

## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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## 11TH CENTURY JAIN SCULPTURES DISCOVERED IN MYSURU DISTRICT

### News

- **Three Jain sculptures** dated to around **11th century CE** were discovered in **Varuna village in Mysore** district recently.

### About

- One of the sculptures is of a **Jain Teerthankara**, but its identity is challenging to ascertain due to effaced or damaged symbols.
- The entire belt comprising **Varuna, Varakodu and Vajamangala** in Mysore, Karnataka were once thriving **Jain centres**.



### About Jainism

- Jainism is **one of the three most ancient religions of India**, with roots that go back to at least the **mid-first century B.C.E.**
- Today, it is still an integral part of Indian culture that teaches that the **path to enlightenment** is through **nonviolence and reducing harm to living things** (including plants and animals).
- Like Hindus and Buddhists, **Jains believe in reincarnation**. This cycle of birth, death, and rebirth is determined by one's karma.

### Philosophy:

- **Ahimsa (Non-violence):** The paramount principle, emphasizing non-violence towards all living beings, both in thought, word, and deed.
- **Aparigraha (Non-possession):** Minimizing attachment to material possessions and practicing detachment from worldly desires.
- **Brahmacharya (Celibacy or ethical sexual conduct):** Promoting responsible and mindful sexual conduct, often interpreted differently by different sects.

- **Satya (Truthfulness):** Speaking truth and avoiding deception in all forms.
- **Anekantavada (Many-sidedness):** Recognizing the multifaceted nature of reality and respecting diverse perspectives.

### Tirthankaras:

- Jains honor **24 Jinas, or Tirthankaras**, spiritual leaders who achieved enlightenment and have been liberated from the cycle of rebirth.
- One of the most influential Jinas was **Mahavira, born Vardhamana**, who is considered the 24th, and final, Jina.

### Do you know?

- Twenty four Jains tirthankaras were identified with their respective sacred symbols, as shown below:

| S.No | Names of Tirthankara | Sacred symbol      | S.No | Names of Tirthankara | Sacred symbol                |
|------|----------------------|--------------------|------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1    | Adinatha             | Bull               | 13   | Vimalanatha          | Boar                         |
| 2    | Ajitanatha           | Elephant           | 14   | Anantanatha          | Eagle                        |
| 3    | Sambhavanath         | Horse              | 15   | Dharmnatha           | Vajra                        |
| 4    | Abinandanatha        | Monkey             | 16   | Shantinatha          | Antelope                     |
| 5    | Sumantinatha         | Heron or red goose | 17   | Kunthunatha          | Goat                         |
| 6    | Padmaprabha          | Padma              | 18   | Aranatha             | Nandyavarta or fish          |
| 7    | Suparshvanatha       | Swastika           | 19   | Mallinatha           | Kalasha                      |
| 8    | Chandraprabha        | Crescent moon      | 20   | Munisuvarta          | Tortoise                     |
| 9    | Pushpadanta          | Crocodile          | 21   | Naminatha            | Blue lotus                   |
| 10   | Shitalanatha         | Shrivatsa          |      | Neminathji           | Conch                        |
| 11   | Shreyasanatha        | Rhino              | 23   | Parasvanatha         | Sesnaga (seven headed snake) |
| 12   | Vasupujya            | Buffalo            | 24   | Mahavira             | Lion                         |

### Different Sects:

- **Digambara:** Emphasize strict asceticism and nudity for monks.
- **Svetambara:** Monks wear white robes and emphasize a more moderate approach to asceticism.

### Jain Scriptures:

- Fourteen Purvas, Ang Agams, Upang Agams, Chheda Sutras, Mul Sutras, Chulika Sutras and Prakirnas.

### Impact and Contributions:

- Jainism has influenced Indian cultural values like **vegetarianism and ahimsa**.
- Jain architects and sculptors have left a **legacy of stunning temples and artwork. Eg. Gomateshwara Temple, Karnataka**
- Jain principles inspire **movements for peace, animal welfare, and environmental protection**.

