

Art and Culture Current Affairs April 2020

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Tablighi Jamaat

Why in the news?

• Recently **over 200** have **tested positive for COVID-19** from **among 4,000-odd** who had **gathered in Delhi's Markaz Nizamuddin**, the **headquarters of the Tablighi Jamaat**.

What is Tablighi Jamaat?

• **Tablighi Jamaat**, which means a **society for spreading the faith**, is a **Sunni Islamic missionary movement**.
• It has **emerged as one of the most dominant forms of religiosity** in **post-colonial India**. The **proselytizing movement** aims to reach out to **ordinary Muslims** and **revive their faith**, particularly in matters of ritual, dress, and personal behaviour.

How did the movement begin?

• Its roots lie in the **Deobandi version of the Hanafi School of jurisprudence**.
• It was **launched by Deoband cleric** and prominent Islamic scholar **Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Khandhalaw in 1927 in Mewat**.
• Its **emergence** also **coincided with Hindu proselytizing movements**.

How does it promote Islam?

The Tablighi Jamaat is based on six principles:

1. The first is the **kalimah**, an article of faith in which the **Tabligh accepts** that there is **no God**, but **Allah and that Prophet Muhammad** is his messenger.
2. The second is **salaat, or prayer five times daily**.
3. The third is **ilm and dhikr, the knowledge and remembrance of Allah** conducted in sessions in which the congregation listens to preaching by the imam, performs prayers, recites the Quran and reads the Hadith
4. The **fourth principle is Ikram-i-Muslim**, the **treatment of fellow Muslims with honour**.
5. The **fifth is ikhlas-i-niyat** or **sincerity of intention**
6. The **sixth is dawat-o-tabligh** or **proselytization**.

Topic- GS Paper 1–Art and Culture

Source- The Hindu

Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts

Why in the news?

• Indian Handicrafts & Gifts Fair (IHGF) is **Asia's largest gifts & handicrafts trade fair** conducted by EPCH, **49th edition** of the fair has been **called off due to COVID-19**.



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About the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts

- The Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH) was **established under the Companies Act in the year 1986-87**. It is a **non-profit organization**, with an **object to promote, support, protect, maintain and increase the export of handicrafts**.
- It is an **apex body of handicrafts exporters** for promotion of exports of Handicrafts from the country and **projecting India's image abroad** as a **reliable supplier of high quality** of handicrafts.
- The Council has created **necessary infrastructure** as well as **marketing and information facilities**, which are **availed both by the member's exporters and importers**.

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Source- The Hindu

Spring Harvest Festivals in India

Why in the news?

- The **President of India greeted people** on the occasion of **Vaisakhi, Vishu, Rongali Bihu, Naba Barsha, Vaisakhadi, Puthandu, Pirappu**, which are being celebrated in different parts of the country as a **Spring Harvest Festivals in India**.
- The first day of the month of **Vaisakh (April 13, 14 or 15)**, marks the start of Hindu New Year.
- Various called **Baisakhi or Vaisakhi (UP, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab), Puthandu (Tamil Nadu), Vishu (Kerala), Mahabishuva Sankranti (Odisha), Rongali Bihu (Assam) and Poila Boishakh (Bengal)**, it is also a celebration of the spring harvest.

Types of Spring Harvest Festivals in India

a. Rongali Bihu

- Rongali Bihu also known as Bohag Bihu, is celebrated in Assam.
- The festival celebrated in the Assam and other parts of northeastern India.



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- Bohag Bihu or Rongali Bihu festival **continues for seven days** and called as Xaat Bihu. The seven days are known as **Chot Bihu, Goru Bihu, Manuh Bihu, Kutum Bihu, Senehi Bihu, Mela Bihu and Chera Bihu.**
- It marks the beginning of the **Assamese New Year.**
- This marks the **first day of the Hindu solar calendar** and is also **observed in Bengal, Manipur, Mithila, Nepal, Orissa, Punjab, Kerala and Tamil Nadu** though called by different names.
- The farmers prepare the fields **for cultivation of paddy and there is a feeling of joy** around.

