



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 24-05-2025

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1. Santara (Sallekhana)
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Santara (Sallekhana)

Syllabus: GS-1: Indian Culture – Religious Rituals.

Context:

A three-year-old girl suffering from a terminal illness died after being administered Santhara – a Jain ritual of voluntary fasting unto death – by a spiritual leader in Indore.

Santhara (Sallekhana) – Jain Ritual of Voluntary Fasting unto Death

Definition & Practice

- **Santhara** or **Sallekhana** is a Jain religious vow of **voluntary and gradual fasting unto death**, undertaken to purify the soul and attain **moksha** (liberation).
- Practiced by both **monks and laypersons**, typically under conditions like **terminal illness, old age, or famine**.
- Involves **gradual withdrawal from food and water**, accompanied by **detachment, forgiveness, and spiritual reflection**.
- Requires **spiritual maturity** and is undertaken under **religious supervision**.

Core Jain Doctrines Supporting Santhara

- **Ahimsa (Non-violence)** – Even towards oneself; Santhara is seen as a non-violent way to exit life without harming others.
- **Satya (Truthfulness)** – Practiced with honesty and clarity of purpose.
- **Asteya (Non-stealing)** – Upholds renunciation; nothing is taken without consent.
- **Brahmacharya (Chastity)** – Promotes spiritual discipline and detachment from desires.
- **Aparigraha (Non-possessiveness)** – Key principle supporting the voluntary renunciation of life and material attachment.

Triratna (Three Jewels of Jainism) and Their Role

- **Samyak Darshan (Right Faith)** – Accepting death with clarity and detachment.
- **Samyak Jnana (Right Knowledge)** – Understanding karmic theory and liberation.
- **Samyak Charitra (Right Conduct)** – Living and dying in accordance with Jain ethics.

Legal Status in India

- **2015 Rajasthan High Court:** Declared Santhara **illegal**, equating it with **suicide (IPC 306)**.
- **Supreme Court Stay (August 2015):** Stayed the HC verdict, affirming that **Santhara is protected under Article 25 (Right to Religious Freedom)**.
- **Current Legal Status:** **Legally protected**, subject to **voluntary consent** and **religious oversight**.

Religious and Historical Significance

- **Spiritual Purpose:** Considered a **dignified, peaceful exit** aiming to **shed karma** and attain **liberation**.
- **Historical Practitioners:** Followed by **Bhadrabahu** and **Chandragupta Maurya** in **Shravanabelagola**.
- **Scriptural References:** Mentioned in **RatnakarandaShravakachara**, **Silappadikaram**, and **Neelakesi**.

Conclusion

Santhara reflects the **Jain ideals of detachment, self-discipline, and non-violence**, offering a spiritual path to liberation. Despite legal and ethical debates, it remains a **constitutionally protected religious practice** in India. The challenge lies in **balancing individual religious rights** with **contemporary ethical concerns**, especially involving **minors and consent**.

Guttala Sculptural Inscription

Syllabus: GS-1: Indian History, Art and Culture.

Context:

The 16th-century sculptural inscription near Chandrashekara temple in Guttala, Haveri district, Karnataka, documenting the death of 6,307 people due to a drought in 1539 CE, stands as India's earliest known epigraphic record of a humanitarian disaster.

Guttala Sculptural Inscription (1539 CE)

Location:

- Found near **Chandrashekara temple**, Guttala village, **Haveri district**, Karnataka.

Language & Script:

- Written in **Kannada language** using **Kannada script** on a **stone slab**.

Historical Context & Content:

- **Date:** Dated to **Saka 1461**, which corresponds to **August 18, 1539 CE**.
- **Event Recorded:** Death of **6,307 people** due to a **severe drought** (referred to as "*bara*" in the inscription).
- **Humanitarian Response:**
 - A local man named **Marulaih Odeya**, son of **Nanideva Odeya**, **buried the dead in baskets**.
 - This act was performed to earn **religious merit** (*punya*) for a ruler named **TimmarasaSvami**.

Unique Features:

- **India's Earliest Epigraphic Evidence** of a **humanitarian disaster** caused by a natural calamity.
- Combines **textual record** with **sculptural depiction**:
 - Sculpture shows **Marulaih carrying a basket of corpses**, a rare visual representation of a humanitarian crisis.
- Provides insight into **social and administrative structures**:
 - Mentions the term "**seeme**" indicating a **local territorial governance unit**.
- Demonstrates the **role of individuals** and **local communities** in disaster response in pre-modern India.

Significance:

- Offers **early evidence of social resilience** and **community-level response** to natural disasters.
- Highlights **humanitarian values** in 16th-century Karnataka.
- Valuable for studying the intersection of **art, history, and environmental events**.
- Enhances understanding of **epigraphy as a source of environmental and social history**.

Keezhadi Excavation

Syllabus: GS-1: Indian Art and Culture – Civilizations.

