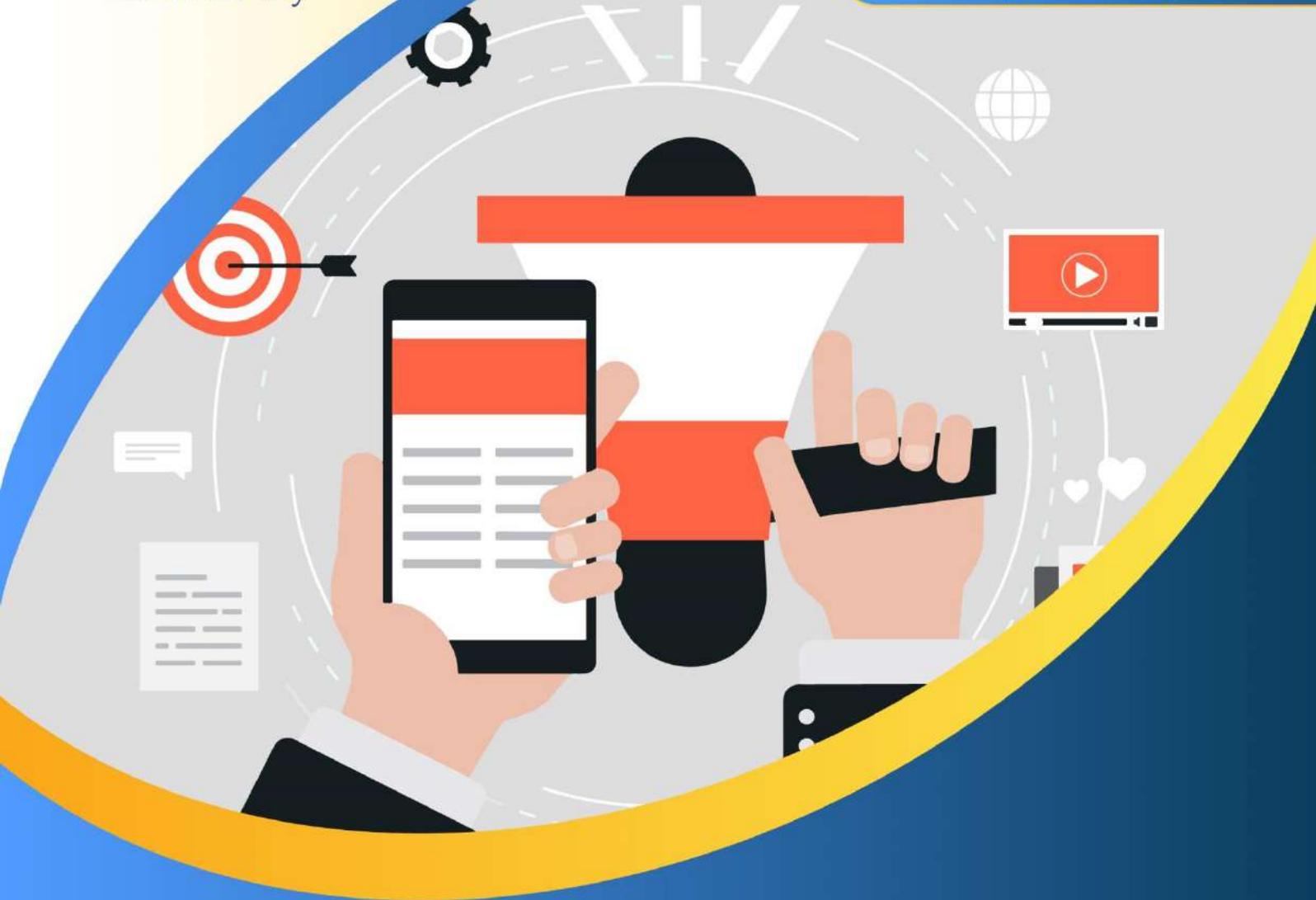


January to July 2021



# 2021 Current Affairs for Prelims 2021

## HISTORY

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# HISTORY

## 1. Buddhist Circuit

**In news-** The Ministry of Tourism organised a webinar titled “Exploring Buddhist Circuit by Train” as a part of ‘Dekho Apna Desh’ Webinar series.

### The Buddhist Circuit-

- In the Mahaparinirvana sutra, the Buddha tells his followers that they can attain merit and a noble rebirth by going on pilgrimage to the places where he was **born (Lumbini, Nepal), gained enlightenment (Bodhgaya), first taught (Sarnath), and attained nirvana (Kushinagar)**.
- The IRCTC Buddhist tourist train covers all the places which had a significant impact on Buddha’s life and teachings.
- Other important places associated with Buddha are-
- **Nalanda (Bihar)** – where he lived and taught,
- **Rajgir (Bihar)** where Lord Buddha set in motion his second wheel of law,
- **Kapilavastu (on India Nepal Border)** where it is believed that Buddha spent his first early years before embarking on the long journey to enlightenment,
- **Vaishali (in Bihar)** where Buddha delivered his last sermon,
- **Sravasti (in Uttar Pradesh)** where Buddha spent twenty four rainy seasons at the Jetavan monastery, built by his disciple Sudatta Anathapindika,
- **Kausambi (in Uttar Pradesh)** where Buddha stayed and preached.

## 2. Prabuddha Bharata

**In News -** Prabuddha Bharata monthly journal recently completed 125 years.

### About Prabuddha Bharata or Awakened India-

- Prabuddha Bharata or Awakened India is an **English-language monthly journal** of the Ramakrishna Order, first published by **Swami Vivekananda in July 1896**.
- It carries articles and translations by monks, scholars, and other writers on **humanities and social sciences**.
- It has a section of book reviews where important publications from university presses from around the world are reviewed.
- It is edited from Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Uttarakhand, and published and printed in Kolkata.
- It is **India's longest running English journal**

## 3. Chauri Chaura Centenary Celebrations

**In news-** The Prime Minister inaugurated the Chauri Chaura Centenary Celebrations at Chauri Chaura, Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, on 4th February 2021.

### About Chauri Chaura incident-

- The Chauri Chaura incident took place on 4 February 1922 at Chauri Chaura in the Gorakhpur district of the United Province in British India, when a large group of protesters participating in the Non-cooperation movement, clashed with police who opened fire
- In retaliation the demonstrators attacked and set fire to a police station, killing all of its occupants.

- The incident led to the deaths of three civilians and 23 policemen.
- The incident dealt a blow to the nonviolent noncooperation movement led by Mahatma Gandhi, who denounced the violence in Chauri Chaura and called off a campaign of civil disobedience that he had been about to launch in Bardoli, Gujarat state.

#### 4. Grand Anicut Canal System

**In news-** Recently, the Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for the extension and modernisation of the Grand Anicut Canal System. The canal is important for irrigation in the Cauvery delta districts.

##### **About the Grand Anicut/Kallanai Dam-**

- It is a simple checkdam constructed by King Karikala Chola of the Chola Dynasty in between the 100 BC- 100 century AD.
- The dam is located on the River Kaveri, approximately 20km from the city of Tiruchirapalli.
- The purpose of the dam was to divert the waters of the Kaveri across the fertile Thanjavur delta region for irrigation by canals.
- Improvements were made to the dam in the 19th century by Arthur Cottons, a British general and irrigation engineer.
- It is the fourth oldest water diversion or water-regulator structure in the world and the oldest in India which is still in use.

##### **Arthur Cottons:**

- He is known as the "**Delta Architect**" of the Godavari District because of his pioneering work in irrigation engineering.
- The Lower Anaicut built by Sir Arthur Cotton in the 19th century CE across Coleroon, the major tributary of Cauvery, is said to be a replicated structure of Kallanai.
- Other projects in which he contributed were: Dowleswaram Barrage, the Prakasam Barrage and the Kurnool Cuddapah Canal (K. C. Canal).

#### 5. Shri Ram Chandra Mission

**In news-** The Prime Minister addressed the event organized to commemorate 75 years of the Shri Ram Chandra Mission.

##### **About Shri Ram Chandra Mission (SRCM)-**

- SRCM was founded in India in July 1945, and the registered office is at Hardoi Road Rosa Post, District Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh.
- SRCM was founded in Shahjahanpur, India and now has its world headquarters in Chennai, India.
- It is a non-profit organisation which provides spiritual training to interested seekers around the world.
- This mission offers a platform for spiritual evolution and practical living through the system of Sahaj Marg meditation, in more than one hundred countries worldwide.
- The founding president was Shri Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur (Babuji), who dedicated the Mission to his spiritual guide, Shri Ram Chandra of Fatehgarh (Lalaji)
- Kamlesh D. Patel is the current living spiritual Master and president of SRCM.
- SRCM is formally associated with the United Nations Department of Public Information (UNDPI) as an international non-governmental organisation.

