Xtracts
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Mission X for UPSC

ISSUE 01 GS-I Indian Heritage & Culture

Mahabharata, Arthashastra & Rajatarangini Inscribed in UNESCO's Memory of the World Asia-Pacific Register

Three centuries-old Indian manuscripts — a Kashmiri birch-bark Mahabharata, Kautilya's palm-leaf Arthashastra, and Kalhana's Rajatarangini — have been added to UNESCO's Memory of the World Regional Register for Asia and the Pacific, taking India's tally in the register to six. The decision was taken at the 11th Session of the Asia-Pacific Regional Register Committee (MOWCAP) in Jakarta, with the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) preparing the nomination dossiers.

3	21	6	1992	Jakarta
MANUSCRIPTS INSCRIBED	NEW ENTRIES, 2025-26	INDIA'S REGISTER TOTAL	PROGRAMME LAUNCHED	MOWCAP SESSION VENUE

PRELIMS RELEVANCE	MAINS RELEVANCE	ETHICS RELEVANCE
★★★★★	★★★☆☆	★★☆☆☆

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- Mahabharata manuscript: a 400-year-old birch-bark (bhurjapatra) text in Sarada script, held at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune.
- Arthashastra manuscript: a 16th-century palm-leaf copy of Kautilya's work, held at the Oriental Research Institute, Mysuru.
- Rajatarangini manuscript: Kalhana's 12th-century chronicle of Kashmir, held at the Oriental Research Library, Srinagar.
- UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme was launched in 1992; its Asia-Pacific Regional Register sits below the global International Register.

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-I GS-II

The inscriptions situate three foundational texts of statecraft, historiography and epic literature within a global documentary-heritage framework, strengthening the case for preserving India's manuscript wealth, most of which remains undigitised and vulnerable to decay. Key themes: safeguarding tangible and intangible heritage, the National Mission for Manuscripts, and India's growing footprint in UNESCO's cultural registers — six entries now, after three 2024 inscriptions (the illustrated Ramcharitamanas, a 15th-century Panchatantra manuscript and the Sahrdayaloka-Locana). **GS-II | International Organisations**: the inscription also shows how cultural diplomacy through bodies such as UNESCO builds India's standing in multilateral cultural governance.

ETHICS LENS

"Does a nation have an ethical duty to preserve the knowledge of the past even when it cannot be put to immediate modern use?"
The Arthashastra's statecraft and the Rajatarangini's chronicle survive only because generations of scribes and institutions chose custodianship over neglect; India's own manuscript wealth remains largely undigitised and at risk of being lost to time and climate.
***GS-IV Value: Intergenerational justice** — the duty to conserve civilisational knowledge as a trust held for future generations, not a resource to be exploited or allowed to decay for present convenience.*

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Consider the following properties included in the World Heritage List released by UNESCO: 1. Shantiniketan 2. Rani-ki-Vav 3. Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas 4. Mahabodhi Temple Complex at Bodhgaya. How many of the above properties were included in 2023?

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

Answer: (b) Only two — Shantiniketan and the Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas were added to the World Heritage List in 2023; Rani-ki-Vav and the Mahabodhi Temple Complex were inscribed earlier. Today's Mahabharata-Arthashastra-Rajatarangini additions extend this pattern of UNESCO recognising Indian heritage, but under the separate Memory of the World Register, not the World Heritage List.

ISSUE 02 GS-II Health & Welfare Policy

NPPA Caps Trade Margins at 30% on 137 Anti-Cancer Drugs; MRPs to Fall by up to 70%

The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) has capped trade margins at 30% on 137 non-scheduled anti-cancer formulations — including pembrolizumab, durvalumab, osimertinib, denosumab, pegfilgrastim and bevacizumab — with effect from 9 November 2026. The order, which covers patented drugs as well, is expected to cut maximum retail prices by up to 70% and follows a 2019 pilot that capped margins on 42 cancer drugs.

137	30%	70%	7 Days	2019
ANTI-CANCER DRUGS COVERED	TRADE MARGIN CAP	MAX. MRP CUT EXPECTED	PRICE-LIST DEADLINE	PILOT SCHEME PRECEDENT

PRELIMS RELEVANCE	MAINS RELEVANCE	ETHICS RELEVANCE
★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★★☆

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- NPPA functions under the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers.
- Revised MRP formula: Price to Stockist/Distributor + trade margin of up to 30% + GST.
- Applies to non-scheduled formulations of the 137 named drugs regardless of strength, dosage form or combination; patented drugs are included.
- Manufacturers must circulate revised price lists within 7 days and need NPPA's permission to cut production.

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-II GS-III

Trade-margin rationalisation targets a core access-to-medicine failure: a wide gap between a drug's procurement price and what patients actually pay, inflated by layers of distribution margin on expensive, often life-saving therapies. Key themes: the right to health and affordable healthcare, and the NPPA's price-control architecture built on the Drugs (Prices Control) Order framework. **GS-III | Indian Economy**: the order also tests the state's ability to regulate pricing power in a sector critical to welfare outcomes without resorting to a blanket price cap that could blunt pharmaceutical innovation.

