VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

8th December 2025

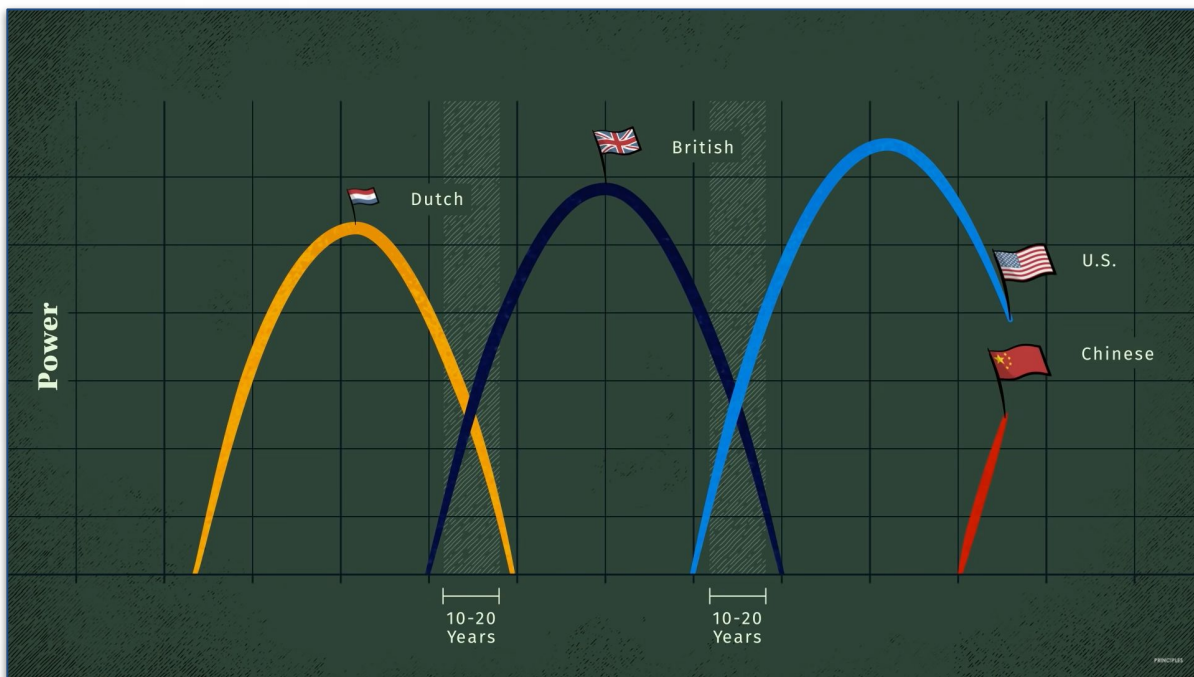# Redefining India's Strategic Autonomy

CONTEXT: India needs to assert strategic autonomy by engaging both Russia and West.

What is Strategic Autonomy?

- *'ability of a state to pursue its own national interest; without being constrained'*
- **Primary Reason?**

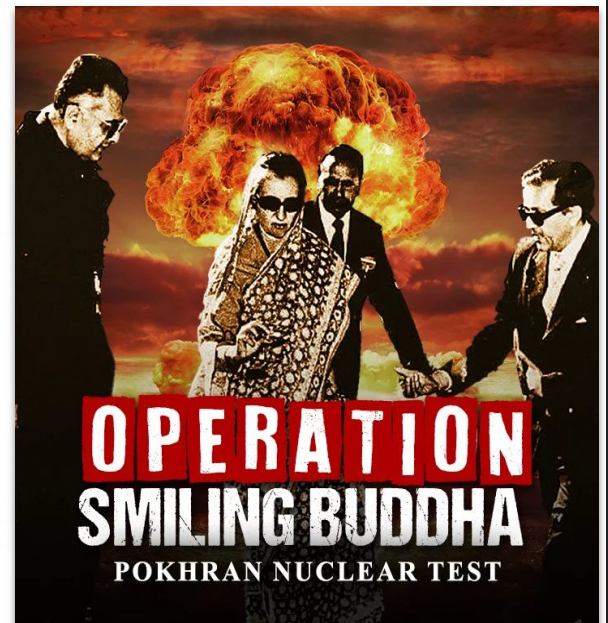## Evolution of Strategic Autonomy: Amid changing World Order

- **1st phase** - Non-Alignment (1947-1961) - Bipolar World
    - Bandung Conference
    - NAM
    - Panchsheel policy
    - Preservation of autonomy
- **2nd phase** - Realism (1962-71)
    - Pragmatic choices
- **3rd phase** - Regional Assertion (1971-91)
    - Tilt towards USSR
    - Creation of Bangladesh
    - Nuclear Test, 1974
    - Peacekeeping Operation
    - US-China-Pakistan axis

Redefining India's Strategic Autonomy

CONTEXT: India needs to assert strategic autonomy by engaging both Russia and West.

