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Current Affairs - 11 September 2025

ADI SANSKRITI PLATFORM



- It is a pioneering **digital learning platform for tribal artforms**, preserving heritage, enabling livelihoods and connecting India's tribal communities with the world.
- **Objective of Adi Sanskriti Platform**
 - It is **envisioned as the world's first Digital University** to preserve and promote the culture and traditional knowledge of tribal communities.
 - It functions as an online marketplace for the world to access **products made by tribal artisans**.

The platform integrates three major components:

- **Adi Vishwavidyalaya (Digital Tribal Art Academy):** Currently offering 45 immersive courses on tribal dance, painting, crafts, music, and folklore.
 - **Adi Sampada (Socio-Cultural Repository):** A collection of over 5,000 curated documents across five themes, covering paintings, dance, clothing & textiles, artefacts and livelihood.
 - **Adi Haat (Online marketplace):** It is currently linked with TRIFED, this will evolve into a dedicated online marketplace for tribal artisans, enabling sustainable livelihoods and direct consumer access.
- It is being built in close partnership with **State Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs)**.

States involved in its first phase: TRIs from Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh have contributed to the documentation, content curation, and digital mapping of tribal artforms.



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GEOTAGGING BUILDINGS IN CENSUS: PROCESS AND BENEFITS

CENSUS BASICS

THE POPULATION CENSUS has been conducted since 1872; the 2027 Census will be the 16th such exercise, and the eighth since Independence.

A RANGE OF DATA, including data on housing conditions, amenities and assets, demography, religion, language, literacy and education, economic activity, migration, fertility, etc., are collected along with the headcount of individuals at the village, town, and ward levels.

INDIA'S POPULATION was 1.21 billion as of March 1, 2011. India is now estimated to have surpassed China to become the most populous nation in the world.

A BUDGET of Rs 14,618.95 crore has been sought by the Office of the Registrar General of India (RGI), which is under the Ministry of Home Affairs, for the conduct of Census 2027, according to sources.

MORE THAN 34 LAKH enumerators and field functionaries are expected to be involved in conducting the Census. The enumerators will use their own smartphones for collecting data. In the Socio Economic and Caste Census 2011 (SECC), dedicated handheld tablets provided by Bharat Electronics Limited were used.

India's 2027 Census will introduce several firsts, including digital enumeration, self-enumeration, and caste counting after 1931.

A major innovation will be **geotagging of all buildings** across the country. Each structure will be assigned precise GPS coordinates using mobile devices, ensuring accurate mapping of households and institutions. This will help remove duplication, improve coverage, and create a reliable spatial database to aid urban planning, infrastructure development, and better targeting of welfare schemes.

About Geotagging

- Geotagging is the process of marking a **building's exact latitude-longitude coordinates on a Geographic Information System (GIS) map.**
- A **GIS** is a computer system that records, checks, and displays data linked to specific positions on Earth's surface.
- Latitudes (horizontal lines) measure north-south distance from the equator, while longitudes (vertical lines) measure east-west distance from the prime meridian in Greenwich, UK.
- Together, these create a grid that allows any location to be uniquely identified.
- Through this system, geotagging assigns each building a precise locational identity that can be accurately pinpointed.

Number of Buildings in India (Census 2011)

- In Census 2011, a '**Census House**' was defined as any building or part of a building with a separate main entrance, used as a distinct unit.
- Such houses could be occupied or vacant, and used for residential, non-residential, or mixed purposes.



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How Geotagging Will Be Conducted in Census 2027

- Geotagging will take place during the **Houselisting Operations (HLO)**, the first phase of the Census scheduled for April–September 2026.
- The second phase, **Population Enumeration** (will begin in February 2027) will record demographic, socioeconomic, and cultural details.
 - In Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, it will begin earlier in September 2026.
- **Role of Enumerators**
 - Enumerators will visit all buildings within their assigned Houselisting Blocks (HLBs) — clearly demarcated areas in villages or town wards with notional maps.
 - Using Digital Layout Mapping (DLM) and smartphone apps, they will switch on location services and geotag each building.
 - The exercise will record the number of Census Houses and Households in each building.
 - Buildings will be classified as residential, non-residential, partly residential, or landmarks.
- **Definition of Household**
 - As per Census 2011, a **household is a group of people normally living together and sharing meals from a common kitchen, unless prevented by work conditions.**

Benefits of Geotagging in the Census

- Geotagging during the Census will provide **accurate estimates of Census houses and households**, ensuring better workload distribution for enumerators.
 - Unlike earlier Censuses that relied on hand-drawn sketches, digital geotagging offers precision and efficiency.
 - The government already uses geotagging on a smaller scale, such as for tracking houses built under **Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana (PMAY)** in rural and urban areas, demonstrating its practical usefulness.
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HIMACHAL PRADESH BECOMES FULLY LITERATE STATE

Himachal Pradesh has been declared 'fully literate', joining Goa, Ladakh, Mizoram, and Tripura. However, 'fully literate' does not imply 100% literacy. It means the state has achieved a literacy rate above 95%, with Himachal recording 99.3%.

