

# EXPECTED



## Prelims Sure Shot Topics For IAS Prelims 2026

BASED ON **LAST 45 YEARS PYQs** & **LAST 1.5 YEARS CURRENT AFFAIRS**

### **ANCIENT, MEDIEVAL & CULTURE**

Ancient, Medieval & Culture Prelims Sure Shot topics have been meticulously curated through a comprehensive analysis of UPSC Prelims Previous Year Questions spanning the last 45 years, integrated with the most relevant developments from the past 1.5 years of current affairs. It aims to provide aspirants with a list of expected topics which have a very high chance to be reflected in IAS Prelims 2026.

Developed under the academic guidance of **S.A. Majid Sir**, this resource reflects the rigorous research and collective expertise of the content team at RICE IAS.

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## EXPECTED PRELIMS TOPICS - 2026

### BASED ON LAST 45 YEARS PYQs & LAST 1.5 YEARS CURRENT AFFAIRS

#### ANCIENT, MEDIEVAL & CULTURE

CHAPTER	EXPECTED THEME	SURE SHOT TOPICS FOR PRELIMS - 2026	JUSTIFICATION
1. PRE AND PROTO HISTORY +STONE AGE	Neolithic site	Inamgaon	PYQs: 2024, CAPF 2023
		Burzahom	PYQs: 2021 In news: Ancient DNA: Kashmir's genetic links to Central Asia and Europe revealed through Burzahom burials, tracing 7000 years of ancestry.
		Tekkalkota (or Tekkalakote)	Recently, Archaeologists discover 3,000-5,000-year-old skeletons in Karnataka's Tekkalakota; first in over 6 decades.
		Molapalayam	Recent, Discovery of animal remains (including rhinoceros bones)
	Chalcolithic site	Ganeshwar–Jodhpura Culture (Rajasthan)	Recent excavations revealed Neo-Chalcolithic culture
		Nara Huda (Odisha)	CDS 2024
		Jorwe culture (Daimabad)	Based on the Union Budget 2026-27 and related recent announcements, the Government of India is focusing on developing 15 archaeological sites—including major ancient sites like Rakhigarhi (Haryana), Dholavira (Gujarat), Hastinapur (Uttar Pradesh), and Adichanallur (Tamil Nadu)
	Megalithic Site	Adichanallur	Recently, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has submitted a detailed report on the findings during the first two phases of the digging at the Sangam-era (Linked to Megalithic culture) site and their significance. PYQs: 2024, CAPF 2023
		Keeladi and Mangadu	PYQs: 2021 In news: Ancient DNA: Kashmir's genetic links to Central Asia and Europe revealed through Burzahom burials, tracing 7000 years of ancestry.

		Hire Bankal	Recently in news due to poor infrastructure & access issues
		Mudumal	Added to UNESCO Tentative World Heritage List (2025)
<b>2. IVC</b>	<b>Harappan sites location and major key findings</b>	Lothal	Fresh excavations (2025–26) revealed industrial tools, furnaces, bead-making units
		Dholavira, Rakhigarhi	Based on the Union Budget 2026-27 and related recent announcements, the Government of India is focusing on developing 15 archaeological sites—including major ancient sites like Rakhigarhi (Haryana), Dholavira (Gujarat), Hastinapur (Uttar Pradesh), and Adichanallur (Tamil Nadu). PYQ (CSE 2021, CDS2022, CDS 2017, CAPF 2023)
		Kalibangan	Previously asked in CDS, CAPF exam, So, this site is on the Radar. (CAPF 2023, CDS 2017)
		Shortugai	Important for its advanced irrigation techniques. And irrigation is the prominent theme for UPSC
		Sinauli	Recently, three full-sized, horse-drawn (debated) chariots were found in burial pits.
		Balakot	NDA 2021
	<b>Arts and Crafts</b>	Harappan Script	The Tamil Nadu government has announced a \$1 million prize for deciphering the 4,000-year-old Indus Valley (Harappan) script. PYQ (CDS 2017, CAPF 2020)
		Stone work, Seal and Bead making sites	Most frequently asked in CDS, CAPF and NDA PYQ: (CDS2025, CDS 2020, CDS 2018, NDA 2025, NDA 2021, CAPF 2023, CAPF 2020)
	<b>Economy</b>	Kotada Bhadli	In News: Organised Trade Infrastructure (Caravanserai system)
	<b>Religion and funerary practices</b>	The Pashupati Seal,	Recently, a fake AI-generated image of the Pashupati Seal went viral on social media.
	<b>Town Planning</b>	urban character	A 2025 report (“From Mohenjo-daro to Mumbai”) highlighted Harappan planning as a model for modern cities.

