ANTHROPOLOGY NEWS DIARY

(AND)

01.06.2021

FOR UPSC CSE MAINS

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.](https://telegram.com)
INDEX

A. ARCHAEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY
   1. 4000 YO Memorial Monument ......................................................... 03
   2. Neolithic Tomb .................................................................................. 04
   3. Hire Benakal ...................................................................................... 04
   4. Orkney ............................................................................................... 05

B. TRIBAL AFFAIRS
   1. Karuk people .................................................................................... 06

 UPSC ANTHROPOLOGY PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS ........................................ 06
 PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PEER REVIEW ..................................................... 06

Note - For convenience, the respective reference links have been dropped at the end of every topic.
A. ARCHAEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. 4k YO Memorial Monument

Context:
Archaeologists have identified a 4,000-year-old memorial monument at the site of Banat-Bazi in Syria, that resembled the Ancient Egyptian Stepped Pyramid of Saqqara.

Highlights:
● Known as the “White Monument” due to the white sheen given by the materials used in its construction, the artificial mound was first excavated by archaeologists several decades ago.
● A new study has determined that the monument was added around 2,400 BC, where an earlier mound was modified with a series of horizontal steps, each containing at least 30 burials sealed in layers of plaster.
● Ancient Mesopotamian texts reference war memorials where the corpses of enemies are piled in mass, although none have yet been discovered.
● However, the ‘White Monument’ at Tell Banat appears to be a memorial to the settlement’s dead, rather than to bury enemies fallen in conflict.
● These findings not only challenged some of the excavators’ assumptions, but also some traditional underpinnings of Near Eastern archaeology. This would have looked much like the Stepped Pyramid of Saqqara, and was about the same size, but it was made of dirt, not stone.
● Additionally, they found it was not a mass grave of those who fell in battle, but the deceased were deliberately reburied in the monument at a later point.
● The decision to carefully rebury the dead, likely with their military equipment, in a special addition to an existing monument provides strong evidence this was an effort by the community to celebrate their warriors.

Reference:
https://www.google.co.in/amp/s/www.heritagedaily.com/2021/05/archaeologists-identify-giant-4000-year-old-war-memorial/139308
2. Neolithic Tomb

Context:
Prehistoric carvings of red deer found in Scottish neolithic tomb

Highlights:
- Delicate prehistoric carvings of adult red deer, thought to be the oldest of their type in the UK, have been found in a tomb in one of Scotland’s most famous neolithic sites.
- The carvings depict two male red deer with full-grown antlers and several thought to be young deer.
- Archaeologists estimate the carvings are between 4,000 and 5,000 years old, a period which spans the neolithic and early bronze age, and are the first in the UK located alongside prehistoric cup and ring markings found throughout Kilmartin Glen.
- While there are a few prehistoric carvings of deer in the UK, the only other ones created in the early bronze age are very schematic. It is remarkable that these carvings in Dunchraigaig cairn show such great anatomical detail and there is no doubt about which animal species they represent.

Reference:
https://www.google.co.in/amp/s/amp.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/may/31/prehistoric-carvings-of-red-deer-found-in-scottish-neolithic-tomb

3. Hire Benakal

- It was only when it recently made it to UNESCO’s ‘tentative’ list of heritage sites (a prerequisite for nomination as a World Heritage Site) that people came to know of the secret of Hire Benakal, a village in Koppal district in Karnataka.
- What is even more surprising is that this village, with its wealth of megaliths, has remained under the radar for ages.
- Known to a clutch of historians and archaeologists, Hire Benakal is less than 50km away from the architectural extravaganza of Hampi, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a popular Indian destination.
- Encyclopaedia Britannica defines megaliths as ‘huge, often undressed stone used in various types of Neolithic (New Stone Age) and Early Bronze Age monuments’.
- Found in many places around the globe, these stone structures with their unique architectural pattern, have been challenging historians to determine the reason behind their construction.
- Most believe these are associated with rituals surrounding the dead, indications of burial sites, or are memorials to the departed.
- One of the most famous megalithic monuments in the world is Stonehenge in the United Kingdom. The Megalithic temples of Malta, likely dated between 3000 BC and 700 BC, are said to be the oldest free standing structures in the world.
● In Hire Benakal, archaeologists have also found what they believe to be a quarry which probably supplied the stones and the remains of a lake which likely provided the water required for the rituals. Prehistoric rock art has also been found in a few structures.

