

1. Dissolution of Standing Committee on Statistics (SCoS) GS 2 (Governance)

- The Union Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has dissolved the 14-member Standing Committee on Statistics (SCoS), led by economist Pronab Sen.
- The government informed the members that the committee's work overlapped with that of the **Steering Committee for National Sample Surveys**, chaired by Rajeeva Laxman Karandikar. This overlap was cited as the reason for dismantling the SCoS.

- It is responsible for collecting, processing analyzing, and disseminating data crucial for planning, policy-making, and governance.
- It is a decentralized system, with responsibilities shared between the Central and State governments, covering a wide array of sectors including economics, agriculture, industry, demography, and health.

- India's Statistical System is **influenced by the constitutional division of powers between the Union, State, and Concurrent Lists, as outlined in the 7th Schedule.**
- Each govt department or ministry, whether at the central or state level, is generally responsible for the collection of statistics related to its specific subject area.
- E.g., - For education or labor welfare, mentioned in concurrent list, both the Union and the States may gather statistics.

- Each state has its own statistical departments that collaborate with central agencies to ensure data consistency.

How urgent is the next census?
The country's decennial census has been conducted every ten years since the 1870s, with the last census in 2010. The 2020 census was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and even after three years, the Census has not provided a roadmap for the next census. Economists and policymakers agree that relying on 2010 census data for statistical surveys, even after 12 years, will negatively impact decision making. So they suggest that the way forward is to conduct the next census at the earliest.

- **Regulatory Framework**
 - **The Collection of Statistics Act, 2008** - Governs the collection of statistics across various sectors.
 - **Census Act, 1948** - Governs the decennial Census of India, a major source of demographic and socio-economic data.
- **Challenges:**
 - **Data Quality and Timeliness**
 - Concerns have been raised about the accuracy and timeliness of data, especially given delays in critical surveys like the decennial Census.
 - **Capacity Constraints:**
 - State statistical agencies often lack adequate manpower, funding, and infrastructure, which hinders efficient data collection and processing.
 - **Coordination Issues**
 - Decentralized nature leads to coordination challenges between central and state statistical bodies, impacting data uniformity and integration.
 - **Technological Adoption:**
 - While digitization efforts have been undertaken, there is a need for more advanced data collection and processing technologies to improve efficiency and accuracy.
 - **Political Interference:**
 - Allegations of political pressure and manipulation of data, especially in areas like unemployment and GDP, have affected the credibility of official statistics.
 - **Lack of Uniformity**
 - Different methods used by various departments can lead to inconsistencies in data collection and reporting.
 - **Recent controversy**
 - The Centre has been claiming that data provided by the EPFO, ESIC on its enrolments and Reserve Bank of India's KLEMS (K: Capital, L: Labour, E: Energy, M: Materials and S: Services) database gave a rosy picture about the employment scenario in the country.
 - However, questions have been raised as administration data, especially on labour, is threshold-based.
 - It is alleged that such data was airing the perspectives of policy architects or reflecting the government's intentions.
 - The chances of manipulating the administration data set were also high as government agencies generated that data.
 - It is also argued that such data has limitations of analytical rigour.
 - On the other hand, survey-based data, including the census, has universal coverage without any thresholds, providing a wider and bigger platform
- **Standing Committee on Statistics (SCoS)**
 - **Background**
 - The Government had formed Standing Committee on Economic Statistics (SCES) in December 2019.
 - In July 2023, the SCES was renamed as SCoS to advise on all surveys as and when required by MoSPI.
 - **Function**
 - SCoS advised the government on survey methodologies, including sampling design, survey instruments, and questions.
 - It played a key role in finalizing survey tabulation plans, reviewing existing frameworks, and addressing issues related to survey results and methodologies.

- The SCoS was also tasked with guiding pilot surveys, exploring administrative statistics, identifying data gaps, recommending additional data requirements, and providing technical guidance to central and state agencies for conducting surveys.

