



Date – 17 May 2022

Buddha Purnima

- The Prime Minister, on the occasion of Buddha Purnima, recalled the principles of Lord Buddha and reiterated his commitment to fulfill them.
- He also visited Nepal on this special occasion.

Buddha Purnima:

- It is celebrated to mark the birth of Gautam Buddha, the founder of Buddhism.
- It is also known as Vesak. In view of the contribution of Buddhism to the global society, this day was recognized by the United Nations in the year 1999.
- It is considered as 'Triple-Blessed Day' as the birth, enlightenment and Mahaparinirvana of Tathagata Gautam Buddha.
- Buddha Purnima usually falls on the full moon between April and May and is a state holiday in India.
- On this occasion many devotees visit Mahabodhi Vihar, a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in Bodh Gaya, Bihar.
- Bodhi Vihara is the place where Lord Buddha attained enlightenment.

Gautam buddha:

- Gautam Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, was born as Siddhartha Gautama in Lumbini around 563 BC and belonged to the Shakya dynasty.
- Gautam attained Bodhi (enlightenment) under a peepal tree in Bodh Gaya, Bihar.
- Buddha gave his first sermon in Sarnath village near Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. This phenomenon is known as dharma chakra enforcement (the turning of the wheel of law).
- He died in 483 BC at the age of 80 in Kushinagar, Uttar Pradesh. This event is known as Mahaparinirvana.
- He is considered to be the eighth incarnation of the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu.

Buddhism:

- Buddhism started in India about 2600 years ago.
- The main teachings of Buddhism are contained in the core concept of the Four Noble Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path.
- Suffering and its extinction are central to the Buddha's doctrine.
- The essence of Buddhism lies in the attainment of enlightenment or nirvana, which can be achieved in this life.
- There is no supreme god or goddess in Buddhism.

Branches of Buddhism:

- Mahayana (Idol worship), Hinayana, Theravada, Vajrayana (Tantric Buddhism), Zen.

Buddhist scriptures (Tripitaka):

- Vinayapitaka (rules applicable to monastic life), Sutta Pitaka (Buddha's main teachings or Dhamma), Abhidhammapitaka (a philosophical analysis and administration of teaching).

Contribution of Buddhism to Indian Culture:

- The concept of non-violence is a major contribution of Buddhism. In later times it became one of the cherished values of our nation.
- Its contribution to the art and architecture of India is remarkable. The stupas at Sanchi, Bharhut and Gaya are wonderful specimens of architecture.
- It promoted education through residential universities such as Taxila, Nalanda and Vikramshila.

- Pali and other local languages developed through the teachings of Buddhism.
- It also promoted the spread of Indian culture to other parts of Asia.

UNESCO heritage sites related to Buddhism:

- Archaeological site of Nalanda Mahavihara in Nalanda, Bihar
- Buddhist Monument at Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh
- Mahabodhi Vihar Complex in Bodh Gaya, Bihar
- Ajanta Caves, Aurangabad (Maharashtra)

Yojna IAS

Devasahayam Pillai

- Recently Devasahayam Pillai has been canonized by Pope Francis (Catholic Church) in Vatican.
- They converted to Christianity in the 18th century in the then Kingdom of Travancore. Devasahayam is the first common Indian person to be given the status of a saint, a title given to him by the Vatican for 'tolerating increasing difficulties'.

Life introduction:

- Devasahayam Pillai was born on April 23, 1712 in the village of Nattalam in Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu.
- He became Catholic in the year 1745 and after converting to Christianity, he took the name 'Lazarus' which means "God is my help" but later he came to be known as Devasahayam.
- Baptism (baptism) is a Christian sacrament in which ceremonial water is used and the recipient is accepted into the Christian community.
- Their conversion did not go down well with the heads of their original religion. False charges of treason and espionage were leveled against him and he was removed from the post of royal administration.
- He campaigned against the prevailing caste discrimination in the country, as a result of which he was harassed and murdered.
- On January 14, 1752, Devasahay was shot dead in the forest of Aralvaimozhi. He is widely considered a martyr and his mortal remains were buried inside St. Francis Xavier's Cathedral in Kottar, Nagercoil.
- The Vatican recognized his martyrdom in 2012 after a rigorous and rigorous process.

Why Devasahayam has been declared a saint?

