

Daily Current Affairs

20 July 2025

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Daily Current Affairs Quiz 20 July 2026

Q1. The UNESCO Award of Distinction for the restoration of the Abathsahayeswarar Temple was announced on:

- (a) December 6, 2024
- (b) January 26, 2025
- (c) November 14, 2024
- (d) October 2, 2024

Ans.(a)

Sol. The correct answer is (A) December 6, 2024

Explanation:

- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) formally announced the winners of the prestigious Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation on December 6, 2024, recognizing exceptional conservation efforts across the region.
- The historic Abathsahayeswarar Temple located in Thukkachi village near Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, was proudly bestowed with the top-tier Award of Distinction during this cycle, highlighting its world-class restoration methodology.
- The announcement was officially released from the UNESCO Bangkok regional office after a strict and thorough multi-month vetting process conducted by an international jury of conservation architects, heritage experts, and renowned archaeologists.
- This global recognition on December 6, 2024, acknowledged the exemplary transformation of a highly dilapidated, vegetation-choked, and structurally compromised 1,000-year-old living temple complex into a safe, vibrant center of heritage and community life without erasing its historical authenticity.

Information Booster:

- The UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation have been operational since the year 2000, aiming to praise private individuals, non-governmental groups, and public-private partnerships that successfully restore historic structures.
- In the same 2024 awards cycle, another prominent Indian structure, the iconic Gothic-style BJPCI School building located in Mumbai, Maharashtra, received global acclaim under the Award of Merit category, marking a stellar year for Indian heritage preservation.

Additional Knowledge:

- January 26, 2025 (Option B): Celebrated as India's national Republic Day commemorating the date the Constitution came into effect, featuring civil state awards like Padma awards, completely separate from UN heritage announcements.
- November 14, 2024 (Option C): Celebrated nationally across India as Children's Day to honor the birth anniversary of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, which falls weeks before the final selection meetings of the international UNESCO conservation jury.
- October 2, 2024 (Option D): Known globally as the International Day of Non-Violence and nationally as Gandhi Jayanti, focusing entirely on peaceful diplomacy, human rights, and political ethics rather than engineering conservation announcements.

Q2. The Abathsahayeswarar Temple is located in which district of Tamil Nadu?

- (a) Madurai
- (b) Tiruchirappalli
- (c) Thanjavur
- (d) Salem

Ans.(c)

Sol. The correct answer is (C) Thanjavur

Explanation:

- The legendary Abathsahayeswarar Temple is situated in the peaceful rural village of Thukkachi, which falls administratively within the borders of the historic Thanjavur district in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, India.
- The temple complex is strategically positioned on the fertile banks of the beautiful Arasalar River, approximately 16 kilometers away from the major municipal temple hub and cultural town of Kumbakonam.
- The exact site of the temple holds profound place-name significance, as the word 'Thukkachi' is a local linguistic modification of 'Durga Achi', referring to the powerful presence of Goddess Durga enshrined in the south-facing sanctum within the temple perimeter.
- Being situated in the iconic Cauvery river delta system of Thanjavur, the temple historically functioned as a massive socioeconomic catalyst, managing agrarian land grants, local water channels, and village administrative councils for over a millennium.

Information Booster:

- Thanjavur district is widely revered across India as the cradle of classical South Indian culture, recognized as the birth region of Tanjore paintings, carnatic music foundations, Bharatanatyam dance styles, and the iconic GI-tagged Thanjavur doll.
- The geographical region is filled with exceptional medieval stone architecture, featuring three distinct monumental temples classified collectively by the United Nations as the 'Great Living Chola Temples' under global heritage protection protocols.

Additional Knowledge:

- Madurai (Option A): An ancient metropolis located in southern Tamil Nadu, widely known as the 'Athens of the East' and the historic seat of the Pandyan rulers, built around the breathtaking Meenakshi Amman Temple complex.
- Tiruchirappalli (Option B): A major industrial and cultural district situated upstream on the Cauvery River, famous for housing the sprawling Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple at Srirangam, one of the largest functioning religious complexes worldwide.
- Salem (Option D): A prominent north-central district of Tamil Nadu surrounded by the scenic Shevaroy Hills, known for its extensive iron ore deposits, steel manufacturing plants, and large-scale bauxite mining rather than medieval delta temple architectures.

Q3. The Abathsahayeswarar Temple is an architectural masterpiece of which dynasty?

- (a) Pallava
- (b) Chola
- (c) Pandya
- (d) Vijayanagara

Ans.(b)

Sol. The correct answer is (B) Chola

Explanation:

- The spectacular Abathsahayeswarar Temple stands as a brilliant and definitive structural monument of the later Chola dynasty, constructed primarily between the late 11th and early 12th centuries CE during the heights of medieval imperial power.
- Extensive epigraphical records carved onto the stone basement and walls prove that the temple complex received continuous imperial patronage, physical expansions, and rich gold donations under the reigns of Kulottunga Chola I and his direct successor, Vikrama Chola.

- Historical temple manuscripts recount that King Vikrama Chola ordered a grand expansion of the structural stone walls after he was reportedly cured of a severe skin disease by offering continuous devotion at this holy shrine for forty-eight days.
- The temple showcases classic late Chola design signatures, including a highly advanced layout designed to let early morning solar rays illuminate the central deity, intricately chiseled mini-sculptures, and an elevated stone base representing a celestial processional chariot.

