

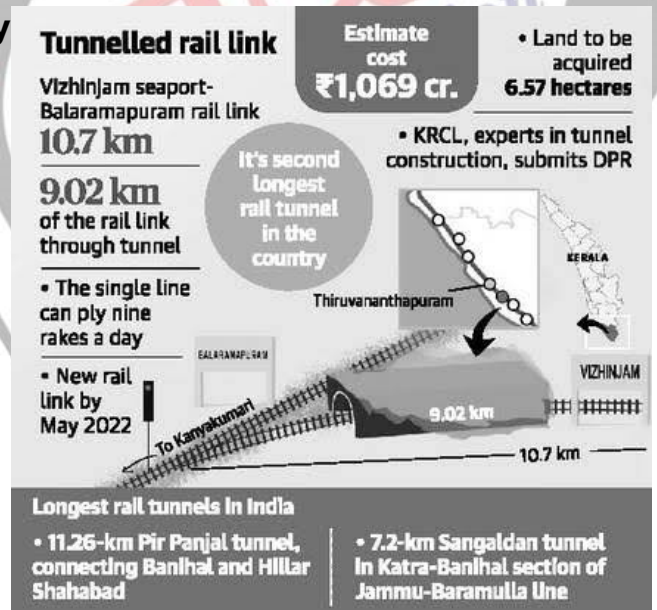


Important Facts for Prelims (8th February 2019)

Statue of Guru Padmasambhava

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik unveiled a **19-foot-high statue of Guru Padmasambhava, the founder of Tibetan Buddhism**, at Jirang in Gajapati district, Odisha.
- This 29 tonne stone statue is placed in the middle of 'Padma Sarovar', a large tank near **Padmasambhava Mahavihara, the largest Buddhist monastery in eastern India**.
- **The Dalai Lama had inaugurated Padmasambhava Mahavihara monastery in 2010**. Tibetan refugees settled in this region over six decades ago.
- Historians claim that **Guru Padmasambhava, also known as second Buddha, was born and brought up in Odisha before he left for Tibet**.
- The statue of Guru Padmasambhava has been sculpted by noted sculptor Padmashri Prabhakar Moharana.

Rail tunnel for Vizhinjam port connectivity



- A 10.7-km railway line, including a 9.02-km tunnel, has been proposed to connect Balaramapuram station on the **Kanyakumari-Thiruvananthapuram railway line** to the upcoming **Vizhinjam International Multipurpose Deepwater Seaport**.
- It will be the **second longest railway tunnel of the country on completion after the Pir Panjal Tunnel which is in Jammu and Kashmir**.
- The development of the Balaramapuram railway station is being explored as part of the rail link to the seaport.

Ladakh's Dard Aryan Tribes

- **Dard Aryan tribe** of Ladakh has requested the central government to intervene to protect their culture and legacy.
- The 'Dard' is derived from a **Sanskrit word, 'Daradas'**, which refers to **people who live on**

hillsides.

- Dard Aryan — **believed to be the original descendants of 'pure Aryan race'** — tribe is known for its liberal customs and ornate costumes. Many researchers believe that the 'Aryans of Ladakh' or the 'Brokpas' were a part of Alexander's army and had come to the region over 2,000 years ago.
- They live in the villages of Dha and Hanu (commonly called as Dhahanu), Darchik, and Gahanu - situated 163km southwest of Leh, the administrative capital of Ladakh.
- The rich heritage of the Dard Aryans is under threat **due to rapid modernization, migration and religious conversion.**

MarCo Cubesat

- NASA has lost contact with its **two mini-satellites Mars Cube One (MarCO) named as MarCo-A and MarCo-B.**
- MarCo CubeSats were launched along with [InSights Mission](#) to serve as communication relays during its Mars landing.
- **After InSight's landing, these spacecraft were launched further on their own trajectories to test if such low-cost technology can operate in deep space.**
- CubeSats are a class of spacecraft based on a standardized small size and modular use of off-the-shelf technologies.
- All previous CubeSats have orbited the Earth. **MarCO was the first attempt to orbit another planet.**

Lunar Lander Beresheet

- An **Israeli nonprofit group** is aiming to lead the first privately funded mission to land a probe on the moon.
- The lunar lander named as **Beresheet** (Hebrew word: "Genesis") will be launched by the group **SpaceIL in support with Israel Aerospace Industries.**
- It will carry instrumentation to **measure the magnetic field of the moon, a laser-reflector provided by NASA** and a **time-capsule of cultural and historical Israeli artifacts.**

Ujjwala Utsav

- The oil industry has observed Ujjwala Utsav celebrate the role played by all stakeholders - District Nodal Officers, Policymakers, Distributors, and beneficiaries - in making [Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana \(PMUY\)](#) a success.
- The event was organized under the aegis of **Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas.**
- PMUY anthem - Ujjwala Bharat Ujjwala- was also launched during the event.

Atal Bhujal Yojana

- Recently, the **World Bank has approved Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABHY), a [Central Sector, Rs.6000 Crore scheme](#)**, for sustainable management of groundwater with community participation.
- The **funding pattern is 50:50 between Government of India and the World Bank.**
- The identified over-exploited (OE) and water-stressed areas for the implementation of the scheme fall in the States of Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.
- **ABHY envisages active participation of the communities in various activities such as the formation of 'Water User Associations', monitoring and disseminating ground water data, water budgeting, preparation & implementation of Gram-panchayat-wise water security plans and IEC activities related to sustainable groundwater management.**

