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Important Facts for Prelims (20th November 2018)

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Horned Frogs Discovered by DU team

- A team of biologists from Delhi University (DU), University College Dublin (Ireland) and the National Museum (UK) have discovered **four new species of horned frogs** from the **Himalayan regions of Northeast India**.
- The team also comprised **S D Biju** from DU's Department of Environmental Studies, known as the '**Frogman of India**'.
- Horned frogs get their name from the fleshy horn-like projection on the upper eyelids of some species, and were discovered in the **forests of Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh**.
- The scientists named the four new Indian species as **Himalayan horned frog** (*Megophrys himalayana*); the **Garo white-lipped horned frog** (*Megophrys oreocrypta*); the **Yellow spotted white-lipped horned frog** (*Megophrys flavipunctata*); and the **Giant Himalayan horned frog** (*Megophrys periosa*).

India's First Elephant Hospital in Mathura

- India's **first specialized hospital for elephants** was opened in **Mathura (Uttar Pradesh)**.
- The hospital armed with facilities such as **wireless digital X-Ray, thermal imaging, ultrasonography, tranquilization devices and quarantine facilities**, has not only come as a respite to the elephants but is also attracting local and foreign tourists.
- Located close to the elephant conservation and care centre, the hospital is **designed to treat injured, sick or geriatric elephants** and is equipped with a medical hoist for lifting elephants.

Solar Bubble Dryer

- An innovative drying technology, Solar Bubble Dryer (SBD), developed jointly by **International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Philippines**; Grainpro, a leading post-harvest solution providing company; and University of Hohenheim, Germany, was introduced to farmers in Odisha.
- The SBD is a **low-cost drying technology** that aims to provide a **simple and flexible alternative to sun-drying** while protecting from spillage, animals, weather and vehicles running over the grains.
- The new technology has been developed in such a way that farmers can dismantle the machinery and reassemble it on their own. Power can be drawn both from solar energy and traditional electricity.

Elephant Corridors as ESZ

- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has asked the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) to consider declaring all elephant corridors in the country as Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZ).
- Eco-Sensitive Zones or Ecologically Fragile Areas are areas **notified by MoEF&CC around Protected Areas, National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries.**
- Activities conducted in eco-sensitive zones are **regulated under the Environment (Protection) Act of 1986** and no polluting industry or mine is allowed to come up in such areas.
- As a general principle width of the eco-sensitive zone could go up to 10 km around a protected area. In case of places with sensitive corridors, connectivity and ecologically important patches, crucial for landscape linkage, even area beyond 10 km width can also be included in the eco-sensitive zone.
- The guidelines **prohibit activities such as commercial mining, commercial use of firewood and major hydropower projects.**
- The basic aim is to regulate certain activities around National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries so as to minimise the negative impacts of such activities on the fragile ecosystem encompassing the protected areas.