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Ambubachi Mela

Syllabus: GS-1; Art & Culture

Context

- The doors of the famed **Kamakhya Temple**, closed for the last four days on the occasion of Ambubachi Mela, opened with devotees thronging the seat of the Shakti cult.
- The temple doors were symbolically closed as it is believed that Goddess Kamakhya undergoes her menstrual cycle during this period.



About

- The Ambubachi Mela is an annual Hindu mela (gathering) held at **Kamakhya Temple in Guwahati, Assam**.
- This yearly mela is celebrated during the **monsoon season** that happens to fall during the Assamese month Ahaar, around the middle of June when the sun transits to the zodiac of Mithuna, when the Brahmaputra River is in spate.
- During this time Brahmaputra River near the temple turns Red for three days.
- Ambubachi Mela is the celebration of the yearly menstruation course of goddess Kamakhya.
- It is believed that the presiding goddess of the temple, Devi Kamakhya, the Mother Shakti, goes through her annual cycle of menstruation during this time stretch.

- *It is also believed that during the monsoon rains, the creative and nurturing power of the 'menses' of Mother Earth becomes accessible to devotees at this site during the mela.*
- *There is no idol of the presiding deity but she is worshipped in the form of a yoni-like stone instead over which a natural spring flows.*

Tantric fertility festival

- *This mela is also known as **Ameti or Tantric fertility festival** since it is closely associated with Tantric Shakti cult prevalent in eastern parts of India.*
- *Even some Tantric Babas make their public appearances only during these four days. The rest of the year, they remain in seclusion.*

The mela

- *The temple remains closed for three days during the mela for it is believed that Goddess Kamakhya rests for three days like the traditional women's menstrual seclusion.*
- *During these three days some restrictions are observed by the devotees like not cooking, not performing puja or reading holy books, no farming etc.*
- *After three days, the Goddess is bathed and other rituals are performed to ensure that Goddess Kamakhya is back to her original form.*
- *Then the doors of the temple are reopened and prasad is distributed.*
- *On the fourth day the devotees are allowed to enter the temple and worship devi Kamakhya.*

Srinagar gets tag of 'World Craft City'

Syllabus: GS-1; Art & Culture

Context

- *Srinagar has become the fourth Indian city to be recognised as a 'World Craft City' by the **World Craft Council (WCC)**, three years after it was designated as part of the **UNESCO Creative City Network (UCCN)** for crafts and folk arts.*



More to know

- *Srinagar is one of the ancient cities of South Asia with a continuously recorded history of about 1,500 years. Located on the historic **Shahra-e-Abresham** (the Silk Route) the city generated wealth of ideas related to arts and crafts and facilitated exchange of activities in trade, cultural practices and scientific knowledge*
- *As of now, at least 10 different forms of craftsmanship survive in Srinagar and its suburbs, including **papier-mâché, walnut wood carving, carpets, Sozni embroidery and Pashmina and Kani shawls.***

Significance

- *World Craft City is a testament to Srinagar's longstanding tradition of excellence in handicrafts and handlooms.*
- *With increased global recognition, Srinagar's crafts will gain **enhanced visibility on the international stage**, opening up **new markets and opportunities** for artisans.*
- *Artisans will have access to **advanced training programs** and workshops, further honing their skills and fostering innovation in their craft*
- *The increase in demand for Srinagar's unique crafts is expected to **boost production**, leading to **job creation and improved livelihoods** for artisans and their families.*
- ***Tourism** in Srinagar is also set to benefit significantly from this recognition.*

- *The city is expected to draw more tourists interested in cultural and craft heritage, providing them with immersive experiences of the vibrant artisan communities*

Know more

- **Jaipur, Malappuram and Mysore** are the other Indian cities that have previously been recognised as World Craft Cities.

What are the duties of a Speaker?

Syllabus: GS-2; Parliament

Context

The article deals with the elections, duties of speaker in a newly elected government.

How are the Speaker and Deputy Speaker elected?

- **Article 93** of the Constitution states that the Lok Sabha shall choose two members to be its Speaker and Deputy Speaker.
- The election of the Speaker is held on a date fixed by the **President**.
- All the Speakers in independent India have been elected unopposed except on three occasions (1952, 1967 and 1976).
- The election of Deputy Speaker is held on a date fixed by the **Speaker**.

What are duties of Speaker in India?

In India, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha (House of the People) has several important duties and responsibilities:

- **Presiding over Sessions:** *The Speaker presides over the meetings and sessions of the Lok Sabha. They maintain order and decorum, decide on points of order, and conduct the proceedings in accordance with parliamentary rules and procedures.*
- **Maintaining Discipline:** *It is the Speaker's duty to ensure discipline among members and to enforce rules regarding speaking time, interruptions, and adherence to parliamentary norms.*
- **Decision Making:** *The Speaker decides who may speak, determines the order of speakers during debates, and grants permission for urgent matters to be raised during sessions.*
- **Casting Vote:** *In case of a tie on any matter put to the vote, the Speaker casts the deciding vote.*

However, the Speaker generally refrains from voting in most cases, except in the event of a tie.

