Prelim Bits 23-06-2023 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Upanishads and Scriptures

PM Modi presented the U.S. President, a first edition print of the book The Ten Principal Upanishads from 1937.

Hindu scriptures

- There are broadly 2 categories of Hindu sacred texts
- **Shruti (the revealed)** – Sruti is direct experience, Great Rishis heard the eternal truths of religion and left a record of them for the benefit of posterity.
- It constitute the Vedas (Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva) and accompanying texts.
- The Vedas are primary authority and foundational scriptures of the Hindus.
- **Smriti (the remembered)** – Smriti is a recollection of that experience so it is secondary authority.
- The Smritis or Dharma Sastras also are books written by sages, but they are not the final authority.
- If there is anything in a Smriti which contradicts the Sruti, the Smriti is to be rejected.
- It includes Brahmanas (ritual texts), Aranyakas (forest or wilderness texts), and Upanishads (philosophical texts).
- These include the great epics of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, Dharmashastras, Puranas and all other post-Vedic scriptures.

Upanishads

- The Upanishads, also known as the Vedanta (the end of Veda) forms the very foundation of Hinduism.
- It is a religious and Philosophical treatises.
- It speculate about the ontological connection between humanity and the cosmos.
- Dated to roughly 800-500 BC, the Upanishads discuss concepts such as transmigration, nature and God.
- They represent the “Knowledge of Brahman” (Brahma-vidya) and are mostly related to Vedas.
- **Oldest Upanishads** - Brihadaranyaka and Chandogya Upanishads – 1st millennium BC.
- **The latest Upanishad** - Muktika Upanishad - by Dara Shikoh – 1656.
- The Upanishads were given particular importance by 8th century Hindu scholar Adi Shankara, whose interpretations synthesised the *Advaita Vedanta* tradition.

Ten Principal Upanishads (Dashupanishads)	
Esha	Mandukya
Kena	Taittiriya

Katha	Aitareya
Prashna	Chandogya
Mundaka	Brihadaranyaka

Reference

The Indian Express | pm-modi-biden-yeats-ten-principal-upanishads

Puri Rath Yatra

Recently Jagannath Rath Yatra Festival, 2023 is celebrated in Puri.

- It is a 9 day festival held at the city of Puri in the state of Odisha.
- It is an *annual* chariot festival dedicated to Lord Jagannath.
- This day is celebrated on Dwitiya (2nd day) of *shukla paksha* (the period between the New Moon (Amavasya) to the Full Moon (Poornima)) in the month of Ashadha (4th lunar month in Hindu calendar).
- Lord Jagannath come out of his sanctum along with the elder brother *Lord Balbhadra* and younger sister *Subhadra* and roam around the city.
- **Types of rath**
  - Nandighosa Rath - Jagannath
  - Taladhwaja Rath - Lord Bala Bhadra
  - Darpadalana Ratha - Goddess Subhadra

Schedules of Yatra	
Jagannath Rath Yatra	Start of the journey towards the Gundicha temple
Hera Panchami	First 5 during which deities reside in the Gundicha temple
Sandhya Darshan or Navami Darshan	Devotees can see and pray all the deities
Bahuda Yatra	The period during which the deities return back to their home
Sunabesa	The period during which all the three deities reside back in the Jagannath temple
Aadhar Pana	A ritual during which a special drink is offered to the holy chariots
Niladri BJ	A special ritual performed by the end of the Jagannath Yatra

> *The 'Ratha Yatra' Festival celebrated in Ahmedabad is considered to be the second biggest Rath Yatra in the country after the Puri Jagannath Rath Yatra.*

Reference

Times of India | jagannath-rath-yatra-2023

Chiral Bose-liquid State

A recent research shows that the chiral bose-liquid state may be an entirely new state of matter.

