Prelim Bits 26-02-2024 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Attukal Pongala

Attukal Pongala goes global with devotees observing the ritual in the US and the UK.

- Attukal Pongala is celebrated in the State of Kerala.
- It is the world's largest congregation of women for a festival.
- The festival is celebrated annually at Attukal Bhagavathy Temple, in Trivandrum, Kerala.
- It is a 10 days event commencing on the Karthigai star of the Malayalam month of Makaram or Kumbham and closing with the sacrificial offering known as Kuruthitharpanam at night.
- On the 9th day of the festival the Attukal Pongala Mahotsavam takes place.
- Pongala, means 'to boil over', is the ritual in which a sweet payasam (a pudding made from rice, jaggery, coconut and plantains cooked together) is prepared and offered to the Goddess or 'Bhagavathy'.

Quick Facts
Attukal Bhagavathy Temple
• The temple of Attukal Bhagavathy Amman is known as Sabarimala of women. • Attukal Bhagavathi is believed to be an incarnation of Kannaki, the central character of the Tamil epic 'Silappathikaaram'. • The temple is renowned for the annual Attukal Pongal festival, in which over three million women participate.

References

1. The Hindu – Attukal Pongala goes global
2. Times of India – Attukal Pongal 2024
3. Hindustan Times – Attukal Pongal : The special time of the year is here

Shahpur Kandi Barrage

The flow of water from River Ravi to Pakistan has been completely halted with the completion of the Shahpur Kandi barrage as per the media reports.

- **Foundation -** The foundation stone for the Shahpur Kandi Barrage Project was laid by former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao in 1995.
- **Location -** Shahpur Kandi barrage is situated on the Ravi River in the border of Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Purpose -** Shahpur Kandi barrage allows India to ensure that the water previously flowing towards Pakistan will now be utilized for Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab regions.

- The newly-built barrage will help India ***fully exploit the allocated water resources***.
- The Indus Water Treaty, 1960, facilitates the usage of the Rivers flowing in India and Pakistan for both the countries.

Indus Waters Treaty
• IWT, signed in 1960 under the World Bank's supervision, is a pivotal agreement regulating the use and distribution of the Indus River system between India and Pakistan. • While India maintains absolute control over the waters of the eastern rivers, the Ravi, Sutlej, and Beas, Pakistan enjoys unrestricted use of the western rivers, the Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab.

- **Other projects -** India has already constructed several storage works, including the Bhakra Dam on the Sutlej, Pong and Pandoh Dam on the Beas, and Thein (Ranjitsagar) on the Ravi.
- These projects, along with others like the Beas-Sutlej link and the Indira Gandhi Nahar Project, have allowed India to utilize nearly its entire share (95%) of the waters from the eastern rivers.

References

1. Times of India | Flow of Ravi water to Pakistan fully stopped
2. The Economic Times | India stops Ravi water flow to Pakistan
3. WION | India stops flow of Ravi River into Pakistan

Sudharshan Setu

PM Modi has recently inaugurates the Sudharshan Setu, India's longest Cable-Stayed Bridge, in the Gulf of Kutch.

- **Cost and Funding -** The bridge was built at a cost of Rs. 978 crore and is funded by the Union Government.
- **Initiation -** The project was initiated by the Centre in 2017.
- **Purpose -** It aims to simplify access for devotees commuting between Okha and Beyt Dwarka, eliminating the need for boat transport to reach the Dwarkadhish Temple.

  Beyt Dwarka is an island near Okha port, which is nearly 30 km from Dwarka town, where the famous Dwarkadhish temple of Lord Krishna is situated.

- **Other names -** The bridge, which was known as 'Signature Bridge', has been renamed as 'Sudarshan Setu' or Sudarshan Bridge.

  Sudarshan Setu boasts a unique design, featuring a footpath adorned with verses from the Bhagavad Gita and images of Lord Krishna on both sides.

- The bridge is constructed as a part of ***National Highway 51*** that runs along the coast

of Saurashtra.

After the Union Territory of Diu, located at Una coast in Gir Somnath, Bet Dwarka is the second largest island off the Gujarat coast.

