



Culture

Classroom Study Material



CULTURE

(May 2017 – February 2018)

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1. DANCES & MUSIC

- Natyashastra of Bharat Muni describes **three aspects** of dance:
 - Natya highlights the dramatic element
 - Nritya is essentially expressional, performed specifically to convey the meaning of a theme or idea.
 - Nritta on the other hand, is pure dance where body movements do not express any mood (bhava), nor do they convey any meaning.

1.1. KATHAK

Why in news?

- Google celebrated the 97th birth anniversary of legendary **Kathak dancer Sitara Devi** with a doodle.

About Sitara Devi

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

About Kathak

- It is a traditional dance form of **Uttar Pradesh** which traces its origin back to the **Ras Leela of Brajbhoomi**. It derives its name from **“kathika”** meaning story tellers.
- The dance form is characterized by intricate footworks and is generally accompanied with dhrupad music. Other music such as **Taranas, Thumris and Ghazals** were also introduced during the **Mughal period**.
- It is the **only** Indian classical dance having a **synthesis of Hindu and Muslim traditions**.
- Kathak is also known for the development of **different gharanas** (Lucknow, Jaipur, Raigarh, Banaras) as it is the only classical dance based on Hindustani style of music.
- Other famous proponents:** Birju Maharaj, Lacchu Maharaj, Sitara Devi, Damayanti Joshi etc.

1.2. ODISSI

Why in news?

- The Odisha government will establish an Odissi museum in Bhubaneswar.

About Odissi

- Odissi is the classical dance form of Odisha.
- It **symbolises the element of water**.
- It was originally performed by **maharis** who were temple dancers. Later group of boys named **Gotipua** were trained in this art. They danced in temples and for public entertainment.
- Facial expressions, hand gestures and body movements in Odissi are used to suggest a certain feeling, an emotion or one of the nine rasas. It is **similar to Bharatnatyam in the use of mudras**.
- The dancers create intricate geometrical shapes and patterns with her body. Hence, it is known as **“mobile sculpture”**
- The techniques of movement are built around the two basic postures of the **Chowk** and the **Tribhanga**.
 - The **chowk** is a position imitating a square - a very masculine stance with the weight of the body equally balanced. The **tribhanga** is a very feminine stance where the body is deflected at the neck, torso and the knees
- Musical instruments used in Odissi are pakhwaj, sitar, manjira and flute.

1.3. OTHER CLASSICAL DANCES

Dance form	Key features
Kathakali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> classical dance of Kerala blend of dance, music and acting (“Katha” meaning story and “Kali” meaning drama) Dramatizes stories and most recitals are a representation of conflict between good and evil. Symbolizes the element of sky or ether. Codified hastamudras and facial expressions Elaborate makeup with different colors along with a headgear Associated instruments: Chenda, Maddalam, Chengila, Ilathalam, Idakka and Shankhu.
Bharatnatyam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oldest classical dance from Tamil Nadu. Also known as ekaharya, where one dancer takes on many roles in a single

	<p>performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associated instruments: mridangam, veena or violin, flute and cymbal.
Manipuri	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has its roots in the ancient festival of Lai Haraoba. The dance gained prominence under the advent of Vaishnavism. • Most popular forms of Manipuri dance: Ras, Sankirtana and Thang-Ta. • The main theme revolves around Radha, Krishna and the gopis. • Manipuri dance incorporates both the tandava and lasya. It is known for its lyrical and graceful movements. The facial expressions are natural and not exaggerated. • Associated instrument: Pung and Kartal.
Sattriya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced by the great Vaishnava saint in Assam, Sankaradeva for propagation of the Vaishnava faith. • This tradition has been preserved by the Sattras i.e. Vaishnava maths or monasteries. • Governed by strictly laid down principles in respect of hastamudras, footworks, aharyas, music etc. • Majuli island in Assam is closely associated with this dance.
Mohiniattam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classical solo dance form of Kerala, performed by women. It is interpreted as the dance of 'Mohini', the female form taken by Vishnu to kill Bhasmasura. • Characterized by graceful, swaying body movements with no abrupt jerks or sudden leaps. • It belongs to the LASYA style which is feminine, tender and graceful. • Symbolises element of air • Importance to the hand gestures and Mukhabhinaya with subtle facial expressions.
Kuchipudi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Originated in Kuchipudi village, Krishna district of modern Andhra Pradesh. • It was conceived in 17th century by Vaishnava poet Siddhendra Yogi from Yakshagana – dance-drama. • It comprises of techniques such as dancing on the rim of brass plate and with a pitcher full of water on the head. This is called Tarangam. • Sometimes, the Kuchipudi performer combines the role of both dancer and singer. The style is known for both solo and group performances.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dance is performed on Carnatic music where singer is accompanied by musical instruments like mridangam, violin, flute and tambura.
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1.4. SANGRAI DANCE

Why in news?

- Traditional **Sangrai dance** of Tripura was presented in Republic Day parade for the first time.

Details

- It is performed by the **Mog tribal community** of Tripura on the occasion of Sangrai festival
- The day is celebrated to welcome the new year.
- The Mog are the Arakanese descendants and follow Buddhism

Related information

- Maharashtra won the **best tableau** award on Republic Day Parade which was based on Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's coronation who introduced **Ashtapradhan mandal (Council of Eight Ministers)** consisting of
 - **Peshwa** (chief minister),
 - **Amatya or majumdar** (finance),
 - **Sachiv or shuru nawis**(correspondence),
 - **Sumant or dabir**(foreign minister)
 - **Senapati or san-i-naubat** (recruitment, training and discipline of the army)
 - **Mantri or waqia nawis:** (personal safety of the king)
 - **Nyayadhish** (administration of justice)
 - **Dhanadhyaksha or the pundit rao** (looking after charitable work)
- Himachal Pradesh's tableau depicted a model of Kye Gompa, a Tibetan Buddhist monastery established in the 11th century located in the Spiti Valley.
- Chhattisgarh's displayed artists performing dance based on Kalidasa's Meghadootam (a lyric poem which tells the story of a yaksha who has been exiled from his kingdom).

Other important works for Kalidas

- **Abhijnanashakuntala** - depicting love, separation & reunion of King Dushyanta, Sakuntala & their son (Bharata)
- **Raghuvamsha** – deals with the themes from Ramayana
- **Malvikagnimitram** - play tells the story of the love of Agnimitra, son of Pushyamitra Sunga
- **Kumarasambhav** – theme is courtship of Shiva and Parvati
- **Ritusamhara** – this poem portrays six Indian seasons.

1.5. THUMRI

Why in news?

- Girija Devi, one of the foundational figures of Banaras and Senia gharana of thumri passed away.

Background

- There are two main schools of Indian classical music: **the Hindustani style** of the North and **the Carnatic music** of the South.
- Well-known Hindustani styles include Dhrupad, Dhamar, Khayal, Tappa and Thumri.

Thumri: It is primarily a vocal style of romance music written from the perspective of the woman and sung in a literary dialect of Hindi called Braj Bhasha. The **thumri** is very lyrical in its structure and presentation.

Dhrupad: Tansen was one of the best-known dhrupad singers and one of the nine jewels of Emperor Akbar's court. It is a northern Indian style that features a straight delivery and no embroidery or embellishment. Singers are accompanied by a been and pakhawaj barrel drum.

Dhamar: Dhamar is a form similar to dhrupad but has more embellishments.

Khayal: Khayal means "imagination". **Amir Khusrou** of the 13th century gave it an impetus. It is a form of classical singing with more elaborate embellishments and embroidery. The Khayal has various gharanas – Gwalior Gharana, Agra Ghrana etc.

Tappa: It consists of the song uttered in fast note patterns. Ragas in which Tappa compositions are set remain same as in Thumri style.

Hindustani music	Carnatic music
It has its roots in Vedic traditions where hymns in Sama Veda, a sacred text, were sung rather than chanted	It developed significantly during the Bhakti movement
It features a number of Turko-Persian musical elements.	No Turko-Persian influence
There is bandish of time	There is no such Bandish
There are more than one style of singing known as gharanas	It is written to be sung in a specific way
Use of tabla, sarangi, sitar, santoor, clarinet, violin & flute	Use of veena, mridangam, mandolin, jalatarangam, violin & flute

फाउंडेशन कोर्स

सामान्य अध्ययन

इनोवेटिव क्लासरूम प्रोग्राम के घटक

○ प्रारंभिक और मुख्य परीक्षा के लिए

DELHI
25th June

JAIPUR
15th May

हिन्दी माध्यम में

ऑनलाइन कक्षाएं भी उपलब्ध



- ▶ प्रारंभिक परीक्षा, मुख्य परीक्षा और निबंध के लिए महत्वपूर्ण सभी टॉपिक का विस्तृत कवरेज
- ▶ मौलिक अवधारणाओं की समझ के विकास एवं विश्लेषणात्मक क्षमता निर्माण पर विशेष ध्यान
- ▶ एनीमेशन, पॉवर प्वाइंट, वीडियो जैसी तकनीकी सुविधाओं का प्रयोग
- ▶ अंतर - विषयक समझ विकसित करने का प्रयास
- ▶ योजनाबद्ध तैयारी हेतु करेंट ओरिएंटेड अप्रोच
- ▶ नियमित क्लास टेस्ट एवं व्यक्तिगत मूल्यांकन

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- ▶ निबंध टेस्ट सीरीज
- ▶ सीसेट टेस्ट सीरीज
- ▶ निबंध लेखन - शैली को कक्षाएं
- ▶ करेंट अफेयर्स मैगजीन

2. PAINTINGS & OTHER ART FORMS

2.1. MODERN PAINTING

Why in news?

- Recently, exhibitions in **Victoria Memorial Hall** went live on the Google Art & Culture Project where **Abanindranath's Bharatmata** was one of the most famous paintings featured.

Modern Indian Painting

Roughly, the modern period in Indian art began around **1857**. Various styles of painting evolved in modern era are:

- **Company Style of painting:** It is a hybrid style of painting that emerged in the colonial period. It combined elements of **Rajput, Mughal and other Indian styles of painting with European elements.**
- **Bazaar Painting:** Unlike the Company paintings, they did not mix the Indian style with the European techniques. They simply copied the Greek and Roman style. This school was prevalent in **Bengal and Bihar. The paintings showed Indian bazaars with European background.**
- **Kalighat Painting:** It is done on cloth or patas which began developing around the temple of Kalighat in Bengal where local village **scroll painters** (called *patuas*) and potters began introducing new features in traditional painting such as
 - Use of shading to give painting a rounded form (3-D effect).
 - use of a bold, deliberately non-realistic style, where the figures emerge large and powerful, with a minimum of lines, detail and colors.
 - painting social and political themes unlike religious only in previous times.

Major exponents of modern painting are **Raja Ravi Verma** ("Raphael of the East" due to brilliant brush strokes and lifelike paintings), **Abanindranath Tagore** etc. Abanindranath's 'Bharatmata' (1905) was the first purely Indian idea of the spirit of motherland.

2.2. PUPPETRY

Why in news?

- Recently, on 21st March World Puppetry day was celebrated.

Puppetry in India

- The earliest reference to the art of puppetry is found in Tamil classic 'Silappadikaaram' written around the 1st or 2nd century B.C.
- The puppeteer narrates the story in prose or lyrical form while the puppet shows provides the visual treat.
- Stories from puranic literature, local myths and legends form the subject of puppetry shows in ancient India.
- There are mainly four types of puppet forms in India: **String puppets, shadow puppets, rod puppets and glove puppets.**
- **String Puppetry:** String puppets or marionettes have jointed limbs controlled by strings. Some of the famous string puppetry are:
 - Kathputli, Rajasthan
 - Kundhei, Odisha
 - Gombeyatta, Karnataka
 - Bommalattam, Tamil Nadu.
- **Shadow Puppetry:** Shadow puppets are flat figures which are pressed against a screen with strong source of light behind it to create shadows. Some of the famous shadow puppetry are:
 - Togalu Gombeyatta, Karnataka
 - Tholu Bommalata, Andhara Pradesh
 - Ravanachayya, Odisha
- **Rod Puppetry:** Rod puppets are an extension of glove-puppets, but often much larger and supported and manipulated by rods from below. Some of the famous rod puppetry are:
 - Putul Nautch, West Bengal
 - Odisha Rod Puppet
 - Yampuri, Bihar
- **Glove Puppetry:** Glove puppets are also known as sleeve, hand or palm puppets. The head is made of papier mache, cloth or wood, with two hands emerging from just below the neck and rest of the body is generally a flowing skirt. These puppets are made to produce various types of movements at the hands of a puppeteer. **Eg: Pavakoothu, Kerala.**

3. SCULPTURE AND ARCHITECTURE

3.1. BUDDHIST MONASTERIES

Why in news?

- The **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** has unearthed structures resembling Buddhist monasteries in Vadnagar city of Gujarat.

Archaeological survey of India

- The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), under the **Ministry of Culture**, is the premier organization for the archaeological researches and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation.
 - Its main objective is maintenance of ancient monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance,
 - Additionally, it regulates all archaeological activities in the country as per the provisions of the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958**. It also regulates **Antiquities and Art Treasure Act, 1972**.
- A three-day festival, **Bodhi Parva: BIMSTEC Festival of Buddhist Heritage** was celebrated in New Delhi.
 - A proposal to build a 70 ft. Buddha statue in Ghantasala in Andhra Pradesh has been passed by the government.

Types of Buddhist Architecture

- Three major types of Buddhist architecture are found:
 - **Stupa:** It is a burial mound for the Buddha. It comprises of a hemispherical dome. The original stupas contained the Buddha's ashes. One of the most famous stupas in India is the **Sanchi Stupa** in Madhya Pradesh. **Piprahwa Stupa** in Uttar Pradesh is one of the earliest one.
 - **Viharas:** It is the resident hall of the monks. It was a dwelling of one or two stories, fronted by a pillared veranda.
 - **Chaitya or Chaityagriha:** It refers to an assembly hall that contains a stupa. Ex: Chaitya at **Karle caves** near Lonavala, Maharashtra.
- These were in the form of Rock-cut Caves mostly.

Important Buddhist Sites

Eight Astamahasthanas (holy places):

- **Lumbini, Nepal:** Birth of Buddha.
- **Bodhgaya, Bihar:** Enlightenment of Buddha.
- **Sarnath, UP:** First sermon or Dhammachakraparivartan

- **Kushinagar, UP:** Death or mahaparinirvana
 - "Mahaparinirvana" refers to the ultimate state of Nirvana (everlasting, highest peace and happiness)
- Along with these, the other four are Shravasti, Sankasya, Rajgir and Vaishali.

Important monasteries

- **Ladakh:** Hemis, Thiksey, Phuktal Monastery, Zanskar, Rizong
- **Leh:** Diskit Monastery, Lamayuru Monastery
- **Karnataka:** Namdroling Nyingmapa Monastery (Coorg)
- **Himachal Pradesh:** Dhankar, Tabo Monastery (Spiti Valley), Palpung Sherabling Monastic Seat (Kangra Valley), Namgyal Monastery (Dharamshala), Gandhola Monastery, Kungri Monastery, Kardang Monastery
- **West Bengal:** Ghoom Monastery
- **Uttarakhand:** Mindrolling Monastery (Dehradun).
- **Sikkim:** Rumtek and Gonjang Monastery, Enchey Monastery, Ralang Monastery, Pemayangtse Monastery.
- **Arunachal Pradesh:** Tawang Monastery.

3.2. HOYSALA TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE

Why in news?

- A Hoysala style temple is being built by a public trust in Venkatapura in Kolar district of Karnataka.

Hoysala Architecture

- The Hoysala dynasty ruled in south Karnataka between the 11th and 14th centuries. The Hoysala architectural style is considered an **intermediate between the Indo-Aryan and Dravidian traditions**.
- Its temples are ornate and complex. Another characteristic feature of Hoysala temple is that it used **soapstone** instead of sandstone.
- The temples have a **star shaped base** with the main structure standing on a raised platform. The temples are also covered with intricate sculptural carvings.
- Some of the famous Hoysala style temples are: Chennakesava temple in Belur, Hoysaleswara temple in Halebidu and the Ishwara temple in Arasikere.

3.3. ANANDA TEMPLE

Why in news?

- Prime Minister visited the Ananda Temple at Bagan in Myanmar which is being restored by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

More on News

- It is a Buddhist temple built in 12th century by King Kyansittha of Burma. It is the second largest temple in the entire Bagan region and is considered a masterpiece of Mon Architecture. ASI took up the conservation work of the temple after MoU was signed in 2010.

Other Conservation Works of ASI

- **Bamiyan Caves** – The Bamiyan Buddha statues in Afghanistan were carved out of rock facing the Bamiyan valley in 6-7th century. Prior to their destruction in 2001 by terrorist activities, the Bamiyan Buddhas were considered to be the largest Buddha sculptures in the world.
- **Angkor Wat (Cambodia)** - Built between A.D. 1113 and 1150 roughly and encompassing an area of about 500 acres (200 hectares) is one of the largest religious monuments ever constructed. The temple was built by King Suryavarman II. It was originally built as a Hindu temple dedicated to God Vishnu, but it was converted to a Buddhist temple in 14th century.
- **Ta Prohm Temple (Cambodia)** - Built from 1186 A.D. and originally known as Rajavihara (Monastery of the King), Ta Prohm was a Buddhist temple dedicated to the mother of Jayavarman VII.
- **Vat Phou Temple in Laos** – This ruined Khmer temple complex is older than Angkor Wat. One temple at the site is as old as 5th century. It is an active Buddhist religious place. However, various carvings can be found of Indra (the Hindu god of war, storms, and rainfall) riding a three-headed elephant and Vishnu riding on a garuda, an eagle. It is a UNESCO world heritage site.
- **My Son Temple (Vietnam)** - My Son Sanctuary dates from the 4th to the 13th centuries CE. The property is located in the mountainous border Duy Xuyen District of Quang Nam Province, in central Viet Nam. It

is a Hindu temple constructed during the My Son civilization.

3.4. AJANTA CAVES

Why in news?

Recently, digital restoration of Ajanta caves in Maharashtra has been taken up.

More about Ajanta Caves

- It includes 29 **rock-cut Buddhist** caves and has various chaityas and viharas.
- The Ajanta caves are mainly famous for its paintings and sculptures. Various themes of paintings include Mahaparinirvana of Buddha, **Padmapani** (Bodhisattva holding a padmalotus), **Vajrapani** (Bodhisattva holding the vajra – ritual object) and theme of Mara Vijaya.
- Ajanta paintings are not true fresco – as plaster was set and then painted.

More rock-cut caves

- **Ellora Caves** – They are situated near Aurangabad Maharashtra and are related to Buddhism, Jainism and Brahmanism. It is known for Kailashnath Temple which has been excavated from a single piece of Rock. Buddhist caves have images belonging to Vajrayana Buddhism and Brahmanical caves have Shaivism and Vaishnavite themes.
- **Elephanta Caves** - They are located on Elephanta Islands, Maharashtra. These were earlier dominated by Buddhist images then by Shaivism images. The most imposing figure – Trimurti is here, which shows Shiva as creator, preserver destroyer
- **Bhimbetka Caves** – It is located near Bhopal, MP and its remains date back to Lower Palaeolithic Age to the Early Medieval Ages. They are famous for its rock paintings mainly executed in red and white with occasional use of green and yellow. The themes of paintings range from events of daily life to sacred and real images.
- **Bhaja Caves and Karle Caves**- They were built during the Mauryan times and are one of the most important Buddhist Centres of Hinayana faith. They also contain painting of Buddha.
- **Kanheri Caves, Mumbai**- They are renowned for their natural Basalt formations, ancient Indian styled architecture and the 109 special entrances to the caves. There are about 34

unfinished paintings of Buddha within the Caves.

- **Udaygiri Caves**- They are Located in Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh and contain some of the oldest Hindu temples. They were built during the Gupta period and has illustrations related to Vaishnavism, Shaivism and Shaktism (Durga) as well as important inscriptions from the Gupta period. They are home to iconic Varaha sculpture which represents the story of the rescue of Bhudevi (Earth). It has simple ochre paintings.

3.5. POST-INDEPENDENCE ARCHITECTURE

Why in news?

World Monuments Fund has placed 25 cultural heritage sites spanning 30 countries on its 2018 World Monuments Watch list.

World Monument Fund (WMF)

It is a private nonprofit organization founded in 1965 by individuals concerned about the accelerating destruction of important artistic treasures throughout the world.

Through its programme **World Monuments Watch**, it aims to identify imperiled cultural heritage sites and direct financial and technical support for their preservation.

Impact

- Putting the heritage sites **on watch list** means that they are currently threatened by conflict, climate change, or other dangers.
- The sites include storm-ravaged areas in the Caribbean, the Gulf, and Mexico, and the Souk in Aleppo, Syria, which has been damaged in the country's ongoing civil war.
- From India "**Post-Independence Architecture of Delhi**" has been identified for preservation.
- It came to light after demolition of **Hall of Nations** building without even waiting for the court hearing for the same. The building was constructed in 1972 by famous architect Raj Rewal.

Other major Post Independence Architectural Marvels

- Urban planning of **Chandigarh** by French architect **Le Corbusier** with hierarchy of roads and many Green belts
- Mass housing projects of **Laurie Baker** in Kerala using locally available materials and construct buildings so as to merge them with environment.
- Architectural marvels of **Charles Correa** which includes Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Museum at the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad, Jawahar Kala Kendra in Jaipur, New Bombay with special emphasis on prevailing resources, energy and climate as major determinants in the ordering of space.

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4. LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

4.1. PRAKRIT

Why in news?

- Despite a significant contribution to history, Prakrit is yet to get the classical language status.

The Government of India has awarded the distinction of classical language to **Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Sanskrit, Tamil and Telugu**

Criteria for declaring classical language are:

- High antiquity of its early texts/recorded history over a period of 1500-2000 years
- A body of ancient literature/texts, which is considered a valuable heritage by generations of speakers
- The literary tradition be original and not borrowed from another speech community
- The classical language and literature being distinct from modern, there may also be a discontinuity between the classical language and its later forms or its offshoots.

About Prakrit

- Prakrit in the widest sense of the term, was indicative of any language that in any manner deviated from the standard one, i.e. Sanskrit. It was the spoken language of Indians along with Pali after the Vedic period.
- The Prakrit language is believed to have been used while composing the Jain scriptures.
- Prakrit is well known for Gathasaptashati (700 verses) by Hala (300 A.D.), the best example of erotic literature. It is a compilation of 700 verses along with his own contribution of 44 poems.
- The sacred texts (Siddhanta or Agama) of the two main sects of the Jains employed three types of Prakrit. The oldest sutras of the Svetambara sect are written in Ardha-Magadhi, while later books are in Maharastri. The sacred books of the Digambara sect are written in Savraseni.

4.2. KONKANI

Why in news?

- Konkani Bhasha Mandal will translate 100 books in Konkani in order to promote and preserve children's literature in Konkani.

About Konkani

- It is the **official language of the state of Goa** and it is one of 22 scheduled languages

mentioned in the 8th schedule of the **Constitution**.

- It is spoken all along the Konkan and Malabar coasts.
- Konkani is the only language that is written in five different scripts – **Roman, Devnagri, Kannada, Persian Arabic and Malayam**.
- One of the first firm evidence of this language was through 263rd abhanga of Marathi poet Namdev, a Bhakti saint.
- Konkani became the first Asian language ever to be printed in 1556.

4.3. NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE: KAZUO ISHIGURO

Why in news?

Swedish academy has awarded Nobel Prize in Literature for year 2017 to British author **Kazuo Ishiguro**.

More about the news

- He is best known for his novel '**The Remains of the Day**' for which Ishiguro has won Booker prize as well in 1989.
- His other works include 'A Pale View of Hills', 'An Artist of the Floating World' etc.
- Rabindranath Tagore is the only Indian who has won Nobel Prize in Literature.
- Major works of Rabindranath Tagore are Gitanjali, The Postmaster, Chaturanga, Chokher Bali etc.

4.4. PADMAAVAT

Why in news?

- Every year Rajputs celebrate the Jauhar (self-immolation) of Rani Padmavati between the months of February and March.

Padmaavat

- It is a piece of poetry dating back to 16th century written in Awadhi language by Sufi poet Malik Mohammed Jayasi. The poem is the story of the historic siege of Chittor by Alauddin Khilji.
- Malik Mohammed Jayasi was an Indian Sufi poet of the 15th century who wrote in both Awadhi and Persian.

Allauddin Khilji Reforms

- He maintained large permanent standing army who was to be paid **salary in cash**
- He introduced system of **dag** (branding of horse) and **huliya/chehra** (descriptive rolls of soldiers)
- He established four separate markets and a department to fix prices was also set up.
- He introduced scientific measurement of land for the **assessment of land revenue, first Delhi sultan** to do so. He also introduced **Kharaj** where 50% of produce was to be given to state
- No one was allowed to buy directly from the cultivators, only traders could do so. All merchants in Delhi were required to register themselves
- He also put an **end to the special privileges** of the Chaudhuris (headmen of the parganas), Khuts (zamindars), and Muquddams (headmen of the villages). Even big landlords could not escape taxes
- He introduced **two new taxes**—a horse tax and a tax on all milk cows. Jazia was imposed on non-Muslims.

4.5. SAHITYA AKADEMI AWARDS

Why in news?

- The **Sahitya Akademi** announced its annual awards in 24 languages which include English and Rajasthani along with 22 schedule languages mentioned in the Constitution.

About Sahitya Akademi Awards

- The Sahitya Akademi presents awards to the most outstanding books of literary merit published in any of the major Indian languages recognised by the Akademi.
- **Sahitya Akademi, India's National Academy of Letters** is the central institution for literary dialogue, publication and promotion in the country and the only institution that undertakes literary activities in 24 Indian languages.
- It was **setup by the Government of India in 1954 but it functions autonomously**. It is registered as a society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.

