Prelim Bits 20-03-2018

Saksham Scholarship Scheme

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- The scheme was launched in 2014-15, with the objective of encouraging economically weaker differently-able students to pursue technical education at Diploma and Degree levels.
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- In other words, it aims to provide assistance to 1000 specially able children to pursue Technical Education.
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- It is implemented by Ministry of Human Resource and Development.
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- Other schemes of similar name,
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\n Project Saksham \n	\n Ministry of Finance \n	\n Its objective is to develop a New Indirect Tax Network (Systems Integration) of the Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC). \n
\n Project Saksham \n	\n Ministry of Railways \n	\n It is a comprehensive training program for all employees of Indian Railways to boost productivity & efficiency \n

\n Saksham (Sanrakshan Kshamta Mahotsav) \n	\n Ministry Of Petroleum and Natural gas \n	\n It is an annual flagship event to create focused attention on fuel conservation through people centric activities \n
\n Saksham \n	\n Ministry of Rural Development \n	\n Capacity Building program - a training module that uses Remote Sensing and GIS tools for project planning and monitoring component. \n

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Seychelles' coral reefs

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- Coral reef restoration program is being carried out to save the coral reefs in Seychelles,
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- The restoration project involves nurturing fragments of corals in underwater nurseries and then reintroducing them in to their natural habitat.
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- Tiny coral fragments, once collected from the sea floor, are nurtured in tanks and then, transferred to an underwater "rope nursery" or improvised skeleton.
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- The Seychelles in some areas lost up to 90% of its coral reefs in 1998 in an environmental event known as bleaching.
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- In coral bleaching, the corals in warm water expel the colorful algae that live within their skeletons and they starve without their nutrients.
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- “Super corals” were chosen for regrowth and transplanting as they were resilient to the recent 2016 coral bleaching.
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- Click here to know about threats to coral reefs.
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World Water Development Report

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- UN calculated that an estimated 3.6 billion people live in areas where water can be scarce at least one month per year in its World water Development Report 2018.
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- The WWDR is an annual and thematic report that focuses on different strategic water issues each year.
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- It aims to provide decision-makers with the tools to implement sustainable use of our water resources.
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- The WWDR is the UN-Water flagship report on water.
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- This year’s report ‘Nature Based Solutions for Water’ report that focuses on nature-based solutions, such as China’s rainwater recycling, India’s forest regeneration and Ukraine’s artificial wetlands to improve the quality and access of clean water.
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World Sparrow day

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- World Sparrow Day is celebrated on March 20 every year.
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- The objective in celebrating it is to educate people about the threat posed by polluted urban environments and the indifference of humans to house sparrows
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- It also encourages the appreciation of common biodiversity, a change from the attention surrounding rare and exotic species.
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- It is an international initiative by the Nature Forever Society (NFS) of India in collaboration with the Eco-Sys Action Foundation (France) and other national and international organization across the world.
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- Nature Forever Society, generally referred to as NFS, is a non-governmental, non-profit organization devoted to conserve House Sparrows.
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- House Sparrow has been listed as Least Concern on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List.
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Impact of Permafrost thawing

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- A new study has found that the permafrost in the coldest northern Arctic is thawing at an unprecedented rate.
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- Its continuous thawing could mean massive release of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane into the atmosphere.
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- Permafrost is soil that has remained frozen for years or centuries under topsoil that covers about 24% of the northern Hemisphere.
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- It is formed in a climate where the mean annual air temperature is 0 degree Celsius or lesser which is found in Siberia and a few other parts of Russia, the Tibetan Plateau, Alaska, Northern Canada, Greenland, and parts of Scandinavia.
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- It contains carbon-rich organic matter, including the remains of plants and animals that died and froze without decaying.
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- Scientists estimate that the world’s permafrost holds about 1,500 billion tons of carbon, almost double the amount of carbon that is currently in the atmosphere.
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International day of Happiness

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- The General Assembly of the United Nations declared 20th March as the International Day of Happiness.
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- This year’s theme is: **Share Happiness** — focusing on the importance of relationships, kindness and helping each other.
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- The day is to recognize the relevance of happiness and well-being as universal goals and aspirations in the lives of human beings around the world.
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- Also to highlight the importance of their recognition in public policy objectives.
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- Click here to know about world Happiness report
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Map of the Day

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Africa – Water Bodies

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- Lake Victoria is the world’s second largest fresh water lake and source of the White Nile.
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- Lake Tana is the main reservoir of Blue Nile and also the largest lake of Ethiopia.
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- Lake Chad is located in the Sahelian zone west central Africa at the conjunction of Chad, Cameroon, Nigeria, and Niger.
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Source: PIB, The Hindu, Business Standard

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