• New committee replacing SCoS

- The newly formed Steering Committee, replacing the SCoS, has 17 members and one non-member secretary.
- Its two-year tenure and Terms of Reference are similar to the SCoS, including reviewing survey results, methodology, sampling design, and finalizing the tabulation plan for National Sample Surveys.
- The main difference between the two committees lies in their composition, **with the Steering Committee having more official members, while the SCoS had a higher number of non-official members, leading to some overlap in their mandates.**

2. Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology (CSTT) GS 2 (Governance)

• Background:

- In alignment with the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, the Indian government has taken steps to promote education in Indian languages.
- This includes technical education in disciplines like engineering and medicine. One of the major initiatives under this policy is the **"AICTE Technical Book Writing and Translation"** project, which aims to provide technical textbooks in 12 scheduled Indian languages.
- To further this mission, the **Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology (CSTT)** plays a pivotal role in standardising technical and scientific terms in Indian languages.

• What is CSTT?

- It was established in October 1961 with an objective to standardise scientific and technical terminology in Indian languages to ensure uniformity and clarity in communication.
- CSTT regularly publishes bilingual, trilingual, and multilingual glossaries, definitional dictionaries, and monographs.
- Additionally, it brings out quarterly journals like **'Vigyan Garima Sindhu'** and **'Gyan Garima Sindhu'**.
- CSTT also focuses on the publication of university-level textbooks in Indian languages, collaborating with Granth Academies, textbook boards, and publication cells across the country.
- Its efforts extend to the publication of administrative and departmental glossaries used widely by government departments, institutions, research labs, and public sector units.

• The 'Shabd' Glossary Platform:

- The CSTT has launched an online platform called **'Shabd'**, available at <https://shabd.education.gov.in>, which serves as a central repository for technical and scientific terms in Indian languages.
- This data server hosts all the glossaries compiled by CSTT in a digital, searchable format.
- Other institutions or agencies that prepare dictionaries can also upload their works to this platform, making it a one-stop solution for accessing standardized terminology.
- Users can search terms based on language, subject, and dictionary type, and provide feedback on the existing terminology.
- This dynamic platform aims to create a unified resource for technical terms across various disciplines.

• The Process of Term Standardization:

- The terminologies on the 'Shabd' platform are prepared by Expert Advisory Committees consisting of subject matter experts, linguists, and language specialists.
- These committees identify equivalent terms in Indian languages for specific subject areas.
- Once finalized, these terminologies are used by institutions like Granth Academies, NCERT, NTA, AICTE, and various textbook boards.

What role does CSTT play in standardising technical terms?

What is the Shabd glossary platform? How many terms are available on the platform?

Stephanie Chakrabarty

The story so far
In alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, to support education in Indian languages for an improved teaching-learning outcome, the government has initiated technical education, including engineering and medicine in Indian languages. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has launched 'AICTE Technical Book Writing and Translation' in 12 scheduled Indian languages. The government is collaborating with technical education departments to distribute one of the books in Indian languages for the literacy of each degree and diploma level institution. The Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology (CSTT) has also launched a website offering technical terms in all 22 official Indian languages for various educational subjects.

What is CSTT?
The CSTT, established on October 1, 1961, focuses on preparing standardised

scientific and technical terminology in Indian languages. It regularly publishes a range of bilingual, trilingual, and multilingual glossaries, definitional dictionaries, and monographs. Besides publishing quarterly journals named Vigyan Garima Sindhu and Gyan Garima Sindhu, the CSTT also initiates the publication of university-level textbooks through its Granth Academies, textbook boards, and publication cells located in various parts of the country. It also undertakes the publication of administrative and various departmental glossaries that are widely used by government departments, institutions, research labs, and public sector units.

What is the name of the new website and how does it operate?
The CSTT glossary search website, 'Shabd', is hosted at <https://shabd.education.gov.in>. It is a data server that features all the glossaries of CSTT in digital web-based mode. Other institutions or agencies preparing dictionaries can also host their work in digital form on this platform. The aim is to develop a central repository for all the terminologies prepared in or for Indian languages.

The platform allows users to search for scientific and technical terms in Indian languages and provide feedback on existing terminologies prepared by CSTT. The search options include language, subject, dictionary type, and language pair. It also allows users to search specific glossaries or the entire collection.

