

Daily Current Affairs

18 April 2023



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Important News: International



1. Syria becomes world's largest 'narco-state'

Why in news: Syria has become the world's largest narco-state, with most of its foreign exchange earnings coming from the production and export of captagon, a highly addictive amphetamine commonly referred to as "poor man's coke."



A. Syria can be classified as a narco-state because the illicit trade in narcotics, especially the Captagon, makes up a significant part of its economy, accounting for more than 90 percent of the country's foreign exchange earnings.

B. Syria is the major producer of captagon, a highly addictive amphetamine that is mainly exported to the Gulf region.

C. The rapid increase in the production and use of illicit drugs, especially captagon, has raised concerns globally. The US calls it an "international security threat".

What is Captagon?

D. Captagon is a popular recreational drug among youth in the Gulf states, as well as used by armed individuals who feel invincible under its influence.

It is sometimes referred to as "Captain Courage" or "Jihadi Magic Potion".

E. The cost of manufacturing a captagon is as low as 1 USD per pill.

(SOURCE - LIVEMINT)

2. Global Buddhist Summit

Why in news: PM will inaugurate the first Global Buddhist Summit in New Delhi on April 20th and 21st.

A. First Global Buddhist Summit to address universal human concerns with philosophy & praxis



B. The Global Buddhist Summit will be moderated by the Ministry of Culture + International Buddhist Confederation (IBC).

C. Theme: "Responses to Contemporary Challenges: Philosophy for Praxis."

D. Objective:

- The summit aims to enhance cultural and diplomatic relations with other countries and mark the importance and importance of India in Buddhism, as Buddhism originated in India.

- The summit is an effort towards engaging the global "Buddhist Dhamma" leadership and scholars on the matters of Buddhist and universal concerns, and to come up with policy inputs to address them collectively.

E. The summit will witness the participation of eminent scholars, Sangha leaders and Dharma practitioners from all over the world, who will discuss pressing global issues and look for answers in the Buddha Dhamma that is based on universal values.

F. The discussions will be held under four themes: Buddha Dhamma and Peace; Buddha Dhamma: Environmental Crisis, Health and Sustainability; Preservation of Nalanda Buddhist Tradition; Buddha Dhamma Pilgrimage, Living Heritage and Buddha Relics: a resilient foundation to India's centuries-old cultural links to countries in South, South-East and East Asia.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

3. IBSA Forum

Why in news: The trilateral India-Brazil-Africa forum is likely to receive increased diplomatic focus, according to persons of the matter.



INDIA South
BRAZIL aware
SOUTH AFRICA
FORUM

A. It is a trilateral dialogue forum of India, Brazil and South Africa which was created in the year 2003. The group was formalised as the IBSA Dialogue Forum under the Brasilia Declaration.



B.It aims to promote close coordination on global issues among the three large multicultural and multiethnic democracies of Asia, South America and Africa and contribute to enhancing trilateral India-Brazil-South Africa cooperation in regional areas.

C.It was established in 2004,

D.It facilitates the execution of human development projects to advance the fight against poverty and hunger in developing countries.

E.It is managed by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC).

F.IBSAMAR is a joint multinational maritime exercise between the Indian, Brazilian and South African navies which is an important part of defence cooperation between these countries.

(SOURCE – THE HINDU)

