Prelims Bits 08-01-2018

Bishing Stand-off

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- Troops of Indian and Chinese security forces are locked in a standoff near Bishing in Arunachal Pradesh.
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- The standoff is firmly within Indian Territory, about 4 km from the McMahon Line.
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- The standoff began after Indian troops involving the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and the Indian Army were informed by local villagers that a Chinese road-building team had entered India with bulldozers.
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CFC and ozone depletion

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- Chlorofluorocarbons(CFCs) are long-lived man- made chemical compounds that eventually rise into the stratosphere.
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- There they are broken apart by the Sun’s ultraviolet radiation, releasing chlorine atoms that go on to destroy ozone molecules.
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- Recent findings proved an international ban on CFCs, has resulted in about 20% less ozone depletion.
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- The Montreal Protocol and its amendments have banned the use of ozone destroying chemicals and the rate of ozone depletion seems to have slowed.
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- Scientists used data from the Aura satellite to determine how ozone and other chemicals have changed year to year.
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- Aura is a NASA mission to study Earth's ozone, air quality, and climate and conduct research on the composition, chemistry, and dynamics of Earth's atmosphere.
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Nayachar Islands

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- Nayachar is a newly emerged island with mangrove ecosystem in the middle estuary of the Hooghly River in West Bengal.
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- This land mass was created in the Indian Sunderbans by river silt deposits, and remained largely submerged, rising occasionally above the water level.
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- Till 1990 it was completely barren, with hardly any plant or animal species, at present there are 151 animal species on the island, making it a rare case in ecology.
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- The natural succession of species on the island has been aided by the inundation of water during tides, and the soil brought from other places by fishermen.
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Labelling organic products

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- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) had issued regulations that required food companies selling organic produce to get certified from either one authority.
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- Certificate issuing authorities will be National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) or the Participatory Guarantee System for India (PGS-India).
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- Companies could also get a voluntary logo from the FSSAI that marked its produce as ‘organic.’

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- It will be implemented from July 2018, any company that claims to sell organic food and not sticking to standards can be prosecuted.
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NPOP

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- Organic farming certification had been done through a process of third party certification under the NPOP.
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- This is a top- down mechanism run by the Ministry of Commerce used for certifying general exports.
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- Nearly 24 agencies were authorised by the NPOP to verify farms, storages and processing units and successful ones got a special ‘India Organic’ logo.
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PGS-India

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- The PGS-India programme had been working from 2015, it involves a peer-review approach.
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- Here, farmers play a role in certifying whether the farms in their vicinity adhered to organic-cultivation practices.
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- This programme was implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture through the National Centre of Organic Farming.
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NASA’s Mission to explore Ionosphere

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- NASA has announced two missions to explore the little-understood area of 96 km above Earth’s surface.
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- The two missions Global-scale Observations of the Limb and Disk (GOLD)

and Ionospheric Connection Explorer(ICON) will team up to explore the ionosphere.
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- ICON will be in low-Earth orbit, at 560 km above Earth, like a close-up camera while GOLD will be in a geostationary orbit over the Western Hemisphere, about 35,398 km above the planet’s surface.
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- It will help in full-disk view of the ionosphere and the upper atmosphere beneath it every half hour.
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Ionosphere

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- The ionosphere is defined as the layer of the Earth's atmosphere that is ionized by solar and cosmic radiation.
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- It lies 75-1000 km (46-621 miles) above the Earth, the thickness of the ionosphere is quite tiny compared with the size of Earth.
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- Due to high energy from the Sun and from cosmic rays, the atoms in this area are “ionized,” and are therefore positively charged.
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- These are the layers of near-Earth space and are home to radio signals used to guide airplanes, ships and Global Positioning System satellites.
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Jal Mahotsav

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- Third Jal Mahotsav has been celebrated in Hanuwantiya Island in Khandwa district under the aegis of Indira Sagar Dam project (that forms the largest reservoir in India).
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- It is India’s biggest water carnival through which is organised every year in Hanuwantiya.
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- Jal Mahotsav promotes rural economies, and transforms hinterlands towards local economic development.
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US Special Watch list

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- US places Pakistan on ‘Special Watch List’ for ‘severe violations’ of religious freedom, by this Pakistan was the first country to be put under the newly-formed list.
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- US has a separate list for the countries which violates International religious freedom act known as ‘Countries of Particular Concern’ (CPC).
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- The Special Watch List is for countries that engage in or tolerate severe violations of religious freedom but may not rise to the level of the CPC.
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- The Special Watch List designation is being seen as a step below designating it as Country of Particular Concern, which would have automatically kicked in economic and political sanctions.
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Source: The Hindu, Indian Express, Live mint

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