



**INSIGHTSIAS**

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IAS EXAM PREPARATION

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**Art and Culture**

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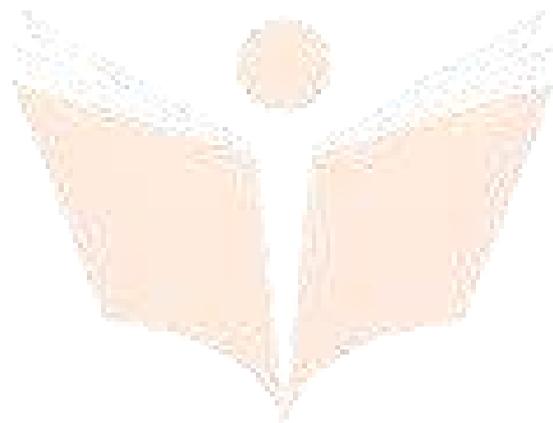
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## Festivals / Celebrations

### NOTES

### 1. Jangalmahal Utsab

- Jangalmahal Utsab was recently inaugurated at the Jhargam district in West Bengal.
- The festival is organised in the state to **promote tribal art and culture**.
- Different folk songs and dances such as Tusu, Bhadu, Ahira and Jhumur are performed by the locals of the Jangalmahal area during the festival.
- The world Jangalmahal is used to refer four districts of the state — Purulia, Bankura, Jhargam and West Midnapore. These four districts were once affected by Maoist insurgency.

### 2. Jal Mahotsav

- **India's biggest water carnival** through 'Jal Mahotsav' is organised every year in **Hanuwantiya Island in Madhya Pradesh**.
- The third such 'Jal Mahotsav' concluded this year on January 2.
- The festival, held between October and January, is a celebration of **Madhya Pradesh's natural beauty and its culture**.
- It is also a great place to try out a variety of adventure sports like parasailing, paramotoring, water zorbing, and many others.
- The festival also represents the **culture of Madhya Pradesh** – a culture that stands for rich skill set of its artisans and rich heritage.
- Hanuwantiya Island, located on the banks of the Indira Sagar dam in Madhya Pradesh, plays host to India's largest water carnival – Jal Mahotsav.

### 3. Medaram's Sammakka-Sarakka/Saralamma Jatara

- Central government is likely to declare Medaram's Sammakka-Sarakka/Saralamma Jatara a **national festival**.
- Once declared a national festival, Jatara can be considered for '**intangible cultural heritage of humanity**' tag of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).
- Sammakka-Sarakka Jatara held by **forest dwelling Koya tribe of Telangana and surrounding States**, is the **biggest Tribal festival in Asia** which is attended by one crore people on an average.
- The event is **held bi-annually** to honour the twin goddesses Sammakka and her daughter Sarakka.
- Several communities in Telangana society support Jatara as it is also a mythical narrative of two tribal women leaders who fought against the Kakatiya rulers who tried to annex their land and forests.
- According to the myth it was Sammakka's curse which caused gradual decline and death of Kakatiya rule.
- **Medaram is a remote place in the Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary**, a part of Dandakaranya, the largest surviving forest belt in the Deccan.



#### 4. National Youth Festival

- National Youth Festival was celebrated on **12th January**, that is, on the occasion of **birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda**, the youth icon of India.
- National Youth Festival (NYF) is the **biggest Youth Festival of its kind in the Country**.
- The Festival is organised by **Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports** in collaboration with **one of the State Governments**.
- Thus it is held in a different state each year (2018 was with collaboration with State Govt. of Uttar Pradesh and held at Gautam Buddha University, Greater Noida).
- This is the **22nd National Youth Festival**. The 1st National Youth Festival was held in 1995 in Bhopal.
- This was the first time that the National Youth Festival is being organized in NCR.
- **Objective:** The objective of organizing NYF is to provide a platform to bring the youth of the country together in an attempt to provide them opportunity to showcase their talents in various activities.
- **Theme:** The Theme of the Festival is '**Sankalp Se Siddhi**', to capitalize on the demographic dividend of young India, and to pledge to accomplish the Goal of New India.
- **Significance of the festival:**
  - The Festival also provides an arena, by creating a Mini-India, where youth interact in formal and informal settings and exchange their social and cultural uniqueness.
  - This blend of diverse socio-cultural milieu creates 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat'.
  - The entire programme is designed to enhance the awareness about government initiatives and exhorting the youth to express their perceptions and concepts of how to make their initiatives more effective.

#### 5. Indian harvest festivals

- The festival of **Makar Sankranti** is celebrated when the Sun enters the Makar zodiac and the days begin to lengthen compared to nights.
- In South India and particularly in **Tamil Nadu**, it's the festival of **Pongal** which is being celebrated over 4 days at harvest time.
- In **Assam** and many parts of the North East, the festival of **Magha Bihu** is celebrated.
- **Gujarat** celebrates it in the form of the convivial **kite festival of Uttarayan**.
- In **Punjab**, Makar Sankranti is celebrated as **Maghi**. Bathing in a river in the early hours on Maghi is important.
- In **Shimla** District of Himachal Pradesh, Makara Sankranti is known as **Magha Saaji**.
- The festival is known as **Kicheri** in **Uttar Pradesh** and involves **ritual bathing**.

## 6. Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav

- Continuing its endeavour to **promote India's Heritage**, Ministry of Culture organised a week long diversified cultural carnival - **8<sup>th</sup> 'Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav'** in Madhya Pradesh at Maan Mandir Fort, Gwalior.
- The States paired with Madhya Pradesh are Nagaland and Manipur.
- To celebrate the idea of unity in diversity, Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav is organised **under the Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat** matrix.
- The festival showcases a titanic variety of tribal and classical art forms from different cities and towns across the country accompanied by dance, music, drama, entertainment, literature and food.
- It aims to provide platform to bring together artists from each corner of country.
- **7<sup>th</sup> edition of the Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav was held in Karnataka.** The State paired with Karnataka was Uttarakhand.

## 7. Kathakar Festival

- **7th edition of three day 'Kathakar: International Storytellers Festival'** was recently inaugurated at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi.
- The partners for this year's festival are the IGNCA of Union Ministry of Culture in Delhi, Heritage Transport Museum in Gurugram and the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) in Mumbai.
- Kathakar is the **only oral storytelling festival in India** and is a **part of Ghummakkad Narain**- the Travelling Literature Festival which was started under the aegis of UNESCO in 2010.
- Kathakar is an attempt to not just preserve the art form but also create new audiences for the same.

## 8. Hornbill Festival

- Hornbill Festival was celebrated on the **State Formation Day of Nagaland on December 1.**
- The Hornbill Festival is the perfect showcase of rich Naga culture and traditions, preserved over the years in the form of **music, dance and food.**
- Hornbill Festival is the most anticipated festivals of Nagaland held between December 1<sup>st</sup> to December 10<sup>th</sup> every year.
- It is one of the biggest indigenous festivals of the country.
- It was established on 1st December 1963 and was inaugurated by the then President **Dr. S Radhakrishnan.**
- It is organized by the **State Tourism and Art & Culture Departments.** It is also supported by the Union Government.
- The aim of the festival is to revive and protect the rich culture of Nagaland and display its traditional extravaganza.
- The Hornbill festival is named after the **hornbill bird.** The bird is highly respected and its importance is reflected in tribal folklore, songs and dances.



**NOTES**

## 9. Kumbh Mela

- The **Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage under UNESCO** has inscribed '**KumbhMela**' on the **Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity** during its 12th session held at Jeju, South Korea.
- This inscription is the third in two years following the inscriptions of 'Yoga' and 'Nouroz'.
- **Kumbh Mela:**
  - Kumbh Mela is the largest peaceful congregation of pilgrims on earth.
  - The festival is held alternately between **Allahabad, Haridwar, Nashik and Ujjain** every three years which represents a syncretic set of rituals related to worship and ritual cleansing in holy rivers in India.
  - The rivers at these four places are **Ganga at Haridwar, Prayag Sangam at Allahabad, Godawari at Nashik, and Shipra at Ujjain.**
  - At any given place, the Kumbh Mela is held once in 12 years.
  - As a religious festival, the **tolerance and inclusiveness** that Kumbh Mela demonstrates are especially valuable for the contemporary world.
- **Intangible cultural heritage:**
  - The **UNESCO Convention for Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage**, adopted in 2003, defines intangible cultural heritage as the **practices, representations, expressions as well as knowledge and skills** that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage.
  - The list was established in 2008 after Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2003 came into effect.
  - The list of intangible cultural treasures was created mainly to **increase awareness** about them, while UNESCO also sometimes offers **financial or technical support** to countries struggling to protect them.
  - It compiles two lists viz. **Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity** and **List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.**
  - **Previous ones includes:**
    - **Chhau dance:** classical Indian dance originated in the eastern Indian states.
    - **Buddhist chanting of Ladakh:** Recitation of sacred Buddhist texts in Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir.
    - **Sankirtana** –the ritual singing, drumming, and dancing of Manipur.
    - **Traditional brass and copper craft** of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab.
    - **Ramlila-** the traditional performance of the Ramayana.
    - Tradition of **Vedic Chanting.**
    - **Koodiyattam:** Sanskrit Theatre of Kerala.
    - **Mudiyett:** Theatre ritual of Kerala.
    - **Ramman:** Religious festival and ritual theatre of Garhwal, Uttarakhand.

- **Novruz** – It marks the Parsi New Year and ushering in spring.
- **Yoga** – An ancient spiritual discipline which focuses on bringing harmony between mind and body.

## **10. Bodhi Parva**

- India hosted the **2017 edition of “Bodhi Parva: BIMSTEC Festival of Buddhist Heritage”** in New Delhi as part of celebrations of 20th Anniversary of BIMSTEC.
- The festival was held at IGNCA, Janpath (**Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts**).
- The festival was organized by the **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** along with Teamwork Arts.
- **Why this Festival?**
  - Emphasise and raise awareness of Buddhism, a rich and common heritage and mark the 20th anniversary of BIMSTEC.
  - To spread universal message of peace and tolerance practiced by Buddhism to address growing sense of inadequacy in face of changes and conflicts that people and the world face.