Source: **TH**



## VISIT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER TO RUSSIA

### In News

- Minister of External Affairs of India completed his five days visit to Russia

### Key Highlights of Visit

- India and Russia discussed a wide range of issues, including the Indo-Pacific region, Ukraine, and the Israel-Gaza conflict.
- They have signed a **Protocol on Consultations** for the period of **next four years** from 2024 to 28 to make progress in **economic cooperation**, energy trade, connectivity, military-technical cooperation, and people-to-people exchanges.
- They signed some “very important” agreements related to the construction of the future power-generating units of the **Kudankulam nuclear power plant**.

#### Do you know ?

- The **Kudankulam nuclear power plant**, India's largest, is being built in Tamil Nadu with the technical assistance of **Russia**.
  - The construction began in March 2002.
- Since February 2016, the first power unit of the Kudankulam NPP has been steadily operating at its design capacity of 1,000 MW.
- The plant is expected to start operating at full capacity in 2027

### India-Russia ties

- Historical** : India started building a strong relationship with the **then-Soviet Union in the mid-1950s** during the **Cold War**, then strengthened those ties over conflicts with Pakistan.
  - The Soviet Union helped mediate a cease-fire between India and Pakistan to end the 1965 war over control of the disputed Himalayan territory of Kashmir.
  - During **India's war with Pakistan** in December 1971, the **Soviet Union used its veto power** to **support India** at the United Nations.
- Indo-Russian Friendship and Cooperation**: India and the Soviet Union signed a treaty of peace, friendship, and cooperation in August 1971.
  - Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, it was replaced by the Treaty of **Indo-Russian Friendship and Cooperation** in January 1993.
- Declaration on the **India-Russia Strategic Partnership” was signed** in 2000 .
- Security Council Cooperation**: India and Russia maintain close cooperation between the Security Council secretariats led by NSA .
  - They hold regular bilateral consultations, besides meeting on the sidelines of various multilateral events
- Trade and Economic Cooperation** : The primary mechanism at the government level for enhancing trade and economic cooperation is the **India-Russia Intergovernmental Commission for Trade, Economic, Scientific & Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC)**.
  - India-Russia Strategic Economic Dialogue (IRSED) is another G2G mechanism
  - In April-August 2022, the bilateral trade soared to an all-time high of \$18.23 billion with India's imports of \$17.23 billion, while India's exports to Russia amounted to \$992.73 million.
  - India's import of Russian crude oil** has gone up significantly despite increasing disquiet over it in many Western countries.
- Defence**: India has longstanding and wide-ranging cooperation with Russia in the field of defence.
  - India-Russia military technical cooperation has evolved from a buyer-seller framework to one involving joint research, development and production of advanced defence technologies and systems.
  - India bought its first aircraft carrier, INS Vikramaditya, from Russia in 2004. The carrier had served in the former Soviet Union and later in the Russian Navy.
- Nuclear Energy** : Russia is an important partner for India in the area of peaceful use of nuclear energy. Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP) is a flagship **project between India and Russia in this sphere**.
- Space Cooperation** : India-Russia cooperation in the field of peaceful uses of outer space dates back to about four decades. The two countries are cooperating closely under India's first human spaceflight program “Gaganyaan”.
- Science & Technology** : India and Russia have a long history of cooperation in the field of science and technology.

- ♦ The new Roadmap for Bilateral STI Co-operation has been developed and agreed by both sides to replace the erstwhile ILTP co-operation program.
  - It focusses on a variety of new engagements to promote innovation and exchanges and will be in-force for next 5 years.
- **Cooperation in the fight against Covid-19 :** India and Russia cooperate closely in the sphere of vaccine production. **SPUTNIK-V** received DCGI approval for emergency use in India in 2021, making it the first foreign-made vaccine to be permitted for use in India, and third overall.

### Emerging Issues

- There are worries over the flagging of defence supplies, continued issues over paying Russia for imports in third currencies, and the general decline in other bilateral engagements .
- India has been reducing its dependency on Russian arms and diversifying its defence procurements, buying more from countries like the U.S., Israel, France and Italy. But experts say it may take 20 years to get over its dependence on Russian supplies and spares.
  - ♦ India lacks a strong industrial base for military equipment.
- Russia started developing closer ties with China, because of the war against Ukraine.

