

INDIAN CULTURE

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Tanhaji Malusare, the 'Unsung Warrior'

Recently a movie named Tanhaji, the Unsung warrior was released which is based on the story of Tanhaji Malusare, the 17th-century Maratha warrior.

Tanhaji Malusare

- Tanhaji Malusare was a General of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.
- He is known for his role in the Battle of Sinhagad (1670), which he fought under the Maratha flag against the Mughals, losing his life in the campaign.

Battle of Sinhagad 1670

- In 1665, as Mughal forces led by the Rajput commander Jai Singh I besieged Shivaji at the Purandar fort in Deccan, the latter was forced to sign the Treaty of Purandar. Under the agreement, Shivaji had to hand over important forts to the Mughals, including Purandar, Lohagad, Tung, Tikona, and Sinhagad (then called Kondhana).
- As part of the treaty, Shivaji had agreed to visit Agra to meet the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, which he did in 1666. Here, Shivaji was placed under house arrest, but was able to make a daring escape back to Maharashtra. Upon his return, Shivaji began to recapture the forts ceded to the Mughals under the treaty.
- To retake Kondhana (Sinhagad), the Marathas deputed Tanhaji Malusare and his brother Suryaji. The fort at the time was held by the Mughal commander Uday Bhan Rathod.
- In the early hours of February 4, 1670, Tanhaji with around 300 soldiers successfully captured the fort, but lost his own life. Tanhaji himself with his selected followers scaled the walls by means of an iguana and opened the gates. A sanguinary action ensued in which both sides lost heavily including their leaders Tanhaji and Uday Bhan.
- Shivaji, had the fort Kondhana renamed 'Sinhagad' in the general's honour ('Sinh' meaning 'lion'). A bard named Tulsidas was commissioned to write a 'powada' (ballad) for Tanhaji, and this literary work continues to be popular in Maharashtra.

1,500-year-old Sealing of Vakataka Queen Unearthed Near Nagpur

For the first time, a team of archaeologists has unearthed a sealing that dates back nearly 1,500 years and belonged to Prabhavtigupta, the queen of Vakataka king Rudrasena II, who ruled the kingdom from Nagardhan in Ramtek taluka, located about 50 km from Nagpur.

Key Features of the Discovery

- The oval sealing that bears images of the queen and a conch, accompanied with some inscriptions in Brahmi letters, was found on top of a mega wall, now believed to be a part of a palace structure located in the capital city of the Vakataka dynasty.

- Elaborate excavations were carried out by researchers from the Department of Archaeology and Museums, government of Maharashtra, and Deccan College, Pune, during 2015 and 2018. Remains from these excavations have offered newer insights into the Vakataka dynasty.
- Even though the Vakataka rulers were primarily Shaivites, these rulers had forged several matrimonial alliances with other dynasties. Of these, the most important alliance was stitched with Prabhavatigupta, the daughter of Emperor Chandragupta II of the Gupta dynasty, who were Vaishnavites.
- Prabhavatigupta enjoyed significant power as a Vakataka ruler, and she became more powerful after ascending the throne post the sudden demise of her husband. This is because it was from this very site at Nagardhan, believed to be the capital of the Vakataka dynasty, where the queen issued seals.
- The text on the seal is like an ode to the Gupta lineage and mentions names of Prabhavatigupta's father Chandragupta II and her grandfather Samudragupta. The conch symbolises the close affiliation that the Guptas had to the Vaishnav sect of Hinduism.
- The evidence also suggests that construction of many of the non-religious structures at Nagardhan could have started during the reign of Prabhavatigupta.
- Some of the temples dedicated and identified as Keval Narasimha, Rudra Narasimha and one dedicated to Varaha, could be traced to Ramtek and showcased strong affinity to Vishnu's incarnations. However, none of these structures were present at the site till the queen's rule that lasted for eight to 10 years, till her sons took over.
- Despite getting married into a Shaivite family, queen Prabhavatigupta was so powerful that she had the freedom to choose and worship a deity of her choice, i.e. Lord Vishnu. This is rare for those times. Besides, she also propagated Vaishnav practices and beliefs in Nagardhan.
- The sealing also dates back to the time when more Vaishnav believers started settling in present-day Nagpur region. The worship of Narasimha in Maharashtra must have started from Nagardhan and some of the temples found here date back to 1,500 years, said Sontakke.
- The sealing could have been used on a document, giving the royal permission to carry out certain activities. This also indicates that the queen enjoyed a powerful position in the otherwise male-dominant rulers of the dynasty.
- Marriage alliances and conquests were one of the ways of Chandragupta II to extend his power and kingdom. His daughter Prabhavati was married to a Vakataka king and after the premature death of king, she was the virtual ruler. With her help, Chandragupta II isolated the Shaka king and later annexed his kingdom.

Vakataka Dynasty

- Vakataka dynasty ruled from the 3rd to the 5th Century CE in the Deccan and was founded by Vindhyaśakti.

- It is believed to have extended from the southern edges of Malwa and Gujarat in the north to the Tungabhadra river in the south as well as from the Arabian sea in the western side to the edges of Chattisgarh in the east.
- They were the contemporaries of the Guptas in the north.
- Some important Vakataka Rulers were Pravarasena I, Rudrasena II, Sarvasena, Harishena etc.
- The rock-cut Buddhist Viharas and Chaityas of Ajanta Caves were built under the patronage of Harishena.

Victoria Memorial to Belvedere House: Kolkata's new 'Cultural Space'

Prime Minister **recently** inaugurated India's first dedicated "cultural space" in Kolkata. Four iconic colonial buildings — the Old Currency Building, Metcalfe Hall, the Belvedere House and the Victoria Memorial Hall — have been refurbished to collectively emerge as a cultural hub.

- **Old Currency Building:** The three-storeyed structure was built in 1833, designed in Italian style with Venetian windows, cast iron grates, portcullis and railings. But it had been lying derelict. In 2005, the building was handed over to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) for restoration.
- **Belvedere House:** Located in Alipore, Belvedere House was the former palace for the Viceroy of India and later, the Governor of Bengal. Now, Indira Gandhi **National Centre for the Arts pays tribute to the Bengal renaissance and Rabindranath Tagore by showcasing the works of the Hungarian mother-daughter duo Elizabeth Sass Brunner and Elizabeth Brunner, who largely portray Santiniketan and Tagore.**
- **Metcalfe House:** The design of the 1844 building is taken from the portico of the Temple of Winds in Athens. The Metcalfe Hall was erected as its name imparts to perpetuate the memory of Lord Metcalfe, who officiated as Governor General of India from March 1835 to March 1836. It was originally conceptualised as a Public Library later on housed the Imperial Library.
- **Victoria Memorial Hall:** Victoria Memorial is one of the famous and beautiful monuments of Kolkata. It was built between 1906 and 1921 to commemorate Queen Victoria's 25-year reign in India. This huge white-marble museum consists of forms like the great dome, clustered with four subsidiary, octagonal domed chattris, the high portals, the terrace and the domed corner towers. Lord Curzon, the then viceroy of India is credited for conceptualising the Victoria Memorial Hall.

Five Sites to be Developed as Iconic Sites

The Finance Minister in her budget speech announced government's plan to develop five archaeological sites as iconic sites with on-site Museums at Rakhigarhi (Haryana), Hastinapur (Uttar Pradesh), Shivsagar (Assam), Dholavira (Gujarat) and Adichanallur (Tamil Nadu). She

also announced an allocation of Rs 3,150 crore to the Ministry of Culture for the maritime museum coming up at Lothal in Gujarat.

Rakhigarhi

- It is a Harappan Civilisation site in Hisar district of Haryana which became the **largest Harappan civilisation site** post excavations in 2016.
- Excavations at the site reveal **mature Harappan phase** represented by **planned township** having mud-brick as well as burnt-brick houses with **proper drainage system** and the ceramic industry represented by **red ware**.
- **Animal sacrificial pit** lined with mud brick and triangular and circular **fire alters** on the mud floor have also been excavated.

Hastinapur

- Hastinapur which finds mention in the Mahabharata as well as ancient Jain texts is a site in present day Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh.
- The “new ceramic industry”, named the **Painted Grey Ware**, which as per the report represented the relics of the early Indo-Aryans, was discovered at the site.
- The presence of iron objects in the archaeological excavations around the site indicates the existence of a vigorous **iron industry**.
- There are also indications of **brick – lined roads** and **drainage systems**, and an **agro – livestock-based economy**.

Shivsagar

- Sivasagar was the epicentre of the **Ahom kingdom** that existed in the Brahmaputra Valley between the 13th and 19th century CE.
- The site hosts **burial mounds** of the Ahom kings and was made a part of the world heritage sites in 2014.
- In Sivasagar, excavations at the Karenghar (Talatalghar) complex between 2000-2003 led to the discovery of buried structures in the north-western and north-eastern side of the complex and remains of ceramic assemblages including vases, vessels, dishes, and bowls, Terracotta smoking pipes etc.
- In another excavation site called Garhgaon Raja’s palace, a burnt-brick wall running in north-south orientation was found, along with the remains of two huge circular wooden posts.

Dholavira

- Dholavira located in the **Khadir island** of the Rann of Kutch, Gujarat is one of the sites where remains of Harappan civilisation have been found.
- It is unique because remains of a complete **water system** have been found here.

- The people who lived there for an estimated 1,200 years during the Harappan civilisation are noted for their water conservation system using **rainwater harvesting techniques** in an otherwise parched landscape.

Adichanallur

- Adichanallur lies in the Thoothukudi district of Tamil Nadu.
- The **urn-burial site** was first brought to light during a “haphazard excavation” by a German archaeologist in 1876.
- The three important findings of the site are: the discovery of an ancient Tamil-Brahmi script on the inside of an urn containing a full human skeleton with various ethnicities, a fragment of broken earthenware, and the remains of living quarters.

