

Prelim Bits 20-03-2018

Saksham Scholarship Scheme

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- The scheme was launched in 2014-15, with the objective of encouraging economically weaker differently-able students to pursue technical education at Diploma and Degree levels.

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- In other words, it aims to provide assistance to 1000 specially able children to pursue Technical Education.

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- It is implemented by Ministry of Human Resource and Development.

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- Other schemes of similar name,

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<p>\n Project Saksham \n</p>	<p>\n Ministry of Finance \n</p>	<p>\n Its objective is to develop a New Indirect Tax Network (Systems Integration) of the Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC). \n</p>
<p>\n Project Saksham \n</p>	<p>\n Ministry of Railways \n</p>	<p>\n It is a comprehensive training program for all employees of Indian Railways to boost productivity & efficiency \n</p>

<p>\n</p> <p>Saksham (Sanrakshan Kshamta Mahotsav)</p> <p>\n</p>	<p>\n</p> <p>Ministry Of Petroleum and Natural gas</p> <p>\n</p>	<p>\n</p> <p>It is an annual flagship event to create focused attention on fuel conservation through people centric activities</p> <p>\n</p>
<p>\n</p> <p>Saksham</p> <p>\n</p>	<p>\n</p> <p>Ministry of Rural Development</p> <p>\n</p>	<p>\n</p> <p>Capacity Building program - a training module that uses Remote Sensing and GIS tools for project planning and monitoring component.</p> <p>\n</p>

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Seychelles' coral reefs

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• Coral reef restoration program is being carried out to save the coral reefs in Seychelles,

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- The restoration project involves nurturing fragments of corals in underwater nurseries and then reintroducing them in to their natural habitat.

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- Tiny coral fragments, once collected from the sea floor, are nurtured in tanks and then, transferred to an underwater “rope nursery” or improvised skeleton.

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- The Seychelles in some areas lost up to 90% of its coral reefs in 1998 in an environmental event known as bleaching.

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- In coral bleaching, the corals in warm water expel the colorful algae that live within their skeletons and they starve without their nutrients.

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- “Super corals” were chosen for regrowth and transplanting as they were resilient to the recent 2016 coral bleaching.

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- Click [here](#) to know about threats to coral reefs.

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World Water Development Report

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- UN calculated that an estimated 3.6 billion people live in areas where water can be scarce at least one month per year in its World water Development Report 2018.

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- The WWDR is an annual and thematic report that focuses on different

strategic water issues each year.

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- It aims to provide decision-makers with the tools to implement sustainable use of our water resources.

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- The WWDR is the UN-Water flagship report on water.

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- This year's report 'Nature Based Solutions for Water' report that focuses on nature-based solutions, such as China's rainwater recycling, India's forest regeneration and Ukraine's artificial wetlands to improve the quality and access of clean water.

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World Sparrow day

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- World Sparrow Day is celebrated on March 20 every year.

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- The objective in celebrating it is to educate people about the threat posed by polluted urban environments and the indifference of humans to house sparrows

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- It also encourages the appreciation of common biodiversity, a change from the attention surrounding rare and exotic species.

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- It is an international initiative by the Nature Forever Society (NFS) of India in collaboration with the Eco-Sys Action Foundation (France) and other national and international organization across the world.

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- Nature Forever Society, generally referred to as NFS, is a non-governmental, non-profit organization devoted to conserve House Sparrows.

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- House Sparrow has been listed as Least Concern on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List.

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Impact of Permafrost thawing

