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5 CULTURE

PRELIMS 2026



COVERAGE JUNE 2025 TO FEB2026

This file has month wise CA in compiled format.

All memory tricks , static value addition is done by expert faculty ANKITA MAAM in classes on youtube. DO NOT MISS THEM .

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TOPICS COVERED-

- **Daojali Hading – Neolithic Site in Assam** – Revealed Eastern Asiatic Neolithic culture with celts, cord-marked pottery, and early metallurgy in Dima Hasao district.
- **Osaka World Expo 2025** – Global event in Japan themed “Designing Future Society for Our Lives”; India’s pavilion curated by IGNCA.
- **Simhastha Kumbh Mela** – 12-yearly Hindu pilgrimage in Nashik and Ujjain, linked to Jupiter’s entry into Leo, recognized by UNESCO.
- **Kheer Bhawani Festival** – Annual Kashmiri Pandit gathering at Kheer Bhawani Temple offering rice pudding as prasad.
- **Padmanabhaswamy Temple** – Kerala Vishnu temple with rare ‘Maha Kumbhabhishekam’, Dravidian architecture, and historic manuscripts.
- **Sant Kabir Das Ji** – 15th-century Bhakti poet-saint from Varanasi, promoting Nirguna devotion and social reform through simple dohas.
- **Katkari Tribe** – PVTG in Maharashtra & Gujarat, historically forest-dependent, targeted by welfare schemes for livelihood and preservation.
- **Jagannath Dham Temple (Digha)** – Kalinga-style temple in West Bengal, consecrated in 2025 with stone idols mirroring Puri Jagannath Temple.
- **INS Kaundinya & Tankai Shipbuilding** – Ancient stitched ship built via 5th-century Tankai method, reviving India’s maritime heritage.
- **Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act, 1950** – Regulates unauthorized use of official emblems/names to protect national dignity.
- **Kumbakonam Vetrilai & Thovalai Maanikka Maalai – GI Tags** – Tamil Nadu betel leaf and garland recognized for origin-specific qualities under GI Act.
- **Sant Kabir Das – 648th Birth Anniversary** – Tribute to Kabir as Bhakti reformer, poet-saint, and founder of Kabir Panth promoting equality.
- **Birsa Munda Martyr’s Day** – Commemorates tribal leader Birsa Munda’s Ulgulan movement and fight for land rights in Jharkhand.
- **50th Anniversary of Sikkim’s Integration with India** – Marks Sikkim becoming India’s 22nd state in 1975 after monarchy abolished via referendum.
- **Buddhism & the Path to Nirvana** – Philosophy teaching Middle Path, Four Noble Truths, and Eightfold Path for liberation and social equality.
- **Raghuji Bhonsle I – Maratha General** – 18th-century Maratha leader of Nagpur Bhosale dynasty known for military expansion in South & East India.
- **Digha Jagannath Temple Controversy** – Replica temple in West Bengal faces disputes over stone idols and use of “Dham” from Puri tradition.
- **Veerashaiva-Lingayats – Separate Religion Code Demand** – Community in Karnataka seeking distinct census code; founded by Basava, emphasizing equality and social reforms.

- **Early Harappan Burial Discovery – Lakhapar, Gujarat** – 5,300-year-old burial with Pre-Prabhas pottery linking Harappan and Chalcolithic cultures.
- **Ghumot – Goa’s State Heritage Instrument** – Traditional percussion instrument made of clay and membrane, significant in Goa’s cultural heritage.
- **Kolhapuri Chappal – Traditional Handcrafted Footwear** – Iconic leather sandals from Maharashtra, GI-tagged, known for durability, craftsmanship, and eco-friendliness.
- **Ambubachi Mela 2025 – Kamakhya Temple, Assam** – Annual festival celebrating Goddess Kamakhya’s menstruation; key Tantric worship event and fertility ritual.
- **Lokmata Devi Ahilyabai Holkar – 300th Birth Anniversary** – Celebrated Malwa queen known for just governance, military leadership, and promotion of culture and dharma.



HISTORY AND ART& CULTURE

SOURCE – THE HINDU

Daojali Hading – Neolithic Site in Assam**Recent Context -:**

Daojali Hading, a Neolithic site in Assam's Dima Hasao district, revealed evidence of Eastern Asiatic Neolithic complex, double-shouldered celts, cord-marked pottery, and early metallurgical practices during excavations in the 1960s.

About:

1. Located in Assam's Dima Hasao district near the Brahmaputra valley.
2. Excavated by T.C. Sharma and M.C. Goswami between 1962–64.
3. First evidence in India of Eastern Asiatic Neolithic complex.
4. Finds include double-shouldered celts and cord-marked pottery.
5. Discovery of furnace and iron slag indicating early metallurgy.
6. Neolithic Age: 7000–1000 BCE, agriculture, domestication, permanent settlements.
7. Other Neolithic sites: Mehrgarh, Burzahom, Senubar, Koldihwa, Bagor, Sarutaru, Brahmagiri, Paiyampalli.

Osaka World Expo 2025**Recent Context -:**

Osaka World Expo 2025 in Japan will showcase innovations under the theme "Designing Future Society for Our Lives", with India's Pavilion curated by IGNCA under the Ministry of Culture.

About:

1. **Location:** Japan; event held every 5 years for 6 months.
2. **Theme:** "Designing Future Society for Our Lives".
3. Functions as a "Living Lab" for global problem-solving through shared knowledge and cutting-edge technology.
4. **India's Pavilion** curated by Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA).
5. **IGNCA** established in 1985; premier government-funded arts organisation.

6. **IGNCA** is an autonomous institute under the Union Ministry of Culture.
7. **IGNCA** is the nodal agency for the National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM).

Simhastha Kumbh Mela**Recent Context -:**

Simhastha Kumbh Mela, a 12-yearly Hindu pilgrimage in Nashik and Ujjain, aligns with Jupiter's entry into Leo (Simha Rashi), and is listed in UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage.

**About:**

1. Held every 12 years at Nashik-Trimbakeshwar (Godavari River) & Ujjain (River Shipra).
2. Named after the Simha constellation of the zodiac.
3. Celebrated when Jupiter (Brihaspati) enters Leo zodiac sign (Simha Rashi).
4. One of 4 traditional Kumbh Melas — others: Haridwar, Prayagraj, and Ujjain.
5. Prayagraj Kumbh at Triveni Sangam (Ganga, Yamuna, Sarasvati).
6. **UNESCO (2017)** listed Kumbh Mela as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
7. Described as the largest peaceful congregation of pilgrims on earth.

Kheer Bhawani Festival**Recent Context -:**

Kheer Bhawani Festival, the largest Hindu gathering in Kashmir after Amarnath Yatra, is celebrated annually on Jyestha Ashtami by Kashmiri Pandits at the Kheer Bhawani Temple in Jammu & Kashmir.

About:

1. Also called **Mela Kheer Bhawani**.
2. Celebrated on **Jyestha Ashtami** (May–June).
3. Devotees are predominantly **Kashmiri Pandits**.
4. Venue: **Kheer Bhawani Temple**, Jammu & Kashmir.
5. Temple is dedicated to **Goddess Ragnya Devi**.
6. **Biggest Hindu religious gathering** in the valley after **Amarnath Yatra**.
7. Devotees offer **kheer** (rice pudding) as the main **prasad**.

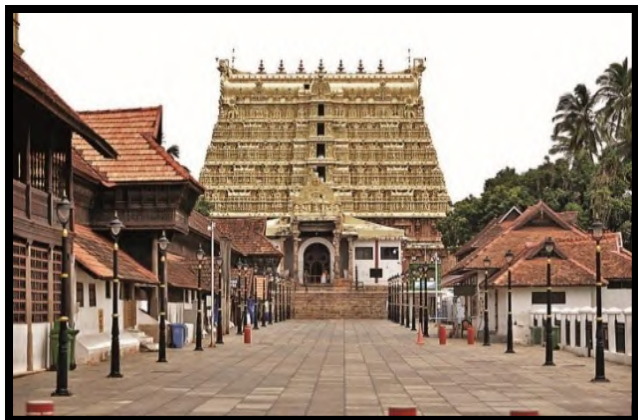
Padmanabhaswamy Temple

Recent Context -:

The **Padmanabhaswamy Temple** in **Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala** performed the rare **'Maha Kumbhabhishekam'** after **270 years**, reviving a major ritual in one of the most revered **Lord Vishnu** temples of India.

About:

1. Located in **Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala**.
2. Built in the **8th century**; later renovated by **King Marthanda Varma**.
3. One of the **108 Divya Desams** dedicated to **Lord Vishnu**.
4. Follows **Thripadidanam** tradition (donation to temple & deity).
5. Architecture: **Dravidian style** with **7-tier gopuram** & intricate carvings.
6. Houses **~3 million palm-leaf manuscripts** from the 14th century.
7. **Nammalwar** (9th-century poet, Alvar saint) composed 10 hymns praising **Lord Padmanabha**.



Sant Kabir Das Ji

Recent Context -:

Sant Kabir Das Ji, a **15th-century mystic poet** from **Varanasi**, remains a key figure of the **Bhakti Movement**, influencing Hinduism and Sikhism with his **Nirguni philosophy** and profound **dohas**.

About:

1. Born in **Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh** in the **15th century**.
2. **Mystic poet**, saint, and **social reformer** linked to the **Bhakti Movement**.
3. Influenced by **Ramananda**; belonged to **Nirguni tradition** (God as formless).
4. Works include **Kabir Granthawali, Anurag Sagar, Bijak, Sakhi Granth**.
5. Verses preserved in **Guru Granth Sahib** by **Guru Arjan Dev**.
6. Literary forms: **Dohas, Ramanas, Padas, Sabdas**.
7. Wrote in **simple Hindi** to make spiritual ideas easily understood.

Katkari Tribe

Recent Context -:

The **Katkari Tribe**, a **PVTG** of Maharashtra and Gujarat, has gained attention due to recent welfare schemes aimed at improving livelihood, housing, and preserving their distinct **language and traditions**.



About:

1. Listed among **75 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)** in India.
2. Also called **Kathodis**; historically **forest dwellers**.

- Primarily reside in **Maharashtra – Pune, Raigad, Thane** districts.
- Found in some parts of **Gujarat**.
- Speak **Katkari** and **Marathi** languages.
- Traditionally dependent on **forest produce** and seasonal labor.
- Identified for **special development initiatives** due to socio-economic vulnerability.

Jagannath Dham Temple (Digha)

Recent Context -:

In **April 2025**, the **Jagannath Dham Temple** at **Digha, West Bengal**, was consecrated. Built in **Kalinga-style architecture**, it mirrors Puri's Jagannath Temple but features **stone idols** instead of wooden ones.

About:

- Located in **Digha**, a coastal town in **West Bengal**.
- Inspired by the **12th-century Jagannath Temple of Puri**.
- Built in **traditional Kalinga-style architecture**.
- Enshrines **stone idols** of **Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, and Subhadra** on **Ratnabedi**.
- Comprises **Vimana, Jagamohan, Nat Mandir, and Bhog Mandap**.
- Made from **pinkish Bansi Paharpur sandstone**.
- Differs from Puri temple's **Darubrahma** (wooden) deities.

SOURCE – VISION MONTHLY

INS Kaundinya & Tankai Shipbuilding Method

Recent Context -:

The Indian Navy inducted **INSV Kaundinya**, an ancient stitched ship built using the **Tankai method**, inspired by a **5th-century CE Ajanta painting**, reviving **India's maritime heritage** through traditional shipbuilding.

About:

- INSV Kaundinya** based on **Ajanta Caves** 5th-century CE ship depiction.
- Built using **Tankai method** — 2000-year-old **stitched shipbuilding** with wooden planks, no nails.
- Tripartite project**: Ministry of Culture, Indian Navy, **M/s Hodi Innovations**.

- Maritime heritage**: Harappan–Mesopotamia trade, Lothal dock, Rig Veda mentions sea voyages.
- Cultural diffusion**: Buddhism spread to **Sri Lanka**; Indian architecture in **Borobudur, Angkor Wat**.
- Naval prowess**: Magadh navy, **Rajendra Chola-I, Shivaji Maharaj** coastal forts & 500+ ships.
- Maritime diplomacy**: **Samudragupta, Pala court** hosted foreign Buddhist missions.



Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act, 1950

Recent Context -:

The **Supreme Court** dismissed a plea concerning honoring a **freedom fighter** under the **Emblems and Names Act, 1950**, which regulates the **use of official emblems and names** without permission.

About:

- Aim** – Prevents **misuse** of specified **emblems** and **names** for **commercial/professional** purposes.
- Covers** trademarks, patents, and trade names.
- Emblems** include seal, flag, insignia, coat-of-arms, pictorial representations.
- Specified list** under the Act & Rules defines protected emblems/names.
- Permission** required from **Central Government** for usage.
- Applies** across India and to **Indian citizens abroad**.
- Enforced to protect **national dignity** and **public trust**.

Kumbakonam Vetrilai & Thovalai Maanikka Maalai – GI Tags

Recent Context -:

Kumbakonam Vetrilai (betel leaf) and **Thovalai Maanikka Maalai** (special garland) from **Tamil Nadu** have been granted **Geographical Indication (GI) tags**, recognizing their unique qualities linked to origin.

About:

1. **Kumbakonam Vetrilai** – Betel leaf from **Thanjavur's Cauvery basin**, rich in **chavicol** with antioxidant & anti-inflammatory properties.
2. **Thovalai Maanikka Maalai** – Garland from **Thovalai**, flowers folded to mimic **rubies** in geometric patterns.
3. **GI tag** – Signifies a product's **specific geographical origin** & linked qualities/reputation.
4. Governed by **GI of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act, 1999**.
5. **GI Registry** located in **Chennai**.
6. Protected under **TRIPS Agreement & Paris Convention**.
7. **Validity** – 10 years, renewable; **Uttar Pradesh** holds most GI tags in India.

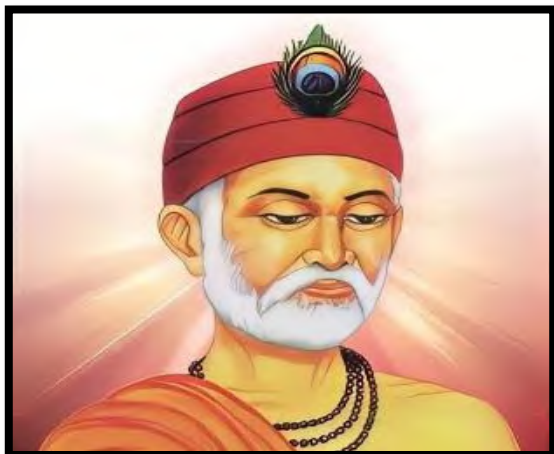
SOURCE – DRISHTI MONTHLY

Sant Kabir Das – 648th Birth Anniversary

Recent Context -:

On **11th June 2025**, the Prime Minister paid tribute to **Sant Kabir Das** on his **648th birth anniversary** (*Kabirdas Jayanti*), honoring his role as a **Bhakti movement** reformer and poet-saint.

About:



1. **Sant Kabir Das** (1440–1518) – Mystic poet & social reformer from **Varanasi**, identified as a humble **julaha** (weaver).
2. Proponent of **Nirguna Bhakti** – Devotion to a **formless, attributeless God** (*Nirguna Brahman*).
3. Spiritual influences – **Ramananda** (Bhakti saint) & **Sheikh Taqi** (Sufi teacher).
4. Advocated **truth, compassion, equality**, and rejection of **casteism & blind rituals**.
5. Literary works – **Dohas, bhajans** in Brajbhasha, Awadhi, Sant Bhasha; major compilations include **Bijak, Kabir Granthawali, Anurag Sagar**.
6. Influence on Sikhism – Verses included in **Guru Granth Sahib** by **Guru Arjan Dev**.
7. Founded **Kabir Panth** – Sect promoting **communal harmony** and spiritual awakening.

Birsa Munda Martyr's Day

Recent Context -:

On **9th June 2025**, the Prime Minister paid tribute to **Bhagwan Birsa Munda** on his **Martyr's Day**, honoring his leadership in the **Ulgulan Movement** and fight for **tribal land rights**.

About Birsa Munda:

1. **Identity** – Tribal leader, **religious reformer**, and **freedom fighter** from the **Chotanagpur region**; revered as **Dharti Abba** (*Father of the Earth*).
2. **Birth** – 15th Nov 1875, **Ulihatu** (Jharkhand); born to a poor **Munda sharecropper** family.
3. **Spiritual Path** – Founded **Birsait religion**; worshipped **Singhonga** (sun god); denounced **alcoholism, superstitions**, and **forced labour (beth begari)**.
4. **Cause** – Fought against British policies dismantling the **Khuntkatti system** (tribal collective land ownership) and exploitation by **zamindars & thikadars**.
5. **Ulgulan Movement** – Led from **1899–1900**; guerrilla resistance aiming for a **self-governed tribal state** (*Birsa Raj*).

6. **Martyrdom** – Arrested Feb 1900; died in British custody on **9th June 1900** at age 25 (officially cholera).
7. **Impact** – Inspired **Chotanagpur Tenancy Act (1908)** protecting tribal land rights and banning transfer to non-tribals.

Related Tribal Welfare Initiatives:

- **Janjatiya Gaurav Divas** – 15th Nov since 2021.
- **Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan** – Integrated development of 63,000 tribal villages.
- **PM-JANMAN (2023)** – Support for PVTGs in healthcare, finance, and community needs.
- **PMAAGY** – Infrastructure for tribal-majority villages.

50th Anniversary of Sikkim's Integration with India

Recent Context :-

On **16th May 2025**, India marked **50 years** of **Sikkim's integration**, commemorating its transition from a **monarchy** to the **22nd state** of India after a **1975 referendum** and constitutional amendments.

About Sikkim's Integration:

1. **Monarchical Rule** – Governed by the **Chogyal dynasty** from **1642–1975**.
2. **Key Treaties** – **Treaty of Titaliya (1817)**, **Treaty of Tumlong (1861)**, **Calcutta Convention (1890)**, and **Lhasa Convention (1904)** defined Sikkim's relations with British India/Tibet.
3. **Indo-Sikkim Treaty (1950)** – Made Sikkim an **Indian protectorate** with control over **defence, foreign affairs, communication**; retained internal autonomy.
4. **1975 Referendum** – **97%** voted to **abolish monarchy** and merge with India.
5. **35th Amendment Act (1974)** – Sikkim became an **Associate State**.
6. **36th Amendment Act (1975)** – Granted **full statehood** as India's **22nd state**.
7. **Significance** – Strengthened India's **northeastern strategic position**, especially along the **China border**.

SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS

Buddhism & the Path to Nirvana

Context :

Buddhism arose as a reformist, egalitarian philosophy against Brahmanical ritualism. It taught the Middle Path, Four Noble Truths, and Eightfold Path as the way to liberation (nirvana).

About:

1. **Founder:** Siddhartha (later Buddha) of the Sakya clan, attained enlightenment at Bodhi Gaya. Known as *Tathagata* (one liberated).
2. **Four Noble Truths (Ariya-saccani):**
 - Life is suffering (*Dukkha*).
 - Cause of suffering is desire (*Samudaya*).
 - Cessation of suffering is possible (*Nirodha*).
 - Path to cessation = *Eightfold Path (Magga)*.
3. **Eightfold Path (Ashtangika-marga):**
 - Right view, intention, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, concentration.
 - Represents the *Middle Path* (avoiding extremes of indulgence & asceticism).
4. **Core Ideas:**
 - Impermanence (*Anicca*), No-self (*Anatta*), Suffering (*Dukkha*).
 - Nirvana = release from rebirth, desire, and ego.
5. **Social Dimension:**
 - Inclusive order: Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras could join Sangha.
 - Actions (*karma*) > birth.
 - Buddha sometimes addressed as "Brahmana" (wise one).
6. **Reordering Hierarchy:**
 - Kshatriyas placed before Brahmanas (unlike Purushasukta).
 - Monastic order (*Sangha*) open to all → symbol of equality

Raghuji Bhonsle I – Maratha General

Context: Maharashtra reclaimed the 18th-century “Raghuji Sword” at a London auction.

Key Points:

1. **Raghuji Bhonsle I (1739–1755):** Maratha general under Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj.
2. **Founder:** Nagpur-based Bhosale dynasty, part of the Maratha Confederacy.
3. **Military Campaigns:** Expanded Maratha influence in Bengal, Odisha, South India; defeated Nawabs of Kurnool & Cuddapah.
4. **Title & Recognition:** ‘Senasaheb Subha’ for military acumen.
5. **Sword:** European-style blade with local Mulheri hilt; reflects **18th-century Indo-European arms trade and craftsmanship.**

Digha Jagannath Temple Controversy

Context: Newly consecrated **replica of Puri Jagannath Temple** in West Bengal faces objections from Puri servitors.

Key Points:

1. **Location & Design:** Digha, Purba Medinipur, 213-ft tall; sandstone; Kalingan architecture.
2. **Issue:** Use of “Dham” and Nilachakra, stone idols vs original neem wood (Daru) Jagannath.
3. **Religious Significance:** Performing rituals here may **dilute sanctity of original Puri Temple.**
4. **Tourism & Culture:** Replica could compete with Puri for devotees and tourists.
5. **Puri Jagannath Temple:** 10th century, Eastern Ganga dynasty; Ratha Yatra; Daru idols; Kalinga architecture.

Veerashaiva-Lingayats – Separate Religion Code Demand

Context: Veerashaiva-Lingayats in Karnataka demand **separate religion code in 2026 census.**

Key Points:

1. **Founder:** Basava (12th century), social reformer and Prime Minister under Kalachuri King Bijjala I.
2. **Beliefs:** Personal worship of Shiva via **Ishtalinga**, rejection of Brahmin-led rituals, equality and socio-religious reforms.

3. Key Concepts:

- **Anubhav Mantapa:** First human parliament; Vachana literature recorded proceedings.
 - **Kaayaka:** Manual labour with divine mindset.
 - **Daasooaha:** Charity from earnings to support poor.
4. **Veerashaivas vs Lingayats:** Veerashaivas predate Basava, Lingayats follow Basava’s reformist philosophy.
 5. **Socio-Cultural Impact:** Promoted equality, rejected caste/gender discrimination, emphasized literacy, ethics, and devotion.

SOURCE – INSIGHTS

Early Harappan Burial Discovery – Lakhapar, Gujarat

Recent Context -:

Archaeologists uncovered a **5,300-year-old Early Harappan burial at Lakhapar, Kutch (Gujarat)**, revealing links between **Harappan and Chalcolithic cultures**, extending Harappan influence deeper into western India.

Key Facts:

- **Location:** Lakhapar village, Kutch, Gujarat; excavations by **University of Kerala.**
- **Dating: 3300–2600 BCE** (Early Harappan phase).
- **Findings:**
 1. **Human burial with Pre-Prabhas pottery** – first of its kind in Gujarat.
 2. **No markers/architecture** for burial pit.
 3. **Harappan-style architecture** – sandstone/shale structures.
 4. Pottery links to **Chalcolithic Saurashtra** (Prabhas Patan, Dadrana).
 5. Cultural parallels with Early Harappan **Sindh** sites.

Ghumot – Goa’s State Heritage Instrument

Recent Context :

Goa’s traditional percussion instrument **Ghumot** is in focus due to revival debates balancing **heritage**

conservation with **wildlife protection**, following its 2019 **State Heritage Instrument** recognition.

Key Facts:

- **What:** Traditional **mud-based membranophone** percussion instrument of Goa.
- **Origin:** Brought by tribal communities/early settlers; rooted in Goa's **oral traditions**.
- **Types:** Varied sizes for **children, women, amateurs, professionals**.
- **Cultural Link:** Crafted by tribal potters; played by **Hindu & Christian communities** → **syncretic culture**.

Making Process:

1. **Clay shaping** into pumpkin-like form (3 parts) → air bubbles removed.
2. **Sun-dried & kiln-fired** for strength.
3. **Membrane:** Earlier monitor lizard skin (now banned under **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**) → replaced with **goat/buffalo skin or synthetic**.
4. **Tuning** with coir rope for resonance.



Kolhapuri Chappal – Traditional Handcrafted Footwear

Recent Context:

Artisans of **Kolhapuri chappals** objected to **Prada's 2026 collection**, alleging **unauthorised imitation** of their traditional design.

Key Facts:

- **What it is:** Handcrafted **leather sandals** with **durable, intricate design**, featuring **open-toe, T-strap structure**.
- **Region of Origin:** Kolhapur (Maharashtra) and adjoining districts; parts of Karnataka (Belgaum, Bagalkot, Dharwad).
- **GI Tag:**
 - Received **Geographical Indication (GI)** status in **2019**.
 - Jointly registered by Maharashtra & Karnataka artisans.
 - GI ensures only registered producers can use the **"Kolhapuri"** name.

Unique Features:

- Made from **vegetable-tanned buffalo hide**, **without nails**.
- **Traditional motifs** and **braided leather straps**.
- **Eco-friendly, breathable, long-lasting**.

Ambubachi Mela 2025 – Kamakhya Temple, Assam

Context:

Thousands of devotees gather at **Kamakhya Temple, Guwahati** for **Ambubachi Mela 2025**, celebrating the **annual menstruation of Goddess Kamakhya**, a central event in **Tantrik Shaktism**.

About Ambubachi Mela

1. **Nature:** Annual festival at Kamakhya Temple, Assam, marking Goddess Kamakhya's menstrual cycle; linked to fertility & monsoon.
2. **Practices:** Temple closed for 3 days; no idol worship; distribution of symbolic cloth amulets; pause in agricultural activities.
3. **Temple Status:** One of 51 Shakti Peethas; major Tantric worship site on Nilachal Hills, ~7 km from Guwahati.
4. **Structure:** Three chambers; innermost houses yoni-shaped cleft with natural spring (worshipped as deity).
5. **History & Legend:** Rebuilt in 1565 by Koch king Chilarai after destruction by Kala Pahar; linked to Sati's reproductive organ myth.

