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Classroom Study Material

CULTURE

JUNE 2016 – March 2017

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1. DANCES

1.1. CLASSICAL DANCES

1.1.1. ABOUT INDIAN CLASSICAL DANCE

- Indian classical dance, or Shastriya Nritya, is an umbrella term for various performance arts rooted in religious Hindu musical theatre styles, whose theory and practice can be traced to the Sanskrit text Natya Shastra.
- As per the ancient treatises, dance is considered as having **three aspects: natya, nritya and nritta**.
 - Natya highlights the dramatic element and most dance forms do not give emphasis to this aspect today with the exception of dance-drama forms like Kathakali.
 - Nritya is essentially expressional, performed specifically to convey the meaning of a theme or idea.
 - Nritta on the other hand, is pure dance where body movements do not express any mood (bhava), nor do they convey any meaning.
- To present nritya and natya effectively, a dancer should be trained to communicate the **navarasas**. These are: love (shringara), mirth (haasya), compassion (karuna), valour (veera), anger (roudra), fear (bhayanak), disgust (bibhatsa), wonder (adbhuta) and peace (shaanta).

1.1.2. MOHINIYATTAM

- Mohiniyattam is the classical solo dance form of Kerala, performed by women.
- It is interpreted as the dance of '**Mohini**', the female form taken by Vishnu to kill Bhasmasura.
- This dance form of Kerala was structured into the present day classical format by the Travancore Kings, Maharaja Kartika Tirunal and his successor Maharaja Swati Tirunal (18th -19th century C.E.).
- References of Mohiniyattam can be found in the texts **Vyavaharamala** written in 1709 by Mazhamagal Narayanan Namputiri and in Ghoshayatra, written later by great poet Kunjan Nambiar.
- Movements have been borrowed from Nangiar Koothu and female folk dances Kaikottikali and the Tiruvatirakali.
- The hand gestures, 24 in number, are mainly adopted from Hastalakshana Deepika, a text followed by Kathakali. Few are also borrowed from NatyaShastra, AbhinayaDarpana and Balarambharatam.
- It is characterized by graceful, swaying body movements with no abrupt jerks or sudden leaps.
- It lays emphasis on acting, where the dancer identifies herself with the character and sentiments existing in compositions and expresses through hand gestures and facial expressions.



1.1.3. KUCHIPUDI DANCE

Why in News?

- Kuchipudi earned a place in Guinness book of world records when 6117 dancers from all over the world performed together in a single show in Vijaywada.

What is Kuchipudi dance?

- This dance originated in Kuchipudi village, Krishna district of modern Andhra Pradesh. It was conceived in 17th century by Vaishnava poet **Siddhendra Yogi**.
- It begins with an invocation to Lord Ganesha followed by **Nritta** (non-narrative pure dancing), **Nritya** (narrative dancing) and **Natya**.
- The dance is performed on Carnatic music where singer is accompanied by musical instruments like mridangam, violin, flute and tambura.

1.2. FOLK AND TRIBAL DANCES

1.2.1. GOTIPUA DANCE (ODISHA)

- Gotipua, a traditional dance form of Odissi folk in praise of Lord Jagannath. This dance form is said to have originated around the beginning of the 16th Century.
- Etymologically, 'Gotipua' in Oriya means 'single boy'. But the dance is performed in groups. The boys are recruited to learn the dance at a very young age, and undergo training until their adolescence, when their androgynous appearances begin to change.
- When the Mahari (Female dancers in temples) dance form started declining, the male dancers continued the tradition by dressing up as the female dancers.
- In Gotipua, the dancers themselves sing.

1.2.2. CHHAU

- Chhau Dance is one of the most renowned tribal martial dances of India. The dance is performed with a Mask, which gives it the name Chau (Chhaya means mask).
- Chhau dance is a tradition from eastern India that enacts episodes from epics including the Mahabharata and Ramayana, local folklore and abstract themes.
- Its three distinct styles hail from the regions of **Seraikella, Purulia** and **Mayurbhanj**, the first two using masks.
- Chhau dance is intimately connected to regional festivals, notably the spring festival Chaitra Parva.
- The dance is accompanied with loud beats and instruments like **drum and marui**.

1.2.3. CHAAM OF SIKKIM MONASTERIES

- Chaam is one of the forms of ritual dance of the Lamas, which features colorful masks and are held at various monasteries during the festivals.
- Costumed Lamas with painted masks, ceremonial swords and sparkling jewels, leap and swing to the rhythm of drums, horns and music.
- There are several types of Chaams like **Singhi Chaam** dedicated to the Mythical Lion, the Yak chaam dedicated to the Yaks.

Singhi Cham

- It is a masked dance of Sikkim, depicting **snow lion** – the cultural symbol of the state.
- The dancers are attired as snow lions, the guardian deity of the land as decreed by Guru Padamsambhava.

1.2.4. BADHAI DANCE (BUNDELKHAND)

- Badhai is one of the popular folk dance of Madhya Pradesh, which is very common in Bundelkhand region.
- Badhai is performed to thank Goddess Shitala and seek her blessings.
- This particular rhythm is known as Badhai from which this folk dance has acquired its name.
- Animals also take part in Badhai Nritya and in many villages, mares (female horses) are seen at such performances.
- The musical instruments used are Dhapla, Timki, Lota, Rantula & Algoja.

1.2.5. PANTHI DANCE (CHHATTISGARH)

- This dance form is a ritual of the **Satnami community**. The dance is very expressive in its depiction and is performed to the accompaniment of melodious songs.
- It is mainly performed by the **male dancers**. The performance of this dance requires great flexibility and stamina as it involves various challenging steps.
- The performers dance around a **Jaitk-hamb** set up for the occasion, to the songs eulogizing their spiritual head and reflects the Nirvana philosophies like those of Kabir, Dadu etc.
- Traditional folk **instruments** are used which comprise of Mridanga and Jhaanj, drums are used occasionally.

1.2.6. PUNGCHOLOM (MANIPUR)

- It is derived from martial arts and also the traditional Maibi Jagoi dance. It's a tradition practiced since the seventeenth century.
- The traditional costume consists of turbans, dhothis and a necklace made of tulsi seeds.
- It is performed in Manipur during weddings, temple functions and even funerals.
- A **pung**, (Manipuri name for Drum), hangs around each dancer's neck. The dancers jump and swirl high in the air once the dance progresses.

1.2.7. CHERAW (BAMBOO DANCE OF MIZORAM)

- It is believed that the dance had existed way back in the 1st Century A.D., while the Mizos were still somewhere in the Yunan Province of China, before their migration into present Mizoram.
- Men sitting face to face on the ground tap long pairs of horizontal and cross bamboo staves open and close in rhythmic beats.
- Girls in colorful Mizo costumes of 'Puanchei', 'Kawrchei', 'Vakiria' and 'Thihna' dance in and out between the beats of bamboo.
- This dance is now performed in almost all festive occasions. Gongs and drums are used to accompany the dance.

1.2.8. THAPETTA GULLU (ANDHRA PRADESH)

- This is the dance form of the Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh.
- In this dance more than ten persons participate, singing songs in the praise of the local goddess.
- The dancers use drums, which are hung around their necks to produce varied rhythms.
- Tinkling bells around the waist form a distinctive part of the dancers' costumes.
- Only men perform this dance traditionally.
- The themes and the subjects are taken from the Ramayana and Mahabharata.

1.2.9. RAUF (J&K)

- It is one of the most popular traditional dances of Kashmir.
- This beautiful dance form graces all the festive occasions, especially Id and Ramzan days.
- The dance is performed by a group of women facing each other lined up in two lines and dressed in beautiful costumes.
- The dance has simple footwork which also called as **Chakri** in local language.
- The dance is often performed in spring season to celebrate good weather.

1.2.10. KUD DANCE

- It is a dance form popular in middle mountain ranges of J&K.
- It is performed as a tribute to one of the most worshipped god in the state – Devtas of Lok.
- 20-30 members can perform together in this dance.

1.2.11. JABRO DANCE

- It is a community dance of nomadic people of Tibetan origin in high hills of **Ladakh** region.
- It is performed by men and women as part of **Losar** (Tibetan New Year festival) celebrations.
- Musical instruments involves – flute and damian (guitar like stringed instrument).
- The performance starts with lower tempo which goes on increasing and performed for hours especially in moonlit nights.

1.2.12. MAYUR DANCE (U.P.)

- It is a dance popular in the **Braj** region of Uttar Pradesh.
- The Mayur or peacock dance is created from an episode in the love lore of Radha and Krishna.
- Radha, pining for Krishna after a brief separation, decides to console herself by the sight of peacocks.

- He eventually yields to Radha's entreaties and himself appears in the guise of a peacock to dance with his beloved.

1.2.13. RATHWA TRIBAL DANCE (GUJARAT)

- The Rathwas, who dwell in Rath-Vistar, the hilly area of the southeastern part of Gujarat state, perform the Rathwa ni Gher dance on the occasion of Holi also known as Kavant festival.
- The Gher (dance with music) performances begin on Dhulendi, which is, literally, 'the day of flying coloured dust'.
- Both men and women perform the Gher together, in groups of 20 to 25.
- Of all Rathwa dances performed on various occasions linked with the cycle of seasons, Rathwa ni Gher stands out as exquisite, colourful and spectacular.

1.2.14. JAGOR FOLK DANCE OF GOA

- Performed jointly by the **Hindus and Christians**, it is a dance drama of Goa based on no continuous plot or narrative to seek the Devine Grace for protection and prosperity of the crop.
- Literal meaning of Jagor is "jagran". The strong belief is that the night long performance, awakens the deities once a year and they continue to remain awake throughout the year guarding the village.
- **Perni Jagor** is the ancient mask dance – drama of Goa, performed by Perni families, using well-crafted and painted wooden masks, depicting various animals, birds, super natural power, deities, demons and social characters.
- **Gauda Jagor**, is an impression of social life that displays all the existing moods and modes of human characters.
- The performance is accompanied by Goan folk instruments like Nagara/Dobe, Ghumat, Madale etc.

1.2.15. YAK DANCE-ARUNACHAL PRADESH

- The Yak dance is one of the famous mask dances of the Buddhist tribes (Mahayana sect) of Arunachal Pradesh.
- It is performed during the Losar festival.
- Individuals put on Yak costumes and masks and perform the Yak dance in order to honour the Yak.
- The masked dancers represent the members of the family who are said to have discovered the Yak with the help of a magical bird hundreds of years ago.
- The Yak is believed to be the symbol of wealth and prosperity.

1.2.16. FOLK DANCES OF KARNATAKA

- The Republic Day Tableau of the state of Karnataka showcased its folk dances.

1.2.17. DOLLU KUNITHA

- Dollu Kunitha is one of the variations of the Kunitha dance. The other being Suggi.
- The dance is widely performed during the harvest season.
- Mainly performed by the shepherd community (known as Kuruba), it involves dancing to the drum beats.
- The songs used in this dance usually have religious and battle fervour.
- Large drums are adorned with coloured clothes and hang around the necks of men.
- The main emphasis is on quick and light movement of the feet and legs.
- Dollu Kunitha forms a part of the ritualistic dances of the dodavāsīs of Karnataka.

1.2.17.1. BAYALATA DANCE

- It is a folk dance of Southern Karnataka which marks the end of harvest season.
- It is a religious dance fused with drama and dialogues.

1.2.17.2. YAKSHAGANA DANCE

- Yakshagana is a fusion of dance and drama.
- Stories depicted from the epics of Ramayana, Mahabharata and Purana are performed on stage.
- A narrator narrates the story along with musicians playing traditional instruments while actors enact the story.

1.2.17.3. NAGAMANDALA DANCE

- It is a night long ritual performed in the regions of Southern Karnataka.
- It involves ritualistic appeasement of the serpent which is considered to be a symbol of fertility.
- This dance form is performed by male dancers (called Vaidyas) who dress as female serpents (nagakannikas).
- The dancers perform around a design painted on a sacred ground which represents the serpent spirit.

1.2.18. GORAVA DANCE

- Gorava dance or 'goravara kunita' is a dance form popular in northern Karnataka region.
- It is performed by Goravas, tribe belonging to shiva-cult.
- Goravas are singing tribe who narrates stories of deeper religious value.
- Materials used in dance – small dolu in one hand, flute in other, headgear made of bear hair.

1.2.19. KARAKATTAM-TAMIL NADU

- Also known as Karagam, this popular folk dance originated from Thanjavur and spread to the neighbouring areas.
- It is a ritualistic dance involving acrobatics feats performed during the month of August. It is dedicated to the goddess of health and rain Mariamman.
- It is performed by an individual or two persons.

1.2.20. DEVARATTAM DANCE

- It is a folk dance of Tamil Nadu performed by Kambala Nayaka community.
- Devarattam literally means “dance of gods” and popular belief is that kambala nayaka community members are descendants of gods or devas.
- Musical instruments involved – Urmi (double headed drum like instrument) long flute.

1.2.21. HOJAGIRI-TRIPURA

- It is a folk dance performed by the Reang clan of the Tripuri people.
- It is performed during Hojagiri Festival (laxmi puja). Laxmi Puja is held on the following full moon night of Durga Puja.
- The dance is performed only by women while the male members sing and play musical instruments.
- The dancers use props like BALING, a wide circular rice cleaning article made of cane, a pitcher or kalash, a bottle, a household traditional lamp, a plain dish and a handkerchief.

1.2.22. SAMMI DANCE

- It is a folk dance of Punjab performed by Punjabi tribal women
- The dancers are dressed in bright coloured kurtas with full flowing skirts (lehengas) and a silver hair ornament.

1.2.23. LAVA DANCE

- It is traditional folk dance of Lakshadweep
- It is usually performed by male members (some of them carrying drums)
- The dancers wear – red trouser, white scarf around waist, black and white head gear (‘Bolufeyle’ as locally known)
- The dance is similar to the Maldives folk - Maldivine Bileh dhafi negun.

1.2.24. CHHAPELI FOLK DANCE

- It is folk dance of Kumaon Uttarakhand.
- It is performed by male and female together as lover and his beloved respectively.
- It is performed on the tune of music from various instruments like hurka, manzira and flute.

