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Important Facts for Prelims (8th November 2018)

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Dhokra Sculpture

- Dhokra sculptures, a type of folk art, is an **age-old wax-casting technique** also known as Lost-wax process.
 - Dhokra is an **alloy of brass, nickel and zinc** which gives an antique look.
 - The oldest specimen using such technique was during Harappan Period (famous Dancing Girl of Mohenjo-daro).
 - Dhokra Tradition is practised in the following states:
Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Nagaland (Konyak Naga Tribe).
 - Its motifs are mostly drawn from folk culture which includes animal figures like elephant, horse, gods and goddesses, containers with lids, lamp and lamp stands, intricate designs in shape of trees and branches.
- **Lost-wax process** or the cire-perdue is a method of metal casting in which a molten metal is poured into a mould that has been created by means of a wax model.
 - Once the mould is made, the wax model is melted and drained away. A hollow core is then filled with molten metal which takes the shape of the mould.

Balti Community

- The Balti community of **Ladakh's Turtuk village**, on the **India-Pakistan border** and enclosed by **Karakoram and Hindu Kush ranges**, has a distinct culture and a strong sense of self-reliance.
- The village was part of the **Silk Route**, and Balti caravans shepherded Central Asian and European traders through the steep, mountainous land.
- Even today, the Baltis display their riding skills in polo matches and are hired to provide transport to isolated posts of the Indian army.
- Turtuk was under Pakistan's control until **India took it over after the 1971 war** and is geographically part of the **Baltistan region bordering Pakistan and China.**

Palau Becomes First Country to Ban Sunscreen to Save Coral Reefs

- The Western Pacific nation of **Palau has become the first country to ban many kinds of sunscreen**, to protect its coral reefs from chemicals that scientists say cause significant damage.
- Damage to coral reefs worldwide from climate change has been widely reported, but according to scientists there is growing evidence that **chemicals from sunscreen**, which washes off swimmers or enters the ocean through sewer systems, also causes grave harm.
- It has been estimated that 14,000 tonnes of sunscreen ends up in the world's oceans each year.
- Studies have shown that chemicals in sunscreen can cause localized **coral bleaching** and can **disrupt the reproduction of fish by interfering with their hormonal systems**.
- A 2015 study found that **oxybenzone (organic compound used in sunscreens)** stunts coral growth and is toxic for the algae that live within reefs.

India Re-elected as Member of ITU Council

- India has been elected as a member of the International Telecommunications Union Council (ITU) for another 4-year term - from 2019 to 2022.
- The elections to the council were held during the ITU Conference 2018 at Dubai, UAE.
- ITU was founded in Paris in 1865 as the International Telegraph Union. It took its present name in 1934, and in 1947 became a **specialized agency of the United Nations**.
- The ITU has 193 member states who elect representatives to the Council.
- **India has been an active member of the ITU since 1869**, earnestly supporting the development and propagation of telecom in the global community of nations.
- The country has been a regular member of the ITU Council since 1952.
- India's strong partnership with the ITU is also demonstrated in the recent decision to set up the ITU South Asia Area Office and Technology Innovation Centre in New Delhi.

Women of India National Organic Festival 2018

- **Ministry of Women and Child Development** organized 5th edition of 'Women of India National Organic Festival 2018'.
- The main objective of the Festival is to support and encourage women and women-led groups that promote organic farming, to make women self-reliant entrepreneurs, boosting local economy and spreading awareness about benefits of organic products.
- The participants of Women of India National Organic Festival 2018 also had the opportunity to enrol themselves in **Mahila-E-Haat**, which is an online marketing portal set up by the Ministry of Women & Child Development, to meet the aspirations and needs of women entrepreneurs.