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YUGE YUGEEN BHARAT MUSEUM



- It is envisioned as a landmark civilisational museum showcasing the continuity, diversity, and richness of **India's civilisational heritage** through an integrated narrative of its tangible and intangible cultural heritage.
- It will be developed by the **Ministry of Culture** through the **adaptive reuse** of the historic **North Block and South Block buildings** in **New Delhi.**
- It aims to **transform** the **two prominent government buildings** into a national institution highlighting the continuity, diversity, and richness of India's civilisational heritage.
- It is an **integral part** of the **Central Vista Redevelopment Project.**
- The project draws **inspiration** from **France's 'Grands Projets' initiative**, under which **government buildings** were **repurposed into major cultural spaces.**

Features:

- Spread over a proposed built-up area of approximately 1,78,509 square metres, the museum will **integrate contemporary museum practices, immersive technologies**, and **visitor-centric interpretation.**
- It is going to be the museum with the **largest display area in the world.**
- It will present India's civilisational journey through **curated thematic galleries, exhibitions,** and interpretation of its diverse cultural traditions, knowledge systems, artistic practices, and heritage.
- The project encompasses **gallery development,** collection storage and conservation facilities, integration of technologies and **immersive experiences, landscaping, intelligent building systems,** and associated infrastructure.

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Implementation Strategy and Targets:

- The project will be implemented in a **phased manner** over **FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31.** The **first inaugural gallery** on the **theme of Adornment** is **expected to open** to the public in the **North Block** in the **latter part of 2027.**
- **Other galleries** are being developed **on themes such as Architecture and Cityscapes, Mathematics and Astronomy**, **Languages** and **Scripts**, Faith and Spirituality, and Bharat Connects – Trade and Ideas, among others.

SWACHH SHEHAR JODI INITIATIVE



- It aims to institutionalise **structured mentorship, peer learning**, and collaborative action between **mentor cities and mentee cities** from **within the same State**.
- It is implemented under the **Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban (SBM-U).**
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)
- **Objectives**
  - The objective is to **support comparitively low performing cities** in improving their swachhata performance by drawing on the **experience of mentor cities to:**
  - **Replicate tested best practices** in sanitation and waste management
  - **Strengthen processes** in mentee cities
  - **Support the waste processing** set-up to improve visible cleanliness
  - **Improve citizen engagement** for responsible behaviour change for swachhata
- **Key features**
  - Under this, **each mentor city and mentee city** pair will **jointly develop an Action Plan.**
  - **Eight thematic Focus Areas:**
    - Visible cleanliness; waste segregation and transportation; scientific processing of waste; access to sanitation; used water management;

mechanised desludging and worker welfare; Swachhata advocacy and citizen engagement; and citizen feedback and grievance redressal.

- **Funding:** Both mentor and mentee cities may **utilize the Capacity Building (CB) Funds** allocated to each State/UT as part of SBM-U 2.0. State/UT Governments are encouraged to top up this fund, if required.

Recent Participation

- Under this initiative, **70 mentor cities have been paired with 191** mentee cities to facilitate knowledge-sharing and improve sanitation outcomes.
- **Recognition in Swachh Survekshan 2025–26:** The top three city pairs were **Ahmedabad-Sanand, Indore-Depalpur and Tirupati-Kuppam.**

LEADERSHIP GROUP FOR INDUSTRY TRANSITION

- It was **jointly launched** by the governments of **Sweden and India** at the **UN Climate Action Summit in September 2019.**
- It is supported by **the World Economic Forum.**
- It was the first global high-level initiative aimed at reaching net-zero emissions from heavy industry.
- **Aim:** It gathers countries and companies that are committed to reaching **net-zero carbon** emissions from **industry by 2050.**
- LeadIT fosters **public and private partnerships** to enable the necessary policy environment, finance flows, and exchange of best practice for a just and inclusive industry transition.
- **LeadIT 2.0** was initiated for the **period 2024-26,** at COP-28 in Dubai, which focuses on
  - Inclusive & Just Industry Transition
  - Co-development & transfer of low-carbon technology
  - Financial support to emerging economies for Industry Transition
- **Secretariat:** It is hosted by the **Stockholm Environment Institute.**
- **Member countries:** 19 countries and 33 companies.

