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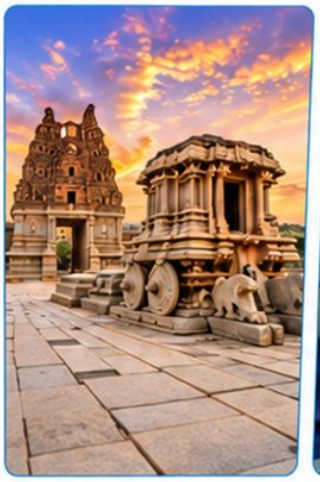
Weekly Current Affairs Compilation for UPSC TNPSC KPSC

Guiding Dreams, Empowering Future

By *DR. V. RAM PRASATH MANOHAR, IAS*

EXCLUSIVE CURRENT AFFAIRS BULLETIN

Newsletter | 1st Week, October 2026

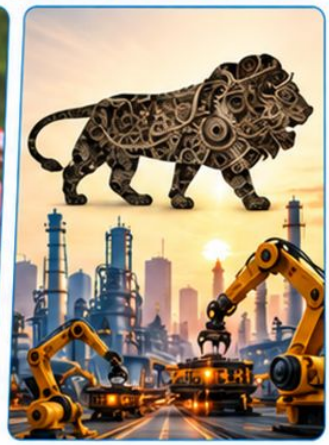








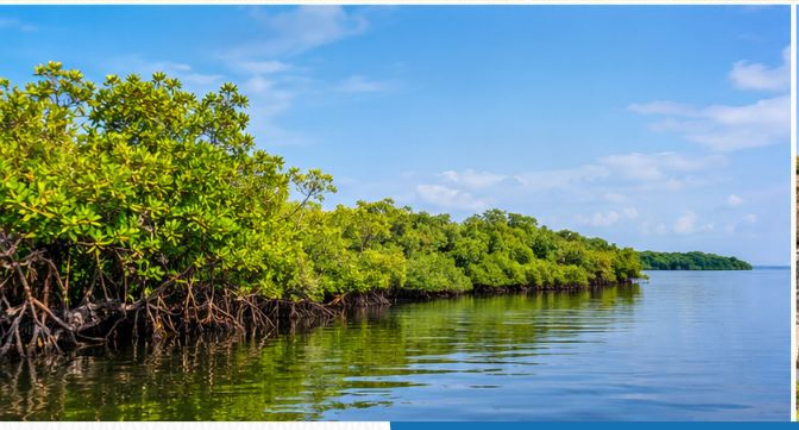




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UNESCO Tentative List ADDITIONS & WORLD Tourism Day 2026

Why in News

India added new heritage properties and serial/trans-national proposals to its UNESCO Tentative List, while World Tourism Day 2026 on 27 September highlighted digital technology and artificial intelligence in tourism. Together, the developments connect heritage conservation, tourism, technology, livelihoods and global cultural engagement.

Part A:

New Additions to India's UNESCO Tentative List

- The announced additions took India's Tentative List count to 78.
- India's World Heritage portfolio includes cultural and natural properties such as Santiniketan, Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas and Assam's Moidams; distinguish the Tentative List from the formally inscribed World Heritage List.

1. Bagh Cave Paintings – Madhya Pradesh

- Located on the southern slopes of the Vindhyas along the Baghni River; nine rock-cut Buddhist caves in sandstone within a largely basaltic region.
- Developed during the Gupta period, broadly 4th–6th century CE.
- Inscriptions dated roughly 358–487 CE use terms such as "Valkha" and "Vikha-adishthana", indicating political-administrative importance.
- Associated with Buddhist monastic activity; features Chaityagrihas, Viharas, pillared verandas and Stupas.
- Murals show continuity with Ajanta while retaining regional identity; earth/lime plaster and mineral pigments include lapis lazuli, terre verte, red/yellow ochre and carbon.
- Comparable within the wider Asian mural tradition to Ajanta, Sigiriya and Mogao.

2. Udaigiri Caves – Madhya Pradesh

- Primarily late 4th–early 5th century CE; about twenty rock-cut caves associated with Gupta rulers Chandragupta II and Kumaragupta I.
- Known for Vaishnava iconography, especially the colossal Varaha panel and Anantasayana Vishnu.
- Also contains Shaiva and Jain elements, reflecting religious pluralism.
- Represents a transition between rock-cut architecture and later freestanding stone temples with sanctum, mandapa and axial planning.
- Shows synthesis of Mathura/Malwa regional idioms with Gupta classical aesthetics.

3. Group of Temples of the Chambal Valley – Madhya Pradesh

- Includes Bateshwar, Padavali and Kakarmath in Morena district.
- Built broadly between the 8th and 11th centuries CE under Gurjara-Pratihara and Kachchhapaghata patronage.
- Important examples of regional Nagara-style temple architecture.
- Features axial planning, shikharas, sandstone carving and sophisticated dry-masonry construction.

4. Ginnorgarh Fort – Madhya Pradesh

- Tribal hill-fort inside Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary, using forests, ravines and steep slopes as natural defences.
- Associated with Raj Gond political power and the Garha/Gond historical landscape between the 15th and 18th centuries.
- The region's history includes the legacy of Rani Durgavati and subsequent Mughal-era political layering.
- Spatial organisation includes outer defensive/service areas, middle administrative-military zones and an inner royal core.
- Rani Mahal ruins and Gond courtly art reflect indigenous traditions; local stone, lime and surkhi were used with organic binders such as jaggery and bael pulp.
- Architecture reflects interaction between Gond planning and Indo-Islamic elements.

5. Rangpur–Sivasagar Historical Ensemble – Assam

- Represents the political, ceremonial and architectural heart of the Tai Ahom kingdom.
- Tai Ahoms entered Assam under Siu-ka-pha in 1228 CE and ruled much of the Brahmaputra Valley for about six centuries.
- Ahom resistance to Mughal expansion is associated with the Battle of Saraighat (1671); the kingdom later declined amid internal conflict and Burmese invasions, followed by British expansion after the Treaty of Yandaboo (1826).
- Rangpur became an Ahom capital in the early 18th century; Sivasagar developed as a major political-cultural centre.
- Architecture evolved from timber/bamboo to brick-and-stone construction; Dols show distinctive plinth and shikhara forms.
- Hydraulic works include Joysagar, Gaurisagar and Sivasagar tanks, supported by indigenous engineering and the Paik labour-administration system.
- Key monuments include Rang Ghar, Talatal/Kareng Ghar and Ghanashyam House.
- The wider landscape includes Pohugarh and the Namdang Stone Bridge, illustrating Ahom engineering and cultural infrastructure.

6. Sites of Satyagraha – Serial Transnational Proposal

- Proposed as a serial transnational property linking sites in South Africa and India associated with the evolution of Gandhi's Satyagraha.
- South Africa: Pietermaritzburg Station, associated with Gandhi's 1893 train incident; Phoenix Settlement (1904), linked to Indian Opinion and experiments in communal living.
- India – Champaran, Bihar: Gandhi's first major Satyagraha in India (1917).
- Sabarmati Ashram, Gujarat: Associated with Gandhi's constructive programme and the 1930 Dandi March.
- Mani Bhavan, Mumbai: Gandhi's base during important phases of Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience.
- Harijan Sevak Sangh, Delhi: Founded in 1932 in the context of anti-untouchability work.
- Sevagram Ashram, Wardha: Established in 1936; associated with rural reconstruction, self-reliance and Swaraj.
- Aga Khan Palace, Pune: Detention site during 1942–44; associated with Kasturba Gandhi and Mahadev Desai.
- Gandhi Smriti, Delhi: Gandhi's last residence and the site of his assassination on 30 January 1948.

UNESCO Tentative List – Conceptual Framework

- A Tentative List is an inventory of cultural/natural properties a State Party may consider for future World Heritage nomination.
- A property normally must be on a State Party's Tentative List before nomination to the World Heritage List; Tentative List inclusion itself is not World Heritage inscription.
- For exam purposes, distinguish nomination, tentative listing and final inscription by the World Heritage Committee.

Part B: World Tourism Day 2026

- Observed on 27 September each year.
- The 2026 theme highlighted digital agenda and artificial intelligence in redesigning tourism.
- World Tourism Day was first observed in 1980; 27 September commemorates the adoption of the UNWTO Statutes in 1970.
- The date also falls around a seasonal transition in tourism between the Northern and Southern Hemispheres.

India's World Tourism Day Initiatives 2026

- National Digital Tourism Stack: open digital public infrastructure intended to improve discoverability, accessibility and trust in tourism offerings.
- Dekho Apna Desh 2.0: promotes lesser-known destinations and more balanced distribution of tourist footfall.
- Industry partnerships/MoUs: destination visibility, digital outreach, experiential tourism, sustainable tourism and community participation under the Incredible India framework.

Economic Significance of Tourism

- Global travel and tourism contributed about US$10.9 trillion, around 10% of global GDP, in 2024; supported about 357 million jobs and generated about US$1.9 trillion in international visitor spending.
- Tourism contributes about 5.22% to India's GDP; employment in the sector rose from about 6.94 crore in 2019–20 to 8.46 crore in 2023–24.
- Digital transformation and AI can improve planning, personalisation, visitor experience, skills and destination management.

Digital Transformation of Tourism in India

- e-Visa: introduced in 2014 for nationals of 43 countries and subsequently expanded substantially; current access spans many countries and designated airports, seaports and land ports.
- Incredible India Digital Platform: supports discovery of cultural, heritage, adventure, gastronomic, wellness, art/craft and rural tourism; AI-enabled features can support personalisation, weather/city information and travel services.
- NIDHI+: National Integrated Database of Hospitality Industry provides digital registration, recognition and classification workflows for tourism service providers.
- Google India partnership: Ministry of Tourism signed an MoU in June 2026 focused on AI, digital technology, data insights and capacity building.
- Tourism startups: DPIIT-recognised startups have expanded across many districts, including Tier II and Tier III cities.
- Multilingual Tourist Helpline: 24×7 toll-free assistance through 1800111363 / short code 1363 in multiple international languages.

India's Diverse Tourism Landscape

- Spiritual/Pilgrimage Tourism: Ayodhya, Kashi, Bodh Gaya, Amritsar, Tirupati, Puri and other destinations; supported by schemes such as PRASHAD and Swadesh Darshan.
- Buddhist Circuits: Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, Kushinagar and wider Asian cultural linkages.
- Heritage/Cultural Tourism: forts, palaces, temples, archaeological sites, museums, historic cities, festivals, arts, crafts and cuisines.
- Wellness, Yoga and Medical Tourism: traditional systems and modern healthcare strengthen India's wellness/medical tourism proposition.
- Eco and Wildlife Tourism: national parks, tiger reserves, wetlands, mangroves, forests and Himalayan landscapes; requires conservation-sensitive management.
- Rural and Community-Based Tourism: homestays, village experiences, local cuisine, handicrafts and agriculture-linked

experiences can diversify rural livelihoods.
- Coastal/Cruise Tourism: cruise passenger traffic increased from about 1.08 lakh in 2014–15 to 4.62 lakh in 2025–26; terminals and digital facilitation are being upgraded.
- Lighthouse Tourism: tourism facilities at selected lighthouses and museums promote maritime heritage under the Marine Aids to Navigation framework.
- MICE Tourism: national strategy promotes meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions using venues such as Bharat Mandapam, Yashobhoomi and Jio World Centre.
- BRICS Tourism Cooperation: India's 2026 BRICS chairship included tourism cooperation on AI, sustainability, skilling and travel facilitation.
- G20 legacy: meetings across multiple Indian cities during India's G20 Presidency increased destination visibility and showcased local culture, crafts and cuisine.

Government Initiatives to Boost Tourism

- Integrated Destination Development: shift from isolated attractions toward destination ecosystems.
- RCS-UDAN: improves regional air connectivity; the modified UDAN framework seeks further airport and helipad development.
- Swadesh Darshan: launched in 2014–15 for thematic tourism circuits; dozens of projects across Buddhist, Coastal, Desert, Eco, Himalayan, North East, Ramayana, Rural, Spiritual and Tribal themes.
- Swadesh Darshan 2.0: destination-centric, sustainable and experience-based approach; 53 projects worth about ₹2,207.08 crore cited in the supplied material.
- Challenge Based Destination Development (CBDD): sub-scheme under Swadesh Darshan 2.0; 37 projects worth about ₹687.99 crore cited under spiritual and eco-tourism categories.
- PRASHAD: pilgrimage and heritage destination development; 54 projects worth about ₹1,726.18 crore cited in the supplied material.
- Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI): supports iconic destination infrastructure; 40 projects across 23 States with 3,295.76 crore cited for FY 2024–25, plus subsequent tourism allocations.
- Capacity Building for Service Providers (CBSP): skilling, upskilling and reskilling of tourism workers and communities.
- Paryatan Mitra/Paryatan Didi: trains local service providers in hospitality, cleanliness, safety and sustainability; about 4,382 candidates cited as trained.
- Hospitality-skills partnerships: curricula revision and partnerships with Central Institutes of Hotel Management and hospitality groups.

Interconnection Between Heritage Conservation and Tourism

- Heritage sites can diversify tourism while conservation protects cultural/natural assets.
- Sustainable tourism seeks to balance visitor access, conservation and local economic benefit.
- Digital/AI platforms can improve visibility, interpretation and visitor management.
- Community participation can create livelihoods for local households, artisans and enterprises.
- Transnational heritage proposals and tourism cooperation support cultural diplomacy and international engagement.

Conclusion

The heritage and tourism developments illustrate a dual policy challenge: conserve culturally significant landscapes while using digital tools, infrastructure and community participation to build a sustainable and competitive visitor economy. For UPSC, focus on the UNESCO listing process, site-location matching, cultural chronology, tourism schemes, digital public infrastructure, and the economic-environmental trade-offs of tourism development.

Previous Year Question (Prelims)

Q. Consider the following properties included in the World Heritage List released by UNESCO: (2024)

1. Santiniketan
2. Rani-ki-Vav
3. Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas
4. Mahabodhi Temple Complex at Bodhgaya

How many of the above properties were included in 2023?

(a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) Only three
(d) All four

Answer: (b) Only two

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) 2.0

Why in News:

DDU-GKY marked its 12th anniversary in 2026, continuing to strengthen pathways from skills to employment for rural youth. The upgraded DDU-GKY 2.0 framework, notified in May 2025, represents a significant shift from skill training to sustainable livelihood creation.

