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Shore Temple
• Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping visited the sea-facing Shore Temple on the first day of their second informal summit in Mamallapuram.
• The Shore Temple (built in 700–728 AD) is so named because it overlooks the shore of the Bay of Bengal.
• It was built probably in the reign of Narasimhavarman II, also known as Rajasimha (Pallava ruler) who reigned from 700 to 728 CE.
• It is a structural temple, built with blocks of granite, dating from the 8th century AD. At the time of its creation, the site was a busy port during the reign of Narasimhavarman II of the Pallava dynasty.
• As one of the Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram, it has been classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1984. It is one of the oldest structural (versus rock-cut) stone temples of South India.

Chaukhandi Stupa
• Recently, Chaukhandi Stupa has been declared of national importance by the Archeological Survey of India (ASI).
• It is an ancient Buddhist site in Sarnath (Uttar Pradesh), with a lofty brick structure crowned with an octagonal tower.
• Originally stupa is said to be built by Emperor Ashoka.
• The octagonal tower on top is a Mughal monument built in 1588 to commemorate Humanyu’s visit to this place.
• It is maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India

Sarnath
• Sarnath had been referred as 'Mrigadava' meaning 'deer park' and 'Isipatana' denoting the place where holy men fell to earth.
• Site for Buddhism
  o Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon after attaining enlightenment in Sarnath called dharmachakra – pravartana. oDhamekh Stupa (Dharma Chakra Stupa): It is the place where Lord Buddha had given his first conversation of Dharma. is said to have been built in the year 500 CE while the construction was ordered by Emperor Ashoka in the 3rd Century BC.
  o MulagandhakutiVihara: This is the place where Lord Buddha lived when he visited Sarnath
  o Bodhi Tree: It is located near to the MulagandhakutiVihara, planted by taking a branch from the Sri Maha Bodhi tree of Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka.
• Ashoka Pillar: Emblem of the country - Ashoka Pillar marks the visit of King Ashoka to Sarnath. This 50m long pillar has four lions on top of it and four animals at below viz. bull, lion, elephant and horse. These four represent the phases of Lord Buddha’s life.
• Site for Jainism: It is the birthplace of 11th teerthankar, Shreyansanath. It is the place where 4 of the 5 kalyanak (auspicious life events) of Shri ShreyansanathaBhagwan took place.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chaukhandi_Stupa
Buddhist Relic Unearthed in Andhra Pradesh

- A Buddhist relic has been unearthed by a group of indologists on the right bank of the Gundlakammariver at Anamanaluru village, near Korisapadu, in Prakasam district.
- It is a limestone pillar, which is carved with half lotus medallions at the centre and top portions on all four sides.
- It belongs to the Amaravati school of Art ofthe Ikshvaku times.
- Buddhist monastery of which this pillar might be part of a Shilamandapa where Buddhist teachers offer regular discourses on the Dhamma of the Buddha.

Amravati School of Art

- The Amravati School of Art flourished in the region of Andhra Pradesh between the lower valleys of rivers Krishna and Godavari.
- The main patrons of this art form were the Satavahans but it carried on even later, patronized by their successor Ikshavaku rulers. This art is said to have flourished between 150 BC and 350 AD.
- The material used is a distinctive white marble and Amaravati sculptures have a sense of movement and energy with profound and quiet naturalism in human, animal and floral forms.
- An important characteristic of the Amravati school is the ‘narrative art’. The medallions were carved in such a manner that they depict an incident in a natural way. For example one medallion depicts a whole story of ‘taming of an elephant by the Buddha’.

Markandeshwar temple

- The Archaeological Survey of India is taking up the restoration work of Markandeshwar temple in Maharashtra.
- This group of temples were built between the 9th and 12th centuries and may have had up to 24 different temples.
- It gets its name from the main temple dedicated to Lord Shiva called Markandeshwar or Markandadeo temple, which lies in Markanda village on the banks of the Wainganga river.
- They are famously known as the ‘mini Khajuraho’ or ‘Khajuraho of Vidarbha’. They belong to saiva, vaishnava and sakti faith.
- The temples belong to the Nagara group of temples of North India. Most of the temples have a simple plan, with ardhamandapa, mandapa, antarala and garbhagriha forming the component of the entire set up.
- It is believed that a lightning strike about 200 years ago led to the partial collapse of the shikhara. Then a Gond ruler about 120 years ago tried to restore the temple

Megalithic Culture

- Recently, new menhirs were found on the Pothamala hills on the Kerala-Tamil Nadu border.
• Pothamala hills houses hundreds of cobbled stone structures, pointing to the existence of a structured graveyard of a prehistoric civilisation dating back around 3,000 years.
• Menhirs are endemic to certain regions only and are a feature of megalithic culture. Menhirs are monolithic slabs that are erected above the ground and may be small or gigantic in height.

