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# Art & Culture

## *Compilation*

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## 1. Dara Shikoh

### About

- Dara Shikoh, was the eldest son of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, who in 1642, formally confirmed Dara Shikoh as his heir, granting him the title of Shahzada-e-Buland Iqbal.
- He was killed after losing the war of succession against his brother Aurangzeb.
  - ✓ Battle of Samugarh was decisive struggle in a contest for the throne between the sons (Aurangzeb and Murād Bakhsh, on the one side, and, Dara Shikoh) of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahān after the emperor's serious illness in 1657.
- He was liberal in outlook and tried to find commonalities between Hindu and Islamic traditions.

### Contributions

- He translated the Bhagavad Gita as well as Upanishads from their original Sanskrit into Persian in 1657 so that they could be studied by Muslim scholars.
  - ✓ His translation is often called Surr-e-Akbar ("The Greatest Mystery"), where he states that the work referred to in the Quran is none other than the Upanishads.
  - ✓ Majma-ul-Bahrain, a short treatise written in Persian, was also devoted to a revelation of the mystical and pluralistic affinities between Sufic and Vedantic speculation.
- Dara Shikoh Album' is a collection of paintings and calligraphy assembled during 1630s by Dara Shikoh and presented to his wife Nadira Banu Begum in 1641-42.
- He is credited with the commissioning of several exquisite examples of Mughal architecture such as, the tomb of his wife Nadira Begum (Lahore), the Shrine of Mian Mir (Lahore), the Dara Shikoh Library (Delhi), the Akhun Mullah Shah Mosque (Srinagar) and the Pari Mahal garden palace (Srinagar).
- Some historians argue that Dara Shikoh, was the total antithesis of Aurangzeb, in that he was deeply syncretic, warm-hearted and generous – but at the same time, he was also an indifferent administrator and ineffectual in the field of battle.
- Italian traveller Niccolao Manucci has written down the details of Dara Shikoh's death in his book Travels of Manucci.

### Why in News

- The Ministry of Culture recently set up a 7-member panel of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to locate the grave of the Mughal prince Dara Shikoh (1615-59), who is believed to be buried somewhere in the Humayun's Tomb complex in Delhi.

## 2. Brihadisvra Temple

### About

- Brihadeshwara Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva, is located in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu at the South bank of Kaveri river. It is also known as Periya Kovil, RajaRajeswara Temple and Rajarajeswaram.
- The temple was built between 1003 AD and 1010 AD by the great Chola emperor Raja Raja I. It is one of the largest temples in India and is an example of Dravidian architecture.
- The temple is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site known as the 'Great Living Chola Temples' with other two being the 'Temple at Gangaikondacholapuram' and 'Airavatesvara temple at Darasuram'.

## News

- Recently, 'Kumbhabishegam' ceremony was held at 'Brihadeshwara temple' after 23 years

## 3. Digital Heritage Project

- It is initiative of the Department of Science & Technology (DST), for the digital documentation and interpretation of our tangible and intangible heritage.
- The basic goal of the IDH project was to bring fine synergy of Geospatial technologies with matured ICT technologies to help preserve, use, and experience India's vast heritage in digital form.i
- It also aimed to provide analytic tools for the art-historian, the architect or any scientist in conducting scholarly studies of Indian heritage.
- First project under it was 'Digital Hampi'.

## 4. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur

- She was mentioned in TIME magazine's list of the 100 most powerful women who defined the last century.

### About

- Amrit Kaur was born in 1889, to the royal family of Kapurthala.
- She grew up in a Christian household as her father converted to Christianity before she was born, and her mother was a Bengali Christian.
- She was educated in Oxford and returned to India in 1918, and began to be drawn towards the work and teachings of MK Gandhi.

### Contributions

- She was a champion to the cause of women's rights and worked towards eradication of the purdah system, child marriage, child illiteracy, and the devadasi system.
- In 1927, she helped in founding All India Woman's Conference along with Margaret Cousins.
  - ✓ She also founded the Delhi Women's League (the Delhi branch of AIWC) alongwith Rameshwari Nehru.
- She believed that the welfare state included economic betterment and provision of certain minimum standards of living essential for a healthy life for all people.
- She ensured that maternity and child welfare centres were set up all over the country.
- She campaigned to prevent malaria post independence, likely saving hundreds of thousands of lives.

