Prelim Bits 22-10-2017

Snakehead Fish Species

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- A global digital database of the snakehead fish species has been developed to avoid confusions over.
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- The members of the species are found distributed from the Middle East to eastern Asia, Central and West Africa and the Nile.
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- Earlier, it was widely believed that there were 38 species in this group.
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- However, DNA-level analysis showed that there were several more species than first thought.
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- Since these species are mostly found in the inland waterbodies, no data on their catch is available.
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- The wide ranging species are currently listed as of “least concern” in the Red List of IUCN.
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- One of the criteria for assessing a species as of least concern is its wide distribution.
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- The breaking down of the species complex into individual species may have a different story to tell about its distribution which may prompt the scientific community to think for more species-specific conservation programs.
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Efforts to promote Millets

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- Karnataka is trying to convince the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to declare a year as an ‘international year of millets’.
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- This is in a bid to popularise these mineral-rich and drought-tolerant foodgrains at the international level.
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- If it happens, several activities will be lined up to create awareness about the benefits of millets and it would in turn help their growers.
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- Karnataka’s millet-growing area as well as production is set to get a boost with the recent good spell of rains.
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- Non-availability of primary processing machine was a major lacuna in the value chain of millets so far as traders were sending the produce to States such as Maharashtra for processing.
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- This was adding to the selling cost of millets.
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- Providing primary processing facilities is expected to help farmers get better prices.
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Pollution in Ganga

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- Ganga is the longest river within India’s borders.
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- Its basin constitutes 26% of the country’s land mass and supports 43% of India’s population.
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- Its basin traverses 11 States out of which five States are located along the river’s main stem spanning Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar and West Bengal.
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- Much of the river’s polluted by chemical effluents, sewage, dead bodies, and excreta coming from these States.
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- In the Ganga basin, approximately 12,000 million litres per day (mld) of sewage is generated, for which there is now a treatment capacity of just 4,000 mld.
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- Though the contribution of industrial pollution, volume-wise, is about 20%,

its toxic and non-biodegradable nature has a disproportionate impact.
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- The industrial pollutants largely emanate from tanneries in Kanpur, distilleries, paper mills and sugar mills in the Kosi, Ramganga and Kali river catchments.
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- The municipal sewage is about a billion litres a day i.e 80% of the pollution load.
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Avian Influenza A(H7N9)

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- It is a subtype of influenza viruses.
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- This particular A(H7N9) virus was first found in March 2013 in China.
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- Since then, infections in both humans and birds have been observed.
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- The disease is of concern because most patients have become severely ill.
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- Most of the cases of human infection with this avian H7N9 virus have reported recent exposure to live poultry or potentially contaminated environments.
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- This virus does not appear to transmit easily from person to person, and sustained human-to-human transmission has not been reported.
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- However, Lab experiments on a new strain of the H7N9 bird flu suggest the virus can transmit easily among animals and can cause lethal disease.
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- This raise alarm that the virus has the potential to trigger a global human pandemic.
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Impact of climate change on Greenland

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- Ocean data from Northeast Greenland reveals the long-term impact of the melting of the Greenland ice sheet.

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- From the ocean, the fresh water flows into the Greenland fjords.
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- More fresh water in the surface water layers makes it harder for the nutrient-rich bottom water to rise to the upper layers where the the production of plankton algae happens.
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- Plankton algae form the basis for all life in the sea and a lower production of algae will result in a lower production of fish.
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- At a global scale, the increased melting of the ice sheet may impact global ocean circulation patterns through the 'thermohaline circulation'.
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