Core Facts About DDU-GKY

- Launch: 25 September 2014 by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM).
- Objective: Placement-linked skill training and employment opportunities for rural youth to diversify incomes and enable sustained upward movement out of poverty.
- Target Beneficiaries: Rural youth aged 15–35 years from poor households.
- Social Inclusion Mandate: Mandatory coverage of SC/ST communities (50%), women (33%), and persons with disabilities (5%).
- Sectoral Coverage: Training across diverse sectors including aerospace and aviation, agriculture, beauty and wellness, green jobs, healthcare, and textiles.
- Budgetary Support: ₹750 crore allocated in Union Budget 2026–27.

DDU-GKY 2.0: Key Upgrades End-to-End Skilling Approach

- Covers the entire employment cycle: skill training - placement - employ-



ment retention - career progression.
- Strengthens training quality, placement outcomes, post-placement support, and technology-based monitoring.

Standardised Training Framework
- Retains 576-hour minimum training duration.
- 396 hours of domain-specific technical training.
- 180 hours of mandatory non-domain training: English communication, employability and life skills, computer and digital literacy, and entrepreneurship.

Extended Placement Duration
- Minimum placement duration increased from 3 months to 6 months.
- Recognises multiple employment formats: wage employment, self-employment, and gig employment.

Financial & Retention Support
- Post-placement allowance: ₹7,620 total (₹1,270 per month for 6 months).
- Retention incentive: ₹5,000 for candidates remaining employed for 365 days.
- Upskilling and reskilling opportunities after 12 months of placement.

Job Melas for Employer Linkages
- Organised at block and Gram Panchayat levels by State Rural Livelihood Missions (SRLMs).
- Financial support: up to ₹50,000 for GP-level fairs and ₹1 lakh for block-level fairs.

Migration Support Centres (MSCs)
- Established in high-migration areas and destination locations.
- Annual funding increased from ₹10 lakh to ₹30 lakh per centre.
- Provide counselling, accommodation assistance, local administrative coordination, and alumni networking.

Special Initiatives Under DDU-GKY 2.0

Roshni Initiative
- Addresses skill development needs in Left-Wing Extremism (LWE)-affected districts and Aspirational Districts.
- Provides residential skill training with 40% mandatory participation of women.
- Focuses on local resources, traditional skills, and regional development needs.

Himayat Initiative
- Special programme for Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.
- Covers both rural and urban youth (BPL and APL categories).
- 100% centrally funded, implemented with State support through dedicated Mission Management Units.
- Supports wage employment, self-employment, and gig employment.

North Eastern Region Support
- 10% of DDU-GKY allocation earmarked for North Eastern States.

Support for Difficult Areas
- Special Area Allowance of additional 10% of base training cost per candidate for hard-to-reach areas.

Technology-Driven Implementation
- End-to-end digital platform covering PIA onboarding, project management, training-centre and candidate management, assessment, certification, financial management, and placement tracking.
- Real-time dashboards for programme monitoring.
- Public candidate portal for searching training opportunities and viewing PIA performance ratings.
- Face-authenticated attendance and digital assessments.
- Integration with Skill India Digital Hub for course validation.
- Kaushal Panjee platform for tracking placement outcomes for one year.

State-Level Rollout (2025–26)
- Goa: First State to create batches under DDU-GKY 2.0.
- Andhra Pradesh: Initiated training for over 12,000 candidates within three months.
- Jammu & Kashmir: Allocated 100% of targets and commenced training for 91% of allocated candidates.

Key Milestones Achieved
- Implementation Network: 31 States and Union Territories; 749 approved projects, 760 active training centres, 455+ Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs).
- Skill Training: Over 18.47 lakh rural youth trained across 36 sectors and 800+ job roles since 2014–15.
- Employment Generation: More than 12.43 lakh candidates secured placements.
- Women Empowerment: Over 9.71 lakh women trained, with 6.34 lakh women securing placements.

Complementary Initiative: RSETIs
- Rural Self-Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs) promote rural entrepreneurship alongside DDU-GKY's placement-based skilling.
- Provide free residential training and handholding support to rural unemployed youth aged 18–50 years, particularly from BPL households.
- 647 RSETIs operational across 634 districts in 33 States/UTs.
- Since 2009: 63.47 lakh candidates trained, 45.60 lakh settled through livelihood opportunities.

Conclusion

DDU-GKY 2.0 represents a paradigm shift from mere skill training to sustainable livelihood creation. By integrating industry-aligned training, extended placement support, digital monitoring, and entrepreneurship promotion, the scheme contributes to building a skilled, empowered, and self-reliant rural workforce. It aligns with India's broader vision of inclusive growth and Viksit Bharat @2047, addressing the demographic opportunity of India's youth population projected to reach nearly 345 million by 2036.

Previous Year Question (Prelims)

Q. How does the National Rural Livelihood Mission seek to improve livelihood options of rural poor? (2012)

1. By setting up a large number of new manufacturing industries and agribusiness centres in rural areas
2. By strengthening self-help groups and providing skill development
3. By supplying seeds, fertilizers, diesel pump-sets and micro-irrigation equipment free of cost to farmers
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b) 2 only



Autonomy of the Election Commission of India (ECI)

Why in News:

The ECI is facing renewed scrutiny over its institutional independence and functioning. Opposition parties have sought action against the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) following reports that two Election Commissioners (ECs) had recorded objections on several decisions, while the ECI has maintained that its final decisions were unanimous. Simultaneously, the Supreme Court has referred challenges to the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023 to the Chief Justice of India for consideration by an appropriate Constitution Bench after a 1:1 split verdict.

Constitutional Framework of ECI

- Article 324: Vests the superintendence, direction, and control of elections in the ECI. Appointment of the CEC and other Election Commissioners is made by the President, subject to any law made by Parliament.
- Gap in Legislation: For over seven decades, Parliament did not enact a specific law for these appointments, leaving the process under the Union Executive.
- Removal Protection: The CEC can be removed only in a manner and on grounds similar to a judge of the Supreme Court. Other Election Commissioners can be removed on the recommendation of the CEC.

Concerns Regarding the 2023 Appointments Act

Background

- In March 2023, a five-judge Constitution Bench in Anoop Baranwal v. Union of India ruled that until Parliament enacted a law, the CEC and ECs would be appointed on the advice of a committee comprising the Prime Minister, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, and Chief Justice of India (CJI).
- The 2023 Act replaced this interim arrangement with a Selection Committee comprising the Prime Minister (Chairperson), Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha (Member), and a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister (Member).

Key Concerns with the Act

- Exclusion of the CJI: The CJI was removed from the selection panel and replaced with a Cabinet Minister.
- Executive Dominance: Critics argue that the PM and nominated Cabinet Minister create a 2:1 executive majority, limiting the practical influence of the LoP.
- Perception of Bias: Critics contend that the structure may affect perceptions of institutional independence and safeguards for free and fair elections.
- Perception Test: One strand of judicial concern in the split verdict emphasised that institutional independence must also be publicly perceived. Critics argue the 2023 Act may not satisfy this perception test.

Concerns Regarding Internal Governance of the ECI

Collegial Decision-Making

- The ECI functions as a multi-member collegial body comprising the CEC and two ECs; decisions may be taken unanimously or by majority.
- Reports of objections during internal decision-making have triggered debate about transparency and collegiality. The ECI has stated that final decisions were unanimous.