Other Literary Awards

Vyas Samman

The **Vyas Samman 2017** has been awarded to Mamta Kalia “**Dukkam Sukkam**”.

It is a literary award for Hindi literary work published in the last 10 years given by the **K K Birla Foundation** since 1991.

Bhasha Samman

The 2018 Bhasha Samman has been awarded to Magahi writer Shesh Anand Madhukar.

It is also awarded by the **Sahitya Akademi** to writers who have made significant contribution to India languages other than the 24 languages covered by the Sahitya Akademi.

Jnanpith Award (Gyaanpeeth Award)

The 2017 Jnanpith Award has been awarded to Hindi litterateur Krishna Sobti.

The Jnanpith Award is given by the **Bharatiya Jnanpith Organisation** which was founded by the Sahu Shanti Prasad Jain. It recognises litterateurs who write in any one of the 22 Indian languages listed in the Schedule Eight of the Indian Constitution.

Saraswati Samman

Konkani writer Mahabaleshwar sail won the Saraswati Samman 2017 for “Hawthan”.

It is awarded by the **K K Birla Foundation** for outstanding prose or poetry literary works in ant of the 22 Indian languages listed in the Constitution.

Sangeet Natak Akademi – India’s National Academy for music, dance and drama.

- It was the first national academy of arts setup by the Government of India in 1952. It is registered as a society under the **Societies Registration Act, 1986**.
- It functions as the apex body of the performing arts in the country, preserving and promoting the vast intangible heritage of India's diverse culture expressed in the forms of music, dance and drama.
- The academy also collaborates with international organisation like the **UNESCO** to save the cultural heritage of the country.

Lalit Kala Akademi

- It is the National Academy of Art setup by the Government of India in 1954 and registered as a society under the Societies Registration Act, 1896.
- It is the Government’s apex cultural body in the field of visual arts in India. It is an **autonomous body, funded by the Ministry of Culture**.

4.6. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON DEMETRIOS GALANOS

Why in news?

- International Conference on 'Demetrios Galanos and his Legacy' was held in New Delhi by the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA).

About IGNCA

- It is an autonomous arts institution under the Ministry of Culture. It was established in the memory of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.
- It has launched **Bharat Vidya Paryojana**, a long-term academic program in 2016 with an aim to reconceive Indology through Bharat

About Demetrios Galanos

- He was a Greek scholar who came to India to study in the 19th century.
- He translated the Bhagvad Gita into Greek among many other Sanskrit texts. His major contribution was the compilation of a Sanskrit-English-Greek lexicon of about 9000 words.

Other Famous Translators

- Charles Wilkins:** He is famous for being the first translator of Bhagvad Gita into English. He published a book that was titled, 'Bhagvat-geeta, or Dialogues of Kreesna and Arjoon'. In 1785.
- James Princep:** He was the founding editor of Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal and is remembered deciphering the Kharosthi and Brahmi scripts of ancient India.

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5. TRIBE

5.1. BONDA TRIBE

Why in news?

- The **Bonda Development Agency (BDA)** has started an inquiry and survey in the remote Bonda-inhabited villages

About the Bonda Tribe

- Bonda are one of the ancient tribes living in the Malkangiri district of southwestern Odisha, India.
- They are considered as scheduled tribes and are divided into two groups- Upper Bonda and Lower Bonda.
- Bondas have their own languages - "**Remo**" language - sans a script - which belongs to the Mundari group of languages. Researchers believe them to be members of the Austro-Asiatic language family.
- They still maintain their primitive social customs and tradition.
- Bondas have a unique marriage tradition showing matriarchal dominance. Older women marry much younger men.

5.2. TODA TRIBE

Why in news?

- Recently, **Tribal Research Centre (TRC)** in Ooty refuted the Census Directorate report that Toda and Kota dialects are headed for extinction.

About Toda Tribe

- **Spread:** isolated Nilgiri plateau of Southern India.
- The Toda have attracted a disproportionate amount of attention because of their unlikeness to their neighbours in appearance, manners, and customs.
- The Toda lands are now a part of The Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, a UNESCO-designated International Biosphere Reserve and is declared UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Their sole occupation is cattle-herding and dairy-work and their religion also centres on the buffalo.

About Kota Tribe

- Kota tribe is thought to be indigenous to the Nilgiri Hills of Tamil Nadu. Their name Kota was given by outsiders. They call themselves kovs.

- The Kota tribal language known as "Ko-v Mant" is a very old and rude dialect of Kannada language and is closely related to Toda Language.
- Kotas consider themselves to be Hindus. They do not believe in caste system.

5.3. SOLIGA TRIBE

Why in news?

- Coffee Board and the Social Welfare Department have started a ₹2.05-crore project for branding of the beans grown by the Soliga tribals.

About Soligas

- The Soligas are nomadic people who have lived in the **Biligiriranga Hills region of Southern Karnataka** for centuries.
- Soligas - whose name means Children of the Bamboo - live off forest produce like honey, berries and timber.
- The Soliga speak the Sholaga language (Soliganudi) which is a member of the Dravidian family.

5.4. REANG TRIBE

Why in news?

- A book on the Reang tribe, the second largest tribe of Tripura, was recently released.

About the Reang Tribe

- They are a pastoral tribe.
- They identify themselves as **Bru**.
- Reang society is patriarchal in nature.
- They speak the **Kao-Bru language** which is of **Tibeto-Burmese origin**. However, it does not have a script.
- They are known for the 'Hojagiri' folk dance in which a group of women balance themselves on earthen pitchers and manage other props. The performance is associated with the harvest.

5.5. SIDDI TRIBE

- The **Siddi** also known as **Sheedi, Habshi** or **Makrani**, are an ethnic group inhabiting India and Pakistan.
- They are descendants of Africans from North-East and East Africa who were brought to India as slaves, soldiers or servants.

- The Siddi are descended from Bantu peoples from Southeast Africa. Some were merchants, sailors, indentured servants and mercenaries.
- **Spread:** Karnataka, Gujarat and Hyderabad in India and Makran and Karachi in Pakistan as the main population centres
- **Religion:** Siddis are primarily Sufi Muslims, although some are Hindus and Roman Catholic Christians.
- The Siddis of Gujarat live around Gir Forest National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary.

5.6. JARAWA TRIBE

- The tribes of the Andaman Islands – the **Jarawa, Great Andamanese, Onge and Sentinelese** are believed to have lived there for up to 55,000 years.
- Considered one of the most isolated people on earth, the Jarawa are a hunter-gatherer tribe that has lived in the dense forests of Andaman Islands completely cut off from the outside world.
- However, with the increasing flow of outsiders, the Jarawas are facing the threat of extinction.

About other tribes

- **Andamanese** - They form the largest population among the other tribes found in these islands. They speak Andamani Hindi
- **Onges** – It is one of the most primitive tribes in India. They are semi-nomadic and fully dependent on the food provided by nature. They have developed artistry and crafts, and can make canoes.
- **Sentinelese** – They are inhabitants of the north Sentinel island and live in complete isolation. They are very hostile and never leave their island

5.7. KOYA TRIBE

- The Koyas are one of the few multi-lingual and multi-racial peasant tribes of Andhra.
- Physically they are classified as Australoid. The Koyas call themselves as "Koithur".
- The Koyas speak the language called "Koyi". It is closely related to Gondi and is influenced by Telegu.
- Koyas practice their own ethnic religion but they also worship a lot of Hindu gods and goddesses.

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6. INITIATIVES OF UNESCO

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) is responsible for coordinating international cooperation in education, science, culture and communication. It strengthens the ties between nations and societies, and mobilizes the wider public so that each child and citizen:

- has access to quality education - a basic human right and an indispensable prerequisite for sustainable development;
- may grow and live in a cultural environment rich in diversity and dialogue, where heritage serves as a bridge between generations and peoples;
- can fully benefit from scientific advances;
- and can enjoy full freedom of expression; the basis of democracy, development and human dignity.

6.1. KUMBH MELA

Why in news?

UNESCO has inscribed Kumbh Mela on its **Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**.

Kumbh Mela

- Kumbh Mela (Festival of Sacred Pitcher) is the largest peaceful congregation of pilgrims on earth. It represents a syncretic set of rituals related to worship and cleansing in holy rivers.
- It is a Hindu festival which is observed during the Purnima (full moon) of month of Paush (December 22- January 20) after every 12 years on the banks of a holy river to take dip and perform various rituals.
- It is held every four years by rotation at:
 - **Haridwar** (banks of Ganga),
 - **Allahabad** (Confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati),
 - **Nashik** (banks of Godavari) and
 - **Ujjain** (banks of Shipra).
- Knowledge and skills related to 'Kumbh Mela' are transmitted through the **Guru-Shishya parampara** (teacher-student relationship) by saints.
- Kumbh Mela can be traced back in history through the writings of 7th century Chinese traveller **Hiuen Tsang** who came to India during the rule of **Harshavardhan**. The

festival was also popularised among people by the eighth century saint **Shankaracharya**.

Hiuen Tsang (also Xuanzang, Hsuan Tsang) was a Chinese traveller who visited India during the reign of **Harshavardhana**.

When he went back to China, he wrote a detailed description of India in his book '**Si-yu-ki**' or '**Record of the Western Countries**'.

His description is considered an important source of knowing the administrative, social and cultural condition of India at that time.

He visited various places in North and South India. He stayed at Nalanda University for five years.

He wrote about the **fourth Buddhist council** which was held at Kundalvana in Kashmir in 72 AD under the Kushan king Kanishka.

UNESCO's Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage

- It is a list which is prepared to **promote the intangible heritage** and contribute to a greater awareness of their importance and was formed after **Convention for Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage** came into effect.
- **Intangible cultural heritage** means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills -- as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated with them that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as a part of their cultural heritage.
- **Intergovernmental Committee for safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage** meets and evaluates the nominations proposed by member states after which the List is published every year.
- UNESCO brings out two separate lists:
 - **Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity** – It is made up of those intangible heritage elements which bring out the diversity of culture.
 - **List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in need of Urgent Safeguarding** – It is made up of the intangible heritage elements which require urgent measures. It also helps to mobilize international cooperation. No heritage of India is included in this list as of now.

- UNESCO also brings out a **Register of Good Safeguarding Practices** which contains programs, projects and activities that best reflect principle of the Convention.

Other entries of India in UNESCO’s Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage

- **Yoga** – An ancient spiritual discipline which focuses on bringing harmony between mind and body.
- **Traditional brass and copper craft of utensils among thatheras in Punjab**
- **Sankirtana** - ritual singing, dancing and drumming of Manipur
- **Buddhist chanting of Ladakh** - recitation of sacred Buddhist texts
- **Chhau Dance** – This dance, performed with a mask, is the tribal martial dance from eastern India that enacts episodes from epics (Mahabharata, Ramayana etc.), local folklore and abstract themes.
- **Kalbelia Folk Songs and Dance** – Kalbelia song and dance is performed by Rajasthani tribe, Kalbelia who are also known as snake-charmers.
- **Kudiyattam** - It is the last living performance tradition of Sanskrit theatre of Kerala
- **Tradition of Vedic Chanting**
- **Ramlila** - the traditional performance of the Ramayana
- **Ramman** - religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas, India
- **Mudiyettu** - ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala
- **Novruz** – It marks the Parsi new year and ushering in spring.

6.2. LIST OF WORLD HERITAGE IN DANGER

Why in News?

- World Heritage Committee has decided to include 54 properties on the List of World Heritage in danger in accordance with Article 11 (4) of the UNESCO’s World Heritage Convention.

UNESCO’s World Heritage Convention

- The convention defines the kinds of natural or cultural sites that can be included on the World Heritage List.
- Various activities such as “World Heritage City” as well as “World Heritage in danger” come under this convention of UNESCO.

List of World Heritage in danger

- The "in danger" list is designed to tell the international community about the conditions that threaten the very characteristics for which a property was added to the World Heritage List in the first place, and to encourage governments to take action to protect the sites.
- There is no Indian site in this list.

Heritage Sites Included in the Danger List in 2017

- **Historic Centre of Vienna, Austria**
- **Hebron/ AL-Khalid Old Town, Palestine**

6.3. WORLD HERITAGE CITY

- The 606-year-old walled city of Ahmedabad was declared World Heritage City by UNESCO during the 42nd session of World Heritage Committee (WHC) meeting in Krakow, Poland.
- Modern Ahmedabad was founded by Ahmad Shah in 1411 AD on the ancient sites of Ashaval and Karanavati.
- The city boasts of a composite culture and a rich mix of Hindu and Jain temples, Islamic and European architecture.