Information Booster:

- The Chola Empire was exceptionally famous for replacing early brick shrines with everlasting granite structures, utilizing advanced engineering techniques to lift massive stone blocks into place without binding mortar.
- The Thukkachi shrine is deeply valued by art historians as it houses one of the earliest known stone iconographic carvings of Sri Sarabeshwarar—a fierce, multi-limbed mythical avatara combining lion and bird attributes, introduced during the late Chola period.

Additional Knowledge:

- Pallava (Option A): A powerful northern Tamil dynasty celebrated for initiating Dravidian rock-cut architecture, monolithic rathas, and coastal stone complexes at Mamallapuram between the 6th and 8th centuries CE.
- Pandya (Option C): A dynamic southern maritime dynasty famous for their structural contributions in the later medieval eras, emphasizing the construction of massive multi-tiered gateway towers (gopurams) decorated with thousands of stucco figures.
- Vijayanagara (Option D): A mighty late-medieval empire that unified southern India, bringing highly theatrical artistic elements such as sprawling open assembly halls (Kalyana Mandapams) and ornate pillars featuring rearing mythical beasts.

Q4. Which temple in Tamil Nadu received UNESCO's Award of Distinction in December 2024 for its exemplary restoration?

- (a) Brihadeeswarar Temple
- (b) Airavatesvara Temple
- (c) Abathsahayeswarar Temple
- (d) Meenakshi Amman Temple

Ans.(c)

Sol. The correct answer is (C) Abathsahayeswarar Temple

Explanation:

- In December 2024, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) conferred the highly esteemed Asia-Pacific Award of Distinction for Cultural Heritage Conservation upon the Abathsahayeswarar Temple at Thukkachi.
- The historical structure was chosen out of dozens of competitive submittals across numerous nations, earning praise for the technical perfection shown in preventing the absolute structural collapse of a thousand-year-old living sanctuary.
- The long-term restoration program was highly lauded by the global evaluation panel because it seamlessly married state-of-the-art engineering tools like 3D laser rendering and digital block numbering with the classic rules of ancient Sthapatya Veda manual traditions.
- A key feature that earned the project its Award of Distinction was its highly successful community-driven model, where rural villagers, traditional artisans, and corporate philanthropists worked hand-in-hand to revitalize both the tangible stone structures and the intangible spiritual customs of the region.

Information Booster:

- The UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards seek to encourage proactive local heritage ownership, highlighting projects that successfully restore public structures to ensure they can be safely passed down to future generations.
- The success of the Thukkachi restoration has been hailed as a model case study by the state authorities, providing an operational roadmap for public agencies planning to restore hundreds of other ancient rural shrines across South India.

Additional Knowledge:

- Brihadeeswarar Temple (Option A): The flagship monument of Thanjavur built by Raja Raja Chola I, designated as an active UNESCO World Heritage site since 1987, meaning it receives high-level institutional care rather than recent emergency NGO restorations.
- Airavatesvara Temple (Option B): Located in Darasuram near Kumbakonam, this delicate late-Chola marvel is another part of the designated World Heritage cluster, famous for its stone wheels and pillars.
- Meenakshi Amman Temple (Option D): A massive, heavily visited pilgrimage complex in Madurai managed by state boards, globally celebrated for its multi-storied towers and modern crowds rather than rural preservation awards.

Q5. The restoration project of the Abathsahayeswarar Temple was completed at an approximate cost of:

- (a) ₹2 crore
- (b) ₹3 crore
- (c) ₹5 crore
- (d) ₹10 crore

Ans.(c)

Sol. The correct answer is (C) ₹5 crore

Explanation:

- The comprehensive structural restoration, clearing, and successful physical preservation of the grand Abathsahayeswarar Temple complex at Thukkachi was achieved at a total project cost of approximately ₹5 crore.
- This highly efficient financial project was successfully completed through a dynamic public-private collaboration, drawing heavy monetary funding from corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives—notably from the Coimbatore-based Karpagam Trust—alongside local community funding pools.
- The ₹5 crore budget was carefully managed to fund highly technical and physically demanding tasks, which included the manual removal of massive invasive banyan tree roots that had split the stone roofs, along with rebuilding highly unstable inner sanctum walls block by block.
- The funds were also utilized to pay master traditional stone carvers (sthapathis) over several years, secure high-quality structural reinforcement materials, clear centuries of silt from the holy temple tank, and execute the grand spiritual Kumbhabhishekam revitalization ritual.

Information Booster:

- The Thukkachi project set an important precedent in economical heritage management, proving that major architectural ruins can be completely restored for a modest sum of ₹5 crore when local public volunteers replace costly commercial operations.
- Modern digital mapping technologies like high-resolution aerial drone surveys helped the engineers avoid costly manual trial-and-error mistakes during the re-stacking of shifted stone walls.

Additional Knowledge:

- ₹2 crore (Option A): An insufficient financial amount that would not have covered the prolonged labor costs, heavy lifting machinery, and multi-year structural repairs required across the vast seven-acre historical site.

- ₹3 crore (Option B): While a significant sum of money, it represents an early budget estimate before the full extent of structural foundation sinking and roof leakage was discovered by conservation specialists.
- ₹10 crore (Option D): An overestimation of the final expenditure; the project managed to avoid reaching this high figure by utilizing locally sourced traditional materials and engaging local rural labor networks instead of relying on expensive international contractors.

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