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UPSC CSE PRELIMS

ANCIENT HISTORY AND ART & CULTURE

GS PAPER 1

Prelims Research 2013–2026

Every Ancient History and Art & Culture question of UPSC Prelims from 2013 to 2026, year-wise with the latest paper first: the correct answer, an explanation of every option, and notes on the topic.

Compiled by Arvind KrS

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Ancient History and Art & Culture Prelims Research 2013–2026

Year-wise UPSC Prelims Ancient History and Art & Culture questions with answers and explanations

Prelims 2026 Edition · Compiled November 2026

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PRELIMS RESEARCH | GS PAPER 1 | ANCIENT HISTORY AND ART & CULTURE

UPSC Prelims Research: Ancient History and Art & Culture 2026

All 15 Ancient History and Art & Culture questions of UPSC Civil Services Preliminary Examination 2026, General Studies Paper 1, with the correct answer and an explanation of every option.

Q. Which one of the following Carnatic music ragas is similar to Raga Bilawal in Hindustani music?

(a) Nat Bhairavi
(b) Kamavardhini
(c) Hanumatodi
(d) Dheera Shankarabharanam

Answer: (d) Dheera Shankarabharanam

Bilawal and Shankarabharanam

- **Bilawal** is both a raga and one of the **ten thaats** (parent scales) of Hindustani music, as classified by **Pt. V. N. Bhatkhande**. It uses **all seven shuddha (natural) notes**: Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni, which matches the Western **major scale**. It is a **morning raga**.
- In Carnatic music, the parent scales are the **72 melakarta ragas** (systematised by **Venkatamakhi** in the 17th century). The 29th melakarta, **Dheera Shankarabharanam** (usually called **Shankarabharanam**), uses the same natural notes, so it is the Carnatic counterpart of Bilawal.

Carnatic melakarta	Notes	Hindustani thaat
Dheera Shankarabharanam (29)	All natural notes	Bilawal
Natabhairavi (20)	Komal Ga, Dha, Ni	Asavari
Hanumatodi (8)	Komal Re, Ga, Dha, Ni	Bhairavi
Kamavardhini / Pantuvarali (51)	Komal Re, Dha; tivra Ma	Purvi

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Mechakalyani (65)	Tivra Ma	Kalyan (Yaman)
Harikambhoji (28)	Komal Ni	Khamaj

- **(a) Nat Bhairavi** corresponds to **Asavari** thaat; it is the natural minor scale.
- **(b) Kamavardhini** (Pantuvarali) corresponds to **Purvi** thaat.
- **(c) Hanumatodi** corresponds to **Bhairavi** thaat (all four movable notes flat). Note that Hindustani **Todi** thaat is a different scale.

Q. Consider the following statements:

I. Pali texts contain the first definite references to coins, e.g., kahapana, nikkha, kamsa, and kakanika.

II. The literary evidence from Pali texts is corroborated by archaeological evidence of punch-marked coins from many sites, most of them made of silver.

The above statements have been associated with which of the following?

1. Emergence of urban life

2. Transition to money economy

Select the answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

> **Answer: (c) Both 1 and 2**

Coins and the Second Urbanisation (c. 600–300 BCE)

- The **Pali canon** (Buddhist texts) gives the **first clear references to coins**: **kahapana** (karshapana), **nikkha** (nishka), **kamsa** and **kakanika** (a small copper coin). Vedic texts mention nishka and shatamana, but these were probably **ornaments or units of value**, not true coins.
- **Punch-marked coins (PMCs)** are India's earliest coins. They were made by stamping symbols (sun, tree, hill, animal) on pieces of metal, mostly **silver** and some copper. They are found at **Taxila, Kaushambi, Rajghat, Ujjain, Patna** and many other sites of the **Ganga valley**.
- **Link to inference 1 (urban life):** coins appear together with the **second urbanisation**, the rise of cities such as **Rajagriha, Shravasti, Kaushambi, Champa, Varanasi and Ujjain** in the age of the **Mahajanapadas**. Towns needed coins for trade, crafts and markets, and guilds (**shreni**) of merchants and artisans appear in the same texts.
- **Link to inference 2 (money economy):** exchange shifted from **barter and cattle** to **metal currency**. Pali texts also mention **loans on interest**, wages paid in coin and taxes, showing the growth of a money economy.
- So both statements are associated with urban life and with the shift to a money economy.

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Q. Which of the following temples has/have a Nagara-style shikhara?

1. Malegitti Shivalaya, Badami

2. Huchimalligudi Temple, Aihole

3. Dashavatara Temple, Deogarh

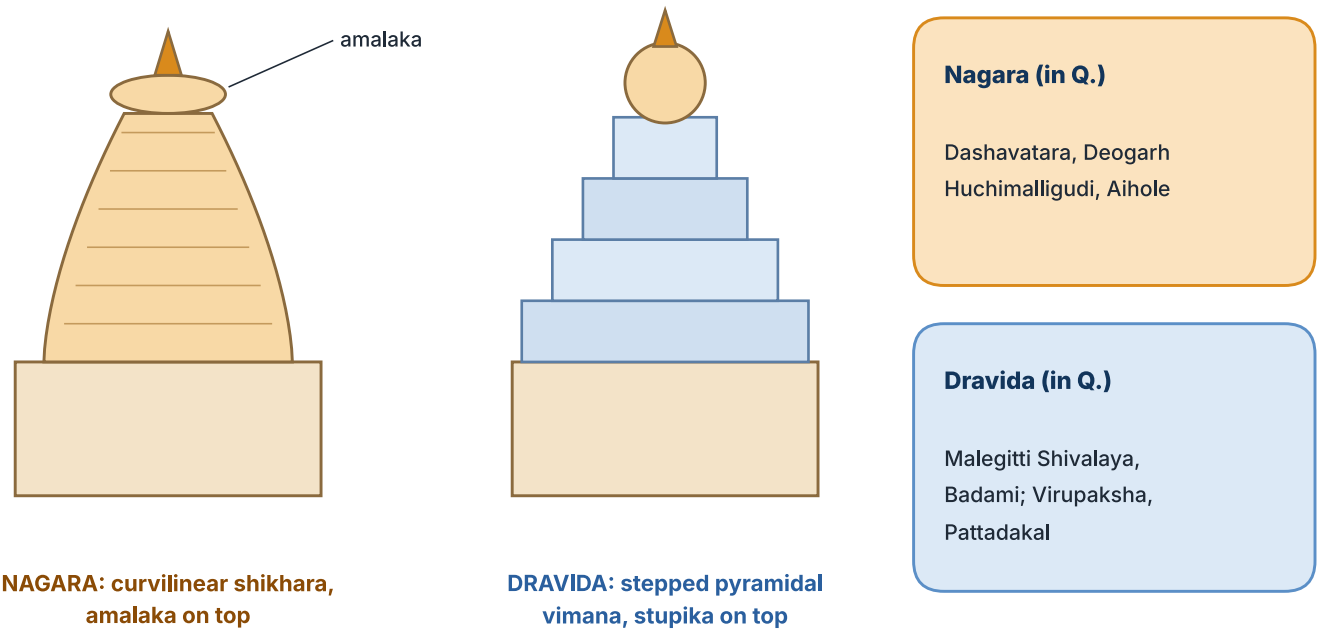
4. Virupaksha Temple, Pattadakal

Select the answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 and 2
(b) 2 and 3
(c) 3 only
(d) 3 and 4

