Prelim Bits 16-10-2017

Usutu Virus

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- It belongs to “flavivirus” family along with tick-borne encephalitis, West Nile, and Dengue virus.
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- The virus is an African origin and it was first detected in Austria in 2001.
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- It caused a severe bird die-off, mainly of blackbirds and songbirds.
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- Besides wild birds, humans can also be infected with the virus through mosquito bites.
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- This year, already the virus is detected in songbirds in Austrian region.
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INS Kiltan

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- It is the indigenously-built anti-submarine warfare stealth corvette.
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- It has been recently inducted into the Indian Navy.
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- It is the latest indigenous warship after Shivalik Class, Kolkata Class and sister ships INS Kamorta and INS Kadmatt.
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- It is India's first major warship to have a superstructure of carbon fibre composite material resulting in improved stealth features.
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- The ship derives its name from one of the islands in Aminidivi group of the Lakshadweep and Minicoy group of islands.
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Melting ice in Greenland

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- For the first time, ocean data from Northeast Greenland reveals the long-term impact of the melting of the Greenland ice sheet.
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- The increased melting of Greenland ice causes coastal waters to become less saline.
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- The less saline water is expected to affect marine life as well as global ocean currents that keep Europe warm.
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- The ‘Greenland Ecosystem Monitoring Program’ shows that the fresh water from the ice sheet accumulates in the surface layer of the surrounding sea and flows into the Greenland fjords.
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- Meltdown of the Greenland ice sheet has more than doubled compared with the period 1983-2003.
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- Fjords are a long, narrow, deep inlet of the sea between high cliffs typically formed by submergence of a glaciated valley.
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Pro bono legal services

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- Ministry of Law and Justice introduced the pro bono legal services scheme aiming to connect those in need of legal aid with lawyers through use of technology.
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- ‘Pro-bono legal services’ – It is a web based platform through which the interested lawyers can register themselves to volunteer services for litigants who are unable to afford it.
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- Supreme Court has recently released the guidelines, which says that a lawyer should have fought a certain number of cases pro bono (free of cost) in order to be designated as a senior lawyer.
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- The government wants the same principle to be followed in the appointment of judges.
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No Development Zone

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- The National Green Tribunal has passed a judgment declaring an area of 100 meters from the edge of the river between Haridwar and Unnao as “No Development Zone”.
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- It also prohibited dumping of waste within 500 metres from the river.
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- No-development zones are zones where no construction, including commercial or residential buildings, can come up.
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Atal Pension Yojana

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- The Centre and the pension regulator PFRDA are hopeful of bringing at least one crore subscribers by March 2018 under the Atal Pension Yojana platform.
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- APY will be focussed on all citizens in the unorganised sector, who join the National Pension System (NPS) administered by PFRDA.
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- It is open to all bank account holders who are not members of any statutory social security scheme.
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- It mainly targets on unorganised sector workers.
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- Under the APY, the subscribers would receive the fixed pension ranging from Rs. 1000 - Rs. 5000 per month, at the age of 60 years, depending on their contributions.
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- The age of joining APY is 18 years to 40 years. Therefore, minimum period of contribution by the subscriber under APY would be 20 years or more.
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- The Central Government would also co-contribute 50% of the subscriber’s contribution or Rs. 1000 per annum, whichever is lower for a period of 5 years upto 2020.
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Source: The Hindu, Indian Express.

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