

Prelim Bits 05-08-2017

Institutions of Eminence

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- Ministry of HRD will soon set up an empowered committee to select 10 public and 10 private educational institutes to be upgraded as “Institutions of Eminence”.

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- Consequently, the apex higher educational regulators such as UGC and AICTE will lose powers to regulate those institutions.

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- Institutions of Eminence would have complete freedom to decide the curricula, hire domestic and foreign faculty and fix a fee structure of their choice.

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- These institutions are expected to make into top 500 world rankings in a decade.

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- The institutions which are among top 50 in the National Institute Ranking Framework are allowed to apply for this scheme.

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- The search and selection committee comprising the cabinet secretary, the secretary (Higher Education) and the UGC chairman will be set up to choose an empowered committee comprising eminent scholars.

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National Institute Ranking Framework

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- NIRF was launched by Ministry of HRD, which outlines the methodology to rank institutions across the country.

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- The framework has identified broad parameters for ranking institutions.

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- The parameters broadly cover “Teaching, Learning and Resources,”

“Research and Professional Practices,” “Graduation Outcomes,” “Outreach and Inclusivity,” and “Perception”.

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- India Rankings were introduced in 2016 to rank universities based on the parameters defined under NIRF.

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- Under India Rankings, there are also stream wise categories like Engineering, Management, Pharmacy, college besides overall ranking.

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- This year, Indian Institute of Science Bangalore topped the overall ranking followed by Indian Institute of Technology Madras and Bombay.

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Bharat 22

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- The government is set to launch a second exchange-traded fund (ETF) known as the Bharat-22.

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- It will comprise stocks of 22 blue-chip public sector units, State-owned banks and Specified Undertakings of the Unit Trust of India (SUUTI).

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- It will help the government to sell equity stakes in state-run firms in order to meet its objective to raise Rs 72,500 cr through disinvestment in the current financial year 2017-18.

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- Earlier the government has launched Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSE) ETF, which had stocks of many energy companies.

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- Bharat 22 is a well diversified ETF spanning six sectors such as basic materials, energy, finance, FMCG, industrials and utilities.

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- While CPSE ETF has only state-run companies as its constituents, Bharat-22 will give the government a shot at selling stakes in some of the private sector blue-chip companies as well.

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- Click [here](#) to know more about ETF.

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Global Food Price Index

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- Global Food Price Index is released by UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

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- Recently, the index for the July month hit the highest in 31 months.

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- The Index is a monthly measure of international market prices of five major food commodity groups such as Cereals, Sugar, Dairy, Vegetable oil and Meat products.

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UN FAO

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- It was established in 1945 with the objective of eliminating hunger and improving nutrition and standards of living by increasing agricultural productivity.

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- Its secretariat is located in Rome, Italy.

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- Some of the important key programmes of FAO are Food Security Programmes, Codex Alimentarius, International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) etc.,

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- The Codex Alimentarius Commission, established by FAO and WHO develops harmonized international food standards, guidelines and codes of practice to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair trade practices in the food trade.

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- International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) - It aims to protect cultivated and wild plants by preventing the introduction and spread of pests.

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NAVIC

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- The Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) is been given a

name "NAVIC".

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- It is India's own GPS like system, that provides accurate real-time positioning and timing services.
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- The system at-present consist of a constellation of 7 satellites (IRNSS 1A to 1G).
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- It covers India and a region extending 1,500 km (930 mi) around it, with plans for further extension.
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- The system provide two levels of services such as 'standard positioning service' will be open for civilian use, and a 'restricted service' , an encrypted one for authorized users (including military).
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- Four satellites (IRNSS 1A, 1B, 1D, 1E) are in geosynchronous orbit and the remaining 3 satellites are in geo stationary orbit.
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- The satellites provide positional details which are vital for civil and military aviation, defence needs, ATMs and individual users.

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IRNSS 1H

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- IRNSS 1A has become redundant due to failure of its rubidium atomic clocks, which are critical for providing precise time.
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- Thus, ISRO will soon launch a replacement navigation satellite IRNSS 1H, 8th navigation spacecraft to replace IRNSS 1A.
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- IRNSS 1H will be fitted with corrected atomic clocks to make up for the failed rubidium atomic clocks in IRNSS-1A.

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Time Synchronisation

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- NAVIC will also soon synchronise its clocks to time provided by the National Physical Laboratory, a CSIR body.

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- The synchronisation would help IRNSS to end its dependence on the United States Naval Observatory (USNO) for time synchronisation.

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- Currently, IRNSS provides accurate positional information services with respect to Coordinated Universal Time as per the time maintained by atomic clocks at the USNO.

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