- The Ministry of Education defines **literacy as the ability to read, write, and compute with comprehension, including skills like digital and financial literacy.**
- A State/UT is considered 'fully literate' when it achieves 95% literacy.
- These definitions were issued in August 2023 for the ULLAS programme, launched in 2022 to promote adult education for those above 15.

ULLAS Programme

- **ULLAS (Understanding Lifelong Learning for All in Society)** is a national adult education initiative launched in 2022 by the Ministry of Education.
- It targets individuals aged 15 and above who missed formal schooling, aiming to equip them with reading, writing, numeracy, digital skills, and financial literacy.
- The programme aligns with the National Education Policy 2020 and the UN Sustainable Development Goal of achieving 100% literacy by 2030.

How Literacy is Attained under ULLAS

- Under the ULLAS programme, adults are taught basic reading, writing, and arithmetic (up to Class 3 level), along with practical skills like reading time, using calendars, handling money, writing cheques, and making safe digital transactions.
- Training is delivered via a mobile app or offline by students and community volunteers.
- Learners then take the **Functional Literacy Numeracy Assessment Test (FLNAT)**, a 150-mark test in their chosen language.
- Successful candidates are certified by the **National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS)** as having achieved foundational literacy and numeracy.



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Process of Becoming a 'Fully Literate' State

- To achieve the 'fully literate' tag, states first identify adults lacking literacy through door-to-door surveys or data records.
 - These individuals are trained under the ULLAS programme and tested through the **Functional Literacy Numeracy Assessment Test (FLNAT)**.
 - States where the number of illiterate adults is relatively small — due to already high literacy levels or smaller populations — achieve the milestone more quickly.
 - For example, according to the 2011 Census, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Mizoram, and Tripura already had literacy rates well above the national average of 74%.
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A JOINT AND NEW JOURNEY ALONG THE SCO PATHWAY

- The **SCO Tianjin Summit** produced significant results, including the **creation of four security centres** and the **decision to establish an SCO Development Bank**.
- Leaders endorsed a new decade-long development strategy and pledged support for multilateral trading and global peace.
- President Xi announced major cooperation platforms in energy, green industry, and the digital economy, alongside centres for innovation, higher education, and vocational training.
- Highlighting his **Global Governance Initiative**, Xi called for equality, rule of law, and people-centered multilateralism.
- Since joining in 2017, India has played a vital role in SCO, with China acknowledging Prime Minister Modi's support and seeking deeper collaboration in security, finance, and sustainable development.

75 Years of China-India Diplomatic Ties

- As India and China mark the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping reaffirmed their commitment to partnership, emphasizing that the two nations are partners, not rivals.
- Both leaders agreed that cooperation outweighs differences.



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- Xi urged India and China to be good-neighbourly partners, symbolised as the “**dragon and elephant dancing together.**”
- Modi echoed this, calling for a long-term perspective in developing ties.

Pathways for Strengthening Relations

- **Consolidating Strategic Trust** - Both countries must learn from the past, build mutual respect and trust, and gradually resume dialogue mechanisms between governments to ensure peaceful coexistence and common development.
- **Expanding Exchanges and Cooperation** - Development should remain the central focus.
 - China expressed readiness to work with India in areas like technology, education, culture, tourism, and poverty alleviation, while also enhancing people-to-people exchanges across political, academic, media, and youth platforms.
- **Enhancing Good-Neighbourliness** - The two sides should uphold the **Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence**, respect each other’s core concerns, and not let the unresolved boundary issue define bilateral relations. Instead, cooperation should ensure stability and mutual growth.
- The diamond jubilee of ties marks a renewed effort to build trust, deepen cooperation, and strengthen friendship between India and China, laying the foundation for more stable and constructive relations.

China and India’s Shared Global Role

- As leading members of the Global South, India and China share interests in development, peace, and global governance.
- With both nations set to hold successive BRICS presidencies, China expressed readiness to work with India to strengthen cooperation, implement the Global Governance Initiative, oppose hegemony, uphold fairness and justice, and build a shared future for humanity.

India and China, through the SCO platform and their bilateral ties, aim to strengthen cooperation, uphold fairness, and jointly build a stable and inclusive global order.



