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VIDHVATH IAS KAS ACADEMY & STUDY CENTRE

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

DATE: 28/07/2026 (TUESDAY)

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1. Maharashtra Qualifies for Second RKVY Installment

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Pioneer State:** Maharashtra became the first State in India to qualify for the second installment (Second Mother Sanction) under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY).
- **Fund Utilisation Threshold:** Out of ₹335 crore released as the first installment, Maharashtra utilized ~₹260 crore, comfortably surpassing the mandatory 75% expenditure benchmark.
- **Additional Allocation:** Following successful compliance, the Union Ministry initiated the process to release the remaining ₹335 crore to the State.
- **Component Progress:** Satisfactory performance was observed under Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), alongside rapid creation of Farmer IDs and direct compensation transfers (~₹14,000 crore) during flood relief.
- **Focus Areas:** The Union Agriculture Ministry directed accelerated expenditure in key sub-schemes, including Digital Agriculture, Agricultural Extension, Seeds, Oilseeds, and Agroforestry.
- **PMFBY Clarification:** Emphasized full data disclosure for both Kisan Credit Card (KCC) and non-KCC farmers to prevent double-dipping while maintaining insurance coverage transparency.

Essential Definitions

- **Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY):** An initiative launched to ensure holistic development of agriculture and allied sectors by giving states freedom to plan and execute decentralized agricultural strategies.
- **Kisan Credit Card (KCC):** A scheme providing timely, hassle-free credit to farmers for agricultural inputs, post-harvest expenses, and maintenance assets with interest subvention benefits.
- **Digital Agriculture Mission:** An umbrella initiative leveraging modern technologies like AI, GIS, and Remote Sensing along with AgriStack (Farmer IDs) to modernize farming workflows.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Seventh Schedule Entry:** Agriculture falls under **Entry 14 of the State List** in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution, making State action central to implementation while the Centre provides policy and budgetary support via Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS).
- **Article 282:** Enables the Union Government to grant financial assistance to States for public purposes, serving as the financial backbone for central schemes like RKVY.
- **RKVY Operational Guidelines:** Mandate strict fiscal discipline, requiring States to utilize at least 75% of previously sanctioned funds and submit corresponding Utilization Certificates (UCs) before the release of subsequent tranches.

Conclusion

Maharashtra's timely utilization of funds sets a benchmark for cooperative federalism in agricultural governance. Accelerating sub-schemes like Digital Agriculture and maintaining operational transparency in PMFBY will ensure sustainable growth, modern technology integration, and enhanced income security for farmers.

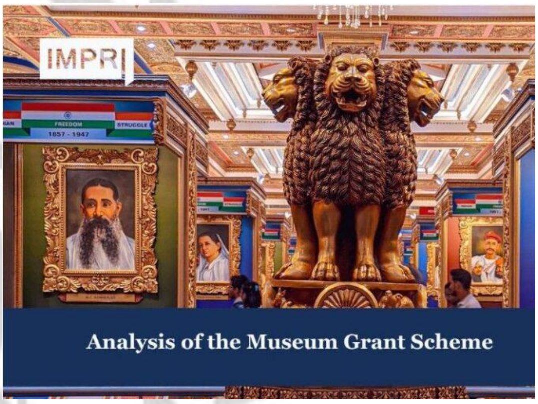
UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, and cooperative federalism (Union-State financial transfers).
- **GS Paper III:** Major cropping patterns, direct and indirect farm subsidies, storage/supply chain management, and technology missions in agriculture.

2. Museum Grant Scheme and Preservation of Cultural Heritage

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Central Financial Assistance:** The Ministry of Culture operates the Museum Grant Scheme (MGS) to support setting up new museums, upgrading existing facilities, digitizing collections, and building virtual/experiential museums.
- **Broad Eligibility Scope:** Grants are accessible to Central/State governments, PSUs, autonomous bodies, local bodies, academic institutions, and registered non-profit trusts.



- **Three-Tier Classification:** Beneficiary museums are categorized into Category I (State Capital government/PSU museums), Category II (Other government/PSU museums), and Category III (Registered societies, trusts, and local bodies).
- **Fund Allocation Limits:** Financial aid varies by category; Component A allows up to ₹15 crore for Category I, ₹10 crore for Category II, and ₹5 crore for Category III projects.
- **Digitization Focus:** Components B and C allocate dedicated funds (up to ₹50 lakh for Category I; ₹25 lakh for others) specifically for digitizing artifacts and professional capacity building.
- **Synergy with Tourism:** The initiative operates alongside Ministry of Tourism promotional drives to position Indian heritage and museums within global travel markets.

