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By **MANIKANT SINGH**



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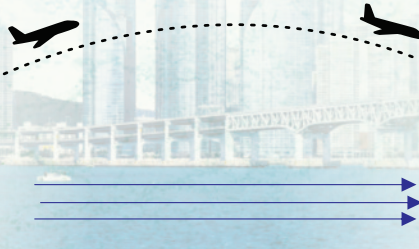


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Art & Culture, Literature and Festivals etc.

Virupaksha Temple - The Surviving Glory

Why in the News?

Recently, a portion of the Virupaksha temple in Karnataka collapsed following torrential rains.

Cause of Collapse:

- ❖ The pavilion, constructed with stone pillars, deteriorated due to **prolonged natural phenomena, especially heavy rains**.
- ❖ The foundation had weakened gradually, leading to the collapse earlier than expected.

About Virupaksha Temple:

- ❖ The Virupaksha Temple, **located in Hampi, Karnataka, is dedicated to Lord Shiva**.
- ❖ It is situated approximately **350 km away from Bangalore** and is recognised as one of **UNESCO's World Heritage Sites in 1985**.
- ❖ **Constructed with the assistance of Lakkana Dandesha**, a commander under **King Deva Raya II**, during the **Vijayanagara rule**.
- ❖ Also known as the **Pampapathi temple**, it stands as a testament to Hampi's historical and architectural significance.
- ❖ **Belonging to the Group of Monuments at Hampi** and it showcases Hampi's grandeur.
- ❖ The temple, distinct from the **Prasanna Virupaksha Temple**, is revered by pilgrims and attracts numerous tourists.
- ❖ It remains one of the oldest and most prominent structures amidst the ruins of Hampi, **reflecting its enduring cultural importance**.

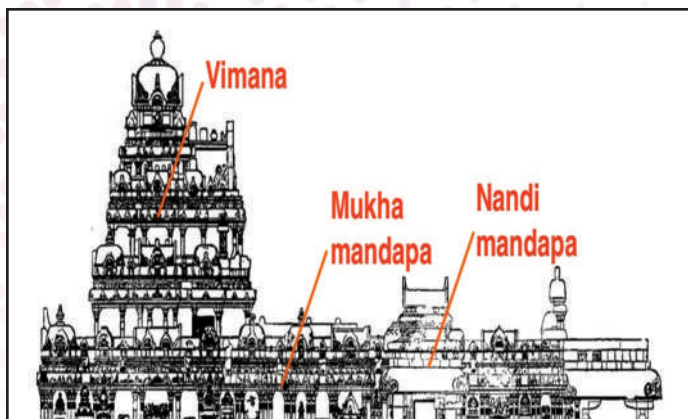
History of Virupaksha Temple:

- ❖ **Origins and Early History:**
 - The temple's history dates back to the **7th century**, with legends suggesting even earlier origins.
 - It is **believed that Lord Virupaksha (Shiva) married Parvati here**, and the **Pampapathi temple dedicated to Parvati** is also within the temple complex.
 - Inscriptions linked to Lord Shiva date back to the **9th and 10th centuries**.
- ❖ **Vijayanagara Empire Influence:**
 - Gained prominence and expanded during the **14th century under the Vijayanagara Empire (1336-1646)**.

- **Founded by Harihara I** of the **Sangama dynasty**, the empire grew to be one of the most powerful kingdoms of its time.
- Flourished under Vijayanagara rulers, especially **Krishnadevaraya**, who greatly **expanded the temple and built the grand gopuram** (gateway).
- Became a vital centre for religious and cultural activities, reflecting the empire's patronage of art and architecture.
- ❖ **Contributions by Other Dynasties:**
 - **Chalukyan and Hoysala emperors also contributed** to the temple's construction and expansion.
 - Major renovations and restorations were undertaken in the 19th century, including the reconstruction of the broken towers of the north and east gopuram.
- ❖ **Cultural and Religious Centre:**
 - **Hampi was the capital city of the Vijayanagara Empire** and remains a testament to its historical and architectural glory.
 - Despite the **destruction by the Bahmani Sultanates in 1565**, the **Virupaksha-Pampa sect** continued their worship, and the temple remains intact and in use.

Architecture and Features of Virupaksha Temple:

- ❖ **Grandeur of the Temple Complex:**
 - Virupaksha Temple is a complex of temples, not just a single structure.
 - The main entrance features a **huge gopuram** (gateway), **built by Krishnadevaraya**, ruler of the Vijayanagara Empire.
 - ⊙ The gopuram is adorned with fine and beautiful carvings.
- ❖ **Stone Chariot: A Marvel of Art:**
 - Inside the complex is a unique stone chariot known as "**Hajar Ram Teerth**".
 - **Dedicated to Garuda**, the vehicle of Lord Vishnu, the chariot features intricate sculptures and carvings.
- ❖ **Other Architectural Marvels:**
 - The temple complex includes **several mandapas** (halls), **smaller temples**, and **tirthas** (sacred water bodies).
 - Notable structures include the **Hazar Stambh** (Hall of Thousand Pillars), **Hakka Bazaar** (Food Market), and **Siddhivinayak Temple**.



- All structures are inspired by the Dravidian architectural style, characteristic of South India.
- ❖ **Significance of Tungabhadra River and Hemakunta Hill:**
 - The temple is situated on the banks of the holy Tungabhadra river.
 - The foothills of Hemakunta Hill enhance the temple's historical and religious importance.
- ❖ **Structural Details:**
 - Apart from the sanctum, the temple includes three ante chambers, a pillared hall, and an open pillared hall.
 - The temple complex features delicately carved pillars, pillared cloisters, entrance gateways, courtyards, smaller shrines, and numerous other structures.
 - The nine-tiered eastern gateway, 50 metres high, provides access to the outer court and has a stone base with a brick structure.
 - The Kanakagiri gopuram to the north leads to a small enclosure with smaller shrines and access to the Tungabhadra river.
 - The temple's construction and decoration use mathematical concepts, including fractals.
 - ⊙ The temple is triangular in shape.

Significance of Virupaksha Temple:

- ❖ **Cultural Significance:**
 - The temple halls were used for various purposes, including housing images of gods, hosting programs of music, dance, drama, and conducting divine marriages.
 - Tourists flock to witness the betrothal and marriage ceremonies of Lord Virupaksha and Goddess Pampa in December and the annual Chariot festival.
- ❖ **Mythological Significance:**
 - Associated with the Ramayana; Hampi is believed to

be the ancient Kishkindha where Lord Rama met Sugriva and Hanuman.

- An inscription in the temple courtyard describes Hanuman's bravery.
- ❖ **Architectural and Artistic Significance:**
 - Prime example of Dravidian temple architecture with grand gopurams, intricate carvings, and pillared halls.
 - Rich carvings and sculptures on the gopuram depict various deities, mythological scenes, and animals.
 - The sanctum sanctorum houses the Shiva lingam, the main object of worship.
 - Paintings on the ceilings date back to the 14th and 16th centuries.

Enduring Legacy: The temple has stood the test of time and remains a surviving glory of Hampi, attracting numerous visitors.

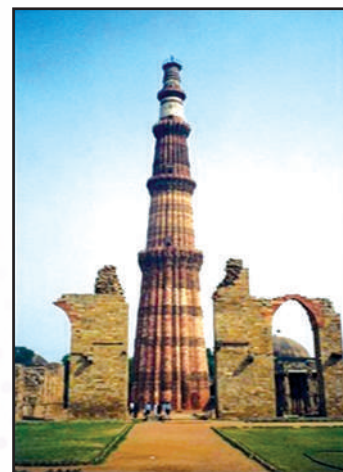
Qutub Minar

Context:

In 2023-24, Qutub Minar, a 13th-century marvel built by the Delhi Sultanate, surpassed Agra Fort of the Mughal Empire as the second most visited monument by foreigners, according to Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) visitor statistics.

Qutub Minar Overview:

- ❖ Built in early 13th century by Delhi Sultanate, India's tallest masonry tower at 72.5 metres.
- ❖ Construction spanned 75 years, started by Qutub-Din Aibak in AD 1199, expanded by Shamsuddin Iltutmish.
- ❖ Features intricate honeycomb design and inscriptions repaired by Firuz Shah Tughlaq, Sikandar Lodi, and Major R. Smith.



Key Points:

- ❖ Qutub Minar commemorates Muslim conquests over Delhi's Rajput rulers, doubling as a minaret for mosque calls.
- ❖ Includes a 7-metre iron pillar in mosque courtyard.
- ❖ Engraved with Quranic verses and fine arabesque decorations.
- ❖ UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1993.

Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque:

- ❖ **Established by Qutb-ud-Din Aibak in AD 1198**, incorporating pillars from 27 Hindu and Jain temples.
- ❖ Expanded by Shamsuddin Iltutmish and Alauddin Khalji, includes a unique five-arched screen and ancient Iron Pillar.

Tomb of Iltutmish: Constructed in AD 1235, a red sandstone chamber adorned with Saracenic motifs and inscriptions.

Alai Darwaza and Alai Minar:

- ❖ **Alai Darwaza Gate**, masterpiece of Indo-Muslim art built in AD 1311 by Alauddin Khalji.
- ❖ Alai Minar, intended to surpass Qutb Minar, stands incomplete at 25 metres.

Architectural Significance:

- ❖ Represents early Islamic architecture in India, blending Persian and Indian styles.
- ❖ Complex includes funerary buildings showcasing technological and artistic advancements.

Palitana: A Revered Jain Pilgrimage Destination

Context:

The decision to **ban non-veg foods** in Palitana was made after nearly **200 Jain monks protested** and succeeded in having around **250 butcher shops shut down**, making **meat sale and consumption illegal in the city**.

Overview of the City:

- ❖ **Location:** Palitana, in the **Bhavnagar** district of **Gujarat**, India, is a highly revered town for Jainism followers.
- ❖ The city, formerly known as **Padliptapur**, is nicknamed the “**City of Temples**,” or **Jain Temple Town**.
- ❖ The place is located around **Shatrunjaya Hills**.
- ❖ **Significance:** Palitana features **more than 800 temples** in the city.
 - The main temple, is dedicated to **Rishabha (the first Tirthankara)**.
 - **Sanctity:** The hill is sanctified by the visits of 23 Tirthankaras, except for **Neminatha**, who has already been **liberated from karma**.
- ❖ **Accessibility:** Reaching the temples requires climbing approximately **3950 stairs**. Constructed over **900 years**, the oldest temples date back to the **11th or 12th century**.



- **Historical Context:** Much of Palitana’s **11th-century architecture**, originally built by the **Solanki dynasty**, was destroyed by **Muslim invaders** and later reconstructed in the 16th century by wealthy merchants.
- ❖ **Prominent Temple:** The **Adishwar Temple**, also known as the **Chaumukha Temple**, is the most lavishly decorated. Built in the **early 17th century**, it features a **marble pedestal with a four-faced deity of Adinath**.
- ❖ **Angar Pir Shrine:** Nearby, this **Muslim shrine** is dedicated to a saint believed to help childless couples, with miniature cradles offered in hopes of blessings.
- ❖ **Other Important Temples:** Notable temples include **Rampal, Kumarpal, and Sampriti Raja**.
- ❖ **Cultural Context:** The town is a hub for pilgrimage, especially during the **Kartik Purnima festival**.
 - It is believed that visiting these temples is crucial for achieving **nirvana or salvation**.
- ❖ **Religious Practices:** The temple town is considered a **divine abode**, and therefore, no one is allowed to stay overnight, including priests.
 - Some temples remain **closed during the monsoon season**.
- ❖ **Cultural and Tourist Attractions:**
 - **Shopping:** Palitana’s bustling bazaars offer handcrafted **woven bamboo products as souvenirs**.
 - **Festivals:** Local festivals such as **Makar Sankranti and the Kite Festival** are celebrated with great enthusiasm.

Architectural Features of the Town:

- ❖ The design includes a **large square subdivided into smaller squares with domes**, representing the five sacred hills.
- ❖ **Decorations:** The temple's pillars and roof are intricately carved marble shaped like dragons.
- ❖ **Temple Complex:** The site features **both large and small shrines**. Larger temples have marble halls with columns and towers, while smaller ones are compact, displaying **Tirthankara emblems**.
- ❖ **Marble Use:** Temples are richly adorned with marble that reflects sunlight, creating an ivory shield effect.

The Solanki Clan: A Historical Overview

- ❖ The Solanki dynasty, also known as the **Chalukyas of Gujarat**, played a significant role in shaping the history of Gujarat from the **10th to 13th centuries CE**.
 - They were more prominent in **southern regions than in Rajputana**.
- ❖ **Mularaja**, the founder of the Solanki dynasty, established an independent kingdom with **Anahilapataka (modern Patan)** as its capital in **940 CE**.
 - **Siddharaja Jayasimha and Kumarapala** are the best known Solanki kings.

100 years of Discovery of the Harappan Civilisation

Context:

On September 20, 1924, **The Illustrated London News** announced the **discovery of the Indus Valley Civilization**, which **now spans 2,000 sites across 1.5 million sq. km in India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan**.

Discovery and Significance:

- ❖ **Announcement:** Discovered and announced by **John Marshall**, then **Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** in **The Illustrated London News** on September 20, 1924.
- ❖ **Origins:** Known as the **Indus Valley Civilization**, the Harappan civilization **emerged around 3200 BCE and lasted until approximately 1500 BCE**.

Major Harappan Sites

Site	Place
Harappa	Punjab, Pakistan
Mohenjo-Daro	Sindh, Pakistan
Dholavira	Kutch district of Gujarat,
Kalibangan	Rajasthan
Lothal	Gujarat
Rakhigarhi	Haryana
Chanhudaro	Sindh, Pakistan
Ganweriwala	Punjab, Pakistan
Sutkagendor	Baluchistan Province, Pakistan
Alamgirpur	Uttar Pradesh

- ❖ **Historical Impact:** Filled a significant gap in South Asian history, **revealing a sophisticated civilization** alongside **Egypt** and **Mesopotamia**.
- ❖ **Maritime Contacts:** Demonstrated **extensive trade and cultural exchange with Mesopotamia and West Asia from around 3000 BCE**.

Phases and Extent

- ❖ **Early Phase (3200 BCE - 2600 BCE):** Initial development and establishment of urban centres.
- ❖ **Mature Phase (2600 BCE - 1900 BCE):** Peak of the civilization with **advanced urban planning and technology**.
- ❖ **Late Phase (1900 BCE - 1500 BCE):** Decline and eventual collapse.
- ❖ **Geographical Spread:** Spanned across 1.5 million square kilometres in modern-day **India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan**.
 - Major sites include **Harappa, Mohenjo-daro, Rakhigarhi, and Dholavira**.

Major Features:

- ❖ **Urban Planning:** Advanced city layouts with brick houses, well-planned streets, courtyards with wells and bathrooms, and **underground drainage systems**.
- ❖ **Technological Advancements:** Proficient in **metallurgy, pottery, bead-making, and other crafts**.
 - Built **reservoirs, warehouses, and fortification walls**.
- ❖ **Trade and Commerce:** Extensive **trade networks reaching Mesopotamia, Afghanistan, and the Arabian Peninsula**.
- ❖ **Craftsmanship:** Notable for **intricate pottery, jewelry, seals, and bead-making**.

- Produced **red pottery with black motifs** and **detailed steatite seals**.

Archaeological Enigmas:

- ❖ **Undeciphered Script:** The **Harappan script** remains **undeciphered** despite efforts by scholars like **Irvatham Mahadevan**.
- ❖ **Cultural Influence:** **Pre-dates Aryan civilization**, with **maritime trade** and **cultural interactions** influencing ancient Asia.

Social and Cultural Aspects:

- ❖ **Social Organisation:** Likely a **hierarchical but relatively egalitarian society** with **no significant evidence of warfare or social stratification**.
- ❖ **Religion and Iconography:** **Artefacts depict symbols and motifs possibly related to religious beliefs**, including the **"Priest King"** and **animal figures**.
- ❖ **Agriculture:** Cultivated crops like **wheat, barley, peas, and cotton**.

Decline and Collapse: Possible causes include **climate change, environmental degradation, invasions, and internal conflicts**.

- ❖ **Cities were abandoned, and people became nomadic by 1500 BCE.**

Ongoing Research and Exploration:

- ❖ **Modern Techniques:** Use of **satellite imaging, DNA sampling, and radiocarbon dating** to study Harappan sites like **Rakhigarhi** and **Dholavira**.
- ❖ **Unresolved Mysteries:** Continued efforts to **decipher the Harappan script** and **fully understand the civilization's social and political structures**.

Lothal

Context:

A **new study** has found fresh evidence that can **confirm the dockyard's existence at Lothal**.

More on news:

- ❖ Since the 1950s discovery of Harappan sites at Lothal in the Bhal region of Gujarat, archaeologists have debated whether a dockyard existed at this location during the Indus Valley Civilisation.
- ❖ The study revealed that during the Harappan Civilisation, the **Sabarmati River once flowed near Lothal**, which is now 20 kilometres away from its current course.
- ❖ The **analysis** also uncovered a travel route that **connected Ahmedabad to Dholavira, another Harappan site, passing**

through Lothal, the Nal Sarovar wetland, and the Little Rann.



- ❖ The research supports the **dockyard theory** and clarifies issues related to **historical inlets, highlighting Lothal's significance for trade through both river and sea routes**.

About Lothal:

- ❖ **Location:** Lothal was **one of the southernmost sites** of the ancient Indus Valley Civilization, located in the **Bhal region of the Indian state of Gujarat**.
- ❖ **Founding:** Construction of the city is believed to have begun around 2200 BCE.
- ❖ **Discovery:** Lothal was discovered in 1954 by **SR Rao (Archaeological Survey of India)**. Excavation work was conducted from 1955 to 1960.
- ❖ **Dock:** Lothal had the **world's earliest known dock**, which connected the city to an ancient course of the Sabarmati River on a trade route between Harappan cities in Sindh (Pakistan) and the Saurashtra peninsula.
- ❖ **Planning:** The city was planned with a **citadel and lower town**, divided into blocks on terraced platforms. It had standardised widths for roads and an efficient drainage system.
- ❖ **Trade:** Lothal was a **vital trade centre**, with its beads, gems and ornaments reaching West Asia and Africa. It had **warehouses** near the acropolis to store and examine cargo.
- ❖ **Religion:** The people of Lothal worshipped a **fire god**, possibly represented by the horned deity depicted on seals, referred to as **Atha (Athar) and Arka**.
- ❖ **Burial Practices:** In Lothal, burial pits were **lined with burnt bricks, suggesting the use of coffins**.
 - The site also shows **evidence of twin burials**, where pot burials sometimes contained pairs of skeletons.

- ❖ **Metallurgy and Jewellery:** The people of Lothal demonstrated advanced metallurgy, employing the **Cire Perdue (lost-wax) technique** for casting and used multi-piece moulds for creating intricate figures of birds and animals.
- ❖ **Art:** Lothal was a major **hub for the bead industry**. Unique beads such as **double-eye agate beads, gold-capped jasper beads, and carnelian beads** are attributed to this site.
- ❖ **Seals:** Lothal has yielded the **third-largest number of seals** among all Indus Valley Civilisation sites.
 - The seals feature depictions of **short-horned bulls, mountain goats, tigers, and composite animals** like the elephant bull, which may have held symbolic or religious significance.
- ❖ **Pottery: Redware pottery** is the most commonly found type at Lothal and is used for everyday activities.
 - **Blackware pottery**, though less common, was significant for finer goods like drinking vessels and decorative items.
- ❖ **First Harappan Site in India:** Lothal is important as **India's first discovered Harappan site**, after the major towns of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro were excavated in the 1920s in what is now Pakistan.
- ❖ **Nomination:** Lothal has been nominated as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.
- ❖ **National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC):** It is being developed at Lothal to display India's diverse maritime heritage.
- ❖ The National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) is poised to become the **world's largest maritime museum complex**, transforming into an international tourism hub.

The Great Stupa of Sanchi

Context:

Recently, the **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar** visited the replica of the East Gate of Sanchi's Great Stupa, located outside the Humboldt Forum museum in Berlin.

More on News

- ❖ This intricate **red sandstone** gateway, unveiled in December 2022, is a full-scale reproduction of the original, standing nearly 10 metres tall, 6 metres wide, and weighing approximately 150 tonnes.

*Sanchi, a historic site in west-central Madhya Pradesh, India, is located on a sandstone hill about 5 miles (8 km) south-west of **Vidisha, near the Betwa River**. It is renowned for its well-preserved Buddhist monuments, which were designated a **UNESCO World Heritage site in 1989**.*

The Great Stupa of Sanchi

- ❖ A **stupa** is a **Buddhist monument built to commemorate and often house sacred relics of the Buddha or other revered saints**. The classic stupa features a **hemispherical structure**, with origins tracing back to pre-Buddhist burial mounds in India.
- ❖ The **Great Stupa of Sanchi** is a prime example of this architectural form.
 - Commissioned in the **3rd century BCE by Emperor Ashoka**, it is the **largest and oldest structure** within a complex of Buddhist monuments, which includes various stupas, temples, and monasteries.
 - Some parts of the Sanchi complex were built as late as the 12th century CE.
 - It is one of the oldest surviving stone structures in India, **believed to have been built over relics of the Buddha**.
 - Its **construction was overseen by Ashoka's wife, Devi**, who was from the nearby town of Vidisha, and the development of the Sanchi complex was supported by Vidisha's mercantile community.

Gateways of the Great Stupa

- ❖ Although the original stupa is a simple hemispherical structure **topped with a chhatra** (parasol), its defining feature is the **ornamental gateways, or toranas**, that stand before it.
 - These **four toranas**, aligned with the cardinal directions, were built in the 1st century BCE, likely within a few decades of each other, **during the Satavahana dynasty**.
- ❖ Each gateway **consists of two square pillars** supporting a superstructure of three curved **architraves** (beams) with spiralled ends.
 - Both the pillars and the architraves are **richly decorated with intricate bas-relief carvings and sculptures**, illustrating **scenes from the Buddha's life, the Jataka Tales, and other Buddhist symbols**.
 - The **toranas**, along with the balustrade encircling the Great Stupa, were painted once.

The East Gate and its Replica

- ❖ **In Europe**, the **East Gate is the most renowned** of the Sanchi toranas, and there's a historical reason for this.
- ❖ The Sanchi complex was in ruins when **British officer Henry Taylor "discovered" it in 1818**.
- ❖ **Alexander Cunningham**, who later founded the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), **conducted the first formal survey and excavation of the site in 1851**.
- ❖ **Restoration** to its current state was led by ASI director-general **John Marshall** in the 1910s, with financial support from the begums of Bhopal.

- ❖ **Lieutenant Henry Hardy Cole** made a **plaster cast of the East Gate for the Victoria and Albert Museum in the late 1860s**.
 - Several replicas of this cast were later created and displayed across Europe. The latest replica in Berlin traces its origin to this original cast.
- ❖ The **upper architrave of the gate** represents the **seven Manushi Buddhas (previous Buddhas, with the historical Buddha being the latest incarnation)**.
- ❖ The **middle architrave** depicts the **Great Departure**, when Prince Siddhartha leaves Kapilavastu to live as an ascetic in search of enlightenment.
- ❖ The **lower architrave** shows **Emperor Ashoka visiting the Bodhi tree**, where the Buddha attained enlightenment.

Other decorative features include the **shalabhanjika** (a fertility symbol represented by a yakshi holding a tree branch), **elephants, winged lions, and peacocks**.

Khandagiri & Udayagiri Caves

Context:

On the third day of her Odisha tour, President Droupadi Murmu visited the Khandagiri and Udayagiri caves in Bhubaneswar.

Historical Background:

- ❖ Constructed during the reign of **Kalinga King Kharavela in the 1st and 2nd centuries BC**.
- ❖ **Located near Bhubaneswar, Odisha**.
- ❖ Served as **residences for Jain monks**.
- ❖ Originally known as Kattaka or Cuttack Caves.
- ❖ Hills referred to as **Kumari Parvata in Hathigumpha inscription**.
- ❖ **Rock-cutting continued till the Somavamsi period (10th-11th century AD)**.



Udayagiri Caves Contains 18 caves

- ❖ **Famous caves:** Hathi Gumpha, Ananta Gumpha, Ganesha Gumpha, Jaya Vijaya Gumpha, Mancapuri Gumpha, Bagha/Vyagra Gumpha, Sarpa Gumpha.
- ❖ **Significant caves:**
 - **Rani Gumpha (Queen's Cave):** Double-storeyed monastery, known for its acoustic qualities and central wing relief images.

- **Ganesh Gumpha:** Notable for carvings of Jain Tirthankara and sculpture carvings.
- **Hathi Gumpha:** Features inscriptions of King Kharavela detailing his conquests and leadership.

Significance:

- ❖ Located roughly 200 metres apart, facing each other.
- ❖ Showcases advanced rock-cut architecture and carvings.
- ❖ Depicts **mythological and historical themes, including the Kalinga War**.
- ❖ Jain monks used the caves for residence and meditation.
- ❖ **Equipped with water sources, communication systems, lamp places, and tilted flooring for headrests**.
- ❖ **Most caves are double-story**, with upper chambers for deep meditation.

Modern Importance:

- ❖ Listed as **Adarsh Smarak Monument** by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
- ❖ Udayagiri and Khandagiri Caves reflect the religious, cultural, and artistic heritage of ancient India.
- ❖ Served as important centres for Jain ascetics and later became a significant site for Buddhist activities.

Kaliyahimarddaka Krishna

Context:

A Chola-era bronze idol of **Kaliya Narthana Krishna** (Lord Krishna dancing on Kaliya Naag) has been brought back to India.

More on News:

- ❖ It was stolen several years ago and has now been **retrieved from Bangkok, Thailand**.
- ❖ The rare variant of the bronze idol was **surrendered by the Fine Arts Department of Thailand** and housed at the High Commission of India in Bangkok before its return here.



About Kaliyahimaraddaka Krishna Idol :

- ❖ Belongs to the **Chola era (880-1279)**.
- ❖ **Depicts:** Krishna overcoming **Kaliya, a snake king** who had been poisoning the waters of the sacred Yamuna River and terrifying the local population.
- ❖ **Gesture:** Krishna performs the gesture of **reassurance to**

comfort his devotees while he subdues Kaliya by dancing on the snake king's hood of protective snakes,

- ❖ Once defeated, **Kaliya himself became a devotee of Krishna**, a transformation expressed by the snake king's gesture of worship and expression of adoration towards his vanquisher.

Kalamkari

Context:

The once-thriving Kalamkari art form is now facing survival challenges in modern times, largely because of the increasing use of power looms and higher costs of raw materials.

About Kalamkari:

- ❖ The name is derived from the word '**kalam**' meaning pen, referring to its intricate **hand-painted style**.
- ❖ It is a widely popular form of **hand-painted or block-printed** cotton textiles and paintings.
- ❖ It **originated in Tilang**, present-day **Andhra Pradesh and Telangana** during the reign of **Qutb Shahis at Golconda** in the **16-17th century**.
- ❖ It primarily depicts scenes from sacred texts like the **Mahabharata and Ramayana** on cloth.
- ❖ It uses **natural materials** such as **cotton cloth, dried unripe fruit, milk for the mordant, charcoal sticks, etc.**
- ❖ **The final colours are earthy tones of reds, blues, greens, yellows and browns.**
 - Using **red, indigo, and yellow dyes**, the artist mixes pigments to create **secondary colours**; for instance, applying indigo dye on yellow areas produces green.



- Artists use hand-carved wooden blocks to print outlines and main features of their designs.
- Influenced by Persian culture due to Mughal and Golconda Sultanate patronage, traditional motifs include interlacing leaves, flowers, cartwheels, and lotus forms.
- This style has received a **Geographical Indications tag**.

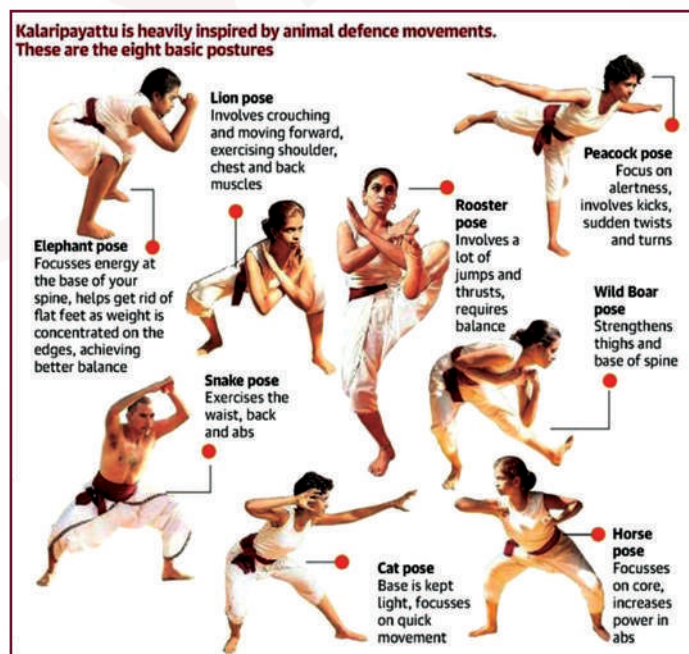
Kalaripayattu

Context:

Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports Recognises **Kalaripayattu Federation of India for Promotion of Kalaripayattu** in Country.

Overview of Kalaripayattu:

- ❖ **Origins and Significance:** Kalaripayattu, often shortened to **Kalari**, is an ancient Indian martial art from **Kerala**, considered **one of the oldest surviving martial arts** in the world.