Context:

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has indeed directed archaeologist Amarnath Ramakrishna to revise and resubmit the Keezhadi excavation report, emphasizing the need for enhanced scientific accuracy and improved period classification.

Keezhadi Excavation – A Window into Tamilakam's Urban Past

Introduction

Keezhadi is a significant archaeological site located near Madurai, Tamil Nadu, along the **Vaigai River basin**. Initially explored by the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)**, the excavation has since been carried forward by the **Tamil Nadu State Archaeology Department (TNSDA)**.

It has brought to light a highly advanced and urbanised Tamil civilisation predating the commonly acknowledged Sangam period.

Timeline and Location

- **Discovered:** Based on surveys conducted during 2013–14; excavations began in **2015**.
- **Location:**
 - **Excavation Site:** PallichanthaiThidal, Sivaganga district, Tamil Nadu.
 - Situated near Madurai, along the **Vaigai river valley**.
- **Excavated Area:** Only **1 out of 100 acres** excavated has yielded over **4,000 artefacts**.

Key Findings

- **Carbon Dating (AMS Method):**
 - Charcoal samples dated to **200 BCE**, indicating urban habitation.
- **Urban Features Discovered:**
 - **Brick structures** with advanced layouts.
 - **Ring wells**, indicating water management systems.
 - **Pottery, graffiti, beads**, and other artefacts showcasing daily life and trade.

- **Large decorative pot**, unique in Tamil excavations, pointing to artistic sophistication.
- **Trade & Cultural Connections:**
 - Artefacts reveal **links to North India and the western trade routes**.
 - Pottery and script suggest active **inter-regional exchanges** during the Sangam Age.

Cultural and Historical Significance

- **Pre-Sangam Urbanisation:**
 - Challenges the belief that Tamil urban civilisation developed only during the Sangam period.
 - Suggests a **continuum of urban habitation**, literacy, and craftsmanship prior to 200 BCE.
- **Link to Classical Tamil Literature:**
 - Ancient texts like **Tiruvilayadal Puranam** mention nearby settlements like **Manalur** and **Konthagai**.
 - Strengthens the historicity of Sangam-era literary sources.
- **Centre of Craftsmanship and Literacy:**
 - Graffiti and script samples indicate **literacy among common people**.
 - Beads and ornamentation imply **advanced artisanal techniques**.
- **Challenging North-Centric Narratives:**
 - Offers robust evidence for an **equally advanced Southern civilisation** during early historic times.
 - Emphasises the **diversity of civilisational development** in India.

Recent Developments

- The **ASI has asked archaeologist Amarnath Ramakrishna to resubmit the excavation report** with revisions, citing:
 - Need for **scientific accuracy**.
 - Improved **period classification**.
 - Emphasis on **methodological rigor** in presenting findings.

Relevance to Contemporary Discourse

- **Historical Revisionism:** Keezhadi plays a vital role in **reshaping our understanding** of early South Indian history.
- **State vs Centre in Heritage Narratives:** The excavation has highlighted **institutional tensions** between the ASI and the Tamil Nadu government over the control and interpretation of heritage.
- **Educational and Tourism Potential:** There is a growing demand to **establish Keezhadi as a heritage and educational site.**

Conclusion

The Keezhadi excavation is a landmark discovery that **redefines early Tamil history**. It brings forth tangible evidence of an **urban, literate, and culturally advanced civilisation** in South India, predating and contemporaneous with the better-documented civilisations of the North. It underscores the **plurality and regional richness** of Indian civilisation and calls for a **more inclusive historical narrative**.

IMD Colour coded alert

Syllabus: GS-3: Disaster Management.

Context:

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Thursday (May 22, 2025) issued 'red' and 'orange' alerts for several districts in Maharashtra for the next few days and predicted extremely heavy to very heavy rainfall.

IMD Colour-Coded Weather Warnings

The **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** issues **colour-coded weather warnings** to alert the public and authorities about severe weather conditions. These warnings help in disaster preparedness and risk mitigation.

Purpose of Colour-Coded Warnings

- To provide **quick and easily understandable** alerts about severe weather.
- To help **government agencies, disaster management teams, and the public** take necessary precautions.
- To minimize loss of life, property, and economic disruptions.

Types of Weather Events Covered

IMD issues warnings for:

- Heavy rainfall (floods, landslides)
- Heatwaves & Coldwaves
- Cyclones
- Dust storms, thunderstorms, hailstorms
- Dense fog (aviation and transport risks)

Colour Codes and Their Meanings

Colour	Severity	Meaning	Action Required
Green	No advisory	Weather is normal, no risk.	No action needed.
Yellow	Be updated	Severe weather possible but not extreme.	Stay alert, monitor updates.
Orange	Be prepared	Severe weather expected with disruptions.	Authorities should prepare response plans. Public should take precautions.
Red	Take action	Extreme weather conditions likely.	Immediate action needed. High risk to life and property. Evacuations may be required.

