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**GS-1**

**Kailash Mansoravar :**

**Why in News?**

Proposal for 'Sacred Mountain Landscape and Heritage Routes' (Indian side of Kailash Mansoravar) has been included in Tentative List of World Heritage Sites of India as a Mixed site in April, 2019.

**Details:**

- As per UNESCO's Operational Guidelines 2017, a site must be on tentative list of UNESCO at least for a period of one year before proposing it for final nomination.
- Once the nomination dossier is completed, it is sent to the World Heritage Centre (WHC) by the stipulated deadline of 01 February of a calendar year.
- In furtherance an expert of the respective field in cultural & natural fields is deputed for the evaluation of site by WHC.
- Accordingly, decision of permanent inclusion of any site in World Heritage list is taken by the members of the World heritage committee.

**About World Heritage Site:**

- A **World Heritage Site** is a landmark or area which is selected by the [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization](#) (UNESCO) as having cultural, historical, scientific or other form of significance, and is legally protected by international treaties.
- The sites are judged important to the collective interests of humanity.
- To be selected, a World Heritage Site must be an already classified landmark, unique in some respect as a geographically and historically identifiable place having special cultural or physical significance (such as an ancient ruin or historical structure, building, city, complex, desert, forest, island, lake, monument, mountain, or wilderness area).
- It may signify a remarkable accomplishment of humanity, and serve as evidence of our intellectual history on the plane

**WHS in India:**

- There are 37 [World Heritage Sites](#) located in [India](#).



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- These include 29 cultural sites, seven natural sites and one mixed site.
- India has the sixth largest number of sites in the world. [

**A new geological epoch — the Anthropocene**

**Context:**

On May 21, a 34-member panel of the Anthropocene Working Group (AWG) voted 29-4 in favour of designating a new geological epoch — the Anthropocene.

The vote signals the end of the Holocene Epoch, which began 11,700 years ago.

**Background:**

- According to *Nature*, the panel plans to submit a formal proposal for the new epoch by 2021 to the International Commission on Stratigraphy, which oversees the official geologic time chart.
- That nearly 90% voted in favour of a naming the new epoch to reflect how the Earth has been shaped by human activity, is not surprising, as an informal vote had already conducted three years ago in Cape Town at the 2016 International Geological Congress.
- The term 'Anthropocene' was coined in 2000 by Nobel Laureate Paul Crutzen and Eugene Stoermer to denote the present geological time interval in which human activity has profoundly altered many conditions and processes on Earth.

**Phenomenon Associated:**

According to the AWG, the phenomena associated with the Anthropocene include :

- an order-of-magnitude increase in erosion and sediment transport associated with urbanisation and agriculture,
- marked and abrupt anthropogenic perturbations of the cycles of elements such as carbon, environmental changes generated by these perturbations, including global warming, sea-level rise, and ocean acidification,



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- rapid changes in the biosphere and finally proliferation and global dispersion of many new 'minerals' and 'rocks' including concrete, fly ash and plastics, and the myriad 'technofossils' produced from these and other materials.

**Golden Spike:**

- The focus is now on identifying a definitive geologic marker or golden spike (technically called Global boundary Stratotype Section and Point) to signal the beginning of the Anthropocene Epoch.
- The golden spike must be present globally and should be a part of deposits for geological record.
- Many in the AWG believe that artificial radionuclides spread across the world by atomic bomb tests from the early 1950s would serve as the golden spike.
- The radionuclides are present almost everywhere — from marine sediments to ice layers and even stalagmites and stalactites.

**What lies Ahead?**

- Once a formal proposal is made by the AWG, it will be considered by several more groups of the International Commission on Stratigraphy.
- The final ratification will be made by the executive committee of the International Union of Geological Sciences.

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**Scheme for Trans-disciplinary Research for India's Developing Economy (STRIDE)**

**Why in News?**

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has approved a new scheme - 'Scheme for Trans-disciplinary Research for India's Developing Economy' (STRIDE).



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**About the Scheme:**

- Broadly, STRIDE will provide support to research projects that are socially relevant, locally need-based, nationally important and globally significant.
- STRIDE shall support research capacity building as well as basic, applied and transformational action research that can contribute to national priorities with focus on inclusive human development.
- STRIDE shall support creation, development and integration of new ideas, concepts and practices for public good and strengthening civil society.

**Benefits Expected:**

- STRIDE scheme will strengthen research culture and innovation in colleges and Universities and help students and faculty to contribute towards India's developing economy with help of collaborative research.
- Focus on Humanities and Human Sciences will boost quality research on Indian languages and knowledge systems.

**STRIDE Objectives:**

1. To identify young talent, strengthen research culture, build capacity, promote innovation and support trans-disciplinary research for India's developing economy and national development.
2. To fund multi institutional network high-impact research projects in humanities and human sciences.

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**NPA accounts**

**What is It?**

In terms of Reserve Bank of India (RBI), an asset becomes non-performing when it ceases to generate income for the bank.

As per the circular, a non-performing asset (NPA) is a loan or an advance where—

- a. in respect of a term loan, interest and/or instalments of the principal remain overdue for a period of more than 90 days;



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- b. in respect of an Overdraft/Cash Credit, the account remains 'out of order';
- c. in respect of bills purchased and discounted, the bill remains overdue for a period of more than 90 days;
- d. in respect of agricultural loans, the instalment of principal or interest thereon remains overdue for—

- (i) two crop seasons for short-duration crops, and
- (ii) for one crop season for long-duration crops.