Two Main Styles of Kalamkari:

- ❖ **Srikalahasti**, known for freehand drawing, from Chittoor district.
 - This style uses a traditional pen with a brush to create designs.
 - Artisans primarily produced hand-painted cloth for temples, used as backdrops for deities or on chariots.
 - The art, originating in the temple town, features mythological figures.
- ❖ **Pedana or Machilipatnam**, which uses block-printing techniques, from Krishna district.
 - It involves vegetable-dyed block-printing on fabric.

- It is believed to have originated around the **3rd century BCE**, as mentioned in the **Vedas**.
- The term combines "**Kalari**" (**battlefield**) and "**payattu**" (**to fight or exercise**), emphasising its historical roots in combat training.
- The term "**Kalari**" is first found in **Tamil Sangam literature**, where it refers to both a **battlefield and a combat arena**.
- ❖ **Foundation and Development:** According to tradition, the sage **Parasurama**, an **avatar of Vishnu**, founded Kalaripayattu and established **42 training centres**.

- It has been historically significant, flourishing during the wars between **Chola, Chera, and Pandya dynasties**.
 - The art faced **decline** under British rule but saw a revival in the **late 20th century**.
 - Now practised in **Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Sri Lanka**.
- ❖ **Styles:**
- **Vadakkan (Northern Style):** Practised in Malabar, emphasises graceful movements and weaponry.
 - **Thekken (Southern Style):** Practised in Travancore, focuses on free armed techniques and powerful movements.
- ❖ **Influence on other Arts:**
- It has influenced various traditional art forms, such as **Kathakali, Kolkali, and classical dance forms**.
 - Also had a significant impact on the evolution of **Shaolin Kung Fu (a symbol of Chinese martial arts)**.

Other Martial Art forms in India:

- ❖ **Gatka of Punjab:** Originated to defend **Sikh faith** and communities.
 - **Techniques:** Emphasises armed combat with weapons like **sticks (lathi), swords (shastar), and circular shields**.
- ❖ **Kuttu Varisai of Tamil Nadu**
 - **Techniques:** Combines armed and unarmed combat, includes **grappling and striking**.
- ❖ **Silambam of Tamil Nadu**
 - **Techniques:** Centers around staff fighting with **bamboo** staff of varying lengths.
- ❖ **Thang-ta of Manipur, Northeastern India**
 - **Techniques:** Combines both **armed and unarmed** combat.
- ❖ **Paik Akheda of Odisha:**
 - Paika is a traditional **martial art** and **warrior group** that originated in the ancient **Kalinga kingdom**.

Puri Rath Yatra

Context:

The Odisha government has made extensive arrangements for the festival, typically a one-day event, now extended to two days due to celestial factors, a first since 1971.

Jagannatha Rath Yatra Overview:



- ❖ **Significance:** Jagannatha Rath Yatra is a major Hindu festival with great religious significance, celebrated in Odisha, dedicated to Lord Jagannatha, Lord Balbhadra, and Goddess Subhadra.
- ❖ **Date:** The festival will be celebrated on Dwitiya Tithi of Shukla Paksha in Ashadha, which is July 7, 2024.
- ❖ **Historical Context:** The festival started between the 12th and 16th centuries and is associated with various stories and legends.

Religious Importance:

- ❖ **Divine Manifestation:** Lord Jagannatha, a manifestation of Lord Krishna, along with his siblings Subhadra and Balabhadra (Balarama), blesses devotees who are unable to enter the temple.
- ❖ **Symbolic Journey:** The yatra represents Lord Krishna's journey from Gokul to Mathura and symbolises the divine's desire to bless followers.

Annual Pilgrimage:

- ❖ **Pilgrimage:** The event commemorates the yearly pilgrimage of Lord Jagannatha, Balabhadra, and Subhadra from the Jagannatha Temple to the Gundicha Temple, believed to be their Mausi's residence.
- ❖ **Return Journey:** The yatra concludes when the deities return to the Jagannatha Temple after nine days.

Rituals and Traditions:

- ❖ **Chariot Construction:** Every year, three enormous chariots are constructed for the deities using specific materials and dimensions based on ancient specifications.
- ❖ **Pahandi Procession:** The deities are taken out of the temple in a grand procession known as Pahandi, accompanied by singing, dancing, and chanting.
- ❖ **Chariot Pulling:** Devotees pull the chariots through the streets of Puri while singing bhajans and reciting hymns, an act considered highly auspicious.

- ❖ **Gundicha Temple Stay:** The deities spend nine days at the Gundicha Temple, where numerous ceremonies and celebrations are held.
- ❖ **Return Journey (Bahuda Yatra):** The deities return to the Jagannatha Temple in a similarly grand procession.

Kozhikode: India's First UNESCO City of Literature

Context:

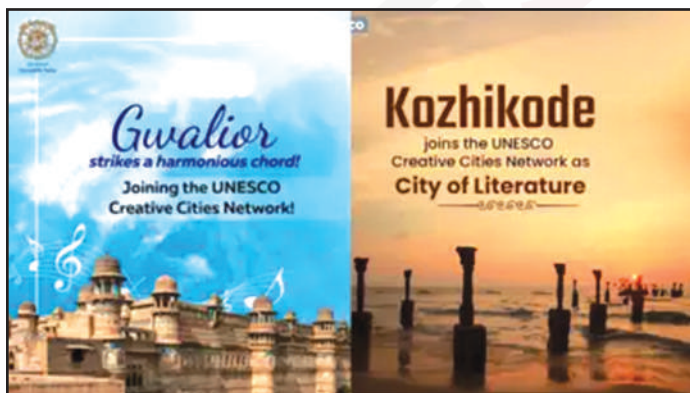
Kozhikode, a city in northern Kerala known for its rich cultural heritage, was officially recognized as India's first 'City of Literature' category of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN).

More on News:

- ❖ Announced on **World Cities Day, October 31.**
- ❖ Tourism Minister P A Mohammed Riyas unveiled the **UNESCO 'City of Literature' logo** as part of the event.
- ❖ **June 23** will be celebrated as the '**City of Literature' Day of Kozhikode** starting next year.
 - Special **awards in six categories** will be announced on this day.

Significance of the City:

- ❖ Recognized for their commitment to **cultural and creative development, and innovative human-centred urban planning.**



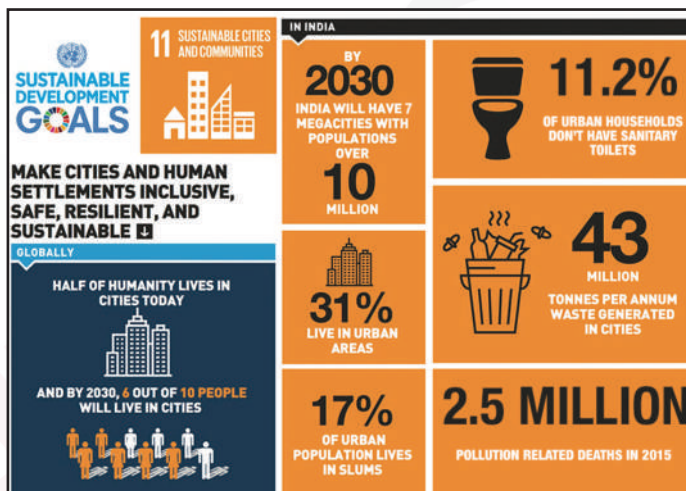
- ❖ Formerly known as the **city of Zamorins and Calicut** during British rule.
- ❖ Served as a gateway for **Persians, Arabs, Chinese, and Europeans** centuries ago.
- ❖ Cradle of the **freedom movement** in Kerala.
- ❖ Kozhikode has **over 500 libraries** and has been the base of literary activities for **M T Vasudevan Nair**. Important desti-

nation for **book festivals** for many decades.

- ❖ Kozhikode is home to literary greats like late **S K Pottakkad and Vaikom Muhammed Basheer.**

Categories and Other Cities:

- ❖ **Gwalior** is recognized in the '**Music**' category.
- ❖ Kozhikode is recognized in the '**Literature**' category.
- ❖ Other cities include **Bukhara** (Crafts and Folk Art), **Casablanca** (Media Arts), **Chongqing** (Design), **Kathmandu** (Film), **Rio de Janeiro** (Literature), **Ulaanbaatar** (Crafts and Folk Art).



Overview of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN):

- ❖ UCCN is UNESCO's flagship city programme, established in 2004.
- ❖ The Network covers **seven creative fields: Crafts and Folk Arts, Media Arts, Film, Design, Gastronomy, Literature and Music.**
- ❖ Comprises around 350 cities.
- ❖ **Mission and Goals:**
 - Leverage culture and creativity **to build sustainable cities.**
 - ⊙ Aid in achieving **SDG 11** on **sustainable cities.**
 - Foster collaboration across **seven creative fields.**
 - Support **cultural diversity** across various regions and settings.
- ❖ **Vision:**
 - Reinforce culture-powered urban development to **transform societies, strengthen communities, and enhance city attractiveness.**
 - Emphasise culture's role in collective **well-being and local development.**

The other Indian cities in the list are:

- ❖ Srinagar for Crafts and Folk Arts (2021)
- ❖ Mumbai for Film (2019)
- ❖ Hyderabad for Gastronomy (2019)
- ❖ Chennai for Music (2017)
- ❖ Jaipur for Crafts and Folk Arts (2015)
- ❖ Varanasi for Music (2015)

Classical Language Status

Context:

The Union Cabinet has approved the recognition of five more languages as “classical,” expanding India’s list of culturally significant languages.

More on News:

- ❖ **Marathi, Pali, Prakrit, Assamese, and Bengali** have now been granted the prestigious classical status.
- ❖ These languages join the six already recognised as classical: **Tamil (2004), Sanskrit (2005), Telugu (2008), Kannada (2008), Malayalam (2013), and Odia (2014).**
- ❖ This classification fosters greater academic and cultural engagement, while opening new opportunities for research and preservation of these ancient languages.

Criteria for Classical Language Status:

The recognition of a classical language is based on criteria established by a **Linguistic Experts Committee.**

The Linguistics Expert Committee includes **representatives from the Union Ministries of Home and Culture**, along with **four to five linguistic experts** at any given time. The committee is chaired by the president of the **Sahitya Akademi.**

To be considered classical, a language must meet the following standards:

- ❖ **High Antiquity:** The language must have **early texts and recorded history dating back over 1,000 years.**
- ❖ **Ancient Literature:** It must possess a body of ancient literature or texts **considered cultural heritage** by generations of speakers.
- ❖ **Knowledge Texts:** In addition to poetry, the language must have **prose works, including knowledge texts, epigraphical, and inscriptional evidence.**
 - The literary tradition of the language **must be original and not derived** from another speech community.

- ❖ **Distinct Evolution:** The classical language and its literature **may be distinct from its modern form or have evolved into newer forms, potentially discontinuous from its original structure.**

Benefits of Classical Language Status:

When a language is designated as classical, the **Ministry of Education offers several benefits** to promote it, including:

- ❖ **Two prestigious international awards each year** for distinguished scholars in the language.
- ❖ The establishment of a **Centre of Excellence for studies** in the classical language.
- ❖ **A request to the University Grants Commission (UGC) to create Professional Chairs** in Central Universities dedicated to the study of the classical language.

Ongoing Demands for Classical Language Status:

- ❖ **Maithili:** Despite its rich literary tradition and historical significance, Maithili has yet to receive classical status. Advocates argue that it has a documented history dating back over 2,500 years and a distinct literary heritage.
- ❖ **Tulu:** Similar to Maithili, Tulu speakers are pushing for recognition based on its unique cultural contributions and ancient texts.
- ❖ **Gujarati:** There are calls for Gujarati to be classified as a classical language, highlighting its historical literature and cultural importance.
- ❖ **Konkani:** The Konkani-speaking community is also seeking recognition, emphasising its distinctiveness and historical roots.

Kharchi Puja Festival

Context:

The Prime Minister Shri **Narendra Modi** today **wished everyone**, particularly the people of **Tripura**, on the occasion of **Kharchi Puja.**

Kharchi Puja 2024:

- ❖ Kharchi Puja is a festival where the gods that comprise the dynastic deity of the Tripuri community are worshipped in the state of **Tripura** in northeast India.
- ❖ The rituals are observed for a whole week in the temple dedicated to the 14 gods which is located in the **state’s capital city of Agartala.**
- ❖ In 2024, Kharchi Puja was celebrated on **14th July, Sunday.**

About Kharchi Puja Festival:

- ❖ **Origin and History:** Kharchi Puja has been celebrated since the era of the erstwhile **royal dynasty in Tripura**, deeply rooted in **religious heritage and regional culture.**

- ❖ **Timing and Duration:** It is observed during the **Ashadha month**, typically falling in **July**, and spans over a week.
 - The festival begins on the **8th day of the new moon**.
- ❖ **Rituals and Customs:** The festival commences with the sacred ritual of bathing the idols of the **Fourteen Gods** in the **Howrah River**.
 - This act symbolises purification and the **cleansing of sins**.
 - Devotees, temple authorities, and priests participate in these traditional rites with great reverence.
- ❖ **Significance:** Kharchi Puja holds immense **religious significance** among local devotees and attracts thousands from across Tripura and beyond.
 - It signifies spiritual renewal and the renewal of faith through the worship of the deities.
- ❖ **Celebration:** Throughout the festival, the deities are worshipped with **offerings of flowers, fruits, and sweets**. **Hymns** are chanted, and **traditional music** fills the air.
 - **Cultural programs** and **decorations** adorn the temple.
- ❖ **Community and Heritage:** Kharchi Puja is not only a religious observance but also a cultural celebration that promotes unity and shared heritage among diverse communities.
 - It fosters a sense of **belonging and togetherness**.
- ❖ **Arrangements:** Temple authorities make extensive preparations, including security measures and facilities for devotees, to ensure the smooth conduct of the festival.

Onam Festival: Athachamayam Parade in Kerala

Context:

The ten-day Onam celebrations commenced with the Athachamayam procession in Thripunithura, Ernakulam, on September 6, 2024.

- ❖ The festival will continue until September 17, with the highlight, “**Thiruvonam**,” on September 15.

Athachamayam Procession Highlights:

- ❖ The parade showcased **traditional art forms** like **pulikali**, **kavadiyattam**, and **karakattam**.
- ❖ **Caparisoned elephants**, **elaborate floats**, and **folk dances** were central to the procession.

Traditional Art Forms:

- ❖ Various folk art forms such as **Theyyam**, **Thiruvathirakali**, **Kathakali**, and **Kummatti** were featured.

- ❖ Performers dressed as **Lord Mahabali** led the procession, symbolising the cultural roots of Onam.



History of Athachamayam:

- ❖ Athachamayam has multiple origin stories, including **celebrating the victory of the King of Kochi** or the **start of the harvest season**.
- ❖ The procession begins with **hoisting the Atham flag**, followed by a **ceremonial parade in Thripunithura**.

Significance of Each Day Leading to Thiruvonam: Each of the **nine days leading up to Thiruvonam** has cultural and religious significance:

- ❖ **Atham (Day 1):** Prayers to Lord Vamana and a **small floral carpet** (pookkalam).
- ❖ **Chithira (Day 2):** House cleaning for the season.
- ❖ **Chodhi (Day 3):** Shopping and home decor.
- ❖ **Vishakam (Day 4):** Preparations for the Onam feast (sadya).
- ❖ **Anizham (Day 5):** Traditional boat races.
- ❖ **Thriketta (Day 6):** Family visits and gift exchanges.
- ❖ **Moolam (Day 7):** Sadya preparation.
- ❖ **Pooradam (Day 8):** Creation of clay idols of Vamana and Mahabali.
- ❖ **Uthradam (Day 9):** Preparing traditional meals for Thiruvonam.

Cultural and Historical Roots:

- ❖ The Athachamayam parade, which resumed in **1961** after being halted for Kerala’s state reorganisation, showcases Kerala’s rich history and traditions.

The festival honours the legacy of King Mahabali, combining mythological tales with agrarian harvest practices, embodying unity and prosperity for all Keralites.

World's Oldest Calendar

Context:

Archaeologists at **Göbekli Tepe in Turkey** have uncovered the world's oldest calendar, dating back nearly **13,000 years**.

More on News:

- ❖ Also referred to as the **world's first temple**, Göbekli Tepe features a series of **large stone pillars** adorned with ornate carvings.
- ❖ The carvings on the stone pillars indicate a sophisticated **solar-lunar calendar**, likely used to track time and celestial events, including a comet strike around 10,850 BCE.
- ❖ The carvings include a series of **V-shaped symbols**, each **representing a single day**. This system closely resembles the modern calendar.
- ❖ Most important aspect of the discovery is the **depiction of the summer solstice**.
- ❖ This discovery challenges earlier views on early human technology, revealing advanced **astronomical knowledge long before the advent of written language**.



India's National Calendar

India's national calendar is the **Saka calendar**, also known as the **Shaka Samvat**. It was **adopted in 1957** as an official calendar **alongside the Gregorian calendar**.

Key Features of the Saka Calendar:

- ❖ **Solar Calendar:** Based on the Earth's revolution around the sun.
- ❖ **Structure:** Similar to the Gregorian calendar with 12 months and 365 days.

- ❖ **Starting Point:** The Saka era begins in **78 AD**.
- ❖ **First Month:** **Chaitra**, which usually starts on **March 22nd** (March 21st in leap years).
- ❖ **Usage:** Used by the Government of India for **official purposes**, including the **Gazette of India**, **All India Radio broadcasts**, and **government communications**.

Types of Calendars:

Calendars are systems of organising days for social, religious, commercial, or administrative purposes. They are primarily based on the predictable movements of the sun, moon, and Earth.

Based on Celestial Bodies:

- ❖ **Solar Calendars:** These calendars are based on the **Earth's revolution around the sun**. They are typically **more accurate** in aligning with seasons.
 - **Gregorian Calendar:** The most widely used calendar today.
 - **Julian Calendar:** Predecessor to the Gregorian calendar.
- ❖ **Lunar Calendars:** These calendars are based on the **phases of the moon**. They are shorter than solar years.
 - **Islamic Calendar:** Used by Muslims worldwide.
 - **Hebrew Calendar:** Used by Jewish people.
- ❖ **Lunisolar Calendars:** These calendars **combine elements of both solar and lunar** calendars. They attempt to align both lunar months and solar years.
 - **Chinese Calendar:** A complex system incorporating both lunar and solar elements.
 - **Hindu Calendar:** Various Hindu calendars, like **Vikram Samvat** and **Saka Samvat**, fall into this category.



Historical Events (Ancient to Modern India)

Satnami Community

Context:

'Desecration' of Religious Symbol Sparks Outrage in **Satnami Community**, in Chhattisgarh.

More on News:

- ❖ Their agitation stemmed from the purported **vandalism of 'Jaitkham'** (a revered symbol of the Satnami sect).

About Jaitkham:

- ❖ The 'Jaitkham', also known as the **Victory Pillar**, holds profound significance for the Satnami community.
- ❖ It symbolises their **spiritual heritage and resilience**.
- ❖ Located at the Amar Gufa, it serves as a sacred site for worship and religious gatherings, embodying the community's identity and history.

About Satnamis:

Satnami community is also referred to as the Satnami sect or the Sadhan sect.

❖ Founder

- The term "**Sat naam**" was popularised by 15th-century **Bhakti poet Kabir**, although it is possible that it was coined earlier.
- Kabir, a prominent figure in the Nirguna bhakti tradition, referred to the concept of "sat naam" or "satya naam" in several of his poems.
- The Satnami community was founded in **1657 by Birbhan, a mendicant inspired by Kabir's teachings, in Narnaul, Haryana.**

❖ Community

- The community comprises **farmers, artisans, and people from backward castes.**
- The sect emphasises **three principles**: wearing Satnami attire, earning money honestly, and not tolerating injustice or oppression.

❖ Rituals and Superstition

- Rituals and superstition were condemned, and allegiance was explicitly rendered to Kabir.
- Caste distinctions within the community were forbidden.

- Most Satnamis belonged to the "Untouchable" caste group engaged in leather work.

- ❖ **Teachings:** Satnami's preachings emphasise sympathy with the poor and hostility towards authority and wealth.

❖ Revolt

- In 1672, Satnamis revolted against Aurangzeb **due to increased tax demands.**
- The Mughals killed thousands of Satnamis and nearly wiped out the community.

- ❖ **Revival:** Satnamis revived in the mid-18th century in Uttar Pradesh under **Jagjivan Das** and in **Chhattisgarh under Ghasidas.**

❖ Guru Ghasidas (1756-1836 AD)

- He was a famous saint from **Chhattisgarh** and he established the "**Satnami Community**" there.
- He strongly believed in **equality and criticised** the oppressive caste system.
- He was a **monotheist** and was **against idol worship.**
- This rejection of deity worship allowed Satnamis to transcend temple-entry restrictions.
- Ghasidas asked his followers to drop their surnames and use "Satnami" instead.

Chera Dynasty

Context:

The **Chera dynasty is in the news** due to Kerala's resolution renaming the state as "Kearalam," **echoing historical "Keralaputra" significance.**

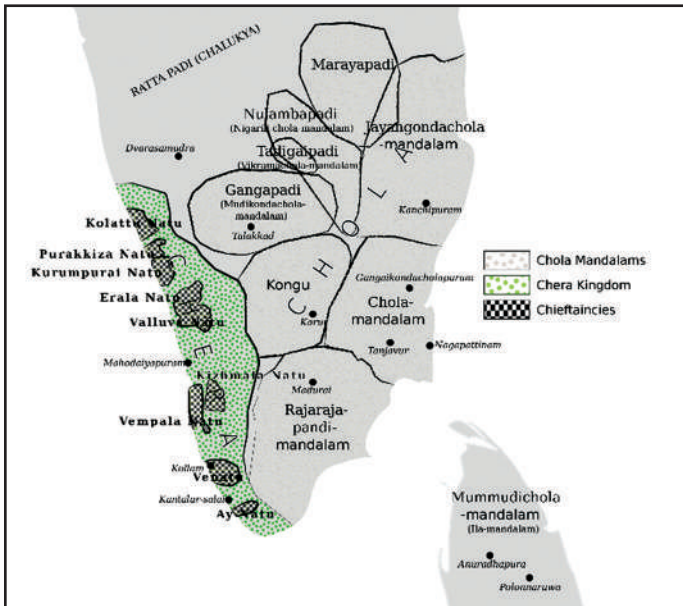
Chera Dynasty:

- ❖ The Chera dynasty ruled **parts of present-day Kerala and Tamil Nadu** from around the 4th century BCE to the 12th century CE.
- ❖ They were prominent in **maritime trade with the Roman Empire** and others, and known for **patronising arts, literature, and architecture.**

Early Period and Important Rulers

- ❖ **Uthiyan Cheralathan:** The **founder in the 3rd century BCE**, known for military conquests and kingdom expansion.
- ❖ **Nedum Cheralathan:** Ruled in the 1st century BCE, patronised arts and built the Kodungallur temple.

- ❖ **Kulashekara Varman:** Ruled in the **9th century CE**, known for cultural patronage and building of **Thiruvanchikulam temple**.



- ❖ Artistic achievements include **temple architecture, murals, and frescoes depicting religious themes**.

Decline and Legacy:

- ❖ **Internal conflicts, invasions by other dynasties like the Cholas, and emergence of new regional powers** led to decline by the 12th century.
- ❖ Legacy includes shaping the **cultural, religious, and economic landscape** of southern India.
- ❖ The Chera dynasty's contributions **continue to influence South Indian history and heritage**.

The Santhal Rebellion: A Historic Uprising

Context:

The Santhal Hul of 1855 was a revolt against British imperialism led by four brothers, Sidho, Kanho, Chand, and Bhairav Murmu, along with their sisters Phulo and Jhano. June 30 marks the 169th anniversary of this significant peasant uprising, one of the first against British colonial oppression.

Administration and Society

- ❖ **Decentralised administration** with local chieftains governing regions under the king's authority.
 - **Taxation system funded military campaigns** and infrastructure development.
- ❖ **Matrilineal society with high status for women;** religious tolerance towards Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism.

Cultural Contributions

- ❖ Patronage of **Tamil language and literature**, highlighted by **Sangam literature**.
- ❖ Significant contributions to **music, dance, and architectural feats like the Sabarimala temple**.
- ❖ **Dravidian-style temples with pyramid-shaped gopurams** and intricate carvings.

Economic Activities:

- ❖ Primarily based on **maritime trade with the Roman Empire** and other regions.
- ❖ Exported **spices, textiles, precious stones, and steel;** imported **ivory, pearls, and other luxury goods**.
- ❖ Advanced agricultural practices supported by irrigation systems.

Literary and Artistic Achievements:

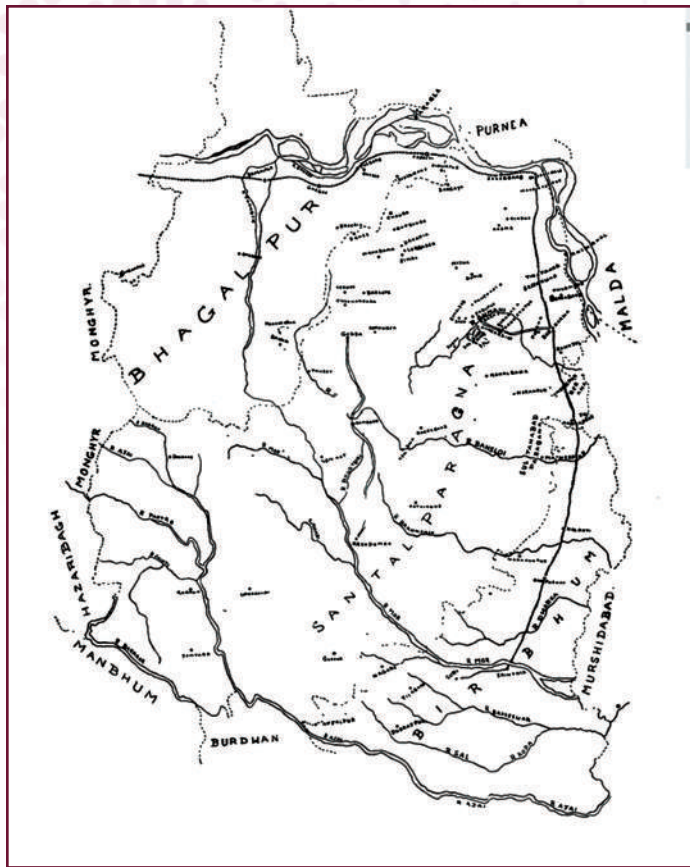
- ❖ Known for literary works such as **Silappadikaram, Manimekalai, and Thirukkural**.

Background:

- ❖ **Permanent Settlement System (1793):** Introduced by Lord Cornwallis, this system granted landlords perpetual rights over land, leading to the exploitation of peasants.
- ❖ **Demarcation of Damin-E-Koh (1832):** The East India Company promised non-interference in this region, encouraging Santhals to settle there.
- ❖ **Economic Hardship:** Santhals faced high-interest loans and oppressive land taxes, losing control over their land and traditional lifestyle.

Causes of the Revolt:

- ❖ **Exploitation by Zamindars:** Santhals were oppressed by landlords who imposed heavy rents and taxes.
- ❖ **Abolition of Traditional Panchayat System:** The end of the Santhals' traditional political institution, "Purha Panchayat."
- ❖ **Entry of Christian Missionaries:** Under the Charter Act of 1813, the British government granted permission for religious propagation and conversion in the Santhal region.
- ❖ **Debt Trap:** Unfamiliar with money, Santhals borrowed from moneylenders at exorbitant rates, trapping them in debt.
- ❖ **Loss of Land:** Traditional Santhal lands were auctioned off by the British, leading to widespread resentment.
- ❖ **Other reasons:** The British government forcibly took labour from the Santhals without pay during the development of the Bhagalpur-Bardhaman rail project.



The Rebellion:

- ❖ **Initial Revolt (June 30, 1855):** Sidhu and Kanhu organised 10,000 Santhals in Bhognadih village and declared a revolt against the British.
- ❖ **Guerrilla Tactics:** Santhals used guerrilla warfare, targeting zamindars, moneylenders, and British properties.
 - Around 60,000 Santhals participated, employing guerrilla tactics against the British and local exploiters.
- ❖ **Divine Inspiration:** The Murmu brothers claimed divine direction from their God, Thakur Bonga, to resist oppression.
- ❖ **Major Conflicts:** They captured large areas including Rajmahal Hills, Bhagalpur district, and Birbhum.
- ❖ **Duration:** The rebellion lasted nearly six months, ending on January 3, 1856.
- ❖ **Casualties:** Over 15,000 Santhals were killed, and 10,000 villages were destroyed.
- ❖ **Leaders' Fate:** Sidhu was hanged on August 9, 1855, and Kanhu in February 1856.

British Response:

- ❖ **Military Action:** British troops, initially unsuccessful, imposed martial law on November 10, 1855.

- ❖ **Suppression:** By January 3, 1856, British forces had killed around 15,000 Santhals, including Sidhu and Kanhu, and destroyed their villages.

Aftermath and Legacy:

- ❖ **Santhal Parganas Tenancy Act (1876):** Enacted by the British to offer some protection to Santhals against exploitation.
- ❖ **Impact on Tribal Identity:** The rebellion fostered a sense of unity and identity among Santhals, playing a significant role in the creation of Jharkhand in 2000.
- ❖ **Lasting Influence:** The rebellion inspired further movements for land rights and social justice, such as the Birsa Munda movement.

