



CAP2024

CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR PRELIMS

Crisp and Comprehensive Coverage of One Year Current Affairs for Prelims 2024

Art & Culture



volume **01**

KEY FEATURES OF CAP 2024

- Interactive classes with live doubt resolution by faculties.
- Comprehensive yet concise study material.
- Lectures that promote both conceptual clarity and interlinkage with Current Affairs.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ARCHITECTURE & SCULPTURE	Matangini Hazra	24
Konark Sun Temple	Lachit Borphukan	24
Sacred Ensembles Of Hoysalas	Nawab Wajid Ali Shah	24
Chausath Yogini Temple	Subramania Bharathi.....	25
Pre-Mauryan Era Evidences Found in Purana Qila.....	Ustad Ali Zaki Hader.....	26
Sharda Temple.....	Yeshwant Ghadge	26
Rudragiri Rock Art.....	Constantine Joseph Beschi	26
	Guru Tegh Bahadur.....	27
ART FORMS	FESTIVALS	
Seethakali Folk Art.....	Kharchi Puja: Festival of 14 Gods.....	27
Mewar School of Painting.....	Ambubachi Mela	28
Kolkali Dance	Samvatsari: A Jain Observance	28
Vajra Mushti Kalaga	Eid-UI-Zuha	28
Garba Dance of Gujarat makes it to UNESCO List.....	Gnana Muyarchi.....	29
Lambani Art	Nuakhai Festival.....	29
Kolattam Dance	'Vaishali' Festival of Democracy.....	30
Theyyam.....	Rosh Hashanah	30
Thoppikkallu	MISCELLANEOUS	31
Bharatanatyam.....	Chola Administration.....	31
Nataraja	JATAN: Virtual Museum Builder.....	32
Gond Art.....	Gandhi Peace Prize 2021.....	32
	Ol Chiki Script.....	32
SITES IN NEWS	Kui Language.....	33
Porpanaikottai Site	Tankai Shipbuilding Method	33
Santiniketan Designated as UNESCO World Heritage Site.....	Kokborok Language.....	33
Statue of Oneness.....	Nobel Prize in Literature 2023.....	34
United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Announced its list of Best Tourism Villages 2023.....	53rd Dadasaheb Phalke Lifetime Achievement Award.....	34
Maa Danteshwari Temple (Chhattisgarh)	National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities (NMMA).....	34
Gwalior, Kozhikode joined the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN).....	Veer Baal Diwas.....	35
Vadnagar	3D Digitisation of Museums	35
Ahilyanagar	Janjatiya Darpan.....	35
Char Dham Yatra.....	Kashi Culture Pathway	36
Al-Hakim Mosque.....	Initiatives of Archeological Survey of India	36
Buddhavanam	Film and Television Institute of India (FTII)	37
	Sangeet Natak Akademi Amrit Awards	37
PERSONALITIES IN NEWS	Artisanal Treasures Showcased in G20	37
350th Coronation Ceremony of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.....	Project Veer Gatha 3.0.....	38
Rani Durgavati.....	Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas.....	38
Shri Alluri Sitarama Raju.....	Wagh Nakh	39
Sri Aurobindo's 150th Birth Anniversary	Geographical Indication (GI).....	40
Sir Syed Ahmed Khan.....	Dancing Girl (Channapatna Toys).....	41
Sant Meera Bai.....		
Birth Anniversary of Rani Laxmi Bai		

ARCHITECTURE & SCULPTURE

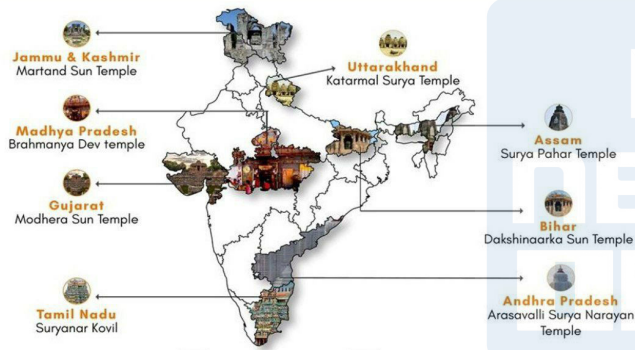
KONARK SUN TEMPLE

The mural of the iconic Konark Sun Temple wheel was presented to world leaders at the G20 Summit.

Overview:

- **UNESCO Heritage:** Konark Sun Temple is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, renowned as the Black Pagoda, Arka Kshetra, and Padma Kshetra.
- **Construction:** Built during the 13th century under Eastern Ganga King Narasimhadeva-I's rule.
- **Sun Worship:** Dedicated to the worship of the Sun God, it emphasizes the celestial movement of the Sun.

Other Prominent Sun Temples in India



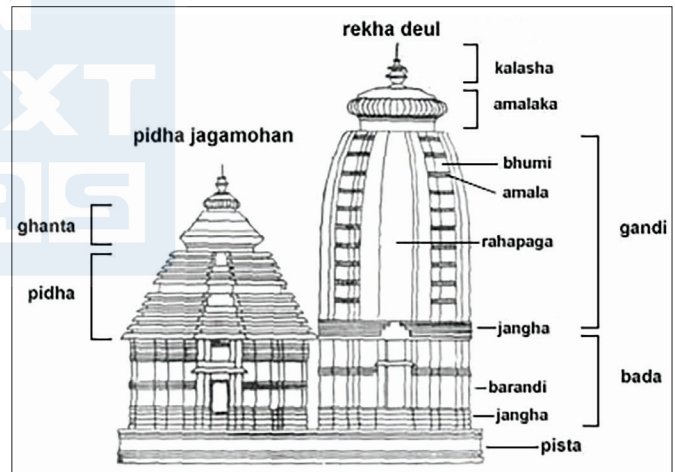
- **Structure:**
 - ♦ **Evolved Architecture:** Represents the pinnacle of Kalinga Architecture.
 - ♦ **Entrance:** Features the Gajasimha, symbolizing elephants and lions, leading to the Natya Mandapa for dance and theatre.
 - ♦ **Jagamohan:** The assembly hall with stone horses leading to the sanctum (Deul) housing the idol.
 - ♦ **Bhoga-mandira:** Addition for preparing offerings, showcasing the evolution of Kalinga temple architecture.
- **Architectural Features:**
 - ♦ **Sun Rays:** Designed to capture the first rays of the rising sun, illuminating the sanctum and deity.
 - ♦ **Chariot Design:** Resembles the chariot of Surya, the Sun God, with 24 intricately carved wheels.
 - ♦ **Konark Wheel:** Represents a chariot drawn eastwards by seven horses, featuring carved medallions and figures.

- ♦ **Carvings:** Illustrate war horses, Sun God, everyday activities, mythical creatures, and sensuous details.

INTERPRETATIONS OF KONARK WHEEL

- **Time:** Some associate the wheels with days, months, hours, and prahars.
- **Life Cycle:** Interpretation as the 'Wheel of Life,' depicting the cycle of creation, preservation, and realization.
- **Zodiac Signs:** Possible representation of the 12 zodiac signs.
- **Dharmachakra:** Connection to the Buddhist Wheel of Karma.
- **Sun Dial:** Wheels used as sundials for timekeeping.
- **Symbol of Democracy:** Reflects democratic ideals and commitment to progress.

About Kalinga Architecture:



- **Blend:** Fusion of the Nagara style of Northern India and Dravida style of South India.
- **Components:** Typically consists of sanctum (Deul) and hall (Jagamohana), with later additions like natya-mandapa and bhoga-mandira.
- **Categories:**
 - ♦ **Rekha Deul:** Square plan with a curvilinear tower resembling a shikhara.
 - ♦ **Pidha Deul:** Square plan with a pyramidal tower composed of horizontal tiers.
 - ♦ **Khakhara Deul:** Rectangular plan with a barrel-shaped (vault shape) tower.

SACRED ENSEMBLES OF HOYSALAS

Declared the **42nd UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS)**, comprising Chennakeshava temple (Belur), Hoysaleshwara temple (Halebidu), and Keshava temple (Somanathapur).



Temples and Historical Background:

- **Construction Period:** 12th-13th century.
- **Other WHS in Karnataka:** Hampi, Pattadakal, and Western Ghat.
- **Unique Features:** Blend of Dravidian and Nagara styles, showing Bhumija influence.
- **Chennakeshava Temple (Belur):**
 - ◆ **Commissioned:** By King Vishnuvardhana in 1117 CE.
 - ◆ **Deity:** Lord Vishnu as Chennakesava.
 - ◆ **Key Features:**
 - **Material:** Chloritic schist/soapstone, unique zigzag walls.
 - **Sculptures:** Depict daily life, music, dance, Vishnu's life, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Shiva, Jainism, and Buddhism.
- **Hoysaleshwara Temple (Halebid):**
 - ◆ **Commissioned:** By King Vishnuvardhana in 1121 CE.
 - ◆ **Deity:** Lord Shiva as Nataraja.
 - ◆ **Key Features:**
 - **Mandapa:** Large hall for music and dance.
 - **Sculptures:** Extensive scenes from epics, more than 240 intricate sculptures, themes from Vaishnavism, Shaktism, Jainism.
- **Keshava Temple (Somanathapur):**
 - ◆ **Commissioned:** By Somanatha Dandanayaka in 1268 CE.
 - ◆ **Deity:** Lord Krishna in three forms – Janardhana, Keshava, Venugopala.

◆ Key Features:

- Stellar plan with three shrines and Vimanas.
- **Sculptures:** Depict Lord Vishnu, Ganesha, Lakshmi, and Saraswati.

HOYSALA ARCHITECTURE STYLE

- **Hybrid Style:** Vesara, blending Dravidian and Nagara styles.
- **Bhumija Influence:** A variety of North Indian shikhara.
- **Key Features:**
 - ◆ **Stellate Plan:** Star-like arrangement on a raised platform.
 - ◆ **Material:** Soapstone, allowing intricate carvings.
 - ◆ **Garbha Griha:** Central shrine on a pedestal.
 - ◆ **Mandapas:** Open and closed, circular pillars with sculpted figures.
 - ◆ **Gopuram:** Lofty entrance towers.
 - ◆ **Sculpture:** Salabhanjika, depicting a woman.
 - ◆ **Vimana:** Simple inside, lavish outside decorations.
 - ◆ **Ceilings:** Ornate with mythological figures and floral designs.
 - ◆ **Other Features:** Corbelled domes, vase-shaped water pot on temple tower.

CHAUSATH YOGINI TEMPLE

About

- **Located** in Mitaoli village, Morena district, Madhya Pradesh.
- **Built by** King Devpala of the Kachchhapaghata dynasty.
- **Venue for education** in astrology and mathematics based on the Sun's transit.
- Declared an ancient and historical monument by the Archaeological Survey of India.
- Also known as **Ekattarso Mahadeva Temple** due to numerous Shiva lingas.

Architectural and Historical Features:

- **Circular Design:**
 - ◆ 64 chambers dedicated to yoginis surrounding the central shrine.
 - ◆ Central shrine dedicated to Shiva.
- **Drainage System:**
 - ◆ Slab coverings in the central shrine with perforations for rainwater drainage.

- ◆ Rainwater is directed to a large underground storage.
- **Earthquake Resilience:**
 - ◆ Withstood earthquake shocks, maintaining its circular structural integrity for centuries.
- **Educational Significance:**
 - ◆ Historical venue for providing education in astrology and mathematics.
 - ◆ Focus on teachings based on the transit of the Sun.

PRE-MAURYAN ERA EVIDENCES FOUND IN PURANA QILA

A fresh round of excavations at the site of Delhi's Purana Qila (Old Fort) have uncovered evidence of the continuous history of the city since the pre-Mauryan era.

Excavations of New Site:

- This was the third round of excavations at the site, beginning from January. Earlier excavations had been carried out in 2013-14 and 2017-18.
- These efforts have revealed nine cultural levels, representing different historical periods, including **pre-Mauryan, Mauryan, Sunga, Kushana, Gupta, post-Gupta, Rajput, Sultanate, and Mughal.**
- **The Findings of New Excavations include:**
 - ◆ shards of **Painted Gray Ware pottery** which are usually dated to around 1200 BC to 600 BC,
 - ◆ remains of a 900-year-old **Vaikuntha Vishnu** from the Rajput period,
 - ◆ a terracotta plaque of **Goddess Gaja Lakshmi from the Gupta period,**
 - ◆ the structural remains of a 2,500-year-old **terracotta ring well from the Mauryan period,** and
 - ◆ a well-defined four-room complex from the **Sunga-Kushan period** dating back to 2,300 years ago.

Purana Qila:

- Purana Qila' (Old Fort) is one of the oldest forts in Delhi.
- Excavations point to traces from the 3rd century BC, the pre-Mauryan period. It is believed by many to be the site of Indraprastha, as mentioned in the Mahabharat.
- The present fort was re-built under the reign of the **second Mughal Emperor Humayun and Sur Emperor**

Sher Shah Suri.

- ◆ The fort was the inner citadel of the city of Din Panah during Humayun's rule who renovated it in 1533 and completed five years later.
- ◆ The founder of the Suri Dynasty, Sher Shah Suri, defeated Humayun in 1540, naming the fort Shergarh; he added several more structures in the complex during his five-year reign.

SHARDA TEMPLE

The Navratri pujas have been held in Sharda Temple in Kashmir this year for the first time after 1947.

About:

- It is located **in Neelum Valley in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK)** and falls in the **Kupwara District of Jammu and Kashmir** along the Line of Control (LoC).
- It is **one of the 18 Maha Shakti Peethas** and is considered to be the home of Hindu Goddess Saraswati.
 - ◆ Goddess Sharada was referred to as **Kashmira-Puravasani.**



- The temple was also once regarded as one of the foremost **centres of higher learning of Vedic works, scriptures and commentaries.**
 - ◆ It was considered to be at par with the ancient seats of learning at Nalanda and Takshila.
- This temple also links with the **Sharda-civilization and Sharda-script**, which is considered as the **original script of our Kashmir.**

RUDRAGIRI ROCK ART

About

- Rudragiri Hillock is situated in the picturesque Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh, nestled amid the Eastern Ghats.

- Notable for its historical significance, the hillock boasts five naturally formed rock shelters at its foothills, facing westward.
- These rock shelters served as dwelling places for people during the Mesolithic age around 5000 B.C., adorned with luminous rock paintings from that era.

Key Findings:

- **Mesolithic Rock Shelters:**
 - ♦ Five naturally formed rock shelters have been preserved, providing insights into the living conditions during the Mesolithic age.
 - ♦ Witness remarkable rock paintings, these shelters unravel the artistic expressions of ancient inhabitants.
- **Kakatiya Kingdom Murals:**
 - ♦ Two natural caves at the southern end of the hillock showcase exceptional murals attributed to the Kakatiya kingdom.
 - ♦ Notable depictions include a narrative mural portraying the intense battle between the Vanara brothers, Vali and Sugriva, displaying fierce determination and scenes from the Ramayana.
- **Ramayana Frescoes:**
 - ♦ The first cave features a narrative mural depicting the battle between Vali and Sugriva.
 - ♦ Rama, positioned behind Sugriva, is shown shooting arrows at Vali.
 - ♦ Another fresco depicts Hanuman lifting the Sanjeevani hill, accompanied by sacred symbols like the conch and fire altars.
- **Hanuman Depictions:**
 - ♦ The second cave presents a grand sketch of Hanuman carrying the Sanjivani hill in his right hand, symbolizing his mission to save Lakshmana's life.
 - ♦ Kakatiya artists chose the same rock shelter to superimpose an elegant figure of Hanuman in a unique 'Anjali' posture, folding his hands in a divine offering.
- **Patronage by Ganapati Deva Maharaja:** Ganapati Deva Maharaja (1199-1262 AD), the illustrious founder of Muppavaram temple and a prominent figure of the Kakatiya dynasty, is believed to have patronized the rich ancient mural heritage found at Rudragiri.

About Mesolithic Period

- The Mesolithic period, often termed the Middle Stone Age, bridges the Paleolithic (Old Stone Age) and the Neolithic (New Stone Age).
- **Timeframe:** This period is generally considered to have occurred between approximately 12,000-10,000 years ago.
- **Lifestyle:** Human societies during the Mesolithic period were predominantly hunter-gatherer communities, shaping their existence through a nomadic lifestyle.

ART FORMS

SEETHAKALI FOLK ART

About:

- Seethakali is a centuries-old folk art form originating from Perinad in Kollam district, Kerala, with roots dating back around 150 years.
- First performed by the Vedar and Pulayar communities, it stands as a unique cultural tradition.

Themes:

- **Origin:** Based on episodes from the Indian epic Ramayana, Seethakali brings to life mythical characters like Rama, Seetha, Ravana, and Hanuman.
- **Narrative:** The performances depict Seetha's journey, starting from accompanying Rama to the woods and culminating in her ascent to the heavens.
- **Festival Association:** Initially performed during the harvest festival Onam, Seethakali is presented from the Atham star until the 28th day after Onam.

Artistic Elements:

- **Performers:** Members of subaltern communities travel from house to house during the festival period to showcase Seethakali.
- **Props and Instruments:** Crafted from natural materials like bamboo and palm leaves, adding an authentic touch to the performances.
- **Costumes and Makeup:** Characterized by vibrant, eye-catching costumes, with Rama and Laxmana appearing in green, a color representing deities in Kathakali.
- **Registered Group:** Perinad Seethakali Sangham is currently the only registered Seethakali performing group in Kerala.

