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SOUTH ASIA ECONOMIC FOCUS

Why in news?
✓ World Bank cuts India’s growth projection to 6%

South Asia Economic Focus:
✓ It is a biannual economic update presenting recent economic developments and a near-term economic outlook for South Asia by World Bank.
✓ It includes a Focus section presenting more in-depth analysis of an economic topic of relevance for stability, growth, and prosperity in the region.
✓ It also gives country briefs covering Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

More about the report:
✓ It finds that Bangladesh and Nepal are growing faster than India.
✓ The projected growth of India in 2019 according to the report is 6%.
✓ South Asia remains the fastest growing region in the world.
✓ It highlights the export potential of the area.

Important reports and indexes published by World Bank:
• Ease of doing business
• World development report
INTERPOL AND NOTICES

Why in news?

✓ Red Notices against Nirav Modi’s brothers vanish from Interpol site.

Interpol:

✓ INTERPOL is global police co-operation agency and a non-governmental Organization (NGO).
✓ Its work focuses on public safety and battling terrorism, crimes against humanity, genocide, war crimes, environmental crime etc.
✓ It was established as the International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC)
✓ Its headquarters is located at Lyon, France.
✓ It is the 2nd-largest international organization after the United Nations in terms of international representation with 190 member countries

Notices issued by Interpol:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notice</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red Notice</td>
<td>To seek the location and arrest of wanted persons with a view of extradition or similar lawful action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow Notice</td>
<td>To help locate missing persons, often minors, or to help identify persons who are unable to identify themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange Notice</td>
<td>To warn of an event, a person, an object or a process representing a serious and imminent threat to public safety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Notice</td>
<td>To provide warnings and intelligence about persons who have committed criminal offences and are likely to repeat these crimes in other countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Notice</td>
<td>To collect additional information about a person’s identity, location or activities in relation to a crime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple Notice</td>
<td>To seek or provide information on modus operandi, objects, devices and concealment methods used by criminals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Black Notice
- To seek information on unidentified bodies.
- Interpol-UN security Council Special Notice
- Issued for groups and individuals who are the targets of UN Security Council Sanctions committee.

‘FOREIGN’ PLASTIC INVADES GREAT NICOBAR ISLAND

Why in news?
A survey of five beaches in the islands recorded the presence of plastic bottles.

About the news:
- The pristine beaches of the Great Nicobar Island, India’s southernmost territory are under threat from plastic.
- “Major portion of the litter (40.5%) was of Malaysian origin.
- It was followed by Indonesia (23.9%) and Thailand (16.3%).
- The litter of Indian origin only amounted to 2.2%

Biggest threat:
- Plastic pollution has emerged as one of the severest threats to ocean ecosystems and its concentration has reached 5,800,000 pieces per square kilometre.
- Plastic represents 83% of the marine litter found.
- The remaining 17% is mainly textiles, paper, metal and wood.

Note: The Great Nicobar Island is home to one of the most primitive tribes of India — the Shompens.

GOLD EXCHANGE TRADED FUND

Why in news?
- Holdings in gold-backed exchange traded funds and similar products hit an all-time high, worries about the escalating US-China trade war and uncertainty over monetary policy led to increased demand for the precious metal.

What is gold ETF?
- A gold exchange traded fund (Gold ETF) is a passive investment fund that aims to track the price of physical gold.
- Each unit of gold ETF represents one gram of gold as the fund invests in physical gold and investors get the units in dematerialized form.
- Since it’s an ETF, the units are listed on stock exchanges and investors can buy or sell units on the exchange platform like any equity instrument.
- Simply put gold ETF is like buying gold in an electronic form.
- While selling a gold ETF unit, an investor will not get physical gold but the cash equivalent.

Who will buy gold ETFs?
- Any investor who wants to hold gold for purely investment purposes can look at gold ETFs.
- For those who want to accumulate physical gold, such ETFs are not the right instrument.
What are the benefits?

- First, **one gets to invest in gold without worrying about factors such as purity of gold, transparency of pricing, making charges, lockers and theft**, among other things.
- Second, **one can purchase as little as one unit** — representing one gram — at a time and still have the flexibility of buying more units depending on liquidity and prevailing gold prices.
- Since it’s an ETF, it’s a **liquid investment** and can be sold at any time on the exchanges.
- It also offers many benefits in terms of tax, as income earned is treated as long term capital gain and there is no other levy such as wealth tax.

**GALATHEA NATIONAL PARK AND CAMPBELL BAY NATIONAL PARK**

- Located in the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, India.
- It is located on the island of Great Nicobar in the Nicobar Islands.
- Galathea National Park was established in the year of 1992.

**RASHTRIYA SANSKRITI MAHOTSAV**

- Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav under the Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat initiative will be celebrated in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh.

**PROJECT BEEHIVE**

- It is the project launched by Indian Army’s Corps of Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME).
- It is a collaborated project of Army with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
- It meant for automation of the entire Corps to enable real-time monitoring and response of its 2,000 workshops across the country.

**JEEVANKAUSHAL - CURRICULUM FOR LIFE SKILLS**

- It is designed by University Grants Commission (UGC)
- The program has been framed for Undergraduate courses across the country.
- The curriculum is designed to impart and strengthen the knowledge, skills and dispositions believed to be the best requisites of the current industry and thereby empower the talent.

**PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION**

1. Which are the countries bordering red sea?
   1. Saudi Arabia
   2. Yemen
   3. Egypt
   4. Syria
   5. Eritrea
   6. Oman
   (a) 1,2,3&5 only  (b) 2,3,4&5 only  
   (c) 1,4&6 only  (d) All of the above