- **4th phase** - The 1991 Inflection (1991-2005)
    - Economic Reforms
    - Started - Multi alignment
    - Look East

- **5th phase** - India's Strategic Autonomy in a Multipolar World (after 2005)
    - Shift from a P2 mindset
    - 'free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific'
    - Balancing diplomacy
    - Dehyphenation policy
    - Issue-based cooperation
    - Intensified cooperation - middle powers
    - Critical Defence Deals
    - 2+2 Dialogue
    - Military Logistics Agreements
    - Pulling out of RCEP
    - Act East
    - Use of Hard power
    - Expanding Soft power
    - Indo-Pacific Centrality

OPERATION SMILING BUDDHA
POKHRAN NUCLEAR TEST

Redefining India's Strategic Autonomy

CONTEXT: India needs to assert strategic autonomy by engaging both Russia and West.

Challenges to Strategic Autonomy

- Energy Security
- Trade structure & China-linked supply dependencies
- Defence Autonomy?
- Technology and "critical inputs"
- Perception of weakness
- Fear of becoming a US ally
- Assertive rise of China - Land Border
- Assertion of Power
- Domestic capability bottlenecks

Way forward

- Multi-Vector Foreign Policy Approach
    - interest-based, not identity-based
- Securing Energy Inputs
- Reducing "single-point" dependencies
- Diversify markets + Upgrade Competitiveness
- Russia- As a Lever + Enhance Western Interactions
- Creative Diplomacy and Flexibility - Cooperate and Compete
- Active Engagement with Middle Powers
- Utilising Multilateral Institutions

Mains Practise Question

"In an increasingly polarised global order, India's pursuit of strategic autonomy has undergone significant evolution." In the light of this statement, discuss the challenges faced by India's principle of Strategic Autonomy and also suggest a comprehensive way forward.

(15 Marks, 250 words)

20. 'भारत और यूनाइटेड स्टेट्स के बीच संबंधों में खटास के प्रवेश का कारण वाशिंगटन का अपनी वैश्विक रणनीति में अभी तक भी भारत के लिए किसी ऐसे स्थान की खोज करने में विफलता है, जो भारत के आत्म-संमादर और महत्वाकांक्षा को संतुष्ट कर सके ।' उपयुक्त उदाहरणों के साथ स्पष्ट कीजिए ।

'What introduces friction into the ties between India and the United States is that Washington is still unable to find for India a position in its global strategy, which would satisfy India's national self-esteem and ambitions.' Explain with suitable examples.   15

The Fire Safety Crisis in India

CONTEXT: Five tourists, 20 staffers killed; club was operating without licenses and emergency exit doors, says FIR

- According to ADSI Report by **NCRB** - **7435 people – 2022**
- **Fire Service –** State Subject **- Municipal Function –** 12th Schedule

Why Are Urban Areas Prone to Deadly Fires?

- **Urbanisation and Infrastructure Issues**
  - Illegal Constructions - Rules flouted, non-fire-resistant materials, etc.
  - Poor Urban Planning - Congested and narrow lanes; NBC - 2016
- **Governance Challenges**
  - Political Interference - Populism
  - Lack of Public Awareness - ignore fire drills; illegal factories
- **Industrial and Commercial Oversights**
  - Faulty Machinery and Poor Maintenance - Overheated equipment; HVAC Load
  - Unsafe Handling of Hazardous Materials
- **Climate-Driven Threats**
  - Severe heat - Aggravated by CC

Major Fire Accidents in India

Gwalior Apartment Fire
Khasgi Bazar apartment fire in Gwalior causes widespread damage — April 2025

Kolkata Hotel Fire
Rituraj Hotel fire in Kolkata leads to casualties — April 2025

Prayagraj Tent Fires
Mahakumbh Mela tent fires disrupt religious gathering — January 2025

Mumbai Apartment Fire
Ansari Heights fire in Mumbai claims lives and property — November 2024

Delhi Commercial Fire
West Delhi commercial building fire causes significant damage — May 2022

The Fire Safety Crisis in India

CONTEXT: Five tourists, 20 staffers killed; club was operating without licenses and emergency exit doors, says FIR

What are the Key Fire Safety Regulations in India?