Lothal

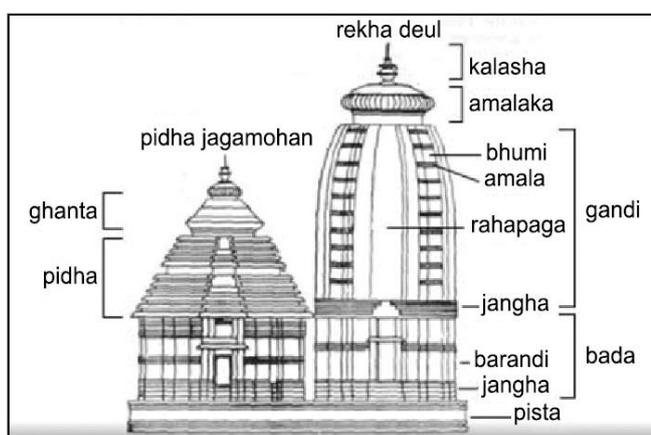
- Lothal, the oldest port of India and a mature Harappan Civilisation site contained a **tidal dockyard**, which is considered one of the oldest in the world.
- The word Lothal, means the **mound of the dead**.
- It is located between the **Bhogavo and Sabarmati rivers** near the Gulf of Khambat.
- The site displays division of town into **citadel and lower town, advanced town planning** etc.
- One of the most unique features of the site is the presence of **twin-burial sites**.
- It was one of the most important **centres of shell-working and bead making- factory**.
- The remains of **rice husk** have also been found here.

Conservation Plan for Konark Sun Temple on the anvil

Union Minister of Culture announced recently that a plan to restore and preserve the nearly 800-year-old Konark Sun Temple in Odisha would be drawn up soon, after a two-day conference of experts on February 28 and 29. The temple had been filled with sand and sealed by the British authorities in 1903 in order to stabilise the structure. A scientific study was carried out by the Roorkee-based Central Building Research Institute from 2013-2018 to ascertain the temple's structural stability as well as the status of the filled-in sand.

Konark Sun Temple

- The 13th Century temple, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** since 1984, was built by **King Narasimhadeva I** of **Eastern Ganga dynasty**.



- The temple represents a **chariot of the Sun God**, with twelve pairs of wheels drawn by seven horses evoking its movement across the heavens.
- It is the culmination of **Kalinga temple architecture**.
- The Konark is the **third link of Odisha's Golden Triangle**. The first link is Jagannath Puri and the second link is Bhubaneswar (Capital city of Odisha).
- This temple was also known as '**Black Pagoda**' due to its dark colour and was used as a navigational landmark by ancient sailors to Odisha. Similarly, the **Jagannath Temple** was called the '**White Pagoda**'.
- It is a major pilgrimage site for Hindus, who gather here every year for the **Chandrabhaga Mela** around the month of February.

Kalinga Style of Architecture

- Kalinga Style is a distinct **sub-style of the Nagara style** predominantly found in Odisha temples like the Lingaraja temple at Bhubaneswar (11th century), the Jagannath Temple at Puri (12th century) and the great Sun Temple at Konark (13th century).
- Three orders of architectural features:
 - **Rekhapida**: Tall straight building (looking like a shikhara) covering the garbhagriha.
 - **Pidhadeul**: It is the mandapa, a square building where worshippers are present and also where dancing takes place.
 - **Khakra**: Rectangular building with a truncated pyramid-shaped roof. Temples of Shakti are usually in this type.
- Shikhara is called Deul and is almost vertical and suddenly curves sharply inwards at the top.
- In front of the deul, there is the mandapa, called jagamohana in Odisha.
- Exterior of the temples are lavishly carved while the interiors are plain and bare.
- Temples generally have boundary walls.

Sant Ravidas

Sant Ravidas Jayanti was celebrated on February 19th. This year is said to be the 642nd birth anniversary of Guru Ravidas.

Guru Ravidas

- Guru Ravidas was a famous **saint of the Bhakti Movement** and was born in 1377 C.E. at Mandhuadhe which is located in **Uttar Pradesh**, India.
- He was one of the most famous and leading star of the **nirguna sampradaya** means sant parampara and lead the North Indian Bhakti movement.
- The **Adi Granth** of Sikhs, in addition to the **Panchvani** are the two of the oldest documented sources of the literary works of Guru Ravidas.

- He belonged to the untouchable caste but he spoke against the caste divisions and spoke of removing them to promote unity. His teachings resonated with the people, leading to a religion being born called the **Ravidassia religion**, or Ravidassia Dharam based on his teachings.
- He taught about the **omnipresence of God** and said that a human soul is a particle of God and hence rejected the idea that people considered lower caste cannot meet God. He said in his teachings that the only way to meet God was to **free the mind from the duality**.
- He is also considered the **spiritual teacher of Meera Bai**.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh Voted the Greatest Leader in World History

Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the founder of the Sikh Empire, has been named the “Greatest Leader of All Time” in a poll conducted by BBC World Histories Magazine. He was nominated for forging a modern empire of tolerance.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh

- Ranjit Singh was born in Gujranwala just north of Lahore in November 1780.
- The name Ranjit, meaning ‘victor in battle’, was given to him as a child to commemorate his father’s victory over a regional rival.
- When his father died in 1792, he became the head of the Sukerchakia Misl, at the ripe age of 12 years. Subsequently, with his rise he began to be called the ‘Lion of Punjab’.
- He was a strong and courageous soldier, an efficient administrator and a skilful diplomat.
- He rose to prominence at the end of eighteenth century and soon brought all Sikh Chiefs west of Sutlej under his control and established the kingdom of Punjab.
- He was a military genius who built up a powerful, disciplined and well-equipped army along European lines with the help of European instructors. His new army was not only confined to Sikhs but also included Gurkhas, Biharis, Oriyas, Pathans , Dogras and Punjabi Muslims.
- He set up modern foundries to manufacture cannon at Lahore and employed Muslim gunners to man them.
- He was tolerant and liberal in religious matters. He not only restored Sikh temples – most notably the rebuilding of Harmandir Sahib, the Golden Temple, at Amritsar in marble (1809) and gold (1830) –but also donated a tonne of gold to plate the Hindu Kashi Vishwanath temple to Lord Shiva in Varanasi. He patronised Hindu temples, Muslim mosques, and Sufi shrines, and in a nod to Hindu sensibilities banned the slaughter of cows.

Tablighi Jamaat: A Society of Preachers

The Tablighi Jamaat, an Islamic organisation, has been at the centre of controversy after hundreds of people who attended a religious congregation organised by the group at its headquarters in Delhi in March and those who came in their contact across the country, tested positive for COVID-19.

Tablighi Jamaat

- Tablighi Jamaat, which literally means a society for spreading the faith, is a Sunni Islamic missionary movement.
- The proselytising movement aims to reach out to ordinary Muslims and revive their faith, particularly in matters of ritual, dress, and personal behaviour.
- Its roots lie in the Deobandi version of the Hanafi school of jurisprudence. It was launched by Deoband cleric and prominent Islamic scholar Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Khandha law in 1927 in Mewat where he aimed to revive the faith of Meos Muslims, a Rajput ethnic group, who used to follow syncretic traditions. Its emergence also coincided with Hindu revivalist movement like Shuddhi movement.
- At present, it is spread across Pakistan, Bangladesh, United States, Britain, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore.

Principles of Tablighi Jamaat

- The Tablighi Jamaat is based on following six principles:
- **Kalimah:** It is an article of faith in which the Tabligh accepts that there is no God but Allah and that Prophet Muhammad is his messenger.
- **Salaat:** It means prayer five times daily.
- **Ilm and Dhikr:** It means the knowledge and remembrance of Allah conducted in sessions in which the congregation listens to preaching by the imam, performs prayers, recites the Quran and reads the Hadith; the congregation also uses these sessions to dine together, thus fostering a sense of community and identity.
- **Ikram-i-Muslim:** It translates to the treatment of fellow Muslims with honour.
- **Ikhlas-i-niyat:** It means sincerity of intention.
- **Dawat-o-tabligh:** It means proselytisation.

Indian Council for Cultural Relations Celebrates 70th Anniversary

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) is celebrated its 70th Foundation Day on 9th April 2020. However, the grand celebrations planned earlier are now postponed by a year in the wake of COVID-19.

Indian Council for Cultural Relations

- ICCR is an autonomous organisation of government of India which was founded in 1950 by India's first Education Minister, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, with the objective of fostering and strengthening cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and the world, and to promote cultural exchanges with other countries and people.
- ICCR as an institution promotes India's cultural heritage and has emerged as the 'soft power' arm of the Ministry of External Affairs through an array of well-designed and targeted programmes.
- A wide-range of ICCR's cultural, academic and intellectual exchanges and promotion of India's culture abroad encompass various outreach activities through its 39 cultural centres abroad and 19 Regional Offices within India, including Indian art, history, oral traditions, dance, music, yoga, languages, food, festivals and contemporary issues.
- The larger objective of the institution is to foster an enlightened understanding of Indian culture amongst the global community.
- ICCR has been assigned the responsibility of facilitating the celebration of the International Day of Yoga by Indian Missions/Posts abroad since 2015.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

- Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was born on 11th November 1888 in Mecca, Saudi-Arabia.
- He is commonly remembered as Maulana Azad (word Maulana is honorific meaning Our Master) and he had adopted Azad (Free) as his pen name.
- He supported the Non-Cooperation Movement started by Gandhiji and entered Indian National Congress in 1920.
- In October 1920, he was elected as a member of foundation committee to establish Jamia Millia Islamia at Aligarh in U. P. He assisted in shifting the campus of the university from Aligarh to New Delhi in 1934.
- In 1923, at the age of 35, he became the youngest person to serve as the President of Indian National Congress.
- He was one of the main organizers of the Dharasana Satyagraha in 1931 and emerged as one of the most important national leaders of the time, prominently leading causes of Hindu-Muslim unity as well as espousing secularism and socialism.
- He also worked for Hindu-Muslim unity through his newspaper **Al-Hilal**.
- His Important Literary Works are Ghubar-e-Khatir, Dars-e-Wafa, India Wins Freedom etc.
- He served as Congress president from 1940 to 1945, during which Quit India rebellion was launched.
- In 1947, he became the first education minister of independent
- National Education Day of India is celebrated every year on 11 November to commemorate his birth anniversary.

- First Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Indian Institute of Science (IISc), School of Planning and Architecture and the University Grants Commission were established in his tenure.
- Major cultural and literary academies such as the Sangeet Natak Academy, Lalit Kala Academy, Sahitya Academy and Indian Council for Cultural Relations were also established under his tenure.
- He was posthumously awarded India's highest civilian honour, Bharat Ratna in 1992.