World Heritage Sites in India

Man-made Sites	
Agra Fort	Ajanta Caves
Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi	Champaner- Pavagadh Archaeological Park
Chhtrapati Shivaji Terminus (formerly Victoria Terminus)	Churches and Convents of Goa
Elephanta Caves	Ellora Caves
Fatehpur Sikri	Great Living Chola Temples
Group of Monuments at Hampi	Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram
Group of Monuments at Pattadakal	Hill Forts of Rajasthan
Humayun’s Tomb, Delhi	Khajuraho Group of Monuments
Mahabodhi Temple, Bodh Gaya	Mountain Railways of India
Qutub Minar, Delhi	Rani-ki-Vav (the Queen’s step-well), Patap, Gujarat
Red Fort	Rock Shelters of Bhimbhetka
Sun Temple, Konark	Taj Mahal

The Jantar Mantar, Jaipur	Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavira (Nalanda University), Bihar
Architectural Work of Le Corbusier (Capitol Complex, Chandigarh)	Historic City of Ahmedabad
Natural Sites	
Great Himalayan National Park	Kaziranga National Park
Keoladeo National Park	Manas Wildlife Sanctuary
Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Parks	Sundarbans National Park
Western Ghats	Mixed Site: Khangchendzonga National Park

6.4. UNESCO ASIA PACIFIC AWARD OF MERIT

Why in news?

- **Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple in Srirangam in Tamil Nadu** has won the **UNESCO Asia Pacific Award of Merit 2017 for cultural heritage conservation.**

UNESCO Asia-Pacific awards for cultural heritage conservation programme

- It is aimed at acknowledging the efforts taken to restore and conserve historical structures without affecting their heritage value.
- The awards are classified under four categories - Award of Excellence, Awards of Distinction, Awards of Merit and Award for New Design in Heritage Context.
- Mumbai's Christ Church and Royal Bombay Opera House were the other monuments in India that received the Award of Merit this year.

About Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple

- It is considered as one of the most important of the **108 main Vishnu temples (Divyadesams).**
- This temple lies on an **islet formed by the twin rivers: Cauvery and Coleroon.**
- It has seven prakaras or enclosures.
- It is a **Vaishnava temple** built in the **Tamil or Dravidian style of architecture.** The temple and 1000 pillared hall were constructed in the Vijayanagar period (1336–1565) on the site of an older temple.
- The Gopuram of Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple is the **biggest gopuram** in Asia. It is also called as “Raja Gopuram”

- The temple bagged the UNESCO award for use of traditional methods in renovating temple structures and re-establishment of rainwater harvesting and historic drainage system.

Dravidian Architecture

- It is a style of architecture mainly found in the temple architecture of South India. This style of temple architecture existed from **7th to 18th** century. It is noted for its pyramidal towers and enormity in design.
- The origins of the Dravida style can be observed during the reign of **Chola dynasty.** Further, it was cultivated by kings of **Pallava dynasty, Pandyas, Vijayanagara Kings and by the Nayaks of Madura.**
- One of the earliest examples is the **rock-cut shrine at Mahabalipuram or the Shore temple nearby.**
- The temple consisted of – **Vimanas, Gopurams, Mandapams.**
- The **Vimana** was the central plot of the land. It consisted of a squared chamber sanctuary where the main idol was placed.
- The entrance gateway in the front wall is known as **Gopuram**
- A pillared porch or hall which leads to different parts of the temple is known as **Mandapam**
- There was also presence of water tank inside the temple enclosure.
- The stone or the bronze idol of the deity was placed inside the innermost sanctum sanctorum, the “**GarbhaGriha**”.
- Some of the other examples of Dravida style temple are **Brihadeshwara at Tanjore** (built by Raja Raja I), **Gangaikondacholapuram temple** (built by Rajendra I).

6.5. CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK

Why in News?

Chennai has been recently included in UNESCO Creative Cities list.

What is Creative Cities Network?

- It was **created in 2004** to promote **cooperation with and among cities** that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development.

- The 7 creative fields, on basis of which the cities are awarded the status, are Crafts & Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Literature, Music and Media Arts.
- By joining the Network, cities commit to **sharing their best practices and developing partnerships** with public & private sectors and civil society.
- Chennai has been included in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network for its rich musical tradition. It is the **3rd Indian city** after Jaipur (craft) & Varanasi (music).

6.6. UNESCO'S ENDANGERED LIST

Why in news?

- According to a list prepared by the UNESCO, 42 languages in India are endangered and maybe be headed for extinction. These languages are spoken by less than 10, 000 people.

Facts

- There are 22 scheduled languages in India mentioned in the Eighth Schedule (Article 344(1) and 351) of the Indian Constitution.
- Apart from the 22 languages, there are 31 languages that have been given the status of official language by state governments and union territories.
- According to a Census Directorate report, there are 100 non-scheduled languages which are spoken by one lakh or more people

Government Initiatives

- **Government of India** launched a scheme known as "**Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages of India**" in 2014.
- Under this Scheme, the **Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysore** works on protection, preservation and documentation of all the mother tongues/languages of India spoken by less than 10,000 speakers keeping in mind the degree of endangerment and reduction in the domains of usage.

- Under the programme, grammatical descriptions, monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, language primers, anthologies of folklore, encyclopedias of all languages or dialects especially those spoken by less than 10,000 people are being prepared.

UNESCO has categorized languages on basis of endangerment as:

- Vulnerable
- Definitely Endangered
- Severely Endangered
- Critically Endangered

6.7. CONFERENCE ON TOURISM AND CULTURE

Why in news?

- The **second UN World Tourism Organization/UNESCO World Conference on Tourism and Culture** with focus on **sustainable development** was held in October 2017.

About the Conference

- First held in 2015, it brought together for the first time Ministers of Tourism and Ministers of Culture with the objective to identify key opportunities and challenges for a stronger cooperation between these highly interlinked fields.

United Nations World Tourism Organisation

- It is the United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.
- UNWTO encourages the implementation of the **Global Code of Ethics for Tourism**, to maximize tourism's socio-economic contribution while minimizing its possible negative impacts
- It is committed to promoting tourism as an instrument in achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, geared towards reducing poverty and fostering sustainable development worldwide.

7. RELIGION AND CULTURAL FESTIVALS

7.1. MAHAMASTAKABHISHEKA

Why in news?

The President recently inaugurated the **Mahamastakabhisheka**, which is the largest gathering of Jains in the world, in **Shravanbelgola**, Karnataka.

Mahamastakabhisheka

- It is the **head anointing ceremony** of the Bahubali which is observed once every 12 years in the **Digambar** Jain tradition.
- The Gomateshwar statue is dedicated to Bahubali, the son of **Rishabhanath**, the first in the line of the 24 Jain tirthankaras.
- The statue has been depicted in **kayotsarga posture**. Kayotsarga means to give up one's physical comfort and body movements, thus staying steady, either in a standing or other posture, and concentrating upon the true nature of the soul.
- The statue is said to be built by **Chavundaraya** who was the commander-in-chief as well as the Prime Minister of the **Ganga King Rachamalla** during the later period of 10th century A.D.

About Shravanbelgola

- A group of Jain monks under the leadership of **Bhadrabahu** migrated from Ujjain to Shravanbelgola in response to a serious famine during the reign of Chandragupta Maurya.
- The group of monks that migrated came to be known as **Digambaras** (sky clad or naked) and the group of monks who stayed in the north under **Sthulabhadra** came to be known as **Shvetambara** (White-robed)
- Later **Chandragupta Maurya** handed over his kingdom to his son Bindusara and chose to spend his last days at Sravanbelgola.

Jainism

- It is believed in Jainism that one must conquer worldly desires in order attain enlightenment and purity of the soul (jiva). It is a non-theistic belief like Buddhism i.e it does not believe in the supreme power of God.
- It did not explicitly rejected caste-system.

- This ancient religion is believed to have **24 Trithankaras/teachers (Jinas)**. The 1st Trithakara was **Rishabdev or Rishabnath**.
- The 23rd Trithankara was **Parshavnath** and the last was **Vardhamana Mahavira (Born in 540 BC at Kundangrama, near Vaishali)**.
- Mahavira attained Kaivalya (nirvana) under Sal tree at Timbhikagrama.
- There are **three principle or Triratnas of Jainism**
 - **Right faith**
 - **Right Knowledge**
 - **Right Conduct** which includes observance of five vows: ahimsa (non-violence), satya (truth), asteya (no stealing), parigraha (no acquiring property) and brahmacharya (abstinence).
- The proponents of Jainism **used Prakrit (the common language) for teaching instead of Sanskrit**. The adoption of Prakrit by the Jainas helped the growth of this language and literature.
- First Jain council was held at Patliputra in 3rd century BC. It was presided over by Sthulabahu.
- **Jain Literature is called Jain Agamas**. They are a total of 45 texts based on Mahavira's teachings and were compiled in 6th century AD in Valabhi in Gujarat. The Jain literature contains epics, Puranas, novels and drama. A large portion of Jaina writing is still in the form of manuscripts, which have not been published and which are found in the Jaina shrines of Gujarat and Rajasthan.
- Jains also made prolific temples. **Rock-cut caves at Aihole and badami** which have figures of Jain trithankaras was built during the Chalukyan period. The **Dilwara Jain temples at Mount Abu** were built by Chalukya Dynasty Kings between 11th and 13th century. There are five Jain caves at Ellora. Other caves are **Tiger cave at Udaygiri and Sittannavasala Cave at Padukottai**.

7.2. KANDHEI JATRA

Why in news?

- **Kandhei Jatra, a unique annual toy fair is celebrated in Behrampur, Odisha.**

About Kandhei Jatra

- The festival is observed every year on full moon night of the Hindu month of Shravan, which is also celebrated as Guru Purnima.
- The festival is ritualistically attached to the **Old Jagannath Temple**. On the full moon night of the festival, the pedestal of the idol of lord Jagannath at the temple is decorated with earthen toys depicting mythological characters.

7.3. THAKURANI JATRA FESTIVAL

What is it?

- The month long festivities of the Thakurani Jatra festival were celebrated in the city of Behrampur (the silk city), Odisha in April.

About the Festival

- It is a **biennial festival**.
- Also known as **Ghata Yatra**, it is the chief festival of Southern Odisha.
- The festival marks the worship of Maa Buddhi Thakurani who is considered the **protector** of Behrampur.
- Originally the Deras, a weaver community, worshiped the goddess.

7.4. MEDARAM'S JATARA

Why in news?

- Central government is likely to declare Medaram's Sammakka-Sarakka/Saralamma Jatara a national festival this year.

Medaram is a remote place in the **Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary**, a part of Dandakaranya, the largest surviving forest belt in the Deccan.

About the Festival

- It is held bi-annually in Medaram village, Telegana to honour the twin goddesses - Sammakka and her daughter Sarakka.
- It is held by forest dwelling **Koya Tribe** of the region and is the biggest tribal festival in Asia attracting non-advaitis as well.

Significance of National Tag

- Apart from getting recognition, national tag would also make Medaram **eligible for central funds**.

- Once declared a national festival, Jatara can be considered for **'intangible cultural heritage of humanity' tag of UNESCO**.
- Union government had in 2015 declared **Vanaj**, a tribal dance and music festival, as national festival.

7.5. CAUVERY MAHA PUSHKARAM

Why in news?

- Recently, Maha Pushkaram was celebrated along the course of the river Cauvery.

About Maha Pushkaram

- Pushkaram is the Indian festival of worshipping rivers. It is celebrated **along the banks of 12 rivers** in India.
- The celebration happens annually, once in 12 years along each river. Each river is associated with one zodiac sign. The river for each year's festival is based on which zodiac the planet Jupiter is in.
- Other rivers are: Ganga, Narmada, Saraswati, Yamuna, Godavari, Krishna, Kaveri, Bhima, Tapti, Tungabhadra, Sindhu (Indus) and Pranhita.
- The **celestial transit of Planet Jupiter** from Kanni Rasi to Thula Rasi in the Hindu almanac is said to be the Maha Pushkaram period. The celestial event is said to occur **once in 144 years**.

7.6. WARI WARKARI

Why in news?

- Virtual version of Wari created on different social media platforms has garnered much support and has also helped realise social causes.

About Wari

- Wari meaning "pilgrimage" refers to the annual padayatra to the Vithoba temple in Pandharpur, Solapur district of Maharashtra. It is a 700 year old tradition.
- Vithoba is a form of Krishna, an avatar (incarnation) of Vishnu. Thus, Warkari is a branch of Vaishnavism.
- The Warkaris carry the padukas (foot prints) of various saints, most notably Dnyaneshwar and Tukaram.

- It is mainly geographically related to Maharashtra and Southern Karnataka. Individuals taking the padayatra are called Warkari meaning pilgrim.
- The pilgrimage culminates on Ekadashi (the 11th day) of the Hindu lunar calendar month of Aashaadha.
- The teachers responsible for establishing and supporting the movement through its history include Dnyaneshwar, Tukaram and Chokhamela.

Nanda Devi Raj Jaat Yatra (Himalayan Mahakumbh)

- It is a festival in Uttarakhand in which Goddess Nanda Devi (also known as Gaura and Raj Rajeshwari in Garhwal division) is worshipped.
- It is held for whole three weeks and is organized once in every twelve years in the Chamoli District of Garhwal Region.