- **National Building Code:** By the BIS - 1970, 3rd edition in 2016.
    - primary standard for fire safety in India
    - State governments - integrate - local bylaws.
- **Model Building Bye Laws 2016**: Use of fire-resistant materials for construction, installation of fire alarms and detection systems, etc.
- **Fire Prevention and Fire Safety Act, 2005**: fire safety in buildings and must be upheld by all states
- **Model Bill to Provide for the Maintenance of Fire and Emergency Service for the State, 2019**
- **Scheme for Expansion and Modernization of Fire Services in the States 2023**
- **Fire Safety Week:** Union Health Ministry - 'Fire Safety Week' from 21st to 25th April' - raise awareness
- **NDMA Guidelines:** homes, schools, and hospitals.

What should be the way forward?

- **Infrastructure Modernization:** Smart Infrastructure; Retractable Staircases; Retrofitting F.R. Materials
- **Overhauling Firefighting:** Robust PPE kits
- **Safe Industrial Practices**: Phase-out - Hazardous Materials; Proper Storage
- **Climate Resilience**: Green Belts; Water Recycling Systems; Predictive Analysis.

Mains Practise Question:

India has been witnessing increasing number of fire accidents lately. Discuss the causes and suggest way forward for handling this crisis effectively.

(10 Marks, 150 words)

Decoding The News

On September 25, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) released the draft Indian Statistical Institute Bill, 2025. The Bill has been met with strong protests by academicians as well as students of the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) who claim that the move is aimed to strip the institute of its academic autonomy by converting it from a "registered society to a statutory body corporate".

What is the significance of the ISI?

The ISI was founded in December 1931 by P.C. Mahalanobis in Kolkata and has since grown into one of India's most prestigious academic and research institutions. The institute was originally registered in April 1932, under the Societies Registration Act of 1860, and later re-registered under the West Bengal Societies Registration Act of 1961. Being a society provided the institute its own memorandum of association, bye-laws, and regulations. Parliament enacted the Indian Statistical Institute Act, 1959, declaring ISI as an Institution of National Importance (INI).

Many scholars link the origin of the institute to the Bengal renaissance and credit the institute with shaping India's planning and policy apparatus. The National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) was developed at ISI, establishing the foundation of India's official statistical system. Other than P.C.Mahalanobis, the institute has produced legendary scholars such as Professor C.R. Rao and S.R.S. Varadhan.

With about 1,200 students and six centres across India, ISI offers undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in Statistics, Mathematics, Quantitative Economics, Computer Science, Library and Information Science, Cryptology and Security, Quality Management Science and Operations Research.

Why are academicians protesting?

The primary concern of those opposing the draft Bill is how the ISI's institutional status will change, from a "a registered society to a statutory body corporate".

A recent letter by about 1,500 academicians to Rao Inderjit Singh, Minister of State (Independent Charge) MoSPI, stated that there is no transparent reason that MoSPI should repeal the (1959) Act, abolish the society and introduce a Bill which violates the basic spirit of the agreement between the general body of the society and the government. The letter also states that the move to bypass the society registered under the WB Societies Registration Act to a "statutory body corporate" infringes upon the jurisdiction of the Societies Registration Act and is against the spirit of cooperative federalism. On November 28, hundreds of students and staff of ISI formed a human chain and held a public meeting near the institute's campus on B.T. Road in North Kolkata.

Those opposing the draft Bill point out that the governance structure, as in the existing 1959 Act, vested authority in a council with academic representation, and procedural safeguards against government overreach. The proposed 2025 Bill, however, gives power to the Board of Governors (BoG), defined under Section 15 of the Act, which is heavily dominated by government nominees sidelining the authority of faculty and academic stakeholders. Former professor of ISI and chairman of West Bengal Infrastructure Development Finance Corporation Abhirup Sarkar said that the ISI is a place of doing basic research which is a long-term process where immediate results may not be visible. Since there is a push for a corporate model of funding in the draft Bill, getting funds for basic research projects could be a problem in the future. Section 29 of the proposed 2025 Act deals with 'power to generate revenue' which includes student fees, consultancy services and sponsored research projects among others.

Another critical area raised by those opposing the Bill is that all appointments will be controlled by the Union government, through the BoG. Earlier there were 10 representatives from ISI (eight elected, one worker and one scientific worker) out of the 33 representatives on the council, a little less than one-third. Now there will be none. Professor Sarkar said that after the proposed Bill, there are apprehensions of political interference in the appointments by the Union Government.

Concerns over draft ISI Bill

What is the government saying?
The government claims that the idea behind the legislation is the vision to make ISI not only one of the best in India but one of the foremost institutes in the world as the institute approaches its centenary in 2031. A press release stated that, over the years, four review committees had examined the functioning of ISI. The most recent, chaired by Dr. R.A. Mashelkar in 2020, recommended major reforms to strengthen governance, expand academic programmes, and make ISI globally competitive.