Answer: (b) 2 and 3

Nagara and Dravida Temples



Nagara and Dravida temple towers compared

- **Nagara** (northern) temples have a **curvilinear tower (shikhara)** topped by an **amalaka** and kalasha. **Dravida** (southern) temples have a **pyramidal, stepped vimana** crowned by a **stupika (shikhara)**, usually inside a walled enclosure with gopurams.
- **1. Malegitti Shivalaya, Badami: Dravida.** A small early **Chalukya** temple (late 7th century) on a boulder hill; it has a **stepped Dravida vimana**. No Nagara shikhara.
- **2. Huchimalligudi, Aihole: Nagara.** An early Chalukya temple (7th century) at Aihole, the "cradle of Indian temple architecture". It carries an early **rekha-nagara (curvilinear) shikhara** over its sanctum and is noted for one of the earliest **antaralas** (vestibule).

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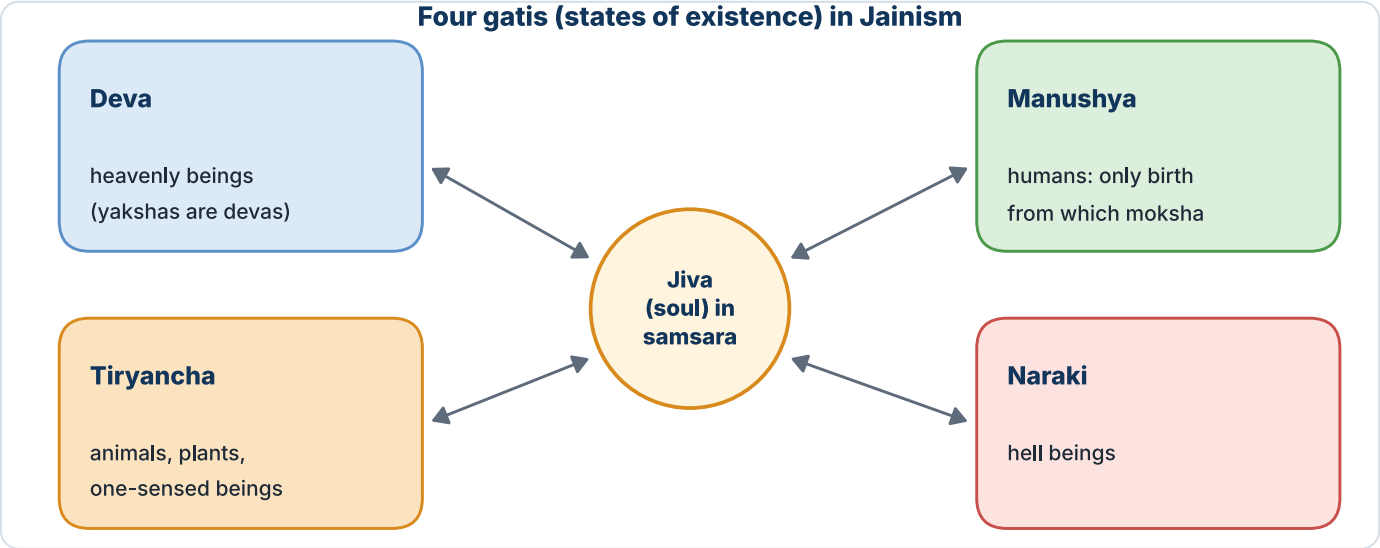
- **3. Dashavatara Temple, Deogarh: Nagara.** Built in the **Gupta period (c. 500 CE)** in **Lalitpur district, Uttar Pradesh**, it is one of the **earliest Nagara temples** with a (now partly ruined) **shikhara**. It is a **panchayatana** temple dedicated to Vishnu, famous for the **Sheshashayi Vishnu**, **Gajendramoksha** and **Nara-Narayana** panels.
- **4. Virupaksha Temple, Pattadakal: Dravida.** Built around **745 CE** by **Queen Lokamahadevi** to celebrate **Vikramaditya II's** victory over the Pallavas of Kanchi, and modelled on the **Kailasanatha temple of Kanchipuram**. It is a classic **Dravida** temple.
- **Pattadakal** (UNESCO World Heritage Site, 1987) is unique in having temples of **both styles side by side**: Nagara (**Papanatha, Galaganatha, Kashivishvanatha, Jambulinga, Kadasiddheshwara**) and Dravida (**Virupaksha, Mallikarjuna, Sangameshwara**).

Q. Among the four main forms of existence of life recognized in Jainism, which one of the following is not included?

(a) Deva (gods)
(b) Yaksha (demi-gods)
(c) Manushya (humans)
(d) Tiryancha (animals and plants)

Answer: (b) Yaksha (demi-gods)

The Four Gatis of Jainism



The four gatis of existence in Jainism

- Jainism holds that every **jiva (soul)** wanders through the cycle of birth and death (**samsara**) according to its **karma**. It can be born in one of **four gatis (states of existence)**:
  - **Deva**: heavenly beings (gods), who enjoy pleasure but must still be reborn.
  - **Manushya**: human beings. Only from human birth can a soul reach **moksha (kevala jnana)**.
  - **Tiryancha**: animals, birds, insects, **plants** and even one-sensed beings in earth, water, fire and air.
  - **Naraki**: beings of the **hells**, who suffer for their bad karma.

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- **Yakshas** are not a separate gati. In Jain belief they are a class of **devas**: the **shasana-devatas** (guardian deities) attending each Tirthankara, such as the **yakshi Ambika** with Neminatha and **Padmavati** with Parshvanatha.
- The Jain symbol of the **swastika** stands for these four gatis; its four arms show the four states of existence, and liberation lies beyond them.

Q. The Hallisalasya painting in the Bagh Caves represents:

(a) A joyous folk dance
(b) Buddha in a meditative pose
(c) The depiction of Shiva and Parvati on Kailasha
(d) Samudramanthan (Churning of the Ocean)

> **Answer: (a) A joyous folk dance**

Bagh Caves

- The **Bagh caves** are **nine Buddhist rock-cut caves** in **Dhar district, Madhya Pradesh**, on the **Baghani river**, a tributary of the Narmada. They date to the **late Gupta period (c. 5th–6th century CE)**, and their murals are close in style to **Ajanta**.
- The best paintings are in **Cave 4, the Rang Mahal ("palace of colours")**. The **Hallisaka (Hallisa-lasya)** scene shows a **lively group dance**: a **male dancer in the centre, encircled by women** dancing and playing **cymbals, drums and flutes**. Hallisaka was a **circular folk dance**, later linked with the **rasa** dance of Krishna and the gopis. So it is a **joyous folk dance**, not a religious scene.
- **(b)** Bagh's paintings are secular and courtly, unlike Ajanta's many **Jataka** and Buddha scenes. **(c)** Shiva and Parvati on Kailasha is a famous sculpture at **Ellora (Cave 16, Kailasa temple)**. **(d)** The **churning of the ocean** appears in later temple art, such as the long relief at **Angkor Wat**.
- Many Bagh paintings were damaged by seepage and were **copied in the 1920s**; some panels are kept at the **Gwalior museum**.

