

National Archives of India (NAI)

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In news— Director-General of NAI has said that NAI does not have records of 1962, 1965, and 1971 wars, or even of the Green Revolution. In this context let us look at the NAI, its role and significance.

About NAI-

- The NAI, which **functions under the Ministry of Culture, is the repository of all non-current government records**, holding them for the use of administrators and scholars.
- **Originally established as the Imperial Record Department in 1891 in Calcutta**, the capital of British India, the **NAI is now located in Delhi**.
- It **keeps and conserves records of the government and its organisations only**, and does not receive classified documents.
- Officials claim the holdings in NAI are in a regular series starting from the year 1748, and the **languages of the records include English, Arabic, Hindi, Persian, Sanskrit and Urdu**.
- Lately, NAI has also made efforts to make available all the records digitally – on the newly created **Abhilekh Patal portal**. However, five years later, it's a work in progress and the entire holdings haven't been digitised.
- **As per the Public Records Act, 1993, various central ministries and departments are supposed to transfer records more than 25 years old to the NAI**, unless they pertain to classified information.
- However, it is **up to the respective ministries and departments to ascertain** what is classified information, and that is where subjective opinions may kick in.
- **Various ministries and administrations come up with**

their own definitions of what is classified and what is non-current.

- Opacity and lack of accessibility are just a few of the issues regularly faced by researchers at the archives, irrespective of the administrations in power.
- There are in all 151 ministries and departments, and the NAI has only records of 64 agencies, including 36 ministries and departments.
- **Several Union ministries and departments have not shared their records with NAI.**
- The NAI also holds regular exhibitions such as the **display of declassified files on Subhas Chandra Bose in 2016 and the recent exhibition, 'The Jammu and Kashmir Saga'**, commemorating 70 years of Jammu & Kashmir's accession to India. Between 1973 and 2015, the NAI has held 108 exhibitions on various themes.