Prelim Bits 11-05-2018

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Nuclear Winter

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- Nuclear winter refers to the cooling and darkening of the globe that is expected to happen as a result of a severe nuclear explosion.
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- It is also known as the nuclear twilight.
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- It is believed that the smoke, dust and other byproducts of a huge nuclear explosion could form a thick layer of soot over earth’s atmosphere and prevent the entry of sunlight to its surface.
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- It is also hypothesized that nuclear explosions could release chemicals that damage the ozone layer.
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- The term was coined by American scientist Carl Sagan.
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- He used the term in a 1983 pamphlet warning about the devastating effects of a nuclear war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.
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Institutional deliveries double

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- The recent government’s Children in India- 2018 report points out the increase in Institutional deliveries.
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- The proportion of women giving birth in health institutions has doubled since the introduction of cash-incentive under the Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) in 2005.
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- Around 88 per cent of first-time expectant mothers went for institutional deliveries, only 48 per cent women giving birth to their sixth or more children went to a health facility.
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- The drop in institutional deliveries for subsequent child births can be partly explained by the fact that under JSS, cash benefits are only given for the delivery of first two children.
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- The report also says that 91 per cent of the expectant mothers, who visited a health facility at least four times during pregnancy, went for institutional deliveries.
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- In contrast, only 57 per cent of the women who did not visit the hospital during pregnancy opted for institutional deliveries.
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- Institutional deliveries were also higher (95 per cent) in women who received at least 12 years of schooling, compared to women (62 per cent) who have not received any formal education.
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Economic Cost due to land degradation

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- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) review warned that the world will lose $23 trillion by 2050 due to land degradation.
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- Only US $4.6 trillion, a fraction of the predicted losses, will be required to rectify what is one of the biggest threats to the environment.
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- Land degradation due to drought and desertification affects about 1.9 billion hectares of land and 1.5 billion people globally.
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- Asia and Africa bear the highest costs, estimated at US $84 billion and 65 billion per year respectively.
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- In fact, nearly 30 per cent of the India’s land is degraded or facing desertification.
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- The review will guide policy-makers with information that can help estimate the value of their investments in land restoration and make informed choices.
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- In eight states—Rajasthan, Delhi, Goa, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Nagaland,

Tripura and Himachal Pradesh—around 40 to 70 per cent of land has undergone desertification.
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National Maha Bal Panchayat

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- Nobel laureate Kailash Satyarthi conducted the 4th National Maha Bal Panchayat elections at his Bal Ashram, Viratnagar in Jaipur.
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- The idea is to ensure children's role in local governance.
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- The Maha Bal Panchayat will work for
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1. basic infrastructure in schools
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2. school teacher appointment
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3. monitoring for regular attendance
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4. preventing cases of early child marriage
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5. facilitating links to several social welfare schemes
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- Bal Ashram is a rehabilitation and educational support Centre for children rescued from various states.
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- The event was jointly organized by Kailash Satyarthi Children’s Foundation and Global March Against Child Labour
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- The election was held under the Bal Mitra Gram (BMG) program.
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- A total of 66 Bal Panchayat members from the six states – Bihar, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh formed the Maha Bal Panchayat of 2018.
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SagarKanya

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- Sagar Kanya is a ocean research vessel (ORV).
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- The vessel is a versatile ocean observing platform equipped with technologically advanced scientific equipment and related facilities.
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- It is owned and operated by National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research.
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- The ship has helped in India's studies of the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal, and the Indian Ocean.
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- In 1983, under Indo-German collaboration, this multidisciplinary research vessel was built in Germany and delivered in India to Ministry of Earth Sciences (then Department of Ocean Development).
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United Nations Disarmament Commission

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- The United Nations disarmament chief made a statement about disarming North Korea recently.
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- The General Assembly created the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) under the Security Council in 1952.
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- Its mandate is to prepare proposals for a treaty for the regulation, limitation and balanced reduction of all armed forces and all armaments, including the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction.
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- The UNDC is serviced substantively by the Office for Disarmament Affairs and technically by the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services.
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Source: PIB, The Hindu, Down to earth

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