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✎ WHY IN NEWS

India's development story on March 7, 2026 was shaped by four converging themes: high-end global services through GCCs, population-scale genomic research infrastructure, convergence-based water conservation under Mission Amrit Sarovar, and deepening India-France naval cooperation through Exercise Varuna.

GLOBAL CAPABILITY CENTRES SHOWED INDIA'S SHIFT UP THE VALUE CHAIN

India's rise as a destination for **Global Capability Centres (GCCs)** remained one of the most significant economy stories in the March 7 cycle. According to **NASSCOM** and **Zinnov** industry assessments, India hosts over **1,760 GCCs** (more than 1,700 as of FY24), employs roughly **1.9 million professionals**, and generates approximately **USD 64.6 billion** in annual revenue. The mid-market segment alone accounts for **480+ centres** employing over **210,000 professionals**, making up 27% of India's GCC landscape.

The importance of GCCs is that they are no longer back-office units alone. Many now handle **engineering design, research and development, cybersecurity, AI and analytics, financial operations**, and global product management. This means India is moving from cost arbitrage toward capability arbitrage. By 2030, projections indicate over **2,400 GCCs** will operate in India, commanding a market size of nearly **USD 100 billion** and generating over **4.5 million jobs**.

For UPSC, GCCs are useful because they connect services exports, urban labour markets, skilling, digital infrastructure, and India's place in global corporate networks.

GENOMEINDIA MARKED A BIG STEP IN POPULATION-SCALE GENOMIC RESEARCH

The **GenomeIndia Project**, initiated on **3 January 2020** by the **Department of Biotechnology (DBT)**, Ministry of Science and Technology, stayed in focus because it has created one of the country's most important scientific datasets. Led by the **Centre for Brain Research at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru**, in collaboration with **20 institutions**, the project sequenced whole genomes of **10,000 healthy and unrelated Indians** from **83 diverse population groups**. A total of **20,000 samples** were collected, with **36.7% from rural**, **32.2% from urban**, and **31.1% from tribal populations**, covering all four major linguistic families: Indo-European, Dravidian, Austro-Asiatic, and Tibeto-Burman.

The data is hosted at the **Indian Biological Data Centre (IBDC)** at the **Regional Centre for Biotechnology (RCB), Faridabad**. The IBDC archives Fastq files of **9,772 samples (~700 TB)**, gcfs of **9,772 samples (~35 TB)**, and phenotypic data from **9,330 samples**. In **January 2025**, the Government announced completion of the project and made the data publicly accessible.

Its value lies in the fact that disease risk, drug response, and genetic variation differ across populations. A more representative Indian genomic reference can support precision medicine, public-health research, and a better understanding of rare diseases. It also raises legitimate questions about privacy, consent, data governance, and benefit-sharing.

MISSION AMRIT SAROVAR ILLUSTRATED CONVERGENCE-BASED WATER CONSERVATION

Mission Amrit Sarovar, launched on **24 April 2022**, continued to matter because it is a practical example of how the state tries to revive local water bodies through convergence rather than a single standalone department. The mission originally aimed to build **75 ponds in each district**, with a national target of **50,000 water bodies** by **15 August 2023** (Amrit Varsh). It has since surpassed expectations, with over **68,000 Amrit Sarovars** constructed or rejuvenated as of early 2026.

The mission operates under a **“Whole of Government” approach**, implemented jointly by the **Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Jal Shakti**, and **Ministry of Panchayati Raj**, converging schemes such as **MGNREGA**, district planning, local bodies, and community participation.

This matters because water conservation cannot be solved only through mega-dams or urban supply systems. In much of India, local ponds, tanks, and check structures remain crucial for groundwater recharge, livestock, irrigation support, and climate adaptation. The implementation lesson is equally important: local water restoration works only when land ownership, maintenance responsibility, and community use are addressed together.

EXERCISE VARUNA REFLECTED DEPTH IN INDIA-FRANCE MARITIME COOPERATION

Exercise Varuna, the India-France bilateral naval exercise, remained a significant defence story because it reflects a long-term strategic partnership in the **Indian Ocean**. The exercise was first initiated in **1993** and formally christened “**Varuna**” in **2001**. The **23rd edition** was conducted between **19 and 22 March 2025**, featuring aircraft carriers **INS Vikrant** and **Charles de Gaulle**, alongside their fighter aircraft, destroyers, frigates, and a Kalvari-class submarine.

Naval exercises like Varuna are not symbolic events alone; they help build interoperability in **air defence, anti-submarine warfare, cross-deck operations, replenishment-at-sea, minesweeping, and coordinated maritime surveillance**. The exercise is held alternately in the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea.

For India, France is a particularly important partner because of its own military presence in the Indian Ocean (through bases in Reunion, Djibouti, and Abu Dhabi) and its broader role in defence technology cooperation. In a region shaped by sea-lane competition and extra-regional power rivalry, such exercises strengthen India’s maritime posture without relying on formal alliance structures.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GCCs, NASSCOM, services exports; GenomeIndia Project, IBDC, IISc; Mission Amrit Sarovar, 24 April 2022, MGNREGA convergence; Exercise Varuna, 1993/2001, India-France naval cooperation.

MAINS GS-2:

International partnerships and cooperative governance.

MAINS GS-3:

Services-led growth, genomics, water conservation, maritime security.

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

GLOBAL CAPABILITY CENTRES:

India hosts over **1,760 GCCs** (1,700+ as of FY24)
 Employment: approximately **1.9 million professionals**
 Annual revenue: approximately **USD 64.6 billion**
 Mid-market GCCs: **480+ centres**, 27% of India's GCC landscape
 Work areas: R&D, analytics, finance, cybersecurity, engineering design, AI
 Projection by 2030: **2,400+ GCCs**, **USD 100 billion** market, **4.5 million jobs**

GENOMEINDIA PROJECT:

Initiated: **3 January 2020** by the Department of Biotechnology
 Led by: Centre for Brain Research, **IISc Bengaluru**, with **20 institutions**
 Sequenced: **10,000 whole genomes** from **83 population groups**
 Total samples collected: **20,000** (36.7% rural, 32.2% urban, 31.1% tribal)
 Data hosted at: **IBDC, Regional Centre for Biotechnology, Faridabad**
 Data volume: **~700 TB** of Fastq files archived
 Uses: precision medicine, rare-disease research, population genetics
 Completion announced: **January 2025**

MISSION AMRIT SAROVAR:

Launched: **24 April 2022**
 Original target: **50,000 water bodies** by 15 August 2023
 Achievement: over **68,000 Amrit Sarovars** constructed or rejuvenated
 Implementing ministries: Rural Development, Jal Shakti, Panchayati Raj
 Convergence with: MGNREGA, district plans, community participation

EXERCISE VARUNA:

Bilateral naval exercise between **India and France**
 Initiated in **1993**; christened "Varuna" in **2001**
 23rd edition: **19-22 March 2025** (INS Vikrant and Charles de Gaulle)
 Focus: anti-submarine warfare, cross-deck operations, replenishment-at-sea
 Held alternately in the **Indian Ocean** and the **Mediterranean Sea**

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

GCC growth CAGR from 2022: **19%**
 GenomeIndia covered all 4 linguistic families: Indo-European, Dravidian, Austro-Asiatic, Tibeto-Burman
 France has Indian Ocean military presence via bases in Reunion, Djibouti, and Abu Dhabi

Sources: [NASSCOM](#) , [Department of Biotechnology](#) , [Indian Biological Data Centre](#) , [Mission Amrit Sarovar](#) ,
[Indian Navy](#) , [PIB](#)

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