Lokmata Devi Ahilyabai Holkar – 300th Birth Anniversary

Context:

The **Prime Minister of India** addressed the **Mahila Sashaktikaran Mahasammelan** in **Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh**, commemorating the **300th birth anniversary** of **Lokmata Devi Ahilyabai Holkar**.

Early Life & Family

- **Born:** 31 May 1725, **Chondi village, Ahmednagar**, Maharashtra.
- **Father:** Mankoji Rao Shinde, village head, ensured her **education**.
- **Marriage:** Married **Khanderao Holkar**, son of **Malhar Rao Holkar** of the Malwa kingdom.

Reign as Ruler

- **Became ruler of Malwa:** 1767, after **Peshwa's approval**.
- **Capital:** Maheshwar, Madhya Pradesh.
- **Governance Style:** Wise, just, and inclusive during **politically volatile times**.
- **Military Leadership:** Personally led campaigns; founded the **Holkar army in 1792**.

Legacy

- **Died:** 13 August 1795, aged 70.
- Founded the **Maheshwari saree textile industry**, still famous today.
- Known as the **'Philosopher Queen'** for wisdom and spiritual outlook.
- Remembered for **combining development with dharma (duty)**.
- Her work continues to influence **cultural preservation and grassroots governance in India**



TOPICS COVERED-

- **Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar (MGMD) Initiative** – Digitally documents intangible village heritage to preserve and promote cultural identity.
- **Chautal** – Traditional 12-beat rhythmic cycle in North Indian classical music, reflecting musical heritage and diaspora links.
- **India's 44th UNESCO World Heritage Site – Maratha Military Landscapes** – 12 forts showcasing Maratha strategy, architecture, and cultural legacy.
- **Indian Harmonium** – Portable hand-pumped instrument central to classical, devotional, and folk music traditions.
- **Legacy of Chola** – South Indian dynasty known for maritime strength, trade networks, and cultural influence in Southeast Asia.
- **Gangaikonda Cholapuram** – Imperial Chola capital with Dravidian architecture and UNESCO-recognized temple heritage.
- **Rajendra Chola I** – Chola ruler famed for naval expeditions, overseas influence, and irrigation innovations.
- **Guryul Ravine Fossil Site** – 260-million-year-old site in Kashmir documenting Permian–Triassic extinction and earliest tsunami evidence.
- **Kashi Declaration** – Youth-led initiative aiming to eliminate drug abuse in India by 2047 through societal and spiritual engagement.
- **Ashokan Pillar** – 3rd-century BCE monolithic pillar spreading Ashoka's Dhamma and Buddhist values.
- **Penico: Peru's Newly Unearthed Ancient City** – 3,500-year-old city showing early urban development and pre-Inca trade.
- **Sohrai Art** – Tribal women's ritual wall-painting in Jharkhand reflecting agrarian life, spirituality, and sustainability.
- **Santhal Rebellion (Hul, 1855–56)** – Tribal uprising against British colonial oppression in Jharkhand, commemorated for resistance.
- **Machilipatnam Greenfield Port** – Modern port project reviving historic maritime trade hub in Andhra Pradesh.
- **Paika Rebellion (1817)** – Early anti-colonial uprising in Odisha led by Bakshi Jagabandhu, symbolizing tribal resistance.
- **Chola Gangam Lake** – 1,000-year-old man-made lake in Gangaikonda Cholapuram illustrating Chola engineering and water management.
- **Maratha Military Landscapes** – UNESCO-listed forts highlighting coastal defense, military innovation, and administration.
- **Kashmiri Pashmina Shawl** – Handcrafted woolen shawl representing India's artisanal heritage and global cultural diplomacy.
- **Piprahwa Relics** – Sacred relics of Lord Buddha returned to India, emphasizing historical and religious heritage.

HISTORY AND ART & CULTURE

SOURCE – DRISHTI

Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar (MGMD) Initiative

Recent Context -

Over 4.7 lakh villages culturally documented under MGMD, a nationwide initiative to digitally map India's intangible heritage, launched in June 2023 under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

7 Prelims About -

1. **Objective:** Document and preserve intangible cultural heritage of Indian villages.
2. **Launched:** June 2023, under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.
3. **Implementing Agency:** Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA).
4. **Coverage:** 6.5 lakh villages targeted; 360° video documentation of 750 villages.
5. **MGMD Web Portal:** Acts as National Cultural Workplace with artist registration, UICs, and scheme links.
6. **Part of:** National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM).
7. **NMCM Aim:** Create national cultural database, promote rural development, and integrate with welfare schemes.



Chautal

Recent Context -

PM shared a video of Bhojpuri Chautal performance in Trinidad & Tobago, highlighting India's cultural connection with diaspora and the classical 12-beat rhythmic cycle in dhrupad music.

7 Prelims About -

1. **Definition:** Traditional 12-beat rhythmic cycle (tāl) in North Indian classical music.
2. **Origin:** Dhrupad tradition, North India; "Chautal" means "four claps."

3. **Structure:** Two schools – 4-4-2-2 or six vibhags of 2 beats.
4. **Instrument:** Primarily played on pakhawaj; emphasizes improvisation ("thapi").
5. **Tempo:** Medium; avoids extreme fast or slow playing.
6. **Significance:** Oldest surviving Indian classical music form; reflects spiritual depth and rhythmical power.
7. **Diaspora Connection:** Preserves cultural link with Bhojpuri-speaking communities abroad.

SOURCE- THE HINDU

India's 44th UNESCO World Heritage Site – Maratha Military Landscapes

Recent Context -

At 47th WHC, India's Maratha Military Landscapes, 12 forts across Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, were inscribed as India's 44th UNESCO World Heritage Site for military, architectural, and cultural significance.

7 Prelims About -

1. **Forts Covered:** 11 in Maharashtra (Salher, Shivneri, Lohgad, Khanderi, Raigad, Rajgad, Pratapgad, Suvarnadurg, Panhala, Vijaydurg, Sindhudurg) and 1 in Tamil Nadu (Gingee).
2. **Classification:** Hill, Hill-Forest, Hill-Plateau, Coastal, and Island forts.
3. **UNESCO Criteria:** (iv) – architectural/technological significance, (vi) – historic/cultural association.
4. **Historical Context:** Reflects Maratha military strategy and Shivaji Maharaj's vision.
5. **Protection:** ASI manages 8 forts; Maharashtra Archaeology Directorate manages 4 forts.
6. **India & UNESCO WHS:** 44 sites; India ranks 6th globally, 2nd in Asia-Pacific; 62 sites on Tentative List.
7. **Strategic Features:** Forts use natural terrain; adaptive design with local materials; mix of coastal, island, plateau, and forest locations.

INDIAN HARMONIUM

Context -

Recently highlighted in science and cultural articles for its non-electric, hand-pumped design, the Indian

harmonium continues to be central in classical, devotional, and folk music traditions.

About -

1. Portable, hand-pumped free-reed aerophone, made of wood.
2. Produces sound via bellows-driven air and metal reeds, no electricity required.
3. Key instrument in Hindustani classical music, bhajan, qawwali, folk, theatre, and cinema.
4. Dynamics controlled manually via bellows; tone enriched by multiple reeds per key.
5. Octave-coupling mechanism reduces finger strain; tuning affected by temperature.
6. Self-contained acoustic design allows outdoor and uninterrupted performances.
7. Related to European reed organ; developed unique timbre in Indian context.



LEGACY OF CHOLA

Context -

On Rajendra Chola I's birth anniversary, PM highlighted the dynasty's maritime strength, decentralized governance, trade networks, and cultural influence across Southeast Asia, underpinning India's historical global connections.

About -

1. Ruled South India (9th–13th century CE), extended to Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia.
2. Rajaraja Chola I: naval power, Brihadisvara Temple, Sri Lanka expansion.
3. Rajendra Chola I: Gangaikonda Cholapuram, northern campaigns, overseas influence.
4. Kudavolai system: early rural electoral practice; decentralized village governance via Ur/Sabha/Nagaram.
5. Maritime trade: Poompuhar and Nagapattinam as ports; merchant guilds promoted commerce.

6. Cultural influence: South-East Asian temples, Shaivism & Vaishnavism patronage, bronze sculpture excellence.

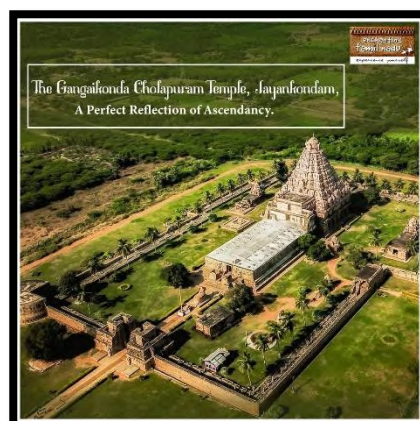
GANGAIKONDA CHOLAPURAM

Context -

India marks 1000 years of Rajendra Chola I's northern expedition, establishing Gangaikonda Cholapuram as a capital; today recognized as UNESCO-listed 'Great Living Chola Temples' site.

About -

1. Imperial Chola capital (1025–1279 CE) in Ariyalur, Tamil Nadu.
2. Built by Rajendra Chola I after Ganga expedition; name means "Chola who brought Ganga."
3. Featured palaces, water reservoir (Chola Gangam), and Gangaikonda Cholivaram Temple.
4. Temple architecture mirrors Thanjavur Brihadisvara, with vimanas, carvings, and jalasthambam.
5. Epigraphic evidence: Tiruvalangadu & Karanthai plates, Kalingattuparani, Muvar Ula.
6. Served as political, cultural, and trade center for two centuries.
7. UNESCO World Heritage: part of 'Great Living Chola Temples' along with Thanjavur & Darasuram.



SOURCE – INSIGHTS

Rajendra Chola I

Recent Context - India commemorates 1,000 years of Rajendra Chola I's Southeast Asian expedition through

cultural events and heritage projects, highlighting his naval, trade, and cultural influence.

About -

1. Ruled Chola Empire: 1014–1044 CE.
2. Son of Rajaraja Chola I.
3. Capital: Gangaikonda Cholapuram.
4. Naval expedition (1025 CE) defeated Srivijaya, controlled Malacca Strait.
5. Title: "Gangaikondachola" (Conqueror of Ganga).
6. Built Gangaikonda Cholapuram Temple, Dravidian architecture.
7. Advanced irrigation: Cholagangam Tank.

Guryul Ravine Fossil Site

Recent Context - GSI warns of threats to 260-million-year-old Guryul Ravine fossil site in Kashmir due to quarrying; site records the Permian–Triassic mass extinction and earliest known tsunami.

About -

1. Location: Khonmoh, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir.
2. Age: 260 million years, Permian–Triassic boundary.
3. Records the 'Great Dying' (90% marine, 70% terrestrial species extinct).
4. Contains oldest known tsunami evidence.
5. Protected under 2017 Government Order.
6. Fossil layer 3m thick (larger than China's Meishan).
7. Potential UNESCO Global Geopark and National Geological Monument.

Kashi Declaration

Recent Context - Adopted at Youth Spiritual Summit 2025 in Varanasi, Kashi Declaration provides a youth-led, culturally rooted roadmap to eliminate drug abuse in India by 2047.

About -

1. Launched by Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
2. Aim: Nasha Mukta Yuva by 2047.
3. Focus on spiritual mobilization and youth empowerment.

4. Whole-of-society approach: families, communities, institutions.
5. Multi-ministerial coordination (Youth, Social Justice, Culture, Labour, Home).
6. Annual review: Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue.
7. Digital monitoring against online targeting of schoolchildren.



Ashokan Pillar

Recent Context - India unveiled Ashokan Pillar replica in Waskaduwa, Sri Lanka, commemorating Emperor Ashoka's spread of Buddhism and Dhamma values after Kalinga war.

About -

1. Built by Ashoka, 3rd century BCE, post-Kalinga war.
2. Height: 40–50 feet, monolithic sandstone.
3. Capitals: lotus base, lion motifs.
4. Inscriptions in Brahmi, Kharosthi, Aramaic, Greek.
5. Spread moral messages: non-violence, welfare, justice.
6. Placed near trade routes, pilgrimage sites, capitals.
7. First architectural expression of Dhamma in India and Asia.

Penico: Peru's Newly Unearthed Ancient City

Recent Context - Archaeologists discovered the 3,500-year-old city of Penico in northern Peru, a post-Caral trade hub linking Pacific, Andean, and Amazonian cultures, shedding light on early urban development in pre-Inca Peru.

About -

1. Location: Barranca Province, ~200 km north of Lima, altitude ~600 m.

2. Time Period: 1800–1500 BCE, contemporary with early Egypt, Sumer, India.
3. Layout: Central circular structure + 18 stone/mud buildings.
4. Structures: Ceremonial temples, residential complexes, central plaza with sculpted reliefs.
5. Artifacts: Clay figures, conch shell trumpets, beaded necklaces.

Sohrai Art

Recent Context - Showcased at Kala Utsav 2025 at Rashtrapati Bhavan, Sohrai Art from Jharkhand highlights tribal women's ritual wall-painting tradition, reflecting agrarian life, spirituality, and sustainability.

About -

1. Practiced by Santhal, Munda, Oraon tribes of Jharkhand.
2. Ritual wall painting during harvest festivals, especially Diwali.
3. Tools: Bamboo twigs, chewed sticks, cloth rags.
4. Motifs: Animals, birds, trees, rural life; nature-inspired.
5. Pigments: Natural earth-based colors (red ochre, kaolin, manganese, yellow clay).
6. Women-led art, orally transmitted across generations.
7. Cultural Significance: Symbolizes agrarian thanksgiving, feminine creativity, mythology, spiritual ecology.



Santhal Rebellion (Hul, 1855–56)

Recent Context - 170th anniversary of Santhal Rebellion observed as 'Hul Diwas' in Jharkhand, honoring tribal leaders who resisted British colonial

oppression, land alienation, and economic exploitation.

About -

1. Leaders: Sidhu & Kanhu Murmu; women warriors Phulo & Jhano Murmu.
2. Location: Damin-i-Koh (Santhal Parganas, Jharkhand).
3. Causes: Land alienation, debt traps, forced labour, loss of traditional livelihood.
4. Sequence: June 30, 1855 – rebellion declared; guerrilla tactics used.
5. Suppression: Martial law, firearms, elephants; ended 1856.
6. Outcome: Santhal Parganas administrative unit; Tenancy Act 1876.
7. Legacy: Inspired future tribal movements; commemorated annually in folk songs/literature.

Machilipatnam Greenfield Port

Recent Context - Construction of Machilipatnam Greenfield Port (~48% complete) aims to revive historic maritime trade hub in Andhra Pradesh, linking Telangana dry port and boosting coastal economic corridor.

About -

1. Location: Krishna district, Andhra Pradesh; mouth of River Krishna, Bay of Bengal.
2. Ancient port: Satavahana era (1st century AD); Golconda textile exports.
3. European factories: Dutch, British, French in 17th century.
4. Decline: 18th-century policy shift to Madras; siltation issues.
5. Modern port: Manginapudi; Phase-I with 4 berths, expandable to 16.
6. Capacity: 36 MTPA, handles 80,000-tonne ships; inland connectivity via Telangana dry port.
7. Economic impact: Employment, logistics, and coastal corridor development.

Paika Rebellion (1817)

Recent Context - NCERT omission of Paika Rebellion in Class 8 textbook sparked controversy; uprising led by

Bakshi Jagabandhu in Odisha predated 1857 revolt, symbolizing anti-colonial tribal resistance.

About -

1. Location: Khurda district, Odisha; spread to Puri, Banpur, Ghumusar.
2. Leader: Bakshi Jagabandhu; involved Paikas, Kondhs, tribal and peasant groups.
3. Causes: Loss of hereditary land, British revenue policies, salt monopoly, economic exploitation.
4. Attacks: Police stations, treasuries, symbols of British power.
5. Tactics: Guerrilla raids and open confrontation.
6. Outcome: Brutally suppressed; Jagabandhu exiled until 1825.
7. Significance: Considered first war of independence in Odisha; symbol of anti-colonial pride.



SOURCE – VISION MONTHLY

CHOLA GANGAM LAKE

Recent Context: Tamil Nadu announced development of 1000-year-old Chola Gangam Lake in Gangaikonda Cholapuram during Aadi Thiruvathirai festival.

About -

1. Also called **Ponneri Lake**; largest ancient man-made lake in India.
2. Built by **Rajendra Chola I** (1014–1044 CE) in Gangaikonda Cholapuram.
3. **Water source:** Canal from Kollidam River, a distributary of Kaveri.
4. **Structure:** Elliptical bunds strengthened with laterite stones.
5. **Purpose:** Drinking water supply & irrigation; holy water from Ganga poured.

6. **Cultural link:** Associated with Shaiva Bhakti tradition and Chola maritime expeditions.
7. **Heritage value:** Illustrates Chola engineering, administration, and urban planning.

MARATHA MILITARY LANDSCAPES

Recent Context: Added to UNESCO World Heritage List as India's 44th site; spans Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

About -

1. Linked to **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj** and 17th–19th century Maratha rule.
2. Includes **12 forts** across Sahyadri, Deccan Plateau, Konkan Coast, Eastern Ghats.
3. **Key forts:** Raigad, Shivneri, Rajgad, Pratapgad, Gingee, Sindhudurg, Khanderi.
4. **Strategic purpose:** Coastal defense, hilltop strongholds, military innovation.
5. **Maratha administration:** Ashtapradhan council; revenue systems: Chauth, Sardeshmukhi.
6. **Decline:** After Third Battle of Panipat, 1761.
7. **Heritage significance:** Reflects military, architectural, and strategic ingenuity of Marathas.

KASHMIRI PASHMINA SHAWL

Recent Context: Indian PM gifted handcrafted artefacts, including Kashmiri Pashmina shawl, during his visit to Ghana.

About -

1. Made from the fine undercoat of **Changthangi (Pashmina) goat** in Ladakh.
2. Celebrated for **softness, warmth, and lightweight texture**.
3. Represents India's **handicraft and artisanal heritage**.
4. Pashmina shawls have **GI tag protection** for authenticity.
5. Other notable handicrafts gifted: **Bidriware vases (Karnataka), Silver filigree purse (Odisha)**.

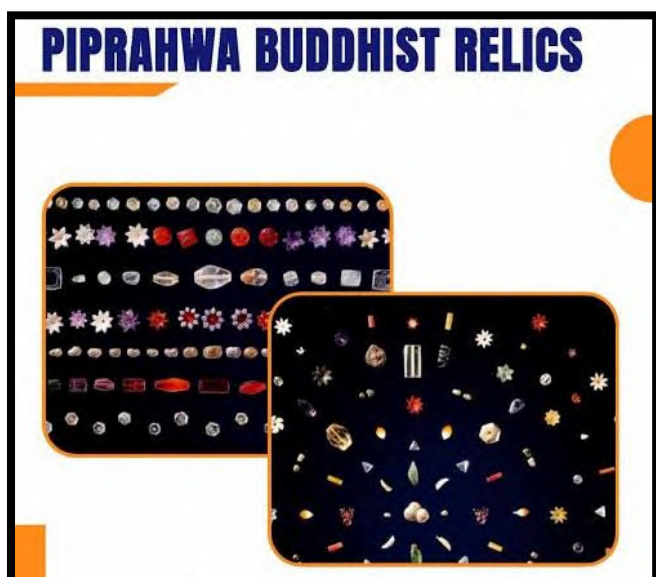
6. **Bidriware:** Zinc-copper alloy with black finish and silver inlay; floral motifs symbolize prosperity.
7. **Silver filigree (Tarakasi) work:** Intricate floral and vine designs; Miniature Ambawari Elephant (West Bengal) made from synthetic ivory.

PIPAHWA RELICS

Recent Context: India witnessed the return of Lord Buddha's sacred Piprahwa Relics.

About -

1. Discovered in **1898** at Piprahwa, Siddharthnagar, UP, by William Claxton Peppé.
2. Associated with **Buddha's mortal remains** (body relics).
3. Relics include **bone fragments, soapstone & crystal caskets, sandstone coffer, gold offerings.**
4. **Enshrined around 3rd century BCE;** Brahmi inscription confirms deposition by the Sakya clan.
5. Classified as **'AA' antiquities** under Indian law; cannot be removed or sold.
6. Linked to **ancient Kapilavastu,** Buddha's early life region.
7. Reflects **Buddhist heritage, archaeology, and international cultural restitution.**





TOPICS COVERED-

1. **Keeladi Archaeological Site** – Ancient urban settlement in Tamil Nadu (6th century BCE) with advanced town planning and Tamil Brahmi inscriptions.
2. **Kudavolai System – Chola Ballot Pots** – Early ballot-based village elections demonstrating decentralised governance in the Chola Empire.
3. **Maratha Military Landscapes – UNESCO World Heritage** – Strategic forts of 17th–19th century Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu reflecting Maratha military architecture.
4. **14th Dalai Lama & Tibetan Reincarnation** – Dalai Lama asserts independent authority over future reincarnations, outside Chinese control.
5. **Pandharpur Wari** – Annual 250 km pilgrimage in Maharashtra honoring Lord Vitthal with paduka processions.
6. **Kanwar Yatra** – Pilgrimage across North India carrying Ganga water to Shiva temples during Shravana.
7. **Kakori Train Action** – 1925 revolutionary act by HRA to seize British treasury, commemorated on its 100th anniversary.
8. **200th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule** – Celebrating social reforms, anti-caste work, and women's education initiatives.
9. **Vithalbhai Patel** – First elected Indian President (Speaker) of Central Legislative Assembly, promoting parliamentary independence.
10. **Dhirio (Bull Fighting in Goa)** – Traditional Goan bullfighting linked to agrarian festivals, currently banned but culturally significant.
11. **Pingali Venkayya & National Flag of India** – Designer of the Indian National Flag, symbolizing unity, peace, and progress.
12. **Goswami Tulsidas** – Celebrated 500th birth anniversary of poet-saint who authored Ramcharitmanas and promoted Bhakti Movement.
13. **Gallantry Awards** – Honors for bravery and valor in wartime and peacetime, conferred by the President of India.
14. **Commonwealth Games (CWG)** – India to host 2030 CWG in Ahmedabad, reviving its role as a global multi-sport host.
15. **1,000 Years of Rajendra Chola I's Maritime Expedition** – Commemorates Chola naval supremacy and overseas campaigns.
16. **Quit India Movement (QIM) / August Kranti Diwas** – 1942 mass civil disobedience movement led by Mahatma Gandhi against British rule.
17. **Sarnath Nominated for UNESCO World Heritage Site** – Site of Buddha's first sermon with historic stupas and archaeological significance.
18. **Paithani Sarees** – Maharashtra's 2,000-year-old handwoven silk sarees known for intricate zari work and cultural heritage.
19. **India's Fossil Heritage** – Rich fossil record under threat due to lack of legal protection and illegal trade.
20. **Bengali Women Revolutionaries** – Key female figures in armed resistance, education, and social reform during India's freedom struggle.
21. **Return of Piprahwa Buddhist Relics** – Sacred relics of Buddha repatriated to India after 127 years, highlighting cultural diplomacy.

HISTORY AND ART & CULTURE

SOURCE – THE HINDU

Keeladi Archaeological Site

Recent Context :

Excavations at **Keeladi village, Tamil Nadu** reveal evidence of **urban civilisation** on Vaigai riverbanks dating back to **6th century BCE**, reshaping understanding of the **Sangam Age**.

ABOUT-

1. **Location:** Keeladi is in **Sivaganga district, Tamil Nadu**, 12 km from **Madurai** along the Vaigai river.
2. **Dating:** **Carbon dating** of charcoal confirms settlement from **6th century BCE**; deeper excavations suggest **580 BCE**.
3. **Urban Features:** Houses with **burnt bricks, drainage systems, water tanks, deep wells**, showing **advanced urban planning**.
4. **Economic Activities:** Evidence of **pottery, weaving, dyeing, bead-making**, and furnaces for **quartz, carnelian, glass, agate beads**.
5. **Trade & Cultural Links:** Artifacts suggest **trade and cultural exchange** with **Indus Valley Civilisation**.
6. **Script Evidence:** Over **120 potsherds** bear **Tamil Brahmi inscriptions**, with personal names like **Aathan, Uthiran, Thiesan**.
7. **Historical Significance:** Fills gap from **Iron Age (12th–6th century BCE)** to **Early Historic Period**, supporting **Sangam literature**.



TOPIC: Kudavolai System – Chola Ballot Pots

Recent Context :

The **Prime Minister** highlighted the **Chola Empire's democratic traditions**, including **Kudavolai system**,

showing early **ballot-based elections** at village assemblies and decentralised governance mechanisms.

ABOUT-

1. **Chola Empire:** Ruled **9th–13th centuries CE**; known for **maritime power, temple architecture, decentralised administration**.
2. **Village Assemblies:** **Sabha** (Brahmin villages) and **Ur** (non-Brahmin villages) managed **revenue, irrigation, temple affairs, law and order**.
3. **Kudavolai System:** Early **ballot-based elections**; candidates' names on **palm leaves** drawn by a **young impartial boy**.
4. **Eligibility:** Candidates must be **tax-paying landowners, 35–70 years, Vedic/admin knowledge**, with **no criminal or domestic abuse record**.
5. **Disqualifications:** Debt defaulters, alcoholics, and close relatives of sitting members were **excluded**.
6. **Accountability:** **Annual audits**, fines, and disqualification for **misappropriation or dereliction of duty**.
7. **Significance:** Illustrates **transparent, fair, decentralised governance**, predating **modern democratic principles**.

TOPIC: Maratha Military Landscapes – UNESCO World Heritage

Recent Context :

UNESCO inscribes **Maratha Military Landscapes of India** including **12 forts** in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, highlighting **strategic military architecture** from the **17th–19th centuries CE**.

ABOUT-

1. **World Heritage Listing:** Added during **47th WHC session, Paris**; India now has **44 UNESCO sites**, ranking **6th globally**.
2. **Forts Included:** **Raigad, Salher, Shivneri, Lohagad, Khanderi, Rajgad, Pratapgad, Suvarnadurg, Panhala, Vijaydurg, Sindhudurg, Gingee Fort**.