7.7. LOSAR FESTIVAL

Why in news?

- The Losar festival marking the festivities of the New Year was celebrated in Ladakh.

About the Festival

- The festival, said to have originated in the 15th century, celebrates the Ladakhi or Tibetan New Year.
- It is said to last from 3 to 15 days and is celebrated from the first day of the 11th month of the Tibetan Lunar Calendar.
- Apart from Ladakh, it is also celebrated in **Lahul and Spiti in Himachal Pradesh, Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim.**
- Losar is characterized especially by dancing, music, and a general spirit of merrymaking. The festival is marked by making offerings to the Gods, both in Gompas and their shrines.

Other New Year Celebrations Across India

- Ugadi - Telegu New Year
- Gudi Padwa - Marathi New Year
- Baisakhi - Punjabi New Year
- Puthandu - Tamil New Year
- Bohag Bihu - Assamese New Year
- Pohela Boisakh - Bengali New Year
- Bestu Varas - Gujarati New Year
- Vishu - Malayalam New Year
- Hijri - Islamic New Year
- Lossong - Sikkimese New Year
- Cheti Chand – Hindu New Year for Sindhi Hindus

7.8. NABAKALEBAR FESTIVAL

Why in news?

- **President Ram Nath Kovind** released Rs 1,000 and Rs 10 commemorative coins on the occasion of Nabakalebar festival.

About the Festival

- Nabakalebar is an occasional festival observed in the Shri Jagannath Temple at Puri. Naba means new and the Kalebar is body.
- In Jagannath cult this is a periodical renewal of the wooden forms of Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshana.
- The soul or the Brahma is transferred from the old idols to their new bodies in a highly technical prescribed and secret method.
- The Nabakalebar festival is observed in a gap of 12 to 19 years.
- During this festival the annual Rathayatra becomes the Nabakalebar Ratha Yatra.

7.9. JALLIKATTU

- It is a bull-vaulting event practised in Tamil Nadu as a part of Pongal celebrations on Mattu Pongal day.
- Participants tackle the bull in an arena by its hump and try to hang on till they cross the finishing line.
- It is popular in the districts of Madurai, Tiruchirappalli, Theni, Pudukkottai and Dindigul — a region also known as the Jallikattu belt.
- It is an ancient sport. Sangam literature (2nd BCE – 2nd CE), has many detailed references to Eru Thazhuvuthal (hugging the bull).
- At present, Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Tamil Nadu Amendment) Act, 2017, permits Jallikattu in the state overturning Supreme Court (SC) earlier judgement banning it.
- Now, constitutional bench has been set up to decide whether state can enact such a law to preserve their cultural heritage under Article 29(1).

Other Animal Sports in India

- **Kambala:** annual Buffalo Race (he-buffalo) held in coastal Karnataka.
- **Cock-fight:** blood sport between two roosters (cocks) popular in Andhra Pradesh during Sankranti.
- **Bail Gaadi Shariat:** bullock-cart race held in Maharashtra.

- **Camel Race:** during the Pushkar fair in Rajasthan.
- **Bulbul Fight:** in the Hayagriva-Madhava Temple in Assam during every Makar Sankranti.

7.10. AMBUBACHI FESTIVAL

- It is one of the most important festivals of Kamakhya temple, Guwhati, Assam.
- It is celebrated every year during monsoon season and ambubachi mela is also held.
- The Kamakhya Temple is known to be one of the 52 shakti peethas of goddess Shakti.
- It is associated with tantric cult and this festival is also known as “mahakumbh of east”.

7.11. CHAPCHAR KUT

- Chapchar Kut is a festival of Mizoram which literally means - a festival held during the period when the bamboos and trees that have been cut down are being awaited to dry to be burnt for jhumming.
- It marked the end of the Jhum clearing, readying the field for sowing and the festive spirit lasts from three to seven days in March.
- The Chapchar Kut festival evolved sometime between 1450 -1600 A.D. The traditional costume parades, showcasing dances like cheraw, chai, chheihlam, sarlamkai and musical performances by groups, among others, are part of the celebrations.

7.12. NORTH EAST CALLING FESTIVAL

Why in news?

Recently, **Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER)** inaugurated the North East Calling festival.

Destination North East

- It is an event which is being organised to promote North East Region through Business Summit, exhibition stalls showcasing best of North Eastern Features and attract investment in tourism, skill, start-up, handloom and handicrafts, horticulture, medicinal and aromatic plants.

About the Festival

- The “North East Calling” Festival is an event to promote the **art, culture, heritage, cuisine, handicrafts, business and tourism** of North East India.

- This Festival has been organised by the MDoNER’s “**Destination North East**”.
- On the occasion, the following were also launched:
 - **North East Venture Fund** as a joint venture of Ministry of DoNER and **North Eastern Development Finance Corporation** to attract young entrepreneurs in North East region.
 - **North East Tourism Development Council** with the objective to promote **sustainable tourism** in North East India.

North Eastern Development Finance Corporation

- It is a Public Limited Company registered under the Companies Act 1956 in August 1995.
- It provides financial assistance to micro, small, medium and large enterprises for setting up industrial, infrastructure and agri-allied projects in the North Eastern Region of India and also Microfinance through MFI/NGOs.

7.13. HORNBILL FESTIVAL

Why in news?

- **The Hornbill festival** was recently celebrated in **Nagaland** in early December.

Hornbill in India

Nine different species of Hornbill are found in India in:

- Western Ghats: Indian Grey Hornbill, the Malabar Grey Hornbill, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Great Hornbill (state bird of Kerala)
- Narcondam Island: Narcondam Hornbill (Endangered)
- Others in North-East & Himalayan foothills: White-throated Brown Hornbill, Rufous-necked Hornbill (Vulnerable), Wreathed Hornbill, Oriental Pied Hornbill

About The festival

- Named after the Hornbill, a **revered bird** of Nagaland, the festival is known to be a celebration of the indigenous tribes of Nagaland.
- It is organized by the State Tourism and Art & Culture Departments of Nagaland.
- The festival was first celebrated in 2000 and has been celebrated every year since then.
- It is a powerful **presentation of the Naga culture** through traditional music, dance, and sports shows.
- The celebration of the Hornbill festival also coincides with the **Statehood Day of Nagaland**.

7.14. ARANMULA REGATTA

Why in news?

- The annual snakeboat regatta Uthrittathi Vallamkali was held in the river Pampa at Aranmula, Kerala.

About Aranmula Regatta

- The Aranmula Uthrittathi Vallamkali or Aranmula Boat Race is the most ancient and revered boat races of Kerala.
- The snake boats used for this race are called Palliyodams.

Other Boat Races in Kerala

- **Champakulam Moolam (Snake) Boat Race** - This snake boat race is held to mark the pious day when the Krishna idol was mounted in the Shree Krishna Temple of Ambalappuzha region. It is held at Champakkulam Lake, Alleppey.
- **Payippad Boat Race (Jalotsavom)** - This boat race takes place to inaugurate the Prathista ceremony or the installation of the idol of Lord Subramanya at Haripad Subramanya Temple. It takes place at Payippad Lake, Alleppey.

7.15. SADDULA BATHUKAMMA

Why in news?

- About 3500 women from Telangana tried forming the largest number of humans in a flower formation on the eve of Saddula Bathukamma.

About Saddula Bathukamma

- Bathukamma is a state flower festival celebrated by the Hindu women of **Telangana. It is celebrated for nine days during Druga Navratri.**
- The 9-day festivities culminate on "Saddula Bathukamma" festival on Durgashtami.
- This unique festival celebrates the inherent relationship between earth, water and the human beings. During the entire preceding week, women make '**boddemma**' (a deity of **Gowri – mother Durga – made with earthly**

mud) along with Bathukamma and immerse it in the ponds. This helps reinforce the ponds and helps it retain more water.

- Bathukamma is a beautiful flower stack, arranged with different unique seasonal flowers most of them with medicinal values, in seven concentric layers in the shape of temple gopuram. In Telugu, 'Bathukamma' means 'Mother Goddess come Alive' where Goddess Maha Gauri - 'the Life Giver' is worshipped in the form of Bathukamma.

7.16. RAMAKRISHNA MOVEMENT

Why in news?

- The Central government has exempted two organizations namely: **Ramakrishna Mission and Ramakrishna Math to come under EPFO coverage.**

Swami Vivekananda

- He is credited with introducing Indian philosophies of Vedanta and Yoga to the western world as well as raising interfaith awareness, bringing Hinduism to the world stage during the late 19th century.
- His writings and speeches evoked not only agitated mind of Indians but also enkindled love for the motherland. He established motherland as the only deity to be worshiped in the mind and heart of countrymen.
- His speech at Chicago in 1893 established him as the greatest figure in the **Parliament of World Religions** and India as the Mother of religion.

About Ramakrishna Movement

- The Ramakrishna Mission and the Ramakrishna Math form the core of Ramkrishna movement (also known as Vedanta movement)
- The **Ramakrishna Math** was founded by **Ramakrishna Paramhansa**, a priest from Calcutta at **Belur**.
- The **Ramakrishna Mission** was established by **Swami Vivekananda**, the **disciple of Ramakrishna Pramhansa**, in 1897.
- Pramhansa recognized the oneness of all religions and said that there are many ways to God and salvation which was all preached by Swami Vivekananda.

8. HISTORICAL EVENTS

8.1. HISTORY OF INDIAN NAVY

Why in news

In the recent Mann ki baat, Prime Minister talked about the greatness of **navy of Chola kingdom**.

About Chola Navy

- **Sangam literature** has numerous references of voyages and expeditions of the Chola navy.
- Chola Navy was considered one of the strongest navies and played a big role in the expansion of the Chola rule to Sri-Lanka and Malay Peninsula
- They possessed a very rich and sound knowledge of ship building.
- Some of the **important ports** cities of Cholas were Poompuhar/ **Kaveripattinam** (capital), **Arikamedu, Kancheepuram, Nagapattinam** etc.
- A large number of women played leading roles in Chola navy and actively took part in battles.

Fact about Chola Kingdom

- **Administration:** was marked by well-established **local self-government** in villages
- **Status of women:** The practice of 'sati' was prevalent among the royal families. The devadasi system emerged during their period.
- Development of Tamil literature reached its peak during the Chola period.
- **Examples of Dravidian style of art and architecture:** Brihadeshwara Temple (now a UNESCO World Heritage Site), Nagaeshwvara, Airavateshwara temples
- **Bronze statues of Nataraja** or dancing Siva is master piece of the Chola period.

8.2. PAIKA REBELLION

Why in news?

Recently the Minister of Human Resource Development announced that Paika Rebellion will be renamed as "First War of Independence".

History of Paika Bidroha

- The Paika rebellion took place in 1817 in **Khurda, Odisha**.
- Paikas were the **peasant militias of the Gajapati rulers of Odisha** who rendered military service to the king during times of

war while taking up cultivation during times of peace.

- The armies of the East India Company overran Odisha in 1803 after establishing their sway over Bengal Province and Madras Province. The Raja of Khurda lost his primacy and the power and prestige of the Paikas went on a decline.
- But in 1817 Paikas rebelled against the British under the leadership of **Baxi Jagandhu Bidyadhara**, hereditary chief of militia army to throw off the British yoke.
- It ended with the surrender of Jagandbandhu in 1825.
- Chronologically not the first - Even before the Paika rebellion of 1817 there had been Sanyasi revolt in Bengal in early 18th century, Chuar uprisings of Bengal and Bihar from 1766, rebellion by Dewan Velu Thampi of Travancore in 1805 and rebellion of Taluqdars of Aligarh in 1814 to name a few.

8.3. CHAMPARAN SATYAGRAH

Why in news?

- An exhibition titled "**Swachhagraha – Babu Ko Karyanjali – Ek Abhiyan, Ek Pradarshani**" was held in Delhi to mark the 100 years of Satyagraha in Champaran.

About the Champaran Satyagrah

- The **Champaran Satyagrah of 1917** was Mahatma Gandhi's first satyagrah and this satyagrah along with **Kheda Satyagrah of 1918** put Gandhiji as one of the frontrunners of **Indian National Movement**.
- Gandhiji was invited by **Rajkumar Shukla** to look into the problems of the indigo planters of Champaran (Bihar).
- **The peasants were forced to grow indigo on 3/20 of their land under the tinkathia system for their landlords.**
- The price fixed for indigo was too less and was calculated on the basis of cultivated area rather than the crop produced. The peasants were offered to be relieved of the contracts but the compensation to be paid was too much.
- Upon arriving in Champaran, Gandhiji was asked to leave the district at once by the British authorities. Gandhiji defied the orders and maintained resistance.

- His satyagrah resulted in the government setting up a committee to look into the issue and he was offered a seat in it as well.
- Gandhiji was able to convince the authorities that the tinkathia should be done away with and the farmers should be compensated.

8.4. SABARMATI ASHRAM

Why in News?

- The Prime Minister attended the centenary year celebrations of Sabarmati Ashram in Gujarat.

