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Nagardhan Excavations

- Archaeological excavations at Nagardhan, near Nagpur, have provided concrete evidence on the life, religious affiliations and trade practices of the Vakataka dynasty.
- It also gives clarity on Vakataka rule under Queen Prabhavatigupta.
- **Oval-shaped sealing** - has been traced, which belongs to the period when Prabhavatigupta was the queen of the Vakataka dynasty.
- It bears her name in the Brahmi script, along with the depiction of a conch.
- The presence of the conch is a sign of the Vaishnava affiliation that the Guptas held.
- Since the Vakataka people traded with Iran and beyond through the Mediterranean Sea, these sealings could have been used as an official royal permission issued from the capital city.
- Besides, these were used on documents that sought mandatory royal permissions.



- **Copper plate** - Issued by Queen Prabhavatigupta has also been found.
- It starts with a genealogy of the Guptas, mentioning the Queen's grandfather Samudragupta and her father Chandragupta II.

Queen Prabhavatigupta

- The Vakataka rulers were known to have forged several matrimonial alliances with other dynasties of their times.
- One of the key alliances was with Prabhavatigupta of the mighty Gupta dynasty, which was then ruling north India.
- After marrying Vakataka king Rudrasena II, Prabhavatigupta enjoyed the position of Chief Queen.
- Scholars say Queen Prabhavatigupta was among a handful of women rulers in India to have reigned over any kingdom during ancient times.
- Also, there had been no evidence so far of any successor female ruler within the Vakataka dynasty.
- She ruled for about 10 years until her son Pravarasena II, and had a pivotal role in propagation of Vaishnava practices in the Vidarbha region of

Maharashtra.

Vakataka dynasty

- The Vakataka Empire originated from the Deccan in the mid-3rd century CE, with Nagardhan as capital.
- Vindhyashakti (c. 250 – c. 270 CE) is known to be the founder of the family.
- The elephant god was a commonly worshipped deity in those times.
- Animal rearing was one of the main occupations. Remains of seven species of domestic animals — cattle, goat, sheep, pig, cat, horse and fowl — have been traced.
- Their state is believed to have extended from the southern edges of Malwa and Gujarat in the north to the Tungabhadra River in the south as well as from the Arabian Sea in the west to the edges of Chhattisgarh in the east.
- They were the most important successors of the Satavahanas in the Deccan and contemporaneous with the Guptas in northern India.
- The Vakataka dynasty was a Brahmin dynasty and rulers were predominantly shaivites.
- The Gupta emperor Chandragupta II married his daughter into Vakataka royal family and with their support annexed Gujarat from the Saka Satraps in 4th century CE.
- The Vakataka power was followed by that of the Chalukyas of Badami in Deccan.
- The rock-cut Buddhist viharas and chaityas of Ajanta Caves (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) were built under the patronage of Vakataka emperor, Harishena.

Dhanush Gun System

- Dhanush gun system was showcased for the first time at the 71st Republic Day parade.
- The 155 mm/45-calibre gun system is a towed Howitzer designed indigenously by the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB), with contributions from DRDO.
- It is the first long-range artillery gun to be produced in India.
- The gun has a maximum range of 36.5 km and has the capability of automatic alignment and positioning.
- It is equipped with inertial navigation-based sighting system, auto-laying facility, onboard ballistic computation and an advanced day and night direct firing system.
- The self-propulsion unit allows it to negotiate and deploy itself in mountainous areas with ease, it is intended for use in all kinds of terrain.
- It is an improved version of the FH-77B 155 mm/39-calibre field howitzers

that were originally produced by AB Bofors of Sweden, which is now BAE Systems.

Sahana (hemorrhagic septicemia)

- Around 40 buffaloes have died within four days due to suspected Sahana disease (hemorrhagic septicemia) in a number of villages located in the Garadapur block of Odisha's Kendrapara.
- Hemorrhagic septicemia is a severe bacterial disease.
- It spread through contact with infected animals, contaminated clothes, equipment and ingestion or inhalation of the bacteria.
- The main symptoms of the disease include undigested food in faeces, swishing tail, reduced cudding reduced milk yield.
- Burring the carcasses of infected animals in deep pits will prevent the spread of the disease.

