

GEOGRAPHY**Typhoon Hagibis**

The main Japanese island of Honshu was hit by Typhoon Hagibis on 12th October 2019.

About

- Typhoon Hagibis could be the strongest storm to hit Japan since 1958.
- Typhoon Hagibis, which means “speed” in the Philippine language, had packing winds of 180 km per hour near its centre.
- The storm brought record-breaking rainfall to many areas, resulting in floods and landslides in the country.
- Typhoon Ida, known as the “Kanogawa Typhoon” in Japanese, killed more than 1,000 people in September 1958. Ida had winds of 190 kmph when it hit the country.
- Typhoon is a region-specific name of the Tropical Cyclone (swirling system of clouds and thunderstorms that originates over tropical or subtropical oceans).
- In the Atlantic and Northeast Pacific, the term “hurricane” is used. The same type of disturbance in the Northwest Pacific is called a “typhoon” and “cyclones” in the South Pacific and the Indian Ocean.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS**LOTUS-HR**

India and Netherlands launched the second phase of the LOTUS-HR (Local Treatment of Urban Sewage streams for Healthy Reuseplant) as a part of joint collaboration.

About:

- The LOTUS-HR project is jointly supported by Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India and Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research /STW, Government of Netherlands.
- The project was initiated in July 2017 and aims to demonstrate a novel holistic (waste) water management approach that will produce clean water which can be reused for various purposes.
- In the second phase, 10,000 Litre sewage water will be treated per day.

India-China 2nd Informal Summit- Mamallapuram Summit

Recently, the Prime Minister of India and the President of the People's Republic of China held their Second Informal Summit in Chennai (Mamallapuram), India.

- The recent Mamallapuram Summit has begun a “New Era of Cooperation” between India and China.
- First India- China informal summit invoked the ‘Wuhan spirit’, whereas the second informal India-China summit has called for ‘Chennai Connect’.
- Informal summits allow discussion on wide-ranging issues, they are not particularly purpose-specific, and are sometimes considered to play bigger roles in diplomatic dialogue than formal exchanges.
- It also acts as supplementary exchanges to annual summits.

Key Points

- Reiteration of the first Informal Summit in Wuhan (2018)
 - Both the countries reiterated the consensus reached during the first informal Summit in Wuhan to consider India and China as factors for stability in the current international landscape.
 - It also emphasized upon managing the differences and not to allow differences on any issue to become disputes.
- Economic Development:
 - A High-Level Economic and Trade Dialogue mechanism to be established to enhance trade and commercial relations
 - The manufacturing partnership is to be established to encourage mutual investments in identified sectors.
- Multilateral trading system
 - India-China agreed to support and strengthen the rules-based multilateral trading system.

- Also promised to work together for open and inclusive trade arrangements to maintain inclusive international order.
- **Strategic Issues:**
 - Boundary issues to be solved on the lines of a mutually-agreed framework based on Political Parameters and Guiding Principles that were agreed by the two sides in 2005.
 - The strategic communication to be enhanced to maximize usage of high-level exchanges like dialogue mechanisms.
- **Terrorism:**
 - Both countries recognized the joint efforts to ensure that the international community strengthens the framework against training and financing terrorist groups throughout the world and on a non-discriminatory basis.
- **Sister State Relations:**
 - Considering the age-old commercial as well as maritime linkages, both the countries agreed to establish Sister-State Relations between Tamil Nadu and Fujian Province.
 - An academy to study links between Mahabalipuram and Fujian province on the lines of the experience between Ajanta and Dunhuang to be established.
- **70 years of India-China relations:**
 - The year 2020 will mark the 70th anniversary of the establishment of India-China diplomatic relations, to celebrate the event two countries will be organizing 70 activities to emphasize the historical connection between the two civilizations.
 - Also the year 2020 will be designated as the Year of India-China Cultural and People to People Exchanges.
 - Being important contemporary civilizations in the world, efforts will be taken in order to foster cultural understanding between the two countries.

Why Mamallapuram is chosen?