What lies ahead?
The students and academicians are banking on the support of Opposition parties to oppose the proposed legislation. Villupuram Member of Parliament D. Ravikumar has written to the Union Minister of State (MoPSI) urging him to withdraw the draft Indian Statistical Institute Bill, 2025. Leaders from Trinamool Congress and Communist Party of India (Marxist) have also publicly opposed the draft legislation and vowed to oppose it if it is tabled in Parliament.

Prelims Booster

Current Statistical Framework in India

Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)

- MoSPI was formed in **1999** via the **merger** of two departments-
    - **Department of Statistics** (DoS)
    - **Department of Programme Implementation** (DoPI)
- 2 Wings: Comprises **Statistics Wing** (**NSO**) and **Programme Implementation** Wing.

- *The **Programme Implementation** Wing of MoSPI oversees **MPLADS,** the Twenty-Point Programme (**TPP**), and Infrastructure Monitoring (**IPMD**).*

National Statistical Office (NSO)

- Formation: Created in **2019** as an **umbrella body** under MoSPI.
- Divisions: Includes Central Statistical Office (**CSO**) and National Sample Survey Office (**NSSO**).
- CSO Role: Manages **GDP**, Index of Industrial Production (**IIP**), **Consumer Price Index**, and **ASI**.
- NSSO Role: Conducts socio-economic surveys, including **PLFS**, **consumer expenditure**, and **health**.

National Statistical Commission (NSC)

- Setup: Constituted in **2006** based on **Rangarajan Commission** recommendations.
- Role: Ensures professional **oversight**, **quality** assurance, and release **protocols**.

Concerns over draft ISI Bill

State Statistical Coordination

- **State DES:** Directorates of Economics and Statistics (DES) handle local data collection.
- **Alignment:** Follow **NSO formats** and survey protocols.

Legal Framework

- **Union List Entry 94:** Allows the **Centre** to collect statistics on **Union subjects**.
- **Concurrent List Entry 45:** Empowers both the **Centre** and the **States** to handle **general statistics**.
- **Relevant Acts:** **Census Act** (1948), **Registration of Births & Deaths Act** (1969), **Statistics Act** (2008).

Institutional Status

- **ISI:** ISI functions as an autonomous institution under **MoSPI** as per the ISI Act, 1959.
- **UN Integration:** NSO aligns with the **IMF-SDDS** and **UN release standards**.

  - *IMF–SDDS: The **Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS)** by the IMF sets global norms for publishing timely, reliable, and comparable macroeconomic data.*

Tech-Fixes as "Snake Oil"

SYLLABUS : GS 2 : Governance, Accountability
Newspaper: The Hindu   **Page Number : 06**

Introduction: Surveillance as a Substitute for Accountability

A growing trend: government systems increasingly rely on **photographs, videos, biometrics, and apps** to ensure worker accountability. From cleaners to nurses to Anganwadi workers, frontline staff are monitored through digital tools. However, these mechanisms often **fail to improve actual work quality** and, in many cases, worsen corruption or exclusion.

The Biometric Turn: When Attendance Overshadows Work

Governments attempted to fix absenteeism by introducing **biometric attendance systems**.

- Many employees shifted their priority from completing work to merely **clocking in on time**.
- A RCT in Rajasthan showed that biometric attendance **did not reduce absenteeism among government nurses**; in fact, attendance worsened in the long run.
  - **Key issue:** Technology monitored presence, **not performance**.

MGNREGA and the NMMS App: Old Corruption, New Tools

MGNREGA faces chronic inflation of attendance to siphon wages.

- In 2022, the **NMMS** required workers' photos uploaded twice daily.
- Yet, corruption adapted:
  - random or irrelevant photos,
  - photos of photos (jpeg manipulation),
  - proxy attendance through digital loopholes.
    A 2025 circular from the Ministry of Rural Development identified **seven major malpractices**, showing that **fudged photos simply replaced fudged signatures**.

Poshan Tracker & Facial Recognition: Exclusion and Inefficiency

The Ministry of Women and Child Development mandated **FRT** for THR.

- **Idea:** ensure mothers and children receive their rations.
- **Reality:** connectivity issues, app glitches, and crowds made the process difficult.
- Cheating persisted because **FRT does not prevent denial of rations after authentication**.

This mirrors earlier problems with **ABBA** in PDS:

- Elderly or disabled beneficiaries could not send proxies.
- Many were excluded due to authentication failures.
- Some ration dealers used ABBA to cheat beneficiaries by giving them **less than their quota**.

