Prelim Bits 24-07-2022 & 25-07-2022 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Lumpy Skin Disease

Around 1000 cattle, especially cows and buffaloes, have died in Gujarat due to the lumpy skin disease.

- Lumpy skin disease (LSD) is a viral disease of cattle and water buffalo caused by the **poxvirus** LSD virus.
- It is spread by mosquitoes, flies, lice, wasps, by direct contact among the cattle, and through contaminated food and water.
- Main symptoms include,
    1. Fever in animals,
    2. Depression,
    3. Characteristic skin nodules all over the body,
    4. Marked reduction in milk production,
    5. Abortion in pregnant animals,
    6. Difficulty in eating, which sometimes lead to the animal's death.
- **Prevention** - Four tactics to control and prevent LSD are quarantine, vaccination, slaughter campaigns and management strategies.
- Insecticides can be sprayed to prevent mosquitoes, flies, lice in the animal habitats during the monsoon season.
- **Treatment** - There is no treatment for the virus, so prevention by vaccination is the most effective means of control.
- Secondary infections in the skin may be treated with Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatories (NSAIDs) and also antibiotics when appropriate.

Reference

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2. https://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/pests-diseases-weeds/animal/lumpy-skin-disease
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Serious Fraud Investigation Office

A Member of Parliament has written to the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO), a fraud regulator, urging them to launch an investigation into the finances of the edtech behemoth, BYJU'S.

- Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) is a multi-disciplinary organization under the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs**.
- It was constituted based on the recommendation of **Naresh Chandra committee** on corporate governance.
- Initially, the Government of India set up the SFIO by way of a resolution in 2003.
- Section 211 of the Companies Act, 2013 has accorded statutory status to the SFIO.
- It consist of experts in the field of accountancy, forensic auditing, law, information technology, investigation, company law, capital market and taxation.
- These members detect and **prosecute or recommend** for prosecution **white-collar crimes/frauds**.
- SFIO has powers to arrest people for the violation of the Company law.
- SFIO investigates serious cases of fraud received from Department of Company Affairs.
- SFIO can start an investigation into the affairs of a company under the following circumstances:
    1. On receipt of a report of the Registrar or inspector under section 208 (Report on Inspection made) of the Companies Act, 2013.
    2. On intimation of a special resolution passed by a company that its affairs are required to be investigated.
    3. In the public interest.
    4. On request from any department of the central government or a state government.
- It takes up for investigation cases characterized by,
    1. Complexity and having inter-departmental and multi- disciplinary ramifications.
    2. Substantial involvement of public interest to be judged by size, either in terms of monetary
    3. The possibility of investigation leading to or contributing towards a clear improvement in systems, laws or procedures

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2. https://sfio.gov.in/about-sfio-history/
3. https://www.mca.gov.in/content/mca/global/en/about-us/affiliated-offices/sfo.html

Wentian Laboratory

China launched the second of 3 modules to its permanent space station, in one of the final missions needed to complete the orbiting outpost by year's end.

- The 23-tonne Wentian ("Quest for the Heavens") laboratory module was launched on the China's most powerful rocket, Long March 5B.
- The 17.9-metre long Wentian lab module will be where astronauts can carry out scientific experiments along with the third module Mengtian ("Dreaming of the heavens") module that hasn't yet been launched.
- The Wentian module comes with an airlock cabin that is designed to be the main exit and entry point for activities when the space station is complete.

- It will also be used as short-term living quarters for astronauts during crew rotations on the station.
- It is designed for long-term accommodation of just three astronauts.
- Mengtian is expected to be launched in October 2022 and, like Wentian, is to dock with Tianhe, forming a T-shaped structure.

Reference

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Narayana Guru

Brahmashree Narayana Guru Circle at Lady Hill in the Mangalore city will be developed at an estimated cost of Rs. 48 lakh.