### **Sahaj Marg-**

Sahaj Marg means the Natural Path/Heartfulness, and is a spiritual practice based on inner experience through meditation. It is a form of ancient practice of Raja Yoga, refined and simplified for modern everyday life. Sahaj marg involves meditation, cleaning, and prayer. The cleaning of impressions (called samskaras) is claimed to be unique to this method.

## **6. Pattachitra paintings**

**In news** - Recently, the Prime Minister praised Odisha 'pattachitra' artist in Mann Ki Baat.

### **Brief note Pattachitra Painting-**

- Pattachitra style of painting is one of the oldest and most popular art forms of Odisha & West Bengal.
- The name Pattachitra has evolved from the Sanskrit words patta, meaning canvas, and chitra, meaning picture.
- Pattachitra is thus a painting done on canvas, and is manifested by rich colourful application, creative motifs and designs, and portrayal of simple themes, mostly mythological in depiction.
- It was originally created for ritual use and as souvenirs for pilgrims to Puri, as well as other temples in Odisha.
- Pattachitra (of Odisha) have mainly the design of **Lord Sri Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra.**

### **Some of the other popular themes represented through this art form are-**

- **Thia** Badhia - depiction of the temple of Jagannath
- Krishna Lila - enactment of Jagannath as Lord Krishna displaying his powers as a child
- Dasavatara Patti - the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu
- Panchamukhi - depiction of Lord Ganesh as a five-headed deity

### **How are these paintings made?**

- Making the patta is the first thing and the painters, also called chitrakars, go about their work in preparing a tamarind paste, which is made by soaking tamarind seeds in water for three days.
- The gum of the kaitha tree is the chief ingredient, and is used as a base for making different pigments, on which diverse raw materials are mixed for diverse colours.
- Powdered conch shells are used for making a white pigment, while lamp soot is used for a black pigment.
- The root of the keya plant is usually used for making the common brush, while mouse hair is used on the requirement of finer brushes, to be attached to wooden handles.

## **7. Thirukkural and Tolkappiyam:**

**In news** - Tamil Nadu petrol pump offers free fuel for children reciting Thirukkural.

### **About Thirukkural-**

- It is a classical Tamil language text consisting of short couplets of seven words each, or kurals.
- Thirukkural was written more than 2000 years ago by an ancient sage called Thiruvalluvar.
- The text is divided into three books with aphoristic teachings on virtue (aram), wealth (porul) and love (inbam), respectively.
- It is known for its universality and secular nature.
- It was composed after the Sangam period.

- It is traditionally praised with epithets and alternate titles such as "the Tamil Veda" and "the divine book".
- This book emphasizes non-violence and moral vegetarianism as virtues for an individual
- It highlights truthfulness, self-restraint, gratitude, hospitality, kindness, goodness of wife, duty, giving, and so forth, besides covering a wide range of social and political topics such as king, ministers, taxes, justice, forts, war, greatness of army and soldier's honor, death sentence for the wicked, agriculture, education, abstinence from alcohol and intoxicants.
- It also includes chapters on friendship, love, sexual union, and domestic life.

#### **Tolkappiyam-**

- Tolkappiyam is the most ancient extant Tamil grammar text and the oldest extant long work of Tamil literature.
- The surviving manuscripts of the Tolkappiyam consists of three books, each with nine chapters, with a cumulative total of 1,612 sutras in the nurpa meter.
- The three books are the Eluttatikaram ("Eluttu" meaning "letter, phoneme"), the Sollatikaram ("Sol" meaning "Sound, word") and the Porulatikaram ("Porul" meaning "subject matter").
- Some in the Tamil tradition place the text in the mythical second sangam, variously in 1st millennium BCE or earlier.
- Tholkapiyam, some traditionally believe, was written by a single author named Tholkappiyar, a disciple of Vedic sage Agastya mentioned in the Rigveda.

## **8. Dickinsonia in Bhimbetka:**

**In News-** Researchers have discovered three fossils of the earliest known living animal 'Dickinsonia', on the roof of the 'Auditorium Cave' at Bhimbetka Rock Shelters, Madhya Pradesh.

#### **About Dickinsonia-**

- Dickinsonia is an extinct genus of basal animal that lived during the late Ediacaran period in what is now Australia, Russia and Ukraine.
- The individual Dickinsonia typically resembles a bilaterally symmetrical ribbed oval.
- Its mode of growth is consistent with a stem-group bilaterian affinity, though some have suggested that it belongs to the fungi or even an "extinct kingdom".
- The discovery of cholesterol molecules in fossils of Dickinsonia lends support to the idea that Dickinsonia was an animal.
- Dickinsonia fossils have shown that they could exceed four feet in length but the one found in Bhimbetka is 17 inches long.

#### **Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka:**

- These rock shelters are located in the Raisen District of Madhya Pradesh, near Abdullaganj town and inside the Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary.
- The Bhimbetka rock shelters are an archaeological site of the Paleolithic age.
- The name Bhimbetka is associated with Bhima, a hero-deity of the epic Mahabharata. The word Bhimbetka is said to derive from Bhimbetka meaning "sitting place of Bhima".
- Dr V. S. Wakankar, a most renowned archeologist, discovered these caves in 1958.
- These rock shelters are declared a World Heritage Site in 2003.
- The entire region comprises more than 600 caves.

- These cave paintings show tremendous similarity to the aboriginal rock paintings of the Savanna regions of Australia, the paintings done by pygmies of the Kalahari Desert and the Paleolithic Lascaux cave paintings of France.
- Various community activities, like birth, burial, dancing, religious rites, hunting scenes, animal fighting and merrymaking are pictured in these paintings.

## 9. Dandi March

**In news:** 2021 Dandi March marks 75 years of Independence.

### About Dandi March-

- The Dandi March or **Salt March** was **part of Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent protest** against the British monopoly on production of salt.
- The **twenty four day march lasted from 12 March 1930 to 5 April 1930** as a direct action campaign of tax resistance.
- Gandhi started this march with 78 of his trusted volunteers.
- The march spanned 240 miles (390 km), **from Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi, which was called Navsari** at that time (now in the state of Gujarat).
- When Gandhi broke the British Raj salt laws at 6:30 am on 6 April 1930, it sparked large scale acts of civil disobedience against the salt laws by millions of Indians.
- The Congress Party planned to stage a satyagraha at the Dharasana Salt Works, 40 km south of Dandi.
- However, Gandhi was arrested on the midnight of 4–5 May 1930, just days before the planned action at Dharasana.
- The satyagraha against the salt tax continued for almost a year, ending with Gandhi's release from jail and negotiations with Viceroy Lord Irwin at the Second Round Table Conference.
- It had a significant influence on American activists Martin Luther King Jr., James Bevel, and others during the Civil Rights Movement for civil rights for African Americans and other minority groups in the 1960s.

### Participation in the 2021 Dandi March-

- Descendants of those who walked the Salt March (in 1930) were honoured.
- The march saw 81 walkers traverse the route in memory of the 78 who accompanied Mahatma Gandhi in 1930 from Ahmedabad to Dandi and two others who had joined mid-route.
- The subsequent journey saw “big events at six places” associated with Gandhi including his birthplace **Porbandar, along with Rajkot, Vadodara, Bardoli (Surat), Mandvi (Kutch) and Dandi (Navsari).**

## 10. Swaminarayan Sampradaya

**In news:** Around hundred saints got the Covid-19 jab at Swaminarayan temple in Gujarat.

### About Swaminarayan Sampradaya:

- Swaminarayan Sampradaya/ Uddhav Sampraday is a part of Hindu sampradaya.
- It was propagated by Swaminarayan (Sahajanand Swami) in the 1800s who was born on 3 April 1781 in the village of Chhapaiya in present-day Uttar Pradesh.
- Ramanand Swami initiated him as Sahajanand Swami on 28 October 1800 and appointed him to be his successor and the leader of the sampradaya in 1801.
- At the time of initiation, Ramanand Swami also gave him the second name, Narayan Muni.

