

ART & CULTURE**Allah Baksh and Mewari Style Painting**

Context: Allah Baksh, a Mewari miniature painter late 17th century, portrayed the Interpretation of Mahabharata in his Painting and is known for his intricate and delightful representation.

About:

- Allah Baksh was a court painter employed by Maharaja Jai Singh of Udaipur during the late 17th century.

Paintings & Portrayal:

- Allah Baksh meticulously depicts the details of the characters' attire, the flora and fauna in the background, and the depiction of magical and mystical happenings in each painting.
- These miniatures encompass a wonderful picture of the Mahabharata, displaying a dialogue between the poet's and painter's linguistic and visual imaginations.

Mewari Style Miniature Painting:**About:**

- Mewar painting was one of the most important schools of Indian miniature painting in the 17th and 18th centuries. It is a Rajasthani school that was founded in the Hindu principality of Mewr (in Rajasthan state).
- It is a highly sophisticated and elaborate style of painting distinguished by its meticulous artistry, brilliant colors, and attention to detail.
- The school's works are distinguished by basic vivid color and strong emotional appeal.
- The relatively large number of paintings with dates and locations of origin allows for a more thorough picture of the development of painting in Mewr than in any other Rajasthan school.

What is Miniature Painting?**About**

- Miniature paintings are colorful handmade paintings very small in size. One of the outstanding features of these paintings is the intricate brushwork which contributes to their unique identity.
- The colors used in the paintings are derived from various natural sources like vegetables, indigo, precious stones, gold and silver.
- They were often painted for either books or albums, on perishable material including paper, palm leaves and cloth.
- The Palas of Bengal are considered the pioneers of miniature painting in India.
- The tradition of miniature paintings was further taken forward by the artists of various Rajasthani schools of painting, including the Kishangarh, Bundi Jaipur, Mewar and Marwar.

Schools of Miniature Painting:

Pala School: The earliest Indian miniature paintings are related to the Pala School dating back to the 8th century A.D.

This school of painting emphasized on the symbolic use of colors and the themes were often taken from the Buddhist tantric rituals.

Jain School: The Jain School of painting gained prominence in the 11th century A.D when religious texts like 'Kalpa Sutra' and 'Kalkacharya Katha' were portrayed in the form of miniature paintings.

Mughal School: The amalgamation of Indian paintings and Persian miniature paintings gave rise to the Mughal School of miniature painting.

Interestingly, Persian miniature paintings were largely influenced by Chinese paintings.

Rajasthani School: The decline of the Mughal miniature paintings resulted in the rise of the Rajasthani School. Rajasthani School of painting can be further divided into various schools depending on the region they were created in.

The Mewar School, Marwar School, Hadoti School, Dhundar School, Kangra and Kullu Schools of art are all part of Rajasthani School of painting.

Pahari School: Pahari School of miniature painting emerged in the 17th century A.D. These paintings originated in the kingdoms of North India, in the Himalayan region.

Deccan School: The Deccan School of miniature painting flourished in places like Ahmednagar, Golconda, Tanjore, Hyderabad and Bijapur from 16th to 19th century A.D.

The Deccan School of miniature painting was largely influenced by the rich traditions of the Deccan and the religious beliefs of Turkey, Persia and Iran.

INTERNAL SECURITY**Uniform Anti-terrorism Structure Under NIA for All States**

Context: The Union Home Minister has said that along with a ruthless approach, an uniform anti-terrorism structure should be established under the purview of National Investigation Agency (NIA) in all the States.

What are the recommendations?

- To improve coordination between Central and State agencies, the hierarchy, structure, and standard operating procedure of all anti-terrorism agencies in all states should be made uniform.
- To be successful in the battle against terrorism, all Centre and State authorities should make multidimensional and Artificial Intelligence-based use of the database.

About NIA

- The NIA was constituted in the wake of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack in November 2008. The agency came into existence on December 31, 2008, and started its functioning in 2009.
- The NIA is a central agency which investigates all offences affecting the sovereignty, security and integrity of India, friendly relations with foreign states, and the offences under the statutory laws enacted to implement international treaties.
- Terror Acts: These include terror acts and their possible links with crimes like smuggling of arms, drugs and fake Indian currency and infiltration from across the borders.
- The agency has the power to search, seize, arrest and prosecute those involved in such offences.
- It is headquartered in Delhi.

What is the scope of the NIA's jurisdiction?

- The law under which the agency operates applies throughout India and also to Indian citizens living outside the country; persons in the service of the government wherever they may be posted; persons on ships and aircraft registered in India wherever they may be; and persons who commit a scheduled offence outside of India against an Indian citizen or in the interest of India.

