Prelim Bits 22-12-2018

Asiatic Lion Conservation Project

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- Ministry of Environment has recently launched Asiatic Lion Conservation Project.
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- It aims to protect and conserve the world's last ranging free population of Asiatic Lion and its associated ecosystem.
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- Habitat improvement, scientific interventions, disease control and veterinary care supplemented with adequate eco development will be carried out under the project.
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- The project will be funded from the Centrally Sponsored Scheme - Development of Wildlife Habitat (CSS-DWH) with 60:40 share ratio of Central and State government.
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- Asiatic Lion that once ranged from Persia (Iran) to Palamau in Eastern India were almost driven to extinction by hunting and habitat loss.
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- According to 2015 census, it is found in Gir Protected Area Network that includes Gir National Park, Gir Sanctuary, Pania Sanctuary, Mitiyala Sanctuary adjoining reserved forests, protected forests.
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- It is included in 21 critically endangered species for recovery programme and financial assistance under the species recovery component of CSS-DWH.
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Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats (IDWH)

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- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has recently approved continuation of the IDWH beyond the 12thPlan period from 2017-18 to 2019-20.

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- It is a centrally sponsored umbrella scheme consists of Project Tiger, Development of Wildlife Habitats and Project Elephant.
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- The schemes would result in overall strengthening/ consolidation of tiger, elephant and wildlife conservation in the country.
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- Besides, it would also address the Man-Animal conflict effectively and benefit the communities relocating from core protected areas.
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- The implementation of the schemes would be done through the respective States in designated Tiger Reserves, Protected Areas and Elephant Reserves.
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SDG India Index

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- The index has been released by NITI Aayog in collaboration with the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI), Global Green Growth Institute and United Nations in India.
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- It tracks progress of all States and UTs on 62 Priority Indicators based on each aggregate performance across 14 SDGs selected by NITI Aayog.
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- The score ranges between 0 (performing poor) and 100 (achieved national target in meeting SDG).
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- According to the Index, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu are progressing at a faster rate towards the SDG set for 2030.
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- Among the UTs, Chandigarh is the front runner followed by Puducherry.
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- U.P, Bihar and Assam are progressing at a slower rate.
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- Tamil Nadu is the top scorer in eradicating poverty and also providing clean and affordable energy.
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- The average score for the States was the worst in gender equality, in creating sustainable cities and communities, in enabling industry, innovation, and infrastructure, and in eradicating hunger.
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International Press Institute

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- According to Death Watch list published by International Press Institute, 78 journalists were killed in 2018.
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- IPI’s Death Watch lists journalists and media staff who were deliberately targeted because of their profession either because of their reporting or simply because they were journalists as well as those who lost their lives while on assignment.
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- IPI is a global network of editors, journalists and media executives who share a common dedication to quality, independent journalism.
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- Its headquarters is based in is Vienna.
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- It represents leading digital, print and broadcast news outlets in nearly 100 countries.
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- According to its 2017 report, India and Mexico are the two countries where the greatest number of recent cases are pending investigation.
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Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS)

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- It is a 155mm, 52 calibre gun being developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation.
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- Indian Army has recently begun finalising the Preliminary Specifications Qualitative Requirements (PSQR) for the gun system.
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- DRDO developed the gun system in two parallel protocols.
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- The gun is currently weighing about 18 tonnes while the ideal weight is 14-15 tonnes.
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- Significant features of the gun system - All-electric drive, high mobility, quick deployability, auxiliary power mode, advanced communications system, automated command and control system.
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Source: PIB, The Hindu, The New Indian Express

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