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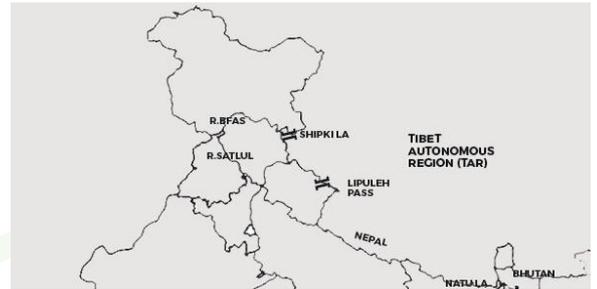
Sino-Indian border trade opens at NathuLa

In news:

- The 14th edition of the annual Sino-Indian border trade opened at Nathu La in Sikkim.

In brief:

- The bilateral border trade between the two countries is organized four days a week for six months, between May 1 and November 30, every year.
- Sealed by India after the 1962 Sino-Indian War, it was resumed in 2006 after a gap of 44 years.
- A total of 36 items, on India's export list comprising dairy products to utensils, while a total of 20 items, including carpets, quilts and jackets among others, are in the country's import list from the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR).
- Last year, the export of goods from India stood at Rs 45.03 crore, while items worth Rs 3.23 crore were imported from the TAR.



About Nathu La:

- The pass, at 4,310 m above mean sea level, forms a part of an offshoot of the ancient Silk Road.
- The vegetation graduates from sub-tropical forest at its base, to a temperate region, to a wet and dry alpine climate, and finally to cold tundra desert devoid of vegetation.

The three open trading border posts between India and China are-

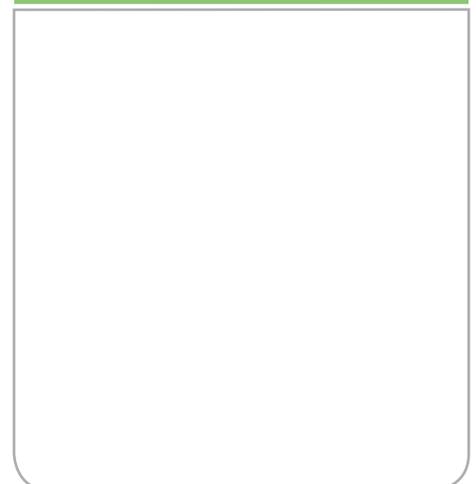
- Nathu La in Sikkim
- Shipkila in Himachal Pradesh
- Lipulekh in Uttarakhand

CENTRAL BANKS AND GOLD RESERVES

In News:

- Central banks across the globe are building up gold reserves with the first quarter of 2019 seeing significant buying from such entities.
- According to the latest Gold Demand Trends report by the World Gold Council, central banks bought 145.5 tonnes of gold in the first quarter — a 68% jump from the same period in 2018 and also the strongest start to a year since 2013.
- Meanwhile, the overall global gold demand rose to 1,053.3 tonnes in the first quarter of 2019, up 7% compared to the same period last year.
- This year-on-year increase was largely due to continued growth in central bank buying, as well as growth in gold-backed exchange-traded funds.

Note



About the World Gold Council:

- The Market development organisation for the gold industry.
- Works across all the parts of the industry from gold mining to investment.
- Aim: Stimulate and Sustain gold.
- Also provides insights about the gold industry.
- Launched SPDR GLD and Gold accumulation plans in India and China.
- An Association whose members comprise the world's leading gold mining companies.
- Developed the Conflict free gold standard.
- HQ: London, UK



CHARMINAR

Why in news?

- A chunk of limestone stucco of one of the four minarets of the historic Charminar in the Old City of Hyderabad has chipped off causing concerns about the safety of the 428-year-old majestic heritage structure.

About Charminar:

- The Charminar (Literal meaning - "Four Minarets") is a monument and mosque located in Hyderabad, Telangana.
- It was constructed in 1591 by Muhammad Quli Qutub Shah, the fifth ruler of Qutub Shahi dynasty.
- It was built after shifting his capital from Golkonda to the newly formed city of Hyderabad.
- The Charminar is situated on the east bank of Musi river.
- Jean de Thévenot, a French traveler who visited India during 17th century vividly narrated the architectural features of Charminar.
- Charminar, along with the Qutb Shahi Monuments of Hyderabad: the Golconda Fort, and the Qutb Shahi Tombs, were included in the "tentative list" of UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Note

Wikileaks and Julian Assange

- Julian Paul Assange is an Australian journalist, computer.
- In 2006, he founded WikiLeaks, an international publishing organisation known for revealing war crimes, human rights abuses, and corruption.
- WikiLeaks came to international attention in 2010 when it published a series of leaks provided by former US intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning, like footage of US soldiers killing civilians from a helicopter in Iraq.