MEWAR SCHOOL OF PAINTING

- **Origins:**
 - ◆ Developed in Mewar, Rajasthan, the Mewar School of Painting finds its roots in the exquisite **Ragamala paintings** crafted at **Chawand** in 1605 by the artist **Nisardin**.
 - ◆ The **Nathdwara School**, a subset of the Mewar School, shares its artistic heritage.



- **Evolution of Themes:**
 - ◆ In the 18th century, Mewar painting experienced a thematic shift, embracing courtly and secular subjects.
 - ◆ This included portraiture, court scenes, hunting expeditions, festivals, zenana activities, and sports.
- **Distinctive Features:**
 - ◆ Known for its simplicity, bright colors, and direct emotional appeal, Mewar Miniature Painting reflects the region's artistic identity.
 - ◆ Miniature paintings, executed on various materials such as vellum, prepared card, copper, or ivory, showcase fine craftsmanship.
- **Prominent Mewar School Artists:**
 - ◆ **Sāhibdin:** Renowned for his work on Raagmala, Rasikapriya, Bhagvata Purana (1648), and the Yuddha Kanda of Ramayana (1652).
 - ◆ **Manohar:** Notable for illustrating the Bal Kanda of the Ramayana.
 - ◆ **Jagannath:** Contributed significantly to the Bihari Satsai.

KOLKALI DANCE

Recently, the Kolkali dance was presented in Thrissur, Kerala, commemorating St. Thomas' arrival in India.

About:

- It is a folk art form originating in the **North Malabar region** of the state.
 - ◆ Known as **Kolattam** in Tamil Nadu and **Kolamu** in Andhra Pradesh.
- **Incorporates elements** from Kalaripayattu, a martial art of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- **Performers use sticks**, forming a circle and striking the sticks.
 - ◆ As the music gradually rises in pitch, the pace increases till the performance reaches its climax.
 - ◆ The circle expands and contracts as the dance progresses.
 - ◆ Every dancer moves in accordance with a close pattern, without touching each other or missing a beat.
 - ◆ As the dance advances to the end, the dancers move in vigorous steps, with sweeping movements and turns.
- Typically performed during the paddy harvest season.

VAJRA MUSHTI KALAGA

About

- Unique Indian martial art incorporating hand-to-hand combat techniques like grappling, wrestling, and striking.
- A distinctive form of wrestling, deviating from conventional grappling, involving two fighters or "jettys."
- **Wrestlers employ "Vajramushti,"** translating to Thunderbolt Fist is a knuckle-duster adorned with diamonds as symbolic weaponry for a precise battle.
 - ◆ The victor is the one who draws blood from the opponent's head first.
 - ◆ The knuckleduster, also called Vajra Mushti, is typically crafted from animal horns and worn on the fighter's knuckles.
- **Primary objective:** Neutralize the opponent and counter their weapon.
- Traditionally held on the ninth day of Navaratri at the Mysuru Palace in Mysore, Karnataka.
- **Originated** during the Vijayanagar rulers' era (14th to 17th centuries).
- The fight is genuine, with participants striving to draw blood; a referee intervenes upon observing the first drop.

- Medieval Portuguese travelers documented this wrestling form during Navaratri celebrations in the Vijayanagar empire.
 - ♦ **Fernano Nuniz**, a Portuguese traveler, observed this wrestling style in the Vijayanagar empire.

GARBA DANCE OF GUJARAT MAKES IT TO UNESCO LIST

Recently included in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity by UNESCO.

Details of the Recognition:

- Added under the provisions of the **2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage** during the 18th meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee (IGC) in **Kasane, Botswana**.
- **Marks the 15th ICH element** from India to join this prestigious list.

About Garba:

- Ritualistic and devotional folk dance performed during the Hindu festival of Navaratri, dedicated to the worship of feminine energy or 'Shakti.'
- The term "garba" originates from the Sanskrit word "garbha," meaning "womb."

Key Features of the Dance:

- Takes place around a perforated earthenware pot with an oil lamp or an image of the mother goddess Amba.
- Dancers move in an anti-clockwise circle using simple feet movements, accompanied by singing, clapping hands, and traditional musical instruments.
- Beyond religious significance, it symbolizes respect towards women.
- Modern Garba is heavily influenced by Dandiya Raas, traditionally a dance performed by men.
- The fusion of Garba and Dandiya Raas has resulted in the dynamic and high-energy Garba dance observed today.

About UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the ICH, 2003:

- **Adopted** in Paris in 2003 to safeguard intangible cultural heritage.
- IGC, established within UNESCO, examines requests for inscription on the Lists.

- ♦ Consists of 24 members elected based on equitable geographical representation and rotation.
- ♦ India elected to the IGC in 2022 for a 4-year tenure, having served two previous terms (2006-2010 and 2014-2018).

• ICH Examples:

- ♦ Languages, oral traditions, literature, and poetry.
- ♦ Performing arts (music, dance, and theatre).
- ♦ Social practices, rituals, and festive events.
- ♦ Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe.
- ♦ Traditional craftsmanship (pottery, weaving, and metalwork).

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF INDIA

1. Kutiyattam, Sanskrit theatre (Kerala)
2. Buddhist chanting of Ladakh
3. Tradition of Vedic chanting
4. Sankirtana, ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur
5. Ramlila: The traditional performance of the Ramayana
6. Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab
7. Ramman: Religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas
8. Nawrouz
9. Chhau dance
10. Yoga
11. Kalbelia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan
12. Kumbh Mela
13. Mudi yettu, ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala
14. Durga Puja in Kolkata
15. Garba in Gujarat

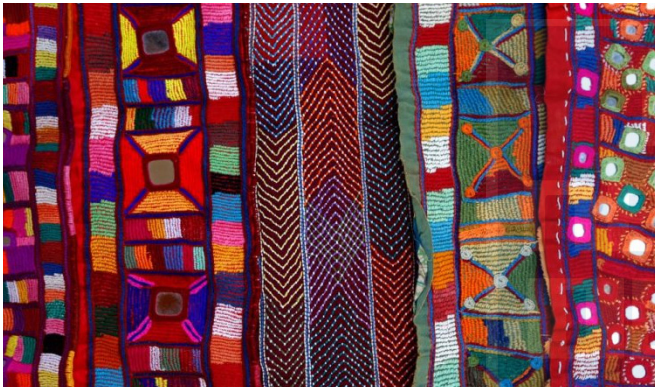
LAMBANI ART

About

• Key Features:

- ♦ Textile embellishment practiced by the Lambani or Banjara community, particularly in states like Karnataka.
- ♦ Characterized by vibrant threads, mirror work, and diverse stitch patterns on loosely woven fabric.

- ◆ Involves skillful stitching of discarded fabric pieces to create beautiful patchwork.
- ◆ Recognized as a sustainable practice emphasizing recycle and reuse principles.
- **Global Connections:**
 - ◆ Lambani embroidery techniques and aesthetics share similarities with textile traditions in Eastern Europe, West Asia, and Central Asia.
 - ◆ Demonstrates the interconnectedness of global textile arts.
- **Sandur Lambani Embroidery:**
 - ◆ A specific type of Lambani art originating from the Sandur region of Karnataka.
 - ◆ Received a Geographical Indication tag in 2010, highlighting its unique identity and cultural significance.



- ◆ The sticks are stroked against each other in a calibrated form to create harmony.
- ◆ The dancers are led by a leader and move about in two circles.
- ◆ The inner circle receives the strikes on their sticks from the artists in the outer circle that deliver them.

THEYYAM

About

- It is a popular ritual form of **dance worship in Kerala and Karnataka**. It consisted of **thousand-year-old traditions, rituals, and customs**.
- The people consider Theyyam itself as a channel to a god and they thus seek blessings from Theyyam.
- Each Theyyam is a man or a woman who attained divine status by performing heroic deeds or by leading a virtuous life.
- Most Theyyams are believed to be the **incarnations of Shiva or Shakti** (the consort of Shiva). Or they have strong associations with these principal deities of Hinduism.
- The main instruments used for thottampattu are Chenda, Veekan Chenda, Ilathalam, and Kuzhal.
- Theyyams are performed in sacred groves and other places usually once in a year and are known as Kaliyattam.



KOLATTAM DANCE

In Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh Girls performed the Kolattam dance during Balotsav, a children's festival.

About

- The Kolattam dance is predominantly a dance **performed by women**, in Southern India.
 - ◆ Men mostly take up the role as drummers or play the background music.
- In **Tamil Nadu and Kerala** the dance is known as **Kummi** and in **Andhra Pradesh** it is known as **Kolannalu**.
- The dance form resembles the **Dandiya and Garba** folk dances of **Gujarat**.

Performance of Dance

- The group comprises dancers in the range of 8 to 40. It is **performed by using sticks** to represent the rhythm of the dance.

Types of Theyyam

- There are about **456 types of Theyyam (theyyakkolams)**, among which 112 are famous. Some of the famous Theyyams are:
 - ◆ **Vishnumoorthy Theyyam:**
 - It is the most popular Vaishnava Theyyam.

- This theyyam narrates and performs the story of Hiranyakashipu's death by Lord Vishnu in his avatar of Narasimham.
- Because of this, Vishnumoorthi has another name, 'Narasimha Moorthi' [half man and half lion avatar of Vishnu].
- ♦ **Sree Muthappan Theyyam:**
 - Muthappan theyyam consists of two divine figures is considered as the personification of two divine figures— the **Thiruvappana or Valiya Muttapan (Vishnu) and the Vellatom or Cheriya Muttapan (Shiva)**.
 - Muthappan Theyyam is different from other theyyams as it is performed all around the year.
 - Muthappan Anthithira is another theyyam dedicated to Muthapan.
 - The uniqueness of it is that it is performed only once in all the Muthapan temples.

• **Padikutti Amma:**

- ♦ The Padikuttiamma is believed to be the mother of Muthapan.
- ♦ The Padikutti Amma Theyyam is performed in the Palaprath Temple in Kodallur near ParassiniKadavu in the Meenam (a Malayalam month).

• **Gulikan:**

- ♦ Gulikan represents Yama, the Hindu god of death, called Yama.
- ♦ The Benkanakavu (Venganakavu) in Nileshwar is the most famous temple dedicated to Gulikan.

THOPPIKKALLU

About:

- Hat stones, popularly called Thoppikkallu in Malayalam, are hemispherical laterite stones used as lid on burial urns during the megalithic period.
- A large number of megalithic burial sites and relics were found at Nagaparamba during the salvage excavation.
- Archaeologists say it could arguably be the largest number of hat stones in an unprotected site in the State.
- A large number of earthen urns and iron implements were also found with unique features, which could ostensibly throw light on the life and culture of people who lived in those parts more than 2,000 years ago.

About Megalithic Period:

- The word 'megalith' derived from the Latin mega (large) and lith (stone).
- Megaliths were constructed either as burial sites or commemorative memorials.
- These are sites with actual burial remains, such as dolmenoid cists (box-shaped), cairn circles (stone circles) and capstones (mushroom-shaped burials found mainly in Kerala).
- The urn containing the mortal remains was usually made of terracotta. Commemorative megaliths include memorial sites such as menhirs.



- This megalithic culture lasted from the Neolithic Stone Age to the early Historical Period (2500 BC to AD 200) across the world.
- In India, archaeologists trace the majority of the megaliths to the Iron Age (1500 BC to 500 BC), though some sites precede the Iron Age, extending up to 2000 BC.



BHARATANATYAM

About:

- Bharatanatyam of Tamil Nadu state is one of the classical dances of India which has grown out of the art of dancers dedicated to temples and was earlier known as **Sadir or Dasi Attam**.
- It is a popular classical dance form in South India.
- It is the first of India's traditional dances to be **refashioned** as a **theatre art** and to be exhibited widely **both at home and abroad**.
- The Abhinaya Darpana by Nandikesvara is one of the main sources of textual material, for the study of the technique and grammar of body movement in Bharatanatyam Dance.
- Bharatanatyam rests on principles of performance and an aesthetics set down in classics such as Bharata's Natyashastra.
- It has a rich repertoire of songs in Telugu, Tamil and Sanskrit.
- Bharatanatyam has a highly evolved language of **Nritta**, abstract dance, and Nritya which unfolds the narrative.
- The **themes** have a wide range spanning human and divine love and are generally classed under the rubric of shringara (romantic love) and bhakti (devotion).
- As a result of its exquisite representation of the element of fire within the human body, Bharatanatyam is frequently referred to as the "**fire dance**."
- The music of Bharatanatyam belongs to the **Carnatic system of southern India**.
- Some common instruments that accompany a Bharatanatyam dancer in a recital are; the Mridangam, Veena, Flute, Violin, Talam, Ghatam, Kanjeera, Tambura, Nadaswaram and Harmonium.



Elements of Bharatanatyam:

- **Bhava (Expressions):** Bharatanatyam performers need to master being able to perform various facial expressions as demanded by the song/story.
 - ◆ Expressions of joy, surprise, anger, grief, love etc aid in communication of the message during performance.
- **Hastha Mudra (Hand gestures):** Hand gestures and forming of different shapes by finger movements make an important part of Bharatanatyam performance.
- **Thala:** Bharatanatyam performance is done in sync with some soulful Carnatic music.
 - ◆ Thalams represent eight rhythmic intervals.
- **Dance:** Bharatanatyam dance performance includes carefully choreographed and well-rehearsed dance performance that utilizes all of stage space, showcasing tricky body maneuvers and dance steps that sync perfectly with music, facial expressions and hand gestures.
- **Nataraja Statue:** Most Bharatanatyam dances are performed in front of Lord Nataraja statue.
 - ◆ All performances begin with a prayer and initial steps marking respect to Lord Nataraja.
- **Dress:** Bharatanatyam performers (females) wear silk saree, along with suitable ornaments, jewelry and metallic bells (gejje) on their wrist and ankles.
 - ◆ Male performers wear silk dhoti, shalya and minimum jewelry.
- **Performers:** Bharatanatyam is performed both by male and female artists. However, the majority of the artists are female.
- **Solo/Group:** Bharatanatyam may be performed both solo and in a small group.

DO YOU KNOW?

- All classical dance forms are based on what is called the Fifth Veda, the Natya Shastra.
- Though the exact date of origin of this text cannot be traced, mythologically, it is believed that on Lord Brahma's command, Sage Bharata codified and documented the Natya Shastra.

NATARAJA

Composition:

- The artisans from Swamimalai in Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu constructed it **using "ashta dhatu", a blend of eight metals, with copper as the primary component at 87%**.

- The eight metals used in its construction are copper, zinc, lead, tin, silver, gold, mercury and iron.

Lost Wax Casting Process:

- The sculpture has been made using traditional '**lost wax' casting process**, adhering to ancient canons and measurements prescribed in the **Shilpa Shastra** or the science of sculpturing, which have guided the **creation of Nataraja sculptures since the Chola period**.
- The intricate fabrication process involves several stages, including creation of a clay armature figure to serve as the support structure; application of a wax layer on top of the clay armature; addition of detailing and elaborate finishing and polishing.

Tandava:

- Nataraja is Lord Shiva in his dynamic dance posture, called "tandava", which in a single pose captures Shiva's roles as creator, preserver, and destroyer.
- **The two most common forms of Shiva's dance are the**
 - ♦ **Lasya (the gentle form of dance)**, associated with the creation of the world, and
 - ♦ **Ananda Tandava (dance of bliss, the vigorous form of dance)**, associated with the destruction of weary worldviews—weary perspectives and lifestyles.

Features of Nataraja Sculpture:

- On the forearm of his right hand is placed a **bhujanga-valaya** which is a bracelet shaped like a coiled snake.
- **The left leg of Nataraja** is raised diagonally towards the right one with its foot up in the air denoting the path of salvation.
- The image of Shiva is encircled in a **prabhamandala, that is the circle of fire**.
- Adorning the head of the lord is a crown of **coiled hair (jatamukuta)**, embellished with the river Goddess Ganga, a snake, jewels, flowers, a crescent moon, and a human skull.
- **Several jatas emerge** from the crown on either side spreading horizontally, touching the prabhamandala.

GOND ART

About:

- Gond art is a traditional tribal art style that evolved from the Gondi people of central India, particularly in **Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh** regions.

- It is one of India's most vivid and unique tribal art traditions.
- Detailed and colourful portrayals of nature, legends, and daily life characterise Gond art.

Features of Gond Art:

- It is renowned for its intricate patterns, dots, and lines that are used to create detailed and artistically pleasing compositions.
 - ♦ These patterns are frequently used to fill in shapes and forms in artwork.
- Many Gond art pieces feature the region's flora and fauna, including animals, birds, trees, and other natural aspects.
- Tribal mythology and folklore are frequently used in Gond art.
- The artwork may include mythical animals, gods, and goddesses from Gondi mythology.

SITES IN NEWS

PORPANAİKOTTAI SITE

- **Artifacts Unearthed:**
 - ♦ Excavation at Porpanaikottai site in **Pudukottai, Tamil Nadu**, revealed significant items from the Sangam Age.
 - ♦ Gold stud, bone point, and a carnelian bead.
- **Sangam Age Context:** Refers to the historical period of ancient Tamil Nadu and Kerala, spanning from the **6th century BCE to the 3rd century CE**.
- **Indication of Burial Site:** The excavation site pointed towards a burial ground, shedding light on the burial practices of the Sangam Age.
- **Water Bodies in Fort Area:** Signs of water bodies within the fort area suggested strategic planning and utilization of water resources.
- **Trade Significance:** Discovery of a carnelian bead, typically found in Northern India, indicated internal trade networks within the country during the Sangam Age.
- **Weaving Industry Presence:** Unearthing of bone point tools at Porpanaikottai suggested that the site was associated with the weaving industry during the Sangam Age.