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2. MUSIC

2.1. PANCHAVADYAM

- Panchavadyam literally meaning an orchestra **of five instruments**, is a temple art form that has evolved in Kerala.
- Of the five instruments, four — **timila, maddalam, ilathalam** and **idakka** —belong to the percussion category, while the fifth, **kombu**, is a wind instrument.
- Panchavadyam is characterized by a pyramid-like rhythmic structure with a constantly increasing tempo coupled with a proportional decrease in the number of beats in cycles.
- Panchavadyam is not related very closely to any temple ritual and permits a lot of personal improvisation.

2.2. BEEN JOGI (HARYANA)

- Jogi is a traditional singer of Haryana who reflect many aspects of its folklore and culture.
- They perform rich ballads, devotional songs, stories poems and even healing to some extent.
- Their art is dying out and on the verge of extinction.
- They perform with instrument called Beens which is also used by traditional snake charmers.
- The performers normally wear saffron attires resembling those of saints or yogis.

2.3. MANGANIAR (FOLK SINGERS OF RAJASTHAN)

- **Manganiyar** is a small tribal community living in rural areas of western Rajasthan, mainly in three districts i.e. Jodhpur, Badmer and Jaisalmer.
- Their songs are passed on from generation to generation as a form of oral history of the desert.
- The special bowed instrument Kamaicha, played by the community is made of local material and looks as if a rudimentary one, but the musical patterns presented on it are very complex.
- Apart from main playing strings, there are a few supporting or drone strings called Jhare or Jhare -ke-taar which rest on the main bridge, and are responsible for creating bigger sound.
- Other instruments used by them are the Dholak and Khartaal.
- Manganiyars present Ragas like Kalyani, Khamaichi etc. which have little or no resemblance with our classical Ragas.

2.4. PANDAVANI (CHHATTISGARH)

- It is a folk ballad form performed in Chhattisgarh and depicts the story of the Pandavas.
- Traditionally it used to be performed by males but now females also perform it.
- There is a lead artist and some supporting singers and musicians.
- The lead artist narrates one episode after another and enacts the characters in the scenes to produce a more realistic effect. Occasionally, he also breaks out into a dance movement.
- During the performance he sings along the rhythm produced by the ektaal held in his hand.
- There are two styles of narration in Pandwani; Vedamati and Kapalik

2.5. KANIYAN KOOTHU

- Kaniyan koothu is a ritual art form practiced during temple festivals in Tamil Nadu only by men.
- It gets its name from the community that the artists come from. Kaniyans are a Scheduled Tribe.
- It is at least 300 years old and can be traced back to 17th century.
- **Instrument:** Magudam, or frame drum is the main instrument. It is made by fixing the new hide on the frame with a paste made from tamarind seed.

Kaniyan tribe

- The Kaniyan are a tribal community residing in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu.
- Their population is less than 750 and only around 200 persons are currently performing the art.

- The lead singer is called annavi and he leads this troupe.
- It has very deep religious significance and is not just about entertainment.
- The team never performs at weddings, deaths and functions at homes.
- The performers receive no formal training; the singers pick up the songs and stories by listening to their fathers.
- Kaniyan Koothu tells Puranic stories such as Markandeya and Harischandra Puranam and tales from Ramayana and Mahabarata, besides local deities.

2.6. MOHAN VEENA

- **Mohan Veena** refers to two distinct Indian stringed classical instruments.
- First kind is a modified Sarod created by the well known sarod artist Radhika Mohan Maitra and the other is a modified Hawaiian guitar created by Vishwa Mohan Bhatt.
- Bhatt's Mohan Veena is a highly modified concord arch top played lap-style.
- It has nineteen strings and is under tremendous tension. The total strings pull can be in excess of 500 pounds.
- Some variants of Mohan Veena include Chaturangi, Hansa Veena and Shankar Veena.

2.7. 'KA BOM' DRUM

- Traditional drum of **Khasi community in Meghalaya**.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi tried his hand on the drum while on his visit to Meghalaya at the 65th plenary session of North-Eastern Council.

2.8. KIRANA GHARANA

- Kirana Gharana is one of the most prolific Pakistani and Hindustani Khayal gharanas.
- The name of this school of music derives from Kirana or Kairana in Shamli district of Uttar Pradesh, which is the hometown of stalwarts like Ustad Abdul Karim Khan and Ustad Abdul Waheed Khan, who established this gharana.
- It is considered the foremost in perfect intonation of **notes or swara**. The central concern of the Kirana style is swara, in particular precise tuning and expression of notes.
- In the Kirana Gayaki, the individual notes (swaras) of the raga are considered not just random points in the scale but independent realms of music capable of horizontal expansion.
- Most Hindustani musicians from Karnataka are exponents of kirana gharana, thanks to Ustad Abdul Kareem Khan (1872-1937). It has imbibed many features of the Carnatic tradition.
- The border region along Karnataka and Maharashtra is famous for Kirana School of singing.

2.9. BAUL TRADITION

- The **Baul** are a group of people from West Bengal and Bangladesh.
- Bauls are usually Vaishnava Hindus and Sufi Muslims.
- They can often be identified by their distinctive clothes and musical instruments.
- Though only a small fraction of the Bengali population, their influence on the culture of Bengal is considerable.
- In 2005, the Baul tradition was included in the list of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO.
- **Baul music**
 - Its lyrics carry influences of the Hindu bhakti movements and the *suphi*, a form of Sufi song exemplified by the songs of Kabir.
 - Musical instruments used by them are *ektara*, *dotara*, *khamak*, *duggi*, *dhol* and *khol*.

3. PAINTINGS

3.1. THANGKA PAINTING

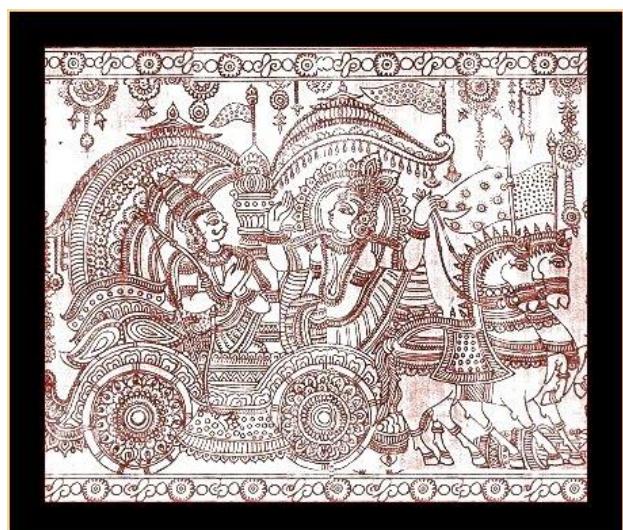
- The thangka is a traditional Tibetan form of religious art originating in India whose subject or subjects may include Buddha, bodhisattvas, meditational deities, great teachers, and mandalas.
- Most thangkas are scroll paintings usually framed in colorful silk brocade and have a thin silk veil covering the front surface.
- They are distinctively Tibetan, highly religious, and possess a unique art style of their own.
- Although always religious in nature, Tibetan thangkas cover a wide range of subject matters.
- Most of them are painted on cloth or paper. The white cloth is first mounted on a frame, and water-based colloid chalk is applied to the surface. Surface is polished with talc when dried.
- Apart from this, there are thangkas, which are webs of embroidery, woven silk, silk tapestry, or appliqué. Embroidered thangkas are done with multi-colored silk threads.

3.2. KANGRA PAINTING

- Kangra paintings belong to the school of Pahari paintings that were patronized by the Rajput rulers between the 17th and 19th centuries.
- Became widely popular with the advent of Jayadev's Gita Govinda, of which many extant manuscripts feature exquisite Kangra illustrations.
- They portrayed incidents and scenes from the life of lord Krishna and other Bhakti themes.
- Apart from female beauty, landscapes, countryside, rivers, trees, birds, cattle, flowers etc. are meticulously portrayed in these paintings.
- The Kangra painters used colors made of vegetable and mineral extracts. They employed cool and fresh colors.

3.3. KALAMKARI ART

- The word is derived from the Persian words kalam (pen) and kari (craftsmanship), meaning drawing with a pen.
- **Pedana** town in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh is known for its Kalamkari.
- These paintings are made on cloth. It is hand painted as well as blocks printing with vegetable dyes applied on cloth.
- The art of painting using organic dyes on cloth was popular in several parts of India, but this style of Kalamkari flourished at Kalahasti and at Masulipatnam.
- This art is mainly related to decorating temple interiors with painted cloth panels, which was developed in the fifteenth century under the patronage of Vijaynagar rulers.
- They are very durable and flexible in size and made according to theme.
- Subjects are adopted from the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and Hindu religious mythology.



Two distinctive styles

- There are two distinctive styles of Kalamkari design - Srikalahasti style and Masulipatnam style of art.
- The Masulipatnam style is influenced by Persian art. The motifs like trees, flowers and leaf designs are printed using blocks.
- The Srikalahasti style flourished around temples with Hindu patronage thus has an almost religious identity, wherein the kalam is used for freehand drawing of the subject, and filling in the colours is done by hand.

3.4. MITHILA PAINTING

- Also known as **Madhubani painting**, it is characterized by line drawing filled in with bright colours.
- Painting is done with fingers, twigs, brushes, nib-pens and matchsticks.
- Geometrical patterns are a characteristic feature.
- The painting is done with mineral pigments.
- Originally this painting was done on freshly plastered or mud wall.
- For commercial purposes, it is now done on paper, cloth and canvas.



3.5. BUNDI SCHOOL OF PAINTING

- Bundi School of Painting is a Rajasthani style of **Indian miniature painting** that lasted from 17th century towards the end of 19th century.
- It existed in the princely state of Bundi and neighbouring principality of Kotah.
- The Bundi School is characterized by a fondness for lush green vegetation, dramatic night skies and a distinctive way of depicting water with light swirls.
- It has a close association with the Mughal style.
- The Bundi Paintings emphasized on hunting, court scenes, procession, life of nobles, lovers, animals, birds and scenes from Lord Krishna's life.

3.6. NATHDWARA PAINTING

- Nathdwara Paintings refer to a school of artists that originated in Nathdwara in Rajasthan.
- The Nathdwara School of Painting is a subset of Mewar School and is seen as an important school in 17th and 18th century.
- These paintings have different sub-styles, of which the Pichwai Paintings are the most popular.
- Pichwai Paintings are cloth paintings hung behind the image of Hindu God, Shrinathji.
- Pichwai paintings illustrate different moods of Lord Krishna.

3.7. ROCK PAINTINGS DISCOVERED IN KONDANE CAVES

- 40 rock paintings were recently discovered in the Kondane caves in Raigad district in western region of Maharashtra.
- The images were found in both natural caverns and man-made caves.
- An unfinished Buddhist chaitya and a vihara were found in two man-made caves in the group. A chaitya is Buddhist prayer hall with a stupa at one end. A vihara is a monastery.
- The Buddhist rock-cut architecture found in these caves belongs to the Hinayana phase of Buddhism.
- A striking image found was that of a mythical figure, perhaps a demon. Other paintings reflected everyday life and occupations such as hunting deer.
- The style and articulation of these paintings suggest that they have been drawn during the late historical period of second century B.C. onwards.

4. MISCELLANEOUS ART FORM

4.1. ALPANA FOLK ART

Why in News?

- INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage) has joined hands with the Daricha Foundation to revive the lost fold art of Bengal – Alpana.

What is Alpana?

- Alpana is a folk art of Bengal was mainly done on the floor and the walls of the house.
- The painting was done with hands (fingers are the brush) and the paint is mainly a paste comprising of rice flour.
- The motifs drawn are ritualistic images from mythology and scriptures.
- Alpana was drawn by women of the house before the sunset.
- It is considered to ward off evil spirits and was specifically drawn on special occasions such as festivals or weddings.

4.2. ADIVASI ADIVIMB

- It is a three day festival of tribal dance music and theatre organized by national school of drama.
- Various performances associated with different regions were performed such as
 - Ghumura - odisha
 - Adi solung dancers - Arunachala Pradesh
 - Mishing bihu and gumrag - Assam
 - Hozagiri dancers - Tripura

4.3. FRINGE FOLK ARTS

4.3.1. BEHEROPIYA

- It was once a mode of entertainment for royals.
- It is an art to entertain with alertness and wit, through impersonating someone, hazirjawabi.
- This art is getting extinct. Only few people take it up and that too to use it for begging.

4.3.2. KACHCHHI GHORI DANCE

- It is a folk dance with origin in shekhawati region of rajasthan
- It is performed by men on dummy horses.
- It is performed on a beat of drums and fifes
- These artists of fringe folk arts above are also known as ‘Maidaani Kalaakar’ as they perform in the open without any need for a stage.

4.4. JANGAM JOGI

- Jangam jogi are folk musicians associated with region of Haryana, Punjab.
- Jangam is a style of devotional music dedicated to lord shiva.
- Their instruments are small and portable (being travellers) like dafli, khanjari, khartal.

4.5. CHANNAPATNA WOODCRAFT

- Channapatna is the heritage wooden craft of Karnataka.
- It is used to make toys. These toys are safe for children as they have no shard edges and no lead colours (only organic colours).
- It has attained GI status under WTO.
- Channapatna also has India's first craft part.

4.6. KAI SILAMBAM

- It is a traditional folk art of Puducherry.
- It is closely related to art of kalaripayattu of Kerala and angampora of Sri lanka.
- Silambam refers to bamboo staff (main weapon used in this style).
- It is also practiced in Malaysia today.

4.7. KOLKALI AND MARGRAM

- Kolkali is a folk art performed in Kerela
 - It has been influenced by kalaripayattu
 - It has been revived by Syrian Christian communities of Kerela
- Margam dance is also a folk dance from kerela

4.8. KATHISAMU AND KARASAMU

- It is a martial art of Andhra Pradesh, having origin in Vijaynagar Empire.
- Kathisamu and karasamu are name of weapons used in it.
- Various weapons used are
 - knife fighting (baku samu)
 - sword fighting (katti samu)
 - stick fighting (kara samu)

4.9. SANGODD

- It is a festival celebrated in Goa during monsoon season on 29thjune.
- The sangodd celebrations begins in the afternoon only after priests give blessings to sangodd and areca poles that fishermen use and grand feast mass in morning
- Sangodd is the tying together of 2 boats representing binding of faith.

4.10. ROGAN ART

- Rogan is an art of painting on fabric, with its origin in Persia and popular in India in Kutch region
- In this art, organic colors such as vegetable pigments are used with castor oil base
- The painting is done using a stick, a rod or a metal block.
- The most frequently used colours are yellow, blue and red.

4.11. STATUE OF UNITY

- It is being constructed in Narmada district of Gujarat as a tribute to Sardar Patel
- It would be world's tallest statue when completed.
- The project is being executed by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Rashtriya Ekta Trust (SVPRET), the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) formed by the Gujarat government.

4.12. KANISHKA STUPA

Why in news?

- Pakistan government is urging to include Kanishka stupa, in Peshawar, as 8th wonder of the world

About Kanishka Stupa

- It was established by Kushana king Kaishka in 2nd century AD.
- It would be perhaps tallest building of ancient history.
- Its Buddhist relics were transferred to Mandalay hill, Burma.

4.13. KUTIYATTAM

- Kutiyattam is a form of theatre that originated in ancient India, dating back to about two millennia. It draws on the plays of the eminent Sanskrit dramatists of India.
- It has been declared as “Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity” by UNESCO.
- Kutiyattam is performed by a community of male actors called Chakyars and female performers called Nangiars, assisted by drummers called Nambalars, in theatre houses called Kuttampalams.
- Kutiyattam represents a synthesis of Sanskrit classicism and reflects the local traditions of Kerala.
- Actors undergo ten to fifteen years of rigorous training to become fully-fledged performers with sophisticated breathing control and subtle muscle shifts of the face and body.

4.14. BAZIGAR (ACROBATS OF PUNJAB)

- They are a community among the Scheduled Castes of Punjab.
- Originally nomads, they trace their origin to the Rajputs of Rajasthan and started to settle in the North West India in last 3 centuries.
- Their main profession was making Bazis (jumps and somersaults), but now they are also into casual labour.
- The economic condition is poor as the traditional profession is not sustainable.

4.15. KALARIPAYATTU (MARTIAL ARTS FROM KERALA)

- Kalarippayattu is the indigenous martial art of Kerala and is known to be in practice for more than five hundred years.
- It has been preserved for many centuries following the tradition of guru-sisya parampara.
- It has three regional variants that are distinguished by their attacking and defensive patterns.
- Kalaripayattu techniques are a combination of steps (Chuvatu) and postures (Vadivu).
- A kalari in Tamil and Malayalam means the school or training hall where martial arts are taught.

4.16. BAHURUPIYA (MIMICRY ARTISTS FROM RAJASTHAN)

- The term bahurupiya derives from the Sanskrit bahu (many) and rupa (form).
- The practice of performing as a bahurupiya is now associated with Bhands, but formerly members of various castes, including Brahmins, practiced this art in villages as well as courts.
- Central to the art of the bahurupiya is the ability to create convincing impersonations of identifiable types.
- A bahurupiya's disguise is known as a vesh (Sanskrit for clothing or dress).

4.17. THANG TA (MARTIAL ART FORM OF MANIPUR)

- The Meitis of Manipur practised a distinct martial technique called thang-ta, in which a Thang (spear) and a Ta (sword) are the primary weapons.
- It is a way of life. The exercises, movements and the fighting methods are meant to instill discipline, boost self-confidence, safeguard women, respect elders or fight for the kingdom.
- There are weapons like ‘arambai’ (a pointed small spear with traditional poison filled at the tip), ‘thang’ and ‘chungoi’ and many others which add power to Thang-ta.

4.18. MALLAKHAMB (MAHARASHTRA)

- Mallakhamb as the name suggests is a pole used by wrestlers for practicing their skills in the game KUSTI.
- But nowadays the trend has changed and it has got a special identity. Mallakhamb needs concentration, speed and flexibility. It is a good exercise to our body especially for backbone.
- Earliest mention of Mallakhamb can be traced back to the 12th Century.
- There are three ways in which mallakhamb may be performed – on a fixed pole, hanging pole or rope. Three decades ago, pole mallakhamb gave way to the rope mallakhamb.

4.19. NADA KUSTI

- It is a **traditional form of wrestling**, deep rooted in the people of **Mysore**.
- A sport that has had royal patronage since early 17th Century, Nada Kusti is very popular among those from the lower middle class and rural areas.
- Today, the sport is no more than a form of rural entertainment confined to the Dasara festivities.

4.20. PHULKARI

- The origin of this art can be traced back to the 15th century AD.
- In it embroidery is done in a simple and sparse design over shawls and dupattas.
- In some cases where the design is worked over very closely, covering the material entirely, it is called bagh (a garden of flowers).
- The threads used were of a silk yarn called pat.

4.21. ZARDOZI

- Zardozi is metal embroidery, which was used for the attire of royals. Persian terms Zar meaning gold and Dozi meaning embroidery.
- It involves making elaborate designs, using gold and silver threads. Precious stones, diamonds, emeralds, and pearls are also used.
- **Uses:** to adorn walls of the royal tents, scabbards, wall hangings and the paraphernalia of regal elephants and horses.
- Zardozi embroidery work is mainly a specialty of Lucknow, Bhopal, Hyderabad, Delhi, Agra, Kashmir, Mumbai, Ajmer and Chennai.
- In 2013 the Geographical Indication Registry (GIR) accorded the Geographical Indication (GI) registration to the Lucknow Zardozi, which is manufactured in areas in Lucknow and six surrounding districts of Barabanki, Unnao, Sitapur, Rae Bareli, Hardoi and Amethi.

4.22. CHETTINAD COTTON SARIS

- Chettinadu saree was derived from Chettinadu, a small town in Sivaganga district of Tamil Nadu.
- The traditional sari from Chettinad is called Kandanghi and is made of cotton.
- The Chettinadu sarees are designed by incorporating checks of vivid colours - mustard, brick red, oranges, chrome and brown.
- Checks and Temple borders are the traditional patterns of Kandanghi saree.

4.23. TANGALIA WEAVING

- **Tangalia weaving** is a 700-year-old indigenous craft which uses a unique weaving technique comprising themes made up of '**danas**' or **beads** ranging from a few dots to a more elaborate arrangement by using cotton or wool yarn.
- It is **only** practiced by the **Dangasia community** in **Surendranagar district** of Gujarat.
- Tangalia textiles are usually worn as a shawl and wraparound skirt by the women of the **Bharwad shepherd community**.
- Tangalia shawl was given **Geographical Indications** recognition by the Central government in **2009**.

Dangasia community

- The word **Dangasia** has been derived from the word **Dang**, meaning **stick** in the vernacular language, signifying the **stick** used by shepherds to herd their sheep.
- The Dangasias follow **Hinduism**. They are believers in **Chamunda Devi**, a form of the goddess **Parvati** and celebrate Navratri.
- They celebrate all major Hindu festivals like Holi, Diwali, Uttarayan and Janmashtami besides actively participating in other local festivals and fairs.

- They share a symbiotic relation with the **Bharwads**, where the latter provides wool and the former wove garments for them.

4.24. BIDRI CRAFT

- It is a metal handicraft from **Bidar district of Karnataka**.
- The craft originated in Persia and came to India in the 14th century. It flourished under the **Bahamani dynasty**.
- In Bidri work, zinc is the primary metal used.
- Bidriware is characterised by its black shine which comes from the special soil used. This is black soil found in Bidri.



BIDAR-WARE: FLOWER VASE

4.25. THEWA CRAFT

- Thewa is a unique art of jewellery making which involves embossing of intricately worked-out sheet of gold.
- It originated about 400 years ago in the Pratapgarh district of Rajasthan.
- The word Thewa comes from two words: Tharna meaning hammer and Vada meaning silver wire.
- Its origin is attributed to the goldsmith Nathuji Soni who was conferred the title of Rajasoni by Raja Savant Singh of Pratapgarh.
- The title and the craft have been passed down through generations.



4.26. JOGI TRIBAL ART

- Jogi Art is tribal art form that hinges on lines and dots.
- It is mostly done in black and whites; however the recent installation in the city of Jaipur is of vibrant colours.
- It is practised by artists from Magriwada in Reodar tehsil of Sirohi district in Rajasthan.
- Interestingly, now this tribal art form is just practised by a nuclear family
- The Rajasthan government has installed Jogi Tribal Art Paintings across Jaipur in an attempt to make people aware and to keep the traditional art alive.

4.27. KABADDI WORLD CUP

Why in News?

- India beat Iran in the finals of Kabaddi World Cup 2016 to win the third consecutive title.

Kabaddi

- Kabaddi is a contact sport that originated in ancient India.
- It is known as sadugudu in Tamil Nadu, Kabaddi in Karnataka, Hadudu in Bengal, Bhavatik in Maldives, Kauddi in Punjab region and chedugudu in Andhra Pradesh.
- There are mainly four forms of Kabaddi played in India: Sanjeevani Kabaddi, Gaminee style, Amar style and Punjabi Kabaddi.
- The Kabaddi Federation of India was founded in 1950.
- The sport received international exposure during 1936 Berlin Olympics.

5. TRIBES

5.1. NYISHIS TRIBE OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

- They are the most populous tribe of Arunachal Pradesh numbering around 3 lakhs.
- The Nyishi support themselves with a slash-and-burn agriculture and with hunting and fishing.
- The most unique feature of the Nyishis is the cane helmet with the beak of the Great Indian Hornbill worn by the males.
- Rice is their staple food crop supported by fish.
- They worship Aabhu Thanyi as their mythical forefather.
- Traditionally they were hunters, but now with increasing awareness, they have become conservators of forests and wildlife due to their proximity to nature.

5.2. TODA TRIBE

- **Spread:** isolated Nilgiri plateau of Southern India.
- Small **pastoral** community with population range 700 to 900 during the last century.
- The Toda have attracted a disproportionate amount of attention because of their unlikeness to their neighbours in appearance, manners, and customs.
- The Toda lands are now a part of The Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, a UNESCO-designated International Biosphere Reserve and is declared UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Their sole occupation is cattle-herding and dairy-work.
- **Religion:** Centres on the buffalo
- **Threat:** Some Toda pasture land was lost due to agriculture by outsiders or afforestation by the State Government of Tamil Nadu.

5.3. ASUR TRIBE

- The members of the tribe live in Jharkhand, pockets of Bihar, West Bengal and a few other states.
- The 2011 Census put the number of Asurs at 22,459 in Jharkhand and 4,129 in Bihar.
- The Asurs claim to be descendants of Mahishasur, the buffalo-demon whom Goddess Durga kills after a fight lasting nine nights.
- This mythology celebrated as Durga Puja in mainstream Hinduism, but observed as ‘Mahishasur Dasain’ among the Asurs, who hold a period of mourning during which they largely stay indoors.
- Traditionally, they have been iron-smelters and slash burn cultivators. Thus, they have been nomadic.
- According to one of the theories, the Magadh Empire benefited a lot from the weapons the Asurs made.
- The Unesco has listed the Asur language as “definitely endangered” with only 7,000 speakers left.

5.4. BONDA TRIBE

- The tribe lives in isolated hill regions of the Malkangiri district of southwestern **Odisha**, near the junction of Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and Andhra Pradesh. Their current population is 12,000.
- They have almost no connection to the outside world. Only 6% are literate.
- In Bonda society, the women enjoy a privileged position.
- Girls largely marry boys who are at least five to ten years younger than them. Thus the girl looks after her husband as he grows up and in turn he cares for his older wife.
- The number of women among the Bonda greatly exceeds the number of men.

5.5. SIDDI TRIBE

- The **Siddi** also known as **Sheedi, Habshi or Makrani**, are an ethnic group inhabiting India and Pakistan.
- They are descendants of Africans from North-East and East Africa who were brought to India as slaves, soldiers or servants. The Siddi are descended from Bantu peoples from Southeast Africa. Some were merchants, sailors, indentured servants and mercenaries.

- Spread: Karnataka, Gujarat and Hyderabad in India and Makran and Karachi in Pakistan as the main population centres
- Religion: Siddis are primarily Sufi Muslims, although some are Hindus and Roman Catholic Christians.
- The Siddis of Gujarat live around Gir Forest National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary.

5.6. JARAWA TRIBE

- The tribes of the Andaman Islands – the **Jarawa, Great Andamanese, Onge and Sentinelese** – are believed to have lived there for up to 55,000 years.
- Considered one of the most isolated people on earth, the Jarawa are a hunter-gatherer tribe that has lived in the dense forests of Andaman Islands completely cut off from the outside world.
- However, with the increasing flow of outsiders, the Jarawas are facing the threat of extinction. Today, approximately 400 members of the tribe live in groups of 40-50 in chaddhas – as they call their homes.
- Contraceptive methods: contraceptive leaves known as Vachahi and Hatho are used.

5.7. NARIKURAVA TRIBE

- They have recently been included in the Scheduled Tribe category by the union government.
- There is gradual change seen as they got the first engineer from their community recently.
- Narikurava is an indigenous community from the Indian state of **Tamil Nadu**.
- It is **one of the most socially and educationally backward communities in India**.

5.8. KHASI TRIBE OF MEGHALAYA

- **Megalithic stone structures and iron implements** dating back to pre-historic period have been found in the ridge spread over 1.5 km in Ri-Bhoi district, Meghalaya.
- Radiocarbon dating of the megalithic structures and tools indicates that **Khasis** made Meghalaya their home way back in 1200 BC.
- This excavation at **Lummawbuh** is the **first Neolithic site in Meghalaya**.

About Khasi

- The Khasis are an indigenous tribe, majority of who live in the state of **Meghalaya**.
- What sets this tribe apart from other tribes is that the descendants are recognized from the mother and not from the father i.e it follows the **matrilineal system** of society.
- They practice **shifting cultivation (JHUM)** for their survival.

