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Important Facts for Prelims (27th September 2018)

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Indian Ocean Naval Symposium

- The 'Indian Ocean Naval Symposium' (IONS) is a voluntary initiative that seeks to increase maritime cooperation among navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region by providing an open and inclusive forum for discussion of regionally relevant maritime issues.
- It endeavours to generate a flow of information between naval professionals that would lead to common understanding and possibly cooperative solutions on the way ahead.
- There are 36 littoral in the Indian Ocean which have been geographically grouped into the following four sub-regions.
 - South Asian Littorals - Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan, Seychelles and Sri Lanka
 - West Asian Littorals - Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Yemen
 - East African Littorals - Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Eriteria, France, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan and Tanzania
 - South East Asian and Australian Littorals - Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Timor Leste
- The inaugural of IONS-2008 was held in New Delhi. The theme of the IONS-2008 was "Contemporary Trans-national Challenges – International Maritime Connectivities".
- The 2nd edition i.e. IONS-2010 was held in Abu-Dhabi. The theme of IONS-2010 was "Together for the Reinforcement of Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean".

TRIFED & TRIBES INDIA

- TRIFED and Tribes India under Ministry of Tribal Affairs will launch "Punch Tantra" Collection and also appointed Ms. Mary Kom as the Brand Ambassador of Tribes India".

- The Punch Tantra is a collection of powerful tribal legacy, which comprises of a range of ethnic and traditional tribal handicraft and handloom products like Sarees, Stoles, Dupattas, Shawls, Kurtas/Kurtis, Lampshades (Kandels), Sky Lanterns, Diyas, Gift hampers, etc. specially introduced for the coming Diwali and festival season.

Tribes India

- It is an e-commerce platform of Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED). It aims to promote e-commerce for tribal artisans by a dedicated website, mobile app, and partnership with e-commerce portals.
- It has set the retail sales target of Rs. 100 crores to be achieved during the year 2018-19.

TRIFED

- The Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED) was founded in 1987. It is a national-level apex organization functioning under the administrative control of Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- Other initiatives of TRIFED:
 - Aadi Mahotsavas- Organised in Delhi, Jaipur, Bhopal, Ranchi, Chandigarh and Guwahati to facilitate tribal artisans to directly link up with big markets.
 - Aadi Vyapar- A handbook for TRIFED's retail trade to institutionalize the sale and procurement operations
 - For Minor Forest Produce-
 - Pricing of Minor Forest Produces need to be carefully done so that tribals can get best price for their products.
 - Minimum Support Price and Value Addition Scheme for Minor Forest Produces has now been extended to 19 States and that Value Addition has been given high priority.
 - A target has been set for 30,000 Value Addition Centres in rural areas.
 - Tribes Haat- A news magazine to provide information to all stakeholders and customers about its activities and to attract them to be partners in the tribal development strategy.

Agmark Online

- Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare launched the online software for Agmark.
- The Agmark online is under the Digital India initiative, now the application processes related to Agmark certification will be done online by the Directorate of Marketing & Inspection (DMI).

- The Agricultural Produce (Grading and Marketing) Act, 1937, popularly known as AGMARK Act, prescribes certain standards of quality for agricultural produce and verifies whether certain products get marked safe as per the AGMARK regulations.
- The use of modern technologies by the National Informatics Center has made these processes easy, reliable and cost-effective by providing online electronic mode.

Goods and Services Network (GSTN)

- The Union cabinet has approved increasing the government ownership in Goods and Services Tax Network.
- The restructured GSTN stake with 100 per cent government ownership, will be acquired equally between the Centre(50%) and the states (50%).
- The decision was based on the rationale that a vast amount of GST-related data should be completely under the government's supervision, as it is a repository of sensitive information of over 1 crore taxpayers.

New Governance Structure

The Cabinet also decided to allow directors who will be nominated by the Central and state governments, three other independent directors would be nominated by the board of directors.

Background

- Goods and Services Tax Network is a not for profit, non-Government, private limited company.
- The Government of India holds 24.5% equity in GSTN and all states including NCT of Delhi and Puducherry, and the Empowered Committee of State Finance Ministers, together hold another 24.5%. Balance 51% equity is with non-Government financial institutions such as ICICI, HDFC.
- GSTN has been set up primarily to provide IT infrastructure and services to the Central and State Governments, tax payers and other stakeholders for implementation of the Goods and Services Tax.
- The Authorized Capital of the company is Rupees ten crore.
- Creation of common and shared IT infrastructure for functions facing taxpayers has been assigned to GSTN and these are filing of registration application, filing of return, creation of challan for tax payment, settlement of IGST payment , generation of business intelligence and analytics.

ASTRA MISSILE

- The Indian Air Force successfully test fired the indigenously developed Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile Astra from a Su-30 aircraft.

- The Astra missile is developed as part of the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme.
- DRDO carried out mission analysis, system design, simulation and post flight weapon analysis of weapon system.
- It can successfully engage a manoeuvring target with high precision.
- The highly agile, accurate and reliable missile features high Single Shot Kill Probability (SSKP) and is capable of operating under all weather conditions.
- The electronic counter-measures feature improves the missile's target tracking capability by reducing the effect of electronic countermeasures of the enemy targets in jamming environments.
- The Astra Beyond Visual Range air to air missile is powered by a smokeless, single stage, solid fuel propulsion system. It can intercept and destroy enemy targets with a launch speed between Mach 0.4 and Mach 2.