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1. AVVAIYAR/THIRUVALLUVAR

Context

Recently, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman cited some poets in her Budget speech. The famous Tamil poets, Avvaiyar and Thiruvalluvar were also among them. Also, in late 2019, the statue of Thiruvalluvar was vandalized in Pillayarpatti in Tamil Nadu.

About

- **Avvaiyar's "aaathichoodi" and Thiruvalluvar's 'five jewels'** was quoted by Finance Minister during her Budget 2020 presentation in the Parliament.
- The three major themes of Budget 2020 are **aspirational India**, a **caring society** and **economic development for all**.
- In reference to asking farmers to adopt organic fertilizers, **Tamil poet Aauvaiyar's** advice, **"aaathichoodi"** was quoted.
 - ▶ It translated means one must first till one's land and then eat.
- Quote on good governance included **Tamil poet and philosopher Thiruvalluvar's 'five jewels'**: freedom from illness, wealth generation, farm productivity, happiness, and good defences.

Facts about Avvaiyar

- **Avvaiyar** (literally '**Respectable Woman**') was the title of **more than one female Tamil poets** active during different periods of Tamil literature.
 - ▶ According to linguists, there were **three avvais** - one from **Sangam-age**, another from **Chola-age**, and third one belonging to **contemporary times**.
 - ▶ She is often imagined as an **old and intelligent** lady by Tamil people.
- **Avvaiyar I:** Budget 2020 refers to Sangam-age Avvaiyar. She authored **various aphorisms** as a guide to moral life. They are taught to children as an introduction to poetry and are recited even today by school kids in Tamil Nadu.
 - ▶ Her poems are found in Purananuru, Kurunthogai and Natrinai.
- **Avvaiyar II:** The second Avvaiyar was contemporary of 12th century Tamil poets, Kambar and Ottakoothar, during reign of Chola dynasty.
- **Avvaiyar III:** The third Avvaiyar is most widely known for her works including; 'Vinayagar Agaval', 'Aathi Soodi', 'Kondrai Vendhan', 'Nalvazhi' and 'Moodhurai'.
- **Legend around Avvai:** According to legend, Vinayaka bestowed young Avvai with the looks of an old woman, as she did not want to be entangled in marriage. With her poems pregnant with common sense, she could easily impress kings and commoners.
 - ▶ Kings valued her wisdom and wanted her to stay in their courts, but she refused to be bogged down. She was always on the move.

- ▶ Her moral uprightness gave her the courage to talk to kings on equal terms and correct them when they were wrong.
- **Myths and theories:** According to some theories, there is only one Avvaiyar and she lived during period of Kulothunga III. The Sangam Age Avvai is a myth.
- **Recognition:** An Avvaiyar aphorism “What you haven’t learned is the size of the world” is exhibited at
 - ▶ In 1991, a 20.6 km-wide crater in Venus was named ‘**Avviyar crater**’, by the **International Astronomical Union**.

Aaathichoodi

- Aathichoodi is a collection of **single-line quotations** written by Avvaiyar and organized in alphabetical order.
- There are **109** of these sacred lines which include insightful quotes expressed in simple words. It aims to inculcate **good habits, discipline and doing good deeds**.
- In an attempt to push organic farming for better care of agricultural land, Aathichoodi text (Bhumi Tiruthi Unn) was **quoted by in Budget speech**

Facts about Thiruvalluvar

- **Thiruvalluvar, also known as Valluvar**, was a celebrated Tamil poet and philosopher. He is best known for **Thirukkural** a collection of couplets on **ethics, politics, economics, and love**.
 - ▶ Thiruvalluvar is thought to have lived sometime between **3rd – 1st century BC**.
- **Origin:** Valluvar is believed to have lived in Madurai and later in town of Mayilapuram or Thirumayilai (present-day Mylapore in Chennai), although there is no real proof.
 - ▶ He is generally thought to have belonged **either to Jainism or Hinduism**. However, almost **every religious group has claimed him** and his work as their own.
- **Thiruvalluvar statue:** There is a 133-foot tall statue of Thiruvalluvar erected **at Kanyakumari**, denoting Tirukkural’s 133 Chapters. It displays a show of three fingers denoting the three themes in it; Aram, Porul, and Inbam.
- **Official image of Thiruvalluvar:** Tamil Nadu government’s official image of Thiruvalluvar sports a white dhoti with no sacred ash on forehead.
 - ▶ Lately, there was a controversy about BJP posting a picture of Thiruvalluvar draped in saffron dhoti.
 - ▶ Thiruvalluvar is considered **an icon of Tamil identity**, with his teachings finding place in all Dravidian parties.

Thirukkural

- Thirukkural is one of the **most revered ancient works** in Tamil language. It is considered a ‘**common creed**’, providing a guide for human morals and betterment in life.
 - ▶ It has been translated into several languages, including a **translation into Latin** by Constanzo Beschi in 1730.
- **Divided into three sections:** Section one deals with **Aram**, good ethical behavior with conscience and honour (“right conduct”); section two discusses **Porul**, the right manner of conducting worldly affairs; and section three dwells on **Inbam**, love between man and woman.
 - ▶ **Aram and Inbam deal with private life** of an individual, while more than half of couplets are grouped under **Porul, which discuss ethics in public life**.
- **Kurals:** The first section has 38 chapters, second has 70 chapters, and third has 25 chapters. Each chapter consists of 10 couplets or kurals, i.e. a total of 133 chapters and 1330 couplets.
 - ▶ The book is also called the ‘**fifth Veda**’ or ‘**Bible of the Tamil Land**’.

2. "LOCATE THE GRAVE OF THE MUGHAL PRINCE DARASHIKOH"

Context

The Ministry of Culture recently set up a seven-member panel of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to locate the grave of the Mughal prince DaraShikoh (1615-59).

About:

- The seven-member panel of ASI is headed by T J Alone, Director-Monument at ASI, the panel has senior archaeologists R S Bisht, Sayeed Jamal Hassan, K N Dikshit, B R Mani, K K Muhammed, Satish Chandra, and B M Pandey as members.
- It has been given three months.
- There are around 150 graves of the clan of the Mughal rulers in the Humayun's Tomb complex and the grave of Shikoh is said to be one among them.
- DaraShikoh is believed to be buried somewhere in the historical monument.
- The panel will use architectural evidence from that time, and also written history and any other information that can be used as evidence.

Who was DaraShikoh?

- Muhammad DaraShikoh was born in 1615 in Ajmer, Rajasthan.
- The eldest son of Shah Jahan, DaraShikoh is described as a "liberal Muslim" who tried to find commonalities between Hindu and Islamic traditions.
- Titles: Dara was designated with the title Padshahzada-i-Buzurg Martaba ("Prince of High Rank") and was favoured as a successor by his father and his older sister, Princess Jahanara Begum.
 - ▶ Other titles given to him include- Jalal ul-Kadir, Sultan Muhammad DaraShikoh, Shah-i-Buland Iqbal
- During the lifetime of his mother Mumtaz Mahal (who was buried in the Taj Mahal after its completion, DaraShikoh betrothed to his half-cousin princess Nadira Banu Begum.
- He translated into Persian the Bhagavad Gita as well as 52 Upanishads.
- Dara believed in the existence of a single divine power, who is called by different names – Brahm or Noor.
- He followed the Qadri tradition of Sufism and believed in interfaith dialogues. Benaras and Allahabad played an important role in his spiritual journey.
- Dara wrote many treatises, but his two books Majma-ul-Bahrain (The Confluence of Two Seas) and Sirr-e-Akbar (The Greatest Mystery) started a dialogue among the intelligentsia of that time.

Majma-ul-Bahrain was the first such book to offer a comparative study of Dharma Shashtra and Quran to formulate a new vision for society.

How did he die?

- DaraShikoh was killed in 1659 after losing the war of succession against his brother Aurangzeb.
- According to the Shahjahannama, after Aurangzeb defeated DaraShikoh, he brought the latter to Delhi in chains.

3. KALIDASA

Context

In the latest Budget 2020, the Finance Minister of India cited some poets in her Budget speech. The famous Kalidasa was also among them.

About

- Kalidasa's Raghuvamsa was quoted by Finance Minister during her Budget 2020 presentation in the Parliament.
 - ▶ It said that just as Surya collects vapour from little drops of water, so must a government collect taxes—lightly.
- The three major themes of Budget 2020 are:
 - ▶ aspirational India
 - ▶ a caring society
 - ▶ economic development for all

Facts about Kalidasa

- Kalidasa was a Classical Sanskrit writer, widely regarded as the greatest poet and dramatist in the Sanskrit language of India.
- Much about his life is unknown, only what can be inferred from his poetry and plays.
- His plays and poetry are primarily based on the Vedas, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Puranas.
- His surviving works consist of three plays, two epic poems and two shorter poems.
- His works cannot be dated with precision, but they were most likely authored within the 4th–5th century CE.
- Palaeographic evidence: The earliest paleographical evidence of Kalidasa is found in a Sanskrit inscription dated c. 473 CE, found at Mandsaur's Sun temple.
 - ▶ His name, along with that of poet Bharavi, is mentioned in a stone inscription dated 634 C.E. found at Aihole, located in present-day Karnataka.
- Influenced: Kalidasa had great impact on Rabindranath Tagore. Meghadutam's romanticism is found in Tagore's poems on the monsoons.
 - ▶ Father of Modern Medicine Sir William Osler always kept on his desk a poem written by Kalidasa.

Theories locating the origin of Kalidasa

- Himalayas, Ujjain and Kalinga: Scholars have speculated that Kalidasa may have lived near the Himalayas, in the vicinity of Ujjain, and in Kalinga.
 - ▶ This hypothesis is based on Kalidasa's detailed description of the Himalayas in his Kumarasambhava, the display of his love for Ujjain in Meghaduta, and his highly eulogistic descriptions of Kalingan emperor Hemachandra in Raghuvaṃśa (sixth sarga).
- Kashmir: Lakshmi Dhar Kalla (1891–1953), a Sanskrit scholar and a Kashmiri Pandit, concluded that Kalidasa was born in Kashmir, but moved southwards, and sought the patronage of local rulers to prosper. The evidence cited through Kalidasa's writings includes:
 - ▶ Description of flora, fauna and geographical features common to Kashmir, but not Ujjain or Kalinga: saffron plant, deodar trees, musk deer, tarns, glades etc.
 - ▶ Reference to certain legends of Kashmiri origin, such as Kashmiri text Nilamata Purana mentioned in Shakuntala Nikumbha.
- Some scholars posit Garhwal in Uttarakhand to be Kalidasa's birthplace.

Legends around Kalidasa

- According to folklore, Kalidasa became a great poet because he sought to study Purana and other ancient texts in order to seek revenge from a princess who mocked Kalidasa for being an unintelligent man when he had come to pursue her hand in marriage.
 - Challenged by the princess, Kalidasa visited a Kali temple and was inspired to learn Sanskrit.
 - He then wrote three epics Kumarasambhava, Meghaduta and
- Another legend is that he visited Kumaradasa, the king of Sri Lanka formerly known as Ceylon and, because of some treachery, Kalidasawas murdered there.
- Theory of multiple Kalidasa: Some scholars believe that all the works attributed to “Kalidasa” are not by a single person.
 - From the 8th and 9th centuries, there may have existed three noted literary figures that share the name Kalidasa.

Literary works

- Kalidasa wrote three plays:
 - **Malavikagnimitram** (Pertaining to Malavika and Agnimitra) tells the story of King Agnimitra, who falls in love with the picture of an exiled servant girl named Malavika.
 - **Abhijnanasakuntalam** (Of the recollection of Shakuntala) tells the story of King Dushyanta who, while on a hunting trip, meets Shakuntala, the adopted daughter of a sage, and marries her. It was among the first Sanskrit works to be translated into English.
 - **Vikramorvasiyam** (Urvashi Won by Valour) tells the story of mortal King Pururavas and celestial nymph Urvashi who falls in love.
- Kalidasa is the author of two epic poems:
 - **Raghuvamsha** is an epic poem about the kings of Raghu dynasty.
 - **Kumarasambhava** describes the birth and adolescence of the goddess Parvati, and her marriage with Lord Shiva.
- Kalidasa also wrote two khandakavyas (minor poems):
 - **Ritusamhara** describes the six seasons by narrating the experiences of two lovers in each of the seasons.
 - **Meghaduta** (The Cloud Messenger) describes the story of a Yaksha trying to send a message to his lover through a cloud. This poem is elegiac in nature through which Kalidasa created his own genre of poetry. Kalidasa set this poem to the mandakranta meter, which is known for its lyrical sweetness.



1. HOW SWAMI VIVEKANANDA BECAME THE 'MESSENGER OF INDIAN WISDOM' TO WEST

Context

January 12 is the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, the famous Hindu spiritual leader and intellectual from the late 19th century.

About

- An important religious reformer in India, Swami Vivekananda is known to have introduced the Hindu philosophies of Yoga and Vedanta to the West.
- Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose had called Vivekananda the “maker of modern India.”
- In his honour, the government of India in 1984 declared his birthday as National Youth Day.
- The aim of the celebrations is to spread the message of strength, fearlessness, sacrifice, character-building and excellence among youth.
- Swami Vivekananda propounded the importance of Education in building a nation. He believed that education was the primary means to empowering people. He specially emphasized on education being relevant to the common masses.
- Ramakrishna Mission is an organization established by Swami Vivekananda which works in the area of value based education, culture, health, women’s empowerment, youth and tribal welfare and relief and rehabilitation.

Swami Vivekananda early life

- Vivekananda was born in Kolkata on January 12, 1863, as Narendra Nath Datta.
- From an early age, he nurtured an interest in Western philosophy, history, and theology, and went on to meet the religious leader Ramakrishna Paramhansa, who later became his Guru. He remained devoted to Ramakrishna until the latter’s death in 1886.
- In 1893, he took the name ‘Vivekananda’ after Maharaja Ajit Singh of the Khetri State requested him to do so, changing from ‘Sachidananda’ that he used before.
- After Ramakrishna’s death, Vivekananda toured across India, and set after educating the masses about ways to improve their economic condition as well as imparting spiritual knowledge.

The Chicago address

- Vivekananda is especially remembered around the world for his speech at the Parliament of the World’s Religions in Chicago in 1893.
- The speech covered topics including universal acceptance, tolerance and religion.
- He began delivering lectures at various places in the US and UK, and became popular as the ‘messenger of Indian wisdom to the Western world’.

Vivekananda's legacy

- Through his speeches and lectures, Vivekananda worked to disseminate his religious thought. He preached 'neo-Vedanta', an interpretation of Hinduism through a Western lens, and believed in combining spirituality with material progress.
- 'Raja Yoga', 'Jnana Yoga', 'Karma Yoga' are some of the books he wrote.
- Before his death in 1902, Vivekananda wrote to a Western follower: "It may be that I shall find it good to get outside my body, to cast it off like a worn out garment. But I shall not cease to work. I shall inspire men everywhere until the whole world shall know that it is one with God."

10 Inspirational Quotes by the Legendary and World Renowned Monk Swami Vivekananda

- All the powers in the universe are already ours. It is we who have put our hands before our eyes and cry that it is dark.
- We are what our thoughts have made us; so take care about what you think. Words are secondary. Thoughts live; they travel far.
- Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life - think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success.
- All differences in this world are of degree, and not of kind, because oneness is the secret of everything.
- If money help a man to do good to others, it is of some value; but if not, it is simply a mass of evil, and the sooner it is got rid of, the better.
- You have to grow from the inside out. None can teach you, none can make you spiritual. There is no other teacher but your own soul.
- The moment I have realized God sitting in the temple of every human body, the moment I stand in reverence before every human being and see God in him - that moment I am free from bondage, everything that binds vanishes, and I am free.
- Truth can be stated in a thousand different ways, yet each one can be true.
- As different streams having different sources all mingle their waters in the sea, so different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to God.
- When an idea exclusively occupies the mind, it is transformed into an actual physical or mental state.

