Prelim Bits 23-02-2018

Press Freedom-Corruption Perception Index

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- India is a worst regional offender of press freedom in Asia Pacific, according to Corruption Perception Index.
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- Transparency International finds crackdowns on NGOs and media are associated with higher levels of corruption in the world.
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- On average, every week at least one journalist is killed in a country that is highly corrupt.
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- The analysis by Transparency International showed that in the last six years, more than 9 out of 10 journalists were killed in countries that score 45 or less on the Corruption Perceptions Index.
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- Transparency International is a Berlin-based non-government organization.
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Echindas

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- Echidnas, also called spiny anteaters, are mammals
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- Echidnas are one of the world’s oldest surviving mammals.
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- They are egg-laying mammals.
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- It is listed as ‘least concern’ in IUCN classification.

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- However, the short-beaked echidna found only in Australia and Papua Guinea is threatened**.**
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- The main threats are land clearing and habitat loss ,traffic, feral cats and potentially the rapidly changing climate.
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Humanoid Robot- Sophia

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- Sophia is the world's first AI powered humanoid robot
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- It was a part of the World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT), 2018, held in Telegana, India.
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- A Humanoid may be defined as something that resembles or looks like a human and having their characteristics like opposing thumb etc,
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- A Humanoid robot is fully automated as it can adapt to its surroundings and continue with its goals, as the case with Sophia.
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- Sophia with her incredible human likeness and expressiveness is an evolving genius machine.
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- Sophia, with a perfect skin and soft facial muscles, can give as many as 66 facial expressions.
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Gobar Dhan

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- During the budget, the finance minister announced the launch of "GOBAR-Dhan" (Galvanising Organic Bio-Agro Resources-Dhan).

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- The initiative has two objectives:
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1. To make villages clean and generate wealth
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2. Energy from cattle and other waste.
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- The GOBAR-Dhan initiative is expected to convert cattle dung and other organic waste to compost, biogas and even larger scale bio-CNG units.
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- The Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin will pilot this initiative.
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PM’s Awards for Excellence in Public Administration, 2018

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- Government of India has instituted the scheme to acknowledge, recognize and reward the extraordinary and innovative work done by Districts / organizations of the Central and State Governments.
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- The Award aims to bring about transparency, improvement in approaches, systems and processes in the delivery of public services.
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- Following four priority programmes have been identified for the awards this year:
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1. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana,
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2. Promoting Digital Payments,
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3. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban & Rural, and
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4. Deen Dayal Upadhayay Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDUGKY).
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- The awards will be presented on Civil Services Day, 2018 function to be organized by Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.
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- Every year on 21st of April (Civil Services Day) the awards for excellence in Public Administration are given.
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SARAS

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- India’s indigenous light transport aircraft SARAS has been successfully test flown for a second time recently.
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- The design and development of the aircraft is being done by CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories, NAL.
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- Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, HAL has been identified as the production agency for the military version of SARAS.
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- SARAS Mk 2 will be ideal for commuter connectivity under Government of India’s UDAAN Scheme.
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- It can be used for variety of applications like air taxi, aerial search/survey, executive transport, disaster management, border patrol, coast guard, ambulance and other community services.
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Source: PIB, The Hindu, Business Standard

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