How Does the NIA Conduct an Investigation?

- Section 6 of the Act provides that state governments may refer cases involving scheduled offenses lodged at any police station to the Central government (Union Home Ministry) for NIA investigation.
- When the Central Government discovers that a scheduled offence has been committed in any place outside India to which this Act applies, it has the authority to order the NIA to register the matter and conduct an investigation.
- While investigating any scheduled offence, the agency may additionally investigate any other alleged offence committed by the accused if the offence is related to the scheduled offence.

PRELIM FACTS

1. DAKAR DECLARATION

Context: Ministers from the world's 46 least developed countries (LDC) recently issued a joint Dakar Declaration on Climate Change 2023.

About

- The joint Dakar Declaration on Climate Change 2023 outlines the expectations and priorities of least developed countries for 28th Conference of Parties (COP28) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- IPCC AR6 findings: The ministers emphasised the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Synthesis Report for the Sixth Assessment Reports cycle (IPCC AR6), which show that global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have continued to rise and that global warming is rapidly approaching 1.5°C.
- Role of Least Developed Countries in global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions:
- While LDCs account for more than 14 percent of the global population, they only account for about 1 percent of emissions from fossil fuels and industrial processes, according to the ministers.
- In addition, the countries bear the least historical responsibility for climate change, are forced to adapt beyond their capabilities and are at the forefront of the climate crisis.

2. Drone (Amendment) Rules, 2023

Context: The Ministry of Aviation recently alerted drone pilots of the Drone (Amendment) Rules, 2023. The new restrictions were enacted under the authority afforded by the 1934 Aircraft Act.

About:

Aim:

- To promote and facilitate drone operations across India.
- To make India a global Drone Hub by 2030.
- To encourage more individuals especially in Rural areas and in the Agricultural Sector, to embrace drone technology and its benefits.

Need for the New Rules:

- Earlier having a passport to obtain a Remote Pilot Certificate caused difficulties for many individuals, especially in the Agricultural sector in rural areas.
- To address the issue and liberalize drone operations, government-issued identity proof like Voter ID, Ration Card, or Driving License, and address proof can be used instead of a passport.

3. Project Veer Gatha 3.0

Context: The Ministry of Defence (MoD) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MoE) has now decided to launch Project Veer Gatha 3.0.

About Project Veer Gatha 3.0

- Being a part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, it has been launched in schools to raise awareness about the Gallantry Awards.

What are Gallantry Awards?

These awards honor the acts of bravery and sacrifice of the officers/personnel of the Armed Forces, other lawfully constituted forces, and civilians.

Classification:

1. Classified into two Categories: Wartime Gallantry Awards & Peacetime Gallantry Awards

- **Wartime Gallantry Awards: Param Vir Chakra (PVC), Mahavir Chakra (MVC), Vir Chakra**
- **Peacetime Gallantry Awards: Ashok Chakra, Kirti Chakra, Shaurya Chakra**

Others: Sena Medal, Nao Sena Medal & Vayu Sena Medal: Awarded for acts of exceptional devotion to duty or courage in the Army, Navy & IAF respectively.

Aim:

- To raise awareness about the brave acts and sacrifices of the Gallantry Award winners among school students.

Activities conducted:

- The projects can be interdisciplinary and in various formats like poems, paintings, essays, videos, etc.
- Schools have conducted various projects/activities and have uploaded a total of four best entries from each school on the MyGov portal.
- Virtual/ face-to-face awareness programs/sessions for schools across the country.
- Two editions of the Veer Gatha Project 1.0 and 2.0 have been conducted in 2021 and 2022 respectively.
- The best project is rewarded nationally by the Ministry of Defence on the forthcoming Republic Day.
- During the earlier two editions, 25 winners (Super 25) were selected. However, in the Veer Gatha Project (3.0), 100 winners (Super 100) will be selected.
- Each winner will be awarded a cash prize of Rs.10,000.

4. PUSA-44

Context: The Punjab Chief Minister has announced that the growing of the PUSA-44 paddy type will be prohibited from next year.

About

- PUSA-44 is a Paddy Variety developed in 1993 by the Delhi-based Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).
- By the end of 2010s, it had gained widespread popularity among farmers across the Punjab, covering approximately 70 to 80% of the area under paddy cultivation.
- But by 2018, the Punjab government reduced the area under PUSA-44 to 18 percent of the total area under paddy, but it rebounded to 22 per cent last year.
- Yield: Farmers claim that PUSA-44 yields nearly 85 to 100 mann (34 to 40 quintals) per acre, while other varieties' yield average is 28 to 30 quintals per acre.

Why has the Punjab Agriculture Department Discouraged its Cultivation?

