1. RAKHIGARHI TO BE DEVELOPED AS AN ICONIC SITE

Topic: Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

Context:
- Union Budget (2020-21) has proposed to develop Rakhigarhi (Hisar district, Haryana) as an iconic site.
- 4 other archaeological sites in Hastinapur (Uttar Pradesh), Shivsagar (Assam), Dholavira (Gujarat) and Adichanallur in (Tamil Nadu) will also be developed as iconic sites with onsite museums.

About Rakhigarhi:
- Rakhigarhi is the largest Harappan site in the Indian subcontinent.
- Other large sites of Harappan civilization on Indian sub-continent are Harappa, Mohenjodaro and Ganveriwala in Pakistan and Dholavira (Gujarat) in India.
- At Rakhigarhi, the excavations are being done to trace its beginnings and to study its gradual evolution from 6000 BCE (Pre-Harappan phase) to 2500 BCE.
- The site was excavated by Amarendra Nath of ASI.

About the major findings at the site:
- The archaeological excavations revealed the mature Harappan phase represented by planned township having mud-brick as well as burnt-brick houses with a proper drainage system.
- A cylindrical seal with 5 Harappan characters on one side and a symbol of an alligator on the other is an important find from this site.
- The ceramic industry represented by red ware, which included dish-on-stand, vase, perforated jar among others.
- Blades; terracotta and shell bangles, beads of semi precious stones, and copper objects; animal figurines, toy cart frame and wheel of terracotta; bone points; inscribed steatite seals and sealings.
- Animal sacrificial pit lined with mud-brick and triangular and circular fire altars on the mud floor have also been excavated that signifies the ritual system of Harappans.
- The excavations have yielded a few extended burials, which certainly belong to a very late stage, maybe the medieval times.
- Recently, a study of DNA from skeletal remains excavated from the Harappan cemetery at Rakhigarhi found that the people in the Harappan Civilization have an independent origin.
- This study negates the theory of the Harappans having Steppe pastoral or ancient Iranian farmer ancestry.

About Harappan Civilization:
- It is also known as Indus Valley Civilization.
It flourished around 2,500 BC, in the western part of South Asia, in contemporary Pakistan and Western India.

The Indus Valley was home to the largest of the four ancient urban civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, and China.

In the 1920s, the Archaeological Department of India carried out excavations in the Indus valley wherein the ruins of the two old cities, viz. Mohenjodaro and Harappa were unearthed.

2. INQUIRY INTO STUDY ON BATS AND BAT-HUNTERS

Topic: Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of Ethics in human actions; dimensions of ethics; ethics in private and public relationships.

Context:
- The government has ordered an inquiry into a study conducted in Nagaland by researchers from China, US, and India on bats and humans carrying antibodies to deadly viruses like Ebola.
- The study is investigated for how the scientists were allowed to access live samples of bats and bat hunters (humans) without due permission.
- The inquiry comes at a time when people worldwide are grappling with the spread of novel coronavirus (nCoV) from China.

About the study:
- Bats are harvested in an annual ritual by a Naga Tribe in Nagaland.
- The study conducted research on individuals who participated in the ritual.
The Nagaland study suggests bats in South Asia act as a reservoir host of a diverse range of filoviruses, and filovirus spillover occurs through human exposure to these bats.

Spillover effect means the virus seems to have moved from bats to humans in one event and after this moved from one human to another.

Northeast India is a region with no historical record of Ebola virus. But, this study has found the presence of filovirus (ex. ebolavirus, marburg virus) reactive antibodies in both human (ex. bat hunters) and bat populations implying zoonotic spread.

However, the potential virus present in bats may not be an exact copy of the virus responsible for various outbreaks.

About Filovirus:
- Filoviruses belong to a virus family called Filoviridae.
- Filovirus is a filamentous RNA virus of a genus which causes severe hemorrhagic fever in humans and nonhuman primates.
- 3 genera of this virus family have been identified: Cuevavirus, Marburgvirus and Ebolavirus.