5.9. JUANG TRIBE OF ORISSA

Death of 19 Juang children in 3 months atop the Nagada hills in Odisha's Jajpur district has woken up the government to the problem of malnutrition in the tribe.

Juang Tribe

- Juangs are a tribal (Adivasi) group of people from the Munda Ethnic group.
- They mainly reside in Keonjhar, Dhenkanal, Angul and Jajpur districts of Odisha.
- They speak the Juang language which is accepted as a branch of Austroasiatic languages.
- The tribe has been identified as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)

5.10. HAKKA PIKKI

Why in news?

- Karnataka govt. decided to permanently rehabilitate the members of Hakki-Pikki community.

About Hakki-Pikki community

- This tribe is mainly found in the southern part of India and is semi nomadic in nature.
- It is said that the tribal community has relations with the king Rana Pratap and are from the Kshatriya clan.
- These tribes follow rules of Matriarchy and Endogamy is strictly prohibited.

- Their main occupation is hunting but they are showing more interest in agriculture and floral decoration.
- They are well conversant in their local dialect Vahgri, Kannada, Tamil and Hindi and some also speak Malayalam and Telugu.
- They celebrate various festivals like Diwali, shivaratri, Ugadi, Ganesh chaturthi and practice animal sacrifice.

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6. SCULPTURE AND ARCHITECTURE

6.1. AUSTRALIA RETURNS STOLEN SCULPTURES TO INDIA

- Australia returned three ancient sculptures to India that were stolen and smuggled out of the country.
- The sculptures that have been returned includes a third century rock carving worth \$8,40,000, a 900-year-old stone statue of Goddess Pratyangira and a Seated Buddha.

6.2. ARDHANARISWARA

- It is an androgynous form in which Shiva is on the right half and his consort Parvathi on left half, split down the middle.
- This form of Shiva came into existence after Goddess Parvati got a boon to be merged with Shiva.
- The essence of worshipping this form of Shiva is that if the inner masculine and feminine meet, you can be in a perpetual state of ecstasy.
- The famous statue of Ardhanarishwara in Elephanta is an excellent portrayal of this form.

6.3. FORT ST. GEORGE CHENNAI

- **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** along with the Army and Public Works Department has taken up the restoration of the moat around Fort St. George in Chennai.
- The 2.3 km moat was built during the French Attack in 1760s.
- The big section of the moat has become a waste water chamber.
- The sluice gates were closed many years ago and would remain so. The moat would turn into a dry channel, used only to collect excess rainwater.

6.4. BUDDHIST REMAINS UNEARTHED IN ANDHRA PRADESH

Why in news?

- Buddhist remains on a mound called '**Ernammal Pallu Dibba**' were unearthed in **Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh**.
- The remains have been unearthed under the campaign, "**'Preserve Heritage for Posterity'**, an initiative of the Cultural Centre of Vijayawada and Amaravati

What is it?

- The remains (limestone pillars) are carved with half-lotus medallions, two limestone panels and a fragment of a Buddha image.
- Based on the style and architecture, the remains are datable top 3rd century AD i.e Ikshwaku times.

6.5. YOGA IN THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE LIST

Why in news?

- **UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation)** included YOGA in its **Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity** in 2016.
- The decision was taken in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, during the 11th session of the **Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage**.
- Yoga is the **13th intangible cultural heritage** to be listed in UNESCO's list.

Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity from India

- Chau Dance
- Buddhist Chanting of Ladakh
- Sanskritana – the ritual singing, dancing and drumming of Manipur
- The traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab
- Ramlila – the traditional performance of Ramayana
- Tradition of Vedic Chanting
- Koodiyattam
- Mudiyet
- Kalbelia
- Ramman: religious festival and ritual theatre of Garhwal, Uttarakhand

UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage

- The list was established in 2008 when Convention for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage came into effect.
- It includes important intangible cultural heritages worldwide. It has two parts:
 - ✓ **Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.**
 - ✓ **List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of urgent Safeguarding.**
- The list includes 814 cultural sites, 203 natural and 35 both natural and cultural sites

6.6. VADAKKUNNATHAN TEMPLE

- Sree Vadakkunnathan Temple in Kerala, India has received the Award of Excellence in this year's UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation.
- This Award was given for the remarkable conservation effort undertaken at the sacred site which employed age-old rituals and conservation techniques drawn from vastu shastra, an Indian traditional science focusing on architecture and construction.
- The temple is situated in the Thrissur district and is a classic example of the Kerala style of architecture.
- The temple has many decorative murals, including some on the Mahabharata theme and other pieces of art.

The UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation programme recognizes the efforts of private individuals and organizations that have successfully restored and conserved structures and buildings of heritage value in the region. By recognizing private efforts to restore and adapt historic properties the awards aim to encourage other property owners to undertake conservation projects within their communities, either independently or by seeking public-private partnerships.

Parvati Nandan Ganapati Temple, Pune, Maharashtra

- It was given an Honourable Mention UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation.
- Jijabai, mother of Chhatrapati Shivaji, earlier renovated the temple in the early 17th century.
- The temple is dedicated to Lord Ganesha, the main deity of Maharashtra.
- The temple has a 'gabhara' (inner sanctum), 'mandap' (outer pavilion), 'sabhamandap' (assembly pavilion), 'shikhar' (roof) and the main entrance gateway.

6.7. MUZIRIS HERITAGE PROJECT

- The Muziris Heritage Project is being implemented by the Government of Kerala, with the support of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.
- It was initiated six years ago, is an ambitious project comprising the --
 - ✓ development works of Chennamangalam palaces,
 - ✓ Cheraman Parambu, Synagogue and waterfront at North Paravur;
 - ✓ a performance centre at Gothuruthu;
 - ✓ a Museum at Pallipuram
- The project envisages conservation of monuments across Thrissur and Ernakulam.
- Muziris was an ancient seaport and urban centre which dates from at least the 1st century BC and located at the mouth of the Periyar River at present on the west coast of south Indian state of Kerala.
- Large ships of ocean traders frequented the port from across the world, including Arabs, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans and Chinese. Its historic importance has been mentioned in the Sangam literature and a number of classical European historical sources.
- Next phase of the project is the 'Spice Route Initiative', which will explore the international connections and linkages that the Malabar Coast had with many parts of the world.
- This phase is to be implemented with the support of UNESCO and United Nations World Tourism Organization. Kerala Tourism has won 2015 Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) award in the 'Heritage & Culture'.

6.8. BODH GAYA-SPIRITUAL CAPITAL

- The Indian Government decided to develop Bodhgaya as the site of spiritual capital to serve as a civilizational bond between India and the Buddhist world.
- Mahabodhi Temple, located in Bodhgaya, was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2002.
- Bodh Gaya is the most holy place for Buddhists all over the world. Situated by the bank of river Neranjana (now Falgu) the place was then known as Uruwela.
- The main monastery of Bodh Gaya used to be called the Bodhimanda-vihāra (Pali). Now it is called the Mahabodhi Temple.

Bodhgaya

- It was here under a banyan tree, the Bodhi Tree, Gautama attained supreme knowledge to become Buddha, the Enlightened One.
- The temple is an architectural amalgamation of many centuries, cultures and heritages.
- Its architecture has a distinct stamp of the Gupta era, and it has later ages inscriptions describing visits of pilgrims from Sri Lanka, Myanmar and China between 7th and 10th century AD.
- Bodh Gaya has monasteries from almost all prominent Buddhist countries.

About Mahabodhi temple

- it marks the location where **Buddha is said to have attained enlightenment**
- **One of the oldest brick structure in eastern India**, it influenced the development of brick architecture over the centuries
- The first temple was built by Emperor Asoka in the 3rd century BC. However, the present temple is of the 5th-6th century CE, belonging to the late Gupta period.

About Vesak

- Vesak poya, aka **Buddha Purnima** and **Buddha Day**, is a holiday observed traditionally by Buddhists on different days in South Asian and South-East Asian countries.
- It **commemorates the birth, enlightenment (nirvana) and death (parinirvana) of Gautam Buddha** in the Theravad or southern tradition.
- The name of the observance represents a month in the Hindu calendar falling in April-May i.e. Vaishaka.
- On this day the followers gather and sing hymns in praise of the holy triple gem: The Buddha, The Dharma (his teachings), and The Sangha (his disciples).

6.9. AMRAVATI: NEW CAPITAL OF ANDHRA PRADESH

- Amaravathi has been approved as the upcoming capital city of Andhra Pradesh.
- It was ancient seat of Satavahana ruler's kingdom, located on the banks of river Krishna.
- Andhra Pradesh Cabinet has also approved the first phase of the master plan prepared by Singapore government.
- The city derives its name from Lord Amareswara temple in the village. It is also known as 'Dakshina Kashi' (Kashi of the south). It also has Buddhist significance.
- The Andhra sculpture is generally known as Amaravati schools. The stupas at Amaravati were made of a distinctive white green marble.

6.10. DECODING OF TEXT ON AN ANCIENT COPPER PLATE

Researchers from the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (BORI), which houses South Asia's largest collection of manuscripts and rare texts, have decoded a copper plate.

Conclusions from the copper plate

- The date of Harshavardhan's defeat to the Chalukya King Pulakeshin II is fixed at 618 AD.
- It was believed that the battle occurred sometime between 612 AD and 634 AD.
- The plate also fixed the details of the coronation of Pulakeshi II in 610-611 AD.

The Battle of Harshvardhan and Pulakeshin II

- The battle was fought on the banks of the Narmada.
- Pulakeshin, ruling from the Chalukyan capital Badami, challenged Harsha's conquests.
- Unwilling to tolerate the existence of a powerful rival in the south, Harsha had marched from Kanauj with a huge force.
- Such was Pulakeshin's efficiency in guarding the passes of the Narmada that Harsha was compelled to accept the river as the demarcation and retire from the battlefield after losing most of his elephant force.

6.11. CHOLA SCULPTURE OF CHANDESVARAR

A sculpture of Chandesvarar, believed to belong to 10th century AD, has been found near Trichy, Tamil Nadu.



Description of the sculpture

- The headgear is arranged as 'jatabhara', a hairstyle worn particularly by Shiva, usually characterised by a large number of penitential plaits worn in a bunch on the side.
- The apparel at the hip is short and wavy and is kept in place by a well draped cloth around the waist called 'idaikkattu'
- The sculpture is found seated in 'suhasana' with one leg folded and kept on the seat, his other leg rests on a pedestal.

About Chandesvarar

- Chandesvarar is one of the 63 Nayanars of the Saivite sect and was the first among them to find a place in temples.
- He is housed in a separate shrine on the northern side of all the Saivite temples, facing the presiding deity.
- Rajaraja I built the most distinguished shrine of Chandesvarar at Thanjavur.

Nayanars

- The 7th to 9th centuries saw the emergence of new religious movements in south India, led by the Nayanars (saints devoted to Shiva) and Alvars (saints devoted to Vishnu) who came from all castes including "untouchables".
- They were critical of the Buddhists and Jainas and preached love of Shiva or Vishnu as the path to salvation.
- They drew upon the ideals of love and heroism as found in the Sangam literature and blended them with the values of bhakti.
- There were 63 Nayanars, belonging to different backgrounds such as potters, "untouchable" workers, peasants, hunters, soldiers, Brahmanas and chiefs.
- Best known were Appar, Sambandar, Sundarar and Manikkavasagar.
- There are two sets of compilations of their songs – Tevaram and Tiruvacakam.

6.12. HUMAYUN'S TOMB

- The gilded finial to 16th century Humayun's Tomb was restored after it was knocked in a storm few years ago.
- The finial was last dismantled and repaired by British in 1912, who also did a documentation of the object.

About the tomb

- The tomb was built by his widow, Begha Begum in Delhi.
- The building was constructed with red sandstone, edged with white marble.
- The grand mausoleum is a synthesis of Persian architecture and Indian traditions. It is also inspired by Syrian and earlier Islamic models.
- It served as an architectural inspiration for Mausoleum of Jahangir at Shahdara, Lahore, as well as the Taj Mahal, at Agra.
- The tomb stands in the centre of a square garden, divided into four parts by causeways ('charbagh'), in the centre of which ran shallow water-channels.
- The arched alcoves, corridors and a high double dome as well as the kiosks (chhatris) give it a pyramidal shape from a distance.

6.13. TRINUMALAI NAYAK PALACE

- King Trinumalai Nayak built this palace in 17th century over 20 acres depicting the grandeur of South India.
- This Palace is a classical fusion of Dravidian and Rajput styles.
- Built in 1636, it was known for its 248 pillars.
- Only a quarter of the original structure stands today.
- After independence, the Palace was declared to be a national monument.

6.14. STEP WELLS

Why in news?

- The Delhi government's calendar for 2017 celebrates the history of Baolis in Delhi.
- As per the ASI, there are 16 baolis in the Delhi and most of them are in a very poor state.



About

- Step wells are wells or ponds in which the water may be reached by descending a set of steps.
- All forms of step wells are examples of **many types of storage and irrigation tanks** that were developed to cope with seasonal fluctuations in water availability.
- Step wells are of **architectural significance**.
- They are most **common in western India** and are found in the other more **arid regions** of South Asia, extending into Pakistan.
- **A basic difference between step wells and tanks and wells** was to make it easier for people to reach the ground water, and to maintain and manage the wells better.

A brief History

- Step wells can be traced back in the sites of **Indus Valley Civilization** such as **Dholavira and Mohenjo-daro**.
- **Mohenjo-daro** has **cylindrical brick lined wells** which may be the predecessors of the step well.
- The **first rock-cut step wells** in India date from **200-400 AD**.
- The earliest example of **bath-like pond** reached by steps is found at **Uperkot caves in Junagadh**.
- The step wells at **Dhank in Rajkot district** are dated to **550-625 AD**.
- The stepped ponds at **Bhinmal (Rajasthan)** are dated to **850-950 AD**.

6.15. KEMPE GOWDA ERA MANTAPA

Why in News?

