Prelim Bits 16-04-2018

Gender gap in India’s research scenario

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- The data from the HRD ministry says that 21,000 more male PhD candidates enroll for research work than women do in India.
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- Similarly, in the subsequent years, the gender gap continued as with increasing number of total enrolments, the number of male PhD candidates was also higher in 2015-16, and 2016-17.
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- The data also reveals that maximum PhD candidates are enrolled in state public universities, followed by institutions of national importance.
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- According to the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2016-17 report, there were more instances of women dropping out from hard sciences particularly after completing their post-graduation (PG).
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- The report was released by the Human Resource Development Ministry in starting of this year.
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- It also stated that women were also not pursuing a doctorate while more men did their doctorate even in courses where they were outnumbered by women at the PG level.
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AlterEgo

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- AlterEgo is a silent-speech device developed by researchers at MIT.
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- The device uses electrodes **to read the neuromuscular signals** from the user's internal speech organs when they "say" words in their head.
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- Our brains send tiny electrical signals to our speaking muscles, which

AlterEgo's sensors on the face and jaw detect.
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- AlterEgo interprets 'silent speaking' and when necessary, sends feedback to the user via audio others can't hear.
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- It is tested by using it in controlling devices, solving math problems, assisting chess and go players, assisting memory by pulling up stored information.
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Atlantic Ocean circulation

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- Global warming is likely slowing the main Atlantic Ocean circulation, which has plunged to its weakest level on record.
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- It could make for more extreme weather across the Northern Hemisphere, especially Europe.
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- It could also increase sea level rise along the U.S. East Coast.
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- Warmer water lessens the amount of cooling and makes it harder for the water to sink and turn over.
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- Ice sheets and glaciers in Greenland are melting and the fresh water is pouring into the area where the water turns over, making it less salty, less dense and therefore less likely to sink.
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- There's also more rain and snow in northern areas and more evaporation in southern areas, altering the flow.
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India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC)

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- India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) signed a MoU with Hyderabad based firm for developing a Mega Tourism Destination project at Bhairav Lanka in Kakinada, East Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh.
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- This is the first of its kind project for the state owned ITDC, which got preferred against several private contenders.
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- ITDC has been the prime mover in the progressive development, promotion and expansion of tourism in the country.
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- It came into existence in October 1966.
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- The Corporation is running hotels, restaurants at various places for tourists, besides providing transport facilities.
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- The Ashok Institute of Hospitality & Tourism Management of the Corporation imparts training and education in the field of tourism and hospitality.
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- Broadly, the main objectives of the Corporation are:
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1. To construct, take over and manage existing hotels and market hotels, Beach Resorts
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2. To provide transport, entertainment, shopping and conventional services
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3. To produce, distribute, tourist publicity material
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4. To render consultancy-cum-managerial services in India and abroad
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iDex (Innovation for Defense Excellence) scheme

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- Prime Minister launched the iDex, Innovation for Defense Excellence scheme in the DefExpo 2018.
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- The scheme will set up innovation hubs particularly for the defense sector across the country.
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- The scheme wishes to incubate ideas and provide support through infrastructure for defense related start-ups.
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- During the DefExpo, in order to boost defense production in the country, the Prime Minister welcomed the move of establishing two defense industrial corridors in Tamil Nadu and Uttra Pradesh.
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- Additional information is that Foreign Direct Investment in defense sector in India currently permits foreign companies to own 49% of Indian units.
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NPA and High Level debt

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- ASSOCHAM said that it may take at least 3 quarters before the twin balance sheet problem to get resolved.
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- Twin balance sheet problem refers to the stress on balance sheets of banks due to non-performing assets (NPAs) or bad loans on the one hand, and heavily indebted corporate on the other.
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- A recent report by CARE Ratings ranked India at fifth on the list of countries with highest Non-Performing Assets (NPAs), and is on top spot among the BRICS nations.
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- The Non-Performing assets of India stands at 9.9 %.
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- Leading corporate houses and companies accounted for approximately 77 per cent of the total gross NPAs from domestic operations for the banks.
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- The Associated Chambers of Commerce & Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) is a not for profit organization, facilitating reach of India to all businesses around the globe, for wanting to do business with India.
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Map of the Day

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India UNESCO World Heritage Sites

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- Khangchendzonga National Park is the only Mixed Heritage site in the country.
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- Historic city of Ahmadabad is the latest addition to the World Heritage site list in the country.
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- Taj Mahal, Ellora Caves, Ajanta caves, Agra fort were the first (1983) **cultural** monuments in the country to get the UNESCO World Heritage Site Tag.
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- Similarly Manas, Keoladeo and Kaziranga national parks were the first (1985) to receive the **natural heritage site** tags.
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- Mountain Railway includes Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, Nilgiri Mountain Railway and Kalka Shimla Railway.
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Source: PIB, The Hindu, Business standard

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