

## Prelim Bits 16-11-2023 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

### Constantine Joseph Beschi

*An Italian Jesuit, Tamil scholar, and Chanda Sahib's Dewan.*

- **Visit to India** - He arrived in Goa in 1700 and reached Tamil Nadu in 1715 to do missionary work
- **Language skills** - He studied *Sanskrit, Telugu, Urdu and Tamil* and became a master of these languages, especially Tamil.

*Constantine Joseph Beschi was known as **Thairiyannathaswamy** and its translation reads as **Veeramamunivar** in Tamil.*

- **Friendship with Chanda Sahib** - Veeramamunivar considered Chanda Sahib as the **ruler of the banks of the Cauvery**.
- Chanda Sahib gifted him **4 villages to the north of the River Kollidam** (distributary of [River Cauvery](#)) in Tamil Nadu.
- He conferred the surname, **Ismattee Sannyasi**, indicating veeramamunivar's excellence as a religious devotee.
- He presented a palanquin and appointed him to the **office of Dewan in Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu**.
- **Life style in Tamil Nadu** - He dressed like a Hindu sanyasi and travelled in a palanquin with a tiger skin to sit upon.
- **Contribution to Tamil language** - **Thembavani, Sathurakarathi** and many other works.
- His principal efforts were the conversion of the Idolaters and so, he delved deep into Tirukkural, Naladiyar, Civaka Cintamani, and other celebrated Hindu works.

*F.W. Ellis, the British civil servant and a scholar in Tamil and Sanskrit had classified Dravidian Languages as a separate family of languages even before Robert Caldwell.*

### Reference

[The Hindu | Constantine Joseph Beschi](#)

### ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus)

*Indonesia is hosting the 10th Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) at Jakarta in 2023 as the chair of ADMM-Plus.*

- **ADMM** - It is the **highest defence consultative and cooperative mechanism** in [ASEAN](#).

- **ADMM-Plus** - It is a platform for the ASEAN member-states and its 8 dialogue partners collectively called as 'Plus Countries'.

*Plus Countries of ADMM-Plus were India, U.S., China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. India became the dialogue partner of the ASEAN in 1992.*

- **Meeting** - 1<sup>st</sup> edition was held in Hanoi (Capital of Vietnam) in 2010 and it is held **annually since 2017**.
- **Objectives** - To enhance regional peace and stability through cooperation in defence and security.
- To contribute to the realisation of Bali Concord II and Vientiane Action Programme.

*Bali Concord II embodies ASEAN's aspiration to achieve peace, and stability with one another and with the world at large.*

*Vientiane Action Programme calls for ASEAN to build a secure and prosperous ASEAN and to adopt outward-looking external relation strategies with its friends and Dialogue Partners.*

- **7 Focus areas** - maritime security (MS), counter-terrorism (CT), humanitarian assistance and disaster management (HADR), peacekeeping operations (PKO), military medicine (MM), humanitarian mine action (HMA) and cyber security (CS).
- **Experts Working Groups (EWGs)** - 1 EWG has been created to facilitate cooperation for each of the 7 focus areas.
- Each EWGs is co-chaired by 1 ASEAN Member States and 1 Plus Country, operating in a **3-year cycle**.
- In the present cycle **from 2021-2024, India is co-chairing EWG** on HADR along with Indonesia.

## References

1. [The Hindu| 10<sup>th</sup> ADMM-Plus hosted by Indonesia](#)
2. [ADMM| ADMM-Plus](#)

## Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas (Tribal Pride Day)

*In India, the Janjatiya Gaurav Divas is celebrated every year on November 15 since 2021 to recognize the efforts of the brave tribal freedom fighters.*

- It is to mark the **birth anniversary of Sri Birsa Munda** who is revered as Bhagwan by tribal communities across the country.
- **Objective** - To recognize the efforts of the tribals for preservation of cultural heritage and promotion of Indian values of valour, hospitality and national pride.
- **Activities undertaken** - Debate completions, social activities and others events to show case
  - The achievements of tribals in Indian Freedom struggle.
  - Benefits of various welfare measures taken by Government of India in tribal development.

