



3 July, 2024

Mudras of Buddha

Context: In his inaugural speech as Leader of the Opposition in Parliament on Monday, Rahul Gandhi referenced a unifying theme across religions and specifically mentioned the 'abhaya mudra'.

➤ Dharmachakra Mudra

- **Meaning:** "Wheel of Dharma" in Sanskrit.
- **Symbolism:** Represents Buddha's first sermon at Sarnath, symbolizing the setting in motion of the Wheel of Dharma.
- **Gesture:** Thumb and index fingers of both hands touch to form a circle.
- **Representation:** Displayed by the first Dhyani Buddha, Vairochana.
- **Significance:** Represents the Buddha's teachings and the path to enlightenment.

➤ Bhumisparsha Mudra

- **Meaning:** "Touching the Earth" or "Earth Witness" mudra.
- **Symbolism:** Commemorates Buddha's enlightenment under the bodhi tree, calling the earth goddess to witness his attainment.
- **Gesture:** Right hand touches the ground with fingers extended, left hand in the dhyana mudra (meditation posture).
- **Representation:** Displayed by the second Dhyani Buddha, Akshobhya.
- **Significance:** Symbolizes overcoming obstacles and reaching enlightenment.

➤ Varada Mudra

- **Meaning:** "Gesture of Charity" or "Boon-granting" mudra.
- **Symbolism:** Represents the gesture of granting wishes and offering compassion.
- **Gesture:** Left hand hangs naturally with palm facing forward and fingers extended.
- **Representation:** Displayed by the third Dhyani Buddha, Ratnasambhava.
- **Significance:** Symbolizes generosity, morality, patience, effort, and meditative concentration.

➤ Dhyana Mudra

- **Meaning:** "Meditation Mudra" or "Gesture of Meditation".
- **Symbolism:** Represents concentration, meditation, and spiritual perfection.
- **Gesture:** Hands are placed at the level of the stomach or on the thighs, palms facing upwards with fingers extended.
- **Representation:** Displayed by the fourth Dhyani Buddha, Amitabha.
- **Significance:** Symbolizes the attainment of spiritual insight and the union of method (right hand) and wisdom (left hand).

➤ Abhaya Mudra

- **Meaning:** "Gesture of Fearlessness".
- **Symbolism:** Represents protection, peace, and dispelling of fear.
- **Gesture:** Right hand raised to shoulder height, palm facing outward with fingers upright and joined; left hand hangs down at the side.
- **Representation:** Displayed by the fifth Dhyani Buddha, Amoghasiddhi.
- **Significance:** Symbolizes overcoming fear and promoting benevolence and fearlessness.

➤ Vajra Mudra

- **Meaning:** "Thunderbolt Gesture".
- **Symbolism:** Symbolizes the five elements (air, water, fire, earth, and metal) and spiritual power.
- **Gesture:** Right fist with the index finger extended, encircling the erect forefinger of the left hand.
- **Significance:** Represents strength, firmness, and the indestructible nature of Vajrayana teachings.

➤ Vitarka Mudra

- **Meaning:** "Gesture of Discussion" or "Teaching Gesture".
- **Symbolism:** Represents intellectual argument and discussion of Buddhist teachings.
- **Gesture:** Tips of the thumb and index finger touch to form a circle, other fingers extended.
- **Significance:** Symbolizes the transmission of knowledge and wisdom.

➤ Jñāna Mudra

- **Meaning:** "Gesture of Wisdom" or "Gesture of Knowledge".
- **Symbolism:** Represents spiritual enlightenment and the circle of perfection.
- **Gesture:** Thumb and index finger touch to form a circle, palm facing inward towards the heart.
- **Significance:** Symbolizes inner wisdom and the realization of the ultimate truth.

➤ Karana Mudra

- **Meaning:** "Gesture of Expelling Demons" or "Gesture of Warding Off Evil".
- **Symbolism:** Used to remove obstacles and negativity.
- **Gesture:** Index and little fingers raised, other fingers folded.
- **Significance:** Represents protection and purification from negative influences.

➤ Uttarabodhi Mudra

- **Meaning:** "Gesture of Supreme Enlightenment".
- **Symbolism:** Represents the attainment of supreme enlightenment and connection with universal energy.
- **Gesture:** Hands clasped together at the heart level, index fingers pointing upwards and intertwined.

Face to Face Centres



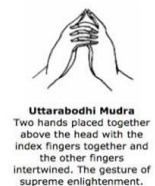
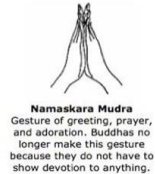
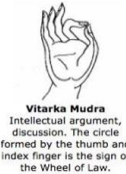
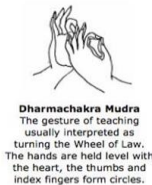
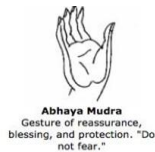
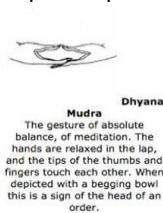
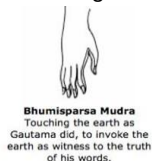


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- **Significance:** Symbolizes spiritual achievement and union with the divine.