## **11. Kambala**

- The Supreme Court has refused to pass an interim order to stay Ordinance allowing kambala, the traditional buffalo slush track race in Karnataka.
- Kambala is an annual traditional **Buffalo Race** held in coastal districts of Karnataka to entertain rural people of the area.
- **Slushy/marshy paddy field** track is used for Kambala.
- In the traditional form of Kambala, buffalo racing is **non-competitive** and the buffalo pairs run one by one in paddy fields.
- There is also **ritualistic approach** as some agriculturists’ race their buffaloes for **thanks giving** to god for protecting their animals from diseases. But in recent times, Kambala has become an organised rural sport.



## **12. Jallikattu**

- Jallikattu is a **bull taming or bull vaulting sport** played in **Tamil Nadu** on **Mattu Pongal day** as a **part of Pongal celebrations**.
- Jallikattu has been derived from the words ‘calli’ (coins) and ‘kattu’ (tie), which means a bundle of coins is tied to the bull’s horns.
- In the ancient **Sangam literature** the sport has been called as **‘Yeru thazhuvuthal’** (means to embrace bulls).
- In older times Jallikattu was popular amongst warriors during the Tamil classical period. The bull tamer sought to remove this bundle from the animal’s head to win gold or silver coins to be called ‘brave’ and ‘valourous’.
- **All castes participate in the event** and majority of jallikattu and bulls used for the sport belong to the **pulikulam breed of cattle**.



### 13. Manipur Sangai Festival 2017

- The **annual Sangai Festival** was celebrated in Manipur.
- The festival is labelled as the **grandest festival of the State** and helps **promote Manipur as a world class tourism destination**.
- Every edition of the festival **showcases the tourism potential** of the state in the field of Arts & Culture, Handloom, Handicrafts, Indigenous Sports, Cuisine, Music and Adventure sports of the state etc.
- **Background:**
  - The festival is named after **state animal, Sangai**, the endangered brow-antlered deer found only in Manipur's Keibul Lamjao National Park, only floating national park in the world. It was started in 2010.
- **Focus areas:**
  - The State's classical dance form, '**Ras Leela**' is quite famous all over the world for its distinctiveness from any other dance forms in India.
  - The Ras Leela was an important part of the dance performances at the Manipur Sangai Festival 2017 besides the various other folk dance performances like the Kabui Naga dance, Bamboo dance, Maibi dance, Lai Haraoba dance, Khamba Thoibi dance etc.
- **Indigenous sports** were also a major highlight of the festival. Manipur's famous martial arts- **Thang Ta** (a combination Spear & Sword skills), Yubi-Lakpi (a game played with greased coconut like rugby), Mukna Kangjei (a game that combines hockey and wrestling), and Sagol Kangjei- Modern Polo (believed to have evolved in Manipur) were part of the festival.



### 14. Namami Barak festival

- The **first ever Namami Barak festival** was celebrated on November 18th at **Barak Valley in Assam**.
- Namami Barak is an attempt to pay **tribute to the River Barak** and to showcase of Barak's potential and possibilities to emerge as a **hub of trade and commerce**.
- The cultural heritage of the valley together with its cuisine, fauna and flora, socio-economic and civic splendor were showcased before the global audience during the festival.
- **Barak river:**
  - The Barak River is one of the major rivers of South Assam and is a part of the **Surma-Meghna River System**.
  - It rises in Manipur State, where it is the biggest and the most important of the hill country rivers.
  - After Manipur it flows through Mizoram and into Assam, ending after 564 kilometres just after it enters Bangladesh where it forks into the Surma and Kushiara rivers.



### 15. Aadi Mahotsav

- It is a **fortnight long tribal festival** on the theme of '**A Celebration of the Spirit of Tribal Culture, Cuisine and Commerce**'. It was held in Delhi.
- More than 750 tribal artisans and artisans from over 25 states took part in the festival.
- The Mahotsav features **exhibition-cum-sale of tribal handicrafts, art, paintings, fabric, jewellery** and much more.
- A special feature of the festival is tribal India cuisine, recreated and presented in delectable forms to suit urban tastes by special tribal chefs.
- The name Aadi Mahotsav suggests that the 'adi' factor is important about them. So, this festival seeks to channelize and promote their natural skills and provide them sources of income.
- The Government has formed the **Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (Trifed)** for achieving this.

### 16. Nuakhai Juhar

- Nuakhai Juhar was celebrated across **Odisha** on August 26.
- Nuakhai is the chief festival of Western Odisha.
- It is the **harvest festival of Odisha wherein farmers are in possession of new rice of the season**.
- They offer the first produce of their respective lands to **Goddess Samaleswari** and then consume it personally.
- It is one of the major festivals celebrated widely in the state.



### 17. Falun Gong

- Falun Gong, **the ancient Chinese holistic system that is banned in China**, was celebrated in India on July 15 with a parade and Human Word Formation in the capital.
- Falun Gong is a Chinese spiritual practice that **combines meditation and qigong exercises with a moral philosophy centered on the tenets of truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance**.
- The practice emphasizes morality and the cultivation of virtue, and identifies as a qigong practice of the Buddhist school, though its teachings also incorporate elements drawn from Taoist traditions.
- Through moral rectitude and the practice of meditation, practitioners of Falun Gong aspire to **eliminate attachments, and ultimately to achieve spiritual enlightenment**.

### 18. Pelican Bird Festival

- '**Pelican Bird Festival-2018**' was recently organized at **Kolleru Lake**.
- It was jointly organised by the **Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority (APTA)** and



**Krishna district administration.**

- **Background:**
  - During winter season, thousands of pelicans, painted storks and other birds migrate to Kolleru Lake.
  - During their stay they roost, breed and later fly away with their off springs.
  - Recently, **Atapaka Bird Sanctuary** was recognised as one of the largest pelicanry in the world.
- **Kolleru lake:**
  - Kolleru lake is one of the largest **fresh water lakes** in the country.
  - It is located **between Krishna and Godavari delta**.
  - It was declared as a **wildlife sanctuary in 1999** under Wildlife Protection Act of 1972.
  - It is a **Ramsar site** and is also listed as an **Important Bird Area**.
  - The lake is known to amateur birdwatchers and professional ornithologists as a Pelicanery — a location were the Grey Pelicans, a large magnificent bird, nest and breed.
  - Grey pelicans had vanished from the lake in 1973 for nearly 35 years and returned to it to nest again in December 2006.
- The **Grey Pelican also called the Spot Billed Pelican** is listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act and in the Red Data Book It is categorised as “Near threatened species”.

## 19. Mahamastakabhisheka

- **88th Mahamastakabhisheka** (head anointing ceremony) of the monolithic statue of **Lord Bahubali** was held at **Shravanabelagola, Karnataka**.
- The *mastakabhisheka* is held **once in 12 years**.
- One of the biggest festivals for the **Jain community**, it honors Lord Bahubali, a revered Jain icon.
- According to Jain texts, Bahubali attained liberation from the cycle of births and deaths (moksha) at Mount Kailash and is revered as a liberated soul (Siddha) by the Jains.
- Bahubali is also called **Gommateshwara** because of the Gommateshwara statue dedicated to him and as lord “Kammateswara” from an inscription.
- The Gommateshwara statue was built by the Ganga dynasty minister and commander **Chavundaraya**; it is a 57-foot monolith situated above a hill in Shravanabelagola in the Hassan district, Karnataka state, India.
- The statue has been depicted in **kayotsarga posture**.
- Kayotsarga means to **give up one's physical comfort and body movements**, thus staying steady, either in a standing or other posture, and concentrating upon the true nature of the soul.
- It was built in around **981 A.D.** and is one of the largest free-standing statues in the world.
- **Shravanabelagola:**
  - A group of Jain monks under the leadership of **Bhadrabahu** migrated from Ujjain to



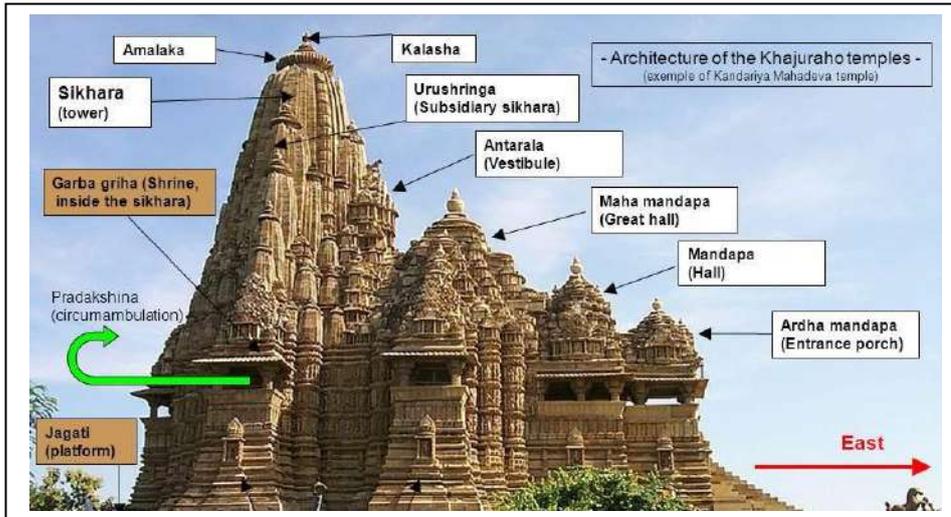
Shravanbelgola due to a serious famine during the reign of Chandragupta Maurya.