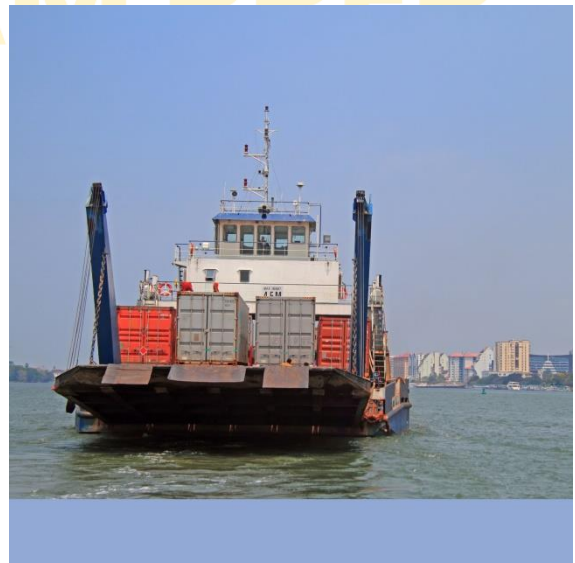
Important News: National

4. Trade data

Why in news: Trade data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry showed that India's May trade deficit widened to \$24.29 billion from \$6.53 billion a year ago.

A.The trade data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on Thursday indicates adverse conditions for growth.

B.India's merchandise exports and imports have declined in three of the last four months as tightening of financial conditions across the world has dampened global and domestic demand.



C. According to the latest data, merchandise exports declined by about 14 per cent in March as global demand remained weak, while imports declined by about 8 per cent, pointing to a slowdown in domestic demand.

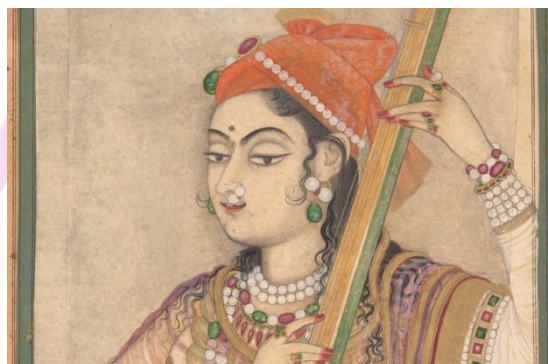
D. Considering the slowdown in the global economy this year — in its latest World Economic Outlook, the International Monetary Fund has pegged global growth at 2.8 per cent in 2023, down from 3.4 per cent in 2022 — exports are likely to come under further pressure. While the full extent of the slowdown will be clear only in the coming months,

E. Given the strong ties to the broader economy, a deeper contraction in merchandise exports will dampen the manufacturing sector in India, acting as a strain on overall domestic economic activity. **(SOURCE -NEWS ON AIR)**

5. Khayal Music

Why in news: NCERT has recently deleted chapters on the Mughal Empire from its Standard 12 history textbooks.

A. Khayal is a genre of Hindustani classical music, which originated in the late 16th century in Sufi communities in the region between Delhi and Jaunpur.



B. Its name comes from an Arabic/Persian word meaning "imagination". Origin of the music style 'Khayal' is attributed to Amir Khusrau.

D. There were also devotional forms such as Persian qaul and tarana sung in Sufi communities from the Amir Khusro (1253-1325) tradition.

E. Katkula was a regional form of Khayal that was used during the reign of Sultan Hussain Shah Sharqi of Jaunpur, who ruled from 1458 to 1505 and was a great music lover.

F. The members who played this style had close ties with Vaishnava sects. Later Niyamat Khan Sadarang (1670-1748), a famous Dhrupad singer played a key role in developing Khayal.



G.By the end of the 19th century, hereditary Khayal musicians, who were largely Muslim, began to teach the genre to people outside their respective families, including Hindus.

H.This eventually gave birth to famous Hindu musicians like Bhimsen Joshi, Kishori Amonkar, Kumar Gandharva etc.

(SOURCE – INDIAN EXPRESS)

6. STABLECOINS

Why in news: The United States Congress recently made an attempt to create a legislative framework for the increasingly popular stablecoins.



A.They are cryptocurrencies whose value has been pegged to, or tied to, another currency, commodity or financial instrument.

B.Stablecoins aims to provide an alternative to the high volatility of the most popular cryptocurrencies, including Bitcoin (BTC).

C.Unlike cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin, the prices of stablecoins remain stable, whatever fiat currency supports them.

D.For example: USDC Stablecoin is backed by dollar-denominated assets.

E.They are open, global and accessible to anyone on the internet.

