



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 01-02-2024

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Srirangam temple

Syllabus: GS-1; Art and Culture

Context

- *Devotees gathered and pulled the temple car of Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple in Srirangam as part of the ongoing 'Thai Ther' festival.*

About

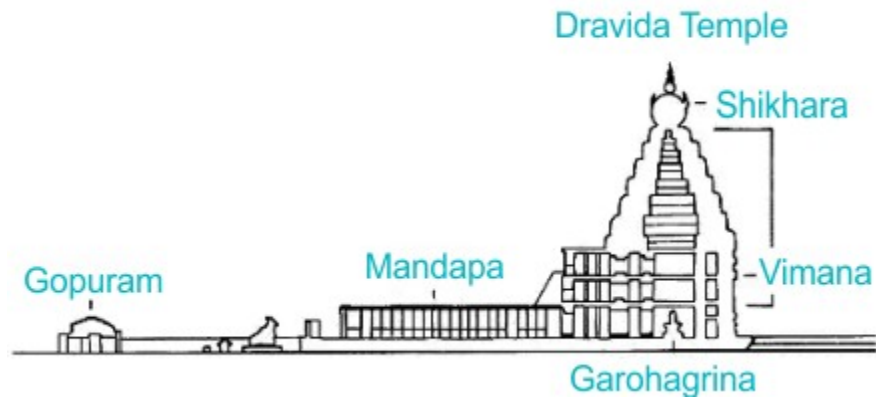
- *The Ranganathaswamy Temple is a Hindu temple dedicated to Ranganatha, is located in **Srirangam, Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu, India.***
- *Constructed in the Dravidian architectural style, the temple is glorified by the Tamil poet-saints called the **Alvars** in their canon, the **Naalayira Divya Prabhandam**, and has the unique distinction of being the foremost among the 108 Divya Desams dedicated to the god Vishnu.*
- *It is among the most illustrious **Vaishnava temples** in South India rich in legend and history. Beyond the ancient textual history, archaeological evidence such as inscriptions refer to this temple, and these stone inscriptions are from late 100 BCE to 100 CE.*
- *Hence, "making it one of the **oldest surviving active temple** complexes in South India".*
- *Its location, on an **island between the Kollidam and Kaveri rivers.***
- *The temple complex has been nominated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and is in **UNESCO's tentative list.***
- *The historic inscriptions at the Ranganathaswamy Temple are in six major Indian languages: **Tamil, Sanskrit, Kannada, Telugu, Marathi and Odia.***

Architecture

- *The Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple in Srirangam, India is built in the **Dravidian style of architecture.***
- *The temple is made up of seven concentric walled sections and 21 tower gates (gopurams). The tower is called the **Pranavakara Vimanam.***
- *The temple is one of 108 Divya Desams dedicated to the god Vishnu.*

Dravidian style of architecture

- *Dravidian architecture is a Hindu temple architectural style that originated in South India and Sri Lanka and reached its final form in the 16th century. It is also known as the South Indian temple style.*



Characteristics of Dravidian architecture

- **Gopurams:** Large temples have gopurams around them that dwarf the older central structures. The Gopuram is the entrance to the temple.
- **Boundary walls:** Dravidian-style temples are surrounded by a wall.
- **Short pillars:** Most Dravidian-style temples have short pillars.
- **Gateways:** Dravidian-style temples have gateways.
- **Sections:** The main structure is divided into sections, including the sanctum, a closed hall, a semi-closed hall, a porch, and a space for dance.
- **Pyramidal tower:** A high pyramidal tower is built over the innermost chamber of the temple.
- Some famous Dravidian temples include:
 - Kailashnath Temple, Ellora
 - Meenakshi Amman Temple, Madurai
 - Virupaksha Temple, Hampi
 - Shore Temple, Mahabalipuram
 - Lad Khan Temple, Aihole
 - Brihadeshwara Temple, Thanjavur

India nominates 12 forts of Marathas for UNESCO world heritage list

Syllabus: GS-1: Indian Art and Culture.

