Prelim Bits 13-09-2017

Dairy Processing & Infrastructure Development Fund (DIDF)

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- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved setting up of Dairy Processing & Infrastructure Development Fund.
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- It was announced in the union budget 2017-18, under National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).
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- The project will be implemented by National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) and National Dairy Development Cooperation (NCDC).
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- NABARD will give loans to NDDB and NCDC to help the milk cooperatives.
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- The project will focus on building an efficient milk procurement system, expansion of processing infrastructure for value added products for the milk unions and producer companies.
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Homoeopathy Virology Lab

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- Union AYUSH minister has inaugurated India’s first advanced Homoeopathy Virology lab in Kolkata.
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- The laboratory has been established to develop new drugs and technologies in Homoeopathy to combat emerging challenges of viral diseases.
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- The laboratory is the only one in India for conducting basic and fundamental research in Homoeopathy for viral diseases like influenza, Japanese encephalitis, dengue, chickunguniya and swine flu.
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Nari Shakti Puraskars

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- The Ministry of Women & Child Development has invited nominations for the "Highest Civilian Honor for Women" – Nari Shakti Puraskars.
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- GoI confers this award every year on the occasion of International Women's Day (8^{th} March).
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- The objective of the award is to acknowledge and recognize the services of individuals and institutions in recognition of their service towards the cause of women empowerment.
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Report on fragile island ecosystem

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- Recently Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) has published the first consolidated and updated information of the faunal diversity of **Sundarbans**, a mangrove ecosystem.
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- The Indian segment of the Sundarbans is part of a UNESCO World Heritage site, forms part of the Ganga-Brahmaputra delta.
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- The researchers documented the famous tigers of the island which have adapted to aquatic conditions.
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- The report highlighted that rhinos, swamp deer, barking deer and hog deer, Asiatic wild water buffalo are not found in Sundarbans anymore.
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- But it has turtles and the River Terrapin (most threatened freshwater species) and Cartilaginous fish which have cartilage rather than bone.
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River Terrapin

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- A terrapin is one of several small species of turtle living in fresh or brackish

water.
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- The northern river terrapin (Batagur baska) is a species of riverine turtle native to Southeast Asia.
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- It is classified “Critically Endangered” by the IUCN.
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- The species is currently found in Bangladesh (in the Sundarbans), India (parts- West Bengal & Odisha), Indonesia, Cambodia and Malaysia.
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- A captive conservation breeding programme has been implemented in Sunderbans Tiger Reserve to protect the species against natural risks and also facilitate genetic management.
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Vishwajeet Scheme

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- Vishwajeet scheme aimed to help top IITs to get top league in global rankings.
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- It had the provision of funding to top seven IITs over a period of five years to upgrade infrastructure, hire foreign faculty and collaborate with foreign institutions.
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- Recently, the scheme was scrapped by Union Finance Minsitry.
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- The ministry sent back the HRD’s request for in-principle approval of the project with a note that the IITs should first address “fundamental issues” such as the autonomy to fix fees, raising resources from corporate houses and alumni members, and strengthening existing schemes.
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- However, Union HRD ministry has introduced “Higher Education Finance Agency (HEFA)” to provide support to universities for creating the research infrastructure.
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- Click here to know more about HEFA.
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Source: PIB, The Hindu.

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