2. BATTLE OF KOREGAON

Context

202nd Anniversary of Battle of Koregaon Bhima

About

- Bhima-Koregaon, a small village in Pune district of Maharashtra, has a rich Maratha history. Two hundred years ago, on January 1, 1818, a few hundred Mahar soldiers of the East India Company, led by the British, defeated the massive Peshwa army, led by Peshwa Bajirao II, in Koregaon.
- Legend has it that about 500 Mahar soldiers under the East India Company clashed with a 25,000-strong army of Peshwa Bajirao II.
- Mahars, at this point, were considered an untouchable community, and were not recruited in the army by the peshwas.
- This battle has, since, attained legendary stature in Dalit history.
- The Dalits who follow BR Ambedkar view this battle as a victory of Mahars over the injustice and torture meted out to them by the Brahminical Peshwas.

So What Happens There Every January?

- On January 1, 1927, Bhimrao Ambedkar started the ritual of holding a commemoration at the site of this pillar, one that is repeated every year.
- It's the Ambedkarite Dalits who gather at Bhima Koregaon to pay their respect at the Vijay Sthamb (victory pillar).
- The pillar was erected by the East India Company in memory of those who fought the battle. The names of the Mahar soldiers who unknowingly brought an end to the Peshwa rule in 1818 are inscribed on the pillar.
- Dalit Ambedkarites draw inspiration from this victory at Bhima Koregaon. Ever since Bhima-Koregaon Ranstambh Seva Sangh (BKRSS) was formed, they regard the stambh or pillar as a site of their valour and a symbol of their place in the political diaspora.
- Those protesting the commemoration of the Koregaon Bhima battle victory are miffed because it basically celebrates the "British victory" against the Marathas.

Why Bhima Koregaon is seen as a Dalit symbol?

- The battle has come to be seen as a symbol of Dalit pride because a large number of soldiers in the Company force were the Mahar Dalits.
- Since the Peshwas, who were Brahmins, were seen as oppressors of Dalits, the victory of the Mahar soldiers over the Peshwa force is seen as Dalit assertion.
- Thus, in the first battle and the last battle (1757-1818) it was the Untouchables who fought on the side of the British and helped them to conquer India.

Arguments against it

- Ambedkar's pride in Bhima Koregaon belonged very much to that age. Ambedkar was a very original and provocative thinker. Some of his views were quite cogent but belonged to those very times.
- Many of his views on Muslims and Christians would be totally unacceptable in today's India.
- It was not as if the British were kind to the Mahars.
- The British had abolished the Mahar regiment after 1857 uprising. They started preferring upper castes that they called 'martial races'.
- The Mahar regiment was restarted only during the Second World War.

3. JALLIANWALA BAGH NATIONAL MEMORIAL (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2019

Context

- The Lok Sabha recently passed Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial (Amendment) Bill, 2019 by a voice vote.
- A high-pitched verbal duel over the bill saw ruling National Democratic Alliance members accuse the Congress of holding on to the post despite it being the centenary year of the memorial.

Amendments included in the bill:

- The Bill amends the Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Act, 1951 which was passed to erect a National Memorial in memory of those killed and wounded in the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of over 1,000 people on April 12, 1919.
- Under the provisions of the Act, the trustees of the Memorial include the Prime Minister as Chairperson, the Congress president, the Minister-in-charge of Culture, the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, the Governor and Chief Minister of Punjab, and three eminent persons nominated by the Centre as its members. The bill seeks to remove the Congress president as a permanent member of this trust.

- The bill says that “the Leader of Opposition recognised as such in the House of the People, or where there is no such Leader of Opposition, then the Leader of the single largest Opposition Party in that House” will be on the trust.
- The bill allows the central government to terminate the term of a nominated trustee before the expiry of the period of his term.
- The bill is introduced so that such organizations or trusts could not be politicized and should instead be nationalized.

Opposition to the bill:

- Some members of the Parliament believe that the only intention of the government is to wipe out history. They say that the stalwarts of the Congress remained in the party, they went to jail, fought for the Independence movement. The museum was built by them; the money was donated by them. Hence Congress president should continue as a permanent member of the trust.
- Some members of the Parliament consider such bills as a waste of Parliament’s precious time. They are not of any use for solving the grievances of the common public. It is a trivial issue.



1. SURANGA BAWADI ON WORLD MONUMENT WATCH LIST

Context

Suranga Bawadi, an integral part of the ancient Karez system of supplying water through subterranean tunnels built during Adil Shahi era in Vijayapura, is now set to get funding for restoration.

About

- The unique underground water system in Vijayapura will receive funds for restoration work.
- A New York-based non-governmental organisation has included it in the World Monument Watch list for 2020 along with 24 other monuments from across the world.
- The monument has been selected under the 'Ancient Water System of the Deccan Plateau'.
- Suranga Bawadi is expected to get funds for restoration within the next two years.
- World Monuments Fund works in collaboration with the local stakeholders, including the district administration, the Archaeological Survey of India, and local explorers of ancient monuments, in highlighting the need for the restoration of ancient monuments.

Karez System

- Ancient water system 'Karez' which is believed to be one of the best systems in the world.
- Karez System is a method to harness water in which groundwater is brought to the surface by a tunnel.
- No mechanical pump or lift is used in the system.
- Karez system was built in the 16th century by Ali Adil Shah-I, his successor, Ibrahim Adil Shah-II, brought in several changes by adding more structures to strengthen it.
- Adil Shahis built the magnificent underground system to supply water to the city.

World Monuments Watch

- The World Monuments Watch is a global, nomination-based program that uses cultural heritage conservation to empower communities and improve human well-being.
- Through heritage, the program seeks to improve the resilience of communities, enhance social inclusion, and build new capacities in the heritage conservation field and beyond.
- Since its inception in 1996, the program has included 814 sites in 136 countries and territories.

How are the sites been selected?

- Sites included on the Watch are in need of urgent or timely action.
- To be selected for inclusion on the program, nominators must describe the major challenges that the stakeholders of a site are confronted with.
- Those challenges are diverse, and they may include the risk that a place may be permanently altered or lost.

Funding for the sites

- Inclusion on the Watch program results in various forms of assistance from World Monuments Fund, including financial support for interventions that use heritage conservation to deliver tangible social benefits.
- World Monuments Fund is not a grant making institution, and no minimum or maximum amounts of funding are guaranteed.
- Rather, through the Watch program, World Monuments Fund partners with local stakeholders to jointly design and implement targeted conservation programs, with budgets that vary.

2. SOCIAL REFORMS BY VINAYAK DAMODAR SAVARKAR

Context

136th anniversary of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was celebrated recently on 28 May.

About

V D Savarkar:

- Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was commonly known as Veer Savarkar. He was a fearless freedom fighter, social reformer, writer, dramatist, poet, historian, political leader and philosopher.
- He was born in 1883 in Bhagur, a tiny village in district Nasik, Maharashtra.
- He went through 15 years of torturous imprisonment in Cellular jail of Andaman and Nicobar Islands for organising an armed revolt against the Morley-Minto reforms of 1909. After release from the jail, he focused on social reforms.

Social reforms:

- According to him, the Hindu society was bound by seven shackles (bandi) viz. prohibition of touch (sparshabandi) of certain castes, prohibition of inter-dining (rotiband) with certain castes, prohibition of inter-caste marriages (betiband), prohibition of pursuing certain occupations(vyavasayabandi), prohibition of seafaring (sindhubandi), prohibition of rites sanctioned by the Vedas (vedoktabandi), prohibition of reconversion (shuddhibandi) to the Hindu fold. He appealed to society to break these shackles.
- He was a strong critic of the caste system. He worked to ensure that children of lower castes attend school. He gave monetary incentives to their parents and distributed slate and chalk to children from these castes.
- He asked the government to abandon the title 'special schools for low caste children' as this title creates a feeling of inferiority among children attending the school.
- He would visit houses on festivals (like Dussehra and Makar Sakranti), accompanied by people from different castes, and distribute traditional sweets. He himself brought up a girl child from a former untouchable community and taught people from untouchable communities to read, write and recite the Gayatri mantra.
- He started the first pan-Hindu Ganeshotsav in 1930. The festival was marked by "kirtans" by the untouchables. Listeners from the higher castes would garland those who rendered these devotional songs. Public lectures by women and inter-caste dining by women were special features of these festivities.
- He wrote a song related to the entry of erstwhile untouchables into temples in 1931. It can be translated as "Let me see the idol of God, let me worship God."
- He supported many temple movements of Maharashtra, where the untouchables were encouraged to pray, recite Sanskrit hymns and conduct "abhishek" of the Vishnu idol.
- He started a café in 1933 for Hindus of all castes, including untouchables. He had employed a person from the Mahar caste to serve food there.

3. CENTRAL SANSKRIT UNIVERSITIES BILL, 2020

Context

The Central Sanskrit Universities Bill, 2020 has been passed by the Parliament after it was passed by Rajya Sabha.

About

- This bill will convert the following into Central Sanskrit Universities:
 - ▶ Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, New Delhi
 - ▶ Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, New Delhi
 - ▶ Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, Tirupati
- These 3 universities will have more opportunities to spread the knowledge of Sanskrit language not only in India but also across the world in a better way.
- The Universities will:
 - ▶ disseminate and advance knowledge for the promotion of Sanskrit
 - ▶ make special provisions for integrated courses in humanities, social sciences, and science
 - ▶ train manpower for the overall development and preservation of Sanskrit and allied subjects.

Functions of the Universities:

- Key powers and functions of the University include:
 - ▶ prescribing courses of study and conducting training programmes
 - ▶ granting degrees, diplomas, and certificates
 - ▶ providing facilities through a distance education system
 - ▶ conferring autonomous status on a college or an institution
 - ▶ provide instructions for education in Sanskrit and allied subjects

Significance of the Bill:

- This is one of the landmark Bills passed by the Parliament which has fulfilled the aspirations and long standing wish of many Sanskrit lovers, scholars and Sanskrit speaking people in the country.
- The Central University status awarded to these 3 Universities will enhance the status of these Universities and will give boost to Post Graduate, Doctoral and Post-doctoral education and Research in the field of Sanskrit and Shastraic education.
- This will pave way for many people from abroad to learn Sanskrit and Shastraic lore from these prestigious Central Sanskrit Universities in our country.

Therefore creation of Central Sanskrit Universities will boost further research in Sanskrit with the deep route that may lead to many useful insights and offer solutions to some of the modern-day problems.



1. "INDIA'S NOMINATION FOR 2020 WORLD HERITAGE LIST"

Context

Government of India has submitted two nomination dossiers namely '**Dholavira: A Harappan City**' and '**Monuments and Forts of Deccan Sultanate**' for inclusion in the World Heritage List for the year 2020.

About

Dholavira:

- The city of Dholavira located in Khadir island of the Rann of Kutchch belonged to matured Harappan phase.
- Dholavira is one of the five largest Harappan sites in the world and the most prominent archaeological site in India belonging to Indus Valley Civilization.
- Dholavira was known for the excellent water storage system and town planning. The inhabitants of Dholavira were master water conservationists.
- No significant rivers were flowing by, just two rivulets — Mansar and Manhar. Nine reservoirs were built around the city to store water. The city itself is divided into three parts — the Citadel, the Middletown and the Lower Town.

Monuments of the Deccan Sultanate

- The 'Monuments of the Deccan Sultanate' is a serial property comprising of four component constitute the most representative, most authentic and best-conserved examples of **Deccani Sultanate** monuments in India.
- The series demonstrates the exemplary convergence of national and international styles of Islamic architecture and their intersections with the prevalent Hindu architecture of the period southern Indian in present-day **Karnataka** and **Andhra Pradesh**.
 - **Bahmani Monuments** at Gulbarga, Karnataka
 - **Bahmani and Barid Shahi Monuments** at Bidar, Karnataka
 - **Adil Shashi Monuments** at Bijapur, Karnataka
 - **Qutb Shahi Monuments** at Hyderabad Andhra Pradesh

What is UNESCO's World Heritage List?

- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity.

- This is embodied in an international treaty called the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by UNESCO in 1972.
- The world heritage list aims to recruit the world community in identifying cultural and natural properties of “outstanding universal value.”

Significance of the inclusion:

- UNESCO seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity.
- The international recognition to the heritage precinct can significantly boost the local economy in various manners. It also gives a tremendous fillip to domestic and international tourism leading to increased employment generation, the creation of world-class infrastructure and heritage memorabilia.
- Furthermore, inclusion into the UNESCO’s list becomes a matter of pride to the nation.

2. 1946 NAVAL MUTINY: WHEN INDIAN SAILORS ROSE IN REVOLT AGAINST THE RAJ

Context

Seventy-four years ago on this date, on February 18, 1946, some 1,100 Indian sailors or “ratings” of the HMIS Talwar and the Royal Indian Navy (RIN) Signal School in Bombay declared a hunger strike, triggered by the conditions and treatment of Indians in the Navy.

About

- A “slow down” the strike was also called, which meant that the ratings would carry out their duties slowly.
- The commander of HMIS Talwar, F M King, reportedly addressed the naval ratings as “sons of coolies and bitches”, which inflamed the situation further.

1946 naval mutiny: Strike and demands

- The morning after February 18, somewhere between 10,000-20,000 sailors joined the strike, as did shore establishments in Karachi, Madras, Calcutta, Mandapam, Visakhapatnam, and the Andaman Islands.
- While the immediate trigger was the demand for better food and working conditions, the agitation soon turned into a wider demand for independence from British rule.
- The protesting sailors demanded the following things
 - ▶ The release of all political prisoners including those from Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose’s Indian National Army (INA),
 - ▶ Action against the commander for ill-treatment and using insulting language,
 - ▶ Revision of pay and allowances to put RIN employees on a par with their counterparts in the Royal Navy,
 - ▶ The demobilisation of RIN personnel with provisions for peacetime employment,
 - ▶ Release of Indian forces stationed in Indonesia, and better treatment of subordinates by their officers.

1946 navy mutiny: Upsurge of nationalism

- The RIN strike came at a time when the Indian nationalist sentiment had reached fever pitch across the country.

- The winter of 1945-46 saw three violent upsurges: in Calcutta in November 1945 over the INA trials; in February 1946, also in Calcutta, over the sentencing of INA officer Rashid Ali; and, in that same month, the ratings' uprising in Bombay.
- In his short book, 'The Indian Naval Report of 1946', Percy S Gourgey, a former lieutenant of the Royal Indian Naval Volunteer Reserve, wrote that the chain of events led to the "mounting fever of excitement affecting the whole political climate".
- One of the triggers for the RIN strike was the arrest of a rating, BC Dutt, who had scrawled "Quit India" on the HMIS Talwar.
- The day after the strike began, the ratings went around Bombay in lorries, waving the Congress flag, and getting into scraps with Europeans and policemen who tried to confront them.
- Soon, ordinary people joined the ratings, and life came to a virtual standstill in both Bombay and Calcutta.
- There were meetings, processions, strikes, and hartals.
- In Bombay, labourers participated in a general strike called by the Communist Party of India and the Bombay Students' Union.
- In many cities across India, students boycotted classes in solidarity.
- The response of the state was brutal. It is estimated that over 220 people died in police firing, while roughly 1,000 were injured.

