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Important Facts for Prelims (27th October 2018)

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Migratory Birds Start Arriving at Chilika

- Migratory birds have started arriving at the wetlands of Odisha's Chilika Lake (one of the largest wintering grounds in Asia), however there has been a drop in the numbers compared to the previous years. **The Nalabana Bird Sanctuary (core area of Chilika) and Mangalajodi (on the banks of Chilika lake)**, the two major places in Chilika where the birds congregate, also have not received the usual numbers.
- Close to one million birds congregate on the mudflats of the lake during winter. The lake, spread over 1,000 sq km, is home to 230 bird species, out of which 97 are intercontinental migrants from the Arctic and Eurasian regions.
- One of the reasons behind the low turnout is the **flooding after incessant rain triggered by cyclone Titli** that hit the Odisha coast in the second week of October.
- Of late, slightly reduced number of birds owing to **growth in prawn farming as well as silting and reduced salinity** has alarmed the conservationists.
- The plying of mechanized boats, the increasing of different fishing nets and gears has threatened the flagship species of the Chilika lagoon, the Irrawaddy dolphin.

Chilika Lake

- Chilika lake located in the coastal Odisha is Asia's largest brackish water lagoon.
- Because of its rich bio-diversity and socio-economic importance, the lake has been a designated Ramsar site (a wetland of international importance) since 1981.
- Chilika is recognized as one of the most important wetlands in the world because it is home to a large variety of birds.
- The lake and its reed islands teem with nesting birds-white bellied sea eagles, ospreys, golden plovers, sandpipers, flamingos, pelicans, shovellers, gulls, include migratory ones flying great distances from Iran, Central Asia and Siberia.
- Another major attraction at Chilika is Irrawaddy dolphins which are often spotted off Satpada Island in Chilka.
- The lake also supports the local fisherman in earning their living from Chilika's prawn, mackerel and crabs.

Mingingo Island Dispute

- Mingingo Island located in Lake Victoria like has led neighbouring Kenya and Uganda to both lay claim to its sovereignty. The densely populated island is barely a quarter of a hectare large.
- For over a decade, Mingingo has been a source of tension between Uganda and Kenya, who have been unable to decide to whom it really belongs.
- It was in the early 2000s when the island was barely inhabited and shown within Kenya on all maps. It started drawing the attention of Ugandan authorities who sent officials to Mingingo to tax fishermen and offer protection against pirates.
- Kenyan fishermen in return called on Kenya's government, which deployed security forces to Mingingo in a move that nearly brought the two nations to loggerheads in 2009.
- Kenya and Uganda then decided to create a joint commission to determine where the watery border is but nothing conclusive came out of it.

Moths in Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary (KWS)

- Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary (KWS) in Uttarakhand houses some of the most fascinating biodiversity as well as medieval temples.
- Over 200 different species of rhododendrons (locally known as the buransh), the state flower of Uttarakhand are found in KWS.
- Spread over Chamoli and Rudraprayag districts of the state, KWS is one of the most prominent protected areas in the Western Himalayas and home to the endangered musk deer.
- KWS is a treasure trove of moth species that act as a vital indicator of biodiversity.
- Moths are widespread with varying habitats, ranging from temperate, coniferous and alpine forests to alpine meadows (bugyals).
- An interesting characteristic of large tiger moth is that it secretes a liquid from the back of its neck region which is a defence mechanism making the moth unpalatable to predators. This behaviour has been reported in the wood tiger moth and several other tiger moths.
- Moths have been proven to act as indicators of forest health, and this is extremely important in the present situation of habitat degradation and climate change. Studying their ecology would be helpful to understand the changes in the ecological hierarchy.

Gujarat bags 'Best Agriculture Award'

- For its innovation and technological advancement in farming, Gujarat has received 'Best Agriculture Award' by the Indian Council of Food and Agriculture (ICFA) at the '11th Global Agriculture Leadership Summit and Leadership Awards – 2018.'
- Gujarat has adopted several initiatives towards better farming practices and spreading awareness for the same such as Krishi Mahotsav, Soil Health Card, Post harvest management, dairy and animal husbandry.

Indian Council of Food and Agriculture (ICFA)

- ICFA is an apex think tank for addressing policy issues concerning farmers, food and agro-industries.
- It is serving as a global platform for trade facilitation, partnerships, technology, investments and agribusiness services.
- A proactive approach helps ICFA in discerning critical challenges emerging in Indian agriculture along with creating opportunities for development, value addition and international trade to augment farmers' growth and farm revenue.

Technology Summit

- India will host the 24th edition of Technology Summit with Italy as the partner country.
- Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) organises the summit with the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India as the partner.
- The Summit is envisaged to serve as a wide-ranging knowledge-business partnership platform.
- The Summit will facilitate a comprehensive convergence of key elements of knowledge economy of India and Italy.
- It will also strengthen the collaborations between industries and universities of both countries and would lead to scaling-up of the existing bilateral industrial Research & Development programs.
- Aerospace, Cleantech, Cultural Heritage, Education, Healthcare, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and Renewables are the seven focus sectors for the 2018 summit.