➤ Anjali Mudra

- **Meaning:** "Gesture of Greeting" or "Prayer Gesture".
- **Symbolism:** Represents respect, gratitude, and adoration.
- **Gesture:** Palms pressed together at the heart chakra, thumbs touching the sternum.
- **Significance:** Symbolizes unity and reverence in greetings, prayers, and spiritual practices.



Rationalising regulations on export, import transactions

Context: On July 2, the RBI proposed streamlining regulations governing export and import transactions to boost business ease and enhance banks' efficiency in serving foreign exchange customers.

➤ Draft Regulations and Directions under FEMA, 1999

- **Export Declaration Requirement:** Exporters must submit a declaration to specified authorities, detailing the full export value of goods or services.
- **Realisation and Repatriation Timeline:** The full export value must be realised and repatriated to India within nine months from the shipment date for goods and invoice date for services.
- **Caution Listing for Non-compliance:** Exporters failing to meet the repatriation deadline may be caution listed by authorised dealers.
- **Trading Restrictions for Caution-listed Exporters:** Caution-listed exporters can only export upon receipt of full advance payment or an irrecoverable letter of credit, satisfying authorised dealers.

- **Import Restrictions on Gold and Silver:** Advance remittance for gold and silver imports requires specific approval from the RBI.

• Objectives of the Proposed Regulations:

- Facilitate ease of doing business, particularly for small exporters and importers.
- Enable Authorised Dealer banks to deliver faster and more efficient services to foreign exchange customers.

➤ Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999

- **Introduction and Background**
 - FEMA replaced FERA in 2000, reflecting India's economic liberalisation.
 - Its primary aim is to facilitate external trade and payments, ensuring orderly development of India's foreign exchange market.
- **Scope and Provisions**
 - FEMA governs procedures, formalities, and transactions involving foreign exchange in India.
 - It covers acquisition, holding, payment, settlement, export, and import of currency, among other activities.
 - The RBI is authorized to frame rules to enforce the act, treating violations as civil offences.
- **Enforcement and Penalties**
 - The Enforcement Directorate in Delhi oversees FEMA's enforcement.
 - Violations can lead to penalties and fines.
- **Applicability**
 - Applies nationwide and extends to Indian agencies abroad.
 - Pertains to foreign exchange, securities, exports, imports, banking, financial, insurance services, and more.
 - Includes overseas companies owned by NRIs and Indian citizens, whether residing in India or abroad.
- **Role of RBI and Authorized Persons**
 - RBI manages foreign exchange through authorized entities such as dealers, money changers, and offshore banking units.
 - These authorized persons facilitate foreign exchange transactions under RBI supervision.

'Zero hunger' now in reverse

Context: A report released on July 2, 2024, shows that around 30% of the world's population suffers from food insecurity, and 42% cannot afford a healthy diet.

➤ Global Food Security Challenges and Projections

- Around 600 million people are forecasted to face hunger by 2030.
- The 'zero hunger' goal appears increasingly distant due to ongoing global challenges.

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➤ **Impact of Global Events on Food Systems**

- The pandemic, Russia-Ukraine conflict, and climate crises have severely affected global food systems.
- These events have exposed vulnerabilities and highlighted the lack of resilience in the current food supply chains.

➤ **UN Review and Sustainable Development Goals**

- The United Nations will assess progress on Sustainable Development Goal 2 during the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development from July 8 to 17, 2024.
- Progress towards achieving food security, improved nutrition, and sustainable agriculture has stalled.

➤ **Findings on Food Security**

- Corporate-controlled food supply chains have shown vulnerability to disruptions and market volatility.

- Small-scale, local food supply chains have proven more resilient and equitable, offering diverse, nutritious food options.

➤ **Benefits of Localized Food Systems**

- Local food webs, including public markets, cooperatives, and urban agriculture, support communities with nutritious and affordable food.
- These systems demonstrate high resilience and adaptability to global shocks and disruptions.

➤ **Recommendations for Governments**

- Redirect public procurement to support sustainable small-scale producers.
- Shift subsidies towards infrastructure that strengthens 'territorial markets.'
- Protect local markets from corporate dominance and promote sustainable farming practices.
- Encourage diverse diets and biodiversity conservation through policy interventions.

NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

Chief Justice of India



Recently, Chief Justice of India D. Y Chandrachud highlighted justice and equality as core judiciary values at the Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony for three Court buildings at Karkardooma.

About the Chief Justice of India:

- The Chief Justice of India is the **head of the judiciary in India** and the Supreme Court of India.
- He/she also serves as the **Chief Administrative Officer** of the judicial system.
- The Chief Justice of India and the Judges of the Supreme Court are **appointed by the President under clause (2) of Article 124** of the Constitution.
- The Chief Justice of India can be **removed by an order of the President** following an address by Parliament, supported **by a special majority in each House**.
- The CJI **should be a citizen of India** and must have been a **High Court judge for at least five years**, an advocate of a High Court for at **least ten years** or deemed a distinguished **jurist by the President**.
- He/she plays a key role in the administration of justice, including **assigning cases** and **constituting benches**.
- The tenure of the Chief Justice of India (CJI) is until he/she reach the **age of 65**.
- The first Chief Justice of India was **Harilal Jekisundas Kania**, who served from 1950 to 1951.

