

Topics

- **African Swine Fever (ASF)**
- **Freedom of religion**
- **Fight in myanmar**
- **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**
- **Mount Etna & what is stratovolcano??**
- **Mains**



By saurabh Pandey





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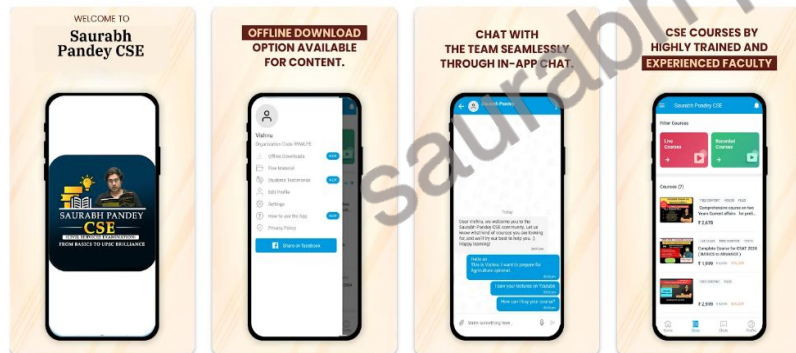
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African Swine Fever cases reported at Kerala farm

The Hindu Bureau

THRISSUR

As many as 310 pigs at Madakkathara grama panchayat in Kerala's Thrissur are set to be culled after an outbreak of African Swine Fever was reported at a private farm in the 14th ward of the local body.

The highly contagious swine disease has been confirmed in the pigs at the farm in Veliyanthara.

Disinfection measures

The Thrissur Collector has directed the district animal husbandry officer to cull the pigs and bury them, according to an official release here on Friday.

A team consisting of doctors, livestock inspectors, and attendants will carry out the culling operations, and further primary disinfection measures will also be taken. The area within one-km radius of the affected farm has been declared disease-hit and the area within 10-km radius has been declared a disease surveillance area.

African Swine Fever (ASF)



- African Swine Fever (ASF) is a highly contagious and deadly swine disease that can affect both farm-raised and feral (wild) pigs.
- ASF doesn't infect people, but it is readily passed from one pig to another by direct contact with bodily fluids from an infected pig.
- The practice of feeding uncooked food waste (that has not been appropriately heat treated) to pigs can also result in transmission of the virus if the food waste being fed to pigs contains contaminated pork products.

African **swine** fever (ASF)



The virus is highly **resistant to low temperatures** and can survive for extended periods of time in the blood, feces and tissue of infected animals.



ASF is a **highly contagious**, transboundary viral disease (*Asfarviridae* family; *Asfivirus* genus).

It can affect both domestic and wild pigs (wild boars and peccaries).
It is harmless to humans.



Typical clinical signs of ASF are similar to those of classical swine fever (which is endemic in several countries of the Americas); therefore, a **laboratory test** is required to distinguish them.

The **peracute** form of the virus causes sudden death with few signs.

African swine fever can be transmitted through **direct contact** between sick and healthy animals. It can also be transmitted **indirectly** through feed containing meat from infected animals (the virus can remain infectious for 3 to 6 months in uncooked pork products); **biological vectors** such as ticks of the genus *Ornithodoros*; and contaminated **inanimate objects** (fomites) that can transmit the virus.



Global alarms went off in August 2018, when an ASF outbreak was first reported in **China**. The disease swept through the entire Asian country and spread to **Mongolia, Vietnam, Cambodia and Hong Kong**.

According to official data for this period, more than **2.5 million domestic pigs** have died or been killed— 67.6% of them in Asia over the past 10 months.

Between 2016 and May 2019, there were a total of **10,211 outbreaks in Africa, Europe and Asia**.



Symptoms include **fever, loss of appetite**, low energy, abortion, internal hemorrhages, visible hemorrhages, and even death.



Spiritual orientation, religious practices and courts



“What is religion to one is superstition to another,” said Chief Justice Latham of Australia in *Adelaide Company of Jehovah's Witnesses Inc vs Commonwealth* (1943). Religion has been at the centre of human societal existence since time immemorial. Man is incurably religious; Indians more so. Right now, we are in a rush hour of god with religiosity on the rise and spirituality on the decline.

