Xtracts
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Mission X for UPSC

ISSUE 01 GS-I Indian Heritage & Culture

Cabinet Clears ₹3,230-Crore ‘Yuge Yugeen Bharat’ Museum in North & South Block

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved an estimated ₹3,230 crore for the Yuge Yugeen Bharat Rashtriya Sangrahalaya — planned as the world’s largest museum — which will reuse the historic North and South Block buildings on Raisina Hill. Led by the Ministry of Culture, the museum will trace India’s civilisational journey from pre-history to the present, built in phases from 2026-27 to 2030-31, with the first phase targeted for 2027.

₹3,230 Cr	2026–31	2027	N & S Block	Culture Min.
SANCTIONED OUTLAY	PHASED ROLLOUT	PHASE-1 TARGET	HERITAGE REUSE	NODAL MINISTRY

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

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- North Block and South Block, flanking Rashtrapati Bhavan on Raisina Hill, were designed by Sir Herbert Baker as part of Edwin Lutyens’ New Delhi plan and have housed central government ministries since 1931.
- The project is distinct from the existing National Museum on Janpath, whose artefacts are proposed to be relocated into the repurposed buildings.
- “Civilisational museum” status places Yuge Yugeen Bharat in the same heritage-conservation/adaptive-reuse category often tested alongside UNESCO World Heritage List questions.

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-I GS-II

The project is a test case in adaptive reuse of colonial-era heritage buildings for a nation-building cultural narrative, repurposing Raisina Hill’s Lutyens-era secretariat rather than demolishing it. Key themes: heritage conservation financing models, museumisation of civilisational history, soft power and cultural diplomacy through large public museums, and balancing modern administrative needs with the preservation of Grade-I heritage structures. **GS-II | Governance** — the parallel shift of ministries out of North and South Block into the new Central Vista Common Secretariat is itself a governance and urban-planning exercise worth tracking alongside the museum’s construction timeline.

ETHICS LENS

“Should a nation spend thousands of crores memorialising its past while urgent welfare needs compete for the same fiscal space?” Large heritage and museum investments are often contrasted with health, education or sanitation spending, raising a genuine trade-off between identity-building projects and immediate human development outcomes, even when the budgets are not directly fungible. ***GS-IV Value: Distributive justice*** *— the duty to weigh the opportunity cost of large symbolic public projects against competing claims on scarce public resources, especially for the most vulnerable citizens.*

PYQ CONNECT · UPSC CSE 2024 PRELIMS

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

Why it matters today: Shantiniketan and the Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas were both inscribed in 2023 — the same heritage-recognition logic (adaptive reuse, civilisational storytelling) now underpins Yuge Yugeen Bharat’s bid to showcase India’s heritage on a world stage.

ISSUE 02 GS-II Welfare Schemes / Urban Governance

President Confers 10th Swachh Survekshan Awards; Visakhapatnam, Navi Mumbai Lead

President Droupadi Murmu felicitated the winners of the 10th Swachh Survekshan at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. Conducted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban, the survey assessed 4,751 cities across 43 indicators in 10 domains, adding new categories for Himalayan, riverfront and coastal towns, alongside a “Swachh Shehar Jodi” mentorship pairing of 70 mentor cities with 191 mentee cities.

10th	4,751	43	2016	70:191
EDITION	CITIES ASSESSED	INDICATORS	SURVEY LAUNCHED	MENTOR:MENTEE CITIES

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

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- Swachh Survekshan is conducted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban, launched in 2016 with 73 cities in its first edition — now billed as the world’s largest urban cleanliness survey.
- Greater Visakhapatnam topped the Million-Plus category; Navi Mumbai led the Super Swachh League; Ujjain and Dewas topped the mid-size and small-city categories respectively.
- New 2025-26 categories recognised India’s first Cleanest Riverfront Town (Rewa), Cleanest Coastal Town (Puri) and Cleanest Himalayan City (Rudrapur), widening the survey beyond plain urban agglomerations.

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-II GS-III

Swachh Survekshan has evolved from a simple cleanliness ranking into a governance tool that uses competitive federalism among urban local bodies to drive last-mile sanitation outcomes. Key themes: citizen participation in service delivery, data-driven monitoring of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), the Swachh Shehar Jodi mentorship model as peer-to-peer capacity building, and the limits of self-reported municipal data in large-scale surveys. **GS-III | Environment** — solid and liquid waste management indicators embedded in the survey also feed directly into India’s urban environmental sustainability and circular-economy goals.

ETHICS LENS

“Does ranking cities on cleanliness risk rewarding cosmetic compliance over genuine, sustained sanitation outcomes for the urban poor?” Survey-driven incentives can push municipal bodies toward visible, short-term clean-up drives timed to assessment windows rather than durable systems like faecal sludge management or safe conditions for sanitation workers, who remain among the most invisible and vulnerable urban labourers. ***GS-IV Value: Compassion for the vulnerable*** *— administrators must ensure competitive rankings translate into real, dignified improvements for sanitation workers and slum residents, not just favourable optics for the assessment window.*

PYQ CONNECT · UPSC CSE 2022 PRELIMS

Consider the following statements: 1. The India Sanitation Coalition is a platform to promote sustainable sanitation and is funded by the Government of India and the World Health Organization. 2. The National Institute of Urban Affairs is an apex body of the Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs in Government of India and provides innovative solutions to address the challenges of Urban India. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Why it matters today: Both the India Sanitation Coalition and NIUA sit in the same MoHUA-led urban sanitation ecosystem that runs Swachh Survekshan — UPSC has already tested whether aspirants can distinguish a funding-platform NGO from an apex government think tank in this exact space.

