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MUSIC, DANCE & DRAMA

1 Konyak Dance

Context: During the Aoling Monyu festival, 4,700 Konyak Naga women danced together to set the world record. The program was organized to welcome the spring to preserve the cultural heritage of the people and also to promote tourism.

About:

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

What is Konyak?

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

Aoling Monyu festival

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

Difference between Hornbill festival and Aoling Monyu festival

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

2 Maniyaro

- It is a variety of folk dance of Gujarat and carries the sentiments of heroism in the Dandiya RAAS

of Maher community in the states.

- In Gujarat and especially in the Saurashtra region, generally, Men wear traditional costumes, having preset sized wooden sticks and present Maniyaro.
- Maniyaro is usually being played with ancient instruments like Drum, Flute, and **RAVAN Hattho**, etc.
- The lyrics of the songs that are being sung in Maniyaro are sometimes flowing enjoyment, at times expressing the feeling of separation and sometimes inspiring heroism.

3 Kamsale Dance

About:

- Kamsale is known as Beesu Kamsale. It is a unique folk art performed by the devotees of God Mahadeshwara.
- Kamsale also refers to a brass made musical instrument. Its origin is traced to the Mythological period. The kamsale comprises a cymbal in onehand and a bronze disc in the other and is used to produce a rhythmic clang.
- It is a group dance form performed by the menfolk in villages in the Mysore, Nanjanagudu, Kollegala and Bangalore areas in Karnataka.

4 Assamese Bhaona

Context: This art form will be going to make debut in Abu Dhabi.

About:

- The initiative is supported by Assam's Department of Culture to popularize Bhaona across the world in the English language.
- **Bhaona is a traditional form of entertainment.**
- It was the creation of saint-reformer **Srimanta Sankardeva (a Vaishnava saint born in 1449 A.D in Nagaon district of Assam. He started the neo-Vaishnavite movement).**
- Initially, he wrote his prose in Sanskrit but later used Assamese and Brajavali (a literary language limited to theatrical usage, in which Sankardeva wrote his songs and plays) to develop the following artforms:
 - **Borgeet-** a new form of spiritual music,
 - **Bhaona-** a mythology-based theatrical performance, and
- Monastic dances that evolved into the classical Sattriya (a classical dance form which acts as a medium for the propagation of the Vaishnava faith).
- **A Bhaona involves dialogues, songs, and dances** and the actors who perform it are known as **Bhaoriya**.
- It usually involves 40-50 performers wearing costumes and ornaments including those playing heavy drums and cymbals.

5 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 formule), 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 a 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 the 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 the 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 emphasizes 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 several Kritis in Tamil attributed to him.
- ▶ Most of his works propitiate the goddess Kamakshi.

ARCHITECTURE & SCULPTURE

1 Suranga Bawadi on World Monument Watch list

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

About:

- A New York-based non-governmental organization has included it in the **World Monument Watch list for 2020 along with 24 other monuments from across the world.**
- The monument has been selected under the **'Ancient Water System of the Deccan Plateau'.**
- World Monuments Fund works in collaboration with the local stakeholders, including the district administration, the Archaeological Survey of India, and local explorers of ancient monuments, in highlighting the need for the restoration of ancient monuments.

Karez System

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

World Monuments Watch

- The World Monuments Watch is a global, nomination-based program that uses cultural heritage conservation to empower communities and improve human well-being.
- **Since its inception in 1996, the program has included 814 sites in 136 countries and territories.**

2 Mamallapuram

Context: Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping visited at Mamallapuram during a two-day second India-China informal summit.

About:

- **Mahabalipuram or Mamallapuram is a historic city and UNESCO World Heritage site** in the state of Tamil Nadu.
- Mahabalipuram was the **second capital of the Pallavas** who ruled Kanchipuram. Formerly, Mahabalipuram was known and called as Mamallapuram.
- It was during the reign of King Narasimha Varman I (630 - 668AD), the name Mahabalipuram was changed. King Narasimha Varman I was a great and valiant warrior. He was given the title **Mamalla which means 'the great wrestler'** so the name was converted from Mahabalipuram to Mamallapuram considering the great king and his achievements.
- During the reign of the Pallava dynasty, between the 3rd century CE and 7th century CE, it became an important center of art, architecture, and literature.

Art & Architectural Masterpieces at Mamallapuram:

- **Shore Temple:** The Shore Temple (built-in 700–728 AD) is so named because it overlooks the shore of the Bay of Bengal. It is a structural temple, built with blocks of granite, dating from the 8th century AD. It was built during the reign of Narasimhavarman II. It is a remnant of a larger complex of temples and civil structures much of which lies under the depth of the sea now.
- **Descent of the Ganges:** It is alternatively known as Arjuna's Penance. Descent of the Ganges is a gigantic open-air bas-relief sculpted out of pink granite. The dramatic relief sculpture narrates the tales from Indian epics such as the Mahabharata.
- **Pancha Ratha:** Pancha Ratha (five chariots) is an architectural ode to Mahabharata's five Pandava brothers Yudhistir, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, Sahadeva, and their wife Draupadi. Thematically and structurally, each ratha is significantly different from the other ones, but all of them were carved out of a long stone or monolith.

3**Bibi Ka Maqbara**

Context: The marble domes of Bibi Ka Maqbara (in Aurangabad, Maharashtra), the famous 17th-century Mughal-era monument, are set to get a new shine.

Bibi Ka Maqbara:

- The structure, known as the '**Taj of the Deccan**' because of its striking resemblance to the Taj Mahal, was built in 1668 by Azam Shah, the son of Aurangzeb to commemorate his mother Dilras Begum who was titled Rabia Durani post her death.
- Also called the Tomb of the Lady, Bibi Ka Maqbara was designed by Ataullah, the son of Ahmad Lahauri, the architect of the Taj Mahal which explains its appearance heavily based on the prime marvel.

Archaeological Survey of India:

- The **Archaeological Survey of India, established in 1861 is an attached office under the Ministry of Culture** dedicated to the protection, preservation, and conservation of the national monuments.
- It is a multidisciplinary organization including exploration and excavation, chemical conservation, Horticultural operation, Museum, underwater archaeology, Pre-History Branch, Epigraphy, Publication, etc.
- The present organization is the successor of '**The Asiatic Society of India**', which was founded in 1861 by Sir Alexander Cunningham with the help of the then Viceroy Canning.

4

National War Memorial**Context:**

- The government had approved the project for building a National War Memorial and a National War Museum near India Gate in 2015 in memory of over 22,500 soldiers who laid down their lives post-Independence.

About:

- The National War Memorial draws inspiration from the '**Chakravyuh**' formation
- The memorial has spread over 40 acres in the India Gate complex behind the canopy
- The names of 25,942 war casualties have been inscribed on 16 walls of the National War Memorial
- The main structure has been built in the form of four concentric circles, each chakra signifying different values of the armed forces
- The Amar Chakra (circle of immortality): The 'Amar Chakra' comprises a 15-meter tall obelisk and the eternal flame.
- The Veerta Chakra (circle of bravery): The 'Veerta Chakra' is About: the six important battles of the army, air force, and navy, which have been depicted in bronze.
- The Tyag Chakra (circle of sacrifice): The 'Tyag Chakra' holds the names of About: 25,700 battle casualties which have been written on a 1.5-meter wall.
- The Rakshak Chakra (circle of protection): The outermost tier is the 'Suraksha Chakra', comprising 695 trees depicting 'standing soldiers guarding.
- Adjacent to the main complex lies a tribute to the 21 Param Vir Chakra with a bronze bust.
- The entire stonework of the memorial was done by Star Mercantile of Kishore Kapur, including the obelisk.

