Prelim Bits 08-01-2023 & 09 -01-2023| UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Sagol Kangjei

A 122-foot-tall statue of a polo player astride a Manipur Pony was inaugurated in the Marjing Polo Complex, Imphal.

- The 122-feet tall gigantic Polo statue is located above the hill top of Ebudhou Marjing hills.
- Marjing is a semi-god who started Sagol Kangjei.
- Modern polo is said to have originated from Sagol Kangjei, a sport indigenous to Manipur.
- In Sagol Kangjei players ride horses, specifically the Manipur Ponies.
- **History** - It is believed that the Manipur King – Kanba invented the game in the 14th century BC.
- In the 1850s, the British observed Manipuris play a sport using a pony and a hockey-like stick.
- Influenced by the game, Britishers later formed a polo club in Silchar.
- **Culture** - In Meitei culture, polo is a sport of the gods.
- It is played with seven players on a side. A ball made from bamboo root is used in this game.
- The Meitei deity also carries a bamboo stick in his hands just like a polo player.

Manipur Pony

- The Manipur Pony is one of 5 recognised equine breeds of India.
- The Manipur Pony has a powerful cultural significance for Manipuri society.
- The 17th Quinquennial Livestock Census 2003 had recorded 1,898 Manipur Ponies; the number fell to 1,101 in the 19th Quinquennial Livestock Census in 2012.
- The Manipur government takes efforts to conserve Manipuri pony like Manipur Pony Conservation and Development Policy 2016, the Marjing Polo Complex.

References

1. Indian Express - Sagol Kangjei: The ancient polo of Manipur
2. North East Today - 120-Ft-Tall Effigy Of 'Sagol Kangjei'

Keezhanthoor Coffee

The traditional coffee farmers of Anchunad at Marayur in Idukki are reaping the benefits of organic farming.

- Keezhanthoor Coffee is an Arabica variety.

- Keezhanthoor is a village in Idukki District, Kerala.
- This coffee beans are mainly cultivated at Kanthalloor, Keezhanthoor, Kulachivayal, and Vettukad of Idukki district.
- They are marketed as Keezhanthoor coffee.
- **Speciality** - Keezhanthoor Coffee is famous for its taste and aroma.
- Traditional organic farming is the speciality of the coffee.
- Organic coffee farming is followed by the tribespeople and other farmers in the Anchunad valley.
- In 2014, Chilla, an exclusive tribal market under the Marayur Forest Division was opened to sell produce cultivated by the tribespeople.

References

1. The Hindu - Coffee farming in Idukki's Anchunad

Superconductivity in Mercury

A group of researchers from Italy have published a paper to fully understand how superconductivity operates in mercury.

Mercury

- Mercury (Hg) known as 'quicksilver', is the only elemental metal that is liquid at room temperature.
- It is used in thermometers, barometers and manometers.
- Mercury poisoning leads to Minamata disease.
- Mercury is the earliest known superconductor.

Superconductivity

> *A superconductor conducts electricity with zero resistance to the flow of electrons. Generally achieved at very low temperatures.*

- In 1911, Dutch physicist Heike Kamerlingh Onnes discovered superconductivity in mercury.
- At a very low temperature, called the threshold temperature (around -270°C for mercury), solid mercury offers no resistance to the flow of electric current.

Bardeen-Cooper-Schrieffer (BCS) Theory

- BCS theory was proposed by Bardeen, Cooper, and Schrieffer in 1957 for which they received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1972.
- BCS Theory is the first theory to explain superconductivity as a microscopic theory.
- According to BCS theory, in superconductors the vibrational energy released by the grid of atoms encourages electrons to pair up, forming so-called Cooper pairs.
- One electron in each pair in mercury occupied a higher energy level than the other and reportedly lowered the Coulomb repulsion between them.
- These Cooper pairs can move without facing resistance to their flow, below a threshold

temperature.

Coulomb Repulsion is the repulsive force between 2 positive or negative charges, as described by Coulomb's law.

References

1. The Hindu - How mercury becomes a superconductor: A clear picture
2. Britannica - BCS Theory

Living Root Bridges

A farmer takes forward the traditional practice of building root bridges and connects two areas across Umkar River in Cherrapunjee.

- A farmer from War tribe (sub-tribe of Khasi) in Meghalaya created a root bridge over Umkar River in Siej village near Cherrapunjee (Sohra).
- The bridge is located in the East Khasi Hills of Meghalaya.
- The roots of the rubber fig (*Ficus elastica*) was used to build the bridge.
- Traditional techniques were used to mould and model the roots into a bridge with the help of bamboo.
- **Jingkieng jri** - Meghalaya is known for its living root bridges, locally known as jingkieng jri**.**
- They are on the tentative list of UNESCO's World Heritage sites.
- Khasi and Jaintia tribes are known for this bio-engineering wonder.
- Many bridges across the State are over a century old.
- At present, there are about 100 known living root bridges spread across 72 villages in the state.
- These living root bridges naturally grow stronger with time, and thus do not need regular maintenance and repair work.
- The famous Umshiang Double Decker root bridge in Nongriat village near Cherrapunjee is around 200 years old.

References

1. The Hindu - Roots connect a Meghalaya village

Margamkali

A solid performance of the Margamkali by school girls was seen during the Kerala School Kalolsavam 2023.

- Margam Kali is a popular Christian art form in Kerala and is believed to have evolved from *Kalaripayattu*.
- **Dancers** - This dance involves 12 people and they dance around a traditional lamp (*Vilakku*) in a circular manner.
- The 12 members in the group are considered as the 12 Apostles of Jesus Christ. The

lighted lamp represents Jesus Christ.

- It demands a high sense of rhythm and agility from the performers.
- **Song** - The Margam Kali Pattu is written in about 4000 lines in different meters.
- The theme of the song is the miracles performed by St. Thomas at Malankara.
- The songs are believed to have been written in the 17th century by Kallissery Itti Thoman Kathanar.
- **Performance** - The leader of the dance group, called the Asan, sings the song and the other members in the group sing the chorus.
- Musical instruments are not used in this dance.
- It is performed mostly at Christian wedding ceremonies and often at church festivals.
- This dance is seen commonly in the districts Kottayam and Thrissur.
- **Attire** - The costume of the performers is a white dhoti and they wear a peacock feather on their turban.
- The women wear the traditional dress of the Christians which is the Chattayum Mundum.

References

1. The Hindu - Kerala School Kalolsavam 2023
2. Kerala Tourism - Margamkali

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