

## 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 Minister 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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.