- Recently a historic relic, believed to be from **Kempe Gowda** era, called **Mantapa** was unearthed during de-silting work in Hosakerehalli Lake in Bengaluru.
- It is made up of **greyish-black granite**.

Mantapa

- It is a **four-pillared** structure holding together the roof and floor, which are essentially stone slabs.
- It is adorned by **floral carvings** while the rooftop with a depression appears like a cradle.
- It is locally known as **Gangamma Thottilu (the cradle of Ganga)**.

Who was Kempe Gowda?

- He was a chieftain under **vijaynagar empire** who ruled most part of Karnataka during 16th century.
- He is considered as the **founder** of Bengaluru city. As per a legend, he built Hosakerehalli lake in 16th century.

7. ANCIENT INDIA

7.1. WORLD'S OLDEST ROCK ART FOUND

Why in news?

- Pre-historic paintings (Petroglyphs) have been found in the rock shelters of Bhimbetka, a world heritage site in Madhya Pradesh and at Dharaki-Chattan(hillock) near Bhanpura in Madnasur district, MP. They date back to 2-5 lakh years old.

Auditorium Cave, Bhimbetka

- Ten cupules (cup-shape hollows) were found covered by remains dating from the Acheulian period.
- The petroglyphs were created on heavily recrystallized, very hard quartzite that was extensively mined during the Lower Palaeolithic.
- Cupules are non-functional cup-shaped depressions found on a rock surface which are created by a number of human blows.

Daraki-Chattan Rock Shelter

- Two vertical panels densely pitted with 498 cupules dating from a Lower Palaeolithic chopping tool culture were found at a second Stone Age site at Daraki-Chattan, a small, narrow and deep cave in the Indragarh Hill, near Tehsil Bhanpura, Madhya Pradesh.

What is Petroglyph?

In prehistoric art, the term "petroglyphs" (derived from the Greek word "petra" meaning stone, and "glyphein" meaning to carve) is used to describe any image created on a rock surface by scouring, scratching, engraving, chiseling, carving or any similar method.

Difference between Petroglyphs and Rock Art?

Whereas a petroglyph is a narrow type of stonework, the term "rock art" is a much wider term which embraces three types of art: (1) Petroglyphs; (2) Pictographs, including cave painting or any other form of pictorial symbol; and (3) Megalithic Art, or petroforms, involving the arrangement of stones.

7.2. BUDDHAVANAM PROJECT

- It is a Buddhist heritage theme park of the Telangana State Tourism Development Corporation (TSTDC) which was conceptualized in 2005.
- As per the history, it was a place where Acharya Nagarjuna established a university and was the main centre for the propagation of Buddhism in other countries.
- It is first of its kind project in the country having many thematic segments depicting the major events from the life of Buddha.

About Acharya Nagarjuna (Also known as Second Buddha/ Medicine buddha)

- He was a philosopher and founder of Madhyamaka (Middle Path) school of Mahayana Buddhism.
- He was the most influential Buddhist thinker after Buddha himself.
- He is considered to be one the ancient scholars and teachers of Ayurveda.

7.3. THREE INDIAN SITES GETS INTO WORLD HERITAGE LIST

Why in News?

- The World Heritage Committee, a UNESCO body notified three Indian sites as heritage sites at its 40th session.
- The sites include Chandigarh's magnificent Capitol Complex, Mt Khangchendzonga, and the archaeological site at Nalanda Mahavihara (Nalanda University) in Bihar.
- This is also the first time that India got a mixed site notified as heritage site. A mixed site is the one which exhibits qualities of both natural and cultural significance.
- It is also the first time that any country has got three sites named as World Heritage Sites in a single session.



Heritage Sites in India

Now, there are a total of 35 World Heritage Sites in India. Out of which, 27 are cultural, 7 natural and 1 mixed site.

7.3.1. KHANGCHENDZONGA NATIONAL PARK (KNP), SIKKIM (KANCHENJUNGA BIOSPHERE RESERVE)

- It is the first and only mixed site in India to be notified as World Heritage Site.
- The park covers **25 percent of Sikkim** and exhibits one of the wildest altitudinal ranges of any protected area in the world.
- It boasts of a unique topography of snow clad mountains and steep valleys. In fact, it is home to the **world's third highest peak, Mt. Khangchendzonga**.
- It is inhabited by endemic, rare and threatened plant and animal species. It is home to **musk deer, snow leopard and Himalayan tahr**.
- It has been notified as a mixed site due to its ecological significance along with the religious and cultural practices of **Buddhism**.
- There are many glaciers including the **Zemu glacier**.
- The park also has few **Lepcha tribal settlements**. Lepcha is an indigenous tribal community of Sikkim. They number between 30,000 and 50,000.

What is a World Heritage Site?

- A World Heritage Site is place (such as a building, city, complex, desert, forest, island, lake, monument, or mountain) as notified by UNESCO for having cultural or physical significance.
- Convention Concerning the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage was adopted by UNESCO in **1972**.
- The list of World Heritage Sites is maintained by UNESCO World Heritage Committee which comprises of **21 member states** elected by the General Assembly.

7.3.2. CHANDIGARH'S CAPITOL COMPLEX

- The Capitol Complex includes three buildings, three monuments and lake.
- It was designed by **French architect Le Corbusier in the 1950s**.
- This complex is part of **17 works of Le Corbusier spread across 7 countries including France and India** that have been included together in the list under a single entry.
- The Capitol Complex comprises of the **Legislative Assembly, Secretariat, High Court, Open Hand Monument, Geometric Hill and Tower of Shadows**.
- He was Swiss-French architect and urban planner, and is known as one of the pioneers of modern architecture.
- He is known for “five points for modern Architecture” and was called a functionalist and rationalist.

7.3.3. NALANDA MAHAVIHARA (NALANDA UNIVERSITY), BIHAR

- It is the most **ancient university of the Indian subcontinent**.
- It engaged in organized transmission of knowledge over an uninterrupted period of 800 years.
- It comprises the archaeological remains of a monastic and scholastic institution dating from around 3rd century BC to 13th century BC.
- It includes **stupas, shrines, viharas and important art works in stucco, stone and metal**.
- The historical development of the site testifies to the development of Buddhism into a religion and flourishing of monastic traditions.

7.4. HARIKATHA

- The main aim of Harikatha is to imbibe righteousness and truth in the minds of the people.
- It has its roots in the kirtan tradition of Maharashtra.
- It includes music, storytelling, dance, drama and philosophy.
- Its main feature is narration of ‘upakathas’ (side-stories) in a lighter vein.
- It is not a secular art and is essentially religious and didactic.

7.5. CHINESE SCHOLAR XUAN ZANG

- Chinese scholar Xuan Zang (also spelled Hsuan Tsang or Hiuen Tsang) travelled to Andhradesa to visit the Viharas at Amaravathi and Nagarjunakonda around 640 C.E.

- It is popularly believed that he stayed in Bezwada (present day Vijaywada) to copy and study the Abhidhammapitakam, the last of the three pitakas (Pali for baskets) constituting the Pali canon, the scriptures of Theravada Buddhism.
- Xuan Zang talked about two Buddhist monasteries in the region, “eastern and western”.
- According to another Archaeologist, the monasteries mentioned by Xuan Zang are actually the Moghalrajpuram caves and the Akkanna Madanna caves located in Vijaywada.

7.6. INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION (IVC) AGE

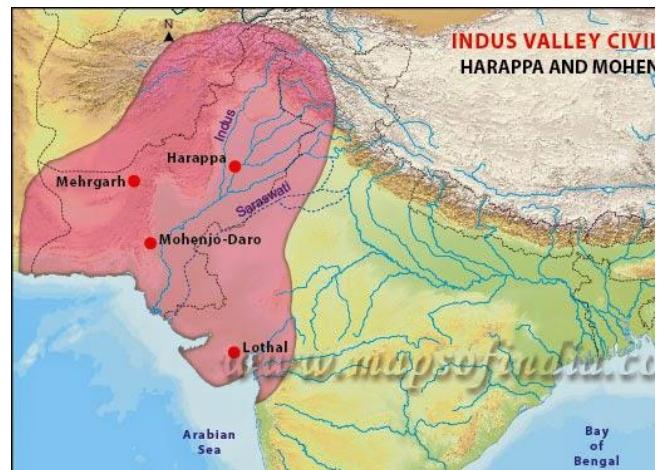
- Indian researchers have used carbon dating techniques on animal remains and pottery fragments to conclude that the Indus Valley settlements could be 8,000 years old—2,500 years older than previously believed.
- This could make the Indus Valley settlements even older than the Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations.

Highlights of the Study

- The study was conducted in Bhirrana in Haryana
- The site shows preservation of all cultural levels, from the pre-Harappan Hakra phase through the Early Mature Harappan to the Mature Harappan time.
- Researchers used a technique known as **Optically Stimulated Luminescence**.
- According to the researchers, the civilisation was spread over a much larger part of India than previously believed.

Cause of decline for IVC

- Researchers also proposed a new theory for the decline of the civilization.
- The study argues that although climate change played a role, it was changes in cropping patterns and storage of grains which led to the civilization's decline.
- Large-grained cereals like wheat and barley were cultivated during the early part of intensified monsoon
- People shifted to drought-resistant species of small millets and rice in the later part of declining monsoon.
- Because these later crops generally have much lower yield, the organised large storage system of mature Harappan period was abandoned.
- It gave rise to smaller more individual household based crop processing and storage system
- It could have acted as catalyst for the de-urbanisation of the Harappan civilisation rather than an abrupt collapse.



Optically-Stimulated Luminescence is a dating technique used to date the last time quartz or feldspar sediment was exposed to light. It measures doses from ionizing radiation.

7.7. SULBASUTRAS

- Several Sanskrit texts collectively called Sulbasutras were written by the Vedic Hindus starting before 600 BC. They are written in late Vedic Sanskrit.
- There are four major Sulbasutras namely, Baudhayana, Manava, Apastamba and Katyayana with Baudhayana being the oldest.
- In Sulbasutras, sulba, means a rope or a string. The measurements for geometrical constructions are performed drawing arcs with different radii and centres using a ‘sulba’.
- They are vedic appendices to the Kalpasutra family and contain geometry related to fire altar construction.
- For the rituals to be successful the altar had to conform to very precise measurements, so mathematical accuracy was seen to be crucial.
- Unique fire altar shapes were associated with unique gifts from the God. For example those desiring the heaven were to construct a fire altar in the shape of a ‘falcon’.

- It is difficult for historians to estimate whether the mathematical information in Sulbasutras was for its own sake like the Greeks did, or was it only for the sake of religious rites.
- Some of the rules like constructing a square with an area equal to a rectangle are exact but rules for constructing a square with an area equal to a given circle are approximations.
- A. Seidenberg in his work “The Origin of Mathematics” has pointed out that while ancient Babylonians possessed knowledge of Pythagoras theorem, it was very basic, it is explicitly stated only in the Sulbasutras later.

7.8. PREHISTORIC ROCK ART SITE DISCOVERED

Why in News?

- Archaeologists have spotted a prehistoric rock art site at the foothills of **Ambukuthi hills** in a village located in **Sulthan Bathery taluk of Kerala's Wayanad district**.

More on the Site

- The site is characterised by petroglyphs and petrographs similar to those found in Edakkal caves and Thovari hillocks.
- Petroglyphs and petrographs are usually found in rock shelters but in Ambukuthi, they are found on six small granite blocks independently located on a lakeside.
- Their style, motif and workmanship are strikingly similar to Thovari. They do not have humans or animals in motion which are present at Edakkal Caves.

Edakkal Caves

- The Edakkal Caves were discovered by Fred Fawcett, an erstwhile police official of the Malabar State in 1895.
- They are present in Sulthan Bathery taluk of Wayanad district in Kerala.
- These caves are formed naturally out of a strange disposition of three huge boulders.
- Edakkal Caves are known for **Neolithic petroglyphs**.

Thovari Hillocks

- The petroglyphs at Thovari Hillocks were discovered in 1984.

7.9. RARE STONE INSCRIPTION ON KAPALIKAS

- Nearly thousand year old inscription on Kapalikas has been discovered in Raichur, Karnataka.
- The inscription is undated but based on the nature of the script its date is presumed.
- The Kapalika tradition is a **non-Puranic Tantric Shaivism** in India.
- Kapalikas are worshippers of **Bhairava** who is a manifestation of Shiva. They were a mysterious cult who may have practiced human sacrifice.
- They are called ‘kapalika’ or ‘skull men’ because they carried a skull topped staff.
- The inscription also refers to a ‘Kankala Gorava’ who had mastered ‘Soma Siddantha’ or Kapalika Siddantha.

7.10. ANTIQUITIES RETURNED

- Recently, United States initiated the process of returning over 200 stolen artifacts back to India.
- The pieces being returned are only a part of around 3000 artifacts recovered by the US authorities, and will eventually be returned to India.

Background

- A 1970 **UNESCO Convention on Ownership of Cultural Property** prohibits illicit transfer and trading of ownership of cultural properties including antiquities.
- The process of retrieval of a stolen object that surfaces in a foreign country takes place through India’s mission in that country.
- The **CBI’s Economic Offences Wing** deals with heritage crimes. In Tamil Nadu with huge collection of artefacts there is an Idol Wing-CID.

Stolen Artifacts

- In 2013, a sculpture of **Vrishanana Yogini**, weighing 400 kg and dating to the 10th century, was brought back from Paris.

- In 2014, Australia returned a **Nataraja** and an **Ardhanariswara**.
- In 2015, three idols, **Parrot Lady** from Canada, **Mahisamardini** from Germany and **Uma Parameshwari** from **Singapore** returned to India.
- Earlier this year, a 10th century buff sandstone slab of the **Tirthankara Rishabhanatha** and a very rare sandstone panel depicting the equestrian deity Revanta and his entourage dated 8th century AD, worth millions of dollars was discovered in the US.

