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Date: 07-11-2026

Table of Content

Parents Income Not Sole Factor: SC on Creamy Layer in OBC

Revolutionising Agricultural Extension for Viksit Bharat 2047

Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS)

Relaxation of Overseas Listing Norms for Indian Companies

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Martyrs' Memorial of the First War of Independence of 1857
- The International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP)
- India Science and Technology (S&T) Scoreboard
- PM Surya Ghar Excellence Award
- KOCHON PRIZE 2026
- 'Mahabharata', 'Arthashastra', 'Rajatarangini' Added To UNESCO Memory Register

PARENTS INCOME NOT SOLE FACTOR: SC ON CREAMY LAYER IN OBC

Context

- The Supreme Court reaffirmed its March 11 judgment which held that the **creamy layer status of Other Backward Classes (OBCs)** cannot be decided solely on the basis of parental income.

Background

- **The 1993 Office Memorandum (OM)** excluded **salary and agricultural income while determining the creamy layer status of OBCs.**
  - **The 2004 clarification stated** that salary income of employees working in Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and the private sector would be considered for determining creamy layer status.
  - The clarification was not effectively implemented until 2014 and was applied rigorously from CSE 2015 (2016 batch).
  - Consequently, around **100 OBC candidates who cleared the CSE had their OBC claims rejected by DoPT** on the grounds of belonging to the creamy layer.
- **Supreme Court's March 11, 2026 Judgment:** The Supreme Court upheld the views of the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) and several High Courts, which had ruled in favour of the affected OBC candidates.
  - It directed the Centre to provide relief to eligible candidates and create supernumerary posts, wherever required, to accommodate them.
  - The Court allowed six months for implementation of its directions.

The Centre sought clarification on the implementation of the March 11 judgment, arguing that:

- The judgment should not retrospectively reopen completed selections, appointments, service allocations and seniority positions.
- It should be given a reasonable period of two years to establish equivalence between posts in government services, PSUs and the private sector.
- Retrospective implementation could disrupt existing service arrangements.

Supreme Court's Latest Clarification

- The Supreme Court **rejected the Centre's plea for delaying implementation,** stating that there was no convincing justification for doing so.
  - It extended the implementation deadline by eight weeks.
- It clarified that the relief granted under the March 11 judgment **would apply only to the candidates who were parties to the original proceedings.**
- The judgment would **not automatically reopen** previously concluded selections, appointments, service allocations or seniority positions.
- The creamy layer interpretation laid down by the Supreme Court **will govern OBC service allocations in CSE 2025,** as the allocation process is still pending.
- The Court clarified that the legal principle declared in its judgment constitutes a **binding precedent under Article 141 of the Constitution.**

Significance of the Judgment

- **Protection of reservation benefits:** It provides relief to affected OBC candidates whose claims were rejected due to the interpretation of the creamy layer criterion.
- **Judicial clarity:** It clarifies the distinction between the legal principle laid down by the Court and the individual relief granted to petitioners.
- **Administrative stability:** It prevents the reopening of completed selections, appointments and seniority arrangements, thereby protecting the interests of other employees.
- **Constitutional accountability:** It reinforces the binding nature of Supreme Court judgments under Article 141.
  - **Article 141:** It states that the law declared by the Supreme Court is binding on all courts in India.

Reservation in India

- As per existing instructions, reservation is provided to **Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs)** at the rate of **15%, 7.5% and 27%, respectively,** in case of direct recruitment on all India basis by open competition.
  - In direct recruitment on an all India basis, other than by open competition, the percentage fixed is **16.66% for SCs, 7.5% for STs and 25.84% for OBCs.**

- The **Constitution (103rd Amendment) Act 2019** enables the State (i.e., both the Central and State Governments) to provide **reservation to the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) of the society.**

Creamy Layer Principle

- It is a concept used to ensure that reservations in educational institutions and government jobs are extended to those **who are economically and socially disadvantaged within a certain group.**
  - It aims to **prevent the more affluent or advantaged members** of a reserved category from availing themselves of these benefits.
- **Origin:** The concept was first articulated by the **Supreme Court of India** in the **Indra Sawhney case (1992),** also known as the **Mandal Commission case.**
  - The Court's ruling emphasized that within the OBC (Other Backward Classes) category, those who are **relatively more privileged should not benefit from reservations.**
- **Impact:** By applying the creamy layer principle, the government aims to make its affirmative action policies more effective and equitable, ensuring that those who are most in need receive the support intended for them.

