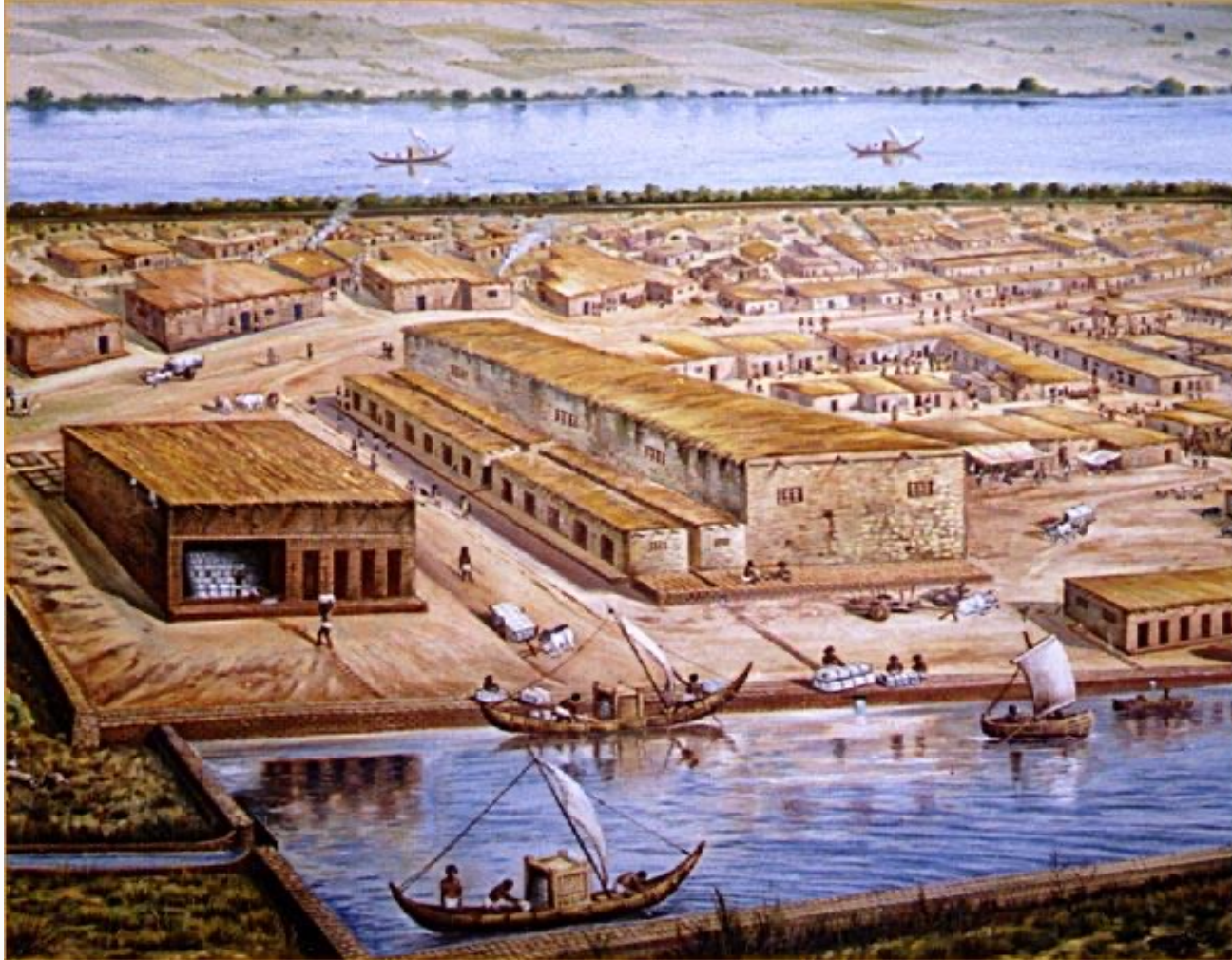


# 50 Most Important Topics of History (Part 2): UPSC Prelims 2023

# ANCIENT HISTORY

# National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) At Lothal



# Context:

- Recently, PM reviewed the construction of the **National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC)** site at Gujarat's **Lothal** via video conferencing. [Oct.-Nov. 2022]





# Important Points to remember:

- A National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) is being developed within the ASI site of Lothal that is located 80 kms away from Ahmedabad in Gujarat.
- What is distinct in NMHC from other museums is that it will be a recreation of ancient Lothal city.
- Lothal was one of the southernmost cities of the ancient Indus Valley Civilization.
- The meaning of Lothal (a combination of Loth and (s) thal) in Gujarati is “the mound of the dead”.

# Important Points to remember:

- Lothal was a vital and thriving trade Centre in ancient times, with its trade of beads, gems, and valuable ornaments reaching the far corners of West Asia and Africa.
- The techniques and tools they pioneered for **bead-making and in metallurgy** have stood the test of time for over 4000 years.
- The Lothal site has been **nominated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site**, and its application is pending on the tentative list of UNESCO.

# JAIN COMMUNITY PROTESTS

# Context

- Recently, many Jain community members staged protests over demands related to two holy sites – **Sammed Shikhar on Parasnath hill in Jharkhand** and **Shetrunjay hill in Palitana of Gujarat.** [Jan. 2023]



# Analysis for Prelims

Important Points to remember:

**SAMMET SHIKHARJI**



# Analysis for Prelims

- Shikharji also known as **Sammed** or **Sammet Shikharji**, is **one of the Holiest pilgrimage** sites for Jains.
- Shikharji means the "**venerable peak**" and Sammed Śikhar means "**peak of concentration**"
- It is located in Giridih district, Jharkhand.
- It is located on Parasnath hill, the highest mountain in the state of Jharkhand.
- The hill is named after Parasnath, the 23rd Tirthankara.
- It is the place where twenty of the twenty-four Jain tirthankaras along with many other monks attained Moksha.
- The Santhals call it Marang Buru, the hill of the deity.

# Analysis for Prelims

## SHETRUNJAY HILL



# Analysis for Prelims

- Shatrunjaya or Shetrunjaya ("place of victory against inner enemies") are hills located by the city of Palitana, in Bhavnagar district, Gujarat.
- They are situated on the banks of the Shetrunji River at an elevation 164 feet (50 m) above sea level.
- The Jain's sacred hill of Shatrunjaya have 865 temples atop itself.
- The hills were sanctified when Rishabha, the first tirthankara of Jainism, gave his first sermon on the top of this hill.