WHAT IS THE BLUE FLAG CERTIFICATION?



- It is a **globally recognized eco-label accorded by** the **Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) in Denmark.**
- It is one of the **world's most recognised voluntary awards for beaches, marinas, and sustainable tourism boats.**
- The Blue Flag Programme **started in France in 1985.** It has been implemented in Europe since 1987 and in **areas outside of Europe since 2001.**
- It promotes sustainable development in freshwater and marine areas.
- The award encourages local governance bodies, including Panchayats, Municipalities, district and state administrations, to commit to sustainable coastal development.
- The candidate beaches applying for the Blue Flag award are **evaluated based** on their compliance to the **33 international criteria** in **four major heads: environmental education and information, bathing water quality, environment management** and **conservation, and safety and services** on the beaches.
- Currently, there are over **5,000 Blue Flag sites** worldwide across **51 countries.**
- Of all Blue Flag-certified sites worldwide,**6 percent** sit in **just six countries**. **Spain leads the world** with 794 certified sites, **followed by Greece** (658), Türkiye (628), Italy (612), France (488), and Portugal (438).

Chandrabhaga Beach, located on the **Konark coast of Odisha**, was the **first beach in India** to receive the **Blue Flag Certification** in **2018**. It was also the **first beach in Asia** to receive this certification.

The **Centre for Environment Education (CEE)** is the **National Operating Agency** for the Blue Flag in India.

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INDIAN NATIONAL SCIENCE ACADEMY



- It was **established in January 1935** to promote **science in India and harness scientific knowledge** for the cause of humanity and national welfare.

- **Background**
  - It was earlier known as the **National Institute of Sciences of India (NISI)**

  It was inaugurated on 7 January 1935 at Calcutta and functioned with its headquarters at the Asiatic Society of Bengal till 1951 and **thereafter shifted to Delhi.**
- **Objectives:**
  - **Promotion of scientific knowledge** in India, including its practical application to problems of national welfare.
  - **Coordination among Scientific Academies**, Societies, Institutions, Government Scientific Departments, and Services.
  - To **publish such proceedings, journals, memoirs**, and other publications as may be found desirable.
  - To promote and maintain liaison between Science and Humanities.
  - To secure and manage funds and endowments for the promotion of science.
- The academy also serves as a forum for interactions among scientists within and outside the country and recognizes outstanding young scientists, engineers, and technologists through the award of medals/prizes and by providing modest financial support for pursuing research.
- **Senior scientists** are honoured through election to its Fellowship.
- The Academy has established exchange programmes with different overseas academies to facilitate visits of Indian scientists to research institutions abroad and of foreign scientists to India for lectures/scientific discussions.
- It was designated as the adhering organization in India to **the International Council for Science (ICSU)** on behalf of the Government of India in January 1968.

CLIMATE FINANCE: WHY IT REMAINS A PERENNIAL FLASHPOINT AT UN SUMMITS

As negotiators gathered in Antalya, Türkiye, for **COP31,** the familiar dispute over climate finance resurfaced once again.

While wealthy nations highlight rising sums mobilised for climate action, developing countries raise a harder question: how much money actually reaches them, on what terms, and how quickly?

For India and the Global South, this isn't mere accounting — it concerns protecting farms, cities, and lives from climate impacts while expanding clean energy access.

The Widening Gap Between Need and Availability

- The UN Environment Programme's 2026 **Adaptation Gap Report** estimates developing countries will need ~$305 billion/year by 2035 for climate adaptation.
- In 2024, developed countries provided only $28.2–$31.7 billion in public adaptation finance.
- Even if the Brazil summit's goal to triple this finance by 2035 is achieved, it would cover only 20-29% of the estimated need.

The Unfinished Bargain: Origins of the Dispute

- Under the UN Climate Convention, developed nations accepted an obligation to provide financial resources to developing countries — reaffirmed by the **2015 Paris Agreement** (nearly 200 nations committed to limiting warming to well below 2°C, ideally 1.5°C).
- This principle reflects **historical responsibility**: nations most responsible for emissions and with greater financial capacity should support those with fewer resources.
- **2009 Copenhagen Summit**: Wealthy nations pledged $100 billion/year by 2020 — a target missed until 2022, finally reaching $136.7 billion in 2024 (per OECD), exceeding the target for the third consecutive year.

