DAYANAND SARASWATI

Prime Minister of India will inaugurate the year-long celebrations commemorating the 200th birth anniversary of Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati, at Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, Delhi.

About Dayanand Saraswati:

- Swami Dayanand Saraswati was a **philosopher, social leader and founder of the Arya Samaj**, a reform movement of Vedic dharma.
- He established the Arya Samaj on April 7, 1875, in Bombay -- with 10 principles that are beautifully based purely on God, soul and nature.
- This organisation brought about immense changes in the religious perceptions of Indians.
- He was the first to give the call **for Swaraj as "India for Indian" in 1876**.
- He preached 'Universalism', and not any specific caste.
- He introduced a complete overhaul of the education system and is often considered one of the visionaries of modern India.
- The **Dayanand Anglo Vedic schools** came into existence in 1886 to realize the vision of Swami Dayanand Saraswati.
- The first DAV School was established in **Lahore with Mahatma Hansarj**as the headmaster.
- One of his most influential works is the **book Satyarth Prakash**, which contributed to the Indian independence movement.
- His followers included Sri Aurobindo and S. Radhakrishnan.

BHASHINI MISSION

Union minister for electronics and information technology recently said that Mission Bhashini's capabilities have been integrated with the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) to make digital payments through the UPI 123 Pay available in more than 20 local Indian languages.

About Bhashini Mission:

- It is a **local language translation mission** that aims to break the barrier between various Indian tongues by using available technology.
- BHASHINI4 aims to **build a National Public Digital Platform for languages**.

- This government platform **aims to make Artificial Intelligence and Natural Language Processing (NLP) resources available in the public domain** to be used by -- Indian MSMEs, startups an and individual innovators.

- This will **help developers to offer all Indians easy access to the internet** and digital services **in their native languages.**

- This online platform also has a **separate 'Bhasadaan' section which allows individuals to contribute to multiple crowdsourcing initiatives** and it is also **accessible via respective Android and iOS apps.**

What is UPI 123 Pay?

- It is an **instant payment system** which will allow users to **make UPI transactions without an internet connection.**

- It was **launched by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)**

- Transactions through UPI 123Pay can be **done through IVR (interactive voice response) based payment solution, missed call, sound-based technology, and payment app.**

AMRITPEX 2023

The Minister for Communications recently inaugurated AMRITPEX 2023 in New Delhi.

About AMRITPEX 2023:

- It is a **National Philatelic Exhibition** organised by **the Department of Posts under the Ministry of Communications.**

- **Stakeholders of AMRITPEX 2023**: Ministry of Culture, Government of India and Philatelic Congress of India.

- **Objective:** National Philately Exhibition aims to introduce the new generation of Philately. This exhibition will include India's History, Culture, Art and Heritage through stamps.

- This exhibition will also include digital exhibits.

- Some of the attractions are the Wall of Philately, Mascot - VR Rooms, and Digital Charkha. Digital Kiosks – digital postcard, quiz and design are also a highlight.

- **Themes of AMRITPEX 2023:** Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, Women Power, Youth Power, Nature and Wildlife and Culture and History.

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

The Geological Survey of India (GSI) will be taking up 111 public -health and public good geoscience activities during 2023-24.

About the Geological Survey of India:

- It was set up in 1851 primarily to find coal deposits for the Railways.

- Over the years, it has grown into a **repository of geo-science information** required in various fields in the country.

- GSI's chief role includes providing objective, impartial and **up-to-date geological expertise and geoscientific information of all kinds**, with a focus on policy-making decisions, and commercial and socio-economic needs.

- It also emphasises systematic documentation of all geological processes**, both surface and subsurface**, of India and its offshore areas.

- The organisation carries out this work through **geological, geophysical, & geochemical surveys** using the latest and most cost-effective techniques and methodologies.

- The main functions of the GSI relate to the creation and updation of national geoscientific information and mineral resource assessment.

- It is **headquartered in Kolkata** and has six regional offices located at Lucknow, Jaipur, Nagpur, Hyderabad, Shillong and Kolkata. Every state has a state unit.
- Presently, GSI is an attached office to **the Ministry of Mines.**

SAPTAKOTESHWAR TEMPLE

The Prime Minister has recently expressed happiness over the renovation of Shree Saptakoteshwar Devasthan, Narve, Bicholim in Goa.