Surveillance Apps and Sincere Workers: Perverse Incentives

Field-level health workers face constant digital surveillance:

- ANMs must upload photos of breastfeeding counselling or home visits.
- A genuine visit without a photo is counted as "not done", but a fake photo upload passes.
- A worker in Andhra Pradesh received a show-cause notice because poor connectivity forced her to move 300 metres to log a visit—flagged as "fraudulent".

Outcome: Genuine workers feel **demoralized**, while dishonest ones learn to game the system.

Limits of Tech-Fixes: Accountability Without Responsibility

Drèze and Amartya Sen argue for moving from **accountability** (compliance with instructions) to **responsibility** (intrinsic motivation to serve public interest).
Tech fixes:

- can enforce minimal compliance,
- but cannot create responsibility or improve work culture,
- and cannot explain why many workers remain sincere despite weak accountability.

Agnotology: Cultivated Ignorance of Tech Failures

Despite evidence of failures, the government continues pushing more digital surveillance.
Examples:

- NMMS misuse acknowledged, yet the response was a directive for **100% photograph verification**, not reform.
- Even amid NMMS failures, FRT was mandated for nutrition programmes.

Tech-Fixes as "Snake Oil"

The article invokes **agnotology** (Robert Proctor's term): the intentional production of ignorance.
Possible reasons:

- vested interests of tech companies,
- creation of large markets for devices, servers, authentication systems, and surveillance apps,
- wilful blindness to exclusion, inefficiency, and privacy violations.

Conclusion: Tech-Fixes as "Snake Oil" for Accountability

The article concludes that digital monitoring tools:

- fail to stop corruption,
- cause exclusion of vulnerable groups,
- slow down welfare delivery,
- violate privacy, and
- demotivate honest workers.

Rather than over-relying on technology, India needs **systemic reforms**, better staffing, transparent processes, supportive work environments, and a shift from coercive accountability to **public-service responsibility**.

National intelligence grid gains traction as Central agencies, police scour for information

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID), a platform for the police and investigating agencies to securely access government and private databases in real time, is getting around 45,000 requests a month, government officials told *The Hindu*.

The platform, accessible only to security agencies, became operational last year after first being conceptualised in 2009 in the aftermath of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks.

At the recent conference of Directors-General of Police, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Raipur, the law enforcement agencies, including State police, were asked to scale up the use of NATGRID in all investigations.

Seamless flow

The National Intelligence Grid was conceptualised in 2009. It became operational last year

- NATGRID is a platform for the police and investigating agencies to access government and private databases in real time
- Union Home Ministry has asked States to liberally use the platform to access datasets, which include details of driving licence, Aadhaar registration, airline data, bank records, and also details of social media accounts which share posts on a particular issue
- Access to NATGRID is now available to Superintendent of Police-rank officers. Earlier, it was only meant to be accessible to 10 Central agencies

The Union Home Ministry has asked States to liberally use the platform to access datasets, which include details of driving licence, Aadhaar registration, airline data, bank records, and also details of social media accounts which share posts on a particular issue.

Access to NATGRID is now available to Superintendent of Police-rank officers. Earlier, it was only meant to be accessible to 10 Central agencies, such as the Intelligence Bureau, Research and Analysis Wing, National Investigation Agency, Enforcement Directorate, Financial Intelligence Unit, Narcotics Control Bureau, and the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence.

Several State police officials told *The Hindu* that they faced certain hurdles while accessing the information on the platform.

Time consuming

An official said that logging on the portal required a lot of time, while another official said they had to wait longer to get the desired information, even though the platform is supposed to provide real-time data.

The platform, which had been in the works for over a decade and was first envisaged under Congress leader P. Chidambaram, received a fresh momentum under Home Minister Amit Shah in 2019. Under Mr. Shah, the differences between various security agencies were ironed out, and the application was made accessible to even the State police.

The government is taking several steps to enhance security and maintain the sanctity of data in the wake of repeated cyberattack attempts on critical infrastructure in the country, official sources said.

In 2024, India witnessed over 20.41 lakh cybersecurity-related incidents, the highest number of incidents since 2020.

"Instead of security agencies seeking data from multiple sources, NATGRID provides the information on a single platform. The confidentiality of the user is maintained, and the registration of a first information report (FIR) is not necessary. Information can be secured to join the dots during an investigation or to develop intelligence," said another government official.

