



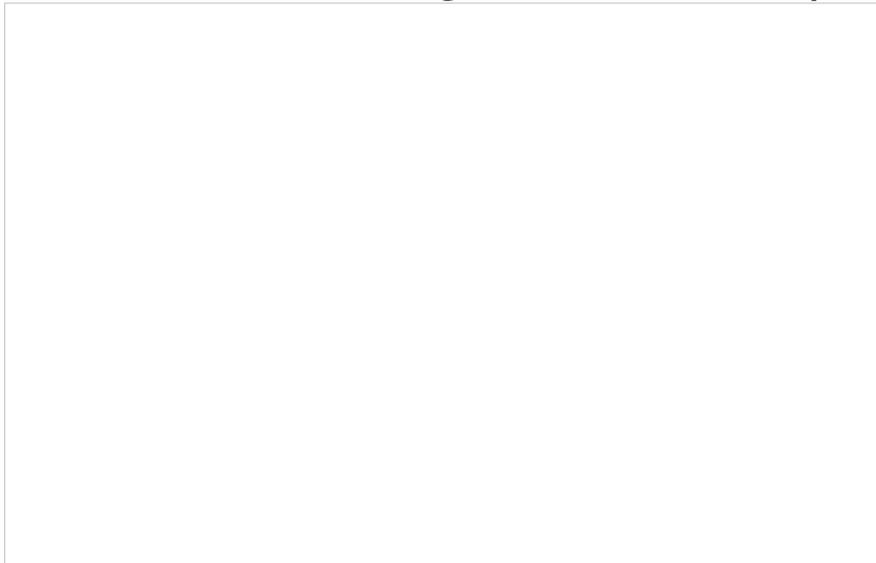
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News Analysis (06 Feb, 2019)

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Melting Glaciers in Hindu Kush Himalayas

Recently, The **Hindu Kush Himalayan Assessment study** has been released by the **International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)**.



- The Hindu Kush Himalayan region is of critical importance, given that it holds **the largest ice mass after the North and South Poles**, and has been on a constant warming trend since the 1970s.
- The study warns that if global efforts to limit global warming to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels fail, it could lead to **the melting of two-thirds of the region's glaciers by 2100**.
- This trend could be catastrophic, given that there are 8,790 glacial lakes in the region, of which 203 could lead to floods from **glacial lake outbursts**. On an average, 76 events of natural hazard occur every year in the Hindu Kush, with China accounting for 25 and India 18.
- The **Indo-Gangetic Plain**, an extremely polluted region, has **amplified the effects of greenhouse gases**. Deposits of **black carbon** and dust have **sped up the melting** of Hindu Kush glaciers.

Adverse Effect

- **Destabilizing Rivers**

- Increasing glacial melts could destabilize rivers by changing their stream flow.
- The **Indus could witness more stream flow due to high glacial melt till 2050**, after which the flow would start reducing due to decreasing glacial melt.
- The Ganga and the Brahmaputra, which are mainly monsoon-fed rivers, will also see variations, as pre-monsoon flows may decline. This will hamper agriculture that accounts for the largest share of water usage.

