Prelim Bits 15-01-2017

SAREX – 18

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- It is a joint search and rescue exercise between India and Japan to help increase mutual understanding in Anti-Piracy operations.
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- During the exercise, helicopters of the Japan and Indian Coast Guard will perform cross landing operations to improve compatibility between the two forces.
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- This year, it will be held in Chennai.
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- Japanese coast guard ship “Tsugaru”, a patrol vessel with helicopters will participate in this exercise.
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Internet Service Provider for Nepal

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- China has recently become Nepal’s second Internet service provider, breaking India’s monopoly in providing Internet access.
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- So far, Nepal had been linked to the global internet network through Indian telecom operators using optical fibre connections in few provinces in Nepal.
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- But a new terrestrial fibre cable launched by China Telecom Global (CTG) in 2016 will now connect Nepal and China through the border gateway.
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- It is to be noted that CTG has already expanded Internet services to Pakistan, Laos and Thailand.
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Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS)

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- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has recently given its approval to continuation of MPLADS till the term of the 14th Finance Commission i.e. 31.03.2020.
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- The MPLAD Scheme is an ongoing Central Sector Scheme which was launched in 1993-94.
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- It enables the Members of Parliament to improve physical and institutional infrastructure in their constituencies.
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- Lok Sabha MP chooses these villages from the constituency he/she represents and the Rajya Sabha MP chooses it from the state he/she represents.
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- MPs cannot pick villages which belong to themselves or their spouses.
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- Gram Panchayat would be the basic unit for development.
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- The scheme requires MP to draft a village development plan, identify gaps in funding and mobilizing MPLAD funds to create additional resources specifically from CSR initiatives of various corporate houses.
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- District Collectors will carry ground-level surveys along with monthly review meetings to monitor progress.
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LEADS Index

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- Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) index is a composite indicator to assess international trade logistics across states and Union territories.
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- It is based on a stakeholders' survey conducted by Deloitte for the **Ministry of commerce and industry**.
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- Gujarat topped the first-of-its-kind index, Punjab and Andhra Pradesh took the second and third positions, respectively.
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- The index is loosely based on the World Bank's biannual Logistics Performance Index (LPI).
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- India was ranked 35 among 160 countries in LPI in 2016, up from 54 in 2014.
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- LEADS is based on eight parameters such as infrastructure, services, timeliness, track and trace, competitiveness of pricing, safety of cargo, operating environment and regulatory process.
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Kala Azar

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- India has missed the 2017 deadline for elimination of Kala Azar.
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- Elimination is defined as reducing the annual incidence of Kala Azar to less than 1 case per 10,000 people at the sub-district level.
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- Visceral leishmaniasis (VL), also known as kala-azar, is caused by the protozoan Leishmania parasites.
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- It is transmitted to humans through infected sandflies.
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- It is characterized by irregular bouts of fever, weight loss, enlargement of the spleen and liver, and anaemia.
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- The parasite migrates to the internal organs such as the liver, spleen, and bone marrow, and, if left untreated, may result in the death.
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- It is endemic to the Indian subcontinent in 119 districts in four countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal).
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- India itself accounts for half the global burden of the disease.
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- Further, a little-known skin condition called Post Kala Azar Dermal Leishmaniasis (PKDL), a red flag for transmission of Kala Azar has been growing steadily over the past few years.
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Chiru Goat

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- Chiru goat is also known as the Tibetrean antelope.
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- It is native of China (Tibet, Xinjiang region) and India (North Eastern Ladakh region) and regionally extinct in Nepal.
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- Its numbers and distribution have decreased sharply as a result of commercial hunting for the underfur for making of shawls.
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- In India, it is killed for making of the famous Shahtoosh shawls, which is renowned for its quality from Srinagar.
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- In 2017, it has been included in “Near Threatened” category by IUCN.
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- The parliamentary standing committee on science & technology, environment & forests had recommended to the ministry of environment, to conserve and breed the Chiru goat, which can then be given to the shawl makers.
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- The motive behind such recommendation is to provide a sustainable livelihood opportunity to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.
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- However, Ministry of Environment has ruled out the possibility of conservation breeding citing that it may lead to decline in its population due to commercial poaching.
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Source: The Hindu, PIB, Livemint

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