Prelim Bits 05-12-2018

First hominoid ape fossils in Peninsular India

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- Fossil evidences of a hominid species have recently been discovered at Tapar in the Kutch basin of Gujarat.
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- First human-like footsteps were traced from the Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania.
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- About 14 million years ago (Miocene) ape-like species first originated on earth and gave rise to the present-day taxonomic family called *Hominidae*.
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- This belief is supported by fossil remains recovered from Africa and beyond, including India, where at least four hominid families are found.
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- Two of them belonged to the larger *Indopithecus*, and the other two to smaller *Sivapithecus*.
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- *Indopithecus* fossils have been reported earlier from Himachal Pradesh, while those of *Sivapithecus* from Siwalik regions of India and Pakistan.
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- Present discovery is exciting because this is the first-ever discovery of a *Sivapithecus* fossil outside the Siwaliks.
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- This represents a significant southern range extension of Miocene hominoids in the Indian peninsula.
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- This fills a time window of approximately 11 million years in the evolutionary history of future hominid remains in India.
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- Hominidae includes all great apes – Orangutans, Gorillas, Chimpanzees & Humans.

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Odisha Skill Development Project

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- The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a $85 million loan.
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- This is to improve the skill development eco-system in Odisha and establish, the World Skill Center (WSC), an advanced skill training center in Bhubaneswar.
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- ADB will also administer a $2 million technical assistance grant from the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction, financed by the Government of Japan.
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- The project will make them more relevant to industry and will impart advanced occupation-ready skills training aligned with international standards.
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- It will help over 150,000 people learn skills in priority sectors, including manufacturing, construction and services for formal employment.
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Seismic Airguns & Marine Wildlife

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- Seismic Air Gun consists of one or more pneumatic chambers that are pressurized with compressed air.
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- When it is fired air into a fire chamber which in turn causes a piston to move, thereby allowing the air to escape the main chamber and producing a pulse of acoustic energy.
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- This controlled seismic energy used to perform both reflection and refraction seismic surveys i.e they are used to find oil and gas deep underneath the ocean floor.
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- Sound from these intense blasts can travel over 2,000 miles.
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- Five oil and gas companies have recently been given the green light to use seismic airgun blasts to search for oil and gas deposits in the sea floor from New Jersey to Florida.
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- The blasts could potentially harm commercial fishing by killing Zooplanktons.
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- But conservationists are particularly concerned about critically endangered North Atlantic right whales, of which only about 450 remain.
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- Large marine mammals like whales and dolphin use sound for communicating, feeding, and mating.
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- So the blasts could impact all three of those essential activities.
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Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF)

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- Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF) is a widespread disease caused by a tick-borne virus called *Nairovirus*.
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- CCHF virus causes severe viral haemorrhagic fever outbreaks.
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- Such outbreaks have a case fatality rate of up to 40%.
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- The virus is primarily transmitted to people from ticks and livestock animals.
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- Human-to-human transmission can occur resulting from close contact with the blood, secretions, organs or other bodily fluids of infected persons.
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- CCHF is endemic in Africa, the Balkans, the Middle East and Asia, in

countries south of the 50th parallel north.
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- There is no vaccine available for either people or animals
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EX SHINYUU Maitri-2018

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- The Japanese Air Self Defence Force (JASDF) is in India for a bilateral air exercise SHINYUU Maitri-18 with Indian Air Force.
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- The theme of the exercise is joint Mobility/Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief (HADR) on Transport aircraft.
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- The focus of the exercise is set for the IAF and JASDF crews to undertake Joint Mobility/ HADR operations. Display of heavy loading/ off loading are also planned to be practiced during this exercise.
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Source: PIB, The Hindu

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