Prelim Bits 22-02-2022 | Daily UPSC Current Affairs

Byanjana Dwadashi

The Byanjana Dwadashi festival of Odisha is seen as a great step towards promoting food security.

- Byanjana Dwadashi festival is celebrated in Odisha's temple town of Puri.
- This festival is a gastronomic and epicurean delight with at least 701 dishes being prepared.
- It celebrates a variety of food (*Byanjana*) on the 12th day (*Dwadashi*) of the *Sukla Paksha* or waxing phase of the moon in the month of Margashira (mid-December to mid-January).
- This festival commemorates an episode of the Mahabharata where Yashoda observes that her son Krishna is pale and weak.
- She realises that this is because of lack of proper nutrition at a time when Krishna has devoted all his energy in fighting demons.
- In order to fulfil his nutritional requirements, she prepares a lot of delicacies and feeds him and his friends.
- This episode was re-enacted in the Vaishnava mutts of Puri by the medieval mystic, **Chaitanya Mahaprabhu** around 500 years ago.

Reference

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Reef ball Burials

- A reef ball burial will have the cremated remains (human ashes) mixed into a pH-neutral perforated concrete dome, known as the reef ball.
- This burial is also known as Ocean Burial or Sea burial.
- The reef balls **placed in the seabed** can attract a host of marine life to largely barren seabed.
- **Reality** - The concept of an ocean burial is becoming increasingly popular as people look for environmentally friendly alternatives to traditional burial and cremation.
- But still, this burial **still needs cremation**, which may release 400kg of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere for each body.
- **History** - A desire to return to the ocean goes back millennia, with evidence of sea burial in ancient Egypt and Rome.
- In the South Pacific, bodies would be placed in canoes and pushed out to sea, while scattering ashes in the ocean has long been widely practised in Asia.
- There are tales of fallen Viking heroes' boats set ablaze in some cultures.

Reference

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2. https://www.natureworldnews.com/articles/49522/20220221/people-are-dying-to-be-turned-into-corals-after-their-death.htm
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Minsk Agreements

The US has urged both Russia and Ukraine to return to a set of agreements designed to end a separatist war by Russian speakers in eastern Ukraine.

MINSK I (2014)

- Ukraine and the Russian-backed separatists agreed a 12-point ceasefire deal in the Belarusian capital in 2014.
- Its provisions included
    1. Prisoner exchanges,
    2. Deliveries of humanitarian aid and
    3. The withdrawal of heavy weapons.
- The agreement quickly broke down, with violations by both sides.

MINSK II (2015)

- Representatives of Russia, Ukraine, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the leaders of two pro-Russian separatist regions signed a 13-point agreement in 2015.
- The leaders of France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine issued a declaration of support for the deal.
- It set out **military and political steps** that remain unimplemented.
- A major blockage has been Russia's insistence that it is not a party to the conflict and therefore is not bound by its terms.
- These agreements call for, an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire; withdrawal of all heavy weapons by both sides; monitoring and verification by the OSCE; and provision of humanitarian assistance.
- It calls for a dialogue on interim self-government for the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, in accordance with Ukrainian law, and acknowledge their special status by parliamentary resolution.
- Other provisions include,
    1. An exchange of hostages and prisoners.
    2. Resumption of socio-economic ties, including pensions.
    3. Restoration of full control of the state border by the government of Ukraine,
    4. Constitutional reform in Ukraine including decentralisation, with specific mention of Donetsk and Luhansk, and
    5. Intensifying the work of a Trilateral Contact Group comprising representatives of Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE.

Reference

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2. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/9/what-is-the-minsk-agreement-and-why-is-it-relevant-now

National Financial Switch

- The National Financial Switch (NFS) is India's largest interconnected network of Automated Teller Machines (ATMs).
- NFS enabled the interconnectivity between the bank's switches such that the transactions made at any ATM could be routed to the connected banks.
- NFS system was developed by the Institute of development and research in Banking Technology (IDRBT), Hyderabad under the aegis of the RBI in 2004
- It was taken over from IDRBT by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) in 2009.
- NFS ATM network is India's leading multilateral ATM network. It has 37 members connecting about 50,000 ATMs.
- **Salient Features** - NFS has introduced sub-membership model which enables smaller, regional banks including RRBs and local co-operative banks to participate in the ATM network.
- It extends service to non-banking entities with White Label ATMs.
- NPCI has also tied up with International card schemes which allows their cardholders to use ATMs connected to NFS network.
- [International card schemes like Discover Financial Service (DFS), Japan Credit Bureau (JCB) and China UnionPay International (CUPI).]
- The Dispute Management System has benefitted members with high operational efficiency & ease of online transaction life cycle management in the network apart from being compliant with local regulatory needs.
- Fraud Risk Management (FRM) solution is offered as a value added service to monitor transactions (in real time) and to generate alert or decline the transaction in the NFS network

Reference

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Presidential Fleet Review 2022

The President of India took part in the 12th Presidential Fleet Review of the Indian Navy 2022.

> Currently, the India's Naval Fleet has 60 ships and submarines and 55 aircraft.
>
> Commemorating 75 years of independence, the theme of Presidential Fleet Review 2022 is 'Indian Navy - 75 years in Service of the Nation'.

- The Presidential Fleet Review is the country's President taking stock of the Navy's capability.
- It showcases all types of ships and capabilities the Navy has.
- A fleet review is usually conducted **once during the tenure** of the President, who is the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.
- In terms of significance, the Navy's Presidential review is second only to the Republic Day Parade.
- **President's Yacht** - The President is taken on one of the Naval ships, which is called the President's Yacht, to look at all the ships docked on one of the Naval ports.
- The President's Yacht this year is an indigenously built Naval Offshore Patrol Vessel, INS

Sumitra, which will lead the Presidential Column.

- The yacht will be distinguished by the Ashoka Emblem on her side and will fly the President's Standard on the Mast.
- **Previous Reviews** - So far, 11 Presidential Fleet Reviews have been conducted since Independence.
- The first one was conducted in 1953, under President Rajendra Prasad.
- The last one was conducted in 2016 under President Pranab Mukherjee.
- The reviews in 2001 and 2016 were International Fleet Reviews, in which some vessels from other countries also participated.

The earliest recorded Indian Fleet Review was in the 18th Century by the Maratha fleet, consisting of 'Ghurabs' and 'Gallivats', under the renowned Sarkhel (Grand Admiral) Kanhoji Angre at the coastal fortress of Ratnagiri.

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