

UPSC Daily Current Affairs| Prelim Bits 09-01-2025

Challenges in Deciphering Harappan Script

Why in News?

Recently, the scholars have struggled to solve many subproblems to decipher the Harappan writing system.

- **Challenges** - Deciding if set of symbols actually represent a writing system.
- Devising appropriate procedures to isolate or segment the stream of symbols into a sequence of single signs.
- Reducing the set of signs to the minimal set by forming (its alphabet, syllabary, or inventory of signs) by identifying all allographs.

***Allograph** is the different representations of the same character in different typefaces. It is the same sign written in a variant form, for example a printed 'a' and a cursive 'a'*

- Assigning to each symbol their specified value, whether phonetic or otherwise.
- Trying to match these values to a specific language.
- **No multilingual inscriptions** - IVC had robust trade links with the contemporaneous Mesopotamian Civilisation whose cuneiform script was deciphered but there isn't any multilingual inscriptions found.

*The most famous multilingual inscription is the **Rosetta Stone**, which contains a decree passed during the reign of Ptolemy V in 196 BCE in 3 scripts: Greek, demotic (a later ancient Egyptian script), and hieroglyphics.*

- **Unknown Script and/or Language** - The Indus script is under the category of 'an unknown script writing an unknown language'.

3 basic categories of undeciphered scripts/languages

- An unknown script writing a known language.
- A known script writing an unknown language.
- An unknown script writing an unknown language.

- **Insufficient material evidences** - Although some 3,500 seals have been identified till date, given that each seal has on average only 5 characters inscribed, it isn't sufficient to decipher the script.
- This general paucity of information has made it difficult to decipher its script.

*The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister has announced a **\$1 million prize** for deciphering the script of the Indus Valley Civilisation.*

Reference

[The Indian Express| Challenges in Deciphering Indus Script](#)

Related News

[100 years of Discovery of Harappan Civilisation](#)

[Connection between Harappan and the Vedic Age](#)

Savitribai Phule

Why in News?

Every year on January 3, people celebrate Savitribai Phule Jayanti.

- **Background** - A Dalit woman from the Mali community from Naigaon village in Maharashtra.
- **Education** - She is the ***1st Indian woman teacher***.
- She and her husband Jyotirao Phule open a school for girls in Pune, in 1848 and this became the ***country's 1st girls' school***.
- During her tenure, she established 17 schools across the nation.
- **Social reforms** - She advocated inter-caste marriages, widow remarriage, and eradication of child marriage, sati and dowry systems, among other social issues.
- **Balhatya Pratibandhak Griha** - A childcare centre for the protection of pregnant widows and rape victims.
- **Satyashodhak Samaj** (*'Truth-seekers' society'*) - It was setup in 1873 by both of them.
- It is a platform open to all, irrespective of their caste, religion or class hierarchies, with the sole aim of bringing social equity.
- **Literary works** - She published her 1st collection of poems, called *Kavya Phule* (*'Poetry's Blossoms'*), at the age of 23 in 1854.
- She published *Bavan Kashi Subodh Ratnakar* ('The Ocean of Pure Gems'), in 1892.
- *Matushri Savitribai Phlenchi Bhashane va Gaani* (Savitribai Phule's speeches and songs'), and her letters to her husband have also been published.
- Her Marathi poetry promoted ideals such as equality, liberty, humanism, and the significance of education.
- **Recognition** - In honour of her great work towards women's education, January 3 is observed as ***Women's Education Day***.

