Prelim Bits 02-06-2017

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

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- India and Pakistan’s admission as full members to the SCO will be formalised at the SCO’s summit (8–9 June 2017) in Kazakhstan.
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- It is a **Eurasian** political, economic, and military organisation (HQ: Beijing), which was founded in 2001 in Shanghai by the leaders of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and **Uzbekistan.**
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- These countries, except for Uzbekistan, had been members of the **Shanghai Five,** founded in 1996.
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- It is an observer in the General Assembly, the European Union, ASEAN, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.
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- **The Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS),** headquartered in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, is a permanent organ of the SCO which serves to promote cooperation of member states against the three evils of terrorism, separatism and extremism.
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- The Head of RATS is elected to a three-year term. Each member state also sends a permanent representative to RATS.
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Third gravitational wave detection

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- The LIGO detectors in the U.S. have detected yet another merger of two black holes.
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- Named GW170104, this signal marks the third confirmed detection of gravitational waves coming from a binary black hole merger.

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- At LIGO, the detection has revealed not merely a black hole merger, but also the alignment of the spins of the black holes. This can shed light on the way the black holes might have formed.
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- **LIGO:** The Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory is a large-scale physics experiment and observatory with the mission to **directly observe gravitational waves of cosmic origin.**
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- These waves were first predicted by Einstein's general theory of relativity in 1916.
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- Their existence was indirectly confirmed when observations of the binary pulsar PSR 1913+16 in 1974. The Nobel Prize in Physics 1993 was awarded to Hulse and Taylor for this discovery.
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- Two large observatories were built in the United States with the aim of detecting gravitational waves by **laser interferometry.**
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- **LIGO-India,** or INDIGO, is a planned collaborative project between the LIGO Laboratory and the **Indian Initiative in Gravitational-wave Observations (IndIGO)** to create a world-class gravitational-wave detector in India. A site in the Hingoli district (Maharashtra) has been selected.
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INAM-Pro +

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- The Minister of Road Transport & Highways and Shipping launched INAM-Pro +.
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- It is an upgraded version of INAM-Pro, **the web portal** designed by National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd (NHIDCL) two years back as a common platform to bring cement buyers and sellers together.
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- This reduced the time and effort in preparation of proposals and bid submissions, and helped increase efficiency in procurement of construction materials as one could place orders, obtain price quotes and track them in swift manner on this portal.
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Indra-2017

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- The eighth edition of **India-Russia 'Indra' exercise** between the armies of the two strategic partners had taken place in mountainous Vladivostok in Russia.
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- The main focus of the joint exercise was **counter-terrorism**.
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- The Indian Army and the Indian Navy has been having the military exercise 'Indra' with Russia separately. The Indian Air Force had participated in an exercise 'AviaIndra' with Russian air force in 2014.
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- **This year will see the first ever Tri-services exercise INDRA–2017.**
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