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26 April 2024

West Bengal News

Bengal Government to Establish Two GST Tribunal Benches

Context:

- The Bengal government plans to **establish two GST tribunal benches** to expedite the **resolution of tax issues**, aiming for them to be operational by **August-September**.

Key points:

- Each bench will consist of **four members, including one from the state, one from the Centre, and two independent judicial members**.
- These tribunals will settle tax matters concerning West Bengal, Sikkim, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- Vivek Jalan, **chairperson of the National Fiscal Affairs & Taxation Committee** of The Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry, mentioned that **50 such benches are expected to be set up nationwide**.
- The process was delayed due to discussions between **states and the Centre**.
- Currently, traders with disputes must first seek settlement at the **state departmental level and then, if necessary, in the High Court, which is often overburdened**.
- The introduction of GST tribunals is **expected to expedite the justice delivery process**.

Alipore Zoological Garden

Context:

- The **Alipore Zoological Garden in Kolkata** has expanded its animal collection through an **exchange program with the Indira Gandhi Zoological Park in Visakhapatnam**.

Key points:

- Alipore Zoo has acquired various animals, including a **white Bengal Tiger, a pair of ring-tailed lemurs, grey wolves, striped hyenas, a black swan, five wild dogs, and three hog deer. A pair of sloth bears will arrive later**.
- **Exchange Program:** Alipore Zoo has given a pair of northern giraffes, a pair of scarlet macaws, and two pairs of water monitor lizards to IGZP, Visakhapatnam in exchange.
- **Previous Success:** Alipore Zoo has previously successfully bred fishing cats, dancing deer, painted storks, iguanas, and monitor lizards.



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Malaria

Context:

- Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) has identified 69 wards for a malaria awareness programme.
- The week-long programme, starting 26th April, aims to raise awareness about **malaria protection and eradication**.

About:

- Malaria is caused by the **Plasmodium parasite**.
- It spreads to humans through bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes, known as **"night-biting" mosquitoes**.

Malaria in India:

- India accounted for **66% of malaria cases in the WHO's South-East Asia region in 2022**.
- India and Indonesia accounted for about **94%** of all malaria deaths in the region last year.
- Nearly **46%** of all cases in the region were caused by Plasmodium vivax.

Government Efforts to Control Malaria in India:

- Since 2000, India has reduced malaria cases by more than half and malaria deaths by more than 66%.
- Introduced the **National Framework for Malaria Elimination (2016-2030)** in 2016.
- **Aims for a malaria-free country by 2027 and elimination by 2030**.
- Increased funding by more than **25%** for the **National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme in 2019**.
- Increased support as a donor to the **Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria**.

Do you know?

- World Malariaday is celebrated on **25th April** annually.

Theme:

- **"Accelerating the fight against malaria for a more equitable world"**.

Meteorological Department Issues Red Alert for Severe Heatwave in South Bengal

Context:

- The Regional Meteorological Centre in Alipore has issued a **red alert for severe heatwave in five districts of South Bengal**.
- Additionally, a yellow alert for a heatwave has been issued for three districts in North Bengal.



Heat Wave:

- Qualitatively, a heat wave is a condition of air temperature that becomes fatal to the human body when exposed.
- Quantitatively, it is defined based on the temperature thresholds over a region in terms of actual temperature or its departure from normal.
- **Heatwave is considered if the maximum temperature of a station reaches at least 40°C or more for Plains and at least 30°C or more for Hilly regions.**

a) Based on Departure from Normal

- **Heat Wave:** Departure from normal is 4.5°C to 6.4°C
- **Severe Heat Wave:** Departure from normal is >6.4°C

b) Based on Actual Maximum Temperature

- **Heat Wave:** When actual maximum temperature $\geq 45^{\circ}\text{C}$
- **Severe Heat Wave:** When actual maximum temperature $\geq 47^{\circ}\text{C}$
- India Meteorological Department issues following colour code impact based heat
- warning jointly with National Disaster Management Authority.

Colour Code	Alert	Warning	Impact	Suggested Actions
Green (No action)	Normal Day	Maximum temperatures are near normal	Comfortable temperature. No cautionary action required.	Nil
Yellow Alert (Be updated)	Heat Alert	Heat wave conditions at isolated pockets persists on 2 days	Moderate temperature. Heat is tolerable for general public but moderate health concern for vulnerable people e.g. infants, elderly, people with chronic diseases	(a) Avoid heat exposure. (b) Wear lightweight, light-coloured, loose, cotton clothes. (c) Cover your head: Use a cloth, hat or umbrella
Orange Alert (Be prepared)	Severe Heat Alert for the day	(i) Severe heat wave conditions persists for 2 days (ii) Through not severe, but heat wave persists for 4 days or more	High temperature. Increased likelihood of heat illness symptoms in people who are either exposed to sun for a prolonged period or doing heavy work. High health concern for vulnerable people e.g. infants, elderly, people with chronic diseases.	(b) Avoid heat exposure– keep cool. Avoid dehydration. (b) Drink sufficient water- even if not thirsty. (c) Use ORS, homemade drinks like lassi, torani (rice water), lemon water, buttermilk, etc. to keep yourself hydrated
Red Alert (Take Action)	Extreme Heat Alert for the day	(i) Severe heat wave persists for more than 2 days. (ii) Total number of heat/severe heat wave days exceeding 6 days.	Very high likelihood of developing heat illness and heat stroke in all ages.	Extreme care needed for vulnerable people.

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