PAINTINGS, LITERATURE & OTHER ART FORMS

1 Neolithic Age Siva Linga Discovered

Context: An 18-foot Siva linga has been discovered Bhairaveswara Swamy Temple in YSR Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh.

More on News:

- The linga was believed to have been naturally formed ('swayambhu') during the Neolithic age dated back to 3,000 - 2,800 B.C.
- The sighting of the Siva linga on the banks of the Mogameru rivulet, close on the heels of the discovery of stone implements such as axes and other tools used by the Megalithic civilization by the Archaeology Department, has created further interest.
- The discovery of the Siva linga has thrown light on the religious practices of Neolithic civilizations during which people used to worship idols of Gods and Goddesses in standing posture. Earlier, Megalithic burial sites have also been found on the river bank.

Neolithic Age

- The Neolithic Age began around 12,000 years ago and ended as civilizations started to rise around 3500 BCE. The term Neolithic comes from two words: neo, or new, and lithic, or stone. As such, this period is sometimes referred to as the New Stone Age.
- Humans in the Neolithic Age still used stone tools and weapons, but they were starting to enhance their stone tools. There's evidence of initial metallurgy as well, and also creating more pottery.

2 Ghumot- Goa's heritage musical instrument

Context: Ghumot, an indigenous earthen drum that was once banned due to the use of monitor lizard skin in its making, will soon be notified as a heritage instrument of Goa.

About:

- Traditionally, ghumot, a percussion instrument played during Ganesh Chaturthi 'aarties' (prayers), is fashioned as a designed clay pot, with the skin of the monitor lizard (locally known as 'gaar') stretched taut across the pot's mouth, forming a drumhead.

3

Classical Sanskrit Literature**Kalidasa Work:**

- Two great epics: **Kumarasambhava** (the birth of Kumar), and **Raghuvamsa** (the dynasty of the Raghus).
- Three Plays: **Malavikagnimitra** (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 the dream)
- Bhavabhuti - **Uttara-Ramacharitam** (the later life of Rama)
- Visakhadatta - **Mudrarakshasa** (Written in the Gupta period, describes how ChandraguptaMaurya 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)
- The first book of dramaturgy - **Natyashastra** - By Bharata (1st-century B.C.-1st century A.D.).

RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY & FESTIVALS

1 Ganga Jatara festival

Context: The entire Chittoor town of Andhra Pradesh and its surrounding villages are gearing up for the famous Ganga Jatara, scheduled to commence from May 14.

Key facts

- It is the annual folk festival of Tirupati in Chittoor town of Andhra Pradesh.
- This festival is to offer prayers to Sri Thathaya Gunta Gangamma, the Gramadevata (the goddess looking after the village) of Tirupati.
- It is a week-long event which falls on the second week of May every year.

2 Kochi-Muziris Biennale

Context: The fourth edition of Asia's biggest contemporary art festival, the Kochi-Muziris Biennale- a 108-day event was held in Kochi.

Key Facts:

- The exhibition held at nine venues, eight of which are centered around West Kochi and Mattancherry at the confluence of the Arabian Sea with Lake Vembanad, the longest lake in India.
- The theme for the biennale was "Possibilities for a Non-Alienated Life," with Anita Dube, a contemporary artist, as its curator.

Kochi Biennale Foundation:

- It is a non-profit charitable trust founded in 2010 by artists Bose Krishnamachari and Riyas Komu.
- It is engaged in promoting art & culture and educational activities in India; primary amongst them the hosting of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale.
- The Kochi Biennale Foundation is also engaged in the conservation of heritage properties and monuments and the upliftment of traditional forms of art and culture.
- The Foundation works throughout the year to strengthen contemporary art infrastructure and to broaden public access to art across India through a diverse range of programs.

3 Rongali Bihu Festival

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

Key Facts:

- The first pinnacle phase is called Raati Bihu wherein women gather beneath an ancient tree or an open field, surrounded by burning torches. The participation of men is mostly ceremonial wherein they play Pepa (buffalo hornpipe) or Bholuka Baanhora Toka (a musical instrument made of split bamboo). This is followed by Bali Husori, where Bihu dances are organized by the young.
- The main celebration starts on the day of Goru (cow) Bihu, where livestock is washed with a combination of symbolic herbs like black gram and turmeric paste, whipped *litsea salicifolia*, and pieces of bottle gourd and brinjal. After the bath, they are decorated with new harnesses and garlands.
- The second day is known as Manuh (human) Bihu where people take a bath with black grams and turmeric paste, wear new clothes, seek blessings from the elders and exchange gifts. A Gamusa (an indispensable and symbolic piece of cloth) is presented to each other as a token of friendship, love, and warmth with each other. A traditional Bihu dance is performed by both men and women, which is the high point of the festival.
- The third day is called Gosai (God's) Bihu. People worship idols after cleaning their homes.
- The rest of the celebrations take place on Kutum Bihu, Senehi Bihu, Chera Bihu, and Mela Bihu. Sweet dishes that include pitha (rice cake), laru/ladoo (made of rice and coconut or black sesame seeds) and savory dishes like khaar and xaak make for an essential part of the festivity.
- Notably, there are three Bihu festivals in the year namely – Rongali Bihu or Bohag Bihu, Bhugali (Magh Bihu) and Kangali (Kati Bihu) marking the distinctive phase in the farming calendar.

4 Tiwa tribe and Wanchuwa festival

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

Tiwa Tribe:

- Tiwa also is known as Lalung is an indigenous community inhabiting the states of Assam and Meghalaya and is also found in some parts of Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur.
- They are recognized as a Scheduled tribe within the state of Assam. But they still do not benefit the ST status in the state of Meghalaya.
- They are divided into 2 sub-groups- **Hill Tiwa** and **Plains Tiwa** which have contrasting cultural features:
 - ▶ **Hill Tiwa:** They live in the westernmost areas of Karbi Anglong district. They speak a Tibeto-Burman language.
 - ▶ **Plains Tiwa:** They live on the flatlands of the Southern bank of the Brahmaputra valley. The vast majority speak Assamese as their mother tongue. Their descent system is patrilineal. Their religion shares many elements with Assamese Hinduism but remains specific.
- They practice Jhum or shifting cultivation, where the land is first cleared of any vegetation that is later set on fire (slash-and-burn).

- The main festivals of the Tiwa tribes are: Three Pisu (Bihu), Borot utsav, Sogra phuja, Wanchuwa, Jonbeel Mela, Kabla, Langkhon Phuja and Yangli Phuja.
- Pig is a staple part of their diet and culture.

Wanchuwa festival:

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

5 Chaitra Jatra Festival

Context: The celebration of the annual Chaitra Jatra festival was canceled by the Odisha government due to the outbreak of COVID-19 infection.

