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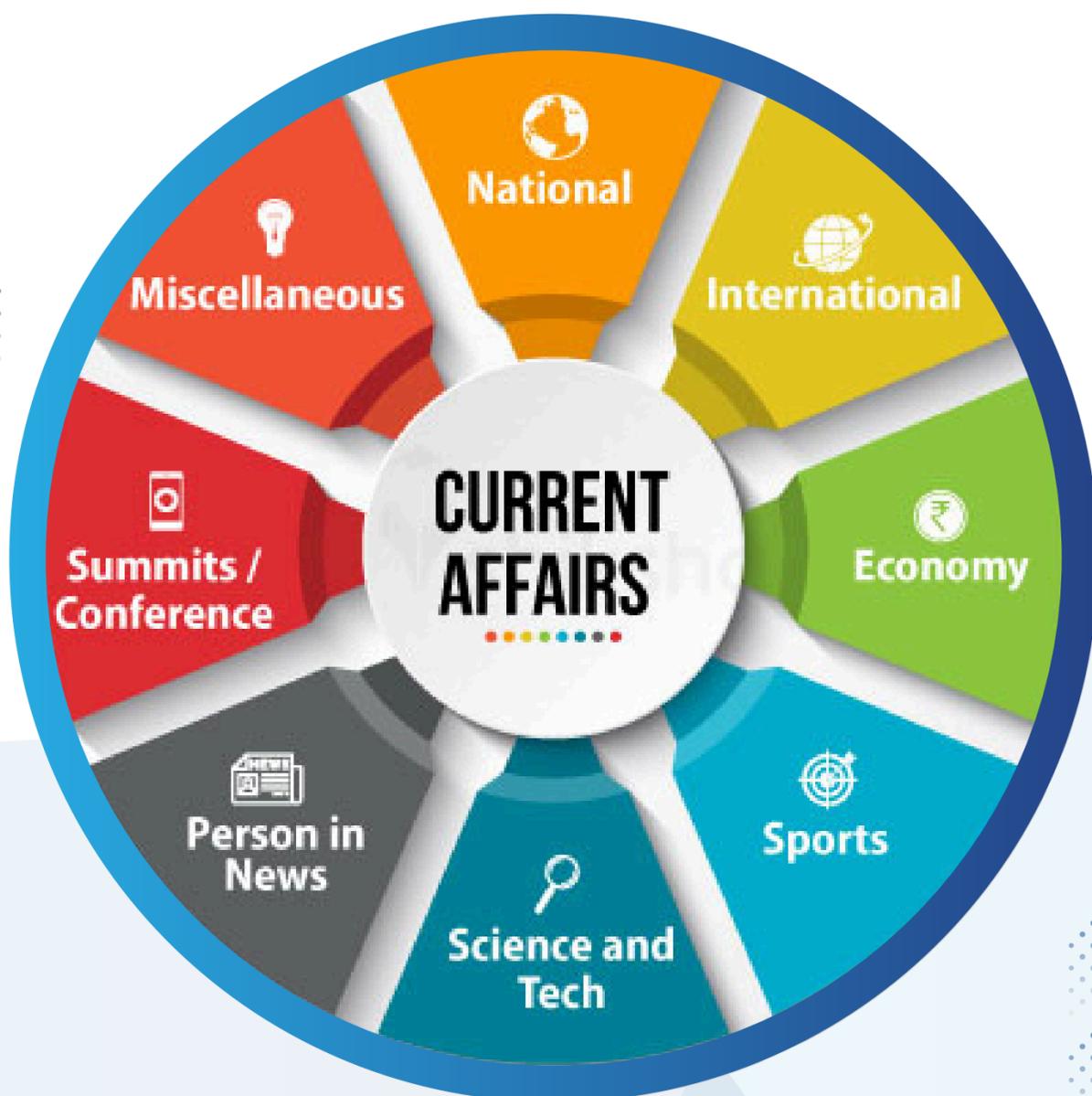
VIDHVATH IAS KAS ACADEMY & STUDY CENTRE

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

DATE: 11/07/2025

(FRIDAY)



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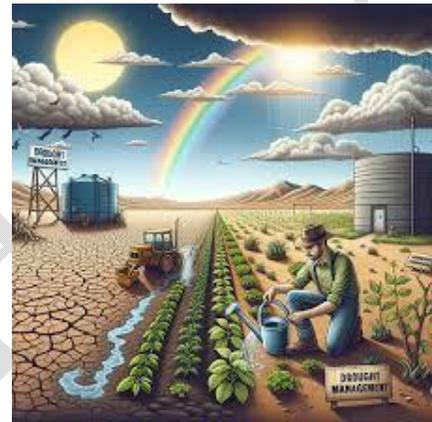
I. Drought Review in Andhra Pradesh – Union Agriculture Minister's Key Initiatives

1. Integrated Action Plan for Drought Relief

- Union Agriculture Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan held a review meeting with Andhra Pradesh ministers regarding the drought situation in southern districts, particularly Rayalaseema.
- An *Integrated Action Plan* will be jointly developed by the Centre and the State to address both immediate and long-term drought impacts.
- A Central team comprising officials and scientists from **ICAR, Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development, and Land Resources** will visit the affected areas to design sustainable agricultural strategies.

2. Focus on Organic Farming and Palm Oil Mission

- The meeting also covered promotion of **organic farming** and progress under the **Palm Oil Mission**, aimed at crop diversification and increasing farmer income.
- Emphasis was laid on encouraging eco-friendly farming practices to ensure long-term soil fertility and reduce input costs.



3. Measures for Climate-Resilient Agriculture

- The region suffers from **low rainfall and frequent droughts**, so a shift towards **climate-resilient crops** and **drought-resistant seed varieties** was discussed.
- The Centre will support Andhra Pradesh in adopting **integrated farming systems**, including horticulture, animal husbandry, agroforestry, and beekeeping to stabilize farmer incomes.

