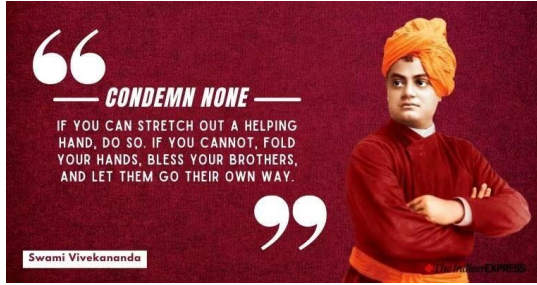


Current Affairs:04/05.07.2021

Swami Vivekananda:Death Anniversary- 4th July.



He was a true luminary, credited with enlightening the western world about Hinduism. He was an ardent **disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa** and a major force in the revival of Hinduism in India. He pushed for national integration in colonial India, and **his famous speech**

remains as the one that he gave in Chicago in 1893 (Parliament of the World Religions). In 1984 the Government of India declared that 12 January, the birthday of Swami Vivekananda, will be celebrated as **National Youth Day.**

Early life- contributions:

1. Born in Kolkata on January 12, 1863 in Kolkata, Swami Vivekananda was **known as Narendra Nath Datta in his pre-monastic life.**
2. He is known to have **introduced the Hindu philosophies of Yoga and Vedanta to the West.**
3. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose had called Vivekananda the **“maker of modern India.”**
4. In 1893, he took the name ‘Vivekananda’ after **Maharaja Ajit Singh of the Khetri State requested him to do so.**
5. He formed **the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897** “to set in motion a machinery which will bring noblest ideas to the doorstep of even the poorest and the meanest.”
6. In 1899, he established **the Belur Math, which became his permanent abode.**
7. He preached **‘neo-Vedanta’**, an interpretation of Hinduism through a Western lens, and believed in combining spirituality with material progress.

6th BRICS Culture Ministers Meeting 2021 held virtually under the Chairship of India

On 2nd July 2021, India virtually hosted the **6th BRICS(Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) Culture Ministers meeting 2021** under the chairship

of Prahlad **Singh Patel**, Minister of State (I/C) for Culture and Tourism. The meeting saw the participation of the Minister of Culture from the BRICS member countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa).

The meeting was conducted under the theme – “**Bonding and Harmonizing Cultural Synergy**”

Key Discussions:

- i. Increasing collaboration among the member countries in exchanging knowledge of Cultural experiences to protect various tangible & intangible cultural heritages.
- ii. A proposal was made for the formation of the BRICS Alliance to conserve & preserve ancient manuscripts through digital means.
- iii. Promoting the use of digital technologies to conserve cultural heritage by conducting online cultural activities like – Virtual Museums, Arts, Theatres etc.

About BRICS(Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa):

2021’s Chair – India

2021’s Theme – BRICS @ 15: Intra-BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation and Consensus

Vembanad Lake: Kerala

Kerala houseboats in Vembanad Lake are about to begin soon amid a robust vaccination drive.

This is the largest lake in Kerala and the longest Lake in India. **Source of the rivers:** Meenachil, Achankovil, Pampa and Manimala. Vallam Kali (i.e **Nehru Trophy Boat Race**) is a Snake Boat Race held every year in the month of August in Vembanad Lake. In 2002, lake was included in the list of **Ramsar Convention**.

It is the second-largest Ramsar site in India after the Sundarbans in West Bengal.

- The Vembanad wetland is also identified under the National Wetlands Conservation Programme.
- The **Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary** is located on the east coast of the lake.
- In 2019, **Willingdon Island**, a seaport located in the city of Kochi, was carved out of Vembanad Lake.
- One of the most outstanding features of this lake is the 1252 m long saltwater barrier, **Thanneermukkom**, which was built to stop saltwater intrusion into Kuttanad.

Trafficking in Persons Report

About the Report

- It is released by the **US State Department**
- It is world's most comprehensive resource of governmental anti-trafficking efforts.
- It is also U.S. Government's principal diplomatic tool to engage foreign governments on human trafficking.

What are the key findings of the Report?

1. According 2021 report, the Covid-19 pandemic has **resulted in an increase in vulnerability** to human trafficking and interrupted existing anti-traffic efforts.
2. Human trafficking involves the illegal transport of individuals by force or deception for the purpose of labour, sexual exploitation, or activities in which others benefit financially.
3. India has not met the minimum standards to eliminate trafficking. The efforts made by the government are inadequate.
4. Chinese government is engaged in widespread forced labour

What are the relevant Laws in India?

- **Article 23** prohibits human trafficking and begar (forced labour without payment).
- **Article 24** forbids employment of children below the age of 14 years in dangerous jobs like factories and mines.
- **Indian Penal Code (IPC) Section:**
 - **Section 370 and 370A** of IPC provide for comprehensive measures to counter the menace of human trafficking
 - **Sections 372 and 373** dealing with selling and buying of girls for the purpose of prostitution.

Wash Report

- According to a new report by the Wash Institute (a non-profit organisation based out in Tamil Nadu), **India was responsible for the largest drop in open defecation since 2015**, in terms of absolute numbers.
 - Open Defecation is practise of going out in fields, or other open spaces rather than using the toilet to defecate. It exposes women to the danger of physical attacks and poses health risk to children (vulnerability to diseases & Infection)

What were the findings of the Report?

- By 2016, open defecation had decreased in all states of India, with the largest drops seen in Himachal Pradesh and Haryana.
- Progress in curbing open defecation in sub-Saharan Africa was slow.
- Between 2016 and 2020, the global population with access to safely managed drinking water at home increased to 74%, from 70%.
- People faced challenges to maintain hygiene, especially in the context of the Covid-19
 - 3 in 10 people worldwide could not wash their hands with soap and water at home during the Covid-19 pandemic due to lack of water resources.

What are some Government Initiatives?

- **National rural sanitation strategy:**
 - 10-year Rural Sanitation Strategy starting from 2019 up to 2029.
 - Lays down a framework for planning Open Defecation Free (ODF) Plus status,
- **Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen Phase-II:**
 - It emphasizes the sustainability of achievements under phase I and to provide adequate facilities for Solid/Liquid & plastic Waste Management (SLWM)
- **Open Defecation Free (ODF), ODF+, ODF++ Status (for Town and Cities)**
 -
 - **ODF:** At any point of the day, not even a single person is found defecating in the open.
 - **ODF+:** At any point of the day, not a single person is found defecating and/or urinating in the open, and all community and public toilets are functional and well maintained.
 - **ODF++:** If the area is already ODF+ and the faecal sludge/septage and sewage are safely managed and treated

Europe's 'Green Passport' and its impact on India

Definition: On July 1, the European Union implemented the EU Digital COVID Certificate (EUDCC) or the “Green Passport”, which allows ease of intra-European travel for passengers who have taken one of four recognised vaccines.

- The list of approved vaccines does not include India made COVISHIELD & COVAXIN.
- The move led to a sharp protest from India, as well as the African Union, as concerns grow over vaccine passports that discriminate against travellers from developing countries with limited access to vaccines.