How many words drawn from how many subjects are available on the platform?
The entire collection which is as of now includes about 322 glossaries has about 60,000 Indian words. This covers disciplines in Humanities, Social Sciences, Medical Sciences, Engineering, Agricultural Sciences, and more than 60 subjects such as Journalism, Public Administration, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, Technology, Physics, Economics, etc. It also allows users to search specific glossaries or the entire collection.

AICTE, and so on. The 'Shabd' website contains words taken from various definitional dictionaries, glossaries, and reference materials that have been published by the CSTT over the years.

When was the portal launched and what has been the response so far?
The site first went online in March this year and since then, it has had 26,563 hits from across the country and the world.

THE GIST

The CSTT is responsible for creating standardised scientific and technical terminology in Indian languages.

This platform serves as a central repository for scientific and technical terms in Indian languages, allowing users to search by language, subject or specific glossary. It also enables users to provide feedback on existing terminologies and upload new ones to the website.

- The platform currently offers terms derived from several reference materials, including definitional dictionaries and glossaries compiled by CSTT over the years.
- The 'Shabd' portal, launched in March 2024, has already received significant attention, with 1,36,968 hits from users across India and the world.
- This indicates growing interest in accessing and utilising standardized technical terms in Indian languages.
- **Terms & Disciplines Covered:**
 - As of now, the portal contains around **322 glossaries** comprising **21,84,050 headwords**. These terms span multiple disciplines, including:
 - Humanities
 - Social Sciences
 - Medical Sciences
 - Engineering
 - Agricultural Sciences
 - In addition, more than **60 subjects** are covered, such as **Journalism, Public Administration, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, Psychology, Physics, Economics, Ayurveda, Mathematics, Civil and Electrical Engineering, Computer Science, Political Science, Agriculture, Transport, Geology, Cell Biology, Forestry, and more.**
- **Future Plans:**
 - Moving forward, CSTT plans to integrate **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and other digital technologies to accelerate the development of standardized terminology.
 - This will ensure that Indian languages continue to evolve with advancements in education and technology.
- **Conclusion:**
 - The Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology (CSTT) is at the forefront of promoting education in Indian languages by standardizing technical terms across various disciplines.
 - With the launch of the 'Shabd' platform and its commitment to using cutting-edge technologies, CSTT is helping India achieve its vision of accessible and effective education in regional languages, in line with the goals of the **National Education Policy 2020**.

3. Cholera Outbreak

GS 2 (Health)

- **Why in News:** Climate change is worsening health issues globally, yet fundamental problems like clean water, hygiene, and sanitation often receive less attention. Recent WHO cholera data underscores this issue, revealing how inadequate sanitation and unsafe water, exacerbated by climate change, lead to preventable diseases and reduced quality of life. Addressing these basic needs is crucial for preventing health crises and improving community well-being.
- **About**
 - Cholera is an **acute diarrhoeal disease** caused by the ingestion of water or food contaminated with *Vibrio cholerae*.
 - This bacterial disease is caused by the bacterium *Vibrio cholerae*.
 - It can cause **severe diarrhoea, vomiting, leg cramps, and weakness**, and people with low immunity such as malnourished children and people living with HIV/AIDS are at greater risk of death if infected.
 - The most common pathways of contracting the germs are by eating food cooked by infected people, drinking contaminated water, and shaking hands with infected people
 - The main symptom of cholera is severe acute watery diarrhoea that lasts for three to seven days.

Panic in the time of cholera: issues critical to managing a resurgence

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Key Points:

- Cholera is an acute diarrhoeal disease caused by the ingestion of water or food contaminated with *Vibrio cholerae*. It can cause severe diarrhoea, vomiting, and weakness. People with low immunity, such as malnourished children and people living with HIV/AIDS, are at greater risk of death if infected.
- The most common pathways of contracting the germs are by eating food cooked by infected people, drinking contaminated water, and shaking hands with infected people.
- The main symptom of cholera is severe acute watery diarrhoea that lasts for three to seven days.
- Climate change is worsening health issues globally, yet fundamental problems like clean water, hygiene, and sanitation often receive less attention.
- Recent WHO cholera data underscores this issue, revealing how inadequate sanitation and unsafe water, exacerbated by climate change, lead to preventable diseases and reduced quality of life.
- Addressing these basic needs is crucial for preventing health crises and improving community well-being.

