

PRELIMS SAMPORNA

Current Affairs Yearly Compilation

Jan 2021 - Feb 2022

Art & Culture



- 1 All Historial and Cultural Events
- 2 Personalities/Schemes/Awards/Religion
- 3 Tribal & Other Art Forms & Culture
- 4 Dances/Architecture/Places/Languages in News
- 5 Factual and Crisp Prelims Pointers
- 6 Fused Static and Dynamic

PRELIMS SAMPOORNA

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HISTORICAL EVENTS

1. National Mathematics Day 2021

Context: India observes National Mathematics Day every year on December 22 to celebrate the life and work of the eminent Indian mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan.

Who was Srinivasa Ramanujan?

- Srinivasa Ramanujan was born on December 22, 1887, in Tamil Nadu.
- A highly respected mathematician, he was known as ‘The Man who knew infinity’ because of his infinite love and passion as well as contributions made to Mathematics.
- He had won a scholarship to study at Kumbakonam’s Government Arts College, because he had failed in some other subjects because of his focus only on Mathematics and lost the scholarship.

Key-achievements of Srinivasa Ramanujan

- He contributed to journal of Indian Mathematical Society.

Indian Mathematical Society

- The society is the oldest organization in India devoted to the promotion of study and research in mathematics.
- It was founded in April 1907 by V. Ramaswamy Aiyer.
- **Headquarters:** Pune

- Ramanujan worked as a clerk in Madras Port Trust.
- He was further referred by a colleague to Professor GH Hardy of Trinity College, Cambridge University.
- At the age of 26, he was invited to Cambridge University for his statements on the 120 mathematics theorems on the continued fractions, infinite series, number theory, and improper integrals.
- In 1917, Ramanujan was elected to the London Mathematical Society and in 1918 he was elected as a fellow to the prestigious Royal Society for the research done by him on Elliptic Functions and the theory of numbers.
- In October 1917, Mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan became the first Indian to be elected as a fellow of Trinity College.

- After having compiled more than 3,000 mathematical equations and results he returned to the India in 1919 and passed away due to Tuberculosis in 1920.

2.

Paika rebellion cannot be called the first War of Independence: Centre

Context:

- After consulting the **Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR)**, the Central Government clarified that the **Paika rebellion** cannot be called the **first War of Independence**.
- ‘Paika Bidroha’ was set off in March, 1817, and continued until May, 1825.

About Paika Rebellion (1817)

- In 2017, the Odisha state cabinet had passed a proposal to formally urge the centre to declare the Paika rebellion as the first war of Independence.
- The Paiks of Odisha were the traditional landed militia (‘foot soldiers’ literally) who enjoyed rent free land tenures for their military service and policing functions on a **hereditary basis**.
- The extortionist policies of British East India Company caused resentment amongst the Paikas reduced their power and prestige.
- With active support of **Mukunda Deva**, the last Raja of **Khurda**, and other zamindars of the region, **Bakshi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar**, with the help of his **Paika supporters**, started armed struggle against the Company.
- In 1825 he surrendered under negotiated terms.
- The Paikas through this negotiations succeeded in
 - ▶ Getting large remissions of arrears
 - ▶ Reductions in assessments
 - ▶ Suspension of the sale of the estates of defaulters at discretion
 - ▶ A new settlement on fixed tenures
 - ▶ Other adjuncts of liberal governance.

Other Important Civil Uprisings

- Sanyasi Revolt (1763-1800)
- Polygar Rebellion in Tamil Nadu (1799)
- Kol Rebellion (1832)
- Kuka Movement (1840)
- Santhal Hul (1855-1856)
- Munda Ulgulan (1899 – 1900)

The first War of Independence

- **Indian Mutiny or Sepoy Mutiny of 1857** is considered the first war of Independence against **British Rule**.

3.

Swarnim Vijay Varsh Victory Flame arrived in Arunachal Pradesh

Context: The Swarnim Vijay Varsh Mashaal or victory flame arrived at Dahung in Arunachal Pradesh on September 12, 2021 after touring the country.

About Swarnim Vijay Varsh Victory Flame:

- It symbolises India's victory over Pakistan in **1971 War**.
- The flame was flagged off by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 16, 2020 from the National War Memorial in New Delhi.
- It also moved through the villages of Param Vir Chakra (PVC) and Maha Vir Chakra (MVC) awardees of 1971 war.

1971 India-Pakistani War:

- It was a military confrontation between India and Pakistan, in which India fought for Liberation of Bangladesh.
- It resulted in Bangladesh getting freedom.
- It lasted for just 13 days and is the shortest wars in history.

4.

Swami Vivekananda's iconic Chicago speech

Context

- PM recalled Swami Vivekananda's famous speech at the **World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893** and said its spirit has the potential to create a more just, prosperous, and inclusive planet.

Who was Swami Vivekananda?

- Swami Vivekananda was a Hindu monk and a renowned spiritual leaders of India.
- Born Narendranath Dutta, he was the chief disciple of **Ramkrishna** and the founder of **Ramkrishna Mission**.
- Swami Vivekananda is also considered a key figure in the introduction of Vedanta and Yoga to the West and is credited with raising the profile of Hinduism to that of a world religion.
- He carried on the free-thinking philosophy of his guru, **Ramkrishna Paramhansa** forward into a new paradigm.
- He worked tirelessly towards betterment of the society, dedicating his all for his country.
- He was responsible for the revival of Hindu spiritualism and established Hinduism as a revered religion on world stage.
- He gave the message of **universal brotherhood and self-awakening**.



- His birthday, January 12, is celebrated as the **National Youth Day in India**.

- **Institutions:** Ramakrishna Math; Ramakrishna Mission; Vedanta Society of New York
- **Religious Views:** Hinduism
- **Philosophy:** Advaita Vedanta
- **Publications:** Karma Yoga (1896); Raja Yoga (1896); Lectures from Colombo to Almora (1897); My Master (1901)
- **Memorial:** Belur Math, Belur, West Bengal

Key-highlights of the Speech

- Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902) is best known in the United States for the speech given by him in **1893 World's Parliament of Religions**.
- In this speech he,
 - ▶ Introduced **Hinduism to America** and called for **religious tolerance** and an end to fanaticism
 - ▶ Here he mentioned the basic yet most important things that one should follow in life. These things included:
 - being patriotic
 - loving all religions
 - analysing religion
 - being acquainted with science
 - knowing importance and necessity of rituals
 - being aware of roots of Hinduism
 - being aware of the goal of science
 - being aware of the cause of downfall of India
 - being against religious conversions

5.

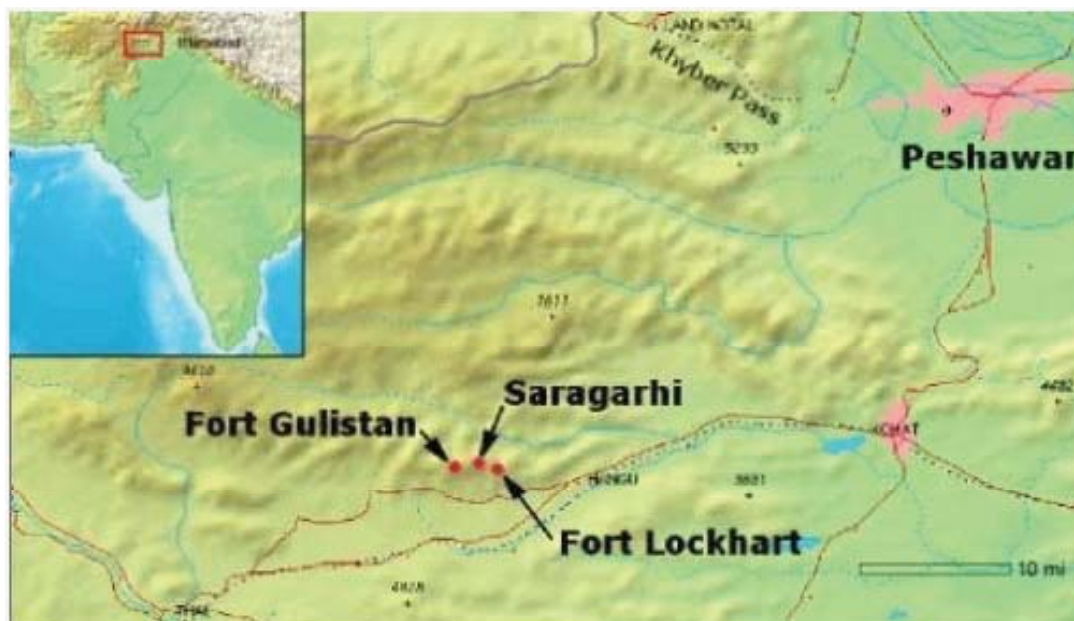
Saragarhi Day 2021: Sikh battle memorial unveiled after years of work.

Context:

- The 124th anniversary of the **Battle of Saragarhi** celebrated on September 12.
- The Battle was fought between the British Indian Army's Sikh Regiment and Afghan tribesmen.

About the Battle

- The 1897 Battle was fought between the British Indian contingent comprising **21 Jat Sikh soldiers** of the 36th Sikhs against 10,000-12,000 Afghans.
- **Contingent of Jat Sikhs was led by:** Havildar Ishar Singh
- **Location:** Saragarhi in Samana Valley in the then North-West Frontier Province
- During this battle, all the 21 soldiers fought till their last breath against the **Afghan hordes**, killing 200 tribals and injuring 600.



UK Unveils Statue Honouring Fallen Soldiers

- This year, on the battle's 124th anniversary, the United Kingdom unveiled a life-size bronze statue of **Havilder Ishar Singh** at **Guru Nanak Gurdwara at Wednesfield**, a suburb of **Wolverhampton**.
- The 10-feet-tall bronze statue of Havilder Ishar Singh has been installed atop a six feet plinth with the names of all martyrs inscribed on it.

Why was Saragarhi important?

- Saragarhi was the **communication tower** between **Fort Lockhart** and **Fort Gulistan** which housed large number of troops in NWFP.
- It was vital to ensuring the survival of these two forts and the defence of the region.

Why is their achievement celebrated?

- The soldiers managed to keep the Afghan attackers at bay for an entire day.
- This bought time for the two other forts to be reinforced and were able to defend themselves upon coming under attack.
- Every year, 12 September is observed as the Regimental Battle Honours Day of the Sikh Regiment of the Indian Army.

Indian Order Merit award

- **Saragarhi** is the only instance in the history of warfare where 21 soldiers were posthumously awarded with **Indian Order Merit**, the highest award given to Indian soldiers at the time (equivalent to today's **Param Vir Chakra**).

6. Partition Horrors Remembrance Day to be observed henceforth on August 14th

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced on August 14, 2021 that, August 14 would now be observed as “Partition Horrors Remembrance Day”.

About Partition Horrors Remembrance Day:

- The day would be observed every year to commemorate the “struggles and sacrifices” of millions of people who were displaced and lost their lives due to Partition.
- On August 14, Pakistan emerged as a political entity after Partition and is observed as Independence Day of Pakistan.
- It seeks to further strengthen the spirit of oneness, social harmony and human empowerment.

7. Kargil Vijay Diwas

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid homage to all the martyrs of Kargil on Vijay Diwas.

About Kargil Vijay Diwas

- Kargil Vijay Diwas is celebrated every year on 26 July, in honour of the **Kargil War’s Heroes**.

Kargil War

- It is also known as the **Kargil conflict** and it was an armed conflict that was fought between **India and Pakistan in 1999 in the Kargil** district of Kashmir and along the Line of Control (LoC).
- Kargil Conflict was termed as **Operation Vijay** by the Indian military.

8. Juneteenth in US

Context: US President Joe Biden signed a law to make June 19 or “Juneteenth” a national holiday recognizing end of slavery after American Civil War.

What is Juneteenth?

- Juneteenth, combination of June and nineteenth, is observed on June 19 every year.
- It is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of end of slavery in America and is known as Emancipation Day or Juneteenth Independence Day

9. New Policy for Declassification of War Histories

Context: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh announced the decision to declassify of War histories.

Key Points about new policy

- This policy will allow the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to archive, declassify, compile and publish war and operations histories.
- The policy though will not automatically lead to de-classification of older wars like of 1962.
- De-classification will be taken up on case-by-case basis by a committee which will be constituted under the new policy.
- As per policy, records should ordinarily be declassified by Ministry of Defence in 25 years.
- Records which are older than 25 years should be appraised by archival experts and transferred to National Archives of India after histories of war or operations have been compiled.
- Committee will take a view on earlier wars and operations. Compiled history on wars and operations will be consumed internally first, within five years.
- After that, the committee may decide to publicly release whole or parts of it based on the sensitivity of subject.

About Committee to be constituted

- As per policy, a committee will be constituted which will be headed by Joint Secretary of MoD.
- It will comprise of representatives of Services, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and prominent military historians for compilation of war & operations histories.
- History Division of the committee will be responsible to coordinate with various departments while compiling, for approval & publishing of war and operations histories.

Why was the decision taken?

- Proposal of having war histories written with clear cut policy on declassification was recommended by Kargil Review Committee headed by K Subrahmanyam and N.N. Vohra Committee to analyse lessons learnt and prevent future mistakes.

10.

The dominance of paddy cultivation in arid Vidarbha, 3000 yrs ago

Context:

- A group of archaeologists has identified extensive cultivation in the semi-arid regions of Vidarbha in Maharashtra.
- It was dominated by rice, some 3,000 years ago.

Iron Age

- Iron Age is recognized as succeeding the **Late Harappan culture**.
- It is characterized by the **Painted Grey Ware culture (1300 to 300 BCE)** and **Northern Black Polished Ware (700 to 200 BCE)**.
- This age corresponds to the transition of the **Janapadas** to the sixteen **Mahajanapadas**.

About the key findings

- Rithi-Ranjana, a site near Nagpur district along the banks of river Kanhan, a tributary of Wainganga was explored.
- Earlier, hoe, sickle, and others tools associated with the Iron Age were explored from this region of Vidarbha.
- The study gives evidence of double cropping and sequential cultivation in the early Iron Age in this region.
- The excavated cereals are rice, wheat, barley, pulses, pigeon pea, horse gram, green gram along gooseberry and other wild berries.
- Around 56 percent of the total cultivation was rice. The other most commonly cultivated crops were pea (19 percent), green gram (17 percent), barley and lentils (4 percent each), and wheat (about 1 percent).

Iron Age sites in Maharashtra

- **Mahurjhari** near Nagpur (bead manufacturing site)
- **Phuggaon** in the Vidarbha region
- **RithiRanjana**, a site about 37km northwest of Nagpur district
- **Naikund, Mahurjhari, Bhagimori and Thakalkat** in the vidharbha region
- The river **Purna**, a major tributary of the river Tapi

11. Guru Arjan Dev martyrdom day

Context: Events were organized on Guru Arjan Dev's martyrdom day. The Shaheedi Diwas of Guru Arjan Dev in 2021 is on June 14.

About Guru Arjan Dev

- The fifth guru of Sikhs, was martyred on June 16, 1606.
- According to the Hindu calendar, the Shaheedi Diwas or the martyrdom day of Guru Arjan Dev is observed on Jeth Sudi 4.
- Born in 1563 in Goindval of Tarn Taran district, Guru Arjan Dev was the first martyr of the Sikh religion and was executed on the orders of Mughal emperor Jahangir.
- The Mughals were afraid of his increasing influence in northern India and the spread of Sikhism.
- He had compiled the first edition of the Sikh scripture Adi Granth, which is now known as Guru Granth Sahib.
- On Guru Arjan Dev's martyrdom day, people often organise religious events where they read Sri Guru Granth Sahib.
- On this day Langars are also distributed in Gurudwara.

12. Shivakumara Swamiji Jayanti

Context: PM Modi paid tribute to **Shivakumara Swamiji**, a prominent **Lingayat** scholar, educator, and spiritual leader on his birth anniversary.

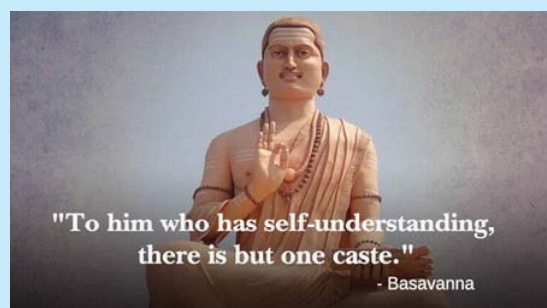
About Shivakumara Swamiji

- Shivakumara Swamiji was known as ‘**Nadedaaduva Devaru or Walking God**’ among his followers
- He was considered as the **incarnation of Basavanna** who was the 12th-century social reformer, as he accepted everyone irrespective of their religion or caste.
- The Swamiji has established around 132 institutions for education and training purposes.
- His triple sacraments or “**Trividha Daasoha**” included - **food, shelter, and education**
- He was also awarded by **Padma Bhushan in 2015**.



Lingayatism

- **Lingayatism** is a Shaivite Hindu religious tradition and considered a Hindu sect as its beliefs include many Hindu elements.
- Some Lingayats recently demanding legal recognition as a religion distinct from Hinduism and Veerashaivas
- **It was** initially known as *Veerashaivas* and since the 12th-century followers of this faith are known as *Lingayats*.
- Lingayatism was founded by the 12th-century philosopher Basava in Karnataka.
- Contemporary Lingayatism is very influential in South India, especially in the state of **Karnataka and Maharashtra**.
- Lingayatism rejects any form of social discrimination based on religion and including the caste system.



13. Poet Sarala Das

Context: Vice President Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu greeted **Odia Adikabi Sarala Das’s 600th birth anniversary** function in Cuttack, Odhisha.

About Sarala Das:

- Sarala Das was among the prominent scholars of **Odia literature**.
- He was the first scholar to write his works in Odia in the 15th century A.D.
- His best-known works include three Odia books: **Mahabharata, Vilanka Ramayana, and Chandi Purana**.
- He also wrote the book **Laxmi Narayana Vachanika**.
- He started writing his Mahabharata in the 15th Century AD under the reign of Kapileswar, otherwise known as Kapilendra, the famous Gajapati king of Odisha. (AD 1435–67).

14. New Jersey recognized the Guru's 400th anniversary as the 'human rights day'

Context: The New Jersey Senate declares the 400th birth anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Sikh master as 'Human Rights and Religious Freedom Day'.

About Guru Tegh Bahadur

- Guru TeghBahadur was the **ninth Guru** of the ten gurus.
- He sacrificed his life through execution in the hands of **Mughal emperor Aurangzeb** in 1675.
- His martyrdom is remembered as **Shaheedi Divas of Guru TeghBahadur** every year on **24 November**.
- It is based on the **Nanakshahi calendar** which was released by the **Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee** in 2003.



About the Sikh Gurus:

- **Guru Nanak:** He was the first guru of Sikhs and gave the first teaching and true meaning to Sikhism. He is known as the founder of the religion.
- **Guru Angad:** He was the second guru and popularized the Gurumukhi script.
- **Guru Amar Das:** He established the Manji and Piri System of religious missions. He also asked Akbar to ban the toll levied from non-muslim travelers.
- **Guru Ram Das:** He composed the four Lawans of the Anand Karaj which is a distinct marriage code for Sikh. He laid the foundation of Amritsar City.
- **Guru Anjan:** He was the 5th Guru and compiled the Guru Grant Sahib, the holy text of Sikhism. He was executed by Jahangir, the Mughal emperor.
- **Guru Har Gobind:** He started the practice of the Sikh army – saint warriors.
- **Guru Har Rai:** The 7th guru fought against the atrocities of Muslim rulers.
- **Guru Har Krishan:** He was the youngest and for the smallest duration. He died due to smallpox.
- **Guru Tegh Bahadur:** He was the second last guru and was executed by Aurengzeb.
- **Guru Gobind Singh:** He was the last guru and was assaulted by Wazir Khan, a Mughal emperor.

15. Connection of Indus Valley Civilization to Bengal

Context: Researchers have recently unearthed many links which show that Chandraketugarh, a 2,500-year-old site in West Bengal, was linked to international trade in the Indus Valley Civilisation.

About the King Chandraketu and Chandraketugarh:

- Recent discoveries suggest that **Sandrocottus** was the name **Megasthenes**, used for King Chandraketu.

- ▶ **Chandraketugarh (Fort of Chandraketu)**, often called “the city that never existed”.
- ▶ It was once reportedly an important coastal hub in international trade, between 4th Century BCE and 12th Century CE.
- ▶ The archaeological site is over 2,500 years old and is located near the Bidyadhari River, which is around 35 kilometers northeast of Kolkata, in North 24 Parganas, near Berachampa and the Harua Road railhead.



- **Indus Valley Civilization Connect:** Some of the terracotta items date back to the Indus Valley Civilisation.
 - ▶ A wide variety of **figurines, animals, toy-carts, erotic depictions, narrative plaques depicting sceneries of harvest, aquatic motifs**, among others, have been unearthed.
 - ▶ The female figurines are adorned with intricate headdresses, earrings, pendants, and other accessories that show the stellar craftsmanship of the civilization.
 - ▶ A pair of terracotta rattles in the form of Indian male nature spirits, called yakshas and (right) Coins unearthed at Chandraketu.

Indus Valley Civilisation (IVC)

- The **Indus Valley Civilisation (IVC)** was a **Bronze Age** civilization in the north-western regions of South Asia.
- It lasted from **3300 BCE to 1300 BCE, and in its mature form from 2600 BCE to 1900 BCE.**
- Together with ancient **Egypt and Mesopotamia**, it was one of three early civilizations of the Near East and South Asia.
- Its sites spanning an area stretching from **northeast Afghanistan, through much of Pakistan, and into western and north-western India.**
- It flourished in the basins of the Indus River.
- The Indus civilization is also known as the **Harappan Civilisation**, after its type site, Harappa, the first of its sites to be excavated early in the 20th century.

16.

Sikh fighter pilot memorial in U.K. to honour Indians who fought in World Wars

Context: A statue of the legendary Hardit Singh Malik, the first Indian fighter pilot of the Royal Flying Corps, will be erected at Southampton, a city in South East England, in memory of all Indians who fought in the World Wars.

About Hardit Singh and his contribution in World War

- The legendary **World War I** hero, Hardit Singh Malik was the world's first Royal Flying Corps (now the Royal Air Force) Sikh.
- Malik is famous as the '**Flying Sikh**'. Among his other nicknames is the 'Flying Hobgoblin'.
- Hardit Singh Malik studied from **Balliol College at the University of Oxford in 1908**.
- He later on became the Indian Ambassador to France after a long and distinguished career in the Indian Civil Service.
- He was also leader of the Indian delegation when the United Nations General Assembly was held in Paris.
- **Honour:** In April 1956, he was decorated as a **Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour** by the **President of France**, René Coty.

World War I

- It is also called **First World War** or **Great War**.
- It was an international conflict that in 1914–18 embroiled most of the nations of Europe along with Russia, the United States, the Middle East, and other regions.
- The war pitted the Central Powers—mainly Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey—against the Allies—mainly France, Great Britain, Russia, Italy, Japan, and, from 1917, the United States.
- It ended with the defeat of the Central Powers.

World War II

- The **Second World War**, conflict involved virtually every part of the world during the years 1939–45.
- The principal belligerents were the Axis powers—Germany, Italy, and Japan—and the Allies—France, Great Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union, and, to a lesser extent, China.

Important facts about the memorial

- The memorial will be dedicated to black and ethnic minority service personnel who fought for Britain and lost their lives in the World Wars.
- The statue and plinth are going to be almost 17 feet tall and it is planned to be installed by April 2023.

17.

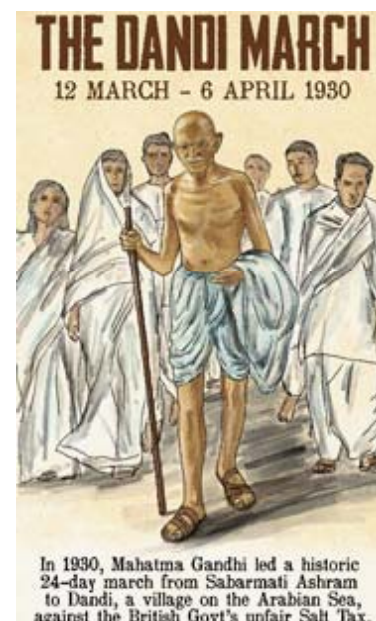
91st anniversary of the historic 'Dandi March' led by Mahatma Gandhi

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off a symbolic 386-kilometer '**Dandi march**', following the same route to commemorate the historic Dandi March.

About the Dandi March

- Dandi March was a **24-day march from March 12 to April 5, 1930**.
- **Objective:** It was a **tax resistance campaign** against the British salt monopoly.
- It marked the **inauguration of the civil disobedience movement**.

- **Principal:** The march was based on **Gandhi's principle of non-violence or Satyagraha.**
- **An organized movement:** The Dandi march was the most significant organized movement against the British Raj after the non-cooperation movement of the early 1920s.
- A group of **78 men**, who were bona fide ashramites, accompanied him during the march.
- The diversity was social as well as geographical, for among the chosen marchers were many students and khadi workers, several 'untouchables', a few Muslims and one Christian.”
- **Significance:** It is considered truly a turning point in the Indian Independence movement.
- **End of movement:** In 1931, Mahatma Gandhi was released and met Lord Irwin who wanted to put an end to the civil disobedience movement.
- As a result, **the Gandhi-Irwin pact** was signed, the civil disobedience movement was halted and Indians were allowed to make salt for domestic use.
- Arrested Indians were also released.
- The Second Round Table Conference was attended by Mahatma Gandhi in London.



Why did Gandhi call for the Dandi March?

- **To break the monopoly:** The **1882 Salt Act** gave the British a monopoly in the manufacture and sale of salt. Even though salt was freely available on the coasts of India, Indians were forced to buy it from the colonizers.
- **Symbol of unity:** Gandhi saw salt as a symbol of unifying power as it was the most common element among all the individuals.

Some other similar initiatives at the time of Salt Satyagraha

- **Tax breaks:** Apart from the salt tax, several other unpopular tax laws were also disobeyed including the forest laws, chowkidar tax, land tax, etc.
- In Salt Satyagraha, thousands of women also participated, people boycotted foreign materials like clothes, Liquor shops were picketed.
- There were strikes all over.

Several marches continued and salt was produced illegally in Assam and Andhra Pradesh-

- **In South India:**
 - ▶ Similar march was started by **C Rajagopalachari** on the south coast from Trichy to Vedaranyam in Tamil Nadu.
 - ▶ He was also arrested for making salt.
 - ▶ In the Malabar region, **K Kelappan** led a march from Calicut to Payyanur.
- **In North India**
 - ▶ Another Satyagraha was organized in Peshawar, led by Mahatma Gandhi's disciple, **Ghaffar Khan.**
 - ▶ He was arrested in April 1930.

- On 21 May 1930, **Sarojini Naidu** led a protest against the Dharsana Salt Works by non-violent protestors. To suppress the movement, Britishers lathi-charged the protestors which resulted in the deaths of two and several protestors were injured.

18. Inscription on Vijayanagar king's death discovered

Context: The first-ever epigraphical reference to the date of death of Vijayanagar king Krishnadevaraya has been discovered at Honnenahalli in Tumakuru district of Karnataka.

What does the inscription tell?

- Krishnadevaraya, one of the greatest emperors of India who ruled from the South, died on October 17, 1529, and incidentally this day was marked by a lunar eclipse.

About Krishnadeva Raya

- Krishnadevaraya was born to Nagala Devi and Tuluva Narasa Nayaka.
- The Tulava dynasty was founded by Krishnadevaraya's father and Krishnadevaraya was the third ruler in this dynasty.
- Tulavas were staunch Vaishnavites.
- Krishnadevaraya is also known as Andhra Bhoja and Kannada Rajya Ramana in honor of his victories and conquests of lands in the Krishna-Tungabhadra basin
- He built the Vithalaswamy temple and the Hazar Rama Temple in the Hoysala style of architecture.
- He took active steps to promote agriculture by building dams and irrigation canals.
- He set up a system of provincial government with himself as the absolute head and with trusted aides as governors of smaller provinces.
- He had 8 Telugu scholars and poets in his court, collectively called Ashtadiggajas.



