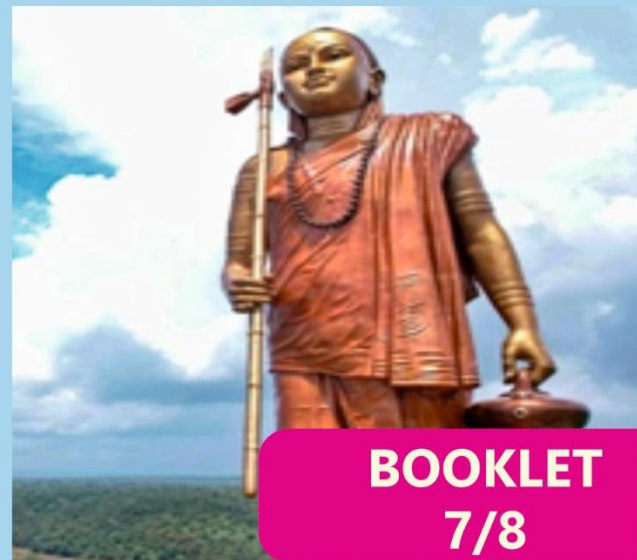


**ART & CULTURE  
MISCELLANEOUS  
PRELIMS SPECIAL**

**KSG**

An Institute For **IAS** Exam...

**2024**



**BOOKLET  
7/8**

# **YEARLY COMPILATION**

**(MAY 2023 - DECEMBER 2023)**

**Jan to April 2024 will be released in mid May**

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## IMPORTANT PERSONALITIES

### Shree Narayana Guru

#### News Excerpt:

Recently, the Prime Minister has paid tributes to Shree Narayana Guru on his Jayanti.

#### About Shree Narayana Guru:

- Shree Narayana Guru (1856-1928) was a **saint, philosopher, spiritual leader, and social reformer from Kerala**.
- He was born in 1856, near Thiruvananthapuram into a family of the **Ezhava caste** which was regarded as Avarna in the caste-ridden society of Kerala.
- He expressed this idea in his famous Malayalam saying, **"One caste, one religion, one god for humanity."**
- He sought to end the oppression of people in lower castes, emphasizing education and spiritual growth as means of uplifting them.
- He founded many schools and temples that were open to people of all castes.
- He demonstrated **a path to social emancipation without invoking the dualism of the oppressed and the oppressor**.
  - He was instrumental in setting the spiritual foundations for social reform in Kerala and was one of the most successful social reformers to revolt against caste system in India.
  - His philosophy always advocated social equality, education for all, and spiritual enlightenment.
- In 1903, he established the **Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP)** as the founder and president.
- Sree Narayana Guru played an influential role in the famous Vaikom Satyagraha movement against caste discrimination and untouchability.
  - The **Sivagiri pilgrimage** was established in 1924 by him to promote the virtues of cleanliness, education, devotion, agriculture, handicrafts, and trade.

### Alluri Sitarama Raju

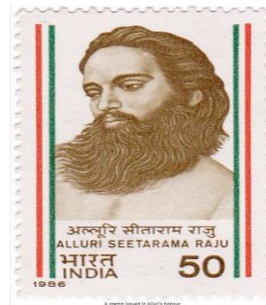
#### News Excerpt:

The year-long **125<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary celebration** of legendary freedom fighter **Alluri Sitarama Raju** was celebrated in **Bhimavaram, Andhra Pradesh**. A 30 feet tall

bronze statue on the occasion was also unveiled by Honourable PM.

#### Alluri Sitarama Raju:

- Alluri Sitarama Raju was **born on 04 July 1897**, in a village called Mogallu near Bhimavaram in Andhra Pradesh.
- Raju completed his initial years of schooling in his native village and then shifted to Visakhapatnam for his higher studies.
- By the **age of eighteen**, he renounced all worldly pleasures and became a sanyasi.
- The **tribals regarded him as a mystic** who would rescue them from British authorities.



#### Evolution of Methods for Fighting Britishers:

- Initially, Sitarama Raju, under the influence of **Gandhiji's Non-cooperation movement**, inspired the tribals to seek justice in the local panchayat courts and boycott the colonial courts.
- However, these steps did **not alleviate their suffering** and eventually, he used this movement to spread awareness about the need for change.
- In August 1922, he launched what is now known as the **Rampa Rebellion** against the British.

#### Manyam or Rampa Rebellion (1922-1924)

- Manyam, or the Rampa rebellion, was a tribal revolt led by Alluri Sitarama Raju in the **Rampa regions** of present-day **Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh**.
- The uprising was **against the exploitative British policies** and oppressive forest laws that threatened the lives of tribes in the region.
- The tribes followed the **'Podu' system of cultivation**, whereby every year some amounts of forest tracts were cleared for cultivation, as it was their only source of food.
- **The Madras Forest Act, 1882** was passed restricting the free movement of the tribal communities and prohibiting them from engaging in their traditional Podu agricultural system.
- **The rebellion** was started by looting police stations in Chintapalli, Krishnadevipet, and Rajavommangi by 500 tribals under Raju on August 22, 23, and 24, respectively.

- The tribal masses showed wholehearted participation throughout the rebellion under Raju, who prepared them and spread the **ideals of the non-cooperation movement and Swaraj** in the hills.
- British retaliation forced the rebels to start **guerilla warfare**, which lasted for two years. The government imposed **martial law and punitive taxes** on the villagers, exerting pressure on them to end the rebellion.
- Meanwhile, the British continued inflicting misery on the tribals. In a bid to alleviate their suffering, Sitarama **Raju surrendered**, with the expectation that he would be given a fair trial in return.
- However, on **07 May 1924**, he was treacherously trapped, tied to a tree, and **shot dead**. He was cremated on 08 May, thus marking the **end of his glorious fight** against the British Government.

## Ram Prasad Bismil

### News Excerpt:

Recently on 11th June, Ram Prasad Bismil's 126th birth anniversary celebrated.

### Early life:

- He was born on June 11, 1897, in **Shahjahanpur district** of the **United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh)**.
- He joined the Arya Samaj and became a prolific writer and poet, penning patriotic verses in Hindi and Urdu under pen names like '**Agyat**', '**Ram**', and the one that is most known – '**Bismil**.'
- At the age of only 18, he penned the poem **Mera Janm (My Birth)**, venting out his anger over the death sentence handed out to Arya Samaj missionary **Bhai Parmanand**.

### Revolutionary life:

- He is one of India's most revered freedom fighters, known as much for his revolutionary zeal as for his poetic profundity.
- Fighting against the British Raj, he was involved in the **Mainpuri Conspiracy of 1918** as well as the more **famous Kakori Train Action of 1925**.
- He founded the **Hindustan Republican Association (HRA, later Hindustan Socialist Republican Association)** and was hanged for his revolutionary activities in 1927.
- Ram Prasad Bismil has also become a **symbol of communal harmony** due to his close friendship with fellow revolutionary poet **Ashfaqullah Khan**.

- In his last letter, written just before his hanging, Bismil made an enduring call for Hindu-Muslim unity in the service of the nation.
- After an eighteen-month long trial for their involvement in the **Kakori train action**, **Bismil, Ashfaqullah** and **Rajendranath Lahiri** were sentenced to **death**.
- The sentence was carried out on December 19, 1927. Ram Prasad Bismil was just 30 years old when he died.
- His ideals of freedom struggle stood in stark contrast to that of Mahatma Gandhi and he would reportedly say "**independence would not be achieved by means of non-violence**".

## Rani Durgavati

### News Excerpt:

Madhya Pradesh government launched the six-day Rani Durgavati Gaurav Yatra and marked June 24 as a day of sacrifice, when the queen is believed to have died while fighting the Mughals in the mid-16th century.

### About Rani Durgavati:



- Rani Durgavati was born in **1524** in **Chandela dynasty of Mahoba**. The region comes under present-day Uttar Pradesh.
- Chandelas were known for building the famous **Khajuraho temples**.
- She married **Dalpat Shah**, the son of the **Gond King Sangram Shah** of the kingdom of **Garha-Katanga** which is noted as one of the most powerful kingdoms of the **Gond tribe**.
- Durgavati was widowed in 1550 and her young son Bir Narayan presided over the throne, and she ruled the country as his regent.

### The Mughal attack on Garha-Katanga:

- The painting by Beohar Rammanohar Sinha shows Durgavati preparing for a battle with the Mughals in Narhi.
- The period of the mid-16th century witnessed early Mughal expansion in India under Akbar.
- During her reign, **Durgavati fought with Baz Bahadur**, the sultan of the neighbouring **Malwa**

who was **eventually defeated by Akbar**, but the frequent battles continued even after the takeover.

- Mughals fortified the area and overwhelmed the Gonds. While fighting them in battle, she was struck by two arrows, and it is believed she stabbed herself with her dagger to not surrender to the Mughal forces.

## Shilabhatarika

### News Excerpt:

Researchers at India's **Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute in Pune** decrypted **copper plates** that revealed Shilabhatarika was the daughter of the **Chalukyan ruler Pulakeshin II**.

### About Shilabhatarika:

- Shilabhatarika was an Indian **Sanskrit poet** who lived in the **ninth century**.
- She lived in the **Narmada Valley**, near the **Vindhya Mountains**.
- Medieval Sanskrit literary writers appreciated her poetic abilities.
- It is thought that she is related to **Shilamahadevi**, the queen of **Rashtrakuta monarch Dhruv** in the eighth century.
- She was the daughter of **Chalukya ruler Pulakeshin II**, according to current study.

### Literary works:

- Shilabhatarika is known to have composed at least 46 poems on a variety of subjects, including love, morality, politics, nature, beauty, the seasons, insects, rage, indignation, rules of conduct, and the characteristics of many types of heroines.
- Shilabhatarika is regarded as a pivotal character in the **Panchali literary style**, which strives for "**a balance between words and meaning.**"
- The **Panchali style**, according to Rajashekhara, can be found in the works of Shilabhatarika and probably in some of the works of the 7th-century poet Bana.
- A 14th-century anthology, **Sharangadhara-paddhati**, celebrates her and three other female poets for their exceptional literary genius and erudition.
- "**Toch chandramanabhat**" (it is the same moon in the sky), one of the most iconic songs by noted Marathi poetess Shanta Shelke, is inspired by Shilabhatarika's words.

## Ramanujacharya

### News Excerpt:

Recently, on 25<sup>th</sup> April, 1006<sup>th</sup> Birth anniversary of Ramanujacharya was celebrated.



### About

### Ramanujacharya:

- Ramanuja, also known as Ramanujacharya, was an Indian Hindu philosopher and social reformer.
- **He was born in 1017 in Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu.**
- He is noted to be one of the most important exponents of the **Sri Vaishnavism tradition within Hinduism**.
- **Ramanuja** was originally known as **Lakshmana** but later came to be known as Ramanuja.
- He played a major role towards **Vaishnavism tradition and Bhakti movement**.
- Ramanujacharya was always **against discrimination**, and he revolted against discrimination on the basis of caste and even helped the people to follow the Vaishnavism and Bhakti movement.
- His major works are:
  - **Vedartha Sangraha, Sri Bhashya and Bhagwat Gita Bhashya**
- He was **deeply influenced** by the **Alvars**.
- He propounded the **doctrine of Vishishtadvaita or qualified oneness** in that the soul even when united with the Supreme God remained distinct.
- He is considered to be the inspiration for poets like **Annamacharya, Bhakt Ramdas, Thyagaraja, Kabir, and Meerabai**.
- Ramanuja is also credited with establishing the correct procedures for rituals performed in temples throughout India, the most famous being **Tirumala and Srirangam**.
- He took education to those who were deprived of it. His greatest contribution is the propagation of the concept of "**vasudhaiva kutumbakam**", which translates as "**all the universe is one family**".
- He travelled across India for several decades, propagating his ideas of social equality and universal brotherhood from temple podiums.
  - He embraced the socially marginalized and condemned and asked royal courts to treat them as equals.

- He spoke about universal salvation through devotion to God, compassion, humility, equality, and mutual respect, which is known as **Sri Vaishnavam Sampradaya**.

## Adi Shankaracharya

### News Excerpt:

Madhya Pradesh CM unveiled the 108-foot-tall '**Statue of Oneness**' or 'Ekatmata ki Murti' of Adi Shankaracharya at Omkareshwar on Mandhata Island.



### About the statue:

- The multi-metal statue is installed atop Mandhata Parvat hill, facing southwards towards the Narmada River.
- It stands atop a 54-feet pedestal, supported by a 27-feet lotus petal base made of red stone.
- At the base of the statue is the Shankar Stambh, which features wooden domes and stone pillars with "carvings depicting 32 stories related to Acharya Shankar.

### About Adi Shankaracharya:

- Adi Shankara is believed to have lived between **788 and 820 AD**.
- He was born in Kerela's Kaladi, situated on the bank of the **Periyar River**.
- He was one of the most influential philosophers of India.
- He advocated **Advaita**, or the **doctrine of the oneness of the individual soul and the Supreme God**, which is the **Ultimate Reality**.
- He became a sanyasi at an early age, left his Brahmin household and made his way to Omkareshwar.
- Here, he studied under his guru **Govinda Bhagavatpada**, and soon became a proponent of **Advaita Vedanta**, challenging prevailing philosophical traditions – including **Buddhism and Jainism**.
  - **Advaita Vedanta** is a school of Hindu Philosophy that teaches **non-duality**, or the absence of separation between the subject and object.
- Shankaracharya believes that the Brahman is real, the world is unreal, and the individual self is non-different from Brahman.
- His Hinduism does not see God as external to the universe, and both are indivisible.

- **Literature:** He authored as many as 116 books in just 32 years of lifespan.



- The most notable are the **commentaries** or bhashyas on the 10 Upanishads, the Brahma Sutra, and the Bhagavad Gita.
- **Introductory texts** like – Vivekachudamani, Upadeshasasri, Atma Bodhi and **Stotras** like – Nirvana Shatakam, Bhaja Govindam.
- He composed grand benedictions to Puranic gods: Shiva (Daksinamurti-stotra), Vishnu (Govinda-ashtaka) and Shakti (Saundarya-lahari).
- Shankara is said to have **founded four monasteries (maths) at Shringeri (south), Puri (east), Dwaraka (west), and Jyotirmath (north)**, probably following the Buddhist monastery (vihara) system.

**Doctrine of Oneness** is a philosophical and spiritual idea that suggests a fundamental unity or interconnectedness underlying all of existence.

### About Vedanta:

- Vedanta was described by **Badrayan** in Brahma Sutra but popularized by Adi Shankaracharya.
- It referred to the end of the Vedas with an emphasis on the Upanishads. Therefore, it is also known as '**Uttara Mimansa**' or '**Jnana Mimansa**' (Study of knowledge).
- It says that every action must be guided by the intellect, whether right or wrong.
- According to Vedanta, all religions lead to the same goal.
- **This school believes in Karma and rebirth or Punarjanama**. It states that Brahma is real and everything else is unreal (maya).
- The school is sub-divided as

- **Advaita** (non-dualism, i.e., Brahma without non-dualism) by Adi Shankaracharya,
- **Achintya Bhedabheda** by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (difference and non-difference),
- **Suddhadvaita** by Vallabhacharya (pure non-dualism),
- **Tattvavada** (Dvaita) by Madhavacharya (dualism), and
- **Vishishtadvaita** by Ramanuja (qualified non-dualism, i.e., Brahma with attributes).
- Modern developments in Vedanta include the establishment of **Neo-Vedanta** and the **Swaminarayan Sampradaya**.

## Shri Ramalinga Swamy

### News Excerpt:

PM addressed the 200th birth anniversary of Shri Ramalinga Swamy, also known as 'Vallalar.'

### About Shri Ramalinga Swamy:

- He was born in the village of **Marudhur (Tamil Nadu)**.
- He was a prominent Tamil poet in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and a member of the "**gnana siddhars**" lineage.

### His Contribution towards Society:

- He recognized **divinity in every atom of the universe**, transcending religion, caste, and creed barriers. Hence, he was strongly against the caste system and initiated the 'Samarasa Vedha Sanmarga Sangam' in 1865, later renamed '**Samarasa Suddha Sanmarga Sathya Sangam**.'
- He also established '**Sathya Dharma Salai**,' a free food facility in Vadalur, Tamil Nadu 1867, serving all people without caste distinctions.

### His Philosophy and preaching:

- **Compassion for living beings:** According to Suddha Sanmarga, the prime aspects of human life should be love, connected with charity and divine practice, leading to pure knowledge.
  - He believed that the intelligence possessed by humans is illusory (**Maya**) intelligence and not accurate or final; hence he preached to emphasize "**Jeeva Karunyam**" (**Compassion for living beings**) as the path of final intelligence.
  - He forbade killing animals for food and advocated feeding the poor as the highest form of worship.

- **Mercy is a path to God:** He also believed that God in the form of Grace is the personification of Mercy and Knowledge. His primary teaching was "Service to Living Beings is the path of Liberation/Moksha."

## Saint Mirabai

### News Excerpt:

During **525th birth anniversary of Sant Mirabai**, Indian PM unveiled a **commemorative stamp and coin** as a tribute to poet-saint.