Meru Jatra Festival Banned in Odisha

Odisha's Ganjam district administration banned the Meru Jatra festival and congregations related to it at temples on the occasion of Mahavishub Sankranti recently.

Meru Jatra

- Meru Jatra marks the end of the 21-day-long festival of penance named 'Danda Nata'.
- Danda Nata is celebrated in the month of 'Chaitra' (the first month of Hindu Calendar, falling between March-April). The origin of the festival is generally traced to 8th and 9th century AD after the decadence of Buddhism in Orissa.
- The danduas (people who participate in the festival) undergo Danda, the self-inflicted pain, to pay their obeisance to the lord Kali.
- It is also a form of worshipping the lord Shiva and his consort Parvati.

Mahavishub Sankranti

- Mahavishub Sankranti is the start of the Odia New Year.
- On the occasion of Mahavishub Sankranti thousands of devotees gather at the Tara Tarini hill shrine and other temples.
- The famous Chaitra Jatra festival is also celebrated at Tara Tarini hill shrine.
- Tara Tarini hill shrine, located at a hilltop on banks of the Rushikulya river, is a major centre of Shakti worship in Odisha.
- The twin goddesses Tara and Tarini represent one Shakti and are the main deity of Ganjam district (Odisha).
- Tara is an important deity of Mahayana Buddhist Sect.

Heritage Crafts Village in Odisha Wears Deserted Look Amidst Lockdown

Uncertain about their future since lockdown, the Pattachitra Artists of Raghurajpur, the heritage crafts village in Puri District of Odisha want virtual platform to sell their artwork as tourists, the foundation of livelihood of villagers, are no longer welcomed. Making of Pattachitras, traditional paintings in which mythological, religious stories and folk lore are told through intricate canvassing, has been the principal vocation of most villagers here.

Pattachitra Painting

- Pattachitra, a cloth-based scroll painting is one of the oldest and most popular art forms of Odisha.
- The name Pattachitra has evolved from the Sanskrit words patta, meaning canvas, and chitra, meaning picture.
- The painters of Pattachitra are known as Chitrakars.
- Pattachitra painting is done on canvas, and is manifested by rich colourful application, creative motifs and designs, and portrayal of simple themes, mostly based on Hindu mythology which is especially inspired by Jagannath and Vaishnava sect.
- Some of the popular themes of this religious art are:
 - **The Badhia:** a depiction of the temple of Jagannath
 - **Krishna Lila:** an enactment of Jagannath as Lord Krishna displaying his powers as a child
 - **Dasabatara Patti:** the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu
 - **Panchamukhi:** a depiction of Lord Ganesh as a five-headed deity
- Patta paintings are done on small strips of cotton cloth. The canvas is prepared by coating the clothing with a mixture of chalk and gum made from tamarind seeds. Then it is rubbed by taking the help of two different stones and then the cloth is dried. The mixture of gum and chalk gives the cloth's surface a leathery finish on which the artists paint with vegetable, earth and stone colours.
- The colours used are normally white, red, yellow, and black.
- When the painting is completed it is held over a charcoal fire and lacquer is applied to the surface.
- This makes the painting water resistant and durable, besides giving it a shining finish.

Union Culture Ministry Launches Draft List of Intangible Cultural Heritage

The Union Culture Ministry released a draft list of 106 items listed as intangible cultural heritage recently seeking public comment.

- 13 traditions of Indian intangible cultural heritage have already been recognised by UNESCO and the national list is an attempt to further awareness and protection to more such elements.
- The initiative is a part of the Ministry's Vision 2024 programme.

Draft List of Intangible Cultural Heritage

- The devotional music of Qawwali and the music of the oldest instrument in the country, the Veena. The Kumbh Mela and Ramlila traditions of different States.

- The traditional folk festival of Pachoti in Assam, where the birth of a baby, particularly a male infant as the tradition “relates to the birth of Krishna”, is celebrated with relatives and neighbours.
- The oral traditions of the transgender community called Kinnar Kanthgeet and compositions of Ameer Khusro are among the entries from Delhi.
- Gujarat’s Patola silk textiles from Patan with its geometric and figurative patterns
- The practice of tying a turban or safa across Rajasthan.
- From Jammu and Kashmir, the Kalam Bhat or Qalambaft gharana of Sufiana music in Budgam district and from Ladakh, the Buddhist chanting across both Leh and Kargil districts.
- The making of khor, a rice beer, by the Tangkhul community in Manipur as well as other crafts associated with it, like making gourd vessels and wicker baskets.
- Kerala’s martial art form, Kalaripayattu, and the practice of making designs at the entrance of homes and temples called kolam in Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.
- Different forms of shadow puppet theatre — Chamadyacha Bahulya in Maharashtra, Tolu Bommalatta in Andhra Pradesh, Togalu Gombeyatta in Karnataka, Tolu Bommalattam in Tamil Nadu, Tolpava Kuthu in Kerala and Ravanchhaya in Orissa.

UNESCO’s List of Intangible Cultural Heritage

- The UNESCO’s list of Intangible Cultural Heritage is made up of those intangible heritage elements that help demonstrate diversity of cultural heritage and raise awareness about its importance.
- It was established in 2008 after Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2003 came into effect.
- It compiles two lists viz.
 - Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity
 - List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.
- As per the 2003 UNESCO Convention for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, the list has five broad categories — **oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, knowledge and practices related to nature and traditional craftsmanship.**

India’s Entries in the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage

- Tradition of Vedic chanting
- Ramlila, the traditional performance of the Ramayana
- Kutiyattam, Sanskrit theatre
- Ramman, religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas
- Mudi yettu, ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala
- Kalbelia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan

- Chhau dance
- Buddhist chanting of Ladakh: recitation of sacred Buddhist texts in the trans-Himalayan Ladakh region, Jammu and Kashmir.
- Sankirtana, ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur
- Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab
- Yoga
- Nawrouz
- Kumbh Mela

Nihangs: The Valiant Sikh Warriors

Recently nihangs came into the national limelight when a group of nihangs chopped off hand of a police officer in Patiala, Punjab when stopped for a curfew pass and for the subsequent seizure of weapons and narcotics.

Nihangs

- Nihang is an order of Sikh warriors, characterised by blue robes, antiquated arms such as swords and spears, and decorated turbans surmounted by steel quoits.
- Etymologically the word nihang in Persian means an alligator, sword and pen but the characteristics of Nihangs seem to stem more from the Sanskrit word nihshank which means without fear, unblemished, pure, carefree and indifferent to worldly gains and comfort.
- The 19th century historian Rattan Singh Bhangu described Nihangs as “unaffected by pain or comfort”, “given to meditation, penance and charity” and “complete warriors”.
- Some sources trace their origin to Guru Gobind Singh’s younger son, Fateh Singh (1699-1705), who once appeared in the Guru’s presence dressed in a blue chola and blue turban with a dumala (piece of cloth forming a plume). On seeing his son look so majestic, the Guru remarked that it shall be the dress of Nihangs, the reckless soldiers of the Khalsa.
- Nihangs observe the Khalsa code of conduct in its strictest sense. They do not profess any allegiance to an earthly master. Instead of saffron they hoist a blue Nishan Sahib (flag) atop their shrines.
- Nihangs use the slogans ‘chhardi kala’ (forever in high spirits) and ‘tiar bar tiar’ (state of ever preparedness) for unforeseen events.

Significance of Nihangs in Sikh History

- Nihangs played a major role in defending the Sikh panth after the fall of the first Sikh rule (1710-15) when Mughal governors were killing Sikhs, and during the onslaught of Afghan invader Ahmed Shah Durrani (1748-65). When the Khalsa army was divided into

five battalions in 1734, one Nihang or Akali battalion was led by Baba Deep Singh Shahid.

- Nihangs also took control of the religious affairs of the Sikhs at Akal Bunga (now known as Akal Takht) in Amritsar. They did not consider themselves subordinate to any Sikh chief and thus maintained their independent existence.
- At Akal Takht, they held the grand council (Sarbat Khalsa) of Sikhs and pronounced the resolution (Gurmata) passed.
- Their clout came to an end after the fall of Sikh Empire in 1849 when the British authorities of Punjab appointed a manager (sarbrah) for the administration of the Golden Temple in 1859.
- The Nihangs today constitute a small community of about a dozen bands, each headed by a jathedar (leader), still carrying on with the traditional order.

Khalsa

- The word "Khalsa" means "pure".
- Khalsa's are Sikhs which have undergone the sacred Amrit Ceremony initiated by the 10th Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh.
- The Khalsa order was initially created on Baisakhi Day, March 30, 1699.
- **Khalsa** also refers to a community that considers Sikhism as its faith.

Jharkhand's Sohrai Khovar Painting, Telangana's Telia Rumal Get GI Tag

Recently Jharkhand's Sohrai Khovar painting and Telangana's Telia Rumal were given the Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the Geographical Indications Registry headquartered in Chennai. The application for the painting was made by Sohrai Kala Mahila Vikas Sahyog Samiti Limited while the application for Telia Rumal was made by the Consortium of Puttapaka Handloom Cluster-IHDS.

Sohrai Khovar Painting

- The Sohrai Khovar painting is a traditional and ritualistic mural art being practised by local tribal women during local harvest and marriage seasons using local, naturally available soils of different colours in the area of Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand.
- The Sohrai Khovar painting is primarily being practised only in the district of Hazaribagh. However, in recent years, for promotional purposes, it has been seen in other parts of Jharkhand.
- Traditionally painted on the walls of mud houses, they are now seen on other surfaces, too.
- The style features a profusion of lines, dots, animal figures and plants, often representing religious iconography.

- In recent years, the walls of important public places in Jharkhand, such as the Birsa Munda Airport in Ranchi, and the Hazaribagh and Tatanagar Railway Stations, among others, have been decorated with Sohrai-Khovar paintings.

Telia Rumal

- Telia Rumal cloth involves intricate handmade work with cotton loom displaying a variety of designs and motifs in three particular colours — red, black and white.
- Telia Rumal can only be created using the traditional handloom process and not by any other mechanical means as otherwise, the very quality of the Rumal would be lost.
- During the Nizam's dynasty, Puttapaka, a small, backward village of the Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh had about 20 families engaged in handloom weaving, who were patronised by rich Muslim families and the Nizam rulers.
- The officers working in the court of the Nizam would wear the Chituki Telia Rumal as a symbolic representation of status.
- Telia Rumals are offered at the dargah of Ajmer Sharif in Rajasthan, with some devotees offering 50 or even 100 cloths.
- Telia Rumals were worn as a veil by princesses at the erstwhile court of the Nizam of Hyderabad; and as a turban cloth by Arabs in the Middle East.