3. VEDIC AND LATER VEDIC	<b>Religion</b>	Vedic Gods and Goddesses + Nature	In news: Major events like Ugadi Mahotsavam (2026) included Vedic chanting, yajnas, and rituals. Scholars like Ganeshwar Shastri Dravid (Padma Shri 2025) recognized for Vedic contributions. PYQ (CDS-2025, 2018, 2015, 2014 CAPF-2023, 2021)
	<b>Literature</b>	Upanishad	In recent times UPSC has started to put key focus on Upanishad (Specifically) not only in CSE (2024) but also in CDS (2024)
	<b>Comparison between cultures</b>	Vedic vs Later Vedic vs IVC	Past year trend analysis shows that such conceptual question from this type of comparison is prominent. (PYQ-2017)
4. KINGDOMS, KINGS AND AN EARLY REPUBLIC	<b>Mahajanapadas and their location</b>	Asmaka	New inscriptions found by the Archaeological Survey of India confirm that present-day Telangana was part of the Asmaka Mahajanapada.
		Vajji, Gandhara, Magadha, Kosala	These 4 sites are frequently asked in the CDS (2022), CSE (2025), CAPF (2020) AND NDA (2024)
5. MAURYA EMPIRE	<b>State control Mechanism (Polity + Economy)</b>	Administrative Hierarchy & Key Officials	Increasing focus on good governance models & ethical administration (Dhamma) inspired by Ashoka. Related keywords generally asked in the exam based on PYQ trend: (CSE 2025) CDS (2024), CAPF (2024, 2017)
		Taxation system and kautilay's vision	Conceptual questions and specific key terminologies related question generally asked as per PYQ Trend (CSE 2022), CDS (2022), CAPF (2024, 2023), NDA (2016)
	<b>Mauryan art and architecture</b>	Ashokan Pillars and inscriptions (Court Art)	Replica of Ashokan Pillar unveiled in Sri Lanka Ashokan pillar sites like: Rampurva Lauriya Nandangarh (Bihar) Included in UNESCO Tentative List.
		Rock-Cut Architecture and Stupas	In Union Budget 2026–27, a new Buddhist tourism circuit was announced.