Context:

- *"Maratha Military Landscapes of India" is India's nomination for UNESCO World Heritage List 2024-25.*

More about nomination:

- *The nomination includes twelve component parts:*
 - *Salher fort, Shivneri fort, Lohgad, Khanderi fort, Raigad, Rajgad, Pratapgad, Suvarnadurg, Panhala Fort, Vijay durg, Sindhudurg in Maharashtra, Gingee Fort in Tamil Nadu*
- *These components are spread across different geographical and physiographic regions.*
- *They collectively showcase the strategic military prowess of the Maratha rule.*
- **Maratha Military Landscapes of India** developed between the 17th and 19th centuries.
- Represents an **extraordinary fortification and military system** envisioned by Maratha rulers.
- *The network of forts varies in hierarchies, scales, and typological features.*
- *Integration of landscape, terrain, and physiographic characteristics specific to Sahyadri mountain ranges, Konkan Coast, Deccan Plateau, and Eastern Ghats in the Indian Peninsula contributed to this system.*
- **Maharashtra has more than 390 forts**, but only 12 are part of the Maratha Military Landscapes of India.
- *Eight of these forts are protected by the Archaeological Survey of India: Shivneri, Lohgad, Raigad, Suvarnadurg, Panhala, Vijaydurg, Sindhudurg, and Gingee.*
- *The Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Maharashtra, protects Salher, Rajgad, Khanderi, and Pratapgarh forts.*

Under the Maratha Military Landscapes of India:

- **Hill forts:** *Salher, Shivneri, Lohgad, Raigad, Rajgad, Gingee.*
- **Hill-forest fort:** *Pratapgad.*
- **Hill-plateau fort:** *Panhala.*
- **Coastal fort:** *Vijaydurg.*
- **Island forts:** *Khanderi, Suvarnadurg, Sindhudurg.*

- *Maratha Military ideology began in the 17th Century during the reign of King Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj (around 1670 CE).*
- *The ideology persisted through subsequent rules until the Peshwa rule, which lasted until 1818 CE.*
- *Maratha Military Landscapes is nominated in the cultural criteria category for the World Heritage List.*
- *There are six cultural criteria (i to vi) and four natural criteria (vii to x) for inclusion.*
- **Maratha Military Landscapes is nominated under the following cultural criteria:**
 - **Criterion (iii):** *Bearing unique or exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or civilization, whether living or extinct.*
 - **Criterion (iv):** *Being an outstanding example of a building, architectural, technological ensemble, or landscape illustrating significant stages in human history.*
 - **Criterion (vi):** *Being directly or tangibly associated with events, living traditions, ideas, beliefs, and outstanding universal significance in artistic and literary works.*

Other World Heritage Sites in India:

- *India currently has 42 World Heritage sites: 34 cultural, 7 natural, and 1 mixed site.*
- **Maharashtra contributes six World Heritage Sites, with five cultural and one natural:**
 - *Ajanta Caves (1983)*
 - *Ellora Caves (1983)*
 - *Elephanta Caves (1987)*
 - *Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (formerly Victoria Terminus) (2004)*
 - *Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai (2018)*
 - *Western Ghats of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala (2012) in the natural category.*

*The Maratha Military Landscapes of India, in the **Tentative List for World Heritage sites in 2021**, is the sixth cultural property nominated from Maharashtra*

Corruption perception index

Syllabus: GS-2: Governance – Corruption.

Context:

- *India ranks 93 out of 180 countries in corruption perceptions index 2023.*

India's Corruption Ranking (2023):

- *Overall rank: 93 out of 180 countries*
- *Source: Transparency International report*
- *Measurement: Corruption Perceptions Index*
- *Scale: 0 to 100 where 0: Highly corrupt and 100: Very clean*
- *Criteria: Perceived levels of public sector corruption*
- *Score: Remained largely unchanged*

South Asia's Corruption Landscape:

- **South Asia Debt and Political Instability:**
 - *Pakistan: Rank 133*
 - *Sri Lanka: Rank 115*
- *Both face debt burdens and political instability*
- **Judicial Oversight in Pakistan and Sri Lanka:**
 - *Both countries have strong judicial oversight*
 - *Supreme Court of Pakistan strengthened citizens' right to information*
- **Bangladesh's Situation (Rank 149):**
 - *Emerging from least developed country status*
 - *Economic growth reducing poverty and improving living conditions*
 - *Hindered flow of information on the public sector due to press crackdown*
- **China's Anti-Corruption Measures (Rank 76):**
 - *Aggressive crackdown on corruption*
 - *Punished over 3.7 million public officials in the last decade*
 - *Concerns about long-term effectiveness due to heavy reliance on punishment*
- **Asia Pacific 2024 Election Year:**
 - *Significant elections in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Solomon Islands, South Korea, and Taiwan*
 - *2023 Corruption Perceptions Index indicates little to no meaningful progress in curbing corruption.*

