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1. Iron Age Megalithic Site and Mesolithic Rock Art Discovered in Telangana (April 20, 2024)

Archaeologists unearth a unique Iron Age Megalithic site at Ooragutta near Bandala village in SS Tadvai mandal of Mulugu district, Telangana.

An Overview of the News

- Additionally, the team uncovers two new rock art sites at Damaratogu Gundala mandal of Bhadradi Kothagudem district, Telangana.
- One of these sites, dubbed "Devarlabanda Mula," exclusively features depictions of animals without any human figures. Experts speculate that the paintings date back to the Mesolithic age (between 8000-3000 BCE) due to the absence of weaponry or domesticated animals in the artwork.

Iron Age Megalithic site:

- Newly discovered Iron Age megalithic sites in India boast unprecedented monument types unseen elsewhere.
- At the Ooragutta archaeological site, distinct features defy the conventional 'Dolmenoid Cists' prevalent in the area.
 - The arrangement of side slabs conforms to the cap-stone shape, resulting in a unique configuration for the dolmenoid cist.
- These monuments are estimated to originate around 1,000 BCE.
- Notably, the majority of monuments in this region typically exhibit square or rectangular forms.

Archaeologists Team:

- K.P. Rao: History Professor at the University of Hyderabad
- Ch Praveen Raju: Research Scholar at Yogi Vemana University, Kadapa (Andhra Pradesh)

Telangana:

- Chief Minister: Anumula Revanth Reddy
- Governor: C.P. Radhakrishnan
- Zoological Parks:
 - Nehru Zoological Park
 - Vana Vigyan Kendra Mini Zoo (Kakatiya Zoological Park)
- Airports:
 - Rajiv Gandhi International Airport

Begumpet Airport

2. Uttar Pradesh awarded with 13 new Geographical Indications (April 19, 2024)

The Geographical Indications Registry of the Government of India has awarded the Geographical Indication (GI) tag to 13 new products originating from Uttar Pradesh (UP), including Banaras Tirangi Barfi and Banaras Metal Casting Craft.

An Overview of the News

- The cumulative number of GI products in Uttar Pradesh has reached 75, confirming its position as the state with the highest number of GI-tagged products in India.
- Whereas Tamil Nadu is in second place with a total of 58 GI-tagged products.

List of Recently Approved Geographical Indication Products in Uttar Pradesh:

Goods	GI Product
Food Stuffs	1. Banaras Tirangi Barfi 2. Banaras Lal Peda (Sweet) 3. Jaunpur Imarti (Sweet)
Handi Crafts	1. Banaras Metal Casting Craft 2. Lakhimpur Kheri Tharu Embroidery 3. Bareilly Furniture 4. Bareilly Zardoji Craft 5. Pilkhuwa Home Furnishing 6. Banarasi Tabla (Musical Instrument) 7. Banaras Shehnai (Musical Instrument) 8. Banaras Mural Painting
Agriculture	1. Chiraigaon Karonda of Varanasi 2. Banaras Lal Bharwamirch (Red Pickel Chilli)

Tricolor Barfi:

- The tricolor barfi, a sweet representing the national flag, served as a "sweet weapon" during the Quit India Movement.
- Made from cashews and pistachios, it symbolizes the tricolor of the Indian flag: saffron, white and green.
- Starting from Thatheri market in Varanasi, it started in Shri Ram Bhandar in 1942.

Banaras Metal Casting Craft:

- Essential for the manufacture of idols and utensils in Kashi, the Banaras Metal Casting Craft uses brass with a central copper band to manufacture the utensils.

Support by NABARD:

- National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) in Lucknow, UP supported GI tag for Banaras Tirangi Barfi, Banaras Metal Casting Craft, Lakhimpur Kheri Tharu Embroidery, Bareilly Furniture, Bareilly Zardozi Craft and Pilkhuwa Home Furnishing.

Dominion of Varanasi:

- Varanasi, boasting 32 products, is the region with the highest number of GI products within the same geographical area.

About Geographical Indications Registry:

- Part of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI).
- The headquarters is located in Chennai, Tamil Nadu (TN).

3. Miraj's Sitar and Tanpura receive coveted GI Tags (April 8, 2024)

The Geographical Indications Registry awarded GI tags to Miraj town in Maharashtra for its sitars and tanpuras.