- India has chosen Mamallapuram as a symbol of India's 'soft power'.
- Mamallapuram is an important town of the erstwhile Pallava dynasty that ruled in parts of South India from 275 CE to 897 CE.
- The name Mamallapuram got distorted during the British era to Mahabalipuram and thus it is also known as Mahabalipuram.
- The city of Mamallapuram was founded by the Pallava king Narasimhavarman I in the 7th century AD.
- The name Mamallapuram derives from Mamallan, or "great warrior", a title by which the Pallava King Narasimhavarman I was known.
- It is renowned for its architecture, widely admired across the world.
- Mamallapuram and the Pallava dynasty are also historically relevant, for the earliest recorded security pact between China and India (in the early 8th century) that involved a Pallava king (Rajasimhan, or Narasimha Varma II), from whom the Chinese sought help to counter Tibet.

Wuhan Spirit:

- Wuhan Spirit is in line with the five principles of peaceful coexistence (Panchsheel) jointly advocated by China and India in the 1950s.
- Wuhan Spirit highlighted
- To form the "backbone" of economic globalization, and they should jointly make positive contributions to global peace and development.
- To cooperate, for the first time ever, on a joint project in Afghanistan.
- China has indicated that India's refusal to join the Belt and Road Initiative will not come in the way of economic cooperation.

Vice President's Visit to Comoros and Sierra Leone

The Vice President of India recently visited Comoros and Sierra Leone - two African countries. The agenda was to deepen ties with African nations.

India - Comoros

- India and Comoros signed 6 Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) on defence, health (e-Arogya Bharati) and culture (e-Vidya Bharati).
- India announced Line-of-credit of USD 41.6 mn for setting up an 18MW power plant in Moroni (capital city) and a vocational training centre.

- The Vice President also called for enhancing defence ties in maritime domain between India and the island nation of Comoros as part of a collaborative security architecture in the Indian Ocean.

Ties between India and Comoros

- Comoros supports India's candidature for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council (UNSC).
- It is a member of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) as well as the International Solar Alliance.
- Comoros avails scholarship/training programmes offered by India under the Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation (ITEC) scheme.

India - Sierra Leone

- India announced the decision to establish a High Commission in Sierra Leone.
- Both the countries agreed to enhance cooperation in agriculture, food processing, Information Technology, infrastructure development and capacity building.
- A MoU was signed for Sierra Leone to participate in India's Pan-African tele-Education, tele-Medicine initiatives, e-VidyaBharati and e-Arogya Bharati.
- India will soon initiate steps to set up a Centre of Excellence in IT in Sierra Leone.
- An agreement was signed to initiate a cultural exchange program between the governments of India and Sierra Leone for the years 2019-23.
- The Vice President reiterated India's offer to conduct a "Jaipur Foot" camp in Sierra Leone under the "India for Humanity" initiative for fitting of artificial prosthetic limbs for the disabled.
- "India for Humanity" is an initiative undertaken in the context of 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

Ties Between India and Sierra Leone

- India was among the first countries to contribute to the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) with the deployment of 4000 strong Indian Military contingent.
- India has extended concessional lines of credit to Sierra Leone worth USD 123 million in sectors such as agriculture, water, and transmission line.
- India has also undertaken grant projects through India Brazil South Africa Forum (IBSA) funds and provided direct humanitarian assistance to Sierra Leone during the Ebola crisis in 2014 and during floods in 2017.
- Sierra Leone is also a beneficiary of the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme.
- Sierra Leone is one of the members of the International Solar Alliance.

Exercise Dharma Guardian – 2019

The Joint Military Exercise Dharma Guardian-2019 between India and Japan will be conducted to share experience gained during various Counter-Terrorism Operations in respective countries.

About

- It is an annual training event which is being conducted in India since 2018.
- The scope of this exercise covers joint training on counter-terrorism operations in the jungle and urban scenario.
- The joint military exercise will enhance the level of defence co-operation as well as bilateral relations between the two nations.

ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES

mHariyali

Ministry for Housing & Urban Affairs launched the mobile app, 'mHariyali' for 'Environment Protection in Government Colonies.'