SANTINIKETAN DESIGNATED AS UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE (WHS)

Background:

- **West Bengal's Third WHS:** Following Sundarbans National Park and Darjeeling Mountain Railways.
- **Contributors:** Rabindranath Tagore, Surendranath Kar, Nandalal Bose, Patrick, and Arthur Geddes.

About Santiniketan:

- **Location:** District Birbhum, West Bengal.
- **Description:** Ensemble of historic buildings, landscapes, gardens, pavilions, artworks, and educational and cultural traditions.
- **Unique Internationalism:** Blends Indian, Japanese, Chinese, Persian, Balinese, Burmese, and Art Deco forms.
- **'Total Work of Art':** A Gesamtkunstwerk where life, learning, work, art, local, and global elements intertwine.
- **Complex Components:** 36 historic structures, sculptures, and landscape features.

Establishment (Early Days):

- **19th Century Origin:** Maharshi Devendranath Tagore found solace in the barren land.
- **Land Purchase:** Devendranath purchased the land in 1863 and built Santiniketan.
- **Area Flanked by Rivers:** Flanked by the Ajay and the Kopai rivers.

Key Architecture and Cultural Features:

- **Main Areas:**
 - ♦ Ashrama (Hermitage)
 - ♦ Uttaryan (Residential quarters - Udayan, Konark, Shyamali, Punascha, Udichi)
 - ♦ Kala Bhavana and Sangit Bavana (Schools for Art and Music)
- **Indigenous Architecture Style:** Evolved new forms celebrating local narratives, crafts, and nature.
- **Building Material:** Traditional (mud, thatch) and modern (reinforced cement concrete).
- **Open Spaces:** Used for cultural exchange, fairs, and seasonal festivals.
- **Decoration:** Murals, frescoes, and sculptural friezes by leading Indian artists.

ABOUT RABINDRANATH TAGORE (1861-1941)

- **Birthplace:** Kolkata.
- **Education:** Home-educated, did not complete formal education.
- **Awards:** Nobel Prize in Literature (1913).
- **Notable Works:** Gitanjali, Kabuliwallah, Gora, etc.
- He composed the national anthems for two nations, India and Bangladesh, and had an impact on both the lyrics and music of Sri Lanka's national anthem, 'Sri Lanka Matha'.
- **Contribution in Education:** Promoted self-realization, intellectual, physical, moral, spiritual, and social development. Emphasized mother tongue as the medium of instruction.

Difference Between Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore:

- **Education:** Gandhi was critical of Western education; Tagore advocated combining Western elements with Indian tradition.
- **Nationalism:** Gandhi saw it as self-rule for the entire community; Tagore viewed it as individual selfishness elevated.
- **Technology:** Gandhi opposed technology worship; Tagore advocated integrating science and technology.

BANGLAR MATI

- West Bengal declared Rabindranath Tagore's '**Banglar Mati, Banglar Jol**' as the state anthem.
- Assembly resolution made **Poila Baishakh (April 15) the statehood day**.
- The song was written during the Banga Bhanga movement, promoting communal harmony through Raksha Bandhan.
- Tagore also composed **Amar Sonar Bangla (the national anthem of Bangladesh) and Vande Mataram (the national song of India)**.

STATUE OF ONENESS

Inauguration of the Statue:

- A 108-foot-tall statue of the 8th-century spiritual leader Adi Shankaracharya unveiled in Omkareshwar.
- Named "Statue of Oneness."

About the Statue:

- **Depiction:**
 - ♦ Represents Shankaracharya as a 12-year-old child during his visit to Omkareshwar.

- ◆ Omkareshwar is associated with one of the twelve Jyotirlinga shrines.
- **Specifications:**
 - ◆ Weighs 100 tonnes.
 - ◆ Conceptualized by an Indian team of artists, sculptors, and engineers.
 - ◆ Metal casting is done in China's Nanchang city.
 - ◆ Made of bronze (88% copper, 4% zinc, and 8% tin) with a high-quality steel internal structure.
 - ◆ Installed on a 75-foot platform.

Adi Shankaracharya - The Spiritual Leader:

- **Birth:**
 - ◆ Born in 788 AD in Kalady, Kerala.
 - ◆ Showed exceptional intellectual abilities from an early age.
- **Spiritual Quest:**
 - ◆ Left home in pursuit of superior knowledge.
 - ◆ Found **Guru Govind Bhagvatpad** at Omkareshwar at the age of 12.
- **Philosophical Contributions:**
 - ◆ Championed **Advaita philosophy**, asserting the oneness of god and humans.
 - ◆ Traveled across India from 16 to 32, spreading the message of Vedas.
 - ◆ Wrote 18 commentaries on scriptures, including Brahma Sutras and Bhagavad Gita.
 - ◆ Authored about two dozen books explaining Advaita Vedanta's philosophy.
 - ◆ Composed devotional hymns such as **Soundarya Lahari and Nirvana Shalkam**.

ADVAITA VEDANTA

- **Fundamental Tenets:**
 - ◆ Advaita Vedanta articulates a radical nondualistic philosophical position.
 - ◆ Derives its worldview from ancient Upanishadic texts.
- **Principle of Nonduality - 'Brahman':**
 - ◆ According to Advaita Vedantins, Upanishads reveal the principle of nonduality termed 'brahman.'
 - ◆ Brahman is considered the ultimate reality that underlies and transcends all things.
- **Nature of Brahman:**
 - ◆ **Transcendence:** Advaitins understand Brahman as transcending individuality and empirical plurality.

- ◆ **Essential Core of Self (Atman):** Seek to establish that the core of one's self (atman) is, in essence, brahman.
- ◆ **Non-Intentional Consciousness:** The atman is perceived as pure non-intentional consciousness.

Ashrams Founded by Adi Shankaracharya:

- ◆ Established four ashrams in different corners of the country:
 - Badrinath for Atharva Veda.
 - Puri for Rig Veda.
 - Dwaraka for Sama Veda.
 - Sringeri for Yajur Veda.

OTHER STATUE INAUGURATED BY PRIME MINISTER

- Previously, the PM inaugurated the Statue of Equality in Hyderabad for Bhakti saint Sri Ramanujacharya.
- In 2018, the Statue of Unity in Gujarat for Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

UNITED NATIONS WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION (UNWTO) ANNOUNCED ITS LIST OF BEST TOURISM VILLAGES 2023

Initiative Background:

- Launched in 2021, the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO is part of the UNWTO Tourism for Rural Development Programme.
- The initiative comprises three pillars, including recognition, upgrading support, and the formation of a network for sharing experiences and good practices.

Recognition Criteria:

Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO recognizes rural tourism destinations with:

- Accredited cultural and natural assets.
- A commitment to preserving community-based values.
- Clear commitment to innovation and sustainability across economic, social, and environmental dimensions.

Dhordo Village (Best Tourism Villages 2023):

- **Located** in Kutch district, Gujarat, Dhordo gained global recognition.
- **Famous for** hosting the annual Rann Utsav (White Desert Festival) by Gujarat Tourism.

- **Rann Utsav** showcases traditional art, music, crafts, dance, and cuisine.
- **Home to the Mutwa community**, known for Mutwa embroidery.

Madla Village (Selected in Upgrade Programme):

- **Situated** in Panna district, Madhya Pradesh.
- The village is traversed by **River Karnawati (Ken)**.
- Rich intangible heritage includes folk music, dance, local festivals, and Bundelkhand cuisine.
- The village's architecture retains its traditional essence.

UNWTO's Approach:

- **Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO Upgrade Programme:**
 - ◆ Supports villages on their journey to meet recognition criteria for the award.
 - ◆ Provides assistance in identifying gaps during evaluation.
- **Best Tourism Villages Network:**
 - ◆ A platform for exchanging experiences and good practices.
 - ◆ Facilitates learning and opportunities among members.
 - ◆ Open to contributions from experts and public-private sector partners promoting tourism for rural development.

UNITED NATIONS WORLD TOURISM ORGANISATION (UNWTO)

- **Introduction:** The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations, focusing on the promotion of responsible, sustainable, and universally accessible tourism.
- **Establishment:** Founded in 1975, the UNWTO has played a pivotal role in shaping global tourism policies and practices.
- **Functions:**
 - ◆ Acts as a global forum for addressing tourism policy issues.
 - ◆ Encourages the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, emphasizing responsible and ethical tourism practices.
- **Membership:** UNWTO boasts a membership that includes 159 countries globally, highlighting its widespread influence and engagement.

- **Official Languages:** Recognizing its international reach, UNWTO conducts its affairs in multiple languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish.
- **Organizational Structure:**
 - ◆ **General Assembly:**
 - Principal gathering of the World Tourism Organization.
 - Comprises full members and associate members.
 - Convenes every two years to discuss and decide on key issues.
 - ◆ **Executive Council:**
 - Serves as UNWTO's governing board.
 - Consists of 35 members elected by the General Assembly.
 - Meets at least twice a year to guide the organization's direction.
- **Headquarters:** Madrid, Spain.

MAA DANTESHWARI TEMPLE (CHHATTISGARH)

About

- The Maa Danteshwari Temple is dedicated to Mahisasuramardini, represented as Danteswari and carved on a black stone.
- It holds significance as one of the Sakti-pithas, part of the 51 sacred shrines in India associated with Goddess Shakti.

Sacred Location:

- Strategically located at the confluence of rivers **Sankhini and Dankini**, enhancing its spiritual significance.
- Constructed during the **11th-12th century A.D.** by the rulers of **Chindak Nagvanshi**, showcasing the rich heritage of the region.
- In the 14th century AD, **Annamdev**, brother of Prataprudra from the **Kakatiya dynasty**, played a crucial role in the temple's renovation.
- Jagdalpur became the permanent capital during the rule of King Annagdev in the princely state of Bastar.
- To facilitate worship, King Annagdev constructed the Danteshwari Mata Temple in Jagdalpur Rajmahal and appointed hereditary worshipers known as Jinye Jia.

About Kakatiyas:

- **Political Successors:** The Kakatiyas emerged as political successors of the Kalyana Chalukyas, asserting their independence alongside the Hoysalas and Yadavas.
- **Region:** The Kakatiyas held dominion over the Eastern Deccan region, encompassing present-day Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, eastern Karnataka, and southern Odisha.
- **Capital and Port:**
 - ♦ **Orugallu**, modern-day Warangal, served as the capital of the Kakatiya dynasty.
 - ♦ **Motupalli**, an important port visited by Marco Polo, played a crucial role in their maritime activities.
- **Key Rulers:**
 - ♦ **Prolla II**, the first independent ruler of the Kakatiya dynasty, laid the foundation for their rule.
 - ♦ **Rudradeva (1163-1195)** and his successor **Mahadeva (1195-1198)** were pivotal figures.
 - ♦ **Ganapati (1199-1261)**, the son of Mahadeva, continued the dynasty's legacy.
 - ♦ **Rudrama Devi**, a notable queen in Indian history, succeeded Ganapati.
- **Conflict with Alauddin Khilji:** In 1303, the Kakatiya territory faced invasion by Alauddin Khilji. The invasion resulted in disaster for Khilji.

GWALIOR, KOZHIKODE JOINED THE UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK (UCCN)

Gwalior ('Music' category) and Kozhikode ('Literature' category) from India are among the 55 new cities added to the Creative Cities Network (UCCN) of UNESCO on World Cities Day.

WORLD CITIES DAY

- It is designated by the **United Nations** and falls on Oct. 31 each year and was first celebrated in 2014.
- **The Global Observance of World Cities Day** of 2023, under the **theme of Financing a sustainable urban future for all**, focuses on unlocking transformative investment in urban planning and achieving adequate fiscal decentralization.

About

- **Kozhikode:** It is a permanent venue for the **annual Kerala Literature Festival** and hosts several other book festivals.

- ♦ Kozhikode decided to work for the 'City of Literature' tag in 2022 based on a proposal by the Kerala Institute of Local Administration.
- ♦ The Kozhikode Corporation formed a **collaborative partnership** with Charles University in **Prague**, the capital of the Czech Republic.
- ♦ **Prague was the first city** to be honored with the title of 'City of Literature' by UNESCO in 2014.
- **Gwalior: Gwalior's Musical Legacy:** Gwalior gave the world the legendary musician Tansen, who has been bestowed with the prestigious **title of 'City of Music'** by UNESCO.
 - ♦ It has a rich and diverse musical heritage encompassing classical **Hindustani music, folk music, and devotional music**. It has some prestigious music institutes and hosts popular festivals.
 - ♦ **Gwalior Gharana:** It is **one of the oldest Hindustani musical Gharanas**, is believed to have originated in this very place, solidifying its status as the birthplace of this iconic musical style.
 - ♦ The Scindias, the erstwhile royal family of Gwalior, have diligently preserved and propagated music for centuries, adding to the city's musical legacy.
 - ♦ **Other Cities of India:** Before Kozhikode and Gwalior, UNESCO listed **Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, Varanasi, Jaipur, and Srinagar** to the Creative Cities Network (UCCN).

The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN)

- The UCCN was created in 2004 to promote cooperation among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development. It now includes 350 cities in over a hundred countries.
- The network is aimed at leveraging the creative, social, and economic potential of cultural industries.
- It was launched to promote UNESCO's goals of cultural diversity and strengthen resilience to threats such as climate change, rising inequality, and rapid urbanization.
- It encourages a culture of creativity in urban planning and solutions to urban problems.

Latest Developments

- UNESCO has shared the full list of the new 55 cities which include **Bukhara – Crafts and Folk Art, Casablanca – Media Arts, Chongqing – Design, Kathmandu – Film, Rio de Janeiro – Literature, and Ulaanbaatar – Crafts and Folk Art**.

- With the latest additions, according to UNESCO, the **UCCN now counts 350 cities** in more than a hundred countries, **representing seven creative fields: Crafts and Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Literature, Media Arts and Music.**
- The newly designated Creative Cities are **invited to participate in the UCCN Annual Conference (2024) in Braga, Portugal**, under the **theme 'Bringing Youth to the Table for the Next Decade'**.

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)

- **Genesis:** It was formed in 1945, and is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN)
- **Members:** It has 194 member states and 10 associate members. **India is a founding member of the Organisation.**
- **Role:**
 - ♦ It contributes to **peace and security** by promoting international cooperation in **education, sciences, culture, communication and information.**
 - ♦ It promotes **knowledge sharing** and the **free flow of ideas** to accelerate mutual understanding and a more perfect knowledge of each other's lives.
 - ♦ The programs of UNESCO contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals defined in the 2030 Agenda.
- **Headquarters:** Paris, France

VADNAGAR

About:

- Vadnagar is a town and municipality under Mehsana district of Gujarat state.
- It has been known by names like Anartapura, Anandapur, Vridhanagar, Chamatkarapur and so on, during different periods of its history.
- Vadnagar was situated at a strategic location of two major ancient trade routes: one joining **central India with the Sindh** and further northwest regions, while another connected the port towns on **Gujarat's coast to northern India.**
- It is often compared to the historic **living cities** of Mathura, Ujjain and Varanasi as cities inhabited since the early historic period and in the modern day.
- In Dec. 2022, northern Gujarat's Vadnagar city and the Sun Temple of Modhera, both part of the Mehsana district, made it to the Tentative list of the UNESCO World heritage sites.

Vadnagar as a 'Living City':

- Vadnagar has often been compared to Varanasi in terms of both claiming to be "living cities".
- **An unbroken sequence of seven successive cultures going back to 750 BCE has been found and divided into seven periods:**
 - ♦ pre-rampart phase (in 2nd century BCE),
 - ♦ Rampart phase (2nd century BCE – 1st century CE),
 - ♦ Kshatrapa phase (1st – 4th century CE),
 - ♦ post-Kshatrapa phase (5th – 9th/10th century CE),
 - ♦ Solanki phase (10th – 13th century CE),
 - ♦ Sultanate-Mughal phase (14th – 17th century CE) and
 - ♦ Gaekwad phase (17th/18th – 19th century CE).

Cultural Significance:

- The built heritage resource of the Vadnagar includes historical structures, temples, fortification remains, water bodies, kothis, residential structures and excavated sites.
- **Gates:** There are six gates to the town, on the north side **Arjun Bari, Nadiol and Amtol gates on the west, Ghaskol and Pathori gates on the south and Amarthol gate on the east.** All these gates have niches with sculptures of various deities such as Mahishasurmardini, Bhairav and Ganesha.
- **Sharmishtha Lake:** This lake covers the north-eastern corner of the fortified town of Vadnagar, forced to have curvature in the northern segment of fortification wall.
- **Hatkeshwar Temple:** Hatkeshwar temple at Vadnagar is located outside Nadiola gate. Its feature exhibits the **Solanki ornate style.** However, some of the feature exhibits **post-date the Solanki period** probably to the period following in the 15th century CE.
- **Kirti Torans:** Vadnagar has two magnificent glory gates (Kirti-stambhas) standing outside the fortification wall to the north of the town. Yellow sandstone without mortar or any other cementing material is used for building these toranas.

AHILYANAGAR

History of Ahmednagar:

- Ahmednagar is a city in the Ahmednagar district, Maharashtra.

