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News: Kozhikode and Gwalior in UNESCO Creative Cities Network

- Recently, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) announced the addition of 55 new cities to its Creative Cities Network (UCCN).
- Among the new entrants, two Indian cities made their mark: Kozhikode in Kerala as the ‘City of Literature’ and Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh as the ‘City of Music’.

Significance of Kozhikode and Gwalior

Kozhikode as City of Literature

- Kozhikode is the first city in India to receive the prestigious title of ‘City of Literature’ by UNESCO.
- The city has a long history of hosting various literary events, such as the Kerala Literature Festival, which is one of the largest literary gatherings in Asia.
- This acknowledgement reinforces the city's role as a hub for intellectual exchange and literary discussions.
- Kozhikode carried the distinction of being home to over 500 libraries.

- The city is also home to many renowned writers, including S. K. Pottakkatt (the most celebrated writer of the city), Thikkodiyar and P. Valsala Sanjayan, along with poets, scholars, and publishers who have contributed to the diversity and vibrancy of Malayalam literature and culture.

Gwalior as the City of Music

- Gwalior is the third city in India to be designated as the 'City of Music' by UNESCO, after Chennai and Varanasi in 2015.
- The city is widely regarded as the birthplace of Tansen, one of the greatest musicians and composers in Indian history, who was also one of the 'Navratnas' (nine jewels) in the court of Emperor Akbar.
- The city is also the origin of the Gwalior Gharana, the oldest and most influential school of Hindustani classical music.
- The city hosts one of the biggest annual music festivals in India, the Tansen Sangeet Samaroh, which attracts thousands of music lovers and artists from across the country and abroad.

UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN)

- UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was created in 2004.
- Currently, over 250 cities make up this network which aims towards a common objective of placing creativity and cultural industries at the heart of

their development plans at the local level and cooperating actively at the international level.

- By joining the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN), the cities pledge to share best practices and develop partnerships involving public and private sectors as well as civil society to strengthen the creation, production, and distribution of cultural activities.
- The UNESCO Creative Cities aims to achieve Sustainable Development Goals through innovative thinking and action.
- The network covers seven creative fields: crafts and folk arts, media arts, film, design, gastronomy, literature, and music.
- **Mumbai** – Creative City of Film, **Hyderabad** – Creative City of Gastronomy, **Chennai, Varanasi, and Gwalior** – Creative City of Music, **Jaipur** – Creative City of Crafts and Folk Arts and **Srinagar** – Creative City of Crafts and Folk arts, **Kozhikode – Creative City of Literature** are the entries from India.