Megalithic Culture in India
• Megalithic culture refers to the cultural remains found in the megaliths and from the habitation sites associated with them. Megaliths include different kind of monuments that have one thing in common—they are made of large, roughly, dressed slabs of stone.
• In the Indian subcontinent, Megaliths occur in the far south, the Deccan plateau, the VindhyanArravalli ranges and the north west.
• Megalithic sites in India are dated to period ranging from 1300 BCE to 12 century CE.
• Megaliths in Vindhyas referred to a pre-iron chalcolithic context, peninsular India are associated with iron period.
• The three basic types of Megaliths are the chamber tombs, unchambered tombs, and megaliths not connected with burials.
• Various types of megalithic monuments found are menhirs, dolmenoid cist/dolmen, topikal etc.

What are megalithic constructions

Types:
• *menhirs* – free-standing stones
• *dolmens* - stone tables or corridors
• *cromlechs* – arched stone structures
• *alignments* – stone rows, alleys and stone circles.

New Findings on the decline of the Harappan Civilization
• Recently, a DNA analysis of some skeletal remains at the Rakhigarhi site, have questioned the Aryan invasion theory.
• The paper indicates that there was no Aryan invasion and no Aryan migration and that all the developments right from the hunting-gathering stage to modern times in South Asia were done by indigenous people.
• The skeleton remains found in the upper part of the Citadel area of MohenjoDaro belonged to those who died due to floods and were not massacred by Aryans as hypothesised by Sir Mortimer Wheeler.
• There was some small movement of people from Central Asia and mixing of their gene with the population here. But it doesn’t change the ancestry of the IVC people.
• There was no attack that replaced the entire population.
Rakhigiri Site

- The site of Rakhigarh is one of the five known biggest townships of Harappan civilization on Indian sub-continent.
- Five interconnected mounds spread in a huge area form the Rakhigarhi’s unique site.
- It revealed mature Harappan phase represented by planned township having mud-brick as well as burnt-brick houses with proper drainage system.
- The ceramic industry represented by red ware, which included dish-on-stand, vase, jar, bowl, beaker, perforated jar, goblet and handis.
- Animal sacrificial pit lined with mud brick and triangular and circular fire alters on the mud floor have also been excavated that signify the ritual system of Harappans.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rakhigarhi

DANCE AND DRAMA

Shondol Dance

- Shondol dance, which is known as the royal dance of Ladakh, has created history by entering into the Guinness Book of World Records as the largest Ladakhi dance.
- Shondol is a famous dance, which artistes used to perform for the king of Ladakh.
- As many as 408 women attired in traditional dresses and beautiful head gears performed the dance.
- It was held on the concluding day of the ongoing Buddhist carnival Naropa festival near the Hemis Monastery.
- Hemis Monastery is a Himalayan Buddhist monastery of the Drukpa Lineage, in Hemis, Ladakh, India. Situated 45 km from Leh, the monastery was re-established in 1672 by the Ladakhi king SenggeNamgyal. The annual Hemis festival honouring Padmasambhava is held in early June

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hemis_Monastery

Assamese Bhaona

- Recently, the Assamese Bhaona performers had made a foreign debut in Abu Dhabi.
- Bhaona is a traditional form of entertainment with religious messages, prevalent is Assam.
- It is a creation of Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva written in the early sixteenth century. He created the form to convey religious messages to villagers through entertainment.
- The bhaona are written in the Assamese and Brajavali languages.
- The plays of bhaona are popularly known as AnkiyaNats and their staging is known as bhaona. Bhaona is generally staged at xatras and namghar in Assam.
There are some special characteristics of Bhaona like the plays, dialogues, costumes, ornaments among others. These characteristics help to differentiate Bhaona from other plays.

The main drama is generally preceded by a performance of the Gayan-Bayan. It’s a musical, performed with traditional instruments (Khol, Taal, Doba and Nagara; all the instruments were also created by Sankardeva); with different hard and fast sequences, and formulas, which are also named differently.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhaona

**Ottanthullal**

The art form from Kerala can be traced back to the 18th century when KunjanNambiar, the poet, fell asleep playing the drums at a Chakyarkooth (another satirical art form) and was ridiculed by the main player.

In response, he is believed to have developed overnight the Ottanthullal as an alternative performance. Despite being banned by the king from playing it, Nambiar managed to popularise the art form, which is then believed to have rivalled Chakyaarkooth and even Kathakali, given its usage of simple language and humour that appealed to people.

The distinguishing factor of Ottanthullal is the performer himself singing and playing the story, which is a tedious task. Another person will recite the same verses.

The accompanying instruments for Ottanthullal are Mridangam and Idakka.

