Prelim Bits 13-05-2019

Discovery of Orchid

- Lecanorchis taiwaniana, is one of the smallest orchid in terms of size and duration of bloom to be recorded botanicallyin India.
- It was recently discovered in the state of Assam.
- It is a mycoheterotroph, one of two types of parasitic plants that have abandoned photosynthesis.
- Northeast India has rich orchid wealth in the country, having 800 of some 1,300 species.
- About 300 species are found in the Western Ghats and 200 in the north-western Himalayas.

World Migratory Bird Day

- World Migratory Bird Day is celebrated in May month each year to highlight the need for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats.
- This year highlighted the impact of plastic pollution on the migratory birds health which affects wide range of species – Whales, turtles, Fish and birds.
- It is organised by 3 environmental organisations,

i. The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)
ii. The African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA)
iii. Environment for the Americas (EFTA).

- CMS and AEWA are intergovernmental wildlife treaties administered by UN Environment.
- CMS a.k.a Bonn Convention, aims to conserve terrestrial, aquatic and avian migratory species throughout their range.
- It was entered into force in 1979 and currently it has 127 parties.
- AEWA is dedicated to the conservation of migratory waterbirds that migrate along the African-Eurasian Flyway.
- It covers 255 species of bird ecologically dependent on wetlands for at least part of their annual cycle.
- Currently, 78 countries and EU are part of this agreement.

Monkeypox Virus

- Singapore has recently reported its first case of the rare monkeypox virus.

- Monkeypox, a virus like the human smallpox which was eradicated in 1980.
- It does not spread easily from person to person but can in rare cases be fatal.
- Transmission is usually via close contact with infected animals such as rodents and monkeys and is limited between people.
- This viral infection has only been documented outside of Africa in 3 countries – US, UK and Israel.
- It typically lasts for 2 to 4 weeks, starting as a fever and headache and progressing through to small bumps called pustules that spread over the body.

WTO

- It operates a global system of trade rules, acts as a forum for negotiating trade agreements, it settles trade disputes between its member countries and it supports the needs of developing countries.
- WTO officially commenced under the Marrakesh Agreement, replacing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).
- It is created by Uruguay round of negotiations and established in 1995. HQ - Geneva.
- The trade agreements are signed by representatives of member governments and ratified by their parliaments.
- It has 164 members and 22 observer governments, with Afghanistan and Liberia being the latest to join.
- The members need not have to be fully independent states.
- Even customs territory with full autonomy in the conduct of their external commercial relations can join with the consent of other members. eg: Hong Kong.
- **Recent developments -** India has recently hosted Mini-Ministerial meeting of World Trade Organisation in New Delhi.
- It is an informal meeting of 50 WTO members to deliberate upon ways to create a positive atmosphere for carrying forward the mandate of WTO.
- It focused on the deadlock in WTO's dispute settlement body and attempts by richer nations to deny developing countries access to certain trade benefits.
- US has consistently blocked the appointment of judges in dispute settlement body.
- The lack of judges on the 7-member body has become a serious concern since it is the principal body tasked with arbitration between nations on trade disputes.

Dispute Settlement Body in WTO

- Dispute Settlement Body establishes "panels" of experts to consider a case.
- It accepts or rejects the panels' findings.

- The panel’s report can only be rejected by consensus in DSB, hence its conclusions are difficult to overturn.
- It monitors the implementation of the rulings and recommendations, and has the power to authorize retaliation when a country does not comply with a ruling.
- Appeals to the panel ruling are dealt by the permanent 7 member Appellate Body broadly representing the members.
- DSB has to accept or reject the appeals and again the rejection is only possible by consensus.

Source: The Hindu, Business Standard

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering