Prelim Bits 03-07-2018

Hubble Space Telescope

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- NASA’s Hubble Space Telescope has recently detected a massive **globular cluster** that orbits the Milky Way galaxy.
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- The globular cluster is a huge gravitationally bound collection of stars believed to be 10 billion years old.
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- They are denser and more spherical than open star clusters and typically contain stars which are thought to have formed at roughly the same time.
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- Hubble space Telescope is the world's first large, **space-based optical telescope**, named in honor of astronomer Edwin Hubble.
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- The Hubble is a joint project between NASA and the European Space Agency.
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- Sun is the energy source of this space-based telescope.
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- Hubble Telescope has tracked the Neptune’s Mysterious Shrinking Storm.
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- Some of the interesting Hubble Discoveries are
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1. Creating a 3-D map of mysterious dark matter.
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2. Discovering Nix and Hydra, two moons of Pluto.
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3. Helping determine the rate of the universe's expansion.
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4. Discovering that nearly every major galaxy is anchored by a black hole.
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5. Helping refine the age of the universe.
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Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia (RIMES)

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- It is an intergovernmental institution for the generation and application of early warning information.
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- It was established in 2009, evolved from the efforts of countries in Africa and Asia, in the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.
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- It works with a multi-hazard framework for the generation and communication of early warning information and capacity building for preparedness and response to trans-boundary hazards.
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- It operates from its regional early warning center in Thailand.
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- The **State government of Odisha** has recently entered into a collaboration with RIMES.
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- It is to enhance early warning system for effective management of all kinds of disasters like flood, drought, heat wave, lightning and road accidents.
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2021 Census

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- The Registrar General of India (RGI) recently notified the amended census rules.
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- The RGI issued the notification as the process for the 2021 Census kicks in.
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- According to the notification, the data collected during the 2021 Census will be stored electronically.
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- This is the first time to store date electronically since the decennial exercise was conducted in 1951 in Independent India.
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- Any tampering with the data will invite punishment under the Information Technology Act, 2000.

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Asia Pacific Trade Agreement

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- The Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA) was signed in 1975 as an initiative of UN- Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).
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- It is previously named the **Bangkok Agreement**.
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- There are 6-member states to APTA – Bangladesh, China, India, South Korea, Laos and Sri Lanka.
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- Mongolia is soon to become the 7^{th} member of APTA. It has concluded bilateral negotiation on tariff concessions with members of APTA.
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- It is a **preferential trade agreement (PTA),** under which the basket of items as well as extent of tariff concessions are enlarged during the trade negotiating rounds.
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- It is a truly region-wide trade agreement spanning East and South Asia, with potential to expand to other sub-regions, including Central Asia and the Pacific.
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- APTA is the only operational trade agreement linking China and India.
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- It is open to all developing member countries.
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- It is the first plurilateral agreement among the developing countries in the region and has the longest effective implementation period amongst the trade agreements in the entire Asia-Pacific.
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- Recently, India has agreed to provide tariff concessions on 3,142 products to APTA members from July 1.
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Golden Globe Race

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- It is being conducted to commemorate 50 years since the world’s first solo non-stop circumnavigation undertaken by Sir Robin Knox Johnston of UK in 1968.
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- In this race, all the 18 participants are required to sail around the world, single-handed and non-stop.
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- It commences from Les Sables d’Olonne harbour in France from June 2018 and expected to complete in April 2019.
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- The uniqueness of the race is that boat designs and technology newer than 1968 is not permitted, hence use of GPS, satellite communication, navigational aids, etc is forbidden.
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- Commander Abhilash Tomy of the Indian Navy is the only invitee from Asia to participate in the Golden Globe Race.
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- He will sail the boat 'Thuriya', an indigenously built sailing vessel.
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- He has already covered 53,000 nautical miles under sail, including a solo non-stop circumnavigation of the globe in 2012-13 onboard Indian Naval Sailing Vessel (INSV) Mhadei.
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Source: The Hindu, PIB

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