About:

- The app is aimed to encourage Public engagement in planting trees and other such Green drives.
- People can now upload information/photos of any plantation done by them, which is linked to app and will be displayed on the website www.epgc.gov.in.
- The App provides for automatic geo-tagging of plants. This app will also enable nodal officers to periodically monitor the plantation.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE ETC

Vertiport

The world's first "vertiport" for electric aircraft is being built in Singapore's Marina Bay, an early step towards a global network for flying taxis.

About:

- A British company, Essex-based Skyports Ltd. plans to show off the "Volocopter vertical take-off and landing station, dubbed a VoloPort or vertiport", at Marina Bay during the Intelligent Transport Systems World Congress from Oct. 21-25.
- Germany's Volocopter GmbH will bring along its electric aircraft for a demonstration flight.
- Volocopter GmbH is a German aircraft manufacturer. The company specializes in the design of electric multirotor helicopters in the form of ready-to-fly aircraft, designed for air taxi use.

Related Info :

- Urban air transport isn't new—helicopters have been doing it for decades. What's changing is that better batteries and innovative designs are making it cheaper, cleaner and quieter.
- A report from Citigroup said sales of air taxis could reach \$5 billion by the end of the next decade.

PRELIMS SPECIFIC FACTS- INDICES, DAYS, AWARDS ETC.

The 2019 Sveriges Riksbank Prize In Economic Sciences In Memory Of Alfred Nobel

The 2019 Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel has been awarded jointly to Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer "for their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty".

About:

- The Nobel citation says that the research conducted by this year's Laureates has considerably improved our ability to fight global poverty. The "new, powerful tool" employed by the Laureates is the use of Randomised Control Trials (RCTs).
- Duflo is married to Banerjee, who have been collaborating for long, and in 2011 wrote the book Poor Economics: Rethinking Poverty & The Ways to End it together. The couple are at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Michael Kremer is at Harvard University.
- Duflo is only the second woman, after Elinor Ostrom in 2009, to win the economics Nobel.

Randomised Control Trials (RCTs)

- Before their use as a public policy research tool by the winners of this year's economics Nobel, RCTs were largely used in medicine to test the effects of drugs.
- First, economists choose a sample – of people, for example – from the target population and randomly split it into two or more groups. One or more of these is a "treatment" groups and the others are "placebo" groups. They study the two groups both during and after the intervention, and the results are used to determine how effective the policy measure is or how it may best be implemented.
- Since Banerjee's and Duflo's wildly popular book Poor Economics was published in 2011, RCTs have become a common tool in the development research kit across the world.

World Standard Day

Union Minister of Consumer Affairs inaugurated the celebrations of 'World Standard Day' by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) on the theme "Video Standards create a global stage" in New Delhi.

About:

- World Standards Day (or International Standards Day) is an international day celebrated internationally each year on 14 October.
- The date marks the day in the year 1946, when delegates from 25 countries gathered in London for the first time and decided to create an international organization focused on facilitating standardization.
- While ISO was formed one year later, the first World Standards Day was celebrated in 1970s.
- The day honours the efforts of the thousands of experts who develop voluntary standards within standards development organizations such as the ASME, IEC, ISO, ITU, IEEE and IETF.
- The aim of World Standards Day is to raise awareness among regulators, industry and consumers as to the importance of standardization to the global economy.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Success is walking from failure to failure with no loss of enthusiasm.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns- As a rising China projects its economic and military power into the Indian Ocean, any strategy for regional balance by the government in India would necessarily involve the economic and military development of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Examine.

Answer :

The geostrategic position of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands makes them central to any Indian response to rising Chinese influence in the Indian Ocean Region as China has made great advances on its path to military superiority and control over the trade route via waters in the South China Sea and via land through the One Belt One Road initiative.

- India could be using these islands to project power into the region and signal China's People's Liberation Army Navy about its readiness to counter any intervention.
- It can become a platform for power projection and fortifying the Andaman-Nicobar Islands can be the first step toward a more robust Indian Ocean strategy.

