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News Analysis (02 Sep, 2019)

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G7 Summit

The three days G7 summit was concluded on August 26, 2019, at Biarritz, Nouvelle-Aquitaine, France.

> Although **no joint communique** was issued at the end of the summit, the French President released a statement stating that the seven industrialized nations were committed to open and fair world trade, and global economic stability.

Key Takeaways

- Discussion on forest fires in the **Amazon rainforests**. G7 countries pledged $20 million help to fight fires in the Amazon rainforests.
- US trade conflicts with France over **GAFA tax** & other related issues, Iran over the **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)**, US-China **trade wars.**
- G7 leaders backed the existence and importance of the **Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984** on Hong Kong and called for violence to be avoided.
- The United States of America offered a better deal after UK's **Brexit.**
- There was a call for **reinstating Russia** back into the group. Russia was removed from the group after it **annexed Crimea in 2014.** But the consensus for the same was not achieved.
- As a reflection of **strong bilateral relations between India & France**, a **special invitation** was sent to India to become a part of this summit.
  - On the sidelines of this summit, India highlighted its large-scale efforts to address various environmental issues like, reducing biodiversity, climate change, water stress & ocean pollution.
    - India highlighted the steps taken in this regard which include, vow to **eliminate single-use plastic**, harnessing solar energy, saving water, and protecting flora and fauna.
    - On a session on **Digital transformation** at G7 Summit, Indian PM

remarked, "India's usage of technology for enhanced & innovative digital payment initiatives." India is putting enormous efforts in leveraging digital technology to fight social inequalities through empowerment and inclusion.

- Indian Prime Minister also had a brief discussion with the US President over the **Kashmir** issue, reiterating that, *'it is an internal matter of India & any related issues on it will be resolved bilaterally with Pakistan'.*

- The need for a dedicated multilateral **Green Bank was** demanded. The purpose of this bank would solely be to finance the projects supporting renewable energies and mitigating environmental challenges.

This bank will complement and collaborate with other existing multilateral-regional & national institutions in co-financing the projects.

G7

- The Group of Seven (G7) is a forum of the **world's seven largest developed economies** whose government leaders **meet annually** to discuss international economic and monetary issues.
- The G-7 has its roots in an **informal meeting of the finance ministers** of France, West Germany, the U.S, Great Britain, and Japan (the **Group of Five**) in the wake of the **1973 oil crisis.** That, in turn, inspired the French President to invite the leaders of those countries, and **Italy,** to Rambouillet in 1975 for further discussions on global oil.
- The next year, **Canada** was also invited to join the group and the first meeting with all **G-7 nations was hosted by the United States which was held in Puerto Rico in 1976.**
- Summits are held annually and hosted on a rotation basis by the group's members.
- The 2018 summit was hosted by Canada in Quebec from June 8-9.
- The 45th G7 summit was hosted by France from August 24-26, 2019, in Biarritz in Nouvelle-Aquitaine, France.

Members

The G7 members are recognized as the seven **wealthiest** and **most advanced** nations in the world. The members are:

- France,
- Germany,
- The United Kingdom,
- Italy,
- The United States of America,
- Canada,
- Japan
- The **European Union** is sometimes considered an eighth member of the G-7, since it

holds all the rights and responsibilities of full members except to chair or host the meeting.

Expansion to G-8 (the Group of Eight)

- The G-7 responded as the global economy evolved. In 1991, the Soviet Union pledged to create an economy with freer markets and held its first direct presidential election.
- Following the 1994 G7 meeting in Naples, Russian President held meetings with G-7 member countries, in what became known as the P-8 **(Political 8).**
- In 1998, after urging from leaders including U.S. President, Russia was added to the G-7 group as a full-time member, creating a formal G-8.
- However, in 2014, Russia was suspended from the group after the annexation of Crimea and tensions in Ukraine.

Purpose

- The major purpose of the G-7 is to discuss and deliberate on **international economic issues.** It sometimes acts in concert to help resolve other global problems, with a special focus on economic issues.
- G7 fills out numerous global top lists:
  - Leading export countries,
  - Largest gold reserves,
  - Largest nuclear energy producers,
  - Top contributors to the UN budget.

