Prelim Bits 27-03-2018

Principle scientific advisor to government of India

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- K Vijay Raghavan, one of the most distinguished biologists of the country, was appointed Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India.
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- The Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA), a post created in 1999, is the topmost advisor to the government on all matters related to scientific policy.
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- The office of the PSA is one of the three scientific bodies the government relies on for advice on matters relating to science.
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- It acts as the interface between scientific institutions and the government.
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- The other two are Science Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (SAC-PM) and Science Advisory Council to the Cabinet (SAC-C).
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- Both SAC-PM and SAC-C were not reconstituted under the present government.
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Bt Cotton

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- Cotton farmers all over the world were losing much of their cotton to tobacco budworms, cotton bollworms, and pink bollworms
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- Bt cotton is an insect-resistant transgenic crop designed to combat the bollworm.
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- It was created by genetically altering the cotton genome to express a microbial protein from the bacterium Bacillus thuringiensis.
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- Traditionally, the cotton bollworm has been combated by the use of pesticides.

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- Bt cotton was developed with the intention of reducing the amount of pesticides needed for cotton monoculture, thereby reducing the cost of growing cotton and reducing the environmental impact of heavy pesticide use.
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- Bt cotton contains the following three genes inserted via genetic engineering techniques:
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1. Cry1Ac gene
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2. nptII gene
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3. aad gene
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- NPTII and AAD proteins are used as a selectable marker and have no pesticidal activity and are not known to be toxic to any species
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- In 2005, Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) of India approved only one variety of Bt cotton hybrid out of the 13 listed for commercial cultivation.
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Down syndrome

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- A' National Conference on Down Syndrome' was organized by the National Trust under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment recently.
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- Down syndrome is a chromosomal condition associated with intellectual and

learning disabilities.
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- Delayed development and behavioral problems are often reported in children with the syndrome.
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- The United Nations General Assembly in 2011 declared 21st March of every year as World Down Syndrome Day (WDSD) to create awareness about this disease.
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- The National Trust is a statutory body set up by an Act of Parliament for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.
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E-tribes India

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- Ministry of tribal affairs will soon launch e-Tribes India.
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- The Launch of e-Tribes includes Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India's (TRIFED) websites www.tribesindia.com, www.trifed.in and Retail Inventory Software and M-commerce app.
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- The TRIFED under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs is going Digital as per the vision document of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
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- It will also include the launch of 'Tribes India' Banners at Amazon, Snapdeal, Paytm & GeM.
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- This initiative will lead to expansion of tribal commerce and the availability of tribal products over large area, reaping greater benefits for tribal artisans.
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- TRIFED also organizes exhibitions like National Tribal Craft Expo called "Aadi Mahotsav".
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- TRIFED is a PSU under Ministry of Tribal Affairs with a objective is to promote tribal art and craft for the benefit of tribal artisans of the country.
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Indian Railways Finance Corporation (IRFC)

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- Ministry of Finance has approved Government guarantee for Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) bonds to be subscribed by Life Insurance Corporation (LIC).
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- IRFC was set up 1986 as the dedicated financing arm of the Indian Railways for mobilizing funds from domestic as well as overseas Capital Markets.
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- RFC is a Public Sector Enterprise under the administrative control of the Ministry of Railways, Govt. of India.
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- It is also registered as Systemically Important Non–Deposit taking Non Banking Financial Company (NBFC – ND-SI) and Infrastructure Finance Company (NBFC- IFC) with Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
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- The primary objective of IRFC is to meet the predominant portion of **'Extra Budgetary Resources' (EBR) requirement** of the Indian Railways through market borrowings at the most competitive rates and terms.
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- IRFC has also been lending to various entities in Railway sector like Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL), Railtel, Konkan Railway Corporation Limited (KRCL), Pipavav Railway Corporation Limited (PRCL) etc.
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Idu mishmis

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- In a unique initiative, the famous Madhavpur Mela in Gujarat saw its first-ever cultural integration with the North-East.
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- The event witnessed performance of Arunachal Pradesh mishmi tribes and Haroba folk dance of Manipur.
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- The Idu-Mishmi is a major sub-tribe of Mishmi group.
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- Their brother tribes are namely the Digaru-Mishmi (TARAONS) and the Miju-Mishmi (KAMANS).
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- They inhabit the Lohit district, Dibang Valley district and Lower Dibang Valley district in Arunachal Pradesh.
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- They are of mongoloid stock and speak the Tibeto-Burman language.
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- Idus are expert in handicraft and weaving.
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Map of the day

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Asia Political

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- Uzbekistan is a **double landlocked country**, which means that a country is surrounded by other land locked countries.
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- In this case of Uzbekistan, it is surrounded by Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which are also landlocked countries.
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- Another such double land locked country in the world is Liechtenstein in Europe.
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- **North Korea** shares border with China and **Russia.**
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- **Laos** is the only landlocked country in South-East Asia.
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- Singapore and Brunei share border only with Malaysia.

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- Malaysia also shares its border with Indonesia.
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Source: PIB, The Hindu, Business Standard

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