



15 January 2025

National and International News

<p>National Board</p> <p>Turmeric</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recently, the Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Shri Piyush Goyal, inaugurated the National Turmeric Board in New Delhi. The Board's headquarters has been established in Nizamabad. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It will focus on the development and growth of turmeric and turmeric products in the country. It will especially focus on capacity building and skill development of turmeric growers for harnessing greater benefits out of value addition. The Board will also promote quality and food safety standards and adherence to such standards. Composition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board shall have a Chairperson, who will be appointed by the Central Government. It will have members from the Ministry of AYUSH, Departments of Pharmaceuticals, Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Commerce & Industry of the Union Government, and senior State Government representatives from three states (on a rotation basis). Select national/state institutions involved in research, representatives of turmeric farmers and exporters. The Department of Commerce will appoint a Secretary. The Ministry of Commerce will be the nodal department providing funds and infrastructure for the NTB, which will look into increased demand, usage, production, research, market linkage, exports and so on. Key facts about Turmeric (Curcuma longa) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a perennial herbaceous plant belonging to the ginger family (Zingiberaceae). Climatic conditions required <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soil and climate: A friable well-drained red loamy soil in wet or garden lands under tropical conditions is ideal. Rain: Regions receiving an annual rainfall of 1500 mm can support its growth. Temperature: range of 20 to 35 °C. India is the largest producer, consumer and exporter of turmeric in the world. The largest producing states of Turmeric are
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	Maharashtra, Telangana, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.
PM-Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has issued the Scheme Guidelines for the implementation of the ‘Payment Security Mechanism’ and ‘Central Financial Assistance’ components under the PM-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana. These components are specifically designed for RESCO Models and Utility-Led Aggregation Models. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a government scheme launched on February 15, 2024, that aims to provide free electricity to households in India. Under the scheme, households will be provided with a subsidy to install solar panels on their roofs. The subsidy will cover up to 40% of the cost of the solar panels. The scheme is expected to benefit 1 crore households across India. It is estimated that the scheme will save the government Rs. 75,000 crore per year in electricity costs. Under the scheme, DISCOMs are designated as State Implementation Agencies (SIAs) responsible for facilitating various measures, including net meter availability, timely inspection, and commissioning of installations. DISCOMs will receive incentives based on their achievement in the installation of additional grid-connected rooftop solar capacity beyond a baseline level.
H-1B Visa	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Indian discussion on Donald Trump’s potential second term in the White House must move beyond the ongoing H-1B visa controversy in the United States. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise for a specified period. The intent of the H-1B provisions is to help employers who cannot otherwise obtain needed business skills and abilities from the U.S. workforce by authorizing the temporary employment of qualified individuals who are not otherwise authorized to work in the United States. Occupations that qualify for the H-1B visa are typically in fields such as technology, finance, engineering, architecture, or more.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Eligibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A valid job offer from a U.S. employer for a role that requires specialty knowledge ○ Proof of a bachelor's degree or equivalent experience in that field ○ The US employer must show that there is a lack of qualified U.S. applicants for the role. ● Features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The H-1B visa is valid for three years and can be extended one time for an additional three years. In general, the H-1B is valid for a maximum of six years. ○ There is no limit to the number of H1-B Visas that an individual can have in his or her lifetime. ○ H1-B holders can seek Green Card or Lawful Permanent Residency for themselves and their family. ○ If the H1-B holder is changing jobs, he or she must reapply for a new visa.
<p>Important Days: Thiruvalluvar Day</p>	<p>Why in news? The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi remembers the great Tamil philosopher, poet and thinker Thiruvalluvar, today, on Thiruvalluvar Day.</p> <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Thiruvalluvar Day was first celebrated on May 17 and 18 in 1935. ● In the present time, it is usually observed either on January 15 or 16 in Tamil Nadu and is a part of Pongal celebrations. ● The occasion is named after and honours the poet, Thiruvalluvar ● About Thiruvalluvar: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ He was a poet and philosopher, is regarded as a cultural icon by Tamils. ○ He is fondly referred to as Valluvar by Tamils. ○ His most popular work is Thirukkural, a collection of couplets on ethics, politics, economy and love. ○ Thiruvalluvar's primary work Thirukkural contains 1330 couplets (kurals) that are divided into 133 sections of 10 couplets each. ○ The text is divided into three parts with teachings on dharma, artha, and kama (virtue, wealth and love). ○ Each section covers a wide range of topics and imparts moral, ethical, and practical guidance to the readers. ○ The couplets are composed in a concise and poetic form, making them easily memorable and quotable.
<p>Maha Kumbh Mela</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Prime Minister has congratulated the devotees who participated in the first Amrit Snan at the Mahakumbh,



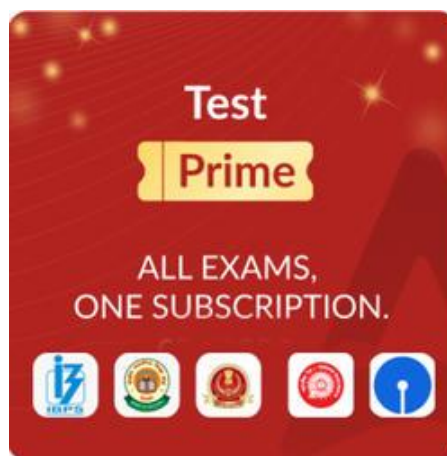
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marking the auspicious festival of Makar Sankranti.

Key Points:

- It is a sacred pilgrimage that is **celebrated four times over a course of 12 years.**
- **Kumbh Mela**, the world's largest peaceful gathering, draws millions of pilgrims who bathe in sacred rivers seeking to **purify themselves from sins and attain spiritual liberation.**
- This sacred event rotates between four locations in **India-Haridwar, Ujjain, Nashik, and Prayagraj-** each situated by a holy river, from the Ganges to the Shipra, the Godavari, and the confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna, and the mythical Sarasvati in Prayagraj.
- **Historical background**
 - The roots of the Kumbh Mela stretch back thousands of years, finding early references during the **Maurya and Gupta periods (4th century BCE to 6th century CE).**
 - During the medieval period, the Kumbh Mela received patronage from various royal dynasties, including the **Chola and Vijayanagara empires** in the south, and the Delhi Sultanate and Mughals in the north.
 - Even Mughal emperors such as Akbar are noted to have participated in the celebrations, illustrating a spirit of religious tolerance.
 - British administrators observed and documented the festival, intrigued by its massive scale and the diverse congregations it drew.
 - Figures such as British colonial administrator James Prinsep chronicled the Kumbh Mela in the **19th century**, detailing its ritualistic practices, the vast congregations, and the **socio-religious dynamics at play.**





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