Key Facts

- Chaitra Jatra is celebrated at the Tara Tarini hill shrine in the Hindu month of Chaitra.
- Tara Tarini hill shrine is located at Kumari hill on the banks of the Rushikulya river. It is a major center of Shakti worship in Odisha.

6 Makaravilakku Festival Season

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.

About:

- Makaravilakku is an annual festival held on Makar Sankranti in Kerala, at the shrine of Sabarimala. The festival includes the Thiruvabharanam (sacred ornaments of Ayyappan) procession and a congregation at the hill shrine of Sabarimala.

7 Indian Harvest Festivals

- **Makar Sankranti:** The festival of Makar Sankranti (Andhra, Telangana, and Maharashtra) 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 four 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 is 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, the 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

8 Bharat Rang Mahotsav

About:

- Bharat Rang Mahotsav (BRM), the annual **international theatre festival of India** is organized by the National School of Drama (NSD), which was established two decades ago to stimulate the growth and development of theatre across India.
- Originally a national festival showcasing the work of the most creative theatre workers in India, BRM has evolved to international scope, hosting theatre groups from around the world, and is now the largest theatre festival of Asia. To date, BRM was celebrated in New Delhi and has traveled to several cities in India, presenting an overwhelming 1787 plays, and riveted thousands of audiences who basked in the glory of heart-winning stories and superior performances.

9 Manipur Sangai Festival-2019

Context: The State of Manipur celebrates the “Manipur Sangai Festival” from 21st to 30th November.

About:

- The ‘Festival’ is named after the State animal, Sangai, the brow-antlered deer found only in Manipur.
- The State’s classical dance form, ‘Ras Leela’ is quite famous all over the world for its distinctiveness from any other dance forms in India. The Ras Leela will form an important part of the dance performances at the Manipur Sangai Festival besides the various other folk dance performances like the Kabui Naga dance, Bamboo dance, Maibi dance, Lai Haraoba dance, Khamba Thoibi dance, etc. which will be showcased at the festival.
- The festival will also bring to light an array of Manipur’s best indigenous handlooms and handicrafts products. The themed huts of the variety of tribes at the heritage park will represent the living-style of these tribes and exhibit their indigenous products.
- Manipur’s famous martial arts- Thang Ta (a combination Spear & Sword skills), Yubi-Lakpi (a game played with greased coconut-like rugby), Mukna Kangjei (a game that combines hockey and wrestling), and Sagol Kangjei- Modern Polo (believed to have evolved in Manipur) will all form part of the festival.
- Adventure sports activities like trekking, white water rafting, and parasailing, etc. will also form a major part of the festival.

10 Behdienkhlam Festival

Context: Behdienkhlam, one of the most colorful 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.
- Behdienkhlam means **driving away from the plague as “Khlam” means ‘Plague’ and “Beh Dein” means to drive away from the plague.**
- It is celebrated to **invoke the gods for a bumper harvest** and drive away from the 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 colorful 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.

The 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 should 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 to give a cylindrical shape. During functions, they wear crowns of silver and gold with a peak attached at the back of it.
- Apart from the Behdienkhlam festival, **the Laho Dance festivals** also important festivals of the Jaintias.

11 Kumbhabhishegam at Sri Brihadeeswarar Temple

Context: This enormously significant event was held after 23 years.

About:

- The Sri Brahadeeswarar Temple (also spelled Brihadisvara, and called Peruvudaiyar Koyil, which translates simply to ‘Big Temple’) is the most famous of the many temples in Thanjavur. The temple, one of the world’s largest and grandest, was **built between 1003 AD and 1010 AD by the great Chola emperor Raja Raja I (c. 985-1014 AD)** and it is one of the most prominent examples of **Dravidian architecture**.
- **Brihadeswara Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva, is located in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu at the South bank of Kaveri river.**
- It is also known as Periya Kovil, Raja Rajeswara Temple and Rajarajeswaram.

- The temple is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site known as the 'Great Living Chola Temples' with the other two being the 'Temple at Gangaikondacholapuram' and 'Airavatesvara temple at Darasuram'

12 Lai Haraoba Festival

About:

- The 'Lai Haraoba' which translates as '**Festivity of the Gods**' is a native festival of the '**Meiteis**', the majority ethnic group of Manipur.
- Predominantly Hindu Vaishnavites after their forcible conversion in the 18th Century during the reign of King Pamheiba (also known by the Hindu name Garibniwaz), the Meiteis originally had its traditional religion which worshipped 'Shidaba Mapu' or 'Atiya Shidaba' as the supreme god, the creator.
- **Sanamahi, Pakhangba, Nongpok Ningthou, Leimarel, and Panthoibi are some of the major household deities and About: 364 Umang Lais (Jungle deities) are worshiped by the Meiteis.**
- The Lai haraoba is the festivity or the merry-making of these Gods which according to mythical belief was first held at 'Koubru Ching', a hill situated in the northern end of Manipur.
- Four types of Lai Haraoba are prevalent in the Meitei society- Kanglei Haraoba, Chakpa Haraoba, Moirang Haraoba, and Kakching Haraoba.

13 Zo fest

Context: The Mizoram government will be organizing Zo Kutpui (festival) in at least 10 states across India and countries such as the US, Myanmar, and Bangladesh.

About:

- The move is an attempt to unify and strengthen the brotherhood among various Mizo tribes living in different parts of the world.
- The event will witness various cultural programs by different Mizo tribes, besides performance by various artistes belonging to Zo ethnic tribes of Mizoram and the Northeast.

14 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 symbolizes 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, atop **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 the **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 of menstrual hygiene

15 Hornbill Festival

About:

- Hornbill Festival offers a unique opportunity for states to interact and exhibit their cultural heritage in the true spirit of "**Ek Bharat, Shrestha Bharat**".
- **Nagas celebrate this festival to revive, protect, sustain and promote the richness of the Naga heritage and traditions.**
- It occurs from 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 the 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 color 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**.

16 Cherry Blossom Festival

Context: India International Cherry Blossom festival was held in November in Shillong, Meghalaya.

Significance:

- This festival is the **world's only autumn** cherry blossom festival.
- The festival is organized by the Government of Meghalaya's Forest & Environment Department as well as by the Institute of Bioresources & Sustainable Development (IBSD) in collaboration with the 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 this, the festival will also showcase the region's food, wine, and crafts in addition to several cultural events.

17 Chardham Yatra**About:**

- 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 birthplace of the Holy River Ganga**.

- The stone on which King Bhagirath did a 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**

18 Chithirai Festival

Context: The Chithirai festival is celebrated every year at the Meenakshi Temple in Madurai, Tamil Nadu during 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 avatar of Lord Vishnu** entering the **Vaigai River**.
- He travels from his abode in Azhagarmalai 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.

19 Bathukamma Festival

About:

- 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 the 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 the 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

20 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 that 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 kilometers 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.

21 Prayagraj Kumbha Mela 2019

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

About:

- 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 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 the 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 the list was undertaken following a recommendation by the 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 on 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 organized 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 organized in the month of Magh according to the Hindu Calendar.