Poila Boishakh

- Poila Boishakh also known as Pahela Baishakh or Bangla Nababarsha, is the first day of Bengali Calendar.



- Boishakh is the first month of the Bengali calendar, and **Poila** stands for **First**. So, **Poila Boishakh** means the first day of the month of **Boishakh**, thus, marking the **beginning of a new year**. People greet each other saying, **Shubho Noboborsho** where **Naba** means **New** and **Barsho** indicate **Year**, together with means **New Year**.
- According to the Gregorian calendar, the Bengali New Year usually falls around April 14 or April 15. This year Pohela Boishakh will be celebrated on April 14.
- The first day of the initial month of Baishakh of the Bengali solar calendar is called by many names like Naba Barsha, Pohela Boishakh, and Pahela Baisakh in various parts of India.

Puthandu

- **Puthandu** is celebrated with pomp and fervour by Tamilians across the world. It marks the first day of the Tamil New Year.
- On this day, people wish each other 'Puthandu Vazthukal' which means 'Happy New Year.'
- The Tamil New Year follows the spring equinox and generally falls on 14 April of the Gregorian year.



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- In the temple city of Madurai, the Chitterai Thiruvizha is celebrated in the Meenakshi Temple. A huge exhibition is held, called Chitterai Porutkaatchi.
- Puthandu is also celebrated by Tamil Hindus outside Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, such as in Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, Reunion, Mauritius, and other countries with Tamil diaspora.
- The day celebrates the first day of the traditional Tamil calendar and is a public holiday in both Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka.
- Several Buddhist communities in Myanmar, Cambodia, Thailand, and Sinhalese in Sri Lanka also celebrate the same day as their new year.

Baisakhi

- It is also known as Vaisakhi, Vaishakhi, or Vaisakhi, is celebrated with much fanfare in Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh.
- Baisakhi is a spring harvest festival for the Sikhs and Hindus. It is usually celebrated on April 13 or 14 every year.
- It marks the Sikh new year and commemorates the formation of Khalsa Panth of warriors under Guru Gobind Singh in 1699.



- Vaisakhi is also an ancient festival of Hindus, marking the Solar New Year and also celebrating the spring harvest.
- Baisakhi was also the day when colonial British empire officials committed the Jallianwala Bagh massacre on a gathering, an event influential to the Indian movement against colonial rule.

Bikhoti

- It is the festival of Uttarakhand involves people taking a dip in holy rivers.

Jurshital

- It is celebrated in the **Mithila region of Bihar and Nepal**; the New Year is celebrated as Jurshital.

Mahabishuva Sankranti

- It is celebrated in Odisha, also known as Pana Sankranti. To observe this festival, the Odisha govt has decided to cancel the Meru Jatra festival amid the lockdown in Odisha.

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Source- PIB

Meru Jatra festival

Why in the news?

- **Odisha government** has recently **banned the Meru Jatra festival** and **congregations related to it at temples** on the occasion of **Mahavishuva Sankranti**.



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- Mahavishub Sankranti is the **start of the Odia New Year**.

About Meru Jatra festival

- It marks the end of the **21-day-long celebration of penance** named '**Danda Nata**'. Danda Nata or Danda Jatra is one of the **most important traditional dance festivals organized in different parts of South Odisha** and particularly in the **Ganjam District**.
- The **Danda Nata festival** is being held in the month of **Chaitra** of every year.
- **Only male persons** take part in this festival.
- The **Participants of Danda are called Danduas** (also known as **Bhoktas**).