Procedural Issues Relating to Form 6

- During the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), allegations were made that changes to Form 6 for new voter registration were introduced through administrative directions rather than statutory procedure.
- Form 6 is prescribed under the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960. Section 28 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 provides for rule-making by the Central Government after consultation with the ECI and publication through the prescribed legal process.

Centralisation of Electoral-Roll Management

- Reported objections also concerned centralisation of electoral-roll IT systems such as ERONet in Delhi.
- The concern is that restricted access for State-level officials could weaken decentralised electoral-roll administration.

Risk of Disenfranchisement

- The ECI's stated guiding principle is "no voter to be left behind".
- Reports and political claims regarding large-scale deletions during SIR have raised questions about transparency, accuracy, due process and the risk of legitimate voters being excluded. Such figures and allegations should be read as contested unless confirmed in official final data.

Institutional Credibility

- Repeated controversy over internal procedure can affect transparency, accountability, institutional coherence and public confidence, making clear and documented decision-making especially important.

Measures Discussed to Strengthen Institutional Integrity

- Broad-Based Selection Committee: Proposals have sought a more balanced or consensus-based appointment mech-

anism; reform discussions have cited the Dinesh Goswami Committee (1990), Law Commission of India 255th Report (2015), and Anoop Baranwal judgment (2023).

- Equal Protection for Election Commissioners: Extend stronger removal safeguards to ECs to support independent decision-making and dissent.
- Post-Retirement Safeguards: Consider cooling-off periods or restrictions on post-retirement executive appointments to reduce perceived conflicts of interest.
- Clear Transaction of Business Rules: Codify circulation, recording and approval procedures for major decisions to strengthen collegiality and accountability.
- Follow Statutory Procedure: Electoral forms and procedures should be changed through the legally prescribed process under the Representation of the People framework.
- Protect Decentralised Electoral Administration: Digital systems such as ERONet should preserve adequate State and district access, oversight and operational capacity.
- Expenditure Charged on the Consolidated Fund of India: A reform proposal is to place ECI administrative expenditure on a charged basis to strengthen financial autonomy.
- Independent and Permanent Secretariat: A dedicated cadre and service conditions, analogous in principle to independent constitutional secretariats, could reduce dependence on deputation and strengthen institutional memory.

Conclusion

The ECI is central to the conduct of free and fair elections. The current debate concerns the design of appointments, internal collegiality, legal procedure, financial autonomy and administrative independence. For UPSC purposes, distinguish constitutional provisions and enacted law from reform proposals, political allegations and judicially contested questions.

Previous Year Question (Prelims)

Q. Consider the following statements: (2017)

1. The Election Commission of India is a five-member body.
2. Union Ministry of Home Affairs decides the election schedule for the conduct of both general elections and bye-elections.
3. Election Commission resolves the disputes relating to splits/mergers of recognised political parties.
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 3 only

Answer: (d) 3 only

Why in News: **India is set to enter the blue finance market with its first-ever blue bond issuance by Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited (SMFCL), India's first maritime sector-specific Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC). This marks a significant step in mobilising long-term capital for sustainable maritime infrastructure and ocean-economy projects.**



Core Facts About the Maiden Blue Bond

- Issuer: Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited (SMFCL), a state-owned maritime-focused lender under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.
- Issuance Size and Structure: The maiden issue aimed to raise ₹600 crore through 10-year debt securities, including a base issue and an over-subscription greenshoe option of ₹500 crore.
- Credit Rating: AA+ by ICRA and CARE.
- Market Placement: SBI Capital Markets appointed as arranger to secure commitments from long-term institutional investors such as insurance companies and provident funds.
- Capital Allocation: Proceeds are intended for maritime-sector lending, greenfield port projects and expansion of the coastal road network.

Definition and Scope of Blue Bonds

- Specialised debt instruments, generally treated as a thematic sub-category of sustainable/green finance, raising capital for protection and sustainable use of ocean and water ecosystems.
- Eligible sectors can include sustainable shipping, ocean renewable energy, marine biodiversity conservation, sustainable fisheries, water recycling and coastal mapping.
- Blue bonds generally follow green, social or sustainability bond design principles, with proceeds earmarked for specified ocean/water-related purposes.

Why India is Entering the Blue Bond Market

- Blue Economy Contribution: India's blue economy is

estimated to contribute around 4.1% of GDP, while about 95% of the country's trade by volume moves through maritime routes.
- Maritime Infrastructure: India has a 7,517-km coastline and an Exclusive Economic Zone of about 2.2 million sq km.
- Investment Target: India seeks to raise the maritime sector's contribution to GDP from about 4% to 12% by 2047, requiring very large long-term investment.
- Asset-Liability Matching: SMFCL lends for an average tenure of about 12 years while its borrowings average about 3.5 years; longer-tenor blue bonds can reduce this mismatch.

Market Development and Municipal Sector Traction

- Vadodara Municipal Corporation plans to raise roughly ₹200 crore via blue bonds, extending thematic sustainable-water borrowing into municipal debt markets.
- Expected uses include a pump house, water-treatment plant and clear-water reservoir.
- Blue finance can therefore extend beyond marine projects to eligible urban water and wastewater infrastructure.

Global Context and Examples

- Seychelles issued the world's first sovereign blue bond in 2018, raising $15 million to support marine protection and sustainable fisheries.



- The Seychelles structure included a $5 million partial credit guarantee and $5 million concessional financing from the Global Environment Facility, helping lower financing costs.
- Belize used a debt-for-ocean swap in 2021, restructuring about $550 million of external commercial debt while committing to protect 30% of its ocean territory.
- As of June 2025, the global blue-bond market was reported at about $15.25 billion in cumulative issuances, with emerging markets forming a large share.

Challenges and Considerations

- Market Volatility: Maritime earnings are sensitive to freight rates, trade disputes, commodity cycles and regulation.
- Complexity: Blue bonds and debt-for-nature structures can require multi-stakeholder negotiations and specialised monitoring.
- Transaction Costs: Complex debt conversions can carry high advisory, legal and structuring costs.
- Limited Scale: The market remains small compared with total investment needs.
- Greenwashing Risk: Transparent use-of-proceeds tracking and credible impact reporting are essential.

Conclusion

India's first blue bond broadens the sustainable-finance toolkit beyond conventional green bonds and can mobilise long-duration capital for ports, shipping, coastal and water-related infrastructure. Its policy significance lies in linking maritime development with environmental safeguards, transparent use of proceeds and better asset-liability matching.

Previous Year Question (Prelims)

Q. With reference to the Indian economy, consider the following statements regarding "Sovereign Green Bonds": (2026)

1. The interest earned on these bonds is completely tax-exempt for retail investors.
2. The proceeds can be used to finance compressed biogas plants and solar power projects.
3. They are issued by the Reserve Bank of India on behalf of the Government.
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b) 2 and 3 only



Asian Games 2026 – India's Medal Winners and Key Achievements

Why in News

India's contingent at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games 2026 recorded medals across a wide range of disciplines. To avoid duplicating a single-athlete story, this section consolidates Jay Meena's historic soft-tennis bronze with the broader Indian medal-winning performance. The snapshot below is frozen at the close of 30 September 2026 because the Games continue into October.