Source

**FESTIVAL**

**Ambubachi Mela**

- It is an annual festival held at Kamakhya temple, atop Nilachal hills of Guwahati, Assam on the bank of Brahmaputra river
- It is the celebration of the yearly menstruation course of goddess Kamakhya
- There is no idol of the presiding deity but she is worshipped in the form of a yoni-like stone instead over which a natural spring flows

**Kamakhya Temple**

- The Kamakhya Temple also known as Kamrup-Kamakhy temple, KamakhyaDevalaya is a Hindu temple dedicated to the mother goddess Kamakhya. It is one of the oldest of the 51 Shakti Pithas.
- Situated on the Nilachal Hill in western part of Guwahati city in Assam, India, it is the main temple in a complex of individual temples dedicated to the ten Mahavidyas of Saktism : Kali, Tara, Sodashi, Bhuvaneshwari, Bhairavi, Chinnamasta, Dhumavati, Bagalamukhi, Matangi and Kamalatmika.
- Among these, Tripurasundari, Matangi and Kamala reside inside the main temple whereas the other seven reside in individual temples. It is an important pilgrimage destination for Hindus and especially for Tantric worshipers.
Sources
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ambubachi_Mela

Mela Kheerbani
The KheerBhawanimela starting on ZeashtAstami is one of the biggest religious functions of the displaced community Kashmiri Pundit who fled their homes for their life in the 1990s.
It was held at the famous Ragnya Devi temple in Jammu and Kashmir’s Ganderbal district.
The mela has become a symbol of communal harmony as Muslims in the locality make all the arrangements for the devotees, including setting up of stalls for flowers and other offerings.


Kharchi Puja
- Kharchi puja is a Hindu festival from Tripura, India. Performed in Agartala in July or August, the festival involves the worship of the fourteen gods forming the dynasty deity of the Tripuri people.
- On day of puja, the fourteen deities are carried by members of chantai, taken to river Saidra, it is bathed in the holy water and brought back to temple. They are placed in the temple again, decorated by various flowers, put up vermillion in the fore head of deities.
- It is performed 15 days after Ambubachi (annual festival held at Kamakhya temple, Assam).
- Earlier, the kings of Tripura offered pujas to the 14 Gods and Goddesses, but later it became the festival of common people.

http://www.tripura.org.in/kharchi.htm

Ashadhi Bij
- AshadiBeej or AshadhiBij is observed on the second day of the Shukla Paksha or waxing phase of moon in Ashada month.
- Region: It is the Kutchi New Year.
- Celebrations: AshadiBeej is mostly a traditional affair and is a celebration of rains. During Ashadhi-beej, farmers check the moisture in the atmosphere to help predict which crop would do best in coming monsoon.


Hornbill Festival
- Hornbill Festival is a celebration held every year from 1 to 10 December, in Nagaland, Northeast India. It is also called the 'Festival of Festivals'.
- The festival is named after the bird “Indian hornbill”, which is displayed in the folklore of most of the state’s tribes.
- There are 9 hornbill species in India of which Great Hornbill is the most famous.
- Festival highlights include the traditional Naga Morungs exhibition and the sale of arts and crafts, food stalls, song and dance shows, indigenous games etc.
- One of the major highlights of this festival is the Hornbill International Rock Festival where local and international rock bands perform.
The Tripura government has planned to host an event on the lines of Nagaland’s Hornbill Festival.

The two-day festival will be held from February 8 in Baramura Hills or HathaiKotor in West district to boost tourism.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hornbill_Festival

**Nuakhai: The greatest harvesting festival of Odisha**

- The Nuakhai festival is being celebrated in the state of Odisha. Nuakhai is an agricultural festival mainly observed by people of Western Odisha in India.
- Nuakhai festival traces its origin to the Vedic period where the sages or Rishis used to talk about Panchayajna. One among them was Pralambanayajna which means the cutting of new crops and offering them to mother goddess as followed in Nuakhai festival.
- The word nua means new and khai means food so the name means the farmers are in possession of the newly harvested rice. It is observed to welcome the new rice of the season.
- The farmers offer the first produce of their respective lands to Goddess Samaleswari and then consume it personally.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuakhai

**PAINTING**

**Karikiyoor Rock Paintings**

- The rock paintings in Karikiyoor at KilKotagiri in the Nilgiri forests have withstood the forces of nature for some 5,000 years, but in just the last few years, close to 40% of the paintings have been destroyed by trekkers, tourists, and vandals.
- The society that painted the symbols onto these rocks were contemporaneous with the Indus Valley civilisation.
- The rock paintings in Karikiyoor contain analogous Indus script, meaning they resemble the script found in Indus civilization sites of northern India.
- Members of the Irula tribal community have an ancestral link to the site.
- The rock paintings serve both, as a “historical record,” detailing the hunting habits and ways of life of the local communities, and also a ritualistic purpose.


**LITERATURE**

**South India's Earliest Sanskrit Inscription**

- Archaeological Survey of India has discovered the earliest epigraphic evidence so far for the Saptamatrika cult. It is also the earliest Sanskrit inscription to have been discovered in South India as on date.
- The inscription is in Sanskrit and in Brahmi characters and was issued by Satavahana king Vijaya in 207 A.D.
- Saptamatrikas are a group of seven female deities worshipped in Hinduism as personifying the energy of their respective consorts.
- In Andhra Pradesh, the Saptamatrika cult was widely prevalent during the rule of the early Chalukyas of Badami (6th to 8th century A.D.), though the worship of the goddesses is traceable at Nagarjunakonda from 4th century A.D.
Earlier the Nagarjunakonda inscription of IkshavukukingEhavalaChantamula issued in his 11th regnal year corresponding to the 4th century A.D. was considered the earliest Sanskrit inscription in South India.