Vijayanagara Empire

- Vijayanagara had 4 dynasties: Sangama, Saluva, Tuluva and Aravidu
- Hampi (once its capital) is world famous UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Vijayanagar was created as the 31st district of Karnataka recently.
- It is located in Raichur Doab between Tungabhadra and Krishna

19. Narmadapuram will be the new name of Hoshangabad

Context:

- The Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, has announced the renaming of Hoshangabad city of MP as Narmadapuram.

- He said that, the proposal to change the name will be sent to the centre.

About Hoshangabad

- Hoshangabad city was named after Hoshang Shah, who was the first ruler of Malwa.
- Geographically it is located in the Berar region.
- It is well known for its beautiful ghats along the river Narmada River.
- Most visited place in this district is the Sethani ghat.

About River Narmada

- River Narmada is considered to be the lifeline of Madhya Pradesh.
- The river flows in Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat.
- Origin of the River is from the Amarkantak Plateau in the Anuppur district of Madhya Pradesh.
- It is considered to be the geographical divide between North and South India.
- River Narmada flows from East to West.
- It is the 5th largest river in India.
- It flows through the rift valley and forms an estuary at its mouth.
- Important cities located on its banks are Jabalpur, Maheshwar, Omkareshwar Narsinghpur and Jhabua.
- It drains into Arabian Sea through the Gulf of Khambhat.

20. Guru Ravidas Jayanti

Context: The country observed Guru Ravidas Jayanti on February 16, 2022.

About the festival:

- This festival is celebrated in North India, specifically in Punjab.
- The day marks the birthday of mystic poet-saint of India, Ravidas.
- It is observed as Magh Purnima.

About Guru Ravidas:

- Guru Ravidas (Bhagat Ravidas) was a renowned saint, who is remembered for his contribution to Bhakti movement.
- He was contemporary to saint Kabir.
- Guru Ravidas was born in Seer Goverdhanpur village in Uttar Pradesh in poor family.
- He advocated human rights.
- Guru Ravidas was a progressive thinker.
- He took upon himself to spread the message of equality through his poems and teachings based on spirituality.
- His written verses are included in Sikh scriptures "Guru Granth Sahib".
- Meera Bai recognised Guru Ravidas as her spiritual guide.
- He is considered as the founder of the Ravidassia sect.

When this day is celebrated?

- Guru Ravidas Jayanti is observed on the full moon of Magh month, according to Hindu calendar.

21. Fossils of 'Dickinsonia' found at Bhimbetka

Context: Researchers have discovered three fossils of the earliest known living animal, the 550-million-year-old 'Dickinsonia', on the roof of the **Bhimbetka Rock Shelters**.

Features of the fossil finding

- It has **white leaf-like patches with a central vertebra** (central midrib) and connecting veins.
- The discovery can be seen right at the beginning of the '**Auditorium Cave**', the first of such caves at Bhimbetka, a UNESCO heritage site.

Bhimbetka Caves

- The **Bhimbetka rock shelters** are an archaeological site in central India.
- It spans the prehistoric **Paleolithic and Mesolithic periods**, as well as the historic period.
- It exhibits the **earliest traces of human life in India and evidence of the Stone Age**.
- It is located in the Raisen District in the Indian state of **Madhya Pradesh** about 45 kilometers (28 mi) south-east of Bhopal.
- It is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.

22. 'Chauri Chaura' Centenary Celebrations on 4th February

Context: 4th February 2021 marks the 100th year celebration of Chauri Chaura at Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh.

About Chauri Chaura Incident

- The '**Chauri Chaura**' incident is a landmark event in the country's fight for independence.
- The **incident** took place on 4 February 1922 at Chauri Chaura in the Gorakhpur district of the United Province (modern Uttar Pradesh) in British India.
 - ▶ During this a large group of protesters participating in the **Non-cooperation movement**, clashed with police who opened fire.
 - ▶ In retaliation the demonstrators attacked and set fire to a police station, killing all of its occupants.
 - ▶ The incident led to the death of three civilians and 22 policemen.
- Mahatma Gandhi, who was strictly against violence, halted the non-co-operation movement on the national level on 12 February 1922, as a direct result of this incident.

23. Parakram Diwas**Context:**

- Government of India has announced that the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose is to be celebrated as "Parakram Diwas".

- Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was born on January 23, 1897.
- A Year-long celebrations of 125th birth anniversary year of Netaji will be observed by the country.

Facts about Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose:

- He was born in Cuttack.
- He acquired a degree in philosophy and was later selected for the Indian Civil Services. But he refused to join as he did not want to serve the British Government.
- A newspaper called 'Swaraj' was written by him.
- A book titled "The Indian Struggle" was written by him and it covers the Indian Independence movement between 1920 and 1942.
- He had served as the general secretary and also the President of the Indian National Congress.
- In 1938 (Haripura) and 1939 (Tripuri) he was appointed as the President of Congress. He resigned from Presidency at the Tripuri Session due to his differences with Mahatma Gandhi.
- He formed the All India Forward Bloc as a part of the Indian National Congress in 1939.
- Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose led the Indian National Army from Japan.
- The Indian National Army supported the Japanese army in their invasion of Northeast India. They together took control of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

24. 125th anniversary celebrations of 'Prabuddha Bharata'

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the 125th anniversary celebrations of 'Prabuddha Bharata', a monthly journal of the Ramakrishna Order.

About 'Prabuddha Bharata'

- The journal 'Prabuddha Bharata' has been an important medium for spreading the message of India's ancient spiritual wisdom.
- **It was started by** Swami Vivekananda in the year 1896
- Its publication was started from Chennai, in April 1899.

25 Malabar Rebellion

Context: 20th August marks the beginning of the centenary of **Malabar rebellion** which has been considered as one of the most significant movements in the Malabar region of Kerala prior to Independence.

What is the Moplah rebellion?

- It had been an uprising of Muslim tenants against British rulers and local Hindu landlords.
- It has often been perceived as one of the first nationalist uprisings in southern India. It has even been described as a peasant revolt.
- The uprising, which began on August 20, 1921, went on for several months marked by many bouts of bloodstained events.

26. Quit India Movement Day

Context: The Quit India Movement Day was celebrated on 8 August, by paying tribute to freedom fighters who laid their lives for the country.

About the Quit India Movement Day

- The Quit India Movement was launched by **Mahatma Gandhi** on August 8, 1942, at the **Bombay session** of the **All India Congress Committee (AICC)**.
- **Different names:** Bharat Chhodo, August Kranti or August Movement.
- The movement was launched by Mahatma Gandhi and gave a call 'do or die'.
- In the early hours of the morning of **9 August 1942**, most of the leaders of the congress including **Mahatma Gandhi, Abdul Kalam Azad, Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and Jawaharlal Nehru** were arrested and were lodged in different parts of the country.
- The Congress was banned and there were hartals and processions in every part of the country.
- **Lord Linlithgow**, the then Viceroy of India, adopted the **policy of violence** to stop the movement.
- There were firings, lathi charges, and arrests throughout the country.
- The resolution for the movement declared for the immediate ending of British rule in India.
- Parallel governments were running in some parts of the country such as Balia in the U.P., Tamluk in Bengal, Satara in Maharashtra, Dharwar in Karnataka, and Balasore and Talcher in Orissa.

Short story of Quit India Movement

- **Launched by:** Mahatma Gandhi
- **Date:** August 8, 1942
- **Slogan:** do or die
- **Then Viceroy of India:** Lord Linlithgow
- **Involved leaders:** Abdul Kalam Azad, Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and Jawaharlal Nehru

Causes behind the movement

- The collapse of **Cripps Mission** to discuss the British Government's Draft Declaration on the Constitution of India.
- Unconditional support in **World War II** by British India.
- Economic downturn due to **World War II**.
- The anti-British and full-independence sentiments
- Several mass movements All India Kisan Sabha and Forward Bloc set the radical tone for the movement to take place.

27. Archaeological evidence of new human species found in Israel

Context: Archaeologists have discovered new human species in Israel.

About the new find:

- Excavations done at Israeli site of Nesher Ramla has led to discovery of a skull which might represent a late-surviving example of a distinct Homo population.
- This species is estimated to have lived about 420,000 to 120,000 years ago.

What was discovered?

- Archaeologists discovered pieces of skull, including a right parietal (towards the back/side of the skull).
- They also discovered a mandible (jaw) which dates back to 140,000–120,000 years old. Analysis finds that, this jaw belonged to person who were neither fully Homo sapiens nor were Neanderthal.

28. Pulakeshin II victory over Harshvardhana

Context: On the Day of lunar eclipse 1,402 years ago, in 619AD, **Pulakeshin II**, ruler of the **Chalukya dynasty**, asked for a **copper-plate inscription** that would eulogise his victory over Emperor **Harshvardhana**, ruler of the **Vardhana dynasty**.

About the Inscriptions

- Researchers from the **Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (BORI)**, which houses South Asia's largest collection of manuscripts and rare texts, claim to have fixed the date of Emperor Harshavardhan's defeat to the **Chalukya King Pulakeshin II** by decoding a copper plate, owned by Mumbai-based Raghuvveer Pai.
- It was believed that the battle occurred sometime between 612 AD and 634 AD. But now, thanks to this new copper plate, it can be ascertained definitively to have taken place in 619 AD.
- The plate is also useful in fixing the details of the coronation of **Pulakeshi II** in 610-611 AD.
- The plate further records the grant of 50 'nivarthanas' (a unit of land) by Pulakeshin from the village **Brahmana-Vataviya** (in modern-day Paithan Taluka of Aurangabad) to a **Vedic scholar, Nagasharma**.

About the war

- Pulakeshin, who ruled from the Chalukyan capital of Badami, challenged Harsha's conquests.
- Unwilling to tolerate the existence of a powerful rival in the south, Harsha had marched from Kanauj with a huge force, but got defeated at the hands of Pulakeshin II
- Such was Pulakeshin's efficiency in guarding the passes of the Narmada that Harsha was compelled to accept the river as the demarcation and retire from the battlefield after losing most of his elephant force.

The Chalukyas of Badami

- The Chalukyas were a great power in southern India between **6th and 8th century A.D.**
- **Pulakesin I**, the first great ruler of this dynasty ascended the throne in 540 A.D. and having made many splendid victories, established a mighty empire.
- **Pulakesin II**, the son of Kirtivarman, was one of the greatest rulers of the Chalukya dynasty and he ruled for almost 34 years.
- In this long reign, he consolidated his authority in Maharashtra and conquered large parts of the Deccan.
- His greatest achievement was his victory in the defensive war against **Harshavardhana**.
- However, he was defeated and killed by the **Pallav king Narasimhavarman in 642 A.D.**

Harshavardhana

- With the commencement of the 7th century, **Harshavardhana (606-647 A.D.)** ascended the throne of Thaneshwar at Kanauj on the death of his brother, Rajyavardhana.
- By 612 A.D., Harshavardhana consolidated his kingdom in northern India.
- Harshavardhana is well known for his religious toleration, able administration and diplomatic relations.
- He maintained diplomatic relations with China and sent envoys, who exchanged ideas of the Chinese rulers and developed their knowledge about each other.
- The **Chinese traveller, Hiuen Tsang**, who visited India during his reign, has given a vivid description of the social, economic and religious conditions, under the rule of Harsha spoke highly of the king.

29. 100 years since Tulsa race massacre

Context: 31st May, 2021 marked the 100th anniversary of the **Tulsa race massacre**.

About the Massacre

- In the massacre, a violent mob of Tulsa's White residents attacked a prosperous Black neighbourhood, killing hundreds and leaving the locality in ashes.
- The Tulsa race massacre occurred in **Tulsa, Oklahoma**, beginning on May 31, 1921, and lasting for two days.
- The massacre left somewhere between 30 and 300 people dead, mostly African Americans, and destroyed Tulsa's prosperous Black neighbourhood of Greenwood.
- The massacre was one of the most severe incidents of racial violence in U.S. history, but it was barely mentioned in history books until the late 1990s, when a state commission was formed to document the incident.

The attack on Greenwood

- The 1921 Attack on Greenwood was one of the most significant events in **Tulsa's history**.
- Following **World War I**, Tulsa was recognized nationally for its affluent **African American community** known as the **Greenwood District**.
- This thriving business district and surrounding residential area was referred to as "**Black Wall Street**."
- In June 1921, a series of events nearly destroyed the entire Greenwood area.

What is genocide?

- According to **Article II** of the **UN Convention on Genocide** of December 1948, genocide has been described as carrying out acts intended "to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group".
- Recently, Joe Biden has become the **first US President** to declare formal recognition of the Armenian genocide, more than a century after the mass killings by Ottoman troops and opening a rift between the new US administration and Ankara.

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1. Pandit Bhimsen Joshi Jayanti

Context: The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has remembered **Pandit Bhimsen Joshi** on his 100th birth anniversary.

About Pandit Bhimsen Joshi :

- Pandit Bhimsen Joshi Born in 1922 at Ron, Gadag district, Karnataka, Bhimsen Joshi was the eldest among 16 children born to Gururaj Joshi and Godavaribai.
- Bhimsen Gururaj Joshi (1922 – 2011), also known by the honorific prefix Pandit, was one of the greatest Indian vocalists from Karnataka, in the Hindustani classical tradition.
- He is known for the khayal form of singing, as well as for his popular renditions of devotional music (bhajans and abhangs).
- Joshi belongs to the Kirana gharana tradition of Hindustani Classical Music.
- He also used to sing popular renditions of devotional music.
- He is remembered for his famous ragas including Shuddha Kalyan, Miyan Ki Todi, Puriya Dhanashri and Multani etc.
- In the years 1964 to 1982 he visited Afghanistan, France, Italy, USA and Canada for concerts.
 - ▶ His concerts were advertised by posters in New York. This happened for the first time for a musician from India.
- He also organised the Sawai Gandharva Music Festival annually. This was organised as homage to his guru, Pandit Sawai Gandharva.
 - ▶ He found his guru Pandit Sawai Gandharva at Kundagol, Dharwad district.
- When All India Radio opened a station in Dharwad in 1950, the inaugural song Vande Mataram was sung by Pandit Bhimsen Joshi, Gangubai Hangal, Mallikarjun Mansur and Basavaraj Rajguru.

Awards:

- He was awarded the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship in the year 1998.
 - ▶ It is the highest honour which is conferred by the Sangeet Natak Akademi.
- In the year 2009 he received India's highest civilian honour, Bharat Ratna.

2. Lala Lajpat Rai 157th Birth Anniversary

Context: Every year **28th January** is observed as the birth anniversary of **Lala Lajpat Rai** remembering his struggle for the freedom of the nation.

About Lala Lajpat Rai:

- Lala Lajpat Rai was one of those renowned freedom fighters whose contribution is immense as far as the independence of the nation is concerned.
- He is fondly known for its triumvirate 'Lal-Bal-Pal'. The other two being Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal.

Early Life:

- He belonged to a small village named **Dhudike in Ferozepur district of Punjab** and was born on **28th January 1865**.
- The name of his father was **Munshi Radha Krishna Aggarwal** who was a **Persian government teacher** and the name of his mother was **Gulab Devi**.
- He studied law at **Government College, Lahore** and practiced it at **Lahore and Hisar**.
- Because of his birth in Punjab and his great struggle for the freedom of the nation, he was **known as Punjab Kesari or 'Lion of Punjab'**.



Contribution in India's independence:

- At the age of 16, he joined the **Indian National Congress (INC)** and participated in various political agitations.
- **In 1907**, as a result of his agitations, he was deported to **Burma without trial**. But he was sent back within months because of the lack of evidence.
- **In 1917**, he founded the **Home Rule League of America in New York**. Through these international movements he tried to generate international support for the independence of the nation.
- He believed in **Purna Swaraj**, which is the complete independence of the nation.
- He was a member of **Hindu Mahasabha** as well. He also **opposed the partition of Bengal**.
- **In 1920**, he chaired a **National Conference of the All India Trade Union Congress** as its **President**.
- **In 1920**, he was elected as the **President of the Indian National Congress**.
- **In 1920**, at the **Nagpur session of Congress**, he was in support of the **Non Cooperation Movement led by Gandhiji**.
- He stood against the **Rowlatt Act and Jallianwala Bagh massacre**.
- **In 1926**, he was elected as the **Deputy Leader of the Central Legislative Assembly**. Before this he was in prison from **1921-1923**.
- **In 1928**, a resolution was released by him in the assembly regarding **no cooperation with the members of the Simon Commission** because there were no Indian members in it.

- In 1928, Lala Lajpat Rai was brutally Lathi charged by Superintendent of Police James Scott while protesting against the Simon Commission in Lahore. Then, after sustaining it for a few weeks he died because of injuries on 17th November 1928.

3. Kathak legend Birju Maharaj passes away

Context: Legendary Kathak dancer Brijmohan Mishra popularly known as Pandit Birju Maharaj passed away.

Who was Pandit Birju Maharaj?

- Birju Maharaj (1938-2022) was a leading exponent and torch-bearer of Kathak dance form.
- He was an excellent singer with a strong grip over Thumri, Dadra, Bhajan and Ghazals.
- He gave his first performance at the age of seven. Pandit Birju Maharaj is not only a Kathak dancer but also a sensitive poet and captivating orator.
- Pandit Birju Maharaj was an exponent of the Kalka-Bindadin Gharana of Lucknow. Pandit Birju Maharaj received India's second-highest civil honour, the Padma Vibhushan, in 1984 for his contributions in the field of dance.

Awards:

- Padma Vibhushan,
- Sangeet Natak Akademi Award,
- Kalidas Samman,
- National Film Award for Best Choreography,
- Filmfare Award

Important facts about Kathak dance form

- Kathak is a major Indian dance which originates from the northern part of India. It is one of six Indian classical dance forms.
 - ▶ **Others are:** Bharatanatyam, Kathakali, Manipuri, Kuchipudi and Odissi.
- Kathak comes from the word Katha which means story.
- This form of dance has its origins to the time of the bards who used to occupy the ancient part of North India. Kathak in those days were the storytellers.
- Gradually the 16th century saw the performance being promoted to another art with the introduction of the Persian and Central Asian kind of dance forms in it. These originated from the era of the Mughals and thus the Kathak dance came to be.
- Kathak dance has three major important Gharanas –
 - ▶ **the Jaipur Gharana**
 - ▶ **the Lucknow and Banaras Gharana**
 - ▶ **the Rajgarh Gharana**

4. PM Modi pays tributes to Tamil poet Thiruvalluvar

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tributes to Thiruvalluvar on the occasion of Thiruvalluvar Day, observed to mark the birth anniversary of Tamil poet and philosopher.

About the Day:

- Thiruvalluvar Day is observed to honour his contribution either on January 15 or 16 as a part of the Pongal celebrations.
- The day is quite similar to Raksha Bandhan where women pray for the well-being of their brothers.
- The women perform the rituals in the morning. Rice is put at the centre of a leaf as a part of the ritual while the women ask for the well-being of their brothers.
- This is followed by an Arati and turmeric water is sprinkled on the “kolam”.

Who was Thiruvalluvar?

- Thiruvalluvar was a renowned philosopher and poet who was said to have lived in the **4th century BCE**.
- His contribution to Tamil literature is immense, which is echoed through his works that continue to inspire people to this day.
- Thiruvalluvar is regarded as a cultural icon. His most popular work is a collection of couplets on politics, ethics, economy, and love, called “**Thirukkuaaa**”.
- A beautifully sculpted statue of the famed scholar exists in the city of Chennai.
- Recognised as the greatest Tamil scholar, a resolution to celebrate the day was passed on 17 January 1935.

5. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya birth anniversary

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid his tributes on the **160th birth anniversary** of **Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya**, who was a great educationist and politician.

About Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya

- Madan Mohan Malaviya was **born on December 25, 1861**, in Allahabad.
- He was a **famous Indian scholar, educational reformer, and politician** known for his **major role in India’s independence movement**.
- He was given the title of ‘Mahamana’ or **great soul by Mahatma Gandhi, who considered him as an elder brother**.
- After working as a teacher during his initial days, Malaviya was drawn towards politics and joined the **Indian National Congress (INC) in 1886**.
 - ▶ Later, he rose up the ranks and was appointed as the **INC President four times in 1909, 1913, 1919, and 1932**.
 - ▶ One of the most famous slogans, ‘**Satyamev Jayate**’ was said by Pandit Malviya in the session of **1918** when he was the **President of the Indian National Congress**.

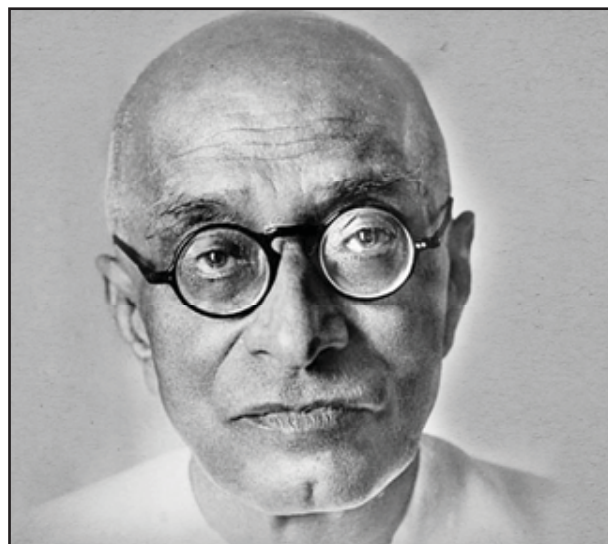
- He was also **one of the early leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha** and played a **prominent role in its foundation in 1906.**
- He was also a **social reformer and a successful legislator** who served as a member of the **Imperial Legislative Council for 11 years from 1909 to 1920.**
- Pandit Malviya is known for his contributions to
 - ▶ He was the chairman of the **Hindustan Times from 1924 to 1946**, and he also **founded many Hindi and English newspapers, namely: The Leader, Hindustan Dainik, Maryada, etc.**
- Apart from his political career, Malaviya also played a **major role in the freedom struggle and participated in several movements against British rule.**
- He was a part of **Mahatma Gandhi's Salt Satyagraha and Civil Disobedience Movement** after which he was also
- Further speaking on **his role towards promoting modern education**, he was the **co-founder of the Banaras Hindu University** in 1916, which is the **largest residential university in Asia** and **also one of the largest in the world with students** from across various streams from all over the world.
- **Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya** has also been **posthumously conferred with the prestigious Bharat Ratna on March 30, 2015** after which the **Varanasi-New Delhi Mahamana Express** was also started in the **leader's honour.**

6. C. Rajagopalachari birth anniversary

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tributes to **freedom fighter and statesman C. Rajagopalachari on his 143rd birth anniversary.**

About C. Rajagopalachari

- C Rajagopalachari, also known as **Rajaji** or **C.R.**, was born on **10 December 1878** in **Thorapalli Agraharam, Krishnagiri District in Tamil Nadu.**
- His father **Chakravarti Venkataryan** was the **munsiff of Thorapalli**, who with his wife Singamma had two other sons apart from Rajagopalachari.
- Rajagopalachari studied in **elementary schools at Thorapalli and Hosur** and passed his **matriculation in 1891.**
- **In 1894**, he secured a **BA in Arts from Central College in Bangalore.**
- **In 1897**, he graduated in law from the **Presidency College, Madras.**
- He married **Alamelu Mangamma in 1897** and had five children.
 - ▶ Later, his **daughter Lakshmi married Devdas Gandhi**, son of **Mahatma Gandhi.**
- He started his **legal career in Salem, Tamil Nadu in 1900** where he got interested in **politics and society.**
- **In 1911**, he became a member of the **Salem Municipality.**



- ▶ He also served as its **chairman** from **1917 to 1919**. It was during his tenure as chairman that the **municipality got its first Dalit member**, and Rajagopalachari had a **big role in this development**.

Role during the Independence Struggle

- He joined the **Indian National Congress in 1906** and participated in the **1906 Calcutta session**.
- After that, he became more involved in **national politics**. He took part in the **anti-Rowlatt Act agitations**.
- He became one of the early followers of Mahatma Gandhi after Gandhi joined the **Indian Independence Movement**.
- He quit his legal practice and took part in the **non-cooperation movement**.
- **In 1921**, he became the **party's General Secretary**.
- He led the group of **NO-CHANGERS** e. individuals against contesting elections for the Imperial Legislative Council and other Provincial Councils against **PRO-CHANGERS**.
 - ▶ **NO-CHANGERS** won the motion in the **Indian National Congress** against **PRO-CHANGERS** which led to the **resignation of Pandit Motilal Nehru and C.R.Das**.
- He was involved in the **Vaikom Satyagraha Movement against untouchability** during **1924-25**.
- When Gandhi was leading the **Dandi March in 1930**, Rajagopalachari made a similar march at **Vedaranyam and defied the salt laws**. For this, he was arrested.
- He became the **President of Tamil Nadu Congress Committee in 1937**.
- As premier, He issued the **Temple Entry Authorization and Indemnity Act 1939** and removed restrictions on **Dalits entering Hindu temples**.
- He was instrumental in convincing the **Indian National Congress to participate in the 1937 general elections**.
- **He resigned from premiership** when the Viceroy declared India to be a party to the Second World War without duly consulting Indians. He was arrested in December 1940.
- He also offered a resolution to the INC-Muslim League impasse over the issue of partition in the form of the C.R. Formula.

Post Independence

- He was the **Minister of Industry, Supply, Education and Finance** in Jawaharlal Nehru's interim government from **1946 to 1947**.
- He was also the **Member of Constituent Assembly** where he was the part of **Advisory Committee and Sub-Committee on Minorities**.
- He was the **first Governor of West Bengal after the partition of India in 1947**.
- He also acted as the **Acting Governor-General of India** in the **absence of Lord Mountbatten in November 1947**.
- He became the **first Indian Governor-General of India and the last Governor-General of India** when he served between **June 1948- 26 January 1950**.
- He also served as the **Home Affairs Minister for 10 months from December 1950**.
- He was against **Linguistic States** as he considered they would act against the **Unity of India**.
- During his tenure **Andhra Pradesh**, a **Telugu speaking state** was created after division from **Madras Presidency in 1953**.
- His government became more unpopular when he introduced **the controversial Modified System of Elementary Education** and later he **resigned as CM in 1954**.

- In 1957 he resigned from the Congress Party and in 1956 founded the Swatantra Party along with Murari Vaidya and Minoo Masani.
- He was against Soviet Socialism and also coined the term 'License-Permit Raj'.
- In 1967, Swatantra Party in an alliance with the DMK and the Forward Bloc won the Madras Assembly Elections and ousted the Congress in Madras for the first time in 30 years.
- Swatantra Party also became the single largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha in 1967 elections.
- He passed away on 25 December 1972 aged 94.
- He was conferred the Bharat Ratna in 1955.
- He was referred to as 'my conscience keeper' by Gandhi.

7. Onake Obayya Jayanti observed in Karnataka

Context: Karnataka government started celebration of 'Onake Obavva Jayanti' on the 11th of November from the year 2021.

About Onake Obayya Jayanti

- The proposal to celebrate birth anniversary of Onake Obavva was made by Kannada and Culture Department.
- Onake Obavva was a woman-soldier who had fought against Hyder Ali forces in Chitradurga in 18th century.
- The events will be state-sponsored.

Who is Onake Obavva?

- Onake Obavva was a brave woman who fought against the forces of Hyder Ali with a pestle single-handedly.
- She fought in the kingdom of Chitradurga in Karnataka.
- Her husband was a guard of a watchtower in fort of Chitradurga.
- She belonged to Holayas (Chalavadi) community.

Other celebrated female warriors of Karnataka:

- Abbakka Rani
- Kittur Chennamma
- Keladi Chennamma.

8. Babasaheb Purandare Dies

Context: Padma Vibhushan Babasaheb Purandare died on November 15, 2021 in Pune.

About Babasaheb Purandare:

- He was a celebrated historian, author, and theatre personality.
- His full name was Balwant Moreshwar Purandare.
- He was famous for his work on Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.
- The author wrote several books on Shivaji Maharaj, his administration as well the forts from Shivaji's era.

