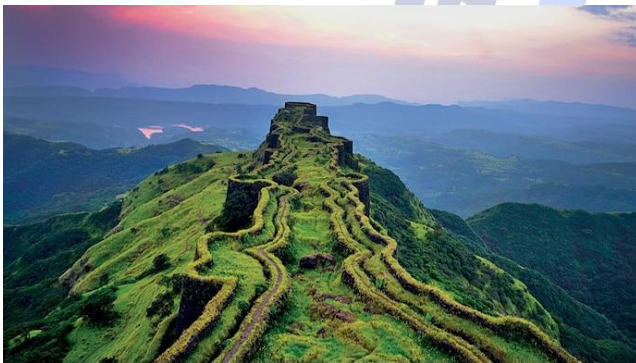


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## THE MARATHA MILITARY LANDSCAPE OF INDIA

**Context:** Maratha Military Landscapes of India has been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, becoming India's 44th property to receive this recognition.



### About The Maratha Military Landscape

- The Maratha Military Landscapes of India, which developed between the **17th and 19th centuries**, represent an **extraordinary fortification and military system** envisioned by the Maratha rulers.
- This extraordinary network of forts, varying in hierarchies, scales and typological features, is a result of integrating the landscape, terrain and physiographic characteristics distinctive to the Sahyadri mountain ranges, the Konkan

Coast, Deccan Plateau and the Eastern Ghats in the Indian Peninsula.

- The twelve component parts of this nomination are, **Salher fort, Shivneri fort, Lohgad, Khanderi fort, Raigad, Rajgad, Pratapgad, Suvarnadurg, Panhala Fort, Vijay durg, Sindhudurg** in Maharashtra and **Gingee Fort** in Tamil Nadu.
- Among these, Salher fort, Shivneri fort, Lohgad, Raigad, Rajgad and Gingee fort are hill forts, Pratapgad is hill-forest fort, Panhala is hill-plateau fort, Vijaydurg is coastal fort whereas Khanderi fort, Suvarnadurg and Sindhudurg are island forts.
- The inception of the Maratha Military ideology dates back to 17th Century during the reign of the **Maratha King Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj** by the 1670 CE and continued through subsequent rules until Peshwa rule till 1818 CE.

### The UNESCO World Heritage Convention

- UNESCO World Heritage Convention, formally known as the **Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage**, was **adopted in 1972 and came into force in 1975**.
- The Convention's **primary objective is to identify, protect, and preserve sites of outstanding universal value**, ensuring

their transmission to future generations.

- **It establishes the World Heritage Committee and List.** Sites nominated by states are evaluated by designated advisory bodies before being inscribed on the list.
- Signatory countries commit to safeguarding these sites, integrating heritage protection into national planning, and reporting on their conservation status.
- The Convention also facilitates international cooperation and assistance, providing support through the **World Heritage Fund for preservation efforts.**
- The Convention thus created a framework of international cooperation and legal obligations to preserve humanity's shared heritage.

### UNESCO World Heritage Site Selection Criteria

- UNESCO World Heritage Site selection criteria are a set of ten standards used to determine whether a site has Outstanding Universal Value and deserves global recognition and protection.
- To qualify, a site must meet at least one of these criteria, which cover both cultural and natural significance.
- **Cultural Sites (6 criteria):**
  - A masterpiece of human creative genius.
  - Represents cultural interchange or a civilisation.
  - Bears unique testimony to a tradition or civilisation.
  - Exemplifies architecture, technology, or landscape.
- Shows traditional settlement, land, or sea use.
- Links to events or ideas of universal significance.
- **Natural Sites (4 criteria):**
  - Displays superlative natural phenomena or features.
  - Represents Earth's evolutionary history.
  - Exemplifies ecological and biological processes.
  - Hosts critical habitats of biological diversity.