Sabarmati Ashram

- Build by Jivanlal Deshai in 1915, Gandhi ji shifted the ashram on bank of Sabramati in 1917.
- Idea of Ashram emanate from Tolstoy Farm (Phoenix Farm) of South Africa.
- On Gandhiji's return from South Africa, his first Ashram in India was established in the Kochrab area of Ahmedabad in 1915. The Ashram was shifted on the banks of river Sabarmati in 1917.
- The Sabarmati Ashram was also known as Harijan Ashram or Satyagrah Ashram
- When Gandhi started his padayatra (foot march) in 1930 from Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi for the Salt Satyagraha, he had decided not to return to Sabarmati till independence for India was attained.
- In April 1936, Gandhiji established his residence in the village Shegaon which he renamed as Sevagram, which means 'village of service'.
- **Gandhiji lived in this Sevagram ashram till 1946** till he left for Naokhali.

8.5. BENGALI NEWSPAPERS

Why in news?

Governor of West Bengal released a commemorative volume on the two hundred years of Bengali Newspapers.

More about news

- The first newspaper of the country, '**Hicky's Bengal Gazette**' was published from Kolkata in 1780. The paper ceased publication on March 23, 1782. It was published just for two years.
- Till the 80s of the nineteenth century Bengal was the hub of newspaper publication. A

survey of the Indian Language Press by Sir George Campbell in 1876 showed that half of the total number of 38 newspapers was published from Kolkata.

- **Samachar Darpan** was the first newspaper in Bengali language. It was published by Serampore Mission press on May 23, 1818.
- In 1821, a remarkable Bengali journal **Sambad Kaumadi** was published under the patronage of Rammohan Roy.
- **Sambad Pravakar** was the first Bengali daily newspaper published in 1839, patronized by Iswar Chandra Gupta.
- The early Bengali papers took up the cause of the oppressed workers in the indigo plantation, and of the peasants. Notable among them were the **Som Prakash**, the **Grambartha Prakashika** and the **Amrita Bazar Patrika** (before it became an English weekly).
- Other important newspapers include Bengalee (S.N. Banerjee), Hitabadi (Dwijendranath Tagore) and Sanjibani (K.K. Mitra).

8.6. QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT

Why in news?

The nation celebrated 75th Anniversary of the Quit India Movement. Theme of this year's celebration was "Sankalp se Sidhi" urging the people to take a pledge to fight poverty and malnutrition.

Quit India Movement

- In July 1942, Congress Working Committee at **Wardha** passed a resolution to end British Rule in India. It also declared that free India will be against the aggression of Nazism, Fascism and Imperialism.
- Reasons behind the launch of Quit India Movement:
 - **Failure of Cripps Mission** due to lack of British will to address Indian demands.
 - **Public discontent** due to increased wartime disparities such as price rise, shortage of food items etc.
 - Reversals faced by British in South-East Asia enhanced popular willingness to overthrow British rule from India.
 - Britishers' discriminatory behavior against Indian refugees in south-east Asia
- On **August 8, 1942**, Quit India Movement was **launched from Gowalia Tank, Bombay**.



However, all the leader including Mahatma Gandhi, J.L. Nehru, Patel, Azad etc. were arrested.

- The movement saw massive public upsurge and attack on symbols of authority especially in Eastern UP, Bihar and Bengal.
- During the movement
 - Underground activities provided line of command.
 - Parallel government was carried on in Balia, Tamluk and Satara.
 - Participation of youth, women, workers, peasants etc. was seen.

8.7. BATTLE OF KOREGAON

Why in news?

Recently, on the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Koregaon clashes broke out in Maharashtra.

Battle of Koregaon

- It was the last of the Anglo-Maratha battle that took place on 1 January 1818 in Bhima, Koregaon between the troops of Maratha Ruler Baji Rao Peshwa II and the British East India Company (EIC).
- In the battle the EIC represented by majority of **Mahar** soldiers successfully resisted Peshwa troops in which Peshwa lost 600 of his soldiers after which he withdrew and gave up plans to attack Pune.
- British constructed a tower to commemorate victory with an inscription stating, "Accomplished one of the proudest triumphs of the British Army in the East."
- The **Mahars celebrate this day** as the day when they regained their former status of military glory.

- **Mahars** are a caste cluster living mainly in Maharashtra and adjoining states.
- The Mahars, though untouchables, had been valued for their military skills for centuries and formed a significant portion of Shivaji's army.
- However, under the Peshwas they were ill-treated and lost their military glory.
- The Mahar were unified by B R Ambedkar, who urged them to militant political consciousness and to great educational improvement.

More about Anglo-Maratha wars

- **First Anglo-Maratha War (1775-1782)** The first Anglo-Maratha war took place due the British retaliation of the Maratha violation of **Treaty of Purandhar, 1776**. It culminated with **The Treaty of Salbai (1782)** which granted the possession of Salsette to the British while the rest of the territory conquered since Treaty of Purandhar was returned to the Marathas
- **Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803-1805)** – Internal dispute among the Marathas gave yet another opportunity to the British. Bajirao II signed the **Treaty of Bassein (1802)** with the British which gave them strategical benefit. It gave British troops the opportunity to keep English troops permanently Maratha territory
- **Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817-1819)** – British took various actions against the Pindaris (mercenaries in the Maratha army). This united the Maratha confederacy against the British. The Marathas were defeated by the British and various treaties were signed which resulted in dissolution of Maratha confederacy

9. PERSONALITIES

9.1. BASAVESHWARA

Why in news?

- **Basavanna Jayanti or Basava Jayanti** which marks the 884th birth anniversary of **12th century** social reformer **Basaveshwara** was recently celebrated in **Karnataka**.

About Basaveshwara

- He is considered to be the founder of **Lingayatism or Lingayat Sect or Veerashaivism**.
- He stood for the upliftment of the downtrodden and fought the evils that had crept into the Brahmanical Vedic tradition.
- He scripted his practical experiences in a novel form of literature called – **Vachana (poetry)**. The main aim of Vachana (poetry) movement propagated welfare for all.
- He heralded the establishment of **'Kalyana Rajya' (Welfare state)**
- He gave two important and innovative concepts called "Sthavara" and "Jangama", the meaning of which is "Static" and "Dynamic" which are the main foundation stones of the revolutionary ideology of Basavanna.

9.2. SAINT TYAGRAJA

Why in news?

- Recently the 250th birth anniversary of Saint Tyagraja was celebrated.

About Saint Tyagraja

- Saint Tyagraja is one of the principal composers of the Carnatic trinity along with along with Muthuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri.
- Tyagaraja was born in the Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu.
- With the influence of Ramayana, he became an ardent devotee of Lord Rama. He composed about 24000 songs in his life devoted to Lord Ram.
- Tyagaraja Aradhana, a music festival conducted in honour of Tyagraja is organized in Thiruvaiyaru between the months of January and February every year.

Related News

Lingayats want to be categorised as a religious group separate from Hindus.

Though Lingayats worship Shiva, they say the concept of "Ishta Linga" (personal god) and rules of conduct prescribed by Basaveshwara cannot be equated to the Hindu way of life.

Lingayats comprising 10-17% of the State population and are listed in the Other Backward Classes category.

9.3. RAJA RAM MOHAN ROY

Why in news?

Recently, the 245th birth anniversary of Raja Ram Mohan Roy was celebrated.

About Raja Ram Mohan Roy

- Prominent figure behind the socio-cultural awakening of India in the 19th century.
- He is also known as "**Maker of Modern India**", "**Father of Modern India**" and "**Father of the Bengal Renaissance**".
- The title "**Raja**" was given to him by the Mughal emperor Akbar Shah II.
- He fought against **sati, child marriage and the prohibition of widow remarriage**.
- In August 1828, he founded the Brahma Sabha which later came to be known as **Brahmo Samaj**. It was the culmination of his earlier Atmiya Sabha of 1814.
- The Brahma Samaj championed the **worship of one god and brotherhood and interdependence**.
- He wanted to combine the goodness of western ideals and the Indian culture.
- He setup the **Hindu College** in Calcutta in 1822.
- He published in different languages, like - **Sambad Kaumudi and Mirat-ul-Akbar**.

9.4. SRI RAMANUJACHARYA

Why in news?

- The **1000th birth anniversary of Sri Ramanujacharya was observed on May 1, 2017** in Srirangam and Kanchipuram.

Vedanta

The Vedanta school of Hindu philosophy is based on the Vedanta (end of Vedas) or Upanishads.

Other schools of Vedanta Philosophy (apart from Vishishta Advaita) are:

- **Dvaita:** main exponent is **Madhavacharya**. It is the **dualistic** school, according to which universe is divided into two – swatantra (independent being) and partantra (dependent being)
- **Bheda Abheda or Dvaita Advaita:** the founder is **Nimbarka**. It believed in **dualism monism**, i.e., supreme being transforms himself into the souls of world. Thus, soul is different from supreme being and yet cannot exist independently without support.
- **Shudh Advaita:** the founder is **Vallabha**. It believed in **pure monism**, i.e., god is shudh in himself
- **Advaita:** The founder is **Adi Sankaracharya**. It believed in **monism**, i.e., doctrine of oneness of individual soul and supreme god

About Sri Ramanujacharya

- Sri Ramanujacharya was a **Hindu Vaishnava theologian** and philosopher who reinvented and revitalised Hinduism.
- He was born in a Tamil Brahmin Family in the village of Sri Perumbudur village, Tamil Nadu.
- He preached the philosophy known as **Vishishtadvaita or qualified non-dualism**.
- The Visishtadvaita is so called because it inculcates the Advaita or oneness of God, with Vishesha or attributes. It is, therefore, qualified monism.
- The **Visishtadvaita system** is an ancient one was originally expounded by **Bodhayana in 400 B.C.**
- Sri Ramanujacharya wrote a total of 9 philosophical texts in Sanskrit known as **Navagranthas**. Some of them are: **Vedanta Sangraha (commentaries on Vedas), Sri Bhasya (commentaries on Brahma sutras), Bhagavad Gita Bhasya (commentaries on Bhagavad Gita)**.
- Ramanuja provided an intellectual basis for the practice of **Bhakti**.

Bhakti Movement

- Bhakti movement refers to the religious movement during the medieval period which emphasized single-minded devotion to god.
- It originated in South India between 7th and 12th century. It then moved northwards.
- It achieved a great deal of popularity through the poems of the Alvars and Nayanars, the Vaishnavite and Shaivite poets
- It condemned rituals, ceremonies and blind faith.

- It preached open-mindedness about deciding religious matters. It challenged the caste distinction.
- Kabir, Guru Nanak, Mirabai, Surdas and Tulsi Das, Chaitanya are great exponents of Bhakti movement.

Famous Literary Works of Bhakti Proponents

- **Alvars** – Alvars (12saints) were devoted to Vishnu. One of the major anthologies of compositions by the Alvars was **Nalayira Divyaprabandham** (Four Thousand Sacred Compositions). **It is also described as Tamil Veda.**
- **Nayanars** – They were 63 saints who were devoted to Shiva. The compilation of their p[oe]try (tamil literature) into 12 volumes was known as **Tirumurai**. The first seven volumes compile the works of Appar, Sampandhar and Sundara as **Tevaram**.
- **Kabirdas** – He is 15th century poet whose writings influenced the Bhakti movements. His verses are also found in the Guru Granth Sahib. Some of his famous works are compiled in: **Kabir Bijak, Sakhi Granth, Kabir Granthawali and Anurag Sagar**
- **Nanak** – The hymns composed by Nanak along with the works of other religious poets like Baba Farid, Ravidas (also known as Raidas) and Kabir were compiled by Guru Arjan Dev under **Adi Granth Sahib**.
- **Mirabai** – She is known for her bhajans and poems written in praises of Lord Krishna.
- **Tulsidas** – Famous works include **Ramcharitmanas, Vinaya Patrika and Hanuman Chalisa**
- **Chaitanya Mahaprabhu** – He composed the **Siksastakam** (eight devotional prayers) in Sanskrit.

9.5. BABA FARID

Why in news?

- The five-day festival in the memory of Sufi saint Baba Sheikh Farid Ji was celebrated in Faridkot.

Who was Baba Farid?