- He also directed 'Jaanta Raja', which is a popular play on the life of Chattrapati Shivaji.
- He was referred to as Shiv-Shahir.

Awards received by him:

- The historian was awarded Padma Vibhushan in 2019.
- He was awarded with Maharashtra Bhushan Award in 2015.
- Madhya Pradesh government had awarded him the Kalidas Samman in 2007–08, for his works in the field of drama.

Books written by Babasaheb Purandare:

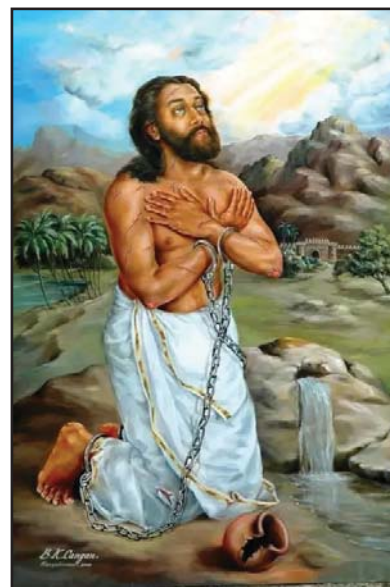
- His other works include-
 - ▶ Book titled Raja Shiva-Chatrapati
 - ▶ Book titled Kesari
 - ▶ A book on life of Narayanrao Peshwa.
 - ▶ A drama called Janata Raja.

9. Devasahayam Pillai

Context: Devasahayam Pillai, an 18th-century Hindu convert to Christianity, would be the first Indian layman (a non-ordained member of the Church) to be made a saint.

About Devasahayam Pillai

- He was born on **23rd April 1712** in the village of **Nattalam in Tamil Nadu's Kanyakumari District**.
- Known as Nilakanda Pillai before embracing Christianity, he grew up in an upper-caste family of temple priests.
 - ▶ Devasahayam Pillai is the first Indian layman to be declared a saint. He is to be declared a saint by the Vatican in May 2022.
- He went on to serve in the court of Travancore's Maharaja Marthanda Varma. It was here that he met a Dutch naval commander, who taught him about the Catholic faith.
- He became a Catholic in 1745. Pillai took the Christian name Lazarus but later came to be known as Devasahayam (God's help).
 - ▶ Lazarus means "God is my help".
- He then faced the wrath of the Travancore state, which was against his conversion.
- He faced harsh persecution and imprisonment during the 18th century when he decided to convert to Christianity.
- On 14th January 1752, just seven years after he became a Catholic, Devasahayam was shot dead in the Aralvaimozhy forest.
 - ▶ Since then, he has widely been considered a martyr by the Catholic community in South India.
 - ▶ His body is at Saint Francis Xavier Cathedral in the Diocese of Kottar (Tamil Nadu).
- The Church is of the view that his preaching of equality of all people despite caste differences eventually led to his martyrdom.



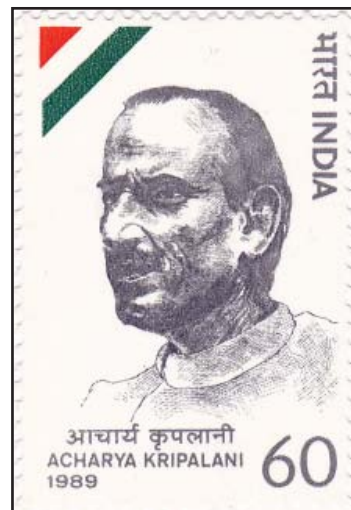
- He was first approved for sainthood in February 2020 for “**enduring increasing hardships**” after he decided to embrace Christianity.

10. PM pays tributes to Acharya Kripalani

Context: Recently, the Prime Minister has paid tributes to Acharya Kripalani on his Birth Anniversary (11th November).

Who was Acharya Kripalani?

- Born on **11th November 1888** in **Hyderabad, Sindh**, Acharya Kripalani was an **independence activist, Indian politician and an Educationist**.
- His original name was **Jivatram Bhagwandas Kripalani** but was popularly known as **Acharya Kripalani**.
- He was married to **Sucheta Kripalani, India’s first woman Chief Minister**, who led **Uttar Pradesh** from **1963 to 1967**. She remained in Congress after Independence.
- He, along with Vinoba Bhave, was involved in **preservation and conservation activities** throughout the 1970s.
- He earned the moniker ‘**Acharya**’ around **1922** when he was teaching at the **Gujarat Vidyapith**, founded by the Mahatma a couple of years before.
- **Independence Activist:**
 - ▶ He was involved in the organization of the
 - Non-Cooperation Movement
 - Civil Disobedience movements
 - Quit India Movement
 - ▶ He was the **President of the Indian National Congress (INC)** at the time of independence.
 - ▶ He served in the **Interim Government of India (1946–1947)** and the **Constituent Assembly** of India.
- **Political Career: Post-independent India**
 - ▶ Post-independence, he left the Congress and became one of the founders of the **Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party (KMPP)**. This party subsequently merged with the Socialist Party of India to form the **Praja Socialist Party (PSP)**.
 - ▶ He remained in opposition for the rest of his life and was **elected to the Lok Sabha** in **1952, 1957, 1963 and 1967** as a member of the **Praja Socialist Party**.
 - ▶ Kripalani moved the first-ever No-confidence motion in Lok Sabha in 1963, immediately after the **India-China War**.
 - ▶ He remained a critic of **Nehru’s policies and Indira Gandhi’s authoritarian rule**. He was **arrested during the Emergency**.
- His autobiography ‘**My Times**’ was released **22 years after his death in 2004**.



11. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad: National Education Day 2021

Context: Every year since 2008, **November 11** is celebrated as the **National Education Day** to mark the birth anniversary of **India's first Education Minister Abul Kalam Ghulam Muhiyuddin**.

About

- Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, originally named **Muhyiuddin Ahmad**, was born on **11th November 1888** in **Mecca, Saudi-Arabia** and died on **22 February 1958**.
- He was **senior Muslim leader** of the **Indian National Congress** during the Indian independence movement.
- He is commonly remembered as Maulana Azad (word Maulana is honorific meaning 'Our Master') and he had adopted Azad (Free) as his pen name.
- Azad was a brilliant debater, as indicated by his name - "**Abul Kalam**" which means "**Lord of Dialogues**".
- Azad mastered several languages like **Urdu, Persian, Hindi, English, Bengali and Arabic**.
- He was the **first Minister of Education** of Independent India.
- He had played an important role in the **foundation of Jamia Millia Islamia at Aligarh** in Uttar Pradesh.
- He assisted in shifting the campus of the university **from Aligarh to New Delhi in 1934**.
- For his service to the nation, he was posthumously awarded the **country's highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna**.

Contributions of Maulana Azad

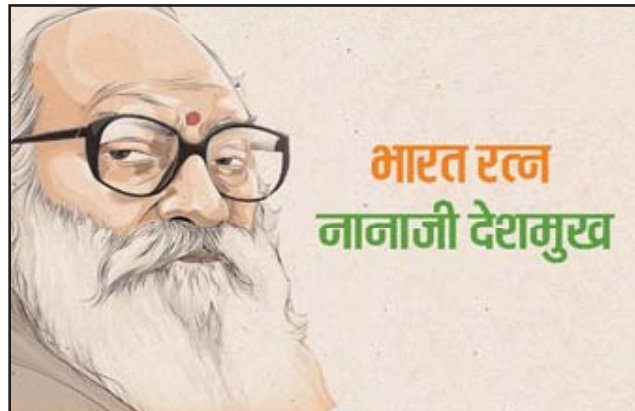
- **Before independence:**
 - ▶ **Hindu-Muslim unity:** He worked as a journalist, publishing works critical of British Raj and espousing causes of Indian nationalism. He worked for **Hindu-Muslim unity through the Al-Hilal newspaper**.
 - ▶ **Khilafat movement:** He was a prominent Leader in Khilafat Movement.
 - ▶ **Non-cooperation movement:** Disheartened by the **Rowlatt Act of 1919**, he worked to organise the Non-Cooperation Movement and protests in opposition of the Act.
 - ▶ **Dharasana Satyagraha:** He was one of the main organisers of the **Dharasana Satyagraha in 1931**.
 - ▶ **Protest against Two Nation Theory:** Maulana criticised Jinnah over Two Nation Theory.
 - ▶ **Quit India Movement:** He played a significant role in the Quit India Movement.
 - ▶ **Colonial Government.** He served as the Congress President from **1940 to 1945**, during which the Quit India movement was launched.
 - ▶ **India's independence:** He was **strictly against India's partition** even after the acceptance of partition by Gandhiji.
- **Post-Independence:**
 - ▶ **Member of Constitution assembly:** He was a member of the **constituent assembly** and **helped in shaping the Constitution** of India.
 - ▶ **Education:** He was the first Union Minister of education.
 - ▶ **Research:** He held portfolios of Natural resources and scientific research. He played a pivotal role in the foundation of **CSIR and scientific research laboratories in India**.

12. Bharat Ratna Nanaji Deshmukh

Context: Prime Minister, Narendra Modi paid tribute to Bharat Ratna Nanaji Deshmukh for his Jayanti.

About Nanaji Deshmukh:

- Nanaji Deshmukh born as Chandikadas Amritrao Deshmukh on **October 11, 1916** in the Marathi-speaking Deshastha Brahmin family in Kadoli, a small town in the **Hingoli district of Maharashtra**.
- He was a social activist and a longtime member of **Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)**, who also played a key role in the **JP Movement** against the **Indira Gandhi government**.
 - ▶ He joined **RSS** at the age of **13**.
 - ▶ He was associated with **Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh** from 1928 until his death (2010) in **Satna, Madhya Pradesh**, and was known for starting a series of inspired RSS schools throughout India.
 - ▶ As General Secretary of the Lok Sangharsh Samiti, Deshmukh was the main force behind the social activist Jayaprakash Narayan agitation for total revolution.
- He was a veteran of Sangh Parivar, a founding member of the Janata Party, and one of the senior-most members of the BJP.
- Nanaji Deshmukh was the founding member of the **Baratiya Jan Sangh**.
- Nanaji Deshmukh has worked in the field of education, health and self-employment in rural areas.
- He was politically active in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.
- He represented the Uttar Pradesh region in Balrampur constituency in Lok Sabha from **1977 to 1979**.
- He played an important role in carrying out the **social restructuring programme** in over **500 villages** of **Uttar Pradesh** and **Madhya Pradesh**.
- Deshmukh also founded the country's first **Saraswati Sishu Mandir** in Gorakhpur in 1950 and was the founder of the Deendayal Research Institute based in Chitrakoot.
- He was also honored with the **Padma Vibhushan in 1999**.
- After his death he was awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest award in 2019 by the Government of India.
- Nanaji Deshmukh died on **27 February 2010 (at the age of 94)**.

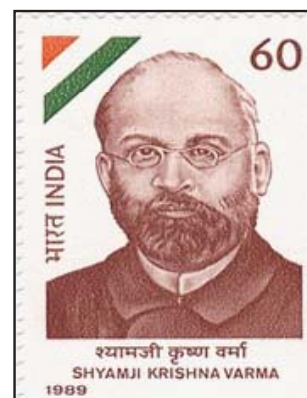


13. PM pays tributes to Shyamji Krishna Varma

Context: PM Modi paid tribute to freedom fighter **Shyamji Krishna Varma** on his 164th birth anniversary.

Who was Shyamji Krishna Varma?

- Shyamji Krishna Varma was born in 1857 in Gujarat.
- He was an Indian freedom fighter, lawyer and journalist.
- He was an admirer of **Dayanand Saraswati**, because of that he became the **first President of Bombay Arya Samaj**.
- **Died on:** March 30, 1930.



Major organizations founded by Shyamji Krishna Varma:

- **Indian Home Rule Society (IHR):** The organisation was founded by Shyamji Krishna Varma, with support from Bhikaji Cama, Dadabhai Naoroji and S.R. Rana in London in 1905.
 - ▶ It was an Indian organisation that promoted the cause of **self-rule** in **British India**.
- **India House:** India House was a student residence that existed between 1905 and 1910 which was opened to promote nationalist views among Indian students in Britain.
 - ▶ Shyamji inspired Veer Savarkar who was a member of India House in London
- **Indian Sociologist:** The Indian Sociologist in London became an outlet for nationalist ideas.

14.

PM lays foundation stone of Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh University in Aligarh

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh State University in Aligarh.

About the University

- The university is being established in memory and honour of Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh, the great freedom fighter, educationist and social reformer.
- It is being set up in a total area of over 92 acres at Lodha village and Musepur Kareem Jarouli village of Aligarh's Kol tehsil.
- The university will provide affiliation to 395 colleges of the Aligarh division.

Who was Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh?

- Born into a royal family in the Hathras district of Uttar Pradesh in 1886, Singh was a social reformer, freedom fighter and Marxist revolutionary.
- An alumnus of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Collegiate School later called Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), he was active in the political arena from a young age.
- Though he did not complete his graduation from AMU, Singh was felicitated during the centenary celebrations of the university in 1997.
- He also participated in the **1911 Balkan War** with his fellow students at the college.
- Belonging to the royal family of Mursan, he had left his home and family in Aligarh in December 1914 and escaped to Germany and remained in exile for about 33 years as he was wanted by the British authorities.

15. Vinoba Bhave Birth Anniversary

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tributes to **Vinoba Bhave** on his birth anniversary, saying he carried forward the **noble Gandhian principles** after India attained independence.

About Vinoba Bhave:

- Acharya Vinoba Bhave's original name was **Vinayak Narahari Bhave**.
- Born Vinayak Narahari Bhave to Narahari Rao and Rukmini Devi, Vinoba Bhave had a deep sense of spiritualism instilled in him at a very young age by his religious mother.
- He was born on September 11, 1895, in a Chitpav Brahmin family in Gagoda village of the Konkan area of Maharashtra.
- He had read the **Bhagavad Gita** in his early years and was drawn towards spiritualism and asceticism despite being an academically good student.
- He learnt various regional languages and Sanskrit along with reading the scriptures.

Major contributions:

- He worked towards eliminating social inequities. He started the **Sarvodaya Movement** which meant 'Progress for all'.
- He also took part in **nonviolent** agitations against the British government, for which he was imprisoned.
- He created the **Brahma Vidya Mandir** which was a small community of women enabling them to become self-sufficient.
- In 1951, Bhave started the **Bhoodan Movement** in Pochampally, Telangana.
- He authored several books and was well-versed in many languages including Marathi, Gujarati, Sanskrit, English, Urdu and Hindi.
- He was awarded the **Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership** in 1958.
- In 1983, he received the **Bharat Ratna posthumously**.
- Vinoba Bhave died on 15 November 1982 due to a serious illness.

Bhoodan movement

- The Bhoodan Movement (Land Gift Movement) attempted to persuade wealthy landowners to voluntarily give a percentage of their land to landless people.
- It is also known as the Bloodless Revolution was a voluntary land reform movement in India.



How were Vinoba Bhave and Mahatma Gandhi related?

- Vinoba Bhave met Mahatma Gandhi in 1916.
- He was chosen by Gandhi as the **first individual Satyagrahi** in a nonviolent movement in the year 1940.
- After this event, the unknown Vinoba Bhave became known to the whole country.

16. Subramania Bharati

Context: To commemorate the death anniversary of freedom fighter Subramania Bharati, Tamil Nadu government has declared September 11 as 'Mahakavi' Day.

About Subramania Baharati

- Son of Chinnasamy Iyer and Lakshmi Ammal, Subramania Bharati was born on December 11, 1882, in Ettayapuram, South India.
- Bharati found his mentor and inspiration in **Bal Gangadhar**. He exhibited a knack for writing poetry at a very young age. He started composing poems at the age of 8.
- He has left his legacy in Tamil Literature.
- He was not only a poet but a patriot, journalist, philosopher, reformer, and freedom fighter during the pre-independence era.
- Also referred to by the name of Mahakavi Bharathiyar, meaning Great Poet of Tamil, Bharati's name is counted amongst the most celebrated poets of the country.
- He was an expert at both prose and poetry writing.
- He was also the first Asian poet to sing the glory of the **Bolshevik revolution**.



Literary works: "Kannan Pattu" "Nilavum Vanminum Katrum" "Panchali Sabatam" "Kuyil Pattu".

- The Government of India in 1987 instituted the highest **National Subramania Bharati Award** conferred along with the **Ministry of Human Resource Development** (now Education), annually conferred on writers of outstanding works in Hindi literature.
- **Bharathiar University**, a state university has been named after the poet in Coimbatore.
- Subramania Bharati's commemorative stamp was also issued by the Indian Post in his respect.

17. Hari Singh Nalwa

Context: Hari Singh Nalwa, a legendary Sikh commander, tamed the turbulent forces at play in Afghanistan and earned the reputation of the most feared Sikh warrior there.

Who was Hari Singh Nalwa?

- Hari Singh Nalwa was one of the main and most trustworthy commanders of **Maharaja Ranjit Singh's**
- He remained **Governor of Kashmir, Hazara and Peshawar**.
- He defeated various Afghans and established control over various regions along the boundary of Afghanistan and prevented Afghans from entering Punjab through **Khyber Pass**.
 - ▶ Khyber Pass was the main route to enter India by the foreign invaders from **1000 AD till early 19th century**.

- Hari Singh Nalwa was the biggest strength of **Maharaja Ranjit Singh**.

Legacy:

- The government of India released a stamp on the name of Nalwa in 2013, for his bravery and ferocity.

How did Afghans start fearing him?

- Most of the important battles were fought under the command of **Hari Singh Nalwa**.
- Hari Singh Nalwa participated in various battles against Afghans because of which Afghans lost their control over various Afghan-held territories.
- **Battle of Kasur:** In 1807, at the age of 16, he participated in the **Battle of Kasur (now in Pakistan)** and defeated Afghani ruler Kutab-ud-din Khan.
- **Battle of Peshawar:** In 1818, Sikh army under Nalwa won the **Battle of Peshawar** and Nalwa asked to be stationed there.
- Nalwa took control over Jamrud in 1837, a fort at the entryway to Afghanistan through Khyber Pass.
- The **Battle of Multan, Hazara, Manekera, Kashmir** also expanded Sikh empire by defeating Afghans.
- Such victories over Afghans created huge fear of Nalwa among the Afghans because of which his name is used to take in front of unruly children by their mothers.
- Nalwa remained stationed at Peshawar to keep an eye on the **Afghan-Punjab border**.

What happened in his final battle?

- Hari Singh Nalwa died in the **Battle of Jamrud**.
- Hari Singh Nalwa was stationed at Peshawar at that time.

18. Subhadra Kumari Chauhan, honoured by Google Doodle

Context: An illustrated Google Doodle has honoured Subhadra Kumari Chauhan, India's first woman satyagrahi who also wrote the iconic **Jhansi ki Rani poem** on her 117th birth anniversary.

About Subhadra Kumari Chauhan

- Subhadra Kumari Chauhan was born on August 16, 1904, in Nihalpur village, Prayagraj.
- She attended the Crosthwaite Girls' School and passed middle-school in 1919 when she married Thakur Laxman Singh Chauhan of Khandwa at the age of just 16.
- Both SubhadraKumariChauhan and her husband became a part of Mahatma Gandhi's Non-cooperation movement in 1921.
- During the struggle, she became the first woman satyagrahi to court arrest and was subsequently jailed in Nagpur.
- Subhadra Kumari Chauhan continued to participate in the freedom struggle and joined Mahatma Gandhi's movements in 1923 as well as in 1942.
- In between this period she also became a member of the legislative assembly in what was formerly known as Central provinces.
- The country had honoured her by naming a coast guard ship after her and the state did so by putting up a statue in Jabalpur.

- Chauhan became a prominent poet and freedom fighter in an age that was dominated by males.
- She used her poetry to boost the morale of the countrymen in their fight for freedom.
- She also highlighted the hardships faced by Indian women including “gender and caste discrimination”.



19. Rana Punja Bhil

Context: A dispute in Rajasthan’s Udaipur district took place between the **tribal Bhil community**, an adivasi and influential community and Upper class Hindu, over flag hoisting on the **statue of Ranapunja Bhil**.

Who was Rana Punja Bhil?

- Rana Punja Bhil was a contemporary of Maharana Pratap, 16th century ruler of Mewar.
- Punja is considered a significant character who bolstered the strength of Pratap during his battles with Mughal emperor Akbar.
- The tribal Bhil community voluntarily came to Maharana Pratap assistance and at the time the Bhil army was commanded by Punja.
- He was bestowed the title of Rana, owing to his status as a commander.
- It is not yet clear if Rana Punja was a Bhil or a Rajput chieftain who commanded large army of Bhils.
- He played an important role in the battle of Haldighati.
- In the past three decades, Punja has been styled as a tribal icon.

Political Significance of Bhils

- Bhil community, which is a forest dweller, is classified as scheduled tribe in Rajasthan.
- They had a significant influence in the Mewar region.
- Rajput rulers of the region have always forged alliances with the tribal group.
- The Bhils were also adept in guerilla warfare with bows, arrows and slingshots and were a significant part of the Rajput resistance against the Mughal Army during the battle of Haldighati owing to their knowledge of the region’s topography.
- They are demanding for a separate Bhil Pradesh.

20. Jamsetji Tata: World's top Philanthropist of the last Century

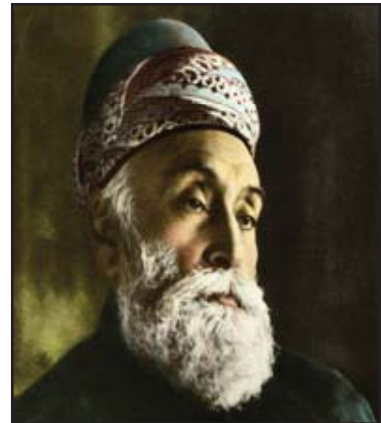
Context: Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata who was the founder of Tata Group, has emerged as the topper of the list of EdelGive Hurun Philanthropists of Century.

About Jamsetji's Philanthropy

- An estimated donation of \$102.4 billion was in health and education sector.
- Total philanthropic value of Tata is made up of 66 percent of Tata Sons which is estimated at \$100 billion.
- Tata Group and its philanthropic activities are presently headed and overseen by Emeritus Chairman Ratan Tata

Who was Jamsetji Tata?

- Jamsetji Tata was the founder of **Tata Iron and Steel Works Company (TISCO)** in Jamshedpur which is now known as Tata Steel.
- His endowments started as early as 1892 and he was popular for his ventures within cotton and pig iron industry.
- Though Jamsetji Tata died in 1904, Tata Steel operates across 26 countries and employs about 80,500 people. Jamsetji Tata is regarded as the **"Father of Indian Industry"**.
- He was so influential across the world of industry that Jawaharlal Nehru referred him as **"One-Man Planning Commission"**.



Tata Group

- It is an Indian public multinational conglomerate that manufacture automobiles, airplanes and other products. It is headquartered in Mumbai and was founded in 1868.

21. Guru Tegh Bahadur

Context: Prime Minister paid tributes to **Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji** on his **Martyrdom Day**.

About Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621–1675)

- **Guru Tegh Bahadur** was the **ninth of ten Gurus of the Sikh religion**.
- He was **born at Amritsar in 1621** and was the **youngest son of Guru Hargobind**.
- His term as **Guru ran from 1665 to 1675**.
- **One hundred and fifteen of his hymns** are in **Guru Granth Sahib**.
- There are several accounts explaining the motive behind the **assassination of Guru Tegh Bahadur on Aurangzeb's orders**.
- He stood up for the **rights of Kashmiri Pandits** who approached him against **religious persecution by Aurangzeb**.
- He was **publicly killed in 1675** on the orders of **Mughal emperor Aurangzeb in Delhi** for himself **refusing Mughal rulers and defying them**.

- Gurudwara Sis Ganj Sahib and Gurudwara Rakab Ganj Sahib in Delhi mark the places of execution and cremation of his body.

Impact of his martyrdom

- The execution hardened the resolve of Sikhs against religious oppression and persecution.
- His martyrdom helped all Sikh Panths consolidate to make the **protection of human rights central to its Sikh identity**.
- Inspired by him, **his nine-year-old son, Guru Gobind Singh Ji**, eventually organized the **Sikh group into a distinct, formal, symbol-patterned community** that came to be known as **Khalsa (Martial) identity**.

22.

Periyar's Birth Anniversary to be observed as Day of Social Justice

Context: Tamil Nadu government has decided to celebrate the birth anniversary of reformist leader E V Ramasamy Periyar "Social Justice Day".

About Social Jusstice Day:

- E V Ramasamy Periyar was born on September 17. This day will now be celebrated as 'Social Justice Day' every year.
- Periyar's ideology was all about social justice, equality, self-respect, and rationalism. This laid the foundation stone for Tamil society's growth during the last century. These ideologies would also pave way for the future. Thus, government decided to celebrate his birth anniversary every year to celebrate the symbolic reinforcement of his egalitarian principles.

How this day will be celebrated?

- Every year, on September 17, employees in all government offices and State Secretariat will take pledges to follow values on the basis of such lofty ideals comprising of equality, brotherhood, self-respect and rationalism.

Erode Venkatappa Ramasamy Periyar (EV Ramasamy Periyar)

- He was commonly known as Periyar or Thanthai Periyar.
- He was an Indian social activist and politician.
- He started Self-Respect Movement and Dravidar Kazhagam and is known as the 'Father of the Dravidian movement'.
- He rebelled against the Brahmanical dominance as well as gender & caste inequality in Tamil Nadu.

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3

CULTURAL EVENTS

1.

Madhya Pradesh Government organises World Sangeet Tansen Festival

Context: The 97th edition of the World Sangeet Tansen festival took place in Gwalior on 25th December 2021.

About Tansen

- Mian Tansen (born 1493 or 1506 as Ramtanu Misra – died 1586 or 1589 as Tansen) was a prominent Indian classical music composer, musician and vocalist.
- He is known for a large number of compositions, and also an instrumentalist who popularised and improved the plucked rabab (of Central Asian origin).
- He was among the Navaratnas (nine jewels) at the court of the Mughal Emperor Jalal ud-din Akbar.
- Akbar gave him the title Mian, an honorific, meaning learned man.

The Tansen ceremony

- Every year in December, an annual festival, the Tansen Samaroh, is held in Gwalior to celebrate Tansen.
- The Tansen ceremony was started in the year 1924 the reign of Scindia family in Gwalior.
 - ▶ This is the 97th Tansen ceremony.

Key-highlights of 97th ceremony

- The stage of the program has been constructed on the **theme of the Siddhanath temple situated in Omkareshwar.**
- **Many artists not only from India but also from abroad participate** in the music festival.
- **The first seven concerts** were held at the stage prepared at the **mausoleum of Tansen and the tomb of Mohammad Ghaus.**
- **The eighth concert** was held on the banks of the **Jhilmil River, in Behat (Birthplace of Tansen) on December 30.**
- **The last brief concert** last be held at **Gwalior Fort on the same day.**

2. Varanasi hosts the “Kashi Utsav”

Context:

- Kashi Utsav as held in Varanasi from November 16 to November 18, 2021 and it celebrated the classic heritage & culture of Kashi.

About Kashi Utsav:

- “Rudraksh International Cooperation and Convention Centre” of Varanasi was the organiser of the Utsav.
- It celebrated the work of legends like Goswami Tulsidas, Sant Raidas, Sant Kabir, Munshi Premchand, Bhartendu Harishchandra, and Shri Jaishankar Prasad.
- The Uttar Pradesh State Government and Varanasi Administration supported the Kashi Utsav as a part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- The festival had dedicated theme for each day and those were as follows:
 - ▶ Kashi ke Hastakshar
 - ▶ Kabir, Raidas ki Bani aur Nirgun Kashi
 - ▶ Kavita aur Kahani – Kashi ki Zubani
- On the first day of the event the focus on eminent literary figures namely Shri Jaishankar Prasad and Bhartendu Harishchandra.
- Second day of the event focused on prominent poets like Sant Raidas and Sant Kabirdas.
- While on the final day, works of Goswami Tulsidas and Munshi Premchand were admired.
- The event also emphasized on these personalities from Kashi by means of panel discussions, film screenings, exhibitions, music, dance performance and drama.
- The play Khoob Ladi Mardani, based on Rani Laxmi Bai, was presented by artists from National School of Drama (NSD).
- The play has been directed by Ms Bharti Sharma from NSD.
- Dance drama titled Kamoyani which is based on classic poetry of Shri Jaishankar Prasad was presented.