- He directed his devotees to chant the Swaminarayan mantra, which is a compound of two Sanskrit words: Swami and Narayan.
- According to him the ultimate goal of life is moksha, a spiritual state of ultimate liberation from the cycle of births and deaths that is characterized by eternal bliss and devotion to God.
- In the Vachanamrut, the principal theological text of the sampradaya, Swaminarayan identifies five eternal and distinct entities- Parabrahman, Aksharbrahman, maya, ishwar, and jiva.
- Before Swaminarayan died, he split the administration of the Swaminarayan Sampradaya into two gadi (seats) for his two adopted sons.
- The Nar Narayan Dev Gadi is headquartered in Ahmedabad and the Laxmi Narayan Dev Gadi is headquartered in Vadatal.
- During his lifetime he constructed six mandirs at Ahmedabad, Bhuj, Vadatal, Dholera, Junagadh and Gadhada.
- Even Akshardham temple of New Delhi is associated with this sect.
- His important literary works are the Shikshapatri and the Vachanamrut
- He engaged with the Vedanta philosophical tradition, particularly the Vaishnava Vedanta of Ramanuja, Madhva, Vallabha, and Chaitanya.

## 11. Rakhigarhi

**In news:** Recently, the Ministry of Culture stated that Rakhigarhi is being developed as one of the five Identified Iconic Archaeological Sites as announced in the union budget of 2020.

### About the Rakhigarhi:

- The ancient sites of **Rakhi-Khas and Rakhi-Shahpur** are collectively known as Rakhigarhi.
- It is located on the right bank of the now dried up Palaeo-channel of **Drishadvati**.
- Several scholars have identified the river with the **present-day Ghaggar-Hakra river** or dried up part of it.
- **It is the site of a pre-Indus Valley Civilisation (IVC)** settlement going back to about 6500 BCE and also part of the mature IVC.
- This site encompasses a set of 11 mounds with a confirmed size in excess of 350 hectares.
- According to the Global Heritage Fund, **Rakhigarhi is the largest and oldest Indus sites in the world.**
- The earliest excavation of IVC sites started from Harappa in 1921-1922 and Mohenjo-daro in 1931 and the excavations at Rakhigarhi were first carried out in 1969.
- As of 2020, 5% of the site had been excavated by the ASI and Deccan College.
- As per the discoveries, digging so far reveals a **well-planned city with 1.92 m wide roads, a bit wider than in Kalibangan.**
- Key findings in the site include a **granary that was found here** belonging to the mature Harappan phase (2600 BCE to 2000 BCE), made up of mud-bricks with a floor of ramped earth plastered with mud and has 7 rectangular or square chambers.

## 12. Bamiyan Buddha

**In news:** Recently, Bamiyan Buddhas have been brought back to life in the form of 3D projections in an event called "A Night With Buddha".

### About Bamiyan Buddha:

- The Buddhas of Bamiyan were two 6th-century monumental **sandstone statues of Gautama Buddha** carved into the side of a cliff in the **Bamiyan valley of central Afghanistan.**

- They were **once the world's largest standing Buddhas**, but they were lost forever when the Taliban blew them up 20 years ago.
- **Salsal and Shamama**, as they were called by the locals, rose to heights of 55 and 38 metres respectively and were said to be male and female.
- Salsal means "light shines through the universe" whereas Shamama is "Queen Mother".
- According to Carbon dating the smaller "**Eastern Buddha**" was built around 570 AD, and the larger "**Western Buddha**" was built around 618 AD.
- The statues represented a later evolution of the **classic blended style of Gandhara art**.
- In their Roman draperies and with two different mudras, the Bamiyan Buddhas were great examples of a **confluence of Gupta, Sassanian and Hellenistic artistic styles**.
- UNESCO included the remains in its list of **world heritage sites in 2003**.

### 13. Shaheedi Diwas

- March 23 is known as **Shaheed Diwas or Sarvodaya Day** to commemorate the execution of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru who had fought for the assassination of **Lala Lajpat Rai**.
- They were hanged for their involvement in the **assassination of the ASP of Lahore, John Saunders**.
- Bhagat Singh with his companions on 8th April, 1929 **threw bombs over the Central Legislative Assembly** by reading the **slogan "Inquilab Zindabad"**.
- 23rd March is the day when revolutionary freedom fighters Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev were hanged to death by the British government in 1931 at the Lahore Jail.
- Their body was cremated at the banks of the Sutlej River.

### 14. Tomar king Anangpal II

- The Union government has recently formed a committee to popularize the legacy of 11th-century Tomar king, Anangpal II.
- **The committee's head** is BJP MP from UP's Gonda, Brij Bhushan Singh.
- **Anangpal Tomar II** belonged to the Tomar dynasty that ruled parts of present-day Delhi and Haryana between the 8th and 12th centuries.
- During his time only the **capital city of the Tomar dynasty was changed from Anangpur (near Faridabad) capital during the reign of Anangpal I to Dhillikapuri (Delhi)**.
- He was succeeded by his grandson Prithviraj Chauhan, who was defeated by the Ghurid forces in the Battle of Tarain (present-day Haryana) after which the Delhi Sultanate was established in 1192.
- Crediting him with giving Delhi its present name and also repopulating it, **the National Monument Authority (NMA)** has embarked on a mission to present "correct history" to the people through the works of historians, academics and archaeologists.
- The committee's proposals seminar include building a statue of Anangpal II at the Delhi airport and building a museum dedicated to his legacy in Delhi.

### 15. Singorgarh Fort

**In news:** The President of India laid the foundation stone for the conservation works of Singorgarh Fort in Singrapur village of Damoh district in Madhya Pradesh.

### About the Singorgarh Fort-

- This fort is an old hill-fort of the **Gondwana dynasty** which is spread over hills in a forested area.
- It was **attacked in June, 1564 during the last war of the Garha Kingdom dynasty**, under the rule of Rani Durgavati.
- Before Gond rulers, it was under **Chandela rulers** of Bundelkhand region.
- During the 1308, the Singorgarh was ruled by Vyaghradev Ji who was ruler of Kumhari and was under rulers of Kalinjar.
- The **Gond ruler Sangramshahi** conquered the Singorgarh fort in the early period of the 16th century who was father-in-law of Rani Durgavati.
- In 1564 the Mughal army, led by Asaf Khan (from Kunda, Uttar Pradesh), with assistance of Rewa rulers, attacked on Gond Kingdom, then it was ruled by Queen Durgavati & she was present in the same Singorgarh fort.
- **Hirde Shah**, the first Gond king to adopt Islam.

## 16. Maharaja Chhatrasal Bundela

**In news:** Minister of State for Tourism and Culture and Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh inaugurated the 'Maharaja Chhatrasal Convention Centre' at Khajuraho developed under Swadesh Darshan Scheme.

### Maharaja Chhatrasal (4 May 1649 – 20 December 1731)-

- He was a Bundeli warrior who chose to turn against the **Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb** and seek to establish his own kingdom in Bundelkhand.
- He was a **descendant of Rudra Pratap Singh of Orchha**.
- Chhatrasal was a disciple of Pran Nathji and accepted him as his guru and accepted **Pranami Dharma**.
- Chhatrasal was a patron of literature and eulogies written by Kavi Bhushan, Lal Kavi, Bakhshi Hansaraj and other court poets helped him gain lasting fame.
- In his lifetime, he saw the Mughals at their height under Shah Jahan and their fall with Muhammad Shah Rangila.
- Some of the Mughal generals who were defeated by him were Rohilla Khan, Kaliq, Munawwar Khan, Sadruddin, Sheikh Anwar, Sayyid Latif, Bahlol Khan and Abdus Ahmed.
- Chhatrasal was able to defeat the Mughals until he was attacked by Muhammad Khan Bangash on December 1728.
- The Maratha Peshwa Baji Rao I's second wife Mastani was Chhatrasal's daughter born from his Muslim concubine.

## 17. Bidriware

**In news:** Bidriware is one of the products that was displayed in 28th Hunar Haat programme in Panaji, Goa.

### About Bidriware-

- Bidriware is a combination of blackened alloy of zinc & copper (proportion of 16:1) and inlaid with thin sheets of pure silver.
- It is a metal decorative object ornamented with a type of inlay work.
- The Bidriware undergoes an eight-stage process.
- Bidriware derives its name from the town of Bidar, in Karnataka.
- Bidriware in other parts of India: Hyderabad, Lucknow, Purnia and Murshidabad.
- It originated in the 14th century during the rule of Bahmani Sultans.

- It was first practised in ancient Persia and then it was brought to India by Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti's followers.
- The art form developed due to a mix of Persian and Arabic cultures and after the fusion with local style, a new and unique style of its own was created.
- This native art form has obtained a Geographical Indications (GI) registry.
- Common Bidriware items include various flowers (known as asharfi-ki-booti), leaves (vine creepers), geometric designs, human figures, stylized poppy plants with flowers, etc... are found on the items.

