

INDIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE, HISTORY**Ashfaquallah Khan**

The Uttar Pradesh government has recently announced it will build a 121-acre zoo named after Ashfaquallah Khan.

About:

- Ashfaquallah Khan (1900 – 1927) was a freedom fighter in the Indian independence movement. He was born in Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh.
- In the mid-1920s, Ashfaquallah Khan and Ram Prasad Bismil went on to found the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA), with the aim of winning freedom for the country through an armed revolution. HSRA published its manifesto titled “The Revolutionary” in 1925.
- He along with Ram Prasad Bismil, was sentenced to death for the Kakori train robbery, commonly referred to as the Kakori conspiracy of 1925

Epiphany Festival

The Epiphany festival was celebrated in parts of India, such as Goa and Kerala. In Goa, the celebration is known by its Portuguese name ‘Festa dos Reis’, and in parts of Kerala by its Syriac name ‘Denha’.

About:

- Epiphany is among the three oldest and major festival days in Christianity, the two others being Christmas and Easter.
- It is celebrated on January 6 by a number of Christian sects, including Roman Catholics, and on January 19 by some Eastern Orthodox churches.
- In the West, the duration between December 25 and January 6 is known as the Twelve Days of Christmas.
- Epiphany is a feast day, or a day of commemoration, which in Christianity marks the visit of the Magi (meaning the Three Wise Men or Three Kings) to the Infant Jesus (Christ from his nativity until age 12).
- According to Christian belief, the Magi — Balthasar, Melchior, and Gaspar (or Casper), the kings of Arabia, Persia, and India, respectively — followed a miraculous guiding star to Bethlehem, where they paid homage to the Infant Jesus.
- The day also commemorates the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS**Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLAT)**

The Centre has issued revised guidelines for mutual legal assistance in criminal matters with other nations.

About:

- India has Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties, MLAT with 42 countries and is signatory to various International Conventions for cooperation in criminal matters. Home Ministry is the designated central authority for the country.
- Under the MLAT, a country can request for obtaining evidence for criminal investigations and prosecutions. The evidence includes witness statements or the service of documents among others.

Revised guidelines:

- The revised guidelines provide step-by-step guidance to the investigation agencies for drafting and processing letters rogatory or mutual legal assistance requests and service of summons, notices and other judicial documents.
- These revised guidelines have provision for service of documents to authorities of foreign country preferably within ten days of receipt of request in respect of offences committed against women and children.

Migration And Mobility Partnership Agreement

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for the ratification of Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement between India and France.

About:

- The Agreement was signed in March, 2018 during the State Visit of the French President to India.
- The Agreement is initially valid for a period of seven years. It incorporates provision for automatic renewal and a monitoring mechanism through a Joint Working Group.
- It is a major milestone in enhancing people-to-people contacts, fostering mobility of students, academics, researchers and skilled professionals and strengthening cooperation on issues related to irregular migration and human trafficking between the two sides.

International Cooperation In Health

The Union Cabinet has given its ex-post-facto approval on the MOU signed in November, 2019 between Department of Health & Family Welfare (DOHFW), Government of India and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) on cooperation in the field of Health.

The MOU covers the following areas of cooperation:

- To reduce maternal, neonatal and child morbidity and mortality, improve key nutrition outcomes, by improving the reach, coverage and quality of essential primary health, immunization and nutrition services.
- To increase the basket of choice and quality for family planning methods, specially for reversible methods, and increase access amongst younger women.
- To reduce the burden of select infectious diseases [TB, Visceral Leishmaniasis (VL), Lymphatic Filariasis (LF)].
- To strengthen health systems, including aspects such as budget utilization, management and skills of human resources for health, digital health, strengthening supply chains and monitoring systems.

Related Info:

- Leishmaniasis is a disease caused by parasites of the Leishmania type. It is spread by the bite of certain types of sandflies.
- The disease can manifest in three ways: (1) Cutaneous, (2) mucocutaneous And (3) Visceral.
- Visceral Leishmaniasis (VL) is also known as kala-azar, black fever, and Dumdum fever. The parasite is spread to humans by bites from infected female sand flies. It attacks the immune system, and is almost always fatal if not treated.