ETHICS LENS

"Is it ethical for a life-saving medicine to be priced beyond the reach of the person who needs it?"
Cancer therapies such as checkpoint inhibitors can cost patients lakhs of rupees per cycle, with trade margins — not manufacturing cost — accounting for a large share of that price; when access turns on a distribution markup rather than medical urgency, treatment becomes a function of commerce rather than need.
***GS-IV Value: Distributive justice** — allocating essential goods such as medicines according to need rather than ability to pay, especially where the state holds the regulatory capacity to narrow that gap.*

PYQ Connect · Prelims 2022 VERIFIED

With reference to Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission, consider the following statements: 1. Private and public hospitals must adopt it. 2. As it aims to achieve universal health coverage, every citizen of India should be part of it ultimately. 3. It has seamless portability across the country. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 3 only — ABDM's seamless portability is verified; mandatory hospital adoption and guaranteed universal enrolment are not. Like ABDM, today's NPPA order is a governance tool meant to widen healthcare access and affordability without altering clinical practice itself.

ISSUE 03 GS-III Defence Indigenisation

GRSE Delivers INS Amini, Navy's Fifth Anti-Submarine Shallow Water Craft, with Over 80% Indigenous Content

Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata, has delivered INS Amini — the fifth of eight Arnala-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC) — to the Indian Navy. Built with over 80% indigenous content under a Rs 6,311-crore, eight-ship contract signed in 2019, the vessel replaces the ageing Abhay-class corvettes and carries the DRDO-developed Abhay hull-mounted sonar.

5th of 8	80%+	900 t	25 kt	₹6,311 cr
ASW CRAFT DELIVERED	INDIGENOUS CONTENT	DISPLACEMENT	TOP SPEED	8-SHIP CONTRACT VALUE

PRELIMS RELEVANCE	MAINS RELEVANCE	ETHICS RELEVANCE
★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★☆☆☆☆

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- Builder: Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata; INS Amini was launched on 16 November 2023.
- Class: Arnala-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC), replacing the Abhay-class corvettes (commissioned 1989-91).
- Key sensor: the Abhay hull-mounted sonar, developed by DRDO, enabling hull-mounted sonar on smaller vessels for the first time.
- Armament includes RBU-6000 rocket launchers, triple 324mm lightweight torpedo tubes and a 30mm naval surface gun.

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-III

The delivery advances two linked goals of India's defence policy: deepening indigenous shipbuilding capability — over 80% local content, with inputs from Bharat Electronics, Mahindra Defence and Larsen & Toubro — and closing a genuine capability gap in shallow-water anti-submarine warfare along India's coast. Key themes: **GS-III | Science & Technology**, Atmanirbhar Bharat in defence production, indigenisation of naval sensors and pump-jet propulsion, and maritime and coastal security against sub-surface threats in littoral waters.

ETHICS LENS

"Does pursuing self-reliance in defence production carry an ethical cost when it means prioritising domestic industry over the fastest or cheapest available option?" Indigenisation programmes like the Arnala-class often take longer, and sometimes cost more, than an off-the-shelf import, trading short-term efficiency for long-term strategic autonomy and domestic industrial capacity.

***GS-IV Value: Accountability to the public exchequer** — balancing the state's duty to secure the best immediate outcome for citizens' tax money against its long-term duty to build sovereign capability.*

PYQ Connect · Prelims 2016 VERIFIED

Which one of the following is the best description of 'INS Astradharini', that was in the news recently?

(a) Amphibious warfare ship	(b) Nuclear-powered submarine
(c) Torpedo launch and recovery vessel	(d) Nuclear-powered aircraft carrier

Answer: (c) Torpedo launch and recovery vessel — UPSC has repeatedly tested recognition of indigenously built, functionally specific Navy vessels named after Indian geography, exactly the pattern INS Amini (named for a Lakshadweep island) now continues.

ISSUE 04 GS-III Environment & Climate Governance

COP31 Opens in Antalya as the 31st UN Climate Conference Convenes Under Turkish Presidency

The 31st Conference of the Parties (COP31) to the UNFCCC opened in Antalya, Turkiye, running from 9 to 20 November, with talks focused on turning existing Nationally Determined Contributions and clean-energy pledges into measurable action amid record global temperatures. The conference follows COP30 in Belem and leads into the next cycle of climate finance and adaptation commitments.

31st	9-20 Nov	Turkiye	1.5°C	2015
COP EDITION	CONFERENCE DATES	HOST & PRESIDENCY	PARIS AGREEMENT GOAL	PARIS AGREEMENT ADOPTED

PRELIMS RELEVANCE	MAINS RELEVANCE	ETHICS RELEVANCE
★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★☆☆

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- COP31 (9-20 November 2026) is held in Antalya, Turkiye, under the UNFCCC.
- It follows COP30 (Belem, Brazil, 2025) and precedes the next round of NDC revisions.
- The Paris Agreement (adopted at COP21, 2015; in force 4 November 2016) seeks to hold warming well below 2°C, pursuing 1.5°C.
- Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are the core national-pledge mechanism under the Paris Agreement, revised on a five-year cycle.