Vesak 2020: UN Chief Looks to Buddha's Message as Humanity Suffers from Covid-19

Lord Buddha's message of unity, service to others is more important today as the humanity suffers from the COVID-19 pandemic and it is only by working together that nations can stop the spread, recover from the deadly coronavirus, the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said in his message for the Day of Vesak observed on 7th May.

Vesak

- Vesak marks the birth, enlightenment (nirvana) and death (mahaparinirvana) of Gautama Buddha. It was on the Day of Vesak two and a half millennia ago, in the year 623 B.C., that the Buddha was born. On this day, Buddha attained enlightenment and passed away in his 80th year.
- Vesak is the Day of the Full Moon in the month of May (Vaishakh). It is also known as Buddha Purnima and Buddha Day. It is the most sacred day to millions of Buddhists around the world.
- In 1999, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution in which it recognised the International Day to acknowledge the contribution that Buddhism, one of the oldest religions in the world, has made for over two and a half millennia and continues to make to the spirituality of humanity.

Virtual Programme on Rare Artworks at National Gallery

- The National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) recently announced a virtual programme of exhibitions to showcase rare artworks from its repository.
- The “**NGMA Ke Sangrah Se**” kicked off with “Gurudev – Journey of the Maestro through his visual vocabulary” with focus on Rabindranath Tagore on his 159th birth anniversary observed on 7th May.
- The NGMA ke Sangrah Se programme will have different daily and weekly themes.

Rabindranath Tagore

- Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), popularly known as ‘Gurudev’, was the son of Debendranath Tagore, a prominent leader of Brahma Samaj.
- He was primarily known as a writer, poet, playwright, philosopher and aesthete, music composer and choreographer, founder of a unique educational institution - Visva-Bharati and a painter.
- Tagore's emergence as a painter began in 1928 when he was 67 years old. He never gave any title to his paintings. Fed by memories and the subconscious, Rabindranath's art was spontaneous and dramatic. His images did not represent the phenomenal world but an interior reality.
- In 1905, at the start of the Swadeshi and Boycott movements against partition of Bengal Tagore wrote powerful nationalist songs and provided a novel gesture of protest: he decided to observe ‘Rakshabandhan’ when everyone would tie a rakhi on everyone else to symbolise Bengal's unity. However later he became disillusioned with the movement since he could very clearly see that there was no concern about the need for mass awareness and that the city-based middle class were keen on protecting its own selfish interests.
- In 1913, he became the first Indian to receive a Nobel Prize in Literature for his novel 'Geetanjali'.
- He also wrote the National Anthems of India (Jana Gana Mana) and Bangladesh (Amar Shonar Bangla).
- Tagore was knighted by the ruling British Government in 1915, but he resigned the honour in 1919 as a protest against the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre.
- As per his Social Philosophy the human must engage both externally in coping with nature and internally in developing spiritually. Tagore also fought against the evils of the society such as poverty, superstition, untouchability and oppression of women.
- He did not find the West to be the source of all evil. He welcomed Western science and Western beliefs in individual worth, freedom, and democracy.
- Tagore desired a freedom that would enable a human being to realise his ideas and aspirations as it found expression in different types of creative art with the help of

reason and scientific outlook and by allowing the potentialities of industrialisation towards human liberation. For Tagore, freedom of the individual was the basis or the growth of human civilisation and progress. It was the inner urge of a person to be in harmony with the great universe.

- He believed that nationalism deteriorated from patriotism to chauvinism. Nationalism is individual selfishness raised to a higher level. Just as a human must rise above self-centredness to love for all, the nations of the world too must grow to love other nations. Thus his clear preference for socialism, democracy, freedom and social justice transcended national boundaries and races.
- Tagore strongly, and openly, disapproved of Gandhi's unwillingness to draw a clear line between politics and religion. Tagore firmly believed that religion belonged in the individual's private world.
- In his view, the traditional schools imprison children. Hence, he started a model-school after the ancient hermitage schools of India: **Shantiniketan** (the abode of peace). He also widened his educational commitment by founding a university – **Visva Bharati** – where he promoted an international culture of unity in diversity.

Ancient Temple Submerged in River Mahanadi Resurfaces in Nayagarh

An ancient temple in Odisha's Nayagarh, that was submerged in Mahanadi river has resurfaced. The temple, believed to be around 450 to 500 years old, had submerged during a flood in 1933.

Key Highlights

- The archaeological survey team of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) recently claimed that they discovered an ancient submerged temple in the Mahanadi upstream from Cuttack.
- The temple had submerged a long time back but around 11 years ago, the temple started emerging again. Now the temple is visible a little bit above the water level.
- The top of the submerged temple was discovered mid-river near Baideswar in the Padmavati village near Nayagarh. The 55 to 60 feet submerged temple dates back to the late 15th or early 16th century, considering the construction style of the Mastaka and material used for the construction.
- The region where the temple has been found used to be regarded as 'Satapatana'. Padmavati village was part of Satapatana which is a combination of seven villages. The temple was dedicated to Lord Gopinath Dev.
- With the river changing its course due to flooding 150 years ago, its flow changed and the entire village was submerged by the river in 1933 during a flood.

Puri Rath Yatra Commences with Conditional Approval of Supreme Court

The Supreme Court gave conditional approval to conduct the annual Jagannath Rath Yatra this year, which takes place in Puri, Odisha due to COVID-19. It limited the festival to be held only in Puri, and attached a few stringent conditions for conducting the yatra.

Lord Jagannath Rath Yatra

- The Rath Yatra, or the Chariot festival, is a 10-12-day annual celebration during which Lord Jagannath, his elder brother Balabhadra and younger sister Subhadra are taken in chariots to stay in the **Gundicha Temple**, 3 km away from the Jagannath temple, for nine days.
- As per one legend of Hindu mythology, the deities go to meet Gudincha, the queen of King Indrayumna, who is believed to have built the temple. Another legend has it that on the fourth day of the festival, Goddess Lakshmi, the wife of Lord Jagannath visits the Gundicha temple to meet her husband.
- At the end of the nine-day period, the deities are brought back to the Jagannath Temple. The journey is called **Bahuda Jatra** or the Jagannath Yatra, and the chariots are pulled by devotees.
- The procession of the three chariots from Jagannath temple to Gundicha temple is called **pahandi**.
- The size of the chariots varies, and indicates a hierarchy between the three deities. Lord Jagannath's chariot is called Nandighosh and has 16 wheels. His elder brother Lord Balabhadra's chariot is called Taladvaja, and moves on 14 wheels, while Subhadra has the smallest chariot, called Padmadhvaja, which has 12 wheels.
- New chariots, the main attraction of the festival, are handcrafted every year and are carefully crafted with wood, cloth and resin. At the end of the festival, the raths are dismantled and the wood is used as fuel in temple kitchens.

Jagannath Temple

- The Jagannath Temple (also called White Pagoda) in Puri was built by Anantavarman Chodaganga of Eastern Ganga Dynasty in 12th century.
- The presiding deity is Lord Jagannath (an incarnation of Lord Vishnu), along with his elder brother Balabhadra and sister Subhadra. The temple also has statues of deities Sudarshan, Madhaba, Sridevi and Bhudevi.
- Unlike the stone and metal icons found in most Hindu temples, the image of Jagannath is made of wood and is ceremoniously replaced every twelve or nineteen years by an exact replica.
- The temple is built on a raised platform and stands at a height of 65 m, while the main gate is guarded by the '**Simha Dwara**', a structure with two lions. There are three other

entrances also namely the **Hathidwara** or the Elephant Gate, the **Vyaghra dwara** or the Tiger Gate and the **Ashwadwara** or the Horse Gate.

- Jagannath Puri temple is called '**Yamanika Tirtha**' where, according to the Hindu beliefs, the power of 'Yama', the god of death has been nullified in Puri due to the presence of Lord Jagannath.
- The temple is one of the **Char Dhams** (Badrinath, Dwaraka, Puri, Rameswaram), pilgrimages that a Hindu is expected to make in one's lifetime.

Odisha Celebrates Raja Parba Festival amidst Lockdown

Recently, Odisha celebrated the 3-day long Raja Parba festival celebrating menstruation and womanhood.

Raja Parba Festival

- The festival is natively pronounced as '**raw-jaw**', while 'Raja' is derived from the word 'Rajaswala' which means menstruating women.
- Each day of the festival has its own name and significance — the first day is called **PahiliRajo**, the second day is **Mithuna Sankranti**, which signifies the beginning of the solar month of Mithuna i.e., the rainy season which readies the soil for productivity; the third day is **Bhu Daaha or Basi Raja** and the fourth day is called **Vasumati Snana**, the purification bath.
- According to the religious belief, during the first three days of the festival, '**Bhudevi**' (Mother Earth), the wife of Lord Jagannath undergoes menstruation cycle and on the fourth day, she is given a ceremonial bath.
- The festival is essentially the **celebration of the earth's womanhood**. During the festival, women and girls from across the state buy new clothes, play games and celebrate it by taking a break from work and routine. Agricultural work also comes to a standstill during these days.

Kodumanal Excavations Indicate Megalithic Belief in Afterlife

A team from the State Department of Archaeology, Chennai has identified 250 cairn-circles from the excavation at the Kodumanal village in Erode district (Tamil Nadu) during which it made discoveries that reveal the megalithic belief in afterlife.

Highlights of Recent Excavations at Kodumanal

- A recent recovery of 10 pots and bowls filled with grains, instead of the usual three or four pots, placed outside three-chambered burial cists and inside the cairn-circle,

throws light on the burial rituals in megalithic culture. It also suggests that there was a popular belief that the deceased person will get a new life after death.

- The rectangular chambered cists, each two metres long and six metres wide, are made of stone slabs, and the entire grave is surrounded by boulders that form a circle.
- Experts believe that the grave could be of a village head or the head of the community as the size of two boulders, each facing east and west, are bigger than other boulders.
- The other findings unearthed so far include an animal skull, possibly of a wolf or a dog; precious stones like beryl, carnelian, quartz, jasper, beads, gold pieces and needles; copper smelting units; the mud walls of a workshop; potteries; Tamil Brahmi script and pieces of grooved tiles at a trench.