### Participation in India's Freedom Struggle

- She took an active part in the salt campaign and was arrested for her participation in the Dandi March.
- She became a secretary to Mahatma Gandhi in 1930, serving him for 16 years, and moved to Gandhiji's ashram in 1934.
- She condemned the Communal Award and moved a resolution against it at the All India Women's Conference held in 1932.
- She was appointed a member of the Advisory Board of Education by the British government but resigned in 1942 in support of the Quit India Movement

## Contribution to Constitution Making

- She was elected to the Constituent Assembly from Central Provinces and Berar and was one of the 15 women Constituent Assembly Members.
- She was a member of two crucial committees: o Sub-Committee on Fundamental Rights o Sub-Committee on Minority Rights
- She contributed to the establishment of constitutional 'equality' of men and women which is guaranteed under Articles 14, 15, and 16.
  - ✓ She also played a crucial role in the inclusion of Uniform Civil Code as a part of Directive Principles of the State Policy.

## Achievements post-Independence

- She was the only woman in the Independent India's first Cabinet, thus becoming the first woman to hold a cabinet rank in free India.
  - ✓ She was appointed as the Health Minister and remained in that position for 10 years.
- She was a co-founder of Indian Council of Child Welfare in 1952.
- She introduced the AIIMS Bill, 1956 (which set up AIIMS, Delhi) in both the houses and was instrumental in the passing of the Bill as an Act
- In 1950, she also became the first female and first Asian president of the World Health Assembly and also led India's delegation to the World Health Organization several times.
- She was also the Chairperson of the Indian Red Cross for fourteen years.

## 5. World Heritage List for the Year 2020

Government of India has submitted two nomination dossiers namely 'Dholavira: A Harappan City' and 'Monuments and Forts of Deccan Sultanate' for inclusion in the World Heritage List for the year 2020.

### Dholavira

- It is a fortified quadrangular Harappan city set which was saw occupation for 1200 years (3000 BCE-1800 BCE) and had an access to the sea prior to decrease in sea level.
- It is one of the two largest Harappan sites in India, and 5th largest in the subcontinent.
  - ✓ Mohenjo-daro, Harappa and Ganweriwala (all in Pakistan) and Rakhigarhi and Dholavira (both in India).
- It lay between two seasonal streams, the Mansar in the north and Manhar in the south, and had three distinct zones
  - ✓ Upper Town or the citadel: It consists of enclosures identified as a castle and a bailey and is surrounded by massive mud-brick walls.
  - ✓ Middle Town: It has an area identified as the ceremonial ground or stadia, a distinct street-pattern and a large scale enclosure. It also served as a transition from the citadel to the middle.
  - ✓ Lower Towns: It is the area where commoners or the working population lived.
- The site demonstrates the ingenuity of Harappan people to evolve a highly organised system of town planning with perfected proportions, interrelation of functional areas, street-pattern and an efficient water conservation system. It adopted excellent water conservation strategy by building dams, reservoirs and pipelines

## Monuments and Forts of Deccan Sultanate

- **Bahmani Monuments at Gulbarga, Karnataka:** These monuments were built in 14th century and primarily comprise of:
  - ✓ **The Gulbarga Fort and Great Mosque in the Fort**
    - ❖ Gulbarga was the first capital of the Bahmani dynasty, and thus had an elliptical fort.
    - ❖ It was initially constructed on the remains of a Warangal fort built by Raja Gulchand, and then completely overhauled and reconstructed later by Alauddin Bahmani.
  - ✓ **The Haft Gumbad complex with seven tombs**
    - ❖ The Haft Gumbad tombs include that of Mujahid Shah, Daud Shah, Ghiyath al-Din Shah and Shams alDin Shah of the Bahmani dynasty.
- **Bahmani and Barid Shahi Monuments at Bidar, Karnataka.**
  - ✓ These were built from late 15th to the early 16th centuries and comprise of Bidar Fort, Madrasa Mahmud Gawan, Bahamani tombs at Ashtur and Barid Shahi tombs.
- **Adil Shahi Monuments at Bijapur, Karnataka**
  - ✓ The Adil Shahi monuments at Bijapur date from late 15th to the late 17th centuries.
  - ✓ These are an ensemble of 80 small and big monuments including the fortifications, gates, water systems and tanks, several mosques and tombs and palatial structures.
  - ✓ The most remarkable monuments within the fort is Gol Gumbaz that is the 2nd largest dome in world history and is the tomb of Muhammad Adil Shah.
- **Qutb Shahi Monuments at Hyderabad, Telengana**
  - ✓ The landmarks that symbolize the Qutb Shahi Dynasty are Golconda Fort, Qutb Shahi Tombs and Charminar.
    - ❖ Charminar is a ceremonial Gateway built to celebrate the foundation of Hyderabad in 1591 A.D.