- The group of monks that migrated came to be known as **Digambaras**.
- Shravanabelagola has two hills, Chandragiri and Vindhyagiri. **Gommateshwara is located on Vindhyagiri Hill.**
- It is said that Chandragupta Maurya had spent his last days at Shravanbelagola and died here in 298 BCE after he became a Jain monk and assumed an ascetic life style.

## **20. Khajuraho dance festival**

- The **44th edition of Khajuraho Dance Festival 2018** was held at **Khajuraho temple, a UNESCO world heritage site** in Chhatarpur district, Madhya Pradesh.
- The Dance Festival was organised by the **culture department of the Madhya Pradesh government**.
- Khajuraho Dance Festival is **annual cultural festival** that highlights richness of various Indian classical dance styles.
- The 6-day festival **showcased classical dances** including Kathak, Odissi, Bharatnatyam, Kuchipudi, Kathakali and Mohiniattam.
- During the festival, dances were performed in an open- air auditorium, in front of **Vishwanatha Temple** dedicated to Lord Shiva and **Chitragupta Temple** dedicated to Sun God.
- **Khajuraho Temples:**
  - The Khajuraho Group of Monuments is a group of **Hindu and Jain temples** in Madhya Pradesh.
  - They are one of the **UNESCO World Heritage Sites** in India.
  - The temples are famous for their **nagara-style** architectural symbolism and their erotic sculptures.
  - Most Khajuraho temples were built between 950 and 1050 by the **Chandela dynasty**.
  - Of the various surviving temples, the **Kandariya Mahadeva Temple** is decorated with a profusion of sculptures with intricate details, symbolism and expressiveness of ancient Indian art.
  - The largest temple at Khajuraho is the Kandariya Mahadeva temple which is attributed to king Ganda.
  - The first recorded mention of the Khajuraho temples is in the accounts of Abu Rihan al Biruni in AD 1022 and the Arab traveler Ibn Battuta in AD 1335.

- The temples at Khajuraho are made of Sandstone.



## NOTES

### 21. Delhi hosts India's first radio festival

- India's first radio festival was recently held in Delhi.
- The festival was organised by the **International Association of Women in Radio and Television**, in collaboration with **UNESCO**.
- The event touched on the **2018's theme of World Radio Day – sports and radio** – and traced the journey of creativity, music and social changes on the radio.
- **IAWRT:**
  - IAWRT is a **global organization formed by professional women working in electronic and allied media** with a mission to strengthen initiatives towards ensuring women's views and values are integral part of programming and to **advance the impact of women in media**.
  - IAWRT organizes conferences, implements projects, undertakes activities collaborates with and media organizations.
  - It is in **consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**.
  - IAWRT is managed by international board, which oversees funding initiatives for a number of local chapters and member activities.

### 22. Losar festival

- The Losar festival in **Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir** is celebrated to mark the **beginning of New Year** in the Himalayan region.
- It is celebrated on the **first day of the lunisolar Tibetan calendar**, which corresponds to a date in February or March in the Gregorian calendar.
- Following the old tradition, people from Ladakh **visit graveyards of ancestor family members** and pray for peace for the departed soul.
- In India, Losar is also celebrated by Yolmo, Sherpa, Tamang, Gurung, and Bhotia communities residing in different regions in the country.
- It is celebrated in **Tibet, Nepal, and Bhutan**. It is also called as **Tibetan New Year**.

### **23.32nd Surajkund International Crafts Mela**

- The 32nd edition of Surajkund International Crafts Mela was held at Faridabad, Haryana.
- It is **annual cultural festival** hosted since 1987 to showcase **richness and diversity of the handicrafts and cultural heritage of India**.
- This year **Uttar Pradesh is theme state** and **Kyrgyzstan is the partner nation**.
- The Mela is organized every year by **Surajkund Mela Authority** and **Haryana Tourism** in collaboration with Union Ministries of Tourism, Textiles, and Culture.
- The festival's name Surajkund derives its name from ancient amphitheatre constructed in 10th century AD by Raja Suraj Pal, one of Tomar chieftains.
- This unique monument was built to worship Sun God and it resembles a Greek amphitheatre.



### **24.Wangala Festival**

- Annual **Hundred Drums Wangala Festival** was celebrated in **Meghalaya**.
- Wangala Festival is an annual **post-harvest festival** of the **Garos tribes** generally celebrated in the second week of November every year.
- They **give thanks to the God and Goddess**, called Misi Saljong, for blessing the people with a **rich harvest**.



### **25.Kandhei Jatra**

- **Kandhei Jatra** or **Toy Fair** is a traditional festival celebrated every year in **Berhampur** in the Indian state of **Odisha**.
- The festival is three centuries old and related to the oldest **Jagannath temple** of the city.
- This festival takes place for three days and things for domestic use made of clay, wood or metal were also put up for sale.

### **26.Cauvery Maha Pushkaram**

- **Cauvery Pushkaram** is a festival of River Cauvery.
- The word Pushkaran means **worship of the sacred river**. As such, it is celebrated along **12 major rivers by rotation**. The celebration happens annually, **once in 12 years along each river**.
- Other rivers are: Ganga, Narmada, Saraswati, Yamuna, Godavari, Krishna, Bhima, Tapti, Tungabhadra, Sindhu (Indus) and Pranhita.
- Each of these rivers is associated with a particular zodiac sign.
- The river where the festival is to be celebrated depends on the position of Jupiter.
- The Maha Pushkaram period is when the celestial **transit of planet Jupiter from Kanya Rasi to Thula** takes place. This particular alignment of stars is

known to happen only once in 144 years.

- The day of Maha Pushkaram is marked by holy dips in the sacred river.

## **27. Nabakalebar festival**

- President Ram Nath Kovind has released Rs. 1,000 and Rs. 10 commemorative coins on the occasion of Nabakalebar festival.
- Nabakalebara festival is an **ancient ritual that is observed in the Shree Jagannath Temple** at Puri, Odisha.
- Naba means new and Kalebara is body.
- In this festival, the **idols of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra and Sudarshan are replaced by new idols** as it is believed that Lord Shree Jagannath adorns new body during Nabakalebara.
- The soul or the Brahma is transferred from the old idols to their new bodies.
- It usually comes in every twelve to nineteen years.

## **28. Bathukamma**

- Bathukamma is **floral festival** celebrated by the Hindu women of **Telangana**.
- Bathukamma is celebrated for **nine days during Durga Navratri**.
- Bathukamma is a **beautiful flower stack**, arranged with different unique seasonal flowers most of them with medicinal values, in seven concentric layers in the shape of **temple gopuram**.
- It is the festival for **feminine felicitation**.



## **29. Chapchar Kut**

- Chapchar Kut, the most important traditional festival of the **Mizos** is celebrated across Mizoram and Mizo-inhabited areas in the neighbouring states.
- There are three Kuts celebrated in the state- **Chapchar Kut, Mim Kut and Pawl Kut**.
- All the three festivals are connected with **agricultural activities**.
- On this occasion, **farmers cut bamboo forests to make place for jhum or seasonal farming**.
- The festivals are celebrated to **mark the arrival of spring** with feasts and traditional dances.



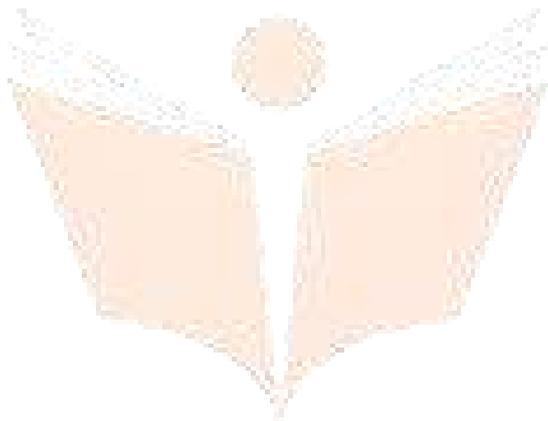
## **30. North East Calling festival**

- Two-day festival 'North East Calling' was organized by the **Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER)**.
- This Festival is organised by the Ministry of DoNER's "**Destination North East**".
- The two-day event included showcase of **rich culture of North East**, including Music Festival for bands of North-East, Cultural Night for Dances of North-

East.

- The B2B conferences were also organised at the event.
- The purpose of these events is to promote the art, culture, heritage, cuisine, handicrafts, business and tourism of North East India.

**NOTES**



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## Events / Conferences

### NOTES

### 1. 26th World Book Fair

- The **26th edition of annual World Book Fair** was held in New Delhi.
- It was organised by **National Book Trust (NBT)**, under Ministry of Human Resource Development in association with **India Trade Promotion Organisation**.
- The theme for this year is '**Environment and Climate Change**'.
- It focuses on environment issues like climate change, global warming, and water pollution.
- **European Union was Guest of Honour Country** for this year's book fair.
- New Delhi World Book Fair is not just an opportunity for a reader but it also provides a huge platform to the publishers who exhibit their numerous books at the event.
- Starting from 200 participants as publishers in 1972 the number of participants has gone up to 886 by 2016.

### 2. International Dharma-Dhamma Conference

- **4th International Dharma-Dhamma Conference** on "State and Social Order in Dharma-Dhamma Traditions" was recently inaugurated at Rajgir in Nalanda district.
- The event is being organised as part of the commemorative events to celebrate the **Silver Jubilee year of ASEAN-India Dialogue Partnership**.
- **Organizers:** Nalanda University, in collaboration with the Centre for Study of Religion and Society, India Foundation, Ministry of External Affairs and the Vietnam Buddhist University organised the conference.
- **Significance of the conference:**
  - The central theme of the conference is the **ideal state and just social order based on dharmic principles**.
  - Through this conference it is aimed to facilitate crosspollination of ideas and foster harmony at the global level.
  - In the present era of globalization it is all the more needed to integrate the world through the common bond of Dharma-Dhamma which provides **strong thread of interconnectedness**.
  - Thus, the conference seeks to explore the shared values of the dharmic traditions, which may provide the guiding light to the troubled world today.

