





16 December 2024

National and International News

<p>Homi Bhabha Chair Scheme</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology informed the Rajya Sabha about the DAE- Homi Bhabha Chair Scheme. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is administered by the Department of Atomic Energy. It is for Distinguished Scientist/Professors, in order to give recognition and an opportunity to outstanding Scientists and Engineers including those retired /superannuated scientists/engineers who were involved in the development of sensitive and/ or critical technologies to carry out research and development work in the fields of their choice and of interest to the Department of Atomic Energy. The tenure under DAE- Homi Bhabha Chair Scheme is for the period of one to five years at the discretion of the Selection Committee. Under the scheme each awardee shall be entitled to an honorarium of Rs.200000/- p.m.(In case honorarium plus pension sanctioned is more than pay last drawn, honorarium would be restricted to pay last drawn before retirement).
<p>Places in news: Abathsahayeshwarar Temple</p> 	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 1,300-year-old Abathsahayeshwarar Temple in Thukkatchi in Thanjavur district has been chosen by UNESCO to receive the Award of Distinction - 2023 for having been conserved keeping its heritage intact. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> About Abathsahayeshwarar Temple: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was constructed during the reigns of Kings Vikrama Chola and Kulothunga Chola. This temple stands as a testament to the architectural brilliance and spiritual dedication of the Chola dynasty. Historically, the village surrounding the temple was known as Vikrama Chozheeswaram and Kulothunga Chola Nallur, named after these illustrious rulers. Kulothunga Chola also installed the idol of Aadhi Sarabeshwarar in the temple. The temple is home to numerous deities, including Soundaryanayaki Ambal and Ashtabhuja Durga Parameshwari and also consists of five



	<p>prakarams, or enclosures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About UNESCO Asia - Pacific Awards for cultural heritage conservation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Since 2000, the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation programme has recognised the efforts of private individuals and organisations in restoring, conserving and transforming structures and buildings of heritage value in the region. ○ It encourages other property owners to undertake conservation projects within their communities, either independently or by public-private partnerships. ○ The awards give people a sense of pride and sense of ownership of their own heritage.
<p>Defence Exercise: Knight Exercise: Desert Knight</p> 	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India, France, and the UAE have initiated the Desert Knight air combat exercise over the Arabian Sea. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a trilateral air combat exercise designed to enhance military interoperability and combat readiness among the participating nations. • Nations Involved: India, France, and the UAE. • Location: Conducted over the Arabian Sea, approximately 350-400 km southwest of Karachi. • Aim of the Exercise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strengthen trilateral defence cooperation. ○ Enhance combat skills and interoperability among air forces.
<p>Smart Manufacturing and Rapid Transformation Hub (SAMARTH) -Udyog Bharat 4.0</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently, the Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI) under the Scheme for “Enhancement of Competitiveness in the Indian Capital Goods Sector” has set up 4 Smart Advanced Manufacturing and Rapid Transformation Hub (SAMARTH) Centres. <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Centre for Industry 4.0 (C4i4) Lab, Pune; ○ IITD-AIA Foundation for Smart Manufacturing, IIT Delhi; ○ I-4.0 India @ IISc, Bengaluru; and ○ Smart Manufacturing Demo & Development Cell, CMTI, Bengaluru. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart Advanced Manufacturing and Rapid Transformation Hub (SAMARTH) -Udyog Bharat 4.0 is an Industry 4.0 initiative of the Department of Heavy Industry, under its



	<p>scheme on Enhancement of Competitiveness in Indian Capital Goods Sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scheme on ‘Enhancement of competitiveness in the Indian Capital Goods Sector’ was notified in 2014 to encourage technology development and infrastructure creation. • CMTI has established Smart Manufacturing Demo & Development Cell (SMDDC) as a Common Engineering Facility Centre (CEFC) to propagate and support the process of adoption of Industry 4.0 and smart manufacturing practices by the rapidly growing Indian manufacturing industry. <p>About Industry 4.0:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It refers to the fourth industrial revolution, which is the cyber-physical transformation of manufacturing. • It has been defined as “a name for the current trend of automation and data exchange in manufacturing technologies, including cyber-physical systems, the Internet of things, cloud computing and cognitive computing and creating the smart factory.”
<p>Israel’s military strikes in Syria</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Israel’s military operations in Syria, including airstrikes and naval actions, aim to target key military sites to prevent the transfer of advanced weaponry to hostile groups, particularly those backed by Iran. • These efforts are focused on curbing the influence of these groups, especially near Israel’s borders in the Golan Heights region, where security concerns are most acute. <p>Key Points:</p> <p>Timeline of Syrian war</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2011: Pro-democracy protests erupt, leading to violent repression by Assad’s regime. The Free Syrian Army (FSA) is formed, and the U.S. and EU call for Assad’s removal. • 2012: The conflict escalates into a civil war with multiple armed factions. Assad receives support from Russia and Iran. • 2013: ISIS rises, capturing territory and heightening fears of extremism in the region. • 2014: ISIS declares a caliphate. The U.S. forms an international coalition to combat ISIS, with Kurdish forces playing a key role. • 2015: Russia intervened militarily in support of Assad, with Iran providing additional support. • 2016: The Battle for Aleppo results in the city’s fall to Assad’s regime after intense bombardment. • 2017: A chemical attack in Khan Shaykhun leads to U.S. missile strikes. Assad, supported by Russia, recaptures much of eastern Syria, and ISIS is pushed back.

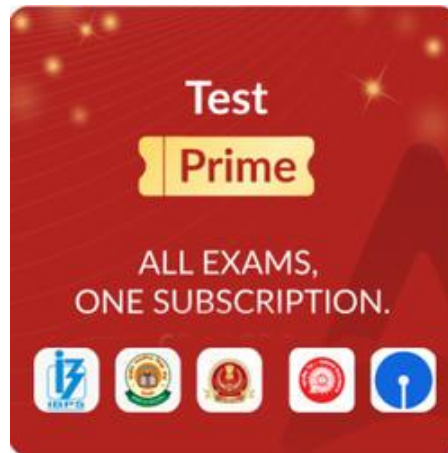


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- **2018:** The Syrian government launches an offensive on Idlib. Tensions rise between U.S., Turkey, and Kurdish forces in northern Syria.
- **2019:** ISIS loses its caliphate. The U.S. withdraws troops from northern Syria.
- **2020-2021:** Assad, backed by Russia and Iran, regains most of Syria, while parts remain under rebel control. The U.S. keeps forces in northeastern Syria to combat ISIS and support Kurdish fighters.
- **2022-2023:** The Hamas attack on Israel leads to fighting with Hezbollah, weakening its presence in Syria and undermining Assad.
- **2024:** Rebels launch a new assault on Aleppo. With Assad's allies distracted, his army collapses, and rebels take control of major cities, overthrowing Assad.
- **Geographical Location of Syria:**
 - Syria is located in the **Middle East**, in the western part of the Asian continent.
 - It shares borders with **Turkey to the north, Iraq to the east, Jordan to the south, Israel and Lebanon to the southwest, and the Mediterranean Sea to the west.**
 - Syria occupies a strategic position, linking the Levant region with the rest of the Arab world.
- **About Golan Heights:**
 - It is a **rocky plateau in southwestern Syria, about 60 kilometers (40 miles) south of Damascus.**
 - The **Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee border it on the west, Mount Hermon on the north, the seasonal Wadi Al-Ruqqd River on the east, and the Yarmk River on the south.**
 - At its broadest point, the Golan measures approximately 44 miles (71 kilometers) from north to south and 27 miles (43 kilometers) from east to west.





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