## SANDALWOOD BUDDHA STATUE



# Context

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi presented a sandalwood Buddha statue to Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida during the latter's two-day state visit. [Mar. 2023]



# Analysis

## Important Points to remember:

- Karnataka is sometimes also called '**gandhada gudi**' or the land of sandalwood.
- In this gifted statue, Buddha is **sitting in 'dhyana mudra' under the Bodhi tree**.
- The '**dhyana mudra**' is the **mudra of meditation and the attainment of spiritual perfection**.
- According to tradition, this mudra derives from the one assumed by the **Buddha when meditating under the Bodhi tree before his enlightenment**.

# Analysis

## Background Information on Buddhism

- The origin of Buddhism is attached to the **story of Siddhartha** who came to be known as **Buddha**.
- It is the world's **fourth largest religion** after Christianity, Islam and Hinduism.
- Gautam Buddha was **born at Lumbini (in present Nepal) in 563 BC** as Siddhartha Gautam in Sakyan kingdom under Kshatriya clan.

# Analysis

- He was **married to Princess Yashodhara** and had a **son named Rahul**.
- At the age of 29, he **left his house riding** on his horse **Kanthaka** and along with the charioteer **Channa**, to find the truth of life.
- He **wandered as an ascetic for next 6 years**.
- At the age of 35 on the same day of his birth, he **attained enlightenment (Nirvana)** under a pipal tree in **Gaya** and became the **Buddha**, the **Enlightened One**.



# Analysis

- **Buddha attained Mahaparinirvana at Kushinagar (Malla Mahajanapada) in Uttar Pradesh at the age of 80 in 483 BC.**
- **Buddha is known in various Buddhist texts also as Tathagata and Sakyamuni.**
- **The predecessor of Buddha under Buddhism was Kassapa Buddha and his successor will be Maitreya.**

# Various schools of Buddhism are

## Mahayana

- The term Mahayana is a Sanskrit word which literally means "**Great Vehicle**".
- It believes in the **heavenliness of Buddha** and Idol worship of Buddha and Bodhisattvas embodying Buddha Nature.
- It **originated in northern India and Kashmir** and then spread east into Central Asia, East Asia and some areas of Southeast Asia.
- Buddhist schools embedded in **China, Korea, Tibet and Japan** belong to the Mahayana tradition.

# Various schools of Buddhism are

## Hinayana

- Literally **Lesser vehicle**, also known as **Abandoned Vehicle** or **Defective vehicle**.
- It believes in the **original teaching of Buddha** or **Doctrine of elders**.
- It **does not believe in Idol worship** and tries to attain individual salvation through **self discipline and meditation**.
- **Theravada is a part of Hinayana sect.**



# Various schools of Buddhism are

## Theravada

- It is the **most ancient branch** of extant Buddhism today.
- It remains **closest to the original** teachings of the Buddha.
- Theravada Buddhism **developed in Sri Lanka** and subsequently spread to the rest of Southeast Asia.
- It is the dominant form of religion in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

# Related Questions

**Q.) With reference to the Indian History, who among the following is a future Buddha, yet to come to save the world? (2018)**

- (a) Avalokiteshvara
- (b) Lokeshvara
- (c) Maitreya
- (d) Padmapani

# Related Questions

**Q.) With reference to the religious history of India, consider the following statements: (2016)**

1. The concept of Bodhisattva is central to Hinayana sect of Buddhism.
2. Bodhisattva is a compassionate one on his way to enlightenment.
3. Bodhisattva delays achieving his own salvation to help all sentient beings on their path to it.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- |            |                  |
|------------|------------------|
| (a) 1 only | (b) 2 and 3 only |
| (c) 2 only | (d) 1, 2 and 3   |

# Kashi Tamil Sangamam



# Context

- PM recently inaugurated a **month-long** '*Kashi Tamil Sangamam*' in Varanasi. [Nov. 2022]

# Important Points to remember

- 'Kashi Tamil Sangamam' is being organised with the objective to rediscover, reaffirm and celebrate the age-old links between Tamil Nadu and Kashi – two of the *country's most important and ancient seats of learning.*
- It is being organized by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with other ministries.



# Background Information on Kasi Viswanathar Temple, Sivakasi (Tamil Nadu)

- It is an important link between Kashi and Tamil Sangams.
- It is believed to have been built by Pandyan ruler Harikesari Parakkirama Pandian during the 16th century.
  - As per legend, Pandya king Harikesari Parakkirama Pandian wanted to construct a temple for Hindu god Shiva and went to Kasi to bring a lingam.
- While returning to his palace with the prized lingam, he rested under a tree.

# Background Information on Kasi Viswanathar Temple, Sivakasi (Tamil Nadu)

- When a cow carrying the lingam refused to move from the spot, the king realised that it was a divine wish of Shiva, and he placed the lingam in the place where the cow halted.
- The place where the "shivalingam brought from Kasi" was installed came to be known as Sivakasi.
- Since he brought the lingam from Kasi, it came to be known as Kasi Viswanathar temple.

# Background Information on Tamil Sangams

- The period roughly between the **3rd century B.C. and 3rd century A.D. in South India** (*the area lying to the south of river Krishna and Tungabhadra*) is known as Sangam Period.
- ‘Sangam’ means fraternity and its literature was very popular amongst the masses.
- The ‘Sangam’ literature is a collection of works that contains approximately 2381 poems that have been attributed to 473 poets and there is a corpus of literature written by 102 poets that remains anonymous.
- The poets included **men and women** from different classes of society.

# Background Information on Tamil Sangams

- This literature bears the name 'Sangam' because the **kingdom of Pandya organised assemblies where poets, bards and writers would flock** from various parts of South India.
- These assemblies were called 'Sangamas' and the literature produced in the duration of these assemblies was called Sangam literature.
- The very famous and revered **Tamil saint Thiruvallurar** had contributed the '**Kural**' to the Sangam literature.

# Background Information on Banaras

- Varanasi has been historically known as '**Benaras**' and 'Kashi' as it lies on the banks of the holy river Ganga. It is also known as the 'spiritual capital' of India as it is home to many Hindu temples and Buddhist sanctuaries.
- The city is closely associated with the worship of Lord Shiva especially with the multitude of mathas established in the city.

# Baliyatra





# Context

- Recently, during the G20 Summit, PM mentioned Baliyatra, literally 'voyage to Bali'. [Nov. 2022]

# Important Points to remember

- Baliyatra, literally 'voyage to Bali', is one of the country's largest open-air fairs.
- It is organised every year to commemorate the 2,000-year-old maritime and cultural links between ancient Kalinga (today's Odisha) and Bali and other South and Southeast Asian regions like Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Burma (Myanmar) and Ceylon (Sri Lanka).
- Popular items of trade between Kalinga and Southeast Asia included pepper, cinnamon, cardamom, silk, camphor, gold, and jewellery.

