

**INDIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE, HISTORY****Battle of KanglaTongbi**

The Battle of KanglaTongbi recently completed its platinum jubilee.

**Battle of KanglaTongbi**

- It is considered one of the fiercest battles of World War II, was fought by Ordnance personnel of 221 Advance Ordnance Depot (AOD) on the night of 6/7 April 1944.
- Japanese forces had planned a three pronged offensive to capture Imphal and the surrounding areas.
- At KanglaTongbi, a small but determined detachment of 221 AOD put up stiff resistance against the advancing Japanese forces.
- The position of 221 AOD was not at all sound from a tactical point of view and was exposed to the enemy from all sides and had to rely on its own combatant manpower for its defence.
- However their combatant role shook the enemy and forced the Japanese to withdraw leaving many dead.

**Significance of the battle**

- This battle is one of those fought during the Battle of Imphal that shook imperialist motives of Japan and made them reconsider.
- Japanese armies attempted to destroy the Allied forces at Imphal and invade India, but were driven back into Burma with heavy losses.
- The defeat was the largest defeat to that date in Japanese history with many of the Japanese deaths resulting from starvation, disease and exhaustion suffered during their retreat.

**Centenary of JallianwalaBagh Massacre**

The upcoming 13th of April will mark centenary of the infamous JallianwalaBagh Massacre that shook entire nation.

It has often been said that Britain lost its empire the day when, a hundred years ago when this massacre took place.

**Protesting the contentious Rowlatt Act**

- The act officially known as the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act, 1919 was passed in 1919 by the Imperial Legislative Council.
- It had authorised the British government to arrest anybody suspected of terrorist activities.
- It also authorised the government to detain such people arrested for up to 2 years without trial.
- It empowered the police to search a place without a warrant. It also placed severe restrictions on the freedom of the press.
- The primary intention colonial govt. was to repress the growing nationalist movement in the country.
- The British were also afraid of a Ghadarite revolution in Punjab and the rest of the country.

**JallianwalaBagh Massacre**

- The massacre took place on 13 April 1919 when troops of the British Indian Army under the command of Col. Reginald Dyer fired rifles into a crowd of Indians.
- The civilians had assembled for a peaceful protest to condemn the arrest and deportation of two national leaders, Satya Pal and SaifuddinKitchlew.
- Dyer without warning ordered his troops to fire at the unarmed crowd which included children as well.
- The indiscriminate firing went on for about 10 minutes which resulted in the deaths of at least 1000 people and injured more than 1500 people.

**Aftermath**

- In protest against the massacre Rabindranath Tagore gave up his knighthood.
- Gandhiji relinquished his title 'Kaiser-e-hind' bestowed on him by the British for his services during the Boer War in South Africa.
- Michael O'Dwyer, the then Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab, who had approved the actions of Dyer, was assassinated by Udham Singh in London in 1940 as revenge against the massacre.
- The heroic treatment to Dyer's heinous act again set a benchmark of colonial arrogance.

**Hunter Commission**

- In October 1919 the Secretary of State for India, Edwin Montagu, ordered the formation of a committee of inquiry into the events in Punjab.
- Referred to as the Disorders Inquiry Committee, it was later more widely known as the Hunter Commission (Not to be confused with Hunter Education Commission).
- Still there are long-standing demands in India that Britain should apologize for the massacre.

**ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES****Neelakurinji Blossom**

Experts fear that for next season, the Neelakurinji blossoms may not carpet the hillocks of the Western Ghats in a ravishing purple.

### Neelakurinji

- Kurinji or Neelakurinji (*Strobilanthes kunthiana*) is a shrub that is found in the shola forests of the Western Ghats in South India.
- Nilgiri Hills, which literally means the blue mountains, got their name from the purplish blue flowers of Neelakurinji that blossoms only once in 12 years.
- It is the most rigorously demonstrated, with documented bloomings in 1838, 1850, 1862, 1874, 1886, 1898, 1910, 1922, 1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006 and 2018
- Some Kurinji flowers bloom once every seven years, and then die. Their seeds subsequently sprout and continue the cycle of life and death.
- The Paliyan tribal people living in Tamil Nadu used it as a reference to calculate their age.

### Threats to Neelakurinji

- About 1,000 ha of forestland, grantis and eucalyptus plantations and grasslands have been destroyed in the fire.
- These large-scale wildfires on the grasslands where Neelakurinji (*Strobilanthes kunthiana*) blossomed widely last year after a period of 12 years could have wiped out all the seeds of the endemic flowers.
- There are allegations that the areas coming under the proposed Kurinji sanctuary were set on fire with a motive to destroy the germination of Neelakurinji seeds.
- In the proposed Kurinji sanctuary, there were encroachments and land grabbers wanted to keep the area off the limits of the sanctuary.

### Green Urban Areas

CPWD recently organized National Seminar on “Greenery and Landscaping”.

#### Following recommendations were made during the Seminar:

- Green Urban Areas play an important role in the social and natural sustainability and improve quality of life.
- Greenery and Dense plantation have a major impact on the conservation of energy, and reduce the energy requirement of the building. In order to maintain sustainable environment, pollution free clean air, it is essential to take up the plantation work.
- Cost of land has increased manifold and high rise buildings are coming up, people are getting hardly any area for the greenery. Keeping in view the same, plantation, greenery and other environment friendly applications should be planned around the building by way of dwarf trees, small shrubs, ground covers, hanging baskets, creepers, etc. There is need to adopt wood alternative in building construction. Use of alternate materials like Bamboo needs to be encouraged.
- Orientation and proper training should be imparted to the persons engaged in landscaping and Horticulture, for implementation of the new technologies in this field to save the labour and cost of the project in long run.
- Emphasis should be given for conserving and transplanting indigenous and grown up trees.
- Herbal and medicinal plants need to be encouraged. Herbal plants are useful for keeping the life healthy.
- Application of Organic Manure needs to be adopted for healthy and nutritious food.
- Water conserving irrigation method like drip irrigation, Sprinkler irrigation and pop up system needs to be adopted.
- Plants and greenery help in reducing adverse effects of climate change. Therefore every individual should adopt minimum one tree.
- Green initiative needs to be taken up on a mission mode by every nation, every city, every society and every individual so that future generations may lead happy and healthy life.

#### What are Green Urban Areas/Spaces and why are they significant?

- Green spaces such as parks and sports fields as well as woods and natural meadows, wetlands or other ecosystems, represent a fundamental component of any urban ecosystem.
- Green urban areas facilitate physical activity and relaxation, and form a refuge from noise. Trees produce oxygen, and help filter out harmful air pollution, including airborne particulate matter. Water spots, from lakes to rivers and fountains, moderate temperatures.
- Green spaces also are important to mental health. Having access to green spaces can reduce health inequalities, improve well-being, and aid in treatment of mental illness. Some analysis suggests that physical activity in a natural environment can help remedy mild depression and reduce physiological stress indicators.

### **QUOTE OF THE DAY**

**A dream continues to remain a dream until you fix a deadline to achieve it.**