- Chisti sufi saint **Farid-ud-din Ganj-i-Shakar** was popularly known as Baba Farid.
- **Baba Farid composed verses in Punjabi which were later incorporated in Guru Granth Sahib.**

About the Sufi Movement

- Sufism is an English word coined in the 19th century. The word used for Sufism in Islamic texts is “**tasawwuf**”. Some scholars believe that it is derived from “**suf**” meaning **wool**, referring to the coarse woollen clothes worn by sufis. Others believe that it is derived from **safa** meaning **purity**.
- Sufis were a group of religious-minded people who turned to asceticism and mysticism. They laid emphasis on seeking salvation through intense devotion and love for God. Sufi saints were also known as **faqirs** or **dervishes**.
- Sufism **thrived in India from 10th to 14th century AD**. By 11th century, it evolved into well-developed movement with a body of literature on Quranic studies and Sufi practices.
- Sufi communities were known as **Khanqahs** which was controlled by a **Shaikh (pir or murshid)**. Sufi **Silsilas (lineages)** began to appear in 12th century in various parts of the world.
- When a Shaikh died, his **tomb shrine (dargah)** became the centre of devotion for his follower. This encouraged the practice of **ziyarat (pilgrimage)** for seeking the sufi’s spiritual grace (**barakat**).
- Different sufi orders (Silsilas) that existed in India were Chisti Silsila, Suharwadi Silsila, Naqsbandi and Qadiri Silsila.
- **Chisti Silsila**
 - It was established by **Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti whose dargah is located in Ajmer**.
 - A major feature of Chisti tradition was austerity, including maintaining distance from worldly power. The chisti silsilah conversed in language of the people.
 - Music and dance was used including mystical chants performed by musicians or qawwals to evoke divine ecstasy.
 - Poets like Amir Khusrau and Malik Mohammed Jayasi wrote poems in praise of sufi principles.
 - Some of the famous teachers of Chisti Silsilah (along with their dargah) are **Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki (Delhi)**, **Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya (Delhi)** and **Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh-i Delhi (Delhi)**.

- Sultan Iltutmish built the Qutub Minar as a dedication to his saint, Kawaka Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki.
- **Suharwadi Silsilah**
 - The founder of this Silsilah was Sheikh Shihabuddin Suharwadi. However, it was propagated in India by Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya.
 - Unlike the Chisti saints, the Suharwadi lived a life of wealth and even held important posts under the Delhi Sultanate.
- **Qadiri Silsila**: It was founded by Sheikh Nayamatullah Qadri. One the followers of this Silsila was **Daro shikho** (the eldest son of Shah Jahan).
- **Naqshbandi Silsila**: It flourished during the Mughal period, especially propounded by Baqi Billah. One of the main proponents was Sheikh Ahmad Sihindi who self titled as “Mujeddid Ali Saffani” (reformer of the millennium).

9.6. SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL

Why in news?

- **Rashtriya Ekta Diwas** was observed on the birth anniversary of **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel** on 31st October. It is being observed so since 2014.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

- Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel played a key role in the freedom movement.
- He was deeply influenced by Gandhiji’s ideology and joined the freedom struggle in 1917 after meeting Gandhiji.
- He got the title of “Sardar” after he led a massive “No Tax Campaign” in 1918 in Gujarat that forced the British authorities to return the land taken away from the farmers.
- **Nagpur Flag Satyagraha**- When Gandhi was in prison, Patel was asked by Members of Congress to lead the Satyagraha in Nagpur in 1923 against a law banning the raising of the Indian flag.
- **Borsad Punitive Tax Satyagraha**- Satyagraha under leadership of Gandhiji to protest against unfair increment in the land revenues imposed on the people by settlement-revision officers. Sardar Patel took part in this Satayagraha

- He also led Bardoli Satyagraha against 'tax-hike' in 1928.
- After independence, **he was crucial in integration of over 500 princely states into the Indian Union.**
- He is also referred to as the **"Iron Man"** for his uncompromising resolve of consolidation of India.

9.7. BIRSA MUNDA

Why in news?

- Birsa Munda Jayanti is celebrated on the birth anniversary of the tribal leader.

About Birsa Munda (popularly known as Dharti Abba)

- Born on November 15, 1875, he belonged to the **Munda tribe of the Chotanagpur Plateau.**
- Birsa Munda was a young freedom fighter and tribal leader who spearheaded the Millenarian Movement. His spirit of activism in the late 19th century is remembered to be a strong mark of protest against British Rule in India.
- He converted to Christianity but upon realising the efforts of the missionaries to convert tribals to Christianity, Birsa started the faith of **'Birsait'**. **He was rendered as God by the people.**
- Members of the Oraon and Munda community started joining the Birsait sect challenging the British conversion activities.
- He also helped the tribal community uproot superstition, stop animal sacrifice and avoid alcoholism.
- Despite having a short life, Birsa is known to have mobilized the tribal community against the land settlement system imposed by the British. It forced the British to introduce **Chotanagpur Tenancy Act protecting the land rights of the tribals eight years after his death.**
- He is the only tribal leader whose portrait hangs in the Parliament's Central Hall.

9.8. ANASUYA SARABHAI

Why in news?

- Google celebrated the 132nd birth anniversary of Anasuya Sarabhai with a doodle.

About Anansuya Sarabhai

- She is known as India's first female union leader. She founded India's oldest union of textile workers the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association (Majadoor Mahajan Sangh) in 1920.
- She was born in a wealthy family of Ahmedabad. She was orphaned at a young age and was forced to marry at just 12. However, she escaped and went on study at the London School of Economics.
- In London, she was influenced by the Fabian Society and new ideas concerning equality and got involved with the protests of women demanding right to vote.
- Upon returning to India, she got involved with plight of mill workers, against the 36-hour shifts. In 1914, she helped the weavers organise their first strike for huge wages.
- She was also involved in the formation of **Self-Employed Women's Association of India** in 1972.

Other Prominent Women Involved in India's Freedom Struggle

- **Rani Lakshmi Bai** – She was one of the leading warriors of India's first war of Independence (1857). She protested against the "Doctrine of Lapse" and refused to give up Jhansi.
- **Begum Hazrat Mahal** – Also known as the Begum of Awadh, she played a major role in the rebellion of 1857.
- **Savitribhai Phule** – She played an important role in improving women's rights during British rule. She along with her husband founded the first women's school at BhideWadai in Pune in 1848. Apart from women's rights, she also worked against the abolition of caste-based discrimination.
- **Sarojini Naidu** – She was the first woman President of Indian National Congress and also the first woman governor of an Indian state (United Province). She played a pivotal role in India's Civil Disobedience Movement. She is also known for her literary works.
- **Aruna Asaf Ali** – She is remembered for unfurling the Indian National Congress flag at the Gowalia Tank Maidan in Bombay at the scheduled time, thus initiating the commencement of the Quit India Movement. She is popularly known as Grand Old Lady of Independence.

- **Madam Bhikaji Cama** – She has the unique distinction of unfurling the first Indian National Flag designed by her in Stuttgart, Germany in 1907. She is regarded as the “Mother of Indian Revolution”. She also started the journal “Bande Mataram” to spread her revolutionary thought. She served as private secretary to Dadabhai Naoroji
- **Annie Besant** – She established the Home Rule League in 1916 and she is also one of the founders of Banaras Hindu University.

She also started newspapers New India & Commonweal and created tremendous enthusiasm among the people through her speeches and writings.

- **Usha Mehta** – She was one of the youngest freedom fighters of Indian freedom movement. She participated in “Simon Go Back” at the young age of 8. She is also credited with the Secret Congress Radio which was underground radio operative during Quit India Movement.

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10. GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

10.1. SCHEMES OF MINISTRY OF TOURISM

10.1.1. SWADESH DARSHAN

- Ministry of Tourism (MoT) launched the Swadesh Darshan Scheme for **integrated development of theme-based tourist circuits in the country in 2014-15**
- This scheme is envisioned to synergise with other Government of India schemes like **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Skill India, Make in India** etc. with the idea of positioning the tourism sector as a major engine for job creation, driving force for economic growth, building synergy with various sectors to enable tourism to realise its potential.
- Under the scheme, 15 thematic circuits have been identified, for development namely: **North-East India Circuit, Buddhist Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Krishna Circuit, Desert Circuit, Tribal Circuit, Eco Circuit, Wildlife Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Ramayana Circuit, Heritage Circuit, Trithankar circuit and Sufi circuit.**

10.1.2. SPECIAL TOURISM ZONE

Why in news?

- The Maharashtra government Junnar taluka in Pune district as a 'special tourism zone'. It not only houses Chhatrapati Shivaji's birth place — Shivneri fort — but also seven other historical forts and over 350 caves.

About Special Tourism Zones

- Creation of 'Special Tourism Zones' anchored on **Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs)** in partnership with the States was announced in the Budget for 2017-18.
- Creation of Special Tourism Zones would lead to overall development of the areas and offer diverse tourism experiences which would help in creating livelihood and improve standards of local communities living in those areas.

10.1.3. PARYATAN PARV

Why in news?

Recently, Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with other Central Ministries, State Governments and Stakeholders organized Paryatan Parv.

About Paryatan Parv

- It was organized from 5th October to 25th October with the objective of drawing focus on the **benefit of tourism**, showcasing **cultural diversity** and reinforcing the principle of "**Tourism for all**".
- The programme focused on encouraging Indians to explore their own country (**Dekho Apna Desh**). Tourism events such as interactive sessions and workshops on skill development and innovation in the sector would be conducted across all states.

10.1.4. ADOPT A HERITAGE SCHEME

Why in news?

Recently seven companies were chosen for conservation of fourteen monuments under 'Adopt a Heritage Scheme'.

Details of Adopt a heritage Scheme/ Apni Dharohar Apni Pehchan Project

- It is a scheme of **Ministry of Tourism** in collaboration with Ministry of Culture and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
- Under this Private Sector Companies, Public Sector Companies and Corporate individuals are invited to adopt the heritage sites.
- They would be called "**Monument Mitras**" and activities taken up by would be counted as a CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) initiative.
- It envisages **developing monuments, heritage and tourist sites** across India and making them tourist friendly to enhance their tourism potential and cultural importance to make them more sustainable.

10.1.5. ICONIC TOURIST SITES PROJECT

Why in news?

- The Ministry of Tourism has identified 12 sites for development under the Iconic Tourist Sites Project.

About the Iconic Tourist Sites Project

- The development of prominent tourist sites into iconic tourist destinations was announced in Union Budget 2018-19.
- The sites were identified based on the criteria of footfall, regional

distribution, potential for development and ease of implementation.

- The 12 sites that have been identified are: Taj Mahal, Fatehpur Sikri, Ajanta Caves, Ellora Caves, Humayun's Tomb, Qutub Minar, Red Fort, Colva Beach, Amer Fort, Somnath, Dholavira, Khajuraho, Hampi, Mahabalipuram, Kaziranga, Kumarakom, Mahabodhi Temple.

10.1.6. PRASAD SCHEME

Why in news?

- The parliamentary standing committee on transport, tourism and culture has referred to the tourism ministry's flagship Prasad scheme as one whose conceptualisation is "radically wrong".

About PRASAD Scheme

- Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spirituality Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) was launched in 2015.
- It was to identify and develop pilgrimage tourist destinations on the principles of high tourist visits, competitiveness and sustainability to enrich the religious tourism experience.
- Originally 12 cities were selected for the same but it was increased to 25.

10.2. SCHEMES OF MINISTRY OF CULTURE

10.2.1. NATIONAL MISSION ON CULTURAL MAPPING AND ROADMAP

Why in news?

- The Government of India has launched the implementation of **National Mission on Cultural Mapping of India from Mathura district**.

About National Mission on Cultural Mapping and Roadmap

- The mission falls under **Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat**. The Mission seeks to open a direct channel of communication of artists with the Government and peer to peer communication among artists for talent honing and handholding of each other.
- The main **objectives** of the mission are as follows:

- Establish the **cultural mapping (i.e. database of cultural assets and resources)** via running nationwide cultural awareness programme called **Hamari Sanskriti Hamari Pahchan Abhiyan** for the development of all art forms and artists. This Abhiyan will take care of their aspirations & needs by providing a robust mechanism under "Design for Desire and Dream" project.
- The Mission will run the Abhiyan also by arranging "**Sanskritik Pratibha Khoj Samaroh Din**" at various levels of this project
- Establish a **National Cultural Working Place (NCWP) portal** for obtaining information, knowledge sharing, participation, performance and awards in the field of all art forms.

About the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat

- The Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat programme was launched in 2016.
- It aims to actively enhance interaction between people of diverse cultures living in different States and UTs in India, with the objective of promoting greater mutual understanding amongst them.
- As per the programme, each year, every State/UT would be paired with another State/UT in India for reciprocal interaction between the people.
- It is envisaged through this exchange, that the knowledge of the language, culture, traditions and practices of different states will lead to an enhanced understanding and bonding between one another, thereby strengthening the unity and integrity of India.

10.3. OTHER GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

10.3.1. SWACHH ICONIC PLACE

Why in news?

Meenakshi Sundareshwarar Temple in Madurai has been adjudged the best 'Swachh Iconic Place' (clean place) in India.

Meenakshi Sundareshwar Temple, Tamilnadu

- The current structure of temple was built in 1623-1655 AD by **Nayaka rulers** of Madurai though its history can be traced to 6th century BC Pandyan rule in ancient city of Madurai.
- The temple is dedicated to **Parvati**, known as

Meenakshi, and her consort, **Shiva**, here named Sundareswarar.

- The temple is a masterpiece of Dravidian architecture with a **temple tank**, large **Vimana**, 14 **Gopurams** and **Mandapam** with 1000 Pillars.