Santhali
- Santhali language made its debut in RajyaSabha when a lawmaker from Odisha used it to raise a matter of urgent public importance during the Zero Hour.
- Santhali, is the most widely spoken language of the Munda subfamily of the Austroasiatic languages, related to Ho and Mundari, spoken mainly in the Indian states of Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Mizoram, Odisha, Tripura and West Bengal.
- Santhali is written in OlChiki script which was created by Pt. RaghunathMurmu in 1925.
- By 92nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003, Santhali along with Bodo, Maithili and Dogri were added to the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution.


Sangam Age
- Recently, excavations at Keeladi in Tamil Nadu have pointed that the time period of Sangam Age could be between 6th century BCE and 1st century AD (earlier believed to be 3rd BCE and 3rd AD).
- The results from the excavations suggest that the second urbanisation (the first during Indus civilisation) of Vaigaiplains(Keezhadi site belongs from this plain) happened in Tamil Nadu around 6 th Century BCE as it happened in ‘Gangetic plain’.
- The Tamil country was ruled by three dynasties namely the Chera, Chola and Pandyas, with royal emblem bow, tiger and carp (fish) respectively.
- Tolkappiyam refers to the fivefold division of lands Kurinji (hilly tracks), Mullai (pastoral), Marudam (agricultural), Neydal (coastal) and Palai (desert).
- Tolkappiyam also refers to four castes namely arasar (ruling class), anthanar (priests), vanigar (traders), and vellalar (agriculturalists).
- Agriculture was the chief occupation ship building and ornaments making was prominent.
- The main exports were cotton fabrics, spices, ivory products, pearls and precious stones. While gold, horses and sweet wine were the chief imports.

PERSONALITIES

Maharaja Ranjit Singh
A statue of 19th-century ruler Maharaja Ranjit Singh in Lahore was vandalised by two men

About Maharaja Ranjit Singh
- **Maharaja Ranjit Singh** (13 November 1780 – 27 June 1839) was the leader of the Sikh Empire, which ruled the northwest Indian subcontinent in the early half of the 19th century.
- Prior to his rise, the Punjab region had numerous warring misls (confederacies), twelve of which were under Sikh rulers and one Muslim. Ranjit Singh successfully absorbed and united the Sikh misls and took over other local kingdoms to create the Sikh Empire. He belonged to the Sukerchakiamisl.
- He was popularly known as Sher-e-Punjab, or "Lion of Punjab".
- Under his tenure, the Sikh Empire was very secular since it allowed men from different religions as well, to rise to commanding positions of authority.
His army even included a few Europeans. However, the British were not allowed to join it as it was believed that they have a very inconsistent nature.

In his empire, none of the subjects were discriminated on account of their religion. He never forced Sikhism on non-Sikhs and respected all religions.

The golden part of the Golden Temple and even some of the intricate marble work was done under the aid of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

The Sikh army was defeated in the first Anglo-Sikh War and under the terms of the Treaty of Lahore and the Treaty of Bhroyal, all major decisions were made by the British East India Company.

**Treaty of Amritsar**, (April 25, 1809), pact concluded between Charles T. Metcalfe, representing the British East India Company, and Ranjit Singh, head of the Sikh kingdom of Punjab. The treaty settled Indo-Sikh relations for a generation

Maharaja Ranjit Singh is remembered for the possession of the Koh-i-Noor diamond which he left to Jagannath Temple in Odisha and was given to him by Shuja Shah Durrani of Afghanistan.

Source used:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ranjit_Singh
https://www.britannica.com/event/Treaty-of-Amritsar

**Travelogues quoted in Ayodhya judgment**

**Joseph Tieffenthaler** (1710-1785)

- Tieffenthaler was an 18th-century missionary who travelled in India for 27 years, and wrote his travelogue titled "Description Historique et Geographique De l'Inde".
- Hailing from Bozano in present-day Italy, Tieffenthaler underwent religious training in the Jesuit order before setting sail for Goa from Portugal in 1743. He said to have been proficient in mathematics, astronomy, geography and natural sciences, and in the German, Italian, Spanish, French, Hindustani, Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit languages.
- In India, he was commissioned at the famous observatory of Sawai Jai Singh, the Raja of Jaipur, and was later attached at the Jesuit College in Agra which was built with the patronage of Akbar. Tieffenthaler is said to have lived in Awadh, where Ayodhya is located, for over five years.