Q. Consider the following statements relating to the use of the place-value system in India:

1. The earliest epigraphic use of the place-value system in India is found in the Mankani plates from Gujarat (AD 595-596).

2. In the ninth century, place-values become general in inscriptions all over India.

3. The place-values have been found in Sanskrit inscriptions in South-east Asia as early as the seventh century.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1 and 3 only

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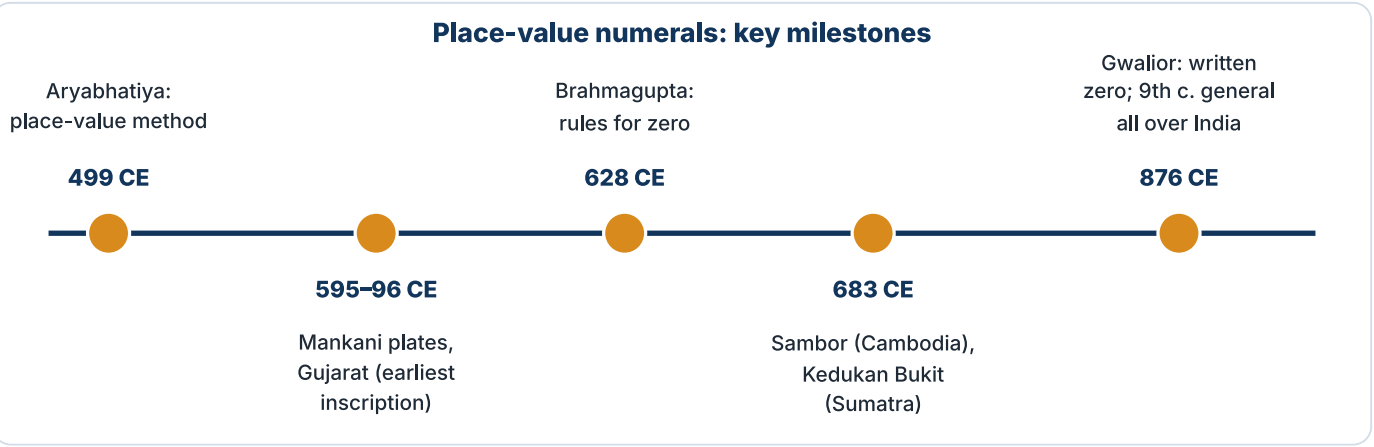
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3

The Decimal Place-Value System



Milestones of the place-value system

- In a **place-value system**, the value of a digit depends on its **position** (units, tens, hundreds), and a sign for **zero** marks an empty place. With just **ten symbols** any number can be written. This Indian invention travelled through the Arabs to Europe as the **"Hindu-Arabic numerals"**.
- **Statement 1 is correct.** The **Mankani (Sankheda) copper plates** from Gujarat, dated **346 of the Kalachuri era (AD 595–596)**, are regarded as the **earliest inscription** using place-value numerals in India (some scholars have questioned their authenticity).
- **Statement 2 is correct.** By the **9th century**, place-value numbers are common in inscriptions across India. The **Gwalior (Chaturbhuj temple) inscription of 876 CE** shows a **written zero** as a small circle.
- **Statement 3 is correct.** In **South-east Asia**, inscriptions of the **7th century** use place-value numbers with zero, for example the **Sambor inscription (Cambodia)** and **Kedukan Bukit inscription (Sumatra)**, both of **683 CE**, older than the Gwalior example.
- In texts, **Aryabhata** (Aryabhatiya, 499 CE) used a place-value method, and **Brahmagupta** (Brahmasphutasiddhanta, 628 CE) gave rules for calculating with **zero**. The **Bakhshali manuscript** also uses a dot for zero.

Q. Consider the following statements about the archaeological findings in Harappan towns:

I. There is wide occurrence of spindle-whorls in the houses but absence of spinning wheels.

II. Weights and measurement scales, complete with graduations have been discovered.

III. There are houses built in large part with baked bricks, around relatively spacious courtyards, with their own wells, bathing platforms, and large rooms.

Which of the following inferences can be drawn from the above statements?

1. Statement I suggests that spinning was a laborious activity done at home.

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2. Statement II suggests the extent of the scientific knowledge that the Harappans possessed.

3. Statement III suggests the emergence of a common property system.

Select the answer using the code given below :

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

> **Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only**

Reading the Harappan Evidence

- **Inference 1 is valid. Spindle-whorls** (small weights of clay or faience used with a hand spindle) are found in many houses, but the **spinning wheel (charkha)** was unknown; it reached India only in medieval times. Spinning thread by hand was **slow and laborious household work**, probably done largely by women. Cotton cloth itself is known from a fragment at **Mohenjo-daro**.
- **Inference 2 is valid.** The Harappans used **standardised cubical weights** of chert, following a **binary series (1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32…) and then decimal multiples**, the base unit being about **13.6 g**. A **graduated scale** of shell from **Mohenjo-daro** and an ivory scale from **Lothal** show precise linear measurement. These reveal a good knowledge of **mathematics and measurement**.
- **Inference 3 is not valid.** Large, well-built **private houses** with their own wells, bathing areas and rooms point to **private property**, family wealth and **social differences** (rich and poor households), not to a **common property** system. At Mohenjo-daro many houses had **private wells**, while smaller houses and "barracks" suggest unequal living conditions.

Q. Consider the following statements about the Rigvedic period :

I. Irrigation from wells allowed agriculture to expand away from flood plains and strips on river margins into the present Punjab and Haryana plains having underground water levels reasonably close to the surface.

II. Draught-animal power was employed to draw up water out of the wells.

Which of the following information support/supports the above statements?

1. There is evidence in the Rigveda of the use of ashma chakra (stone pulley wheel) and ahava (strapped wooden pails) to draw up water.

2. Mention has been made in the Rigveda of the use of implements like parashu/kulisha (axe) and datra /sreni (sickle).

3. There is a history of the use of ox, even before the Rigveda, for ploughing the land and pulling the carts.

Select the answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1, 2 and 3

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(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 3 only

> **Answer: (c) 1 and 3 only**

Wells and Farming in the Rigvedic Age

- **Information 1 supports both statements.** The Rigveda mentions wells (**avata, kupa**) from which water was raised using a **stone pulley wheel (ashma chakra)**, a **strap or rope (varatra)** and **wooden pails (ahava, kosha)**. Water lifted this way was led into channels (**kulya**) for the fields, so farming could spread beyond river banks into the plains of **Punjab and Haryana**, where groundwater is near the surface.
- **Information 3 supports statement II.** Oxen were used for **ploughing (with the plough, langala or sira)** and drawing carts long before the Rigveda: a **ploughed field** has been found at **Kalibangan** (Early Harappan) and **terracotta bullock-cart** models at Harappan sites. A society used to harnessing oxen could readily use them to **draw water from wells**.
- **Information 2 does not support the statements.** Axes (**parashu**) and sickles (**datra, srni**) show forest clearing and harvesting, but they say **nothing about wells or irrigation** or the use of animals to lift water.
- Rigvedic people were mainly **pastoral** (cattle as wealth: **gavishti**, the "search for cows", meant war), but agriculture was growing; the Rigveda knows only one grain, **yava (barley)**.

