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Herath Festival

- Hindu community in Jammu and Kashmir celebrated most important festival Sivaratri, locally called 'Herath'.
- It is first such festival since J&K was reduced to a Union Territory (UT) last year.
- Walnuts and fish dishes are central to the festival. In fact, the weather gods also kept their tryst with the festival.
- Several temples, including the traditional temples located in the Kashmir, like the Shri Ganesh temple, the Purshyar Mandir, the Durgeshwari temple etc. saw local Pandits performing important rituals.
- The fact is that at the end of the religious ceremonies, a day is observed as 'Salaam', which entailed celebrations with the Muslim brethren in Kashmir.
- During such festivals shops run by Muslims provides paraphernalia for puja.
- Temporary stalls by Muslim vendors will sell local fish and Trout, which is preferred by the pundits during the occasion.

Bharat-Bangla Tourism festival

- It is a two-day long Tourism festival held at Ujjayanta Palace compound in Agartala, Tripura.
- The State Tourism Department has organized the festival in memories of the contribution of Tripura in 1971 Bangladesh liberation war as well as giving a fillip to the Tripura tourism sector.
- Seminars, discussions, cultural events, visit of important tourism spots, historical and archaeological sites are the main parts of the two-day friendship festival.

Bangladesh Liberation War

- The Bangladesh Liberation War was a revolution and armed conflict sparked by the rise of the Bengali nationalist and self-determination movement in what was then East Pakistan during the 1971 Bangladesh genocide.

- It resulted in the independence of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.
- The war began after the Pakistani military junta based in West Pakistan launched Operation Searchlight against the people of East Pakistan on the night of 25 March 1971.
- It pursued the systematic elimination of nationalist Bengali civilians, students, intelligentsia, religious minorities and armed personnel.
- The junta annulled the results of the 1970 elections and arrested Prime minister-designate Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
- The war ended on 16 December 1971 after West Pakistan surrendered.

International Mother Language Day

- February 21 was International Mother Language Day.
- It has been observed since 1999 to promote “linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism”.
- UNESCO declared International Mother Language Day in 1999, to commemorate a 1952 protest against West Pakistan’s imposition of Urdu as the official language of East Pakistan (present-day Bangladesh).
- According to a report, police opened fire on demonstrating Dhaka University students and “some people were killed”.
- When thousands thronged the university the next day, police fired again, killing more people.
- In Bangladesh, since 1953, February 21 is observed as Ekushe Day, after the Bengali word for twenty-one.

Facts on Languages

- Globally, English remains the most widely spoken language with 1.13 billion speakers in 2019, followed by Mandarin with 1.17 /
- Hindi is third with 615 million speakers while Bengali is seventh with 265 million.
- In India, Hindi is the most spoken language with over 528 million speakers in 2011, as per the Census.
- Bengali had 97.2 million speakers in 2011, followed by Marathi (83 million), while other languages with over 50 million speakers are Telugu (81 million), Tamil (69 million), Gujarati (55.5 million) and Urdu (50.8 million).
- Percentage trends from 1991 to 2011 underline the growth of the most widely spoken language, Hindi, which was spoken by 39.29% of the Indian population in 1991, and whose share grew to 43.63% in 2011.
- For other languages in India’s top 12, the 2011 percentage share has

fallen when compared to that in 1991.
- Of the world's 6,000 languages, 43% are estimated as endangered, according to the UN.
- On the other hand, just 10 languages account for as many as 4.8 billion speakers over 60% of the world population.

Global Health Security Index

- The Global Health Security Index is the first comprehensive assessment of health security and related capabilities in 195 countries.
- It assesses 195 countries across six categories — prevention, early detection, rapid response, health system quality, standards, and the risk environment.
- It is a project of the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) and the Johns Hopkins University Center for Health Security (CHS), with research by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).
- In this Index, India was ranked 57th out of 195 countries with a score of 46.5 out of 100.
- The United States (US) topped the list globally, overall with a score of 83.5, followed by United Kingdom (77.9) and Netherlands (75.6).
- Global Health Security Index finds that no country is adequately prepared to deal with the new strain of coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) that is causing worldwide panic.

Thirumathi kart App

- The National Institute of Technology (NIT), Trichy, Tamilnadu has developed Thirumathikart - a mobile app for SHG (Self Help Group) products.
- The application was developed in coordination with the Union Department of Science and Technology.
- The main objective of the app is to empower women and help them access market opportunities in a seamless manner.
- The platform will also enable Self Help Groups to showcase their products to a wider audience.

Buddah Nullah

- Buddah Nullah is a seasonal tributary of Sutlej in Ludhiana, which originates at village Koom Kalan of Ludhiana.
- It runs for 47 kms till Walipur Kalan where it merges with River Sutlej, this stream carrying freshwater was earlier known as 'Buddha Dariya'.

- Over the years, the name got changed to Buddha Nullah (drain) owing to the sewage, industrial and domestic waste that is dumped into it in the 14-km stretch within Ludhiana city municipal corporation limits.
- The pollution in the Buddah Nullah is a major threat to public health and environment and the main sources of pollution in the nullah are direct flow of pollutants by industries and dairies.
- Recently Punjab Cabinet approved ₹650 crore in the first phase for rejuvenation of Buddah Nullah.

Source: The Hindu, AIR News

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