3. Adi Shankaracharya’s statue unveiled at Kedarnath

Context: Recently, Prime Minister Modi unveiled a 12-foot statue of Adi Shankaracharya at Kedarnath (Uttarakhand), where the he is believed to have attained samadhi at the age of 32.

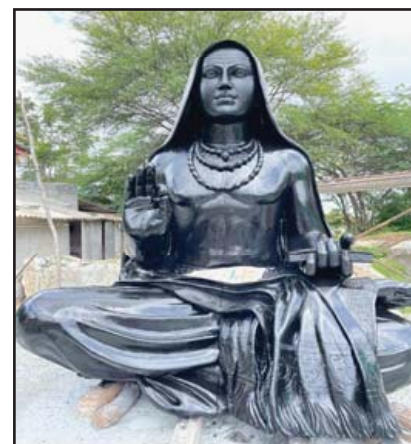
About Adi Shankaracharya’s Statue at Kedarnath

- Adi Shankaracharya’s Statue at Kedarnath weighs around 35 tonnes.
- The statue construction had begun in 2019 under the guidance of architect Arun Yogiraj from Mysuru.
- It is made using chlorite schist.

Chlorite schist is a rock popular for withstanding rain, sunshine, and harsh weather.

Who was Adi Shankaracharya?

- **Adi Shankaracharya**, commonly known as Adi Shankara, was born on 11th May 788 AD, at Kaladi near Kochi, Kerala.
- He took Samadhi at the age of 33, at Kedar tirth.
- Generally considered as an **eighth-century religious teacher**, he was a devotee of Shiva.
- He propounded the **Doctrine of Advaita (Monism)** and wrote many commentaries on the Vedic canon (Upanishads, Brahma Sutras and Bhagavad Gita) in Sanskrit.
- **Major Work done by him**
 - ▶ Brahmasutrabhasya (Bhashya or commentary on the Brahma Sutra)
 - ▶ Bhajagovinda Stotra
 - ▶ Nirvana Shatakam
 - ▶ Prakaran Granths



Other important contributions

- He was responsible for reviving Hinduism in India to a great extent when Buddhism was gaining popularity.
- He established four Mathas in the four corners of India at
 - ▶ Badrinath for Atharva Veda
 - ▶ Puri for Rig Veda
 - ▶ Dwaraka for Sama Veda
 - ▶ Sringeri for Yajur Veda
- These were the centres to elucidate the essence of **Advaita philosophy**.

4. Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar

Context:

- Recently, Prime Minister paid homage to **Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar** on **114th Thevar Jayanthi (Guru Pooja)**.
- It is celebrated on 30th October every year to commemorate the birth anniversary of **Pasumpon Muthuramalingam Thevar**.

About Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar

- He was born on the **30th of October 1908** in Pasumpon in the Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu.
- He was a freedom-fighter cum spiritual leader.
- He is seen as a deity among the Mukulathor community, a cluster community comprising the Kallar, Maravar and Ahambadiar.



The people of the **Mukulathor community** still make offerings as is done for the deities in temples to the statue on **Pasumpon Thevar's Jeyanthi** and **Guru Pooja celebrations**.

- He did not accept traditional Hinduism because it supported the '**Varnashrama**'. He regularly fought against the evils of the Hindu religion.
- He openly rejected religious superstition and narrow-mindedness.
- Being a social worker and a colleague of Subhash Chandra Bose, he served as deputy chairman of the **All India Forward Bloc (AIFB) since 1952**.

He has been elected three times to the AIFB national parliament constituency.

- **The Temple Entry Authorization and Indemnity Act** was passed by the government of C. Rajagopalachari in 1939 due to his efforts.

It removes restrictions that prevent Dalits from entering Hindu temples.

- He supported the change and in July 1939 assisted activist A. Vaidyanatha Iyer to take Dalits to the Meenakshi Temple in Madurai.
- **The Criminal Tribes Act (CTA)**, enacted by the British in 1920, was against the Mukulathor community, in which Thevar protested by mobilizing people and this became the major milestone in his career.

CTA criminalized entire communities by designating them as habitual criminals.

- He was instrumental in getting the act repealed after continuous efforts in 1946.
- He died on October 30, 1963.

All India Forward Bloc

- Built in May 1939 by **Subhash Chandra Bose**. It was a left-wing political party in India that emerged as a party within the 1939 India Congress.
 - ▶ The **First All India Conference of Forward bloc** was held in Nagpur in June 1940. It also passed a resolution entitled '**All Power to the Indian People**', calling for steps to be taken against the British colonial rule.
- The prime objective of the Forward Bloc was to bring all radical elements of the Congress party together. So that it could spread the meaning of complete independence of India with adherence to the application of principles of equality and social justice.
- It was **declared banned on 23 June 1942**.
- Even when it was declared illegal, it played a revolutionary role to crown the struggle of the people with success and glory.
 - ▶ The party has also re-established itself as an independent political party after the independence of India.

5.

Prime Minister attends Abhidhamma Day programme in Uttar Pradesh

Context: The Prime Minister attended the **Abhidhamma Day Programme** on **20th October, 2021** in Uttar Pradesh.

What were the key take ways

- Prime Minister on this visit to UP inaugurated the Kushinagar International Airport.
- He then participated in an event at Mahaparinirvana Temple, marking Abhidhamma Day.

Abhidhamma Day

- It symbolises the end of three-month rainy retreat called “**Varshavaas or Vassa**”, which is observed by the **Buddhist Monks**.
- During this period, monks stay at one place in **vihara** & monastery for offering prayer.

Facts about Kushinagar Airport

- The inauguration of **Kushinagar International Airport** was marked by the landing of first flight at the airport from **Colombo, Sri Lanka**.
- The flight had carried Sri Lankan delegation comprising of more than hundred Buddhist Monks & dignitaries.
- Among them, a **12-member Holy Relic** entourage will bring **Holy Buddha Relics for Exposition**.
- Delegation also included Anunayakas (deputy heads) from all four Nikatas (orders) of Buddhism in Sri Lanka namely, **Asgiriya, Amarapura, Ramanya and Malwatta**.
- Five ministers of the Sri Lankan government also had taken part in the event.

Services provided by Airport

- This airport will be facilitate the travel of domestic as well as international pilgrims to Kushinagar which is the place were Lord **Buddha attended Mahaparinirvana**.

6.

Podcast on Freedom Movement Launched by Cultural Ministry

Context: Union Minister of Culture & Tourism G. K. Reddy launched “Amrit Mahotsav Podcast”, as a part of initiative by Government of India to celebrate the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.

About the Posdcast

- “Amrit Mahotsav Podcast” series is the way paying tribute to the persons and movements that in a big way contributed to freedom struggle of India.

Zara Yaad Karo Qurbani

- Zara Yaad Karo Qurbani is the first series of the newly launched podcast.
- It went live with an episode focused on **Indian National Army (or Azad Hind Fauj)**.
- It is a weekly series.

- It will remember the heroes of INA through their stories of courage and valour.
- It will try and instil nationalistic pride in its listeners.

What is Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav?

- It is an initiative that was launched 75 weeks before August 15, 2022.
- It will continue till August 15, 2023.
- While launching the event, Prime Minister had reiterated five pillars as guiding forces to move forward in Amrit Mahotsav-
 - ▶ Freedom Struggle
 - ▶ Achievements at 75
 - ▶ Ideas at 75
 - ▶ Actions at 75
 - ▶ Resolves at 75

The **Ministry of Culture** deals with the preservation and conservation of the country's rich cultural heritage and promotion of art and culture.

7.

Banglabandu Sambad Kendra inaugurated by I&B Minister of Bangladesh

Context: The Information and Broadcasting Minister of Bangladesh, Dr Hasan Mahmud, inaugurated **Bangabandhu Sambad Kendra** on October 28, 2021 in Kolkatta.

About the Event-

- The inauguration of Bangabandhu Sambad Kendra marked the golden jubilee of the independence of Bangladesh as well as birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
- Inauguration of the Kendra symbolised the contribution of journalists of Kolkata Press Club to the liberation war of Bangladesh.
- Felicitation of 5 journalists took place during the ceremony.

About Sheikh Mujibur Rahman-

- Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was a Bangladeshi politician, statesman and Founding Father of Bangladesh.
- He served as the first President of Bangladesh and then also served as Prime Minister of the country.
- He was assassinated in 1975.
- He was called as "Bangabandhu".



Independence Day of Bangladesh

- Bangladesh celebrates its independence day on March 26, every year.
- On this day Bangladesh declared its independence from Pakistan in 1971. In the year 2017.

8. Bhaskarabda: A Luni-Solar Calendar

Context: Recently, the Assam Government has announced that **Bhaskarabda, a Luni-Solar Calendar** will be used as an official calendar.

About Bhaskarabda:

- Bhaskarabda, a period calculated from the date of the ascension of the **7th-century local ruler Bhaskar Varman**.
- It is based on both phases of the moon and the solar year.
- It all started when Baskara Varman was crowned ruler of the **Kamrupa kingdom**.
- He was political ally of the northern Indian ruler **Harshavardhana**.
- The gap between **Basaskarabda and Gregorian calendar is 593 years**.

Use of the *calendar* by Assam:

- Currently, the official Assam government official calendar uses the **Saka calendar and the Gregorian calendar**.
- However, the Basquearabda calendar will be used from now on.

Type of Calendars-

- **Solar:** Any dating system based on the **seasonal year** of approximately **365 1/4 days**, the time it takes the Earth to revolve once around the Sun.
- **Lunar:** Any dating system based on a year that **contains synodic moons** - that is, complete cycles of phases of the Moon.
- **Luni-Solar:** The lunisolar calendar month is a lunar month but the solar years were used in early Middle Eastern civilizations and Greece.

9. Hindi Diwas: September 14

Context: Hindi Diwas is observed every year in India on **September 14**, to remember and honour the adoption of Hindi language as one of the **official languages in India**.

About Hindi Diwas

- Hindi Language, written in the **Devanagari script**, was adopted as one of the official languages of India on this day in 1949.
- The day is also called as Hindi Day.
- It is observed across India to honour and promote the Hindi language among people, with special emphasis on children.

About Hindi Language

- Hindi is written in Devanagari script for the unversed.
- It comprises of a large number of dialects.
- Hindi Language stands at fourth place worldwide after English, Spanish and Mandarin.

10. Sanskrit Week: August 19th to 25th, 2021

Context: Sanskrit Week is being celebrated from August 19 to August 25, 2021.

About Sanskrit Week:

- Sanskrit Week is celebrated to promote and popularise **Sanskrit language**.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on this occasion, urged everyone to learn and promote Sanskrit language.
- People were asked, at this event, to take a pledge and generate a new enthusiasm for Indian cultural traditions & languages and to make Sanskrit Language accessible to people easily.

World Sanskrit Day

- This day is also known as Vishva-sanskrita-dinam.
- Every year, the day is celebrated on Shraavana Poornima, the full moon day of the Shraavana month in Hindu calendar.
- Samskrita Bharati organises the event.

11. Chhari Mubarak performs darshan at the holy cave, returns to Pahalgam

Context: The annual 59-days pilgrimage to Amarnath cave shrine concluded as 'Chhari Mubarak', was taken to the holy Cave in Kashmir Himalayas.

What is Chhari Mubarak?

- Chhari Mubarak is the holy mace of Lord Shiva.
- The rituals for 'Chhari Mubarak' mark the traditional commencement of the **Amarnath Yatra**.

About Amarnath temple

- Amarnath Temple is a Hindu shrine located in Jammu and Kashmir.
- The cave is situated at an altitude of 3,888 m (12,756 ft).
- The cave is about 141 km from Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, reached through Pahalgam town.

12. Navroz, the new year of Parsis started

Context: President Ram Nath Kovind extended greetings on the occasion of **Navroz**.

About Navroz:

- In Persian, 'Nav' stands for new, and 'Roz' stands for the day, which literally translates to 'new day'.
- Iranians and the Parsi community have been celebrating the traditional New Year for the past 3,000 years.

- This is celebrated to promote peace, solidarity and friendship among people and different communities.
- The day also marks the beginning of spring and the renewal of nature.
- In India, prominent celebrations take place in Maharashtra and Gujarat, where a sizeable Parsi population resides.
- Navroz falls in the month of August, according to the **Gregorian calendar**.
- Navroz is also known as **Jamshed-i-Navroz**, after the Persian King, Jamshed.
- The king is credited with having created the Persian calendar, or the **Shahenshahi calendar**.
- It has been celebrated since **11th century CE** to mark the New Year.
- United Nations officially recognized the “**International Day of Nowruz**” with the adoption of **UN resolution 64/253** in 2010.

Features of the festival

- On this day, people declutter their houses, minds to get rid of unnecessary things.
- The Parsi community dresses up in their traditional attire, decorate their homes and prepare delicious food including Prawn Patio, Mori Dar, Patra Ni Macchi, Haleem, Akoori, Berry Pulao, PatraniMachhi and more.
- Parsis also visit the **Fire Temple (Agiary)** and offer fruits, sandalwood, milk and flowers on this auspicious day.

13. Ashadhi Bij, the Kutchi New Year

Context: The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi greeted the people on the auspicious occasion of Ashadhi Bij, the Kutchi New Year.

About the Ashadhi Bij

- Ashadhi Bij is 2nd day of Shukla paksha of **Aashaadha month**, of Hindu calendar.
- This is an auspicious day for farming communities in Northern India especially in Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and some other places.
- This marks the beginning of the new-year by the Kutchi People in Gujarat.
- Ashadhi Bij is celebrated to predict the monsoon. During this, lend is checked by the experts to check the moisture in the atmosphere.
- It is done to predict the suitability of the crop for the land.
- On this occasion, Rath Yatra is organised.

Major New Year celebrations from different parts of the country	
Festival	State
Baisakhi	Punjab
Jude Sheetal	Bihar, Jharkhand
Bohag Bihu	North Eastern States

Gudi Padwa	Maharashtra
Ugadi	Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh
Vishu	Kerala
Pohela Boishakh	West Bengal
Jamshedi Navroz	Gujarat, Maharashtra

14. Lord Jagannath rath yatra commences in Gujarat

Context: The 144th annual rath yatra of Lord Jagannath began in Gujarat's Ahmedabad city.

About Jagannath Rath Yatra:

- Jagannath Rath Yatra is one of the biggest festivals in India.
- It is held at one of the Char Dhams – Jagannath Temple in Puri, Odisha.
- **Deities:** Lord Jagannath, Lord Balbhadra and Lordess Subhadra.

Lord Jagannath:

- Jagannath is a deity worshipped in regional Hindu traditions as part of a triad along with his brother Balabhadra and sister, Devi Subhadra.
 - Jagannath within **Odia Hinduism** is the supreme god, **Purushottama**.
 - To most Vaishnava Hindus, particularly the Krishnaites, Jagannath is an abstract representation of Krishna.
 - Sometimes as the avatar of Krishna or Vishnu, to some Shaiva and Shakta Hindus, he is a symmetry-filled tantric form of Bhairava, a fierce manifestation of Shiva associated with annihilation.
- Jagannath Rath Yatra is celebrated by worshipping Lord Jagannath (ruler of the world), his elder brother Balbhadra (Balaram) and sister Subhadra.
 - Three giant wooden chariots are made of a kind of Neem tree for the deities for the yatra.
 - The journey of the chariots of Lord Jagannath, his brother Balbhadra and sister Subhadra began from the **400-year-old Jagannath temple in Jamalpur area**.
 - It started with '**Pahind Vidhi**'- a symbolic ritual of cleaning the way for the '**raths**' (**chariots**).
 - It is the oldest Ratha Yatra taking place in India and the World, whose descriptions can be found in **Brahma Purana, Padma Purana, and Skanda Purana and Kapila Samhita**.

About Jagannath Temple:

- The Jagannath Temple at Puri is among the most revered Vaishnava sites in India.

- The current temple was built by **Anantavarman** of the **Chodaganga dynasty** in the **12th century**.
- The deities in the sanctum are associated with **King Indrayumna** of the **Iksvaku dynasty**, who was the nephew of **Lord Ram**.
- The Jagannath Temple celebrates 148 festivals annually, which includes 12 yatras, 28 upayatras and 108 ritualistic festivals.
- Among these the Ratha Yatra festival of Jagannath deva celebrated in the month of Asadha (June-July) is the most well-known one.



15. Raja Festival Of Odisha

Context: Odisha, the land of Lord Jagannath, has launched ‘Pitha on Wheels’ ahead of the three-day Raja festival, one of the most popular festival that one celebrates at the onset of monsoon.

About Raja Festival

- Raja Festival of Odisha is a **three-day event** that marks the period of **fertility regeneration of Mother Earth**, equivalent to the **menstrual cycle** which women undergo.
- Raja is an abbreviation used for **Rajaswala** (meaning a menstruating woman) and is celebrated across Odisha and Odias living outside.
- It signifies the menstrual cycle of the earth similar to that of a woman. Similar to women, the earth is considered to be in a latent stage during these days.
- This resting period of the earth is when all agricultural activities are forbidden.
- The very first day of this long festival is termed **Pahili Raja** which is also considered to be the last day of the month Jestha (summers).
- The second day of **Raja Parba** signifies the beginning of the solar month of “**Mithuna**”, marking the arrival of rains, according to the website of Odisha Tourism.
- The concluding day is named in local dialect as **Bhuin Dahana** popularly known as **Sesa Raja** (last day).
- The festival in some parts of the regions actually ranges for a period of four days with the inclusion of the fourth day termed as **Basumata Puja or Basumata Gadhua** (Bathing & praying of mother earth).

16. Buddha Purnima

Context: Prime Minister Modi delivered the keynote address on 26th May 2021, on the occasion of Virtual Vesak Global Celebrations on Buddha Purnima.

Key-highlights of the event

- **Organizer:** The **Culture Ministry** in collaboration with the **International Buddhist Confederation (IBC)**.

- It witnessed participation of all the supreme heads of the Buddhist Sanghas from around the world.

Vesaka

- The name of the observance is derived from the Pali term veskha or Sanskrit vaikha, which is the name of the lunar month falling in April–May.
- In Mahayana Buddhist traditions, the holiday is known by its Sanskrit name (Vaikha) and derived variants of it.

About Buddha Purnima

- It is celebrated to mark the birth of **Gautam Buddha**, the founder of Buddhism.
- It is considered a 'triple-blessed day' - as Tathagata Gautam Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and Maha Parnirvana.
- It is believed that all the above three events occurred on this day.
- Buddha Purnima falls on a full moon night, usually between April and May, and it is a **gazetted holiday in India**.
- Buddha Purnima celebration is all about praying with the purest of feelings, and adopting what Buddhism stands for – peace, non-violence and harmony.
- In 2000, the United Nations (UN) resolved to internationally observe the day of Vesaka at its headquarters and offices.

17. Kumbakonam Ramaswamy temple

Context: The major festival of Rama Navami was celebrated during the Tamil month of Panguni (March - April) in the Kumbakonam Ramaswamy Temple.

About the Kumbakonam Ramaswamy temple

- It is a Hindu temple which is dedicated to **Rama**, an **incarnation of Vishnu**.

Location: This temple is located on the banks of river Kaveri.

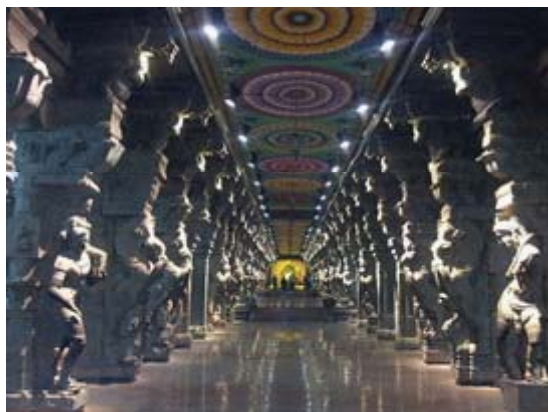
- It is located in **Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu**.
- **Background:** The temple was built in **Kumbakonam** in honour of the 12-year-old Vijayanagar king, Srirama Raya.
- The temple was built during the period of **Thanjavur Nayaks king Achuthappa Nayak (1560 - 1614)**.

Architecture:

- **Nayak Style:** The temple is a typical of Nayak style of temples
 - ▶ The temple is enshrined within a huge granite wall and the complex contains all the shrines and the water bodies of the temple.
 - ▶ The **rajagopurm** (the main gateway) has five tiers.



- ▶ **Pillars:** There are exquisite sculptures on the pillars of the temple depicting various Hindu legends.
 - The sixty four pillars in the hall near the gopuram are sculpted with exquisite finesse depicting various episodes of the epic *Ramayana*.
 - Each pillar is carved out of a single stone and the delicacy is very prominent.
 - Ramayanam is depicted in pictorial format in three segments in the first precinct.
- **Gopuram:** The temple has a 3-tiered gopuram surrounded by walls.
- **Central Shrine:** The central shrine houses the image of Rama in a seated posture with his consort Sita.
 - The other images are of his brothers Lakshmana, Bharatha and Chatruguna in standing posture and Hanuman in worship posture.
 - Rama in the temple is depicted with *Vyakarna Mudra*, while Hanuman is depicted holding manuscripts.
- **Other features:** The other important aspects of the epic like coronation of Vibishana, coronation of Sugriva, relieving Agalya from her curse and Hanuman playing veena.
- **Five Temples group:** Five temples of Vishnu are connected with Mahamaham festival which happens once in 12 years in Kumbakonam.
 - ▶ These five temples together make one of the 108 Divya Desam and they are
 - Sarangapani Temple
 - Chakrapani Temple
 - Ramaswamy Temple
 - Rajagopalaswamy Temple
 - Varahaperumal Temple.



A unique feature of the temple: Hanuman as musician

- It was around the time of the Vijayanagar Empire (14th to 16th century), that the idea of Hanuman as a musician gained ground.
- In *Sundara Muruti Mukhya Prana*, Purandara Dasa, who lived during the apogee of the Vijayanagar Empire, sings of Hanuman coming home wearing anklets and dancing even as he hears the chanting of Rama's name, to the accompaniment of tumburu and Narada playing the veena.

18. Mahavir Jayanti 2021

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi wished people on the occasion of **Mahavir Jayanti** and hoped that **Lord Mahavir** to help us in fighting the current situation of COVID-19.

About Mahavir Jayanti

- The day is celebrated across the world by the Jain community in memory of the last spiritual teacher of Jainism.
- It takes place in March or April, as per the Gregorian calendar.
- It also marks the 13th day of the Chaitra month of the Hindu calendar.
- This year, it was held on April 25.

Important facts about Jainism

- Jainism is one of the oldest religious traditions of the world. A great generation of **tirthankaras**, acaryas, saints, and scholars belonged to this tradition.
- Jainism is one of the religions whose origin can be traced back to the twenty four teachers (tirthankaras - ones who establishes a path or ford), through whom their faith is believed to have been handed down.
- The term 'jaina' is derived from the term '**jina**', and the term '**jina**' is the common name for the supreme souls who are totally free from all feelings of attachment, aversion, etc. The etymological meaning of the word 'jina' is conqueror.
- It is the common name given to the twenty four teachers (tirthankaras), because they have conquered all passions (raga and dvesa) and have attained liberation. Jainism in its essence is the religion of heroic souls who are jinas or conquerors of their self.
- The devotees of jina are called 'jaina', and the religion propounded by jina is called the '**Jaina Religion**.'
- The first of these teachers was Rsabhadeva and the last was **Vardhamana**, also known as **Mahavira (the Great Hero)**.
 - ▶ He is said to have lived in the sixth century B.C. as a contemporary of Gautama Buddha.
 - ▶ Mahavira is the successor of Parvanatha, who lived in the ninth century B.C. The contribution of Jainism to Indian culture, spirituality, and philosophy is really immense. It is a religion of praxis than of faith. Jainism is a **sramanic**
 - ▶ The word '**Sramana**' means an **ascetic or a mystic**. Thus asceticism and mysticism, meditation and contemplation, silence and solitude, practice of virtues like non-violence, renunciation, celibacy, self-control, etc. are distinguishing characteristics of this tradition.
- Jainism was also instrumental for a radical change in the social life of Indians. Jainism has the universal message of non-violence.

Lord Mahavir

- Lord Mahavir is considered the **founder of Jainism**.
- He was born in 599 BC, at **Kshatriyakund, Bihar**, on the 13th day of the bright half of the moon, in the month of Chaitra.
- He was the 24th and the last **Tirthankar (teaching god who preaches dharma)**.
- He was born to **King Siddartha** and **queen Trisala**. He was named Vardhaman by his parents.

Principles of Lord Mahavir:

- Mahavir's teachings are the main pillars of Jainism or the 'Jain Agamas'. Mahavir promoted the following principles to live a righteous life:
 - ▶ **Nonviolence (Ahimsa)** causing no harm to the living beings
 - ▶ **Truthfulness (Satya)** to speak the truth
 - ▶ **Non-stealing (Asteya)** not to possess things that do not belong to you
 - ▶ **Chastity (Bramacharya)** not to indulge in sensual pleasures
 - ▶ **Non-attachment (Aparigraha)** not to get attached to material things

19. Kerala's Thrissur Pooram festivities

Context: As Covid-19 cases are rising, the Kerala's largest annual cultural carnival Thrissur Pooram would be held only in a ritualistic manner without any public participation.

About the Thrissur Pooram festivities

- The **Thrissur Pooram** is a temple festival which is held in Kerala every year.
- The festival is held at the Vadakkunnathan (Shiva) Temple in Thrissur.
- It is celebrated on the Pooram, the day when the moon rises with the Pooram star in the Malayalam Calender.
- Sakthan Thampuran, person who initiated the festivities ordained the temples into two groups, namely "Paramakkavu side" and "Thiruvambady side".
- The pooram officially begins with the event of flag hoisting which is known as Kodiyettam.
- Kodiyettam begins seven days before Thrissur Pooram.
- Under this Pooram Vilambaram is a custom where the elephant pushes open the south entrance gate of the Vadakkunnathan Temple.
- It hosts the Thrissur Pooram, with the idol of 'Neithilakkavilamma'.

Vadakkunnathan Temple-

- It is an ancient Hindu temple which is dedicated to Shiva at Thrissur, Kerala.
- This temple is a classical example of the architectural style of Kerala.
- It has one monumental tower on each of the four sides in addition to a kuttambalam.
- Mural paintings are depicts various scenes from the Mahabharata inside the temple.
- The shrines and the Kuttambalam display vignettes that is carved in wood.
- The temple, along with the mural paintings, has been declared as a National Monument by under the AMASR Act.

Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act (AMASR Act)

- It is an act of parliament that provides for the preservation of ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance.
- It was formed for the regulation of archaeological excavations and for protection of sculptures, carvings and other similar objects.
- It was passed in 1958.

20. Khajuraho Dance Festival

Context:

- Khajuraho Dance Festival was organised at the Khajuraho Temple.

About the Khajuraho Dance Festival:

- It has being held in the temple premises of Khajuraho after 44 years.

- **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** granted permission to organise the festival at this site.
- It is organised by the **Department of Culture, Government of Madhya Pradesh**.
- Objective of this festival is to promote heritage and tourism.
- Festival is organised every year in the month of February.
- It showcases classical Indian dances like Odissi, Kathak, Bharatnatyam etc., but in recent years modern Indian dances have also been added.

About the Khajuraho temple:

- Khajuraho temple complex is a group of monuments comprising of Hindu temples and Jain temples.
- It is located in the Chhatarpur district of Madhya Pradesh.
- It is included in the **UNESCO World Heritage Site list**. Khajuraho temples are famous for nagara-style architectural symbolism.
- Most of the temples were built by the **Chandela dynasty**.



