

GS SCORE

An Institute for Civil Services

IAS PRELIMS

 **Target
PT 2019**

**CURRENT
AFFAIRS**

YEARLY COMPILATION

**ART
& CULTURE**

Off. No. 6, 1st Floor, Apsara Arcade, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-5 (Karol Bagh Metro Gate No. 5)

☎ 8448496262, 011-47058253 ✉ info@iasscore.in 📌 /iasscore



www.iasscore.in

GS SCORE

An Institute for Civil Services

IAS 2019

ALL INDIA MOCK TEST OMR Based

Get real time feel of
Civil Services Prelims Examination
at the TEST CENTRE in your City

Across 20 Cities

Test will be conducted in following cities:

1. Allahabad	5. Bhubaneswar	9. Delhi	13. Jammu
2. Ahmedabad	6. Chandigarh	10. Lucknow	14. Kolkata
3. Bengaluru	7. Chennai	11. Hyderabad	15. North Mumbai
4. Bhopal	8. Coimbatore	12. Jaipur	16. South Mumbai

Mock Test-1 Mock Test-2 Mock Test-3 Mock Test-4 Mock Test-5

24 MARCH

7 APRIL

28 APRIL

12 MAY

19 MAY

PAPER - 1: 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

PAPER - 2: 12:00 Noon - 2:00 PM

₹ 400/- Per Mock Test

Online Registration open at
www.iasscore.in

Registration for each
Mock Test
will CLOSE 10 DAYS BEFORE
the Test Date

Off. No. 6, 1st Floor, Apsara Arcade, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005 (Karol Bagh Metro Gate No. 5)

For More Details, Call Now: **011 - 47058253, 8448496262**

Contents

1. MUSIC, DANCE & DRAMA..... 6	
○ India's First Music Museum..... 6	○ Prayagraj Kumbha Mela 2019.....31
○ Classical Music of India..... 7	○ Kuthiyottam Ritual.....32
○ Kamsale Dance..... 8	○ Mahamastakabhisheka.....33
○ Chhau Dance..... 9	○ Dwijing Festival.....34
○ Kathak Dance..... 9	○ Nongkrem Dance Festival.....34
○ Classical Dances of India.....10	○ Bathukamma Festival.....35
2. ARCHITECTURE & SCULPTURE 13	○ Khajuraho Dance Festival.....35
○ Badshahi Ashoorkhana.....13	○ Chithirai Festival.....36
○ Khirki Mosque.....13	○ National Banana Festival.....36
○ Bababudan Dargah.....14	○ Chardham Yatra.....37
○ Bagh-e-Naya Qila.....15	○ Makaravilakku Festival.....38
○ Khajuraho Temple.....16	○ Harvest Festivals around India.....38
○ Konark Sun Temple.....16	○ Pakke Hornbill Fest as 'state festival'.....38
○ Sri Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple.....17	○ Sangai Tourism Festival.....39
○ Kataraj Dham.....17	○ Behdiengkhlam Festival.....39
○ Kartarpur Corridor.....18	○ Cherry Blossom Festival.....40
○ Rani-ki-Vav.....18	○ Hornbill Festival.....40
○ Buddhist site museum at Lalitgiri in Odisha.....19	○ Ambubachi Mela.....41
○ Monuments of National Importance.....19	6. INSTITUTIONS & CONFERENCES 43
○ World Capital of Architecture.....20	○ Sangeet Natak Akademi.....43
○ Panj Tirath Hindu religious site declared as national heritage.....20	○ Lalit Kala Akademi.....44
3. PAINTINGS & OTHER ART FORMS ... 22	○ Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).....44
○ Mithila Paintings.....22	○ International Buddhist Conference.....45
○ Thanjavur Paintings.....22	○ International conference on Guru Padmasambhava.....45
○ Bagru hand-block printing.....23	○ 11 th World Hindi Conference.....45
○ Kalamkari Art.....24	○ 17 th World Sanskrit Conference.....46
○ Tholu Bommalata.....25	○ 42 nd Session of World Heritage Committee (WHC).....47
○ Dance Panel on Silappathikaram.....25	7. HISTORICAL EVENTS 48
○ Pochampally Sarees.....26	○ Pietermaritzburg Station Incident.....48
4. LANGUAGE & LITERATURE 27	○ Azad Hind Government.....48
○ Walmiki and Malhar: 2 unknown languages discovered.....27	○ Battle of Haifa.....49
○ Classical Sanskrit Literature.....27	8. PERSONALITIES 50
5. RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY & FESTIVALS .. 28	○ Ramanuja.....50
○ Buddhism.....28	○ Sant Kabir.....50
○ Vishishtadvaita (Qualified Non-dualism).....28	○ Tansen.....51
○ Sadharan Brahma Samaj.....29	○ Guru Ravidas.....51
	○ Swami Vivekananda.....52
	○ Pingali Venkayya.....52

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Sir Chhotu Ram53 ◦ Sri Satguru Ram Singhji53 <p>9. SCHEMES & INITIATIVES..... 54</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Swadesh Darshan Scheme.....54 ◦ Sanskriti Kumbh.....55 ◦ Bhasha Sangam Program.....55 ◦ Paryatan Parv 2018.....56 ◦ National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM).....57 ◦ PRASAD Scheme.....57 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ National Culture Fund58 <p>10.MISCELLANEOUS 59</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ GI tag for Telangana’s Adilabad dokra, Warangal Dhurries.....59 ◦ UNESCO’s List of Intangible Cultural Heritage...60 ◦ UNESCO Global Geopark Network Status60 ◦ World Heritage Day.....61 ◦ Kambala.....62
--	--



IAS 2019

PRELIMS TEST SERIES

**BATCH
9**

PT MAXIMA

Total **55 Tests** Starts: **11 MARCH**

**BATCH
10**

FULL MOCK

Total **15 Tests** Starts: **24 MARCH**

**BATCH
11**

**SECTIONAL
+ MOCK**

Total **31 Tests** Starts: **25 MARCH**

Music, Dance & Drama

1

India's First Music Museum

CONTEXT: The country's first music museum will be set up with assistance from the Central government in Thiruvaiyaru, Tamil Nadu, the birth place of Saint Tyagaraja, one of the Trinities of Carnatic music.

Carnatic Music:

- It is a system of music **commonly associated with South India**, including the modern Indian states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu as well as Sri Lanka.
- The basic elements are **śruti** (the relative musical pitch), **swara** (the musical sound of a single note), **rāga** (the mode or melodic formulæ), and **tala** (the rhythmic cycles).
- It is usually performed by a small ensemble of musicians, consisting of a **principal performer** (usually a vocalist), a **melodic accompaniment** (usually a violin), a rhythm accompaniment (usually an mridangam), and a **tambura**, which acts as a drone throughout the performance.
- **Other typical instruments** used in performances may include the **ghatam, kanjira, morsing, venu flute, veena, and chitraveena**.
- The **main emphasis in Carnatic music is on vocal music**; most compositions are written to be sung, and even when played on instruments, they are meant to be performed in **gayaki (singing) style**.

Trinities of Carnatic Music

- **Saint Tyagaraja:**
 - ▶ Saint Tyagaraja was a renowned **composer of Carnatic music**.
 - ▶ He has composed thousands of devotional compositions, **mostly in Telugu in the praise of Lord Rama**, many of which remain popular today.
 - ▶ He saw the reigns of four kings of **Maratha dynasty** — Tulaja II (1763-1787), Amarasimha (1787-1798), Serfoji II (1798-1832) and Sivaji II (1832-1855), **but he served none of them**.
- **Saint Muthuswami Dikshitar:**
 - ▶ Saint Muthuswami Dikshitar was a South Indian poet and composer.
 - ▶ His compositions are noted for their **elaborate and poetic descriptions of Hindu gods and temples** and for capturing the essence of the raga forms through the **vainika (veena) style that emphasises gamakas**.
 - ▶ His compositions are **predominantly in Sanskrit** and he has also composed some of his Kritis in **ManiPravalam** (a mixture of Sanskrit and Tamil).

- **Saint Syama Sastri:**

- ▶ Saint Syama Sastri was a musician and composer of Carnatic music and **was the oldest among the Trinity of Carnatic music.**
- ▶ Even though he did not compose so many Kritis, his compositions are still well known due to the literary, **melodic and rhythmic proficiency observed in them.**
- ▶ **He composed in a more formal** form of Telugu which borrows heavily from Sanskrit and there are also a number of Kritis in Tamil attributed to him.
- ▶ Most of his works propitiate the **goddess Kamakshi.**

2 Classical Music of India

- **Carnatic Music** : It is a system of music commonly associated with the southern part of the Indian subcontinent, with its area roughly confined to five modern states of India: Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Telangana and Tamil Nadu.
- **Hindustani Music**: It is the **traditional music of northern regions** of the Indian subcontinent. It is also called North Indian classical music or Sastriya Sangeet. Its origins date from the 12th century CE, when it diverged from Carnatic music.

Difference between Carnatic and Hindustani Music

CARNATIC MUSIC	HINDUSTANI MUSIC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Carnatic is comparatively pure and was developed in 15th 16th century during Bhakti movement and also get boost in 19th -20th century. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Origin of Hindustani music is earlier than Carnatic music. It synthesizes with Vedic chants, Islamic traditions and Persian style.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ A song composed in the Carnatic style necessarily comprises of a Pallavi, Anupallavi and one or two or more Charanas. Each of these parts of the song. ◦ Carnatic music does not adhere to Time or Samay concepts and instead of Thaats, Carnatic music follows the Melakarta concept. Carnatic music has 72 raga- melakarta. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ More importance is given to the Rāga. There are six principle ragas in Hindustani music.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ A Carnatic music has no such freedom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Artists given freedom to improvise hence variation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ main emphasis in Carnatic music is on vocal music; most compositions are written to be sung, and even when played on instruments, they are meant to be performed in a singing style (known as Gayaki). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Major vocal forms or styles associated with Hindustani classical music are dhrupad, khyal, and tarana. Other are Tappa, Thumri, Ghazal.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Carnatic music tends to be more rhythmically intensive and structured than Hindustani music. Examples of this are the logical classification of ragas into melakarta. ◦ Use of fixed compositions similar to Western classical music. Carnatic raga elaborations are generally much faster in tempo and shorter than their equivalents in Hindustani music. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Improvisation is of central importance to Hindustani music, and each gharana (school tradition) has developed its own techniques. ◦ At its core, it starts with a standard composition (bandish), then expands it in a process called vistar. ◦ The improvisation methods have ancient roots, and one of the more common techniques is called Alap.

<p>Purandardas (1480-1564) is considered to be the father of Carnatic music. He is credited with codification of the method of Carnatic music.</p> <p>Venkat Mukhi Swami. He is regarded as the grand theorist of Carnatic music. He also developed "Melankara", the system for classifying south Indian rāga.</p>	<p>Best known vocalists who sing in the Dhrupad style are the members of the Dagar brothers.</p> <p>Amir Khusro, Mohammad shah played an important role.</p>
<p>Mridangam, Veena, Nadaswaram, Tanpura, Mandolin etc are played.</p>	<p>Tabla, shehnai, sarod, Pakhawaj, Sarangi etc are played.</p>

3 Kamsale Dance

- Kamsale is known as **Beesu Kamsale**. It is a unique folk art performed by the devotees of **God Mahadeshwara**.
- It is a **group dance** form performed by the menfolk in villages in the **Mysuru, Mandya, Nanjanagudu, Kollegala and Bengaluru areas in Karnataka**.
- The Kamsale nritya is closely connected to a tradition of **Male Mahadeshwara, or Lord Shiva** worship by the **haal kuruba/Kuruba Gowda community**. Most of the dancers are also drawn from this community.
- The dance is performed to rhythmic and melodious music that is sung in praise of "Lord Male Mahadeshwara" or "Shiva". The dance is a part of a '**diiksha, or oath**' and is taught by teacher or spiritual leader.
- **Kamsale also refers to a brass made musical instrument**. Its origin is traced to the Mythological period.
- The kamsale comprises a **cymbal in one hand and a bronze disc in the other** and is used to produce a rhythmic clang.
- Kamsale is used both as an instrument and also as a prop by the dancers themselves.

Kamsale Instrument:

- It is an 11th century percussion instrument and belongs to the **category of idiophones**.
- It is referred to as **Batlu and Kaital** in ancient texts.
- Kamsale resembles the cymbals, is played in pairs and usually made of bronze and, occasionally, in brass.
- It is derived from the Sanskrit word '**Kamsya tala**' meaning bronze cymbals.
- The pairs are not identical like the jalra.
- One part of the instrument is in the shape of a cup with a broad base while the other is slightly flat.
- The flat piece is known as **gari**, while the cup-like portion is referred to as **battalu**.
- The gari is slightly bigger and thinner.
- The performers feel that **gari denotes the sky** while **battalu signifies the earth**.
- The performers hold the cup-like piece in the left hand while the right hand holds the other piece.
- The kamsale is then struck to produce different sounds.
- There is a projection on the outer surface of one of the pieces through which passes a multi-coloured string.

4 Chhau Dance

- Chhau dance is **indigenous to eastern India**. Chhau dance is also spread to **West Bengal and present-day Jharkhand** during 18th century.
- The word **chhau** is derived from '**chhaya**' (**shadow**), Oriya literary figure **Shrikant Mahapatra** said that chhau is derived from '**chhauni**' (**army camp**) because of the use of chhau dance as an entertainment for army men.
- Its **origin lies in martial arts and contains vigorous movements** that include unusual leaps. The origin of chhau is attributed to Mayurbhanj, a princely state in the 18th century.
- The form derives **content from epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata and some episodes of the Puranas**. Performances begin with the **fight between good and evil** and conclude with the end of evil.
- It has evolved into a variety of forms, viz. **Seraikella chhau** (evolved in the Seraikella district of Jharkhand), **Mayurbhanj chhau** and **Purulia chhau** (evolved in the Purulia district of West Bengal).
- The most **prominent difference among the three subgenres** of Chhau is **regarding the use of masks**. While, the **Seraikela and Purulia subgenres of Chhau use masks** during the dance, the Mayurbhanj Chhau uses none.
- While the **Purulia style** tends to incline towards **traditional postures**, **Mayurbhanj chhau** movements and postures adapt to **modern styles**.
- Mayurbhanj Chhau dance form has a long history. **Originally a tribal dance**, which originated from the forests of **Mayurbhanj, Odisha** in the 18th century, it got the status of a martial art form in the 19th century.
- Slowly & steadily Mayurbhanj Chhau left its martial character and mellowed. Under the Royal Patronage it received proper attention & direction and showed a bright future and utmost perfection as a dance of excellent style in the field of eastern art and culture of India.

5 Kathak Dance

CONTEXT: Google Doodle Celebrates Sitara Devi, the Queen of India's Kathak Dance

Sitara Devi:

- She was described as **Nritya Samrajni**, meaning "**Empress of Dance**" by **Rabindranath Tagore**
- She was conferred with prestigious honours like Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, Padma Shree, Kalidas Samman and the India Lifetime Achievement Award.

Kathak Dance:

- Kathak is the traditional dance form of **Uttar Pradesh**.
- Kathak derives its name from the '**Kathika**' or **storyteller** who recites verses from the epics with music and gestures.
- During the Mughal times, it was **influenced by Islamic features**, especially in **costume and dancing style**.
- Later in the twentieth century, **Lady Leela Sokhey** revived the classical style of Kathak.
- It is commonly identified with the court tradition in North India.
- In the technique, Kathak follows **Vertical lines with no breaks and deflection**. **Footwork is very important** in training of dancers.
- Kathak is based on **Hindustani music**.
- It consists of **different gharanas** like **Lucknow, Jaipur, Raigarh, and Banaras**.
- Jugalbandi** is one of the main features of Kathak recital. It shows a competitive play between dancer and tabla player.
- Gatbhaar is the dance without music or chanting**. Mythological episodes are outlined by this.

- Kathak is accompanied by **dhruwad music**. During the Mughal period, **Taranas, Thumris, and Gazals** were introduced.
- Lachha Maharaj, Shambu Maharaj and Birju Maharaj etc., are the main proponents of Kathak.

6 Classical Dances of India

The Sangeet Natak Akademi recognizes eight classical dances in India – Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Kuchipudi, Odissi, Kathakali, Sattriya, Manipuri and Mohiniyattam.

