Prelim Bits 16-11-2023 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Constantine Joseph Beschi

An Italian Jesuit, Tamil scholar, and Chanda Sahib's Dewan.

- **Visit to India** – He arrived in Goa in 1700 and reached Tamil Nadu in 1715 to do missionary work

- **Language skills** – He studied *Sanskrit, Telugu, Urdu and Tamil* and became a master of these languages, especially Tamil.

> *Constantine Joseph Beschi was known as* ***Thairiyanathaswamy*** *and its translation reads as* ***Veeramamunivar*** *in Tamil.*

- **Friendship with Chanda Sahib** – Veeramamunivar considered Chanda Sahib as the **ruler of the banks of the Cauvery.**
- Chanda Sahib gifted him ***4 villages to the north of the River Kollidam*** (distributary of River Cauvery) in Tamil Nadu.
- He conferred the surname, ***Ismattee Sannyasi***, indicating veeramamunivar's excellence as a religious devotee.
- He presented a palanquin and appointed him to the ***office of Dewan in Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu***.
- **Life style in Tamil Nadu** – He dressed like a Hindu sanyasi and travelled in a palanquin with a tiger skin to sit upon.
- **Contribution to Tamil language** – ***Thembavani, Sathurakarathi*** and many other works.
- His principal efforts were the conversion of the Idolaters and so, he delved deep into Tirukkural, Naladiyar, Civaka Cintamani, and other celebrated Hindu works.

> ***F.W. Ellis,*** *the British civil servant and a scholar in Tamil and Sanskrit had classified Dravidian Languages as a separate family of languages even before Robert Caldwell.*

Reference

The Hindu| Constantine Joseph Beschi

ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus)

Indonesia is hosting the 10th Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) at Jakarta in 2023 as the chair of ADMM-Plus.

- **ADMM –** It is the ***highest defence consultative and cooperative mechanism*** in ASEAN.

- **ADMM-Plus** – It is a platform for the ASEAN member-states and its 8 dialogue partners collectively called as 'Plus Countries'.

  Plus Countries *of ADMM-Plus were India, U.S., China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. India became the dialogue partner of the ASEAN in 1992.*

- **Meeting** – 1st edition was held in Hanoi (Capital of Vietnam) in 2010 and it is held ***annually since 2017***.
- **Objectives** - To enhance regional peace and stability through cooperation in defence and security.
- To contribute to the realisation of Bali Concord II and Vientiane Action Programme.

  Bali Concord II *embodies ASEAN's aspiration to achieve peace, and stability with one another and with the world at large.*

  Vientiane Action Programme *calls for ASEAN to build a secure and prosperous ASEAN and to adopt outward-looking external relation strategies with its friends and Dialogue Partners.*

- **7 Focus areas –** maritime security (MS), counter-terrorism (CT), humanitarian assistance and disaster management (HADR), peacekeeping operations (PKO), military medicine (MM), humanitarian mine action (HMA) and cyber security (CS).
- **Experts Working Groups (EWGs) –** 1 EWG has been created to facilitate cooperation for each of the 7 focus areas.
- Each EWGs is co-chaired by 1 ASEAN Member States and 1 Plus Country, operating in a ***3-year cycle***.
- In the present cycle ***from 2021-2024, India is co-chairing EWG*** on HADR along with Indonesia.

References

1. The Hindu| 10th ADMM-Plus hosted by Indonesia
2. ADMM| ADMM-Plus

Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas (Tribal Pride Day)

In India, the Janjatiya Gaurav Divas is celebrated every year on November 15 since 2021 to recognize the efforts of the brave tribal freedom fighters.

- It is to mark the ***birth anniversary of Sri Birsa Munda*** who is revered as Bhagwan by tribal communities across the country.
- **Objective** - To recognize the efforts of the tribals for preservation of cultural heritage and promotion of Indian values of valour, hospitality and national pride.
- **Activities undertaken** – Debate completions, social activities and others events to show case
  - The achievements of tribals in Indian Freedom struggle.
  - Benefits of various welfare measures taken by Government of India in tribal development.

