

PrepAlpine

The Next-Generation UPSC Institution

Where Research Meets Mentorship & Precision



Preparation Meets Precision

A Next-Generation Learning Institution

Copyright © 2025 PrepAlpine

All Rights Reserved

No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means—whether photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods—without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law.

For permission requests, please write to:

PrepAlpine

Email: info@PrepAlpine.com

Website: PrepAlpine.com

Disclaimer

The information contained in this book has been prepared solely for educational purposes. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, PrepAlpine makes no representations or warranties of any kind and accepts no liability for any errors or omissions. The use of any content is solely at the reader's discretion and risk.

First Edition: January 2026

Printed and published by PrepAlpine

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS DATED 12.01.2026

GS Paper II: Current Affairs

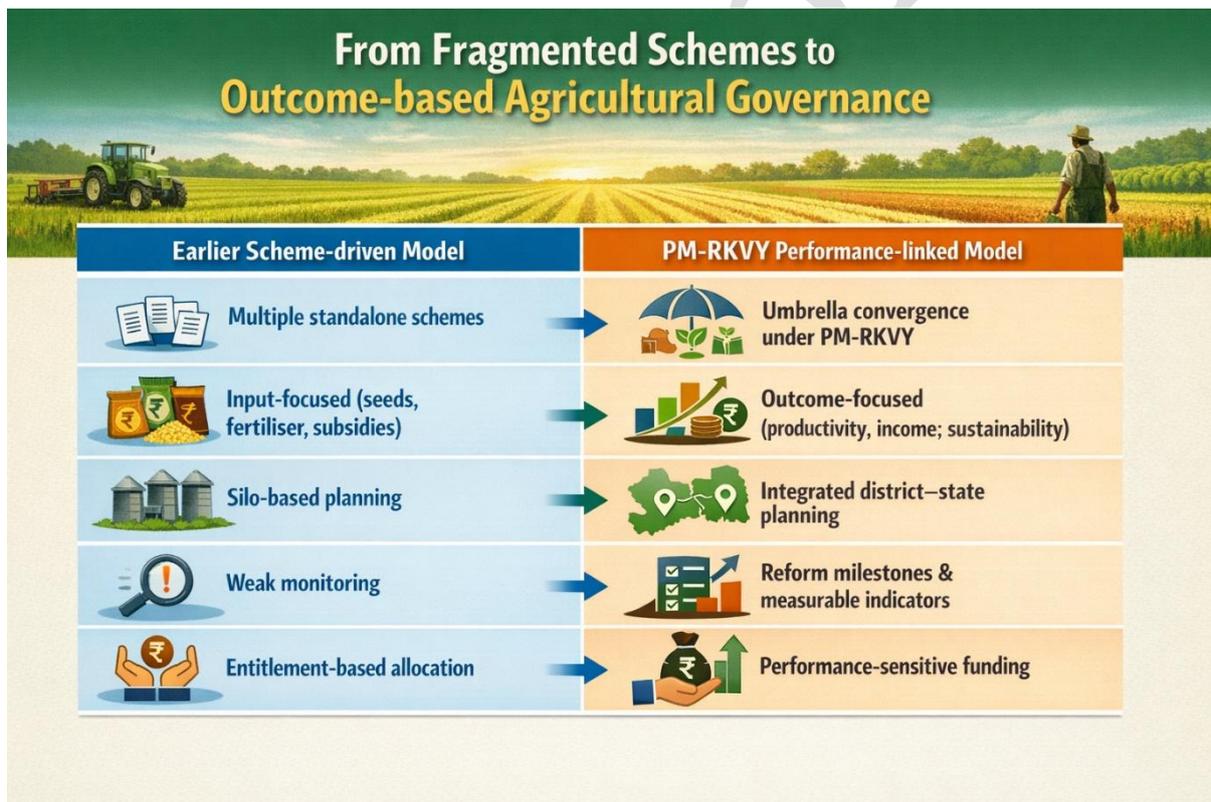
1. Performance-linked Agricultural Scheme Convergence under PM-RKVY

a. Overview: From Fragmented Schemes to Outcome-based Agriculture

India's agricultural policy architecture is undergoing a significant structural transition. For decades, agricultural governance was characterised by a multiplicity of narrowly focused schemes, each operating in isolation. While well-intentioned, this silo-based approach led to fragmented planning, administrative inefficiencies, and weak outcome monitoring.