Some of the prominent temples that have stood the test of time here are **Kandariya Mahadeva, Chaunsath Yogini, Lakshmana, Devi Jagadamba, Chitragupta and Parsvanath**.

- The **Kandariya Mahadeva temple** is the largest of them all and consists of 872 statues.
- The **Chaunsath Yogini temple** is the oldest one in Khajuraho and as the name suggests, it once had 64 cells dedicated to yoginis or female attendants.

Chandela dynasty

- Chandela's were **Rajpoot Dynasty** who ruled over central India from the 8th to 13th centuries. Chandela dynasty was founded by **Nannuka (r. c. 831-845 CE)**.
- Chandela kings were also known as **The Chandelas of Jejakabhukti** as they ruled much of the Bundelkhand region (then called Jejakabhukti).
- Khajuraho was the capital during **Chandela's rules**, earlier it used to be **Mahotsav Nagar**, which is currently known as **Mahoba**.
- It is also written in some historic literature that Chandela's considered 3 Capitals.
 - ▶ **Mahoba** was the cultural capital
 - ▶ **Khajuraho** was the spiritual capital
 - ▶ **Kalinjar** was their Army capital

21. Attukal Pongala: the feast for millions

Context: The famed Pongala, which is said to be the largest congregation of women in the world in connection with the annual festival at **Attukal Bhagavathy Temple in Thiruvananthapuram** falls on February 27 this year.

Important facts about Attukal Pongala Festival

- **Attukal Pongala** is a 10-day religious festival celebrated at the **Attukal Bhagavathy Temple** in Thiruvananthapuram of

- The pongala preparation **starts** with the **ritual** called ‘**Aduppuvettu**’.
- On the **ninth day**, there is a huge gathering of **millions of women** in the temple surroundings.
- These women prepare a divine food made of rice in earthen pots and offer it to the **Attukal Amma (Goddess of the Temple)**.
- The offering is made by **valiyachennellu, native organic** This variety is **rich in iron content**.
- This is the earliest Pongala festival in Kerala. The festival is marked as the **largest annual gathering of women by the Guinness World Records**.

Attukal Bhagavathy Temple

- The **Attukal Bhagavathy Temple** is a Hindu religious shrine, dedicated to Goddess Bhadrakali (Kannaki), the main deity of the temple. There are two idols of the Goddess in the sanctum sanctorum.
- **Architecture:** The temple structure is a harmonious conglomeration of both Kerala and Tamil styles of architecture.
- **Sculptures:**
 - ▶ The beautifully carved figures of Mahishasuramardini, Goddess Kali, Rajarajeswari, Sree Parvathy with Lord Paramasiva are depicted with other Gods.
 - ▶ The corridors walls also adorn the epic stories of the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu viz., the “Desavathara”.
 - ▶ On the southern Gopura, the puranic story of “Dakshayaga” is depicted in sculptures.



22.

PM to Inaugurate Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention 2021

Context: The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention was inaugurated by Shri Narendra Modi, Hon’ble Prime Minister of India on 9 January.

What is the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention 2021?

- The 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention, was organized on 9th January 2021.
- The Convention was held in virtual format.
- The **theme** of 16th PBD Convention 2021 was “Contributing to Aatmanirbhar Bharat”.
- The names of the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awardees for 2020-21 were also announced.
- Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards are conferred to select Indian diaspora members to recognize their achievements and honour their contributions to various fields, both in India and abroad.
- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention is the flagship event of the Ministry of External Affairs.

- It provides an important platform to engage and connect with the overseas Indians.

What is Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas?

- The Youth PBD was also celebrated virtually on the theme “Bringing together Young Achievers from India and Indian Diaspora” on 8 January 2021.
- It will be anchored by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

Why Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is celebrated?

- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is celebrated once in every two years.
- It is celebrated to strengthen the engagement of the overseas Indian community with the Government of India and reconnect them with their roots.
- The decision to celebrate **Pravasi Bharatiya Divas** was taken in accordance with recommendations of the High Level Committee (HLC) on the Indian Diaspora set up by government of India under the chairmanship of **L. M. Singhvi**.
- The day was chosen to mark the return of **Mahatma Gandhi** from South Africa to India in 1915.

23. Bharat Parv 2021

Context: Bharat Parv event was organised virtually from January 26th, 2021 till January 31st, 2021.

About Bharat Parv:

- It is organised annually to celebrate the spirit of India.
- It is organised on the ramparts of Red Fort on the occasion of Republic Day every year by Ministry of Tourism.
- It has been organised every year since 2016.
- In Bharat Parv the handicrafts, music, dance, handlooms, paintings, literary material and other features from across the country are showcased by Central Ministries and other organizations such as Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Ayush, media units of I&B Ministry, Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Archaeological Survey of India, Lalit Kala Academy, National Museum, National Gallery of Modern Arts, Khadi & Village Industries Commission.
- The aim of this event is generating patriotic fervour and showcasing the rich and varied culture of India.
- Theme of Bharat Parv 2021 was focused on Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat.

Highlights of Bharath Parv 2021:

- In this virtual event, states and union territories showcased their tourist destinations, handicrafts, cuisine and other features through their themed pavilions.
- Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla inaugurated the event.

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4

TRIBAL ART & CULTURE

1. 'Gujarat's tribal revolutionaries' tableau

Context:

- In the **Sabarkantha district of Gujarat**, a more horrific massacre than **Jallianwala Bagh** was committed by the British, and about 1,200 tribals were martyred.
- On the 100th anniversary of this unknown historical event, the Gujarat government highlighted it through tableaux, named as 'Gujarat's tribal revolutionaries', at the Republic Day Parade.

About Tableau:

- The 45-feet long, 14-feet wide and 16-feet high official tableau from Gujarat for the Republic Day parade represents the incident of indiscriminate firing by the British army on the tribal revolutionaries of **Pal Dadhvaav village**.
- A seven-feet statue of **Motilal Tejawat**, who was regarded as the '**Gandhi of Koliyari**' by the tribals, will be the main highlight of the tableau.
- A statue of H G Saturn, the British cavalier who gave the firing order, has also been depicted in it.



Protest of Bhil tribal in freedom movement:

- About 600 innocent civilians were killed at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar, Punjab on April 13, 1919.

- Later in 1920, Gandhiji started the non-cooperation movement in Calcutta. The freedom struggle had started all over the country.
- In the Sabarkantha district of Gujarat, the Bhil tribals, who lived a lavish life in the Aravalli hills, also protested the:
 - ▶ exploitation
 - ▶ harsh taxes
 - ▶ tyranny of the British and the feudal lords

About the forgotten horrific incident:

- **Date:** March 7, 1922
- **Location:** Sabarkantha district of Gujarat
- **Tribal leader:** Motilal Tejawat
- **British Officer:** Major HG Stern
- This horrific incident took place in the Sabarkantha district of Gujarat, three years after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.
- Freedom-loving tribals met under the leadership of Motilal Tejawat, known as the Gandhi of Koliyari.
- An armed military force of the British paramilitary force called Mewar Bhil Corps (MBC) was stationed on the Jaramara hills.
- Major HG Stern, the British officer of the MBC, ordered to shoot at the thousands of tribals, who had gathered, and around 1,200 innocent tribals were shot dead.
- The sound of gunshots from machine guns erased the dance and drums of the tribals forever.
- There were piles of dead bodies everywhere.
- Like a battlefield, the whole field was filled with corpses.
- The nearby Dhekhalia Kuwa and Dudhio Kuwa were filled with the bodies of around 1,200 innocent tribals.
- Motilal Tejawat was also shot twice. Later, his companions made him sit on a camel and took him to the hills along the river.
- The tribals of this region still sing songs of this event in their wedding songs.

2. National Tribal Dance Festival held in Chhattisgarh

Context: Government of Chhattisgarh held National Tribal Dance Festival.

About the Dance Festival

- This festival was held at Science College Ground, under the Tourism Development plan of Chhattisgarh government.
- It was a three-day National Tribal Dance Festival.
- Festival saw the participation of Tribal Dance Groups from several states and union territories of India.
- International participants also took part in the festival, portraying and celebrating the tribal folk culture of their respective country.

- The festival will showcased and celebrate the uniqueness of tribal culture. I
- It will also displayed the richness and diversity of tribal life across Chhattisgarh and other areas of India & world.

Which foreign countries took part?

- Kingdom of Eswatini
- Nigeria
- Uzbekistan
- Uganda
- Sri Lanka
- Mali
- Syria
- Palestine

3. Wanchuwa festival of Tiwa Tribe

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

Wanchuwa festival:

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

About Tiwa Tribe:

- Tiwa also known as Lalung is indigenous community.
- They are recognized as a Scheduled tribe within the state of Assam.
- **States:** Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur.
- **Sub-groups:** They are divided into 2 sub-groups- Hill Tiwa and Plains Tiwa which have contrasting cultural features:
 - ▶ **Language:** They speak a Tibeto-Burman language.
 - ▶ **Religion:** One-half of them follow their traditional religion. It is based on the worship of local deities. The other half has been converted to Christianity since the 1950s.
 - ▶ **Language:** The vast majority speak Assamese as their mother tongue. Their descent system is patrilineal.

- ▶ **Religion:** Their religion shares many elements with Assamese Hinduism but remains specific.
- ▶ **Hill Tiwa:** They live in the westernmost areas of Karbi Anglong district.
- ▶ **Plains Tiwa:** They live on the flatlands of the Southern bank of the Brahmaputra valley.

Festivals:

- The main festivals of the Tiwa tribes are: Three Pisu (Bihu), Borot utsav, Sogra puja, Wanchuwa, Jonbeel Mela, Kabla, Langkhon Puja and Yangli Puja.

Important tribes in India and festivals

- **Munda tribe:** Mage Parab , Ind-Parab Jom-Nagoa or Jom Nawa, Batauli, Kolom Sing, Phagu Festival, Sarhul or Ba Parab ,Karam and Sohrai Festival
- **Santhals:** Karam festival
- **Angamis:** Sekrenyi
- **Bhils:** Baneshwar fair
- **Khasis:** Nongkrem
- **Bhutia tribes:** Losar and Losoong
- **Gonds:** Keslapur Jathra
- **Garo Tribes:** Wangala
- **Rengma tribes:** Ngada

4. Gond art in the street culture of Singapore

Context: Recently, the creation ‘**Dancing in Unison**’ was unveiled in Little India in Singapore. The project brings India’s **Gond art** to the street culture of Singapore.

The Project

- One of Singapore’s tallest murals – the recently-unveiled ‘**Dancing in Unison**’ – borrows from the iconic imagery of both India’s Gond art and Singapore’s contemporary art.
- It was created by **Indian Gond artist Bhajju Shyam** and **Singaporean artist Sam Lo** for Singapore Tourism Board (STB) and **St+art India Foundation (St+art)**, the collaborative artwork in Little India, Singapore.

Gond Art

- Gond paintings are a form of painting from folk and tribal art that is practiced by one of the largest tribes in India with whom it shares its name.
- **States:** Gond paintings are considered to be from predominantly from Madhya Pradesh, it is also quite common in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhatisgarh and Odisha.
- Gond art has become so predominant that the Government of India has stepped in to preserve their art form for future generations to enjoy.



- Pardhan Gonds who traditionally served as priests are popularly considered the most prominent and well renowned for their artistic skills, in painting and even music and performing arts.

Features of Art

- **Subjects of Art:** Trees, animals, birds and other environmental representation are probably the most recognizable subject matter in their visual art practice. From mythological tales and oral histories to traditional songs, natural surroundings, important events, and rituals are depicted in the art.
- **Base of Art:** It is a common belief in the Gond community that a good image can earn good luck. This belief is visible in the houses of the community. Brightly painted walls, windows and even floors, replete with traditional icons and motifs are a common sight. Canvas or a cloth, or even chart paper along with basic paint is all that is required to start making a Gond painting.
- **Line and dot technique:** The artists first zero-in on a single theme or a simple subject and then begin the process of painting. One of the most noticeable and easily recognizable features of Gond painting is the line and dot technique used to create entire paintings.
- **Material used:** A mix of natural colours is used from earthen materials such as wooden coal, tree sap, red soil, sem leaves and even cow dung.

Gond Tribe

- The Gonds are said to be the largest tribal, or **Adivasi Community in India**.
- The community's roots can be traced back to the **pre-Aryan age**.
- Belonging largely to Deccan India, the Gond community has settled in regions spanning across northern Andhra Pradesh, eastern Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and western Orissa.
- The 2001 census the figure was nearly 11 million.
- They speak the Gondi language which belongs to **Dravidian language family**.



5. The Chhau mask

Context: Chhau dance, with its martial origin and strenuous body movements, was once a **strictly-guarded male domain**. Now several all-women troupes are all the rage.

Chhau Art form

- The word 'Chhau' probably comes from *chhauni* (camp), and the art form was arguably invented to keep foot soldiers war-ready.
- The martial movements and mock fights subsequently took the shape of dance, becoming popular in the Chota Nagpur Plateau region.



- It is based on the stories from Ramayana, Mahabharata and the Puranas.
- The dance dramas celebrate the triumph of good over evil.
- **States:** The Chhau dance is mainly performed during festivals in the region of Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha, especially the spring festival of Chaitra Parva.
- In these pandemic times, Chhau has even been used to spread awareness about COVID-19.
- Chhau was included in UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2010.



Variants of Chhau:

- **Purulia Chhau:** It is practiced in West Bengal. In this men decked in dazzling costumes and masks. They would dance to the rhythm of dhol, dhamsa, madol, shehnai, and flute at night-long performances. It is during the spring festival of *gajanparab*, dedicated to Shiva.
- **Mayurbhanj Chhau:** It is practised in Odisha.
- **Seraikella Chhau:** It is practised in Jharkhand.
- The most prominent difference among the three subgenres is regarding the use of masks. While, the Seraikella and Purulia subgenres of Chhau use masks during the dance, the Mayurbhanj Chhau uses none.

6.

Vice President to Inaugurate National Tribal Festival "Aadi Mahotsav"

Context: The "Aadi Mahotsav", a National Tribal Festival is being organized by TRIFED, Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

About Aadi Mahotsav

- It is a celebration of the Spirit of Tribal Culture, Crafts, Cuisine and Commerce.
- It is an annual initiative that was commenced in 2017.
- The festival was an attempt to familiarise the people with the rich and diverse craft, culture of the tribal communities across the country, in one place.
- Due to the unprecedented circumstances caused due to the pandemic, TRIFED did not hold any Aadi Mahotsav in 2020.

What are Schedule Tribes in India?

- **Article 366** defined scheduled tribes as "such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of this constitution".
- The Scheduled Tribes are notified in 30 States/UTs and the number of individual ethnic groups, etc. notified as Scheduled Tribes is 705.

- The tribal population of the country, as per 2011 census, is 10.43 crore, constituting 8.6% of the total population. 89.97% of them live in rural areas and 10.03% in urban areas.
- No community has been specified as Scheduled Tribe in relation to the State of Haryana and Punjab and Union Territories of Chandigarh, Delhi and Puducherry.
- **Article 342** provides for specification of tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities which are deemed to be for the purposes of the Constitution the Scheduled Tribes in relation to that State or Union Territory.
- In pursuance of these provisions, the list of Scheduled Tribes are notified for each State or Union Territory and are valid only within the jurisdiction of that State or Union Territory and not outside.

Characteristics of Tribes

- Primitive Traits
- Geographical isolation
- Distinct culture
- Shy of contact with community at large
- Economically backward.

TRIFED

- TRIFED is 'The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India'. It was established in 1987.
- It became operational from April 1988.
- The basic objective of the TRIFED is to provide good price to the products made or collected from the forest by the tribal peoples.

7.

Gujarat Government to give Rs. 5,000 to Tribals for visit to Ayodhya

Context: The Government of Gujarat has decided to give a financial assistance of Rs 5000 per person belonging to tribal community for pilgrimage Shri Ram Janmabhoomi in Ayodhya.

About the Scheme:

- This announcement was made at a gathering in "Shabari Dham" which is a pilgrim site in Dangs district of Gujarat. Shabari Dham is associated with Lord Sri Ram.
- On the occasion, it was decided that state-level 'Dussehra Mahotsav' will be organised at different places of pilgrimage related to Lord Ram every year in
- Following a decision by Supreme Court, "Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra trust" was set up in November 2019. This trust is entrusted with the task of constructing the Lord Ram temple in Ayodhya.

1. Rare black rock art depictions found in Andhra Pradesh

Context: In a recent finding, rare black stick-like drawings of human beings have been discovered in two caves at Paibogula village in Kurnool district close to the Kundu River in Andhra Pradesh.

Key-highlights of the Finding:

- These drawings are supposed to be dating back to the Megalithic Period (1500 to 500 BC) and early Historical period (500 BC to 600 AD).
- These newly explored rock art sites in the Kundu river valley in Gadivemula Mandal are 40 km from Kurnool city.
- These caves are locally known as Yedoorlagayi; Siddhulagayi, and Gurralapadah.
- These sites have rock art in black, red, and white pigments, along with cupules or cup marks of varying sizes, which need to be studied further for the exact dating, he added.
- These cupules were made on gneissic granite, a very hard and erosion-resistant rock type.
- The largest of these measures 10 cm in diameter and 5 cm in depth.

Rock Art:

- These rock art, drawing, painting, or similar work on or of stone, usually belonged from the ancient or prehistoric era.
- Rock art includes
 - ▶ pictographs (drawings or paintings)
 - ▶ petroglyphs (carvings or inscriptions)
 - ▶ engravings (incised motifs)
 - ▶ petroforms (rocks laid out in patterns)
 - ▶ geoglyphs (ground drawings)



- The ancient animals, tools, and human activities depicted often help shed light on daily life in the distant past, though the images are frequently symbolic rather than representative.

2. Karuppur kalamkari paintings and Kallakurichi wood carvings get GI tags

Context:

Kaluppur kalamkari paintings and Kallakurichi wood paintings from Tamil Nadu recently received geographical indication (GI) tags.

About Karuppur kalamkari paintings:

- Kalamkari paintings emerged under the rule of the Nayaka emperors in the early 17th century.
- Kalamkari means to create something with a 'kalam', or brush.
- Kalamkari paintings are made of **white cotton cloth**, which is widely used in temples for umbrella covers, circular curtains, chariot covers and asmanagiri (pieces of false roof fabric).
- **Design:** These designs are carefully made from cotton fabric using pens or brushes made of bamboo and coconut tree trunks.
- **Color:** Traditionally, only three colors are used - black, red, and yellow. But recently, 'Pale blue' has also come into use.
- **Location:** Kalamkari paintings are done in Karuppur and its surrounding villages in the Udayarpalayam taluk in Ariyalur district, and in and around Sickhanayakanpatti and Thirupanandal in Thiruvudaimarathur taluk, Thanjavur district.



Kallakurichi wood carving:

- Kallakurichi wood carving is a unique method of wood carving which involves the use of decoration and designs, found in traditional styles by artisans.
- Wood carving is actually one where artists specialize in carving objects related to the temple and furniture, using traditional designs.
- **Location:** Kallakurichi wood carvings are made mainly in Kallakurichi, Chinnasalam and Tharukkivilur taluks in the Kallakurichi region.
- **Emergence:** The skill of carving came to light as a traditional art form in which Madurai was an important city under various royal empires in ancient times.



Another GI marker in Tamil Nadu

- Cloves in Kanyakumari
- Dindigul locks
- Mahabalipuram stone sculptures
- Nilgiri (orthodox) tea
- Virupakshi hill banana

- The Thanjavur doll
- Kanchipuram silk Saree

3. Abanindranath at 150: Bichitra Revisited

Context: Year-long celebrations marking 150 years of Abanindranath Tagore, titled *Abanindranath at 150: Bichitra Revisited*, is being organised jointly by Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata, and DAG.

Who was Abanindranath?

- Abanindranath (7 August 1871 - 5 December 1951) was the nephew of Rabindranath Tagore.
- He helped shape modern Indian art and was the creator of the iconic '**Bharat Mata**' painting.
- He was the principal artist and creator of the 'Indian Society of Oriental Art' and the first major exponent of **swadeshi values** in Indian art.
- He first created the '**Indian Society of Oriental Art**' and later went on to establish Bengal school of art.
- He sought to modernize **Mughal and Rajput styles** in order to counter the influence of **Western models of art**, as taught in Art Schools under the British Raj and developed an Indian style of painting, later known as **Bengal school of art**.
- **Literature:** Most of his literary works were meant for children. Some of his books like '**BudoAngla**', '**KhirerPutul**' and '**Rajkahini**' are best examples of Bengali children's literature.



Victoria Memorial Hall is the custodian of the **Rabindra Bharati Society** collection, the single-largest collection of works by the artist.

4. Paleolithic cave paintings found in the Aravalli mountain range

Context: Archaeologists have discovered cave paintings in a rocky and forested corner of Haryana which is believed to belong to the **Upper Palaeolithic age**.

About the newly found cave paintings

- The paintings are found from the **quartzite rocks** in the **Aravalli mountain ranges**.
- These caves are located in the region's only surviving patch of primary forest, a holy grove called **Mangar Bani**.
- The cave paintings are comprised of images of human figurines, animals, foliage, and geometric.

- It is in the form of rock art and open-air ceremonial sites.
- Most of the paintings are ochre coloured, but some are white.
- Stones of these colors used to be available locally and inhabitants crushed the stones for preparing the color for paintings.

What is Paleolithic Age?

- The stone age is divided into three periods:
 - ▶ Paleolithic (or Old Stone Age)
 - ▶ Mesolithic (or Middle Stone Age)
 - ▶ Neolithic (or New Stone Age)
- The Upper Paleolithic Age began around 40,000 years ago and lasted till around 10,000 years ago.
- This era is marked by the use of tools by our early human ancestors (who evolved around 300,000 B.C.) and their eventual transformation from a culture of hunting and gathering to farming and food production.
- In the Paleolithic period (roughly 2.5 million years ago to 10,000 B.C.), early humans lived in caves or simple huts or tepees and were hunters and gatherers.
- They used basic stone and bone tools, as well as crude stone axes, for hunting birds and wild animals.
- They cooked their prey, including woolly mammoths, deer, and bison, using controlled fire.
- They also fished and collected berries, fruit, and nuts.

5. Climate change and the world's oldest cave art

Context: Researchers have alarmed about the decay of Pleistocene-era rock paintings which dates back to 45,000-20,000 years ago in cave sites in southern Sulawesi, on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi.

Key findings

- Scientists have warned that environmental degradation is killing one of the oldest and most precious pieces of the world's human heritage.
- The artwork, that is made with pigments, is decaying due to a process known as
- Decay is triggered by the growth of salt crystals due to a repeated change in temperature and humidity.
- It is caused by alternating wet and dry weather in the region.
- Indonesia has also experienced several natural disasters in couple of years, which have quickened the process of deterioration.



The Sulawesi island:

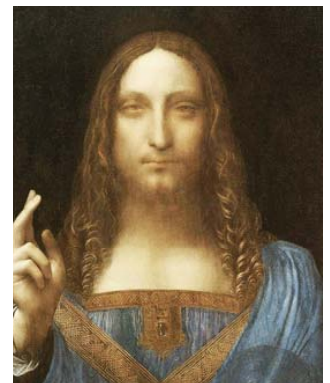
- **Sulawesi** is also known as **Celebes**.
- It is one of the four Greater Sunda Islands which are recognized as Borneo, Java, Sulawesi and Sumatra.
- It is governed by Indonesia.
- The central Indonesian island is situated between Asia and Australia and has a long history of human occupation.
- It occupies an area of over 174,000 sq. km.

6. 500 year old copy of Salvator Mundi recovered

Context: The Italian Police recovered 16th century copy of “Salvator Mundi”.

What is Salvator Mundi?

- Salvator Mundi is a painting by Leonardo da Vinci. It is infact, the world most expensive painting of Leonardo da Vinci.
- The painting depicts Jesus in Renaissance dress and making the sign of cross with his right hand.
- Jesus is also seen holding a transparent crystal orb in his left hand in the painting.
- It is said that the painting represents “Celestial Sphere” of the heavens.
- Many variations of this painting is created by the students of Leonardo.

**Who was Leonardo da Vinci?**

- Leonardo da Vinci was an Italian genius whose depth of knowledge was in multiple subjects.
- Some of his popular works are Mona Lisa, The Last Supper, Lady with an Ermine etc.

7. Significance of world’s oldest cave painting discovered in Indonesia

Context: A team of archaeologists has discovered what may be the world’s oldest known cave painting dating back to more than 45,000 years.

Key features of the painting

- The cave painting depicts a wild boar endemic to the Sulawesi island of Indonesia, where the painting was found.
- It dates back to more than 45,000 years
- The painting was made using **red ochre pigment**.

What is the significance of the cave painting?

- It shows the oldest evidence for the presence of hominins beyond the southeastern limits of the Ice Age Asian continent.

- It depicts the food habit of Hominins which includes the boars as food.
- The painting is a form of creative thinking and artistic expression at that time.

Hominins

- Hominins include modern humans, extinct human species and our immediate ancestors.
- Homo sapiens are the first modern humans who evolved from their hominid predecessors between 200,000-300,000 years ago.
- It is estimated that these modern humans started migrating outside of Africa some 70,000-100,000 years ago.

How did the archaeologists date it?

- Archaeologists used a method called **U-series isotope analysis**, which uses calcium carbonate deposits that form naturally on the cave wall surface to determine its age.
- They used a calcium carbonate deposit, also referred to as “cave popcorn” that had formed on the rear foot of one of the pig figures.

1. Chloe Zhao

Context: Chloe Zhao became the first Asian woman to win the Best director at the Academy Awards. She won this award for her film Nomadland.

About Chloe Zhao

- Zhao was born in China and has done her schooling in London and Los Angeles.
- Her debut film was Songs My Brothers Taught me.

About the Academy Awards

- The Academy Awards is also called as Oscars.
- They are presented for artistic and technical merit in the film industry.
- The winners are awarded with a copy of a Golden Statuette as trophy. The trophy is officially called “Academy Award of Merit”.
- The award was designed by Cedric Gibbons and sculpted by George Stanley.
- It was first presented in 1929.
- Bhanu Athaiya was the first Indian to win Oscar in 1982. She won the award for Best Costume Design for the movie Gandhi.

2. Sahitya Akademi Award 2020

Context: The National Academy of Letters announced the names for the “Sahitya Akademi Award 2020 on March 12, 2021

Important Awardees:

- The award will be bestowed upon the politician-writer M Veerappa Moily and along with other 21 writers.
- M. Veerappa Moily was awarded for his epic poetry called “Sri Bahubali Ahimsa Digvijayam” in Kannada language.
- A. Subramaniam has won the award for her poetry collection called “When God is a Traveller” in English.

What is the Selection procedure?

- Selections of works for the Sahitya Akademi Award is made following the recommendations made by a jury of three members of the concerned languages.
- They make their final decision in accordance with the procedure which was set down for this purpose. Under it, the Executive Board declares the Awards based on unanimous selections made by jurors or selection made in accordance with the majority vote.

About Sahitya Akademi Award

- It is the highest literary honour in India.
- It is conferred by Sahitya Akademi which is India's National Academy of Letters.
- The award is conferred to the most outstanding books of literary merit which are published in any 24 major Indian languages including Hindi, English and other 22 languages of the Eighth Schedule of Constitution.
- The award includes a casket comprising of an engraved copper plaque, a shawl and amount of Rs 1,00,000.

3. Gandhi Peace Prize 2020**Context:**

- Ministry of the culture, government of India has conferred the Gandhi Peace Prize on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for 2020.
- The peace prize for the year 2019 was conferred on the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said of Oman.

About Sheikh Mujibur Rahman:

- Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the first President and also became Prime Minister of Bangladesh, later.
- He is called as "Father of the Nation" or "Mujib".
- He was assassinated on August 15, 1975.

Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said:

- Winner of the Gandhi Peace Prize 2019, Sultan Qaboos, was the longest-reigning leader of the modern Arab world.
- He died in the month of January 2020.
- The peace prize was given this year for the last two years that is 2019 and 2020. In the year 2018, it was announced for the last four years.