  India's freedom struggle was strengthened by several movements by tribal communities such as ***Santhals, Tamars, Kols, Bhils, Khasis and Mizos*** *to name a few.*

Tribal leaders	Contributions
Birsa Munda (Jharkhand)	• Formed a new religion, **Birsait**. • Lead **Munda Rebellion** (Ulgulan Revolt) against British.
Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh (Chhattisgarh)	• Looted and distributed grains amongst the poor after the 1856 famine. • Attained martyr in the independence struggle of 1857.
Alluri Seetha Ram Raju (Andhra Pradesh)	• Lead Rampa Rebellion against British.
Rani Gaidinliu (Manipur)	• Revolted against British rule. • Joined in Heraka movement for establish Naga Raj (Rule of Nagas).
Sidhu and Kanhu Murmu (Jharkhand and Bengal)	• Lead Santhal Rebellion (Hul Revolt) in 1855-56.
Rani Kamalapati (Madhya Pradesh)	• Committed **'Jal Jauhar'** (ritual suicide) to save her honour. • The pride of the Gond tribe and the **last Hindu queen of Bhopal**.
Tantia Bhil (Madhya Pradesh)	• Loot the British and distribute the stolen wealth among the needy • **'Robin Hood of India'.**

References

Vikaspedia| Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas

Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra

On the occasion of the Janjatiya Gaurav Divas on November 15 in 2023, Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra was launched from Jharkhand.

- It is one of the largest ever outreach initiative to be undertaken.
- **Aim** – To reach out to people to spread public awareness about government's welfare schemes at the grass root level.
- **Target** – To cover ***over 2.55 lakh Gram Panchayats*** and ***over 3,600 urban local bodies (ULB) by 25th January 2024*** touching every district of the country.
- **Implementation** – It follows **'whole of Government' approach** involving active participation of the State Governments, District authorities, Urban Local Bodies and Gram Panchayats.
- **IEC Vans** – Information, Education and Communication (IEC) vans have been branded and customized
    - To enable dissemination of information through audio visuals, brochures, pamphlets, booklets and flagship standees
    - In ***Hindi and state languages***
    - Showcasing the major schemes, highlights and their achievements at national, state and district level.
- **Address specific concerns of Tribal areas** – Like sickle cell anaemia elimination mission, enrolment in eklavya model residential schools, scholarship schemes, forest right titles, van dhan vikas Kendra and organising Self Help Groups.
- **Activities undertaken**
    - Experience sharing by beneficiaries and interaction with progressive farmers.
    - Celebration of achievements of Gram Panchayats achieving ***100% saturation of schemes*** like Ayushman Card, Jal Jeevan Mission, Jan Dhan Yojana, PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana, ODF Plus status.

- On the spot quiz competitions, drone demonstration, health camps, Mera Yuva Bharat volunteer enrolment and other activities.

References

PIB| Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra

Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue 2023 (IPRD-2023)

Recently, the 5th edition of "Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue 2023" (IPRD-2023), 3-day annual apex-level regional strategic dialogue of the Indian Navy commenced in New Delhi.

- It is an apex-level international **annual conference of the Indian Navy** at the strategic-level, addressing maritime security issues across the Indo-Pacific.
- **Meeting** – **Previously 4 editions** of IPRD has been completed (2018, 2019, 2021-online, 2022).
- **Organised by** – The Indian Navy in association with the ***National Maritime Foundation as its knowledge partner***.
- **Objectives**
  - To review maritime trends within the **Indo-Pacific region**, the regional opportunities and associated challenges.
  - To foster the exchange of ***solution-oriented dialogue*** amongst key stakeholders.
- **Theme of IPRD-2023** – Geopolitical Impacts upon Indo-Pacific Maritime Trade and Connectivity.
- Both 'trade and maritime transport' are the segments of maritime connectivity.

National Maritime Foundation (NMF)

National Maritime Foundation (NMF) is India's 1st maritime think-tank for the conduct of independent and policy-relevant research on all matters of maritime.

