UPSC Daily Current Affairs| Prelim Bits 21-04-2025

Manuscripts of Bhagavad Gita & Natyashastra added to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register

Prelims (GS I) – *Current events of National Importance*

Mains (GS I) – *Indian History and Culture*

Why in news?

Manuscripts of the Bhagavad Gita and Bharata's Natyashastra are among the 74 new additions to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register this year.

The Natyashastra

- Natyashastra is an *ancient Sanskrit treatise on performing arts*.
- **Authorship** – Traditionally attributed to ***sage Bharata.***
- **Time period** – Estimated between 500 BCE to 500 CE.
- **Composition** – Comprises 36,000 verses.
- **Significance** – It provides a comprehensive set of rules that define,
  - Natya (drama)
  - Abhinaya (performance)
  - Rasa (aesthetic experience)
  - Bhava (emotion)
  - Sangita (music)
- It is often referred to as the *fifth Veda*, as it integrates elements from the four Vedas.

> *The 4 Vedas are Rigveda (words), Samaveda (music), Yajurveda (gestures/actions), and Atharvaveda (emotions).*

The Bhagavad Gita

- Bhagavad Gita is a Hindu text in the ancient intellectual Indian tradition.
- **Authorship** – Attributed to ***sage Vyasa.***
- It is embedded in the sixth book (Bhishma Parva) of the epic Mahabharata.
- **Composition** – 700 verses organized in 18 chapters.
- **Time period** – Generally dated to first or second century BCE.
- **Central theme** – Dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna before the Mahabharata war and Krishna's responses to Arjuna on dharma (duty), karma (action), and the nature of the divine.

India's Representation in the Register

- India has 13 submissions to the Memory of the World Register (including two joint submissions).
- **Notable entries**
  - Rig Veda (added in 2005)
  - Abhinavagupta's works (added in 2023)
  - Non-Aligned Movement archives (joint submission with Algeria, Egypt, India, Indonesia and Serbia, 2023)
  - Dutch East India Company archives (joint submission Netherlands, South Africa and Sri Lanka, 2003)

UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme
• It is an initiative to *safeguard the valuable archive holdings and library collections all over the world* against the collective amnesia, preserve and ensure their wide dissemination. • **Aim –** Facilitate preservation of the world's documentary heritage, particularly in areas affected by conflict and/or natural disaster. • Enable universal access to documentary heritage worldwide. • Enhance public awareness about the significant of documentary heritage among the wider public. • **Established in** – 1992. • **Central Project** – Creation of a register of documents of world significance and outstanding universal value. • The Register has been ***biennally*** updated, with the exception of a lengthy gap between 2017 and 2023 with between nine (in 1999) and 78 (in 2017) additions. • It includes Books or collections of works, Drawings, Manuscripts, Audio recordings and Video recordings. • **Selection Process** – Maximum two submissions from a country are added biennially. • **Current Status** – 570 entries after the latest additions.

Reference

The Indian Express| Bhagavad Gita & Natyashastra in UNESCO Register

World Haemophilia Day

Prelims (GS I) – *Current events of National Importance| General Science*

Mains (GS I) – *Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health.*

Why in news?

Recently World Haemophilia Day was observed on April 17 by *World Federation of Haemophilia (WHF) a Non-Profit organization.*