Significance:

- ❖ **Agrarian Uprising:** Unlike other revolts, the Santhal Rebellion focused on reclaiming traditional lands and economic freedom.
- ❖ **Nationalism:** It fostered a sense of nationalism among Santhals, contributing to future resistance against colonial rule.
- ❖ **Cultural Identity:** The rebellion reinforced the importance of preserving Santhal culture and traditions.

Partition of Bengal (1905)

Context:

On July 20, 1905, the Secretary of State for India approved Bengal's partition, dividing it along Hindu and Muslim lines to weaken the nationalist movement through the British "divide-and-rule" policy and Recently **119 Years of Partition of Bengal**.

About:

- ❖ The Partition of Bengal in 1905 was a significant event in Indian history, marking a crucial turning point in the **Indian freedom struggle**.
- ❖ This administrative decision, announced by **Lord Curzon**, the then **Viceroy of India**, on **July 20, 1905**, aimed to divide the Bengal Presidency into two regions: **Eastern Bengal and Assam**, predominantly **Muslim**, and **Western Bengal**, predominantly **Hindu**. The partition officially took effect on October 16, 1905.

Background:

- ❖ Bengal, including present-day **West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Bangladesh, and Assam**, was under **British rule since 1765**.



- ❖ The province faced challenges in administration due to its large size and rapidly growing population, reaching almost 80 million by the early 20th century.
- ❖ Rural areas in eastern Bengal were neglected in terms of industry, education, and employment, with development centred around Calcutta.
- ❖ The idea of partitioning the province existed before Lord Curzon's arrival, with Assam separated in 1874.
- ❖ Initially proposed as an administrative measure, Curzon later viewed partition as a political tool against growing nationalism.

Causes:

- ❖ Lord Curzon announced the Partition of Bengal on 20 July 1905.
- ❖ The aim was to enhance administrative effectiveness and manage the large population more efficiently.
- ❖ Official reasons included administrative necessity and development of Assam.
- ❖ The partition was also seen as a strategy to weaken nationalism by dividing the Hindu and Muslim populations.
- ❖ Division viewed as a tactic to diminish the political influence of the educated middle class, particularly the Bengal intelligentsia.
- ❖ The British aimed to turn Muslim communalists against Congress and hamper the national movement.

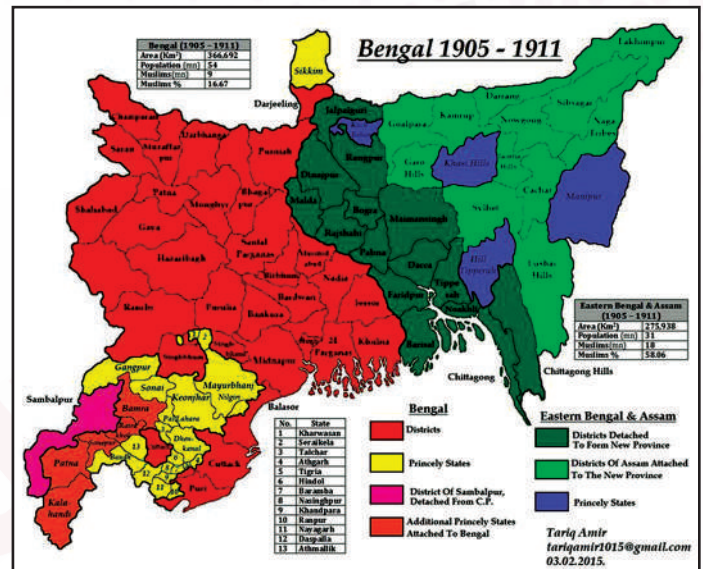
Features:

- ❖ The partition divided Bengal into two: Bengal (West Bengal, Odisha, and Bihar) and Eastern Bengal and Assam.
- ❖ Calcutta remained the capital of Bengal, while Dhaka became the capital of Eastern Bengal and Assam.
- ❖ Bengal had a Hindu majority, while Eastern Bengal and Assam had a Muslim majority.
- ❖ Announcement on July 20, 1905; effective from October 16, 1905.

Reactions to the Partition:

❖ Nationalist Reaction:

- Strong opposition from Hindu community in West Bengal, viewed as a "divide and rule" strategy.
- Nationalists like Surendranath Banerjee and K.K. Mitra led an anti-partition campaign using petitions, prayers, and protests.
- Boycott of British goods and Swadeshi movement emerged as forms of protest.



- The Indian National Congress (Varanasi session 1905), under Gopal Krishna Gokhale, supported the Swadeshi movement and boycott of British goods.
- ❖ Public Reaction:
 - Strong opposition from the Hindu community in West Bengal.
 - Protests marked by mourning and the tying of rakhis as a symbol of unity.
 - Rabindranath Tagore's song "Amar Sonar Bangla" became a symbol of unity and later the national anthem of Bangladesh.
 - Some Bengali Muslims supported the partition, seeing it as beneficial for their community.
 - National protests spread across the country.

Impact:

- ❖ Division led to the Swadeshi and Boycott movements, promoting local industries.
- ❖ Created religious divisions, contributing to the formation of the Muslim League in 1906.
- ❖ Protests and opposition continued until the partition was

annulled in 1911.

Reunification of Bengal:

- ❖ King George V announced the reunification of Bengal during the Delhi Durbar in 1911.
- ❖ Based on linguistic lines, Bihar and Orissa were carved out of Bengal and made separate provinces.
 - Assam was also made a separate province.
- ❖ The capital of British India was shifted from Calcutta to Delhi.
- ❖ Despite the annulment, it created a permanent division between Hindus and Muslims, influencing the later partition of India in 1947.

Battle of Kolachel

Context:

The battle took place on **August 10, 1741**, in the town of Colachel, Kerala.

About:

- ❖ The **Battle of Colachel** (also known as the Battle of Kulachal) was a significant military engagement fought in August 1741 between the **Kingdom of Travancore** and the **Dutch East India Company**.
 - Travancore forces were led by **King Marthanda Varma**, while the Dutch were commanded by **Admiral Eustachius De Lannoy**.
- ❖ The battle resulted in a decisive victory for **King Marthanda Varma** of Travancore over the Dutch forces, marking a major turning point in the history of colonial rule in India.
- ❖ It was part of the **larger Travancore-Dutch War**, in which Travancore fought to resist Dutch colonial ambitions and trade monopolies in the region.
- ❖ The Dutch were initially successful in capturing Colachel and advancing towards Travancore's capital, **Padmanabhapuram**. However, they were eventually besieged by Travancore forces.

Significance:

- ❖ The Battle of Colachel was the first instance of an Asian power decisively defeating a European colonial force, boosting confidence in resisting colonial rule.
- ❖ It marked the end of **Dutch colonial ambitions** and **trade monopolies** in Kerala. The Dutch never regained their strength in the region after this defeat.

About Marthanda Varma:

- ❖ Marthanda Varma (1706-1758) was a prominent ruler of the Kingdom of Travancore in southern India, known for his military prowess, administrative reforms, and cultural contributions.
- ❖ He ascended the throne in 1729 and played a crucial role in establishing Travancore as a significant regional power.
- ❖ **Administrative Reforms:**
 - **Revenue and Irrigation:** Marthanda Varma improved the revenue collection system and initiated extensive irrigation projects, transforming agricultural practices in the region. Canals and dams were constructed, leading to increased agricultural productivity.
 - **Infrastructure Development:** He built roads and improved communication channels, facilitating trade and movement within the kingdom.
- ❖ **Cultural Patronage:** Marthanda Varma was a patron of the arts and culture. He supported various art forms, including **Kathakali** and **Koodiyattam**, and encouraged the migration of artists and scholars to **Thiruvananthapuram**, which became a cultural hub.

Religious Contributions: He had a close relationship with the Padmanabhaswamy Temple, dedicating his kingdom to Lord Vishnu and adopting the title of Padmanabha Dasa (Servant of the Lord). This act symbolised the integration of religious and political authority in Travancore.

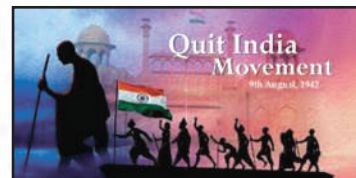
Quit India Movement Day 2024

Context:

Quit India Movement Day (August Kranti Day) is observed annually on August 8th, marking the 82nd anniversary in 2024. It commemorates the launch of the Quit India Movement in 1942.

Historical Background:

- ❖ **Origins:** The movement was sparked by growing discontent with British rule and the failure of the Cripps Mission in March 1942, which aimed to secure Indian cooperation during World War II.
- ❖ **Resolution:** On August 8, 1942, the All India Congress Committee adopted the Quit India Resolution in Bombay, demanding an immediate end to British rule.
- ❖ **Gandhi's Call:** Mahatma Gandhi's "Do or Die" speech became the rallying cry, urging Indians to engage in non-violent resistance.



Significance of the Movement:

- ❖ **Mass Participation:** Unlike earlier movements, the Quit In-

dia Movement mobilised millions of Indians from all walks of life, including students, farmers, and women.

- ❖ **Unity and Resistance:** It highlighted the collective determination for self-rule and reinforced the power of non-violent civil disobedience.
- ❖ **Acceleration of Independence:** Though initially suppressed, the movement weakened British control, accelerating India's path to independence in 1947.

International Impact:

- ❖ **Global Attention:** The movement drew significant international attention to India's independence struggle.
- ❖ **Allied Pressure:** It garnered support from within the British public and pressure from Allied powers during World War II.
- ❖ **Challenging Colonialism:** It contributed to the growing global criticism of British colonialism.

Contemporary Relevance:

- ❖ **Social Justice:** The day encourages reflection on ongoing struggles for equality and fairness in society.
- ❖ **Human Rights:** It serves as a reminder of the importance of protecting and promoting human rights for all citizens.
- ❖ **National Unity:** The movement reinforces the value of unity in diversity, essential both during the independence struggle and today.
- ❖ **Inspiration:** The commemoration inspires collective action and reaffirms India's commitment to democratic values and social progress.

Chengannur Riots

Context:

The Chengannur Riots refer to a series of communal riots that occurred in Chengannur, a town in Kerala, India, primarily between Hindus and Muslims, on **21st September 1938**. These riots are notable for their intensity and the underlying socio-political tensions that led to violence in the region.

Major Causes:

- ❖ **Communal Tensions:** The riots were rooted in long-standing communal tensions between Hindus and Muslims in the region. These tensions were exacerbated by political mobilisation along religious lines, particularly during election periods, which often heightened inter-community conflicts, as observed in the book "*The Chengannur Riot 1938*" by Arun Babu Zachariah.
- ❖ **Political Manipulation:** Political parties sometimes exploit communal sentiments for electoral gain, intensifying rivalries between communities. This manipulation often led to

violence as groups reacted to perceived threats or provocations from the other community.

- In the book, "*Contesting the Nation: Religion, Community, and the Politics of Democracy in India*" edited by **David Ludden**, the authors have showcased the politicisation of religious identities.
- ❖ **Economic Factors:** Economic disparities and competition for resources also played a role. Issues such as **land ownership** and **access to local markets** often became flashpoints for conflict.
- ❖ **Incidents of Violence:** Specific incidents, such as altercations or provocations during religious festivals or processions, often acted as triggers for larger-scale riots.
- ❖ **Historical Context:** The Chengannur Riots are part of a broader pattern of communal violence in India, reflecting ongoing issues related to religious identity, nationalism, and social justice. They serve as a case study for understanding the dynamics of communal conflict in multi-religious societies.

Animals and Empires

Context:

In the annals of history, animals have played roles far beyond companionship, shaping battles, influencing empires, and even inspiring legends.

From oxen that helped secure a throne to camels that saved a province, animals have had a profound yet often overlooked impact on human events.

A Battle of Wits in the Deccan

- ❖ In the 15th century, Firuz Shah, the **Bahmani Sultan of the Deccan**, suspected that his brother, **Ahmad**, aspired to his throne.
- ❖ To preempt any moves by Ahmad, **he dispatched an army to capture him.**
- ❖ **Ahmad**, however, understood he **was outnumbered but possessed sharp strategic insight.**
- ❖ Behind his **limited cavalry**, he lined up **rows of oxen**, each with soldiers mounted atop.
- ❖ This gave the **illusion of a massive cavalry force.**
- ❖ Firuz's generals, upon seeing Ahmad's supposed army, panicked.
- ❖ **Ahmad's smaller, resourceful force emerged victorious**, and he soon ascended to the throne—**an achievement he owed, in part, to a herd of bullocks.**

The Swift Camels of Akbar

- ❖ In 1573, **when Gujarat revolted** against the Mughal Empire, it seemed likely the region would be lost.
- ❖ However, Emperor **Akbar surprised the rebels by arriving with reinforcements** after a gruelling nine-day, nonstop journey—one that usually took two months.
- ❖ His swift arrival, **made possible by camels** covering up to 200 kilometres a day, turned the tide.
- ❖ This unexpected twist **allowed the Mughals to hold onto one of India's wealthiest provinces**, facilitating further conquests.

Elephants: The Power and the Peril

- ❖ Elephants were **prized for their ability to break enemy ranks in battle**, although they required substantial maintenance, including food, water, and dedicated attendants.
- ❖ In **Odisha**, rulers even styled themselves as **"Gajapatis,"** or Lords of the Elephant.
- ❖ Yet, these powerful creatures were **highly sensitive to noise and often panicked** at the sound of cannon fire.
- ❖ To keep them calm, **elephants were sometimes given sedatives and alcohol.**
- ❖ **As gunpowder weapons became more common, elephants lost their battlefield role** but remained significant in ceremonial contexts.

Horses: The Ultimate War Companions

- ❖ The horse, however, holds perhaps the most influential place in military history.
- ❖ **Originally domesticated for milk**, the horse **became central to the way of life for Central Asian peoples**, who mastered horseback archery.
- ❖ Although Central Asia had a small population compared to India and China, it **boasted half the world's horses**, many of superior quality.
- ❖ This enabled its people to become **formidable conquerors and suppliers of warhorses**, shaping military power far beyond their numbers.

- ❖ Certain horses earned fame alongside their masters.
 - The **chestnut-coloured Copenhagen**, for example, **carried British officer Arthur Wellesley** during his most celebrated military victory, the **Battle of Waterloo**, for 18 continuous hours.
 - Today, Copenhagen is remembered with a gravestone in England, a testament to its service in changing the course of European history.

Unsung Heroes: Goats and Hares

- ❖ Lesser animals have also played critical, albeit understated, roles.
- ❖ In 1509, as **Krishnadevaraya** prepared to ascend the throne of Vijayanagara, his half-brother, determined to eliminate him, ordered Krishnadevaraya be blinded.
- ❖ A minister, however, faked the blinding by **presenting the eyes of a slaughtered goat** instead.
- ❖ The half-brother died, believing his lineage was safe, and the throne passed to Krishnadevaraya—thanks, in part, to the **sacrificial goat.**
- ❖ Legends about animals also influenced city foundations.
- ❖ According to one story, the **first ruler of Vijayanagara chose Hampi as his capital after a hare he was hunting bit his hounds at a certain spot.**
- ❖ Similar stories are told about the founding of **Ahmednagar and Malacca**, where a **hare symbolised a mystical source of strength and courage.**

Execution and Accidents

- ❖ Animals also played **darker roles** in history.
- ❖ They were used as **instruments of punishment**, with **criminals sometimes tied to elephants or horses**, which would then tear them apart by moving in different directions.
- ❖ Strange accidents involving animals are also recorded, such as the **death of Kerala Varma**, a revered scholar and the **"Father of Modern Malayalam Prose."**
- ❖ In 1914, while riding in a car, his driver swerved to avoid a stray dog, causing an accident that led to Varma's death two days later.



Personalities in News

Nizamuddin Auliya

About:

- ❖ **Nizamuddin Auliya**, also known as **Hazrat Nizamuddin** (1238 – April 3, 1325), was a **revered Sufi saint** and scholar of the **Chishti Order** in India.
- ❖ Born in **Badayun, Uttar Pradesh**, he became one of the most significant figures in the Indian spiritual landscape, particularly known for his teachings on **love, compassion, and religious tolerance**.

Contributions to India's Culture and Heritage:

Promotion of Sufism:

- ❖ **Chishti Order:** Nizamuddin Auliya was a prominent leader of the **Chishti Order**, which emphasised **love and devotion to God** as the path to **spiritual enlightenment**.
 - His teachings encouraged followers to connect with God through love for humanity, fostering a sense of community and compassion among diverse groups.
- ❖ **Mystical Practices:** He played a crucial role in **popularising Sufi practices** in India, which included **meditation, music, and poetry** as means of spiritual expression.
- ❖ His emphasis on the internal experience of faith led many to embrace mysticism over **rigid orthodoxy**.

Cultural Influence:

- ❖ **Religious Pluralism:** Nizamuddin advocated for **religious pluralism, promoting harmony** among different faiths. His approach attracted followers from various backgrounds, contributing to a **syncretic culture** that **characterised medieval Indian society**.
 - This inclusivity helped bridge communal divides and foster mutual respect among different religious communities.
- ❖ **Amir Khusro:** One of his most famous disciples was Amir Khusro, a legendary poet and musician who is credited with enriching Indian music and literature.
 - Khusro's works reflect the synthesis of **Persian and Indian traditions**, showcasing the cultural amalgamation encouraged by Nizamuddin's teachings.

Legacy and Pilgrimage:

- ❖ **Nizamuddin Dargah:** After his death, Nizamuddin's shrine in Delhi became a major pilgrimage site for people of all

faiths. The annual Urs (death anniversary) celebrations attract thousands who come to pay their respects and partake in communal prayers and festivities, highlighting his enduring influence on Indian spirituality and culture.

- ❖ **Cultural Festivals:** The Dargah serves as a center for various cultural activities, including qawwali performances that celebrate his legacy through music. These events not only preserve Sufi traditions but also promote cultural exchanges among diverse communities.

Sikandar Lodhi

Sikandar Lodhi, originally named **Nizam Khan**, was the second Sultan of the **Lodi Dynasty**, reigning from 1489 to 1517. He was born on July 17, 1458, and succeeded his father, **Bahlul Khan Lodhi**. Sikandar is often regarded as one of the most effective rulers of the **Lodhi** dynasty, known for his military conquests, administrative reforms, and significant contributions to art and architecture.

Consolidation of the Lodhi Empire:

- ❖ **Military Expansion:** Sikandar expanded his territory by successfully annexing regions such as **Jaunpur** and **Bihar**. His military campaigns extended the empire's influence from **Punjab to Bengal**, significantly strengthening the Lodhi dynasty's control over northern India.
- ❖ **Administrative Reforms:** He implemented stringent measures to control the nobility and ensure loyalty among his governors. By establishing an efficient system of governance that included **regular audits of accounts** and **oversight of military leaders**, he enhanced administrative efficiency and reduced corruption.
- ❖ **Capital Relocation:** In 1505, Sikandar moved the capital from **Delhi to Agra**, which facilitated **better management of his extensive territories**. This shift also marked Agra as a significant cultural and political centre in India.

Contributions to Art, Culture, and Architecture:

- ❖ **Tomb of Sikandar Lodi:** His mausoleum, located in the Lodhi Gardens in New Delhi, is a prime example of **Indo-Islamic architecture**. Built in the **early 16th century**, it showcases an **octagonal design** with a **large central dome** surrounded by a **beautifully landscaped garden**. This tomb is significant as it was one of the first garden tombs in India, setting a precedent for later monumental structures such as the Taj Mahal.

- ❖ **Bada Gumbad Mosque:** Constructed in 1494 near his tomb, this mosque features intricate **stucco decorations** that **blend Islamic geometric patterns** with **Hindu floral designs**. The mosque's design includes minarets inspired by the **Qutub Minar** and showcases a unique architectural style that reflects the cultural synthesis during his reign.
- ❖ **Lodhi Gardens:** Sikandar Lodi is credited with establishing Lodhi Gardens, which houses several monuments from the Lodhi period. The gardens are designed following Persian landscaping principles and include various structures that highlight the architectural advancements of his time.
- ❖ **Cultural Patronage:** Sikandar encouraged poets and scholars at his court as a patron of arts and literature. His own poetry under the pen name **Gulruk** illustrates his commitment to cultural development. This patronage fostered an environment where literature and arts could thrive.
- ❖ **Architectural Techniques:** The period saw innovations in construction techniques, such as the use of **double domes**, which allowed for taller structures while maintaining aesthetic appeal. This method was first prominently used in Sikandar's tomb.

Akbar

Context:

482nd Birth Anniversary of Mughal emperor Akbar.

About:

- ❖ **Akbar**, also known as **Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar**, was the **third Mughal emperor**, reigning from **1556 to 1605**.
- ❖ He is often regarded as one of the greatest rulers in Indian history due to his extensive contributions to the consolidation of the Indian subcontinent, enhancement of classical literature, art, and culture, and implementation of significant religious reforms.

Consolidation of the Indian Subcontinent:

- ❖ **Expansion of the Empire:** Akbar significantly expanded the Mughal Empire, bringing large parts of India under his control. His military campaigns included:
 - **Conquest of Northern India:** Akbar defeated **Afghan forces** and re-established **Mughal dominance** over northern territories, including **Agra** and **Gujarat**. His victory at the **Second Battle of Panipat** in 1556 was pivotal in securing his rule.
 - **Rajput Alliances:** He adopted a conciliatory approach towards the **Rajputs**, marrying into their families and allowing them to maintain their territories in exchange for **loyalty**. This policy not only secured military alliances but also integrated Rajput warriors into his administration.

- **Conquests in the Deccan:** By the end of his reign, Akbar had extended his empire into southern India, including parts of **Khandesh** and **Berar**.

Administrative Reforms:

- ❖ **Centralised Administration:** He established a **bureaucratic system** that emphasised **merit over birthright**, allowing individuals from various backgrounds to rise in ranks within the government.
- ❖ **Revenue System:** Akbar implemented a standardised revenue collection system, which improved tax efficiency and reduced corruption.

Contributions to Literature, Art, and Culture:

- ❖ **Navratnas (Nine Jewels):** His court included notable figures such as poet **Tansen** and advisor **Birbal**, who contributed to a **cultural renaissance**. This period saw advancements in **music, painting, and literature**.
 - He established **Taswir Khana (a workshop for artists)**, which produced exquisite Mughal art, as the author **Ira Mukhoty** observes in her book "**Akbar: The Great Mughal**".
- ❖ **Fatehpur Sikri:** He built this city as a cultural centre featuring stunning architecture that blended various styles. The city housed libraries with thousands of texts and was a hub for scholars translating works into Persian.
- ❖ **Translation Initiatives:** He commissioned translations of significant texts from various languages into Persian, enriching the literary landscape.
- ❖ **Ain-i-Akbari:** This comprehensive account documented Akbar's reign and provided insights into the socio-economic conditions of his time.

Religious Reforms:

- ❖ **Abolition of Discriminatory Taxes:** He abolished the **jizya** (a tax on non-Muslims) in 1564 and the pilgrimage tax in 1563, promoting religious equality.
- ❖ **Din-i Ilahi:** Akbar attempted to create a **syncretic religion** that combined elements from various **faiths**, encouraging **dialogue among different religious** communities (**Ibadat Khana**, also known as the **House of Worship**). This initiative aimed to foster unity (**Sulh-i-Kul**) within his diverse empire.

Other Contributions:

- ❖ **Infrastructure Development:** He constructed numerous public buildings, including mosques and forts like the **Red Fort** in **Agra** and **Buland Darwaza** at **Fatehpur Sikri**.
- ❖ **Promotion of Education:** Akbar established schools and libraries throughout his empire, emphasising education as a means for societal advancement.

Jahangir

Context:

397th Death Anniversary of Fourth Mughal Emperor, Jahangir.

About:

- ❖ **Jahangir**, born **Nur-ud-din Mohammad Salim** was the fourth Mughal emperor.
- ❖ He was the son of **Akbar the Great** and **Mariam-uz-Zamani**.

Contributions to Consolidating the Mughal Empire:

- ❖ **Military Campaigns:** Jahangir actively engaged in military campaigns to consolidate and expand Mughal authority. Notable conquests during his reign included **Mewar** in **1615**, parts of the **Deccan** in **1617**, and **Kandahar** in **1622**, which helped **secure Mughal dominance** over these regions.
- ❖ **Administrative Reforms:** He continued and built upon his father Akbar's policies of religious tolerance and administrative efficiency. Jahangir introduced reforms aimed at reducing corruption within the bureaucracy and improving governance.
 - He also emphasised justice by personally addressing public grievances, famously using a "**Chain of Justice**" that allowed citizens to summon him for help.
- ❖ **Diplomatic Relations:** Jahangir's reign marked the beginning of significant diplomatic interactions with European powers, notably allowing English traders into his court. This established early trade relations that would grow in importance over subsequent decades.

Cultural Contributions:

- ❖ **Patronage of the Arts:** Jahangir was a prolific patron of the arts, particularly Mughal painting, which flourished under his rule. He encouraged artists to blend Persian, Indian, and European styles, leading to a distinctive artistic legacy characterised by **intricate miniatures** and **detailed naturalism**.
- ❖ Notable works from this period include "**Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings**", which illustrates his preference for spiritual over temporal authority.
- ❖ **Architectural Innovations:** His reign saw significant architectural achievements, including the construction of the **Shalimar Gardens** in **Lahore** and his own mausoleum. These projects reflected a synthesis of **Islamic, Persian, and Indian architectural styles**, showcasing the aesthetic sophistication of the Mughal Empire.
- ❖ **Literature and Music:** Jahangir's court was a vibrant centre for literature and music. He supported poets and writers

like **Abdul Rahim Khan Khana**, **Ras Khan**, **Kavindracharya Sarasvati**, etc., who contributed to Persian literature while also fostering classical music traditions that incorporated diverse cultural influences.

- ❖ **Gardening and Horticulture:** Jahangir had a profound love for nature, which was evident in his extensive development of gardens throughout the empire. His contributions to horticulture were not merely aesthetic; they symbolised the cultural richness of his reign.

Bahadur Shah Zafar

Context:

Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar was captured by the Britishers on 20th September 1857.

About:

- ❖ **Bahadur Shah Zafar** (1775-1862) was the **twentieth and last Mughal emperor of India**.
- ❖ He ascended the throne in **1837** at the age of 62, succeeding his father **Akbar Shah II**.
- ❖ Zafar was more of an aesthete than a political leader.
- ❖ He was a poet, musician and calligrapher known for his religious tolerance and pluralistic views.



Mughal Empire During Zafar's Reign:

- ❖ By the time Zafar became emperor, the once mighty Mughal Empire existed in name only.
- ❖ His authority was limited to the **walled city of Old Delhi (Shahjahanabad)**. The British East India Company had gained significant control over large parts of the Indian sub-continent.

1857 Revolt:

- ❖ Bahadur Shah Zafar was reluctantly drawn into the **1857 Revolt** when rebel troops seized Delhi and compelled him to accept nominal leadership of the revolt.
 - **British historian William Dalrymple** also reported this in his book **The Last Mughal: The Fall of Delhi 1857**.
- ❖ After the **British** recaptured **Delhi**, Zafar was **arrested, tried for treason**, and **exiled to Rangoon** (now Yangon) in British-controlled Burma along with his family. He died in captivity in 1862 at the age of 87.

Guru Gobind Singh

Context:

316th Death Anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh.

About:

- ❖ Guru Gobind Singh was the **tenth** and **final Guru of Sikhism**, serving from 1675 until his death in 1708.
- ❖ He is a pivotal figure in **Sikh history**, known for formalising the **Sikh faith** and establishing the **Khalsa**, a collective of initiated Sikhs who embody the principles of equality, justice, and martial spirit.

Role in Expanding Sikhism:

- ❖ **Formation of the Khalsa:** In 1699, Guru Gobind Singh established the **Khalsa** during a significant gathering at **Anandpur Sahib**.
 - This event marked a transformation in Sikh identity, as he called upon Sikhs to demonstrate their commitment to their faith through acts of bravery.
 - The initiation ceremony involved five volunteers who were symbolically sacrificed and then resurrected, becoming known as the **Panj Pyare (Five Beloved Ones)**.
 - This act not only solidified the communal identity of Sikhs but also emphasised their role as *“saint-soldiers”* dedicated to fighting oppression and injustice.
- ❖ **Five Articles of Faith:** Guru Gobind Singh introduced the Five Ks—**Kesh (uncut hair)**, **Kara (iron bracelet)**, **Kanga (comb)**, **Kachha (cotton undergarment)**, and **Kirpan (ceremonial sword)**—which serve as symbols of faith and commitment to Sikh values.
 - These articles not only distinguish Khalsa Sikhs but also reinforce their collective identity.
- ❖ **Literary Contributions:** He contributed significantly to Sikh literature by compiling and finalising the **Guru Granth Sahib** as the eternal Guru of the Sikhs. This scripture includes hymns from previous Gurus and other saints, promoting messages of equality and devotion.

Making the Militant Clan:

- ❖ **Martial Order:** Guru Gobind Singh transformed the Sikh community into a **formidable military force**.
 - He encouraged Sikhs from various backgrounds, including oppressed caste groups who were **historically marginalised**, to take up arms against tyranny. This inclusivity was **revolutionary**, as it broke down **caste barriers** within the military structure of the Khalsa.
- ❖ **Philosophy of Resistance:** His philosophy was rooted in the belief that when **righteousness declines and tyranny pre-**

vails, it is necessary to take up arms for justice.

- He viewed his role as divinely ordained to restore balance against oppressive forces, particularly those represented by **Mughal rule under Aurangzeb**.
- The Khalsa was thus not just a military group but a spiritual brotherhood committed to protecting human rights and dignity.

Bajirao I

Context:

Bajirao, who is also known as ‘Bajirao Ballal’ and ‘Thorley Bajirao’ was **born on 18 August 1700**.