The proposed convergence of multiple agricultural schemes under the Prime Minister's Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (PM-RKVY), coupled with the introduction of performance-linked funding, marks a decisive philosophical shift. The emphasis is moving away from mere input distribution towards measurable outcomes, reform incentives, and accountability.

At its core, this reform seeks to improve public expenditure efficiency, incentivise states to undertake meaningful agricultural reforms, and strengthen cooperative federalism. Agriculture, constitutionally a state subject, is now being governed through a framework that balances state-level flexibility with outcome-based accountability.



b. PM-RKVY as an Umbrella Framework for Agricultural Federalism

The Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana was launched in 2007 with the objective of achieving holistic development of agriculture and allied sectors. Its foundational principle is that states are best positioned to understand their local agricultural needs.

Unlike rigid centrally designed schemes, PM-RKVY allows states to prepare district-level and state-level agricultural plans, reflecting local agro-climatic conditions, cropping patterns, and socio-

economic realities. This built-in flexibility makes PM-RKVY particularly suitable as an umbrella framework under which diverse agricultural interventions can be harmonised.

c. Rationale for Scheme Convergence

Prior to convergence, India's agricultural policy landscape was marked by a proliferation of schemes operating independently, often pursuing overlapping objectives such as income enhancement, sustainability, and diversification.

This fragmentation resulted in:

- Administrative duplication
- Disjointed planning processes
- Multiple reporting requirements
- Weak monitoring of outcomes

States were compelled to navigate diverse guidelines and compliance frameworks, which diluted focus and accountability. Convergence under PM-RKVY is therefore aimed at simplifying governance, enhancing policy coherence, and ensuring optimal utilisation of public funds.

d. Schemes Proposed to be Merged under PM-RKVY

Under the proposed framework, several existing agricultural schemes are to be subsumed within PM-RKVY, including:

Krishonnati Yojana

- Focuses on productivity enhancement, diversification, and income growth
- Covers crop development, mechanisation, and extension services

National Mission on Natural Farming

- Promotes chemical-free and sustainable agricultural practices
- Emphasises soil health, biodiversity, and reduced input costs

National Bee and Honey Mission

- Strengthens apiculture and pollination-based livelihoods
- Enhances farm incomes through allied agricultural activities

While sectorally diverse, these schemes share common objectives of income enhancement, sustainability, and resilience, making their integration both logical and administratively efficient.

e. Funding Structure after Convergence

The proposed merger retains the existing federal funding architecture, thereby preserving fiscal balance:

- General category states: 60:40 (Centre : State)
- North-Eastern and Himalayan states: 90:10
- Union Territories: 100% central funding

This differentiated funding structure recognises varying geographical, fiscal, and administrative capacities, while reinforcing the principles of cooperative federalism.

f. Transition from Need-based to Performance-based Funding

Traditionally, PM-RKVY allocations were guided by structural and demographic indicators, such as:

- Net un-irrigated area
- Share of small and marginal farmers
- Youth population

While these indicators reflected developmental needs, they did not capture governance quality or reform efforts. The proposed reform introduces a new parameter assessing reform initiatives and milestones achieved by states, assigned a 30% weightage, the highest among all criteria.