• Bharatnatyam

- ▶ Bharatnatyam Dance of **Tamil Nadu** is considered to be over 2000 years old. Several texts beginning with **Bharata Muni's Natya Shastra** (200 B.C.E. to 200 C.E.) provide information on this dance form.
- ▶ The **Abhinaya Darpana by Nandikesvara** is one of the main sources of textual material, for the study of the technique and grammar of body movement in Bharatnatyam Dance.
- ▶ On the gopurams of the **Chidambaram temple**, one can see a series of Bharatnatyam poses, frozen in stone as it were, by the sculptor.
- ▶ In many other temples, the **charis and karanas of the dance** are represented in sculpture and one can make a study of the dance form.
- ▶ The origin of this dance is traced to the **solo dance performance of Devadasis(Temple dancers)** in Tamil Nadu.
- ▶ The art became nearly extinct after the decline of devadasi system. The efforts of prominent freedom fighter E.Krishna Iyer revived this dance form.
- ▶ Bharatnatyam dance is known to be **ekaharya**, where one dancer takes on **many roles in a single performance**.
- ▶ At first there is an invocation song. The first dance item is the **alarippu**, literally meaning - **to adorn with flowers**. It is an abstract piece combining pure dance with the recitation of sound syllables.
- ▶ **Jatiswaram is a short pure dance piece** performed to the accompaniment of musical notes of any raga of Carnatic music. Jatiswaram has no sahitya or words.
- ▶ As a **solo dance**, Bharatnatyam leans heavily on the **abhinaya or mime aspect of dance** - the **nritya**, where the dancer **expresses the sahitya through movement** and mime.
- ▶ The performance **ends with a tillana** which has its origin in the **tarana of Hindustani music**. It is a vibrant dance performed to the accompaniment of musical syllables with a few lines of sahitya.

• Kuchipudi

- ▶ Around the third and fourth decade of this century it emerged out of a long **rich tradition of dance-drama** of the same name in **Andhra Pradesh**
- ▶ In 17th century Kuchipudi style of Yakshagaana was **conceived by Siddhendra Yogi** a talented Vaishnava poet.
- ▶ Kuchipudi became prominent under the **patronage of Vijayanagara and Golconda** rulers.
- ▶ The dance style is a **manifestation of earthly elements in the human body**.
- ▶ Dexterity of the dancers in **footwork and their control and balance over** their bodies is shown in techniques like dancing on the rim of a **brass plate and with a pitcher full of water** on the head
- ▶ **Acrobatic dancing** became part of the repertoire. By the middle of this century, Kuchipudi fully crystallized as a separate classical solo dance style.
- ▶ The music that accompanies the dance is according to the **classical school of Carnatic music**
- ▶ Accompanying musicians, besides the vocalist are: a **mridangam player to provide percussion music, a violin or veena player** or both for providing instrumental melodic music, and a cymbal player who usually conducts the orchestra and recites the sollukattus(mnemonic rhythm syllables)

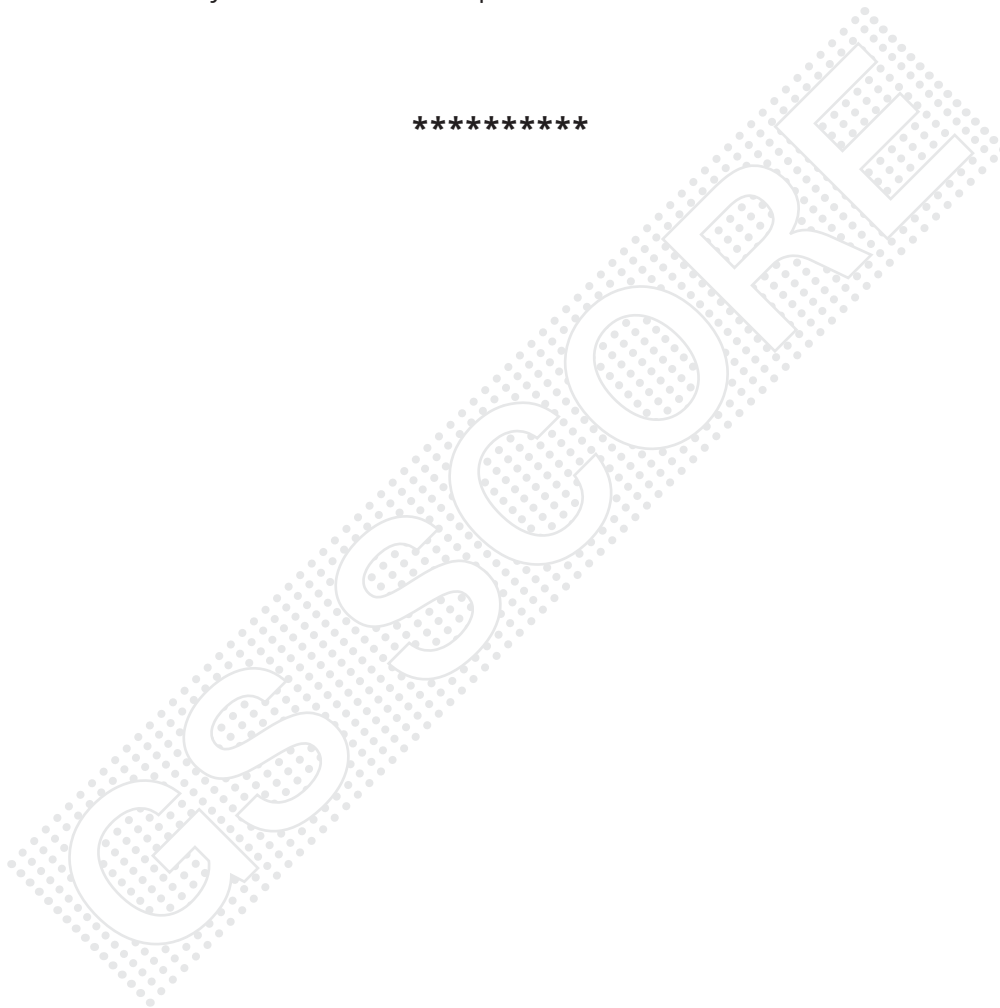
- ▶ Usually performance of Kuchipudi is **broadly based on Lord Krishna** and the tradition of **Vaishnavism** include an invocation, short dance- dharavu, nritya – pure dance and nritya – expressive dance respectively.
- **Odissi**
 - ▶ Odissi derives its name from “**Odhra Magadha**” mentioned in **Natya Shastra**. **Khandariya-Udayagiri caves of Odisha** provide some of the early examples of Odissi dance.
 - ▶ Odissi dance performs Natya combined with an **element of dancing and acting**.
 - ▶ The **three bent form of dance called Tribhanga posture** is an important feature of Odissi. Tribhanga is a **very feminine stance** where the **body is deflected at the neck, torso and the knees**.
 - ▶ **Chowk is a position** imitating a square - a **very masculine stance** with the weight of the body equally balanced.
 - ▶ The **torso movement is very important** and is a unique feature of the Odissi style. With the lower half of the body remaining static, the torso moves from one side to the other along the axis passing through the centre of the upper half of the body
 - ▶ Creative literature inspired the Odissi dancer also and provided the themes for dance. This is especially true of the 12th century **Gita Govinda by Jayadeva**. It is a profound example of the **nayaka-nayika bhava** and surpasses other poems in its poetic and stylistic content. The devotion of the poet for **Krishna** permeates through the work.
 - ▶ The dancer is adorned in elaborate Odiya **silver jewellery** and a special hair-do.
 - ▶ In each performance, a modern **Odissi dancer still reaffirms the faith of the devadasis or maharis where they sought liberation or moksha** through the medium of dance.
- **Kathakali**
 - ▶ It is an art which has evolved from many **social and religious theatrical forms of Kerala**, which existed in the southern region in ancient times. **Chakiarkoothu, Koodiyattam, Krishnattam and Ramanattam** are few of the ritual performing arts of Kerala which have had a direct influence on Kathakali in its form and technique.
 - ▶ The **temple sculptures in Kerala and the frescoes in the Mattancheri temple, Kerala** of approximately the 16th century, dance scenes depicting the square and rectangular basic positions so typical to Kathakali are seen.
 - ▶ For body movements and choreographical patterns, Kathakali is also indebted to the early martial arts of Kerala.
 - ▶ Kathakali is a **blend of dance, music and acting and dramatizes stories**, which are mostly adapted from the Indian epics.
- **Sattriya**
 - ▶ The Sattriya dance form was introduced in the 15th century A.D by the great **Vaishnava saint and reformer of Assam, Mahapurusha Sankaradeva** as a powerful medium for propagation of the Vaishnava faith in **Assam**.
 - ▶ This **neo-Vaishnava treasure of Assamese** dance and drama has been, for centuries, nurtured and preserved with great commitment by the Sattras i.e. **Vaishnava maths or monasteries**.
 - ▶ Sattriya dance tradition is **governed by strictly laid down principles in respect of hastamudras, footworks, aharyas, music etc.**
- **Manipuri**
 - ▶ The dance in Manipur is **associated with rituals and traditional festivals**, there are legendary references to the **dances of Shiva and Parvati and other gods and goddesses** who created the universe.
 - ▶ Manipur dance has a large repertoire, however, the most popular forms are the **Ras, the Sankirtana and the Thang-Ta**. There are **five principal Ras dances of which four are linked with specific seasons**, while the fifth can be presented at any time of the year
 - ▶ **The themes** often depict the pangs of **separation of the gopis and Radha from Krishna**. The parengs or pure dance sequences performed in the Rasleela dances follow the specific rhythmic patterns and body movements.

- ▶ Manipuri dance **incorporates both the tandava and lasya** and ranges **from the most vigorous masculine to the subdued and graceful feminine**. The facial expressions are natural and not exaggerated.
- ▶ The **Ashtapadis of Jayadeva's Geeta Govinda** is very popular and is sung and danced in Manipur with great religious fervour.

- **Mohiniattam**

- ▶ Mohiniyattam literally interpreted as the **dance of 'Mohini', the celestial enchantress of the Hindu mythology**, is the classical solo dance form of Kerala.
- ▶ The **delicate body movements and subtle facial expressions are more feminine** in nature and therefore are ideally suited for performance by women.
- ▶ The hand gestures, 24 in number, are mainly **adopted from Hastalakshana Deepika, a text followed by Kathakali**. Few are also borrowed from NatyaShastra, AbhinayaDarpana and Balarambharatam.

The **foot work is not terse and is rendered softly**. Importance is given to the hand gestures and Mukhabhinaya with subtle facial expressions.



Architecture & Sculpture

1 Badshahi Ashoorkhana

CONTEXT: Telangana government and Aga Khan Trust are working to restore Hyderabad's 17th century Badshahi Ashoorkhana.

Hyderabad's 17th century Badshahi Ashoorkhana:

- The 400-year old Ashoorkhana was built by *Muhammed Quli Qutb Shah*.
- It was a **house of mourning**, where large congregations of **Shia Muslims gathered** in memory of the martyrdom of *Imam Hussain* during *the month of Muharram*.
- The building consists of a *Kaman*, *Naqqar Khana* (where ceremonial drums are beaten), *Niyaz Khana* (where visitors are fed), *Sarai Khana* (place to rest), *Abdar Khana* (drinking water is stored), the *chabutra* (platform) and *a guard room*.
- During the rule of the **Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb**, in 1178 Hijri (about 1764 AD), the **Ashoorkhana was converted into a bandikhana**. For 80 years, it was used as a stable where horses were kept, before it was **restored as a place of worship by the then mutawalli Mir Nawazish Ali Khan**.
- The **eight wooden pillars** were reconstructed and the alams were reinstalled. During this time, the **main entrance, Bab-e-Faiz-e-Imam-e-Alamiyan**, was also constructed.

Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah

- He was the **fifth sultan of the Qutb Shahi dynasty of Golkonda** who ascended to the throne in 1580.
- **He founded the city of Hyderabad** and built its architectural centerpiece, the *Charminar*. He also built **Charkaman archways**.
- He is **a contemporary of Tulsidas, Mirabai and Surdas**. His poetry is bound to earth and revels in the universality of love and mystic experiences.
- During his reign, *Jean Baptiste Tavernier* visited and wrote about walking into the **Qutb Shahi tombs complex** where carpets were laid out and whoever walked in was served pulao.

2 Khirki Mosque

CONTEXT: Archaeological Survey of India (Delhi Circle) of has discovered a hoard of 254 Copper Coins in the premises of Khirki Mosque during the course of conservation of the monument.

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), under the Ministry of Culture, is the premier organization for the archaeological researches and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation. It was set up in 1861 by Sir Alexander Cunningham w/help of then Viceroy Canning with primary object of surveying antiquarian remains in this country & their study.

Khirki Mosque:

- This mosque lies on the southern periphery of the village Khirki, New Delhi.
- The mosque was built by *Khan-i-Jahan Junan Shah*, the *Prime Minister of Firoz Shah Tughluq* (1351-88) and is believed to be one of the seven mosques built by him.
- Built with *rubble stone*, the Khirki Mosque is *double-storeyed*.
- The lower storey consists only of a series of basement cells.
- Untidy bastions occupy its four corners, imparting it the look of a fortified building.
- The gateways of three sides, except on the west, are edged by narrowed minarets; the main entrance is from the east.
- **Corresponding with the openings of cells on the lower storey, the upper storey contains holed windows (khirkis), which have given it its present name.**
- The **pillared courtyard is divided into twenty - five squares**, five on each side, each square consisting of nine smaller squares.
- The larger squares, together with the square in the centre of the courtyard, are each covered with a cluster of nine small low domes.
- Among the remaining squares, four on the diagonals are left uncovered to admit light, while the others are covered with flat roofs.
- This ingenious way of covering the courtyard is repeated only in one other mosque erected by the same builder. These two are the only examples of closed mosques in northern India.

3 Bababudan Dargah

CONTEXT: The State government has opposed the demand to declare the Sri Guru Dattatreya Bababudan Swamy Dargah near Chikkamagaluru as an exclusively Hindu place of worship. Accepting the report submitted by an expert committee headed by *Justice Nagamohan Das*, the government has confirmed that the cave shrine will retain its syncretic nature as a dargah venerated by both Hindus and Muslims.

- The controversy erupted in 1975 when the State government decided to transfer the shrine from the Muzrai Department to the wakf board.
- Till then, Bababudangiri had been a pilgrimage centre visited by both Hindus and Muslims.
- Hindus treated it as the abode of *Dattatreya Swamy*, while Muslims considered it the place of *Dada Hayat Mir Qalandar*.
- The terms of reference issued while appointing the committee stated that it would go through the Endowment Commissioner's recommendations on the rituals to be followed at the shrine, submitted to the Supreme Court on March 10, 2010.
- Besides that, the committee would consider the objections to the recommendations and the petitions filed before the government following the apex court's final order, which was pronounced on September 3, 2015.
- The court had directed the government to take a call on the recommendations of the *Endowment Commissioner's recommendations*.
- The committee has maintained that **no rituals based on the Agama tradition** could be allowed in the shrine.

- Any change in the nature of the shrine would be a violation of the ***Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991***.
- On the matter of administration of the shrine, the committee has said that the **government could treat it on the lines of any other religious institution in the State.**

Baba Budan Giri:

- Dattagiri or Baba Budangiri is a **mountain in the Dattagiri Hill Range / Baba Budan Giri Range** of the **Western Ghats** in **the Chikkamagaluru District of Karnataka.**
- There is a shrine of Baba Budangiri, a place of pilgrimage for both Hindus and Muslims.
- Baba Budangiri is known as **birth place of Coffee Plantations in India.**
- Baba Budan Hills are **famous for iron-ore mining.**

4 Bagh-e-Naya Qila

CONTEXT: The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) will use Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) to map the contours of the area around the Bagh-e-Naya Qila excavated garden inside the Golconda Fort. It has roped in the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) to carry out the mapping.

Bagh-e-Naya Qila:

- The Naya Qila garden inside Golconda Fort was **built by successive rulers of the Deccan** and is one of the few **symmetrical gardens** extant.
- There are **strange figures and animals worked out of stone and stucco on the walls** of the outer fort facing the Naya Qila.
- In 2014, when the ASI excavated the area after diverting the water flow, it discovered water channels, settlement tanks, walkways, fountains, gravity pumps, and a host of other garden relics.

Golkonda Fort:

- It was the **capital of the medieval sultanate** of the **Qutb Shahi dynasty** and is situated 11 km (6.8 mi) west of Hyderabad.
- The region is **known for the mines** that have produced some of the world's most famous gems, including the **Koh-i-Noor, the Hope Diamond, Nassak Diamond and the Noor-ul-Ain.**
- **Golkonda Fort** was first built by the **Kakatiya dynasty** as part of their western defenses along the lines of the **Kondapalli Fort.**
- The fort was rebuilt and strengthened by **Rani Rudrama Devi** and her successor **Prataparudra.**
- Later, the fort came under the control of the **Musunuri Nayaks**, who defeated the Tughlaqi army occupying Warangal.
- It was ceded by the Musunuri Kapaya Naidu to the **Bahmani Sultanate** as part of a **treaty in 1364.**
- Bahmani rule gradually weakened during this period, and Sultan Quli formally became independent in 1538, establishing the **Qutb Shahi dynasty based in Golkonda**
- It remained the capital of the Qutb Shahi dynasty until 1590 when the capital was shifted to Hyderabad.
- The fort finally fell into ruin in 1687, after an **eight year long siege leading to its fall at the hands of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.**

Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) Technology:

- Ground-penetrating radar (GPR) is a geophysical method that uses radar pulses to image the subsurface.
- This nondestructive method uses electromagnetic radiation in the microwave band (UHF/VHF frequencies) of the radio spectrum, and detects the reflected signals from subsurface structures.