Significance of the events

- The RIN revolt remains a legend today.
- It was an event that strengthened further the determination among all sections of the Indian people to see the end of British rule.
- Deep solidarity and amity among religious groups were in evidence, which appeared to run counter to the rapidly spreading atmosphere of communal hatred and animosity.
- However, communal unity was more in the nature of organisational unity than unity among the two major communities.
- Within months, India was to be devoured by a terrible communal conflagration.

3. BATTLE OF ÇANAKKALE

Context

Recently, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan pledged to continue his unflinching support for Islamabad's stance on Kashmir. He compared the "struggle" of Kashmiris with that of Turkey in the Battle of Çanakkale.

About

- **Battle of Çanakkale: Also known as Gallipoli campaign or Dardanelles campaign,** the Battle of Çanakkale is considered to be one of the bloodiest of **World War I**.
- During this battle, **the Ottoman army faced off against the Allied forces**, leading to the slaughter of many thousands of soldiers on both sides.
- **History:** In **March 1915**, Winston Churchill, then Britain's First Lord of Admiralty, devised a plan to **take control of the Dardanelles** (strategic strait connecting Sea of Marmara to the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean Sea), and reach Constantinople (today's Istanbul) at the mouth of Bosphorus.
 - By taking Constantinople, Allied forces hoped to break the **Turks**, who had recently entered the war **on the side of Germany**.
- **Participants:** British and French troops as well as **divisions of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC)**. ANZAC Corps was created early in World War I (1914-18).

Gallipoli campaign

- The Allies carried out a **heavy naval bombardment** of Turkish forts along the shores of Dardanelles, and when that failed, they followed up with what was the **biggest amphibious landing in military history** at the time.
- However, what the British and their allies had hoped would be the turning point in the war **ended up as a catastrophe**.
- In the nine months up to **January 1916**, when the **Allies called off the campaign and evacuated**, more than **40,000 British soldiers** had been killed, along with **8,000 Australian**. On the **Turkish side, some 60,000** had perished.
- **Reason for failure: Lack of sufficient intelligence and knowledge of the terrain**, along with a **fierce Turkish resistance** (Ottoman army), hampered the success of the invasion.

Legacy of the Battle

- The campaign was considered a great **Ottoman victory**.
- In Turkey, it is regarded as a **defining moment in the history of the state**, a final surge in the defence of the motherland as the Ottoman Empire retreated.
- The struggle formed the **basis for the Turkish War of Independence** and declaration of the Republic of Turkey eight years later.
- The campaign is often considered to be the **beginning of Australian and New Zealand national consciousness**.
 - **April 25, the anniversary of the Gallipoli landings**, is observed as **ANZAC Day** – the day of national remembrance for dead of the war.



1. THE FIVE 'ICONIC' ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES MENTIONED IN THE BUDGET

Context

The government proposes to set up an Indian Institute of Heritage and Conservation under the Ministry of Culture, and develop five archaeological sites as "iconic sites" with onsite museums in Rakhigarhi (Haryana), Hastinapur (Uttar Pradesh), Sivsagar (Assam), Dholavira (Gujarat) and Adichanallur (Tamil Nadu).

About

The government proposes to set up an Indian Institute of Heritage and Conservation under the Ministry of Culture, and develop five archaeological sites as "iconic sites" with onsite museums in Rakhigarhi (Haryana), Hastinapur (Uttar Pradesh), Sivsagar (Assam), Dholavira (Gujarat) and Adichanallur (Tamil Nadu).

◦ Rakhigarhi

- Rakhigarhi in Haryana's Hissar district is one of the most prominent and largest sites of the Harappan civilisation.
- It is one among the five known townships of the Harappan civilisation in the Indian subcontinent.
- Between 2013 and 2016, excavations were carried out at the cemetery in Rakhigarhi by a team of Indian and South Korean researchers led by Vasant Shinde of Deccan College, Pune.
- In one of their excavations, the skeletal remains of a couple were discovered.
- Interestingly, of the 62 graves discovered in Rakhigarhi, only this particular grave consisted of more than one skeletal remains and of individuals of the opposite sex together.

◦ Hastinapur

- Excavations at Hastinapur, in Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh.
- Hastinapur finds mention in the Mahabharata and the Puranas.
- One of the most significant discoveries made at this site was of the "new ceramic industry", which was named the Painted Grey Ware, which as per the report represented the relics of the early Indo-Aryans.
- The Painted Grey Ware would be associated with the early settlers on these sites, viz. The Pauravas, Panchalas, etc., who formed a part of the early Aryan stock in India.
- Such an association may also explain the synchronism between the appearance of the Painted Grey Ware in the Ghaggar-Sutlej valleys and the probable date of the arrival of the Aryans in that area."

◦ Sivasagar

- In Sivasagar, excavations at the Karenghar (Talatalghar) complex between 2000 and 2003 led to the discovery of buried structures in the north-western and north-eastern side of the complex.

- ▶ Among the structural remains found at the site were ceramic assemblages including vases, vessels, dishes, and bowls, etc.
- ▶ Terracotta smoking pipes were also found.
- ▶ Another excavation site in Sivasagar district is the Garhgaon Raja's palace.
- ▶ A burnt-brick wall running in north-south orientation was found, along with the remains of two huge circular wooden posts.
- **Dholavira**
 - ▶ Dholavira in Gujarat is located in the Khadir island of the Rann of Kutch, and like Rakhigarhi is one of the sites where the remains of the Harappan civilisation have been found.
 - ▶ Dholavira is unique because remains of a complete water system have been found here.
 - ▶ The people who lived there for an estimated 1,200 years during the Harappan civilisation are noted for their water conservation system using rainwater harvesting techniques in an otherwise parched landscape.
- **Adichnallur**
 - ▶ Adichnallur lies in the Thoothukudi district of Tamil Nadu.
 - ▶ The urn-burial site was first brought to light during a "haphazard excavation" by a German archaeologist in 1876.
 - ▶ Following this, an Englishman Alexander Rae excavated the site between 1889 and 1905.
 - ▶ Over the years, the site has gained attention because of three important findings: the discovery of an ancient Tamil-Brahmi script on the inside of an urn containing a full human skeleton, a fragment of broken earthenware, and the remains of living quarters.

2. KUMBHABISHEGAM ROW: HOW THE OLD ARYAN-DRAVIDIAN TUSSLE PLAYED OUT IN AN ICONIC TAMIL NADU TEMPLE

Context

Tens of thousands of people thronged Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu's Cauvery delta to witness the kumbhabishegam (consecration) ceremony at the Sri Brahadeeswarar Temple.

About

- This enormously significant event was held after 23 years.
- The judgment delivered the struggle for supremacy between the Sanskrit and Tamil traditions that lies at the heart of several cultural battles in the state — and which also played out in the kumbhabishegam ceremony.

Sri Brahadeeswarar Temple and kumbhabishegam ceremony

- The consecration ceremony that culminated with the maha poornahuthi or the main puja
- The Sri Brahadeeswarar Temple (also spelt Brihadisvara, and called Peruvudaiyar Koyil, which translates simply to 'Big Temple') is the most famous of the many temples in Thanjavur.
- The temple, one of the world's largest and grandest, was built between 1003 AD and 1010 AD by the great Chola emperor Raja Raja I (c. 985-1014 AD).
- Holy water brought from the yaga salai — the site of the yajna in the temple compound — was poured on the gold-plated kalasam that tops the 216-foot vimanam over the sanctum sanctorum.
- The other idols at the temple too, were sanctified with holy water from the yaga salai.

About Kumbhabhishekam

- Kumbha-abhishekam is a purification ceremony to sanctify the temple structures and the Deities.
- Kumbha (kalasa) is a pot and the abhishekam -generally means 'bathing' (Sanskrit root word-Shic- to sprinkle , abhi -all around-).
- When the two words are combined, it 'means ceremonial pouring of sanctified materials.'
- In temple worship, sixty-four worship procedures are recommended by Agama Sastras.
- Of these sixty-four, five upacharas (paadyam, gandham, pushpam, dhoopam, deepam) are of paramount importance.
- These five are then followed by naivedyam, which is distributed to devotees as prasadam.
- Among the five upachara, paadyam, or offer of water is most important.
- This is the reason why during the Kumbha-abhishekam, water contained in pots is first sanctified with Vedic prayers (Theertha kalasa Pooja), after which it used for abhishekam for the deities and other structures.

3. NAGARDHAN EXCAVATIONS: WHY ARE FINDINGS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND VAKATAKA DYNASTY

Context

Recent archaeological excavations at Nagardhan in Ramtek taluka, near Nagpur, have provided concrete evidence on the life, religious affiliations and trade practices of the Vakataka dynasty that ruled parts of Central and South India between the third and fifth centuries.

About

- After a 1,500 year-old sealing was excavated for the first time; a new study in Numismatic Digest has tried to understand the Vakataka rule under Queen Prabhavatigupta.
- Nagardhan is a large village in Nagpur district, about 6 km south of Ramtek taluka headquarters.
- Archaeological remains were found on a surface spread over a 1 km × 1.5 km area.
- A Koteswar temple dating back to the 15th-16th centuries stands on the banks of a stream.
- The existing village sits on top of the ancient habitation.
- The Nagardhan Fort stands south of present-day Nagardhan village.
- This was constructed during the Gond Raja period and later renovated and re-used by the Bhosales of Nagpur during the late 18th and 19th centuries.
- The area surrounding the fort is under cultivation and has archaeological remains.

Why is the excavation important?

- Very little was known about the Vakatakas, the Shaivite rulers of Central India between the third and fifth centuries.
- All that was known about the dynasty, believed to hail from the Vidarbha region, was largely through some literature and copperplates.
- There were assumptions that the excavated site of Nagardhan is the same as Nandhivardhan, the capital city of the eastern branch of the Vakatakas.
- It was after archaeological evidence from here that Nagardhan was understood to have served as a capital of the Vakataka kingdom.
- Besides, the scholars have traced archaeological evidence revealing the dynasty's religious affiliations — the types of houses and palaces of the rulers, coins and sealings circulated during their reign, and their trade practices.

What is the significance of these finds?

- It is the first time clay sealings have been excavated from Nagardhan.
- The oval-shaped sealing belongs to the period when Prabhavatigupta was the queen of the Vakataka dynasty.
- It bears her name in the Brahmi script, along with the depiction of a conch.
- The 6.40-gram sealing, this is 1,500 years old, measures 35.71 mm by 24.20 mm, with a thickness of 9.50mm.
- The presence of the conch is a sign of the Vaishnava affiliation that the Guptas held.
- The sealing was traced on top of a mega wall that researchers now think could have been part of a royal structure at the capital city of the kingdom.
- So far, no archaeological evidence had emerged about the types of houses or palatial structures of the Vakataka people or rulers.
- These are strong indicators of Vaishnava signatures on the royal seals of the Vakatakas, reiterate that Queen Prabhavatigupta was indeed a powerful woman ruler.
- Since the Vakataka people traded with Iran and beyond through the Mediterranean Sea, scholars suggest that these sealings could have been used as an official royal permission issued from the capital city.
- Besides, these were used on documents that sought mandatory royal permissions.

What else has been excavated from Nagardhan so far?

- Earlier results from the excavations here had traced evidence in the form of ceramics, ear studs of glass, antiquities, bowls and pots, a votive shrine and tank, an iron chisel, a stone depicting a deer, and terracotta bangles.
- Some terracotta objects even depicted images of gods, animals and humans, along with amulets, scotches, wheels, skin rubbers and spindle whorls.
- An intact idol of Lord Ganesha, which had no ornaments adorned, too was found from the site.
- This confirmed that the elephant god was a commonly worshipped deity in those times.
- On the means of living of the Vakataka people, researchers found animal rearing to be one of the main occupations.
- Remains of seven species of domestic animals — cattle, goat, sheep, pig, cat, horse and fowl — were traced in an earlier study by the team.



1. TULU LANGUAGE

Context

There has been a growing demand to include Tulu in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. At present, Tulu is not an official language in India or any other country.

About

- Tulu is a Dravidian language whose speakers are concentrated in the region of Tulu Nadu, which comprises the districts of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi in Karnataka and the northern part of Kasaragod district of Kerala.
- Kasaragod district is called 'Sapta bhasha Samgama Bhumi (the confluence of seven languages)', and Tulu is among the seven.
- The oldest available inscriptions in Tulu are from the period between 14th to 15th century AD.

Case for Inclusion in the Eighth Schedule

- Global Efforts: The Yuelu Proclamation made by United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at Changsha, China, in 2018 plays a central role in guiding the efforts of countries and regions around the world to protect linguistic resources and diversity.
- The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL). The IYIL 2019 strives to preserve, support and promote indigenous languages at the national, regional and international levels.
- Constitutional Safeguard: Article 29 of the Indian Constitution deals with the "Protection of interests of minorities". It states that any section of the citizens residing in any part of India having a distinct language, script or culture of its own, shall have the right to conserve the same.
- Number of Speakers: According to Census-2011, there are more than 18 lakh native speakers of Tulu in India. The Tulu-speaking people are larger in number than speakers of Manipuri and Sanskrit, which have the Eighth Schedule status.
- Literary Recognition: Robert Caldwell (1814-1891), in his book, A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South-Indian Family of Languages, called Tulu as "one of the most highly developed languages of the Dravidian family".

Advantages of Recognition in Eighth Schedule

- If included in the Eighth Schedule, Tulu would get the following benefits
- Recognition from the Sahitya Akademi.
- Translation of Tulu literary works into other languages.
- Members of Parliament (MP) and Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) could speak Tulu in Parliament and State Assemblies, respectively.

- Option to take competitive exams in Tulu including all-India competitive examinations like the Civil Services exam.
- Special funds from the Central government.
- Teaching of Tulu in primary and high school.

Way Forward

- India has a lot to learn from the Yuelu Proclamation. Placing of all the deserving languages on equal footing will promote social inclusion and national solidarity.
- It will reduce inequalities within the country to a great extent. So, Tulu, along with other deserving languages, should be included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution in order to substantially materialise the promise of equality of status and opportunity mentioned in the Preamble.

2. 'BIBI KA MAQBARA'

Context

The marble domes of Bibi Ka Maqbara, the famous 17th-century Mughal-era monument in the city, are set to get a new shine.

About

Bibi Ka Maqbara:

- The structure, known as the 'Taj of the Deccan' because of its striking resemblance to the Taj Mahal, was built in 1668 by Azam Shah, the son of Aurangzeb to commemorate his mother Dilras Begum who was titled Rabia Durani post her death.
- Also called the **Tomb of the Lady**, Bibi Ka Maqbara was designed by Ataullah, the son of Ahmad Lahauri, the architect of the Taj Mahal which explains its appearance heavily based on the prime marvel.
- According to the "Tarikh Namah" of Ghulam Mustafa, the cost of construction of the mausoleum was Rs. 6,68,203 - 7,00,000.
- Bibi Ka Maqbara or tomb of Rabia Durani stands as a lone soul in the southern part.
- It was Aurangzeb's long-standing governorship of Aurangabad that the shrine came to exist in the city and is today one of the most famous historical monuments in Maharashtra.

The story of Dilras Banu:

- Dilras Banu, born in the Safavid royal family of Iran, was the daughter of Shah Nawaz Khan who was the then viceroy of the state of Gujarat.
- She married Aurangzeb in 1637 thus becoming his first consort and wife.
- Both Aurangzeb and his eldest son, Azam Shah couldn't bear the loss of the most important woman in their lives.
- It was then in 1668 that Azam Shah ordered for a mausoleum to be built for his beloved mother on the lines of Taj Mahal, which was the resting place of Banu's mother-in-law and Aurangzeb's mother, Mumtaz Mahal.