This marks a fundamental shift in agricultural federalism—from entitlement-based allocations to performance-sensitive public financing.

g. Understanding Reform-linked Funding

Reform-linked funding rewards states that design, implement, and sustain agricultural reforms effectively. The emphasis shifts towards:

- Policy innovation
- Institutional strengthening
- Demonstrable improvements in productivity, sustainability, and market integration

This approach draws inspiration from:

- The Fifteenth Finance Commission's emphasis on performance incentives
- NITI Aayog's advocacy of outcome-based governance

Agriculture is thus being aligned with a broader results-oriented public finance framework.

h. Significance of the New Framework

Governance Perspective

- Strengthens cooperative federalism with accountability
- Retains state autonomy while incentivising results

Agricultural Perspective

- Encourages crop diversification and natural farming
- Promotes allied sectors such as apiculture
- Enhances resilience to climate and market shocks

Fiscal Perspective

- Improves value for money
- Reduces inefficiencies of entitlement-based spending

i. Challenges and Risks

Key concerns associated with performance-linked convergence include:

- Risk of widening inter-state disparities, as administratively stronger states may consistently outperform weaker ones
- Ambiguity in reform indicators if benchmarks are not clearly defined
- Capacity constraints in poorer states limiting reform implementation
- Potential over-centralisation of reform templates, undermining local diversity

j. International Comparisons

Several countries have adopted results-based agricultural financing:

- European Union: Payments linked to sustainability and environmental outcomes
- Australia: Grants tied to productivity and climate resilience
- Brazil: Incentives linked to environmental compliance

India's evolving PM-RKVY framework is broadly aligned with these international best practices, while being adapted to its federal context.

k. Way Forward

For effective implementation, the following steps are essential:

- Clearly defined, transparent, and measurable reform indicators
- Targeted capacity-building and handholding for weaker states
- Independent evaluation mechanisms involving institutions like NITI Aayog and third-party audits
- Alignment with global commitments such as SDGs 2 (Zero Hunger), 12 (Responsible Consumption), and 16 (Institutions)

Conclusion

The convergence of agricultural schemes under PM-RKVY, combined with reform-linked funding, marks India's transition from scheme-driven agriculture to an outcome-oriented, accountable, and reform-led model of governance.

By harmonising flexibility with accountability, the framework strengthens cooperative federalism while promoting sustainable agricultural growth. If implemented with clarity, transparency, and inclusiveness, it holds the potential to fundamentally reshape India's agricultural governance landscape.

GS Paper III: Security

2. India's Maritime Policy: Evolution, Significance, and Future Direction

a. Maritime Policy as a Structural Theme in India's Strategy

India's maritime policy is best understood not as a short-term response to emerging threats, but as a long-term strategic evolution shaped by geography, history, economic interests, and security imperatives. With the Indian Ocean surrounding the subcontinent on three sides and some of the world's busiest sea lanes passing close to its shores, India's prosperity and security are deeply intertwined with the maritime domain.

It reflects how India seeks to convert its geographical advantage into strategic influence while balancing power, cooperation, and regional stability.

b. Geographical Foundations of India's Maritime Outlook

India's strategic worldview has been shaped by two enduring geographical features:

The Himalayan Barrier

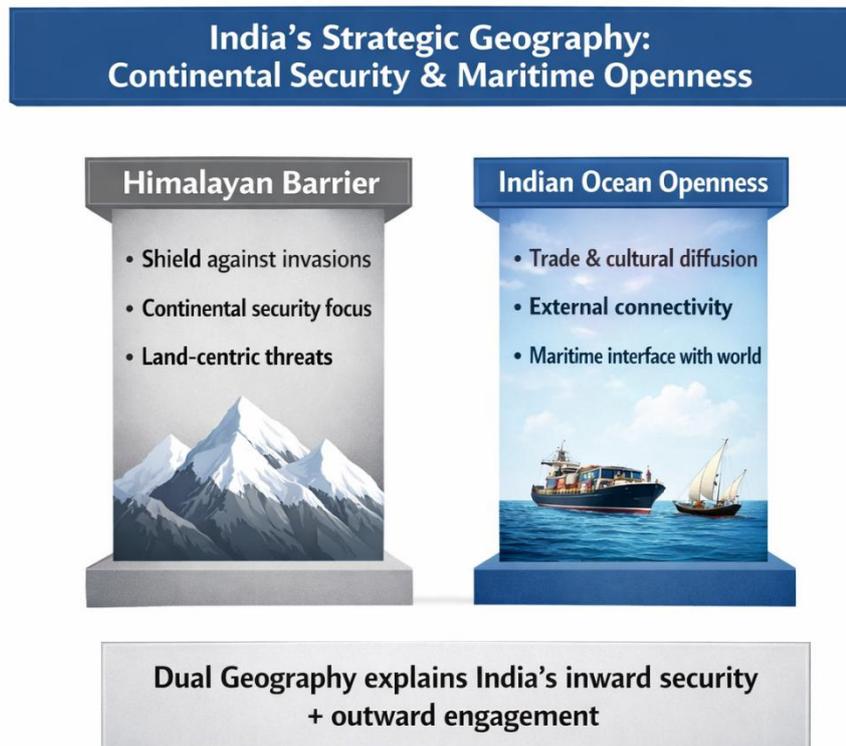
- Provided historical protection from northern invasions

- Anchored India's continental boundaries and security concerns

The Indian Ocean Openness

- Enabled trade, cultural exchange, and diplomatic outreach
- Served as India's primary interface with the external world

While most invasions historically occurred through land routes in the north-west, maritime routes facilitated commerce and cultural diffusion. This dual geography explains why India's civilisation remained inwardly secure yet outwardly connected.



c. Historical Evolution of India's Maritime Engagement

i. Ancient and Medieval Maritime Traditions

India's maritime orientation has deep historical roots:

Trade and Cultural Networks

- Indian sailors navigated routes linking East Africa, West Asia, and Southeast Asia
- Maritime trade supported the spread of religions, ideas, and cultural practices

Naval Power and Political Authority

- The Chola Empire projected naval power across Southeast Asia
- The Marathas developed strong coastal defence and sea-control capabilities

These experiences demonstrate that maritime strength historically served both economic and strategic objectives.

ii. Colonial Disruption and Early Independence

European colonial powers leveraged superior naval capabilities to dominate Indian Ocean trade routes and establish political control over the subcontinent. After independence in 1947, India's strategic focus shifted towards:

- Territorial consolidation

- Land-based security challenges

As a result, maritime policy remained relatively underdeveloped for several decades, despite India's favourable geography.

d. Strategic Reorientation since the 1980s

A major reorientation began in the mid-1980s due to:

- Rising dependence on sea routes for energy imports
- Expanding volume of maritime trade
- Growing strategic importance of the Indian Ocean Region

Key developments included:

- Strengthening of the Indian Navy
- Maritime boundary agreements with neighbouring states
- Expansion of maritime diplomacy with Australia, Japan, and ASEAN countries

Collectively, these shifts marked India's re-emergence as a significant maritime actor.

e. The Indo-Pacific Framework and India's Maritime Vision

The Indo-Pacific concept links the Indian Ocean with the western Pacific, reflecting integrated economic and strategic realities. For India, it is not merely a geographical construct but a strategic framework encompassing:

- Economic connectivity
- Security cooperation
- Regional balance

India's vision emphasises a:

- Free
- Open
- Inclusive
- Rules-based maritime order

While conscious of strategic competition—particularly with China—India seeks to avoid zero-sum rivalries and instead prioritises stability, dialogue, and rule-based conduct.

f. Maritime Partnerships and Strategic Autonomy

India follows a policy of multi-alignment, not rigid alliances:

i. Key Strategic Partners

- Japan and Australia for Indo-Pacific security
- France due to its Indian Ocean presence

ii. Regional Engagement

- Capacity-building and coastal security assistance to Indian Ocean littoral states
- Deep maritime engagement with ASEAN for sea lane security

iii. Managing Strategic Competition

- Complex engagement with China marked by competitive coexistence

- Emphasis on dialogue alongside deterrence

This diversified approach preserves strategic autonomy while expanding India's maritime influence.