3. **Time Period:** 17th–19th centuries CE, reflecting **Maratha strategic defence planning**.
4. **Geography:** Diverse terrains—**coastal outposts, hilltop strongholds**—showing knowledge of **geography and fortification**.
5. **Purpose:** Preserve **cultural heritage**, showcase **military innovation** and Maratha influence.
6. **UNESCO Objective:** Protect sites of **Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)** across **cultural, natural, mixed properties**.

TOPIC: 14th Dalai Lama & Tibetan Reincarnation

Recent Context :

The **14th Dalai Lama** announced continuation of the **Dalai Lama institution** with **Gaden Phodrang Trust** as sole authority to recognise **future reincarnations**, asserting independence from **Chinese government influence**.

ABOUT-

1. **Title:** “Dalai Lama” combines **Mongolic ‘dalai’ (ocean)** and **Tibetan ‘lama’ (master)**; first conferred in **1578** to **Sonam Gyatso**.
2. **Tulku Concept:** Dalai Lamas are **reincarnated spiritual masters**, manifestations of **Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara**.
3. **14th Dalai Lama:** Born **1935**, **Taktser, Tibet**, escaped to India **1959**, settled in **Dharamsala**, established **Tibetan government-in-exile**.
4. **Political Transition: 2011**—relinquished temporal power; transferred authority to **democratically elected Tibetan leader**.
5. **Chinese Dispute:** China views him as a “**splittist**”, insists on controlling future **reincarnation recognition**.
6. **Future Reincarnation:** **Gaden Phodrang Trust** is sole authority; 600-year institution continues **independently of China**.

TOPIC: Pandharpur Wari

Recent Context :

Pandharpur Wari, a **700–800-year-old pilgrimage**, sees **thousands of devotees walking 250 km** in June–

July in Maharashtra, carrying **padukas of saints** to **Pandharpur**.

ABOUT-

1. **Pilgrimage:** Annual **yatra** to **Pandharpur**, abode of **Lord Vitthal (form of Vishnu)**.
2. **Participants:** **Warkaris** walk **~250 km over 20 days**, singing **abhangas** and performing **kirtans**.
3. **Paduka Tradition:** Carry **sacred sandals of saints** like **Dnyaneshwar** and **Tukaram** in **palkis**.
4. **Historical Origin:** Tradition is **700–800 years old**.
5. **Cultural Significance:** Strengthens **community bonding, religious devotion, and cultural identity**.
6. **Economic & Social Impact:** Supports **local economies, pilgrimage infrastructure, and spiritual tourism**.
7. **Modern Relevance:** Highlights **continuity of Bhakti movement** and **regional devotional culture** in Maharashtra.



TOPIC: Kanwar Yatra

Recent Context :

Kanwar Yatra, observed in **Shravana (July–August)**, involves **pilgrims carrying Ganga water** to Shiva temples, blending **mythological significance** with modern **mass religious practice** across North India.

ABOUT-

1. **Definition:** Annual pilgrimage of **Kanwariyas**, carrying **holy Ganga water** in **decorated kanwars** to **Shiva temples**.

- Mythology:** Linked to **Samudra Manthan**, where Shiva drank **halahal (poison)**; Ganga water offered to **soothe him**.
- Origins:** Mass form emerged in **1700s Bihar (Sultanganj)**, spreading across North India.
- Water Sources:** **Haridwar, Gangotri, Gaumukh, Sultanganj, Varanasi, Prayagraj, Ayodhya**.
- Offerings:** Offered at **local Shiva temples**, including **12 Jyotirlingas** and famous shrines.
- Popularity Factors:** Boosted by **infrastructure, Hindu identity assertion, rising incomes**.
- Sociological Significance:** Fosters **community bonding, caste integration, and shared religious participation**.

Kakori Train Action

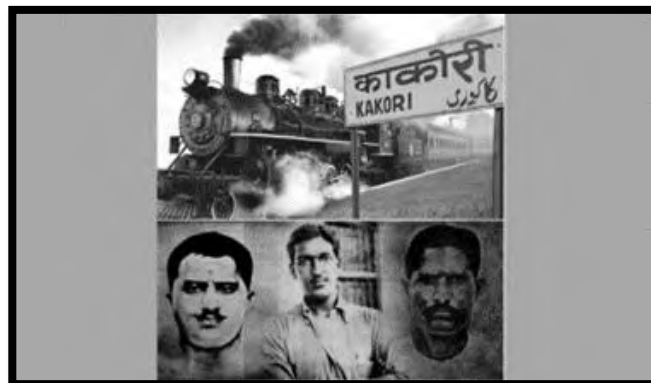
Recent Context :

On **August 9, 2025**, the **Prime Minister and UP CM** paid tribute on the **100th anniversary** of the **Kakori Rail Conspiracy**, now officially renamed '**Kakori Train Action**'.

ABOUT-

- HRA Formation:** **Hindustan Republican Association** founded in **October 1924** by **Sachindra Nath Sanyal, Ram Prasad Bismil**, aimed at **armed revolution for independence**.
- HSRA:** Renamed **Hindustan Socialist Republican Association** in **1928** under **Chandra Shekhar Azad**; key members included **Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Vohra**.
- Event:** On **August 9, 1925**, HRA revolutionaries stopped the **Saharanpur–Lucknow train** near Kakori and seized **government treasury funds**.
- Main Participants:** **Ram Prasad Bismil** (planner), **Ashfaqulla Khan, Chandrashekhar Azad, Rajendra Lahiri, Roshan Singh**, others.
- Legal Proceedings:** **Special Sessions Court** under Justice Archibald Hamilton; 19 convicted; defense by **Govind Ballabh Pant** and **Chandra Bhanu Gupta**.
- Outcome:** **Death sentences**—Bismil, Khan, Lahiri, Roshan Singh; others

imprisoned/deported to Cellular Jail; Azad remained underground till **1931 encounter**.

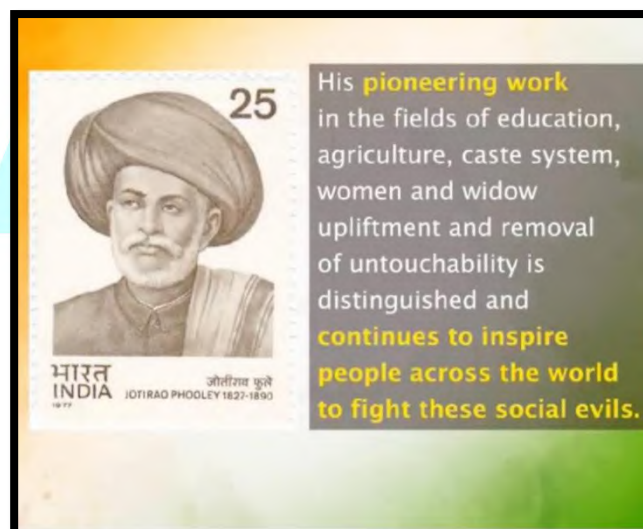


SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS

TOPIC: 200th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule

Recent Context :

India celebrated **200th birth anniversary** of **Mahatma Jyotiba Phule (1827–1890)** in 2025, recognizing his **social reforms, anti-caste work, and efforts in women's education**.



ABOUT-

- Early Life:** Born **11 April 1827**, Pune; married **Savitribai Phule** (first female teacher in India).
- Education:** Studied at **Scottish Mission High School**; influenced by **Thomas Paine and John Stuart Mill**.
- Social Reforms – Education:** Founded **first girls' school (1848)**, schools for **Dalits**, and **night schools** for workers.
- Women Empowerment:** Promoted **girls' education, widow remarriage, anti-**

infanticide centers, and economic independence.

5. **Satyashodhak Samaj:** Founded **1873** to fight **Brahmanical dominance, caste oppression, and promote rationalism and equality.**
6. **Literary Contributions:** Authored **Gulamgiri (1873), Shetkaryacha Asud (1881), Sarvajanik Satya Dharma Pustak, Satsar, Manav Mahammand.**
7. **Legacy:** Inspired **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar,** strengthened **social justice, anti-caste, and education movements** in India.

Vithalbhai Patel

Recent Context :

The **All India Speakers' Conference** commemorated **100 years of Vithalbhai Patel** becoming the **first elected Indian President (Speaker) of the Central Legislative Assembly,** a milestone in parliamentary history.

ABOUT-

1. **Early Life:** Born in **1873,** elder brother of **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,** prominent **freedom fighter and legislator.**
2. **Legislative Career:** Elected to **Bombay Legislative Council (1912)** and **Imperial Legislative Council (1918).**
3. **Central Legislative Assembly:** Elected from **Bombay city in 1924;** became **first Indian President (Speaker) in 1925.**
4. **Swaraj Party:** Co-founded in **1923** with **Motilal Nehru, Chittaranjan Das,** opposing Gandhi's suspension of the **Non-Cooperation Movement.**
5. **Parliament Secretariat:** Established an **independent Secretariat reporting only to the President,** ensuring administrative autonomy.
6. **Political Stance:** Advocated **constitutional methods of struggle, parliamentary debate, and freedom through legislative reform.**
7. **Legacy:** Pioneer in **Indian parliamentary history,** emphasizing **institutional independence and democratic traditions.**

TOPIC: Dhirio (Bull Fighting in Goa)

Recent Context :

Goa state legislators demanded legalising Dhirio, a traditional form of **bullfighting,** banned since **1997,** citing its importance to **Goan cultural heritage and agrarian festivals.**

ABOUT-

1. **Definition: Dhirio (Dhiri)** is Goan bullfighting; unlike Spanish bullfighting, **no matador or ritual killing** is involved.
2. **Rules:** The fight ends when one bull is pushed out or runs away.
3. **Cultural Heritage:** Linked to **agrarian festivals and church feasts,** reflecting **local traditions.**
4. **Legal Status: Banned by High Court (1997),** but still practiced in some rural coastal villages.
5. **Historical Roots:** Tradition dates back to **Portuguese colonial era in Goa.**
6. **Social Significance:** Represents **community bonding, traditional sports, and festival celebrations.**
7. **Current Debate:** Focus on balancing **cultural preservation with animal welfare and legal compliance.**

TOPIC: Pingali Venkayya & National Flag of India

Recent Context :

On **2nd August 2025,** the **Prime Minister** paid tribute to **Pingali Venkayya,** designer of **India's National Flag,** acknowledging his contribution to **freedom struggle and national symbolism.**

ABOUT-

1. **Early Life:** Born **2 August 1876,** freedom fighter, teacher, author, agriculturist, and linguist.
2. **Military Service:** Served in **British Army during Second Boer War (1899–1902);** inspired to design **Indian national flag.**
3. **Flag Draft (1916):** Initially had **two bands – red and green** representing **Hindus and Muslims;** Gandhi suggested **white band for peace** and **spinning wheel for progress.**
4. **Flag Adoption:** Present form adopted by **Constituent Assembly on 22 July 1947.**

5. **Design: Rectangular (2:3 ratio);** three colors **safron, white, green,** with **Ashok Chakra (24-spoke wheel)** at center.
6. **Ashok Chakra Significance:** Represents **Dharma Chakra – “wheel of law”,** showing **movement of life, dynamism, and justice.**
7. **Legacy:** Symbol of **unity, peace, progress,** and **Indian identity post-independence.**



SOURCE – VISION MONTHLY

Goswami Tulsidas

Recent Context :

The **500th birth anniversary of Goswami Tulsidas** was celebrated in **Chitrakoot**, honouring his literary contributions, promotion of **Bhakti Movement**, and cultural impact through **Ramcharitmanas** and **Ramlila**.

ABOUT-

1. **Early Life:** Born in **Rajapur, Banda, Uttar Pradesh;** real name **Rambola Dubey;** parents **Aatmaram and Hulasi;** teacher **Shri Narharidas Ji.**
2. **Literary Contributions:** Authored **Ramcharitmanas (Awadhi), Vinay Patrika, Kavitali (Braj), Hanuman Chalisa, Janaki Mangal, Parvati Mangal;** **Ramcharitmanas** is in **UNESCO Memory of the World Asia-Pacific Register.**
3. **Bhakti Movement:** **Ramanandi Sampradaya** saint, follower of **Saguna Bhakti;** believed **Saguna and Nirguna Bhakti complement each other.**
4. **Promotion of Regional Dialects:** Used **Awadhi and Braj,** enriching **Hindi literary tradition**

and making scriptures accessible to common people.

5. **Temple Building:** Founded **Sankatmochan Temple, Varanasi,** dedicated to **Lord Hanuman.**
6. **Ramlila Tradition:** Theatrical enactment of **Ramcharitmanas;** started by disciples or **Megha Bhagat (1625);** recognized by **UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage.**

Gallantry Awards**Recent Context :**

On the eve of **79th Independence Day 2025,** the **President of India** approved **127 Gallantry awards** and **40 Distinguished Service awards** recognizing acts of **bravery and valor.**

ABOUT-

1. **Objective:** Recognize **bravery, valour, and self-sacrifice** during **wartime and peacetime;** conferred by the **President of India,** supreme commander of **Armed Forces.**
2. **History:** **Param Vir Chakra, Maha Vir Chakra, Vir Chakra** instituted in **1950** (effective from **15 Aug 1947**); **Ashok Chakra Class I, II, III** in **1952,** renamed **Ashok Chakra, Kirti Chakra, Shaurya Chakra** in **1967.**
3. **Announcement:** Twice a year — **Republic Day** and **Independence Day;** Ministry of Defence invites **recommendations from Armed Forces and MHA.**
4. **Wartime Gallantry Awards:**
 - **Param Vir Chakra (PVC):** Highest military decoration; all ranks including civilians.
 - **Maha Vir Chakra (MVC):** Second highest.
 - **Vir Chakra (VrC):** Third highest.
5. **Peacetime Gallantry Awards:**
 - **Ashok Chakra:** Equivalent of PVC.
 - **Kirti Chakra:** Equivalent of MVC.
 - **Shaurya Chakra:** Equivalent of VrC.
6. **Distinguished Service Awards:** **Param Vishisht Seva Medal, Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, Vishisht Seva Medal, Sarvottam Yudh Seva Medal, Uttam Yudh Seva Medal, Yudh Seva**

Medal — for exceptional service during peace or war.

TOPIC: Commonwealth Games (CWG)

Recent Context :

In 2025, **Union Cabinet approved India's bid** to host the **2030 Commonwealth Games** in **Ahmedabad**, after **Indian Olympic Association approval**, reviving India's role as a global **multi-sport host nation**.

ABOUT-

- Definition:** Multi-sport event held **every four years** among **Commonwealth nations**; India hosted its **19th CWG in Delhi, 2010**.
- History:** First CWG held in **1930, Hamilton, Canada**; earlier names include **British Empire Games (1930-1950), British and Commonwealth Games (1954-1964), British Commonwealth Games (1970-1974)**.
- Commonwealth Genesis:** Originated in **1926 conference**; members were **equal parts of British Empire**, later formalized in **London Declaration, 1949** allowing republics to join.
- Membership:** **56 countries** across Africa, Asia, Europe, Americas, and Pacific; **Gabon and Togo** joined in **2022**.
- Key Bodies:** **Commonwealth Secretariat (London, 1965)** manages activities; **Board of Governors** represents member nations via High Commissioners.
- India & CWG:** Ahmedabad selected as **host city for 2030 CWG**, reflecting India's growing **sports infrastructure and global sporting profile**.

SOURCE – DRISHTI MONTHLY

TOPIC: 1,000 Years of Rajendra Chola I's Maritime Expedition

Recent Context :

During his visit to **Gangaikonda Cholapuram** and **Brihadisvara Temple**, the Prime Minister highlighted the **Chola Empire's maritime prowess** and released a **commemorative coin** marking 1000 years of Rajendra Chola I's expedition.

ABOUT-

- Rajendra Chola I (1014–1044 AD):** Son of **Rajaraja Chola I**, extended the **Chola Empire's reach overseas**, first Indian king to lead foreign naval expeditions.
- Gangetic Expedition:** Rajendra Chola I led campaigns up to **Ganga river in Bengal**, defeating Eastern Chalukyas and Pala rulers.
- Capital:** Built **Gangaikonda Cholapuram** to commemorate the northern expedition.
- Administration:** Maintained **efficient revenue and naval administration**; Cholas known for **democratic practices** in local governance (village assemblies).
- Maritime Prowess:** Dominated **Southeast Asian waters**, engaging in trade, diplomacy, and conquest in present-day Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Malaysia.
- Cultural Contributions:** Built temples like **Brihadisvara Temple**, showcasing **Dravidian architecture**, art, and inscriptions of naval victories.
- Legacy:** Cemented **Chola naval supremacy** and influence on **Indian Ocean trade and culture** for centuries.

TOPIC: Quit India Movement (QIM) / August Kranti Diwas

Recent Context :

India observes **Quit India Movement Day on 8 August**, commemorating Mahatma Gandhi's **"Do or Die"** call (1942), marking mass civil disobedience and youth-led struggles against British colonial rule.

ABOUT-

- Launch – Mahatma Gandhi, Bombay Session, 1942**, post **Cripps Mission failure**.
- Slogan – "Do or Die"**, coined by **Yusuf Meherally**.
- Key Leaders – Aruna Asaf Ali, Ram Manohar Lohia, Jayaprakash Narayan, Matangini Hazra, Sucheta Kripalani**.
- Nature – Self-defense violence, sabotage, guerrilla attacks**.
- Participation – Students/youth, Muslim League absent**.

6. **Causes – WWII, Bengal Famine 1943, INA influence, Cripps Mission rejection.**
7. **Outcomes – Leader arrests, parallel governments (Ballia, Tamluk, Satara), weakened British authority, path to 1947 independence.**

TOPIC: Sarnath Nominated for UNESCO World Heritage Site

Recent Context :

India nominated **Sarnath** for the **UNESCO World Heritage List (2025–26 cycle)**; site famous for **Buddha's first sermon** and historical stupas reflecting centuries of **religious and architectural evolution**.

ABOUT-

1. **Location:** Near **Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh**; historically called **Rishipatana, Mrigadava, Mrigadaya**.
2. **Buddhist Significance:** One of **four main Buddhist pilgrimage sites**: Lumbini (birth), Bodh Gaya (enlightenment), Sarnath (first sermon), Kushinagar (death).
3. **Key Monuments:**
 - **Chaukhandi Stupa (5th century AD)**
 - **Dhamek Stupa (~500 CE)**
 - **Dharmarajika Stupa**
 - **Ashokan Pillar.**
4. **Excavations:** First by **Alexander Cunningham (1834–36)**; Friedrich Oscar Oertel excavated **Lion Capital (1904–05)**.
5. **Historical Evolution:** Flourished under **Mauryan, Kushan, Gupta, Harshavardhana, Gahadavala dynasties**; restored post invasions (Hunas, Mahmud of Ghazni).
6. **Museums:** **Sarnath Archaeological Museum** houses **Lion Capital**; **Mulagandha Kuti Vihar** features **frescoes narrating Buddha's life**.
7. **UNESCO & India:**
 - **UNESCO World Heritage Convention, 1972**; India ratified in **1977**.
 - India ranks **6th globally, 2nd in Asia-Pacific**, with **62 sites on Tentative List**.
 - **ASI** is nodal agency for World Heritage matters.

Paithani Sarees

Recent Context :

The **Prime Minister highlighted** the cultural significance and craftsmanship of **Paithani sarees**, Maharashtra's traditional handwoven silk sarees, known for intricate zari work, vibrant motifs, and 2,000-year-old legacy.

ABOUT-

1. **Origin & History:** Originated in **Paithan, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Maharashtra** around the **6th century BCE**; flourished during **Satavahana era**, a silk export hub to the **Roman Empire**.
2. **Material & Craftsmanship:** **Handwoven silk sarees** with **zari work** (gold or silver thread), renowned for **rich pallus and motifs**.
3. **Motifs & Inspiration:** Motifs include **peacocks, lotuses, and floral designs**, inspired by **Ajanta and Ellora cave art** and Hindu mythology.
4. **Geographical Indication (GI):** Granted **GI tag in 2010**, protecting its authenticity and origin.
5. **Cultural Significance:** Regarded as **Mahavastra** (great garment) of Maharashtra; integral to traditional ceremonies and festivals.
6. **Other GI-Tagged Sarees of Maharashtra:**
 - **Karvathi Kati Tussar Silk Saree:** Handwoven in **Vidarbha region**, inspired by **Ramtek temple architecture**; borders resemble **temple Vimana**.
7. **Legacy & Recognition:** Over **2,000 years of heritage**, symbolizing **Maharashtra's textile excellence** and **Indian handloom tradition**.

SOURCE – INSIGHTS MONTHLY

India's Fossil Heritage

Context:

India's fossil heritage is under threat due to theft, vandalism, and illegal auctions, with rare specimens like the **47-million-year-old snake Vasuki indicus** at risk because of absence of a national fossil protection law.

Key Points:

1. **Diverse Fossil Record:** Fossils from **Precambrian to Cenozoic**, including dinosaurs, giant snakes, Indohyus (ancestor of whales), and early plant life.
2. **Unique Evolutionary Insights:** India's isolation post-Gondwanaland provides evidence of **dinosaur evolution, mammal emergence, and marine transitions** after India-Asia collision.
3. **Key Fossil Sites:** **Kutch (Gujarat), Narmada Valley (MP), Deccan basalts, Himalayan foothills.**
4. **Cultural & Educational Value:** Ammonites (Shaligrams) revered in Hindu rituals; fossils serve as natural history archives for students.
5. **Economic Potential:** Fossil parks/museums like **Balasinor, Gujarat** can boost geo-tourism.
6. **Challenges:**
 - No legal protection; fossils vulnerable to **commercialization, theft, private hoarding, and decay.**
 - High demand in **international auctions**, illegal smuggling.
7. **Comparative Global Practices:**
 - **US/Europe:** Strong curation, export regulation.
 - **China:** Fossils are state property; smuggling penalized.

TOPIC: Bengali Women Revolutionaries**Context:**

Bengali women revolutionaries played a crucial role in India's freedom struggle, combining armed resistance, education, literature, and social reform, often overlooked in mainstream history.

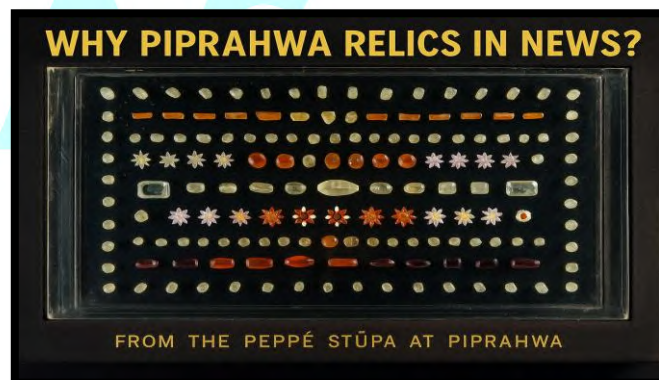
Key Figures & Contributions:

1. **Pritilata Waddedar (1911–1932):** Led **Chittagong European Club attack**; consumed cyanide to avoid capture.
2. **Kalpna Datta (1913–1995):** Participated in **Chittagong Armoury Raid (1930)**; documented women's role as tacticians.
3. **Bina Das (1911–1986):** Attempted assassination of **Governor Stanley Jackson**; promoted intellectual and armed resistance.

4. **Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain (1880–1932):** Social reformer and feminist; wrote **Sultana's Dream (1905)**; established **girls' schools.**
5. **Kamala Das Gupta (1907–2001):** Member of **Jugantar group**; smuggled arms, coordinated underground operations.
6. **Nanibala Devi (1898–1977):** Disguised herself to support revolutionary activities; endured torture without betrayal.
7. **Labanya Prabha Ghosh (1886–1956):** Social reformer and writer; mobilized women through literacy and nationalist journals.
8. **Matangini Hazra (1869–1942):** Led **Quit India procession**; shot holding the tricolour; symbol of grassroots resistance.

Return of Piprahwa Buddhist Relics**Recent Context:**

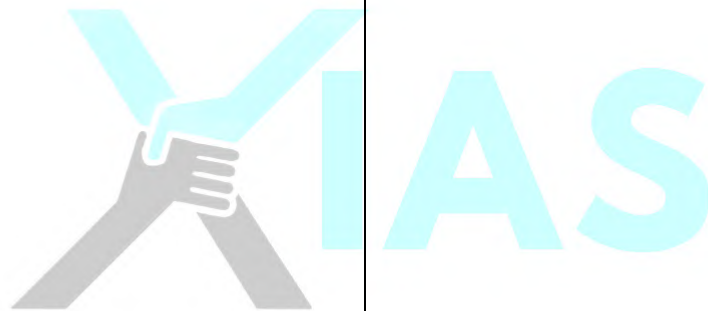
In **July 2025**, India successfully repatriated **sacred Piprahwa Buddhist relics** after **127 years**, via diplomatic intervention and public-private partnership with **Godrej Industries.**

**ABOUT-**

1. **Discovery:** Found in **1898** by British engineer **William Claxton Peppé** at **Piprahwa Stupa, Siddharthnagar, UP**, near ancient **Kapilavastu.**
2. **Contents:** Included **Buddha's bone relics, crystal caskets, gold and gemstone ornaments, and a sandstone coffer.**
3. **Historical Significance:** Inscription in **Brahmi script** confirms enshrinement by **Sakya clan (~3rd century BCE).**
4. **Colonial Loss & Repatriation:** Taken abroad during **British era**; resurfaced in **Sotheby's**

Hong Kong auction (May 2025); returned under **Ministry of Culture** initiative.

5. **Civilizational Importance:** Part of **India's Buddhist heritage**, linked to **Lumbini, Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, Kushinagar**; showcases **spread of Dhamma** via **Ashoka edicts**.
6. **Cultural Diplomacy:** Strengthens **India's soft power**; used in **Global Buddhist Summit 2023** and **Asian Buddhist Summit 2024** to foster ties with Buddhist-majority nations.
7. **Preservation & Research:** Supports **Swadesh Darshan Buddhist Circuit**, promotes **cultural tourism**, and preserves **Pali language** (Classical language, 2024) for scriptural study.



