

Prelim Bits 03-05-2017

'Decadal Swing' in North Indian Ocean

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- From 1993 to 2003 — the North Indian Ocean (NIO) sea levels fell.

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- The **NIO consists of the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal and part of the Indian Ocean up till the 5°S latitude**. After 2004, sea levels began an unprecedented, accelerated spike till 2014.

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- This rise and fall was even as global temperatures steadily climbed and registered their largest two-decadal jump in more than a century.

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- Such a “decadal swing” in the North Indian Ocean was unique and never observed in either the Pacific or Atlantic oceans.

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- Also, the NIO was warming twice as fast as the other oceans after 2004.

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- Sea levels primarily rise due to water expanding from atmospheric heat and, more water being added from, for instance, melting ice sheets and glaciers.

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- **Wind flows**, which welled warm water on the Indian Ocean surface, changed directions every decade and probably influenced sea level patterns.

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- In coming decades, in spite of rapid and rising temperatures, we might see a fall in sea levels.

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Vidya-Veerta Abhiyan

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- Universities and educational institutions across country will soon have a “wall of heroes”, depicting portraits of soldiers who showed extraordinary courage in defending the nation.

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- The Ministry of HRD has launched “Vidya, Veerta Abhiyan” to **encourage varsities to display portraits of Param Veer Chakra-decorated soldiers.**
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- The idea of having a wall of martyrs in universities was first proposed by a group of ex-servicemen who said portraits of martyrs and tanks used in wars should be put on display in the campus **to instill sense of “nationalism” and “patriotism” among the students.**
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- **Param Vir Chakra:** It is India's highest military decoration awarded for the displaying distinguished acts of valour **during wartime.**
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- The medal was designed by Savitri Khanolkar, the wife of an Indian Army officer, Vikram Khanolkar of the Sikh Regiment.
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- It can be awarded to officers or enlisted personnel from all branches of the Indian military. To date, the award has not been conferred twice (**can be awarded twice**).
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- The medal has been awarded 21 times, of which 14 were posthumous awards, and 16 were awards for action in Indo-Pakistani conflicts. Of the 21 awardees, 20 have been from the Indian Army, and 1 has been from the Indian Air Force.
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One IP- Two Dispensaries

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- Under this scheme, ESIC has given an option to an Insured Person (IP) to choose two dispensaries, one for self and another for family through an employer.
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- This will benefit all IPs, **especially migrant workers** who are working in other than home State, while their families are living in their native States.
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- Because of non-availability of option of second dispensary, the dependant members of family are often deprived of medical benefits.
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- As of now, around 3 crores IPs are covered under ESIC and total number of beneficiaries i.e. IPs and their family members is over 12 crores.
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Albino Orangutan

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 - A rare albino orangutan has been rescued on the Indonesian part of Borneo island where villagers were keeping the **white-haired, blue-eyed** creature in a cage.
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 - Native to Indonesia and Malaysia, orangutans are currently found in only the rainforests of Borneo and Sumatra.
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 - The **Bornean orangutan** (has three subspecies), which along with the **Sumatran orangutan** are **Asia's only great apes**, is classified by the IUCN as "**critically endangered**".
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 - The creatures have seen their habitat shrink dramatically as the island's rainforests are increasingly turned into oil palm, rubber or paper plantations, and are sometimes targeted by villagers who view them as pests.
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 - Orangutans are **the most arboreal of the great apes** and spend most of their time in trees.
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 - Fruit is the most important component of an orangutan's diet; however, the apes will also eat vegetation, bark, honey, insects and even bird eggs.

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Avvaiyar Award

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 - The award was constituted by late CM J Jayalalithaa in 2012 **to honour women** actively working in the areas of social reform, women's development, culture, media, inter-faith harmony, and administration, among others.
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 - Tamil Nadu government honoured social worker **Padma Venkataraman** with the state's "Avvaiyar Award" for 2017.
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 - Padma, daughter of former President of India, the late R Venkataraman, was honoured for her efforts in the areas of women's welfare and rehabilitation of leprosy-affected persons for the past 30 years.

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