### About Mirabai:

- Mirabai was born in **1498** in the Kudki region of **Marwar state**, now known as the **Pali district of Rajasthan**, in the **Rajput royal family**.
- She was **married to the Prince of Mewar, Bhoj Raj**. After his death, she left the luxurious life and embarked on her spiritual journey.
- Mirabai became a **disciple of Ravidas**, a saint from a caste considered "untouchable".
- Mirabai is well known for her fond love towards **Lord Krishna**.
- She composed innumerable bhajans expressing her intense devotion. Her songs openly challenged the norms of the "upper" castes and became popular with the masses in Rajasthan and Gujarat.
- She advocated for social issues like **inequality prevailing due to birth, poverty, age, and sex**.
- Her most famous **song is 'Payoji Maine Naam Ratan Dhan Payo.'** and she is also mentioned in **Bhaktamal, written by Nabha Dass**.

## Samarth Ramdas

### News Excerpt:

**Samarth Ramdas**, a prominent figure in Indian history, was a saint, philosopher, and social reformer who made significant contributions to society during the 17th century.

### Early Life and Spiritual Journey:

- Samarth Ramdas, originally named **Narayan Suryaji Thosar**, was born in Jamb, **Maharashtra**, in **1608**.
- From a young age, he displayed an inclination towards spirituality and a deep longing for spiritual knowledge. He renounced his family and worldly possessions at the age of 11 and embarked on a spiritual quest.
- His teachings, writings, and reforms continue to inspire generations and have left an indelible impact on Indian society.

- Under the tutelage of **Guru Ramdas**, Samarth Ramdas received spiritual training and imbibed the teachings of the Bhakti movement, emphasizing devotion to God and the principles of social equality.

**Teachings and Philosophy:**

- Samarth Ramdas' teachings were grounded in the belief that true spirituality lies in the service of humanity. He emphasized the importance of **moral values, righteousness, and compassion**.
- He advocated for the eradication of social evils and the upliftment of the marginalized sections of society.

**Literary Contributions:**

- Samarth Ramdas penned several literary works that continue to inspire and guide people.
- His most renowned composition is the "**Dasbodh**," a spiritual treatise in Marathi that contains profound insights into various aspects of life, including self-realization, ethics, and social responsibility.
- His other notable works include "**ManacheShlok**" and "**Karunashtak**."

**Guru Teg Bahadur**

**News Excerpt:**

The Prime Minister recalled the martyrdom of **Guru Teg Bahadur (1621-1675)**, calling the **ninth Sikh Guru** a beacon of courage and strength.

**About Guru Tegh Bahadur:**

- Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621- 1675) was born as **Tyaga Mal**.
- He came to be known by the name **Teg Bahadur (Mighty of The Sword)**, given to him by his father, **Guru Hargobind Sahib (Sixth Guru)**, after he showed his bravery in a battle against the Mughals.
- He was the ninth of ten Gurus of the Sikh religion.

**His contribution towards society:**

- He built the city of **Anandpur Sahib**, which is located in the **Ropar district** (bordering Shivalik Hills and Sutlej River) in Punjab.
  - Here the last two Sikh Gurus lived and Guru Gobind Singh Ji founded the **Khalsa Panth** in **1699**.
- He is remembered for giving up his life for freedom of religion as he was resistant to the forceful conversions of '**Kashmiri Pandits**' and '**non-Muslims**' to Islam during Aurangzeb's reign.

- Due to this, he was publicly beheaded on **November 24, 1675**, on the orders of **Mughal emperor Aurangzeb** in Delhi for refusing to convert to Islam.
- This day is observed as the '**Shaheedi Divas**' of Guru Tegh Bahadur. **Even though there is still confusion about the date.**
- **Gurudwara Sis Ganj Sahib** (Chandni Chawk, Delhi) marks the place of his execution.
- He contributed over **100 poetic hymns to Granth Sahib**, covering various topics, such as the nature of God, human attachments, body, mind, dignity, service, etc.

**FAIRS AND FESTIVALS**

**Literary festival 'Unmesha**

**News Excerpt:**

President inaugurated the three-day international literary festival '**Unmesha 2023**' in **Bhopal**. **It is Asia's largest literature festival** in terms of the **number of languages represented**.

**About:**

- The **Sahitya Akademi, Union Ministry of Culture, and Madhya Pradesh Culture Department** jointly organised this festival. This was the second edition of 'Unmesha'.
  - **Sahitya Akademi** is an autonomous organization working under the **Ministry of Culture**, Government of India, to promote literature in the 24 languages it has recognized, including Indian English, and in the tribal and oral traditions of the country.

**Utkarsh**

**News Excerpt:**

The President of India inaugurated the **national festival of India's folk and tribal expressions** (performing arts) "**Utkarsh**".

**About Utkarsh:**

- The **Culture Department of Madhya Pradesh** along with **Sangeet Natak Akademi** organized this event.
- Folk and tribal dances of 12 states of the country were presented on the day.
  - **Mayur Raas** of **Uttar Pradesh, Aji Lamu (Monpa tribe) of Arunachal Pradesh, Phag of Haryana, Kalbeliya of**



Rajasthan, Natua dance of West Bengal, Kargattam of Tamil Nadu, Puja Kunitha of Karnataka, and Sirmauri Nati from Himachal Pradesh dance were the major attraction.

#### Sangeet Natak Akademi:

- It is the apex body in the field of **performing arts** in the country.
- It was set up in **1953** for the **preservation and promotion of the vast intangible heritage of India's diverse culture** expressed in forms of music, dance, and drama. It is an autonomous body of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

### Changpa Tribal Annual Festival

#### News Excerpt:

The Ministry of Home Affairs has **lifted restrictions** on foreign tourists from attending the Changpa festival of Hanle (Ladakh).

#### About Changpa Festival:

- The festival promotes the **art, craft, food, and culture** of the local **Changpa tribe**, and is aimed at offering a platform to the nomadic population to **sell their wares** to tourists.
- It is organised annually by the **Ladakh Art Culture and Languages Academy**.
- Till now, foreign tourists were allowed only till **Nyoma**, situated about 57 kms from Hanle. Even Indian tourists are required to take **inner line permits (ILP)** to visit these areas.
- Inner Line Permit (ILP) is an **official travel document** issued by the Government of India to **allow inward travel** of an **Indian citizen** into a protected area for a limited period.

### Lord Jagannath's 'Rath Yatra'

#### News Excerpt:

Recently, Ratha Yatra, also known as the Gundicha Yatra or chariot festival of **Lord Jagannath, Devi Subhadra**, and **Lord Balabhadra**, was celebrated.

#### About Lord Jagannath's Rath yatra:

- As per the Odia calendar, this festival is celebrated on the **second day of Shukla Paksha of ashadha month**.
- Lakhs of devotees from the state, as well as every part of the country, travel to the **city of Puri**, to catch a glimpse of the three deities, Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, and Devi Subhadra as they are carried in ornate **chariots (made**

## Jagannath Temple

The Jagannath Temple at Puri is one of the most revered Vaishnava sites of worship in India.

It was constructed by a famous king of Ganga Dynasty Ananta Varman Chodaganga Deva dating back to 12th century at the seashore part.

The main temple of Shri Jagannath an impressing and amazing structure constructed in Kalinga architecture, with a height of 65 meters placed on an elevated platform.

Shri Jagannath Puri Temple is one of the most impressing monuments of the Indian State Odisha.

**from neem wood**) called Rathes which are pulled by the devotees.

- The auspicious festival begins with the Snana Yatra where the three deities are washed thoroughly in **Ganges water**. This is followed by the Anasara period where the deities are laid to 'rest'.
  - Thereafter, deities are carried to the **Gundicha Temple** where they reside for about eight to nine days. Afterwards they return to their temple through a procession known as **Bahuda Yatra**.

### First Janjatiya Khel Mahotsav

#### News Excerpt:

Recently, the first Janjatiya Khel Mahotsav was concluded with **Odisha** emerging as the overall **champions** in both the **men's** and **women's** categories.

#### Janjatiya Khel Mahotsav:

- The grand sporting event was jointly hosted by the **Ministry of Culture** and the **Odisha Government** in collaboration with **KIIT University**.
- The **first edition** attracted the participation of 5,000 tribal athletes and 1,000 officials from 26 states.
- In the event, **Karnataka emerged as the 1st runners-up** and Jharkhand as the 2nd runners-up overall.

## Kharchi Puja 2023

### News Excerpt:

Kharchi Puja, also called the '**Festival of 14 Gods**', is observed on the eighth day of the new moon in July or August every year in **Tripura**.



### About:

- The festival is centred around the worship of **Chaturdasa Devata**, the ancestral deity of the Tripuri people.
- The word '**Kharchi**' is derived from two Tripuri words '**khar**' or **kharta** meaning **sin** and '**chi**' or **si** meaning **cleaning**.
- It is believed that the **Mother Goddess or Tripura Sundari**, the presiding deity of the land who protects the people of Tripura, **menstruates** during the time of **Ambubachi**, which is observed in **June**.
- There is a popular belief that the Earth becomes impure during the menstruation period of the Goddess.
- Hence, Kharchi Puja is observed to **ritualistically clean the Earth** after her menstruation is over and wash away the sins of the people in the land.

## Banni Festival

### News Excerpt:

Banni festival was recently celebrated in **Andhra Pradesh**.



### About:

- Banni is an ancient custom that was celebrated under the **Vijayanagara Empire**.
- It involves mock fights for capturing idols during the **Dussehra** (Vijayadashami) festival.

- In this practice, villagers gather with sticks and clash with one another on the sidelines of the main festival.
- The idols of Parvati (**Mamma**) and Shiva (**Malleswara Swamy**) at Mala Malleswara Swamy temple located in **Kurnool district** (Andhra Pradesh) are brought down to the foot of the hill.
- Some devotees form a security ring, while others try to capture them. The procession, led by farmers, symbolizes the **killing of demons** by Mala-Malleswara (Shiva).
- Despite a Supreme Court **ban**, locals continue the tradition.

## Arattu Festival

### News Excerpt:

The 'Arattu' festival was celebrated at the Sree Padmanabha Swamy Temple in Thiruvananthapuram.

### About Arattu Festival:



- The word Arattu means **holy bath**. As the name suggests, the festival is about the sacred bath of the idol of **Lord Padmanabha**.
- It is celebrated for **ten days** in different temples of **Kerala**.
- The festival is celebrated **twice a year** in the spring season in **March or April** and in the autumn season in **October or November**.
- The Arattu Festival is also celebrated at the Sree Krishnaswamy Temple at Ambalapuzha.

## Chhath Puja: A Holy Festival of Bihar

### News Excerpt:

President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi led political leaders wishing people for Chhath Puja on November 19.

### About Chhath Puja:

- For centuries, the Chhath festival has been celebrated in **Bihar and some parts of eastern Uttar Pradesh and Nepal**, making it much more visible across the country.



- Almost all civilisations have worshipped the 'God Sun', but it has a unique form in Bihar Chhath Puja, the only occasion where the **setting sun is worshipped along with the rising sun.**
- According to the Hindu calendar, Chhath Puja is celebrated on the **sixth day of Kartik month.**
- Chhath Puja, also known as **Surya Shashti**, is a **bathing festival followed by a four-day period of abstinence and ritual purity.**

## Mysuru Dashara

### News Excerpt:

Music director Hamsalekha inaugurated the 414th **Mysuru Dasara** festival in Karnataka.

### About the Mysuru Dasara Festival:

- Mysore Dasara, also known as '**Naada Habba**', is the **state festival of Karnataka**. It is a **10-day festival**, starting with nine nights called Navratri and the last day being Vijayadashami.
- The festival is observed on the tenth day in the Hindu calendar month of Ashvina.
- It was the day in the Hindu legends when **Goddess Chamundeshwari (Durga)** killed the demon **Mahishasura**. (Got the city name 'Mysuru' from 'Mahishasura')

### History of the festival:

- The Dasara festival in Mysuru completed its **414th anniversary** in the year 2023, which was first observed in Karnataka state by the **Vijayanagara Empire kings in the 15th century.**
- **From the diaries of Foreign Travelers:** The Italian traveller **Niccolo de Conti** described the festival's intensity and importance as a grandeur, religious and martial event with royal support.
  - However, after the fall of the Vijayanagar to the Deccan Sultanates, these Hindu celebrations **ended during Muslim rulers.**
- The **Wodeyars of Mysore** formed a kingdom in the Southern parts of the

Vijayanagara Empire. They continued the Mahanavami (Dasara) festival celebration, a **tradition started initially by Raja Wodeyar I (1578-1617 CE) in mid-September 1610 at Srirangapatnam.**

## Hornbill Festival 2023

### News Excerpt:

**U.S.A., Germany, and Colombia** were the **partner countries** for the **Hornbill Festival 2023.**

### About the Hornbill Festival:

- Hornbill Festival is specifically celebrated on '**Nagaland Statehood Day**' (**December 1**), which continues for about 10 days.
- It is known as the "**festival of all festivals**," which is usually celebrated in Nagaland during December every year.
- It is held at **Naga Heritage Village, Kisama.**
- Associated Tribes: **Angami, Ao, Chakhesang, Chang, Dimasa Kachari, Garo, Khiamniungan, Konyak, Kuki, Lotha, Phom, Pochury, Rengma, Sangtam, Sumi, Yumchungru, and Zeliang.**
- **Aim:** To revive and protect the rich culture of Nagaland and display its extravaganza and traditions.
- The festival gets its name from the Indian Hornbill, which is a bird among the folklores and tribes of Nagaland and can be commonly seen prancing around in the forests of Nagaland.

### About Great Hornbill:

- **IUCN status: Vulnerable.**
  - **Other Hornbill species found in India:**
    - Rufous-Necked Hornbill (Aceros nipalensis): Vulnerable status
    - Wreathed Hornbill (Rhyticeros Undulatus): Vulnerable status
- **Location:** The great hornbill is native to the forests of **India, Bhutan, Nepal, mainland Southeast Asia** and **Sumatra**. Its distribution is fragmented in the **Western Ghats** and the **foothills of the Himalayas.**
- **Its Social Relation:** In Nagaland's indigenous traditions, the Great Indian Hornbill is considered sacred.
  - It is also known as the '**farmer of the forest**' as it helps conserve ecological balance and habitats.
  - It is predominantly **frugivorous** (predominantly feeding on fruits) but

also preys on small mammals, reptiles, and birds.

- The great hornbill is long-lived, living for nearly 50 years in captivity.

## Kambala Festival

### News Excerpt:

The Namma Kambala **buffalo race** is making its debut in **Bengaluru** this year.



### About:

- Kambala is a traditional folk sport of **buffalo race** events popular in **coastal Karnataka districts**
- Kambala is derived from 'gampa kala,' where gampa refers to **wet mud or slush**. It is performed on **two parallel racetracks** filled with slushy water.
- **History:** The **Hoysala Kings began the event** to see if buffaloes could be taught and used in battle. The Hoysalas were astounded by the buffaloes' speed and began racing them against one another.
- Between November and March, the Kambala season typically **begins after the southwest monsoon**, after the **tilling season** and **before seedling planting**.
- **Major Events:** Over 45 villages in coastal Karnataka celebrate the Kambala race yearly.

### Legality of the Kambala Festival:

- Animal Welfare Organizations have criticized the sport, claiming it involves **animal cruelty**.
- The celebration of Kambala was stopped in Karnataka based on an order of the **Supreme Court dated May 7, 2014**.
- After the Tamil Nadu government used an ordinance to **legalize Jallikattu in 2017**, the State Government of Karnataka was forced to pass an ordinance **legalizing Kambala in 2017**.
- **The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Karnataka Second Amendment) Act, 2017**,

now **allows** it to be done with limits to prevent animal cruelty.

- The present edition in Bengaluru is part of an **effort to popularise it** among the **urban community** and promote it for Indian buffalo breed conservation.

## PAINTINGS, DANCE & OTHER ART FORMS:

### Pichwai Painting

#### News Excerpt:

Chennai hosts an **art exhibit** showcasing Pichwai paintings.



#### About the Pichwai painting:

- Pichwai is a traditional style of **painting** from **Rajasthan** and usually depicts **Lord Krishna** and related stories. They show various moods of Krishna and are executed in the **miniature style**.
- The history of this art form can be traced back to the 17th century from Nathdwara in Rajasthan.
- This unique word Pichwai comes from the Sanskrit words, '**pitch**' meaning back and '**wais**' meaning hanging. It therefore means traditional paintings are hanging behind the idol of Shrinathji.
  - Other **themes** are also portrayed, such as the **map** of the **Nathdwara temple**, and **cows** (as symbols of Lord Krishna) among others and not very often, are also created on **paper**.
- The paintings are **made of cloth** and are used as a **backdrop** to the idol in the temple.
- The classic styles are generally made with **natural colours** and even natural brushes. The base is mostly **red** woven with **yellow** or any bright-coloured embroidery. Some of the paintings are filled with **pure gold**.

## Mewar School of Painting

### News Excerpt:

Recently, the artists tried to unravel the mystery behind the man who illustrated the epic with 4,000



paintings, done in the Mewari miniature style, which is now with the Government Museum in Udaipur.

### About Mewar school of painting:

- The Mewar School of Painting, also known as the Udaipur School of Painting, is one of the prominent schools of Rajput painting that emerged in the **Mewar region of Rajasthan**.
- This school flourished under the patronage of the **Rajput rulers** of Mewar, particularly during the **17th to 19th centuries**.
- Its emergence is linked to an early dated set of **Ragamala paintings**.
  - During the later part of the seventeenth century, artists within the Rajasthani school of painting progressed to incorporate texts such as **Harivamsha** and **Sursagar (Puranas)** into their works.
- Artists from Mewar School are biased towards reds and yellows as a **bright colour palette** is their topmost preference.
- Furthermore, Mewar paintings stood out from the others in terms of secular and courtly ambience around the **eighteenth century**.
- **Subjects associated with paintings: Flamboyant court scenes, hunting expeditions, festivals, zenana activities, and sports.**

## Mesolithic-Era rock paintings

### News Excerpt:

Recently, A Mesolithic period rock painting depicting a **person tilling a piece of land** has been found in Orvakallu village in **Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh**.