4. Water Resource Management Strategy

- **Rainwater harvesting, afforestation, and exploration of inter-basin water transfer** (from Krishna and Tungabhadra rivers) will be key components of the drought mitigation plan.
- Coordination with the **Ministry of Jal Shakti** will ensure better irrigation infrastructure in affected districts.

5. Governance & Accountability

- The Union Minister highlighted past misutilisation of central funds by the previous government, but praised current Chief Minister Shri Chandrababu Naidu for proactive governance.
- The collaborative Centre-State approach is aimed at restoring farmer confidence and building institutional mechanisms for drought preparedness.

Key Definitions:

- **Integrated Farming:** A holistic farming approach combining crops, animals, and allied activities to improve sustainability and income.
- **Drought:** A prolonged dry period in the natural climate cycle that can lead to crop failure and water scarcity.
- **ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research):** Apex body for coordinating, guiding, and managing research and education in agriculture in India.



Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Article 48 (Directive Principles):** Promotes scientific agriculture and animal husbandry.
- **Disaster Management Act, 2005:** Drought is classified as a disaster under this Act, enabling special relief measures.
- **Seventh Schedule:** Agriculture and water are subjects under the **State List**, but the Centre can provide assistance under **Article 282**.

Conclusion & UPSC Relevance:

This high-level meeting reflects a shift towards **collaborative federalism** in tackling agrarian distress. The Centre's integrated approach—focusing on water conservation, sustainable agriculture, and livelihood diversification—provides a **holistic model** for drought-prone regions nationwide.

UPSC Relevance:

- GS Paper II: **Governance and Cooperative Federalism**
 - GS Paper III: **Agriculture, Disaster Management, Environment Conservation**
 - Prelims: Schemes like **National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA)**, **Oil Palm Mission**, **Watershed Development Component of PMKSY**.
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2. India–Japan Strategic Partnership: Dholera SIR Visit and Semiconductor Collaboration

1. Japan's High-Level Visit to Dholera SIR Signals Strategic Economic Partnership

- Japanese Ambassador **Mr. Keiichi Ono** led a delegation of major Japanese companies to **Dholera Special Investment Region (SIR)** in Gujarat.
- This visit, a milestone in India–Japan bilateral ties, showcased Dholera SIR as a key node of **industrial, smart city, and semiconductor** development under the **Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC)**.

2. Semiconductor Investment and the Semicon India Programme

- Delegation reviewed the **Tata Electronics–PSMC (Taiwan)** semiconductor fabrication unit, part of India's **₹1.54 lakh crore investment** push under the **Semicon India Programme**.
- Semiconductors are vital to **Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-reliant India)**, with Dholera emerging as a **fab-ready** region for electronics and chip manufacturing.

3. Smart City Infrastructure and Plug-and-Play Industrial Planning

- Dholera SIR offers **real-time governance** through the Integrated Command & Control Centre (ICCC), advanced utility infrastructure, and **'plug-and-play' industrial zones**.
- Planned social infrastructure includes hospitals, schools, fire stations, hospitality hubs, and commercial complexes — aiming to create a **livable and investor-friendly urban ecosystem**.

4. Multimodal Connectivity & Strategic Location

- Dholera is connected via the **Ahmedabad–Dholera Expressway** and an upcoming **Greenfield International Airport**.
- Modeled after Japan's **Tokyo–Osaka corridor**, Dholera is a flagship project under the DMIC, benefiting from Japanese expertise and financial collaboration through **JBIC** and **JETRO**.

5. Vision 2047 & Global Investment Hub

- The visit aligns with **India@2047** vision to become a **developed, innovation-driven economy**.
- Japan reaffirmed its commitment to India's economic transformation, highlighting Dholera's potential as a **global hub for advanced manufacturing**, sustainability, and smart governance.



Key Definitions for UPSC:

- **Dholera SIR (Special Investment Region):** A greenfield industrial city developed under the DMIC to attract global investment and advanced manufacturing.
- **Semicon India Programme:** A Government of India initiative to establish a sustainable semiconductor and display manufacturing ecosystem.
- **Plug-and-Play Infrastructure:** Ready-to-use industrial infrastructure where investors can immediately set up operations without waiting for basic utilities.

Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Article 301–307:** Ensures freedom of trade, commerce, and intercourse throughout India.
- **Make in India & National Policy on Electronics (NPE) 2019:** Facilitate investment in electronics manufacturing, including semiconductors.
- **Special Economic Zones Act, 2005:** Though Dholera is not an SEZ yet, similar investment-friendly provisions are being followed.

Conclusion & UPSC Relevance:

The Japanese delegation's visit to Dholera SIR reinforces India's push for **technological self-reliance**, **foreign investment**, and **next-gen infrastructure development**. It symbolizes the growing India–Japan synergy in strategic sectors like **semiconductors**, **smart cities**, and **advanced manufacturing**. Dholera SIR exemplifies integrated planning, international cooperation, and futuristic vision aligned with **India@2047**.

UPSC Relevance:

- **GS Paper II:** India–Japan bilateral relations, international cooperation.
- **GS Paper III:** Infrastructure, economy, investment, manufacturing, and science & tech.
- **Prelims:** Semicon India, DMIC, Dholera SIR, plug-and-play industrial model.

3. India's Clean Energy Milestone: 4000% Solar Growth and Vision for Energy Storage Leadership

1. India Achieves 4,000% Growth in Solar Capacity

- Union Minister **Shri Piyush Goyal** announced a **4,000% increase in solar capacity**, with total renewable energy capacity reaching **227 GW**.
- India is among the first G20 nations to **achieve its NDC targets** under the **Paris Agreement**, reflecting its global climate leadership.
- Example: **Palli village (J&K)** became India's first **carbon-neutral panchayat** using solar energy and energy-efficient practices.

