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1. Government organised the birth anniversary of Santh Sevalal Maharaj, the religious leader of the Banjara community for the first time (Feb. 27, 2023)

For the first time, the Union Ministry of Culture is organising a year-long festival to mark the 284th birth anniversary of **Santh Sevalal Maharaj**, the spiritual and religious leader of the **Banjara community**.

An overview of the news:

- This jubilee year program started on February 26, 2023 under the **Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav**. Under this, a two-day program was organised as a part of the 284th birth anniversary celebrations on February 26-27, 2023 at Dr. Ambedkar International Center in New Delhi.
- Home Minister Amit Shah was invited as the chief guest in this program.
- For the last 3 years, New Delhi based Santh Sevalal Maharaj Charitable Trust has been celebrating it in Delhi.

Santh Sevalal Maharaj:

- He was born on February 15, 1739 at **Suragondankoppa in Shivamogga district of Karnataka**.
- He is considered a social reformer and spiritual teacher of the **Banjara community**.
- Due to his extraordinary knowledge, excellent skills and spiritual background in Ayurveda and Naturopathy, he was able to dispel the myths and superstitions prevalent in the tribal communities and improve their lives.
- In states like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, Santh Sevalal Maharaj is the revered icon of every Banjara family.
- In February, the birth anniversary of Santh Sevalal Maharaj ji is celebrated with great pomp in all these states.
- The Samadhi Sthal of Santh Sevalal Ji is situated at Pohradevi in Manora Taluka of Washim District of Maharashtra, which is also known as Banjara Kashi.
- The population of the **Banjara community in the country is 10 to 12 crores**.

2. China launches Zhongxing-26 satellite (Feb. 27, 2023)

China has launched the **Zhongxing-26 satellite** in February 2023 at a cost of \$333 million.

An overview of the news

- The Zhongxing-26 satellite was launched on a **Long March 3B rocket**. The main objective of this satellite is to provide broadband connectivity for aviation and shipping related operations.
- Zhongxing-26 was launched by the China Academy of Space Technology (CAST). CAST plans to launch 60 more in 2023.
- The rocket uses **liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen fuel** in the third stage. Liquid rocket fuel requires controlled temperature to remain in its form.
- China is about to launch more than 200 spacecraft in its 60 missions in the coming time.
- China plans to launch **Tianzhou-6**, a cargo craft, by the end of 2023.
- Also, to strengthen its **Tiangong Space Station**, there are plans to launch crewed missions like **Shenzhou-16 and Shenzhou-17**.

3. PM inaugurates 'Barisu Kannada Dim Dimava', Amrit Mahotsav of Delhi-Karnataka Sangha (Feb. 26, 2023)

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** inaugurated the '**Barisu Kannada Dim Dimava**' cultural festival at **Talkatora Stadium in New Delhi** on 25 February.

An overview of the news

- The festival is organised under the aegis of **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav** and celebrates the **culture, traditions and history of Karnataka**.
- In line with the Prime Minister's vision of '**Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat**', the 'Barisu Kannada Dim Dimava' cultural festival is being organized to celebrate the culture, traditions and history of Karnataka.
- Held under the aegis of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, the festival will provide an **opportunity to hundreds of artistes** to showcase the cultural heritage of Karnataka through **dance, music, drama, poetry etc.**

Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat

- The Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat programme was launched by the Prime Minister **Modi on 31st October, 2015** on the occasion of the **140th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**.
- This programme is a unique initiative by the Government to promote the **spirit of national integration and to strengthen the fabric of emotional bonds between the people of our country**.
- Every State and UT in the country would be paired with another State/UT for a time period, during which they would carry out a structured engagement with one another in the spheres of language, literature, cuisine, festivals, cultural events, tourism etc.

4. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz calls on President Droupadi Murmu (Feb. 26, 2023)

German Chancellor **Olaf Scholz** called on President **Draupadi Murmu**, in New Delhi on February 25.

An overview of the news

- India and Germany enjoy a **long-standing relationship**, based on shared values and shared goals for both countries.
- Bilateral relations cover a wide spectrum, reflecting the mutual trust that has been nurtured over the decades.
- Germany is **India's largest trading partner in Europe** and also among the top investors in India.
- Germany is also **India's second largest development cooperation partner** and has played an important role in India's development journey.
- In recent years, Germany has emerged as a **preferred destination for Indian students** and researchers seeking to pursue higher education, especially in science and technology.
- India and Germany also have strong cultural ties, with a long tradition of German Indologists working in India.
- India and Germany share a common objective in maintaining democratic values, rules-based international order, multilateralism, as well as reform of multilateral institutions.

Federal Republic of Germany

- Germany is also known as **Deutschland**.
- Capital : **Berlin**
- Currency : **Euro**
- President : **Frank-Walter Steinmeier**
- Chancellor : **Olaf Scholz**
- The German Chancellor is equivalent to the **Prime Minister in India**.