- **Cable-stayed bridge -** Sudharshan Setu is Gujarat's longest cable-stayed bridge.
- There is one cable-stayed bridge in Bhavnagar but it is a few dozen metres long.
- The Narmada Bridge in Bharuch is 1.3 km long, it differs from a typical cable-stayed bridge like Sudarshan Setu.

Atal Setu, India's longest sea bridge was recently inaugurated by the Prime Minster Narendra Modi in Mumbai.

References

1. The Economic Times | PM inaugurates longest cable-stayed bridge
2. The Indian Express | PM inaugurates Signature Bridge in Gujarat
3. NDTV | PM Modi Inaugurates Sudarshan Setu

Third-Party Application Provider (TPAP)

RBI has asked the National Payment Council of India (NCPI) to examine the request of Paytm, to become a Third-Party Application Provider (TPAP) for continued Unified Payments Interface operation.

- **TPAP -** A Third-Party Application Provider is an entity that provides the UPI compliant app(s) to the end-user customers to facilitate UPI-based payment transactions.
- **Applications -** These applications could be mobile wallets, merchant apps, or any other platform that utilizes UPI for payments.
- **NPCI -** NPCI is the umbrella organisation for operating retail payments and settlement systems in India, owns and operates the UPI platform.
- **Working of TPAP -** TPAPs leverage the UPI infrastructure provided by NPCI and work with payment service providers (PSPs) and banks to facilitate transactions.
- They are responsible for ensuring that their applications adhere to security standards and compliance guidelines set by NPCI.
- Payment service providers (PSPs) need to obtain a TPAP license from NPCI to run UPI services and facilitate merchant transactions through partner banks, as per the current regulations.
- Currently, there are 22 NPCI-approved 3rd party Unified Payments Interface (UPI) apps that can be used to send and receive money from other UPI users by using UPI IDs.
- They include Amazon Pay, Google Pay, Groww, Jupiter Money, Mobikwik, Phonepe, Samsung Pay, TataNeu and Whatsapp.

RBI barred Paytm Payments Bank from accepting deposits or top-ups in any

customer account, prepaid instruments, wallets, FASTags and NCMC card after February 29, 2024, in the wake of persistent non-compliances.

Quick Facts
National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)
• NPCI is an umbrella organisation for operating retail payments and settlement systems in India. • It is an initiative of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and Indian Banks' Association (IBA). • It works under the provisions of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, for creating a robust Payment & Settlement Infrastructure in India. • NPCI has been incorporated as a Not for Profit Company under the provisions of Section 25 of Companies Act 1956 (now Section 8 of Companies Act 2013).

References

1. The Indian Express | RBI to consider Paytm's request for TPAP
2. The Hindu | RBI asks NPCI to examine if TPAP status to Paytm
3. Live Mint | NPCI to review Paytm's application for 3rd party status

Tangail Saree

Bangladeshis annoyed after West Bengal gets GI Tag for Tangail Saree.

- Tangail sarees named after the place called Tangail, located in Bangladesh.
- Weavers from Tangail region of then East Bengal, migrated to different parts of West Bengal and continued their weaving profession for production of Tangail Sarees.
- The Tangail saree is a simplification of Jamdani cotton saree but with minimal designs in body portion, thereby minimizing the labour and price.

The traditional tangail borders had a 'paddo' or lotus pattern, pradeep or lamp pattern apart from popular 'ans par' that was common in Shantipur region.

- **Materials used -** Tangail weavers normally used cotton and the texture is usually high and compact.
- Tassar silk yarn, Mercerized cotton yarn, dyed twisted cotton yarn are used as extra warp for making designs in the borders of the sarees.
- Jacquards fabrics are used for making designs in the borders.
- Coloured yarns are used for both warp and weft and in extra warp also.

Tangail sarees are often highlighted with gold or silver thread, which heightens their elegance.

- **Weaving technique -** Tangail sarees have an unusually fine and smooth texture with a pattern running through every alternate or every two weft threads apart.
- Tangail cotton saree is woven with figured motifs, in transparent plain ground, with

designs of extra warp in borders and extra weft in the body portion.

West Bengal bagged the Geographical Indication (GI) Tag for Tangail Saree in January 2024.