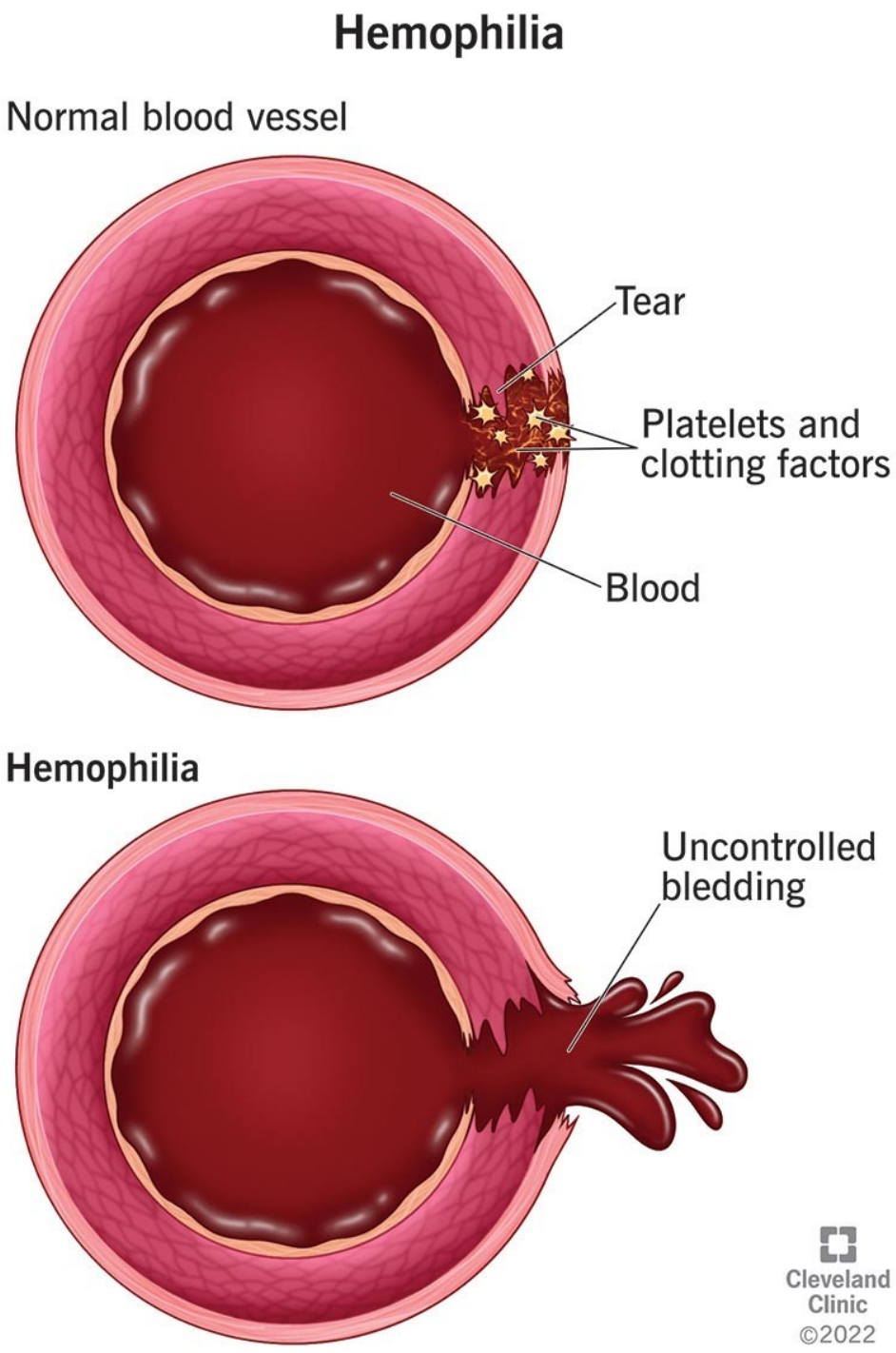
- World Haemophilia Day is observed annually as a global healthcare initiative ***to create awareness on bleeding disorders.***
- **Objectives** – To promote better control and prevention of haemophilia, through

collaboration with local policymakers.
    - To ensure improved treatment and care for those affected.
- **Theme, 2025** – "Access for All – Women and Girls Bleed Too".
- **Organizing Body in India** – Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

India has the World's second largest burden of Haemophilia with a case load of 1.36 lakhs.

Haemophilia

- It is a ***rare genetic bleeding disorder*** where blood doesn't clot normally.



- **Cause** – Haemophilia is caused by a *mutation or change*, in one of the genes located on the X chromosome, that provides instructions for making the clotting factor proteins needed to form a blood clot.
- Males are more commonly affected.
- Females can be carriers with 50% chance of transmitting to sons.
- **Symptoms -** Prolonged bleeding after injuries or surgeries, as well as spontaneous bleeding into joints and muscles.
- **Types** – There are two types based on the protein factor deficiency,
  - **Haemophilia A** - Factor VIII (F-8) deficiency (more common)
  - **Haemophilia B** - Factor IX (F-9) deficiency (less common)
- **Treatment** – There is *no cure* for hemophilia, effective treatments are available to

manage the condition and prevent severe bleeding, includes replacement of missing clotting factors using Gene therapy.

Recently Indian scientist has conducted first human clinical trial of Gene therapy for Haemophilia A at Christian medical college, Tamil Nadu.

- **WHF Humanitarian Aid Program** – Launched in 1996 by WHF to provide access to support care and treatment of bleeding disorder globally.

Quick facts
Other Major Bleeding Disorders • **Von Willebrand Disease –** Deficiency or dysfunction of von Willebrand factor (vWF), a protein that helps platelets stick to damaged blood vessels. • Most common inherited bleeding disorder. • Autosomal dominant (affects males and females equally). • Prolonged bleeding from cuts, nosebleeds, heavy menstrual bleeding. • **Thrombocytopenia –** Caused due to ***low platelet count*** (below 150,000 platelets per microliter). • Small red/purple spots and prolonged bleeding.

