crore**

DPI stack: Aadhaar (1.3 billion+), UPI (10 billion+ transactions/month), DigiLocker, UMANG

Key concerns: digital inclusion, cybersecurity, privacy, grievance redress

EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS IN POPULATED AREAS (EWIPA):

Political Declaration adopted: **18 November 2022**, Dublin, Ireland

Initial signatories: **83 states**; current endorsers: **90** (as of Dec 2025)

EWIPA is the **leading cause of civilian casualties** in armed conflict

Declaration is **not legally binding** (political commitment)

Commits states to: national policies, data collection, victim assistance

GREEN AMMONIA AND GREEN METHANOL:

India notified standards on **27 February 2026** under NGHM

Green Ammonia threshold: **0.38 kg CO_{2e}/kg**; Green Methanol: **0.44 kg CO_{2e}/kg**

National Green Hydrogen Mission: approved **4 January 2023**

NGHM outlay: **Rs 19,744 crore** (FY24 to FY30)

NGHM target: **5 MMTPA** green hydrogen by 2030; **125 GW** renewable energy addition

Global green methanol market projection: **6-12 MMTPA** by 2030

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

Finland is a global leader in 6G research (University of Oulu’s 6G Flagship programme)

India championed DPI at the G20 New Delhi Summit (September 2023)

NGHM includes Rs 17,490 crore for the SIGHT programme (incentives for green hydrogen/ammonia)

Sources: [Ministry of External Affairs](#), [Digital India](#), [International Committee of the Red Cross](#), [Ministry of New and Renewable Energy](#), [PIB](#)

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