Prelim Bits 27-09-2018

Champions of the Earth

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- It is the UN's highest environmental honor.
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- It was launched in the year 2005 by UNEP.
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- It recognizes exemplary individuals and organisations whose actions created positive impact on environment.
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- It recognizes laureates in the following categories,\n
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1. Lifetime Achievement
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2. Policy Leadership
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3. Action and Inspiration
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4. Entrepreneurial Vision
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5. Science and Innovation
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- In its 2018 edition, Indian Prime Minister and France President has been awarded under Policy Leadership category for their International Solar Alliance (ISA) initiative.
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- Indian PM Modi has also been awarded for his pledge to eliminate single use plastic in India by 2022.
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- Cochin International Airport has also been honored with the award for Entrepreneurial Vision, for its leadership in the use of sustainable energy.
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- The awards will be presented during the Champions of the Earth Gala in New York City, on the sidelines of the 73rd UN General Assembly.
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Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN)

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- GSTN provides the technological support to the GST.
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- It handles massive amounts of data and deals with crucial data sets such as indirect tax returns and refunds.
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- Union Cabinet has recently approved increasing the government stake in GSTN to 100 per cent.
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- At present, The government holds a 49% stake, with Centre and states share of 24.5% each.
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- The balance 51% is held by five non-government institutions.
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- Thus, the government will acquire the entire 51 per cent equity held by the non-government institutions.
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- The stake will be acquired equally by the Central and state governments.
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- The Cabinet also decided to allow change in the existing composition of the GSTN board.
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- It will have a total of 11 directors including a Chairman and a Chief Executive (CEO).
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- While 3 directors each will be nominated by the Central and state governments, 3 other independent directors would be nominated by the board of directors.
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Astra Missile

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- Astra is the indigenously developed Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile (BVRAAM).
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- It was successfully test fired from Su-30 aircraft.

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- Astra is the best in class weapon system.
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- It comprises a launcher and a missile and it is designed as a BVR missile with a long range of 110 km and short range of 20 km.
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Opportunity Rover

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- NASA's mars orbiter has recently spotted Opportunity Rover on the red planet for the first time since it went into hibernation after a dust storm.
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- A high-resolution camera aboard NASA’s Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter captured the image of the rover in Perseverance Valley in Mars.
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- Opportunity Rover was launched by NASA in 2003 to land in red planet Mars.
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- It was originally planned for 90-day mission. But it has far outlasted its planned mission by 55 times longer than originally planned.
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Click here to know more about it.

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Jan Dhan Darshak

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- It is a mobile application launched by the Finance Ministry as a part of Financial Inclusion.
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- It is jointly developed by National Informatics Centre and Ministry of Finance.
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- The app provide a citizen centric platform for locating financial service touch points across all providers such as banks, post office, CSC, etc at a given location in the country.
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Police Forces Rules

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- Ministry of Home affairs has recently notified new rules amalgamating police forces in six Union Territories.
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- The rules effectively mean that officers who are not direct IPS recruits could be posted in any of the six UTs and will be at the disposal of the Ministry.
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- It would include personnel currently employed in the Delhi Police, A&N Islands Police, Lakshadweep Police, Daman & Diu Police, Dadra and Nagar Haveli Police and Chandigarh Police.
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- The Rules will come into effect upon the promotion or direct recruitment of Inspectors to the post of ACP.
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- It is being viewed as the first step towards the creation of a central police cadre allowing for the posting of police personnel across the country irrespective of the force they are initially inducted into.
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Source: PIB, The Hindu, Economic Times

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