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# History

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# 1. Srirangam Ranganathaswamy Temple Tiruchirapalli

## In news

- Won the UNESCO Award of Merit
- Awarded by UNESCO Asia Pacific region for the reconstruction activities undertaken in temple without affecting its traditional splendor

## About the Temple

- A temple at Srirangam is **mentioned in** Tamil literature of the Sangam era (1st to the 4th century CE), including the epic **Silapadikaram**
- It is **dedicated to Ranganatha, a reclining form of Vishnu**
- It is built in **Dravidian style of architecture**
- This temple is glorified by Alvars in their Divya Prabhanda and is the foremost among the 108 Divya Desams (108 Vishnu temples that are mentioned in Nalayira Divya Prabandham) dedicated to Vishnu
- It was one of the hubs of early Bhakti movement with a devotional singing and dance tradition
- The temple was **looted and destroyed by the Delhi Sultanate** armies in a broad plunder raid on various cities of the Pandyan kingdom in early 14th century
- The temple and 1000 pillared hall were **constructed in the Vijayanagar period in late 14th century**
- Its Gopuram, also called as —**Raja Gopuram, is the biggest gopuram in Asia**
- It annually hosts 21-day festival during the Tamil month of Margazhi (between December and January)
- The temple complex has been **nominated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and is in UNESCO's tentative list.**
- The inscriptions in the temple belong to the Chola, Pandya, Hoysala and Vijayanagar dynasties who ruled over the region.
- Thousand Pillar Mandapam is a theatre like structure made from granite.
- Sesharaya Mandapam is the intricately carved hall. It has 40 leaping animals with riders on their back, all carved out of monolithic pillars
- Garuda Mandapam is named after the vahana (vehicle) of Vishnu, named Garuda. Inside the community hall, on its pillars, are portrait sculptures.
- Kili Mandapam is found inside the innermost (first) prakaram courtyard.
- Ranga Vilasa Mandapam is one of the larger community halls designed for large spaces between the pillars for the pilgrim groups and families to sit together and rest. It is covered with Hindu mythology murals and narratives from the Ramayana.

## 2. Losar Bahubali, Khajuraho

- Losar is characterized especially by dancing, music, and a general spirit of merrymaking.
- The celebrations are an amalgamation of ancient rituals, staged dance dramas, the dance of the Ibex deer and lots of music, dance, and revelry for the people.
- Houses are decorated with good-luck signs.
- Prayer flags are hoisted in important religious places to welcome the New Year.
- The auspicious images of the Ibex deer and other symbols are made on the door, walls of the kitchen and wooden columns to welcome the New Year.
- Losar is marked with ancient ceremonies that represent the struggle between good and evil.
- Metho Ceremony – where hundreds of people carrying flaming torches and chanting prayers parade through the streets to chase away evil spirits and hungry ghosts.
- The Gumpa dance is a special dance celebrated around the time of **Losar, the Tibetan New Year.**

### Bahubali

- Located on the Vidyagiri hills at the Jain pilgrimage site of Shravanabelagola near Bangalore
- It is a 57-foot monolithic statue of the Jain God Bahubali or Gomateshwara
- Every 12 years, this piece of Jain craftsmanship is visited by thousands of pilgrims from around the world for a ceremony known as the **Mahamastak abhisheka, or the anointing of the statue in the presence of Jain acharyas.**
- The Gomateshwara at Shravanabelagola was built in 983 CE. It is known to have been **commissioned by the ruler and minister of the Ganga dynasty, Chamunda-Raya.**
- In any case, a large number of inscriptions at the site give references to Chamunda-Raya being the one who brought to the public notice the Gomateshwara statue and also arranged for its anointment.
- Chamunda-Raya did not just install the Gomateshwara statue at Shravanabelagola but also performed the great ceremony of consecration of the image on March 13, in 981 CE.
- The event was carried out in the precise manners prescribed in the Jain scriptures and in the scale and grandeur befitting the enormity of the image.
- **Jain mythology holds up Bahubali as the one who succeeded in attaining liberty from worldly desires through a long period of sustained meditation.** During this time, climbing plants grew around his legs.
- After his period of meditation, Bahubali is said to have attained omniscience (complete understanding or supreme wisdom)
- Kevala jnana is believed to be an intrinsic quality of all souls. This quality is masked by karmic particles that surround the soul. Every soul has the potential to obtain omniscience by shedding off these karmic particles.

- The story of Bahubali, though varied in detail, is that of a ruler who won against his brother and was filled with grief over his actions and therefore abandoned his possessions and kingdom in search of omniscience.
- The Jain poet Bopanna wrote of him as the one who “gave back the whole earth though he had completely conquered it”.
- His story is narrated in Sanskrit texts like the Adi Purana and the Bahubali Kannada literary texts and poems.

### 3. Khajuraho Temples

- It is a group of **Hindu and Jain Temples in Madhya Pradesh** build by CE.
- They are **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.
- The temples are famous for their **nagara-style architectural symbolism**
- The temples at Khajuraho are all made of **Sandstone**.
- Historical records note that the Khajuraho temple site had 85 temples by the 12th century. Of these, only about 25 temples have survived.
- Of the surviving temples, the **Kandariya Mahadeva Temple** intricate details, symbolism and expressiveness of ancient Indian art.
- It's the largest temple at Khajuraho and is attributed to Lord Shiva
- All the towers or shikhara of temple rise high, upward in a curved pyramidal fashion, emphasizing temple's vertical thrust ending in horizontal fluted disc called Amalaka topped with Kalasha or vase.
- Khajuraho is one of the four holy sites linked to the deity, **Chandela Dynasty** between 950 and 1050 and their erotic sculptures.
- The temple site is **within the Vindhya mountain range** in central India.
- The temples are clustered near water, a typical feature of Hindu temples.
- **All temples, except one (Chaturbhuj), face sunrise** - another symbolic feature that is predominant in Hindu temples.
- Of the surviving temples, six are dedicated to Shiva and his consorts Ganesha, one to Sun god, three to Jain Tirthankars.
- The territory is laid out in three triangles that converge to form a pentagon
- The temples have a rich display of intricately carved statues. While they are famous for their erotic sculpture, sexual themes cover less than 10% of the temple sculpture.
- The arts cover numerous aspects of human life and values considered important in the Hindu pantheon.
- Khajuraho Dance Festival is an annual cultural festival that highlights the richness of various Indian classical dance styles.

- The 6-day festival showcased classical dances including Kathak, Odissi, Bharatnatyam, Kuchipudi, Kathakali and Mohiniattam.

