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Important Facts for Prelims (4th February 2019)

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Indus River Dolphin

- Recently the **Punjab Government** declared the Indus River dolphin, as the **state's aquatic animal**.
- Indus river dolphin is found **only in the main channel of the Indus River** in Pakistan and in the **Beas river in India**.
- Indus river dolphins also known as **Bhulan** are one of the **only four river dolphin species** and subspecies in the world that are found in freshwater. Others include the **Chinese river dolphin, Ganges river dolphin and Amazon river dolphin**.
- The Indus river dolphin is a **marine mammal** which means it's **warm-blooded, breathes air, gives birth and produces milk to feed its young**.
- It is listed endangered in the **IUCN's Red List of Threatened Species** and its International trade is prohibited by virtue of it being listed under **Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)**.
- Indus dolphin like Ganges River dolphin is **functionally blind** and relies on **echolocation to navigate**, communicate and hunt prey in muddy river water.

NASA Discovers Dwarf Galaxy

- **NASA's Hubble telescope has discovered a dwarf galaxy** in the neighborhood of Milky Way galaxy.
- The dwarf galaxy is discovered only 30 million light years away within the **globular cluster NGC 6752**.
- The dwarf galaxy, **nicknamed as Bedin 1**, is a modestly sized, elongated galaxy. It measures only around 3000 light-years at its greatest extent which is a fraction of the size of the Milky Way.

Significance

- From the properties of its stars, scientists are able to infer that the galaxy is around 13 billion years old — nearly as old as the Universe itself.

- Due to its isolation, Bedin 1 is will be helpful in **understanding the early Universe**.

Globular Cluster:

- A Globular cluster is a large group of **old stars** that are closely packed in a symmetrical and somewhat spherical form.
- Globular clusters are **extremely luminous objects** and may contain thousands to millions of stars.

Dwarf Galaxy

“Dwarf galaxies” is a general term for galaxies that are faint and **small in size and have low-luminosity**, lack of dust and old stellar populations.

Kerala’s Village Millet Scheme

- Kerala government has decided to expand millet village scheme to other districts in the state.
- The Millet Village scheme was first launched in Attappady in Palakkad district of **Kerala**.
- Under the Millet Village scheme, the government promoted the harvest of ragi (finger millet), thina (foxtail millet), cholam (sorghum) and kuthiravaali (barnyard millet).
- The project aimed at protecting seeds of traditional varieties of millets and ensures food security and livelihood for tribals.
- The scheme also provides financial assistance to farmers for cultivation of millets crops.

Millets Production in India

Millets are cultivated in low-fertile land, mountainous, tribal and rain-fed areas. These areas include Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana.

Advantages of Millets

Millets also are known as ‘nutri-cereals’ and have a high protein content, short growing season, climate change resilience and low water requirement.

International Year of Millets