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Important Facts for Prelims (5th February 2019)

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Asian Elephant Alliance

- The **Asian Elephant Alliance** has decided to raise about 187 crore rupees to secure 96 out of the 101 elephants corridors across 12 States in India in the next 10 years.
- Asian Elephant Alliance is a joint initiative by **five non-governmental organizations(NGOs)**.
- Five NGOs include **Elephant Family, International Fund for Animal Welfare, IUCN Netherlands, World Land Trust** and **Wildlife Trust of India**.

Kisan Credit Cards

- The Government of India has decided to launch a campaign aimed at financial inclusion of farmers by enhancing the coverage of **Kisan Credit Cards (KCC)**.
- This campaign will be launched through the **Financial Institutions including Commercial Banks, Cooperative Banks and Regional Rural Banks in collaboration with the State Governments**.
- At present, there are around 6.95 crores active KCCs. However, there are still a large number of farmers who do not have access to institutional credit either because they have not been issued a KCC or the KCC issued earlier have been inactive due to various reasons.
- **Kisan Credit Card (KCC) was introduced in August 1998** to enable farmers in having quick and **timely access to affordable credit**. It was **launched by the NABARD and Reserve Bank of India**.
- The scheme aims to reduce farmers' dependency on informal banks for credit, which is often lucrative yet very expensive.

Black Softshell Turtle

- The **black softshell turtle** is being bred in the pond of **Hayagriva Madhab Temple at Hajo in Guwahati, Assam**.

- Locals regard the turtles in the pond as Kurma avatar of Lord Vishnu to whom the Hajo temple is dedicated.
- India hosts 28 species of turtles, of which 20 are found in Assam. Threats to turtles include hunting for meat and eggs, silt mining, encroachment of wetlands and change in flooding pattern have had a disastrous impact on the turtle population.

About Black Softshell Turtle(Nilssonina nigricans)

- IUCN Status: **Extinct in Wild**
- CITES: **Appendix 1**
- Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA): **Schedule IV**
- Habitat: **Bangladesh and Indian state of Assam.**

About Hayagriva Madhava temple

- The Hayagriva Madhava temple is one of the important centers for **Vaishnavism**.
- The temple exists on a hilly place which located at **Hajo nearby Guwahati, Assam**.
- It was estimated that the temple was built during the **Pala period of 10th-12th century A. D.**