### 3. UNWTO/UNESCO World Conference on Tourism and Culture

- The **Second UNWTO/UNESCO World Conference on Tourism and Culture: Fostering Sustainable Development** was held in **Muscat, Sultanate of Oman**.
- This conference was hosted by the **Government of the Sultanate of Oman**.
- It was conducted within the framework of **International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development (IY2017)** to build and strengthen partnerships between the Tourism and Culture sectors.
- This Conference is a sequel to the First UNWTO/UNESCO World Conference on Tourism and Culture, held in Siem Reap, Cambodia in February 2015.

- **Significance of this conference:**
  - The **United Nations has declared 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.**
  - In this context, the second UNWTO/UNESCO World Conference on Tourism and Culture features prominently as one of the official events on the calendar of activities of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.
- **UNWTO:**
  - The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is the United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.
- **Members:**
  - UNWTO's membership includes 158 countries, 6 Associate Members and over 500 Affiliate Members representing the private sector, educational institutions, tourism associations and local tourism authorities.
- **What it does?**
  - As the **leading international organization in the field of tourism**, UNWTO promotes tourism as a driver of economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability and offers leadership and support to the sector in advancing knowledge and tourism policies worldwide.
  - UNWTO encourages the implementation of the **Global Code of Ethics for Tourism**, and is committed to promoting tourism as an instrument in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
  - UNWTO generates market knowledge, promotes competitive and sustainable tourism policies and instruments, fosters tourism education and training, and works to make tourism an effective tool for development.

#### 4. 6th International Tourism Mart

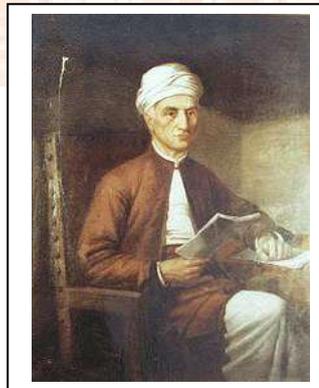
- The **Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, in association with the North Eastern States** organised the "International Tourism Mart" (ITM) in Guwahati, Assam.
- The focus areas of 6th ITM was to spotlight on India's "**Act East Policy**", blossoming ties with ASEAN and larger East Asia region, home to world's rapidly growing economies and India's emerging tourism markets.
- **International Tourism Marts:**
  - The International Tourism Marts are **organised in the North Eastern States on rotation basis.**
  - The earlier editions of this mart have been held in Guwahati, Tawang, Shillong, Gangtok and Imphal.
  - The objective is highlighting the tourism potential of the region in the domestic and international markets. It brings together the tourism business fraternity and entrepreneurs from the eight North Eastern States.

## 5. International Kala Mela

- The **First ever International Kala Mela was held in New Delhi.**
- The International Kala Mela was organised by the **Lalit Kala Akademi** in partnership with **Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA) of the Ministry of Culture.**
- The central objective of Kala Mela is to focus on direct interaction between the artist and the connoisseur and also educating and raising awareness about art, which has been the mandate of Lalit Kala Akademi.
- This comprehensive outreach shall include the participation of National, International level Artists/ Art Critics of repute from all over the Globe.
- More than 800 artists from across the world took part in the Festival.
- The festival serves as a platform for artists to showcase their art works.
- **Lalit Kala Akademi:**
  - The Lalit Kala Akademi or **National Academy of Art** is India's National Academy of Fine Arts.
  - It is an autonomous organization, established at New Delhi in 1954 to promote and propagate understanding of Indian art, both within and outside the country.
  - It does so through providing **scholarships, a fellow program, and sponsoring and organizing numerous exhibitions** in India and overseas.

## 6. International Conference on 'Demetrios Galanos and His Legacy'

- **Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)** organized an International Conference on, 'Demetrios Galanos and His Legacy'.
- The convention was held in Delhi and Varanasi.
- The conference was organized by IGNCA under the **Bharat Vidya Prayojana**, a long term academic program of the IGNCA.
- The aim of the conference is to focus on **academic and cultural exchanges between India and Greece** made by scholars and artists both Indian and Greek, in modern times since Demetrios Galanos.
- **Demetrios Galanos:**
  - Demetrios Galanos (1760–1833) has a special place among the European Indologists of the nineteenth century.
  - He was the only one who **stayed in India for 47 years**, and except for the first seven years when he lived in Calcutta, for 40 years he lived in the city of Varanasi, **mastering Sanskrit, Hindi and Persian**, from local scholars.
  - Contributions: He **translated the Bhagvad Gita into Greek** among many other Sanskrit texts.
  - His major contribution was the **compilation of a Sanskrit-English-Greek lexicon of about 9000 words.**



## 7. Theatre Olympics

- India hosted the 8th Edition of Theatre Olympics 'The Biggest Theatre Celebration of the World'.
- The event was held in India for the first time and was organised by National School of Drama (NSD) under Ministry of Culture.
- The theme of the festival is – "Flag of Friendship".
- It featured Indian and international theatre groups, eminent theatre personalities along with their performances.
- 30 countries participated in the festival from across the globe.
- **Theatre Olympics:**
  - The Theatre Olympics was established in 1993 in Delphi, Greece, as the first international theatre festival.
  - With the tagline 'Crossing Millennia', this is an initiative to connect the cultural past with the present and future, bringing the richness and diversity of theatre heritage to the experiments and research of contemporary theatre.
  - The first country to host the Theatre Olympics was Greece in 1995.

## 8. International Mother Language Day

- The United Nations' (UN) International Mother Language Day annually celebrates language diversity and variety worldwide on February 21.
- With this, UNESCO aims at preserving it and promoting mother tongue-based multilingual education.
- The theme of 2018's International Mother Language Day is 'linguistic diversity and multilingualism for sustainable development.'
- **SDG4:** International Mother Language Day also supports target 6 of Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): "Ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy."

## Dance and Music

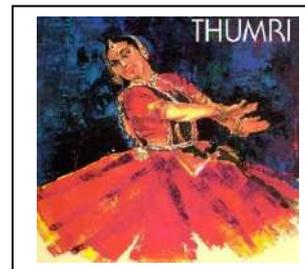
### 1. Chhau dance

- Chhau dance show was staged at **National Palace Museum in Taipei City** as part of efforts to strengthen **cultural exchanges between Taiwan and the South Asian nation**.
- It was jointly organized by NPM and **India-Taipei Association**.
- Originating in eastern India, Chhau features dancers in **colorful masks and costumes** performing movements inspired by animals, birds, martial arts and tribal and folk customs.
- The practice was added to **UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2010**.
- Chhau shows typically depict episodes from classic Hindu epics the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the Purana and other Indian literature.
- The dance includes **religious themes found in Shaivism, Shaktism and Vaishnavism**.
- It is found in three styles named after the location where they are performed, ie. the Purulia Chau of **Bengal**, the Seraikella Chau of **Jharkhand**, and the Mayurbhanj Chau of **Odisha**.
- The dance is traditionally an all males troupe, regionally celebrated particularly during spring every year.
- The dance is egalitarian and brings together people from diverse socio-economic backgrounds in a festive and religious spirit.



### 2. Thumri

- Eminent classical singer **Girija Devi** who was considered as **queen of thumri** passed away.
- Thumri is a common genre of **semi-classical Indian music** originated in **eastern part of Uttar Pradesh**.
- The term '*thumri*' is derived from the Hindi verb *thumakna* which means "to walk with dancing steps so as to make the ankle-bells tinkle."
- The form is, thus, connected with dance, dramatic gestures, mild eroticism, evocative love poetry and folk songs of Uttar Pradesh, though there are regional variations.
- The text is **romantic or devotional** in nature, and usually revolves around a **girl's love for Krishna**.
- *Thumri* is characterized by its sensuality, and by a greater flexibility with the *raag*.
- The lyrics are usually in Uttar Pradesh dialects of Hindi called **Awadhi and Braj Bhasha**.



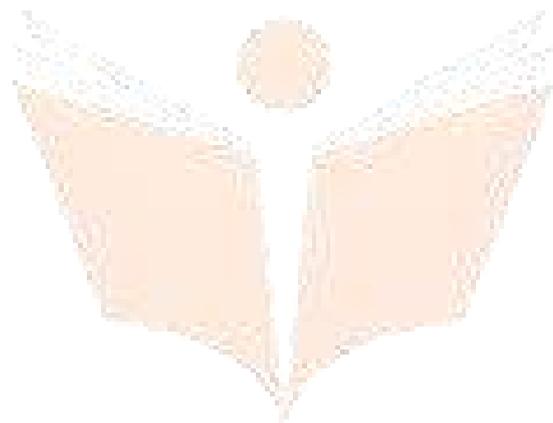
### 3. Sangrai dance

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

- The dance is performed by the **Mog tribal community** on the occasion of Sangrai festival during the month of Chaitra (in April) of the Bengali calendar year.
- Mogs are **Buddhist** and have the close affinity with Burmese Buddhism.



