



Maya's Pit Viper

Why in News?

Recently, a new venomous green snake named **Trimeresurus mayae** or **Maya's Pit viper** was discovered from **Umroi Military station in Ri-Bhoi district of Meghalaya**.

What are the Key characteristics of Pit Viper?

▪ About Maya's Pit viper

- The snake measures about 750 mm in length
- It looked very similar to Pope's Pit Viper but the colour of the eyes was different.
- This snake and the Pope's Pit Viper have very different hemipenis, the copulatory organ. [//](#)



- According to a herpetologist, this new species was relatively common in Meghalaya, Mizoram and even in Guwahati.

▪ About Pit Viper

- **Pit viper**, any species of viper (subfamily Crotalinae) that has, in addition to two movable fangs, a heat-sensitive pit organ between each eye and nostril which together help it accurately aim its strike at its warm-blooded prey.
- Pit vipers are found from deserts to rainforests.
- They may be terrestrial, arboreal, or aquatic. Some species lay eggs; others produce live young.
- The venomous pit vipers species includes hump-nosed pit viper, Mangrove pit viper and Malabar Pit Viper.
- Russell's Viper and Saw-scaled Viper are two most venomous vipers species found in India and member of big four poisonous and deadliest snakes in India.
- These snake species are responsible for the majority of [snake bites](#) in India.

▪ Significance

- In a country where around 1.2 million people have lost their lives owing to snakebite and many more have lost their limbs in the last two decades; a discovery of a new venomous snake means a lot in the context of public health.
- **Venom is a complex protein**, mostly typical to a species and thus unravelling a new species will help understanding its venom and its impact on human life.

Civil Services Examination, Previous Year's Questions (PYQs)

Q. King Cobra is the only snake that makes its own nest. Why does it make its nest? (2010)

- (a) It is snake-eater and the nest helps attract other snakes
- (b) It is a viviparous snake and needs a nest to give birth to its offspring
- (c) It is an oviparous snake and lays its eggs in the nest and guards the nest until they are hatched
- (d) It is large, cold blooded animal and needs a nest to hibernate in the cold season

Ans: (c)

Exp:

- King cobras are venomous snakes that are found in South and Southeast Asia. They can grow up to 18 feet long which makes it the longest venomous snake in the world. They are threatened by habitat destruction and have been listed as vulnerable in the IUCN Red List since 2010.
- Being an oviparous (who lays eggs) reptile, it makes nests to lay eggs and guard them. Therefore, option (c) is the correct answer.

Source: TH

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