Earlier Excavations

- Earlier excavations at the site revealed that the site served as a trade-cum-industrial centre from 5th century BCE to 1st century BCE.
- Previous excavations also disclosed that multi-ethnic groups lived at the Kodamanal village, located about 500 metres away from the Noyyal river.

Megaliths

- Megaliths, derived from the Latin mega (large) and lith (stone), were constructed either as burial sites or commemorative (non-sepulchral) memorials.
- The burial sites are the ones which contain actual burial remains, such as dolmenoid cists (box-shaped stone burial chambers), cairn circles (stone circles with defined peripheries) and capstones (distinctive mushroom-shaped burial chambers found mainly in Kerala).
- Non-sepulchral megaliths include memorial sites such as menhirs (large man-made upright stone).
- Across the world, Megalithic culture lasted from the Neolithic Stone Age to the early Historical Period (2500 BC to AD 200).
- In India, archaeologists trace the majority of the megaliths to the Iron Age (1500 BC to 500 BC), though some sites precede the Iron Age, extending up to 2000 BC.
- Megaliths are spread across the Indian subcontinent, though the bulk of them are found in peninsular India, concentrated in the states of Maharashtra (mainly in Vidarbha), Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Dharma Chakra Day

International Buddhist Confederation (IBC), under the aegis of Ministry of Culture, celebrated Asadha Poornima on July 4, as Dharma Chakra Day.

- The event was kick started at the Rashtrapati Bhavan by the President of India.

- Later, rest of the day's events were streamed from Mulagandha Kuti Vihara, Sarnath and Mahabodhi Temple, Bodh Gaya in association with Mahabodhi Society of India and Bodh Gaya Temple Management Committee.
- Also, the Ministry of Culture presented the first set of five volumes of **Mongolian Kanjur** published under the **National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM)** was presented to the President of India on the occasion. Ministry of culture has taken up the project of reprinting of 108 volumes of Mongolian Kanjur under NMM.

About Dharma Chakra Day

- The auspicious day of Asadha Poornima which falls on the first full moon day of the month of Asadha as per Indian sun calendar is also known as **Esala Poya in Sri Lanka** and **Asanha Bucha in Thailand**. It is the **second most sacred day for Buddhists** after the Buddha Poornima or Vesak.
- The day **marks Buddha's first teaching** after attaining Enlightenment to the first five ascetic disciples on the full-moon day of Asadha at 'Deer Park', Rishipatana in the current day Sarnath, near Varanasi.
- This teaching of Dharma chakra Pravartana Sutra is also known as the **First Turning of Wheels of Dharma** and comprised of the **Four Noble Truths** and **Noble Eightfold Path**.
- The Rainy Season retreat (**Varsha Vassa**) for the Monks and Nuns also starts with this day lasting for three lunar months from July to October, during which they remain in a single place, generally in their temples dedicated to intensive meditation. They are served during this period by lay community who also observe **Uposatha** i.e., to observe eight precepts and meditate under the guidance of their teachers.
- The day is also observed as **Guru Poornima** by both Buddhists and Hindus as a day to mark reverence to their Gurus.

About Mongolian Kanjur

- Mongolian Kanjur, the Buddhist canonical text in 108 volumes is considered to be the most important religious text in Mongolia.
- In the Mongolian language 'Kanjur' means 'Concise Orders'- the words of Lord Buddha in particular. It is held in high esteem by the Mongolian Buddhists and they worship the Kanjur at temples and recite the lines of Kanjur in daily life as a sacred ritual.

Four Noble Truths: The four noble truths outlined by Buddha are:

- **Dukkha** (suffering, incapable of satisfying, painful) is an innate characteristic of existence in the realm of samsara or world.
- **Samudaya** (origin, arising) of this dukkha, which arises or "comes together" with tanhā ("craving, desire or attachment").
- **Nirodha** (cessation, ending) of this dukkha can be attained by the renunciation or letting go of this desire.

- **Magga** (path, Noble Eightfold Path) is the path leading to renouncement of desire and cessation of suffering

Noble Eightfold Path: The eightfold path consists of following practices:

- Right Thought
- Right Belief
- Right Speech
- Right Action
- Right Effort
- Right means of Livelihood
- Right Memory
- Right Mediation

National Mission for Manuscripts: The National Mission for Manuscripts was launched in February 2003 by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, with the mandate of documenting, conserving and disseminating the knowledge preserved in the manuscripts.

Tangam: Critically Endangered Language of Arunachal Pradesh

Recently Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister released a book titled “Tangams: An Ethnolinguistic Study Of The Critically Endangered Group of Arunachal Pradesh”.

Tangams

- The **Tangams** are a little-known community **within the larger Adi tribe** of Arunachal Pradesh and reside in the **hamlet of Kugging** in Upper Siang district’s Paindem circle, with 253 reported speakers.
- As per the UNESCO World Atlas of Endangered Languages (2009), Tangam — an **oral language** that belongs to the **Tani group**, under the greater **Tibeto-Burman languagefamily** — is marked ‘**critically endangered**’.

Risks Faced by Languages in Arunachal Pradesh

- **Multilingualism:** Kugging hamlet is surrounded by a number of villages inhabited by Adi subgroups such as Shimong, Minyongs, as well as the Buddhist tribal community of Khambas, among others. To communicate with their neighbours over the years, the Tangams have become multilingual, speaking not just Tangam, but other tongues such as Shimong, Khamba and Hindi.
- **Invisibility in the State:** The Tangams are relatively unknown even within Arunachal Pradesh. The village lacks proper infrastructure in all basic sectors of education, health, drinking water facilities, road and electricity. Roads have reached Kugging only in 2018. Not a single person from the community has gone to university.
- **Use of Link Languages:** The diversity of languages has led various communities to depend on English, Assamese and colloquial variety of Hindi called Arunachalee Hindi

as the link languages. Many believe this shift has led to loss of native languages of the tribal communities.

- **Neglect by Youth:** Even the numerically larger tribes like Nyishi, Galo, Mishmi, Tangsa etc. whose population exceed the ten thousand mark are also not safe from endangerment, hence marked unsafe. The reason is that the younger generation of these tribes especially in the urban areas have mostly discarded the use of their mother tongue.
- **Low Population:** While almost all languages of Arunachal Pradesh are endangered, smaller languages are more vulnerable, and extinction is directly proportional to population.

Way Forward

- Government should conclude the survey of languages as soon as possible to delineate evidence based protection and preservation policy for various languages.
- More books like the recently published book on Tangams which has followed multidisciplinary approach by taking into account not only language, but also rituals, folklore, food habits, belief systems etc, should be encouraged. This will help the future children retain their unique identity as an ethnolinguistic group.

Languages of Arunachal Pradesh

- The languages of Arunachal Pradesh have been classified under the **Sino-Tibetan language family**, and more specifically under the **Tibeto-Burman** and **Tai group** of languages, such as Lolo-Burmish, Bodhic, Sal, Tani, Mishmi, Hruishh and Tai.
- There has been no systematic, scientific or official survey on the number of languages in Arunachal Pradesh till recently. An official linguistic survey by the state government began only in 2018, which is currently underway. Before that, People's Linguistic Survey of India was published in 2017. Still, experts peg the number of languages at 32-34, with a disclaimer that it is not a conclusive figure.
- According to the UNESCO *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger (2009)* more than 26 languages of Arunachal Pradesh have been identified as endangered. The degrees range from 'unsafe', 'definitely endangered' to 'critically endangered'.

Lingaraj Temple to be Refurbished Soon

Recently Odisha government declared its plan to renovate and beautify Bhubaneswar's largest temple – the Lingaraj Temple. The project is part of a larger 66-acre **Ekamra Kshetra Yojana** that will also include the renovation of water tanks, the development of the Mukteswara and Kedar Gouri temple premises and the creation of a park that sits at the fore of the Lingaraj Temple.

Lingaraj Temple

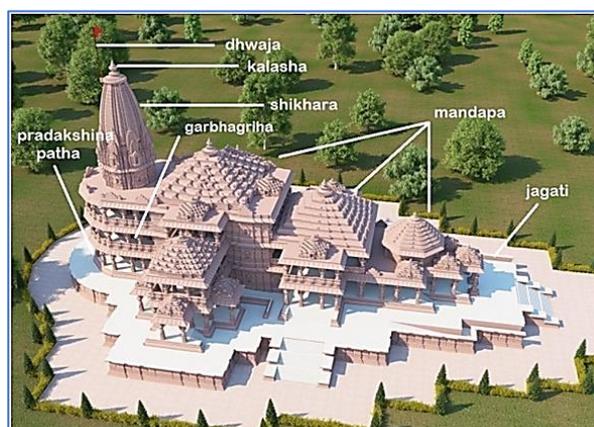
- The temple was constructed in the 11th century by the Somavanshiruler **Jajati Kesari**.
- It marks the culmination of the temple architecture in Bhubaneswar which was the cradle of the **Kalinga School of Temple Architecture**.
- Built of sandstone and laterite, the temple is built in **Duala Style** and has four components namely, vimana (structure containing the sanctum), jagamohana (assembly hall), natamandira (festival hall) and bhoga-mandapa (hall of offerings).
- It lies on the banks of the sacred **Bindu Sagar lake** which is believed to have been created by Lord Shiva.
- Lord Shiva is worshipped here as **Tribhubanesvara** (Bhubaneswar) from which the city has derived its name.
- The temple consists of an intricately carved tower that rises to 180 feet. It also has one hundred and fifty subsidiary shrines.
- **Lingaraj** is referred to as **'Swayambhu'** – (self-originated Shivaling) and the **Shivaling** is known as **Hari Hara** which signifies the syncretisation of Shaivism and Vaishnavism sects in Odisha.
- Withing the premises, there is a beautiful garden **'Ekamra Van'** (a forest of a single mango tree) where it was believed the Lingam was first discovered as per the mythological texts. In these texts, Bhubaneswar was known as **Ekamra Kshetra**, which nearly translates to "the place of the mango tree".
- **Shivaratri** held in the month of Feb/March and **RukunaRatha Yatra** held on Ashokastami (around April) are two major festivals celebrated here.
- During the **RukunaRatha Yatra**, Lord Chandrashekhara, the representative of Lord Lingaraja, visits maternal aunts home.
- RukunaRatha Yatra literally means the chariot which does not take a U-turn.