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Why the Headline Numbers Mislead?

- The OECD's total includes public finance, multilateral development bank contributions, export credits, and private investment linked to public interventions — counting the full-face value of loans, not just grants.
- 2024 breakdown: Loans = $68.5 billion (67%); Grants = just $29.7 billion (29%).
- **Why This Matters**: A grant doesn't need repayment; even a low-interest loan remains debt. A loan for a revenue-generating power project isn't equivalent to a grant for flood protection or heat action plans.
- **Disbursement Gap:** Pledged money isn't necessarily disbursed — approval procedures can delay fund transfers for years.

The 2024 Azerbaijan Agreement: Progress, But Unresolved

- Developed countries agreed to lead in providing at least **$300 billion/year by 2035**.
- A broader ambition was set to scale finance (public + private) to $1.3 trillion/year.
- **Key Gap:** These are different commitments — the agreement didn't specify how much should be grants vs loans vs direct government support.

India's Position

- India has formally called for at least **$1 trillion/year** from developed countries, primarily as grants and low-cost loans.
- India insists support must be affordable, predictable, and accessible — not a rejection of private investment, but recognition that private capital cannot replace the financial responsibility wealthy nations accepted, especially for non-commercial mitigation/adaptation projects.
- Access remains a universal concern: complex applications, limited technical capacity, and lengthy project preparation processes prevent many developing nations — not just India, but also least developed countries and small island states — from using funds that are nominally available.

THE SIR EXERCISE IS ALSO A TECHNOLOGY FAILURE

- The Special Intensive Revision **(SIR)** of electoral rolls in 2025–26 has raised concerns regarding the autonomy of the Election Commission of India (ECI), documentation requirements and voters' eligibility.
- However, an equally significant issue is **the role of technology** in determining electoral inclusion and exclusion.
- For the first time, a revision of this scale has been conducted through a centralised digital platform.
- Despite India's achievements in digital infrastructure, the SIR has **exposed weaknesses in software design,** algorithmic decision-making and institutional accountability, raising questions about technology, democracy and constitutional rights.

Digital Transformation and Its Contradictions

- **India's Digital Public Infrastructure**
  - India has established itself as a global leader in digital infrastructure through Aadhaar, UPI, DigiLocker, IRCTC and income-tax e-filing.
  - Their success resulted from years of piloting, testing, continuous improvement and transparent technical specifications.
- **Failure to Apply Established Practices**
  - Adequate testing and validation against India's diverse demographic and linguistic conditions were missing.
  - Since electoral administration directly affects citizens' voting rights, technological errors can produce serious **democratic consequences.**

Overarching Power and Weak Digital Governance

- **Frequent Changes in Software**
  - De-duplication software, previously considered unreliable by the Commission, was reintroduced in certain States and Union Territories.

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- Another **algorithm checking voters' mapping** to relatives on historical rolls required Booth Level Officers (BLOs) to repeat completed work.
- These developments exposed the absence of an effective change-management framework, increasing administrative pressure and confusion.

- **Lack of Written Instructions and Transparency**
  - New software procedures were communicated through demonstration videos, video conferences and WhatsApp groups rather than formal written instructions.
  - This left Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) and BLOs implementing changing rules without **adequate documentation.**
  - Centralised control also restricted officials' discretion, weakening accountability and citizens' ability to challenge adverse decisions.

Lessons for Digital Governance and Democratic Institutions

- The SIR demonstrates the importance of several safeguards in digital governance:
  - **Pre-deployment testing** against real demographic and linguistic data.
  - **Pilot projects** across diverse geographical and social settings.
  - **Algorithmic transparency** through published rules and decision-making criteria.
  - **Effective change management** before introducing new software features.
  - Written Standard Operating Procedures for officials.
  - **Legal compliance** between digital workflows and statutory provisions.
  - **Human oversight** to correct automated errors.
  - **Accessible grievance redressal** to protect citizens' rights.

Conclusion

- The SIR demonstrates that **digital transformation** requires more than technological sophistication or administrative centralisation.
- When algorithms determine electoral eligibility and access to hearings, technological errors can become instruments of democratic exclusion.
- The ECI must ensure that **technology remains subordinate to constitutional principles** and legal safeguards.