Prelim Bits

ISRO to set record in January 2017

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- ISRO to launch record 83 satellites in one go using PSLV-C37 in January 2017.
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- Of the 83 satellites, 80 belong to Israel, Kazakhstan, Netherlands, Switzerland and the US and they weigh about 500 kg.
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- The three Indian satellites are Cartosat-2 series, weighing 730 kg as primary payload, and INS-IA and INS-1B, weighing 30 kg.
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- Previously, ISRO in June 2016 had successfully launched 20 satellites, including its earth observation Cartosat-2 series, in a single mission on board PSLV-C34.
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China plans to become first country to land on dark side of the moon

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- China will launch a lunar probe in 2018 to achieve the world's first soft landing on the far side of the moon.
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- China has already landed a rover on the moon in the past but now wants to explore the dark side of the lunar surface.
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- The lunar probe Chang'e-4 will conduct in situ and roving detection and relay communications at earth-moon L2 point (Lagrange point).

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- The new mission strives to attain the automated extra-terrestrial sampling and returning technology by space explorers.
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Watal panel on digital payments

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- The Committee on Digital Payments headed by former finance secretary Ratan P Watal to set a road map for digital payments to grow substantially over the next three years.
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- The objective of digital initiative is to halve the cash to GDP ratio to 6% over the next 3 years.
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- Two main recommendations of the Committee\n
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  - To create a new payments regulator.
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  - To make Board for Regulation and Supervision of Payment and Settlement Systems (BPSS) within RBI more independent which it today lacks by being a sub-committee of the Central Board of RBI.
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Using Deer antlers in Ayurveda drugs

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- Kerala's State Board for Wildlife sought Union Government's approval for using deer antlers in Ayruveda drugs.
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- Antlers are the extensions of the skull of the deer.
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- The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, has included antler in the definition of wildlife trophy. A wildlife trophy is defined as the “whole or any part of any captive animal or wild animal”.
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- Deer belongs to the Bovidae class but there are many distinctions which separates them from this class.
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- Unlike other ruminants (cud chewing animals) deer have solid horns and that is its most distinguishing factor.
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- Deer antlers are mass of solid bone and are shed on regular intervals and regrow again. Whereas in all other bovidae’s the horns are permanent and are not shed.
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- During the growing of the antlers a soft shining skin covers the antlers and is known as “velvet”. This skin is highly sensitive as it is fed by many blood vessels and can be injured easily.
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- When the antlers grow to take their final shape a ring of bone forms on the base and cuts off the supply of blood to the velvet thus leading to its shedding.
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\nDeer varieties in India

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- India has a distinction of having the largest number of deer species in the world.
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- Deer species of central India are known for their large size and big antlers. Whereas the species found in Eastern and Southern India have antlers smaller in size
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The Swamp Deer or the Barasingha

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- IUCN status - Vulnerable.
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- State animal of Madhya pradesh and Uttar pradesh.
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- In India there two races of this deer found: one is the swamp inhabiting and is found mainly in the Terai region of U.P., small numbers in the Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary. The other race is the Hard Ground one found only in Madhya Pradesh.
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The Sambhar

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- IUCN status - Vulnerable.
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- State animal of Odisha.
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- Sambhar is the largest of all deer species found in the Indian Sub-continent.
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- In India Sambhar is found from the lower ranges of Himalayas to the forests of south India, from the forests of Rajasthan to the forests of north east India.
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The Chital or the Spotted Deer

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- IUCN status - Least Concern.
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- State animal of Telangana.
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- In India Chital is very widely distributed from the base of Himalayas to the steaming forests of the south except in the north east.
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The Hog Deer

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- IUCN status - Endangered.
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- Hog deer as named has a peculiar habit of running like a hog with its head down without the traditional leaps of a deer.
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- In India, Hog Deer inhabits the alluvial grasslands of the Terai forest right from Corbett to the forests of Assam.
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The Muntjac or the Barking Deer

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- IUCN status - Least Concern.
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- It is found all over India.
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- The Muntjac has small set of antler consisting of short brow-tine and an unbranched beam.
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Hangul or the Kashmir Stag

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- IUCN status - Critically Endangered.
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- State animal of Jammu & Kashmir.
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- A deer species more related to the Red Deer found commonly in Europe, Hangul is found in the valley of Kashmir especially in areas above Srinagar called Dachigam.
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The Thamin or Brow-Antlered Deer

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- IUCN status - Endangered.
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- State animal of Manipur.
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- This deer is also called the Dancing Deer due to its delicate style of walking.
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- In India this deer is found only in Manipur in Eastern India and that also on the Shore of Loktak Lake.
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