HISTORY

SOURCE: VISION MONTHLY

200TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF DADABHAI NAOROJI



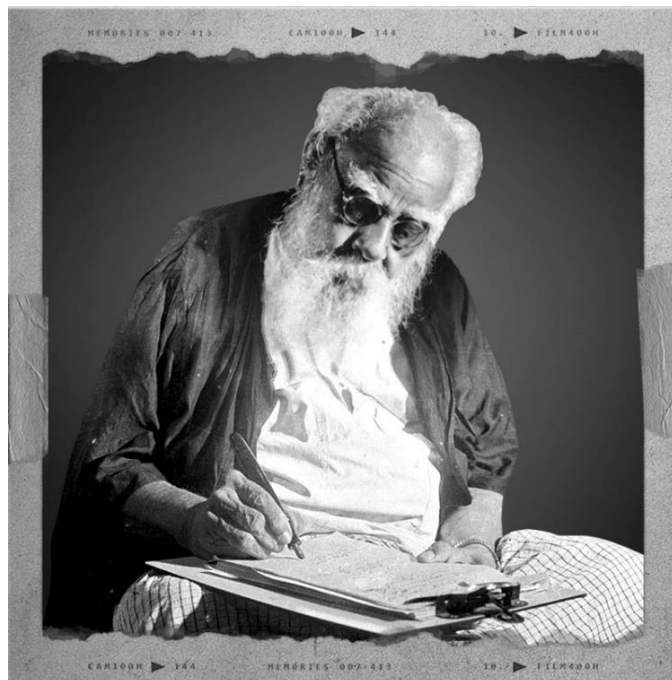
Recent Update: India celebrated the **200th birth anniversary of Dadabhai Naoroji**, a key figure in India's national awakening.

About Dadabhai Naoroji (1825–1917):

1. Known as the **“Grand Old Man of India”** and **“Unofficial Ambassador of India.”**
2. Founding member and **three-time President of the Indian National Congress** (1886, 1893, 1906).
3. In 1906, presided over Congress to **bridge the gap between moderates and extremists.**
4. First Indian appointed as **Professor at Elphinstone College**; promoted **women's education.**
5. In 1855, moved to **London** for business; became **Professor of Gujarati at University College London.**
6. Elected **Member of the Municipal Corporation, Bombay (1875).**
7. Authored *“Poverty and Un-British Rule in India”*, laying foundation for the **Drain of Wealth Theory.**

100 YEARS OF THE SELF-RESPECT MOVEMENT

Recent Update: Marks **100 years of the Self-Respect Movement**, which transformed South Indian politics and social thought.



About the Movement:

1. **Launched by:** E.V. Ramaswamy (**Periyar**) in **1925.**
 2. **Core Idea:** To create an **egalitarian society** free from caste, gender, and religious discrimination.
 3. Also called **“Arivu Vidutalai Iyakkam”** – liberation of intellect.
 4. Objectives published in **Namathu Kurikkol** and **Tiravitak Kalaka Lateiyam** pamphlets.
- ### Key Features:
5. **Social Upliftment:** Opposed caste system, Devadasi practice, and restrictions on widow remarriage.
 6. **Self-Respect Marriages:** Conducted without priests; reduced ritual costs and Brahmin monopoly.
 7. **Inter-Caste and Love Marriages:** Promoted equality and women's choice.
 8. **Conferences:** The **first provincial Self-Respect Conference (1929)** at Chengalpattu led by **W.P.A. Soundara Pandian.**

RAJA PRITHU RAE (Khen Dynasty, Kamrupa)

Recent Update: Historical significance revisited for his resistance against **Bakhtiyar Khilji**.



About:

1. Ruled **Kamrupa (Assam)** in **early 13th century**.
2. Belonged to the **Khen Dynasty**, tracing lineage to **Narakasura**.
3. Worshipped **Goddess Kamteswari (incarnation of Durga)**.
4. The **Khen rulers** rose post the fall of the **Pala Dynasty**, marking the **beginning of the Kamata Kingdom** (Kamru/Kamrup/Koch Hajo).

Contributions:

5. **Defeated Bakhtiyar Khilji's invasion of Kamrupa**.
6. **Kanai Varasi rock inscription** attests to this victory.
7. Practiced **Dharma Yuddha**, pardoning prisoners of war.

RAMON MAGSAYSAY AWARD 2025

Recent Update: Educate Girls NGO became the **first Indian organisation** to win the **Ramon Magsaysay Award 2025**.

About the Award:

1. Established **1957**; **First awarded in 1958**.
2. Known as **"Asia's Nobel Prize."**



3. Commemorates **Ramon Magsaysay**, 3rd President of the Philippines.
4. Recognises **selfless service and leadership in Asia**, regardless of race, creed, or gender.
5. **Categories:** Community leadership, peace and international understanding, public service, journalism, and emergent leadership.

GYAN BHARATAM PORTAL

Recent Update: PM launched **Gyan Bharatam Portal** to preserve and digitize India's **manuscript heritage**.

About:

1. Part of the **Gyan Bharatam Mission (Budget 2025–26)** for **survey, documentation, and conservation** of manuscripts.
2. Enables **digital access** to India's ancient textual knowledge.

About Manuscripts:

3. Defined as **handwritten works** on materials like palm leaves, cloth, bark, or metal, **75+ years old** with scientific, historical, or aesthetic value.
4. **Not included:** Printed books or lithographs.
5. India houses **~10 million manuscripts** in **80 ancient scripts** such as **Brahmi, Gaudi, Lepcha, Maithili**, etc.
6. Around **75% are in Sanskrit**, 25% in **regional languages**.

7. Considered the **'Memory of the World'**, reflecting India's **civilizational depth**.

SOURCE: DRISHTI MONTHLY

VITHALBHAI PATEL

Recent Update: The All India Speakers' Conference was hosted by the Delhi Legislative Assembly to mark the **\$100^{th}\$ anniversary** of Vithalbhai Patel becoming **President of the Central Legislative Assembly**



About:

1. He was the brother of **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**².
2. He co-founded the **Swaraj Party in 1923** along with C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru³.
3. He became the **President of the Central Legislative Assembly in 1925**⁴.
4. He introduced the **ward and watch system** for Parliament security, ensuring **Speaker's control**⁵.
5. He preserved the **Speaker's authority** after the **1929 bombing incident** involving Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt⁶.
6. He established an **independent Parliament Secretariat** reporting solely to the Speaker⁷.
7. He created a separate **Legislative Assembly Department** in 1929 to strengthen the Speaker's autonomy⁸.

8. He was elected to the **Bombay Legislative Council (1912)** and the **Imperial Legislative Council (1918)**⁹.

ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE

Recent Update: India's 79th Independence Day emphasizes **women's vital role in the freedom struggle**, fighting against British rule and social restrictions



About:

1. **Rani Laxmibai** fought in the **First War of Independence (1857)** and resisted the **Doctrine of Lapse**¹¹.
2. **Savitribai Phule** was the **First female teacher in India**, promoting **girls' education** and opposing caste discrimination¹².
3. **Sarojini Naidu** was the **First Indian Woman President of INC (1925)** and a key figure in the **Salt March and Civil Disobedience**¹³.
4. **Aruna Asaf Ali** hoisted the **Congress flag during QIM** (Quit India Movement) and was titled '**Heroine of 1942**'¹⁴.
5. **Rani Gaidinliu** led the **Heraka Movement**, promoting **Naga identity** and resisting British rule¹⁵.
6. **Matangini Hazra (Gandhi Buri)** led protests in **QIM** and was **martyred** while holding the tricolour¹⁶.

7. **Bina Das** attempted to **assassinate Bengal Governor Stanley Jackson in 1932**¹⁷.
8. **Bhikaiji Cama** was responsible for the **first Indian flag hoisted abroad** (in Stuttgart, Germany, 1907)¹⁸.

HARAPPAN (INDUS VALLEY) SCRIPT

RECENT UPDATE: The **Ministry of Culture** hosted the first Gyan Bharatam International Conference, inviting experts to present research on **deciphering the Harappan (Indus Valley) script**¹.



ABOUT:

1. The script was used by the **Indus Valley Civilization (2600-1900 BCE)** in present-day Pakistan and north-west India².
2. It was discovered in the 1920s on seals and terracotta tablets and remains **still undeciphered**³.
3. It is generally written **right to left**, with longer texts sometimes in the **Boustrophedon style** (alternating lines)⁴.
4. Inscriptions are **brief**, averaging 5 symbols, with the longest text having **26 symbols**⁵.
5. It is likely a **logosyllabic system**, combining pictograms and syllables⁶.
6. The **Dravidian Hypothesis** argues the script has Dravidian roots, potentially using the **rebus principle**⁷.

7. Its purpose and function were likely related to **trade, taxes, and identification**⁸.
8. The **Sanskrit Connection** theory is largely rejected as the Aryan migration occurred after 2000 BCE⁹.

SOURCE: THE HINDU

SARNATH

RECENT UPDATE:

India has officially **nominated Sarnath** for the **UNESCO World Heritage List (2025–26 cycle)**, ending its **27-year wait** on the tentative list.

ABOUT:

1. **Sarnath** is one of the **four holiest Buddhist pilgrimage sites**, located about **10 km northeast of Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh**.
2. It is where **Gautama Buddha delivered his first sermon** — the **Dhammachakkappavattana Sutta**, marking the birth of the **Buddhist Sangha**.



3. Known in ancient texts as **Mrigadava** or **Rishipatana**, symbolizing the **Deer Park**.
4. **Emperor Ashoka (268–232 BCE)** erected the **Lion Capital Pillar** here — now **India's National Emblem**.
5. Key structures include the **Dhamek Stupa** (site of Buddha's sermon) and monastic ruins (**viharas**).

6. The **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** will install a new plaque acknowledging **Babu Jagat Singh (1787–88)** for rediscovering Sarnath’s significance.
7. Sarnath stands as a symbol of **India’s spiritual, historical, and cultural heritage**.

LANKHONG PUJA

RECENT UPDATE:

The **Tiwa tribe of Assam** recently celebrated their traditional **Lankhong Puja**, praying for a prosperous **Rabi crop season**.



ABOUT:

1. **Lankhong Puja** is a **socio-religious festival** of the **Tiwa (Lalung) tribe** of Assam.
2. It is held to **invoke blessings for good agricultural yield** in the **Rabi season**.
3. Rituals include **community prayers, offerings to deities, and music and dance performances**.
4. The festival reinforces **agricultural traditions, cultural continuity, and community unity**.
5. The **Tiwa tribe**, belonging to the **Mongoloid ethnic group**, are part of the **Tibeto-Burman linguistic family**.
6. They inhabit regions of **Nagaon, Morigaon, Dhemaji, Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Titabor (Assam)** and parts of **Meghalaya and Tripura**.
7. The celebration embodies the **bond between nature, agriculture, and culture** among tribal communities.

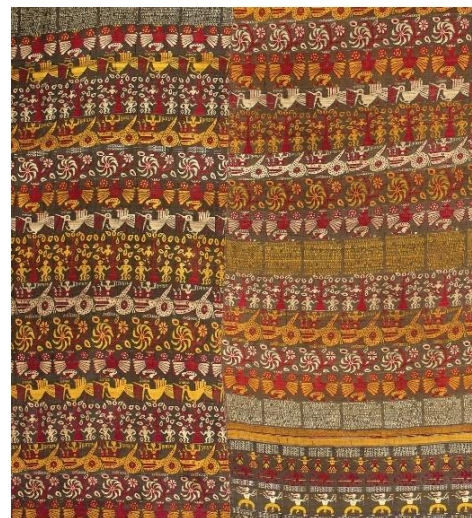
VRINDAVANI VASTRA

RECENT UPDATE:

The **British Museum** will loan the **16th-century Vrindavani Vastra** to **Assam in 2027** for an **18-month exhibition**.

ABOUT:

1. The **Vrindavani Vastra** is a **silk tapestry** created under **Srimanta Sankardeva**, the saint-reformer of Assam’s **Vaishnavite movement**.
2. It consists of **15 woven panels** joined to form a **937 cm × 231 cm textile**, depicting **scenes from Lord Krishna’s life in Vrindavan**.



3. Commissioned by **Koch King Nara Narayan** in the **16th century**.
4. It later traveled to **Tibet**, was repurposed in a monastery, and acquired during the **1904 Younghusband Expedition**.
5. Brought to **London** by journalist **Perceval Landon**, and accessioned into the **British Museum** as **As1905,0118.4**.
6. Initially miscatalogued as **Tibetan silk**, its **Assamese origin** was rediscovered decades later.
7. The Vastra represents **Assam’s cultural excellence** and the **fusion of art, devotion, and craftsmanship**.

SEVEN NATURAL HERITAGE SITES ADDED TO UNESCO’S TENTATIVE LIST

RECENT UPDATE:

Seven new **natural heritage sites** from India were

added to **UNESCO's Tentative List**, raising the total to **69 properties**.

ABOUT:

1. The **Tentative List** is the **first step** toward achieving **World Heritage Site** recognition.
2. Inclusion enables **international conservation support and funding**.
3. Aims to **preserve India's geological and ecological heritage**.
4. Promotes **global recognition** of India's **natural wonders** and enhances **cultural diplomacy**.
5. The seven sites include: **Deccan Traps (Maharashtra)**, **St. Mary's Islands (Karnataka)**, **Meghalayan Caves (Meghalaya)**, **Naga Hill Ophiolite (Nagaland)**, **Erra Matti Dibbalu (Andhra Pradesh)**, **Tirumala Hills (Andhra Pradesh)**, and **Varkala Cliffs (Kerala)**.
6. These sites showcase **unique geological features** from **lava flows to red sand dunes** and **ancient rock formations**.
7. Their inclusion strengthens India's profile in **geoscientific heritage and global natural conservation**.



(Naga Hill Ophiolite)

(Meghalayan Caves)

(Natural Heritage of Tirumala Hills)



Deccan Traps at Panchgani and Mahabaleshwar



(Geological Heritage of St. Mary's Island Cluster)

(Varkala Cliffs)

(Natural Heritage of Erra Matti Dibbalu)

ERRA MATTI DIBBALU (RED SAND DUNES)



RECENT UPDATE:

The **Erra Matti Dibbalu (Red Sand Dunes)** near **Visakhapatnam** were included in the **UNESCO Tentative List** of World Natural Heritage Sites.

ABOUT:

1. A **National Geo-heritage Monument**, spread over **1,500 acres** along the **Bay of Bengal coast** near Visakhapatnam.
2. Formed during the **late Quaternary Age (~2.6 million years ago)**, recording ancient **climate and sea-level changes**.
3. First documented in **1886** by **British geologist William King**.
4. Declared a **National Geo-heritage Monument** in **2016** by **GSI**.
5. Composed of **sand, silt, and clay**, giving a distinctive **reddish hue** from natural oxidation.
6. Contains **dendritic drainage patterns** and **sedimentary layers** serving as **natural climate archives**.
7. Only two comparable sites exist globally — in **Sri Lanka** and **Tamil Nadu**.

AMRITSARI KULCHA

RECENT UPDATE:

The **Punjab Food Processing Department** is seeking a **Geographical Indication (GI)** tag for the famous **Amritsari Kulcha**.

ABOUT:

1. The **Amritsari Kulcha** is a **flaky, stuffed tandoori flatbread** made with **refined flour (maida)** and **fermented with yogurt**.
2. Served with **chhole, tamarind chutney, and butter**, forming a **signature Punjabi breakfast**.
3. Originated about **200 years ago in Amritsar**, influenced by **khameeri roti** and **colonial-era baking**.
4. Its **distinct crispiness** comes from **low-temperature tandoor baking** and **multi-layered rolling**.
5. The GI proposal is led by **Punjab's Food Processing Department**.
6. **Amritsar**, known as the "**Kulcha Capital of India**", houses iconic eateries like **Kesar Da Dhaba** and **Bhai Kulwant Singh Kulchian Wale**.
7. The GI tag aims to protect **culinary heritage** and boost **local branding**.

SOURCE: INDIAN EXPRESS

STATE EMBLEM OF INDIA



RECENT UPDATE:

Nearly **50 people** were detained in **Srinagar** after the **national emblem plaque** was vandalized inside the **Hazratbal shrine**.

ABOUT:

1. The **State Emblem of India** is an **adaptation of the Lion Capital of Ashoka** at **Sarnath**.
2. Officially **adopted on 26 January 1950**, symbolizing **sovereignty and justice**.

3. The **original pillar** was erected by **Emperor Ashoka (3rd century BCE)** at **Sarnath**.
4. Features **four Asiatic lions** standing back-to-back — symbolizing **power, courage, pride, and confidence**.
5. The **abacus frieze** depicts an **elephant, horse, bull, and lion**, separated by **Dharma Chakras**.
6. The original included a **bell-shaped lotus**, omitted from the official emblem.
7. Preserved today at the **Sarnath Museum, Uttar Pradesh**.



SARCOPHAGUS

RECENT UPDATE:

Radiocarbon dating of a **sarcophagus** from **Kilnamandi, Tamil Nadu**, dates it to **1692 BCE**, linking it to the **Late Harappan period**.

ABOUT:

1. A **sarcophagus** is a **terracotta coffin** used in **ancient burials**, containing **charcoal, pottery, and grave goods**.
2. Found at **Kilnamandi village, Tiruvannamalai district, Tamil Nadu**.
3. Dated to **1692 BCE**, showing **trade links with Harappan regions** like **Gujarat and Maharashtra**.
4. **Graffiti symbols** found resemble **Indus Valley markings** (~90% similarity).
5. Items recovered include **carnelian beads, iron tools, and high-tin bronze objects**.
6. Evidence suggests **clan-based burial customs** with unique **urn enclosures**.

7. The finding redefines **South India's prehistoric cultural timeline.**

DOLMENS OF KODAIKANAL

RECENT UPDATE:

Over **half of Kodaikanal's ancient dolmens** have **disappeared**, endangering **5,000-year-old megalithic heritage.**



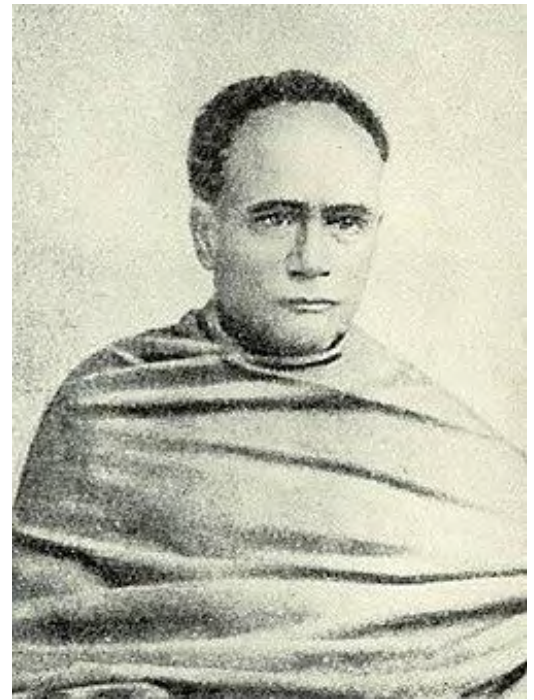
ABOUT:

1. **Dolmens** are **stone-box structures**, built with a large horizontal slab over three vertical pillars.
2. Used for **burials or memorials** during the **Pre-Iron Age (1500–2000 BCE).**
3. Associated with tribes like **Paliyans and Kurumbas**, believed to be descendants of **dolmen builders.**
4. First recorded by **Jesuit priests Rev. Anglade S.J. and Rev. Newton S.J.** in the **1920s.**
5. Excavations at **Thandikudi and Pethuparai** revealed **black-and-red ware pottery** and **carnelian beads.**
6. Indicate **continuous habitation** from **Pre-Iron Age to early historic periods.**
7. Their decline reflects the **urgent need for conservation** of India's **megalithic heritage.**

ISHWAR CHANDRA VIDYASAGAR

RECENT UPDATE:

The **Union Home Minister** paid tribute to **Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar** on his **205th birth anniversary** in Kolkata.



ABOUT:

1. A **19th-century reformer, educator, and writer**, known as the **Father of Modern Bengali Prose.**
2. Born on **26 September 1820** in **Birsingha village, Midnapore, Bengal Presidency.**
3. Overcame **poverty** to excel in **Sanskrit and English studies.**
4. Served as **Principal of Sanskrit College, Calcutta**, promoting **education for women and non-Brahmins.**
5. Authored **Borno Porichoy (1855)** — the **primary Bengali alphabet primer** still in use.
6. Advocated **widow remarriage, female education, and social reform.**
7. Remembered as an **icon of the Bengal Renaissance** for his **rationalism and compassion.**

ACHARYA VINOBA BHAVE

RECENT UPDATE:

The **Prime Minister** paid homage to **Acharya Vinoba Bhave** on his **birth anniversary (11 September 2025).**



ABOUT:

1. Known as **National Teacher of India** and **spiritual successor of Mahatma Gandhi**.
2. Born on **11 September 1895** at **Gagode village, Maharashtra**.
3. Leader of the **Bhoodan Movement (1951)** — **land gifts from landlords to the landless**.
4. Initiated the **Gramdan Movement (1954)** for **community-owned villages**.
5. Served as **first Individual Satyagrahi (1940)** at Gandhi's request.
6. A **polyglot and philosopher**, translated the **Bhagavad Gita into Marathi (Geetai)**.
7. Preached **non-violence, self-reliance, and Sarvodaya (welfare of all)**.

DR. SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN

RECENT UPDATE:

On **September 5, 2025**, President **Droupadi Murmu** paid floral tribute to **Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan**, celebrated as **Teacher's Day**.



ABOUT:

1. Born on **September 5, 1888**, in **Tirutani, Andhra Pradesh**.
2. Renowned **philosopher, teacher, and statesman**, served as **India's 2nd President (1962–1967)** and **1st Vice President (1952–1962)**.
3. Taught at **Madras Christian College, University of Mysore, and University of Calcutta**.
4. Became **Spalding Professor at Oxford University** and **Ambassador to the Soviet Union (1949–1952)**.
5. Bridged **Indian and Western philosophy**, promoting **spiritual humanism**.
6. Authored classics like **"The Philosophy of Upanishads"** and **"Hindu View of Life"**.
7. His birthday is observed nationwide as **Teacher's Day** to honor educators' contributions.



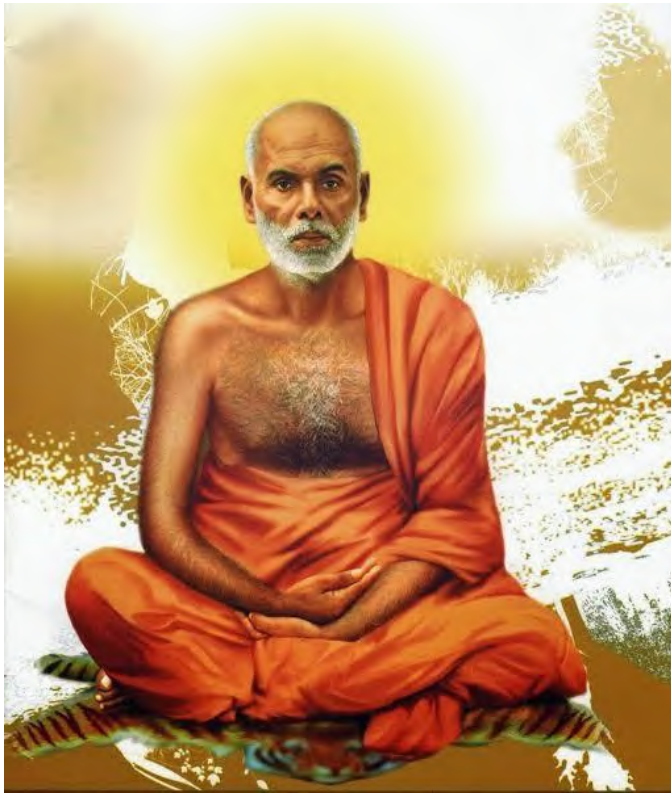
TOPICS COVERED-

- 1. Sree Narayana Guru — social reformer, Advaita philosophy, caste equality**
- 2. Vande Mataram — Bankim Chandra, national song, freedom movement**
- 3. Bamiyan Buddhas — Gandhara art, Taliban destruction, UNESCO heritage**
- 4. Bathukamma Festival — Telangana floral festival, Goddess Parvati, women's celebration**
- 5. Nobel Peace Prize 2025 — Maria Machado, democracy struggle, Venezuela**
- 6. Nobel Prize in Literature 2025 — Krasznahorkai, existential prose, Central Europe**
- 7. Dogri Language — Indo-Aryan, 8th Schedule, regional identity**
- 8. UNESCO Virtual Museum of Stolen Objects — digital heritage, restitution, AI reconstruction**
- 9. UNESCO Elects New Chief — Khaled El-Enany, global culture governance, UNESCO leadership**
- 10. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel — integration of princely states, Home Minister, national unity**
- 11. Visva-Bharati University — Tagore, Santiniketan, cultural-educational philosophy**
- 12. Naikpod Tribal Masks — Telangana GI, Poniki wood, tribal art**
- 13. Tiruppur Kumaran & Subramaniya Siva — freedom struggle, Kodikatha Kumaran, nationalist writers**
- 14. Siddi Community — African-origin tribe, PVTG, western coastal states**
- 15. MONDIACULT 2025 — UNESCO culture conference, global public good, heritage policy**
- 16. Onam — Kerala harvest festival, Mahabali, Vallam Kali**
- 17. Self-Respect Movement — Periyar, anti-caste, social reform**

SOURCE: VISION MONTHLY

SREE NARAYANA GURU

Recent Update: The President inaugurated the **Mahasamadhi Centenary** of Sree Narayana Guru in Kerala.