In a significant yet controversial order in *P. Navin Kumar* (2024), by Justice G.R. Swaminathan of the Madras High Court, the religious practice of *angapradakshinam* has been allowed. The practice involves rolling over the banana leaves on which other devotees (in this instance) of Sri Sadasiva Brahmendral of Nerur village in Tamil Nadu had partaken food. The order overruled the 2015 order of Justice S. Manikumar.

In 2015, the petitioner had argued that the practice involved Dalits and non-Brahmins rolling over on left-over plantain leaves even though the district administration had disputed the allegation of caste discrimination. Justice Manikumar had relied on the Supreme Court of India's order, in *State of Karnataka and others vs Adivasi Budakattu Hitarakshana Vedike Karnataka and others* (in Special Leave Petition (C) No.33137 of 2014), where the top court had stayed a 500-year-old ritual on similar lines where mainly Dalits used to roll over the leaves. Justice Swaminathan refused to follow the 2015 order as temple trustees which used to organise the event were not made parties, and thus not heard. Moreover, not only Dalits but even others too rolled over the leaves and thus no caste discrimination was there.

Revival of a debate

The order has revived the debate on issues such as what is religion; how essential practices of any religion are to be determined, and how far the judiciary has been consistent in such determination. Justice Swaminathan, in a well-researched order, has cited all the important judgments of the Supreme Court to reach the conclusion that the petitioner, P. Navin Kumar – who has taken the vow of *angapradakshinam*, is entitled to execute it as part of his freedom of religion under Article 25 and right to privacy under Article 21 and human dignity – is in no way undermined in such a practice. He even held that rolling over on used banana leaves is part of the freedom of movement under Article 19(1)(d).

Without any evidence being strictly examined, as was done in similar cases, Justice Swaminathan took judicial notice of the fact that *angapradakshinam* is an established religious practice. Thus, like other cases, no questions were being asked whether it is an essential and integral practice of the Hindu religion. Or whether it is a mandatory practice and not a mere superstitious practice. He has quoted the *Krishna Yajur Veda* and *Bhavisyapuranam* which



Faizan Mustafa
the Vice-Chancellor of the Chanakya National Law University, Patna, Bihar

Judges should not become the clergy to determine theological issues; progressive India should not allow even an essential religious practice if it is contrary to constitutional ethos and values

describe this practice as a noble act, but every noble act cannot get the high status of a mandatory act.

The subject of essential practices

The framers of the Indian Constitution had subordinated the freedom of religion to all other fundamental rights. It has further been subjected to public order, health and morality, with additional powers being given to the state to bring in social reforms. The courts have further restricted the freedom to only the 'essential religious practices'. Accordingly such a plea was accepted in just seven out over 47 cases and that is why the latest pronouncement, by Justice Swaminathan needs critical evaluation. Is not the rolling over on used banana leaves with leftover food an unhygienic practice with the danger of health hazards? Can the right to privacy be claimed in respect of a public event such as an *angapradakshinam*?

Justice Swaminathan observed that privacy is not lost if an individual is in a public place. In an interesting analogy, the learned judge, in paragraph 21 of his judgment, held that 'if the right to privacy includes sexual and gender orientation, it certainly includes one's spiritual orientation also'. It is open to a person to express this orientation in the manner he deems fit subject to rights of others.

The leading Supreme Court judgment on the freedom of religion was *Sri Shirur Mutt* (1954) where the Court had observed that Article 25 guarantees freedom not only to entertain such religious belief as may be approved of by one's judgment and conscience, but also to exhibit his belief in such outward acts as he thinks proper.

The Court further held that religion does prescribe rituals, ceremonies and modes of worship which are regarded as an integral part of religion. The Court was categorical in saying that 'what constitutes the essential part of religion is primarily to be ascertained with reference to the doctrines of that religion itself'. In subsequent years, the Court became inconsistent in its determination of essential religious practices and moved away from looking at a particular religion to decide its essential practices and brought in its own rationality. Thus, a five-judge bench in *The Durgah Committee, Ajmer* (1961) said that freedom of religion protects only essential and integral practices of a religion and does not extend to practices, though religious in character may have sprung from merely superstitious beliefs and be extraneous and unessential accretions to religion itself. Why was *angapradakshinam* not tested on this touchstone?

In *Gramsabha of Village Battis Shirala* (2014), a particular sect claimed the capturing and worship of a live cobra during *nagpanchnami* to be an essential part of its religion. They placed reliance on the text of *Shrinath Lilamrut* which prescribed such a practice. The court relied on the more general *Dharmashastra* text to rule that since there was no mention of capturing a live

cobra, it could not be an essential practice of the petitioners' religion.