- Ahmednagar has been a part of some prominent kingdoms, starting from 240 BC, “when the vicinity is mentioned in the reference to the Mauryan Emperor Ashok”.
- In the Medieval period, the region was ruled over by the **Rashtrakuta Dynasty, the Western Chalukyas, and then the Delhi Sultanate.**
- A revolt by Afghan soldier Alladin Hasan Gangu led to the establishment of the **Bahmani kingdom** in the Deccan. In the following years, Ahmednagar, then known as **Nizamshahi**, became one of the five independent kingdoms to emerge from that empire.
- In 1486, **Malik Ahmad Nizam Shah** assumed the position of the Bahmani Sultanate’s prime minister. He successfully defeated the king of the Bahmani kingdom in 1490. Subsequently, he laid the foundation of a city on the left bank of Sina river. This city was named after him i.e. Ahmednagar.

Ahilyabai Holkar:

- **Malwa Kingdom:** Ahilyabai Holkar (1725 – 1795) was the 18th century Queen of Malwa kingdom.
 - ♦ Malwa is a historical region of west-central India which at present includes districts of western Madhya Pradesh and parts of south-eastern Rajasthan.
 - ♦ Geologically, the Malwa Plateau generally refers to the volcanic upland north of the Vindhya Range.
- **Early life:** She was born in Chondi village of Ahmednagar.
 - ♦ After the demise of her husband Khande Rao Holkar in the Battle of Kumbher in 1754 and later on the demise of her father-in-law and son, Ahilyabai herself undertook the affairs of Holkar dynasty in **Malwa.**
- **Administration:** She was one of the few women rulers of Medieval India. During her reign of around thirty years (till 1795), she ensured stability and peace in Malwa when the whole of Central India was facing a power struggle.
- **Military campaigns:** She defended the Malwa state against intruders and personally led armies into battle, with **Tukoji Rao Holkar** as her military commander.
- **Maheshwar:** She established Maheshwar (in Madhya Pradesh) as the seat of Holkar Dynasty.
 - ♦ Under her rule, Maheshwar became a literary, musical, artistic and industrial centre. She helped establish a textile industry there, which is now home to the famous **Maheshwari sarees.**

- **Temple-building & restoration:** In 1780, she had the **Kashi Vishwanath temple in Varanasi** rebuilt, nearly a century after Mughal king Aurangzeb ordered its destruction. Apart from holy sites like **Badrinath, Dwarka, Omkareshwari, Gaya, and Rameswaram**, Holkar also supported the construction of resting lodges for travellers, and of public ghats.

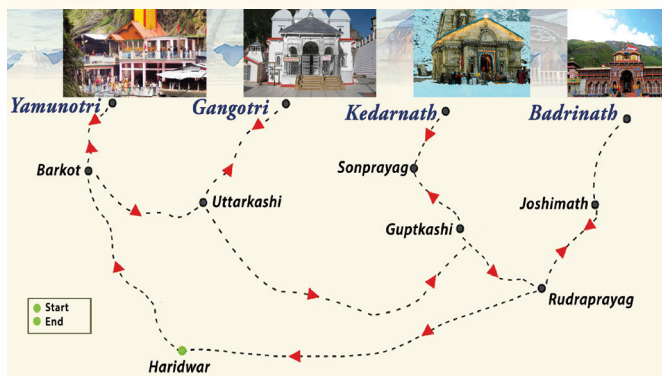
CHAR DHAM YATRA

About:

- The Char Dham is an important Hindu pilgrimage circuit in Uttarakhand, in the Indian Himalayas. The circuit consists of four sites—**Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath** and **Badrinath.**
- **Route:** Traditionally, this pilgrimage tour should begin from the West and end in the East. It is also believed that one should complete the Char Dham Yatra in a clockwise direction.
 - ♦ Thus, the Char Dham Yatra commences from Yamunotri, then proceeding to Gangotri and finally to Kedarnath and Badrinath.
- **When:** Akshaya Tritiya (April or May in the Gregorian calendar) marks the beginning of the Char Dham Yatra and closes 2 days after Diwali, on the day of Bhai Dooj.
- **Char Dham Project:** The ₹12,000 crore project was announced in 2016 to broaden the roads of about 900 km of national highways for safer and faster traffic movement. The project also includes the Tanakpur-Pithoragarh stretch of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra route.

Shrines:

- **Yamunotri:** The shrine is dedicated to the Goddess ‘Yamuna’. It is located in Uttarkashi district and stands on the western face of the Bandarpunch Peak.
- **Gangotri:** The shrine is dedicated to Goddess ‘Ganga’. It is located in Uttarkashi district and overlooks the River Bhagirathi.
- **Kedarnath:** The shrine is dedicated to Lord ‘Shiva’ and is also a part of the Panch Kedar. It is the northernmost Jyotirlinga and is located in the Rudraprayag district, close to the source of River Mandakini.
- **Badrinath:** The shrine is dedicated to Lord ‘Vishnu’. It is situated in Chamoli district on the bank of the River Alaknanda.



AL-HAKIM MOSQUE

About:

- **Name:** The Mosque of al-Hakim is also known as al-Anwar mosque. It is named after **Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah (985–1021)**, the sixth Fatimid caliph and 16th Ismaili Imam.
- **Location:** The mosque is located in **Cairo, Egypt**.
- **Significance:** Al-Hakim is the **fourth oldest mosque** in Cairo, and the second Fatimid mosque to be built in the city.
- **Construction:** Construction of the mosque was originally started by Caliph al-'Aziz, the son of al-Mu'izz and the father of al-Hakim, in 990 AD. It was completed in 1013 by **al-Hakim, which is why it is named after him**.
- **Restoration:** In the centuries since its construction the mosque was often neglected and eventually falling into ruin. A major restoration of the mosque by the **Dawoodi Bohras** was completed in 1980, reopening it for religious use.

Dawoodi Bohras:

- **Religion:** The Dawoodi Bohras are a religious denomination within **Isma'ilism (the branch of Shia Islam)**.
- **Lineage:** They trace their heritage to the Fatimid Caliphate, named after Fatimah, the daughter of Muhammad.
- **Demography:** Around 2-5 million Dawoodi Bohras reside in over 100 countries. The majority reside in the Indian state of Gujarat and in the Pakistani city of Karachi.

List of Foreign Mosques visited by PM Modi:

- **Sheikh Zayed Mosque, UAE (in 2015):** Located in Abu Dhabi, it is the largest Mosque of UAE.

- **Istiqlal Mosque, Indonesia (in 2018):** Located in Jakarta, it is the largest mosque in Southeast Asia.
- **Chulia Mosque, Singapore (in 2018):** It is built by the Chulia Muslims, a community of Tamil Muslims.
- **Sultan Qaboos Mosque, Oman (in 2018):** It is the largest mosque in Oman, made of Indian sandstone.

BUDDHAVANAM

Buddhavanam Project:

- **About:** The meticulously planned **Heritage Theme Park** spread across **274 acres** is divided into **eight segments** with the Entrance Plaza itself standing as a big attraction.
 - ♦ The Project gives an impressive insight into the major events of the life of **Siddhartha Gautama** and his previous birth stories.
- **Buddhist motifs and symbols:**
 - ♦ The Entrance Plaza depicts the **Buddhist motifs and symbols** with a **Dharma Chakra** at the Centre,
 - ♦ The **Buddha Charitavanam** near the **Mahastupa** depicts the five major events in the life of Gautama Buddha —
 - The birth,
 - The four encounters,
 - The Great Departure,
 - The Enlightenment, the first discourse and
 - The Mahaparinirvana (the Great Extinction).
 - ♦ **Buddhapāda** with the '**astamangala**' (eight auspicious) symbols carved in **Palnadu limestone**, at the entrance of the park, and the **Dhamma bell** are the principal attractions in this segment.
- **Jatakas: Jatakavanam** (Bodhisatva Park) throws light on how a Bodhisattva goes through several lives **practising the 'dasa pāramitās'** or the ten perfections before he becomes the Buddha.
 - ♦ The previous births of the Bodhisattva are illustrated in 547 stories called the '**jātakas**'.
 - ♦ The **Jātakas** are very popular in **India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Nepal, Cambodia** and other Buddhist countries.
- **Avukana Buddha from Sri Lanka: Dhyavanam** (Meditation Park) consists of a replica of **Avukana Buddha** (27 ft tall), donated by the **Government of Sri Lanka**.

- **Mahastupa:** The most sought-after place in the Buddhavanam project is the **Mahastupa**, the centre of attraction with a width of 42 metres and 21 metres in height.
 - ♦ It is built according to the dimensions and architecture of the original **Stūpa** of Dhanyakataka Amaravati, with a **Vedika (drum), Anda (dome) and a Hārmika** on its top.
- **Miniature stupas of Stupavanam:** A conscious attempt has been made in developing the **Stupavanam** (Miniature Stupa Park) which has Buddhist stupa architecture at one place from:
 - ♦ Karla Stupa and Ajanta (Maharashtra),
 - ♦ Sanchi (Madhya Pradesh),
 - ♦ Sarnath (Uttar Pradesh),
 - ♦ Mankiala, (Punjab, Pakistan) and
 - ♦ Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka, Kahu-jo-daro (Mirpur Khas, Pakistan),
 - ♦ Boudhanath (Nepal),
 - ♦ Topdarra (Afghanistan),
 - ♦ Wat Mahathat Chedi (Thailand),
 - ♦ Pardo Kaling Chorten (Tibet),
 - ♦ Shwesandaw (Myanmar), and
 - ♦ Gyeongju (South Korea).
- **Initiative of State governments:** The project initially developed by the **Andhra Pradesh** Development Corporation in 2003 was **transferred to the Telangana State Tourism** Development Corporation (TSTDC) after bifurcation.
 - ♦ **Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh**, too has a **profound heritage of Buddhism** evident through Nagarjunakonda, Phanigiri in Suryapet, Nelakondapalli in Khammam, Dhuli Katta in Karimnagar.

ABOUT GAUTAMA BUDDHA

- **Early Years: Birth:** 563 BC in Lumbini (modern-day Nepal) as **Prince Siddhartha Gautama**.
 - ♦ **Parents:** Siddhodana (father) was the chief of the Shakya clan and **Maya Devi (real mother) and Prajapati Gautami (foster mother)**.
- **In search of truth:** He left his worldly possessions and principedom at the age of 30 to lead a life searching for the truth, seeking penance in the hopes of liberating himself from suffering (dukkha).

- **Enlightenment:** He **attained enlightenment** under the **Bodhi Tree in Bodh Gaya** and gave his **first sermon** at **Sarnath** near Varanasi which is known as **Dharma-Chakra-Pravartana** (turning of the wheel of law).
- **Sermons:** He taught in the area around Rajgir, where he was living in a forest monastery built by king Bimbisara of Magadha, and he lived the largest part of his life as The Buddha in Shravasti.
 - ♦ He delivered his **last sermon in Vaishali**.
- **Death:** Most people believe he died in **Kushinagar**, Uttar Pradesh, at the age of 80.
- **Avatara of Vishnu:** Buddha is considered as the ninth avatar of Lord Vishnu.

Buddhist Circuit:

- India is currently **home to seven of the eight most significant Buddhist sites in the world**.
- The **Ministry of Tourism** is promoting a **number of tourist circuits** that transgress national borders.
 - ♦ The holy places of Buddhism, where Lord Buddha was born and He taught, preached, and attained 'Enlightenment' and 'Nirvana', are termed as Buddhist Circuit.

PERSONALITIES IN NEWS

350TH CORONATION CEREMONY OF CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI MAHARAJ

About: Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj (1627-1680)

- Born at Shivneri fort near Junnar in Pune district on February 19, 1630.
- **Parents:** Jijabai (Mother) & Shahajiraje Bhosale (Father).
- During his birth, most of Maharashtra was under the Nizamshah of Ahmednagar and the Adilshah of Bijapur.
- After his death, effective power shifted to a Chitpavan Brahmana family serving as Peshwa for his successors.

ABOUT CORONATION CEREMONY

- **Date and Place:** It occurred on June 6, 1674, at the Raigad Fort.
- **Religious Ceremony:** Shivaji Maharaj was crowned by the Brahmin priest **Vishveshvara Bhatta**, popularly known as **Gang Bhatt**.

- **Title:** He was conferred with the title of "Chhatrapati," meaning the paramount sovereign or emperor.
- **Significance:**
 - ◆ The coronation was a pivotal moment in Shivaji's quest for Swaraj.
 - ◆ It marked the formal establishment of the Maratha Empire with Shivaji as its ruler.
 - ◆ In commemoration of his coronation, special coins were minted.
 - ◆ A gold coin called 'hon' and a copper coin called 'shivrai' were crafted, both featuring the legend "Shri Raja Shivachhatrapati" inscribed on them.
- **Political Implications:** The coronation asserted Shivaji's independence from the Adilshahi Sultanate and the Bijapur Sultanate.

• **Foundation of Swaraj**

- ◆ Initiated the establishment of Swaraj in the challenging Pune region, utilizing its hills and valleys.
- ◆ Residents of the region are referred to as Mavalas.
- ◆ Objective: Swaraj aimed at the welfare of the people, as expressed in Shivaji's official seal.
- ◆ Skillfully utilized the geographical features, capturing forts like Murumbdev (Rajgad), Torna, Kondhana, and Purandar, laying the foundation of Swaraj.

• **Administrative Structure:**

- ◆ The administrative structure under Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was robust, with the king at the helm.
- ◆ To assist the king, there was a council of state ministers known as **ashtapradhan**, including positions like Peshwa (Prime Minister), Mazumdar (accountant), Wakenavis (intelligence, posts, and household affairs), Dabir (Foreign secretary and ceremonies), Senapati, Nyayadhish, and Panditrao (in charge of charitable grants).
- ◆ Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj preferred providing cash salaries to regular soldiers, although chiefs sometimes received **revenue grants (saranjam)**.
- ◆ Mirasdars, those with hereditary land rights, were under strict supervision.
- ◆ To supplement income, Chhatrapati Shivaji levied a contribution on neighboring Mughal territories, which later became known as **Chauth, constituting one-fourth of the land revenue.**

• **Military Organization**

- ◆ Maintained light cavalry, and infantry, especially the skilled **Mevalis and Hetkaris** in guerilla and hilly warfare.
- ◆ Established the Maratha Navy for territorial protection, merchant ships, and revenue from maritime trade and customs duty.
- ◆ Constructed around 250 forts, each managed by a team including a havildar, sabnis, and sarnobat.
- ◆ Built sea forts like **Suvarnadurg, Sindhudurg, Vijaydurg, and Padmadurg** for naval protection and to counter external threats.

RANI DURGA VATI

About:

- **Birth:** Born in 1524 in **Mahoba's Chandela dynasty**, present-day Uttar Pradesh, near the border with Madhya Pradesh.
 - ◆ Chandela dynasty, known for constructing the renowned Khajuraho temples in the 11th century.
- **Marriage and Rule:** Married Dalpat Shah, ruling the kingdom of Garha-Katanga after her husband's death in 1550.
 - ◆ The kingdom covered the Narmada Valley and parts of Northern Madhya Pradesh.
- **Leadership:** Governed the kingdom with vigor and courage for 16 years.
- **Mughal Attack on Garha-Katanga:**
 - ◆ **Battle against Asaf Khan:** Successfully confronted Akbar's commander Asaf Khan initially.
 - ◆ **Tragic Outcome:** Faced overwhelming forces in subsequent Mughal attacks; rather than surrendering, Rani Durgavati chose to sacrifice her life.
- **Legacy and Recognition:**
 - ◆ **Patriotic Symbol:** Revered as a patriotic ruler embodying India's self-determination.
 - ◆ **Character Praise:** Described as a blend of beauty, grace, courage, and bravery by Abul Fazl, Akbar's court historian.
 - ◆ **Cultural Defender:** Remembered for sacrifices and as a defender of her culture.
- **Rani Durgavati's Strategic Leadership:**
 - ◆ To strengthen defenses, Rani Durgavati moved her capital from Singorgarh Fort to the strategically vital Chauragarh Fort in the Satpura hill range.

- ◆ This relocation enhanced her kingdom's fortifications, ensuring preparedness for potential conflicts.
- **Developmental Projects:** Undertook various developmental initiatives, including the construction of reservoirs like Ranital, Cherital, and Adhartal, for the well-being of her subjects.
- **Patron of Learning:** Supported learning by allowing Acharya Bitthalnath to establish a seat of the Pushtimarg Cult at Garha.

Chandelas of Jejakabhukti:

- **Historical Background:**
 - ◆ Chandelas ruled Central India from the 9th to 13th centuries.
 - ◆ Initially subordinate to the Gurjara-Pratiharas, they emerged as a significant power under Nannuka, ruling around Khajuraho.
- **Art and Architecture:**
 - ◆ Left a lasting legacy through cultural accomplishments, including temples, water bodies, palaces, and forts.
 - ◆ Most renowned for the artistic and architectural marvels at Khajuraho, including Hindu and Jain temples.
 - ◆ **Notable Temples:** Under Yashovarman, Dhanga, and Vidyadhara, temples like the Lakshmana Temple, Vishvanatha Temple, and Kandariya Mahadeva Temple were built, exemplifying the Nagara architectural style.
- **Challenges and Decline:**
 - ◆ Engaged in battles with neighboring dynasties like the Paramars and Kalachuris.
 - ◆ Faced invasions from northern Muslim dynasties such as the Ghaznavids and Ghurids.
 - ◆ Chandela rule declined in the early 13th century due to invasions by the Chahamanas and Ghurids.

SHRI ALLURI SITARAMA RAJU

125th Birth Anniversary of Shri Alluri Sitarama Raju and 100 years of the Rampa Rebellion concluded in Hyderabad.

About:

- **Early Childhood:**
 - ◆ **Birthplace:** Born on July 4, 1897, in Mogallu near Bhimavaram, Andhra Pradesh.

