



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 23-01-2025

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Kashi Tamil Sangamam

Syllabus: GS-1; Art & Culture

Context

- Union Minister for Education, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, launched the registration portal for the 3rd edition of Kashi Tamil Sangamam (KTS).

About

- The **Kashi Tamil Sangamam** is a cultural initiative that seeks to celebrate, reinforce, and rediscover the age-old connection between the cultures, traditions, and civilizations of **Kashi (Varanasi)** and **Tamil Nadu**.
- The program is part of the Indian government's broader efforts to promote "**Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat**"—a scheme aimed at fostering unity and understanding among different states and cultures.

Inception and Objective:

- Launched in 2022 by the **Government of India** under the **Ministry of Education**.
- Aims to explore and celebrate the historical and cultural linkages between the **northern city of Kashi (Varanasi)** and the southern state of Tamil Nadu.
- Focuses on **cultural exchange, education, philosophy, language, music, and art**.

Historical Linkage:

- Both Kashi and Tamil Nadu are ancient cultural hubs of India with shared traditions, especially in **Shaivism** (devotion to Lord Shiva) and **Vaishnavism** (devotion to Lord Vishnu).
- Tamil scholars, poets, and traders historically visited Kashi, while Sanskrit scholars from Kashi contributed to Tamil literature and culture.
- Institutions like the **Kashi Vishwanath Temple** have long been a pilgrimage destination for Tamil devotees.

Features of the Sangamam:

- **Interdisciplinary Approach:** Explores the shared heritage through literature, philosophy, spirituality, music, dance, yoga, and Ayurveda.
- **Workshops and Seminars:** Includes discussions on historical linkages, linguistic ties, and societal contributions.

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- **Cultural Programs:** Featuring performances by Tamil and Kashi artists showcasing classical dances like Bharatanatyam, Carnatic music, and traditional Kashi folk performances.
- **Exhibitions and Food Festivals:** Displays Tamil and Kashi cuisines, traditional crafts, and art forms.

Significance:

- Promotes **national integration** and mutual respect between the North and South Indian cultures.
- Encourages **tourism**, trade, and academic collaboration between Kashi and Tamil Nadu.
- Reinforces the timeless essence of Indian culture and civilizational unity.

Key Highlights of KTS 3.0:

Significance of KTS 3.0:

- Coincides with **Mahakumbh** and is the first edition after the **Pran Pratishtha of Shri Ram Lalla** in Ayodhya.
- Central Theme: **Maharishi Agasthyar**, emphasizing his contributions to Tamil literature, health, philosophy, science, and spirituality.
- Aims to deepen the cultural ties between Kashi and Tamil Nadu while celebrating India's **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat** vision.

Previous Editions:

- **KTS 1.0 (2022):** Conducted for one month, featuring 2,500 delegates.
- **KTS 2.0 (2023):** Held for a fortnight, inaugurated by PM Modi on **17th December 2023** in Varanasi. Featured **real-time app-based Tamil translations** of the PM's speech for Tamil delegates.

Konark sun temple

Syllabus: GS-1; Art & Culture

Context

- Recently, Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam visited the Sun Temple, highlighting its global prominence and Odisha's rich craftsmanship.



Location

- Situated in **Konark, Odisha**, approximately 35 km from Puri.
- Located on the coastline of the Bay of Bengal.

Historical Background

- Built in the **13th century** (c. 1250 CE) during the reign of King **Narasimha Deva I** of the **Eastern Ganga Dynasty**.
- Dedicated to **Surya**, the Sun God.

Architectural Significance

- Constructed in the **Kalinga architectural style**, which is part of Odisha's temple architecture.
- Designed as a colossal **chariot of the Sun God**, with **24 intricately carved wheels** and seven horses symbolizing the seven days of the week.
- Built using **chlorite, laterite, and khondalite stones**.

Symbolism

- The temple reflects **time and space** with its wheel motifs serving as sundials, capable of accurately telling time.
- The orientation of the temple aligns with the east, allowing the first rays of the sun to illuminate the sanctum.

Unique Features

- Known for its **erotic sculptures**, similar to those at Khajuraho. These sculptures depict various aspects of life, including human emotions and relationships.
- The wheels are adorned with intricate carvings and act as timekeepers.

Decline and Restoration

- Parts of the temple, including the main sanctum (vimana), collapsed due to **natural disasters**, and its structural instability worsened over time.
- The temple lost its original **magnetic dome**, believed to have contained a lodestone.
- British archaeologists began conservation efforts during the colonial period.