Essential Definitions

- **Museum Grant Scheme (MGS):** A flagship Central Sector initiative aimed at modernization, infrastructure enhancement, and digital integration across Indian museums.
- **Virtual Experiential Museum:** An interactive cultural space utilizing digital tools like AR, VR, and metaverse platforms to display historical artifacts interactively.
- **Digitization of Collections:** The process of capturing high-resolution digital images, 3D scans, and metadata of physical artifacts for preservation and public access.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Seventh Schedule Allocation:** Heritage conservation spans multiple lists—**Entry 67 of the Union List** covers ancient monuments and records of national importance, while **Entry 12 of the State List** covers state libraries and museums.
- **Article 49 (DPSP):** Obligates the State to protect monuments, places, and objects of artistic or historic interest from spoliation, disfigurement, or destruction.

- **Societies Registration Act, 1860:** Serves as the primary statutory framework governing Category III private trusts and autonomous entities seeking government cultural grants.

Conclusion

The Museum Grant Scheme plays a vital role in democratizing access to India's vast cultural heritage. By combining physical infrastructure upgrades with digital preservation, the scheme strengthens cultural diplomacy, boosts heritage tourism, and protects historical assets for future generations.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper I:** Indian culture, protection and preservation of art forms, literature, and architectural monuments from ancient to modern times.
- **GS Paper II:** Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

3. Gyan Bharatam Mission and Manuscript Digitisation

Key Highlights & Summary

- **National Manuscript Survey:** Launched across all States and UTs under the Gyan Bharatam Mission to identify and document manuscript holdings, repositories, and custodians across diverse languages.
- **Massive Inventory Base:** Over 1.19 crore manuscripts have been reported during the survey without setting explicit district-wise targets or enforcing physical registration barriers.
- **Gyan Bharatam Web Portal:** Integrates AI technologies like Large Language Script Models (LLSM), Optical Character Recognition (OCR), and Handwritten Text Recognition (HTR) for intelligent manuscript access.
- **Gyan Mitram Interface:** Serves as an AI-powered knowledge interface that combines manuscript images, transcriptions, and machine-assisted translations for contextual exploration.
- **BharatiyaGPT & Pandulipi Darpan:** Enables conversational AI interaction via "Talk to Manuscript" features alongside automated script recognition, transliteration, and semantic search.
- **Access Rights & Compliance:** Digital copies and metadata are shared through the National Digital Repository in compliance with custodian rights and applicable legal frameworks governing intellectual property.

Essential Definitions

- **Gyan Bharatam Mission:** A national initiative aimed at preserving, digitizing, and democratizing access to India's ancient manuscript heritage through advanced digital frameworks.
- **Handwritten Text Recognition (HTR):** An AI-driven technique used to convert historical handwritten documents into machine-readable text formats.
- **Large Language Script Models (LLSM):** Specialized AI models trained on historical scripts and archaic languages to assist in automated translation and semantic interpretation.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 49 (DPSP):** Mandates that the State shall protect every monument, place, or object of artistic or historic interest from spoliation, disfigurement, or destruction.

- **Seventh Schedule Entry:** Ancient and historical monuments and records fall under **Entry 67 of the Union List** (for national importance) and **Entry 12 of the State List** (for regional heritage).
- **Copyright Act, 1957:** Governs public access, digitization permissions, and rights protection for manuscripts, ensuring sensitive or custodian-protected material remains legally compliant.

Conclusion

The Gyan Bharatam Mission bridges India's ancient intellectual traditions with modern technology. By deploying cutting-edge tools like BharatiyaGPT and Pandulipi Darpan, the mission safeguards fragile cultural assets while democratizing scholarly research and global access to indigenous knowledge systems.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper I:** Indian culture, salient aspects of art forms, literature, and preservation of ancient Indian knowledge traditions.
- **GS Paper II:** Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.
- **GS Paper III:** Developments and applications of technology in daily life, specifically Artificial Intelligence in cultural preservation.

Technology in Securing Examinations and Preventing Paper Leaks

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Systemic Crisis:** Paper leaks in high-stakes tests like NEET-UG erode meritocracy, delay recruitment cycles, impose heavy financial burdens, and severely affect mental health among aspirants.
- **Technological Intervention:** Interventions including encrypted digital question banks, time-locked delivery, biometric authentication, geo-fencing, and AI-driven monitoring significantly limit leak vectors.
- **Inherent Limitations:** Technology mitigates operational loopholes but remains vulnerable to insider collusion, sophisticated cyberattacks, and systemic governance gaps.
- **Global Best Practices:** Nations like China, South Korea, and the US deploy computer-based testing, multi-instance examination cycles, and continuous evaluation models to dilute single-exam pressure.
- **Future Paradigm Shift:** India's examination landscape requires transitioning toward computer-based assessments, AI-driven question randomization, and holistic evaluation metrics.
- **Legislative Action:** The Union Government has enacted stringent statutory measures to impose severe criminal and financial deterrence against organized paper leak syndicates.

Essential Definitions

- **Time-Locked Delivery:** A security mechanism where digitized, encrypted question papers are decrypted and unlocked at test centers only minutes prior to examination commencement.
- **Geo-Fencing:** A location-based digital boundary system that restricts access to examination files or portal logins to authorized geographical premises.
- **Computer-Based Testing (CBT):** An automated assessment framework where candidates answer questions directly on secured, networked computer systems rather than paper-and-pen modules.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024:** Provides statutory backing to curb leaks, prescribing imprisonment up to 10 years and fines reaching ₹10 crore for organized crime syndicates.
- **Article 14 & 16:** Paper leaks violate fundamental rights to equality before law and equal opportunity in public employment by undermining meritocratic selection process.
- **Seventh Schedule Allocation:** Education falls under **Entry 25 of the Concurrent List**, granting joint jurisdiction to Union and State governments to reform test administration protocols.

Conclusion

While advanced technology forms a robust front-line defense against physical paper tampering, digital tools cannot completely substitute institutional integrity. Securing national examinations demands a holistic policy strategy combining robust cybersecurity, administrative accountability, continuous evaluation, and strict legal enforcement.

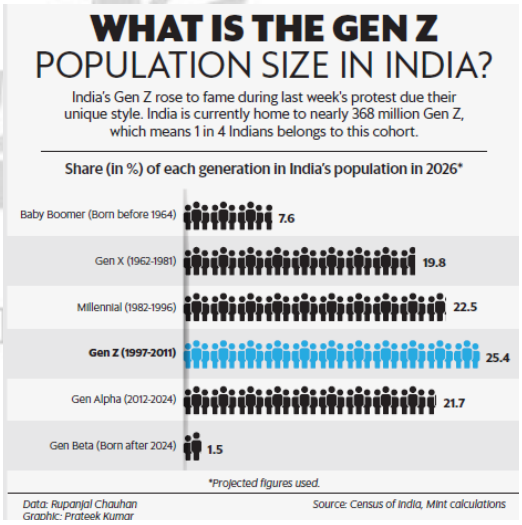
UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Governance issues, statutory frameworks, transparency, accountability, and role of civil services in public administration.
- **GS Paper III:** Application of technology, cyber security challenges, and infrastructure development in education.

4. Demographic Transition and Gen Z Cohort in India

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Dominant Population Cohort:** India is home to nearly 368 million Gen Z individuals, representing 1 in 4 citizens nationwide.
- **Largest Demographic Share:** Projections for 2026 show Gen Z leading India's age composition at 25.4%, followed by Millennials at 22.5%.
- **Emerging Youth Cohort:** Gen Alpha (born 2012-2024) accounts for 21.7% of the total population projection.
- **Older Demographics:** Gen X constitutes 19.8% and Baby Boomers comprise 7.6%, while Gen Beta represents 1.5% of the total demographic spread.



- **Demographic Dividend:** The expansion of working-age cohorts (Gen Z and Millennials) positions India with a low dependency ratio, driving economic productivity.
- **Socio-Political Influence:** With rising civic engagement and digital connectivity, Gen Z represents a transformative social, political, and economic force in national policy creation.

Essential Definitions

- **Gen Z Cohort:** The demographic group born between 1997 and 2011, characterized as digital natives raised alongside high-speed internet and modern digital tools.

- **Demographic Dividend:** Economic growth potential resulting from shifts in a population's age structure, particularly when the working-age population outnumbers non-working dependents.
- **Dependency Ratio:** The ratio of non-working-age dependents (below 15 and above 64) to the working-age population (15 to 64 years).

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 21A:** Mandates free and compulsory education for children aged 6 to 14, providing foundational training for upcoming cohorts like Gen Alpha.
- **Article 39(e) & (f) (DPSP):** Directs state policy toward protecting youth from exploitation, ensuring physical and moral development in freedom and dignity.
- **National Youth Policy (NYP):** Sets long-term frameworks to harness youth potential across education, employment, skill development, leadership, and health.

Conclusion

India's substantial Gen Z population offers an unparalleled opportunity to capitalize on its demographic dividend. Realizing this potential requires targeted investments in quality higher education, digital skills, vocational training, and sustainable job creation to build a competitive and resilient workforce.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper I:** Population and associated issues, urbanization, social empowerment, and demographic dynamics in Indian society.
- **GS Paper II:** Government policies and interventions for development, health, education, and human resources utilization.
- **GS Paper III:** Indian economy, mobilization of resources, growth, employment generation, and skill development.

5. PSBs Sell NPAs Ahead of New RBI Rules

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Surge in Stressed Asset Sales:** Indian public sector banks (PSBs) offered ~₹50,000 crore out of nearly ₹60,000 crore of stressed assets for sale to Asset Reconstruction Companies (ARCs) in the April–June quarter.
- **Private and Non-Bank Participation:** Private sector banks put up ₹8,000 crore of bad loans, while non-banking lenders contributed the remaining ₹2,000 crore.
- **Regulatory Impetus:** Lenders are actively offloading legacy Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) to clean balance sheets before the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Expected Credit Loss (ECL) framework takes effect.
- **Shift to Proactive Provisioning:** The upcoming ECL regime requires banks to scan for likely loan defaults early and hold higher provisioning reserves rather than waiting for an actual default to occur.

- **Rising ARC Acquisition:** Bad loan acquisitions by ARCs reached ₹16,876 crore in the corresponding quarter of FY26, up from ₹13,852 crore a year prior.
- **First Categorized Data Release:** Industry data compiled by the Association of ARCs in India represents the first instance where stressed asset sales have been classified by lender category.

Essential Definitions

- **Non-Performing Asset (NPA):** A loan or advance for which the principal or interest payment remains overdue for a period exceeding 90 days.
- **Expected Credit Loss (ECL) Model:** A forward-looking provisioning approach where financial institutions estimate future credit losses at loan origination based on historical data and macroeconomic factors, replacing the reactive incurred-loss model.
- **Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC):** A specialized financial institution that buys NPAs from banks and financial institutions to assist in debt recovery and balance sheet cleanup.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **SARFAESI Act, 2002:** Regulates the registration and operation of Asset Reconstruction Companies and empowers banks to auction residential or commercial properties to recover bad loans.
- **Banking Regulation Act, 1949:** Empowers the RBI under Section 35A to issue binding directions to banking companies regarding asset classification, provisioning norms, and credit risk management.
- **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016:** Provides a time-bound statutory mechanism for resolving stressed assets and corporate insolvency.

Conclusion

The proactive sale of legacy NPAs by state-owned banks reflects a structural shift toward healthier balance sheets ahead of stricter regulatory norms. Transitioning to the forward-looking ECL regime will align Indian banking standards with global practices, enhance risk resilience, and promote systemic financial stability.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III:** Indian economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development, and management of the banking sector (NPAs, capital adequacy, and regulatory reforms).
- **GS Paper III:** Statutory regulatory bodies, financial inclusion, and risk mitigation frameworks in public sector institutions.

6. Kharif Sowing Trends and Agricultural Acreage Dynamics

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Overall Acreage Shortfall:** Total Kharif crop sowing reached 78.7 million hectares as of late July, trailing behind the 82.6 million hectares recorded in the corresponding period of the previous year.
- **Paddy and Staple Decline:** Sowing of paddy, the flagship Kharif staple, dropped to 23.4 million hectares—a reduction of 619,000 hectares compared to the prior year.
- **State-Level Regional Disparities:** Major agricultural states like Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Haryana, Gujarat, and West Bengal experienced lower sowing coverage, whereas Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Andhra Pradesh recorded gains.

- **Contraction in Cash Crops:** Oilseed coverage declined to 16.3 million hectares, impacted by reductions in soybean (down 359,000 hectares) and groundnut acreage (down 58,000 hectares).
- **Monsoon Recovery Impact:** Improved monsoon precipitation in recent weeks helped narrow the sowing gap, although uneven spatial rainfall distribution continues to affect rainfed agricultural belts.

- **Narrowing Sowing Trajectory:** Despite structural shortfalls in pulses, coarse cereals, and cotton, sugarcane remained an outlier by demonstrating positive growth.

Essential Definitions

- **Kharif Crops:** Autumn crops sown with the arrival of the southwest monsoon (June–July) and harvested between September and October, relying heavily on seasonal rainfall.
- **Acreage Gap:** The statistical difference between total land area cultivated during a current cropping season compared to the corresponding period of a previous benchmark year.
- **Rainfed Agriculture:** Cultivation systems dependent entirely on natural rainfall for soil moisture rather than artificial irrigation infrastructure.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 48 (DPSP):** Directs the State to organize agriculture and animal husbandry on modern and scientific lines to ensure sustainable farm productivity.
- **Entry 14, State List:** Places agriculture, including agricultural education, research, and protection against pests/diseases, under primary State jurisdiction in the Seventh Schedule.
- **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013:** Mandates foodgrain production stability to fulfill statutory obligations of providing subsidized foodgrains to designated priority households.