## 4. Jagannath Temple

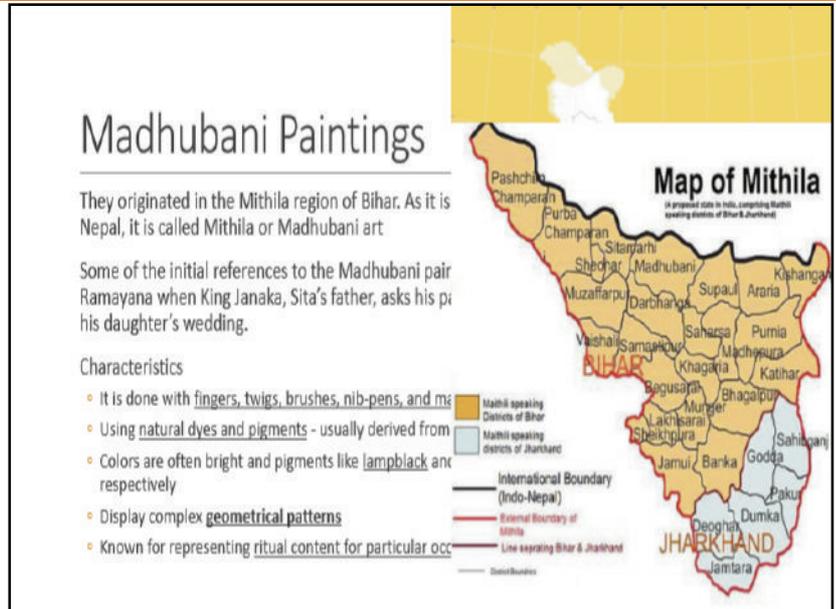
- The Shree Jagannath Temple of **Puri** is an important Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Jagannath, a form of lord Maha Vishnu
- Built by the **Ganga dynasty king Anantavarman Chodaganga** in the 12th century CE, as suggested by the **Kendupatna copper-plate inscription of his descendant Narasimhadeva II**.
- The temple complex was further developed during the reigns of the subsequent kings, including those of the Ganga dynasty and the Suryvamshi (Gajapati) dynasty.
- **Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra are a trio of deities worshipped at the temple.**
- These three, constitute the basic and fundamental Trinity and are considered to be the forms and manifestations of the omni-present, omni-scient and omni-potent supreme power.
- **Sudarsan** who is supposed to be the fourth important divine manifestation is also worshipped with the celebrated trio and these four are known as the **Chaturdha murti or the four-fold divine images**.
- The inner sanctum of the temple contains statues of these three Gods carved from sacred neem logs known as daru sitting on the bejewelled platform or ratnabedi
- Worship of these deities pre-dates the building of the temple and may have originated in an ancient tribal shrine.
- The Puri temple is built on a gigantic raised platform in the heart of the city
- There are four gates, facing the four directions.
- On the east-facing gate, there are stone images of two lions and it is called the Lions Gate. The north, south and west facing gates are similarly known as the Elephant Gate, the Horse Gate and the Tiger Gate (also called the Khanja Gate) respectively.
- The north gate is mainly meant for the God himself in as much as, the logs of wood out of which, the images are fabricated, make their entry into the temple premises through this gate
- In front of the Eastern gate (Lions Gate), we see a monolithic pillar about 10 meters high.
- This pillar is known locally as the Aruna Stambha.
  - ✓ In Hindu mythology Aruna is the the charioteer of the Sun-god, The world famous Konarka temple was designed in the form of a stupendous chariot and this monolithic pillar with the beautifully carved Aruna seated on its top was installed right in front of the porch of that temple.
  - ✓ When the temple was abandoned and there was no presiding deity in it, this pillar was removed from Konarka to Puri and was fixed in front of Jagannatha temple.

- The Jagannath triad are usually worshiped in the sanctum of the temple at Puri, but once during the month of Asadha (Rainy Season of Orissa, usually falling in month of June or July), they are brought out onto the Bada Danda (main street of Puri) and travel (3 km) to the Shri Gundicha Temple, in huge chariots (ratha), allowing the public to have darśana (Holy view). This festival is known as Rath Yatra, meaning the journey (yatra) of the chariots (ratha).
- The huge chariots of Jagannath pulled during Rath Yatra is the etymological origin of the English word Juggernaut. The Ratha-Yatra is also termed as the Shri Gundicha Yatra.
- One of the most grandiloquent events associated with the Lord Jagannath, Nabakalabera takes place when one lunar month of Ashadha is followed by another lunar month of Aashadha.
  - ✓ This can take place in 8, 12 or even 18 years.
  - ✓ Literally meaning the "New Body" (Nava = New, Kalevar = Body)
- The event involves installation of new images in the temple and burial of the old ones in the temple premises
- The three deities came to be claimed as the symbols of Samyak Darshan, Samyak Jnana and Samyak Charita usually regarded as Triratha (of the Jain cult), an assimilation of which leads to Moksha (salvation) or the ultimate bliss
- Jagannath is worshipped as Vishnu or Narayana or Krishna and Lord Balabhadra as Shesha.
- (In Hinduism, Shesha, also known as Sheshanaga, is the nagaraja or king of all nāgas and one of the primal beings of creation. Vishnu is often depicted as resting on Shesha. Shesha is considered a servant and a manifestation of Vishnu.)
- Simultaneously, the deities are regarded as the bhairava with Vimala (the devi or the consort of Shiva) installed in the campus of the temple. So ultimately we find a fusion of Saivism, Shaktism and Vaishnavism of the Hindu religion with Jainism.
- The temple is one of the holiest Hindu Char Dham (four divine sites) sites comprising Rameswaram, Badrinath, Puri and Dwarka.
- The Nila Chakra (Blue Discus) is the discus mounted on the top shikhar of the Jagannath Temple.
- The Singhadwara, which in Sanskrit means The Lion Gate, is one of the four gates to the temple and forms the Main entrance. The Singhadwara is so named because two huge statues of crouching lions exist on either side of the entrance.
- The statues of the two guards to the temple Jaya and Vijaya stand on either side of the doorway. Just before the commencement of the Rath Yatra the idols of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra are taken out of the temple through this gate.
- Jaya and Vijaya are the two gatekeepers (Dwarapalaka) of the abode of Vishnu, known as Vaikuntha (meaning place of eternal bliss)
- The other entrances are the Hathidwara or the Elephant Gate, the Vyaghradwara or the Tiger Gate and the Ashwadwara or the Horse Gate.

- There are many Mandapas or Pillared halls on raised platforms within the temple complex meant for religious congregations. The most prominent is the Mukti Mandapa the congregation hall of the holy seat of selected learned Brahmins

## 5. Madhubani Paintings

- The painting was traditionally done on **freshly plastered mud walls and floors of huts**
- Madhubani paintings are **made from the paste of powdered rice.**
- Colours derived from turmeric, pollen, pigments, indigo, various flowers, sandalwood, and leaves of various plants and trees, etc.
- The knowledge was passed down from generation to generation and the paintings began to adorn the houses of the region.



- The women of the village practiced these paintings on the walls of their respective home.
- Their paintings often illustrated their thoughts, hopes and dreams.
- Over time, Madhubani paintings became a part of festivities and special events like weddings.
- The traditional base of plastered mud wall was soon replaced by handmade paper, cloth and canvas.
- Madhubani painting has remained confined to a compact geographical area and the skills have been passed on through centuries, the content and the style have largely remained the same. For this reason,
  - ✓ Madhubani painting being accorded the coveted GI (Geographical Indication) status.
  - ✓ The themes as well as the style are more or less, the same.
- This painting as a form of wall art was practiced widely throughout the region; the more recent development of painting on paper and canvas mainly originated among the villages around Madhubani, and it is these latter developments led to the name Madhubani art being used alongside the name "Mithila Painting."

### Madhubani Paintings – Themes

- The themes used in these paintings often revolve around **Hindu deities like Krishna, Rama, Lakshmi, Shiva, Durga and Saraswati.** Heavenly bodies like the Sun and the Moon often form the centerpiece of Madhubani paintings. One can also find paintings based on the scenes from the royal courts and social events like weddings.