### Mesolithic period rock painting:

- It was found by D. Kanna Babu, former Superintending Archaeologist of the Temple

Survey Project (Southern Region) of the Archaeological Survey of India, Chennai.

- While surveying the **lower River Krishna Valley** to ascertain the architectural features of shrines, he identified a new prehistoric rock painting on the walls and ceiling of natural rock shelters on a hillock at **Orvakallu**.
- After an intensive exploration, it was noticed that these were shelters for prehistoric humans who lived at this place.
- Among these five naturally formed caves, two are embellished with distinguished depictions of rock paintings on the back walls and ceilings executed by people of Mesolithic Age, roughly [from] 5000 BC.

### About painting:



- The paintings were made with "**natural white kaolin and red ochre pigments**", as well as that most of them had been "**badly damaged**" due to exposure to "**air and wind**".
  - **Ochre** is a pigment composed of **clay, sand, and ferric oxide**.
  - **Kaolinite** is a **soft, earthy, and usually white mineral** produced by the chemical weathering of **aluminium silicate minerals like feldspar**.
- One of the paintings depicted a **man catching wild goat** with his left hand while wielding a hook-like implement to control it. Another showed **two couples standing with their hands raised** while a **child stood behind them**.
- Earlier, in **2018**, archaeologists had uncovered prehistoric rock art estimated to be from the **Neolithic era**, circa 1500-2000 BC, on natural limestone formations near **Dachepalli in Guntur district**.

## Vajra Mushti Kalaga

### News Excerpt:

A martial art form Vajra Mushti Kalaga, that takes place during the **Vijaydashmi festival in Mysore, Karnataka** is **facing terminal decline**.

### About Vajra Mushti Kalaga:

- It is a unique Indian martial art that incorporates various techniques of hand-to-hand combat like **grappling, wrestling, and striking**.
- It makes use of a **knuckle duster**, a **small metal weapon** (usually made of **animal horns**) hence it is called a '**Vajra Mushti**' (**Thunderbolt Fist**).
- The objective behind the celebration of martial art is to neutralize the opponent and counter his weapon.
- **History:**
  - This form of martial art finds its evidence from the **Vijayanagara Empire** reigned between the 14th and the 17th centuries.
  - The **Medieval Era Portugal travellers** had noticed this form of wrestling during the Navratri days in the Vijayanagar Empire and have left detailed accounts of it in their writings.

### Garba Dance

#### News Excerpt:

Gujarat's folk dance 'Garba' was included in **UNESCO's** list of **Intangible Cultural Heritage**.

#### About Garba:



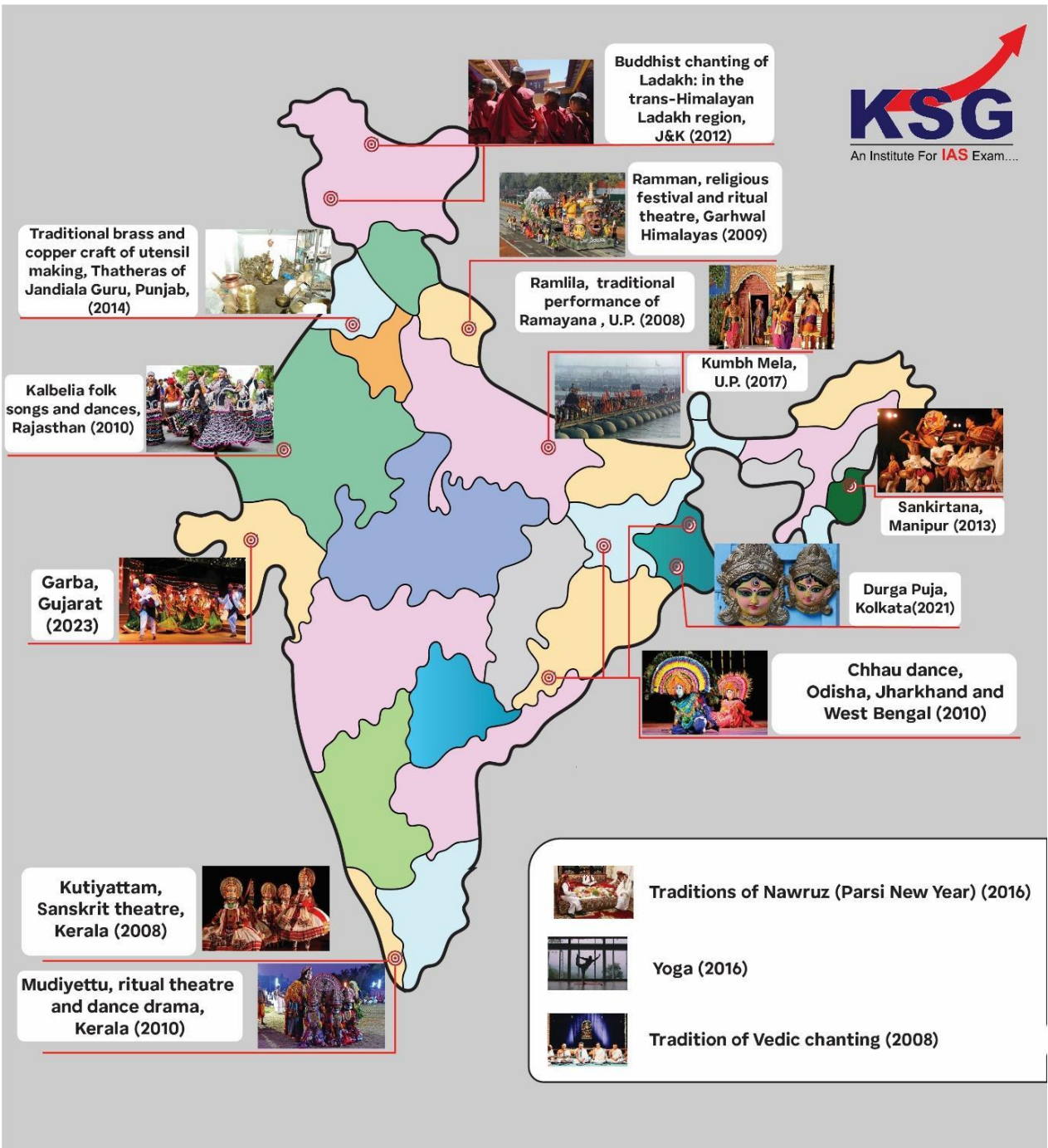
- It is a traditional Indian folk dance that honours, worships, and celebrates the **feminine form of divinity**.
- Garba originated in **villages of Gujarat** and is usually associated with **Gujarati folk music**.
- It symbolizes **celebration, devotion, gender inclusivity, and social equality, transcending boundaries**.
- Garba is celebrated for **nine days during the festival of Navaratri**, which is dedicated to the worship of Shakti.

### About the News:

- **Through its intergovernmental committee, UNESCO's 2003 convention** on Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage recognized '**Garba of Gujarat**' during its **18th session in Botswana**.
- Garba is now India's **15th heritage** on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. It described the 'Garba' as a **ritualistic and devotional dance** performed throughout the State of Gujarat and across India.

### About UNESCO:

- The **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** was born on **November 16, 1945**.
- **UNESCO** has **195 Members** and **8 Associate Members** and is governed by the General Conference and the Executive Board.
- **UNESCO's mission** is to contribute to building a culture of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development, and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication, and information.
- **Previous Indian inclusions** in the prestigious list include:
  - **Durga Puja in Kolkata (2021)**
  - **Kumbh Mela (2017)**
  - **Yoga (2016)**
- **UNESCO's 2003 convention:**
  - The **Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage** is a UNESCO treaty adopted by the **UNESCO General Conference on October 17, 2003**.
  - The convention **entered into force in 2006**.
  - The list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity of the 2003 UNESCO Convention currently has some **704 elements** corresponding to **5 regions and 143 countries**.
  - The **Purposes** of this Convention are:
    - To safeguard the intangible cultural heritage.
    - To ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage of the communities, groups, and Individuals concerned.



**Buddhist chanting of Ladakh:** in the trans-Himalayan Ladakh region, J&K (2012)

**Ramman,** religious festival and ritual theatre, Garhwal Himalayas (2009)

**Ramlila,** traditional performance of Ramayana, U.P. (2008)

**Kumbh Mela,** U.P. (2017)

**Sankirtana,** Manipur (2013)

**Durga Puja,** Kolkata (2021)

**Chhau dance,** Odisha, Jharkhand and West Bengal (2010)

**Traditions of Nawruz (Parsi New Year)** (2016)

**Yoga** (2016)

**Tradition of Vedic chanting** (2008)

**Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making, Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab,** (2014)

**Kalbelia folk songs and dances,** Rajasthan (2010)

**Garba, Gujarat** (2023)

**Kutiyattam, Sanskrit theatre, Kerala** (2008)

**Mudiyettu, ritual theatre and dance drama, Kerala** (2010)

- To raise awareness at the local, national, and international levels of the importance of the Intangible cultural heritage and of ensuring mutual appreciation thereof.
- To provide international cooperation and assistance.

## ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE

### Martand Sun temple

**About:**

- This Kashmiri Hindu temple is one of the most elegant structures ever built in India.
- Temple was built during **725 – 756 AD** under the **Karkota dynasty king Lalitaditya**.
- The eighth-century temple was said to have been **destroyed** during the rule of **Sikandar Shah Miri** between **1389 and 1413**.
- In Sanskrit, Martand is another name for the Sun God within Hinduism.

- The structure was constructed of **limestone** and the entire complex had been built on the top of a plateau **near Anantnag in Kashmir**.

**The architecture of Martand Sun temple:**

- The architecture of the Martand Sun temple is comprised of the **Gandharan, Gupta, Roman, Chinese, Syrian – Byzantine** and **Greek** designs.



- Entrance was adorned by elaborate and intricate carvings of the Hindu Deities.
- Main shrine had smaller antechamber which was decorated with the beautiful intricate carvings of Lord Vishnu, goddess Ganga and Yamuna and the ultimate Sun God, Surya.
- In order to magnetize the aura of the place, Martand Sun temple was surrounded by some 84 small shrines as well during that time.

**Temples that inspired the Design of the Old Indian Parliament building**

**News Excerpt:**

The uniqueness of the **Chausath Yogini temple** and its circular shape is said to have inspired the design of the old Indian Parliament, though there is no historical



proof for this.

**About Old Parliament Building - "temple of the Indian democracy":**

- The current British-era structure was designed by **Sir Edwin Lutyens** and **Herbert Baker**, the architects who planned and built much of New Delhi
- Most notable in the design of the Parliament are the **144 columns**.

- Indian touches in the architecture include the use of **fountains, balconies and marble lattice screens**. The building is surrounded by **large gardens**, and the **perimeter is fenced off** by sandstone railings.

**About Chausath Yogini Temple:**

- The Chausath Yogini Temple is in **Morena district's Mitawali village, near Gwalior**.
- It is believed to have been built by **Kachchhapaghata King Devapala (1055 – 1075 AD)**.
- The central shrine of the temple is dedicated to **Lord Shiva**. There are **slab coverings** here that have perforations to drain rainwater.
- The **64 small chambers** in its interior are said to be dedicated to **64 yoginis**.

**Similarities between both structures:**

- They are both circular in design structure with **pillars lining their outer walls** and a **central chamber**.
- However, due to the lack of evidence, historians, and archaeologists remain skeptical.

**Thirunelli Temple**

**News Excerpt:**

The **Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH)** has urged the government to conserve the historically significant **600-year-old 'Vilakkumadom'**, an exquisite **granite structure**, at the **SreeMahavishnu Temple** at Thirunelli.

**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.

INTACH's mission to conserve heritage is based on the belief that living in harmony with heritage enhances the quality of life.

INTACH is recognized as one of the world's largest heritage organizations, with over 190 Chapters across the Country.

It is Headquartered in New Delhi.

INTACH has pioneered the conservation and preservation of not just our natural and built heritage but intangible heritage as well.



### About Thirunelli Temple:

- It is one of the most ancient temples in **Kerala**. It is believed that here **the prathishta of Lord Vishnu** was performed **by Lord Brahma**.
- It is also known as '**SahyamalaKshetram**' and the '**Kashi of the South**'.
- It draws pilgrims from all over, primarily for ancestral rites.
- The rituals are performed on the banks of the stream **Papanasini** which flows down from **Mount Brahmagiri**.
  - It is believed that this stream has divine power to dissolve sins of all the mortals.
  - Another major attraction of the temple is the holy rock where people pray for their forefathers.
- It is the only temple in the world where the devotees can perform all the rituals related to one's life, starting from birth to death and life after death.

### Dogra Architecture

#### News Excerpt:

The Jammu and Kashmir administration and the **Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH)** are collaborating to preserve Dogra Architecture.

#### About Dogra Architecture style:

- Dogra Hindu kings introduced architectural elements in **Kashmir** between **1846 and 1947**.
- **Key features: collonaded walkways, decorative pilasters, exposed moulded brickwork, dome-topped arch terraces and "mehraab" style doorways.**
- **Mubarakmandi** was the centre of Dogra culture. The **domes** at Mubarakmandi illustrate how shikhara and dome styles can coexist.
- **Bahu Fort, Jasrotra Palace, and Billawar Palace** are some other examples of the Dogra style. The **local sandstones** and **pebbles** are utilized in the construction.
- The **Rajput monarchs** of Jammu executed and studied the **Jharokha style** of the balcony, which was **inspired** by the Rajasthani style of architecture.
- The **12th century** saw the creation of **Krimchi temples in Udhampur**, which combined Jammu architecture with **Hellenistic** building styles.
- **Purmandal**, a holy site for Hindus, was established by Gulab Singh.

### Temple Caves discovered in Ratnagiri.

#### News Excerpt:

Two rock cut Shaivite temple caves have been discovered in **Ratnagiri, Maharashtra**.

#### About Shaivite Temple Caves:

- These were created about **5 or 6 century CE**, near **Bondla Wildlife Sanctuary, Rajapur, Ratnagiri**, about 380 km from **Mumbai**.
  - **Ratnagiri** is also famous for the **Ratnagiri caves**.
- The **Shiva linga** forms an integral part of the cave that has a **rectangular entrance**.
- These are **older** than the **Elephanta caves and are the type of monolithic rock-cut caves**.
- Such Shaivite caves are **also found in Ellora Caves**.

#### About Elephanta Caves:

- The Elephanta Caves are located in **Western India** on **Elephanta Island (otherwise known as the Island of Gharapuri)** about **11 km northeast of the Apollo Bandar, Mumbai**.
- The island is named after a colossal elephant found on the island, which is popularly known as '**Gharapuri**'.
- These archaeological remains reveal evidence of occupation from **as early as the 2nd century BC**.
- The rock cut Elephanta Caves were constructed around the **mid-5th to 6th centuries AD**.
- The Elephanta Caves are protected primarily by the **Archaeological Survey of India**.

#### Gundala-Veerlavagu Valley:

- A rock bruising dating back to the Neolithic period was found in **Palnadu district** in the **coastal Andhra Pradesh**.
- It was discovered during the survey as a part of a heritage awareness campaign titled '**Preserve Heritage for Posterity**'.
- **Vaishnavite temples** dating back to the Kakatiya period (**13th Century CE**) were also found on the right side of **Veerula Vagu (deep and narrow gorge)**.
- A few megalithic burials called **cairn circles** dating back to around **1,000 BCE** were also found.

- **Remains of bricks** and potsherds called **redware** of the **Satavahana era** (1st century CE) were also found.

## Mahabalipuram Shore Temple to be India's First Green Energy Archaeological Site

### News Excerpt:

Shore Temple in Mamallapuram has attained the distinction of becoming India's first **Green Energy Archaeological Site**.

### About Shore Temple:

- It is a historic temple complex located in Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu.
- It is **dedicated to Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu**.
- It was probably built during the reign of **Narasimhavarman II**, also known as **Rajasimha (Pallava ruler)**, who reigned from **700 to 728 CE**.
- Shore Temple is one of the **oldest structural (rock-cut) stone temples** at Mahabalipuram, on the **Coromandel Coast of Tamil Nadu** in South India.
- The Mamallapuram monuments and temples, including the Shore Temple complex, were collectively designated a **UNESCO World Heritage site in 1984**.



### What is the Green Heritage Project?

- Green Heritage aims at developing a holistic, innovative and inclusive approach toward direct and indirect **climate change (CC)** impact on **intangible cultural heritage (ICH)**.
- Moreover, it aims to empower the local community by creating **employment opportunities**.
- Women from the local area have been engaged to operate electric buggies, a sustainable mode of transport that benefits pregnant women, senior citizens, and individuals with disabilities.
- This not only promotes inclusivity but also reduces the carbon footprint associated with traditional modes of transportation.

## Maa Danteshwari Shaktipeeth

### News Excerpt:

PM Modi visited Maa Danteshwari ShaktiPeeth in **Chhatisgarh** in 2023.