# MEDIEVAL HISTORY



# LINGAYAT COMMUNITY

# Context

- The High Court of Karnataka on Thursday allowed the State government to take a decision on **reservation for the Panchamasali, a Lingayat sub-sect.**

# “Virashaiva”

- Basavanna (1106-68)
  - Followers: ‘Virashaiva’ or ‘Lingayat’
  - ‘Jangama’: Wandering monks who are revered
  - Karnataka
  
- On death, devotee will be united with Shiva and will not return to this world (Bury)

# Analysis for Prelims and Mains

- They **ignored Sanskrit** – which was understood by very few – and addressed the people in Kannada.
- Lingayats emerged as a reactionary force against Hinduism and **Basavanna rejected caste system, Vedic rituals, idol worship.**
- **Basavanna's** teachings were based on the principles of **Arivu (true knowledge), Achara (right conduct), and Anubhava (divine experience).**



# Analysis for Prelims and Mains

- He encouraged certain practices like post-puberty marriage and the **remarriage of widows** – which was disapproved in the Dharmashastras.
- He gave socio-economic principles of **Kayaka (Divine work)** and **Dasoha (Equal distribution)**.
- **Kayaka** signifies that each individual in society should take up the job of his choice while the **Dasoha** stresses equal income for equal work.

# Assam's Charaideo Maidams



# Context

- Recently, Centre picked Assam's Charaideo Maidams to be nominated for World Heritage Site status. [Jan. 2023]

# Important Points to remember

- There is currently no World Heritage Site in the category of cultural heritage in Northeast India.

# Analysis

## Background Information on Charaideo Maidams:

- Charaideo Maidams represent the late medieval (13th-19th century CE) mound burial tradition of the Tai Ahom community in Assam.
- Charaideo district is an administrative district in Assam.
- Charaideo was established by the Ahom king Chaolung Sukaphaa.



# MODERN HISTORY



# Bhima-Koregaon Battle

# Context

- Recently, the 205th anniversary of Bhima-Koregaon battle was celebrated. [Jan. 2023]



# Analysis

## Important Points to remember:

- King Shivaji recruited a number of Mahars into the Maratha army in the 17th century
- But it is said that Peshwa Bajirao II had insulted the Mahar community and terminated them from the service of his army.
- Peshwas were said to be have attitude of oppression and persecution towards the Mahar dalits.
- This led Mahars to side with the Britishers.



# Analysis

- Bhima- Koregaon battle was battle fought in [Bhima Koregaon, a district in Pune on January 1, 1818.](#)
- The **British army**, which comprised mainly of **Dalit soldiers**, fought the upper caste-dominated **Peshwa army**.
- The **British troops defeated the Peshwa army**.
- The victory was seen as a **win against caste-based discrimination** and oppression as a large number of soldiers in the Company force were the **Mahar Dalits**.

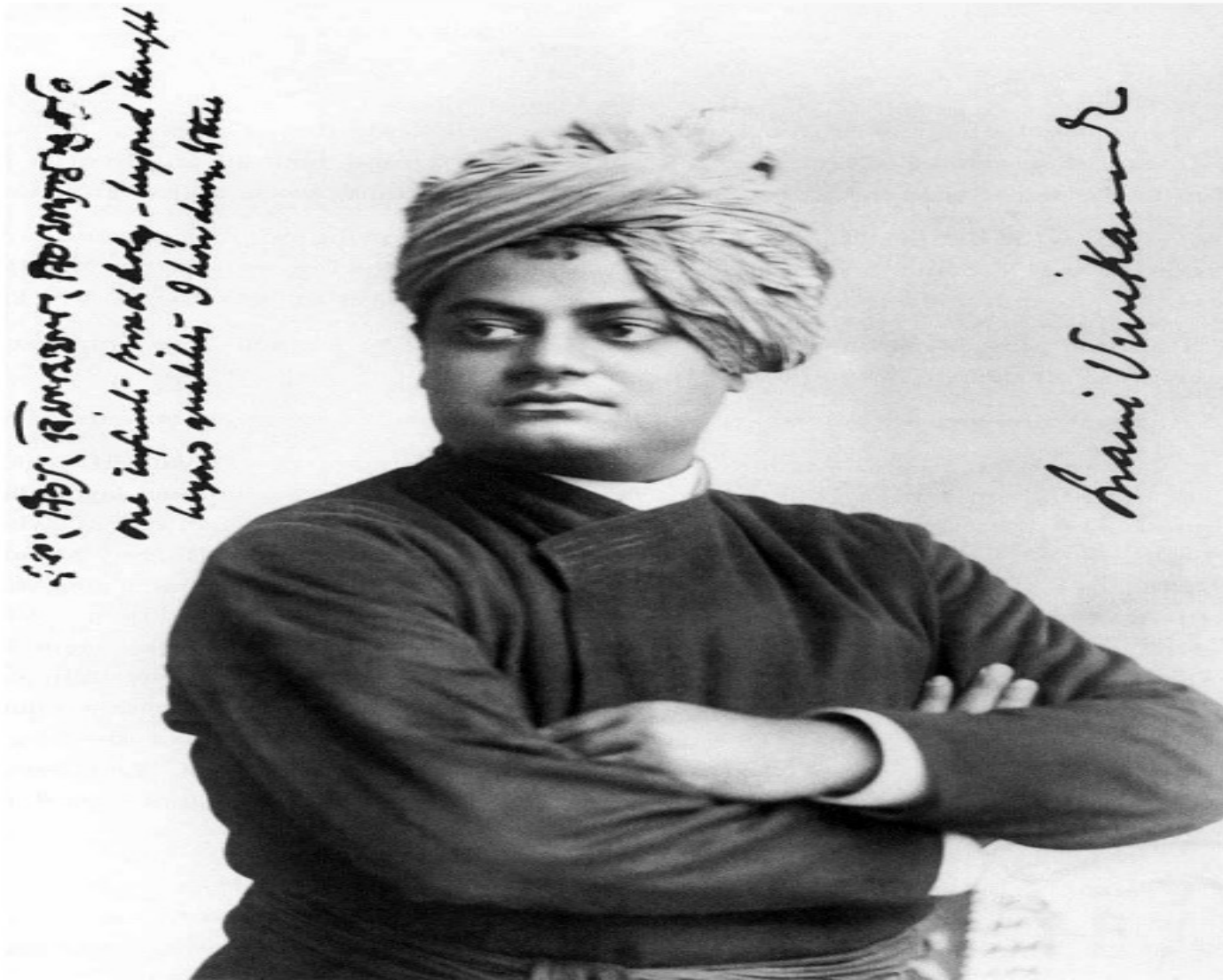
# Analysis

- On 1 January 1927, B.R. Ambedkar visited the memorial obelisk erected on the spot.
- There is a "Jay Stambh" or a "victory pillar" (obelisk) in Koregaon commemorating the battle.
- In 2018, incidents of violence were registered during the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Bhima-Koregaon battle