The Significance of the Islands**Doorway to Southeast Asia:**

- The northernmost part of the archipelago is only 22 nautical miles away from Myanmar.
- The southernmost point, called the Indira Point, is 90 nautical miles from Indonesia. The islands are significant as balancing Chinese dominance would involve considerable cooperation between India and its major strategic partners.

Trade and Security:

- These islands dominate the Bay of Bengal and the Six Degree and Ten Degree channels through which more than 60,000 commercial vessels traverse each year.
- Among the nine major bottlenecks that control entry to this region are the Malacca Strait and the Six Degree Channel. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands lie in this strategically important zone, and India with its growing naval capabilities could play a significant role in controlling access.
- India can deploy naval assets to the islands for surveillance in important sea lines of communication.

Maintaining the regional balance:

- From these islands, India can create a maritime exclusion zone in the event of a conflict with China. Development of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands can counter the presence of People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) surface combatants, aircraft carrier, or nuclear attack submarines
- Bolstering India's defense infrastructure on the islands would send a strong message that India intends to remain the leading power in the Indian Ocean.
- The ability to monitor Chinese maritime activity in the IOR would allow India to acquire valuable information about the nature of Chinese operations in the IOR, such as operational patterns.

Economic significance:

- Unrestricted and widest possible access to the Indian Ocean and the Andaman Sea can widen the possibility of resource exploitation of minerals rich islands. Moreover, foreign warships and vessels can be restricted access to the strategically significant region. It can balance Chinese hold on ports in Pakistan, Sri Lanka and countries from Horn of Africa and its string of pearls policy.
- Developing undersea cable link between India's mainland and the islands can improve internet connectivity which can further strengthen its connectivity with the mainland.
- Infrastructural development like road building, airstrip construction, and the building of jetties can help link North with South and can promote economic activities like tourism in the region.

Economic and Military Development

- The Ministry of Tourism is developing the Coastal Circuit (Long Island-Ross Smith Island- Neil Island- Havelock Island- Baratang Island-Port Blair) in Andaman & Nicobar under the Coastal thematic circuit of Swadesh Darshan Scheme for development of island tourism in the country.
- The government is planning to bring seaplanes under the regional connectivity scheme, UDAN-3. This would boost tourism in the area connecting it to the mainland as well as to the other islands.
- With a view to creating a model for the integration of three defense services, the government has permanently stationed fighter jets and other combat platforms on the islands strengthening the tri-service Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC).

Conclusion

- India should make Andaman and Nicobar Islands an important element of its "Act East Policy" and "Neighborhood First" initiative. Islands Development Agency should be strengthened and robust policy framed it can be promoted, which develops the island territories with an eye to India's larger geopolitical interests.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQS

1. Consider the following statements:
 1. The city of Mamallapuram was founded by the Pallava dynasty.
 2. The famous World Heritage Site- Shore temple is located in Mahabalipuram.Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2**
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
2. Exercise 'Dharma Guardian' is a military exercise between India and which of the following countries?
 - (a) Maldives
 - (b) Mongolia
 - (c) Japan**
 - (d) Philippines
3. Recently in news, LOTUS-HR is a programmed for
 - (a) Malnutrition Eradication
 - (b) Sewage Treatment**
 - (c) Chemical Waste Treatment
 - (d) Air Pollution Prevention
4. A mobile app, 'mHariyali' for 'Environment Protection in Government Colonies', recently launched by which ministry?
 - (a) Ministry of Labour and Employment
 - (b) Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
 - (c) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
 - (d) Ministry for Housing & Urban Affairs**
5. With reference to World Standards Day, consider the following statements:
 1. It is an international day celebrated internationally each year on 14 October.
 2. This year theme is "Video Standards create a global stage".Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2**
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
6. With reference to the 2019 Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, consider the following statements:
 1. This year's prize awarded jointly to Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer.
 2. They were awarded for the use of Randomised Control Trials (RCTs) to alleviate global poverty.Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2**
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2