

Prelim Bits 31-03-2018

National Annual Rural Sanitation Survey (NARSS)

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- The National Annual Rural Sanitation Survey (NARSS) 2017-18 reveals that 68% of rural households in India use the toilet when required.

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- The survey was conducted by a third party agency Kantar Public, as a requirement by the World Bank to begin payout on its \$1.5 billion loan to the Swacch Bharat Abhiyan-Gramin.

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- The provisional summary report of the survey found that 77% of all rural households now have access to toilets, and that 93.4% of those who had access to toilets used them regularly.

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- Kerala and Mizoram top the list of States, with 100% of households which do not practice open defecation.

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- Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are at the bottom of the rankings, with less than 44% of such households.

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- The following 11 states/UTs namely Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Gujarat, Chandigarh, Daman and Diu, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Meghalaya had been declared Open Defecation Free in India.

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Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy and Heat Transport mission (InSight)

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- NASA is to send the first-ever mission dedicated to exploring the deep interior of Mars, called InSight.
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- It will be the first NASA mission since the Apollo moon landings to place a seismometer, a device that measures quakes, on the soil of another planet.
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- It is a Mars Lander designed to give the Red Planet its first thorough checkup since it formed 4.5 billion years ago.
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- The lander uses cutting edge instruments to measure the planet's "vital signs": its "pulse" (seismology), "temperature" (heat flow), and "reflexes" (precision tracking).
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- It is the first outer space robotic explorer to study in-depth the "inner space" of Mars: its crust, mantle, and core
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- Two cubesats named Mars Cube One or MarCO are also launched.
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- MarCO will relay back InSight data as it enters the Martian atmosphere and lands.
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- It will be a first test of miniaturized CubeSat technology at another planet.
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Kadakhnath Chicken

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- Madhya Pradesh has got the Geographical Indication (GI) Tag for Kadakhnath Chicken.
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- Kadakhnath is a black-feathered chicken known for its flavorful meat and found mainly in the districts of Madhya Pradesh.
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- The breed is native to Jhabua, Alirajpur and parts of Dhar district of eastern Madhya Pradesh.
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- The protein-rich meat of Kadaknath, chicks and eggs are sold at a much higher rate than other varieties of chicken.
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- The Kadaknath is popular mainly for its adaptability, and the good-tasting black meat, which is believed to have medicinal properties
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- In the recent past, the Madhya Pradesh government had launched a mobile app called 'MP Kadaknath'.
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Ladakh Lakes

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- Ladakh is a part of the Trans-Himalayan range; it is in the northern most area of Jammu and Kashmir.
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- The natural high altitude salt water lakes — Tso Kar, Tso Morari and Pangong Tso, are a typical feature of Ladakh
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- They lie in the sweeping valleys of Rupshu and the Changthang Plains.
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- The **Pangong Tso is a 'high grassland lake'** located at an altitude of 14,270 ft on the Sino-Indian Line of Actual Control.
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- The lake is endorheic in nature and completely freezes during winter.
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- Endorheic regions are considered closed systems as surface waters drain to inland termini whence they evaporate or seep away rather than draining to the sea or ocean.
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- The **Tso Morari, a pearl shaped 'Mountain Lake'** lies on the Ladakhi part of the Changthang plateau.
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- It is encircled by mountains and said to be the 'Jewel of the Rupshu Valley' is at an altitude of 14,836 ft.
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- Tso Morari Wetlands conservation reserve is situated here which is also a Ramsar Conservtion site.
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- The **Tso Kar or 'white lake'** lies in the Rupshu Valley in the Southern part of Ladakh.

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- It is called as white lake as the white salt of the water deposits all over the lake shore.

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- The Tso-Kar area is inhabited by the Khampas or Rupsa Chang, a nomadic group

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Land Degradation

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- Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Assessment Report is the world's first comprehensive evidence-based assessment of land degradation and restoration.

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- Land degradation is defined as the temporary or permanent decline in the productive capacity of the land, and the diminution of the productive potential.

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- It says that land degradation has been driving species to extinction and intensifying climate change.

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- The degradation is also a major contributor to mass human migration and increased conflict.

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- By 2014, more than 1.5 billion hectares of natural ecosystems had been converted into croplands.

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- Less than 25 per cent of the earth's land surface has escaped substantial impact of human activity.

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- The report estimates that 50 million- 700 million people will be forced to migrate by 2050

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Ratna Bhandar

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- Recently, the state government's law department granted conditional permission to open the Puri Jagannath Temple's Ratna Bhandar.

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- The permission was granted for inspection by experts of the ASI to assess its structural stability and safety.

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- Precious jewellery and ornaments of the deities of the temple are kept in the Ratna Bhandar.

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- The Bhandar is inspected after 34 years.

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- During the last inspection in 1984, only three chambers out of seven were inspected. Therefore, no one knows what is inside the rest of the chambers.

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- Puri Jagannath temple is in the state of Odisha.

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- It is one of the four 'Dhams' the Hindus considered holy while, the other three 'Dhams' are Badrinath, Dwarka and Rameswaram.

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Source: PIB, The Hindu, Business Standard

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