In *Mohammed Fasi* (1985), a Muslim police officer challenged a regulation in the Kerala High Court which did not permit him to grow a beard. It is disgusting to note that rather than looking at the question of the essentiality of a beard in Islam, the court rejected the petitioner's argument simply by relying on the irrelevant fact that certain Muslim dignitaries do not sport a beard and that the petitioner did not have a beard in previous years. Therefore, the court looked at empirical evidence of practice rather than religious texts. The court refused to permit the keeping of a beard by a policeman as it was merely a noble and pious act because it was based on sayings of Prophet (Hadith) and not made mandatory in the *Koran*. The *hijab* was similarly not found mandatory.

In *Acharya Jagdishwarananda Avadhuta* (2004), where the Calcutta High Court found that the *tandava* dance was an essential practice of the Ananda Margi faith, the Supreme Court overruled the High Court by looking at earlier judicial verdicts and not religious texts. Another strange reason provided was that the Ananda Margi faith had come into existence in 1955 and that the *tandava* dance was adopted only in 1966. Therefore, as the faith had existed without the practice, it could not be accepted as an essential feature of the faith. The approach seems to identify a religious practice as only an integral practice if it existed when the religion was founded. This logic would lead to an approach to religious practices that are frozen in time. By this logic no Jewish, Christian and Islamic practice can be protected if it was not considered integral by Moses, Jesus Christ and Muhammad, respectively, in their lifetime.

The 'essentiality test' reached absurd levels in *M. Ismail Faruqui* (1995) where the top court was dealing with the issue of the state acquiring the land over which the Babri Masjid once stood. The court held that while offering of prayers is an essential practice, the offering of such prayers in the mosque is not unless the place has a particular religious significance in itself. Everyone knows congregational prayer is central to Islam and that mosques are an essential means to achieve this objective. Yet, the mosque was not held essential.

The Constitution is supreme

This writer has consistently held the view in his articles that judges should not become the clergy to determine purely theological issues and that a progressive nation such as India should not allow even an essential religious practice if the same is contrary to constitutional ethos and values. It is the Constitution of India and not religions that should govern us. Only that much religious freedom can be granted as is permitted by the Constitution.

The views expressed are personal

Freedom of religion



- **The framers of the Indian Constitution had subordinated the freedom of religion to all other fundamental rights.**
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Junta under pressure as fierce fighting breaks out in northeastern Myanmar

The latest battle brings an end to the Chinese-brokered ceasefire, putting pressure on the military regime as it faces attacks from resistance forces on multiple fronts in the country's civil war; there is no indication whether ethnic armed organisation, Arakan Army, has joined the fight in Shan State

Associated Press
BANGKOK

New fighting has broken out in northeastern Myanmar, bringing an end to a Chinese-brokered ceasefire and putting pressure on the military regime as it faces attacks from resistance forces on multiple fronts in the country's civil war.

The Ta'ang National Liberation Army, one of three powerful militias that launched a surprise joint offensive last October, renewed its attacks on regime positions last week in the northeastern Shan State, which borders China, Laos, and Thailand, and the neighbouring Mandalay region with the support of local forces there.

Since then, the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army has joined in, and by Friday, combined forces from the two allied militias had reportedly encircled the strategically important city of Lashio, the headquarters of the regime's northeastern military command.

'Safety of people'

This is the next phase of October's "1027" offensive, said Lway Yaw Oo, spokesperson for the TNLA, which last week said the military provoked retaliation with artillery and airstrikes despite the cease-



Gaining ground: Members of the Mandalay People's Defence Force pose for a photograph with the group's flag in front of the captured police station in Madaya Township in Myanmar. AP

fire. "In phase two, our number one aim is the eradication of the military dictatorship, and number two is the protection and safety of local people," she said.

That Swe, a spokesperson for the military regime, which seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021, accused the militias of putting civilians in jeopardy by restarting the fighting. "As the TNLA is starting to violate the ceasefire, the Tatmadaw is protecting the lives and the property of the ethnic people," he said in an email, referring to the military by its Burmese name.

There was no indication that the third ethnic armed organisation that makes up

the Three Brotherhood Alliance, the powerful Arakan Army, has joined in the renewed fighting in Shan state.