- **Authenticating Bills:** *The Speaker is responsible for authenticating all bills passed by the Lok Sabha.
Their signature certifies that the bill has been duly passed by the House.*
- **Representing the House:** *The Speaker represents the Lok Sabha in its relations with the President and the Rajya Sabha (Council of States) and in its relations with external authorities and organizations.*
- **Committee Appointments:** *The Speaker appoints members to various parliamentary committees and may also be involved in the functioning of these committees.*
- **Custody of Rules:** *The Speaker has custody of the Constitution, the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business, and other related documents of the Lok Sabha.*
- **Judicial Powers:** *The Speaker decides on questions of disqualification of members based on defection or other grounds, in accordance with the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution (Anti-Defection Law).*
- **Administrative Functions:** *The Speaker oversees the administration of the Lok Sabha Secretariat and plays a role in the recruitment and management of staff.*

Overall, the Speaker plays a crucial role in the functioning of the Lok Sabha by ensuring fair debate, maintaining order, upholding parliamentary rules, and representing the House in various capacities.

Jal Jeevan Mission

Syllabus: GS-2; Government policies and Interventions

Context

Jal Shakti Ministry conceives 'new project' to fix water deficit in flagship Jal Jeevan Mission.

About

- *The Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) is a flagship initiative of the Government of India launched in 2019 with the aim to **provide safe and adequate drinking water** through household tap connections to all rural households in India by 2024.*

Objective

- *The primary objective of the Jal Jeevan Mission is to ensure every rural household in India has access to piped water supply with **functional household tap connections (FHTCs)** for drinking water and other domestic needs.*

Scope

- *The mission aims to cover over 19 crore rural households across India, which constitutes a significant portion of the rural population.*
- *This involves **implementing infrastructure to provide piped water supply to households.***

Implementation Strategy

- **Convergence:** *The mission emphasizes convergence with various government programs and departments to optimize resources and ensure effective implementation.*
- **Community Participation:** *Local communities are encouraged to participate in planning, implementation, and management, fostering ownership and sustainability of water supply systems.*
- **Technological Interventions:** *Utilization of modern technologies such as sensors for monitoring water supply systems and GIS-based mapping for planning and monitoring.*
- **Funding:** *The Jal Jeevan Mission is supported financially by the central government with contributions from state governments as well.*
It is part of the broader goal to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 6, which aims to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
- **Progress:** *Since its launch, significant progress has been made in providing piped water connections to rural households.*
The mission involves extensive planning, implementation, and monitoring at various levels of government.
- **Challenges:** *Implementation challenges include geographical and topographical diversity, varying water quality issues, financial constraints, and capacity building at the local level.*
- **Impact:** *The mission aims to improve health outcomes by reducing waterborne diseases, empower women by saving time spent on fetching water, and enhance overall socio-economic development in rural areas.*

India's largest leopard Safari

Syllabus: GS-3; Biodiversity

Context

- *South India's first and the country's largest leopard safari was inaugurated by Environment Minister Eshwar Khandre at the Bannerghatta Biological Park (BBP).*
- *As per Central Zoo Authority guidelines for safaris, an area of 20 hectares has been demarcated and fenced for the safari. Currently eight leopards have been released for the safari in the open forest area.*



Leopard

- *Leopard, (Panthera pardus), large cat closely related to the lion, tiger, and jaguar.*
- *The name leopard was originally given to the cat now called cheetah—the so-called hunting leopard—which was once thought to be a cross between the lion and the pard. The term pard was eventually replaced by the name leopard.*
- **Distribution**
 - *In 1750 the geographic range of the leopard (Panthera pardus) spanned nearly the whole of Africa south of the Sahara, as well as parts of north and northeast Africa, and extended from Asia Minor through Central Asia and India to China and Manchuria. By 2019 the species had lost up to 75 percent of its former range.*
- **Conservation status**

- *The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has classified *P. pardus* as a **vulnerable species**, with the number of leopards worldwide estimated at several hundred thousand individuals.*

Bannerghatta National Park

- *Bannerghatta National Park, near **Bangalore, Karnataka**, was founded in 1970 and declared as a national park in 1974.*
- *In 2002 a portion of the park, became a biological reserve, the Bannerghatta Biological Park.*
- *It is a popular tourist destination with a zoo, a pet corner, an animal rescue centre, a butterfly enclosure, an aquarium, a snake house and a safari park.*
- *The park has a hilly terrain of **granite sheets under moist deciduous forest valleys and scrubland on higher areas**. Sixteen villages border the park.*
- *The park is part of a wildlife corridor for elephants which connects the **BR Hills and the Sathyamangalam forest**.*
- *The park is contiguous with **Talli reserve forest** in the southeast and **Bilikal forest** in the south.*
- *The **Suvarnamukhi stream** runs through the national park.*