# Swami Vivekananda

## Context

- Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla recently unveiled statues of [Swami Vivekananda](#) and freedom fighter and [agriculturalist Pandurang Khankhoje](#). (Aug.-Sep. 2022)





# Important Points to remember

- He was born in 1863 in Calcutta as Narendranath Datta.
- He was a chief disciple of the 19th-century Indian mystic Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.
- He was a key figure in the introduction of the Indian darsanas (teachings, practices) of Vedanta and Yoga to the Western world.
- On September 11, 1893, Swami Vivekananda delivered his famed speech at the 'Parliament of the World's Religions'.
- The Chicago address had dwelt at length on Hinduism and Indian culture.

# Important Points to remember

- After the Parliament, he founded the Vedanta Society of New York and the Vedanta Society of San Francisco (later renamed Vedanta Society of Northern California).
- He was considered a major force in the revival of Hinduism in India.
- He is also credited with raising interfaith awareness, bringing Hinduism to the status of a major world religion during the late 19th century.

# Important Points to remember

- He established the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897.
- Ramakrishna Mission is an organization which works in the area of value-based education, culture, health, women's empowerment, youth and tribal welfare and relief and rehabilitation.
- In 1899, he established the Belur Math, which became his permanent abode.
- Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose had called Vivekananda the “maker of modern India.”
- National Youth Day is held every year on January 12 to observe the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda.
- He died in Belur Math in 1902, at a young age of 39.



**yeh kaam to mai hargiz nahi karunga**

- Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla recently unveiled statues of Swami Vivekananda and freedom fighter and agriculturalist Pandurang Khankhoje.

Pandurang Khankhoje



# Important Points to remember

- He was born in Wardha, Maharashtra, in 1893.
- As a student, Khankhoje was an ardent admirer of the French Revolution and of the American War of Independence.
- He was also admirer of reform and social change movements led by Swami Dayanand and his Arya Samaj movement.
- He decided to go abroad for further training in revolutionary methods and militaristic strategy.
- Bal Gangadhar Tilak advised him to go to Japan, which was itself a strong, anti-West Asian imperialistic force then.



# Important Points to remember

- After spending time with nationalists from Japan and China, Khankhoje eventually moved to the US and enrolled in college as a student of agriculture.
- A year later, he joined the Mount Tamalpais Military Academy in California.
- While in USA, he was one of the **founding members of the Ghadar Party**, established by Indians living abroad in 1913, mostly belonging to Punjab.
- Ghadar or Ghadr Party was an Indian revolutionary organisation, with the aim to liberate India from British rule.

# Important Points to remember

- He was inspired by “The Mexican Revolution of 1910” which led to the overthrow of the dictatorial regime.
- He also met Bhikaji Cama in Paris, and met with Vladimir Lenin in Russia among other leaders, seeking support for the Indian cause.
- However, as he was facing possible deportation from Europe and could not go to India, he sought shelter in Mexico.

# Important Points to remember

- There he was appointed a professor at the National School of Agriculture in Chapingo, near Mexico City.
- He researched corn, wheat, pulses and rubber, developing frost and drought-resistant varieties, and was part of efforts to bring in the Green Revolution in Mexico.
- Later on, the American agronomist **Dr Norman Borlaug**, called the **Father of the Green Revolution in India**, brought the Mexican wheat variety to Punjab.
- Khankhoje was revered as an agricultural scientist in Mexico.
- The renowned **Mexican artist Diego Rivera** painted murals including one titled 'Our Daily Bread' that prominently depicted Khankhoje breaking bread with people seated around a table.

# PAL-DADHVAV MASSACRE



# Context

- Recently, Gujarat government observed the anniversary of the **Pal-Dadhvav killings**, calling it a massacre “bigger than the Jallianwala Bagh”. [March 2023]



# Analysis for Prelims and Mains

## Important Points to remember:

- The Pal-Dadhvav massacre took place on **March 7, 1922**, in the Pal-Chitariya and Dadhvaav villages of Sabarkantha district.
- **Villagers from Pal, Dadhvav, and Chitariya** had gathered on the banks of river Heir as part of the 'Eki movement', led by one **Motilal Tejawat**.

# Analysis for Prelims and Mains

- The movement was to **protest against the land revenue tax (lagaan)** imposed on the peasants by the British and feudal lords.
- Tejawat had been outlawed by the Udaipur state, which had announced a Rs-500 reward on his head.
- The Mewad Bhil Corps (MBC), a **paramilitary force raised by the British** that was on the lookout for Tejawat, heard of this gathering and reached the spot.



# Analysis for Prelims and Mains

- **Bhils under the leadership of Tejawat** lifted their bows and arrows. But, the Britishers opened fire on them.
- **Nearly 1,000 tribals (Bhils) fell to bullets.**
- While the British claimed some 22 people were killed, the Bhils believe 1,200-1,500 of them died.

# SHAHEED DIWAS



# Context

- Recently, Shaheed Diwas was celebrated across India on **23rd March to remember the sacrifices made by three freedom fighters** - Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar, and Shivaram Rajguru.

# Analysis for Prelims

## Important Points to remember:

- On March 23, 1931, the three freedom fighters **were executed by the British government for assassinating John Saunders**, a British police officer.
- **Shivaram Hari Rajguru** was born in Maharashtra in 1908.
- He was an active member of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA).

# Analysis for Prelims

- **Sukhdev Thapar** was born in Ludhiana in 1907.
- He was a member of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA) and Naujawan Bharat Sabha (NJSB).
- **Bhagat Singh** was born on 26th September, 1907 in **Lyallpur District, present-day Pakistan**.
- Bhagat Singh supported Mahatma Gandhi and the **Non-Cooperation Movement**.



# Analysis for Prelims

- In 1924 in Kanpur, he became a member of the **Hindustan Republican Association (HRA)**, started by Sachindranath Sanyal in 1923 and mainly run by **Chandra Shekhar Azad**.
- Here, he was greatly influenced by '**Philosophy of the Bomb**' written by revolutionary **Bhagwati Charan Vohra**.
- In 1926, he founded the **Naujawan Bharat Sabha**.

