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History, Art and Culture

Agatthiyar

Recently, the Vice President of India released the book "Agatthiyar – The Unifier".

- Agathiyar (Agastya) is a revered Vedic sage.
- **Contributions** – Founding father of the Siddha system of medicine.
- **Literary work –** Agathiyam (Tamil grammer book).
- **Associated places** – Held River Kaveri in his kamandalam (water pot) to provide water to the dry lands of the south.
  - In the sacred Pothigai Hills, Agastya composed *Agathiyam, the earliest known Tamil grammatical treatise.*
- **Legacy –** "India's languages are sister tongues, enriched by mutual respect and centuries of cultural exchange."

Ayurveda Knowledge Heritage workshop

CCRAS-Central Sanskrit University Initiative Strengthens Preservation of India's Ayurveda Knowledge Heritage recently.

- **Organised by** –
  - Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), Ministry of Ayush.
  - Central Sanskrit University (CSU), Ministry of Education.
- **Collaboration with –** Sri Vadiraja Research Foundation.
- **Focuses on** – Transliteration of Tigalari and Old Kannada Manuscripts
  - Publication of rare unpublished ayurveda texts.
- **Aim** – To build expertise among scholars in reading, deciphering and transcribing Ayurveda manuscripts.

Dancing Girl of Mohenjo-daro

There is a recent controversy about the digital "covering up" of the bare torso of the 4,500-year-old bronze "Dancing Girl" figurine Period – Indus Valley Civilisation.

- **Discovered in –** Mohenjo-daro (present-day Sindh, Pakistan), in the year of 1926.
- **Excavated by** – British archaeologist Ernest Mackay
- **Made-up of –** Bronze.
- **Features** – Naturalism, lively posture, and ancient metallurgy.

Polity & Governance

Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

ASI and National Museum of Denmark Signed MoU for Underwater Archaeological Investigation of Historic Danish Ship Oresund.

- It is a premier organization for *archaeological research and heritage protection.*
- **Founded in –** 1861 by Sir Alexander Cunningham.
- **Functions under –** Ministry of Culture.
- **Legal Framework**
  - Operates under the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.*
  - Regulates the *Antiquities and Art Treasure Act, 1972.*
- **Administrative Structure –** Entire country divided into *37 Circles for monument/site management.*
- **Objectives –** To conducts archaeological surveys, excavations, and research projects.
  - To maintains and conserves monuments and sites of national importance.
  - To operates museums and publishes research findings.

SHE-Marts (Self-Help Entrepreneur Marts)

Under DAY-NRLM 700 SHE-MARTs, 1,000 District Fulfilment Centres to be set up to ensure 6 crore lakpati didis.

- **SHE-Marts –** These are Community-owned retail outlets supported by the government.
  - Designed to empower rural women entrepreneurs.
- **Objectives -**
  - To enable Self-Help Groups (SHGs) *to sell goods directly to consumers.*
  - To increase profit margins and reduce dependence on middlemen.
  - To support the *"Lakhpati Didi" mission –* ensuring sustainable income for 6 crore women.
- **Structure & function**
  - Established within *cluster-level federations* to showcase and sell local products.
  - Linked with *Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)* for nationwide digital selling.

International Relations and Issues

Slovakia

Prime Minister conferred with the national honour of the Slovak Republic recently.

- **Award –** ''Order of the White Double Cross, 1st Class''.
  - It is the highest national honour of the Slovakia.

Slovakia



- Slovakia is a landlocked parliamentary democratic republic in Central Europe.
  - It became an independent nation on *January 1, 1993.*
- **Capital –** Bratislava (only national capital in the world that directly borders two other sovereign countries: *Austria and Hungary*).
- **Geography –** Dominated by the *Western Carpathian Mountains.*
- **Boarders** –Poland (north), Ukraine (east), Hungary (south), Austria (southwest), Czech Republic (northwest).

Exercise Pitch Black

The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) officially launched the 2026 edition of Exercise Pitch Black.

- **Held in** – Northern **Australia.**
- **Operated from** – RAAF Bases Darwin and Tindal in the Northern Territory, as well as RAAF Base Amberley in Queensland.
- **Participating nations** – India, Australia, Brunei, Canada, Fiji, Finland, France, Indonesia, and other 11 nations.
- **Objective** – To enhance interoperability, shared preparedness, and regional security among allied and partner air forces.

Agriculture

Queen Pineapple

Recently Union Minister highlights GI-tagged Queen Pineapple as a flagship product with global premium potential.

- It is a *spiny, golden-yellow variety.*
- **Scientific name** – Ananas comosus (L.) Merr.
- **Known for** – Deep orange-yellow flesh, *intense sweetness (13-17.2 degrees Brix)*, and rich aroma.
- **Nutritional value –** Packed with vitamins (A, B, C) and minerals (calcium, magnesium, iron).
- **Note –** It is *state fruit of Tripura.*

Environment

Project Great Indian Bustard (GIB)

Recently, Project GIB Adds Three Chicks, Taking Captive Stock to 94 Birds.

- **Objective** – to save Great Indian Bustard (GIB) i.e, state bird of Rajasthan.
- **Conservation methods** –
  - **Captive breeding –** *"Jumpstart approach",* By replacing an infertile egg in the wild with a captive-bred, led to increase in population.
  - Habitat preservation,
  - Power-line mitigation.
- **Conservation status –**
  - **IUCN Red List** – Critically Endangered
  - **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** – Schedule I
  - **CITES** – Appendix I

Security

INS Sharda (P55)

Recently, INS Sharda departed Colombo, Sri Lanka after a successful port call that further strengthened maritime cooperation.

- It is a *Sukanya-class offshore patrol vessel* of the Indian Navy.
- **Commissioned in** – 1991.
- **Designed for** – Maritime surveillance, fleet support, and anti-piracy operations.
- **Significance –** It actively participates in
  - Regional security deployments and
  - Humanitarian assistance missions.

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
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