Prelim Bits 15-06-2018

Opportunity Rover

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- Opportunity Rover was launched by NASA in 2003 to land in red planet Mars.
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- The rover landed in 2004 and begin traversing the planet in search of signs of past life.
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- It is still actively exploring the Martian terrain.
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- It was originally planned for 90-day mission. But it has far outlasted its planned mission by 55 times longer than originally planned.
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- Mars is prone to dust storms due to its thin atmosphere and desertic conditions.
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- Recently, it witnessed an immense dust storm which led to the impenetrable, perpetual night in the planet.
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- Since, opportunity rover is a solar powered, the amount of light the spacecraft receives has dropped to less than 1 percent of normal levels.
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- Before the storm began, it had been rolling down a channel called **Perseverance Valley**, which scientists think may have been carved by water billions of years ago.
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- **Curiosity** - It is also a rover deployed by NASA in its Mars Exploration Program in 2012 to assess whether Mars ever had an environment able to support small life forms called microbes.
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- The rover captured **mesas and buttes** on mars geological layer called as Murray formation, which is formed from the lakebed mud deposits.
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Animal Welfare Board of India

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- It is a statutory, advisory body established under Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act, 1960.
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- It is within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
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- It ensures implementation of the animal welfare laws in the country and provides grants to animal welfare organizations and advice the Centre, States and UTs on animal welfare issues.
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- As per the Act, the Board comprises of 28 Members including 6 MPs (4 from Lok Sabha and 2 from Rajya Sabha) with the term of 3 years.
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- It is headquartered at Ballabhgarh in Haryana.
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- Last year, the government has notified that the board will be permanently chaired by senior official from the ministry of environment.
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- Recently, the board has issued directives to all the state departments to save stray animals from cruelty.
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- Thus, the responsibility of protecting stray animals is given to state departments. Previously it was the responsibility of cow shelters and animal activists.
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- The board does not have the right to prescribe punishments or fines for violations of the PCA Act but can pursue legal action.
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Swajal Yojana

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- Swajal yojana was recently launched by Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation in 115 aspirational districts in the country.
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- It is a community owned drinking water programme for sustained piped drinking water supply powered by solar energy.
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- It ensures the availability of clean drinking water to every household round

the year.
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- The scheme will train hundreds of rural technicians for operation and maintenance of Swajal units which generates employment in the rural areas.
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- Under the scheme, 90% of the project cost will be taken care by the Government and the remaining 10% of the project cost will be contributed by the community.
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- The operations and management of the project will be taken care by the local villagers.
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Central Adoption Resource Authority

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- It is a statutory body under the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
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- It functions as the nodal body for adoption of orphan, abandoned and surrendered children and is mandated to monitor and regulate the same.
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- **Hague Convention on Inter-country Adoption, 1993** was ratified by the Govt of India in 2003.
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- In accordance with the provisions of the convention, CARA was designated as the Central Authority to deal with inter-country adoptions.
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- It has recently **barred partners in live-in relationships** from adopting a child on the ground that cohabitation without marriage is not considered a stable family in India.
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- It permits a single woman to adopt a child of any gender, while single men can adopt only boys.
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- In case an applicant is married, both spouses must give their consent for adoption and should be in a stable marriage for at least two years.
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Composite Water Management Index

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Click here to know about the index.

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- The index is developed by NITI Aayog and it ranked states on how well they managed water.
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- It comprises 9 broad sectors with 28 different indicators covering various aspects of groundwater, restoration of water bodies, irrigation, farm practices, drinking water, policy and governance.
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- According to the recent report, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh have managed water resources efficiently.
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- Meghalaya, Uttarakhand and Nagaland are the bottom three states in the index.
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- While Tripura has emerged as top performer in north-east, Rajasthan has emerged as the best performer in the incremental progress over last two years.
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- Some of the other important findings from the recent report are,
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1. India is facing its “worst” water crisis in history and that the demand for potable water will outstrip supply by 2030, if steps are not taken.
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2. 21 cities, including Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai and Hyderabad, will run out of groundwater by 2020, affecting 100 million people.
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3. Critical groundwater resources, which accounted for 40% of the water supply, are being depleted at “unsustainable” rates and up to 70% of the supply is “contaminated”.
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Source: The Hindu, PIB, Economic Times

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