GENERAL STUDIES I

Land Stack & Glossary of Revenue Terms: India's Next Step in Digital Land Governance

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Land Stack is an integrated GIS-based digital platform for land and property records, introduced alongside the Glossary of Revenue Terms under India's Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP). Drawing inspiration from international land administration practices, the initiative aims to support better integration, accessibility and management of land information. This UPSC-focused article explains its objectives, potential benefits, implementation challenges, constitutional significance, and connections with governance, land reforms, and economic development.

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UPSC CURRENT AFFAIRS 2026 | GS PAPER II & III | LAND GOVERNANCE

1. Why Is Land Stack in the News?

The Government of India launched Land Stack and released the Glossary of Revenue Terms (GoRT) on 31 December 2025.

These initiatives form part of efforts to modernise land administration under the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP).

Land Stack is an **integrated Geographic Information System (GIS)-based digital platform** designed to bring together land and property information.

The initial pilot locations were Chandigarh and Tamil Nadu.

> **UPSC Relevance:** E-governance, land reforms, property rights, GIS technology, cooperative federalism, agriculture and economic development.

2. What Is Land Stack?

Land Stack is a GIS-based digital framework intended to integrate information maintained by different land-related departments.

It draws inspiration from international land administration practices in countries such as Singapore, the United Kingdom and Finland.

Core Objectives

- Provide integrated access to land-related information.
- Improve transparency in property transactions.
- Support informed decisions by citizens.
- Improve coordination between departments.
- Reduce fragmented land information.
- Support evidence-based government planning.

> **Core Idea:** Land Stack seeks to connect land records, spatial maps, registration information and other relevant datasets through interoperable digital systems.

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3. Key Features of Land Stack

GIS Integration

Connects land information with geographical and spatial maps.

Single-Window Access

Aims to reduce the need to consult several departments separately.

Interoperability

Supports exchange of information between land-related systems.

Transparency

Can improve access to relevant property information.

Better Due Diligence

Can help identify certain property-related risks before transactions.

Data-Driven Planning

Supports informed administrative and development decisions.

4. What Is the Glossary of Revenue Terms?

GoRT stands for Glossary of Revenue Terms.

It was released to address differences in land-revenue terminology across Indian States.

Historical revenue systems have produced diverse regional terminology.

For example, terms such as Khasra and Dag may be used in different regional land-record systems.

Important Features

- Provides explanations of land-revenue terminology.
- Includes vernacular, Hindi, English and Roman-script forms.
- Helps officials interpret regional terminology.
- Supports comparability and interoperability.
- Does not replace State-specific terminology.

Institutional Development

GoRT was prepared by the Department of Land Resources in collaboration with the Centre of Excellence in Land Administration and Management at YASHADA, Pune.

> **Prelims Distinction:** Land Stack integrates land-related datasets. GoRT harmonises the understanding of land-revenue terminology.

5. Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme

DILRMP aims to modernise land records and create a comprehensive, transparent land-information management system.

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Background

- The National Land Records Modernization Programme was approved in 2008.
- It was subsequently revamped as DILRMP.
- From 1 April 2016, DILRMP became a Central Sector Scheme with 100% Central funding.

Main Objectives

1. Digitisation of land records.
2. Digitisation of cadastral maps.
3. Integration of textual and spatial records.
4. Modernisation of registration systems.
5. Reduction of land disputes.
6. Prevention of fraudulent transactions.
7. Improved access to land information.

6. DILRMP 3.0: Important 2026 Update

On 10 September 2026, the Government launched operational guidelines for DILRMP 3.0.

The programme covers 2026–2031 and has an approved outlay of ?565.50 crore.

Major Components

Component	Purpose
National Land Stack	Federated integration of State land-information systems.
Bhu-Aadhaar / ULPIN	14-digit unique identifier for land parcels.
Georeferenced Maps	Improved spatial accuracy of cadastral information.
Registration Seva Kendras	Modernised citizen-friendly registration services.
Legacy Record Scanning	Digital preservation of historical records.
Registration Repository	Integrated deed and encumbrance information.
Paperless Revenue Courts	Improved case management and links with land records.
NAKSHA	GIS-based urban land mapping.

What Is Bhu-Aadhaar?

The Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN), popularly called Bhu-Aadhaar, is a 14-digit identifier designed for land parcels.

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It helps establish a consistent parcel identity across digital land systems.

> **Important:** Bhu-Aadhaar is a land-parcel identifier. It is not the same as an individual's Aadhaar number and does not, by itself, guarantee legal ownership.

