

January – 06

TNPSC BITS

- ❖ The Eminent Bharatanatyam exponent Shanta Dhananjayan was conferred the title of Nritya Kalanidhi at the 13th dance festival inaugurated held at Chennai.
- ❖ The Group of researchers at Nagpur-based Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology have developed a new technique which promises to help produce high value graphene from discarded dry cells batteries.
- ❖ The Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Communications and Minister of State for Railways Manoj Sinha released a Commemorative Postage Stamp on Rajkumar Shukla at New Delhi.
 - He made a seminal contribution culminating in the launch of the Champaran Satyagraha in 1917 by Mahatma Gandhi.
- ❖ The HDFC Mutual Fund has surpassed ICICI Prudential MF to regain top position after two years as the largest asset management company (AMC).
- ❖ Pakistan has decided to withdraw the facility of on-arrival visas for Afghan nationals citing security risks and the spike in terror attacks.
- ❖ The Ministry of Rural Development Signs MoU with Maruti Suzuki India Ltd for Training Rural Youth for Skill Development Under Deendayal upadhyaya grameen kaushalya yojana (Ddu-Gky).
- ❖ The New NASA research confirms that Saturn is losing its iconic rings at the maximum rate estimated from Voyager 1 & 2 observations made decades ago.
 - The rings are being pulled into Saturn by gravity as a dusty rain of ice particles under the influence of Saturn's magnetic field.
- ❖ The Andhra Pradesh government has launched works for erection of the first radial gate - the 41st one - at the Polavaram project site.
 - The state hopes that the project works would be completed by May 2019 and water would be released to canals under gravity by December 2019.
- ❖ The Polavaram multi-purpose irrigation project is all set to break the Guinness Book record in terms of using the highest volume of concrete in a given day.
- ❖ The famous dal lake in Srinagar is frozen. The city recently witnessed the lowest temperature ever in 11 years at minus 7.6 degree.
- ❖ The Government of India has notified a High-level committee of nine members under the chairmanship of M.P. Bezbarauah for implementation of Clause VI of the Assam Accord.



INTERNATIONAL

Panj Tirath site declared as National Heritage

- ❖ The provincial Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government in the northwest Pakistan has declared the ancient Hindu religious site of Panj Tirath in Peshawar as national heritage.



- ❖ The KP Directorate of Archaeology and Museums issued a notification under the KP Antiquities Act 2016.
- ❖ Panj Tirath derives its name from the five pools of water in the site which also has a temple.

New peace agreement

- ❖ The ceasefire between Yemen's Houthi rebels and forces loyal to President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi in the port city of Hodeida came into existence on December 18.
- ❖ The agreement was reached in the UN-mediated talks held in Stockholm.
- ❖ According to the agreement, all combatants should withdraw from Hodeida in 21 days.
- ❖ The UN observers will set up a monitoring team of government and rebel representatives to oversee the peace.

ENVIRONMRNT

Green – Ag Project

- ❖ The Government has launched the
 - “Green – Ag: Transforming Indian Agriculture for global environmental benefits and the conservation of critical biodiversity and forest landscapes” in association with Global Environment Facility (GEF).
- ❖ The project would be implemented in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in high-conservation-value landscapes of 5 States,
 - Madhya Pradesh - Chambal Landscape
 - Mizoram - Dampa Landscape
 - Odisha - Similipal Landscape
 - Rajasthan - Desert National Park Landscape
 - Uttarakhand - Corbett-Rajaji Landscape.
- ❖ The Green-Ag project seeks to integrate biodiversity, climate change and sustainable land management objectives and practices into Indian agriculture.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Apollo 8 - 50th anniversary

- ❖ NASA's 1st flight to moon, Apollo 8, marks 50th anniversary on December 21, 2018.
- ❖ It was the second manned spaceflight mission in the United States Apollo space program, was launched on December 21, 1968.
- ❖ It became the first manned spacecraft to leave low Earth orbit, reach the Moon, orbit it, and safely return.
- ❖ The 3-astronaut crew Frank Borman, James Lovell, and William Anders became the first humans to travel beyond low Earth orbit, see Earth as a whole planet, and enter the gravity well of another celestial body.



Korolev Crater

- ❖ Korolev Crater is an icy- crater on Mars found recently.
- ❖ It was captured by European Space Agency's (ESA) Mars Express mission.



- ❖ The crater floor can reach depths of two kilometres (1.2 miles) below its rim, deeper than Earth's Grand Canyon.

- ❖ The Mars Express Mission was launched back in June 2003 and entered orbit around the red planet in December of the same year.
- ❖ Since then, the probe has been surveying the surface of Mars using a high-resolution camera as well as other tools like radars and spectrometers.

STATES

Prana Raksha app of police

- ❖ The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister has recently launched the Prana Raksha web application developed by the Chittoor police at Kuppam.
- ❖ The app has been designed to save the lives of road accident victims and reach out to women in distress.

Buddhist site museum at Lalitgiri

- ❖ One of the earliest Buddhist settlements in Odisha, Lalitgiri, where excavations have yielded ancient seals and inscriptions, has been converted into a museum.
- ❖ Located in Cuttack district, it will be the third site museum of the Bhubaneswar circle of the Archaeological Survey of India after Ratnagiri and Konark.
- ❖ The Excavations at Lalitgiri have yielded the remains of four monasteries, showing cultural continuity from the post-Mauryan period till the 13th century CE.



PERSONALITIES, AWARDS AND EVENTS

Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards

- ❖ The 13th edition of the Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards was held at New Delhi.



- ❖ The Union Home Minister presented awards to 29 winners in 18 categories, across print, broadcast and purely-digital, for outstanding work done in 2017.
- ❖ The Indian Express Group instituted the Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards in 2005.
- ❖ The award has been instituted as part of the centenary year celebrations of Indian Express Group's founder, Ramnath Goenka.

Journalists – Tamil Nadu	Media	Category of Award	For
M Gunasekaran	News 18	REGIONAL LANGUAGES	For his reports on fisherfolk during Cyclone Ockhi
Vijay Kumar S	The Hindu	INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING	For his reports on how taxmen alerted officials about payoffs in the Tamil Nadu gutka scam



Sandhya Ravishankar	Thewire.in	ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING	For her investigative reports on illegal beach sand mining in Tamil Nadu.
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