### Conclusion and Way Forward

- Development of India-Russia relations has been a key pillar of India's foreign policy.
- India considers Russia a time-tested ally from the Cold War era with key cooperation in defence, oil, nuclear energy and space exploration.
- India has not yet condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine and it has been maintaining that the crisis must be resolved through diplomacy and dialogue.
- India and Russia ties are historic and have been moving consistently forward.
- India-Russia should have direct understanding of each other rather than have perceptions determined by other countries.

Source: **TH**

## ARSENIC AND FLUORIDE CONTAMINATION

### In Context

- The **National Green Tribunal** has issued notices to 24 states and four Union Territories regarding the **presence of arsenic and fluoride in groundwater**.

### Factors responsible for the Arsenic, Fluoride in Groundwater

- **Geological Factors: Arsenic:** Certain geological formations, such as the Gangetic plain, are known to contain elevated levels of naturally occurring arsenic. Arsenic leaches into the groundwater from rocks and sediments.
  - ♦ **Fluoride:** Geological factors, including the presence of fluoride-rich minerals like fluorite, can lead to the contamination of groundwater with fluoride.
- **Irrigation Practices:** Excessive use of groundwater for irrigation can contribute to the mobilization of arsenic and fluoride.
  - ♦ In some cases, the over-extraction of groundwater can alter the geochemical conditions, leading to the release of these contaminants.
- **Climate and Rainfall Patterns:** Changes in precipitation can influence the leaching of arsenic and fluoride from geological formations.
- **Anthropogenic Activities: Arsenic:** Certain human activities, such as mining and industrial processes, can contribute to elevated levels of arsenic in groundwater. The use of arsenic-containing pesticides and fertilizers may also play a role.
  - ♦ **Fluoride:** Industrial discharges, especially from aluminum, ceramic, and phosphate industries, can contribute to fluoride contamination.

### Health Concerns with Arsenic and Fluoride Contamination

- Any amount of arsenic can be detrimental to health, with chronic exposure leading to **skin, vascular and nervous-system ailments, or cancer**.
- Too much fluoride can cause dental mottling, which is a largely cosmetic problem, albeit sometimes with negative social effects.

- ♦ Higher concentrations may lead to **skeletal luorosis**, which is a debilitating stiffening of the joints.

### Steps Taken by Government of India to curb Arsenic and Fluoride Contamination

- **Monitoring: Central Ground Water Board (CGWB)** generates ground water quality data of the country as part of its ground water quality monitoring program and various scientific studies.
- **Arsenic Free Wells:** CGWB is successfully constructing **Arsenic free wells** in arsenic affected areas using the cement sealing technology for tapping contamination free aquifers.
- **Jal Jivan Mission:** Government of India, in partnership with States, is implementing **Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)** from 2019 to provide potable tap water supply of prescribed quality and on regular & long-term basis to every rural household in the country.
- **Allocation of Funds:** While allocating the funds to States/ UTs in a particular financial year, 10% weightage is given to the population residing in habitations affected by chemical contaminants.
- **National Water Quality Sub-Mission:** Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation had launched a **National Water Quality Sub-Mission (NWQSM)** in 2017 as a part of National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) to provide safe drinking water to arsenic/fluoride affected rural habitations in the country.
- **AMRUT:** Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) scheme is being implemented since 2015, in selected 500 cities and towns across the country which focuses on development of basic urban infrastructure such as water supply, sewerage & septage management.

Source: **BS**

## ULFA SIGNS PEACE AGREEMENT WITH GOVT.

### In Context

- The **pro-talks faction of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA)** signed a peace accord with the Union government and the Assam government.

### About

- With this Memorandum of Settlement, the ULFA faction has **formally agreed to shun violence and join the mainstream.**

- The Central government had been holding unconditional negotiations for over 12 years.
- The peace pact has brought the decades old insurgency a step closer to a complete closure.