Conclusion

The contraction in Kharif acreage highlights the structural vulnerability of rain-fed farming systems to temporal and spatial monsoon variances. Aligning climate-resilient cropping strategies, expanding micro-irrigation infrastructure, and implementing targeted policy support remain vital to safeguarding domestic production, farmer income, and national food security.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III:** Major cropping patterns in various parts of the country, different types of irrigation and irrigation systems, storage, transport, and marketing of agricultural produce.
- **GS Paper III:** Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies, minimum support prices, food security, and agricultural risk mitigation against monsoon fluctuations.

7. RBI Forex Window and FCNR(B) Inflows

Key Highlights & Summary

- SBI Research projects total foreign currency inflows into India could hit $80 to $85 billion through the Reserve Bank of India special window, driven largely by Foreign Currency Non-Resident Bank or FCNR(B) deposits.
- FCNR(B) deposits alone are expected to reach $65 to $70 billion by the time the window closes at the end of September 2026, already touching $26 to $28 billion by 23 July.
- The current inflow pace has outpaced the 2013 special FCNR(B) window, which took roughly three months to mobilize about $26 billion.


RBI'S PLAN OF ACTION

- FCNR(B) deposits of three to five years to be exempt from cash reserve ratio and statutory liquidity ratio, lowering cost of mobilising such funds for banks
- For external commercial borrowings, RBI has set a swap cost of 1.5% a year, making overseas loans attractive for top-rated PSUs compared with domestic funding
- FCNR(B) swap window will remain open until Oct 16, 2026, for deposits mobilised up to Sept 30
- The ECB and OFCB swap facility will run until Jan 15, 2027, for drawdowns up to Dec 31, 2026

- Large public sector banks are steering the scheme by leveraging overseas customer relationships and deploying an optimally blended onshore-offshore game plan.
- India balance of payments is now projected to register a surplus of over $50 billion in FY27, shifting drastically from an earlier projected deficit of $65 to $70 billion.
- The current account deficit is projected to remain stable at 1.0 to 1.2 percent of GDP, while temporary dollar-rupee swap facilities and external commercial borrowings provide added stability.

Essential Definitions

- Foreign Currency Non-Resident Bank Deposits or FCNR(B) refer to fixed deposits permitted to be maintained in foreign currencies by non-resident Indians or persons of Indian origin, shielding depositors from exchange rate fluctuations while boosting domestic foreign exchange reserves.
- Balance of Payments or BoP is a comprehensive statement that systematically summarizes, for a specific time period, the economic transactions of an economy with the rest of the world.
- Current Account Deficit or CAD occurs when a country's total imports of goods, services, and transfers exceed its total exports, indicating that the nation is a net borrower from the rest of the world.
- External Commercial Borrowings or ECBs are commercial loans raised by eligible resident entities from recognized non-resident entities, subject to parameters laid down by the Reserve Bank of India.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 empowers the central bank to regulate the issue of bank notes and keep reserves with a view to securing monetary stability in India and to operate the credit and currency system to the advantage of the country.
- Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 or FEMA consolidates and amends the law relating to foreign exchange with the objective of facilitating external trade and payments and promoting the orderly development and maintenance of foreign exchange market in India.
- Constitution of India under Entry 36 of List I or the Union List in the Seventh Schedule grants the Parliament exclusive power to make laws regarding currency, coinage, legal tender, and foreign exchange.

Conclusion

The accelerated mobilization of FCNR(B) deposits highlights effective proactive liquidity management by the Reserve Bank of India. By tapping into non-resident capital and stabilizing external accounts, these temporary special windows successfully insulate the domestic currency from global volatility, fortify foreign exchange reserves, and transform a projected balance of payments deficit into a robust surplus.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is highly relevant for the UPSC Civil Services Examination under General Studies Paper III covering Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development, and employment. Aspirants must understand external sector dynamics, capital account convertibility, the role of the central bank in exchange rate management, and the mechanisms governing foreign exchange reserves.

