

Harvest Festival

❖ **Context**

➤ The Prime Minister has greeted the people on the occasion of Makar Sankranti.

About Harvest festival:

- Harvest festivals of Indian states **occur at the time of the** main harvest of the region.
- The **first yield of the new crop** is a cheerful time for farmers. It is a time for the celebration of the food grown.
- The farmers **indulge in fun and frolic**, and they are joined by the urban crowd as well, albeit in different ways.
- **Different regions** of the country celebrate their Harvest festival at various times throughout the year.
- Since India is a land of great biodiversity, **different states celebrate a large number of harvest festivals**.
- For a country largely dependent on agriculture, **harvest becomes one of the most important** events across the nation.
- **Lohri, Makar Sankranti, Baisakhi, Onam, Pongal** are some of them.
- Harvest festivals are not just about celebrating the ripe crops but **also an important astronomical change** going on in the solar system.



- They are considered to be **auspicious periods** and hence are marked with celebrations and prayers.

The Harvest Festival	States
Makar Sakranti	Gujarat, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Himachal, West Bengal, and Punjab
Baisakhi/ Vaisakhi	Punjab and Haryana
Ladakh Harvest Festival	Ladakh, Zaskar and Kargil
Lohri	Punjab
Bohang Bihu	Assam
Wangala	Assam and Meghalaya
Ka Pomblang Nongkrem	Meghalaya
Nuakhai	Orissa
Nabanna	West Bengal
Onam	Kerala
Pongal	Tamil Nadu
Vishu	Kerala and Karnataka
Gudi Padwa	Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh

National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)

❖ **Context**

➤ Four years since the Centre launched the **National Clean Air Campaign (NCAP)**, analysts found that progress has been slow and pollution only incrementally reduced in most cities.

NCAP

- The government launched the NCAP that committed funds as well as **set targets for 131 of India's most polluted cities** on January 10, 2019.
- **Non-attainment Cities**
 - The 131 cities are called non-attainment cities, as they did **not meet the national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS)** for the period of 2011-15 under the National Air Quality Monitoring Programme (NAMP).
 - Barring Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru and Kolkata, all the cities selected are tier 2 cities.
- It envisaged to provide the States and the Centre with a framework to combat air pollution.
- **Nodal Ministry**
 - Ministry of Environment.
- **Target Levels**
 - The country's current, annual average prescribed limits for the **two main classes of particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10)** are **40 micrograms/per cubic metre (ug/m3)** and **60 micrograms/per cubic metre**.
 - The NCAP initially set a target of reducing key air pollutants PM10 and PM2.5 **by 20-30% in 2024**, taking the pollution levels in 2017 as the base year to improve upon.
 - In **September 2022**, the Centre moved the goalposts and **set a new target of a 40% reduction in particulate matter concentration**, but by 2026.

- **Funding**
 - To meet these targets, approximately ₹6,897.06 crore has been disbursed to the cities by the government.
- **Implementation**
 - Central Pollution Control Board (**CPCB**) coordinates the programme.
 - Cities were required to quantify improvement starting from 2020-21, which requires 15% and more reduction in the annual average PM10 concentration and a concurrent increase in "good air" days to at least 200.
 - Anything fewer will be considered 'low' and the funding, provided by the Centre via the Environment Ministry, consequently reduced.
- **National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)**
 - National Ambient Air Quality Standards are the standards for ambient air quality set by the Central Pollution Control Board (**CPCB**).
 - The CPCB has been conferred this power by the **Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981**.
 - **Ambient Air Quality Standards contains 12 pollutants**. I.e. SO2, NO2, PM10, PM2.5, Ozone, Lead, Carbon monoxide (CO), Arsenic Nickel, Benzene, Ammonia, and Benzopyrene.

Face to Face Centres



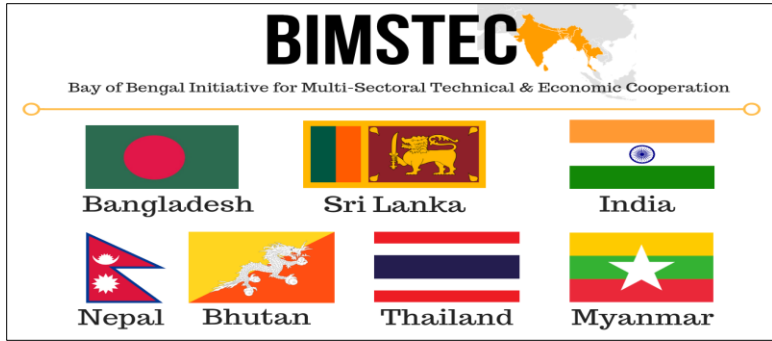
Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)

❖ Context

- Recently, a meeting of the BIMSTEC Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism & Transnational Crime started.

