Prelim Bits 11-07-2018

MoU by the Vice President

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- Vice President, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu becomes first Chairman of Rajya Sabha to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with a foreign country.
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- Rajya Sabha has, for the first time in 76 years since it came into being, entered a MOU with a foreign counterpart for promoting inter-parliamentary dialogue.
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- The MoU was inked with the visiting President of the Senate of the Republic of Rwanda
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- It covers the following articles of cooperation -
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1. To promote Inter-Parliamentary dialogue,
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2. Capacity building of parliamentary staff,
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3. Organisation of conferences, forums, seminars, staff attachment programmes, workshops and exchanges,
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4. Collaboration in mutual interest in regional and international multilateral parliamentary bodies in furtherance of bilateral relations.
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Ease of Doing Business – India State wise Ranking

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- Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce and Industry has recently released the final rankings of States in Ease of Doing Business.
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- DIPP in collaboration with the **World Bank** conducted an annual reform exercise for all States and UTs under the Business Reform Action Plan (BRAP).
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- The top rankers are **Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Haryana**.
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- Jharkhand and Gujarat stood fourth and fifth respectively.
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- The aim of this exercise is to improve delivery of various Central Government regulatory functions and services in an efficient, effective and transparent manner.
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- It is for the first time that DIPP has introduced taking feedback to ensure that the reforms have reached ground level.
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GRACE-FO

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- NASA has launched Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment Follow-On (GRACE-FO) mission recently.
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- It will map changes in water and ice around the world by detecting variations in Earth's gravity.
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- It involves two identical spacecraft that will orbit the Earth in tandem.
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- It is a follow-on mission to the original GRACE mission, which mapped Earth's gravity field from 2002 to 2017.
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- Both missions are joint projects between NASA and the GFZ German Research.
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- To detect these gravitational changes, the twin spacecraft will fly about 220 km apart and send microwave signals back and forth.
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- When they pass over a region where gravity increases or decreases, the

distance between the two spacecraft will change slightly, allowing the satellites to map Earth's gravity field.
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Best tourist spot

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- Western Ghats has figured in **Lonely Planet's top five "2018 Best in Asia" list,** a collection of 10 of the best destinations to visit in the continent for the year.
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- It came 4th in the list of the lonely Planet, which is considered a Bible by travellers worldwide.
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- It is one of the Hottest Biodiversity Hotspots and UNESCO World Heritage site.
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- It is older than the Himalayas and well known for its rich and unique flora and fauna.
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- Neelakurinji (Strobilanthes kunthiana), which has started blooming after 12 years in the famed hill station of Munnar has found mention in report.
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- The neelakurinji flower blooms only once every 12 years and is expected to boom from August to October 2018.
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Eat Right Movement

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- Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) recently unveiled 'The Eat Right Movement'.
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- The programme aims to engage and enable citizens to improve their health and well-being by making the right food choices.
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- It is built on two broad pillars of 'Eat Healthy' and 'Eat Safe'.
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- FSSAI has also undertaken 'Safe and Nutritious Food (SNF)'initiative to promote awareness towards consumption of safe and nutritious food.

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- FSSAI has been established under Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.
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- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is the administrative Ministry for the implementation of FSSAI.
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Plastic Ban

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- State Government of Odisha has recently announced complete ban on use of plastic in several places from October 2, this year.
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- The Housing & Urban Development department and Panchayati raj department have been mandated for executing the order in urban and rural areas, respectively.
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- The Forest & Environment department will monitor the plastic pollution control work across the state.
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Source: The Hindu, PIB

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