About Diseases linked to bats:
- All bats can carry viruses.
- Many high-profile epidemics have been traced to bats.
  - Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) antibodies were found in insectivorous bats.
  - Ebola antibodies were found in Hammer-headed fruit bat.
  - Indian Flying Fox, hosts over 50 viruses.
  - Rabies
- With around 1,200 species, bats comprise 20% of the earth’s mammalian diversity.
- Long periods of flying raises the temperatures of bats, boosting their immune responses and helps them survive the microbes’ pathogenic effects.
- Given the widespread challenges form the newly discovered viruses, it must be ensured that all medical studies in the country adhere to strict norms.

Steeped in secrecy
Researchers from the U.S., China and India conducted the study on bats and humans carrying antibodies to deadly viruses like Ebola
- The study found the presence of filovirus-reactive antibodies in human and bat populations in northeast India
- Bats often carry Ebola, rabies, marburg and the SARS coronavirus
- The study suggested that bats in South Asia act as a reservoir host of a diverse range of filoviruses
- For the study done in 2017, 85 individuals participating in an annual bat harvest at Mimi, Nagaland, were picked
3. WATERHOLES REVIVAL IN BANDIPUR TIGER RESERVE

**Topic:** Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

**Context:**
- Prolonged monsoon and unseasonal rains have helped to rejuvenate the waterholes in Bandipur Tiger Reserve, Karnataka.
- There are **370 big and small waterholes** (a depression in which water collects from where animals usually drink) in Bandipur and **85% of them are full**.

**Background:**
- At Bandipur, majority of waterholes dry up by **February and March** leading to severe water stress situation for animals. But this year, it is expected that the depletion of water levels will take a little longer.
- Also, in the areas of water stress, **37 solar-powered borewells** have been arranged that will function to replenish the waterholes periodically to further minimise the water scarcity.

**About Bandipur Tiger Reserve:**
- **Bandipur Tiger Reserve** was established in **1973** under Project Tiger.
- In **1985**, by including adjacent areas from **Venugopala Wildlife Park**, it was enlarged and named as **Bandipur National Park**.
- The Tiger Reserve is situated in **two contiguous districts** (Mysore and Chamarajanagar) of Karnataka and is located at the tri-junction area of the States of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.
- It forms a part of **Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve**.
- Bandipur Tiger Reserve lies in one of the **richest biodiversity areas** of the country.
- It is surrounded by:
  - **Mudumalai Tiger Reserve** in the South,
  - **Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary** in the South-west &
  - The **Kabini Reservoir** separates the Bandipur and **Nagarahole Tiger Reserve** on the North-west.

**Highlights:**
- The Reserve is endowed with rich floral and faunal diversity and is recognized as one of the **Mega Biodiversity Areas** in the country.
- The **Tiger and the Elephants** are the **flagship** (iconic or symbolic species for a defined habitat, issue, campaign or environmental cause) and **umbrella** (species selected for making conservation-related decisions) species for the conservation of all the biota that this ecosystem represents.
- The Bandipur along with Nagarahole, Mudumalai, Sathyamangalam & Wayanad constitutes the **single largest Wild population of Tigers in the world**.
• This landscape comprises of **21% of the total forested area** of the Western Ghats and holds **one-eighth** of the world’s Tiger population (**one-fourth** of India’s Tiger population).
• This Landscape is also home to the **single largest Asian Elephant population in the world** and is part of the **Mysore Elephant Reserve (MER)**.
• The park is located between the **Kabini river in the north** and the **Moyar river in the south**.
• The **Nugu river runs** through the park.
• The highest point in the park is on a hill called **Himavadd Gopalswamy Betta**.

### 4. FLAME-THROATED BULBUL

**Topic:** Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

**Context:**
- The flame-throated bulbul, also called the **Rubigula (State bird of Goa)**, has been chosen as the **mascot of the 36th National Games**.
- The 36th National Games will be held between October 20 and November 4 in the year 2020.

**About Flame-Throated Bulbul:**
- The Flame-throated Bulbul is **endemic to southern peninsular India** where it is locally distributed in southern Andhra Pradesh, eastern Karnataka, Goa, Orissa, eastern Kerala and northern Tamil Nadu.
• The Flame-throated Bulbul prefer habitats like rocky, scrub-covered hills mostly in the Eastern Ghats and central peninsular India but also in some places in the Western Ghats.
• IUCN status: Least Concern.
• India’s Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: It is a Schedule – IV bird.