Conservation of the structure:

- The domes and other marble parts of the mausoleum will undergo scientific conservation.
- The domes and minarets of the structure, which are built-in marble, as well as the marble screens inside would undergo scientific conservation.
- The conservation work will involve cleaning and carrying out a chemical treatment to give it a new glow.

3. WHAT IS THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF NANKANA SAHIB IN PAKISTAN?

Context

Tension mounted in Nankana Sahib in Pakistan and there was outrage in India after a mob, led by the family of a Muslim man who had married a Sikh teenage girl, hurled stones at Gurdwara Janam Asthan, the birthplace of Guru Nanak Dev, and threatened to convert it into a mosque.

About/historical significance of Nankana Sahib

- Nankana Sahib is a city of 80,000 in Pakistan's Punjab province, where Gurdwara Janam Asthan (also called Nankana Sahib Gurdwara) is located.
- The shrine is built over the site where Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was believed to be born in 1469.
- It is 75 kms to the west of Lahore, and is the capital of Nankana Sahib district.
- The city was previously known as Talwandi, and was founded by Rai Bhoi, a wealthy landlord.
- Rai Bhoi's grandson, Rai Bular Bhatti, renamed the town 'Nankana Sahib' in honour of the Guru. 'Sahib' is an Arabic-origin epithet of respect.

Other information

- Besides Gurdwara Janam Asthan, Nankana Sahib has several important shrines, including Gurdwara Patti Sahib, Gurdwara Bal Leela, Gurdwara Mal Ji Sahib, Gurdwara Kiara Sahib, Gurdwara Tambu Sahib — all dedicated to stages in the life of the first Guru.
- There is also a Gurdwara in memory of Guru Arjan (5th Guru) and Guru Hargobind (6th Guru).
- Guru Hargobind is believed to have paid homage to the town in 1621-22.
- The Janam Asthan shrine was constructed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, after he visited Nankana Sahib in 1818-19 while returning from the Battle of Multan.
- During British rule, the Gurdwara Janam Asthan was the site of a violent episode when in 1921, over 130 Akali Sikhs were killed after they were attacked by the Mahant of the shrine.
- The incident is regarded as one of the key milestones in the Gurdwara Reform Movement, which led to the passing of the Sikh Gurdwara Act in 1925 that ended the Mahant control of Gurdwaras.
- Until Independence, Nankana Sahib's population had an almost equal number of Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus, which since Partition has been predominantly Muslim.



1. CHALUKYAS

Context

Graves of Chalukyan rulers have been found in a village near Huligemmanakolla in Pattadakal of Karnataka's district.

About

- The discovery was made by explorer **Manjunath Sullolli** who says that the place has graves of the family members of Chalukyan rulers.
- There are **11 small temple-like structures** in Huligemmanakolla that are believed to be the final resting place of the royal family.
- **Chalukyan kings were famous for building gigantic temples** with intricate architecture in places such as **Aihole, Badami, and Pattadakal in Bagalkot**
- Built between the **sixth and eighth centuries**, these monuments are examples of the best of the architecture of that era in entire South India.
- Though the **Chalukyan kings built marvelous monuments and temples**, there are no clear details available of the places where they lived.
- Neither they have left behind documents nor evidence of their graves; therefore, explorers are still searching for their graves.

Chalukyas

- The Chalukya dynasty was established by **Pulakeshin I in 543 AD**. Pulakeshin I took Vatapi (modern Badami in Bagalkot district, Karnataka) under his control and made it his capital.
- Pulakeshin I and his descendants are referred to as "**Chalukyas of Badami**".
- **Pulakeshin II**, the most famous ruler, extended the Chalukya Empire up to the northern extents of the Pallava kingdom and halted the southward march of Harsha, belonging to Pushyabhuti dynasty by defeating him on the banks of the river Narmada.

Architecture

Their style of architecture is called "Chalukyan architecture", "Karnata Dravida architecture" or the "Vesara Style" of architecture, which is the fusion between northern "Nagara" style and southern "Dravida" style.

Badami Cave temples

Badami cave temples have rock-cut halls with three basic features: pillared veranda, columned hall and a sanctum cut out deep into rock.

Pattadakal temples

- Virupaksha temple

- Papanatha temple
- Mallikarjuna temple
- Sangameshwara temple

Aihole temples

- Lad khan temple
- Durga temple
- Suryanarayan temple
- Ravana Phadi temple

Contributions

- A Southern India-based kingdom took control and consolidated the entire region between the Kaveri and the Narmada rivers.
- The rise of this empire saw the birth of efficient administration, overseas trade and commerce.
- Kannada literature, which had enjoyed royal support in the 9th century Rashtrakuta court found eager patronage from the Western Chalukyas.
- The Chalukyas provided patronage to various religions and traditions such as Jainism, Veerashaiva etc and allowed them to prosper.

2. THE ANCIENT PORT TOWN OF MAMALLAPURAM

Context

The ancient port town of Mamallapuram was selected for the scheduled visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping during a two-day second India-China informal summit.

About

- **First India-China informal summit:** It was held in **Wuhan, China** on April 27-28, 2018, to exchange views on overarching issues of bilateral and global importance, and to elaborate their respective visions and priorities for national development in the context of the current and future international situation.

Mamallapuram:

- **Mahabalipuram or Mamallapuram is a historic city and UNESCO World Heritage site** in the state of Tamil Nadu.
- Mahabalipuram was the **second capital of the Pallavas** who ruled Kanchipuram. Formerly, mahabalipuram was known and called as Mamallapuram.
- It was during the reign of King Narasimha Varman I(630 - 668AD), the name Mahabalipuram was changed. King Narasimha Varman I was a great and valiant warrior. He was given the title **Mamalla which means 'the great wrestler'** so the name was converted from Mahabalipuram to Mamallapuram considering the great king and his achievements.
- During the reign of the Pallava dynasty, between the 3rd century CE and 7th century CE, it became an important centre of art, architecture and literature.
- Mahabalipuram was already a thriving sea port on the Bay of Bengal before this time. A significant amount of coins and other artefacts excavated from this region also indicate a pre-existing trade relation with the Romans even before it became a part of the Pallava Empire.

Art & Architectural Masterpieces at Mamallapuram:

- **Shore Temple:** The Shore Temple (built in 700–728 AD) is so named because it overlooks the shore of the Bay of Bengal. It is a structural temple, built with blocks of granite, dating from the 8th century

AD. It was built during the reign of Narasimhavarman II. It is a remnant of a larger complex of temples and civil structures much of which lie under the depth of the sea now.

- **Descent of the Ganges:** It is alternatively known as Arjuna's Penance. Descent of the Ganges is a gigantic open air bas-relief sculpted out of pink granite. The dramatic relief sculpture narrates the tales from Indian epics such as the Mahabharata.
- **Pancha Ratha:** Pancha Ratha (five chariots) is an architectural ode to Mahabharata's five Pandava brothers Yudhistir, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, Sahadeva, and their wife Draupadi. Thematically and structurally, each ratha is significantly different from the other ones, but all of them were carved out of a long stone or monolith.

3. KEELADI – AN URBAN SETTLEMENT OF SANGAM AGE

Context

The Tamil Nadu Archaeology Department (TNAD) has stated that Keeladi excavations reveals sangam age to be much older than believed earlier.

About

The Tamil Nadu Archaeology Department (TNAD) has stated that Keeladi excavations reveals sangam age to be much older than believed earlier.

Where is Keeladi located?

Keeladi is a small village near Silaiman on the border between Madurai and Sivagangai districts in Tamil Nadu, and also the site on the banks on Vaigai River where remains of ancient Sangam culture have been found.

What is the Significance of Keeladi finding?

- Generally, the Age of Sangam is considered between 3rd century BCE and 3rd century CE. But, the available **Accelerator Mass Spectrometry (AMS) dates obtained for the Keeladi carbon samples push the date of Tamil-Brahmi to 6th century BCE.** These scientific dates force to re-assess the widely held date of Sangam Age.
- The AMS dates obtained from Kodumanal and Porunthal pushed the date of Tamil-Brahmi to 5th century BCE. But, the Keeladi AMS dates further pushed the date to a century earlier i.e., 6th century BCE.
- As high literacy level is well achieved in 6th century BCE, naturally the beginning of historic period in Tamil Nadu goes back to 6th century BCE. The available evidences clearly suggest that **the Early Historic period of Tamil Nadu begins in 6th century BCE and the Iron Age begins in 2 nd millennium BCE.**
- It is generally believed that second urbanization observed in Gangetic valley did not occur in Tamil Nadu. **But, the Keeladi excavation clearly suggests that the second urbanization too happened in Tamil Nadu in 6th century BCE.**

What is Sangam Age?

- The Sangam Age constitutes an important chapter in the history of South India. According to Tamil legends, **there existed three Sangams (Academy of Tamil poets)** in ancient Tamil Nadu **popularly called Muchchangam.**
- **These Sangams flourished under the royal patronage of the Pandyas.**
- **The first Sangam, held at Then Madurai,** was attended by gods and legendary sages but no literary work of this Sangam was available.
- **The second Sangam was held at Kapadapuram** but the all the literary works had perished except Tolkappiyam.

- **The third Sangam at Madurai was founded by Mudathirumaran.** It was attended by a large number of poets who produced voluminous literature but only a few had survived.
- These Tamil literary works remain useful sources to reconstruct the history of the Sangam Age.

Historical importance of Madurai:

- It is one of the ancient cities in India that enjoyed continuity in the history from Pre-historic times. Due to its cultural prominence, Madurai is described as **“The Athens of South India”**.
- It is also well known as a great centre for learning from very early times. As the seat of the Tamil academy called the Sangam, it wielded great influence in the literary and cultural fields.
- During the glorious rule of Pandyas, Madurai had overseas connections for both commercial and cultural activities.
- **The Pandyas and their capital city Madurai were well known to the Ancient Greeks and Romans.**
- Megasthenese, the Greek ambassador of Seleukos Nikator at the court of the Chandra Gupta Maurya (320 B.C.), in these accounts gave a vivid picture of a South Indian Kingdoms.
- Strabo (C. 25. B.C.) stated that a Pandya king sent an embassy to the Roman Emperor Augustus.
- Pliny (C. 75 A.D.) mentioned about the Pandya, King Pandya and his capital Madurai.
- Ptolemy (C. 130 A.D.) also referred Madurai as the royal city of the Pandyas.
- **The Arthasastra of Kautilya**, while describing the trade between Northern and Southern India, **spoke about the pearls and muslins of the Pandya country.**
- **The astronomer Varahamihirar referred the Pandya kingdom in his Brhatsamhita.**
- The earliest datable **Ashoka’s rock edicts Nos. 2 and 13 mention the South Indian Kingdoms viz, Chola, Pandya, Satyaputra and Keralaputra.**



1. PANDIT DEENDAYAL UPADHYAYA

Context

103rd birth anniversary of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya.

About

◦ Deendayal's personal life:

- ▶ Deendayal Upadhyaya was **born in a village** near the Farah town **in Mathura district called Chandrabhan**, which later went on to be **named after him as "Deendayal Dham"**.
- ▶ His father's name was Bhagwati Prasad, an astrologer, and his mother Rampyari was a religious woman.
- ▶ Both his parents died when he was only eight years old and he was then brought up by his maternal uncle and aunt who took care of him and his education as well.

◦ Education of Deendayal Upadhyaya:

- ▶ He completed his intermediate education at Birla College, Pilani, and his Bachelors in Arts at Sanatan Dharma College, Kanpur, in 1939. At this college, **he came into contact with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) through his classmate Baluji Mahashabde**.
- ▶ He further joined St John's College in Agra to pursue a master's degree in English literature, but didn't complete it.

◦ Upadhyaya as a writer:

- ▶ Deendayal Upadhyaya first **started the monthly "Rashtra Dharma" from Lucknow in the 1940s**, meant **for spreading the ideology of Hindutva nationalism**.
- ▶ Later on, he also started the **weekly "Panchjanya"** and then the **daily "Swadesh"**.
- ▶ He edited the weekly and daily from Kanpur itself.

◦ He wrote a **Hindi drama on Chandragupta Maurya**, a **biography of Shankaracharya**, and **translated a Marathi biography of Hedgewar**.

◦ Deendayal and the Bharatiya Jana Sangh:

- ▶ After meeting the RSS founder KB Hedgewar in 1942, he joined RSS as a full-time worker, called Pracharak.
- ▶ In **1951, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee founded the Bharatiya Jana Sangh**.
- ▶ Deendayal was seconded to the party by the RSS, bestowed with the responsibility of moulding it into a genuine member of the 'Sangh Parivar'.
- ▶ Then, he was appointed as General Secretary of the party's Uttar Pradesh branch, and later as the all-India General Secretary.
- ▶ He remained the general secretary for 15 long years and **also contested for Lok Sabha from Uttar Pradesh, but did not get elected as he failed to gain enough political traction**.

- **Upadhyaya's ideology for India:**

- Upadhyaya devised the **political philosophy of Integral Humanism**, which advocates the simultaneous and integrated program of the body, mind and intellect and soul of each human being.
- This philosophy of his is a synthesis of the material and the spiritual; the individual and the collective.
- For India, he **visualised a decentralised polity and self-reliant economy with the village being the core basis** which thought of India as an independent nation which cannot rely upon western concepts like individualism, democracy, socialism, communism or capitalism.
- Deendayal was of the view that India is in urgent need of a 'fresh breeze' to get rid of the post-independence westernisation.
- He felt Indian intellect had been suffocated, and Indian polity was no more rooted in the traditions of our ancient culture.
- Deendayal, just like all strong leaders, **believed in the concept of Swaraj (Self Governance)**.

- **Deendayal's death: A mystery**

- A pool of doubt surrounds the mysterious death of this political leader.
- Travelling in a train to Patna, a year after he was elected in 1967 as the president of the Jana Sangh, he was allegedly murdered.
- 10 minutes after the train's arrival at Mughal sarai station, his body was found near it clutching a five-rupee note in his hand.
- Hence, the problematic case has been looked into by several judges and has seen demands made by several MPs, politicians and family members to be reopened.

- **Upadhyaya's eternal legacy:**

- Ever since BJP came to power under PM Modi, several public institutions, government schemes, and recently a railway station, were renamed after him.
- A Delhi road/marg has been renamed as Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Marg.
- An institute was established as Deen Dayal Research Institute which deals with queries on Upadhyaya and his works.
- Mughalsarai junction in UP where Deendayal's body was found has been renamed as Deen Dayal Upadhyaya junction.

- **Several Schemes in the name of Deendayal Upadhyaya:**

- Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana (DAY).
- Deendayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) .
- Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Shramev Jayate Karyakram.
- Deendayal Upadhyaya Swaniyojan Yojana (DUSY).
- Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana.

2. SANT RAVIDAS--THE MYSTIC GURU OF BHAKTI MOVEMENT

Context

Amid the State-wide protest by Ravidas community over the alleged demolition of a temple in New Delhi on the purported direction of apex court, Punjab Chief Minister on Sunday sought Prime Minister's intervention to pacify the community leaders.

About

- Guru Ravidas was a famous saint of the Bhakti Movement and was born in 1377 C.E. at Mandhuadhe which is located in Uttar Pradesh, India.
- He was one of the most famous and leading star of the nirguna sampradaya means sant parampara and lead the North Indian Bhakti movement.
- He has given variety of spiritual and social messages through his great writings of poetry to his lovers, followers, community people, and society people to reform their mind and show their boundless love towards God.
- He was the vision of people as a messiah in order to complete the social and spiritual needs. He was the spiritually rich person worshipped by the people.
- Guru Ravidas was also known as Raidas, Rohidas or Ruhidas.