References

1. PIB| World Haemophilia Day
2. Cleveland Clinic| Haemophilia

Kailash Mansarovar Yatra

Prelims (GS I) – *Current events of National Importance*

Mains (GS I) – *Indian History and Culture*

Why in News?

The resumption of the yatra was formally discussed for the first time at the Special Representatives meeting in Beijing, which has been suspended since 2020.

- **Location -** Lake Mansarovar, known locally as Mapam Yumtso, is a high-altitude freshwater lake near Mount Kailash in the Ngari Prefecture of the ***Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR).***
- Both the lake and the adjacent high mountain are believed to be the home of **Lord Shiva**, are sacred in ***Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and the Tibetan Bon religion.***
- **Yatra –** Ministry of External Affairs organized the pilgrimage for Indians between the months of June and September each year.
- Pilgrims usually trek to Lake Manasarovar, and then circumambulate the nearby

Mount Kailash.

- **Eligibility -** The journey usually took between 23 and 25 days, and was *open to anyone holding Indian passports,* displaying medical and physical fitness.
- **Age -** Between 18 - 70.
- The total cost of the yatra would be upwards of Rs 2 lakh.
- **The two routes -** There are two primary routes to reach Lake Mansarovar from India.
- **Lipulekh Pass Route -** Lipulekh pass lies at an altitude of 5,115 metres, on the border between ***Uttarakhand and TAR***, near the trijunction with Nepal.
- It is an ancient passageway between the Indian subcontinent and the Tibetan Plateau, frequented by traders and pilgrims alike.
- While the Lipulekh pass route is the most direct way to get to Mansarovar from India, the lake is roughly 50 km from the border, the terrain makes the journey very challenging.
- Currently, this route entails roughly 200 km of hard trekking. Before 2020, it had been operational since 1981.
- **Nathu La Pass Route -** Nathu La pass lies at an altitude of 4,310 metres on the border between Sikkim and TAR.
- It is one of two mountain passes in the region, the other being **Jelep La** that have connected Sikkim and Tibet since ancient times.
- The route to Mansarovar from Nathu La is much longer in terms of distance lose to 1,500 km.
- But it is fully motorable, meaning pilgrims can make it all the way to the lake without any trekking. (They would only need to trekk 35-40 km for the circumambulation of Mount Kailash).
- This route became operational in 2015.
- On the Indian side, logistics were arranged by the *Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam* on the Lipulekh route, and the Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation on the Nathu La route.
- TAR authorities provided accommodation and logistics on the other side of the border.
- One could provide the preference of route during the registration process on the MEA portal.

Reference

The Indian Express | Kailash Mansarovar Yatra

New Chief Justice of India

Prelims – *Indian polity and Governance*

Mains (GS II) – *Polity | organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary*

Why in News?

Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna recently wrote to the Union Law Ministry, naming Justice B R Gavai, the 2nd -most senior judge of the Supreme Court, as his successor.

Justice B R Gavai

- **Born in -** Amravati in Maharashtra.
- **Joined the Bar on -** March 16, 1985, and worked with Raja S Bhonsale, former Advocate General and judge of the Bombay High Court, till 1987.
- He served as Additional Judge of the Bombay High Court on November 14, 2003, and became a *permanent Judge of the High Court* on November 12, 2005.
- Elevated as a *judge of the Supreme Court* on May 24, 2019.
- **Landmark Rulings**

1. Supporting demonetization of currency notes of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000.
2. Allows sub-categorization of scheduled castes, extending the creamy layer principle to Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) to achieve real equality.
3. Upheld the Centre's decision to abrogate Article 370, which gave special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.
4. Struck down the Electoral Bonds Scheme.
5. Criticized the use of bulldozers against properties of crime accused, and ruled that demolition of properties of citizens without following due process is contrary to the rule of law.

Chief Justice of India (CJI)
• **Appointment -** The **President** appoints the CJI under ***Article 124(2)*** of the Constitution. • He is appointed based on a recommendation from the *Supreme Court Collegium.* • The collegium system was established through judgments of the Supreme Court, particularly the ***Second Judges Case in 1993.*** • **Collegium -** The collegium consists of the CJI and 4 senior-most judges of the Supreme Court. • As per the convention, the senior most judge of Supreme court will be chosen as CJI. - The seniority is measured by the ***length of service*** on the Supreme Court. • **Qualification -** Must be a citizen of India. - Must have served as a judge in a High Court for at least five years **or** - Must have practiced as an advocate in a High Court for at least ten years **or** - He can be someone deemed as a distinguished jurist by the President. • **Removed by -** The **President** only after Parliament presents an address, supported by a special majority in both Houses (a majority of total members and at least two-thirds of those present and voting).

