Prelim Bits 25-11-2019

Industrial Security Annex

- The 2+2 dialogue between India and the U.S. is going to be held in Washington, D.C.
- During the dialogue, both countries are expected to sign the Industrial Security Annex (ISA) and review the steps to operationalise the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA).
- The ISA is part of the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA), which India had signed with the U.S. many years ago.
- It will allow the transfer of defence technology
- It is crucial for U.S. companies bidding for big-ticket Indian deals to partner Indian private companies.
- It would be the first time India has entered into such a pact with any country, although the United States has such agreements in place with several countries.
- But the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-spatial Cooperation (BECA), which is under discussion, is unlikely to be concluded in the upcoming dialogue.

Plastic Parks

- A plastic park is an industrial zone devoted to plastic enterprises and its allies' industries.
- It includes a whole range of companies required by the plastics processing community such as

1. Material and machinery suppliers,
2. Plastics processing companies,
3. Plastic recycling companies including waste management system.

- These plastic parks are being developed by State Governments with the support of Department of Chemicals & Petrochemical of Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers.
- The government has approved setting up of 6 plastic parks in Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Jharkhand and Tamil Nadu.
- Under the scheme, the government provides grant funding up to 50 per cent of the project cost.

- The remaining project cost is to be funded by State Government beneficiary industries and by a loan from financial institutions.

Golden Rice

- In the late 1990s, German scientists developed a genetically modified variety of rice called Golden Rice.
- It was claimed to be able to fight Vitamin A deficiency, which is the leading cause of blindness among children and can also lead to death due to infectious diseases such as measles.
- Rice is naturally low in the pigment beta-carotene, which the body uses to make Vitamin A.
- Golden rice contains this, which is the reason for its golden colour.
- Now, Bangladesh could be on the verge of becoming the first country to approve plantation of this variety.
- In Bangladesh, over 21 per cent of the children have vitamin A deficiency.
- The Golden Rice that is being reviewed in Bangladesh is developed by the Philippines-based International Rice Research Institute.

Cane Turtle

- While turtles are more or less dependent on water, tortoises are completely terrestrial.
- Cane Turtle is an anomaly. It scuttles through the forest and adopts a land-based lifestyle among leaves.
- Although the shape of its legs and webbed feet are reminiscent of its aquatic relatives, it doesn’t like water and stays clear of streams.
- When scared, it dives under dry leaves as if it were plunging into a pond or brook.
- They are endemic to the evergreen and semi-evergreen forests of the Western Ghats of Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- They are omnivorous and feed on fruits, leaves, arthropods, and molluscs.
- Males have a darker pink or scarlet colouring compared to females, besides also being smaller in size.
- The 10-cm-long turtle blended in colour and shape with the dry leaves that clothed the forest floor.
- Rainforests don’t undergo a distinct winter season, but the turtle puts its life on hold for six months after the Northeast monsoon recedes.
- Its IUCN Status is Endangered.

Measles

- Measles is a highly infectious acute viral illness that can lead to severe

complications, such as pneumonia, encephalitis and death.

- Children younger than five years who get infected with measles have higher rates of complications, hospitalisation and even death.
- The disease is preventable through two doses of a safe and effective vaccine.
- Babies are protected against measles through maternal antibodies for the first six months based on studies carried out in measles-endemic settings.
- A recent study has shown that maternal antibodies against measles does not protect infants for the first 6 months of age.
- It shows that antibodies from the mother almost disappear by the end of three months.
- Hence, infants become susceptible to measles infection at the end of three months and not six months as earlier thought.
- Currently, as per WHO recommendations, children in India are vaccinated only at 9-12 months, leaving them open to infection.
- India currently gives a measles rubella vaccine in its universal immunisation programme to tackle both measles and rubella.
- India, as part of the global initiative, has targeted elimination of measles and control of rubella by 2020.

Source: PIB, The Hindu, The Indian Express