Key Highlights:

- This meeting is being hosted by the **Government of India in New Delhi.**
- **Participants-** Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand.
- The working group on counter terror deals with a few key realms of policy. These include “**six Sub-Groups on.**”
 - Intelligence Sharing.
 - Legal and Law Enforcement.
 - Countering Radicalization and Terrorism.
 - Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism.
 - Human Trafficking.
 - Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursor Chemicals.

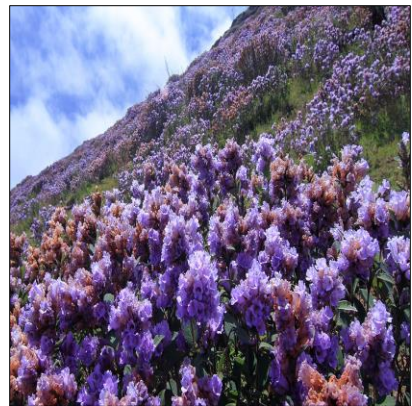


About BIMSTEC:

- BIMSTEC is an **economic bloc** that came into being on **6 June 1997** through the **Bangkok Declaration.**
- BIMSTEC is an international **organization of seven South Asian and Southeast Asian nations.**
- It is **housing 1.73 billion people** and having a combined **gross domestic product of \$3.8 trillion (2021).**
- **Members**
 - Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand.
 - Its members **lie in the littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal** constituting a contiguous regional unity.
- **Headquarter**
 - Dhaka.
- **Aims**
 - To **accelerate economic growth and social progress** among members across multiple sectors — trade, technology, energy, transport, tourism and fisheries, agriculture, public health, poverty alleviation, counter-terrorism, environment, culture, people to people contact and climate change.
- **Meetings**
 - The grouping holds **annual meetings** hosted by member states **based on alphabetical rotation.**

News in Between the Lines

Neelakurinji



Context

- Recently, The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF) has listed Neelakurinji under Schedule III of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, including it on the list of protected plants.

Key highlights:

- Those who uproot or destroy the plant will invite a fine of ₹25,000 and three years' imprisonment.
- The cultivation of Neelakurinji and its possession is not allowed.

Neelakurinji:

- **Scientific Name-** Strobilanthes kunthiana.
- The plant was endemic to a small stretch in the Western Ghats from the Mangaladevi hills to the Nilgiris hills.
- In the Western Ghats region, nearly 70 varieties of Neelakurinji plants have been identified.
- The most popular Neelakurinji is Strobilanthes kunthiana which blooms once in 12 years.
- **Distribution-** It is a shrub that is found in the **shola forests of the Western Ghats in Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.**
- **Dimension-** One can view the shorter variation (about 2 ft.) at higher spots and longer variations (about 5 to 10 ft.) are seen at lower spots.
- The **Paliyan tribal** people living in Tamil Nadu used it as a reference to calculate their age. This plant flowers during September–October.
- **Kurinjimala Sanctuary** protects the kurinji in approximately 32 km² core habitat in Idukki district of Kerala.
- The **Eravikulam National Park**, near Munnar, is known for widespread blooming of the kurinji, with the next flowering season expected in 2030.

Face to Face Centres



Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)



❖ Context

➤ Recently, The **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)** issued notices to e-commerce entities, Amazon, Flipkart and Snapdeal for sale of toys in violation to standards directed for compulsory use by the Central Government.

❖ Key Highlights:

- CCPA has expanded the country-wide campaign to prevent sale of spurious and counterfeit goods that violate Quality Control Orders (QCOs) published by the Central Government.
- It will include consumer durables such as electric immersion water heaters, electric iron, domestic gas stove, microwave oven, sewing machines etc.

❖ Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

- It is a regulatory authority set up under Section 10(1) of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.
- CCPA works under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs**.
- It was established to promote, protect and enforce the rights of consumers.
- **Function**
 - It deals with matters affecting rights of consumers by individuals or entities following improper trade practices or by display of inappropriate or wrong advertisements affecting public interest.
 - It helps promoting consumer trust by enforcing the rights of consumers through effective guidelines.
- **Composition**
 - It consists of the **following members** appointed by the Central Government.
 - Chief Commissioner.
 - Two Commissioners. One commissioner each will represent goods & services.
 - The CCPA will have an Investigation Wing that will be headed by a Director General.
 - **District Collectors will also have the power to investigate** complaints of violations of consumer rights, unfair trade practices, and false or misleading advertisements.

Maghi Mela



❖ Context

➤ This year, the festival **Maghi Mela was celebrated on January 14**.

