Prelim Bits 27-11-2017

Mahendragiri Gecko

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- A new species of gecko (lizards) belonging to the genus Hemidactylus was recently discovered from Mahendragiri hills in Andhra-Odisha border.
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- It is the second gecko to be found endemic to the Eastern Ghats area.
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- The first one “House Lizard” was discovered from Kanger Ghati National Park in Chattisgarh.
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- Scientists discovered that Mahendragiri geckos were not a population of geckos found in Western Ghats in Maharashtra and it is the latest addition to the species list of the Eastern Ghats.
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- The lizard is the 32nd species of Hemidactylus gecko found in India.
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- The discovery highlights the biodiversity importance of the region.
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- For the last 70 years, it did not get its rightful place in the classification scheme.
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Mamallapuram Stone Sculptures

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- The hand-crafted stone sculptures of Mamallapuram have been recently granted the Geographical Indications (GI) tag.
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- The exquisite rock-sculpting techniques exhibited in Mamallapuram date back to early 7th century CE.
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- The Pallava dynasty, which ruled the area between 6 and 9th centuries A.D., is responsible for the development of port town as a centre of art and architecture.

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- Mahendravarman (AD 580-630), his son Narasimhavarman I Mamalla (AD 630-668), Paramesvaravarman (A.D. 672-700) and Narasimhavarman II Rajasimha (A.D. 700-728) had contributed the most of sculptures.
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- Mamallapuram was named after the king Narasimhavarma Pallava, who was also known as Mamallan (great wrestler).
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- Sculptors use blue metal for stone sculptors instead of granite which has high density and very costly.
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GI tags

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- Tamil Nadu is first among the states in India with regard to the number of GI tags for its products, while Uttar Pradesh comes second.
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- Darjeeling Tea was the first Indian product to get a Geographic Indication in the early 2000s.
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- Tamil Nadu has submitted 50 products of which 24 have been approved by the registry.
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- The most famous among these is the Kanchipuram silk.
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- Coimbatore wet grinder, artisans of Vadasery in Nagercoil who make dazzling jewellery of a unique kind for temples, Tanjavur Dancing Doll are some of the products that have obtained the GI certificate.
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Neelakurinji Reserve

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- The reserve is located in Munnar in Idukki district of Kerala.
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- The government has decided to redraw the boundaries of the Neelakurinji reserve.
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- The government had issued a preliminary notification in 2006 reserving a

3,200-hectare area for Neelakurinji bloom.
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- It blooms once in 12 years and it is expected to bloom in July, 2018.
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- The notification had triggered an outcry from the local community citing the presence of habitations, institutions, and places of worship within the notified area.
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- Click here to know more about Neelakurinji.
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UMANG App

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- UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance) mobile app allow citizens to access government services on a single platform.
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- The services live on the app include Aadhaar, DigiLocker, Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS) among others.
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- It is expected to provide access to over 1,200 services of various government organisations in states and at the Centre as well as utility payments.
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- Using the app, citizens will be able to access Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) services, apply for a new PAN, and can register under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana.
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International Gita Mahotsava – 2017

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- The International Gita Mahotsava-2017 was recently organized in Kurukshetra, Haryana.
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- It was inaugurated by the President of India.
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- The mahotsav which will conclude on December 3 will have Mauritius as partner country and Uttar Pradesh as partner state.
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Source: The Hindu, PIB

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