About Gandhi Peace Prize:

- This is an International Gandhi Peace Prize which has been named after Mahatma Gandhi.
- The award is presented by the Government of India, as a tribute to the Gandhian Ideals.
- This award was launched in the year 1995 on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of Mohandas Gandhi.
- This annual award is given to the individuals and institutions for their contributions in the political, social and economic transformation through non-violence and other Gandhian ideals. It comprises of rupees one crore in cash, a plaque and a citation. The award is open to all the persons regardless of their race, nationality, gender or creed.

4. Shaheed Bhagat Singh Smarak inaugurated in New Delhi

Context: Education Minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' on March 23, 2021 inaugurated Shaheed Bhagat Singh Smarak in New Delhi.

About the Smarak:

- Homage was paid to Bhagat Singh in the chamber located in basement of Viceregal Lodge of Delhi University where he was imprisoned.
- This Smarak commemorates the 90 years of martyrdom of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev.
- On the occasion, an existing collection of books on freedom fighters which has been converted into "Shaheed Smriti Pustakalaya" was also made available for the students and teachers of Delhi University.
- It is hoped that the Bhagat Singh Smarak will instil in students the values of freedom and sacrifice.

5. Republic Day Parade 2021 Awards

Context:

- India celebrated its 72nd Republic Day Parade on 26th January, 2021.
- On this occasion the Union Sports Minister, Kiren Rijiju, presented the Republic Day Awards for 2021 Parade Tableaux.

Republic Day 2021:

- This Republic Day celebration saw participation of 32 tableaux.
- In all tableaux from the 17 States and Union Territories (UTs) were selected for participation.
- The event also saw participation of 6 Tableaux from the Defence Ministry and 9 from other ministries, departments and paramilitary forces.

Awards:

- The Uttar Pradesh tableau bagged the award for best tableau.
- The theme of the UP tableau was "Ayodhya: Cultural Heritage of Uttar Pradesh".
- The tableau of Tripura came second.
- The Tripura tableau displayed the eco-friendly traditions to achieve the self-reliance in the socio-economic parameters.
- The third best was taken by the tableau of Uttarakhand.
- The Uttarakhand Tableau displayed the theme of the "Dev Bhoomi- The Land of the Gods".

6. Lag B'Omer festival of Israel

Context: A stampede happened at the religious annual festival Lag B'Omer, which was attended by more than 1,00,000 of ultra-Orthodox Jews in northern Israel killed dozens of people and injured around 150.

What is the Lag B'Omer festival?

- **Jewish festival:** It is an annual Jewish festival which is observed during the Hebrew month of Iyar.
- **Homage:** People pay homage to Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, a second century sage and mystic.
 - ▶ He is believed to have died on this day.
 - ▶ It is believed that he shared the knowledge and wisdom on the same day.
 - ▶ That is why bonfires are often lit on the day to represent it.
- **Occasion:** It is celebrated on the 33rd day of the Omer that is the 49-day period between Passover and Shavuot.
 - ▶ This is the only day during the 49-day period when the celebration is permitted.
- **Celebrations:** Jews usually schedule weddings on this day every year.
 - ▶ The hair, of young boys who reached at the age of three, is cut for the first time on this occasion.
- **Location:** To mark the celebration every year, tens of thousands of ultra-Orthodox Jewish pilgrims reach to the base of Mount Meron.
- The Rabbi's tomb is a revered holy site in Israel.

7

DANCES FORMS

1. The Thullal dance form of Kerala

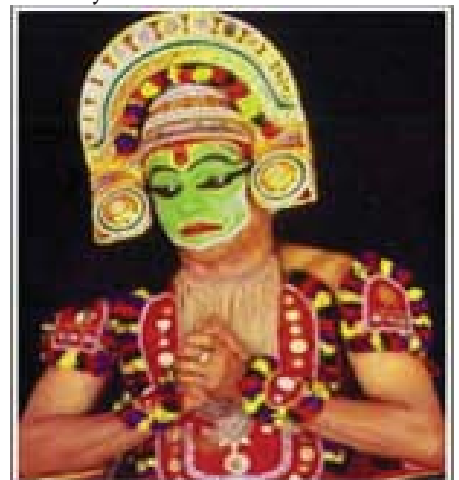
Context: During the harvest festival in August-September, the artists prepare to leave home for long spells to perform at temple festivals across Kerala and perform song-and-dance Thullal, which is steeped in satire on contemporary society though the themes are mythological.

About the Thullal dance:

- The word 'Thullal' means '*to leap or jump about playfully*'.
- It emerged in the eighteenth century.
- Three forms of thullal are – Ottan Thullal, Parayan Thullal and Seethankan Thullal. Of the three Ottan Thullal is the most popular.

Key features of the dance form

- A solo performance combines both dance and recitation.
- The performer through the classical acting techniques portrays the various characters in an episode and does the narration.
- Thullal is the explication of a tale which is drawn from the puranas and narrated in verse.
- It was introduced by Kunchan Nambiar, the renowned poet of the eighteenth century.
- The humorous and satiric mode of presentation and the use of simple Malayalam language made thullal very popular among the ordinary people.
- It is accompanied by an orchestra of mridangam, harmonium and cymbals.
- The make-up is simple and very much similar to that of Kathakali.
- The face is painted with yellow arsenic mixed with blue color. The eyes are blackened and lips reddened.
- The dancer wears breast-plate which has golden pearls, necklaces and colourful tassels.
- The white waist clothes resemble the skirts.
- The head-gear is small which is made of light wood and studded with bright stones and decorated with golden paper.
- The bracelets, amulets and waistlets are almost similar as in Kathakali.



2.

'Kalyanasougandhikam' highlights the fine classicism of Kathakali

Context: 'Kalyanasougandhikam' brought alive the blend of elements unique to a Kathakali play.

What is 'Kalyanasougandhikam'?

- *Kalyanasougandhikam* is a story known for its unique blend of elements that highlight the classicism of Kathakali.
- It was penned by **Kottayathu Thampuran** in eighteenth century.
- **Kalyanasougandhikam** is a citation of dance from Kathakali which depicts Bhima's search for the rare flower Kalyanasougandhikam for his consort Panchali.
- The performance centred on the meeting between the two sons of Vayu — Hanuman and Bhima — when the latter goes in search of the divine flower sougandhikam.
- One of its features is richness of its Sanskrit-dense literature.
- It has the component of the slow and fast dances, twists in plots, and the vitality of background scores.
- It is accompanied with Carnatic music.

Kathakali-

- Kathakali is a classical dance drama which originated in Kerala state of India.
- It dates back to 17th century and this art form is renowned for its elaborate makeup and costumes.
- It is one of the oldest theatre forms in the world.



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1. Hoysala Temples in Karnataka

Context:

- India has finalised the **Hoysala Temples in Karnataka** as its nominations for consideration in the **World Heritage Sites List for 2022-23**.
- **The Hoysala temples in Belur and Halebeedu in Hassan district and Somanathapura in Mysuru district have been nominated.**
- They were finalised by the **Union Ministry of Culture and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)**.

About Hoysala Temples:

- The Hoysalas temples of Belur, Halebid and Somnathapur were reportedly built in the 12th-13th centuries.
- The masterpieces represent and attest to the creativity and skill of the Hoysala artists and architects.
- Hoysala architecture is the building style that was developed by architects under the rule of the Hoysala Empire between the 11th and 14th centuries.
- The Hoysala influence was at its peak in the **13th century and several large and small temples built** during the era remain today as examples of the **Hoysala architectural style**.



- ▶ The Hoysala temples include Chennakesava Temple at Belur, the Hoysaleswara Temple at Halebidu and the Kesava Temple at Somanathapura.
- There are several other examples of Hoysala craftsmanship such as the temples at Hosaholalu, Belavadi, Amruthapura, Basaralu, Mosale, Arasikere, Nuggehalli and Kikkeri.
- ▶ The Hoysala architectural style reveals a negligible Indo-Aryan influence and a more distinct impact of Southern Indian style.
- The Hoysala temples are protected monuments under the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)**. Their conservation and maintenance is done by ASI but the Karnataka state government will ensure the conservation of state-protected monuments around these three monuments.

Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

- The ASI is the premier organisation for the **archaeological research and protection of the cultural heritage of the country**.
- The prime objection of ASI is to **maintain the archaeological sites, ancient monuments and remains of national importance**.
- The ASI Headquarters is in **New Delhi**.
- It was established in **1861 by Alexander Cunningham**.
- It regulates all archaeological activities as per the provisions of the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958**.
- It functions under the aegis of the **Union Ministry of Culture**.
- It also regulated by the **Antiquities and Art Treasure Act, 1972**.

What is a World Heritage Site?

- A World Heritage Site is a location having an **“Outstanding Universal Value”**.
- According to the **World Heritage Convention’s** Operational Guidelines, an Outstanding Universal Value signifies **“cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity.”**
- The Sites fall into **three categories: cultural heritage, natural heritage, and mixed heritage (cultural as well as natural)**.
 - ▶ Cultural heritage entails an Outstanding Universal Value from the **point of view of history, art or science, and includes monuments, groups of buildings, and sites which are the combined work of nature and human agency**.
 - Examples include the **Taj Mahal, the Statue of Liberty, and the Sydney Opera House**.
- The Sites under natural heritage are those having **Outstanding Universal Value from the point of view of science, conservation of natural beauty**, such as the **Sundarbans Natural Park or the Victoria Falls**.
- **Of the 1121 World Heritage Sites in the world, 869 are cultural, 213 are natural, and 39 are mixed.**

2.

Adi Shankaracharya's birthplace to become A National Monument

Context:

The birthplace of Adi Shankaracharya in the state is likely to be declared as a monument of national importance.

Who was Adi Shankaracharya?

- Adi Shankaracharya was born in Kalady in Kerala in 788 C.E and disappeared in the year 820 C.E at the young age of 32.
- Adi Shankara was an exceptional child as he had become fluent in Sanskrit by the age of two. By four, he was comfortably reciting scriptures including Vedas.
- The burning quest for attaining superior knowledge from an early age pushed Adi Shankara to leave his home and set on the search for a guru.
- His quest ended with Govind Bhagvatpad at Omkareshwar (Madhya Pradesh) on the bank of Narmada River.
- Adi Shankaracharya championed the Advait branch of philosophy that declared that God and humans were not two. He then set out to spread the message of his guru.
- From the age of 16 to 32, Adi Shankaracharya travelled across the length and breadth of India with the message of Vedas.



Historical Significance of Adi Shankaracharya

- Adi Shankara helped compile the Advaita Vedanta and revived the Hindu Culture on the verge of decline.
- Along with Madhava and Ramanuja, Shankara formed doctrines that are followed and respected to date in the respective sects.
- The trio is considered the most potent icon of the recent history of Hindu philosophy.

In early November last year, Prime Minister Modi had unveiled a 13-foot statue of Adi Shankaracharya at Kedarnath Temple in Uttarakhand.

How a monument is declared as a monument of national importance?

- The Archeological Survey of India (ASI) designates any monument of national importance and authorises the Central government to 'maintain, protect and promote' the site.
- If mandated by the Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958, the monument could be considered of significant historical importance.
- Currently, the ASI protects 3,600 monuments of national importance.

3. Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple

Context: Recently, the Supreme Court (SC) has declined a plea filed by **Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple Trust** seeking to exempt it from the audit of 25 years as ordered by the court last year (2020).

About Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple:

- The temple dates back to the 8th century but the present structure was built in the 18th century by the then **Travancore Maharaja Marthanda Varma**.
- Sree Padmanabhaswamy temple is a Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu.
- Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple is one of 108 Divya Desams (holy abodes of Vishnu) - principal centres of worship of the deity in Vaishnavism.
 - ▶ The temple gave its name to Kerala's capital Thiruvananthapuram.
- Padmanabhaswamy Temple, one of the richest shrines in the world, has 6 underground vaults called Vault A, Vault B, Vault C, Vault D, Vault E and Vault F.
 - ▶ These vaults are also called **chambers**, which are full of royal treasure worth in billions.
 - ▶ Padmanabha Swamy Temple has chambers that consist of royal treasure.



4. ASI discovered remains of an ancient temple of Gupta period

Context: Recently there have been interesting findings of the remains of a Gupta period temple by the Archaeological survey of India in Etah-Uttar Pradesh.

Key-findings:

- Archeologists have found 'shankhalipi' inscriptions on the stairs on an ancient temple dating back to the Gupta period.
- This site (Bilsarh) was declared 'protected' in 1928.
- The ASI team discovered "two decorative pillars close to one another, with human figurines,"
- These two pillars were flat rectangular pillars, placed parallel and facing the same direction, and the front faces showed images of the yakshas, ganas, and various geometrical motifs.
- The stairs led to a structural temple built during the Gupta period. The discovery becomes significant since only two other structural temples from the Gupta age have been found so far
 - ▶ Dashavatara Temple (Deogarh)
 - ▶ Bhitargaon Temple (Kanpur Dehat)
- The inscription on the stairs possibly reads 'Sri Mahendraditya', which was the title of Kumaragupta I of the Gupta dynasty.

- Sri Mahendraditya which was the title for King Kumaragupta I of the Gupta dynasty whose ruling period was from 415- 455 CE.

What is the Shankhalipi script?

- Shankhalipi or “shell-script” is a term used by scholars to describe ornate spiral characters assumed to be Brahmi derivatives that look like conch shells or shankhas.
- They are found in inscriptions across north-central India and date to between the 4th and 8th centuries.
- Both Shankhalipi and Brahmi are stylised scripts used primarily for names and signatures.
- The inscriptions consist of a small number of characters, suggesting that the shell inscriptions are names or auspicious symbols or a combination of the two.



Gupta dynasty rulers:

- Chandragupta 1 (320–330CE) -Chandragupta 1 was the founder of the Gupta empire. From being a local chief in Magadha kingdom, he increased his power by marriage alliances and wars.
- Chandragupta 2 (380–413 CE) -Chandragupta II The Great also known as Chandragupta Vikram Aditya, son of Samudragupta, was one of the most powerful emperors of the Gupta empire in northern India.
 - ▶ Under his rule the Gupta Empire achieved its zenith, art, architecture, and sculpture flourished, and the cultural development of ancient India reached its climax.

5.

Quartz is the reason behind the ‘durability’ of Stonehenge megaliths: Study

Context:

- Recently, research was conducted on **Stonehenge’s 52 sandstone megaliths**, which is known as sarsens, to gain insight into its geology and chemistry.
- It revealed some of the traits of building material for the famed monument in southern England to show their **stout resistance to weathering**.

About the Stonehenge megaliths:

- **Stonehenge** is a prehistoric monument built under the **Neolithic and Bronze Age** in around **2500 BC**.
- This is located in **Wiltshire, England**.
- This consists of an **outer ring of vertical sarsen standing stones**,
- The stones are around 13 feet high, seven feet wide, and weighs around 25 tons.



- The inside ring consists of smaller bluestones.
- The whole monument is orientated towards the sunrise on the summer solstice.
- The site and its surrounding area were added to UNESCO's list of **World Heritage Sites**.

What are the findings of the research?

- The researcher was conducted used CT-scan, X-rays, microscopic analyses, and various geochemical techniques.
- The sarsens are made of stone known as **silcrete** which forms gradually within a few meters of the ground surface due to the groundwater washing through buried sediment.
 - ▶ The silcrete is comprised of mainly **sand-sized quartz grains** which are cemented tightly together by an interlocking mosaic of quartz crystals.
- Quartz is extremely durable and does not easily crumble or erode even when exposed to eons of wind and weather.
- This explains why the stones are resistant to weathering and why they made ideal material for monument-building.

6. ASI restoring the 17th-century Dutch cemetery at Chinsurah

Context: The Archeological Survey of India, Kolkata had started the restoration of the Dutch cemetery at Chinsurah.

About the Dutch Cemetery:

- The cemetery is situated more than 40 km upstream from Kolkata on the river Hooghly.
- The Chinsurah Dutch cemetery is probably the **biggest non-British European cemetery** in West Bengal.
- It is a protected monument and the most important proof of strong Dutch presence in the town.
- The Cemetery reminds of the golden days of the Dutch legacy in Chinsurah.
- The cemetery contains an assortment of 250 graves scattered under old trees and surrounded by a high wall.
- It has two segments, the older one having graves of Dutch nationals and the other is still used by the British and native Christians.
- It has mausoleums with an architectural style of the same period in south India.
- The southern part of the cemetery is home to 24 extant Dutch tombs, which are of three types, namely, pyramids, tomb boxes, and plain.

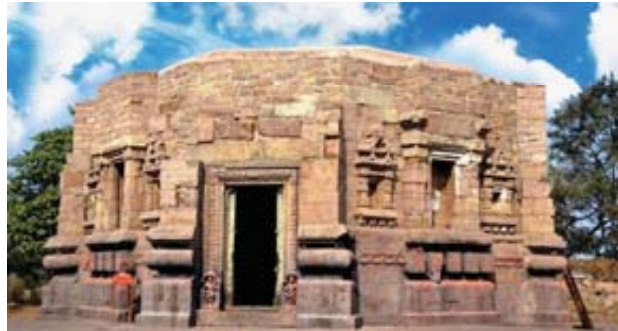





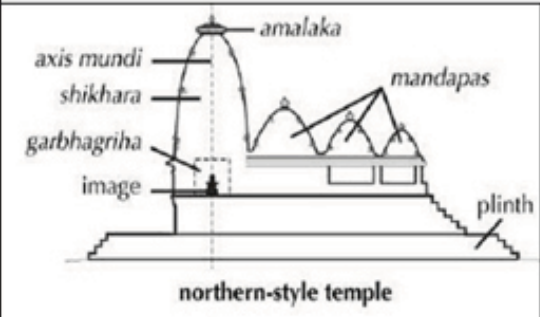
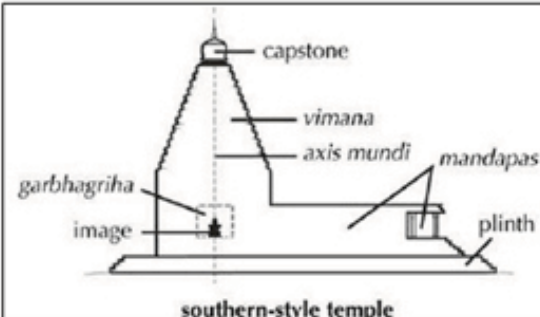
7. Mundeshvari temple

Context: Mundeshvari temple is considered the oldest functional temple in the country and also said to be older than the temples in Banaras.

About the Mundeshwari temple:

- **Characteristics:** The **Mundeshwari Devi Temple** is located on the Mundeshwari Hills of Kaimur plateau.
- It is located near Son River, Bihar.
- It is protected by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) since 1915.
- The existence of Naga (serpent) on four faced shivalingam and Naga janeu (sacred thread) on Ganesha idols is not found anywhere in India and also on broken pieces scattered around the hill clearly indicated that it was a construction by rulers of Naga dynasty (110BC to 315AD) who used serpent as their royal sign.
- It is an ancient temple dedicated to the **worship of Lord Shiva and Shakti.**
- A royal seal of **Sri Lankan king Dutthagamani (101-77 BC)** was also recovered from this place.
- **Historical Significance:** It is said the goddess installed in the Mundeshwari temple might well have been a deity worshipped originally by the aboriginal population, described in the Vedic and post-Vedic texts as asura and daitya.
- Temple design
 - ▶ It is a sandstone Shiva temple built to an octagonal plan.



Nagara	Dravida	Vesara
		
 <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 5px;">northern-style temple</p>	 <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 5px;">southern-style temple</p>	

- ▶ It is the earliest specimen of the Nagara style of temple architecture in Bihar.
- ▶ It has four doorways opening out in the cardinal directions and large central niches flanked by smaller side niches on each of the interceding walls.
- ▶ It stretches 14m across from one door to opposite door.

- ▶ The main deities in the sanctum sanctorum are of the Devi Mundeshwari and Chaturmukh (four faced) Shiva linga.
- ▶ There are deities installed in the open as well.

8. Reclining Buddha and his various depictions in art

Context:

- On Buddha Jayanti, Buddha Purnima, or Vesak, India's largest statue of the Reclining Buddha was to be installed at the Buddha International Welfare Mission temple in Bodh Gaya.
- It is a giant 100-foot fibreglass statue built over three months by artisans in Kolkata.

The Reclining Buddha:

- A reclining Buddha statue or image **represents The Buddha during his last illness, about to enter Parinirvana**, the stage of great salvation after death.
- The Buddha's death came when he was 80 years old, in a state of meditation, in Kushinagar in eastern Uttar Pradesh.
- It also signifies the Buddha's last deeksha even while on his deathbed, he took a follower into the fold.



Significance of the Iconographic representation:

- Statues and images of the Reclining Buddha show him lying on his right side, his head resting on a cushion or on his right elbow.
- It is a popular iconographic depiction in Buddhism, and is meant to show that all beings have the potential to be awakened and be released from the cycle of death and rebirth.

Historical background of Reclining Buddha

- The Reclining Buddha was first depicted in **Gandhara art**.
- It began in the period between 50 BC and 75 AD, and **peaked during the Kushana period** from the first to the fifth centuries AD, Dr Manwatkar said.
- Buddha was against idol worship, in the centuries immediately following his parinirvana (483 BC), his representation was through symbols.
- As the devotional aspect subsequently entered Buddhist practice, however, iconographic representations of The Buddha began.

Reclining Buddha outside India

- Reclining postures are more prevalent in Thailand and other parts of South East Asia.
 - ▶ The **largest Reclining Buddha** in the world is the 600-foot Winsein Tawya Buddha built in 1992 in Mawlamyine, Myanmar.
 - ▶ In the late 15th century, a 70-metre statue of the Reclining Buddha was built at the Hindu temple site of **Baphuon in Cambodia's Angkor**.

- ▶ The **Bhamala Buddha Parinirvana in Pakistan's** Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, which dates back to the 2nd century AD, is considered the oldest statue of its kind in the world.
- ▶ There are several statues of the Reclining Buddha in China, Thailand, Japan, Indonesia, and Malaysia.
- **Reclining Buddha in India**
 - ▶ **Cave No. 26 of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Ajanta** contains a 24-foot-long and nine-foot-tall sculpture of the Reclining Buddha.
 - ▶ **It is** believed to have been carved in the 5th century AD.
 - ▶ It shows the Buddha reclining on his right side, and behind him are two sala trees.
 - ▶ At the base of the sculpture are his begging bowl, a water pitcher and walking stick.
 - ▶ While his disciples are shown sitting in mourning, celestial beings are shown on top, rejoicing in anticipation of the Buddha's arrival in heaven.
- Kushinagar, where the Buddha actually attained parinirvana, has a 6-metre-long red sandstone monolith statue of the Reclining Buddha inside the Parinirvana Stupa.

Other depictions of the Buddha

- **Sitting postures**, the most common depiction, mostly pertaining to his Enlightenment rather than to his demise.
 - ▶ At the **Mahabodhi temple**, the Buddha is sitting in the bhoomi-sparsha mudra, where his hand is pointing towards the ground.
 - ▶ It symbolises earth as being witness to his enlightenment.
- At **Sarnath**, where the Buddha gave his first sermon, the stone statue has a hand gesture called the dharma-chakra mudra, which signifies preaching.
 - ▶ This is also the most popular depiction in India, along with the Bodhi tree depiction.
- **The Walking Buddha**, it is either beginning his journey toward enlightenment or returning after giving a sermon.
 - ▶ This is the least common of the Buddha postures, and is seen mostly in Thailand.

9. Rare sculptures of Rani Rudrama Devi unearthed

Context: Two rare sculptural portraits of Kakatiya Queen Rudrama Devi were unearthed and identified on the premises of Sangameswara Swamy Temple at Teerthala village in Khammam district.

About the newly discovered sculptures:

- The sculpture shows her **devotion for Lord Siva**.
- She is seated on her forefeet with her hands are in Anjali mudra (a gesture of worship).
- **The second sculptural panel:** It is in a rectangular frame and represents arrival of the Rudrama Devi on a royal elephant to this temple site.
- It shows the provincial chief under her control is welcoming her by stopping the running elephant with his hands.



Who was Rudrama Devi?

- **Rudrama Devi** was a monarch of the Kakatiya dynasty in the Deccan Plateau from 1263-1289 until her death.

Kakatiya dynasty

- The *Kakatiya dynasty* was a South Indian *dynasty*.
- It ruled most of eastern Deccan region that comprise present day Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, and parts of eastern Karnataka and southern Odisha.
- They ruled between 12th and 14th centuries.
- Their capital was Orugallu which is now known as Warangal.
- Kakatiya rulers served as feudatories to the Rashtrakutas and Western Chalukyas for more than two centuries.
- They assumed sovereignty under Prataparudra I in 1163 CE after suppressing the Chalukya subordinates in the Telangana region.

- She was one of the very few women who ruled as monarchs in India.
- **Challenges:** Rudrama Devi faced challenges from the Eastern Ganga dynasty and the Yadavas.
- **Devotion:** She was a staunch devotee of Shiva.

Sangameswara temple

- It is *panchakuta*, which is a five-unit marvellous shrine monument.
- The shrine stands on a well built *jagati* platform which is being covered under flooring.
- The shrine complex is enriched with two most marvellous sculptural representations.
- The temple is dedicated to lord Shiva.
- The temple was constructed during the reign of Rani Rudrama Devi.
- It is situated in the Teerthala village on the banks of Akeru River.
- The place is venerated as 'Triveni sangama sthali' and is situated on the confluence of three rivers – Akeru, Munneru and Buggeru.

10.

Visakhapatnam's 2000-year-old Buddhist site of Thotlakonda

Context: Historians and biologists are campaigning to protect the ancient Buddhist site of Thotlakonda in Visakhapatnam, which is also a home to an estimated 90 species of bird.

About the Buddhist site:

Cultural Significance:

- **The Thotlakonda Buddhist Complex** is situated on a hill near Bheemunipatnam which is about 15 km from Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh.
- The site is thought to be used for practicing Hinayana Buddhism from 200 BCE to 200 CE.
- Thotlakonda is thought to be under influence of ancient Kalinga, which was an important source of dissemination of Buddhism to Sri Lanka and various parts of Southeast Asia.

- It provides an insight into the trans-oceanic diffusion of Indic culture, especially Buddhism.
- The site has been declared as an area comprising a protected monument under the Andhra Pradesh Ancient and Historical Monument and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1960.
- A partial excavation of the site by the State Archaeology Department (1988-1992) found ancient pottery such as tan ware, black red ware, coins from the Satavahana period and Roman coins, labels with Brahmi inscriptions, inscribed Chhatra pieces, terracotta and glass beads, bangles, stuccos and stone sculptural remains at the site.

Ecological Significance

- The site has been left undisturbed for more than 2,000 years since and allowed the flora and fauna of this area to develop naturally.
- The site is home to birds and raptors like the white-bellied sea eagle, Indian rock eagle, Indian spotted eagle, black-shouldered kite, and common kestrel.

Hinayana Buddhism

- Buddhism was divided into two sects namely Mahayana and Hinayana.
- The terms Hinayana (refers to the Lesser Vehicle or Modest Vehicle) and Mahayana (Greater Vehicle or Vast Vehicle) have originated in The Prajnaparamita Sutras.
 - ▶ Hinayana follows the original teaching of Buddha.
 - ▶ It emphasizes on individual salvation through self discipline and meditation.
 - ▶ Hinayana Buddhists think Buddha as a Human instead of a God who found a way to Nirvana.
 - ▶ It follows teaching or Philosophy of Buddha rather taking it a religion.
 - ▶ It is found mostly in the South and West covering Indochina and Ceylon (Sri-Lanka).
 - ▶ Its early work written in Pali language (e.g. Kamma, Dhamma).

11. A 3000-year-old 'lost golden city' discovered in Egypt

Context: Egypt announced the discovery of a **three-millennia-old "lost golden city"**, being touted as the most important find since the unearthing of **King Tutankhamun's tomb**, 100 years ago.