# Analysis for Prelims

- Naujawan Bharat Sabha acted as an open wing of revolutionaries to carry out political work among the youth, peasants and workers, and it was to open branches in villages.
- He served as the organisation's secretary.



# Analysis for Prelims

- In 1927, he was arrested on charges of association with the **Kakori robbery Case**, by the accusation of writing an article under the **pseudonym Vidrohi (Rebel)**.
- In 1928, under the leadership of **Chandra Shekhar Azad**, the name of HRA was changed to **Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA)**.



“Laxmiji ki kripa se paisa toh itna hai  
ki Dhanteras pe aap he ki dukaan  
khareed ke aap hi ko gift karde.”

WATCH BAREILLY KI BARFI ON ZEE5 NOW

# Analysis for Prelims

- The participants in this included **Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Bhagwaticharan Vohra** from Punjab and Bejoy Kumar Sinha, Shiv Verma and Jaidev Kapur from the United Provinces.
- The HSRA decided to work under a **collective leadership and adopted socialism** as its official goal.
- On 30 October 1928, Lala Lajpat Rai led a non-violent march in protest against Simon Commisison and gave the slogan "**Simon Go Back**".

# Analysis for Prelims

- The police superintendent in Lahore, **James A. Scott**, ordered the police to lathi charge and **Lala was severely hit and he died** on 17 November 1928.
- To take revenge for the death of Lala Lajpat Rai, Bhagat Singh and his associates plotted the **assassination of James A. Scott, the Superintendent of Police**.
- However, they **mistakenly killed J.P. Saunders on 17 December, 1928**.



# Analysis for Prelims

- This incident is famously known as **Lahore Conspiracy case (1929)**.
- After this incident, **Bhagat Singh** fled from **Lahore** and made changed his appearance to avoid arrest.
- On 8th April 1929, **Singh** and **Batukeshwar Dutt** threw a bomb in the **Central Assembly** at Delhi, from the **Visitors' Gallery**.

# Analysis for Prelims

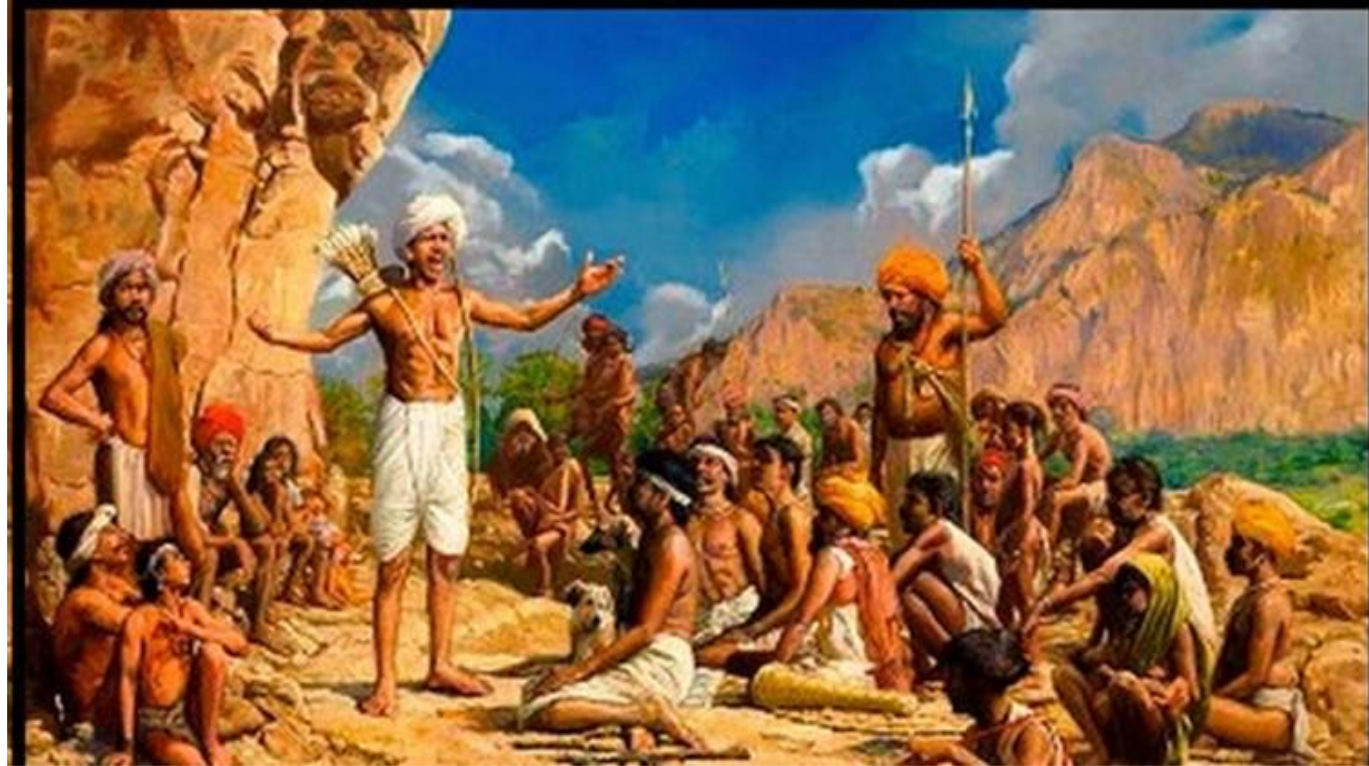
- They were protesting against the passing of two repressive bills, the **Public Safety Bill** and the **Trade Dispute Bill**.
- They threw pamphlets and **raised pro-revolutionary slogans**.
- It was never their intention to cause physical harm to anyone but their **aim was 'to make the deaf hear'**.

# Analysis for Prelims

- Both were arrested and in the trial that ensued, both **Singh and Dutt** were **sentenced to transportation for life**.
- By this time Bhagat Singh was also **linked to the JP Saunder's murder** incident.
- He, along with Rajguru and Sukhdev was charged with the murder of Saunders.
- The three revolutionaries were **hanged** on **23rd March, 1931 in Lahore**



# Janjatiya Gaurav Divas





# Context

- President of India recently paid her respects to tribal freedom fighters such as Birsa Munda, Alluri Sitarama Raju and Rani Gaidinliu.
- Janjatiya Gaurav Divas is a name given to 15 November by the Union Cabinet in its meeting held on 10 November 2021, to remember the contribution of tribal freedom fighters.