❖ Key Highlights:

- Maghi Mela is held in the holy city of **Sri Muktsar Sahib** every year in January, or on the month of Magh according to the Nanakshahi calendar.
- It is one of the most important festivals for Sikhs.
- It has been celebrated for centuries in memory of 40 Sikh warriors were killed fighting the Mughals in the **Battle of Khidrana in 1705**.
- It was after this battle that Khidrana was named Muktsar, or the pool of liberation.
- Over the years, political conferences became the main attraction in this mela, and often set the political tone for the state.
- Since 2018, however, there have been attempts to reduce the number of conferences and de-politicise the festival.

Scientifically Validated Traditional Knowledge to the Society (SVASTIK)



❖ Context

➤ **1st Indian Architectural Heritage Sub-Committee Meeting for "Communicating India's Scientifically Validated Traditional Knowledge to the Society (SVASTIK)"**.

❖ Key Highlights:

- **As a part of the national initiative "Communicating India's Scientifically Validated Traditional Knowledge to the Society (SVASTIK)", CSIR-NIScPR hosted the first meeting** of the Indian Architectural Heritage sub-committee.
- Participants at the meeting proposed measures to **disseminate ancient practices related to housing, water distribution systems, and urban settlements**.
- The panelists suggested hosting a series of talks about India's architectural history. It was also suggested that **the Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge** might consider publishing a special issue on architectural heritage.
- **The committee recommended that SVASTIK stories** be shared with teachers and used in the classroom to disseminate traditional knowledge.
- It was suggested to **contact institutions working on traditional knowledge** and access their theses and dissertations to gather SVASTIK stories.

Face to Face Centres

Doppler Weather Radar Network



❖ Context

- On 148th Foundation Day of IMD union minister announced that-entire country will be covered by Doppler Weather Radar Network.

❖ Key Highlights:

- Entire Country will be covered by **Doppler Weather Radar Network by 2025** to predict extreme weather events more accurately.
- **IMD** has the legacy of maintaining weather and climate records and is monitoring & predicting the weather since its **inception 148 years ago on 15 January, 1875.**
- IMD has taken pro-active steps to increase the Radar Network from mere **15 in 2013 to 37 in 2023 and will add 25 more in next 2-3 years.**
- Union Minister also dedicated **4 Doppler Weather Radar Systems** to the Western Himalayan States of Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.
- **The web GIS services launched by IMD** have been augmented further with addition of hazard and vulnerability **element to initiate timely response action** to mitigate the disasters further.
- The Minister pointed out that the warning and **advisory services are helping farmers and fishermen to improve their economy** as found from a latest survey by National Centre for Applied Economic Research.
- **For example,** the investment in monsoon mission programme has resulted in **return of 50 rupees for investment of each one rupee.**

Geospatial Hackathon



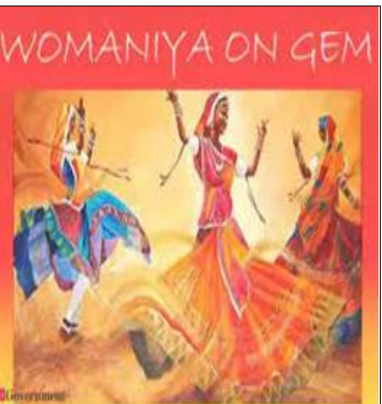
❖ Context

- **Union Minister launches “Geospatial Hackathon”** to promote Innovation and Start-Ups in India’s Geospatial ecosystem.

❖ Key Highlights:

- The Geospatial Hackathon **was planned and designed by** Ministry of Science and Technology, Survey of India, IIIT Hyderabad and Microsoft India.
- **The Hackathon** will promote Innovation and Start Ups in India’s Geospatial ecosystem.
- Indian Start-Up economy crossed a major milestone as it added **the 100th Indian Start-Up to the Unicorn club in 2022.**
- **India is on the cusp of Geospatial Revolution** and will boost up economic output and would help India becoming a **10 Trillion Dollar Economy by 2030.**
- “Geospatial Hackathon” will have **Two Sets of Challenges- Research Challenge and Start-up Challenge to find out 4 winners** for the Best Solutions to the Geospatial Select Problem Statements.

Womaniya on Government eMarketplace (GeM)



❖ Context

- GeM holds event to commemorate **success of Women entrepreneurs on GeM.**

❖ Key Highlights:

- The event was held by **GeM in partnership with Self-Employed Women’s Association, Bharat (SEWA Bharat).**
- **Launched in 2019, the “Womaniya” initiative** has sought to encourage the participation of women entrepreneurs and self-help groups (SHG).
- **The objective of “Womaniya”** is to develop women entrepreneurship on the margins of society who face challenges in accessing public procurement markets, and work towards achieving gender inclusive economic growth of under-served seller groups.
- “Womaniya” aligns with the Government’s initiative to set aside a **target of three (3) percent (%) in public procurement for women-owned and led MSEs.**
- The “Womaniya” initiative seeks to address **the triple challenge of “access to markets”, “access to finance” and “access to value-addition”** faced by women entrepreneur.