Prelim Bits 18-08-2017

Navika Sagar Parikrama

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- It is a project wherein a team of women officers of the Indian Navy would circumnavigate the globe on an Indian-built sail boat INSV Tarini.
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- This is the first ever Indian circumnavigation of the globe by an all-women crew.
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- The project is considered essential towards promoting Ocean Sailing activities in the Navy.
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- It is also aimed at helping to discard the societal attitudes and mindset towards women in India by raising visibility of participation by women in challenging environment.
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Acute Encephalitis Syndrome

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- According to a health report, nearly 14% of the patients admitted with Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) in West Bengal in 2016 have died.
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- AES is characterized by an acute onset of fever and clinical neurological manifestation that includes mental confusion, disorientation, delirium, or coma.
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- Viruses have been mainly attributed to be the cause of AES in India although other sources such as bacteria, fungus, parasites, spirochetes, chemical, and toxins have also been reported
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- Assam, Bihar, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu contribute approximately 80% of cases.
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- The case fatality and morbidity is very high.
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- The causative agent of AES varies with season and geographical location, and predominantly affects population below 15 years with Japanese encephalitis Virus (JEV) being the major cause in India.
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- Specific anti-viral drug for AES including Japanese Encephalitis is not available till date and cases are managed symptomatically and supportive treatment plays major role.
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SUNREF

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- SUNREF (Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and Energy Finance) Housing India programme is to be launched by the National Housing Bank (NHB) along with French Development Agency (FDA) and the European Union.
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- It is aimed at scaling up green housing projects in India by providing €112 million to NHB.
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- Green residential buildings demonstrate more efficiency in energy, water and building material use.
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Long Term Irrigation Fund

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- A large number of major and medium irrigation projects taken up under Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP) were languishing mainly due to inadequate provision of funds.
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- During 2016-17, 99 ongoing projects under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) - AIBP were identified for completion in phases by December-2019.
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- To cater to the large fund requirement and ensure completion of these projects, Long Term Irrigation Fund (LTIF) in NABARD with an initial corpus

of Rs. 20,000 crore was created.
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- It is for funding of Central and State share for the identified ongoing projects under PMKSY (AIBP and CAD).
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- The Union Cabinet recently approved raising Extra Budgetary Resources upto Rs. 9020 crore for Long Term Irrigation Fund during the year 2017-18.
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- The completion of the identified irrigation projects will generate immediate wage and other employment opportunities during the construction phase.
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- On completion, the increased irrigation potential will increase cropping intensity, bring change in cropping pattern and promote agro processing and other ancillary activities.
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MyFASTag and FASTag Partner

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- FASTag is a device that employs Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology for making toll payments directly from the prepaid account linked to it.
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- It is affixed on the windscreen of the vehicle and enables to drive through toll plazas.
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- The method of purchase and recharge of FASTags has been cumbersome, hindering the implementation of Electronic Toll Collection project.
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- National Highways Authority of India launched two mobile apps, MyFASTag and FASTag Partner, to ensure smooth functioning of the Electronic Toll Collection system.
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- MyFASTag is a consumer app where one can purchase or recharge FASTags, FASTag Partner is a merchant app.
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- These apps will facilitate the availability of FASTags for electronic toll collection making it possible to buy or recharge FASTags.
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- The NHAI chairman also said that from October 1, all lanes of NHAI toll plazas in the country will become FASTag enabled.
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New Polio Vaccine

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- Researchers from John Innes Centre, Norwich in the UK have developed a new polio vaccine using plants.
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- It can pave the way for global eradication of the age-old viral disease.
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- It is produced with a method that uses virus-like particles (VLPs).
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- VLPs are non-pathogenic mimics of polio virus which are grown in plants.
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- Genes that carry information to produce VLPs are infiltrated into the plant tissues.
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- The host plant then reproduces large quantities of them using its own protein expression mechanisms.
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- VLPs are non-infectious.
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- This means that they mimic the behaviour of the virus, stimulating the immune system to respond without causing an infection of polio.
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