- PUSA-44 is a long-duration variety, taking around 160 days to mature. This is around 35 to 40 days more than other varieties, requiring 5-6 extra cycles of irrigation.
- With Punjab facing severe groundwater depletion and the availability of short-duration paddy varieties, the government aims to conserve one month of irrigation water by banning the variety.
- Additionally, the area under paddy, a water-intensive crop to begin with, continues to grow in the state.
- As many as 102 of the state's 141 agricultural development blocks were declared 'dark zones', in which the rate of groundwater depletion exceeded the rate of recharge.
- Moreover, this variety is also known to exacerbate the long-running issue of stubble burning in the state which, in combination with a variety of factors, contributes to the severe levels of air pollution in most parts of north India during the winter.

- Additionally, PUSA varieties generate around 2 per cent more stubble than short varieties, which becomes a significant concern when cultivated on a large scale.

5. Nobel Prize for Literature 2023

Context: The Nobel Prize for Literature 2023 has been awarded to Norwegian author Jon Olav Fosse, for his “innovative plays and prose which give voice to the unsayable”.

About

- Jon Fosse presented us with ordinary circumstances that we can all relate to.
- In the simplest terms, his severe reduction of words and dramatic action portrays the most profound human emotions of worry and powerlessness.
- Fosse writes in Norwegian Nynorsk, the less widely spoken of the two official dialects of Norwegian.
- In addition to novels, short tales, children's books, poetry, and essays, Fosse has authored about 40 plays.
- Last year, his novel "A New Name: Septology VI-VII," about two painters named Asle but with quite different lives, demons, and preoccupations, was a nominee for the International Booker Prize.
- Fosse's other works include I Am the Wind, Melancholy, Boathouse, and The Dead Dogs.

6. Bekal Fort

Context: Bekal Fort will house Kerala's first public-sector caravan park.

About

- The Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC) will build the caravan park and camp shelter in Bekal, which has also been chosen by the Tourism Department for development as part of film tourism.
- It is a project that aims to attract tourists by highlighting great spots in the state that have been in popular films.
- The KTDC has also proposed caravan parks in Ponmudi, Thiruvananthapuram, and Bolgatty Palace, Kochi.

The Fort of Bekal

- The famous Bekal Fort was erected in the 17th century and is shaped like a huge keyhole.
- Originally built by the ancient Kadampa Dynasty, the Fort has passed through the hands of the Kolathiri Rajas, the Vijayanagara Empire, Tipu Sultan, and eventually the British East India Company.
- An historic mosque near the Fort is supposed to have been built by Tipu Sultan of Mysore.



7. Nobel Prize for Peace 2023

Context: The Norwegian Nobel Committee has awarded Iranian activist Narges Mohammadi the 2023 Nobel Prize for Peace for her fight against the oppression of women in Iran and her fight to promote human rights and freedom for all.

Details

- Mohammadi, who was born in Iran in 1972, is currently detained there on charges of "spreading anti-state propaganda" and slander.
- Mohammadi and her family have historically participated in political activities, dating back to the Iranian Revolution.
- She then went on to study nuclear physics in Qazvin.
- She joined the Center for Human Rights Defenders in Iran, which was created for the elimination of the death penalty by Iranian lawyer Shirin Ebadi.
- Ebadi, by the way, received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003.
- Shirin Ebadi, the first Iranian woman to earn the Nobel Peace Prize, was honored for her contributions to democracy and human rights.

Her work:

- Her book 'White Torture' was published in 2022, while she was recovering from a heart attack and surgery.

- It was an account of life in solitary confinement, featuring interviews with other Iranian women who had been subjected to the punishment.

8. Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)

Context: Russia might revoke its ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

About the CTBT:

- The CTBT is an international pact that prohibits all nuclear explosions, whether military or civilian.
- Despite the fact that it was accepted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1996, it is still in the ratification stage, with 18 nations yet to ratify (the procedure by which a state confirms its permission to be bound by a treaty).
- Although Russia ratified the deal in 2000, the United States has yet to do so.
- All 44 countries specified in Annex 2 of the Treaty must ratify the CTBT before it can enter into force.
- When the CTBT was negotiated, these countries had nuclear power or research reactors.

Eight Annex 2 countries have yet to ratify:

- China,
- The Republic of North Korea,
- Egypt,
- India,
- Iran,
- Israel,
- Pakistan
- The United States of America

ANSWER WRITING

Q. Case Study

A Civil Servant, who was posted at the frontier headquarters in Delhi as Commandant (administration) is accused of engaging in financial irregularities for personal financial gains. It is alleged that he misused his position to influence subordinates to indulge in fraudulent practices related to the booking of Leave Travel Concession (LTC) air tickets. These irregularities involved the use of personal credit cards and the manipulation of LTC tickets, resulting in false claims and misuse of earned mileage points. Discuss the ethical implications of the Civil Servant's involvement in financial irregularities and misuse of his official position. How does this impact public trust and the integrity of the organization?