About the "Lost golden city":

- **Largest City:** The city is known as "**The Rise of Aten**" and the largest city ever found in Egypt.
- **Dynasty:** The city is thought to belong from the era of **18th-dynasty king Amenhotep III (1391 to 1353 B.C.)**.
- The city is also considered to have been used by **Tutankhamun** and his successor Ay during a period believed to be the golden era of ancient Egypt.
- It is considered the **largest administrative and industrial settlement** of the pharaonic empire.
- **Location:** The golden city is situated **at the west bank of the Nile River**.
- **Architecture:** The city is fenced in by a zigzag wall and has only one access point leading to internal corridors and residential areas.

- The **northern part of the city** includes the administrative and residential districts and in the **southern part** workshops, bakery, oven, and pottery storage are found.
- **Houses** are made up of **mud-bricks**.
- The site has also seen a **large number of ovens and kilns** for making glass and faience.
- The **clay caps of wine vessels, rings, scarabs, colored pottery, and spinning and weaving tools** were also found.
- Two **burials of a cow or bull** are also found inside one of the rooms.
- The **burial of a person** with arms outstretched to his side and remains of a rope wrapped around his knees is also found.

Tutankhamun (c. 1342 – c. 1325 BC)

- He is commonly referred to as **King Tut**.
- He was the last of his royal family to rule during the end of the **18th Dynasty Egyptian pharaoh**.
- His father was the pharaoh Akhenaten.

12. 3D Image of Bamiyan Buddha

Context:

- In March 2021, the Bamiyan Buddhas were brought back to life with the help of 3D projection in the event that was held in the Bamiyan Valley of Afghanistan.
- The event called “A Night with Buddha” was held on the anniversary of its annihilation.

What is the history of the statues of Bamiyan Buddhas?

- They were two 6th-century monumental statues of Gautama Buddha.
- Both these statues were specimen of Gandhara Art form.
- The statues of Bamiyan Buddha were dismantled into small pieces in March 2001 during the previous Taliban regime.

Gandhara Art

- The statues represented a classic blend of Gandhara art style or the blend of artistic style of Guptas, Sassanian & Hellenistic style.



13. Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysala

Context: The nomination dossier of 'Sacred Ensemble of Hoysalas' for "Tentative List" of World Heritage Sites have been submitted to UNESCO, as per the **Ministry of Culture**.

About Hoysala at Belur

- The Chennakeshava temple, devoted to Lord Vishnu, was at the center of the old walled town located on the banks of the Yagachi River.
- Construction of the temple commenced in 1117 AD and took 103 years to complete.
- A total of 118 stone inscriptions have been recovered from the temple complex.
- The richly sculptured exterior of the temple includes sculptures and iconography and horizontal friezes that depict scenes from daily life, music, and dance, and narrate scenes from the life of Vishnu and his reincarnations and the epics, Ramayana, and Mahabharata.
- However, some of the representations of Shiva are also included.

About Hoysala at Halebid

- The Hoysaleshwara temple at Halebidu is the most exemplary architectural ensemble of the Hoysalas extant
- Built in 1121CE during the reign of the Hoysala King, Vishnuvardhana Hoysaleshwara.
- The temple, dedicated to Shiva, was sponsored and built by wealthy citizens and merchants of Dorasamudra
- The Hoysaleshwara temple is most well-known for the more than 240 wall sculptures that run all along the outer wall.
- Halebid has a walled complex containing of **three Jaina basadi** (temples) of the Hoysala period:
 - ▶ the Parshvanatha Basadi
 - ▶ the Adinatha Basadi
 - ▶ the Shanthinatha Basadi
- The Kedareshwara temple is another exquisitely carved temple dedicated to Shiva.

Hoysala Dynasty

- Hoysala dynasty is a South Indian dynasty that existed between 1110 A.D. and 1326 A.D.
- **Nripakama II/Sala** was the founder of Hoysala Dynasty.
- The capital of the empire initially was at Belur, later moving to Halebidu.
- At its height the dynasty ruled over parts of the modern states of Mysore, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu.

14. Ancient Buddhist monastery found in Jharkhand

Context: The Archaeological Survey of India has unearthed a Buddhist monastery buried under a mound in a village situated in a hilly area of the Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand.

About the newly found monestry

- The findings are made in Burhani village near Juljul Pahar of Sitagarhi Hills located around 12 km from district headquarters
- The monastery is believed to be at least 900 years old.
- It seems to be built during the Pala period.
- Key Findings
 - ▶ Four statues of deity Tara in Varad Mudra
 - ▶ Varad Mudra is the gesture of hand showing dispensing of boons
 - ▶ Six statues of the Buddha in Bhumisparsha Mudra
 - ▶ Bhumisparsha Mudra is the gesture of hand showing five fingers of right hand towards the earth symbolizing the Buddha's enlightenment.
 - ▶ The sculptures each stand two to three feet tall.

- **Tara** is known as a deity in **Hinduism** and a female **bodhisattva**—central figures who delay personal enlightenment to offer earthbound worshippers salvation—or Buddha in different Buddhist traditions.



Contribution of Pala dynasty to Support Buddhism:

- The Pala dynasty ruled the regions of Bengal and Bihar for about 400 years, from the 8th century until the end of the 11th century.
- Gopala, the first Pala king, was a Buddhist.
- They used the revenue from the tax collections to fund initiatives all across the region that would spread Buddhism.
- The Pala rulers followed an approach of religious tolerance, granting land for Hindu temples and allowing Hindu Brahmins to hold high official posts in the Pala court.

Monasteries

- Monastic complexes were created for the monks for meditation and residing purposes.

Three types of architecture:

Stupa

- The first was the stupa, a significant object in Buddhist art and architecture.
- On a very basic level, it is a burial mound for the Buddha.
- The original stupas contained the Buddha's ashes.
- 6 Buddhist Stupas in India:
 - ▶ Mahabodhi Stupa, Bodh Gaya.
 - ▶ Sanchi Stupa, Madhya Pradesh.
 - ▶ Shanti Stupa, Leh.
 - ▶ Dhamekh Stupa, Sarnath.
 - ▶ Kesaria Stupa, Bihar.
 - ▶ Maha Stupa, Thotlakunda.



Vihara

- This is the Buddhist monastery that also contained a residence hall for the monks.

Chaitya

- This was an assembly hall that contained a stupa.
- The central hall of the chaitya was arranged to allow for the circumambulation of the stupa.
- Famous Chaityas and Viharas
- Two important Chaityas in India are
 - ▶ **Karle Chaitya.** It is a complex of ancient Buddhist Indian rock-cut caves at Karli near Lonavala, Maharashtra.
 - ▶ **Nasik Chaitya.** There are 16 Viharas and one Chaitya situated in Nasik of Maharashtra.
 - ▶ **Junnar Vihara.**

15. Sculptors take center stage at Yadadri

Context:

- The Yadari Project which started in October 2016 for the renovation of Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple at Yadagirigutta, renamed as Yadadri, has been completed.
- The new sculptors have built all gopurams using only black stone and complied with Agama Sastra guidelines.

Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple (Yadadri):

- It is a Hindu temple situated on a hillock in Yadagirigutta of Telangana.
- The temple is an abode of Narasimha, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

Architecture

- The temple architecture is based on Dravidian Architecture.
- The architecture of the temple is based on Agama Shashtra.
- The temple is built entirely in stone.
- The three types of stones were being used for the temple-
 - ▶ **Krishna Sila** (PurushaSila) for presiding deities in the sanctum sanctorum.
 - ▶ **Sthri Sila** for deities of Goddesses.
 - ▶ **Napusaka Sila** for flooring and walls etc.

16.

Heritage Conservation Committee approves Central Vista Project

Context: The Heritage Conservation Committee has approved the construction of a new Parliament under the Central Vista Project.

What is Heritage Conservation Committee?

- The Heritage Conservation Committee is set up under the chairmanship of Additional Secretary, Ministry of Urban Affairs as per the provisions of the Delhi Building Byelaws, 1983 to protect heritage buildings.
- Only buildings in and around Delhi are governed by these laws.
- The heritage buildings are graded by the Heritage Conservation Committee for developmental activities.

What gradings are offered by the Heritage Conservation Committee?

- The Heritage Conservation Committee offers 3 Grades which are as follows:
 - ▶ **Grade I:** The buildings under Grade I include buildings of historic importance. No interventions are permitted either on the interior or exterior of these Heritage buildings unless it is essential in the interest of strengthening the life of the building.
 - ▶ **Grade II:** These buildings comprise of regional or local importance processing architectural merit or historical significance. Internal changes are allowed in these buildings. Also, adaptive reuse shall be allowed.
 - ▶ **Grade III:** It comprises of buildings that evoke architectural or sociological interest. Both internal changes and adaptive reuse of these buildings are allowed.

Central Vista Project:

- It refers to the ongoing redevelopment to revamp the Central Vista, India's central administrative area located near Raisina Hill, New Delhi.
- The project aims to revamp the Raj Path (i.e. the area between Rashtrapati Bhawan and India Gate, convert North and South Blocks to publicly accessible museums by creating a new common Central Secretariat to house all ministries, a new Parliament building near the present one with increased seating capacity for future expansion, new residence and office for the Vice-President and the Prime Minister near the North Block and South Block and convert some of the older structures into museums.

- The area was designed by Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker during British colonial rule and was retained by Government of India after independence.

What is the applicability of Heritage Conservation Committee?

- The regulations of Heritage Conservation Committee applies to heritage sites such as artifacts, buildings, areas and structures that are listed in Unified Building Bye Laws for Delhi, 2016.

Who prepares the list of notified Heritage buildings?

- There are 886 buildings notified in the list. The list is prepared by the National Disaster Management Committee, Delhi Development Authority.

IMPORTANT PLACES IN NEWS

1. Thamirabarani Civilisation: Tamil Nadu

Context: The Thamirabarani civilisation in Tamil Nadu is at least 3,200 years old, reveals **carbon dating** done on organic material retrieved from archeological excavations in Sivakalai, Thoothukudi district.

What is Carbon Dating?

- The determination of the age or date of organic matter from the relative proportions of the carbon isotopes carbon-12 and carbon-14 that it contains.

About Thamirabarani River:

- It is the **shortest river in the state (Tamil Nadu)**
- Thamirabarani starts in **Pothigai hills of the Western Ghats and flows into the Gulf of Mannar (Bay of Bengal).**
- **Significance of the Findings:**
 - ▶ It could lead to evidence that there was a **city civilisation (Porunai River (Thamirabarani) civilization) in south India as long back as 3,200 years ago.**
 - ▶ Also, **archaeological excavations** would be carried out **in other States and countries in search of Tamil roots.**
- **Other Recent Findings:**
 - ▶ A silver punch marked coin was recently **excavated from Keezhadi (Tamil Nadu)** which bore the symbols of the sun, the moon, the taurine and other geometrical patterns.
 - ▶ Studies on this found the **coin to date back to the 4th century BC**, which is before the time of the **ancient Maurya Empire (321-185 B.C.E).**
 - ▶ Archaeological excavations are **being done at numerous places** such as Kodumanal, Keeladi, Korkai, Sivakalai, in Tamil Nadu.

2. Menhir from Megalithic period found in Basrur

Context: A menhir, an upright standing stone, has been found at Basrur in Udupi district.

Key-highlights of the discovery

- The discovery takes back the antiquity of Basrur to between 1,000 BC and 800 BC, which is the Megalithic period.
- The stone has a height of seven feet above the ground level.

What are Menhirs?

- Menhirs are upright stones from the Megalithic period.
- They are erected above a burial site or near a burial site as a memorial.

Basrur

- Basrur is a **medieval trading city** in coastal Karnataka.
- **Different names:** Basurepattana, Basurepura, Vasupura, Basaruru.
- The town is studded with many temples, which is an indicator of its splendid wealth.
 - ▶ The **Devi temple** of Basrur has special importance with the feast of Devi performed once every 60 years.
 - ▶ Mahalingeshwara temple, Kote Anjaneya temple, Tuluveshwara temple, Ramachandra temple, Umamaheshwara temple, Bhairava temple are the other surviving temples in the town in addition to Sadananda Mutt.

3.**Rakhigarhi to be developed as one of the five identified iconic Archaeological Sites**

Context: The proposed development of five iconic archaeological sites located across five states, including Rakhigarhi, Haryana was conceptualized in the Union budget of 2020.

About Rakhigarhi:

- Representation of Harappan Culture: The site has yielded various stages of Harappan culture.
- It is by far one of the largest Harappan sites in India.
 - ▶ Seven (07) mounds are located here.
- Collective Site: The ancient site of Rakhi-Khas and Rakhi-Shahpur are collectively known as Rakhigarhi.
- Location: It is located on the right bank of the now dried-up Palaeo-channel of Drishadvati (Saraswati basin).
- Some important discovered features:
 - ▶ Infrastructure: paved roads, drainage system, large rainwater collection, storage system, terracotta bricks.
 - ▶ Art: statue production, and skilled working of bronze and precious metals have been uncovered.
 - ▶ Jewellery, bangles made from terracotta, conch shells, gold, and semi-precious stones.
 - ▶ Fire altars and apsidal structures were revealed in Rakhigarhi.

TALES FROM HARAPPA'S DEAD

Harappan sites in India and Pakistan where skeletons have been found. The discovery of the Rakhigarhi necropolis is unique in a number of ways



Five places to be developed as “iconic sites”:

- The government proposes to set up an Indian Institute of Heritage and Conservation under the Ministry of Culture.
- Under this, five archaeological sites will be developed as “iconic sites”:
- ▶ Rakhigarhi (Haryana)
- ▶ Hastinapur (Uttar Pradesh)
- ▶ Sivsagar (Assam)
- ▶ Dholavira (Gujarat)
- ▶ Adichanallur (Tamil Nadu)

4. Boost to tourism due to Varanasi-Chunar Service

Context:

- The Varanasi-Chunar Cruise service started on September 5, 2021 with aim to boost tourism in Varanasi.

About Varanasi-Chunar Service

- This cruise service in Ganga River will run from Varanasi to the historic fort of Chunar in Mirzapur.
- Tourists travelling to Varanasi can now cruise in Ganga for 30 kms due to this service.

- The ride will start from Ravidas ghat of Varanasi.
- This will be a round trip from Chunar fort ending on the same day.
- State government is further planning to extend this journey till Sangam in Prayagraj.

The Chunar Fort

- Chunar Fort is located in Mirzapur district of Uttar Pradesh.
- It is located 23 kilometres south-west of Varanasi. South-eastern part of the fort touches the rocky bank of the Ganges River. The history span of the fort is from 56 BC and between Afghan decedent Sher Shah Suri's rule, the Mughal Empire rule, as well as the Maratha rule in 1782 to 1804.
- British Raj occupied this fort till 1947 when India gained independence.



5.

Uttarakhand's Narayankoti Temple: Adopt a Heritage Project

Context:

The Narayan Koti temple in **Uttarakhand's Rudraprayag district** has been included under the **Centre's Adopt a Heritage project**.



About Narayan Koti Temple:

- The **Narayankoti Temple** is a group of ancient temples located about two kilometers from **Guptkashi** on the **Rudraprayag-Gaurikund highway**.
- It is believed that these temples were constructed in the 9th century.

- It is devoted to **Lakshmi Narayana** who is associated with **Pandavas**.
- It is a major attraction for devotees visiting Rudraprayag as it's the only place in the country where temples of all the nine planets "symbol of nine planets" – **Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Sun, Moon, Rahu and Ketu** – are present.

Key-highlights of the MoU

- The Narayan Koti temple is set to get a major facelift. For this, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between-
 - ▶ The Ministry of Tourism
 - ▶ The Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board
 - ▶ The Social Legal Research & Education Foundation (SLREF)
 - ▶ Ministry of Culture
 - ▶ Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

Main focus of the MoU

- To develop tourism amenities at heritage/ natural/ tourist sites spread across India to make them tourist friendly, in a planned and phased manner.
- The Social Legal Research & Education Foundation (SLREF) will develop various amenities for tourists/visitors around the heritage site.
- This includes:
 - ▶ Construction of roads.
 - ▶ Installation of street lighting.
 - ▶ Garbage disposal system.
 - ▶ Ensuring availability of clean drinking water.
 - ▶ Development of the parking area.
 - ▶ Revamping the entrance.
 - ▶ Boundary wall around the temple site.

Adopt a Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan

- The 'Adopt a Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan' scheme is an initiative of the Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and the Archaeological Survey of India.
- It was launched in September 2017 on World Tourism Day.

6. PM inaugurates first phase of Kashi Vishwanath Corridor

Context: Prime Minister inaugurated **Phase 1 of the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor Project in Uttar Pradesh's ancient city Varanasi.**

About the project:

- This project aims to create an **accessible pathway between Kashi Vishwanath Temple and banks of Ganga River.**

- The project comprises of **more than 40 ancient temples that are restored and beautified.**
- **A total 23 buildings** were inaugurated, including a **Tourist Facilitation Centre, Mumukshu Bhavan, Bhogshala, City Museum, Viewing Gallery and Food Court.**
- It will help **boost tourism by providing the pilgrims and travellers with amenities** such as **wider and cleaner roads and lanes**, better lighting with bright street-lights, and clean drinking water.

About Kashi Vishwanath Temple

- **Kashi Vishwanath Temple** is one of the most famous Hindu temples **dedicated to Lord Shiva.**
- It is located in **Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh in India.**
- The Temple stands on the **western bank of the holy river Ganga**, and is one of the **twelve Jyotirlingas, the holiest of Shiva Temples.**
- The temple encapsulates the vision of the **Holkar queen of Indore, Ahalya Bai Holkar**, who created a series of temples and vistas leading up to the Ganga ghat.



Varanasi

- Varanasi (name coined from the two rivers Varuna and Asi) or Benaras is the ultimate pilgrimage spot for the Hindus for ages now.
- Also known as Kashi, the abode of Lord Shiva is believed to be the oldest city in the world.

7. Pilot projects launched to revive traditional Namda Craft

Context:

- Recently the Minister of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has launched two projects—
 - ▶ Revival of Namda craft of Kashmir as a special pilot project under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) 3.0 and
 - ▶ Upskilling of artisans and weavers of Kashmir under Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), a component of PMKVY.

What is Namda Craft?

- Namda craft is widely thought to have originated in the 11th century during the reign of Mughal emperor Akbar.
- Namda craft is a rug made of sheep wool through a felting technique instead of the normal weaving process.
- It is extensively used in Kashmiri households for floor covering and mattresses.



Key-objective

- To boost and preserve the traditional Namda craft of Kashmir and upskill the local weavers and artisans to enhance their productivity through RPL assessment and certification.
- Due to low availability of raw material, lack of skilled manpower and marketing techniques, the export of this craft has declined almost 100 percent between 1998 and 2008.
- The Namda project will benefit 2,250 people of 30 Namda Clusters and RPL initiative targets to upskill 10,900 artisans and weavers of Jammu and Kashmir.
- This will also improve the access of existing artisans of Namda crafts cluster in Kashmir and will improve their prospects of employability.

8. Puri Heritage Corridor Project

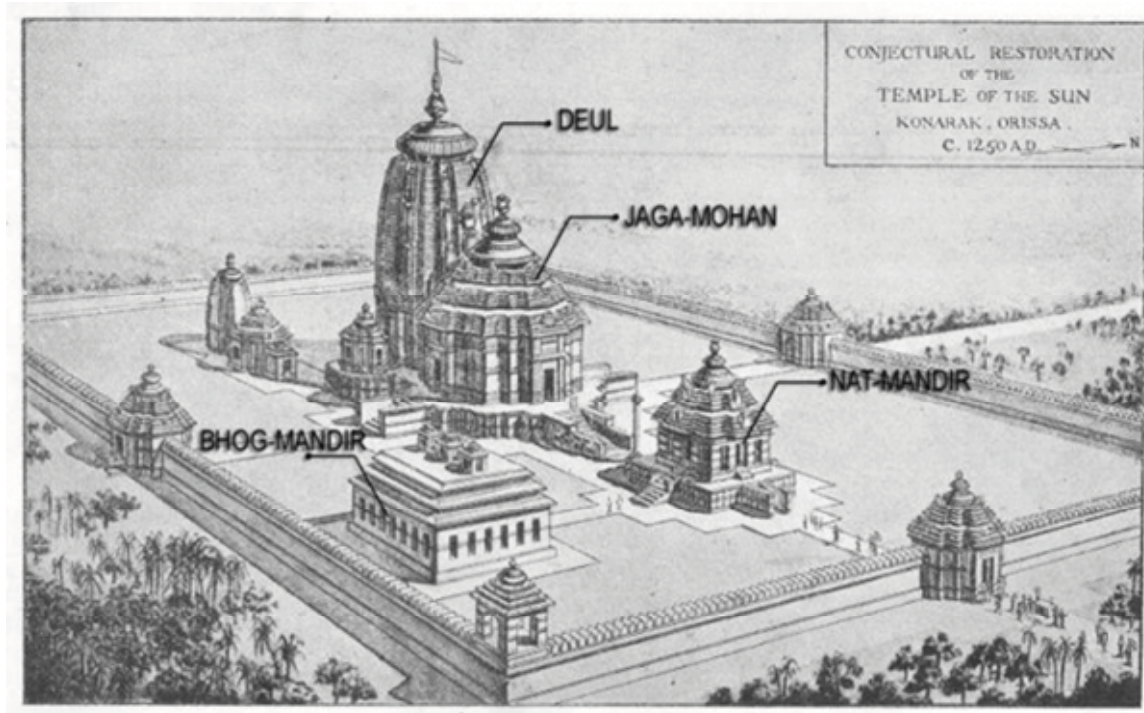
Context: Odisha CM laid down the foundation stone of the much-awaited Puri Heritage Corridor.

About the Puri Heritage Corridor Project:

- Conceived in 2016, the Puri Heritage Corridor Project was unveiled in December 2019 to transform the holy town of Puri into an international place of heritage.
- The project includes redeveloping major portions of the holy town and the vicinity of the Puri Jagannath temple for visitors and tourists.

About Jagannath Temple

- The Jagannath Temple is an important Vaishnavite temple dedicated to Jagannath, a form of Sri Krishna in Puri, Odisha.
- The present temple was rebuilt from the 10th century onwards, on the site of an earlier temple, and begun by Anantavarman Chodaganga Deva, the first king of the Eastern Ganga dynasty.
- The Puri temple is famous for its annual Ratha Yatra, or chariot festival, in which the three principal deities are pulled on huge and elaborately decorated temple cars.
- With its sculptural richness and fluidity of the Oriya style of temple architecture, it is one of the most magnificent monuments of India.
- The huge temple complex covers an area of over 400,000 square feet and is surrounded by a high fortified wall.
- Its 20 feet high wall is known as Meghanada Pacheri.
- Another wall known as kurma bedha surrounds the main temple.



The temple has four distinct sectional structures, namely:

1. Deula, Vimana or Garba griha (Sanctum sanctorum) where the triad deities are lodged on the ratnavedi (Throne of Pearls) in Rekha Deula style;
2. Mukhashala (Frontal porch);
3. Nata mandir/Natamandapa, which is also known as the Jagamohan (Audience Hall/Dancing Hall), and
4. Bhoga Mandapa (Offerings Hall).

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

1. mYoga App

Context:

- On the occasion of International Day of Yoga, Prime Minister launched the mYoga App
- He also gave the mantra of “Yog se Sahyog Tak”.

About mYoga App

- This App will provide yoga training videos which will be available across the world in different languages. Currently it is available in English, Hindi and French languages.
- It will be launched in other UN languages soon.
- It was launched in collaboration with World Health Organisation (WHO).
- This app has been launched to provide users with collection of videos and audio practice sessions which can be practiced “in comfort of their own homes, whenever they wish.”
- The App can be used as daily yoga companion bu people aged 12-65 years.

Developer of this App:

- It was developed in collaboration between WHO and Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy.

2. Online Exhibition of Ramayana inaugurated by the Tourism and Cultural Ministry

Context: First online exhibition of Ramayana was inaugurated by The Union Minister of Tourism and Culture Shri Prahlad Singh Patel recently.

About the exhibition

- The exhibition will display 49 miniature paintings.
- These paintings have been collected from the National Museum in New Delhi.
- The paintings are dated between 17th and 19th century.

3. Karnataka government to develop Nandi Hills as an international tourist destination

Context: Nandi hills, a popular hill station in the Chikkaballapur district of Karnataka will be developed as an international tourist destination.

About Nandi Hills

- Nandi Hills is an ancient hill fortress built by Ganga Dynasty.
- Cholas had established Yoga Nandeeshwara Temple in Nandhi hills during the 11th Century.
- This temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva.
- It reflects Dravida and Chola Architecture.
- Raja Rajendra Chola and Kulotunga Chola's names are scripted on the walls.
- The first-ever SAARC summit hosted by India was held at Nandi Hills.

4. Amendment to the Jagannath Temple Act

Context: The Odisha state cabinet recently approved amendments to the Sri Jagannath Temple Act of 1954 that simplified issues pertaining to land owned by the Jagannath Temple.

About Jagannath Temple Act, 1954:

- Jagannath Temple which was earlier known as Juggernaut temple by the colonial rulers.
- British Rulers in 1806, issued regulations for management of the Jagannath temple.
 - ▶ Under these regulations, pilgrims who visited the temple were expected to pay taxes and the British government was entrusted with appointing senior priests at the temple.
- Later the powers of management of the temple were passed on to the King of Khurdha while the colonial government continued to retain some control.
- It was only after India gained Independence that the state of Odisha formally introduced the Jagannath Temple Act in the year 1952, which came into effect in 1954.

Recent amendment:

- The recent amendment approved by the state cabinet now decentralizes the power to settle land related issues of the temple.
- The cabinet has delegated power to temple administration and concerned officials for sale and lease of land in name of Jagannath temple.
- Unlike earlier, no approval will be required from the state government for the process. Through the sale of land, used and unused, the temple will also generate additional corpus funds.
- Earlier, people who had occupied or were in possession of the temple land for a long period of time had to approach the state government for sale or transfer of the land.

About Jagannath Temple:

- The temple is believed to have been constructed in the 12th century by King Anantavarman Chodaganga Deva of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty.

- Jagannath Puri temple is called 'Yamanaka Tirtha' where, according to the Hindu beliefs, the power of 'Yama', the god of death is nullified due to the presence of Lord Jagannath.
- This temple was called the "White Pagoda" and is a part of Char Dham pilgrimages (Badrinath, Dwaraka, Puri, Rameswaram) that Hindus are expected to take in one's lifetime.
- There are four gates to the temple-
 - ▶ Eastern 'Singhdwara'
 - ▶ Southern 'Ashwadwara'
 - ▶ Western 'VyaghraDwara'
 - ▶ Northern 'Hastidwara'
- The Nilachakra – Or the Blue wheel perched on top of the temple is made of eight metals or ashtadhatu
- In front of the entrance stands the Aruna stambha or sun pillar, which was originally at the Sun Temple in Konark.
- Jagannath Puri Yatra is the most famous Vaishnavite rituals observed in India and abroad.
 - ▶ On the occasion, devotees pray to three deities – Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Lordess Subhadra.

1. Revival of Jaipur Blue Pottery

Context: By upcycling ceramic waste, the heritage craft of Jaipur Blue Pottery was presented at the ongoing, digital graduate show 'RCA 2021'.

About the Jaipur Blue Pottery:

- Jaipur Blue Pottery was conferred Geographical Index Status (GIS) in 2008.
- It came from Iran and Turkey to India in the 14th century.
- It is primarily used as souvenirs or decorative tableware.
- The art was patronised by the ruling family of Jaipur.



Key features of Jaipur Blue Pottery:

- This pottery technique does not use clay but utilises locally sourced quartz powder, plant-based gum (katera), recycled glass, and Multani Mitti.
- These ingredients are molded as a flatbread and sun-dried.
- It is designed with intricate motifs done with oxide pigments.
- The glaze is applied to the pottery as the last step before firing at around 800 degrees.

2. Reinvention of the heritage products of Jamakkalam

Context: The Weavers are re-designing the **Bhavani Jamkkalam**, a GI-tagged product, into playful fabric blends and color patterns, so that it does not get extinguished.