INDIAN ECONOMY

North East Natural Gas Pipeline Grid

The Government has approved the Viability Gap Funding (VGF) of 5,559 crore rupees to Indradhanush Gas Grid Limited to build Natural Gas Pipeline Grid covering 8 North Eastern states.

About:

- The 1,656-km pipeline will connect Guwahati in Assam to major cities in the region such as Itanagar, Dimapur, Kohima, Imphal, Aizawl and Agartala.
- The project is critical towards implementing the government's Hydrocarbon Vision 2030 for the North-East. The Gas Pipeline Grid would be developed in all the eight states of North-Eastern region.

Related Info: Indradhanush Gas Grid Limited (IGGL), a joint venture company of five CPSEs (IOCL, ONGC, GAIL, OIL and NRL) has been incorporated on 10.08.2018 to develop and operate Natural gas pipeline grid in North-East region.

Neelachal Ispat Nigam Limited (NINL)

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has given in-principle approval for the sale of equity held by four Central Public Sector Enterprises and two-state PSUs in Neelachal Ispat Nigam Limited (NINL), Odisha.

About:

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the strategic disinvestment of equity shareholding of Minerals & Metals Trading Corporation (MMTC), National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC), MECON, Bharat Heavy Electricals (Bhel) and two Odisha state government PSUs in Neelachal Ispat Nigam Limited (NINL) to a strategic buyer.
- The buyer is to be identified through a two-stage auction procedure.
- NINL is a joint venture company, in which four central public sector enterprises MMTC, NMDC, Bhel and MECON, and two Odisha state government PSUs - IPICOL and OMC - are shareholders.
- The proposed strategic disinvestment of NINL would unlock resources to be used to finance the social sector and developmental programmes of the government.

ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES

New Wetland Conservation Rules

Ministry of Environment has notified the new Wetland Conservation Rules.

Salient features of the rules:

- The rules prohibit setting up or expansion of industries and disposal of construction and demolition waste within the wetlands.
- Each state and Union Territory will have to set up an authority that will define strategies for conservation and wise use of wetlands within their jurisdiction.
- The Authority will prepare a list of all wetlands of the State or UT within three months from the date of publication of these rules.
- It will develop a comprehensive list of activities to be regulated and permitted within the notified wetlands and their zone of influence.
- It will also recommend mechanisms for maintenance of ecological character through promotional activities for land within the boundary of notified wetlands.

- The Ministry has also created a web portal for sharing information regarding the implementation of Wetlands Rules where the central government, state governments are required to upload all relevant information and documents pertaining to wetlands in their jurisdiction.

Related Info:

- A wetland is a land area that is saturated with water, either permanently or seasonally, and it takes on the characteristics of a distinct ecosystem.
- The Centre had in September 2019, identified 130 wetlands for priority restoration in the next five years. The highest number of such identified wetlands are in Uttar Pradesh (16) followed by Madhya Pradesh (13), Jammu & Kashmir (12), Gujarat (8), Karnataka (7) and West Bengal (6).

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE ETC**TOI 700 d**

NASA reported the discovery of an Earth-size planet, named TOI 700 d, orbiting its star in the “habitable zone”.

About:

- TOI 700 d was found by NASA’s Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) mission, which it launched in 2018. Very few such Earth-size planets have been found so far, including some by NASA’s Kepler mission, and this one is the first such discovery by TESS.
- TOI 700 d measures 20% larger than Earth. It orbits its star once every 37 days and receives an amount of energy that is equivalent to 86% of the energy that the Sun provides to Earth.
- The star, TOI 700, is an “M dwarf” located just over 100 light-years away in the southern constellation Dorado, is roughly 40% of our Sun’s mass and size, and has about half its surface temperature.

