

1. Shondol Dance

Why in News?

- ▶▶ Ladakhi Shondol dance has recently created history by entering into the **Guinness Book Of World Records as the largest Ladakhi dance.**

About Shondol dance:

- ▶▶ The Shondol dance performance was performed on the concluding day of the annual week long Buddhist carnival **Naropa festival.**
- ▶▶ Shondol, which is known as the royal dance of Ladakh, is **performed by Takshoma** or women dancers to praise the King of Ladakh on the special occasion.
- ▶▶ It was performed near the 11th-century world-famous Hemis Monastery in Ladakh.

About Hemis Monastery:

- ▶▶ It is a Tibetan Buddhist monastery (gompa) of the Drukpa Lineage, in Hemis, Ladakh, India. It is situated on the West bank of river Indus. This monastery is famous for the annual festival of Guru Padmasambhava which is held in June-July.

2. BeiDou Navigation System

Why in News?

- ▶▶ Recently China has launched 2 new satellites that forms 47th and 48th satellite of the BeiDou Navigation System (BDS) family.

About BeiDou Navigation System:

- ▶▶ It was the Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) of China that was being projected by Beijing as a rival to the American Global Positioning System (GPS).
- ▶▶ It has been named after the Chinese term for Big Dipper, the BeiDou system started providing independent services over China in 2000.
- ▶▶ The full constellation is scheduled to comprise 35 satellites. BeiDou has two separate constellations, BeiDou-1 and BeiDou-2. BeiDou-1 also known as first generation was a constellation of three satellites. BeiDou-2, also known as COMPASS, is the second generation of the system. It became operational in the year 2011.

What are the various GNSS systems?

- ▶▶ The four global GNSS systems are – GPS (US), GLONASS (Russia), Galileo (EU), BeiDou (China). Additionally, there are two regional systems – QZSS (Japan) and IRNSS or NavIC (India).

3. Nataraja Idol

Why in News?

- ▶▶ The Nataraja idol which was repatriated from Australia recently was handed over to the authorities of the concerned temple in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu. The idol was stolen in the year 1982 and found to be in the custody of Australian museum last year.

About Nataraja Idol:

- ▶▶ The most magnificent image of Chola period in the bronze is Nataraja idol. It is Lord Shiva in his cosmic dance/ Tandav Dance form.
- ▶▶ In this dance, he creates and destroys the world. His dance is called Tandavam or Nadanta, depending on the context of the dance.
- ▶▶ It typically shows Shiva dancing in one of the Natya Shastra poses, holding Agni (fire) in his left back hand, the front hand in gajahasta (elephant hand) or dandahasta (stick hand) mudra, the front right hand with a wrapped snake that is in abhaya (fear not) mudra while pointing to a Sutra text, and the back hand holding a musical instrument, usually a damaru.

4. Marine Heatwaves

Why in News?

- ▶▶ Recently researchers have warned that coral reefs near Hawaiian Islands were under severe threat due to marine heatwave, which has caused widespread bleaching last year.

About Marine Heatwave:

- ▶▶ Marine heatwaves are prolonged periods of anomalously warm seawater temperatures that can have notable impacts on marine ecosystems. Marine heatwaves can occur both in summer and winter.
- ▶▶ They occur regionally throughout the global oceans, including marginal seas, continental shelves, and the open ocean. These anomalously warm events arise from local or remotely forced mechanisms related to atmosphere, climate, or ocean variability.
- ▶▶ Marine heatwaves have been associated with widespread mortality of species in marine ecosystems, major shifts in ecosystem structure, and fisheries closures and quota reductions.

5. International Day of Sign Languages

Why in News?

- ▶ International Day of Sign Languages was observed on 23rd September, 2019.

About:

- ▶ The UN General Assembly has proclaimed 23 September as the International Day of Sign Languages in order **to raise awareness of the importance of sign language in the full realization of the human rights of people who are deaf.**
- ▶ The **first International Day of Sign languages was celebrated in 2018** under the theme “With Sign Language, Everyone is Included!”
- ▶ This date was selected because this was the date when the World Federation of the Deaf was established in 1951.
- ▶ Sign languages are fully-fledged natural languages, structurally distinct from the spoken languages.
- ▶ **2019 Theme: Sign Language Rights for All**



Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC):

- ▶ It is an autonomous body under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- ▶ The Centre was established in 2015 and is located in New Delhi.
- ▶ The Centre carries out many activities for promoting the use of Indian Sign Language as the educational mode for deaf students at primary, secondary and higher education levels.
- ▶ It conducts diploma courses in Indian Sign Language Interpretation.

6. VAHAN Database

Why in News?

- ▶ The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has asked all PUC Centres to link emission test data with the VAHAN Database.

VAHAN Database:

- ▶ VAHAN is a digital national vehicle registry portal. It collates all the information available with road transport authorities for easy access by both citizens and regulators.

- ▶▶ The portal allows access to all details about vehicles such as registration number, colour, chassis/engine number, body/fuel type, manufacturer and model and provides various online services to citizens.
- ▶▶ Driving Licence and related information are automated through another application called 'Sarathi'.
- ▶▶ VAHAN offers the following services:
 - ❖ Vehicle registration (New/Renewal/Transfer, Etc.)
 - ❖ Permit (Issuance/Renewal)
 - ❖ Taxes (Calculation and Payment)
 - ❖ Fitness (Fitness Certificate issuance and Renewal)
 - ❖ Enforcement (Issue of challan, settlement of Penalty Amount)

7. UMMID and NIDAN Kendras

Why in News?

- ▶▶ The Union Health Minister has inaugurated the UMMID and NIDAN Kendras.

About UMMID:

- ▶▶ UMMID stands for **Unique Methods of Management and treatment of Inherited Disorders**.
- ▶▶ It has been launched to tackle inherited genetic diseases of new-born babies and pregnant women.
- ▶▶ The initiative aims to:
 - ❖ Produce skilled clinicians in human genetics.
 - ❖ Establish five NIDAN Kendras.
- ▶▶ It is supported by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) under the Ministry of Science and Technology.
- ▶▶ This was launched taking into account the fact that congenital and hereditary genetic diseases are becoming a great health burden in India. There is a need for adequate and effective genetic testing and counselling services.
- ▶▶ In India's urban areas, congenital malformations and genetic disorders are the third most common cause of mortality in new-borns.
- ▶▶ With a very large population and high birth rate, and consanguineous marriage (marriage among blood-relatives) favoured in many communities, the prevalence of genetic disorders is high in India.

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- ▶▶ The NIDAN Kendras will provide counselling, prenatal testing and diagnosis, management, and multidisciplinary care in government hospitals (where there are more patients). The Kendras will produce trained clinicians and also undertake screening of pregnant women and new-borns for inherited genetic diseases.

8. Cyclonic Storm 'HIKAA'

Why in News?

- ▶▶ A cyclonic storm named 'HIKAA' over the northeast and adjoining east-central Arabian Sea moves closely westwards.

Highlights:

- ▶▶ It is **Tropical cyclone** which is about 490 km **west-southwest of Veraval in Gujarat**.
- ▶▶ It is likely to intensify further and weaken gradually thereafter.
- ▶▶ It is very likely to move nearly westwards and cross the Oman coast during the early hours of 25th September as a deep depression.
- ▶▶ HIKAA has now been classified as a '**very severe storm**'.