#### **A brief note on Hunar Haat-**

- It is an initiative to provide the supremely talented artisans and craftsmen a platform where they can showcase their talent.
- "Hunar Haat" is a **"Perfect, Popular and Proud Platform" for indigenous artistry and crafts of the country.**
- It is organized by the **Union Ministry of Minority Affairs.**
- The 28th "Hunar Haat" has a **theme of "Vocal for Local".**

## **18. Delhi's Partition museum**

**In news-** Delhi to get its 1st Partition museum which will be opened to the public on 15th August, in time to commemorate India entering its 75th year of independence.

#### **About partition museum-**

- It is an extension of Amritsar's Partition Museum.
- It will come up at the Dara Shikoh Library building in Old Delhi's Mori Gate.
- Built in 1643 and named after Shah Jahan's eldest son, Dara Shikoh, the building currently stands in the Ambedkar University Delhi campus.
- In the later years, it served as the residence of Mughal viceroy of Punjab, Ali Mardan Khan, and then of David Ochterlony, a British officer in the Mughal court.
- Besides the Partition Museum, there will be a museum dedicated to the life of Dara Shikoh, and one to display antiquities and artefacts in its possession.
- The project will be implemented by Union Ministry of Tourism, Delhi government and private entities Monument Mitras, The Arts and Cultural Heritage Trust (TAAHAT), and Museum and Arts Consultancy (MAC) acting in a PPP mode.
- According to TAAHAT, the entire project is tentatively called 'Daastaan-e-Dilli', and is aimed at creating a cultural hub at the historic and beautiful Dara Shikoh Library.
- It will be a unique space in which one can consider the impact of divisions (the Partition of India) and unification (as through the Sufism of Dara Shikoh) side by side.

## **19. Nizamuddin Markaz Mosque**

**In news-** The Centre has told the Delhi High court that no gathering or congregation can be permitted in Nizamuddin Markaz mosque as these have been prohibited by the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) guidelines.

#### **About Nizamuddin Markaz Mosque-**

- Also called Banglewali Masjid, is a mosque located in Nizamuddin West in South Delhi, India.

- It is the birthplace and the global headquarters of the Tablighi Jamaat network, the missionary and reformist movement started by Muhammad Ilyas Kandhlawi in 1926.
- The mosque continues to serve as the headquarters of the Nizamuddin faction of Tablighi Jamaat.
- It was built in Nizamuddin by Mirza Ilahi Baksh.
- Mawlana Muhammad Ismail established a madrasa in its premises under the name Kashif al-Ulum.
- After the death of Mawlana Ismail and his elder son, his other son Muammad Ilyas took up the task of teaching at the madrasa.
- He evolved the practices of tabligh which involved turning ordinary Muslims into preachers.
- Training them in the preaching work became the main activity of the madrasa, gradually turning the Banglewali Masjid into a markaz.
- As the mosque organised a large congregation in March 2020, participants got stuck in the Markaz Building due to the sudden and surprise announcement of nationwide lockdown in India by the government.

#### Tablighi Jamaat-

- 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 behavior.
- 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 Khandhalaw in 1927 in Mewat.
- In the **first Tablighi conference held in 1941**, approximately 25,000 people from across North India attended.
- After Partition in 1947, a Pakistan chapter was started in the town of Raiwind, Lahore. Currently, Bangladesh has one of the largest chapters.
- The Tablighi Jamaat also has a significant base in the United States and Britain, which has a large Indian subcontinent diaspora.
- It also has a presence in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore.
- It is based on **six principles**:
  - **Kalimah**, an article of faith in which the Tabligh accepts that there is no God but Allah and that Prophet Muhammad is his messenger.
  - **Salaat**, or prayer five times daily.
  - **Ilm and dhikr**, 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**, the treatment of fellow Muslims with honour.
  - **Ikhlas-i-niyat**, or sincerity of intention.
  - **Dawat-o-tabligh**, or proselytisation.

## 20. Buddhist Monastery found in Jharkhand

**In news-** Recently, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has unearthed a Buddhist monastery, believed to be at least 900 years old, buried under a mound in a village situated in a hilly area of Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand.

#### More about the monastery-

- The finding comes two months after the discovery of an ancient Buddhist shrine, buried under a similar mound, barely 100 metres away.

- ASI has excavated 10 stone statues of deity Tara and the Buddha in Burhani village near Juljul Pahar of Sitagarha Hills, around 12 km from district headquarters Hazaribagh.
- ASI found a sculpture which appears to be that of Shaivite deity Maheswari – with a coiled crown and chakra indicating cultural assimilation in the area.
- Archaeologists said the findings were significant since the monastery is on the old route to Varanasi, 10 km from Sarnath, where the Buddha gave his first sermon.
- The presence of statues of deity Tara shows possible proliferation of Vajrayana form of Buddhism in this region.
- ASI in December last year had founded a Buddhist shrine with three rooms near agricultural land on the eastern side of Juljul Pahar.

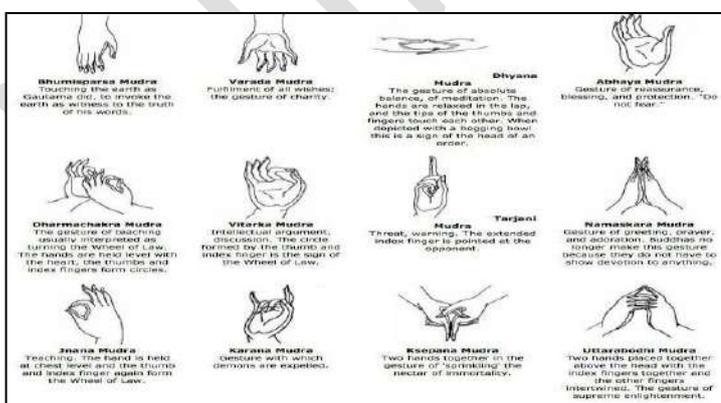
### Vajrayana-

- Vajrayana means the 'Vehicle of the Thunderbolt'.
- Also known as Tantric Buddhism or Tibetan Buddhism.
- Developed in India in the 5th century C.E.
- It is accepted that Vajrayana Buddhism emerged out of the Mahayana in India.
- Vajrayana ritual and devotion employs mantras (esoteric verbal formulas), mandalas (diagrams and paintings used in visualization practices), and a complex array of other rituals.
- The practitioner of the Vajrayana Buddhism takes his or her innate Buddha nature as the means of practice.

### Deity Tara-

- Tara or Shayama Tara, is also known as Jetsun Dolma in Tibetan, Tara Bosatsu in Japan, and as Duoluo Pusa in Chinese Buddhism.
- Important figure in Buddhism, especially revered in Tibetan Buddhism.
- She appears as a **female bodhisattva in Mahayana Buddhism, and as a female Buddha in Vajrayana Buddhism.**
- She is known as the "**mother of liberation**", and represents the virtues of success in work and achievements.
- She is a **meditation deity** revered by practitioners of the Tibetan branch of Vajrayana Buddhism to develop certain inner qualities and to understand outer, inner and secret teachings such as karuṇā (compassion), mettā (loving-kindness), and shunyata (emptiness).

### Various Mudra of Buddha-



## 21. World heritage day, 2021

**In news-** World Heritage Day is observed every year on April 18, to preserve the human heritage and recognize the efforts of the organizations working for it.

### More about World Heritage Day-

- The Venice Charter, also known as the 1964 International Charter on the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites, laid the foundation for the ICOMOS organisation.
- In November 1983, at the 22nd session of the UNESCO Conference, a resolution was passed declaring April 18 to be World Heritage Day every year.
- Every year, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) makes the decision.
- It encourages people of all religious backgrounds to put their differences aside and come together to spread the message of unity.
- 'Complex Pasts: Diverse Futures' is the theme for World Heritage Day 2021.
- At present, India has 38 World Heritage Properties.
- There are 30 cultural sites, 7 natural sites and 1 mixed site.
- All the sites under the **Ministry of Culture** are conserved as per ASI's Conservation Policy and are in good shape.

## 22. Mongolian Kanjur

**In news-** The Ministry of Culture is likely to complete **reprinting of about 100 sets of sacred Mongolian Kanjur (108 volumes each)** by 2022 for distribution in the main centers of Buddhism in Mongolia.

### About the project-

- The Ministry of Culture has taken up the project of reprinting under the National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM).
- This work is being carried out under the supervision of eminent Scholar Prof. Lokesh Chandra.
- The first set of five volumes of Mongolian Kanjur published under the NMM was presented to the President of India on the occasion of Guru Purnima, also known as Dharma Chakra Day, on 4th July 2020.
- A set was then handed over to His Excellency Mr. Gonching Ganbold, Ambassador of Mongolia to India.
- The NMM was launched in February 2003 by the Government of India, with the mandate of documenting, conserving and disseminating the knowledge preserved in the manuscripts.
- One of the objectives of the mission is to publish rare and unpublished manuscripts so that the knowledge enshrined in them is spread to researchers, scholars and the general public at large.