### NOTES



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## Paintings and other Art Forms

### NOTES

### 1. Madhubani paintings

- The folk painting of Madhubani will soon be seen decorating the walls of various government buildings in Bihar, where the art hails from.
- Madhubani railway station got complete makeover with Madhubani paintings.
- Madhubani, which means 'forest of honey', is a style of **folk painting** old enough to find mention in some of the ancient Indian texts like the holy Ramayana.
- It is **also known as Mithila**, for its origin is said to be the Mithila region in Bihar.
- Traditionally, the Madhubani paintings are created using fingers and twigs, and items like matchsticks have come to be used in their creation in recent times.
- Their various styles include Bharni, Katchni, Tantrik, Godna, and Kohbar, which would historically be painted only by women from the upper strata in the caste system, who would make them on mud walls on special occasions.
- The norms have now changed and the paintings can be enjoyed by anyone and in various forms.
- Madhubani is now found on apparel, paper, canvas, and other products, which boast of designs **inspired by Hindu deities** such as Krishna, Rama, Lakshmi, Shiva, Durga, Saraswati, all of whom have been painted in Madhubani since ancient times.
- Other subjects of Madhubani paintings include peacocks, fish and human connection with nature.
- With time, it became part of **festivities and special events like marriage**.
- It was made from paste of powdered rice. It also used colours derived from vegetables and plants.
- It has been accorded the coveted **GI (geographical Indication) status**.
- Some of the other GI protected Paintings of India:
  - **Mysore Traditional Paintings (Karnataka)**
  - **Thanjavur Paintings (Tamil Nadu)**
  - **Cheriyal Scroll Paintings (Telangana)**
  - **Kangra Paintings (Himachal Pradesh)**
  - **Nirmal Paintings (Telangana)**
  - **Warli Painting (Maharashtra)**



### 2. Geographical Indication (GI) tag

- Recently Geographical Indication (GI) tag was granted to:
  - Banaganapalle mangoes of Andhra Pradesh.
  - Tulaipanji rice of West Bengal.
  - Gobindobhog rice of West Bengal.
  - Banglar rosogulla of West Bengal.
  - Stone sculptures of Mamallapuram.

**NOTES**

- Durgi stone carvings and Etikoppaka toys of Andhra Pradesh.
- Pochampally Ikat of Telangana.
- Chakshesang shawl of Nagaland.

- **Sculptures from Mamallapuram:**

- They are **carved in stone** with characteristics of intricate designing chiselled finely, keeping with the spirit of the surrounding **Pallava art and architecture**.
- The description includes cave architecture, rock architecture, structural temples, open sculptures, relief sculptures and painting/portrait sculptures.
- Mamallapuram sculptors still use **hammer-and-chisel technique** for carving and follow the process enunciated in various **Shilpa Shastras**.
- Mamallapuram was named after the famous title of **Narasimhavarma Pallava in the mid-seventh century**.



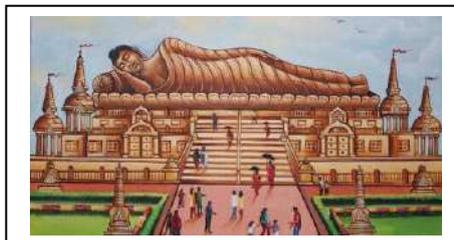
- **Etikoppaka toys:**

- These toys are made in **Etikoppaka region of Andhra Pradesh**.
- They are made from the **soft wood of Ankudi Karra (Wrightia tinctoria)** tree.
- The toys are painted with **natural dyes**.
- The natural dyes are prepared from seeds, lacquer, bark, roots and leaves.
- These dyes are unique as they do not have heavy metal or toxic content in it.
- The art of making such toys is known as **Turned Wood Lacquer Craft**.
- According to the artisans, the art is **more than 400 years old**.



### **3. 70-ft Buddha statue to adorn tourist project in Ghantasala**

- A proposal to build a 70 ft. Buddha statue in **Ghantasala village in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh** has been cleared for the construction.
- A two-storied structure in Buddhist architecture resembling a pedestal with a 100-ft wide and 70-ft high Buddha in the **Mahaparinirvana posture** will be a major highlight.
- In Buddhism, **Mahaparinirvana means the ultimate state — everlasting, highest peace and happiness — entered by an Awakened Being (Buddha)**.
- **Significance of reclining Buddha:**
  - On top of the two-storey structure will be an imposing statue of **the reclining Buddha**.
  - This is a major iconographic and statuary pattern of Buddhism.
  - It represents the **historical Buddha during his last illness, about to enter the Mahaparinirvana**.
  - It shows Buddha lying on the right flank, his head resting on a cushion



or on his right elbow, supporting his head with his hand.

- This pattern seems to have emerged at the same time as other representations of the Buddha in the Greco-Buddhist art of Gandhara.

- **About Ghantasala:**

- Ghantasala, **known as Katakasila** in the ancient times, was a renowned Buddhist centre located near the coast.
- **Ptolemy, the Greek geographer, had made a specific mention of an emporium of Kontakossyla in the region of Misolia (present Machilipatnam).**
- Initially, the archaeological significance of Ghantasala was reported by Boswel in 1870-71 and the site was subsequently subjected to excavations by Alexander Rea which brought out the stupa architecture in detail.

#### 4. Ananda Temple

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi had visited the **Ananda Temple, at Bagan in Myanmar.**
- This is a **Buddhist temple** built in the **early 12th century.**
- It is the **second largest temple in the entire Bagan region.**
- The **Archaeological Survey of India has carried out structural conservation and chemical preservation work of this temple.**
- Restoration work is being carried out after damage during the earthquake in 2016.
- The ASI has undertaken several major conservation works across various countries of Asia.
- Besides the Ananda Temple, these include the **Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan, the Angkor Wat in Cambodia, the Ta Prohm Temple in Cambodia, the Vat Phou Temple in Laos, and the My Son Temple in Vietnam.**



#### NOTES

## Personalities

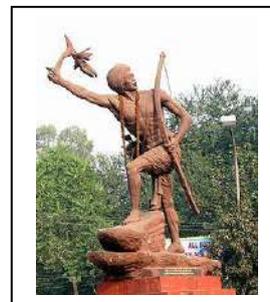
### 1. Purandara Dasa

- There is much speculation about where Purandara Dasa, regarded as the pitamaha of Carnatic music, was born.
- Now, an **expert committee constituted by Kannada University, Hampi**, has come to the conclusion that it was most likely a small village called Kshemapura (now called Keshavapura) at Araga hobli in Tirthahalli taluk of Shivamogga district in Karnataka.
- The committee has found enough evidence to believe this place, which was a major province of the Vijayanagara empire, was the birthplace of the saint.
- **Background:**
  - Till now, some have been arguing that the saint-poet was born in Purandaragadh, near Pune in Maharashtra, and finally settled in Hampi.
- **Purandaradasa:**
  - Purandara Dasa (1484–1564) was a **Haridasa**, great **devotee of Lord Krishna** (an incarnation of Lord Vishnu) and a saint.
  - He was a disciple of the celebrated Madhwa philosopher-saint **Vyasatirtha**, and a contemporary of yet another great Haridasa, **Kanakadasa**.
  - Purandaradasa was the pioneer who blended the rich musical streams, namely the Dravidian and Aryan music, into a single stream known as **Carnatic music**.
  - In honor of his significant and legendary contributions to Carnatic Music, he is widely referred to as the **Pitamaha of Carnatic Music**.
  - Purandara Dasa is noted for composing **Dasa Sahithya**, as a Bhakti movement vocalist, and a music scholar.
  - Purandara Dasa's Carnatic music compositions are **mostly in Kannada**, while some are in Sanskrit.



### 2. Birsa Munda

- Birth anniversary of Birsa Munda was observed on November 15th. In recognition of his impact on the national movement, the state of Jharkhand was created on his birth anniversary in 2000.
- Birsa Munda was a folk hero and a **tribal freedom fighter** hailing from the **Munda tribe**.
- He was a spearhead behind the **Millenarian movement** that arose in the Bihar and Jharkhand belt in the 19th century under the British colonisation.
- He had led **Munda rebellion** towards end of 19th century against British Raj.
- Starting in 1895, revolt was **against interference by British administration** which transformed tribal agrarian system into feudal state around Chhotanagpur area, as well as interference in their religious matters from



**NOTES**

Missionary activities.

- He is also known as **'Dharti Abba' or the Earth Father**.
- He is the only tribal leader whose portrait hangs in the Parliament's Central Hall.
- **Birsait:**
  - Bisra wanted to reform the tribal society and so, he urged them to let go of beliefs in witchcraft and instead, stressed on the **importance of prayer, staying away from alcohol, having faith in God and observing a code of conduct**.
  - Based on these, he started the faith of **'Birsait'**.
- **Achievements:**
  - Bisra started a movement called **'Ulgulan', or 'The Great Tumult'**.
  - His struggle against the exploitation and discrimination against tribals led to a big hit against the British government in the form of the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act being passed in 1908.
  - The act restricted the passing on of land from the tribal people to non-tribals.

### 3. Basavanna

- Basavanna was a **12th-century philosopher**, statesman, Kannada poet and a social reformer who lived in Karnataka during the reign of the Kalachuri-dynasty king Bijjala I.
- Basavanna spread social awareness through his poetry, popularly known as **Vachanaas**.
  - Vachana is a prosaic form very much popular in the Kannada literature.
  - It propagates **values of universal brotherhood**. It was penned by Basavanna and other saints.
- He served as the chief minister of his kingdom. **Basavanna rejected gender or social discrimination, superstitions and rituals**.
- During his tenure as Chief Minister, he introduced many new public institutions like **Anubhava Mantapa ("hall of spiritual experience")** that would facilitate men and women from all socio-economic backgrounds to have a healthy and open discuss on various spiritual and mundane questions of life.
- In 2003, former President of India Abdul Kalam inaugurated **Basaveshwar's statue in the Parliament of India**.
- In 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the **statue of Basaveshwara along the bank of the river Thames in London**.



## Awards / Institutions

### NOTES

### 1. Padma Awards

- **Padma Awards - one of the highest civilian Awards** of the country are conferred in **three categories**, namely, **Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri**.
- The Awards are given in **various disciplines/ fields of activities**, viz.- art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service, etc.
- 'Padma Vibhushan' is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service; 'Padma Bhushan' for distinguished service of high order and 'Padma Shri' for distinguished service in any field.
- The awards are announced on the **occasion of Republic Day** every year.
- These awards are conferred by the **President of India** at ceremonial functions which are held at Rashtrapati Bhawan usually around March/ April every year.
- This year the President of India presented **85 Padma Awards** including two duo cases (in a duo case, the award is counted as one). The list comprises 3 Padma Vibhushan, 9 Padma Bhushan and 73 Padma Shri Awards.
- 14 of the awardees are women and the list also includes 16 persons from the category of Foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI and 3 posthumous awardees.
- The list also includes unsung persons and also people who rendered selfless service at the grassroots.

