

Current Edge: Daily Brief

13th September 2025

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THE BIG PICTURE

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NEWS IN SHORT

- 1) PM Launches Gyan Bharatam Mission for Manuscript Digitisation

QUOTES OF THE DAY

"Man is the only creature who refuses to be what he is." –
ALBERT CAMUS

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Israel is gradually losing legitimacy around the world, being placed in a group that includes other reviled pariah states. Even its oldest, most loyal friends are finding it increasingly uncomfortable to be associated with it." –
HAARETZ, ISRAEL

News / Explained / Explained Politics / As PM Modi visits Manipur, 5 key issues in conflict-torn state

As PM Modi visits Manipur, 5 key issues in conflict-torn state

Twenty seven months after the conflict in Manipur began in 2023, a number of key issues remain unresolved in the state. Here's what you need to know

IE Explained; By Sukrita Baruah;

Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Governance, Security [Link](#)

- **State three-phase resettlement plan** (July / Oct / Dec) aiming to close camps by Dec 2025;
- **Small returns so far** (~5,000 pre-plan); prefabricated houses promised after "full normalcy".



Why in News?

PM Modi visiting Manipur (Sept 2025) to meet internally displaced people and inaugurate large projects as unresolved fallout from the May 2023 Meitei–Kuki-Zo conflict persists.

Five key issues

Rehabilitation of displaced population

- **≈57,000 IDPs in >280 relief camps** (living >2 years);

Free movement inside the state

- Valley–hills boundaries hardened into heavily guarded “**buffer zones**”;
- Meiteis restricted to valley; Kuki-Zo denied valley/airport access;

- Centre’s “free movement” push triggered clashes (notably Mar 8 incident); limited agreement for essential goods but no mutual free-movement accord.

Dialogue and ceasefire arrangements

- Violence ebbed since Nov 2024 but risk persists; **both communities heavily armed**;
- Ministry of Home Affairs engaging groups separately; **Suspension of Operations** renewed with Kuki-Zo umbrellas (KNO, UPF);
- **Kuki-Zo demand for “separate administration”** / UT with legislature remains a flashpoint despite SoO clause on “territorial integrity”; strong objections from Meitei groups.

Government formation and political stability

- Former CM N. Biren Singh resigned (Feb 2025); President’s Rule imposed and continued;
- Valley/Naga NDA MLAs pushing for restoration of elected govt; Centre cautious about lifting President’s Rule to avoid destabilisation.

Border and cross-border issues with Myanmar

- Free Movement Regime with Myanmar scrapped; plan to fence porous border;
- Meitei concerns about **alleged illegal Chin immigration** cited as a cause of volatility;
- Nagas and Kuki-Zo oppose fencing; United Naga Council’s trade embargo (routes closed) later temporarily suspended.

Test Your Knowledge 01

Q1. “Arambai Tenggol”, seen in Manipur news during the ethnic conflict, is:

- A Meitei armed civilian group alleged to have state patronage.
- A cultural troupe promoting Manipuri martial arts.
- A Kuki-Zo political organisation demanding UT status.
- A Naga insurgent umbrella council.

Hint: This group emerged during the Manipur ethnic violence as an armed Meitei civilian formation, often in headlines due to allegations of state patronage — not a cultural troupe or a Naga/Kuki organisation.

The RTI’s shift to a ‘right to deny information’



Shailesh Gandhi
is a former Central Information Commissioner

Citizens and the media need to challenge the Digital Personal Data Protection Act’s amendment of Section 8(1)(j) of the Right to Information (RTI) Act

TH Opinion; By Shailesh Gandhi;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Governance [Link](#)

Why in News?

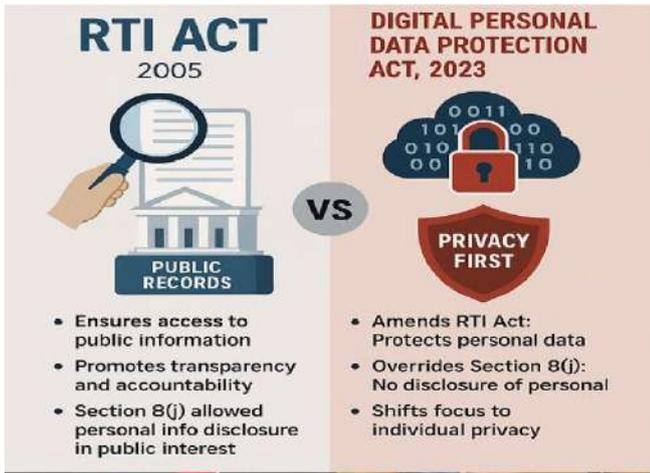
The **RTI Act’s Section 8(1)(j)** was amended via the **DPDP Act, 2023**, weakening safeguards & enabling wider denial of information.

Original RTI Provision & Its Safeguards

- **Section 8(1)(j) exempted personal info** if not connected to public activity or where privacy is invaded.
- **Included a proviso:** if info cannot be denied to Parliament or State Legislature, it cannot be denied to any person.
- **Allowed “larger public interest” override** where disclosure was important despite privacy concerns.