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

22

Navroz Festival

Context: The Parsi new year, also known as Navroz, is celebrated to mark the beginning of the Iranian calendar.

About:

- Navroz (meaning 'new day') is a 3,000-year-old Zoroastrian tradition which includes a ritual celebration that signals the start of Spring and the Persian new year.
- In more modern times, in A.D. 1079, a king of Iran named Jalaluddin Malekshah started observing it on March 21.
- In the 18th century, a rich tradesman from Surat, Nusservanji Kohyaji, who often travelled to Iran, came to know about Navroz and began celebrating the day back home; that brought the festival to India. Over a period of time, the festival was introduced in India on a wide scale by members of the Parsi community.
- It has been recognized as an Intangible Cultural Heritage by the UNESCO in 2016.

Other festivals as celebration of New Year in other communities or regions

- Navreh (Kashmiri New year)
- Losar (Tibetan New Year)
- Rongali Bihu (Assamese New Year)
- Baisakhi (Punjabi New Year)
- Pohela Boishakh (Bengali New Year)
- Gudi padwa (Marathi & Konkani New Year)
- Puthandu (Tamil New Year)
- Pana Sankranti (Odia New Year)
- Ugadi (Telugu New Year)
- Vishu (Malayali New Year)

INSTITUTIONS & CONFERENCES

1 Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha

Context: The President of India unveiled a statue of Mahatma Gandhi at the Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha in Chennai.

About:

- Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha was established in the year 1918 by Mahatma Gandhi with the sole aim of propagating Hindi in southern states.
- The first Pracharak was Devadas Gandhi son of Mahatma Gandhi.

2 Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), under the Ministry of Culture, is the premier organization **for 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 the 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 the successor of the Asiatic Society of India.
- It regulates all archaeological activities in the country as per provisions of Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Sites & Remains Act, 1958 & Antiquities & Art Treasure Act, 1972

3 Lalit Kala Akademi

About:

- 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 an autonomous organization funded by the Ministry of Culture.
- It was established in 1954. It provides scholarships and fellow program and sponsors and organizes exhibitions in India and overseas.
- It publishes a bilingual journal.

HISTORICAL EVENTS

1 Battle of Koregaon

Context: The 202nd Anniversary of Battle of Koregaon Bhima got organized recently.

Key Facts:

- Bhima-Koregaon, a small village in the Pune district of Maharashtra, has a rich Maratha history. Two hundred years ago, on January 1, 1818, a few hundred Mahar soldiers of East India Company, led by the British, defeated the massive Peshwa army, led by Peshwa Bajirao II, in Koregaon.
- Legend has it that about 500 Mahar soldiers under the East India Company clashed with a 25,000-strong army of Peshwa Bajirao II.
- Mahars, at this point, were considered an untouchable community and were not recruited in the army by the Peshwa.
- This battle has, since, attained legendary stature in Dalit history.
- The Dalits who follow BR Ambedkar view this battle as a victory of Mahars over the injustice and torture meted out to them by the Brahminical Peshwas.
- On January 1, 1927, Bhimrao Ambedkar started the ritual of holding a commemoration at the site of this pillar, one that is repeated every year.
- It's the Ambedkarite Dalits who gather at Bhima Koregaon to pay their respect at the Vijay Sthamb (victory pillar).
- The pillar was erected by the East India Company in memory of those who fought the battle. The names of the Mahar soldiers who unknowingly brought an end to the Peshwa rule in 1818 are inscribed on the pillar.

2 Battle of Kangla Tongbi War

Context: The Platinum Jubilee of the Battle of Kangla Tongbi War was commemorated by Army Ordnance Corps at Kangla Tongbi War Memorial near Imphal.

Key Facts:

- It is considered **one of the fiercest battles of World War II**.
- It was **fought by Ordnance personnel of 221 Advance Ordnance Depot (AOD) on the night of 6/7 April 1944 against Japanese forces**.

- Japanese forces had planned a three-pronged offensive to capture Imphal and the surrounding areas.
- In their attempt to extend their line of communication to Imphal, the 33rd Japanese Division cut in behind the 17th Indian Division at Tiddim (Myanmar) and establishing themselves on the main Kohima- Manipur highway, started advancing towards Kangla Tongbi.
- However, the combatant role of AOD personnel shook the enemy and forced the Japanese to withdraw

3 Nehru-Liaquat Agreement

Context: The debate on The Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) in Parliament included multiple references to the Nehru-Liaquat Pact that was signed in Delhi in 1950.

About:

- The Nehru-Liaquat agreement signed by Jawahar Lal Nehru and Pakistan's Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan is also known as the Delhi Pact.
- It was a bilateral agreement signed between India and Pakistan to provide a framework for the treatment of minorities in the two countries.
- The agreement was signed in the backdrop of large-scale migration of people belonging to minority communities between the two countries in the wake of attacks by the majority communities in their respective territories.

4 Paika Rebellion

Context: President Ram Nath Kovind laid the foundation stone to the memorial being built in memory of the Paika rebellion, a two-hundred-year-old armed revolt against the British East India Company in Odisha.

About:

- It was an armed rebellion that took place **in Odisha against the British East India Company**.
- Paikas were the traditional landed militia of the **Gajapati rulers of Odisha**.
- Paikas owned rent-free land that had been given to them for their military service to the Kingdom of Khurda.
- The British, having established their sway over Bengal Province and Madras Province to the north and south of Odisha, occupied it in 1803.
- The King of Odisha Mukunda Deva-II was a minor then and initial resistance by Jai Rajguru, the custodian of Mukunda Deva-II, was put down brutally.
- Rulers of Khurda were traditionally the custodians of Jagannath Temple and ruled as the deputy of Lord Jagannath on earth. They symbolized the political and cultural freedom of the people of Odisha.
- A few years later, the Paikas under Baxi Jagabandhu, the hereditary chief of the militia army of the Gajapati King, rose in rebellion, taking the support of tribals and other sections of society.
- They attacked British symbols of power, setting ablaze police stations, administrative offices, and the treasury during their march towards Khurda, from where the British fled.
- They were supported by the zamindars, village heads, and ordinary peasants.

PERSONALITIES

1 Sant Ravidas

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

About:

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

2 Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya

Context: The 103rd birth anniversary of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya has been celebrated.

Key facts:

- In **1951, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee founded the Bharatiya Jana Sangh.**
- Upadhyaya devised the **political philosophy of Integral Humanism**, which advocates the simultaneous and integrated program of the body, mind and intellect and soul of each human being.
- For India, he **visualized a decentralized polity and self-reliant economy with the village being the core basis** which thought of India as an independent nation that cannot rely upon western concepts like individualism, democracy, socialism, communism or capitalism.
- Deendayal, just like all strong leaders, **believed in the concept of Swaraj (Self Governance).**

3 Jayaprakash Narayan

Context: Prime Minister paid tribute to Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Narayan on his 117th birth anniversary.