*India's freedom struggle was strengthened by several movements by tribal communities such as **Santhals, Tamars, Kols, Bhils, Khasis and Mizos** to name a few.*

Tribal leaders	Contributions
<b>Birsa Munda (Jharkhand)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formed a new religion, <b>Birsait</b>.</li> <li>Lead <b>Munda Rebellion</b> (Ulgulan Revolt) against British.</li> </ul>
<b>Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh (Chhattisgarh)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Looted and distributed grains amongst the poor after the 1856 famine.</li> <li>Attained martyr in the independence struggle of 1857.</li> </ul>
<b>Alluri Seetha Ram Raju (Andhra Pradesh)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead <a href="#">Rampa Rebellion</a> against British.</li> </ul>
<b>Rani Gaidinliu (Manipur)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revolted against British rule.</li> <li>Joined in <a href="#">Heraka movement</a> for establish Naga Raj (Rule of Nagas).</li> </ul>
<b>Sidhu and Kanhu Murmu (Jharkhand and Bengal)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead <a href="#">Santhal Rebellion</a> (Hul Revolt) in 1855-56.</li> </ul>
<b>Rani Kamalapati (Madhya Pradesh)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Committed '<b>Jal Jauhar</b>' (ritual suicide) to save her honour.</li> <li>The pride of the Gond tribe and the <b>last Hindu queen of Bhopal</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Tantia Bhil (Madhya Pradesh)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loot the British and distribute the stolen wealth among the needy</li> <li>'<b>Robin Hood of India</b>'.</li> </ul>

## References

[Vikaspedia| Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas](#)

## Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra

*On the occasion of the Janjatiya Gaurav Divas on November 15 in 2023, Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra was launched from Jharkhand.*

- It is one of the largest ever outreach initiative to be undertaken.
- Aim** - To reach out to people to spread public awareness about government's welfare schemes at the grass root level.
- Target** - To cover **over 2.55 lakh Gram Panchayats** and **over 3,600 urban local bodies (ULB) by 25th January 2024** touching every district of the country.
- Implementation** - It follows '**whole of Government**' **approach** involving active participation of the State Governments, District authorities, Urban Local Bodies and Gram Panchayats.
- IEC Vans** - Information, Education and Communication (IEC) vans have been branded and customized
  - To enable dissemination of information through audio visuals, brochures, pamphlets, booklets and flagship standees
  - In **Hindi and state languages**
  - Showcasing the major schemes, highlights and their achievements at national, state and district level.
- Address specific concerns of Tribal areas** - Like sickle cell anaemia elimination mission, enrolment in eklavya model residential schools, scholarship schemes, forest right titles, van dhan vikas Kendra and organising Self Help Groups.
- Activities undertaken**
  - Experience sharing by beneficiaries and interaction with progressive farmers.
  - Celebration of achievements of Gram Panchayats achieving **100% saturation of schemes** like Ayushman Card, Jal Jeevan Mission, Jan Dhan Yojana, PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana, ODF Plus status.

- On the spot quiz competitions, drone demonstration, health camps, Mera Yuva Bharat volunteer enrolment and other activities.

## References

[PIB| Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra](#)

## Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue 2023 (IPRD-2023)

*Recently, the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of “Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue 2023” (IPRD-2023), 3-day annual apex-level regional strategic dialogue of the Indian Navy commenced in New Delhi.*

- It is an apex-level international **annual conference of the Indian Navy** at the strategic-level, addressing maritime security issues across the Indo-Pacific.
- **Meeting - Previously 4 editions** of IPRD has been completed (2018, 2019, 2021-online, 2022).
- **Organised by** - The Indian Navy in association with the ***National Maritime Foundation as its knowledge partner.***
- **Objectives**
  - To review maritime trends within the **Indo-Pacific region**, the regional opportunities and associated challenges.
  - To foster the exchange of ***solution-oriented dialogue*** amongst key stakeholders.
- **Theme of IPRD-2023** - Geopolitical Impacts upon Indo-Pacific Maritime Trade and Connectivity.
- Both ‘trade and maritime transport’ are the segments of maritime connectivity.