Regional CPI Stagnation (Asia and the Pacific):

- *Five years of stagnant average CPI score: 45 out of 100*

- *Indicates little change in corruption levels*
- *Several historically high-ranking countries show slow decline*

Global and Regional Averages:

- *Global average: 43 out of 100*
- *Regional average: 45 out of 100*
- *71% of countries in the region score below the regional and global averages*

Weak Scores Causes:

- *Lack of delivery on anti-corruption agendas by elected officials*
- *Crackdowns on civil society*
- *Attacks on press freedom, assembly, and association*

Countries with High Scores:

- *New Zealand: Rank 3*
- *Singapore: Rank 5*

Countries at the Bottom of the CPI Index:

- *North Korea: Rank 172*
- *Myanmar: Rank 162*

Afghanistan's Situation (Rank 162):

- *Facing one of the worst humanitarian crises in history*

Common Characteristics of Bottom-ranked Countries:

- *Fragile states*
- *Authoritarian regimes*

Implications:

- *Suggests high levels of corruption in these countries*
- *May face challenges related to governance, human rights, and stability.*

About Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI):

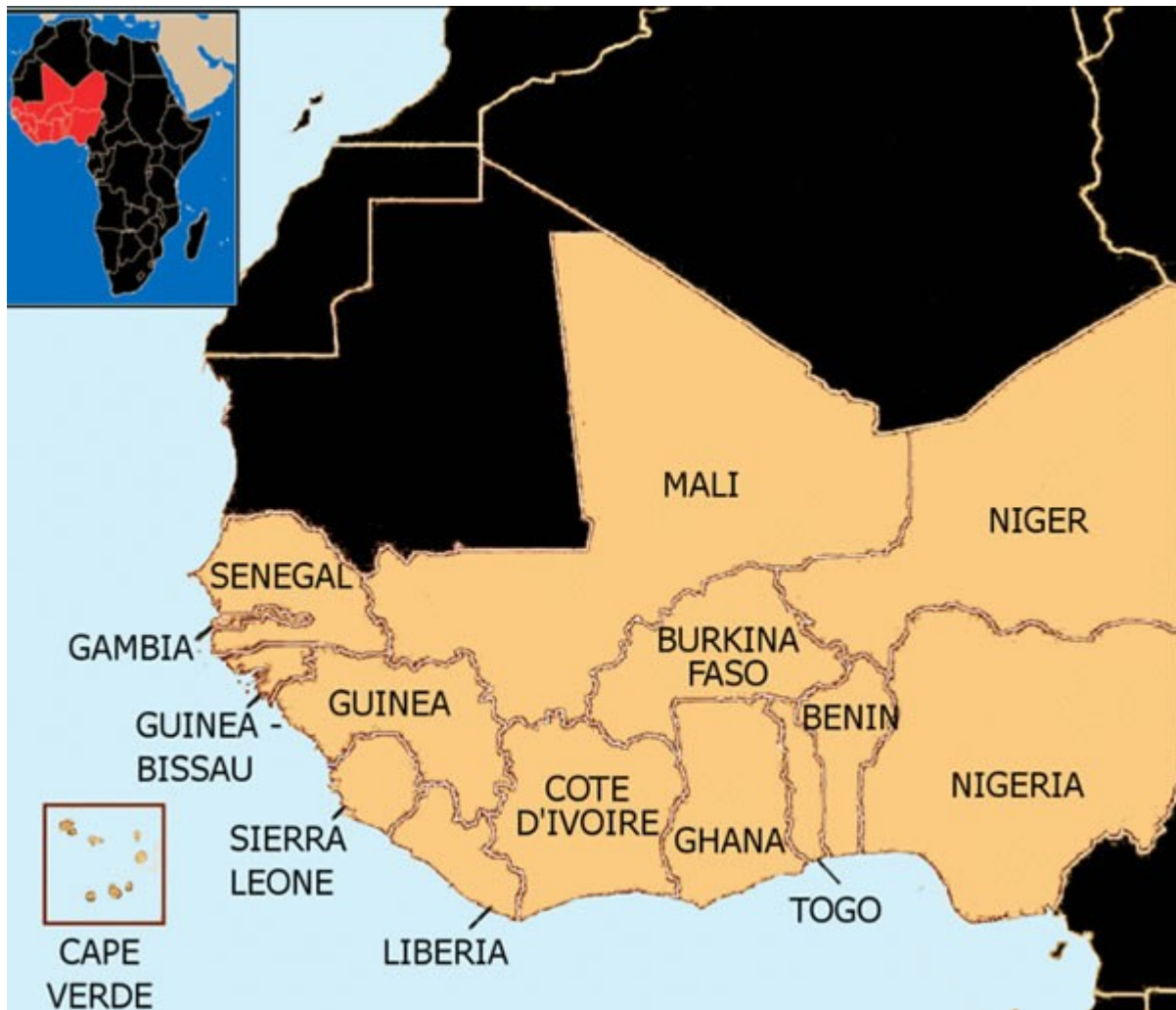
- **Purpose:** *Ranks countries based on perceived levels of public sector corruption*
- *Determined by expert assessments and opinion surveys*
- **Definition of Corruption:** *"Abuse of entrusted power for private gain"*
- **Publisher:** *Non-governmental organization: Transparency International*
- **Publication Frequency:** *Annually*
- **Initiation Year:** *Established in 1995*