About:

- Upon his return from the United States to India in 1929, he joined the Indian National Congress (Congress Party).
- He took a leading part in the formation of the **Congress Socialist Party, a left-wing group within the Congress Party**, the organization that led the campaign for Indian independence.
- **He was imprisoned by the British again in 1939 for his opposition to Indian participation in World War II on the side of Britain**, but he subsequently made a dramatic escape and for a short time tried to organize violent resistance to the government before his recapture in 1943.
- After his release in 1946, he tried to persuade the Congress leaders to adopt a more militant policy against British rule.
- In 1948 he, together with most of the Congress Socialists, left the Congress Party and **in 1952 formed the Praja Socialist Party**.
- In 1954, he devoted his life **exclusively to the Bhoodan Yajna Movement, founded by Vinoba Bhave**, which demanded that land be distributed among the landless.
- When Indira Gandhi was found guilty of violating electoral laws by the Allahabad High Court. JP Narayan called for Indira and the CMs to resign and the military and police to disregard unconstitutional and immoral orders. He advocated a program of social transformation which he termed **'Sampoorna Kranti' (total revolution) in 1974 against corruption in public life**.
- **Jayaprakash Narayan was posthumously conferred with India's highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna, for his "invaluable contribution to the freedom struggle and upliftment of the poor and downtrodden".**

4 Swami Vivekananda

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

About:

- An important religious reformer in India, Swami Vivekananda is known to have introduced the Hindu philosophies of Yoga and Vedanta to the West.
- **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose had called Vivekananda the "maker of modern India."**
- In his honor, the government of India in 1984 declared his birthday as National Youth Day.
- In 1893, he took the name 'Vivekananda' after Maharaja Ajit Singh of the Khetri State requested him to do so, changing from 'Sachidananda' that he used before.
- Ramakrishna Mission is an organization established by Swami Vivekananda which works in the area of value-based education, culture, health, women's empowerment, youth, and tribal welfare and relief and rehabilitation.

5 Remembering Maharana Pratap, Tagore, and Gokhale

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

Maharana Pratap

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

Rabindranath Tagore

- The 159th birth anniversary of Rabindra Nath Tagore is being celebrated all over West Bengal.
- **Tagore is also known as Gurudev, Kabiguru, and Biswakabi.**
- He released **his first collection of poems under the name Bhanusimha, or Sun Lion** when he was 16.
- He wrote **India's national anthem, Jana Gana Mana and in 1911**, he sang Jana Gana Mana as the opening song for the second day of the Congress Session. It was later adopted as **India's National Anthem.**
- He also wrote **Amar Sonar Bangla, the national anthem for Bangladesh.** The **Sri Lankan national anthem was inspired by his work.**
- While **Rabindra Jayanti is celebrated on May 7 every year, Bengalis observe it on Pochishe Boishakh, the 25th day of the first Bengali month of Boishakh**, and which rarely coincides with May 7.
- He was the **first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913.**

Gopal Krishna Gokhale

- He was a famous social reformer, freedom fighter, scholar and **Mahatma Gandhi's political guru.**
- He was among the most prominent faces in the Indian National Congress (INC) and a strong advocate for constitutional ways of the struggle for gaining independence from the Britishers.
- He also **served as the President of the INC and was elected to the post in 1905.**
- His deep concern for the marginalized section of the society led him to form the **Servants of India Society**, whose members dedicated themselves to lifelong service for the poor and downtrodden. He also worked for the cause of the oppressed in South Africa.
- He persuaded a young Mohandas Gandhi to return to India from South Africa to help the Congress in struggling for India's independence.
- **His rival in the INC was Lokmanya Tilak.** Both the leaders came to represent the moderate and extremist faction in the party.
- His **mentor was Justice M.G. Ranade who had started the Sarvajanic Sabha Journal with the help of Gokhale.**

6

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

Context: The 136th anniversary of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was celebrated on 28 May.

Key Facts:

- **Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was commonly known as Veer Savarkar.** He was a fearless freedom fighter, social reformer, writer, dramatist, poet, historian, political leader, and philosopher.

- **He went through 15 years of torturous imprisonment in the Cellular Jail of Andaman and Nicobar Islands for organizing an armed revolt against the Morley-Minto reforms of 1909.**
- **He was a strong critic of the caste system.** He worked to ensure that children of lower castes attend school.
- He asked the government to abandon the title 'special schools for low caste children' as this title creates a feeling of inferiority among children attending the school.
- He started the first pan-Hindu Ganeshotsav in 1930. The festival was marked by "kirtans" by the untouchables.
- He wrote a song related to the entry of erstwhile untouchables into temples in 1931. It can be translated as "Let me see the idol of God, let me worship God."

7 Sant Ravidas

Context: 642nd Ravidas Jayanti.

About:

- He was the **founder of the Ravidassia religion.**
- People celebrate this day by reading the holy book **Amritbani Guru Ravidass Ji.**
- 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.
- Guru Ravidas spoke against the caste divisions and spoke of removing them to promote unity.
- **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.**
- 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.

8 Ashfaqullah Khan

Context: The UP Cabinet approved a proposal to set aside Rs 234 crore for construction of a zoological garden named after Shaheed Ashfaqullah Khan in Gorakhpur.

Ashfaqullah Khan

- Khan was born on October 22, 1900, in Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh. He grew up at a time when Mahatma Gandhi had launched the non-cooperation movement and urged Indians not to pay taxes to the government or co-operate with the British.
- Within 1.5 years of the movement's launch, in February 1922, the Chauri Chaura incident took place in Gorakhpur — a large number of non-cooperation protestors clashed with the police and set the police station on fire, killing roughly 22 policemen. Opposed to violence, Gandhi called off the movement.

- According to a press release by the Press Information Bureau (PIB), the youth of the country were greatly disappointed and disillusioned with this. Khan was one of these youths. Subsequently, he joined the revolutionaries and became acquainted with Bismil.
- In the mid-1920s, Khan and Bismil went on to found the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA), to win freedom for the country through an armed revolution.

The Kakori Conspiracy

- In August 1925, an armed robbery took place on board the Kakori Express, going from Shahjahanpur to Lucknow, carrying money that had been collected at various railway stations and was to be deposited in Lucknow.
- In this planned robbery, carried out to fund the activities of the HSRA, Bismil, Khan and over 10 other revolutionaries stopped the train and fled with the cash they found in it. Within a month of the robbery, many members of the HSRA were arrested.
- In September 1926, Bismil was arrested but Khan was on the run. According to the PIB release, he hid in a sugarcane field half a mile from his home for sometime, before he left for Bihar and then Delhi, where he was finally arrested. The trial for the case went on for About: 1.5 years. It ended in April 1927, with Bismil, Khan, Rajendra Lahiri and Roshan Singh sentenced to death, and the others given life sentences.

9 Thiruvalluvar

Context: Tamil Nadu's BJP unit tweets picture of Thiruvalluvar with saffron clothes, the statue of poet found vandalized near Thanjavur.

About:

- Thiruvalluvar, commonly known as Valluvar, was a **Tamil saint, poet, and a philosopher**. He is usually shown with a white shawl in the images.
- Many researchers put his birth date between 1st century BC and 2nd century AD.
- Thiruvalluvar's moral philosophy is anthropo-centric since it focuses on life on this earth rather than aspiring for heavenly abode.
- Moreover, he opposed absolutizing and idealizing the problems and making them other-worldly affairs.
- He boldly advocated a life of discipline, self-control, chastity, non-violence, temperance, and devotion.
- He is best known as the author of Thirukkural, a collection of 1330 couplets on ethics, political and economic matters, and love.
- In Thirukkural, through the phrase 'Aadhi Bhagavan', Thiruvalluvar asserted that the Omnipotent and Omnipresent God was Universal.

