Prelim Bits 18-08-2018

Restricted Areas Permit

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- Under the Foreigners (Restricted) Areas Order, 1963, entire Andaman & Nicobar Islands and part of the Sikkim State have been declared as 'Restricted' Areas.
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- A foreign national (except Bhutan) is not normally allowed to visit the restricted areas.
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- They require a special permit from the competent authority delegated with powers to issue such a special permit or from Ministry of Home affairs.
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- Some areas are notified by the Union Government from time to time that allows foreigners to visit restricted areas with a view to promote tourism.
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- Union Home Ministry has recently excluded Andaman& Nicobar Islands from the Restricted Area Permit (RAP) till December 31, 2022.
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- It was notified subject to condition such as,
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1. Citizens of Afghanistan, China and Pakistan would continue to require RAP to visit the UT,
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2. Citizens of Myanmar will continue to require RAP, which shall be issued only with the prior approval of the Home ministry,
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3. Separate approvals of the competent authority would be required for visiting reserved forests, wildlife sanctuaries and tribal reserves.
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UPI 2.0

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- Unified Payment Interface is a platform created by the National Payments Corporation (NPCI) to facilitate faster and smoother digital payments.
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- It allows a customer to pay directly from a bank account to another bank account & different merchants, both online and offline, without the hassle of typing credit card details, IFSC code, or net banking/wallet passwords.
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- UPI 2.0 is an upgraded version with several new features added to UPI.
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- It allows scheduling payment transfers at a later date with pre-authorisation.
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- It allows customers to link their overdraft (OD) account with UPI. In the Earlier version, only current and savings account can linked.
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- It will also let users verify UPI credentials using a QR code.
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- Customers can now receive invoices from merchants directly in the inbox to verify the authenticity of credentials.
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International Nitrogen Initiative

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- International Nitrogen Initiative was established in 2003 under sponsorship of the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (SCOPE) and International Geosphere-Biosphere Program (IGBP).
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- The key aims of the INI are,
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1. To optimize nitrogen’s beneficial role in sustainable food production,
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2. To minimize nitrogen’s negative effects on human health and the environment resulting from food and energy production.
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- The INI holds a conference every three years to discuss ideas and exchange knowledge on nitrogen issues.
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- The last INI conference was held in Melbourne, in December 2016, adopting Melbourne declaration.
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- The next INI conference will be held in Berlin, Germany, in 2020.
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- The 5th International Nitrogen Conference in 2010 (N2010) was organized by INI and its South Asia regional centre inNew Delhi.
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- N2010 enabled INI to bring together its contributions to the Global Nitrogen Assessment.
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- Under this, Indian Nitrogen Group has released "**The Indian Nitrogen Assessment**", India's first-ever such attempt to studynitrogen pollution.
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- INI is coordinated by a Steering Committee, led by a chair and six regional centre directors representing, Africa, Europe, Latin America, North America, South Asia and East Asia.
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- Recently, Indian scientist-academician, N Raghuram, has been elected Chair of the Steering Committee of INI.
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Hubble Space Telescope

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- NASA's Hubble have recently captured one of the largest panoramic views of star birth in the distant universe, featuring about 15,000 galaxies.
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- It is the world's first large, space-based optical telescope, named in honor of astronomer Edwin Hubble.
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- The Hubble is a joint project between NASA and the European Space Agency.
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- Sun is the energy source of this space based telescope.
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- It captured the image of the star birth in the Ultraviolet, Infrared and visible light range.
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Fall Armyworm

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- It is an invasive agricultural pest discovered in the Maize field in the State of Telangana.
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- It was first reported in Karnataka by the Indian Council for Agricultural Research.
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- It is a major maize pest in North America and it arrived in Africa in 2016.
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- It has spread to Central and Western Africa in 2016 and has proved very hard to control.
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- It prefers Maize, but can feed on 80 species of plants, including rice, sorghum, millet, sugarcane and cotton.
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- It can be controlled with insecticides, through natural enemies or by inter-cropping.
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Source: The Hindu, BusinessLine

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