Medal Snapshot – Close of 30 September 2026

- India: 60 medals – 10 Gold, 21 Silver and 29 Bronze; 8th in the medal table at that cutoff.
- The 2026 Asian Games are being held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, from 19 September to 4 October 2026.
- Key medal-producing disciplines included shooting, athletics, archery, kabaddi, cricket, squash, boxing, wrestling, badminton, weightlifting, wushu, rowing, soft tennis, table tennis, kurash and mixed martial arts.

Gold Medal Winners / Teams

- Women's T20 Cricket: Harmanpreet Kaur, Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Arundhati Reddy, Deepti Sharma, Richa Ghosh, Gunalan Kamalini, Bharti Fulmali, Kranti Gaud, Nandani Sharma, Pratika Rawal, Radha Yadav, Renuka Singh Thakur, Shree Charani and Shreyanka Patil.
- Compound Women's Team Archery: Jyothi Surekha Vennam, Chikitha Taniparthi and Prithika Pradeep.
- Compound Mixed Team Archery: Chikitha Taniparthi and Sahil Jadhav.

- Compound Men's Team Archery: Sahil Jadhav, Ganesh Mani Ratnam Thirumuru and Kushal Dalal.
- Mixed 10m Air Pistol Team: Kamaljeet and Suruchi Singh.
- Women's Individual Trap Shooting: Neeru Dhanda.
- Trap Mixed Team: Neeru Dhanda and Kynan Chenai.
- Women's 4x400m Relay: Kiran Pahal, M.R. Poovamma, Prachi Choudhary and Vithya Ramraj.
- Women's Kabaddi: Pushpa Rana, Bhavna Thakur, Jyoti Thakur, Manisha Kumari, Nikita Kumari, Pinki Roy, Pooja Hathwala, Raj Rani, Ritu Negi, Ritu Sheoran, Sanju Devi and Sonali Shingate.
- Men's Kabaddi: Sunil Kumar, Ankit Jaglan, Arjun Deshwal, Ashu Malik, Aslam Inamdar, Ayan Lohchab, Devank Dalal, Gaurav Khatri, Jaideep Dahiya, Pawan Sehrawat, Rahul Sethpal and Sumit Sangwan.

Silver Medal Winners / Teams

- Elavenil Valarivan – Women's 10m Air Rifle.
- Elavenil Valarivan, Sonam Uttam Maskar and Vidarsa Vinod – Women's 10m Air Rifle Team.
- Himanshu Dhillon – Men's 10m Air Rifle.
- Himanshu Dhillon, Parth Mane and Rudrankksh Patil – Men's 10m Air Rifle Team.
- Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar, Niraj Kumar and Rudrankksh Patil – Men's 50m Rifle 3 Positions Team.
- Tilottama Sen, Vidarsa Vinod Kochalumkal and Ashi Chouksey – Women's 50m Rifle 3 Positions Team.
- Esha Singh – Women's 25m Pistol.
- Neeru Dhanda, Manisha Keer and Aashima Ahlawat – Women's Trap Team.
- Manu T.S., M.R. Poovamma, Vishal T.K., Vithya Ramraj, Jay Kumar and Kiran Pahal – Mixed 4x400m Relay.
- Gulveer Singh – Men's 10,000m and Men's 1500m.
- Sawan Barwal – Men's Marathon.
- Tajinderpal Singh Toor – Men's Shot Put.
- Sarvesh Kushare – Men's High Jump.
- Murali Sreeshankar – Men's Long Jump.
- Yashvir Singh – Men's Javelin Throw.
- Abhay Singh – Men's Singles Squash.
- Anahat Singh – Women's Singles Squash.
- Mirabai Chanu – Women's 49kg Weightlifting.
- Naorem Roshibina Devi – Women's Sanda 60kg Wushu.



Bronze Medal Winners / Teams

- Rudrankksh Patil – Men's 10m Air Rifle.
- Maheshwari Chauhan, Parinaaz Dhaliwal and Raiza Dhillon – Women's Skeet Team.
- Anantjeet Singh Naruka, Bhavtegh Singh Gill and Mairaj Ahmad Khan – Men's Skeet Team.
- Anantjeet Singh Naruka and Parinaaz Dhaliwal – Mixed Team Skeet.
- Aashima Ahlawat, Manisha Keer and Neeru Dhanda – Women's Trap Team (as listed in the consolidated medal tracker; note that source listings around team-trap results should be cross-checked against the official results book if used for a final post-Games edition).
- Seema Kumari – Women's 10,000m.
- Baranica Elangovan – Women's Pole Vault.
- Manpreet Kaur – Women's Shot Put.
- Prachi Chaudhary – Women's 400m.
- Tejaswin Shankar – Men's Decathlon.
- Parul Chaudhary – Women's 3000m Steeplechase and Women's 5000m (source tracker listing).
- Harita Bhadra – Women's 200m.
- Vithya Ramraj – Women's 400m Hurdles.
- Rohit Yadav – Men's Javelin Throw.
- Gulveer Singh – Men's 5000m.
- Gurindervir Singh, Sneha Gowda, Animesh Kujur and Harita Bhadra – Mixed 4x100m Relay.
- Pooja Singh – Women's High Jump.
- Vishal T.K., Dharmveer Choudhary, Rajesh Ramesh, Manu T.S. and Jay Kumar – Men's 4x400m Relay.
- Joshna Chinappa and Velavan Senthilkumar – Squash Mixed Doubles.
- Lakshya Sen, Ayush Shetty, H.S. Prannoy, Kidambi Srikanth, Tharun Mannepalli, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, Chirag Shetty, Hariharan Amsakarunan, M.R. Arjun and Dhruv Kapila – Men's Team Badminton.
- Suchika Tariyal – Women's Traditional 60kg Mixed Martial Arts.
- Satnam Singh and Salman Khan – Men's Double Sculls Rowing.
- Jay Meena – Men's Singles Soft Tennis; India's first-ever Asian Games medal in soft tennis.
- Diya Chitale and Manush Shah – Mixed Doubles Table Tennis.
- Pincky Balhara – Women's 78kg Kurash.
- Priya Ghanghas – Women's 60kg Boxing.
- Kapil Pokhariya – Men's 90kg Boxing.
- Narender Berwal – Men's +90kg Boxing.
- Sunil Kumar – Men's 87kg Greco-Roman Wrestling.

Jay Meena – Historic Soft Tennis Milestone

- Jay Meena won bronze in the Men's Individual event, becoming India's first-ever Asian Games medallist in soft tennis.
- He reached the semi-final after defeating Sherwin Nuguit of the Philippines 4–3 in the quarter-final and lost 2–4 to Japan's Takuya Kurosaka in the semi-final.
- The 2026 Games were his third Asian Games appearance after Jakarta 2018 and Hangzhou 2023.
- He hails from Dewas, Madhya Pradesh. Earlier achievements include National Games men's singles gold (2022), mixed doubles bronze at the World Soft Tennis Championships with Aadhya Tiwari (2024), men's singles national title (2025), and men's singles bronze at the Asian Soft Tennis Championships (2025).

Significance for India

- The medal spread shows India's growing competitiveness beyond a small number of traditional disciplines.
- The compound archery sweep and shooting performances underline strength in precision sports.
- Jay Meena's bronze gave India a first Asian Games podium in soft tennis and can improve visibility for an emerging sport.
- Because the Games were still ongoing at the time of this bulletin, medal counts should be updated from the official results after 4 October for a final archival edition.