Q. Consider the following assertion: In the Pleistocene period either the Yamuna once flowed into the Indus, or the Sutlej flowed into the Yamuna and one major tributary of either had shifted from the Ganga to the Indus or vice versa.

Which of the following is/are the basis of the above assertion?

1. The Nadi-Sukta of the Rigveda

2. The explorations of the Sutlej and the Yamuna by Robert Bruce Foote

3. The presence of the same species of dolphins in both the Indus and the Ganga river systems

Select the answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) 1 and 2
(d) 3

> **Answer: (d) 3**

Evidence for Ancient River Shifts

- **Basis 3 is correct.** Freshwater **river dolphins** (genus **Platanista**) live in both the **Indus** and the **Ganga–Brahmaputra** systems, which today are not connected. Such animals could have spread between the two only if, at some time in the **Pleistocene** (about 2.6 million to 11,700 years ago), the rivers were **linked**:

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the Yamuna flowing west into the Indus system, or the Sutlej flowing east into the Yamuna. This is the reasoning used by historians such as **Irfan Habib**.

- The two dolphins were earlier treated as one species; they are now recognised as **Indus river dolphin (Platanista minor)** and **Ganges river dolphin (Platanista gangetica)**, India's **National Aquatic Animal**. Their close kinship still shows a shared past.
- **Basis 1 is incorrect.** The **Nadi-sukta (Rigveda, Book 10, hymn 75)** lists rivers from east to west (Ganga, Yamuna, Sarasvati, Shutudri, Parushni...). It belongs to the **Holocene** (the last few thousand years) and says nothing about river courses in the Pleistocene.
- **Basis 2 is incorrect. Robert Bruce Foote**, the "father of Indian prehistory", found the first **palaeolithic hand-axe at Pallavaram near Madras (1863)** and worked mainly in **South India**, not on the Sutlej and Yamuna.

Q. What does an empty seat represent in early Buddhist iconography?

(a) The meditation of the Buddha
(b) The Buddha's First Sermon
(c) The Buddha's Mahaparinibbana
(d) The Buddha's Mahabhinishkramana

> **Answer: (a) The meditation of the Buddha**

Aniconic Symbols of the Buddha

- In early Buddhist art (c. 2nd century BCE–1st century CE), at **Sanchi, Bharhut and Amaravati**, the Buddha was **not shown in human form**. His presence and the events of his life were shown through **symbols**. The NCERT text *Themes in Indian History* notes that the **empty seat** was meant to indicate the **meditation of the Buddha**, and the **stupa** his **mahaparinibbana**.

Symbol	Event or idea
Empty seat (throne)	Meditation of the Buddha
Horse (riderless)	Great Departure (Mahabhinishkramana)
Bodhi tree	Enlightenment (Sambodhi)
Wheel (dharmachakra)	First Sermon at Sarnath
Stupa	Mahaparinibbana (death)
Footprints	The Buddha's presence
Lotus / elephant	Birth / Queen Maya's dream

- **(b) First Sermon** at **Sarnath** (Dhammachakkappavattana) is shown by the **wheel**, often with deer.
- **(c) Mahaparinibbana** at **Kushinagar** is shown by the **stupa**.
- **(d) Mahabhinishkramana**, the Great Departure from Kapilavastu, is shown by a **horse** (Kanthaka) without a rider, under a royal umbrella.
- The **human image** of the Buddha appeared later, around the **1st century CE**, in the **Gandhara** and **Mathura** schools.

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Q. Which of the following pairs of ancient and modern names of rivers is/are correctly matched?

1. Vitasta : Chenab

2. Asikni : Jhelum

3. Parushni : Ravi

4. Yavyavati : Beas

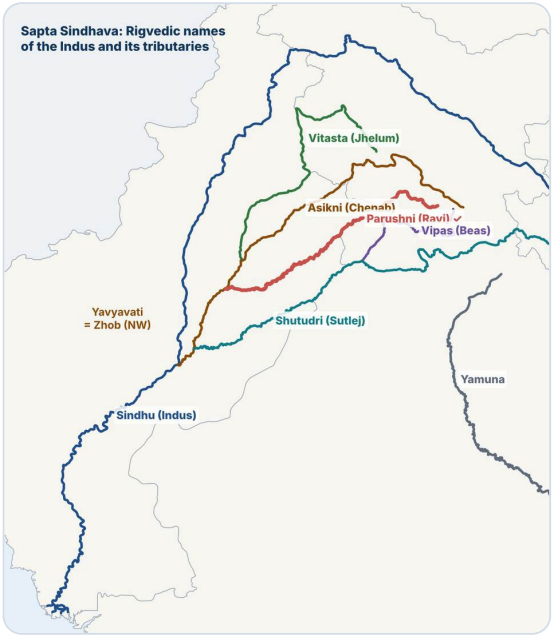
Select the answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 and 2
(b) 3 and 4
(c) 3 only
(d) 4 only

Answer: (c) 3 only

Rigvedic Rivers

- **1. Incorrect. Vitasta** is the **Jhelum**.
- **2. Incorrect. Asikni** ("the dark one") is the **Chenab**.
- **3. Correct. Parushni** is the **Ravi**, on whose banks the **Battle of Ten Kings (Dasharajna)** was fought, in which **Sudas** of the Bharata tribe defeated a confederacy of ten tribes.
- **4. Incorrect.** The **Beas** was called **Vipas** (or Vipasha). **Yavyavati** is usually identified with the **Zhob** river in the north-west (present Pakistan).



Rigvedic and modern names of the rivers of the Indus system

Rigvedic name	Modern name
Sindhu	Indus
Vitasta	Jhelum
Asikni	Chenab
Parushni	Ravi
Vipas	Beas
Shutudri	Sutlej
Kubha / Krumu / Gomati	Kabul / Kurram / Gomal

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Sadanira	Gandak

- The land of the Indus and its tributaries was called **Sapta Sindhava** (land of seven rivers). The **Sarasvati** (often linked with the **Ghaggar–Hakra**) was the most praised river in the Rigveda (**naditama**).

Q. Which of the following statements on the Amaravati Stupa and its relief sculpture is/are correct?

1. It was located in the lower Krishna valley.

2. In India, it was next only to the Sanchi Stupa in size.

3. The Amaravati school of sculpture made a lasting impact on the later South Indian sculpture, and its products were carried to Sri Lanka and South-east Asia.

Select the answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

> **Answer: (b) 1 and 3 only**

Amaravati Stupa and School of Art

- **Statement 1 is correct.** The stupa (the **Mahachaitya**) stood at **Amaravati (ancient Dhanyakataka) in Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh**, in the **lower Krishna valley**. It grew from about the **3rd–2nd century BCE** and flourished under the **Satavahanas** and later the **Ikshvakus**.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect.** Amaravati was **larger than Sanchi**. Its dome is estimated at about **50 m** in diameter, against about **36.6 m** for the Great Stupa at Sanchi, making it one of the largest stupas in India. It was dismantled over the centuries; many reliefs are now in the **Government Museum, Chennai** and the **British Museum, London**.
- **Statement 3 is correct.** The **Amaravati school** used white-green **limestone (Palnad marble)** for lively narrative panels full of movement, crowded scenes and graceful figures. It strongly influenced later **Pallava and Chola** sculpture, and its works and style spread to **Sri Lanka** (Anuradhapura) and **South-east Asia**.