Reference

The Indian Express | Chief Justice of India

Grizzled Giant Squirrel

Prelims – *Current events of national Importance | General issues on Bio-diversity.*

Mains (GS III) – *Conservation.*

Why in News?

The Villupuram Forest Division, Tamil Nadu has planned to conduct a population study of the grizzled giant squirrel to provide a fillip to the long-pending demand for notifying the hills as a wildlife sanctuary.

- It is a large tree squirrel, arboreal, crepuscular (active at dawn and dusk) and spend most of their time foraging in the canopy.
- **Scientific name -** Ratufa macroura.
- **Habitat -** Canopy of tropical and subtropical forests in South Asia.
- **Distribution -** Found in Central and Uva provinces of Sri Lanka, and in patches of *riparian forest* along the Kaveri River and in the hill forests of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala states of southern India.
- **Appearance -** Grizzled giant squirrels are the smallest of the giant squirrels.
- It has a distinctive grizzled, grayish-brown fur on its back, with a creamy-white belly. Its fur is soft and dense, and its long bushy tail is usually darker than the rest of its body.
- **Characteristics** - They are agile climbers and jumpers, able to leap up to 6 metres between trees.
- Their bushy tail is used for balance while jumping and as a parachute while descending. They are also important seed dispersers for many plant species in their habitat.
- While males are generally larger than females, there are no significant physical differences between the sexes.
- **Diet -**Primarily herbivorous, feeding on fruits, nuts, and leaves.
- **Conservation Status**
    - **CITES –** Schedule II.
    - **WPA, 1972** – Schedule I.
    - **IUCN** - Near threatened.
- **Threats -** Habitat loss, Poaching and Pet Trade.

Tamil Nadu Government established Grizzled Squirrel Wildlife Sanctuary in 1988.



Reference

The Hindu | Grizzled Giant Squirrel

One Liners 21-04-2025
Geography

Vizhinjam Seaport Inauguration

PM Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Vizhinjam International Seaport in Kerala on May 2, 2025.

• **India's First Deep–Water Transshipment Hub** – This marks a significant advancement as India's first semi–automated, truly deep–water international container transshipment port.

• **Public–Private Partnership** – The project is a collaborative effort involving the Kerala government, the Centre, and Adani Ports through a Public–Private Partnership (PPP).

• **Strategic Trade Location** – Its proximity to major international shipping lanes is expected to significantly boost India's trade and establish Kerala as a key maritime center.

• **Key Project Benefits** – The port will reduce transit times, accommodate large vessels, enhance regional trade with Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, and generate economic growth and jobs for Kerala.

• **Adani Group's Extensive Port Operations** – Adani Ports operates extensively on both the east and west coasts of India and manages international ports in Israel, Tanzania, and Sri Lanka, handling a substantial portion of India's port traffic.

Dal Lake

Recently, tourists shikara overturned in Srinagar's Dal Lake due to strong winds, causing four people (a tourist family and a boatman) to fall into the water.

• **Location and Setting** – Dal Lake is a mid–altitude urban lake situated in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, surrounded by the Pir Panjal mountains.

• **Tourism Significance** – Integral to Kashmir's tourism and recreation, it's known as the "Jewel in the crown of Kashmir" or "Srinagar's Jewel" and also as the "Lake of Flowers."

• **Shoreline Features** – Its 15.5 km shoreline is lined with Mughal gardens, parks, houseboats, and hotels.

• **Size and Depth** – The lake covers 18 sq. km and is part of a larger 21.1 sq. km wetland with floating gardens ("Raad") that bloom with lotuses in July–August; its average depth is about 5 ft, with a maximum of 20 ft.

• **Basins and Islands** – The wetland is divided into four basins: Gagribal, Lokut Dal, Bod Dal, and Nagin (sometimes considered separate); Lokut–dal and Bod–dal have central islands called Rup Lank (Char Chinari) and Sona Lank.

• **Floating Market Attraction** – Dal Lake is also famous for its floating market where vendors sell goods from their shikaras to tourists.

Polity & Governance

National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO)

Recently, NOTTO is urging states and UTs to implement swap organ transplantation.

• **NOTTO's Role** – NOTTO is the national apex body for organ procurement and distribution in India.

• **Removal of Age Cap** –The previous upper age limit of 65 for organ transplant registration has been eliminated due to increased life expectancy.

• **No Domicile Restriction** – The requirement for organ recipients to register in their state of domicile has been removed under a 'One Nation, One Policy' initiative, allowing registration in any state.