### What is a Shakti Peeth?

- Shakti Peeth is a sacred **place of eternal power** and is considered significant in **Hinduism**.
- It is believed to be where a part of **Devi Sati's body or her ornaments fell on the earth**.
- There are a total of **51 Shakti Peeths**, out of which **18** are considered as **Maha Shakti Peeths**.
- Most of these peeths are located in India, with a few in neighbouring countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

### About Danteshwari Shaktipeeth:

- The **51 Shakti Peeths** are elaborated in **Devi Purana** and Danteshwari Shakti Peeth of Chattisgarh is one of them. It is dedicated to Goddess Mahalakshmi.
- The teeth of devi sati had fallen here, hence the name Danteshwari and the district Dantewada.
- **Location:** It is situated at the confluence of the holy **rivers Shankini and Dhankini**, in the **Dantewada district**.

## Angkor Wat Temple in Cambodia becomes World's 8th wonder.

### News Excerpt:

Angkor Wat temple complex located in **Cambodia**, has recently earned the prestigious title of the world's **8th wonder**.

### Art and Heritage at Angkor Wat:

- Angkor Wat was built by King Suryavarman II in the 12th century.
- It was a Hindu temple dedicated to Vishnu.
- It was gradually converted into a major **Buddhist temple** by his successor, **Jayavarman VII**, who also built the famous Buddhist temple of Bayon nearby.
  - The Hinduism to Buddhism transition is evident in the **intricate carvings** that

adorn the temple walls. They depict scenes from **Hindu and Buddhist mythology**.

- It is famous for its statue of **eight-armed Vishnu** which is also believed and worshipped by the locals as their protecting deity.
- They include the well-known **Angkor Wat Temple** and the **Bayon Temple in Angkor Thom**, which has numerous **sculptural decorations**.
- It is a famous place globally, replacing Pompeii as the eighth Wonder of the World.
- It's a massive religious monument and UNESCO World Heritage Site, covering about 500 acres.

#### What are the criteria for selection of the New Wonders of the World?

- The criteria for selecting the new wonders have always been **debated** over the years. (no specific criteria)
- According to New 7 Wonders, the factors considered include the **time span** that covers **human history, a structure** that humans must have built, **full-scale geographic dimension, artistic and cultural values, presenting diversity**, being **universally recognizable**, etc.

### Konark Wheel

#### News Excerpt:

The G20 Summit in India conducted recently in the Bharat Mandapam in Delhi, had 'Konark Wheel' as the model representing Indian Art and Architecture.



#### About Konark Sun Temple:

- The word '**Konark**' represents two worldly inclusions – '**Kona**' for 'the corner' and '**Arka**' means 'the Sun' (according to Brahma Purana).
- The Konark Sun Temple, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984**, is a popular destination for pilgrims.
- **Location:** It is situated in **Odisha**, some 35 km from Puri and 6.5 km from Bhubaneswar.
- **Constructed by:** **King Narasimha Deva I (Eastern Ganga Dynasty)** in the **12th century** paying tribute to the Sun God.

#### History behind the 'The Black Pagoda':

- According to some researchers, the Sun Temple was constructed in the sea to give the appearance of the Sun God rising from the water at dawn.
- Due to the perception of the **temple's roof being dark**, the European sailors called the temple "**Black Pagoda**."
- It acted as a crucial signpost for sailors back then who were sailing the Bay of Bengal.

#### Artistic features of Konark Temple:

- One of the highest temples ever constructed in the nation - about 227 feet tall.
- The spectacular Jagamohana (Entrance Hall) with the sanctum sanctorum, however, is the only structure still standing today, though completely collapsed.
- The Natya Mandap, which is still standing despite being in ruins, is the other building.
- The temple was fashioned like the Sun God's chariot, which was drawn by 7 horses and had 24 exquisitely carved wheels (Konark Wheels).

#### Protection of Heritage by the Indian Government:

- The Konark Sun Temple is a World Heritage Site.
- It is protected under the National Framework of India by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act (1958) and its Rules (1959).

### Nataraja Sculpture

#### News Excerpt:

The 27-foot-tall Nataraja statue has been installed at the G20 summit venue to showcase India's rich history and culture.

#### Features of the Statue:

- It is also considered the tallest statue of **Lord Shiva's dancing form** in the world.
- The statue is an **ashtadhatu (eight-metal alloy)** piece of art, weighing about **18 tonnes**.
- The **design draws inspiration from three revered Nataraja idols:**



- **Thillai Nataraja Temple (Chidambaram)**
- **Uma Maheswarar Temple (Konerirajapuram)**
- **Brihadeeswara Temple (UNESCO World Heritage Site).**
- All these three temples from which the **Bharat Mandapam Nataraja** statue is inspired were originally constructed by the Cholas.

**Art and Architecture during Cholas:**

- Cholas who at their peak around the **9th-11th centuries AD**, ruled over much of peninsular India.
- Chola art and architecture in South India was a product of a prosperous, highly efficient empire during the period of its greatest territorial expansion.
- **Architecture Contribution:** Among the important parts of Chola sculpture, Shaiva figures are predominant. A very fine Vaishnava and Jain images are also being observed.
  - **Rajaraja Chola (985–1014 AD):** Under his patronage the massive **Brihadisvara temple** at Tanjavur was built.
  - **Rajendra Chola I (1012–1044 AD):** He constructed the **monumental Brihadisvara temple** at Gangaikondacholisvaram.
  - **Rajendra Chola II (1143–1173 AD):** The splendid temple of **Airavatesvara** at Darusaram was built.
- All three temples, dedicated to **Lord Shiva**, whose impressive remains dominate the modern landscape, designated as the Great Living Chola Temples by **UNESCO**, were inscribed on the **World Heritage List in 1987**.
- **Art Contribution:**

- **Paintings:** Scenes from Periyapuram are beautifully depicted in Temple Paintings.
- **Music: Nambiandar Nambi and Nathamuni** made major contributions in Music. During Cholas, almost in every temple, **Aiwar and Nayanmar hymns** were sung.
- **Dance:** The two classical types of dances **Bharatanatyam and Kathakali** were performed.
- **Drama:** Dramas like **Koothu, Rajarajeswara natakam and Rajarajavijayam** were performed.

**Sengol**

**News Excerpt:**

Recently, Indian Prime Minister installed a historic sceptre 'Sengol' next to the Lok Sabha Speaker's seat in the newly constructed Parliament building.

**About Sengol:**

- Sengol comes from a Tamil word "**Semmai**" which means righteousness.

**'Sengol' etched in history**

A symbol of governance in Tamil kingdoms of yore, Sengol was made by then Madras-based jeweller Vummidi Bangaru Chetty along with Vummidi Ethirajulu and Vummidi Sudhakar. It was displayed at the Allahabad Museum after being handed over to Jawaharlal Nehru

**SYMBOL OF INDIAN INDEPENDENCE**

Lord Mountbatten asked Nehru about a ceremonial transfer of power, following which the latter consulted C Rajagopalachari or Rajaji, who identified the Chola dynasty's model where the transfer of power from one king to the other was sanctified and blessed by high priests. He approached the Dharmic Mutt in Tamil Nadu's Tanjore district – the Thiruvavaduthurai Adheenam. The leader of the Adheenam commissioned jeweller Chetty for Sengol's preparation.

**FROM THE ARCHIVES:**  
In a report on August 17, 1947 HT presented details of the ceremony

**SCEPTRE HANDED OVER TO NEHRU**

Three people were flown in from Tamil Nadu – deputy high priest of Adheenam, a Nadaswaram player and Oduvar (singer) – who came carrying the Sengol and conducted the proceedings. The priest gave the Sengol to Mountbatten, and took it back. The Sengol was purified with holy water and then taken in a procession to Nehru's house, where it was handed over to him. A special song was rendered, as told by the high priest.

India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru holds the sceptre

Made of silver and gold

5 FEET

- It is a sceptre made of gold and silver and is decorated with many precious stones.
- Sengol was presented to India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on August 14, 1947. This was marked as the transfer of power from the British Government to India.
- The Sengol was a **powerful symbol of the Chola Kings authority** and their commitment to justice.
- The sceptre is a reminder of India's rich history and the culture. It originated from the Chola dynasty which was one of the most important and powerful dynasties in the history of India.
- "Sengol symbolises a just and fair governance by a king. Its converse is authoritarianism or Kodungol in Tamil. Sengol finds reference even in Tholkappiyam, the earliest treatise on Tamil grammar,"
- Sengol was one of the 10 constituents of a kingdom besides **venkottrakudai (white umbrella), murasu (drum), kodi (flag), thanai (Army), aaru (river), malai (mountain), thar (garland), yaanai (elephant) and kuthirai (horse)**. Different literary works have included different things.
- It was created during the time of Independence in 1947 when the British handed over power to India. It was made by **Vummidi Bangaru Jewellers, a well-known jeweller in Chennai.**

## Parthenon Sculptures or Elgin Marbles

### News Excerpt:

British PM cancelled a meeting with his Greek counterpart over the status of the Parthenon Sculptures housed at the British Museum.



### What are the Parthenon Sculptures?

- The Parthenon Sculptures at the British Museum are more than **30 ancient stone sculptures** from **Greece** that are more than 2,000 years old.
- Most of them originally adorned the walls and grounds of the **Parthenon temple Athens.**

- Completed in 432 BC, the temple is dedicated to the **goddess Athena** and is seen as the crowning glory of **Athens' Golden Age.**
- The Elgin Marbles, a collection of stone sculptures and inscriptions more properly known as the Parthenon Sculptures, were acquired by **Lord Elgin** in Athens, **Greece** between **1801 and 1805** and today live in **London's British Museum.**

### About the History and Culture of Parthenon Sculptures:

- The Parthenon was constructed **between 447 and 432 B.C.E.** under the direction of sculptor and **architect Phidias.**
- When Athens was selected as the new country's capital in 1834, most of the post-Roman period structures on the Acropolis were removed to accommodate further archaeological exploration and to return the site to a state that reflected Greece's idealized '**Classical**' past.
  - It became a **symbol for the modern nation-state of Greece** following independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1832.

## TRIFED's Artisanal Treasures

### News Excerpt:

The G20 Summit showcased India's rich tribal heritage and craftsmanship, curated and presented by TRIFED (Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India), Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

### About TRIFED's Artisanal Treasures:

#### Longpi Pottery:

- Named after the village **Longpi in Manipur**, the **Tangkhol Naga tribes practice** this pottery style.
- Longpi **does not resort to the potter's wheel.** All shaping is done with the hand and mould's help.
- E.g.- grey-black cooking pots, stout kettles, quaint bowls, mugs, and nut trays, at times with a handle of fine cane.

#### Chhattisgarh Wind Flutes:

- Curated by the **Gond Tribe of Bastar** in Chhattisgarh, the '**Sulur**' bamboo wind flute produces melodies through a **simple one-handed twirl.**
- The 'Sulur' also serves utilitarian purposes, helping tribal men ward off animals and guide cattle through jungles.

**Gujarat Hangings:**

- It is curated by the **Bhil & Patelia Tribe in Dahod, Gujarat.**
- They boast mirror work, zari, stones, and beads, evolving to suit contemporary fashion while preserving tradition.

**Rajasthan Artistry:**

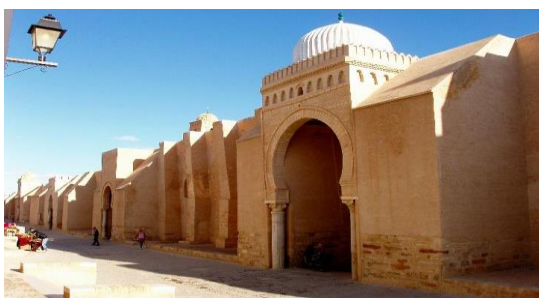
- **Glass Mosaic Pottery** captures the mosaic art style, meticulously crafted into lampshades and candle holders. When illuminated, they unleash a kaleidoscope of colours.
- **Meenakari:** It is the art of decorating metal surfaces with vibrant mineral substances, a **technique introduced by the Mughals.** Delicate designs are etched onto metal, creating grooves for colours to nestle in. Each hue is fired individually, creating intricate, enamel-adorned pieces.
- **Metal Ambabari Craft:** It is curated by the **Meena Tribe** and also embraces enamelling (a process that elevates metal decoration). Today, it extends beyond gold to metals like silver and copper.

**IMPORTANT SITES IN NEWS**

**Kairouan Walls**

**News Excerpt:**

Founded in **670AD**, Kairouan is one of **Tunisia’s holiest cities** and a leading tourist attraction. It has been listed as a **Unesco world heritage site since 1988.**



**About Kairouan walls:**

- Kairouan flourished under the Aghlabid dynasty in the 9th century.
- Despite transferring the political capital to Tunis in the 12th century, Kairouan remained the Maghreb’s principal holy city.
- It served as the capital of the Muslim world in North Africa for four centuries until Tunis became Tunisia’s political capital in the 12th century.

- Its rich architectural heritage includes the **Great Mosque**, with its marble and porphyry columns, and the 9th-century **Mosque of the Three Gates**, distinguished as the oldest known mosque with a sculpted facade.
- The city is surrounded with a **3 KM historical wall** a section of **which collapsed in 2023.**

**Dhordo Village**

**News Excerpt:**

Dhordo village in **Gujarat** has been selected in the **United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) Best Tourism Villages list.**

**About UNWTO:**

- It was formed in **1974** with headquarters in **Madrid, Spain.** India joined it in 1975.
- It **promotes** tourism as a driver of economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability.

**About Dhordo:**

- It is in **Kutch district**, Gujarat and is situated near **the India-Pakistan border.**
- Dhordo is famous for hosting the annual **Rann Utsav**, which showcases the region’s traditional art, music, and crafts.
- It also hosted the first **Tourism Working Group Meeting** of the **G-20** held under India’s presidency.

**About Best Tourism Villages initiative:**

- Launched in **2021**, it is **part of the UNWTO Tourism for Rural Development Programme.**
- A global initiative to highlight those **villages where tourism preserves cultures and traditions celebrates diversity**, provides opportunities and safeguards biodiversity.
- **Areas of evaluation:**
  - Cultural and Natural Resources.
  - Promotion and Conservation of Cultural Resources.
  - Economic, Social, and Environmental Sustainability.
  - Tourism Development and Value Chain Integration.
  - Governance and Prioritization of Tourism.
  - Infrastructure and Connectivity.
  - Health, Safety and Security.
- Other villages selected in 2023 are from **Japan, China, Jordan, Chile, Egypt**, etc.

## Nagarjuna Sagar Megalithic Site- Ancient capital of the Ikshvaku dynasty

### News Excerpt:

Recently, the ancient city 'Sriparvatiya' was in the news, which belonged to the **Ikshvaku Dynasty**.

### Evolution of Ikshvaku Dynasty:

- **What does History say?**
  - Although the origin of the Ikshvaku dynasty is still a debated topic in History, we find numerous evidence of the dynasty's origin and existence.
  - **Inscriptions:** Nagarjunakonda, Jaggayyapetta, Amravati, and Bhattiprolu document their activities, such as donation, construction, religious faith, social outlook, etc. In the Ikshvaku inscriptions, 'Sriparvatiya' is referred to about vijayapuri (the ancient name of the Ikshvaku capital) as Sriparvate Vijaypur, which appears to be the ancient name of the **Nallamalai Range**.
  - **Textual evidence:** The Puranas also mention ikshvakus as Andhrabhrtyas (Andhra servants) and Sriparvatiyas (Foresters).
  - According to the written evidences, the '**Dharmamrita**', which were the Andhra Ikshvakus were the descendants of the renowned Ikshvakus of North India.
- Though the authenticity of this information is currently debatable, the **Andhra Ikshvakus** undoubtedly believed in this claim that they were the descendants of the mythological Ikshvakus of **Ayodhya, of Lord Rama**.



- According to Orient thinkers/historians like **Buhler and Rapson**, the northern Ikshvakus **migrated to the south** and later established their sovereignty.

### Art and Architecture during Ikshvakus (c. fourth to third century BCE):

- Architecture patronized by the rulers of the Ikshvaku dynasty is characterized by ornate temples and a rich assemblage of pillars, copings,

railings, casings and sculptures portraying various themes from Buddhist texts and cosmology.

- Specimens of Ikshvaku architecture were found in excavations from **Nagarjunakonda in Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh**.

### Inscription:

- Their inscription records the facts such as donation for the construction of chaityas and viharas at Bhattiprolu, Jaggayyapeta, as well as the building of temples during the reign of each ruler, which points to the fact that they believed in both **Buddhism and Brahmanism**.
- **Women status:** Most of the Ikshavus women of royal families were patrons of Buddhism since they were mostly funded for Buddhist construction.
- This reign marks the growth of cultural and religious growth and development of the Krishna Guntur region.

### Art and Architecture from Ikshvakus Period:

- The Temple architecture in Andhra Pradesh dates back to the period of the 'Satavahana' dynasty. The Satavahanas left behind them many works of art, the remains of which are seen at Amaravati near Guntur.
- The 'Ikshvakus' succeeded the Satavahanas and the monuments left behind by them. The architectural splendour of the Ikshvakus manifest in the Maha-chaityas and Viharas, and the richly ornate temples, particularly at the site called **Nagarjunakonda**, prove that they patronized both **Vedic and Buddhist faiths**.
  - **Stupas:** Amaravati and Bhattiprolu in Guntur.
  - '**Chaityas**' and '**Sankaram**': Kondepur in Medak.
  - **Viharas:** Nagarjuna Konda near Vishakhapatnam.
- **The Rock-Cut Temples:**
  - In the subsequent era of 'Salankhyanas' and 'Vishnukundies', rock architecture thrived.
  - The **caves at Mogalrajapuram near Vijayawada and Undavalli in Guntur and the rock-cut temples at Bhairavakonda near Udayagiri in Nellore**, stand as a witness to this form of architecture of that period.
  - Three prominent styles of architecture, namely, 'Nagara', 'Vesara' and 'Dravida' flourished during their period.
    - An Amalaka 'sikhara' and a curvilinear tower were the marks of perfection in Vesara style, the most important of them were the temples of Amaravati,

Draksharama, Bhimavaram, Samalkot and Chebrolu.