### World Heritage Sites Legal Status

- Once inscribed, World Heritage Sites remain under the sovereignty of their respective states, but their protection becomes a collective responsibility.
- **State Obligations:** Identify, protect, conserve, and transmit cultural and natural heritage to future generations.
- **Integration:** Incorporate heritage protection into regional planning and avoid actions that harm heritage.
- **Reporting & Education:** Periodically report site conditions and promote heritage appreciation through education.
- **International Support:** The World Heritage Committee can assist with threats, impose sanctions, or delist endangered sites.
- **States retain ownership** but share the responsibility to preserve heritage for all humanity, even at the cost of limiting certain activities.
- **UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India include 44 remarkable locations recognised for their cultural, natural, or mixed significance. Among these, 36 are**

cultural sites, 7 are natural, and 1 is a mixed site

Source: India's 'Maratha Military Landscapes' inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage List (The Hindu)

## SPECIES IN NEWS

### Greater One Horned Rhino



- The greater one-horned rhino, also known as Indian rhinoceros, is the largest of the three Asian rhinos and, together with African white rhinos, is the largest of all rhino species.

#### Distribution:

- It can be found in India and Nepal, particularly in the foothills of the Himalayas.
- In the past, Greater one-horned rhinos roamed freely in the floodplains and forests alongside the Brahmaputra, Ganges, and Indus River valley.
- **Kaziranga National Park** in Assam, India, contains the largest population (2,401).
- **Habitat:** Greater one-horned rhinos are semi-aquatic and often take up residence in swamps, forests, riversides, and anywhere that is near nutritious mineral licks.

#### Features:

- The largest of the Asian rhinos, male Indian rhinos weigh approximately 2,200 kg (nearly 4,840 pounds) and range in height from 170 to 186 cm (67 to 73 inches) and are 368 to 380 cm (145 to 150 inches) long.
- It is identified by a single black horn about 8-25 inches long and a grey-brown hide with skin folds, which gives it an armored appearance.
- The **species is solitary**, except for females with small calves. Males maintain loosely defended territories.
- The rhino is primarily a grazer. Its diet consists almost entirely of grasses, but it also eats leaves, branches, fruit, and aquatic plants.
- **Conservation Status:**
  - IUCN Red List: Vulnerable

## SCHEMES IN NEWS

### Aspirational DMF Programme

- The programme is launched for the convergence of District Mineral Foundation (DMF) initiatives with the Aspirational District Programme (ADP) and Aspirational Block Programmes (ABP).
- **Launched by:** Ministry of Coal and Mines
- **Feature:** Its guidelines are designed to strategically align District Mineral Foundation (DMF) planning and implementation with the development priorities identified under ADP and ABP, which focus on improving socio-economic indicators in India's most underserved regions.

#### About District Mineral Foundation (DMF)



- **It is a trust set up as a non-profit body, in those districts affected by the mining works, through amendment in the Mine and Minerals Development Regulation (Amendment) Act, 2015.**
- **Objective:** The objective of District Mineral Foundation is to work for the interest of the benefit of the persons and areas affected mining related operations in such manner as may be prescribed by the State Government.
- **Funding:** It is funded through the contributions from the holder of major or minor mineral concession in the district.
- **Composition:** The composition and functions of the District Mineral Foundation shall be such as may be prescribed by the State Government.
- **PMKKKY:** The Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana is implemented by the District Mineral Foundations from the funds accruing to them in terms of the MMDR Act, 1957.
- PMKKKY provides for **utilization of at least 70% of the funds for high priority areas** like: (i) drinking water supply; (ii) environment preservation and pollution control measures; (iii) health care; (iv) education; (v) welfare of women and children; (vi) welfare of aged and disabled people; (vii) skill development; and (viii) sanitation ix) housing, (x) agriculture, and (xi) animal husbandry.
- While, **up to 30% of the funds** shall be utilized for other priority areas (i) physical infrastructure; (ii) irrigation; (iii) energy and watershed development; and (iv) any

other measures for enhancing environmental quality in mining district.