ISSUE 03 **GS-III** Critical Minerals / Industrial Policy

India Bans Export of Lithium-Ion Battery ‘Black Mass’ to Secure Critical Mineral Supply

The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has moved lithium-ion battery black mass, classified under ITC(HS) code 85491400, from “Free” to “Prohibited” for export with immediate effect. Black mass — the powder recovered from shredding end-of-life batteries and manufacturing scrap — contains recoverable lithium, cobalt, nickel and manganese, and the ban aims to keep this feedstock inside India for domestic refining rather than letting it leave as low-value waste.

Prohibited	85491400	Li-Co-Ni-Mn	DGFT	Immediate
NEW EXPORT STATUS	ITC(HS) CODE	RECOVERABLE METALS	REGULATING BODY	EFFECTIVE DATE

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

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- “Black mass” is the shredded powder residue of spent lithium-ion batteries, rich in lithium, cobalt, nickel and manganese — the same elements tested in recent Prelims questions on EV battery composition.
- The export policy change was made by the DGFT, under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, by amending the ITC(HS) classification — a recurring Prelims theme on how India regulates foreign trade of specific goods.
- India joined the US-led Minerals Security Partnership in 2023 and amended the MMDR Act the same year to allow Centre-led auctioning of critical mineral blocks — both part of the same strategic push to cut import dependence on critical minerals.

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-III

The ban is a textbook industrial-policy intervention to build a domestic circular economy for critical minerals, converting urban “waste” into a strategic input rather than letting it be exported as cheap scrap for refining abroad. Key themes: Atmanirbhar Bharat in critical mineral supply chains, the EV and battery manufacturing ecosystem’s dependence on cobalt, lithium and nickel (none produced domestically at scale), and the use of export-policy tools, rather than tariffs or subsidies, to steer industrial outcomes. **GS-III | Environment** — retaining black mass onshore also supports safer, regulated recycling of hazardous battery waste instead of its uncontrolled export or informal-sector processing.

ETHICS LENS

“Is it fair to abruptly restrict an export that many small recyclers and exporters had built their business models around, in the name of a longer-term national interest?” Overnight trade-policy reversals can protect strategic national interests but also blindside legitimate small and mid-sized recycling businesses that had organised supply chains around the earlier “Free” export status, raising a genuine tension between swift state action and predictability for private economic actors. ***GS-IV Value: Fairness and due process*** *— policymakers owe affected economic actors adequate transition timelines and consultation, even while acting swiftly to protect a strategic national resource.*

PYQ CONNECT · UPSC CSE 2025 PRELIMS

In the context of electric vehicle batteries, consider the following elements: I. Cobalt II. Graphite III. Lithium IV. Nickel. How many of the above usually make up battery cathodes?

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

Why it matters today: Cobalt, lithium and nickel make up EV battery cathodes (graphite is the anode material) — exactly the metals black mass is valuable for recovering, which is why India now wants this feedstock refined at home rather than exported.

ISSUE 04 **GS-III** Security & Disaster Management

Navy Launches Sea Vigil-26 After India’s Coastline Remeasured at 11,098.81 km

The Indian Navy has launched the fifth edition of the pan-India coastal defence exercise Sea Vigil-26, covering the entire coastline and Exclusive Economic Zone along with the Coast Guard, Coastal Security Police and Customs. It is the first edition to use India’s newly remeasured coastline of 11,098.81 km, replacing the 7,516.6 km figure used officially for decades, and precedes the biennial multi-service exercise TROPEX.

5th	11,098.81 km	2018	18–19 Nov	200 nm
EDITION	NEW COASTLINE FIGURE	EXERCISE CONCEIVED	SEA PHASE DATES	EEZ LIMIT (UNCLOS)

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

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- Sea Vigil was conceived in 2018 in the aftermath of the 26/11 Mumbai attacks to test coastal security readiness across the entire coastline and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
- India’s coastline was remeasured at 11,098.81 km using high-resolution data — nearly 1.5 times the earlier 7,516.6 km figure that had been in official use for decades.
- Under UNCLOS, the territorial sea extends up to 12 nautical miles and the EEZ up to 200 nautical miles from the baseline, both measured from the same baseline that any coastline remeasurement affects.

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-III GS-II

A near 50% jump in India’s official coastline length is not just a cartographic correction — it recalibrates baseline data for maritime security planning, EEZ resource surveys, disaster-management zoning and coastal infrastructure allocation, making Sea Vigil-26 a timely test of whether India’s coastal security architecture can scale to the newly measured frontier. Key themes: inter-agency coordination (Navy, Coast Guard, Customs, State Coastal Police) as a model for internal security, lessons from 26/11 institutionalised into recurring drills, and the strategic value of accurate geospatial baselines for a maritime nation. **GS-II | International Relations** — coastal security drills also feed into India’s broader maritime diplomacy posture, including its MAHASAGAR vision for the Indian Ocean Region.