Commission/body	Falls under
1. Finance Commission	Ministry of Finance
2. Central Information Commission	Ministry of Personnel
3. Central Administrative Tribunal	Ministry of Personnel
4. Union Public Service Commission	Ministry of Personnel
5. Staff Selection Commission	Ministry of Personnel
6. Central Vigilance Commission	Ministry of Personnel
7. Central Bureau Of Investigation	Ministry of Personnel
8. Inter-State Council	Ministry of Home Affairs
9. Zonal Councils	Ministry of Home Affairs
10. National Investigation Agency	Ministry of Home Affairs
11. National Human Right Commission	Ministry of Home Affairs
12. Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities	Ministry of Minority Affairs
13. National Commission For Minorities	Ministry of Minority Affairs

14. National Commission for SCs	Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
15. National Commission For Backward Classes	Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
16. Central Commissioner For Disabled Persons	Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
17. National Commission for Protection of Child Rights	Ministry Of Women And Child Development
18. Central Social Welfare Board	Ministry of Women and Child Development
19. National commission for women	Ministry of Women and Child Development
20. National Commission for STs	Ministry Of Tribal Affairs
21. North Eastern Council	Ministry of Development of the North Eastern Region

Top agricultural research body urges varsities to start courses in natural farming

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) Director-General M.L. Jat has written to the Vice-Chancellors of all State and Central agriculture universities, as well as universities with agriculture departments, urging them to launch undergraduate and postgraduate courses and research programmes in natural farming.

Though natural farming was already offered as an elective subject in various institutions and four universities had dedicated courses on the subject, it is the first time that the ICAR has urged all affiliated colleges and State government institutions to introduce courses on the topic.

Natural farming has emerged as a subject of national importance, says ICAR D-G

In the letter, Dr. Jat said natural farming had emerged as a subject of national importance, aligned with India's strategic priorities for sustainable agriculture and farmer welfare. He said the B.Sc. (Hons.) agriculture - natural farming programme, developed as per the Sixth Deans' Committee recommendations and National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 guidelines, has already been finalised, approved, and circulated to all agricultural universities. "Some universities have successfully initiated this programme from the academic year 2023-24, marking a transformative milestone in agricultural higher education. I hope remaining universities will introduce this course by next academic year," he said.

On strengthening postgraduate education and advanced research on the subject, he said that given the expanding national demand for chemical-free food systems, resilient agro-ecosystems, soil health restoration, and low-emission farming, it was imperative that the State agricultural universities, deemed universities, and Central agricultural universities develop PG programmes in natural farming and allied domains.

Prelims Booster

What is Natural Farming? What are the main pillars of Natural Farming?

Natural Farming is a chemical-free traditional farming method that relies on minimal external inputs and emphasizes sustainability. It is considered as an agroecology based diversified farming system which integrates crops, trees and livestock with functional biodiversity. It is largely based on on-farm biomass recycling with major stress on biomassmulching, use of on-farm cow dung-urine formulations; maintaining soil aeration and exclusion of all synthetic chemical inputs.

It is gaining popularity in India due to its reduced cost, improved soil health, and eco-friendly practices. It has many indigenous forms in India, the most popular one is practiced in Andhra Pradesh called Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF).

Natural Farming

COMPONENTS OF
NATURAL FARMING

Beejamrit

The process includes treatment of seed using cow dung, urine and lime based formulations.

Whapasa

The process involves activating earthworms in the soil in order to create water vapor condensation.

Jivamrit

The process enhances the fertility of soil using cow urine, dung, flour of pulses and jaggery concotion.

Mulching

The process involves creating micro climate using different mulches with trees, crop biomass to conserve soil moisture.

Plant Protection

The process involves spraying of biological concoctions which prevents pest, disease and weed problems and protects the plant and improves their soil fertility.

'It is essential to nurture inheritance and pass it on to future generations'

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The world is indeed becoming "more multi-polar", which makes a compelling case for "deeper multilateralism", and collectively, prosperity can only come through mutual respect and understanding, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said on Sunday.

In his address at the opening ceremony of a key UNESCO meeting on Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) at the Red Fort complex here, he also told delegates from various countries that in the "shared quest for progress

S. Jaishankar

and prosperity", it is essential to nurture inheritance, build on it and pass it on to the future generations.

The 20th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage will take place at the Red Fort from December 8 to 13.

Mr. Jaishankar underlined that India, besides being home to many UNESCO World Heritage Sites, has itself undertaken many preservation and conservation projects across the world. A key dimension of that engagement is preservation of intangible heritage.

"The world is a fundamentally pluralistic landscape, a landscape whose richness lies in its diversity and intricacy. Far from being flat, it has a vast range of specificities and characteristics," he said. "What humankind has generated over the centuries will only

be fully appreciated when that heritage is carefully nurtured," he said.

He emphasised that challenges in that context arise when efforts are made to "dominate, to sideline, to dismiss or even to erode".

