

2019



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CURRENT AFFAIRS

**INDIAN CULTURE AND
HISTORICAL EVENTS**

4th November- 9th November



BusinessLine



1. Tawang Festival

Why in News?

The 7th edition of the Tawang Festival concluded in Arunachal Pradesh. Tawang festival is a three day fest with varied traditional activities and events.

- The name Tawang came to the festival after the name of a hill station Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh.
- It celebrates Arunachal's rich cultural heritage, which includes Buddhist religious functions, traditional dances, indigenous sports, films and documentaries, food festivals.
- The major attractions in the festival are Dance of Yak, tribal participation with various dances and traditional monastic dances and **Aji-Lhamu dance**.
- Tawang hill station is home to several tribes and the **major tribal community** is **Monpas**.
- Tawang festival processions starts with a **religious tradition** known as **Sebang**.
 - It is a religious tradition in which the monks of Tawang town move to the festival spot in rallies from the Tawang monastery.

2. 550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji

Why in News?

12 November 2019, marks the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji - the founder of the Sikh religion. The occasion is celebrated as Gurupurab.

- Kartarpur corridor, across the international border between India and Pakistan has been built to commemorate the birth anniversary.

About Guru Nanak Dev

- Born in 1469, Guru Nanak Dev Ji is the first Guru of Sikhs.
- He advocated **nirguna bhakti i.e., worshipping a formless God** and universal brotherhood, love, humility, simplicity, equality and tolerance. His three important precepts are:
 - Contemplation of one god (**nam-japna**)
 - Earning one's livelihood (**kirat karna**)
 - Sharing one's earnings with others (**vand chhakna**)
- These principles act as a guide to live life with a high sense of purpose.
- He condemned the pretentious nature of religion with all its religious rites, ceremonies, sacrifices, pilgrimages, idol-worship and ascetic practices.
- Guru Nanak Dev initiated institutions like **Sangat** (*congregation*) and **Pangat** (*people sitting in row*) to vanquish institutionalised inequality and caste exclusiveness which continues to impact the social, religious, political and economic fabric of Indian society.
- He was succeeded by Guru Angad Dev.

Kartarpur Corridor

- India and Pakistan have signed a landmark agreement to operationalise the historic Kartarpur Corridor to allow Indian Sikh pilgrims to visit the holy Darbar Sahib in Pakistan.
- Daily 5000 Indian pilgrims will be allowed visa-free entry into Pakistan.
- Pilgrimages between India and Pakistan are governed by the 1974 Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines, which includes a list of shrines in Pakistan and India open for visitors from both countries.
- The Kartarpur Corridor connects the Darbar Sahib Gurdwara in Narowal district of Pakistan with the Dera Baba Nanak shrine in Gurdaspur district in India's Punjab province.
- The length of the corridor is about 4 km, 2 km on either side of the international border.

Darbar Sahib Gurdwara, Kartarpur

- It is one of the holiest places for Sikhs where Baba Guru Nanak Dev Ji settled and preached for the last 18 years of his life.
- The Gurdwara is on the bank of the Ravi, in Kartarpur, Pakistan.
- It was his last resting place.

3. Fall of the Berlin Wall

Why in News?

- November 9th, 2019 marks the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall.
- It was a fortified barrier that stood from 1961 to 1989 separating West Berlin from East Berlin.
 - Berlin Wall not only represented the division between East and West Germany, but it was a symbol of the cold war separating the East and the West as a whole.

The Berlin Wall

- After the Second World War, Germany (and the city of Berlin) was divided into 4 occupation zones:
 1. USA
 2. France
 3. UK
 4. USSR
- East Berlin (German Democratic Republic) was under USSR control, while West Berlin (Federal Republic of Germany) was under UK, USA, France.
- Construction of the wall started in 1961 to prevent the east German citizens from escaping to the west Germany via Berlin.
- It is part of the “**Iron Curtain**” which was the ideological conflict and physical boundary dividing Europe into two separate areas.

Fall of the Berlin Wall

- The Soviet Union had grown to be a large size where it became difficult to continue with state planning.
 - This resulted in failed policies, faulty industrialisation patterns, corrupt bureaucracy leading to severe economic crisis.
- The state controlled economic system did not provide incentives to encourage innovation and productivity.
- High expenditure in defense and neglect of other sectors led to rise in food prices and decline in wages.
- The closed market economy and coercive policies further damaged the crippling economy.
- In 1989, a series of radical political changes occurred in the Eastern Bloc, which challenged its authoritarian systems and led to liberalisation.
- Civil unrest across East and West Germany had put pressure on the East Germany administration to loosen some travel restrictions.
- After several weeks of civil unrest, the East German government announced on 9 November, 1989 that citizens could visit West Germany and West Berlin.
- This led to the collapse of the Berlin Wall.

4. Prophet Muhammad's Birthday

Why in News?

Recently, the birthday of Prophet Muhammad was celebrated on the occasion of Milad-un-Nabi.

Prophet Muhammad and Origin of Islam

- Muhammad is traditionally said to have been born in 570 in Mecca (Saudi Arabia) and to have died in 632 in Medina (Saudi Arabia).
 - He is considered as Messenger of Allah (God) and the last Prophet of Islam.
- He was a deeply spiritual man, and often spent time in meditation on Mount Hira.
- Prophet Muhammad had divine revelations from Allah that became the basis for Quran and the foundation of Islam.
- Muhammad's popularity was seen as threatening by the people in power in Mecca, and Muhammad took his followers on a journey from Mecca to Medina in 622.
- This journey is called the **Hijrah** (migration) and the event was seen as so important for Islam that 622 is the year in which the Islamic calendar begins.
- Within ten years Muhammad had gained so many followers that he was able to return and conquer Mecca.
- From this time on, he was generally accepted by the faithful as the true final Prophet of God.

- Muhammad continued to lead his community both spiritually and in earthly matters until his death in 632.
- The word Islam means ‘submission to the will of God’.
- There are five basic pillars of Islam:
 - Declaration of faith
 - Praying five times a day
 - Giving money to charity
 - Fasting
 - A pilgrimage to Mecca

5. Thiruvalluvar

Why in News?

Recently, ancient poet-saint Thiruvalluvar has been in the news because of a political controversy in Tamil Nadu.

About Thiruvalluvar

- Thiruvalluvar was a Tamil poet-saint of the Sangam period.
- He is the author of the Tirukkural (Sacred Couplets), considered a masterpiece of human thought, compared in India and abroad to the Bible, John Milton’s Paradise Lost, and the works of Plato.

Sangam Age

- The word ‘Sangam’ is the Tamil form of the Sanskrit word Sangha which means a group of persons or an association.
- Sangam age is a period of history of ancient Tamil Nadu and Kerala, named after the famous Sangam academies of poets and scholars centered in the city of Madurai.



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