Note: The Asian Games are ongoing. The medal snapshot in this bulletin is frozen at the close of 30 September 2026

for exam-note stability; later results are not included in that section.

Conclusion

India's 2026 Asian Games campaign, as of 30 September, combined team-sport golds, a compound-archery sweep, strong shooting and athletics results, and breakthrough medals in less mainstream disciplines. For current-affairs preparation, focus on firsts, record performances, sport-event matching, host/location, and the distinction between an interim medal tally and the final post-Games tally.

Prelims Practice Question

Q. Consider the following statements regarding sports in India:

1. The Khelo India Programme seeks to promote sports culture and participation at the grassroots level.
2. The Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) supports identified elite athletes for high-performance preparation and international competition.
3. Soft tennis originated in Japan.
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3

8th Anniversary of Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY)

Why in News: The Government of India marked the 8th anniversary of Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY), highlighting its role in expanding healthcare access and reducing financial burden on vulnerable sections. Together with its other pillars, these initiatives aim to advance Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

Core Facts About Ayushman Bharat

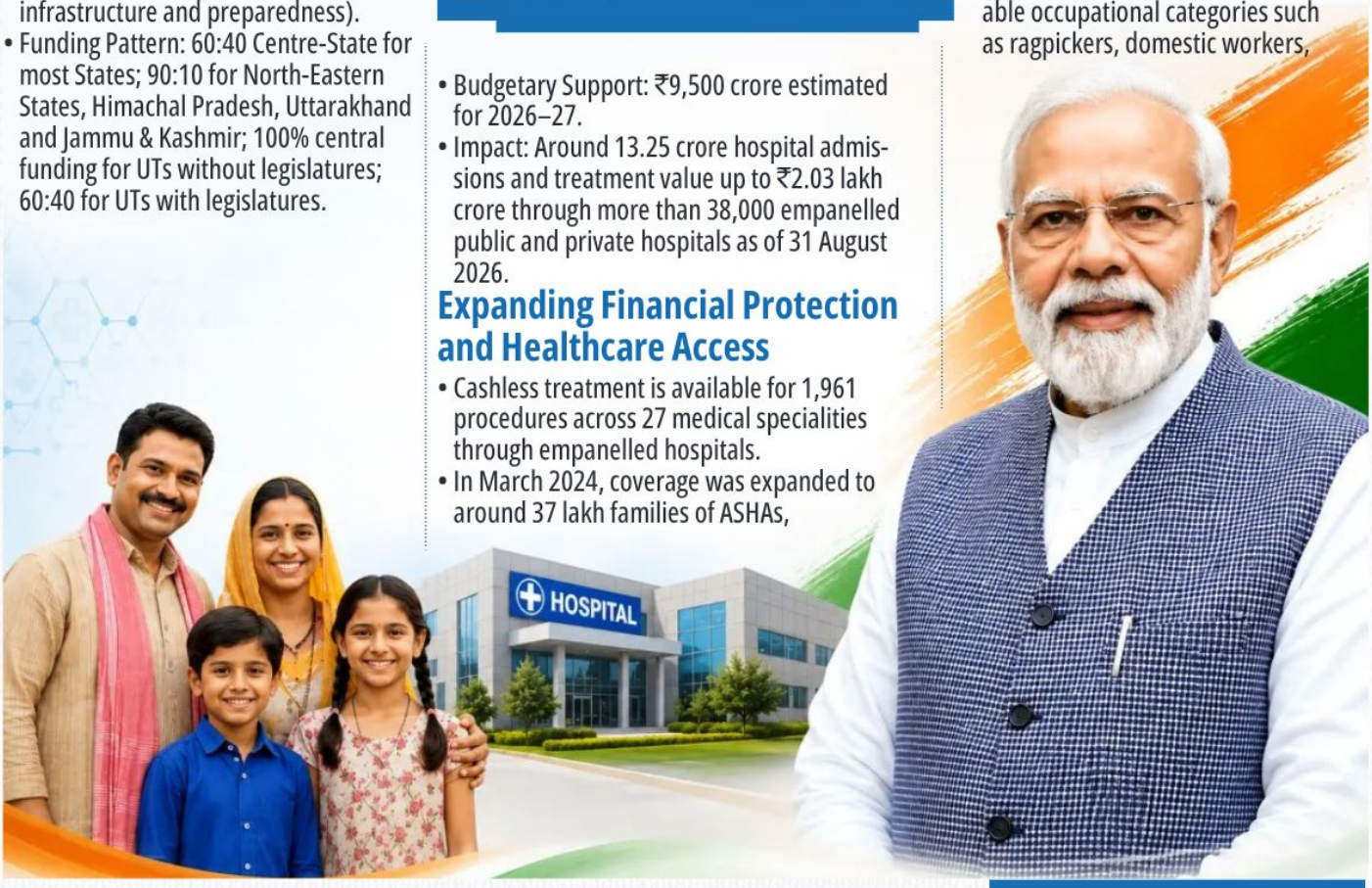
- AB PM-JAY was launched on 23 September 2018 to advance universal health coverage by providing affordable and quality healthcare access, particularly to vulnerable sections.
- AB PM-JAY is a public health assurance scheme covering secondary and tertiary healthcare services. As of 21 September 2026, over 48.51 crore people had received Ayushman cards, covering nearly one-third of India's population.
- Ayushman Bharat also includes Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (primary care), Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (digital health infrastructure), and PM-Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (public-health infrastructure and preparedness).
- Funding Pattern: 60:40 Centre-State for most States; 90:10 for North-Eastern States, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jammu & Kashmir; 100% central funding for UTs without legislatures; 60:40 for UTs with legislatures.
- Budgetary Support: ₹9,500 crore estimated for 2026–27.
- Impact: Around 13.25 crore hospital admissions and treatment value up to ₹2.03 lakh crore through more than 38,000 empanelled public and private hospitals as of 31 August 2026.

Expanding Financial Protection and Healthcare Access

- Cashless treatment is available for 1,961 procedures across 27 medical specialities through empanelled hospitals.
- In March 2024, coverage was expanded to around 37 lakh families of ASHAs, Anganwadi Workers and Anganwadi Helpers; over 44.81 lakh cards had been issued to these beneficiaries by 21 September 2026.
- In 2024, the scheme was expanded to all citizens aged 70 years and above, covering around 6 crore senior citizens; more than 1.36 crore Ayushman Vay Vandana cards had been issued by 21 September 2026.

Identification of Eligible Beneficiaries

- Rural beneficiaries are identified using SECC 2011 deprivation criteria, including vulnerable housing, no earning adult, certain female-headed households, disability-related deprivation, SC/ST households and landless labour households.
- Urban eligibility is based on vulnerable occupational categories such as ragpickers, domestic workers,



street vendors, construction workers, sanitation workers, artisans, transport workers, small-establishment workers and mechanics.

Additional Vulnerable Groups Covered

- Building and Other Construction Workers and dependants.
- Eligible road-accident victims through PM-RAHAT.
- Transgender persons through the SMILE initiative.
- Eligible children under PM CARES for Children.
- Identified sanitation workers and waste pickers under NAMASTE.
- Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups under PM-JANMAN.

Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAM)

- AAMs strengthen primary healthcare by upgrading existing facilities, equipment, human resources, medicines, diagnostics and IT systems.
- Services extend beyond maternal and child care to non-communicable disease screening, oral/eye/ENT care, mental health, first-level emergency and trauma care, essential medicines and diagnostics.
- AYUSH Arogya Mandirs expand Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy services.
- AAMs support health awareness, patient follow-up and community monitoring through frontline workers and ASHAs.
- e-Sanjeevani links citizens with healthcare professionals through telemedicine.
- AAMs have recorded cumulative footfall of over 540 crore visits.

Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)

- Launched in September 2021 to build an integrated, citizen-centric digital health ecosystem.
- ABHA IDs function as digital health identities enabling citizens to link health records and access interoperable services with consent-based digital mechanisms.
- Healthcare Professionals Registry (HPR): verified professionals including doctors and AYUSH practitioners.
- Health Facility Registry (HFR): unified database of hospitals, clinics, laboratories and pharmacies.
- Unified Health Interface (UHI): open network for discovering services, appointments and consultations across platforms.
- Aarogya Setu 2.0 is described as a unified access platform for digital health services and personal health records.



PM-Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM)

- Launched in October 2021 under Budget 2021–22 to strengthen health infrastructure, disease surveillance and health research.
- Outlay: ₹64,180 crore for 2021–2026.
- Supports 23,224 rural health and wellness centres in 10 high-focus States.
- Aims for 13,736 urban health and wellness centres across States.
- Surveillance infrastructure includes 3,389 Block Public Health Units in 11 high-focus States and 744 Integrated Public Health Laboratories across districts.
- Provides for 631 Critical Care Hospital Blocks in districts with population above 5 lakh.

Conclusion

Ayushman Bharat combines financial protection, primary healthcare, digital health and resilient infrastructure. The integrated architecture seeks to reduce catastrophic health expenditure while expanding preventive, primary, secondary and tertiary care capacity on the path toward Universal Health Coverage.

Previous Year Question (Prelims)

Q. Which of the following are the objectives of 'National Nutrition Mission'? (2017)

1. To create awareness relating to malnutrition among pregnant women and lactating mothers.
2. To reduce the incidence of anaemia among young children, adolescent girls, and women.
3. To promote the consumption of millets, coarse cereals, and unpolished rice.
4. To promote the consumption of poultry eggs.
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1, 2 and 3 only
(c) 1, 2 and 4 only
(d) 3 and 4 only

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only





Why in News:

Exercise Tarang Shakti 2026 began in Jodhpur, Rajasthan, bringing together participating air forces and observers from nearly 40 countries to enhance multinational air-combat cooperation and interoperability



Core Facts

- Second edition of the Indian Air Force's multinational air exercise, following the inaugural 2024 edition.
- Theme: "Power in Partnership".
- Location: Jodhpur, Rajasthan.
- Objective: Train participating air forces in planning and execution of multinational joint combat operations in a realistic contemporary battlespace and derive tactically viable solutions.
- Wider engagement includes professional seminars, industrial tours, the Sekhon Marathon, heritage tours and yoga sessions.

Participation

- Countries participating with air assets: Australia, Bangladesh, France, Germany, Greece, Sri Lanka, UAE and USA.
- Around 32 countries are attending as observers.
- Nearly 40 countries are involved overall.

Aircraft and Operations

- **Foreign platforms include F-35 Lightning II, Rafale, F-16, A400M, MRTT, C-130/C-130J and KC-30A aircraft.**
- **Missions include counter-air operations, air defence, reconnaissance, airlift, air-to-air refuelling and other complex combat scenarios.**

French Participation – Mission Pégase 26

- Four Rafale F4 fighters.
- Three A330 MRTT Phénix aircraft.
- Two A400M Atlas aircraft.
- The deployment highlights India-France aerospace and defence cooperation.

Significance

- Demonstrates IAF operational capability and professional standards.
- Strengthens interoperability, mutual trust and defence partnerships.
- Provides diplomatic and professional engagement with nearly 40 countries.
- Showcases India's indigenous aerospace and defence ecosystem and export potential.
- Builds multinational operating experience relevant to contemporary air operations.

Conclusion

Tarang Shakti 2026 is an important platform for multinational air-force interoperability, operational learning, defence diplomacy and showcasing India's aerospace ecosystem. Its UPSC relevance lies in defence exercises, partner countries, platforms, interoperability and India's expanding defence diplomacy.

Prelims Practice Question

Q. Consider the following statements



regarding multinational military exercises involving India:
1. Exercise Malabar is a naval exercise involving India, the United States, Japan and Australia in its current quadrilateral format.
2. Exercise Yudh Abhyas is a joint military exercise between India and the United States.
3. Exercise Garuda is a joint air exercise between India and France.
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3
Answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3



India's First World-Class Geological Museum – Jabalpur

Why in News

India's first world-class geological museum is set to be developed in the Bhedaghat–Lamhetaghat area of Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, to showcase the geological history of the Narmada Valley.

Core Facts

- Location: Bhedaghat–Lamhetaghat area, Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh.
- Project Components: Geological museum and interpretation centre with six galleries and more than 130 exhibits.
- Objective: Explain the origin of the Earth and geological evolution of the Narmada Valley through interactive displays.
- Major Attractions: 3D models, interactive





touch tables, digital panels, immersive theatre, Titanosaur Square, dinosaur park, fossil garden, geological maze, rock garden, tree-top walkway, glass floor, nature trails and viewing decks.

- Project Cost: ₹87 crore approved by the Central Government.
- Scheme: Swadesh Darshan 2.0.
- Implementing Agency: Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board.
- Target Completion: February 2028.
- Significance: Geological education, scientific awareness, interpretation of the Narmada Valley's geological heritage and eco-tourism.

Exam Relevance

- Bhedaghat is known for the Narmada River landscape and marble-rock formations.
- Lamheta/Lameta geological formations and the wider Narmada Valley are important for palaeontology and dinosaur-fossil studies.
- The project links geotourism with Swadesh Darshan 2.0's destination-centric and sustainable-tourism approach.

Prelims Practice Question

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the Swadesh Darshan Scheme:

1. It was launched to develop thematic tourism circuits in the country.
2. Swadesh Darshan 2.0 adopts a destination-centric approach with emphasis on sustainable tourism.
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (c) Both 1 and 2

Jharkhand's Traditional Musical Instrument Mandar Gets GI Tag

Why in News:

Jharkhand's traditional folk percussion instrument, the Mandar, has received a Geographical Indication (GI) tag from the Geographical Indications Registry, Chennai. The registration recognises its distinctive construction, locally rooted craftsmanship, acoustic qualities and deep association with Jharkhand's tribal and folk culture.

Core Facts About Mandar

- GI Name: Registered as "Mandar of Jharkhand", legally linking the instrument's reputation and traditional identity with Jharkhand.
- Nature of Instrument: A traditional double-headed percussion drum, generally barrel/cylindrical in form, central to folk music, dance, festivals, rituals and community gatherings.
- Craft Cluster: Jarjatta village in Raidih block of Gumla district has been a major centre of traditional Mandar craftsmanship; artisans in other parts of Jharkhand also make the instrument.
- GI Application: The application was filed in 2021. Raidih Mandar Producer Company Ltd, an artisan collective, played a central role in the registration effort with support from the district and State administration.
- Distinctiveness: The GI documentation highlighted traditional construction methods, locally sourced raw materials, characteristic acoustic properties and the instrument's cultural association with Jharkhand.
- Cultural Importance: The Mandar is closely associated with Jharkhand's Adivasi and folk traditions and is played during community celebrations, dances and festivals, making it both a musical instrument and a marker of cultural identity.