School	Region	Material	Main patrons
Gandhara	North-west	Grey-blue schist, stucco	Kushanas
Mathura	Mathura (UP)	Spotted red sandstone	Kushanas
Amaravati	Lower Krishna valley	White limestone	Satavahanas, Ikshvakus

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Q. Which of the following pairs of the king and his dynasty in early historical Tamilakam is/are not correctly matched ?

1. Senguttuvan : Chera

2. Udiyanjeral : Chola

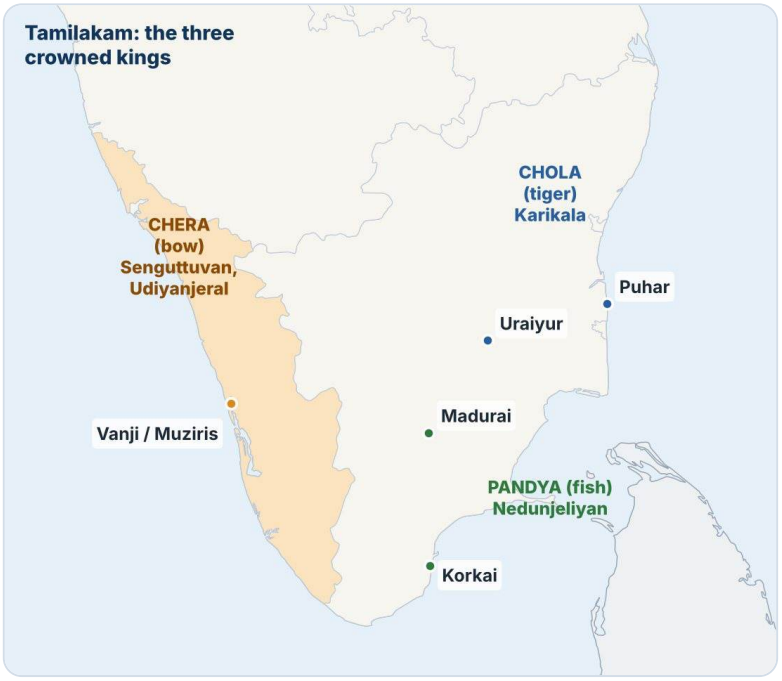
3. Nedunjeliyan : Pandya

Select the answer using the code given below :

(a) 1 and 2
(b) 2 only
(c) 1 and 3
(d) 3 only

Answer: (b) 2 only

The Three Crowned Kings (Muvendar)



The Chera, Chola and Pandya kingdoms of early Tamilakam

- **1. Correctly matched. Senguttuvan (the Red Chera)** was the most famous Chera king. The epic **Silappadikaram** says he led an expedition to the Himalayas to bring stone for an image of **Kannagi** and began the **Pattini (Kannagi) cult**. His brother **Ilango Adigal** is the traditional author of the epic.
- **2. Not correctly matched. Udiyanjeral** (Perunchorru Udiyan Cheralathan) was an early **Chera**, not a Chola. Tradition says he fed both armies at the **Kurukshetra war**, earning the title **"Perunchorru"** (great feast).
- **3. Correctly matched. Nedunjeliyan** was a great **Pandya** king who won the **Battle of Talaiyalanganam** against the Cheras, Cholas and five chieftains; he is praised in the **Maduraikanchi** of Mangudi Marudan.

Dynasty	Capital / port	Emblem	Famous ruler
Chera	Vanji / Muziris	Bow	Senguttuvan
Chola	Uraiyur / Puhar (Kaveripattinam)	Tiger	Karikala
Pandya	Madurai / Korkai	Fish (carp)	Nedunjeliyan

- The three dynasties are mentioned in **Ashoka's Rock Edicts II and XIII** as independent neighbours, and in the **Hathigumpha inscription** of Kharavela.

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Q. Pandit Mallikarjun Mansur, the famous classical singer from Karnataka, represented the:

(a) Agra Gharana
(b) Gwalior Gharana
(c) Patiala Gharana
(d) Jaipur-Atrauli Gharana

> **Answer: (d) Jaipur-Atrauli Gharana**

Pt. Mallikarjun Mansur (1910–1992)

- A **khayal** singer from **Dharwad, Karnataka**, he began in the **Gwalior** style and later trained with **Manji Khan** and **Bhurji Khan**, sons of **Ustad Alladiya Khan**, founder of the **Jaipur-Atrauli gharana**. He was known for rare and complex ragas (**aprachalit ragas**). Awards: **Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan** and **Padma Vibhushan (1992)**, and the **Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship**.
- **Jaipur-Atrauli gharana:** intricate, layered **taans**, rare ragas and blending of ragas (**jod ragas**). Other exponents: **Kesarbai Kerkar, Mogubai Kurdikar, Kishori Amonkar, Shruti Sadolikar, Ashwini Bhide-Deshpande**.

Gharana	Founder / key figure	Known exponents
Gwalior (oldest khayal gharana)	Haddu, Hassu Khan	Vishnu Digambar Paluskar, Veena Sahasrabuddhe
Agra	Faiyaz Khan	Vilayat Hussain Khan
Kirana	Abdul Karim Khan	Bhimsen Joshi, Gangubai Hangal
Patiala	Fateh Ali, Ali Bakhsh	Bade Ghulam Ali Khan
Jaipur-Atrauli	Alladiya Khan	Mallikarjun Mansur, Kishori Amonkar

- **Dharwad** region gave India several great Hindustani vocalists: Mallikarjun Mansur, **Bhimsen Joshi, Gangubai Hangal, Kumar Gandharva** and **Basavaraj Rajguru**.

Q. In which one among the following texts does the term kshetra-patni ('mistress of the field') originate?

(a) Rigveda
(b) Atharvaveda
(c) Ashtadhyayi
(d) Arthashastra

> **Answer: (b) Atharvaveda**

Kshetra-patni and the Atharvaveda

- The term **kshetra-patni** ("mistress of the field") occurs in the **Atharvaveda**, in hymns connected with **agriculture, fertility and protection of crops**. The Atharvaveda is a collection of **charms, spells and**

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prayers for everyday life: healing, prosperity, good harvests and protection from evil. The **Rigveda** knows the male **Kshetrapati** ("lord of the field"), to whom a hymn is addressed.

- **(a) Rigveda:** the oldest Veda (c. 1500–1000 BCE), hymns to Agni, Indra, Soma and others; it has **Kshetrapati**, not kshetra-patni.
- **(c) Ashtadhyayi: Panini's** Sanskrit grammar (c. 5th–4th century BCE), with nearly **4,000 sutras**.
- **(d) Arthashastra: Kautilya's** treatise on statecraft; it calls the state's agricultural officer the **Sitadhyaksha** and crown land **sita**.