The TNLA claims to have already captured more than 30 army outposts, and to now control the western part of Mogoke, whose ruby mines make it a lucrative target. There is also fighting for the town of Kyaukse, which sits at a highway crossroads, and Nawnghkio to the southwest, which leads toward the major military garrison town of Pyin Oo Lwin along the same highway.

"That's where you need to cut it off to prevent the military from sending reinforcements," said Morgan Michaels, a Singapore-

based analyst with the International Institute of Strategic Studies who runs its Myanmar Conflict Map project.

In Mandalay, the region west of Shan, a local People's Defence Force – one of many armed resistance groups that have sprung up in support of the underground National Unity Government, which views itself as Myanmar's legitimate administration – joined the TNLA's offensive.

Osmond, a spokesperson for the Mandalay People's Defence Force who would only give his *nom de guerre* because of safety concerns, said his and other local resistance groups have seized nearly 20 mili-

tary outposts.

The October offensive by the Three Brotherhood Alliance made rapid advances as the militias took large expanses of territory in the north and northeast, including multiple important border crossings with China and several major military bases.

Chinese ties

The alliance militias have close ties to China, and it's widely believed that the offensive had Beijing's tacit approval because of its growing dissatisfaction with the military regime's seeming indifference to the burgeoning drug trade along its border and the proliferation of centres in Myanmar at which cyber-scams are run, with workers trafficked from China.

China then helped broker the ceasefire in January, bringing the major fighting in the northeast to an end.

With the renewed violence in the northeast, China's Foreign Ministry said it stood ready to again provide support for peace talks, but would not say whether it had been in direct contact with the Three Brotherhood Alliance or the military State Administration Council.

"China urges all parties in Myanmar to earnestly abide by the ceasefire agreement, exercise maximum restraint, disengage on the ground as soon as

possible, and take practical and effective measures to ensure the tranquillity of the China-Myanmar border and the safety of Chinese personnel and projects," the Ministry said in a faxed reply to questions.

The Myanmar army doesn't appear to have been surprised by the TNLA attacks, with evidence that it mobilised forces and prepared defences as well as security checkpoints and patrols ahead of the renewed offensive, Mr. Michaels said.

"They didn't get caught completely off guard, although they've not been able to respond yet, there's been no counter-offensive," he said.

Objectives unclear

It is not yet clear what the TNLA's objectives are, and it could be that the group is just looking to expand gains and consolidate positions now while the military is stretched thin by fighting on several fronts, and before new batches of conscripts are trained for service.

Likewise, with the MNDA, it is not clear whether it is planning to join the broader offensive or whether it intends to take encircled Lashio by force, lay siege to it, or simply tie up the troops now trapped there. The group did not respond to requests for comment.



