Prelim Bits 14-08-2017

Japanese Encephalitis

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- It is a mosquito-borne viral infection of the brain.
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- Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV) is a flavivirus related to dengue, yellow fever and West Nile viruses, and is spread by mosquitoes.
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- There is no cure for the disease. Treatment is focused on relieving severe clinical signs and supporting the patient to overcome the infection.
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- JEV is transmitted to humans through bites from infected mosquitoes of the Culex species.
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- The virus exists in a transmission cycle between mosquitoes, pigs and/or water birds (enzootic cycle).
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- Safe and effective JE vaccines are available to prevent disease and it is one of the vaccines given under Universal Immunisation Programme of India.
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International Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise (IMMSAREX)

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- Bangladesh, the current Chair of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) is scheduling a International Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise (IMMSAREX) in November in the Bay of Bengal.
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- It is going to be attended by the members and observers of the IONS.
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- China will be participated in the Rescue Exercise as an observer.
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Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)

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- The IONS is a regional forum of Indian Ocean littoral states, launched in 2008.
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- It presently has 23 members and 9 observers.
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- Indian Ocean littoral states are represented by the heads of their navies and the organization aims to foster military-to-military cooperation.
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- The Voluntary initiative seeks to increase maritime co-operation among navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region.
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- The grouping has working groups on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), Information Security and Interoperability (IS&I) and anti-piracy now renamed as maritime security.
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Elephant Census

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- Recently, Elephant Census 2017 was released by Union Environment Ministry.
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- The elephant is considered a National Heritage Animal of India.
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- According to the Census, the population has decreased by about 3,000, compared to last census in 2012.
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- India started Project Elephant in 1992 to protect the Asian elephant, its habitat and corridors and address the man-elephant conflict.
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- IUCN status of Asian Elephants is listed as “Endangered” and African elephants are listed as “vulnerable”.
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Gaj Yatra

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- It is a nationwide campaign to protect elephants on the occasion of World Elephant Day (12th Aug).
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- International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) is partnering the campaign.
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- The campaign is planned to cover 12 elephant range states.
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- Elephant Range States – Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, A.P, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha and Uttarakhand.
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Mike Programme

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- Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) programme was started by CITES (The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora).
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- It was started in South Asia (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka) in the year 2003.
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- It is an international collaboration that tracks trends in information related to the illegal killing of elephants to monitor effectiveness of field conservation efforts.
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- CITES is the only treaty to ensure that international trade in plants and animals does not threaten the survival in the wild.
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TRAPPIST-1

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- In a new study, researchers found that the TRAPPIST-1 star is quite old: between 5.4 and 9.8 billion years.
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- This is up to twice as old as our own solar system, which formed some 4.5 billion years ago.
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- TRAPPIST-1 is a system of seven Earth-size planets orbiting an ultra-cool dwarf star about 40 light-years away.
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- This is by far the largest collection of Earth-like planets in the habitable ‘Goldilocks’ zone of a star.
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- Goldilocks represents a zone which is neither too close nor too far from a star, which raises the possibility of liquid water being present on the surface.
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- Unlike earlier discoveries of exoplanets, all seven planets could possibly have liquid water.
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- Since the initial discovery of three planets was made using the Chile-based Transiting Planets and Planetesimals Small Telescope, the exoplanet system is called TRAPPIST-1
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- The TRAPPIST-1 planets have lower densities than Earth; it is possible that large reservoirs of volatile molecules such as water could produce thick atmospheres that would shield the planetary surfaces from harmful radiation.
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