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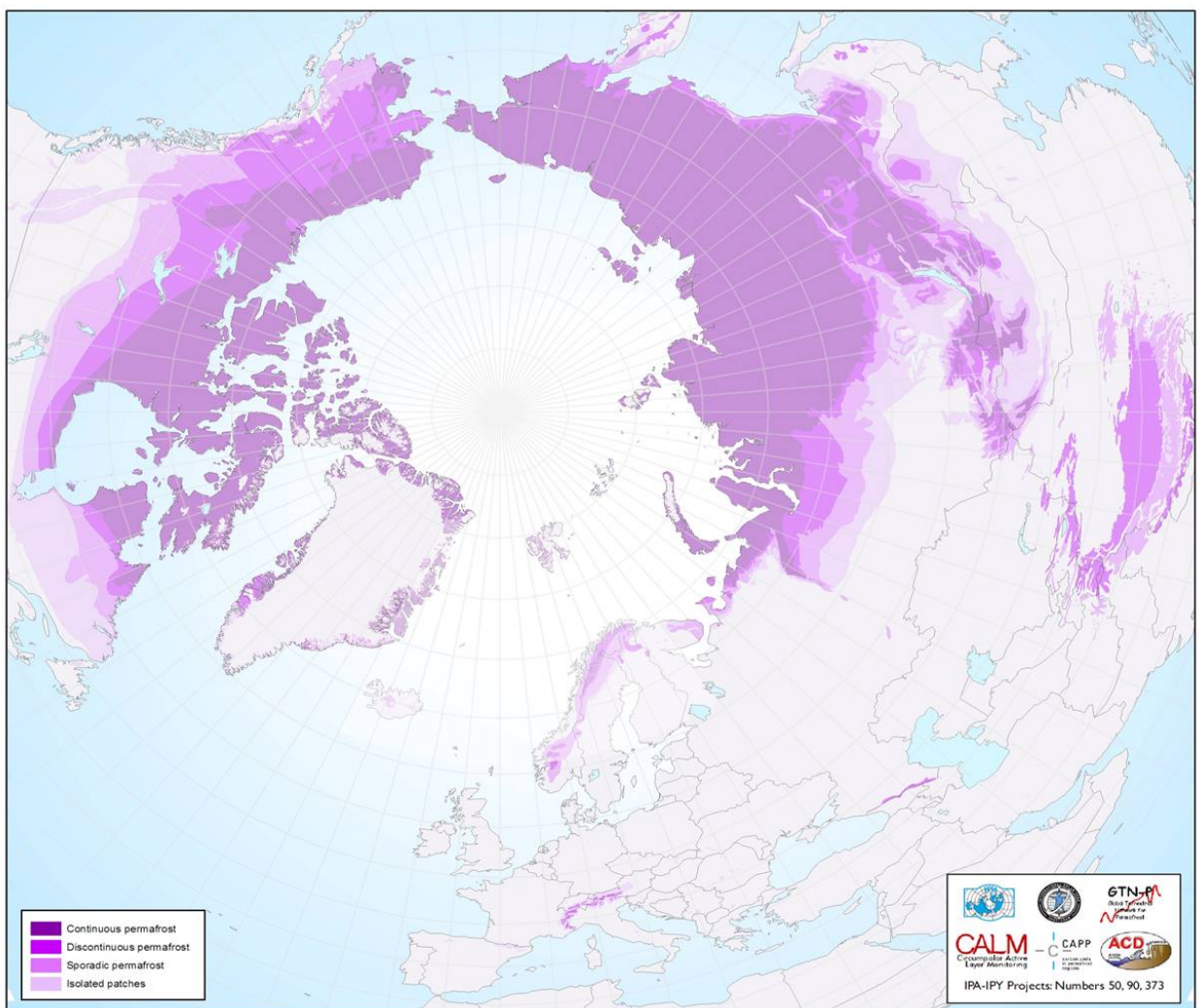
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- A new study has found that the permafrost in the coldest northern Arctic is thawing at an unprecedented rate.

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- Its continuous thawing could mean massive release of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane into the atmosphere.
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- Permafrost is soil that has remained frozen for years or centuries under topsoil that covers about 24% of the northern Hemisphere.
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- It is formed in a climate where the mean annual air temperature is 0 degree Celsius or lesser which is found in Siberia and a few other parts of Russia, the Tibetan Plateau, Alaska, Northern Canada, Greenland, and parts of Scandinavia.
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- It contains carbon-rich organic matter, including the remains of plants and animals that died and froze without decaying.
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- Scientists estimate that the world's permafrost holds about 1,500 billion tons

of carbon, almost double the amount of carbon that is currently in the atmosphere.

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International day of Happiness

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- The General Assembly of the United Nations declared 20th March as the International Day of Happiness.

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- This year's theme is: **Share Happiness** — focusing on the importance of relationships, kindness and helping each other.

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- The day is to recognize the relevance of happiness and well-being as universal goals and aspirations in the lives of human beings around the world.