			However, Sanchi (a major Mauryan site built by Ashoka) was excluded, triggering criticism. PYQ: CSE (2023, 2020), CAPF (2023), CDS (2022, 2016) NDA (2024, 2024)
	<b>Ashoka's Major Rock Edicts- inscriptions and their locations</b>	Jaugada, Dhauli, Chandraketugarh	Already asked in previous year two times. (CSE 2024, 2021)
		Kanganahalli and Maski	Frequently asked in Other UPSC CSE exam. PYQ: (CSE 2019) (CDS 2023)
		Girnar and Kalsi	Ashokan Edict Sites are being discussed for UNESCO World Heritage nomination (serial nomination)
		Major Rock Edict 13	Most Important Edict PYQ: (CSE 2022, 2019) (CDS-2025, 2023, 2016) (NDA-2015)
	<b>Ashoka's Dhamma</b>	Link between Buddhism and Ashoka's Dhamma	Conceptual question can be asked from this section.
	<b>Arthashastra</b>	Arthashastra on Social Structure.	Most frequently asked in the exams like CSE, CAPF, CDS, in terms of checking conceptual clarity. PYQ: (CSE-2022) (CDS-2022) (CAPF-2024, 2023)
<b>6. POLITY AND SOCIETY IN POST-MAURYAN PERIOD</b>	<b>Indo-Greek; Kushan</b>	Cultural impact on India	Based on PYQ trend analysis the most prominent theme is Indo Greek and Kushan and their contribution to Indian society in multiple ways. PYQ: (2004, 12, 14, 16, 20, 22, 23) (CAPF-2023, 2021) (NDA-2023)
	<b>Satavahana</b>	Trade	In News: Excavations at Phanigiri (Telangana) revealed: Roman coins + Satavahana coins together
	<b>Shaka</b>	Polity (Rudradaman –I)	PYQ: 2018
<b>7. PHILOSOPHICAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>Jainism</b>	Jain philosophy cum literature & scholars <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parishishtaparvan (12th c.) by Hemachandra</li> <li>The Bhagavati Sutra by Vyakhyaprajnapti</li> <li>Neminatha's Lilavati</li> <li>Trishashtilakshana Mahapurana (9th c.): Digambar texts, Written by Jinasena &amp; Gunabhadra</li> <li>Kundakunda: Crucial Digambara Acharya known for Samayasāra(philosophy)</li> </ul>	PYQ: (2020, 2022, 2023)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Somadeva Suri: 10th-century author of Nitivakyamrta.</li> <li>Siddhasena Divakara: 5th-century Śvetāmbara monk, known for works on logic like Sanmatitarka</li> </ul>	
		All Jain sects (Digambara– Shvetambara and their subsects)	PYQ (2017, 2018)
		Sallekhana practice	In news: A terminally ill 3-year-old girl with a brain Tumor died on March 21, 2025, after taking the Santhara / Sallekhana vow
	<b>Buddhism</b>	<p>Buddhist philosophy cum literature and scholars</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nagarjuna: Founder of Madhyamaka philosophy</li> <li>Asanga &amp; Vasubandhu: Associated with Yogachara school</li> <li>Ashvaghosha: Author of <i>Buddhacharita</i></li> <li>Dharmakirti: Refined Buddhist logic and epistemology</li> <li>Avadanashataka (2nd century) and the Divyavadana (4th century) which have stories connected with the Buddha</li> <li>The Nettigandha or Nettipakarana (The Book of Guidance) gives a connected account of the teaching of the Buddha.</li> </ul>	PYQ: (2020, 2022, 2023, 2024)
		All Buddhist sects	PYQ: (2016, 2020) CDS (2020)
<b>8. GUPTA EMPIRE</b>	<b>Gupta Polity</b>	Key Important personalities- samudragupta (Allahabad Pillar inscription), Chandragupta II (Mehrauli pillar), Skandagupta (repulse a Huna invasion)	PYQ: 2025
	<b>Gupta state affairs- Administrative</b>	Administration Unit level from village to province: [sources- Damodar copper plates] Deshas/ bhuktis (provinces)> Vishayas (districts)> gramika at village level.	PYQ: (2015, 2000) CDS (2016)