7.11. MOGAO CAVES

- The Mogao caves, hundreds in number in south-east of the Dunhuang oasis, Gansu Province of China are carved into the cliffs above the Dachuan River in the middle of the dry Gobi desert.
- Endowed with wall paintings, painted sculptures, ancient architecture, movable cultural relics and their settings, they describe the epic story of the journey of Buddhism as they were excavated for meditation and as retreats for monks.
- Buddhist cave art, which originated in India in the 3rd century C.E., travelled to Dunhuang, which was a major point of intersection along the Silk Road, and Bamiyan, Kucha-Kizil, Turfan.
- These works provide an abundance of vivid materials depicting various aspects of medieval politics, economics, culture, arts, religion, ethnic relations, and daily dress in western China.
- They have an amalgamation of Han Chinese artistic tradition with ancient Indian and Gandharan customs and the arts of the Turks, ancient Tibetans and other Chinese ethnic minorities.
- The Mogao Caves were inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1987. As a State Party, China has put all World Heritage sites under top-level protection.

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8. EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

8.1. TEPPOTSAVAM

- It is a 5-day annual float festival held in Telangana celebrated in month of Chaitra.
- In this festival, a Hamsavahanam' (swan-shaped boat), carried the processional idols of Lord Rama and His consort Sita in Godavari river.

8.2. AMBUBACHI FESTIVAL

- It is one of the most important festival of Kamakhya temple, Guwhati, Assam
- It is celebrated every year during monsoon season and ambubachi mela is also held.
- The Kamakhya Temple is known to be one of the 52 shakti peethas of goddess Shakti.
- It is associated with tantric cult and this festival is also known as "mahakumbh of east".

8.3. MADHWA NAVAMI FESTIVAL

Why in news?

- This annual festival is celebrated to commemorate the journey of great Indian philosopher Sri Madhwacharyato Badrinath where he went to meet his Guru Veda Vyasa but never returned.

Sri Madhwacharya

- He was an Indian philosopher and chief exponent of **Dvaita (Dualism) philosophy**.
- He was born in 1238 AD in Udupi district of Karnataka and also known as Anandatirtha or Purnaprajna.
- His followers known as Madhvatas consider him as incarnation of wind God VAYU.
- He differed significantly from traditional Hindu belief of Universal Salvation which states that all souls will eventually obtain Moksha, even though it may be after millions of rebirths.
- He divided the souls into 3 categories of Mukti Yogyas (souls qualify for liberation), Nitya Samsarins (souls subjected to eternal rebirth) and Tamo Yogyas (souls that will eventually condemned to hell).
- He also outlawed Devadasi system in all place of worship under his follower's control.

Dvaita Philosophy (Dualism)

- It is an outshoot of the Vedanta Philosophy of ancient India.
- It proclaims that God and Souls are different entities and that souls are not created by God but depend on Him for their existence.
- This is opposite to Advaita Philosophy of Shankaracharya which believes in Monism (Non-dualism).

8.4. NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE 2016

Why in News?

- The Nobel Prize in Literature 2016 has been awarded to Bob Dylan for ""for having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition".
- He is the first songwriter to win this award.

More About Bob Dylan's Work

- Born as Robert Allen Zimmerman in 1941 in Duluth, Minnesota, Dylan taught himself to play the harmonica, guitar and piano
- Armed with harmonica and acoustic guitar, Dylan confronted social injustice, war and racism, quickly becoming a prominent civil rights campaigner.

Nobel Peace Prize 2016

- The Nobel Peace Prize 2016 has been awarded to Columbian President Juan Manuel Santos.
- The Nobel academy chose the Columbian president for his efforts to end 52 years of civil war in Columbia.

8.5. RASHTRIYA SANSKRITI MAHOTSAV

Why in News?

- Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav 2016 has been established by the Ministry of Culture in Delhi.
- The Seven Zonal Culture Centres under the Ministry have been given the task of organizing the Mahotsav in Delhi as well as taking it to different cities.

What is it?

- The Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav was conceived by the Ministry of Culture in 2015 with the intent to showcase the rich cultural heritage in all its rich and varied dimensions.
- The Mahotsav showcases Handicrafts, Cuisine, Painting, Sculpture, Photography, Documentation and Performing Arts-Folk, Tribal Classical and Contemporary- all in one place.
- The Mahotsav will go to different cities under the banner of the slogan- “Ek Bhaarat, Shreshth Bhaarat”.
- Demonstration of the process of creation of the wares based on the crafts will be done by master craftsmen.
- Photo exhibitions are to be held to draw public attention to the irreparable damage done to national heritage. Exhibition will be part of “Swacch Bharat Abhiyan”

8.6. NATIONAL TRIBAL CARNIVAL

- The first National Tribal Carnival was held in October 2016.
- The four day long carnival was organised by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs to promote a sense of inclusiveness among the tribals.

8.7. JALLIKATTU

- It is a bull-vaulting event practised in Tamil Nadu as a part of Pongal celebrations on Mattu Pongal day.
- Participants tackle the bull in an arena by its hump and try to hang on till they cross the finishing line.
- It is popular in the districts of Madurai, Tiruchirappalli, Theni, Pudukkottai and Dindigul — a region also known as the Jallikattu belt.
- It is an ancient sport. Sangam literature (2nd BCE – 2nd CE), has many detailed references to Eru Thazhuvuthal (hugging the bull).

8.8. ONAM FESTIVAL

- The festival falls during the Malayalam month of Chingam (August-September). It is reminiscent of Kerala's agrarian past and is considered to be a harvest festival. It is also the state festival of Kerala.
- The festival marks the commemoration of Vamana avatara of Lord Vishnu and the subsequent homecoming of the mythical King Bali and his prosperous rule.
- Poojas are performed at temples across the state including at the hill shrine of Sabari Mala, Guruvayur and Thrikkakara, believed to be the capital of King Bali.
- Traditional feast known as Onam Sadya is served on banana leaves with sweet called payasam.
- Vallam Kali, a traditional boat race in Kerala, is a form of canoe racing and is mainly conducted during Onam.

8.9. WANGALA FESTIVAL MEGHALAYA

- It is a post-harvest festival of Garos, held in November, marking the end of the agricultural year.
- It is also known as **Hundred Drums Festival**.
- A nagara (a special drum) is beaten to start celebrations.
- Men and women dance with drums, buffalo horn trumpets and bamboo flutes.
- The men wear dhotis, half-jackets and turbans with feathers. The women wear colourful dresses made of silk, blouses and a head-wrap with feathers.

8.10. NEW YEAR FESTIVALS

- **Ugadi** is celebrated as New Year's Day in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The name Ugadi is derived from the name "Yuga Adi", which means 'the beginning of a new age'. It is celebrated on the first day of the Hindu month Chaitra, which marks the onset of spring.
- **Gudi Padwa** is celebrated as New Year's Day in Maharashtra. It is celebrated on the same day as Ugadi i.e., the first day of the month Chaitra. Lord Brahma is worshipped on this day and the gudi, Brahma's flag (also called Brahmadvaj), is hoisted in every house as a symbolic representation of Rama's victory over Ravana.
- **Vishu** is celebrated as New Year's Day in Kerala. It is celebrated on the first day of the Malayalam month of Medam (mid-April on the Gregorian calendar).
- **Novruz** is the first day of Farvardin, the first month of the Iranian solar calendar. In the Fasli/Bastani variant of the Zoroastrian calendar, Navroz is always the day of the vernal equinox (nominally falling on March 21).

8.11. LOSAR FESTIVAL LADAKH

- The Losar festival marks the beginning of the New Year in Ladakh/Tibet and is considered to be the most important festival of the region.
- It falls in December and Ladakhi Buddhists make religious offering before their deities in the domestic shrines or in the Gompas.
- A medley of cultural events, ancient rituals and also traditional performances are performed during this festival.
- There is blaring music accompanied with dancing, and celebration dinner with relatives.

8.12. SAJIBU CHEIRAOBA FESTIVAL MANIPUR

- It is the New Year of the Manipuris and is celebrated on the first day of the Manipuri month, Sajibu, which falls in the month of March or April.
- The people of Manipur clean and decorate their homes and other premises to start celebrations.
- The occasion is marked by praying to Meitei Gods by offering flowers, fruits and dishes, traditional family feasting after which they climb nearby hillocks in the afternoon.
- Married women give gifts to their parents and brothers on the occasion.

8.13. CHAPCHAR KUT OF THE MIZOS

- Chapchar Kut literally means - a festival held during the period when the bamboos and trees that have been cut down are being awaited to dry to be burnt for jhumming.
- It marked the end of the Jhum clearing, readying the field for sowing and the festive spirit lasts from three to seven days in March.
- The Chapchar Kut festival evolved sometime between 1450 -1600 A.D.
- The traditional costume parades, showcasing dances like cheraw, chai, chheihlam, sarlamkai and musical performances by groups, among others, are part of the celebrations.

8.14. NABAKALEBAR FESTIVAL

- This festival is symbolic recreation of wooden forms of the four deities at **Jagannath Temple, Puri**.
- Nabakalebar is an occasional festival observed in the Shri Jagannath Temple at Puri. Naba means new and the Kalebar is body.
- In Jagannath cult this is a periodical renewal of the wooden forms of Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshana.
- The soul or the Brahma is transferred from the old idols to their new bodies in a highly technical prescribed and secret method.
- The Nabakalebar festival is observed in a gap of 12 to 19 years.
- During this festival the annual Rathayatra becomes the Nabakalebar Ratha Yatra.

8.15. RAMMAN

- Festival of Ramman based on the story of ‘Ramayana’ in Uttarakhand having Narshingh Devta ‘God’ at the front of the tableau.
- The festival has been declared World Heritage in 2009 by UNESCO.
- Artists play the folk musical instrument of Uttarakhand “Bhankor” at the middle part of tableau and temple of Bhumyal God and The Himalaya at the back part are presented.
- Dance is performed wearing the mask at Temple complex of Bhumyal God in night. There are masks of various epical, historical and imaginative characters. The masks are of two types. “Dhyo Pattar” and “Khyalari Pattar”.

8.16. OTHER FESTIVALS IN NEWS

- **Saga Dawa** is celebration of Buddha Jayanti in Sikkim, which is popularly called Saga Dawa.
- **Nuakhai** is a festival that marked offering of first harvest of rice to deity, in Odisha. It is celebrated a day after Ganesh Chaturthi.
- **Sammakka Sarakka Jathara** or Medaram Jathara is the largest tribal religious congregation in the country. The biannual Jathara festival of honouring the goddesses is celebrated in the state of Telengana.

8.17. HORNBILL FESTIVAL

- The Hornbill festival is organized by the State Tourism and Art & Culture Departments of **Nagaland**.
- It is known to be a collaborative celebration of all Naga tribes at one place.
- The festival is a tribute to the “Hornbill” which is the most admired and revered bird of Nagaland.
- The festival also coincides with the Statehood Day of Nagaland.

8.18. ODISHA-DOLA JATRA

- Dola Yatra or Dola Melana or Dola Festival is a festival of get together of Lord Krishna’s idols.
- It is believed that all year devotees visit the deities but in the month of Falguna, the deities visit the devotees.
- The festival is celebrated from 10th day of bright fortnight up to full moon day of Falguna.
- Deities from different villages and different Sahi Bhagabat Ghara come to the Melana Padia (field) by Dola, a specially designed temple like structure made of wood.
- The get together is celebrated in different villages/cities across Odisha. Odissi and gotipua dancers also perform in front of the Bimana/Dola.

8.19. BHAKTI MOVEMENT

- Bhakti movement refers to the religious movement during the medieval period which emphasized single-minded devotion to god.
- It originated in South India between 7th and 12th century. It then moved northwards.
- It achieved a great deal of popularity through the poems of the Alvars and Nayanars, the Vaishnavite and Shaivite poets.
- Bhakti movement preached unity of God or one God through different names.
- It condemned rituals, ceremonies and blind faith.
- It preached open-mindedness about deciding religious matters.
- It challenged the caste distinction.
- Kabir, Guru Nanak, Mirabai, Surdas and Tulsi Das, Chaitanya are great exponents of Bhakti movement.

9. GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

9.1. NATIONAL MISSION ON MONUMENTS AND ANTIQUITIES

Why in News?

- Poor implementation of National Mission on Monuments and Antiques is being said to be one of the reasons of idol theft seen in recent times.

Background

- The Antiquities and Art Treasures Act of 1972, mandates compulsory registration of antiquities.
- Ministry of Culture launched the National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities (2007) (NMMA) to document antiques in India (public or private).
- It was initially approved for 5 years from 2017-2012 (XI plan). It was also proposed to be extended in the XII plan as a Central scheme.
- Performance audit by CAG on **Preservation and Conservation of Monuments and Antiquities in 2013** observed India's poor acquisition, documentation and conservation systems.

Provisions of the Mission

- It offers advice on heritage matters, **framing guidelines on conservation of heritage monuments and sites and suggesting appropriate amendments to the heritage laws.**
- It **documents and creates a suitable database on built heritage and sites** to disseminate information to planners, researchers, governments etc. and to help in their better management.
- It also promotes awareness and sensitizes people on preservation of the cultural aspects of built heritage, sites and antiquities.
- It also trains and builds capacity of the concerned State Departments, Local bodies, NGOs, Universities, Museums, Local communities etc. in management of heritage.
- It is also involved in Publication and Research in relation to monuments and antiques.
- It will also draw up a national thematic atlas of built heritage, sites and antiquities.
- Documentation will be done both by Archeological Survey of India and also by outsourced agencies.

Other missions under Culture Ministry

- National Mission on Manuscripts** – It was started in 2003. It aims to identify, document, conserve and make manuscript heritage of India accessible.
- National Mission on Libraries** –
 - ✓ It aims to create a National Virtual Library of India.
 - ✓ It also aims to set model libraries and build capacity of library professionals.
 - ✓ Raja Ram Mohan Roy Library Foundation is its nodal agency.

Criterion for inclusion of monuments in centrally protected list

- As per AMASR Act, any sculpture, erection, monument, cave, inscription, monolith etc. which is of historical, archaeological and artistic interest and is in existence from at least 100 years is considered of national importance.
- The proposals are received from ASI which is evaluated and submitted to central government for approval.