- **Treatment: Oral rehydration solution (ORS), Intravenous fluids, Antibiotics, Zinc**(in children younger than 5). If treatment is delayed, this can lead to excessive and fast dehydration and possibly death.
- **WHO's data:**
 - The global cholera crisis is worsening, with a 17% increase in deaths and a 13% rise in cases from 2022 to 2023.
 - Cholera, a preventable and treatable disease, caused 4,000 deaths last year and continues to spread, with 22 countries reporting active outbreaks into 2024.
 - In South-East Asia alone, 5,052 cholera and acute watery diarrhea cases were reported from January to July 2024, with 2,400 deaths globally.
 - Conflict, climate change, unsafe water and sanitation, poverty and displacement all contributed to the rise in cholera outbreaks last year.

4. CPI-based Inflation or Retail Inflation GS 3 (Economy)

- **Why in News:** India's Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based retail inflation increased to 3.65 per cent in August (from 3.60 per cent in July), according to the government data. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) aims to keep inflation around 4%.
- **More on News**
 - CPI inflation in August remains below the 4% mark, food price pressures continue
 - **Food inflation** as measured by the Consumer Food Price Index inched up marginally to 5.66% in August from 5.44% in July. It was at 9.94% in August 2023.
 - **Core Inflation:** This excludes volatile items like food and fuel to provide a clearer picture of underlying inflation trends.
 - **Current Rate:** Stands at 3.5%. Despite this, there have been slight increases in prices for clothing (2.72%) and services like recreation (2.31%), education (3.74%), and health (4.10%).
 - **Industrial Production:** The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) tracks the output of factories, mines, and utilities. It reflects how much industrial activity is happening in the economy.
 - **July's IIP:** Increased to 4.83%, up from 4.72% in June. This indicates a small improvement in industrial activity, suggesting that factories and businesses are producing more goods.
- **What is CPI-based Inflation or Retail Inflation?**
 - CPI-based Inflation or Retail Inflation is a metric that is used to measure inflation.
 - CPI measures **retail inflation** by collecting data on the **prices of goods and services** that are consumed by the retail population of the country.
 - CPI meaning refers to an increase in the price level of a selected basket of goods and services over a select period of time.
 - It is a **macroeconomic indicator of inflation**. It is a tool for the central bank and government for inflation targeting and for inspecting price stability, and as deflator in the national accounts.
 - **Calculation:** It is calculated by referring to a base year which is a benchmark. The base year is monitored by the **Central Statistics Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**, and changes from time to time.
 - MoSPI updated the base year of the **Consumer Price Index (CPI)** from 2012 to 2024 to improve economic data accuracy.
 - **Categories:** Food and beverages, clothing, housing, fuel and light, etc.
 - **CPI formula:** $(\text{Price of basket in current period} / \text{Price of basket in base period}) \times 100$.

REMAINS BELOW THE 4% MARK IN 4+/-2% BAND OF RBI'S MEDIUM-TERM TARGET

Retail inflation edges up to 3.65% in August fuelled by rising food prices



- The 2nd Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation concluded with the adoption of Delhi Declaration. Delhi Declaration is a comprehensive framework aimed at enhancing regional cooperation, addressing emerging challenges, and fostering sustainable growth within the civil aviation sector.
- The 2-day conference was organised by Ministry of Civil Aviation in collaboration with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). It witnessed engaging discussions and presentations focused on shaping the future of aviation in the Asia Pacific region.

PM Modi: India has become 'aviation inclusive' in past decade

SUKALP SHARMA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 12

INDIA is moving forward to become a leading aviation hub by the end of the decade and will be among the most well-connected regions in the coming years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Thursday while underscoring the shift in India's aviation landscape over the past few years that has made flying more affordable and accessible for the common citizen.

"India is today a strong pillar of the global civil aviation ecosystem. The growth of the civil aviation sector in India is unprecedented. In just one decade, from 'aviation exclusive', our country has become 'aviation inclusive'," Modi said, adding that a growing number of lower middle-class and middle-class Indians, even from smaller cities and towns are now travelling by air, something that earlier used to be limited to well-heeled Indians mostly from big cities.

"The number of airports has doubled in India in the past 10 years. The India of the future will



PRIME MINISTER

be among the most well-connected regions globally. Our airlines are also aware of this. That is why they have placed orders for over 1,200 aircraft," the Prime Minister said in his address to the International Civil Aviation Organization Agency's (ICAO) Second Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation.

Last year, Indian carriers IndiGo, Air India, and Akasa Air placed large aircraft orders with Airbus and Boeing, with deliveries likely to run into the middle of the next decade.

India is now the world's third-largest aviation market and is also among the fastest-growing major aviation markets globally.

The country has ambitions to develop its large airports into international hubs, while also building a domestic aircraft maintenance and manufacturing ecosystem.

"India is moving ahead with an aim to become a leading aviation hub by the end of the decade where the MRO (maintenance, repair, and overhaul) industry alone would be worth \$4 billion. For this, we have made MRO policies. With enhanced air connectivity in tier two and three cities, many cities will become new centres of growth in India," the PM said as he touched upon the economic potential of the civil aviation sector, particularly with regard to further developing the country's aviation ecosystem and creating high-skill job opportunities.

Modi credited the government's policy measures and initiatives like regional connectivity scheme—Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik (UDAN)—for making air travel affordable and accessible for the common Indian, and called upon the visiting delegates to study the scheme.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

Indian Aviation Sector

- **Size**
 - India is now the world's third-largest aviation market and is also among the fastest-growing major aviation markets globally.
 - It is expected to overtake China and the United States as the world's third-largest air passenger market in the next ten years, by 2030, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA)
 - In FY24, airports in India pegged the domestic passenger traffic to be 306.79 million, a 13.5% YoY growth, and international passenger traffic to be 69.64 million, a 22.3% YoY growth, over the same period last year.
- **Budget 2024-25**
 - According to the documents of the budget for 2024-25, the Ministry of Civil Aviation will get an allocation of Rs. 2,357 crore (US\$ 282 million).
- **Policy decisions**
 - The Indian government has approved 100% FDI via the automatic route for the Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) sector.
 - **NABH (NextGen Airports for Bharat)** - Nirman is a government initiative to expand airport capacity more than five times to handle billions of trips a year, in the next 10-15 years.
 - **AAI Startup Policy:** Delivering a framework & mechanism for the interaction of AAI with internal and external stakeholders that catalyze innovation at airports and leveraging technology for addressing challenges and enhancing the delivery of services to passengers.
- **Regulatory frameworks for the aviation sector**
 - **National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP) 2016** guides the Indian aviation sector.
 - Aviation policy is broad-based in India and is dealt with by the **Ministry of Civil Aviation** under the legal framework of the **Aircraft Act 1934, and Aircraft Rules 1937.**
 - The DGCA is the **statutory regulatory authority** which comes in for issues related to safety, licensing, airworthiness, and so on.
 - **Airports Authority of India (AAI)** manages and operates airports and provides air traffic management services.
 - **Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS)** is responsible for laying down standards and measures for the security of civil flights and airports.
 - **Airport Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA)** regulates tariffs and other charges for aeronautical services provided at major airports.
 - It also monitors performance standards of such services.
 - **Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) - UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik)** aims to make air travel affordable and widespread by enhancing regional air connectivity through financial incentives, subsidies, and infrastructural support.
- **Key Highlights of speech delivered by PM Modi**
 - Emphasized on making the sector more inclusive for women