Applications:

- GPR can have applications in a variety of media, including rock, soil, ice, fresh water, pavements and structures. In the right conditions, practitioners can use GPR to detect subsurface objects, changes in material properties, and voids and cracks.

5 Khajuraho Temple

CONTEXT: The 44th Khajuraho Dance Festival 2018 was held at the temple town in Chhatarpur district, Madhya Pradesh.

- It is a **group of Hindu and Jain Temples in Madhya Pradesh** build by **Chandela Dynasty** between 950 and 1050 AD.
- They are **UNESCO World heritage Site**.
- The temples are famous for their **Nagara-style architectural** symbolism and their erotic sculptures (about 10% of total sculptures).
- The temples at Khajuraho are **made of Sandstone**.
- The **largest temple at Khajuraho is the Kandariya Mahadeva temple** which is attributed to **king Ganda**.
- All the towers or shikhara of temple rise high, upward in curved pyramidal fashion, emphasizing temple's vertical thrust ending in horizontal fluted disc called **Amalaka topped** with **Kalasha or vase**.
- The erotic expression of sculptures in these temples gives equal importance in human experience as a spiritual pursuit, and it is seen as a part of the larger cosmic whole.
- The first recorded mention of the Khajuraho temples is in the accounts of **Abu Rihan al Biruni in AD 1022** and the Arab traveler **Ibn Battuta in AD 1335**.
- The Khajuraho group of temples were built together but were dedicated to two religions, Hinduism and Jainism, suggesting a tradition of acceptance and respect for diverse religious views among Hindus and Jains in the region.

6 Konark Sun Temple

CONTEXT: An aesthetically designed interpretation centre with world-class facilities that showcases the unique architectural features of Kalingan era was recently inaugurated at Sun Temple, Konark. The Indian Oil Foundation has developed the interpretation centre and the tourist facilitation centre at a cost of Rs. 45 crore.

Konark Sun Temple:

- Built in the 13th century, the Konark temple was **conceived as a gigantic chariot of the Sun God, with 12 pairs of exquisitely ornamented wheels pulled by seven horses**.
- The name Konark derives from the combination of the Sanskrit words Kona (corner or angle) and Arka (the sun).

- It was **built by King Narasimhadeva I**, the great ruler of **EasternGanga dynasty**.
- Also called the **Surya Devalaya**, it is a classic illustration of the **Odisha style of Hindu temple architecture**.
- The temple is included in **UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984** for its architectural greatness and also for the sophistication and abundance of sculptural work.
- The temple is perfect blend of Kalinga architecture, heritage, exotic beach and salient natural beauty.
- It is protected under the **National Framework of India by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act (1958)** and its Rules (1959).
- The **Konark** is the **third link of Odisha's Golden Triangle**. The first link is **Jagannath Puri** and the **second link is Bhubaneswar** (Capital city of Odisha).
- This temple was **also known as 'Black Pagoda' due to its dark color and used as a navigational landmark by ancient sailors to Odisha**. Similarly, the **Jagannath Temple in Puri** was called the **"White Pagoda"**.
- It remains a major pilgrimage site for Hindus, who gather here every year for the **Chandrabhaga Mela** around the month of February.

7 Sri Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple

CONTEXT: The Chithirai festival is celebrated every year at the **Meenakshi Temple in Madurai**

- It is historic Hindu temple located on **southern bank of Vaigai River** in temple city of **Madurai, Tamil Nadu**.
- It is dedicated to Meenakshi, a form of Parvati, and her consort, Sundareswar, a form of Shiva.
- It was built during reign of **Pandyas**.
- It houses 14 gopurams (gateway towers), ranging from 45–50m in height and tallest is southern tower, 51.9 metres high.
- It also has two golden sculptured vimanas, shrines over garbhagrihas (sanctums) of main deities.
- The Sri Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple in Madurai (Tamil Nadu) was adjudged as the **cleanest iconic place** in country under **Swachhta Hi Seva (cleanliness is service) programme** in 2017.

8 Katas Raj Dham

CONTEXT: Going ahead with a people-oriented diplomacy, Pakistan has issued a large number of visas for Indian pilgrims who are expected to visit the famed Shiva temple at Katas Raj Dham, near the city of Lahore.

Katas Raj Complex:

- The Katas Raj Temples also known as **Qila Katas** is believed to be derived from the Sanskrit word **kataksha, meaning "tearful eyes."**
- The temple complex **consisting of seven shrines located around the Katas Lake** is considered sacred by pilgrims of multiple faiths.
- The complex is located in the **Potohar Plateau region of Pakistan's Punjab province**.
- The temples are located near the town of **Kallar Kahar**.
- The temples' pond is said in the Puranas to have been created from the teardrops of Shiva, after he wandered the Earth inconsolable after the death of his wife Sati.
- Apart from the temples, the area is **renowned for its Buddhist remains and architecture**.

- Pakistan had earlier granted 3,800 visas for **Sikh pilgrims visiting Nankana Sahib Gurdwara** in Pakistan's Punjab for the celebration of the 549th birth anniversary of the **founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak**.
- It had also issued 220 visas for the **Shadani Darbar temple in Sukkur** where a centuries-old festival is continuing.

9

Kartarpur Corridor

CONTEXT: Pakistan formally inaugurated the project for building the corridor that will allow Sikh pilgrims to visit the holy temple at Kartarpur across the border.

- It is a road link that will connect India's border district of Gurdaspur with historic **Gurudwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan**.
- Its purpose is **to let Sikh pilgrims visit holy shrine without visa and to help them walk across and come back without having to secure visa**.
- Indian side of corridor will start from **Dera Baba Nanak in Gurdaspur district** and extends upto International border between India and Pakistan.
- The corridor will be developed by **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** and will be funded by the Union Government.
- The project corridor is 4 lanes with service road and will encompass all other appropriate amenities needed by pilgrims while visiting the Gurudwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan.
- It will help to boost tourism and people to people contact between both countries as more pilgrims will visit holy shrine throughout the year between two countries.

Gurudwara Darbar Sahib:

- It is **16th century Gurudwara located on the banks of the river Ravi** in Shakargarh in Narowal district of Punjab province of Pakistan.
- It is located about 3 to 4km from Indo-Pak border in Pakistan in Punjab.
- This gurudwara was established by the first Sikh Guru in 1522.

It is important for Sikhs as Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism and its first guru had assembled Sikh community and lived for 18 years until his death in 1539.

10

Rani-ki-Vav

CONTEXT: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had released a new lavender Rs. 100 currency note. The banknote highlights the rich and diverse cultural heritage of India as it prominently displays a photograph of 'Rani-ki-vav' (The Queen's Stepwell), an 11th century architectural wonder.

Rani- ki- vav:

- It is an intricately constructed **stepwell situated in Patan, Gujarat**.
- The stepwell is located **on the banks of Saraswati River**.
- It was built by **Queen Udayamati of the Solanki Dynasty in the 11th-century as a memorial to her husband King Bhima I**.
- Rani Ki Vav was built in the complex **'Maru-Gurjara' architectural style with an inverted temple and seven levels of stairs** and holds more than **500 principal sculptures**.
- It **highlights the sanctity of water** as it is designed as an inverted temple under the earth's surface.

- The central theme is the ***Dasavataras, or ten incarnations of Vishnu, including Buddha***. The avatars are accompanied by sadhus, Brahmins, and apsaras (celestial dancers).
- It was added to the **list of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites on June 22, 2014**.
- The site bagged the title of ***the 'Cleanest Iconic Place' in India at the Indian Sanitation Conference 2016***.

Facts about the new Rs. 100 Currency Note:

- The Rs 100 banknote highlights the rich and diverse cultural heritage of India as it prominently displays a photograph of ***'Rani-ki-vav' (The Queen's Stepwell)***.
- This is the **first Indian Currency Note made of entirely domestic materials**.
- This note is designed in India, printed on currency paper made in India.
- The base colour of the note is Lavender.
- The note has other designs, geometric patterns aligning with the overall colour scheme, both at the obverse and reverse.
- The previous green coloured Rs 100 note carries an image of ***Mount Kanchenjunga, the third highest peak in the world***.

11 Buddhist site museum at Lalitgiri in Odisha

CONTEXT: Buddhist site museum has been inaugurated at ***Lalitgiri in Odisha***. Excavations at Lalitgiri have yielded ancient seals and inscriptions.

- Located in ***Cuttack district***, it will be the ***third site museum of the Bhubaneswar*** circle of the Archaeological Survey of India after ***Ratnagiri and Konrak***.

Lalitgiri:

- It is a **major Buddhist complex** in the Indian state of Odisha comprising major stupas, ***'esoteric' Buddha images, and monasteries (viharas)***, one of the oldest sites in the region.
- Together with the ***Ratnagiri and Udayagiri sites, Lalitagiri is part of Puspagiri University*** located on top of hills of the same names. The three complexes are known as the ***"Diamond Triangle"***. **Tantric Buddhism was practiced at this site.**
- Excavations at Lalitgiri have yielded the remains of four monasteries, showing cultural continuity **from the post-Mauryan period till the 13th century CE**. The centre of attraction is a relic casket containing corporal remains found inside the ***Mahastupta***.
- ***Location:*** It is hemmed between the ***Parabhadi and Landa sandstone hills*** in the standalone Assian hill range. It is situated in the ***Mahanga Tahsil in Cuttack district***.

12 Monuments of National Importance

CONTEXT: Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) it has added six structures to the list of monuments of national importance, taking the total number to **3,693**.

Monuments of national importance declared in 2018:

- With 506 monuments under its belt, Karnataka continues to top the list in South India, followed by Tamil Nadu (413). Nationally too, Karnataka is in the second place after Uttar Pradesh, which has 745 such monuments.
- The six monuments declared as Monuments of national importance in 2018 are:
 - ***Old High Court Building*** in Nagpur, Maharashtra.

- ▶ **Haveli of Agha Khan** in Agra.
- ▶ **Haveli of Hathi Khana** in Agra.
- ▶ **Neemrana Baori** in Rajasthan's Alwar district.
- ▶ Group of Temples at **Ranipur Jharail** in Odisha's Bolangir district.
- ▶ **Vishnu Temple in Kotali**, Pithoragarh district, Uttarkhand.

Ancient Monument:

- ▶ According to the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958**, any structure, sculpture, inscription, etc., which is in existence for not less than 100 years is termed ancient.

13 World Capital of Architecture

CONTEXT: Rio de Janeiro has been recognised as '**World Capital of Architecture for 2020** by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

- Rio de Janeiro will be hosting the World Congress of the International Union of Architects (UIA) in July 2020.
- The theme of the 2020 World Congress of the International Union of Architects is "**All the worlds. Just one world**".

World Capital of Architecture:

- The World Capital of Architecture initiative underscores the **common commitment of UNESCO and the UIA to preserve architectural heritage in the urban context**.
- UNESCO designates the World Capital of Architecture as per the partnership agreement with the UIA.
- The **World Capital of Architecture also hosts the UIA's World Congress**, an event that takes place every three years.
- The World Capital of Architecture aims to become an international forum for debates about pressing global challenges from the perspectives of culture, cultural heritage, urban planning and architecture.

International Union of Architects (UIA):

- It is a non-governmental organisation recognized by UNESCO as the only architectural union operating at an international level.
- It was founded in **Lausanne, Switzerland in 1948** to unite the architects of the world through a federation of their national organizations.

14 Panj Tirath Hindu religious site declared as national heritage

CONTEXT: The provincial **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government** in northwest Pakistan has declared the ancient Hindu religious site of **Panj Tirath in Peshawar** as national heritage.

- The government also announced a fine of up to Rs. 2 million and five years' imprisonment for anyone found guilty of damaging the historic site.

Panj Tirath:

- Panj Tirath is an over 1,000 years old archaeological site and is situated at Hashtnagri.

- Panj Tirath, which got its name from the **five pools of water present there, also contains a temple and a lawn with date palm trees**. The name can be recognized as ***Pancha (means five) Theertha (holy water) from Hindu scripts.***
- It is believed that **Pandu, a mythical king in the Mahabharata, belonged to this area and Hindus used to come to these pools for bathing during the month of Karteek** and worship for two days under the trees.
- The site was damaged during the reign of the ***Afghan Durrani dynasty in 1747***; however it was restored by local Hindus during the period of Sikh rule in 1834 and worship started again.

GS SCORE

Paintings & Other Art Forms

1 Mithila Paintings

CONTEXT: Madhubani railway station got complete makeover with Mithila paintings. The makeover project was unique initiative of Indian Railways to experiment with local artists voluntarily painting works in short span of two months.

Mithila Painting:

- Mithila painting is **folk painting** practiced in *Mithila region of India (especially Bihar) and Nepal*.
- It is also known as *Madhubani paintings* which mean '*forest of honey*'.
- It has been mentioned in ancient Indian texts like *Ramayana*.
- It originated in small village known as *Maithili in Bihar*.
- Initially, women from village drew paintings on **freshly plastered mud walls of their home as illustration of their thoughts, hopes and dreams using fingers and twigs** forming two dimensional imagery using paste of powdered rice.
- With time, it became **part of festivities and special events like marriage**. It also used **colors derived from vegetables and plants**.
- Now they are also **painted on cloth, handmade paper and canvas**.
- The **central themes of Mithila paintings** are based on *Hindu Gods and Goddesses*.
- Its main theme is supported by *traditional geometric patterns*.
- Some of main attributes of these paintings are **double line border, abstract-like figures of deities, ornate floral patterns, bold use of colors and bulging eyes and jolting nose of faces** of figures.
- The various styles of Mithila painting include *Bharni, Tantrik, Katchni, Godna, and Kohbar*, which were **historically painted only by women from the upper strata in caste system**, which used to make them on mud walls on special occasions.

Mithila painting has been **accorded the coveted GI (geographical Indication) status** as it has remained confined to compact geographical area and skills have been passed on through centuries, but content and the style have largely remained same.

2 Thanjavur Paintings

CONTEXT: Raman Spectroscopy been is now being used to ascertain if gold or gemstones on Thanjavur paintings are fake or not.

Thanjavur Paintings:

- It is a classical **South Indian painting style**, which was inaugurated from the town of Thanjavur and spread across the adjoining and geographically contiguous old Tamil country.
- The art form draws its immediate resources and inspiration from way back about 1600 AD, a period when the **Nayakas of Thanjavur** under the **suzerainty of the Vijayanagara Rayas**.
- It is distinguished by its **famous gold coating**.
- However, it can safely be surmised that Thanjavur painting, as we know it now, originated in the **Maratha court of Thanjavur (1676 – 1855)**.
- It has been **recognized as a Geographical indication** by the Government of India in 2007-08.

The specialty of Thanjavur Painting:

- Thanjavur paintings are **characterised by rich, flat and vivid colors, simple iconic composition, glittering gold foils** overlaid on delicate but extensive gesso work and inlay of glass beads and pieces or very rarely precious and semi-precious gems.
- In Thanjavur paintings one can see the **influence of Deccani, Vijayanagar, Maratha and even European or Company styles of painting**.
- Essentially serving as devotional icons, the subjects of **most paintings are Hindu gods, goddesses, and saints**.
- Episodes from Hindu Puranas, Sthala-puranas and other religious texts were visualised, sketched or traced and painted with the main figure or figures placed in the central section of the picture.
- There are also many **instances when Jain, Sikh, Muslim, other religious and even secular subjects were depicted in Thanjavur paintings**.

Raman Spectroscopy:

- It is one of the **vibrational spectroscopic techniques used to provide information on molecular vibrations and crystal structures**.
- This technique uses a laser light source to irradiate a sample, and generates an infinitesimal amount of Raman scattered light, which is detected as a Raman spectrum.

Raman Scattering (Raman Effect):

- **When light is scattered by matter, almost all of the scattering is an elastic process (Rayleigh scattering) due to which there is no change in energy.**
- However, a very small percentage of scattering is an inelastic process (Raman scattering), thus a scattered light has different energy from incident light.

3 Bagru hand-block printing

CONTEXT: Union Minister for Textiles Smriti Irani inaugurated the 'Titanwala Museum' in Bagru that showcases the Chhipa community's Bagru hand-block printing.

Bagru hand-block printing

- Bagru printing is one of the traditional techniques of **printing with natural colour followed by the chhipas of Rajasthan**.
- The Bagru hand-block printing has a **history of over 1000 years**. The fabric is first **soaked in Fuller's earth and then dipped into turmeric water** to get a tone of yellow colour.
- Then the dyed fabric is stamped with the beautiful designs known as blocks. Block printing is a labour intensive process. It requires a lot of skillfulness, time and tolerance power of artisan.

