

GS PAPER 1

Indian Culture And Heritage

UNESCO Site Status

In News

- The Geological Survey of India (GSI) has laid out a plan to commemorate heritage locations in Maharashtra and Karnataka as Global Geoparks. It is a tag similar to that of “World Heritage Site” wherein the geological features are highlighted on the global stage.
- One of the sites is an ancient circular lake created by a meteorite strike in **Maharashtra called the Lonar Lake or Lonar Crater**. It became a geo-heritage site in 1979, and is relatively young geologically, at just 50,000 years old.
- Its most remarkable feature is a near-perfect, circular ejecta blanket around it, which is nothing but the earth thrown up during collision. It is probably the only known meteorite crater in basaltic rock in India.
- The other one is **St. Mary’s Island off the coast of in the city of Udupi in Karnataka**. It is a hexagonal mosaic of basaltic rocks that was formed by sub-aerial sub-volcanic activity, at a time when Madagascar was attached to India. The rifting of Madagascar took place around 88 million years ago.
- The road to recognition, however, is long and arduous. An aspiring Global Geopark must have a few pre-requisites for it to be accepted as a world heritage site. The most important things needed to be considered for the tag are: *a dedicated website, corporate identity, a comprehensive management plan; and protection, finance and partnership plans.*

Global Geoparks

- A geopark is basically a unified area that initiates the protection and use of geological heritage in a sustainable way, promoting economic well-being of the people who live there, and also of course putting it on the global map thus initiating geo-tourism.
- Its **bottom-up approach** of combining **conservation with sustainable development** while involving local communities and is becoming increasingly popular.
- At present, there are **140 UNESCO Global Geoparks** in 38 countries.
- In order to ensure the quality of UNESCO Global Geoparks, they are subject to a **thorough revalidation every four years** to examine their functioning and quality.

Experiencing North East Festival

In News

- The **Experiencing North East festival**, depicting the uniqueness of North Eastern culture, was recently held at India International Centre (IIC), New Delhi
- The festival was organized by **North Eastern Council (NEC)**, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), in collaboration with **India International Centre**.
- The event which is a part of **‘Destination North East’ series** showcased the diverse culture, heritage and strengths of North East through its art and literature, films and rich musical talent.

- There were 5 workshops focusing on various themes like Adventure Tourism in NER, Science & Technology Interventions in North East Region (STINER), Act East & NER which provided opportunities for discussions and brainstorming sessions.
- Apart from this, the literary events called 'These hills we come from' and 'Voices from North East India', focussed on the linguistic and literary world of North East India through talks, readings, presentations, discussions and interactive sessions with authors from the North East.

Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony

In News

- The Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony for the years 2014, 2015, & 2016 was recently conferred on the doyen of Manipuri dance **Rajkumar Singhajit Singh**; **Chhayanaut** (a cultural organization of Bangladesh); and on one of India's greatest sculptors, **Ram Vanji Sutar**, respectively.
- The annual award was instituted by the government during the commemoration of **150th Birth Anniversary of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore**.
- The **first Tagore Award was conferred on Pt. Ravi Shankar**, the Indian Sitar Maestro in 2012 and second was conferred on Shri Zubin Mehta in 2013.
- The award carries an amount of Rs. 1 crore, a citation in a scroll, a plaque as well as an exquisite traditional handicraft/ handloom item.
- The award is **open to all persons regardless of nationality, race, language, caste, creed or sex**.