Archaea

- Archaea are a primitive group of microorganisms that thrive in extreme habitats such as hot springs, cold deserts and hypersaline lakes.
- These slow-growing organisms are also present in the human gut, and have a potential relationship with human health.
- They are known for producing antimicrobial molecules, and for anti-oxidant activity with applications in eco-friendly waste-water treatment.
- Archaea are extremely difficult to culture due to challenges in providing natural conditions in a laboratory setting.
- As archaea are relatively poorly studied, very little is known about how archaea behave in the human body.
- Scientists have reported a new archaeon (a kind of microorganism), which they discovered in Sambhar Salt Lake in Rajasthan.
- It has been named Natrialba swarupiae, after Dr Renu Swarup, secretary, Department of Biotechnology.

Sambhar Salt Lake

- The Sambhar Salt Lake, India's largest inland salt lake is located southwest of Jaipur, Rajasthan.
- Sambhar Salt is the source of most of Rajasthan's salt production; It produces 196,000 tons of clean salt every year.
- Sambhar has been designated as a Ramsar site (recognized wetland of international importance).
- The specialized algae and bacteria growing in the lake provide striking watercolors and support the lake ecology that, in turn, sustains the migrating

waterfowl.

Bru-Reang Agreement

- The Bru or Reang are a community indigenous to Northeast India, living mostly in Tripura, Mizoram, and Assam.
- In Tripura, they are recognised as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG).
- Over two decades ago, a few ethnic social organizations of Mizoram who demanded that the Bru be excluded from electoral rolls in the state.
- In October 1997, following ethnic clashes, nearly 37,000 Bru fled Mizoram's Mamit, Kolasib, and Lunglei districts to Tripura, where they were sheltered in relief camps.
- Since then, over 5,000 have returned to Mizoram in nine phases of repatriation, while 32,000 people from 5,400 families still live in six relief camps in North Tripura.
- Apart from their own Kaubru tongue, the Bru speak both Kokborok and Bangla, the two most widely spoken languages of the tribal and non-tribal communities of Tripura, and have an easy connection with the state.
- The Bru-Reang is a tripartite agreement is signed between the Government of India, Governments of Tripura and Mizoram and Bru-Reang representatives in New Delhi on 17 January, 2020.
- The agreement mentions the following

1. About 34,000 Bru refugees will be settled in Tripura.
2. Centre will provide help to these tribes for their all-round development and for this around Rs 600 crores were sanctioned.
3. Ech displaced family would be given 40X30 sq.ft. residential plots.
4. For 2 years, they will be given the aid of Rs 5000 per month.
5. Free ration for 2 years
6. About Rs 1.5 lakh aid to build their house.
7. The Tripura Government would provide the land.

Measles

- Measles is a highly contagious viral disease.
- It remains an important cause of death among young children globally, despite the availability of a safe and effective vaccine.
- Also called German Measles, Rubella is a contagious, generally mild viral infection that occurs most often in children and young adults
- Measles is transmitted via droplets from the nose, mouth or throat of infected persons.
- Severe measles is more likely among poorly nourished young children,

especially those with insufficient vitamin A, or whose immune systems have been weakened by HIV/AIDS or other diseases.

- The most serious complications include blindness, encephalitis (an infection that causes brain swelling), severe diarrhea and related dehydration, and severe respiratory infections such as pneumonia.
- Under the Global Vaccine Action Plan, measles and rubella are targeted for elimination in five WHO Regions by 2020.
- Recently India has stepped in to help the Maldives tackle a recent outbreak of measles.
- The Indian government's initiative comes even as the two countries implement the Memorandum of Understanding on Health cooperation — signed during PM Narendra Modi's visit to Male in June 2019.

Bharat Parv 2020

- The Bharat Parv is an annual event to celebrate the spirit of India, organized in Red Fort, Delhi.
- Bharat Parv, 2020 is being celebrated from 26th to 31st January, annually, in front of Red Fort at Gyan Path and Red Fort grounds
- Central theme of Bharat Parv 2020 is 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' and 'Celebrating 150 Years of Mahatma Gandhi'
- The objective of Bharat Parv is to encourage Indians to visit different tourism places of India and to inculcate the spirit of 'Dekho Apna Desh'.

Source: The Hindu, Indian Express, PIB

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