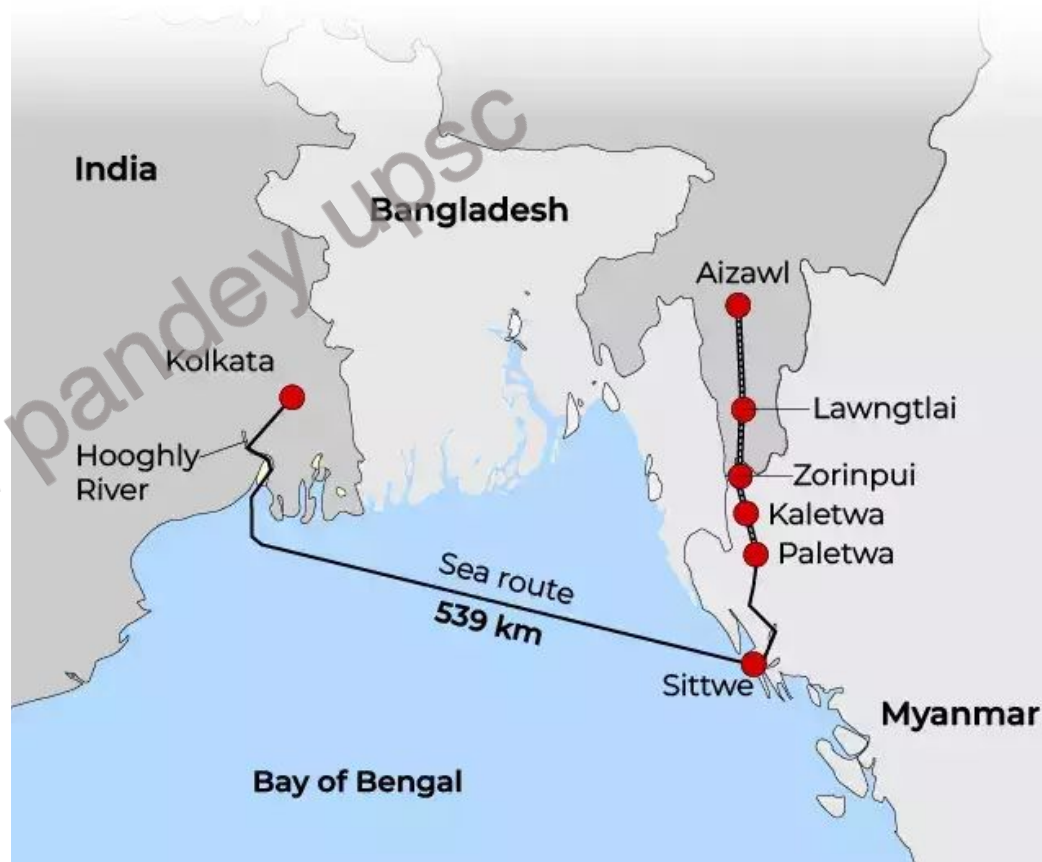
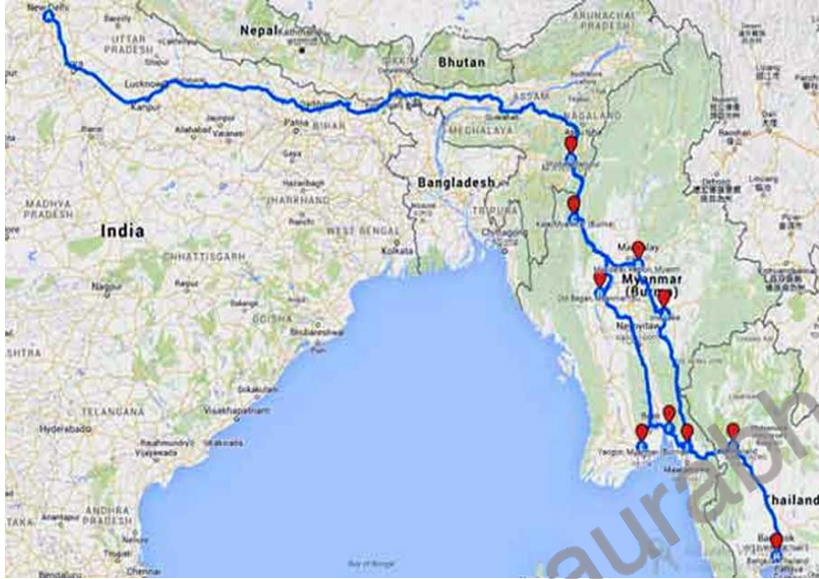
Fight in myanmar

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- **China then helped broker the ceasefire in January, bringing the major fighting in the northeast to an end**



Kaladan Multi Modal Transit Transport Project





Laurence Hart, director of International Organization for Migration, speaks during a press conference in Geneva. AP

Migrants face abuse and violence crossing Africa, says UN report

Agence France-Presse

GENEVA

Refugees and migrants face extreme violence, abuse and exploitation on land routes crossing Africa to get to the Mediterranean, with far more believed to be dying there than at sea, a UN-backed report said on Friday.

Nearly 30,000 migrants have been declared dead or missing attempting to cross the Mediterranean to Europe in the past decade. But it could be even worse for those travelling through Africa to the coast, according to a report from United Nations agencies for refugees and migrants and the monitoring group Mixed Migration Centre.

Based on more than 31,000 interviews with refugees and migrants, the report found that 1,180 people were known to have died while crossing the Sahara Desert between January 2020 and May 2024. Five deaths a day are being recorded on the desert routes, Laurence Hart of the UN's International Organization for Migration said.

Those on the move face torture, kidnapping for ransom, people trafficking, sexual violence, robbery, arbitrary detention and collective expulsions, the report said. Despite the "unimaginable horrors", the report highlighted an increase in the number of people attempting the perilous land crossings.

The organisations stressed the urgent need to step up protection along the routes. "This is not to facilitate the movement of people," said Vincent Cochetel, UNHCR's special envoy for the central and western Mediterranean. "It is to find protection solutions to address the abuse and the violations they suffer."

