Prelim Bits 08-03-2018

Ranthambore Tiger Reserve

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- The tiger reserve, named after the Ranthambore fort, is situated in Karauli and Swai Madhovpur districts of Rajasthan.
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- The reserve is located at the junction of Aravallis and Vindhyan ranges.
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- The reserve was established in the year 1969.
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- It was earlier the private hunting grounds of Maharajas of Jaipur.
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- The reserve comprises Ranthambore national park and two sanctuaries namely Sawai Mansigh and Keladevi.
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- Poaching, habitat loss and fragmentation are the threats to the reserve.
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- Tiger populations in Ranthambore are smaller, isolated populations.
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- This makes them less genetically diverse due to lesser intermixing of different populations.
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National Tiger Conservation Authority

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- The National Tiger Conservation Authority is a statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.
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- It was constituted under enabling provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
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- The objectives of the NTCA are
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1. Providing statutory authority to Project Tiger so that compliance of its directives becomes legal
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2. Fostering accountability of Center-State in management of Tiger Reserves
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3. Providing for an oversight by Parliament
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4. Addressing livelihood interests of local people in areas surrounding Tiger Reserves
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- The main function of NTCA is to approve, co-ordinate, research and monitor tiger, co-predators, prey habitat, related ecological and socio-economic parameters and their evaluation.
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- NTCA gave a statutory backing to Project Tiger.
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Flawed Quota Provision

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- Telegana Government passed a bill to enhance reservation for Muslims and Scheduled Tribes to 12% and 10% respectively.
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- However, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) has said that the provisions of the Telangana legislation are in violation of a 1992 Supreme Court order that capped quota at 50%.
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- In the Indra Sawhney case 1992, the Supreme Court ruled that clause (4) of Article 16 of the Constitution speaks of adequate representation and not proportionate representation.

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- Article 16 ensures equality of opportunity in matters of public employment.
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- Particularly, clause 4 of Article 16 empowers the state to make provisions for reservation of appointments or posts for inadequately represented backward classes.
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Swatantra Sainik Samman Yojana (SSSY)

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- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister has approved the continuation of Swatantra Sainik Samman Yojana (SSSY) during 2017-2020 beyond the 12th Five Year Plan.
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- In 1969, Government of India introduced the 'Ex-Andaman Political Prisoners Pension Scheme'.
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- This was to honor the freedom fighters who had been incarcerated in the Cellular Jail at Port Blair.
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- Later, a liberalized scheme, namely the 'Swatantrata Sainik Samman Pension Scheme, 1980' was implemented.
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- From the financial year 2017-18 onwards, the nomenclature of the Scheme has been changed as 'Swatantrata Sainik Samman Yojana'.
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- Besides the freedom fighters, spouses (widows/widowers), unmarried and unemployed daughters and parents of deceased freedom fighters are eligible for pension under the scheme.
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- The scheme is implemented by the Division of Freedom Fighters and Rehabilitation under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
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Pritzker Prize

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- Balkrishna Doshi became the first Indian to receive the Pritzker Prize also dubbed as ‘architecture Nobel’.

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- The international Pritzker prize is awarded each year to a living architect/s for significant achievement.
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- It was established by the Pritzker family of Chicago through their Hyatt Foundation in 1979.
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- It bestows laureates with $100,000 along with a bronze medallion.
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- **Balkrishna Doshi** is a pioneer of low-cost housing design, committed to sustainable architecture that brought modernist design to a country rooted in traditionalism.
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- His noted works include Life Insurance Corporation Housing in Ahmedabad, Vidhyadhar Nagar in Jaipur, Aranya Low cost Housing in Indore.
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Aranya Low cost Housing

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Parker Solar Probe

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- NASA is inviting people around the world to submit their names online to be placed on a microchip aboard its Parker solar probe.
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- Parker Solar Probe is a historic mission, as it is flying into the sun's atmosphere (or corona) for the first time.
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- The corona is the outermost part of the sun's atmosphere that is unstable, producing the solar wind, flares and coronal mass ejections.
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- In 2017, NASA renamed the spacecraft from the Solar Probe Plus to the Parker Solar Probe in honor of astrophysicist Eugene Parker.
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- The spacecraft will travel directly into the sun’s atmosphere about 4 million miles from the star’s surface.
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- Parker Solar Probe has three detailed science objectives:
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1. Trace the flow of energy that heats and accelerates the solar corona and solar wind.
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2. Determine the structure and dynamics of the plasma and magnetic fields at the sources of the solar wind.
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3. Explore mechanisms that accelerate and transport energetic particles.
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Radiation Technologies in Agriculture

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- Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) in particular are engaged in extensive research on use of radiation processing.
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- Irradiation is very effective process in treating agricultural produce to enhance its shelf life.
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- Unique advantages of radiation processing of products (including fruits, vegetables, cereals, pulses, spices, sea foods and meat products) are:
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1. Cold and clean process
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2. Effective elimination of harmful bacteria and insects/pests
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3. Treatment after final packaging to avoid recontamination
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4. Significant increase in shelf life
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- DAE has developed crop varieties with desirable traits such as higher yield, seed size, improved agronomic and quality traits, early maturity and resistance to biotic and abiotic stresses.
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- These were achieved using radiation induced mutation (and conventional) breeding.
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- Two technology demonstration plants were set up based on R&D carried out at BARC:
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1. KRUSHAK at Lasalgaon, Nashik, Maharashtra
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2. Radiation Processing Plantat Vashi, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra
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- These plants are set up under the guidance of Board of Radiation & Isotope Technology (BRIT) under the Department of Atomic Energy.
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Map of the day

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Caribbean Islands

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- Caribbean Islands comprises of the Greater and lesser Antilles along with Lucayan Archipelago (The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos).
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- The islands border the Caribbean Sea and largely situated on the Caribbean plate.
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- The Lesser Antilles is super set of three groups of islands namely Leeward in the north, Windward in the south and Lesser Antilles in east.

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- Trinidad & Tobago and Barbados are also part of the Lesser Antilles.
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- Last year hurricane Irma had a severe impact on the Antilles.
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Source: PIB, The Hindu, Business Standard

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