About:

1. Born in **Chempazhanthy, Kerala**, into the socially disadvantaged **Ezhava community**, which faced caste discrimination.
2. A revered **saint, philosopher, poet, and social reformer** known as *Gurudevan* among followers.
3. Championed the message **“One Caste, One Religion, One God for Humankind”**, promoting social equality and spiritual unity.
4. Advocated **education, self-purification, simplicity**, and rational spirituality as pathways to liberation.
5. Established the **Advaita Ashram (1913)** at Aluva, promoting the ideal *Om Sahodaryam Sarvatra* (universal brotherhood).
6. Led the **Aruvippuram Movement (1888)** by consecrating a Sivalinga, challenging caste-based temple restrictions.
7. Founded the **SNDP Yogam (1903)** to uplift the Ezhava community through self-respect and institutional empowerment.
8. Supported the historic **Vaikom Satyagraha (1924–25)** for temple entry rights and eradication of untouchability.

VANDE MATARAM

Recent Update: The Union Cabinet announced nationwide celebrations for the **150th anniversary** of *Vande Mataram*.



About:

1. Composed in **Sanskrit** by **Bankim Chandra Chatterjee** and first appeared in *Anandamath* (1882).
2. Adopted on **24 January 1950** as having **equal status** with the National Anthem.
3. Recited by **Rabindranath Tagore** at the 1896 INC session.
4. Symbolises **devotion, unity, courage, and national awakening**.
5. Inspired the freedom struggle and became a symbol of **anti-colonial resistance**.
6. Lyrics glorify **Mother India** as the source of strength, fertility, and prosperity.
7. Integral to India’s cultural nationalism and patriotic consciousness.
8. Frequently used in revolutionary literature, songs, and movements.

BAMIYAN BUDDHAS

Recent Update: The Bamiyan Buddha statues resurfaced in global discussions due to renewed preservation efforts.



About:

1. Located in the **Bamiyan Valley, Afghanistan**, carved into sandstone cliffs.
2. Built in the **6th century CE** during the height of **Gandharan Buddhist art**.

3. Represented the fusion of **Indian, Hellenistic, and Central Asian artistic traditions**.
4. Played a major role in spreading Buddhism across Central Asia along the **Silk Route**.
5. Destroyed by the **Taliban in 2001**, causing immense global outrage.
6. Bamiyan Valley declared a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in 2003.
7. Ongoing international efforts aim at **digital reconstruction & preservation**.
8. Symbol of global cultural loss and resilience of heritage conservation.

BATHUKAMMA FESTIVAL

Recent Update: Telangana's Bathukamma celebrations achieved **two Guinness World Records**.

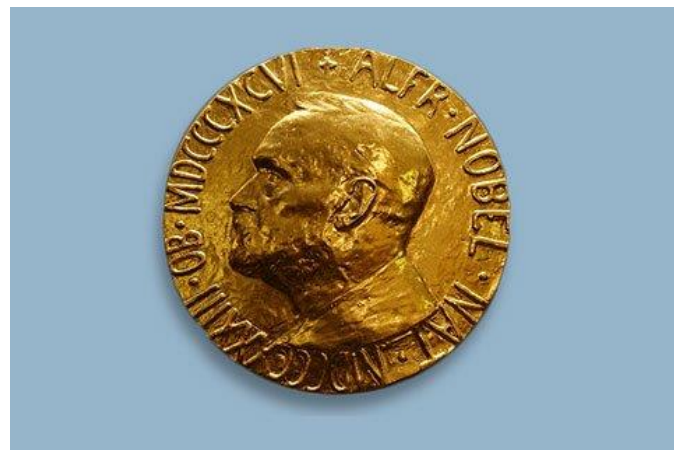


About:

1. A vibrant **floral festival** celebrated mainly by women in **Telangana** and parts of Andhra Pradesh.
2. Observed for **nine days during Navratri**, honouring **Goddess Parvati**.
3. Involves crafting **Bathukamma**, a tiered floral arrangement using seasonal medicinal flowers.
4. The name means **"Mother, Come Alive Again"**, symbolising fertility and life.
5. Recognised as the **State Festival of Telangana**.
6. Promotes **community bonding, ecological awareness**, and cultural continuity.
7. The festival celebrates the **unique biodiversity** of Telangana's floral species.
8. Associated with women's cultural expression and empowerment.

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE 2025

Recent Update: Awarded to **Maria Corina Machado** for her struggle for democratic transition in Venezuela.



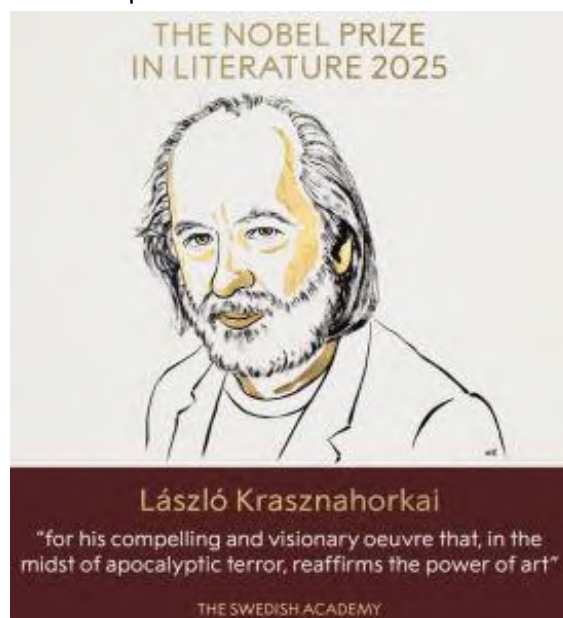
About:

1. Recognises contributions to **peace, democracy, human rights, and disarmament**.
2. Machado honoured for advocating **non-violent resistance** against dictatorship.
3. Prize established in **1901**, awarded annually in Oslo, Norway.
4. Celebrates efforts promoting a **peaceful world order**.
5. Past Indian laureates: **Mother Teresa (1979)** and **Kailash Satyarthi (2014)**.
6. Focus areas include **conflict resolution, humanitarian work, and global governance**.
7. Often awarded to activists challenging **authoritarian regimes**.
8. Enhances global awareness of democratic struggles.

SOURCE: INSIGHTS MONTHLY

NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE 2025

Recent Update: Hungarian author **László Krasznahorkai** received the 2025 Nobel Prize in Literature for his profound philosophical and experimental prose.



About:

1. The **Nobel Prize in Literature**, instituted under **Alfred Nobel's 1895 will**, honours authors producing "outstanding work in an ideal direction."
2. Awarded annually by the **Swedish Academy**, it is globally recognised as the highest literary distinction.
3. The 2025 laureate **László Krasznahorkai** is known for dense, existential, and apocalyptic narratives rooted in **Central European literary tradition**.
4. His works reflect **absurdism, existential dread, moral decay, authoritarianism**, and spiritual crisis.
5. Major works include **Satantango, The Melancholy of Resistance, War and War, and Herscht 07769**.
6. Krasznahorkai's writing style is marked by **long rhythmic sentences**, deep metaphysical insights, and surreal imagery.
7. His contributions bridge **social critique with philosophical reflection**, reinforcing his place among major postmodern European writers.
8. The award includes **11 million Swedish crowns**, reinforcing global recognition of his literary impact.

DOGRI LANGUAGE

Recent Update: A new sociolinguistic study found steep decline in **Dogri** reading and writing skills among Jammu's urban youth.



About:

1. **Dogri** is an **Indo-Aryan language** primarily spoken in the Jammu region and recognised under the **Eighth Schedule**.
2. It evolved from **Sanskrit → Old Indo-Aryan → Middle Indo-Aryan**, shaping its present linguistic structure.
3. Historically written in **Dogra Akkhar**, it shifted to **Devanagari script** in the 20th century.
4. It became an **official language of Jammu & Kashmir (2020)** and a scheduled language in **2003**.

5. Spoken by **2.6 million people**, including communities in Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Pakistan, and diaspora groups.
6. The term **Dogra/Duggar** appears in 1317 CE in Amir Khusrow's *Nuh Sipahr*, marking early literary reference.
7. Dogri literature includes rich traditions of **folk songs, ballads, and poetic compositions** reflecting regional identity.
8. Its decline is linked to **urbanisation, English-medium education, and lack of institutional encouragement**.

UNESCO – VIRTUAL MUSEUM OF STOLEN CULTURAL OBJECTS

Recent Update: UNESCO launched the **world's first Virtual Museum of Stolen Cultural Objects** at MONDIACULT 2025 in Barcelona.

About:

1. The digital museum documents and displays **stolen or trafficked cultural artifacts** from around the world.
2. Uses **3D modelling, AI, and VR** to recreate over



240 missing artifacts from **46 countries**.

3. Aims to combat **illicit trafficking**, strengthen **heritage protection**, and support **restitution efforts**.
4. Includes interactive spaces like **Stolen Objects Gallery, Auditorium, and Restitution Room**.
5. Offers **AI-generated reconstructions** where original visuals are unavailable.
6. Provides educational materials on **cultural history, preservation practices, and anti-trafficking laws**.
7. Helps countries symbolically **reconnect with lost heritage** removed during colonialism, conflict, and theft.

8. Supports global museum ethics and awareness under UNESCO's broader **heritage safeguarding mandate**.

UNESCO ELECTS NEW CHIEF

Recent Update: Egypt's **Khaled El-Enany** was elected Director-General of UNESCO for 2025–2029.

About:

1. The **Director-General of UNESCO** is the organisation's highest executive authority.
2. Oversees global programmes in **education, science, culture, communication, and heritage**.
3. Elected by the **58-member Executive Board** through secret ballot requiring absolute majority.
4. Appointment is formally ratified by the **UNESCO General Conference (194 members)**.
5. El-Enany received **55 votes**, defeating Congo's candidate (2 votes), with the US abstaining.
6. Serves a **four-year term**, renewable once, shaping strategic global priorities.
7. His background includes work in **Egyptology, culture administration, and heritage conservation**.
8. Expected to spearhead reforms in **digital learning, cultural restitution, and global heritage diplomacy**.

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL

Recent Update: India is celebrating the **150th birth anniversary** of Sardar Patel with major cultural events on Rashtriya Ekta Diwas 2025.



About:

1. Born **31 October 1875** in Nadiad, Gujarat, Patel rose from a lawyer to a leading nationalist.
2. Played decisive roles in **Kheda Satyagraha (1918)** and **Bardoli Satyagraha (1928)**, earning the title "**Sardar**."

3. As INC President (Karachi Session, 1931), he steered the party during political turbulence.
4. Became India's **first Deputy PM and Home Minister** after independence.
5. Integrated **565 princely states** through diplomacy and firmness—major cases include **Hyderabad, Junagadh, and Travancore**.
6. Instrumental in creating the **All-India Services**, calling them the "**Steel Frame of India**."
7. Advocated national unity, administrative stability, and strong internal security.
8. His legacy is honoured through **Rashtriya Ekta Diwas** and the **Statue of Unity**, the world's tallest statue.

VISVA-BHARATI UNIVERSITY

Recent Update: NEP 2020-linked reforms have triggered funding cuts and unrest at **Visva-Bharati University**, raising concerns over autonomy.



About:

1. **Visva-Bharati**, founded by **Rabindranath Tagore in 1921**, blends Indian traditions with global learning.
2. Located at **Santiniketan**, Birbhum district, West Bengal.
3. Began as an **ashramic school** emphasising simplicity, arts, and learning in nature.
4. Became a **Central University in 1951**, recognised as an institution of national importance.
5. Known for institutions such as **Kala Bhavana, Sriniketan, and Cheena Bhavana**.
6. Promotes **interdisciplinary learning**, creativity, rural development, and cultural exchange.
7. Guided by Tagore's philosophy of **freedom in learning** and harmony with nature.
8. Current issues stem from **administrative overreach, funding shortages, faculty tensions**, and reform pressures.

SOURCE: DRISHTI MONTHLY

NAIKPOD TRIBAL MASKS

Recent Update: The Naikpod community of Telangana has applied for a **GI tag**, which may become the state's 29th GI product.



About:

1. The masks originate from **Madaram village, Bhadradri–Kothagudem**, reflecting strong tribal–ecological linkages.
2. Crafted by the **Naikpod tribe**, the masks express **ancestral stories, spiritual icons, heroism, and nature worship**.
3. Made using **Poniki wood, bamboo splinters, and natural dyes**, showcasing indigenous forest-based knowledge.
4. Used mainly in **Naikpod jataras**, depicting deities, warriors, and local lore, reinforcing **identity continuity**.
5. Feature **vibrant motifs, stylised faces, forestry themes, and animal forms**, giving them a distinct artistic vocabulary.
6. Crafted without **chemical dyes or synthetic moulds**, enhancing **eco-sustainability** of the tradition.
7. Each mask is **handmade and unique**, meeting core GI criteria of **reputation–origin–quality linkage**.
8. GI recognition will boost **tribal livelihoods, IP protection, heritage preservation**, and support schemes like **PM-Vishwakarma and ODOP**.

TIRUPPUR KUMARAN & SUBRAMANIYA SIVA – REMEMBRANCE DAY

Recent Update: The Prime Minister paid tribute to **Tiruppur Kumaran and Subramaniya Siva** on their remembrance day for inspiring India's nationalist awakening.



About:

1. **Tiruppur Kumaran (1904–1932)** was born near Erode and was deeply influenced by **Gandhian ideology**.
2. Founded the **Desa Bandhu Youth Association** to mobilise youth for the freedom movement.
3. Martyred in **1932** at Tiruppur while holding the **banned national flag**, earning the title **“Kodi Kaatha Kumaran.”**
4. His memorial and the 2004 postal stamp preserve his legacy of **courage and sacrifice**.
5. **Subramaniya Siva (1884–1925)** was a freedom fighter, writer, and social reformer from Dindigul district.
6. Associated with **V.O. Chidambaram Pillai** and **Subramania Bharati**, promoting nationalism blended with spirituality.
7. Founded **Dharma Paripalana Samajam**, and edited journals like **Gnana Bhanu** and **Prabuddha Mithran**.
8. Authored works such as **Ramanuja Vijayam**, wrote patriotic essays as **“Naradhar,”** and died due to leprosy contracted in British prisons.

SIDDI COMMUNITY

Recent Update: The President met Gujarat's **Siddi PVTG** and praised their **72% literacy**, eco-friendly practices, and role in inclusive development.

About:

1. Siddis are descendants of **African slaves** brought by Portuguese traders during the **17th-century Indian Ocean slave trade**.
2. They display **African (Negroid) physical features** and are also known as **Habshi** or **Badsha**.
3. Primarily settled in **Gujarat, Karnataka, and Maharashtra**, especially along India's western coast.
4. Classified as a **Scheduled Tribe (2003)** by the Union government.
5. Also listed as a **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG)** due to socio-economic marginalisation.

6. Follow mostly **nuclear families**, though extended kin units exist.
7. Known for rich **musical and dance traditions**, including **Dhamal** and **Rasda** (men mainly perform Dhamal).
8. Their heritage reflects a blend of **African roots and Indian cultural assimilation**, making them a unique ethnocultural group.

SOURCE: PIB

MONDIACULT 2025 (UNESCO WORLD CULTURE CONFERENCE)

Recent Update: MONDIACULT 2025 held in **Barcelona** adopted a global declaration recognising **culture as a global public good**.

About:

1. MONDIACULT is UNESCO's flagship conference on **cultural policies and sustainable development**.
2. India co-chaired the **Asia-Pacific region**, led by the Union Culture Minister.
3. Discussions strengthened global consensus on **protecting cultural heritage**.
4. India pushed for multinational inscription of **Chhath Mahaparv** under UNESCO heritage lists.
5. The conference integrated **youth and civil society** voices into final decisions.
6. The outcome document reaffirmed culture's role in **social cohesion and development**.
7. Promotes international cooperation in **cultural preservation and creative industries**.
8. Advances recognition of culture within the global **SDG framework**.

SOURCE: THE HINDU

ONAM

Recent Update: Celebrated across Kerala with major cultural events, highlighting its rituals and traditional art forms.



About:

1. **Major harvest festival of Kerala**, celebrated for ten days marking prosperity and cultural unity.
2. Begins on **Atham** and culminates on **Thiruvonam**, considered the most auspicious day.
3. Enriched with iconic rituals like **Vallam Kali** (boat races) and **Pulikali** (tiger dance).
4. Features **Kummattikali** (mask dance) showcasing folk theatre traditions.
5. Includes **Onathallu**, a traditional martial art performed mainly in Palakkad region.
6. **Thiruvathirakali**, a graceful group dance celebrating womanhood, is part of festivities.
7. Symbolizes the annual return of **King Mahabali**, representing equality and harmony.

SELF-RESPECT MOVEMENT

Recent Update: 2025 marked **100 years of the Self-Respect Movement**.



About:

1. Founded in **1921** by **S. Ramanathan**, later led by **Periyar (E.V. Ramasamy)** from 1925.
2. Inspired by **Phule and Ambedkar**, and linked to **Vaikom Satyagraha**.
3. Opposed **Brahminical dominance** and promoted **rationalism and self-respect**.
4. Advocated **women's rights** — property rights, inter-caste marriages, widow remarriage.
5. Introduced **self-respect marriages** without priests.
6. Publications: **Kudi Arasu**, **Namathu Kurikkol**, **Tiravitak Kalaka Lateiyam**.
7. Political legacy: **DMK and AIADMK** emerged from this movement.



TOPICS COVERED-

- 1. Sirpur Archaeological Site**
- 2. Red Fort (Lal Qila)**
- 3. Taj Mahal**
- 4. Madhvacharya**
- 5. Aabhar Online Store**
- 6. Meerut Bugle**
- 7. UNESCO Creative Cities Network**
- 8. Gold Coins from the Vijayanagara Era**
- 9. Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur**
- 10. Plant Genome Saviour Awards**
- 11. Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh 2025**
- 12. 150 Years of Vande Mataram**
- 13. Vande Mataram Movement**
- 14. Bathukamma Festival**
- 15. Mera Hou Chongba Festival**
- 16. Siddi Tribal Community**
- 17. Virtual Museum of Stolen Cultural Objects**
- 18. Bathou Religion**
- 19. Ningol Chakouba Festival**
- 20. Sabarimala Temple**
- 21. Nouka Baich Boat Race**
- 22. Mudgal Fort**
- 23. Aligarh Muslim University**
- 24. ICOMOS**
- 25. Moidams (Maidams)**
- 26. Dilmun Civilization**
- 27. Neasden Temple (BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir)**

SIRPUR ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

Recent Update: The Chhattisgarh government has initiated steps to nominate the **Sirpur archaeological site** for **UNESCO World Heritage status**, including digital interpretation facilities and eco-friendly transport systems.



About:

1. Sirpur is a **5th–12th century multi-religious urban centre** that flourished under the **Panduvanshi and Somavamshi dynasties**, reflecting political stability and cultural prosperity.
2. Located on the **banks of the Mahanadi River** in present-day **Mahasamund district**, it functioned as a major **religious, commercial and administrative hub** of Dakshina Kosala.
3. Archaeological excavations reveal over **22 Shaiva temples, 5 Vaishnava temples, 10 Buddhist viharas and 3 Jain establishments**, highlighting strong **religious coexistence**.
4. The **Lakshmana Temple** represents early **Nagara-style architecture** with sculpted shikharas and narrative panels.
5. The **Surang Tila complex** displays advanced urban planning with elevated platforms, multiple shrines and seismic-resistant construction.
6. The **Teevardev Buddhist Vihara** and **Baleshwar Temple** reflect artistic synthesis through Buddhist iconography and Shaiva symbolism.
7. Overall, Sirpur represents a **thriving urban, artistic and spiritual ecosystem**, strengthening its claim for **World Heritage recognition**.

RED FORT (LAL QILA)

Recent Update: A recent security incident near the Red Fort led to investigations by national agencies, underlining its continued **strategic and symbolic importance**.



About:

1. The Red Fort is a **17th-century Mughal fort-palace** built by **Emperor Shah Jahan** as the imperial seat of power.
2. Constructed primarily of **red sandstone**, it exemplifies the **zenith of Mughal architectural excellence** combining Persian, Timurid and Indian styles.
3. The complex houses iconic structures such as the **Diwan-i-Aam, Diwan-i-Khas, Moti Masjid** and the **Nahr-i-Behisht** water channel.
4. It served as the political centre of the Mughal Empire and later as a focal point of **colonial resistance**.
5. Key historical events include the **1857 Revolt, INA trials (1945–46)** and **India's first Independence Day address in 1947**.
6. Declared a **UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2007**, it symbolises India's architectural brilliance and national identity.
7. The Red Fort continues to represent **sovereignty, continuity and collective memory** of the Indian nation.

TAJ MAHAL

Recent Update: Recent debates triggered by a film revived discussions on the Taj Mahal's origins, reinforcing the need for **evidence-based historical interpretation**.



About:

1. The Taj Mahal is a **17th-century white marble mausoleum** built by **Emperor Shah Jahan** in memory of **Mumtaz Mahal**.
2. Located on the **banks of the Yamuna River in Agra**, it is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** and one of the **Seven Wonders of the World**.
3. Construction began in **1632 CE** and involved master artisans from **India, Persia and Central Asia**.
4. The monument follows a **perfectly symmetrical layout** with a central dome, four minarets and a Charbagh garden design.
5. Intricate **pietra dura inlay work**, calligraphy and floral motifs highlight its artistic excellence.
6. The cenotaphs of **Mumtaz Mahal and Shah Jahan** lie in the main chamber, while the actual graves rest below.
7. The Taj Mahal stands as a timeless symbol of **love, architectural mastery and India's composite cultural heritage**.

MADHVACHARYA

Recent Update: The Prime Minister recently visited Udupi and paid tribute to **Jagadguru Madhvacharya**, highlighting his enduring spiritual and philosophical legacy.

About:

1. Madhvacharya (13th century CE) was a **renowned philosopher and theologian**, founder of the **Dvaita (dualistic) school of Vedanta**.
2. Born as **Vasudeva in Pajaka village near Udupi**, he displayed exceptional intellect and physical strength from an early age.



3. He propounded **Tattvavada**, asserting the eternal distinction between **God, soul and matter**.
4. He upheld **Vishnu/Narayana as the supreme independent reality**, with all souls dependent on divine grace.
5. He rejected monism and emphasized **Bhakti as the sole path to liberation**.
6. He institutionalised his philosophy through **mathas and disciples**, strengthening Vaishnavism in South India.
7. His teachings deeply influenced India's spiritual and philosophical traditions.

AABHAR ONLINE STORE

Recent Update: Indian Railways has partnered with GeM to promote the '**Aabhar**' online store, supporting artisans and traditional industries.

About:

1. Aabhar is a **digital marketplace** showcasing products made by artisans, weavers and craft communities.
2. It features goods under **ODOP and GI-tagged categories**, ensuring authenticity.
3. Products are sourced from **CCIE, KVIC and state handicraft bodies**.
4. Items will be used for **official gifting by Indian Railways**, expanding artisan visibility.
5. The initiative strengthens **Vocal for Local** and indigenous supply chains.
6. It promotes **women-led enterprises and rural livelihoods**.
7. The platform supports **inclusive and sustainable economic development**.

THE MEERUT BUGLE

Recent Update: The traditional **Meerut Bugle** has received a **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**, recognising its cultural and historical importance.



About:

1. The Meerut Bugle is a **brass wind instrument** used in military parades and ceremonial events.
2. Its origins trace back to the **colonial period**, where it served battlefield communication needs.
3. The bugle is handcrafted using **traditional brass-working techniques**.
4. It is widely used by the **Indian Army, police and ceremonial bands**.
5. The GI tag protects it from **imitation and misuse**.
6. The recognition enhances **artisan livelihoods and heritage preservation**.
7. It represents India's **living military and cultural tradition**.

UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK (UCCN)

Recent Update: Lucknow has been designated a **UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy**, recognising its rich culinary heritage.



About:

1. The UCCN was launched in **2004** to promote culture-driven urban development.

2. It connects cities that use **creativity as a driver of sustainable growth**.
3. The network covers **seven creative fields**, including gastronomy and crafts.
4. Member cities collaborate on **innovation, cultural exchange and capacity-building**.
5. It supports the **UN Sustainable Development Goals**, especially sustainable cities.
6. Lucknow's inclusion highlights its **Awadhi cuisine and food traditions**.
7. The status enhances **tourism, branding and cultural diplomacy**.

GOLD COINS FROM THE VIJAYANAGARA ERA

Recent Update: Over 100 gold coins from the **Vijayanagara Empire** were discovered during temple restoration in Tamil Nadu.



About:

1. The coins belong to the **Vijayanagara Empire (1336–1646 CE)**, founded by Harihara I and Bukka Raya I.
2. They bear the **Varaha (boar) emblem**, symbolising royal authority and divine sanction.
3. The coins were used in **temple endowments and commercial transactions**.
4. Inscriptions appear in **Kannada, Tamil and Sanskrit**, reflecting cultural integration.
5. The find highlights a **sophisticated monetary and trade system**.
6. It reinforces the role of temples as **economic and administrative centres**.
7. The discovery enriches understanding of **medieval South Indian history**.

SRI GURU TEGH BAHADUR

Recent Update: The President of India commemorated the **350th martyrdom anniversary** of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur.



About:

1. Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621–1675) was the **ninth Sikh Guru**, known for courage and spiritual depth.
2. He was trained in **martial arts, scriptures and philosophy** from a young age.
3. He preached values of **religious freedom, tolerance and justice**.
4. He founded **Anandpur Sahib**, a major centre of Sikh learning.
5. He opposed religious persecution and defended oppressed communities.
6. His martyrdom symbolises **sacrifice for freedom of conscience**.
7. His legacy continues to inspire **human rights and moral courage**.

PLANT GENOME SAVIOUR AWARDS

Recent Update: The awards were conferred to farmers and community institutions for conserving indigenous plant genetic resources.