About Saptakoteshwar Temple:

- The original Saptakoteshwar Temple was built around the twelfth century by the **Kadamba dynasty** in Narve on Divar Island.
- The main deity of this temple is
- There is a small entrance marked with bells, while the main five pillared halls are decorated with arches.
- Intricate designs adorn the ceiling while the sanctorum wall is composed of plain wood.
- The **mandapa** of the temple is built in a **distinctly European style**. Laterite and stone caves surround the temple.
- **Maratha King Shivaji** ordered the rebuilding of the Saptakoteshwar temple and the installation of the linga in its proper location. This order is still mentioned on a stone plaque near the temple's entrance.

WHAT IS OPERATION DOST?

India has recently launched 'Operation Dost' to extend assistance to Turkey and Syria, the nations hit by an intense 7.9-magnitude earthquake.

About Operation Dost:

- It is an **ongoing search and rescue mission initiated by the Government of India to help Syria and Turkey**, after they

witnessed a massive earthquake that left thousands dead, injured and trapped under the rubble.
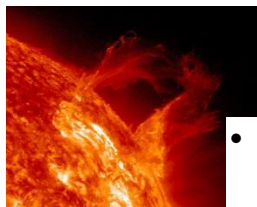
- Under operation dost, **India has sent search and rescue teams**, mainly **teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)**, materials, **medicines**, medical equipment and consumables to Turkey and Syria.

- The **NDRF teams comprise dog squad, medicines**, blankets, four wheelers.

- The **Indian Army's team of medical specialists** is **providing relief** to the injured at a **field hospital set up in Turkey's Hatay**. The hospital is running with medical, surgical and emergency wards.

National Disaster Response Force (NDRF):

- It is **India's specialized force for responding to natural disasters and** chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defense **(CBRN) emergencies**.

- The force was **constituted under the Disaster Management Act of 2005**.

- NDRF is a force of 12 battalions, **organised on para-military lines, and manned by persons on deputation from the para-military forces** of India:

WHAT IS A SOLAR PROMINENCE?

Scientists recently observed a large prominence near Sun's north pole.

About Solar prominence:

- **What is it? Large, loop-like structures on the edge of the solar disk** sometimes **stand out brightly against the dark background of space**. These enormous structures are **called solar prominences.**

- Prominences are anchored to the Sun's surface in the photosphere, and **extend outwards into the Sun's hot outer atmosphere**, called the **corona**.

- They are **much cooler and denser** than the surrounding plasma in the Sun's corona.

- Prominences are **shaped by the Sun's complex magnetic field**, often **forming loops** with each end anchored to the Sun's surface.

- Prominences **are enormous, extending out for many thousands of kilometers.**

- They can **last for several days or up to several months.**
- **Some prominences erupt and break apart**, giving rise to **coronal mass ejections (CMEs).**

What are Solar Filaments?

- **Sometimes prominences are observed against the bright background of the Sun itse**lf, instead of at the edge of the Sun's disk.
- **These prominences appear dark** compared to the bright background of the Sun **and are called solar filaments.**

What are Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs)?

- CMEs are **large expulsions of plasma and magnetic field from the Sun's corona that propagates outward into interplanetary space.**
- The blast of a CME **carries about a billion tons of material out** from the Sun **at very high speeds** of hundreds of kilometers per second.
- They can **cause geomagnetic storms on Earth** that can have significant impact on both ground- and space-based technological systems.

GOVT. IS RAMPING UP BORDER INFRASTRUCTURE

Why in news?

- Recently, at an unscheduled briefing during Parliament session, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar released details of the government's projects on border infrastructure and connectivity.
- It focused on initiatives in the north and east along India's 3,488 km border with China.

Why border management is needed for India?

- India's internal security challenges are invariably linked with the security of the country's borders due to the hostile attitude of some of India's neighbours and their tendency to exploit India's persistent national challenges.

- The challenge of long-standing boundary and territorial disputes, coupled with steep terrain, extreme climatic conditions and porosity of borders, has rendered India's Borders vulnerable.
- This has made efficient and effective border management a foremost priority for the Indian Government.