- ◆ **Spiritual Journey:** Renounced worldly pleasures and embraced Sanyas by the age of 18.
- **Contribution in India's Independence:**
 - ◆ Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi during the Non-Cooperation Movement (NCM).
 - ◆ Encouraged tribals to seek justice in local panchayat courts, boycotting colonial courts.
 - ◆ Persuaded people to adopt khadi and abstain from drinking.
- Shri Alluri Sitarama Raju mobilized and united various tribal communities to stand against the British authorities.
- He employed guerrilla warfare tactics, utilizing the dense forests of the region to launch surprise attacks on the British forces.
- His strategies were aimed at disrupting the British administration and challenging their exploitation of the tribal population.

Rampa Rebellion (1922-1924):

- **Overview:**
 - ◆ Also known as the **Manyam Rebellion**, with Shri Alluri Sitarama Raju hailed as "**Manyam Veerudu**" (**Hero of the Jungles**).
 - ◆ Launched in August 1922 against British tyranny.
- **Objectives and Actions:**
 - ◆ Opposed the oppressive Madras Forest Act, 1882.
 - ◆ Organized a militant guerrilla movement in the early 1920s.
 - ◆ Realizing the limitations of traditional weaponry, initiated attacks on police stations to seize modern weapons.
 - ◆ First attack on Chintapalli police station in Visakhapatnam.
- **Legacy:**
 - ◆ Relentlessly pursued by British forces, Sitarama Raju was caught and martyred on May 7, 1924.
 - ◆ Rampa Rebellion inspired tribals in Orissa, leading to a no-rent struggle and violations of forest laws.
- **Calcutta Secret Society:** Sitarama Raju was a member of a Calcutta Secret Society, where he acquired knowledge in bomb-making.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- **Alienation of Tribal Population:**
 - ◆ **Madras Forest Act, 1882:**
 - Restricted the free movement and collection of Minor Forest Produce by tribal communities.
 - Particularly affected the tribal population residing in Rampa and Gudem Hills.
- **Ban on Podu Agricultural System:** Traditional slash-and-burn shifting cultivation, known as Podu, was prohibited.
- **Exploitation of Tribals:**
 - ◆ **Vetti Worker System:** Tribal refusal to work as vetti labor in road and railway construction in the hilly region.
 - ◆ **Gothi Labour (Debt Bondage):** Employment of gothi labors by private forest contractors without proper wages.
 - ◆ **Coolie Labour System:** Labors paid at local rates for certain work but remained unpaid for specific forest-related tasks.
- **Muttadars' Power Curtailment:**
 - ◆ **Role of Muttadars (Village Headmen):** Traditional rulers in the socio-economic framework of the Rampa region.
 - ◆ **British Intervention:**
 - British rule altered the power structure, curtailing the authority of muttadars.
 - Antagonized the muttadars and disrupted the traditional tribal community dynamics.

SRI AUROBINDO'S 150TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

The year-long celebration marking the 150th Birth Anniversary of Sri Aurobindo was held at Auroville, Puducherry.

About:

- **Background:**
 - ◆ He was a 20th-century Bengali poet, philosopher, spiritual leader, and revolutionary freedom fighter.
 - ◆ Born on August 15, 1872, in Calcutta (now Kolkata), West Bengal.
- **Educational Journey:**
 - ◆ Initial education in a Christian convent school in Darjeeling.

- ◆ Studied in London at St. Paul's School and King's College in Cambridge.
- **National Movement Participation:**
 - ◆ Pioneer of the Indian extremist movement, co-establishing Anushilan Samiti in 1902.
 - ◆ Active politics after the Bengal partition in 1905.
 - ◆ Advocated passive resistance during the Surat Split of INC in 1907.
 - ◆ Arrested in the Alipore Conspiracy Case in May 1908.
- **Literary Contributions:**
 - ◆ Authored '**New Lamps for Old**,' criticizing moderate politics of Congress.
 - ◆ Edited '**Bande Mataram**' newspapers and started weeklies like '**Karmayogin**' and '**Dharma**.'
 - ◆ Published philosophical magazine '**Arya**' in 1914.
 - ◆ Notable books include '**Essays on the Gita**,' '**Collected Poems and Plays**,' '**The Synthesis of Yoga**' and the epic poem '**Savitri**.'
- **Spiritual Journey:**
 - ◆ Transitioned from active politics to spiritual reform after 1910.
 - ◆ Developed Integral Yoga, emphasizing self-realization and inner transformation.
 - ◆ Founded the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in 1926 with **Mirra Alfassa**.
 - ◆ Advocated Jnana (knowledge), Bhakti (devotion), and Karma (work ethics) for the divine path.
 - ◆ Opposed social inequalities and aimed for a sound personality through the synthesis of spirituality, creativity, and intellectuality.
 - ◆ Influenced by Sri Ramanujacharya's teachings, supporting the inclusion of outcastes into Hinduism.
 - ◆ Mirra Alfassa founded Auroville, the city of dawn, based on the principles of peace, progress, and harmony.
 - ◆ **Integral Yoga:**
 - ◆ Developed by Sri Aurobindo for achieving true self-realization and inner transformation.
 - ◆ Focuses on liberating consciousness and transforming human nature.

CONCEPT OF NATION AND THEORY OF SPIRITUAL NATIONALISM

- **Nation as a Shakti:** Defined the nation beyond geographical boundaries, seeing it as a collective energy.
- **Nationalism as a Faith:** Considered nationalism not just a political movement but a profound faith and creed.
- **Immortality of Nationalism:** Believed nationalism is eternal as it is divinely created, not a human invention.
- **Call to Action:** Emphasized that true nationalism requires active contributions towards the betterment of the nation.

SIR SYED AHMED KHAN

The year 2023 marked the 125th death anniversary of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, a prominent figure known for his multifaceted contributions.

About

- A polymath with roles encompassing civil service, journalism, education, social reform, and historian.
- **Religious Views:**
 - ♦ Advocated free inquiry (ijtihad) within Islam.
 - ♦ Emphasized the compatibility of Koranic revelations with scientific discoveries.
- **Writings:**
 - ♦ Authored "**The Causes of the Indian Revolt**," offering insights from a native perspective.
 - ♦ Published the **Aligarh Institute Gazette** and founded **Tahzebul Akhlaq** to address social and religious issues.
 - ♦ Contributed to historical documentation with works like "**Asar-us-Sanadid**."

Role as a Social Reformer:

- **Transformation in Education:**
 - ♦ Established the Scientific Society in 1863 to promote a scientific temperament among Muslims.
 - ♦ Founded the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College in Aligarh in 1875, initiating the Aligarh movement.
 - ♦ Emphasized the necessity for Muslims to excel in English for societal progress.

- **Record on Women's Rights:**

- ♦ Despite conservatism, denounced polygamy, infanticide, and child marriage.
- ♦ Evolved outlook on women's education after he visited England, recognizing its societal importance.

SANT MEERA BAI

The 525th birth anniversary of Sant Meerabai was recently celebrated in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, commemorating the life and contributions of this revered Bhakti saint.

About Sant Meerabai (1498-1546):

- **Early Life:**
 - ♦ Born as Princess Yashodha of Mewar, Meerabai later became a prominent Bhakti saint and Hindu mystic poet.
 - ♦ In 1516, she married Rana Bhoj Raj, the crown prince of Mewar.
- **Life as a Saint:**
 - ♦ Following the death of her husband, Meerabai embarked on a spiritual quest, leaving Mewar to seek Lord Krishna.
 - ♦ She traversed various places, including Brindavan and Dwarka, embracing Saguna Bhakti and considering Lord Krishna as her eternal companion.

BHAKTI MOVEMENT

- **Origin of Bhakti Movement:**
 - ♦ Originated in South India between the 7th and 12th centuries A.D.
 - ♦ Embraced the belief in the equality of all humans, dismissing caste distinctions.

Bhakti Movement in Different Regions:

- **South India:**
 - ♦ Initially led by **Alvars (Devotees of Lord Vishnu)** and **Nayanars (Devotees of Lord Siva)**.
 - ♦ Alvars and Nayanars connected with the masses through the use of the local language.
 - ♦ **Nayanars, sixty-three in number**, included saints like **Appar, Sundarar, Thirugnana Sambandar, and Manickavachakar**.
 - ♦ **Alvars, twelve in number**, featured saints like **Nammalwar, Tirumangai Alwar, Andal, and Perialwar**.

- Devotional songs of Andal known as **Thiruppavai**.
- Alvars' songs compiled in the **Divya Prabandham**.
- **Central and North India:**
 - ♦ The Bhakti movement spread from South to Central and North India in the 13th century.
 - ♦ **Two categories emerged:**
 - **Saguna:** Worship with attributes or form (e.g., Tulsidas, Meera Bai).
 - **Nirguna:** Worship of the Formless form of God (e.g., Kabir Das, Guru Nanak Dev).
 - ♦ **Maharashtra:**
 - From the 13th to the 17th centuries, Maharashtra witnessed a surge in saint poets composing in the local language.
 - Focused on the Vitthala temple in Pandharpur, following the Warkari tradition.
 - Prominent saints include **Janeshwar, Namdev, Eknath, and Tukaram**, as well as women like **Sakkubai** and the **Chokhamela** family.
 - Rejected ritualism, outward display of piety, and social differences based on birth.
- **East and North East:**
 - ♦ Neo-Vaishnavite Movement led by **Śankaradeva in Assam**.
 - ♦ **Chaitanya Mahaprabhu**, a devotee of Lord Krishna, from Bengal, popularized 'Sankirtan' or public singing of God's name.



- **Major Works:**
 - ♦ Meerabai's poetry, expressed in the Braj language, vividly portrays her unique relationship with Lord Krishna.
 - ♦ Notable compositions include "**Paayoji maine Ram Ratan dhan paayo**" and collections like "**Raag Govind**," "**Narsi Ji Ka Mayara**," and others.
 - ♦ Some bhajans translated into English as '**Meerabai: Ecstatic Poems**' by Robert Bly and Jane Hirshfield.
 - ♦ **Bhaktmal**, a biography written by Guru Nabha Dass in 1585, provides insights into Meerabai's life.
- **Social Reforms:**
 - ♦ Meerabai became a disciple of Sant Ravidas, challenging caste norms.
 - ♦ Her songs openly defied upper-caste norms, resonating with the masses in Rajasthan and Gujarat.
 - ♦ Rejecting traditional roles, she embraced a life of wandering.

BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF RANI LAXMI BAI

About

- Also known as Jhansi Ki Rani, she was the queen of the Maratha-ruled princely state of Jhansi.
 - ♦ A prominent figure in the Indian Revolt of 1857, symbolizing resistance to British rule in India.
- **Early Life:**
 - ♦ Born on 19th November 1828 in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, originally named **Manikarnika**.
 - ♦ Received formal training in martial arts, including horse riding, shooting, and fencing, while pursuing studies.
 - ♦ **Associated with Nana Sahib** (adopted son of the Peshwa) and **Taty Tope**.
- **As Jhansi Ki Rani:**
 - ♦ **Married Maharaja Gangadhar Rao Newalkar of Jhansi** at the age of 14.
 - ♦ After the Maharaja's first wife's death, Manikarnika became Laxmibai, Rani of Jhansi.
 - ♦ **Gave birth to a son who died at three months;** later, the couple adopted **Damodar Rao** from Gangadhar Rao's extended family.

Role in Struggle for Independence:

- Fought against the British during the annexation attempt after the **Doctrine of Lapse** was applied in 1853.

- After the Maharaja died in 1853, **Lord Dalhousie refused to recognize the adopted child**, applying the Doctrine of Lapse and annexing the state.
- **Doctrine of Lapse:**
 - ♦ Annexation policy by Lord Dalhousie from 1848 to 1856.
 - ♦ Stated that any princely state without a legal male heir would be annexed.
 - ♦ Adopted sons were not recognized as heirs.
 - ♦ Resulted in the annexation of several states, including Jhansi in 1853.
- Died in battle on 17th June 1858, defending her empire from annexation.
- General Hugh Rose on her death said that “here lay the woman who was the only man among the rebels”.

MATANGINI HAZRA

About:

- **Early life:** She was born on 19 October 1870, in the small village of **Hogla, near Tamluk in Bengal**, she was the daughter of a poor peasant and did not receive a formal education.
- **Role during freedom struggle**
 - ♦ She was a revolutionary and actively participated in the Indian Independence Movement.
 - ♦ She was affectionately known as **Gandhi Buri (Bengali for Old Lady Gandhi)**.
 - ♦ In 1905, she became actively interested in the Indian independence movement **as a Gandhian**.
- She took part in the **Non-Cooperation Movement** and protested for the **abolition of salt tax** as a part of the civil disobedience movement.
 - ♦ It was during this time that she became an active member of the **Indian National Congress**, and started spinning her own khadi in Gandhi's footsteps.
- She led a procession of 6000 protestors, mostly women as a part of the **Quit India Movement**.
- She kept chanting **Vande Mataram (Hail to the Motherland)** during her last moments.
- **Post Independence:**
 - ♦ Numerous schools, colonies, and streets were named after Hazra.



- ♦ The first statue of a woman put up in Kolkata, in independent India, was Hazra's in 1977.
- ♦ In 2002, as part of a series of postage stamps commemorating sixty years of the Quit India Movement the Department of Posts of India issued a five rupee postage stamp with **Matangini Hazra's image**.

LACHIT BORPHUKAN

About

- Lachit Borphukan was a prominent figure in the history of Assam during the 17th century. He served as the military commander of the **Ahom Kingdom**.
- He is best known for his leadership during the **Battle of Saraighat in 1671** against the Mughal forces led by **Raja Ramsingh under Aurangzeb**.
- He was the inspiration behind strengthening India's naval force and revitalizing inland water transport and creating infrastructure associated with it due to his great naval strategies.
- **Lachit Borphukan Gold medal:** It is awarded to the best cadet from the National Defence Academy.
 - ♦ The medal was instituted in 1999 to inspire defense personnel to emulate Borphukan's heroism and sacrifices.
- **Lachit Divas:** Assam celebrates “Lachit Divas” annually on November 24th in honor of Lachit Borphukan, commemorating his role in the Battle of Saraighat.

AHOM KINGDOM

- It was established by Chaolung Sukapha in the 13th century.
- It endured for six centuries as the ruling power in Assam.
- The Ahoms governed the region until it was annexed to British India in 1826 through the signing of the Treaty of Yandaboo.

NAWAB WAJID ALI SHAH

About:

- Wajid Ali Shah (30 July 1822 – 1 September 1887) was the eleventh and last King of Awadh, holding the position for 9 years, from 13 February 1847 to 11 February 1856.

- His kingdom, long protected by the East India Company (EIC), was annexed under the tenure of the **Governor-General Lord Dalhousie** on 11 February 1856 under the pretext of "maladministration" and "lawlessness".
- The Nawab was exiled to Garden Reach in Metiabruz, then a suburb of Kolkata, where he lived out the rest of his life on a pension.

Contributions to Music:

- A large number of composers, including Wajid Ali Shah himself, enriched the light classical form of thumri.
- Although Wajid Ali Shah's pen-name was "Qaisar", he used pseudonym "Akhtarpiya" for his numerous compositions. Diwan-i-Akhtar, Husn-i-Akhtar contain his ghazals.
- He is said to have composed many new ragas and named them Jogi, Juhi, Shah-Pasand, etc.
- The source for much information on music in Nawabi Lucknow comes from the text Ma'danul Moosiqui ('The Mine of Music') of Hakim Mohammed Karam Imam, courtier of Wajid Ali Shah.

Contributions to Dance: Kathak

- Under Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, Kathak achieved greater dimensions. He gave a definite form, made it more artistic, and gave to it an aesthetic touch, he enriched it with rasa and bhava, and he added literature to it.
- During this period, Kathak was also extensively performed by tawaifs. They frequently performed on lighter classical music such as **dadra, kajri and tappa as well as thumri**.
- Wajid Ali Shah started two distinct forms one is **Rahas** and the other one is called **Raas**.
- Rahas was a dramatic form of theatre including acting, dancing, and music while Raas was purely a religious form. Primarily Dhrupad was sung in Raas and the performance began with its singing. Raas was a circular form of dance where many gopis danced with one Krishna.
- He himself choreographed a dance based on the moves of Kathak called, Rahas, that he danced himself with the ladies of his court.
- It was at his reign that Lucknow Gharana came into existence. The Lucknow style of Kathak dance is characterized by graceful movements, elegance and natural poise with dance.

Contributions to Hindustani Theatre:

- He established the famous **Parikhaana** (abode of fairies) in which hundreds of girls were taught music and dancing by expert-teachers engaged by the royal patron.
- He used to organise a spectacular pageant or Mela known as **Jogia Jashan**, in which all citizens of Lucknow could participate, dressed as Yogis, irrespective of caste and creed.
- Later, when his favourite venue, the **Qaisarbagh Baradari** was built, he began to stage his magnificent Rahas (a Personalised name for Rasleela) full of sensuous poetry, his own lyrical compositions and glamorous Kathak dances.

Contributions to Literature:

- He also patronised literature and several poets and writers. Notable among them were 'Barq', 'Ahmad Mirza Sabir', 'Mufti Munshi', and 'Aamir Ahmad Amir', Irshad-us-Sultan and Hidayat-us-Sultan, Amanat the famous author of Indra Sabha and Bekhud, who wrote Jalwa-Akhatar, Hajjo Sharaf and Afsana-in-Lucknow.
- The famous poet **Mirza Ghalib** also received the gracious patronage of Wajid Ali Shah, who granted him a pension of Rupees five hundred per year in 1854.