**William Finch** (died 1613)

- William Finch’s account has been recorded in the 1921 book ‗Early Travels in India (1583-1619)‘ by the historiographer Sir William Foster. The book contains the narratives of seven travellers from England, including Finch.
- Finch is known to have arrived in India in 1608 at Surat with Sir William Hawkins, a representative of the East India Company.
- His is said to be the earliest English language account of Kashmir, as well as trade routes connecting Punjab and eastern Turkistan and western China

**Robert Montgomery Martin** (1801-1868)

- Originally from Dublin in Ireland, Martin was an Anglo-Irish author and civil servant. He practised medicine in Ceylon (present day Sri Lanka), East Africa and Australia.
- Martin then went on to work in Kolkata where helped found the paper ‗Bengal Herald‘. He later returned to England where he wrote about the British Empire.
- Martin wrote the three-volume work ‘History, Antiquities, Topography and Statistics of Eastern India’. 
Thiruvalluvar and Avvaiyar in Budget 2020

Thiruvalluvar
- He’s a celebrated ancient Tamil poet and philosopher, and the author of the *Thirukkural*, a collection of rhyming couplets.
- The *Tirukkural* is a classic Tamil language text consisting of 1,330 couplets. The text is divided into three books, each with aphoristic teachings on virtue, wealth and love.
- Considered one of the greatest works on ethics and morality, it is known for its universality and secular nature. The text has been dated variously from 300 BCE to 5th century CE.
- The traditional accounts describe it as the last work of the third Sangam, but linguistic analysis suggests a later date of 450 to 500 CE and that it was composed after the Sangam period.

Avvaiyar
- Avvaiyar was the title of more than one female poet who were active during different periods of Tamil literature. They were some of the most famous and important female poets of the Tamil canon.
- There were three female poets titled Avvaiyar. Among them, the first Avvaiyar lived during the Sangam period (c. 3rd century BCE) and is said to have had cordial relations with the Tamil chieftains VelPari and Athiyaman. She wrote 59 poems in the Purananuru.
- The medieval period Avvaiyar was the court poet of the Chola monarch and was the contemporary of Kambar and Ottakkuttar. She found great happiness in the life of small children. Her works, Aathichoodi and Konraiventhan, written for young children, are even now generally read and enjoyed by them.
- The third Avvaiyar is the most widely known for her ‘VinayagarAgaval’, ‘AathiSoodi’, ‘KondraiVendhan’, ‘Nalvazhi’ and ‘Moodhurai’

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thiruvalluvar

Guru Nanak
Sikhs crossed over in Pakistan from Wagah Border to attend celebrations of 550 birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak in Nankana Sahib

About Guru Nanak
- Guru Nanak DevJi the founder and first Guru of Sikhism, was born in the year 1469, in the village Talwandi which is located in the Punjab region of the Indian subcontinent.
- The village, now known as Nankana Sahib, is situated near the city of Lahore in present day Pakistan.
- It is said that in 1499 he got enlightenment and heard ‘God’s Call’ to dedicate himself completely to the service of humanity.
- Guru Nanak died at the age of 70. He appointed Bhai Lena as his successor and renamed him as Guru Angad.
- Guru Angad compiled the compositions of Guru Nanak, to which he added his own in a new script known as Gurmukhi.
Compositions of Guru Nanak and other Sikh gurus and the writings of other figures like Shaikh Farid, Sant Kabir, Bhagat Namdev were compiled in Guru Granth Sahib, the holy scripture of the Sikhs.

The basis of his religious teachings was the belief in a universal God, who was beyond form, but who was manifest to varying degrees in all of creation.

He taught his followers three basic religious principles.

1. **Selflessness** – sharing with others, and giving to those who are less fortunate. But, also a selflessness of attitude – avoiding the pitfalls of egoism, pride and jealousy.

2. **Earning an honest living** – living without deceit, exploitation or fraud.

3. **Naam Japna** – Meditating on God’s name and repeating a mantra. Through the repetition of God’s name, Nanak taught that a follower could free himself from selfish tendencies and cultivate happiness. However, Nanak taught it was not just enough to repeat a mantra mechanically, but with selflessness and real zeal.

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**Udham Singh**

Udham Singh has been mentioned in Parliament recently. There have been several demands in the past few years for his statue to be installed in Jallianwala Bagh and the Parliament complex.

He was born in Sunam in Punjab’s Sangrur district in 1899, was a political activist who got associated with the Ghadar Party while in the US.

He was best known for his assassination in London of Michael O’ Dwyer, the former lieutenant governor of the Punjab in India, on 13 March 1940. The assassination was in revenge for the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in Amritsar in 1919.

He was sentenced to death and was hanged on July 31, 1940 at Pentonville Prison.

**Subramania Bharathi**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tributes to poet-reformer Subramania Bharathi on his 137th birth anniversary.

Bharathi was a Tamil writer, poet, journalist and an independence activist. Popularly known as Mahakavi Bharathi, he was a pioneer of modern Tamil poetry and is considered as one of the greatest Tamil literary figures ever.

The revolutionary Tamil poet was born in 1882 in Ettaiyapuram in Thoothukudi district of Tamil Nadu.

