



drishti

Important Facts for Prelims (28th December 2018)

 drishtiias.com/printpdf/important-facts-for-prelims-28th-december-2018

Decrease in Population of River Dolphins

- **Rise in salinity** in the central and eastern water system of the Indian Sunderbans has resulted in the decrease of population of the **Ganges River Dolphins in the region**.
- Researchers have found some evidence of the species only in the western part of Sunderbans, where the salinity is lower.
- **Reasons for rise in salinity:**
 - **Lost connectivity** with the upstream freshwater flow;
 - **Rise in sea level**, triggered by climate change;
 - Hydrological modifications like **water diversion** and **commission of large barrages upstream**.
- Flow of freshwater to the Sunderbans is crucial for the subsistence of these species as it becomes **difficult for the dolphin to remain submerged** in waters with high salinity.
- A higher rate of encounter were noted in rivers and stretches that had limited use of motorised boats, less river traffic and more country boats.
- Earlier in 2018, it was reported that the Dolphin population also declined at the Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary (VGDS).

Baseline Survey of Waterfowl in Kaziranga

- For the **first time survey of various bird species**, specifically the waterfowl was held in Kaziranga National Park.
- Traditionally the focus of attention in the Kaziranga, has been the '**big four**' — **rhino, elephant, Bengal tiger and Asiatic water buffalo**.
- A good avifauna reflects on the **health of the ecosystem**, and the baseline survey will help to understand the population trend.

Pokkali Paddy

- **Endemic to Central Kerala**, the Pokkali paddy variety, which grows to a height of up to 2 metre, survived the devastating floods.
- The **GI-tagged** Pokkali is a **saltwater-tolerant paddy** grown in the coastal fields of **Alappuzha, Ernakulam and Thrissur districts of Kerala**.
- This traditional farming of Pokkali paddy is facing threat as farmers are not getting satisfactory return despite it fetches good price in the market.
- **Local societies, cooperative banks and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act(MGNREGA) groups** have stepped in to protect this variety of rice, which the local people believe has **medicinal properties**.
- Pokkali is an **ancient farming practice**. One season of rice farming is alternated with **another season of prawn culture**.

Pavakoothu Puppetry

- In **Kerala**, the traditional **glove puppet play** is called Pavakoothu.
- It came into existence during the **18th century due to the influence of Kathakali**, the famous classical dance-drama of Kerala.
- The head and the arms of puppet are carved of wood and joined together with thick cloth, cut and stitched into a small bag.
- The face of the puppets are decorated with paints, small and thin pieces of gilded tin, the feathers of the peacock, etc.
- The manipulator puts his hand into the bag and moves the hands and head of the puppet.
- The theme for glove puppet plays in Kerala is based on the **episodes from either the Ramayana or the Mahabharata**.