UNESCO



The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) issued a stark warning, stating that a staggering 90 per cent of the planet's land surface could be degraded by 2050.

About UNESCO:

- UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), is a **specialized agency of the United Nations**.
- It was **established on 16th November 1945** with the aim of **promoting peace** and security through international cooperation in **education, science, culture** and **communication**.
- The **first session** of the General Conference of UNESCO was held in Paris during **November-December of 1946**.
- It **administers the World Heritage Programme**, which identifies and **protects cultural and natural heritage sites** of outstanding universal value.
- UNESCO has **193 Members** and **11 Associate Members** (as of April 2020) and is run by the General Conference and Executive Board.
- Some UNESCO members aren't part of the UN, like **Cook Islands, Niue, and Palestine**, while some UN members, like **Israel, Liechtenstein** and the **United States**, aren't UNESCO members.
- Its headquarter is located in **Paris, France**.

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LOFAR



Recently, the astronomers have discovered a new radio galaxy using the LOW-Frequency ARray (LOFAR).

About LOFAR:

- LOFAR (Low-Frequency ARray) is a **radio telescope** that operates in the **10–240 MHz frequency range**.
- It is **made up of an array of dipole antennas** spread across **Europe** and the **Netherlands** and is the **world's largest** distributed radio telescope.
- Its main **purpose is to study astronomy at low radio frequencies** and it's designed to open up the **lowest frequency radio** regime for a wide range of astrophysical research.
- LOFAR's stations are categorized as **core**, **remote** or international depending on how far they are from the array's center.
- The stations send signals to a central processing unit using high-speed internet connections.
- It has **38 stations in the Netherlands**, **6 in Germany**, **3 in Poland** and **1 each in France**, the **UK**, **Sweden**, **Ireland** and **Latvia**.
- It was officially opened by **Queen Beatrix** of the Netherlands in **2010**, and regular observations began in December **2012**.

Araku Coffee



Recently, the Prime Minister of India praised 'Araku' coffee in his 'Maan Ki Baat' address, and highlighted its unique flavor.

About the Araku Coffee:

- Araku Coffee is **grown in the Araku Valley**, located in the Eastern Ghats of **Andhra Pradesh** and the state of **Odisha**.
- It is **cultivated by tribal farmers** using organic and sustainable agricultural practices.
- This coffee is known for its **rich aroma** and distinctive **flavor profile**, often described as smooth with notes of **chocolate** and **fruit**.
- It was accredited with the Geographical Indication (**GI**) tag in **2019**.
- The weather in the valley, characterized by **hot days** and **cold nights**, combined with the **iron-rich soil**, enables the coffee to ripen slowly, resulting in aromatic richness and enhanced taste.
- This coffee is produced with use of **green manuring**, **organic manures** and **organic pest**.

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease



Recently, in Japan, the number of hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD) infections has exceeded the warning level nationwide for the first time in nearly five years.

About the Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease:

- Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD) is a **viral illness** that **causes blisters and rashes** on the hands, feet and mouth, and sometimes in the diaper area, genitals and buttocks.
- It is **usually caused by coxsackievirus A16**, a type of enterovirus.
- It is **very contagious** and can **spread through unwashed hands, saliva, mucus, feces** and fluid from blisters.
- It is **most common in children under 5 years** old, but anyone can get it.
- Symptoms of this disease include **fever**, **painful red blisters** in the **mouth** and **throat**, skin rash on the hands and feet and spots that can turn into blisters.

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Place in News

Bahrain

Recently, the Indian Embassy in Bahrain inaugurated Odisha State Tourism and One District One Product (ODOP) walls in its Consular hall to promote Indian cultural diversity and regional products, with members of the Odiya community in attendance.

Bahrain (Capital: Manama)

Location: Bahrain, officially known as the Kingdom of Bahrain, is an **island country** in **West Asia**.

Boundaries: Bahrain shares maritime borders with **Qatar** (Southeast) and with Saudi Arabia (West).

Physical Features:

- The highest point in Bahrain is **Jebel Dukhan**, also known as the Mountain of Smoke.
- Bahrain has limited natural mineral resources, with some deposits of **oil** and **natural gas** being the most significant.
- Bahrain has a **desert climate** characterized by hot summers and mild winters.

Membership: Bahrain is a member of several international organizations, including the **United Nations** (UN), **Gulf Cooperation Council** (GCC) and the **Arab League**.



POINTS TO PONDER

- Where is Minamitorishima Island located? – **Pacific Ocean**
- Which state government recently launched the 'Mukhyamantri Kisan Samman Nidhi' scheme? – **Rajasthan**
- What is Amoebic Meningoencephalitis (PAM)? – **A rare, usually fatal infection of the central nervous system**
- Which country recently became the first to prepare a checklist of its entire fauna? – **India**
- Which team won the 9th ICC Men's T20 World Cup by defeating South Africa? – **India**

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