### About Mongolian Kanjur-

- It is the Buddhist canonical text in 108 volumes and 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.
- The Kanjur are kept in almost every monastery in Mongolia.
- It has been translated from Tibetan and the language of the Kanjur is Classical Mongolian.
- During 1956-58, Professor Raghu Vira obtained a microfilm copy of the rare Kanjur manuscripts and brought them to India.
- The Mongolian Kanjur in 108 volumes was published in India in 1970s by Prof. Lokesh Chandra, former Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha).
- Now, the present edition which is being published will have a list of contents indicating the original title of the sutra in Mongolian.

## 23. Malerkotla

**In news-** Recently **Punjab Chief Minister declared** Malerkotla as the 23rd district of the state on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.

### History of Malerkotla-

- It was established in 1454 by Sufi saint Sheikh Sadruddin-i-Jahan also known as Haider Sheikh from Afghanistan.
- The settlement was being called 'Maler' which was bestowed by the Behlol Lodhi to the Sheikh whose lineage too was Afghan, as was Lodhi's.
- 'Kotla', meaning Fortress, was added later in 1657 by Bayazid Khan, a descendant of Haider Sheikh, who got it as a jagir by Mughal Emperor Shah Jehan.
- Bayzid Khan supported Aurangzeb against his brother Dara Shikoh and thus gained favour with the emperor and added permanency to the rule of his family.
- After Maharaja Ranjit Singh consolidated his rule in Northern Punjab in the early 19th century, Malerkotla aligned itself with the neighbouring Sikh states like Patiala, Nabha and Jind which too were feeling threatened by Maharaja Ranjit Singh's consolidation.
- These cis-Sutlej states accepted British protection in 1809 and were free from interference from the Sikh Maharaja.
- Malerkotla continued under the British protection and the alliance with the neighbouring Sikh states till 1947 when it became the only Muslim majority Sikh state in East Punjab.
- After the dissolution of the princely states in 1948, Malerkotla joined the new state of Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU).
- PEPSU itself was dissolved in 1954 and Malerkotla became a part of Punjab.

## 24. Buddha Purnima

**In news-** Buddha Purnima, celebration of the birth of Gautama Buddha was observed.

### About Buddha Purnima-

- The day is also known as Vaisakhi Buddha Purnima or Vesak.
- As per the Hindu calendar, Buddha Jayanti falls on a full moon day in the month of Vaisakh (which usually falls in April or May).
- As it is actually based on the Asian lunisolar calendar, the dates change every year.
- Buddha Jayanti, 2021 marked the Lord Buddha's 2583rd birth anniversary.
- This day is commemorated by Buddhists and Hindus all over the world, and is a major festival in countries like India, Nepal, Bhutan, Burma, Thailand, Tibet, China, Korea, Laos, Vietnam, Mongolia, Cambodia, Singapore, Indonesia and Sri Lanka (where it is called Vesak).
- The full moon in May is a more auspicious day for Buddhists because three major events in the life of the Buddha took place on this day.
- It was on the Day of Vesak, in the year 623 B.C, the Buddha-to-be, Prince Siddhattha was born at Lumbini Grove (modern day Nepal).
- Secondly, after six years of hardship, he attained enlightenment under the shade of the Bodhi tree and became Gotama Buddha at BodhGaya also on the full moon day of May.
- Thirdly, after 45 years of teaching the Truth, when he was eighty, at Kusinagara, he passed away to nibbana, the cessation of all desire, on the full moon day of May.

- The UN General Assembly, by its resolution 54/115 of 1999 recognized internationally the Day of Vesak to acknowledge the contribution of Buddhism to humanity.
- Though in Hinduism, Buddha is considered as the ninth avatar of Lord Vishnu, Buddhists do not consider so.

## 25. Reclining Buddha in India

**In news-** India's largest statue of the Reclining Buddha will be installed at the **Buddha International Welfare Mission temple in Bodh Gaya.**

### About the statue-

- The **100-foot fibreglass statue** has been built over three months by a team of 22 artisans in Kolkata.
- The **Buddha died** when he was 80 years old, **in a state of meditation**, in Kushinagar in eastern Uttar Pradesh.
- A reclining Buddha statue or image **represents Buddha during his last illness**, about to enter **Parinirvana**, the stage of great salvation after death.
- It also signifies the **Buddha's last deeksha** - even while on his deathbed, he took a follower into the fold.

### More about reclining Buddha-

- Statues and images of the Reclining Buddha show him lying on his right side, his head resting on a cushion or on his right elbow.
- It is a popular iconographic depiction in Buddhism meant to show that all beings have the potential to be awakened and be released from the cycle of death and rebirth.
- The Reclining Buddha was first depicted in Gandhara art (50 BC - 75 AD) and peaked during the Kushana period from the first to the fifth centuries AD.
- Since Buddha was against idol worship, in the centuries immediately following his parinirvana (483 BC), his representation was through symbols.
- As the devotional aspect subsequently entered Buddhist practice, iconographic representations of The Buddha began.
- In Sri Lanka and India, the Buddha is mostly shown in sitting postures, while the reclining postures are more prevalent in Thailand and other parts of SouthEast Asia.
- The Bhamala Buddha Parinirvana in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province dates back to the 2nd century AD, and is considered the oldest statue of its kind in the world.
- In India, Cave No. 26 of Ajanta contains a 24-foot-long and nine-foot-tall sculpture of the Reclining Buddha, believed to have been carved in the 5th century AD.
- In the late 15th century, a 70-metre statue of the Reclining Buddha was built at the Hindu temple site of Baphuon in Cambodia's Angkor.
- The largest Reclining Buddha in the world is the 600-foot Winsein Tawya Buddha built in 1992 in Mawlamyine, Myanmar.
- There is a 6-metre-long red sandstone monolith statue of the Reclining Buddha inside the Parinirvana Stupain Kushinagar.
- At the Mahabodhi temple, the Buddha is sitting in the Bhoomi-sparsha mudra, where his hand is pointing towards the ground which symbolises earth as being witness to his enlightenment.
- At Sarnath, where the Buddha gave his first sermon, the stone statue has a hand gesture called the dharma-chakra mudra, which signifies preaching.
- While the Sitting Buddha signifies teaching or meditating, the Standing Buddha signifies rising to teach after reaching nirvana.

## 26. Louvre museum

**In news-** Art historian and **curator Laurence des Cars** has become the **first woman to be appointed the president of Louvre art museum** in its 228-year history. In 1994, she joined Musee d'Orsay, another iconic Paris museum, as curator and, in 2017, became its first woman director.

### About Louvre museum-

- The Louvre is the world's most visited museum and is the world's largest art museum and a historic monument in Paris, France.
- It is located on the right bank of the River Seine.
- It was established in 1793.
- The museum is housed in the Louvre Palace, originally built in the late 12th to 13th century under Philip II.
- Due to urban expansion, the fortress eventually lost its defensive function, and in 1546 Francis I converted it into the primary residence of the French Kings.
- In 1682, Louis XIV chose the Palace of Versailles for his household, leaving the Louvre primarily as a place to display the royal collection.
- During the French Revolution, the National Assembly decreed that the Louvre should be used as a museum to display the nation's masterpieces and it was opened on 10 August 1793 with an exhibition of 537 paintings.
- The collection was increased under Napoleon and the museum was renamed Musee Napoleon.
- The collection is divided among eight curatorial departments: Egyptian Antiquities; Near Eastern Antiquities; Greek, Etruscan, and Roman Antiquities; Islamic Art; Sculpture; Decorative Arts; Paintings; Prints and Drawings.
- It is home to the Mona Lisa, the iconic Leonardo da Vinci painting.

## 27. Rwandan genocide

**In news-** French President Emmanuel Macron recently acknowledged his country's "overwhelming responsibility" in the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

### About the genocide-

- The majority Hutus and minority Tutsis have had a troubled relationship in Rwanda.
- German and Belgian colonialists ruled Rwanda through the Tutsi monarchy.
- Tutsis were appointed as local administrative chiefs and the ethnic minority enjoyed relatively better educational and employment opportunities, which led to widespread resentment among the Hutus.
- In 1959, Rwanda saw violent riots led by Hutus in which some 20,000 Tutsis were killed and many more were displaced.
- In the 1960 elections, organised by the Belgians, Hutu parties gained control of nearly all local communes.
- In 1961, Hutu leader Gregoire Kayibanda declared Rwanda an autonomous republic and in 1962 the country became independent.
- Kayibanda became Rwanda's first elected President, while the Tutsis who fled the country formed armed insurgencies.
- Since then, Rwanda had been controlled by Hutus, until their genocidal regime was toppled by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) in 1994.
- The crisis escalated in the 1990s when the RPF, led by Paul Kagame, grew in strength and posed a serious challenge to the regime of President Habyarimana, who was backed by France and had defence ties with Israel.