“Kannan Pattu” “Nilavum Vanminum Katrum” “Panchali Sabatham” “Kuyil Pattu” are examples of Bharathi’s great poetic output.

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MISCELLANEOUS

UNESCO Creative Cities Network
- UNESCO has announced that Mumbai and Hyderabad have been included in its network of 'Creative Cities' on the occasion of World Cities Day 2019
- Mumbai has been designated as Creative City of Films and Hyderabad a Creative City of Gastronomy
- In India, Chennai and Varanasi are UNESCO cities of music while Jaipur is the City of Crafts and Folk Arts
- About UNESCO Creative Cities Network
  - The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was created in 2004 to promote cooperation with and among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development.
  - The 246 cities which currently make up this network work together towards a common objective: placing creativity and cultural industries at the heart of their development plans at the local level and cooperating actively at the international level.
  - The network covers seven creative fields: crafts and folk arts, media arts, film, design, gastronomy, literature and music

Sources
https://en.unesco.org/creative-cities/home

Sanskrit Bharati Vishwa Sammelan
- The first ever Sanskrit BharatiVishwaSammelan or Sanskrit World Conference was organised in New Delhi.
- It was a three-day mega event for discussing ideas, theories and research findings in the ancient Sanskrit language.
- It was organised by SanskritaBharati [a non-profit organization]


GI Tags
Palani Panchamirtham
- It is an ‘abhishegaprasadam’ (food that is a religious offering) for Lord DhandayuthapaniSwamy, the presiding deity of ArulmiguDhandayuthapaniSwamy Temple, situated on Palani Hills, Palani Town in Dindigul District of Tamil Nadu.
- This is the first time a temple ‘prasadam’ from Tamil Nadu has been bestowed with the GI tag
- It is a combination of five natural substances, namely, banana, jaggery sugar, cow ghee, honey and cardamom in a definite proportion.
- It is prepared in a natural method without addition of any preservatives or artificial ingredients and is well known for its religious fervour and gaiety.


Tirur
- Tirur betel vine is mainly cultivated in Tirur, Tanur, Tirurangadi, Kuttippuram, Malappuram and Vengara block panchayaths of Malappuram District, Kerala and is valued both for its mild stimulant action and medicinal properties (remedy for bad breath and digestive disorders)
- It is unique for its significantly high content of total chlorophyll and protein in fresh leaves.
Eugenol is the major essential oil in Tirur betel leaf contributing to its pungency. It’s shelf period is also more compared to other betel leaves.

Kandangi
Kandangi is a type of saree made from silk threads in Tamil Nadu state of India. Highly quality cotton from Coimbatore is used to make the saree. The main characteristic of the saree is its bright colours that hold strong.

Dindigul Lock
The product, which recently received the GI tag, is believed to have a history going back at least 400 years. The famous Dindigul locks are known throughout the world for their superior quality and durability, so much so that even the city is called Lock City. The abundance of iron in this region is the reason for the growth of the lock-making industry. Though machine-made locks are easily available, government institutions like prisons, godowns, hospitals and even temples use the older pattern locks. These lock manufacturing units are limited to an area of 5 km in and around Dindigul.

Mizoram’s Tawlhlohpuan and MizoPuanchei
Tawlhlohpuan and MizoPuanchei are Mizo traditional puan (shawls), which have received the GI tag. Tawlhlohpuan, a medium to heavy, compactly woven, good quality fabric from Mizoram is known for warp yarns, warping, weaving & intricate designs that are made by hand. Tawlhloh, in Mizo language, means ‘to stand firm or not to move backward.

MizoPuanchei is a colourful Mizo shawl and is considered as the most colourful among the Mizo textiles. It is an essential possession for every Mizo lady and an important marriage outfit in the state. It is also the most commonly used costume in Mizo festive dances and official ceremonies. The weavers insert the designs and motifs by using supplementary yarns while weaving to create this beautiful and alluring textile.

Odisha Rasagola
Odisha has bagged the geographical indication (GI) tag for its local version of “Rasagola”. This GI tag, numbered 612, is the second for Odisha. It got its first GI tag for KandhamalHaldi. This tag comes amid a years-long debate between West Bengal and Odisha over where the sweet had originated. West Bengal and Odisha had staked their claim on GI tag for Rasagola. In 2017, West Bengal secured the GI tag for its “BanglarRasogolla”. Bengalis claim that the Rasgulla was invented in the 19th century by Nobin Chandra Das at his Bagbazar residence in Kolkata, while Odias believe that the tradition of NiladriBije where Rasgulla is offered started in the 12th century.
Go Tribal Campaign
TRIFED, a Multi-State Co-operative Society under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has launched the “Go Tribal” campaign
'Go Tribal' campaign will promote and make available tribal handcrafted textiles, jewellery, and other accessories through global online market spaces.
https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1579408

Kakinada Hope island
Kakinada Hope Island is a beautiful place in Andhra Pradesh, and now the Ministry of Tourism has decided to develop it as a coastal and eco-tourism circuit. The ministry, under its SwadeshDarshan Scheme, gives Central Financial Assistance to State Governments/Union Territory (UT) Administrations for development of tourist circuits in India.
Hope Island is a tadpole-shaped island, located off the coast of Kakinada, in Bay of Bengal. This island is pretty young as it was formed in the late 18th century, by the waters of the Koringa River, which is a distributary of the River Godavari.

