This series provides compilation of daily CURRENT AFFAIRS of Anthropology.

It is aimed at addressing the requirement of aspirants to add contemporary aspects of the subject to the answers.

It also helps in understanding the trends of anthropology across India and the world.

**NOTE:** Please attempt the questions given at the end of the document and can upload on the **telegram channel: Sosin for Anthropology Q&A**, for peer review.
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Note - For convenience, the respective reference links have been dropped at the end of every topic.
A. **ARCHAEOLOGY**

1. **Bronze Age Civilizations in Europe**  
   **Context:** Ancient DNA reveals origin of first Bronze Age civilizations in Europe  
   **Highlights:**

- The first civilisations to build monumental palaces and urban centres in Europe are more genetically homogenous than expected, according to genomes gathered from archaeological sites around the Aegean.

- Individuals from the northern Aegean were considerably different by the Middle Bronze Age, sharing half their ancestry with people from the Pontic-Caspian steppe. These populations were highly similar to present-day Greeks. This supports theories that Proto-Greek and Indo-European languages originated in Anatolia or the Pontic-Caspian Steppe region.

- Despite marked differences in burial customs, architecture, and art, the Minoan civilization in Crete, the Helladic civilization in mainland Greece and the Cycladic civilization in the Cycladic islands in the middle of the Aegean Sea, were genetically similar during the Early Bronze age (5000 years ago).

- The findings are important because it suggests that critical innovations such as the development of urban centres, metal use and intensive trade made during the transition from the Neolithic to the Bronze Age were not just due to mass immigration from east of the Aegean as previously thought, but also from the cultural continuity of local Neolithic groups.

- The study also finds that by the Middle Bronze Age (4000-4,600 years ago), individuals from the northern Aegean were considerably different compared to those in the Early Bronze Age.

- These individuals shared half their ancestry with people from the Pontic-Caspian steppe, a large geographic region stretching between the Danube and the Ural Rivers and north of the Black Sea, and were highly similar to present-day Greeks.

- The findings suggest that migration waves from herders from the Pontic-Caspian steppe, or populations north of the Aegean that bear Pontic-Caspian Steppe like ancestry, shaped present-day Greece.

- These potential migration waves all predate the appearance of the earliest documented form of Greek, supporting theories explaining the emergence of Proto-Greek and the evolution of Indo-European languages in either Anatolia or the Pontic-Caspian Steppe region.

- Future studies could investigate whole genomes between the Mesolithic and Bronze Age in the Armenian and Caucasus to help further pinpoint the origins of migration into the Aegean, and to better integrate the genomic data with the existing archaeological and linguistic evidence.

**Reference:**  
[https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/05/210505102025.htm](https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/05/210505102025.htm)
2. Earliest Evidence of Human Ecosystems Changing with Fire

- A new study provides the earliest evidence to date of ancient humans significantly altering entire ecosystems with flames.
- The study combines archaeological evidence -- dense clusters of stone artifacts dating as far back as 92,000 years ago -- with paleoenvironmental data on the northern shores of Lake Malawi in eastern Africa to document that early humans were ecosystem engineers.
- "This is the earliest evidence I have seen of humans fundamentally transforming their ecosystem with fire," said Jessica Thompson, assistant professor of anthropology in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and the paper's lead author. "It suggests that by the Late Pleistocene, humans were learning to use fire in truly novel ways. In this case, their burning caused replacement of the region's forests with the open woodlands you see today."
- The artifacts examined by the researchers are of the type produced across Africa in the Middle Stone Age, a period dating back at least 315,000 years.
- The earliest modern humans made their appearance during this period, with the African archaeological record showing significant advances in cognitive and social complexity.
- Lake Malawi's water levels have fluctuated drastically over the ages. During the lake's driest periods, the last of which ended about 85,000 years ago, it diminished into two small, saline bodies of water. The lake recovered from these arid stretches and its levels have remained high ever since, according to the study.
- According to the researchers, the data revealed that a spike in charcoal accumulation occurred shortly before the flattening of the region's species richness -- the number of distinct species inhabiting it.
- Despite the consistently high lake levels, which imply greater stability in the ecosystem, the species richness went flat following the last arid period based on information from fossilized pollen sampled from the lakebed, the study found.
- The increase in archaeological sites after the last arid period, paired with the spike in charcoal and absence of forest, suggests that people were manipulating the ecosystem with fire, the researchers conclude.
- The scale of their environmental impact over the long term is something typically associated with farmers and herders, rather than hunter-gatherers.
- This suggests early ecological manipulation on par with modern people and may also explain why the archaeological record formed.

