Prelim Bits 13-01-2024 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Kalaram Temple

Recently, Prime Minister of India took part in cleaning the Kalaram temple premises under the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' campaign.

- **Built in** – ***1792***, with the efforts of one Sardar Rangarao Odhekar.
- **Name** – It derives its name from a ***black statue*** of the Lord Kala Ram translates literally to ***"Black Ram."***
- **Location** – On the banks of the ***River Godavari*** in the Panchavati area of the Nashik in Maharashtra.

Panchavati*, whose comes from the existence of 5 banyan trees in the area. It was a part of Dandakaranya (dense forest in central India). According to Ramayanam, Lord Ram, Sita, and Lakshman set up a hut here as the presence of 5 banyan trees made this region auspicious.*

- **Features** – It has ***14 steps***, which represent the 14 years of Ram's exile and has ***84 pillars***, which represents the cycle of 84 lakh species that one must complete to be born as a human.
- **Sanctum sanctorum** – Statues of ***Ram, Sita, and Lakshman, and a black idol of Hanuman*** at the main entrance.
- **Historical importance** – It is also the site of a landmark agitation led by Babasaheb Ambedkar demanding temple entry rights for Dalits more than 90 years ago.

Bhavarth Ramayana, written in Marathi, by Sant Eknath.

Nashik Satyagraha in 1930

- **Lead by** – ***B R Ambedkar*** along with the Marathi teacher and social activist Pandurang Sadashiv Sane, known as ***Sane Guruji***.
- **Aim** – To demand ***access for Dalits to Hindu temples***.
- **Events** – On March 2, ***1930***, Ambedkar organised a *large protest outside the Kalaram temple* with many dalit protesters.
- Over the next few days, they *sang songs, raised slogans, and demanded the right to enter* the temple.
- Sane Guruji too, travelled all over Maharashtra to campaign for Dalit rights, and led a protest fast at the Vitthal Temple.
- This continued ***until 1935***.

*In 1927, Ambedkar had launched **Mahad or Chavdar Tale satyagraha** to assert the rights of Dalits to use the water in public places.*

References

The Indian Express| Indian PM visits Kalaram Temple

Lentil Production

India is set to become the world's largest producer of lentil (masoor) during the 2023-24 crop year on account of higher acreage.

Lentils
• **Scientific name** – Lens culinaris • It is a *small annual legume* of the *pea family (Fabaceae)* and its *edible* seed. • **Types** – Green lentils, Red & Yellow lentils, Black lentils and Brown lentils. • **Nutrition** – It has *high protein and fibre content*. • **Cultivation** – Throughout Europe, Asia, and North Africa but are little grown in the Western Hemisphere. • **Benefits** – It helps in *nitrogen fixation* in the soil.

- **Cultivation in India** – Agriculture Ministry shows that ***19.45 lakh hectares is under lentil*** till January, 2024, 6% higher from last year's area, and 37% higher than the normal area.
- **India's lentil production** – In the 2022-23 crop year, it stood at 1.56 million tonne.
    - According to FAO, ***India is world's 2nd largest lentil growers*** (1.26 million tonnes) in 2022 while Canada tops the chart. followed by India.

Lentil Production in India has tapered since 2017-18 when the country recorded its highest output of 1.62 million tonne. But Indian government had increased the MSP of lentils to Rs 6,425 per quintal for the Rabi Marketing Season 2024-25 from the Rs 2,950 per quintal in 2014-15.

- **Imports** – It is to meet its domestic requirements, buying mainly from *Australia, Canada, Russia, Singapore, and Turkey*.
- During the current year, it also imported some quantities of lentil from UAE, USA, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

References

The Indian Express| Increasing production of lentils in India

Poppy straw

Over 10,000 kg of poppy straw, under the cover of cattle feed, has been seized by the Central Bureau of Narcotics in the last 1 year.

- **Poppy straw** – It is the *husk left after the opium is extracted* from the pods which also contains a *very small morphine content*.
- **Drug** – It is one of the narcotic drugs under the ***Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (NDPS)***.

India is one of the few countries that legally cultivate opium poppy and is the only country on earth that illicitly produces opium gum.

- **Legal regulation** – Possession, sale, use, etc. are ***regulated by the State Governments*** under the *State NDPS Rules*.
- Farmers *sell the poppy straw to those licensed by the State* Governments to purchase poppy straw and *any excess poppy straw is ploughed back into the field*.
- **Responsible authorities** – The ***Central Bureau of Narcotics*** is responsible for
  - *Issuing licenses* to farmers to cultivate opium poppy
  - Supervising and *controlling the cultivation*
  - *Procuring* the opium produced by the licenced cultivators
- A Deputy Narcotics Commissioner is in-charge of each of the ***3 opium growing States*** Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.
- The ***Narcotics Control Bureau***, that comes under the Ministry of Home Affairs is also responsible in regulating NDPS.
- **Violation** – Anyone possessing, selling, purchasing or using it without a license or in violation of any conditions of the license is ***liable to prosecution under the NDPS Act***.
- **Control operations** - In 2023, record high anti-narcotics operations were undertaken.
  - Under ***Operation Prahaar in 2023***, 10,326 hectares of illicit opium field was destroyed in Arunachal and Manipur.

India is a signatory to the single Convention on Narcotic Drugs 1961, as amended by the 1972 Protocol, the ***Conventions on Psychotropic Substances, 1971*** *and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988.*

References

1. The Indian Express| Seizure of Poppy Straws
2. Department of Revenue| Central Bureau of Narcotics

National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)

Ganga mission gets power to allow treated sewage into water bodies.

- **Establishment** – It was registered ***as a society in 2011*** under the Societies Registration Act 1860.
- **Objectives** – To ensure effective ***abatement of pollution and rejuvenation*** of the river Ganga and to maintain ***minimum ecological flows*** ensuring better water quality and environmentally sustainable development.
- **Vision** – To ensure *Aviral Dhara* (Continuous Flow), *Nirmal Dhara* (Unpolluted Flow), Geologic and ecological integrity.
- **Operation** – The *implementation arm of National Ganga Council* since 2016.
- It has a *2-tier management structure* and comprises of Governing Council and Executive Committee.
- **Key functions** – *Implement the work programme* of National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA) and the World Bank supported National Ganga River Basin Project.
- *Coordinate and oversee* the implementation of the projects.
- *Accept or to provide any grant of money*, loan securities or property to undertake operations.
- **New Provisions** – NMCG may now ***permit the discharge of treated sewage*** and effluent that conforms to the prescribed "norms" into the river, canal or water bodies.
- **Recent activities of NMCG in 2023** – It has organised the 8th India Water Impact Summit (IWIS) and Driving Holistic Action for Urban Rivers (DHARA) Conference.
- It has launched Global River Cities Alliance with 9 countries to scale up collaborative knowledge sharing to facilitate river conservation.

Role of EPA, 1986 in protecting River Ganga

- It aims for *prevention, control and abatement of environmental pollution* in river Ganga and to ensure *continuous adequate flow of water* so as to rejuvenate the River Ganga.
- It envisages ***5 tier structure*** at national, state and district level as below
  - *National Ganga Council* under chairmanship of Prime Minister of India.
  - *Empowered Task Force (ETF)* on river Ganga under chairmanship of Hon'ble Union Minister of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation.
  - National Mission for Clean Ganga (*NMCG*).
  - *State Ganga Committees*
  - *District Ganga Committees* in every specified district abutting river Ganga and its tributaries in the states.

References

1. The Indian Express| Amendment to NMCG
2. Jal Shakti| National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)



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