7. Role of GIS in Land Administration

GIS stands for Geographic Information System.

It enables information to be linked with geographical locations and spatial maps.

Applications in Land Governance

- Mapping land parcels.
- Identifying spatial boundaries.
- Supporting land-use planning.
- Comparing maps with textual records.
- Improving infrastructure planning.
- Supporting disaster-risk assessment.

What Is a Cadastral Map?

A cadastral map represents land parcels and their boundaries for land administration purposes.

Digitisation and georeferencing can help connect such maps with Records of Rights.

8. Constitutional and Governance Significance

Constitutional Dimension

Land administration is primarily a State subject.

Entries 18 and 45 of the State List are relevant to land and land revenue.

The Union Government supports modernisation through financial and technical assistance.

Cooperative Federalism

A federated Land Stack can support interoperability while allowing State authorities to retain control over their respective datasets.

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Economic Significance

- Better property due diligence.
- Potential reduction in fraudulent transactions.
- Improved access to relevant land information.
- Support for agricultural credit.
- Improved infrastructure planning.
- Potential reduction in administrative transaction costs.

9. Challenges and Way Forward

Major Challenges

- Inaccurate legacy records.
- Differences in State revenue systems.
- Mismatch between textual records and maps.
- Unresolved ownership disputes.
- Cybersecurity and privacy concerns.
- Unequal administrative capacity.
- Digital literacy and access barriers.

Way Forward

1. Improve field-level record verification.
2. Strengthen cadastral surveys.
3. Adopt interoperable data standards.
4. Provide accessible grievance redressal.
5. Protect sensitive property information.
6. Improve training of revenue officials.
7. Coordinate registration, revenue and survey systems.

> **Policy Principle:** Digitisation improves access to records, but accurate land titles also require sound legal procedures, verification and dispute resolution.

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10. UPSC Prelims Quick Revision

Topic	Important Fact
Land Stack	Integrated GIS-based land-information platform
Launch Date	31 December 2025
Initial Pilots	Chandigarh and Tamil Nadu
GoRT	Glossary of Revenue Terms
Nodal Department	Department of Land Resources
Ministry	Ministry of Rural Development
DILRMP	Digital India Land Records Modernization Pr[illegible]
DILRMP 3.0	Operational guidelines launched in S[illegible]026
ULPIN	Unique Land Parcel Identification N[illegible]
Bhu-Aadhaar	14-digit land-parcel i[illegible]
GIS	Geographic I[illegible] System
Land	State List, E[illegible]18
Land Revenue	State List, Entry 45

11. UPSC Mains Answer-Writing Strategy

GS Paper II

Discuss e-governance, transparency, accountability, citizen services and cooperative federalism.

GS Paper III

Explain land reforms, agricultural productivity, property rights, institutional credit and economic development.

> **Suggested Structure:** Introduction ? Land-record problems ? Land Stack features ? Benefits ? Challenges ? Way forward ? Conclusion.

12. Conclusion

Land Stack represents a shift from fragmented digital land records towards integrated, GIS-enabled land governance.

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Together with GoRT and DILRMP 3.0, it can support better administrative coordination, property-related transparency and evidence-based planning.

However, successful reform will require accurate records, legal safeguards, interoperability and effective grievance redressal.

> **Final UPSC Takeaway:** Digital land governance must combine technology, reliable records, citizen access and legal accountability.

13. UPSC Previous Year Questions and Practice MCQs with Answers

> **Question Bank:** Five relevant UPSC PYQs from 2016–2024 are followed by five original practice MCQs. The practice questions are not official PYQs.

Part A: Verified UPSC PYQs

UPSC PRELIMS 2024

PYQ 1: DILRMP

With reference to the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme, consider the statements:

1. The Central Government provides 100% funding.
2. Cadastral maps are digitised.
3. An initiative supports transliteration of Records of Rights from local languages into Constitution-recognised languages.

(A) 1 and 2 only
(B) 2 and 3 only
(C) 1 and 3 only
(D) 1, 2 and 3

Correct Answer and Explanation

> **Correct Answer: (D) 1, 2 and 3**

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Statement 1: Correct. DILRMP is a Central Sector Scheme with 100% Central funding.

Statement 2: Correct. Digitisation of cadastral maps is an important component.

Statement 3: Correct. Transliteration of Records of Rights supports wider language accessibility.

Land Stack Link: Land Stack builds on digitised and interoperable land information.

UPSC MAINS 2024 | GS III

PYQ 2: Success of Land Reforms

What factors contributed to the successful implementation of land reforms in certain parts of India? Elaborate.