Some highlights

- **Ganjam district** is the **heartland** of the ancient **Kalinga Empire**.
- The Kalinga Emperors organized this Chaitra festival for their **Ista Devi, Taratarini**.
- It is believed that the present-day **Danda Nata** is a **part of the ancient Chaitra Yatra festivals** being celebrated every year at **Taratarini Shakti/Tantra Peetha**.
- The **Danduas or Bhoktas** pray **Goddesses Kali and Shiva** during this **13-, 18- or 21-day Danda period**.
- All the `Bhoktas` or 'Danduas' **lead a very pious life** for all these days during the festival, and they **avoid eating meat, fish or cohabiting during this period**.
- **Danda Nata** is a **form of a religious festival** that has **theatrical and dance components**.
- The dance, along with the **accompanying events**, is performed over three months **March, April, and May**.

Topic- GS Paper 1–Art and Culture

Source-The Hindu

Nihangs

Why in the news?

- Recently, **Patiala witnessed an incident** between Nihangs and Punjab police during the national lockdown.

About Nihangs

- It is an **order of Sikh warriors**, characterised by **blue robes, antiquated arms such as swords and spears, and decorated turbans** surmounted by **steel quoits**.



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They use the slogans 'chhardi kala' (forever in high spirits) and 'tiar bar tiar' (state of ever preparedness) for unforeseen events. Who can become a Nihang?

- Any person **irrespective of caste, creed or religion** can be included, provided he has unshorn hair as per the Sikh traditions at the time of entering the sect.

Historical Background

- They had a **significant role in defending the Sikh panth** after the fall of the **first Sikh rule (1710-15)** when **Mughal governors were killing Sikhs and during the onslaught of Afghan invader Ahmed Shah Durrani (1748-65)**.
- They held the **grand council (Sarbat Khalsa) of Sikhs at Akal Takht** and **pronounced the resolution (Gurmata) passed**.

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Source- The Hindu

DekhoApnaDesh webinar series

Why in news?

- The **Ministry of Tourism** has recently launched its "**DekhoApnaDesh**" webinar series to **provide information** on the **many destinations** and the sheer depth and expanse of the culture and heritage of our Incredible India.



About the DekhoApnaDesh webinar series

- It has been launched to **provide information on the many destinations** and the **sheer depth and expanse of the culture and heritage of Incredible India**.
- The first webinar of the series titled "**City of Cities- Delhi's Personal Diary**" touched upon the long history of Delhi as it has unfolded as 8 cities.
- The webinar will be **available on the Ministry's social media handles- IncredibleIndia on Instagram and Facebook**.

Showcasing India's rich culture:

- Series of webinars will be an **on-going feature and the Ministry** would work towards **showcasing the diverse and remarkable history and culture of India** including its **monuments, cuisine, arts, dance forms, natural landscapes, festivals and many other aspects of the rich Indian civilization**.
- The core of the session based itself **on tourism awareness and social history**.

Launch of webinar in public domain soon:

- The webinar will be **available in public domain soon**.
- The next webinar is on the **16th of April from 11 am to 12 noon** and shall take visitors to the amazing **City of Kolkata**.

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Source- Indian Express



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Darbar Move

Why in the news?

- For the **first time in 144 years**, the **Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) administration** has decided to halt the 'Darbar move' due to the ongoing Covid-19 crisis.

About the Darbar move

- It is the name for the **bi-annual shift** of the **secretariat and all other government offices in J&K from Srinagar** (state's summer capital) **to Jammu** (state's winter capital).

Duration

- The **secretariat is located in Srinagar** from **May to October** and in **Jammu** from **November to April**.

Historical origin

- The practice was started by Dogra King Maharaja Ranbir Singh in 1872 to escape extreme weather conditions in these places.

Topic- GS Paper 1–History

Source- AIR

World Heritage Committee of UNESCO

Why in the news?

- The **44th session of the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO** scheduled in **Fuzhou (China)** has been **postponed due to coronavirus outbreak**.
- **India ratified** the World Heritage Convention **in 1977**.