About:

1. Instituted under **Section 39(1)(iii)** of the PPV&FR Act to honour grassroots conservationists.
2. Recognises individuals and communities preserving **landraces, traditional varieties and wild relatives** of crops.
3. Awardees include farmer groups, tribal communities and seed conservators across India.
4. The awards promote **on-farm conservation and biodiversity protection**.

5. They encourage continuation of traditional agricultural knowledge systems.
6. The initiative strengthens **genetic security and sustainable agriculture**.
7. It reinforces India's commitment to **agrobiodiversity conservation**.

JANJATIYA GAURAV VARSH 2025

Recent Update: The Government of India launched Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh 2025 to commemorate tribal heritage and the 150th birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda.



About:

1. It is a year-long national celebration honouring **tribal freedom fighters and cultural heritage**.
2. The programme is coordinated by the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** with support from states and tribal institutions.
3. It commemorates **150 years of Birsa Munda** and the spirit of indigenous resistance.
4. Activities include **cultural festivals, exhibitions, educational programmes and heritage walks**.
5. Focus is placed on **tribal empowerment, cultural pride and inclusive development**.
6. Initiatives cover **tribal education, language preservation and youth engagement**.
7. The celebration strengthens **national integration through recognition of tribal contributions**.

150 YEARS OF VANDE MATARAM

Recent Update: India marked 150 years of “Vande Mataram” with nationwide cultural and educational programmes.



About:

1. “Vande Mataram” was composed by **Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay** in 1875 and later included in *Anandamath*.
2. It became a powerful **symbol of the freedom movement**, inspiring mass participation.
3. The song invokes the image of **Mother India as a divine, nurturing force**.
4. It was sung at major nationalist gatherings, including the **1905 Swadeshi Movement**.
5. The Constituent Assembly accorded it the status of **National Song of India**.
6. It embodies the ideals of **unity, sacrifice and national pride**.
7. The anniversary celebrations aim to reconnect youth with India’s freedom ethos.

VANDE MATARAM MOVEMENT

Recent Update: The legacy of the Vande Mataram Movement is being commemorated as part of national integration initiatives.

About:

1. The movement emerged during the **anti-colonial struggle**, especially in Bengal and Hyderabad regions.
2. It mobilised citizens against colonial repression through **cultural nationalism**.
3. In Hyderabad-Karnataka, the slogan became a rallying cry against the Nizam’s rule.
4. Leaders and students faced repression but continued peaceful resistance.

5. The movement symbolised unity across religion, region and language.
6. It strengthened mass participation in the freedom struggle.
7. Its legacy continues as a symbol of patriotic consciousness and unity.

BATHUKAMMA FESTIVAL

Recent Update: The festival recently entered the news for setting **two new Guinness World Records** during **state-organised celebrations in Telangana**.



About:

1. **Bathukamma** is a **floral festival** celebrated predominantly by **women of Telangana**.
2. The term **Bathukamma** means “**Mother Goddess Come Alive**”, symbolising **feminine energy, life, and protection**.
3. Its origins are linked to legends of **Goddess Gauri’s revival** and the **Chola-era story of King Dhramangada and Queen Satyavati**.
4. The **Kakatiya dynasty** historically promoted Bathukamma as a celebration of **agricultural prosperity and womanhood**.
5. It is observed annually during **September–October**, coinciding with **Durga Navratri**.
6. The festival spans **nine days**, culminating in **Saddula or Pedda Bathukamma**.
7. It is followed by the **seven-day Boddemma festival**.
8. Bathukamma is officially recognised as the **State Festival of Telangana**.

MERA HOU CHONGBA FESTIVAL

Recent Update: The festival was recently celebrated in **Manipur**, highlighting **hill–valley unity**.



About:

1. **Mera Hou Chongba** symbolises **unity between hill and valley communities** of Manipur.
2. It is observed annually on the **15th lunar day of the Mera month** in the **Meitei calendar**.
3. Its origins trace back to the era of **Nongda Lairen Pakhangba**, an early legendary ruler of Manipur.
4. Rituals include a **ceremonial march** led by the **Manipur titular king** along with **tribal village chiefs**.
5. Key rituals are **Mera Thaomei Thanba** (lighting of ceremonial fire) and **Mera Yenkhong Tamba** (exchange of gifts).
6. Celebrations proceed from the **Royal Palace to Kangla**, the ancient seat of power.
7. The festival concludes with **cultural dances and a grand feast**.
8. It is the **only festival in Manipur involving all indigenous communities**, reinforcing **communal harmony and social unity**.

SIDDI TRIBAL COMMUNITY

Recent Update: The community has recorded a **literacy rate above 72%**.

About:

1. The **Siddi** are an **Indo-African tribal community** descended from the **Bantu people of Africa**.
2. They arrived in India via **Arab merchants (7th century)** and later through **Portuguese and British colonial routes**.
3. Siddis were historically brought as **slaves, soldiers, servants, and sailors**.

4. They are concentrated in **Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Telangana**.
5. The community was notified as a **Scheduled Tribe in 2003** and listed among **PVTGs**.
6. Traditional livelihoods include **agriculture, forest-based work, and manual labour**.
7. Languages spoken include **Konkani, Urdu, and Marathi**.
8. Cultural identity is marked by folk dances like **Dhamal** (mainly male-performed) and **Rasda**.

VIRTUAL MUSEUM OF STOLEN CULTURAL OBJECTS

Recent Update: Launched at **MONDIACULT 2025**, showcasing stolen artefacts from **46 countries**.



About:

1. The **Virtual Museum of Stolen Cultural Objects** is a **UNESCO-led digital initiative**.
2. It aims to create the **world's first immersive virtual museum** for stolen cultural heritage.
3. The platform raises awareness about **illicit trafficking of cultural property**.
4. It supports **recovery and restitution** of stolen artefacts.
5. The initiative is **financially supported by Saudi Arabia**.
6. It is developed in collaboration with **INTERPOL**.
7. The museum currently displays around **240 missing cultural objects** globally.
8. Indian exhibits include **9th-century sandstone sculptures from Mahadev Temple, Pali (Chhattisgarh)**.

BATHOU RELIGION

Recent Update: The religion now receives **separate recognition in the census.**



About:

1. **Bathou** is the **traditional religion of the Bodo community** in Assam.
2. The name derives from **'Ba' (five)** and **'thou' (deep thought)**.
3. It represents the **five elements—Air, Sun, Earth, Fire, and Sky.**
4. Worship centres on **Bwrai Bathou**, the supreme deity symbolising **highest wisdom.**
5. The **Sijou plant (Euphorbia splendens)** is planted at the centre of the altar.
6. The altar is enclosed by **bamboo fencing** symbolising **five life stages.**
7. The religion is deeply tied to **Bodo cultural identity.**
8. Bathou continues to function as a **living indigenous faith system.**

NINGOL CHAKOUBA FESTIVAL

Recent Update: The festival is now widely celebrated by **Manipuri diaspora communities.**

About:

1. **Ningol Chakouba** is an annual festival of **Manipur.**
2. It is celebrated on the **second day of the Hiyangei month** of the **Meitei calendar.**
3. **'Ningol'** means **married woman**, and **'Chakouba'** means **invitation to feast.**
4. Married daughters are invited to their **parental homes** for a grand meal.
5. Brothers formally invite sisters **a week in advance.**

6. The festival strengthens **emotional bonds between siblings and parents.**
7. Married women receive **gifts and blessings.**
8. It symbolises **family cohesion and social continuity.**

SABARIMALA TEMPLE

Recent Update: The temple continues to witness massive pilgrim inflow during the **Mandalam–Makaravilakku** season.



About:

1. **Sabarimala** is an ancient hill shrine dedicated to **Lord Ayyappa.**
2. It is located in **Pathanamthitta district, Kerala**, within the **Western Ghats.**
3. Lord Ayyappa is regarded as the son of **Shiva and Mohini.**
4. The temple lies within the **Periyar Tiger Reserve.**
5. It attracts **40–50 million pilgrims annually**, among the world's largest pilgrimages.
6. Devotees observe a **41-day vratham** before the pilgrimage.
7. The shrine is open to **all faiths**, symbolising inclusiveness.
8. **Vavaru Nada**, dedicated to **Vavar (a Sufi saint)**, reflects **communal harmony.**

NOUKA BAICH BOAT RACE

Recent Update: Increasing **women participation** has been noted in recent races.



About:

1. **Nouka Baich** is a traditional **boat race of West Bengal**.
2. It is held mainly in **September**, during peak monsoon river flow.
3. Races may extend into **October or November** in some regions.
4. Historically **male-dominated**, it is now becoming **more inclusive**.
5. The event is culturally linked to worship of **Goddess Manasa**.
6. Multiple boat types are used, including **Chhip, Kaile Bachhhari and Chitoi**.
7. A special **90-foot-long Sorengi boat** is a major attraction.
8. The race reflects **riverine culture and agrarian traditions**.

MUDGAL FORT

Recent Update: Renewed interest due to its **multi-dynastic and strategic significance**.



About:

1. **Mudgal Fort** is located in **Karnataka** with a history of over **1,000 years**.

2. It was associated with **Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas, Bahmani Sultanate, and Vijayanagara Empire**.
3. The fort rose to prominence under the **Bahmani Sultans of Gulbarga**.
4. It became a major flashpoint between **Vijayanagara and Adil Shahi Sultanate**.
5. Its strategic importance lay in controlling the **Raichur Doab**.
6. The region was agriculturally rich and **mineral-bearing (gold)**.
7. The fort contains around **99 inscriptions** in multiple languages.
8. Architectural features include **shared walls of temple and dargah**, symbolising syncretism.

ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY (AMU)

Recent Update: A **seven-judge Supreme Court bench (2024)** overruled the 1967 judgment, reopening examination of its minority status.



About:

1. **AMU** is a **central university** located in **Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh**.
2. It was founded in **1875** by **Sir Syed Ahmad Khan** as **MAO College**.
3. The institution was transformed into a university in **1920** by an Act of Parliament.
4. AMU has been **open to all communities** since inception.
5. It offers **300+ courses** across disciplines.
6. It has off-campus centres in **Kerala, West Bengal, and Bihar**.
7. The minority-status debate has evolved through **1967, 1981, 2006 and 2024 rulings**.

8. The final determination now hinges on **examining AMU's genesis and origin.**

ICOMOS

Recent Update: Continues to advise UNESCO on **World Heritage Site evaluations.**

About:

1. **ICOMOS** stands for **International Council on Monuments and Sites.**
2. It was established in **1965 in Warsaw.**
3. It is based on principles of the **Venice Charter (1964).**
4. It is an **international non-governmental organisation.**
5. It advises **UNESCO** on cultural World Heritage Sites.
6. Members include **experts, professionals, institutions and local authorities.**
7. It works for **conservation of architectural and landscape heritage.**
8. It plays a crucial role in **heritage protection globally.**

MOIDAMS (MAIDAMS)

Recent Update: Growing global recognition of **Ahom funerary traditions.**



About:

1. **Moidams** are **mound-burial structures** of the **Ahom dynasty** in Assam.
2. They date from the **13th–19th centuries.**
3. Comparable to **Egyptian pyramids and Chinese royal tombs.**

4. **Charaideo** served as the primary site of early Moidams.
5. Founded by **Chao Lung Siu-Ka-Pha** in 1253.
6. Post-18th century, cremated remains were buried in Moidams.
7. They are **revered royal burial sites.**
8. Similar traditions exist across **Tai-Ahom cultural regions.**

DILMUN CIVILIZATION

Recent Update: Discovery of a **4,000-year-old Dilmun temple on Failaka Island.**



About:

1. **Dilmun** was an ancient civilisation of the **eastern Arabian Peninsula.**
2. It was centred on **Bahrain and Failaka Island (Kuwait).**
3. Emerged in the **late 4th millennium BCE.**
4. Became a major power by the **early 3rd millennium BCE.**
5. Acted as a **trade link between Mesopotamia and Indus Valley.**
6. Known as the **“Land of Copper”.**
7. Declined after **1600 BCE.**
8. Archaeological remains include **burial mounds and stamp seals.**

NEASDEN TEMPLE (BAPS SHRI SWAMINARAYAN MANDIR)

Recent Update: Continues to symbolise **Indian cultural diplomacy in Europe.**

About:

1. Located in **Neasden, London**, it is a **traditional Hindu stone temple.**

2. Opened in **1995**, it is the **first of its kind in Europe**.



3. Built using **Bulgarian limestone and Italian marble**.
4. Stones were **hand-carved in India** using traditional methods.
5. Constructed under the guidance of **Pramukh Swami Maharaj**.
6. Entirely **funded by the Hindu community**.
7. Once held a **Guinness World Record** as largest Hindu temple outside India.
8. Represents **diaspora heritage, craftsmanship and cultural continuity**.



TOPICS COVERED

- 1. UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) List**
- 2. Communist Party of India (CPI) – 100 Years**
- 3. Collapse of the Indus Valley Civilization**
- 4. 70th Death Anniversary of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar**
- 5. National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC), Lothal**
- 6. Ellora Caves**
- 7. Boreendo (Pakistan) – Intangible Cultural Heritage**
- 8. Dandami Maria Tribe**
- 9. Hornbill Festival**
- 10. Narsapuram Lace Craft**
- 11. Haka Dance**
- 12. Natyashastra**
- 13. Santali Language**
- 14. 2,000-Year-Old Labyrinth, Solapur (Satavahana Era)**
- 15. Emperor Perumbidugu Mutharaiyar II**
- 16. Mahad Satyagraha**
- 17. 140th Foundation Day of Indian National Congress**
- 18. Vijay Diwas – 1971 War Victory**
- 19. C. Rajagopalachari (Rajaji)**
- 20. Dadabhai Naoroji – 200th Birth Anniversary**
- 21. Sirpur Archaeological Site**
- 22. Bnei Menashe**
- 23. Guru Tegh Bahadur**
- 24. Koraga Tribe**
- 25. Piprahwa Relics**
- 26. Ramman Festival**

UNESCO INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE (ICH) LIST

Recent Update: Deepavali inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

About

1. ICH includes **practices, expressions, knowledge, skills and cultural spaces** recognised by communities as heritage.
2. Defined under **2003 Convention for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage**.
3. Characteristics include **intergenerational transmission, constant recreation and identity formation**.
4. Domains cover **oral traditions, performing arts, rituals, festive events, traditional craftsmanship and nature-related knowledge**.
5. UNESCO maintains **Representative List, Urgent Safeguarding List and Best Practices Register**.
6. India now has **16 ICH elements**, strengthening its cultural diplomacy.
7. Inscription promotes **documentation, funding support and global recognition**.
8. Enhances **soft power, tourism and preservation of living traditions**, not just monuments.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (CPI)

Recent Update: CPI celebrated **100th foundation year (1925–2025)**

About

1. Origins trace to **Tashkent (1920)** by revolutionaries inspired by **October Revolution and anti-colonial struggle**.
2. Formal Indian establishment at **Kanpur Communist Conference (1925)**.
3. Ideology based on **Marxism–Leninism**, advocating class struggle and socialist state.
4. Promoted **workers' rights, peasants' movements, land reforms and nationalisation of key sectors**.
5. Played role in **trade union and Kisan Sabha mobilisations**.
6. Banned by British in **1934**, ban lifted in **1942**.

7. Split in **1964** into CPI and CPI(M) over **Soviet–China ideological differences**.
8. Remains influential in **Left politics, labour reforms and welfare discourse**.

COLLAPSE OF THE INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION (IVC)

Recent Update: Study shows **gradual decline due to prolonged droughts, not sudden catastrophe**



About

1. Decline linked to **series of long-term climatic drought events** between 2425–1400 BCE.
2. **Hydrological desiccation of rivers and lakes** reduced agricultural productivity.
3. Reduced water flow disrupted **riverine trade and transport networks**.
4. Frequent **migration and settlement relocation** observed archaeologically.
5. Shrinking **food supply weakened urban centres and governance structures**.
6. No evidence of **mass invasion or sudden destruction**, countering older theories.
7. Suggests **climate change as major civilisational stress factor**.
8. Demonstrates importance of **environment–society linkages in urban sustainability**.

70TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR

Recent Update: India observed **Mahaparinirvan Diwas**, commemorating Ambedkar's legacy



About

1. Chief architect of **Indian Constitution**, champion of **justice, equality and fraternity**.
2. Led **Mahad Satyagraha and Temple Entry movements** against untouchability.
3. Represented **Depressed Classes at Round Table Conferences**, advocating political safeguards.
4. Negotiated **Poona Pact**, shaping reservation-based representation.
5. Introduced **labour reforms like 8-hour workday, maternity benefits and welfare measures**.
6. Designed constitutional safeguards including **fundamental rights and abolition of untouchability**.
7. Highly educated scholar with **PhD (Columbia) and DSc (LSE)**.
8. Remains central to **social justice, constitutional morality and inclusive democracy discourse**.

NATIONAL MARITIME HERITAGE COMPLEX (NMHC), LOTHAL

Recent Update: India–Netherlands signed **MoU for development of NMHC at Lothal**



About

1. Flagship project to showcase **4,500–5,000 years of India's maritime history**.

2. Located at **Lothal, Gujarat**, ancient Harappan port town.
3. Developed by **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways**.
4. Will house **world-class museum, galleries, research centre and exhibitions**.
5. Collaboration with **National Maritime Museum, Amsterdam** for curation expertise.
6. Promotes **maritime archaeology, training and scholarship**.
7. Enhances **tourism, education and heritage conservation**.
8. Reinforces India's image as **historic maritime trading civilisation**.

ELLORA CAVES

Recent Update: Calls to protect **neglected heritage sites around Ellora complex**



About

1. UNESCO World Heritage Site with **34 rock-cut caves**.
2. Represents **Buddhist, Hindu and Jain traditions**, symbolising religious coexistence.
3. Built between **600–1000 CE** mainly during **Rashtrakuta period**.
4. Includes **Kailasa Temple**, world's largest monolithic rock-cut structure.
5. Features **viharas, chaityas, sculptures, pillars and intricate carvings**.
6. Demonstrates **advanced basalt excavation engineering**.
7. Shows **multi-religious harmony and artistic excellence**.
8. Major centre for **tourism and cultural heritage education**.

BOREENDO (PAKISTAN)

Recent Update: Inscribed on UNESCO ICH in Need of Urgent Safeguarding list



About

1. Traditional **spherical clay vessel-flute** from Sindh region.
2. Roots trace back to **Indus Valley Civilization artefacts**.
3. Handmade using **terracotta, sun-dried and kiln-fired clay**.
4. Produces **soft, breathy tones** for folk melodies.
5. Pitch controlled through **tilting technique rather than complex fingering**.
6. Decorated with **natural motifs by local women artisans**.
7. Practised by **very few surviving masters**, risking extinction.
8. Safeguarding preserves both **music tradition and pottery craftsmanship**.

DANDAMI MARIA TRIBE

Recent Update: Bison Horn Maria dance highlighted for cultural vitality



About

1. Tribal group belonging to **Gond ethnic community** of central India.
2. Known for **Bison Horn Maria dance and distinctive headgear**.
3. Speak **Dandami Maria and Gondi dialects**.

4. Reside mainly in **Bastar region of Chhattisgarh**.
5. Livelihood based on **agriculture, hunting, fishing and forest produce**.
6. Culture deeply linked with **forest ecology and animistic beliefs**.
7. Dance serves as **social cohesion and ceremonial identity marker**.
8. Reflects **indigenous knowledge and tribal heritage preservation**.

HORNBILL FESTIVAL

Recent Update: 26th edition underway at Kisama Heritage Village, Nagaland



About

1. Known as **“Festival of Festivals”**, celebrating Naga tribal heritage.
2. Held annually **1–10 December**.
3. Started in **2000** to promote unity and tourism.
4. Named after **Hornbill bird symbolising valour and tradition**.
5. Showcases **folk dances, songs, war cries and indigenous sports**.
6. Includes **handicrafts, food festivals, rock concerts and exhibitions**.
7. Encourages **inter-tribal cultural exchange and youth participation**.
8. Boosts **tourism, local economy and global visibility of Northeast culture**.

NARSAPURAM LACE CRAFT

Recent Update: Highlighted as model of **women-led economic empowerment with GI tag recognition**

About

1. Handmade **crochet lace craft** using single hook and fine thread.
2. Practised mainly in **West Godavari and Konaseema districts of Andhra Pradesh**.
3. Introduced in **1844 by European missionaries**, later indigenised.



4. Provides **regular income to thousands of rural women artisans**.
5. Produces **tablecloths, garments, home décor and export products**.
6. Survived **famines and economic downturns**, showing resilience.
7. GI tag ensures **authenticity and market protection**.
8. Combines **livelihood generation with preservation of traditional textile art**.

HAKA DANCE

Recent Update: Māori haka performed as protest gesture in New Zealand drew global attention



About

1. **Haka** is a traditional **Māori posture dance** involving rhythmic stamping, chanting (waiata), thigh-slapping and intense facial expressions.
2. Originates from **Māori people of Aotearoa (New Zealand)** and is deeply embedded in tribal identity.

3. Mythological roots linked to **Tāne-rore**, whose shimmering dance symbolises trembling hand movements.
4. Famous haka "**Ka Mate**" composed by **Te Rauparaha**, celebrating survival and resilience.
5. Types include **Peruperu (war haka)**, **Pōwhiri (welcome)**, **Ngeri (energising)**, **Manawa wera (mourning)**.
6. Functions as **ceremonial, social and political expression**, used in welcomes, funerals, protests and celebrations.
7. Symbolises **unity, strength, pride and collective memory** of iwi (tribes).
8. Today serves as a **non-violent indigenous assertion of rights and identity**, blending culture with dissent.

NATYASHASTRA

Recent Update: IGNCA organised academic programme on **Natyashastra** during UNESCO ICH session in Delhi



About

1. Foundational Sanskrit treatise on **drama (natya), dance, music, aesthetics and stagecraft**.
2. Traditionally authored by **Bharata Muni**, dated roughly **200 BCE–200 CE**.
3. Revered as "**Natya Veda**" (**Fifth Veda**) to communicate ethical and social values through performance.
4. Core concept is **Rasa–Bhava theory**, explaining aesthetic emotions like **Shringara, Veera, Karuna, Adbhuta, etc.**
5. Describes **four Abhinayas: Angika (body), Vachika (speech), Aharya (costume), Sattvika (emotion)**.

6. Provides detailed guidance on **plot construction, stage design, costumes, direction and theatre architecture**.
7. Codifies **mudras, karanas, facial expressions and movement grammar** for standardised training.
8. Forms the **theoretical foundation of India's classical arts ecosystem** including Bharatanatyam, Kathak, theatre and music.

THE SANTHALI LANGUAGE

Recent Update: Centenary of **OI Chiki script** celebrated; President highlighted Santali's unifying role

About

1. **Santhali** is an ancient **tribal language** spoken by the **Santhal community**.
2. Belongs to **Munda branch of Austroasiatic family**, distinct from Indo-Aryan languages.
3. Traditionally preserved through **oral literature, songs, folklore and rituals**.
4. Acquired written form via **OI Chiki script (1925)** developed by **Pandit Raghunath Murmu**.
5. Included in **Eighth Schedule (92nd Constitutional Amendment, 2003)**.
6. Spoken by **~7 million people** across Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Bihar and neighbouring countries.
7. Features **agglutinative grammar, phonetic script and rich oral storytelling traditions**.
8. Acts as a **symbol of tribal identity, dignity and cultural continuity**.

2,000-YEAR-OLD LABYRINTH – SOLAPUR (SATAVAHANA ERA)

Recent Update: Archaeologists discovered **largest circular stone labyrinth in India** in Maharashtra

About

1. Massive **circular stone labyrinth** dated to **~1st–3rd century CE**, linked to **Satavahana dynasty**.
2. Located in **Boramani grasslands, Solapur district**, aiding preservation.
3. Measures **~50 × 50 feet** with **15 concentric circuits**, highest recorded in India.



4. Circular design resembles **labyrinth motifs on Roman coins**, suggesting cultural exchange.
5. Similar smaller structures found in **Sangli, Satara and Kolhapur**, indicating regional network.
6. Possibly served as **navigational markers or symbolic signposts for merchants**.
7. Reinforces Maharashtra's role as **trade corridor between Deccan interior and Arabian Sea ports**.
8. Highlights India's **integration into ancient global trade networks (Indo-Roman commerce)**.

EMPEROR PERUMBIDUGU MUTHARAIYAR II

Recent Update: Commemorative **postage stamp** released honouring the Tamil ruler



About

1. Ruled **c. 705–745 CE**, also known as **Suvaran Maran / Shatrubhayankar**.
2. Belonged to **Mutharaiyar dynasty**, feudatories of **Pallavas**.
3. Controlled **Cauvery delta region including Thanjavur and Tiruchirappalli**.
4. Known for **administrative efficiency and irrigation-based agrarian expansion**.

5. Patronised **Shaivism and Tamil culture**, while allowing **religious pluralism**.
6. Supported **temple construction and endowments**, influencing early Chola architecture.
7. Strengthened **regional economy through tanks, canals and infrastructure**.
8. Acts as **bridge between Pallava and Chola political traditions**.

MAHAD SATYAGRAHA

Recent Update: Scholars revisiting its role in shaping constitutional morality and rights discourse



About

1. Led by **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (1927)** asserting Dalit right to **access public water (Chavdar Tank)**.
2. One of India's earliest **civil rights and anti-caste mass movements**.
3. Challenged **Brahmanical social exclusion and untouchability practices**.
4. Included **symbolic burning of Manusmriti**, rejecting scriptural sanction of caste.
5. Emphasised **liberty, equality, fraternity**, later embedded in Constitution.
6. Saw **active participation of women**, linking caste and gender justice.
7. Resulted in **legal victory (1937)** affirming equal civic rights.
8. Became **foundation of modern Dalit assertion and constitutional democracy**.

