Adi Vaani AI platform: 13 tribal languages, text translation in 9

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News

On 15 November 2026 PIB released an official factsheet on the progress of 'Adi Vaani', which the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs describes as India's first AI-based translation platform for tribal languages. Its beta version was launched on 1 September 2025 with four languages – Santali, Bhili, Mundari and Gondi. On 24 August 2026, at the National Conclave on Tribal Languages and Museums in Mysuru, held with the Karnataka State Tribal Research Institute and the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), an upgraded version, an iOS app and a new logo were released and five more languages were added. The Ministry's AI conversational assistant 'Jago' was launched the same day, and Karnataka released a Class 1 primer in Jenukuruba. The platform was built by a consortium led by IIT Delhi with BITS Pilani, IIIT Hyderabad, IIIT Nava Raipur and several State Tribal Research Institutes. It offers text translation, speech-to-text, speech-to-speech translation, OCR, video subtitling and dictionaries; the platform works with 13 tribal languages, with text translation available in 9 of them (as on 15 October 2026). According to PIB, a Working Group on Tribal Languages that met on 15 October 2026 discussed making Adi Vaani the National Tribal Language Repository.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Platform	Adi Vaani – AI translation for tribal languages
Ministry	Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs

Point	Details
Beta launch	1 Sept 2025 – Santali, Bhili, Mundari, Gondi
Mysuru conclave	24 Aug 2026 – upgraded version, iOS app, +5 languages, 'Jago' AI assistant
Developers	IIT Delhi-led: BITS Pilani, IIIT Hyderabad, IIIT Nava Raipur, State TRIs
Languages	13 (text translation in 9); e.g. Kokborok, Garo, Kui, Koya, Betta Kuruba
Usage	35,000+ Android downloads; ~6,500 monthly users
Next aim	National Tribal Language Repository

Background

- Constitution: Article 342 provides for notifying Scheduled Tribes. Per Census 2011, tribals are 8.6% of India's population; the Bhil are the most populous tribe, followed by the Gond. Among the 22 Eighth Schedule languages, Santali and Bodo are tribal languages; Santali was added by the 92nd Amendment in 2003. Its script, Ol Chiki, was devised in 1925 by Pandit Raghunath Murmu.
- Linguistics and science: many Indian tribal languages are on UNESCO's endangered list, and many have no script. The UN has declared 2022–2032 the International Decade of Indigenous Languages. To build AI models for such low-resource languages, speech and text corpora are collected from the communities. Complementing the government's 'Bhashini' platform for Indian languages, Adi Vaani focuses on tribal tongues. The Ministry has also signed an MoU with CIIL on language documentation and corpus development.
- Geography: Adi Vaani's languages span many States – Bhili (Madhya Pradesh), Mundari (Jharkhand), Santali and Kui (Odisha), Gondi (Chhattisgarh), Garo (Meghalaya), Kokborok (Tripura), Betta Kuruba (Karnataka), Katkari (Maharashtra), Koya (Andhra Pradesh), Thadou Kuki and Tangkhul (Manipur) and Chodri (Gujarat). Kokborok has been an official language of Tripura, along with Bengali, since 1979.

Tamil Nadu link: In PIB's list of the 13 Adi Vaani languages, none is yet shown against Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu's Tribal Research Centre is at Udhagamandalam (Nilgiris); it began in 1983-84 under Tamil University, Thanjavur, and has been run directly by the State since 1995; studying tribal languages is one of its tasks. The Todas, Kotas, Irulas, Kurumbas, Paniyans and Kattunayakans are Tamil Nadu's six Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

On 15 November 2026 PIB released an official factsheet on the progress of 'Adi Vaani', which the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs describes as India's first AI-based translation platform for tribal languages.

What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Platform: Adi Vaani – AI translation for tribal languages; Ministry: Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs; Beta launch: 1 Sept 2025 – Santali, Bhili, Mundari, Gondi; Mysuru conclave: 24 Aug 2026 – upgraded version, iOS app, +5 languages, 'Jago' AI assistant.

What is the background to this news?

Constitution: Article 342 provides for notifying Scheduled Tribes. Per Census 2011, tribals are 8.6% of India's population; the Bhil are the most populous tribe, followed by the Gond.

Practice questions (with answers)

1. Which institution led the academic consortium that built the Adi Vaani platform?

A) IIT Madras

B) IIT Delhi

C) IISc Bengaluru

D) IIIT Hyderabad

Answer: B – Explanation: IIT Delhi, with BITS Pilani, IIIT Hyderabad, IIIT Nava Raipur and State Tribal Research Institutes.

2. Santali, one of Adi Vaani's first languages, is written in which script?

A) Ol Chiki

B) Gunjala Gondi

C) Warang Citi

D) Sorang Sompeng

Answer: A – Explanation: Ol Chiki – devised by Raghunath Murmu in 1925. Warang Citi is for Ho; Sorang Sompeng for Sora.

3. The Bhil, whose Bhili is on Adi Vaani, hold which distinction as per Census 2011?

A) Smallest PVTG

B) Largest tribe of NE

C) An island tribe

D) Most populous tribe

Answer: D – Explanation: India's most populous Scheduled Tribe (about 1.7 crore); the Gond are second.

4. The UN General Assembly's 'International Decade of Indigenous Languages' covers which period?

A) 2015–2024

B) 2019–2028

C) 2020–2029

D) 2022–2032

Answer: D – Explanation: 2022–2032, led by UNESCO. The year 2019 was observed as the International Year of Indigenous Languages.

5. Kokborok, now on Adi Vaani, is an official language of which State?

A) Mizoram

B) Manipur

C) Tripura

D) Meghalaya

Answer: C – Explanation: Tripura – an official language with Bengali since 1979. Garo is from Meghalaya; Tangkhul from Manipur.

Sources: PIB – Ministry of Tribal Affairs backgrounder, Release ID 2336424 (15 Nov 2026) – pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2336424; PIB Release ID 2302927 (24 Aug 2026, Mysuru conclave); PIB release of 1 Sept 2025 (beta launch); TN Adi Dravidar & Tribal Welfare Dept – tntribalwelfare.tn.gov.in/tribal_research_centre.php. © Shanmugam IAS Academy.