Source: TH

Spacecom: A New Pentagon Command

Recently, the US President has launched **a new Pentagon command (Spacecom)** dedicated to warfare in space.

- The US has announced this, due to threat perception it feels from China and Russia in **Space.**
- The Space Command is the **Pentagon's 11th full command** and the second to be launched in two years.
    > In 2018, the Pentagon elevated its **cyber warfare operations to CyberCom**, recognizing that online attacks and defence constituted a unique theatre of combat.
- US president also announced that SpaceCom will be followed by the establishment of the United States Space Force as the **sixth branch of the United States armed forces.**

There are 5 existing forces in the US: the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard.
- The U.S. Air Force already has a dedicated space warfare operation.
  - However, **the SpaceCom will elevate space facilities** (largely the satellites and high-altitude aircraft essentials) **to modern-day warfare**, which has emerged as a focused theatre of combat.
  - The challenges In the Space domain range from adversaries jamming communications and GPS satellites to ground-launched missiles used to physically destroy satellites.
- It can be noted that India recently tested its anti-satellite missile under **Mission Shakti.**
- Also, in order to address the new-age challenges to national security, the Government of India decided to **set up three new agencies** — the **Defence Cyber Agency,** the **Defence Space Agency** and the **Special Operations Division** in late 2018.
    Moreover, the newly instituted **Defence Space Agency** will administer the **Defence Space Research Organization (DSRO)** whose objective is to create weapons to deny, degrade, disrupt, destroy or deceive an adversary's space capability.

Source: TH

Indonesia's New Capital

Recently, Indonesia's President has announced that the **country's capital (currently Jakarta)** will be relocated to **East Kalimantan province on Borneo island.**

- Jakarta is the largest Indonesian city with a population of 1 crore people and is located on the North West coast of the **most populous island in the world, Java.**

