Kurukshetra

Novemeber Edition

Welcome to PadhAI

KURUKSHETRA MONTHLY COVERAGE

You are here because you understand a fundamental truth of UPSC preparation:
it's not about reading everything — it's about reading what truly matters, in the right way, at the right time.

Magazines like Kurukshetra offer deep insights into rural development, governance, social schemes, and grassroots policy implementation. Yet for many aspirants, the challenge lies in separating exam-relevant content from general narratives.

PadhAI's Kurukshetra coverage is designed to do exactly that - *filter, structure, and align policy discussions with UPSC requirements.*

Why This Kurukshetra Coverage Matters

At PadhAI, we don't reproduce articles. We *extract core themes,* map them with the syllabus, and connect them with *Prelims and Mains PYQs.*

Every topic included here:

- carries relevance for *GS Papers or Essay,*
- strengthens understanding of *developmental and governance issues, and*
- builds *analytical depth* rather than surface-level knowledge.

Nothing is added for volume.

Everything is added for value.

Part of the PadhAI Preparation Ecosystem

This Kurukshetra coverage forms part of a larger, integrated learning system that includes:

- early and concise *monthly magazines,*
- *daily PIB summaries* with exam-focused clarity,
- *monthly compliance tracking,*
- complete *Prelims & Mains PYQs with structured answers,*
- relevant *news article summaries,* and
- *personal tutor chat support* for continuous guidance.

The aim is simple:
one trusted ecosystem instead of multiple scattered sources.

Our Guiding Philosophy

At PadhAI, everything is built around one belief:

- *Learn only what matters.*
- *Learn it the right way.*
- *Learn it at the right time.*

We don't believe in shortcuts.
We believe in clarity, consistency, and cumulative preparation.

A Final Note

UPSC preparation is demanding and often overwhelming.

PadhAI exists to ensure you prepare with *direction, relevance, and confidence* — never blindly, never alone.

If this Kurukshetra coverage helps you save time, connect policy with practice, and strengthen your answers, then it has served its purpose.

Welcome to PadhAI.
A community built to prepare — not to overwhelm.

Topic 1: Rural India as a Hub of Ecotourism

Summary: Ecotourism is a vital component of India's rural development, serving to integrate **economic diversification, environmental stewardship, and social inclusion**. By focusing on low-impact, authentic, and community-centric travel, ecotourism supports biodiversity conservation while generating green economic growth.

Background: Ecotourism is defined by the International Ecotourism Society as responsible travel that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people. It aligns with India's diverse cultural and natural heritage, and has gained policy prominence as a tool for **conservation financing** and rural livelihood generation.

Key Points:

- **Economic Stature:** India ranks **10th globally** in travel and tourism GDP contribution, with the sector projected to generate **53 million jobs by 2029**.
- **National Strategy for Ecotourism (2022):** This policy aligns the Ministry of Tourism with the MoEFCC to promote **eco-certification**, community participation, and carrying-capacity assessments in fragile ecosystems.
- **Government Schemes:** Initiatives like **Swadesh Darshan 2.0** focus on sustainable circuits (e.g., rainforest trekking in Kerala), while the **PRASHAD scheme** supports eco-spiritual and heritage infrastructure.
- **LiFE Mission:** Promotes responsible tourism behaviour and citizen engagement aligned with sustainability principles.

- **Social Impact:** Ecotourism can increase rural household income by **35–60%** and has empowered thousands of women, particularly in states like Kerala.

Prelims Facts (One Liners):

1. India's ecotourism sector was valued at **USD 19.8 billion in 2024**.
2. International tourist arrivals in India are expected to reach **30.5 million by 2028**.
3. The tourism sector contributed **US$ 199.6 billion** to the economy in 2022.
4. **82% of Indian travellers** currently prioritise sustainable options like eco-lodges and homestays.
5. The top three sources of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in 2023 were **Bangladesh, USA, and the UK**.

MCQ Practice: Q. According to the National Strategy for Ecotourism (2022), which of the following is a primary focus area for tourism in fragile ecosystems? A) Mass infrastructure development B) Eco-certification and carrying-capacity assessment C) Privatisation of forest resources D) Rapid urbanisation of rural hubs

Answer: B (The strategy emphasizes eco-certification, responsible tourism, and carrying-capacity assessment.)