His Association with Meera Bai

- Sant Guru Ravidas Ji is considered as a spiritual Guru of the Meera Bai
- She was very impressed by the teachings of Guru Ravidass Ji and became the great follower of him.
- Meera Bai has written some lines in the respect of his Guru "Guru Milyaa Ravidas Ji ..."

His Involvement in Social Issues

- He was sent by the God on the earth when required him to save the real Dharma as at that time social and religious patterns were distressing because of the lots of manmade discriminations over social beliefs, caste, color and etc.
- He bravely faced all the discriminations and answered people about the real definition of beliefs and castes.
- He taught people that one is not known by his caste, religion or believes for God, he known only for his great actions (or karma). He also worked against the system of untouchability in the society by the higher caste people for lower caste people.
- He spread a message that "God created man and not man created God" means everyone is created by the God and has equal rights on this earth.

Guru Ravi Das's teachings relevant today

- Every citizen of the country should work for the welfare of society and serve the humanity selflessly as preached by Guru Ravi Dass Ji Maharaj.
- Teachings of great spiritual saint inspire us to lead a righteous life. There were five human values of Sathya, Dharma, Shanti, Prema and Ahimsa. These human values were taught by saints of all religions, which confer inner bliss.
- Propagate the message of Guru Ravi Dass Ji to every nook and corner of the country to fight the evils of casteism, communalism, corruption which have engulfed the society today.

3. KOLAM MAPS

Context

Kolams maps are helping women map business potential.

About

- **Kolam** is a **traditional drawing** found **across south India**.
- It is drawn by using rice flour, chalk, chalk powder or rock powder, often using naturally or synthetically colored powders.
- It is a geometrical line drawing composed of curved loops, drawn around a grid pattern of dots.

- Kolams are thought to bring prosperity to homes. Every morning, millions of women draw kolams on the ground with white rice flour.
- Through the day, the drawings get walked on, washed out in the rain, or blown around in the wind; new ones are made the next day

Kolam Maps

- This skill of drawing a sequence of dots and deftly making geometric patterns has been used to **draw the maps in Tamil Nadu**
- It is helping women in Tamil Nadu **to identify lucrative locations to set up businesses.**
- Every single detail on the streets is observed near homes, making notes of the shops, tea stalls, water points, temples and everything. Then it is drawn on the ground and they understand what they have and what they don't.
- The kolam inspired maps are now a ready reckoner for thousands of women, all budding entrepreneurs trapped in low paying jobs, to decide which business to start or where to set up shop.



1. ROPEWAY PROJECT TO ELEPHANTA CAVES

Context

Ministry of Culture assured that “full cooperation” will be provided to **India’s first and longest ropeway project** over the sea connecting **Mumbai with the Elephanta Caves**.

About

- It is pitted as the **country’s first and longest ropeway project** over the sea.
- It is to be executed by the **Mumbai Port Trust, under the Ministry of Shipping**.
- As Elephanta caves is a **world heritage site**, clearance will have to be taken from **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)**, besides the Indian Navy, Coast Guard and the Ministry of Environment.
- The required approval is likely to come soon under the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958**.

Significance

- The caves see an annual footfall of nearly seven lakh visitors and are one of the must-visit places around Mumbai.
- Presently, it takes around an hour for the 10-km cruise from Mumbai and vice versa. The 14-minute ride by 30-seater cable cars will give a major boost to tourism

Elephanta Caves

- The Elephanta Caves are located in Western India on Elephanta Island (otherwise known as the Island of Gharapuri) in Mumbai Harbour.
- The caves are carved out of solid basalt rock and cover an area of 60,000 sq. ft
- There are two groups of caves on Elephanta Island, each featuring the rock-cut style of architecture.
- The larger one of these two groups has five caves with numerous Hindu sculptures.
- Two Buddhist caves at the site make up the smaller group along with water tanks and a Stupa.
- Each cave has been carved as a rock-cut temple with one main huge chamber, courtyards, two lateral chambers, and minor shrines.
- Cave 1 aka the Grand Cave is the biggest one among these. This cave temple is mainly dedicated to Lord Shiva and has several structures and carvings celebrating the deity and his different forms.
- Today, the magnificent Elephanta Caves count among the top tourist attractions and historical monuments in Mumbai. This architectural marvel was granted the status of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 1987.

2. INDUS VALLEY INSCRIPTIONS

Context

- A research paper published recently in Palgrave Communications, a Nature group journal claims that majority of the Indus Valley inscriptions were written logographically (by using word signs) and not by using phonograms (speech sounds units).
- Another paper, titled “Interrogating Indus inscription to unravel their mechanism of meaning conveyance”, published recently points out that the inscriptions can be compared to the structured messages found on stamps, coupons, tokens and currency coins of modern times.

About

- Indus Valley inscriptions are discovered from 4,000 ancient inscribed objects, including seals, tablets, ivory rods, pottery shards, etc.
- These Indus inscriptions are one of the most enigmatic legacies of the Indus Valley civilization but these have not been deciphered due to the absence of bilingual texts, extreme brevity of the inscriptions, and ignorance about the language(s) encoded by Indus script.

Findings of the paper:

- The paper focuses on understanding **how** Indus inscriptions conveyed meanings, rather than on deciphering **what** they conveyed.
- Analysing the brevity of the inscriptions, the rigid positional preferences maintained by the signs of the inscriptions, and the co-occurrence of restriction patterns demonstrated by certain classes of Indus signs, it was inferred that such patterns can never be phonological co-occurrence restrictions (two or more sound units that cannot be pronounced together).
- A very compelling, nearly unassailable proof of the logographic nature of Indus inscriptions comes from the co-occurrence restriction patterns maintained within them.
- It classifies all the signs into nine functional classes.
- The inscribed seals and tablets were used in some administrative operation that controlled the commercial transactions prevalent in the trade-savvy settlements of the ancient Indus valley Civilisation.
- The inscriptions can be compared to the messages found on stamps, coupons, tokens and currency coins of modern times, where we expect formulaic texts that encode certain type of information in some pre-defined ways, rather than freely composed narrative.
- A common perception among some scholars is that the Indus script is logo-syllabic, where one symbol can be used as a word sign at one time and as a syllable-sign at another. This method, where a word-symbol also gets sometimes used only for its sound value, is called the rebus principle. For example, we can combine the pictures of a honey bee and a leaf to signify the word “belief” (bee+leaf).
- The paper states that, though many ancient scripts use rebus methods to generate new words, the inscriptions found on the Indus seals and tablets have not used rebus as the mechanism to convey meaning.

3. UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES

Context

UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) declared the **Prosecco Hills of Conegliano and Valdobbiadene** as a UNESCO World Heritage Site at the 43rd agency’s meeting in Baku (capital of Azerbaijan).

About

More on News:

- Italy has more UNESCO sites than any other European country--and it ties only with China globally.
- The hills of Conegliano and Valdobbiadene is located north-east of Venice in Italy. It is home to the world-famous sparkling wine Prosecco.
- The landscape is characterized by Cigloni, a small plots of vines on narrow grassy terraces, forests, small villages and farmland.
- These hills are the eighth UNESCO World Heritage site in the Veneto region, the 55th site in Italy, and the 10th site in the world to be registered under the category of "cultural landscape" in recognition of their unique interaction between man and the environment.
- The new World Heritage Site status is expected to promote awareness, encourage tourism and boost the local economy.
- Earlier in this month, UNESCO also added The Twentieth Century Architecture of **Frank Lloyd Wright** as another cultural site to its list of World Heritage properties.

UNESCO's World Heritage Site list

- The list of World Heritage Sites is maintained by the international 'World Heritage Programme' which is administered by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.
- The UNESCO World Heritage Committee is composed of 21 UNESCO member states, elected by the General Assembly.
- A World Heritage Site is a place that is listed by UNESCO for its special cultural or physical significance.

Criteria for inclusion in List of UNESCO World Heritage Sites

- Any heritage or any historical site has to be first on the tentative list to be a part of UNESCO's World Heritage sites. Once it makes it to the tentative list, then the proposal is sent to the UNESCO for inclusion in the final List of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, only if the site:
- Contains significant natural habitats for conservation of biological diversity, including threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.
- Associates with events, living traditions, ideas, beliefs, and artistic & literary works of outstanding universal significance etc.



1. JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

Context

Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute to Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Narayan on his 117th birth anniversary and termed him a source of inspiration for all Indians.

About

- Jayaprakash Narayan (JP) whose name means, "Victory to the light" was born in the early hours of October 11, 1902 in the remote Bihar village of Sitabdiara.
- Narayan was educated at universities in the United States, where he became a Marxist.
- Upon his return to India in 1929, he joined the Indian National Congress (Congress Party).
- In 1932 he was sentenced to a year's imprisonment for his participation in the civil disobedience movement against British rule in India.
- Upon release **he took a leading part in the formation of the Congress Socialist Party, a left-wing group within the Congress Party**, the organization that led the campaign for Indian independence.
- **He was imprisoned by the British again in 1939 for his opposition to Indian participation in World War II on the side of Britain**, but he subsequently made a dramatic escape and for a short time tried to organize violent resistance to the government before his recapture in 1943.
- After his release in 1946 he tried to persuade the Congress leaders to adopt a more militant policy against British rule.
- In 1948 he, together with most of the Congress Socialists, left the Congress Party and **in 1952 formed the Praja Socialist Party**.
- Soon becoming dissatisfied with party politics, he announced in 1954 that he would thenceforth devote his life **exclusively to the Bhoodan Yajna Movement, founded by Vinoba Bhave**, which demanded that land be distributed among the landless.
- His continuing interest in political problems, however, was revealed when **in 1959 he argued for a "reconstruction of Indian polity" by means of a four-tier hierarchy of village, district, state, and union councils**.
- When Indira Gandhi was found guilty of violating electoral laws by the Allahabad High Court. JP Narayan called for Indira and the CMs to resign and the military and police to disregard unconstitutional and immoral orders. He advocated a program of social transformation which he termed '**Sampoorna Kranti' (total revolution) in 1974 against corruption in public life**.

Total revolution:

- Total Revolution is a combination of seven revolutions, viz., political, social, economic, cultural, ideological or intellectual, educational and spiritual.

- The main motive was to bring in a change in the existing society that is in tune with the ideals of the Sarvodaya.
- **Jayaprakash Narayan was posthumously conferred with India's highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna, for his "invaluable contribution to the freedom struggle and upliftment of the poor and downtrodden".**

2. TIWA TRIBE AND WANCHUWA FESTIVAL

Context

Recently, Tiwa tribesmen took part in a dance during the Wanchuwa festival in Karbi Anglong district of Assam.

About

Tiwa tribe:

- Tiwa also known as Lalung is indigenous community inhabiting the states of Assam and Meghalaya and are also found in some parts of Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur.
- They are recognized as a Scheduled tribe within the state of Assam. But they still do not benefit the ST status in the state of Meghalaya.
- They are divided into 2 sub-groups- **Hill Tiwa** and **Plains Tiwa** which have contrasting cultural features:
 - ▶ **Hill Tiwa:** They live in the westernmost areas of Karbi Anglong district. They speak a Tibeto-Burman language. In most cases, the husband goes to live in her wife's family settlement (matrilocal), and their children are included in their mother's clan. One-half of them follow their traditional religion. It is based on the worship of local deities. The other half has been converted to Christianity since the 1950s.
 - ▶ **Plains Tiwa:** They live on the flatlands of the Southern bank of the Brahmaputra valley. The vast majority speak Assamese as their mother tongue. Their descent system is patrilineal. Their religion shares many elements with Assamese Hinduism but remains specific.
- They practice Jhum or shifting cultivation, where the land is first cleared of any vegetation that is later set on fire (slash-and-burn). The result is a more fertile soil that is freshly enriched with potash, all the more useful for a bountiful crop.
- The main festivals of the Tiwa tribes are: Three Pisu (Bihu), Borot utsav, Sogra puja, Wanchuwa, Jonbeel Mela, Kabla, Langkhon Puja and Yangli Puja.
- Pig is a staple part of their diet and their culture.

Wanchuwa festival:

- This festival is celebrated by Tiwa tribesmen to mark their good harvest.
- It comes with songs, dances, a bunch of rituals and people clad in their native attires.
- The people of Tiwa tribe associate the bountiful harvest with the higher power from nature. This takes the form of pigs' skulls and bones which act as deities and are preserved through many generations.
- People do plenty of make up in the form of paste made of rice powder. They participate in dance with this make up.
- With bamboo sticks in hand, the people proceed to rhythmically beat the rice powder, and occasionally pause to move around the circle.
- Tiwas pray for a bountiful harvest as well as protection from pests and natural calamities.

3. REMEMBERING MAHARANA PRATAP, TAGORE AND GOKHALE

Context

Nation remembers legendary warrior Maharana Pratap, Rabindranath Tagore and Gopal Krishna Gokhale on their birth anniversaries.

About

Maharana Pratap

- He was a Rajput king of Mewar in Rajasthan area and was famous for his bravery in the region and his fight at Haldighati.
- He was born on May 9, 1540, Pratap was the second son of King Udai Singh-II and Queen Jaiwanta Bai.

Rabindra Nath Tagore

- The 159th birth anniversary of Rabindra Nath Tagore is being celebrated all over West Bengal. A multifaceted personality, his prose, poetry and artwork are brilliant and thought provoking. He enhanced India's pride and richly contributed to the freedom movement.
- He was born on May 7 in the Jorasanko mansion in Calcutta to Debendranath Tagore and Sarada Devi.
- Tagore is also known as Gurudev, Kabiguru and Biswakabi.
- He began writing poetry when he was just eight years old. He released his first collection of poems under the name Bhanusimha, or Sun Lion when he was 16. Soon, he began writing short stories and dramas under his own name. His writings gave rise to new forms of prose and verse which were different from the traditional models based on classical Sanskrit.
- He attended a number of sessions of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta where he composed songs and sang during India's freedom struggle. He wrote India's national anthem, Jana Gana Mana and in 1911, he sang Jana Gana Mana as the opening song for the second day of the Congress Session. It was later adopted as India's National Anthem.
- He also wrote, Amar Sonar Bangla, the national anthem for Bangladesh. The Sri Lankan national anthem was inspired by his work.
- While Rabindra Jayanti is celebrated on May 7 every year, Bengalis observe it on Pochishe Boishakh, the 25th day of the first Bengali month of Boishakh, and which rarely coincides with May 7.
- He was the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913.
- Tagore and the world-renowned scientist Albert Einstein were mutual admirers and also have a picture of them alongside each other. Tagore met Einstein at the latter's home in Germany's Caputh in 1930.
- He passed away on August 7, 1941, in Calcutta.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale

- He was a famous social reformer, freedom fighter, scholar and Mahatma Gandhi's political guru.
- He was born on May 9, 1866 in Ratnagiri, Maharashtra. He was a professor of history and political economy at the Fergusson College, Pune. He resigned from the job to join active politics.
- He was among the most prominent faces in the Indian National Congress (INC) and a strong advocate for constitutional ways of struggle for gaining independence from the Britishers.
- He also served as the President of the INC and was elected to the post in 1905.

- His deep concern for the marginalised section of the society led him to form the **Servants of India Society**, whose members dedicated themselves to lifelong service for the poor and downtrodden. He also worked for the cause of the oppressed in South Africa.
- He persuaded a young Mohandas Gandhi to return to India from South Africa to help the Congress in struggling for India's independence.
- His rival in the INC was **Lokmanya Tilak**. Both the leaders came to represent the moderate and extremist faction in the party.
- His mentor was Justice **G. Ranade** who had started the **Sarvajanik Sabha** Journal with the help of Gokhale.
- He died at the age of 48, on February 19, 1915 in Bombay.