## 6. National List for Intangible Cultural Heritage

### About

- It is an attempt to recognize the diversity of Indian culture embedded in its intangible heritage.
- It aims to raise awareness about the various intangible cultural heritage elements from different states of India at national and international level and ensure their protection.
  - ✓ Intangible Cultural Heritage refers to the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, transmitted from generation to generation within communities, created and transformed continuously by them, depending on the environment and their interaction with nature and history.
  - ✓ It is also vital for maintaining cultural diversity in the face of globalization.
- This initiative is also a part of the Vision 2024 of the Ministry of Culture.
  - ✓ Vision 2024 has fixed timeline for completing work of enlisting, preserving and showcasing deep and invaluable heritage and culture of country's monuments and traditions.
- The items in the list have been collated from the projects sanctioned under the scheme for 'Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Diverse Cultural Traditions of India' formulated by the Ministry of Culture (MoC) in 2013.

- As of now the list has more than 100 elements, it also includes the 13 elements of India that have already been inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

## Elements of India in UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

- Kutiyattam (Sanskrit Theatre of Kerala)
- Traditional Vedic Chanting
- Ramlila
- Ramman (Religious festival of Uttarakhand)
- Chhau Dance (West Bengal)
- Mudiyettu (Ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala)
- Kalbelia (Folk dance of Rajasthan)
- Buddhist chanting of Ladakh: recitation of sacred Buddhist texts in the trans-Himalayan Ladakh region, Jammu and Kashmir
- Sankirtana (ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur)
- Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab
- Nawrouz
- Yoga
- Kumbh Mela

## 7. Purandar Dasa

### News

- Karnataka government will commence field research at Keshavapura in Karnataka to solve the mystery regarding the birth place of Purandara Dasa.

### About

Till now, it was believed that Purandara Dasa was born in Purandaragarh near Pune, Maharashtra. However, an expert committee constituted by Karnataka Government reported that there is enough evidence to suggest Keshavapura as his birth place and recommended further research.

- Purandara Dasa (1484- 1564) was a saint, poet and singer during the Vijayanagara empire. He was the disciple of Vyasatirtha, Rajaguru of Vijayanagara empire.
- Prior to his initiation to Haridasa tradition (music and literary tradition followed by Vaishnavais), Purandara Dasa was a rich merchant and was called Srinivasa Nayaka.
- He is regarded as the 'Pitamaha' of Carnatic music. His systemized method of teaching Carnatic music is followed till present day.
- He introduced the raga "Maya malava gowla" as the basic scale for music instruction.
- Under the pen name 'Purandara Vittala', he has written around 4.75 lakh devotional songs in simple Kannada, known as kirtanas touching the local issues and traditions of South India.
- Swami Haridas, teacher of the foremost Hindustani musician Tansen, was a disciple of Purandara Dasa.

## 8. Geographical Indication (GI) tags

### Recently new GI tags were awarded to the following entities

- Kashmir Saffron
  - ✓ It is cultivated in Karewas (highlands) of Jammu & Kashmir.
  - ✓ It is only saffron in world grown at an altitude of 1,600 m to 1,800 m. o In ancient Sanskrit literature, saffron is referred to as 'bahukam'. o Characteristics.
  - ✓ Longer and thicker stigmas, natural deep-red colour, high aroma, bitter flavour, chemicalfree processing, and high quantity of crocin (colouring strength), safranal (flavour) and picrocrocin (bitterness).
  - ✓ Three types include: Guchhi, Lachha and Mongra Saffron.
  - ✓ Iran is the largest producer of saffron and India comes second.
- Kovilpatti kadalai mittai (Tamil Nadu):
  - ✓ It is a candy made of peanuts held together with glistening syrup, and topped with wisps of grated coconut dyed pink, green and yellow.
  - ✓ It is made using all natural ingredients such as the traditional and special 'vellam' (jaggery) and groundnuts and water from the river Thamirabarani is used in the production, which enhances the taste naturally.
- Chak-Hao (black rice of Manipur):
  - ✓ It is a scented glutinous rice which has been in cultivation in Manipur over centuries, is characterised by its special aroma.
  - ✓ Chak-Hao has also been used by traditional medical practitioners as part of traditional medicine. This rice takes the longest cooking time of 40-45 minutes due to the presence of a fibrous bran layer and higher crude fibre content.
- Gorakhpur terracotta:
  - ✓ It is a centuries-old traditional art form, where the potters make various animal figures like, horses, elephants, camel, goat, ox, etc. with hand-applied ornamentation.
  - ✓ The entire work is done with bare hands and artisans use natural colour, which stays fast for a long time. There are more than 1,000 varieties of terracotta work designed by the local craftsmen.
- Sohrai Khovar painting
  - ✓ It is a traditional and ritualistic mural art being practised by local tribal women in the area of Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand.
  - ✓ It is done during local harvest and marriage seasons using local, naturally available soils of different colours.
- Telia Rumal of Telangana
  - ✓ It involves intricate handmade work with cotton loom displaying a variety of designs and motifs in three particular colours – red, black and white.