- In 1993, Habyarimana signed a peace agreement (Arusha Accords) with the RPF.
- This led to resentment among Hutu militias, backed by the government, towards local Tutsi population, who were accused of collaborators of the RPF.
- On April 6, 1994, a Falcon 50 jet carrying President Habyarimana and his Burundi counterpart Cyprien Ntaryamira was shot down near Kigali International Airport.
- The Hutu-led government blamed the RPF for the attack on the presidential jet.
- The military and Hutu militias, with support from the government, launched a premeditated violent campaign on April 7, aimed at eliminating the entire Tutsi communities.
- Bodies were dumped in the Nyabarongo River and France, backed the Hutu government and did nothing to stop the massacre.
- In June, France deployed a much-delayed UN-backed military force in southwest Rwanda called Operation Turquoise which was able to save some people, but was accused of sheltering some of the genocide's perpetrators.
- Thousands were slaughtered in churches where they sought refuge.
- The killings came to an end after the RPF, under Paul Kagame's command captured Kigali and toppled the Hutu regime.
- Over the course of 100 days, over 8 lakh people died, estimated to amount up to 20% of Rwanda's population.

## 28. Pandav Leni Buddhist caves

**In news-** Three new small caves have been discovered by an Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) employee at the PandavLeni cave complex in **Nashik**. The age of the new caves may be determined after their study is completed and documentation is carried out.

### About the Pandav Leni caves-

- The caves are also known as Pandu Caves/ Trirashmi Buddhist Caves.
- It is a group of 25 caves that were carved out of Trirashmi Hill between the 2nd century BC and 6th century AD.
- The name is derived from the word "Tiranhu" which is inscribed in the Caves which means "rays of sunlight".
- The caves complex was documented in 1823 by Captain James Delamaine.
- These caves were carved and donated by various kings that ruled Nashik - the Satavahanas, the Nahapanas, the Abhirs to the Buddhist monks.
- Some caves are intricately connected by stone-cut ladders that join them to the other caves.
- These rock-cut caves served as viharas or monasteries for the disciples to meet and hear sermons.
- Chaityas were used for chanting and meditation.
- The caves have images of Buddha, Bodhisattva, sculptures representing the King, farmers, merchants and rich iconography depicting a beautiful amalgamation of Indo - Greek architecture.
- The site has an excellent ancient water management system with several attractive water tanks.
- Inscriptions in caves 3, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 19 and 20 are legible.
- Since the caves were inhabited by the Mahayana as well as the Hinayana sects of Buddhism, a nice confluence of structural and carvings can be seen.

## 29. Indian network for memory studies (INMS)

**In news-**IIT Madras launched Indian Network for Memory Studies, recently.

### **About Indian Network for Memory Studies (INMS)-**

- It is the first formal national network in the field of Memory Studies in India and Asia, which has been formed under the aegis of the international Memory Studies Association, Amsterdam.
- It will coordinate complex engagements with 'memory' from different institutes including cultural studies centres as well as neuroscience laboratories and industry research on AI and related fields.
- It is founded by Dr. Avishek Parui and Dr. Merin Simi Raj, Assistant Professors (English), Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras, who will also be its Chairpersons.
- INMS has emerged from the Centre for Memory Studies, IIT Madras, which has been funded by the Ministry of Education, Government of India.
- It also received funding from XR Lab, TCS Chennai, and Anglo-Ink, Chennai.
- It will open up research and internship opportunities for Indian students as well as international scholars through an annual membership programme in collaboration with the International Memory Studies Association.

### **The Vision of INMS include:**

- Offering an India-centric model of memory studies departing from the established Eurocentric models in theory and practice.
- Producing and promoting an innovative interdisciplinary engagement with the complex cognitive, cultural, and machinic modes of memory.
- Examining the processes of encoding and effacement that simultaneously inform acts of remembrance and re-construction in private as well as shared orders, and how such processes may be recorded as well as represented by a range of fields such as fiction, history, media, urban geography, and technology.
- Producing exhibitions, conferences, workshops, and special journal issues on a range of themes in Memory Studies, in collaboration with partners from academia and industry.
- Academically accentuating as well as promoting the rich research on imperialism, Partition, and post-colonial identities through the interdisciplinary lenses of memory studies.
- Re-creating Indian and South-Asian pre-colonial, colonial, and postcolonial events and identities using the model of memory as reconstruction, foregrounding the textuality and the technology informing processes of remembering.

### **International Memory Studies Association-**

- The Memory Studies Association was launched symbolically at its inaugural conference in Amsterdam (3-5 December 2016).
- The MSA is a professional association for Memory Studies scholars, as well as those who are active in museums, memorial institutions, archives, the arts and other fields engaged in remembrance.
- The objective is to become the most important forum for the memory field – both through an annual, international and interdisciplinary conference and through a strong online presence.

## **30. National Maritime Heritage Complex**

**In news-** Recently, the Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways signed an MoU for 'Cooperation in Development of National Maritime Heritage Complex at Lothal, Gujarat'.

### **Key updates-**

- The Ministry of Culture (MoC) will provide required support for showcasing the maritime heritage of India at NMHC in the form of gallery contents, sharing relevant documents, books, artefacts, electronic media, articles, original artefacts/ replicas etc...

- During the construction, operation, sustenance, maintenance and growth of NMHC, MoC will share its technical understanding on design, lighting and digital technology.

#### **About National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC)-**

- NMHC is to be developed as a first of its kind in the country dedicated to the legacy of Maritime Heritage of India, to showcase India's rich and diverse maritime glory
- NMHC, a world-class facility is to be developed in the vicinity of the ASI site of Lothal, located about 80 kms away from Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
- It would be developed as an international tourist destination, where the maritime heritage of India from ancient to modern times would be showcased and
- It would be developed in an area of about 400 acres with various unique structures such as: National Maritime Heritage Museum, Light House Museum, Heritage Theme Park, Museum Themed Hotels & Maritime themed eco-resorts, Maritime Institute etc...
- The unique feature of NMHC is the recreation of ancient Lothal city, which is one of the prominent cities of the ancient Indus valley civilization dating to 2400 BC.
- Apart from that, the evolution of India's Maritime Heritage during various eras would be exhibited through various galleries.
- NMHC would have a pavilion for each coastal states and union territories to showcase the artefacts/maritime heritage of the respective states and union territories.
- Various theme parks would be developed at NMHC(through PPP) such as: Maritime & Naval Theme Park, Monuments Park, Climate Change Theme Park, Adventure & Amusement Theme Park.

#### **Ancient city Lothal-**

- Lothal is one of the prominent cities of the ancient Indus valley civilization dating to 2400 BC, located in Gujarat, an important western state of India.
- Archaeological excavations have discovered the oldest man-made dockyard, over 5000 years old, in Lothal.
- Lothal is located between the **Sabarmati river and its tributary Bhogavo** in the Saurashtra region.
- Within the quadrangular fortified layout, Lothal has two primary zones – the upper and the lower town.
- The **citadel or the upper town** is located in the south eastern corner and is demarcated by platforms of mud-brick of 4 meters in height instead of a fortification wall.
- The remains of the lower town suggest that the area had a **bead-making factory**.
- The excavated site of Lothal is the **only port-town of the Indus Valley Civilisation**.

## **31. The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)**

**In news-** The Culture Ministry recently inaugurated the new premises of the IGNCA at the refurbished Janpath Hotel, as part of the Central Vista redevelopment project. **Other cultural institutes in the wider Central Vista redevelopment zone** are the National Museum and the National Archives.

#### **About Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)-**

- The IGNCA was built in the late 1980s after an international jury comprising British architect James Sterling and India's B V Doshi picked **American architect Ralph Lerner's design**.
- It was **inaugurated in November 1985** by then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

#### **Aims and Objectives-**

- To serve as a major resource centre for the arts, especially written, oral and visual source materials.