### About United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA)

- It is an insurgent group that has been active in the **northeastern state of Assam.**
- ULFA was formed in **1979** with the stated goal of establishing a sovereign, independent state called "Asom" for the Assamese people.
- The group has been involved in armed struggle against the government, seeking to address what it perceives as the economic and political exploitation of Assam.

### Why has there been Insurgency in the North Eastern Region of India?

- **Ethnic Diversity:** The northeastern region of India is characterized by a high degree of ethnic and cultural diversity, with numerous indigenous communities and tribes.
  - ♦ The competition for resources and a sense of identity and autonomy among these diverse groups have contributed to tensions and conflicts.
- **Historical Factors:** The region has a history of being distinct from the rest of India, both culturally and geographically.
  - ♦ Many indigenous communities have historically maintained a certain level of autonomy, and the integration of the region into the Indian state led to challenges in addressing local aspirations.
- **Economic Marginalization:** Some insurgent groups in the northeast have cited economic marginalization as a key grievance.
- **Borders and Connectivity:** The region shares international borders with countries like Myanmar, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and China.
  - ♦ This geopolitical situation has contributed to issues related to cross-border movements, smuggling, and the presence of insurgent groups operating from neighboring countries.
- **Cultural Identity and Autonomy:** Many insurgent groups perceive threats to their unique cultural heritage and seek to preserve and promote their distinct ways of life.

- **Political Alienation:** The sense of being politically marginalized and not adequately represented in decision-making processes has contributed to discontent.
- **Migration and Demographic Changes:** Migration patterns, including the influx of people from other regions, have sometimes led to demographic changes, creating tensions over issues related to land, resources, and cultural identity.
- **Government Responses:** The nature of government responses, including counter-insurgency operations, has at times led to human rights concerns and further fueled grievances among local populations.
  - ♦ to make the North East a developed region and bring it on par with the rest of India.
- As a result of the border dispute settlement agreements and peace accords, there has been a significant improvement in the security situation of the Northeast.
  - ♦ **Assam:** 60% of Assam now free from Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA)
  - ♦ **Arunachal Pradesh:** Now AFSPA left in only three districts and two police stations in one district.
  - ♦ **Tripura and Meghalaya:** Completely withdrawn.

Source: *HT*

### Impact of Insurgency

- **Humanitarian Impact:** Insurgency often results in human rights violations, including displacement, forced migration, and loss of life.
- **Economic Disruption:** Insurgency can disrupt economic activities, leading to reduced investment, lower economic growth, and loss of livelihoods.
- **Social Disintegration:** Communities may face social disintegration as a result of displacement, migration, and the breakdown of social structures.
  - ♦ The presence of armed groups can lead to fear and mistrust among the population.
- **Infrastructure Damage:** Ongoing conflict can lead to the destruction of infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and public facilities.
- **Healthcare Challenges:** Access to healthcare can be compromised in conflict-affected areas.
- **Internal Displacement and Refugee Issues:** Insurgency often results in internal displacement, with people fleeing conflict-affected areas to seek safety.
- **Erosion of Trust in Institutions:** Insurgency can erode trust in government institutions and the rule of law.

### Way Ahead

- Government has identified **three core objectives for the North East Region:**
  - ♦ to preserve its dialects, languages, dance, music, food, and culture and to create attraction for it all across India;
  - ♦ to end all disputes in the North East and to make it a peaceful region,

## INDIA'S LITHIUM DEAL WITH ARGENTINA

### In Context

- India is close to striking a deal on acquiring **five lithium blocks for exploration and development in Argentina.**
  - ♦ The agreement will be signed between Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL) and CAMYEN, a state-owned mining and energy company in Argentina.

### About Lithium

- Lithium is a chemical element with the symbol Li and atomic number 3.
- It belongs to the alkali metal group of the periodic table and is a soft, **silvery-white metal.**
- It is a **highly reactive metal** due to its position in the alkali metal group.
- **Applications:** Lithium has various industrial applications, most notably in **rechargeable lithium-ion batteries.**
  - ♦ These batteries are widely used in electronic devices such as smartphones, laptops, and electric vehicles.
- **Energy Storage:** Lithium-ion batteries have become a crucial technology for energy storage.
  - ♦ They are employed in portable electronic devices, electric vehicles, and for grid energy storage, playing a **key role in the transition to renewable energy.**
  - ♦ **Global Production:** The majority of the world's lithium production comes from countries like **Australia, Chile, and Argentina.**



- ◆ These countries have significant lithium reserves and are major players in the global lithium market.