SUBRAMANIA BHARATHI

About:

- C. Subramania Bharathi was a poet, freedom fighter and social reformer from Tamil Nadu.
- He was known as Mahakavi Bharathiyar and the laudatory epithet Mahakavi means a great poet.
- His songs on nationalism and freedom of India helped to rally the masses to support the Indian Independence Movement in Tamil Nadu.
- Durbar Hall on the campus was also renamed after him as Bharathiar Mandapam.

Contributions:

- **As a Poet and Nationalist:**
 - ◆ Most parts of his compositions are classifiable as short lyrical outpourings on patriotic, devotional and mystic themes.
 - ◆ "Kannan Pattu" "Nilavum Vanminum Katrum" "PanchaliSabatam" "KuyilPattu" are examples of his great poetic output.
 - ◆ He exhorted the people to join the independence struggle and work vigorously for the liberation of the country.

- He outlined his vision for a free India and published the sensational “SudesaGeethangal” in 1908.
- **As a Journalist:**
 - He was the sub-editor in “Swadesamitran” in November 1904.
 - In order to proclaim its revolutionary ardour, Bharathi had the weekly printed in red paper. “India” was the first paper in Tamil Nadu to publish political cartoons.
 - He also published and edited a few other journals like “Vijaya”.
- **As a Social Reformer:**
 - Bharathi was also against the caste system. He declared that there were only two castes—men and women and nothing more than that.
 - He believed in women’s rights, gender equality and women emancipation. He opposed child marriage, dowry and supported widow remarriage.

USTAD ALI ZAKI HADER

About:

- Ali Zaki Hader was the last exponent of the **Khandarbani (Khandaharbani) style of the Jaipur Beenkar gharana of Dhrupad**.
- He was the Disciple of **Ustad Asad Ali Khan**.

Rudra Veena:

- It is an **ancient stringed instrument**, which is made of **teak wood, metal, pumpkin, and Bamboo**.
- It is found in various parts of **North India**. Majorly used in Northern Indian classical music.
- It is held at a higher angle of elevation, i.e., **almost vertically**. It consists of **two large vibrating boxes**.
- Unlike a sitar or sarod, the **rudra veena does not have resonance strings**.



- The word veena is believed to have been derived from the word **vana**, a string **instrument mentioned in the Rig Veda**.

- It is believed that Rudra Veena was created by **Lord Shiva** as a tribute to the **beauty of Goddess Parvati**.
- Rudra Veena has now become a **rare instrument** almost on the verge of extinction.
- Both, the craftsmen who create the instrument as well as its players are rarely found now.
 - The instrument lost its importance in the early nineteenth century with the evolution of other stringed instruments such as – **Surbahar, Sitar and Sarod, etc.**

YESHWANT GHADGE

About:

- He was a soldier of the **Mahratta Light Infantry** who served in Italy during **World War II (1939-1945)**.
- He was killed in action fighting on the heights of **Upper Tiber Valley**.
 - He was not even 23 when he succumbed to **German sniper fire** in Montone, a commune in the Italian province of Perugia.
- He had been in service for at least four years at the time, and had been promoted to the rank of Naik, commanding his own rifle section.
- He was posthumously awarded **Victoria Cross (VC)**, the UK’s highest military decoration, for his uncommon courage in one of the fiercest battles of the Italian campaign.



CONSTANTINE JOSEPH BESCHI

About:

- He was the **Italian Jesuit missionary** and **Tamil scholar** and famously known as **Veeramamunivar**.
- He dressed like a Hindu sanyasi and travelled in a palanquin with a tiger skin to sit upon.
- He arrived in **Goa in 1700** and abstained from the “use of flesh and fish” and employed two Tamil youths to dress his food according to the Hindu custom.
- **Roles and responsibilities:** He had acted as **Dewan of Chanda Sahib** and he retained the habit of a religious devotee.
- Chanda Sahib also gifted him four villages — Bokalur, Malwav, Arasur and Nullur — north of the Kollidam in Tiruchi district, yielding a net revenue of ₹12,000 a year.

- He also studied Sanskrit, Telugu, and Tamil assiduously and became a master of these languages, especially Tamil.
 - ♦ He was known as Thairiyathaswamy and its translation reads as Veeramamunivar.
- He considered **Chanda Sahib as the ruler of the banks of the Cauvery**.
 - ♦ As per the guidelines of the missionary works of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), he found Chanda Sahib a good source for his work.
- His principal efforts were directed towards the conversion of the Idolaters.
 - ♦ He delved deep into Tirukkural, Naladiyar, Civaka Cintamani, and other celebrated Hindu works.
- He held the office of Dewan in Tiruchi till 1740.
 - ♦ When Chanda Sahib was arrested and made a prisoner after Tiruchi was besieged by the Maratha army under Nather Singh, Veeramamunivar went to Manapadu and remained there in the service of the church and died in 1742.
- **Biography:** The first biography of **Veeramamunivar** in Tamil written by **A. Muttusami Pillei**, manager of the College of Fort Saint George and Moonshee (secretary) to the Tamil Translator to Government.

GURU TEGH BAHADUR

About:

- Guru Tegh Bahadur was the ninth Sikh Guru and played a significant role in Sikh history.
- **Birth:** Born in 1621, in Amritsar.
- Became the ninth Sikh Guru at the age of 43 in 1664. His hymns are included in the Guru Granth Sahib, the holy scripture of Sikhism.
- **Historical Significance:**
 - ♦ He advocated for the right to practice one's religion freely.
 - ♦ Executed in 1675 in Delhi by Aurangzeb for refusing to convert to Islam.
 - ♦ His martyrdom is commemorated annually as Shaheedi Divas ('Martyrdom Day').
 - ♦ His sacrifice is celebrated as a symbol of resistance against religious oppression.
 - ♦ The site in Delhi where Guru Tegh Bahadur was martyred is now the Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib.

Spiritual Teachings:

- ♦ His teachings emphasize the universality of God and the oneness of humanity.
- ♦ Emphasized meditation, selfless service, and devotion to God.
- ♦ Promoted the principles of equality, humility, and compassion.

FESTIVALS

KHARCHI PUJA: FESTIVAL OF 14 GODS

Also known as the 'Festival of 14 Gods,' Kharchi Puja involves worshiping Chaturdasa Devata, the ancestral deity of the Tripuri people, housed in the ancient Ujjayanta Palace.

Rituals and Worship:

- During the festival, **Tripura people** worship both **Chaturdasa Devata and the earth**.
- A significant ritual includes constructing the Chaturdasha Mandapa, symbolizing the royal palace of the Tripuri kings.
- On Puja day, the 14 gods are taken to the **Saidra river** by the royal priests (Chantai), bathed, and then returned to the temple.
- It occurs during the month of **'Ashad'** on the **'Shukla Ashtami' day**.

History:

- The term 'Kharchi' comes from Tripuri words **'khar' or kharta (sin) and 'chi' or si (cleaning)**.
- While having tribal origins, Kharchi Puja is celebrated by both tribal and non-tribal people in Tripura.
- Linked to the belief that **Tripura Sundari**, the presiding deity, menstruates during Ambubachi in June.
- The ritualistic cleaning of the Earth after the goddess's menstruation aims to wash away the sins of the people in the land.

STATE	LOCAL FESTIVALS
Andhra Pradesh	Ugadi, Pongal, Deccan Festival
Assam	Bihu, Ambubachi Mela, Bohag Bihu
Bihar	Chhath Puja, Sonapur Mela, Rajgir Dance Festival
Goa	Shigmo, Carnival, Feast of St. Francis Xavier

Gujarat	Navratri, Diwali, International Kite Festival
Haryana	Baisakhi, Teej, Surajkund Crafts Mela
Himachal Pradesh	Kullu Dussehra, Shimla Summer Festival
Jharkhand	Sarhul, Karma, Tusu Parab
Karnataka	Mysuru Dasara, Hampi Utsav, Karaga Festival
Kerala	Onam, Thrissur Pooram, Nehru Trophy Boat Race
Madhya Pradesh	Khajuraho Dance Festival, Tansen Music Festival
Maharashtra	Ganesh Chaturthi, Diwali, Gudi Padwa
Odisha	Rath Yatra, Durga Puja, Konark Dance Festival
Punjab	Baisakhi, Lohri, Basant Panchami
Rajasthan	Pushkar Camel Fair, Jaipur Literature Festival
Tamil Nadu	Pongal, Chithirai Thiruvizha, Jallikattu
Telangana	Bathukamma, Bonalu, Deccan Festival
Uttar Pradesh	Kumbh Mela, Taj Mahotsav
West Bengal	Durga Puja, Poush Mela

AMBUBACHI MELA

About:

- It is an annual Hindu fair held at the historic **Kamakhya Temple**.
- Celebrated during the monsoon season, specifically in the Assamese month Ahaar, typically around the middle of June.
- Occasion:** Marks the yearly menstruation course of goddess Maa Kamakhya.
- Other Names:** Also known as Ameti or Tantric fertility festival, closely associated with the Tantric Shakti cult prevalent in eastern India.

Key Facts about Kamakhya Temple:

- Location:** Situated on **Nilachal Hill**, adjacent to the southern bank of the Brahmaputra River in Guwahati.
- Significance:** Revered as one of the oldest of the 51 Shakti Peethas in India.
- Temple Architecture:**
 - Modeled with a combination of **traditional Nagara (North Indian) and Saracenic (Mughal) styles**, known as the **Nilachala Style of Architecture**.

- ♦ **Only Assam temple** with a **fully developed ground plan**.
- ♦ **Comprises five chambers:** garbhagriha (sanctuary), antarala (vestibule), Jagan Mohan (principal chamber), bhogmandir (ritual chamber), and natmandir (opera hall).

SAMVATSARI: A JAIN OBSERVANCE

About

- **Observance Nature:** Samvatsari is marked by prayers, rituals, and fasting, serving as a time for Jains to renew their commitment to non-violence, truth, and righteousness.
- **Day of Reflection:** This signifies a day of reflection, atonement, and reconciliation within the Jain community.
- **Conclusion of Paryushan:** Marks the conclusion of the Paryushan festival, a crucial annual event in Jainism, lasting eight days among Shwetambaras and ten days among Digambaras.

Rituals and Practices during Samvatsari:

- **Forgiveness Seeking:** Shwetambar Jains seek forgiveness for past wrongdoings, bad karma, and mistakes during rituals or interactions, fostering personal growth and humility.
- **'Michami Dukkadam':** Jains commonly express 'Michami Dukkadam' to seek forgiveness from loved ones during Samvatsari.
- **Prayers and Meditation:** Jains commence the day with prayers, meditation, and temple visits to seek blessings from revered Tirthankaras.
- **Focus on Lord Mahavira:** Temples prominently feature the image of Lord Mahavira, the 24th Tirthankara, and Jainism's founder, as the central focus of veneration.
- **'Pratikramana' Ritual:** Jains engage in 'Pratikramana' or 'Pratikraman,' a detailed confession of sins committed during the past year.

EID-UL-ZUHA

About:

- **Names:** Eid-ul-Zuha is also known as **Eid-ul-Adha, Eid-ul-Azha and Bakr-Id**. It is also referred to as the **festival of sacrifice**.

- **When:** In the Islamic lunar calendar, Eid al-Adha falls on the tenth day of Dhu al-Hijjah and lasts for four days.
- **Background:** Muslims around the world believe that Allah (God) commanded Ibrahim (Abraham) to sacrifice his son Ishmael.
 - ♦ Ibrahim followed God's orders, but his son was replaced by a sheep at the last moment. Muslims celebrate this at Eid al-Adha.
- **Celebration:** Because of the tradition of sacrificing a goat ('bakri' in Urdu) it is known as Bakr-id.
 - ♦ Eid al Adha is that it **also marks the end of the Hajj pilgrimage** to Mecca in Saudi Arabia, which is a mandatory religious journey undertaken by Muslims to the holy place of Kabbah.
- **Significance:** Eid al-Adha is one of the two main festivals celebrated in Islam (the other being Eid al-Fitr).

EID AL ADHA	EID AL FITR
It is a celebration to mark the ultimate sacrifice by Ibrahim (Abraham) to show his love and devotion to Allah/God.	It is a celebration to mark the end of Ramadan/Ramzan , the holy month of fasting.
It is celebrated on the 10th day of the month of Dhu Al-Hijjah (in Islamic Calendar).	It is celebrated on the first day in the month of Shawwal .
It literally means ' Feast of the Sacrifice '.	It literally means ' Feast of the breaking Fast '.
It is also known as Bakrid or Bakri Eid because of the sacrificial lamb/goat which is deemed a sacred offering to the gods.	It is also known as ' Meetha Eid ' because the sweet dish of sewwayyan (a form of vermicelli pudding) is savoured and distributed among family and friends.

GNANA MUYARCHI

About:

- The Gnanamuyarchi, a palm manuscript from the 18th Century, is discovered in an Armenian monastery in northern Italy.
- It is a copy of the first Tamil translation of Spiritual Exercise, written by St. Ignatius of Loyola in the 16th century.
 - ♦ The translation is most likely by Michele Bertoldi, known in Tamil as Gnanaprakasasamy.

Background and Significance:

- The discovery was made by Tamil Bharathan, a doctoral scholar from the Special Centre for Tamil Studies in Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU).
- These palm manuscripts are of utmost importance in preserving historical and cultural knowledge, offering valuable insights into the time period they originate from, providing a firsthand account of the social, literary, and religious practices during that era.
- The manuscripts are written in Tamil, showcasing the influence of the language and its spread beyond its homeland.

Unveiling the Origin:

- The library categorises these manuscripts as Indian Papyrus Lamulic Language – XIII Century.
- The prevailing theory among those in charge of the monastery is that the Armenians in Chennai, India, could have played a role in bringing these manuscripts to Italy, highlighting the interconnectedness and mobility of cultures during that period.

NUAKHAI FESTIVAL

About:

- **Names:** Nuakhai is called as Nuakhai Parab or Nuakhai Bhetghat.
- **Where:** Nuakhai is an agricultural festival mainly observed by tribal people as well as Hindus of Western Odisha.
 - ♦ It is also celebrated in the adjoining areas of Simdega in Jharkhand, where the culture of Western Odisha is much predominant.
- **Why?** Nuakhai is observed to welcome the new rice of the season. **The word nua means new and khai means food**, so the name means the farmers are in possession of the newly harvested rice.
- **When?** It is observed on panchami tithi (the fifth day) of the lunar fortnight of the month of Bhadrapada (August–September), **the day after the Ganesh Chaturthi festival**.
- **History:** Nuakhai festival is of ancient origin, originating from **Pralambana yajna** (which involves cutting of the first crop and reverent offering of the same to the mother goddess).
 - ♦ **In its current form**, the festival dates to the time of the **first Chauhan King Ramai Deva of Patnagarh in west Odisha**.

Celebrations:

- This festival has 9 sets of rituals that start from Behrana to Nuakhai and all conclude in Juhar Bhet.
- **Beheren** - This is the announcement of the meeting to be fixed on the date.
- **Nuakhai** - This ritual is popular, and it is observed to eat the new crop after offering it to the deity, followed by dancing and singing.
- **Juhar bhet** - It is taking blessings on elderly people and sharing gifts with them.

'VAISHALI' FESTIVAL OF DEMOCRACY

About:

- The '**Vaishali**' festival of democracy was organised by the Union Culture Ministry in '**Bharat Mandapam**' as part of the side events of the G-20 Summit.
- The exhibition titled "**Bharat: mother of democracy**" was aimed at highlighting the **democratic ethos of India**.
- It holds significant **historical and cultural importance**, as it commemorates the birthplace of democracy and celebrates the enduring values of democratic governance.

Ancient City of Vaishali:

- It is a great Buddhist pilgrimage and birthplace of Lord Mahavira, the last Tirthankar of Jainism. It is believed to be the first republic in the world.
- Buddha visited this place thrice, delivered his last sermon and announced his Nirvana here at Vaishali.
- After the death of Buddha, the Second Buddhist Council was held at Vaishali.

Gana or Sangha:

- It was a **different form of government** of the Magadha empire.
- In a gana or a sangha there were many rulers, each one was known as a raja who performed rituals together. They also **met in assemblies**, and decided what had to be done and how, **through discussion and debate**.
 - ♦ However, women, dasas and kammakaras could not participate in these assemblies.
- Both the Buddha and Mahavira belonged to ganas or sanghas.
- Ajatshatru, the great Magadh King, annexed Vaishali in the fifth century BC and after that Vaishali gradually lost its glory and power.

- **UNESCO** declared the ruins of Nalanda Mahavihara, a **world heritage site**.

NALANDA UNIVERSITY

- It was a **centre of higher learning** that attracted scholars from different parts of the country as well as the world **from the 5th century CE to 12th century CE**.
- It was **located in present day Rajgir, Bihar**.
- The courses of study offered by Nalanda University covered a wide range, almost the entire circle of knowledge then available.
 - ♦ Students at Nalanda studied the Vedas and were also trained in fine arts, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, politics and the art of warfare.
- The **Chinese scholars I-Qing and Xuan Zang** visited Nalanda in the **7th century CE** and noted that **as many as one hundred discourses happened on a daily basis**, in a variety of disciplines through the **methods of debate and discussions**.
 - ♦ Xuan Zang himself became a student of Nalanda to study yogashastra. He has mentioned that the Chancellor of Nalanda, Shilabhadra, was the highest living authority in yoga.