**Steps taken to expedite and enable resolution of NPAs and recovery from NPA accounts, include, inter-alia, the following:**

(1) **The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC)** has been enacted, which has provided for taking over the management of the affairs of the corporate debtor at the outset of the corporate insolvency resolution process.

(2) **Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act** has been amended to make it more effective, with provision for three months' imprisonment in case the borrower does not provide asset details and for the lender to get possession of mortgaged property within 30 days.

(3) Suits for recovery of dues are also filed by banks before **Debts Recovery Tribunals**. Six new Debts Recovery Tribunals have been established to expedite recovery.

(4) Under the PSB Reforms Agenda, PSBs have created **Stressed Asset Management Verticals** to focus attention on recovery, segregated monitoring from sanctioning roles in high-value loans, and entrusted monitoring of loan accounts of above Rs. 250 crore to specialised monitoring agencies for clean and effective monitoring, and created online end-to-end



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One-Time Settlement platforms for timely and better realisation.

Enabled by the above steps, Scheduled Commercial Banks have recovered Rs. 4,51,857 crore over the last four financial years, including record recovery of Rs. 1,50,789 crore during 2018-19.

### **National Common Mobility Card:**

#### **Why in News?**

The National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) has been launched in India with the tagline of 'One Nation One Card'.

The High level Committee on Deepening of Digital Payments (CDDP) under chairmanship of Shri Nandan Nilekani has, inter-alia, also recommended that NCMC cards be usable at all transit locations.

All new metro, and transit payments should be made interoperable through NCMC.

#### **About the Card:**

- The NCMC card has 2 instruments on it – a regular debit card which can be used at an ATM, and a local wallet (stored value account), which can be used for contactless payments, without the need to go back to the server or additional authentication.
- It is envisioned that a single card will be usable for all local travel needs across the country.  
National Common Mobility Card is an open loop card, which can be used for all local travel needs in the country.
- This is aimed at low value payments for various segments e.g. Transit, Smart cities, Toll, Parking and other low value merchant payments, in addition to the normal day to day retail payments.
- The vision behind the introduction of this card is to have interoperability, based on open standards.



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MoHUA has further informed that there is provision of storing money on the card, which can be used for contactless payments across various use cases like toll transit, parking etc.

**Whaling resume in Japan:**

**Context:**

Japan began its first commercial whale hunts in more than three decades on Monday, brushing aside outrage over its resumption of a practice that conservationists call cruel and outdated.

**Background:**

- The country's Fisheries Agency said it had set a cap for a total catch of 227 whales through the season until late December.
- The hunts come after Japan's withdrawal from the International Whaling Commission, a move slammed by anti-whaling activists but welcomed by Japanese whaling communities.
- Whaling has long proved a diplomatic flashpoint for Tokyo, which says the practice is a Japanese tradition that should not be subject to international interference.

**About IWC:**

- The **International Whaling Commission (IWC)** is an international body set up by the terms of the [International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling \(ICRW\)](#), which was signed in [Washington, D.C.](#), United States, on December 2, 1946 to "provide for the proper conservation of whale stocks and thus make possible the orderly development of the whaling industry".

**IWC on Whaling:**

- In 1982 the IWC adopted a [moratorium](#) on commercial [whaling](#).



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- Currently, [Japan](#), [Canada](#), and a number of other nations oppose this moratorium.
- The IWC allows non-zero whaling quotas for [aboriginal](#) subsistence and also member nations may issue 'Scientific Permits' to their citizens.
- Japan has issued such permits since 1986, Norway and [Iceland](#) whale under objection to the moratorium and issue their own quotas.
- In 1994, the [Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary](#) was created by the IWC.

### **Functions of IWC:**

- The main duty of the IWC is to keep under review and revise as necessary the measures laid down in the Schedule to the Convention which govern the conduct of whaling throughout the world.
- These measures, among other things, provide for the complete protection of certain species; designate specified areas as whale sanctuaries; set limits on the numbers and size of whales which may be taken; prescribe open and closed seasons and areas for whaling; and prohibit the capture of suckling calves and female whales accompanied by calves.
- The compilation of catch reports and other statistical and biological records is also required.

### **Early Diagnosis of Heart Attack:**

#### **Why in News?**

A cardiac biomarker — cardiac troponin I — that is widely used for early diagnosis of acute heart attack can now be detected in about three minutes and even when present at very low concentration. And the detection can be done at bedside.

This has become possible with the development of a microfluidic device by a team of researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Hyderabad.

#### **How does it work?**



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- The heart cells that get damaged during heart attack cause the expression of cardiac muscle proteins such as the biomarker cardiac troponin I, which get released into the blood.
- Detecting the biomarker in the blood serum helps in early diagnosis of heart attack.

**Superior performance**

- Commercially available assays have limitations in terms of both sensitivity and time taken for detection.
- These assays cannot detect when the biomarker is present at concentrations below 0.02 nanogram per ml and take a long time for detection.
- In contrast, the microfluidic device developed by the team from the Department of Biomedical Engineering at IIT Hyderabad can detect the biomarker even when the concentration is as low as 0.005 nanogram per ml.

**Rapid detection**

- The researchers have successfully integrated the microfluidic device with chitosan-coated nickel vanadate nanospheres to enable rapid detection and better sensitivity.

**Bedside device**

- Since the microfluidic device can be made tiny, detection of the biomarker can be made right at bedside..