	<b>Revenue system and coinage</b>	<p>Gupta inscriptions mention fiscal terms such as Kara, Bali, Udranga, Uparikara, and hiranya.</p> <p>Gold coins (Dinaras)+ silver + copper</p> <p>Samudragupta- Depicts the King playing the Veena</p> <p>Kumaragupta I- Depicts the deity Kartikeya riding a peacock.</p>	<p>PYQ: 2012, 1997,1999</p> <p>The study of coinage systems across different dynasties constitutes a crucial dimension of economic and political history, and holds significant relevance for UPSC examinations.</p> <p>Coins not only served as mediums of exchange but also functioned as valuable historical sources, reflecting the administrative authority, economic conditions, trade networks, religious affiliations, and artistic developments of their respective periods</p>
	<b>Literature and science works</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kamandaka's Nitisara</li> <li>• Chinese travellers' account- Faxian, Xuanzang, and Yijing.</li> </ul> <p>Kalidasa:</p> <p>Dramas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Abhijnanashakuntala</li> <li>▪ Malavikagnimitra</li> <li>▪ Vikramorvasiya</li> </ul> <p>Poems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Raghuvamsha</li> <li>▪ Kumarasambhava</li> <li>▪ Meghaduta</li> </ul> <p>Bhasa:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Madhyamavyayoga</li> <li>▪ DutaGhatotkacha</li> <li>▪ Dutavakya</li> <li>▪ Balacharita</li> <li>▪ Charudatta</li> </ul> <p>Other Scholars/Literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bharavi's Kiratarjuniya</li> <li>• Dandin's Kavyadarsha</li> <li>• Amarasimha's Amarakosha</li> <li>• Vishakhadatta's Mudrarakshasa</li> <li>• Shudraka's Mrichchhakatika</li> <li>• Vishnusharma's Panchatantra</li> <li>• Varahamihira's Panchasiddhantika (6th century), and Brihatsamhita.</li> </ul>	<p>PYQ: (1995,1996, 2020,2023, 2024, 2025) CDS (2022)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brahmagupta's Brahmasputasiddhanta (628 CE) and the Khandakhadyaka (665 CE).</li> <li>• Vagbhata's Ashtangahridaya (Heart of Medicine)</li> <li>• Kashyapa's compendium, which deals mainly with the diseases of women and children.</li> <li>• Panini's Ashtadhyayi and Patanjali's Mahabhashya</li> <li>• Chandrogomia, composed a book on grammar named Chandrvyakaranam.</li> <li>• Vishnudharmottara- This text gives a detailed account of the theory and practice of painting</li> </ul>	
<b>Art and architecture</b>	Evolution of Gupta Temple Architecture	Gupta temples included in UNESCO tentative list proposals. ASI Museum Display of Gupta Artefacts (2025)
	Dashavatara	The "Dashavatara" Digital Twin: Efforts are underway to create a 3D digital model of the Deogarh temple
	Bhitargaon Temple	Conservation of Terracotta Temples: Recent news highlights the chemical stabilization of the Bhitargaon Temple, one of the oldest surviving brick temples in India, to protect it from rising salinity and moisture
<b>Society</b>	Position of Women and Shudra	PYQ (2019, 1995)
<b>Land tenure</b>	<p>Akshaya-nivi and aprada-dharma (gift was inalienable)</p> <p>Nivi-dharmakshaya (donee was given full rights over the land)</p> <p>Bhumichhidranayaya (non- agricultural land)</p>	PYQ: 2019
<b>Economy</b>	Trade- Kalyan (Calliena), Chaul, Male (Malabar), Mangarouth (Mangalore), Salopatana, Nalopatana, Pandopatana, Tamralipti.	PYQ: 2020

<b>9. EARLY HISTORY OF SOUTH INDIA</b>	<b>Sangam era</b>	Economy –Trading Ports	PYQ: (2023, 2016,2011, 2003,1997)
		Society- women and religion	PYQ: (2022)
		Sources: Silappathikaram (Jain epics) and Manimekalai (written by sathanar), The Periplus of Erythrean Sea, Tholkappiyam.	CDS: 2023, CAPF: 2024
<b>10. POST GUPTA PERIOD</b>	<b>Political Development</b>	Growth of regional kingdoms (Maukharis, Maitrikas, Pushyabhuti, Gauda)	PYQ: 2021
	<b>Harsha</b>	Source of Information (Hiuen Tsang, Pulakeshin II, Harsha’s Own Works such as Ratnavali, Priyadarshika etc.	PYQ: 2025
	<b>Harsh’a Contribution</b>	Educational Patronage (Nalanda), Religious Activities (Prayag Assembly), Administration (Feudal focus)	Nalanda University’s revival symbol of commitment to re-establish its glory in modern form: President Murmu
<b>11. CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH INDIA</b>	<b>Chalukya</b>	Sources: Aihole Inscription, Kuram copper plates, Arab travellers like Sulaiman and Al-Masudi.	Not asked before but UPSC may ask foreign travellers in chronology way or visited during whose time.
		Architecture: Aihole, Badami, Pattadakal	Digital Preservation: The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has initiated 3D Laser Scanning of the Pattadakal temple complex.
		Chalukya Painting	Recent art history symposiums have highlighted the Chalukya paintings as the "missing link" between the classical Ajanta style (Gupta-Vakataka) and the later Rashtrakuta (Ellora) and Vijayanagara styles.
	<b>Pallava</b>	Key Personalities (Mahendravarman I, Narasimharvarman I and their contribution	PYQ: 2025
		Pallava art and architecture (Mamallapuram)	Recently, Pallava sites, particularly in Mamallapuram (Mahabalipuram) and Kanchipuram, have been in the news due to restoration projects and climate resilience studies.
		Pallava Agriculture (Tank Irrigation) and Village life (official administration) related keywords- Like Eripatti.	PYQ: 2016. Irrigation-related keywords and technologies have special importance in CSE Prelims. For example in 2025 Araghatta was asked.
		Pallava Economy (Trade related keywords like sudesi, nanadesi, and ainurruvar) and trade relation with south East Asia	CDS 2022