Nagara Architecture of Ayodhya's Ram Temple

Recently Shri Ram Janm bhoomi Teerth Kshetra released some photos of the proposed model of the grand temple at Rama Janmabhoomi in Ayodhya which will follow the Nagara style of temple architecture.

Salient Features of Ayodhya Ram Temple

- Reportedly, the stones from Banshi mountains in Rajasthan will be used for the construction.



- The temple will be a whopping 161-feet high and have three storeys. It will be designed according to the Vastushastra and Shilpishastra.
- The main shikhara of the temple rises upward in a curved pyramidal fashion, ending in a horizontal fluted disc called an **Amalaka** topped with a **Kalasha**. This is called the **latina-style shikhara**.
- The **shikhara over the mandapas** in the Ayodhya Ram temple can be seen having a square base, and a rectilinear outline. This is called the **phamsana-style shikhara**. The mandapa shikhara right at the entrance has an octagonal base.
- The Ayodhya Ram temple will have **five mandapas** between the garbhagriha and the entrance- **kudu mandapa, nritya mandapa, rang mandapa** - in that order. The **kirtan mandapa** and **prarthana mandapa** will be on the either side.
- The structure will have a total of 360 pillars.



Nagara Style of Temple Architecture

- The basic form of a Hindu temple consists of following architectural elements:
 - **Garbhagriha** - the small room where the principle deity/deities of the temple reside
 - **Mandapa** - the portico or hall at the entrance of the temple generally designed to house a large number of people
 - **Shikhara** - the mountain like spire which can have different shapes from pyramidal to curvilinear
 - **Vahana** - the mount of the main deity placed generally in line of sight from Garbhagriha
- However, under different regional rulers' different types of temple architectural style emerged which contain other special features apart from aforementioned basic elements.
- The Nagara style of temple architecture is found in northern India and is further subdivided into different schools based on region like **Odisha, Khajuraho, Solanki** etc.
- In the Nagara style, the temple is generally constructed on a upraised platform called **jagati**.
- Mandapas are present in front of the Garbhagriha. These are adorned with the Shikhara, the tallest one being above the Garbhagriha.
- Unlike South Indian temples which have magnificent Gopurams (gateways), Nagara style does not usually have elaborate boundary walls or gateways.

- Also, often there is no water tank in the Nagara temple premises unlike South Indian temples and the pradakshina patha is covered.

Naukhai Juhar Festival

Recently Prime Minister extended greetings on the occasion of Naukhai Juhar to farmers.

About Naukhai Juhar

- Naukhai Juhar is one of the most ancient festivals celebrated in Odisha, Chhattisgarh and areas of neighbouring states to welcome the new crop of the season.
- It is an agricultural festival which is also known as Nuakhai Parab or Nuakahi Bhetghat.
- Nuakhai is a combination of two words signifies eating of new rice as 'nua' means new and 'khai' means eat.
- On this day, people worship food grain and prepare special meals. Farmers offer the first produce from their lands to Goddess Samaleswari, the famous 'Mother Goddess' of Sambalpur district of Odisha.
- Likewise, locals also organise several cultural programmes - folk songs and dances in their respective districts on this day to display the state's local culture and tradition.

Warli Painting

- National Fertilizers Limited (NFL), a central Public Sector Undertaking, and country's leading fertilizers manufacturer, is promoting warli painting.
- It engaged a few artists who were rendered jobless in the last few months due to COVID-19 to paint the outer wall of its Noida head office.

About Warli Painting

- Warli painting is a style of tribal art created by the people of Warli Tribe from the North Sahyadri Range in Maharashtra.
- The elements of nature are often the focal points of these paintings.
- Warli artists use a blend of rice paste, gum and water as paint and bamboo stick as their brush.
- These primitive wall paintings use a set of basic geometric shapes like circle, triangle, and square in their designs.

Rare Inscription of Renati Cholas Unearthed in Andhra Pradesh

A rare inscription dating back to the Renati Chola era has been unearthed in a remote village of Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh recently.

Key Findings

- The inscription is found engraved on a dolomite slab and shale, which are part of a fragmentary pillar excavated from the site in a farmer's field.
- The inscription was written in **archaic Telugu**.
- It was assigned to the 8th Century A.D., when the region was under the rule of Chola Maharaja of Renadu.
- The inscription seems to throw light on the record of a gift of six **Marttus** (a measuring unit) of land gifted to a person Sidyamayu, one of the Brahmins serving the temple at Pidukula village.
- Some lines of the inscription are **indicative of the priority given to morality** in those days.
- In July 2020, Archaeological Survey of India experts had deciphered two inscriptions of Renati Cholas belonging to the seventh century. The first inscription throws light on their capital Erikkal in Kamalapuram region in Kadapa, while the other speaks about battle of Renati Cholas and Banas. These inscriptions written in Telugu were engraved on boulders near a Siva temple in Lankamalla forest on the banks of Penna in Kadapa district.

Renati Cholas

- The Telugu Cholas of Renadu (also called as Renati Cholas) ruled over Renadu region in Rayalseema, in the present-day Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh.
- Their inscriptions state that they belonged to the family of Karikala Chola. However, this fact cannot be established conclusively yet.
- They were under the subjugation of Pallavas and one of the earliest Renati Chola Chief was named Nandivarman, perhaps after the name of the Pallava King.
- They were the first rulers to use Telugu language in their administration and inscriptions instead of Sanskrit way back in the 6th and 8th centuries.

Dekho Apna Desh Webinar on Hampi

On 29th August 2020, the Ministry of Tourism organised a webinar titled 'Hampi- Inspired by the past; Going into the future' under Dekho Apna Desh Webinar series. Dekho Apna Desh Webinar Series is an effort to showcase India's rich diversity under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat programme. It is presented in technical partnership with National e Governance Department, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

Hampi

- Hampi was the last capital of the Vijayanagara empire which arose in 1336 CE, from the ruins of the Kampili kingdom.
- Hampi is a UNESCO World Heritage Site whose name is derived from Pampa which is the old name of the Tungabhadra River on whose banks the city is built.

Group of Monuments at Hampi

The grandiose site of Hampi comprises mainly of the remnants of the Capital City of Vijayanagara Empire (14th-16th Cent CE), located in the Tungabhadra basin in Bellary District.

Some of the notable structures at Hampi are:

- **Virupaksha Temple (Pampavathi Temple):** Dedicated to Lord Virupaksha, the patron deity of the Vijayanagara empire.
- **Vitthala Temple Complex:** Dedicated to Lord Vitthala, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu and consists of pillared halls and the colossal stone chariot.
- **Hazara Rama Temple:** Private temple of king with its exceptionally carved outer walls, an unusual feature in other Vijayanagara temples.
- **Ganigatti Jain temple:** Hampi housed several Jain temples including the Ganigatti, ParsvanathCharan etc.
- **Krishna Temple:** It was constructed in 1513 CE during the rule of king Krishnadevaraya to commemorate his conquest over the Gajapatis of Orissa. It is famous for its swing pavilion and the renowned musical pillars.
- **Lotus Mahal:** Located in the 'Zanana Enclosure' meant for Queen and other royal women, it is one of the finest examples of Indo-Islamic architecture with the base depicting Hindu foundation of stone typifying Vijayanagara style of architecture while the upper pyramidal towers illustrate Islamic architecture.
- **Other Important Structures:** Narasimha, Ganesa, Hemakuta group of temples, Achyutaraya temple complex, Pattabhirama temple complex, Chola Mantapa, Kampli Fort, Anjaneyaswamy Temple, Queen's bath, Elephant Stables etc.

Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat

- Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat was announced on 31st October, 2015 (Rashtriya Ekta Diwas) on the occasion of the 140th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.
- The broad objectives of the initiative are to:
 - **Celebrate** the Unity in Diversity of our Nation and to maintain and strengthen the fabric of traditionally existing emotional bonds between the people of our Country;

- **Promote** the spirit of national integration through a deep and structured engagement between all Indian States and Union Territories through a year-long planned engagement between States;
- **Showcase** the rich heritage and culture, customs and traditions of either State for enabling people to understand and appreciate the diversity that is India, thus fostering a sense of common identity;
- **Establish** long-term engagements and
- **Create** an environment which promotes learning between States by sharing best practices and experience.

ASI Declares Site & Remains at Baghpat to be of National Importance

The archaeological site and remains at Sadikpur Sinauli in Uttar Pradesh's Baghpat district where evidence of the existence of a warrior class around 2,000 BCE was discovered in 2018 have been declared to be of "national importance" by the Archaeological Survey of India.

Highlights

- The ASI's notification under provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 brings the 28.67-hectare-site under Central protection.
- The site would now be maintained by the ASI and development works around it would be subject to Central rules.
- The notification comes two years after the ASI unearthed remains of three chariots, shields, legged coffins, swords and helmets indicating the presence of a warrior class at the site that is 68 km from Delhi.
- The discovered objects date back 3,700 to 4,000 years.
- ASI termed the site the "largest necropolis of the late Harappan period datable to around early part of second millennium BCE".

Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958

- The AMASR Act provides for preservation of ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance.
- It provides for the regulation of archaeological excavations and for protection of sculptures, carvings and other like objects.
- The Archaeological Survey of India functions under the provisions of this act.

Sree Narayana Guru

Recently Prime Minister of India paid homage to Sree Narayan Guru on the occasion of his 164th birth anniversary on September 2. Additionally, Kerala Government decided to name

Kerala's first open university after Sree Narayan Guru, a saint who fought against the caste system prevalent in the society.

About Sree Narayana Guru

- Sree Narayana Guru was born in 1856 in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala into an Ezhava family, a backward community of Kerala.
- He was a saint, poet, philosopher & social reformer who led the reform movement in Kerala, revolted against caste system and worked on propagating new values of freedom in spirituality and social equality.
- He gave the universal message of **"One caste, One religion, One God."**
- He launched the **Aravipuram movement** in 1888 after consecrating Siva Lingam at Aravippuram.
- He was a proponent of **Advaita Vedanta**, the principle of non-duality put forward by Adi Shankara. He further extended this non dualistic principle into practical modes of self-realisation through spiritual education, compassion, and peaceful coexistence of humanity.