- **Establishment** – In 2005.
- It is an independent and autonomous think-tank based in New Delhi.
- **Government Support** – Its intellectual and organisational development is supported by the Ministry of Defence and the Indian Navy.

References

1. PIB| Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue 2023 (IPRD-2023)
2. Maritime India| National Maritime Foundation

Other Important News

India International Science Festival (IISF)

• 9th edition of the annual event, India International Science Festival (IISF) will be held at Faridabad, Haryana in January 2024.
• **Theme -** Science and Technology Public Outreach in Amrit Kaal.
• **Aim -** To provide a platform to engage the public with science and celebrate how science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) can improve lives.
• It is a collaborative effort of the Ministry of Science and Technology and Ministry of Earth Sciences in association with Vijnana Bharati.

Pandora's cluster

• Recently, scientists used the James Webb Space Telescope to discover the 2nd and 4th most distant galaxies in a part of space known as Pandora's cluster.
• Pandora's Cluster is the nickname of ***Abell 2744***, a giant galaxy cluster in the ***constellation Sculptor***.
• It's about 4 million light-years across and has the mass of 4 trillion suns (Dark matter – 75%).
• The cluster is located approximately 4 billion light years from Earth.
• The gas (around 20%) is so hot that it shines only in X-rays.

Sea Guardian-3

• The Sea Guardian-3 exercise is a joint bilateral naval exercise between ***China and Pakistan*** in the ***Northern Arabian Sea.***
• China and Pakistan will conduct their 1st joint maritime patrol during this exercise.
• The exercise is divided into 2 phases, shore-based exchanges, and maritime joint operations with the theme of Joint Response to Maritime Security Threats.

NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) mission

• It is a joint ***Low Earth Orbit observatory mission*** between ***NASA*** and the ***Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)*** scheduled to take place in the early 2024.
• **Aim -** To survey all of Earth's land and ice-covered surfaces every 12 days.
• NISAR carries L and S dual-band Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR), which operates with the ***Sweep SAR technique*** to achieve large swaths with high-resolution data.

White-Cheeked Macaque (Macaca leucogenys)

• The White-cheeked macaque is a species of macaque found only in Medog County in southeastern ***Tibet*** and ***Arunachal Pradesh*** in northeastern India.
• **Conservation status –** Endangered (IUCN Red List)
• It is not covered by the Wildlife Protection Act of India.
• Along with White-Cheeked Macaques and Arunachal Macaque, Assamese Macaque (Macaca assamensis) and Rhesus Macaque (Macaca mulatta) reported from the same landscape.

Dollfus' Stargazer

• Hirodai ohtsukai is a new genus and species of crustacean parasite discovered recently in the Dollfus' Stargazer (Uranoscopus guttatus) fish species off the coast of India.
• Dollfus' stargazer (Uranoscopus dollfusi) is a marine fish in the family ***Uranoscopidae***.
• It is widespread in the Western Indian Ocean, including the Gulf of Suez, Gulf of Oman, and Persian Gulf. It can be found at depths ranging from 300-550 m.
• The stargazers are a family of perciform fish that have eyes on top of their heads.

Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA)

• It's a Boeing 747SP aircraft modified to carry a 2.7-meter (106-inch) reflecting telescope and is the world's ***only airborne*** telescope.
• The telescope weighs 19 tons and is mounted in the rear fuselage of the aircraft.
• SOFIA was designed for infrared astronomy observations in the stratosphere at altitudes of about 12 kilometers.
• SOFIA achieved full operational capability in 2014 and concluded its final science flight on September, 2022.

Galapagos Giant tortoises

• Giant tortoises were once so abundant on the Galapagos archipelago off Ecuador.
• The Galapagos giant tortoise (Chelonoidis niger) is the largest living species of tortoise.
• It is also one of the longest-lived land vertebrates, with an average lifespan of over 100 years.
• Of the 15 species of giant tortoises that once lived in the Galapagos, 3 are now extinct.
• The Galapagos National Park (Ecuador's first national park and a UNESCO World Heritage Site) was established to collect eggs from the wild and incubate them at the Charles Darwin Research Station.

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