## 9. Malabar Rebellion

- The year 2021 will be the 100th-year anniversary of the Malabar uprising.

### History

- The Malabar rebellion, also known popularly as the Moplah rebellion, was an armed revolt staged by the Mappila Muslims of Kerala against the British authorities and their Hindu landlords in 1921.
- The six-month-long rebellion is often perceived to be one of the first cases of nationalist uprisings in Southern India.
- It occurred within the broader spectrum of the Khilafat/Non-cooperation movement led by Mahatma Gandhi.

### Background

- Moplahs/Mappilas were the Muslim tenants (kanamdars) and cultivators (verumpattamdars) inhabiting the Malabar region where most of the landlords (janmi or jenmies) were upper caste Hindus.
- Moplahs had gained some prominence over their landlords during the Mysorean invasions by Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan. But after the British occupation of Malabar in 1792 (following the 3rd Anglo-Mysore war), the domination of the Hindu landlords was re-established.
- In this scenario, the Mappilas soon found themselves at the mercy of their Hindu landlords who were sustained by the British authority as their agents.

### Causes of the revolt

- History of feudal conflicts in the Malabar region: Peasant-landlord relations were historically strained in the region. Evidently, about 32 uprisings were organized by the Moplahs, between 1836 and 1919, against high caste Hindu landlords, their relatives or assistants and British officials.
- Agrarian discontent: The economic condition of Mappila tenants had deteriorated overtime due to oppressive British policies resulting in increased taxation, insecure tenancy, rack renting, forced evictions etc. This had given rise to anti-British and anti-feudal sentiments.
- Political mobilization of mappilas: The Congress reached out to the Mappila cultivators to mobilize support for independence through Khilafat movement and support agrarian reforms in the region.
  - ✓ A Khilafat committee was formed in Malabar in June 1920, which became increasingly active.
  - ✓ In August, 1920, Gandhi along with Shaukat Ali (the leader of the Khilafat movement in India) visited Calicut to spread the combined message of non-cooperation and Khilafat among the residents of Malabar.
  - ✓ By January 1921, the Mappilas, under their religious head Mahadum Tangal pledged support to the noncooperation movement.
- Immediate cause: Mappilas under the leadership of Variyamkunnath Kunjahammed Haji took up arms in August 1921 due to the arrest of Khilafat leader Ali Musaliyar and a widespread rumour that a prominent mosque in Thirurangadi has been raided.

### Course of the rebellion

- It largely took the shape of guerrilla-type attacks on janmis, police and troops.
- Symbols of the colonial state – telegraph lines, train stations, courts, post offices etc. and homes of landlords were attacked.
- When the rebellion spread across the Malabar district, British officers and the local police escaped, leaving vast tracts of territory firmly under the control of the local rebels.

- ✓ The territory was declared an 'independent state' in August 1921 with Haji as its ruler.
- ✓ For nearly six months, he ran a parallel Khilafat regime headquartered in Nilambur, with even its own separate passport, currency and system of taxation.
- ✓ Tenants were granted the power over the lands they cultivated along with tax incentives.
- ✓ Although the movement started off largely as a protest against British authorities, it acquired communal overtones that culminated into communal violence.
- British suppression of the revolt
  - ✓ The British government responded to the movement with much aggression, bringing in Gurkha regiments to suppress it and imposing martial law.
  - ✓ Wagon tragedy: Approximately 60 Mappila prisoners on their way to a prison, suffocated to death in a closed railway goods wagon.
  - ✓ By January 1922, they had taken back the areas held by the rebels and captured all their key leaders.

