Prelim Bits 29-10-2018

Electoral Bonds

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- Government of India has recently notified the Electoral Bond Scheme 2018.
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- As per the provisions of the scheme, Electoral Bonds may be purchased by a person, who is a citizen of India or incorporated or established in India.
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- A person being an individual can buy Electoral Bonds, either singly or jointly with other individuals.
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- Political Parties which are eligible for receiving the electoral bonds must satisfy two criteria,
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1. The party must be registered under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (43 of 1951).
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2. It should secure not less 1% of the votes polled in the last General Election to the House of the People or the Legislative Assembly of the State.
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- The electoral bonds shall be encashed by an eligible Political Party only through a Bank account with the Authorized Bank.
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- The bonds shall be valid for 15 calendar days from the date of issue and no payment shall be made to any payee Political Party if the Electoral Bond is deposited after expiry of the validity period.
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ZSI survey on Moths

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- Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) has recently conducted a study on moths.
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- It revealed that moth insects are acting as pollinators to a number of flowering plants in the Himalayan ecosystem.
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- The insect order Lepidoptera comprises the butterflies, moths, and skippers.
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- They can be distinguished from all other insects by their two pairs of scale-covered wings and are renowned for their sense of smell.
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- For most Lepidoptera species, the vast majority of the life cycle is spent in the larval stage.
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- Butterflies and moths have numerous physical and behavioral differences. Eg. moths are nocturnal and butterflies are diurnal.
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- **Role of pollinators** – They are essential for the genetic exchange among flowering plants and the biodiversity among plants.
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- About 90% of the world's flowering plants are pollinated by animals.
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- Usually bees, wasps and butterflies are considered as prominent pollinators.
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- Almost two-thirds of common large moth species have declined over the last 40 years in some parts of world.
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- One of main reasons for the decline is light pollution (an increase in artificial light in moth habitats).
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AQI in Delhi

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- Air Quality Index is a number used to communicate to the public how polluted the air currently is or how polluted it isforecasted to become.
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- As AQI increases, an increasingly large percentage of the population is likely to experience increasinglyadverse health effects.
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- The AQI is most commonly used by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)

to describe ground-level ozonelevels.
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- According to CPCB report, AQI score in Delhi for the season reached poor and severe category recently.
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- The city registered an average AQI of 366, which falls in the ‘very poor’ category, based on the reading of 32 monitoring stations.
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- Accordingly, CPCB has issued health advisories and recommended stringent measures from November 1 to 10 forecasting further deterioration in air quality ahead of Diwali.
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- AQI takes in to account 8 pollutants and prepare a 6 grade colour code to reveal the severity of pollutants in air quality.
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- These pollutants are:
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1. Ground-level Ozone or O3
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2. Particulate Matter (soot and dust) - PM 5 and PM 10
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3. Carbon Monoxide or CO
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4. Sulphur Dioxide or SO2 and
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5. Nitrogen Dioxide or NO2
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6. Lead or Pb
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7. Ammonia or NH3
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Restructuring of Shang-dongs

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- Earlier this year, Buddhist monks in Leh’s Chushul village restructured a shang-dong into a stupa.
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- This was a symbolic gesture to mark peace between man and wolf.
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- Shang-dong is a traditional contraption used by Changpa people of Leh to capture the wolves that lift their prized pashmina goats.
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- This wolf trap is made of stones and buried in the ground.
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- Once the wolves leap in, the conical walls ensure they can’t clamber out.
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- Generally, these wolves are caught and stoned to death.
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- But researchers of the Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF), were long been concerned by the threats these traps posed to large carnivores including snow leopards.
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- They found Buddhist communities had more positive attitude towards carnivores and they integrated “locally relevant religious philosophies” into conservation.
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- It was also important to tighten the traditional link between culture, livelihood and conservation.
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- So the shang-dongs which are a part of Changpa culture were not destroyed but merely dismantled.
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- Additionally Pashmina wool produced by the people in the region are given ‘Snow Leopard Friendly’ certificate by NCF, if it meets 15 conditions including neutralising shang-dongs.
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- Others include rotational grazing, maintaining a village wildlife reserve where grazing and hunting are prohibited, predator-proofing livestock corrals and stopping all retaliatory killing of carnivores including wolves and snow leopards.
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Amur Falcons in Disputed territory

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- Amur falcons are the world’s longest travelling raptors.
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- They migrate annually during winter from their breeding grounds in

Mongolia, South-east Russia and northern China to warmer South Africa through India and across the Arabian Sea.
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- They feed on dragonflies that follow a similar migration path over Arabian Sea
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- Generally Doyang Lake near Pangti village in Nagaland's Wokha district is better known as a stopover for the Amur falcons during their annual migration.
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- But a flock of these falcons has been seen since 2010 in Umru village on the Assam-Meghalaya border.
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- Umru in Block II is one of 12 disputed areas along the Assam-Meghalaya border, since Meghalaya was carved out of Assam in 1972.
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- Assam claims the village is under East Karbi Anlong district while Meghalaya asserts it is under Ri-Bhoi district.
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- But these disputes are forgotten when the village welcomes the falcons in mid-October, uniting to ensure a safe stay for the birds.
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- Both Gorkha and Khasi tribal communities have made common cause in protection of the Amur falcons and have fixed a fine of Rs.25,000 for anyone caught ensnaring or killing the birds.
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- Amur Falcon Festival is also been organised since 2015.
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Source: PIB, The Hindu

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