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

- **The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is a United Nations agency mandated to aid and protect refugees, forcibly displaced communities, and stateless people, and to assist in their voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement to a third country.**
- **It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.**

- UNHC was created in 1950 to address the refugee crisis that resulted from **World War II**.
- The **1951 Refugee Convention** established the scope and legal framework of the agency's work, which initially focused on Europeans uprooted by the war.
- Commensurate with the **1967 Protocol to the Refugee Convention**, which expanded the geographic and temporal scope of refugee assistance, UNHCR operated across the world, with the bulk of its activities in developing countries.

- In recognition of its work, UNHCR has won two Nobel Peace Prizes, in 1954 and 1981, and a Prince of Asturias Awards for International Cooperation in 1991.
- It is a member of the United Nations Development Group, a consortium of organizations dedicated to sustainable development.

Spitting fire



Spewing out: Craters erupt from Mount Etna, the largest active volcano in Europe, on Friday in Sicily, an island in Italy. Due to the eruption, the Catania airport announced its closure as ashes fell on the airspace and the surrounding area. AFP

Mount Etna

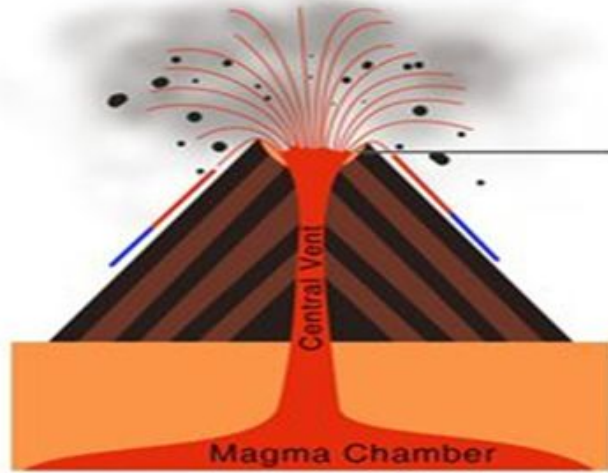


- Craters erupt from Mount Etna, the largest active volcano in Europe, in Sicily, an island in Italy
- Mount Etna, active volcano on the east coast of Sicily.
- The name comes from the Greek Aitne, from *aithō*, “I burn.”
- Mount Etna is the highest active volcano in Europe, its topmost elevation being about 10,900 feet (3,320 metres).
- Like other active volcanoes, it varies in height, increasing from deposition during eruptions and decreasing from the periodic collapse of the crater's rim.

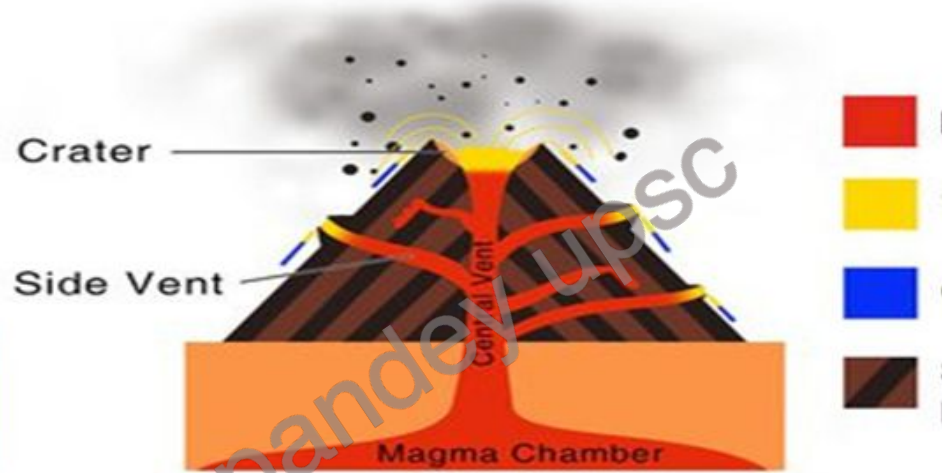
Mount Etna is the highest Mediterranean island mountain and the most active stratovolcano in the world.