	<b>Tamil Literature</b>	Nalayira Divya Prabhandam and Panniru Tirumurai.	CAPF-2024, CDS-2018
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## ART AND CULTURE

CHAPTER	EXPECTED THEME	SURE SHOT TOPICS FOR PRELIMS - 2026	JUSTIFICATION
<b>1. ARCHITECTURE</b>	<b>Temple</b>	Hoysala Temples (Karnataka)	Frequently asked on the Temple architecture theme. PYQ (2001, 2002, 2006, 2008, 2009(3), 2012, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2022, 2021)  The Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas (Belur, Halebidu, and Somanathapura) were recently inscribed as India's 42nd UNESCO World Heritage Site.
		Shore Temple, Mamallapuram (Tamil Nadu)	It has become India's first "Green Heritage Site." This means the site is now powered entirely by solar energy and focused on sustainable tourism.
		Martand Sun Temple (Jammu & Kashmir)	The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has been working on the conservation of this 8th-century site.
		channakesava temple	PMO Sevateerth complex derived inspiration based on this temple complex.
		Mahabodhi temple complex	Naval Officers From 74 Countries Visit Mahabodhi Temple and Meditate Under Sacred Bodhi Tree
		Sri Mallikarjunaswamy Temple	The earliest Indian epigraphic reference to Halley's Comet appears in a 1456 CE Vijayanagara copper plate inscription from Srisailam.
		<b>Cave</b>	Ratnagiri
	Badami Caves (Karnataka)		
	Kanheri Caves (Maharashtra)		The Ministry of Tourism recently inaugurated new visitor facilities and a 3D-interpretation centre to showcase the "Buddhist Circuit."
	Bagh Caves (Madhya Pradesh)		New restoration projects have been initiated to prevent the further decay of the murals, which are often compared to the Ajanta paintings.
	Sittanawasal		The Sittanavasal Caves in Tamil Nadu have been in the news due to urgent concerns regarding the preservation of their ancient frescoes Conservation of "Arivar Koil"