- The usage of geometrical patterns is pretty much apparent in these paintings. Madhubani paintings mostly depict the man & its association with nature and the scenes & deity from the ancient epics. Religious plants like tulsi are also widely painted
- Generally, **no space is left empty; the gaps are filled by paintings of flowers, animals, birds, and even geometric designs.**

## 6. Adilabad Dhokra Warangal Dhurries Monument Mitras

### Adilabad Dhokra (Dokra)

- A form of ancient bell metal craft; Practiced by Woj community (commonly referred to as Wojaris or Ohjas in the rural areas of Telangana); Native to Adilabad district of Telangana.
- They use ancient casting technique called cire perdue (lost wax casting technique), a technique wherein duplicate metal sculpture is cast from an original sculpture.
- The craftsmen use clay and design a model of the sculpture that they want to create. They wrap the clay with wax threads before baking the mould, so that the wax melts away and the molten metal is poured into the mould.
- Only 100-odd families are currently involved in the creation of this hereditary craft.
- The craftsmen mostly indulge in creation of metal casting products like idols of local deities, dancing figures, bells, jewellery, statues and many other decorative items.
- Apart from these, they also makes figures of animals and birds, and jewels.
- The uniqueness of this art form is that no two sculptures are the same, as they are not made out of a pre-designed cast.
- They use brass as their main material
- Dhokra craft tradition has the amazing feature that the pieces are crafted out of a single piece of metal and have no joints.
- The technique of lost wax casting is being practiced in India for more than 4000 years and even to this day, it is in use by these craftsmen.
- The method of making Dokra is done by combining the metallurgical skills with that of the lost wax technique.

### Warangal Dhurries

- Dhurries is popular traditional thick cotton rug in which weavers create beautiful patterns and dye them using vegetable colours, which are washed in flowing water after the printing process.
- Warangal district became a renowned hub for weaving these rugs due to the availability of cotton, which is grown by farmers in the area.
- There are reportedly more than 2,000 weavers in Telangana whose products are being exported across the world.
- The shatranji carpets and jainamaaz prayer mats made in Warangal range in size from the smallest 2 feet by 3 feet to a massive 60 feet by 90 feet, examples of which are seen in some museums.

- Bright colours, geometrically repetitive patterns and interlocking zigzag motifs in cotton and jute are the signature styles of the carpets.
- One of the newest innovations by the weavers here is an adaptation of tie-dyed ikat techniques and hand-painted or block-printed kalamkari designs for the dhurries to save time and energy.
- Warangal dhurries are known for their geometrically repetitive patterns and zigzag motifs.

## 7. GI Tags

- The registration of a GI is **valid for 10 years** after which it needs to be renewed.
- Violation of GI tags is punishable offence under law.
- Other GI Tags in Telangana
  - ✓ The Silver Filigree of Karimnagar
  - ✓ Hyderabad Haleem
  - ✓ Narayanpet Handloom Sarees
  - ✓ Pochampally Ikat
  - ✓ Pembarthi Metal Craft
  - ✓ The famous 'Hyderabad biriyani' DID NOT get a GI tag, as it could not prove its historical origin.

### GI Tags in Andhra

- The famous 'Tirupati laddu' offered as prasadam at the Sri Venkateshwara temple atop Tirumala already enjoys the GI tag,
  - ✓ Banganapalle mango
  - ✓ Durgi stone carvings
  - ✓ Andhra Pradesh Leather Puppetry
  - ✓ Guntur Sannam Chilli
  - ✓ Etikoppaka Toys

## 8. Adopt a Heritage

- Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan' scheme is an initiative of the **Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and the Archaeological Survey of India.**
- It was launched in September 2017 on World Tourism Day
- Under it, the **government invites entities, including public sector companies, private sector firms as well as individuals, to develop selected monuments and heritage and tourist sites across India.**
- It entails providing and maintaining basic amenities, including drinking water, ease of access for the differently abled and senior citizens, standardized signage, cleanliness, public conveniences and illumination, along with advanced amenities such as surveillance systems, night-viewing facilities and tourism facilitation centers.

- The sites/monument are selected on the basis of tourist footfall and visibility and can be adopted by private and public sector companies and individuals – known as Monument Mitras – for an initial period of five years.
- The Monument Mitras are selected by the ‘oversight and vision committee,’ co-chaired by the Tourism Secretary and the Culture Secretary, on the basis of the bidder’s ‘vision’ for development of all amenities at the heritage site.
- There is no financial bid involved.
- The corporate sector is expected to use corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds for the upkeep of the site.
- The project would begin with 83 ASI ticketed monuments and would be expanded to other natural and cultural sites across India. The heritage sites are classified into various categories.
- The **Monument Mitras are responsible for operation and maintenance and development/upgradation of tourist amenities, in the non- core areas of the monument.**
- At present, 11 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU’s) have been signed with the Monument Mitras.

Monument Mitra	Name of Monument/Heritage Site/Tourist Site or Technological Intervention	Category*
M/s Dalmia Bharat Ltd.	Red Fort, Delhi	Green
M/s Dalmia Bharat Ltd.	Gandikota Fort, Andhra Pradesh	Orange
Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI)	Area surrounding Gangotri Temple and Trail to Gaumukh, Uttarakhand	Orange
Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI)	Mt. Stok Kangri Trek, Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir	Orange
Yatra Online	Qutub Minar, Delhi	Green
Yatra Online	Leh Palace, Jammu & Kashmir	Orange
Yatra Online	Ajanta Caves, Maharashtra	Green
Yatra Online	Hampi (Hazara Rama Temple), Karnataka	Orange
M/s Bliss India Pvt. Ltd. (V-Resorts)	Surajkund, Haryana	Orange
M/s Apeejay Surrendra Park Pvt. Ltd.	Jantar Mantar, Delhi	Orange
M/s Resbird Technologies Pvt. Ltd.	Development of Multi-lingual Audio Guide Application for five Iconic Tourists Sites which are listed below: Colva Beach, Goa; Amer Fort, Rajasthan; Kaziranga, Assam; Kumarakom, Kerala; Mahabodhi Temple, Bihar	

## 9. Bhakti Movement

### Bhakti

- It is derived from the Sanskrit root word Bhaja whose literal meaning is ‘to utter’.
- The significance of the word Bhaja is ‘to adore’ or ‘to love with honour’.
- In the devotional literature the word is used to mean ‘unquestionable faith and utter devotion to God’. Thus in a general sense Bhakti means devotion to God.

- The Bhakti movement originated in South India during the seventh to eighth century CE, spread northwards from Tamil Nadu through Karnataka and gained wide acceptance in fifteenth century Bengal and northern India.
- The 12 Vaishnava Alvars and 63 Saiva Nayanars of South India are hailed as the earliest groups of bhakti saints.
- These 75 poet-saints composed soul-stirring verses in Tamil that set the groundwork for centuries of bhakti tradition.
- The early Vaishnava and Saiva bhakti saints composed hymns at a time when Jainism and Buddhism were gaining major popularity.
- In the early seventh and eighth centuries, the Hindu Pallava and Chola kingdoms of southern India were at the height of their power.
- This, coupled with the burgeoning popularity of the divine songsters, kept Hinduism strong as it faced threats from other faiths.
- The bhakti environment created by these poet-saints influenced people from all walks of life, royalty and laymen, who were inspired by the pristine devotion of the saints and subsequently redefined their own lives as service to God