● India is home to several megalithic sites with the bulk spread across the southern peninsula. Hire Benakal is said to be the largest such site in India. Hire Benakal is about 35km by road from Hospet. It is being maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India.

Reference:

4. Orkney

Context:
With more Neolithic remains revealed earlier this year, as well as Viking graffiti and a stone circle older than Stonehenge, the Orkney islands are a prehistoric wonder.

Highlights:
● This is the heartland of the Neolithic North, a bleak, mysterious place that has made Orkney a magnet for archaeologists, historians and other researchers. For decades they have tramped the island measuring and ex-cavating its great Stone Age sites.

● This is the temple complex of the Ness of Brodgar, and its size, complexity and sophistication have left archaeologists desperately struggling to find superlatives to describe the wonders they found there. "We have discovered a Neolithic temple complex that is without parallel in western Europe.

● Yet for decades we thought it was just a hill made of glacial moraine," says discoverer Nick Card of the Orkney Research Centre for Archaeology.

● The people of the Neolithic – the new Stone Age – were the first farmers in Britain, and they arrived on Orkney about 6,000 years ago.

● They cultivated the land, built farmsteads and rapidly established a vibrant culture, erecting giant stone circles, chambered communal tombs – and a giant complex of buildings at the Ness of Brodgar.

● The religious beliefs that underpinned these vast works is unknown, however, as is the purpose of the Brodgar temples.

● Discarded stone tools and shards of elegant pottery also indicate that the early Orcadians were developing an increasingly sophisticated society.

● Over the centuries, their small farming communities coalesced into larger tribal units, possibly with an elite ruling class, and they began to construct bigger and bigger monuments.

Reference:
https://www.google.co.in/amp/s/inews.co.uk/inews-lifestyle/travel/orkney-prehistoric-neolithic-new-skara-brae-brodgar-solstice-1018740/amp
5. TRIBAL AFFAIRS
   1. Karuk People
   • For thousands of years before contact with Europeans, the Karuk people, like many Native American tribes, tended their land with fire, keeping an ecological balance among plants, animals, river, and forest.
   • Situated along the Klamath River, in Humboldt and Siskyou counties, the Karuk are now struggling to renew their way of life.
   • Today, nearly 98% of the tribe’s ancestral land is controlled by the U.S. Forest Service.
   • The landscape is overgrown with timber and undermanaged. Out-of-control wildfires have repeatedly decimated the area, a consequence of disallowing native people to wield the tool of intentional burning, say advocates of the practice.
   • The Karuk Tribe is a federally recognized Indian tribe of Karuk people. They are an indigenous people of California, located in the northwestern corner of the state, in Humboldt and Siskiyou Counties.
   • The Karuk Tribe is one of the largest Indian tribes in California.
   • The Karuk people were one of the last indigenous groups in California to suffer the consequences of Euro-American contact. Living in the remote rugged region of Northwestern California, the Karuk, or “upriver” people, benefited from a resource-rich ecosystem dominated by salmon, eel, elk, deer, and acorn.
   • The Karuk people effectively managed land, river, and forest using a combination of sustainable harvesting, prescribed burning, and native horticultural practices.
   • The resulting abundance, combined with favorable climate, allowed development of highly developed artistic and ceremonial practices, most notably renowned basketry and the world renewal ceremonies known as Pikiawish.

Reference:
https://www.kqed.org/science/1973196/the-karuk-used-fire-to-manage-the-forest-for-centuries-now-they-want-to-do-that-again

UPSC Previous year questions based on today’s concept:

1. Neolithic Age (S. N. - 2009)

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. Sacred geography (10 Marks)