

18 MAY 2019

KERALA'S MASALA BONDS LISTED AT LSE

In news

- Kerala has turned out to be the first sub-sovereign entity in the country to access the international market by listing masala bonds at the London Stock Exchange

In brief

- The resources earned through the bonds would be channelised for funding a clutch of infrastructure development projects cleared by the KIIFB director board.
- Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) had decided to garner Rs.3,500 crore from the international market in the initial phase.
- It plans to list the bonds at the Singapore stock exchange too.

Masala Bond

- Masala bonds are bonds issued outside India but denominated in Indian Rupees, rather than the local currency.
- Masala is an Indian word and it means spices.
- The term was used by the International Finance Corporation to evoke the culture and cuisine of India.

WHAT ARE MASALA BONDS?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Masala Bonds are named after Indian spices and refer to financial instrument via which Indian firms can raise money from global markets in rupees 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ These are similar to Dim Sum bonds that are issued in Chinese currency 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ NHAi is learnt to have approached SBI Caps to be the arranger for raising money through bonds 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ NHAi needs to raise about Rs 50,000 crore this year from the market to fund projects 	

SPACE-X "STARLINK" PROJECT

In news

- SpaceX postponed a launch of 60 satellites into low-Earth orbit that was scheduled for last night, possibly until next week, citing a need for software updates.

In brief

- The SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket launch from Cape Canaveral was to be the first of potentially thousands in its Starlink project to beam broadband internet across the planet.
- The launch will make it an early forerunner, along with rival OneWeb, a startup, but well ahead of Amazon's Project Kuiper, the brainchild of Musk's space rival Jeff Bezos.



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Starlink Project

- A satellite based broadband network called Starlink, with the objective of eventually building a low-cost, satellite based broadband network capable of delivering internet access to the entire globe.
- SpaceX also plans to sell satellites that use a satellite bus that may be used for military, scientific or exploratory purposes

BUKKAPATNA DECLARED AS CHINKARA SANCTUARY

In news:

- The Karnataka government has notified Bukkapatna as Chinkara(Indian gazelles) sanctuary.
- It is only the second protected habitat for the rare antelope in the state after Yedehalli in Bagalkot district.
- It is spread over an area of 148 sq km.

About Chinkara:

- IUCN status: Least Concern
- It is native to Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India
- They live in arid plains and hills, deserts, dry scrub and light forests.
- They can go without water for long periods and can get sufficient fluids from plants and dew.



ISRO PLANS FOR MEGA MISSIONS IN NEXT 10 YEARS

In news:

- ISRO is planning to accomplish six other mega missions over the next 10 years, apart from Chandrayaan-2.
- They are XPoSat, Aditya-L1 mission, Mangalyaan-2, Venus mission, Lunar Polar Exploration and Exoworlds

About Chandrayaan 2:

- It would have three modules namely Orbiter, Lander named Vikram and Rover named Pragyan, all developed by India.
- The mission would land on the southern pole of the moon, which has not

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been explored much before by any of the countries.

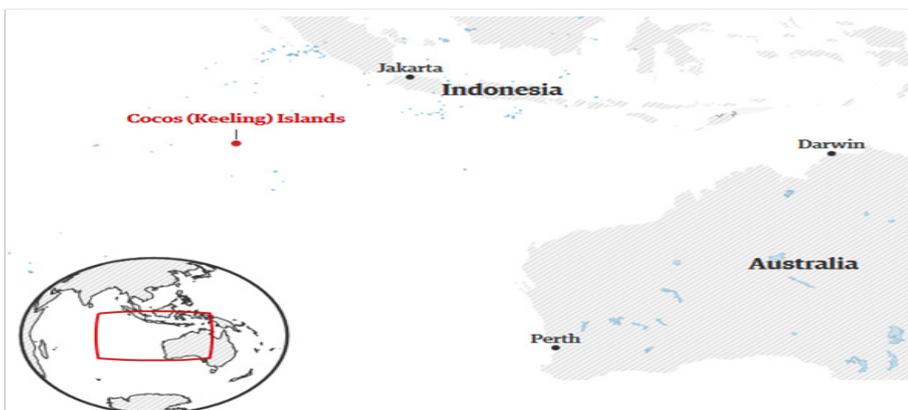
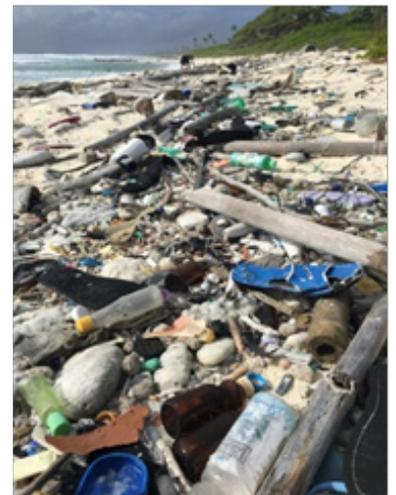
- Chandryaan 2 would attempt a soft landing the lunar surface.
- Payload: 3290 kg.
- It is planned to be launched using GSLV MK III.
- The payloads will collect scientific information on lunar topography, mineralogy, elemental abundance, lunar exosphere and signatures of hydroxyl and water-ice.