Cultural and Religious Significance

- The temple is a symbol of India's rich heritage and ancient engineering prowess.
- It holds a central place in **Odisha's cultural identity**, with the annual **Konark Dance Festival** celebrating traditional dance forms.

Recognition

- Declared a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in 1984.
- Featured on the **Indian 10 rupee note** as a cultural symbol.

Indus water treaty

Syllabus: GS-2; International Relations

Context

- India has taken a significant step by seeking a review and modification of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), a pact signed with Pakistan in 1960..

Background

The **Indus Water Treaty (IWT)** is a landmark agreement signed in **1960** between **India and Pakistan**, brokered by the **World Bank**, to govern the sharing of water from the **Indus River System**. It is often cited as an example of successful transboundary water management despite geopolitical tensions.

- **Signed on:** September 19, 1960
- **Signatories:**

- **Jawaharlal Nehru** (Prime Minister of India)
- **Ayub Khan** (President of Pakistan)
- **Broker:** World Bank

Rivers Covered

The treaty divides the Indus river system into two categories:

1. **Eastern Rivers:**

- Ravi
- Beas
- Sutlej
- **India has unrestricted use** of these rivers.

2. **Western Rivers:**

- Indus
- Jhelum
- Chenab
- **Pakistan controls** these rivers, with India having limited rights for irrigation, domestic use, and hydroelectric power generation (run-of-the-river projects).

Water Allocation

- **India:** Exclusive control over 20% of the total water of the Indus system (Eastern Rivers).
- **Pakistan:** Control over 80% of the water (Western Rivers).
- According to **Article III (1)**, India is obligated to allow the flow of waters from Western Rivers to Pakistan.

Dispute Resolution Mechanism

The treaty provides a **three-tier dispute settlement mechanism:**

- **Bilateral negotiations** between the Indus Commissioners.
- Escalation to a **Neutral Expert** appointed by the World Bank.
- Arbitration by a **Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)**, if necessary.

Key Provisions

- Establishment of a **Permanent Indus Commission (PIC)** to manage disputes, share data, and ensure treaty compliance.
- India's right to construct **run-of-the-river projects** on Western Rivers under specific design and operational constraints.

Recent Developments

Neutral Expert's Decision

- The **Neutral Expert** appointed by the World Bank, **Michel Lino**, has upheld India's position on the ongoing differences with Pakistan over the design of two hydroelectric projects in Jammu and Kashmir:
 - **Kishenganga Hydroelectric Project (HEP)** on the Kishenganga River, a tributary of Jhelum.
 - **Ratle Hydroelectric Project** on the Chenab River.
- The decision was announced on **January 7, 2025**, vindicating India's stance that the issues fall under the Neutral Expert's jurisdiction as per the treaty's Annexure F.

Pakistan's Objections

- Pakistan had alleged that the design features of these projects violated the IWT.
- In 2015, Pakistan initially requested a Neutral Expert but later withdrew and sought arbitration by the PCA.
- India refused to engage with the PCA, maintaining that such an approach violated the treaty's provisions.

World Bank's Actions

- On **October 13, 2022**, the World Bank instituted parallel processes:
 - Appointed Michel Lino as the Neutral Expert.
 - Initiated PCA proceedings.
- India boycotted the PCA but participated in the Neutral Expert's proceedings.

Significance of the Decision

- The Neutral Expert's decision to adjudicate the matter vindicates India's position.
- This ensures that the disputes are addressed within the framework of the IWT.

India's Call for Treaty Modification

- In **January 2023**, India issued a formal notice to Pakistan seeking a **modification** of the treaty for the first time in its history.
- In **September 2024**, India issued another notice citing "fundamental and unforeseen changes" such as:
 - Demographic changes.
 - Environmental concerns.
 - The need for clean energy development.
 - Cross-border terrorism.

Challenges and Controversies

- **Design of Indian Projects:**
 - Pakistan's repeated objections to India's hydroelectric projects, including **Baglihar Dam, Kishenganga, and Ratle** projects.
- **Geopolitical Tensions:**
 - India's indication of re-evaluating the treaty following attacks like Uri (2016) and Pulwama (2019).
- **Climate Change:**
 - Impact of melting glaciers and changing precipitation patterns on water flow.

Importance for India and Pakistan

- **For India:**
 - Ensures water for irrigation and hydroelectric projects.
 - Addresses energy security and climate commitments.
- **For Pakistan:**
 - Critical for agriculture and drinking water.
 - Maintains water security for a downstream country.

