



## **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 14-01-2026**

### **Mapping Perspective**

1. Shaksgam Valley

### **Prelims Perspective**

2. Bhadrakali Inscription
3. Catastrophe Bonds (CAT Bonds)

### **Mains Perspective**

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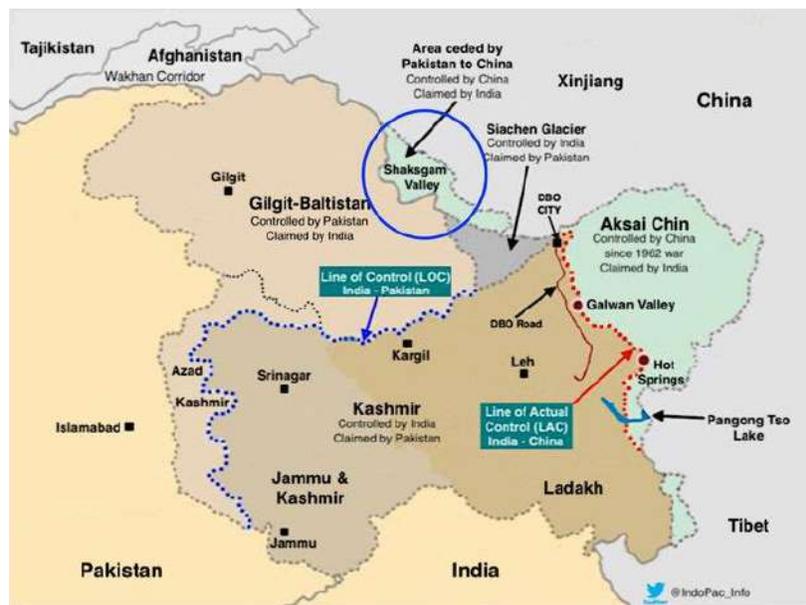
## Shaksgam Valley

Syllabus: GS-1: Indian Geography – Political Map & GS-3: Internal Security – Border Disputes.

Context:

- **China rejected India's territorial claim** over the **Shaksgam Valley**, asserting that the region forms part of Chinese territory.
- India maintains that the valley is **an integral part of the former princely state of Jammu & Kashmir**, and hence legally belongs to India.
- The statement has renewed focus on **China-Pakistan collusion** in territories under **Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK)** and its implications for India's sovereignty.

### About Shaksgam Valley (Trans-Karakoram Tract)



### Location & Geographical Setting

- Lies in the **Hunza-Gilgit region of POK**.
- **Borders:**
  - **North:** Xinjiang (China)
  - **South & West:** Northern Areas of POK
  - **East:** Siachen Glacier region
- Forms part of the **strategically sensitive Karakoram region**.

### Political and Legal Status

- **Claimed by India**, as part of the undivided Jammu & Kashmir.

- **Controlled by Pakistan** until 1963; later transferred to China.
- Considered **illegal cession** by India, as Pakistan has no sovereign authority over POK.

### 1963 Sino-Pakistan Boundary Agreement

- Pakistan **ceded Shaksgam Valley to China** under a boundary agreement.
- **Crucial Clause (Article 6):**
  - The agreement is **provisional**.
  - After final settlement of the **Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan**, the **sovereign authority concerned** shall reopen negotiations with China to sign a **formal boundary treaty**.
- India cites this clause to assert that:
  - China's claim lacks final legal validity.
  - The area's status remains **disputed under international law**.

### Strategic Importance

- Laid the foundation for the **Karakoram Highway**, constructed jointly by China and Pakistan in the 1970s.
- Integral to:
  - China-Pakistan strategic partnership
  - China's western connectivity and access to South Asia
- Enhances China's proximity to:
  - Siachen Glacier
  - Ladakh sector

### Why It Matters for India (UPSC Relevance)

- **Sovereignty Issue:** Reinforces India's consistent position on POK and illegal territorial transfers.
- **China-Pakistan Nexus:** Highlights strategic coordination affecting India's northern borders.
- **Security Concerns:** Proximity to Siachen and Ladakh increases military sensitivities.
- **International Law Angle:** Provisional nature of the 1963 agreement weakens China's absolute claim.