- To undertake research and publication programmes of reference works, glossaries, dictionaries and encyclopaedia concerning the arts and the humanities.
- To establish a tribal and folk arts division with a core collection for conducting systematic scientific studies and for live presentations.
- To provide a forum for a creative and critical dialogue through performances, exhibitions, multi-media projections, conferences, seminars and workshops between and amongst the diverse arts, traditional and contemporary.
- To foster dialogue between arts and current ideas in philosophy, science and technology, with a view toward bridging the gap in intellectual understanding between modern sciences and arts and culture.
- To evolve models of research programmes and arts administration more pertinent to the Indian ethos.
- To elucidate the formative and dynamic factors in the complex web of interactions between diverse social strata, communities and regions.
- To promote a network with national and international institutions,
- To conduct related research in the arts, humanities and culture.

#### **Five different divisions which represent its principles under IGNCA**

1. The Asvattha- It is associated with the SUTRADHARA
2. The Nyagrodha–It is associated with the landscaping of JANAPADA SAMPADA
3. The Asoka- It is associated with KALANIDHI
4. The Arjuna- It is associated with KALAKOSA
5. The Kadamba- It is associated with KALADARSHANA

One of the programmes of this centre, in collaboration with UNDP, is to utilize multimedia computer technology to create a wide variety of software packages that communicate cultural information.

## **32. Shumang Leela theatre form**

**In news-** The Manipur government has planned to use the popular 'Shumang Leela' form of theatre to reach out to people and spread awareness against Covid-19. Plans are underway to stage a **play titled 'Keidoubagi Kidoino' (There is no need to fear)** directed by Sougrakpam Hemanta.

#### **About Shumang Leela form-**

- It is also called Shumang Kumhei.
- It is a traditional form of theatre in **Manipur**.
- 'Shumang' means courtyard and 'Leela' means play.
- The theatre is arranged in the **form of open air from four sides**.
- All the characters, including women, are **played by male actors**.
- It was officially **recorded for the first time** in the state with the Harischandra leela in **1918**.
- However, the form is much older and is believed to have existed during the reign of **King Chandrakriti (1851-1886)**.
- In 2017, **Sougrakpam Hemanta** was conferred the **Sangeet Natak Akademi Award** in recognition of his contribution in Shumang Leela, thus became the first person to receive the award for this art form.
- The theatre form remains a **popular medium to spread awareness on social issues**.

## **33. Kesaria Buddha Stupa**

**In news-** Kesaria Buddha stupa was waterlogged following floods in east Champaran district of Bihar.

### About Kesaria Buddha Stupa-

- Kesariya Stupa has a circumference of almost 400 feet and rises to a height of about 104 feet.
- The stupa is said to be the tallest and the largest Buddhist stupa in the world and is one ft taller than the Borobudur stupa in Indonesia.
- Its exploration had started in the early 19th century after its discovery led by Colonel Mackenzie in 1814.
- Later, it was excavated by General Cunningham in 1861-62 and in 1998 an ASI team led by archaeologist K.K. Muhammad had excavated the site properly.
- The original Kesaria stupa is said to date back to the time of emperor Ashoka (circa 250 BCE) as the remains of an Ashokan pillar was discovered there.
- The locals call the stupa “devalaya” meaning “house of gods”.
- The ASI has declared it a protected monument of national importance.
- It is the tallest ever-excavated Stupa in the world.
- Rising to a height of 104 feet and much reduced than its original height, it is one foot taller than the famous Borobodur Stupa in Java, a world heritage monument.
- The Kesaria Stupa was 123 feet tall before the 1934 earthquake in Bihar.
- At present the height of Kesaria is reduced to 104 feet and Borobodur in Indonesia to 103 feet.
- The archeologists believe the Stupa in Kesaria known to the people as “Raja Ben ka DEORA” was built by Licchivis of Vaishali before Budha attained Nirvana.
- Two great foreign travelers, Faxian (Fahien) and Xuan Zang (Hsuan Tsang), had visited this place.
- The current stupa dates to the Gupta Dynasty between 200 AD and 750 AD and may have been associated with the 4th century ruler Raja Chakravarti.
- Lord Budha on his last Journey spent a memorable height at Kesaria.
- Here he made sensational announcements, which was later on recorded in Buddhist Jataka Story.
- Buddha also asked Licchivis to return to Vaishali after giving them “BEGGING BOWL.”
- Recent excavations of Kesaria Stupa by A.S.I. Patna circle throws light on Buddhist history.
- The excavation reveals the terraces with “Pradakshina path” around the stupa.
- Move important finding is a number of figures of Lord Budha in “Bhoomi Sparsh Mudra” and other sitting image.
- These figures are made of soil and pebbles in each layer.

## 34. Holy relic of St Queen Ketevan

**In news-** Recently, India handed over the Holy relic of St Queen Ketevan to **Georgia**.

### Background-

- On the request of Georgian Government the Holy relic was sent to Georgia in 2017 which returned to India in 2018.
- Considering the persistent request from the Georgian side for permanent transfer of the Holy Relics and also taking into account the sentiments that are attached to the St. Queen Ketevan by the Georgian people, Government of India has decided to gift one part of Holy Relics to the Government and people of Georgia.

### About St Queen Ketevan(1560-1624)-

- She was the queen of Kakheti, a kingdom located in a region of eastern Georgia that bears the same name.
- Kakheti was nestled between two mighty Islamic empires: The Ottoman empire (in present-day Turkey) and the Safavid empire (in present-day Iran).
- She was killed in Safavid Iran in 1624 for refusing to give up her Christian faith and convert to Islam.
- Queen Ketevan was canonised as a saint by the Georgian Orthodox Church shortly after her death.

- Her place as a subject of veneration is attributed to her courageous stand against the demand for forcible conversion.
- Her relics were found in 2005 at the St. Augustine Convent in Old Goa, India, on the basis of medieval Portuguese records.
- On directions of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad, carried out DNA analysis that confirmed its authenticity.

#### **Safavid Dynasty-**

- It was one of the most significant ruling dynasties of Iran from 1501 to 1736.
- The Safavid dynasty had its origin in the Safavid order of Sufism, which was established in the city of Ardabil in the Iranian Azerbaijan region.
- It was of Kurdish origin, but during their rule they intermarried with Turkoman, Georgian, Circassian, and Pontic Greek dignitaries.

### **35. Adarsh Smarak scheme**

**In news-** Monuments at Nagarjunakonda, Buddhist remains at Salihundam and Veerabhadra Temple at Lepakshi are identified as 'Adarsh Smarak' in Andhra Pradesh for providing additional facilities.

#### **About the scheme-**

- The Adarsh Smarak scheme was launched in 2014 by the Union government for providing improved visitor amenities, especially for the physically challenged.
- The scheme comes under the Ministry of Culture.
- A total of 100 Monuments protected by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) are being developed and maintained as Adarsh Monuments under the scheme.
- The civic amenities are being augmented at these sites.
- **Objectives of the Scheme-**
  - To make the monument visitor friendly.
  - To upgrade/provide washrooms, drinking water, signages, cafeteria, and wi-fi facility.
  - To provide interpretation and audio-video centers.
  - To streamline wastewater and garbage disposal and a rainwater harvesting system.
  - To make the monument accessible to differently-abled people.
  - To implement Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

Conservation, Preservation and environmental development in and around Centrally Protected Monuments/Sites is taken up according to an annual conservation programme drawn on the basis of need and priority.

### **36. Swadesh Darshan scheme**

**In news-** Eco-tourism has been identified as one of the Niche Tourism areas under 'Swadesh Darshan scheme' by the Ministry of Tourism.

#### **About the scheme-**

- It is a Central Sector Scheme for integrated development of theme-based tourist circuits in the country in 2014-15.

- This scheme is envisioned to synergize with other Government of India schemes like Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Skill India, Make in India, etc. with the idea of positioning the tourism sector as the driving force for economic growth.
- The funding available for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives of Central Public Sector Undertakings and Corporate Sector is also used in this scheme.
- **Objectives include-**
  - To position tourism as a major engine of economic growth and job creation
  - Develop circuits having tourist potential in a planned and prioritized manner
  - Promote cultural and heritage value of the country to generate livelihoods in the identified regions
  - Enhancing the tourist attractiveness in a sustainable manner by developing world-class infrastructure in the circuit /destinations
  - Follow community-based development and pro-poor tourism approach
  - Creating awareness among the local communities about the importance of tourism for them in terms of increased sources of income, improved living standards and overall development of the area
  - To create employment through the active involvement of local communities
- The entire scheme is based on theme-based tourism.
- Each theme is called a "circuit" and is composed of various tourist destinations.
- Tourist Circuit is defined as "a route having at least three major tourist destinations which are distinct and apart. Circuits should have well-defined entry and exit points. A tourist who enters should get motivated to visit most of the places identified in the circuit.
- A Circuit could be confined to a State or could be a regional circuit covering more than one State/Union Territory.
- Currently, there are 15 theme-based circuits -- Buddhist, coastal, desert, eco, heritage, Himalayan, Krishna, north-east, Ramayana, rural, spiritual, Sufi, Tirthankar, tribal and wildlife.