1. GANGA JATARA FESTIVAL

Context

- The entire Chittoor town of Andhra Pradesh and its surrounding villages are gearing up for the famous Ganga Jatara, scheduled to commence from May 14.
- Thousands of people from Andhra Pradesh and neighbouring States of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka are reaching Chittoor town to take part in this festival.

About

What is Ganga Jatara festival?

- It is the annual folk festival of Tirupati in Chittoor town of Andhra Pradesh.
- This festival is to offer prayers to Sri Thathaya Gunta Gangamma, the Gramadevata (the goddess looking after the village) of Tirupati.

Why is it celebrated?

- When Tirupati and surrounding areas were ruled by Palegondulu, harassment on women was enormous.
- During this time, in a village - Avilala, the Goddess Gangamma was born and grew into a most beautiful woman.
- When the Palegondulu wanted to harm Goddess Gangamma, she with her grace and power tried to kill him. Palegondulu, fearing her, hid in a remote place.
- To take him out of hiding, the Gangamma planned "Ganga Jathara" where the people in Tirupathi do vichitra veshadarana and curse Gangamma for a period of 7 days.
- On the seventh day, the Palegondulu came out of hiding and was killed by Goddess Gangamma for the LokaKalyanam (well-being of all people).
- This festival celebrates this killing.

The Celebrations: It is a week-long event which falls on second week of May every year.

- The festival begins with Chatimpu (the official announcement) during midnight of 2nd Tuesday of the month of May by playing musical instruments known as Dappu. Town folk stay away from streets during Chatimpu.
- **Day 1: Bhairagi Vesham** - People used to smear their body with white colour paste (Namam Kommu) and wear a garland made of fruit Rella Kaya. They hold neem leaves with the hand and also tie their waist with neem leaves. They walk to the temple through the city and leave those neem leaves and Rella Kaya garland there at the temple after the darshan of the Goddess.
- **Day 2: Banda Vesham** - On this day devotees use to smear their body with kumkum colour paste and tie a ribbon to the head.

- **Day 3: Thoti Vesham** - On this day devotees used to smear their body with charcoal and wear a garland made out of neem leaves.
- **Day 4: Sunnapu Gandalu** - Devotees smear their body with white colour paste and apply dots with charcoal and carry a pot (Veyyi kalla Dutta) on their head.
- **Day 5: Dora Vesham** - On this day devotees use to smear their body with sandal paste (Chandanam) and wear a garland made out of neem leaves and lemons.
- **Day 6: Mathangi Vesham** - Gangamma who killed Palegadu in Dhora Vesham, consoles Chieftain's wife in Mathangi Vesham.
- **Day 7: Gangamma Jatara** - The last day of the festival is celebrated as Ganga Jatara. During this day, all Gangamma temples in Tirupati are flocked with lakhs of devotees.
 - ▶ People use to visit temple and offer Pongallu and/or Sarees to Gangamma.
 - ▶ Few Devotees use to have darshan of Gangamma by wearing Sapparalu (A special gopuram like object made of bamboo) along with Dappu Vaidyam (a musical instrument).
 - ▶ Ragi Ambali is served to the devotees visiting temples all over the city.
 - ▶ After the midnight, a clay idol of Gangamma (Viswaroopam) is installed in front of the Temple. The portico is smashed into pieces.
 - ▶ Devotees then clamour around to get the clay smithereens, which they consider as sacred, to be either preserved in the 'Puja' room or consumed by mixing it in water. The clay is believed to have curing powers.
 - ▶ By this event the entire seven-day Jatara will come to an end.

2. WORLD HERITAGE DAY

Context

UNESCO World Heritage Day 2019: In the year 1982, the International Council on Monuments and Sites declared 18th April as World Heritage Day to raise awareness about monuments and other sites which form a part of our history and culture.

About

- UNESCO approved of this day in the year 1983 and since then the day is dedicated to informing people about the sites which have achieved the status of heritage, their importance and the problems involved in protecting these sites.
- World heritage day also aims to seek recognition for the people involved in preserving these sites, especially scientists, archaeologists, geographers and engineers.
- World Heritage site is a natural or man-made site, area, or structure recognized as being of outstanding international importance and therefore as a deserving special protection. Sites are nominated to and designated by the World Heritage Convention (an organization of UNESCO).
- In 2019, the theme is **Rural Landscapes** – which is linked to the theme of the 2019 ICOMOS (The International Council on Monuments and Sites Scientific Symposium on Rural heritage to take place in October in Marrakesh, Morocco).

UNESCO's World Heritage mission is to :

- Encourage countries to sign the World Heritage Convention and to ensure the protection of their natural and cultural heritage;
- Encourage States Parties to the Convention to nominate sites within their national territory for inclusion on the World Heritage List;
- Encourage States Parties to establish management plans and set up reporting systems on the state of conservation of their World Heritage sites;

- Help States Parties safeguard World Heritage properties by providing technical assistance and professional training;
- Provide emergency assistance for World Heritage sites in immediate danger;
- Support States Parties' public awareness-building activities for World Heritage conservation;
- Encourage participation of the local population in the preservation of their cultural and natural heritage;
- Encourage international cooperation in the conservation of our world's cultural and natural heritage.

Top 5 UNESCO World Heritage sites :

- **Angkor Wat** : The largest religious temple in the world, Angkor Wat was originally dedicated to Hindu deity Vishnu but then was transformed into a Buddhist temple by the end of the twelfth century.
- **Machu Pichu** : Located in Peru, Machu Pichu is located at 8000 ft with a natural beauty which is unparalleled.
- **Taj Mahal** : Taj Mahal is a mausoleum located in Agra, India which was built by emperor Shah Jahan to his honour his wife Mumtaz Mahal.
- **Sigiriya** : Located near the town of Dambulla in the Central Province, Sri Lanka, the Sigiryan lion rock is a fortress and temple complex build atop a volcanic plateau and is truly a sight to behold.
- **Cinque Terre** : Located in Italy, the name of this site translates to 'Five Lands' and is a part of the rugged Italian coastline.

3. RONGALI BIHU FESTIVAL

Context

Recently, Rongali Bihu, also known as Bohag Bihu, is celebrated, which is the Assamese New Year wherein farmers thank the lord for the successful harvest and welcome the spring season.

About

- The "Bihu" is derived from the Sanskrit word bishu, which means 'to ask for prosperity from the Gods during the harvest season', it is one of the most important festivals in Assam. A time of zest, joy, and feasting, it is celebrated for seven days, wherein each day holds a special significance.
- The first pinnacle phase is called Raati Bihu wherein women gather beneath an ancient tree or an open field, surrounded by burning torches. The participation of men is mostly ceremonial wherein they play Pepa (buffalo hornpipe) or Bholuka Baanhora Toka (a musical instrument made of split bamboo). This is followed by Bali Husori, where Bihu dances are organised by the young.
- The main celebration starts on the day of Goru (cow) Bihu, where livestock is washed with a combination of symbolic herbs like black gram and turmeric paste, whipped litsea salicifolia, and pieces of bottle gourd and brinjal. After the bath, they are decorated with new harnesses and garlands.
- The second day is known as Manuh (human) Bihu where people take a bath with black gram and turmeric paste, wear new clothes, seek blessings from the elders and exchange gifts. A Gamusa (an indispensable and symbolic piece of cloth) is presented to each other as a token of friendship, love, and warmth with each other. A traditional Bihu dance is performed by both men and women, which is the high point of the festival.
- The third day is called Gosai (God's) Bihu. People worship idols after cleaning their homes.
- The rest of the celebrations take place on Kutum Bihu, Senehi Bihu, Chera Bihu and Mela Bihu. Sweet dishes that include pitha (rice cake), laru/ladoo (made of rice and coconut or black sesame seeds), and savoury dishes like khaar and xaak make for an essential part of the festivity.



1. 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF JALLIANWALA BAGH MASSACRE

Context

The cold-blooded massacre at Amritsar's Jallianwala Bagh on April 13, 1919 (Baisakhi day) completed its 100 years in 2019. It marked a defining moment in the history of modern India and made the British presence morally untenable.

About

Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

- It is now a part of the world's archives of state led crime. Troops under the command of Brigadier general (temporary rank) **Reginald Dyer** entered the garden, blocking the main entrance after them, took up position on a raised bank and on Dyer's orders fired on the crowd for some 10 minutes, discharging 1,650 bullets at the peaceful protestors. They stopped only when the ammunition supply was almost exhausted. This event embodied a nation's death-defying dignity in pain and hurt.
- It was an occasion to shed a silent tear for each of the innocent Indians who lost their lives on that **Baisakhi day** and a mournful moment of reflection on colonial cruelty and irrational anger.

Causes of the event:

- The massacre was the result of the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act of 1919, famously known as the Rowlatt Act.
- Rowlatt Act** curbed, in the name of war-time discipline, every conceivable civil liberty. This act enabled stricter control of the press, arrests without warrant, indefinite detention without trial. It empowered the police to search a place and arrest any person they disapproved of without warrant.
- The civilians assembled for a peaceful protest to condemn the arrest and deportation of two national leaders, **Satya Pal** and **Saifuddin Kitchlew**.

Aftermath of the massacre:

- Following the massacre, the **Hunter Commission** was appointed to investigate into the matter. The Commission in 1920 held Dyer guilty for his actions.
- The Bengali poet and Nobellaureate **Rabindranath Tagore** renounced the knighthood that he had received in 1915.
- Gandhi was initially hesitant to act, but he soon began organizing his first large-scale and sustained nonviolent protest (satyagraha) campaign, the non-cooperation movement (1920–22), which thrust him to prominence in the Indian nationalist struggle.

2. KONYAK DANCE

Context

During the Aoling Monyu festival, 4,700 Konyak Naga women danced together to set world record. The programme was organised to welcome the spring with an aim to preserve the cultural heritage of the people and also to promote tourism.

About

In an attempt to set a Guinness World Record for the “Largest Traditional Konyak Dance display”, around 4700 women of Konyak tribe dressed in their traditional attires danced to the beats of traditional instruments and sang a ceremonial song for 5:01 minutes under the theme “Empowering Women for Cultural Heritage”.

What is Konyak?

- Konyak is one of the 16 Naga tribes and people of this community live mainly in the Mon district of Nagaland. It is one of the largest Naga tribe of Nagaland and their head hunting tradition is widely popular and known.
- They are easily distinguishable from other Naga tribes by their pierced ears; and tattoos which they have all over their faces, hands, chests, arms, and calves.

Aoling Monyu festival

- It is a major festival of Konyak Naga tribe celebrated in first week of the April every year. Being on the border of Myanmar, the neighbouring country also witnesses the pomp and gay of the Aoling Monyu festival.
- The festival is divided into three segments – 1st 3 days for weaving, feasting and sacrificing; 4th day for singing, dancing and head hunting; last 2 days for cleansing the house and the community for re-establishment of daily life. It also coincides with the start of Konak New Year. It is basically a harvest festival.

Purpose of this festival:

- To forgive each other so that everyone can work together and welcome the oncoming season of spring.
- Aoling is a time to offer sincere prayers to divine spirits for a good harvest. The people firmly believe in the generosity of the divine spirits who in turn blesses the people and their land.
- People also make small sacrifices of domestic animals for the respective purpose.

Difference between Hornbill festival and Aoling Monyu festival

- The Hornbill festival, which is often cited as festival of all festivals, celebrates the cultures of all the 17 tribes in Nagaland. However, Aoling is celebrated by a single tribe (Konyak) of Nagaland.

3. KOCHI-MUZIRIS BIENNALE

Context

Fourth edition of Asia’s biggest contemporary art festival, the Kochi-Muziris Biennale – a 108-day event in December 2018.

About

More on news

- The exhibition was held at nine venues, eight of which are centred around West Kochi and Mattancherry at the confluence of Arabian Sea with Lake Vembanad, the longest lake in India.
- The theme for the 2018 biennale was “**Possibilities for a Non-Alienated Life,**” with Anita Dube, a contemporary artist, as its curator.
- About 100 artists from over 36 countries are participating in the art show known for its photo exhibitions, film screenings, paintings, installations, art education programs, and workshops.

Kochi-Muziris Biennale

- Inspired by renowned art festivals like the Venice Biennale, the Kochi-Muziris Biennale is the first biennale of India, providing a platform to showcase new artistic practices of the subcontinent and the world.
- The Kochi Biennale Foundation has hosted the festival since 2012 with the support of the state government and a few businesses.

What is the objective of the Biennale?

- To create a new language of cosmopolitanism and modernity that is rooted in the lived and living experience of Kochi.
- To establish itself as a centre for artistic engagement in India by drawing from the rich tradition of public action and public engagement in Kerala.
- To reflect the new confidence of Indian people who are slowly, but surely, building a new society that aims to be liberal, inclusive, egalitarian and democratic.
- To explore the hidden energies latent in India’s past and present artistic traditions and invent a new language of coexistence and cosmopolitanism that celebrates the multiple identities people live with.



1. REGGAE GETS INTO HERITAGE LIST

Context

Reggae music, whose chill, lilting grooves won international fame majorly because of artists like Bob Marley, secured a coveted spot on the United Nations' list of global cultural treasures.

About

- UNESCO, the UN's cultural and scientific agency, added the genre to its collection of "intangible cultural heritage" that originated in **Jamaica**.
- UNESCO noted that while reggae started out as "the voice of the marginalised" it was "now played and embraced by a wide cross-section of society, including various genders, ethnic and religious groups."
- The genre now joins a list of over 300 cultural traditions, including numerous musical ones such as Dominican merengue, Slovakian bagpipe music and Vietnamese xoan singing.
- To mark its inclusion on the list, UNESCO shared a short documentary that examines the history and distinct characteristics of reggae music.
- It is of particular significance that reggae is inextricably related to the religion of Rastafari, which emerged as a direct response to oppression within Jamaican colonial society.
- Its contribution to international discourse on issues of injustice, resistance, love and humanity underscores the dynamics of the element as being at once cerebral, socio-political, sensual and spiritual.

Knowledge base-

India and the UNESCO

- Till now total of 13 Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) elements from India have been inscribed on the UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
- For inclusion of an element in the UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, the state parties are required to submit nomination dossier on the relevant element for evaluation and examination of the UNESCO Committee.
- The Ministry of Culture has appointed the Sangeet Natak Akademi, an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Culture, as nodal office for matters relating to the intangible cultural heritage including for preparation of the nomination dossiers for the Representative List of UNESCO.
- The Ministry of Culture makes regular Schemes as well as organisations make efforts towards preservation, protection and promotion of intangible cultural heritage in the country.
- In addition, the Ministry of Culture implements, since the year 2013-14 also, a scheme titled "Scheme for Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Diverse Cultural Traditions of India" with the aims and objectives of professionally enhancing awareness and interest in Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), safeguarding, promoting and propagating it systematically.

2. 19TH HORNBILL FESTIVAL, NAGALAND

Context

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the 19th Hornbill Festival at Kisama village near state capital Kohima in Nagaland.

About

Hornbill Festival:

- The Hornbill Festival is a celebration held every year from 1 - 10 December in Nagaland.
- It is also called the 'Festival of Festivals'.
- Why: To encourage inter-tribal interaction and to promote culture through colourful performances, crafts, sports, food fairs, games and ceremonies.
- The first festival was held in 2000.
- The festival is named after the Indian hornbill, the large and colourful forest bird which is displayed in the folklore of most of the state's tribes.
- The celebrations and programmes have been scheduled in five districts of the state Kohima, Dimapur, Mokokchung, Phek and Wokha.

