

August - 04

## TNPSC BITS

- ❖ In Jammu and Kashmir, the 43-day-long Machail Mata Yatra in Kishtwar district was suspended due to security reasons.
  - Machail Mata is a Goddess Durga shrine located at Machail, Kishtwar District of Jammu region in India.
- ❖ Addressing the 10<sup>th</sup> MGC Ministerial Meeting in Bangkok, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has emphasised on better connectivity between India and other member countries of the Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC) bloc.
  - It is a sub-regional cooperation organisation comprising India and five ASEAN countries, namely, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam.
- ❖ NASA's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) mission has discovered GJ 357 d, a super-Earth planet located 31 light years away from our own solar system.
- ❖ India's Satwik sairaj Ranki reddy and Chirag Shetty scripted a piece of history by beating reigning World champions Li Jun Hui and Liu Yu Chen, in the men's doubles final of the Thailand Open badminton championship in Bangkok.

## TAMIL NADU

### Water ATM at Nilgiris



- ❖ Nilgiris district administration has installed Water ATMs at 70 locations popular with tourists.
- ❖ The ban on sale of plastic water bottles and soft drinks along highways running through Nilgiris will come into effect from August 15.



- ❖ Tourists can collect water from ATMs at a nominal price.

## NATIONAL

### Genome India Initiative

- ❖ Under Genome India Initiative, the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) plans to scan nearly 20,000 Indian genomes over the next 5 years in a two-phase exercise.
- ❖ The project is done to develop diagnostic tests that can be used to test for cancer.
- ❖ While 22 institutions, including Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the DBT would be involved in the exercise.
- ❖ The data generated will be accessible for to researchers anywhere for analysis through National Biological Data Centre.

### The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill, 2019


- ❖ The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill or POCSO (Amendment) Bill has been passed by both houses of Parliament. It amends POCSO Act, 2012.

Offence	POCSO Act, 2012	2019 Bill
Use of child for pornographic purposes	Maximum: 5 years	Minimum: 5 years
Use of child for pornographic purposes resulting in penetrative sexual assault	Minimum: 10 years Maximum: life imprisonment	Minimum: 10 years (in case of child below 16 years: 20 years) Maximum: life imprisonment
Use of child for pornographic purposes resulting in aggravated penetrative sexual assault	Life imprisonment	Minimum: 20 years Maximum: life imprisonment, or death.
Use of child for pornographic purposes resulting in sexual assault	Minimum: Six years Maximum: Eight years	Minimum: Three years Maximum: Five years

Use of child for pornographic purposes resulting in aggravated sexual assault	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimum: Eight years</li> <li>Maximum: 10 years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimum: Five years</li> <li>Maximum: Seven years</li> </ul>
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## Kala Azar Disease

- ❖ Researchers at the IIT Hyderabad have been able to achieve sustained release of the drug (Amphotericin B) for up to 10 days, which can be used for treating kala-azar.
- ❖ It is a disease caused by parasites of the Leishmania type.
- ❖ It is spread by the bite of infected female sandflies.
- ❖ It attacks the immune system, and is almost always fatal if not treated.
- ❖ It is the second-largest parasitic killer in the world (after malaria).
- ❖ Kala Azar also known as black fever, and Dumdum fever is classified as a neglected tropical disease.
- ❖ In India, this disease is endemic to West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and eastern Uttar Pradesh.

WHAT IS KALA-AZAR	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A slow progressing indigenous disease</li> <li>Caused by protozoan parasite of genus <i>Leishmania</i></li> <li>In India, <i>Leishmania donovani</i> is the only parasite causing the disease</li> <li>The parasite primarily infects reticuloendothelial system</li> </ul>	<p><b>Signs &amp; Symptoms</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recurrent fever</li> <li>Loss of appetite</li> <li>Weakness</li> <li>Spleen enlargement</li> <li>Anaemia</li> </ul>
Transmission	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sandfly of genus <i>Phlebotomus argentipes</i> only known vector of kala-azar in India</li> </ul>	
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indian kala-azar has a unique epidemiological feature of being anthroponotic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Female sandflies pick up parasite while feeding on infected human host</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development and multiplication in the gut of sandflies and move to mouthparts</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parasite undergoes morphological change to become flagellate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Healthy human hosts get infection when an infective sandfly vector bites them</li> </ul>

