

Indian Culture And Heritage – Dec'18

Adopt a Heritage Site

In News

- The Tourism Ministry recently handed over an MoU under the “Adopt A Heritage Project” to Resbird Technologies for development of a mobile audio guide App for five iconic sites.
- The five iconic sites are Amer Fort (Rajasthan), Kaziranga (Assam), Colva Beach (Goa), Kumarakom (Kerala), and Mahabodhi Temple (Bihar).

Adopt a Heritage Scheme

- The ‘**Adopt a Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan**’ scheme is an initiative of the Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and the Archaeological Survey of India.
- It was launched in September 2017 on World Tourism Day by President Ram Nath Kovind.
- Under it, the government invites entities, including public sector companies, private sector firms as well as individuals, to develop selected monuments and heritage and tourist sites across India.
- Development of these tourist sites calls for providing and maintaining basic amenities, including drinking water, ease of access for the differently abled and senior citizens, cleanliness, public conveniences and illumination, along with advanced amenities such as surveillance systems, night-viewing facilities, and tourism facilitation centres.
- The sites/monument are selected on the basis of tourist footfall and visibility and can be adopted by private and public sector companies and individuals — known as **Monument Mitras** — for an initial period of five years.
- The Monument Mitras are selected by the oversight and vision committee, co-chaired by the Tourism Secretary and the Culture Secretary, on the basis of the bidder’s vision for development of all amenities at the heritage site.
- There is no financial bid involved. The corporate sector is expected to use **corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds** for the upkeep of the site.
- The Monument Mitras, in turn, will get limited visibility on the site premises and on the Incredible India website. The oversight committee also has the power to terminate a memorandum of understanding in case of non-compliance or non-performance.

Buddhist Site Museum At Lalitgiri In Odisha

In News

- One of the earliest **Buddhist settlements in Odisha, Lalitgiri**, where excavations have yielded ancient seals and inscriptions, has been converted into a museum and was inaugurated by the Prime Minister.
- Located in Cuttack district, it will be the third site museum of the Bhubaneswar circle of the Archaeological Survey of India after Ratnagiri and Konarak,
- The museum complex is spread over 4,750 sq. m. The building and auditorium are built over 1,310 sq. m. The complex has been constructed at a cost of ₹10 crore.
- Excavations at Lalitgiri have yielded the remains of four monasteries, showing cultural continuity from the post-Mauryan period till the 13th century CE.

- The centre of attraction is a relic casket containing corporal remains found inside the Mahastupta.
- Huge sculptures of Buddha, architectural fragments of Viharas and Chaityas are arranged period-wise
- The central gallery is designed after a Buddha Mandala with a colossal Buddha image at the centre and six Bodhisattva images surrounding it

Heritage Park for Hindus, Buddhists in Elum Valley in Pak

In News

- The **Khyber Pakthunkhwa** province plans to construct a heritage park in Elum Valley, which carries a historical significance to both the Hindus and the Buddhists, to promote religious tourism.
- Elum Valley is located between the Swat and Buner districts in the province and it has been a site of divinity and pilgrimage for both the Hindu and the Buddhist communities.
- According to Hindu belief, Lord Ram spent time meditating there during his 14 years of exile, while Buddhists believe it to be the site where a previous incarnation of Lord Buddha gave up his life.

Hornbill Festival 2018

In News

- Union Home Minister recently inaugurated the hugely popular Hornbill Festival, coinciding with Formation Day of Nagaland. The festival, named after a bird, is a spectacular event showcasing rich ancient culture & civilizational unity of people of Nagaland.
- It is celebrated every year in the **first week of December**.
- The festival is **held at the Naga Heritage Village in Kisama**, which is around 12 km from the capital city Kohima and is enveloped with green valleys and pretty hills.
- The Government of Nagaland has taken the festival to other parts of the State where mini-Hornbill Festivals are celebrated from time to time.
- The colourful festival is also one of the major crowd-pullers for the state and falls in what is believed to be the best time to visit Nagaland.
- During the daytime, the entire village echoes with the thumping of drums and folk songs. In addition to all these, war dance performances and head-hunting rituals are organised for the entertainment of people.
- Competitions are held every day during the festival, where a number of brave hearts try their luck at **Bhut jholokia** (one of the hottest varieties of chilli) eating contest.
- After the sun goes down, Kohima Night Bazaar takes over the streets and a number of food and handicraft stalls start setting up their shops. And then comes the very famous rock and metal festival wherein some of the best bands of the state perform for the audience.

Dwijing Festival

In News

- The third edition of the 12-day Dwijing Festival, a river tourism project of the Assam government was recently held in the **Chirang district**.

- With the target of promoting river tourism in the rural areas of the Bodoland Territorial Council and the State, the festival was **initiated in the year 2016-17 under the moniker of AIE River Winter Festival**.
- It is being organised jointly by **Assam Tourism Development Corporation** and **Bodoland Tourism**.
- **Dwijing means river bank** and the festival covering areas around the river Aie will focus on business and income generation for the local people through rural tourism
- **The river Aie, meaning Mother**, originates from the Himalayas of Bhutan flowing through Chirang and Bongaigaon districts before meeting the river Brahmaputra. The Aie plays a vital role in the lives of people of the area.
- The festival showcased ethnic trade, cuisine, culture, games and sports, exhibitions, adventure sports, river rafting, helicopter rides and cultural programmes to make it a centre of attraction for the visitors as a New Year event.

Mukhyamantri Tirth Yatra Yojana

In News

- Delhi government has launched the Mukhyamantri Tirth Yatra Yojana, that offers **free travel packages for five religious circuits for senior citizens of Delhi**.
- To facilitate a seamless coordination for the said scheme, the Delhi Tourism and Transportation Development Corporation Ltd (DTTDC) has signed an MoU with Indian Railways and Catering Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), Ministry of Railways.
- The scheme will be for any of the following routes--Mathura-Vrindavan-Agra-Fatehpur Sikri, Haridwar-Rishikesh-Neelkanth, Ajmer-Pushkar, Amritsar-Wagah Border-Anandpur Sahib, and Vaishno Devi-Jammu.
- The scheme will enable 1,100 senior citizens from each of 70 assembly constituencies of Delhi every year to undertake free pilgrimage and overall 77,000 senior citizens will be able to avail this facility.
- Delhi residents above the age of 60 are covered under this scheme. Those selected, will be allowed to be accompanied by an attendant above 20 years of age, whose expenditure will also be borne by the Government.