National Monuments Authority (NMA)

- As per the provisions of AMASR (The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains) Act, Ministry of culture has set up NMA for the protection and preservation of monuments and sites.
- It prohibits activities and regulates area around centrally protected monuments such as its permission is required for construction related activity in the prohibited and regulated area.
- It makes necessary scrutiny of the Heritage bye laws and accord approval after public suggestions.
- It is also involved in grading and classification of monuments.

9.2. SAFEGUARDING THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

- The Ministry of Culture has formulated a Scheme titled "**Scheme for Safeguarding the Intangible Heritage and Diverse Cultural Traditions of India**".

- The objective is of reinvigorating and revitalizing various institutions, groups, individuals, so that they may engage in activities/ projects for strengthening, protecting, preserving and promoting the rich intangible cultural heritage of India.
- The Scheme will cover all recognized domains of ICH such as oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage, Performing arts, Social practices, rituals and festive events, Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, traditional craftsmanship etc.

9.3. GANDHI HERITAGE SITES MISSION

- This mission was started in 2013 with fixed term of 5 years.
- It aims at conserving and preserving sites of tangible, literary and visual heritage associated with Gandhi.
- The states are involved through the Zonal Cultural Centers (North, South, East, West and Central Zone) under the Ministry of Culture.

9.4. SWACHH BHARAT-SWACHH SMARAK

- Under this project, all ASI Protected Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites have been declared Polythene Free Zones upto 300 metres from monuments.
- 75 More Adarsh Monuments was included in ‘Swachh Paryatan Mobile App’, launched by ministry of tourism, taking it to 100.
- “Rani ki Vav (Gujarat)” a World Heritage Site has been declared as the cleanest iconic place in the country based on cleanliness parameters like toilet facility, polythene usage etc.

9.5. CENTRAL ADVISORY BOARD ON CULTURE

- Central Advisory Board on Culture (CABC) has been reconstituted recently.
- It aims at providing a platform for participative discussion of ideas and interests from different domains of culture.
- The tenure of its members is 3 years.
- It will advise culture ministry over new plans and existing missions across the country.

9.6. ARTISTS PENSION SCHEME AND WELFARE FUND

- Any person who has contributed significantly to field of art and letter, above 60 years of age and with monthly income of less than 4000 are eligible for this scheme.
- It covers existing beneficiaries of 1961 scheme as well as new eligible artists and writers.
- In case of death of recipient, the spouse will be entitled for benefits for life and dependent would be eligible till marriage/employment/before 21 years of age.

9.7. SAHITYA ACADEMY

- India's National Academy of Letters, is the central institution for literary dialogue, publication and promotion in the country and the only institution that undertakes literary activities in 24 Indian languages, including English.
- Though set up by the Government resolution of 1954, the Akademi functions as an autonomous organisation.
- Sahitya Academy presents Sahitya Academy Award for literature.

9.8. UNESCO'S CREATIVE CITY NETWORK

- Launched in 2004 and now comprising 116 Member Cities, the UNESCO Creative Cities Network aims to foster international cooperation with and between cities committed to investing in creativity as a driver for sustainable urban development, social inclusion and cultural vibrancy.
- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by it in 2015 highlights culture and creativity as key levers for sustainable urban development.

- The UNESCO Creative Cities Network includes cities within its seven creative fields (Crafts and Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Literature, Media Arts and Music)
- Jaipur and Varanasi were recently added to the Creative Cities Network as cities of Crafts & Folk Art and Music respectively.

9.9. BHARATVANI PORTAL LAUNCHED

What is it?

- A multilingual knowledge portal.
- It is a project of the Ministry of HRD and was launched at Lucknow
- It will be implemented by Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL) Mysuru.

Salient features

- It will focus on becoming single point source for multiple language learning, content and technology.
- It will be an inclusive, interactive and dynamic platform.
- It is proposed to develop it as the largest language portal in the world by aggregating multimedia content from all Indian writers, govt. and non-governmental institutions
- It will also include a mobile app based multi-lingual dictionary.
- The portal has been launched in 22 scheduled languages, and will be later extended to 100 more languages

9.10. JNANPITH AWARD

President conferred the 2015 Jnanpith Award (51st Jnanpith Award) on Gujarati litterateur Raghuveer Chaudhary.

Background of Bhartiya Jnanpith

- The Bhartiya Jnanpith organisation was founded in 1944 by Sahu Shanti Prasad Jain of Sahu Jain family.
- It was founded in order to undertake systematic research and publication of Sanskrit, Prakrit, Pali and Apabhramsha texts.
- It aimed to cover subjects like religion, philosophy, logic, ethics, grammar, astrology and poetics.
- The Jnanpith Award recognises litterateurs who write in any one of the 22 Indian languages listed in the Schedule Eight of the Indian Constitution.
- The nomination and award is decided by the Bhartiya Jnanpith foundation.

9.11. MAGSAYSAY AWARD FOR WILSON, T. M. KRISHNA

Bezada Wilson

- A renowned campaigner against manual scavenging, he is a national convenor of the Safai Karmachari Andolan.
- A Dalit activist born in Karnataka, has been felicitated for his work towards asserting the right for human dignity.
- As per reports, due to his efforts the number of total manual scavengers in the country has come down to 2 lakhs in 2013 from 15 lakhs.
- He was awarded for “asserting the inalienable right to a life of human dignity”.

T. M KRISHNA

- He is a carnatic music vocalist from Chennai.
- He was awarded under the category of “Eminent Leadership” for bringing “social inclusiveness in culture”.

About Magsaysay Award

- The Ramon Magsaysay Award is an annual award established to perpetuate former Philippine President Ramon Magsaysay's example of integrity in governance, courageous service to the people, and pragmatic idealism within a democratic society.
- The prize was established in April 1957 by the trustees of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund based in New York City with the concurrence of the Philippine government.

10. TOURISM AND PLACES

10.1. FIRST NATIONAL TOURIST CIRCUIT

The Ministry of Tourism is set to announce the **Buddhist Circuit** as India's first trans-national tourist circuit.

Background

- The development of Buddhist circuit is part of the **Swadesh Darshan Scheme, announced in 2014** whereby integrated theme based tourist circuits will be developed.
- The themes can include features that are unique and specific to the area and can range from religion, culture, heritage etc.
- The scheme includes the North-East Circuit, Buddhist Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, the Coastal Circuit and the Krishna Circuit.
- In a separate announcement the government also announced another fifty circuits across the country for the development of tourism in the country.

Buddhist Circuit

- The map of the Buddhist circuit as envisaged by the Ministry includes Bodh Gaya, Vaishali, Rajgir in Bihar, Kushinagar, Sarnath and Shravasti in UP, along with Kapilavastu and Lumbini in Nepal.

Bodh Gaya

- Located in Gaya district, Bihar, this is one of the four most important pilgrimage sites for Buddhists. It is the place where Buddha is believed to have attained enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree.
- The Mahabodhi Temple Complex became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2002.



Vaishali

- It is a district in Bihar named after the ancient city of Vaishali of Mithila mentioned in the Mahabharat. It is important to both Buddhists and Jains.
- It was the capital of Lichchavi dynasty considered one of the first example of a republic in Vrijji Mahajanapada.
- Buddha preached his last sermon here before his death in 483 BC. In 383 BC the Second Buddhist Council was convened here.
- It also contains one of the best preserved Ashokan pillars topped by a single Asiatic lion.

Rajgir

- Located in the Nalanda district of Bihar, it was the first capital of Magadhan kingdom. This too is of importance to both Buddhists and Jains.
- Buddha is believed to have delivered several of his sermons here during his twelve year stay here. Also Buddha is believed to have set in motion his second wheel of law here.
- The first Buddhist Council was also held here.

Kushinagar

- Kushinagar is in Uttar Pradesh. This is where it is believed that Buddha attained Parinirvana. It is an International Buddhist pilgrimage centre.

Sarnath

- The city of Sarnath is located in UP on the confluence of the rivers Ganges and Gomati.
- It is in Sarnath that Buddha first taught the Dharma after attaining enlightenment.

Shravasti

- Shravasti is located near west Rapti river in UP. The ancient city of Shravasti was the capital of the Kosala.
- It is believed that Buddha spent fourteen Chaturmases (a holy period of four months) here.
- The many old stupas, viharas and temples in the city establish its association with Buddha.

Kapilavastu

- Kapilavastu is located in southern Nepal. In ancient times Kapivastu was the capital of the Shakya kingdom where Siddhartha was believed to have stayed with his parents till he left the palace at the age of 29.

Lumbini

- Lumbini is a Buddhist pilgrimage site in the Rupendehi district of Nepal. It is believed by Buddhists to be the place where Queen Maya gave birth to Gautama Siddhartha in 563 BC.
- It became a UNESCO world heritage site in 1997.

10.2. INDIAN MUSEUMS IN BEST 25 IN ASIA

Why in News?

- Five Indian museums have featured in the top 25 museums in Asia according to a survey conducted by Trip Advisor.
- They are: Leh's "Hall of Fame", Bagore ki Haveli (Udaipur), Victoria Memorial (Kolkata), Salar Jung Museum (Hyderabad) and Jaisalmer War Museum.

Leh's Hall of Fame

- The Hall of Fame located near the Leh Air Field is a museum built in the memory of soldiers who lost their lives during the Indo-Pak wars.
- It has been constructed and maintained by the Indian Army.
- It enlists information about the soldiers and also houses artefacts (weapons) from various wars.

Bagore ki Haveli

- It is an ancient structure (haveli) in Udaipur, Rajasthan that has been converted into a museum.
- It was built by Amir Chand Badwa, the Prime Minister of Mewar in 18th century.
- The museum portrays the culture of Mewar. It has glass and mirror interior work. There are also displays of costumes and modern art.
- The museum also has premium mural paintings of Rajasthan designed in Mewar.
- Unique symbols of the Rajput clan such as jewellery boxes, dice-games, hukkas, pan boxes, nut crackers, hand fans, rose sprinklers are also on display.

Salar Jung Museum

- Located in Hyderabad, it is one of the three national museums of the country.
- The museum's collections are sourced from the property of the Salar Jung Family.
- It has a collection of sculptures, paintings, carvings, textiles, manuscripts, etc. from Japan, China, Burma, India, Persia, Egypt, Europe and North America.
- Some of the important Indian historical collections are: paintings of Raja Ravi Verma, Aurangzeb's sword and a wardrobe of Tipu Sultan.

Victoria Memorial Hall

- Victoria Memorial Hall is a large marble building built between 1906 and 1921 in the memory of Queen Victoria. It houses a museum today.
- The building was designed by William Emerson, President of the Royal Institute of British Architects.
- Although not the same, the architecture has an uncanny resemblance to the Taj Mahal.
- The museum has 25 galleries in all which includes the Royal Gallery, the National Leaders Gallery, Portrait Gallery, Sculpture Gallery and Calcutta Gallery.
- The museum has the largest single collection of the works of Thomas Daniell and nephew William Daniell.
- It also houses a collection of rare and antiquarian books.

Jaisalmer War Museum

- This museum is built and maintained by The Indian Army.
- It has been built in order to commemorate the sacrifices of the war heroes of 1965 Indo-Pak war and the Battle of Laungewala (during the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971).
- The museum also showcases the glorious history of the Indian Army.
- It also displays war exhibits which include vehicles and equipments captured during 1965 and 1971.

10.3. BET DWARKA DARSHAN CIRCUIT

Why in News?

- **Ministry of Urban Development** has approved the development of 6 km long Bet Dwarka Darshan Circuit in Gujarat under the central scheme **HRIDAY**.

Bet Dwarka Darshan Circuit

- The Circuit would connect famous Dwarkadish Haveli and Hanuman Dandi.
- There are two important water bodies along the stretch: Ranchod Talav and Shankhudhar Lake.
- Developmental works to be taken up under the project include: development of streets, plantation, provision of benches, resting spaces and so on.

National Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY)

- It is a central scheme launched by Ministry of Urban Development in 2015 with the focus on holistic development of heritage cities.
- The scheme has been implemented in 12 identified cities viz. Ajmer, Amravati, Amritsar, Badami, Dwarka, Gaya, Kanchipuram, Mathura, Puri, Varanasi, Velankanni and Warangal.
- The initiatives under the scheme are development of water supply, sanitation, drainage, waste management, approach roads, footpaths, street lights etc.

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11. PERSONALITIES AND PEOPLE

11.1. KANAKA MURTHY

- Kanaka Murthy is a kannada sculptor who won the highest sculpture award in Karnataka.
- Kanaka Murthy is the only woman sculptor in the country whose sculptures are worshipped in temples.
- Her work includes authentic reproduction of Chola, Hoysala and Chalukya styles.
- Her sculptures are installed are many prestigious places such as Wright brothers features at the Visvesvaraya Industrial Museum.

11.2. CHAITANYA'S MAHAPRABHU

Ministry of Culture has issued commemorative and circulation coins of Rs 500 and Rs 10 respectively to mark the 500th anniversary of **Sri Chaitanya's Mahaprabhu's** coming to Vrindavan.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

- A famous Hindi Saint and social reformer was a distinguished promoter for the Vaishnava School of Bhakti Yoga.
- He is credited with eradicating the evils of caste and feudal system of medieval India.
- He propagated the worship of Lord Krishna and popularized the chanting of "Hare Krishna Mantra".
- He came to Vrindavan with the objective of locating the lost holy places associated with Lord Krishna's transcendent pastimes.

11.3. NATIONAL YOUTH DAY

Why in news?

- It is celebrated every year on 12th January to commemorate the birth of Swami Vivekananda.
- Swami Vivekanada's birthday was first declared by the Government of India as National Youth Day in 1984.
- The theme was this year's celebration was "**Youth for Digital India**".

