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Important Facts for Prelims (25th September 2018)

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Tipeshwar Wildlife Sanctuary

- Tipeshwar Wildlife Sanctuary is located in Yavatmal district of Maharashtra
- It is fast emerging as a prime tiger conservation and tiger tourism haven despite the disadvantage of being much smaller in area.
- The comparatively higher incidence of tiger sightings in the sanctuary has made the place popular among wildlife enthusiasts.

International Day of Sign Languages

- Following the declaration by the United Nations (UN), International Day of Sign Languages is celebrated annually across the world on the 23rd September as part of the International Week of the Deaf. The theme of International Day of Sign Languages is "With Sign Language, Everyone is Included".
- In India International Day of Sign Languages was celebrated by Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC) under Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- Sign languages are fully fledged natural languages, structurally distinct from the spoken languages. There is also an international sign language, which is used by deaf people in international meetings and informally when travelling and socializing.
- The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognizes and promotes the use of sign languages. It makes clear that sign languages are equal in status to spoken languages and obligates states parties to facilitate the learning of sign language and promote the linguistic identity of the deaf community.
- Sign languages are complex grammatical languages just like the spoken ones. They have their own grammar and vocabulary. No one form of sign language is universal. Different sign languages are used in different countries or regions. For example, British Sign Language (BSL) is a different language from ASL, and Americans who know ASL may not understand BSL.

World Federation of the Deaf

- The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) is an international non-profit and non-governmental organisation of deaf associations from 133 countries.
- In addition to this, its membership includes Associate Members, International Members and Individual Members as well as Youth Members. It's legal seat is in Helsinki, Finland where the WFD Secretariat operates.
- The WFD has a consultative status in the United Nations and is a founding member of the International Disability Alliance (IDA).
- It promotes the human rights of deaf people in accordance with the principles and objectives of the United Nations Charter, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and other Human Rights Treaties.

NASA's MAVEN spacecraft

- NASA's Mars Atmosphere and Volatile Evolution mission (MAVEN) spacecraft has beamed back a selfie to mark its four years orbiting Mars and studying the upper atmosphere of the red planet.
- Launched in Nov. 2013, the mission will explore the Red Planet's upper atmosphere, ionosphere and interactions with the sun and solar wind.
- Scientists will use MAVEN data to determine the role that loss of volatiles from the Mars atmosphere to space has played through time, giving insight into the history of Mars' atmosphere and climate, liquid water, and planetary habitability.
- Mars was a potentially habitable planet billions of years ago, with a thick atmosphere and large amounts of liquid water flowing across its surface. But then something happened, and the Red Planet transitioned to the cold and dry world we know today, with an atmosphere just 1 percent as dense as that of Earth. Scientists want to know what happened to the water and where the planet's thick atmosphere went.
- MAVEN is designed to peer into the Martian past in an attempt to piece together how the ancient Red Planet changed from a wet world into the dry desert.
- The MAVEN mission will study the nature of the red planet's upper atmosphere, how solar activity contributes to atmospheric loss, and the role that escape of gas from the atmosphere to space has played through time.
- During its time at Mars, the spacecraft has acquired compelling evidence that the loss of atmosphere to space has been a major driver of climate change on Mars.
- MAVEN has demonstrated that the majority of the carbon dioxide (CO₂) on the planet has been lost to space and that there is not enough left to terraform (transform so that it can support human life) the planet by warming it, even if the CO₂ could be released and put back into the atmosphere.

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- Recently a National Orientation workshop on National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA) was organized by Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.
 - The focus of the workshop was to encourage all State Legislatures to move towards e-Vidhan platform and bring in transparency, accountability and responsiveness in their conduct of business, through the use of technology.
 - e-Vidhan is a Mission Mode Project to digitize and make the functioning of State Legislatures paperless.
 - This is part of Digital India programme and Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, being the Nodal Ministry for this project, desires to roll out e-Vidhan covering all 40 Houses including two Houses of Parliament and thereby putting all them on a single platform and proving the theory of 'One Nation One Application'.
 - This journey began with a pilot project executed in Himachal Pradesh with the central assistance which made the Shimla Legislative Assembly the first Assembly in India to go paperless in 2014.

Pakyong Airport

- It is the first airport in Sikkim.
- Pakyong is India's 100th operational airport.
- Pakyong airport is part of the UDAN scheme.
- It is located at an altitude of 4500 ft from sea level.
- It is Airport Authority of India's first greenfield airport.

Significance of Airport

- **Strategic Significance:** The airport is located 60 km from the Indo-China border. Hence, it is strategically important. The Indian Air Force (IAF) can also use the airport for landing and taking off of its aircraft.
- **Economic Development of North East:** The airport will also give boost connectivity of Sikkim with rest of India. It will be a huge booster for the tourism sector in Sikkim. With the new airport, it will be easier for tourists to reach Sikkim.