### Lithium Triangle

- The “Lithium Triangle” refers to a region in South America that contains some of the world’s largest lithium reserves.
- This triangular-shaped region encompasses **parts of Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile.**
- Argentina, Bolivia and Chile are assessed to possess **58 percent of the world’s known lithium reserves.**
- These three countries are **significant players in the global lithium market** due to the abundance of lithium resources found in the area.



### India and Lithium Triangle Countries (LTCs)

- India has also been increasing its diplomatic outreach to the LTCs for accessing the mineral.
- India has been actively seeking to secure lithium resources to meet the **growing demand for lithium-ion batteries, particularly in the context of electric vehicles (EVs) and renewable energy storage.**
- India has launched an ambitious plan to manufacture **Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC)** under the PLI scheme to boost battery production.
  - ◆ However, India still imports 100 percent of its lithium metal, mostly from East Asian countries like China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Republic of Korea for battery production.
- States like Telangana are also aspiring to become the EV manufacturing hub of India.

- Even as it seeks such critical minerals overseas, India also aims to **exploit lithium deposits in places like Jammu and Kashmir.**

### Conclusion

- India’s engagement with the Lithium Triangle countries is part of its broader strategy **to ensure a stable supply chain for critical minerals,** especially those essential for the production of lithium-ion batteries.
- The government has been promoting the **adoption of electric vehicles** to address **environmental concerns** and reduce dependence on fossil fuels.
- Securing a reliable supply of lithium is crucial for the development and growth of the electric vehicle industry in India.

Source: *TH*

## PRADHAN MANTRI KISAN SAMMAN NIDHI (PM-KISAN)

### News

- The government is **increasing the total number of farmer-beneficiaries** under the **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan)** to about 8.75 crore, from the current 8.12 crore.

### Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan)

- **Launched in:** 2019 as a Central Sector Scheme.
- **Objective:** It aims to provide income support to **all landholding farmer families in India** to supplement their financial needs for procuring various inputs related to agriculture and allied activities as well as domestic needs.
- **Income support:** It is a **direct income support (DIS)**, in which every farmer is paid a flat **Rs 6,000 per year in three equal installments.**
  - ◆ **Every four months,** the benefit will be credited to the account of the eligible PM Kisan beneficiary.
  - ◆ It is **irrespective of which crops she grows** in whatever quantities and sells to whomsoever at any price.
- **Scope:** There is **no differentiation between urban and rural cultivable land.** This is because both are included under the scheme, **as long as the land in urban areas are actually being farmed.**

- ♦ Also, the **scheme does not cover agricultural land that is exploited for nonagricultural purposes.**
- **Exclusion:** The following category of farmers are not eligible to get the benefits of the PM-Kisan scheme:
  - a) All institutional Landholders; and
  - b) Farmer families in which one or more of its members belong to following categories:-
    - i. Former and present holders of constitutional posts
    - ii. Former and present ministers and former/present Members of Lok sabha/ Rajya sabha/ state Legislative Assemblies.
    - iii. All serving or retired officers and employees of Central/ State Government
    - iv. All superannuated/retired pensioners Rs. 10,000/- or more (Excluding multi Tasking employees)
    - v. Professionals like Doctors, Engineers', Lawyers, Chartered Accountants, and Architects registered with Professional bodies
- **WTO Rules complaint:** The Rs 6,000-amount is also **indifferent to inputs used**, whether chemical fertilisers or organic manure. Thus, it's a subsidy that is **not market-distorting.**

#### Issues:

- **Eligibility and exclusion:** Determining eligibility based on land ownership records can exclude tenant farmers and those with shared landholdings.
- **Delayed payments:** Delays in fund transfers cause financial hardship for farmers, especially during critical agricultural seasons.
- **Inequitable distribution:** The fixed amount of Rs. 6,000 per year, regardless of land size or crop type, fails to account for regional variations in income and expenditure.
- **Corruption and leakages:** Concerns exist about potential diversion of funds due to lack of transparency and robust monitoring mechanisms.
- **Administrative challenges:** Implementing the scheme across diverse states with varying land records and administrative systems poses logistical challenges.

