



Important Facts For Prelims (15th April 2019)

Blockchain Technology

- The National Payments Corporation of India ([NPCI](#)) is considering using highly scalable [blockchain](#) solution to further strengthen digital payments, which have seen an exponential growth in recent times.
 - A **blockchain is a list of records**, linked using cryptography. Each block contains a cryptographic hash of the previous block, a timestamp, and transaction data.
 - At the basic level, a blockchain is **an open, distributed ledger that can record transactions between two parties efficiently** and in a verifiable manner.
 - **Data security** is there as data stored in a block cannot be changed without altering subsequent blocks.
 - As per a recent report of global consultancy firm PwC, India would be one of the world's blockchain leaders by 2023.
- **NPCI**, an umbrella organisation for operating retail payments and settlement systems in India, is an initiative of [Reserve Bank of India \(RBI\)](#) and **Indian Banks' Association (IBA)** under the provisions of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, for creating a robust Payment & Settlement Infrastructure in India.
 - **The Indian Banks' Association (IBA) was formed on 26th September, 1946 with 22 members.** As on April, 2018 the total Membership of the Association is 249. It's vision is to work proactively for the growth of a healthy, professional and forward-looking banking and financial services industry, in a manner consistent with public good.

Yangtze Giant Softshell Turtle

- The **last female** of rare **Yangtze Giant Softshell** turtles **died in China**.
- This was one of **four Yangtze giant softshell turtles** known to be remaining in the world. The same zoo also houses a male Yangtze giant softshell turtle. The other two live in Vietnam, but their genders are unknown.
- The species is one of the most endangered turtle in the world.
 - Loss of habitat and poaching are among the reasons for the decline of the species' population

Higher School Enrolment Rate of Girls: UNFPA

- According to the [State of World Population 2019](#) report of the **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**, the **enrolment rate of girls is higher** than that of boys in Indian schools at **both primary and secondary levels**.
- Worldwide, the **rate of enrolment of girls is lower than that of boys at primary school, and equal at secondary level**.
- In India, 98% of primary school-age girls were actually enrolled, as opposed to 97% boys, according to figures adjusted for 2009-18.
 - Worldwide, this compares with 90% female enrolment and 92% male enrolment, so that India's gender parity index is 1.01 to the world's 0.98.
- At secondary school level, India's female and male enrolment rates are **lower than the worldwide 66% for both genders**.

- However, **India's female enrolment (62%)** is once again higher than **male enrolment (61%)**, giving it a gender parity index **(1.01) that is higher than the worldwide index of 1.0.**

World's Largest Plane

- World's largest airplane **built by the US-based Stratolaunch Systems** has made its **first test flight** in the Mojave Desert in California.
- The plane, made of **carbon composites**, is **named as Roc.**
- It was financed by **Paul Allen**, who co-founded Microsoft with Bill Gates in 1975.
- The plane can be **used to launch satellites.**

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