- **The wooden blocks of teak-wood** are used for printing the design which is soaked in oil overnight and then washed before putting in to use.
- The cloth to be printed is soaked in the solution of clay and other chemicals to make the fabric soften and then dried before used for printing.
- Neat stamping is foremost to get the appealing prints. After printing, the cloth is left for drying in sun for final touch-up.

- **Bagru** is one of the famous centres of hand block printing in **Rajasthan** located 32 km west from Jaipur.
- The Chhipa community is famous for this artisan work of block printing. Its **soil and climate** provide a perfect blend for this exclusive style of printing.
- **Dabu printing** is famous in Bagru in which clay, gum, ruined wheat, limestone and cow pies are mixed together and printed on the fabric. Thereafter fabric then can be dyed and left for drying under the sunlight.
- **Chhipa moholla** is considered as the **hub of hand block printing in Bagru** where one can be able to see various colors of fabric hung on terraces.
- It is believed that this form of art was introduced 450 years back by **Chhipa community** who were settled in the **banks of river Sanjariya** which provides the most important ingredient "clay" for this printing.

4

Kalamkari Art

CONTEXT: A 'Kalamkari art museum' has been opened at Pedana in Andhra Pradesh. The museum traces the history of the art and displays the process of extraction of natural colours from various sources.

Kalamkari:

- Kalamkari literally translates into "**pen craft**"; with '**kalam**' meaning pen and '**kari**' meaning art. It is among the most beautiful traditional Indian art forms and **involves block printing or hand printing**, typically done on pieces of cotton fabrics.
- The unique feature of the Kalamkari art is that it makes use of **only natural colours or vegetable dyes**.
- Kalamkari art and printing is **concentrated primarily in Andhra Pradesh**, particularly in **Kalahasti and Machilipatnam**, and a few other smaller regions of the state.
- Srikalahasti was the main center of kalamkari art for a very important reason: it received a constant supply of clean river water.
- There are two identifiable styles of Kalamkari art in India:
 - ▶ In the **Machilipatnam style of Kalamkari**, motifs are essentially printed with hand-carved traditional blocks with intricate detailing painted by hands.
 - ▶ On the other hand, **Srikalahasti style** of painting draws inspiration from the Hindu mythology describing scenes from the epics and folklore. This style holds a strong religious connect because of its origin in the temples.
 - ▶ The Srikalahasti style is characterized by one very important feature: **free hand drawing**.
 - ▶ The procedure begins with the craftsman treating the cotton cloth using mordant and sketching the design outline with black colour or 'kasami'.
 - ▶ The only other colours used for filling the outlined sketch are those obtained from natural plants: indigo, green, red and vibrant yellow. Therefore, every piece of the kalahasti kalamkari art is quite unique and absolutely authentic.

5 Tholu Bommalata

CONTEXT: Tholu Bommalata, the traditional puppetry art form of Andhra Pradesh, has lost its sheen. Now, there are only a few artisans to carry forward the art.

Tholu Bommalata:

- Tholu Bommalata is the **shadow puppet theatre** tradition of the state of **Andhra Pradesh**.
- Tholu Bommalata **literally means "the dance of leather puppets"**.
- The puppets are **large in size and have jointed waist, shoulders, elbows and knees**.
- They are **coloured on both sides**. Hence, these puppets **throw coloured shadows on the screen**. The **music is dominantly influenced by the classical music of the region**.
- The puppeteers make up some of the various entertainers who perform all night and usually reenact various stories from Hindu epics such as the **Ramayana and Mahabharata and Puranas**.
- Its performers are the part of a **group of wandering entertainers and peddlers** who pass through villages during the course of a year and offer to sing ballads, tell fortunes, sell amulets, perform acrobatics, charm snakes, weave fishnets, tattoo local people and mend pots.
- Years ago, the art was active in the four districts of Rayalaseema, especially in the border villages of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.
- However currently, there are only 6-8 troops left in all those areas that are still taking up the leather puppetry as the prime livelihood.

6 Dance Panel on Silappathikaram

CONTEXT: A rare dance panel of Nayak period and an inscribed pillar of Chola period have been found on an abandoned brick mound at Pathalapettai near Kiliyur in Tiruchi. Silappathikaram has references to such ritualistic performances by rural folks.

Silappatikaram:

- It is one of the **Five Great Epics of Tamil Literature** according to later Tamil literary tradition. **A poet-prince from Kodungallur near Kochi**, referred to by the **pseudonym Ilango Adigal**, is credited with this work.
- The **epic revolves around Kannagi**, who having lost her husband to a miscarriage of justice at the court of the Pandyan Dynasty, wreaks her revenge on his kingdom.

The Dance Panel:

- The dance panel is depicted on a stone slab that measures 1.21 metres in length and 33 centimetres in height.
- Four pairs of well-dressed male and female dancers, holding some object in one of their hands, are seen engaged in a ritualistic dance in the panel. Three pairs are shown hugging each other while the last pair is dancing keeping a distance between.
- All of them are decked with ornaments and different head gears. The female deity with a flower in the right hand seen between the first two pairs and the pot depicted between the last two pairs denote the ritualistic nature of the dance.

About the pillar:

- The pillar found at the spot has an inscribed base. The base has a **Tamil inscription of Chola paleography** with a few Grantha letters used in between. Though seven lines are visible, the last two are not readable.

- The inscription records that a certain **Rejaladeviyar Sativinjei, queen of Iladevayan**, had gifted that pillar. A sketchy figure of a **Mugalinga** is seen sculpted on the first half of the pillar, suggesting its conversion into a Linga.

7

Pochampally Sarees

- Pochampalli Ikat is a saree made in **Bhoodan Pochampally in Nalgonda district of Telangana**.
- The uniqueness of Pochampally sarees lies in the **transfer of intricate design and colouring onto warp and weft threads first and then weave them together** globally known as **double ikat textiles**.
- They have **traditional geometric patterns in Ikat style of dyeing**.
- The intricate geometric designs find their way into sarees and dress materials.
- The Indian government's official air carrier, Air India, has its cabin crew wear specially designed pochampally silk sarees.

Global fame for Pochampally sarees:

- Pochampally saree received Intellectual Property Rights Protection or Geographical Indication (GI) **status in 2005**.
- It has found place in UNESCO tentative list of world heritage sites as part of "**iconic saree weaving clusters of India**".
- The handkerchiefs made of silk thread have earned international fame as "**Teli Rumals**".

Language & Literature

1 Walmiki and Malhar: 2 unknown languages discovered

CONTEXT: A linguist from the University of Hyderabad (UoH) has stumbled on two languages called Walmiki and Malhar both predominantly in the remote regions of Odisha.

- They were discovered by **Prof Panchanan Mohanty** as part of activity of **Centre for Endangered Languages and Mother Tongue Studies**.
- The professor had collected some data and did preliminary analysis of these languages and published paper in proceedings of **XX Annual Conference of Foundation for Endangered Languages, UK**.
- The languages are **categorised 'endangered'** as the number of people speaking is small. These languages are spoken in **Andhra Pradesh and Odisha**.
- Only a few people living in the forest and hilly areas speak these languages.

Walmiki:

- It is spoken in district of **Koraput of Odisha** and on **bordering districts of Andhra Pradesh**.
- It is an **isolate language and does not belong to particular family of languages**.
- Its name is interesting and indicative as speech of the community claims to be descent from great **Indian saint-poet Valmiki**, who is credited to have **written one version of epic Ramayana**.

Malhar:

- It is spoken in a **remote and isolated hamlet** about 165 km **away from Bhubaneswar, Odisha**.
- Now it is spoken by community consisting of about 75 speakers including children.
- It belongs to **"North Dravidian" subgroup of Dravidian family** of languages.
- It has close affinities with other North Dravidian languages like Malto and Kurux spoken in Jharkhand, West Bengal and Bihar.

2 Classical Sanskrit Literature

Kalidasa Work

- Two great epics : **Kumarasambhava** (the birth of Kumar), and **Raghuvamsa** (the dynasty of the Raghus).
- Three Plays: **Malvikagnimitra** (Malavika and Agnimitra); **Vikramorvasiya** (Vikram and Urvasi);

and Abhigyan Shakuntala (the recognition of Shakuntala).

- Poetry: **Ritusamhar** (first poetry), Meghadutam (the cloud messenger),

Other Sanskrit Play Writers

- Sudraka - Mricchakatika (the clay-cart)
- Bhasa - Swapnavasavadatta (Vasavadatta in dream)
- Bhavabhuti - Uttara-Ramacharitam (the later life of Rama)
- Visakhadatta - Mudrarakshasa (Written in Gupta period, describes how Chandragupta Maurya got Chanakya's assistance to overthrow the Nandas.)
- Harshvardhan - Ratnavali, Priyadarshika, Nagananda
- Other Sanskrit Poetry Writers
- Bharavi (550 A.D.) - Kiratarjuniyam (Kirat and Arjun)
- Magha (65-700 A.D.) - Sishupalavadha (the killing of Shishupal).
- Jayadeva (12 century A.D.) - (last great name in Sanskrit poetry) Gitagovinda (describe every phase of love between Krishna and Radha)

Didactic Fable

- Vishnu Sharma - Panchatantra (five chapters- dealing with politics and practical wisdom)
- Narayan Pandit - Hitopadesha, (the bird, animal-human and non-human stories of)
- First book of dramaturgy - Natyashastra - By Bharata (1st century B.C.-1st century A.D.).

Religion, Philosophy & Festivals

1 Buddhism

CONTEXT: International Buddhist Conference was held in Lumbini, Nepal to commemorate 2562nd Buddha Jayanti.

About Buddha

- Siddhartha Gautama is the original name of Buddha.
- Siddhartha Gautama was born in 624 BC, in a *Sakya clan in Lumbini near Kapilvastu* (Nepal).
- He was born to *Shudhodana and Mahamaya*.
- He was married to Yashodhara and he had a son Rahula.
- He attained 'Nirvana' or 'Enlightenment' at 35 at Gaya in Magadha (Bihar) under a pipal tree.
- He delivered the *first sermon at Sarnath*.
- His **first sermon** is called '*Dharmachakrapravartan*'.
- The 'Dharmachakrapravartan' means '**Turning of the Wheel of Law**'.
- He attained *Mahaparinirvana at Kushinagar in 483 BC* at the age of 80 in the **Malla republic**.
- **Three Ratnas of Buddha is: Buddha; Dhamma - The teachings of Buddha and Sangha - Community of Buddhist monks and nuns**
- Teachings of Buddha are known as *Dhamma*.

The Four Great Truths:

- The world is full of sorrow and misery.
- The cause of all pain and misery is desire.
- Pain and misery can be ended by killing or controlling desire.
- Desire can be controlled by following the Eight Fold Path.

Astanga Margha:

- *Eight-fold Path of Buddha* is known as Astanga margha. The Eight fold path is: Right livelihood; Right observation; Right determination; Right action; Right meditation; Right exercise; Right speech; Right memory.

2 Vishishtadvaita (Qualified Non-dualism)

CONTEXT: A 216-foot-tall statue of Ramanuja will be built at Hyderabad.

- Its proponent was *Rāmānuja*.
- The basic theory is that "*jīvātman is a part of Brahman*, and hence is similar, but not identical. Brahman, matter and the individual souls are distinct but mutually inseparable entities".

- Vishishtadvaita advocates ***Bhakti to attain God.***
- It is one of the **most popular schools of the Vedanta school of Hindu philosophy.**
- Vedanta literally means the end of the Vedas.
- **VishishtAdvaita (literally “Advaita with uniqueness; qualifications”) is a non-dualistic school of Vedanta philosophy.**
- It is non-dualism of the qualified whole, in which Brahman alone exists, but is characterized by multiplicity.
- It can be described as ***qualified monism or qualified non-dualism or attributive monism.***
- It is a school of Vedanta philosophy which believes in all diversity subsuming to an underlying unity.
- Ramanuja, the main proponent of Vishishtadvaita philosophy contends that the ***Prasthanatrayi (“The three courses”)***, namely the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Brahma Sutras are to be interpreted in a way that shows this unity in diversity, for any other way would violate their consistency.
- There are three key principles of Vishishtadvaita:
 - ▶ ***Tattva:*** The knowledge of the 3 real entities namely, ***jiva (living souls; the sentient); ajiva (the nonsentient) and Ishvara (Vishnu-Narayana or Parahbrahman, creator and controller of the world).***
 - ▶ ***Hita:*** The means of realization, as through bhakti (devotion) and prapatti (self-surrender).
 - ▶ ***Purushartha:*** The goal to be attained, as moksha or liberation from bondage.

3 Sadharan Brahma Samaj

CONTEXT: Sadharan Brahma Samaj (SBS), the party funded by Rabindranath Tagore’s father in the initial years, has entered into a legal battle with the West Bengal State government over its decision to dissolve the governing bodies of eight colleges in Kolkata run by the organisation.

Sadharan Brahma Samaj (SBS):

- It is a **general community of worshipers of one God**, formed in **May 1878**, traces back its roots to The Brahma Samaj.
- It was formed when a band of followers of **Keshav Chandra Sen** (Brahmo Samaj India) left him after he violated the **Brahmo Marriage Act** by marrying his 13 year old daughter with Maharaja of Cooch-Bihar.
- **Anandamohan Bose** was its first President.
- In 1891, it opened the **Das Ashram, a welfare institution of untouchables**, and the Brahma Girls School of Calcutta, and also founded small hospitals, orphanages, a leper asylum.
- Its basic principles are:
 - ▶ It believes in the existence and personality of God,
 - ▶ It believes in the immortality of the human soul.
 - ▶ It does not believe in any particular book or collections of books as the one infallible revelation of divine truth, love, and final authority.
 - ▶ It does not believe in specific incarnation the Deity.
 - ▶ It accepts, respects, and uses of scriptures of the world, (not as infallible) as ancient records of the moral and spiritual experiences.
 - ▶ It is involved in various educational, social, medical and other welfare activities.

Brahmo Samaj:

- **Founded in 1828** as Brahma Sabha, by **Raja Ram Mohan Roy**. Later it become Brahma Samaj.

- **Doctrine:** Believe in existence of one God,
 - ▶ No revelation, prophet or holy book is infallible or to be considered as authority.
 - ▶ Human being is created from Singularity
- **Social and Religious reform:** abolition of caste system, child marriage and practice of Sati, opposed idolatry, condemned polygamy, and dowry system.

4 Prayagraj Kumbha Mela 2019

CONTEXT: Prayagraj Kumbh Mela 2019 has been placed in the Guinness World Records in three sectors.

- The **Kumbh Mela (the festival of the sacred pitcher)** is anchored in Hindu mythology. It is the largest public gathering and collective act of faith, anywhere in the world.
- It is a religious pilgrimage that is celebrated four times **over a course of 12 years**.

The geographical location of Kumbh Mela spans over four locations in India and the Mela site keeps rotating between one of the four pilgrimage places on four sacred rivers as listed below:

- **Haridwar** on the **Ganges** in Uttarakhand.
- **Ujjain** on the **Shipra** in Madhya Pradesh.
- **Nashik** on the **Godavari** in Maharashtra.
- **Prayagraj** at the **confluence of the Ganges, the Yamuna, and the mythical Sarasvati** in Uttar Pradesh.

Selection of site:

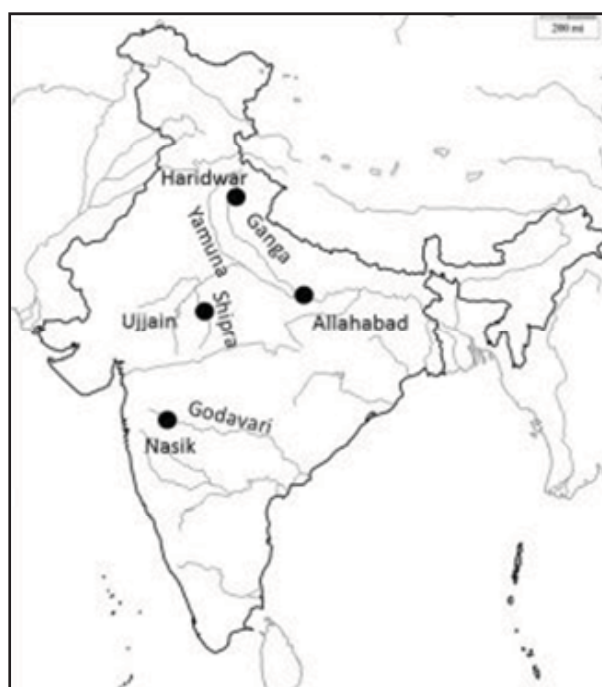
Each site's celebration is based on a distinct set of astrological positions of the Sun, the Moon, and the Jupiter. The celebrations occur at the exact moment when these positions are fully occupied, as it is considered to be the holiest time in Hinduism.