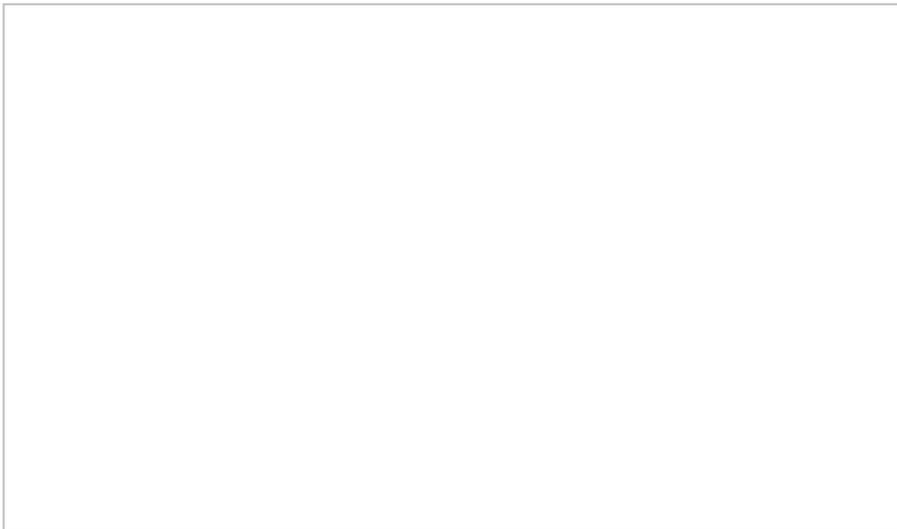
- **Impact on Monsoons**

- The Hindu Kush range exerts a significant influence on seasonal shifts in the monsoon circulation and the distribution of rainfall over Asia in summer.
- Changing monsoon patterns, including **increased severity and frequency of storms**, could lead to mountain hazards that may destroy critical infrastructure.

- **Forced Environmental Migration**

Forced migration could occur with an increase in the incidence and magnitude of extreme events such as floods.

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)



- The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) is a **regional intergovernmental** learning and knowledge sharing centre.
- It has **eight regional member countries of the Hindu Kush Himalaya – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan** – and based in **Kathmandu, Nepal**.
- Globalization and climate change have an increasing influence on the stability of fragile mountain ecosystems and the livelihoods of mountain people.
- ICIMOD aims to assist mountain people to understand these changes, adapt to them, and make the most of new opportunities, while addressing upstream-downstream issues.

UNCTAD Report on Trade Wars

Recently the UN body has released a report on trade wars titled "**Trade Wars: The Pain and the Gain**".

This dispute between China and the United States will **not benefit domestic producers in either country** but could have "**massive**" implications on the global economy.



Background

- The ongoing trade tensions initially came out in **early 2018 when China and the United States** imposed tariffs on about \$50 billion of each other's goods.
- The confrontation quickly escalated, and in **September 2018 the United States imposed 10% tariffs** covering about \$200 billion of Chinese imports, to which **China retaliated by imposing tariffs** on imports from the United States worth an additional \$60 billion.
- The 10% tariffs were initially due to rise to 25% in January 2019. However, in early December 2018 the parties agreed to freeze the tariff increase until 1 March 2019.

Positive Impacts

- Amid tit for tat tariff hikes between Washington and Beijing, **trade is being diverted** and a handful of countries stand to benefit from the ongoing trade tensions.
- The trade war between the US and China is expected to **boost the Indian economy with a rise of 3.5% in exports.**
- The countries that are expected to benefit the most from the trade war are:
 - The **EU members** as exports in the bloc are likely to grow by USD 70 billion.
 - **Japan and Canada** will see exports increase by more than USD 20 billion each.
 - Other countries set to benefit from the trade tensions include **Australia, with 4.6% export gains, Brazil (3.8) India (3.5), Philippines (3.2) and Vietnam (5).**
- However, the study also underscores that even for countries whose exports are set to increase because of the trade disruptions, not all the results will be positive.

Negative Impacts

- One major concern is the risk that trade tensions **could spiral into currency wars, disturbances in commodity prices, financial markets, etc.** all which will have important repercussions for developing countries.
- The **magnitude and duration of tariffs is unclear**, because of which producers have been reluctant to make investment decisions that may turn out to be unprofitable if the tariffs are revoked.
- More countries may join the fray and that protectionist policies could escalate to a global level, which is against the rule based order, thus hurting weaker countries the most.

UNCTAD

- Established in 1964, UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) promotes development-friendly integration of developing countries into the world economy.
- UNCTAD is a **permanent intergovernmental body established in 1964.**
- Headquarters - **Geneva, Switzerland.**
- Some of the reports published by it are:
 - Trade and Development Report
 - World Investment Report
 - The Least Developed Countries Report
 - Information and Economy Report
 - Technology and Innovation Report
 - Commodities and Development Report

GSAT-31 launched by ISRO

Indian Space and Research Organisation (ISRO) has launched GSAT-31 onboard Ariane 5 rocket from French Guiana in South America.