Indonesia's new administrative capital*

- **Reasons for Relocation:**
  - Jakarta was built on a marsh, (already a few meters below sea level), thereby prone to be submerged.
  - **Due to climate change, the water levels in the Java Sea are rising and weather events are becoming more extreme.**
  - Jakarta is among the **world's fastest sinking city.**
  - Moreover, the Jakarta is the centre for administration, governance, finance and trade, it has inevitably led to relentless construction in the city, due to which the water is not able to seep into the ground in many areas, leading to increased run-off.
- **Site of Relocation**
  - East Kalimantan is located over 1,400 km from Jakarta, on the **island of Borneo.**
  - Mineral-rich East Kalimantan was once almost completely covered by rainforests.
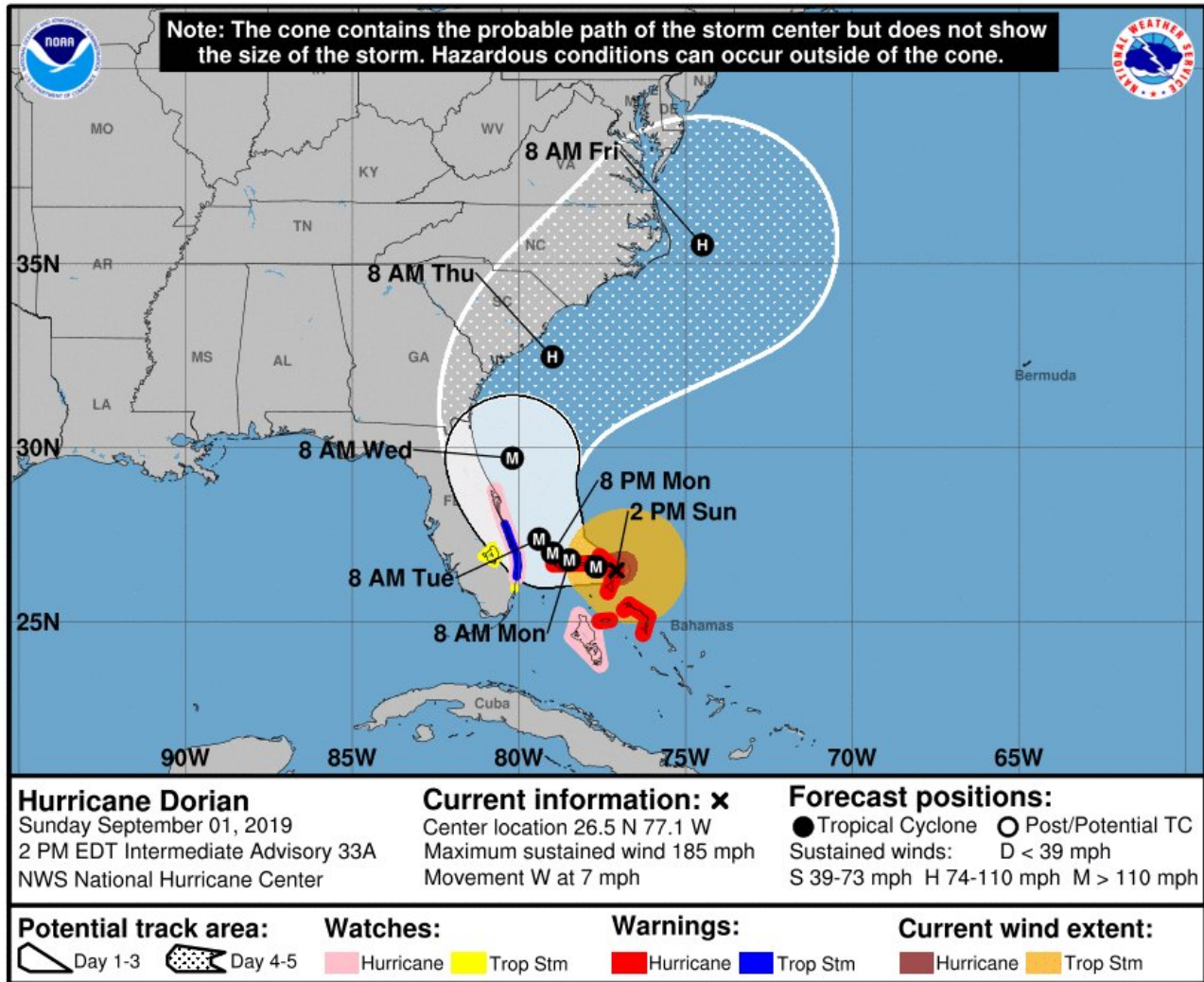
Source: IE

Hurricane Dorian

Recently the Hurricane Dorian became the strongest storm in modern records to hit the northwestern **Bahamas (a country in the Caribbean Islands).**

Hurricane Dorian

- It is an extremely powerful tropical cyclone currently affecting the Bahamas and threatening the Southeastern United States.
- It is developed from a tropical wave in the Central Atlantic.
- It is categorised as a **Category 5 storm on Saffir–Simpson hurricane wind scale (SSHWS)** with maximum sustained winds of 285 km per hour.

Hurricanes

- A Hurricane is a **tropical cyclone** that occurs in the Atlantic Ocean and the northeastern Pacific Ocean.
- These are formed over the warm ocean waters near the equator.
- Hurricanes typically form between 5 to 15 degrees latitude north and south of the equator.
- Hurricanes are known to be one of nature's most destructive storms as they bring heavy rains, deadly waves and fierce winds.

Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale

The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale is a 1 to 5 rating based on a hurricane's sustained wind speed. This scale estimates potential property damage.

Category	Sustained Winds	Types of Damage Due to Hurricane Winds
1	119-153 km/h	Very dangerous winds will produce some damage
2	154-177 km/h	Extremely dangerous winds will cause extensive damage
3 (major)	178-208 km/h	Devastating damage will occur
4 (major)	209-251 km/h	Catastrophic damage will occur
5 (major)	252 km/h or higher	Catastrophic damage will occur

Source: TH

Mamallapuram

Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu is expected to be the venue for the **second India-China informal summit.**

- Besides holding talks, the leaders of both countries are likely to make a visit to the ancient monuments in the area.
    - The monuments in the area have been classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
    - During the **first informal summit in Wuhan (in China) in April 2018,** the leaders had made a visit to the Hubei provincial museum.
- Recently, Mamallapuram had also hosted the **Defence Expo 2018,** an annual event of the Union Defence Ministry.