Origin:

- The origin of Kumbh Mela was transcribed **by the 8th-century philosopher Shankara**. The founding myth of the Kumbh Mela points out to the Puranas.
- The first written evidence of the Kumbha Mela is mentioned in **Bhagvat Purana**.
- Another **written evidence of Kumbha Mela is in works of Huen Tsang**, who visited India in 629–645 AD, during reign of Harsha.
- The **Samudra manthan** episode also has mentioned in Bhagavata Purana, Vishnu Purana, Mahabharata, and Ramayana.

Kumbh in UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity:

- The Intergovernmental Committee for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage under UNESCO has inscribed 'Kumbh Mela' on **UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2017**.



- The inscription of Kumbh Mela in list was undertaken following recommendation by expert body which examines nominations submitted by member countries of UNESCO during its 12th session of Committee held at Jeju, South Korea.
- Kumbh Mela is the 14th intangible cultural heritage from India to be listed in UNESCO's list.

Prayagraj Kumbh Mela 2019:

- Prayagraj Kumbh Mela 2019 has been placed in the Guinness World Records in three sectors.
- The three sectors are:
 - ▶ Largest traffic and crowd management plan,
 - ▶ The biggest painting exercise of public sites under "Paint my City" scheme, and
 - ▶ The biggest sanitation and waste disposal mechanism.

Types of Kumbh Mela:

- **Maha Kumbh Mela:** It is held only in Prayagraj. It comes in every 144 years or after 12 Purna (Complete) Kumbh Mela.
- **Purna Kumbh Mela:** It comes every 12 years. Mainly held at 4 Kumbh Mela Places in India i.e. Prayagraj, Haridwar, Nashik and Ujjain. It rotates every 12 years at these 4 places.
- **Ardh Kumbh Mela:** It means Half Kumbh Mela which is held every 6 years in India only at two places i.e. Haridwar and Prayagraj.
- **Kumbh Mela:** Held at four different places and is organised by the state governments. Millions of people participate with spiritual enthusiasm.
- **Magh Kumbh Mela:** It is also known as Mini Kumbh Mela which is held annually and only at Prayagraj. It is organised in the month of Magh according to the Hindu Calender

Interesting facts about Kumbh 2019

- The first royal bath (Shahi Snan) of the Ardh Kumbh Mela will be observed on the auspicious day of **Makar Sankranti**. It is here that all the prominent religious groups take a dip at the Triveni Sangam at Prayagraj.
- The second royal bath will take place on January 21 and is called **Paush Poornima**.
- The last bath will be observed on the day of the festival of Maha Shivratri on March 4, 2019.
- **Peshwai** is an important festivity and is a vital part of the Kumbh.
- Peshwai denotes the grand procession carried out to mark the beginning of the Kumbh Mela by welcoming people from all around the world.

5

Kuthiyottam Ritual

CONTEXT: The Kerala State Commission for the Protection of Child Rights registered a suo motu case in connection with the Kuthiyottam ritual.

- The commission said it would examine if the ritual, reportedly involving piercing children's sides with a hook, violated child rights in any manner.

Kuthiyottam Ritual and Pongala Festival:

- It is usually performed every year during the Pongala festival at the **Attukal Bhagavathy Temple in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala**. The temple is popularly known as the "**Women Sabarimala**".
- According to Kerala's Department of Tourism, the **Attukal Pongala festival is the largest congregation of women for a festival in the world**.

- **Pongala**, which means *'to boil over'*, is a ritual in which women prepare a pudding made from rice, jaggery, coconut and plantains cooked together, and offer it to the *'Bhagavathy'*, also referred to as *'Attukalamma' goddess*.
- **The ritual can only be performed by women.**
- The Attukal Pongala Mahotsavam is a 10 days festival which falls during **Malayalam month of Kumbham**.
- **In 2009, the Attukal Pongala festival entered the Guinness Book of Records** as the largest gathering of women.

What does the Kuthiyottam Ritual involve?

- Nearly **1,000 young boys undertake a seven-day penance** before Pongala day.
- These boys are said to **represent the wounded soldiers of the goddess**.
- The boys have to **observe strict discipline and stay inside the temple** for seven days.
- The rigors include **sleeping on the floor, strict diet restrictions, and bathing three times a day**.
- They also have to prostrate 1,008 times before the deity.
- The ritual reportedly involves piercing the child's side with a small hook and knotting a thread through it to symbolize their bond with the Goddess.

6 Mahamastakabhisheka

CONTEXT: President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated 88th Mahamastakabhisheka of Lord Gomateshwara by unveiling an idol of Bahubali at Shravanabelagola in Hassan district, Karnataka. President also lighted lamp to mark inauguration of the mega event which is held once in 12 years.

Mahamastakabhisheka:

- Mahamastakabhisheka is the **head anointing ceremony** which is performed **once in 12 years to the 57 feet tall monolithic** statue of **Lord Bahubali (Gomateshwara) at Shravanabelagola, Karnataka**.
- It is **one of biggest festivals for Jain community** and it honors Lord Bahubali, a revered Jain icon.
- According to Jain texts, Bahubali had attained liberation from cycle of births and deaths (moksha) at **Mount Kailash** and is revered as a liberated soul (Siddha) by Jains.
- **Bahubali is also called Gommateshwara** because of Gommateshwara statue dedicated to him and as **lord Kammateswara** from an inscription.
- Gommateshwara statue was built by **Ganga dynasty minister and commander Chavundaraya in around 981 AD**.

Importance of Shravanabelagola:

- The Shravanabelagola town is located near Channarayana near Hassan district of Karnataka. **'Shravana' means a Jain ascetic and 'Belagola' means white pond**.
- The place Shravanabelagola or Sravanabelagola is famous for the Bahubali statue which is supposed to be the tallest monolithic statue in the world, carved out of single block of granite.
- It is one of the most important Jain tirth (a sacred place) of the Jains in South India.
- **Jain saint Bhadrabahu** reached this place from Ujjain along with his disciples. Later **Chandragupta Maurya**, the ruler of Patna, also handed over his kingdom to his son Bindusara and chose to spend his days here.

About Lord Bahubali:

- Lord Bahubali or Gomateshwara was the son of the first *Jain Tirthankara* named **Rishabhadeva**.
- Lord Bahubali attained Kevalagnana after giving the kingdom to his brother Bharatha, who was fighting for the kingdom.
- The Gomateswara temple is built on the top of a hill at an altitude of 3347 feet, on Vindhyagiri hills (also known as Indragiri or Doddabetta).

7 Dwijing Festival

CONTEXT: Dwijing Festival, an annual river festival, was held on the bank of River Aie at Chirang district in Assam. It was the third edition of the festival. The festival was inaugurated by the Public Health Engineering Minister of Assam, Rihon Daimary.

Dwijing Festival:

- It is an annual river festival celebrated in the **Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD) region of Assam with various colorful events viz. ethnic trade and food festival, exhibition, games & sports, river campaign & adventure and various culture** programs to make it a centre of attraction for the visitors as a New Year Festival.
- The festival provides a **platform of earning for the people in the region by putting in to focus the business activities for the better economy generation** through rural tourism.
- The festival also aims to provide help to the flood victim families through charity generation and distribution.

River Aie (Mother):

- **River "Mother" originates** from the **Himalayan Mountains of Bhutan** and flows through the Chirang and Bongaigaon districts of Assam before joining the river Brahmaputra.
- The River Aie is the **lifeline of the region as about 30000 families in the region** are dependent on the river for their daily livelihoods through Crops, Fishing, Stone & Sand Collection and many other activities.
- The River creates a massive attraction for **many tourists (locals/visiting) for picnic and weekend activities during the winter season and in summer** the river creates massive damages to both the sideways due to heavy rainfall resulting in loss of properties and lives of many families.
- **Hagrama Bridge** which is located on this river is a centre of attraction.

8 Nongkrem Dance Festival

CONTEXT: Nongkrem dance festival was celebrated at Smit village in Khasi Hills of Meghalaya.

Nongkrem Dance Festival:

- Nongkrem Dance Festival (held annually in November) is a **five day festival which is celebrated for the harvest thanksgiving by the Khasi tribe**.
- The **Nongkrem Dance** is the most important festival of the **Khyrim state**.
- The festival is associated mostly with goat sacrifice and is held at Smit, which is around 15 kilometres to the southwest of Shillong.

- The Nongkrem word means “Goat Killing Ceremony”. The word Nongkrem was used because in the past years, the tribes used to celebrate this festival at Nongkrem, which is the headquarters of Khyrim state.
- Drums and Pipes are played continuously during this festival to mark the occasion.
- The traditional dance is performed by dancers who are the young men and women of the tribe. The youngsters get dressed up in exquisite attire. The silver or gold crowns worn by the tribes on their heads signify the glory and dignity of the Khasi society.
- The dance performed by the man is known as “Ka Shad Mastieh”.
- The men dance by holding the sword in their right hand and whisks in their left. The sword is used to symbolize a man’s defense of himself and his family. Men wear dhotis, full sleeved shirts, embroidered sleeveless coats and turbans.
- Prayers are offered to Ka Pah Syntiew and U Suid Nia Tong Syiem. The prayer is offered for good harvest, peace and prosperity for all the community people.

9 Bathukamma Festival

CONTEXT: The New South Wales Parliament in Sydney, Australia for the first time ever, celebrated the Bathukamma festival. Women in resplendent clothes danced around ‘floral deities’ singing Bathukamma songs.

Bathukamma Festival:

- Bathukamma festival is a **floral festival celebrated predominantly by the Hindu women of Telangana and some parts of Andhra Pradesh.**
- It is the **festival for feminine felicitation.**
- Every year this festival is celebrated as per **Satavahana calendar** for nine days starting **Bhadrapada Pournami till Durgashtami**, usually in September–October of Gregorian calendar.
- Bathukamma is celebrated for nine days during **Durga Navratri.**
- It starts on the day of **Mahalaya Amavasya** and the 9-day festivities will culminate on **“Saddula Bathukamma” or “Pedda Bathukamma”.**
- Bathukamma is followed by **Boddemma**, which is a 7-day festival.
- **Boddemma festival** marks the **ending of Varsha Ruthu** whereas **Bathukamma festival** indicates the **beginning of Sarad or Sharath Ruthu.**

How is it celebrated?

- A beautiful flower stack will be arranged with different unique seasonal flowers most of them with medicinal values, in seven concentric layers in the shape of temple gopuram.
- Women gather and dance around this flower stack.
- They also sing Bathukamma songs while dancing.
- In Telugu, **‘Bathukamma’ means ‘Mother Goddess come Alive’** and **Goddess Maha Gauri-‘Life Giver’** is worshipped in the form of Bathukamma – the patron goddess of womanhood, Gauri Devi.

10 Khajuraho Dance Festival

CONTEXT: The 44th Khajuraho Dance Festival 2018 was held at the temple town in Chhatarpur district, Madhya Pradesh.

Khajuraho Dance Festival:

- It is annual cultural festival that highlights richness of various Indian classical dance styles.

- The 6-day festival showcased classical dances including **Kathak, Odissi, Bharatnatyam, Kuchipudi, Kathakali and Mohiniattam.**
- Art Mart, which is part of festival, showcased paintings of international artists from Germany, France and China among other countries.
- During the festival, dances were performed in an open- air auditorium, in front of **Vishwanatha Temple** dedicated to **Lord Shiva** and **Chitragupta Temple** dedicated to **Sun God.**

11 Chithirai Festival

CONTEXT: The Chithirai festival is celebrated every year at the Meenakshi Temple in Madurai, Tamil Nadu during the month of April for symbolizing the unity of saivism and vaishnavism.

Chithirai Festival:

- It does so by re-enacting the wedding of **Lord Sundareswarar (Lord Shiva) and Goddess Meenakshi (Lord Vishnu's sister).**
- The festival includes a procession of **Kallazhagar avtar of Lord Vishnu** entering **Vaigai River.**
- He travels from his abode in Azhagamalai to get his sister married to Lord Sundareswarar.
- This journey from his abode to his sister's wedding, on a golden chariot, is the legend behind celebrating the Chithirai Festival.

12 National Banana Festival

CONTEXT: The National Banana Festival (NBF-2018) was held at Kalliyoor,

Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. The festival was organised by Centre for Innovation in Science and Social action (CISSA) in partnership with Kalliyoor Grama Panchayat and a host of National and State organisations.

- The festival provided **first-hand information to the farmers and general public about its multifaceted uses of banana.**
- The objectives of this festival were:
 - ▶ Create awareness on the local biodiversity conservation
 - ▶ Promote entrepreneurship for doubling farmers income
 - ▶ Create awareness on the nutritional and health benefits of banana
 - ▶ Promote utilization of underutilized parts of banana -peels, leaves, pseudo stem, stalk and inflorescence for food and non-food products.
 - ▶ Augment market : supply chain and value addition linkages
 - ▶ Promote organic farming, precision farming, and efficient input management and per drop more crop.
- Help farmers get exposure to new technologies and new species in banana cultivation.
- The festival **plays host to a buyer-seller meet, training programmes, documentary screenings, photography contest etc.**
- The festival also includes a national seminar, exhibition, training programmes, farmers' meet and a host of other activities.
- The festival is organised by **Centre for Innovation in Science and Social action (CISSA)** in partnership with **Kalliyoor Grama Panchayat** and a host of National and State organisations.

13 Chardham Yatra

CONTEXT: The Supreme Court has given its nod to Chardham Development Plan which connects the holy places of Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath by all-weather roads.

- As per Hindu traditions, Char Dham Yatra opens **the gates of salvation by washing away all the sins.**
- The term Chardham is believed to be coined by **Shri Adi Shankaracharya**, which means **four abodes of God or Holy Destinations.**
- The **Yatra begins from Yamunotri**, then the pilgrims head to Gangotri, thereafter to Kedarnath and finally to Badrinath to complete the Chardham Yatra. Yamunotri is the source of the sacred Yamuna River.
- According to Hindu Mythology, Yamuna was the sister of Yamraj and she was promised by Yamraj that whoever takes the holy dip in the Yamuna River will not be taken to Yamlok and they would attain salvation.
- Yamunotri is also the seat of Goddess Yamuna. Gangotri i.e. **Gomukh is the birth place of the Holy River Ganga.**
- The stone on which King Bhagirath did meditation to bring Goddess Ganga to earth is located near Ganga Temple in Gangotri.
- A temple dedicated to Goddess Ganga is located in this pious area. Kedarnath is one of the twelve jyotirlingas of Lord Shiva and the temple is believed to be restored by Adi Shankaracharya.
- Badrinath is considered as the most sacred among the four shrines and is located on the **left bank of the Alaknanda River.**
- The **temple at Badrinath** is dedicated to **Lord Vishnu**, the protector and preserver of the divine Hindu Trinity (Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva).
- It is also believed that Adi Shankaracharya got freedom from the process of reincarnation at Badrinath.
- The **Chardham Development Plan** is the project of the **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.**

14 Makaravilakku Festival

CONTEXT: The hill shrine of Lord Ayyappa in Kerala has been opened for the 21 day-long Makaravilakku festival season, marking the concluding phase of the annual pilgrimage season.

Makaravilakku:

- It is the **religious practice performed by the tribes** in the **forest of Ponnambalamedu.**
- Once the **Cyrus star (Makara Jyothi)** appears in the sky during the day of the **Makara Sankranti** festival, the tribes perform their rituals in a temple at Ponnambalamedu forest.
- Makara jyothi is a star that appears in the sky on **Makara Samkramam**, when the Sun moves from dhanu rasi (Sagittarius) to Makaram rasi (Capricorn) on the first day of the Malayalam month of Makaram, which is January 14 (Makara Sankranti) — this year.
- Makaravilakku is a light lit at Ponnambalamedu, a plateau across the Sabarimala shrine.
- The light, believed to have celestial origins, is shown three times by the chief priest of Pamba temple. **Pamba is the base station of Sabarimala.**
- This Aarathi performed by the tribes is referred to as **Makaravilakku.**

15

Harvest Festivals around India

CONTEXT: The Harvest season is on and festivities have gripped the nation from the north to down south.

Various festivals being celebrated across the Nations:

- **Makar Sankranti:** The festival of Makar Sankranti is being celebrated when the Sun enters the Makar zodiac and the days begin to lengthen compared to nights.
- **Pongal:** In South India and particularly in Tamil Nadu, it's the festival of Pongal which is being celebrated over 4 days at harvest time.
- **Magha Bihu:** In Assam and many parts of the North East, the festival of Magha Bihu is celebrated. It sees the first harvest of the season being offered to the gods along with prayers for peace and prosperity.
- **Uttarayan:** Gujarat celebrates it in the form of the convivial kite festival of Uttarayan.
- **Maghi:** In Punjab, Makar Sankranti is celebrated as Maghi. Bathing in a river in the early hours on Maghi is important.
- **Saaji:** In Shimla District of Himachal Pradesh, Makara Sankranti is known as Magha Saaji. Saaji is the Pahari word for Sankranti, start of the new month. Hence this day marks the start of the month of Magha.
- **Kicheri:** The festival is known as Kicheri in Uttar Pradesh and involves ritual bathing.