Early Life:

- ❖ Baji Rao I, **peshwa of the Maratha Confederacy from 1720 to 1740**, was born in Sinnar, Nasik, to **Balaji Vishwanath** and Radhabai Barve.
- ❖ He succeeded his father as **peshwa at age 20**, establishing hereditary succession.
- ❖ Educated in reading, writing, and Sanskrit, Baji Rao was trained as a warrior and accompanied his father on military operations.



Rise to Power:

- ❖ Upon his father’s death in **1720**, **Baji Rao was appointed peshwa by Chhatrapati Shahu**.
- ❖ He faced opposition from senior ministers but appointed young commanders like **Ranoji Shinde** and **Malhar Rao Holkar** to strengthen his position.

Military Conquests:

- ❖ **The Nizam:** Baji Rao met **Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah in January 1721** to settle conflicts, but the Nizam did not recognise Maratha tax rights.
 - **Baji Rao helped the Nizam win at Sakhar-Kheda**, furthering Maratha influence.
- ❖ **Malwa:** In **1723**, **Baji Rao led an expedition to Malwa**, overcoming Mughal resistance led by Girdhar Bahadur.
 - By **November 1728**, **Marathas had reached the Narmada River** and continued into Rajasthan.
- ❖ **Bundelkhand:** Baji Rao **intervened in Bundelkhand in 1729**, defeating Mughal forces and reinstating Chhatrasal, who rewarded him with land and his daughter, Mastani.
 - **Chhatrasal died in 1731**.

- ❖ **Gujarat:** Baji Rao asserted **Maratha tax rights in Gujarat**. He faced opposition from local rulers and Dabhade, but eventually secured Maratha dominance.

Legacy:

- ❖ **Baji Rao I significantly strengthened the Maratha Empire through military prowess and diplomacy.**
- ❖ **After his death, the Maratha power declined** as his successors struggled to match his leadership.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj

Context:

A 35-foot statue of the **Maratha warrior king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj**, which had been unveiled by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi at **Rajkot Fort in Maharashtra's Sindhudurg district**, collapsed recently.

About Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj

Birth and Background:

- ❖ **Born:** in **1627**, at **Shivneri Fort near Pune**, India.
- ❖ **Grew up under Muslim rule:** **Mughals** in the north, and **Muslim sultans** of **Bijapur** and **Golconda** in the south.



Military Exploits:

- ❖ In **1659**, **defeated Afzal Khan of Bijapur** by luring him into difficult terrain and killing him in a meeting.
- ❖ Gained significant military power by **capturing the Bijapur army's resources**.
- ❖ **Raided Mughal territories**, including the rich coastal town of **Surat**, provoking Emperor **Aurangzeb**.

Conflict with the Mughals:

- ❖ Mughal Emperor **Aurangzeb** sent a large army under **Mirza Raja Jai Singh**.
- ❖ Shivaji was **forced to sue for peace and attend the Mughal court at Agra**, where he was placed under house arrest.

The **Treaty of Purandar** was a significant agreement **between Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj**, the founder of the Maratha Empire, and the **Mughal Empire in 1665**. It marked a **temporary truce** between the two powers, but also imposed certain terms on Shivaji.

Key terms of the treaty:

- ❖ **Fort Surrender:** Shivaji agreed to **surrender 23 of his forts to the Mughals**, retaining only 12.
- ❖ **Tribute:** Shivaji was required to pay a **tribute of 400,000 gold hun** to the Mughals.
- ❖ **Mughal Vassal:** Shivaji became a vassal of the Mughal Empire, **acknowledging Mughal authority**.
- ❖ **Military Service:** Shivaji was obligated to **send his son Sambhaji and 5,000 horsemen** to serve in the Mughal army.

- ❖ **Escaped from Agra** in 1666 by disguising himself and his son in baskets.

Consolidation of Power:

- ❖ **Regained lost territories** and expanded his domain within two years of his escape.
- ❖ **Built a navy** to defend his kingdom and engage in trade, becoming the **first Indian ruler of his time to use sea power effectively**.
- ❖ Recently, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled the Indian Navy's new ensign** at Cochin Shipyard Limited in Kochi, during the **commissioning of India's first indigenous aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant**.
 - The **Indian Naval flags**, which carried symbols of colonial rule, have been **replaced with a new design inspired by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj**.



Religious and Administrative Policies:

- ❖ Practised **religious tolerance**, respecting all faiths and protecting places of worship.
- ❖ **Chauth:** Chauth was a **tax levied at the rate of one-fourth (25%)** of the annual revenue or produce from lands under nominal Mughal rule.
 - It was essentially a **tribute paid by states to avoid Maratha invasions and raids**.
- ❖ **Sardeshmukhi:** Sardeshmukhi was an **additional 10% levy on top of the Chauth**, paid to the Maratha king.
 - It was a tribute paid to the Maratha king, **started by Koli Maharaja Som Shah of Ramnagar**, who claimed hereditary rights over these lands.
- ❖ Established a **cabinet of eight ministers (Ashta Pradhan)** to manage his kingdom.

Ashta Pradhan was the council of eight ministers that served as the **administrative core of the Maratha Empire** under Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. This system was a significant aspect of Shivaji's governance, as it provided a **balance of power, ensured efficient administration, and promoted meritocracy.**

The eight ministers were: **Peshwa** (Prime Minister), **Mantri** (Minister of Revenue), **Senapati** (Commander-in-Chief), **Su-mant** (Chief of Intelligence), **Nyayadhish** (Chief Justice), **Pan-ditrao** (Chief Astrologer and Advisor), **Sachiv** (Secretary) and **Vadakhya** (Chief of Accounts).

Coronation and Later Years:

- ❖ Crowned as an **independent sovereign in 1674**, marking the formal beginning of the Maratha Empire.

Hindavi Swarajya

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's concept of **Hindavi Swarajya** (self-rule of the Indian people) was a foundational principle for his governance and the establishment of the Maratha Empire. The **term was first articulated by Shivaji** in a letter dated 1645, emphasising the need for a **sovereign rule that was distinctly Indian and free from foreign domination**, particularly from the Mughal Empire.

Under Shivaji's rule, Hindavi Swarajya was characterised by significant cultural and administrative reforms. He **replaced Persian with Marathi** as the court language, **established a regnal era known as the Shiv Shak**, and **minted coins that reflected his identity as a Hindu ruler.**

His emphasis on self-rule and local governance **inspired later movements against colonial rule**, particularly during the **Indian independence struggle**. Leaders like **Bal Gangadhar Tilak** embraced the concept, further embedding it within the broader narrative of Indian self-determination.

- ❖ Faced challenges from within his family, particularly from his elder son, who briefly defected to the Mughals.
- ❖ **Died on April 3, 1680, at Raigad Fort** after a period of illness.



Legacy:

- ❖ Revered as a **champion of Hindu freedom** and resistance against Mughal oppression.
- ❖ Known for his **military prowess, administrative skills**, and commitment to religious tolerance.
- ❖ The **"Maratha Military Landscapes of India"** will be India's **nomination for inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List** for the 2024-25 cycle.



- ❖ The nomination includes **twelve key Forts** such as **Salher Fort, Shivneri Fort, Lohgad, Khanderi Fort, Raigad, Rajgad, Sindhudurg** in Maharashtra, and **Gingee Fort** in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ These Forts, spread across various **geographical and physiographic regions, highlight the strategic military strengths** of Maratha rule.

Abd al-Qadr Badayuni

Abd al-Qadir Badayuni, born in 1540 in Toda, India, was a prominent Indo-Persian historian, poet, and translator during the Mughal era, particularly under Emperor Akbar's reign. He died around 1615. He is best known for his significant contributions to Indian medieval literature and philosophy, mainly through his historical writings.

Contributions to Indian Medieval Literature:

Major Works:

- ❖ **Muntakhab al-tawarikh** (Selection from History): This is Badayuni's most renowned work. It is a comprehensive history of Muslim India that includes discussions of various religious figures, poets, and scholars. It is notable for its critical perspective on Akbar's policies and practices, which led to their suppression until the reign of Jahangir.
- ❖ **Kitab al-Hadith**: Although no longer extant, this work focused on the sayings of the **Prophet Muhammad** and reflects Badayuni's deep religious engagement.
- ❖ **Translation of Sanskrit Epics**: Badayuni was commissioned by Akbar to translate significant Hindu texts, including the **Ramayana** and **Mahabharata**, into Persian. His translation of the **Ramayana** took four years to complete, showcasing his linguistic prowess and cultural engagement.
- ❖ **Tarikh-e Alfi**: He contributed to this multi-author historical work, which aimed to document Islamic history up to the millennium of the Hijrah.

Historiographical Significance:

- ❖ Badayuni's writings are crucial for understanding the historiography of medieval India.
- ❖ His approach to writing history was innovative for its time.
- ❖ It blended literary analysis with historical documentation, setting a precedent for future historians in the region.

Philosophical Contributions:

- ❖ Badayuni's works also reflect the philosophical and theological debates of his time, particularly the tensions between Sunni orthodoxy and the more syncretic approaches promoted by Akbar and his court.

- ❖ His critical stance on Akbar's religious policies, including establishing the **Ibadat Khana** for theological discussions, highlights the ideological divides within the Mughal court.
- ❖ This tension is evident in his writings, where he often contrasts his conservative Sunni beliefs with the more liberal views of contemporaries like **Abul Fazl**.

Personality in News: Asaf Ali

Context:

136th Birth Anniversary of Asaf Ali.

Early Life -

- ❖ He was one of the most respected lawyers of the country .
- ❖ He married to **Aruna Asaf Ali** who is widely remembered for hoisting INC flag in Bombay during Quit India Movement.



His Contributions (During Independence Struggle)-

- ❖ He supported the cause of Turkey when the British attacked the Ottoman empire in 1914.
- ❖ He resigned from the Privy council of which he was a member which was an example of Non-Cooperation.
- ❖ In 1935 , he became a member of the Central Legislative Assembly representing the Muslim nationalist .
- ❖ He was imprisoned several times when the INC adopted the Quit India Movement.
- ❖ He defended **Shaheed Bhagat Singh** and **Batukeshwar Dutt** who were accused of throwing bomb on the Central Legislative Assembly on 8 April 1929.
- ❖ He was the Convener of the INA Defence team that was created by the INC for the defence of the officers of the Indian National Army.
- ❖ He was the founding member of the Home Rule League at Delhi .
- ❖ He contributed to the constitution making .

Post-Independence contributions -

- ❖ He served as the Governor of Orissa.
- ❖ He was the first Indian ambassador to the US.

127th Birth Anniversary of Ram Prasad Bismil

About Ram Prasad Bismil:

- ❖ Born on **June 11, 1897** into a Rajput Tomar family in **Shahjahanpur district, Uttar Pradesh**.
- ❖ Learned Hindi from his father and Urdu from a nearby Maulvi.
- ❖ Attended an English medium school, developing language skills early on.



Arya Samaj Connections:

- ❖ **Joined Arya Samaj** during childhood, an influential organisation in North India.
- ❖ Became a **prolific writer and poet**, penning patriotic verses in Hindi and Urdu.
- ❖ Used pen names like '**Agyat**', '**Ram**', and '**Bismil**', reflecting his sentiments.

His Literature Contributions:

- ❖ Wrote patriotic verses in **Hindi and Urdu**.
- ❖ **Notable works:** "**Mera Janm**", "**Mainpuri ki Pratigya**", "**Mera rang de Basanti Chola**".
- ❖ Translated works like "**Bolshevikon ki Kartoot**" from Bengali.
- ❖ Authored autobiography "**Kakori ke Shaheed**" and collection of poems "**Man ki Lahar**".

Contributions in Indian Freedom Struggle and His Conspiracy:

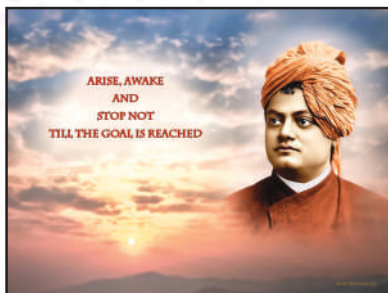
- ❖ Participated in **Mainpuri Conspiracy (1918)** and **Kakori Conspiracy (1925)** against British rule.
- ❖ Founding member of the **Hindustan Republican Association (HRA)** for armed rebellion.
- ❖ Started revolutionary organisation **Matrivedi (The Altar of the Motherland)**.
- ❖ Led **Kakori Train Action in 1925** to fund revolutionary activities and gain publicity.
- ❖ Sentenced to death after an 18-month trial, **executed on December 19, 1927**.

Swami Vivekananda

Context:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute to Swami Vivekananda on his Punya Tithi (death anniversary).

About Swami Vivekananda: Swami Vivekananda, born **Narendra Nath Datta on January 12, 1863**, in Kolkata, was educated in a Western-style university and became a devout follower of Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa.



Spiritual Journey:

- ❖ **Sannyasa:** In 1887, he and fellow disciples of Ramakrishna took vows of sannyasa, renouncing worldly pleasures.
- ❖ **Foundations:** He founded the **Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission (1897)** to continue his guru's work.

Contributions and Achievements:

- ❖ **Parliament of Religions:** Attended the **World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893**, earning acclaim with his speech beginning with, "**Sisters and brothers of America...**"
- ❖ **Vedanta Philosophy:** Promoted **Vedanta philosophy** in the West, **emphasising religious unity and service to humanity**, and delivered lectures across the US, England, and Europe to spread Hindu philosophy and interfaith awareness.
- ❖ **Publications:** Authored four classics on Hindu philosophy—**Jnana-Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga, Karma-Yoga, and Raja-Yoga**.

Legacy:

- ❖ **Influence:** Considered one of modern India's most influential figures; **his birthday is celebrated as National Youth Day**.
- ❖ **Reform:** Advocated for **social reforms**, including **education for women and lower castes**, and the **elimination of child marriage and illiteracy**.
- ❖ **International Impact:** Became **India's spiritual ambassador**, **fostering understanding between East and West**.
- ❖ **Recognition:** Known for his spiritual genius, deep insight, and charismatic personality. **His words continue to inspire globally**.

Final Years: Passed away on **July 4, 1902**, leaving a lasting legacy in both East and West.

Kadambini Ganguly: Pioneering Doctor

Context:

Born on 18th July 1861 in Bhagalpur, Kadambini Ganguly was a trailblazing Indian woman who overcame substantial obstacles to become one of the nation's earliest female medical professionals in the late 19th century.



Early Activism and Education: Born in 1861 in Bhagalpur, Bihar, influenced by her father's advocacy for women's education.

- ❖ Overcame societal barriers to become the first woman to **graduate from Calcutta University in 1882**.

Medical Career and Advocacy: **Admitted to Calcutta Medical College in 1884**, becoming its **first female student** despite discrimination.

- ❖ Earned multiple medical diplomas in Britain, returning to India as a respected practitioner.

Contributions to Women's Health: Advanced women's health in India, challenging biases in medical education and practice.

- ❖ **Served as superintendent at Lady Dufferin Women's Hospital**, advocating for better healthcare for women.

Political Engagement: **Addressed the Indian National Congress in 1890 (Calcutta)**, advocating for women's education and empowerment within the nationalist context.

- ❖ Organised women's conferences to promote nationalist causes and challenge social norms.

Role in Legislative Reform: **Played a pivotal role in the enactment of the Age of Consent Act in 1891**, addressing child marriage and exploitation of young girls.

- ❖ Appointed by the British government to conduct a critical survey and submit recommendations that influenced the legislation.

Legacy and Impact: Kadambini Ganguly's activism in the nationalist movement and her efforts in women's rights and labour reforms marked significant contributions despite historical oversight.

- ❖ Her multifaceted advocacy bridged medical practice with social and political reform, shaping India's early struggle for independence.

Birth Anniversaries of Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Chandra Shekhar Azad

Context:

On 23rd of July, Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tributes to Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Chandra Shekhar Azad on their birth anniversaries.

Chandra Shekhar Azad: Revolutionary Life and Legacy:



- ❖ **Birth:** Born on July 23, 1906, in Bhabhra, princely state of Alirajpur.
- ❖ **Initial Involvement:** Joined the Non-Cooperation Movement in 1921 at the age of 15.
 - Arrested on December 20, 1921. During his appearance before the Parsi District Magistrate, he declared his name as "Azad" (The Free), his father's name as "Swatantrata" (Independence), and his residence as "Jail."
- ❖ **Dissatisfaction with Gandhi:** Displeased by Gandhi's decision to end the Non-Cooperation Movement in 1922.
- ❖ **Member of HRA:** He met Ram Prasad Bismil through Manmath Gupta and joined the Hindustan Republican Association (HRA).
 - Actively involved in raising funds through targeted robberies of government buildings.
- ❖ **Notable Revolutionary Actions:**
 - **Kakori Train Robbery (1925):** Aimed at funding revolutionary activities and challenging British rule.
 - **Shooting of John P. Saunders (1928):** Retaliation for the murder of Lala Lajpat Rai.

- **Attack on Viceroy's Train (1929):** Part of broader revolutionary efforts.
- ❖ **Reorganisation of HRA:** On September 8, 1928, Azad, along with Bhagat Singh and other revolutionaries, restructured the HRA into the **Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA)**. This new organisation aimed to establish a socialist republic in India.
- ❖ **Death:** On February 27, 1931, Azad was surrounded by police at **Alfred Park (now Azad Park) in Allahabad**. During a fierce gunfight, he shot himself in the head with the last bullet from his weapon to avoid capture.

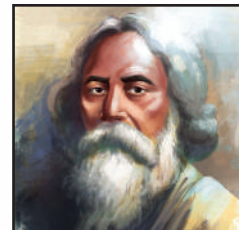
Rabindranath Tagore

Context:

Rabindranath Tagore passed away 83 years ago on 7th August 1941.

About:

- ❖ **Rabindranath Tagore** was a multifaceted Indian poet, playwright, philosopher, musician, and social reformer, born on May 7, 1861, in Kolkata (then Calcutta).
- ❖ He is best known for his profound contributions to literature and education, as well as his influential role in the Indian independence movement.
- ❖ Tagore was the **first non-European** to receive the **Nobel Prize in Literature** in 1913 for his collection of poems, *Gitanjali (Song Offerings)*, which showcased his unique poetic style and deep spiritual insights.



Contributions to Education and Modern India:

- ❖ Tagore's educational philosophy was revolutionary for its time. In 1901, he founded an experimental school at **Santiniketan**, which later evolved into **Visva-Bharati University** in 1921.
 - This institution became a hub for artistic and intellectual pursuits, nurturing many prominent figures in Indian culture and education.
- ❖ His approach to education emphasised **creativity, holistic learning, and the integration of Indian and Western educational philosophies**.
- ❖ Tagore believed in the importance of **education as a means to foster individual growth and social responsibility**.
- ❖ His educational reforms aimed to **empower individuals** and promote a sense of **community**, aligning with the broader goals of the **Indian Renaissance**.

Contributions to the Freedom Movement:

- ❖ Tagore was an **ardent critic** of **British colonial rule** and played a significant role in the Indian freedom movement.
- ❖ He used his **literary prowess** to inspire **national consciousness** and advocate for **social reforms**.
- ❖ They have served as a means of protest and resistance, inspiring various social movements in **Bengal** and beyond.
 - For instance, the song "**Amar Sonar Bangla**" became Bangladesh's national anthem, symbolising the struggle for independence and cultural identity. This song became the mode of inspiration during the **Swadeshi movement** and the **Partition of Bengal** in 1905.
- ❖ His works often reflected themes of **patriotism**, **social justice**, and the **struggles of the common people**, which resonated deeply with the Indian populace.
- ❖ In 1919, following the **Jallianwala Bagh massacre**, Tagore renounced his **knighthood** as a protest against British atrocities, demonstrating his commitment to the cause of Indian independence.

Tagore as the Symbol of India's Soft Power:

- ❖ Scholars like **Radha Chakravarty** have pointed out that Tagore consciously positioned himself as a **representative of the East in dialogues with the West**, advocating for mutual understanding despite cultural differences.
- ❖ **Amitava Tripathi**, a former diplomat, noted that Tagore saw soft power as a necessary tool for India to engage with the **global community**, emphasising messages of **peace, brotherhood, and humanism**.
 - This perspective resonates with the ideals articulated by **Jawaharlal Nehru**, particularly his **pan-Asianism** and the principles of peaceful coexistence, which were inspired by Tagore's thoughts on India-China cooperation.
- ❖ **MK Rasgotra**, a former Indian Foreign Secretary, acknowledged that while Tagore's universalism and humanism have positively shaped India's soft power approach, they have also led to misjudgments in understanding the policies of other nations, such as China.

- ❖ He was a contemporary of **Mahatma Gandhi** and shared similar ideals regarding **non-violent resistance**.
- ❖ Tagore's writings and public speeches contributed to the intellectual discourse surrounding independence, making him a revered figure among leaders like **Gandhi** and **Jawaharlal Nehru**.

Beacon of Social & Economic Reforms:

- ❖ Tagore was deeply concerned about the **poverty and exploitation of rural communities** in Bengal.
- ❖ He developed an **economic programme** that emphasised the expansion of small-scale cottage industries in villages.

- In his efforts at **Sriniketan**, Tagore sought to bridge the gap between **traditional craftsmanship** and **modern technology**. He encouraged local artisans to form co-operatives, which he referred to as "**cartels**", to market their products effectively.
- To support impoverished farmers during times of crisis, Tagore set up **grain banks** in **Patisar**. These banks provided a safety net for villagers, allowing them to access food supplies during emergencies.
- Tagore organised fairs and festivals, such as the **Katyani Mela**, to showcase local agricultural products and crafts.
- ❖ Tagore was a strong advocate for **women's rights and empowerment**. He gave women active roles in the Indian independence movement and considered the Indian woman a symbol of strength and respect.
- ❖ His writings often explored themes of **gender equality** and the importance of female education.

Nurturing Bengali Culture through Rabindra Sangeet:

- ❖ It is a musical genre created by **Rabindranath Tagore** and holds immense cultural significance in India, particularly **Bengal**.
- ❖ It is a cornerstone of **Bengali culture** and a vital link to the region's literary and musical heritage.
- ❖ The songs are characterised by their **emotive strength, intricate melodies, and poetic lyrics**, which often explore themes of love, nature, spirituality, and social justice.
- ❖ Tagore's work combines **Indian classical music** with **Western influences**, creating a rich and diverse musical landscape. This integration has allowed Rabindra Sangeet to **transcend cultural barriers** and appeal to audiences worldwide, thus working as a medium of India's soft power.
 - This cross-pollination of art forms enriches the **cultural landscape** and showcases **India's artistic diversity** to the world.

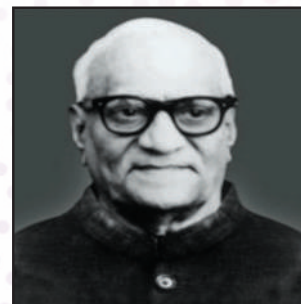
VV Giri

Context:

The President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu paid floral tributes to Shri VV Giri, former President of India, on his birth anniversary in Dili, Timor-Leste, on August 10, 2024.

Early Life and Education:

- ❖ **Born on August 10, 1894, in Berhampur, Odisha**, into a Telugu-speaking family involved in the independence movement.
- ❖ Studied law and social science at University College Dublin, Ireland, where he participated in both Indian and Irish politics.



Involvement in the Freedom Struggle:

- ❖ Returned to India and practised law in Madras.
- ❖ **Joined the Indian National Congress and Annie Besant's Home Rule League.**
- ❖ Gave up his legal career to join the freedom movement during the **Non-Cooperation Movement in 1922.**
- ❖ Was arrested in 1922 for protesting against liquor shops.

Contribution to the Labour Movement:

- ❖ A founding member and General Secretary of the **All India Railwaymen's Federation (1923).**
- ❖ **Became the President of the All India Trade Union Congress in 1926.**
- ❖ **Founded the Bengal Nagpur Railway Association;** led a significant labour strike in **1928.**
- ❖ Co-founded and led the **Indian Trade Union Federation (ITUF) in 1929.**
- ❖ Represented workers at the **International Labour Conference (1927)** and the Second Round Table Conference.

Political Career Post-Independence:

- ❖ **Held various roles:** Minister of Labour, High Commissioner to Ceylon, and Governor of Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, and Karnataka.
- ❖ **Elected Vice President of India in 1967,** became **Acting President in 1969.**
- ❖ Elected as the **fourth President of India in 1969,** serving until 1974, as the **only President elected as an independent candidate.**

Legacy:

- ❖ **Awarded the Bharat Ratna in 1975.**
- ❖ **Passed away on June 24, 1980,** in Chennai at the age of 85.
- ❖ Remembered for his dedication to social justice, labour rights, and his significant contributions to Indian politics.

Subhash Chandra Bose

Context:

In a letter to Prime Minister Modi, Netaji's grandnephew urged for the return of Subhas Chandra Bose's remains from Renkoji to India, reiterating the appeal on the eve of Bose's death anniversary, August 18.

Early Life and Education:

- ❖ **Birth:** Subhas Chandra Bose was **born on January 23, 1897,** in **Cuttack,** Orissa (now Odisha), India.
- ❖ **Family:** Son of Prabhavati Dutt Bose and Janakinath Bose, a prominent lawyer.
- ❖ **Education:** Expelled from Presidency College, Calcutta, in

1916 for nationalist activities. Graduated from Scottish Churches College in 1919.

- ❖ **Civil Service:** Studied at the University of Cambridge; **passed the Indian Civil Service examination in 1920 but resigned in 1921** to join the independence movement.



Early Political Activity:

- ❖ **Nationalist Involvement:** **Joined the Non-Cooperation Movement (1920–22)** led by Mahatma Gandhi and worked with **Chittaranjan Das,** becoming a youth educator, journalist, and Bengal Congress volunteers' commandant.
- ❖ **Leadership:** **Elected as general secretary of the Congress party in 1927.** Appointed **chief executive officer of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation in 1924.**

Disagreements with Gandhi:

- ❖ **Civil Disobedience (1930):** **Detained in 1930 for underground activities;** elected mayor of Calcutta while imprisoned.
- ❖ **Resignation:** **Became Congress President in 1938** (Haripura Session); **formed a National Planning Committee** advocating industrialisation, clashed with Gandhi's economic policies, and **resigned in 1939** (Tripuri Session) due to a lack of support.

Forward Bloc and Exile:

- ❖ **Forward Bloc:** **Founded in 1939 to unify radical Congress factions and promote complete independence and social justice.**
- ❖ **Exile:** **Escaped to Germany in 1941, travelled to Tokyo in 1943,** and led the **Indian National Army (Azad Hind Fauj)** from Southeast Asia.

Azad Hind Fauj (INA) and Provisional Government:

- ❖ **Formation:** **Proclaimed the Provisional Government of Independent India on October 21, 1943.**
- ❖ **Military Campaigns:** **INA advanced into India in 1944 but was defeated in battles at Kohima and Imphal.**

Final Years and Legacy:

- ❖ **Death:** **Reportedly died on August 18, 1945,** in Taiwan from burn injuries sustained in a plane crash.
- ❖ **Legacy:** Known for his militant approach and leadership in India's independence struggle. Famous slogans include **"Tum Mujhe Khoon Do, Main Tumhe Aazadi Dunga,"** **"Jai**

Hind,” and “Delhi Chalo.” The Azad Hind Fauj and Bose’s efforts remain significant in India’s history of independence.

Louis Mountbatten

Context:

Louis Mountbatten died on 27th August 1979.

About:

- ❖ He was a **British naval officer and statesman**, best known for his roles during World War II and as the last Viceroy of India.
- ❖ He was the son of **Prince Louis of Battenberg** and a **great-grand-son of Queen Victoria**.
- ❖ Mountbatten’s naval career began in **World War I**, and he served in various capacities throughout his life, including as Chief of Combined Operations during World War II.



Role in World War II:

- ❖ **Commander of the 5th Destroyer Flotilla:** At the war’s outset, he commanded the destroyer HMS Kelly and led successful operations, including the evacuation of Allied forces during the Norwegian Campaign.
- ❖ **Chief of Combined Operations:** Appointed in 1941, he was responsible for planning and executing joint military operations, including the preparations for D-Day. His leadership was pivotal in coordinating efforts between the Army and Navy, and he developed strategies that contributed to the successful Allied invasion of Europe.
- ❖ **Supreme Allied Commander, South East Asia Command:** After the war in Europe, he was appointed to this role. He oversaw Allied operations against **Japan** and played a crucial part in the recapture of **Burma**.

The Mountbatten Plan:

- ❖ The Mountbatten Plan refers to his strategy for transferring power from British rule to Indian independence.
- ❖ Appointed as **Viceroy of India** in **March 1947**, Mountbatten aimed to facilitate a smooth transition by negotiating with key Indian leaders. However, he faced significant challenges, particularly in reconciling the demands of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League.
- ❖ On June 3, 1947, he announced the plan for partitioning British India into two independent states, **India** and **Pakistan**, with the transition date set for August 15, 1947.

- ❖ This decision was made to **address escalating communal tensions** and was met with mixed reactions from Indian leaders. Ultimately, the partition resulted in significant upheaval and violence, marking a controversial legacy for Mountbatten.

Direct Action Day:

- ❖ Direct Action Day, declared on **August 16, 1946**, by the **All-India Muslim League** under **Muhammad Ali Jinnah**, aimed to assert the demand for a separate Muslim homeland following the **failure of the Cabinet Mission Plan**.
- ❖ This day marked a significant escalation in communal tensions between Hindus and Muslims, particularly in **Calcutta** (now **Kolkata**), leading to widespread violence known as the **Great Calcutta Killings**.
 - The Muslim League had been advocating for a **separate state for Muslims** since the **Lahore Resolution of 1940**, and by **1946**, the failure of negotiations regarding the transfer of power exacerbated these tensions.

