

**THOLPAVAKKOOOTHU****WHY IN NEWS?**

- First-ever robotic shadow leather puppet was installed at the Palakkad District Heritage Museum.

**ABOUT**

- It is also called as **shadow puppetry**, **Nizhalkkoothu** and **Olakkoothu**.
- It is a **traditional temple art in Kerala** having its roots in Palakkad and neighbouring regions.
- It used to be performed in the **Bhadrakali temples of Palakkad**, telling tales from the Ramayana.
- Musical Instruments Used → Accompanying instruments include **Ezhupara**, **Chenda** and **Maddalam**.
- The artists have to undergo several years of **rigorous training to master this art form**.
- The puppetry is staged on a **special structure** in temple premises called **Koothumadam**.

**Regional Names of Shadow Puppetry in India**

State	Name
Andhra Pradesh	Tholu bommalata
Karnataka	Togalu gombeyaata
Maharashtra	Charma bahuli natya
Odisha	Ravanachhaya
Kerala	Tholapavakkoothu
Tamil Nadu	Thol bommalata

**FOSSILS OF DICKINSONIA****WHY IN NEWS?**

- Recently, the researchers have discovered three fossils of 'Dickinsonia' on the roof of the Bhimbetka Rock Shelters.

**ABOUT**

- It is an earliest known living animal which is **550-million-year-old**.
- It is an **extinct genus of basal animal** that lived during the **late Ediacaran period** in what are now Australia, Russia and Ukraine.
- Ediacaran Period is a geological period that **spans 94 million years** from the end of the **Cryogenian Period 635 million years ago** to the beginning of the **Cambrian Period 541 million years ago**.

- It is one of the **links in the evolution of life**, linking the explosion of life to the simple organisms which existed before that.
- The fossils are known only in the **form of imprints and casts in sandstone beds**.

**BHIMBETKA CAVES:****History and Period Span →**

- The Bhimbetka rock shelters are an **archaeological site in central India** that spans the **prehistoric Paleolithic and Mesolithic periods**, as well as the historic period.
- It exhibits the **earliest traces of human life** in India and evidence of **Stone Age** starting at the site in Acheulian times.
- It is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** that consists of seven hills and over 750 rock shelters distributed over 10 km.
- **Discovery →** The Bhimbetka rock shelters were found by **V S Wakankar in 1957**.
- **Location →** It is located in Raisen District between Hoshangabad and Bhopal in **Madhya Pradesh**.
- It is about **40 kilometres south-east of Bhopal** in the foothills of the **Vindhya Mountains**.
- **Paintings →**
  - Some of the Bhimbetka rock shelters feature **prehistoric cave paintings** and the earliest are about **10,000 years old** (c. 8,000 BCE), corresponding to the Indian Mesolithic.
  - Most of these are done in **red and white** on the **cave walls**.
  - A multitude of themes were covered in this **form of rock art** and it depicted scenes like **singing, dancing, hunting and other common activities** of the people staying there. The oldest of the cave paintings in Bhimbetka is believed to be about **12,000 years ago**.

**RASHTRIYA SANSKRITI MAHOTSAV****WHY IN NEWS?**

- The 11th edition of the Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav is being held in West Bengal this year.

**ABOUT**

- **Nodal Ministry →** It is a festival started by the **Ministry of Culture** in the year **2015**.