Outside India:

- Shakrain is an annual celebration of winter in Bangladesh, observed with the flying of kites.
- Maghe Sankranti is a Nepalese festival observed on the first of Magh in the Bikram Samwat Hindu Solar Nepali calendar (about 14 January).

16

Pakke Hornbill Fest as 'State Festival'

CONTEXT: The government of Arunachal Pradesh has declared the Pakke Paga Hornbill Festival (PPHF)-the state's only conservation festival, as a "state festival".

Pakke Paga Hornbill Festival (PPHF):

- The first-ever PPHF was held on January 16-18, 2015.
- The organizers had a number of objectives in mind-
 - ▶ To recognise the role played by the resident Nyishi tribe in conserving hornbills in the Pakke Tiger Reserve (PTR),
 - ▶ To devise alternative sources of income for a region that relies on hunting and logging, and
 - ▶ To tell the rest of the country about the wonders of the PTR and its surrounding areas.
- As part of the festival, visitors are treated to cultural programmes, food stalls, plays, sightseeing, river and village walks, bird-watching, screenings of short films as well as local tribal sports and dances.

Pakke Tiger Reserve

- Pakke Tiger Reserve, also known as **Pakhui Tiger Reserve**, is a Project Tiger reserve in the East Kameng district of **Arunachal Pradesh** in northeastern India.
- Previously it was declared a Wildlife sanctuary in 2001, and was declared a Tiger Reserve in 2002.
- This Tiger Reserve has won India Biodiversity Award 2016 in the category of 'Conservation of threatened species' for its Hornbill Nest Adoption Programme.

17 Sangai Tourism Festival

CONTEXT: The annual Sangai Festival was celebrated in northeastern state of Manipur.

Key Highlights:

- It is **grandest festival of state named after state animal, Sangai**, the **critically endangered brow-antlered deer** found **only in Manipur**.
- The festival aims to **promote Manipur as world class tourism destination**.
- It was started in 2010 and has grown over years into big platform for Manipur to showcase its rich tradition and culture to the world.
- It showcases tourism potential of Manipur in field of arts & culture, handloom, handicrafts, indigenous sports, cuisine, music and adventure sports of state etc.
- It also showcases '**Ras Leela**', **state's classical dance** form along with various other folk dance performances like Bamboo dance, Maibi dance, Kabui Naga dance, Lai Haraoba dance, Khamba Thoibi dance etc.
- Indigenous sports such as martial arts- Thang Ta (a combination Spear and Sword skills), Mukna Kangjei (game that combines hockey and wrestling), Yubi-Lakpi (game played with greased coconut like rugby) and Sagol Kangjei Modern Polo (believed to have evolved in Manipur) will be also showcased festival.

Sangai Deer:

- Sangai Deer (*Rucervus eldii*) also called the Dancing Deer. It is the **state animal of Manipur**.
- Once it was found across Manipur Valley in abundant now only its remaining natural habitat is found in **Keibul Lamjao National Park (KLNP)**, only floating national park in the world.
- It is listed as **critically endangered species** by IUCN.
- KLNP is floating biomass in Manipur's **Loktak Lake**.
- It is known around the world for its unique composition which is made up of biomass vegetation (locally called phumdis) that floats on surface of lake.

18 Behdiengkhlam Festival

CONTEXT: Behdienkhlam, one of the most colourful festivals of the State, was recently celebrated in the Jaintia Hills, Meghalaya.

Behdienkhlam Festival:

- Behdienkhlam is a major festival of the people in the Jaintia Hills.
- The Behdienkhlam literally means **driving away the plague** as "**Khlam**" means '**Plague**' and "**Beh Dein**" means **to drive away the plague**.
- It is celebrated to **invoke the gods for a bumper harvest** and drive away plague.
- It is the ritualistic expression of the relentless struggle of mankind to overcome the destructive forces of nature, including diseases, since the dawn of civilization.
- During the festival, **decorated and colourful raths are immersed** in '**Wah Ainar**,' a muddy pool.
- The non-Christian '**Pnar**' people who believe either in the traditional faith of '**Niamtre**' or Hinduism observe this festival.
- The festival ends with a final salutation to the divine powers when the women of the tribe offer sacrificial food to their almighty. The festival is also known as the festival for chasing away the **Demon of Cholera**.

- The festival is celebrated around the same time "**Rath Yatra**" is celebrated in other parts of eastern India.

Jaintia tribe:

- They are also known as **Syntengs and Pnars**.
- They reside in the east part of Meghalaya and they are of an **Austro-Asiatic origin**.
- They are a **matrilineal society** as the children take the identity or family title solely from the mother.
- Amongst the Jaintias, it is the youngest daughter who inherits property and has the obligation to take care and look after the family.
- The tribe is famous for artistic weaving, wood-carving and cane and bamboo work.
- Jaintia men wear **Jymphong and dhoti** while the women wrap several pieces of clothes so as to give a cylindrical shape. During functions they wear crowns of silver and gold with peak attached at the back of it.
- Apart from Behdiengkhlam festival, **the Laho Dance festivals** also an important festivals of the Jaintias.

19 Cherry Blossom Festival

CONTEXT: India International Cherry Blossom festival was held in the month of November in Shillong, Meghalaya.

Significance:

- This festival is the **world's only autumn** cherry blossom festival.
- The festival is organised by Government of Meghalaya's Forest & Environment Department as well as by the Institute of Bioresources & Sustainable Development (IBSD) in collaboration with Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR).

The Aim of the Festival:

- To celebrate the unique autumn flowering of Himalayan Cherry Blossoms. The Cherry Blossom tree flowers only for a short period in a year.
- The festival will showcase full pink and white cherry blossoms found all along the roadside of the famous **Ward Lake**.
- Alongside, the festival will also showcase the region's food, wine and crafts in addition with several cultural events.

20 Hornbill Festival

CONTEXT: The Union Home Minister inaugurated the hugely popular Hornbill Festival 2018 in Kohima, coinciding with the Formation Day of Nagaland.

- Hornbill Festival offers unique opportunity for states to interact and exhibit their cultural heritage in the true spirit of "Ek Bharat, Shrestha Bharat".

Hornbill Festival:

- **Nagas celebrate this festival to revive, protect, sustain and promote the richness of the Naga heritage and traditions.**
- It occurs during 1 - 10 December on an annual basis.

- It is also called the **“Festival of Festivals”**.
- The festival pays tribute to Hornbill; the most admired and revered bird for the Nagas for its qualities of alertness and grandeur. It is organized by State Tourism and Art & Culture Departments and also supported by Union Government.
- Hornbill Festival was established on 1st December 1963 and was inaugurated by the then President Dr. S Radhakrishnan.

Great Indian Hornbill:

- The great hornbill (*Buceros bicornis*) also known as the great Indian hornbill or great pied hornbill, is one of the larger members of the hornbill family.
- The great hornbill is long-lived, living for nearly 50 years in captivity.
- It is predominantly fruit eating, but is an opportunist and preys on small mammals, reptiles and birds.
- Its impressive size and colour have made it important in many tribal cultures and rituals.
- **IUCN status: Vulnerable** (uplisted from Near Threatened in 2018). It is also listed in **Appendix I of CITES**.

21 Ambubachi Mela

CONTEXT: Ambubachi Mela, a four-day fair to mark the annual menstruation of the goddess is being held at Kamakhya temple in Guwahati.

Ambubachi Mela:

- It **symbolises the fertility cult of goddess Kamakhya**.
- There is no idol in the temple; the goddess is worshipped in the form of a yoni-like stone over which a natural spring flows.
- Also known as **Siddha Kubjika**, the goddess is a Hindu tantric goddess of desire who evolved in the Himalayan hills. She is also identified as **Kali and Maha Tripura**.
- The festival is also known as **‘Mahakumbh of the East’** as it draws lakhs of devotees from all over the world.

Kamakhya Temple:

- Kamakhya, a top **Nilachal Hills in Guwahati**, is one of 51 shaktipeeths or seat of Shakti followers, each representing a body part of the Sati, Lord Shiva’s companion.
- The temple’s sanctum sanctorum (garbhagriha) houses **the yoni — female genital** — symbolized by a rock.
- Kamakhya Temple denotes the spot where Sati used to retire in secret to satisfy her amour with Shiva, and it was also the place where her yoni fell after Shiva danced with the corpse of Sati.
- The only ones that avoid the temple are the descendants of the medieval **Koch royalty**, who had reconstructed **Kamakhya temple in 1565**.
- This is because the goddess is believed to have cursed the royalty after the king and his brother Chilarai — one of Assam’s revered generals — had secretly watched her dance.
- There are legends about the goddess dancing when Kendukoli, a priest during Naranarayan’s reign, performed puja with his eyes shut.
- Naranarayan and Chilarai convinced the priest to allow them to watch the goddess’s dance.
- Incensed, the goddess punished the priest besides cursing the duo and their descendants with doom if they visited the Kamakhya temple ever.

Tuloni Biya:

- The ritualistic fair celebrating the goddess' period is one of the reasons why the taboo associated with menstruation is less in Assam compared to other parts of India.
- The attainment of womanhood of girls in Assam is celebrated with a ritual called 'Tuloni Biya', meaning small wedding.
- Ambubachi Mela is also an occasion to promote awareness on menstrual hygiene.



Institutions & Conferences

1 Sangeet Natak Akademi

CONTEXT: Sangeet Natak Akademi launches second phase of the Web Campaign 'SANJHI - MUJH MEIN KALAKAR'.

- Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA) launched the second phase of the Web Campaign '*SANJHI-MUJH MEIN KALAKAR*'.
- It is an initiative to document and promote the *Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)* and diverse cultural traditions of the country by direct public-participation.
- The literal meaning of the term *SANJHI* is "to share" and "to partner".
- The first phase of this campaign was earlier initiated in the month of November 2018 during the festival season of Diwali.

The Second Phase:

- The second phase of this campaign has its main focus area like the folk, traditional, customary, socially events and ritualistic art forms - woven as a cultural fabric around the harvest festival season of January.
- It is widely celebrated as various nomenclatures like Makar Sankranti, Pongal, Lohri, Bhogali Bihu, Torgya, Uttarayan, Attukkal Pongal, etc.
- It intends to bring forth such forms that are aligned with the domains of intangible cultural heritage as per the Convention of Safeguarding the ICH under UNESCO:
 - ▶ Oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
 - ▶ Performing arts;
 - ▶ Social practices, rituals and festival events;
 - ▶ Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
 - ▶ Traditional craftsmanship.

The Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA):

- Founded in 31st May 1952.
- HQ: New Delhi
- India's national academy for music, dance and drama - is the first National Academy of the arts set-up by the Republic of India.
- It is presently an *Autonomous Body of the Ministry of Culture*, and is fully funded by the Government for implementation of its schemes and programmes.

- It is the **nodal agency of the Ministry of Culture**, Govt. of India to coordinate the matters related to Intangible Cultural Heritage and various UNESCO Conventions addressing Cultural Diversity and promotion and dissemination of multifarious cultural traditions and expressions of the country.

Intangible Cultural Heritage

- **Cultural heritage** does not end at monuments and collections of objects. It also includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.

2

Lalit Kala Akademi

CONTEXT: President Ram Nath Kovind has appointed Uttam Pacharne as regular Chairman of Lalit Kala Akademi. He will have tenure of three years from the date on which he assumes the charge of his office.

Lalit Kala Akademi:

- It is India's **national academy to promote and propagate understanding of Indian art, in and outside the country.**
- It is also called as **National Academy of Art**. It is autonomous organisation **funded by Ministry of Culture.**
- It was established in 1954. It provides scholarships and fellow program and sponsors and organises exhibitions in India and overseas.
- It publishes **bilingual journal.**

Uttam Pacharne:

- He is **eminent artist and sculptor and is widely respected person in field of art.**
- He has held various important positions in various government organisations.
- He is recipient of National Lalit Kala Award (1985), Maharashtra Gaurav Puraskar (1985), Junior National Award (1986) and Jeevan Gaurav Puraskar (2017).
- Currently, he is Member of Advisory Committee, Kala Academy, Goa and Member of Advisory Committee, P.L. Deshpande State Lalit Kala Academy and Director, Janseva Sahakari Bank Borivali.

3

Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), under the Ministry of Culture, is the premier organization **for the archaeological researches and protection of the cultural heritage** of the nation. It was **set up in 1861** by Sir Alexander Cunningham with the help of then Viceroy Canning **with primary object of surveying antiquarian remains** in this country & their study.

Functions & Powers of ASI:

- Preservation, conservation & environmental development of centrally protected monuments & sites, including World Heritage Monuments & antiquities
- Maintenance of gardens & development of new gardens surrounding centrally protected monuments & sites

- Exploration & excavation of ancient sites Specialized study of inscription & various phases of Indian architecture
- Maintenance of Archaeological site, Museums Operation of Antiquities & Art Treasures Act.
- Research & Training in different areas of Archaeology ASI is successor of Asiatic Society of India.
- It regulates all archaeological activities in country as per provisions of Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Sites & Remains Act, 1958 & Antiquities & Art Treasure Act, 1972.

4 International Buddhist Conference

CONTEXT: International Buddhist Conference was held in Lumbini, Nepal to commemorate 2562nd Buddha Jayanti.

- The theme of the conference **was 'Lumbini Nepal: The birthplace of Lord Buddha and the fountain of Buddhism and world peace'.**
- The basic **objective of conference was to disseminate teachings of Buddha and spread messages of nonviolence, brotherhood, co-existence, love and peace** to international community.
- It also aimed to help to propagate and enhance the importance and the glory of Lumbini in the international arena.
- Representatives from 16 countries including US, Japan, India, China, Indonesia and Sri Lanka attended the conference.
- Buddhist scholars from various countries also presented their papers for discussions during the conference.
- At end of the conference, **10 point Lumbini Declaration** was adopted. It includes issues such as interfaith dialogue, infrastructure development, connecting Buddhist attractions in Nepal and India, and implementing **Greater Lumbini Area Master Plan**.

5 International conference on Guru Padmasambhava

CONTEXT: An International Conference on 8th century Himalayan sage Guru Padmasambhava was held in New Delhi.

- The conference was organised as part of events to commemorate 50-years of formalization of diplomatic ties between India and Bhutan.

Guru Padmasambhava:

- Guru Padmasambhava was born in India and travelled all across Himalayan region in the 8th century **to spread Buddhism and Buddhist teachings.**
- Guru Padmasambhava is highly revered in Bhutan.
- He was also known as **Guru Rinpoche** is widely venerated as a **"second Buddha"** by adherents of Tibetan Buddhism in Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, the Himalayan states of India, and elsewhere.
- Guru Padmasambhava is also considered to be the **founder of Nyingma tradition**, oldest of the four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

6 11th World Hindi Conference

CONTEXT: The 11th World Hindi Conference (WHC) was organized in August 2018 in Mauritius by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India in association with the Government of Mauritius.

11th World Hindi Conference (WHC):

- The theme of the Conference will be **“Vaishvik Hindi Aur Bharatiy Sanskriti”**.
- The conference is aimed at providing common platform to several Hindi scholars, writers and laureates from different parts of the world to contribute the language.
- Its venue will be **Swami Vivekanand International Convention Centre, Pailles Mauritius**.
- The conference will cover **both classical and modern elements** of Hindi and will see participation delegates and scholars of Hindi from all over the world.

World Hindi Conference:

- The World Hindi Conference is major event organised **every three years by MEA** to increase the popularity of Hindi globally.
- The first conference was held from **10 to 12 January 1975 in Nagpur, Maharashtra** and was inaugurated by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Since then, ten such Conferences have been held in different parts of world.
- In the first conference, then Prime Minister of Mauritius Seewoosagur Ramgoolam was Chief Guest and it was attended by 122 delegates from 30 countries.
- In remembrance of the first conference, every year **10th January** is being observed as **World Hindi Day**.
- The **10 edition of World Hindi Conference** was held in **Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh (India) in 2015** with the theme of **“Hindi Jagat-Vistar and Sambhavnaye”**.

7**17th World Sanskrit Conference**

CONTEXT: The 17th World Sanskrit Conference was held at Vancouver, Canada in July, 2018.

- It was inaugurated by Human Resource Development Minister Prakash Javadekar.
- The purpose of this conference was to promote, preserve and practice Sanskrit language all over world by the people.