GSAT-31 is India's **40th communication satellite**

About GSAT-31

- **Weight:** 2,536 kg
- **Payload:** Ku-Band Transponders
- **Coverage Area:** India Mainland and Island
- **Mission Life:** 15 Years
- **Orbit:** Geostationary Orbit

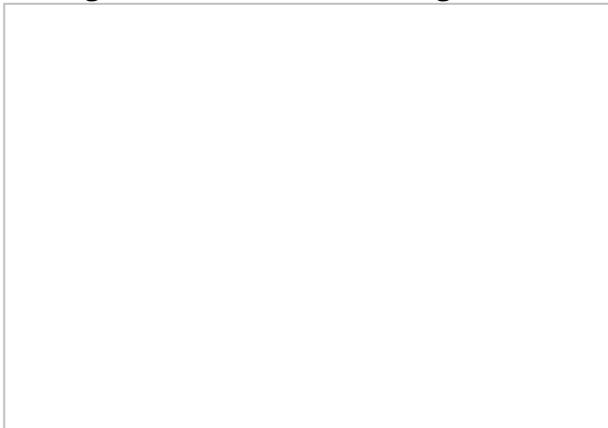
Significance

- The GSAT 31 will **replace the satellites INSAT-4CR and INSAT-4A** which are going to expire soon and will help in maintaining continuity of services currently provided by these satellites.
 - The satellite will **provide connectivity to very small aperture terminals (VSAT) for ATM, stock exchange, e-governance applications, and Direct-to-Home (DTH) services.**
 - It will also provide telecommunication applications for **bulk data transfer for a host of applications, emergency communications, disaster management support.**
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India-Monaco Relations

Prince of Monaco Albert II came to India on his first official visit.

- During the visit, a number of agreements were signed which includes:



- Cooperation on the environment, climate change, renewable energy.
- Establishing linkages especially in infrastructure development
- Visa waiver for diplomatic passport holders of Monaco

- Scope for business cooperation
- Both sides also decided to step up cooperation in the field of ocean resources and urban affairs (including Smart Cities).
- The visit of Prince Albert II of Monaco provided an opportunity for the two sides to review progress in bilateral cooperation and discuss ways to further expand the partnership in areas of mutual interest.

India-Monaco Relations

The Principality of Monaco and India officially established diplomatic relations on 21 September 2007. However, Consular Relations between the Principality of Monaco and India have existed since 30 September 1954.

About Monaco

- Monaco is a **city-state** situated in Southern Europe, on the **Mediterranean coast**.
 - Monaco is spread over 2 km² and is **second smallest country** in the world after Vatican City.
 - Monaco's **government structure is a hereditary constitutional monarchy**, governed by the Constitution established on December 17, 1962.
 - The executive power rests under the high authority of Prince Albert II, Sovereign Prince of Monaco.
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Important Facts for Prelims (6th February 2019)

International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC)

- Recently, the **International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC)** stated that India's cotton production is expected to dip by 7% due to "insufficient rainfall" in growing regions.
- At the same time production in **China is expected to increase** because of better farming practices by about 1%, enabling China to regain the '**top producer**' title it lost to India in the 2015-16 season.

Issues with Cotton Production in India

- The **adverse climatic and water availability** situation in cotton growing regions. About 77% of India's growing region is non irrigated, making it highly dependent on rains.
- Reluctance to adding new areas for cotton cultivation because of the **pest menace**.
- The **lack of awareness among farmers** on good farming practices.

International Cotton Advisory Committee

- The ICAC is an association of members of cotton producing, consuming and trading countries. The Committee was **formed in 1939**, and the Secretariat was established in 1946.
- It is **headquartered in Washington DC, U.S.A.**
- **India is one of the 27 members of this grouping since 1939.**

Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards

- The President of India has conferred the prestigious **Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards 2017** at Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi.
- The General Council of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, the National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama, an autonomous body of the Ministry of Culture had selected forty-two (42) artists from the field of Music, Dance, Theatre, Traditional/Folk/Tribal Music/Dance/Theatre, Puppetry and Overall contribution/scholarship in the Performing Arts for the Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards (Akademi Puraskar) for the year 2017.
- The honour of **Akademi Award has been conferred since 1952**. These honours not only symbolize the highest standard of excellence and achievements, but also recognize sustained individual work and contribution.
- The honour of Akademi Award carries with it **Rs 1,00,000/- (Rupees one lakh), besides a Tamrapatra and shawl.**

Shift in Magnetic North Pole

- Recently, the updated **World Magnetic Model** has been released.
 - The World Magnetic Model was **scheduled to be released in 2020**, but it was preponed due to **shifting in earth's magnetic north pole.**
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