



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 18-April-2018

General Studies-1

Pre-historic rock art site discovered in Andhra Pradesh

A pre-historic rock art site discovered in the vast expanse of limestone blocks on the eastern banks of Naguleru near Dachepalli has thrown light on the Neolithic civilisation that flourished in Guntur during 1500-2000 BC.

About the Site:

"The rock art site on natural lime stone is the first of its kind in the country. The motifs in the form of engraving, pecking and brushing throw fascinating insights into the social and cultural practices of ancient civilisations.

What has made archaeologists look up this latest discovery is the dexterity with which early human was able to engrave different animal motifs like fish, snake, peacock, eagle, bull and scorpion on limestone blocks.

One petroglyph shows an anthropomorphic figure with its head in between the two hands.

Another engraving shows a warrior holding a sword and a shield, indicating the practices during Iron Age.

The region in later years was also synonymous with the flourishing of Buddhism.

A stupa established on the pre-historic rock art site during during 1-2 BC, was unearthed during excavations by the Department of [Archaeology](#) and Museums in 1969.

General studies-2

Education Related Issues:

Study in India portal

'Study in India' portal (www.studyinindia.gov.in) of HRD Ministry will be launched at the India Habitat Centre on Wednesday, 18th April 2018 by the Minister of External Affairs, Smt. Sushma Swaraj .

The portal will enable students from 30 countries across South Asia, Africa, CIS and Middle East to select and apply for different courses from 150 select Indian institutions which are high on NAAC and NIRF ranking.



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The Study in India is aimed at making India a preferred destination for the foreign students to pursue their education.

The Event will also include the launch of Study in India film along with a Cultural event by the foreign students.

Ambassadors and representatives from across 80 countries have been invited to remain present at the launch of the event.

What is NIRF?

The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) outlines a methodology to rank institutions across the country.

- The parameters for ranking broadly cover "Teaching, Learning and Resources," "Research and Professional Practices," "Graduation Outcomes," "Outreach and Inclusivity," and "Perception".
- The 2018 rankings include nine different categories-overall, universities, engineering, colleges, management, pharmacy, medical, architecture, and law. Out of which ***sections like medical, architecture and law have been introduced this year.***

Health Related Issues

POSHAN Abhiyaan

Why in News?

First meeting of National Council on India's Nutrition Challenges under POSHAN Abhiyaan is being held today.

The mandate of the National Council on India's Nutritional Challenges is as under:

- (a) Provide policy directions to address India's nutritional challenges through coordinated inter-sectoral action.
- (b) Coordinate and review convergence between Ministries.
- (c) Review programmes for nutrition on a quarterly basis.

The Council will submit its report to the Prime Minister every 6 months.



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About Poshan Abhiyaan:

- The POSHAN Abhiyaan targets reduction in the level of under-nutrition and other related problems by ensuring convergence of various nutrition related schemes.
- It will monitor and review implementation of all such schemes and in this endeavour, the *Abhiyaan* seeks to utilize existing structural arrangements of line Ministries wherever available.
- The Abhiyaan targets to reduce stunting, under-nutrition, anemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and reduce low birth weight by 2%, 2%, 3% and 2% per annum respectively.
- The target of the mission is to bring down stunting among children in the age group 0-6 years from 38.4% to 25% by 2022.

International Relations:

U.S.-India Strategic Energy Partnership

Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Dharmendra Pradhan and U.S. Secretary of Energy Rick Perry co-chaired the inaugural meeting here today of the U.S.-India Strategic Energy Partnership, which President Donald J. Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced during their June 26, 2017 Summit in Washington, D.C.

The Partnership affirms the strategic importance of energy cooperation to the U.S.-India bilateral relationship and sets the stage for deeper and more meaningful engagements through government and industry channels.

Through the Partnership, the United States and India collectively seek to enhance energy security, expand energy and innovation linkages across our respective energy sectors, bolster our strategic alignment, and facilitate increased industry and stakeholder engagement in the energy sector.

Under the Partnership, the United States and India will pursue four primary pillars of cooperation:

- (1) Oil and Gas;
- (2) Power and Energy Efficiency;
- (3) Renewable Energy and Sustainable Growth; and



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4) Coal.

As a first step in realizing the full potential of the Strategic Energy Partnership, the United States and India are pleased to announce the U.S.-India Natural Gas Task Force.

The Task Force provides a team of U.S. and Indian industry experts with a mandate to propose, develop, and convey, innovative policy recommendations to Government of India in support of its vision for natural gas in the economy of India.

The work of the Task Force is expected to advance the strategic and economic interests of both the United States and India.

General Studies-3

DARPAN-PLI App launched

With a view to achieve total digitisation of postal operations in the country, under the IT Modernisation Plan, Department of Posts has launched **DIGITAL ADVANCEMENT OF RURAL POST OFFICE FOR A NEW INDIA (DARPAN)** Project, which aims to connect all 1.29 lakh Rural Branch Post Offices in the country, to enable them to do online Postal and Financial Transactions.

Hand held devices with SIM connectivity and solar power backup are being installed in all Branch Post Offices in the Country.

The total Project cost is more than Rs.1300 crores. 61,941 Branch Post Offices have been rolled out under DARPAN Project.

The DARPAN-PLI App, launched by Hon'ble Minister of State (I/C) for Communications and Minister of State for Railways today, will help in collection of premium for PLI and RPLI policies at Branch Post Offices anywhere in India, with online updation of the policies.

Further, with launch of this App, indexing of maturity claims in respect of PLI and RPLI policies can be done at Branch Post Office itself, upon which the customer will immediately be provided with the request number for further references.

These two initiatives will help Department of Posts in providing better after-sales service to customers of PLI and RPLI, particularly those living in rural areas of the country.



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TESS mission

Why in News?

An 11th- hour technical glitch prompted SpaceX to postpone its planned launch on Monday of a new NASA space telescope designed to detect worlds beyond our solar system.

About TESS

- The two-year, \$337 million TESS mission is designed to build on the work of its predecessor, the Kepler space telescope, which has discovered the bulk of some 3,700 exoplanets documented during the past 20 years and is running out of fuel.
- NASA expects to pinpoint thousands more previously unknown worlds, perhaps hundreds of them Earth-sized or "super-Earth"-sized — no larger than twice as big as our home planet.
- Those are believed the most likely to feature rocky surfaces or oceans, and are thus considered the best candidates for life to evolve.
- Scientists said they hope TESS will ultimately help catalog at least 100 more rocky exoplanets for further study in what has become one of astronomy's newest fields of exploration.

TESS will concentrate on stars called red dwarfs, smaller, cooler and longer-lived than our sun. Red dwarfs also have a high propensity for Earth-sized, presumably rocky planets, making them potentially fertile ground for further scrutiny.

Plastic Eating Enzyme discovered:

Scientists in Britain and the United States say they have engineered a plastic-eating enzyme that could in future help in the fight against [pollution](#).

The enzyme, which is biodegradable, is able to digest polyethylene terephthalate, or PET — a form of plastic patented in the 1940s and now used in millions of tonnes of plastic bottles. PET [plastics](#) can persist for hundreds of years in the environment and currently pollute large areas of land and sea worldwide.