Quick Facts
Geographical Indication (GI) Tag
• It is defined under Article-23 and 24 of the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement of the World Trade Organization (WTO). • GI tag is a form of certification that recognizes unique products based on their origin. • GI tagged products can be natural or man-made. • The raw materials for such products do not necessarily have to come from that region, unless it is an agricultural tag. • The essential difference between GI and other intellectual properties (IP) is that, GI is a collective Intellectual Property Right. • India is a member of WTO and enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act, 1999 that came into force from 2003.

References

1. WION | Bangladesh cries foul over Tangail saree
2. The Daily Star | Caught in the crossfire of geographical indication
3. ETV Bharat | Saree State of Affairs
4. The Business Standard | The Tangail saree fiasco

Other Important Topics
Vimarsh 2023
• It is a 5G Hackathon will focus on addressing key issues and exploring innovative solutions for Law Enforcement Agencies based on user specific problem statements. • **Conducted by -** The Telecom Centres of Excellence (TCoE) India in collaboration with Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
Ayutthaya

• Ayutthaya named after the birth city of Lord Ram in Ayodhya, was located above the tidal bore of the ***Gulf of Siam*** in ***Thailand.***
• The Historic City of Ayutthaya, founded in 1350, was the 2nd capital of the ***Siamese Kingdom after Sukhothai***.
• Ayutthaya was strategically located on an island surrounded by 3 rivers connecting the city to the sea.
• Ayutthaya is now home to archaeological treasures, characterized by the remains of ***tall prang (reliquary towers)*** and Buddhist monasteries.

DHARMA GUARDIAN

The 5th edition of EXERCISE 'DHARMA GUARDIAN' commenced recently in Rajasthan.
• Exercise 'DHARMA GUARDIAN' is a ***Joint annual military exercise*** and conducted alternatively in ***India and Japan***.
• **Aim -** To foster Military Cooperation and enhance combined capabilities to execute joint operations in semi-urban environment under Chapter VII of United Nations Charter.

Nisarg Gram

PM Modi recently inaugurates National Institute of Naturopathy (NIN) named 'Nisarg Gram' in Pune.
• The National Institute of Naturopathy (NIN) in Pune, Maharashtra has been named Nisarg Gram.
• The campus is named after Mahatma Gandhi's Nature Cure campaign of 1946 at the ***Nisarg Upchar Ashram*** in Uruli Kanchan village near Pune.
• The NISARG GRAM is a bedded hospital with multi-disciplinary research and extension service centre along with a Naturopathy Medical College.

Right to Adopt Child

• The Delhi High Court has recently ruled that the right to adopt ***cannot*** be raised to the status of a fundamental right within ***Article 21*** of the Constitution of India.
• It also includes that it cannot be raised to a level granting ***Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAPs)*** the right to demand their choice of who to adopt.

KALIA Scheme

The Odisha state cabinet recently extended the KALIA scheme for 3 more years.

• KALIA stands for “Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation”.

• It is a cash assistant scheme launched by Odisha Government in 2018 to accelerate Agricultural Prosperity and reduce poverty in the State.

• Financial assistance of Rs.25,000 will be given per farm family over 5 seasons.

India's largest Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)

• It has been commissioned successfully by Solar Energy Corporation of India Limited (SECI), under the aegis of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.

• It has an installed capacity of 152.325 megawatt hours (MWh) and a dispatchable capacity of 100 megawatts AC solar power.

• Battery energy storage systems (BESS) work with renewable energy sources like solar and wind to store energy.

• They charge batteries when resources are abundant and generally have a discharge duration of four hours or less at rated power.

Purple Fest

• Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment is organizing a long ‘Purple Fest’ at Amrit Udyaan in the Rashtrapati Bhawan recently.

• The ‘Purple Fest’ will have fully inclusive and interactive stalls of organizations working in the field of accessibility, inclusion and disability rights.

Meow Meow, White Magic, M-Cat and Drone

• Mephedrone, which has various street names such Meow Meow, White Magic, M-Cat and Drone, is a synthetically manufactured stimulant of the amphetamine and cathinone category.

• Mephedrone, also known as 4-methylmethcathinone (4-MMC) and 4-methylephedrone, is a synthetic stimulant drug.

• It's chemically similar to the cathinone compounds found in the Khat plant of eastern Africa.

Language Atlas

• The Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, an autonomous body under the Union Culture Ministry, proposes to conduct a linguistic survey across the country to create a ‘Language Atlas’ of India.

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