About Aditya-L1:

- The Aditya-1 mission (400 kg) was planned to be placed at Lagrangian point 1 (L1), which is 1.5 million km from the Earth in 2021.
- The satellite carries Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC) along with additional 6 payloads.
- Estimated to be launched during 2019–20 by PSLV-XL rocket.
- Aditya-1 was meant to observe only the solar corona.

COCOS ISLANDS DROWNING IN PLASTIC

- A new survey on plastic pollution reveals that Australia’s Cocos (Keeling) Islands, and the territory’s beaches are littered with an estimated 414 million pieces of plastic debris.
- It is among the most remote places on Earth, in the Indian Ocean.
- The study found the quantity of debris buried up to 10cm beneath the beach was 26 times greater than the amount visible.



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NATIONAL e-VIDHAN APPLICATION (NeVA PROJECT)

Why in news?

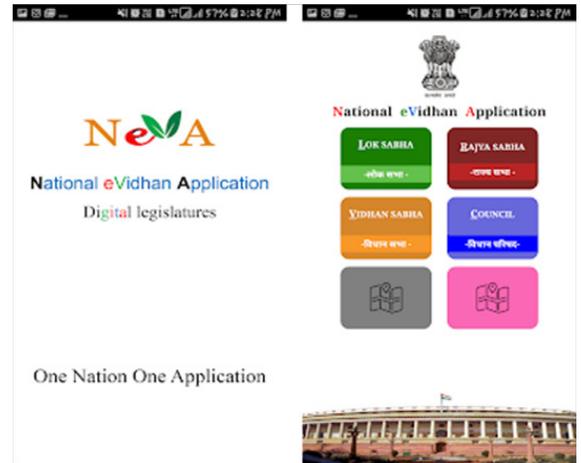
- Recently the Kerala government decided to digitalize its State legislature's records under e-vidhan project.

In brief

- Himachal Pradesh is already the first Digital Legislature of the country.

About e-Vidhan project:

- It is a mission mode project under Digital India Programme.
- The Ministry of Parliamentary affairs is the nodal ministry for its implementation.
- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) provides technical support to this programme through its cloud technology MeghRaj.
- It is a centrally sponsored scheme with the funding ratio of 60:40; 90:10 (North East and Hilly States) from the Central and State governments respectively.
- The project aims to bring the all state legislatures under one platform so that a massive data deposit can be created.
- Automation of entire law-making process, tracking of decisions and documents, sharing of information are some of the benefits of this project.



PRELIMS BITS

CHRISTCHURCH CALL TO ACTION

- It is a global initiative to combat online extremism and make internet a safe and secure place.
- It is launched jointly by the Governments of France and New Zealand.
- A total of 18 countries including European Union (EU) supported the initiative along representatives of online giants like Facebook, Google, YouTube, Microsoft, Amazon and Twitter.
- India is also a major participant of this initiative however USA declined to join this initiative.
- The signatory countries include Australia, New Zealand, India, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, France Germany, United Kingdom, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Spain, European Commission, Senegal and Canada.



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