#### Measures needed:

- **Streamlining eligibility and verification:** Updating land records, simplifying verification procedures, and adopting alternative eligibility criteria like Aadhaar-based identification can help ensure inclusivity.
- **Improving payment efficiency:** Investing in better technology, automating processes, and strengthening coordination with banks can expedite fund transfers.
- **Differential support based on need:** Introducing variations in support based on factors like land size, crop type, and regional income levels can ensure more equitable distribution.
- **Capacity building and technological adoption:** Providing training and support to farmers in digital literacy and financial management can empower them and enable better utilization of the scheme.

#### Way Ahead:

- Overall, the PM-Kisan scheme has the **potential to significantly improve the lives of millions of farmers.**
- However, **addressing the current issues and implementing effective measures** is crucial to ensure its inclusivity, effectiveness, and long-term sustainability.

Source: *IE*

## NEWS IN SHORTS

### INDEX OF EIGHT CORE INDUSTRIES (ICI)

#### In Context

- The combined Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) increased by 7.8 per cent (provisional) in November 2023 as compared to the Index of November 2022.

#### About

- The production of Coal, Electricity, Fertilizers, Natural Gas, Refinery Products and Steel recorded positive growth in November 2023.
- The Eight Core Industries comprise 40.27 percent of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

#### What is IIP data?

- Index of Industrial Production data or IIP as it is commonly called is an index that **tracks manufacturing activity** in different sectors of an economy.



- The IIP number **measures the industrial production** for the period under review, usually a month, as against the reference period.
- The base year was changed to **2011-12** from 2004-05 in the year 2017.
- IIP is a **key economic indicator** of the manufacturing sector of the economy.

### Who releases Index of Industrial Production or IIP data?

- The IIP data is compiled and published by CSO every month.
  - ♦ CSO or Central Statistical Organisation operates under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

### Who uses IIP data?

- The factory production data (IIP) is used by **various government agencies** such as the Ministry of Finance, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), private firms and analysts, among others for analytical purposes.
- The data is also used to compile the **Gross Value Added (GVA)** of the manufacturing sector in the **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** on a quarterly basis.

#### IIP vs ASI

- While the **IIP is a monthly indicator**, the **Annual Survey of Industries (ASI)** is the **prime source of long-term industrial statistics**.
- The ASI is used to track the health of the industrial activity in the economy over a longer period.
- The index is compiled out of a much larger sample of industries compared to IIP.

Source: **PIB**

## NATIONAL TRANSIT PASS SYSTEM (NTPS)-'ONE NATION-ONE PASS'

### In News

- The Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change launched **the National Transit Pass System (NTPS) pan-India**.

### About National Transit Pass System (NTPS)

- It is an online Transit Pass generation system for timber, bamboo and other forest produce.
  - ♦ Currently, the transit permits are issued for transport of timber and forest produce based on state specific transit rules.

- It expedites issuance of transit pass systems. A Transit pass issued from this system will be valid across India.
- There will not be any requirement of a Transit Pass at state borders.
  - ♦ There is no need to visit forest office for issuance of Transit Pass
- **Importance :** It will streamline the issuance of timber transit permits by providing a unified, online mode for tree growers and farmers involved in agroforestry across the country, contributing to the ease of doing business.

Source: **PIB**

## INDIAN NAVY UNVEILS NEW EPAULETTES FOR ADMIRALS

### News

- The Indian Navy recently unveiled the **new design of Admirals' epaulettes**.

### About

- With the **octagon in the new design**, drawn from the naval ensign and inspired from **rajmudra of Chhatrapati Shivaji**, it is said that it is the **"true reflection of our rich maritime heritage"**.
- The new Admirals epaulettes now have the **golden navy button top**, followed by an **octagon**, and an **Indian sword and a telescope** crossed followed by stars indicating the ranks of Rear **Admiral, Vice Admiral and Admiral**.