## 10. Gurjara-Pratiharas

### News

Natesa, a 9th century's rare sandstone idol of Rajasthan temple smuggled out of country in 1998 returned to India.

### About Natesa sandstone idol

- Natesa is a rare sandstone idol from the Pratihara Style of architecture in Rajasthan.
- It is originally from the Ghateswar Temple at Baroli, Rajasthan.
- The sandstone Natesa figure stands tall at almost 4 ft in a rare and brilliant depiction of Shiva.
  - ✓ A depiction of Nandi (sacred bull calf) is shown behind the right leg of the Natesa icon.
- Pratihara Style of architecture is associated with Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty around 800-900 AD.

### About the Dynasty

- Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty ruled much of Northern India from the mid-8th to the 11th century.
- They were one of the first four patrilineal clans of the caste group referred to as the Rajputs.
- The Pratiharas, derived their name from the Sanskrit meaning doorkeeper, are seen as a tribal group or a clan of the Gurjaras.
- Important rulers:
  - ✓ Nagabhata I contained Arab armies moving east of the Indus River and rose to fame in the late 8th century CE.
  - ✓ Nagabhata II, Mhir Bhoj (Bhoja) and Mahendrapala I were the other important rulers of dynasty.
- The expansion of the Gurjara-Pratihara kingdom involved constant conflicts with other contemporary powers such as the Palas and the Rashtrakutas known as the tripartite struggle (refer to infographics).

### Administration and military.

- They retained terms of administration, on line of the Gupta Empire's and Harshvardhana's ideas.
- Some areas were administered directly by the centre and some were divided into provinces (bhukti) and districts (mandala or vishaya), respectively, governed by a governor (uparika) and a district head (vishayapati).

- Governor and district heads were tasked with collecting land revenue and maintaining law and order with the help of the army units stationed in their areas.
- They were well-known for their cavalry in which horses were imported from Central Asia and Arabia etc.
- After Bhoja, military power of the Pratiharas declined, and they suffered defeats under successive kings.

## Architecture

- The Pratiharas extended Gupta architecture tradition by adding a full-fledged mandapa to the single shrine temple and mandavara too got articulated into either the triratha, or the pancharatha plan. E.g. Gadarmal temple, Badoh-Pathari etc.
- Gurjara-Pratiharas were known for their open pavilion temples.
- They are known for their new space concepts, structural and functional constructs, motifs etc. together with aesthetic and iconographic norms temples belonging to Nagara Style of temple Architecture.

## Trade/economy

- Economy in Gurjara-Pratihara Empire was mainly dependent on agricultural production and major source of government revenue at that time was the tax derived from the bulk of agricultural production.
- Horses were important commodity in trade of Gurjara-Pratihara Empire.

## Literary Sources

- Primary literary sources include the accounts of Arab merchants like Suleiman, al-Masudi and poet Rajashekhara in court of Mahendrapala I.

# 11. Nagara Architecture

## News

The grand temple at Rama Janmabhoomi in Ayodhya will follow the Nagara style of temple architecture.

## About

- The Nagara style of temple architecture is found in northern India.
- In the Nagara style, the temple is generally constructed on an upraised platform called jagati. Mandapas are present in front of the Garbhagriha. These are adorned with the Shikhara, the tallest one being above the Garbhagriha.
- Nagara style doesn't usually have elaborate boundary walls or gateways. ● Generally, there is no water tank in the temple premises and the pradakshina patha is covered.
- The garbhagriha is always located directly under the tallest tower.

## The basic form of a Hindu temple contains the following architectural elements:

1. Garbhagriha - the small room where the principle deity/deities of the temple reside
2. Mandapa - the portico or hall at the entrance of the temple generally designed to house a large number of people.
3. Shikhara - the mountain like spire which can have different shapes from pyramidal to curvilinear.
4. Vahana - the mount or vehicle of the main deity placed generally in line of sight from Garbhagriha.

## 12. Warli Painting

- Maharashtra is known for its Warli folk paintings.
- Its roots may be traced to as early as the 10th century A.D.
- They bear a resemblance to those created in the Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka.
- Scenes portraying hunting, fishing and farming, festivals and dances, trees and animals are used to surround the central theme of the painting.
- Women are mainly engaged in the creation of these paintings. Unique features: A very basic graphic vocabulary like a circle, a triangle and a square are used in these rudimentary wall paintings which are monosyllabic in nature.