10 Tipu Sultan

Context: Karnataka Chief Minister said history lessons glorifying Tipu Sultan shall be removed from school textbooks.

About:

- Tipu Sultan became the ruler of the Kingdom of Mysore after the death of his father Hyder Ali in 1782 during 2nd Anglo-Mysore War.

- Tipu Sultan is seen as the fearless “Tiger of Mysore” and a brilliant military strategist who, in a short reign of 17 years, mounted the most serious challenge that the East India Company faced in India.
- However, because of the help given by Nizam of Hyderabad and Marathas, in the 4th Anglo-Mysore War, Tipu was defeated and killed on 4 May 1799 while defending his fort of Seringapatam.
- With Tipu gone, Wellesley imposed the Subsidiary Alliance on the reinstated Wodeyar king, and Mysore became a client state of the East India Company.

SCHEMES & INITIATIVES

1 Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial (Amendment) Bill, 2019

Context: Rajya Sabha passed the Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial (Amendment) Bill, 2019, which seeks to amend the Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Act, 1951, and change the provisions for trustees of the memorial.

Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Act, 1951

- The original Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Act of 1951 was enacted by Parliament for the management of the National Memorial to remember those killed in the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre on April 13, 1919.
- Under the 1951 Act, the Trustees of the Memorial include:
 - ▶ the Prime Minister, as Chairperson,
 - ▶ the President of the Indian National Congress,
 - ▶ Minister-in-charge of Culture,
 - ▶ the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha,
 - ▶ the Governor of Punjab,
 - ▶ the Chief Minister of Punjab, and
 - ▶ three eminent persons nominated by the central government.
 - ▶ As per the National Monuments Act, 1951, the trustees are supposed to be Congress heads.

Features of the Bill:

- The **Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial (Amendment) Bill** sought to amend the **Jallianwala Bagh Memorial Act 1951**.
- The **President of the Indian National Congress** no more has to be a permanent member of the trust.
- The central government can now remove the trustees of the Jallianwala Bagh memorial for any reason even if they haven't completed their term.
- The **Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial (Amendment) Bill** says that **only the leader of the largest opposition party will be made a trustee**; it says there is no leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha.
- The Act provides that the **three eminent persons nominated by the central government will have a term of five years and will be eligible for re-nomination**.

- The Bill adds a provision to allow the central government to terminate the term of a nominated trustee before the expiry of his term without assigning any reason.

The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

- Also known as the Amritsar massacre, took place on 13 April 1919 when Acting Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer ordered troops of the British Indian Army to fire their rifles into a crowd of unarmed civilians in Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar, Punjab, killing at least 400, including 41 children.
- It was **Baisakhi** that day, many villagers gathered and were peacefully protesting the arrest and deportation of two national leaders, Satyapal and Saifuddin Kitchlew and implementation of the Rowlatt Act, which armed the British government with powers to detain any person without trial.

2

Sanjhi- Mujh Mein Kalakar

Context: Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA) will launch the second phase of the Web Campaign Sanjhi- Mujh Mein Kalakar.

About:

- It is an **initiative to document and promote the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) and the diverse cultural traditions of the country by direct public-participation.**
- This is a unique talent search where the participant will showcase their talent in the fields of music, dance, drama, puppetry, folk, and tribal arts, culinary skills, painting, sculpture, etc. The literal meaning of the term SANJHI is "to share" and "to partner", and the cultural traditions of our country has developed and prospered on the notions of harmony.
- The second phase of this campaign, Sanjhi- Mujh Mein Kalakar, has its main focus area- the folk, traditional, customary, social events, and ritualistic art forms- woven as a cultural fabric around the harvest festival season of January. It is celebrated all across the country, known as various nomenclatures like Makar Sankranti, Pongal, Lohri, Bhogali Bihu, Torgya, Uttarayan, Attukkal Pongal, etc.

Sangeet Natak Akademi

The Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA) 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.

3

Eco Circuit

Context: The Ministry of Tourism has inaugurated the project 'Development of Eco Circuit: Pathanamthitta – Gavi – Vagamon – Thekkady' under the Swadesh Darshan scheme.

About:

- 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 Kadamannitta, Eco Log Huts at Peerumedu, Idukki, Approach Roads,

Walking trails, Rain Shelters at Pine Valley Forest, Thekkady, Kumily, MoozhiyarDam, Penstock and Kakki

- The eco-tourism circuit aims to protect the flora and fauna of Pathanamthitta and Idukki districts including places like Gavi, Peerumedu.

4 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.**
- **Ministry/Department:** Ministry of Tourism
- **Objective:** To develop theme-based tourist circuits in the country.
- The duration of the 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 that 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 the 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- Bhuaneshwari- Matabari- Neermahal- Boxanagar- Chotta Khola- Pilak- Avangchaarra** are covered with the total project cost of Rs. 65 Crores.

5 PRASAD Scheme

About:

- The Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) is a government scheme which was into that focuses on identifying and developing the pilgrim sites across the country to enrich the religious tourism experience.

- It was launched by the **Union Ministry of Tourism**.
- It aims at the integrated development of pilgrimage destinations in a planned, prioritized and sustainable manner to provide complete religious tourism experience & also seeks to promote local art, culture, handicraft, cuisine, etc.
- Harness pilgrimage tourism for its direct and multiplier effect upon employment generation and economic development.
- Enhance tourist attractiveness sustainably by developing world-class infrastructure in religious destinations.
- Under it, the 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, the Central Government will provide a 100% fund. For improved sustainability of the project, it also seeks to involve Public-Private Partnership (PPP) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as well.

MISCELLANEOUS

1 UNESCO World Heritage Sites

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

Key facts:

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

UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India:

- There are **38 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India**. The sites are broken down into the following categories: 30 cultural sites, seven natural sites, and one mixed site.

Cultural Sites

- Agra Fort (1983)
- Ajanta Caves (1983)
- Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavihara at Nalanda, Bihar (2016)
- Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi (1989)
- Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park (2004)
- Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (formerly Victoria Terminus) (2004)
- Churches and Convents of Goa (1986)

- Elephanta Caves (1987)
- Ellora Caves (1983)
- Fatehpur Sikri (1986)
- Great Living Chola Temples (1987,2004)
- Group of Monuments at Hampi (1986)
- Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram (1984)
- Group of Monuments at Pattadakal (1987)
- Hill Forts of Rajasthan (2013)
- Historic City of Ahmadabad (2017)
- Humayun's Tomb, Delhi (1993)
- Jaipur City, Rajasthan (2019)
- Khajuraho Group of Monuments (1986)
- Mahabodhi Temple Complex at Bodh Gaya (2002)
- Mountain Railways of India (1999,2005,2008)
- Qutb Minar and its Monuments, Delhi (1993)
- Rani-ki-Vav (the Queen's Stepwell) at Patan, Gujarat (2014)
- Red Fort Complex (2007)
- Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka (2003)
- Sun Temple, Konârak (1984)
- Taj Mahal (1983)
- The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier, an Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement (2016)
- The Jantar Mantar, Jaipur (2010)
- Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai (2018)

Natural Sites:

- Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area (2014)
- Kaziranga National Park (1985)
- Keoladeo National Park (1985)
- Manas Wildlife Sanctuary (1985)
- Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Parks (1988,2005)
- Sundarbans National Park (1987)
- Western Ghats (2012)

Mixed Site

- Khangchendzonga National Park (2016)

2 KEELADI – An Urban Settlement of Sangam Age

Context:

- The Tamil Nadu Archaeology Department (TNAD) has stated that Keeladi excavations reveal Sangam age to be much older than believed earlier.
- Keeladi is a small village near Silaiman on the border between Madurai and Sivagangai districts in Tamil Nadu, and also the site on the banks on Vaigai River where remains of ancient Sangam culture have been found.