### Conclusion

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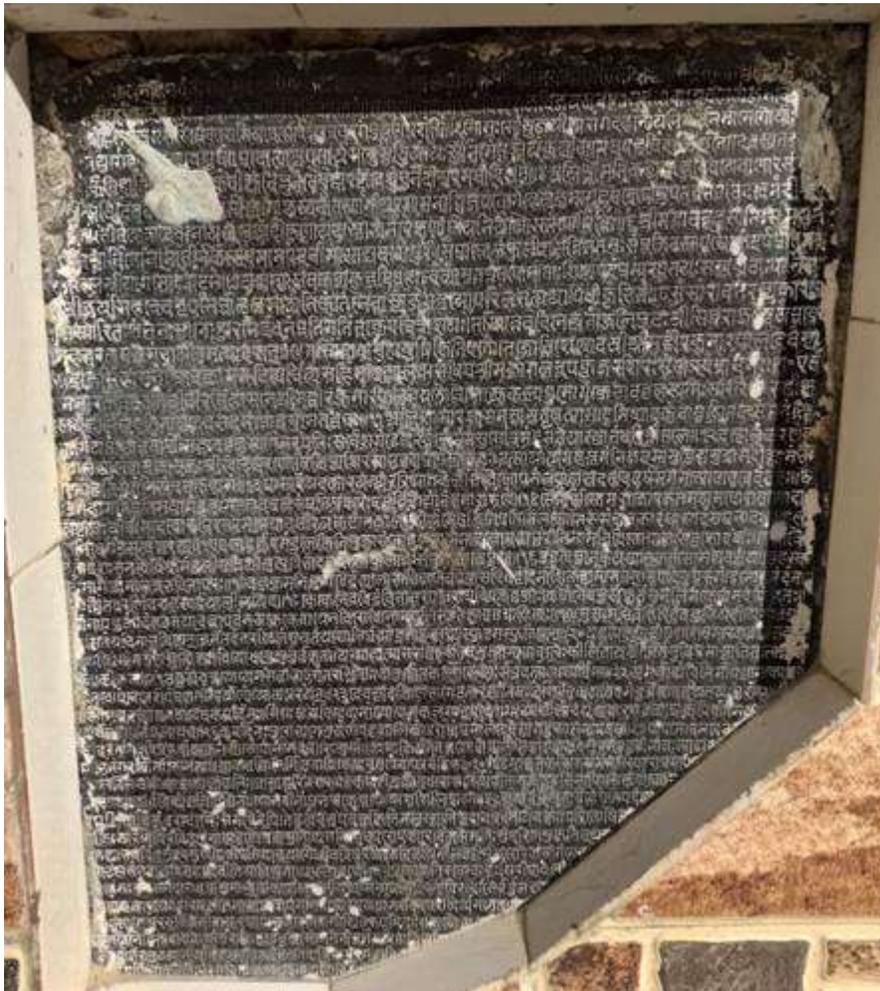
The renewed Chinese assertion over the Shaksgam Valley brings back focus on **unfinished boundary questions, Pakistan's lack of legal authority over POK**, and the **strategic implications of Sino-Pak cooperation**. For India, it remains a **core territorial and sovereignty issue** with long-term geopolitical consequences.

## **Bhadrakali Inscription**

**Syllabus: GS -1; Indian History (Ancient & Medieval), Art & Culture**

### **Context**

The Bhadrakali inscription, a significant 12th-century epigraph, provides crucial historical evidence regarding the origin, evolution, and royal patronage of the Somnath Temple under the Solanki dynasty.



