

3rd May 2017

GS : 1 - ART AND CULTURE

A festival of drums with a message

(The Hindu)

- The banks of the Bharathapuzha at Perumparamba, near Edappal, are set to reverberate with the sounds of the largest traditional percussion ensemble in Kerala.
- Exponents of 'panchavadyam', 'thayambaka', 'melappadam', 'villinmel thayambaka', 'mizhavu' and 'thudikottu', besides other instruments will be there at the event.

Panchavadyam:

- Literally meaning an orchestra of five instruments, is basically a temple art form that has evolved in Kerala.
- Of the five instruments, four - timila, maddalam, ilathalam and idakka - belong to the percussion category, while the fifth, kombu, is a wind instrument.
- Panchavadyam is characterised by a pyramid-like rhythmic structure with a constantly increasing tempo coupled with a proportional decrease in the number of beats in cycles.

Thayambaka:

- It is a type of solo chenda.
- A Chenda is a cylindrical wooden drum, and has a length of two feet and a diameter of one foot.
- It is a performance that developed in Kerala, in which the main player at the centre improvises rhythmically on the beats of half-a-dozen or a few more chenda and ilathalam players around.

Mizhavu:

- Mizhavu is a big copper drum played as an accompanying percussion instrument in the Koodiyattam and Koothu, performing arts of Kerala.
- It is played by the Ambalavasi Nambiar community.
- After 1965, the cast barrier having broken, anyone can play mizhavu in koodiyattam.

Koodiyattam:

- It is a form of Sanskrit theatre traditionally performed in the state of Kerala.
- It is officially recognised by UNESCO as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.
- It is the only surviving specimen of the ancient Sanskrit theatre.
- It finds several mentions in ancient sangam literature.

Koothu:

- Koothu is an informal dance structure, which originated in Tamil land.
- The performances generally depict scenes from ancient epics like Ramayana, Mahabharatha and other classical epics.
- There are traditionally no dialogues, instead only songs.

GS : 3 - SCIENCE AND TECH

Indian Army successfully test-fires advanced Block-III version of Brahmos cruise missile

(Indian Express)

- The Indian Army, adding another feather to its cap, successfully test-fired an advanced version of the Brahmos land-attack cruise missile in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- The test firing of the block-III version of the missile demonstrated the weapon's unmatched lethality of hitting the centre of a designated target with "bull's eye" precision.

Brahmos Missile:

- The Brahmos is a supersonic cruise missile developed by a joint-venture between Russia's Mashinostroyenia and India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- It operates on 'fire and forget principal' and is capable of being launched from land, sea, sub-sea and air against sea and land targets.
- It is capable of carrying a warhead of 300 kilogram and has top supersonic speed of Mach 2.8 to 3 (that is roughly

three times the speed of sound).

- It is a two-stage missile, the first one being solid and the second one ramjet liquid propellant.
- It is hailed as the world's fastest anti-ship cruise missile in operation.
- After India has become the member of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) in 2016, India and Russia have proposed to jointly develop a new generation of Brahmos missiles with a range of 600-km plus and capability to strike the targets with pinpoint accuracy.

GS : 3 - INFRASTRUCTURE

World's Highest Railway Bridge to Come up Over Chenab River

- World's highest railway bridge which will be 35 metres taller than the Eiffel Tower is to come up over the Chenab River in Jammu and Kashmir at a cost of around Rs. 1,100 crore in around two years from now.
- The bridge will connect Bakkal (Katra) and Kauri (Srinagar).
- The bridge will be a part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link project.
- The new railway bridge will be of an arch-shaped structure in hostile terrain.

GS : 2 - GOVERNMENT POLICIES

'Skill councils have conflict of interests'

(The Hindu)

- The Government may soon review the public report of Sharda Prasad committee, that suggested the challenges in vocational education and training system of the country and convergence, synergy and rationalization of sector skill councils (SSCs).

sector skill councils(SSC):

- Sector Skill Councils are set up as autonomous industry-led bodies by National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).
- They create Occupational Standards and Qualification bodies, develop competency framework, conduct Train the Trainer Programs, conduct skill gap studies and Assess and Certify trainees on the curriculum aligned to National Occupational Standards developed by them.

MISCELLANEOUS

Albino Orangutan

- A rare albino orangutan has been rescued on the Indonesian part of Borneo island where villagers were keeping the white-haired, blue-eyed creature in a cage.
- Native to Indonesia and Malaysia, orangutans are currently found in only the rainforests of Borneo and Sumatra.
- The Bornean orangutan (has three subspecies), which along with the Sumatran orangutan are Asia's only great apes, is classified by the IUCN as "critically endangered".

Vidya-Veerta Abhiyan

- Universities and educational institutions across country will soon have a "wall of heroes", depicting portraits of soldiers who showed extraordinary courage in defending the nation.
- The Ministry of HRD has launched "Vidya, Veerta Abhiyan" to encourage varsities to display portraits of Param Veer Chakra-decorated soldiers.