- Saint Devasahayam Pillai stood for equality and fought against social evils like casteism and communalism.
- He has been given the title of saint at a time when India is witnessing expansion in the matter of communalism.
- Declaration of Devasahayam Pillai as a saint is also a big opportunity for the Church so that it can stand itself in the face of the prevailing communalism in the present times.
- Communalism our culture has blind allegiance to our own religious community. It has been defined as a tool to mobilize or against people by appealing for communal services. Communalism is related to dogma and religious fundamentalism.

Finland and Sweden willing to join NATO

- Recently Finland and Sweden have shown interest to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Why are Sweden and Finland not members of NATO?

Finland:

- It has stayed away from such alliances as it always wanted to maintain cordial relations with its neighbor Russia.
- The idea of not joining NATO or coming too close to the West for a long time was a matter of existence for Finland.
- However the change in perception and overwhelming support for joining NATO came after the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Sweden:

- Sweden has been opposed to joining the organization for ideological reasons, unlike Finland whose policy form was a matter of survival.
- By being a member of NATO, these nations will get security guarantee under "Article 5".

Meaning and Benefits of Membership to NATO:

Safety Guarantee:

- NATO works on the principle of collective defense, which means 'an attack on one or more members is considered an attack on all member countries. It should be noted that this is enshrined in Article 5 of NATO.
- By being a member of NATO, these nations will get security guarantee under "Article 5".

Strengthening Coalition:

- The geographical position of Finland is in its favour. Once it becomes a member of NATO, the length of the shared borders of NATO and Russia will be doubled and it will also strengthen the position of NATO alliance in the Baltic Sea.

Opposing Russia's aggression:

- The favoring of the West by more sovereign powers and increasing its power may prove to be counterproductive for Russia.
- If Sweden and Finland join NATO, especially in these circumstances, "this step will give Russia the feeling that war can create an adverse situation for it and this step will further strengthen Western unity, resolve and military preparedness."

Response of Russia and other countries:

Russia:

- Russia threatened the use of military power if Sweden and Finland announced their acceptance of NATO membership and warned of dire consequences.

European countries and Americas:

- The European nations and the United States have welcomed Finland's move.
- Norway and Denmark have said that they may soon join NATO.
- The US said that it is ready to provide any necessary defense assistance or address any concerns until membership is formally accepted.

Turkey:

- Turkey opposes Finland and Sweden joining NATO.
- The Turkish government claimed that it could use its membership in the Western Alliance to veto the acceptance of membership by both countries.
- The Turkish government has criticized the move by Kurdish terrorists and other groups that have been declared as terrorist groups, accusing Sweden and other Scandinavian countries of providing support to these groups.

What is NATO?

- It is a military alliance established by the North Atlantic Treaty of April 1949 (also known as the Washington Treaty) by the United States, Canada and several Western European countries to provide collective security against the Soviet Union.
- It currently includes 30 member countries.
- Its original members were Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- The original signatories included Greece and Turkey (1952), West Germany (as Germany since 1955, 1990), Spain (1982), Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland (1999), Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia (2004), Albania and Croatia (2009), Montenegro (2017) and North Macedonia (2020).
- France withdrew from the unified military command of NATO in 1966 but remained a member of the organization, re-entering the military command of NATO in 2009.
- Headquarters: Brussels, Belgium.

- Headquarters of Allied Command Operations: Mons, Belgium.

Objectives of NATO:

- The basic and enduring purpose of NATO is to guarantee the freedom and security of all its members by political and military means.

Political Objectives:

- NATO promotes democratic values and enables member states to consult and cooperate on issues related to defense and security to solve problems, build mutual trust and prevent conflict in the long term.

Military Purpose:

- NATO is committed to the peaceful settlement of disputes. It has military power to conduct crisis-management operations in the event that diplomatic efforts fail.
- These operations are carried out either alone or in collaboration with other countries and international organizations under the Collective Defense Clause of the Founding Treaty of NATO – Article 5 of the Washington Treaty or the mandate of the United Nations.
- NATO invoked Article 5 only once on September 12, 2001, after the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in the US.

Way ahead

- As Finland joins NATO, more Russian troops may have to be deployed along the Russia-Finland border.
- Finland and Russia 1,300 km. and Russia's actions against NATO membership of Finland (and potentially Sweden as well) may depend on military deployments along the border with Finland and possibly Sweden.
- The people of Finland may not opt for immediate military planning and may want to use their NATO membership as a signal to Russia, but if they continue to feel threatened, they may opt for full military planning can choose.

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