ETHICS LENS

“How much should a democracy spend on recurring, high-cost security drills for threats that materialise rarely, if ever?” Large-scale coastal security exercises consume significant personnel-hours and public money against low-probability but high-consequence threats, posing a genuine dilemma between vigilance against catastrophic risk and the opportunity cost of resources that could otherwise fund welfare delivery. ***GS-IV Value: Prudence in public duty*** *— a state’s responsibility to prepare for low-probability, high-impact threats to citizen safety is itself an ethical obligation, even when the near-term payoff is invisible.*

PYQ CONNECT · UPSC CSE 2022 PRELIMS

With reference to the United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea, consider the following statements: 1. A coastal state has the right to establish the breadth of its territorial sea up to a limit not exceeding 12 nautical miles, measured from baseline determined in accordance with the convention. 2. Ships of all states, whether coastal or land-locked, enjoy the right of innocent passage through the territorial sea. 3. The Exclusive Economic Zone shall not extend beyond 200 nautical miles from the baseline from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured. Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Why it matters today: All three UNCLOS statements are correct — the 12-nautical-mile territorial sea and 200-nautical-mile EEZ limits are exactly what India’s newly remeasured 11,098.81 km coastline recalibrates the baseline for, making Sea Vigil-26’s EEZ-wide coverage a live application of this PYQ’s framework.

🧠 Memory Lab

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

FRI · 13 NOV 2026

✕ XTRACTS IN 30 SECONDS

1. Museum: Cabinet cleared ₹3,230 crore for the Yuge Yugeen Bharat museum, reusing North and South Block; phased construction runs 2026-27 to 2030-31.

2. Swachh Survekshan: 10th edition assessed 4,751 cities; Visakhapatnam and Navi Mumbai topped their categories; new Himalayan, riverfront and coastal town awards introduced.

3. Black Mass Ban: DGFT prohibited export of lithium-ion battery black mass (ITC(HS) 85491400) to keep critical minerals like lithium, cobalt and nickel inside India.

4. Sea Vigil-26: Navy's 5th pan-India coastal defence exercise is the first to use India's remeasured 11,098.81 km coastline, ahead of the biennial TROPEX.

🔥 NUMBERS TO REMEMBER

₹3,230 Cr MUSEUM OUTLAY	**10th** SWACHH SURVEKSHAN EDITION	**4,751** CITIES SURVEYED
85491400 BLACK MASS ITC(HS) CODE	**11,098.81 km** INDIA'S NEW COASTLINE	**7,516.6 km** OLD COASTLINE FIGURE
200 nm EEZ LIMIT (UNCLOS)	**12 nm** TERRITORIAL SEA LIMIT	**2026–31** MUSEUM BUILD PHASE

🟣 ETHICS QUICK REFERENCE

ISSUE 01 — DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

Yuge Yugeen Bharat Museum, ₹3,230 Cr outlay, reusing heritage buildings. **Value: Weighing symbolic heritage spending against competing welfare priorities.**

ISSUE 02 — COMPASSION FOR THE VULNERABLE

Swachh Survekshan rankings drive municipal sanitation behaviour. **Value: Ensuring real gains for sanitation workers, not just survey-season optics.**

ISSUE 03 — FAIRNESS IN POLICY TRANSITION

Overnight black mass export ban, from "Free" to "Prohibited". **Value: Due process and transition time for businesses hit by sudden trade-policy shifts.**

ISSUE 04 — PRUDENCE IN PUBLIC DUTY

Sea Vigil-26 tests coastal readiness across the EEZ. **Value: Preparing for rare, high-consequence threats is itself an ethical duty of the state.**

QUICK LINK

One Vision, Four Stories

Heritage (Culture), Governance (MoHUA), Economy (DGFT/Commerce) and Security (Navy) — today's four issues span all three core GS papers plus GS-IV ethics, making this a complete cross-paper revision set.

◎ QUICK REVISION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Yuge Yugeen Bharat Museum — ₹3,230 Cr, North & South Block, Ministry of Culture, phase 1 by 2027.
- ☐ Swachh Survekshan 2025-26 — 10th edition, 4,751 cities, 43 indicators, MoHUA/SBM-U.
- ☐ Super Swachh League winners: Navi Mumbai, Surat, Vijayawada.
- ☐ New town categories: Cleanest Riverfront (Rewa), Coastal (Puri), Himalayan (Rudrapur).
- ☐ Black mass export status changed from "Free" to "Prohibited" — ITC(HS) 85491400.
- ☐ Black mass contains lithium, cobalt, nickel and manganese recovered from spent batteries.
- ☐ Sea Vigil-26 — 5th edition, conceived in 2018 post-26/11, precedes biennial TROPEX.
- ☐ India's coastline remeasured at 11,098.81 km, up from 7,516.6 km.

📊 PYQ FREQUENCY — 10-YEAR VIEW



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