	Naneghat Caves	Illegal construction near caves → action under AMASR Act
	Yelagiri Hills Cave Paintings – Tamil Nadu	Largest Iron Age rock painting site found in cave near Reddiyur village in Tamil Nadu
	Besnagar Cave	Recently, it has been in the news due to new research by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) focusing on the structural conservation of the rock-cut monuments and the study of ancient inscriptions that link the site to early Bhagavatism (Vaishnavism).
	Varaha Cave, Mamallapuram (Tamil Nadu)	Efforts to digitize and create 3D models of the Pallava monuments have highlighted the intricate carvings of the Varaha cave.
	Ellora cave	Digital mapping and 3D laser scanning are being used to monitor the structural stability of the Kailash Temple (Cave 16) to prevent decay from moisture and environmental factors.
<b>Monastery</b>	Tawang Monastery (Arunachal Pradesh)	PYQ: 2006, 2009, 2014,
		It remains in the news due to its strategic location and its cultural importance as the largest monastery in India (and second largest in the world).
	Kalaburagi Buddhist Monastery site	An MP Demanded for detailed excavation of ancient Buddhist monastery.
	The Namgyal Monastery	A major extension and learning center associated with the Namgyal Monastery was recently inaugurated in Ithaca, New York.
	Zehanpora Monastic complex	Renewed archaeological interest and preservation efforts by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to highlight the region's rich Buddhist heritage.
<b>UNESCO Sites</b>	Hampi	Latest trend analysis shows that UNESCO sites in India are asked PYQ (2024-2 times)
		Hampi, the UNESCO World Heritage site in Karnataka, has recently been in the news due to a high-profile criminal case
	Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas (Karnataka)	In late 2023, the Hoysala temples at Belur, Halebidu, and Somanathapura were inscribed as India's 42nd UNESCO World Heritage Site.
	Maratha military landscape (Shivneri fort, Lohgad, Raigad, Suvarnadurg, Panhala fort, Vijaydurg, Sindhudurg and Gingee fort whereas Salher fort, Rajgad, Khanderi fort and Pratapgarrh)	The Maratha Military Landscapes of India, inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2025.

<b>2. PAINTING</b>	<b>Pre Historic rock Paintings Discovery related Key information (Ex- Pioneer of Indian Rock Art: (Archibald Carlleyle)</b>	Bhimbetka cave Painting (Discovered by V.S. Wakankar) Sittanavasal paintings (Tamil Nadu)	PYQ: 1995, 1999, 2009, 2015, 2018
		Reddiyur Rock Paintings – Tamil Nadu	Recently, the Largest Iron Age rock painting site found in cave near Reddiyur village in Tamil Nadu.
		Lakhudiyar (Uttarakhand)	A 6,000-year-old mystery in Almora, Uttarakhand, was set to be investigated by scientists. Carbon dating of the rock paintings in the Lakhudiyar Cave near Almora was scheduled to begin soon.
		Jogimara Caves (Chhattisgarh)	In news: On World Theatre Day (27th March), ASI witnessed the timeless stage of Sitabengra & Jogimara Caves, where the roots of dramatics were established in stone.
	<b>Regional variation</b>	Pattachitra (Odisha & West Bengal)	In the News: Artisans from the heritage village of Raghurajpur (Odisha) gained international acclaim by creating specialized Pattachitra artworks as gifts for G20 delegates.
		Madhubani or Mithila Art (Bihar)	Madhubani art is being used in railway and public space beautification under "Vocal for Local," while Japan's Mithila Museum remains a key global center preserving the tradition.
		Rajsthani & Pahari Miniatures	In the News: The National Museum recently opened a dedicated gallery for Miniature Paintings to showcase rare manuscripts.
		Thangka Paintings (Sikkim, Arunachal & Ladakh)	In the News: The government has proposed a dedicated Center of Excellence for Himalayan Arts to preserve Thangka painting. These are prominently displayed during the Losar (Tibetan New Year) and Hemis festivals.
<b>3. MUSIC</b>	<b>Regional variation</b>	Hindustani vs Carnatic music	PYQ: 2000, 2004, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2017, 2018, 2018, 2025 Carnatic musician Dr Jayanthi Kumaresh named for Sangita Kalanidhi award

#### MISCELLANEOUS (Art and Culture)- In News

- National Symposium on Bhagavad Gita and Natya Shastra Concludes at IGNCA
- UNESCO 'CREATIVE CITY OF GASTRONOMY'
- Deepavali in List of the Intangible Cultural
- India Participates in 10th BRICS Culture Ministers' Meeting in Brazil
- 300th Birth Anniversary of Lokmata Ahilyabai Holkar Commemorated by Ministry of Culture and Bindheshwari Gramothan Sansthan
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Inaugurates International Exposition of the Sacred Piprahwa Relics
- Karni Mata Temple
- How Hindu temples survived political upheavals and philosophical shifts?
- Buddha a historical figure or a mythological figure?
- How Buddhism shows path to nirvana?
- How Indian temples architecture is rooted in art religion and politics?
- GI Tagged Crafts: Headlines like "Kashmiri Pashmina gets a boost" or "Traditional Dokra art facing extinction."
- Classical Dances: Profiles of maestros in Kathak, Bharatanatyam, or Sattriya; or the use of dance in diplomacy (e.g., G20 summits).