Veda	Content
Rigveda	Hymns of praise
Samaveda	Melodies (chants) drawn mostly from the Rigveda
Yajurveda	Sacrificial formulas
Atharvaveda	Charms, spells and prayers for daily life

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All 7 Ancient History and Art & Culture questions of UPSC Civil Services Preliminary Examination 2017, General Studies Paper 1, with the correct answer and an explanation of every option.

Q. With reference to the difference between the culture of Rigvedic Aryans and Indus Valley people, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Rigvedic Aryans used the coat of mail and helmet in warfare whereas the people of Indus Valley Civilization did not leave any evidence of using them.
2. Rigvedic Aryans knew **gold, silver and copper** whereas Indus Valley people knew **only copper and iron.**
3. Rigvedic Aryans had domesticated the horse whereas there is no evidence of Indus Valley people having been aware of this animal.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (c) 1 and 3 only

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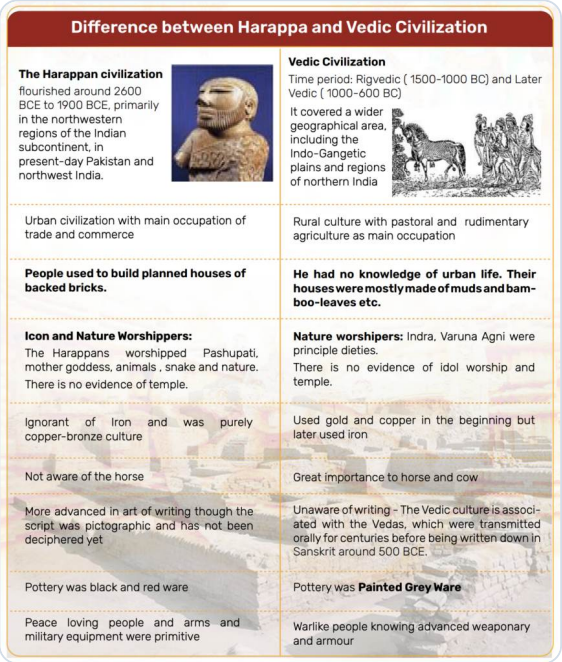

Rig Vedic Aryans vs. Indus Valley People:

- **Use of Armor in Warfare:**
  - Rig Vedic Aryans **utilized armor and helmets during warfare**, whereas the Indus Valley Civilization **did not leave evidence** of similar protective gear.
- **Knowledge of Metals:**
  - Rig Vedic Aryans were knowledgeable about **gold, silver, and copper.**
  - However, the Indus Valley people also had knowledge of **bronze (copper and tin alloy) and possibly iron.**
- **Domestication of Horses:**
  - The **Rig Vedic Aryans domesticated horses**, while **there is no substantial evidence that the Indus Valley people were aware of horses.**
- **Tribal Society Structure:**
  - The Rig Vedic society was primarily divided into three groups: **warriors, priests, and the common people.**
  - A **fourth group, the Sudras, emerged towards the end of the Rig Vedic period**, first mentioned in the **tenth Book of the Rig Veda**, which is the most recent.
- **Presence of Slavery:**
  - References in the Rig Veda indicate the **existence of slaves, primarily women**, who were given as gifts to priests and employed for domestic purposes.
  - **Slaves were not directly used in agriculture or production activities** during this period.
- **Occupational Differentiation:**
  - While there was a **beginning of occupational differentiation**, it was not rigid, as many families engaged in various occupations simultaneously.
- **Social Structure:**
  - Tribal elements in society were prominent, with **no significant social divisions based on tax collection** or the accumulation of land.
  - The society maintained a largely **egalitarian structure, indicating a lack of feudalism** during the Rig Vedic period.

Q. With reference to the religious history of India, consider the following statements:

1. **Sautrantika** and **Sammitiya** were the **sects of Jainism**.
2. Sarvastivadin held that the constituents of phenomena were not wholly momentary, but existed forever in a latent form.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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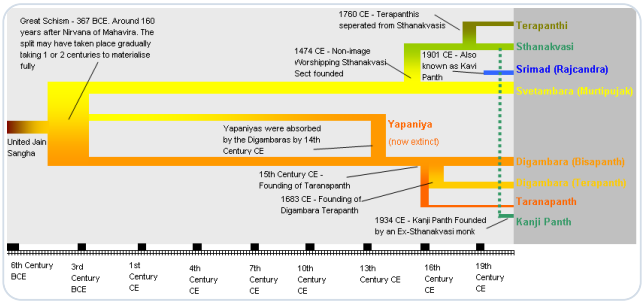
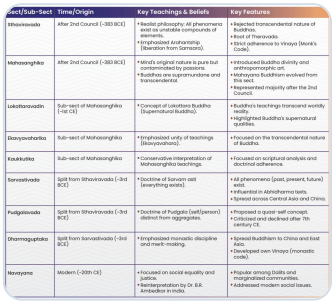
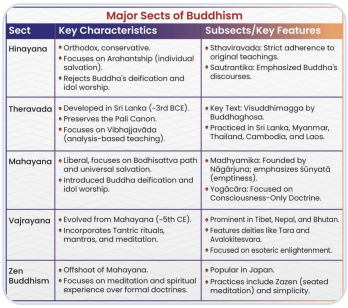
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (b) 2 only





Sect/Sub-Sect	Time/Origin	Key Teachings & Beliefs	Key Features
Sthaviravada	After 2nd Council (~383 BCE)	• Realist philosophy: All phenomena exist as irreducible compounds of elements. • Emphasized Arahantship (liberation from Samsara).	• Rejected transcendental nature of Buddhas. • Root of Theravada. • Strict adherence to Vinaya (Monk's Code).
Mahasanghika	After 2nd Council (~383 BCE)	• Mind's original nature is pure but contaminated by passions. • Buddhas are supermundane and transcendental.	• Introduced Buddha divinity and anthropomorphic art. • Mahayana Buddhism evolved from this sect. • Represented majority after the 2nd Council.
Lokottaravadin	Sub-sect of Mahasanghika (~1st CE)	• Concept of Lokottara Buddha (Supernatural Buddha).	• Buddha's teachings transcend worldly reality. • Highlighted Buddha's supernatural qualities.
Ekavyavaharika	Sub-sect of Mahasanghika	• Emphasized unity of teachings (Ekavyavahara).	• Focused on the transcendental nature of Buddha.
Kaukkutika	Sub-sect of Mahasanghika	• Conservative interpretation of Mahasanghika teachings.	• Focused on scriptural analysis and doctrinal adherence.
Sarvastivada	Split from Sthaviravada (~3rd BCE)	• Doctrine of Sarvam asti (everything exists).	• All phenomena (past, present, future) exist. • Influential in Abhidharma texts. • Spread across Central Asia and China.
Pudgalavada	Split from Sthaviravada (~3rd BCE)	• Doctrine of Pudgala (self/person) distinct from aggregates.	• Proposed a quasi-self concept. • Criticized and declined after 7th century CE.
Dharmaguptaka	Split from Sarvastivada (~3rd BCE)	• Emphasized monastic discipline and merit-making.	• Spread Buddhism to China and East Asia. • Developed own Vinaya (monastic code).
Navayana	Modern (~20th CE)	• Focused on social equality and justice. • Reinterpretation by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in India.	• Popular among Dalits and marginalized communities. • Addressed modern social issues.



