
Prelims Exam Topics

BHOJSHALA COMPLEX

Context

The Madhya Pradesh High Court ruled that the Bhojshala-Kamal Maula complex in Dhar is a Saraswati temple and thus permitting Hindu worship over the disputed site.

About Bhojshala complex

- **Historical Background:** Bhojshala is located in the Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh, established in 1034 AD by Raja Bhoj of the Parmar Dynasty (1000 and 1055 AD).
- **Centre of Learning:** The site functioned as a renowned educational institution where an idol of Vagdevi, identified with Goddess Saraswati, was installed.
 - Bhojshala became associated with knowledge, literature, and Sanskrit scholarship.
- **Invasions:** Alauddin Khilji is believed to have attacked Bhojshala in 1305 AD. Later, in 1514 AD, Mehmudshah Khilji II attempted to convert the structure into a dargah.
 - During this period, the land adjoining the Saraswati temple was occupied and the mausoleum of “Kamal Moulana” was constructed.
- **Administration:** In 1952, the Government of India transferred the management and protection of Bhojshala to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
- **Architecture:** The Bhojshala complex consists of a spacious open courtyard surrounded by a pillared verandah, while a prayer hall is situated on the western side.
 - The prayer hall is particularly notable for its intricately carved ceiling and sculpted pillars, many of which are believed to have originally belonged to the earlier Bhojshala structure.
- **Literary Significance:** Rock engravings include two hymns in the Prakrit language dedicated to the Karmavatar, or crocodile incarnation, of Lord Vishnu.
- **Inscriptions:** Two important Sarpabandha pillar inscriptions are found at the site dated 11-12th centuries.

- One inscription contains the Sanskrit alphabet along with the principal endings of nouns and verbs, while the other records declensions relating to the ten tenses and moods of Sanskrit grammar.
- **Sanskrit Compositions:** The pillars also contain two Sanskrit compositions written in the Anustubha metre.
 - One composition praises Raja Bhoj's successors, Udayaditya and Narvarman, while the other records that the pillars were installed during the reign of Udayaditya

PM-SHRI SCHEME

Context

West Bengal recently signed a pact with Centre to implement PM-SHRI scheme

About PM-SHRI scheme

- **Introduction:** PM-SHRI (Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India) is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme launched in 2022 to develop over 14,500 existing schools into model institutions aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
- **Duration:** The scheme is being implemented from 2022–23 to 2026–27, after which the responsibility for maintenance will be transferred to the respective States and Union Territories.
- **Objective:** The initiative aims to create modern, inclusive, and high-quality schools that demonstrate innovative teaching methods and holistic learning practices.
- **Beneficiaries:** The scheme is expected to directly benefit more than 18 lakh students across India.
- **Funding pattern:**
 - States and Union Territories with legislature: 60:40 Centre-State sharing
 - North-Eastern States, Himalayan States, and Jammu & Kashmir: 90:10
 - Union Territories without legislature: 100% Central funding
- **Selection process:** Schools are selected through a competitive “Challenge Mode” process involving:
 - Signing of MoU between States/UTs and the Union Government
 - Identification of eligible schools through UDISE+ benchmarks

- Evaluation on specified criteria and physical verification
 - Final selection by an expert committee
 - A maximum of two schools to be selected from each block or urban local body.
- **Infrastructure facilities:** PM-SHRI schools are equipped with Smart classrooms, computer and science laboratories, Atal Tinkering Labs, ICT facilities, Digital libraries and Vocational education labs.

PM MODI VISIT TO UAE

Context

India and the UAE signed major agreements on energy security, defence cooperation and infrastructure investment.

Key Decisions Taken During the Visit

- **Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) Agreement:** India and the UAE signed a pact between to expand UAE participation in India's strategic petroleum reserves up to **30 million barrels**.
- **Strategic Gas Reserve Cooperation:** Both countries agreed to collaborate on setting up strategic gas reserve and LNG/LPG storage infrastructure in India.
- **Long-Term LPG Supply Agreement:** Indian Oil Corporation (IOCL) and ADNOC signed an agreement **ensuring long-term LPG supply to India.** (*UAE supplies nearly 40% of India's LPG imports*)
- **Strategic Defence Partnership Framework:** India and UAE signed a framework agreement covering **defence-industrial collaboration, technology sharing, maritime security, cyber defence** and joint development of military hardware.
- **Infrastructure & Investment Commitments:** UAE pledged investments worth **\$5 billion in India** across infrastructure, banking and energy sectors.
- **Ship Repair & Maritime Infrastructure:** An MoU was signed for developing a ship-repair cluster at Vadinar, Gujarat, strengthening maritime infrastructure cooperation.
- **Regional Security Consultations:** Both leaders exchanged views on the West Asia conflict, with India condemning attacks on the UAE and reaffirming support for regional stability.