- Ecuador granted him refuge in their London embassy in 2012 to avoid his extradition to Sweden on rape accusations.
- He spent about seven years holed up in Ecuadoran Embassy and was found guilty of breaching the UK's Bail Act.
- He was arrested when Ecuador terminated his asylum on 11th April 2019 and was sentenced on 1 May 2019 to 50 weeks in a British prison.
- Julian Assange has vowed to fight extradition to the United States, in what could become a long and complicated legal battle.

Extradition:

- Extradition is the process by which one state, upon the request of another, effects the return of a person for trial for a crime punishable by the laws of the requesting state and committed outside the state of refuge.
- According to the principle of territoriality of criminal law, states do not apply their penal laws to acts committed outside their boundaries except in the protection of special national interests.
- Extradition is regulated within countries by extradition acts and between countries by diplomatic treaties



Asylum:

- Asylum is the protection granted by a state to a foreign citizen against his own state. The person for whom asylum is established has no legal right to demand it, and the sheltering state has no obligation to grant it.
- Territorial asylum is granted within the territorial bounds of the state offering asylum.
- Extraterritorial asylum refers to asylum granted in embassies, legations, consulates, warships, and merchant vessels in foreign territory and is thus granted within the territory of the state from which protection is sought.
- Neutral asylum is employed by states exercising neutrality during a war to offer asylum within its territory to troops of belligerent states.

PRELIMS BITS

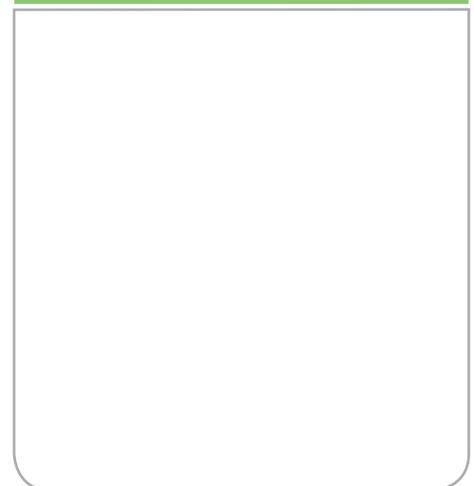
LANGAR

About Langar:

- Langar is the term used in Sikhism for the community kitchen in a Gurdwara where a free meal is served to all the visitors, without distinction of religion, caste, gender, economic status or ethnicity.
- In Sikhism, the practice of the langar, or free kitchen, is believed to have been started by the first Sikh Guru, Guru Nanak.
- It was designed to uphold the principle of equality among all people, regardless of religion, caste, colour, creed, age, gender or social status.
- The second Guru of Sikhism, Guru Angad, is remembered



Note



in Sikh tradition for systematizing the institution of langar in all Sikh temple premises, where visitors from near and far could get a free simple meal in a communal seating.

- It was the third Guru, Amar Das, who established langar as a prominent institution, and required people to dine together irrespective of their caste and social rank.

KATHPUTLI

- Kathputli is a string puppet theatre, native to Rajasthan, India, and is the most popular form of Indian puppetry.
- Kathputli is a join of two rajasthani language words Kath meaning wood and Putli meaning a doll which has no life. Kathputli means a puppet which is made entirely from wood.
- It is believed that somewhere 1500 years ago, tribal Rajasthani Bhat community started the use of Kathputli as string marionette art.
- Rajasthani Kings and nobles were patrons of art and craft associated with Kathputli.
- Today Kathputli art is one of the most popular performing arts of Rajasthan after Ghoomar.
- Capital New Delhi also has an area known as ‘Kathputli Colony’, in Shadipur Depot, where puppeteers, magicians have settled.
- Historically, these puppets were not only a source of entertainment, but also provided moral and social education.



Note

