

## Prelims Bits 09-02-2018

### Falcon Heavy

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- Falcon Heavy is a reusable super heavy-lift launch vehicle designed and manufactured by SpaceX, a private American aerospace manufacturer.

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- Its first test flight carrying a red sports car was successfully launched from florida pad used by NASA.

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- It is the most powerful operational rocket in the world.

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- It can lift about twice the payload at one third of the cost by Delta 4 rocket which was the most powerful rocket till now.

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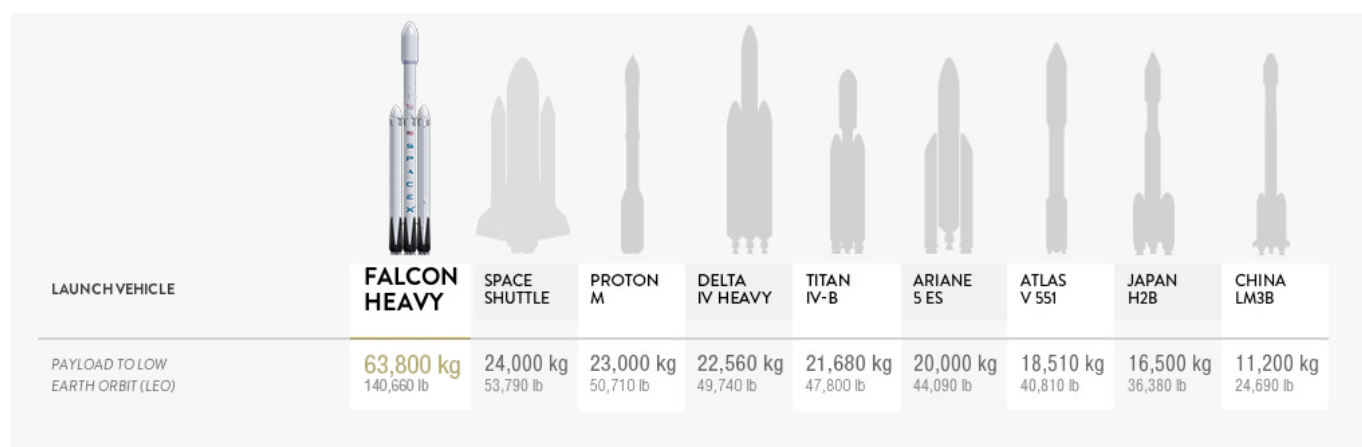
- This lift capacity allows to launch heavier satellites into low Earth orbit, or reach higher geostationary orbits to keep station over the same part of Earth.

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- Its three first-stage boosters are designed to be reusable.

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LAUNCH VEHICLE	FALCON HEAVY	SPACE SHUTTLE	PROTON M	DELTA IV HEAVY	TITAN IV-B	ARIANE 5 ES	ATLAS V 551	JAPAN H2B	CHINA LM3B
PAYLOAD TO LOW EARTH ORBIT (LEO)	63,800 kg 140,660 lb	24,000 kg 53,790 lb	23,000 kg 50,710 lb	22,560 kg 49,740 lb	21,680 kg 47,800 lb	20,000 kg 44,090 lb	18,510 kg 40,810 lb	16,500 kg 36,380 lb	11,200 kg 24,690 lb

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### Galapagos

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- The rising tourist arrival to Galapagos Island puts pressure on the this fragile volcanic archipelago.

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- The Galapagos Islands, part of the Republic of Ecuador, distributed on either side of the Equator in the Pacific Ocean surrounding the centre of the Western Hemisphere.

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- The island inspired Charles Darwin's Theory of evolution and was his field of study.

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- The Islands and their surrounding waters form the Galapagos Province of Ecuador, the Galapagos National Park, and the Galapagos Marine Reserve.

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- UNESCO recognised the islands as a World Heritage Site and as a biosphere reserve

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## **Prime Minister's Research fellow scheme**

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- 'Prime Minister's Research Fellows (PMRF)' scheme aims to improve the quality of research by attracting the best talents across the country.  
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- Under this scheme, the best students who have completed or are in the final year of B.Tech or integrated M.Tech or M.Sc in science and technology streams in the IISc/IITs/NITs/IISERs/IIITs will be offered direct admission in the PhD programme in the IITs/IISc.  
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- The fellowship scheme will be implemented for a period of seven years from 2018-19.  
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- A maximum of 3,000 fellows will be selected over first three-year period, beginning 2018-19.  
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- The students who get shortlisted through the selection process would be offered a fellowship of Rs. 70,000 per month for the first two years, Rs. 75,000 per month for the third year and Rs. 80,000 per month in the fourth and fifth years.  
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- Apart from this, a research grant of Rs.2.00 lakh will be provided to each of the fellows for a period of 5 years to cover their foreign travel expenses for presenting research papers in international conferences and seminars.  
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- It will help in tapping the talent pool of the country for carrying out research indigenously in cutting edge science and technology domains.  
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## **Vizag - Next Scuba Diving Destination**

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- A second shipwreck was found off the coast of Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.  
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- The ship wreck is spotted with critically endangered fish species called Goliath.  
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- A century-old shipwreck was unearthed in the same region a month before.  
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- Some of the other interesting aqua life species spotted were barracuda, the trevally and jack fish and a rich bed of corals like the star feather corals, sand corals and whip corals.  
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- Scuba diving is a mode of underwater diving where the diver uses a self-contained underwater breathing apparatus (scuba) which is completely independent of surface supply, to breathe underwater.

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## **Goliath grouper**

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- It is extremely rare fish species, recently discovered by a team of experienced divers and diving instructors near Vizag.
- It is recognised as a critically endangered species by the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature).
- It is considered to be the keystone species of an ecosystem and is entirely protected from harvest in the U.S.
- It is usually found in tropical and subtropical waters of the Atlantic Ocean.
- It is regionally abundant near Vishakapatnam in the Bay of Bengal region.
- It is found from inshore to about 100 m in reef, mangrove, seagrass, and estuarine habitats.

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## **Prithvi-II**

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- India successfully test-fired its indigenously developed nuclear capable Prithvi-II missile from a test range in Odisha.
- It is surface to surface missile with a strike range of 350 km.
- It is capable of carrying 500-1,000 kilogram of warheads and is thrust by liquid propulsion twin engines.
- The state-of-the-art missile uses advanced inertial guidance system with manoeuvring trajectory to hit its target.

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## **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)**

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  - Amendments were passed by Parliament to the NABARD Act, 1981. Click [here](#) to know more.
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    - These amendments support the government’s push to boost the rural and agricultural sector.
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      - National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) is an apex development financial institution in India, headquartered at Mumbai.
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        - It was established on the recommendations of B.Sivaraman Committee, to implement the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Act 1981.
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          - The 1981 Act was enacted to establish a development bank

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  - 1. to provide and regulate credit
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    - 2. to promote and develop agriculture, small-scale industries, cottage and village industries
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      - 3. to support handicraftsand allied economic activities in rural areas.

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**Source: PIB, The Hindu, Business Standard**

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