Culture Ministry launches 'Sanskriti' AI search platform

Topics: Art & Culture · UPSC Prelims · TNPSC · SSC · Current Affairs



News

On Monday, 16 November 2026, the Union Ministry of Culture launched 'Sanskriti', an AI-powered semantic search and knowledge-discovery platform with a conversational assistant (chatbot). It runs on the ministry's main website, culture.gov.in; no new website was built. Culture Secretary Vivek Aggarwal said it answers only from authorised information on more than 65 websites of the ministry and its institutions. Working in 22 Indian languages with the help of Bhashini, it accepts voice questions, reads answers aloud and needs no login. It queries databases such as Gyan Bharatam, Abhilekh Patal, the Indian Culture portal and 'Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar' live, and each answer carries citation links to ministry pages (ThePrint). The ministry is also considering using AI to trace stolen antiquities.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Name	Sanskriti
Launched	16 November 2026 (Monday)
Ministry	Union Ministry of Culture
Hosted on	culture.gov.in
Answers from	65+ ministry/institution websites

Point	Details
Languages	22 Indian languages (via Bhashini)
Technology	RAG, embeddings, knowledge graph; open-source models
Features	voice input, read-aloud, cited answers
Announced by	Culture Secretary Vivek Aggarwal

Background

- In RAG (Retrieval-Augmented Generation), the AI model first retrieves trusted documents and then generates its answer from them, reducing the chance of 'hallucination'. Sanskriti runs on the ministry's own servers (on-premises) and is LLM-agnostic.
- The Ministry of Culture has 43 organisations under it (ThePrint). PM Modi launched the 'Gyan Bharatam' manuscripts portal on 12 September 2025. The 'Indian Culture' portal, live since December 2019, was upgraded to version 2.0 in March 2026 with an AI chatbot named 'Bharti'.
- 'Bhashini' is the National Language Translation Mission of the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY), offering text and speech translation across Indian languages. 'Abhilekh Patal' is the online records portal of the National Archives of India.
- The Eighth Schedule of the Constitution lists 22 languages, Tamil among them. The ministry says that answering only from official sources will help curb misinformation on culture and history.

Tamil Nadu link: Sanskriti also answers in Tamil (one of its 22 languages). Of the Culture Ministry's seven Zonal Cultural Centres, the South Zone Cultural Centre (SZCC) is located at 'Dakshini', Medical College Road, Thanjavur (SZCC website).

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

On Monday, 16 November 2026, the Union Ministry of Culture launched 'Sanskriti', an AI-powered semantic search and knowledge-discovery platform with a conversational assistant (chatbot).

What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Name: Sanskriti; Launched: 16 November 2026 (Monday); Ministry: Union Ministry of Culture; Hosted on: culture.gov.in.

What is the background to this news?

In RAG (Retrieval-Augmented Generation), the AI model first retrieves trusted documents and then generates its answer from them, reducing the chance of 'hallucination'.

Practice questions (with answers)

1. 'Bhashini', which lets Sanskriti answer in 22 languages, comes under which Union ministry?

A) Electronics & IT

B) Education

C) Culture

D) Info & Broadcasting

Answer: A – Explanation: MeitY – the National Language Translation Mission (Bhashini) provides text and speech translation across Indian languages.

2. 'Abhilekh Patal', one of the databases Sanskriti searches, is the records portal of which body?

A) ASI

B) Sahitya Akademi

C) National Archives

D) National Museum

Answer: C – Explanation: The National Archives of India (New Delhi) – the portal lets users search old government records online.

3. In the 'RAG' method used by Sanskriti, what does the AI model do first, before generating an answer?

A) Retrains itself

B) Retrieves documents

C) Encrypts the query

D) Compresses the model

Answer: B – Explanation: RAG – Retrieval-Augmented Generation: the model first fetches trusted documents and then builds its answer from them.

4. In which city is the Culture Ministry's South Zone Cultural Centre (SZCC) located?

A) Hyderabad

B) Bengaluru

C) Thiruvananthapuram

D) Thanjavur

Answer: D – Explanation: Thanjavur (Tamil Nadu). The Culture Ministry has seven Zonal Cultural Centres across India.

5. AI assistants like Sanskriti can err. In AI, what is meant by 'hallucination'?

A) Convincing false answer

B) Image generation

C) Voice cloning

D) Data encryption

Answer: A – Explanation: The AI gives a confident-sounding but false or made-up answer. Answering only from official sources reduces it.

Sources: SZCC; PIB (MeitY, Bhashini); National Archives of India (Abhilekh Patal); News On AIR; ThePrint; Oneindia. © Shanmugam IAS Academy.