The assistance under this scheme shall not be admissible for the components such as below:

- Land acquisition for development
- Resettlement and rehabilitation package
- Improvement/investments in assets/structures owned by private entities
- Accommodation
- Rejuvenation/dredging/development of bunds of a water body (man-made & natural both)
- Convention Centers / Golf Course / Aquamarine Parks /amusement parks/theme parks which shall be taken up for VGF under other schemes of the ministry.

### 37. Kakatiya Ramappa Temple declared a World Heritage site

**In news-** Telangana's Kakatiya Rudreswara Temple (also known as the Ramalingeshwara or Ramappa Temple) has been given a world heritage site tag by UNESCO. The decision was taken at the 44th session of the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO, held in Fuzhou, China.

#### Key updates-

- The temple is located in Palmamet in Mulugu.
- The temple was constructed in 1213 AD during the reign of the Kakatiya Empire by Recherla Rudra, a general of Kakatiya king Ganapati Deva.
- The presiding deity here is Ramalingeshwara Swamy.
- It is also known as the Ramappa temple, after the sculptor who executed the work in the temple for 40 years.

- It is the only temple that has been named after its sculptor.
- The temple stands on a 6 feet high star-shaped platform with walls, pillars and ceilings adorned with intricate carvings that attest to the unique skill of the Kakatiyan sculptors.
- The distinct style of Kakatiyas for the gateways to temple complexes, unique only to this region, confirm the highly evolved proportions of aesthetics in temple and town gateways in South India.
- One of the European travelers had remarked that the temple was the "brightest star in the galaxy of medieval temples of the Deccan".
- It was proposed by the Indian government as its only nomination for the UNESCO World Heritage site tag for the year 2019.
- Now the temple has become the 39th site in India to gain the prestigious tag.
- While Norway opposed the inscription being given to the Ramappa temple, Russia and many other countries backed India for the heritage tag.

#### About Kakatiya dynasty-

- The Kakatiya dynasty was a South Indian dynasty that ruled most of eastern Deccan region comprising present day **Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, and parts of eastern Karnataka and southern Odisha** between 12th and 14th centuries.
- Their **capital was Orugallu, now known as Warangal.**
- Early Kakatiya rulers served as **feudatories to Rashtrakutas and Western Chalukyas** for more than two centuries.
- They assumed sovereignty under **Prataparudra I in 1163 CE** by suppressing other Chalukya subordinates in the Telangana region.
- **Ganapati Deva (1199–1262)** significantly expanded Kakatiya lands during the 1230s and brought under Kakatiya control the Telugu-speaking lowland delta areas around the Godavari and Krishna rivers.
- Ganapati Deva was succeeded by **Rudrama Devi (1262–1289)** and is one of the few queens in Indian history.
- Marco Polo, who visited India in 1289–1293, made note of Rudrama Devi's rule and nature in flattering terms.
- She successfully repelled the attacks of Yadavas (Seuna) of Devagiri into the Kakatiyan territory.
- In 1303, **Alauddin Khilji**, the emperor of the Delhi Sultanate invaded the Kakatiya territory which ended up as a disaster for the Turks.
- Another attack by **Ulugh Khan in 1323** saw stiff resistance by the Kakatiya army, but they were finally defeated.
- The Kakatiya era also saw the development of a distinct style of architecture and notable examples are the Thousand Pillar Temple in Hanamkonda, Ramappa Temple in Palampet, Warangal Fort, and Kota Gullu in Ghanpur.
- Much of the information about the Kakatiya period comes from inscriptions, including around 1,000 stone inscriptions, and 12 copper-plate inscriptions.
- A 1978 **book written by P.V.P. Sastry on the history of the Kakatiyas**, published by the Government of Andhra Pradesh also constitutes one of the sources.

## 38. Dholavira gets Unesco's World Heritage Site tag

**In news-** Dholavira, the archaeological site of **Indus Valley Civilisation (IVC)** received the UNESCO world heritage site and hence became the **fourth site from Gujarat and 40th from India to make to the list.** It is the **first site of the IVC in India to get the tag.** Other than India, Italy, Spain, Germany, China and France have 40 or more World Heritage Sites.

### About Dholavira-

- The IVC acropolis is located on a hillock near present-day Dholavira village in Kutch district.
- It has two seasonal streams, Mansar and Manhar.
- It was discovered in 1968 by archaeologist Jagat Pati Joshi.
- The site's excavation was carried out between 1990 and 2005 under the supervision of archaeologist Ravindra Singh Bisht.
- The ancient city was a commercial and manufacturing hub for about 1,500 years before its decline and eventual ruin in 1500 BC.
- After Mohen-jo-Daro, Ganweriwala and Harappa in Pakistan and Rakhigarhi in Haryana of India, Dholavira is the fifth largest metropolis of IVC.
- The site has a fortified citadel, a middle town and a lower town with walls made of sandstone or limestone instead of mud bricks in many other Harappan sites.
- It has a cascading series of water reservoirs, outer fortification, two multi-purpose grounds -- one of which was used for festivities and as a marketplace, nine gates with unique designs, and funerary architecture featuring tumulus and hemispherical structures like the Buddhist Stupas.
- Unlike graves at other IVC sites, no mortal remains of humans have been discovered at Dholavira.
- The memorials contain no bones or ashes but offerings of precious stones, etc.
- Remains of a copper smelter indicate Harappans, who lived in Dholavira, knew metallurgy.
- It is believed that traders of Dholavira used to source copper ore from present-day Rajasthan and Oman and UAE and export finished products.
- It was also a hub of manufacturing jewellery made of shells and semi-precious stones, like agate and used to export timber.
- The beads peculiar to the Harappan workmanship have been found in the royal graves of Mesopotamia, indicating Dholavira used to trade with the Mesopotamians.
- Its decline also coincided with the collapse of Mesopotamia, indicating the integration of economies.
- From 2000 BC, Dholavira entered a phase of severe aridity due to climate change and rivers like Saraswati dried up and people migrated toward the Ganges valley or towards south Gujarat and further beyond in Maharashtra.

## 39. Battle of Haldighati

**In news-** The ASI (Archaeological Survey of India) would update a number of plaques in Rajasthan's Rajsamand district that carry 'incorrect information' about the Battle of Haldighati.

### About the issue-

- The battle was fought in June 1576, between the forces of Maharana Pratap of Mewar and the soldiers led by his cousin, Man Singh I of Amber, who was leading Akbar's army to expand the Mughul empire.
- According to the plaques currently in place, the battle is described as inconclusive, or a defeat for Maharana Pratap.
- According to some historians, both sides claimed victory at the end of the battle.
- Mewar claimed they had won because there had been no surrender and the Mughals claimed victory because they still held the field.
- However, in the light of recent research and evidence, historians have also come to the conclusion that Pratap's army never retreated from the Battle of Haldighati and he won the battle.
- Hence Rajput organisations and historians have written to Rajasthan Chief Minister asking him to remove a plaque at Rakht Talai, which states that Maharana Pratap "retreated" from the Battle of Haldighati.
- Rakht Talai is 4 km away from Haldighati, where the battle was fought, and was the last spot of the battle.

#### **About the Battle of Haldighati-**

- Haldighati is a **region in the Aravalli mountain range**, which links Rajsamand and Pali districts in Rajasthan, the name for which is inspired by its **yellow-turmeric coloured soil**.
- Akbar was planning to stabilise his kingdom by gaining control over Rajput regions, which would have also secured lines of communication with Gujarat.
- In Rajasthan, almost all major kings had accepted the Mughal dynasty except Udai Singh, the father of Maharana Pratap.
- To demonstrate his authority, Akbar laid siege to Chittorgarh in October 1567 and the Rajputs were surrounded and besieged by the Mughals.
- Udai Singh was forced to quit and the responsibility of defence was given to King Jaimal of Merta, who was killed during the battle.
- Udai Singh continued to stay in the forests of Aravalli till his death four years later.
- After Udai Singh's death, his son Maharana Pratap took charge of Mewar.
- No negotiations worked and Akbar finally decided to begin the war.
- The battle is described as being so fierce that the yellow soil of the area turned to red, which is why one of the battlefields is now known as **Rakht Talai, the pool of blood**.