## Alvars

- The Alvars, which literally means "those immersed in God", were Vaishnava poet-saints who sang praises of Vishnu as they travelled from one place to another.
- These poet-saints, all great devotees of Maha Vishnu, came from diverse communities in the Tamil South. They traveled to temples far and wide, collectively composing 4,000 hymns (pasurams) in praise of Vishnu and Krishna.
- They established temple sites such as Srirangam, and spread ideas about Vaishnavism. As torchbearers of the Sri Vaishnava tradition of South India from the sixth through ninth centuries, the 12 Alvars of Tamil Nadu spread the message of fervent love, devotion and spiritual surrender unto the Divine.
- In the 10th century, theologian Nathamuni compiled their works as the Nalayira Divya Prabandham (Divine Collection of 4,000 Hymns) and set them to music for singing in temples. The Divya Prabandham is hailed as the "Vedas of the Dravidians" as they convey the message of the Vedas and Upanishads in accessible Tamil.
- The Alvars propound a personal and emotional approach as they dote on and chide Perumal/Vishnu through their passionate bhakti poetry, which devotees memorize, recite, sing, listen and dance to.
- The songs of the Prabandham are regularly sung in South Indian Vishnu temples and homes, especially during festivals.
- The Bhakti literature that sprang from Alvars has contributed to the establishment and sustenance of a culture that broke away from the ritual-oriented Vedic religion and rooted itself in devotion as the only path for salvation.
- In addition they helped to make the Tamil religious life independent of a knowledge of Sanskrit

- As part of the legacy of the Alvars, five Vaishnava philosophical traditions (sampradayas) have developed at the later stages

## 10. Bhakti Saints

### Andal

- Born in Srivilliputhur and brought up by Periyar (also an alvar), the maiden named Kothai maintained that she would marry only Lord Ranganatha of Thiruvaramam. Her devotion and surrender earned her the name Andal, the girl who “ruled” over the Lord.

### Nammalvar

- Nammalvar (“our Alvar”) is one of the most famous and prolific of the group. His poetry contributed greatly to philosophy and theology of Tamil Vaishnavism.

### Divya Desam

- To the Alvars, the Lord is not a mere idea but a concrete presence.
- Through their magnificent hymns in the Divya Prabandham, the saints sang about Lord Vishnu presiding in 108 temples.
- Each of these temples is celebrated as a Divya Desam, “divine precinct”, and together form a map of sacred geography and pilgrimage for the Sri Vaishnava community.
- India is home to 105 of these sanctuaries, spread across Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. One Divya Desam is in Nepal, and two are in celestial realms.

### Nayanars

- The Nayanars “hounds of Siva”, later “teachers of Siva”) were a group of 63 saint-poets in the 6th to 8th century who were devoted to the Hindu god Shiva in Tamil Nadu.
- The Nayanars were from various backgrounds, including Channars, Vanniyar, Vellalas, Idayars, Thevars, oilmongers, Brahmins, Harijan, and nobles.
- In the 10th century, king Raja Raja Chola I collected Tevaram literature after hearing excerpts of the hymns in his court. His priest Nambiyandar Nambi began compiling the hymns into a series of volumes called the Tirumurai.
  - ✓ He arranged the hymns of three saint poets Sambandar, Appar and Sundarar as the first seven books which he called the Tevaram.
  - ✓ He compiled Manikkavacakar's Tirukovayar and Tiruvacakam as the eighth book, the 28 hymns of nine other saints as the ninth book, the Tirumandiram of Tirumular and 40 hymns by 12 other poets as the tenth book.
- In the eleventh book, he created the Tirutotanar Tiruvanthathi (also known as Tirutoṅṅar Antādi, lit. Necklace of Verses on the Lord's Servants), which consisted of 89 verses, with a verse devoted to each of the saints. With the addition of Sundarar and his parents to the sequence, this became the canonical list of the 63 saints.
- In the 12th century, Sekkizhar added a twelfth volume to the Tirumurai called Periya Puranam in which he expands further on the stories of each of 63 Nayanars.

## Shaivas

- The poets' itinerant lifestyle helped create temple and pilgrimage sites and spread spiritual ideas built around Shiva.
- Early Tamil-Siva bhakti poets influenced Hindu texts that came to be revered all over India.
- Of the Siva devotees, the Nalvar (Sambandar, Appar, Sundarar and Manikkavasagar), as well as female poet-saint Karaikkal Ammaiyar, had a great impact on Saiva Siddhanta philosophy (According to Saiva Siddhanta, Siva is the ultimate and supreme reality, omniscient, omnipresent and unbound) as they sang about Siva as Personal Lord and Supreme Reality.

## 11. Bhakti Movement-Part II

### Origin

- Originated in South India, during the seventh to eighth century C.E., spread northwards from Tamil Nadu through Karnataka and gained wide acceptance in fifteenth century Bengal and northern India. Started with the Saiva Nayanars and the Vaisnava Alvars, who lived between 5th and 9th century C.E. Their efforts ultimately helped spread bhakti poetry and ideas throughout India by the 12th-18th century CE. The Alvars, which literally means "those immersed in God", were Vaishnava poet-saints who sang praises of Vishnu as they travelled from one place to another.
  - ✓ They established temple sites such as Srirangam, and spread ideas about Vaishnavism.
  - ✓ Their poems, compiled as Alvar Arulicheyalgal or Divya Prabhandham, developed into an influential scripture for the Vaishnavas.
- The Tirumurai, a compilation of hymns on Shiva by sixty-three Nayanar poet-saints, developed into an influential scripture in Shaivism.
  - ✓ The poets' itinerant lifestyle helped create temple and pilgrimage sites and spread spiritual ideas built around Shiva.

### Meaning

- In the devotional literature the word Bhakti is used to mean 'unquestionable faith and utter devotion to God'
- Single-minded intense devotion to God
- A complete surrender of oneself to God
- Bhakti to God was accepted as salvation

### Features of the Bhakti Movement

- Unity to God or one God though known by different names
- Bhakti, intense love and devotion, the only way to salvation
- Repetition of the True Name
- Self-surrender
- Condemnation of rituals, ceremonies and blind faith

- Rejection of idol worship by many saints
- Open-mindedness about deciding religious matters
- No distinction of different castes, higher or low
- Need of a guru for guidance advocated by some
- Preaching through local or regional languages and travelling from place to place for spreading the religious message

## 12. Rise of Bhakti

### The impact of the Muslim rule

- The Hindus had suffered a lot materially, morally and spiritually. The Muslim rulers in general wanted to enforce the Islamic laws on the Hindus. The Muslim rule had put dread in the hearts of the Hindu masses.
- The Bhakti movement brought them hope and support and inner strength to save themselves.

### Evil practices in Hinduism

- During the course of time, several evil practices had crept into the Hindu society like rigidity of caste system, irrelevant rituals and religious practices, blind faiths and social dogmas. The society also suffered from polytheism, segregation, severe economic disparity due to casteism, untouchability etc.
- The Bhakti saints were social reformers also. They condemned several social evils.

### Popular Disaffection with Religion

- The religion itself was monopolized by the Brahmins who themselves led a degenerated and corrupt moral life. Common men in general had developed an adverse attitude towards these social evils and were in need of a liberal form of religion where they could identify themselves with simple religious practices.

### The contribution of Sufis

- With the foreign invaders, some Sufi Muslim saints had also come to India and settled here. They emphasized the virtues of love and devotion, brotherhood and equality etc. This helped to bring the two communities nearer. It also helped to harmonize the conflicting interests.
- The Sufi Saints like Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti, Bakhtiyar Kaki, Nizamudin Auliya and Nasiruddin Chirag-i-Delhi etc. attempted to restrain the fanaticism of the Muslims and tried to bring them nearer to the Hindus. Several Hindus became followers of the Sufi saints but without relinquishing their own religion.

