

NATIONAL MISSION ON CULTURAL MAPPING

Context: The Finance Minister in her Budget Speech highlighted the key role of the NMCM in preserving and highlighting India's rich cultural heritage.



राष्ट्रीय सांस्कृतिक मानचित्रण मिशन
NATIONAL MISSION ON CULTURAL MAPPING

About National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM):

- It was launched in **2017** by the **Ministry of Culture**. It aims to **create a cultural map of India**, highlighting its diversity and supporting the artist community.
- NMCM is implemented by the **Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)**.
- Cultural mapping records a region's unique cultural elements, including **stories, rituals, arts, languages, heritage, and cuisines, documenting both tangible and intangible assets.**

Objectives of NMCM:

- Documenting India's cultural assets.
- Using cultural potential to promote self-reliance in villages.

- Highlighting the link between heritage, development, and identity.
- It seeks to map the geographical, demographic, and creative capitals of 6.5 lakh villages in India, with 4.5 lakh villages already included.

Mission Components:

- **Cultural Awareness Programme:** Like Hamari Sanskriti Hamari Pahchan (Our Culture, Our Identity).
- **Grading of Artists:** Introduction of Unique Cultural-ID (UCID) for artists.
- **Cultural Infra:** Development of cultural hubs (Kala Grams) and integrating knowledge centers.
- **Artist Welfare:** Implements welfare schemes and grants for artists, especially veterans.
- **Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar (MGMD):** MGMD was launched under the NMCM to document the cultural heritage of 6.5 lakh villages. Under MGMD, data is collected in seven broad categories like Arts and Crafts Village, Ecologically Oriented Village etc.

Other Initiatives for Cultural Preservation:

- ✓ **Guru-Shishya Parampara Scheme:** The Ministry of Culture runs the 'Financial Assistance for Promotion of Guru-Shishya Parampara' scheme - providing financial aid to cultural organizations for training artists in music, dance, theatre, folk art, etc.

- ✓ **Cultural Property Agreement (CPA):** A CPA was signed with the US in July 2024 that will make easy retrieval of stolen antiquities.
- ✓ **Adopt a Heritage 2.0:** Launched by Ministry of Culture in Sept 2023, this facilitates collaboration with private and public entities to develop amenities in Protected Monuments using CSR funds. The amenities are categorized into four broad categories:
 - Hygiene (toilets, drinking water, etc.)
 - Accessibility (battery operated vehicles, signage, etc.)
 - Safety (CCTV, lighting etc)
 - Knowledge (Cultural/light and sound shows, AR/VR tools, etc).

Source: National Mission on Cultural Mapping expanded and strengthened (PIB)

INTERNATIONAL BIG CAT ALLIANCE (IBCA)

Context: The Agreement on the establishment of IBCA has come into force and IBCA and its Secretariat have become a full-fledged treaty based international organization.



About IBCA:

- It was **launched by India in April 2023** in Mysuru - commemorating the **50th anniversary of Project Tiger**.
- IBCA aims to ensure cooperation for the conservation of seven big cats: **lion, tiger, leopard, cheetah, snow leopard, jaguar, and puma**. Five of these cats, apart from jaguar and puma, are found in India.
- **Membership:** It is open to 97 'range' countries, which contain the natural habitat of these big cats, as well as international organizations, etc.
- It aims for cooperation among countries for mutual benefit in furthering the conservation agenda.
- It will have a **multipronged approach in broad basing and establishing linkages manifold in several areas** and help in knowledge sharing, capacity building, networking, advocacy, finance, research, technical support, education and awareness.

Governance Structure:

- A **General Assembly** consisting of all member countries.
- A **Council of at least 7 but not more than 15 countries** elected by the General Assembly for a term of 5 years, and a Secretariat.
- Upon the recommendation of the Council, the **General Assembly will appoint the IBCA Secretary General** for a specific term.
- **Funding:** It has India's initial support of Rs. 150 crore for five years (2023-24 to 2027-28).
- As of now, **27 countries including India have consented to join IBCA** and several international/national organisations working in the field of wildlife

conservation have also partnered with IBCA.

- Nicaragua, Eswatini, Somalia, Liberia & India have deposited instruments of ratification.

India’s role in Big Cat Conservation

- ✓ **Big Cat Diversity:** India is home to five of the seven major big cats: tiger, lion, leopard, snow leopard, and cheetah.
- ✓ **Conservation Efforts:** India has undertaken conservation efforts such as Project Tiger, as reflected in the increase in big cat populations. For instance, India now hosts about 75% of world’s tiger population, and Asiatic lion population in Gir National Park has shown steady growth.
- ✓ **Project Cheetah:** Cheetahs have been extinct in India since 1952. In Nov 2022, 8 cheetahs were imported from Namibia and released into Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh.

Source: International Big Cat Alliance officially comes into force as a full-fledged Treaty based Inter-governmental International Organization (PIB)

CASTE CENSUS

Context: The Telangana Assembly unanimously passed a resolution urging the union govt. to conduct a caste census as soon as possible.

Census in India:

- The regular decennial census exercise in India **began in 1881**.
- Census is used by the government, policymakers, academics, and others to capture the Indian population, access



resources, map social change, and conduct delimitation exercises.

- It is conducted by the **Registrar General and Census Commissioner** of India, who functions under the Union **Ministry of Home Affairs**.

About Socio-Economic Caste Census:

- First conducted in: **1931**.
 - This aimed to collect info on the economic status of families, both in rural and urban areas, to identify indicators of deprivation.
- SECC is meant to identify about every family:
 - **Economic status** → to allow the government to come up with indicators of deprivation meant to identify the poor for targeted schemes.
 - **Caste status** → to allow the government to re-evaluate which caste groups are economically backward.
- SECC allows for a mapping of inequalities at a broader level.