Key Highlights:

- The conference provided an ideal platform to the scholars to exchange their knowledge by presenting papers on various subjects followed by discussions among the members.
- There was a special panel discussion on topics such as - History and Education of Women in Vedic Literature, Sanskrit Buddhist Manus, Mimamsa Beyond the Yagasala, the Yuktidipika forging a place for Sankhya, introducing Bhagavata Purana Commentaries and research on the Gargiyajyotisa.
- Over 500 papers on various themes were presented during the 5-day conference.
- Besides the Union HRD Minister, the Indian delegation participating in the 17th World Sanskrit Conference included 10 scholars and two officers.

World Sanskrit Conference:

- The World Sanskrit Conference is a premier international forum for professional researchers and educators of the Sanskrit language and its literatures and of the history, religion and cultures of pre-modern South Asia.
- The conference is held in various countries across the globe **once every three years** with the support of the **International Association of Sanskrit Studies**. So far it has been held thrice in India.
- The 17th WSC was held in **Vancouver, Canada** from July 9-13, 2018. This is the first time that the prestigious triennial event is being held in Canada.
- It is being hosted by the **Department of Asian Studies** at the **University of British Columbia (UBC)**.

- The UBC is ranked among the three top research universities in Canada and it has taught Sanskrit at all levels since 1969.

8

42nd Session of World Heritage Committee (WHC)

CONTEXT: The 42nd session of World Heritage Committee (WHC) meeting of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) held in Manama, Bahrain has inscribed four cultural sites on the World Heritage List.

- These four cultural sites are ***Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensemble of Mumbai (India), Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars region (Iran), Hidden Christian Sites in Nagasaki Region (Japan) and Sansa, Buddhist Mountain Monasteries in Korea (South Korea).***

Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensemble of Mumbai:

- Mumbai's Victorian ensemble includes Indian elements suited to climate, including balconies and verandas.
- Art Deco edifices are found in cinemas and residential buildings, having blend of Indian design with Art Deco imagery, creating unique style that has been described as Indo-Deco.

Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars region:

- ▶ They are eight archaeological sites situated in three geographical parts in southeast of Fars Province of Iran viz. ***Firuzabad, Bishapur and Sarvestan.***
- ▶ These fortified structures, palaces, and city plans date back to earliest and latest times of ***Sassanian Empire (from 224 to 658 CE).***
- ▶ These sites bear witness to influence of ***Achaemenid and Parthian cultural traditions*** and of ***Roman art***, which had significant impact on architecture and artistic styles of the Islamic era.

Hidden Christian Sites in Nagasaki Region:

- ▶ It is located in ***north-western part of Kyushu Island.***
- ▶ The 12 components of the site consist of 10 villages, Hara Castle and cathedral, built between the 16th and 19th centuries.
- ▶ Together they reflect earliest activities of Christian missionaries and settlers in Japan.
- ▶ These sites also bear unique testimony to cultural tradition nurtured by hidden Christians in Nagasaki region who secretly transmitted their faith during period of prohibition from 17th to 19th century.

Sansa, Buddhist Mountain Monasteries in Korea:

- ▶ They are Buddhist mountain monasteries located throughout southern provinces of Korean Peninsula.
- ▶ They are spatial arrangement of seven temples that comprise site, (established from 7th to 9th centuries), present common characteristics that are specific to Korea- ***"madang" (open courtyard)*** flanked by four buildings (pavilion, Buddha Hall, lecture hall and dormitory).
- ▶ They contain large number of individually remarkable structures, objects, documents and shrines.
- ▶ These mountain monasteries are sacred places, and have survived as living centres of faith and daily religious practice.

Historical Events

1 Pietermaritzburg Station Incident

CONTEXT: Joint Issue of Postage Stamps by India and South Africa on the theme “125th Year of Mahatma Gandhi’s Pietermaritzburg Station Incident & Birth Centenary of Nelson Mandela”.

- The Commemorative Postage Stamps on the above theme depict images of “*Mahatma Gandhi*” of India and “*Nelson Mandela*” of South Africa.

The Pietermaritzburg Station Incident:

- The famous incident at the Pietermaritzburg railway station occurred in **1893 when Gandhi was thrown off a first-class train compartment** despite having bought the ticket. He was told that it was for ‘whites only’. He also learnt the hard way that Indians were not allowed to tread on public footpaths.
- Gandhi was pained to see the humiliation of his fellow Indians and he then decided to embark on a journey that would change the face of both South Africa and India forever.

2 Azad Hind Government

CONTEXT: On 21-October-2018, Government celebrates the 75th Anniversary of formation of Azad Hind Government.

Azad Hind Government:

- The Azad Hind Government, founded on **21st October, 1943** was inspired by **Neta ji Subhash Chandra Bose who was the leader of Azad Hind Government** and also the Head of State of this Provisional Indian Government-in-exile.
- It was a part of the freedom movement, originating in 1940s outside India with a purpose of allying with Axis powers to free India from British rule.
- The existence of the Azad Hind Government gave a greater legitimacy to the independence struggle against the British.
- Pertinently, the role of **Azad Hind Fauj or the Indian National Army (INA)** had been crucial in bequeathing a much needed impetus to India’s struggle for Independence.

Indian National Army:

- The Indian National Army (INA) was an armed force formed by Indian **nationalists in 1942 in Southeast Asia** during World War II.
- Its aim was to secure Indian independence from British rule.

- It formed an alliance with Imperial Japan in the latter's campaign in the Southeast Asian theatre of WWII.
- The army was first formed in **1942 under Mohan Singh**, by Indian PoWs of the British-Indian Army captured by Japan in the Malayan campaign and at Singapore.
- It was revived under the leadership of Subhash Chandra Bose after his arrival in Southeast Asia in 1943.
- The role of Subhash Chandra Bose & his Indian National Army(INA), also known as **Arzi-e-Hukumat Azad Hind Fauz** have been a significant part of Indian Freedom Struggle.
- INA was an armed force organised by Bose in South Asia.

3 Battle of Haifa

CONTEXT: The Embassy of India held a ceremony in Haifa to mark the Centenary of the Battle of Haifa when on 23 Sep 1918; Indian soldiers from the Jodhpur, Mysore and Hyderabad Lancers liberated the city of Haifa.

Battle of Haifa:

- The Battle of Haifa was fought on **23 September 1918**.
- Owing to its rail and harbour, **Israeli port city of Haifa** was a strategic supply base.
- In addition to Haifa, the Allied Forces also engineered a plan to annex Nazareth and Damascus in present-day Israel and Syria.
- On September 23, 1918, the 15th (Imperial Service) Cavalry Brigade comprising lancers from the regiments of princely states of Jodhpur and Mysore inflicted heavy assault on positions held by Ottoman Turks in and around the city of Haifa.
- Eventually, the Indian cavalry brigades fighting under the leadership of **British General Edmund Allenby** helped liberate Haifa from the clutches of the Turkish-German forces.
- A total of 1,350 German and Ottoman prisoners were captured by the two Indian regiments.

Personalities

1 Ramanuja

CONTEXT: A 216-foot-tall statue of Ramanuja will be built at Hyderabad.

Ramanujacharya:

- Born in *Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu, in 1017 A.D.*, dedicated his entire life for reformism and left no stone unturned in dispelling darkness from the minds and lives of people.
- He was a saint who **propagated universal brotherhood**.
- He embraced the untouchables and treated them on par with the elites. Seeing his compassion towards the oppressed, his delighted guru honoured him with the coveted title "**Em-perumanar**" you are ahead of us.
- He was a great philosopher-Saint, theologian, social reformer and chief exponent of the **Visishtadvaita School of Vedanta or qualified non-dualism**.
- **Bhagawad Ramanujacharya** made hard journeys in his lifetime, to distant places across the Indian subcontinent and taught that the social order is actually a moral order (rule of conduct) and the crux of all values is man's desire for the better.
- His ultimate objective was to induce Vedic way of life into the society, which met with glorious success.

2 Sant Kabir

CONTEXT: June 28 marks Sant Kabir's 500th death anniversary and is celebrated as Kabir Jayanti across the country.

Kabir Das:

- Sant Kabir Das was a very renowned **saint, poet and social reformer of India who lived during the 15th century**. His esteemed works and poems describe the greatness and oneness of the Supreme Being.
- He **did not believe in any religious discrimination and readily accepted all the religions**. Sant Kabir Das propagated that there is the presence of same Supreme Being in all religions.
- Sant Kabir Das was a highly acclaimed poet of his time. His writings significantly influenced the Bhakti movement. Some of his famous writings include '**Sakhi Granth**', '**Anurag Sagar**', '**Bijak**' and '**Kabir Granthawali**'.
- A religious community known as '**Kabir Panth**' was founded by him and the members of this forum are referred as '**Kabir Panthis**', implying the followers of Kabir Das. He was admired by individual of all faiths and his teachings are still alive and passed from generations.

- **Swami Ramananda influence:** Kabir Das' ideologies were greatly influenced by *Vaishnava saint* Swami Ramananda who accepted Kabir as his disciple.
- The UP Tourism department has initiated to promote Maghar as a tourist destination where Hindus have built a temple in memory of Kabir, while Muslims have constructed a mausoleum in his memory.
- **Kabir was the first saint to reconcile Hinduism with Islam.**
- Kabir died at **Maghar in the Gorakhpur district** of Uttar Pradesh in 1518 A.D.

3 Tansen

CONTEXT: The Madhya Pradesh Government has conferred the annual Tansen Samman upon eminent Sitar Player Manju Mehta for her contribution in the field of Hindustani Classical Music.

- The award was presented by Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on inaugural function of Tansen Music Festival in Gwalior.

Tansen:

- Tansen (earlier names **Ramtanu Pande/Mohammad Ata Ali Khan**) was the **legendary court musician of Akbar.**
- His early music training was held in music school of **Gwalior's Raja Mansingh Tomar.**
- He was a **disciple of Swami Haridas.**

Tansen Samaroh (Tansen Music Festival):

- The department of culture, Madhya Pradesh government organizes annual four day Tansen Samaroh near the tomb of Tansen in Gwalior every year in December.
- The vocal and instrumental artists from all over India come and deliver their performances.

Tansen Award:

- Tansen Award was instituted by Madhya Pradesh government to honour the individual artists with significant contribution to Hindustani Classical Music.
- This award carries a cash prize of Rs. 2 Lakh along with a memento.
- The first Tansen Samman was conferred upon Sitar maestro Ustad Abdul Haleem Jafar Khan in 2000.

4 Guru Ravidas

CONTEXT: Sant Ravidas Jayanti was celebrated on February 19th. This year is said to be the 642nd birth anniversary of Guru Ravidas.

Guru Ravidas:

- Guru Ravidas was a North Indian **mystic poet of the bhakti movement.**
- While the exact year of his birth is not known, it is believed that the **saint was born in 1377 C.E.**
- Guru Ravidas Jayanti is celebrated on **Magh Purnima**, which is the full moon day in the Hindu calendar month of Magha.
- The **Adi Granth of Sikhs**, in addition to the **Panchvani** are the two of the oldest documented sources of the literary works of Guru Ravidas.

Guru Ravidas Teachings:

- Guru Ravidas **spoke against the caste divisions and spoke of removing them to promote unity.**

- His teachings resonated with the people, leading to a religion being born called the **Ravidassia** religion, **or Ravidassia Dharam** based on his teachings.
- He taught about the **omnipresence of God** and said that a human soul is a particle of God and hence Ravidas rejected the idea that people considered lower caste cannot meet God.
- He said in his teachings that the only way to meet God was to free the mind from the duality.

5 Swami Vivekananda

CONTEXT: 2018 marked the 125th anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's address at Parliament of the World's Religions in 1893 held in Chicago.

Swami Vivekananda (1863 – 1902):

- Born as **Narendranath Dutta in Calcutta** in January 1863.
- Was influenced by **Ramakrishna Paramahansa** who became his Guru.
- Became a monk and travelled all over India and the West.
- **His writings and speeches did a lot to spread Hindu philosophy in the West especially Advaita Vedanta and Yoga philosophies.**
- In 1886, he formally accepted monastic vows.
- He established many Mathas in India the most important being the Belur Math in Belur, Howrah district.
- He founded the **Ramakrishna Mission in May 1897.**
- He died in 1902 **in Belur Math in West Bengal.**
- The four pillars of nationalism according to Swami Vivekananda are:
 - ▶ Consciousness and pride in the ancient glory of India.
 - ▶ Development of moral and physical strength.
 - ▶ Awakening of the masses.
 - ▶ Unity based on common spiritual ideas.

Ramakrishna Mission:

- The Mission, founded by **Vivekananda in 1897** is a humanitarian organization which carries out medical, relief and educational programs.
- Two main purposes of mission are to spread the teachings of Vedanta as embodied in the life of the Hindu saint Ramakrishna (1836-86) and to improve the social conditions of people.
- The ideals propagated by the mission include work as worship, the inherent divinity of every soul and the harmony of religions.

6 Pingali Venkayya

CONTEXT: 141st birth anniversary of freedom fighter and designer (architect) of Indian National Flag Pingali Venkayya was observed on August 2, 2018.

Pingali Venkayya:

- He was born on August 2, 1876 in **Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh** and died in 1963.
- He **was firm believer in Gandhian principles and ardent nationalist.**

- He was also **linguist, geologist and writer**.
- At young age, he had served as soldier in British India Army in South Africa during Anglo Boer war in Africa.
- During his stint with British Army he had met Mahatama Gandhi in Africa. He was 19 when meeting took place and formed association Gandhiji which would last for more than 50 years.
- After his return from Africa, he had most of his time researching about farming and cultivating cotton. He even went on to study Sanskrit, Urdu and Japanese Anglo Vedic School in Lahore.
- Such credentials also had given him interesting titles like '**Japan Venkayya**', '**Patti (cotton) Venkayya**' and '**Jhanda Venkayya**'.
- Venkayya had published book in 1916 offering thirty designs of what could make Indian flag.
- Throughout all Congress sessions between 1918 and 1921, he relentlessly put forward idea of having flag of our own in every session of the Congress.

7 Sir Chhotu Ram

CONTEXT: Prime Minister unveiled a statue of Sir Chhotu Ram (1881-1945) in Rohtak district.

Sir Chhotu Ram:

- He founded the **Jat Sabha**, followed by the launch of the **Jat Gazette in 1915**.
- He joined the Congress in **1916**.
- In 1920, he launched **Zamindaran Party**, which later became the **Unionist Party in 1923** in alliance with **Fazl-e-Hussain and Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan**.
- His party won the general elections of 1936 and formed a coalition government along with the Congress and Sikh Akali Dal. He became the Revenue Minister.

8 Sri Satguru Ram Singhji

CONTEXT: To commemorate the 200th Birth Anniversary of Sikh philosopher, reformer and freedom fighter, Sri Satguru Ram Singhji, an International Seminar was inaugurated by the Minister of State for Culture

Satguru Ram Singhji:

- The birth of Satguru Ram Singhji took place in 1816 in village **Raiyan in district of Ludhiana in Punjab**.
- He spearheaded the **Namdhari sect** to free the country.
- He **started Kuka Movement** to free the country a month before the Mutiny of 1857.
- **Satguru Ram Singh Ji advocated boycott of the British merchandise and services.**
- He was a great **social reformer and preached against killing the girl child in infancy and stood firmly against the Sati Pratha and urged people to remarry the widow** to maintain her status in the society.
- He **started a new mass marriage system** wherein the marriages were performed by spending a rupee and twenty five paise only. The dowry was totally banned in any shape.
- Satguru Ram Singh inculcated the religious awareness among the people because it evokes the feeling of self-respect and sacrifices for the sake of the country.

Schemes & Initiatives

1 Swadesh Darshan Scheme

Context: The Union Tourism Minister inaugurated the '*Eco Circuit: Pathanamthitta – Gavi – Vagamon – Thekkady*' project at Vagamon, Kerala. This project is a part of the Swadesh Darshan Scheme.

- The Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned two new projects under Heritage and North East Circuits of Swadesh Darshan Scheme for Rs. 164.95 Crores in Punjab and Tripura.

Eco Circuit: Pathanamthitta – Gavi – Vagamon – Thekkady Project

- The Eco Circuit project was sanctioned in December 2015 at the cost of Rs. 76.55 crores.
- It has been developed **as a 150 km circuit and includes Eco-Adventure Tourism Park** at Vagamon, Cultural Centre at Kadamanitta, Eco Log Huts at Peerumedu, Idukki, Approach Roads, Walking trails, Rain Shelters at Pine Valley Forest, Thekkady, Kumily, Moozhiyar Dam, Penstock and Kakki
- The eco-tourism circuit aims to protect the flora and fauna of Pathanamthitta and Idukki districts including places like Gavi, Peerumedu.