References

1. [Business Standard| Women Education Day](#)
2. [The Indian Express| Savitribai Phule's Contribution](#)

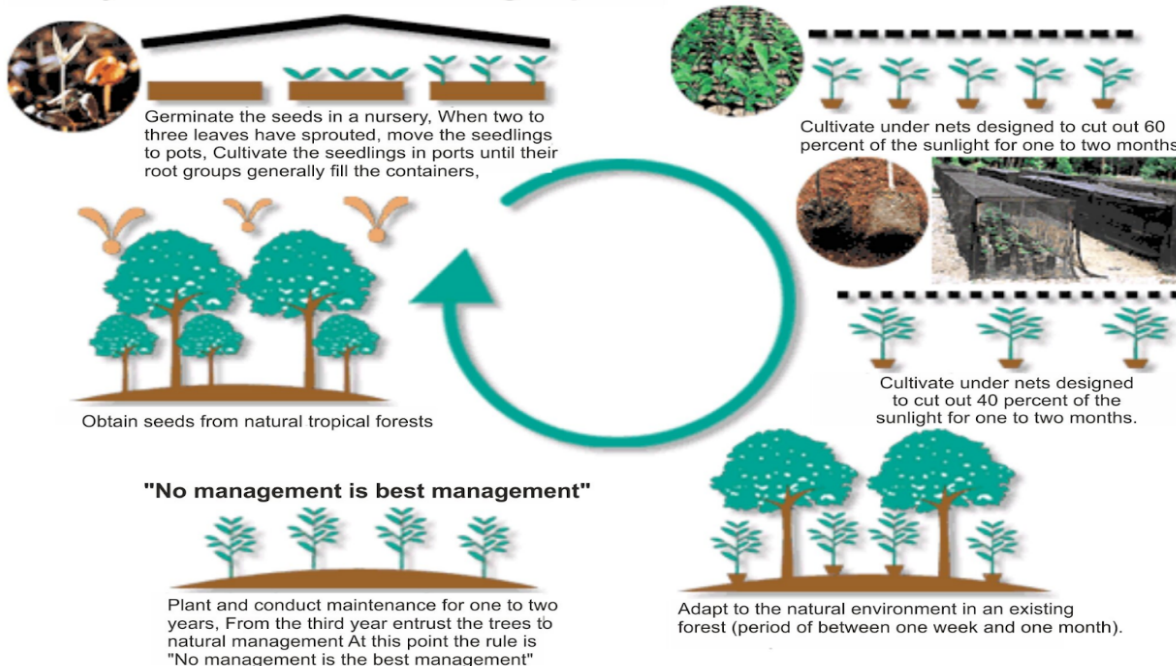
Miyawaki technique

Why in News?

In preparation for Mahakumbh 2025, dense forests have been developed at various locations across Prayagraj, to ensure pure air and a healthy atmosphere for the millions of devotees expected to visit the city.

- **Miyawaki Foresting** - An ecological engineering technique of afforestation, involves planting a diverse range of native tree species in a small area, which then grow into a **dense, multilayered forest**.
- **Developed by** - Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki in 1970s.
- **Aim** - To create a self-sustaining forest, with a high level of biodiversity and to restore degraded land and combat climate change.
- **Process** - It involves planting trees and shrubs close to one another to accelerate their growth.
- Plants **grow 10 times faster** with this technique, making it a practical solution for urban areas.
- A completely maintenance-free, wild and native forest after the 1st 3 years.
- **4 steps of Miyawaki foresting technique**
 - Initial survey of the locality
 - Collection of the seeds
 - Preparation of planting sites
 - Planting.

The Miyawaki method for restoring tropical forests



Miyawaki Technique is also known as **Pot Plantation Method**.

- **Benefits** - Up to 30 times more dense than conventional plantations.
- Up to 30 times better noise and dust reduction.

- Up to 30 times *better Carbon-dioxide absorption* as compared to a monoculture plantation.
- It is highly effective in the establishment of *urban forests* as well as converting unproductive wastelands into ecological and socially beneficial productive lands.

The Prayagraj Municipal Corporation has utilized the Japanese Miyawaki technique over the past 2 years to establish multiple oxygen banks, which have now transformed into lush green forests. It also contributed to improving air quality, playing a crucial role in environmental conservation.