What is the 50% Rule?

- The Supreme Court has historically maintained that reservations, whether in jobs or education, **should not exceed 50%** of the total seats/ posts.
- **Mandal Commission Case:** In **1992**, SC in the **Indra Sawhney case** had ruled that reservation should **not exceed 50%**, barring certain **extraordinary situations.**
  - Such as to provide reservations to communities which hail from far flung areas of the country and have been kept out of the mainstream of the society. This is not a geographical test but a social one.
- **EWS Judgement:** The Supreme Court upheld the **103rd Constitutional Amendment** which provides for **10% additional reservations** to the EWS.
  - This means, for the time being, that the 50% limit applies only to non-EWS reservations, and States are permitted to reserve a total of **60%** of the seats/posts including EWS reservations.

Constitutional Provisions Related to Reservation

- **Article 16:** It provides for **equality of opportunity** for all citizens but as an exception the State can provide for reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class that is not adequately represented in the state services.
- **Article 16 (4A):** Provides that the State can make any provision for reservation in matters of promotion in favour of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes if they are not adequately represented in the services under the State.
- **Article 335:** It recognises that special measures need to be adopted for considering the claims of SCs and STs to services and posts, in order to bring them at par.
- **103 Amendment of the Constitution of India:** Introduced **10% reservation** for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) of society.

Source: IE

REVOLUTIONISING AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION FOR VIKSIT BHARAT 2047

Context

- To realise Viksit Bharat 2047, agriculture needs to develop at about 4 per cent yearly in real terms, which demands a transformation from the existing agricultural extension system to a farmer-centric approach.

What is Agricultural Extension?

- Agricultural extension is a process of **providing farmers with knowledge, technical advice, skills and support services** to improve agricultural productivity, profitability and sustainability.
- It links agricultural research institutions with farmers to promote the uptake of improved farming techniques and technologies.
- In India, it has been a historically **top-down technology dissemination approach** where the specialists design technologies and the extension workers convey innovations to the farmers.

Need to Reform Agricultural Extension System

- **Climate change**, soil degradation, water scarcity and disruptions in agricultural input supply chains need locally adaptable solutions.

- **Promising agricultural innovations fail to achieve wide adoption** because of inadequate infrastructure, financial constraints and limited access to complementary services.
- **New technologies involve learning costs**, financial investment and uncertainty, discouraging risk-averse farmers.
- **Changing Market Requirements:** Farmers need support in market access, quality certification, traceability and export compliance, beyond conventional agronomic advice.

Limitations of the Traditional Agricultural Extension Model

- **Follows a top-down approach** in which knowledge flows from research institutions to extension workers and then to farmers.
- **Promotes standardised Packages** of Practices that do not suit differences in soil, water availability, climate and farming conditions.
- **Assumes that farmers will automatically** adopt technologies if they promise higher yields or lower costs, overlooking practical barriers.

From Agricultural Extension System to Agricultural Opportunity System

- The proposed approach offers to **transform extension workers** from **information providers into opportunity brokers,** connecting farmers with the services and institutions required to adopt technologies successfully.
- It focuses on understanding farmers' aspirations, local constraints and market opportunities rather than promoting standardised technology packages.

Four Pillars of Agricultural Opportunity System

- **Adopt a Systems Perspective:** Replace conventional technology packages with farmer-centred, regionally adaptable solutions based on agro-climatic conditions, soil and water availability, household capacity and market demand.
- **Provide Real-Time, AI-Enabled Advisories:** Replace static, seasonal packages of practices with dynamic and real-time decision-support systems.
  - Use automatic meteorological station data, satellite imaging, and localised pest models to generate timely, location-specific suggestions.
- **Scaling Proven Innovations:** Address the pilot trap by preventing premature scaling of unproven technologies and isolation of successful pilots.
- **Building a Coordinated, Pluralistic Extension Ecosystem:** Replace fragmented policymaking with a coherent food-systems approach that considers trade-offs across nutrition, water, energy and farmers' incomes.
  - Encourage collaboration among **public extension agencies, agri-tech start-ups, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs),** input suppliers and civil society organisations.