2. Focus on Self-Reliance and Supply Chain Resilience

- Minister stressed the importance of building **supply chain resilience** across the energy sector to reduce dependence on select geographies.
- Emphasis on **localised manufacturing**, robust infrastructure, and a complete **value chain ecosystem**—from raw materials to recycling.
- **PM Surya Ghar Yojana** and **PM Kusum Yojana** are supporting rooftop solar and solar irrigation respectively.

3. ₹1 Lakh Crore Innovation Fund for Battery Technology

- Government has approved a **₹1 lakh crore R&D and Innovation Fund** to develop **next-generation battery technologies**, such as **solid-state** and **hybrid chemistries**.
- This fund aims to **match global R&D investment** levels and promote **cost-effective, indigenous storage solutions**.



4. Storage Technologies Critical for 24x7 Renewable Energy

- Technologies like **battery storage, pumped hydro, geothermal, and nuclear power** are vital to ensuring **round-the-clock renewable power**.
- The goal is to achieve **500 GW renewable energy capacity** by 2030 and ensure **energy security** for a growing economy.

5. Electric Mobility and Infrastructure Development

- Push for developing **charging networks** and **battery swapping stations** to scale up **electric vehicle (EV) adoption**.
- Promotes **clean mobility**, lower emissions, and accessible transportation for all.
- India Energy Storage Week (IESW) 2025 showcased global collaboration in green hydrogen, e-mobility, and advanced battery systems.



Key Definitions for UPSC:

- **Energy Storage:** Technology to store energy for use at a later time, enabling grid stability and continuous renewable power supply.
- **Solid-State Batteries:** Batteries using solid electrolytes for enhanced safety and energy density.
- **Circular Supply Chain:** A closed-loop system that promotes reuse, recycling, and minimal waste in the manufacturing process.

Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Article 48A (DPSP):** State shall protect and improve the environment.
- **Environment Protection Act, 1986:** Enables regulations on emissions and clean energy transitions.
- **Electricity Act, 2003 (amended):** Promotes renewable energy integration and competitive energy markets.

Conclusion & UPSC Relevance:

India's remarkable growth in solar capacity, backed by strategic policy measures and international commitments, marks a paradigm shift towards **sustainable, secure, and self-reliant energy systems**. The ₹1 lakh crore R&D fund and vision for full value chain integration place India on the path to becoming a **global clean energy and technology leader** by 2047.

UPSC Relevance:

- **GS Paper II:** Government policies, international relations (Paris Agreement, G20 climate commitments)
- **GS Paper III:** Environment, energy, R&D, technology, infrastructure, sustainable development
- **Prelims:** Schemes like **PM Surya Ghar Yojana, PM Kusum, Semicon India**, Energy Storage technologies, and solar milestones.

4. India's Agricultural Transformation: Soil Health, Credit Access & Global Trade Integration

1. Soil Health and Credit Access Revolution

- Over **25 crore Soil Health Cards** distributed under the government's initiative to promote **balanced fertiliser usage** and **soil-specific crop planning**.
- **Kisan Credit Cards (KCC)** have ensured **easy access to low-interest institutional credit**, empowering farmers to invest in better inputs and technologies.
- These reforms aim to enhance **productivity, sustainability, and income security** for small and marginal farmers.

2. PM-KISAN and Market Integration through e-NAM

- **PM-KISAN Samman Nidhi** has directly benefited **crores of farmer families** by providing ₹6,000 annually in three instalments.
- **1,400 mandis integrated with the e-NAM platform**, enabling farmers to access **real-time price discovery**, wider markets, and **better bargaining power**.
- These digital and direct benefit initiatives strengthen **inclusive and transparent agricultural markets**.



3. Global Market Expansion through FTAs and Export Promotion

- India has signed **Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)** with **Australia, UAE, EFTA nations, and UK**, enhancing **agri-export potential**.
- India's agricultural exports, including **rice, spices, horticulture, poultry, and fisheries**, have touched **₹4 lakh crore**, even amidst global slowdowns.
- The "Local Goes Global" vision reinforces farmers' role in achieving **Atmanirbhar Bharat** and making Indian agriculture **globally competitive**.

4. Innovations in Agriculture and Digital Transformation

- Government promoting **AI, geospatial tech, vertical farming, predictive weather tools** to drive **digital agriculture**.
- Focus on **natural and organic farming, quality seed production, and drip irrigation** for sustainable intensification of agriculture.
- Support extended to **FPOs, cooperatives, and food processing** through better **design, packaging, branding, and value addition**.

5. Infrastructure Development and Supportive Policies

- Major emphasis on **warehouse and cold storage infrastructure**, post-harvest management, and **processing value chains**.
- Fertiliser subsidies, especially during COVID-19, ensured **timely and affordable input availability** to farmers.
- Government aims to make agriculture a **profitable enterprise** through fiscal support and targeted reforms.

Key Definitions for UPSC:

- **Soil Health Card**: A government-issued document that provides farmers with nutrient status of their soil and recommended doses of fertilizers.
- **e-NAM (Electronic National Agriculture Market)**: A pan-India online trading platform connecting existing APMC mandis to create a unified national market.

- **PM-KISAN:** A central sector scheme providing income support of ₹6,000 per year to all farmer families.

Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Article 48 (DPSP):** Directs the state to organize agriculture on scientific lines.
- **Seventh Schedule (State List):** Agriculture is a subject under state jurisdiction, though Centre can support via schemes (Article 282).
- **Essential Commodities Act, 1955 (Amended):** Regulates supply and prices of essential food items to protect farmer and consumer interests.

Conclusion & UPSC Relevance:

India's agricultural sector is undergoing a significant transformation driven by **digital empowerment, financial inclusion, market integration, and global outreach**. With schemes like **Soil Health Cards, PM-KISAN**, and integration with **e-NAM**—supported by infrastructure, innovation, and trade facilitation—the government is steering the sector toward a **resilient, profitable, and sustainable future**.

