

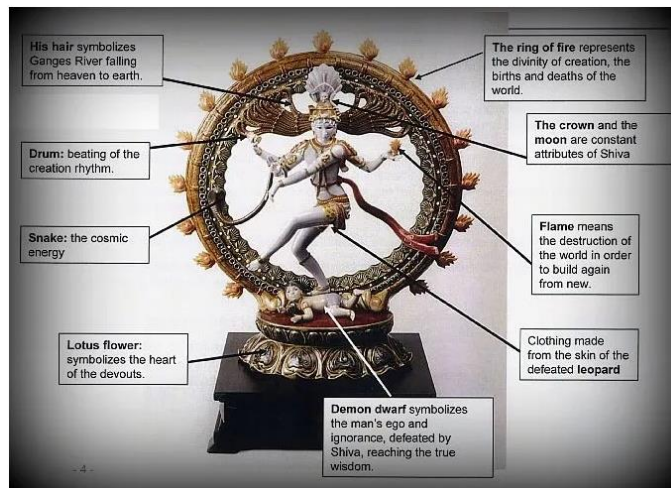
7 September, 2023

Chola Sculpture and Architecture

Context: A Nataraja Statue is placed in front of the Bharat Mandapam where the G20 meeting is to take place.

About Nataraja

- Nataraja, the cosmic dancer, is an embodiment of Lord Shiva and is found in metal or stone sculptures in Shaivite temples, particularly in South India.
- It is a significant piece of Chola sculpture.
- Nataraja's upper right hand holds a drum symbolizing the sound of creation, originating from the damru's sound.
- The upper left hand holds eternal fire, representing destruction, the counterpart of creation.
- The lower right hand is in Abhaya mudra, signifying blessings and dispelling fear.
- The lower left hand points to the upraised foot, indicating the path to salvation.
- Shiva dances on a dwarf symbolizing ignorance and ego.
- Shiva symbolizes the source of all cosmic movement and performs the doomsday dance, represented by arching flames during the universe's dissolution.
- His matted hair represents the flow of the river Ganges.
- Unique ornamentation includes a male earring in one ear and a female earring in the other, symbolizing the fusion of male and female aspects, known as Ardhanarishvara.



Chola Sculptures

- The Brihadisvara temple in Tanjavur showcases mature Chola temple sculpture with gracefully modeled figures and delicate ornamentation.
- Chola art had a wide-reaching influence, even reaching places like Java and Sumatra.
- An example of Chola craftsmanship from the 11th century depicts Lord Shiva in a fierce dance after defeating an elephant demon.
- In the 13th century, Chola art continued to evolve, featuring sculptures of Bhudevi, the earth goddess, as the younger consort of Vishnu.

Chola Architecture

- Cholas patronized numerous temples, including the royal temples of Thanjavur, Gangaikonda Cholaपुरam, and Darasuram.
- These temples house Dancing Woman, Brihadishvarar temple architecture, sculpture, paintings, and Chola arts iconography.
- Temples became centers for social, economic, cultural, and political activities.
- Temple paraphernalia included officials, dancers, musicians, singers, and priests, reflecting the royal court.
- Early Chola temples were architecturally simple, with sepulchral temples built for kings' burials.
- Brihadeeshvarar Temple in Thanjavur is a magnificent example of Chola architecture with a 190-foot vimana.
- Fresco paintings and miniature sculptures in the temple depict scenes from puranas and epics.
- Gangaikonda Chozhapuram, built by Rajendra I, commemorates his North India victory and features sculptures of various deities.
- Darasuram Temple, built by Rajaraja II, showcases miniatures depicting incidents from Periyapuram on its sanctum's wall.

Battery Energy Storage System

Context: The Cabinet has given approval for Viability Gap Funding aimed at the development of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS).

- The Union Cabinet has approved the "Scheme for Viability Gap Funding (VGF) for development of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)."
- The scheme aims to develop 4,000 MWh of BESS projects by 2030-31 through competitive bidding.
- It offers up to 40% financial support of the capital cost as budgetary support through VGF.
- The scheme is designed to reduce storage costs for distribution companies and consumers.
- The initial outlay for the scheme is Rs. 9,400 crore, with a budgetary support of Rs. 3,760 crore.