Reference

[PIB| Green Mahakumbh using Miyawaki Technique](#)

Schemes and programmes of Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare

PM Kisan Samman Nidhi

- **Launched** - On 24th February 2019.
- PM-KISAN is a central sector scheme to supplement the financial needs of land-holding farmers.
- **Financial benefit** - Of Rs. 6,000/- per year in 3 equal instalments every 4 months is transferred into the bank accounts of farmers' families.
- **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mode** - PM-KISAN is one of the largest DBT schemes in the World.

Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF)

- **Launched** - In 2020 with an allocation of Rs 1 lakh crore.
- It is a *Central Sector Scheme*.
- **Aim** - To provide medium to long-term debt financing for post-harvest management and community farming infrastructure projects.
- **Interest subvention** - Of 3% per annum on loans up to Rs 2 crore for up to 7 years.
- **Credit guarantee coverage** - For loans up to Rs 2 crore through the CGTMSE scheme.

Farmer Producer Organization Scheme

- **Launched** - On 29th February 2020.
- A *Central Sector Scheme* for Formation & Promotion of 10,000 FPOs.
- The Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare oversees its *implementation through 14 agencies*, including NABARD, SFAC, NAFED and others.

Namo Drone Didi Scheme

- **Launched** - On 30 November 2023.
- Namu Drone Didi is a *central sector scheme* aiming to *empower women-led Self-Help Groups (SHGs)* by equipping them with drone technology to provide agricultural services.
- It provides for *providing rental services* to farmers for agriculture purpose (application of liquid fertilizers and pesticides for the present).
- In 2023-24, 500 drones were procured (from own resources) and distributed by Lead Fertilizer Companies (LFCs).
- The scheme also offer sustainable business opportunities, with SHGs earning at least Rs 1 lakh annually.

Per Drop More Crop (PDMC)

- **Launched** - In 2015-16.
- PDMC scheme aims to *enhance water use efficiency* at the farm level through *micro-irrigation technologies* like Drip and Sprinkler systems.
- Initially implemented under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY), it is *now part of Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY)* from 2022-23.
- **Financial assistance** - Of 55% to small and marginal farmers, and 45% to others, for micro-irrigation installation.
- From 2015-16 to 2024-25 (December 2024), approximately 95 lakh hectares have been covered.

Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)

- **Launched** - In 2016.
- PMFBY provides comprehensive *coverage against crop losses* due to natural calamities and unforeseen weather events.
- Over Rs 1.70 lakh crore in claims have been paid under the scheme.
- **DigiClaim** - Introduced in Kharif 2023, ensures transparency in claims by directly transferring payments to farmers via the National Crop Insurance Portal using the PFMS platform.
- The *Krishi Rakshak Portal (KRPH)* and a *dedicated toll-free helpline (14447)* have been set up for efficient grievance redressal, allowing farmers to track complaints and ensuring resolution within a specified timeframe.

e-NAM Platform

- eNAM is a *pan-India electronic trading portal* which networks the existing APMC mandis to create a unified national market for agricultural commodities.
- **Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC)** - Is the lead agency for implementing eNAM under the aegis of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Government of India.

Digital Agriculture Mission

- **Announced** - In the *Union Budget 2023-24*, the government announced the *development of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) for agriculture*, further augmented in the 2024-25 Budget.
- **Comprehensive data on farmers** - Including demographic details, land holdings and crops sown, integrating state and central government data for innovative, farmer-centric services.
- **3 key Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)** - AgriStack, Krishi Decision Support System (DSS) and Soil Profile Mapping.
- **AgriStack** - Will create digital IDs for 11 crore farmers and launch a nationwide Digital Crop Survey.
- **DSS** - Will integrate geospatial data on crops, soil, weather, and water, while soil profile maps will cover 142 million hectares.

Soil Health & Fertility Scheme of Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY)

- **Launched** - On 19th February 2015.
- The Soil Health Card (SHC) and Soil Health Management (SHM) programs assist state governments in issuing SHCs to farmers.

National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF)

- **Launched** - On November 25, 2024.
- Promote *natural farming* in mission mode across the country as a standalone *Centrally Sponsored Scheme*.



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