About Swami Vivekananda

- Born in Calcutta as Narendranath Dutta, Swami Vivekananda was the chief disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahansa.
- He contributed immensely to the concept of nationalism in colonial India and helped in agitating the youth of the country through his writings and speeches.
- His concept of nationalism is based on Humanism and Universalism. He is credited with raising interfaith awareness and taught people to get rid of self-inflicted bondages and resultant miseries.
- He condemned the Hindu caste system and propagated unity based on spiritual ideas.
- He introduced Indian philosophies of Vedanta and Yoga to the western world.
- Brought Hinduism to the World Stage through his address at the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in 1893.
- In 1897, he founded the Ramakrishna Mission (headquartered in Belur Math in Howrah, West Bengal) as a humanitarian organisation.
- Published two papers: Parbudha Bharat in English and Ubodhana in Bengali.

11.4. M. S. SUBBALAXMI

Why in News?

- The Suswaralakshmi Academy of Classical Music and Performing Arts in Bengaluru celebrated the 100 birth anniversary tribute to M. S Subbalaxmi.

More about M. S. Subbalaxmi

- Madurai Shanmukhavadiu Subbulakshmi born on 16th September, 1916 is known as a legendary Carnatic singer. She died on 11th December, 2004.

- She was the first musician ever to be awarded the Bharat Ratna as well as the first Indian musician to receive the Ramon Magsaysay Award.
- She received several awards during her career such as Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhushan, Bharat Ratna and more.
- To honour her legacy, UN (United Nations) issued a stamp on her 100th birth centenary.

What is Carnatic Music?

- Carnatic music, **Karnāṭaka saṃgīta or Karnāṭaka saṅgītam** is one of the two sub-genres of Indian classical music that evolved from Hindu traditions; the other being Hindustani music.
- This type of music is mainly associated with the southern states of the country.
- Carnatic music pays a huge emphasis on vocals. Most compositions are to be sung even when they are being played on instruments.
- Like Hindustani music, Carnatic music also relies on two main elements; Raga and Tala.
- Violin, mridangam, tambura, ghatam, kanjira, morsing, venu flute, veena and chitraveena are some of the musical instruments used in performances.

11.5. 1000th BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF SRI RAMANUJA

In May, India celebrated Sri Ramanujar Sahasrabdi, the seer's 1000th birth anniversary celebrations.

Vishistadvaita means modified monism. The ultimate reality according to this philosophy is Brahman (God) and matter and soul are his qualities.

About Sri Ramanuja

- Ramanuja, born in Tamil Nadu in the 11th century was a Bhakti saint of medieval India.
- He was deeply influenced by the Alvars.
- According to him the best means of attaining salvation was through intense devotion to Vishnu.
- He propounded the doctrine of **Vishishtadvaita** or qualified oneness in that the soul even when united with the God remained distinct.
- Ramanuja's doctrine greatly inspired the new strand of bhakti, which developed in north India subsequently.

11.6. MAHASWETA DEVI

Why in News?

- Mahasweta Devi passed away at the age of 90 on July 28, 2016.

Who Was She?

- She was born in 1926 in Dhaka, British India and was one of the most prominent writers of independent India.
- She was also known for her social work that she did to uplift the extremely backward tribal community of **Kheria Sabar**.
- She was honoured with various literary awards such as **Sahitya Akademi Award (in Bengali)** for her novel **Aranyer Adhikar, Jnanpith Award, Ramon Magsaysay Award** as well Indian civilian awards; **Padma Shri and Padma Vibhushan**.
- Some of her famous works of literature are: **Hajar Churashir Maa, Rudali and Aranyer Adhikar**. Although she wrote in Bengali, her work has been translated in English as well.

11.7. TIROT SING

Why in News?

- A function was organised in **Meghalaya** to commemorate the sacrifices of Tirot Sing, the legendary freedom fighter who was hanged to death by British rulers in the 19th century.

Who was Tirot Sing?

- U Tirot Sing was one of the chiefs of the **khasi people** in the early 18th century.
- He fought against **British** attempts to take control of the **Khasi hills**.
- He died on 17 July, 1835. His death is commemorated as U Tirot Sing Day in Meghalaya.

11.8. PANDIT DEEN DAYAL UPADHYAYA

- Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya was an Indian philosopher, economist, sociologist, historian, journalist and political scientist.
- It is only under his leadership that the Jana Sangh first tasted power in half a dozen states in 1967.
- Deendayal Upadhyay believed in the theory of “**integral humanism**”. It refers to accepting the seeming differences among various entities and aspects of life, but at the same time seeking to discover the unity underlying them. It is a synthesis of the material and the spiritual, the individual and the collective.
- He propagated decentralisation of planning, diversity in social and culture ideas and encouraged village based industries. He has also written many books including Samrat Chandragupta and Jagatguru Shankaracharya, an analysis of Five Year plans in India.
- He started a monthly magazine “Rashtra Dharma”, a weekly ‘Panchajanya’, and a daily ‘Swadesh’.
- He believed in Antyodaya, i.e. serving the very last person in the society.

11.9. CONTRIBUTIONS OF SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL

Why in news

- A digital exhibition “Uniting India: Sardar Patel” was launched by the central government.

Key Contributions

- He was a leading member of Congress and was instrumental in shaping the Indian freedom struggle along with Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru.
- He played a pioneer role in the success of peasant movement in Gujarat. He was an important satyagrahi in the Kheda (1918) and Bardoli (1928) Satyagraha.
- He was the president of the Congress at the crucial Karanji session of 1931.
- He played an instrumental role in developing the Indian Civil Service after independence.
- He helped in integrating more than 560 princely states with India.

11.10. PANCHTEERTH: B. R. AMBEDKAR

- Government will develop five places as “Panchteerth” in the honour of B R Ambedkar.
- These include Ambedkar’s birthplace in Mhow, the place in London where he stayed while studying, ‘Deeksha Bhoomi’ in Nagpur, where he took education, ‘Mahaparinirvan Sthal’ in Delhi, and ‘Chaitya Bhoomi’ in Mumbai.

About BR Ambedkar

- He was a jurist, social reformer and politician. He is also known as the Father of Indian Constitution.
- Ambedkar was appointed as India’s first Law Minister in the Cabinet of Jawaharlal Nehru. He was posthumously awarded the Bharat Ratna, India’s highest civilian honor, in 1990.
- Ambedkar founded the Independent Labour Party.
- Some of his famous books include-The Untouchable: Who are They and Why They Have Become Untouchables; Buddha and His Dhamma; ‘The Rise and Fall of Hindu Women’, ‘Emancipation of Untouchables’, ‘The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India’; ‘Pakistan or Partition of India’, ‘Thoughts on Linguistic States’, etc.

11.11. THIRUVALLUVAR

Uttarakhand CM recently unveiled the statue of Tamil poet and philosopher Thiruvalluvar in Haridwar.

About Thiruvalluvar

- Also called Valluvar/Tiruvalluvar was a Tamil poet-saint.
- He is known for his work Tirukkural (Sacred Couplets), a well-known ethical work in Tamil literature.
- He is claimed to be one of their own both by Jains and Shaivites.

11.12. RAJAJI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

- He was a lawyer, independence activist, politician, writer and a statesman.
- Rajaji was the **last Governor-General of India**.
- He was awarded the **Bharat Ratna** in 1954.
- Rajaji replicated and led the **dandi march at Vedaranyam, near Nagapattinam** in the then Madras Presidency Vedaranya in 1930.
- He was also the **editor** of Mahatma Gandhi's newspaper, **Young India**.
- As Premier of Madras Presidency, he **dismantled wartime food controls** in 1952 and also **opposed gold control** in 1963 on the ground that thousands of artisans would be ruined by such controls.
- He founded **Swatantra Party** in 1959. It remained one of the main opposition parties against Congress across the country till Rajaji died in 1972.

11.13. GAYA PRASAD KATIYAR

Why in News?

- Department of posts under Ministry of communication has released special stamp on freedom fighter Gaya Prasad Katiyar who was born in jagdishpur (UP).

Who was Gaya Prasad Katiyar?

- He joined Hindustan Socialist Republican Association in 1925 and got connected with Chandra Shekhar Azad and Bhagat Singh.
- He participated on Lahore Conspiracy Case and was arrested from Saharanpur in 1929 and joined hunger strike at Lahore jail with his co prisoners.
- He was repatriated in 1937 but again arrested and transported to cellular jail in Andaman from where he was released in 1946.

11.14. INDOLOGIST AWARD: PROFESSOR YU LONG YU

Why in News?

- He was bestowed with 2nd Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) "Distinguished Indologist" award by President of India.

About Indologist award

- It is an annual 'Distinguished Indologist' Award instituted by ICCR.
- It is given to eminent indologist working abroad who have made outstanding contribution to the study/research/teaching of India's history, philosophy, thought, art, culture, literature, languages, civilization, society, etc.
- First award was presented to Prof. Heinrich Freiherr Von Stietencron of Germany last year.

ABOUT ICCR

Autonomous organisation of the Govt. involved in external cultural relations, through cultural exchange with other countries and their peoples.

It was founded on 9 April 1950 by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the first Education Minister of independent India.

11.15. URGYEN TRINLEY DORJE

Why in News?

Gol allowed Urgyen Trinley Dorje, the 17th Gyalwang Karmapa, to address public gathering in Arunachal Pradesh.

Union government placed restrictions on his travel for the past five years.

What is karma Kagyu School?

- The Gyalwang Karmapa is the head of the Karma Kagyu School, one of the four main schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

Four main school of Tibet Buddhism:

- **Nyingmapa:** This is the ancient school of Tibetan Buddhism and was founded by Padmasambhava and Śāntarakṣita.
- **Kagyupa:** This is an oral tradition concerned with the meditation based on experience.
- **Sakyapa:** It means "Grey Earth". It follows the traditions of old times.
- **Gelugpa:** It means "Path of virtue". Was originally a reformist movement and is known for its emphasis on logic and debate.

- It is the 2nd largest and certainly the most widely practiced lineage within the Kagyu school.
- This school belongs to the Vajrayana branch of Mahayana Buddhism.
- Central teaching of the Karma Kagyu is the doctrine of **Mahamudra**, also known as the "Great Seal".
- This doctrine focuses on 4 principal stages of meditative practice namely:
 - ✓ The development of single-pointedness of mind.
 - ✓ The transcendence of all conceptual elaboration.
 - ✓ The cultivation of the perspective that all phenomena are of a "single taste".
 - ✓ The fruition of the path, which is beyond any contrived acts of meditation.

11.16. SAVITRIBAI PHULE

- She was born in Naigaon, Maharashtra in 1831 in wealthy and influential farmer family.
- Though married to Jyotirao Phule at the age of just 9, she was determined to study and was one of the few indigenous literate women in her era.
- Couple founded India's first school for girls in Pune in 1848 when female education was considered as **taboo**.
- They also opened a care center called "**Balhatya Pratibandhak Griha**" for pregnant rape victims.
- She fought against prevalent social evils like **child marriages**, **child widows**, **Sati**, discrimination and humiliation faced by Untouchables, etc.
- She opened a clinic in Pune in 1897 for the victims of **bubonic plague** however she succumbed to the disease in same year.
- Two books of her poems were published posthumously - **Kavya Phule** and **Bavan Kashi Subodh Ratnakar**.

11.17. 350TH ANNIVERSARY OF GURU GOBIND SINGH

Why in News?

- Recently 350th anniversary (prakash parv) of Guru Gobind Singh was celebrated by an International Seminar on Guru Gobind Singh's life and legacy in New Delhi.

About Guru Gobind Singh

- He was the 10th Sikh guru born in Bihar.
- He forwarded the teachings of preceding Sikh Gurus by promoting **social institutions like langar (community kitchen), sangat and kirtan (mass prayer)** that acted as unifying agencies.
- He was a poet and philosopher credited with **writing 'Dasm granth'** which had a collection of hymns, philosophical writings, autobiography etc.
- **He is also credit of compiling the Guru Granth Sahib/Adi Granth**, that became the last and the eternal guru of Sikhism.
- He was the **founder of a warrior community called Khalsa** (saint soldiers) to fight injustice and oppression and to protect truth and justice. Eg. Fight social exclusion, Fight religious oppression from tyrants like Aurangzeb.
- He appraised Mughals of the misdeeds towards Sikhs in his letter to Aurangzeb called Zafarnama. He also fought him in Battle of Muktsar in 1705.
- He was named **Hind ka Pir/Saint of India** by Bahadur Shah Zafar.

About Khalsa

The Khalsa are obligated to **wear the Five K's**—

- Kesha (longhair) – Not cut hair to show acceptance to the form that God intended humans to be
- Kangha (comb) – A symbol of cleanliness
- Kara (steel bracelet) – To remind Khalsa of self restraint
- Kaccha (Knee shorts) – For being always ready to go into battle.
- Kirpan (sword) – To defend oneself and the weaker section.

11.18. VEER SAVARKAR'S PLAQUE AT ANDAMAN JAIL

- The Government has decided to reinstall a plaque commemorating the stay of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar at the freedom fighters' memorial at Andaman and Nicobar Island's famous Cellular Jail, where he was imprisoned by the British.
- Savarkar is credited with coining the term Hindutva.
- He was a freedom fighter, social reformer, writer, orator and a patriot, was called Swatantryaveer.
- He was an Indian nationalist and leading figure in the Hindu Mahasabha.

- Savarkar had started his secret revolutionary society called the Abhinav Bharat (similar to Young Italy of Mazzini) in India in 1905.
- He was the author of the famous book “**The Indian War of Independence-1857**”.

11.19. RANI GAIDINLIU

- Rani Gaidinliu was the first female freedom fighter of India from Manipur.
- She was a political and spiritual leader of the Heraka faith.
- Through armed resistance, she quickly transformed a religious-indigenous rebellion into a revolutionary movement for independence.
- Her political struggle was based on Gandhian principles of Satyagraha, non-violence, self-reliance.
- In 1932 at the age of 16, she was arrested and was sentenced to life imprisonment by the then British India Government.
- Rani title: In 1937, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had met her at Shillong Jail and promised to pursue her release. During this time, Nehru gave her title of Rani (Queen) and since then she gained local popularity as Rani Gaidinliu.
- After India's independence in 1947, she was released from the jail and continued to work for the upliftment of people till her death.

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