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- It targets achieving a Levelized Cost of Storage (LCoS) ranging from Rs. 5.50-6.60 per kWh, making stored renewable energy a viable option.
- The VGF will be disbursed in five tranches linked with BESS project implementation stages.
- At least 85% of BESS project capacity will be available to Distribution Companies (Discoms) to enhance renewable energy integration and reduce wastage.
- BESS developers will be selected through a competitive bidding process, promoting competition and investment.
- The scheme aligns with the government's commitment to clean and green energy solutions.

BESS

- These systems are designed to store energy generated from renewable sources like solar and wind.
- BESS allows for the efficient storage and release of this energy, aligning it with electricity demand.
- Lithium-ion batteries are a dominant technology used in BESS for large-scale applications.
- BESS plays a vital role in ensuring a reliable supply of renewable energy to the electricity grid and balancing energy supply with demand.
- **Working:**
 - **Charging with Renewable Energy:** They store energy generated from sources like wind and solar power.
 - **Intelligent Software:** Advanced algorithms manage energy production and decide when to charge and discharge.
 - **Computerized Control:** Control systems make decisions based on electricity demand and grid conditions.
 - **Peak Demand Management:** BESS releases stored energy during high-demand periods, reducing costs.
 - **Cost Efficiency:** It optimizes energy supply, reducing the need for expensive energy sources.
 - **Domestic Use:** Similar principles apply to home energy storage systems, enabling efficient use of renewable energy.

India-ASEAN Relations

Context: The 20th ASEAN-India Summit is being held in Jakarta. In pretext of this, let's look into India-ASEAN relations.

- **Economic Cooperation:**
 - ASEAN is India's 4th largest trading partner.
 - India has Free Trade Agreements (FTA) with ASEAN for goods (2009) and services/investments (2014).
 - CECA promotes concessional trade and increased investments.
 - Commodity trade reached USD 98.39 billion in 2021-22.
 - Key partners: Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand.
- **Political Cooperation:**
 - ASEAN-India Centre (AIC) promotes research and networking.
 - Financial Assistance:
 - India provides aid through ASEAN-India Cooperation Fund, S&T Development Fund, and Green Fund.
- **Connectivity:**
 - Projects include India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway and Kaladan Multimodal Project.
 - Plans: Maritime Transportation Agreement and New Delhi to Hanoi railway link.
- **Defence Cooperation:**
 - India and ASEAN conduct joint naval and military exercises.
 - ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise planned for 2023.
 - 'Watershed' military exercise held in 2016.
 - Vietnam and Singapore are key defense partners.



ASEAN

- ASEAN, a regional alliance, emphasizes economic, political, and security cooperation.
- It was established in August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, through the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) by its founding members: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.
- The chairmanship of ASEAN rotates annually, following the alphabetical order of the English names of its member states.

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- ASEAN collectively comprises a population of 650 million people and a combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) amounting to USD 2.8 trillion.
- **Members:** Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- **Free Trade Agreements:** Australia, China, India, Japan, Korea and New Zealand
- **Dialogue Partners:** Australia, Canada, China, European Union, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Russia, and the United States
- **Observers:** Papua New Guinea and Timor Leste (East Timor)

NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

Fujianvenator Prodigiosus



What is Fujianvenator Prodigiosus?

Fujianvenator prodigiosus, a dinosaur with bird-like features, existed approximately 148 to 150 million years ago during the Jurassic Period in southeastern China.

Puzzling Anatomy: This dinosaur displayed unique features, such as elongated legs, arms reminiscent of wings, and a combination of skeletal characteristics, suggesting it was either a fast runner or had a lifestyle resembling modern wading birds.

Significance in Avian Evolution: The discovery of Fujianvenator sheds light on a crucial stage in the evolution of birds, providing insights into the transition from feathered theropod dinosaurs to birds.

Geological Era: Fujianvenator prodigiosus lived 148-150 million years ago during the Jurassic Period in southeastern China.

Distinct Features: Fujianvenator's fossil is relatively complete but lacks the skull and parts of its feet. It featured a tibia twice as long as its femur and wing-like forelimbs with three clawed fingers.

Lake Baringo



Location: Lake Baringo is situated in Kenya's Rift Valley. It is one of the largest freshwater lakes in Kenya.

Size and Depth: It spans 11 miles in length, 5 miles in width, with an average depth of 17 feet.