# Important Points to remember regarding Birsa Munda

- **Bisra Munda** was born on 15th November 1875 in the Chhota Nagpur Plateau.
- He was a folk hero and a **tribal freedom fighter** hailing from the **Munda tribe**. He mobilised the *tribal community against the British.* He also forced the colonial officials to *introduce laws protecting the land rights of the tribals.*
- He **started the faith of 'Birsait'**: stressed on the **importance of prayer**, staying away from alcohol, having faith in God and observing a code of conduct.



# Important Points to remember regarding Birsa Munda

- Munda Rebellion was led by Birsa Munda in the south of Ranchi in 1899-1900. This movement is also called 'Ulgulan', or 'The Great Tumult'.
- Munda used traditional symbols and language to rouse people, urging them to destroy "Ravana" (dikus/outsideers and the Europeans) and establish a kingdom under his leadership.
- Birsa's followers began targeting the symbols of diku and European power.

# Important Points to remember regarding Birsa Munda

- They attacked police stations and churches, and raided the property of moneylenders and zamindars.
- They raised the white flag as a symbol of Birsa Raj.
- He was arrested in 1900 and he died of cholera in the jail and the movement faded out.
- His struggle led British to introduce Chotanagpur Tenancy Act being passed in 1908.

# Alluri Sitarama Raju

# ALLURI SITARAMA RAJU

- Alluri Sitarama Raju was born in July, 1897 in a village called Mogallu near Bhimavaram in Andhra Pradesh.
- He was involved in anti-British activities in response to the 1882 Madras Forest Act.
- This Act restricted the free movement of Adivasis (tribal communities) in their forest habitats and prevented them from practicing a traditional form of agriculture known as podu (shifting cultivation).
- So he organised the Rampa Rebellion against the British in which he organised the tribal people of Vishakhapatnam and East Godavari districts to revolt against the foreigners.

# ALLURI SITARAMA RAJU

- The Rampa Revolt was fought between the years 1922 and 1924.
- He was nicknamed "Manyam Veerudu" (Hero of the Jungle) by local villagers for his heroic exploits.





# Rani Gaidinliu

# RANI GAIDINLIU

- Born in January, 1915, Rani Gaidinliu was a Naga spiritual leader.
- She belonged to the Rongmei clan of the Zeliangrong tribe of Manipur.
- At 13, she became associated with Heraka religious movement of Haipou Jadonang.
- The movement later turned into a political movement seeking to drive out the British from Manipur and the surrounding Naga areas.
- Rani started a serious revolt against the British was eventually imprisoned for life.

# RANI GAIDINLIU

- Jawaharlal Nehru met her at Shillong Jail in 1937 and promised to pursue her release.
- She was released in 1947.
- Jawaharlal Nehru called her the “**Daughter of the Hills**” and gave her the title “Rani” or queen.



# AMBEDKAR CIRCUIT

# Context:

- Recently, Central government announced a special tourist circuit encompassing five key sites associated with Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. [Sep. 2022]



# Important Points to remember:

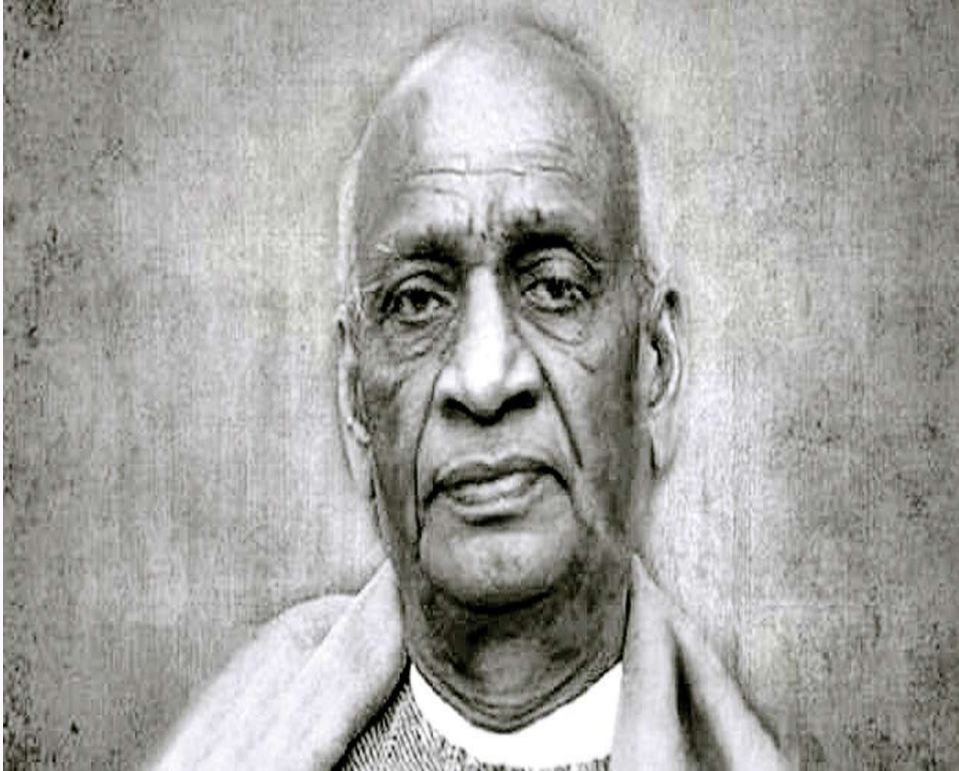
- Government has called these five spots as the “Panchateerths”.
- The five cities in this circuit are:
  - Place where he was born - Madhya Pradesh's Mhow  
- Janma Bhoomi.
  - Place in London where he stayed while studying in the UK - Shiksha Bhoomi.
  - Place in Nagpur where he embraced Buddhism -  
Deeksha Bhoomi.



# Important Points to remember:

- Place of his demise in Delhi - Mahaparinirvan Bhoomi.
- Place of his cremation is in Mumbai - Chaitya Bhoomi.

# SARDAR PATEL



# Context:

- Recently, centre celebrated the National Unity Day 2022,  
on the birth anniversary of **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.**

# Important Points to remember:

- Vallabhbhai Jhaverbhai Patel, one of the six children of Jhaverbhai Patel and Ladba, was born in Nadiad, Gujarat on 31 October 1875.
- He practised law in Godhra, Borsad, and Anand.
- At the age of 36, he journeyed to England and enrolled at the Middle Temple Inn in London and topped his class there.
- Returning to India, Patel settled in Ahmedabad and became one of the city's most successful barristers.