About Schedules under Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:
• Schedule I and part II of Schedule II provide absolute protection - offences under these are prescribed the highest penalties.
• Species listed in Schedule III and Schedule IV are also protected, but the penalties are much lower.
• Schedule V includes the animals which may be hunted.
• The specified endemic plants in Schedule VI are prohibited from cultivation and planting.

5. 34TH SURAJKUND INTERNATIONAL CRAFTS MELA

Topic: Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

Context:
• The President of India inaugurated the 34th Surajkund International Crafts Mela in Surajkund, Haryana on February 1, 2020.
• The Mela is organized by the Surajkund Mela Authority & Haryana Tourism in collaboration with Union Ministries of Tourism, Textiles, Culture and External Affairs.

About the mela:
• The Surajkund Mela is unique as it showcases the richness and diversity of the handicrafts, handlooms and cultural fabric of India, & is the largest crafts fair in the world.
• The Mela was **initiated in 1987** to promote the pool of skilled artisans, who used indigenous technology, but were suffering due to the cheaper machine-made imitations.
• The fair was upgraded to an international level in **2013**.
• **Himachal Pradesh** is the ‘Theme State’ and **Uzbekistan** is the ‘Partner Nation’ for the Year 2020.
• **A record number of 20 countries participated** in the Mela in **2015** when **Lebanon** was the **partner nation** and **Chhattisgarh** was the **theme state**.
• Every year, each theme state constructs a replica of one of the most popular monuments of its state to be displayed as a Commemorative Structure in the Mela Grounds.
• **England** will participate for the **first time** in the Surajkund mela.

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**6. MISSING WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN INDIA**

**Topic:** Social empowerment.

**Context:**
• Recently, the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** has released a study on **missing persons (especially on women and children)** in India.
• The analysis was **directed by the Supreme Court of India in 2019** to identify the areas prone to **child and women trafficking**.

**Background:**
• Some parts of the country report higher incidents of missing children and women which could be one of the sources, transit or destination for child /women trafficking.
• The data for the study has been taken from the annual **Crime in India (CII) report** compiled by the NCRB for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018.

**About the global scenario:**
• The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Global report 2018 on trafficking in persons indicates that the vast majority of the detected victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation are females.
• More than half of the victims of trafficking for forced labour are men and 35% of them are females.
• The reasons for missing include mental illness, miscommunication, misadventure, domestic violence, and being a victim of crime.
• Whereas the common cause of trafficking is forced marriage, child labour, domestic help and sexual exploitation etc.

About the National Scenario:
• Maharashtra registered the maximum number of missing women followed by West Bengal.
• Maharashtra, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh are three most vulnerable states.
• Mumbai and Pune (Maharashtra), Kolkata (West Bengal) and Indore (Madhya Pradesh) recorded the highest number of such incidents.
• The number of missing children is maximum in the State of Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Delhi and Bihar.
• Indore reported the highest number of missing children.
• Whereas West Bengal’s Nadia district, bordering Bangladesh, showed a steep increase from 291 missing children reports in the year 2017 to 474 in 2018.
1. Consider the following statements about National Crime Record Bureau:

1. The National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) was set-up in 1986 under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
2. It functions as a repository of information on crime and criminals so as to assist the investigators in linking crime to the perpetrators.
3. It was set up based on the recommendations of the National Police Commission (1977-1981) and the MHA’s Task Force (1985).

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1 and 2 only
   b) 1 and 3 only
   c) 2 and 3 only
   d) All of the above

Solution: D

12TH ON CRIME CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of crime</th>
<th>Incidents</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>105</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>3,696</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kidnapping &amp; Abduction</td>
<td>368</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extortion</td>
<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dowry death</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arms Act</td>
<td>1,260</td>
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<td>Cyber Crime</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stalking</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Harassment</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total number of crimes 12,518
Number of violent crimes 775
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