An Overview of the News

Craftsmanship and Tradition:

- Sitars and tanpuras made in Miraj are known for their craftsmanship and have a tradition dating back more than 300 years.
- Over seven generations of craftsmen have contributed to the production of these string instruments.

GI Tag Issuance:

- The Miraj Musical Instruments Cluster and Soultune Musical Instrument Producer firm received GI tags for sitars and tanpuras, respectively.
- More than 450 craftsmen are involved in manufacturing musical instruments under the Miraj Musical Instruments Cluster.

Raw Materials and Production:

- Wood for sitars and tanpuras is sourced from Karnataka forests, while pumpkin gourds are obtained from Maharashtra's Solapur district.
- The cluster manufactures around 60 to 70 sitars and 100 tanpuras per month.

Clientele and Recognition:

- Well-known classical singers and founders of the Kirana gharana, such as Ustad Abdul Karim Khan Saheb and Pandit Bhimsen Joshi, have used Miraj-made instruments.
- Artists from the film industry, including Javed Ali, Hariharan, and A R Rahman, are also patrons.

Historical Origin:

- The art of making musical instruments in Miraj dates back to the Adilshahi period when skilled workers transitioned from weapon-making to instrument craftsmanship.

Economic Viability and Recognition:

- The GI tag is expected to enhance the global recognition of Miraj-made instruments and benefit craftsmen.
- Despite the viability of instrument making, skilled workers often face challenges in receiving adequate returns for their labor.

4. Utkal Diwas: Celebrating Odisha's Cultural Kaleidoscope and Rich Heritage (April 1, 2024)

In the Indian state of Odisha, Utkal Diwas, also known as Odisha Day or Utkala Dibasa, is a significant yearly event. This day, which falls on April 1st every year, marks the anniversary of the state of Odisha's formation on that date in 1936.

An Overview of the News:

- For the people of Odisha, the day represents the turning point in a protracted struggle to be recognized as a separate state from the former British provinces of Orissa and Bihar.

The significance of Utkal Diwas:

- For Odisha, Utkal Diwas is more than just a commemoration of statehood; it's also a tribute to the state's vibrant culture and rich history that have endured over time.

- The occasion offers a chance to showcase Odisha's unique identity and its people,
- showcasing their traditions, creative expressions, delectable cuisine, and way of life.

Historical Significance:

- The inception of Utkal Diwas dates back to the early 1900s, during which the movement for the creation of an independent state for the Odia-speaking people gained impetus.
- Odisha was finally formally created on April 1, 1936, which was a major step toward maintaining Odia culture and customs.
- Odisha became the first state to be established on linguistic grounds, having previously been a part of Bihar.
- Odisha is a state in eastern India that borders the Bay of Bengal.
- Cuttack was the capital city at first, but Bhubaneswar was named the new capital in 1948.

Honoring the Culinary Traditions of Odisha:

- On Utkal Diwas, Odisha's abundant culinary legacy is showcased.
- The traditional food of the state is well celebrated, having its roots in regional customs and farming methods.
- During the celebrations, many people eat popular foods including Pakhala Bhata, Dahi Baigana, Macha Ghanta, Rasabali, Chingudi Jhola, Dalma, Chhencheda, Khira Gaintha, and Badi Chura.

Brilliant Dance Forms:

- During Utkal Diwas, Odisha's rich legacy of classical and folk dances is clearly displayed. These dances are a form of cultural preservation as well as entertainment. Important dancing styles include of:
- Odissi: A classical dance style that has its roots in the temples of Odisha, it's renowned for its elegant gestures and portrayal of Hindu mythology.
- Gotipua: A traditional dance with elements of Odissi that is performed by young boys dressed as women.
- Chhau: A type of martial arts dance that combines acrobatics, traditional dance, and martial arts. It frequently represents themes from Hindu epics.
- Sambalpuri Folk Dance: Vibrant clothes and rhythmic footwork characterize these colorful folk dances from western Odisha.
- Ghumura Dance: A traditional dance from the Kalahandi district, it moves that are synchronised to the beat of portable drums.

5. Kathia Gehu of Bundelkhand received the first GI tag for agricultural produce (April 4, 2024)

Kathiya Gehu, an indigenous wheat variety from the Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh, has been given the Geographical Indication (GI) tag, the first such recognition for an agricultural produce in the region.