About Mamallapuram

- **Mamallapuram,** also called **Mahabalipuram** or **Seven Pagodas,** is a town that lies along the Coromandel Coast of the Bay of Bengal, 60 km south of Chennai.
- The town's religious centre was **founded by a 7th-century Hindu Pallava King— Narasimhavarman,** also known as Mamalla—for whom the town was named.
- It contains many surviving 7th- and 8th-century Pallava temples and monuments, chief of which are the sculptured rock relief popularly known as **"Arjuna's Penance," or "Descent of the Ganges,"** a series of sculptured cave temples, and a Shiva temple on the seashore.
    - The town's **Five Rathas,** or monolithic temples, are the remnants of seven temples, for which the town was known as Seven Pagodas. The entire assemblage collectively was designated a **UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984.**

Source: TH

Gallery of Confiscated and Retrieved Antiquities

Recently, the Ministry of State for Culture & Tourism has inaugurated **'Gallery of Confiscated and Retrieved Antiquities'** at **Purana Qila**, New Delhi.

- This Gallery is a part of **Central Antiquity Collection** (CAC), located in Purana Qila.
    - CAC was created to house the antiquities explored and excavated by the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** and also those antiquities which were retrieved and confiscated with the help of Ministry of External Affairs and various law enforcing agencies.
    - According to the government, **the highest number of antiquities are recovered in the last five years.**
- In the past, many of valuable antiquities, artefacts and sculptures have been stolen from India and are sold in foreign countries.
- As per the **Antiquity and Art Treasures Act, 1972 and rules 1973,** it is the duty of the Archaeological Survey of India to stop theft, illegal export and regulates domestic

trade of antiquities.

- So far, ASI has retrieved 44 stolen antiquities from USA, Australia, Singapore, Germany, Canada and England and 119 more antiquities are in the process of retrieval.

Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

- ASI is the premier organization for the archaeological **research, scientific analysis, excavation of archaeological sites, conservation and preservation of protected monuments.**
- It is an attached office under the **Department of Culture (Ministry of Culture).**
- **ASI was founded in 1861** by Alexander Cunningham who became its first Director-General.

Source: PIB

General Assembly of the Association of World Election Bodies

The Election Commission of India is scheduled to host the **4th General Assembly of the Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB)** at Bengaluru on 3rd September 2019.

- India will take over as **A-WEB's Chair for the 2019-21 term.**
- ECI has been its Executive Board Member since AWEB's inception for two consecutive terms (2013-15 and 2015-17).
- During A-WEB General Assembly, 2017 ECI was unanimously elected as Vice-Chair of A-WEB 2017-19.

Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB)

- The Association of World Election Bodies(A-WEB) is the largest association of Election Management Bodies (EMBs) worldwide.
- It was established on October 14, 2013 in South Korea.
- The permanent secretariat of A-WEB is located in Seoul, South Korea.
- It was founded with the shared vision among its members of achieving sustainable democracy around the world
- A-WEB also undertakes Election Visitor and Observation Programmes in various countries to study various election management practices and share knowledge with other Member of EMBs.

Source: PIB

Electors Verification Programme

- The **Election Commission of India**, on 1st September 2019, launched a nation-wide Electors Verification Programme.
- The program **aims to provide better electoral services,** improve communication between voters and the Commission, and improve the overall health of electoral rolls in general.
- It will end on 15th October 2019.
- Voters can use the **National Voters' Service Portal (NVSP),** Voter Helpline App, **Common Service Centres** or the voter facilitation centre to avail of facilities like verification and correction of details, authentication, updating details of family members and giving feedback, among others.
    - **National Voters' Service Portal** aims to provide single window quality services through user-friendly interface for citizens to increase transparency and easy access to information.
    - Through NVSP, a user can avail and access various services such as access the electoral list, apply for voter id card, apply online for corrections in voter's card, view details of the polling booth, etc.
- Voters will also be able to receive updates on application status, the status of the Electors Photo Identity Card (EPIC), election day announcements, and voter slips on their email and mobile numbers. All information related to Polling Station will also be shared with the Electors.

Source: PIB