### Sculptures:

- The sculptures of the Ikshvakus are categorized under the declining phase of glorious art tradition that started with the Amravati and Jaggapattaya art in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries B.C.
- Ikshvakus art acted as the last flicker in the lamp of the great tradition of Satvahana art that started around 230 B.C.E.
- **The Sculpture history of development:**
  - **Virapurushadatta's reign:** The carvings displayed on structures that had less amount of stylization and low relief, lagging vigour of mature Amravati style and tradition.
  - **During the year of Ehuvala Cantamula:** This represented the mature phase representing sculptures having delicate poses and subtle expressions.

## Creative Cities of Literature and Music by UNESCO

### News Excerpt:

Kozhikode in Kerala has been designated as the UNESCO 'City of Literature' and Gwalior as the 'City of Music' in the latest UNESCO list of Creative Cities Network.

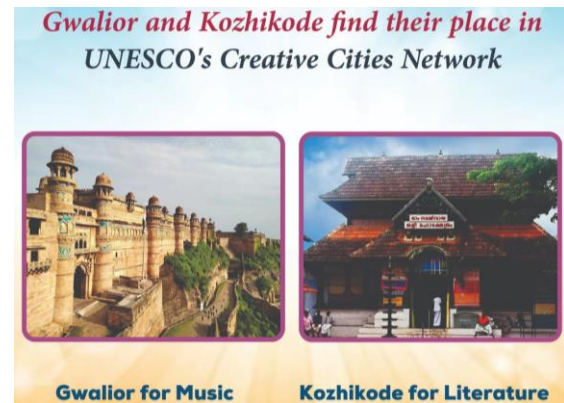
### About UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN):

- The **UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN)** (Established in 2004) is a global initiative that recognizes cities for their **commitment to using culture and creativity as catalysts for sustainable development** and displaying innovative practices in human-centered urban planning.
- The Network now counts 350 cities in more than one hundred countries and represents **seven creative fields: Crafts and Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Literature, Media Arts and Music.**
- Apart from Kozhikode and Gwalior, **Varanasi (music), Srinagar (crafts and folk arts) and Chennai (music)** are part of the network.
- The newly designated Creative Cities will participate in the 2024 UCCN Annual Conference, in Braga, Portugal, from July 1 to July 5, 2024, under the theme 'Bringing Youth to the Table for the Next Decade.'

### Kozhikode (Kerala) as a 'City of Literature':

- In 2022 a proposal for Kozhikode was initiated by the Kerala Institute of Local Administration.

- Upon receiving enthusiastic support, the Kozhikode Corporation formed a collaborative partnership with Charles University in Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic.
  - Notably, **Prague** was the **first city to be honoured with the title of 'City of Literature' by UNESCO in 2014.**
- The first Malayalam novel Kundalatha was born in Kozhikode in 1887.



### Gwalior (Madhya Pradesh) as the 'City of Music':

- Gwalior, the city that gave the world the legendary musician **Tansen**, has been bestowed with the prestigious title of "**City of Music**" by UNESCO as a tribute to the city's rich musical heritage.
- **Gwalior Gharana**, one of the oldest Hindustani musical Gharanas, is believed to have originated in this very place, solidifying its status as the birthplace of this iconic musical style.
  - In **Hindustani music**, a gharana is a system of social organization linking musicians or dancers by lineage or apprenticeship, and by adherence to a particular musical style.
- **The Scindias**, the erstwhile royal family of Gwalior, have diligently preserved and propagated music for centuries, adding to the city's musical legacy.

## Megalithic dolmen site

### News Excerpt:

Unique terracotta figurines in different states of preservation have been found in recent archaeological explorations conducted in the megalithic dolmen site **at Mudu Konaje, near Moodbidri, in Dakshina Kannada.**

### About Megalithic dolmen site:

- Megalithic culture is known for its different types of **burials and use of iron in India.** Dolmen is one among them.





**dolmen** site, which consisted of nine dolmens on the slope of a stone hill.

- Of the eight figurines found, there are two cow bovines, one mother goddess, two peacocks, a horse, the hand of a mother goddess, and an unknown object.
- The **cow bovines** found in the dolmens help to **determine the chronology of the dolmens**.
- **Terracottas** found in the megalithic burial provide a solid ground for the **study of the Bhoota cult** or Daiva Aradhane of coastal Karnataka.
- **Cow bovine** or Cow goddess had its parallels in Malampuzha megalithic terracotta figurines of Kerala and Egypt.

**National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC)**

**News Excerpt:**

First artefact received from Indian Navy; a **Sea Harrier 609 maritime fighter aircraft** was placed at National Heritage Maritime Complex at **Lothal**.

**Features:**

- Under a dolmen sites huge **stone slabs known as orthostats** were **erected in clockwise order**, which created a square room.
- This square chamber was closed by another huge stone slab as a capstone.
- Generally, on the Eastern slab, a round or U-shaped entrance known as the port hole was created.
- It was **known by different names** in South India, like Kalmane, Pandavara Mane, Moriyara Mane and Moriyara Betta etc., which reveals its popularity among the common people.

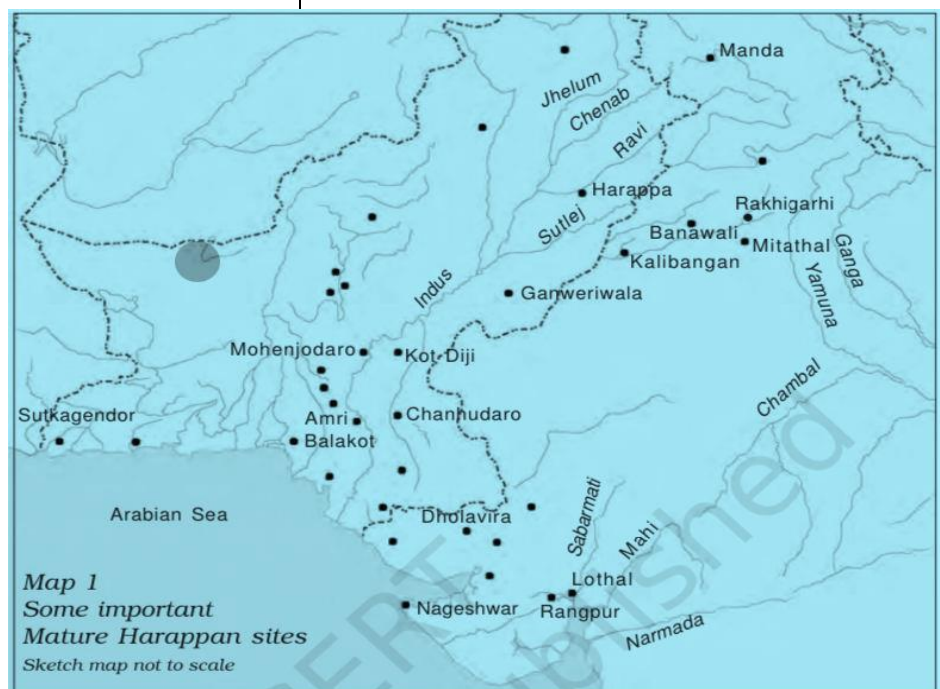
**Key findings in Mudu Konaje site:**

- The figurines were datable to 800-700 BC.
- It was the **biggest megalithic**

**About NHMC:**

NMHC would be developed in an area of about 400 acres with various unique structures such as Asia's Biggest Under Water Marine Museum, India's Grandest Naval Museum and a lighthouse museum, maritime theme parks, amusement park centers, etc.,

- NMHC will showcase the maritime heritage of the country from ancient to modern times by



adopting an edutainment approach using the latest technology to spread awareness about India's maritime heritage.

- NMHC will be developed in Cooperation with the **Republic of Portugal**.
- **Ministries involved-** Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Highway, Ministry of Defence.

#### About Lothal-

- Among the prominent cities of the traditional Harappan civilization dating to 2400 BC, located in Gujarat.
- Archaeological excavations have discovered the **oldest man-made dockyard, over 5000 years old**, in Lothal.

## TRIBAL ISSUES

### Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas

#### News Excerpt:

Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas was celebrated all over India on 15th November 2023.

#### About Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas:

- From the year **2021**, the Government of India has decided to celebrate **November 15** as '**Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas**' to mark the birth anniversary of Tribal Freedom Fighter "**Birsa Munda**".
- Every year, the Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas is held to **honour tribal efforts in the preservation of cultural heritage and the promotion of Indian ideals such as national pride, valour, and hospitality**.
- Birsa's birth anniversary is also marked as the **Statehood Day in Jharkhand**.

#### About Birsa Munda:

- He was born on **November 15, 1875**.
- He was not only a **freedom fighter but also a social reformer** and led the tribal movement, namely **Ulgulan (Revolt) against the**



#### exploitative systems of the British Colonial Government.

- He is also known as **Dharti Abba** as he encouraged tribals to understand their cultural roots & observe unity.
- He belonged to the Munda tribe in the **Chhotanagpur Plateau** area. Under the guidance of his teacher Jaipal Nag, Birsa converted to Christianity to join the German Mission school.
- However, having gained awareness of the British colonial ruler and the efforts of the missionaries to convert tribals to Christianity, Birsa started the faith of '**Birsait**'. Soon members of the Munda and Oraon community started joining the Birsait sect.
- Birsa Munda is known to **have mobilised the tribal community against the British** and had also **forced the colonial officials to introduce laws protecting the land rights of the tribals**.
- He **died on June 9, 1900**, at a **young age of 25**.

#### Other related initiatives launched by the Prime Minister on Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas:

##### PM-PVTG Development Mission:

- It aimed at the overall development of the **75 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)** communities living in remote areas.
- It has been **established to provide basic infrastructure** such as power, water, road connectivity, housing, education, and healthcare.
- Through the **coordinated efforts of nine Ministries**, approximately **11 interventions** such as the **PM-Gram Sadak Yojana, PM-Gram Awaas Yojana, Jal Jeevan Mission**, and others would be delivered to these target villages.

##### Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra:

- It was launched from **Khunti (Jharkhand)** — to achieve saturation of flagship government schemes across the country.
- The Yatra starts in **tribal-dominated districts of the country and will eventually reach all districts by January 2024**.
- The Yatra's main goal will be to **reach out to people and raise awareness about various welfare programs**.
- Top issues targeted in tribal regions- **Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission; Enrollment in Eklavya Model Residential Schools; Scholarship Schemes; Forest Right Titles; Individual and Community Land; Van Dhan Vikas Kendra; Organizing Self-Help Groups**.

- It is one of the country's largest-ever outreach initiatives and intends to cover over **2.55 lakh Gram Panchayats and over 3,600 urban local bodies by January 25th, 2024, touching every district.**

**PM JANMAN (PM- Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan)**

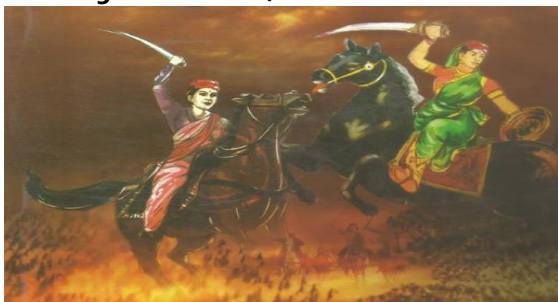
- It is aimed at the comprehensive development of **75 PVTG** communities residing in **18 states** and **1 UT** who continue to lag behind in **socio-economic indicators** of **educational, health and livelihood.**
- The population of these communities is about **28 lakh** and are living in about **22000 habitations** in more than **800 blocks** located in **200 districts.**
- Even after 75 years of independence, various development schemes of the Central and State Governments have not been able to adequately address the critical infrastructure needs of the villages and habitations of these communities.
- The PM also launched the portal on the **PM Gatishatki Platform** which will be used for reaching out and monitoring the progress and outcomes of the PM-JANMAN.

**Sammakka Sarakka Cental Tribal University**

**News Excerpt:**

The Union Cabinet approved the establishment of Sammakka Sarakka Central Tribal University in **Mulugu district of Telangana.**

- The Union Cabinet approved the introduction of the **Central Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2023 in Parliament** to amend the **Central Universities Act, 2009** for setting up of Sammakka Sarakka Central Tribal University, Telangana.
- The University was a commitment made by the Central Government as a part of the **13th Schedule of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014.**



**The History of Sammakka-Sarakka and its relation to Koya tribes:**

- **Sammakka-Sarakka** were mother daughter duo from 13<sup>th</sup> century who are remembered for **fighting** in protest against the **imposition of taxes** on the **Koya people** by local Kakatiya rulers.
  - In the battle, Saramma died, while Sammakka disappeared into the hills, and the local tribals believed she metamorphosed into a vermillion casket.
- **The Sammakka Saramma Jatara (State Festival of Telangana),** known as Kumbh Mela for tribals, is considered among the most significant religious gatherings of tribal people in India. It is part of the Tribal Circuit under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme.

**HakkiPikki Tribal Community**

**News Excerpt:**

Recently, more than 181 members of the HakkiPikki tribal community from Karnataka have been stranded in war-torn Sudan.

**About HakkiPikki Tribal Community:**

- The HakkiPikki tribe is a **semi-nomadic tribe** that lives in **forest areas** of **west and south India** and has traditionally engaged in **bird capturing and hunting.**
- It is a Scheduled Tribe of **Karnataka**, and its ancestors are supposed to be related to the renowned **Ranapratap Singh.**
- The word '**Hakki**' stands for 'bird', and '**Pikki**' stands for the verb 'to catch'.
- The community is known as the '**bird catcher,**' which is their traditional occupation.
- After their **trade of bird hunting** was outlawed, they were rehabilitated in the 1970s.
- They are said to be a **matriarchal group.**
- They communicate in '**Vaagri,**' a **UNESCO** recognised **endangered language.**
- Recently, the Hakki Pikki tribal community from Karnataka (114 tribal people) got title deeds to their lands which they had cultivated for about a century.

**Origin and establishment:**

- The HakkiPikki tribe is thought to have originated in Gujarat and Rajasthan before migrating to south India through Andhra Pradesh.
- In Karnataka, the tribe is organized into four clans and has a population of 11,892.

- Gujaratia, Panwar, Kaliwala, and Mewaras are the four clans, which correspond to castes in traditional Hindu society.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Ramon Magsaysay Award


**News Excerpt:**

This year, marked the **65th edition** and **four Asians** were given the Ramon Magsaysay Award.

**About the Award:**

- The **Ramon Magsaysay Award**, often called the **‘Nobel Prize of Asia’**, is a notable accolade that represents exceptional spirit and influential leadership.
- The award carries a certificate, a medallion bearing the likeness of the late President, and a cash prize of **USD 50,000**.
- **Criteria:** The Asian people who have shown selfless service to others and excellent contributions in their chosen fields without seeking public acknowledgement are eligible for the Award.

**Winners of Ramon Magsaysay Award 2023:**

Awardees	Contribution	Country
Dr. Ravi Kannan R.	<b>Medical and healthcare:</b> Strong devotion to his medical profession, focusing on what medicine is truly for pro-health and people-centred treatment.	India
Korvi Rakshand	 <p><b>Education:</b> Developing inclusive education for the underprivileged children in Bangladesh.</p>	Bangladesh
Eugenio Lemos	<b>Community:</b> Notable contributions to how young Timorese views nature and their surroundings.	Timor-Leste
Miriam Coronel-Ferrer	<b>Peace building and International Understanding:</b> Unwavering belief in the transformative power of	Philippines

non-violent strategies in peace building.

### Gandhi Peace Prize 2021

**News Excerpt:**

**Gita Press, Gorakhpur** was conferred with the **Gandhi Peace Prize 2021**.

**Gandhi Peace prize:**

- Gandhi Peace Prize is an **annual award** instituted by **Government of India in 1995**, on the occasion of **125th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi** as a tribute to the ideals espoused by Mahatma Gandhi.
- The award is open to **all persons regardless of nationality, race, language, caste, creed or gender**.
- The award carries an amount of **Rs. 1 crore, a citation, a plaque** and an exquisite traditional handicraft/handloom item.
- Recent awardees include **Sultan Qaboos Bin Said Al Said, Oman (2019)** and **Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (2020), Bangladesh**.
- The Jury headed by the Prime Minister, after due deliberations on unanimously decided to select **Gita Press, Gorakhpur** as the recipient of the Gandhi Peace Prize for the year 2021, in recognition of its outstanding contribution towards social, economic and political transformation through non-violent and other Gandhian methods.

**Gita press, Gorakhpur:**

- **It was Established in 1923.**
- Gita Press is **one of the world’s largest publishers**, having published more than **41 crore books** in over a dozen languages, including 16.21 crore Shrimad Bhagvad Gita.
- The institution has **never relied on advertisement** in its publications, for revenue generation.
- Gita Press along with its affiliated organizations, strives for the betterment of life and the well-being of all.

### International Yoga Day

**News Excerpt:**

Recently, on 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2023 India celebrated the 9<sup>th</sup> International Yoga Day. Besides spreading awareness about the benefits of yoga and meditation worldwide, this time, India promoted the skills of its tribal artisans.

