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Important Facts for Prelims (21st January 2019)

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Indian Ocean Humpback Dolphin

A pod of Humpback Dolphins was spotted near the Bandra-Worli sea link in Mumbai.

Habitat

- The Indian Ocean Humpback Dolphin occurs **within the Indian Ocean from South Africa to India.**
- These dolphins usually **live in shallow, coastal waters.**
- The habitat preference of the dolphins for shallow waters places them in some of the **world's most intensively utilized, fished, shipped, modified and polluted waters.**

Conservation Status

- The **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** categorizes the Indian Ocean Humpback Dolphin as **Endangered.**
- In India, Dolphins are endangered cetacean species, protected under **Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.**
- Indian Humpback Dolphin is listed in **Appendix I of The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).**

Super Blood Wolf Moon

- The Super Blood Wolf Moon, a total Lunar Eclipse, was visible in many parts of the world on 20-21 January 2019.
- It was visible in North America, Central America, and South America. But the total lunar eclipse was not visible in India.
- **Super Blood Wolf Moon is a lunar eclipse that will last 62 minutes.** The **moon will appear to be red in color** as a result of sunlight scattered and refracted around Earth.

- This super blood moon is called as Super Blood Wolf Moon because in many cultures the first full moon of the year is named as Wolf Moon.

Related Terms

- **Lunar Eclipse:** A lunar eclipse occurs whenever the moon passes through Earth's shadow, also known as its umbra.
- **Super Moon:** Super Moon occurs when the full moon is at the closest point of its orbit to the Earth, which is also called the perigee. The moon appears brighter and bigger than the usual full moon.
- **Blood Moon:** The moon turns into red color during the height of the eclipse as some light reach it even though the moon is in the shadow of the Earth. Fine particles in the atmosphere like dust scatter the blue component of the solar spectrum.
- **Blue Moon:** When two full moons appear in the same calendar month, the second is termed a "blue moon".

RailWire

- RailWire WiFi at 746 railway stations across the country has emerged as **one of the world's largest and fastest public WiFi networks.**
- Within a month Rail Wire has around 2.6 crores login's and over 9,400 TeraBytes (TB) data consumption.
- Free WiFi services to commuters are being provided under 'RailWire', **RailTel's retail Broadband initiative.**
- **RailTel is a 'Mini Ratna', a central public sector undertaking (PSU) under the Ministry of Railways.**
- RailTel has started providing WiFi at rural railway stations, which are small stations catering to rural populations that do not have access to state-of-the-art telecom infrastructure.
- RailTel is also playing a major role in developing Telecom Networks of national interests like National Knowledge Network, National Optical Fiber Network etc.
- WiFi has been provided to railway stations either through the **Universal Service Obligatory Fund (USOF)** of the Union Government or through railway stations' own or other funding.

Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)

- USOF was envisaged in the **new telecom policy - 1999** (NTP'99).
- NTP provided that the resources for meeting the Universal Service Obligation (USO) would be raised through a 'Universal Access Levy (UAL)', which would be a percentage of the revenue earned by the telecom operators.
- USOF was given statutory status by the **Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Act, 2003.**
- The USOF has to be utilized exclusively for meeting the Universal Service Obligation.

- **Universal Service Obligation is defined as access to telegraph services to people in rural and remote areas at an affordable and reasonable price.**

Ladakh's Dard Aryan Tribes

- Dard Aryan tribe of Ladakh has requested the **central government to intervene to protect their culture and legacy.**
- 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.**
- The 'Dard' is derived from a Sanskrit word, 'Daradas', which refers to people who live on hillsides.
- Article 46 of the constitution of India the State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

Pulicat Lake

- A three-day Flamingo Festival has begun at Pulicat lake.
- It is the **second largest brackish water ecosystem in the country after the Chilika lake in Odisha.**
- The arrival of birds, which usually starts in the month of September, was delayed this year till December because of 47% deficit rainfall in the wake of climate change.
- **It is located on the border of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu with over 96% of it in Andhra Pradesh and 4% in Tamil Nadu.**