- The Navy is also set to **rename some of the ranks from the British nomenclature to reflect an Indian connection**.

**Do you know?**

- Rajmudra of Shivaji Maharaj is the **Official Stamp Of Shivaji** which was used on his official letters, orders, etc.
- Rajmudra was also the "**Royal Coin**" during his reign.

**Royal Seal Of Shivaji Maharaj**

- **Text:** "प्रतपिचंद्रलेखेव वर्धिष्णुर्विशिववन्दति ॥ शाहसूनोः शविस्यैषा मुद्रा भद्राय राजते ॥"
- Its English translation goes: The glory of this Mudra of Shahaji's son Shivaji will grow like the first moon. It will be worshiped by the world and it will shine only for the well-being of people.

Source: TH

**KURIL ISLANDS****In News**

- Earthquake of magnitude 6.3 jolts Japan's Kuril Islands.

**About the Kuril Islands**

- **Location:** These are a **set of four islands** situated between the **Sea of Okhotsk and the Pacific Ocean** near the north of Japan's northernmost prefecture, Hokkaido.
  - ♦ They are a **volcanic archipelago** part of **Sakhalin Oblast in the Russian Far East**.
  - ♦ There are **56 islands and many minor rocks**.
- **Geography and climate:** The Kuril Islands form part of the **ring of tectonic instability encircling the Pacific Ocean referred to as the Ring of Fire**.
  - ♦ There is **frequent seismic activity**.
- **Economy:** The islands have **strategic and economic value**, in terms of **fisheries and also mineral deposits of pyrite, sulphur, and various polymetallic ores**.

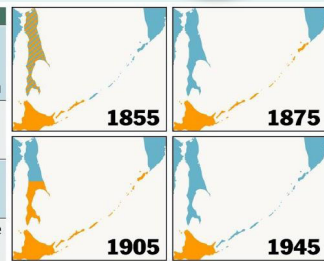
- **Issue: Both Russia and Japan claim sovereignty** over them though the islands have been under **Russian control since the end of World War II**.

**The Kuril Islands kerfuffle between Russia and Japan**

Post Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Japan has elevated its claim over the Kuril Islands which is currently under the control of Russia. On April 22, Japan's Diplomatic Bluebook for 2022 described the Kuril Islands as being under Russia's "illegal occupation."

**HISTORY OF THE KURIL DISPUTE**

- **1855:** The **Treaty of Shimoda** gives southern Kurils to Japan and rest of the island chain to Russia. Sakhalin Island to be under joint administration
- **1875:** The **Treaty of St. Petersburg** cedes all Kurils to Japan in exchange for Russian jurisdiction over Sakhalin
- **1905:** After Russia's defeat in the **Russo-Japanese War**, Japan gains control of southern Sakhalin
- **1945:** The Soviet Union occupies the entire Kuril chain and southern Sakhalin after declaring war on Japan during the final days of **World War II**
- **1951:** Japan renounces claim to Kurils in the **Treaty of San Francisco**, signed between Japan and the Allied powers. The Soviet Union does not sign, and Japan later claims that the four southern islands are not part of the Kuril chain



- **1956:** The **Soviet-Japanese Joint Declaration** restores diplomatic ties between the two countries. The Soviet Union agrees to cede islands of Shikotan and Habomai to Japan after signing of formal peace treaty. Japan claims territorial rights to all four southern islands, so no agreement is signed

Source: TH

**LANTANA CAMARA****In News**

- A decade-long initiative in Madhya Pradesh to reclaim land overrun by lantana helps residents restart agriculture and restore native biodiversity.

**About Lantana camara**

- Lantana camara, a **perennial shrub native to the American tropics** and a member of the **Verbenaceae family**.
- It possesses the remarkable ability to thrive in diverse climatic conditions, tolerating high temperatures and moisture.
- Lantana is **not native to India**. It was introduced in the country as an ornamental plant by the British in the 1800s.
- **Lantana camara** severely impacted the areas of **Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve** in the Western Ghats.

Source: DTE