More about the news

- The Swachh Iconic Places is an initiative under the Swachh Bharat Mission.
- The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation will be the coordinating Ministry for this initiative, in association with the Ministry of Urban Development, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Tourism and the concerned State governments.
- Under **Swachh Iconic place** Initiative government will undertake a special clean-up initiative focused on 100 iconic heritages, spiritual and cultural places in the country.
- All Iconic Sites have designated PSUs for financial and technical support.

10.3.2. NATIONAL ZONAL CULTURAL CENTRES

Why in news?

Recently Eastern Zonal Cultural Centres has organised various fests such as National Theatre Fest, Bharat Utsav, National Mime festival etc.

About Zonal Cultural Centres

- The Government of India has setup seven Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs) with an aim to protect, preserve & promote various forms of traditional art and folk art throughout the country
- ZCCs have been implementing a host of schemes viz.
 - **Award to Young Talented Artistes:** to promote young talented artistes in the age group of 18-31 years in the field of various folk-art forms which are rare and at the verge of extinct. Under this scheme, competitions are conducted in various states and awards are given to winners.
 - **Guru Shishya Prampara Scheme:** to preserve and promote rare and vanishing art forms whether classical or folk/tribal so that the young talents be nurtured to acquire skills in their chosen field of art through some financial assistance in the form of scholarship under the guidance of Experts and Masters in these fields.
 - **Shilpgram Scheme:** Shilpgram/Kalagram are centres which promotes and

preserves the Indian Art & Culture by providing training and a platform to young talented artisans.

- **National Cultural Exchange Programme:** Under this scheme, artists from different zones get the opportunity to showcase their talent in other zones.

10.3.3. PROMOTION OF TRADITIONAL SPORTS

Why in news?

Sports Authority of India (SAI) has revamped the **Khelo India** proposal to include the exclusive component "**Promotion of Rural, Indigenous and Tribal Game**" for promotion of rural and indigenous games.

More on news

- Sports is a state subject and the responsibility of development and promotion of sports falls on state government.
- SAI promoted **Indigenous Games and Martial Arts** (IGMAs) are as follows:
 - **Kalaripayatu** – It is a martial art form which originated in Kerala, originally from northern and central parts of Kerala and southern Tamil Nadu.
 - **Silambam** – It is a weapon based martial art practised in Tamil Nadu. Bamboo staff is used as weapon.
 - **Archery** - It is a sport from Jharkhand in which a bow and arrow are used. Traditionally Archery was practised for hunting and recreational purposes.
 - **Kabaddi** – This is a team sport in which two teams compete to remain outnumbered till the end. This game is widely played in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra.
 - **Malkhamb** – This traditional sport is a combination of acrobatics and aerial yoga. It is performed on a wooden pole and the player demonstrates wrestling grip throughout the performance.
 - **Mukna** – It is a form of folk wrestling from Manipur.
 - **Thangta** – It is a martial art form from Manipur and traditionally known as Huyel Langlon.
 - **Khomlainai** – It is a martial art performed by the Bodo community in Assam.
 - **Gatka** – It is a traditional combat training of Punjab in which wooden sticks are used to simulate swords.

10.3.4. AADI MAHOTSAV

Why in news?

- Aadi Mahotsav (Tribal festival), celebration of the spirit of Tribal Culture, Craft, Cuisine and Commerce was held in Chandigarh. Prior to this, it was held in Delhi.

About Aadi Mahotsav

- It is a joint initiative of **The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED), Ministry of Tribal Affairs and North Zone Cultural Centre.**
- The Aadi Mahotsav gave tribal artisan an opportunity to showcase and sell their products. It also an effort to take tribal commerce to the next level of digital and electronic transactions.
- A special scheme to provide loans from National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC) was also introduced.

About TRIFED

- TRIFED came into existence in 1987. It is a national-level apex organization functioning under the administrative control of **Ministry of Tribal Affairs.**
- The ultimate objective of TRIFED is socio-economic

development of tribal people in the country by way of marketing development of the tribal products

10.3.5. DEEN DAYAL SPARSH YOJANA

Why in news?

- Recently, government launched SPARSH Yojana to increase reach of Philately.

Philately - It includes seeking, locating, acquiring, organizing, cataloguing, displaying, storing, and maintaining the stamps or related products on thematic areas.

Scholarship for Promotion of Aptitude & Research in Stamps as a Hobby-SPARSH Yojana

- It is a pan India scheme launched by the government to increase the collection and study of postal stamps.
- There is a component of annual scholarship for rewarding meritorious students pursuing Philately as a hobby.
- The Concerned schools would also be provided with Philately mentor to **guide the young philatelists** in order to pursue their hobby and projects.

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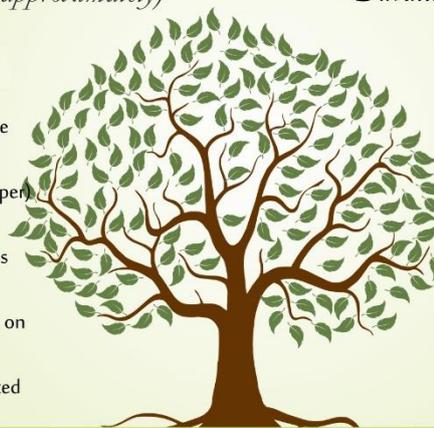
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11. MISCELLANEOUS

11.1. MONCOES DO REINO

- Under a new agreement to promote cooperation in the field of archiving, Portugal has handed over a collection of documents known as 'Moncoes do Reino' (Monsoon correspondence) to India.
- The collection consists of direct correspondence from Lisbon to Goa and documents trade rivalries with the Arabs and European powers and their relations with neighboring kings in South Asia and East Asia.

11.2. INTACH TO DOCUMENT HERITAGE SITES ALONG MAHANADI RIVER

Why in news?

- **Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH)** has launched a programme for **documentation of the tangible and intangible heritage sites along both sides of Mahanadi river.**

INTACH

- The **Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH)** was founded in 1984 in New Delhi with the vision to spearhead heritage awareness and conservation in India. It is registered as a society.

About the Programme

- It will cover about 1000 kilometers on both sides of the river Mahanadi.
- Both tangible and intangible heritage will be covered and important heritage structures will be photographed and videographed.
- It will be a roadmap for conservation workers, historians, students and researchers.

11.3. INDIRA GANDHI PRIZE

Why in news?

- Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will receive the Indira Gandhi Prize for peace, disarmament and development 2017 for his leadership of the country between 2004 and 2014 and enhancing India's stature globally.

About the Award

- The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development 2017 is awarded by the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust. It was constituted in 1986.
- The prize is accorded annually to individuals or organisations in recognition of creative efforts toward promoting international peace, development and a new international economic order, ensuring that scientific discoveries are used for the larger good of humanity, and enlarging the scope of freedom.
- The last two recipients of the award have been the Indian Space Research Organisation and the UN High Commission for Refugees.

11.4. ICOMOS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Why in news?

- The 19th ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) General Assembly hosted by the Indian National Committee on ICOMOS concluded in New Delhi in December 2017.

About the Symposium

- The theme of the symposium was **"Heritage and Democracy"**.
- The 'Delhi Declaration on Heritage and Democracy' passed in the assembly emphasized the understanding that people's perspective is central to heritage.
- It further reinforced that heritage is a fundamental right and responsibility of all and Development Initiatives should include conservation objectives and ensure that the significance, authenticity and the values of a heritage resource are protected.
- The declaration said that ensuring continuity of living heritage is a prerequisite for sustainable development and legislative protection of heritage is the responsibility of all levels of government.

About ICOMOS

- ICOMOS works for the conservation and protection of cultural heritage places. It is the only global non-government organisation of this kind, which is dedicated to promoting the

application of theory, methodology, and scientific techniques to the conservation of the architectural and archaeological heritage.

- Its work is based on the principles enshrined in the 1964 International Charter on the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (the Venice Charter).

11.5. PRASAR BHARTI

Why in news?

- Public broadcaster Prasar Bharti has rejected a range of directives coming from the information and Broadcasting Ministry.

About Prasar Bharati

- It is a statutory autonomous body established under the Prasar Bharati Act. It came into existence in 1997.
- It is a Public Service Broadcaster of the country. The objectives of Public Service Broadcasting are achieved through Doordarshan and All India radio.
- Prior to Prasar Bharti, AIR and DD were working as media units under the Ministry of I&B.

11.6. SABRIMALA

Why in news?

- **Travancore Devaswom Board** has made a request to declare **Sabrimala as a national pilgrimage centre.**

About Sabrimala

- Sabarimala is a Hindu pilgrimage centre located at the **Periyar Tiger Reserve in the Western Ghat mountain ranges of Pathanamthitta District, Perunad grama panchayat in Kerala.**
- It is one of the largest annual pilgrimages in the world, with an estimated over 100 million devotees visiting every year.
- The shrine at Sabarimala is an ancient temple of **Ayyappan also known as sasta and Dharmasasta.**
- The temple is open for worship only during the days of Mandalapooja (approximately 15 November to 26 December), Makaravilakku or "Makara Sankranti" (14 January) and Maha Vishuva Sankranti (14 April), and the first five days of each Malayalam month.

11.7. INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON CIVILISATION

Why in news?

Recently, fourth International dialogue on Civilisation was conducted in New Delhi.

About the Dialogue of Civilisation

- Dialogue of Civilisation was initiated by **National Geographic society in 2013** to encourage studies about five ancient, literate civilisations of the world

South Asian Civilisation

- Developed on the banks of **river Indus and its tributaries.**
- Began to flourish during the Chalcolithic period.
- Most important South Asian civilisation was **Harappan Civilisation.**
- The civilisation had
 - Elaborate **city planning** with two sections Citadel & Lower Town
 - Cities in **parallelogramic** form, grid system
 - **Underground planned** drainage with inspection holes
 - A well-established economy based on trade
 - Advanced agriculture, pottery making, seal making.
 - They worshipped **Pasupati and mother goddess**
 - Believed in life after death and had elaborate burial procedure
 - Large-scale use of burnt bricks – **absence of stone buildings**

Mesopotamian Civilisation

- Formed on the banks of **Tigris and Euphrates** in present day Iran and Kuwait.
- Began during the **Neolithic Period of around 12000BCE**
- Important Mesopotamian civilisation included **Sumerian, Assyrian, Akkadian, and Babylonian civilizations.** According to evidences, civilisation used technology, had established religion, literature, legal codes, philosophy and had external trade relations.

Chinese Civilisation

- Developed on the banks of **Yellow river** in 3rd and 2nd millennia BCE and **Yangtze River** before 5000 BCE. (Neolithic Era)
- They **worshipped nature**.

Mesoamerican Civilisation

- Flourished in parts of **Mexico and Central America** in about **21000BCE**.

Egyptian civilisation

- Flourished in ancient Northeastern Africa along the banks of River Nile.

11.8. GI TAG

Why in news?

- Recently, Geographical Indications (GI) have been granted to various things such as Banganapalle Mango, Bandar Laddu, Mamallapuram stone sculptures and Etikoppaka toys

About Stone sculptures of Mamallapuram

- **Exquisite rock-sculpting techniques** exhibited in Mahabalipuram/ Mahabalipuram date back to early 7th century during the period of **Pallavas**.
- It includes cave architecture, rock architecture, structural temples, open sculptures, relief sculptures and painting/portrait sculptures.
- Male and female sculptures symbolise perfection in terms of beauty.
- It is **characterised** by a wide forehead, sharp nose, long eyes, hanging ears and oval shaped face, usually with double chins.
- Mamallapuram sculptors still use **hammer-and-chisel technique** for carving and follow the time-consuming process enunciated in various **Shilpa Shastras**.
- Mamallapuram was named after the famous title of Narasimhavarma Pallava in the mid-seventh century.

About Etikoppaka toys (Etikoppaka Bommalu)

- These toys are made in **Etikoppaka region of Andhra Pradesh** and are painted with non-toxic natural dyes.
- The toys are unique in shape & material used.
- They are made from the **soft wood of Ankudi Karra (Wrightia tinctoria) tree**
- The 400-year-old art of making such toys is known as **Turned Wood Lacquer Craft**.

11.9. MISCELLANEOUS TITBITS

- **Falun Gong**, the ancient Chinese holistic system that is banned in China, was celebrated in India. Falun Gong combines exercises (meditation, slow-moving exercises, regulated breathing etc.) with moral and spiritual teachings.
- **Kathakar International Storytellers Festival** was held recently. It is the only oral storytelling festival in India and is a part of **Ghummakkad Narain** - the Travelling Literature Festival which was started under the aegis of **UNESCO** in 2010.
- **World Cities Cultural Forum (WCCF) - Mumbai** became the first Indian city to be a member of WCCF recently. WCCF is the biggest forum of global network which provides a platform for 33 cities to share their culture, data-driven research and intelligence while exploring the vital role and impact of culture in future prosperity.
- **Gomira Dance**, a mask dance of West Bengal has its roots in Shaktism and the worship of Adya Shakti (primordial energy). Its dancers are male which portray many characters: male, female and animal.

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