### International Yoga Day:

- It has been celebrated on **21<sup>st</sup> June** of every year since **2015**.
- International Day of Yoga 2023 theme is "**Yoga for Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**," which represents our collective desire for "**One Earth, One Family, One Future**."
- Indian Prime Minister proposed a dedicated yoga day during his speech at the 69th session of the **United Nations General Assembly in 2014**.
- On December 11, 2014, all 193 United Nations member states unanimously agreed to observe the International Day of Yoga on June 21, 2015.
- The primary goal is to raise awareness about yoga as a holistic practice for mental and physical well-being.

### Hul Diwas

#### News Excerpt:

Hul Diwas is **celebrated on June 30** for remembering the sacrifice of Adivas in their fight against British colonial authorities.

#### About Santhals or Hul rebellion:

- The **Santhal rebellion or 'Hul'** literally means revolution. It began in 1855, two years before the uprising of 1857.
- It was an "**organised war against colonialism**" led by the Santhals, against the different forms of oppression they were subjected to by the British colonisers and their collaborators.
- **Led by brothers Sidhu and Kanhu**, it saw the participation of as many as 32 castes and communities rallying behind them.
- The rebellion took place in the lush **Damin-i-Koh region** (Damin-i-Koh meaning the skirts of the hills) and took the British by complete surprise. This region falls in present-day Jharkhand, more specifically, around the **Rajmahal Hills of eastern Jharkhand's Sahibganj district**.
- Every year, the state of Jharkhand celebrates June 30 as 'Hul Diwas', marking the beginning of the rebellion, even though some historical accounts date it to the first week of July instead.
- Today, the Santal community is the **third largest tribal community** in India, spread across Jharkhand-Bihar, Odisha and West Bengal.

### Bastille day

#### News Excerpt:

PM Modi in France attended Bastille Day (**French National Day**).

#### About:

This was the day on which **ordinary people stormed Bastille, a 14th century fortress-prison in Paris** that was used to incarcerate political prisoners.

- Bastille Day can be said to have set in motion the decade-long **French Revolution**, which fundamentally altered French political and social life and influenced the foundational ideas of democracy across the world, popularising slogans such as "**Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité**" (**Liberty, Equality, Fraternity**).
- July 14, 1789, is also the anniversary of **Fête de la Fédération**, an event held in 1790 to celebrate the unity of the French people.
- **Why Bastille-** The reason the mob chose Bastille was because people were imprisoned simply because the King said so, without trial and without publicly stated causes.
- **Events/terms related to it-** Estates-General, National Assembly, First Estate, Second estate, third estate, Tennis Court Oath,
- Before PM Modi, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh attended Bastille Day celebrations in 2009.

### The Latest House Panel Report on The Archeological Survey of India (ASI)

#### News Excerpt:

Claiming that many of the 3,691 centrally protected monuments (CPM) in India are "minor" monuments, a parliamentary committee has recommended that the list should be "rationalized."

ASI launched the "**Adopt a Heritage 2.0**" program to rejuvenate India's rich cultural heritage, in line with the vision of 'Virasat Bhi, Vikas Bhi.'

- It is a revamped version of the earlier Adopt a Heritage Scheme launched in 2017 and clearly defines the amenities sought for different monuments as per the AMASR, 1958.
- The stakeholders can apply to adopt a monument or specific amenities at a monument through a dedicated web portal.
- It seeks to foster collaboration with corporate stakeholders to preserve these monuments for the next generations.
- **Indian Heritage App:** The app will feature state-wise details of heritage monuments of India along with photographs, a list of public

amenities available, geo-tagged locations, and a feedback mechanism for citizens.

- **e-Permission Portal:** For obtaining permission for photography, filming, and developmental projects on monuments. The portal will fast-track the process of obtaining various permissions and solve operational and logistical bottlenecks.

**Major Highlights and Recommendations from the 359<sup>th</sup> House Panel Report:**

- The panel recommended “**rationalizing and categorizing**” this list having many “**minor monuments**” of centrally protected monuments based on national significance and unique architectural and heritage value, also keeping in mind the decolonization agenda.
  - The list includes 75 graves of colonial-era soldiers or officials of no notable importance. E.g. - graves of public works department engineer John Albert Cope (died in 1880) and Henry Gassen (died 1877), working for a cotton ginning company.
  - Deletion of some of the kosminars (milestones built by Mughals) because they come in the way of road-widening exercises.
- It recommended the central agency develop preservation plans for all its work, especially before excavations.
  - This includes establishing clear strategies for documenting findings, conserving artefacts, and restoring structures.
- It also advocated using advanced technologies such as LiDAR, ground-penetrating radar, and 3D scanning. E.g.- used in Gyanvapi complex in Varanasi by the ASI for its non-invasive survey.
- Missing Monuments: CAG declared 92 CPMs as “missing”. The ASI has located only 42 of these monuments, while the remaining 50 monuments are either affected by rapid urbanization, submerged under reservoirs/dams or are untraceable.
  - ASI should maintain digital logbooks that include textual and photographic/ video records of the monument's physical State and location coordinates.
- It mentioned that the 100-metre prohibited area and 300-metre regulated area around all ASI-protected monuments lead to public inconvenience and have pitted the local community against these structures as it is difficult to carry out repair work.
- Encroachments: The committee recommends that ASI **should conduct a comprehensive**

**survey of encroachments** around all monuments under its jurisdiction.

- This will help ASI in creating a database and documenting the nature, extent and impact of encroachments on each site.
- The panel advised making the functioning of ASI more effective by dividing it into two wings:
  - **The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** looks after the core mandate, i.e., exploration, excavation and conservation aspects and
  - **The India Heritage Development Corporation (IHDC)** deals with the ASI's entire revenue.

**Recent Works undertaken by ASI:**

- Hoysala Temples in Karnataka, Shantiniketan in West Bengal.
- Conservation measures in foreign countries – such as Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan; Ta Prohm and Preah Vihear temples in Cambodia, My Son Group of Temples in Vietnam; and Friday Mosque in Maldives.

**The Parliamentary Standing Committee plans to reintroduce the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) (Amendment) Bill, 2023:**

About Previous AMASR Act 1958	About current AMASR (Amendment) Act 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It provides for the -                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Preservation (of ancient and historical monuments, archaeological sites and remains of national importance which are over 100 years old)</li> <li>○ Regulation (of archaeological excavations)</li> <li>○ Protection (of sculptures, carvings and other like objects).</li> </ul> </li> <li>● 3,691 Centrally Protected Monuments or Sites are located in India and are guarded by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) - a Ministry of Culture agency that functions under the provisions of this act.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To strengthen the penal provisions to prevent encroachments and illegal construction close to the monuments, the 1958 Act was amended in 2010.</li> <li>● The amendments provide for the creation of:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A prohibited area of 100 metres around every national monument where no construction, public or private, is permitted.</li> <li>○ Regulated area 200 metres beyond the prohibited area, where any construction requires the permission of a newly constituted National Monuments Authority (NMA).</li> </ul> </li> <li>● The amendment also suggested that heritage by-laws for each monument be created by an expert body, given the uniqueness of each monument.</li> </ul>

### About the proposed New AMASR (Amendment) Bill, 2023:

- The Bill seeks **to redefine monuments and rationalize** the use of areas around the protected monuments.
  - The Act, in its present form, restricts many areas that could be put to good use, specifically in the case of developmental and infrastructure-related work.
  - For example, prohibiting residents from constructing their houses within 100 metres of small and insignificant structures causes a lot of inconveniences and revenue loss to them.

#### Archaeological Survey of India (ASI):

- **It is** under the **Ministry of Culture**, is the premier organization for the archaeological research and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation.
- Maintenance of ancient monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance is the prime concern of the ASI.
- Through this Bill, the Government aims to effect a change in the current benchmark of a structure having **to be at least 100 years old to be listed as a monument**.
- The relook on the monuments also aligns with the **Government's aim to rid India of its 'colonial past.'**
  - The Government believes that most of the current monuments are from the British era despite India having a vast wealth of more ancient structures.

### Meira Paibis

#### News Excerpt:

During his recent visit to **Manipur** Home Minister Amit Shah met with the **Meira Paibis** as part of his meetings with various civil society groups.

#### About:

- The Meira Paibis, also known as Imas or **Mothers of Manipur**, are **Meitei** women who come from all sections of society in the **Imphal valley**, are widely respected, and represent a powerful moral force.
- Meira Paibis or "**women torch bearers**", so called because of the **flaming torches that they hold aloft while marching in the streets**, often **at night**.
- **Formation-** The Meira Paibi was formed in **1977**.

- **Objectives-** One of the largest grassroots movements in the world, its initial focus of **fighting alcoholism and drug abuse** has now expanded to **countering human rights violations** and **the development of society at large**.

### Channapatna toys

#### News Excerpt:

According to UNODC, Toys made in Channapatna have become part of children's academic activities in Afghanistan.

#### About Channapatna toys:



- The famed wooden toys are made by artisans in and around **Channapatna town** (popularly known as "**Gombegala Ooru**" or the "**Toy-City**" of **Karnataka**).
- The craft has diversified over time; besides the traditional **ivory wood ("Aale mara")**, other woods—including rubber, sycamore, cedar, pine and teak—are also used.
- Over **250 cottage units and around 50 factories** make toys in Channapatna.
- Channapatna toys are **ideal for children** as the **chemical dye is not used** in them, and they come **without sharp edges**.
- The history of Channapatna toys can be traced back to **Tipu Sultan's** reign, former ruler of the Kingdom of Mysore in the 18th century.
- This traditional craft of Karnataka has received the **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**.

### Lambani Craft

#### News Excerpt:

As part of the third **G20 culture working group (CWG)** meeting in Hampi, a **Guinness world record** was created for the 'largest display of Lambani items.'

#### About:

- The Lambani embroidery is an intricate form of textile embellishment characterised by **colourful threads, mirrorwork, and stitch patterns**.



- It is practiced in several villages of **Karnataka**.
- The Lambani craft tradition involves stitching together small pieces of discarded fabric to create a beautiful fabric.

**Significance**

- **Over 450 women artisans and cultural practitioners** from Lambani came together to create embroidered patches with GI-tagged Sandur Lambani embroidery, creating 1,755 patchwork pieces.
- The display titled **'Threads of Unity'** celebrates the aesthetic expressions and design vocabulary of Lambani embroidery.
- The promotion of this craft will not only preserve a living heritage practice of India but will also






**support the economic independence of women.**

- The G20 CWG is also espousing **'Culture for LIFE'**, an initiative for an environment-conscious lifestyle and a concerted action towards sustainability.




**New GI Tags**





**About GI tag:**




- A geographical indication (GI) is a sign used on products that have a **specific geographical origin** and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
- Geographical Indication of Goods (Registration and Protection) **Act 1999** governs the GI ecosystem.
- It is issued by Geographical Indications **Registry, Chennai** under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (**DPIIT**), **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.

<p><b>Jalesar Dhatu Shilp</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a metal craft of Jalesar (<b>U.P</b>).</li> <li>• It includes <b>ghungrus</b> (anklets), <b>ghantis</b> (bells) and other decorative <b>metal crafts and brassware</b>.</li> <li>• The <b>Thatheras community</b> of Jalesar makes these products.</li> <li>• Jalesar, situated in the Etah district of Uttar Pradesh, holds great significance as the former capital of Magadha King Jarasandha.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goa Mankurad Mango</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>Portuguese</b> named the fruit as Malcorada, Cardozo mankurad, Corado, and Goa mankur which means <b>'poor coloured'</b>, and with time, it became mankurad aamo (mango) in Konkani.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goan Bebinca</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bebinca is also known as the <b>'queen of Goan desserts.'</b></li> <li>• It is a traditional Indo-Portuguese <b>pudding from Goa</b>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Udaipur Koftgari Metal Craft</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weapons are exquisitely ornamented by a complicated process of etching designs, heating, and then cooling, intertwined with <b>embedding gold</b> and <b>silver wire</b>, pressing, and flattening it to a smooth surface with <b>moonstone</b>, and finally polishing it.</li> <li>• <b>The GI tag is from Rajasthan.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Bikaner Kashidakari Craft</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is traditionally created on <b>cotton, silk or velvet</b> with a variety of fine stitches and <b>mirrorwork</b>, mainly for objects associated with <b>marriage</b>.</li> <li>• The weaving of fabrics by hand used to be done by the <b>Meghwali community</b> in Bikaner and nearby districts of <b>Rajasthan</b>.</li> </ul>



<p><b>Jodhpur Bandhej Craft</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is the Rajasthani art of <b>tying and dyeing</b>.</li> <li>• The fabrics used for Bandhej are <b>muslin, silk and voile</b>.</li> <li>• Cotton thread is used for tying the fabric.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Bikaner Usta Kala Craft</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is also known as <b>gold nakashi</b> or <b>gold manauti</b> work due to the prominence of its long-lasting golden colour.</li> <li>• Untreated raw <b>camel hide</b> is processed and moulded by the <b>Dapgar community</b> of leather craftspeople of <b>Rajasthan</b> for the requirements of the Usta.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Arunachal Yak Churpi</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It became the <b>first ever Yak milk product</b> to get a <b>Geographical Indication (GI) tag</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Yak Churpi</b> is a naturally fermented cheese prepared from the milk of Arunachali yak reared in the high altitude areas in Arunachal Pradesh.</li> <li>• It is <b>rich in protein</b> and used as a substitute for vegetables or mixed in meat curry or eaten with rice as a staple food.</li> <li>• Two other unique products from the Arunachal, <b>Khaw Tai (Khamti rice) from the Namsai region and Tangsa textile</b>, have also obtained GI tag.</li> </ul>

Product	Description
<p>Amroha Dholak (Uttar Pradesh)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a musical instrument made of natural wood like Mango, jackfruit and teakwood.</li> <li>• It is learnt that there are around 300 small units producing wood-based drum instruments (dholak), which provide employment to over 1,000 artisans.</li> </ul> 
<p>Mahoba Gaura PattharHastashlip (Uttar Pradesh)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a stone craft which is a unique and soft stone with scientific name, the 'Pyro Flight Stone'.</li> <li>• Gaura stone craft is made of radiant white-coloured stone that is predominantly found in this region.</li> <li>• It is cut into several pieces, which are then used for making various craft items.</li> </ul> 
<p>Mainpuri Tarkashi' (Uttar Pradesh)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tarkashi, a popular art form from Mainpuri in Uttar Pradesh.</li> <li>• It is primarily brass wire inlay work on wood.</li> <li>• It was mainly used for wooden sandals (khadaous), a necessity for every household, since leather was considered unclean.</li> </ul> 
<p>Sambhal Horn Craft' (Uttar Pradesh)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the Sambhal Horn Craft, the raw material is procured from dead animals.</li> <li>• They are completely hand-made.</li> </ul> 

<p>Baghpat Home Furnishings'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Baghpat and Meerut are famous for their exclusive handloom home furnishing product and running fabrics in cotton yarn since generations.</li> <li>● Only cotton yarn are used in the handloom weaving process.</li> <li>● Baghpat is famous for weaving on the frame loom instead of the pit loom since generations.</li> </ul>	
<p>Barabanki Handloom Product'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There are around 50,000 weavers and 20,000 looms at Barabanki and adjoining area.</li> <li>● The annual turnover of the Barabanki cluster is projected to be ₹150 crore.</li> </ul>	
<p>Kalpi Handmade Paper</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Kalpi has historically been a centre of handmade paper manufacturing.</li> <li>● The handmade paper-making cluster at Kalpi is a huge cluster, engaging more than 5,000 craftsmen and approximately 200 units</li> </ul>	

### Uttarakhand GI Tags

#### News Excerpt:

Recently, **over 15 products from Uttarakhand** have been given the coveted **GI tag** by the Geographical Indications Registry.

#### About the Products that were given GI tags:

- **Berinag tea from Uttarakhand** is highly sought after by London tea establishments and tea blenders. It is manufactured from the leaves of a plant that grows wild in the Himalayas and is then compacted into a solid mass.
- **Bichhu buti fabrics** are manufactured from Himalayan nettle fibres.
  - As the plant's fibres are hollow, they have a unique ability to accumulate air inside, resulting in natural insulation and a perfect clothing material for both winter and summer.
- **The Uttarakhand mandua, a finger millet** grown in Garhwal and Kumaon is a staple in many parts of the state.
- **Jhangora, is a homegrown millet** typically farmed in the rain-fed districts of the Himalayas in Uttarakhand.
- **Gahat is one of the most important pulses** grown in the state's dry regions, with medicinal properties known to Ayurveda and traditional physicians for ages.
- **Uttarakhand lal chawal, is a red rice** farmed organically in the Purola district.
- Other products to receive GI tags included:
  - **Uttarakhand kala bhat** (black soybean)

- **Malta fruit**
- **Chulai** (ramdana), a grain used on fasting days
- **Buransh juice** obtained from the red flowers of the Rhododendron arboreum
- **Pahari toor dal;**
- **Uttarakhand likhai** or wood carvings
- **Nainital mombatti (candles)**
- **Rangwali pichhoda of Kumaon,**
- **Ramnagar Nainital litchis**
- **Ramgarh Nainital peaches**
- **Chamoli wooden Ramman masks**
- **Almora Lakhori mirchis,** a chilli variant.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Windhoek Declaration

#### News Excerpt:

The Windhoek Declaration is considered a worldwide benchmark for ensuring press freedom.