Conclusion

- The Indus Water Treaty remains a cornerstone of India-Pakistan relations, showcasing cooperation amidst conflict. However, evolving geopolitical, environmental, and developmental challenges necessitate periodic reviews to ensure its relevance and efficacy.

Exercise La Perouse

Syllabus: GS-2; International Relations

Context

- La Perouse 25: Indian Navy joins sea phase of multinational exercise to strengthen maritime security in Indo-Pacific.

About

- Exercise La Perouse is a biennial naval exercise conducted by the French Navy. Named after the 18th-century French explorer Jean-François de Galaup, comte de La Pérouse, this exercise aims to enhance maritime cooperation among participating nations.



Key Objectives

- To foster interoperability and cooperation among the navies of participating countries.
- To promote the rules-based international order in the Indo-Pacific region.
- To enhance mutual understanding and strengthen partnerships in maritime security operations.

Participating Nations

The exercise involves **France** and **Quad Nations**:

- **India**
- **United States**
- **Japan**
- **Australia**

In the **fourth edition**, additional participants include:

- **Royal Navy** (United Kingdom)
- **Indonesian Navy**
- **Royal Malaysian Navy**
- **Republic of Singapore Navy**
- **Royal Canadian Navy**

Indian Navy's Participation

- The **indigenously designed and built guided missile destroyer INS Mumbai** is participating in the fourth edition.
- Showcases India's advanced maritime capabilities and commitment to regional security.

Focus Areas and Activities

- Developing **common Maritime Situational Awareness** by enhancing cooperation in maritime surveillance, interdiction, and air operations.
- Conducting **complex and advanced multi-domain exercises**, including:
 - Surface warfare
 - Anti-air warfare and air defense
 - Cross-deck landings
 - Tactical maneuvers
 - VBSS (Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure) operations
- Strengthening tactical interoperability through **progressive training** and **information sharing**.

Strategic Importance

- **Regional Security:** Enhances maritime cooperation and collaboration in the Indo-Pacific region.
- **SAGAR Vision:** Aligns with India's vision of **Security and Growth for All in the Region** by promoting a safer and more secure maritime domain.
- **Interoperability:** Demonstrates high levels of synergy, coordination, and interoperability between like-minded navies.
- **Force Projection:** Reinforces India's operational readiness and strategic presence in the Indo-Pacific.

Flamingo Festival

Syllabus: GS-3; Biodiversity- Community Conservation

Context

- The three-day Flamingo Festival 2025 in Andhra Pradesh concluded, with calls to protect the rich biodiversity of the region, specifically in Pulicat Lake and Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary.



About

- The **Flamingo Festival** is an annual event celebrated in Andhra Pradesh to highlight the significance of bird conservation and promote eco-tourism. The festival primarily revolves around the migratory **flamingos** and other bird species that visit the state during winter.

Location:

- The festival is primarily conducted in the **Pulicat Lake** region, which is the second-largest brackish water lake in India, and **Nellapattu Bird Sanctuary**, both located in the **Nellore district** of Andhra Pradesh.
- Pulicat Lake straddles the border between Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

Timing:

- Held annually in **January**, coinciding with the peak season of migratory bird visits.

Migratory Birds:

- The festival celebrates the arrival of **Greater Flamingos** and other migratory birds from colder regions such as Siberia, Russia, and the Arctic.
- Other bird species include:
 - Grey Pelicans
 - Painted Storks
 - Open-Billed Storks
 - Northern Pintails
 - Eurasian Wigeons

Ecological Importance:

- Pulicat Lake is a vital habitat for migratory birds due to its unique brackish water ecosystem, rich in plankton and fish, which serve as food for the birds.
- The **Nellapattu Bird Sanctuary** is one of the important bird sanctuaries in India, known for its large breeding colonies of water birds.

Cultural and Economic Impact:

- The festival promotes **eco-tourism**, attracting bird watchers, nature enthusiasts, and researchers from across India and abroad.
- Local communities are involved, which helps generate income and creates awareness about conservation efforts.

Conservation Challenges:

- Habitat degradation due to encroachments, pollution, and overfishing in Pulicat Lake.

- Climate change and reduced water inflow into the lake affect the arrival of migratory birds.

Government Initiatives:

- The Andhra Pradesh government organizes this festival to encourage awareness about **biodiversity conservation** and the **Ramsar Wetland Sites**.
- Efforts are being made to improve infrastructure, such as bird-viewing platforms and eco-friendly tourism facilities.