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Lonar and Soor Sarovar Ramsar Sites

- Recently the following lakes have been declared as Ramsar Sites,
- **Meteor lake at Lonar, Maharashtra -** The Lonar lake, was created by the impact of a meteor 35,000 to 50,000 years ago.
- It is part of Lonar Wildlife Sanctuary which falls under the unified control of the Melghat Tiger Reserve (MTR).
- It is the second Ramsar site in Maharashtra after Nandur Madhmeshwar Bird Sanctuary in Nashik district.
- The water in the lake is highly saline and alkaline, containing special microorganisms like anaerobes, Cyanobacteria and phytoplankton.
- **Soor Sarovar, Agra -** It is also known as Keetham lake situated within the Soor Sarovar Bird Sanctuary.
- This lake is situated alongside river Yamuna in Agra, Uttar Pradesh.
- The Soor Sarovar bird sanctuary covered an area of 7.97 sq km.
- It also has a Bear Rescue centre for rescued dancing bears.
- Earlier this year Kabartal Wetland (Bihar) and Asan Conservation Reserve (Uttrakhand) were also designated as Ramsar sites.
- With latest inclusions, the total number of Ramsar sites in India is 41, the highest in South Asia.

Indian Miniature Paintings

- Indian miniatures are small-scale highly detailed paintings.
- They trace back to at least 9^{th} century CE, and are a living tradition with many contemporary artists still pursuing the art form.
- By the 12^{th} century free from restrictions of paintings on palm leaf Indian miniatures grew bigger in format.
- They began to include more intense colours and extensive border embellishments, with the influence of paintings styles of Persia and mamluks under the ottomans.
- Miniature paintings began to break new ground in colour with golds, silver and a new ultramarine blue from lapis lazuli
- Miniatures were heavily influenced by Indian literature and were often used as illustration to texts as well as individual paintings.

- Indian painters illustrated epics fables and religious texts visualizing these stories through art for those who might not be able to read.
- The painters of these tiny, extraordinary works were craftspeople of the highest order.
- Often brushes with only a single bristle would be used to pick out fine details and the technique is very refined.

Acharya Shree Vijay Vallabh Surishwer

- Acharya Shree Vijay Vallabh Surishwer Ji Maharaj is a saint, who lived during 1870-1954.
- He led an austere life, working selflessly and dedicatedly to spread the message of Lord Mahavira.
- He also worked relentlessly for the welfare of the masses, spread of education and eradication of social evils.
- He had wrote inspiring literature such as poetry, essays, devotional hymns and stavans.
- He also gave active support to the freedom movement and the cause of the swadeshi.
- With his inspiration, more than 50 educational institutions of eminence, including colleges, schools and study centres, are operational across several states.
- Recently to commemorate his 151st birth anniversary celebrations union government has unveiled the “Statue of Peace” in Rajasthan.
- It is 151-inch-tall statue is made of “Ashtadhatu” (eight metals with copper being the major constituent).

Maritime Cluster

- Maritime Cluster is conceived as a dedicated ecosystem of Ports, Maritime Shipping and Logistics services providers.
- The concept of maritime clusters is new to India, but these clusters have been driving some of the most competitive ports of the world like Rotterdam, Singapore, Hong Kong, Oslo, Shanghai, and London.
- To ensure a significant footprint in global supply chains of the world with the help of such innovative Ideas, India is planning to set up its first maritime cluster in GIFT City Gujarat.
- It will host an array of maritime, shipping industry players and service providers, along with relevant Government regulatory agencies.
- The Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB), has been trying to develop such a cluster through its subsidiary Gujarat Ports Infrastructure and

Development Company Ltd (GPIDCL).
- While the project was conceptualised back in 2007, it received in-principle approval from the state government in 2015.

Terminologies with respect to Recession

- **Expansionary Phase -** When the overall output of goods and services (measured by the GDP) increases from one quarter (or month) to another, the economy is said to be in an expansionary phase.
- **Recessionary Phase -** When the overall output of goods and services (measured by the GDP) decreases from one quarter (or month) to another, the economy is said to be in a recessionary phase.
- In a recessionary phase, the GDP contracts from one quarter to another.
- **Business Cycle -** In an economy, the expansionary phase and recessionary phase together are called a "business cycle".
- **Recession -** In an economy, when a recessionary phase sustains for long enough, it is called a recession i.e. when the GDP contracts for a long enough period, the economy is said to be in a recession.
- There is no universally accepted definition of a recession but most economists agree with the definition that the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) in the United States uses.
- According to NBER, "During a recession, a significant decline in economic activity spreads across the economy and can last from a few months to more than a year".
- **Technical Recession -** The commentators often consider a recession to be in progress when real GDP has declined for at least two consecutive quarters in order to get around the empirical technicalities associated with the recession.
- The real quarterly GDP has been accepted as a measure of economic activity and a benchmark for ascertaining a "technical recession".
- According to recent bulletin of Reserve Bank of India on state of economy there is a contraction for a second consecutive quarter (Quarter 2).
- The contraction of Q2 is crucial because it implies that India has entered a "technical recession" in the first half of 2020-21 for the first time in its history.

UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize

- In 1995, to mark the UN Year for Tolerance and the 125th anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi, UNESCO created a prize for the promotion of tolerance and non-violence.

- The UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence rewards significant activities in the scientific, artistic, and cultural or communication fields aimed at the promotion of a spirit of tolerance and non-violence.
- The prize is awarded every two years on the International Day for Tolerance, 16 November (The Day recognizes the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms of others)
- The Prize may be awarded to institutions, organizations or persons, who have contributed in a particularly meritorious and effective manner to tolerance and non-violence.

Source: The Hindu, Indian Express, PIB

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