

Gyan Bharatam Mission to sign MoUs with institutes for conservation of manuscripts

20 institutes to ink deal with the Culture Ministry's flagship initiative on Saturday, 30 more to follow later

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The Gyan Bharatam Mission on manuscripts under the Union Culture Ministry will, on Saturday (October 25, 2025), sign Memorandums of Understanding with around 20 institutes across the country for conservation, upkeep and digitisation of manuscripts.

While the 20 institutes will sign the MoUs on Saturday, 30 more will do so over the next few days, a senior official of the Union Culture Ministry told *The Hindu*. Some of these

institutes are Asiatic Society Kolkata, University of Kashmir, Srinagar, Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Prayagraj, and Government Oriental Manuscript Library, Chennai.

Gyan Bharatam is a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Culture for identifying, documenting, conserving, digitising, preserving, and promoting India's vast manuscript heritage. It was announced during the Union Budget this year.

Mandate and structure

The mission's mandate is to preserve and establish a dedicated digital platform — known as the National Digital Repository (NDR) — to share India's manuscript heritage worldwide.

The institutions set to sign MoUs have been categorised into Cluster Centres and Independent Centres.

In the case of a Cluster Centre, the institution shall be responsible for executing all manuscript-related activities of its own centre, as well as those of its designated Cluster Partner Centres, which shall not exceed 20. In the case of the Independent Centres, the institution shall be responsible for executing all manuscript-related activities pertaining solely to its own collection.

Gyan Bharatam shall provide the overarching framework, guidance, monitoring, and support for the execution of activities under this partnership. In addition, it shall also provide funding, necessary equipment, and budgetary allocations to the designated Centres, subject to approval of work plans, milestones, and quality verification.

The various activities to be provided by the institutes with GB's support have been categorised into survey and cataloguing, conservation and capacity building, technology and digitisation, linguistics and translation, research, publication, and outreach.

The Centres have also been asked to constitute a dedicated Gyan Bharatam Cell experienced in each vertical, in the spirit of voluntary service, to represent the Centre with sincerity, while also serving as a vital channel of communication to foster collaboration and ensure smooth coordination.

Funds in two instalments

As far as finances are concerned, funds shall be released in phased instalments in accordance with the implementation schedule and milestones outlined in the approved

work plan.

The first instalment (70%) shall be disbursed upon the annual budget, the second (30%) instalment shall be released only upon submission of progress reports with detailed physical and financial achievements, submission of Utilisation Certificates (UCs) and expenditure statements and Quality Verification Report and approval of work completed by the designated third-party quality assurance by officials.

The Culture Ministry had last month organised the first-ever international conference on Indian manuscripts titled “Reclaiming India’s Knowledge Legacy through Manuscript Heritage”.

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