F.They are fast, cheap and safe to transmit.

Cryptocurrencies are digital or virtual currencies in which encryption technologies are used to regulate the generation of their units and verify the transfer of funds.

G.These currencies operate independently of a central bank.

H.Cryptocurrency underlying economic transactions are decentralized, distributed and distributed. The first and most famous cryptocurrency, Bitcoin was introduced in 2009. Most cryptocurrencies are built on blockchain technology.

(SOURCE – ECONOMIC TIMES)



Important News: States

7. Uttaramerur inscription

Why in news: Recently, the Prime Minister of India referred to the Uttaramerur inscription in Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu, while discussing India's democratic history.



A. While Uttaramerur has multiple inscriptions spanning centuries, the most famous one being referred to by the Prime Minister is from the reign of Parantaka I (907-953 AD) who belongs to the Chola dynasty.

B. The inscription gives details of the functioning of the local sabha, i.e. the village assembly. A sabha was an assembly exclusively of brahmins and had specialised committees tasked with different things. The Uttaramerur inscription details how members were selected, the required qualifications, their roles and responsibilities, and even the circumstances in which they could be removed.

C. There will be 30 wards. Everyone living in these 30 wards would assemble and select one representative for the village assembly.

D. The qualifications for such a representative must be.

- ownership of a certain amount of land, having a house,
- being between the age of 35 and 70 and
- “knowing mantras and Brahmanas” (from the Vedic corpus).
- An exception can be made on land ownership if the person has learnt at least “one Veda and four Bhashyas”.
- One must also be “well-versed in business” and “virtuous”.

E. The inscription describes a number of important committees within the sabha with their own distinct functions. These include, the garden committee, the tank committee, the annual committee (an executive committee which required prior experience and knowledge to be a part of), the committee for supervision of justice (for supervising appointments and wrong doing), the gold committee (in charge of



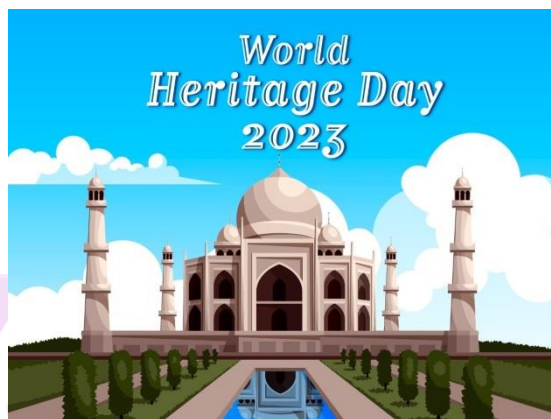
all the gold in the village temple) and the five-fold committee (its role is unclear in the inscription).

(SOURCE – NEWS ON AIR)

Important News: Days

8. World Heritage Day 2023

Why in news: Every year, 18th April is celebrated Worldwide as World Heritage Day to create awareness about Heritage among communities.



A.Theme: The theme of this year's celebrations is 'Rural Landscapes', which is related to the theme of the 2019 ICOMOS Scientific Symposium on Rural Heritage which will take place in Marrakesh, Morocco in October.

B.There are 37 World Heritage Sites in India. These include 29 cultural sites, seven natural sites and one mixed site. India has the sixth largest number of sites in the world.

C.In 1982, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) announced, 18 April as the "World Heritage Day", approved by the General Assembly of UNESCO in 1983, with the aim of enhancing awareness of the importance of the cultural heritage of humankind, and redouble efforts to protect and conserve the human heritage.

D.The rural landscape involves the increasing accumulation of tangible and intangible heritage that is in constant adaptation to environmental, cultural, social, political and economic conditions. They are the most common type of continuous cultural landscape.



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E. These sites are officially recognised by the UN and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation, also known as UNESCO. UNESCO believes that the sites classified as World Heritage are important for humanity, and they hold cultural and physical significance.

(SOURCE – TIMES OF INDIA)