- **States of matter -** There are 3 classical states of matter in day to day life- solid, liquid and gas.
- But, exotic or quantum states of matter, such as plasma, time crystals, and Bose-Einstein condensate also exist at the atomic scale, and at extremely low temperatures approaching absolute zero.
- **Chiral Bose-liquid state** - The chiral Bose-liquid state is a new phase discovered by physicists in a ***frustrated quantum system***, where infinite possibilities result from the interaction of particles.
- The team developed a bilayer semiconductor device or a frustration.
- The top layer of the device was made to be electron-rich, in which the electrons can freely move about.
- The bottom layer only had holes, which are slots an electron can occupy.
- Then the two layers are brought extremely close together.
- The machine is then triggered to create a local imbalance resulting in electrons not having enough holes to fill (similiar to the game of musical chairs).
- This kicks off the novel state called the chiral bose-liquid state.
- **Significance** - In this state,
    - Electrons can be frozen into *predictable patterns.*
    - Electrons can be made *resilient to changes in spin* (a defining characteristic of subatomic particles)
    - Electrons can even *synchronise their movements.*

Reference

The Hindu | what-is-the-chiral-bose-liquid-state

Skin bank

North India's first skin bank opens in Safdarjung Hospital, Delhi.

- **Skin Bank** – It is a valuable resource in providing cadaveric allograft skin (human cadaver skin donated for medical use) as a cover for partial-thickness and full-thickness burn injuries.
- The skin from a donor is generally harvested within 6 – 8 hours of death.
- Only 1/8th thickness part of the skin is taken and stored in glycerol, and then taken to a skin bank.

- **Donated skin** – It includes the skin obtained from
  - Any unburned spot of the same patient – Autograft
  - Cadaveric Skin – Allograft
  - Animals – Xenograft
- A person can donate their organs only in the case of *brain death*, but they *can* donate their eyes and skin even when they suffer a cardiac death.
- The bank is a boon for patients as there is no blood group matching required in skin grafting.
- **Preservation Methods -** *Cryopreservation* is the preferred method for long term storage of viable skin grafts.
- Donor skin can be frozen and stored for 4-8 degree Celsius up to 5 years.

The first skin bank was established in the USA around 1950. India has 16 skin banks across the country.

- **Criteria for donating Skin**
  - A skin donor should be 18 Years or above.
  - Only those suffering from HIV & Hepatitis B & Hepatitis C, generalized infection & Septicemia (Pneumonia, T.B, etc), any kind of skin infection, malignancy and having evidence of skin cancer, *cannot* donate.

Reference

The Indian Express | North-india's-first-skin-bank-opens-in-delhi

International Yoga Day

- Yoga is an ancient physical, mental and spiritual practice that originated in India.
- **UN Definition on Yoga** - Yoga embodies unity of mind and body, thought and action, restraint and fulfillment, harmony between man and nature, a holistic approach to health and well-being.
- It emphasizes physical postures *(asanas)*, breathing techniques *(pranayama)*, and meditation *(dyana)*.
- International Yoga Day is celebrated on June 21 every year because it is the longest day of the year in the northern hemisphere.
- **Theme of 2023** - Yoga for *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (Yoga for the welfare of all in the form of 'One World-One Family').
- **Aim** - To raise awareness about the numerous benefits of yoga and promote its holistic approach to physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.
- **Yoga Sutras** - Patanjali, also known as Gonardiya or Gonikaputra, was the author of Yoga-sutras.
- The Yoga Sutras is Yoga school's treatise on how to accomplish this.
- **Yoga School** - It is closely related to the *Samkhya school* of Hinduism.
- The purpose of yoga is liberation from suffering, caused by entanglement with the world.

- It believes *Ashtanga yoga* eventually leads to liberation.
- Yoga school is one of the orthodox schools in Indian philosophy.

Description of Schools of Indian Philosophy

Schools of Indian Philosophy	Founder	Significance
Vaishesika	Kanada	Naturalism
Nyaya	Gautama	Logic, Methodology, and Epistemology
Samkhya	Kapila	Reality
Yoga	Patanjali	Meditation for achieving Mukti
Purva Mimansa	Jaimini	Power of Yajnas and Mantras
Vedanta or Uttara Mimansa	Vyasa	World is unreal and Brahman is the only real

Reference

The Indian Express | International Yoga Day

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