What the Amendment Changed?

- **Section 8(1)(j) truncated:** detailed definition & safeguards removed; now simply “information which relates to personal information.”
- **Proviso re:** Parliament/State Legislature removed.
- **DPDP Act gives itself power to override** other laws in case of conflict.



Key Concerns / Criticisms

- **Definition of “person”** under DPDP is very broad — includes firms, companies, State etc. That makes “personal information” potentially almost everything.
- **Public Information Officers (PIOs) will tend to deny information** to avoid risk of penalties.
- **Many important documents might be withheld** (e.g. corrected marksheets, beneficiary data, orders signed by officials) under “personal information.”
- **Use of the “larger public interest”** override is rare and difficult in practice; hence not a reliable safeguard.

Impacts on Transparency & Corruption Control

- **Citizens lose monitoring ability**; RTI becomes weak tool in fighting corruption.
- Information about schemes, corruption, ghost employees etc., may get shielded under this exemption.
- **Example:** data of pension beneficiaries or ration card distribution being made public in some states helps catch fraud; that may now be denied.

Call to Action & Warnings

- **Need for media & citizen engagement** to expose & debate the change.
- **Demand political accountability**; include reversal of these amendments in party manifestos.
- **Civil society groups (e.g. IFF, NCPRI) campaign** against Section 44(3) of DPDP Act that effects this change.

Test Your Knowledge 02

Q2. The phrase “provided that the information which cannot be denied to the Parliament or a State Legislature shall not be denied to any person” was part of:

- Article 75 of the Constitution
- Original Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act
- Rules of Procedure of Parliament
- Prevention of Corruption Act

Hint: The proviso ensuring parity between citizens and Parliament was built into the original RTI Act, not the Constitution or other laws.

Q3. With reference to the relationship between the Right to Information Act, 2005 and the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, consider the following statements:

- The DPDP Act contains an overriding clause, giving it primacy in case of conflict with other laws, including RTI.
- The RTI Act explicitly states that no law can override its provisions.
- After the amendment, Section 8(1)(j) of RTI is reduced to a single phrase: “information which relates to personal information.”

How many of the above statements are correct?

- Only one
- Only two
- All three
- None

Hint: RTI never claimed overriding power; DPDP does, and the amendment shortened Section 8(1)(j) to just “personal information.”

NEWS IN SHORT

PM Launches Gyan Bharatam Mission for Manuscript Digitisation

Why in News?

On 12 September 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Gyan Bharatam Mission and its digital portal to accelerate nationwide manuscript digitisation, preservation and public access.

Details

- Nodal **Ministry of Culture** has approved the mission as a **Central Sector Scheme (2024-31)** with an outlay of ₹482.85 crore.

Gyan Bharatam Mission

- 📖 A national initiative to preserve, digitise & disseminate India's vast manuscript heritage
- 📖 ₹482.85 crore allocated for a period of 2024–31
- 📖 44.07 lakh+ manuscripts documented in Kirti Sampada digital repository



Gyan Bharatam Mission



Objectives

- 📖 **Identification & Documentation:** A nationwide network of Manuscript Resource Centres to be established
 - 📖 **Conservation & Restoration:** Through strengthened Manuscript Conservation Centres, manuscripts to be safeguarded using preventive & curative conservation methods
 - 📖 **Research, Translation & Publication:** Rare & unpublished manuscripts to be revived
- Goal is to survey, catalogue and digitise over one crore manuscripts, expanding on the 44.07 lakh already listed in the **Kirti Sampada repository**.
 - Programme sets up **Manuscript Resource Centres** for documentation, Manuscript Conservation Centres for restoration, and uses AI-based Handwritten Text Recognition to build a searchable national repository.
 - Youth-focused initiatives like the **Gyan-Setu AI Innovation Challenge** invite start-ups to create heritage-tech solutions.

Gyan Bharatam Mission



Objectives

- 📖 **Engagement & Incentivisation:** To boost public participation, manuscript custodians & collectors to be encouraged to share their collections via authenticity certification and revenue-sharing
- 📖 **Global Collaboration & Education:** International partnerships to be fostered for manuscript retrieval, digitisation & standardisation, along with embedding of manuscript wisdom into curricula, higher education research & skill development programmes

Gyan Bharatam Mission



Objectives

- 📖 **Digitisation & Repository Creation:** Mission envisions large-scale digitisation of manuscripts using AI-assisted HTR*, microfilming & cloud-based metadata systems
 - 📖 **Capacity Building & Training:** Structured training programmes & workshops in transcription, palaeography, conservation & manuscript studies to be organised
 - 📖 **Technology Development:** Mission to also focus on building digital tools for manuscripts
- Launch formed the highlight of a three-day international conference, “**Reclaiming India’s Knowledge Legacy through Manuscript Heritage**,” at Vigyan Bhawan (11–13 Sept 2025)—timed to honour Swami Vivekananda’s 1893 Chicago address anniversary.
 - **Supports NEP 2020** by integrating Indian Knowledge Systems into education and fulfils the constitutional duty to preserve cultural heritage under **Article 51A(f)**.