- Folk Performances: News on Yakshagana (Karnataka), Chhau (East India), or Theyyam (Kerala), especially regarding their ritualistic or historical roots.
- Musical Instruments: Feature articles on the Sitar, Veena, or the inclusion of Gwalior as a UNESCO City of Music.
- Classical Languages: News regarding the status of Prakrit, Pali, or Sanskrit and the preservation of ancient manuscripts.
- Schools of Philosophy: Deep dives into Advaita Vedanta or Yoga philosophy, often during International Yoga Day (June 21<sup>st</sup>) or philosophical anniversaries.
- Religious/Tribal Fairs: The Hornbill Festival (Nagaland), Pushkar Mela, or Medaram Jathara.
- Antiquities and Art Treasures Act: Legal battles to bring back Indian artifacts from international museums.
- Harvest Festivals: Historical context of Pongal, Bihu, Baisakhi, or Onam.
- Thespians hail renaming Kolkata's Star Theatre after Binodini Dasi as historic, yet futile.
- Buddhist Universities/ learning centers in news: Nalanda (Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently inaugurated the new campus of Nalanda University in Rajgir, Bihar) and others important learning centers - Odantapuri & Jagaddala (Pala Dynasty) Valabhi (Gujarat- Maitraka Dynasty), Kanchipuram (Pallava dynasty)

## MEDIEVAL HISTORY

CHAPTER	EXPECTED THEME	SURE SHOT TOPICS FOR PRELIMS - 2026	JUSTIFICATION
<b>1. TRIPARTITE STRUGGLE</b>	<b>Political rivalry for control over Kannauj in early medieval India</b>	Important Key Personalities involved (Mihir Bhoja, Gopala, Nagabhatta II)	PYQ: 2022, 2020 CDS 2023
<b>2. THE IMPERIAL CHOLA (850 – 1279 AD)</b>	<b>Polity</b>	Local organization (Urar, Sabhaiyar, Nagarattar and Nattar) and Elections	PYQ: 2020
	<b>Trade</b>	Ports (Poompuhar (Kaveripattinam), Arikamedu, and Nagapattinam)	PYQ: 2023
	<b>Art</b>	Sculpture: Famous bronze sculptures: Nataraja (cosmic dance of Shiva)	CDS 2024, 2023 NDA 2023 CAPF 2022
	<b>Important key rulers and their contribution</b>	Rajendra I (Built Gangaikonda Cholapuram on Brihadisvara model; constructed Cholagangam tank (Jala-stambha) and naval expeditions to Southeast Asia  Rajaraja Chola I (Built Brihadisvara Temple)	PYQ:2025  In news: Celebrating the Glorious Legacy of Rajendra Chola I Aadi Thiruvathirai Festival - 23rd to 27th July, 2025  In news: The birth anniversary of the legendary Chola emperor Raja Raja Chola I (Ponniyil Selvon) is celebrated every year during the Sadhaya Vizha in Thanjavur of Tamil Nadu
<b>3. DELHI SULTANATE</b>	<b>Important Rulers and their key contribution</b>	Ilutmish, Khalji, Tughlaq	PYQ: 1995, 1997, 1998,2001, 2002, 2003, 2004,2010, 2021,2022
	<b>Foreign Invasions</b>	Mongol and Timur Invasion	PYQ: 2022,2021,2020

