



# drishti

## Important Facts for Prelims (21st September 2018)

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### Tirumala Rathotsavam

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- Gaiety and religious splendour marked Rathotsavam at Tirumala, on the penultimate day of the nine-day annual Srivari Brahmotsavams.
- Brahmotsavam, the Hindu festival is an auspicious festival celebrated every year at the Tirumala Venkateswara Temple at Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh.
- The celebration of the Brahmotsava is performed over nine-day period. On the very first day of the festival "Anurarpana" ritual is performed along with the celebration of Shri Vishvaksena. The "Anurarpana" ritual signifies fertility, abundance and prosperity.
- During all nine days of the festival various religious activities like homas and daily processions where various idols present in the temple are taken out on different chariots (vahanas).
- The main reason for celebrating this festival is to pray to God for providing a life which is filled with high values and morals.

### Asiatic Lions

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Bodies of at least 11 Asiatic lions have been found in the Gir Forest National Park of Gujarat.

#### **Asiatic lion (*Panthera leo persica*)**

- Asiatic lions are slightly smaller than African lions.
- Males have only moderate mane growth at the top of the head, so that their ears are always visible.
- The most striking morphological character, which is always seen in Asiatic lions, and rarely in African lions, is a longitudinal fold of skin running along its belly.
- Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972: SCHEDULE 1
- CITES: Appendix I
- IUCN Red List: Endangered

- Asiatic lions were once distributed upto the state of West Bengal in east and Rewa in Madhya Pradesh, in central India.
- At present Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary is the only abode of the Asiatic lion.
- The last surviving population of the Asiatic lions is a compact tract of dry deciduous forest and open grassy scrublands in southwestern part of Saurashtra region of Gujarat.
- They are vulnerable to disease, encroachment, forest fire, natural calamities, grazing, collection of fuelwood, Non-timber forest produce (NTFP), poaching, tourism, religious pilgrimage and accidental lion deaths due to human causes.
- Three major roads and a railway track pass through the Gir Protected Area (PA). Also, there are three big temples inside the PA that attract large number of pilgrims, particularly during certain times of the year.

## Raiganj Wildlife Sanctuary

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- In a first, Raiganj Wildlife Sanctuary recorded 98,532 birds this year. This the highest number of birds which has visited Raiganj Wildlife Sanctuary over the past several years.
- The sanctuary is also known as the Kulik Bird Sanctuary, named after the river Kulik. It is located in Uttar Dinajpur district in the Indian state of West Bengal.
- The sanctuary is an artificial forest spread over 1.3 square kilometres, which was created in 1970 as a part of the Social Forestry Project of the West Bengal government.
- As large numbers of open billed storks and other migratory birds began to flock to the area during the mating season, it was officially designated as the Raiganj Wildlife Sanctuary in 1985.
- The migratory species includes open-bill storks, egrets, night herons and cormorants. The resident birds are kites, flycatchers, owls, kingfishers, woodpeckers, drongoes, etc.

## India's First Biotechnology University

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- Gujarat will set up India's first Biotechnology University which will boost research, innovation and entrepreneurship in the sector.
- The Gujarat Biotechnology University, to be made a world class research-focused academic institution, will train and prepare biotech scientists in product-focused research to create and deliver a strong pipeline of innovative products for the country.

## Bajjnath Temple, Himachal Pradesh

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- It was built by Katyuri kings in 1204 A.D.
- Temple is located in the district of Kangra at the left bank of the River Gomati.

- The temple follows the Nagara Style of Architecture.
- Main Sanctum Sanctorum is dedicated to Lord Baijnath, represented in the form of Linga.
- There are 17 subsidiary shrines dedicated to Ganesh, Kartikeya, Nandi etc.
- In the temple premise there is a mysterious stone, Bheem Shila, weighing 100 kg. Just nine people can lift the stone with their index finger bent chanting the Lord's name.
- Government of India has selected Baijnath to be one of the four temples to be connected by the 'Siva Heritage Circuit' in Uttarakhand.
- The Archaeological Survey of India has declared it as 'Monument of National Importance.'
- The Katyuri kings were a medieval ruling clan of present-day Uttarakhand, India. They ruled over the region now known as Kumaon from 800 to 1100 AD. They called their state Kurmanchal, the land of Kurma, the second Avatar of Vishnu, from which the present name is derived. Their capital was Kartripura.

### **Nagara or North Indian Style of Temple Architecture**

- In North India it is common for an entire temple to be built on a stone platform with steps leading up to it.
- Nagara temples consist of towers, known as shikhara. The sanctum sanctorum or garbhagriha is always located directly under the tallest tower.
- Kandariya Mahadeva Temple, Khajuraho Temple Complex is the epitome of Nagara Style of Temple Architecture.