ROSH HASHANAH

About:

- It is a Hebrew phrase that means '**the head of the year**', and followed as a '**new year day**' in **Judaism**. It begins on the **first day of the seventh month of the Jewish calendar**.
- As it is **celebrated for 48 hours**, it is also called '**yoma arichta**', meaning '**a long day**'.

Origin:

- It is **not explicitly mentioned in the Torah (Judaism's founding religious text)** and appears under different names in the Bible.
- However, Torah mentions a **sacred occasion that starts on the first day of the seventh month of the Jewish calendar** around the time Rosh Hashanah is scheduled.
- Though the holiday was likely well established by the sixth century B.C., the phrase "Rosh Hashanah" shows up for the first time in the Mishna, a Jewish code of law compiled in 200 A.D.

MISCELLANEOUS

CHOLA ADMINISTRATION

Prime Minister ceremoniously placed the Sengol, a sceptre gifted by the head of Thiruvaduthurai Adheenam, in India's new Parliament building.

Key Points:

- On August 14, 1947, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru received the 'Sengol' as a symbolic transfer of power from priests of Thiruvaduthurai Adheenam in Tamil Nadu.
- The term 'Sengol,' derived from Tamil 'semmai' meaning 'righteousness,' features an engraved Nandi symbolizing justice.
- The Sengol serves as a reminder to the recipient of their authority to govern justly.

Cultural Significance of Sengol

- In Tamil culture, the coronation of a new king involves the presentation of the 'Sengol,' symbolizing the transfer of power.
- In the Chola Empire, the Sengol represented the principles of duty, service, and national identity.
- The historical practice of handing over a sceptre for power transfer dates back almost 2,000 years, documented in texts like Purananooru and Kalithogai.

Insights into Chola Administration

- The Chola king held complete power, guided by a council of ministers, with top authorities known as **Peruntaram** and other officials as **Siruntaram**.
- The Chola empire was administratively divided into mandalams, provinces, and further into valanadu and nadu, sometimes appointing royal family members as governors.
- Chola administration endorsed local self-government, featuring assemblies like **Ur (general assembly)** and **Mahasabha (assembly of adult men)** in villages.
- Villages enjoyed autonomy with elected executive committees managing their affairs.
- Cholas emphasized irrigation using rivers like Kaveri, and constructing tanks and wells for agricultural purposes.
- Chola rulers derived income from diverse sources, including land tax, tolls on trade, and taxes on professions.

- The Chola military was adept, featuring elephants, cavalry, and infantry, with Rajendra I establishing a navy for expeditions in Ganga valley, Sri Lanka, and Southeast Asia.

TYPES OF LAND UNDER CHOLA'S REIGN

- **Brahmadeya:** Refers to land specifically gifted to Brahmanas.
- **Vellanvagai:** Designates land owned by non-Brahmana peasant proprietors.
- **Devadana, Tirunamattukkani:** Denotes land generously gifted to temples for religious purposes.
- **Pallichchandam:** Represents land donations directed towards Jaina institutions.
- **Shalabhoga:** Allocated land intended for supporting educational institutions.

UTTARAMERUR INSCRIPTION

- The renowned inscription from **Parantaka I's** era is located on the walls of the **Vaikunda Perumal Temple**.
- **Details about the Local Sabha:**
 - ◆ Provides a comprehensive overview of the functioning of the local Sabha, specifically the village assembly.
 - ◆ The Sabha was an assembly exclusively for Brahmins, featuring specialized committees with distinct responsibilities.
- **Qualifications for Sabha Membership:**
 - ◆ Required qualifications include ownership of a specific land amount, having a house, **age between 35 and 70**, and proficiency in "mantras and Brahmanas" from the Vedic corpus.
 - ◆ Exceptions allowed for those who have learned at least "one Veda and four Bhashyas" and are well-versed in business, along with possessing virtuous qualities.
- **Selection Procedure for the Sabha:**
 - ◆ Describes a structured process with **30 wards**; each ward nominates one representative for the village assembly.
 - ◆ Eligible individuals express willingness by writing their names on palm leaf tickets, and representatives are selected through a detailed draw of lots conducted by priests in the assembly's inner hall.

- **Disqualifications for Sabha Membership:**

- ♦ Enumerates disqualifying factors for individuals and their families, such as not submitting accounts while previously serving on a committee.
- ♦ Lists the first four of the **five 'great sins'** as disqualifiers, which include killing a Brahman, drinking alcohol, theft, and adultery.
- ♦ Consuming 'forbidden' dishes are also considered grounds for disqualification.

JATAN: VIRTUAL MUSEUM BUILDER

- **About:** JATAN is a digital collection management system designed for Indian museums, facilitating efficient digital object management.
- **Features:** Client-server application with capabilities like image cropping, watermarking, unique numbering, and multimedia representation management.
- **Developers:**
 - ♦ Created by the **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Pune.**
 - ♦ C-DAC is the premier R&D organization of the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**, established in 1988.
- **Government Initiative:**
 - ♦ Part of the Central government's plan to achieve 3D digitization of all museums under its administrative control by the year-end, enhancing artifact conservation.
 - ♦ The Ministry of Culture oversees 10 museums, and the Archaeological Survey of India manages site museums at 44 locations across the country.
- **Partnership:** A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and the Ministry of Culture** to support this initiative.

GANDHI PEACE PRIZE 2021

- **Recipient:** Gita Press, Gorakhpur, is honored with the Gandhi Peace Prize for 2021.
- **About the Award:**
 - ♦ **Establishment:** The annual Gandhi Peace Prize was instituted in 1995, marking the 125th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

- ♦ **Eligibility:** Open to individuals irrespective of nationality, race, language, caste, creed, or gender.
- ♦ **Award:** Prize includes a cash award of ₹1 crore, a citation, a plaque, and a traditional handicraft/handloom item.
- ♦ **Previous awardees** encompass Nelson Mandela, Grameen Bank, ISRO, and the Sulabh.
- ♦ **Categories:** The prize is awarded in four categories – individuals, associations, institutions, and movements.
 - It can be given to those who have contributed to social, economic, and political transformation through non-violence and other Gandhian principles.

OL CHIKI SCRIPT

Prime Minister extended wishes to the Santhal tribe on Hul Diwas using the Ol Chiki Script of the Santhali language.

About

- **Constitutional Recognition:**
 - ♦ The **92nd Constitutional Amendment Act** added Santali to **Schedule VIII** of the Constitution of India, officially recognizing it as one of India's languages.
 - ♦ Other languages added include Bodo, Dogri, and Maithili.
- **Ol Chiki Script:**
 - ♦ Created in 1925 by **Raghnath Murmu.**
 - ♦ Used for writing the Santhali language, a Munda language spoken in Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, Bangladesh, eastern Nepal, and Bhutan.
 - ♦ Approximately **7.3 million Santhali speakers in India** as per the 2011 census.
- **Significance of June 30:** Celebrated as **Hul Diwas**, marking the commencement of the Santhal Rebellion in 1885.
- **Santhal Rebellion (1855-56):**
 - ♦ One of the initial expressions of revolt against the British colonial regime.
 - ♦ Attributed to the displacement caused by the Permanent Settlement Act of 1790, leading to Santhals' exploitation by Zamindars, police, and the British.

- ◆ The rebellion occurred in the Damin-i-Koh region in the Rajmahal Hills of Jharkhand.
- ◆ **Leadership under two brothers** - Sidhu and Kanhu.

KUI LANGUAGE

The Odisha Cabinet has put forth a proposal to add the Kui language to the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

About

- **Language Family:** Belongs to the Dravidian family of languages.
- **Speakers:** Mainly spoken by the Kondh/Kandha Tribe, the largest tribe in Odisha.
- **Script:** Uses the Odia script, with dialects like Khondi and Gumsai.

8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution:

- **Current Status:** Lists the official languages of the country, consisting of 22 languages.
- **Evolution:** Originally included 14 languages, with subsequent additions over time.
- **Recent Additions:** Sindhi (1967), Konkani, Manipuri, and Nepali (1992), Santali, Dogri, Maithili, and Bodo (92nd Amendment Act 2003).
- **Inclusion Criteria:**
 - ◆ **Existing Scenario:** No fixed criteria are currently established for a language to be considered for inclusion in the Eighth Schedule.
 - ◆ **Past Attempts:** Committees led by Pahwa (1996) and Sitakant Mohapatra (2003) were formed to develop criteria, but a definitive objective was not achieved.

TANKAI SHIPBUILDING METHOD

The Ministry of Culture and the Indian Navy are jointly initiating a project to revive the ancient shipbuilding technique known as the Tankai method.

About

- **Construction Technique:** Involves stitching together wooden planks instead of using nails for ship construction.
- **Historical Significance:** Originates from a 2000-year-old tradition.
- **Distinctive Features:** Offers flexibility and durability, reducing vulnerability to damage from shoals and sandbars.

Advantages of Tankai Method:

- ◆ **Flexibility and Durability:** Wooden planks stitched together provide enhanced flexibility and durability.
- ◆ **Navigational Benefits:** Lesser susceptibility to damage from shoals and sandbars, contributing to improved navigational capabilities.
- **Historical Context:**
 - ◆ **Shift in Techniques:** The traditional Tankai method experienced a shift with the arrival of European ships.
 - ◆ **Influence of European Ships:** Introduction of new shipbuilding techniques influenced by European methods.
- **Project Objective:** The collaborative project aims to revive and reintroduce the Tankai shipbuilding method, exploring its historical significance and maritime advantages.

KOKBOROK LANGUAGE

- **Linguistic Identity:** Kokborok is the language spoken by the Borok people, primarily in the **State of Tripura**.
- **Etymology:** The term 'kok' signifies "verbal," while 'borok' translates to "people" or "human."
- **Linguistic Classification:**
 - ◆ It is classified as a Sino-Tibetan language.
 - ◆ Belongs to the Tibeto-Burman group of languages.
- **Historical Roots:**
 - ◆ Kokborok has historical roots dating back to at least the 1st century AD.
 - ◆ The language's historical records are found in texts like the Rajratnakar, documenting Tripuri kings.
- **Written Form:**
 - ◆ Kokborok gained a written form in 1897.
 - ◆ Doulot Ahammad, a Muslim scholar, authored the first Kokborok Grammar, titled "**KOKBOROMA ANG TRIPURA – VYAKARAN GRAMMAR.**"
- **Official Status:**
 - ◆ Recognized as one of the state languages of Tripura.
 - ◆ Officially notified on January 19, 1979.

NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE 2023

- **Nobel Prize Recipient:** Awarded to the Norwegian author and dramatist **Jon Fosse** for his innovative contributions to plays and prose, providing a voice to the unsayable.

Recognition of Jon Fosse's Work:

- Acknowledged Fosse's extensive body of work, composed in Norwegian Nynorsk, encompassing plays, novels, poetry collections, essays, children's books, and translations.
- Norwegian Nynorsk, one of Norway's official languages, was the medium for Fosse's innovative expression.
- The Nobel Prize in Literature is esteemed at 11 million Swedish kronor (\$1 million), representing the most prestigious international literary accolade.
- The Nobel Prize in Literature has been awarded 116 times to 120 laureates from 1901 to 2023.
- Recent laureates include French author Annie Ernaux (2022) and Tanzanian novelist Abdulrazak Gurnah (2021).

53RD DADASAHEB PHALKE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

The prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award, India's highest honor in cinema, was bestowed upon the legendary actress Ms. Waheeda Rehman.

About

- **Significance:**
 - ♦ The Dadasaheb Phalke Award is India's preeminent recognition in the realm of cinema.
 - ♦ Presented annually at the National Film Awards ceremony by the Directorate of Film Festivals under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
- **Inception and First Recipient:**
 - ♦ Introduced in 1969, the award's inaugural recipient was the acclaimed actress Devika Rani.
 - ♦ The award was instituted to commemorate the pioneering contributions of Dadasaheb Phalke, the visionary director behind India's first full-length feature film, "Raja Harishchandra" (1913).
- **Objective:** Aimed at honoring individuals who have made outstanding and lasting contributions to Indian cinema, reflecting the spirit of innovation and creativity.

Components of the Award:

- ♦ The award consists of a Swarna Kamal (Golden Lotus) medallion, symbolizing excellence.
- ♦ Accompanied by a shawl, the traditional attire of honor.
- ♦ A cash prize of ₹10 lakh, acknowledging the recipient's invaluable impact on the cinematic landscape.

NATIONAL MISSION ON MONUMENTS AND ANTIQUITIES (NMMA)

About

- It was launched in 2007 to document the country's monuments and antiquities.
 - ♦ It was initially set up for a period of 5 years from 2007 to 2012.
 - ♦ It was extended for a further 5 years till 2017 and later merged with **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)**.

DO YOU KNOW?

- Indian heritage items and cultural repositories which are scattered all over the country come under the purview of various agencies.
 - ♦ Some are protected by ASI, some are under the state government and some are under trusts, local authorities, and private ownership.
- Recently, the United States handed over 105 trafficked antiquities to India.
 - ♦ India and the US are to work on a Cultural Property Agreement too.

Objectives of NMMA

- Documentation and **creation of suitable databases** on **built heritage and sites** through published and unpublished secondary sources for information and dissemination to planners, researchers, etc. and for better management of such cultural resources.
- Documentation in a **uniform developed by NMMA**, of all Antiquities that are available in different formats in the form of Registered Antiquities, Catalogued Antiquities with Central as well as State Governments, Private museums and Collections, Universities, etc.
- **Promote awareness and sensitize people** concerning the benefits of preserving the historical and cultural aspects of built heritage, sites and antiquities.

- **Extend training facility** and capacity building to the concerned State Departments, Local bodies, NGOs, Universities, Museums, Local communities etc.
- **Help in developing synergy** between institutions Archaeological Survey of India, State Departments, concerned Institutions and NGOs to generate close interaction. Publication and Research.

VEER BAAL DIWAS

The day was observed to mark the martyrdom of Sri Guru Gobind Singh's sons Sahibzadas Baba Zorawar Singh Ji and Baba Fateh Singh Ji.

About the History of Martyrdom

- **Army of Guru Gobind Singh:**
 - ♦ Guru Gobind Singh was raising an army, which the neighboring hill kings were not comfortable with.
 - ♦ **Khalsa:** In 1699, Guru Gobind Singh established the Khalsa, which the hill kings and the Mughal empire saw as a threat.
 - ♦ The kings had several battles with the Sikhs in the last decade of the 17th century, but had been unable to dislodge them from Anandpur Sahib.
 - ♦ The kings were also supported by the Mughal Empire.
- **Imprisonment:**
 - ♦ The three – the **81-year-old Mata Gujari ji**, and the **two Sahibzade aged 7 and 9** – were imprisoned treacherously by the Mughal governor in the Thanda Burj (cold tower).
- **Allurement for conversion:**
 - ♦ When the children were presented in court, they were offered riches and gifts and told to convert to Islam.
 - ♦ They were told their father and elder brothers had been killed in the war. The Sahibzade refused to convert or to bow to Wazir Khan.
- **Killing:**
 - ♦ After efforts to make them give up their religion failed, Wazir Khan decided that the boys would be bricked alive in 1704.
 - ♦ It is said that even as a wall was being erected around them, the Sahibzada stood unflinching.
 - ♦ Two executioners then slit their throats, killing the younger, Sahibzada Fateh Singh, first.

- ♦ The same day, Mata Gujari ji died of shock.
- Guru Gobind Singh's mother Mata Gujari Ji, and two other sons, Sahibzaada Ajit Singh Ji (18) and Sahibzaada Jujhar Singh Ji (14), were also martyred within a week.
- **The revenge:** A few years later, Baba Banda Singh Bahadur avenged the execution of the Sahibzade, by attacking and capturing Sarhand.

3D DIGITISATION OF MUSEUMS

About:

- **Museums to be covered include:** Salar Jung museum, Hyderabad, the Allahabad Museum in Prayagraj, the Indian Museum, Kolkata, the Victoria Memorial Hall, the National Museum, Delhi and the National Gallery of Modern Art, Delhi
- **Objective:** 3D models can be used in **augmented reality and virtual reality learning experiences**, and facilitate 3D printing. Besides aiding conservation, **3D digitisation in the museum space** can offer visitors new ways to access and explore the collection.
- **Bodies involved:** The entire process was being carried out by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY). A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the MeitY and Union Culture Ministry for this.

JATAN Virtual Museum Builder Software:

- The 3D digitisation would be done using the **JATAN virtual museum builder software** which has been designed and developed by **Human Centres Design and Computing Group, Centre for Development of Smart Computing, Pune**.
- It is a client server application with features such as **image cropping, watermarking, unique numbering, and management of digital objects with multimedia representations**.
- It can create 3D virtual galleries and provide public access through web, mobile or touch screen kiosks.

JANJATIYA DARPAN

About:

- The gallery was established by Rashtrapati Bhavan in collaboration with **Indira Gandhi National Center for the Arts (IGNCA)**.

- The aim of this gallery is to provide a glimpse of rich art, culture and the contributions of tribal communities in building this nation.
- The gallery consists of different themes such as unsung Tribal Freedom Fighters, **Traditional Natural Resource management practices like Halma, Dokra Art, Musical Instruments, Gunjala Gondi Script, Paintings such as Warli, Gondi and Mud Art, Scroll, Metal work** etc.

Other Projects Launched at Rashtapati Bhavan:

- **Navachara:** An Artificial Intelligence enabled gallery developed by Rashtapati Bhavan in collaboration with Intel India.
- **Sutra-kala Darpan:** It is a textile Collection. This gallery showcases a remarkable collection of antique textiles that document the illustrious legacy of Rashtapati Bhavan.