Existing Agricultural Extension Mechanisms in India

- **Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs):** ICAR's frontline institutions that conduct on-farm testing, technology demonstrations and farmer training. India has **731 KVKs** covering 638 rural districts.
- **Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA):** Promotes decentralised and district-level agricultural extension by coordinating different departments and institutions.
- **Kisan Sarathi:** A digital platform that facilitates the delivery of agricultural advisories and information to farmers through ICT-based services.
- **Kisan e-Mitra:** An AI-based virtual assistant that provides farmers with information about government schemes and services.

Way Ahead

- **Redefine the role of extension workers as facilitators** who connect farmers with end-to-end agricultural solutions.
- **Use AI and digital technologies** to strengthen, rather than replace, human-led extension services.
- **Establish robust evaluation mechanisms** to assess the economic, social and ecological viability of innovations before large-scale implementation.
- **Empower Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs)**, FPOs and local extension networks to facilitate participatory technology adoption.

Source: DTE

ELECTRONICS COMPONENT MANUFACTURING SCHEME (ECMS)

Context

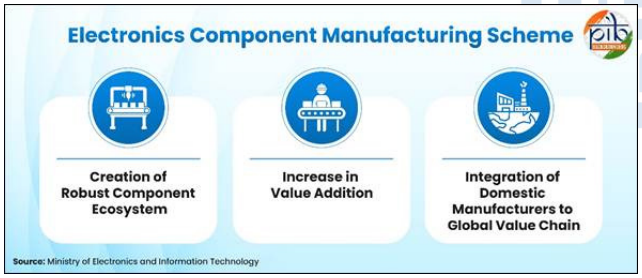
- The government approved 12 new projects under the **Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS).**

About

- Tamil Nadu accounts for four projects, Gujarat and Maharashtra two each, while Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka account for one each.
- With these approvals, overall, 118 applications covering 34 products across 16 States have been approved under ECMS.

Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS)

- It was launched in **2025** and has a **tenure of six years,** with an optional one-year gestation period.
- **Aim:** To build a strong and self-sustaining ecosystem for electronics component manufacturing in the country.

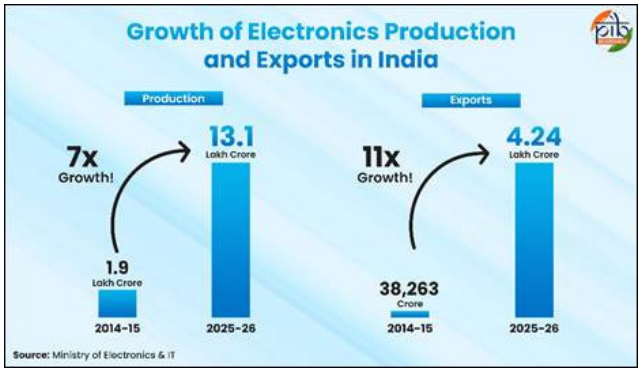


- The ECMS seeks to **integrate India's electronic industry with global value chains** by encouraging production of essential components, sub-assemblies, and raw materials within the country.

Outcome Indicator	Expected Outcome by end of FY 2026-27
Investment	11,156 crore
Froduction	29,024 crore
Employment generation	19,240 jobs

Electronics Sector in India

- Electronics production increased from ₹1.9 lakh crore in 2014–15 to ₹13.11 lakh crore in 2025–26.
- Electronics exports grew from ₹38,000+ crore to ₹4.24 lakh crore during the same period.



- India is the **second largest mobile phone producer** in the world.
  - India has achieved near self-reliance in mobile production- from importing 78% of its requirements in 2014–15 to manufacturing almost all devices domestically today.
- **Top 5 export destinations for Indian electronic goods in FY 2024–25** are the United States, United Arab Emirates, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Italy.
- Electronics manufacturing created **25 lakh jobs in the last 10 years.**
- **Future Projections:** India has a vision of building a $500 billion domestic electronics manufacturing ecosystem by 2030–31.

Government Initiatives

- **Make in India: Launched in 2014,** aimed at boosting India's manufacturing sector and economic growth.
  - Transform India into a global hub for design and manufacturing.
- **Phased Manufacturing Programme (PMP):** Launched in 2017, aimed to promote domestic value addition in mobile phones and their parts.
  - Increased investment and set up significant manufacturing capacities in India.
- **Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI) for Large Scale Electronics Manufacturing:** Introduced performance-linked incentives of 4%–6% on incremental sales for eligible target segments. The focus is on scaling domestic electronics and mobile manufacturing.
- **PLI for IT Hardware:** Offers production-linked incentives to boost domestic manufacturing and attract investment. PLI 2.0 builds on this to strengthen the manufacturing ecosystem, cut import reliance, and position India as a trusted global supply-chain hub.