Benefits:

- The Hornbill Festival has contributed significantly in enhancing the state's tourism.
- Tourism promoters believe that the Hornbill Festival in Nagaland allows tourists to have an insight into the different tribes of Nagaland.
- It fosters understanding of the rich cultural heritage of the state, its resourceful architecture and its ethnic cuisine.

3. MANIPUR SANGAI FESTIVAL

Context

State of Manipur celebrated its annual "Manipur Sangai" festival

About

Sangai festival

- The festival is named after the State animal, Sangai, the brow-antlered deer found only in Manipur.
- It started in 2010 and has grown over the years into a big platform for Manipur to showcase its rich tradition and culture to the world.
- Every edition of the festival showcases the tourism potential of the state in the field of arts & culture, handloom, handicrafts, indigenous sports, cuisine, music and adventure sports.
- It is labelled as the grandest festival of the State and promotes Manipur as a world class tourism destination.

Various features of festival

Dance

- The State's classical dance form, 'Ras Leela' forms an important part of the dance performances during the festival. It is quite famous all over the world for its distinctiveness from any other dance forms in India.

- Other folk dance performances like the **Kabui Naga dance**, **Bamboo dance**, **Maibi dance**, **Lai Haraoba dance**, **Khamba Thoibi dance** are showcased at the festival.

Handicraft

- The festival brings to light an array of Manipur's best indigenous handlooms and handicrafts products which are otherwise not widely available in the market.
- The themed huts of the variety of tribes at the heritage park represented the living-style of these tribes and exhibit their indigenous products.

Sports

- Indigenous sports were a major highlight of the festival this year.
- Manipur's famous martial arts- **Thang Ta** (a combination Spear & Sword skills), **Yubi-Lakpi** (a game played with greased coconut like rugby), **Mukna Kangjei** (a game that combines hockey and wrestling), and **Sagol Kangjei**- Modern Polo (believed to have evolved in Manipur) all formed part of the festival.
- Adventure sports activities like trekking, white water rafting and parasailing etc. also formed a major part of the festival.

Cuisines

- The festival introduced visitors to the best of the State's cuisines.
- Manipur's popular dishes include **Nga-thongba** (fish curry), **Eromba** (a dish prepared with boiled vegetables and fermented fish), **Ooti** (mustard beans), **Bora** (pakoda), **Paknam** (a baked cake of gram flour mixed with other ingredients), **Singju** (a spicy hot traditional salad), and **Brown-rice Kheer**



1. NATIONAL EDUCATION DAY

Context

The country celebrated the National Education Day on 11th November, 2018, to commemorate the birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

About

National Education Day

- Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was the country's first Education Minister after independence, serving from 1947 to 1958.
- National Education Day aims to spread awareness about the nation's commitment to education.

Azad's contribution towards education

- Maulana Azad emphasised on quality education as he considered schools to be laboratories which produce future citizens of the country.
- He strongly advocated for universal primary education, girl's education, free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14, vocational training and technical education.
- First Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Indian Institute of Science (IISc), School of Planning and Architecture and the University Grants Commission were established in his tenure.
- Major cultural and literary academies such as the Sangeet Natak Academy, Lalit Kala Academy, Sahitya Academy and Indian Council for Cultural Relations were also established under his tenure.
- For his immense contribution, he was posthumously awarded 'Bharat Ratna', India's highest civilian honour, in 1992.

Azad's contribution to freedom struggle

- Prominent political leader of the Indian National Congress and was elected as Congress President in 1923 and 1940.
- Advocated the principles of the non-cooperation movement and became follower of Gandhi and his philosophy.
- Participated in all the major movements of Indian National Congress after 1920.
- Prime negotiator of Indian National Congress with the Cabinet Mission to discuss the terms of Independence.
- Opposed the idea of partition based on religion.
- Published a nationalist weekly "Al-Hilal" in 1912.

2. 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF FORMATION OF AZAD HIND GOVERNMENT

Context

- Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi recently hoisted the National Flag at Red Fort, to commemorate the **75th Anniversary of formation of Azad Hind Government**, formed by **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose**.
- Speaking on the occasion, PM said that Azad Hind government represented the vision laid down by Subhas Chandra Bose, of a strong undivided India.

About

- The Azad Hind Government, **founded on 21st October, 1943 in occupied Singapore**, was inspired by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose who was the leader of Azad Hind Government and also the Head of State of this Provisional Indian Government-in-exile. Revolutionary leader **Rash Behari Bose** was designated as the supreme advisor.
- It supported by the Empire of Japan, Nazi Germany, Italian Social Republic, and their allies.
- The government proclaimed authority over Indian civilian and military personnel in Southeast Asian British colonial territory and prospective authority over Indian territory to fall to the Japanese forces and the Indian National Army during the Japanese thrust towards India during the Second World War.
- However, while it possessed all the nominal requisites of a legitimate government, it lacked large and definite areas of sovereign territory until Japan gave it nominal authority of the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands** in 1943 and the occupation of parts of Manipur and Nagaland.
- Japanese officials made all the decisions, and throughout its existence it was entirely dependent on Japanese support. The islands were re-occupied by the British in 1945.
- Immediately after the formation of the government-in-exile, Azad Hind declared war against the Anglo-American allied forces on the Indo-Burma Front. Its army, the **"Azad Hind Fauj"** (Indian National Army or the INA), fought against the British Indian Army and the allied forces as part of the Imperial Japanese Army in the Imphal-Kohima sector.
- Bose's death was seen as the end to the Azad Hind movement. The Second World War also ended in 1945 with the defeat of the Axis powers.

Significance

- Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was convinced that armed struggle was the only way to achieve independence for India. The role of Azad Hind Fauj or the Indian National Army (INA) had been crucial in leaving behind a much needed impetus to India's struggle for Independence.
- Azad Hind government was actively involved in nation building and had even started its own bank, currency, civil code and stamps.
- According to experts, Netaji laid down the foundation for equal opportunity for women in armed forces, through the formation of **Rani Jhansi Regiment**. Prime Minister in his address said that the government is carrying forward this legacy in true means and reiterated that women will be given equal opportunity for permanent commission in armed forces.
- The existence of the Azad Hind Government gave a greater legitimacy to the independence struggle against the British.

3. M.P.'S ORCHHA MAKES IT TO TENTATIVE LIST OF UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES

Context

The architectural heritage of Orchha town in Madhya Pradesh which depict peculiar style of the Bundela dynasty have been included in UNESCO's tentative list of world heritage sites following a proposal sent by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to the U.N. body (UNESCO) on April 15, 2019 to include the sites in its list.

About Orchha

- Orchha is situated on the banks of the Betwa River. It is located around 80 km away from Tikamgarh district in Madhya Pradesh and 15 km from Jhansi of Uttar Pradesh.
- It was built by King Rudra Pratap Singh of Bundela dynasty in the 16th century A.D. The ancient town is famous for its Chaturbhuj Temple, Orchha fort complex, Raja Mahal among others.
- The Bundela architecture has Mughal influence since the two dynasties were very close. The famous King of Bundela dynasty was Veer Singh Dev who was a close friend of Mughal emperor Jahangir and fought wars as Akbar's aid.
- Orchha is also famous for its two elevated minaret called Saavan and Bhadon and its four palaces — Jahangir Palace, Raj Mahal, Sheesh Mahal and Rai Praveen Mahal — and for its concept of open bungalows, stone work windows, animal statues depicting the culture of Bundelkhand.
- It is the only place in India where Lord Ram is worshipped as a king with a dedicated temple in his name called Sri Ram Raja Mandir.

UNESCO's World Heritage Site list

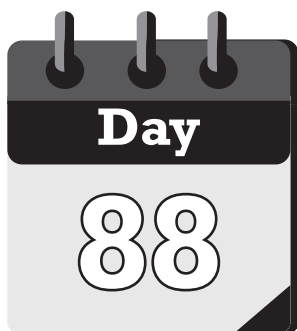
- The list of World Heritage Sites is maintained by the international 'World Heritage Programme' which is administered by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.
- The UNESCO World Heritage Committee is composed of 21 UNESCO member states, elected by the General Assembly.
- A World Heritage Site is a place that is listed by UNESCO for its special cultural or physical significance.

Criteria for inclusion in List of UNESCO World Heritage Sites

Any heritage or any historical site has to be first on the tentative list to be a part of UNESCO's World Heritage sites. Once it makes it to the tentative list, then the proposal is sent to the UNESCO for inclusion in the final List of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, only if the site:

- Contains significant natural habitats for conservation of biological diversity, including threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.
- Associates with events, living traditions, ideas, beliefs, and artistic & literary works of outstanding universal significance.
- Considered as an exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilisation which is living or has disappeared.
- Represents a masterpiece of human creative genius.
- Represents on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals.
- Exhibits an important interchange of human values over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world and depicts developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts or town-planning.
- Contains areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance.

- An archetype of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape that depicts significant stages in human history.
- Showcases traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use, which represents cultural or human interaction with the environment.
- Represents stages of earth's history - record of life, on-going geological processes, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features.



1. DEFENCE PROCUREMENT PROCEDURE (DPP) 2020

Context

The government issued the draft Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) 2020 on Friday, wherein it introduced “leasing” as another category to get defence equipment at affordable rates.

About

- The Defence Procurement Procedure(DPP), as it is commonly referred to, provides the guidelines for all capital acquisitions to be made by the Ministry of Defence including the Armed Forces.
- The DPP was first introduced in 2002 to provide probity, transparency and a structured procedure which would streamline the procurement of military hardware for the Armed Forces in a time bound manner.
- While the DPP has definitely succeeded in introducing probity and transparency and has greatly diminished the influence of shady arms dealers much to the benefit of the system and the Armed forces, the rigidity of the procedure has been detrimental to the acquisition process.
- The DPP has been a work in progress since its initiation in 2002 and though successive iterations in 2006, 2008, 2011, 2013 and 2016 have ‘improved’ upon the initial document; the results have flattered to deceive.

What’s in the new DPP?

- In the new DPP, a new category of “Buy (Global-Manufacture in India)” has been introduced, which is on number five priority-wise.
 - ▶ Foreign vendors’ products that have a minimum of 50 percent indigenous content will come under this new category.
- **Long-term support:** The DPP 2020 also envisions long-term product support -- which would be three to five years after the warranty period is over.
 - ▶ To sustain and support platform/equipment through its operational life-cycle, the service headquarters will ensure that product support requirements for at least 3 to 5 years beyond the warranty period will be procured along with the main equipment.
- **Promoting domestic industries:** To facilitate greater participation of the Indian industry and develop a robust defence industrial base, use of indigenous raw materials, special alloys and software has been incentivised.
- **Price variation clause:** Moreover, a “price variation clause” has been introduced that will be applicable to all cases where the total cost of contract is more than Rs 1,000 crore and the delivery schedule exceeds 60 months.
- **Leasing:** Leasing is introduced as a new category for acquisition, in addition to the existing ‘Buy and Make’ category to substitute huge initial capital outlays with periodical rental payments.

- ▶ Leasing is permitted under two categories i.e lease (Indian), where the lessor is an Indian entity and the owner of the assets, and lease (global), where the lessor is a global entity.

Significance of DPP:

- **Empowering private industries:** The DPP-2020 is aligned with the vision of the government to empower the private industry with the ultimate aim of turning India into a global manufacturing hub.
- **Promoting 'Make in India' initiative:** Moreover, the indigenous content stipulated in various categories of procurement was enhanced to support the "Make in India" initiative.

2. 'GREEN CREDIT SCHEME'

Context

The Forest Advisory Committee has approved the 'Green Credit Scheme' that could allow "forests" to be traded as a commodity. If implemented, it allows the Forest Department to outsource one of its responsibilities of reforestation to non-government agencies.

What is the 'Green Credit Scheme'?

- The proposed 'Green Credit Scheme', as it is called, allows agencies, they could be private companies, village forest communities, to identify land and begin growing plantations.
- After three years, they would be eligible to be considered as compensatory forest land if they met the Forest Department's criteria.
- An industry needing forest land could then approach the agency and pay it for parcels of such forested land, and this would then be transferred to the Forest Department and be recorded as forest land.
- The participating agency will be free to trade its asset, that is a plantation, in parcels, with project proponents who need forest land.
- Once finalised, the scheme will overhaul the compensatory afforestation process by accrediting private or public-private partnership companies to raise plantations near reserved forests which can be bought in lieu of projects involving forest diversion.
- If the company raising the plantation doesn't wish to trade it, it can retain it and harvest the timber once ready.

Understanding the current system:

- Under the Forest Conservation Act 1980, each time forest land is diverted for non-forest purposes like mining or industry, the project developer is supposed to identify land and pay for planting forests over an equal area of non-forest land, or when that is not available, twice the area of degraded forest land.
- It also must pay the State Forest Department the current economic equivalent, called **Net Present Value**, of the forest land.
- This money currently gets collected under the **Compensatory Afforestation Fund**.
- It's then the Forest Department's responsibility to grow appropriate vegetation that, over time, would grow into
- Industries have often complained that they find it hard to acquire appropriate non-forest land, which has to be contiguous to an existing forest.
- Nearly 50,000 crores had been collected by the Centre over decades, but the funds were lying unspent because States were not spending the money on regrowing forests.
- The Supreme Court intervened, a new law came about with rules for how this fund was to be administered.
- About 47,000 crores had been disbursed to States until August, but it has barely led to any rejuvenation of forests.

Concerns:

The proposed scheme has raised some concerns among green activists, as given below:

- **The threat to agricultural land:** The money involved will be discussed between the private agencies raising these plantations and the project proponent. If the economic value of these plantations becomes lucrative, it can pose a serious threat to agricultural land, by diverting the latter for plantations.
- **Uncontrolled circulation of money:** In the scheme, the Compensatory afforestation (CA) money can be exchanged between the private agency and the project proponent. It can lead to a situation where money keeps circulating within a private company.
- **Issues of ambiguity:** The scheme does not provide details about the ownership over the land and where the land will be sourced from.
- **Destruction:** Concerns are also being raised that this would lead to the privatisation of forests and give impetus to their destruction.

Significance of the Scheme:

- **Proper monitoring:** There would be monitoring of plantations, which wasn't done earlier and make it easy for individuals to plant and harvest trees, which earlier was difficult due to the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.
- **Encouraging plantation:** The scheme will encourage plantation by individuals outside the traditional forest area.
- **Meeting environmental goals:** Furthermore, it will help in meeting international commitments such as sustainable development goals and nationally determined contributions.

3. BRAHMOS CRUISE MISSILES

Context

Thailand in talks with India to buy BrahMos cruise missiles.

About

- In possibly the first sale of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles to another country, Thailand.
- As part of the expanding defence cooperation between the two countries, Thailand has made a request for repair and refurbishing their Dornier maritime patrol aircraft.
- Discussions are on to integrate Thailand into India's coastal surveillance radar chain network.
- The inaugural India, Thailand and Singapore trilateral naval exercise announced at Shangri-La dialogue is scheduled to be held later this year.
- The two navies already conduct a Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) and a new bilateral exercise is also in the works apart from the trilateral.
- As members of the Indian Ocean rim association (IORA) and Indian Ocean Naval symposium (IONS), navies of India and Thailand are working closely in the areas of disaster risk management, maritime security safety, information sharing and interoperability.

About BrahMos cruise missiles.