Sangam Age:

- Generally, the Age of Sangam is considered between the 3rd century BCE and 3rd century CE. The Sangam Age constitutes an important chapter in the history of South India. According to Tamil legends, **there existed three Sangams (Academy of Tamil poets)** in ancient Tamil Nadu popularly called Muchchangam.
- These Sangams flourished under the royal patronage of the Pandyas.
- **The first Sangam, held at Then Madurai**, was attended by gods and legendary sages but no literary work of this Sangam was available.
- **The second Sangam was held at Kapadapuram** but all the literary works had perished except Tolkappiyam.
- **The third Sangam at Madurai was founded by Mudathirumaran.** It was attended by a large number of poets who produced voluminous literature but only a few had survived.

The historical significance of Madurai:

- It is one of the ancient cities in India that enjoyed continuity in history from Pre-historic times. Due to its cultural prominence, Madurai is described as **“The Athens of South India”**.
- **The Pandyas and their capital city Madurai were well known to the Ancient Greeks and Romans.**
- Megasthenese, the Greek ambassador of Seleukos Nikator at the court of the Chandra Gupta Maurya (320 B.C.), in these accounts gave a vivid picture of a South Indian Kingdoms.
- Strabo (C. 25. B.C.) stated that a Pandya king sent an embassy to the Roman Emperor Augustus.
- Pliny (C. 75 A.D.) mentioned the Pandya, King Pandya and his capital Madurai.
- Ptolemy (C. 130 A.D.) also referred Madurai as the royal city of the Pandyas.
- **The Arthasastra of Kautilya**, while describing the trade between Northern and Southern India, **spoke about the pearls and muslins of the Pandya country.**
- **The astronomer Varahamihir referred to the Pandya kingdom in his Brhatsamhita.**

3 Nankana Sahib

Context: Recently, an incident of violence has been reported from Nankana Sahib.

Key Facts:

- **Nankana Sahib is a city situated in Pakistan’s Punjab province.**
- The shrine is built over the site where **Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was believed to be born in 1469.**

- The city was **previously known as Talwandi and was founded by Rai Bhoi**, a wealthy landlord.
- Rai Bhoi's grandson, Rai Bular Bhatti, renamed the town 'Nankana Sahib' in honor of the Guru.
- The Janam Asthan shrine was constructed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh after he visited Nankana Sahib in 1818-19 while returning from the Battle of Multan.

Other important places

- **Gurdwara Nankana Sahib (Janam Asthan):** Gurdwara Nankana (Janam Asthan) is built at the site of Guru Nanak Dev's birthplace and childhood home. It is the most prominent of all the gurdwaras located in the town of Nankana, Pakistan. It is the host of annual Gur Purab festivities commemorating Guru Nanak's birth which are celebrated on the full moon in the latter part of the year.
- **Gurdwara Bal Lilah:** Gurdwara Bal Lilah is one of several gurdwaras that dot the town Nankana. It is located in an area where Guru Nanak used to play as a boy with his friends.
- **Gurdwara Kiara Sahib:** Gurdwara Kiara Sahib is one of several small gurdwaras in Nankana. It stands on the site of the former pasture where a miraculous incident occurred when Guru Nanak's cattle destroyed a farmer's crops while he meditated.
- **Gurdwara Mall Ji Sahib:** Gurdwara Mall Ji Sahib is one of the smallest gurdwaras in Nankana. It is built site of the former pasture where both the incident of the Jal tree, and Guru Nanak's encounter with a cobra took place. The interior of the gurdwara is decorated with ancient ceramic tiles, About: four inches square, each depicting a cobra.

4 Tulu Language

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

About:

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

5 Urdu Language

Context: Panjab University's Urdu Department objects to being clubbed with foreign tongues.

About:

- Urdu is one of the official languages (under the 8th schedule) under the Constitution of India.
- It is among the 15 Indian Languages written on the Indian Currency notes.

- It is one of the official languages in states like Kashmir, Telangana, UP, Bihar, New Delhi, and West Bengal.
- Urdu is closely related to Hindi. They are very similar to phonology and grammar.
- According to experts, the Urdu language originated and evolved in India from 6th to 13th century A.D.
- All the historical references indicate that the origin of Urdu had taken place in Punjab state of India.
- The main dialects of Urdu are Dehlavi, Rekhta, etc.
- Despite its Persian script, Urdu is an Indian language because there are several examples of Indian languages which are written in scripts derived from outside the country (e.g. Punjabi Shahmukhi language is also written from right to left).
- After its origin in Punjab, Urdu got developed and flourished in Delhi along with part of Haryana state and some states in South where it was developed in the form of 'Dakhni (Deccani) language.

6 Excavation in Nagardhan

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

Key Facts:

- After a 1,500 year-old sealing was excavated for the first time; a new study in Numismatic Digest has tried to understand the **Vakataka rule under Queen Prabhavatigupta**. It bears her name in the Brahmi script, along with the depiction of a conch.
- Nagardhan is a large village in Nagpur district, About: 6 km south of Ramtek taluka headquarters.
- The Nagardhan Fort stands south of present-day Nagardhan village.
 - **Nagardhan is the same as Nandhivardhan, the capital city of the eastern branch of the Vakatakas.**
- This was **constructed during the Gond Raja period and later renovated and re-used by the Bhosales of Nagpur during the late 18th and 19th centuries.**
- It was after archaeological evidence from here that Nagardhan was understood to have served as the capital of the Vakataka kingdom.
- Besides, the scholars have traced archaeological evidence revealing the dynasty's religious affiliations — the types of houses and palaces of the rulers, coins, and sealings circulated during their reign, and their trade practices.

7 Dictionary of Martyrs

Context: Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, released the Dictionary of Martyrs of India's Freedom Struggle.

Key Facts:

- It is a five-volume dictionary, contains an account of the martyrs from India's First War of Independence in 1857, to India's Independence in 1947. This is the first attempt at compiling the

names of martyrs on this scale, an effort, to not only cherish the past but also a way to secure the future.

- The project was commissioned by the Ministry of Culture to the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the uprising of 1857.