KASHI CULTURE PATHWAY

Key Points: 'Kashi Culture Pathway'

- **Protection of cultural heritage:** The Outcome Document said the nations were united against destruction of cultural heritage "whether intentional or collateral, notably in situations of conflict".
- **Restitution of cultural property:** It sought an inclusive dialogue on the return and restitution of cultural property observing that people have the right to access and enjoy their cultural heritage.
- **Data and information exchange:** The document sought cooperation among nations and strengthening of appropriate tools to increase the effectiveness of law enforcement collaboration and investigations through voluntary data and information exchange for better support to investigations and prosecution on cultural crimes.
- **Strengthen institutional and policy frameworks:** The G-20 nations also reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen institutional and policy frameworks to harness living heritage for sustainable development.
- **Against misuse of living cultural heritage:** The countries recognised the misuse and misappropriation of living cultural heritage, practices and cultural expressions, particularly of local communities as well as of indigenous peoples, specially for commercial use.

- **Regulation of illicit trafficking of cultural property:** They called for a strengthened and effective global coalition to bolster the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property.

INITIATIVES OF ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

Adopt a Heritage 2.0 Programme:

- The programme is a revamped version of the earlier scheme '**Adopt a Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan**', launched in **2017**.
 - ♦ The scheme was an initiative of the **Ministry of Tourism**, in collaboration with the **Ministry of Culture** and the **Archaeological Survey of India**.
- The programme defines the amenities sought for different monuments as per **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act 1958**.
 - Under this programme, ASI invites corporate stakeholders to enhance the amenities at the monuments by utilizing their Corporate social responsibility (**CSR**) funds.
 - The selected stakeholders will develop, provide and/or maintain amenities in hygiene, accessibility, safety and knowledge categories.
 - **The term of the appointment** for stakeholders will be for a **period of five years** initially, which may be further extended up to five years.

'Indian Heritage' Mobile App:

- The app will feature **state-wise details of monuments** along with photographs, list of public amenities available, geo-tagged location and feedback mechanism for citizens.
- The launch will be in a phased manner, with the ticketed monuments launched in Phase I, followed by the remaining monuments.

e-Permission Portal:

- The portal will be launched **for obtaining permission for photography, filming and developmental projects** on monuments.
- The portal will fast-track the process for obtaining various permissions and solve operational and logistical bottlenecks involved.

AMASR ACT 1958

- It is an Act to provide for the **preservation of ancient and historical monuments** and archaeological sites and remains of national importance, for the regulation of archaeological excavations and for the protection of sculptures, carvings and other like objects.
- The Act was amended in **2010** to declare the **100-meter radius** of protected monuments as prohibited areas and the next **300-meter radius** as regulated areas.

FILM AND TELEVISION INSTITUTE OF INDIA (FTII)**About:**

- It is the premier training facility for acting, filmmaking, video editing, direction, and production.
- It is an autonomous body under the **Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**.
- It was **founded in 1960** and is officially recognized under **the Societies Registration Act of 1860**.
- It is located in Pune, Maharashtra, in the premises of the former Prabhat Film studios.
- It is also a **member of International Liaison Centre of Schools of Cinema and Television (CILECT)**, an organization of world's leading schools of film and television.

SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI AMRIT AWARDS**About:**

- The awards are given to Indian artistes aged above 75 years who have not been accorded any national honour in their career so far.
- The recipients are selected by the Akademi's General Council, consisting of distinguished musicians, dancers, theatre artists and scholars in these disciplines and nominees of the Central government, state governments, and Union Territories.
- The award carries a purse of Rs 1 lakh, besides a 'Tamrapatra' and 'Angavastram'.

Adornments:

- Shiva is adorned with a pearl necklace, a yajnopavita that is a sacred thread, urassutra (a chest band), rings, anklets, and a Makara-kundala in the right ear and Patra-kundala on his left ear.

- **Makara-kundala** refers to an earring shaped like a Makara that is a mythical fish-like creature, while
- **Patra-kundala** refers to earrings shaped as coconut or palmyra leaves.

ARTISANAL TREASURES SHOWCASED IN G20**Longpi Pottery:**

- Named after the village of **Longpi in Manipur**. The **Tangkhu Naga tribes** practice this exceptional pottery style.
- Unlike most pottery, Longpi does not resort to the potter's wheel. All shaping is done **with the hand** and with the **help of molds**.
- The characteristic **gray- black cooking pots**, the stout kettles, quaint bowls, mugs and nut trays, at times with a handle of fine cane are trademarks of Longpi.

Chhattisgarh Wind Flutes:

- It is curated from the '**Sulur**' bamboo by the **Gond Tribe of Bastar in Chhattisgarh**.
- Unlike traditional flutes, it produces melodies through a **simple one-handed twirl**. Craftsmanship involves meticulous bamboo selection, hole drilling, and surface etching with **fish emblems, geometric lines, and triangles**.
- Beyond music, the 'Sulur' serves utilitarian purposes, helping tribal men ward off animals and guide cattle through jungles.

Gond Paintings:

- The Gond tribe's artistic brilliance shines through their intricate paintings, reflecting their deep **connection to nature and tradition**.
- They start with dots, calculating image volume, which they then connect to form outer shapes filled with vibrant colors.

Gujarat Hangings:

- The Gujarati Wall Hangings are crafted by the **Bhil & Patelia Tribe in Dahod, Gujarat**.
- The material used is **cotton cloth** and recycled materials along with **mirror work, zari, stones, and beads**.

Araku Valley Coffee:

- Araku Valley Arabica Coffee is from the **picturesque Araku Valley in Andhra Pradesh**.

- It is produced organically and boasts a distinguished reputation for its rich flavor, invigorating aroma, and unmatched purity.

Sheep Wool Stoles:

- **Bodh, Bhutia and Gujjar Bakarwal tribes** from Himachal Pradesh/Jammu & Kashmir exhibit their ingenuity with pure sheep wool, fashioning a diverse range of apparel, from jackets to shawls and stoles.
- Sheep wool threads are woven into intricate **diamond, plain, and herringbone patterns**.
- Originally they were made in monochromatic colors white, black, and gray, however dual-colored designs now dominate.



Rajasthan Artistry Unveiled:

- **Glass Mosaic Pottery** captures the mosaic art style, meticulously crafted into lamp shades and candle holders.
 - ♦ When illuminated, they unleash a **kaleidoscope of colors**, adding vibrancy to any space.
- **Meenakari** is an art of decorating metal surfaces with vibrant mineral substances, a technique **introduced by the Mughals**.
 - ♦ Delicate designs are etched onto metal, creating grooves for colors to nestle in.
 - ♦ Each hue is fired individually, creating intricate, enamel-adorned pieces.
- **Metal Ambabari Craft** curated by the **Meena Tribe**, also embraces enameling, a meticulous process that elevates metal decoration. Today, it extends beyond gold to metals like silver and copper.



PROJECT VEER GATHA 3.0

About:

- Being a part of **Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav**, it has been launched in schools to raise awareness about the **Gallantry Awards**.

GALLANTRY AWARDS?

- These awards honor the acts of bravery and sacrifice of the officers/personnel of the Armed Forces, other lawfully constituted forces, and civilians.
- **Classification:**
 - ♦ Classified into two Categories: **Wartime Gallantry Awards & Peacetime Gallantry Awards**
 - ♦ **Wartime Gallantry Awards:** Param Vir Chakra (PVC), Mahavir Chakra (MVC), Vir Chakra
 - ♦ **Peacetime Gallantry Awards:** Ashok Chakra, Kirti Chakra, Shaurya Chakra
 - ♦ **Others:** Sena Medal, Nao Sena Medal & Vayu Sena Medal: Awarded for acts of exceptional devotion to duty or courage in the Army, Navy & IAF respectively.
- **Aim:** To raise awareness about the brave acts and sacrifices of the Gallantry Award winners among school students.
- **Activities conducted:**
 - ♦ The projects can be interdisciplinary and in various formats like poems, paintings, essays, videos, etc.
 - ♦ Schools have conducted various projects/activities and have uploaded a total of four best entries from each school on the MyGov portal.
 - ♦ Virtual/ face-to-face awareness programs/sessions for schools across the country.
- Two editions of the **Veer Gatha Project 1.0 and 2.0** have been conducted in **2021 and 2022** respectively.
- The best project is rewarded nationally by the Ministry of Defence on the forthcoming Republic Day.
- During the earlier two editions, 25 winners (Super 25) were selected. However, in the Veer Gatha Project (3.0), 100 winners (Super 100) will be selected.
- Each winner will be awarded a cash prize of Rs.10,000.

JANJATIYA GAURAV DIWAS

About:

- It is observed to honor the **birth anniversary** of the revered tribal leader **Birsa Munda**.

- He was an Indian freedom fighter, religious leader, and folk hero from the Munda Tribe of the **Chhota Nagpur Plateau area**.
 - ♦ Chhota Nagpur Plateau lies in Jharkhand state as well as adjacent parts of Chhattisgarh, Odisha, West Bengal, and Bihar.

Early Life of Birsa Munda:

- He was born on **15th November 1875 in Ulihatu** of the erstwhile Bengal Presidency.
- He learned about Hindu religious teachings from a Vaishnav monk (Ananda Pandey) and studied ancient scriptures along with the Ramayana and Mahabharata.

Birsait Religion:

- He founded a new religion called "Birsait" and declared himself as God's messenger. He believed in **One God**.
- People of **Munda and Oraon communities** joined the sect and challenged the British conversion activities of tribals.
- He was referred to as '**Dharti Abba or Father of Earth**' by his followers.

Munda Rebellion:

- It was the tribal movement led by the Munda tribe against the oppressions of the British Raj. It is also referred to as '**Ulgulan**' or the '**Great Tumult**'.
- Munda used traditional symbols and language to rouse people and urged them to destroy the dikus.
 - ♦ **Dikus** was the name given to outsiders like the British, moneylenders, and traders.
 - ♦ In **1900** he was arrested in **Jamkopai forest** and passed away in custody (due to cholera).
- **Outcomes:** The British government introduced the **Chotanagpur Tenancy Act** in **1908**, to prohibit the transfer of tribal land to non-tribals (Dikus).
 - ♦ The primary objective of the Act was to protect the land rights of the indigenous tribal communities, including the Munda, Oraon, Kharia, and others, who inhabited the Chotanagpur region.
 - ♦ The act imposed strict restrictions on the transfer of tribal land to non-tribal persons. It required the permission of the Deputy Commissioner for any such transfer.
 - ♦ It aimed to prevent the alienation of tribal lands to non-tribal individuals or entities, particularly non-tribal landlords and moneylenders.

- ♦ It played a crucial role in preventing the further alienation of tribals and in preserving the cultural and economic autonomy of tribal communities.
- ♦ Following the uprisings of Birsa Munda, the British implemented the Commutation Act in 1897 to end the feudal practice of Bethbegari, or forced labor.

WAGH NAKH

About:

- The MoU states that the antique weapon will be handed over to the Government of Maharashtra **on a loan basis for a period of three years**, during which it will be displayed in museums across the state.

Wagh Nakh:

- Literally it means '**tiger claws**'; It is a **medieval claw-like dagger** which was used across the Indian subcontinent.
 - Designed to either fit over the knuckles (joints of the fingers) or be concealed under the palm, the weapon consisted of **four or five curved blades** affixed to a glove or a bar of some kind.
 - It was a **weapon used for personal defence or stealth attack**, and could easily slice through skin and flesh.

Chhatrapati Shivaji's Legend:

- The most famous use of the wagh nakh in history comes from the **story of Afzal Khan's killing by Shivaji**. Khan was a **general of Bijapur's Adil Shahi Sultanate**.
- Shivaji used to be a former vassal of the **Adil Shahis** but by the 1650s, he had become increasingly assertive, taking forts across the Konkan, and bringing under control large part of Adil Shahi territory.
- Given Afzal Khan's success in the south, he was sent by the Sultan with a mighty army to subdue the Maratha icon.
- Khan marched into the Konkan and demanded a meeting with Shivaji. But Shivaji smelled treachery and went prepared to the meeting, wearing a chainmail under his robes and hiding a wagh nakh in his sleeve.
- In the meeting, Khan, in the guise of embracing him, attempted to stab the Maratha leader. But Shivaji was protected by his armour and retaliated: the wagh nakh ripped out Khan's guts. Khan was eventually beheaded by one of Shivaji's men and in the battle that followed Shivaji's army came out as victor.

- This was given to Mr. James Grant Duff of Eden (political agent of East India Company, 1818-22) when he was Resident at Satara by the Prime Minister of the Peshwa of the Marathas.

GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION (GI)

List of Products that got GI Tag:

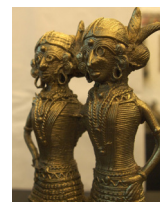
1. **Amroha Dholak:** It is a musical instrument made of natural wood of mango, jackfruit and teakwood. Wood is used to carve the multiple sized and shaped hollow blocks, which are later fitted with animal skin, mostly goatskin, to create the instrument.
2. **Baghpat Home Furnishings:** Baghpat is famous for its exclusive handloom home furnishing product and running fabrics in cotton yarn for generations, and only cotton yarn is used in the handloom weaving process.
3. **Barabanki Handloom Product:** Barabanki is known for fabric knitting through handloom.
 - ♦ The main products are scarves, shawls, stoles and the basic raw materials are silk, zari, cotton, polyester, jacquard loom and dori.
4. **Kalpi Handmade Paper:** Kalpi has historically been a centre of handmade paper manufacturing. Munnalal 'Khaddari', a Gandhian, formally introduced the craft here in the 1940s.
 - ♦ The craft is made from waste paper and cloth strings. This paper is used to make a variety of products such as office files, carry bags, absorption papers, visiting cards and more.
5. **Mahoba Gaura Patthar Hastashlip:** It is a stone craft and is made of radiant **white-colored stone (Pyro Flight Stone)** that is predominantly found in this region.
 - ♦ The stone is cut into several pieces, which are then used for making various craft items.
6. **Mainpuri Tarkashi:** Tarkashi is a technique of inlaying brass, copper or silver wires in wood.
 - ♦ Usually, **Sheesham** wood is used for this art. It is used for decorating jewellery boxes, name plaque, door panels, lamps, sandook, decorative pieces, tables, flower pots etc. It was mainly used for khadaous (wooden sandals), since leather was considered unclean.
7. **Sambhal Horn Craft:** Sambhal offers a wide range of decorative horn-bone handicrafts.
 - ♦ The raw material used for making these craft items is procured from dead animals which makes this industry environment-friendly.

Meghalaya Shawls:

- Meghalaya shawls were originally woven for the Khasi and Jaintia royalty, who considered them a symbol of their power and status.
- The shawls were worn during ceremonial occasions and festivals, and their intricate designs and vibrant colours were a reflection of the royal family's wealth and prestige.
- The designs used in Meghalaya shawls were highly symbolic.
- For instance, the use of animal motifs such as tigers and elephants was a symbol of power and strength, while the use of floral patterns was a symbol of beauty and grace.
- The weavers, mostly women, spend hours weaving intricate designs and patterns using traditional weaving techniques. The shawls are made using locally sourced wool, and natural dyes.

Chhattisgarh's Dhokra Art:

- One of the earliest expressions of this ancient art is the dancing girl artifact found from Mohenjo-Daro and Harappan excavations.
- Traditionally the Gadwas, Gonds and Dhurwas tribes of Chhattisgarh practise the Dhokra art with lost wax technique or hollow casting.
- It is named after 'Dhokar Damar', a nomadic Indian tribe belonging to the central and eastern part of the country.
- The common themes of Dokra art revolve around figurines of Hindu gods & goddesses and different animals.
- Dokra Art is a non-ferrous metal casting art using the lost-wax casting technique.
- This sort of metal casting has been used in India for over 4,000 years and is still used. There are two main processes of lost wax casting: solid casting and hollow casting.



Bidri Art Vases:

- It originated in the town of Bidar in Karnataka, in the 14th century.
- Bidar in Karnataka and Hyderabad in Telangana are the most vibrant centres of the artform.
- Bidri Work handicraft is an art of inlaying alloys. Soil at Bidar fort, magically imparts black color to the primary

metals & the artform has been accorded prestigious GI Status.

- **Technique:** A new mould must be prepared to make a cast in which molten metal, an alloy of zinc & copper is poured. Motifs are sketched on them to be etched with a chisel and hammer.
- The engravings are inlaid with silver wire. It is this contrast of shining silver to the black metal that is unique to Bidri art.

DANCING GIRL (CHANNAPATNA TOYS)

About:

- During the ceremony, PM Modi also unveiled the Expo's mascot – a "contemporised" version of the famous **Dancing Girl of Mohenjodaro**.
- The traditional craft of **Channapatna toys** was used to create this mascot.

Dancing Girl:

- Dancing Girl is a prehistoric bronze sculpture made in lost-wax casting about c. 2300–1750 BC in the Indus Valley civilisation city of **Mohenjo-daro (in modern-day Pakistan)**.
- The statue is 10.5 centimetres tall, and depicts a nude young woman or girl with stylized ornaments, standing in a confident, naturalistic pose.
- The statue was excavated by British archaeologist **Ernest Mackay in 1926**.
- It is now in the **National Museum, New Delhi**.

Channapatna Toys:

- Channapatna toys are a particular form of wooden toys and dolls that are manufactured in the town of **Channapatna in the Ramanagara district of Karnataka**.
- This traditional craft is protected as a **Geographical Indication (GI)**.