Introduction:

- The ethical implications of the Civil Servant involvement in financial irregularities and misuse of his official position are significant and far-reaching. Such actions have a profound impact on public trust and the integrity of the organization.

Ethical Implications and its impact on Public Trust:

Violation of Integrity:

- The Civil Servant's involvement in financial irregularities and misuse of his official position constitutes a violation of integrity.
- As a public official, he is expected to act in an honest and trustworthy manner, upholding the principles of integrity, transparency, and accountability.
- By engaging in fraudulent practices for personal financial gains, he has breached the trust placed in him by the organization and the public.

Breach of Public Trust:

- Public officials hold positions of authority and are entrusted with the responsibility of safeguarding public interest.
- When a Civil Servant misuses his official position for personal benefit, it erodes public trust in the organization and the entire public administration system.
- The public expects public officials to act in the best interests of society, and any breach of this trust undermines the credibility and legitimacy of the organization.

Damage to Organizational Reputation:

- The Civil Servant involvement in financial irregularities tarnishes the reputation of the organization, in this case, the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).
- The organization's integrity and credibility are closely tied to the actions of its officials.
- When a high-ranking officer is implicated in unethical practices, it raises questions about the overall ethical culture within the organization and can damage its standing in the eyes of the public and other stakeholders.

Undermining Fairness and Equality:

- Misuse of official position and financial irregularities create an environment of unfairness and inequality.
- When public officials engage in fraudulent practices, they gain personal advantages at the expense of others who may be more deserving.
- This erodes the principles of meritocracy and fairness upon which public administration should be based.

Impact on Employee Morale:

- The actions of the DIG can significantly impact the morale of other employees within the organization.
- When employees witness senior officials engaging in unethical behavior without facing appropriate consequences, it can lead to demoralization, decreased trust in the leadership, and a decline in the commitment to ethical conduct among other employees.
- This can further perpetuate a culture of misconduct and compromise the organization's ability to operate with integrity.

Conclusion:

- The Civil Servant involvement in financial irregularities and misuse of his official position carries significant ethical implications. It undermines public trust, damages the organization's reputation, and raises questions about the overall ethical culture within public administration. Upholding integrity, transparency, and accountability are essential for maintaining public trust and preserving the integrity of the organization. Efforts should be made to address such ethical breaches effectively, restore public confidence, and ensure that mechanisms are in place to prevent future occurrences.

MCQs

- Who won the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize?
a) Nadia Murad
b) Abiy Ahmed
c) Dmitry Murato
d) Narges Mohammadi
- Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a unique mechanism of which organisation:
a) World Trade Organisation (WTO)
b) World Bank
c) UN General Assembly (UNGA)
d) UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC)
- Which sea/ocean was primarily affected by the recent typhoon Koinu?
a) Indian Ocean
b) South China Sea
c) Yellow Sea
d) Coral sea
- Recently, Jon Fosse won the Nobel Prize in which of the following fields?
a) Literature
b) Chemistry
c) Physics
d) Physiology or Medicine
- Consider the following statements about the 'Gut Microbiome':
1. The gut flora largely aids in the digestion of complex carbohydrates and fibre.
2. It can also influence brain function, behaviour, and mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, and stress.
Which of the following assertions is/are true?
a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2
- Consider the following statements in relation to the BlueWalker 3 satellite:
1. It is a prototype spacecraft in low-Earth orbit.
2. The European Space Agency (ESA) owns it.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
a) 1 only
b) 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2
- Consider the following statements about the National Turmeric Board:
1. It focuses on turmeric growers' capacity and skill development.
2. The Government of India appoints the Chairperson of this board.
3. The Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare serves as the nodal entity for funding.
How many of the above statements are correct?
a) Only one
b) Only two
c) All three
d) None
- Consider the following statements regarding Yak Churpi:
1. It is a milk product derived from the indigenous Arunachali yak breed.
2. It has been designated as a Geographical Indication (GI).
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2
- Ichhamati River, recently in news, is a trans-boundary river between India and:
a) Bangladesh
b) China
c) Bhutan
d) Pakistan
- Consider the following statements regarding the Burevestnik Missile:
Take a look at the following statements on the Burevestnik Missile:
1. It is a Russian air-to-air ballistic missile.
2. It is nuclear-powered and can transport a nuclear weapon.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2