Topic 2: Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP)

Summary: The **Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP)** is a holistic initiative designed to transform border villages through tourism-driven economic growth and infrastructure development. Its

primary goal is to create self-reliant communities, showcase indigenous culture, and **curb outmigration** from strategically sensitive areas.

Background: Launched to strengthen national security and border vibrancy, VVP integrates community participation with infrastructure to align with the vision of **Viksit Bharat @2047** and **Aatmanirbhar Bharat**.

Key Points:

- **Phase I Outlay:** Allocated **Rs 4,800 crore** (2022–23 to 2025–26) for 663 villages across the northern borders, including Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, and Ladakh.
- **Phase II Expansion:** Approved in April 2025 with **Rs 6,839 crore**, extending coverage to border villages in states like Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Punjab, and Rajasthan.
- **Infrastructure Focus:** The programme prioritises all-weather road connectivity, **4G telecom**, electrification (on-grid and off-grid), and digital tools like **PM Gati Shakti**.
- **Tourism Incentives:** The **Best Tourism Village Competition (BTVC)** motivates villages to adopt sustainable practices; the 2024 edition recognised 36 winners across categories like Heritage and Vibrant Villages.
- **Sustainable Livelihoods:** Encourages agro-based value chains, community-managed homestays, and the branding of local cuisines and indigenous products.

Prelims Facts (One Liners):

1. Phase I of VVP targeted **455 villages** specifically in Arunachal Pradesh.
2. VVP Phase II is scheduled to continue until **FY 2028–29**.
3. The programme strengthened road connectivity with **113 roads and 8 low-suspension bridges** in its first phase.
4. Digital education is supported through **SMART classrooms** in border villages.
5. Villages under VVP-I were specially showcased during the **Republic Day 2025** celebrations.

MCQ Practice: Q. VVP Phase II, approved in 2025, has expanded its geographical scope to include border villages in which of the following states/UTs? A) Kerala and Tamil Nadu B) Gujarat, Punjab, and Rajasthan C) Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh D) Odisha and Andhra Pradesh

Answer: B (Phase II expands to border villages beyond the northern border, including states like Gujarat, Punjab, and Rajasthan.)

Click here to access
Monthly Magazine

Click here to access
Yojana Magazine

Click here to access
Current Affairs

Click here to access
PIB Summaries

Topic 3: Agro-Tourism in India

Summary: Agro-tourism integrates **agriculture with tourism**, providing farmers—particularly small and marginal ones—with supplementary income while promoting eco-friendly farming and cultural preservation. As the world's **4th largest economy in 2025**, India leverages its 15 agro-climatic zones to drive this sustainable model.

Background: Agro-tourism shifts the focus from mere production-centric farming to **income-centric strategies**. It aligns with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by addressing poverty alleviation, food security, and decent wages.

Key Points:

- **Economic Potential:** The Indian agro-tourism market is projected to reach **USD 4,911.9 million by 2033**, growing at an annual rate of 17.9%.
- **State Leadership:** Maharashtra's **ATDC** covers over 200 villages and 1,000 centres, while Kerala's **ATCOS** promotes farm stays and spice cultivation.
- **Agricultural Strength:** India is the **largest producer** of milk, pulses, and spices, and the second-largest in fruits, vegetables, wheat, and rice.
- **Sustainability:** Supports organic agriculture and eco-friendly crop protection, as seen in the **UNIDO-India FARM project**.
- **Foodgrain Milestone:** Production rose from 265.05 million tonnes in 2014-15 to an estimated **347.44 million tonnes in 2024–25**.

Click here to access
Monthly Magazine

Click here to access
Yojana Magazine

Click here to access
Current Affairs

Click here to access
PIB Summaries

Prelims Facts (One Liners):

1. Agriculture employs **46.1% of India's workforce**.
2. **Sikkim** is recognised as India's first fully organic state.
3. Karnataka's coffee plantation stays in **Coorg** are a major agro-tourism draw.
4. Small and marginal farmers constitute approximately **80%** of India's farming community.
5. The agriculture sector contributes **17.8% to India's GDP** as of FY 2023-24.