### **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment (UAPA) Bill, 2019**

- ❖ Both houses of Parliament have passed the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019.
- ❖ It amends Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.
- ❖ The Bill empowers government to designate even “Individuals” as terrorists in addition to designating certain organisations as terrorist organisations.
- ❖ Earlier investigation of cases may be conducted by officers of the rank of Deputy Superintendent or Assistant Commissioner of Police or above.
- ❖ The Bill additionally empowers the officers of the NIA of the rank of Inspector or above, to investigate cases.
- ❖ Earlier acts done in contravention to 9 treaties, including the Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings (1997) and the Convention against Taking of Hostages (1979) were defined as terrorist acts.
- ❖ The amendment includes one more convention - International Convention for Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (2005)
- ❖ Under the 1967 Act, an investigating officer is required to obtain the prior approval of the DGP to seize properties that may be connected with terrorism.
- ❖ Now the amendments add that if the investigation is conducted by an officer of the National Investigation Agency (NIA), the approval of the Director General of NIA would be required for seizure of such property.

### **Institutions of Eminence**

- ❖ The University Grants Commission (UGC) on 02nd August 2019 has recommended 20 Institutions to be accorded the status of ‘Institutions of Eminence (IoE).’
- ❖ The IITs Madras and Kharagpur, Delhi University, University of Hyderabad, Amritha Vishwa Vidyapeetham and VIT are among the 20 institutions.
- ❖ Started in 2018, the IoE scheme is aimed at developing 20 world-class institutions which would put India on the global education map.
- ❖ The chosen public institutions will also receive a government grant of ₹1,000 crore, while the private institutions will not get any funding under the scheme.

## INTERNATIONAL

### India – Africa Relations

- ❖ President Ramnath Kovind returned to New Delhi after completion of his three-nation visit to three African nations: Benin, Gambia and Guinea.
- ❖ This is the first ever visit by any President of India to the three West African countries.
- ❖ In Guinea, he received National Order of Merit which is the highest civilian award of the country.
- ❖ MoUs were signed in the field of traditional medicine, pan Africa e-Network Project, solar and renewable energy, E-education and Ayurveda.
- ❖ About pan Africa e-Network:
  - Started in 2009. Aims to provide ‘seamless’ and ‘integrated’ elite, fibre optics and wireless network to connect the African countries.
  - The idea for the project came from the then President of India, A P J Abdul Kalam in Johannesburg in 2004.

### US-Russia Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty

- ❖ The US has formally withdrawn from the Cold War-era Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) with Russia.
- ❖ The treaty had banned the development, testing and possession of short and medium range ground-launched nuclear missiles with a range of 500-5,000 km.
- ❖ INF was signed by then US President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in 1987.

## ENVIRONMENT

### BS VI Norms Exception

- ❖ The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has exempted Armoured and Specialised Vehicles of Armed/ Paramilitary Forces from BS-VI Emission Norms.
- ❖ The exemption has been granted due to security challenges and requirements of suitable BS VI engines which would require considerable time to develop.
- ❖ Other vehicles exempted:

- Motor vehicles used for Government purposes relating to the defence of the country
- Armoured vehicles used for maintenance of law and order and internal security.

### **Canine Distemper – Dogs to Tigers**

- ❖ Wildlife biologists have raised concern about Canine Distemper Virus (CDV).
- ❖ It is a potential virus that can be transmitted from CDV-infected dogs living in wildlife sanctuaries to tigers.
- ❖ It is caused by a single-stranded RNA virus of the family Paramyxoviridae.
- ❖ It is similar to the measles virus in humans.
- ❖ There is no cure for canine distemper infection.
- ❖ Treatment typically consists of supportive care and efforts to prevent infections.
- ❖ In 2018, over 20 lions from the Gir forest have succumbed to the CDV infection.

