Prelim Bits 12-08-2018

FCTC Conference

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- Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) Conference of Parties is being organised by the World Health Organisation (WHO) at Geneva in October.
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- The conference is expected to discuss steps to bring down tobacco consumption and cultivation.
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- Article 17 and 18 of FCTC deal with suitable alternatives to tobacco cultivation.
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- Federation of All-India Farmer Associations requested the Union Commerce Ministry to seek the inclusion of tobacco farmers' representatives in the conference.
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More Assembly Seats for Sikkim

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- Home Ministry has proposed to Union Cabinet to increase the number of assembly seats for sikkim from 32 to 40.
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- If approved, it will be the first expansion of the Assembly since Sikkim merged with India in 1975.
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- The seats are being increased to accommodate the Limboo and Tamang communities, notified as Scheduled Tribes in January 2003.
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- A petition was already moved in the Supreme Court that Limboos and Tamangs were not adequately represented in the Assembly.
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- SC has directed the Home Ministry in 2016 to take action regarding this.
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- By the Delimitation Act, 2002, the number of seats in an Assembly can be readjusted only on the basis of the first census after 2026.
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- The Second Schedule to the Representation of People Act, 1950 and Section 5A of the Representation of People Act, 1951 have been amended to change the Assembly strength.
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DNA Barcoding

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- Scientists from Delhi University (DU) and the Wildlife Institute of India has collected genetic data of frogs and analysed it using DNA barcoding.
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- The researchers found that the ornate narrow-mouthed frog, thought to be widely-distributed in Asia, is seen only in peninsular India and Sri Lanka.
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- The study reveals that the ornate narrow-mouthed frog is present only in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.
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- The study would enable IUCN to review the conservation status of this group of frogs across South Asia at the earliest opportunity.
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RCEP

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- The government has set up a four-member group of ministers (GoM) to advise prime minister Narendra Modi on whether to continue with or withdraw from the 16-member Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations.
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- RCEP is a proposed free trade agreement (FTA) between the ten member states of the ASEAN and the six states with which ASEAN has existing free trade agreements.
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- Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand.
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- Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines,

Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam are ASEAN members.
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- RCEP is viewed as an alternative to the TransPacific Partnership (TPP), a proposed trade agreement which includes several Asian and American nations but excludes China and India.
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- The arrangement is also open to any other external economic partners, such as nations in Central Asia and remaining nations in South Asia and Oceania.
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- RCEP will cover trade in goods, trade in services, investment, economic and technical co-operation,intellectual property, competition, dispute settlement and other issues.
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Trade Remedy Cooperation

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- Cabinet has recently approved the MoU between India and Korea on Trade Remedy Cooperation.
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- MoU will promote cooperation between the two countries in the area of trade remedies such as anti-dumping, subsidy and countervailing and safeguard measures.
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FDI in education institutions

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- The Government has allowed Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) upto 100% under automatic route in the educational institutions.
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- Consolidated FDI Policy of 2017 has accorded this limit but subject to applicable laws, rules/regulations/security conditions.
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- UGC and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) have issued regulations/guidelines on collaboration between Indian and Foreign Universities.
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- It is with a view to increase synergy between Indian and foreign academic

institutions and to improve curriculum and educational content.
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- As per these regulations, Indian Universities and Colleges having the highest grade of accreditation/threshold accreditation, can apply online to the UGC for starting twinning arrangement with Foreign Educational Institutions (FEI) having the prescribed quality.
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Source: The Hindu, PIB

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