



Lord Nataraj

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Why in News

Recently, as many as **157 artefacts and antiquities** were handed over to the Prime Minister by the **United States** including a **bronze Nataraj figure**.

- The list has a diverse set of items **bas-relief panel of Revanta** in sandstone made in the **10th century**, 56 **terracotta** pieces, several bronze figurines and copper objects, among others which mainly belong to **11th and 14th centuries**.
- It also includes an **18th-century sword in its sheath**, with the inscription mentioning **Guru Hargobind Singh in Persian**, some **historic antiquities** comprise figurines relating to **Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism**.

Key Points

- **Nataraja (Lord of the Dance)**, the **Hindu god Shiva** in his form as the **cosmic dancer**, is represented in metal or stone in many Shaivite temples, particularly in South

India.



It is an **important piece of Chola sculpture**.

- The **upper right-hand** holds the drum, which signifies the **sound of creation**. All creations spring from the great sound of the damru.
- The **upper left-hand** holds the eternal fire, which represents the **destruction**. Destruction is the precursor and inevitable counterpart of creation.
- The **lower right hand** is raised in the gesture of **Abhay mudra** signifying benediction and reassuring the **devotee to not be afraid**.
- The **lower left-hand** points towards the upraised foot and indicates the **path of salvation**.
- Shiva is dancing on the figure of a small dwarf. The dwarf symbolises **ignorance** and the ego of an individual.
- Shiva is shown as the **source of all movement within the cosmos** and as the god whose **doomsday dance, represented by the arch of flames**, accompanies the dissolution of the universe at the end of an eon.
- The matted and flowing locks of Shiva represent the **flow of river Ganges**.

- In ornamentation, one ear of Shiva has a male earring while the other has a female. This represents the fusion of male and female and is often referred to as **Ardhanarishwar**.
- A snake is twisted around the arm of Shiva. The snake symbolises the **kundalini power**, which resides in the human spine in the dormant stage. If aroused, one can attain true consciousness.
- The Nataraja is surrounded by a nimbus of glowing lights which symbolises the **vast unending cycles of time**.

Source: IE