# Important Points to remember:

- In September 1917, Patel delivered a speech in Borsad, encouraging Indians to sign Gandhi's petition demanding Swaraj – self-rule.
- In October, 1917, he met Gandhi for the first time at the Gujarat Political Conference in Godhra.
- Kheda Satyagraha, 1918: When Gandhi asked for a Gujarati activist to devote himself completely to the assignment, Patel volunteered.
- In 1920 he was elected president of the newly formed Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee; he would serve as its president until 1945.

# Important Points to remember:

- Non-Cooperation movement, 1920: He took active part in it and setup the Gujarat Vidyapeeth where children could study instead of attending Government schools.
- He led Bardoli Satyagraha, 1928: He asked farmers to refuse to pay taxes in the wake of floods and famines in the area, and a steep hike in taxes by the government. After the success of this campaign, the title 'Sardar' was bestowed on him by his colleagues.
- 1931: President of the Indian National Congress in its Karachi session. In it, the Gandhi Irwin Pact was endorsed by the Congress.



# Important Points to remember:

- In Karachi session, the congress adopted a resolution on Fundamental Rights and Economic Policy which represented the Party's Social, Economic and Political programme. It was later known as Karachi Resolution.
- Cabinet formation, 1947: He became the first Deputy Prime Minister of India. He was in charge of Home Affairs, Information and Broadcasting and the Ministry of States.

# Important Points to remember:

- **Integration of the Princely States:** Along with V. P. Menon, a senior civil servant who was made the chief secretary of the States Ministry, Patel began lobbying the princes.
  - Patel used social meetings and unofficial surroundings to engage most of the monarchs, inviting them to lunch and tea at his home in Delhi.
  - He persuaded the princes of 565 states of the impossibility of independence from the Indian republic, especially in the presence of growing opposition from their subjects.

# Important Points to remember:

- While encouraging the rulers to act out of patriotism, Patel did not rule out force.
- Stressing that the princes would need to accede to India in good faith, he set a deadline of 15 August 1947 for them to sign the instrument of accession document.
- All but 3 of the states willingly merged into the Indian union; only Jammu and Kashmir, Junagadh, and Hyderabad did not fall into his basket.



# Important Points to remember:

- Emphasised the need of modern All India Services system: He had vision that Civil Service should strengthen cohesion and national unity.
- He famously called the services the 'steel frame' of the country's government machinery and is also referred to as the 'patron saint' of the civil services.

# Important Points to remember:

- For his **unwavering resolve** and his **uncompromising commitment** to national integration in the newly independent country, he is called as the **"Iron Man of India"**.
- He died in Bombay on 15 December 1950 aged 75.
- He was awarded the **Bharat Ratna posthumously in 1991.**
- His birth anniversary is observed as **Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (National Unity Day)** since 2014.



# NATIONAL MATHEMATICS DAY

- National Mathematics Day is observed annually on December 22nd to **mark the anniversary of the eminent mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan's birth.**



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# Important Points to remember:

- Srinivasa Ramanujan was born in Erode, Tamil Nadu, in 1887 to a humble Iyengar Brahmin family.
- Ramanujan was a self-taught mathematician and one of the greatest Indian mathematicians of all time.
- Seeking mathematicians who could better understand his work, in 1913 he began a postal correspondence with the English mathematician G. H. Hardy at the University of Cambridge, England.

# Important Points to remember:

- Recognising Ramanujan's work as extraordinary, Hardy arranged for him to travel to Cambridge.
- Ramanujan worked on theorems that seemed impossible to solve during that period.
- His work on Riemann series, continued fractions, hypergeometric series, elliptic integrals, and functional equations belonging to the zeta function are well recognised.
- During his life, Ramanujan independently compiled nearly 3,900 results (mostly identities and equations).

# Important Points to remember:

- He became one of the youngest Fellows of the Royal Society and only the second Indian member, and the first Indian to be elected a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.
- In 1919, ill health — now believed to have been hepatic amoebiasis - compelled Ramanujan's return to India, where he died in 1920 at the age of 32.
- In 2012, PM Manmohan Singh declared that 22 December would be celebrated as National Mathematics Day of India.

# Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

**Pravasi  
Bharatiya  
Diwas**



# Context

- Recently, **Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas** was celebrated on **9th January**.

# Analysis for Prelims

## Important points to remember:

- It marks the **contribution of Overseas Indian community** in the development of India.
- **PBD Convention** is the flagship event of the **Ministry of External Affairs**.
- PBD conventions were **held every year since 2003**.
- Since 2015, its format has been revised to celebrate the PBD **once every two years**.

# Analysis for Prelims

- January 9 was chosen as on this day in 1915 that **Mahatma Gandhi**, the greatest Pravasi, **returned to India** from South Africa.
- **PBD 2023**: The 17th PBD Convention was held in **Indore**.
- The theme of this PBD Convention is "**Diaspora: Reliable partners for India's progress in Amrit Kaal**".
- A Commemorative Postal Stamp '**Surakshit Jaayen, Prashikshit Jaayen**' was also released to underline the importance of **safe, legal, orderly and skilled migration**.



# Analysis for Prelims

- On this day, the Government also confers **Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award**.
- It is the **highest honour** conferred on a **Non-Resident Indian, Person of Indian Origin**; or an organisation or institution established and run by Non-Resident Indians or Persons of Indian Origin, who have made significant contribution in better understanding of India abroad, support India's causes and concerns in a tangible way.

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# ASI FINDS BUDDHIST CAVES, TEMPLES IN MADHYA PRADESH



# Context:

- Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) recently discovered Buddhist caves and stupas, Hindu temples, Brahmi inscriptions, 46 new sculptures at the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh.

# Important Points to remember:

- The Buddhist caves, stupas and Brahmi inscriptions date back to the 2nd century to 5th century.
- The caves and some of their remains had 'Chaitya' (rounded) doors and stone beds typical of Mahayana Buddhism sites.
- While the Hindu temples and sculptures are from the 9th-11th centuries.

# Background Information on Archaeological Survey of India (ASI):

- ASI is an Indian government agency attached to the Ministry of Culture.
- It is responsible for archaeological research and the conservation and preservation of cultural historical monuments in the country.
- It was founded in 1861 by Alexander Cunningham who also became its first Director-General.
- It was formed in 1861 by a statute passed into law by Lord Canning with Cunningham as the first Archaeological Surveyor.
- The survey was suspended briefly between 1865 and 1871 due to lack of funds but restored by Lord Lawrence the then Viceroy of India.



# MATUA MAHA MELA



# Context

- Union Home Minister recently greeted West Bengal's **Matua community** on the occasion of **Matua Maha Mela 2023**.