Rift Valley Lakes: Lake Baringo is one of two major freshwater lakes in the Rift Valley, the other being Lake Naivasha.

Name Origin: The lake's name is derived from the local word "mparingo," which translates to "lake."

Drainage Basin: It is one of seven inland drainage lakes within the Rift Valley drainage basin.

Water Sources: The lake is fed by various rivers, including the Molo, Perkerra, and Ol Arabel. It lacks a distinct outlet, and water is believed to seep through lake sediments into the volcanic bedrock.

Antacid Syrup



Recently, Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has alerted healthcare professionals, consumers, and others to the voluntary recall of antacid syrup Digene Gel by Abbott India at its Goa facility.

Antacid Syrup: Antacid syrup is a pharmaceutical product used to relieve acidity and related symptoms like heartburn, stomach discomfort, abdominal pain, and gas.

Common Use: It is commonly used to neutralize excess stomach acid and provide relief from discomfort caused by acid reflux and indigestion.

Ingredients: Antacid syrups typically contain alkaline compounds like aluminum hydroxide, magnesium hydroxide, or calcium carbonate, which neutralize gastric acid.

Over-the-Counter (OTC): Many antacid syrups are available over-the-counter, allowing consumers to purchase them without a prescription.

Temporary Relief: Antacid syrups provide temporary relief from symptoms but do not address the underlying causes of acid-related conditions.

Botanical Survey of India (BSI)



Establishment: Founded in 1890, BSI is a government organization under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

Mandate: BSI's core role is to survey, document and conserve India's plant biodiversity.

Taxonomy: It specializes in plant taxonomy, classifying and naming plant species.

Conservation: BSI works to conserve endangered plant species and their habitats.

Research: Conducts research, publishes scientific journals, and maintains a herbarium.

Collaboration: Collaborates with national and international institutions for botanical research.

Current Issue Correlation:

- BSI's discovery of Schizostachyum andamanicum led to a patent for a reusable bamboo straw, showcasing its role in identifying economic potential in India's plant biodiversity.
- The patent aligns with eco-friendly alternatives to plastic and supports local economic development.
- BSI's work contributes to biodiversity conservation and sustainable utilization of natural resources.

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India's Act East Policy



What is India's Act East Policy?

India's Act East Policy is a strategic and economic initiative aimed at enhancing engagement with countries in East and Southeast Asia.

Initiation: Launched in 2014, India's "Act East" policy focuses on bolstering economic, strategic and cultural ties with the Asia-Pacific region.

Objectives:

The objectives of India's "Act East" policy include fostering economic collaboration, strengthening cultural relations, creating development opportunities for India's North East States, and enhancing connectivity to the North Eastern Region.

Geographic Focus: Emphasis on Southeast and East Asia, using the North Eastern Region as a vital gateway.

Historical Context: Evolved from India's earlier "Look East" policy initiated in the 1990s, aiming to rekindle relations with the region.

ASEAN Engagement: India became a sectoral dialogue partner of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1992 and a full dialogue partner in 1996, highlighting commitment to regional engagement.

Place in News

Cuba

Cuba: (Capital: Havana)

Recently, the Cuban Foreign Ministry has reported the discovery of a human trafficking ring that has been recruiting Cubans to participate in the war in Ukraine on behalf of Russia.

Political Boundaries: Neighboring countries include Haiti, Jamaica, Bahamas archipelago and the United States to the north across the Straits of Florida.

Geographical Features:

- Cuba is the largest island in the Caribbean Sea.
- It forms a significant part of the Antilles (West Indies) island chain.
- It is located just south of the Tropic of Cancer, at the intersection of the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea.

Major River: Cauto.

Highest Peak: Turquino Peak.



POINTS TO PONDER

- ❖ What is the original and present name of the former British colony in Africa known for its gold supplies? - Original Name: Gold Coast; Present Name: Ghana
- ❖ What is the present name of the country that was once known as Upper Volta? - Burkina Faso
- ❖ Name the smallest country in South America that was once called Dutch Guiana. - Suriname
- ❖ Which of India's neighbors was once known as Serendib? - Sri Lanka
- ❖ What is the present name of the group of tribal confederations to the south of the Persian Gulf, formerly known as the 'Trucial States'? - United Arab Emirates (UAE)

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