

## WORLD'S SMALLEST REPTILE

TAGS: GS-3: Environment

### CONTEXT:

- A chameleon discovered in the island country of **Madagascar** may be the **world's smallest adult reptile**.

### NEWS IN DETAILS:

- **Name:** The team found one male and one female of the species, named **Brookesia nana**, during an **expedition in 2012**.
- **Length:** The male has a length (snout to vent) of **13.5 mm** and a total length of 21.6 mm when the tail is included.
- For context, a **six-inch ruler (150 mm)** would **accommodate almost seven of these males in a row**, tails outstretched. The **female is slightly longer** at 28.9 mm.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Smallest:** Previously, the chameleon species **Brookesia micra** was thought to be the smallest. The average length of adults of this species is **16 mm** (29 mm with tail), while the smallest adult male has been recorded at 15.3 mm.



### REPTILES IN THE WORLD:

- Reptiles come in a **wide size range**.
  - The **longest**, the **reticulated python**, at 6.25 m is almost as long as 289 Brookesia nanas.
  - The gharial is more than 200 Brookesia nanas long,
  - while the king cobra can measure up to nearly 180 Brookesia nanas.
- On the smaller size, the **gecko Sphaerodactylus ariasae** of the Caribbean is almost as small as the Brookesia micra, or about 20-25% longer **than the Brookesia nana**.

### MADAGASCAR-HOME TO TINY LIZARDS:

- Madagascar is **home to tiny lizards** and also the **smallest species of snakes**.
- **Reason:** One possible reason for such small species is the so-called "**island effect**" that **causes species on small islands to get smaller**.
- But the study authors note that the new chameleon occurs in a rainforest and so this tiny new chameleon violates the pattern of the smallest species being found on small islands. That suggests that something else is allowing/causing these chameleons to miniaturise," study co-author Dr Mark D Scherz wrote in a blog.
- **Threat of extinction:** Scientists believe the species might be threatened by extinction because of habitat degradation.

Source: Indian Express

MCQs:

**Q. Recently Brookesia nana was seen in news. It is:**

- a) World's smallest adult reptile.**
- b) A jihadist terrorist organization based in Nigeria
- c) Satellite launched by Israel
- d) None of the above

**ANS: A**