# Analysis for Prelims

## Important Points to remember:

- Matua Mahasangha is a **religious reformation movement** that originated, **around 1860 AD**, in **modern-day Bangladesh**.
- The mela is being organised to celebrate the **birth anniversary of Sri Sri Harichand Thakur ji**, the founder of the Matua sect.
- Mela is being held at Sridham Thakurnagar, Thakurbari in **North 24 Parganas of West Bengal**.





# Analysis for Prelims

- Matua is a sect of **depressed class of Hindus**, a Scheduled Caste group.
- Originally from East Pakistan, the **Matuas migrated to India during Partition** and after the creation of Bangladesh. However, a sizable number are yet to get Indian citizenship.
- **Matua-mahasangha** believe in **Swayam-Dikshiti ("Self-Realisation")** through the chanting of Harinaam, i.e., **chanting the Holy name of God Hari**.

# BUMCHU FESTIVAL



# Context

- Recently, **Bumchu** festival was celebrated in **Sikkim**.

# Analysis for Prelims

## Important Points to remember

- Bumchu festival is celebrated at **Tashiding Monastery, West Sikkim** on the 15th day of the first month of the Lunar calendar corresponding to the month of February/March.
- The **Tashiding Monastery** is one of the most sacred **Buddhist pilgrimage sites**, located on a hilltop overlooking the **Rangit River in Sikkim**.
- In Sikkim, the Bumchu festival is a time of intense delight and celebration.



# Analysis for Prelims

- At the event, **pilgrims travel to Tashiding from all around India** as well as from close by nations like Bhutan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.
- The **opening of the vessel containing the holy water** is the major highlight of the festival.
- The **level of water in this vessel is believed to be a sign of the fortunes** of the coming year.
- The celebrations feature **complex rituals, colourful processions, and traditional music and dance displays**.



# ATTUKAL PONGALA

# Context

- Recently, Attukal Pongala was celebrated in Kerala.

# Analysis for Prelims

## Important Points to remember

- Attukal Pongala is a 10-day religious festival celebrated at the Attukal Bhagavathy Temple in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.
- On the ninth day there is a huge gathering of millions of women on the temple surroundings.
- These women prepare a divine food made of rice in earthen pots and offer it to the Attukal Amma (Goddess of the Temple).

# Analysis for Prelims

- This is the **earliest Pongala festival in Kerala.**
- The ceremony was set up in **Guinness Book of World Records in 1997**, when 1.5 million women participated while in **2009**, a new record was **setup with 2.5 million.**
- Attukal Temple is called the "**Women's Sabarimala**" as only women perform rituals, while it is **predominantly men who undertake the pilgrimage to the hill shrine of Lord Ayyappa at Sabarimala.**



# NEW YEAR FESTIVALS



# Context

- Recently, traditional **new year festivals** such as Chaitra Sukladi, Ugadi, Gudi Padwa, Cheti Chand, Navreh etc were celebrated across the country.



# Analysis for Mains and Prelims

## Important Points to remember

### Chaitra Sukladi

- It marks the beginning of the **new year of the Vikram Samvat** also known as the Vedic [Hindu] calendar.
- Vikram Samvat is based on the day when the emperor **Vikramaditya** defeated **Sakas**, invaded Ujjain and called for a new era.

# Analysis for Mains and Prelims

The Badami rock inscription of Pulakesin I is dated in the Saka year 465. If the same were to be dated in Vikrama Samvat, the year would be: **[1997]**

- (a) 601
- (b) 300
- (c) 330
- (d) 407

# Analysis for Mains and Prelims

➤ Ans. to previous PYQ: A

➤ Explanation

Saka era started in 78 AD, while Vikram era started from 58 BC. So if we want to convert Badami rock inscription of Pulakesin I to Vikram era, it will be  $465 + 78 + 58 = 601$  Vikram Samvat.

# Analysis for Mains and Prelims

## Ugadi

- These are celebrated in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.
- Food that is prepared with a mix of **sweet (jaggery) and bitter (neem)** - signifies that life has both happiness and sorrow.

# Analysis for Mains and Prelims

## Gudi Padwa

- It is the traditional **new year** for **Marathi** and **Konkani Hindus** along with other fellow Hindus.
- It is celebrated in and **near Maharashtra** and **Goa**.
- **Gudi** is a **doll** prepared in **Maharashtrian** homes.
- It signifies the arrival of spring and to the reaping of Rabi crops.

# Analysis for Mains and Prelims

## Cheti Chand

- It is the **new year of the Sindhis**.
- The day commemorates the birth **anniversary of Uderolal/Jhulelal**, the patron saint of Sindhis.

## Navreh

- It is the **lunar new year** that is celebrated in **Kashmir**.
- On this day, Kashmiri pandits look at a bowl of rice which is considered as a symbol of riches and fertility.



# Analysis for Mains and Prelims

## Baisakhi/Vaishakhi

- It is the **harvest festival of Punjab**, which people across religions celebrate it.
- It also marks the **beginning of Hindu Solar New year**.
- Other than harvest, the day of Baisakhi has religious significance too.
- On **March 30, 1699**, on **Vaisakhi**, **Guru Gobind Singh** established the **Khalsa**, which is the pure Sikh community.



# Vishwa Hindi Diwas



# Context

- World Hindi Day, also known as Vishwa Hindi Diwas, is celebrated on January 10 every year by Hindi enthusiasts across the world to mark the importance and celebrate Hindi as a language.

# Analysis for Prelims

## Important Points to remember:

- **Vishwa Hindi Diwas** was started to mark the anniversary of the first time Hindi was spoken in the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** in 1949.
- In the year 1975, the then Prime Minister **Indira Gandhi** inaugurated the first **World Hindi Conference**.
- Since then, conferences have been organised in different parts of the world.
- However, it was on January 10, 2006 when the **World Hindi Day** was celebrated for the first time.

# Analysis for Prelims

- This decision was announced by the then Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh.
- The purpose of this day is to **create awareness about the Indian language** and promote it as a global language around the world.
- It is also used to create awareness about the **issues persisting around the usage and promotion of the Hindi language**.
- The Indian Ministry of External Affairs celebrates this day every year (since 2006) by organising events and activities around the usage and promotion of Hindi.

# Analysis for Prelims

- While the **World Hindi Day** is celebrated on **January 10** every year, **Hindi Diwas** is celebrated on **September 14** annually.
- **World Hindi Day** concentrates on **promotion and global recognition** of the Hindi Language around the world.
- On the other hand, **Hindi Diwas**, which is celebrated in **India**, focuses on **recognition** of the Hindi language in **India**.
- However, there have been debates about promoting this language in non-Hindi speaking regions.



# Thank You.