Major Sects of Buddhism

Sect	Key Characteristics	Subsects/Key Features
Hinayana	• Orthodox, conservative. • Focuses on Arahantship (individual salvation). • Rejects Buddha's deification and idol worship.	• Sthaviravada: Strict adherence to original teachings. • Sautrantika: Emphasized Buddha's discourses.
Theravada	• Developed in Sri Lanka (~3rd BCE). • Preserves the Pali Canon. • Focuses on Vibhajjavāda (analysis-based teaching).	• Key Text: Visuddhimagga by Buddhaghosa. • Practiced in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos.
Mahayana	• Liberal, focuses on Bodhisattva path and universal salvation. • Introduced Buddha deification and idol worship.	• Madhyamika: Founded by Nāgārjuna; emphasizes śūnyatā (emptiness). • Yogācāra: Focused on Consciousness-Only Doctrine.
Vajrayana	• Evolved from Mahayana (~5th CE). • Incorporates Tantric rituals, mantras, and meditation.	• Prominent in Tibet, Nepal, and Bhutan. • Features deities like Tara and Avalokitesvara. • Focused on esoteric enlightenment.
Zen Buddhism	• Offshoot of Mahayana. • Focuses on meditation and spiritual experience over formal doctrines.	• Popular in Japan. • Practices include Zazen (seated meditation) and simplicity.

Notes:

- **Sautrantikas and Sammtiyas are the sects of Buddhism.**
- The word **"Sautrantika" means a follower of the sutras.**
- Sautrantika is generally considered to be another school of Buddhism that developed within the **Sarvastivada sect.**
- **Sarvastivadin:** While, like all Buddhists, the Sarvastivadins consider everything empirical to be impermanent, they maintain that the dharma factors are eternally existing realities. **This sect of Buddhism believes that all things exist, and exist continuously**, in the past and the future as well as in the present.

BuddhismBuddhismJainism

Q. Which one of the following was a very important seaport in the Kakatiya kingdom?

(a) Kakinada

(b) Motupalli

(c) Machilipatnam (Masulipatnam)

(d) Nelluru

Answer: (b) Motupalli

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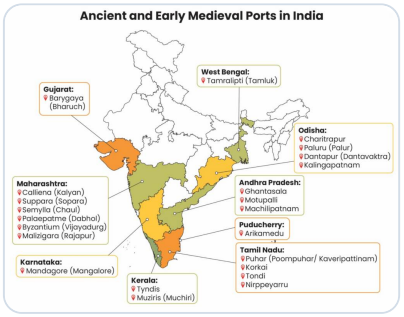

Notes:

- **Motupalli was a thriving trading hub during the Kakatiya dynasty's rule**, located on the east coast of India.
  - The Kakatiya dynasty was a South Indian dynasty whose capital was **Orugallu, now known as Warangal.**
- Historical records, including mentions by **Marco Polo**, highlight its significance as a major port city for trade with other regions in India, Southeast Asia, China, and the Middle East.

Q. The painting of Bodhisattva Padmapani is one of the most famous and oft-illustrated paintings at:

(a) Ajanta

(b) Badami

(c) Bagh

(d) Ellora

Answer: (a) Ajanta

Notes:

- The painting of Bodhisattva Padmapani, a famous and oft-illustrated mural, is found in **Cave 1 of the Ajanta Caves, a Buddhist rock-cut monastery in Maharashtra, India.**
- **Paintings** of various **Bodhisattvas** in tribhanga pose in Cave 1:
  - **Vajrapani** (protector and guide, a symbol of Buddha's power),
  - **Manjusri** (manifestation of Buddha's wisdom) and
  - **Padmapani** (Avalokitesvara) (symbol of Buddha's compassion).
- The **Dying Princess** in Cave no. 16.



Mural of bodhisattva Padmapani in Ajanta Caves, India, 5th century

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Q. Consider the following pairs:

	Traditions	Communities
1.	Chaliha Sahib Festival	Sindhis
2.	Nanda Raj Jaat Yatra	Gonds
3.	Wari-Warkari	Santhals

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Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) None of the above

Answer: (a) 1 only

Notes:

- **Chaliha Sahib**: Chaliha Sahib, a **40-day festival**, is a significant cultural and religious event celebrated by the **Sindhi Hindu community, honoring Lord Jhulelal,** their patron deity, and involves fasting and devotion.
  - The festival typically takes place in **July and August.**
- **Nanda Raj Jaat Yatra**: The Nanda Devi Raj Jat Yatra, also known as the "**Himalayan Mahakumbh**," is a significant religious pilgrimage and **festival in Uttarakhand**, India, celebrated in honor of **Goddess Nanda Devi**, that occurs once **every 12 years.**
  - **Gonds are not native** to this state.
- **Wari-Warkari**: Wari is a pilgrimage for the **Warkari sect related to Pandharpur god Vithobain Maharashtra**, and it is a part of Bhakti movement rather than a festival of a particular tribal group. Besides, Santhals are not native to this state.
  - "**Wari" refers to an annual Hindu pilgrimage (yatra) to Pandharpur,** Maharashtra, honoring the deity Vithoba, while **"Warkari" means "one who performs the Wari,"** belonging to a specific sampradaya (religious movement) within the Bhakti tradition

---

Q. Which of the following is/are famous for Sun temples?

1. Arasavalli
2. Amarakantak
3. Omkareshwar

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a) 1 only

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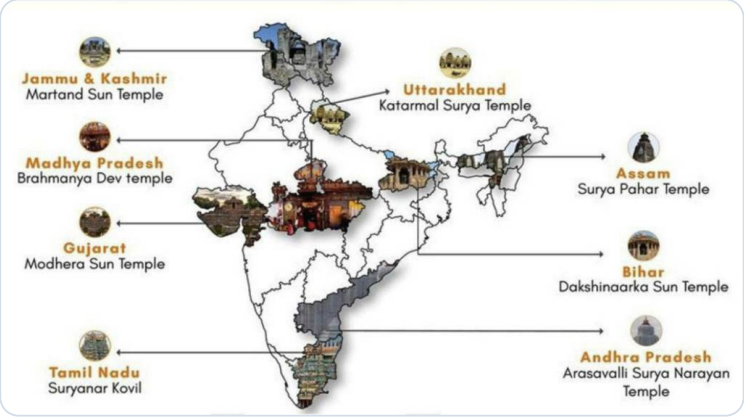

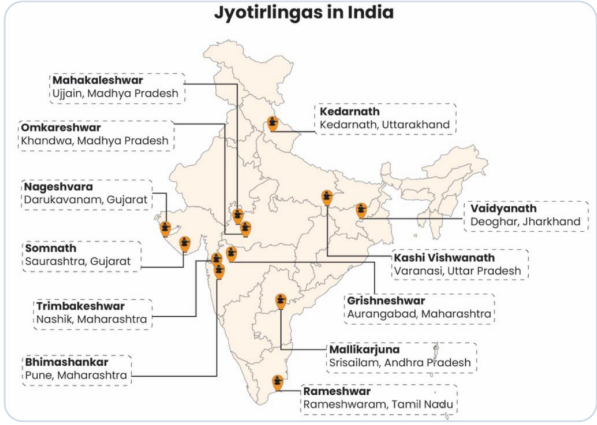

Notes:

