

1. UNESCO's World Heritage List

Topic: Art and Culture



In News: Santiniketan in West Bengal has been recommended for inclusion in UNESCO's World Heritage List.

More on the Topic

- The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), a France-based international non-governmental organization, made the recommendation.
- The ICOMOS is an advisory body to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, comprising experts, representatives from local authorities, heritage organizations, and companies.
- Visva-Bharati, the university built by the Nobel Laureate poet, has already received the Heritage tag. Now it will be the town of Santiniketan to follow suit.

About Santi Niketan:

- It was originally a place bought by Rabindranath Tagore's father, Debendranath Tagore, and later developed into a university by Rabindranath Tagore himself.
- The Santiniketan campus is adorned with splendid sculptures, frescoes, murals, and paintings created by renowned artists such as **Rabindranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose, Ramkinkar, Binodbehari Mukhopadhyay, and others.**
- Varshamangal, the festival of rains, is celebrated during August/September.
- Santiniketan celebrates unique festivals like Briksharopan (festival of Planting Saplings) and Halakarshan (festival of Plowing the Fields) on the 22nd and 23rd days of Sravana (August), respectively.

About World Heritage Sites:

- World Heritage Sites are landmarks or areas of **outstanding universal value that are recognized and protected by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).**
- These sites are selected based on their cultural, historical, or natural significance and are considered to be part of the common heritage of humanity.
- There are over 1,100 World Heritage Sites located in more than 160 countries.

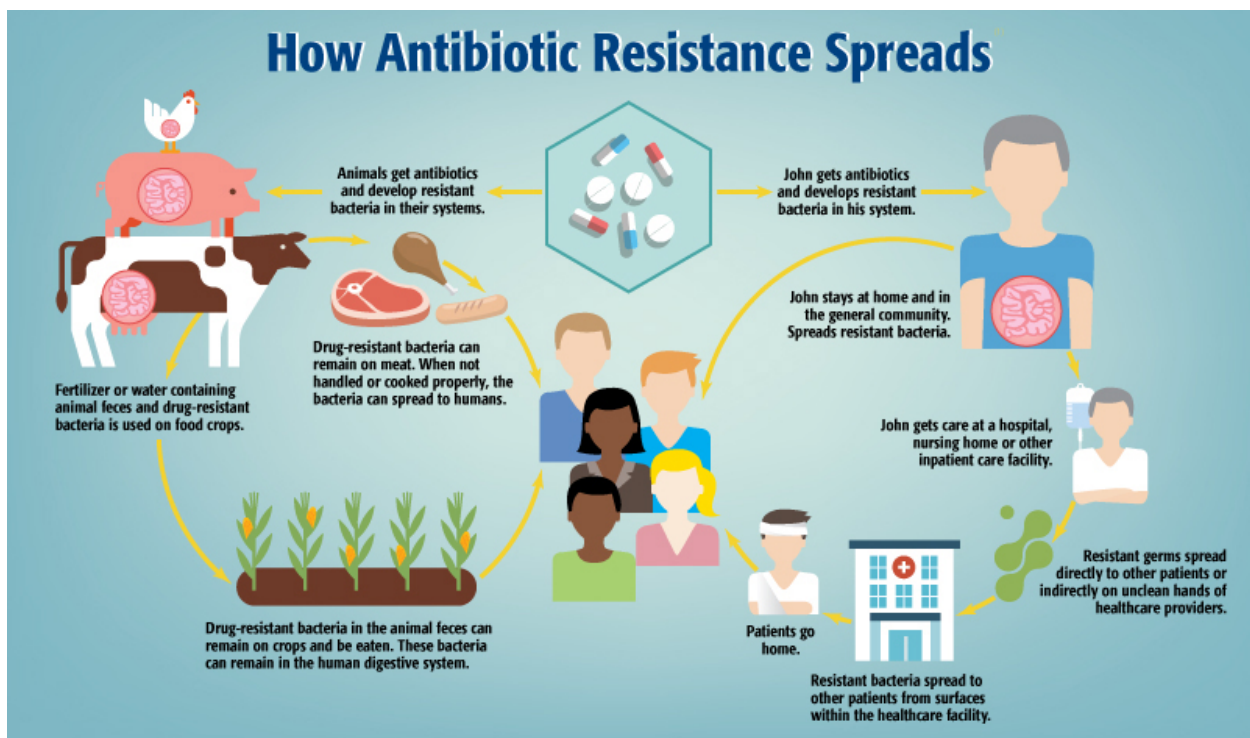
Indian World Heritage Sites:

- There are **40 World Heritage Sites In India**. The first site listed as a World Heritage site in India was Agra Fort in 1983.
- The same year, the Taj Mahal, Ajanta Caves, and Ellora Caves were inscribed on the list by the World Heritage Committee.
- Recently, an important Indus valley civilization, Dholavira, was added to the list of the UNESCO World Heritage sites in India, after which India entered the super 40 club.