- The BrahMos is a medium-range ramjet supersonic cruise missile that can be launched from submarine, ships, aircraft, or land.
- It is the fastest supersonic cruise missile in the world.
- It is a joint venture between the Russian Federation's NPO Mashinostroyeniya and India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) who together have formed BrahMos Aerospace.

- It is based on the Russian P-800 Oniks cruise missile and other similar sea-skimming Russian cruise missile technology.
- The name BrahMos is a portmanteau formed from the names of two rivers, the Brahmaputra of India and the Moskva of Russia.
- It is the world's fastest anti-ship cruise missile in operation.



1. PROJECT 75 INDIA

Context

Defence Ministry has begun the process to shortlist potential Indian shipyards for the construction of six new-generation conventional stealth submarines for the Indian Navy.

About

More on News

- The **Ministry of Defence** has issued the “**Expression of Interest**” (**EoI**) to shortlist potential **Indian Strategic Partners (SPs)** under the strategic partnership model (SP Model) for the construction of six conventional submarines under **Project 75 India** of the Indian Navy in collaboration with the selected manufacturer.
- Under the SP model, government will also nominate the foreign **original equipment manufacturer (OEM)** under the umbrella of ‘**Make in India**’.
- This is a step towards opening a second production line for diesel electric submarines in India. The first was the procurement of **111 Naval Utility Helicopters (NUH)**.
- Four foreign firms have so far responded to the Indian government’s request for proposal for the project. These are French firm Naval Group, Russia’s Rosoboronexport Rubin Design Bureau, Germany’s ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems and Sweden’s Saab.

Project 75 India (P-75I)

- P75I was first cleared in 2007, but lay dormant until now after undergoing numerous changes.
- The P75I project is part of a 30-year submarine building plan that ends in 2030.
- The project cost is about Rs. 45,000 crore.
- As part of this plan, India was to build 24 submarines — 18 conventional submarines and six nuclear-powered submarines (SSNs) — as an effective deterrent against China and Pakistan.
- This project envisages the construction of six conventional submarines with better sensors and weapons and the Air Independent Propulsion System (AIP).
- The project has been cleared under the strategic partnership model.

Background

- In 1999, the **Cabinet Committee on Security** had approved a ‘**30-Year Plan for Indigenous Submarine Construction**’. It was to develop two production lines on which six submarines would be built each named **Project 75** and **Project 75 (I)** with foreign submarine makers.
- These two projects will replace ageing **Sindhughosh** and **Shishumar** class submarines of Indian Navy, which numbered around 13.

- **INS Kalvari**, the first Scorpene class submarine, was commissioned into the navy in December 2017 under Project-75; the remaining five are at different stages of construction and trials.

Current submarine arsenal of India

- India's current arsenal consists of 14 conventional submarines and two nuclear-powered submarines. Only half of the conventional submarines are operational including the Scorpene.
- India also has two nuclear-powered submarines namely **INS Arihant** (a ballistic missile submarine) and **INS Chakra** leased from Russia.
- India's nuclear submarine arm is based in Visakhapatnam while the diesel electric submarines are primarily based both in Mumbai and Visakhapatnam.

Strategic Partnership (SP) Model

- SP model in Defence sector was approved by Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) in 2017. This was implemented to enable participation of private Indian firms in Make in India in defence. This will also ensure development of a wider skill base and will trigger innovation.
- This model aims to revitalise defence industrial ecosystem, increase efficiencies, facilitate faster and more significant absorption of technology and progressively build indigenous capabilities in the private sector to design, develop and manufacture complex weapon systems for the future needs of the Armed Forces.
- The Indian strategic partner will be the systems integrator by building an extensive ecosystem and will tie-up with foreign manufacturers to cover manufacturing, transfer of technology and assistance in building.

Four segments have been identified for acquisition SP route

- Fighter Aircraft
- Helicopters
- Submarines
- Armoured Fighting Vehicles (AFVs) / Main Battle Tanks (MBTs).

Air-independent propulsion (AIP)

- AIP is any marine propulsion technology that allows a non-nuclear submarine to operate without access to atmospheric oxygen.
- It can augment or replace the diesel-electric propulsion system of non-nuclear vessels.

Significance

In addition to bringing in the latest submarine design and technologies, it would provide a major boost to the indigenous design, construction capability of submarines in India, timely delivery of equipment to Armed forces and reduction in dependence on imports and greater self-reliance in meeting national security objectives.

2. MARITIME INFORMATION SHARING WORKSHOP

Context

The Indian Navy hosted a Maritime Information Sharing Workshop (MISW) under the aegis of the Information Fusion Centre — Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) at Gurugram.

About

More on news

- Over 41 delegates from 29 countries of the IOR and beyond participated in the two-day event.

- The aim was to acquaint participants about IFC-IOR and its information sharing mechanisms and promote sharing of best practices in this field.
- The workshop was meant to enhance coordination and to improve response to the myriad security and safety challenges that IOR faces.
- Themes such as **maritime terrorism, piracy, human and drug trafficking, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief; and the legal perspective of combating** were at the core of the workshop.

Information Fusion Centre –Indian Ocean Region

- It is an initiative of Indian Navy supported by the Government of India.
- It was launched in December 2018 for enhancing maritime safety and security in the Indian Ocean Region.
- It is collocated with **Information Management and Analysis Centre** which is jointly administered by the Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard.
- It has so far established linkages with more than 16 countries and 13 international maritime security agencies.
- The information exchange at the IFC-IOR would be initially undertaken by virtual means, using telephone calls, faxes, emails and video conferencing over internet.
- Subsequently, to enable better interaction, quicker analysis of information and provide timely inputs, the IFC-IOR would host Liaison Officers from partner countries.
- IFC-IOR would also undertake conduct of exercises and training capsules in maritime information collation and sharing.
- The entire mechanism would comprise of ideology supported by following three pillars:-
 - ▶ Confidence and capacity building amongst partner nations, thereby ensuring swift and accurate exchange of information pertaining to maritime security.
 - ▶ Maintaining extensive and continuous linkages to ensure comprehensive MDA of the region thereby achieving transparency of maritime environment.
 - ▶ Use of high tech including state of the art methods and analytic tools to undertake traffic analysis thereby ensuring that any emerging threats and trends are predicted in time.

Significance

- IFC-IOR is established with the vision of strengthening maritime security in the region and beyond, by building a common coherent maritime situation picture and acting as a maritime information hub for the region.
- Establishment of IFC- IOR would ensure that the entire region is benefitted by mutual collaboration and exchange of information and understanding the concerns and threats which are prevalent in the region.

3. HYPERSONIC TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATOR VEHICLE

Context

Recently, India conducted a successful first test flight of the indigenously developed Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle (HSTDV). The only other countries that possess this technology are the USA, Russia and China.

About

More on news

- The vehicle was test launched using the Agni 1 missile platform.
- In the test, a missile with the technology demonstrator vehicle mounted on it is launched.

- This test marked a landmark achievement in airborne ballistics and reusable rockets.
- A successful test could boost the development of a hypersonic cruise missile, the Brahmos II, which is currently under development with Scramjet technology.

Features of HSTDV

- India's HSTDV was test-fired by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) from the Integrated Test Range (ITR).
- HSTDV is an unmanned scramjet demonstration vehicle that can cruise up to a speed of mach 6 (or six times the speed of sound) and rise up to an altitude of 32 km in 20 seconds
- It has a range of uses, including missiles of the future, and energy-efficient, low cost and reusable satellite-launch vehicle.
- The HSTDV cruise vehicle is mounted on a solid rocket motor, which will take it to a required altitude, and once it attains certain mach numbers for speed, the cruise vehicle will be ejected out of the launch vehicle.
- The scramjet engine gets ignited automatically later. Besides its utility for long-range cruise missiles of the future, the dual-use technology will have multiple civilian applications too.
- The key areas of technological emphasis in this project include hypersonic propulsion, wind transmission with minimal drag loss, enhancing aerodynamics, and refining the scramjet engine.
- Various electro-optical tracking sensors, telemetry stations and radars tracked the vehicle through its course.

Significance

- It can be used to launch satellites at low cost & will help add to India's ballistic missile defence capabilities. This test puts India in an elite club of nations definitely
- Security-wise, a hypersonic cruise missile can be key in taking out hostile airborne attacks, giving the Air Force an edge in terms of launching offenses of their own.
- It is also a technological feat that can be incorporated into other areas such as sweeping surveillance tasks, all the while being energy efficient in operation.



1. ARMY INVOKES EMERGENCY POWERS FOR MISSILE DEAL

Context

- Recently, Defence Ministry has sanctioned a set of new financial powers for emergency procurements to the Indian Armed Forces to ensure operational preparedness. They have been given a free hand to procure equipment worth up to Rs. 300 crore on a priority basis.
- According to it, the Army is in the process of procuring Spike-LR Anti-Tank Missiles from Israel and Igla-S Very Short Range Air Defence Systems (VSHORAD) from Russia. Entirely new systems not in use can also be procured under the new powers.

About

- The Vice Chiefs of the Army, Navy and the Indian Air Force were granted additional financial powers to carry out specific procurement.
- In the wake of the Pulwama terror attack, the government has granted emergency powers to the Army, Navy and the Indian Air Force to procure critical weapons and equipment (from a single vendor) to help them effectively deal with any hostilities along the border with Pakistan.
- Deliveries under the emergency route have to be completed in three to six months.
- Relaxations in certain rules were made to cut delays in military purchase.
- For the procurement under the emergency orders, the forces need not even take concurrence of the Integrated Financial Advisor from the defence finance department.

2. TITLE: RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS OF DRDO

Context

- Recently, **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** test fired **guided bomb** from Sukhoi combat jet and **AKASH-MK-1S missile**.
- Parallely, **Indian Army along with Indian Navy and Indian Air Force (IAF)** also test fired the aerial version of the **supersonic BrahMos cruise missile** from a Sukhoi jet at the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

About

Guided bomb from Sukhoi combat jet

- Guided bombs** are meant to precisely hit a designated target to minimize collateral damage.
- DRDO test fired an indigenously-developed **500 kg class Inertial Guided Bomb from Su-30 MKI Aircraft** from the **Pokhran test range in Rajasthan**.

- It achieved the desired range and hit the target with high precision.
- It is capable of carrying different warheads.
- The weapon being developed is similar to the **SPICE** (Smart, Precise Impact, Cost-Effective), an Israel made bomb which was used by the Indian Air Force to hit terror camps in Pakistan's Balakot on February 26, 2019.

Supersonic BrahMos cruise missile

- A BrahMos Supersonic Cruise Missile was successfully test-fired by a Unit of Eastern Command, Indian Army from Car Nicobar Islands as part of joint training by Indian Army, Indian Navy and Indian Air Force, demonstrating high standards of Inter Service Synergy.
- The Combat missile was test fired on a specially designed target chosen at a range of 270 Kms, thus validating deep penetration capability by the supersonic cruise missile and accurate engagement of targets in depth.
- The 2.5 tonne air-to-surface missile has a range of around 300 km, and this step will significantly enhance the IAF's combat capability.
- The BrahMos cruise missile travels at a speed of Mach 2.8, nearly three times that of sound.
- This missile has by now established itself as a major 'Force Multiplier' in modern day battlefield with impeccable multi role and multi-platform launch capabilities furthering the confidence amongst Indian troops.
- The missile is a derivative of the Russian anti-ship cruise missile and it is thought to be one of the world's fastest cruise missiles currently in operational use. The missile was inducted into the Army in 2007.

AKASH-MK-1S Missile

- DRDO has successfully test fired AKASH-MK-1S missile with a strike range of 25 km and capability to carry warhead of 60 kg from Odisha.
- The supersonic missile has a range up to the altitude of 18,000 metres.
- The missile uses high-energy solid propellant for the booster and ramjet-rocket propulsion for the sustainer phase. The missile system is said to be highly mobile.
- The medium range multi-target engagement capable missile was developed as part of the Integrated Guided-Missile Development Programme (IGMDP) other than Nag, Agni, Trishul, and Prithvi missiles.
- AKASH MK-1S is an upgrade of existing AKASH missile with indigenous Seeker.
- It is a surface to air missile which can neutralize advanced aerial targets.
- The Akash weapon system has combination of both command guidance and active terminal seeker guidance.
- Seeker and guidance performance have been consistently established in both the missions.
- The missile is guided by a phased array fire control radar called 'Rajendra' which is termed as Battery Level Radar (BLR) with a tracking range of about 60 km.
- The Akash-MK-1S is capable of striking down enemy fighter jets and drones very effectively and accurately.

Way Ahead

- DRDO is also reportedly developing two such glide bombs named - **Garuthmaa** and **Garuda**.
- **Garuthmaa** is the winged version with a range of 100 km while **Garuda** is the non-winged version with a range of 30 km.
- DRDO is also developing a **Smart Anti Airfield Weapon** (SAAW) which can be used to damage enemy airfields during war.
- It had been bogged in controversies with a Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report in 2017 stating that 30% of the missiles failed when tested.

- The Army too had said in 2017 that the missile did not meet its operational requirements due to higher reaction time. India is slowly plugging the holes in its air defence elements by developing the advanced surface-to-air missile named MRSAM — Medium Range Surface to Air Missile in collaboration with Israel.
- Besides that, five regiments of the renowned S-400 air defence system are under procurement from Russia.

3. INS VELA

Context

- Recently, the Indian Navy's fourth Scorpene-class submarine Vela, constructed by the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL), was launched at the Kanhoji Angre Wet Basin of MDL.
- The submarine was towed to the Mumbai Port Trust for separation from the pontoon after which she will undergo rigorous trials and tests, both at the harbour and at sea before delivery to the Navy.

About

Scorpene Class Submarine:

- These are diesel-electric attack submarines jointly developed by the French company - Naval Group (formerly Direction des Constructions Navales (DCNS)) and the Spanish company - Navantia.
- These submarines can undertake multifarious tasks typically undertaken by any modern submarine which include anti-surface as well as anti-submarine warfare.
- They feature diesel propulsion and additional Air-Independent Propulsion (AIP).
- AIP is a marine propulsion technology that allows a non-nuclear submarine to operate without access to atmospheric oxygen (by surfacing or using a snorkel).
- The system of AIP fitted in this class of submarines is a modified version of nuclear propulsion system with heat being generated by ethanol and oxygen. The combustion of the ethanol and stored oxygen, at a pressure of 60 atm, generates steam which powers a conventional turbine power plant.

INS Vela:

- It is the fourth Scorpene class submarine being built under the project 75I by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd through transfer of technology.
- This involves appropriate technical support by the Naval Group to Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd in the field of construction, integration and tests of the submarines in India which is achieved through transfer of technical data package to MDL through information system as well as on job training to MDL's personnel on critical technologies.
- Leveraging the experience and the transfer-of-technology of the Scorpene project, with enhanced and upgraded infrastructure, MDL, is ready for undertaking construction of the future submarines.
- The AIP fitted in these submarines enables them to operate for more than 21 days under water, depending on variables such as speed.
- The complete list of the submarines of this class are:
 - ▶ INS Kalvari - Active
 - ▶ INS Khanderi – Sea trials
 - ▶ INS Karanj – Sea trials
 - ▶ INS Vela – Sea trials
 - ▶ INS Vagir – Under construction
 - ▶ INS Vagsheer – Under construction

INS Vela (S40):

- It was the lead ship of four diesel-electric Vela-class submarines of the Indian Navy. These Vela-class submarines of the Indian Navy were variants of the later Soviet Foxtrot-class submarines.
- The submarine was commissioned in 1973. After 37 years of service, the submarine was decommissioned in 2010. The submarine was the oldest operational submarine in the world at the time of her decommissioning.



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