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Important Facts for Prelims (11th October 2018)

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IWAI to Launch New Ro-Ro Service to Majuli Island

- Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) will start a new Roll on-Roll off (Ro-Ro) facility in collaboration with the Government of Assam for Majuli Island which currently faces serious challenges of connectivity.
- The Ro-Ro ferry services are vessels made to carry wheeled cargo that are driven on and off the ferry on their own wheels or using a platform vehicle.
- The wheeled cargo includes, cars, trucks, semi trailer trucks, trailers, and railroad cars.
- This Ro-Ro facility will cut down the circuitous road route of 423 kms that trucks take from Neamati to Majuli Island via Tezpur Road Bridge, by limiting the distance to only 12.7 kms with the use of river route.
- The commencement of Ro-Ro services to Majuli island will augment connectivity not only in Assam but the entire North Eastern Region.

Majuli Island

- Majuli is the biggest inhabited riverine islands in the world located in the river Brahmaputra.
- It is India's First island district. It has 144 villages with a population of over 1,50,000.
- Majuli was once 1200 square kilometres but due to excessive erosion has shrunk to under 500 square kilometres.
- It is the nerve centre of neo-Vaishnavite culture. It has many 'Sattras' (religious and cultural institutions).
- It has been included in the tentative list of World Heritage Sites by UNESCO.

Goa Maritime Symposium – 2018

- To strengthen friendly relations with maritime neighbours, the Indian Navy is hosting the 'Goa Maritime Symposium – 2018' on 16th October 2018.

- The theme for the one day symposium is “Building Stronger Maritime Partnerships in IOR” The focus of the symposium is on capacity building among IOR Navies to tackle emerging maritime threats, as well as discussing cooperative strategies for enhancing interoperability among partner maritime agencies.
- The 16 Indian Ocean littoral countries participating in the Symposium include Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand from South East Asia; Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka from India’s immediate neighbourhood; the island nations of Seychelles, Mauritius and Maldives; Oman in West Asia; and South Africa, Madagascar, Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique from Africa.
- The symposium will facilitate interaction in the Indian Ocean Region for sharing ideas on common issues of maritime interest.
- With the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) becoming the locus of the 21st century strategic landscape, the symposium will play a constructive role in bringing together stakeholders that have a role in evolving strategies, policies and implementation mechanisms in the maritime domain.
- Further it is aligned with the objective of ‘SAGAR’ (Security and Growth for All in the Region) initiative of India which envisions enhanced engagement with countries beyond shores with the aim of building greater trust and promoting respect for maritime rules, norms and peaceful resolution of disputes.

International Fleet Review (IFR)- 2018

- Guided missile destroyer INS Rana has reached Jeju in South Korea to participate in the International Fleet Review (IFR) which is being held from October 8 to 15.
- However, Japan is not participating in international fleet review hosted by South Korea.
- It has refused Seoul’s request to remove the Japanese navy’s “rising sun” flag.
- The flag portrays a red sun with 16 rays extending outward and is mandatory for Japan's naval ships under domestic laws. Many countries in Korean peninsula see the red-and-white flag as a symbol of Japan’s past military aggression and its colonisation.
- A Naval Fleet Review is a long-standing tradition followed by navies all over the world. The idea of a Review was conceived as a show of naval might or an inspection of readiness for battle at sea.
- In India, the President, as the Supreme Commander of the armed forces, reviews the Fleet once during his tenure. Ten Reviews have taken place in India since Independence in 1947. The first was held in 1953 and the last in 2016.