Prelim Bits 15-08-2021 & 16-08-2021 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Ancient Dagger Found in Tamil Nadu

As a part of an excavation effort that seeks to shine a light on the Keeladi civilization, a rusted iron dagger preserved in a burial urn was discovered in Konthagai village, Tamil Nadu.

- Konthagai is considered as a burial site for the Keeladi civilization, as burial urns filled with bones, weapons and other objects were discovered.
- This type of weapon was used by warriors during the Sangam period (3rd century BCE - 3rd century CE).
- Based on the archaeological evidence, some researchers now say the Sangam period began earlier than previously thought, around 600 B.C.E.

Keeladi Civilization

- It is also referred to as the Vaigai civilization, named after a nearby river Vaigai.
- **Came from IVC** - Discoveries at Keeladi suggest that the people who lived there may have travelled south from the Harappan or Indus Valley civilization (as it declined) to start new lives.
- The civilization was an indigenous, well developed self-sustaining urban culture with an industry and Tamil-Brahmi script, indicating that the people of that era were highly literate.
- Evidence of ancient industrial production are spinning and weaving tools, cloth dyeing operations, brick kilns, and ceramic workshops.
- **Second urbanization** - Discoveries date to around 500 B.C., when an agricultural surplus allowed people to build urban centers in what's known as the subcontinent's "second urbanization."
- [The name reflects a contrast with the much earlier "first urbanization" of the Indus Valley civilization that began 2500 BCE.]
- Previously, it was believed that the second urbanization happened along the Central Ganges Plain in northern India.
- But, new evidence suggests a similar phenomenon occurred in the south as well.

History of Indian Flag

- The first national flag (with 3 horizontal stripes of red, yellow and green) was hoisted on August 7, 1906, at the Parsee Bagan Square, Calcutta.
- In 1921, Pingali Venkayya met Mahatma Gandhi and proposed a basic design of the flag, consisting of two red and green bands.
- After undergoing several changes, the Tricolour was adopted as our national flag at a Congress Committee meeting in Karachi (1931).
- The Indian flag in its present form was adopted during a meeting of the Constituent Assembly held on July 22, 1947.
- The earliest rules for the display of the national flag were governed by,

1. Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act, 1950 and
2. Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971.

Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971

- This Act prohibits desecration of or insult to the national symbols - National flag, national anthem, Indian map and the Constitution.
- It punishes those who disrespect or bring in contempt to National Flag or Constitution of India with upto 3 years imprisonment, or fine, or both.

- Among the other acts which are considered to be of disrespect to the national flag are,
    1. Dipping the Tricolour in salute to any person or thing,
    2. Waving it at half-mast except on specific occasions, or
    3. Using it as a drapery in any form, except in state funerals or for the last rites of armed forces or other paramilitary forces,
- Putting any kind of inscription upon the flag, using it to cover a statue, a monument or platform, is considered disrespect to the Tricolour.
- The flag shouldn't be allowed to touch the ground or trail in water, or be put up in an inverted manner.

Flag Code of India 2002

- This Code allowed the unrestricted display of the Tricolour as long as the honour and dignity of the flag were being respected.
- Flag Code did not replace the pre-existing rules.
- But, it brings together all previous laws, conventions and practices.
- **Restrictions** - The Code has rules on display of the flag by public and private bodies and educational institutions, and rules for display of the flag by governments and government bodies.
- There will be no restriction on the display of flag by public and private bodies and educational institutions except to the extent as laid down in the above two laws (Acts).
- The Code mentions that the tricolour cannot be used for commercial purposes, and cannot be dipped in salute to any person or thing.

- It further states that whenever the flag is displayed, it should be distinctly placed and should "occupy the position of honour".
- Damaged flag should be destroyed in private, preferably by burning or by any other method consistent with the dignity of the Flag.
- For official display, only flags that conform to the specifications of the Bureau of Indian Standards and bearing their mark can be used.

July 2021 - Hottest Month Ever

The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) National Centers for Environmental Information has released a report on global climate.

- This report has said that July 2021 was the hottest month on Earth since 1880.
- It says that the global land-only surface temperature for July 2021 was 1.40 degrees Celsius above the 20th-century average.
- The previous record was held by Julys in 2017 and 2020.
- The warmth across the global land surfaces was driven by higher than normal temperatures across much of the Northern Hemisphere land.

- In July 2021, Arctic sea ice extent was 18.8% below the 1981-2010 average levels.
    - NOAA said that 2021 will be in the list of the 10 warmest years on record.

Fortification of Rice

Emphasising that malnutrition is a hurdle in the development of women and children, Prime Minister announced fortification of rice distributed under various government schemes by 2024.

- This announcement is important as the government distributes rice under various schemes - TPDS, MDM and ICDS - covered under the National Food Security Act, 2013.
- Fortification is defined by FSSAI as deliberately increasing the content of essential micronutrients in a food so as to improve the nutritional quality of food and to provide public health benefit with minimal risk to health.
- [Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) sets standards for food items in the country.]
- According to the FSSAI norms, 1-kg fortified rice shall contain iron (28mg-42.5mg), folic acid (75-125 mg) and Vitamin B-12 (0.75-1.25 mg).
- In addition, rice may also be fortified with micronutrients, singly or in combination, with zinc, and Vitamins A, B1, B2, B3 and B6.

India accounts for over one-fifth of the world's rice production. It is the largest consumer of rice, with a per capita rice consumption of 6.8 kg per month.

Fortification of Rice and its Distribution Under PDS

- Ministry of Consumer Affairs had launched a pilot scheme on "Fortification of Rice and its Distribution under Public Distribution System (PDS)" for a period of 3 years beginning 2019-20.
- This centrally sponsored scheme focuses on 15 districts in 15 states - AP, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha, Gujarat, UP, Assam, TN, Telangana, Punjab, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand and MP.
- Under the scheme, the blending of rice is done at the milling stage.
- The Scheme is funded by the Government of India in the ratio of,
    a. 90:10 in respect of North Eastern, hilly and island states and
    b. 75:25 in respect of the rest of the states and UTs.

Mission Poshan 2.0

- It was announced the Union Budget 2021-22 to strengthen nutritional content, delivery, outreach, and outcome.
- It was launched after merging the Supplementary Nutrition Programme and the Poshan Abhiyan.

Factors Driving up Sensex

The Sensex crossed the 55,000 mark and hit a record high on sustained buying support by retail investors and mutual funds in intra-day trading.

- So, the retail investors must be extra vigilant and avoid putting money in stocks when valuations are high.

- **Factors powering the Sensex** - Retail investors are buying stocks without any serious consideration for value.
    - When this increase ends, the new retail investors who have flocked to the market recently will be hit hard.
- Also, aided by new fund offers and bullish stock markets, equity mutual funds saw record inflows in the recent months. This money is also flowing into the stock markets.
- Further, the recent rally was not a broad-based rally as heavy profit booking was seen in midcap and smallcap stocks, while selling pressure appears to have eased now.
- The market rally is supported by the ample liquidity in the system and hopes of a sustained economic recovery.
- If the fund flow to the stock market continues, the rally will get further momentum.

Source: PIB, The Hindu, The Indian Express

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