An Overview of the News

Certification Process:

- Application for GI certification filed by Kathiya Gehu Bangra Producer Company Limited in January 2022 with the support of NABARD and technical guidance of Padma Shri Rajnikant Rai.
- After a two-year process, the GI tag was issued with certificate number 585 on 30 March 2024.

Importance of GI Tag:

- An important achievement for the Bundelkhand region is to have the first GI tag for any agricultural produce in the region.
- The GI tag will promote Kathiya Gehu as an indigenous brand of wheat, known for its protein richness and ability to thrive with minimal irrigation.

Features of Kathiya Gehu:

- Kathiya Gehu, also known as durum wheat, is prevalent in this region.
- Nutrition-rich and gluten-free, making it a healthy option.
- Adaptable to harsh climatic conditions and requires minimum water for cultivation.

Impact on farmers:

- Confirmation of GI tag will increase the brand value of Kathia wheat, which will benefit the farmers of the area.
- The collaboration between RLBCAU and ICARDA aims to research and develop improved seed varieties for improving Kathiya wheat production.

6. Rajasthan celebrated its 75th anniversary on 30 March 2024 (April 1, 2024)

On March 30, Rajasthan celebrated the 75th anniversary of its formation in 1949 by merging 19 princely states and 3 states. This momentous occasion marked the end of an eight-and-a-half-year process.

An Overview of the News:

- Before 1949, the region was known as 'Rajputana'.
- After the princely states were merged, the territory was renamed "Rajasthan," which is currently acknowledged as the largest state in terms of area in India and is well-known for its rich historical background.

The day's historical context:

- On January 14, 1949, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel declared the union of princely states, which included Jaipur, Bikaner, Jodhpur, and Jaisalmer.
- On March 30, 1949, Rajasthan Day was established and Greater Rajasthan was formally inaugurated in Jaipur.
- Historians believe Colonel James Tod was the one who first named the region "Rajasthan," but George Thomas claimed the name Rajputana in 1800 AD.
- The province where kings lived was referred to in the local literary language as "Rajasthan."
- Princely States and Mergers: When Rajasthan gained its independence, it was divided into 22 princely states, 19 of which were headed by monarchs and 3 by chiefs.
- In addition, British rule extended to the province of Ajmer-Merwara. From March 18, 1948, until November 1, 1956, there were seven phases to the merger process.

Government Intervention:

- On November 1, 1956, the States Reorganization Commission, led by Afzal Ali, recommended that the provinces of Ajmer and Merwara be merged with Rajasthan.
- Capital Designation: On September 7, 1949, the Government of India named Jaipur the capital of Rajasthan, on the recommendation of the Satyanarayana Rao Committee.
- Territorial Changes: As a result of the merger, Sironj village in the Jhalawar district was absorbed into Madhya Pradesh, and Suneltappa village in the Mandsaur tehsil of Madhya Pradesh became a part of Rajasthan.

7. World's first Om-shaped Temple Inaugurated in Rajasthan (March 29, 2024)

The world's first temple in the shape of the iconic Om symbol was inaugurated in Jadan village of Pali district of Rajasthan.

An Overview of the News

- The construction of this temple started about thirty years ago, the foundation stone of which was laid in 1995.
- The shape of the temple mimics the sacred Om symbol, the first of its kind globally.

Structural Features

- More than 400 people are working on this project spread over 250 acres.
- It has 1,008 idols of Lord Mahadev and 12 Jyotirlingas.
- It is supported by 2,000 pillars at a height of 135 feet.
- Its complex comprises 108 rooms.

- The central center is the Samadhi of Guru Madhavanand Ji.
- At the apex of the temple lies a sanctum embellished with a shivling made from a rhinestone obtained from the Bansi hill of Dholpur.
- A huge tank with a capacity of 2 lakh tonnes has been built beneath the temple complex.

Accessibility

- Jadan village is located on National Highway 62, about 71 km from Jodhpur Airport.
- For easy accessibility, travelers can reach Marwar Junction via trains from Delhi to Ahmedabad.

Architectural Style

- Follows the Nagar style prevalent in North India.
- A huge layout with the Om symbol is spread over a radius of about half a kilometer.