#### About:

- The Windhoek Declaration, adopted on May 3, encompasses **19 principles** centred around the importance of an independent, pluralistic, and free press. **In 1993, the United Nations declared May 3 as World Press Freedom Day.**

**World Press Freedom Day** is observed to raise awareness about the global state of press freedom and highlight the responsibilities and risks associated with journalism. It serves as a reminder of the importance of a free and independent press in society.

- This Declaration is based on **Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, which emphasizes the right to freedom of opinion and expression.
- According to the Windhoek Declaration, a free press plays a crucial role in **upholding democracy** and fostering economic development.
- It also addresses the issue of **persecution faced by journalists, editors, and publishers** in African countries.
- It calls upon the United Nations to recognize **press censorship as a violation of human rights.**
- The Declaration also encourages the international community to support the initiatives and projects outlined within it.

### PEN Pinter Prize

#### News Excerpt:

British children's writer and performance poet Michael Rosen, 77, has been awarded the prestigious PEN Pinter Prize 2023.

#### About:

The prize is given to a writer from the **UK, Ireland, and the Commonwealth** whose work is committed to a fearless exposition of truth about contemporary life.

#### The poet Michael Rosen:

- Rosen was the sixth British Children's Laureate between 2007 and 2009 and is known for

**making poetry accessible to children** through his work and performances.

- His themes are often **social, political, and ethical.**
- In **On the Move: Poems about Migration**, Rosen explores contemporary and historical migrations through his family's personal experience and from a global perspective on the ongoing migration drive across Europe.
- Rosen's most well-known works include **You Can't Catch Me (1982), You Wait Till I Am Older Than You (1996), Rover (2007), and Fantastic Mr Dahl.**

### District Good Governance Index (DGGI)

#### News Excerpt:

The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel (DARPG), and the Government of Arunachal Pradesh, with Knowledge Partner CGG, Hyderabad, jointly released **the first District Good Governance Index of Arunachal Pradesh.**

#### Findings:

- More than 50% of the districts have reported an increase in the disbursement of self-employment loans.
- Nineteen (19) districts have reported a positive **Cumulative Annual Growth Rate (CAGR)** in Agriculture Credit.
- All districts except two reported reduction or maintenance in the area under Jhum cultivation.
- Increase in the yield of **rice production** in most of the districts.
- Functional **girls' toilets** in almost all the schools.
- Nine districts achieved an **immunization rate** of more than 85%.
- 22 districts achieved more than 70% **institutional deliveries.**
- The **sex ratio** improved in most of the districts.
- 21 districts have covered more than 50% of the households with a **Health Scheme or Health insurance.**

### NHAI's 'Sustainability Report'

#### News Excerpt:

The report was released by the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highway. It covers NHAI's governance structure, stakeholders, environment, and social responsibility initiatives.

**Key points of the report:**

- The Sustainability Report underlines the effectiveness of various efforts made by NHAI for environment and energy conservation. From FY 2019-20 till 2021-22 **direct emission reduced** by 18.44% and 9.49% due to less fuel consumption.
- **Greenhouse gas (GHG) Emissions** from energy consumption, operations, transport, and travel measured in Metric Tonnes CO2 equivalent /km constructed saw a decline of 9.7% in FY 2020-21 and 2% in FY 2021-22.
- Similarly in operations, **energy intensity** in Giga Joules/km reduced by 37% in FY 2020-21 and 27% in FY 2021-22, while the kilometres constructed through the reporting period has risen steadily. With over 97 percent penetration, Electronic Toll Collection through FASTag has contributed to reduce the carbon footprint.
- NHAI has been using **recycled materials** for National Highway construction. The use of fly-ash and plastic waste in construction has increased over the last three years. NHAI has been encouraging use of **Recycled Asphalt (RAP) and Recycled Aggregates (RA) in the National Highway construction.**
- To ensure sustainable environmental growth, more than **100 Wildlife Crossings** were created in three years across 20 States as a measure for wildlife protection and conservation to reduce man-animal conflict.
- Over the years, NHAI has been undertaking **plantation drives** to develop eco-friendly National Highways. Around 2.74 crore saplings were planted till 2021-22 to offset direct emissions from the vehicles.
- In addition to sustainable development, the report also highlights NHAI's commitment to **creating inclusive and responsible work**

**practices.** Over the last three years, the employment of marginalized communities and women at NHAI has increased.

**Anthropocene epoch**

**News Excerpt:**

Geologists have found sediments at **Crawford Lake in Canada's Ontario** that have provided evidence of the beginning of the Anthropocene epoch.

**About:**

- The Anthropocene epoch is a **proposed epoch** that denotes the present geological time interval, in which the Earth's ecosystem has gone through radical changes due to human impact, especially since the onset of the Industrial Revolution.
- Analyzing **the lake's bottom sediments**, which have over the years captured the fallouts of large-scale burning of fossil fuels, the explosion of nuclear weapons, and the dumping of plastic and fertilizers on land and in water bodies.
- There are numerous phenomena associated with this epoch, such as **global warming, sea-level rise, ocean acidification, mass-scale soil erosion**, the advent of deadly heat waves, deterioration of the biosphere, and other detrimental changes in the environment.

- The Earth's geological time scale is a fundamental tool used by geologists, paleontologists, and other scientists to study the planet's past.
- The planet's geological time scale is divided into **six** broad categories: **eons, epochs, eras, periods, epochs, and ages.**

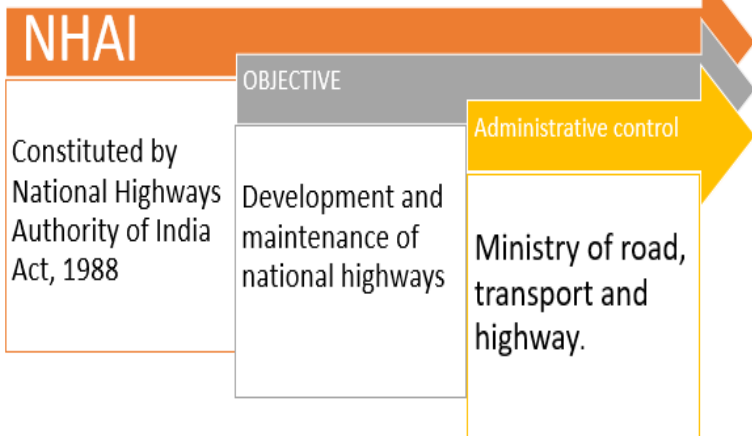
**Energy Transition Index**

**News Excerpt:**

According to the report released by WEF India, it is ranked 67th on the Energy Transition Index.

**The key findings:**

- India is the **only major economy** with energy transition momentum accelerating across the Energy Transition Index's equitable, secure and sustainable dimensions.
- Achieving **universal access to electricity**, replacing solid fuels with clean cooking options, and increasing renewable energy deployment have been primary contributors to the improvement of India's performance.



- The pace of **thermal power plant expansion** has considerably slowed in India, though strategies for early retirement or repurposing of the existing fleet will be crucial.
- **Requirement for India's Energy Transition:**
  - A skilled workforce,
  - Public-private collaboration in innovation and
  - Investment in research and development in low-carbon technologies.
- **Sweden topped the list and was followed by Denmark, Norway, Finland, and Switzerland** in the top five on the list of 120 countries.
- **Drawbacks-** Global energy transition has made progress but falls short of the 1.5°C pathway: IRENA.

#### World Economic Forum (WEF):

- It is a Swiss nonprofit foundation established in 1971.
- **HQ-** Geneva, Switzerland.
- **Other reports published by WEF-**
  - Global Competitiveness Report
  - Global Gender Gap Report
  - Global Risk Report
  - Global Travel and Tourism Report.

## Bharat 6G Alliance (B6GA)

### News Excerpt:

India is taking the lead in 6G technology.

### About:

B6GA is a collaborative platform consisting of public and private companies, academia, research institutions, and Standards development organizations.

- It will forge coalitions and synergies with **other 6G Global Alliances**, fostering international collaboration and knowledge exchange.
- **The objective of B6GA** is to understand the business and societal needs of 6G beyond technology requirements, foster consensus on these needs, and promote high-impact open research and development (R&D) initiatives.
  - **Leading Industry standards:** Related patent creation within the country and actively contributing to international standardization organizations such as 3GPP and ITU, B6GA seeks to position India at the forefront of 6G innovation.

- **Associated Ministry:** Dept of Telecommunication under the Ministry of Communication.
- **Funding:** To bolster the advancement of 6G technology, the government has allocated a grant of ₹240.51 crores through the Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF).

#### About 6G- Next Generation of 5G technology

- **Speed** - 100 times faster than 5G
- Ultra-low latency
- **Uses-** Quantum computing and Artificial Intelligence Render and Transmit Real-time Holographic Images
- Communication will be established through the Terahertz band of Frequency, which is between infrared and microwave on the electromagnetic spectrum.

## Amrit Bharat Stations

### News Excerpt:

The Prime Minister lays the foundation stone for the redevelopment of 508 Amrit Bharat Stations, spread across 27 states and union territories.

### About:

- The '**Amrit Bharat Station Scheme**' is under the **Ministry of Railways**, and almost 1300 prime railway stations in the country will be redeveloped.
- It is based on **Master Planning** for the long term and implementation as per the needs of the station. It aims at enhancing the facilities beyond the Minimum Essential Amenities such as the construction of Roof Plazas and City Centres at the station.
- It caters to the introduction of new amenities as well as the **upgradation and replacement of existing amenities**. Amenities at the stations like entry and exit, circulating areas, waiting halls, toilets, lift/escalators, cleanliness, free Wi-Fi, kiosks for local products through schemes like 'One Station One Product', better passenger information systems, Executive Lounges, nominated spaces for business meetings, landscaping, etc.
- The scheme also envisages improvement of the building, integrating the station with both sides of the city, multimodal integration, and amenities for Divyangjans sustainable and environment-friendly solutions. **The design of the station buildings will be inspired by local culture, heritage, and architecture.**

## Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)

### News Excerpt:

NASA in collaboration with the United States Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) is seeking a **nuclear thermal propulsion system** that could potentially cut down the travel time to Mars by half.

### About:

- The program is named **DRACO, short for the Demonstration Rocket for Agile Cislunar Operations**.
- It takes **7 to 9 months** for the journey to Mars. It could be reduced with more efficient rocket engines. Current rocket engines rely on the **combustion of fuel like hydrogen or methane with oxygen** and are not efficient as there is not enough room in the spacecraft to carry that much propellant.
- Nuclear reactions are much more efficient and provide more speed, agility, and manoeuvrability. It has many national security applications too.
- Earlier projects for nuclear propulsion for spacecraft:
  - **Project Orion** - financed by NASA, the US Air Force, and the Advanced Research Projects Agency.
  - **Project Rover and Project NERVA** were developed by **NASA** and other agencies for nuclear-thermal engines.
  - But none were launched into space.
- NERVA used weapons-grade uranium for its reactors, while recent-**DRACO will use a less-enriched form of uranium**. The reactor would not be turned on until it reaches space as part of the precautions to minimize the possibility of a radioactive accident on Earth.

## Self-Reliant India Fund

### News Excerpt:

As part of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat package, Rs 50,000 crore Equity infusion for MSMEs through Fund of Funds was announced.

### Aim:

To provide support for MSMEs across the country through equity infusion.

### About Self Reliant India (SRI) Fund:

- SRI fund operates through a **mother-fund and daughter-fund structure** for equity or quasi-equity investments. NSIC Venture Capital Fund

Limited (NVCFL), which operates as Mother Fund in SRI Fund implementation, was registered as a Category-II Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) with SEBI on 1st September 2021.

- Since its inception in 2021, total equity infusion under the SRI Fund for MSME reached Rs. 4,885 crores, including the Government of India contribution of Rs. 529.40 crores.

## Nobel Peace Prize

### News Excerpt:

**Iranian** activist **Narges Mohammadi** has been awarded the **2023 Nobel Prize for Peace** "For her fight against the oppression of women in Iran and her fight to promote human rights and freedom for all". Her brave struggle has come with tremendous personal costs. Altogether, the regime has arrested her 13 times, convicted her five times, and sentenced her to a total of 31 years in prison and 154 lashes.

### In-depth:

- The Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded 104 times to 141 (111 individuals and 30 organizations) Nobel Prize laureates between 1901 and 2023.
- The **International Committee of the Red Cross** has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize three times (in 1917, 1944, and 1963), and the **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees** has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize two times (in 1954 and 1981).

The **motto** adopted by the demonstrators: "**Zan – Zindagi – Azadi**" i.e. "**Woman – Life – Freedom**" – suitably expresses the dedication and work of Narges Mohammadi.

1. **Woman:** She fights for women against systematic discrimination and oppression.
2. **Life:** She supports women's struggle for the right to live full and dignified lives. This struggle across Iran has been met with persecution, imprisonment, torture, and even death.
3. **Freedom:** She fights for freedom of expression and the right against rules requiring women to remain out of sight and to cover their bodies. The freedom demands expressed by demonstrators apply not only to women but to the entire population.

## Nobel Literature Prize

### News Excerpt:

The Nobel Prize in Literature for 2023 was awarded to **Norwegian author Jon Fosse** "for his innovative plays and prose which gives voice to the unsayable".

### In-depth:

- The Nobel Literature Prize has been awarded 116 times to 120 Nobel Prize laureates, out of which only 17 have been women.
- **This year's literature laureate, Jon Fosse, writes novels that are heavily pared down to a style that has come to be known as 'Fosse minimalism'.**
- Fosse, which means "waterfall" in Norwegian, is written in Nynorsk, the least common of the two official versions of Norwegian. After winning the Nobel, he said he regarded the award as a recognition of this language and the movement promoting it and that he ultimately owed the prize to the language itself.
- Fosse's magnum opus in prose is named 'Septology'. It is a 1,250-page novel that is one long, very long sentence, plays charged with unspeakable emotional tension due to anxiety and uncertainty, and minimalist poems that raise existential questions.

## Sportswashing

### News Excerpt:

The **Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia** recently said in an **interview** that he does **not care** when he is accused of 'sportswashing'.

### Definition:

Sportswashing is the **practice** followed by individuals, corporations, or governments of **using sports to improve reputations** deteriorated by misconduct. It can be accomplished through **hosting** sporting events or **purchasing** and **sponsoring** sporting teams.

## Inclusion of Cricket in the Olympics

### News Excerpt:

Recently, an International Olympic Committee (**IOC**) meeting was held in **Mumbai**.

### About:

- IOC has approved the inclusion of **Baseball-Softball, Cricket, Flag football, Lacrosse, and Squash** in the Los Angeles Olympic Games 2028.

- According to IOC rules, host cities can propose sports they would like to be added to the Olympic program.

### IOC

- Established on 23 June 1894 in **Lausanne, Switzerland**.
- It is a **not-for-profit** independent international organization entirely **privately funded** and distributes **90%** of its revenues to the wider sporting movement for the development of sport and athletes at all levels.
- It acts as a **catalyst** for collaboration between all **Olympic stakeholders**, including the athletes, the National Olympic Committees, the International Federations, the Organising Committees for the Olympic games, the Worldwide Olympic partners, and Olympic broadcast partners.
- It also collaborates with public and private authorities, including the United Nations and other international organizations.

## Anubhav Awards

### News Excerpt:

The **Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare** has held the Anubhav Awards 2023 Ceremony in Vigyan Bhawan, **New Delhi**.

### About:

- To **encourage** submission of write-ups by **retired Government servants**, an annual Award Scheme was started in 2016.
- It also allows the retiring employees to convey information related to their contribution to enhancing the effectiveness of the various Government policies.
- It is envisaged that this culture of leaving notes by retirees will become the foundation stone of **good governance** and **administrative reforms** in the future.

## Rohini Nayar Prize

### News Excerpt:

The **Second edition of the Rohini Nayar Prize** was awarded to **Deenanath Rajput** for Outstanding Contribution to Rural Development.

### About the Rohini Nayar Prize:

- It has been established to honour the **exemplary contribution of young Indians under the age of 40** who are committed to improving the lives of rural people.

- It has been instituted in the memory of the life and work of eminent economist-administrator Dr. Rohini Nayyar.
- Rohini Nayyar served as the principal advisor in the Erstwhile Planning Commission and as IAS under the Uttar Pradesh Cadre.

**Contribution of Deenanath Rajput:**

- He is an engineer turned social worker.
- He set up a **Farmers Produce Organization (FPO) in Jagalpur in Bastar, Chhattisgarh.**
  - Bastar district is known to be a center of Naxalite activities.
- The **initial membership of the FPO was 337; now, it has more than 6000 members** across 4 districts.
- The FPO provides agricultural extension services to farmers, helping to **build cold storage infrastructure**, connecting them to **national and international markets** for their products, and enabling them **to diversify into high-value-added products and services.**
- His efforts have **changed the lives of over 6000 tribal women in Chhattisgarh.**

**Indira Gandhi Peace Prize**

**News Excerpt:**

Recently, the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament, and Development for 2022 was awarded to the **Indian Medical Association (IMA) and the Trained Nurses Association of India (TNAI)** by former Vice President Shri Hamid Ansari for their remarkable service during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**About Indira Gandhi Peace Prize:**

- It is a prestigious annual award given since **1986.**
- It has been named after former Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi, and conferred on her birth anniversary on 19 November every year by the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust.
- It consists of a monetary award of **25 lakh along with a citation.**
- **Awarded To:**
  - The award is given to people or associations **pursuing worldwide harmony and development, guaranteeing that logical revelation is utilized** to further the scope of opportunity, improve humankind, and make a new global economic order.
- **Current award:**
  - The 2022 award acknowledged the **selfless service, dedication, and perseverance**

**displayed by healthcare workers during the pandemic.**

**Indian Medical Association (IMA)**

- The only representative voluntary organization of Doctors of Modern Scientific System of Medicine, which looks after the interest of doctors and the well-being of the community at large.
- Started in 1928 on the occasion of the 5th all-India Medical Conference at Calcutta.
- The National headquarters of the IMA is situated in New Delhi, and its Journal Office functions from Calcutta.
- "Your Health" in English and "Aap Ka Swasthya" in Hindi are published regularly.

