

**INDIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE, HISTORY****Ramappa temple for world heritage site**

- Telangana may get its first UNESCO World Heritage Site, but it may be the Ramappa Temple at Palampet near Warangal than any of the QutbShahi era sites in Hyderabad.
- The QutbShahi monuments of Hyderabad, Golconda Fort, QutbShahi Tombs and Charminar have been on the tentative list of World Heritage Sites from September 2010.
- The Ramappa Temple's application filed as 'The Glorious Kakatiya Temples and Gateways' has been fast-tracked from April 2014.
- Earlier, the Ramappa Temple was part of a 'serial nomination' along with the Thousand Pillar Temple, Swayambhu Temple and KeertiThoranas of Warangal Fort.

**About the temple**

- The Ramappa Temple is a jewel of the Kakatiya era and it stands out.
- An inscription in the temple dates it to the year 1213 AD and says it was built by a General RecherlaRudra, during the period of the Kakatiya ruler Ganapati Deva.
- The Siva temple is perhaps the only one in the country that is known by the name of the architect rather than the king who commissioned it or its presiding deity.
- The stunning dance sculptures and friezes of the temple appear as if they have been machined into shape on black dolomite, rather than being chiseled.
- The temple is built on a valley and it rests on bricks that are scientifically shown to float in water.

**Agencies involved**

- The property is evaluated by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- The International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) then provides advice on conservation of the site, and training.
- After all these steps, the World Heritage Committee evaluates the site and decides to inscribe it or send back the nomination.
- It remains to be seen whether the Ramappa temple will win the prized inscription at the 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee meeting to be held in Azerbaijan this year.

**UNESCO World Heritage Committee**

- The World Heritage Committee selects the sites to be listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger.
- It monitors the state of conservation of the World Heritage properties, defines the use of the World Heritage Fund and allocates financial assistance upon requests from States Parties.
- It is composed of 21 states parties that are elected by the General Assembly of States Parties for a four-year term.
- India is NOT a member of this Committee.

**INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS****Malham Caves**

- Israel unveils world's longest salt cave.
- Malham is one of 150 caves in Mount Sodom, at the southern part of the Dead Sea, that are made of pure salt.
- Mount Sodom sits near the Dead Sea, a shrinking salt lake (and lowest point on Earth) that extends into Jordan, Israel and the occupied West Bank.
- A large part of the cave's interior is covered by a fine dust that blows in from the desert.
- Massive slabs of salt, some amber-colored from dust and minerals, stick out in dramatic formations.
- A thin slab appearing to have been sliced out is nicknamed "The Guillotine," while twin slabs that look like a pair of tablets in a different hall have earned the title of "The Ten Commandments."
- Israeli researchers say they have discovered the world's longest salt cave near the desert site where, according to the Bible, Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt.

- Radiocarbon dating suggests it's about 7,000 years old, its many passages carved by the very occasional rain storms that pass through the region.
- Even now, Malham continues to grow when water flows in and dissolves more of the salt.

## **ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES**

### Asiatic Wild Dogs (Dhole)

A recent study has discovered a reduction in Dhole occupancy in Karnataka's Western Ghats, from 62 percent in 2007 to 54 percent in 2015.

### Asiatic Wild Dogs (Dhole)

- The dhole is on the IUCN Red List of Endangered Species and is protected under Schedule II of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 in India.
- Globally, dholes have disappeared from approximately 82 percent of their former range.
- The Western Ghats perhaps supports the largest dhole population in the world and is therefore a critical conservation landscape for the species.

### Various threats

- Massive infrastructural initiatives in the area, human intrusion in protected zones, change in land-use pattern, forest fragmentation and loss of forest cover are some of the reasons for the decline in dhole population.
- The presence of semi-feral, free-ranging domestic dogs in unprotected forest areas might be another reason for the decline in dhole occupancy.
- Free-ranging dogs affect dholes as they compete with dholes for similar resources like prey animals.
- Moreover, these dogs often carry lethal and non-lethal disease pathogens that could result in the spread of diseases in the dhole population.

### Ocean heat hits record high: UN

Ocean heat hit a record high in 2018, the United Nations has said.

### State of the Climate Report

- In its latest State of the Climate overview, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) reaffirmed that the last four years had been the hottest on record.
- 2018 saw new records for ocean heat content in the upper 700 metres.
- The UN had data for heat content in the upper 700 metres of the ocean dating back to 1955.
- About 93 percent of excess heat — trapped around the Earth by greenhouse gases that come from the burning of fossil fuels — accumulates in the world's oceans.
- It proves what we have been saying that climate change is moving faster than our efforts to address it.

### About World Meteorological Organization

- The WMO is an intergovernmental organization with a membership of 192 Member States and Territories.
- It originated from the International Meteorological Organization (IMO), the roots of which were planted at the 1873 Vienna International Meteorological Congress.
- Established by the ratification of the WMO Convention on 23 March 1950, WMO became the specialised agency of the United Nations for meteorology.
- The Secretariat, headquartered in Geneva, is headed by the Secretary-General.

## **QUOTE OF THE DAY**

**Everyone would do it, if it were easy.**