Dairy Production Signs in Indus Valley Civilisation

Dairy production in India began as far back as in the 3rd millennium BCE and may have been a factor behind sustaining the Indus Valley Civilisation, according to findings from a team of Canadian and Indian researchers.

Highlights of the Study

- The study dates dairy production to 2500 BCE and is the earliest known evidence of dairy production.
- The results were based on molecular chemical analysis of residue in shards of pottery found at the archaeological site of KotadaBhadli, a rural settlement located in Gujarat.
- Of the 59 samples studied, 22 showed the presence of dairy lipids. Through a process called stable isotope analysis, the researchers were also able to identify the type of ruminant used for dairy, and concluded that these were cattle, like cows and buffalo, rather than goats and sheep.
- The availability of dairy production may have helped sustain such ancient societies and the level of production indicates that it was definitely beyond household consumption.

Government Explores Tourism Opportunities in Rajasthan's Bundi

The Ministry of Tourism's 'Dekho Apna Desh' webinar series titled "**Bundi: Architectural Heritage of a Forgotten Rajput Capital**" focused on Bundi in Rajasthan. 'Dekho Apna Desh' webinar series is an effort to showcase India's rich diversity under 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'. The series is presented in technical partnership with the National e-Governance Department of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

Bundi

- Bundi, is the erstwhile capital of Hada Rajput province known as Hadauti located in south-eastern Rajasthan.
- Bundi is also known as city of stepwells, blue city and Choti Kashi. In ancient times, the area around Bundi was apparently inhabited by various local tribes, of which the Parihar Tribes, Meena were prominent.
- Some of the important attractions of Bundi include:
 - **Sukh Mahal:** A small, two-storied palace which was a summer retreat of past rulers and now is famous for being the place where Rudyard Kipling wrote the novel 'Kim'.
 - **Kshar Bag:** Sometimes known as Saar Bagh, it houses the memorial cenotaphs of the royal family of the Bundi state.
 - **Raniji Ki Baori:** RanijikiBaori, also known as 'Queen's Stepwell', is a famous stepwell built in 1699 by Rani Nathavati Ji, the younger queen of the ruling king Rao Raja Anirudh Singh of Bundi. This multi-storied stepwell displays excellent carvings of Gajraj with his trunk turned inwards, giving the impression of having drunk from the baori on its pillars. Its high arched gate gives it an inviting appearance.
 - **Dabhai Kund:** Shaped like an inverted pyramid, the DabhaiKund, also known as Jail Kund, is the largest of its kind in Bundi.
 - **Taragarh Fort:** Built in 1345, Taragarh fort with its curved roofs topping pavilions, excess of temple columns and elephant and lotus motifs, is a tribute to Rajput style.
 - **Garh Palace Bundi:** The Garh Palace is a collection a number of palaces that were built by different rulers over the span of 3 centuries. Garh Palace is known for its Rajput architecture, which is noticeable in the jharokhas and pillars, many of which sport elephant carvings. Some of the famous palaces here include Chhatra Mahal, Phool Mahal and Badal Mahal, but one of the most famous ones is the Chitrashala, which has a fascinating pavilion and gallery of miniature murals.
 - **Badal Mahal:** The Badal Mahal, also known as the Palace of Clouds, is located within the Garh Palace. The majestic palace's walls are covered in exquisite paintings which depict an early influence of the Chinese culture.

Golconda Fort

- A massive portion of the Majnu Burj inside the Golconda Fort collapsed recently due to incessant rains in Hyderabad.
- The Majnu Burj is inside the Naya Qila area of the Golconda Fort, which is under the control of Hyderabad Golf Club (HGC) under a MoU signed in 2009.
- However, the Golconda Fort is under the control of Archaeological Survey of India,

About the Golconda Fort

- Golconda Fort in Hyderabad was originally known as **Mankal**, and built on a hilltop in the year **1143**. It was originally a mud fort under the reign of Rajah of Warangal of **Kakatiya dynasty**.
- Later it was fortified between 14th and 17th centuries by the **Bahmani Sultans** and then the ruling **Qutub Shahi dynasty**. Golconda was the principal capital of the Qutub Shahi kings. In 1687, this fort came under the rule of Mughal emperor **Aurangzeb**.
- The name of the fort 'Golconda' has been derived from the Telugu words "**Golla**" and "**Konda**" which together means '**Shepherd's Hill**'.
- Within its stone fortifications, the Golconda Fort envelopes a **medieval Islamic settlement**. The inner fort contains ruins of palaces, mosques and a hill top pavilion, which rises about 130 meters high.
- Within the citadel or **Bala Hisar** are the Silahkhana, Nagina bagh, Ambar Khana, Akkanna-Madanna Offices, Ramdas Jail, Darbar hall, Baradari, Hammams, Mahals, royal courts.
- Fort has eight gates out of which the main gate is **Fateh Darwaza** or the Victory Gate. This gate was built to commemorate the victorious march of Mughal Emperor Aurungzeb.
- At Fateh Darwaza one can witness fantastic **acoustical effects**. Clapping of hands at a certain point near the dome entrance reverberates and can be heard clearly at the hill top pavilion, almost one kilometer away. This served as a warning note to the inhabitants of the fort of any impending danger.
- Golconda used to be a **world famous diamond market**. It was at Golconda that the famous Kohinoor and Hope diamonds along with others such as The Regent Diamond, Darya-e Nur, Nur-ul-Ain Diamond were stored.

Char-chapori culture

A proposed "Miya museum" reflecting the culture and heritage of the people living in char-chapouris has stirred up a controversy in Assam.

Char Chapori Culture

- Char-chaporis are shifting riverine islands of the Brahmaputra and are primarily inhabited by the Muslims of Bengali-origin (pejoratively referred to as 'Miyas').
- A char is a floating island while chaporis are low-lying flood-prone riverbanks.
- The 'Miya' community comprises descendants of Muslim migrants from East Bengal (now Bangladesh) to Assam.
- The community's cultural motifs and heritage are related to agriculture and the river. The community has a variety of songs (bhatiali related to the river, magangeet or harvest songs, noikhelorgeet or boat songs etc), instruments and equipment to catch fish, as well as different kinds of boats.
- They perform an ancient performative martial art called the Lathibari.

Sarna Religion of Jharkhand

Recently Jharkhand government convened a special session and passed a resolution to send the Centre a letter to recognise Sarna religion and include it as a separate code in the Census of 2021.

- Currently, the census classifies people under six religions - Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Jain, and Buddhist - while those who do not subscribe to these are clubbed under the 'Other' category.
- With the Centre dropping the "other" option for Census 2021, tribals will have to either leave the column or declare themselves as members of one of the six specified religions.

Sarna Religion

- 'Sarna' followers are nature worshippers who do not consider themselves Hindus.
- The holy grail of the faith is "Jal, Jungle, Zameen" and its followers pray to the trees and hills while believing in protecting the forest areas.
- Jharkhand has 32 tribal groups of which eight are from Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.
- It is believed that 50 lakhs tribal in the entire country put their religion as 'Sarna' in the 2011 census, although it was not a code.

Issue

- Many of the tribals who follow Sarna faith have converted to Christianity—the state has more than 4% Christians most of whom are tribals. This has become one of the planks of demanding a separate code "to save religious identity".
- Some who still follow the Sarna faith believe that converted tribals are taking the benefits of reservation as a minority as well as the benefits given to Schedule Tribes.

They also believe that benefits should be given specifically to them and not those who have converted.

Need for a Separate Code

- **Enumeration of Tribals:** In the last eight decades, the population per cent of tribal people in the state has come down to 26.02 per cent from 38.03 per cent. One of the reasons for this was tribals who go for work in different states are not being recorded in the Census. In other states, they are not counted as Tribals. The separate code will ensure recording of their population.
- **Safeguard Tribal's Rights:** A decline in the population of tribals has an impact on the constitutional provisions and policies framed to benefit the tribal communities. The basis for identifying an area as Schedule V is dependent on the tribal population. In 2019, there were demands of denotifying Schedule V areas where the tribal population has come down. The recognition of Adivasi Sarna code will address this problem.

Concerns Against the Proposal

- Concerns have been raised about the usage of the term 'Sarna' and limiting it to tribals. There are two problems:
 - The term Sarna is not common to all the adherers of a naturalistic religion based on worship of forests, rivers and mountains.
 - Equating the idea of a naturalistic religion with only the Schedule Tribe population is problematic. It should be open to all.

Way Forward

- The protection of their language and history is an important aspect for tribals. Between 1871 and 1951, the tribals had a different code. However, it was changed around 1961-62.
- Experts say that when today the entire world is focusing on reducing pollution and protecting the environment, it is prudent that Sarna becomes a religious code as the soul of this religion is to protect nature and the environment.

Ancient Vishnu Temple Discovered in Northwest Pakistan

A Hindu temple, believed to have been constructed 1,300 years ago, has been discovered by Pakistani and Italian archaeological experts at a mountain in northwest Pakistan's Swat district. The discovery was made during an excavation at Barikot Ghundai.

Highlights

- The discovered temple is of Lord Vishnu. It was built by the Hindus 1,300 years ago during the Hindu Shahi period.

- The Hindu Shahis or Kabul Shahis (850-1026 CE) was a Hindu dynasty that ruled the Kabul Valley (eastern Afghanistan), Gandhara (modern-day Pakistan), and present-day north-western India.
- During their excavation, the archaeologists also found traces of cantonment and watchtowers near the temple site.
- The experts also found a water tank near the temple site which they believe was used by the Hindus for bathing before worship.
- Swat district is home to a thousand-year-old archaeological sites and the traces of the Hindu Shahi period have been found for the first time in the area.
- This was the first temple of the Gandhara civilisation discovered in Swat district.
- Swat district is among the top 20 sites in Pakistan which is home to every kind of tourism such as natural beauty, religious tourism, cultural tourism and archaeological sites.
- Several places of worship of Buddhism are also situated in Swat district.

Lachit Borphukan: The Great Military Commander of Ahom Army

On November 24, Assam celebrated Lachit Diwas in remembrance of the valour and heroism of Lachit Borphukan, one of the symbols of resistance to the Mughal rule.

