DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS ANALYSIS

22 SEPTEMBER 2023

GS I

Indian Culture

- **Context:**

- Santiniketan, a town established by Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, made it to the UNESCO's World Heritage List recently.

- **About Santiniketan:**

- Located in West Bengal's Birbhum district, Santiniketan, which means "abode of peace", started taking shape in 1901 and is the place where Tagore laid the foundations of Visva-Bharati University.
- Santiniketan was a residential school and centre for art based on ancient Indian traditions and a vision of the unity of humanity transcending religious and cultural boundaries
- A 'world university' was established at Santiniketan in 1921, recognising the unity of humanity or "Visva Bharati".
- Santiniketan represents approaches toward pan-Asian modernity, drawing on ancient, medieval and folk traditions from across the region.
- It was established by Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, and later expanded by his son, Rabindranath Tagore whose vision became what is now a university town with the creation of Visva-Bharati.
- Shantiniketan is a university town with varied educational facilities.
- Apart from a number of courses in humanities, science and education, Visva-Bharati offers a range of music, dance and art courses and lays emphasis on language courses.

- **UNESCO World Heritage tag:**

- The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) identifies World Heritage Sites that have been nominated by nations that have signed the UNESCO World Heritage Convention 1972.
- The sites includes:
- Monuments such as:
- architectural works,
- monumental sculptures,
- inscriptions,
- groupings of structures, and
- places comprise cultural heritage including archaeological sites.

- Natural heritage:
- physical and biological formations,
- geological and physiographical formations - including habitats of vulnerable species of animals and plants, and
- natural locations that are valuable for science, conservation, or natural beauty.
- India signed the treaty in 1977.
- In India, there are now 40 World Heritage Sites:
- 32 are cultural,
- 7 are natural, and
- 1 is mixed.
- India has the world's sixth-highest number of sites.

- *Source → The Hindu*

2 – Details of Chausath Yogini Temple:

GS I

Indian Culture

- **Context:**

- The circular, colonnaded Parliament building has for long been a symbol of India's democracy and its architecture resembles to the 20th century Chausath Yogini temple in Mitaoli, Madhya Pradesh.

- **The old Parliament and its inspirations:**

- It was designed by British architects Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker when the British decided to move their capital to New Delhi.
- The 164-pillared building first housed the Imperial Legislative Council (From January 18, 1927 to August 15, 1947).
- After Independence, it served as the Constituent Assembly of India, and once the Constitution was adopted and India became a republic, as the Parliament of India, housing the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha.
- When New Delhi was being planned, the then Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, was quite clear that the buildings should have Indian elements and not look like foreign structures transplanted on Indian soil.
- Thus, the Parliament, the Rashtrapati Bhavan, and other buildings are a mix of Indian and Western-style architecture.

- **The Chausath Yogini temple:**

- The grand Chausath Yogini temple stands atop a hillock in Mitaoli, in the Morena district of Madhya Pradesh.
- It was built around 1323 by King Devapala of the Kachchhapaghata dynasty
- Dedicated to the 64 (chaunsath in Hindi) yoginis, its architecture is different from the temples dedicated to one deity.
- The 64 yoginis are believed to be powerful warriors and sorceresses.

- **The legend behind it:**

- According to mythology, a demon, Raktabija, had a boon that made him almost impossible to kill — everytime a drop of his blood fell on the floor, hundreds of offspring would be born off it.
- However, when Goddess Durga went to battle him, she unleashed an army of 64 yoginis who drank off his blood before it could touch the floor, and Raktabija was finally killed.
- Architecture:
- The Mitaoli temple is circular, with 64 chambers dedicated to the 64 yoginis, and a central shrine dedicated to Shiva.
- While most Hindu temples have a shikhara, or projecting dome, the Mitaoli temple, like other Chausath Yogini temples, is hypaethral, which means it has no roof.
- The Parliament-like pillars are on the inside of the stone temple complex.
- The central shrine has a slab with perforations, for excess rainwater to drain off.

- *Source → The Hindu*

3 – Asia Cup:

GS II

Sports related Issues

- **Context:**

- Prime Minister of India congratulates Indian Cricket Team on winning Asia Cup

- **About Asia Cup:**

- The Asia Cup is a men's international cricket tournament contested between Asian countries in either One Day International format (50 overs) and Twenty20 International cricket format (20 overs).
- It was established in 1983 when the Asian Cricket Council was founded as a measure to promote goodwill between Asian countries.
- The Asia Cup is the only continental championship in cricket and the winning team becomes the champion of Asia.
- It alternates every 2-years between ODI and T20 formats.
- The first Asia Cup was held in 1984 in Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates.
- India boycotted the 1986 tournament due to strained cricketing relations with Sri Lanka.
- India, with eight titles (seven ODI and one T20I), is the most successful team in the tournament.
- Sri Lanka has played the most Asia Cups (15) followed by India, Pakistan and Bangladesh (14 each).