TYPES OF VOLCANOE



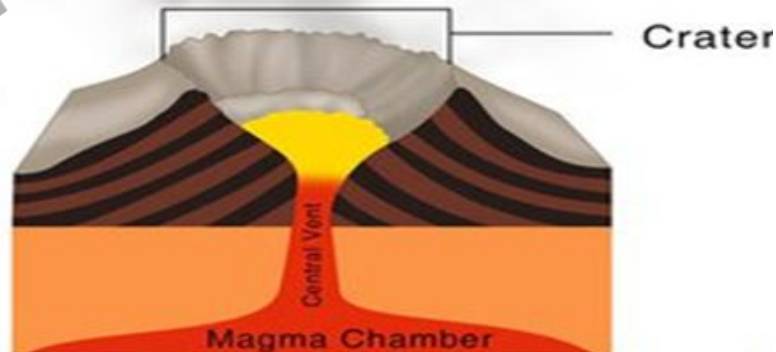
1. Cinder Cone Volcano



2. Composite Volcano

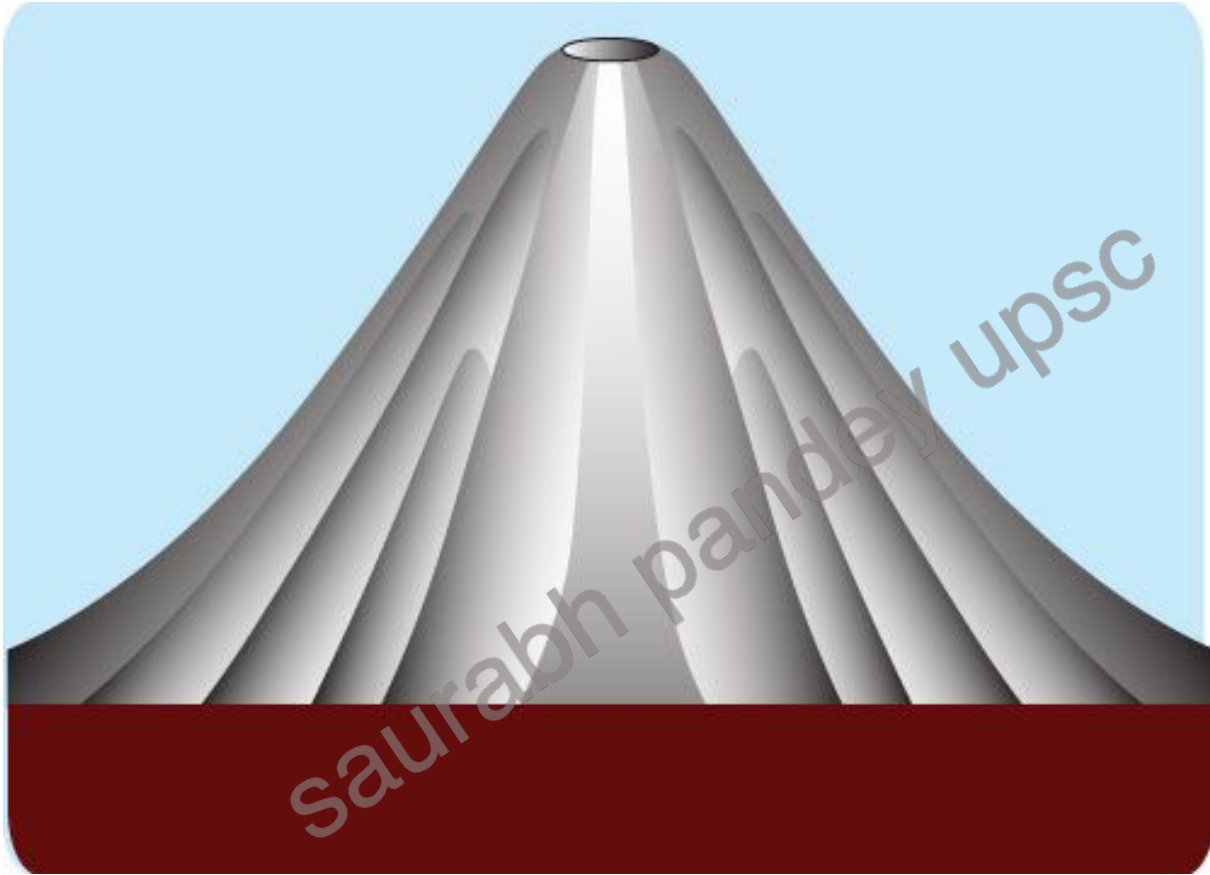


3. Shield Volcano



4. Lava Dome

- A stratovolcano, also known as a composite volcano, is a conical volcano built up by many layers of hardened lava and tephra
- Stratovolcano
- Stratovolcanoes have relatively steep sides and are more cone-shaped than shield volcanoes.
- They are formed from viscous, sticky lava that does not flow easily.
- The lava therefore builds up around the vent forming a volcano with steep sides. Stratovolcanoes are more likely to produce explosive eruptions due to gas building up in the viscous magma.
-