West African Bloc

Syllabus: GS-2; International Relations, International Institutions

Context

- *The military regimes in **Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger** announced their immediate withdrawal from the West African bloc ECOWAS.*



- *The junta-led countries had already been suspended from the bloc, which has been urging them to return to democratic rule.*
- *The three governments said it was a "sovereign decision" to withdraw from Ecowas.*
- *They were also founding members of the bloc, first established in 1975.*

ECOWAS

- *The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS; also known as CEDEAO in French and Portuguese) is a **regional political and economic union of fifteen countries located in West Africa.***
- *Collectively, these countries comprise an area of 5,114,162 km² (1,974,589 sq mi), and has an estimated population of over 424.34 million.*
- *Considered one of the pillar regional blocs of the continent-wide African Economic Community (AEC), the stated goal of ECOWAS is to achieve "**collective self-sufficiency**" for its member states by creating a single large trade bloc by building a full economic and trading union.*
- *Additionally, ECOWAS aims to raise living standards and promote economic development.*

Members

- *Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.*

Significance

- *The organization promote **cooperation and integration, raise living standards, and maintain and enhance economic stability.***

Why Economic Survey wasn't presented on January 31 this year?

Syllabus: GS-3; Economic Survey

Context

- *Every year, a day before the presentation of the budget document, the central government presents an Economic Survey. However, the survey was not presented on January 31 2024.*

What is an Economic Survey?

- *It is a **detailed document presented once a year before the annual financial statement.***

- *The document includes all the important developmental programmes of the central government.*
- *It also highlights the policy initiatives of the Union government.*

Why the Economic Survey was not presented ahead of Budget 2024?

- *As the full budget process will remain disrupted due to elections, the economic survey was not presented on January 31 2024. Instead, the Centre has released a report on India's journey for the past 10 years titled 'Indian Economy–A Review'.*
- *The report also shared glimpses of the outlook for the economy in the coming years. The report was prepared by the office of the **Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) V Anantha Nageswaran.***
- *“This is not the Economic Survey of India prepared by **the Department of Economic Affairs.***
- *That will come before the full budget after the general elections. This review takes stock of the state of the Indian economy and its journey in the last ten years and offers a brief sketch of the outlook for the economy in the coming years,” read the report titled Indian Economy–A Review'*
- *It was mentioned in the report that it is not the Economic Survey of India. The survey will be presented after the general elections before the presentation of the full-fledged Budget.*

'Indian Economy–A Review'

- *Indian Economy-A Review states that **India will become a \$5 trillion economy** the next 3 years and could reach \$7 trillion by 2030.*
- *India is poised to surpass a GDP growth rate of 7.2% in FY24, outpacing the global economy's struggle to achieve a growth rate exceeding 3%, the report states.*
- *It is expected that Indian economy will see a growth of 7 percent in 2024 for the third consecutive year.*
- *India also holds the position of the **third-largest fintech economy globally, after UK and USA.***