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THE WAY FORWARD ON KATCHATHEEVU, PALK STRAIT DISPUTES

- Public debate in India often **portrays Katchatheevu, a small barren islet in the Palk Strait**, as the crux of the fisheries conflict.
- In reality, the **1974 India–Sri Lanka Maritime Boundary Treaty**, which placed the islet within Sri Lankan territory, settled the issue.
- Under international law, **boundary treaties are sacrosanct (pacta sunt servanda)** and cannot be unilaterally repudiated.
- Contrary to popular belief, the island was not gifted by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.
- **Historical records demonstrated Sri Lanka’s stronger claim**, with evidence of administrative control **dating back to the Portuguese and Dutch periods, and earlier to the Tamil kings of Jaffna.**
- International precedents, such as the **ICJ’s 1953 ruling in the Minquiers and Ecrehos case (France vs United Kingdom)**, reinforce that sovereignty rests on effective jurisdiction rather than rhetoric.
- India’s concession was therefore consistent with **legal precedent and international norms**. It is important to distinguish between **sovereignty over Katchatheevu and fishing rights**.
- While the former is legally settled, the latter remains a matter of negotiation.
- The **Palk Strait has historically been recognised as historic waters** where sovereign rights are stronger than in normal territorial seas.
- **Joint management under UNCLOS provisions**, particularly Article 123 on semi-enclosed seas, **is both necessary and legally mandated.**

Conclusion

- The **fisheries crisis and the Katchatheevu issue call for pragmatic solutions** rooted in law, sustainability, and compassion.
 - In doing so, **India reaffirms its commitment to a Neighbourhood First Policy** that balances regional leadership with shared prosperity.
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INDIA'S SHIPBUILDING GROWTH: POISED TO ENTER GLOBAL TOP 5

- India's maritime strength is integral to its economic and strategic ambitions.
- Despite currently holding less than 1% share of the global shipbuilding market, the government has charted a clear path to position the country among the top five shipbuilding nations by 2047.
- With initiatives under **Maritime India Vision 2030** and large-scale infrastructure investments, India seeks to transform shipbuilding and repair into central pillars of its Blue Economy, generating employment, fostering sustainability, and boosting global competitiveness.
- At the INMEX SMM India 2025 event in Mumbai, Minister of State for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, highlighted India's trajectory toward becoming a top-five shipbuilding nation by 2047.
- He emphasised shipbuilding and repair as growth engines of the Blue Economy.
- The Director General of Shipping underscored that with India's current maritime contribution at 4% of GDP, government schemes such as subsidies, financial assistance, and green shipbuilding efforts are vital to scaling up.
- It should be noted that nearly 45% of the Maritime Development Fund is dedicated to shipbuilding and repair, showing unprecedented state commitment.
- Meanwhile, private sector engagement, supported by liberalized FDI norms and public-private partnerships, has accelerated investments in maritime infrastructure.

Government Measures to Promote Shipbuilding

- The Government of India has adopted a multi-pronged approach to support the sector:
 - **Financial Support Schemes**
 - **Shipbuilding Finance Assistance Scheme** to provide capital support.
 - **Shipbreaking Credit Note Scheme** to promote the recycling of ships.
 - **Upfront subsidies of up to 30%** for non-conventional (green) ships.
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WHAT IS PERMAFROST?



- Permafrost is any ground that remains completely frozen—32°F (0°C) or colder—for at least two years straight.
 - Where are they found?
 - These permanently frozen grounds are most common in regions with **high mountains and in Earth's higher latitudes**—near the North and South Poles.
 - Permafrost can be found **on land and below the ocean floor**.
 - Permafrost **thickness** can range from **one meter (about three feet) to more than 1,000 meters** (about 3,281 feet), **covering entire regions**, such as the Arctic tundra, or a **single, isolated spot**, such as a **mountaintop** of alpine permafrost.
 - Permafrost **covers large regions of the Earth**. Almost a **quarter** of the land area in the **Northern Hemisphere** has permafrost underneath.
 - While two years is the minimum for permafrost consideration, **some regions** have had **frozen ground for hundreds of thousands of years**.
 - Scientists discovered the **oldest known permafrost in Siberia**, which has been frozen for the past **650,000 years**.
 - What Is Permafrost Made Of?
 - Permafrost is made of a combination of **soil, rocks, and sand** that are **held together by ice**.
 - The **soil and ice** in permafrost **stay frozen all year long**.
 - Although the ground is frozen, **permafrost regions** are **not always covered in snow**.
 - Near the surface, permafrost soils also contain **large quantities of organic carbon**—a material **leftover from dead plants** that couldn't decompose, or rot away, due to the cold.
 - **Lower permafrost layers** contain soils made mostly of **minerals**.
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