Important Facts for Prelims (24th September 2018)

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Citizen Science Initiative to Save Hornbills

- Recently a citizen science initiative of documenting Indian hornbills has been taken to provide valuable inputs for the conservation of Hornbills.
- Citizen Science is a collective, public participatory effort to collect data when people make their own voluntary contributions to the progress of science from home.
- Four common features of citizen science practice:
    - anyone can participate
    - participants use the same protocol and methods so data can be combined and be high quality
    - data can help real scientists come to real conclusions
    - a wide community of scientists and volunteers work together and share data to which the public, as well as scientists.
- The data on hornbill presence outside protected areas would be crucial in identifying and protecting their habitats from possible threats and development projects
- People can record the observation of a live hornbill, note its call or report a dead, hunted or captive bird.
- India has nine hornbill species, of which four are found in the Western Ghats: Indian Grey Hornbill (endemic to India), the Malabar Grey Hornbill (endemic to the Western Ghats), Malabar Pied Hornbill (endemic to India and Sri Lanka) and the widely distributed Great Hornbill
- It is the **state bird of Arunachal Pradesh and Kerala**.
- Vulnerable or near threatened species such as the rufous-necked hornbill, Austen's brown hornbill including the great hornbill are found in several states in northeastern India.
- India also has one species that has one of the smallest ranges of any hornbill: endangered Narcondam Hornbill found only on the island of Narcondam (part of Andaman islands)

Golden Globe Race 2018

- Recently, Indian Navy launched a search and rescue operation for Navy Commander Abhilash Tomy, who was stranded in his sailing vessel, INSV Mhadei, more than 2500 nautical miles south of Kanyakumari.
- He was participating in Golden Globe Race 2018 (GGR) from India.
- In the GGR, participants are required to sail around the world, single-handed and non-stop in a non-motorised boat.
- The uniqueness of the race is that boat designs and technology participating in the race should not be newer than 1968. Hence the use of the Global Positioning System (GPS), satellite communication and navigational aids are forbidden. Participants have to reply over traditional means of navigation, looking at stars and using physical maps, as they sail through rough seas in the 30,000-mile journey.
- The Golden Globe Race is being conducted by Sir Robin Knox Johnston of the U.K. who was the first person to complete circumnavigation of the earth in 1968 onboard the Indian-built boat, Suhaili.

Successful Night Test of Ballistic Missile Defence System

- Defense Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted a successful night test of two-layer Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) System.
- The BMD consists of two interceptor missiles, the Prithvi Defence Vehicle (PDV) for exo-atmospheric ranges and the Advanced Area Defence (AAD) missile for endo-atmosphere or lower altitudes.
- Exo-atmospheric Missile system is capable of intercepting missiles at an altitude of 50-80 Km. While the Endo-atmospheric system is capable of intercepting missiles up to an altitude of 30 km.
- India is the fifth nation in the world to have a robust Ballistic Missile Defence system after US, Russia, Israel, and China.

Ballistic Missile Defence System

- The Ballistic Missile Defence programme aims to provide an effective missile shield against incoming enemy ballistic and nuclear missiles both inside (endo-) and outside (exo-) the earth's atmosphere.
- A hostile missile needs to be intercepted at boost (launch) point, mid-course (flight through space), or terminal phase (during atmospheric descent).
- The BMD is a two-tier fully automated system which comprises of:
  - Over-lapping network of early warning and tracking radars.
  - Reliable command and control posts.
  - Land and sea-based batteries of advanced interceptor missiles.

Cyber-Trivia App

- The government has launched the 'Cyber-Trivia' app for children to counter incidents of cybercrime against children due to dangerous games like 'Blue Whale' and 'Momo Challenge'.
- The app will have multiple choice questions and children will be rewarded points based on their answers.
- It is an attempt to teach the children in a fun way what should be done if they are contacted by a stranger on the Internet who might ask them for their pictures or ask them to do things.
- The app is developed by Cyber Peace Foundation in collaboration with the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR).
- Cyber Peace Foundation is an apolitical civil society organization and think tank of cyber security and policy experts.