8. RBI Proposes Tighter Securitization Rules

Key Highlights & Summary

- The Reserve Bank of India has proposed stricter regulatory oversight over the securitization market to reinforce transparency and market discipline.
- Commercial banks will be mandated to issue, hold, and transfer securitization notes exclusively in dematerialized form under the draft amendments.
- The minimum investment requirement of 1 crore rupees is proposed to be extended beyond the point of issuance to every subsequent transfer of these securities.
- The restriction ensures that securitization instruments remain largely in the hands of institutional and sophisticated investors rather than retail participants.
- Stakeholder comments on the draft have been invited until 27 August, with proposed implementation scheduled for 1 October.
- The regulatory tightening aims to curb systemic risks, prevent mis-selling of complex financial products, and ensure orderly market operations.

Essential Definitions

- Securitization refers to the financial process of pooling various types of contractual debt, such as mortgages, auto loans, or credit card debt, and selling related repackaged securities to investors.
- Dematerialization or demat is the process by which physical share certificates or securities of an investor are converted into electronic format and maintained in an account with a depository.
- Minimum Investment Threshold represents the regulatory lower limit on the capital amount an investor must deploy to purchase a specific financial instrument, acting as a filter for investor sophistication.
- Institutional Investors are large organizations such as banks, insurance companies, mutual funds, and pension funds that pool large sums of money to invest in financial markets.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 provides the central bank with overarching statutory authority to regulate the monetary policy, financial system, and operations of commercial banks in India.
- Banking Regulation Act, 1949 empowers the Reserve Bank of India to issue directions, guidelines, and enforce prudential norms to safeguard depositor interests and financial stability.
- Constitution of India under Entry 38, List I of the Seventh Schedule grants Parliament the legislative power concerning currency, coinage, legal tender, and foreign exchange.

Conclusion

The proposed stricter regulations on securitization reflect the Reserve Bank of India proactive approach towards safeguarding systemic stability. By enforcing dematerialization and mandating high investment thresholds for subsequent transfers, the central bank aims to eliminate opaque secondary market transactions, enhance transparency, and protect the broader financial ecosystem from complex credit risks.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is highly relevant for the UPSC Civil Services Examination under General Studies Paper III focusing on Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development, and banking sector reforms. Aspirants must understand the mechanics of shadow banking, financial market regulation, the mandate of central banking institutions, and the prevention of systemic financial vulnerabilities.

9. Right to Peaceful Protest and Police Excesses

Key Highlights & Summary

- The Supreme Court emphasized that the right to peaceful and lawful protest is fully guaranteed under the Constitution, and mere agitation does not justify police excesses or violence.
- A three-judge bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant highlighted the necessity for a balanced approach, a pan-India protocol, and self-evolved discipline as core components of a healthy democracy.
- The court was hearing a batch of petitions, including one filed by Rajya Sabha MP Manoj Jha, concerning alleged police brutality and disproportionate force against protesters at Jantar Mantar and other places.
- The bench underscored that injuries to all individuals, whether protesters or police personnel in uniform, are of equal concern, rejecting an adversarial approach from either side.
- The judiciary noted that while demonstrators must be provided with designated spaces and proper facilities without impediment, unlawful actions by anti-social elements must be appropriately handled.
- The court advocated for independent probes into alleged police excesses to ascertain accountability and evaluate preventive measures to curb future recurrences.

Essential Definitions

- Right to Protest refers to the fundamental freedom of citizens to gather publicly, express views collectively, and voice dissent against state policies or actions in a peaceful manner.
- Police Excesses denote the unconstitutional, unlawful, or disproportionate use of physical force, brutality, or violence by law enforcement officers against civilians during public demonstrations.
- Balance of Payments is an unrelated economic term; in legal context, a balanced approach refers to weighing state security needs against fundamental civil liberties proportionally.
- Public Order refers to the even tenor of public life and community safety, constituting a ground under which the state can constitutionally restrict certain fundamental freedoms.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- Constitution of India under Article 19(1)(b) guarantees all citizens the fundamental right to assemble peaceably and without arms, subject to reasonable restrictions imposed under Article 19(3) in the interests of the sovereignty, integrity, or public order.
- Constitution of India under Article 21 protects the right to life and personal liberty of every individual, ensuring that state action, including policing, respects due process and avoids arbitrary deprivation.
- Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 or its successor provisions under Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita regulate the dispersal of unlawful assemblies through specific legal procedures, minimizing the unbridled use of force.

Conclusion

The Supreme Court observation strikes a vital balance between maintaining public order and preserving democratic liberties. By refusing to validate state overreach merely on the grounds of ongoing agitations, the judiciary reinforces that accountability, proportionality, and adherence to uniform protocols are indispensable for protecting citizens and maintaining institutional trust in law enforcement.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is highly relevant for the UPSC Civil Services Examination under General Studies Paper II covering the Indian Constitution, historical evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions, and basic structure, alongside the role of the judiciary in protecting fundamental rights and checking executive excess. Aspirants must critically evaluate the interplay between national security, public order, and the democratic right to dissent.

