

1. R K Shriramkumar, violin maestro chosen for this year's prestigious Sangita Kalanidhi award

Why in News?

Violinist RK Shriramkumar Honoured With Sangita Kalanidhi Award



The Music Academy, Chennai, has chosen violinist and composer Rudrapatna Krishnamurthy Shriramkumar for this year's prestigious Sangita Kalanidhi Award.

Who is R K Shriramkumar?

Shriramkumar belongs to an illustrious Sankethi Brahmin family of musicians from Rudrapatna, a village on the bank of the Cauvery in Karnataka's Hassan district, which is known as Sangeet Grama, or Village of Music.

The village and family have produced some of the biggest names in Carnatic music.

Sangita Kalanidhi and Music Academy

Sangita Kalanidhi, which translates as 'Treasure of Music and Art', is the highest honour in Carnatic music. It is awarded annually by the Madras Music Academy, one of the oldest academies of Carnatic music in India.

The Music Academy was established in 1928, following a decision taken at the Indian National Congress session in Chennai in December 1927 to promote Carnatic music and Bharatanatyam. The lawyer, freedom fighter, and artiste E Krishna Aiyar was trying at the time to revive Bharatanatyam, which had suffered from the stigma of association with devadasis.

Carnatic Music

It is the music of South India. It is indigenous in nature with no external influences. Under Carnatic music, vocalists are expected to sing fixed ragas/ragam and not make any improvisation. The role of instruments is secondary in Carnatic music.

Difference between Hindustani Music and Carnatic Music

Hindustani Music	Carnatic Music
It is prevalent in North India.	It is prevalent in South India.
It has Persian, Afghan, and Turk influence.	It is Indigenous. There are no external influences.
Under this, artists were given freedom to improvise, and thus sub-styles/gharanas emerged.	Under this, fixed style of music was followed, and thus there is only one particular prescribed style of singing.

Instruments play an equal role in this music.

Vocals play a larger role in this music.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Awards and Honours

Source: Indian Express

2. Europe's space agency retires Gaia, the cartographer of the cosmos: Its mission & significance

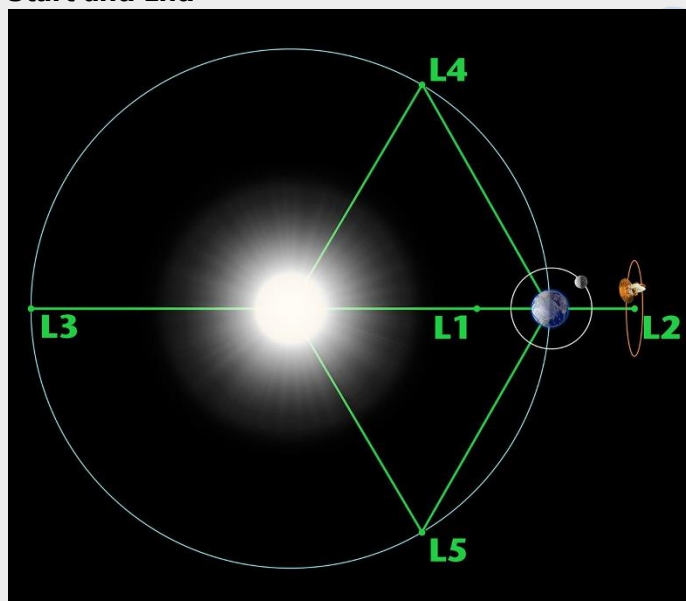
Why in News?

The European Space Agency (ESA) shut down its space observatory mission, Gaia on March 27. Launched into space over a decade ago, Gaia has been instrumental in charting the Milky Way galaxy, revealing its past and estimating its future.

Naming

Originally named Global Astrometric Interferometer for Astrophysics (GAIA), the mission was renamed Gaia. Gaia was designed for astrometry, the science of mapping the cosmos, through precise measurement of the location and movement of stars and other celestial bodies.

Start and End



Gaia was launched in December 2013 aiming to create the most precise, three-dimensional map of the galaxy. It began taking observations on July 24, 2014, finally shutting its eyes on January 15, 2025. Over the last decade, Gaia has taken 3 trillion observations of 2 billion stars and objects and helped inform at least 13,000 scientific publications.

Positioning in space

Gaia was positioned in the Lagrange point 2 (L2), around 1.5 million kilometres 'behind' the Earth, when viewed from the Sun. This effectively

allows the spacecraft to view the larger cosmos unhindered by the planet, the Sun and the Moon.

Achievement

Gaia has transformed the way the Milky Way galaxy is viewed. Its data allowed scientists to recreate not just a 3-D map of the galaxy, but also how it will change over time.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Science & Technology

Source: Indian Express

3. Why Myanmar is frequently rocked by earthquakes

Why Now?

A powerful earthquake of magnitude 7.7 and at least six aftershocks struck central Myanmar recently, bringing buildings down in the country's second-largest city, Mandalay, and killing at least 1600.

Neighbouring Thailand was also affected: an under-construction skyscraper in the capital Bangkok collapsed, killing at least nine people. Parts of Northeast India too felt the shake, although no casualties or significant damage to property has been reported.

The quake's epicentre (point of origin of earthquake) was located 17.2 km from Mandalay, a metropolis with a population of around 1.5 million people. It was a shallow earthquake, with a depth of only 10 km, and the strongest one anywhere in the world in the last two years.



What caused the earthquake?

Earth's lithosphere, the rigid outermost rocky shell of the planet, is made up of a number of tectonic plates. These plates have been slowly moving.

The Myanmar earthquake took place due to the “strike slip faulting” between the Indian and Eurasian plates, meaning these two plates rubbed sideways against each other.

The quake took place on the Sagaing Fault, which runs north to south through the centre of Myanmar, and is prone to earthquakes. A fault is a fracture or zone of fractures between two blocks of rock, which allows the blocks to move relative to each other, sometimes leading to earthquakes.

Why are shallow earthquakes dangerous?

Shallow quakes are generally more dangerous as they carry more energy when they emerge to the surface when compared to quakes that occur deeper underneath the surface. While deeper quakes do indeed spread farther as seismic waves move radially upwards to the surface, they lose energy while travelling greater distances.

Apart from the depth, the magnitude of an earthquake is also an indicator of how destructive a quake could be. Magnitude tells how big the seismic waves are, while strength refers to the energy they carry. While each whole number increase in magnitude represents a tenfold increase in the measured amplitude, it represents 32 times more energy release.

Put simply, the seismic waves produced by a magnitude 6 earthquake have 10 times higher amplitude than the ones produced by a magnitude 5 earthquake. The energy differential is even higher, 32 times for every change of 1 in magnitude.

How frequently do quakes occur in Myanmar?

Myanmar frequently experiences earthquakes due to the Sagaing fault. Since 1900, at least six quakes of magnitude greater than 7 have occurred near the Sagaing Fault.

India's 'Operation Brahma' kicks off

India has immediately started 'Operation Brahma' to assist Myanmar, where over 1,600 people have died, and many are trapped in the debris. The Ministry of External Affairs said that no Indian citizen was among the casualties.

India has been playing the role of first responder in such situations. Last year when Cyclone Yagi had struck, India had responded to assist the government and people of Myanmar.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Geography

Source: The Hindu

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