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Dara Shikoh

- Dara Shikoh was a prince of Mughal Empire (1615-59), he was the eldest son of Shah Jahan.
- Dara Shikoh is described as a "liberal Muslim" who tried to find commonalities between Hindu and Islamic traditions.
- He translated into Persian the Bhagavad Gita as well as 52 Upanishads.
- Dara Shikoh realised the greatness of the Upanishads and translated them, which were earlier known only to a few upper caste Hindus.
- Dara Shikoh was killed after losing the war of succession against his brother Aurangzeb.
- He is believed to be buried somewhere in the Humayun's Tomb complex in Delhi, one of around 140 graves of the Mughal clan.
- The Ministry of Culture recently set up a seven-member panel of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to locate the grave of the Mughal prince Dara Shikoh.
- However, there no proper evidence on location of Dara Shikoh's grave, since most graves in the Humayun tomb complex have no names.

Asur Tribes

- Asur is among the nine Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups found in Jharkhand.
- Of the 32 different tribes recorded in the State, only four to five tribes, including Santhali, Ho and Kuruk, have recorded language scripts.
- As per the 2011 census, the tribe has a population of around 23,000 in Latehar and Gumla districts.
- In the community, 50% of population could barely speak in Asur language; they are not fluent in the language.
- The Asur language figures in the list of UNESCO Interactive Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger.
- Only 7,000 to 8,000 Asur tribals are left in the community who are well conversant in the language.
- With help from tribal rights activists, Asur Tribal Wisdom Centre, an organization involving Asur tribals, was established at Jobhipat village

near Netarhat to protect the language and culture of Asur tribals.

- Using mobile radio, the Asur community has been spreading the popularity of the language within their geographical limits.

PVGTs

- In 1975, the Government of India initiated to identify the most vulnerable tribal groups as a separate category called PVTGs and declared 52 such groups.
- Characteristics of PVGT's

1. PVTGs have declining or stagnant population,
2. Low level of literacy,
3. Pre-agricultural level of technology,
4. Economically backward.
5. Generally inhabit remote localities having poor infrastructure and administrative support.

- While in 1993 an additional 23 groups were added to the category, making it a total of 75 PVTGs out of 705 Scheduled Tribes, spread over 18 states and one Union Territory (A&N Islands) in the country (2011 census).
- Among the 75 listed PVTG's the highest number are found in Odisha (13), followed by Andhra Pradesh (12).
- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs implements the Scheme of "Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)" exclusively for them.
- Under the scheme, Conservation-cum-Development (CCD)/Annual Plans are to be prepared by each State/UT for their PVTGs based on their need assessment, which are then appraised and approved by the Project Appraisal Committee of the Ministry.
- Priority is also assigned to PVTGs under the schemes of Special Central Assistance (SCA) to Tribal Sub-Scheme (TSS), Grants under Article 275(1) of the Constitution, Grants-in-aid to Voluntary Organizations working for the welfare of Schedule Tribes and Strengthening of Education among ST Girls in Low Literacy Districts.

Change of Accounting Year

- After nearly eight decades, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to change its accounting year from July-June to April- May.
- Accordingly, the next accounting year will be a nine-month period, which starts from July 2020 and ends on March 31, 2021.
- Thereafter, all the financial years will start from April every year, the RBI.

- The Bimal Jalan Committee on Economic Capital Framework (ECF) of the RBI had proposed a more transparent presentation of the RBI's annual accounts and change in its accounting year from July to June to April to March from the financial year 2020-21.
- The RBI would be able to provide better estimates of the projected surplus transfers to the government for the financial year for budgeting purposes.
- Through this move, RBI accounts will now be aligned with the central government accounts.
- This move is likely to obviate the RBI's need to transfer an interim dividend to the central government, a practice that has been adopted in the past few years.

Hope Spacecraft

- The Hope Mars Mission is also called Emirates Mars Mission.
- It is a planned space exploration probe mission to Mars funded by the United Arab Emirates and built by the Mohammed bin Rashid Space Centre, University of Colorado, Arizona State University, and University of California, Berkeley and set for launch in 2020.
- The probe will study the climate daily and through seasonal cycles, the weather events in the lower atmosphere such as dust storms, as well as the weather on Mars different geographic areas.
- The probe will attempt to answer the scientific community questions of why Mars atmosphere is losing hydrogen and oxygen into space and the reason behind Mars drastic climate changes.
- The probe is scheduled to reach Mars in 2021, which coincides with the 50th anniversary of the United Arab Emirates' formation.

MAVEN

- Mars Atmosphere and Volatile Evolution (MAVEN) is a spacecraft developed by NASA that went into orbit around mars to study the planet's atmosphere.
- Mission goals include determining how the atmosphere and water, presumed to have once been substantial, were lost over time.
- MAVEN was launched aboard an atlas v launch vehicle in 2013 it reached Mars in 2014.
- Data from maven shows that the deterioration of mars' atmosphere increases significantly during solar storms.

Bent toed gecko

- The new species of lizard, zoologically named Cyrtodactylus urbanus, is discovered in Guwahati.
- It is markedly different in molecular structure, blotch and color from the Cyrtodactylus guwahatiensis, or the Guwahati bent-toed gecko, that was discovered two years ago.
- The bent-toed gecko, named Cyrtodactylus urbanus, was earlier thought to be same as the Khasi Hills lizard.
- All bent-toed geckos in Northeast India were thought to be a single species, the Cyrtodactylus khasiensis found primarily in the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya.
- The study on the urban bent-toed gecko provided additional information on the Guwahati bent-toed gecko, the first of the two Cyrtodactylus endemic to the areas covered by the city and the fourth from Assam.
- It was also the 12th recorded gecko from the Northeast.

Source: The Hindu, Indian Express

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