### Bridge between Hindus and Muslims

- An important factor which led to the popularity of Bhakti movement was that most of the promoters of this movement attempted to reconcile the differences between the Hindus and the Muslims by stressing that Rama and Rahim were one and the same. They condemned the hatred of the fanatic Pandits and Mullahs alike.
- The Bhakti saints tried to generate an environment of good will between the Hindus and the Muslims.

- The Hindus realized that it was difficult to drive away the Muslim rulers and Muslims from India. On the other hand the Muslims also appreciated that the Hindus were in absolute majority and it was impossible to force all of them to embrace Islam. So under the impact of the new movement both sides started making efforts for coming closer to each other.

### **Bhakti as a Way of Life**

- The Hindu and as well as the Muslim saints emphasized religious simplicity. They stressed human qualities and moral attitudes. They stressed that a true religious man is one who is pure in thought and action.

### **Equality between different sections**

- The Bhakti saints believed in equality of man and man. According to them there was no distinction and consideration of high and low on the basis of birth. Their doors were open to all classes.

## **13. Spread of Bhakti**

- In the Kannada region, the movement begun by Basavanna (1105-68) in the 12th century for a time threatened the caste hierarchy and stretched the fabric of local society. While the orthodoxy managed to resist, the Bhakti movement in this region produced a rich vein of literature that came to be known as Vachana Sahitya composed by Basava himself as well as his disciples (Akkamaha devi, Allama Prabhu, Devara Dasimayya and others).
- Consisting of pithy aphorisms, these Vachanas conveyed in unambiguous terms certain astute observations on spiritual and social matters. Basavanna, the founder of the movement in Karnataka, was a minister of King Bijjala. He used his considerable powers to initiate programs of social reform and saw his verses as extending his message to the masses.
  - ✓ He was ultimately defeated by the orthodoxy, but he had initiated a new thinking in society that survives to the modern day, and in Karnataka, he remains an inspirational figure to this day.
- In neighbouring Maharashtra, the Bhakti movement began in the late 13th century. Its proponents were known as the Varkaris.
- The Varkaris worship Vithoba and have a duty based approach towards life emphasising moral behavior and strict avoidance of alcohol and tobacco, the adoption of a strict lacto-vegetarian diet and fasting on Ekadashi day (twice a month), self-restraint (brahmacharya) during student life, equality and humanity for all rejecting discrimination based on the caste system or wealth, the reading of Hindu texts, the recitation of the Haripath every day and the regular practice of bhajan and kirtan. Among its most popular figures were Jnanadev(1275- 96), Namdev(1270-50) and Tukaram (1608-50), who have left behind many verses that embody the essence of Bhakti. Tukaram was a rebel in more ways than one.
  - ✓ A Shudra by caste, he became a merchant.
  - ✓ Later, defying the injunctions of the Brahmins, Tukaram chose to write on religious matters, and that too in Marathi, the language of the people.
  - ✓ That a Shudra chose to write was itself unacceptable to the Brahmins. Writing on religious matters in Marathi and not in Sanskrit was yet another issue.

- ✓ Forced by the orthodoxy to throw his manuscripts into the river, legend has it that Tukaram undertook a fast unto death and after the 13th day, his sunken notebooks appeared from the river, undamaged.
- In northern India, from the 13th to the 17th centuries, a large number of poets flourished who were all Bhakti figures of considerable importance.
  - ✓ At times, speaking of a formless god, sometimes centring their devotion on a preferred god (ishtdevata), these poets have left behind a considerable body of literature in Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Punjabi, Maithili and a number of other languages.
  - ✓ Almost always instinctively rebellious, these poets played an important role in laying the foundation for a reconfiguration of society on more equitable lines.
- Kabir, the renowned saint of northern India, falls squarely in this tradition of singer-songwriter-critic.
  - ✓ Living in the 13th and 14th centuries (the exact dates are disputed, but fall between 1398 and 1518), Kabir upturned the religious notions and social conventions of his time.
  - ✓ Kabir preached a monotheism that appealed directly to the poor and assured them of their access to god without an intermediary.
  - ✓ He rejected both Hinduism and Islam, as well as empty religious rituals, and denounced hypocrisy. This outraged the orthodox gentry.
- Another singer-songwriter was Guru Nanak (1469-1539), an iconoclast and a critic of the dominant societal values of his time.
  - ✓ Nanak was of a syncretic mindset and attempted to fuse the tenets of Hinduism and Islam to serve as a guide for all humanity. He rebelled against a society that preferred ritual to devotion and sincerity.
  - ✓ Among the institutions that he challenged was caste. Nanak did not subscribe to caste taboos and was contemptuous of its ideas of —high" and —low".
  - ✓ Given the injunctions against intermingling, Nanak frequently travelled with Mardana, a lower-caste Mirasi (a community of dancers and singers).
  - ✓ Mardana was a skilled rubab player who is said to have accompanied Nanak whenever he sang his verses.
  - ✓ Eventually, Nanak founded a separate religion, Sikhism, which attempted to put his precepts into practice.
- A near-contemporary of Nanak was Ravi Dass (1450-1520), who was born into a family of leather workers (chamars) in Varanasi.
  - ✓ Like Nanak, Ravi Dass too spoke of the need for a casteless society, though, unlike Nanak, he had suffered its slings and arrows as he belonged to an untouchable caste.
  - ✓ In one of his popular poems, Ravi Dass speaks of —Begumpura"——a place with no pain, no taxes or cares... no wrongdoing, worry, terror or torture"

✓ In this verse and in many others, Ravi Dass gave voice to lower-caste pain at Brahminical society's treatment of them. The Ravidassia community that continues to flourish to this day is evidence of the everlasting nature of his appeal.

## 14. Tulsidas (1532 – 1623 C.E.)

- Tulsidas was a great poet, a Vaishnava saint and a devotee of Rama.
- To Tulsidas, Rama was a personal and supreme God, who had feeling of compassion for the humanity which suffered.
- He is best known for his retelling of the Sanskrit Ramayana in the epic Ram Charit Manas in his local Awadhi dialect of Hindi
- Apart from this, his works include Gitawali, Kavitali, Vinaya Patrika etc.
- Tulsi Das was a humanist and universalist and laid stress upon knowledge, devotion, worship and meditation
- He has blended in his work the philosophical monism of the past with stress on Bhakti.
- He starts from the fundamental conception of philosophical theology, the ethical Brahman, passionless, formless, without attributes (nirguna) and yet possessing the fundamental quality of goodness (sattva)
- Though Tulsi Das did not start any new sector advocate any new doctrine, yet by his own pure life and the magic of his poetry he rendered great service to the Bhakti-marga.

## 15. Sur Das

- Sur Das was another saint, and poet who preached religion of love and devotion to a personal God and provided inspiration to millions of men and women in northern India.
- It is commonly held that he was born sometimes in the last quarter of the fifteenth century.
- His works include Sur Sagar, Sahitva Ratna and Sur Sarawali.
- In Sur Sagar, Sur Das deals with the life of Krishna's childhood. It focuses on descriptions of Krishna as a lovable child, written from the gopis' perspective. He displayed himself not merely as a master of child psychology but also as a devotee of the Almighty.
- In contemporary writings, Sur Sarawali is said to contain one lakh verses, out of which many were lost due to obscurity and uncertainty of the times. It is analogical to the festival of (Holi)
- Sahitya Lahari consists of 118 verses and emphasises on Bhakti (devotion).
- Sur's compositions are also found in the Guru Granth Sahib, the holy book of the Sikhs.
- Sur's poetry was written in a dialect of Hindi called Braj Bhasha. His work raised the status of Braj Bhasha from a crude language to that of a literary one.

