Prelim Bits 31-05-2018

MoU signed for management of Widows' Home

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- The Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Department of Women and Child Development, Government of Uttar Pradesh in for management of Home of Widows at Sunrakh Bangar, Vrindavan.
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- The Ministry of Women and Child Development has constructed this shelter home for widows with a capacity of 1000 inmates.
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- The Home shall be run by the Government of Uttar Pradesh themselves or by any state government institution or by any civil society or by any reputed non-government organization to be decided by the State Government.
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- According to the MoU, the Government of Uttar Pradesh shall be responsible for activities including setting up mechanism for identifying beneficiaries, providing residential care to the widows, deploying staff as per norms with prescribed qualification and experience.
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- The MoU further states that senior officials of Government of Uttar Pradesh shall visit and check the security staff periodically and monitor their performance.
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- The MoU also includes provisions for facilitating Aadhar Cards for all inmates and medical/geriatric care for inmates.
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'The PANKHA' (Hand-fans)

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- 'the PANKHA' (Hand-fans) is an exhibition cum sale event launched by Union Tribal Affairs Minister.
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- It is created by TRIFED through its artisans from all over the country at its showroom Tribes India.
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- TRIFED collaborated with Jatin Das Centre for Arts (JDCA) to take forward the initiative by providing marketing support to the tribal artisans who are associated with this craft.
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- The Pankhas, a range of exotic hand fans draws inspiration from the eminent Artist, Shri Jatin Das and from his collection of 10000 handmade Pankhas.
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- Hand fans are an age old tradition and are an integral part of Indian traditions and customs.
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- Handcrafted masterpieces include Hand Fans made from textile with embroidery and embellishments representing individual States traditions, Bamboo, Palm Leaf etc.
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Bacteria-coated broccoli

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- Scientists have sent broccoli seeds coated with a healthy dose of good bacteria to space in a quest to find a viable way for astronauts at the International Space Station (ISS) to grow their own vegetables.
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- These “beneficial” microbes, also called endophytes.
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- It may also help plants grow better in extreme low-gravity environments, and where nutrients or water could be lacking.
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- Previous research has found that plants can better tolerate drought and other environmental stressors with the help of natural microbes that provide nutrients to their plant partners
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- These specific endophytes and broccoli plants were chosen for the space flight experiment because they performed well together in greenhouse tests under conditions similar to Mars, where nitrogen and phosphorus are limited
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- This is the first that studies natural microbes to possibly help plants grow under nutrient limitations and in microgravity.
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Bear cuscus

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- For the first time the rare marsupial mammal, bear cuscus has born in captivity in south western Poland zoo.
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- The Bear cuscuses live on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi and their population is shrinking rapidly.
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- To preserve the species, 13 animals are held in four zoos around the world – but they have not reproduced there previously.
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- The bear cuscuses are the members of the genus Ailurops
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- They are marsupials of the family Phalangeridae.
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- A distinctive characteristic common to marsupial species is that most of the young are carried in a pouch.
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International Conference on the TRIPS CBD linkage

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- Government of India, along with the Centre for WTO Studies, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade and the South Centre are organizing an International Conference on TRIPS- CBD Linkage in Geneva.
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- Brazil and South Africa are some of the other countries that have joined hands with India on this crucial initiative.
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- The international conference will bring together indigenous people/local communities in developing and developed countries, internationally acclaimed academicians working on the subject, Geneva-based negotiators and capital based experts.
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- The Convention on Biological Diversity is a multilateral agreement on sustainable development and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resource.
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- The Doha Ministerial Declaration in 2001 had tasked the TRIPS Council of the WTO to examine the relationship between the TRIPS Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity.
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- TRIPS CBD Linkage is important for India and other developing countries because it seeks to address bio-piracy.
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- The Nagoya Protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits arising from their utilization came into effect in 2014.
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- The developing countries seek an amendment in the TRIPS Agreement to make disclosure of source or origin of genetic resource by patent applicants, submission of evidence of prior informed consent of local communities and evidence of fair and equitable sharing of benefits under the relevant national regimes mandatory.
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Way to cut emissions in brick kilns

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- The Brick Kiln Initiative, launched by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in Nepal.
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- It found a way to redesign the ovens and stack the bricks differently so that less toxic soot is produced.
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- By stacking the bricks inside the kilns in a zig-zag pattern, the heat snakes through the gaps more efficiently, ensuring coal is completely burned so less soot is produced.
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- There are more than 150,000 kilns in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal belching out thousands of tons of soot — known as black carbon — a major air pollutant and the second largest contributor to global warming after carbon dioxide.
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- The problem is acute, with industrial soot emissions from the region having a worldwide impact.
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- The soot collects on the Arctic ice, decreasing the earth's ability to reflect the sun's rays and contributing to warming globally.

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Source: PIB, The Hindu

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