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6. Indian Air Force contingent reaches in UAE to participate in Exercise Desert Flag VIII (Feb. 26, 2023)

An **Indian Air Force contingent of 110 Air Warriors** reached **Al Dahfra airbase of United Arab Emirates** on 25 February for participating in **Exercise 'Desert Flag VIII'**.

An overview of the news

- Tejas, the **Light Combat Aircraft (LCA)** made in India, will make its first appearance at a multinational exercise in the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)**.

- The IAF would be participating with five **LCA Tejas and two C-17 Globemaster III aircraft.**

About Exercise Desert Flag

- It is a **multilateral air exercise** in which air forces from the **United Arab Emirates, France, Kuwait, Australia, United Kingdom, Bahrain, Morocco, Spain, Republic of Korea and the United States** will also participate.
- This exercise will run from **27 February to 17 March.**
- The objective of the exercise is to participate in multiple combat events and learn from best practices of air forces of different countries.

TEJAS fighter aircraft

- It is an '**Indigenous Light Combat Aircraft**'.
- It has been jointly developed by '**Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA)**' and '**Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)**'.
- It is the smallest-lightweight single-engine '**Multirole Tactical Fighter Aircraft**'.
- It has been designed with an aim to reduce India's dependence on **Russia's MiG-21 fighter jets** and move towards self-reliance in the field of national security.
- It is designed to carry a range of **air-to-air, air-to-surface weapons.**
- It is capable of refueling in the sky during the journey and has a maximum **payload capacity of 4000 kg.**
- It can achieve a **maximum speed of Mach 1.8 and has a range of 3,000 km.**

7. 'Neutral Citation' system to be launched for Supreme Court judgments (Feb. 25, 2023)

Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud on February 23 announced that the Supreme Court will adopt a "**neutral citation system**" for its judgments.

An overview of the news

- The Chief Justice hoped that the **High Courts would also follow the neutral citation** for their judgements.
- The **Delhi, Kerala and Madras High Courts** have already introduced neutral citations.

What is a "citation"?

- The citation of a case is essentially an **identification tag for the decision.**

- Typically, this will include a reference number, the year of the decision, the name of the court that issued the decision, and shorthand for the journal that published the decision.

What is a neutral citation?

- A neutral citation would mean that the court would provide its **own citation, separate from that provided by traditional law reporters.**
- Law reporters are periodicals or annual digests that **publish judgments.**

Why is implementation of the neutral citation system required?

- Steps have been taken to introduce and implement a uniform, reliable and secure methodology for **identifying and citing Supreme Court judgments.**
- The Court is using machine learning tools to translate its judgments from **English to local languages.**
- **2,900 judgments** of the Supreme Court have been translated so far.
- It has also asked district courts to examine machine learning translations of judgments.
- **About 30,000 judgments** will have neutral citations.

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9. Germany to pursue \$5.2-billion deal with India to build 6 submarines (Feb. 25, 2023)

Germany will sign a **\$5.2 billion deal** to **jointly build six conventional submarines** with **India during German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's visit to India** on February 25-26.

An overview of the news

- The naval project is the latest attempt by the **Western military manufacturing power** to end **India's dependence on Russia** for military hardware.
- India is looking to **replace 11 of its 16 conventional submarines** that are more than two decades old, as it seeks to counter China's growing presence in the Indian Ocean.
- The Indian Navy also has two indigenous nuclear-powered submarines.
- **Germany's ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems (TKMS)** is one of the two **international bidders** for the submarine project Berlin will back the deal.
- Under the deal, a foreign submarine maker will have to partner with an **Indian company to build submarines in India**.

10. Russian space agency launches Soyuz spacecraft to bring back 3 astronauts stranded on ISS (Feb. 25, 2023)

Recently the **Russian space agency, Roscosmos** has successfully launched the **Soyuz spacecraft** to **bring back three astronauts stranded on the International Space Station (ISS)** following a **leak in the cooling system in their Soyuz capsule**.

An overview of the news

- Two **Russian and one American astronauts** will board the **empty Soyuz spacecraft to return to Earth**.
- The **Soyuz MS-23** spacecraft was launched from the **Baikonur Space Center in Kazakhstan and placed in orbit**.

- US astronaut **Francisco Rubio**, along with Russian cosmonauts **Sergei Prokopyev and Dmitry Petelin**, were due to return to Earth after their mission ended.
- But two months ago, it got stuck in space due to a leak in the cooling system of **Soyuz MS-22 capsule**.
- According to the Russian space agency Roscosmos, all three Soyuz will **return to Earth on the MS-23 vehicle in September**.
- The leak on the MS-22 spacecraft was **caused by a small piece of a micrometeoroid hitting the capsule**.

About International Space Station (ISS)

- It is a **multi-nation construction project** that is the largest single structure humans ever put into space.
- Its main construction was completed between **1998 and 2011**.
- It is not owned by a single nation and according to the **European Space Agency (ESA)** is a "**co-operative program**" between **Europe, the United States, Russia, Canada and Japan**.
- As of May 2022, **258 individuals from 20 countries** have visited the International Space Station.
- The top participating countries include the **United States (158 people) and Russia (54 people)**.