g. India as a Net Security Provider in the Indian Ocean

India's anti-piracy operations in the Arabian Sea marked a strategic milestone:

- Shift from a defensive posture to proactive regional security
- Protection of international shipping lanes
- Effective humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations

These actions have built trust among Indian Ocean littoral states and reinforced India's image as a responsible maritime power committed to regional stability.

h. Maritime Governance and Regional Challenges

South Asian maritime governance faces persistent challenges:

- Weak institutions
- Political instability
- Governance deficits in several coastal states

These vulnerabilities have enabled greater external influence through infrastructure and connectivity projects linked to broader geopolitical initiatives. India's response focuses on:

- Transparent partnerships
- Sustainable connectivity
- Respect for sovereignty

Rather than coercion, India promotes cooperative maritime governance rooted in mutual benefit and long-term resilience.

i. Economic and Technological Dimensions of Maritime Policy

India's contemporary maritime policy integrates security with development, particularly through the Blue Economy:

Economic Pillars

- Sustainable fisheries
- Offshore energy resources
- Port-led development
- Maritime tourism

Technological Enablers

- Maritime surveillance
- Underwater domain awareness

Climate change adds a new strategic dimension, making coastal resilience and adaptation central to both economic planning and security policy.

j. Power Projection and Strategic Balance

India's maritime power projection is deliberately restrained:

- Presence without aggression
- Deterrence without dominance
- Stability over confrontation

This balanced posture distinguishes India from purely militaristic strategies and reinforces its role as a stabilising force in the Indian Ocean Region.

k. Challenges Ahead

India's maritime trajectory will be shaped by:

- Intensifying strategic competition with China
- Gaps in advanced naval and underwater technologies
- Institutional coordination challenges among maritime agencies
- Climate change-induced risks to coastal infrastructure and livelihoods

Addressing these issues requires sustained investment, policy coherence, and diplomatic engagement.

1. Way Forward

Key priorities must include:

- Strengthening maritime governance institutions
- Enhancing naval and technological capabilities
- Deepening maritime diplomacy and multilateral cooperation
- Promoting a sustainable and inclusive Blue Economy

India should continue to treat the Indian Ocean as a shared regional commons, not a contested arena.

Conclusion

India's maritime policy has evolved from a civilisational tradition of trade and cultural exchange into a comprehensive strategic framework encompassing security, economics, and diplomacy.

In the coming decades, effective maritime governance will be critical to India's emergence as a leading Indo-Pacific power and a trusted net security provider, capable of shaping a stable, inclusive, and rule-based maritime order.

Reader's Note — About This Current Affairs Compilation

Dear Aspirant,

This document is part of the PrepAlpine Current Affairs Series — designed to bring clarity, structure, and precision to your daily UPSC learning.

While every effort has been made to balance depth with brevity, please keep the following in mind:

1. Orientation & Purpose

This compilation is curated primarily from the UPSC Mains perspective — with emphasis on conceptual clarity, analytical depth, and interlinkages across GS papers.

However, the PrepAlpine team is simultaneously developing a dedicated Prelims-focused Current Affairs Series, designed for:

- factual coverage
- data recall
- Prelims-style MCQs
- objective pattern analysis

This Prelims Edition will be released separately as a standalone publication.

2. Content Length

Some sections may feel shorter or longer depending on topic relevance and news density. To fit your personal preference, you may freely resize or summarize sections using any LLM tool (ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, etc.) at your convenience.

3. Format Flexibility

The formatting combines:

- paragraphs
- lists
- tables
- visual cues

—all optimised for retention.

If you prefer a specific style (lists → paras, paras → tables, etc.), feel free to convert using any free LLM.

4. Monthly Current Affairs Release

The complete Monthly Current Affairs Module will be released soon, optimized to a compact 100–150 pages — comprehensive yet concise, exam-ready, and revision-efficient.

PrepAlpine