• **No Registration Fees** – The central government has directed states to cease charging registration fees for organ transplantation.

Kerala Pioneers Online Permanent Lok Adalat Services

Kerala has become the first state in India to launch online Permanent Lok Adalat (PLA) services.

• **Established Under Law** – PLAs are organized under Section 22–B of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.

• **Civil Court Powers** – Permanent Lok Adalats possess the same powers as a Civil Court under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908.

• **Mandatory Pre–Litigation** – They serve as a compulsory mechanism for conciliation and settlement of disputes related to Public Utility Services (e.g., transport, postal, telegraph) before litigation.

• **Binding Judgments** – The judgments issued by Permanent Lok Adalats are final and legally binding on all involved parties.

• **Jurisdictional Limit** – The jurisdiction of Permanent Lok Adalats extends to cases with a value of up to Rs. 1 Crore.

Justice Joseph Committee

Tamil Nadu recently formed a high–level committee, to study the constitutional and legal provisions that impact Centre–state relations

• **Committee** – The *three–member committee* headed by former Supreme Court *judge Kurian Joseph*.

• **Objectives –** To recommend ways for "*maximum state autonomy*" without harming national unity and to address governance challenges and restore State List subjects.

• To suggest ways to restore subjects transferred from State list to the Concurrent one and look at measures needed to address the challenges states face in delivering good governance.

• **Significance** – The recent Supreme Court judgement that laid down timelines for governors and the president on granting assent to bills has reinforced the primacy of the role of elected state governments in framing laws and curtailed the discretion of nominal heads.

• **Historical Precedents –** It mirrors the Rajamannar Committee formed in 1969 to make recommendation on Centre – State Relations.

Environment

Telangana Declares Heatwaves as Disasters

Recently, Telangana government has officially recognized heatwaves and sunstroke as state–specific disasters.

• **Enhanced Climate Resilience** – This declaration aims to bolster the state's resilience to climate change impacts and safeguard vulnerable populations.

• **Financial Relief Measures** – The new classification enables the Telangana government to provide financial assistance to families affected by heat–related incidents.

• **Pioneering State Initiative** – Telangana is among the first states in India to independently classify heatwaves as disasters.

• **National Classification Difference** – This move contrasts with the Union government's current stance of not including heatwaves in the national disaster list.

• **IMD's Heatwave Definition** – According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), heatwaves occur when maximum temperatures reach at least 40°C or are 5–6°C above normal, with severe heatwaves exceeding 7°C above normal or temperatures surpassing 45°C.

Security

Operation ATALANTA

Recently, European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) under Operation ATALANTA has suggested a joint maritime exercise with the Indian Navy.

• **Timing and Location** –The proposed naval drill is expected to take place around the end of May 2025 in the Western Indian Ocean and Red Sea region.

• **Goal of Enhanced Cooperation** –The primary aim is to improve coordination and maritime cooperation between European and Indian naval forces, especially concerning piracy and regional instability.

• **Advanced Drill Scope** –The exercise, if approved, will go beyond standard PASSEX and include advanced tactical maneuvers, counter–piracy operations, and inter–naval communications training.

• **Context of Piracy Resurgence** – Renewed piracy threats near the Horn of Africa, coupled with Houthi activity in the Red Sea, necessitate stronger maritime coordination.

• **About Operation ATALANTA** – Launched in 2008, it is the EU's counter–piracy mission in the Western Indian Ocean and Red Sea with an expanded mandate including protecting WFP vessels, enforcing the Somalia arms embargo, and combating various illegal maritime activities.

Science

Flue Gas Desulphurisation

A study commissioned by the Principal Scientific Adviser suggests the Union Environment Ministry should reverse its 2015 policy mandating FGD installation in all coal–fired plants.

• **Flue Gas Desulphurisation (FGD)** – FGD is a process used in fossil–fuel power plants to remove sulfur compounds, particularly sulfur dioxide (SO2), from exhaust emissions using absorbents.

• **Wet Process Dominance** –The wet process, often using lime or limestone slurry in a scrubber tower, is the primary FGD method for large power plants, achieving up to 95% SO2 removal.

• **Why FGD is Necessary** –Burning fossil fuels releases sulfur into the atmosphere as sulfur dioxide (SO2), a major air pollutant.

• **Environmental Impacts of SO2** – SO2 contributes to acid rain, harming forests, water bodies, soils, and aquatic life, and also causes corrosion and weathering.

• **Importance of SO2 Removal** – Removing sulfur dioxide is crucial for creating a safe and clean environment by limiting toxic emissions



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