About Rajasthan

Chief Minister - Bhajan Lal Sharma

Capital - Jaipur (Executive Branch)

Governor - Kalraj Mishra

8. Election Commission launches 'Mission 414' in Himachal Pradesh (March 22, 2024)

The Election Commission launched "Mission 414" to increase the voting percentage at 414 polling stations in Himachal Pradesh.

An Overview of the News

- A special campaign "Mission 414" was launched by the Election Commission to increase the voting percentage in 414 polling stations which had less than 60% voting during the last Lok Sabha elections in Himachal Pradesh.

Objectives and Strategies:

- Organizing awareness campaigns and cultural programs.
- Designating the identified centers as model polling centers.
- Including booth youth icons and distributing special invitation cards to prospective voters.
- Targeted Intervention:
 - Initiative to increase voting in 22 assembly constituencies with less than 70% voting.

- To implement door-to-door outreach programs to motivate voters.

- Focus on women voters:

- To appoint 'Women Motivators' in Gram Panchayats to encourage women to vote.
- To involve women icons and campus ambassadors to reach out to working women and housewives.

Election Management Measures:

- Enhanced Polling Station Observation:

- The number of polling stations has been increased to 7,990, of which 150 will be exclusively monitored by women officers.
- Allotting 54 stations to young officers and 29 stations to disabled officers.

- Special Voter Features:

- To provide home voting facilities for PwD voters and people above 85 years of age.
- Serving 56,320 disabled voters and 60,995 voters above 85 years of age in the state.

Voter Demographics and Projections:

- Demographic statistics:

- Total eligible voters: 56,38,422, including men, women and persons of third gender.
- Notable demographics include 1,38,918 first-time voters and 10,40,756 voters in the 20-29 age group.

- Expected increase in young voters:

- An increase in young voters is expected as advance applications are being received from 17-year-olds up to 18-year-olds.

Electoral Rules:

- Expenditure Limits:

- Rs 95 lakh for Lok Sabha elections and Rs 40 lakh for assembly by-elections.

Unique Polling Station:

- Extreme Location:

- Tashigang polling station in Lahaul and Spiti, situated at an altitude of 15,256 feet, is the highest in the country.

Voter Distribution:

- Dalhousie's Manola polling station has the highest number of voters (1,410), while Kinnaur's Kaa polling station has the least (16 voters).

9. Uttar Pradesh Police Unveils Trinetra App 2.0 for Enhanced Crime Investigation (March 20, 2024)

In March 2024, Uttar Pradesh Police introduced the advanced digital platform Trinetra App 2.0 to enhance crime investigation and tackle criminal activities.

An Overview of the News

- Trinetra App 2.0, aimed at crime prevention and investigation, was officially launched by Uttar Pradesh DGP Prashant Kumar and ADG Law and Order Amitabh Yash at the DGP Headquarters.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) solutions company Stack Technologies, in collaboration with UP Government and Special Task Force, unveiled AI-powered Crime GPT Trinetra 2.0.
- The primary objective behind the launch of Trinetra 2.0 Crime GPT is to strengthen security measures and facilitate cracking down on criminals by leveraging AI solutions.

Trinetra 2.0:

- Crime GPT Trinetra 2.0 uses both written and audio input to extract criminal databases and generate results accordingly, enabling quick access to critical information.
- The application includes functionalities like criminal gang analysis, voice recognition, facial recognition, etc. which streamline the process of tracking criminals.
- Trinetra 2.0 Crime GPT significantly contributes to strengthening the security infrastructure and assists in the creation of the digital criminal database.

Co-founder and CEO of Stack Technology - Atul Rai

10. Governor C. P. Radhakrishnan assumes charge as Governor of Telangana (March 20, 2024)

Jharkhand Governor C P Radhakrishnan takes charge as the Governor of Telangana.

An Overview of the News

- After the resignation of Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan, President Draupadi Murmu has handed over the additional responsibility of looking after Telangana to Governor Radhakrishnan.
- Additionally, Governor Radhakrishnan has been assigned the task of acting as the Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry.
- The official swearing-in ceremony took place at the Raj Bhavan in Hyderabad, with Chief Justice of the State High Court, Justice Alok Aradhe administering the oath.

About Telangana

Capital - Hyderabad

Chief Minister - Revanth Reddy

Established - 2 June 2014