Criteria for Different Weather Events

Rainfall Warnings

- **Yellow:** 64.5–115.5 mm in 24 hrs
- **Orange:** 115.6–204.4 mm in 24 hrs
- **Red:** >204.5 mm in 24 hrs

Heatwave Warnings

- **Yellow:** Max temp $\geq 40^{\circ}\text{C}$ (Plains) or $\geq 30^{\circ}\text{C}$ (Hills)
- **Orange:** Max temp $\geq 42^{\circ}\text{C}$ (Plains) or $\geq 35^{\circ}\text{C}$ (Hills)
- **Red:** Max temp $\geq 45^{\circ}\text{C}$ (Severe heatwave)

Cyclone Warnings

- **Yellow:** Cyclone expected in 48 hrs
- **Orange:** Cyclone expected in 24 hrs
- **Red:** Cyclone expected to make landfall soon

Importance for Disaster Management

- Helps **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)** and State Disaster Response Forces (SDRF) in planning.
- Used by **agriculture, aviation, and transport sectors** to mitigate risks.
- Supports **early warning systems** under the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction**.

Akashteer System

Syllabus: GS-3: Science and Technology - Defence Technology

Context:

India's indigenously developed 'Akashteer' air defence system performed "exceedingly well" during 'Operation Sindoor', said Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

Akashteer System:

- **Akashteer System:** An advanced, indigenous Air Defence Control and Reporting System (ADCRS) developed by Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) for the Indian Army.
- **Literal Meaning:** "Sky Arrow" (Akashteer in Hindi).
- **Objective:** Automates air defence operations, enhances situational awareness, and strengthens India's air defence capabilities against aerial threats like missiles, drones, and aircraft.

- **Part of:** 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative for self-reliance in defence technology.
- **Integration:** Works with the Indian Air Force's Integrated Air Command and Control System (IACCS) and forms part of the broader C4ISR framework (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance).

Key Features

- **Automation:** Replaces manual air defence processes with real-time, AI-driven, digital command and control systems.
- **Real-Time Threat Response:** Enables instant detection, tracking, and neutralization of hostile aerial threats, reducing response time.
- **Multi-Sensor Integration:** Combines data from various radars (e.g., 3D Tactical Radars, Low-Level Lightweight Radars, Akash Weapon System radars) and sensors for a unified air picture.
- **Mobility and Resilience:** Vehicle-based, mobile control centers ensure operational capability in challenging environments and diverse terrains.
- **Decentralized Authority:** Empowers frontline commanders to engage threats swiftly, enhancing battlefield agility.
- **Multi-Layered Defence:** Coordinates with systems like Akash Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) and S-400 Sudarshan Chakra for robust airspace security.
- **Indigenous Technology:** Integrates ISRO's Earth observation satellites and NAVIC for precision targeting and surveillance, reducing reliance on foreign systems.

Significance

- **Strategic Importance:** Enhances India's air defence posture, comparable to Israel's Iron Dome and the U.S. Integrated Air and Missile Defense Battle Command System.
- **Operational Efficiency:** Digitizes and automates air defence operations, minimizing human error and friendly fire incidents.
- **National Security:** Proven effective in real-time scenarios, e.g., Operation Sindoor (May 9-10, 2025), where it intercepted Pakistani missiles and drones.
- **Self-Reliance:** Aligns with the 'Year of Technology Absorption' (2024) initiative, promoting indigenous defence manufacturing.
- **Jointness:** Enhances coordination between the Indian Army, Air Force, and Navy through integration with IACCS and TRIGUN platforms.

Development and Induction

- **Developed By:** Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), a Navratna PSU under the Ministry of Defence.
- **Contract:** Signed in March 2023 with the Ministry of Defence for Rs 1,982 crore.
- **Induction Status:**
 - 100 units delivered by September 2024.
 - 107 units delivered by November 2024, with 105 more planned by March 2025.
 - Full order of 455 units to be completed by April 2027.
- **Validation:** Trials conducted in November 2024 simulated future war scenarios, validating its effectiveness.

Comparison with Other Systems

- **Akash Missile System:** A medium-range surface-to-air missile system, integrated with Akashteer for coordinated defence.
- **S-400 Sudarshan Chakra:** A long-range air defence system, complemented by Akashteer's real-time coordination.
- **Global Counterparts:** Comparable to Israel's Iron Dome, China's HQ-9, and the U.S. Integrated Air and Missile Defense System.

Challenges and Future Prospects

- **Challenges:**
 - Integration with existing systems requires seamless coordination.
 - Continuous upgrades needed to counter evolving aerial threats (e.g., hypersonic missiles).
- **Future Prospects:**
 - Expansion to cover all Indian Army air defence units.
 - Potential integration with emerging technologies like autonomous drone swarms and AI-driven analytics.