10. Ministry Pushing RBI for Urban Co-op Bank Licences

Key Highlights & Summary

- The Ministry of Cooperation has urged the Reserve Bank of India to open up licensing for more urban cooperative banks across every town in the country.
- Out of approximately 1450 urban cooperative banks in India, nearly 1100 are concentrated in just three states namely Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Karnataka, leaving hundreds of districts underserved.
- Satish K Marathe, Director on the Central Board of the Reserve Bank of India, highlighted the severe geographical skewness during a book release event.

- Ministry of Cooperation Secretary Ashish Kumar Bhutani confirmed that expanding licensing policies for urban cooperative banks is a primary focus area to foster grassroots financial inclusion.

- The discussions took place during the release of the book Cooperative Management: The Indian Perspective, coauthored by K K Tripathy, Harekrishna Misra, and S K Wadkar.
- Expanding cooperative banking networks aims to bridge regional disparities in credit availability and strengthen cooperative federalism at the local level.

Essential Definitions

- Urban Cooperative Banks or UCBs refer to primary cooperative banks located in urban and semi-urban areas, originally registered as cooperative societies, providing banking services to small borrowers and businesses.
- Cooperative Bank is a financial entity owned, controlled, and operated by its members, who are both the depositors and the borrowers, operating on the principle of cooperation and mutual help.
- Financial Inclusion refers to the delivery of financial services at an affordable cost to sections of disadvantaged and low-income segments of society, ensuring unhindered access to formal credit.
- Dual Regulation in cooperative banks denotes the overlapping administrative control of state or central cooperative registrars and financial regulatory oversight by the Reserve Bank of India.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- Constitution of India under the 97th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2011 added Part IXB, granting constitutional status to cooperative societies and protecting the right to form cooperatives under Article 19(1)(c).
- Banking Regulation Act, 1949 was amended through the Banking Regulation (Amendment) Act, 2020 to bring all urban and multi-state cooperative banks under the direct regulatory supervision of the Reserve Bank of India.
- Constitution of India under Entry 43 of List I in the Seventh Schedule empowers Parliament to legislate on incorporation, regulation, and winding up of trading corporations, including banking companies.

Conclusion

The push by the Ministry of Cooperation to expand urban cooperative bank licences addresses a critical structural imbalance where cooperative credit remains heavily localized in western and southern states. Aligning regulatory policies to foster cooperative expansion across unrepresented districts can significantly enhance grassroots financial inclusion, empower local entrepreneurship, and bridge regional credit gaps.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is highly relevant for the UPSC Civil Services Examination under General Studies Paper III covering Indian Economy, banking sector reforms, financial inclusion, and issues relating to inclusive growth. Aspirants must understand the cooperative banking structure in India, the implications of dual regulation, and the role of institutional credit in rural and semi-urban development.

11. Supreme Court Seeks Centre's Response on Tenth Schedule Interpretation

Key Highlights & Summary

- The Supreme Court sought a response from the central government on a plea filed by Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal questioning the current judicial and legislative interpretation of the Tenth Schedule.
- The petition challenges loopholes where splinter groups bypass anti-defection provisions through legislative party mergers, effectively converting an electoral majority into a minority.
- A bench of Justices P.S. Narasimha and Alok Aradhe questioned whether such political mechanisms should ideally be dealt with on the floor of the house or within political parties rather than judicial intervention.
- The plea highlights critical pending matters, including the 2022 Goa case involving ten Congress MLAs merging with the ruling party and a challenge against the Lok Sabha Speaker's approval of six Shiv Sena MPs merging with a rival faction.
- Sibal argued that judicial non-interference allows ruling political factions to exploit loopholes, altering the democratic verdict of the electorate through engineered splits and subsequent mergers.
- The ongoing legal discourse brings to light persistent structural flaws in the implementation of anti-defection laws and the contentious role of presiding officers.

Essential Definitions

- Tenth Schedule refers to the anti-defection law added to the Constitution, setting the provisions for disqualification of elected members of Parliament and state legislatures on the ground of defection.
- Defection refers to the voluntary relinquishment of membership of a political party by an elected representative or voting contrary to the party whip inside the legislature.
- Merger under the Tenth Schedule historically provided an exemption from disqualification if two thirds of the members of a legislative party agreed to merge with another party, a provision substantially altered by the 91st Constitutional Amendment.
- Presiding Officer denotes the Speaker or Chairman of a legislative body who is vested with the quasi-judicial authority to decide disqualification petitions under the Tenth Schedule.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- Constitution of India under the Tenth Schedule, introduced by the 52nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1985, outlines disqualification criteria for legislators and leaves the adjudication power with the Speaker or Chairman.
- Constitution of India under the 91st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003 eliminated the split exception under paragraph 3 of the Tenth Schedule, mandating that at least two thirds of party legislators must agree for a valid merger exemption.

