Prelim Bits 26-02-2018

Exercise MILAN

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- Milan is a eight-day mega naval exercise with an aim to expand regional cooperation and combat unlawful activities in critical sea lanes.
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- The exercise is being hosted by the **Indian Navy** under the aegis of the **Andaman and Nicobar Command**.
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- It is a biennial exercise that will host navies from 16 countries.
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- 'Milan' was first held in 1995 with the participation of five navies.
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- The aim of the initiative was to have an effective forum to discuss common concerns in the Indian Ocean Region and forge deeper cooperation among friendly navies.
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Daman and Diu

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- Prime Minister launched various development projects worth Rs.1000 crores in Daman & Diu recently.
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- Some of the projects launched are water treatment plant, electricity generation, solar power generation, university, gas pipeline and CNG station,flight connection under UDAN scheme.
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- Union Territory of Daman and Diu comprises two districts namely Daman and Diu.
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- After Liberation on 1961 from Portuguese Rule Daman and Diu became a part of the U.T. of Goa, Daman and Diu.
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- Union territory of Daman and Diu came into existence on 1987 with Goa attaining the statehood.
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- Districts of Daman and Diu are near Gujarat State separated by about 700 kms from one another.
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- Diu District is an island on southern portion of Gujarat Peninsula and is joined with Una District of Gujarat State by two bridges over a sea creek.
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Ancient necropolis in Eygpt

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- Egypt’s Antiquities Ministry announced the discovery of an ancient necropolis near the Nile Valley city of Minya, **south of Cairo**.
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- Archaeologist found tombs belonging to priests of Thoth, the ancient god of the moon and wisdom in the area.
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- A tomb includes more than 1,000 statues and four well preserved alabaster canopic jars inscribed with hieroglyphics and designed to hold the mummified internal organs of their owner who was a high Priest of the god Thoth.
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- The priest’s mummy was also found decorated with blue and red beads and bronze gilded sheets.
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- The area is also known to include tombs, a funerary building and a large necropolis for thousands of mummified ibis and baboon birds, as well as other animals.
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- The recent discoveries across the country will help spur the vital tourism sector, which was hit hard by political turmoil following the 2011 uprising.
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Cashless economy

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- A recent survey by Nielsen India finds that there is a long distance to travel for companies that want to convert rural India into a cashless consumer economy.
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- In India, **just 63% of adults** have access to the formal financial system.
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- Rural India’s need for financial inclusion is urgent, as those who migrate to larger cities need to remit money back to their families.
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- There are 120 million migrant workers in India, and more than 80 per cent live in the inadequately connected rural areas who make 80 percent of domestic remittances.
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- Payments banks have particularly been useful for the remittances economy.
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- Nearly 50 per cent of such families transfer money through risky non-traditional channels like friends, family, unknown persons and agents that involves high chances of thefts, cheating and significantly higher transaction rates.
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Auroville

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- Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid homage to Shri Aurobindo,at the golden jubilee celebrations at Auroville,Puducherry.
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- Auroville is a universal township spread across Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.
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- The purpose of Auroville is to realise human unity – in diversity.
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- Today Auroville is recognised as the first and only internationally endorsed ongoing experiment in human unity and transformation of consciousness.
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- It is concerned with sustainable living and the future cultural, environmental, social and spiritual needs of mankind.
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Tungabadra Otter conservation reserve

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- Karnataka declared first otter conservation reserve, 34 km along the Tungabhadra ,in 2016.
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- The Otter reserve stretches from from Mudlapura village to Kampli in Ballari district.
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- The reserve also passes through Hampi, a UNESCO heritage site.
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- The reserve houses a good number of smooth-clawed otter, Eurasian and smooth-coated otters, mahseer fish, fresh water crocodiles and giant soft shelled turtles.
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- Smooth-coated otter is distributed throughout the country from the Himalayas and to the south in India.
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- According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species, Smooth-coated species is vulnerable.
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- The highest protection under Schedule 1 (small-clawed otter) and Schedule 2 (smooth-coated otter) of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 is provided for the otters.
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Source: PIB, The Hindu, Business Standard.

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