UPSC Relevance:

- **GS Paper II:** Government schemes, governance in agriculture, e-governance initiatives.
- **GS Paper III:** Agricultural reforms, food processing, export promotion, innovation in agriculture.
- **Prelims:** Schemes like **PM-KISAN, Soil Health Card, e-NAM, FTAs with UAE/EFTA/Australia, KCC scheme**.

5. North-East Startup Ecosystem Boost: IICA North-East Conclave 2025 in Shillong

1. Empowering Startups in North-East India

- The **Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA)** under the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs** is organizing the **North-East Conclave 2025** (11–12 July) at **IIM Shillong**, themed "*From Ideation to Incorporation*".
- The event aims to **catalyze entrepreneurship, innovation, incubation, and start-up formation** in all eight North-Eastern states.

2. Foundation Stone for IICA North-East Regional Campus

- **Union Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman** will lay the **foundation stone of the IICA North-East Campus in Shillong**, making it a hub for **policy education, corporate governance training, and entrepreneurship support**.
- The campus will support **capacity building, regulatory training, and tailored incubation support** for the region.





3. Diverse Sessions on Startup Development and Innovation

- The conclave includes sessions on:
 - **Startup incorporation & regulatory guidance**
 - **Funding (seed to early-stage)**
 - **Incubation and innovation models**
 - **Entrepreneurship for skilling and employment**
 - Special focus on **women-led enterprises, MSMEs, and regional FPOs**
- Also includes **fireside chats** with founders and **startup exhibitions** featuring 39 innovators from the North-East.

4. Strategic Partnerships and MoUs for Capacity Building

- IICA will sign **seven MoUs** with institutions like **IIM Shillong, STPI, ICAI, ICSI, ICMAI, NLU Assam, and MATI**.
- These collaborations aim to promote **compliance training, regional incubation, legal awareness, and policy innovation** in the entrepreneurial space.

5. National-Regional Convergence and Stakeholder Participation

- Knowledge and program partners include **SIDBI, NEC, NSE, BSE, STPI, SBI, PNB**, and others, ensuring **financial, institutional, and technological support** to startups.
- IIM Shillong acts as **Knowledge Partner**, showcasing integration of **academia, government, and industry**.

Key Definitions for UPSC:

- **IICA**: Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs—an autonomous body under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs focusing on research, training, and capacity-building in corporate governance and entrepreneurship.
- **Startup**: As defined under DPIIT, a startup is an entity less than 10 years old with annual turnover under ₹100 crore, working toward innovation, development, or improvement of products or services.
- **Incubation**: A structured support system for early-stage startups that includes mentoring, infrastructure, capital, and networking.

Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Article 19(1)(g)**: Right to practice any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade, or business.
- **Article 371 (Special Provisions for North-East)**: Allows the Centre to implement special developmental provisions for the region.
- **Companies Act, 2013**: Provides legal framework for incorporation, governance, and compliance of businesses and startups.



Conclusion & UPSC Relevance:

The **IICA North-East Conclave 2025** is a strategic step toward realizing the **entrepreneurial potential** of the North-East through **targeted policy support, skill development, institutional collaboration, and access to capital**. By building a **dedicated IICA campus** and hosting sessions on **startup regulation and innovation**, the event aligns with India's broader **Viksit Bharat @2047** vision and **Startup India** mission.

UPSC Relevance:

- **GS Paper II:** Government policies, e-governance, regional development, institutional initiatives
- **GS Paper III:** Startup ecosystem, innovation, MSMEs, employment, skill development, digital infrastructure
- **Prelims:** IICA, Startup India, North-East policies, IIM Shillong initiatives, government startup schemes

6. Reviving India's Intellectual Legacy: Global Conference on Manuscript Heritage 2025

1. First-Ever Global Conference on Manuscript Heritage

- The **Ministry of Culture** will host the **International Conference on 'Reclaiming India's Knowledge Legacy Through Manuscript Heritage'** from **11–13 September 2025** at **Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi**, in **hybrid mode** (physical and virtual).
- This historic event aligns with **Guru Purnima** and commemorates **Swami Vivekananda's 1893 Chicago speech**, reinforcing India's role as a **global knowledge centre**.

2. India's Rich Manuscript Treasure: A Civilisational Continuum

- India possesses over **1 crore manuscripts**, spanning **philosophy, science, mathematics, medicine, literature, rituals, and arts**, forming the core of **Bharatiya Jñāna Paramparā** (Indian Knowledge Systems - IKS).
- Manuscripts are not just heritage artefacts but a **living repository of knowledge**, requiring conservation, study, and public dissemination.

3. Key Themes and Global Participation

- The 3-day event will witness over **500 delegates**, including **75 eminent scholars and cultural custodians** from India and abroad.
- Thematic sessions will focus on:



Ministry of Culture
Government of India

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

on

**“Reclaiming India’s Knowledge Legacy
Through Manuscript Heritage”**

11–13 September 2025



Organized by
Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India

Venue
Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi

BACKGROUND

India possesses one of the richest manuscript heritages in the world, with an estimated 10 million ancient manuscripts. These span subjects including philosophy, science, medicine, literature, Vedic rituals, mathematics, astrology, *vāstu*, Sanskrit, and Indian arts and *darśana*—often in multiple scripts and languages and housed in institutions like temples, mathas, monasteries, Jaina Bhandāras, archives, libraries, and private collections.

These manuscripts are not merely texts—they are repositories of *Bhāratīya Jñāna Paramparā* (Indian Knowledge Systems) and the civilizational continuity of India. Despite this, many manuscripts remain unpublished, untranslated, or deteriorating.

To safeguard this invaluable heritage and assert India’s knowledge leadership globally, the Government of India announced the Gyan Bharatam Mission (GBM) in the Union Budget 2025–26, reviving and expanding the vision of the National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) launched in 2003 by then PM Late Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

GBM now seeks to preserve, digitize, and disseminate manuscript knowledge, integrate it with modern technologies, and foster a new generation of scholars and institutions to carry the legacy forward.