- **Semicon India Programme:** The 76,000-crore Semicon 1.0 programme created a broader semiconductor and display manufacturing ecosystem. It complements electronics manufacturing with support for fabs, packaging, testing, design and related capabilities.
- **Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMC) Scheme:** This offers financial assistance of up to 50% of the project cost with a ceiling of 50 crore for every 100 acres of land for greenfield projects.
- **Electronics Development Fund (EDF):** Serves as a Fund of Funds investing in venture funds (Daughter Funds) to supply risk capital and promote market-driven innovation, product design, and startup growth in ESDM and IT.
- **The Scheme for Promotion of Manufacturing of Electronic Components and Semiconductors (SPECS):** The scheme will provide financial incentive of 25% on capital expenditure for the identified list of electronic goods that comprise downstream value chain of electronic products.

Conclusion

- The Electronics Components Manufacturing Scheme has emerged as a cornerstone of India's electronics manufacturing strategy.
- The Union Budget 2026–27 enhanced its outlay to 40,000 crore, reflecting a strong policy commitment to expanding domestic production capacity.
- ECMS has mobilised substantial investment, increased production, and generated significant employment.

Source: TH

RELAXATION OF OVERSEAS LISTING NORMS FOR INDIAN COMPANIES

Context

- The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) notified the Companies (Listing of Equity Instruments in Permissible Jurisdictions) Amendment Rules, 2026, to relax overseas listing norms.

About Overseas Listing

- Overseas listing means the listing of securities issued by an Indian company on permitted international stock exchanges to raise capital from foreign investors.
- In January 2024, the government allowed Indian companies to directly list their securities on international exchanges operating in the **GIFT International Financial Services Centre (GIFT-IFSC).**

Provisions of the 2026 Amendment

- The amendment replaces the term 'equity shares' with 'equity instruments' in the overseas listing framework.
  - Companies can now list equity shares, convertible debentures and preference shares on permitted international exchanges.
- **Companies with a negative net worth** can pursue overseas listings, provided at least **75 per cent** of the net offer is allotted to **qualified institutional buyers (QIBs).**
- **Unlisted public companies** operating within International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs) can undertake overseas listings.
  - They must comply with the applicable regulations of the **International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA).**
- **For companies which have repaid overdue loans to financial institutions, the waiting period has been lowered from two years to over six months.**
- The government has amended Form LEAP-1, which companies use to file their prospectus with the Registrar of Companies (RoC).
  - The amended form compels corporations to indicate if any inspection, investigation or inquiry has been imposed against them under the Corporations Act, 2013.

Significance of the Amendment

- **Greater Access to Global Capital:** It leads Indian companies to tap international investors and diversify their sources of financing.
- **Financial Flexibility:** A wider range of eligible securities allows companies to select funding instruments according to their financial requirements.
- **Support for Business Revival:** Companies with negative net worth will access overseas capital, potentially supporting restructuring and business revival.
- **Strengthening IFSCs:** Expands the role of GIFT City as an international financial services hub and enhances its attractiveness to global investors.

- **Improved Global Integration:** Aligns India's overseas listing framework with international financial practices and the existing IFSCA regulatory framework.
- **Institutional Investor Participation:** The QIB allocation requirement will strengthen due diligence and improve investor confidence in overseas offerings.

What are the concerns?

- **Information Asymmetry:** Foreign investors will face difficulties in assessing the financial health and governance practices of Indian companies.
- **Market Volatility:** Exposure to international financial markets may increase companies' vulnerability to global economic fluctuations.

Key Economic Terms

- **Capital Market:** It is a financial market where long term capital (often more than one year) are raised and invested with the use of various instruments like shares, bonds, debentures etc.
- **Equity Shares:** Shares that imply ownership in a corporation, entitling shareholders to vote and a direct claim on profits and assets.
- **Convertible Debentures:** Debt instruments convertible into equity shares of a corporation under certain conditions.
- **Preference Shares:** Shares that give preferential rights to equity shareholders to receive dividends and to have their capital repaid on liquidation.
- **Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs):** Institutional investors, such as mutual funds, insurance companies and banks, who are able to invest in securities due to their financial ability and knowledge.

