

**13 MAY 2019**

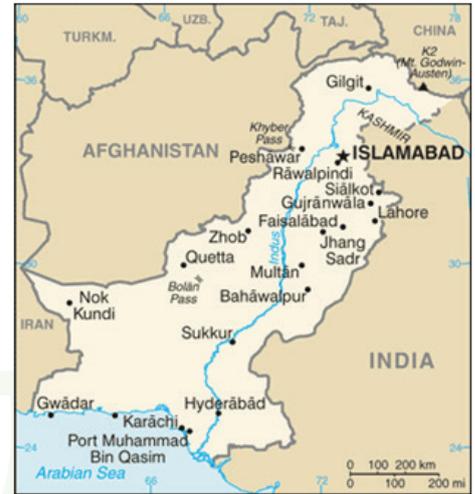
**GWADAR HOTEL ATTACK TOLL RISES TO 5**

**In News:**

Prime Minister Imran Khan called the attack an act of terrorism and praised the “initial response by security guards and security forces” for preventing greater loss of life.

**In Brief:**

1. An insurgent attack at a luxury hotel on Pakistan’s southwestern coast killed five people, including a special forces soldier, a hotel security guard and three staff members, the country’s military said on Sunday after concluding a painstaking operation to clear the hotel and defuse explosive devices left behind by the attackers.
2. The attackers failed to take any guests hostage, but the hotel staff and guard were killed as the insurgents stormed the building. The military said six people, including two soldiers, were also wounded.
3. A Baluch separatist group, the Baluch Liberation Army, claimed responsibility Saturday for the attack, releasing photos of the four insurgents who it said took part. Initially, senior security officials had said four assailants had been killed. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to speak to the media.
4. The Baluch Liberation Army carried out a dozen attacks last year against Chinese-linked projects. In November, the group attacked a Chinese consulate in the major southern city of Karachi, triggering a shootout that killed two police officers, two civilians and all three insurgents.



Beijing is financing tens of billions of dollars’ worth of megaprojects in Pakistan and is currently helping build a modern port in Gwadar, 600 kms (373 miles) west of Karachi. The Pearl Continental hotel is located near the port.

**Background:**

Gwadar lies in the southwestern province of Baluchistan, the scene of a low-level insurgency by separatists who demand a greater share of the province’s natural gas and mineral resources. Pakistan says it has quelled the insurgency, but violence has continued. Residents of Baluchistan and other areas accuse the central government of favouring the country’s Punjab province, home to some 60 percent of the country’s 200 million people and most of the political elite.

The attack on the Pearl Continental came weeks after Islamabad claimed that a group of militants crossed the border from neighbouring Iran and killed 14 security officials when they were on their way to Gwadar in buses.

**PARASITIC ORCHID IN ASSAM**

**In news:**

An Assam forest officer had discovered one of the smallest orchids in terms of size and duration of bloom to be recorded botanically in India.



**In brief:**

- The orchid, discovered earlier in Japan, Taiwan, and Laos, was found to have a maximum height of 40 cm and a blossoming period of five-six days.

**NOTE**



- It is a mycoheterotroph, one of two types of parasitic plants that have abandoned photosynthesis.
- It derives its energy and nutrients from fungus.
- The herbal value of this orchid that flowers and fruits from July to September is yet to be ascertained.
- Myco-heterotrophy is a symbiotic relationship between certain kinds of plants and fungi, in which the plant gets all or part of its food from parasitism upon fungi rather than from photosynthesis.

## GENOME SEQUENCING OF ASIATIC LION

### In news:

The entire genome of Asiatic lion has been sequenced by scientists from CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad. It will help us to better understand the evolution of Asiatic lions and also make possible comparative analysis with other big cats

### About Asiatic Lion:

- Once prowled from the Middle East to India, its population is now restricted to Gir forests.
- IUCN status: endangered
- Only 523 animals are present now.
- 24 Asiatic lions have died due to canine distemper virus (CDV)
- In April 2013, the Supreme Court asked the Union government to translocate some lions to Kuno-Palpur Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh as they were vulnerable to extinction from unpredictable events.



## PRELIMS BITS

## RAPID ACTION FORCE

### Why in news?

- It is a specialized wing of the Indian CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force) to deal with riot and crowd control situations.
- It was raised in 1991 with its headquarters in New Delhi.
- It is under the administrative control of Ministry of Home Affairs.
- It is deployed by the orders of Ministry of Home Affairs on specific demands from state governments for a short duration.
- It played a key role in suppressing the Mumbai Terror Attacks (2008) and Indian Parliament attack (2001).



### NOTE