	<b>Administrative Innovations</b>	Iqta system	PYQ: 2002, 2019, 2000,1998
	<b>Foreign Travellers</b>	Ibn Battuta (Rihala)	Has not been directly asked in CSE but touched in cds (2020)
	<b>Key terminologies</b>	Barid, Munhiyan, Zakat, Sahna-I-Mandi, Diwan-i-Arz, Fawazil, Shiq, Pargana, Diwan-i-Insha.	PYQ: 1996, 2001, 2020,2016,1995
	<b>Sultanate period art and architecture</b>	Tomb Architecture	In News: Delhi government launched a major heritage restoration drive (2025). Focus includes Sultanate-period monuments (Khilji, Tughlaq, Lodi).
		Irrigation technology (Araghatta)	PYQ: 2025 In news: Conservation efforts at Firoz Shah Kotla Fort
	<b>Literature</b>	Literature (Persian)- Amir Khusrau (Parrot of India) (Tughlaq Nama, Khazain-ul-Futuh)	CDS 2025 In news: Addressing the 25th edition of Jahan-e-Khusrau in Delhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi showered praise on the Sufi tradition and Amir Khusrau, the 13th century Sufi poet and musician.
<b>4. VIJAYANAGAR</b>	<b>Economy and polity</b>	Land tax system, irrigation and Amara-Nayaka system	PYQ: 2022, 2016
	<b>Art and architecture</b>	Hampi	Hampi, the UNESCO World Heritage Site in Karnataka, has been in the news in early 2026 due to a landmark legal verdict following a major crime against tourists.
	<b>Foreign Travellers</b>	Niccolò de' Conti, Domingo Paes, Fernão Nunes, Abdur Razzak.	Never directly asked in the CSE, but in this year expected one question from this section.
	<b>Foundation of the Vijayanagara related key personalities and their contribution</b>	K.D. Raya, Harihara and Bukka	PYQ: 2003, 2004,2006,2009, 2015
		The Discovery of Hampi	CDS 2022
	<b>Relation with Portuguese</b>	Impact on Indian Society (Political, Cultural)	PYQ: 2024, 2023,2022
<b>5. MUGHAL PERIOD</b>	<b>Mughal Administration (Revenue)</b>	Mansabdari	PYQ: 2019,1999,1996, 1995
	<b>Art and architecture</b>	Paintings	A famous Mughal miniature titled "A Family of Cheetahs in a Rocky

			Landscape" sold at Christie's London auction (2025).
		Architecture characteristics (Ex- Material, Style, Techniques)	PYQ: 2018
	<b>Key personalities and their contribution</b>	Akbar	PYQ: 2001, 2024
<b>6. BHAKTI AND SUFI MOVEMENT</b>	<b>Philosophy &amp; Teachings</b>	Tulsi das	Tulsidas's role in composing the Ramcharitmanas in Awadhi at Varanasi's Assi Ghat, a work now in UNESCO's Memory of the World regional register.
		Shankara deva	CDS (2023), NDA (2025) The Union Home Minister inaugurated the redeveloped Batadrava Than, the birthplace of Vaishnavite saint Srimanta Sankardeva, in Assam's Nagaon district.
		Basavana	Basavanna represents all communities not just Lingayats .. Rajya Sabha member and Chairman of KLE Society Prabhakar Kore has said.
		Vallabhacharya	In news: Vallabhacharya Jayanti 2025: Celebrating the Legacy of a Revered Philosopher
		Guru Nanak and Kabir	PYQ: 2019 India and the world are celebrating the 556th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the founder of Sikhism. Known as Guru Nanak Jayanti
	<b>Orders &amp; Concepts</b>	Chisti and Suharavardi	CDS-2021
<b>7. MARATHA</b>	<b>Shivaji Administration And Revenue system (Chauth and Sardeshmukhi)</b>	Ashtapradhan	Republic Day parade: Maharashtra tableau based on coronation year celebrations of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj

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### Tests Details:

SIMULATOR TEST DATE	DAY	9:30 A.M- 11:30 A.M	2:30 P.M- 4:30 PM
11 <sup>th</sup> April 2026	Saturday	General Studies	CSAT
19 <sup>th</sup> April 2026	Sunday	General Studies	CSAT
26 <sup>th</sup> April 2026	Sunday	General Studies	CSAT
3 <sup>rd</sup> May 2026	Sunday	General Studies	CSAT
10 <sup>th</sup> May 2026	Sunday	General Studies	CSAT

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