- PM emphasized on making the sector more inclusive for women.
- In India, 15% of the pilots are women which is more than the global average of 5%.
- **India has become aviation inclusive**
 - PM spoke about the transformation in the aviation sector in India in the last ten years and said from being aviation exclusive, **India has become aviation inclusive.**
 - He added that a growing number of lower middle class and middle class Indians even from smaller cities and towns are now travelling by air.
- **Proposed the idea of International Buddhist Circuit**
 - PM urged the participating members to **connect all the holy places related to Lord Buddha across Asia and create an International Buddhist Circuit.**
 - It will benefit the civil aviation sector, the travellers, related countries and their economies as well.
- **India to become a leading aviation hub by the end of the decade**
 - The number of airports has doubled in India in the past 10 years.
 - With enhanced air connectivity in tier two and three cities, many cities will become new centres of growth in India.
 - The India of the future will be among the most well-connected regions globally.
 - Airlines of India have placed orders for over 1,200 aircraft.
 - India is moving ahead with an aim to become a leading aviation hub by the end of the decade where the **MRO (maintenance, repair, and overhaul) industry alone would be worth \$4 billion.**
- **Hailed initiatives like regional connectivity scheme— Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik (UDAN)**
 - So far, 14 million people have travelled under the UDAN scheme. Lakhs of people have seen the inside of an aircraft for the first time due to this scheme.
- **Affordable air taxis to become a reality in India**
 - PM Modi said affordable air taxis will soon become a reality in India, bringing ease of travel in cities through advanced air mobility.
- **Use of drones in the agro sector**
 - He also spoke about the government's push towards using drones in the agro sector.
 - Through our drone didi scheme, we have prepared a large number of trained drone pilots.

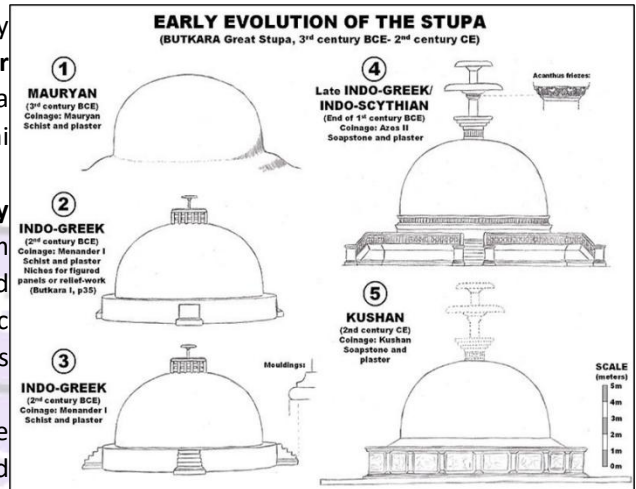
6. The Great Stupa of Sanchi GS 3 (Art and Culture)

- **Why in News:** During his recent visit to Germany, the External Affairs Minister of India paid a visit to the replica of Sanchi's Great Stupa's East Gate standing in front of Humboldt Forum Museum in Berlin.
- **What is a Stupa?**
 - **Meaning:** In Buddhism, a stupa is a mound-like or hemispherical structure containing relics (typically the remains of Buddha and other Buddhist monks or nuns) that is used as a place of meditation.
 - **Origin:** Stupas were pre-Buddhist burial mounds in ancient India. They had no religious significance and were simply memorials that were less elaborate and conspicuous than they are today.
 - **Structure:**
 - **Development:**

From Ashokan times to now, Sanchi to Europe, story of the Great Stupa



- **Expansion under Ashoka (250 BCE):** According to Buddhist tradition, Emperor Ashoka recovered the relics of the Buddha from the earlier stupas and erected 84,000 stupas to distribute the relics across India.
- **Decorated stupas (from 125 BCE):** Stupas were soon to be richly decorated with sculptural reliefs. For example, Bharhut (115 BCE), Bodh Gaya (60 BCE), Mathura (125–60 BCE), Sanchi (for the elevation of the toranas), etc.
- **Development in Gandhara (3rd century BCE - 5th century CE):** Since Buddhism spread to Central Asia, China, Korea and Japan through Gandhara, the stylistic evolution of the Gandharan stupa was very influential.



- **Significance:** It is thought that the temple in the shape of a truncated pyramid may have derived from the design of the stepped stupas that developed in Gandhara. The Mahabodhi Temple in Bodh Gaya is one such example.