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-III GS-II

COP31 tests whether the global climate regime can convert pledges — NDCs, clean-energy transition targets, loss-and-damage funding — into implementation at a moment of record temperatures and energy-security anxieties. Key themes: **GS-III | Environment**, the climate finance architecture (Green Climate Fund, Article 6 carbon markets), and India's stance balancing developmental space with emission commitments. **GS-II | International Relations**: the negotiation dynamics between developed and developing blocs over historical responsibility and finance recur at every COP.

ETHICS LENS

"Who bears the greater ethical burden for climate action — nations that caused most historical emissions, or nations facing the gravest present-day climate harm?" Economies that industrialised earliest contributed disproportionately to cumulative emissions, while developing and low-lying nations — which contributed least — often face the earliest and most severe climate impacts, a mismatch that resurfaces in every COP's finance and loss-and-damage debates.

***GS-IV Value: Intergenerational and distributive justice** — reconciling historical responsibility for emissions with present-day vulnerability when allocating the costs of climate action.*

PYQ Connect · Prelims 2025 VERIFIED

Consider the following statements: Statement I: At the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28), India refrained from signing the Declaration on Climate and Health. Statement II: The COP28 Declaration on Climate and Health is a binding declaration. Statement III: If India's health sector is decarbonized, the resilience of its healthcare system may be compromised. Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

(a) Both II and III correct, both explain I	(b) Both II and III correct, only one explains I
(c) Only one of II/III is correct and explains I	(d) Neither II nor III is correct

Answer: (c) — India did not sign the COP28 declaration because expanding, not curbing, its health sector was the priority; Statement III (not II) explains this. COP31 continues the same pattern of India weighing global climate commitments against domestic developmental priorities at each successive COP.

🧠 Memory Lab

Rapid revision · High-retention formats · Today's key concepts

TUE · 10 NOV 2026

✕ XTRACTS IN 30 SECONDS

1. Heritage: Mahabharata, Arthashastra and Rajatarangini manuscripts join UNESCO's Memory of the World Asia-Pacific Register, taking India's tally to six entries.

2. Health: NPPA caps trade margins at 30% on 137 anti-cancer drugs, set to cut MRPs by up to 70% from 9 November.

3. Defence: GRSE delivers INS Amini, the Navy's fifth Arnala-class anti-submarine shallow-water craft, built with over 80% indigenous content.

4. Climate: COP31 opens in Antalya, Turkiye (9-20 Nov), pressing nations to convert NDC pledges into measurable climate action.

🔥 NUMBERS TO REMEMBER

3 MANUSCRIPTS INSCRIBED (UNESCO)	**6** INDIA'S REGIONAL REGISTER ENTRIES	**137** ANTI-CANCER DRUGS CAPPED
30% NPPA TRADE MARGIN CEILING	**70%** MAX. MRP REDUCTION EXPECTED	**5/8** ASW CRAFT DELIVERED (AMINI)
80%+ INDIGENOUS CONTENT, INS AMINI	**31st** COP EDITION (ANTALYA)	**9-20 Nov** COP31 CONFERENCE DATES

🟣 ETHICS QUICK REFERENCE

ISSUE 01 — HERITAGE CUSTODIANSHIP

Ancient manuscripts survive only through sustained institutional care. **Value: Intergenerational Justice**

ISSUE 02 — DRUG PRICING

Trade margins, not manufacturing cost, often decide whether patients can afford cancer care. **Value: Distributive Justice**

ISSUE 03 — DEFENCE SELF-RELIANCE

Indigenisation can mean trading speed and cost for strategic autonomy. **Value: Accountability to Public Exchequer**

ISSUE 04 — CLIMATE EQUITY

Nations least responsible for historical emissions often face the gravest climate harm. **Value: Intergenerational & Distributive Justice**

◎ QUICK REVISION CHECKLIST

- ☐ MOWCAP = Memory of the World Committee for Asia and the Pacific; it decides the Regional Register, separate from UNESCO's International Register and the World Heritage List.
- ☐ IGNCA prepared India's nomination dossiers for the Mahabharata, Arthashastra and Rajatarangini manuscripts.
- ☐ NPPA functions under the Department of Pharmaceuticals; its caps draw on the Drugs (Prices Control) Order framework.
- ☐ Revised MRP formula = Price to Stockist/Distributor + up to 30% trade margin + GST.
- ☐ GRSE = Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers, Kolkata; builder of the Arnala-class ASW-SWC.
- ☐ The Abhay sonar (DRDO) is the key indigenous sensor fitted on INS Amini.
- ☐ COP31 is held under the UNFCCC in Antalya, Turkiye, 9-20 November 2026.
- ☐ NDCs are revised on a five-year cycle under the Paris Agreement, adopted at COP21 (2015).

📊 PYQ FREQUENCY — 10-YEAR VIEW

UNESCO Heritage Lists	9/10
Health & Drug Pricing Bodies	5/10
Navy Ships & Indigenisation	6/10
UNFCCC / COP & Paris Pact	8/10
NITI Aayog & Govt Bodies	7/10
Ancient Indian Texts	6/10
Defence Indigenisation	7/10



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