- **Arasavalli in Andhra Pradesh** has one of the **prominent Sun temple or suryanarayan temple**.
- **Temple at Amarkantak** is dedicated to **Goddess Narmada and Lord Shiva.**
- Moreover, **Omkareshwar temple on the banks of Narmada River** in Madhya Pradesh is one of the **12 jyotirlingas dedicated to lord shiva.**

Famous Sun Temples in India

Konark Sun Temple, Odisha

- The Konark Sun Temple is a **13th-century CE Hindu temple dedicated to the sun god Surya**.
- It is located in the **town of Konark in the Indian state of Odisha.** The temple is one of the most famous sun temples in India and is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site.**
- The temple is built in the shape of a giant chariot, with 12 pairs of stone horses pulling the chariot. The chariot is 100 feet high and is adorned with intricate carvings of deities, animals, and geometric patterns. **The temple was built by King Narasimhadeva I** of the **Eastern Ganga dynasty.**

Modhera Sun Temple, Gujarat

- The Modhera Sun Temple is another famous sun temple in India. It is **located in the town of Modhera in the Indian state of Gujarat**.
- The temple was **built in the 11th century CE by King Bhimdev I of the Chaulukya dynasty.**
- The temple is **built in the Maru-Gurjara architectural style** and is **made of sandstone**.

Martand Sun Temple, Jammu and Kashmir

- The Martand Sun Temple is a Hindu temple **dedicated to the sun god Surya**.
- It is located in the **Anantnag district of the Indian union territory of Jammu and Kashmir**.
- The temple was **built in the 8th century CE by King Lalitaditya Muktapida of the Karkota dynasty.**
- The temple is built in the **Kashmiri architectural style and is made of limestone**.

Sun Temple, Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh

- The **Sun Temple in Gwalior is a Hindu temple dedicated to the sun god Surya**. It is located in the **city of Gwalior in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh**.
- The temple was built in the 12th century CE by **Raja Suraj Sen of the Tomar dynasty.**

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- The temple is built in the Hindu architectural style and is made of sandstone.

Surya Narayana Temple, Arasavalli, Andhra Pradesh

- The **Surya Narayana Temple** is a Hindu temple dedicated to the sun god Surya. It is located in the **village of Arasavalli in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh**.
- The temple was built in the 7th century CE by **King Devendra Varma of the Chalukya dynasty.**
- The temple is built in the **Dravidian architectural style and is made of sandstone**.

Surya Pahar Temple, Assam

- The Surya Pahar Temple is a Hindu temple dedicated to the sun god Surya.
- It is located in the **village of Surya Pahar in the Indian state of Assam**. The temple is built on a hilltop and is surrounded by lush greenery.
- The temple was **built in the 18th century CE by King Pramatta Singha of the Ahom dynasty**. The temple is built in the **Assamese architectural style and is made of stone**.

Suryanar Kovil, Tamil Nadu

- The **Suryanar Kovil is a Hindu temple dedicated to the sun god Surya.** It is located in the village of **Suryanar Kovil in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu**. The temple is one of the oldest sun temples in India and is believed to have been built in the **7th century CE.**
- The temple is built in the **Dravidian architectural style and is made of granite**.

Surya Narayana Temple, Domlur, Bengaluru, Karnataka

- The **Surya Narayana Temple is a Hindu temple dedicated to the sun god Surya**. It is located in the **Domlur neighborhood of Bengaluru**, the capital of the Indian state of Karnataka. The temple was built in the 19th century CE.
- The temple is built in the **Dravidian architectural style** and is made of granite.

Dakshinaarka Sun Temple, Gaya, Bihar

- The **Dakshinaarka Sun Temple** is a Hindu temple dedicated to the sun god Surya. It is located in the **city of Gaya in the Indian state of Bihar.** The temple is one of the most important pilgrimage sites for Hindus.
- The temple was **built in the 12th century CE by King Vishnuvardhana of the Hoysala dynasty.** The temple is built in the Hoysala architectural style and is **made of sandstone**.

Balaji Sun Temple, Unao, Madhya Pradesh

- The **Balaji Sun Temple** is a Hindu temple dedicated to the sun god Surya. It is **located in the city of Unao in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh**. The temple is one of the oldest sun temples in India and is believed to have been built in the 6th century CE.
- The temple is built in the **Nagara architectural style and is made of sandstone.**

Sun Temple, Ranchi, Jharkhand

- The Sun Temple is a Hindu temple dedicated to the sun god Surya. It is **located in the city of Ranchi in the Indian state of Jharkhand**. The temple was built in the 19th century CE **by King Birsa Munda.**
- The temple is built in the **Dravidian architectural style and is made of sandstone**.

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Sun Temple, Katarmal, Uttarakhand

- The Sun Temple is a Hindu temple dedicated to the sun god Surya. It is **located in the village of Katarmal in the Indian state of Uttarakhand**. The temple was built in the 11th century CE by King Ajaypal of the **Katyuri dynasty.**
- The temple is built in the **Nagara architectural style and is made of sandstone**.

Q. With reference to Manipuri Sankirtana, consider the following statements:

1. It is a song and dance performance.
2. Cymbals are the **only** musical instruments used in the performance.
3. It is performed to narrate the life and deeds of Lord Krishna.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1, 2 and 3
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1 only

> **Answer: (b) 1 and 3 only**

Sankirtana:



- The **Sankirtana** is a **Manipur ritual singing, drumming, and dancing** art form. This art form is performed to commemorate religious occasions as well as different stages in the lives of **Manipuri Vaishnavites**.
- Kirtana singing is said to have arrived in **Manipur** in the **fifteenth century** during the reign of **Bengal's King Kiyamba (1467-1508).**
- This devotional form quickly emerged as a distinct cultural form within Manipur's **Vaishnavite community**.
- The **first kirtana** was said to have been performed at **Lord Vishnu's small temple** in the village of **Vishnupur**.
- Sankirtana is a **collection of arts done by the Vaishnava people of the Manipur plains** to commemorate religious festivals and stages in their lives.
- **Sankirtana traditions revolve around the temple, where singers and dancers describe Lord Krishna's life and actions via songs and dance.**
- Two **drummers** and roughly 10 singer-dancers perform in a hall or residential courtyard surrounded by seated worshippers in a typical performance.
- **Cymbals and drums are the most commonly used musical instruments.**

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- The dignity and flow of artistic and holy energy are unrivaled, driving audience members to tears and causing them to kneel themselves in front of the artists on many occasions.
- Sankirtana has **two primary social purposes:** it brings people together on festive occasions throughout the year, functioning as a unifying factor within Manipur's Vaishnava community; and it develops and maintains links between individuals and communities via life-cycle rites.
- As a result, it is viewed as **God's tangible manifestation.**
- **In 2013**, it was included in **UNESCO's Representative List of Humanity's Intangible Cultural Heritage.**

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