UPSC Daily Current affairs| Prelim Bits 04-01-2020

Patola Saree

- Patola, the trademark Saree of Gujarat, is considered to be very costly and worn only by the Royals or the Aristocrat.
- Reason being the raw material silk yarn is purchased from Karnataka or West Bengal, where silk processing units are situated, thus increasing the cost of the fabric manifolds.
- It can take six months to one year to make one sari due to the long process of dying each strand separately before weaving them together.
- Patola was woven in Surat, Ahmedabad and Patan.
- Highly valued in Indonesia, became part of the local weaving tradition there.
- Recently under initiative of Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), a first Silk Processing Plant was inaugurated at Surendranagar in Gujarat.
- This would help cut down the cost of production of silk yarn drastically and increase the sale and availability of raw material for Gujarati Patola Sarees locally.

Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)

- The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) is a statutory body formed by the Government of India, under the Act of Parliament, 'Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act of 1956'.
- It is an apex organization under the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, with regard to khadi and village industries within India.
- It seeks to - "plan, promote, facilitate, organize and assist in the establishment and development of khadi and village industries in the rural areas in coordination with other agencies engaged in rural development wherever necessary

Pink City Jaipur

- India gets its 38th world UNESCO World heritage site As Pink City Jaipur
- The World Heritage Committee took the decision at the UNESCO’s 43rd session at Baku, Azerbaijan.

- Jaipur celebrated for its grid plan based architecture and buildings of pink façades.
- Features of Jaipur are Architecture of streets with colonnades, which intersect the center, creating large public squares called chaupar.
- The uniform façades of markets, residences and temples in the main streets had also impressed the council.
- The Kachwaha Rajput ruler of Amber, Sawai Jai Singh II, founded the fortified city in 1727.
- The city was established on the plains and built according to a grid plan interpreted in **the light of Vedic architecture.**
- The city's urban planning shows an intermingling of ideas from ancient Hindu, modern Mughal and western cultures.

Markandeshwar Temple

- Restoration work of architectural genius, Markandeshwar temple in Maharashtra was initiated by Archaeological Survey of India
- The Markandeshwar **group of temples were built between the 9th and 12th centuries** .
- Dedicated to Lord Shiva called Markandeshwar or Markandadeo temple on the banks of the Wainganga river.
- They are famously known as the 'mini Khajuraho' or 'Khajuraho of Vidarbha'.
- They belong to saiva, vaishnava and sakti faith, these belong to the **Nagara group temples of North India**

Review of Education Initiatives of Ministry of HRD in 2019

- **Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Program (DHRUV) -** To identify and encourage talented children to enrich their skills and knowledge.
- **NISHTHA –** National Initiative for School Heads and Teachers' Holistic Advancement to improve learning outcomes at the elementary level through an Integrated Teacher Training Programme.
- **Education Quality Upgradation and Inclusion Programme (EQUIP) -** Five year vision plan to transform Indian Higher education environment.
- **SWAYAM 2.0 -** SWAYAM seeks to bridge the digital divide for students who have hitherto remained untouched by the digital revolution and have not been able to join the mainstream of the knowledge economy.
- **Deeksharambh -** It is a guide to Student Induction Programme which is prepared by University Grants Commission (UGC).
- **PARAMARSH -** To mentor National Accreditation and Assessment

Council (NAAC) accreditation aspirant institutions for promoting quality assurance in higher education.

- **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB) -** Aims to actively enhance interaction between people of diverse cultures living in different States
- **Shagun -** World's largest Integrated Online junction for School Education.
- **Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+)** - To ensure quality, credibility and timely availability of information from all the schools in the country.
- The GIS based mapping portal gives information about location of more than 15 lakh schools in the country along with some salient highlights.
- **Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA) –** To provide digital platform to teachers giving them an opportunity to learn and train themselves and connect with teacher community.
- **Performance Grading Index (PGI) -** To objectively evaluate the performance of the school education system in the States/UTs, MHRD has designed a 70 indicators based matrix called Performance Grading Index (PGI) to grade the States and UTs.
- **Mid-Day Meal (MDM) -** The National Programme of Mid-Day Meal in Schools is Centrally-Sponsored Scheme.
- It covers all school children studying in Classes I-VIII of Government, Government-Aided, Special Training Centers including Madrasas and Maqtabs.
- **School Nutrition Gardens (SNG) -** A guideline on School Nutrition Gardens has been issued to all states and UTs.
- It is a place where herbs, fruits and vegetables are grown in the school premises for use in preparation of Mid-Day Meal.
- **Kala Utsav -** Initiative of the Department of School Education & Literacy to recognize the importance of aesthetics and artistic experiences for school students, which play a major role in creating awareness of India's rich cultural heritage and its vibrant diversity.

EVALI Disease

- Recently the number of deaths in the US caused due to the mysterious respiratory illness linked to vaping and e-cigarettes rose to 55.
- As of December 2019, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a US federal agency, has reported 2,561 cases across the country who have suffered from the illness.
- The CDC is tentatively referring to the disease as EVALI (e-cigarette, or vaping, product use associated lung injury).

- E-cigarettes, also called ‘vapes’ or ‘electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS)’, are battery-run devices that were originally marketed as a safer alternative to smoking traditional cigarettes.
- The disease ‘EVALI’ is unknown to doctors, and a link between vaping and the lung illness is yet to be concretely established.
- Symptoms, according to the CDC, are those in common with other respiratory illnesses, including coughing, chest tightness, and shortness of breath, extreme fever or fatigue.

Extraocular Vision

- Recently researchers have shown that a species of brittle stars, which are relatives of starfish, can see even though it does not have eyes.
- The red brittle star (Ophiocoma wendtii), which lives in the coral reefs of the Caribbean Sea, becomes only the second creature, after a sea urchin species, known to have this ability.
- The ability to see without eyes is known as extraocular vision.
- Previous researchers have defined it as the ability to resolve scenes without discrete eyes.
- In sea urchins and brittle stars, extraocular vision is facilitated by the photoreceptor cells found on their bodies.
- The researchers suggest that a brittle star sees with the help of light-sensing cells that cover its entire body.
- These light-sensing cells give the brittle star visual stimuli, allowing it to recognize coarse structures such as rocks, the research suggests.

Kalapani Issue

- Located within Uttarakhand, Kalapani is a 372-sq km area bordering far-west Nepal and Tibet.
- As per the administrative records, dating back to 1830s the Kalapani area had been administered as part of the Pithoragarh district (then Almora district).
- According to Nepal's claim, it lies in Darchula district, Sudurpashchim Pradesh.
- The dispute is because of the ambiguity of the source of the Kali River. Nepal views Kali river as Lipu River as opposed to India's view.
- In the Indian view, the Kali River begins only after Lipu Gad/river is joined by other streams arising from the Kalapani springs.
- The area between the Lipu Gad/Kalapani River and the watershed of the river is the disputed Kalapani territory.

Source: The Hindu, PIB and Indian Express