# Prelim Bits 08-10-2018

## Ganga Task Force

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- The Ganga Task Force is a unit of the Territorial Army deployed in the services of the Ganga.
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- It consists of 3 companies of over 100 men each to be stationed at Kanpur, Allahabad and Varanasi, with the Battalion headquarters at Allahabad.
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- It is formed with the approval of Ministry of Defence and trained by the Defence ministry.
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- They will be in force till December 2020.
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- Mandates of the force -
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i. Crowd management during Kumbh Mela,
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ii. Spread awareness on keeping the river clean,
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iii. Stop people and industry from polluting the river,
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iv. Assisting during floods/natural calamity in the region,
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v. Planting trees to check soil erosion and
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vi. Patrolling sensitive river areas for biodiversity protection.
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- They have also been trained by the Central Pollution Control Board to measure the health of the river.
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## Territorial Army

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- The Territorial Army is a part of Regular Army.
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- It was set up after the Territorial Army Act was passed in 1948.
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- Before Independence, British raised territorial army in 1920 with two wings - European wing and Indian Volunteers wing.
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- Its present role is to relieve the Regular Army from static duties and assist civil administration and provide units as and when required.
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- It assist regular army in dealing with natural calamities and maintenance of essential services in situations where life of the communities is affected or the security of the Country is threatened.
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- Territorial Army units were actively involved in 1962, 1965 and 1971 operations.
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## Eurasian Otter

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- Otter is a carnivorous mammal and there are 7 subspecies found in 3 continents - Europe, Asia and Africa.
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- The Eurasian otter found in all the 3 continents is considered to be "Near Threatened" in IUCN Red List.
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- It lives in a wide variety of aquatic habitats, including highland and lowland lakes, rivers, streams, marshes, swamp forests and coastal areas independent of their size, origin or latitude.
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- Eurasian otter is the one of the least-known of India’s 3 otter species (Eurasian, smooth-coated & small-clawed otters) in Western Ghats.
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- It has been recorded historically from the Western Ghats - Coorg in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu’s Nilgiri and Palani hill ranges.

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- Though its range is wide, it is not as frequently sighted as other two otters in India.
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- All 3 species of otters in India are protected under the Wildlife Protection Act and are listed in CITES Appendices.
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i. Eurasian Otter -  CITES Appendix I; WPA Schedule II
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ii. Smooth Coated Otter - CITES Appendix II; WPA Schedule II
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iii. Clawless Otter - CITES Appendix II; WPA Schedule I
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## Asiatic Lions

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- There are only 700 Asiatic lions in the wild, and they only live in the Gir Forest area, India.
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- At present Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary in Gujarat is the only abode of the Asiatic lion.
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- It is listed in Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972, in Appendix I of CITES and as Endangered on IUCN Red List.
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- The asiatic lions in Gir Sanctuary, has recently been succumbed to the deadly infection of canine distemper virus (CDV) and tick-borne babesiosis.
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- Canine Distemper Virus is a contagious and serious disease that attacks the respiratory, gastrointestinal and nervous systems of species of cats and dogs family.
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- Babesiosis is caused by a parasite that infects red blood cells and transmitted by ticks.
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## JIMEX - 18

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- The 3rd edition of Japan-India Maritime Exercise (JIMEX) is going to be organized in Visakhapatnam.
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- The last edition of JIMEX was conducted in Dec 2013 off Chennai.
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- The conduct of JIMEX-18 after 5 years is indicative of an upswing in the Indo-Japanese defence relations.
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- It is aimed to enhance interoperability, improve understanding and imbibe the best practices of each other.
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**Source: PIB, The Hindu**

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