Source: FE

NEWS IN BRIEF

MARTYRS' MEMORIAL OF THE FIRST WAR OF INDEPENDENCE OF 1857

Syllabus: GS1/ Modern History

Context

- The Union Home Minister inaugurated the Martyrs' Memorial of the First War of Independence of 1857, featuring 22 galleries, in **Haryana's Ambala.**

Historical Significance of the Revolt of 1857

- **Beginning:** The uprising began at Meerut on **10 May 1857** and spread to several regions of northern and central India.
- **Spread of the Revolt:** The uprising spread to Kanpur, Lucknow, Jhansi, Bareilly, Allahabad, Bihar and other regions.
- **Suppression:** The British gradually recaptured major centres and suppressed the revolt by 1858.
- **V.D. Savarkar** described it as the **First War of Indian Independence in his 1909** book.

Major Leaders of the Revolt of 1857

Leader	Centre/Region of Revolt
Bahadur Shah Zafar	Delhi
Nana Saheb	Kanpur
Rani Lakshmibai	Jhansi
Tatya Tope	Kanpur, Gwalior and Central India
Begum Hazrat Mahal	Lucknow
Kunwar Singh	Jagdishpur (Bihar)
Bakht Khan	Delhi
Khan Bahadur Khan	Bareilly
Azimullah Khan	Kanpur

Source: DD News

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF ASIAN POLITICAL PARTIES (ICAPP)

Context

- **The International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP)** adopted the **Seoul Declaration.**

About

- The declaration was unanimously adopted at the **13th General Assembly of ICAPP, held in Seoul.**
- It had representatives of **83 political parties from across Asia.**
- **Seoul Declaration:**
  - The declaration sought to place the principles of the UN Charter at the centre of efforts to rebuild trust among nations.
  - Non-interference in the internal affairs of states, the peaceful settlement of international disputes, and the equal status of all nations.

- It rejected the use of force as instruments of diplomacy, and called on all countries to respect international law consistently.
- The 14th ICAPP General Assembly will be held in **2028 in Vietnam.**

The International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP)

- It is a **regional forum** that brings together **political parties from across Asia** to promote dialogue, cooperation and mutual understanding.
- It was established in **2000** in Manila, Philippines.
- It is a forum for political parties rather than an intergovernmental organisation.
- **General Assembly:** The principal decision-making and deliberative forum, generally held once every two years.
- **Standing Committee:** Oversees organisational activities and takes decisions regarding meetings and programmes.
- **Permanent Secretariat:** Established in Seoul, South Korea, in 2009.

Source: TH

INDIA SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (S&T) SCOREBOARD

Context

- NITI Aayog launched the **India Science and Technology (S&T) Scoreboard** to assess the **scientific and technological performance of States and Union Territories** across the country.

About

- **Aim:** To provide a comprehensive picture of India's science and technology ecosystem through key indicators, including research and development expenditure, scientific publications, citations, patent applications and technological innovation.
- It will cover **11 priority research areas of national importance,** including clean energy, artificial intelligence, semiconductors, critical minerals and agriculture.
- The platform **covers 36 States and Union Territories** and provides data and insights to support evidence-based policymaking.
- The initiative is expected to promote **collaboration between state universities and centrally funded research institutions**, encourage healthy competition and strengthen India's research and innovation ecosystem.
- **Significance:** It is a platform to help states understand their strengths and gaps and align their developmental priorities with science, technology and innovation.

Source: AIR

PM SURYA GHAR EXCELLENCE AWARD

In News

- The Vice President presented the PM Surya Ghar Excellence Award to the Ministry of Railways for securing the top position among Central ministries and departments in equipping buildings with rooftop solar systems.

PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana

- It was launched in 2024 with an outlay of ₹75,021 crore.
- It has become the world's largest domestic rooftop solar programme.
- It offers a subsidy of up to 40 percent to households, making renewable energy more affordable and accessible.
- Its easy financing options, including collateral-free loans up to ₹2 lakh at a 6.75% subsidized interest rate through 12 Public Sector Banks, have further accelerated adoption.

Key Features

- **Free Electricity for Households:** The scheme provides households with free electricity through the installation of subsidized rooftop solar panels, significantly reducing their energy costs.
- **Reduced Electricity Costs for the Government**: By promoting the widespread use of solar power, the scheme is expected to save the government an estimated ₹75,000 crore annually in electricity costs.
- **Increased Use of Renewable Energy:** The scheme encourages the adoption of renewable energy sources, contributing to a more sustainable and environmentally friendly energy mix in India.

