Prelim Bits 30-07-2017

Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS)

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- Recently, RBI has given approval to National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to function as the Bharat Bill Payment Central Unit (BBPCU) and operate Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS).
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- This initiative will provide a major push to digital payments as it is a big step forward in formalising the bill payment system in the country.
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- BBPS is an integrated bill payment system in India offering interoperable bill payment service to customers through a network of agents, enabling multiple payment modes, and providing instant confirmation of payment.
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- NPCI will be responsible for setting business standards, rules and procedures for technical and business requirements for all the participants.
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- NPCI, as the BBPCU, will also undertake clearing and settlement activities related to transactions routed through BBPS.
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- Payments through BBPS may be made using cash, transfer cheques and electronic modes.
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- Bill aggregators and banks, which will function as operating units, will carry out the transactions for the customers.
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Muntra

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- Muntra is the country's first unmanned tank developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
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- Muntra is unmanned, remotely operated tank which has three variants such as Muntra-S, Muntra-M, Muntra-N.
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- Muntra-S is the country's first tracked unmanned ground vehicle developed for unmanned surveillance missions.
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- Muntra-M is for detecting mines and Muntra-N is for operation in areas where there is a nuclear radiation or bio weapon risk.
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Digital Evolution Index

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- The Index is a comprehensive research that tracks the progress countries have made in developing their digital economies and integrating connectivity into the lives of billions.
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- The Index measures four key drivers - supply, consumer demand, institutional environment, and innovation.
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- According to the Digital Evolution Index 2017, India has been categorised under the "break out" segment among 60 countries.
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- The 'break out' segment refers to countries that have relatively lower absolute levels of digital advancement, yet remain poised for growth and are attractive to investors by virtue of their potential.
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Removal of oil spill

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- Scientists have developed a simple, cheap and environment-friendly system for quick absorption of crude oil from the sea following marine spill.
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- They have developed a hydrophobic sorbent that can suck up oil and congeal it.
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- The hydrophobic sorbent is developed by using a cheap raw material

(mannitol) and cellulose pulp as a matrix.
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- Mannitol was converted into a hydrophobic gelator through a one-step process and a solution was made using this compound.
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- Thus the hydrophobic material automatically becomes oil-loving and takes up oil when it comes in contact with it.
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- The sorbent can be easily applied over oil-water mixture and no solvent is needed for spraying the gelator thus making it environmental benign.
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- The gelator adsorbed on the surface of cellulose fibre is able to absorb oil when it comes in contact with it.
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World Day against Trafficking in Persons

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- United Nations office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) observes 30th July as World day against trafficking in persons.
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- The Theme selected for this year is “Act to Protect and Assist Trafficked Persons”.
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