Prelim Bits 04-12-2017

Gwalior Light Railway

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- The Gwalior Light Railway runs between Gwalior and Sheopur Kalan in Madhya Pradesh, covering 198 km in 12 hours.
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- It is the oldest long-haul service to run on 2-ft narrow-gauge tracks in the world.
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- It is laid during the rule of the Scindias (1895 – 1909).
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- Scindia is a Hindu Maratha dynasty that ruled the Gwalior State.
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- Scindia’s originally served as cavalrymen under the Bahmani Sultanate.
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- Later they become a part of the Maratha Confederacy in the 18th and 19th centuries and a princely state of the colonial British government during the 19th and the 20th centuries.
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Ethereum

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- Ethereum is similar to Bitcoin in the sense that they are both open-source platforms based on blockchain technology.
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- These decentralised payment network with its own cryptographic currency, allows anonymous payments without the need for a bank or other third party.
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- Ether is the digital currency of the ethereum blockchain and it is the second-largest cryptocurrency after bitcoin.
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- But while Bitcoin is limited to using blockchain technology for Bitcoin payments, Ethereum can also be used to build decentralised computational platforms.

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- Ethereum technology allows for third party applications, not just the currency, to run on the network.
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- It allows a number of apps to be built and it is also being used by start-ups to raise money with initial coin offering.
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Kamov 226T

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- India and Russia had signed an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) earlier this year to buy Kamov 226T helicopters.
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- Under the agreement, India will buy few choppers off the shelf and remaining will be fully built in India.
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- The Kamov 226T is a twin-engine light but multi-role chopper offers services for both military and civilian purposes.
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- The helicopters will replace India's ageing fleet of Cheetah and Chetak.
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- The military version of 226T is capable of working in extreme and difficult weather conditions and can be used effectively for reconnaissance, targeting and monitoring of transportation.
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- The helicopter has a maximum speed of 250 km/hour and a cruise speed of 220 km/hour with maximum takeoff weight of 3,600 kg.
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- The helicopters will now be **built completely using digital technology** as part of the pilot project.
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- It is the first experience to create a new helicopter modification by using only software.
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Chabahar Port

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- The first phase of the chabahar port project known as the “Shahid Beheshti

port" was inaugurated recently.
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- It opens up a new strategic transit route between Iran, India and Afghanistan, bypassing Pakistan under the 2016 Indo-Afghan-Iran trilateral pact.
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- The port lies outside the Persian Gulf and is easily accessed from India's western coast.
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- India is also constructing a railway line between Chabahar and Zahedan to connect the port to rest of the Iranian railway network.
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- It is further to be linked with Delaram-Zaranj road, built by India in Afghanistan that connects at Afghan-Iran border via rail through Zahedan.
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- The port, through Zahedan railway network, could also be linked with the International North South Transport Corridor connecting India with Russia.
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- Over a month ago, India sent its first consignment of wheat to Afghanistan by sea through the Chabahar port, marking opening of the new strategic transit route.
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India & CITES

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- India has been awarded with the Certificate of Commendation from CITES for its regional and global effort to combat illegal wildlife trade.
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- It was given to Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB).
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- India is the only recipient of this Certificate of Commendation at the 69th Standing Committee meeting of CITES at Geneva.
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- WCCB conducted and coordinated a species specific wildlife enforcement Operation, codenamed **Operation Save Kurma**.
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- The operation aims to combat the proliferating illegal trade in live **turtles** and its parts from the country to destinations abroad.

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CITES

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- CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is a multilateral treaty to protect endangered plants and animals.
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- It is also known as the Washington Convention.
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- Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten the survival of the species in the wild.
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- It accords varying degrees of protection to more than 35,000 species of animals and plants.
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- Participation is voluntary, and countries that have agreed to be bound by the Convention are known as Parties.
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- Presently, 183 countries across the world are signatory to the Convention.
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- Although CITES is legally binding on the Parties, it does not take the place of national laws.
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- Rather it provides a framework respected by each Party, which must adopt their own domestic legislation to implement CITES at the national level.
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Source: The Hindu, BusinessLine

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