### About Bhadrakali Inscription

- **Location:** Prabhas Patan, Gujarat; engraved on the wall of the Bhadrakali Temple
- **Date:** 1169 CE
  - Valabhi Samvat: 850
  - Vikram Samvat: 1255
- **Protection:** State Department of Archaeology, Gujarat
- **Nature:** Eulogistic inscription
- **Subject:** Param Pashupata Acharya **Shriman Bhavabrihaspati**, spiritual preceptor of **Maharajadhiraj Kumarapala** of Anhilwad Patan

### Historical Significance

- Records the ancient and medieval history of the **Somnath Temple**
- Describes reconstruction of the temple across all four **Yugas**:
  - **Satya Yuga:** Built of gold by **Chandra (Soma)**
  - **Treta Yuga:** Built of silver by **Ravana**
  - **Dvapara Yuga:** Built of wood by **Shri Krishna**
  - **Kali Yuga:** Stone temple constructed by **King Bhimdev Solanki**
- Reflects the religious devotion of Solanki rulers and scholarly influence of Bhavabrihaspati

## Catastrophe Bonds (CAT Bonds)

**Syllabus: GS-3; Indian Economy, Disaster Management**

### Context

The **Kerala government** has urged the Union government to consider the adoption of **catastrophe bonds** to safeguard against disaster-induced financial losses.

### About Catastrophe Bonds

- Insurance-linked securities that transfer disaster-related financial risks from governments to capital markets
- Hybrid instruments combining features of **insurance and debt securities**
- Convert insurance coverage into **tradable financial products**
- Currently, disaster-related financial risks are largely borne by governments

## Mechanism and Stakeholders

- **Sponsors:** Sovereign governments paying premiums
- **Issuers/Intermediaries:** Institutions like the **World Bank** or **Asian Development Bank**
- **Investors:** Pension funds, hedge funds, and family offices
- **Coupon rates:** Depend on probability and severity of disasters
  - Earthquake bonds: Lower premiums (1–2%)
  - Cyclone/hurricane bonds: Higher premiums

## Global Examples

- Countries such as **Mexico** and the **Philippines** use CAT bonds for disaster risk mitigation

## **Bhoomi - a governance success**

**Syllabus: GS-2: Governance – eGovernance Projects.**

### Context:

Karnataka's Bhoomi project, now completing 25 years, offers an instructive counterpoint showing how administrative reform can reshape the relationship between governance and the people.

### Bhoomi Project: A Governance Success

#### Introduction / Context

- *Bhoomi* is a **land records digitisation initiative** implemented by the Government of Karnataka.
- It represents an early and successful example of **technology-driven governance reform** in India.
- The project sought to address chronic issues of **corruption, delays, opacity and discretionary power** in land administration.

#### Problem in Traditional Land Administration

- Manual maintenance of land records led to:
  - Delays in accessing Records of Rights, Tenancy and Crops (RTC).
  - Manipulation of records and rent-seeking behaviour.
  - Dependence of farmers on lower-level revenue officials.

- Frequent land disputes due to unclear or outdated records.
- Lack of transparency weakened **property rights**, rural credit access and agricultural planning.

### Objectives of Bhoomi

- Digitisation of land records across the State.
- Ensuring **transparency and accountability** in land governance.
- Providing **easy, timely and affordable access** to land records for farmers.
- Reducing corruption by minimising human discretion.
- Improving efficiency in land mutations and record updation.



### Key Features of Bhoomi

- **Digitised RTCs** available through computerised kiosks at taluk offices.
- **Biometric authentication** for officials to prevent unauthorised data manipulation.
- **Online mutation system** for ownership changes after sale or inheritance.
- Centralised database enabling uniformity and standardisation.
- Citizen-centric service delivery with fixed user charges.

### Governance Innovations

- Shift from **official-centric to citizen-centric administration**.
- Replacement of opaque processes with **rule-based digital workflows**.
- Separation of data entry, verification and approval to reduce collusion.
- Creation of audit trails, enhancing accountability.
- Use of technology as an **institutional reform tool**, not merely automation.

### Outcomes and Impact

### Positive Impacts

- Significant reduction in corruption and rent-seeking.
- Faster service delivery and improved ease of access for farmers.
- Enhanced trust in land records, reducing disputes.
- Improved access to institutional credit due to reliable land titles.
- Strengthening of rural governance and administrative credibility.

### Broader Effects

- Empowerment of small and marginal farmers.
- Better land-use planning and agricultural decision-making.
- Demonstrated scalability of digital public service delivery.

### Bhoomi as a Model of Good Governance

Bhoomi reflects key principles of good governance:

- **Transparency** – Open access to records.
- **Accountability** – Digital logs and authentication.
- **Efficiency** – Reduced time and transaction costs.
- **Equity** – Uniform service delivery irrespective of social status.
- **Rule of law** – Stronger protection of property rights.