The riots in Calcutta triggered a chain reaction of violence in other regions, including Noakhali, Bihar, and Punjab. This escalation of communal violence laid the groundwork for the eventual partition of India in 1947.

Tushar Kanti Ghosh

Tushar Kanti Ghosh (21 September 1898 – 29 August 1994) was a prominent Indian journalist and writer, recognised for his significant contributions to Indian journalism and the freedom movement.

Contributions to Indian Journalism:

- ❖ **Long Tenure at Amrita Bazar Patrika:** Ghosh served as the editor of the English-language newspaper **Amrita Bazar Patrika** for nearly sixty years. Under his leadership, the paper became a vital platform for discussing social issues and advocating for freedom.
- ❖ **Advocacy for Free Press:** He was a strong proponent of a free press and played a crucial role in shaping the landscape of journalism in India. His efforts earned him titles such as “*the grand old man of Indian journalism*” and “*the dean of Indian journalism*”.
- ❖ **Leadership in Journalism Organisations:** Ghosh held leadership positions in various journalism organisations, including the **International Press Institute** and the **Commonwealth Press Union**, further influencing journalistic practices and standards.
- ❖ **Literary Contributions:** In addition to journalism, Ghosh authored fictional novels and children’s books, contributing to Indian literature.

Role in the Freedom Movement:

- ❖ **Support for Mahatma Gandhi:** Ghosh was an active supporter of Mahatma Gandhi and the non-violent movement for India's independence. His journalism often aligned with the principles of the freedom struggle.
- ❖ **Imprisonment for Dissent:** In 1935, Ghosh was imprisoned by British colonial authorities for publishing an article that criticised British judges, demonstrating his commitment to challenging colonial rule through journalism.
- ❖ **Cultural Impact:** Ghosh's witty response to a governor who criticised the grammar of his newspaper highlighted his belief in using journalism as a tool for resistance: *"That, Your Excellency, is my contribution to the freedom struggle."*
- ❖ **Recognition:** In 1964, Ghosh was awarded the **Padma Bhushan**, one of India's highest civilian honours, for his contributions to literature and education.

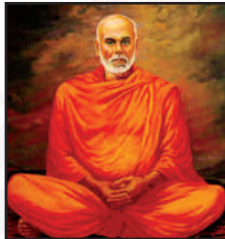
Sree Narayana Guru

Context:

On the **170th birth anniversary of Sree Narayana Guru**, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan reflected on the saint reformer's teachings that challenged caste supremacy and social injustices.

About Sree Narayana Guru:

- ❖ **Birth and Early Life**
 - **Born on August 22, 1856, in Chempazhanthy, Kerala.**
 - Belonged to the **Ezhava caste**; faced social discrimination from an early age.
 - Showed an early inclination towards spirituality, asceticism, and deep contemplation.
- ❖ **Education and Spiritual Journey:**
 - Learned Vedas, Upanishads, Sanskrit, Hatha Yoga, and other philosophies.
 - Lived as a hermit for eight years in the forest, eventually attaining enlightenment.
- ❖ **Social Reform and Anti-Caste Movement:**
 - Gave the famous slogan: **"One Caste, One Religion, One God for All."**
 - **Built a Shiva temple at Aruvippuram in 1888**, challenging caste-based restrictions.
 - **Installed mirrors instead of idols in a temple at Kalavancode**, symbolising that divinity resides within everyone.



- Opposed religious conversions; **organised the first All-Region Conference in 1923.**
- ❖ **Key Contributions and Movements:**
 - Established the **Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yagam (SNDP) in 1903.**
 - **Promoted the Sivagiri pilgrimage in 1924**, advocating virtues like cleanliness, education, and trade.
 - **Inspired the Vaikom agitation** for temple entry rights for lower castes, gaining national attention.
- ❖ **Philosophy and Literary Works:**
 - **Proponent of Advaita Vedanta**, emphasising non-duality.
 - Authored several works like *Advaita Deepika*, *Darshanamala*, and *Daivadasakam*.
 - His teachings **emphasised unity, equality, and self-improvement through education and clean living.**
- ❖ **Legacy and Death:**
 - **Passed away on September 20, 1928**; observed as Sree Narayana Guru Samadhi in Kerala.
 - **His philosophy of Universal Oneness remains relevant today**, especially in promoting social harmony in a divided world.

Sakthan Thampuran

Context:

Recently, **Minister of State for Tourism and Thrissur MP Suresh Gopi** vowed to replace the statue of Sakthan Thampuran, which was damaged by a state transport bus, with a new bronze statue if the Kerala government fails to do so within 14 days.

About Sakthan Thampuran

- ❖ **Raja Rama Varma Kunjipillai**, also known as **Rama Varma IX**, and widely remembered as **Sakthan Thampuran**, ruled the **Cochin kingdom from 1790 to 1805.**
- ❖ **Born in 1751** to Ambika Thampuran and Chendose Aniyan Namboodiri of the Cochin royal family, he was raised by his aunt, who gave him the name **"Sakthan,"** meaning **"powerful."**
 - The term **"thampuran"** is believed to be derived from the Sanskrit word **"samrat,"** meaning emperor.
- ❖ The **Cochin kingdom**, part of the **Late Chera Empire**, spanned the region between Ponnani in Malappuram and Thottappally in Alappuzha, Kerala.
- ❖ Sakthan Thampuran became heir apparent in 1769 at the age of 18, advising the king to maintain friendly relations with both the Dutch and the English, who were competing for control over trade in the region.
- ❖ He is credited with **orchestrating Mysore's attempted invasion of Travancore**, which had allied with the English East India Company.

- This led to the **Powney Treaty**, freeing Cochin from Mysore's dominance and formalising its ties with the British.
- ❖ Sakthan Thampuran **abolished the institution of Yogiatripads**, the spiritual heads of the **Vadakkumnathan and Perumanam temples**, and brought temple management under government control.
- ❖ In 1797, Sakthan Thampuran **initiated the Thrissur Pooram as an alternative to the Arattupuzha Pooram**, which was then the largest temple festival in Kerala.

Thrissur Pooram

Thrissur Pooram is an **annual Hindu temple festival** held in Thrissur, Kerala, India. It is considered the **largest and most famous pooram (temple festival) in Kerala**, attracting over 1 million visitors. The festival is celebrated at the **Vadakkunnathan Temple in Thrissur every year** on the Pooram day—the day when the moon rises with the Pooram star in the Malayalam Calendar month of Medam (April-May).

History

Before Thrissur Pooram, the **largest temple festival in Kerala was the one-day Arattupuzha Pooram**. In 1796, when temples from Thrissur were late for the Arattupuzha Pooram, they were denied access to the procession. Sakthan Thampuran then decided to start Thrissur Pooram on the Pooram day in May as a mass festival, inviting temples to pay obeisance to the presiding deity **Vadakkunnathan (Shiva)** at the Vadakkunnathan Temple. **Home News** **Thrissur Pooram**: All you need to know about the grand temple festival in Kerala. Thrissur Pooram is **considered by the UNESCO** as the **most spectacular festival event on the planet**.

Tilak: The Man in His Times

Context:

Bal Gangadhar Tilak, a pivotal leader of the extremist faction in the freedom movement and part of the Lal-Bal-Pal trio, navigated a contradictory life, with Vaibhav Purandare's book calling him the "empire's biggest enemy," reflecting his complex legacy.

Early Life and Education:

- ❖ **Born: July 23, 1856**, Ratnagiri, Maharashtra.
- ❖ Graduated focusing on social and political reform; established educational institutions.

Entry into Journalism and Politics: Founded *Kesari* (Marathi) and



Maratha (English) and advocated for social reforms, including the abolition of untouchability.

- ❖ Shifted focus to India's political liberation and the right to independence.

Rise to National Prominence: Attended the Indian National Congress in 1889, opposing moderates' reliance on British reforms.

- ❖ Led the extremist faction alongside Lala Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal.

Imprisonment and Writings: **Imprisoned in 1903 for sedition**; wrote *Geeta Rahasya* during exile in Mandalay, Burma.

- ❖ Released in 1914, he resumed political activities with renewed vigour.

Home Rule Movement and Legacy: **Founded the Indian Home Rule League** (1916), promoting Hindu-Muslim unity and self-governance.

- ❖ **Died on August 1, 1920**, shortly before Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement.

Contradictions in Tilak's Ideology: A radical anti-imperialist yet a **social conservative**; **supported the caste system** and **opposed English education for women and lower castes**.

- ❖ Initially believed Muslims should not be considered Indians but later modified many views.

Key Contributions: Used Hindu symbolism to galvanise the nationalist movement, **organising festivals to promote swarajya** (self-rule).

His influence laid the groundwork for mass mobilisation and inspired future leaders like Savarkar, **earning Gandhi's title of "Maker of Modern India."**

Periyar

Context:

Erode Venkatappa Ramasamy, commonly known as **Periyar** or **Thanthai Periyar**, was a **prominent Indian social activist and politician** born on **September 17, 1879**.

About:

- ❖ Periyar is best known as the founder of the **Self-Respect Movement** and the **Dravidar Kazhagam**, earning the title "**Father of the Dravidian Movement**".
- ❖ His work primarily focused on **challenging Brahminical dominance** and advocating for the rights of marginalised communities in Tamil Nadu.

Contributions to National and Social Reform Movements:

Role in the National Movement:

- ❖ Periyar joined the **Indian National Congress** in **1919**, where he initially worked towards social reforms and participated in the freedom struggle.
- ❖ He became president of the **Madras Presidency Congress Committee** in 1922, advocating for **representation of depressed classes in education and government jobs**.
- ❖ However, he became disillusioned with the Congress due to its **Brahmin-centric leadership** and its failure to **address the needs of non-Brahmins**.
- ❖ This led him to resign from the party in 1925, believing that true freedom required self-respect and equality for all individuals, regardless of caste or religion.

Social Reforms:

- ❖ **Periyar's Self-Respect Movement**, founded in 1926, aimed to **eradicate caste-based discrimination and promote gender equality**.
- ❖ He emphasised **rationalism and atheism**, rejecting **religious dogmas** that perpetuated **social inequalities**.
- ❖ His movement encouraged individuals to take pride in their identity and fight against societal norms that devalued them based on birth. The movement also included initiatives like **Self-Respect marriages**, which were **conducted without traditional rituals** that reinforced caste hierarchies.
- ❖ One of Periyar's significant contributions was his leadership in the **Vaikom Satyagraha (1924-1925)**, a **campaign for temple entry rights for lower castes in Travancore**.
- ❖ His involvement helped bring **national attention to the issue of untouchability** and contributed to subsequent temple entry movements across India.

Factors Leading to Advocacy for Social Reforms:

- ❖ **Caste Discrimination:** The oppressive caste system marginalised many communities, leading to widespread social injustice.
- ❖ **Brahminical Dominance:** The dominance of Brahmins in political and educational spheres created a need for representation and rights for non-Brahmin communities.
- ❖ **Colonial Influence:** British colonial policies often exacerbated caste divisions, prompting reformers like Periyar to challenge these injustices.
- ❖ **Awakening of National Consciousness:** The broader Indian freedom struggle inspired many leaders to seek not just political independence but also social equality.

Tiruvalluvar

Context:

The Madras High Court has declined to designate the Anusham star day in the Tamil month of Vaikasi as the official birthday of Tiruvalluvar, the revered **author of the Thirukkural**, a widely celebrated collection of 1,330 couplets offering life lessons.

More on News:

- ❖ Justice M. Dhandapani also rejected a request to direct the Tamil Nadu government to shift the annual 'Tiruvalluvar Day' celebration from the second day of the Tamil month of Thai, as currently observed, to the Vaikasi Anusham Natchathiram day.



About Thiruvalluvar:

- ❖ Also known as **Valluvar**, he is a **revered figure in Tamil literature and philosophy**, best known for his work Thirukkural.
- ❖ His contributions have had a lasting impact on ethics, morality, and social values in Tamil culture and beyond.

Biography:

- ❖ **Historical Context:** Thiruvalluvar is believed to have lived between the **2nd century BCE and the 5th century CE**, although exact dates remain uncertain.
 - He is often associated with the **Sangam period of Tamil literature**, which was marked by a flourishing of poetry and philosophical thought.

Sangam Literature

The earliest known body of Tamil literature, it flourished during the Sangam period, which is generally dated from approximately **300 BCE to 300 CE**. This era is characterised by the establishment of **literary assemblies or "Sangams"** in ancient Tamil Nadu, particularly in **Madurai**, where poets and scholars gathered to compose and critique poetry.

The Sangam period is traditionally divided into three Sangams:

- ❖ **First Sangam:** Believed to have been **held in Madurai**; no works from this assembly survive.
- ❖ **Second Sangam:** Also **held in Kapadapuram Madurai**; only fragments remain, with **Tolakappiyar's Tolkappiyam** (a treatise on Tamil grammar) being the notable surviving work.

- ❖ **Third Sangam:** Held in **Madurai**, this was the most productive period, yielding a wealth of literature that has survived to this day.

Political and Social Landscape: The period was marked by the rule of three major dynasties: the **Cheras, Cholas, and Pandyas**. These kingdoms played a significant role in patronising arts and literature, contributing to a vibrant cultural environment.

Themes and Genres: Sangam literature is categorised primarily into two thematic groups:

- ❖ **Akam (Inner Life):** This genre focuses on personal emotions and relationships, particularly love. Akam poetry employs natural imagery to express complex feelings and is divided into **five landscapes (tinai)**, each representing different phases of love: Kurunji: Mountains (union), Mullai: Forests (waiting), Marutham: Agricultural lands (quarrels), Neithal: Seashore (separation) and Paalai: Desert (hardship).
- ❖ **Puram (Outer Life):** Puram poetry deals with themes related to heroism, valour, and societal issues. It often praises kings and their deeds, reflecting the external aspects of life.

Sangam literature includes several key anthologies and works:

- ❖ **Ettuttokai (Eight Anthologies):** A collection of eight works including Ainkurunuru, Kuruntokai, Narrinai, Akananuru, Kalittokai, Patirruppattu, Purananuru, and Paripatal.
- ❖ **Pattuppattu (Ten Idylls):** Comprising ten poems that provide insights into early Tamil life.
- ❖ **Epics:** Notable epics include **Silappatikaram by Ilango Adigal** and **Manimekalai by Sittalai Sattanar**, which explore various themes from love to philosophy.

- ❖ **Life and Background:** Very little is definitively known about his life.
 - Traditional accounts suggest he may have been born in **Mylapore (modern-day Chennai) or Madurai**.
 - His family background is debated, with some sources indicating he may have belonged to a low-caste community, while others suggest he could be linked to Jainism or Hinduism.
 - His identity has been claimed by various religious traditions over the centuries.
- ❖ **Philosophical Outlook:** Thiruvalluvar's teachings **emphasise ethics, self-discipline, and equality**.
 - His work advocates for **moral vegetarianism and non-violence**, reflecting a deep concern for **social justice and personal integrity**.

Major Work: Thirukkural:

- ❖ **Structure and Content:** The Thirukkural consists of **1,330 couplets (kurals)** divided into three main sections: **Aram (virtue), Porul (wealth), and Inbam (love)**.

- Each section addresses various aspects of life, including governance, ethics, love, and spirituality.
- ❖ **Universal Appeal:** The Thirukkural is celebrated for its universal themes that transcend cultural boundaries.
 - It has been translated into numerous languages worldwide and is regarded as one of the greatest works of Tamil literature.
- ❖ **Cultural Significance:** Thiruvalluvar's insights into human nature and ethical living have made his teachings timeless.
 - He is often referred to as a **sage whose thoughts resonate with readers across generations**.

Legacy:

- ❖ **Cultural Reverence:** Thiruvalluvar is venerated in Tamil Nadu and beyond as a **symbol of wisdom and moral integrity**.
 - His birthday is celebrated as **Thiruvalluvar Day during the Pongal festival**, recognising his contributions to Tamil culture.
- ❖ **Monuments and Recognition:** In honour of his legacy, significant monuments have been erected, including a **towering statue at Kanyakumari**.
- ❖ **Influence on Society:** Thiruvalluvar's **rejection of caste distinctions and advocacy for ethical living** have inspired movements against social injustice in India.

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar

Context:

204th Birth Anniversary of **Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar**.

About:

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891) was a prominent 19th century scholar, educator, and social reformer from Bengal who played a key role in the Bengal Renaissance. He is renowned for his contributions to education, women's empowerment, and social welfare, earning him the title "**Vidyasagar**" meaning "**Ocean of Knowledge**".

Contributions to Education:

- ❖ Vidyasagar strongly believed in the **right to education for all**, regardless of **caste or gender**.
- ❖ He opened up the **Sanskrit College** to students from lower castes and established **20 model schools** in Bengal.
- ❖ He simplified the **Bengali alphabet** and introduced modern western subjects like English, sciences and mathematics into the curriculum.
- ❖ His book "**Borno Porichoy**" is still used to teach the Bengali alphabet.

- ❖ Vidyasagar advocated for **women's education** and **founded 35 girls' schools** across Bengal.
- ❖ He supported the establishment of the **Bethune School**, the first permanent girls' school in India.

Social Reforms:

- ❖ Vidyasagar was a key figure in Bengal's socio-religious reform movement in the 19th century. He advocated for widow remarriage, following in the footsteps of **Raja Ram Mohan Roy**, something that **Sanjeev Sanyal** promoted in his book "*The Indian Renaissance*".
- ❖ He wrote extensively on the **mistreatment of widows** and argued based on scriptures for the **right of widows to remarry**. His efforts led to the passage of the **Widow Remarriage Act** in 1856.
- ❖ **Vidyasagar** also raised concerns about child marriage and polygamy. He personally participated in the **first widow remarriage** in **Calcutta** in **1856**.

Literary Works:

- ❖ Vidyasagar was a prolific writer who expressed his reformist ideas through articles in leading journals and newspapers.
- ❖ Some of his notable works include "*Betaal Panchavinsati*" (1847), "*Banglar Itihaas*" (1848), "*Jivancharita*" (1849), "*Mahabharata*" (1860), and "*Seetar Vanavas*" (1860).
- ❖ He wrote biographical notes on eminent personalities to inspire the youth. His writings on Sanskrit grammar like "*Upakramonika*" and "*Byakaran Koumudi*" are considered classics.

Keshav Baliram Hedgewar

Context:

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh was founded by **KB Hedgewar** on **27th September 1925**.

About:

- ❖ **Keshav Baliram Hedgewar**, commonly known as **Doctorji**, was a prominent **Indian nationalist** and the founder of the **Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)**.
- ❖ Born on April 1, 1889, in Nagpur, he was deeply influenced by the **nationalist movements** of his time and played a significant role in India's struggle for independence.

Contributions of Keshav Hedgewar:

- ❖ Hedgewar's political engagement began early in his life.
- ❖ **Leaders like Lokmanya Tilak** influenced him and became involved with the **Anushilan Samiti**, a revolutionary group

advocating for India's independence, as noted by **Sanjeev Sanyal** in his book "*Revolutionaries*".

- ❖ His commitment to the cause led to his arrest in **1921** for **sedition** due to his speeches against British rule.
- ❖ In 1925, Hedgewar founded the **RSS** in **Nagpur** with the aim of organising **Hindus** for **cultural** and **spiritual regeneration**.
 - The organisation sought to instill a sense of **national identity** among **Hindus** and **promote social service**.
 - Under his leadership, the RSS grew rapidly, establishing numerous branches (*shakhas*) across India.
 - Hedgewar emphasised **character-building** and **community service** as essential components of nation-building.
- ❖ Although he maintained a distance from the **mainstream Indian National Congress** led by **Gandhi**, Hedgewar encouraged RSS members to participate individually in the freedom struggle.
 - He believed that true national service could be achieved through **grassroots organisation** rather than **political manoeuvring**.
 - His contributions included mobilising volunteers for various movements and advocating for **complete independence**, which was later adopted as a goal by the Congress in 1929.

Establishment of RSS and Rise of Communalism:

- ❖ The establishment of the RSS in the 1920s marked a significant shift in the **landscape of Indian politics**, particularly concerning communal relations.
- ❖ Hedgewar's vision was rooted in **Hindu nationalism**, which sought to unify Hindus under a common identity. This ideology emerged partly as a response to perceived neglect by the **Congress regarding Hindu interests** during communal tensions, especially during events like the Khilafat Movement and subsequent riots.
- ❖ The RSS's focus on **Hindu identity** contributed to a **growing sense of communalism** in India.
- ❖ By emphasising Hindu nationalism, it inadvertently fostered divisions between communities.
- ❖ The organisation's rise coincided with increasing tensions between Hindus and Muslims, leading to accusations that it promoted exclusivist narratives that marginalised other religious groups.
- ❖ Hedgewar's belief that India's ancient civilization should be reasserted as a basis for national identity further complicated inter-community relations. The RSS's activities and rhetoric often positioned Hindu culture as superior, which some critics argue laid groundwork for future communal conflicts.

Rani Durgavati

Context:

500th Birth Anniversary of Rani Durgavati.

About:

- ❖ Born on **5 October 1524** in **Kalinjar** (Banda district, Uttar Pradesh).
- ❖ Daughter of Raja Salbahan of Ratha and Mahoba, a descendant of the Chandela dynasty.
- ❖ Named Durgavati she was **born on the festival of Durgashtami**, symbolising strength and valour.
- ❖ At the age of 18, she **married Dalpat Shah, son of Gond King Sangram Shah of Garha-Katanga**.
- ❖ This marriage cemented a strategic alliance between the **Chandela dynasty** and the **Gond kingdom**.
- ❖ **Rani Durgavati**, a formidable queen of the **Gondwana kingdom**, ruled from 1550 until her death in **1564**.
- ❖ Born into the **Chandela dynasty**, she became a **symbol of resistance** against **Mughal expansion** in India. Her reign was marked by significant contributions to her kingdom's autonomy and independence, especially during the Mughal invasions led by **Asaf Khan**.

Garha-Katanga Kingdom

- ❖ Garha-Katanga (later Garha-Mandal) emerged post-**Timur's invasion (1398)** when King Yadavrai threw off Sultanate rule.
- ❖ The kingdom's name was derived from the towns of **Garha and Katanga near Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh**.
- ❖ During Sangram Shah's reign, the kingdom expanded and included areas corresponding to present-day **Mandla, Jabalpur, Narsinghpur, Hoshangabad, Bhopal, Sagar, Damoh in Madhya Pradesh**, and **parts of Chhattisgarh**.

Leadership and Governance

- ❖ **Ascendancy to Power:** After the death of her husband, **Raja Dalpat Shah**, **Rani Durgavati** took charge of the kingdom, installing her young son, **Bir Narayan**, on the throne while effectively ruling as regent.
 - She displayed strong administrative skills by managing state affairs with the help of trusted ministers like **Adhar Kayastha** and **Man Brahman**.
- ❖ **Infrastructure Development:** **Rani Durgavati** initiated various public works, including the construction of reservoirs such as **Ranital, Cherital, and Adhartal**. These projects not only improved agriculture but also showcased her commitment to her people's welfare.

Military Resistance Against the Mughals:

- ❖ **Battle of Damoh/Narra (1564):** The most notable confrontation with the Mughal Empire occurred during the **Battle of Damoh**. Despite being outnumbered, **Rani Durgavati** displayed exceptional bravery and strategic acumen.
- ❖ She positioned her forces in a strategically advantageous location between two rivers and high ridges, which initially allowed her to **repel Mughal advances**.
- ❖ During the battle, she utilised **clever military strategies** to outmanoeuvre **Asaf Khan's forces**. Her ability to inspire her troops and maintain morale even in dire circumstances was crucial in delaying the Mughal advance.

Martyrdom and Legacy:

- ❖ **Choice of Death Over Captivity:** Facing inevitable defeat and capture by the Mughals, **Rani Durgavati** chose to end her life rather than surrender. This act of self-sacrifice on June 24, 1564, solidified her status as a martyr and a symbol of resistance against oppression. Her martyrdom is commemorated annually as **'Balidan Diwas' (Martyr's Day)** in Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ **Cultural Impact:** Rani Durgavati's legacy as a warrior queen continues to inspire pride in Indian history. She is celebrated for her courage and commitment to her principles, embodying the spirit of resistance against colonial forces. Various institutions and memorials have been established in her honour, including **Rani Durgavati University in Jabalpur**.

Ramalingam Swamigal

About:

Ramalingam Swamigal, also known as **Vallalar** or **Thiruvarutprakasa Vallalar Chidambaram Ramalingam**, was a prominent **Tamil saint** and **social reformer** born on **October 5, 1823**, in **Marudhur, Tamil Nadu**. He is celebrated for his profound spiritual teachings and humanitarian efforts aimed at promoting social equality and compassion.

Contributions to Social Reforms

Advocacy Against Caste Discrimination:

- ❖ **Samarasa Suddha Sanmarga Sathya Sangam:** In 1865, Ramalingam founded this organisation, which translates to **"Society for Pure Truth in Universal Selfhood"**.
- ❖ Its primary objective was to **eliminate the caste system** and **promote equality** among all individuals. He emphasised that all humans are equal and should be treated as such, regardless of their caste or social status.

Philosophy of Compassion:

- ❖ **Jeeva Karunyam:** Ramalingam introduced the concept of “*Jeeva Karunyam*,” advocating nonviolence and compassion toward all living beings.
- ❖ He believed that serving others was a path to **spiritual liberation (Moksha)** and that true worship involved kindness and empathy rather than **ritualistic practices**.

Innovative Worship Practices:

- ❖ **Worship of Light:** He promoted a unique style of worship centred around the flame of a lighted lamp, symbolising divine light.
- ❖ This approach emphasised **mental worship** over **traditional rituals**, aligning with his belief in the formless nature of divinity.

Establishment of Social Institutions:

- ❖ **Sathya Dharma Salai:** Founded in 1867 in Vadalur, this institution provided **free meals to the poor without any caste distinctions**. It served as a practical embodiment of his teachings on equality and selfless service.
- ❖ **Sathya Gnana Sabha:** Established in 1872, this hall aimed to **disseminate spiritual knowledge** and foster unity among people from diverse backgrounds. It became a centre for learning and discussion on his philosophical ideas.

Literary Contributions:

- ❖ **Thiruvartuppa:** Ramalingam authored this significant collection of poems that encapsulate his spiritual insights and experiences. His literary works not only reflect his philosophical beliefs but also serve as a source of inspiration for his followers.

Vergheese Payyapill

Context:

95th Death Anniversary of Vergheese Payyapill.

About:

- ❖ **Vergheese Payyapill**, also known as **Payyappilly Varghese Kathanar**, was a significant **social reformer** and **priest** in **South India**, particularly noted for his contributions to social welfare and the upliftment of marginalised communities.
- ❖ He was educated in local schools and received religious training at the **Mangalapuruzha Seminary** and the **Papal Seminary** in Kandy, Sri Lanka.
- ❖ He was ordained a priest in 1907 and served in various parishes, where he began implementing his vision for social reform.

Contributions to Social Reforms:

- ❖ **Establishment of the Sisters of the Destitute:** In 1927, Payyapill founded the **Sisters of the Destitute**, a congregation aimed at serving the **poor and abandoned**.
 - This organisation provided shelter and care for the elderly, terminally ill, and mentally disabled individuals, thereby addressing significant social issues related to **poverty and neglect**.
- ❖ **Response to Natural Disasters:** During the **devastating floods of 1924**, he transformed **St. Mary’s High School** into a refuge for those affected.
 - He organised relief efforts by providing food and shelter to victims, showcasing his commitment to humanitarian aid. His actions during this crisis not only helped many families but also solidified his role as a community leader.
- ❖ **Advocacy for Education:** Payyapill emphasised education as a tool for empowerment.
 - He managed **St. Mary’s High School** in **Aluva**, improving its condition and ensuring it became a centre for learning that served all community members regardless of caste.
 - He believed that education could break the cycle of poverty and caste discrimination prevalent at the time.
- ❖ **Mediator and Community Leader:** Known for his ability to mediate conflicts within families and communities, he was respected by both **church authorities** and **local officials**. His efforts in resolving family disputes through retreats and counselling were pivotal in **promoting social harmony**.
- ❖ **Charitable Works:** His dedication to helping the less fortunate extended beyond institutional reforms; he cared for **individuals in need**. For instance, during his tenure as parish priest, he provided food for those affected by disasters using hired boats to reach them.
- ❖ **Legacy:** His work laid the groundwork for ongoing efforts to address social inequalities in South India. He was declared **Venerable by Pope Francis** in **2018**, recognising his contributions to society and the church.

Shyamji Krishna Varma

Context:

167th Birth Anniversary of Shyamji Krishna Varma.

About:

- ❖ **Shyamji Krishna Varma** was a prominent **Indian revolutionary, lawyer, and journalist** whose contributions significantly shaped the Indian freedom movement.

- ❖ Born in **Mandvi, Gujarat**, he was a scholar in **Sanskrit** and **English**, and he became the first Indian to earn an **MA** from **Oxford University**.
- ❖ His early career included serving as a **barrister** and as the **Diwan** of **several princely states** in India before he turned his focus towards political activism against British colonial rule.

