

Prelim Bits 26-10-2017

Fish - Lizard

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- Indian scientists have recently discovered a fully preserved fossil sea-dwelling reptile known as the 'fish lizard' from Gujarat's Kutch district.

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- The fossil is believed to be from Jurassic period, which lasted from about 250 million to 200 million years.

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- The discovery adds to the knowledge of ichthyosaur (fish - lizard) from the southern continents.

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- It is the first Jurassic ichthyosaur found in India. It has been found in Americas, Australia and Europe.

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- Other Ichthyosaur fossils from the Crustacean period which lasted 145 million to 66 million years ago found in India usually in the form of teeth or fragments of vertebrae.

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- It's the second significant fossil discovery in India this year.

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- The oldest plant fossil in India, red algae from the Chitrakoot region in Madhya Pradesh, believed to be 1.6 billion years old was discovered earlier.

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Mekedatu Project

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- The central water commission has recently sent back a pre-feasibility report on the Mekedatu project to the Karnataka government.

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- It is a balancing reservoir cum drinking water project on the Cauvery River proposed by Karnataka.

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- It is proposed to be located about 110 km from Bengaluru, with storage

capacity of 66.50 tmc ft.

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- Tamil Nadu objected the project saying that it would affect the flow of Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu.

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Central Water Commission

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- It is a premier technical organization in the field of Water Resources.
- It is presently functioning as an attached office of the Ministry of Water Resources.
- It will carry out techno-economic appraisal of medium and major irrigation and multi-purpose projects on inter-state rivers.

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Integrity Index

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- Central Vigilance Commission has set to develop integrity index for public sector undertakings, public sector banks and financial institutions, Ministries and its departments.
- CVC will calculate scores by linking the essential drivers of vigilance with long term efficiency, profitability and sustainability of public organizations.
- It will help in creating an internal and external ecosystem that promotes working with Integrity in public organizations.
- Initially 25 organizations have been selected for development of the index.

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Central Vigilance Commission

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- Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) is an autonomous statutory body

created to address governmental corruption.

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- It is free of control from any executive authority, charged with monitoring all vigilance activity under the Central Government of India.

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- The Commission shall consist of

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1. A Central Vigilance Commissioner (CVC) - Chairperson;
2. Not more than two Vigilance Commissioners (VC) - Members;

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- They are appointed by the President on the recommendation of three member committee.

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- The committee consists of PM as its head, the union minister of Home affairs and the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha.

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- They hold office for a term of 4 years or until they attain the age of 65 years whichever is earlier.

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- They are not eligible for further employment after their tenure.

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- The salary, allowance and other conditions of CVC is similar to chairman of UPSC and VC is similar to members of UPSC.

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Dawn Mission

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- Dawn mission was launched by NASA deploying spacecrafts to orbit extra terrestrial objects.

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- It is the only mission ever to orbit two extraterrestrial targets.

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- It orbited giant asteroid Vesta for 14 months from 2011 to 2012, then continued on to Ceres, where it has been in orbit since March 2015.

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- Ceres is the largest object in the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter.
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- NASA has recently authorized a second extension of the Dawn mission at Ceres.
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- During this extension, the spacecraft will descend to lower altitudes than ever before at the dwarf planet, which it has been orbiting since 2015.
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Passport Index

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- The index ranks passports worldwide based on the cross-border access a holder has.
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- It was developed by Canada based global consultancy Arton Capital.
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- In its new ranking, Singapore has the world's most powerful passport which allows travel to 159 countries either without a visa or visa on arrival.
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- It is the first time that an Asian country has occupied the first place in the index.
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- Germany listed in second place with its citizens able to visit 158 countries.
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- India has improved its ranking to 75th position from 78th last year.
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Source: PIB, The Hindu.

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