Lachit Borphukan

- Originally named as Lachit Deca, Lachit Borphukan, the fierce and indefatigable Ahom Commander, was born during the early 17th century on 24th November at Betioni in the Golaghat district of modern Assam.
- His father, Momai Tamuli Borbarua was the 'Governor' of the kingdom and also 'Commander-in-Chief' of Ahom army under the reign of King Pratap Singha (1603-1641).
- Lachit received military training from an early age and joined the Ahom King Jayadhwaj Singha (1648-1663) as a scarf-bearer. The post 'scarf-bearer' or '**Soladhara Barua**' is considered as a part of the incumbent king's personal staff.
 - In due course of time, Lachit was appointed as '**Ghora Barua**' or 'Superintendent of Royal Horses'.
 - Later he was promoted to the post of Commander of the Simulgarh Fort situated at the south bank of Brahmaputra.
 - When Chakradhwaj Singha became the king of Ahom dynasty during 1663 to 1669, he appointed Lachit as the **Dolakaxaria Barua** or the Superintendent of the Royal Guards.
 - Finally, Lachit was appointed as '**Borphukan**' by King Chakradhwaj Singha. Then onwards, Lachit Deca was known as Lachit Borphukan.
 - The position of Borphukan, which is one of the top five councillors (5 Patra Mantris) in the Ahom kingdom, was instituted by King Prataap Singha. The other four were Borbarua, Burhagohain, Borgohain and Borpatrogohain.

- Borphukan is a position embedded with both executive and judicial powers with its headquarters at Kaliabor in Assam. Lachit shifted the headquarters to Itakhuli in Guwahati.
- He first came into prominence, when he recovered Guwahati from the Mughals in 1667, and was presented with the Hengdang, a gold-plated sword.
- Lachit became famous due to his valour in the **Battle of Saraighat**, one of the worst defeats of the Mughal Army.
- A bust of the Barphukan stands at the entrance to the NDA and the best passing out cadet at the National Defence Academy is awarded the Lachit Borphukan gold medal, which was instituted by the Assam Government in 2000.

Battle of Saraighat

- In the battle of Saraighat (1671), a much smaller Ahom army defeated the mighty Mughal Army led by Raja Ram Singh Kachwaha of Amber, through a combination of tactical brilliance, guerrilla warfare and intelligence gathering.
- The battle was fought at Saraighat on the river Brahmaputra.

Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan

Abdur Rahim Khan I Khanan's tomb, located in Nizamuddin, Delhi was recently thrown open for public after receiving a new lease of life by conservation work, by a multi-disciplinary team of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC), in partnership with the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and support of a corporate conglomerate.

Rahim's Tomb

- The monumental mausoleum was built by Rahim in 1598 for his wife, Mah Banu, making it the first Mughal tomb of its kind built for a lady. Upon his death, Rahim was also buried in the same mausoleum in 1627.
- The marble and red sandstone clad tomb is crowned by a double-domed structure.
- It is the grandest of Rahim's surviving buildings, inspired by the architectural style of Humayun's Tomb (built in 1558) and, in turn, inspiring the Taj Mahal completed in (1653).

About Rahim

- Rahim was born in 1556 to Bairam Khan, the uncle and tutor of Akbar. Upon Bairam Khan's assassination, Akbar immediately ordered the four year child to be brought to him.
- In Akbar's court he was given the kind of education in riding, wrestling, swordsmanship and languages as was reserved for sons of premier nobles. Consequently, he grew up with a strong proficiency in Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Sanskrit and he also spoke some Portuguese.

Military Contributions

- The political and military career of Rahim began with Akbar's Gujarat campaign in 1572. In 1575, he was appointed by the emperor as governor of Gujarat.
- He was also the commander-in-chief of the Mughal army. He also led the expedition to Sind and Baluchistan and played an important role in Akbar's expedition to the Deccan.

Literary Legacy

- He was a celebrated poet, a nobleman and one of the 'Navratnas' in Akbar's court.
- As a poet, Rahim is seen at par with the famous triumvirate of medieval Bhakta poets, Surdas, Tulsidas and Kabir.
- However, in his poetry, he experimented with Persian, Hindi and Sanskrit. In Sanskrit, he wrote two books on astrology, Khetakautukam and Dwatrimshadyogavali.
- Rahim's writings could be grouped under three broad categories. He was a Bhakti poet, but he also didactic poetry of a more liberal kind. He also wrote erotic poetry which was intertwined with Hindu religious poetry.
- He was also one of the foremost translators of his times. He translated Babur's autobiography Baburnama from Chagatai language (extinct Turkish) to Persian.
- His most lasting legacy is in the form of the 700-odd couplets which are laced with simplicity and pragmatic wisdom.

Architectural Contributions

- He patronised construction of monumental buildings - canals, tanks, enclosed gardens - in Agra, Lahore, Delhi and Burhanpur, among other Indian cities.
- The grandest among these is the tomb he built for his wife which later became his resting place too.

Gwalior, Orchha in UNESCO world heritage cities list

The historical fort cities of Gwalior and Orchha in Madhya Pradesh have been included in the list of UNESCO's world heritage cities under its urban landscape city programme.

Gwalior

- Gwalior was established in 9th century and ruled by Gurjar Pratihara Rajvansh, Tomar, Baghel Kachvaho and Scindias.
- It is known for its palaces and temples, including the intricately carved Sas Bahu Ka Mandir temple.
- The Gwalior Fort occupies a sandstone plateau overlooking the city and is accessed via a winding road lined with sacred Jain statues. Within the fort's high walls is the 15th-century Gujari Mahal Palace, now an archaeological museum.

Orchha

- Orchha nestled on the banks of betwa river in Niwari district was founded in the 16th century by Bundela Rajput chief Rudra Pratap.
- The famous spots in the town are Raj Mahal, Jehangir Mahal, Ramraja Temple, Rai Praveen Mahal, Chaturbhuj temple and Laxminarayan Mandir.
- The famed chatris of Orchha are cenotaphs that were constructed in honour of its erstwhile rulers.

Indus Valley Civilisation

The diet of the people of Indus Valley civilisation had a dominance of meat, including extensive eating of beef, finds a new study titled "Lipid residues in pottery from the Indus Civilisation in northwest India".

Key Findings

- It finds dominance of animal products such as meat of pigs, cattle, buffalo, sheep and goat, as well as dairy products, used in ancient ceramic vessels from rural and urban settlements of Indus Valley civilisation in northwest India – in present-day Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.
- The study concentrated on five villages – Alamgirpur (Meerut, UP), two in Masudpur (Hisar, Haryana), Lohari Ragho (Hisar), Khanak (Bhiwani, Haryana) – as well as Farmana town (in Rohtak district) and Rakhigarhi city (Hisar).
- There was diversity in plant products and regional variation in cropping practices. Both summer and winter-based cropping was practiced. Evidence of barley, wheat, rice, different varieties of millets, a range of winter and summer pulses, oilseed and fruit and vegetables, including brinjal, cucumber, grapes, date palm were grown and consumed.
- At Harappa, 90% of the cattle were kept alive until they were three or three-and-a-half years, suggesting that females were used for dairying production, whereas male animals were used for traction.
- Wild animal species like deer, antelope, gazelle, hares, birds, and riverine/marine resources are also found in small proportions in the faunal assemblages of both rural and urban Indus sites suggesting that these diverse resources had a place in the Indus diet.
- There is also evidence of hares and birds being eaten, although little evidence of chicken being a part of the diet.

Four Indigenous Games in Khelo India Youth Games

The Sports Ministry has approved the inclusion of four indigenous sports, namely Gatka, Kalaripayattu, Thang-Ta and Mallakhamba in the Khelo India Youth Games 2021, scheduled to take place in Haryana.

- Kalaripayattu is an Indian martial art that originated in Kerala.
- Mallakhamba, is an ancient traditional Indian sport. 'Malla' means gymnast, and 'khamb' means pole. Thus, the name 'Mallakhamb' stands for 'a gymnast's pole'. It is well-known across India and Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra have been the hotspots of this sport.
- Gatka originates in the state of Punjab and this traditional fighting style of the Nihang Sikh warriors is used both as self-defence as well as a sport.
- Thang-Ta, is a Manipuri marital art.

Monpa Handmade Paper Revived

The 1000-year-old heritage art – the Monpa Handmade Paper of Arunachal Pradesh – which was driven to the extinction, has come to life once again, with the committed efforts of Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) which has commissioned a Monpa handmade paper making unit in Tawang.

Monpa Handmade Paper

- The fine-textured handmade paper, which is called Mon Shugu in the local dialect, is integral to the vibrant culture of the local tribes in Tawang.
- The paper has great historic and religious significance as it is the paper used for writing Buddhist scriptures and hymns in monasteries.
- The Monpa handmade paper is made from the bark of a local tree called Shugu Sheng, which has medicinal values too.
- The paper had originated in China and gradually travelled to India. Monpa paper was earlier sold to countries like Tibet, Bhutan, Thailand and Japan.

Kashmir's Papier-mache Art

The credit goes to the Shia community of Kashmir for keeping alive papier mache art — colourful, exquisite, highly decorative and delicate — in the Valley since the 14th century. However, this year's pandemic has given a heavy blow to this art form which is now pinning hope on the World Bank project and on a post-pandemic world returning to Kashmir.

Papier mache

- Papier-mâché is the French word for "chewed paper".
- It is based primarily on paper pulp, and is a richly decorated, colourful artifact; generally, in the form of vases, bowls, or cups, boxes, trays, bases of lamps, and many other small objects.
- No historian has been able to trace the first papier-mâché artisan who travelled to Kashmir from Persia, where the craft was born. But the local legend has it that the art was introduced to Kashmir in the 15th century by a Kashmiri prince who had spent years in prison in Samarkand in Central Asia.

Process of Making Papier Mache

- Paper is first soaked in water for several days, then drained and mixed with cloth, rice straw and copper sulphate to form a pulp.
- The mixture is placed on a mould and left to dry for two-three days in a process called sakhtsazi.
- The surface is coated with glue and gypsum, rubbed smooth with a stone or piece of baked clay, and plastered with many layers of tissue paper.
- The piece is then sandpapered or burnished and finally painted with several coats of lacquer, a process known as naqashi or surface painting.

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