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- Also to highlight the importance of their recognition in public policy objectives.

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- Click [here](#) to know about world Happiness report

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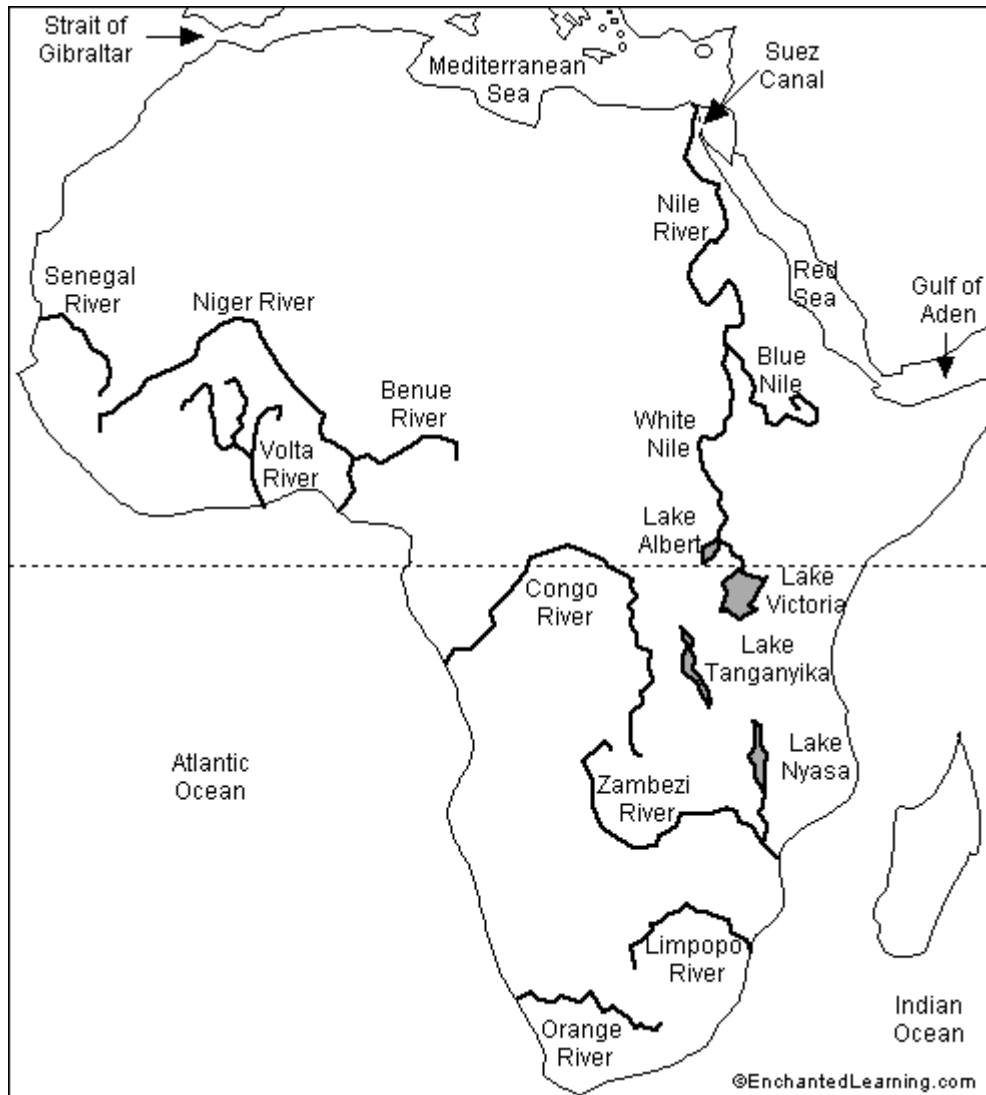
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Map of the Day

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Africa - Water Bodies

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- Lake Victoria is the world's second largest fresh water lake and source of the White Nile.

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- Lake Tana is the main reservoir of Blue Nile and also the largest lake of Ethiopia.

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- Lake Chad is located in the Sahelian zone west central Africa at the conjunction of Chad, Cameroon, Nigeria, and Niger.

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Source: PIB, The Hindu, Business Standard

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