THE CONFERENCE

As part of the Gyan Bharatam Mission launch, a Three-Day International Conference is scheduled for 11–13 September 2025 in New Delhi, also commemorating Swami Vivekananda’s Chicago address (11 Sept 1893), symbolizing India’s intellectual and spiritual global vision.

The conference will be graced by various eminent dignitaries of India, and will feature keynotes and participation by global scholars, thought leaders, and cultural custodians. The Conference will be organised in Hybrid Mode.

STRUCTURE OF THE CONFERENCE

- Inaugural Session & Valedictory Session
- Technical Sessions - 4 Plenary Sessions and 12 Parallel Sessions
- Participation - about 500 national and international delegates through registration and invitation.
- 75 Invited Speakers and Experts

SIDE EVENTS

- Exhibition on Indian Manuscripts and Script Heritage
- Exhibition of manuscripts inscribed in the UNESCO Memory of the World
- Live demonstrations of conservation and digitization tools alongwith hands-on workshop
- Special space for startups in the field
- Cultural Programme

CALL FOR PAPERS

THEMATIC AREAS

Original research papers, case studies, and conceptual frameworks are invited on the following indicative themes:

1. Conservation and Restoration of Manuscripts
2. Survey, Documentation, and Metadata Standards
3. Digitization Tools, Platforms, and Protocols (HTR, AI, IIF)
4. Translation and Interpretation Methodologies

- **Digitisation and AI integration**
- **Palaeography and metadata standards**
- **Ethical custodianship and legal frameworks**
- **Curricular integration of manuscript knowledge**
- **Technology and manuscript-focused startups**

4. Major Institutional and Policy Outcomes

- Conference aims to adopt the **New Delhi Declaration on Manuscript Heritage**.
- Formation of **expert working groups** on:
 - **Decipherment and conservation**
 - **Translation and metadata digitisation**
 - **International institutional collaborations**
- Launch of the **Manuscript Research Partner (MRP) Programme** for training youth in manuscript studies, script labs, and content development.

5. Cultural, Academic, and Diplomatic Significance

- Side events include exhibitions of **UNESCO-inscribed rare manuscripts, live conservation demos, cultural performances, and startup showcases**.



- Original research invited in **Hindi and English** on themes like codicology, education, AI, diplomacy, and heritage law.
- The event reinforces India's identity as a **civilisational state** and a **thought leader** in global heritage preservation and knowledge diplomacy.

Key Definitions for UPSC:

- **Manuscript:** A handwritten document, especially those from ancient times, containing literary, scientific, or philosophical knowledge.
- **Codicology:** The study of manuscripts as physical objects — their structure, materials, and historical significance.
- **Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS):** Traditional Indian intellectual traditions including Vedic texts, Ayurveda, astronomy, mathematics, and arts.

Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Article 49:** Directs the State to protect monuments, places, and objects of artistic or historic interest.
- **Article 51A(f):** Fundamental Duty to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture.
- **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958:** Governs conservation and protection of historical records and sites.
- **Manuscript Conservation and Preservation Policy (proposed):** A national-level framework is under consideration.

Conclusion & UPSC Relevance:

The upcoming **Global Conference on Manuscript Heritage 2025** marks a paradigm shift in **reviving, digitising, and globalising India's ancient manuscript wealth**. By integrating **cultural diplomacy, technology, and education**, it enhances India's soft power, deepens civilisational pride, and positions India as a **global hub for traditional knowledge systems**.

UPSC Relevance:

- **GS Paper I:** Indian culture, heritage conservation, art and architecture.
- **GS Paper II:** Cultural diplomacy, international collaboration, policy initiatives.
- **GS Paper III:** Science & Tech in heritage preservation (AI, digitisation), startup ecosystem in cultural domains.
- **Prelims:** Bhāratīya Jñāna Paramparā, codicology, Guru Purnima, UNESCO Memory of the World Register, Manuscript Research Partner Programme.

7. INS Nistar: India's First Indigenous Diving Support Vessel Strengthens Undersea Capabilities

1. Indigenous Maritime Capability Boost

- The Indian Navy will **commission the first indigenously built Diving Support Vessel (DSV), INS Nistar**, on **18 July 2025** at Visakhapatnam.
- Designed and constructed by **Hindustan Shipyard Ltd.**, the ship marks a milestone in **Atmanirbhar Bharat** and **Make in India** in the defence sector, with **80% indigenous content** and the involvement of over **120 MSMEs**.

2. Strategic Role and Advanced Capabilities

- Nistar will serve under the **Eastern Naval Command** for **deep-sea diving and submarine rescue operations**.
- The vessel features:
 - **Dynamic Positioning System (DPS)** for precision movement,
 - **Air and Saturation Diving Systems**,
 - **Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs)**,
 - **Side Scan SONAR** and acts as a **'Mother Ship' for Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicles (DSRVs)**.
- It offers **hospital-grade onboard medical facilities** including an ICU, Operation Theatre, and Hyperbaric Chamber.

3. Historical Legacy and Symbolism

- The new vessel **carries forward the legacy** of the original **ex-Nistar**, acquired from the USSR in 1969.
- Her motto **'Surakshita Yatharthta Shauryam'** (Deliverance with Precision and Bravery) reflects her mission of underwater safety and rescue.



4. Operational Versatility and Endurance

- The vessel is approx. **120 meters in length**, **displaces over 10,000 tonnes**, and has **endurance of 60+ days at sea**.
- It includes a **15-ton subsea crane**, **helicopter operations capability**, and enhanced underwater and surface surveillance potential—making it one of the **most versatile maritime assets**.

5. Strategic Significance in the Indian Ocean Region

- Enhances **submarine rescue readiness** and bolsters **India's undersea warfare capabilities**.
- Strengthens **India's maritime posture** and deterrence in the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)** amid increasing strategic competition.



- Reinforces India's status as a **regional net security provider** and aligns with its **SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region)** doctrine.

Key Definitions for UPSC:

- **DSV (Diving Support Vessel):** A specialized ship equipped for underwater diving operations, including rescue and repair tasks.
- **Dynamic Positioning System (DPS):** A computer-controlled system that automatically maintains a vessel's position and heading using its own propellers and thrusters.
- **DSRV (Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle):** A small submarine used for rescuing the crew of disabled submarines at great depths.

Constitutional & Legal Framework:

- **Article 73 & 246:** Empower the Union to legislate and administer matters related to **defence and naval forces**.
- **Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP):** Framework for promoting **indigenous defence manufacturing**.
- **Public Procurement (Preference to Make in India) Order, 2017:** Supports indigenous sourcing in defence production.

Conclusion & UPSC Relevance:

The commissioning of **INS Nistar** symbolizes India's growing **indigenous defence capabilities**, enhancing its **strategic readiness in undersea domains** and **rescue operations**. It reflects the synergy between national security goals, technological self-reliance, and public-private sector collaboration in defence manufacturing.

UPSC Relevance:

- **GS Paper II:** Government policies promoting self-reliance in defence, strategic maritime doctrine.
- **GS Paper III:** Science & Technology in national security, naval innovations, indigenisation in defence sector.
- **Prelims:** INS Nistar, Dynamic Positioning System, DSRV, Eastern Naval Command, Hindustan Shipyard Ltd., SAGAR doctrine.

24/7 STUDY CENTRE



FACILITIES

- **Individual Cubicles With Power Point**
- **Flexible For Working Aspirants (24x7)**
- **Separate Wash Room For Girls & Boys**
- **Purified Water**
- **Free High Speed Wi-Fi**
- **CCTV Surveillance**
- **Parking Space Available**
- **UPS Power Backup**
- **Daily News Papers**
- **Peaceful Environment**



8. Supreme Court on Voter Verification: Aadhaar, EPIC, and Ration Card May Be Considered as Valid Proof

1. Supreme Court Intervention in Bihar's Electoral Roll Revision

- The **Supreme Court** is hearing petitions against the **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** of the electoral rolls in **Bihar**.
- The Court stated that this issue “**goes to the very roots of democracy**”, as it pertains to the **fundamental right to vote**.
- The revision process has been questioned for its **lack of clarity** and for not fitting definitions under **Section 21 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950**, which differentiates between **summary** and **special** revisions.



2. Direction to Consider Additional Documents

- The Court noted that the **Election Commission's (EC)** list of 11 verification documents is **not exhaustive**.
- It directed the EC to also **consider Aadhaar, Elector Photo Identity Card (EPIC), and ration card** as valid proof for **voter registration**.
- These are widely used **identity documents** and should logically be accepted for establishing a voter's identity.

3. Aadhaar's Legal Limitation & EC's Objection

- The **EC objected to Aadhaar**, stating it is **not proof of citizenship**, and hence not suitable for voter registration.
- Under the **Aadhaar Act, 2016**, Aadhaar is a **proof of identity**, not **citizenship**. Even **non-citizens who are residents** may be issued Aadhaar cards.
- The EC argued that **voter eligibility** requires **proof of Indian citizenship**, which Aadhaar cannot legally ensure.

4. Judicial Scrutiny and Observations

- **Justice Dhulia** questioned why Aadhaar, which is required for many government services, is **not included** in the EC's document list.
- He emphasized that the **entire voter verification process is about identity**, and Aadhaar's exclusion raises logical concerns.
- The Court also flagged the **timing** of the SIR exercise, calling it “**very short**”, and committed to reviewing its **legality, procedure, and scope**.

Key Legal and Constitutional Provisions:

- **Article 326:** Guarantees **universal adult suffrage** in elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.



- **Representation of the People Act, 1950 – Section 21:** Provides for **preparation and revision** of electoral rolls.
- **Aadhaar Act, 2016:** Clearly states that Aadhaar is **not a proof of citizenship**, only **identity and residence**.
- **Election Commission’s Power (Article 324):** EC has authority over **superintendence, direction, and control** of elections.

Definitions for UPSC:

- **EPIC (Elector Photo Identity Card):** A photo ID issued by the Election Commission of India to all eligible voters.
- **SIR (Special Intensive Revision):** An extensive process to revise electoral rolls, usually conducted under specific circumstances.
- **Aadhaar:** A 12-digit unique identity number issued by UIDAI based on biometric and demographic data.

Conclusion & UPSC Relevance:

The Supreme Court’s direction to **include Aadhaar, EPIC, and ration card** as acceptable identity proofs during voter verification reflects a push toward **inclusive electoral practices** while upholding legal boundaries. This case highlights the tension between **identity verification** and **citizenship proof**, and raises crucial questions on **electoral integrity, administrative discretion, and constitutional rights**.

UPSC Relevance:

- **GS Paper II:** Polity and Governance – Electoral reforms, Election Commission, Right to Vote.
- **GS Paper I (Ethics):** Issues of democratic integrity and fairness.
- **Prelims:** Representation of the People Act, Article 326, Article 324, Aadhaar Act, SIR, EPIC.

This case may become a precedent in future debates on **electoral roll purification, digital identity use, and citizenship verification** in India's democratic processes.

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9. Zonal Councils as Engines of Cooperative Federalism: Transformation under Union Home Ministry

1. Zonal Councils Evolve into Cooperative Engines

- Union Home Minister **Amit Shah** stated that **Zonal Councils**, once limited to being **discussion forums**, have now become “**engines of cooperation**” between the Centre and States.
- At the **27th Eastern Zonal Council meeting** (involving Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, and West Bengal), he highlighted that **83% of issues** raised in Council meetings have been **successfully resolved**, showcasing their effectiveness in dispute resolution and inter-state coordination.