Source: Indian Express

2. Anti Microbial Resistance

Topic: Health



In News: WHO, in partnership with the Global AMR R&D Hub, has released a report for G7 Finance and Health Ministers detailing progress on incentivizing the development of new antibacterial treatments.

More on the Topic:

- The new WHO report (**Incentivising the Development of new antibacterial treatments 2023**) highlights progress in addressing antimicrobial resistance (AMR) but also identifies gaps in ensuring a robust pipeline of antibiotic treatments.



About Anti Microbial Resistance:

- Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) refers to the ability of microorganisms, such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites, **to withstand the effects of drugs that were previously effective in treating infections** caused by them.
- In simple terms, it means that **the microorganisms become resistant to the drugs, rendering them less effective or completely ineffective in fighting infections.**

Why AMR is a threat:

- AMR is a **growing global health concern because it limits the effectiveness of existing antimicrobial drugs**, leading to longer durations of illness, increased healthcare costs, and higher mortality rates.
- Some common examples of antimicrobial drugs include antibiotics, antivirals, antifungals, and antiparasitic medications.

Factors contributing to the development and spread of antimicrobial resistance:

- **Overuse and misuse of antimicrobial drugs:** For example, prescribing antibiotics for viral infections or using them as growth promoters in animals.
- **Poor infection prevention and control practices:** Inadequate hygiene measures in healthcare settings, improper sanitation, and poor infection control practices contribute to the spread of resistant microorganisms.
- **Lack of new drug development:** There has been a decline in the discovery and development of new antimicrobial drugs, which limits treatment options against resistant infections.

Way Ahead:

- **Promoting appropriate antimicrobial use:** Encouraging rational and evidence-based use of antimicrobial drugs in both humans and animals can help slow down the development of resistance.
- **Enhancing infection prevention and control.**
- **Supporting research** for the discovery of new antimicrobial drugs and alternative treatments, as well as diagnostic tools, is crucial to combat AMR.
- **Establishing surveillance systems** to monitor the occurrence and spread of antimicrobial resistance.
- **Raising awareness about AMR,** its causes, and prevention.
- **Cooperation among countries, organizations, and stakeholders** is essential to address AMR on a global scale, as resistant microorganisms can spread across borders.

Source: WHO

3.ECL-based loan loss provisioning norms

Topic: Economy



In News: Lenders have sought a one-year extension from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for implementation of the Expected Credit Loss (ECL)-based loan loss provisioning framework.

More on the Topic:

- The Reserve Bank of India has proposed a new framework for loan loss provisioning that requires banks to estimate expected credit losses based on forward-looking estimations.
- This shift moves away from the current method where loss provisions are made after a default.

About ECL:

- ECL is a method to assess and estimate losses on credit given by a bank before an asset turns bad.
- Under the ECL norms, banks will be required to classify financial assets (primarily loans, including irrevocable loan commitments, and investments classified as held-to-maturity or available-for-sale) into one of the three categories – Stage 1, Stage 2, and Stage 3, depending upon the assessed credit losses on them, at the time of initial recognition as well as on each subsequent reporting date and make necessary provisions.
- **Stage 1:** Financial assets that have not had a significant increase in credit risk or with low credit risk at reporting date.
- **Stage 2:** Financial instruments that have had a significant increase in credit risk but that don't have objective evidence of impairment.
- **Stage 3:** Financial assets that have objective evidence of impairment at reporting date.
- The RBI also proposed to introduce a transitional arrangement for introduction of ECL norms in order to avoid a capital shock.

Source: Hindu

4. Endosulfan

Topic: Environment and Ecology



In News: Supreme Court transfers endosulfan case to Kerala HC for monitoring government's medical and palliative measures for victim.