## 16. Maluk Das

- Maluk Das was born at Kara in the district of Allahabad. He also founded a sect which mainly consists of laymen.
- Like other saints and reformers of his time Maluk das also condemned the externals of religion like pilgrimage, idol worship, etc.
- He teaches that the true religion is an inward faith, that Maya is the enemy of man, and God's name is the only protection against it, that the world is transitory and the worldly relations of no avail, that man is born of dust and will return to dust, that those who are not devoted to spiritual life are the dogs of the world, that salvation is obtained by knowing the self, killing pride and egotism, controlling passions, trusting the Guru, and loving God.
- Maluk Das also laid great emphasis on the unity of the Hindus and Muslims.

## 17. Sundardas

- Sundardas was a disciple of Dadu. He was born in the family of a Bania in Rajasthan in 1596 C.E. He spent most of his early childhood with Dadu at Naraina, and soon gained popularity as a great poet and a saint.
- He returned to his home in 1603 after the death of Dadu and spent the rest of the life spreading the religion of Bhakti taught by Dadu.
- Sant Sunderdas composed about 48 books. He is revered as the Sankaracharya of Hindi literature, and is popularly known as Sant Kavi Sunderdas.
- The reputation of Sundardas rests on his work Sundarvilasa.
- In this work he deals with the six philosophic systems of the Hindus and emphasises their inadequacy in securing salvation of man.
- He insisted on the teachings of Dadu as an easy way for salvation.

## 18. Birbhan

- Birbhan was a contemporary of Dadu. He was born near Narnaul in Punjab in 1543 and founded the famous sect of Sadhus or Satnamis.
- Birbhan was a monotheist and described God by the name of Satnam or Truth.
- Birbhan did not believe in caste and other distinctions and was opposed to idol worship.
- He insisted on meditation and virtuous life with a view to attain ultimate absorption with God.
- Birbhan insisted on his followers to abstain from intoxicants and animal food as well as unnecessary accumulation of wealth.
- The sect founded by Birbhan is known as Satnamis and their religious granth is known as Pothi, which is revered like the Granth of the Sikhs.

## 19. UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage

- A total of 13 Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) elements from India have been inscribed till date on the UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
- For inclusion of an element in the UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, the state parties are required to submit nomination dossier on the relevant element for evaluation and examination of the UNESCO Committee.
- The Ministry of Culture has appointed the Sangeet Natak Akademi, an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Culture, as nodal office for matters relating to the intangible cultural heritage including for preparation of the nomination dossiers for the Representative List of UNESCO.

## 20. Kumbh Mela (2017)

- The festival of the sacred Pitcher
- The (Prayagraj Maha) Kumbh Mela, Haridwar (Maha) Kumbh Mela, the Nashik-Trimbakeshwar Simhastha (Kumbh), and Ujjain Simhastha (Kumbh)
- It has been inscribed on the UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

### What

- The largest peaceful congregation of pilgrims on earth, during which participants bathe or take a dip in a sacred river.

### Why

- Devotees believe that by bathing in the Ganges one is freed from sins liberating her/him from the cycle of birth and death.
- Bathing in these rivers is thought to cleanse a person of all their sins

### Who

- The congregation includes ascetics, saints, sadhus, aspirants-kalpavasis and visitors. Its primary bearers, however, belong to akhadas and ashrams, religious organizations, or are individuals living on alms.

### Where

- The festival is held at Allahabad, Haridwar, Ujjain and Nasik every four years by rotation
- At the Ganges (*Ganga*) at Haridwar; the confluence of the Ganges and the Yamuna and the invisible Sarasvati at Allahabad; the Godavari at Nashik; and the Shipra at Ujjain.
- At Haridwar and Allahabad, a **Maha** ("Great") **Kumbh Mela** is held every 12 years, with an **Ardha** ("Half") **Kumbh Mela** six years later.

## Significance

- Kumbh Mela plays a central spiritual role in the country. The event encapsulates the science of astronomy, astrology, spirituality, ritualistic traditions, and social and cultural customs and practices, making it extremely rich in knowledge.
- At Nashik and Ujjain, the Mela may be held while a planet is in Leo (Simha in Hindu astrology); in this case, it is also known as **Simhastha**. At Haridwar and Allahabad, a *Maha* ("Great") Kumbh Mela is held every 12 years, with an *Ardha* ("Half") Kumbh Mela six years later.
- As it is held in four different cities in India, it involves different social and cultural activities, making this a culturally diverse festival.
- Knowledge and skills related to the tradition are transmitted through ancient religious manuscripts, oral traditions, historical travelogues and texts produced by eminent historians.
- However, the teacher-student relationship of the sadhus in the ashrams and akhadas remains the most important method of imparting and safeguarding knowledge and skills relating to Kumbh Mela.

## Mythology

- Kumbha Mela derives its name from both the original festival being held according to the astrological sign "Kumbha" (Aquarius), and from the associated Hindu legend in which the gods and demons fought over a pot, or "kumbh," of nectar that would give them immortality
- According to medieval Hinduism, Lord Vishnu spilled drops of Amrit (the drink of immortality) at four places, while transporting it in a *kumbha* (pot). These four places are identified as the present-day sites of the Kumbh Mela.
- This legend, however, is not found in the earliest mentions of the original legend of *samudra manthan* as described in various ancient Hindu texts collectively known as the Puranas
- In one of the most popular versions added to the original legend later, the carrier of the kumbha is the divine physician Dhanavantari, who stops at four places where the Kumbh Mela is celebrated.
- In other later addition to the legend, the carrier is Garuda, Indra or Mohini, who spills the amrita at four places

## Current news

- For the 2019 Allahabad Kumbh Mela, the Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath announced that the Ardh Kumbh Mela (organised every 6 years) will simply be known as "Kumbh Mela", and the Kumbh Mela (organised every 12 years) will be known as "Maha Kumbh Mela" ("Great Kumbh Mela")

## 21. Nawrouz/Navroz/Nowruz (2016)

- Navruz is the day of the vernal equinox, and marks the beginning of spring in the Northern Hemisphere.
- **March 21** marks the start of the year in Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.
- It marks the first day of the first month (Farvardin) of the Iranian calendar.

- It is referred to as Nauryz, Navruz, Nawrouz, Nevruz, Nooruz, Novruz, Nowrouz or Nowruz meaning 'new day' when a variety of rituals, ceremonies and other cultural events take place for a period of about two weeks.
- An important tradition practised during this time is the gathering around 'the Table', decorated with objects that symbolize purity, brightness, livelihood and wealth, to enjoy a special meal with loved ones.
- New clothes are worn and visits made to relatives, particularly the elderly and neighbours.
- Gifts are exchanged, especially for children, featuring objects made by artisans.
- There are also street performances of music and dance, public rituals involving water and fire, traditional sports and the making of handicrafts.
- These practices support cultural diversity and tolerance and contribute to building community solidarity and peace.
- They are transmitted from older to younger generations through observation and participation.

