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Important Facts for Prelims (13th August 2018)

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VS Naipaul

- Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul, an Indian-origin British author and Nobel laureate known for his critical commentary on colonialism, religion and politics, died aged 85.
- He was born on Aug 17, 1932, in Chaguanas, Trinidad, where his paternal grandfather had emigrated from India in the 1880s as an indentured servant to work on the sugar plantations.
- His first novel was "The Mystic Masseur (1957)". His other important novels are A House for Mr Biswas, The Mimic Men, The Loss of El Dorado, Guerrillas, A Bend in the River, etc.
- He was awarded Nobel Prize in Literature in 2001.

Parker Solar Probe

- NASA has launched a Parker Solar Probe spacecraft to the sun that will fly closer to the star than anything ever sent before. The spacecraft was carried by Delta-IV Heavy rocket.
- Protected by a revolutionary new heat shield, the spacecraft will fly past Venus in October. The Solar Probe Spacecraft is expected to make 24 close approaches over the next seven years.
- Previous closest probe launched was Helios 2 in 1976.

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Malayaha Tamils

- Malayaha Tamils is a nearly million-strong hill population consisting of Tamil community in Sri Lanka.
- They are distinct from those living in the war-affected areas, as they comprise of descendants of labourers that the British brought down from South India to work on the estates.

- They have served as the primary workforce in Sri Lanka's tea estates, contributing significantly to the country's foreign exchange earned through the sector.
- The Malayaha Tamil community wants the issue of their identity to be resolved. Even though certain sections of the community are not in favour of disowning their Indian roots completely, they do not want to be addressed as "Indian Tamils" as this nomenclature of theirs has been "a source of political and administrative discrimination and social antipathy", besides carrying a "historical baggage."
- The community has been historically neglected and confined to British-era line-room accommodations, which are small, cramped dwellings where many still live.
- Recently, over 400 families from the community took possession of their new houses built with Indian assistance. The construction of the homes is part of India's commitment to building 4,000 homes in the island's central highlands that is home to Malayaha Tamils.

INSV Tarini

- An all-woman crew commanding the INSV Tarini who successfully completed circumnavigation expedition around the globe in more than eight months were conferred prestigious Nari Shakti Purashkar 2017.
- The expedition, christened 'Navika Sagar Parikrama', was flagged off from the INS Mandovi boat pool on September 10 last year.
- The expedition titled 'Navika Sagar Parikrama', is in consonance with the National policy to empower women to attain their full potential. It also aims to showcase 'Nari Shakti' on the world platform and help revolutionise societal attitudes and mindset towards women in India by raising the visibility of their participation in challenging environs.
- The crew used an indigenously built INSV Tarini, a 55-foot sailing vessel built indigenously in India thus showcasing the 'Make in India' initiative on the International forum.

Note: Nari Shakti Purashkar

Nari Shakti Puraskar is a series of India's National Honours conferred on individual women for their exceptional achievement.