Reference:
https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/05/210505145542.htm

3. Archaeologists uncover Carolingian treasure hoard

Context: Archaeologists conducting excavations near the town of Biskupiec in Poland have discovered a silver treasure hoard from the 9th century AD.

Highlights:
- The hoard consists of 118 silver denarii coins and their fragments, depicting the Carolingian King/Emperors: Louis the Pious who ruled from AD 814 to 840, and Charles the Bald who ruled from AD 840 to 877.
During the 9th century AD, the vicinity of Biskupiec was inhabited by Prussian tribes which mainly used Arabic coins as currency, with only a few single Carolingian coins having previously been discovered from that period.

The hoard was placed in the basin of the Osa and Drwęca Rivers, tributaries of the River Vistula that connects to the Vistula Lagoon where the major Viking settlement of Truso had emerged on the banks of the Nogat delta branch.

The Viking settlement in Truso and the related activity of the Vikings likely indicates how the treasure reached the territory of ancient Prussia.

In the 9th century, a clear increase in the threat posed by the Vikings taking part in the invasions of Western Europe was noticed.

Paris is besieged in AD 845, and at the same time the Scandinavians are actively trading in the Baltic regions.

Reference:
https://www.heritagedaily.com/2021/05/archaeologists-uncover-carolingian-treasure-hoard/138900

B. SOCIO - CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

2. Frog Marriage Ritual In Tripura

Context: Tribal tea garden workers in West Tripura recently organised a Hindu wedding ceremony for two frogs in hope of pleasing the rain god, Indra.

Highlights:

- The village in Tripura organised the wedding for the two amphibians in a ceremony traditionally known as “banger biye” (frog wedding).
- The frogs tied the knot with aplomb after having taken a dip in the river and having been dressed in fancy wedding clothes.
- The villagers believe that the wedding ceremony would save them from the drought-stricken condition of their tea garden.
- In the marriage, 2 toads were married performing all the rituals from a bath in a pond or river to new dresses and exchange of garlands.
Back in 2019, Karnataka's Udupi arranged the wedding of two frogs so as to please rain gods. In Karnataka, the ritual is called ‘Mandooka Parinaya’ and it was performed by the Udupi Nagarika Vedike or Udupi Citizen Forum (UCF). The frogs were dressed in custom made outfits for their wedding while the ceremony was performed as per Hindu traditions.

Similarly, in 2018, Assam natives also performed a wedding ceremony in which the female toad is made to sit and oil is applied to her body. Regionally known as ‘Bekhuli Biya’, a frog wedding in Assam, 'Bekhudi' means frog in Assamese language and 'Biya' stands for marriage. A mass feast, music and dance are also part of this ritual.

Reference:

C. LINGUISTIC ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Umatilla tribes release Dictionary For Fading Language
   - The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation have released an online dictionary of their language to preserve it and help new learners pick up the dying tongue.
   - The project is a collaboration between the confederated tribes’ language program and Amazon Web Services.
   - The prevalence of the Umatilla language has diminished over the years as many of its fluent speakers have died.
   - The tribe established a language program in 1996 to preserve Umatilla by recording elders and teaching the language to tribal youth and adults.
   - The reservation in northeast Oregon is home to a union of three area tribes, the Cayuse, the Umatilla, and the Walla Walla.
   - In a statement, the tribe credited tribal member Twáway, also known as Inez Spino-Reves, with working with linguists and providing key details about the languages’ grammar and vocabulary.
Members of other Pacific Northwest tribes, including the Nez Perce and the Yakima, also played important roles, as well as biologists and historians who helped with plant and animal identifications.

Reference:
https://apnews.com/article/language-technology-682ed5d1c2345749a5a4489297afe149

UPSC Previous year questions based on today’s concept:
1. Linguistic elements in Indian Population (10 Marks - 2017)
2. Society and Culture (10 Marks - 2015)

DAILY PRACTICE QUESTION/S FOR MAINS 2021.

Pl do not forget to upload your answer sheet for a peer review on the telegram channel: Sosin for Anthropology Q&A
1. Origin of cities and civilisation (10 Marks)
2. European Mesolithic (10 Marks)