UPSC Daily Current Affairs | Prelim Bits 14-02-2020

National Deworming Day

- The National Deworming Day is a single fixed-day approach to treating intestinal worm infections in all children aged 1- 19 years.
- It will mobilize health personnel, state governments and other stakeholders to prioritize investment in control of Soil Transmitted Helminth (STH) infections one of the most common infections.
- All the children are provided deworming tablet in schools and anganwadis.
- Besides the deworming tablet, various health promotion activities related to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) are organised in schools and anganwadis.
- The NDD program is a cost-effective program at scale that continues to reach crores of children and adolescents with deworming benefits through a safe medicine Albendazole.

Intestinal parasitic worms

- Intestinal parasitic worms are large multicellular organisms, which when mature can generally be seen with the naked eye.
- They are also known as Helminths.
- They are often referred to as intestinal worms even though not all helminths reside in the intestines.
- Parasitic worms in children interfere with nutrient uptake, and can contribute to anemia, malnourishment, and impaired mental and physical development.
- Parasitic worms have also debilitating consequences on the health and education of children, and on their long-term earning potential.

Conservation Plan for Konark Temple

- The Union Government has decided to restore and preserve the nearly 800-year-old Konark Sun Temple, Odisha.
- Konark was built by King Narasimhadeva I (1238-1264AD) in the 13th century and is located in Eastern Odisha near the sacred city of Puri.
- King Narasimhadeva I was a famous ruler of the Ganga Dynasty and with

his accession to the throne, the Ganga Dynasty reached its zenith.

- It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site (1984).
- Dedicated to the Sun God, Konark is the culmination of Odisha temple architecture, and one of the most outstanding monuments of religious architecture in the world.
- Its scale, refinement and conception represent the strength and stability of the Ganga Dynasty as well as the value systems of the historic milieu.
- The entire temple was designed in the shape of a colossal chariot with 7 horses and 24 wheels, carrying the sun god, Surya, across the heavens.
- 'Konarka', the place bears a name composed of two world elements : KONA meaning corner and ARKA meaning the Sun.
- The Sun god worshipped in Ark Kshetra is also called Konark.
- In 'Brahma Purana' the Sun God in Ark-kshetra has been described as Konaditya.
- Surya has been a popular deity in India since the Vedic period.

Arth Ganga Project

- National Ganga Council planned to evolve the 'Namami Gange' project to 'Arth Ganga'.
- In simple terms, 'Arth Ganga' implies a sustainable development model with a focus on economic activities related to Ganga.
- As part of this process, farmers will be encouraged to engage in sustainable agriculture practices, including zero budget farming, planting of fruit trees and building plant nurseries on the banks of Ganga.
- Above practices, along with creation of infrastructure for water sports and development of campsites, cycling and walking tracks etc., would help to tap the 'hybrid' tourism potential of the river basin area- for purposes of religious as well as adventure tourism.
- Almost half of the Indian population lives around the Ganges River belt. Moreover, of India's total freight, about 1/5th originates and 1/3rd terminates in the states around Ganges Belt.
- Thus, inland waterway is one of the most important pillars of "Arth Ganga"project.
- National Waterway-1 is an inland water transport route between Haldia in West Bengal and Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh.
- Ministry of Shipping is also developing Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh) Freight Village and Sahibganj (Jharkhand) Industrial Cluster-cum-Logistics Park with an objective of creating synergy with Inland Waterways.
- The income generated from encouraging ecotourism and Ganga wildlife conservation and cruise tourism etc. would help to generate sustainable

income streams for cleaning of Ganga.

Countervailing duty

- Countervailing duty (CVD) is an import tax imposed on certain goods in order to prevent dumping or counter export subsidies.
- The preferential treatment with respect to CVDs investigations falls under the US' Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) scheme.
- Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) is an umbrella that comprises the bulk of preferential schemes granted by industrialized nations to developing countries.
- The office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) has taken off India from the list of developing and least-developed countries that are eligible to claim benefits for preferential treatment with respect to countervailing duties (CVDs) investigations.
- Along with India, USTR has also eliminated other countries including Brazil, Indonesia, Hong Kong, South Africa, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam and Argentina from getting preferential treatment.
- The new lists consist of 36 developing countries and 44 least developed countries.
- The USA had come up with lists of countries classified as per their level of development to harmonize the USA preferential treatment laws with the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (SCM) Agreement in 1998.
- Thus, the country with per capita GNI above $12,375 or Rs 8.82 lakh, the share of more than 0.5% to the world trade and membership to the above-mentioned organizations is considered as a developed country by USTR.

WTO SCM Agreement

- The WTO Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures disciplines the use of subsidies, and it regulates the actions countries can take to counter the effects of subsidies.
- Under the agreement, a country can use the WTO's dispute-settlement procedure to seek the withdrawal of the subsidy or the removal of its adverse effects.
- Or the country can launch its own investigation and ultimately charge extra duty ("countervailing duty") on subsidized imports that are found to be hurting domestic producers.
- The classification of the countries (developed, developing and least-developed) is done according to the following criteria:

1. Per capita Gross National Income or GNI.
2. Share of world trade.
3. Other factors - such as Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) membership or application for membership, EU membership, and Group of Twenty (G20) membership, etc.

Apiary on Wheels

- The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises has flagged off 'Apiary on Wheels'.
- 'Apiary on Wheels' is a unique concept designed by the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) for the easy upkeep and migration of Bee Boxes having live Bee colonies.
- It is a holistic approach to address the challenges faced by the beekeepers.
- It is designed so as to reduce the labour and cost of maintaining and up keeping Bee Boxes and live bee colonies across India.
- Apiary on Wheels is a platform, which can carry 20 Bee Boxes from one place to another without any difficulty.
- It is like an attachment, which can be easily connected with a Tractor or a Trolley and may be pulled to any suitable destination.
- The KVIC launched Honey Mission in 2017 and has been training beekeepers, distributing Bee Boxes and helping rural, educated but unemployed youth to earn extra income through beekeeping activities, at their doorstep.

Khadi and Village Industries Commission

- KVIC is a statutory body established under the Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act, 1956.
- The KVIC is charged with the planning, promotion, organization and implementation of programmes for the development of Khadi and other village industries in the rural areas in coordination with other agencies engaged in rural development wherever necessary.
- It functions under the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

Conference on 'Combating Drug Trafficking'

- Recently, India hosted the first-ever BIMSTEC Conference on Combating Drug Trafficking in New Delhi.
- It was organized by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), India's federal agency for drug law enforcement.

- The BIMSTEC conference sought to provide an opportunity to all the member nations to deliberate on the increased threats posed by drug trafficking and the collective steps that were required to negate such threats.
- India is in the middle of two major illicit opium production regions in the world:

1. The Golden Crescent (Iran-Afghanistan-Pakistan) in the West.
2. The Golden Triangle (South-East Asia) in the East.

- Manipur and Mizoram having borders with Myanmar and other coastal States are sensitive and may become a gateway for illicit drugs entering India.
- To protect itself from the menace of drug trafficking, India has adopted a Zero Tolerance Policy towards all kinds of narcotics and psychotropic substances to realize its vision of a Drug-free India.
- India has also started an e-portal for digitalization of drug data to assist various drug enforcement agencies.

Source: PIB, AIR, the Hindu, Indian Express

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering