

Prelim Bits 16-03-2017

Madhukar Gupta Committee

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- A committee under the Chairmanship of Madhukar Gupta was constituted to give a report on border protection and address vulnerabilities in fencing along the Indo-Pakistan border.

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- The committee has submitted its report.

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- It recommended measures on the issues of threats and border protection, infrastructure and technology issues for protection of border and administrative issues, assessment and deployment of forces on the border etc.

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Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES)

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- Ministry of Commerce and Industry has proposed a new scheme “Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES)” to enhance export competitiveness.

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- The scheme focus on bridging gaps in export infrastructure, creating focussed export infrastructure, first mile and last mile connectivity for export oriented projects and addressing quality certification measures.

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- The scheme replaces a centrally sponsored scheme – Assistance to States for creating Infrastructure for the Development and growth of Exports (ASIDE).

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- The Central Government funding will be in the form of grant-in-aid, normally not more than the equity being put in by the implementing agency or 50% of the total equity in the project.

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- In case of projects located in North Eastern States and Himalayan States including J&K, this grant can be upto 80% of the total equity.

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Oldest fossil on Earth

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- The oldest fossils on Earth were recently discovered in Quebec.
- The rocks might be as old as 4.3billion years old.
- These fossils are tiny filaments and tubes, made of haematite, a type of iron oxide known as jasper.
- Those tubes and filaments are thought to be the remains of bacteria that lived on iron and dwelt around hydrothermal vent systems and mineral-rich hot springs on the seafloor.
- The structures were also found to contain graphite as well as the minerals apatite and carbonate. They are generally associated with biological matter.
- Thus the discovery shows that sophisticated microbes might have been around as early as 4.3billion years ago.
- The finding also supports the idea that other bodies in the solar system, such as Mars, Jupiter's moon Europa might also support life.

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