SWADESH DARSHAN SCHEME
Ministry of Tourism (MoT) launched the SwadeshDarshan Scheme (Central Sector Scheme) – for integrated development of theme based tourist circuits in the country in 2014-15. This scheme is envisioned to synergise with other Government of India schemes like Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Skill India, Make in India etc. with the idea of positioning the tourism sector as a major engine for job creation, driving force for economic growth, building synergy with various sectors to enable tourism to realise its potential.

Scheme Objectives
- To position tourism as a major engine of economic growth and job creation;
- Develop circuits having tourist potential in a planned and prioritized manner;
- Promote cultural and heritage value of the country to generate livelihoods in the identified regions;
- Enhancing the tourist attractiveness in a sustainable manner by developing world class infrastructure in the circuit /destinations;
- Follow community based development and pro-poor tourism approach;
- Creating awareness among the local communities about the importance of tourism for them in terms of increased sources of income, improved living standards and overall development of the area.
- To create employment through active involvement of local communities;
- Harness tourism potential for its effects in employment generation and economic development.
- To make full use of the potential and advantages in terms of available infrastructure, national culture and characteristic strong points of each and every region throughout the country by development of theme based circuits.
- Development of tourist facilitation services to enhance visitor experience/satisfaction.


The Nehru-Liaquat Agreement of 1950
Home Minister has recently referred to the Nehru- Liaquat Pact that was signed in Delhi in 1950 during the ongoing debate on The Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) in Parliament.
The treaty was signed in New Delhi by the Prime Minister of India JawaharLal Nehru and the Prime Minister of Pakistan Liaquat Ali Khan on April 8, 1950. The treaty was outcome of six days of talks sought to guarantee the rights of minorities in both countries after the Partition of India and to avert another war between them.
The refugees were allowed to return to dispose of their property, abducted women and looted property were to be returned, forced conversions were unrecognized, and minority rights were confirmed. Minority commissions were set up in both countries. More than one million refugees migrated from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) to West Bengal in India.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liaquat%E2%80%93Nehru_Pact

Jnanpith Award
- Amitav Ghosh was recently felicitated with 54th Jnanpith Award. He is the 1st English language writer to become a Jnanpith laureate.
- Jnanpith Award is an Indian literary award presented annually by the BharatiyaJnanpith to an author for their "outstanding contribution towards literature".
- Instituted in 1961, the award is bestowed only on Indian writers writing in Indian languages included in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India and English, with no posthumous conferral.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jnanpith_Award

Imphal Peace Museum
Former adversaries Britain and Japan came together at the inauguration of the Imphal Peace Museum on Saturday to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Imphal that saw some of the fiercest fighting of World War II at MaibamLokpaChing popularly known as Red Hill.
The museum is constructed by the support of The Nippon Foundation (TNF), a non-profit grant-making organization in collaboration with Manipur Tourism Forum and Manipur Government.
The Imphal Peace Museum (IPM) is located 20 km Southwest of Imphal, at the foothills of Red Hill.

Battle of Imphal
- The Battle of Imphal saw some of the fiercest fighting of World War II at MaibamLokpaChing popularly known as Red Hill.
- Red Hill was among the places where the tide began to turn against the Japanese.
- In 1944, Japanese armies attempted to destroy the Allied forces at Imphal and invade India but were driven back into Burma with heavy losses.
- Together with the simultaneous Battle of Kohima on the road by which the encircled Allied forces at Imphal were relieved, the battle was the turning point of the Burma Campaign, of the Second World War.
- The Japanese defeat at Kohima and Imphal was the largest up until that time, with many of the Japanese deaths resulting from starvation, disease and exhaustion suffered during their retreat.
- Imphal, the capital of Manipur, it is some 70 miles to the west of the Burmese border. To the north of Imphal are the Naga Hills and to the south the Chin Hills.


Sangeet Natak Academy
- SangeetNatakAkademi Announces UstadBismillah Khan YuvaPuraskars for the Year 2018.
- SangeetNatakAkademi, India's national academy of music, dance and drama, is a pioneer in the creation of modern India.
Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar is conferred upon artists below the age of 40 years for their talent in the fields of music, dance, and drama.