### 2. 27th Vyas Samman

- Eminent Hindi writer **Mamta Kalia** will be honoured with literary award Vyas Samman for year 2017 for her novel "**Dukkham Sukkham**".
- The author has earlier received "Yashpal Katha Samman" from Uttar Pradesh Hindi Sansthan, "Sahitya Bhushan Samman" and "Ram Manohar Lohia Samman".
- The Vyas Samman is given to a Hindi literary work authored and published in the past 10 years by an Indian citizen.
- Eminent literary critic and poet Ram Vilas Sharma is the first recipient of this award in 1991.
- The writer will receive an amount of Rs 3.5 lakh as the prize money.
- It is awarded annually by the **K.K. Birla Foundation**.

### 3. Jnanpith Award

- Eminent Hindi Litterateur **Krishna Sobti** was awarded the **53rd Jnanpith Award** for the year 2017.
- She will be overall eight women to win this prestigious award.
- Her language is highly influenced by the intermingling of Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi cultures.
- **Jnanpith Award:**



- Jnanpith Award is **India's highest literary honour**. Its name has been taken from Sanskrit words Jnana and Pitha

**NOTES**

which means knowledge-seat.

- It was instituted in 1961 by **Bharatiya Jnanpith trust** founded by the Sahu Shanti Prasad Jain family that owns the Times of India newspaper group.
- It is bestowed upon any **Indian citizen** who writes in any **22 official languages of India** mentioned in VIII Schedule of Constitution of India and English.
- Prior to 1982, the award was only given for a single work by a writer.
- But after 1982, the award is given for lifetime contribution to Indian literature.
- The award carries cash prize of 11 lakh rupees, a citation plaque and a bronze replica of Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of knowledge and wisdom.
- G. Sankara Kurup from Kerala was the first winner of the Jnanpith Award.



#### 4. UNESCO award for Srirangam temple

- The Sri Ranganathaswamy temple at Srirangam has bagged an award of merit from UNESCO for protecting and conserving cultural heritage, thus becoming **the first temple from Tamil Nadu to grab the prestigious honour from the UN body.**
- The traditional method of **renovating temple premises** as well as re-establishment of **rainwater harvesting and historic drainage system** in preventing flooding were two key parameters that earned temple the award.
- Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple is the only religious centre in the whole of South India to bag the award in 2017.
- The famous **Christ Church in Mumbai** and **Royal Bombay Opera House** are the other historic Indian monuments that received the Award of Merit this year, in addition to the temple.
- The temple was lauded by the international body for undertaking renovation and beautification work worth over Rs 20 crore without harming its centuries-old heritage.
- **Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple:**
  - It is considered as one of the most important of the **108 main Vishnu temples (Divyadesams).**
  - It is Vaishnava temple built in **Dravidian style** of architecture.
  - It is located on an islet formed by Twin Rivers: **Kollidam and Cauvery.**
  - The temple and 1000 pillared hall were constructed in the Vijayanagar period (1336–1565) on the site of an older temple.
  - Its Gopuram also called as **“Raja Gopuram”** is the biggest gopuram in Asia.



**NOTES**

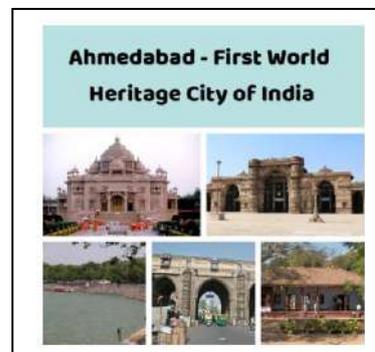
- **About the award:**
  - Launched in 2000, **UNESCO Asia-Pacific awards for cultural heritage conservation programme** is aimed at acknowledging the efforts taken to restore and conserve historical structures without affecting their heritage value in the region comprising 48 countries.
  - The awards are classified under four categories — **Award of Excellence, Awards of Distinction, Awards of Merit and Award for New Design** in Heritage Context.
  - They are being given to encourage the efforts of all stakeholders and the public in conserving and promoting monuments and religious institutes with rich heritage in the Asia-Pacific region.

## 5. Chennai now part of UNESCO’s ‘creative cities network’

- Chennai has been included in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network for its rich **musical tradition**.
- Including Chennai, a total of 64 cities from 44 countries have joined the UNESCO Creative Cities Network.
- **Jaipur (added as City of Crafts and Folk Art) and Varanasi (added as City of Music)** are the other Indian cities that feature on the list.
- **Creative Cities Network:**
  - The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was created in **2004** to promote cooperation with and among cities that have identified **creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development**.
  - The 180 cities which currently make up this network work together towards a common objective: placing creativity and cultural industries at the heart of their development plans at the local level and cooperating actively at the international level.
  - **The Network covers seven creative fields:** Crafts and Folk Arts, Media Arts, Film, Design, Gastronomy, Literature and Music.

## 6. Ahmedabad gets status of India’s first World Heritage City by UNESCO

- Ahmedabad in Gujarat has been formally accorded the status of **India’s first World Heritage City by UNESCO**.
- The honour makes the walled city of Ahmedabad the **first city in India, and the third in Asia**, to be on the list.
- **The other two cities are- Bhaktpur in Nepal and Galle in Sri Lanka.**
- **India is second after China in terms of number of world heritage properties in ASPAC** (Asia and Pacific) region, and overall seventh in the world.
- **India now has a total of 36 World Heritage Inscriptions** — 28 cultural, 7 natural and 1 mixed site.
- **Background:**
  - Founded in the 15th century by **Sultan Ahmad Shah**, the walled city of



**NOTES**

Ahmedabad, on the eastern bank of the Sabarmati river, presents a rich architectural heritage.

- It has 28 Archaeological Survey of India's centrally protected monuments.
- The city boasts of a **composite culture and a rich mix of Hindu and Jain temples, Islamic and European architecture.**
- Ahmedabad is recognized the city as the **cradle of India's non-violent freedom struggle led by Mahatma Gandhi.**
- The city's historic characteristics include densely-packed traditional houses ('pols') in gated traditional streets ('puras') with features such as bird feeders, public wells and religious institutions.
- **World Heritage Cities:**
  - The World Heritage Cities Programme is one of six thematic programmes formally approved and **monitored by the World Heritage Committee.**
  - It aims to assist States Parties in the challenges of protecting and managing their urban heritage. The programme is structured along a two-way process, with
    - The development of a theoretical framework for urban heritage conservation, and
    - The provision of technical assistance to States Parties for the implementation of new approaches and schemes.

## 7. Sahitya Akademi

- Kannada litterateur **Chandrashekar Kambar** has been elected as **president of the Sahitya Akademi.**
- Kambar, who has been recipient of various awards including Sahitya Akademi Award, Padma Shri and Pampa Award, will serve as president of the Akademi for a period of **five years.**
- Hindi poet **Madhav Koushik** has been elected as vice-president.
- *Prof. Kambar is the **third Kannada writer to head the country's premier literary institution**, after Vinayak Krishna Gokak (1983) and U.R. Ananthamurthy (1993).*
- **About Sahitya Akademi:**
  - Sahitya Akademi, **India's National Academy of Letters**, is the central institution for literary dialogue, publication and promotion in the country and the only institution that undertakes literary activities in 24 Indian languages, including English.
  - Though set up by the Government, the Akademi functions as an **autonomous organisation.**
  - The Sahitya Akademi was formally inaugurated by the Government of India on 12 March 1954.
  - The Government of India Resolution, which set forth the constitution of the Akademi, described it as a **national organisation to work actively for the development of Indian letters** and to set high literary standards, to foster and co-ordinate literary activities in all the Indian languages and to promote through them all the cultural unity of the

country.

- **Awards:**
  - Akademi gives **24 awards annually** to literary works in the languages it has recognized and an equal number of awards to literary translations from and into the languages of India.
  - It also gives special awards called **Bhasha Samman** to significant contribution to the languages not formally recognized by the Akademi as also for contribution to classical and medieval literature.
  - The **2018 Bhasha Samman** has been awarded to **Magahi writer Shesh Anand Madhukar**.

## 8. Bhasha Samman

- **Magahi writer Shesh Anand Madhukar**, who has been working extensively for the development of the language, has been honoured with **Sahitya Akademi Bhasha Samman award**.
- He is the second writer of Magahi language to be given the award.
- **Bhasha Samman:**
  - Sahitya Akademi currently honours writers from 24 regional languages, but Bhasha Samman identifies those languages which are equally spoken in different parts of the country.
  - The award is an attempt to make the writers of other languages feels equally important.
  - The award comprises a Rs 1 lakh cheque and a memento.
- **Magahi language:**
  - The Magahi language, also known as **Magadhi**, is a language spoken in **Bihar-Jharkhand region** of eastern India.
  - **Magadhi Prakrit** was the ancestor of Magadhi, from which the latter's name derives.
  - It is believed to be the language spoken by Gautama Buddha.
  - It was the official language of the Mauryan court, in which the edicts of Ashoka were composed.
  - Magadhi has a very rich and old tradition of **folk songs and stories**.
  - It has **not been constitutionally recognised** in India and was legally absorbed under Hindi in the 1961 Population Census.