Mains Exam Topics

ECONOMIC STATECRAFT IN THE EMERGING GLOBAL ORDER

Context

Globalisation is increasingly being shaped by strategic competition, where supply chains, technology ecosystems, critical minerals and trade networks are becoming instruments of geopolitical power.

Emergence of a Geoeconomic World Order

- **Fusion of Economics and Security:** Economic tools such as tariffs, export controls, sanctions and technology restrictions are now central instruments of statecraft.
 - **E.g.:** U.S.-China trade war, semiconductor restrictions, rare-earth export controls
- **Shift from Efficiency to Resilience:** Countries are prioritising secure and diversified supply chains over purely low-cost globalisation. (**E.g:** friend-shoring, near-shoring, supply-chain resilience initiatives)
- **Decline of Traditional Multilateralism:** WTO-led universal trade frameworks are weakening as countries increasingly rely on bilateral and mini-lateral economic arrangements.
 - **E.g.:** IPEF, Indo-Pacific partnerships, regional economic coalitions
- **Strategic Importance of Technology & Minerals:** Semiconductors, AI, batteries and critical minerals are emerging as decisive sources of geopolitical influence. (**E.g.:** CHIPS Act, lithium diplomacy)
- **Rise of Economic Nationalism:** Major powers are increasingly using **industrial policy, subsidies and domestic manufacturing promotion** to secure strategic autonomy.
 - **E.g.** U.S. Inflation Reduction Act, EU strategic autonomy policies)

Why India is Gaining Strategic Importance

- **Alternative Manufacturing Hub:** Global firms seeking diversification beyond China view India as a large and relatively stable production base. (**E.g.:** Apple supply-chain expansion, electronics manufacturing growth)
- **Demographic & Market Advantage:** India combines a **large workforce** with one of the world's **fastest-growing consumer markets**.

- **Digital Governance Model:** India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) model is emerging as a globally recognised governance framework. (E.g. UPI, Aadhaar, DigiLocker)
- **Technology & Innovation Ecosystem:** India is becoming a key hub for AI, Global Capability Center (GCC), semiconductor design and engineering services.
 - E.g. India hosts 2,117 GCCs and over 250 AI/ML Centres of Excellence)
- **Democratic Strategic Partner:** India is increasingly viewed as a trusted democratic alternative in an uncertain geopolitical environment.

India's Geoeconomic Strategy

- **Multi-Alignment Diplomacy:** India is diversifying economic partnerships without exclusive bloc alignment. (Engagement with U.S., EU, Gulf, ASEAN, Russia and Global South simultaneously)
- **Supply-Chain Resilience Policies:** Focus on domestic manufacturing and reducing vulnerabilities in critical sectors. (Examples: PLI schemes, semiconductor mission, logistics reforms)
- **Technology Partnerships:** India is deepening strategic cooperation in semiconductors, AI, telecom and clean technologies. (E.g.: India-U.S. semiconductor initiative, Quad critical technologies)
- **Critical Mineral Outreach:** Building overseas resource partnerships to secure lithium, cobalt and rare-earth supply chains. (E.g.: Agreements with Australia and Argentina)
- **Economic Diplomacy as Foreign Policy Tool:** Trade agreements and connectivity projects are increasingly integrated into strategic policy. (E.g.: IMEC corridor, FTAs with UAE and Australia)

Structural Challenges Before India

- **Import Dependence:** India remains dependent on external sources for semiconductors, critical minerals and advanced technologies.
- **Infrastructure & Logistics Bottlenecks:** High logistics costs and uneven industrial infrastructure affect competitiveness. (Logistics costs around 13–14% of GDP)
- **Weak R&D Ecosystem:** Low investment in research and innovation constrains technological leadership. (R&D expenditure around 0.7% of GDP)
- **Limited High-End Manufacturing:** India's integration into advanced global value chains remains below East Asian economies.

- **Balancing Geopolitical Pressures:** Simultaneous engagement with competing powers creates diplomatic and economic constraints.

Way Forward

- **Build Competitive Manufacturing Ecosystems:** Improve logistics, industrial clusters, ease of doing business and energy reliability.
- **Strengthen Innovation Capacity:** Expand investment in R&D, semiconductors, AI and emerging technologies.
- **Deepen Strategic Trade Partnerships:** Pursue diversified FTAs and resilient supply-chain coalitions.
- **Develop Skilled Human Capital:** Align higher education and skilling with advanced manufacturing and technology sectors.
- **Preserve Strategic Autonomy:** Maintain diversified economic engagement while avoiding overdependence on any single power bloc.