## History

- Despite its Iranian and Zoroastrian origins, Nowruz has been celebrated by diverse communities. It has been celebrated for over 3,000 years in Western Asia, Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Black Sea Basin, and the Balkans
- It is a secular holiday for most celebrants that is enjoyed by people of several different faiths, but remains a holy day for Zoroastrians, Bahais, and some Muslim communities
- During the Mamluk dynasty rule, Balban introduced the celebration of the festival to impress his nobles.
- During the Mughal Empire, the festival was celebrated for 19 days with pomp and gaiety in the realm.
- However, it further goes back to the Parsi Zoroastrian community in Western India, who migrated to the Indian subcontinent from Persia during the Muslim conquest of Persia of 636–651 CE.

## Contemporary India

- Kazi Nazrul Islam, during the Bengal renaissance, portrayed the festival with vivid sketch and poems, highlighting its various aspects.

## 22. Yoga (2016)

- Yoga is one of the six orthodox schools of Hindu philosophical traditions.
- There is a broad variety of yoga schools, practices, and goals in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism
- The term "yoga" in the Western world often denotes a modern form of Hatha yoga, yoga as exercise, consisting largely of the postures called asanas.
- It is based on unifying the mind with the body and soul to allow for greater mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing

- Yoga is it is mentioned in the Rigveda, <sup>but</sup> most likely developed around the sixth and fifth centuries BCE, in ancient India's ascetic and śramaṇa movements
- The **Yoga Sutras of Patanjali** date from the first half of the 1st millennium CE
- Traditionally, yoga was transmitted using the Guru-Shishya model (master-pupil) with yoga gurus as the main custodians of associated knowledge and skills.
- The spiritual sense of the word yoga first arises in Epic Sanskrit, in the second half of the 1st millennium BCE, and is associated with the philosophical system presented in the **Yoga Sutras of Patanjali**, with the chief aim of "uniting" the human spirit with the Divine.
- The ultimate goal of Yoga is **moksha** (liberation), although the exact form this takes depends on the philosophical or theological system with which it is conjugated.
- Patanjali's writing defined an Ashtanga or "Eight-Limbed" Yoga in Yoga Sutras. They are:
  - ✓ **Yama** (The five "abstentions"): Ahimsa (Non-violence, non-harming other living beings), Satya (truthfulness, non-falsehood), Asteya (non-stealing), Brahmacharya (celibacy, fidelity to one's partner), and Aparigraha (non-avarice, non-possessiveness)
  - ✓ **Niyama** (The five "observances"): Śauca (purity, clearness of mind, speech and body), Santosha (contentment, acceptance of others and of one's circumstances), Tapas (persistent meditation, perseverance, austerity), Svādhyāya (study of self, self-reflection, study of Vedas), and Ishvara-Pranidhana (contemplation of God/Supreme Being/True Self)
  - ✓ **Asana**: Literally means "seat", and in Patanjali's Sutras refers to the seated position used for meditation.
  - ✓ **Pranayama** ("Breath exercises"): Prāna, breath, "āyāma", to "stretch, extend, restrain, stop".
  - ✓ **Pratyahara** ("Abstraction"): Withdrawal of the sense organs from external objects.
  - ✓ **Dharana** ("Concentration"): Fixing the attention on a single object.
  - ✓ **Dhyana** ("Meditation"): Intense contemplation of the nature of the object of meditation.
  - ✓ **Samadhi** ("Liberation"): merging consciousness with the object of meditation.

## 23. Yoga and Vedanta

- Yoga and Vedanta are the two largest surviving schools of Hindu traditions.
- They share many thematic principles, concepts and belief in self/soul, but diverge in degree, style and some of their methods.
- Yoga disputes the monism of Advaita Vedanta. Yoga school believes that in the state of moksha, each individual discovers the blissful, liberating sense of himself or herself as an independent identity; Advaita Vedanta, in contrast, believes that in the state of moksha, each individual discovers the blissful, liberating sense of himself or herself as part of Oneness with everything, everyone and the Universal Self.
- They both hold that the free conscience is aloof yet transcendent, liberated and self-aware.

- Further, Advaita Vedanta school enjoins the use of Patanjali's yoga practices and the reading of Upanishads for those seeking the supreme good, ultimate freedom and jivanmukti

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## 26. Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab

- The craft of the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru constitutes the traditional technique of manufacturing brass and copper utensils in Punjab.
- The metals used – copper, brass and *kansa* (an alloy of copper, zinc and tin) – are believed to be beneficial for health.
- The metals used are recommended by the ancient Indian school of medicine, Ayurveda.

- The very name of the community—‘Thatheras’ is identical with the name of the element.
- The process begins with procuring cooled cakes of metal that are flattened into thin plates and then hammered into curved shapes, creating the required small bowls, rimmed plates, to larger pots for water and milk, huge cooking vessels and other artefacts.
- Heating the plates while hammering and curving them into different shapes requires careful temperature control, which is achieved by using tiny wood-fired stoves (aided by hand-held bellows) buried in the earth.
- Utensils are manually finished by polishing with traditional materials such as sand and tamarind juice.
- Designs are made by skilfully hammering a series of tiny dents into the heated metal.
- Utensils may be manufactured for ritual or utilitarian purposes, both for individual and community use on special occasions such as weddings or at temples.
- The process of manufacturing is transmitted orally from father to son.
- Metalwork is not simply a form of livelihood for Thatheras, but it defines their family and kinship structure, work ethic and status within the social hierarchy of the town.
- It was inscribed in UNESCO’s list in 2014.

## 27. Sankirtana, Ritual Singing, Drumming and Dancing of Manipur

- Sankirtana encompasses an **array of arts** performed to mark religious occasions and various stages in the life of the Vaishnava people of the Manipur plains.
- Sankirtana practices centre on the temple, where performers narrate the lives and deeds of Krishna through song and dance.
- In a typical performance, two drummers and about ten singer-dancers perform in a hall (Mandapa) of a temple or domestic courtyard encircled by seated devotees.
- The dignity and flow of aesthetic and religious energy is unparalleled, moving audience members to tears and frequently to prostrate themselves before the performers.
- Sankirtana has two main social functions: it brings people together on festive occasions throughout the year, acting as a cohesive force within Manipur’s Vaishnava community; and it establishes and reinforces relationships between the individual and the community through life-cycle ceremonies.
- It is practiced primarily by the Vaishnava community in Manipur and by the Vaishnava Manipuri population settled in the neighbouring States of Tripura and Assam.
- The Sankirtana of Manipur is a vibrant practice promoting an organic relationship with people: the whole society is involved in its safeguarding, with the specific knowledge and skills traditionally transmitted from mentor to disciple.
- Sankirtana works in harmony with the natural world, whose presence is acknowledged through its many rituals.

## Sankirtana

- In the setting of the home, Sankirtana is offered as prayer at all life-cycle ceremonies, such as the ear-piercing ritual (for both males and females in childhood), the donning of the sacred thread (for adolescent males), marriage, and the rites of passage at death.
- Thus pervading the life of the Manipuri Vaishnava, Sankirtana is regarded as the visible manifestation of God
- The male dancers play the Pung and Kartal while dancing. The masculine aspect of dance - the Choloms is a part of the Sankirtana tradition. The Pung and Kartal choloms are performed at all social and religious festivals.