## 9. Saraswati Samman

- Eminent **Konkani writer Mahabaleshwar Sail** was bestowed with prestigious Saraswati Samman 2016.
- He was awarded for his novel "**Hawthan**" that captures cultural lives of traditional potter community in Goa.
- Saraswati Samman is an annual award bestowed upon **Indian citizen** for his outstanding **literary work written in any 22 Indian language mentioned in Schedule VIII of Constitution and published during last 10 years**.
- It is considered one of the highest literary awards in India. It was established in 1991 by the **KK Birla Foundation**.
- It carries cash prize of 15 lakh rupees, a citation and a plaque of goddess Saraswati.

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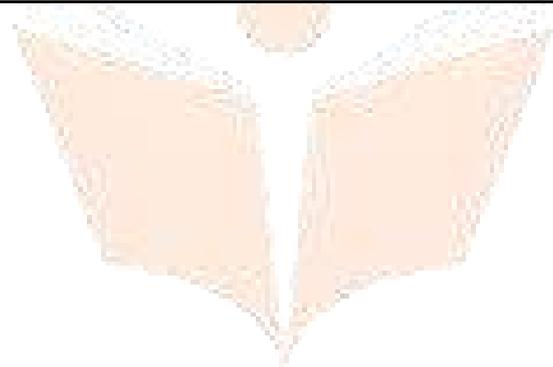
## 10. World Cities Culture Forum

- **Mumbai** became the **first Indian city to be a member of World Cities Culture Forum (WCCF)**, a platform for cities to share their culture.
- **How will the forum help Mumbai?**
  - The WCCF enables the policy makers of member cities to **share research and intelligence**, while exploring the vital role of culture in prosperity.
  - Forum members collaborate via a program of events including themed symposia, regional summits and workshops.
  - Mumbai will be able to share its culture as part of a comparative research to understand its role and impact.
  - The municipal corporation will be able to maintain a relationship with the other member cities and Mumbai will be represented on the Forum at all events.
  - Through its **leadership exchange program**, the city's policy makers will be able to share ideas, technology, challenges and access cultures and arts.
- **WCCF:**
  - The forum, which began in 2012 with eight members, is a network of 32 key cities today, including London, Hong Kong, Amsterdam, Cape Town, Dakar, Edinburgh, Lisbon, San Francisco, Shanghai, Singapore, Toronto and many others.

## 11. UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India

Cultural Site (28)	Location
Taj Mahal	Uttar Pradesh
Ellora Caves	Maharashtra
Ajanta Caves	Maharashtra
Agra Fort	Uttar Pradesh
Sun Temple, Konârak	Odisha
Khajuraho Group of Monuments	Madhya Pradesh
Group of Monuments at Hampi	Karnataka
Fatehpur Sikri	Uttar Pradesh
Churches and Convents of Goa	Goa
Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram	Tamil Nadu
The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier	Chandigarh
Group of Monuments at Pattadakal	Karnataka
Great Living Chola Temples	Tamil Nadu
Elephanta Caves	Maharashtra
Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi	Madhya Pradesh
Qutb Minar and its Monuments	Delhi
Humayun's Tomb	Delhi
Mountain Railways of India	West Bengal
Mahabodhi Temple Complex at Bodh Gaya	Bihar
Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka	Madhya Pradesh

Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (formerly Victoria Terminus)	Maharashtra
Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park	Gujarat
Red Fort Complex	Delhi
The Jantar Mantar	Jaipur, Rajasthan
Hill Forts of Rajasthan	Rajasthan
Rani-ki-Vav (the Queen's Stepwell)	Patan, Gujarat
Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavihara (Nalanda University)	Nalanda, Bihar
Historic City of Ahmedabad	Gujarat
<b>Natural Sites (7)</b>	<b>Location</b>
Great Himalayan National Park	Himachal Pradesh
Keoladeo National Park	Rajasthan
Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Parks	Uttarakhand
Western Ghats	
Sundarbans National Park	West Bengal
Manas Wildlife Sanctuary	Assam
Kaziranga National Park	Assam
<b>Mixed (1)</b>	<b>Location</b>
Khangchendzonga National Park	Sikkim



## International Efforts / International Events

### 1. UNESCO crowns Sharjah as World Book Capital

- **Sharjah** has been crowned with the prestigious the **World Book Capital for 2019** by UNESCO for the **quality of its literary and cultural activities** and for its efforts to make books accessible to the entire population of the nation.
- The emirate was selected because of its innovative and inclusive application, with a community-focused activity programme containing creative proposals to engage the very large migrant population.
- The accolade is an important addition to Sharjah's existing portfolio of milestones like, Capital of Arab Culture (1998), Capital of Islamic Culture (2014), and Capital of Arab Tourism (2015).
- The Sharjah is the first in the GCC and third in the Arab world and Middle East, to have received this recognition.
- Sharjah is the **19th city** to become World Book Capital.
- **World Book Capital City:**
  - UNESCO has been annually designating a city as World Book Capital City beginning with the designation of **Madrid as World Book Capital City in 2001**.
  - For designating a city, UNESCO invites the International Publishers Association, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, and the International Booksellers Federation to nominate and take part in deciding the World Book Capital.
  - The designation of a city **does not include any financial prize**; it rather acknowledges the programmes followed by the city dedicated to books and reading.

### 2. Janadriyah festival

- **Saudi Arabia** celebrated the annual Janadriyah festival. **India** was this year's guest of honor.
- Janadriyah is the **annual national heritage and culture festival** named after the village on the northern outskirts of Riyadh.
- The festival encourages Saudis to celebrate their heritage and to bolster cultural exchange.
- The India Pavilion at festival was based on the theme '**Saudi ka dost Bharat**'. It showcased traditional and modern aspects of India and its culture.

### 3. First Hindu Temple Project In Abu Dhabi

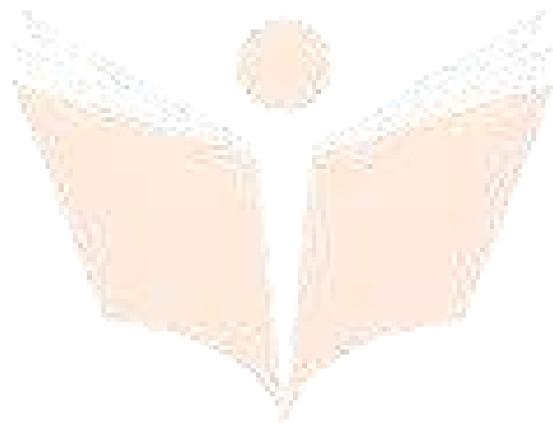
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently launched the **foundation stone-laying ceremony** for the **first Hindu temple in the capital of the UAE**, home to over three million people of Indian origin.
- **Swaminarayan temple** of the Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha, the first Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi will come up on 55,000 square metres of



land.

- The temple will be hand-carved by Indian temple artisans and assembled in the UAE.
- It will be completed by 2020, and open to people of all religious backgrounds.
- It will be the first traditional Hindu stone temple in the Middle East.
- The temple design and structure is along the lines of the Akshardham temple in Delhi and other places.
- It will include idols of Lord Krishna, Lord Maheshwara, Lord Ayyappa and more.

**NOTES**



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## Historical Events

### NOTES

### 1. Paika Rebellion

- Recently the Minister of Human Resource Development announced that **Paika Rebellion of 1817 will be renamed as “First War of Independence”**.
- Earlier, 1857 Sepoy Mutiny was regarded as the First War of Indian Independence.
- The **bicentenary (200th) celebration of Paika Rebellion (1817)** was organised by the Union Ministry of Culture in July 2017 in New Delhi.
- Two-hundred years ago in 1817, **a valiant uprising of soldiers led by Buxi Jagabandhu (Bidyadhar Mohapatra) took place in Khurda of Odisha**. This is known as Paika rebellion.
- **Paika Rebellion:**
  - Paiks were traditional landed militia under **Gajapati rulers of Odisha**.
  - They used to perform policing functions and owned **rent-free land** that was given to them for their military service to Kingdom of Khurda.
  - However they were forcefully usurped their land rendering them landless by the policies of British East India Company.
  - The rebellion had **several other underlying causes** – like the rise in the price of salt, abolition of the cowrie currency for payment of taxes and an overtly extortionist land revenue policy
  - **Bakshi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar**, the military chief of King of Khurda led army of Paikas forced the East India Company forces to retreat in 1817.
  - Although initially the Company struggled to respond they managed to put down the rebellion by May 1817.
  - Many of the Paik leaders were hung or deported. Jagabandhu surrendered in 1825.

### 2. Centenary year celebrations of Sabarmati Ashram

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the **centenary celebrations of Sabarmati Ashram** in Ahmedabad.
- Sabarmati Ashram (also known as Gandhi Ashram, Harijan Ashram, or Satyagraha Ashram) is located in the Sabarmati suburb of Ahmedabad, Gujarat, on the **banks of the River Sabarmati**.
- Sabarmati Ashram served as one of the residences of Mahatma Gandhi for twelve long years.
- It was from his base here that **Gandhi led the Dandi march** also known as the **Salt Satyagraha on 12 March 1930**.
- Before starting the march to Dandi, Gandhiji declared that he will not return to the ashram before the independence of the country.
- The Ashram was started in all earnest with a two-fold purpose- one was to carry on the search for Truth, and the other was to create a non-violent group of workers, who would create a non-violent group of workers, who would



organize and help to secure freedom for the country.

- The ashram has been declared as a **national monument** by the Indian government.

### 3. Champanan Satyagrah

- An exhibition titled “**Swachhagraha – Babu Ko Karyanjali – Ek Abhiyan, Ek Pradarshani**” was held in New Delhi to mark the 100 years of Mahatma Gandhi’s first experiment of Satyagraha in Champanan.

### 4. Quit India Movement

- The **75th anniversary of the Quit India Movement** was observed across the country.
- “**Sankalp Se Sidhi**” program is being organized across the country to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Quit India Movement.
- The program aims to build **new India by 2022**.