About the Bhavani Jamakkalam

- **Bhavani Jamakkalam** is referred to blankets and carpets which are manufactured in Bhavani, Tamil Nadu.
- Bhavani Jamakkalam is a GI-tagged product that was recognized as a Geographical indication by the government in 2005-6.
- **Weaving Community:** A community of weavers called **Jangamars**

- **Basic material:** The blanket is weaved by using colored coarse threads which are called **Jamakkalam**.
- Two types of jamakkalams are produced in Bhavani.
 - ▶ **The first type** is made from coarser cotton threads.
 - ▶ **The second type** is made of artificial silk threads.
- **Loom:** A pit loom is used to weave jamakkalams which are made of wood.
- **Protection:** The hand weaved jamakkalams from Bhavani have faced competition from the power-loom products. So, the Government of Tamil Nadu enacted laws to outlaw the use of power looms.
- Now, producing it in power looms violates the **Handloom (Reservation of Articles for Production) Act, 1985**.

Geographical indication (GI):

- It is a sign given to products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation due to its origin.
- Geographical indications are typically used for agricultural products, foodstuffs, wine and spirit drinks, handicrafts, and industrial products.

Legal Support

- India has enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999, which came into force on 15 September 2003.
- GIs have been defined under Article 22 (1) of the WTO agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement.
- It is also covered as an element of IPRs under Articles 1 (2) and 10 of the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property.

Issuing Authority

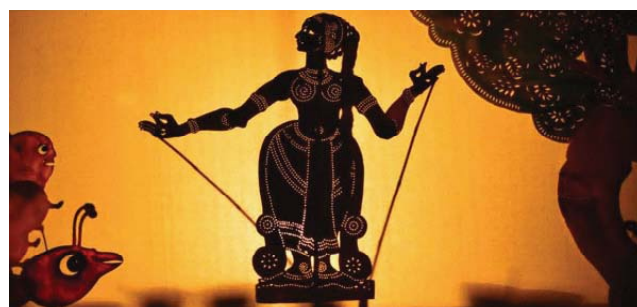
- **In India**, GI tags are **issued** by the **Geographical Indication Registry** under the Department of Industry Promotion and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

3. Tholpavakoothu: the traditional puppetry of Kerala

Context: PadmaShriwardee Ramachandra Pulavar's efforts have brought international recognition to **Tholpavakoothu**, the traditional puppetry of Kerala.

About Tholpavakoothu:

- Tholpavakoothu is a form of **shadow puppetry**, which is practiced in Kerala.
- It is performed as a ritual **dedicated to Bhadrakali** using **leather puppets**.



- This art is performed in **Devi temples in specially built theatres** called koothumadam

Characteristics

- The performance is accompanied by **the recitation of slokas** and the performers are required to learn over 3000 of these before they perform.
- A full Tholpavakoothu performance stages all the episodes of the **Kamba Ramayana**.
- The stage has a screen, a piece of white cloth, behind which the puppets are held.
- The lighting is provided by 21 lamps lit in **coconuthalves or earthen lamps** placed behind the puppets, causing their shadows to fall on the screen.
- **Instruments used:** chenda, maddalam, ezhupara, ilathalam, conchand cherukuzhal.
- The lead puppeteer is called a **pulavar**.
- The puppets used in Tholpavakoothu were made out of **deer skin but are now typically made from goat skin**.
- The puppets are **painted in vegetable dyes**, as these dyes last long.

1. Project Udaan launched by IIT-Bombay

Context: IIT-Bombay launches “Project Udaan”.

About Project Udaan:

- Project Udaan was launched with the aim of breaking the language barrier that many students face while joining the institutes of higher education.
- It enables the translation of textbooks and other study material of the engineering and other streams from English to Hindi & other Indian Languages.
- It is Artificial Intelligence-based project.
- This project will help in translating engineering textbooks and learning materials in one-sixth the time as compared to manual tasking.
- This machine translation will be aided by human effort.

2. Indus valley people spoke ancient Dravidian language, claims new research

Context: A new observation sheds light on the language of **Indus Valley Civilisation**, which could have its roots in ancestral **Dravidian languages**.

What is Indus valley Civilisation?

- Indus Valley Civilization was the first major civilization in South Asia, which spread across a vast area of land in present-day **India and Pakistan**.
- The time period of the mature Indus Valley Civilization is estimated between **2700 BCE to 1900 BCE**.

What does the new research claim?

- The ancestral forms of the Dravidian languages currently spoken in South India were once dominant linguistic groups in the ancient civilisation.
- There is sufficient evidence of an ancient Dravidian language was spoken by people of Indus Valley Civilisation.

Dravidian language

- The Dravidian languages are divided into South, South-Central, Central, and North groups.
 - ▶ These groups are further organized into 24 subgroups.
- The four major literary languages—Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, and Kannada—are recognized by the **Constitution of India**.

3. Tulu and the demand for official language status

Context: Various organisations initiated a campaign demanding official language status for Tulu in Karnataka and Kerala.

About Tulu and its history:

- Tulu is a Dravidian language spoken mainly in coastal districts Dakshina Kannada and Udipi of Karnataka and Kasaragod district of Kerala.
- This region is also known as ‘Tulu Nadu’.
- It is among the earliest Dravidian languages with a history of 2000 years.
- Tulu has a rich oral literature tradition with folk-song forms like paddana, and traditional folk theatre yakshagana.

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1.

Mali and UNESCO are to receive a 'Symbolic Euro' for Timbuktu Heritage Destruction

Context

- The government of Mali and UNESCO are to receive a 'Symbolic Euro' from the **International Criminal Court (ICC)** as a gesture of its 2017 judgment over the destruction of the cultural site of **Timbuktu** by the religious extremists.

About Timbuktu

- It is a city in the **country of Mali**.
- It is situated on the southern edge of the **Sahara and North of the Niger River**.
- It has been an important trading post on the **trans-Saharan caravan route** and has been a **center of Islamic culture**.
- The city was declared as **UNESCO World Heritage site in 1988**.
- In 2012, due to the armed conflict in the region, Timbuktu was added to **the UNESCO List of World Heritage in Danger**.
- **Architecture:** It has famous Mosques of Djingareyber, Sankore, and Sidi Yahia, sixteen mausoleums, and other holy places.



Symbolic Euro: The symbolic euro is a token of the need for redress, though the amount will never be paid.

2.

Singapore's beloved street hawker culture, now a UNESCO 'Intangible Heritage'

Context: One of Singapore's most popular attractions, its vibrant street hawker culture, was designated an Intangible Cultural Heritage by the UNESCO.

Street hawking in Singapore

- Singapore's street hawkers are an indelible part of the its local life and is popular late-night street food destinations.
- The hawker centres showcase Singapore's multiculturalism, with stalls selling cheap, delicious food of Chinese, Malay, Indian origins, among others.

Intangible heritage from India recognised by UNESCO:

- Yoga



3. International Day for Monuments and Site

Context: Every year, the United Nations celebrates April 18 as the International Day for Monuments and Sites and many countries also celebrate it as World Heritage Day.

About the International Day for Monuments and Sites 2021:

- **Theme** for 2021: “Complex Pasts: Diverse Futures”.
- **Promotion:** By the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).
- **Significance:** It signifies the need for conservation of cultural heritage.

International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)

- ICOMOS is a non-governmental international organisation which was Established in 1965.
- Dedicated to the conservation of the world's monuments and sites.
- Offers advice to UNESCO on World Heritage Sites.

World Heritage Sites in India

- At present, there are 38 World Heritage Sites located in India.
 - ▶ 30 are ‘cultural’ site.
 - ▶ 7 are ‘Natural’
 - ▶ 1 is ‘Mixed’

List of World Heritage Sites in India

◦ Cultural (30)

- ▶ 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)
- ▶ Qutub 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 (7)

- ▶ 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 (1)**
 - ▶ Khangchendzonga National Park (2016)

4. Srinagar in UNESCO's Creative Cities Network 2021

Context: On November 8, 2021, Srinagar was included in the UNESCO's network of creative cities.

About the Event:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the inclusion of Srinagar as a fitting recognition for vibrant cultural ethos of this old city.
- UNESCO has designated Srinagar as a creative city of craft and folk arts.

Which other cities have joined this network?

- 49 new cities worldwide have joined the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN).
- These cities were included in the list in recognition of their commitment of placing culture & creativity at the heart of their development as well as for sharing knowledge & good practices.

Which other Indian cities are in this UNESCO's network?

- Chennai and Varanasi are included in UNESCO Cities of music.
- Jaipur is included in UNESCO city of crafts and folk arts.
- Mumbai is included in UNESCO city of film.
- Hyderabad is included in UNESCO City of gastronomy.

What is the Significance of getting included in UCCN?

- By joining UCCN, cities commit for sharing their best practices and developing partnerships among public sectors, private sectors and civil society for strengthening the creation, production and distribution of cultural activities, goods & services. Cities also pledge for developing hubs of creativity & innovation.

5. Six Indian places added to tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites

Context: Six Indian sites have been added to the tentative list of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites.

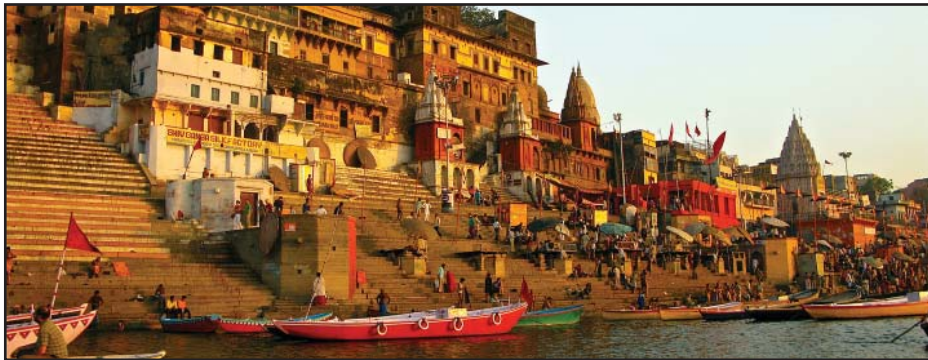
About the Newly added sites:

These submissions were made by Archaeological Survey of India, which is responsible for the conservation and preservation of Indian monuments.

The sites are as follows:

- **The Satpura Tiger Reserve**
 - ▶ It is located in **Madhya Pradesh**.

- ▶ The Satpura National Park is home to 26 species of the Himalayan region, and 42 species of Nilgiri areas.
 - ▶ It is the largest tiger-occupied forest and also has the largest tiger population.
 - ▶ The place has more than 50 rock shelters with paintings that are 1500 to 10,000 years old.
- **Ghats of Varanasi**
- ▶ The Ganges riverfront of **Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh**.
 - ▶ Varanasi’s riverfront falls “into the second category of cultural properties, i.e: groups of buildings, groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science.”



- **Megalithic site of Hire Benkal**
- ▶ It is the 2,800-years-old megalithic site.
 - ▶ It is **situated in Karnataka**.
 - ▶ The granite structures which are burial monuments are characteristics of this site.



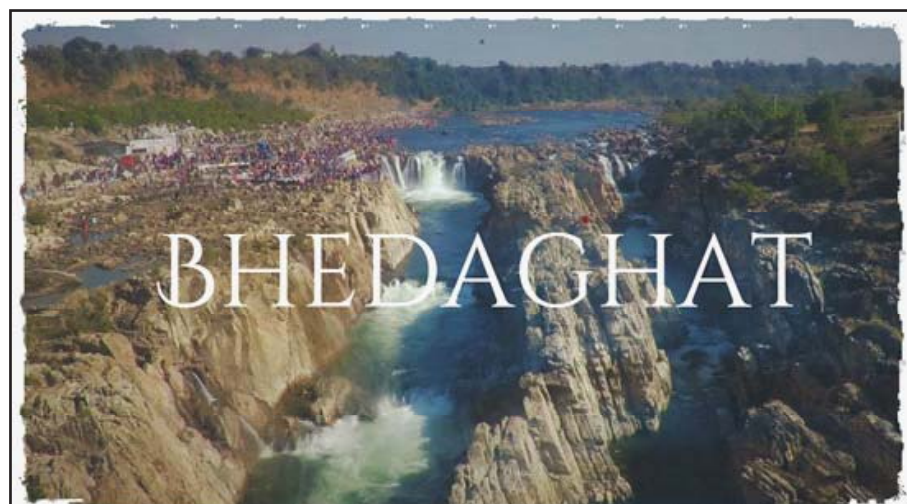
- **Maratha Military Architecture in Maharashtra**
- ▶ This include 12 forts in Maharashtra linked to the era of the 17th-century Maratha king Chhatrapati Shivaji.
 - ▶ They are namely:
 - Shivneri (the birthplace of Shivaji)
 - Raigad (the capital fort rebuilt for the coronation of the Maratha king)
 - Torna (the first fort of the Maratha empire)

- Rajgad,
- Salher-Mulher
- Panhala
- Pratapgad
- Lohagad
- Sindhudurg
- Padmadurga (Kasa)
- Vijaydurg
- Kolaba.



◦ **Bhedaghat-Lametaghat in Narmada Valley- Jabalpur**

- ▶ It is located in **Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh**.
- ▶ Referred to as the **Grand Canyon of India**.
- ▶ It is known for its marble rocks and their various morphological forms on either side of the Narmada River.
- ▶ The magical marble mountains assume different colours and even shapes of animals.
- ▶ Several dinosaur fossils have been found here.



◦ **Temples of Kanchipuram**

- ▶ The temple town of **Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu**, consisting of 126 temples (both Shiava and Vaishnava).
- ▶ It is situated on the banks of River Vegavathi.
- ▶ The was enriched by the Pallava dynasty and it is a fine example of Dravidian styles.



About the Tentative list of UNESCO’s world heritage sites

- Apart from the 38 sites inscribed on the World Heritage List, there is a list of tentative sites for recognition which are submitted to the UNESCO Committee for evaluation and acceptance.
- As per Operational Guidelines, 2019, it is mandatory to put any monument/site on the Tentative List (TL) before it is considered for the final nomination dossier.
- As per rules, any country can submit the final nomination dossier after one year of it being on the TL.

6. Telangana’s Ramappa temple

Context: Telangana’s Ramappa temple was highlighted by Telangana government officials while giving presentation at the tourism and culture ministers’ conference in Bengaluru.

About the Ramappa Temple:

- Named after its architect, **Ramappa**, the temple is also known as **Ramalingeswara Temple**.
- Situated in **Telangana’s Warangal**, Ramappa temple showcases unique skill of the **Kakatiyan sculptors**.



- The temple is dedicated to **Lord Shiva**.

Important features of the temple:

- The structure is of the pyramidal type, consisting of four storeys.
- Decorated beams and pillars of carved granite and dolerite.
- Distinctive and pyramidal Vimana (horizontally stepped tower) made of lightweight porous bricks called floating bricks that reduce the weight of the roof structures.
- The temple's sculptures are of high artistic quality and illustrate regional dance customs and the culture of the region.

Construction

- The temple was constructed in 1213 AD during the reign of the **Kakatiya Empire**.

About kakatiya dynasty

- **The 12th and the 13th centuries** saw the emergence of the **Kakatiyas, who were earlier the feudatories of Western Chalukyas of Kalyana**.
- **Warangal** was their capital.
- The dynasty saw powerful leaders like **Ganapathi Deva and Rudramadevi**.
- It was under the rule of **Prataparudra I (Kakatiya king)** that usage of **Telugu language** in inscriptions began.
- **The Italian traveller Marco Polo** visited the Kakatiya Kingdom sometime during the reign of **Rudramadevi** and admired her administrative skills.

7. Liverpool lost the UNESCO World Heritage listing

Context: The United Kingdom (UK) has lost one of its sites- 'the city of Liverpool' from the list of **UNESCO World Heritage sites**.

Quick facts about the City of Liverpool

- Liverpool is a **maritime city in northwest England**, situated at the confluence of **River Mersey** and the **Irish Sea**.
- It was a key trade and migration port from the 18th to the early 20th centuries.
- The city is famous for the hometown of **The Beatles, Ferries cruise the waterfront**, where the iconic mercantile buildings known as the "**Three Graces**" – **Royal Liver Building, Cunard Building, and Port of Liverpool Building** – stand on the Pier Head.
- It was given the **UNESCO World Heritage status in 2004**.

Reason for the scrapping of its status

- In 2012, UNESCO threatened to revoke Liverpool's World Heritage status because of the "substantial" building interventions.
- A UNESCO commission report stated that large-scale infrastructure projects, such as Liverpool Waters residential and office complex and the Bramley-Moore Dock Stadium was causing a loss of the character of the "**maritime mercantile city**" of Liverpool.

8. Dholavira, the 40th UNESCO's World heritage site of India

Context:

- Dholavira, the archaeological site of a Harappan-era city has received the UNESCO world heritage site tag. Dholavira became the fourth site from Gujarat and 40th site from India to make to the list.
- It is the first site of the Indus Valley Civilisation (IVC) in India to get recognition.

Important facts about Dholavira:

- This city is located on Khadir Island in the Kutch district of Gujarat.
- Dholavira is the fifth largest city of IVC to be discovered.
- It was a commercial and manufacturing hub in ancient India.



What are the distinct features of this ancient site?

- The site has a fortified citadel, a middle town, and a lower town.
- The walls of the city are made of sandstone or limestone instead of mud bricks like in many other Harappan sites.
- The city also has a cascading series of water reservoirs, outer fortification, and two multi-purpose grounds, one for festivities and another used as a marketplace.



Links with other civilizations

- People in Dholavira knew metallurgy and the traders of Dholavira used to source copper ore from Rajasthan, Oman, and UAE and export finished products.
- The manufacturing of jewelry that was made of shells and semi-precious stones, like agate also took place.
- Export of timber is also noticed.
- The beads specific to the Harappan workmanship have also been found in the royal graves of Mesopotamia that indicates Dholavira used to trade with the Mesopotamians.

Reasons behind the decline

- Dholavira entered a phase of severe aridity due to climate change and rivers like Saraswati drying up.
- Because of the drought-like situation, the people at Dholavira started migration toward the Ganges valley or towards southern Gujarat and further beyond in Maharashtra.

Other Harappan sites in Gujarat:

- **Rangpur** on the bank of Bhadar river in Surendranagar district
- **Rojdi** in Rajkot district
- **Prabhas** near Veraval in GirSomnath district
- **Lakhabaval** in Jamnagar
- **Deshalpar** in Bhujtaluka of Kutch

1. PM Modi brings 157 artefacts

Context: During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to New York for the **76th United Nations General Assembly**, the United States presented him with 157 antiquities and artefacts.

What is in the list?

- The list of 157 artefacts includes a diverse set, with items ranging from 1.5 metre bas relief panel of Revanta in sandstone from **10th CE** to the 8.5 cm tall, exquisite bronze Nataraja from the **12th CE**.
- The items largely belong to the period of **11th CE to 14th CE**, as well as historic antiquities such as the copper anthropomorphic object of **2000 BC**, or the terracotta vase from the **2nd CE**.

List of important items

Nataraja



- With its design and dimensions based on Hindu writings on art, the sculpture represents **Shiva** as the lord of dance and dramatic arts.
- This bronze four-armed item depicts **Abhaya Mudra** with his lower left hand thrown across his body, his upper left hand holding a flame in an open palm, and his right hand holding a damaru.

Thirthankaas: 12th Century CE



- On a pedestal, three Thirthankaras are seated.
- On the back of the prabhavali, there is an inscription
- Dates from the **12th century**.
- It documents **Jasadeva's donation** of the image to the **Brahma gotra**.
- A Thirthankara is a person who has mastered the sasra, or cycle of death and rebirth, on their own and paved the way for others to follow.

Paper Painting depicting Rasikapriya and Lingodhbhava



- **(Left)** This is a large painting on paper by an anonymous painter depicting the scene possibly influenced by the famed works of **Rasikapriya** composed by poet Keshava Das [1555-1617]. The reverse of the painting bears a rubber stamp marking which clearly states that it once formed part of the personal collection of Maharaja of Bikaner and was duly accessioned in 1964.
- **(Right)** This object is depicting Siva as **Lingodhbhava**. The image depicts a four-armed Siva within the linga, representing the eternal flame. On the bottom Vishnu is depicted as a boar digging deep into the earth. Brahma is depicted as a swan flying to reach the sky.

Lord Buddha, Quranic verses



- **(Left)** A red speckled sandstone statue of **Lord Buddha** from the 7th-8th centuries.
- **(right)** Copper and brass plates with **Quranic verses**.

Surya-Brahma



- **(Left) Surya:** Riding on a chariot drawn by seven horses.
- **(right) Brahma:** Three-headed, two-armed holding Kamandala in left hand and rosary in right hand.

Standing Buddha



- Religious sculptures from Buddhism - Standing Buddha

2. Renovated Jallianwala Bagh Complex

Context PM Modi virtually inaugurated the Jallianwala Bagh memorial complex in Amritsar.

ABOUT THE MEMORIAL COMPLEX

- Four museum galleries have been established.
- They showcase the historical value of events that unfolded in Punjab, with the fusion of

- ▶ Audio-visual technology
- ▶ Projection mapping
- ▶ 3D representation
- ▶ Art and sculptural installations
- The Smarak established by the state government seeks to pay tribute to the martyrs.



3.

Australia's National Gallery to return 14 Art Works to India

Context: The National Gallery of Australia (NGA) has announced that it will be returning 14 pieces of artworks to India.

About the Art Works:

- The total value of these artworks is estimated to be \$3 million.
- These includes six bronze or stone sculptures, a painted scroll, six photographs and a brass processional standard.
- Some of the artworks which are being returned to India dates back to the period of the Chola dynasty.

4.

Inauguration of Indian Army Memorial in Italy

Context: Indian Army Chief Manoj Naravane inaugurated the Indian Army Memorial at Cassino in Italy.

About the Memorial:

- The memorial commemorates over 3,100 Commonwealth servicemen, including 900 Indian soldiers, who took part in the effort to liberate Italy in **World War II**.
- The **three infantry divisions of the Indian Army** took part in the **Italian campaign**.
- Three Divisions of Indian Army participated in the war in Italy and performed well.
- By 1945, the Allies had won, Italy had been liberated, **Adolf Hitler** was dead and India was barely a couple of years short of independence.

5.

International Museum Day 2021

Context: Culture Ministry organizes panel discussions on the occasion of International Museum Day 2021.

About the International Museum Day

- **Declaration:** 18th May was declared as the International Museum Day by the International Council of Museums (ICOM).
- **Objective:** To raise awareness about museums and their importance and enrichment of cultures and development of mutual understanding, cooperation and peace among peoples.

- **Theme:** The theme for International Museum Day 2021 was ‘The Future of Museums: Recover and Reimagine’.

International Council of Museums (ICOM):

- It was created in 1946 and is headquartered in Paris, France.
- It is a non-governmental organisation which maintains formal relations with UNESCO and has a consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.
- It is tasked with the conservation, continuation and communication to society of the world’s natural and cultural heritage.
- ICOM also partners with entities such as the World Intellectual Property Organization, Interpol, and the World Customs Organization in order to carry out its international public service missions, which include fighting illicit traffic in cultural goods and promoting risk management and emergency preparedness to protect world cultural heritage in the event of natural or man-made disasters.

6. Mini Museums to be set up in Kerala

Context: Kerala aspires to become museum hub of the country.

About Mini Museums

- These museums will focus on conversing with the visitors especially with the youngsters.
- The new museum movement has been started by Keralam Museum. It is an organisation that builds and modernise the museums.
- It seeks to replace the revolutionary concepts which is gaining momentum across the world.

IMPORTANT BODIES

1. National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC)

Context: The Ministry of Culture (MoC) and Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for 'Cooperation in Development of National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) at Lothal, Gujarat'.

About the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC)

- National Maritime Heritage Complex, a world-class facility is to be developed in the vicinity of the ASI site of Lothal.
- This complex will play a big role in highlighting the cultural heritage of the country both.
- It will help exhibit robust maritime history and vibrant coastal tradition of India
- NMHC would be developed with various unique structures such as National Maritime Heritage Museum, Light House Museum, Heritage Theme Park, Museum Themed Hotels & Maritime themed eco-resorts, Maritime Institute, etc.

Unique features of NHMC

- The unique feature of NMHC is the recreation of ancient Lothal city, which was one of the prominent cities of the ancient Indus valley civilization dating to 2400 BC.
- Apart from that, the evolution of India's Maritime Heritage during various eras would be exhibited through various galleries.
- NMHC would have a pavilion for each coastal state and union territories to showcase the artifacts/ maritime heritage of the respective states and union territories.
- Various theme parks would be developed at NMHC such as Maritime & Naval Theme Park, Monuments Park, Climate Change Theme Park, Adventure & Amusement Theme Park through a public-private partnership.

Local, Gujarat

- Lothal was one of the southernmost cities of the ancient **Indus Valley Civilization** and located in the **Bhil region**, near the Gulf of Cambay, Gujarat.
- The Construction of the city began around 2200 BCE.
- Lothal had the world's earliest known dock.
 - ▶ It connected the Sabarmati river on the trade route between Harappan cities in Sindh and the peninsula of Saurashtra, a part of the Arabian Sea.

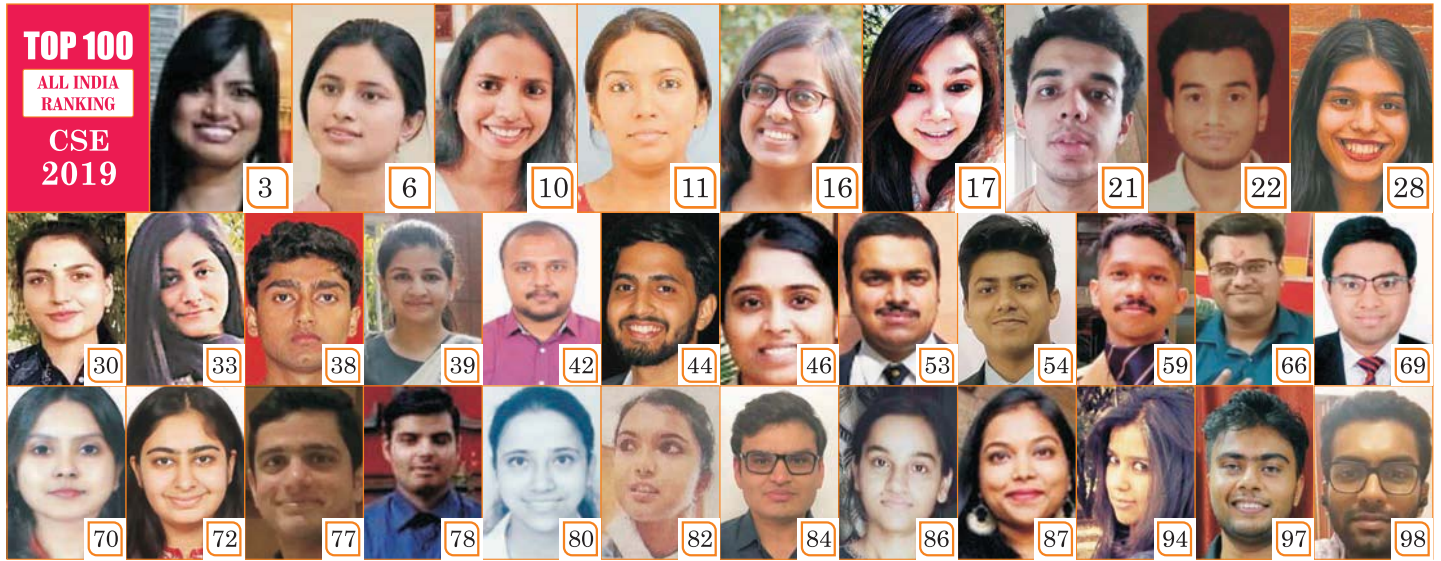
- ▶ **Excavation:** Port Town, Graveyard, Ivory weight balance, Copper dog, First manmade port, Dockyard, Rice husk, Fire alters, Chess-playing.
- ▶ The Lothal site has been nominated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

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