Geographical Indication (GI) – UPSC Basics

- A Geographical Indication identifies goods as originating in a specific territory, region or locality where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic is essentially attributable to that



geographical origin.

- In India, GI protection is governed by the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 and the associated Rules.
- The Geographical Indications Registry is located in Chennai and functions under the Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks.
- GI registration provides legal protection against unauthorised use, helps establish product authenticity and can strengthen branding, market access and livelihood opportunities for authorised producers.
- GI registration is valid for 10 years and can be renewed for further periods of 10 years.

Significance of the GI Tag

- Heritage Conservation: Gives formal recognition to a living musical and craft tradition transmitted across generations.
- Artisan Livelihoods: Can improve visibility, branding and market access for traditional Mandar makers and strengthen local creative-economy livelihoods.
- Authenticity and Legal Protection: Helps distinguish genuine Mandars associated with Jharkhand from imitations and misuse of the geographical name.
- Cultural Documentation: The GI process records production techniques, materials and cultural history, helping preserve traditional knowledge.
- Rural and Cultural Tourism: Recognition can support cultural tourism and promote Jharkhand's tribal art, music and craft traditions at national and international levels.





Conclusion

The GI recognition of the Mandar links intellectual-property protection with cultural conservation and rural livelihoods. For UPSC preparation, the development is important at the intersection of Art and Culture, tribal heritage, GI law, traditional knowledge and local economic development.

Prelims Practice Question

Q. With reference to Geographical Indications (GI) in India, consider the following statements:

1. The Geographical Indications Registry is located in Chennai.
2. GI registration in India is governed by a law enacted in 1999.
3. A registered GI is protected permanently and does not require renewal.
Which of the statements given above are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3
Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only.





12 Years of MAKE IN INDIA

Why in News

Make in India completed 12 years on 25 September 2026. The anniversary highlighted the expansion of India's manufacturing base, investment ecosystem and domestic capabilities across electronics, automobiles, pharmaceuticals, steel, railways, defence and advanced technologies.

About Make in India

- Launch: 25 September 2014.
- Objective: To transform India into a global hub for manufacturing, design and innovation by facilitating investment, fostering innovation, developing infrastructure and improving the business environment.
- Guiding Approach: "Minimum Government, Maximum Governance", with emphasis on modernising processes and policies and improving investor facilitation.
- Make in India 2.0: The initiative now focuses on 27 sectors—15 manufacturing sectors and 12 services sectors.
- Institutional Ecosystem: Measures such as the National Single Window System (NSWS), Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes, PM GatiShakti and the India Industrial Land Bank support investment and manufacturing expansion.





Major Manufacturing Achievements

Electronics and Mobile Phones

- Electronics production increased nearly sevenfold, from about ₹1.9 lakh crore in 2014–15 to ₹13.11 lakh crore in 2025–26.
- Mobile-phone production increased from about ₹18,000 crore in 2014–15 to ₹6.27 lakh crore in 2025–26—around a 33-fold rise.
- India has emerged as the world's second-largest mobile-phone manufacturer by volume, while the overwhelming majority of phones used domestically are now manufactured in India.

Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Schemes

- PLI schemes cover 14 strategic sectors and are designed to encourage scale, investment, domestic value addition and globally competitive manufacturing.
- As of June 2026, PLI schemes had attract-

ed about ₹2.58 lakh crore in realised investment, generated around ₹23.79 lakh crore in production/sales and supported exports of about ₹15.53 lakh crore.
- The schemes had also supported more than 14.57 lakh direct and indirect jobs, according to government/industry data reported around the 12th anniversary.

Automobiles
- Total vehicle production reached about 31.03 million units in 2024–25, around 33% higher than in 2014–15.
- Between 2020–21 and 2024–25, production expanded across passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles, three-wheelers and two-wheelers.

Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices
- India's pharmaceutical industry ranks among the world's largest, including third globally by volume; annual turnover reached about ₹4,71,898 crore in 2024–25.
- Domestic medical-device manufacturing increased from around ₹28,000 crore in 2019–20 to about ₹41,500 crore in 2024–25.

Steel and Railways
- Crude steel production increased from 81.7 million tonnes in 2014–15 to about 170 million tonnes in 2025–26.
- Indian Railways manufactured 54,809 coaches during 2014–24; in 2025–26 it produced 1,674 locomotives and 6,677 LHB coaches.

Defence Manufacturing
- Indigenous defence production increased from ₹46,429 crore in 2014–15 to a record ₹1.78 lakh crore in 2025–26—nearly four times the earlier level.
- Defence exports have also expanded sharply, reflecting a gradual shift from import dependence toward domestic production and export capability in selected systems and platforms.

Broader Policy Architecture
- National Single Window System: Provides a digital platform to facilitate approvals and clearances for investors.
- PM GatiShakti: Promotes integrated multimodal infrastructure planning to improve logistics efficiency and industrial connectivity.
- India Industrial Land Bank: Provides GIS-based information on industrial land and infrastructure to support investment decisions.
- Semiconductor and Electronics Push: New manufacturing programmes seek to deepen domestic capabilities in semiconductors, electronic components and strategic technology supply chains.
- Industrial and Strategic Materials: Policy support has expanded to industrial parks, specialty steel, rare-earth permanent magnets and other inputs required for advanced manufacturing.

Continuing Challenges
- Manufacturing Share: Despite strong sectoral gains, raising manufacturing to a substantially larger share of GDP remains an unfinished structural objective.
- Domestic Value Addition: Assembly-led growth must be complemented by deeper localisation of components, machinery, materials, design and intellectual property.
- MSME Competitiveness: Smaller firms continue to face constraints related to finance, technology adoption, scale, quality certification and integration with global value chains.
- Employment Intensity: Manufacturing expansion must translate into broad-based, productive and formal employment, especially for India's young workforce.
- Logistics and Infrastructure: Further reduction in logistics costs, reliable power, efficient ports and multimodal connectivity remain important for export competitiveness.
- R&D and Skills: Advanced manufacturing requires stronger research, industry-academia linkages, vocational training and high-end technical skills.

Way Forward
- Move from scale alone to deeper domestic value chains and technology-intensive manufacturing.
- Strengthen MSME integration with large manufacturers and global value chains through finance, digitalisation, standards and cluster development.
- Expand R&D, design capability, semiconductor ecosystems and advanced manufacturing skills.
- Maintain predictable regulation and improve ease of doing business at both Union and State levels.
- Combine industrial growth with resource efficiency, clean energy and circular-economy principles to make manufacturing globally competitive and sustainable.

Conclusion
Twelve years of Make in India show substantial capacity expansion in electronics, mobile phones, defence, steel, railways, automobiles and pharmaceuticals. The next phase is increasingly about moving from higher output and assembly toward deeper value addition, technology ownership, resilient supply chains, skilled employment and globally competitive Indian manufacturing.

Prelims Practice Question
Q. With reference to Make in India, consider the following statements:

1. It was launched in September 2014.
2. Make in India 2.0 covers both manufacturing and services sectors.
3. Production Linked Incentive schemes are intended to promote scale and domestic manufacturing in selected sectors.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3.





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