Suggested Answer and Explanation

> **Core Answer:** Effective land reforms require political commitment, accurate records and strong institutions.

- Political will and administrative commitment.
- Implementation of tenancy reforms.
- Enforcement of land-ceiling provisions.
- Updating land records.
- Public awareness and local participation.
- Effective grievance redressal.

Land Stack Link: Integrated digital records can improve transparency and administrative efficiency, but do not replace substantive land reforms.

UPSC MAINS 2023 | GS III

PYQ 3: Objectives and Measures of Land Reforms

State the objectives and measures of land reforms in India. Explain how land-ceiling policy can be considered an effective reform under economic criteria.

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Suggested Answer and Explanation

> **Core Answer:** Land reforms aim to improve equity, productivity and access to land.

Major measures:

- Abolition of intermediaries.
- Tenancy reforms.
- Land-ceiling legislation.
- Consolidation of holdings.
- Updating land records.

Land-ceiling measures seek to limit excessive concentration of land and enable redistribution of surplus land, subject to implementation.

Land Stack Link: Accurate land records can assist implementation, monitoring and verification of reforms.

UPSC MAINS 2021 GS-III

PYQ 4: Marginal and Small Farmers

How did land reforms in certain parts of India help improve the socio-economic conditions of marginal and small farmers?

Suggested Answer and Explanation

> **Core Answer:** Land reforms can improve tenure security and reduce agrarian inequality.

- Improved security of land tenure.
- Reduction in exploitative tenancy arrangements.
- Greater access to productive assets.
- Improved incentives for investment.
- Potential improvement in credit access.

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- Stronger socio-economic position of farmers.

Land Stack Link: Accessible and reliable land records can support farmers in documentation and institutional transactions.

UPSC MAINS 2016 | GS III

PYQ 5: Land Reforms and Agricultural Development

Discuss the role of land reforms in agricultural development. Identify factors responsible for their success in India.

Suggested Answer and Explanation

> **Core Answer:** Land reforms support agricultural development by improving incentives, tenure security and resource distribution.

- Reduction of exploitative intermediaries.
- Improved land-tenure security.
- Consolidation of fragmented holdings.
- More equitable land distribution.
- Better incentives for agricultural investment.
- Stronger administrative implementation.

Land Stack Link: Digital land information can strengthen implementation capacity and transparency.

Part B: Original UPSC-Style Practice MCQs

PRACTICE MCQ 1 | NOT A PYQ

Land Stack Launch

Land Stack was initially launched as a pilot in which locations?

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(A) Kerala and Delhi

(B) Chandigarh and Tamil Nadu

(C) Gujarat and Maharashtra

(D) Assam and Odisha

Correct Answer and Explanation

> **Answer: (B)**

The initial pilot locations were Chandigarh and Tamil Nadu.

PRACTICE MCQ 2 | NOT A PYQ

Glossary of Revenue Terms

What is the main purpose of GoRT?

(A) Replace all State land laws

(B) Harmonise understanding of land-revenue terminology

(C) Fix agricultural market prices

(D) Determine property tax rates

Correct Answer and Explanation

> **Answer: (B)**

GoRT helps users understand regional land-revenue terminology without replacing State-specific terms.

PRACTICE MCQ 3 | NOT A PYQ

Bhu-Aadhaar

ULPIN is primarily:

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(A) A 12-digit citizen identifier

(B) A 14-digit land-parcel identifier

(C) A farm insurance policy number

(D) A property tax exemption certificate

Correct Answer and Explanation

Answer: (B)

ULPIN, or Bhu-Aadhaar, provides a 14-digit identifier for land parcels.

PRACTICE MCQ 4 | NOT A PYQ

Constitutional Distribution of Powers

Land is primarily included in which constitutional list?

(A) Union List

(B) State List

(C) Concurrent List

(D) Residuary Powers

Correct Answer and Explanation

Answer: (B) State List

Land is covered by Entry 18 of the State List in the Seventh Schedule.

PRACTICE MCQ 5 | NOT A PYQ

GIS Technology

What is the full form of GIS?

(A) Government Information Service

(B) Geographic Information System

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(C) General Infrastructure Survey

(D) Global Investment Scheme

Correct Answer and Explanation

Answer: (B)

GIS stands for Geographic Information System. It is used to organise and analyse information linked to geographical locations.

PYQ Trend Analysis

- Digitisation of land records.
- Land reforms and agricultural productivity.
- Land-ceiling legislation.
- Tenancy security and farmers' welfare.
- Land administration and transparency.
- GIS, cadastral maps and property records.

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