- *Source → The Hindu*

4 – Hoysala Temples:

GS I

Indian Culture

- **Context:**

- The Prime Minister of India has hailed the inclusion of Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

- **Key details:**

- Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas', the ancient Hoysala temples of Belur, Halebid and Somnathapura in Karnataka, known for their architectural brilliance have been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.
- The decision was taken during the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee currently underway in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
- 'Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas' were on UNESCO's Tentative list since April 2014.
- The number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India has grown to 42 with the 'Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas' finding a place in the coveted list.
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- **About the Sacred Ensembles of Hoysalas:**

- The sacred ensembles of the Hoysalas, built in the 12th-13th centuries and represented by the three components of Belur, Halebid, and Somnathapura, attest to the creativity and skill of the Hoysala artists and architects who built these masterpieces of a kind never seen before or since.
- The Hoysala temples have a basic Dravidian morphology but show strong influences of the Bhumija mode widely used in Central India, the Nagara traditions of northern and western India, and the Karntata Dravida modes favoured by the Kalyani Chalukyas.

- **Belur: Chennakeshava Temple:**

- The Chennakeshava temple complex was located on the banks of the Yagachi River.
- Construction of the temple commenced in 1117 AD and took a 103 years to complete.
- The temple was devoted to Vishnu, but, some representations of Shiva are also included.
- It remains until today as a site of pilgrimage for Vaishnavites.

- **Halebid: Hoysaleshwara Temple:**

- The Hoysaleshwara temple at Halebidu was built in 1121CE during the reign of the Hoysala King, Vishnuvardhana Hoysaleshwara.
- The temple is dedicated to Shiva.
- It has a walled complex containing of three Jaina basadi (temples) of the Hoysala period as well as a stepped well.

- **Somnathpur: Kesava Temple:**

- The Keshava temple is a beautiful Trikuta Temple dedicated to Lord Krishna in three forms – Janardhana, Keshava and Venugopala.

- **Hoysala architecture:**

- Hoysala architecture developed under the rule of the Hoysala Empire between the 11th and 14th centuries, in the region known today as Karnataka.
- Temples built during this era remain as examples of the Hoysala architectural style, including the Chennakesava Temple at Belur, the Hoysaleswara Temple at Halebidu, and the Kesava Temple at Somanathapura.
- Hoysala architecture is classified as part of the Karnataka Dravida tradition, distinct from the Tamil style.
- Hoysala temples are star-shaped.
- The temples have a sikhara above the Garbhagriha.

- Hoysala temples are constructed on a raised platform (jagati).
- Space is left all around the temple, to do pradakshana of the temple, which is called Pradhakshinapatha.
- The Garbhagriha are small and simple square chambers.
- The outer walls of the temples have stone carvings thar consists of elephants, horses, flower designs, swans, stories from the epics and puranas.
- The doorways of the temples have beautiful carvings in stone and a pair of dwarapalakas stand on either side.
- The centre of the ceiling of the hall has intricate carvings of Bhuvaneshwari.
- Hoysala temples have been classified as per the number of kutas (cells).
- For e.g., ekakuta (One cell) temples panchakuta (five cells) temples.

- *Source → The Hindu*

5 – Bima Sugam:

GS II

Government Policies and Interventions

- **Context:**

- The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) claims that the proposed Bima Sugam is a game changer and a UPI moment for the insurance segment

- **About Bima Sugam:**

- It's an online platform where customers can choose a suitable scheme from multiple options given by various companies.
- All insurance requirements, including those for life, health, and general insurance (including motor and travel) will be met by Bima Sugam.
- This platform will help in the settlement of claims, whether it's health coverage or death claims, in a paperless manner on the basis of policy numbers.
- The overall budget for Bima Sugam has been hiked to Rs 200 crore from around Rs 85 crore.

- **Its role and utility for customers:**

- The platform would act as a single window for the policyholder to manage his/her insurance coverage.
- It will provide end-to-end solutions for customers' insurance needs i.e., purchase, service, and settlement in a seamless manner.

- It will facilitate insurance companies to access the validated and authentic data from various touch points on a real-time basis.
- The platform will interface for the intermediaries and agents to sell policies and provide services to policyholders, among others, and reduce paperwork.

- **Need of the scheme:**

- Currently, there are hundreds of insurance schemes in the life and non-life sectors.
- Customers have no idea who is offering the best deal and the pros and cons of different schemes.
- Bima Sugam will enable them to identify a suitable scheme for the customers in a single platform.

- **Will the physical mode go away?**

- Customers will open an insurance account and the policies will be stored in this account, thus obviating the need for physical documents.
- The paperwork involved in buying a policy will also come down.
- Settlement of claims and renewal of policies will also become faster as paperwork is reduced drastically, making it easier for the customers.

- **What is IRDAI?**

- The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) is an autonomous and statutory body which is responsible for managing and regulating insurance and re-insurance industry in India.
- Irdai is a 10-member body-
- a chairman,
- five full-time members and
- four part-time members.
- It was constituted under an Act of Parliament in 1999.
- Headquarters: Hyderabad.
- Role:
- It has to protect the interests of insurance policy holders and ensure that they are treated in a just manner.
- It also has to monitor policy issuers to ensure that the common man's interests are not subverted.

- *Source → The Hindu*