Prelim Bits 26-07-2018

Global Disability Summit 2018

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- The first ever Global Disability Summit was recently held in London.
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- It was organised by the UK Department for International Development along with International Disability Alliance and the Government of Kenya.
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- The motto of the Conference was to firm up the commitments of the country leaders towards the cause of persons with disabilities.
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- The objectives of the summit are,\n
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    - raise global attention and focus on a neglected area;
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    - bring in new voices and approaches to broaden engagement;
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    - mobilise new global and national commitments on disability; and,
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    - showcase best practice and evidence from across the world.
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- Union Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment represented India in the summit.
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Kala Azar

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- An outbreak of kala azar was recently reported from the kozhikode district, after two months of Nipah virus outbreak.

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- Visceral leishmaniasis (VL), also known as kala-azar, is caused by the **protozoan** Leishmania parasites.
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- It is transmitted to humans through infected sandflies.
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- It is characterized by irregular bouts of fever, weight loss, enlargement of the spleen and liver, and anaemia.
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- The parasite migrates to the internal organs such as the liver, spleen, and bone marrow, and, if left untreated, may result in the death.
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- It is endemic to the Indian subcontinent in 119 districts in four countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal).
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- India itself accounts for half the global burden of the disease.
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- India has missed the 2017 deadline for elimination of Kala Azar.
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- Elimination is defined as reducing the annual incidence of Kala Azar to less than 1 case per 10,000 people at the subdistrict level.
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Dedicated Freight Corridors

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- Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) project is a broad gauge freight corridor being constructed by the Indian Railways.
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- It aims to provide an efficient and reliable transportation system through construction of **six freight corridors** traversing the entire country.
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- Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India (DFCCIL) is a special purpose vehicle of the railways which has been entrusted with the job to develop DFCs in the country.
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- Ministry of Railways have sanctioned the implementation of Western and Eastern Dedicated freight corridors.
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- The commissioning of Western and Eastern DFCs is targeted in phases by 2019/2020.
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- **Western DFC** runs from Dadri near Delhi to Jawahar Lal Nehru Port Trust in Mumbai.
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- It covers the States of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra.
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- It is funded by World Bank.
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- **Eastern DFC** is from Ludhiana in Punjab to Dankuni in West Bengal.
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- It covers the States of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal.
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- It is funded by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).
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- All the freight traffic that is currently on the rail routes between Delhi and Mumbai and Delhi and Kolkata would be moved to these corridors in parts to decongest the existing lines.
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- **Other DFC** - East-West DFC (Kolkata-Mumbai), North-South DFC (Delhi-Chennai), East Coast DFC (Kharagpur-Vijaywada) and the Southern DFC (Chennai-Goa).
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Ethanol Bio-refineries

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- Biofuels are fuels produced directly or indirectly from organic material biomass, including plant materials and animal waste.
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- Primary biofuels are organic materials used in an unprocessed form, primarily for heating, cooking or electricity production.
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- Ethanol is a secondary biofuel which is produced through processing of biomass.
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- **First generation** biofuels are produced directly from food crops.
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- **Second Generation (2G)** biofuels are produced from marginal croplands unsuitable for food production.
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- Oil PSUs have entered into MoUs with State Governments and Technology

Providers for setting up five 2G ethanol bio-refineries.
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- In 2016, the foundation stone of India's first 2G ethanol bio-refinery in Bathinda, Punjab has been laid.
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- In the National Policy on Biofuels 2018, Government has allowed B grade heavy molasses, sugarcane juice and damaged food grains as feedstocks to increase availability of ethanol.
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New Nuclear Plants in India

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- At present, there are 9 nuclear power reactors at various stages of construction.
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\n**State**\n	\n**Location**\n
\nGujarat\n	\nKakrapar (2 reactors)\n
\nRajasthan\n	\nRawatbhata (2 reactors)\n
\nTamil Nadu\n	\nKudankulam (2 reactors)\n
	\nKalpakkam (1 reactor)\n
\nHaryana\n	\nGorakhpur (1 reactor)\n

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- There are 12 nuclear power reactors accorded administrative approval and financial sanction.
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\n**State**\n	\n**Location (Each 2 reactors)**\n
\nHaryana\n	\nGorakhpur\n
\nRajasthan\n	\nMahi-Banswara\n
\nKarnataka\n	\nKaiga\n
\nMadhya Pradesh\n	\nChutka\n
\nTamil Nadu\n	\nKudankulam\n

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- Government has also accorded in principle approval for setting up more reactors in future. They are,
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\n**State**\n	\n**Site**\n	\n**Collaboration**\n
\nMaharashtra\n	\nJaitapur\n	\nFrance\n
\nAndhra Pradesh\n	\nKovvada\n	\nUSA\n
\nGujarat\n	\nChhaya Mithi Virdi\n	
\nWest Bengal\n	\nHaripur\n	\nRussia\n
\nMadhya Pradesh\n	\nBhimpur\n	\nIndigenous\n

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Myanmar Joins ISA

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- Myanmar has recently joined the India-initiated International Solar Alliance (ISA), becoming its 68th member.
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- International Solar Alliance was launched by India and France at the Paris climate summit in 2015.
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- It is open to all 121 prospective member countries falling between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn.
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- Click here to know more about ISA.
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Source: The Hindu, PIB

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