UPSC Daily Current Affairs | Prelim Bits 10-09-2020

E-Gopala App

- e-Gopala App, is a comprehensive breed improvement marketplace and information portal for direct use of farmers.
- At present, no digital platform is available in the country for farmers managing livestock including buying and selling of disease free germplasm in all forms, availability of quality breeding services and guiding farmers for animal nutrition, treatment of animals using appropriate medicine.
- There is no mechanism to send alerts on due date for vaccination, pregnancy diagnosis and calving among other issues and inform farmers about various government schemes and campaigns in the area.
- The e-Gopala app will provide solutions to farmers on all these aspects.
- The app is launched as a part of PM- Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY).

EASE Banking Reforms Index

- Union Minister of Finance inaugurated Doorstep Banking Services by Public Sector Banks (PSBs) and felicitated best performing banks on EASE Banking Reforms Index.
- Enhanced Access and Service Excellence (EASE) Agenda is aimed at institutionalizing clean and smart banking for PSBs launched in 2018.
- The index is prepared by the Indian Banking Association (IBA) and Boston Consulting Group.
- It is commissioned by the Finance Ministry.
- It is a framework that was adopted last year to strengthen public sector banks and rank them on metrics such as

1. Responsible banking,
2. Financial inclusion,
3. Credit offtake
4. Digitization.

- PSBs have shown a healthy trajectory in their performance over four quarters since the launch of EASE 2.0 Reforms Agenda.
- Bank of Baroda, State Bank of India, and erstwhile Oriental Bank of

Commerce were felicitated for being the top three in the 'Top Performing Banks' category according to the EASE 2.0 Index Results.

- Bank of Maharashtra, Central Bank of India and erstwhile Corporation Bank were awarded in the 'Top Improvers' category basis EASE 2.0 Index.
- As part of the EASE Reforms, Doorstep Banking Services is envisaged to provide convenience of banking services to the customers at their doorstep through the

a. Universal touch points of Call Centre,
b. Web Portal or Mobile App.

- The services shall be rendered by the Doorstep Banking Agents deployed by the selected Service Providers at 100 centers across the country.
- The services can be availed by customers of Public Sector Banks at nominal charges.

Special Frontier Force (SFF)

- The SFF was raised by the Intelligence Bureau in the immediate aftermath of the 1962 China-India war.
- The covert outfit recruited Tibetan exiles, now it has a mixture of Tibetans and Gorkhas.
- It was initially named Establishment 22, subsequently renamed SSF, it now falls under the purview of the Cabinet Secretariat.
- It is commonly believed that the SFF was raised by India in coordination with US intelligence agencies.
- On the ground, it is headed by an Inspector General who is an Army officer of the rank of Major General.
- The units comprising the SFF are known as Vikas battalions.
- SFF units are not part of the Army but function under its operational control.
- SSF units have their own rank structures, of equivalent status with Army ranks.
- However, they are Special Forces personnel highly trained for a variety of tasks.
- The SSF training center is in Chakrata, 100 km from Dehradun.

Multidimensional Poverty Index

- Recently NITI Aayog has constituted a Multidimensional Poverty Index Coordination Committee (MPICC).

- NITI Aayog is also working on a Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) parameter dashboard to rank states and Union Territories, along with a State Reform Action Plan (SRAP).
- The Global MPI is part of the government's decision to monitor the performance of the country on 29 select global indices.
- Global MPI is an international measure of multidimensional poverty covering 107 developing countries.
- It was first developed in 2010 by Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative and United Nations Development Programme for UNDP''s Human Development Reports.
- The Global MPI is released at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development of the United Nations in July, every year.
- The dimensions of poverty range from deprivations of health facilities, education and living standards.
- Global MPI is computed by scoring each surveyed household on 10 parameters based on

1. Nutrition,
2. Child mortality,
3. Years of schooling,
4. School attendance,
5. Cooking fuel,
6. Sanitation,
7. Drinking water,
8. Electricity,
9. Housing
10. Household assets.

National Bamboo Mission

- The restructured NBM was launched in 2018-19 for the holistic development of the complete value chain of the bamboo sector and is being implemented in a hub (industry) and spoke model.
- It aims to connect farmers to markets so as to enable farmer producers to get a ready market for the bamboo grown and to increase the supply of appropriate raw material to the domestic industry.
- The Sector Skill Councils established under the National Skill Development Agency (NSDA) will impart skills and recognition of prior learning to traditional artisans, encouraging the youth to carry forward their family traditions.
- NBM also supports local artisans through locally grown bamboo species,

which will actualize the goal of Vocal for Local and help increase the income of farmers, reducing dependency on imports of raw material.
- Recently Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare has virtually inaugurated 22 bamboo clusters.
- The bamboo clusters has been inaugurated in 9 states viz.

1. Gujarat,
2. Madhya Pradesh,
3. Maharashtra,
4. Odisha,
5. Assam,
6. Nagaland,
7. Tripura,
8. Uttarakhand
9. Karnataka

Indian Forest Act and Bamboo cultivation

- The Indian Forest Act 1927 was amended in 2017 to remove bamboo for the category of trees.
- As a result, anyone can undertake cultivation and business in bamboo and its products without the need of a felling and transit permission.
- Import policy has also been modified to ensure the progress of the bamboo industry in the country

Sanskrit Grams

- Sanskrit is the second official language in Uttarakhand after Hindi.
- The state government currently runs 97 Sanskrit schools, where an average of 2,100 students study each year.
- Recently Uttarakhand Government has decided to develop 'Sanskrit Grams' across the state.
- The decision was taken after noting significant progress in a pilot programme to teach Sanskrit to residents of two villages in Uttarakhand.
- It aims to teach people to use Sanskrit regularly.
- Several villages were selected according to the availability of Sanskrit schools so that teachers may visit the villages often and motivate residents to learn and use Sanskrit.
- Villages were selected at the meeting of the Uttarakhand Sanskrit Academy, chaired by the Uttarakhand Chief Minister.
- The focus will be on the school-going children so that they can learn the language from a young age.

- The programme will start by teaching people smaller sentences which are used most commonly.
- The programme will run first at the district level and then at the block level for promotion of the Sanskrit language.
- Sanskrit has been written both in Devanāgarī script and in various regional scripts, such as

1. Śāradā from the north (Kashmir),
2. Bāṅglā (Bengali) in the east,
3. Gujarātī in the west.

- It is also written in various southern scripts, including the Grantha alphabet, which was especially devised for Sanskrit texts.

Important books and authors in Sanskrit

1. Aṣṭādhyāyī ("Eight Chapters") composed by Pāṇini (c. 6th–5th century BCE).
2. Svapnavāsvavadatta - Vāsavadatta composed by Bhāsa.
3. Śakuntalā, Vikramorvaśīya, Kumārasambhava and Raghuvaṃśa were composed by Kālidāsa, dated anywhere from the 1st century BCE to the 4th century CE.
4. Mṛcchakatika ("Little Clay Cart") was composed by Śūdraka, possibly dating to the 3rd century CE.
5. Kirātārjunīya ("Arjuna and the Kirāta") composed by Bhāravi, dates from approximately the 7th century.
6. Śiśupālavadha ("The Slaying of Śiśupāla") was composed by Māgha, whose dates to the late 7th century.
7. The two epics Rāmāyaṇa ("Life of Rāma") and Mahābhārata ("Great Tale of the Bhāratas") were also composed in Sanskrit, and the former is esteemed as the first poetic work (ādikāvya) of India.

Source: PIB, Hindustan Times, Indian Express

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering