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Important Facts for Prelims (31st October 2018)

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INS Tarangini

- The first sail training ship of the Indian Navy, INS Tarangini returned after a seven month long sailing across the world at naval base, Kochi.
- The Voyage named, “Lokayan 18” highlighted the diverse culture of India across 15 ports in 13 countries.
- It is the First Sail Training Ship in Indian Navy and was commissioned on 11 Nov 1997.
- The primary role of these Sail Training Ships is to develop character and professionalism, as well as inculcate the qualities of initiative, courage, resilience and esprit-de-corps amongst the Sea Trainees and also impart practical training to them, primarily on navigation, sailing and seamanship.

Banni’s Bane: Drought in Great Rann of Kutch

- Banni, **the largest grassland of Asia**, situated near the Great Rann of Kutch, is in the grip of a severe drought.
- While the area is known for its scarce rainfall and semi-drought conditions, it is for the first time in 13 years that the **Maldharis, the nomadic natives of Banni**, are leaving their villages as water gets scarce.
- Banni, is separated by National Highway 341, which leads to the India-Pakistan International Border.
- Even the bird sanctuary at **Chari-Dhand**, located on the edge of arid Banni grasslands and the marshy salt flats of the Rann of Kutch which boasts migratory birds such as flamingo, is facing an acute water shortage.

Thanjavur Paintings: A Rich Inheritance

- The style of art called ‘Thanjavur paintings’, found in most South Indian homes, is extremely popular but has hardly been well understood.

- This genre of art which is essentially religious broadly comprises two essential themes: the first being scenes from the epics and the Puranas as depicted on the walls and pillars of temples, and secondly, images of deities consecrated inside temples, particularly of popular ones such as Srirangam and Tirumala.
- Portraits of kings, who were the patrons of these artists, as well as priests and ordinary individuals also find a place in these paintings.
- The artists of the Thanjavur paintings used the important aspects of the murals of the 17th and 18th centuries, the Nayak era in Tamil Nadu which included ‘simple layout, imposing figures, clear outlines and, above all, a vibrant palette.’
- The background colours traditionally used were rich tones such as deep green, deep blue or red, and also combinations of red and green or red and blue, with artists using colours of both vegetal and mineral origin: red ochre, yellow ochre, chrome yellow and indigo.
- Factory-made pigments from Europe, from the end of the 19th century, were also later used, providing the artists with a larger variety of colours.
- The most eye-catching and prominent feature of these paintings were the relief decoration covered with gold-leaf or gilded paper.
- The layout of these artistic creations was generally symmetric with the principal image in the centre and the goddesses and other religious figures near the main deity. Devotees, donors and others are sometimes depicted too.

Financial Stability and Development Council

- The Nineteenth Meeting of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) under the Chairmanship of the Union Minister of Finance reviewed the current global and domestic economic situation and financial sector performance.
- The FSDC was set up to strengthen and institutionalise the mechanism for maintaining financial stability, enhancing inter-regulatory coordination and promoting financial sector development in 2010.
- The Chairman of the FSDC is the Finance Minister of India and its members include the heads of the financial sector regulatory authorities (i.e, SEBI, IRDA, RBI, PFRDA and FMC), Finance Secretary and/or Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs (Ministry of Finance), Secretary, (Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance) and the Chief Economic Adviser.