What are the strategies for border management in India?

- Approach and practices of border management vary from one border to another, based on the security perceptions and relationship with the neighbouring country.
- The **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is responsible for border management**.
- The strategy to deal with border security challenges involves:
  o The management of international land & coastal borders
  o Strengthening of border policing & guarding
  o Creation of border infrastructure such as roads, fencing & floodlighting of the borders as well as the strengthening of coastal security infrastructure
  o Development of Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) on the land borders of the country
  o Implementation of the Border Area Development Programme (BADP)

What are the various schemes for border management?

- **Border Infrastructure and Management (BIM) Scheme**:
  o It is a Central Sector Scheme comprising of projects aimed at infrastructure development & to enhance the security of India's international borders.
    ▪ It is being implemented by Border Management-I Division under MHA.
    ▪ Eg., Border Fence, Border Roads, Border Floodlights, Border Out Posts (BOPs), Helipads and foot tracks along the international borders of the country.
  o It also involves deployment of technological solutions in such patches of the borders, which are not feasible for physical fence.
- **Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS)**:
  o CIBMS has been conceptualized to **integrate** manpower, sensors, networks, intelligence and command control solutions.

o It aims to improve situational awareness at different levels of hierarchy to facilitate prompt and quick response to emerging situations along the India-Pakistan Border (IPB) and India-Bangladesh Border (IBB).

G-20 TOURISTS CAN USE UPI AT SELECT INDIAN AIRPORTS

Why in news?

- Recently, RBI permitted all inbound travellers from the Group of Twenty (G-20) countries and non-resident Indians to access Unified Payment Interface (UPI) for their merchant payments (P2M) at select airports while they are in the country.

Unified Payments Interface (UPI)

- UPI is a system that powers multiple bank accounts into a single mobile application (of any participating bank).
- It does so by merging several banking features, seamless fund routing & merchant payments into one hood.
- In other words, UPI is an interface via which one can transfer money between bank accounts across a single window.
- It was launched in 2016, by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).

Features of UPI

- Immediate money transfer through mobile device round the clock (24*7 and 365 days)
- Single mobile application for accessing different bank accounts
- Hassle free transactions as customers are not required to enter the details such as Card no, Account number, IFSC etc.

Benefits of UPI

- **For Banks**
- o A universal application for transaction;
- o A single click Two Factor authentication;
- o Safer and more secure; Enables easy transactions;

o Unique Identifier

- **For Merchants**

o Easier fund collection; In-App Payments (IAP)

o No risk of storing the customer's virtual address;

o Tap customers not having credit/debit cards

- **For Customers**

o Single application for accessing various bank accounts;

o Round the clock availability;

o One can easily raise a complaint from the mobile app directly;

o Use of Virtual ID is secure

UPI Transaction: Statistics

- According to NPCI data, payments using UPI were at Rs 12.98 lakh crore in value in January 2023.

- As per the Economic Survey 2022-23, of the total 8840 crore digital financial transactions in India with a total value of Rs 126 lakh crore, around 52% were made via UPI in FY22.

UPI: Recent developments

- The Union government has lowered the allocation meant for compensating fintech startups and banks that facilitate free UPI transactions.

- In December, NPCI asked the UPI ecosystem to allow users from some countries with non-resident account types like non-resident external (NRE) and non-resident ordinary (NRO) accounts with international mobile numbers to transact through UPI.

News Summary: G-20 tourists can use UPI at select Indian airports

- RBI has said that it will allow all inbound travellers to use UPI payments for their merchant payments while they are in the country.

- The facility will be first introduced for travellers from G20 countries arriving at select international airports.

What has been announced?

- Banks and non-banks, authorised to issue prepaid payment instruments (PPIs), can issue rupee-denominated full-KYC PPIs to foreign nationals and NRIs visiting India.

- Such PPIs can also be issued in co-branding arrangement with entities authorised to deal in foreign exchange under FEMA.
  o The Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) is legislation which regulates the inflow and outflow of foreign exchange.
- The PPIs can be issued in the form of wallets linked to UPI — like Google Pay and PhonePe — and can be used for merchant payments (P2M) only.
- Loading and reloading of such PPIs will be against receipt of foreign exchange by cash or through any payment instrument.