Prelim Bits 25-12-2018

Paika Rebellion

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- Prime Minister has recently released the commemorative stamp and coin on Paika Rebellion.
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- The setting up of a Chair on the Paika Rebellion, in Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, was also announced.
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- It was an armed rebellion against the British East India Company's rule in Odisha in 1817.
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- The Paiks were the traditional landed militia of Khurda, Odisha.
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- Rulers of Khurda were traditionally the custodians of Jagannath Temple and ruled as the deputy of Lord Jagannath on earth.
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- The British, having established their sway over Bengal Province occupied the Khurda’s land in 1803 and took over the hereditary rent-free lands granted to Paikas.
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- The Paikas rose in armed rebellion in 1817 under the leadership of Baxi Jagabandhu.
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- The tribals of Ghumusar and other sections of the population actively took part in it.
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- Many scholars, researchers and historians have opined that the Paika Rebellion was India’s first organized armed rebellion against British Raj.
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Bogibeel Bridge

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- It is India’s longest rail-road bridge and 4th project across the river Brahmaputra.
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- It will connect Dhibrugarh and Dhemaji in Assam.
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- It aids connectivity between the north and south banks of Brahmaputra, falling in the eastern part of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.
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- It is a double deck bridge with a two-line railway track on the lower deck and a three-lane road on the upper deck.
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- It will reduce train travel time between Tinsukia in Assam to Arunachal Pradesh’s Naharlagun by 10 hours.
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- Foundation stone for the bridge was laid in the year 1997 and North East Frontier Railway constructed the bridge.
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National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK)

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- NCSK has recommended that all states across India should have individual state safai karamchari commissions in order to end the practice of manual scavenging.
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- NCSK was constituted as a statutory body via an act of parliament National Commission for Safai Karamcharis Act, 1993.
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- The act was lapsed in 2004.
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- Now, it is a non-statutory body and its tenure is extended from time to time through government resolutions.
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- It makes recommendations in its annual report to Social Justice and Empowerment ministry.
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- Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 outlaws manual scavenging but people still being employed in the manual cleaning of dry toilets, sewer and septic tanks.
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National Testing Agency

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- It is an autonomous body, constituted last year under the Ministry of Human Resources Development.
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- It has taken the mantle of conducting competitive exams like UGC-National Eligibility Test, NEET and JEE (Main) from CBSE.
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- It is likely to conduct board exams in various states from 2020.
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- This would reduce the burden of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).
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- The entrance examinations will be conducted in online mode at least twice a year, giving adequate opportunity to candidates.
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- There had been concerns of paper leaks, cheating scandals, outdated syllabus, etc with the CBSE. NTA is thus likely to address these shortfalls.
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Fall Armyworm

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- Tamil Nadu State government has recently launched awareness programme among farmers to fight invasive pest fall armyworm.
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- It has been wreaking havoc in the farmlands of Maize in the state of Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar and Assam.
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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: PIB, The Hindu, The New Indian Express

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