More on the Topic:

- Endosulfan is an **organochlorine insecticide and acaricide that was widely used for pest control in agriculture.**
- It is a **highly toxic chemical that poses significant risks to human health** and the environment. Due to its harmful effects, endosulfan has been banned or severely restricted in many countries.
- **Endosulfan acts as a neurotoxin**, affecting the central nervous system of insects, mites, and other pests.
- However, it can also have adverse effects on non-target organisms, including mammals, birds, fish, and beneficial insects.
- **It is highly persistent in the environment and can bioaccumulate in organisms**, leading to long-term exposure and potential harm to ecosystems.
- Numerous studies have linked Endosulfan exposure to a range of health problems in humans.
- Short-term exposure to high doses can cause **acute poisoning, leading to symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, headache, dizziness, and even seizures.**
- Long-term exposure, even at low levels, has been associated with various health effects, **including reproductive disorders, developmental abnormalities, hormonal disruptions, and an increased risk of certain cancers.**

Source: Indian Express



5. Khasi Tribes

Topic: Art and Culture



In News: A tribal council's order not to issue a Scheduled Tribe (ST) certificate to any Khasi person who adopts the surname of her or his father has triggered a war of words in matrilineal Meghalaya.

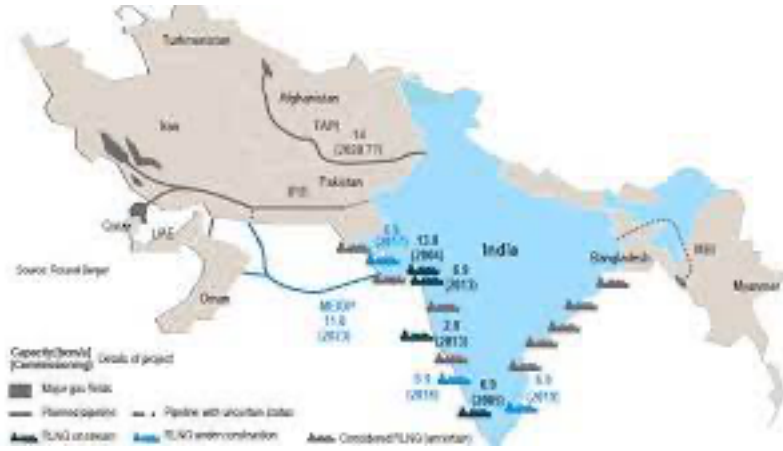
More on the Topic:

- The Khasis, numbering about 1.39 lakh, **are one of the three indigenous matrilineal communities in the northeastern State. The other two are Garos and Jaintias.**
- Khasis follow a matrilineal system of inheritance and youngest daughter or “Ka Khadduh” is eligible to inherit the property.
- Khasis are now mostly Christians but before that, they believed in a Supreme Being, The Creator – U Blei Nongthaw.
- Their festivals include Nongkrem Dance and Shad Suk Mynsiem.

Source: Business Standard

6. Middle East to India Deepwater Pipeline

Topic: International Relations



In News: South Asia Gas Enterprise (SAGE), an international consortium of companies in deepwater pipeline projects, has sought the support of ministry of petroleum and others to develop an undersea gas pipeline from Gulf to India.

More on the Topic:

- The proposed 2,000-km-long energy corridor connecting Middle East and India, a \$5 billion project, can lead to an annual saving of about `7,000 crore in comparison with similar quantity of liquefied natural gas (LNG) import.
- SAGE is a joint venture between India and UK based companies.
- Route being looked at is via Oman and UAE through Arabian Sea to avoid geo-politically sensitive regions.
- It will allow options to import gas from Oman, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkmenistan and Qatar.

Source: Business Standard



7. Sea Butterflies

Topic: Environment and Ecology



In News: Sea butterflies are threatened by climate change.

More on the Topic:

- The stunning sea butterflies, **a suborder of sea snails, are tiny creatures that play a big role in the marine ecosystem.**
- But the smallest species in this group found in the Southern Ocean are extremely vulnerable to climate change and their population is shrinking in a warming world.
- The shelled pteropods (group of free-swimming sea snails) live at or very close to the ocean surface.
- Like snails, they **have muscular feet** that they use as flappers to swim around in water, instead of glide on solid surface.
- As the sea absorbs an increasing quantity of carbon dioxide (CO₂) that turns the water more acidic, the thin outer casing, or the 'homes' of these small sea butterflies, dissolve.
- This leaves them exposed, making it difficult for these delicate species to survive.
- The sea butterflies are **included in the Pteropoda order**, and are also included in the informal group Opisthobranchia.

Source: Business Standard
