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Important Facts For Prelims (3rd May 2019)

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Panchaloha Images



- Panchaloha is traditionally described as an **alloy** of **gold (Au), silver (Ag), copper (Cu), zinc (Zn) and iron (Fe)** as the major constituents. Also, in some cases tin (Sn) or lead (Pb) is used instead of zinc.
- It is an ancient craft, exclusive to South India, which thrives due to its beauty and the sentiment of tradition associated with it.
- For instance, in the given picture, **Nataraja** is a hand made panchaloha sculpture cast by the artists of South India using the **lost wax process**, a skill passed on for generations since the **Chola period**.
- Often in the news in the context of smuggling, the gold-like metal exudes divinity.
- The composition is laid down in the **Shilpa shastras**, a collection of ancient texts that describe arts, crafts, and their design rules, principles and standards.
- Late **S. Devasenapathy** is conferred a **national award in 1984** for this art form. His family dates back to the period of **Raja Raja Chola**, who deployed their services in the construction of the Big Temple (Sri Brihadeeswara Temple) in Thanjavur.
- **Swamimalai of Thanjavur district, T.N** is the hub of bronze and panchaloha products.
- **The government of India has given patent to this art form of Swamimalai.**

Gujarat Salt for De-icing

- For the past three years, the salt export from Gujarat has significantly shot up with the major chunk being used in de-icing the roads in the countries reeling under heavy snowfall.
 - Generally, the salt export for de-icing starts from the month of September.
 - During this period, the salt export touches around 7-8 lakh tonnes per month from the average four lakh tonnes.
- De-icing is the process of removing snow or ice from the surface of the roads, mostly done by using sodium chloride or other chemicals.
 - This is done to prevent fatal accidents caused by slippery roads in sub-zero conditions.
 - Salt or sodium chloride is preferred as it is comparatively inexpensive.
- Gujarat accounts for 90% of the salt exported from India.
 - The salt made in Gujarat is routed through China to the European and American countries and Russia due to lesser logistics cost.
 - China also exports its inferior quality salt for de-icing in Polar countries.

Denisovan

- Scientists have uncovered the most complete remains yet from the **mysterious ancient-hominin** group known as the **Denisovans**.
- The jawbone, discovered high up on the Tibetan Plateau and dated to more than 160,000 years ago, is also the first Denisovan specimen found outside the Siberian cave in which the hominin was uncovered a decade ago — confirming suspicions that Denisovans were more widespread than the fossil record currently suggests.
- Hominins are part of the family, or larger group of primates, called hominids. Hominids include orangutans, gorillas, chimpanzees, and human beings. All hominins are hominids, but very few hominids are hominins.

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Draft Rules for Poultry Farming

Recently draft rules have been laid under Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Egg-laying Hens) Rules, 2019, after High court issued a directive regarding cruelty in poultry Farms.

Draft rules for better poultry farming practices

- Poultry farms in the country have to have a minimum space of not less than 550 sq cm.
- They cannot put more than 6-8 birds in a cage.
- Antibiotics has to be used only for therapeutic purposes and that, too, under supervision by a veterinarian.

- The policy also bars feeding hens with the remains of dead chicks, thereby preventing diseases to the hens and also benefiting healthy commercial egg production in the country.