140TH FOUNDATION DAY OF INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (INC)

Recent Update: INC completed 140 years since foundation (1885–2025)

About

1. One of India's **oldest political organisations**, spearheaded **freedom movement**.
2. Founded on **28 December 1885** at Bombay; first President **W.C. Bonnerjee**.
3. Initially used **constitutional methods and petitions**, later mass mobilisation.
4. Led movements like **Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience, Quit India and Purna Swaraj**.
5. Ideology evolved from **moderate reformism to democratic socialism**.
6. Post-Independence promoted **secularism, parliamentary democracy, planning and non-alignment**.
7. Produced leaders like **Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, Subhas Bose**.
8. Remains a **central actor in India's democratic political history**.

VIJAY DIWAS – 1971 WAR VICTORY

Recent Update: India commemorated 16 December Vijay Diwas 2025



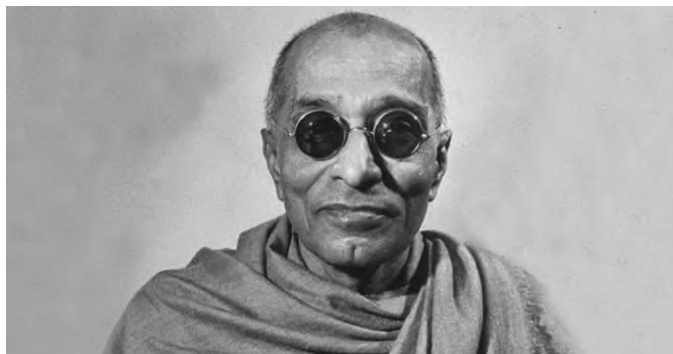
About

1. Marks **surrender of Pakistan's Eastern Command in Dhaka (1971)** and birth of **Bangladesh**.
2. War triggered by **Operation Searchlight repression and refugee crisis (~10 million)**.
3. Pakistan launched **pre-emptive strikes (Operation Chengiz Khan)**, prompting full-scale war.
4. Indian forces achieved **air superiority and naval blockade in Bay of Bengal**.
5. Navy executed **Operations Trident & Python**, crippling Karachi port.
6. War ended in **13 days**, one of fastest decisive victories.

- ~93,000 Pakistani troops surrendered, one of largest WWII-era capitulations.
- Established India as **dominant regional military power and reshaped South Asian geopolitics**.

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI (RAJAJI)

Recent Update: PM paid tribute on **birth anniversary**

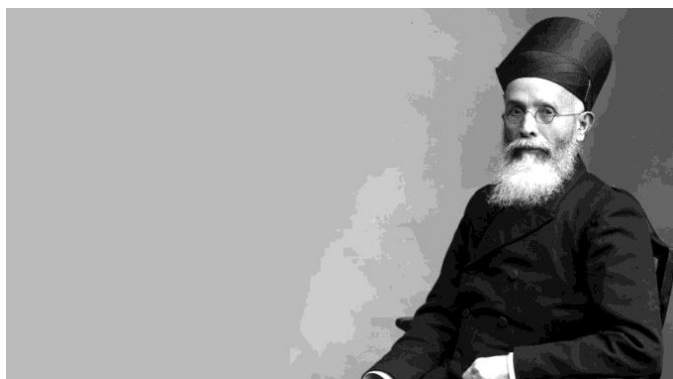


About

- Freedom fighter, jurist, thinker and **first & only Indian Governor-General**.
- Close associate of **Mahatma Gandhi**, called “keeper of my conscience”.
- Led **Vedaranyam Salt March (1930)** in Tamil Nadu.
- Active in **Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience and Quit India movements**.
- Served as **Governor of West Bengal and later Chief Minister of Madras**.
- Founded **Swatantra Party**, advocating free-market economics.
- Prolific **writer and interpreter of epics like Ramayana & Mahabharata**.
- Known for **integrity, simplicity and principled politics**.

DADABHAI NAOROJI – 200TH ANNIVERSARY

Recent Update: India marked **bicentenary of birth (1825–2025)**



About

- Known as “**Grand Old Man of India**”, early nationalist and economic thinker.
- First **Indian Member of British Parliament (1892)**.
- Propounded **Drain of Wealth Theory**, exposing colonial exploitation.
- Authored **Poverty and Un-British Rule in India**, shaping economic nationalism.
- Founding member & **three-time President of INC**.
- Advocated **Swaraj through constitutional and parliamentary methods**.
- Inspired leaders like **Gokhale, Tilak and Gandhi**.
- Laid intellectual foundation for **Swadeshi and fiscal self-reliance**.

SIRPUR ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

Recent Update: Sirpur is being prepared for **UNESCO World Heritage nomination**.



About

- Sirpur is located in **Mahasamund district, Chhattisgarh**, on the **Mahanadi River**.
- It dates from the **5th to 12th century CE**.
- The site was first noted by **Alexander Cunningham in 1871**.
- Sirpur was the capital of **Dakshina Kosala** under Panduvanshi rulers.
- Excavations reveal **Shaiva, Vaishnava, Buddhist, and Jain monuments**.
- The **Lakshmana Temple** is a major Vishnu shrine.
- Sirpur reflects **multi-religious urban civilisation**.

BNEI MENASHE

Recent Update: Israel approved the migration of the remaining **5,800 Bnei Menashe** from India over the next five years.

About

1. Bnei Menashe is an **ethnic community from Mizoram and Manipur**.
2. They claim descent from the **biblical Tribe of Manasseh**, one of Israel's lost tribes.
3. The community originally followed **Christianity**.
4. They later **converted to Judaism** under rabbinical guidance.
5. Israel officially recognises them as **eligible for return under the Law of Return**.
6. Migration is part of **humanitarian and religious reunification efforts**.
7. The move has cultural and diplomatic significance for **India–Israel relations**.

GURU TEGH BAHADUR (1621–1675)

Recent Update: Guru Tegh Bahadur's **Shaheedi Divas** is observed annually on **24 November**.



About

1. Guru Tegh Bahadur was the **ninth Sikh Guru** and father of **Guru Gobind Singh**.
2. His original name was **Tyag Mal**, later renamed for his valour.
3. He is revered as "**Hind ki Chadar**", symbolising protection of religious freedom.
4. He founded **Anandpur Sahib**, a major Sikh spiritual centre.
5. He contributed **over 100 hymns** to the **Guru Granth Sahib**.
6. He was executed in **1675 on Aurangzeb's orders**.
7. His martyrdom stands for **freedom of conscience and human dignity**.

KORAGA TRIBE

Recent Update: A **genomic study** traced the **Koraga tribe's ancestry to the Indus Valley Civilisation**.



About

1. The **Koraga** are a **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG)** found in **Kerala and Karnataka**.
2. They were notified as a **Scheduled Tribe under the Presidential Order of 1956**.
3. **Basket-making** has traditionally been their **primary livelihood activity**.
4. They speak **Koraga Bhasha** as well as **Tulu**, reflecting regional cultural integration.
5. **Dholu and Voote** (drum and flute) are important elements of **Koraga musical traditions**.
6. The community received **land titles under Kerala's Operation Smile rehabilitation project**.
7. Recent genetic research identified a **distinct ancient ancestral lineage** among the Koragas.

PIPRAHWA RELICS

Recent Update: India announced the **return of the sacred Piprahwa Relics of Lord Buddha** through a **public–private partnership**.

About

1. **Piprahwa Relics** are associated with the **mortal remains of Lord Buddha**.
2. They were discovered in **1898** by **William Claxton Peppé** in **Siddharthnagar, Uttar Pradesh**.
3. The relics include **bone fragments, crystal and soapstone caskets, ornaments, and offerings**.

4. A **Brahmi inscription** confirms deposition by the **Sakya clan**, Buddha's kin.



5. The site is identified with **ancient Kapilavastu**, Buddha's homeland.
6. These relics are classified as **'AA' antiquities**, prohibiting export or sale.
7. Their return strengthens **India's civilisational and Buddhist heritage diplomacy**.

RAMMAN FESTIVAL

Recent Update: The **President of India** was presented with a **Ramman mask** at a special session of the Uttarakhand Assembly.



About

1. **Ramman Festival** is an **annual ritualistic festival** celebrated in **Saloor-Dungra villages of Uttarakhand**.
2. It is held in the courtyard of the **Bhumiya Devta temple**, the local presiding deity.
3. The festival was inscribed on **UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity list in 2009**.
4. Performances include **Ramayana recitations, masked dances, and ritual music**.

5. Different **castes and community groups perform predefined roles**, reflecting social harmony.
6. Ramman represents a unique blend of **religion, folklore, theatre, and community participation**.



TOPICS COVERED-

1. Swami Vivekananda
2. Neo-Colonialism
3. Iranian Conundrum
4. Kathputli Puppetry
5. Somnath Temple
6. Zehanpora Stupa
7. Jharkhand Megaliths
8. Sammakka–Saralamma Jatara
9. Tirukkural
10. Savitribai Phule
11. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose
12. Indian Miniature Painting
13. Srimanta Sankardeva
14. Holy City Status and Sikh Heritage
15. Communist Party of India (CPI)
16. Thanjavur Painting
17. Ellora Caves
18. Simhastha Kumbh Mela
19. Santhali Language
20. Padma Awards
21. Gallantry Awards
22. Harvest Festivals of India

Recent Update: His birth anniversary on **12 January** was commemorated as **National Youth Day**, honouring his role in awakening India's spiritual and national consciousness.



About

1. Born as **Narendranath Datta (1863)** in Kolkata, he combined **traditional Indian values** with modern Western education.
2. He displayed remarkable **intellectual depth**, showing strong interest in philosophy, history, and rational inquiry from childhood.
3. His spiritual quest led him to question religious leaders about direct **experience of God**, rejecting blind belief.
4. He became chief disciple of **Ramakrishna Paramahansa**, shaping his philosophy of experiential spirituality.
5. He founded the **Ramakrishna Mission (1897)** to integrate spirituality with organised social service.
6. At the **Chicago Parliament of Religions (1893)**, he introduced India's Vedantic thought globally.
7. He emphasised "**Arise, Awake**", inspiring youth toward strength, character-building, and national regeneration.
8. He systematised spirituality into **Karma, Bhakti, Jnana, and Raja Yoga**, making it accessible and practical.

NEO-COLONIALISM

Recent Update: The Venezuela crisis revived debates on **control without formal annexation**, highlighting modern neo-colonial practices.

About

1. Neo-colonialism refers to **indirect domination** of sovereign states through economic and political leverage.
2. Unlike classical colonialism, it avoids territorial occupation but maintains **external policy influence**.
3. Economic tools such as **debt dependency and trade imbalances** restrict autonomous development.
4. Institutions like the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** shape domestic reforms via conditional lending.
5. Sanctions and financial systems control enable **coercion without military invasion**.
6. Technology and supply-chain dependence create **strategic vulnerability and compliance pressure**.
7. Media narratives and information control influence **public perception and regime legitimacy**.
8. It often results in inequality, elite capture, and weakened **democratic institutions**.

IRANIAN CONUNDRUM

Recent Update: Iran witnessed nationwide unrest amid a sharp **rial collapse (~1.45 million rials/USD)**.



About

1. The Iranian conundrum represents recurring cycles of **economic crisis and political legitimacy stress**.
2. Severe sanctions and inflation undermine **currency credibility and governance capacity**.
3. Short-term crackdowns suppress protests but fail to address **structural economic distortions**.

- External pressure and factional politics reproduce **long-term instability patterns**.
- Hormuz tensions affect global **oil markets and shipping insurance risks**.
- For India, instability threatens **energy security and diaspora safety**.
- Connectivity initiatives such as **Chabahar-linked routes** face geopolitical uncertainty.
- Durable economic normalisation remains essential to prevent **recurrent protest cycles**.

KATHPUTLI PUPPETRY

Recent Update: Kathputli continues to represent Rajasthan's rich **intangible cultural heritage traditions**.



About

- Kathputli is Rajasthan's traditional **string puppetry art form** using carved wooden dolls.
- Puppets narrate stories of kings, warriors, folklore, and **moral-social themes**.
- Practised mainly in **Jaipur, Nagaur, Churu, and Sikar** regions.
- Traditionally performed by the **Bhat and Nat communities** during fairs and courts.
- Puppets feature bold eyes, bright costumes, and **exaggerated facial expressions**.
- Performances are accompanied by folk instruments like **dholak and harmonium**.
- Themes include Rajput history, social satire, and **community storytelling traditions**.
- Kathputli Nagar in Jaipur remains the largest **living puppetry settlement hub**.

1000 YEARS SURVIVAL OF SOMNATH TEMPLE

Recent Update: The Somnath Temple continues to symbolise India's enduring **civilisational resilience and continuity**.



About

- Somnath is one of the twelve sacred **Jyotirlingas of Lord Shiva**.
- Located at **Prabhas Patan, Gujarat**, near the Triveni Sangam.
- Destroyed in 1026 CE by **Mahmud of Ghazni**, marking a major rupture.
- Rebuilt multiple times, symbolising spiritual strength and **cultural resilience**.
- Built in the **Chalukya (Solanki) architectural style** with grand shikhara.
- Post-Independence reconstruction was initiated by **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**.
- Inaugurated in 1951 by **Dr. Rajendra Prasad**.
- Managed today by the **Somnath Trust**, chaired by the Prime Minister.

ZEHANPORA STUPA

Recent Update: A 2,000-year-old Kushan-era Buddhist complex was scientifically excavated in **Baramulla, Jammu & Kashmir**.



About

- Zehanpora is a large **Kushan-era Buddhist monastic complex** spread across nearly ten acres.

- Includes stupas, apsidal chaityas, viharas, and urban settlement remains.
- Located along the ancient **Silk Route corridor linking Kashmir and Gandhara**.
- Dates to the **1st–3rd century CE** under Kushan rulers like Kanishka.
- Reflects Kashmir’s prominence in **Mahayana Buddhist scholarship**.
- Indicates strong cultural exchange within the **Gandhara Buddhist network**.
- Demonstrates early trans-regional trade and **religious connectivity systems**.
- Strengthens understanding of Kashmir’s role in **ancient Buddhist civilisation**.

SOURCE: INDIAN EXPRESS

JHARKHAND MEGALITHS

Recent Update: Jharkhand’s megalithic landscapes continue to attract scholarly attention for their rare tradition of **living megalithism**.



About

- Megaliths are large stone structures such as **menhirs, dolmens, cairns, and stone circles** used for multiple purposes.
- They were erected for **burials, ancestor remembrance, ritual practices, and territorial marking**.
- Major concentrations exist in the **Ranchi–Khunti belt, Hazaribagh region, and Singhbhum areas**.
- Many villages maintain sacred burial grounds locally called **hargarhi or hargarha**.
- The tradition is deeply linked with **Munda, Ho, Oraon, and Asur Adivasi communities**.

- Jharkhand displays rare continuity where **new memorial stones are still added today**.
- Local forms include **Sasandiri (family dolmens)** and **Birdiri/Biridiri (memorial standing stones)**.
- Some alignments show deliberate **astronomical orientation with solstice or equinox sunrises**.

SAMMAKKA–SARALAMMA JATARA

Recent Update: The biennial Sammakka–Saralamma Jatara continues to be recognised as **Asia’s largest tribal congregation**.



About

- It is a biennial tribal spiritual festival honouring **Sammakka and Saralamma**, revered by the Koya community.
- Celebrated at **Medaram village in Mulugu district, Telangana**, inside Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Rooted in Koya legend of resistance against **Kakatiya tax oppression and martyrdom**.
- The deities are symbolically brought from the forest rather than worshipped in permanent temples.
- Rituals are performed exclusively by **Koya tribal priests following indigenous customs**.
- Devotees offer **“Bangaram” (jaggery)** symbolising agrarian equality and simplicity.
- Worship centres on sacred trees, bamboo totems, and **clan symbols instead of idols**.
- The gathering attracts over **one crore devotees**, second only to Kumbh Mela in India.

TIRUKKURAL

Recent Update: The Tirukkural continues to be celebrated as a timeless guide to **ethical living and governance philosophy**.



About

1. The **Tirukkural** is a classical Tamil text containing **1,330 concise couplets (kurals)**.
2. Traditionally attributed to the poet-philosopher **Thiruvalluvar**.
3. Structured into three books: **Aram (Virtue), Porul (Polity/Wealth), and Inbam (Love)**.
4. Offers practical guidance on **personal morality, governance, and social responsibility**.
5. Advocates universal values like **truth, compassion, non-violence, and self-control**.
6. Provides insights into **just rule, administration, and welfare-oriented leadership**.
7. Written in highly concise aphoristic style with **rich philosophical depth**.
8. Revered as the **“Tamil Veda”** for its universal and secular moral tone.

SAVITRIBAI PHULE

Recent Update: Savitribai Phule is increasingly recognised as a foundational figure of **Indian feminism and modern education reform**.

About

1. Savitribai Phule (1831–1897) was India’s first modern **female teacher and pioneering social reformer**.
2. Born in Naigaon, she was educated after marriage by **Jyotirao Phule**.
3. In 1848, she co-founded India’s first **girls’ school at Bhidewada, Pune**.



4. Established nearly **18 schools for girls and marginalised communities**.
5. Opened shelters for widows and campaigned against **child marriage and caste discrimination**.
6. Played a central role in the **Satyashodhak Samaj** promoting social equality.
7. Faced intense social hostility but continued her **educational mission courageously**.
8. Died serving plague victims in 1897, symbolising ultimate **public service sacrifice**.

NETAJI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

Recent Update: Parakram Diwas–2026 is being organised to commemorate the **129th Birth Anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose**.



About

1. Born on **23 January 1897 in Cuttack**, he resigned from the ICS to join the freedom struggle.
2. Elected Congress President in **1938 (Haripura) and 1939 (Tripuri)**.
3. Advocated immediate **Purna Swaraj** and rejected gradual constitutional reforms.
4. Founded the **Forward Bloc (1939)** to mobilise militant nationalist forces.

- Escaped house arrest in 1941, internationalising India's independence movement.
- Reorganised the **Indian National Army (INA)** to militarily challenge British rule.
- Proclaimed the **Azad Hind Government (1943)** as India's government-in-exile.
- His reported death in a 1945 plane crash remains **historically debated and controversial**.

SOURCE: DRISHTI MONTHLY

INDIAN MINIATURE PAINTING

Recent Update: Artists from the **Kangra region** were engaged to restore a 200-year-old Guru Gobind Singh painting using traditional techniques.



About

- Miniature paintings are small, highly detailed artworks usually **not exceeding 25 square inches** in size.
- Figures are typically drawn at about **one-sixth of their actual proportions**, enhancing delicacy.
- Created using the **tempera technique**, mixing pigments with water and organic emulsions.
- Artists used extremely fine **single-bristle brushes** for intricate detailing.
- Common features include **bulging eyes, pointed noses, and slender body forms**.
- Themes ranged from religious epics to **court life, hunting scenes, and romance**.
- Paintings were often made on **palm leaves, vellum paper, or handmade paper**.

- Different regional schools evolved with distinct **stylistic and thematic identities**.

SRIMANTA SANKARDEVA

Recent Update: The redeveloped **Batadrava Than** commemorates the birthplace of Srimanta Sankardeva in Assam.



About

- Srimanta Sankardeva (1449–1568) was a major **Bhakti saint of Assam**.
- Founder of **Neo-Vaishnavism (Eka-sarana-nama-dharma)** centred on exclusive Krishna devotion.
- Promoted Sravana (listening) and **Kirtana (devotional chanting)** practices.
- Established inclusive community institutions called **Namghars and Satras**.
- Advocated unity across **castes, tribes, and linguistic communities**.
- Composed Kirtana-ghosha and Gunamala summarising the **Bhagavata Purana**.
- Introduced Ankiya Naats and strengthened **Bhaona theatrical traditions**.
- Developed Sattriya dance, later recognised as a **classical Indian dance form**.

HOLY CITY STATUS AND SIKH HERITAGE

Recent Update: Punjab declared **Amritsar, Anandpur Sahib, and Talwandi Sabo** as holy cities.

About

- Sikhism was founded by **Guru Nanak (15th century)** emphasising monotheism and equality.
- The Khalsa was formed in 1699 by **Guru Gobind Singh** to institutionalise discipline.

- The **Guru Granth Sahib** is regarded as the eternal Guru of Sikhism.
- The Akal Takht represents the principle of



Miri-Piri (temporal and spiritual authority).

- Takht Sri Keshgarh Sahib marks the founding of the **Khalsa Panth**.
- Takht Sri Patna Sahib is the birthplace of **Guru Gobind Singh**.
- Takht Sri Damdama Sahib is linked to final compilation of **Guru Granth Sahib**.
- The Gurdwara Reform Movement (1920) led to formation of the **SGPC**.

SOURCE: THE HINDU

COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (CPI)

Recent Update: On 26 December 2025, the **Communist Party of India** completed **100 years** since its formal foundation.

About

- The CPI traces its origins to a 1920 meeting in **Tashkent**, where early Indian communists initiated organisational efforts.
- A formal resolution establishing the party was adopted at the **Kanpur Communist Conference in 1925**.
- M. Singaravelu Chettiar** served as the first President and organised India's first **May Day celebration in 1923**.
- The party followed **Marxism–Leninism**, advocating revolutionary transformation towards a socialist state.
- CPI championed **land reforms, abolition of zamindari, workers' rights, and nationalisation of banks**.

- It led major agrarian movements like **Tebhaga, Telangana, and Punnapra-Vayalar struggles** during the 1940s.
- In 1964, ideological differences caused a split into **CPI and CPI (Marxist)** factions.
- CPI influenced organisations like **AITUC, AIKS, and AIFS**, shaping labour and peasant politics.

THANJAVUR PAINTING

Recent Update: A Thanjavur painting of **Lord Ram** was recently transported to Ayodhya by the Department of Posts.



About

- Thanjavur painting originated in **Tamil Nadu** and flourished under Chola, Nayak, and Maratha rulers.
- Also called "**Palagai Padam**", it is traditionally painted on wooden planks.
- These paintings are decorated with **gold foil, glass beads, and semi-precious stones**.
- The art form is renowned for its vibrant depiction of **Hindu deities and mythological themes**.
- It uses rich natural colours and embossed techniques creating a distinctive **three-dimensional effect**.
- The style received a **Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2008**.
- Figures are characterised by **round faces, large eyes, and ornate jewellery**.
- It remains a significant devotional and classical art tradition of South India.

ELLORA CAVES

Recent Update: India and Jordan signed a twinning agreement between **Ellora Caves and Petra** to promote cultural cooperation.



About

1. Ellora Caves are located near **Sambhajinagar, Maharashtra**, carved into basalt cliffs.
2. Designated a **UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1983**, it reflects India's rock-cut architectural excellence.
3. The complex consists of **34 caves** representing Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain traditions.
4. Caves were carved between the **6th and 10th centuries CE** using top-down excavation techniques.
5. The site received patronage from the **Rashtrakuta and Yadava dynasties**.
6. Cave 16, the **Kailasa Temple**, is the world's largest monolithic rock-cut structure.
7. Sculptures depict deities like **Shiva, Vishnu, Parvati, and Jain Tirthankaras**.
8. The site symbolises religious coexistence and artistic synthesis in medieval India.

SIMHASTHA KUMBH MELA

Recent Update: The next **Kumbh Mela 2027** is scheduled to be held in Nashik, Maharashtra.

About

1. Simhastha Kumbh Mela is held every **12 years** at Nashik and Ujjain.

2. It occurs when **Jupiter enters the Leo zodiac sign (Simha Rashi)**.
3. The festival takes place along the **Godavari River in Nashik** and **Shipra River in Ujjain**.
4. It is one of the four traditional **Kumbh Melas** in India.
5. Recognised by UNESCO in 2017 as the **largest peaceful congregation of pilgrims**.
6. Millions of devotees participate in ritual **holy dips (Shahi Snan)**.
7. It symbolises spiritual purification and **cosmic alignment in Hindu tradition**.
8. The event strengthens India's intangible cultural and religious heritage.

SANTHALI LANGUAGE

Recent Update: The President released the **Constitution of India in Santhali**, written in the Ol Chiki script.

About

1. Santhali is spoken by the **Santal tribal community** across Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, and Bihar.
2. It primarily uses the **Ol Chiki script**, developed in the 20th century.
3. The language was added to the **Eighth Schedule** through the 92nd Constitutional Amendment (2003).
4. It holds official language status in **Jharkhand and West Bengal**.
5. Santhali is also written in **Devanagari, Bengali, Odia, and Latin scripts**.
6. The year 2025 marks the **centenary of the Ol Chiki script**.
7. It preserves rich oral traditions including **folk songs, myths, and rituals**.
8. Inclusion strengthened linguistic diversity and recognition of **tribal cultural identity**.

SOURCE: VISION MONTHLY

SOMNATH TEMPLE

Recent Update: The **Somnath Swabhimani Parv** commemorates **1,000 years** since the first attack by **Mahmud of Ghazni on the Somnath Temple in 1026**.

About

1. **Somnath Temple** is located at **Prabhas Patan near Veraval in Gujarat**, a sacred pilgrimage site situated at the **Triveni Sangam of the Kapila, Hiran and Sarasvati rivers**.
2. It is revered as the **first among the twelve Aadi Jyotirlingas of Lord Shiva**, making it one of the most important Shaivite pilgrimage centres in India.
3. The present structure follows the **Maru-Gurjara architectural style (also known as Solanki or Chalukya style)**.
4. The temple is built in the **Kailash Mahameru Prasad style**, comprising the **Garbhagriha (sanctum), Sabhamandap (assembly hall), and Nrityamandap (dance hall)**.
5. The temple features a **150-foot Shikhar topped with a 10-tonne Kalash**, symbolizing grandeur and spiritual significance.
6. The site has been referenced since ancient times, with **Kalidasa in Raghuvamsa describing Somnath-Prabhasa as an important Shiva pilgrimage centre**.
7. Medieval travellers such as **Al-Biruni in Kitab-al-Hind and Amir Khusrou in Khazain-ul-Futuh** documented the temple and its destruction during invasions.
8. The temple faced **multiple attacks including the raid by Mahmud of Ghazni in 1026**, followed by destruction during the **Delhi Sultanate and Mughal period, including Aurangzeb's order in 1706**.