Swadesh Darshan Scheme:

- **Ministry/Department:** Ministry of Tourism
- **Objective:** To develop theme based tourist circuits in the country.
- The duration of Swadesh Darshan Scheme is till the 14th Finance Commission Period i.e. **March 2020**.
- **Definition of Tourist Circuit:**
 - ▶ Tourist Circuit is defined as a route having at least three major tourist destinations which are distinct and apart. Circuits should have well defined entry and exit points.
 - ▶ A Circuit could be confined to a State or could be a regional circuit covering more than one State/Union Territory. These circuits may have one dominant theme and other sub-themes.
 - ▶ Projects under the scheme shall be under the following identified themes; Eco-tourism, Wildlife, Buddhist, Desert, Spiritual, Ramayana, Krishna, Coastal, Northeast, Rural, Himalayan, Tribal and Heritage.
- The scheme is **100% centrally funded** for the project components undertaken for public funding
- It also **leverages Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** initiatives of Central Public Sector Undertakings and corporate sector.
- **Heritage Circuit:**
 - ▶ Under Heritage Circuit in the state of Punjab, the project covers sites of **Anandpur Sahib – Fatehgarh Sahib – Chamkaur Sahib – Ferozpur – Amritsar – Khatkar Kalan – Kalanour – Patiala** at the cost of Rs. 99.95 crores.

- **North East Circuit:**

- ▶ Under North East Circuit in Tripura, the sites of **Surma Cherra- Unakoti- Jampui Hills- Gunabati- Bhunaneshwari- Matabari- Neermahal- Boxanagar- Chotta khola- Pilak- Avangchaarra** are covered with total project cost of Rs. 65 Crores.

2 Sanskriti Kumbh

CONTEXT: The Uttar Pradesh Governor Shri Ram Naik inaugurated the Sanskriti Kumbh at Prayagraj.

- It celebrates the **conglomeration of Spiritual Consciousness and Cultural Heritage of India** in the main premises of Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj.
- It is being organised by the **Ministry of Culture**, Government of India under the **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat initiative**.
- It is aimed at **showcasing the vibrancy of India**.
- The Sanskriti Kumbh will give a chance to people to experience all the colours of Indian Culture at one place.
- This cultural extravaganza aims to promote and reconnect the people especially the youth with our magnificent and multifaceted culture along with the opulence and its historical significance.
- The cultural performances would display the legacy of India's Spiritual and Mythological practices.
- The performances will showcase the inclination of visitors towards devotion and Kumbh tradition.
- The folk dances, representing states from East West North South India, will showcase the spirit of Unity in Diversity that is **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat**.
- Under the ambit of Sanskriti Kumbh, **Rashtriya Shilp Mela** is being organised to display handicrafts and live demonstration of the skill by craftsmen.

Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat:

- Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat was announced on the occasion of the **140th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on 31st October (Ekta Divas)**.
- Its **objective is to strengthen cultural relations of various parts of country and to embolden mutual connection between people dwelling in different states**.
- It also **aims to celebrate unity in diversity culture of nation and to bolster sentimental bonds** between people of different states.
- It aims to strengthen sentiments for National Unity between the citizens of states and states governed by the union government by conducting various activities throughout the year under this campaign.
- Under it rich heritage and culture, customs and traditions of either State will be showcased for enabling people to understand and appreciate the diversity that is India, thus foster sense of common identity.
- It will also establish long-term engagements and create an environment which promotes learning between States by sharing best practices and experiences.

3. Bhasha Sangam Program

CONTEXT: The Department of School Education & Literacy has initiated Bhasha Sangam Programme to provide multilingual exposure to students in Indian Languages.

- It is an initiative under the '**Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat**' which aims to make the students aware about the unique cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity of our country.
- In order **to celebrate the unique characteristic of our country, Bhasha Sangam provides an opportunity to schools and educational institution to provide multilingual exposure** to students in Indian Languages.
- The objective is to familiarize every child with simple dialogues in all the **22 languages under Schedule VIII of the Constitution of India**.
- They will be taking up one language on each working day, to enhance linguistic tolerance and promote national integration.
- The initiative has been widely received and accepted by States and UTs in very positive manner and schools are introducing five simple and commonly used sentences as per the convenience of students.

Lingual provisions:

- **Section 29(2)(F)** of the **Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009** states that "medium of instruction shall, as far as practicable, be in child's mother tongue".
- The **National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005** emphasises the importance of imparting primary education in the mother tongue of the child.
- Since **education is in the Concurrent List**, States have the liberty to decide the medium of instruction in schools.

Three Language Formula:

- The NCF also states that the '**Three Language Formula**' is an attempt to address the challenges and opportunities of the linguistic situation in India.
- As per the 'Three Language Formula' the **first language** to be studied, must be the **mother tongue or the regional language**.
- In the case of Hindi speaking States, children learn a language not spoken in their area.
- Sanskrit may also be studied as a modern Indian language in addition to these languages.

4

Paryatan Parv 2018

CONTEXT: The Union Ministry of Tourism recently organized the second edition of "Paryatan Parv"- a nation-wide celebration of Tourism.

- Paryatan Parv is being organized with the **objective of drawing focus on the benefits of tourism, showcasing the cultural diversity of the country** and reinforcing the principle of **"Tourism for All"**.
- The Paryatan Parv will start with the **India Tourism Mart 2018** which will further ensure wide participation from outside the country.

Components of Paryatan Parv:

- **Dekho Apna Desh:** It will encourage Indians to visit their own country. It will include video, photograph and blog competitions visited during event, stories of India through Travelers' Eyes to promote tourism.
- **Tourism for All:** It will promote tourism events at sites across all States in country. These will mainly be People's events with large scale public participation. The activities at these sites will include Cultural Programmes of Dance, Music, Theatre, Tourism Exhibitions showcasing culture, cuisine and handicrafts and handlooms etc.
- **Tourism & Governance:** It will have interactive sessions and workshops with stakeholders on varied themes like Skill Development in Tourism Sector, Innovation in Tourism, and Developing Rural Tourism in locations near established destinations.

5 National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM)

CONTEXT: The project National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) was launched by *the Ministry of Culture* in the year 2003. The budget allocation for the financial year 2018-19 has been increased to Rs. 1500.00 lakh against the budget allocation of Rs. 1200.00 lakh for the financial year 2017-18.

National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM):

- National Mission for Manuscripts is working towards fulfilling its motto, '*conserving the past for the future*'.
- **Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)** is the nodal agency for the execution of this project.
- Under this mission, **Manuscript Resource Centres (MRCs)** and **Manuscript Conservation centres (MCCs)** are established across the country.
- The MRCs includes museums, libraries, Ideological institutes, universities and non-government organizations, which serve as coordinating agencies in their respective regions.
- The **MCCs helps in conserving manuscripts** with the help of grants obtained under National Mission for Manuscripts.
- Under this mission 31, 23, 000 manuscripts and 185, 88, 390 pages have been digitized up to the end of 2014.

Objectives of the Mission:

- **To facilitate conservation and preservation of manuscripts through training, awareness and financial supports;**
- To document and catalogue Indian manuscripts, wherever they may be, maintain accurate and up-to-date information about them and the condition under which they may be consulted;
- To promote ready access to these manuscripts through publication, both in book form as well as electronic form;
- To boost scholarship and research in the study of Indian languages and manuscriptology;
- To build up a National Manuscript Library at IGNCA.

Manuscripts:

- A manuscript is a **handwritten composition** on paper, bark, cloth, metal, palm leaf or any other material dating back **at least seventy-five years** that has significant scientific, historical or aesthetic value. Lithographs and printed volumes are not manuscripts.
- Manuscripts are distinct from historical records such as epigraphs on rocks, firmans, revenue records which provide direct information on events or processes in history. Manuscripts have knowledge content.

6 PRASAD Scheme

CONTEXT: Union Government has included *Gangotri and Yamunotri in Uttrarakhand, Amarkantak in Madhya Pradesh and Parasnath in Jharkhand* under Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) to develop pilgrimage and heritage destinations in the country. With the new additions, the number of sites under PRASAD has now reached to 41 in 25 states.

PRASAD Scheme:

- It was launched in 2014-15 by Union Ministry of Tourism.

- It aims at integrated development of pilgrimage destinations in planned, prioritised and sustainable manner to provide complete religious tourism experience.
- It focuses on the development and beautification of the identified pilgrimage destinations.
- **Objectives:**
 - ▶ Harness pilgrimage tourism for its direct and multiplier effect upon employment generation and economic development.
 - ▶ Enhance tourist attractiveness in sustainable manner by developing world class infrastructure in the religious destinations.
 - ▶ It also seeks to promote local art, culture, handicraft, cuisine, etc.
- **Funding:**
 - ▶ Under it, **Ministry of Tourism** provides **Central Financial Assistance (CFA)** to **State Governments** for promoting tourism at identified destinations.
 - ▶ For components within public funding under this scheme, **Central Government will provide 100% fund.**
 - ▶ For improved sustainability of project, it also seeks to involve **Public Private Partnership (PPP) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** as well.

7

National Culture Fund

CONTEXT: A total of 34 projects have been successfully completed under National Culture Fund (NCF) scheme since its inception.

National Culture Fund (NCF):

- It was set up as a **Trust under the Charitable Endowments Act, 1890** on 28th November 1996 by the Government, with a view to mobilize extra resources.
- It is managed and administered by a council **headed by Culture Minister** to decide the policies and an **Executive Committee headed by Secretary, Culture** to actualize those policies.
- The Fund aims at inviting the participation of the Corporate Sector, NGOs, State Governments, Private/Public Sector and individuals in the task of promoting, protecting and preserving India's cultural heritage both tangible and intangible.
- The Government has granted Rs. 19.50 crore as one-time corpus fund to National Culture Fund out of the planned budget. Apart from this, there is no fund allocated by the Government to National Culture Fund. Besides this, NCF receives contributions and voluntary donations as endowments from many other sources.
- All the projects undertaken by the NCF are completed within a specified period, in accordance with a MoU signed by NCF.

Miscellaneous

1 GI tag for Telangana's Adilabad dokra, Warangal Dhurries

CONTEXT: Chennai based Geographical Indication Registry has awarded Geographical Indication (GI) Tag to two more craft forms from Telangana viz. Adilabad dokra and Warangal Dhurries.

Adilabad Dokra:

- It is form of **ancient bell metal craft** practiced by **Woj community** native to **Adilabad district of Telangana**.
- They use ancient casting technique called **cire perdue (lost wax casting technique)**, a technique wherein **duplicate metal sculpture is cast from an original sculpture**.
- The 100-odd families are currently, involved in creation of a hereditary crafts.
- The craftsmen mostly indulge in creation of metal casting products like idols of local deities, dancing figures, bells, jewellery, statues and many other decorative items.
- Apart from these, they also make figures of animals and birds, and jewels.

Warangal Dhurries:

- Dhurries is popular **traditional thick cotton rug** in which **weavers create beautiful patterns and dye them using vegetable colours**, which are washed in flowing water after the printing process.
- Currently, there are more than 2000 weaving community members present in **Kothawada, Warangal** in spinning Dhurrie.
- The products are exported mainly to UK, Germany along with few other European and African countries.

Geographical Indication (GI):

- GI tag is **name or sign used on certain products which correspond to specific geographical location or origin**.
- It is **used for agricultural, natural and manufactured goods having special quality and established reputation**.
- These goods and products having tag are recognised for their **origin, quality and reputation and gives it required edge in the global market**. It also ensures that none can use their name, giving them exclusivity.
- The registration of a GI is valid for 10 years after which it needs to be renewed. Violation of GI tags is punishable offence under law.

- The purpose of GI tag enables stakeholders to authenticate their production while earning a premium and derive an improved livelihood. GI is covered as element of intellectual property rights (IPRs) under Paris Convention for Protection of Industrial Property.
- At international level, GI is governed by WTO's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).
- In India, GI tag Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection Act), 1999 governs it. This Act is administered by Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks, who is also Registrar of Geographical Indications.

2 UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage

CONTEXT: UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, has added reggae to its list of cultural institutions worthy of protection and preservation.

Reggae:

- It is **Jamaican music** originating from marginalized groups, mainly in **Western Kingston**.
- It was started out as voice of marginalized. But now it is played and embraced by wide cross-section of society, including various genders, ethnic and religious groups.

From India the Intangible Cultural Heritages added into this list include:

- Tradition of Vedic chanting
- Ramlila, the traditional performance of the Ramayana
- Kutiyattam, Sanskrit theatre
- Ramman, religious festival, and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas.
- Mudi yettu, ritual theatre, and dance drama of Kerala
- Kalbelia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan
- Chhau dance
- Buddhist chanting of Ladakh: recitation of sacred Buddhist texts in the trans-Himalayan Ladakh region, Jammu and Kashmir.
- Sankirtana, ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur
- Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab
- Yoga
- Nawrouz
- Kumbh Mela

3 UNESCO Global Geopark Network Status

CONTEXT: Geological Survey of India has chosen heritage locations in Maharashtra and Karnataka for UNESCO Global Geopark Network status.

Global Geopark:

- UNESCO Global Geoparks are **single, unified geographical areas** where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development.
- Their **bottom-up approach** of combining conservation with sustainable development while involving local communities is becoming increasingly popular. At present, there are 140 UNESCO Global Geoparks in 38 countries.

- An aspiring Global Geopark must have a dedicated website, a corporate identity, comprehensive management plan, protection plans, finance, and partnerships for it to be accepted.

Global Geoparks Network:

- The Global Geoparks Network (GGN), of which **membership is obligatory for UNESCO Global Geoparks**, is a legally constituted not-for-profit organisation with an annual membership fee.
- The GGN was founded in 2004 and is a dynamic network where members are committed to work together and exchange ideas of best practise and join in common projects to raise the quality standards of all products and practises of a UNESCO Global Geopark.
- While the GGN as a whole comes together every two years, it functions through the operation of regional networks, such as the European Geoparks Network that meets twice a year to develop and promote joint activities.

About the sites chosen:

- **Lonar Lake, Maharashtra:**

- ▶ It is the **world's oldest meteoric crater** formed around 50,000 years ago and the only one formed in basalt rock.
- ▶ It is a salt water lake.
- ▶ It became a national geo-heritage site in 1979.

- **St. Mary's Island and Malpe Beach, Karnataka:**

- ▶ It is a hexagonal mosaic of basaltic rocks in an island off Udipi.
- ▶ It is estimated to be an 88-million-year-old formation that goes back to a time when Greater India broke away from Madagascar.
- ▶ It was declared a national geo-heritage site in 1975.

Difference between UNESCO Global Geoparks, Biosphere Reserves and World Heritage Sites:

- While **Biosphere Reserves** focus on the harmonised management of biological and cultural diversity **and World Heritage Sites** promote the conservation of natural and cultural sites of outstanding universal value, **UNESCO Global Geoparks** give international recognition for sites that promote the importance and significance of protecting the Earth's geodiversity through actively engaging with the local communities.
- In case an aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark includes a World Heritage Site or Biosphere Reserve, a clear justification and evidence has to be provided on how UNESCO Global Geopark status will add value by being both independently branded and in synergy with the other designations

4

World Heritage Day

CONTEXT: Every year, 18th April is celebrated world-wide as World Heritage Day to create awareness about Heritage among communities.

World Heritage Day:

- It is observed every year on 18 April.
- It is celebrated to raise the awareness about the diversity of cultural heritage, monuments, sites, the efforts required to protect and conserve it and to draw attention towards its vulnerability.

Theme of World Heritage Day 2018:

- ▶ World Heritage Day 2018 Theme is "Heritage for Generations".

- **History of World Heritage Day:**

- ▶ It is celebrated **every year on 18 April** to preserve the human heritage and to recognise all the efforts of relevant organizations.
- ▶ The **International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in 1982** announced, 18 April as the World Heritage Day.
- ▶ This was approved by **General Assembly of UNESCO in 1983**, with an aim of enhancing awareness about the importance of cultural heritage, monuments and to conserve them.
- ▶ The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) organisation was established on the principles set forth in the **Venice Charter**, also known as the **1964 International Charter on the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites**.

5

Kambala

CONTEXT: The coastal districts of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi are all set for the kambala.

- The races would be held under the auspices of the **District Kambala Committee**.
- The President gave his assent to the **Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Karnataka Amendment) Bill** making Kambala a legal rural sport in Karnataka.
- The Bill seeks to exempt kambala and bullock-cart racing from the ambit of the **Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act, 1960**.
- Kambala is traditional slush track buffalo race that is held annually in coastal districts of Karnataka to entertain rural people of the area.
- Slushy/marshy paddy field track is used for Kambala.
- The sports season generally starts in November and lasts till March.
- The contest generally takes place between two pairs of buffaloes, each pair race in two separate wet rice fields' tracks, controlled by a whip-lashing farmer.
- In the traditional form of Kambala, buffalo racing was non-competitive and buffalo pairs ran one by one in paddy fields.
- Besides, there was also ritualistic approach as some agriculturist's race their buffaloes as a means to thank god for protecting their animals from disease.
- But in recent times, Kambala has become an organised rural sport.
