Prelims Bits 09-02-2018

Falcon Heavy

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- Falcon Heavy is a reusable super heavy-lift launch vehicle designed and manufactured by SpaceX, a private American aerospace manufacturer.
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- Its first test flight carrying a red sports car was successfully launched from florida pad used by NASA.
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- It is the most powerful operational rocket in the world.
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- It can lift about twice the payload at one third of the cost by Delta 4 rocket which was the most powerful rocket till now.
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- This lift capacity allows to launch heavier satellites into low Earth orbit, or reach higher geostationary orbits to keep station over the same part of Earth.
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- Its three first-stage boosters are designed to be reusable.
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Galapagos

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- The rising tourist arrival to Galapagos Island puts pressure on the this fragile volcanic archipelago.
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- The Galapagos Islands, part of the Republic of Ecuador, distributed on either side of the Equator in the Pacific Ocean surrounding the centre of the Western Hemisphere.
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- The island inspired Charles Darwin’s Theory of evolution and was his field of study.
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- The Islands and their surrounding waters form the Galapagos Province of Ecuador, the Galapagos National Park, and the Galapagos Marine Reserve.
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- UNESCO recognised the islands as a World Heritage Site and as a biosphere reserve
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Prime Minister’s Research fellow scheme

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- ‘Prime Minister’s Research Fellows (PMRF)’ scheme aims to improve the quality of research by attracting the best talents across the country.
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- Under this scheme, the best students who have completed or are in the final year of B.Tech or integrated M.Tech or M.Sc in science and technology streams in the IISc/IITs/NITs/IISERs/IIITs will be offered direct admission in the PhD programme in the IITs/IISc.
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- The fellowship scheme will be implemented for a period of seven years from 2018-19.
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- A maximum of 3,000 fellows will be selected over first three-year period, beginning 2018-19.
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- The students who get shorlisted through the selection process would be offered a fellowship of Rs. 70,000 per month for the first two years, Rs. 75,000 per month for the third year and Rs. 80,000 per month in the fourth and fifth years.
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- Apart from this, a research grant of Rs.2.00 lakh will be provided to each of the fellows for a period of 5 years to cover their foreign travel expenses for presenting research papers in international conferences and seminars.
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- It will help in tapping the talent pool of the country for carrying out research indigenously in cutting edge science and technology domains.
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Vizag - Next Scuba Diving Destination

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- A second shipwreck was found off the coast of Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.
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- The ship wreck is spotted with critically endangered fish species called Goliath.
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- A century-old shipwreck was unearthed in the same region a month before.
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- Some of the other interesting aqua life species spotted were barracuda, the trevally and jack fish and a rich bed of corals like the star feather corals, sand corals and whip corals.
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- Scuba diving is a mode of underwater diving where the diver uses a self-contained underwater breathing apparatus (scuba) which is completely independent of surface supply, to breathe underwater.
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Goliath grouper

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- It is extremely rare fish species, recently discovered by a team of experienced divers and diving instructors near vizag.
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- It is recognised as a critically endangered species by the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature).
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- It is considered to be the keystone species of an ecosystem and is entirely protected from harvest in the U.S.
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- It is usually found in tropical and subtropical waters of the Atlantic Ocean.
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- It is regionally abundant near Vishakapatnam in the Bay of Bengal region.
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- It is found from inshore to about 100 m in reef, mangrove, seagrass, and estuarine habitats.
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Prithvi-II

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- India successfully test-fired its indigenously developed nuclear capable Prithvi-II missile from a test range in Odisha.
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- It is surface to surface missile with a strike range of 350 km.
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- It is capable of carrying 500-1,000 kilogram of warheads and is thrusted by liquid propulsion twin engines.
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- The state-of-the-art missile uses advanced inertial guidance system with manoeuvring trajectory to hit its target.
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National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)

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- Amendments were passed by Parliament to the NABARD Act, 1981. Click here to know more.
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- These amendments support the government’s push to boost the rural and agricultural sector.
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- National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) is an apex development financial institution in India, headquartered at Mumbai.
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- It was established on the recommendations of B.Sivaraman Committee, to implement the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Act 1981.
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- The 1981 Act was enacted to establish a development bank
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1. to provide and regulate credit
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2. to promote and develop agriculture, small-scale industries, cottage and village industries
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3. to support handicraftsand allied economic activities in rural areas.
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Source: PIB, The Hindu, Business Standard

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