## National Maritime Foundation (NMF)

*National Maritime Foundation (NMF) is India’s 1<sup>st</sup> maritime think-tank for the conduct of independent and policy-relevant research on all matters of maritime.*

- **Establishment** - In 2005.
- It is an independent and autonomous think-tank based in New Delhi.
- **Government Support** - Its intellectual and organisational development is supported by the Ministry of Defence and the Indian Navy.

## References

1. [PIB| Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue 2023 \(IPRD-2023\)](#)
2. [Maritime India| National Maritime Foundation](#)

## Other Important News

### **India International Science Festival (IISF)**

- 9<sup>th</sup> edition of the annual event, India International Science Festival (IISF) will be held at Faridabad, Haryana in January 2024.
- **Theme** - Science and Technology Public Outreach in Amrit Kaal.
- **Aim** - To provide a platform to engage the public with science and celebrate how science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) can improve lives.
- It is a collaborative effort of the Ministry of Science and Technology and Ministry of Earth Sciences in association with Vijnana Bharati.

### **Pandora's cluster**

- Recently, scientists used the James Webb Space Telescope to discover the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> most distant galaxies in a part of space known as Pandora's cluster.
- Pandora's Cluster is the nickname of **Abell 2744**, a giant galaxy cluster in the **constellation Sculptor**.
- It's about 4 million light-years across and has the mass of 4 trillion suns (Dark matter - 75%).
- The cluster is located approximately 4 billion light years from Earth.
- The gas (around 20%) is so hot that it shines only in X-rays.

### **Sea Guardian-3**

- The Sea Guardian-3 exercise is a joint bilateral naval exercise between **China and Pakistan** in the **Northern Arabian Sea**.
- China and Pakistan will conduct their 1<sup>st</sup> joint maritime patrol during this exercise.
- The exercise is divided into 2 phases, shore-based exchanges, and maritime joint operations with the theme of Joint Response to Maritime Security Threats.

### **NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) mission**

- It is a joint **Low Earth Orbit observatory mission** between **NASA** and the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** scheduled to take place in the early 2024.
- **Aim** - To survey all of Earth's land and ice-covered surfaces every 12 days.
- NISAR carries L and S dual-band Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR), which operates with the **Sweep SAR technique** to achieve large swaths with high-resolution data.

### **White-Cheeked Macaque (Macaca leucogenys)**

- The White-cheeked macaque is a species of macaque found only in Medog County in southeastern **Tibet** and **Arunachal Pradesh** in northeastern India.
- **Conservation status** - Endangered (IUCN Red List)
- It is not covered by the Wildlife Protection Act of India.
- Along with White-Cheeked Macaques and Arunachal Macaque, Assamese Macaque (Macaca assamensis) and Rhesus Macaque (Macaca mulatta) reported from the same landscape.

### **Dollfus' Stargazer**

- Hirodai ohtsukai is a new genus and species of crustacean parasite discovered recently in the Dollfus' Stargazer (Uranoscopus guttatus) fish species off the coast of India.
- Dollfus' stargazer (Uranoscopus dollfusi) is a marine fish in the family **Uranoscopidae**.
- It is widespread in the Western Indian Ocean, including the Gulf of Suez, Gulf of Oman, and Persian Gulf. It can be found at depths ranging from 300-550 m.
- The stargazers are a family of perciform fish that have eyes on top of their heads.

### **Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA)**

- It's a Boeing 747SP aircraft modified to carry a 2.7-meter (106-inch) reflecting telescope and is the world's ***only airborne*** telescope.
- The telescope weighs 19 tons and is mounted in the rear fuselage of the aircraft.
- SOFIA was designed for infrared astronomy observations in the stratosphere at altitudes of about 12 kilometers.
- SOFIA achieved full operational capability in 2014 and concluded its final science flight on September, 2022.

### **Galapagos Giant tortoises**

- Giant tortoises were once so abundant on the Galapagos archipelago off Ecuador.
- The Galapagos giant tortoise (*Chelonoidis niger*) is the largest living species of tortoise.
- It is also one of the longest-lived land vertebrates, with an average lifespan of over 100 years.
- Of the 15 species of giant tortoises that once lived in the Galapagos, 3 are now extinct.
- The Galapagos National Park (Ecuador's first national park and a UNESCO World Heritage Site) was established to collect eggs from the wild and incubate them at the Charles Darwin Research Station.