Related Info: A habitable zone, also called the “Goldilocks zone”, is the area around a star where it is not too hot and not too cold for liquid water to exist on the surface of surrounding planets.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns: "It is important to address not only the physical violence but even the verbal and structural violence, expressed in gender, caste and regional discrimination in order to become a peaceful society."

Comment.

Ans:

A peaceful society is essentially a society that respects the dignity of every section that constitutes it. Violence, on the other hand, is the projection of power by those who think they deserve to keep under subjugation those who are weak. It can be expressed in physical and psychological forms.

Just like physical violence leave scars and marks on the body of a victim, verbal and structural violence leave scars on the perceptions of gender and caste victim. The first scar is visible, the second one is felt.

Such a society becomes more prone to the struggle for power, retaliation for humiliation and resistance against any dominance. A society where a particular gender, caste or community does not feel safe, remains on the cusp of disintegration. It lacks unity and harmony and hence peace.

While physical violence is addressed by putting in place discouraging and punitive measures, structural and verbal violence are yet to be addressed via legislations and institutionalised measures in most societies of contemporary world. It can be addressed through acknowledgement, awareness, sensitisation and by creating the scope of mutual respect among the different sections of society. For example, while discriminatory practices based on gender, community or caste at a workplace can be appealed against in the Supreme Court of India for the violation of Fundamental Rights, the same does not provide protection against the skewed and unequal division of labour in enforcing gender roles at work.

Verbal and structural violence expressed in gender, caste and regional discrimination go against the very essence of peace i.e. social solidarity, mutual respect, fraternity etc. It, therefore, becomes very important to address this type of conceded manifestations of violence in order to become a truly peaceful society.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQs

1. The Union Cabinet has recently given its approval for the ratification of Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement between India and which of the country?
(a) **France**
(b) China
(c) Italy
(d) Spain
2. With reference to the Neelachal Ispat Nigam Limited (NINL), consider the following statements:
 1. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has recently given in-principle approval for the sale of equity held by four Central Public Sector Enterprises and two-state PSUs in Neelachal Ispat Nigam Limited (NINL).
 2. It is a company promoted by MMTC Ltd, Industrial Promotion and Investment Corporation of Orissa limited.

- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) **Both 1 and 2**
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
3. With reference to the new Wetland Conservation Rules, consider the following statements:
1. The rules prohibit setting up or expansion of industries and disposal of construction and demolition waste within the wetlands.
 2. A wetland is a land area that is saturated with water permanently and not seasonally.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) **1 only**
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
4. With reference to the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties, consider the following statements:
1. India has Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties, MLAT with 42 countries and is signatory to various International Conventions for cooperation in criminal matters and Union External Affairs Ministry is the designated central authority for the country.
 2. Under the MLAT, a country can request for obtaining evidence for criminal investigations and prosecutions.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
(b) **2 only**
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
5. With reference to the North East Natural Gas Pipeline Grid, consider the following statements:
1. The Gas Pipeline Grid would be developed in all the eight states of North-Eastern region.
 2. Indradhanush Gas Grid Limited (IGGL), a joint venture company established to develop and operate Natural gas pipeline grid in North-East region.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) **Both 1 and 2**
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
6. What is “TOI 700 d”, recently seen in news?
- (a) **An Earth-size planet orbiting its star in the habitable zone which has been found by NASA’s Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) mission.**
(b) Potentially hazardous asteroid of the Apollo group.
(c) A six-metre telescope on Cerro Toco in the Atacama Desert in the north of Chile.
(d) None of the above
7. Who among the following was involved in the most famous incident of “Kakori train robbery”?
- (a) **Ashfaqulla Khan and Ram Prasad Bismil**
(b) Bhagat Singh and Shivaram Hari Rajguru
(c) Surya Sen and Khudiram Bose
(d) Manabendra Nath Roy and Hutatma Madan Lal Dhingra
8. With reference to the, consider the following statements:
1. It is among the three oldest and major festival days in Christianity, the two others being Christmas and Easter.
 2. It is a feast day which in Christianity marks the visit of the Three Kings to the Infant Jesus.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) **Both 1 and 2**
(d) Neither 1 nor 2