Key Contributions to the Freedom Movement:

- ❖ **Founding of India House and the Indian Home Rule Society:** In 1905, Shyamji established the **Indian Home Rule Society** and **India House** in London.
 - These institutions became pivotal in promoting nationalist sentiments among Indian students and expatriates in Britain.
 - India House served as a meeting point for radical nationalists, while *The Indian Sociologist*, a **monthly publication** he founded, provided a platform for disseminating revolutionary ideas and critiques of British rule.
- ❖ **Advocacy for Independence:** Through his writings and speeches, Shyamji Krishna Varma advocated for complete independence from British rule.
 - He was influenced by cultural nationalists like **Swami Dayanand Saraswati** and philosophers such as **Herbert Spencer**, whose ideas on resistance to oppression resonated with his own beliefs.
 - His declaration that *“Resistance to aggression is not simply justified but imperative”* encapsulated his approach to activism.
- ❖ **Shift to Paris and Continued Activism:** Due to increasing scrutiny from British authorities, **Shyamji** relocated to **Paris** in **1907**, where he continued his revolutionary activities.
 - He collaborated with other notable figures like **Veer Savarkar** and **Bhikaji Cama**, furthering the cause of Indian independence from abroad.
 - His efforts were instrumental in **galvanising support** among **Indians living overseas**, fostering a sense of unity against colonial oppression.
- ❖ **Legacy and Recognition:** Shyamji’s legacy is commemorated through various memorials, including the **Kranti Teerth**, which houses a replica of **India House** and serves as a tribute to his contributions to the freedom struggle.
 - In 2015, he was posthumously reinstated as a **barrister** by the **Inner Temple**, recognising the unfair treatment he received during his lifetime due to his political beliefs.
 - His impact on the nationalist movement is remembered as foundational in inspiring future generations to continue the fight for India’s independence.

Badruddin Tyabji

Context:

180th Birth Anniversary of Badruddin Tyabji.

About:

- ❖ **Badruddin Tyabji** was a prominent figure in India’s early freedom movement, known for his multifaceted contributions as a **lawyer, politician, and social reformer**.
- ❖ He was the **first Indian barrister at the High Court of Bombay** and served as the **third president** of the **Indian National Congress (INC)** in **1887**.
- ❖ His leadership and advocacy for **secularism** and **education** played a crucial role in shaping the INC’s early character.

Contributions to the Indian National Congress:

- ❖ **Founding Member:** Tyabji was one of the founding members of the INC, participating actively since its inception in **1885**.
 - He helped establish the **Bombay Presidency Association**, which served as a platform for political awareness among Indians and facilitated the first session of the INC in Bombay.
- ❖ **Presidency:** As the **first Muslim president** of the **INC**, **Tyabji** presided over its third session in Madras. His election marked a significant moment in promoting Muslim participation within a predominantly Hindu organisation, countering sentiments that suggested Muslims should boycott the Congress.
- ❖ **Secular Political Consciousness:** Tyabji was instrumental in fostering a **secular political consciousness among Muslims**.
- ❖ He believed in uniting Hindus and Muslims under a common cause for independence, advocating for collective interests rather than sectarian divides. This approach was critical during a time when communal tensions were rising.

Role in India’s Freedom Movement:

- ❖ **Advocacy for Education and Social Reform:** Tyabji was a strong proponent of education, particularly for women.
 - He founded the **Anjuman-I-Islam** in 1874 to **promote educational advancement among Muslims**.
 - His progressive stance included sending his daughters abroad for education and **opposing the purdah system**, which he viewed as detrimental to women’s rights.
- ❖ **Judicial Contributions:** In addition to his political work, Tyabji served as a judge and later as **Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court**. His judicial decisions often reflected his commitment to justice and equality, including granting bail to prominent leaders like **Bal Gangadhar Tilak** during politically charged cases.

- ❖ **Political Speeches and Influence:** Known for his eloquence, Tyabji delivered impactful speeches addressing key issues such as import duties and civil service reforms. His ability to articulate the aspirations of Indians garnered respect across communities, making him a pivotal figure in rallying support for the freedom struggle.

Jai Prakash Narayan

Context:

45th Death Anniversary of Jai Prakash Narayan.

About:

- ❖ **Jai Prakash Narayan**, commonly known as **JP** or **Lok Nayak** (People's Leader), was a significant figure in India's struggle for independence and played a crucial role in the country's post-independence political landscape.
- ❖ Born on October 11, 1902, in **Sitab Diyara, Bihar**, he was deeply influenced by **Gandhian principles** and **socialist ideas** throughout his life.

Contribution to India's Freedom Movement:

- ❖ **Early Involvement:** JP's political activism began during his student years, where he was influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent approach.
 - He participated in the Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-22) and later returned to India in 1929 after studying in the United States, where he had been exposed to Marxist thought.
- ❖ **Civil Disobedience Movement:** Narayan played an active role in the Civil Disobedience Movement and was imprisoned multiple times for his activities against British rule.
 - Notably, he was arrested in 1932 for his participation in the movement and again in 1939 for opposing Indian involvement in **World War II**.
 - His leadership became particularly prominent during the **Quit India Movement of 1942**, where he organised underground resistance activities after escaping from prison.
- ❖ **Socialist Ideals:** As a founding member of the **Congress Socialist Party**, Narayan advocated for a more radical approach to achieving independence. He emphasised **social justice** and **economic equality**, drawing on socialist principles to address the needs of the marginalised.

Role in Post-Independence History:

- ❖ **Total Revolution Movement:** After India gained independence in 1947, Narayan focused on social reform.
 - In the 1970s, he initiated the **Total Revolution (Sam-poorna Kranti)** movement, calling for comprehensive

changes across political, social, and economic spheres.

- This movement arose from widespread discontent with corruption and governance issues under **Prime Minister Indira Gandhi**.
- ❖ **Bihar Movement:** In 1974, JP led the **Bihar Movement**, which aimed to challenge corruption within the state government. This grassroots movement **mobilised students and citizens** alike against malpractices and called for accountability from **political leaders**. His leadership during this period positioned him as a key opposition figure against **authoritarianism**.
- ❖ **Political Legacy:** Narayan's activism culminated in the formation of the Janata Party, which united various opposition factions against Indira Gandhi's government.
 - The Janata Party won the 1977 elections, marking the **first non-Congress government** at the national level.

Gopalbandhu Das

Context:

147th Birth Anniversary of freedom fighter Gopalbandhu Das.

About:

- ❖ **Gopalbandhu Das**, popularly known as **Utkalamani** (meaning "Jewel of Utkal" or Odisha), was a prominent figure in India's freedom movement.
- ❖ He was an **activist, journalist, poet, and social reformer** who significantly shaped the nationalist sentiments in Odisha.

Contributions to India's Freedom Movement:

Educational Reforms:

- ❖ **Satyabadi Bana Vidyalaya:** In 1909, Gopalbandhu founded this school in Puri, which aimed to impart a liberal and non-sectarian education based on the Gurukul tradition. The school emphasised the values of **nationalism and secularism**, allowing students from all backgrounds to study together.
- ❖ **Advocacy for Literacy:** He believed education was crucial for fostering awareness of freedom and civic duties among the populace. His educational initiatives laid the groundwork for future generations to engage in social and political issues.

Political Engagement:

- ❖ **First President of the Congress Party in Odisha:** Gopalbandhu was instrumental in organising the Orissa Provincial

Congress Committee and served as its first president. He was pivotal in bringing Mahatma Gandhi to Odisha in 1921, which galvanised local participation in the Non-Cooperation Movement.

- ❖ **Legislative Council Member:** Elected in 1917, he focused on issues like administrative amalgamation of Oriya-speaking regions and expansion of education. His political career was marked by a commitment to the rights of his people.

Social Reforms:

- ❖ **Puri Seva Samiti:** He founded this organization to assist cholera victims during an outbreak, which later led to establishing a hospital for the affected.
- ❖ **Campaign Against Untouchability:** Gopalbandhu actively fought against social injustices, advocating for widow remarriage and literacy among women, thereby promoting a new social order.

Literary Contributions:

- ❖ Gopalbandhu was also a notable literary figure. His works include poems and essays that inspired patriotism and social reform. One of his most famous poems is "*Svadesa Chinta*", written during his imprisonment, reflecting his deep commitment to the nation.

Imprisonment and Legacy:

- ❖ He faced imprisonment for his activism during the **Non-Cooperation Movement**, spending two years in **Hazaribagh jail** from **1922 to 1924**. Despite these challenges, he continued to advocate for Congress's constructive programs upon his release.
- ❖ **Gopalbandhu Das** passed away on June 17, 1928, but his contributions have immortalised him as a key figure in Odisha's history and India's broader struggle for independence.
- ❖ Subhas Chandra Bose referred to him as the "*father of the national movement*" in **Odisha** due to his extensive efforts to foster national consciousness among the Oriya people.

Shripad Amrit Dange

Context:

125th Birth Anniversary of SA Dange.

About:

- ❖ **Shripad Amrit Dange** was a prominent Indian politician, trade union leader, and a founding member of the Communist Party of India (CPI).
- ❖ He played a crucial role in the Indian freedom movement and was instrumental in shaping the **labour rights landscape** in India.

Early Life and Political Affiliation:

- ❖ Dange was influenced by nationalist leaders like **Bal Gangadhar Tilak** and **Mahatma Gandhi**.
- ❖ His political journey began with his involvement in the **Non-Cooperation Movement** in 1920, which marked his transition from student to active participant in India's struggle against **British colonial rule**.
- ❖ Dange's ideological shift towards communism solidified when he became one of the founding members of the **CPI** during a meeting in **Kanpur** in 1925, alongside notable figures such as **Muzaffar Ahmed** and **Shaukat Usmani**.
- ❖ **Dange's commitment** to communist ideology was evident through his extensive involvement in trade unions.
- ❖ He led the **Girni Kamgar movement**, advocating for **textile workers' rights** in **Bombay** and significantly increasing union membership from 324 to 54,000. His leadership extended to serving as joint secretary and later president of the **All India Trade Union Congress**.

Role in India's Freedom Movement:

- ❖ Dange's activism led to multiple arrests; he spent approximately 13 years in prison due to his involvement in various conspiracies against British rule, including the **Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy case** and the **Meerut Conspiracy case**.
- ❖ These trials were pivotal in raising awareness about communist ideologies among the Indian populace.
- ❖ He viewed **imperialism as the primary enemy of the Indian masses**, arguing that Indian Communists should actively participate in the national movement.
- ❖ His efforts were not limited to labour rights; Dange also played a significant role in political reforms post-independence, notably advocating for the formation of Maharashtra as a separate state based on linguistic lines.

Veerapandiya Kattabomman

Context:

225th Death Anniversary of Veerapandiya Kattabomman.

About:

- ❖ **Veerapandiya Kattabomman** was a prominent **18th-century freedom fighter** and **chieftain** from **Panchalankurichi** in **Tamil Nadu**, India.
- ❖ Born on January 3, 1760, he became a significant figure in the **resistance against British colonial rule**, particularly known for his defiance against the British East India Company.

Role in Defiance Against British Expansion:

- ❖ **Kattabomman** was a **Palayakarrar** (or **Polygar**), a local feudal lord with authority over several villages. His governance was marked by a commitment to justice and welfare, which earned him respect among his subjects. When the British sought to impose direct control over tax collection and diminish the powers of local rulers like him, Kattabomman resisted vehemently.
- ❖ **Refusal to Pay Taxes:** The British introduced new tax policies that undermined the authority of the polygars. **Kattabomman stopped paying taxes**, arguing that the drought conditions in his domain justified his refusal. This act of defiance was seen as a challenge to **British sovereignty**.
- ❖ **Formation of Alliances:** Kattabomman attempted to **unify local rulers** and polygars to **resist British encroachment**. He rallied support from neighboring leaders to form a coalition against the British, although this effort faced challenges due to internal divisions among the local rulers.

Contributions and Legacy:

- ❖ **First Polygar War:** His resistance culminated in what is often referred to as the **First Polygar War of 1799**. He led his forces in guerrilla warfare against the British troops, demonstrating remarkable bravery and tactical skill.
- ❖ **Symbol of Resistance:** His defiance became a symbol of resistance against colonial rule in South India. Even after his capture and execution on October 16, 1799, Kattabomman's legacy continued to inspire future generations of freedom fighters.
- ❖ **Martyrdom:** Kattabomman's execution at Kayathar turned him into a martyr for the Indian independence movement. His death **galvanised further resistance against British rule**, leading to subsequent uprisings in Tamil Nadu.

Cultural Impact:

- ❖ **Cultural Celebrations:** The Tamil Nadu government has honored him with memorials and festivals celebrating his legacy.
- ❖ **Films and Literature:** His life story inspired the Tamil film *Veerapandiya Kattabomman*, which contributed to popularising his heroic image.

Background of Polygar War:

- ❖ The **Polygars** were **local feudal lords** who had historically governed their territories with a degree of autonomy. However, as the **British expanded their influence** in South India, they sought to undermine the authority of these local rulers.
- ❖ The British implemented **new tax policies** aimed at bypassing the **Polygars** and **directly collecting taxes from the populace**, which Kattabomman and other Polygars viewed as an infringement on their sovereignty.

- ❖ Although Kattabomman's rebellion was suppressed, it set the stage for further uprisings in South India, culminating in subsequent conflicts such as the **Second Polygar War (1800-1801)**.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898) was a prominent Indian Islamic reformer, educator, and philosopher whose contributions significantly reshaped the socio-religious landscape of India, particularly for the Muslim community, following the upheaval of the 1857 revolt against British rule.

Early Life and Background:

- ❖ Born into an aristocratic family in Delhi, Sir Syed was **well-educated** in **both religious and secular subjects**.
- ❖ His early career included **service in the British administration**, which provided him with insights into **Western education and governance**.
- ❖ The aftermath of the 1857 revolt deeply affected him, leading him to publish "*Asbab-e-Baghawat-e-Hind*" (**Reasons for the Indian Revolt of 1857**), where he attributed the rebellion to British ignorance and aggressive policies towards **Indian society**.

Contributions to Education and Social Reform:

- ❖ **Educational Initiatives:** Sir Syed is best known for founding the **Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College (MAO College)** in **Aligarh** in **1875**, which later became **Aligarh Muslim University**.
 - This institution was pivotal in **promoting modern education among Muslims**, emphasising the need for **scientific knowledge** alongside traditional Islamic studies.
 - He believed that education was essential for the community's progress and advocated for the learning of **English and Western sciences**.
- ❖ **Aligarh Movement:** The Aligarh Movement aimed to **modernise Muslim education** and promote social reform.
 - **Sir Syed organised educational conferences**, such as the **All India Muhammadan Educational Conference** in 1886, which encouraged Muslims to pursue education and engage with contemporary societal issues.
 - His efforts inspired a generation of Muslim leaders and intellectuals who played crucial roles in later political movements.
- ❖ **Literary Contributions:** Sir Syed was a prolific writer who published numerous works addressing social issues, religious interpretation, and educational reform. His notable writings include "*Tafsir-ul-Quran*", a commentary on the **Quran**, and various articles in his journals like "**Moham-**

medan Social Reformer” and “Aligarh Institute Gazette”. He argued for a rational interpretation of Islamic texts that aligned with modern scientific understanding.

Shift Towards Religious Separatism:

- ❖ In his earlier years, **Sir Syed** advocated for **Hindu-Muslim unity** and believed in **India’s composite culture**.
- ❖ However, as political dynamics evolved, particularly with rising Hindu nationalism and concerns about Muslim marginalisation, he began to emphasise a distinct Muslim identity.
- ❖ He articulated ideas that contributed to what would later be known as the **Two-Nation Theory**, which posited that Muslims and Hindus were separate nations with distinct identities.
- ❖ This shift can be attributed to several factors:
 - **Political Context:** The increasing dominance of Hindu nationalism led him to believe that Muslims needed to consolidate their identity and interests.
 - **Educational Advocacy:** His focus on Urdu as a unifying language for Muslims further solidified a separate cultural identity.
 - **Personal Experiences:** Witnessing communal tensions and political exclusion influenced his perspective on Muslim identity within a predominantly Hindu society.

Anasuya Sarabhai

Anasuya Sarabhai, born on **November 11, 1885**, in **Ahmedabad**, was a pioneering figure in **India’s women’s labour movement** and a significant contributor to the country’s freedom struggle and socialist movement. She is often referred to as **Motaben**, meaning “**elder sister**” in **Gujarati**, and is celebrated for her relentless advocacy for workers’ rights, particularly among women in the textile industry.

Early Life and Education:

- ❖ Anasuya was born into the affluent **Sarabhai family**, which is known for its **industrial ventures**.
- ❖ After losing her parents at a young age, she faced a forced marriage at 13, which she later annulled.
- ❖ Seeking education, she travelled to **England** in 1912 to pursue a **medical degree** but shifted to the **London School of Economics** due to her ethical beliefs against **animal dissection**.
- ❖ Influenced by the **Fabian Society** and the **Suffragette movement**, she developed a strong commitment to social equality and labour rights during her time in England.

Role in the Labour Movement:

- ❖ Upon returning to India in 1913, Sarabhai began advocating for the **rights of mill workers**, particularly **women who endured harsh working conditions**.
- ❖ Her activism was ignited after witnessing female workers returning home exhausted from **gruelling shifts**.
- ❖ In 1914, she organised her first strike in Ahmedabad, which lasted for 21 days and successfully negotiated **better wages for the workers**.
- ❖ In 1920, she founded the **Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association (Majdoor Mahajan Sangh)**, which became India’s oldest textile workers’ union. Sarabhai served as its **lifelong president** and played a crucial role in mediating between workers and mill owners to maintain harmonious relations while advocating for fair labour practices.
- ❖ Her efforts were instrumental during significant events like the **Kheda Satyagraha** and the protests against the **Rowlatt Bill**, where she was among the first signatories of **Gandhi’s Satyagraha Pledge**.

Legacy:

- ❖ Anasuya Sarabhai’s contributions extended beyond labour rights; she also focused on **women’s education** and **empowerment**.
- ❖ Her mentorship influenced many future leaders, including **Ela Bhatt**, who later founded the **Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA)**.

Jivatram Bhagwandas Kripalani

Jivatram Bhagwandas Kripalani, commonly known as **Acharya Kripalani**, was a prominent figure in India’s freedom struggle and played a significant role in shaping post-independent India. Born on **11 November 1888** in **Hyderabad, Sindh** (now in **Pakistan**), he was an **educator, social activist**, and politician closely associated with **Mahatma Gandhi** and the **Indian National Congress (INC)**.

Contributions to India’s Freedom Struggle:

- ❖ **Early Involvement:** Kripalani’s political activism began during his student years. He joined the **Indian National Congress** in 1927 and became an ardent follower of Gandhi. His participation in key movements included:
 - **Champaran Satyagraha:** He actively supported the indigo farmers’ struggle against oppressive practices.
 - **Non-Cooperation Movement:** He played a vital role in mobilising support for this nationwide campaign against British rule.

- **Quit India Movement:** As a leader, he was instrumental in organising protests and faced imprisonment multiple times for his activism.
- ❖ **Kripalani's leadership capabilities** were recognised when he was elected as the **President** of the **Indian National Congress** in 1946, during a crucial period leading to India's independence.
- ❖ However, his tenure was marked by **internal conflicts**, particularly with **Jawaharlal Nehru** regarding the direction of the party and governance post-independence. He resigned from this position in 1947 due to these differences.

Role in Constitution Making:

- ❖ Kripalani was also a member of the **Constituent Assembly**, where he chaired the **sub-committee on Fundamental Rights**.
- ❖ He advocated for a **Preamble** that not only stated **legal principles** but also **embodied moral and spiritual values**. His contributions were pivotal during the formative years of Indian democracy.

Post-Independence Contributions:

- ❖ After independence, Kripalani founded the **Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party** in 1951, which later merged into the **Praja Socialist Party**.
- ❖ His political career continued with his election to the **Lok Sabha**, where he served from 1951 to 1962. Notably, he moved the **first-ever no-confidence motion** in the Lok Sabha in 1963, following the **India-China War**, highlighting his proactive stance on governance issues.
- ❖ Kripalani was a **vocal critic of both Nehru and Indira Gandhi**. He opposed Nehru's policies, which deviated from **Gandhian principles of decentralised governance and village republics**.
- ❖ His criticism intensified during **Indira Gandhi's tenure** when he opposed her **authoritarian approach** during the Emergency (1975-1977).
- ❖ He was arrested for his dissent but remained an influential voice advocating for civil liberties and democratic values.

Madan Mohan Malviya

About:

Madan Mohan Malviya was a prominent **Indian scholar, educational reformer, and politician** born on **December 25, 1861**, in **Allahabad**. He played a significant role in the Indian independence movement and is best known for founding the **Banaras Hindu University (BHU)** in **1916**, which remains one of the largest residential universities in Asia. Malviya served as the **university's vice-chancellor** from **1919 to 1938** and was deeply com-

mitted to promoting modern education among Indians.

Contributions to India's Freedom Struggle:

- ❖ **Leadership in the Indian National Congress:** Malviya was a key figure within the Indian National Congress, serving as its president four times. His political career began at the 1886 Congress session, where he became actively involved in advocating for **Indian rights** and **self-rule**.
- ❖ **Promotion of Hindu Nationalism:** In addition to his work with the Congress, Malviya founded the **Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha** in 1906, which sought to unite various **Hindu nationalist movements**. His efforts were aimed at protecting Hindu interests during a time of **increasing communal tensions**.
- ❖ **Advocacy for Social Issues:** Malviya was also involved in social reform movements, including efforts to eradicate untouchability and promote the welfare of marginalised communities. He played a role in founding organisations like the **Harijan Sevak Sangh** to support these causes.
- ❖ **Media Influence:** He established several newspapers and periodicals, such as **Abhyudaya** and **The Leader**, to raise awareness about national issues and mobilise public opinion against British rule.

"Responsivists" Label:

- ❖ Madan Mohan Malviya is often associated with the term **"Responsivists,"** which emerged from a faction within the **Swaraj Party** during the 1920s.
- ❖ This group advocated for **cooperation with the British government** rather than complete **non-cooperation**, which was championed by leaders like **Mahatma Gandhi**.
- ❖ The Responsivists believed that engaging with the government was essential for **protecting Hindu interests** and achieving gradual reforms.
- ❖ Key figures alongside Malviya included **Lala Lajpat Rai** and **N.C. Kelkar**, who collectively argued that participation in legislative processes could serve as a means to secure rights for Indians while maintaining a semblance of political engagement with colonial authorities.

Birsa Munda

About:

- ❖ **Birsa Munda** was a **prominent tribal leader and folk hero** in India, born on November 15, 1875, in **Ulihatu**, present-day **Jharkhand**.
- ❖ He played a crucial role in the **tribal uprising against British colonial rule** during the **late 19th century**.
- ❖ His life and contributions significantly impacted the fight for tribal rights and autonomy in India.

Early Life and Education:

- ❖ **Birsa Munda** belonged to the **Munda tribe**, a group of indigenous people in the **Chotanagpur plateau**.
- ❖ He received his early education at a German missionary school but became disillusioned with the missionaries' attempts to convert tribals to Christianity.
- ❖ This experience fueled his resolve to advocate for his community's rights and cultural identity.

Contributions to the Tribal Uprising:

- ❖ Birsa Munda's activism culminated in the **Munda Ulgulan** or "**The Great Tumult Movement**", which began around **1894**.
- ❖ This movement arose as a response to oppressive British land policies and forced conversions by missionaries. Birsa sought to mobilise the Munda people against both colonial authorities and local landlords, referred to as **Dikus**.

Key Actions and Ideology:

- ❖ **Religious Movement:** In 1895, Birsa renounced **Christianity** and established a new faith called **Birsait**, promoting the worship of a single God and rejecting traditional tribal deities. This religious revival was part of his broader goal to unify the Munda community against external oppression.
- ❖ **Establishment of Munda Raj:** Birsa declared himself a prophet destined to restore the Munda kingdom. He urged his followers not to pay taxes and to reject British authority. He symbolically adopted a **white flag** to represent their independent rule.
- ❖ **Armed Resistance:** His followers engaged in **guerrilla warfare**, attacking police stations, government properties, and churches associated with colonial rule. Notable incidents included assaults on police stations in **Khunti** and attempts to burn down churches during **Christmas of 1899**.

Arrest and Legacy:

Birsa's movement gained momentum but faced severe repression from British forces. He was arrested in March 1900 while hiding in the forests and died in custody on June 9, 1900, under suspicious circumstances—officially attributed to cholera, though many believe he was poisoned³⁴. Despite his early death at just 25 years old, Birsa Munda's legacy endures as a symbol of tribal resistance against colonialism.

Impact on Tribal Rights:

Birsa Munda's efforts significantly raised awareness about tribal issues in India. His movement laid the groundwork for future struggles for tribal rights and autonomy, influencing subsequent generations of activists. The Indian government commemorates his contributions through various initiatives, including **Janjatiya Gaurav Divas (Tribal Pride Day)**, celebrating tribal culture and heroes like **Birsa Munda**.

Harekrushna Mahtab

Harekrushna Mahtab, popularly known as **Utkal Keshari**, was a prominent Indian **freedom fighter** and **politician** born on **November 21, 1899**, in **Agarpada, Bhadrak** district of Odisha. He played a significant role in the Indian independence movement and later in shaping post-independent India, particularly in the state of Odisha.

Contributions to India's Freedom Struggle:

- ❖ **Early Activism and Leadership Roles:** Inspired by **Mahatma Gandhi's ideals**, **Mahtab** joined the **Indian National Congress (INC)** in 1920. He actively participated in the **Non-Cooperation Movement**, which aimed to resist British rule through non-violent means.
 - He served as the **Chairman** of the **Balasore District Congress Committee** from 1924 to 1928, where he coordinated efforts to **boycott foreign goods and promote indigenous products**.
- ❖ **Salt Satyagraha:** In 1930, **Mahtab** led a successful **Salt Satyagraha** in **Odisha**, inspired by Gandhi's Dandi March. This act of civil disobedience against British salt laws resulted in his imprisonment, highlighting his commitment to the cause of independence.
- ❖ **Social Reforms and Advocacy:** Mahtab was a strong advocate for social reform. In 1934, he led initiatives to **combat untouchability** by opening the **gates of his ancestral temple to all castes**, challenging societal norms and promoting inclusivity.
- ❖ **Praja Mandal Movement:** He played a crucial role in the **Praja Mandal Movement**, which sought to empower **local populations against feudal lords and British exploitation**. This grassroots movement aimed at securing rights for peasants and workers in princely states.
- ❖ **Quit India Movement:** During the **Quit India Movement** of 1942, Mahtab was again **imprisoned for his activism against British rule**. His unwavering commitment to independence made him a respected leader among his peers and the public.

Role in Post-Independence India:

- ❖ **Integration of Princely States:** One of Mahtab's most significant achievements was his role in **merging the 26 Oriya-speaking princely states with Odisha**. As Chief Minister from April 1946 to 1950, he worked closely with **Sardar Patel** to facilitate this integration. His diplomatic skills were instrumental during negotiations with local rulers, leading to a **relatively peaceful merger process** that began with **Nilgiri state** on November 14, 1947.
- ❖ **Development Initiatives:** Mahtab played a pivotal role in **relocating Odisha's capital from Cuttack to Bhubaneswar**.

in 1949. This move was part of broader plans for urban development and modernisation within the state.

- ❖ **Infrastructure Projects:** Under his leadership, significant infrastructure projects were initiated, including the construction of the **Hirakud Dam**, which became one of the largest earthen dams in the world and played a crucial role in flood control and irrigation.
- ❖ **Political Leadership and Governance:** After serving as Chief Minister again from 1956 to 1961, Mahtab continued to influence Odisha's political landscape. He was elected to the **Constituent Assembly**, where he contributed to discussions on governance and policy-making for independent India. He also held various positions at the national level, including **Union Minister for Commerce and Industry** from 1950 to 1952, where he promoted **industrialisation efforts** aligned with **Gandhi's vision of self-sufficiency**.

Master Tara Singh

Context:

67th Death Anniversary of Master Tara Singh.

About:

- ❖ **Master Tara Singh** was a **prominent Sikh political leader** and activist in India, born on **June 24, 1885**, in **Haryal**, near **Rawalpindi**. He played a crucial role in the Indian freedom movement, particularly concerning Sikh rights and the political landscape of Punjab during the tumultuous period leading to and following the Partition of India in 1947.

Role During India's Freedom Movement:

- ❖ Master Tara Singh was a founding member of the **Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD)** and the **Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC)**, both established in 1920.
- ❖ He was instrumental in the **Gurdwara reform movement** aimed at **regaining control of Sikh places of worship from British authorities**.
- ❖ His activism included numerous imprisonments for **civil disobedience**, reflecting his commitment to Sikh rights and independence from British rule.
- ❖ During World War II, **Tara Singh** supported **recruitment for the Indian Army**, recognising its significance for Sikhs and viewing it as a pragmatic approach to achieving independence.
 - This stance aligned with a broader strategy among some Indian leaders who believed that supporting the British war effort could yield post-war benefits for India's freedom.

Significance During Partition:

- ❖ As the demand for Pakistan gained momentum, **Master Tara Singh** emerged as a **staunch opponent of the partition on religious lines**.
- ❖ He articulated a vision for an **"Azad Punjab" (Free Punjab)** that would ensure a **Sikh-majority state** within an undivided India.
- ❖ His leadership became pivotal as he **mobilised Sikh communities** to resist **Muslim League** pressures and advocated for their rights amidst growing communal tensions.
- ❖ In March 1947, after witnessing violent riots and massacres against Sikhs in Punjab, he declared that Sikhs would not accept Muslim domination. His statements **galvanised Sikh resistance** and **pressed British authorities** to safeguard their interests.
- ❖ Singh's efforts culminated in a significant shift in **Congress party policy**, as they began to endorse the idea of **separating Sikh- and Hindu-majority areas** from Muslim-majority regions.
- ❖ Despite his efforts, the partition occurred, leading to mass violence and displacement. However, his advocacy ensured that many Sikhs remained aligned with India rather than moving to Pakistan, thus preserving a Sikh presence in **East Punjab**.

Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar

Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar was a significant figure in India's freedom struggle and social reform movements. Born on **December 17, 1869**, in **Deoghar, Jharkhand**, he was a revolutionary journalist and a key proponent of the **Indian Renaissance**. His upbringing in a **Bengali environment**, despite his **Marathi roots**, allowed him to bridge the cultural and intellectual movements between **Maharashtra** and **Bengal**. He is also known as the **"Tilak of Bengal"**.

Role in India's Freedom Struggle:

- ❖ **Revolutionary Journalism:** Deuskar was a pioneering journalist who used his platform to challenge British rule. He edited and contributed to several periodicals, including **Maratha**, where he published articles that highlighted the **injustices of colonial policies**.
 - His writings often called for unity among Indians and encouraged resistance against British oppression.
- ❖ **Deshar Katha:** His book **Deshar Katha (The Story of the Country)** is a landmark work that **critically assessed British exploitation** and its negative impact on Indian society. It provided a historical perspective on India's rich heritage and culture, aiming to instil pride among Indians.

- The book's ban by the British authorities only amplified its reach and significance, making it a rallying point for nationalists.
- ❖ **Shivaji Festival:** Deuskar played a crucial role in organising the **Shivaji Festival** in **Bengal**, which celebrated the legacy of **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj**.
 - This festival not only served as a cultural event but also became a platform for **political mobilisation**. It aimed to inspire pride in Indian history and foster a sense of unity against colonial rule.
- ❖ **Participation in the Swadeshi Movement:** During the Swadeshi Movement, which emerged as a response to the **partition of Bengal** in **1905**, Deuskar was actively involved in **promoting the use of indigenous goods**.
 - He wrote extensively about the importance of **self-reliance and economic independence**, encouraging people to boycott British products. His advocacy for local industries helped galvanise public support for the movement.

Social Reforms:

- ❖ **Education Advocacy:** Deuskar was a strong proponent of education as a means of empowerment.
 - He believed that **educating the masses was essential for fostering political consciousness and social change**.
 - He wrote articles calling for educational reforms and greater access to education for all, particularly for women and lower castes.
- ❖ **Critique of Social Inequality:** In his writings, Deuskar addressed issues of social inequality and caste discrimination.
 - He advocated for social justice and equality, urging society to move beyond **rigid caste boundaries**.
 - His emphasis on social reform was part of a broader vision for an independent India that was not only politically free but also socially just.
- ❖ **Literary Contributions:** Deuskar's literary works included essays, poems, and plays that often carried themes of nationalism and social reform. For instance, his play **Raja Shivaji**, which celebrated the life and achievements of Shivaji Maharaj, not only served as entertainment but also as an educational tool that instilled values of bravery and patriotism among audiences.

Aurobindo Ghosh

Aurobindo Ghosh, commonly known as **Sri Aurobindo**, was a prominent Indian philosopher, nationalist, and spiritual leader born on **August 15, 1872**, in **Calcutta** (now **Kolkata**). His early education in England exposed him to **Western literature** and **philosophy**, which significantly influenced his later thoughts and writings. Upon returning to India in 1893, he became in-

involved in the Indian nationalist movement and played a crucial role in the struggle for independence from British rule.

Role in India's Freedom Movement:

- ❖ He was associated with the **Bengal National College** and the **Anushilan Samiti**, a revolutionary group advocating for India's independence.
- ❖ Aurobindo's writings in newspapers such as **Bande Mataram** and **Karmayogin** articulated a vision of complete freedom (Swaraj) from colonial rule and inspired many young Indians to join the nationalist cause¹²⁴.
- ❖ His political activism peaked during the **Anti-Partition Movement of 1905**, which protested against the British decision to partition Bengal.
- ❖ Aurobindo called for **boycotts of British goods and institutions**, promoting a **form of nationalism** that combined spiritual ideals with political action.
- ❖ However, his revolutionary activities led to his arrest in 1908 during the **Alipore Bomb Case**, where he faced charges related to bombings aimed at British officials. Although acquitted due to lack of evidence, this period of imprisonment profoundly impacted his worldview.

Transition to Philosophy and Spirituality:

- ❖ Following his release from prison, Aurobindo experienced a significant transformation.
- ❖ During his solitary confinement, he had **mystical experiences** that shifted his focus from **political activism to spiritual exploration**.
- ❖ In 1910, he moved to **Pondicherry** (now **Puducherry**), where he dedicated himself entirely to spiritual pursuits, developing what he called **Integral Yoga**. This approach is aimed at achieving a divine life on earth through personal spiritual evolution.
- ❖ Aurobindo's philosophical works, such as **The Life Divine** and **Synthesis of Yoga**, reflect his belief that human beings could evolve spiritually to attain higher states of consciousness.
- ❖ He proposed that this evolution was essential not only for individual liberation but also for societal transformation.
- ❖ His teachings emphasised that true nationalism was rooted in spirituality rather than mere political ideology, asserting that **"nationalism is a spiritual thing"** rather than simply a political programme.

Examples of His Philosophical Influence:

- ❖ **Integral Yoga:** Aurobindo's Integral Yoga integrates aspects of various yogic practices with an emphasis on personal and collective transformation. This holistic approach encourages practitioners to engage with all facets of life—physical, mental, and spiritual—to realise their full potential.

- ❖ **Literary Contributions:** His literary works often blend poetry with profound philosophical insights. For instance, *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol* is an epic poem that explores themes of love, death, and the quest for immortality, reflecting his belief in the transformative power of spiritual consciousness.
- ❖ **Sri Aurobindo Ashram:** Founded in 1926 in Pondicherry, the ashram became a centre for spiritual seekers worldwide. Under Aurobindo's guidance and later that of **Mirra Alfassa (The Mother)**, it fostered a community dedicated to spiritual growth and practical applications of his teachings.

Jatindranath Mukherjee

Jatindranath Mukherjee, popularly known as **Bagha Jatin**, was a significant figure in the Indian independence movement, born on **December 7, 1879**, in **Kayagram village, Nadia district** (now in **Bangladesh**) to **Sharatshashi** and **Umeshchandra Mukherjee**. He earned the title "Bagha" (meaning tiger) after single-handedly killing a Bengal tiger in 1906, an act that symbolised his bravery and tenacity.

Role in India's Freedom Movement:

- ❖ **Revolutionary** ideologies deeply influenced **Bagha Jatin** and became a prominent leader within the **Jugantar Party**, which aimed to organise armed resistance against British rule.
- ❖ He played a crucial role in expanding the **party's network across India** as noted by **Sanjeev Sanyal's "Revolutionaries"**, and was involved in **various revolutionary activities**, including bank robberies and assassination attempts against British officials.
- ❖ His leadership during the **Alipore Bomb Case in 1908** marked a **pivotal moment** when he revitalised the **Jugantar Party** after many of its members were arrested. His strategic vision extended beyond India; he sought international support for the independence movement, notably securing a promise of arms from the **German Crown Prince** during **World War I**.
- ❖ **Jatin's revolutionary activities** included coordinating with other groups like the **Anushilan Samiti** and engaging in **fund-raising efforts through daring operations**, which were essential for financing the armed struggle against colonial rule.
- ❖ His commitment to militant nationalism made him a legendary figure among freedom fighters, inspiring future generations, including leaders like **Subhas Chandra Bose**.

The Battle of Balasore:

- ❖ The **Battle of Balasore**, fought on **September 9, 1915**, was one of Jatin's most notable actions. Following intelligence

reports about an **impending arms shipment from Germany**, Jatin and his associates took refuge in the **forests of Mayurbhanj** and positioned themselves on a **hillock near Balasore**. They faced a large contingent of British police and military forces equipped with advanced weaponry.

- ❖ During this fierce confrontation, which **lasted approximately two hours**, **Jatin** and his **comrades** were heavily outgunned but fought valiantly with their **Mauser pistols**. The battle resulted in significant casualties on both sides; however, Jatin sustained severe injuries. He succumbed to his wounds the following day at **Balasore Hospital** on **September 10, 1915**.
- ❖ His martyrdom is commemorated as a symbol of resistance against British imperialism, encapsulated in his rallying cry: **"We shall die to awaken the nation"**.

Hyder Ali

Hyder Ali (1720 – 1782) emerged as a pivotal leader in the **Kingdom of Mysore** during the **18th century**, particularly following the **decline of the Wodeyar dynasty**. His rise to power and subsequent consolidation of Mysore marked a significant shift in the region's political landscape.

Early Life and Rise to Power:

- ❖ Born in **Budikote**, **Hyder Ali** began his career as a **soldier**, gradually ascending through the ranks due to his military prowess. Initially serving as an officer under the **Nizam of Hyderabad**, he attracted attention for his capabilities, eventually becoming the **Dalavayi (commander-in-chief)** of the **Mysore army** under **Krishnaraja Wodeyar II**.
- ❖ By 1761, amid political instability and financial turmoil within the Wodeyar administration, **Hyder Ali** effectively seized control and became the *de facto* ruler of Mysore, styling himself as **Sarvadhikari (Chief Minister)**.

Consolidation of Mysore:

- ❖ **Military Organisation:** He modernised the Mysore army by adopting European military tactics and **employing European mercenaries for training**. This transformation enabled him to build a formidable fighting force capable of **engaging both local rivals and colonial powers**.
- ❖ **Territorial Expansion:** **Hyder Ali** expanded Mysore's boundaries significantly. He engaged in conflicts with the **Marathas** and successfully captured territories such as **Bednur** and parts of **Malabar**. His campaigns against the Marathas were particularly notable; after a series of conflicts, he capitalised on their weakened state post-1772 to extend his influence up to the **Krishna River**.
- ❖ **Conflict with British Forces:** The growing power of Hyder Ali alarmed both the **British East India Company** and local rulers like the **Nizam of Hyderabad**.

- ❖ This led to the **First Anglo-Mysore War** (1767-1769), where he successfully defended his kingdom against British forces, even compelling them to sign a mutual defence treaty. His military campaigns during this period showcased his strategic acumen and ability to forge temporary alliances.
- ❖ **Administrative Reforms:** Beyond military achievements, **Hyder Ali** implemented **effective governance practices**. He reorganised tax systems, improved agricultural productivity, and established a more centralised administration, which helped stabilise **Mysore's economy** during turbulent times. His focus on infrastructure development further enhanced trade and communication within the kingdom.

Vyas Samman

Context:

Renowned **Hindi author Suryabala's** novel **Kaun Des Ko Vasi: Venu Ki Diary** has been selected for the prestigious **34th Vyas Samman, 2024**, the KK Birla Foundation announced in an official statement.

Suryabala and her Work

- ❖ Suryabala, born in 1943 in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, holds an **MA in Hindi literature from Kashi Vishwavidyalaya and a PhD**.
- ❖ Over a career spanning decades, she has **authored more than 50 novels, biographies, children's books, and other works**, many of which have been adapted into TV serials.
- ❖ Her writing often focuses on social issues.
- ❖ Published in 2018, **Kaun Des Ko Vasi: Venu Ki Diary** ex-

plores the aspirations of Indian youth who view America as a land of promise, delving into the challenges, temptations, and cultural conflicts they face.

- It reflects on the spiritual alienation, cultural estrangement, and identity struggles experienced by individuals caught between two worlds, unable to reconnect with their roots or fully assimilate abroad.

About the Vyas Samman

- ❖ Instituted in 1991, the Vyas Samman is **awarded to an exceptional Hindi literary work by an Indian citizen published within the last 10 years**.
- ❖ The honor includes a **cash prize of ₹4 lakh, a citation, and a plaque**.
- ❖ A **selection committee** comprising **distinguished literary figures and scholars** is responsible for choosing the awardee.
- ❖ If no work meets the expected standard in a given year, the award may not be presented.
- ❖ **Notable Winners:** In 1991, Ramvilas Sharma received the award for his work **Bharat ke Prachin Bhasha Parivar aur Hindi**. In 2020, Prof. Sharad Pagare was honored for his novel **Pataliputra ki Samrajni**. Most recently, in 2023, Pushpa Bharti won the award for her book **Yaadein, Yaadein aur Yaadein**.

Alongside the Vyas Samman, the KK Birla Foundation also presents the Saraswati Samman, with a cash prize of ₹15 lakh, for outstanding literary works in any language listed in Schedule VIII of the Indian Constitution, and the Bihari Puraskar.

THESTUDYIAS

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Miscellaneous (Recent Discovery, Awards, & Honours)

Prehistoric Rock Carvings Discovered

Context:

A significant archaeological discovery has been made in Kanhirapoil, located in Madikkai panchayat, where **24 pairs of prehistoric footprints and a human figure have been found carved into rock on private land.**

More on News:

- ❖ Experts believe these carvings, **thought to date back to the Megalithic period, offer a fascinating glimpse into ancient cultural practices.**
- ❖ The discovery was first reported by local archaeology enthusiast Satheesan Kaliyanam.
 - Archaeologist Professor Ajith Kumar and historian Professor Nandakumar Koroth later visited the site and confirmed its importance.

Details of the Carvings:

- ❖ The carvings, **made using iron tools, depict footprints ranging in size from six to ten inches**, suggesting representations of both adults and children.
- ❖ The **footprints are oriented westward and culminate in a carved human figure surrounded by four circular pits.**
 - According to Professor Kumar, the **footprints likely represent the souls of deceased individuals**, carved to honour them. However, **local residents attribute the carvings to a goddess.**
- ❖ Professor Kumar also noted **similarities between these carvings and prehistoric rock art discovered in Avalakki Pera, Udupi district, Karnataka.** The find adds to a growing list of rock art sites in north Kerala, such as:
 - A **temple carving** at Erikulam Valiyapara, Kasaragod
 - A **running tiger motif** near Bangalam Government Higher Secondary School, Neeleswaram
 - **Human figures** at Cheemeni Ariyittapara
 - **Bull carvings** at Ettukudukka, Kannur
 - The **celebrated Edakkal Caves** in Wayanad

Historical Significance:

- ❖ Estimated to be **around 2,000 years old**, the carvings provide **insights into the lives and artistic expressions of the early inhabitants of Madikkai grama panchayat and Kerala.**

This discovery highlights the shared cultural heritage of the Megalithic period in prehistoric north Kerala.

Face of Neanderthal woman revealed

Context:

Recently, scientists have created a 3D model based on the fragmented, crushed remains found during the excavation of a Neanderthal woman's skull.

More on News:

- ❖ The skull used for creating this model was discovered in Shanidar Cave, located in Iraqi Kurdistan.
- ❖ It is famous because of evidence of burial practices.
- ❖ This cave holds significant historical importance, as it yielded the remains of at least 10 Neanderthal individuals, both male and female, along with children during the 1950s.
- ❖ In 2015, a British team unearthed the Shanidar Z skeleton, comprising the spine, shoulders, arms, and the majority of the upper body.
- ❖ The Neanderthals vanished 40,000 years ago.

Shanidar Z Skull:

- ❖ The skull was found to be extremely flat and fragmented, described as "as flat as a pizza".
- ❖ While the pelvic bones were not recovered, analysis of the tooth enamel proteins indicated the skeleton belonged to a female who died in her mid-40s.
- ❖ The careful placement of the Neanderthal bodies in the cave suggests they maintained traditions around how their dead were treated.

Who were the Neanderthals?

- ❖ Neanderthals were a distinct species known as *Homo neanderthalensis*, separate from modern humans.
- ❖ They Neanderthals have a long evolutionary history, with the earliest known fossils dating back around 430,000 years.
- ❖ They coexisted with early modern humans, and evidence indicates intimate encounters, as some modern humans have inherited approximately **2% Neanderthal DNA.**
- ❖ The peak of Neanderthal existence was between approximately 130,000 and 40,000 years ago.
- ❖ They displayed adaptability, residing in various environments ranging from cold steppe regions in **England** and **Siberia** to warm temperate woodlands in **Spain** and **Italy.**

World's Oldest Stone Needles Unearthed on Tibetan Plateau

Context:

Archaeologists unearthed **six unusual stone artefacts** near the shore of **Lake Xiada Co** in western Tibet. Each artefact is about half the length of a golf tee, with a **pointed tip** and an **eyelike opening**.

Study and Findings:

- ❖ Findings published in the Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports.
- ❖ The artefacts are identified as **stone sewing needles**, dating back up to **9000 years**, making them the **oldest on record**.
- ❖ These are the **oldest stone tools** made by grinding found on the **Tibetan Plateau**.
- ❖ Archaeologists find the study interesting but remain sceptical about the objects being needles.

Characteristics and Analysis of the Needles:

- ❖ **Materials Used:** Made of **tremolite, serpentine, actinolite, and talc**.
 - **Tremolite** is significantly **harder than talc**.
- ❖ **Manufacturing Process:** Needles were **scraped** into shape, ground to form a tip, and then drilled to create an eye.
 - Researchers replicated the needles using **tremolite slabs and obsidian**.
 - Scraping, grinding, and drilling processes were recreated, taking a significant amount of time.
 - The process took at least **seven times longer** than for **bone needles**.
- ❖ **Evolution of Needles:** Bone needles date back approximately **50,000 years (found in Denisova Cave, Russia)**.
- ❖ Previously oldest known stone needles were **2700 years old (found in Henan province, China)**.



Usage and Symbolism:

- ❖ Researchers hypothesise these needles **may have been used for sewing thicker materials like tents**.
 - Needle 6 had traces of **red ochre**, indicating possible **religious significance**.
 - Suggested ochre use on the Tibetan Plateau dates back **4500 years**.
- ❖ **Alternative Perspectives:** Anthropologist suggests blunt tips and ochre indicate a **symbolic** rather than practical use, possibly as **ornaments**.

- Talc's softness was questioned as a practical material for sewing needles.
- Some argue dimensions and wear patterns are closer to bone needles than stone pendants.
- The artefacts might have been used for weaving fishing nets, considering the proximity to a lake.

National Archives of India Acquires the private paper collection of Late Shri Rafi Ahmad Kidwai

Context:

National Archives of India (NAI) acquires the private paper collection of Late Shri Rafi Ahmad Kidwai.

More on news:

- ❖ Papers handed over to Director General, NAI by Shri Faiz Ahmad Kidwai (IAS), Additional Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- ❖ Collection includes **original correspondences between Kidwai and eminent leaders like Pt. Nehru, Sardar Patel, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, P.D. Tandon, etc.**
- ❖ This acquisition ensures the preservation of a significant part of our nation's history and the legacy of a remarkable leader.



Late Shri Rafi Ahmad Kidwai:

- ❖ He was born on **February 18, 1894, in Masauli, Uttar Pradesh**.
- ❖ His political journey started in 1920 with involvement in **Khilafat Movement and Non-Cooperation Movement**.
- ❖ He served as **Private Secretary to Motilal Nehru**, held significant positions in Congress Legislative Assembly and United Provinces Congress Committee.
- ❖ He served as a minister in Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant's cabinet, managing Revenue and Jail portfolios.
- ❖ He also served India's first Minister for Communications in Jawaharlal Nehru's cabinet, initiated **"own your telephone" service and night air mail**.
- ❖ In 1952, took charge of the **Food and Agriculture portfolio**, successfully tackled food rationing challenges.
- ❖ His contributions were recognized with the creation of the **Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Award by Indian Council of Agricultural Research in 1956**.

- ❖ He was known as a magician and miracle man for his administrative skills and swift crisis management.

Khilafat Movement:

- ❖ Initiated in **1919** by Indian Muslims to protest the dismantling of the Ottoman Caliphate by Allied powers after World War I.
- ❖ Aimed to defend the Ottoman Caliphate, which was seen as the spiritual leader of Muslims worldwide.
- ❖ Led by prominent leaders like **Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali**, alongside **Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress (INC)**.

Non-Cooperation Movement:

- ❖ Launched by **Mahatma Gandhi in 1920** as a response to the **Jallianwala Bagh massacre and the Rowlatt Act**.
- ❖ Aimed to non-violently resist British rule through non-cooperation with British institutions, including educational, legislative, and administrative.
- ❖ Temporarily suspended in 1922 following the Chauri Chaura incident, where protesters turned violent.

National Archives of India (NAI):

- ❖ The National Archives of India was set up in **1891 in Calcutta** under the name Imperial Record Department, serving as the primary record repository for the Government of India.
- ❖ NAI is custodian of non-current records of Government of India, holding them in trust as per **Public Record Act 1993**.
- ❖ **Objectives:**
 - To **collect** significant publications on **Modern Indian History** and preserve them for research purposes.
 - To serve as a supplement to the records housed in the National Archives of India.
 - To disseminate information to its users and serve as an epitome of national identity.

UNESCO's Memory of the World Asia-Pacific Regional Register

Context :

Ramcharitmanas, Panchatantra, and Sahṛdayāloka-Locana have entered UNESCO's Memory of the World Asia-Pacific Regional Register.

More on News:

- ❖ The **Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)**, played a vital role in the inclusion of three during the **10th**

meeting of the Memory of the World Committee for Asia and the Pacific (MOWCAP).

- ❖ It was **hosted** by the **Ministry of Culture of Mongolia**, the Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO, and the UNESCO Regional Office in **Bangkok**.
- ❖ This is the first time IGCA has submitted nominations to the Regional Register.

Poem	Author	About poem
Sahṛdayaloka-Locana/ Dhvanyāloka	Acharya Anandvardhan	Tells that the main goal of good poetry is the evocation of a mood or "flavour" (<i>rasa</i>)
Panchatantra (15th Century Manuscript)	Pt. Vishnu Sharma	Collection of folktales and fables(authored in Sanskrit verse.
Ramcharitmanas	Goswami Tulsi-das (16th-century Indian poet)	Poem in the language of Awadhi. It literally means the lake of the deeds of Rama.

About World Asia-Pacific Regional Register :

- ❖ UNESCO's Memory of the World (MOW) Program

It was launched in **1992** as an international cooperation strategy aimed at safeguarding, protecting and facilitating access to and the use of documentary heritage, especially heritage that is rare and endangered.

- ❖ **Memory of the World Committee for Asia/Pacific (MOW-CAP)**
 - MOWCAP (consortium of 43 countries in APAC) is composed of UNESCO National Committee for MOW Program in the Asia/Pacific region.
 - It is a cooperative structure through which people from two or more countries in the region can be brought together to pursue the objectives of the MOW Program.
 - MOWCAP is the authority that approves inscriptions on the Asia/Pacific MOW Register.

About Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) :

- ❖ **Autonomous institute** under the **Union Ministry of Culture**.
- ❖ Launched in **1985 by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi**.
- ❖ It is envisioned as a center for the study and experience of **arts in the field of creative literature** - written and oral; visual arts inclusive of architecture, sculpture, painting and graphics to general material culture, photography and film; and performing arts of music, dance and theatre.

Srinagar Recognised as World Craft City by World Crafts Council

Context:

Srinagar has earned the **World Craft City (WCC)** tag from the **World Crafts Council (WCC)**, a non-government organisation working to empower artisans and safeguard craft heritage globally.

Significance of the Recognition:

- ❖ The recognition is likely to reopen **Kashmir's historical connections with craft centres in Central Asia and Iran.**
- ❖ **Srinagar** has a rich **4,000-year history** and is renowned for its artistry in **shawls, carpets, and papier-mâché.**
 - The city's craft scene underwent significant **changes** in the 14th century with the **arrival of Persian and Central Asian preachers and artisans.**
 - **Srinagar** earned the title of **UNESCO Creative City under Crafts and Folk Art** in **2021**, bringing renewed attention to its craft scene.
- ❖ **Kashmir's shawl and carpet industry** has been heavily **influenced** by Persian artisans, with carpet designs named after Iranian cities like **Kashan and Tabriz.**
 - The handicraft sector in Kashmir has seen significant **economic gains**, with **exports** doubling from **Rs. 1,000 to 2,000** crores in the **last five years.**
- ❖ The WCC tag will provide sustainable **income opportunities, enhance global recognition, and support cultural heritage preservation.**
 - Also offer artisans access to networks for **collaboration and growth, boosting sales and tourism.**

The World Crafts Council:

- ❖ It is a **non-governmental, non-profit organisation** formed in New York City, on **12 June 1964.**
- ❖ **Aim:** maintaining, strengthening, and ensuring the status of crafts as a vital part of cultural life.
- ❖ It promotes the human values of crafts and fosters a sense of fellowship among craftspeople worldwide.
- ❖ It is the **only body** set up to **support** the aspirations of the **world's craftspeople**, whether in maintaining traditions or in extending frontiers through innovation.
- ❖ The Council is organised into the following **five regions:**
 - **Africa**
 - **Asia-Pacific**
 - **Europe**
 - **North America**
 - **South America**

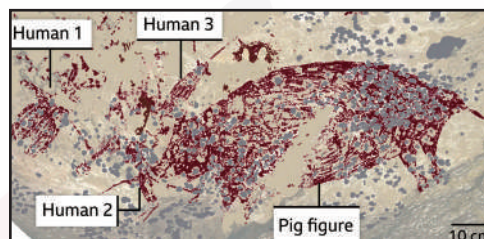
Discovery of World's Oldest Cave Art Showing Humans & Pig

Context:

Scientists discovered the oldest figurative cave art on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi. The painting, found in **Leang Karampuang cave**, is at least 51,200 years old.

About the Painting

- ❖ Discovered on the Indonesian island of **Sulawesi** and is at least 51,200 years old, surpassing previous oldest cave art by more than 5,000 years.
- ❖ It features a **pig** surrounded by three smaller human-like figures.
- ❖ The pig is painted in a single shade of dark red pigment, and the figures are also depicted in the same colour.



Narrative and Interaction in the Painting

- ❖ The painting shows a **pig standing with its mouth partly open and at least three human-like figures interacting with it.**
- ❖ The largest human figure appears to be holding a rod, while the second figure seems to be holding a stick near the pig's throat.
- ❖ The third human-like figure is upside-down with its legs facing up and splayed outwards, reaching towards the pig's head.
- ❖ The way the figures are placed and interact suggests they are telling a detailed story.

Implications for Human Evolution

- ❖ This discovery **challenges the previous notion** that the creative explosion leading to **art and science began in Europe.**
- ❖ The findings **reinforce the idea that narrative storytelling was a crucial part of early human culture** in Indonesia from a very early point in time.

New Dating Technique

- ❖ The new dating method, involving **laser analysis of calcium carbonate deposits**, has enabled more accurate dating of the cave art.
- ❖ This technique is expected to lead to re-dating of cave art sites around the world, potentially pushing back the emergence of representational art even further.

Do You Know?

The first evidence for drawing was found on rocks in the **Blombos Caves** in southern Africa.



It dates back to between 75,000 to 100,000 years ago and consists of geometric patterns.

Assam's 700-yr-old Moidams to be considered for World Heritage List

Assam already boasts of **two** world heritage sites in the **natural** category:

- ❖ **Kaziranga National Park and Manas National Park.**

Context:

The **Moidams**, an ancient **mound-burial system** from the **Ahom dynasty** in Assam that dates back **700 years**, will be considered for inclusion on the **World Heritage List** at the **46th session of the World Heritage Committee (WHC)** next week in **New Delhi**.

More on News:

- ❖ The session is being held in **India** for the **first time**.
- ❖ It will bring together **culture ministers, representatives, and stakeholders** from around the world. If nominated successfully, it **will become the first cultural site** from the **northeastern region of India** on the **World Heritage List**. It is **currently on the tentative list** of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, which is the initial step toward inclusion on the final list.
- ❖ Moidams is **among 28 sites** proposed for inscription, which will be examined based on their category: **natural, mixed, and cultural**.

Current World Heritage List Status:

- ❖ The committee will also review the state of conservation for the **124 sites** already inscribed on the World Heritage List.
- ❖ Of these, **57 sites** are listed as **World Heritage in Danger**.
- ❖ A total of **1,199 sites** in **168 countries** are currently inscribed in the List.
- ❖ **India** has **44 sites** on the **World Heritage List**.

About World Heritage Committee:

- ❖ The **World Heritage Committee** was established under the Convention concerning the **Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage**.
- ❖ It was adopted by the **General Conference of UNESCO** during its **17th session** on **November 16, 1972**.
- ❖ The Committee meets **annually**. It is composed of representatives from **21 States** Parties to the Convention, elected by their **General Assembly**.
 - **India is a party** to the World Heritage Committee.

About Ahom Dynasty:

- ❖ Established by **Sukaphaa** in **1228**, a **Shan prince** from **Mong Mao**.
 - He **arrived in Assam** after crossing the **Patkai Mountains**.
- ❖ The Ahom dynasty ruled between the **13th and 19th centuries**.
- ❖ Tribal communities that emerged during this period included **Kacharis, Chutias, and Koch**.
- ❖ The dynasty ended with the **Burmese invasion of Assam**.
- ❖ Assam was **annexed** by the **British East India Company** following the **Treaty of Yandaboo in 1826**.
- ❖ The British East India Company began the **colonial era in Assam**.

Cultural Mapping of Villages

Context:

Under the **National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM)**, the government has taken an initiative to provide a comprehensive overview of the cultural heritage of 6.5 lakh villages across India.

National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM).

- ❖ It is a scheme **launched in 2017** by the **Ministry of Culture (MoC)**

Cultural mapping :

- ❖ It **records a region's cultural uniqueness**—local stories, rituals, arts, languages, built heritage, cuisines, and history—to define local culture.
- ❖ It documents both **tangible and intangible assets** to develop cultural resource mapping, starting with a **cultural-sensitive approach** to capture the '**sense of place**' and **distinctive elements**.