- **Reduced Carbon Emissions**: The transition to solar energy under this scheme will help lower carbon emissions, supporting India's commitment to reducing its carbon footprint.

Importance

- The scheme contributes to India's progress towards its 500 GW non-fossil capacity target by 2030, with total solar capacity crossing 150 GW as of March 2026.
- It will enhance energy access and reduce subsidy burden on DISCOMs.

Source: DD

KOCHON PRIZE 2026

Context

- Indian NGO REACH has won the Kochon Prize 2026 for its contribution to combating tuberculosis (TB), becoming the first Indian civil society organisation to receive this global recognition.

About

- **Resource Group for Education and Advocacy for Community Health (REACH)** is an India-based non-profit organisation established in Chennai in 1999.
- The recognition is significant because India accounted for approximately 25% of the **global TB burden** in 2024, making it the country with the highest number of TB cases.

Kochon Prize

- Established in **2006** in honour of **Chong-Kun Lee**, founder of the **Kochon Foundation**, the prize recognises individuals and organisations for their significant contributions to combating TB.
- Presented annually by the **Stop TB Partnership**, it carries a prize money of **US$65,000**.
- The **2026 Kochon Prize is shared** by REACH, the Centre for Health Solutions, Kenya, and the Marshall Islands TB Control Program.
- **Previous winners from India** include L.S. Chauhan (2006), head of the Revised National TB Control Programme, the Indian Council of Medical Research (2017) and Molbio Diagnostics (2024).

What is Tuberculosis?

- Tuberculosis (TB) is an **infectious disease** that most often affects the lungs and is caused by the **bacteria Mycobacterium tuberculosis.**
- It spreads through the air when infected people **cough, sneeze or spit.**
- **Symptoms:** prolonged cough (sometimes with blood), chest pain, weakness, fatigue, weight loss, fever, night sweats.
  - While TB usually affects the lungs, it also affects the kidneys, brain, spine and skin.
- **Treatment:** It is **preventable and curable** with antibiotics.
  - **TB Vaccine: The Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine** remains the only licensed vaccine against TB; it provides moderate protection against severe forms of TB (TB meningitis) **in infants and young children.**

Source: TH

'MAHABHARATA', 'ARTHASHASTRA', 'RAJATARANGINI' ADDED TO UNESCO MEMORY REGISTER

Context

- Manuscripts of the Mahabharata, Arthashastra and Rajatarangini have been inscribed in UNESCO's Memory of the World Asia-Pacific Regional Register, taking India's total number of inscriptions in the regional register to six.

About UNESCO's Memory of the World Asia-Pacific Regional Register

- It is a regional register under UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme, launched in 1992 to preserve the world's documentary heritage and ensure its accessibility to present and future generations.
- It is administered by the Memory of the World Committee for Asia and the Pacific (MOWCAP).

About the Three Inscribed Works

- **Rajatarangini:**
  - Composed by the **12th-century Kashmiri historian Kalhana**, it is a Sanskrit historical chronicle tracing Kashmir's history through successive dynasties, rulers and political developments.

- Its chronological narration and examination of historical sources make it an important account of Kashmir's political and cultural past.

- **Mahabharata:**
  - One of the world's longest epic narratives, it explores themes of duty, justice, morality, power, kinship, and the responsibilities of individuals and rulers.
  - Its philosophical dimensions, particularly the **Bhagavad Gita**, have influenced generations of thinkers and shaped discussions on ethics and human conduct.
- **Arthashastra:**
  - Traditionally attributed to **Kautilya (Chanakya)**, it is a foundational text on governance, administration, economics, diplomacy and military strategy.
  - It discusses statecraft, taxation, law enforcement, intelligence networks and public administration, offering insights into ancient Indian political organisation.

Other Indian Entries in the Regional Register

- Illustrated manuscripts of the **Ramcharitamanas**, featuring intricate miniature paintings, preserving Tulsidas' work; a rare 15th-century manuscript containing animal fables and moral stories from the **Panchatantra**; and the manuscript of the **Sahrdayaloka-Locana**, a text of Indian poetics, were inscribed in the regional register in 2024.

Source: TH

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