About World Heritage Committee of UNESCO

- It is a **group of representatives from 21 States Parties** to the **World Heritage Convention**. It is **responsible for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention**, defines the use of the **World Heritage Fund** and **allocates financial assistance upon requests from States Parties**.
- It has the **ultimate decision-making power** of **declaring a property on the World Heritage List**.
- It also decides on the **inscription or deletion of properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger**.
- Three advisory bodies aid the deliberations of the World Heritage Committee are:
 - a. **International Union for Conservation of Nature**
 - b. **International Council on Monuments and Sites**
 - c. **International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property**.

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Source- unesco.org

National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of India

Why in the news?

- **Union Minister for Culture (I/C)** has launched the **National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of India** in New Delhi.

Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage

- It was **adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** in **2003** and **entered into force in 2006**.
- This initiative is also a **part of the Vision 2024 of the Ministry of Culture**.
- **Intangible Cultural Heritages from India** included in the **UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**.



Domains of the intangible list

- The list has been classified into **five broad domains** in which intangible cultural heritage is manifested:
- **Oral traditions and expressions**, including **language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage performing arts**
- **Social practices, rituals, and festive events**
- **Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe**
- **Traditional craftsmanship**

Objectives:

- It aims to **raise awareness** about the various **intangible cultural heritage elements** from **different states of India** at the national and international level and **ensure their protection**.
- To **safeguard the expressions of intangible cultural heritage** that are endangered by the **processes of globalization**.
- To ensure **respect for the intangible cultural heritage** of the **communities, groups, and individuals**
- to **raise awareness at the local, national, and international levels** of the **importance of the intangible cultural heritage**.

India has a **total of 13 intangible cultural heritages** included in the **UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**.



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These include:

- **Koodiyattam**, Sanskrit Theatre, Kerala
- **Mudiyet**: a ritual theatre of Kerala
- The **Tradition of Vedic Chanting Ramlila** – the Traditional Performance of the Ramayana
- **Ramman**: religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas
- **Kalbelia**: folk songs and dances of Rajasthan
- **Chhau dance**: a tradition from eastern India
- **Buddhist chanting of Ladakh**: the recitation of sacred Buddhist texts in the trans-Himalayan Ladakh region, Jammu and Kashmir, India
- **Sankirtana**, ritual singing, drumming, and dancing of Manipur
- **Traditional brass and copper craft** of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab
- **Yoga**
- **Kumbh Mela** (Recently Added)

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Source- PIB

Devanahalli chakota

Why in the news?

- Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) has recently cultivated the Devanahalli Pomelo fruit under its CSR programme 'Namma Ooru'.



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About the Devanahalli pomelo

- It is a variety of the **citrus fruit pomelo (Citrus maxima)** of the family **Rutaceae**.
- It is **exclusively grown in the region** around **Devanahalli taluk of Bangalore Rural District**. It is locally known as **chakota**.
- It is **protected under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act (GI Act) 1999** of the Government of India.

Topic- GS Paper 1–Art and Culture

Source- The Hindu

Basaveshwara

Why in the news?

- Prime Minister has recently **offering homage** to the **12th-century social reformer Basaveshwara** on **his birth anniversary**.

About Basaveshwara

- He is also known as **Bhaktibhandari, Basavanna or Basaveswara** was a **12th-century philosopher, Kannada poet** and a **social reformer** during the reign of the **Kalachuri-dynasty king Bijjala I** in **Karnataka**. He rejected **gender or social discrimination, superstitions and rituals**.
- He introduced **new public institutions** such as the '**Anubhava Mantapa**' (or, the "hall of spiritual experience"), which **welcomed men and women from all socio-economic backgrounds to discuss spiritual and mundane questions of life**, in open.
- He was the founder of the **Lingayats sect**.



Literary works



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- He **spread social awareness** through **poetry (Vachanas)** such as **Shat-sthala-vachana** (discourses of the six stages of salvation), **Kala-jnana-vachana** (forecasts of the future) and **Mantra-gopya**.

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