**Trained Nurses' Association of India (TNAI)**

- A national organization of nurse professionals at different levels, initially known as the Association of Nursing Superintendents.
- Established in 1908 and registered under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860.
- In 1910, the first conference of the Trained Nurses' Association of India was held at Banaras, and the Nursing Journal of India was published for the first time.

**Significance of this Award:**

- Healthcare workers worked tirelessly, often neglecting their own welfare, and endured unprecedented work hours.
  - These COVID warriors stood as the primary defence against the virus, exemplifying remarkable resilience, tenacity, and compassion in adversity.
- The award represents the unparalleled commitment and sacrifices of healthcare professionals and is aligned with the principles and causes advocated by Indira Gandhi throughout her illustrious career.

**Hattee community**

**News Excerpt:**

**Demand** for Scheduled tribe status in the Hattee community has **regained** momentum.

**About Hattee Community:**

- The community resides in the Sirmaur district of **Himachal Pradesh.**



- The name 'Hattis' originated from the **practice of selling** locally grown produce, such as vegetables, crops, meat, wool, etc., at small markets called '**haat**' in towns.
- The community is divided into **two clans** - Trans-Giri and Jaunsar Bawar.
  - The prominent Hattee community living in the Trans-Giri region has been demanding Scheduled Tribe (ST) status for over five years.
- The Hattis are governed by a traditional council called '**khumbli**', similar to 'khaps' in Haryana, which makes decisions related to the community.

## National Unity Day

### News Excerpt:

Sardar Vallabh Patel's birthday, which falls on **31 October**, is also celebrated as National Unity Day.

### About National Unity Day:

- In 2014, the Government of India decided to observe the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel as the "**Rashtriya Ekta Diwas**" (National Unity Day) on 31 October every year.
- This occasion will allow us to reaffirm our nation's inherent strength and resilience to withstand the actual and potential threats to our country's unity, integrity, and security.

### About Vallabhbhai Patel:

- Vallabhbhai Patel, the **deputy Prime Minister** of India, was responsible for the Home, States, and Information and Broadcasting portfolios after India gained independence.
- He tackled the complex issue of **states' integration** into the Union of India, reducing the **Princely States** from 562 to **26 administrative units** and bringing **democracy** to nearly 80 million people.
- As Minister of Home Affairs, he presided over efforts to **restore order and peace** in a country ravaged by **communal strife and** sorted out **partition** problems.
- He also **reorganized services** to form a new **Indian Administrative Service**, providing a stable administrative base for the new democracy.
- In his memory, the **Statue of Unity**, a colossal symbol of India's unity, stands tall on the banks of the **Narmada River** in **Vadodara**, Gujarat. The statue was unveiled in **2018**.

## World Thrift Day

### News Excerpt:

**World Thrift Day** was observed **worldwide on 31st October and on 30th October in India** to promote saving money and developing a sense of financial prudence.

### About:

### Law of Conservation:

It is a principle that states that a certain physical property (i.e., a measurable quantity) does not change over time within an isolated physical system.

- It implies that all energy is conserved, as is the total momentum. Nothing is deleted or destroyed, only conserved. All phenomena, from the subatomic world to the galaxies, follow the path of **least action**.

### Principal of Least Action:

It means that a physical system between any two points in space-time evolves along a path that minimizes or maximizes the action depending on the outcome of the process.

- The basic idea is that nature has a particular purpose to fulfil and thus follows an economic path.
- The **moving water adapts to the hard rocks and soft soil** that come its way and doesn't insist on moving in a straight line. Similarly, **light bends** when moving from one medium to another by changing its velocity (refraction).
- The principle of least action is also helpful in **metaphysics and philosophy**.

## Digital Twins

### News Excerpt:

The Survey of India (SOI) has signed an agreement with Genesys International to create 3D maps of major cities and towns by 2035, which is in line with the National Geospatial Policy's goal of making 'Digital Twins' of urban areas.

### About 'Digital Twins':

- The concept of '**digital twins**' refers to a **virtual replication of a real object, process, or service** at the core of the new digital revolution.
- **The National Geospatial Policy** stated its goals to produce a high-resolution topographical map of "**every inch**" of India by **2030** and create **digital twins** of India's major cities and towns by **2035**.

### Survey of India:

- It is the **National Survey and Mapping Organization of India under the Department of Science & Technology**, set up in 1767.
- It is the custodian of India's map and has been assigned the **nation's Principal Mapping Agency role**.
- Survey of India dedicates itself to advancing theory, practice, collection, and geospatial data applications and promoting an active exchange of information, ideas, and technological innovations.

### National Geospatial Policy, 2022:

- The Policy is a citizen-centric policy that seeks to strengthen the Geospatial sector to support national development, economic prosperity and a thriving information economy.
- The Policy builds on a conducive environment generated by the **"Guidelines for acquiring and producing Geospatial Data and Geospatial Data Services including Maps."**

### Significance of Digital Twins:

- These maps can be used in various planning applications with high-resolution images.
- The digital twinning of urban areas will **help with disaster management and provide details on the vulnerability** of properties and infrastructure through digital terrain/surface models.
- It can facilitate **better decision-making** for all kinds of facilities and services in urban areas, including traffic planning, real estate development, revenue (property tax) collection and ecological planning.
- It will also **help policymakers understand how infrastructure will function in different situations**, such as high-footprint events, population increases, or natural disasters.

### About The Agreement:

- The Agreement will allow **Genesys** to generate **'three-dimensional digital twins'** for 'major Indian cities and towns, develop an **'urban 3-D data model,'** and "license" geospatial data products to buyers in a **'content-as-a-service'** model.
- Genesys International **will use the SOI's nationwide state-of-the-art national survey network of over 900 Continuously Operating Reference Stations (CORS)** to provide real-time **location-based mapping and positioning services** with an **accuracy of + / - 3cm**, as well

as host an array of different positioning services targeted to cater to the needs of different segments of the geospatial and scientific communities.

### CORS (Continuously Operating Reference Stations):

- CORS is a GPS or GNSS reference station that continuously and permanently delivers real-time location information for a defined area.
- It is capable of **precise location-based services** that offer centimetre-level positioning services in real time.
- The Survey of India will operate the CORS Network.
- The Survey of India has established **over 1,000 CORS stations** around the country.

### Genesis International Private Limited:

- It is a **non-profit mapping company incorporated in 1997**.
- **Genesys** is a mapping company that uses **aerial and ground-mapping methods** to create digital maps.
- The company has built digital twins of **Ayodhya and the Dharavi slum cluster in Mumbai, Kochi, and Kanpur**, among other applications.

### Future Endeavours:

- Combining the CORS technology with Genesys' mapping expertise improves the accuracy and reliability of geospatial data, opening up new opportunities for India's development.

## ESIC bags 'ISSA Vision Zero 2023' Award

### News Excerpt:

Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) bags the 'ISSA Vision Zero 2023' Award at the 23rd World Congress on Safety and Health at Work in Sydney, Australia.

### About the news:

- ESIC was awarded "ISSA Vision Zero 2023" as it had great success in outreach in the field of workplace safety and health by aligning the prevention strategy besides post-accidental mechanisms for medical care and cash benefits to the workers and their dependents.
- "Vision Zero" is a transformational approach to workplace accident prevention, integrating safety, health, and well-being at all work levels.

### World Congress on Safety and Health at Work:

- First held in 1955, it is one of the largest international conferences for work health and safety.
- It has developed into a global forum where over 3000 participants exchange ideas, discuss research and best practices, and look at practical solutions to critical occupational safety and health issues.
- The motto of the 2023 World Congress is **Shaping Change: Collaborating for a Healthier and Safer World of Work.**

### International Social Security Association (ISSA):

- It is the principal international institution bringing together social security agencies and organizations worldwide. Founded in 1927, it has headquarters at the International Labour Office in Geneva, Switzerland.
- The ISSA aims to promote dynamic social security as the social dimension in a globalizing world by supporting excellence in social security administration.
- The ISSA provides members with access to information, expert advice, business standards, practical guidelines, and platforms to build and promote dynamic social security systems worldwide.

### Indira Gandhi Peace Prize - 2023

#### News Excerpt:

Daniel Barenboim and Ali Abu Awwad have jointly been awarded the 2023 **Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament, and Development.**

#### About the awardees:

- They were recognized for their work in bringing together **Israeli and Arab youth** and people for a **non-violent resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict.**
- **Daniel Barenboim:**
  - He is an **Argentine-born** distinguished **classical pianist.**
  - He is well known for his relentless **use of music to foster harmony in West Asia.**
- **Ali Abu Awwad:**
  - He is an eminent **Palestinian peace activist** working tirelessly with the people of Palestine and Israel for a peaceful resolution of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.
  - In 2014, he co-founded a local **Palestinian-Israeli initiative** called **Roots**, promoting

understanding, non-violence, and transformation.

#### About the Indira Gandhi Peace Prize:

- This **award is given annually** to a person or organization **without any distinction of nationality, race, or religion** in recognition of creative efforts to enlarge the scope of freedom and enrich the human spirit **since 1986.**
- It consists of an **award of Rs. 2.5 million** and a trophy with a citation.

### Langlands Program

#### News Excerpt:

- Langlands Program is the World's Largest Math Project Connecting Number Theory and Harmonic Analysis.

#### About:

- Robert Langlands was awarded the Abel Prize in 2018 and initiated the Langlands Program in 1967, connecting **representation theory to number theory.**
- Langlands Program aims to find connections between **number theory** (the study of numbers) and **harmonic analysis** (the study of periodic phenomena).
- It bridges the gap between **discrete arithmetic** (numbers like integers) and **continuous mathematical** objects (like waves).

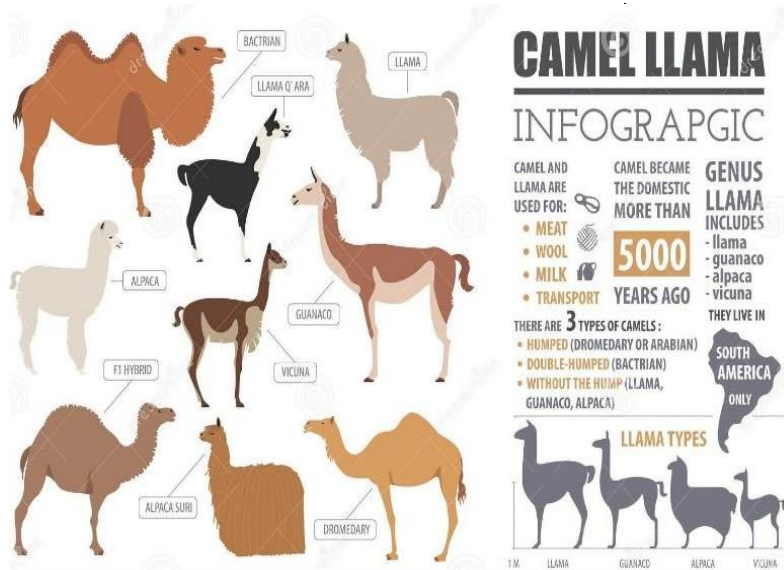
#### Significance of Programme:

- Andrew Wiles and Richard Taylor (The British mathematicians) used Langlands' conjectures to prove Fermat's final theorem **in 1994.**
- The Program has also assisted mathematicians in creating new automorphic functions from existing ones. They recognize that such possibilities could be critical in proving the Ramanujan conjectures, many of which remain unanswered.

### UN has declared 2024 the International Year of Camelids

#### News Excerpt:

The United Nations has declared 2024 as the International Year of Camelids (IYC 2024) to highlight the significant contributions of camelids – alpacas, Bactrian camels, dromedaries, guanacos, llamas, and vicuñas – to the livelihoods of millions in over 90 countries.



### About Camelids:

- Camelids are a fascinating group of **even-toed ungulates belonging to the family Camelidae**.
- They possess remarkable adaptations that enable them to **thrive in arid and high-altitude environments, making them well-suited for harsh terrains worldwide**.
- There are two primary classifications within the Camelidae family-
  - **Old World Camelids:**
    - These are primarily found in northern Africa and central Asia.
    - Notable examples include **Dromedary Camels and Bactrian Camels**.
  - **South American Camelids (New World Camelids):** This category includes llamas, alpacas, guanacos, and vicuñas. They are native to South America and exhibit their own distinct characteristics and adaptations.

### Significance of camelids:

- **Importance in Livelihoods:** Camelids, thriving in harsh environments, play a crucial role in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which address hunger, poverty eradication, women's empowerment, and sustainable ecosystem management, especially among Indigenous Peoples and local communities.
- **Resilience and Essential Resources:** These animals exhibit remarkable **resilience in extreme climates and provide essentials like milk, meat, and fibre where other livestock struggle**, significantly impacting the culture, economy, food security, and livelihoods,

especially in Andean highlands and arid areas in Africa and Asia.

- **Goals of IYC 2024:** The International Year of Camelids aims to raise **global awareness** about their untapped potential, necessitating increased investment in the camelid sector.

- **Endorsement and Support:** The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) recommended the designation, which was endorsed by the UN General Assembly in 2020. Positive feedback from stakeholders, including the International Camel Organization (ICO), signifies recognition and support within the camelid community.

## Meghalaya's Lakadong turmeric gets a GI tag.

### News Excerpt:

The conferred Geographical Indication (GI) tag on Lakadong turmeric marks a significant milestone for Meghalaya, signifying a historic achievement in the state's cultural and agricultural domain.

- The GI tag has not only recognized Lakadong turmeric but also extended to other cultural treasures: Garo Dakmanda (traditional dress), Garo Chubitchi (an alcoholic beverage), and Larnai pottery made from black clay in Larnai village.

### About the News:

- **Lakadong Turmeric:**
  - This specific turmeric variety is found in the Lakadong area of Jaintia Hills in Meghalaya.
  - It is renowned for its **high curcumin content**, around 6.8 to 7.5%, which is significantly higher than other varieties.
  - It generally shows a darker colour and is cultivated organically without using fertilizers.
  - The GI tag is expected to assist farmers in marketing the authentic product and gaining customer access.
- **Garo Dakmanda:** It is a handwoven **ankle-length lower garment worn** traditionally by Garo women in Meghalaya. This traditional attire reflects the cultural heritage of the Garo community.
- **Garo Chubitchi:** This **alcoholic beverage** is a rice-based fermented drink consumed during

**Curcumin:**

- It is a **natural polyphenol compound** found in **turmeric**, a spice derived from the **Curcuma longa plant**.
- It is responsible for the vibrant **yellow colour** of turmeric and is known for its various **health-promoting properties**.
- Curcumin might offer potential benefits in managing **metabolic syndrome**, **reducing pain**, and aiding in managing **inflammatory** and degenerative **eye conditions**.

- feasts and ceremonies in the Garo community. Its recognition via the GI tag could help preserve its cultural identity and expand its market reach.
- **Larnai Pottery:** This pottery is made from black clay sourced from Larnai village and has been passed down through generations. The art form's recognition with the GI tag acknowledges its unique craftsmanship and cultural heritage.

## Meri Maati Mera Desh campaign

**News Excerpt:**

The Amrit Kalash Yatra of the Meri Maati Mera Desh campaign culminated at Kartavya Path.

**About:**

- The **Amrit Kalash Yatra** of the Meri Maati Mera Desh campaign **culminated at Kartavya Path**.
- It is a nationwide campaign launched on **9 August 2023** to pay tribute to the '**Veers**' who laid down their lives for the country.
- This campaign concludes the '**Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav**,' which began on **12 March 2021**.
- It envisions a unified celebration of **India's soil and valour**, commemorating the nation's journey of freedom and progress.
- This campaign comprises many **activities** and **ceremonies** conducted across the country at Panchayat/Village, Block, Urban Local Body, State and National levels:



- **Dedication of Shilaphalakam (Memorial):**

- Shilaphalakam, inscribed with the names of Bravehearts, shall be **erected** locally within Panchayats/Villages and urban sites—likely near Amrit Sarovar.

- **Panch Pran Pledge:**

- People will take a solemn pledge covering the Panch Pran at the memorial site, affirming their commitment to the country.

- **Vasudha Vandhan:**

- Panchayats/villages/urban local bodies will **replenish Mother Earth by planting 75 saplings** of indigenous species and developing the '**Amrit Vatika**'.

- **Veeron Ka Vandan:**

- Felicitation ceremonies shall be held to honour the **freedom fighters** and the **families** of deceased freedom fighters.

- **Rashtragaan:**

- Hoisting of the **National Flag** and singing of Rashtragaan shall be undertaken at the sites.

- **Amrit Kalash Yatra:**

- **Volunteers** from all corners of the country would **collect Mitti** (soil) from Panchayats/Villages and bring it to the block level. Similarly, Mitti shall be collected from smaller urban bodies and brought to larger municipalities/urban local bodies.
- Subsequently, Mitti Kalash, having the soil from the Panchayats/Villages/urban areas, would be carried to the **National Capital**.