MCQ Practice: Q. In the context of agro-tourism, what is the primary objective of the UNIDO-India FARM project mentioned in the sources? A) Promoting industrial-scale chemical farming B) Enhancing eco-friendly crop protection and sustainable farm management C) Replacing traditional crops with imported varieties D) Moving all farmers to urban manufacturing hubs

Answer: B (The project focuses on eco-friendly protection and sustainable management.)

Topic 4: Rural Festivals in India

Summary: Rural festivals reflect India's **cultural heritage** and act as significant engines for **economic growth**. These events transform traditional celebrations into sustainable economic opportunities by promoting local entrepreneurship, tourism, and seasonal employment for artisans.

Background: Around **65% of India's population** lives in rural areas, where festivals provide a platform for local crafts, music, and dance. Government schemes like **Swadesh Darshan and TRIFED** support these festivals to boost village cash flow.

Key Points:

- **Economic Multiplier:** Festivals increase demand for local food, accommodation, and transportation, acting as a branding tool for states.
- **Key Examples:** The **Hornbill Festival** (Nagaland), **Surajkund Fair** (Haryana), **Pushkar Fair** (Rajasthan), and **Thrissur Pooram** (Kerala) are major tourism identities.
- **Community Participation:** Events like those in **Mawlynnong (Meghalaya)** and **Sualkuchi (Assam)** demonstrate successful community-led tourism.
- **Challenges:** Overcrowding can lead to **environmental pressure** and waste management issues, requiring better infrastructure and carrying-capacity planning.
- **Digital Adoption:** Solutions like e-ticketing and digital payments are recommended to manage crowds and modernise these traditional events.

Prelims Facts (One Liners):

1. Festivals provide **seasonal employment** for small traders, farmers, and artisans.
2. The **Pushkar Fair** in Rajasthan is a key example of North Indian festival-based tourism.
3. **Chhath Puja** in Bihar and **Tusu Parva** in Jharkhand are significant cultural identities in East India.
4. The **PRASHAD scheme** is used to support heritage-linked tourism at festival sites.

MCQ Practice: Q. Which of the following festivals is specifically mentioned as a tourism identity for the North East region of India? A) Surajkund Fair B) Pongal C) Hornbill Festival D) Thrissur Pooram

Answer: C (The Hornbill Festival of Nagaland is a major identity for the North East.)

Topic 5: Vocal for Local Initiative

Summary: The **'Vocal for Local'** initiative aims to achieve **self-reliance (Aatmanirbhar Bharat)** by encouraging the consumption of locally made products. It strengthens the domestic economy by empowering MSMEs, artisans, and start-ups while reducing dependency on imports.

Background: Launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in **May 2020**, the initiative focuses on preserving cultural heritage and enhancing the entrepreneurial capacities of rural and urban areas.

Key Points:

- **Procurement Preference:** The Public Procurement Order mandates preference for **'Class-I Local Suppliers'** (products with >50% local content) in government contracts.
- **Tender Restrictions:** Global tenders are generally restricted for government projects valued up to **₹200 crore**, protecting local suppliers.
- **Support Schemes:** Includes **PMEGP** for micro-enterprise subsidies, **CGTMSE** for collateral-free credit, and **SFURTI** for organizing artisans into clusters.
- **Digital Integration:** Partnerships with the **Government e-Marketplace (GeM)** and **ONDC** help onboard local entrepreneurs onto e-commerce platforms.
- **Aakanksha Window:** A specific window on GeM dedicated to showcasing local products from **Aspirational Blocks**.

Prelims Facts (One Liners):

1. Class-I Local Suppliers must provide products with **more than 50% local content**.
2. The **PLI Scheme** provides financial incentives to boost domestic manufacturing in sectors like electronics and pharmaceuticals.
3. The **Ministry of Textiles** uses celebrity endorsements and exhibitions to promote indigenous products.
4. GeM allows **DPIIT-recognised start-ups** to sell directly to government entities with relaxed norms.
5. The initiative aims to transform India into a **global manufacturing hub**.

MCQ Practice: Q. Under the 'Vocal for Local' framework, what is the minimum local content requirement for a supplier to be classified as a 'Class-I Local Supplier'? A) 25% B) 33% C) 50% D) 75%

Answer: C (A Class-I Local Supplier must have more than 50% local content.)

Click here to access
Monthly Magazine

Click here to access
Yojana Magazine

Click here to access
Current Affairs

Click here to access
PIB Summaries