- Constitution of India under Article 105 and Article 194 guarantee parliamentary privileges and freedom of speech, which historically complicated judicial review of internal legislative proceedings before the landmark Kihoto Hollohan judgment.

Conclusion

The Supreme Court's notice to the Centre on the interpretation of the Tenth Schedule underscores the urgent need to address systemic vulnerabilities within India's anti-defection framework. When legislative loopholes and partisan adjudication by presiding officers permit the subversion of electoral mandates, judicial oversight becomes indispensable to preserve the sanctity of representative democracy.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is highly relevant for the UPSC Civil Services Examination under General Studies Paper II covering the Indian Constitution, its historical evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions, and basic structure, alongside the separation of powers and the role of constitutional bodies. Aspirants must critically analyze the efficacy of the anti-defection law, the role of speakers as tribunals, and ongoing judicial debates surrounding political defections.

12. 70% of Suicides by Indians Abroad in Gulf Region

Key Highlights & Summary

- Ministry of External Affairs data tabled in Parliament reveals that over the last three years, 1340 Indian citizens died by suicide in Gulf countries, accounting for more than 70% of total suicides by Indians abroad.
- The United Arab Emirates recorded the highest number of suicides at 511, followed by Saudi Arabia at 354, Kuwait at 162, Oman at 146, Bahrain at 101, and Qatar at 66.

What is killing Indians abroad

	NATURAL REASONS	WORKPLACE ACCIDENTS	SUICIDE	CRIME	OTHER REASONS
Saudi Arabia	6,376	182	354	29	1,040
UAE	5,702	128	511	25	1,092
Kuwait	1,672	62	162	10	285
Oman	1,092	38	146	0	222
Qatar	783	23	66	0	102
Bahrain	703	10	101	2	43

YEARS: 2023-25; SOURCE: MEA

- Total suicides by Indians globally exceeded 1900 during the 2023 to 2025 period, with Malaysia and the United States recording 131 and 62 cases respectively.
- Around 1 crore Indian citizens and persons of Indian origin currently reside across Gulf Cooperation Council countries, facing diverse socio-economic and work-related stressors.
- Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh noted that while specific triggers remain unrecorded, several welfare frameworks are active.
- The Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana functions as a mandatory insurance scheme for all Emigration Check Required category workers going to eligible nations.

Essential Definitions

- Emigration Check Required or ECR refers to a category of Indian passport holders requiring clearance from the Protector of Emigrants before traveling to select countries for employment, mainly aimed at protecting vulnerable workers.
- Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana is a compulsory insurance policy designed for overseas Indian workers under the ECR category, providing coverage against accidental death, permanent disability, and repatriation expenses.

- Gulf Cooperation Council or GCC is a regional political and economic union comprising six Middle Eastern countries namely Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.
- Diaspora refers to nationals of a country living outside their homeland, maintaining cultural, emotional, or economic ties with their country of origin.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- Emigration Act, 1983 regulates the emigration of citizens of India for employment abroad, safeguards their interests, provides for the registration of recruiting agents, and establishes the Protector General of Emigrants.
- Constitution of India under Article 21 guarantees the right to life and personal liberty, which extends to the well-being and safety of Indian citizens residing beyond national borders through diplomatic protection.
- Constitution of India under Entry 19 of List I in the Seventh Schedule grants Parliament exclusive legislative power over admission into, and emigration and expulsion from, India, alongside passports and visas.

Conclusion

The alarming concentration of suicides among Indian workers in Gulf nations underscores deep-seated socio-economic vulnerabilities, financial pressures, and workplace challenges faced by the diaspora. While institutional insurance schemes like the Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana offer financial cushioning, holistic interventions involving robust psychological support systems, stringent labor rights enforcement, and active diplomatic engagement are vital to safeguard overseas Indian workforce welfare.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is significant for the UPSC Civil Services Examination under General Studies Paper II covering India and its neighborhood, bilateral relations, and policies affecting the Indian diaspora abroad. Additionally, it intersects with General Studies Paper III under inclusive growth, labor reforms, and social security challenges. Aspirants must analyze the multi-dimensional issues confronting migrant workers, regulatory mechanisms under the Emigration Act, and the socio-economic contributions of remittances.