### 5. Battle of Koregaon

- Recently there were clashes in Maharashtra during the **200th anniversary of the Battle of Koregaon**.
- The **Battle of Koregaon** was fought on 1 January 1818 between the troops of **Maratha Ruler Baji Rao Peshwa II and the British East India Company** (EIC was supported by the local Mahar community) at Koregaon Bhima (in present-day Maharashtra).
- Historically, Mahars were considered as untouchables.
- The battle brought an end to the domination of Peshwas.
- After the victory, British erected a commemorative **victory pillar (Koregaon Ranstambh)** in Bhima-Koregaon village in 1818.
- Dr B R Ambedkar had also visited the site repeatedly.
- In the following years, thousands have been gathering in Bhima Koregaon on January 1 to pay homage.
- The Mahars celebrate this day as the day when they regained their former status of military glory.
- **Background:**
  - Maratha King Shivaji, nevertheless, recruited large number of Mahars into the Maratha Army in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.
  - However, relations between Mahars and Peshwas turned sour after Baji Rao II reportedly insulted the community by rejecting their offer to serve the army.
  - This made them to side with the English against the Peshwa’s numerically superior army.

### NOTES

## Government Initiatives

### NOTES

### 1. Haj subsidy

- The government has abolished the subsidy being given to Haj pilgrims every year. The government said it will use the subsidy funds to empower the minorities.
- **What is the Haj subsidy?**
  - The Haj subsidy refers to **discounted airfares** given by the government-owned airlines, Air India.
  - It also includes assistance to Muslim pilgrims for **domestic travel** to reach specially designed Haj departure airport terminals, lodging, medical care and meal.
- **Background:**
  - The policy to support Muslims in making the pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia can be traced back to **1932, when the British enacted the Port Haj Committees Act.**
  - In 2012, a **Supreme Court order** directed the Haj subsidy to be gradually phased out in the coming ten years.
  - In 2017, a **Central Haj Committee** meeting decided to do away with the subsidy by the following year.
- **What are the other religious pilgrimages that are offered government subsidy in India?**
  - The state and central governments spend considerable amounts on the pilgrim facilities at the four **Kumbh melas** in Haridwar, Ujjain, Nashik and Allahabad.
  - The **Kailash Manasarovar yatra** from North India to the mountains of Tibet is yet another pilgrimage which is organised by the government with arrangements being made for security and health facilities.

### 2. Smart museums to give 'virtual' tours and 3D view of rare artifacts

- **Centre for Development for Advanced Computing (C-DAC)**, Pune, has developed software named "**Jatan**" and "**Darshak**" that are set to revolutionise museum experience.
- **About Jatan:**
  - The objective of the software is to make a **digital imprint of all the objects preserved in museums.**
  - It will help researchers, curators and also people interested in the field.
- **About Darshak:**
  - It is a mobile-based application. It is aimed at improving the museum visit experience among the differently-abled.
  - It allows real-time museum visitors gather all details about objects or artifacts simply by scanning a **QR code** placed near the object.
  - This facility will help even the differently-abled visitors, information for whom can be made available in the form of audio or audio-visual formats.
- **About C- DAC:**

- Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) is the premier **R&D organization of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** for carrying out R&D in IT, Electronics and associated areas.

### 3. Chardham Mahamarg Pariyojana

- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved **Silkyara Bend-Barkot Tunnel** in Uttarakhand as part of '**Chardham Mahamarg Pariyojana**'.
- **Silkyara Bend-Barkot Tunnel:**
  - The construction of this tunnel will provide **all weather connectivity to Yamunotri**, one of the dham on Chardham Yatra, encouraging regional socio-economic development, trade and tourism within the country.
  - It will reduce the travel distance from Dharasu to Yamunotri by about 20 km and travel time by about an hour.
  - The project will be falling along **NH-134 (old NH-94)** in the State of Uttarakhand.
  - The project will be built under Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) Mode.
  - This is funded under NH (O) Scheme of Ministry of RT&H and forms part of ambitious Chardham Plan.
- **About Chardham Pariyojana:**
  - The Chardham Mahamarg Vikas Pariyojna, or the Chardham highway development project, is an ambitious initiative to **improve connectivity to the Char Dham pilgrimage centres** in the Himalayas.
  - The project's main objective is to develop around 900 km of national highways.
  - The project will make travel to the **Char Dham (Gangotri, Yamunotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath)** safer and more convenient.
  - The project involves widening the existing, geometrically deficient highway that connects the four abodes.
  - Apart from widening, the road transport and highways ministry plans to improve the stretches to two-lane carriageway with paved shoulders, protect landslide hazard zones, construct bypasses, long bridges, tunnels and elevated corridors to ensure safety for the users.

### NOTES

## Miscellaneous

### NOTES

### 1. INTACH to document heritage sites along Mahanadi river

- **Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH)** has launched a programme for **documentation of the tangible and intangible heritage sites along both sides of Mahanadi River**.
- Seven teams of culture enthusiasts will cover nearly 1000 kilometres on both side of the river Mahanadi under the project.
- **INTACH:**
  - INTACH is an **autonomous non-governmental Indian non-profit society** that seeks to **preserve Indian culture and heritage**. It was founded in 1984 in New Delhi.
  - Today INTACH is recognized as **one of the world's largest heritage organizations**, with over 190 Chapters across the Country.
  - Headquartered in New Delhi, it operates through **various divisions** such as Architectural Heritage, Natural Heritage, Material Heritage, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Heritage Education and Communication Services (HECS), Crafts and Community Cell, Chapters, INTACH Heritage Academy, Heritage Tourism, Listing Cell and Library, Archives and Documentation Centre.
- **INTACH's mission:**
  - **Sensitize the public** about the pluralistic cultural legacy of India.
  - Instil a sense of **social responsibility** towards preserving India's common heritage.
  - **Document unprotected buildings** of archaeological, architectural, historic and aesthetic significance, as well as the cultural resources.
  - Develop heritage policies and regulations, and make legal **interventions** to protect India's heritage when necessary.
  - Undertake **emergency response measures** during natural or man-made disasters and support the local administration whenever heritage is threatened.
  - **Sponsorships** for conservation and educational projects.
  - Foster collaborations, Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) and **partnerships** with government and other national and international agencies.
  - Provide expertise in the field of conservation, restoration and preservation of specific works of art; and encourage **capacity-building** by developing skills through training programmes.

### 2. India's first floating market in Kolkata

- India's first floating market is now open in Kolkata's Patuli area in West Bengal.
- Set up by the **Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority (KMDA)**, the market functions solely on boats at the lake in Patuli, where shopkeepers sell fruits, vegetables, fish among other produce.

### 3. Saint Mother Teresa's blue-bordered sari an Intellectual Property

- The famous blue-bordered sari of Mother Teresa, who has been canonised as Saint Teresa of Calcutta by the Vatican, has been recognised as an **Intellectual Property of the Missionaries of Charity**.
- The Trade Marks Registry, Government of India, has granted the registration of the trade mark for that pattern of blue border of sari.



#### NOTES

### 4. Prachi Valley

- The **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** has discovered pottery pieces, and tools made of stones and bones believed to be of the **pre-Christian era** from a mound in Jalalpur village of Cuttack district, Odisha.
- Discoveries of ancient artefacts indicated that a rural settlement might have thrived in that period.
- These settlements could have had cultural and trade ties with other settlements in the Prachi Valley that had come up around the Prachi river, which gradually disappeared.
- The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (**INTACH**) has launched a project to document the monuments of Prachi Valley in Odisha
- **Prachi Valley civilisation** is believed to be earlier than that of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro flourished on the banks of Prachi river.
- Prachi Valley civilisation has contributed a lot towards amalgamation, assimilation and proliferation of different religious faiths and cults.
- The Prachi river, a tributary of Mahanadi, originates about 10 km away from Bhubaneswar.
- The river flows through Puri, Khurda, Cuttack and Jagatsinghpur districts and it is this region that is called the Prachi Valley.



### 5. Kailash Yatra

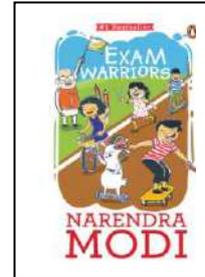
- China has confirmed **restarting of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra through the Nathu La pass**.
- Kailash Mansarovar Yatra (KMY) is known for its religious importance, cultural significance and arduous nature.
- The annual pilgrimage holds religious importance for **Hindus, Jains and Buddhists**.
- The Yatra is organized by the government of India in close cooperation with the Government of the People's Republic of China.
- State Governments of Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Delhi, and Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam Limited (KMVN) are other major Indian partners of the Ministry in organizing the Yatra.
- **Mansarovar Lake** is located at an altitude of 14,950 ft (4,558 m) is said to be the highest freshwater lake in the world. It is located in the Tibet



Autonomous Region, China, 940 kilometres from Lhasa. To the west of it is Lake Rakshastal and to the north is Mount Kailash.

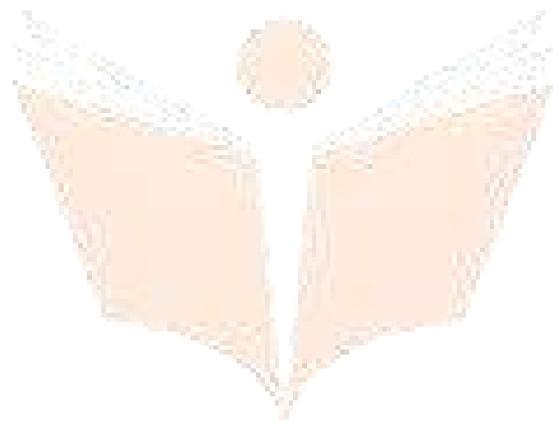
### 6. Exam Warriors

- It is a **book authored by Prime Minister Narendra Modi** for students facing exams.
- It aims to get through to students across the country on the threshold of examinations, and hopes to help them thread the needle with ease.



**Note:** Tribes will be covered in Social Issues Module.

**NOTES**



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