- ❖ The **aims and objectives** of the project include:
 - Raising **awareness about cultural heritage** and its **role in development and cultural identity**.
 - **Mapping 6.5 lakh villages**, including their geographical, demographic profiles, and creative capitals.
 - Creating **National Registers of Artists and Art practices**.
 - Developing a **web portal and mobile app** to serve as a **National Cultural WorkPlace (NCWP)**.
- ❖ The project targets **all inhabited villages in India listed in the 2011 Census**, including those in Bihar.
- ❖ **Vision & Mission**
 - To **preserve India's rich art and cultural heritage** and convert its vast cultural landscape into objective cultural mapping.
 - To Design a mechanism to fulfil the aspirations of the whole artist community of the nation
 - To Preserve the rich cultural heritage of this country for future generations
 - To create a strong **"Cultural Vibrancy"** throughout the nation
- ❖ It will identify, **collect and record cultural assets and resources**.
- ❖ **CSC (Common Service Centres) e-Governance Services India Limited**, a special purpose vehicle (SPV) under **Ministry of Electronics & IT (Meity)**, will carryout National Mission on Cultural Mapping.
- ❖ It is executed under the guidance of **Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)**.

Other Schemes/Programs Related to Art and Culture

- ❖ Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat
- ❖ Kala Sanskriti Vikas Yojana
- ❖ Scheme for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage
- ❖ National Mission on Libraries
- ❖ Museum Grant Scheme
- ❖ Indian Conservation Fellowship Program (ICFP)

Project Pari

Context:

Project PARI (Public Art of India) is an initiative launched by the Ministry of Culture to celebrate and enhance the public art scene in India.

More on news:

- ❖ **The Lalit Kala Akademi and the National Gallery of Modern Art** execute this project.

Lalit Kala Akademi

- ❖ Inaugurated on 5th August **1954** by the then Minister for Education, **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad** and was registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860, it is India's national academy of fine arts established by the Government of India to promote and propagate understanding of Indian art, in and outside the country.
- ❖ The **National Exhibition of Art** is the most prestigious annual event of the Lalit Kala Akademi.

National Gallery of Modern Art

- ❖ The National Gallery of Modern Art is India's premier art institution for modern and contemporary Indian art.
- ❖ The museum was established in 1954 with the singular aim of promoting and preserving modern Indian art.
- ❖ **PARI aims to stimulate dialogue and reflection through public art that blends India's rich cultural heritage with contemporary themes.**
- ❖ It is a part of continuous effort of the Government in blending India's rich cultural history with contemporary themes in public art by providing incentives to the talented artists.
- ❖ More than 200 visual artists came together to create the various traditional artforms, wall paintings, murals, sculptures and installations such as **Phad paintings, Thangka paintings, Warli art, Gond Art, Alpona art, Cheriya painting, Tanjore paintings, Kalamkari, Pithora Art, Kerela Murals**, etc on different themes.etc.

Other schemes of Ministry of Culture

- ❖ Scheme of Financial Assistance for Promotion of Art and Culture
- ❖ Financial Assistance for Promotion of Guru-Shishya Parampara (Repertory grant)
- ❖ National Mission on Libraries
- ❖ Financial Assistance for Construction of Tagore Cultural Complexes(TCC)
- ❖ Scheme of Financial Assistance under Seva Bhoj Yojna
- ❖ Scheme of Scholarship and Fellowship for Promotion of Art and Culture
- ❖ Museum Grant Scheme
- ❖ Scheme for Financial Assistance for Veteran Artists
- ❖ Scheme for Promotion of Culture of Science (SPOCS)
- ❖ Scheme for Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage
- ❖ Global Engagement Scheme
- ❖ Indian Conservation Fellowship Program (ICFP)
- ❖ Centenary and Anniversary Celebrations Scheme

Hindi Diwas: A Day Dedicated to the Mother Tongue

Context:

Hindi Diwas is celebrated on September 14 every year in India as a symbol of the promotion of the Hindi language and the cultural unity of the country.

History of Hindi Diwas:

- ❖ It is celebrated every year on September 14.
- ❖ On September 14, 1949, the **Constituent Assembly** recognised Hindi as the **official language** of India.
- ❖ For the first time in 1953, the idea to celebrate Hindi Diwas was presented by the **Official Language Commission** to promote Hindi at the national level.



Why is Hindi Diwas Celebrated?

- ❖ It is celebrated to promote and highlight the importance of the Hindi language.
- ❖ The day symbolises India's cultural unity and pride in the mother tongue.
- ❖ Various programs are organised to emphasise the significance and role of Hindi.

Importance of Hindi Language and Hindi Diwas:

- ❖ Hindi is a symbol of the country's cultural heritage and unity.
- ❖ The Constitution grants a special place to Hindi.
- ❖ Hindi literature has guided society, with writers such as Kabir, Tulsidas, Premchand, and Mahadevi Verma enriching it.

Purpose of Celebrating Hindi Diwas:

- ❖ To promote and spread Hindi at the international level.
- ❖ To introduce youth to the significance of the Hindi language and its literature.
- ❖ To enhance the importance of Hindi in safeguarding Indian culture and traditions.

Message of Hindi Diwas:

- ❖ To foster pride and respect for the Hindi language.
- ❖ To contribute to the promotion and development of Hindi.
- ❖ To emphasise speaking and writing in Hindi through programs organised in schools, colleges, and various institutions.

Relaunch of National Manuscript Mission

Context:

The Union Ministry of Culture is set to “**revive and relaunch**” the **National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM)** and is mulling the formation of an autonomous body to help preserve ancient texts in India. The new body, **likely to be named the National Manuscripts Authority**, will be an autonomous entity under the Ministry.

About NMM:

- ❖ Presently, NMM is a **part of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts**.
- ❖ **The key objectives** of the National Mission for Manuscripts are **documentation, conservation, digitisation and online dissemination** of manuscript heritage of India.
- ❖ The Mission through the **network of Manuscript Conservation Centres (MCCs) and Manuscript Resource Centres (MRCs)** has preserved, documented and disseminated India's rich manuscript heritage.

Achievements of NMM:

- ❖ The NMM has prepared metadata for **52 lakh manuscripts and digitised over 3 lakh titles**, with **one-third uploaded online**.
- ❖ **44.07 lakhs Manuscripts have been documented**.
- ❖ **To achieve this mandate**, the mission has **established more than 100 Manuscripts Resource Centres and Manuscripts Conservation Centres all over India**.
- ❖ **Conservation Efforts:** The NMM has undertaken preventive and curative conservation of **9 crore folios over the past 21 years**.

Saint Andrew the Apostle Award

Context:

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** received **Russia's highest civilian honour**, the **Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle**, for promoting **strategic partnership and friendly relations between Russia and India**.

About Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle Award:

- ❖ Russia's **highest civilian honour**. Established by **Tsar Peter the Great in 1698**.
- ❖ Abolished in **1918** after the Russian Revolution, **re-established in 1998** by an Executive Order of the President of Russia.



- ❖ **Award Criteria:** Given to **prominent figures** in government, military, science, culture, art, and various sectors for **exceptional services** to Russia, and to foreign state heads for **outstanding services** to the Russian Federation.
- ❖ **Historical Significance:**
 - Named after **Saint Andrew**, one of the **apostles of Jesus**.
 - **Saint Andrew** is believed to have travelled to Russia, Greece, and other parts of Europe and Asia, founding the **Church of Constantinople**.
 - The Russian Orthodox Church, followed by more than **90 million** people in Russia, traces its roots to Saint Andrew.
 - Saint Andrew is the **patron saint of Russia and Scotland**.
 - The **'X'** symbol on the **flag of Scotland** comes from Saint Andrew's symbol, the **'Saltire'**.
 - It is believed that Saint Andrew was **crucified** on a cross of similar shape.
- ❖ **Design of the Order:**
 - The chain consists of **17 alternating links**.
 - Features a gilded image of the State Emblem of the Russian Federation, a **double-headed eagle**.
 - Includes a badge, a star, and a light blue silk moire ribbon.
 - For distinction in combat, the badge and star are adorned with swords.
- ❖ **Other foreign leaders:** include Chinese President **Xi Jinping (2017)** and former **President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev**.

Highest Honours Announced on Prime Minister Narendra Modi:

- ❖ **2023: Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour:** Highest French honour in military or civilian orders.
 - **Order of Nile:** Highest state honour of Egypt.
 - **Companion of the Order of Fiji:** Highest honour of Fiji.
- ❖ **2021: Order of the Druk Gyalpo:** Highest civilian decoration of **Bhutan**.
- ❖ **2019: Order of St. Andrew:** Highest civilian honour of **Russia**.
 - **Order of the Distinguished Rule of Nishan Izzuddin:** Highest honour of the **Maldives**.
 - **Order of Zayed:** Highest civilian honour of the **United Arab Emirates**.
- ❖ **2018: Grand Collar of the State of Palestine:** Highest honour of the State of Palestine.
- ❖ **2016: King Abdulaziz Sash:** Highest civilian honour of **Saudi Arabia**.
 - **State Order of Ghazi Amir Amanullah Khan:** Highest civilian honour of **Afghanistan**.

Port Blair renamed as Sri Vijaya Puram

Context:

Port Blair, the capital of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, was renamed Sri Vijaya Puram as part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiative to eliminate symbols of slavery, announced by Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Origin of Port Blair's Name:

- ❖ Named after Archibald Blair, a naval surveyor and lieutenant in the Bombay Marine.
- ❖ Blair conducted a thorough survey of the Andaman Islands.
- ❖ Initially named the area Port Cornwallis, later renamed after Blair himself.

Blair's Survey Expeditions:

- ❖ Joined Bombay Marine in 1771 and undertook surveys along coasts of India, Iran, and Arabia.
- ❖ In 1778, he led his first survey mission to the Andamans, covering the western and eastern coasts.
- ❖ Submitted a detailed report to the East India Company (EIC), leading to the decision to colonise the islands.

Early Use of the Andaman Islands:

- ❖ EIC colonised the islands to combat Malay pirates and provide refuge for shipwrecks.
- ❖ Became a penal colony for convicts and a strategic military outpost.
- ❖ Colony moved to Port Cornwallis in 1792 for strategic reasons, but later abandoned due to disease.

Penal Colony and Independence Movement:

- ❖ Following the 1857 Revolt, Port Blair was revived as a penal colony for Indian prisoners.
- ❖ The notorious Cellular Jail (Kaala Paani) was established by 1906, imprisoning freedom fighters like Veer Savarkar.

Connection to Cholas and Srivijaya:

- ❖ Historical records suggest Andaman Islands were used by Chola emperor Rajendra I in the 11th century as a naval base.
- ❖ Cholas attacked the Srivijaya Empire (present-day Indonesia) as part of an expansionist campaign.
- ❖ Inscription from 1050 CE refers to the Andaman Islands as Ma-Nakkavaram, leading to the modern name Nicobar.

Bali Jatra

Context:

Asia's largest open-air trade fair, *Bali Jatra*, has started to celebrate Odisha's ancient sea-trading history.

More on News

- ❖ This year's fair opens on the full moon day of Kartika and will run until 22nd November.
- ❖ While the fair has changed, the excitement and spirit remain the same.
- ❖ The festival **stirs up warm memories of Odisha's rich heritage and amazes visitors.**

About Bali Jatra

- ❖ Bali Jatra, also known as "**Voyage to Bali**," is a significant cultural festival celebrated in Odisha, particularly in the city of Cuttack.
- ❖ This festival **commemorates the rich maritime history of the region** and is observed during the **full moon day of Kartika** (October-November), lasting for seven days.

Historical Significance:

- ❖ The festival **marks the day when ancient Odia mariners, known as Sadhabas, would set sail to distant lands such as Bali, Java, Sumatra, and Borneo** for trade and cultural exchanges.
- ❖ The name "Bali Jatra" **reflects this historical connection**, celebrating the maritime legacy of Odisha and its trading links with Southeast Asia.
- ❖ The **Kalinga Empire** (ancient Odisha) **was renowned for its naval prowess**, with ports facilitating extensive trade routes across the Bay of Bengal.

Key Features of the Festival

- ❖ **Boita Bandana Ritual:** A central aspect of Bali Jatra is the Boita Bandana ceremony, **where participants create small boats** from materials like paper and banana leaves.
 - These boats are **illuminated with lamps and floated on the Mahanadi River** as a tribute to the seafaring traditions of their ancestors.
- ❖ **Cultural Celebrations:** The festival includes a grand fair featuring stalls selling traditional handicrafts, food items, and various attractions such as rides and games.
- ❖ **Open Trade Fair:** In 2022, it set a Guinness World Record for creating over 22,000 paper boats in a short period.

Temple Administration in India

Context:

As the Supreme Court considers petitions requesting a court-monitored investigation into allegations of ghee adulteration in the laddu prasadam at Lord Venkateswara's temple, Hindu organisations have renewed their demand for temples to be freed from government control.

Aspect	Indian Secularism	Western Secularism
Definition	Equal respect and protection for all religions by the state.	Complete separation of religion and state.
State-Religion Relationship	Interaction is allowed ; the state can intervene in religious matters for reform.	Clear demarcation ; the state does not interfere in religious affairs.
Financial Support	The state provides financial aid to religious institutions.	No financial support for religious institutions from the state.
Focus of Rights	Protects the rights of both individuals and communities.	Primarily focuses on individual rights , often sidelining community rights.
Role in Politics	Religious bodies play a significant role in politics.	Minimal influence of religious bodies in national politics.
Cultural Context	Aims for harmony among diverse religions; promotes " Sarva Dharma Sambhava " (equal respect for all religions).	Often rooted in a more homogeneous society , emphasising individual liberty over community cohesion.

Temple Administration in India:

- ❖ **Muslims and Christians:** They manage their places of worship and religious institutions **through community-run boards or trusts.**
- ❖ **Hindu and Others:** Many **Hindu, Sikh, Jain, and Buddhist places of worship** are under significant **government control.**
 - **Hindu temples** make up the majority of the approximately **30 lakh places of worship in India, according to the 2011 census.**
- ❖ **Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh:** In Tamil Nadu, temples are managed by the **state's Hindu Religious and Charita-**

ble Endowments (HR&CE) department, while the **Andhra Pradesh** government **controls the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD)**, appointing its head to oversee the Tirupati Temple.

- States often use a **portion of the income from large temple donations and offerings to manage both large and smaller temples**, as well as to fund welfare activities like running hospitals, orphanages, or schools that offer secular education.
- ❖ **Other States:** Several states, including Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala, Maharashtra, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan, have **passed laws granting the government the authority** to manage temples, their finances, and expenditures.
 - In the former state of **Jammu and Kashmir**, the **Jammu and Kashmir Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Act, 1988**, was enacted to specifically **manage the Vaishno Devi Mata Shrine in Katra**.
- ❖ **Source of Authority:** The states derive their power to enact such legislation from **Article 25(2) of the Constitution**, which **allows the government to regulate or restrict secular activities** associated with religious practices and to promote social welfare and reform, including opening Hindu religious institutions to all classes of Hindus.
 - Religious endowments and institutions **fall under List III (Concurrent List)** of the Seventh Schedule, allowing both the Centre and states to legislate on the matter.

How did Hindu temples come under Government Control?

- ❖ **Earliest Evidence:** The earliest evidence of **monumental temple construction** in India dates back to the **Mauryan period (321-185 BCE)**.
 - Throughout history, kings and nobles have **donated land and wealth to temples**, which became **important centres of culture and economy**.
 - Larger temples played a key role in **promoting agriculture, irrigation, and driving economic activity**.

- ❖ **Mediaeval Period:** In the **mediaeval period**, India's wealthy temples were frequently **attacked and looted by invaders**.
- ❖ **Colonial Rule:** During colonial rule, the **British sought to control temples**, and between 1810 and 1817, the East India Company passed **several laws in the presidencies of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay**, granting itself the authority to interfere in temple administration, ostensibly to prevent mismanagement of temple income and endowments.
 - In 1863, the British enacted the **Religious Endowments Act**, transferring temple control to committees established under the Act.
 - However, the **government maintained significant influence through judicial oversight**, the extension of the Civil Procedure Code and Official Trustees Act to temples, and the Charitable and Religious Trusts Act of 1920.
 - In 1925, the **Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Act** empowered provincial governments to legislate on endowments. This law granted extensive oversight powers to a board of commissioners, which could even take over temple management.
- ❖ **After Independence:** After Independence, the **1925 Act served as a model for states** to create their own temple administration laws.
 - The first such law was the **Madras Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act** of 1951, which introduced the **supervision of temples by the HR&CE department** and the appointment of an Executive Officer.
 - ⊙ Although the Madras law was struck down by the courts, it was re-enacted in 1959 with some amendments.
 - A **similar law was passed in Bihar** around the same time.
- ❖ **Present:** Today, most South Indian states follow **similar legal frameworks** for temple control.
 - Government intervention has been argued to be necessary to ensure equal access for all castes to Hindu places of worship.



Recent Major Sports Events

UEFA European Championship 2024

Context:

Spain won its **4th UEFA European Championships** title in history as it beat **England 2-1** in the **Euro Cup 2024 final**.

About European Championship 2024:

- ❖ The final match of **EURO 2024** was held at **Berlin's Olympiastadion** on **14 July 2024**.
- ❖ The tournament featured **24 teams**, including **debutants Georgia**.
- ❖ The final tournament began on **14 June 2024** and concluded on **14 July 2024**.
- ❖ The **17th edition** of the UEFA European Championship, was **hosted by Germany**.
- ❖ This marked the **third occasion** that **Germany hosted** the European Championship.
- ❖ Germany, as the host nation, played the opening match on **14 June 2024** against Scotland.



- ❖ **UEFA European Championship 2021 won by Italy.**
- ❖ **The UK and Ireland will jointly host Euro 2028.**

Overview of UEFA European Championship:

- ❖ The **European Championship (Euro)** is a **quadrennial football tournament organised by the Union of European Football Associations UEFA**.
- ❖ It is considered the **second most prestigious international football tournament** after the World Cup.
- ❖ Initially known as the **European Nations' Cup**, the first final took place in **1960** after preliminary contests involving **17 national teams**.
- ❖ The tournament **began with 4 teams** in the final tournament format in 1960 and expanded to eight teams in 1980, then to 16 teams in 1996, currently **24 teams**.
- ❖ All UEFA member countries participate in qualification, **except the host nation(s) which qualify automatically**.

Wimbledon Championship

Context:

Recently, the Wimbledon final took place, during which **Carlos Alcaraz** has successfully defended his title by defeating **Novak Djokovic**.

About Wimbledon

- ❖ **Founded:** 1877
- ❖ **Location:** It takes place at the **All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club in Wimbledon, London, England**
- ❖ **Surface:** **Grass courts**, making it unique among the Grand Slam tournaments.
 - In 2022, the tournament celebrated its **100th anniversary** at the venue.
 - It is the only major still played on grass, the traditional tennis surface.
- ❖ **Dress Code:** Players are required to wear almost entirely **white attire**.
- ❖ The Wimbledon Championship, often simply referred to as Wimbledon, is the **oldest and one of the most prestigious tennis tournaments** in the world.
 - The other three Grand Slam tournaments are the **US Open (1881)**, **French Open (1891)**, and **Australian Open (1905)**.
- ❖ The tournament takes place over two weeks in late June and early July.
- ❖ The tournament was **cancelled in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic**, the **first cancellation since World War II**.
- ❖ **Maud Watson** of Britain secured **first women's singles Wimbledon title** in 1884.



Player with Most Wimbledon Titles:

- ❖ **Martina Navratilova** holds the record for the most Wimbledon singles titles, winning nine times, with six consecutive victories from 1982 to 1987.
- ❖ **Roger Federer** followed with eight men's singles titles, including five consecutive wins from 2003 to 2007.
- ❖ **Bjorn Borg** also achieved five consecutive victories from 1976 to 1980.

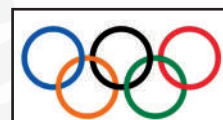
Olympics

Context:

The **Paris 2024 Olympics** are all set to take place from July 26 to August 11, 2024 with Athletes from **206 National Olympic Committees** along with the **IOC Refugee Olympic Team (EOR)** will participate.

History of Olympics:

Genesis: Originating in **776 BC**, the ancient Games were held every four years in honour of the god Zeus, featuring not only athletic contests but also artistic events such as music, poetry, and theatre.



Revival of the Olympics(The Birth of the Modern Games):

- ❖ The **International Olympic Committee (IOC)** was founded in **1894**, and the first modern Olympic Games were held in **Athens in 1896**. **Women** competed for the first time at the **1900 Games in Paris**. Since **1991**, any new sport seeking to join the Olympic program must have women's competitions.

Meaning of the Olympic rings

- The Olympic symbol represents the union of the five continents and the meeting of athletes from throughout the world at the Olympic Games. (Olympic Charter, Rule 8).

Olympics 2024

- ❖ Slogan- "Games Wide Open".
- ❖ **Skateboarding, sport climbing, surfing and breaking/breakdancing** are four non-traditional sports that will be contested at the Paris Games 2024.
 - Raising the **total number of sports in Olympics 2024 to 32**.
- ❖ India has sent its largest-ever contingent of **117 athletes across 16 diverse sports disciplines**, comprising **70 men and 47 women** in olympics 2024.

- ❖ The Olympics were **cancelled during World War I and World War II**.

India in the Olympics:

- ❖ India's Olympic journey made its debut at the **Paris Olympics in 1900** with just one **participant Norman Pritchard, an Anglo Indian**.
- ❖ Indian men's hockey team at the **Amsterdam 1928 Olympics** secured its **first Olympic gold medal**, led by the iconic **Dhyan Chand**.

Most Wimbledon titles in women's singles in Open Era

Players	Titles	Years
Martina Navratilova (Czechoslovakia and USA)	9	1978, 1979, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1990
Steffi Graf (Germany)	7	1988, 1989, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1996
Serena Williams (USA)	7	2002, 2003, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2015, 2016
Venus Williams (USA)	5	2000, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2008

NUMBER PLATE

18

Number of wins Carlos Alcaraz has registered in his first 20 matches in Men's Singles at Wimbledon. Only Rod Laver (19) has registered more wins during the Open Era.

6 Carlos Alcaraz is the youngest player to win all his first six matches (in 2024) against top-5 players since the ATP Rankings were published in 1973.

4 Carlos Alcaraz is only the second player in the Open Era to win his first four Men's Singles finals at Grand Slam events, after Roger Federer

Most Wimbledon titles in men's singles in Open Era

Players	Titles	Year
Roger Federer (Switzerland)	8	2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2012, 2017
Novak Djokovic (Serbia)	7	2011, 2014, 2015, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022
Pete Sampras (USA)	7	1993, 1994, 1995, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000
Bjorn Borg (Sweden)	5	1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980

- Indian men's hockey team secured an **unprecedented three consecutive gold medals** in Amsterdam 1928, Los Angeles 1932, and Berlin 1936.
- ❖ The **Beijing 2008 Olympics** marked a monumental point for India as shooter **Abhinav Bindra secured the nation's first individual gold medal** in the **10m Air Rifle event**.
- ❖ India's **best performance at Tokyo Olympics** was at **Tokyo 2020** proved historic for India with a **total of seven medals**.
- ❖ India has expressed **willingness to host the Olympics in 2036**.
- ❖ On the recommendation of **Sir Dorabji Tata, the Indian Olympic Association was formed in 1927**.

Indian Olympic Association

- ❖ The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) **governs the Olympic Movement and Commonwealth Games in India, overseeing sports administration and athletes' welfare as an IOC-affiliated member**.
- ❖ The Indian Olympic Association is currently governed by a **32-member Executive Council**, headed by President and the **elections for the Executive Council are held once in every 4 years**.
- ❖ The Indian Olympic Association is **recognised by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports**.
- ❖ **PT Usha** is set to become the **first woman President** of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA).

Asian Champions Trophy

Context:

India secured their **fifth Hero Asian Champions Trophy** title with a hard-fought 1-0 victory over hosts China, capping off a dominant tournament where they won all their matches.

More on News:

- ❖ Defender Jugraj Singh scored a rare field goal in the 51st minute, breaking the deadlock after India, led by Harmanpreet Singh, struggled to penetrate China's defence for the first three quarters.
- ❖ Despite China's strong resistance in only their second international final, India emerged victorious, solidifying their record as the most successful team in the tournament's history with five titles, including consecutive wins in 2016 and 2018.

About the Asian Champions Trophy:

- ❖ It is a **prestigious field hockey tournament** organised annually by the **Asian Hockey Federation since 2011**.

Overview of the Asian Champions Trophy

- ❖ **Tournament Structure:** The Asian Champions Trophy involves **six teams: India, Pakistan, South Korea, Japan, Malaysia, and China**.

- It follows a **round-robin format** where each team plays against all others, with the top four advancing to the semifinals.
- ❖ **Historical Context:** India has been the **most successful team** in the history of the Asian Champions Trophy, winning **five titles** (2011, 2016, 2018, 2023, and 2024) and finishing as runners-up once (2012). **Pakistan follows with three titles**.

KIRTI Programme

Context:

As the **Paris Olympics draws near**, the Government's ambitious KIRTI programme is set to receive a fresh boost under the leadership of the **Union Minister for Youth Affairs & Sports and Labour & Employment**.

- ❖ The Hon. Minister will inaugurate **Phase 2** of the initiative in **New Delhi on July 19, 2024**.

About KIRTI:

- ❖ **Khelo India Rising Talent Identification (KIRTI)** aims to develop an **integrated talent identification architecture** based on modern ICT tools and global best practices.
- ❖ It **streamlines the process of grassroots talent identification** by providing a single platform.
- ❖ The **project adopts an athlete-centric approach**, ensuring that every step of the talent identification process is **broad-based and accessible**.
- ❖ **Objectives:**
 - **Identifying sports talent from across the nation.**
 - Using **sports to combat drug addiction** and excessive gadget use **among school children aged 9 to 18**.



Nationwide Launch and Goals:

KIRTI Phase I

- ❖ Initiated in **Chandigarh on March 12, 2024**
- ❖ **Assessments Conducted:** Nearly 51,000 in 28 states and Union Territories.
- ❖ **Top States:** Maharashtra (9168 assessments) and Haryana (4820 assessments), followed by Assam (4703 assessments).
- ❖ **Disciplines Evaluated:** 11 including Archery, Athletics, Badminton, Boxing, Football, Hockey, Kabaddi, Kho-Kho, Volleyball, Weightlifting, and Wrestling.
- ❖ **Highest Assessments:** Athletics (13,804) and Football (13,483).

- ❖ To achieve 20 lakh assessments in the FY 2024-25 by onboarding all states and treating districts as units of assessment.
- ❖ To create a pool of talent capable of winning medals at global competitions like the Olympics and Asian Games.

Ambition and Accessibility:

- ❖ Align to become a top 10 sports nation by 2036 and among the top five by 2047.
- ❖ Target to reach every block in the country, connecting with children who aspire to play sports but lack guidance.
- ❖ **Registration:** Candidates are encouraged through the MyBharat portal.
- ❖ **Transparent selection methodology** leveraging Information Technology, data analytics, and Artificial Intelligence predicts the sporting potential of aspiring athletes.

Khelo India Scheme

Context:

The Khelo India Scheme has allocated funds to various states and union territories for sports infrastructure development.

About Scheme:

- ❖ The Khelo India Scheme, launched in 2016, addressed previous anomalies in the sports sector.
- ❖ It is a flagship initiative by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports aimed at promoting sports culture and achieving sporting excellence across India.



- ❖ From 2017 to 2020, three editions of the Khelo India School and Youth Games and one edition of the Khelo India University Games were hosted.

- ❖ More than 23 lakh school children in the age group of 5-18 years have been assessed through Khelo India mobile app.

Objectives:

- ❖ **Playfield Development:** The scheme focuses on creating and upgrading playfields (serves as the foundation for nurturing young talent and encouraging active participation in sports) across the country.
- ❖ **Utilisation and Creation/Upgradation of Sports Infrastructure:** It allocates funds for critical gaps including building state-of-the-art facilities, sports hubs, and centres of excellence in select universities.

Significance:

- ❖ **Sports for Peace and Development:** It encourages sports activities in areas affected by extremism and terrorism (in the State of Jammu & Kashmir and Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected States).
- ❖ **Talent Search and Development:** Khelo India identifies promising athletes and provides them with training, coaching, and support to reach their full potential.
- ❖ **Promotion of Women's Sports:** Supporting women athletes at both grassroots and elite levels is crucial, as they constitute 50% of India's population.
 - Specialised Women's Only Leagues in football, basketball, and hockey have been introduced to ensure a level playing field.
- ❖ **Promotion of Divyang Athletes:** The SAI National Centre of Excellence in Gandhinagar is dedicated to para-athletes. Support through the TOPS Scheme.
- ❖ The scheme emphasises fitness programs for school children, promoting a healthy lifestyle from an early age.
- ❖ It celebrates India's rich heritage of rural and indigenous sports, ensuring their preservation and growth.

Sports Authority of India (SAI)

- ❖ **Administrative Control:** Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports.
- ❖ **Established in 1984** by the Indian Government.
- ❖ Successor organisation to the IXth Asian Games held in Delhi (1982).
- ❖ It is registered under the Societies Act, of 1860.
- ❖ **Objective:** To promote sports and games in India (as per Government Resolution).
- ❖ **Legislation:** Governed by Memorandum of Association & Rules, and Financial ByeLaws.
- ❖ **Funds Allocation:** Government grants are used to implement sports promotion schemes across India through regional centres and academic institutes.

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