PADMA AWARDS

Recent Update: The President of India approved 131 Padma Awards, including 5 Padma Vibhushan, 13 Padma Bhushan and 113 Padma Shri awards.

About

1. **Padma Awards** are among the **highest civilian honours of India**, recognizing exceptional contributions in various fields of public life.
2. They are conferred in **three categories: Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Shri**.
3. **Padma Vibhushan** is awarded for **exceptional and distinguished service of the highest order**.
4. **Padma Bhushan** is given for **distinguished service of a high order** in any field.



Bharat Ratna

PADMA AWARDS



Padma Vibhushan

Padma Bhushan

Padma Shri

5. **Padma Shri** recognizes **distinguished service in diverse fields such as art, science, literature, social work and public affairs**.
6. The awards were originally instituted in **1954 as Padma Vibhushan with three classes**, and were reorganized into the current categories in **1955**.
7. They are **announced annually on the occasion of Republic Day**, except during certain suspension periods in the past.
8. **Government servants are generally not eligible**, except for **doctors and scientists who have made exceptional contributions**.

GALLANTRY AWARDS

Recent Update: The President approved gallantry awards for 70 Armed Forces personnel, including six posthumous honours.



About

1. **Gallantry Awards** are military decorations given for **acts of bravery, valour, and self-sacrifice by members of the armed forces and other security personnel**.

2. They were instituted in **1950 for wartime gallantry** and later expanded in **1952 to include peacetime gallantry awards**.
3. Wartime gallantry decorations include **Param Vir Chakra, Maha Vir Chakra and Vir Chakra**.
4. Peacetime gallantry awards include **Ashoka Chakra, Kirti Chakra and Shaurya Chakra**.
5. **Param Vir Chakra** is the **highest military decoration awarded for the most conspicuous bravery in the face of the enemy**.
6. **Ashoka Chakra** is the **highest peacetime gallantry award for acts of courage away from the battlefield**.
7. Recommendations for awards are submitted by the **Armed Forces and Ministry of Home Affairs to the Ministry of Defence**.
8. Gallantry awards are **announced twice a year on Republic Day and Independence Day**.

HARVEST FESTIVALS OF INDIA

Recent Update: Various **traditional harvest festivals are being celebrated across India**, marking the harvest season and the Sun's northward movement (Uttarayana).

About

1. Harvest festivals celebrate the **completion of the agricultural cycle and express gratitude for a successful crop season**.
2. These festivals often coincide with the **Sun's transition into Capricorn (Makara), marking the beginning of Uttarayana**.
3. **Makar Sankranti** in Maharashtra celebrates the **Sun's transition into Capricorn and the start of the harvest season**.
4. **Uttarayana in Gujarat and Rajasthan** is widely known for **kite flying celebrations symbolizing the arrival of longer days and new beginnings**.
5. **Pongal in Tamil Nadu** is a **four-day harvest festival including Bhogi, Thai Pongal, Mattu Pongal and Kaanum Pongal**, centred around gratitude to nature and cattle.
6. **Lohri in Punjab** is celebrated with **bonfires, folk songs and dances such as Bhangra and Gidda**, marking the harvest of Rabi crops.
7. **Magh Bihu (Bhogali Bihu) in Assam** marks the **end of harvesting with community feasts, traditional games and bonfires called Meji**.



DYNAMIC GROUND WATER RESOURCE ASSESSMENT REPORT, 2024

Recent Update: The Ministry of Jal Shakti reported improved groundwater recharge and reduced long-term extraction compared to 2017 levels.



About

1. The report indicates a **net improvement in groundwater recharge** across several assessment units nationwide.
2. Groundwater depletion has been largely driven by **agriculture-based over-extraction**, especially for water-intensive crops.
3. India's **highly seasonal monsoon rainfall** creates mismatch between recharge periods and continuous withdrawal.
4. Extensive **hard-rock geological formations** limit sustainable groundwater storage in many regions.
5. Subsidised or free electricity has encouraged **excessive groundwater pumping** in several states.
6. Rapid urbanisation and industrialisation have increased **non-agricultural groundwater demand** significantly.
7. Key interventions include **Atal Bhujal Yojana and NAQUIM 2.0**, promoting scientific aquifer management.
8. Initiatives like **Jal Shakti Abhiyan and PMKSY** emphasise recharge structures and efficient irrigation.

GLOBAL WATER BANKRUPTCY REPORT

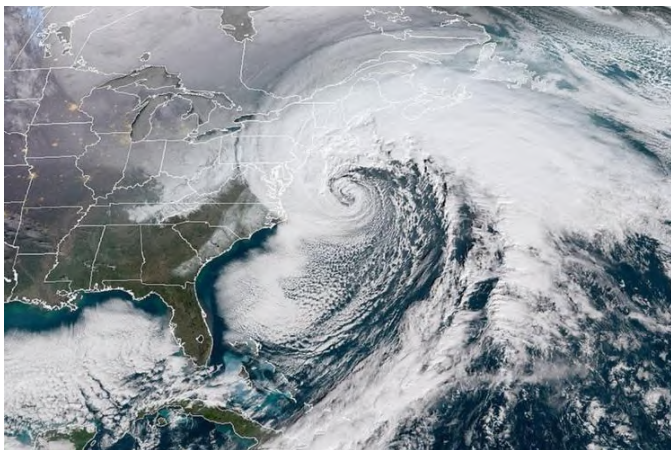
Recent Update: The **UNU-INWEH** released a report warning that many regions are living beyond their hydrological limits.

About

1. The report defines water bankruptcy as **long-term water use exceeding renewable inflows and safe depletion limits**.
2. It argues that traditional terms like “**water stress**” and “**water crisis**” no longer capture systemic collapse.
3. Persistent over-pumping and weak regulation have caused **slow-onset depletion of groundwater reserves**.
4. Large dams and inter-basin transfers have enabled **growth beyond sustainable hydrological capacity**.
5. Wetland destruction and deforestation have led to **ecological liquidation and reduced natural recharge**.
6. Climate change has intensified glacier melt and rainfall variability, worsening **climate-amplified overshoot**.
7. Chronic water scarcity threatens **food security and agricultural productivity** in major breadbaskets.
8. Inequitable allocation deepens **social injustice, migration pressures, and urban “Day Zero” risks**.

BOMB CYCLONE

Recent Update: Winter Storm Ezra intensified into a bomb cyclone over the United States, disrupting holiday travel.



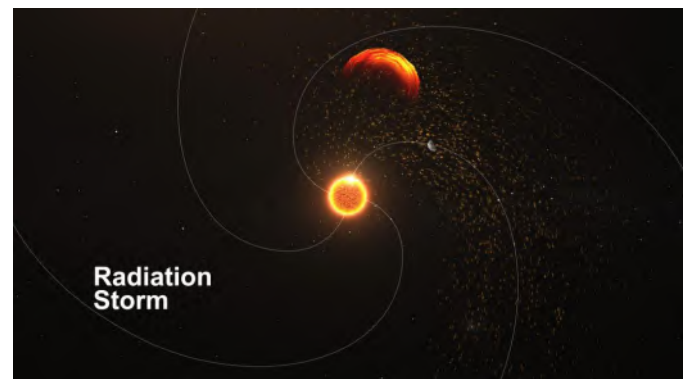
About

1. A bomb cyclone is a mid-latitude storm undergoing **explosive cyclogenesis with rapid pressure drop**.

2. It forms when **cold polar air collides with warm, moisture-rich air**, typically over oceans.
3. A defining feature is a pressure fall of **24 millibars or more within 24 hours**.
4. The intense pressure gradient produces **blizzards, flooding rainfall, and hurricane-force winds**.
5. Sharp temperature drops of **40–50°F within hours** often accompany its passage.
6. Such storms can disrupt **aviation, road transport, shipping routes, and electricity networks**.
7. Bomb cyclones cover vast areas, affecting **multiple states or regions simultaneously**.
8. They reflect extreme atmospheric instability rather than gradual storm development.

SOLAR RADIATION STORM

Recent Update: NOAA recorded an **S4 (Severe) solar radiation storm**, the strongest in over two decades.



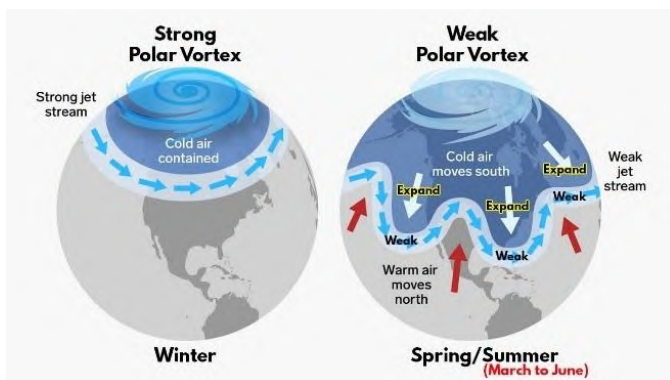
About

1. A solar radiation storm occurs when the Sun ejects **high-energy charged particles towards Earth**.
2. These particles are usually triggered by intense **X-class solar flares and coronal mass ejections**.
3. Charged protons travel nearly **150 million kilometres**, reaching Earth within minutes to hours.
4. Storms are classified on the **NOAA Space Weather Scale (S1–S5)**.
5. S4 storms are rare and were last comparable during the **Halloween Storms of 2003**.
6. They increase **radiation exposure risks for astronauts and high-altitude aviation routes**.

- Satellites may experience **electronic damage, navigation errors, and orbital disturbances.**
- Severe storms generate vivid **auroras far beyond traditional polar regions.**

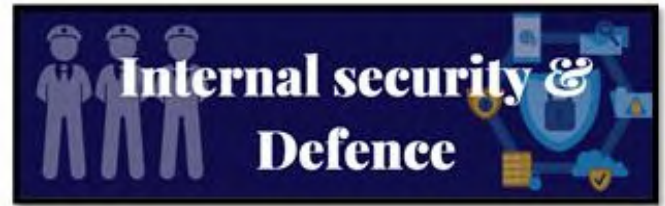
POLAR VORTEX

Recent Update: A polar vortex–driven winter storm brought sub-zero temperatures across multiple US states.



About

- The polar vortex is a large region of **low pressure and extremely cold air** around the poles.
- It exists in both the **troposphere and stratosphere**, strongest during winter months.
- Reduced solar heating at the poles strengthens **cold air circulation and fast-moving winds.**
- A weakened vortex can cause the **jet stream to become wavy**, allowing Arctic air southward.
- Sudden Stratospheric Warming events may **split or destabilise the vortex structure.**
- Arctic amplification reduces temperature gradients, increasing **vortex instability and disruptions.**
- Local impacts include **extreme cold waves, heavy snowfall, and power grid stress.**
- Globally, vortex shifts contribute to **weather volatility and contrasting extreme conditions.**



BHAIRAV BATTALION

Recent Update: The Indian Army has operationalised the **Bhairav Battalion** as a rapid-response hybrid warfare combat unit.

About

- Bhairav Battalion is a high-speed **offensive combat formation** designed for hybrid and special operations.
- It functions under **Corps and Division-level formations** within the Indian Army structure.
- These battalions are positioned along **sensitive borders like Rajasthan, Jammu, Ladakh and the Northeast.**
- The unit bridges the gap between **Para Special Forces and regular infantry units.**
- Each battalion consists of about **200–250 highly trained soldiers** for compact effectiveness.
- It specialises in **drone warfare, reconnaissance, rapid raids and electronic disruption.**
- Designed for hybrid warfare, it integrates **ground action with cyber-electronic support systems.**
- It is linked to the Army's expanding **one lakh-plus drone operator ecosystem.**

LONG-RANGE ANTI-SHIP HYPERSONIC GLIDE MISSILE (LRASHM)

Recent Update: DRDO is advancing trials of the **LRASHM** to enhance India's maritime deterrence capability.

About

- LRASHM is an indigenous **hypersonic glide missile** designed for long-range naval strike missions.
- It is developed by **DRDO for the Indian Navy** to meet maritime strike requirements.
- The missile enhances **Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) capability** in the Indian Ocean Region.



SOURCE: INSIGHTS MONTHLY

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR CULTURE AND LANGUAGES

Recent Update: Government leveraging AI for digital preservation and multilingual cultural access

About

1. This initiative marks a shift from **passive preservation to active cultural participation**, enabling citizens to access heritage in their native languages.
2. It positions **Artificial Intelligence as “Technology for Humanity”**, aligning with inclusive development goals like **“Welfare for All”**.
3. AI enables **digitisation of manuscripts through rapid scanning, cataloguing, and metadata creation**, improving research accessibility.
4. It supports **multilingual and voice-based access**, breaking literacy barriers through speech-to-text and real-time translation tools.
5. Helps preserve **tribal and endangered languages by recording oral traditions and creating digital linguistic archives**.
6. Facilitates **global exposure of artisans and GI products through multilingual digital platforms and catalogues**.
7. Enhances cultural experiences via **AI chatbots providing multilingual guidance during major events and festivals**.
8. Faces challenges such as **digital divide, low-resource language datasets, infrastructure gaps, and authenticity verification issues**.

BUDDHIST CIRCUIT IN NORTHEAST

Recent Update: Union Budget 2026–27 announced new scheme for Buddhist heritage tourism development

About

1. The **Buddhist Circuit (Northeast)** aims to integrate **heritage conservation, tourism, and regional development**.

2. Focuses on **preservation and promotion of monasteries and pilgrimage sites across northeastern states**.
3. Budget includes **development of tourism infrastructure and creation of multiple destinations in Purvodaya region**.
4. Emphasises **connectivity through transport initiatives like e-buses and industrial corridors**.
5. Arunachal Pradesh hosts major sites like **Tawang Monastery (largest in India) and Bomdila Monastery**.
6. Sikkim features key monasteries like **Rumtek, Pemayangtse, Enchey, and Tashiding Monasteries**.
7. Other sites include **Namphake Monastery (Assam) and Ghoom Monastery (West Bengal)**.
8. Initiative promotes **religious tourism, livelihood generation, and cultural integration in Northeast India**.

SERENGSIA BATTLE (1837)

Recent Update: Recognised as an early tribal resistance against British colonial expansion

About

1. The **Serengsia Battle (1837)** was fought by **Ho Adivasis against the East India Company in Jharkhand**.
2. It represents one of the **earliest organised tribal military resistances in eastern India**.
3. Causes included **loss of autonomy, economic exploitation, cultural suppression, and colonial taxation**.
4. Leaders like **Poto Ho, Bera Ho, and Nara Ho led guerrilla-style warfare in forested terrain**.
5. Ho fighters used **bows, arrows, terrain advantage, and innovative tactics like chilli-ash attacks**.
6. The battle resulted in **heavy British casualties and initial retreat of colonial forces**.
7. British later retaliated with **mass arrests, executions, and destruction of villages**.
8. The revolt influenced **recognition of tribal identity and administrative autonomy in Kolhan region**.

DENOTIFIED TRIBES (DNTs)

Recent Update: Continued focus on **social inclusion and welfare of historically marginalised communities**

About

1. **Denotified Tribes (DNTs)** are communities earlier labelled as **“criminal tribes” under British rule.**
2. The **Criminal Tribes Act, 1871** institutionalised stigma and surveillance over entire communities.
3. The Act was repealed in **1952, officially “denotifying” these groups post-Independence.**
4. Despite repeal, **Habitual Offenders laws continued discriminatory practices.**
5. DNTs face **extreme social exclusion, stigma, and policing bias even today.**
6. Many lack **identity documents, land rights, and access to welfare schemes.**
7. Educational levels remain **low due to mobility and marginalisation.**
8. Several communities are **misclassified or excluded from SC/ST/OBC categories, limiting policy benefits.**

MAHARSHI DAYANAND SARASWATI

Recent Update: Continued relevance of **Arya Samaj reformist ideas in social reform discourse**

About

1. **Dayanand Saraswati (1824–1883)** was a **Hindu reformer and founder of Arya Samaj (1875).**
2. Advocated **“Back to the Vedas”**, considering them the purest source of knowledge and truth.
3. Opposed **idol worship, superstition, and blind ritualism**, promoting rational thinking.
4. Supported **social equality and rejected caste based on birth**, emphasising merit-based roles.
5. Championed **women’s education and opposed child marriage and social evils.**
6. Played a major role in **reviving Vedic learning and cultural nationalism.**
7. Authored **Satyarth Prakash and other significant works on philosophy and reform.**

8. Influenced **later nationalist movements through emphasis on self-respect and indigenous revival.**

CHANDRASHEKHAR AZAD

Recent Update: Remembered as a **symbol of revolutionary nationalism and sacrifice**

About

1. **Chandrashekhhar Azad (1906–1931)** was a **revolutionary leader associated with militant freedom struggle.**
2. He adopted the name **“Azad” after declaring himself free during arrest in Non-Cooperation Movement.**
3. Played key role in **Kakori Conspiracy (1925) and evaded British capture successfully.**
4. Collaborated with **Bhagat Singh in Lahore Conspiracy (1928)** to avenge Lala Lajpat Rai’s death.
5. Associated with **Hindustan Republican Association (HRA) and later HSRA.**
6. Promoted **armed resistance after disappointment with non-violent movements.**
7. Known for his vow to **never be captured alive by British authorities.**
8. Died in **Alfred Park (Allahabad) after a gunfight, becoming a martyr at age 24.**

SOURCE: THE HINDU

THIRUVALLUVAR

Recent Update: Continued recognition of **Tirukkural as timeless ethical and philosophical text**

About

1. **Thiruvalluvar**, also known as **Valluvar**, was a celebrated **Tamil poet and philosopher.**
2. He is best known for authoring the **Tirukkural**, a classical work on **ethics, governance, economy, and love.**
3. The text consists of **couplets (Kurals)** that provide universal moral guidance applicable across societies.
4. His philosophy emphasised **virtue (Aram), wealth (Porul), and love (Inbam)** as pillars of life.

5. The **Thiruvalluvar statue at Kanyakumari**, built by V. Ganapathi Sthapathi, symbolizes his global relevance.
6. His teachings promote **ethical governance, social justice, and personal morality**.
7. Tirukkural is considered a **universal text transcending religion, caste, and culture**.
8. It remains highly influential in **Tamil culture and Indian philosophical traditions**.

RANI VELU NACHIYAR

Recent Update: Prime Minister paid tribute on her birth anniversary

About

1. **Rani Velu Nachiyar (1730–1796)** was the queen of Sivaganga and a pioneer of anti-colonial resistance.
2. She is known as **“Veeramangai”** and regarded as the first Indian queen to fight the British.
3. Led an **organised armed rebellion against the East India Company in South India**.
4. Her commander **Kuyili became the first recorded woman martyr and suicide attacker in Indian history**.
5. She formed **Udaiyaal, one of the earliest all-women military units**.
6. Built alliances with **Hyder Ali and Gopala Nayaker to strengthen resistance**.
7. Her struggle marks **early organised resistance against colonial rule in South India**.
8. She remains a symbol of **women’s empowerment and military leadership in Indian history**.

KUSHANA DYNASTY

Recent Update: Discovery of Kushana-era coins near Takshashila

About

1. The **Kushana dynasty (1st–3rd century CE)** originated from the **Central Asian Yueh-chi tribe**.
2. **Kanishka I** was the most prominent ruler who **promoted Buddhism globally**.
3. Convened the **Fourth Buddhist Council**, strengthening Mahayana Buddhism.

4. Empire extended across **Central Asia, Gandhara, Kashmir, Mathura, and Ganga-Yamuna Doab**.
5. Administrative system included **satrapies governed by Satraps**.
6. Issued **large numbers of gold coins indicating strong trade and economy**.
7. Played a key role in **Silk Route trade and cultural exchange between India and Central Asia**.
8. Contributed to **Gandhara art and spread of Indian culture abroad**.

LALA LAJPAT RAI

Recent Update: PM paid tribute on his birth anniversary

About

1. **Lala Lajpat Rai (1865–1928)** was a prominent nationalist leader and part of Lal-Bal-Pal trio.
2. Belonged to the **extremist faction of Indian National Congress advocating assertive nationalism**.
3. Served as **INC President (1920)** and **AITUC President**, reflecting his labour activism.
4. Founded institutions like **Servants of the People Society and Indian Home Rule League of America**.
5. Played role in establishing **Punjab National Bank and promoting economic nationalism**.
6. Authored works like **Unhappy India and Young India**, criticising colonial policies.
7. Led protest against **Simon Commission (1928)** where he was injured in lathi charge.
8. His death inspired **revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh to intensify freedom struggle**.

MADHAV GADGIL

Recent Update: Renowned ecologist passed away in 2026

About

1. **Madhav Gadgil (1942–2026)** was a leading **Indian ecologist and environmentalist**.
2. Founded the **Centre for Ecological Sciences at IISc Bengaluru**.
3. Played key role in **establishing Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (1986)**.

4. Chaired the **Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP)** recommending ecological protection zones.
5. Contributed to **Biological Diversity Act and Forest Rights Act implementation.**
6. Served on **PM's Science Advisory Council**, influencing policy decisions.
7. Received honours like **Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, and UNEP Champions of the Earth.**
8. Advocated **community-based conservation and sustainable development.**

MAHAMAGHAM FESTIVAL

Recent Update: Recognised as major South Indian religious congregation

About

1. **Mahamagham** is a major Hindu festival held once every 12 years in Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu.
2. Often called the “**Kumbh Mela of South India**” due to its scale and significance.
3. Devotees take a **holy dip in Mahamagham tank believed to cleanse sins.**
4. Associated with **astrological alignment of Jupiter and Sun.**
5. Attracts **lakhs of pilgrims from across India.**
6. Linked to **Shaivite and Vaishnavite temple traditions.**
7. Enhances **religious tourism and local economy.**
8. Last major celebration was held in **2016.**

SOURCE: DRISHTI MONTHLY

ROYAL INDIAN NAVY (RIN) REVOLT, 1946

Recent Update: 80th anniversary (2026) highlights militant anti-colonial resistance and Hindu-Muslim unity

About

1. The **RIN Revolt (1946)** was a mass naval uprising involving **20,000+ ratings across 78 ships and 20 establishments.**
2. It began at **HMIS Talwar (Bombay)** and spread to **Karachi, Madras, Calcutta, Cochin, Vizag, and Andamans.**

3. Immediate causes included **poor food, low wages, racial discrimination, and abuse by British officers.**
4. It was linked to **INA trials, anti-colonial sentiment, and opposition to deployment of Indian troops abroad.**
5. Symbolised **Hindu-Muslim unity**, with ships hoisting flags of Congress, Muslim League, and Communist Party together.
6. Escalated into **armed conflict after British firing; rebels used firearms and naval guns.**
7. Received **mass public support through strikes, hartals, and protests in cities like Bombay.**
8. Ended after **leaders like Sardar Patel and Jinnah persuaded surrender to avoid bloodshed.**

NEW MHA PROTOCOL ON VANDE MATARAM & JANA GANA MANA

Recent Update: Mandates **National Song to be played before National Anthem in official events**

About

1. The Ministry of Home Affairs directed that **Vande Mataram must precede Jana Gana Mana when both are played.**
2. Establishes a **formal sequence for national ceremonies and official functions.**
3. Citizens must **stand in attention during official rendition of National Song (~3 minutes).**
4. Not mandatory to stand when **played in films or documentaries to avoid disruption.**
5. Applies to **Presidential events, broadcasts, flag ceremonies, and cultural functions.**
6. Schools are encouraged to **begin the day with community singing of Vande Mataram.**
7. Linked to **Article 51A(a) – Fundamental Duty to respect national symbols.**
8. Reinforces **national identity, civic responsibility, and cultural unity.**

REPUBLIC DAY (26 JANUARY)

Recent Update: 77th Republic Day theme focused on “**150 Years of Vande Mataram**” and **Atmanirbhar Bharat**

About

1. **Republic Day** marks the **adoption of the Constitution on 26 January 1950**.
2. The date commemorates the **Purna Swaraj Resolution of 1930 declaring complete independence**.
3. It signifies transition from **British Dominion to Sovereign Democratic Republic**.
4. The **President replaced the British monarch as Head of State**.
5. Celebrations include **parades, tableaux, military displays, and cultural showcases**.
6. Highlights India's **unity, diversity, military strength, and development achievements**.
7. Padma Awards and Gallantry Awards are **announced to honour contributions**.
8. Reinforces **constitutional values, democracy, and national pride**.

HOYSALA TEMPLES (KARNATAKA)

Recent Update: Continued recognition as **UNESCO World Heritage "Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas"**

About

1. **Hoysala temples (11th–13th century)** are known for **intricate carvings and star-shaped architecture**.
2. Built using **soapstone, allowing minute and detailed sculptural work**.
3. Represent **Vesara style (blend of Nagara and Dravida architecture)**.
4. Feature **stellate (star-shaped) platforms and multiple shrine structures**.
5. Rich in **sculptures depicting epics, animals, dancers (Madanikas), and mythology**.
6. Prominent temples include **Chennakeshava (Belur), Hoysaleswara (Halebidu), Keshava (Somanathapura)**.
7. Built under rulers like **Vishnuvardhana and Veera Ballala II**.
8. Represent the **peak of medieval South Indian temple architecture and craftsmanship**.

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

Recent Update: Proposal to replace **Lutyens' statue with Rajagopalachari at Rashtrapati Bhavan**

About

1. **C. Rajagopalachari (1878–1972)** was a **freedom fighter and the last Governor-General of India**.
2. Played a key role in **national movement and was inspired by leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak**.
3. Led the **Vedaranyam Salt Satyagraha (1930)** paralleling Gandhi's Dandi March.
4. Proposed the **C.R. Formula (1944)** to resolve Congress–Muslim League deadlock.
5. Served as **Governor of West Bengal and Union Home Minister**.
6. Founded the **Swatantra Party promoting free-market policies**.
7. Contributed to **literature and received Sahitya Akademi Award**.
8. Awarded **Bharat Ratna (1954)**, among the **first recipients**.