But as "decolonisation" took place and the world began returning to its "natural diversity", political and economic rebalancing started to unfold, Mr. Jaishankar said.

"Voices across geographies that were suppressed found expression again. But that process will remain incomplete until there is also cultural rebalancing," he added.

What is Intangible Cultural Heritage?

The term 'cultural heritage' has changed content considerably in recent decades, partially owing to the instruments developed by UNESCO. Cultural heritage does not end at monuments and collections of objects. It also includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as **oral traditions**, **performing arts**, **social practices, rituals, festive events**, **knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe** or the **knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts**.

The importance of intangible cultural heritage is not the cultural manifestation itself but rather the wealth of knowledge and skills that is transmitted through it from one generation to the next. The social and economic value of this transmission of knowledge is relevant for minority groups and for mainstream social groups within a State, and is as important for developing States as for developed ones.

unesco   Quick Links

UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage proposes five broad 'domains' in which intangible cultural heritage is manifested:

1. Oral traditions and expressions
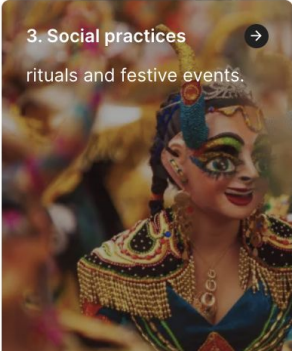including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage.

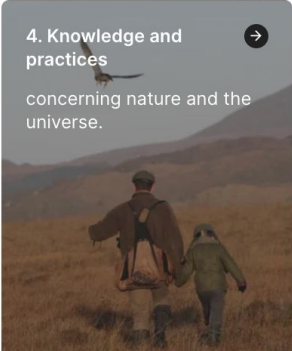**2. Performing arts**
such as traditional music, dance and theatre.
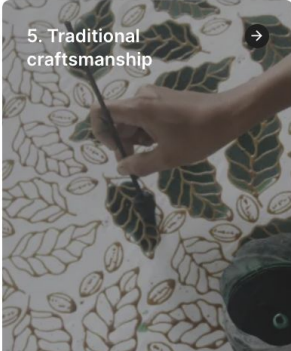
3. Social practices
rituals and festive events.

4. Knowledge and practices
concerning nature and the universe.

5. Traditional craftsmanship

Visit the Convention website
To find out more about intangible cultural heritage.

UNESCO
Intangible Cultural Heritage

1 Oral Traditions and Expressions

2 Performing Arts

3 Social Practices, Rituals and Festive Events

4 Knowledge and Practices on Nature and the Universe

5 Traditional Craftsmanship

PIB RESEARCH UNIT
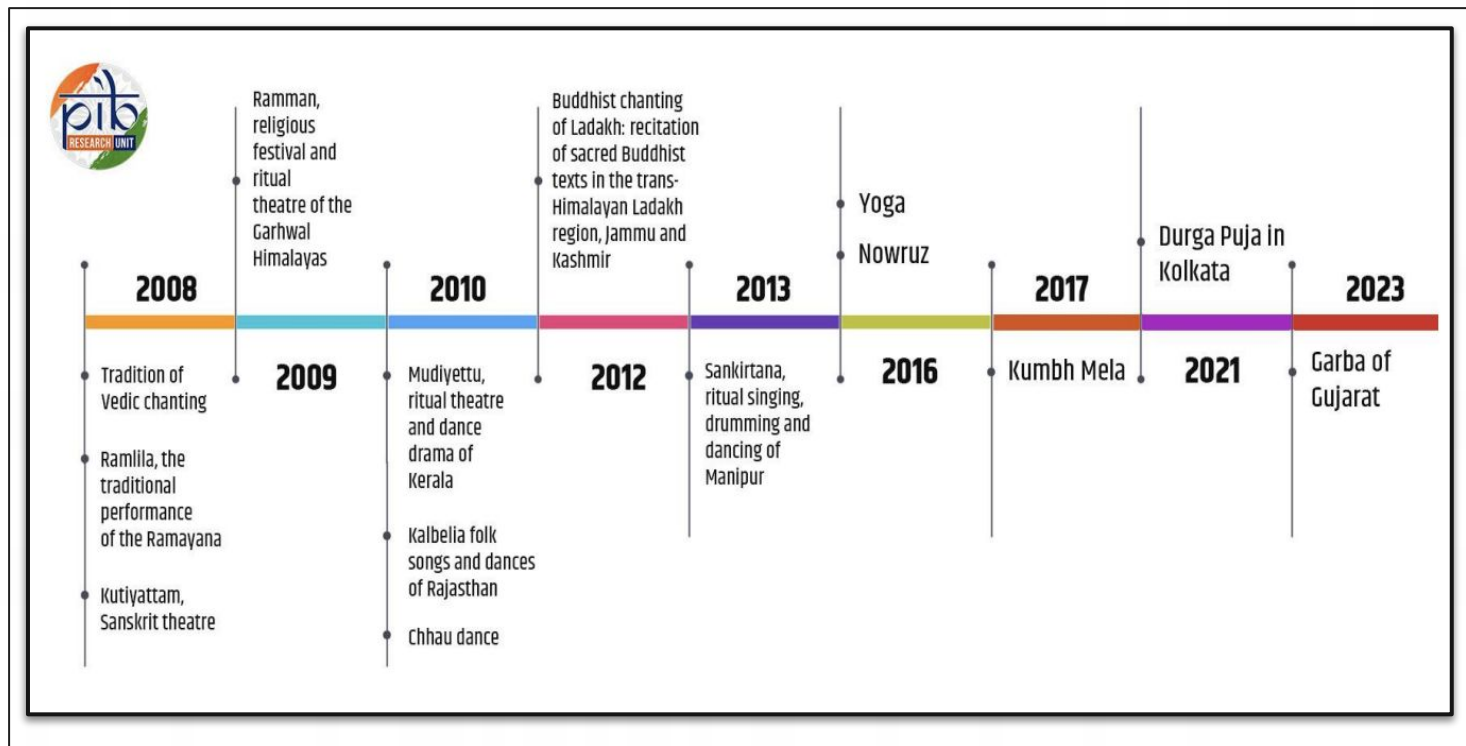
2008
- Tradition of Vedic chanting
- Ramlila, the traditional performance of the Ramayana
- Kutiyattam, Sanskrit theatre