- **Andesite (named after the Andes Mountains), is perhaps the most common rock type of stratovolcanoes, but stratovolcanoes also erupt a wide range of different rocks in different tectonic settings.**

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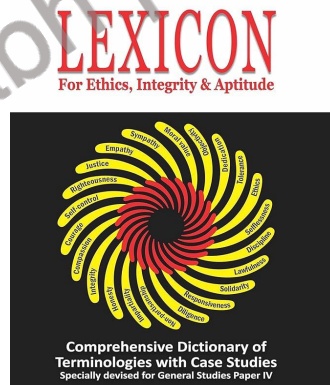
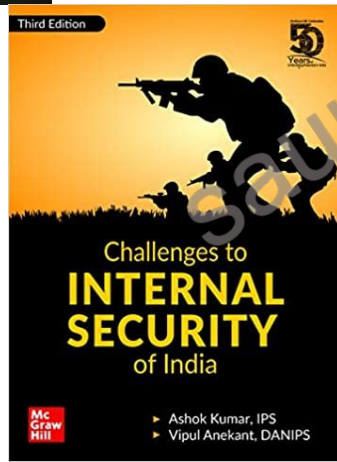
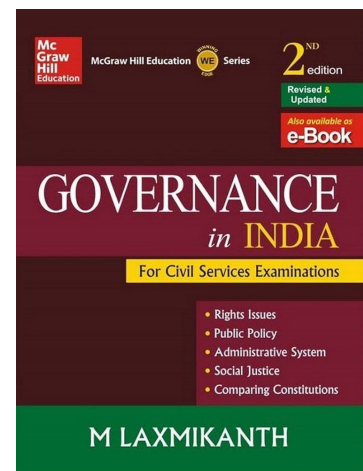
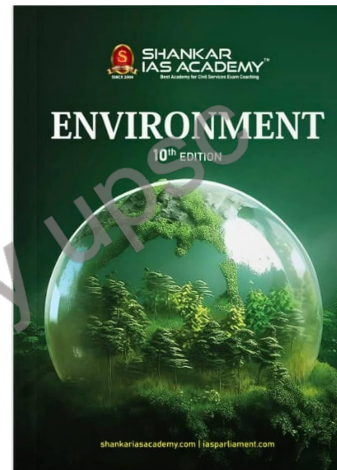
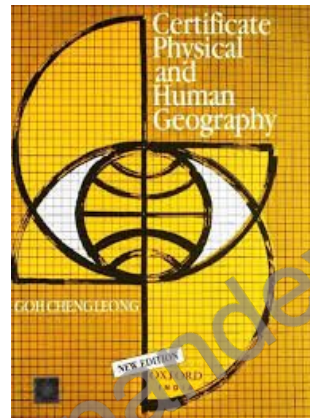
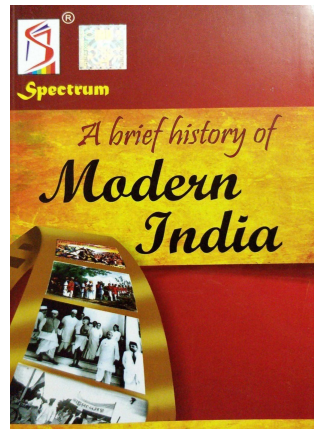
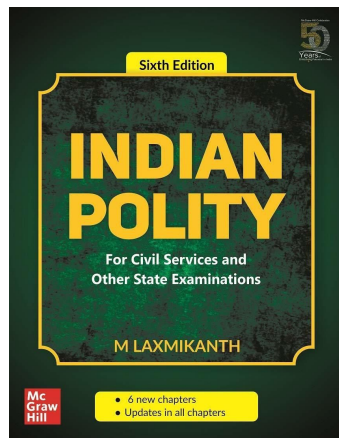
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Technology as a source of 'sanskar' VS S society as a source of "sanskar "

निबंध का विषय -

प्रौद्योगिकी 'संस्कार' के स्रोत के रूप में बनाम एस समाज 'संस्कार' के स्रोत के रूप में

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