## TERMS IN NEWS

### MALE Drones



- India has accelerated the procurement of 87 Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) drones from local manufacturers.
- MALE drones are unmanned Ariel vehicles that have the capability to fly over **30 hours at a maximum altitude of at least 35,000 feet.**
- **These drones are equipped with advanced surveillance and combat capabilities:** including real-time intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) in all kinds of terrain.
- These will enhance surveillance along its sea and land borders.
- **Purpose of Medium Altitude Long Endurance Drones:** Primarily used for surveillance, reconnaissance, and strike missions.
- **Strategic Importance:** These drones will enhance the surveillance capabilities of all three services, especially the Indian Air Force to monitor the Eastern and Western Border

- The procurement of 87 drones is aimed at bolstering real-time monitoring and operational readiness across critical areas.
- **The 87-drone MALE project serves two parallel aims:** fill the medium-altitude tier between smaller tactical UAVs and the high-altitude Guardians, and indigenous capability which is so far dominated by Israeli imports.

#### Agricultural Monitoring and Event Detection (AMED) API



- AMED is an artificial intelligence (AI)-based open-source application programming interface (API) launched by **Google**.
- It provides **field-level crop data, specifically helping in monitoring crops and detecting agricultural events at individual fields across India.**
- The AMED API details the type of crop on a given field, crop season, and the field's size and also provides historical information about the agricultural activity on it for the last three years.
- These insights can help significantly improve agricultural management on farms and also address the specific needs of each crop – including the right soil and water conditions, growth patterns, and

climatic needs – as well as predict crops' harvest volume.

- **Google will be sharing the AMED API for agriculture startups to find more innovative solutions to improve the agriculture ecosystem.**
- AMED API data is also refreshed nearly every two weeks, enabling the ecosystem partners leveraging AMED API access to continuously updated information that accounts for field-level changes.
- AMED API builds on the Agricultural Landscape Understanding (ALU) Research API that the company launched last year.
- It uses satellite imagery and AI to map field boundaries and land use across India.

#### PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q1 : Consider the following statements regarding the UNESCO World Heritage Convention

1. The Convention's primary objective is to identify, protect, and preserve sites of outstanding universal value, ensuring their transmission to future generations.
2. Once inscribed, World Heritage Sites remain under the sovereignty of their respective states, but their protection becomes the sole responsibility of UNESCO.
3. UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India include 44 remarkable locations recognised for their cultural, natural, or mixed significance. Among these, 36 are cultural sites, 7 are natural, and 1 is a mixed site

How many of the above statements are correct?

- A. Only One
- B. Only Two
- C. All of the Above
- D. None of the Above

Q2: Consider the following statements regarding Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) drones

1. MALE drones are unmanned Ariel vehicles that have the capability to fly over 30 hours at a maximum altitude of at least 35,000 feet.
2. These drones are primarily used for surveillance, reconnaissance, and strike missions.

How many of the above statements are incorrect?

- A. Only Statement 1
- B. Only Statement 2
- C. Both the statements
- D. None of the Above

Q3 : Consider the following statements regarding Agricultural Monitoring and Event Detection (AMED) API

1. It is an artificial intelligence (AI)-based open-source application programming interface (API) launched by Apple India limited
2. It provides field-level crop data, specifically helping in monitoring crops and detecting agricultural events at individual fields across India.

How many of the above statements are incorrect?

- A. Only Statement 1
- B. Only Statement 2

- C. Both the statements
- D. None of the Above

Q4 : The greater one-horned rhino, also known as Indian rhinoceros, is the largest of the three Asian rhinos and, together with African white rhinos, is the largest of all rhino species. The rhino is primarily a grazer. Its diet consists almost entirely of grasses, but it also eats leaves, branches, fruit, and aquatic plants. They are semi-aquatic and often take up residence in swamps, forests, riversides, and anywhere that is near nutritious mineral licks.

In India they are primarily found in which of the following areas?

- A. Kaziranga National Park
- B. Manas National Park
- C. Hemis National Park
- D. Valley of Flowers National Park

Q5 : Which among the following forts is not part of the Maratha Military Landscape

- A. Salher fort
- B. Shivneri fort
- C. Raigad Fort
- D. Bhismanagar Fort

#### Answers

1. B
2. D
3. A
4. A
5. D