Census v. SECC:

serial order and indicating the number and names of persons staying therein.

- ✓ It was published only in 1951 and has not been updated since.
- ✓ It has been updated in Assam only for now and the govt. plans to update it nationally as well.
- ✓ The issue of NRC assumed importance as Assam witnessed large-scale illegal migration from erstwhile East Pakistan and, after 1971, from Bangladesh.
- ✓ This led to the **Assam Agitation (1979 to 1985)**, which resulted in the signing of the **Assam Accords** in 1985. This led to the creation of **Section 6A in the Citizenship Act, 1955** (a special provision for Assam) – which created a three-tier classification:
 - Persons of Indian origin who came from Bangladesh before 1st January 1966, were deemed to be citizens of India as of that date.
 - Persons of Indian origin who came to Assam between 1st Jan 1966, and 25th Mar 1971, and who were detected to be foreigners, were required to register themselves and were granted citizenship after 10 years of residence.
 - Persons who entered Assam after 25th March, 1971, were to be detected and deported.
- ✓ Despite the Assam Accords, no NRC was made in Assam. But finally, in 2013, the Supreme Court directed the Union Govt to update the NRC in Assam, leading to the NRC's publication in 2019.
- ✓ Nagaland attempted a similar RIIN (Register of Indigenous Inhabitants of

Nagaland) in June 2019 to distinguish indigenous and non-indigenous Nagas.

- ✓ In August 2022, Manipur Assembly resolved to implement the NRC within the state.

Source: *Deport foreigners, do not detain them for eternity: SC (The Hindu)*

PLACES IN NEWS

Libya



- The **Libyan govt. and armed rebels** fighting against them have reached an agreement to not attack major public infrastructure.
 - Libya has been broiled in **political instability and conflict since the 2011 NATO-backed uprising** led to the overthrow of Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi.
- Libya is a country located **in North Africa**, bordered by **Mediterranean Sea** to the north. It is known for its rich history, diverse culture, and strategic geographical location.
- Libya shares its borders with many countries: **Egypt** to the east, **Sudan** to the southeast, **Chad** and **Niger** to the south, **Algeria** to the west, and **Tunisia** to the northwest.

- Libya's **capital city is Tripoli**, located on its northwestern coast. Other major cities include Benghazi, Misrata, and Sabha
- Libya possesses **major oil reserves**, making oil exports crucial for its economy. However, political instability and conflicts have often disrupted oil production and exports.

TERMS IN NEWS

Grameen Credit Score



- Union Budget 2025-26 has introduced the Grameen Credit Score (GCS) framework **to address the credit needs of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and rural populations.**
- It will be **developed by public sector banks** to assess the creditworthiness of rural individuals, facilitating easier access to loans.
- It aims to **improve repayment discipline and reduce fraud** by providing a more accurate evaluation of borrowers in rural areas.
- It will strengthen **microfinance**, boost **financial inclusion**, and support sectors like **agriculture, rural development, and MSMEs.**
- GCS will **complement existing microfinance models** and work alongside credit scores like CIBIL and CRIF Highmark for assessing loans.

- This score will be **integrated with the SVAMITVA Scheme.**
 - The SVAMITVA Scheme (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas) is an initiative by the union govt. to provide rural property owners with legal ownership rights by mapping land parcels using drones and issuing property cards.

National Gene Bank



- As part of the Union Budget 2025-26, Finance Minister announced the establishment of a **second National Gene Bank in India.**
- The **First National Gene Bank was established in 1996** by the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research-National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (ICAR-NBPGR)** in Delhi.
 - It functions as India's primary facility for preserving plant genetic resources (PGRs) to safeguard biodiversity.
 - It operates through 12 regional stations for collection and storage of crop germplasms.
 - It preserves 0.47 million accessions (plant material for breeding and research) as of January 15, 2025.
- The Second National Gene Bank aims to **store >10 lakh germplasm lines** to strengthen **food and nutritional security.** It will complement the first National Gene

Bank and expand genetic conservation capacity. It aims to **support both public and private sectors** in conservation efforts.



Germplasm refers to living genetic resources, such as seeds, tissues, or cells, that are preserved for breeding, research, and conservation purposes

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC):

1. It was first conducted prior to independence in 1931.
2. Unlike the Census data under the Census Act of 1948, there is no statutorily prescribed confidentiality for SECC data.
3. An SECC has never been conducted in independent India.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Q2. Consider the following statements about Foreigners Tribunals in India:

1. They are established under the provisions of the Foreigners Act of 1946.
2. Only the Union Govt. has the power to establish these tribunals.
3. Currently, Foreigners Tribunals are only operational in Assam.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one

- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Q3. Consider the following species of wild cats from across the globe:

1. Tiger
2. Cheetah
3. Clouded Leopard
4. Snow Leopard
5. Jaguar
6. Puma
7. Caracal

Which of these come under the ambit of conservation by the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA), launched by India?

- (a) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7
- (b) 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6
- (c) 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6
- (d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Q4. Consider the following nations located in Africa:

1. Libya
2. Tunisia
3. Chad
4. Mauritania
5. Algeria
6. Niger
7. Mali

How many of these afore mentioned nations share a coastline with the Mediterranean Sea?

- (a) Only three
- (b) Only four
- (c) Only five
- (d) Only six

Q5. Which of the following statements regarding the newly proposed “Grameen Credit Score” is INCORRECT?

- (a) It aims to address the credit needs of SHGs as well as individuals living in rural areas.
- (b) It will work alongside already existing microfinance and credit score mechanisms.
- (c) It aims to improve repayment discipline and tackle financial fraud in rural credit schemes.
- (d) It will be launched by the Union Ministry of Rural Development in collaboration with the RBI.

Answers:

1. A
2. B
3. C
4. A
5. D