2009
Ramman, religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas

2010
- Mudiyettu, ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala
- Kalbelia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan
- Chhau dance

2012
Buddhist chanting of Ladakh: recitation of sacred Buddhist texts in the trans-Himalayan Ladakh region, Jammu and Kashmir

2013
Sankirtana, ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur

2016
Yoga
Nowruz

2017
Kumbh Mela

2021
Durga Puja in Kolkata

2023
Garba of Gujarat

Q 1. How many of the following cultural heritages of India are inscribed in UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity?
1. Tradition of Vedic chanting
2. Yoga
3. Kumbh Mela
4. Garba
5. Bharatnatyam

Select the correct answer using the codes given below.
a) Only Two
b) Only Three
c) Only Four
d) All Five

Answer: c

Q2. Regarding Natural Farming, consider the following pairs:

S. No	Component	Description
1.	Jeevamrit	It leads to the formation of humus, which safeguards topsoil and improves the soil's ability to retain moisture.
2.	Bijamrit	The seeds are treated with formulations prepared using cow dung and cow urine from native cow species.
3.	Mulching	The process of covering the top soil with crop wastes/organic waste or with cover crops.
4.	Waaphasa	Promoting soil aeration by maintaining a balance of air and moisture in the soil.

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?
a) 1 and 4 only
b) 2, 3 and 4 only
c) 3 and 4 only
d) 2, 3 and 4 only

Answer: b

Q3. Consider the following bodies/commissions:
1. National Investigation Agency
2. Central Vigilance Commission
3. Central Information Commission
4. Inter-state councils
5. North-Eastern council

How many of the above functions under the Ministry of Home Affairs?
a) Only Two
b) Only Three
c) Only Four
d) All Five

Answer: a

Q4. With reference to the *Poshan Tracker* initiative, consider the following statements:
1. It enables real-time growth monitoring of children using WHO growth standards and digital Growth Measuring Devices at Anganwadi Centres.
2. It digitises Anganwadi records and provides a 360-degree view of services delivered to pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children under six.
3. It was launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare under Mission Poshan 2.0.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
a) 1 and 2 only
b) 2 and 3 only
c) 1 only
d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: a

Q5. The National Statistical Commission was established on the recommendation of which of the following committees?
a) Tendulkar Committee
b) Rangarajan Commission
c) NITI Aayog Expert Group
d) Kelkar Committee

Answer: b

VAJIRAM & RAVI

Institute for IAS Examination

A unit of Vajiram & Ravi IAS Study Centre LLP

9-B, Bada Bazar Marg, Old Rajinder Nagar,
New Delhi - 110060 • Ph.: 41007400, 41007500

New No. 62, P Block, 6th Avenue, Anna Nagar,
Chennai - 600040 • Ph.: 044-4330-2121
Visit us at : www.vajiramandravi.com