## 28. Buddhist chanting of Ladakh

- Recitation of sacred Buddhist texts in the trans-Himalayan Ladakh region, Jammu and Kashmir
- In the monasteries and villages of the Ladakh region, Buddhist lamas (priests) chant sacred texts representing the spirit, philosophy and teachings of the Buddha.
- Two forms of Buddhism are practised in Ladakh – Mahayana and Vajrayana – and there are four major sects, namely Nyngma, Kagyud, Shakya and Geluk. Each sect has several forms of chanting, practised during life-cycle rituals and on important days in the Buddhist and agrarian calendars.
- Chanting is undertaken for the spiritual and moral well-being of the people, for purification and peace of mind, to appease the wrath of evil spirits or to invoke the blessing of various Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, deities and rinpoches.
- The chanting is performed in groups, either sitting indoors or accompanied by dance in monastery courtyards or private houses.
- The monks wear special costumes and make hand gestures (mudras) representing the divine Buddha, and instruments such as bells, drums, cymbals and trumpets lend musicality and rhythm to the chanting. *For example, during the Rigmachutuk, the dancers wear silk robes, special shoes and copper masks.*
- Acolytes are trained under the rigorous supervision of senior monks, reciting texts frequently until they are memorized.
- Chants are practised everyday in the monastic assembly hall as a prayer to the deities for world peace, and for the personal growth of the practitioners

## 29. The Rise of Europeans

### Credit

- If the global pie remained the same size, there was no margin for credit. Credit is the difference between today's pie and tomorrow's pie.
- If the pie remains same, why extend credit?
- So, it was hard to get a loan in the pre-modern world.
- Then came the scientific revolution and the idea of progress.

- The idea of progress is built on the notion that if we accept our ignorance and invest resources in research, things can improve.
- This idea soon translated into economic terms.
- Whoever believes in progress believes that geographical discoveries, technological inventions and organizational developments can increase the sum total of human production, trade and wealth.
- New trade routes in the Atlantic could flourish without ruining old trade routes in the Indian Ocean.
- Over the last 500 years the idea of progress convinced people to put more and more trust in the future.

## Christopher Columbus

- In 1484, Christopher Columbus approached the king of Portugal with the proposal that he finance a fleet that would sail westward to find a new trade route to East Asia. Such exploration was, however, very costly and very risky. The King of Portugal declined.
- He then approached the rulers of Spain and was able to convince the Spanish queen Isabella to invest.
- Isabella hit the jackpot. The rest, as they say, is history.
- Columbus' discoveries enabled the Spaniards to conquer America.
- A hundred years later, princes and bankers were far more willing to extend far more credit to Columbus' successors, and they had more capital at their disposal, thanks to the treasures reaped from America.
- Equally important, princes and bankers had far more trust in the potential of exploration, and were more willing to part with their money.
- The magic circle was now complete – credit financed new discoveries, discoveries led to colonies, colonies provided profit, profits built trust, and trust translated into more credit.

## Financial System

- But these expeditions were still a risky and expensive affair. For example, the English wasted a lot of capital in fruitless attempts to discover a north-western passage to Asia through the Arctic.
- In order to reduce the risk each investor incurred, and also to increase the number of investors so that the risk could be shared, Europeans turned to joint-stock companies.
- Instead of a single investor betting all his money on a single rickety ship, the joint-stock company collected money from a large number of investors, each risking only a small portion of his capital.
- Even a small investment in the right ship could turn you into a millionaire.
- Decade by decade, western Europe witnessed the development of a sophisticated financial system that could raise large amounts of credit on short notice and put it at the disposal of private entrepreneurs and governments. This could finance expeditions and discoveries far more efficiently than any kingdom or empire.

## 30. Spain vs. Netherlands

- In the sixteenth century, Spain was the most powerful state in Europe, holding sway over a vast global empire.
- It ruled much of Europe, huge chunks of North and South America, the Philippine islands, a string of bases in Asia and Africa.
- The Netherlands, on the other hand, was a small and windy swamp, devoid of natural resources, a small corner of the king of Spain's dominions.
- In 1568, the Dutch who were mainly Protestants, revolted against their Catholic Spanish overlord.
- And within 80 years, the Dutch had managed not only to secure their independence but also replaced the Spaniards and their Portuguese allies as masters of the ocean highways, build a global Dutch empire, and become the richest state in Europe

### Trust

- The secret of Dutch success was credit.
- The Dutch hired mercenary armies to fight the Spanish for them. They themselves, meanwhile, took to the sea in ever-larger fleets.
- The Dutch were able to finance the mercenary armies, even though they cost a fortune, because they were able to secure the trust of the financial system of Europe at a time when the Spanish king was carelessly eroding trust in him.
- Financiers extended the Dutch enough credit to hire armies, and these armies allowed the Dutch to control the world trade, and that trade led to profits and those profits allowed the Dutch to repay loans, and that further strengthened the trust of the financiers.

### Dutch VOC

- The Dutch merchants financed conquests by getting loans, and increasingly also by selling shares in their companies that entitled their holders to receive a portion of the company's profits.
- Cautious investors who would have never given their money to the Spanish king, happily invested in the Dutch joint-stock companies.
- The shares of the company could be bought from the people who owned them, at a higher price, if you thought it was going to give you rich returns.
- The resulting trade in company shares led to the establishment in most major European cities of stock exchanges, places where the shares of companies were traded.
- The most-famous Dutch joint-stock company, the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, or VOC for short, was chartered in 1602.
- Eventually VOC money financed the conquest of Indonesia. VOC ruled Indonesia for close to 200 years. In 1800, the Dutch state assumed control of Indonesia, making it a Dutch national colony for the following 150 years.

## 31. The French

- As the seventeenth century wound to an end, complacency and costly continental wars caused the Dutch to lose not only New York, but also their place as Europe's financial and imperial engine.
- The vacancy was hotly contested by the French and British.
- At first, France seemed to be in a stronger position. It was bigger than Britain, richer, more populous, and it possessed a larger and more experienced army.
- And yet Britain won the trust of the financial world whereas the French proved unworthy.
- The French Crown was particularly notorious for interfering and the Mississippi bubble, the largest-financial crisis of 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe, rocked the financial system of France.
- The Mississippi Company was chartered in 1717 (From 500 livres to 10000 livres)

## 32. The French Debt

- The French had lost the trust of the financial world in Europe.
- So, in the eighteenth century, while Britain was able to secure credit easily and at lower rates of interest, France had difficulty accessing loans and had to pay high interest rates.
- Eventually, in the 1780's, Louis XVI, who had ascended to the throne on his grandfather's death, realized that half his annual budget was tied to servicing the interest on his loans, and that he was heading towards bankruptcy, he reluctantly convened the Estates General in 1789, which had not met for a century and a half, to find a solution to the crisis.
- The rest, as they say, is history.

## 33. The British Connection

- On 31 December, **1600**, the 'Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading to the East Indies', a group of 218 men, **received their royal charter**.
- Many voyages set off throughout the early seventeenth century, mostly generating modest profits, but from the first the EIC was unable to prevail against better armed, better financed, and more skilfully sailed fleets of Dutch East Indiamen.
- In 1623, the English factory at Amboina in Malacca was attacked by Dutch VOC troops and ten Englishmen were killed and tortured.
- This opened several decades of conflict between England and Holland in which, despite occasional successes, the English came off worse.
- After several bruising encounters, the EIC directors decided they had little option but to leave the lucrative Spice Islands and their aromatic spice trade to the Dutch and focus instead on less competitive but potentially more promising sectors of the trade of Asia: fine cotton textiles, indigo and chintzes.
- The source of all three of these luxuries was India.