Prelim Bits 25-02-2019

Wallace's giant bee (Megachile pluto)

- It is the world's largest bee that was rediscovered in a remote part of Indonesia.
- Wallace's giant bee was discovered in the 19th century by British naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace.
- The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species lists the bee as "vulnerable".
- It was nicknamed the "flying bulldog as it is nearly four times bigger than the European bee.
- It lives in the Indonesian island region of North Moluccas and makes its nest in termite mounds

Gita Govinda

- Victoria Memorial Hall in Kolkata has put on display a handwritten 18th-century copy of Gita Govinda to mark the International Mother Language Day.
- It is written in Sanskrit by Jayadeva.
- It an important text of the Bhakti Movement and dates back to the 12^{th} century.
- It depicts the relationship between Lord Krishna and Radha.
- It was also the inspiration for many beautiful miniature paintings of the Rajasthani and Pahari schools in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Civilian deaths in Afghanistan

- The report from the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) stated that a record number of Afghan civilians were killed last year due to stepped up aerial attacks by U.S-led forces and more suicide bombings.
- The conflict in Afghanistan claimed 3,804 civilian lives that included 927 children leading to an 11% spike in civilian deaths versus 2017.
- Suicide attacks and aerial operations each caused the most civilian casualties ever recorded by UNAMA.
- Ground engagements, mainly between pro-government forces and anti-government groups remained the second leading cause of civilian casualties.
- The mainly Shi'ite Hazara minority has been heavily targeted by attacks claimed by the local affiliate of Islamic State.

Hayabusa 2 and Ryugu asteroid

- Hayabusa 2 is a Japanese probe sent to collect samples from an asteroid for clues about the origin of life and the solar system.
- It fired a bullet into the surface of the Ryugu asteroid.
- The Ryugu asteroid is thought to contain relatively large amounts of organic matter and water from some 4.6 billion years ago when the solar system was born.
- It was launched in December 2014 and is scheduled to return to the Earth with its samples in 2020.
- The probe will observe the surface of the asteroid with its camera and sensing equipment.

National Action Plan – Viral Hepatitis

- It was launched by Union Ministry Health & Family Welfare.
- In India, it is estimated that there are 4 crore people suffering from Hepatitis B and 0.6-1.2 crore people suffering from Hepatitis C.
- It provides a strategic framework, based on which National Viral Hepatitis Control Program was framed and launched under National Health Mission.
- The aim of the program is to

1. combat hepatitis and achieve countrywide elimination of Hepatitis C by 2030
2. achieve significant reduction in the infected population, morbidity and mortality associated with Hepatitis B, C, A and E.

- In India, Hepatitis B vaccine was introduced in the Universal Immunization Program a decade ago.

Flamingo Count

- It is the counting of flamingos that will be taken up across the country for the first time.
- It is undertaken by Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) in collaboration with NGOs and local birdwatchers across the country.
- In India there are two species of flamingos — Greater Flamingo - Phoenicopterus rosues and Lesser Flamingo - Phoeniconaias minor.
- The taller of the two species is the greater flamingo.
- Lesser flamingos are more pink in colour and their legs are sorter.
- Greater flamingos have light pink beaks with a dark tip which are widespread in India
- It will migrate to South India during winter and spend their time in large reservoirs and mud flats.

Source: PIB, The Hindu, Indian Express