### Challenges and Limitations

- Digital divide affecting access for digitally illiterate citizens.
- Dependence on accurate initial data entry.
- Need for continuous updating to maintain record integrity.
- Resistance from entrenched administrative interests during early phases.

### Linkages with National Reforms

- Bhoomi laid the foundation for later initiatives under:
  - Digital land governance reforms.
  - National land records modernisation efforts.
- Influenced replication and adaptation by other States.
- Demonstrates the importance of **State-level innovation** in federal governance.

### Conclusion / Way Forward

- Bhoomi illustrates that **technology, when embedded in institutional reform**, can deliver lasting governance outcomes.
- Its success lies not merely in digitisation but in redesigning processes to reduce discretion.
- Future land governance reforms must focus on:
  - Data accuracy and interoperability.
  - Digital inclusion.
  - Integration with courts, banks and urban land systems.

## **Pax Silica Initiative**

**Syllabus: GS-2: International Relations – Multilateral Initiatives.**

**Context:**

- The **United States** has announced that **India will be invited to join the US-led Pax Silica Initiative** next month.
- The move is aimed at **stabilising and deepening India–US strategic and trade relations**, particularly in **semiconductors, AI, and critical technologies**.
- Pax Silica focuses on **securing silicon-, semiconductor-, and AI-critical supply chains** amid intensifying **geopolitical rivalry and techno-nationalism**.

**About Pax Silica Initiative**



**What is Pax Silica?**

- A **US-led economic security and technology partnership**.
- Objective: To build a **secure, resilient, and innovation-driven global supply chain** for:

- Silicon & semiconductors
- Artificial Intelligence
- Critical minerals
- Advanced manufacturing

### Launched by

- Led by the **United States Department of State**
- First **Pax Silica Summit** held in **December 2025**

### Participating Countries

#### Core members

- Japan
- South Korea
- Singapore
- Netherlands
- United Kingdom
- Israel
- United Arab Emirates
- Australia

#### Guest partners

- Taiwan
- European Union
- Canada
- OECD

### Key Features

- **End-to-end technology chain coverage**
  - From raw materials → wafers → chips → AI infrastructure
  - Prevents chokepoints and single-country dominance
- **Trusted technology ecosystems**
  - Cooperation restricted to **reliable partner nations**
  - Minimises risks of **espionage, sabotage, IP theft, and data breaches**

- **Long-term supply & capacity building**
  - Stable investments
  - Promotion of new **fabs, foundries, and processing units**
- **Anti-dumping & coercion coordination**
  - Collective response to **market flooding, export controls, and political pressure**
- **Economic–national security convergence**
  - Recognises that **control over chips and AI = strategic power**

### Significance of Pax Silica

#### Global Level

- **US-led AI–chip bloc**
  - Consolidates control over large parts of the **advanced semiconductor ecosystem**
- **Reduced strategic vulnerability**
  - Less dependence on **hostile or geopolitically unstable suppliers**
- **Rules-based tech order**
  - Reinforces standards, transparency, and trusted supply chains

#### Significance for India

- **Access to high-end semiconductors & AI chips**
- **Integration into global value chains**
  - Boosts electronics, AI, and defence manufacturing
- **Attracts global investors**
  - Supports India’s semiconductor mission and industrial policy
- **Strategic alignment with US and allies**
  - Enhances India’s role in the **Indo-Pacific tech-security architecture**
- **Supports digital & defence ambitions**
  - Critical for AI, 5G/6G, space, and military technologies

#### Mains Value Addition

- Pax Silica reflects the shift from **globalisation to “friend-shoring”** in critical technologies.

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- Demonstrates how **economic security is becoming inseparable from national security**.
- Strengthens India's position in emerging **minilateral tech alliances**, complementing Quad and IPEF.

**Practice Qs:**

**Q. What is the Pax Silica Initiative? Examine its objectives and assess its strategic significance for India in the context of emerging geopolitical competition over semiconductors and artificial intelligence. (15 marks, 250 words)**