8 UNESCO World Heritage Day

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

About:

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

Objective:

- Encourage countries to sign the World Heritage Convention and to ensure the protection of their natural and cultural heritage;
- Encourage States Parties to the Convention to nominate sites within their national territory for inclusion on the World Heritage List;
- Encourage States Parties to establish management plans and set up reporting systems on the state of conservation of their World Heritage sites;
- Help States Parties safeguard World Heritage properties by providing technical assistance and professional training;
- Provide emergency assistance for World Heritage sites in immediate danger;
- Support States Parties' public awareness-building activities for World Heritage conservation;
- Encourage participation of the local population in the preservation of their cultural and natural heritage;
- Encourage international cooperation in the conservation of our world's cultural and natural heritage.

9 Hindi becomes third language in Abu Dhabi courts

Context: Abu Dhabi has included Hindi as the third official language used in its courts, alongside Arabic and English, as part of a move designed to improve access to justice.

More on News:

- According to official figures, the UAE population is estimated to be around nine million of which 2/3rd are immigrants from foreign countries. The Indian community in the UAE, numbering 2.6

million, constitutes 30 percent of the total population and is the largest expatriate community in the country.

10 Early humans lived in northern India 80,000 years ago

Context: An archaeological excavation carried out in the trenches at Dhaba in the upper Son river valley in central India has found evidence of human occupation in this area almost 80,000 years ago.

More on News:

- This finding is important in the face of competing theories on the first presence of human populations in different regions of the world and on human dispersal from Africa.
- About 74,000 years ago, the Toba volcanic super-eruption, centered around Sumatra, is believed to have caused an almost decade-long spell of cold weather- a volcanic winter- across many parts of the Earth. There is an argument that this induced winter not only led to the cooling of the Earth's surface for almost a thousand years since the eruption but also destroyed huge populations of hominins.
- The hypothesis is that the 'volcanic winter' caused a bottleneck in the gene pool of humans because only a few survived who was in Africa at the time. Later, this population is believed to have emerged from Africa and colonized different parts of the world. However, the present study rules out this hypothesis as it implies that a population of early humans inhabited northern India even before the date of the eruption (74,000 years ago) and continued through the period of the devastation and until much later.
- The excavation unearthed a large tool industry spanning the period of the Toba super-eruption. The large Megalithic tools were dated between approximately 80,000 years and 65,000 years and the small tools were dated at approximately 50,000 years suggesting a continuous inhabiting of this region by humans undisturbed by the super-eruption. Further, the similarity of the tools to ones found earlier in Africa and Arabia led the researchers to infer that they were made by Homo sapiens.

11 UNESCO includes Mumbai, Hyderabad in network of 'Creative Cities'

Context: UNESCO has announced that Mumbai and Hyderabad have been included in its network of 'Creative Cities' on the occasion of World Cities Day 2019.

More on News:

- Mumbai has been designated as Creative City of Films and Hyderabad a Creative City of Gastronomy, an official press release said.
- In India, Chennai and Varanasi are UNESCO cities of music while Jaipur is the City of Crafts and Folk Arts.
- By joining the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN), the cities pledge to share their best practices and develop partnerships involving public and private sectors as well as civil society to strengthen creation, production, distribution, and dissemination of cultural activities, goods, and services, it said.
- The network covers seven creative fields: crafts and folk arts, media arts, film, design, gastronomy, literature and music.

12 Geographical Indication (GI) Tags

Dindigul Lock:

- The Dindigul locks are known throughout the world for their superior quality and durability. It is so famous that even the city is called Lock City. The abundance of iron in the region is the main reason for the growth of the lock-making industry.
- The locks are made of iron and brass and are entirely handmade. It takes a couple of days to be made. It is unique as each is designed with different lever pattern.
- These lock manufacturing units are limited to an area of 5 km in and around Dindigul. There are over 50 varieties of locks including mango lock, trick lock, door lock, and bell lock among others. The most interesting ones are the Kolaikaran pootu (burglar lock) which is designed in a manner that a knife would come out if a wrong key is inserted.
- Despite unique features, the lock industry for the last few years has been gradually dying due to stiff competition from Aligarh and Rajapalayam.

Kandangi sarees:

- The famous **bright-colored Kandangi saree**, manufactured in Karaikudi taluk in **Sivaganga district** are spun by skilled weavers in the dimension 60 warp X 60 weft. Highly quality cotton from Coimbatore is used to make the saree. The main characteristic of the saree is its **bright colors** that hold strong.
- **The manufacturers have been facing challenges similar to** Dindigul locks. The market has a plethora of sarees that are woven in other parts of the State and look akin to the Kandangi saree.
- The original Kandangi saree is manually made using a winding machine, loom, shuttle, and bobbin. It is a team effort of the families who live in the town of Karaikudi and it forms part of their livelihood.
- The Kandangi sarees, which are usually around 5.10 meters – 5.60 meters in length, are characterized by the large contrast borders, and some of them are known to have borders covering as much as two-thirds of the saree.

Palani Panchamirtham:

- It is an '**abhishega prasadam**' (food that is a religious offering) for Lord Dhandayuthapani Swamy, the presiding deity of Arulmigu Dhandayuthapani Swamy Temple, situated on Palani Hills, Palani Town in Dindigul District of Tamil Nadu.
- It is a combination of five natural substances, namely, banana, jaggery sugar, cow ghee, honey and cardamom in a definite proportion.
- It is prepared in a natural method without the addition of any preservatives or artificial ingredients and is well known for its religious fervor and gaiety.
- This is the first time a temple 'prasadam' from Tamil Nadu has been bestowed with the GI tag.
- It is prepared under the guidance given by the CFTRI (Central Food Technological Research Institute) Mysore, a government of India undertaking.

Tawlhlohpuan:

- It is a medium to heavy, compactly woven, **good quality fabric from Mizoram** and is known for warp yarns, warping, weaving & intricate designs that are made by hand.
- Tawlhloh, in Mizo language, means '**to stand firm or not to move backward**'.
- It holds high significance in the Mizo society, is produced throughout the state of Mizoram, Aizawl and Thenzawl town being the main center of production.

Mizo Puanchei Mizoram:

- It is a **colorful Mizo shawl/textile**, from Mizoram.
- It is an important marriage outfit in the state.
- It is also the most commonly used costume in Mizo festive dances and official ceremonies.
- The weavers insert the designs and motifs by using supplementary yarns while weaving to create this beautiful and alluring textile.

Tirur Kerala:

- **Tirur betel vine** is mainly cultivated in Tirur, Tanur, Tirurangadi, Kuttippuram, Malappuram and Vengara block panchayaths of Malappuram District, Kerala and is valued both for its mild stimulant action and medicinal properties (remedy for bad breath and digestive disorders).
- It is unique for its significantly high content of total chlorophyll and protein in fresh leaves.
- It is also commonly used for **making pan masala for chewing**.
- Eugenol is the major essential oil in Tirur betel leaf contributing to its pungency.

13	Titanwala Museum
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Context: Union Textiles Minister inaugurated the 'Titanwala Museum' in Bagru that showcases the Chhipa community's hand-block printing.

Hand-block printing of Bagru

- It is a traditional technique of printing with natural color done by the **Chhipa Community** in Bagru village of Rajasthan.
- Traditionally, motifs printed at Bagru are large with bold lines. The motifs include wildflowers, buds, leaves, and printed geometrical patterns.
- **The main colors used in Bagru are Red and Black.**



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