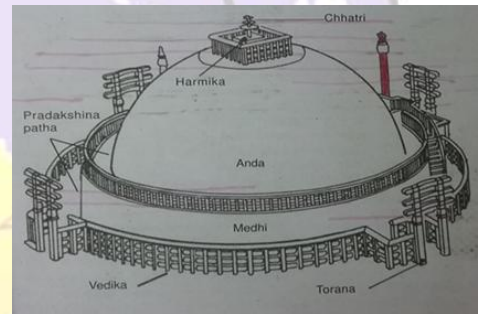
• The Great Stupa of Sanchi:

- **About:**
 - Commissioned in the **3rd century BCE by Emperor Ashoka**, it is the oldest stone structure in India and is considered one of the best-preserved groups of Buddhist monuments in the country.
 - It was built over the relics of Buddha and his two disciples - **Sariputra and Maudgalyayan**.
 - The most recent construction in Sanchi can be dated to as late as the 12th century CE, after which the site was abandoned.
 - British General Henry **Taylor** rediscovered the Sanchi Stupa in **1818** and Alexander Cunningham led the first formal survey and excavations at Sanchi in 1851.
 - The site was restored to its present condition by ASI director-general John Marshall in the 1910s with funding from the begums of nearby Bhopal.
 - It was designated as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1989**.
- **Location:** It is located on a hilltop at Sanchi Town in Raisen District of the State of **Madhya Pradesh**.
- **Significance:** It provides a broad and instructive field for researching the origins, development, and decline of Buddhist art and architecture in India
- **Gateways/ Toranas of the Great Stupa**
 - While the original stupa was a plain hemispherical structure crowned by a chhatra (parasol), the **4 ornamental gateways or toranas** (oriented to the four cardinal directions) were constructed in the first century BCE
 - These were constructed within a few decades of each other during the reign of the **Satavahana**
 - These gateways are made of two square pillars adorned with beautiful sculptures depicting scenes from the Buddha's life (not the Buddha in his human form) and stories from the **Jataka**
 - The art impresses immensely by its rhythm, symmetry, visual splendour and exquisite treatment of the flower and plant elements.

• The East Gate of the Sanchi Stupa and its Replica:

- **Features:**

- **The upper architrave of the gate** represents the seven Manushi Buddhas (previous Buddhas, with the historical Buddha being the latest incarnation)
- **The middle architrave** depicts the scene of the Great Departure, when prince Siddhartha leaves Kapilavastu to live as an ascetic in search of enlightenment.
- **The lower architrave** depicts Emperor Ashoka visiting the Bodhi tree under which the Buddha attained enlightenment.
- **Other decorative elements** include the shalabhanjika (a fertility emblem represented by a yakshi grasping the branch of a tree), elephants, winged lions, and peacocks.
- **Why is the East Gate the most famous of the Sanchi toranas in Europe?**
 - There is a **historical reason** behind this. The East Gate was cast in plaster by Lieutenant Henry Hardy Cole for the Victoria and Albert Museum (London, UK) in the late 1860s.
 - Later, this cast was replicated and displayed all over Europe. The latest Berlin replica too traces its origin to this original cast.



MCQ Current Affairs

13th Sept, 2024

1. Why are tardigrades considered extremophiles?

- a) They are capable of rapid reproduction in various habitats.
- b) They can survive in extreme environments
- c) They are found only in deserts.
- d) They require a thin layer of water around their bodies

2. Jamshedpur City lies on the banks of which one of the following rivers?

- a) Mahanadi
- b) Tapti
- c) Subarnarekha
- d) Musi

3. Consider the following statements regarding Software-as-a-Service (SaaS):

- A. It is a cloud-based method of delivering software where users subscribe to access applications on the Internet rather than purchasing them outright.
- B. It allows businesses/users to focus on their core activities without worrying about the technical complexities of software management.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) A only
- b) B only
- c) A and B
- d) Neither of two

4. Exercise AL NAJAH, a joint military exercise, recently seen in news is conducted between India and:

- a) Japan
- b) Russia
- c) Saudi Arabia
- d) Oman

5. Consider the following statements regarding the Saarthi app:

- A. It is designed to assist businesses in creating their own customised buyer-side apps.
- B. It has features like real-time translation, transliteration, and voice recognition.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) A only
- b) B only
- c) A and B
- d) Neither of two

Answers Current Affairs
13th Sept, 2024

1. b
2. c
3. c
4. d
5. c