2. Resolution of Long-Standing Inter-State Issues

- The meeting addressed **complex and long-pending issues** such as:
 - **Masanjore Dam, Taiyabpur Barrage, and Indrapuri Reservoir.**
 - **Division of assets and liabilities** of PSUs between Bihar and Jharkhand (pending since **the 2000 bifurcation**).
- These issues were resolved through **mutual consent**, reflecting the cooperative spirit fostered by the Zonal Council mechanism.



3. Increase in Zonal Council Engagement Since 2014

- The number of Zonal Council meetings **increased significantly from 25 (2004–2014) to 63 (2014–2025)**.
- This reflects a strategic push by the Union government to strengthen **cooperative federalism** and improve **Centre–State relations**, particularly on **security, infrastructure, and administrative coordination**.

4. Naxalism Declining in Eastern States

- Mr. Shah noted that States like **Bihar, Jharkhand, and Odisha** have largely become **free from Naxalism**, due to **coordinated security efforts**, better governance, and increased development outreach.
- This reduction supports improved law and order and enhances investor confidence in these regions.

5. Constitutional & Legal Framework

- **Article 263 of the Constitution** provides for **Inter-State Councils** to resolve disputes between States and with the Union.
- **Zonal Councils** were established under the **States Reorganisation Act, 1956**:
 - **Five Zonal Councils**: Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western, Central (North Eastern Council is separate under NE Council Act, 1971).
 - Headed by the **Union Home Minister**, they include Chief Ministers, Governors, and senior officials.

Key Definitions for UPSC

- **Zonal Councils:** Statutory advisory bodies under the Ministry of Home Affairs for promoting interstate cooperation.
- **Cooperative Federalism:** A governance approach where the Centre and States **work together harmoniously** to address national challenges.
- **Naxalism:** A form of left-wing extremism marked by armed rebellion against the Indian State, primarily in central and eastern India.

Conclusion & UPSC Relevance

Zonal Councils are no longer symbolic—they now drive **collaborative problem-solving and regional development**. Their growing frequency and effectiveness demonstrate **India's evolving model of cooperative federalism**, especially in **post-conflict and resource-sharing contexts**. Their success also reinforces the need for **institutional mechanisms** that promote **dialogue, trust, and consensus-building**.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Governance, Inter-State Relations, Cooperative Federalism, Role of Zonal Councils.
- **GS Paper III:** Internal Security – Naxalism and governance reforms.
- **Prelims:** Article 263, Zonal Councils, States Reorganisation Act, Inter-State Council.

Zonal Councils exemplify the federal design envisioned by the Constitution—**cooperation over conflict, and dialogue over confrontation**.

10. Nipah Virus Surveillance in Kerala: Central Teams Assess Situation in Palakkad and Malappuram

1. Central Scientific Teams Mobilised for Nipah Control

- A central team led by the **National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC)** visited **Palakkad and Malappuram** districts of Kerala to assess the **Nipah virus outbreak**.
- Another team from the **National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune**, headed by Dr. Dileep Patil, is scheduled to conduct **disease mapping and bat surveillance** in the affected areas.

2. Disease Surveillance and Containment Measures

- The NCDC team reviewed medical protocols and held talks with **District Medical Officers**, expressing satisfaction with the **containment and preventive strategies**.
- As of now, **499 people are under observation**, with:
 - **203 in Malappuram**
 - **178 in Palakkad**





- 116 in Kozhikode
- 2 in Ernakulam

- 14 people are under treatment, and 56 quarantined individuals in Malappuram tested negative.

3. Containment Zone Updates

- Restrictions lifted in 20 wards of Malappuram district after no new cases were detected; no containment zones remain in the district.
- In contrast, 6 wards in Palakkad continue as containment zones, with strict enforcement by district authorities.

4. What is Nipah Virus? (Definition for UPSC)

- Nipah Virus (NiV) is a zoonotic virus transmitted from animals (primarily fruit bats) to humans, and also via contaminated food or human-to-human contact.
- It causes severe respiratory illness and encephalitis, with a high fatality rate.
- No specific treatment or vaccine exists, and management involves supportive care, early detection, isolation, and contact tracing.

5. Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- Under Entry 29 & 30 of the Concurrent List, both Centre and States can legislate on prevention of infectious diseases.
- The Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 and Disaster Management Act, 2005 empower governments to take measures during outbreaks.
- Central agencies like NCDC, ICMR, and NIV play key roles in disease surveillance and response coordination.

Conclusion & UPSC Relevance

The Nipah surveillance in Kerala reflects India's strengthened disease surveillance mechanisms and Centre-State coordination in public health emergencies. Kerala's swift containment measures and scientific disease mapping underline the importance of community health infrastructure, zoonotic surveillance, and early warning systems. Continuous investment in One Health frameworks, involving animal, human, and environmental health, is critical to address emerging infectious diseases.

UPSC Relevance

- GS Paper II: Governance – Health Policies, Centre–State Relations, Institutional Coordination.
- GS Paper III: Disaster Management, Public Health, Science & Tech – Virology, Zoonotic Diseases.
- Prelims: Nipah Virus, NCDC, ICMR, Epidemic Diseases Act.

The situation in Kerala highlights India's evolving capacity to manage biological hazards and is a case study for UPSC on public health emergency preparedness.

I I. Empowering Youth for India's Progress: Choice, Control, and Capital

1. Youth-Centric Development for Demographic Dividend

- India has the **world's largest youth population** — over **371 million** aged 15–29 (UNICEF).
- Investing in their **education, skill development, health, and reproductive autonomy** can yield a **\$1 trillion GDP boost by 2030** (World Bank & NITI Aayog).
- The 2025 **UN theme** for World Population Day, “Empowering young people to create the families they want,” reinforces the right to **informed, voluntary choices** in reproductive health and family planning.

2. Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR)

- The **1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)** guarantees **freedom from coercion, discrimination, and violence** in reproductive health.
- India has reduced **child marriage** to 23.3% and **teenage pregnancies** to 7%, but **regional disparities** persist (NFHS-5).
- Over **36% of adults face unintended pregnancies** and **30% have unmet reproductive goals** (UNFPA, 2025).