- This circle is named after the social reformer Narayana Guru, who was born in 1856 in the Chempazhanthi hamlet near Thiruvananthapuram.
- His family belonged to the Ezhava caste and was considered 'avarna' according to the social mores of the time.
- Sree Narayana Guru became one of the greatest re-evaluators of Advaita Vedanta, the **principle of non-duality** put forward by Adi Shankara.
- **Literary Works** - Advaitha Deepika, Asrama, Thevarappathinkangal, etc.
- **Against Caste Injustice** - He gave the slogan Oru Jathi, Oru Matham, Oru Daivam, Manushyanu (One Caste, One Religion, One God for All).
- In 1888, he built a temple dedicated to Lord Shiva at Aruvippuram which was against the caste-based restrictions of the time.
- In one temple he consecrated at Kalavancode, he kept mirrors instead of idols. This symbolised his message that the divine was within each individual.
- Narayana Guru was in the forefront of the movement for universal temple entry and against the societal ills like the social discrimination of untouchables.
- He provided the impetus for Vaikom agitation, which was aimed at temple entry in Travancore for the lower castes.
- It drew nationwide attention and appreciation from Mahatma Gandhi.
- **Against Conversions** - He taught equality but felt the inequalities should not be exploited to carry out conversions.
- Narayana Guru organized an All-Region Conference in 1923 at Alwaye Advaita Ashram, which was an effort to counter the religious conversions Ezhava community was susceptible to.
- **Contribution to Science** - Emphasized the practice of ideals of cleanliness, promotion of education, agriculture, trade, handicrafts and technical training.
- Sree Narayana Gurudev's Adyaropa darsanam (Darsanamala) explains the creation of the universe.

Reference

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2. https://www.keralatourism.org/varkala/sree-narayana-guru.php
3. https://www.keralatourism.org/varkala/sree-narayana-guru--works.php
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Indian Antarctic Bill 2022

Lok Sabha passed the Indian Antarctic Bill, 2022 moved by Minister of Earth Sciences.

- The bill seeks to give effect to
    1. To the Antarctic Treaty,
    2. The Protocol on Environment Protection (Madrid Protocol) to the Antarctic Treaty and
    3. To the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources.
- The main aim is to ensure de-militarization of the region along with getting it rid of mining or illegal activities. It also aims that there should not be any nuclear test / explosion in the region.
- **Applicability -** The Bill will apply to any person, vessel or aircraft that is a part of an Indian expedition to Antarctica under a permit issued under the Bill.
- Areas comprising of Antarctica include:
    1. The continent of Antarctica, including its ice-shelves, and all areas of the continental shelf adjacent to it, and
    2. All islands (including their ice-shelves), seas, and air space south of 60°S latitude.
- **Committee** - The Bill also establishes a 'Committee on Antarctic Governance and Environmental Protection', which
    1. Grants permits for various activities,
    2. Implements and ensures compliance of relevant international laws for protection of Antarctic environment,
    3. Obtains and reviews relevant information provided by parties to the Treaty, Convention, and Protocol, and
    4. Negotiates charges with other parties for activities in Antarctica.
- The Bill will also facilitate India's interest and pro-active involvement in the management of growing Antarctic tourism and sustainable development of fisheries resources in Antarctic waters.
- It will also help in increased international visibility, credibility of India in Polar governance leading to international collaboration and cooperation in scientific and logistics fields.
- The Bill also lays out a structure for government officials to inspect a vessel, conduct checks of research facilities.
- **IAA** - The Bill also proposed to set-up **Indian Antarctic Authority** (IAA) under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- The IAA shall be the apex decision making authority and shall facilitate programmes and activities permitted under the Bill. It shall,
    1. Provide a stable, transparent and accountable process for the sponsorship and supervision of Antarctic research and expeditions;

2. Ensure the protection and preservation of the Antarctic environment; and
3. Ensure compliance by Indian citizens engaged in the Antarctic programs and activities with relevant rules and internationally agreed standards.

- **Antarctic fund** - The act directs creating a fund called the Antarctic fund that will be used for protecting the Antarctic environment.
- **Jurisdiction** - The Bill also extends the jurisdiction of Indian courts to Antarctica.
- It lays out penal provision for crimes on the continent by Indian citizens, foreign citizens who are a part of Indian expeditions, or are in the precincts of Indian research stations.
- The Bill also prohibits mining, dredging and activities that threaten the pristine conditions of the continent.
- It also prohibits any person, vessel or aircraft from disposing waste in Antarctica and bars the testing of nuclear devices.

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