Prelims Bits 06-01-2018

Cryosphere

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- Cryosphere refers to the frozen part of the earth surface.
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- It might be comprised of snow, river and lake ice, sea ice, glaciers, ice shelves and ice sheets, and frozen grounds.
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- This region plays a major role in the Earth’s climate system through its impact on the surface energy budget, the water cycle, and sea level.
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- It is a fundamental control on the physical, biological and social environment over a large part of the Earth’s surface.
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- Cryosphere is a natural integrator of climate variability and provides one of the most visible signatures of climate change.
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Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

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- The IPCC is an international body for the assessment of climate change, it was established by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).
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- The IPCC reviews and assesses the most recent scientific, technical and socio-economic information produced worldwide relevant to the understanding of climate change.
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- It does not conduct any research nor does it monitor climate related data or parameters.
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Atal Pension Yojana

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- Recently the subscriber’s base under the Atal Pension Yojana (APY) has reached more than 8 million.
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- APY is available to all citizens of India in the age group of 18-40 years.
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- Under the scheme, a subscriber would receive a minimum guaranteed pension of Rs.1000 to Rs.5000 per month, depending upon his contribution, from the age of 60 years.
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- The same pension would be paid to the spouse of the subscriber and on the demise of both the subscriber and spouse, the accumulated pension wealth is returned to the nominee.
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- The APY Scheme follows the same investment pattern as applicable to the NPS contribution of Central Govt employees.
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- APY can be opened through banks, Postal departmentand also through a complete digital channel through eNPS platform.
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Sin Cess

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- A sin cess is added to products or services that are seen as vices, such as alcohol, tobacco and gambling.
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- These types of taxes are levied by governments to discourage individuals from partaking in such activities without making the use of the products illegal.
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- General public usually accepts sin taxes because they are indirect taxes that only affect those who use the products.
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- Under the GST regime, a cess is levied on luxury, demerit and sin goods to make good the loss suffered by the states on account of roll out of the new indirect tax regime.
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- Sin cess in India is levied on top of the highest tax rate of 28% on these

goods.
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Tabby's star

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- Tabby’s star is the “most mysterious star in the universe” as it kept dimming and brightening irregularly, following no pattern.
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- Officially called KIC 8462852, the star is 1,000 light years away from the Earth and 1,000 degrees hotter than the Sun.
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- There was a 20% decrease in brightness and the dip lasted from five to 80 days.
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- A recent report showed that the dimming is caused by ordinary dust particles, the majority of them at a size less than one micrometre.
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RTE amendment bill 2017

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- The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Second Amendment) Bill, 2017 is yet to be passed.
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- The Right to Education Act, 2009 prohibits detention of children till they complete elementary education i.e., class 8.
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- The Bill amends this provision to state that a regular examination will be held in class 5 and class 8 at the end of every academic year.
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- If a child fails the exam, he will be given additional instruction, and take a re-examination.
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- If he fails in the re-examination, the relevant central or state government may decide to allow schools to detain the child.
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Source: PIB, PRS, The Hindu

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