3. Transformative Interventions: Udaan, Advika, and Manzil

- **Project Udaan (Rajasthan)** prevented **30,000 child marriages** and **15,000 teenage pregnancies** by promoting **secondary education, health awareness, and contraceptive access**.
- **Advika Programme (Odisha)** fostered **11,000 child-marriage-free villages** and halted 950+ child marriages through **adolescent empowerment and child protection awareness**.
- **Project Manzil (Rajasthan)** enabled **28,000 girls** to gain skill training; **16,000 were employed**, transforming them into **first-generation earners**, delaying early marriage and boosting gender equality.



4. Economic Empowerment as the Core of Reproductive Autonomy

- Economic empowerment enhances **decision-making power, negotiation in marriage, and family planning** choices.
- **Human-centered design** of programmes aligns with **aspirations of young women**, while addressing **social norms and structural barriers** (e.g., workplace safety, childcare access).

5. Structural & Legal Frameworks Supporting Youth Rights

- **Right to Education (Article 21A), Fundamental Rights (Article 14, 15, 16) and Directive Principles (Article 39(e), 45)** emphasize youth welfare, especially girls.
- **POSCO Act, Child Marriage Prohibition Act (2006), and Reproductive Rights under Article 21** are key legal instruments to protect adolescent rights.
- Government schemes like **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, RKSK (Adolescent Health Programme)** and **POSHAN Abhiyaan** supplement these efforts.

Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

Empowering India's youth—especially **adolescent girls**—through **education, health, rights-based approaches, and economic opportunities** is essential to realize the **demographic dividend** and build an **inclusive Viksit Bharat**. Programmes like **Udaan, Advika, and Manzil** are replicable success models to eliminate **child marriage**, ensure **reproductive autonomy**, and foster **economic resilience**.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper I:** Population and associated issues; Role of women and women's organizations.
- **GS Paper II:** Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections, rights issues, and governance mechanisms.
- **GS Paper III:** Inclusive development, demographic dividend, and skill development.
- **GS Paper IV:** Ethics of empowerment, autonomy, and social justice.

This topic blends population policy, gender justice, and social empowerment—core areas of UPSC General Studies and Essay preparation.

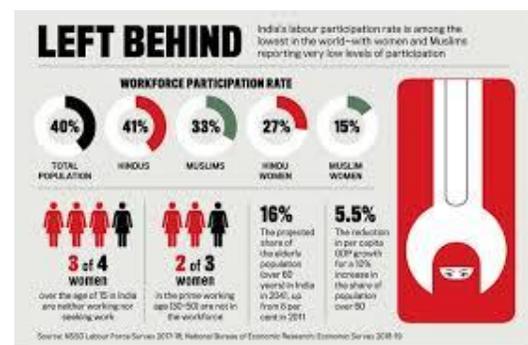
12. Population Decline and the Myth of Demographic Doom

1. Changing Population Discourse: From Overpopulation to Underpopulation

- Earlier fears based on **Malthusian theory** emphasized **population explosion** and ecological strain; now the global concern is **falling fertility rates** and population decline.
- Influential figures like **Elon Musk** have predicted "population collapse", but **UN World Population Prospects 2024** projects **global population peaking at 10.3 billion by 2085**, not immediate decline.
- **UN data debunks alarmism**—the population in 2100 is expected to be only 6% lower than previous projections, not catastrophic shrinkage.

2. Key Demographic Concepts

- **Total Fertility Rate (TFR):** Average number of children a woman is expected to have during her lifetime. A TFR of **2.1** is considered **replacement level**.
- **Population Momentum:** Even when fertility falls below replacement level, population can **continue growing for decades** due to a large young population base.
- **Projections ≠ Predictions:** Demographic trends depend on assumptions and can change with policy, social, and economic shifts.



3. The Real Fertility Crisis: Barriers to Reproductive Autonomy

- **UNFPA Report 2025** found **one in five people** couldn't have the children they desired due to:
 - **Financial constraints (38%)**
 - **Housing issues (22%)**



- **Unemployment (21%)**
- **Lack of childcare (18%)**
- **Infertility (13%)**

- The problem isn't low fertility by choice, but **lack of support** to realize **desired fertility goals**.

4. Misguided Policy Responses and Gender Impacts

- **Target-driven pronatalism** (e.g., baby bonuses) reinforces **traditional gender roles**, ignores men's role, and fails to address real obstacles.
- Some governments curb **abortion or contraceptive rights**, targeting **voluntarily childfree women**, instead of supporting those who want children.
- Focus should be on **societal change**—better jobs, housing, and **gender-equal workplaces**, not pressuring women into childbearing.

5. International Experiences and Evidence-Based Lessons

- **South Korea's fertility revival (7.3% rise in early 2025)** followed 20 years and \$200 billion investment, but financial and housing barriers remain primary concerns.
- Successful demographic policy must shift from coercion to **creating enabling environments**—education, employment, healthcare, childcare, and social security.

Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

The ongoing panic about population decline is **premature, analytically flawed, and ethically problematic**. The **real crisis is reproductive inequality**—barriers that prevent individuals from fulfilling their desired family goals. India must **prioritize rights-based reproductive policies**, enhance **socioeconomic infrastructure**, and ensure **gender justice** to respond to demographic changes meaningfully.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper I:** Population and associated issues, demographic trends.
- **GS Paper II:** Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections; issues related to women and child development.
- **GS Paper III:** Inclusive growth and employment.
- **GS Paper IV:** Ethics in public policy, autonomy, and social equity.
- **Essay Paper:** Excellent fodder for essays on "Reproductive Rights", "Population and Development", or "Women and Public Policy".

This topic integrates **demographic analysis, public policy, rights-based development, and gender empowerment**—key themes across UPSC GS papers and essay writing.