**About Sangeet Natak Academy**
- In 1945, the Asiatic Society of Bengal submitted a proposal for the creation of a National Cultural Trust consisting of three academies—an academy of dance, drama, and music; an academy of letters and an academy of art and architecture. It led to the creation of three national academies after Independence. The national Academy named Sangeet Natak Akademi, was the first of these entities to be established by a resolution of the Ministry of Education.
- In 1961, it was reconstituted by the Government as a society and registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.
- It promotes the festivals of music, dance, and elect the great masters of the performing arts as Fellows of the Akademi, besides conferring annual awards. It has a large archive of audio and video tapes and remains the single most important resource for researchers in the field of performing arts.
- The Akademi establishes and looks after institutions and projects of national importance in the field of the performing arts. The Jawaharlal Nehru Manipur Dance Academy (JNMDA) in Imphal, the premier institution in the teaching of Manipuri dance and music, established in 1954, is the first of these institutions. In 1959, the Akademi established the National School of Drama and the Asian Theatre Institute; and in 1964, the Kathak Kendra, both being based in Delhi.


**Jaipur Gets World Heritage Status**
- In a remarkable achievement, India gets its 38th UNESCO World Heritage Site as Pink City Jaipur.
- In 2017, old Ahmedabad was India's first city to win the 'heritage city' tag.
- With Jaipur's inclusion, the number of heritage sites across India that are on the UNESCO World Heritage list, has grown to 38, including 30 cultural properties, 7 natural properties and 1 mixed site.
- India had proposed the nomination of Jaipur as an "exceptional urban example in indigenous city planning and construction in South Asia". Unlike other medieval cities of the region, Jaipur was deliberately planned as a new city on the plains open for trade as opposed to hilly terrain and military cities of past.
- Its iconic monuments such as the Govind Dev temple, City Palace, Jantar Mantar and Hawa Mahal excel in artistic and architectural craftsmanship of the period.


**Seva Bhoj Yojana**
- Seva Bhoj Yojana is a Central Sector Scheme for providing reimbursement of CGST and Central Government's share of IGST paid by charitable/religious institutions on purchase of specific raw food items for serving free food to public/devotees.
- The specific raw food items covered under the Scheme are (i) Ghee (ii) Edible Oil (iii) Sugar/Burra/Jaggery (iv) Rice (v) Atta/Maida/Rava/Flour and (vi) Pulses.
- Under the scheme of Seva Bhoj Yojana, the financial assistance will be provided for free 'prasad' or free food or free 'langar' / 'bhandara' (community kitchen) offered by charitable/religious institutions like Gurudwara, Temples, Dharmik Ashram, Mosques, Dargah, Church, Math, Monasteries etc.

**Criteria for financial assistance:**
- These Charitable Religious Institutions should have been distributing free food in the form of 'prasad', 'langar'/ 'bhandara' (community kitchen) to at least 5000 persons in a calendar month for at least past 3 years.
- Financial Assistance under the scheme shall be given only to those institutions which are not in receipt of any Financial Assistance from the Central/State Government for the purpose of distributing free food.
- The Institution/Organization blacklisted under the provisions of Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) or under the provisions of any Act/Rules of the Central/State shall not be eligible for financial assistance under the scheme.

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Virasat-e-Khalsa museum

- The Asia Book of Records has listed the Virasat-e-Khalsa museum in Punjab’s Anandpur Sahib as the most visited museum in the Asian sub-continent (on a single day).
- The museum had witnessed a record footfall of 20,569 visitors on a single day.
- The Limca Book of Records and India Book of Records had also listed ‘Virasat-e-Khalsa’ as the country’s top-ranked museum in terms of the number of visitors.
- The museum has been conferred an award by the Punjab Energy Development Agency in state-level energy conservation competition, for cutting down electricity consumption.
- The Virasat-e-Khalsa museum (the second most important Sikh shrine in Anandpur Sahib, after the Golden Temple complex) was built to commemorate 300 years of the founding of the ‘KhalsaPanth’ by the Guru Gobind Singh (10th Sikh guru).


Kondapalli toys

- Kondapalli toys — cultural icons of Andhra Pradesh — are one of the most sold handicrafts in India and abroad, across online, wholesale, and retail platforms.
- These are the toys made of wood in Kondapalli of Krishna district in Andhra Pradesh.
- The artisans who make the toys are referred to as Aryakhastriyas (also known as Nakarshalu), who have their mention in the BrahmandaPurana.
- It was registered as one of the geographical indication handicraft from Andhra Pradesh as per Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.
- The Kondapalli toys are made from softwood known as TellaPoniki which is found in nearby Kondapalli Hills.

National School of Drama

- It was set up by SangeetNatakAkademi in 1959. In 1975, it became an autonomous organization.
- It trains students in all aspects of theatre, including theatre history, production, scene design, costume design, lighting, make-up, etc. The school has a performing wing, a Repertory Company to establish professional theatre and regular experimental work.
- The NSD has promoted children’s theatre. The Theatre-in- Education Company (renamed as Sanskar Rang Toli) was founded in 1989 and has been actively involved in production of plays for children, organizing summer theatre workshops in the schools of Delhi and also promoting children’s theatre through Saturday Club.
- The first ever National Theatre Festival christened Bharat Rang Mahotsav was held in 1999.