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Government Initiates Probe into Type-2 Polio Virus Contamination

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has ordered an inquiry into the type-2 polio virus contamination detected in the vials used for immunisation in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Telangana.

- The World Health Organization (WHO) found the virus in some sewage and stool samples during their routine surveillance and ensured that the cases have not developed into Poliomyelitis (Polio). Nevertheless, the government has ordered additional immunisation in these three States.
- This detection indicated the use of a type 2 poliovirus containing vaccine, despite the fact that trivalent vaccine (tOPV) that contained type 2 poliovirus vaccine had been phased out globally, and in India, in April 2016, as a part of the Polio End Game strategy.
- The traces found are attenuated (weakened) poliovirus and does not cause paralysis. The recipients of such vaccine usually shed the vaccine virus through fecal route for about 4-6 weeks after which it will die down.

Background

- The last case due to type-2 wild poliovirus globally was reported from Aligarh in India in 1999.
- India was declared polio free in 2014 and the last case was reported in January 2011.
- India switched to bivalent vaccine (bOPV) from trivalent vaccine (tOPV) following certification of global eradication of type 2 wild polio virus. Removing type 2 component from polio vaccine was done with the aim of minimizing the risk of vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 outbreak.

- Oral Polio Vaccines (OPV) contains weakened but live polio virus which can cause paralytic polio. Also, the vaccine virus is excreted by immunized children which can move from one person to another. This allows the virus to stick around and mutate to a more virulent form, raising the threat of vaccine-derived poliovirus (VDPV). VDPV, like imported wild polio, can cause outbreaks in under-immunized population.
- Therefore replacing OPV with the Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV) is a prerequisite for Polio eradication. Even the Polio Eradication and Endgame Strategic Plan of WHO calls for the phased removal of oral polio vaccines (OPV) by 2019.

Why not use IPV at first instance itself?

- IPV induces very low levels of immunity in the intestine. As a result, when a person immunized with IPV is infected with wild poliovirus, the virus can still multiply inside the intestines and be shed in the faeces, risking continued circulation.
- IPV is over five times more expensive than OPV.
- Administering IPV requires trained health workers, as well as sterile injection equipment and procedures.

Recently India had also launched Pulse Polio programme for 2018 to administer Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) to more than 17 crores children who are less than 5 years of age on National Immunisation Day, which is observed on January 28.

Polio

- The virus is transmitted by person-to person spread mainly through the faecal-oral route or, less frequently, by a common vehicle (e.g. contaminated water or food) and multiplies in the intestine, from where it can invade the nervous system and can cause paralysis.
- Initial symptoms of polio include fever, fatigue, headache, vomiting, stiffness in the neck, and pain in the limbs. In a small proportion of cases, the disease causes paralysis, which is often permanent. There is no cure for polio, it can only be prevented by immunization.
- Of the 3 strains of wild poliovirus (type 1, type 2, and type 3), wild poliovirus type 2 was eradicated in 1999 and no case of wild poliovirus type 3 has been found since the last reported case in Nigeria in November 2012.

Uzbekistan's President Visit to India

President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev was on a 2-day maiden visit to India.

- Both India and Uzbekistan signed 17 agreements which include holding a joint military training exercise in the area of counter-terrorism.
- to cooperate in the field of military education and military medicine

- setting up Joint Working Group to support and sustain enhanced, mutually-beneficial defense-related activities.
- They agreed to set up a defense wing at the Uzbekistan embassy in Delhi.
- The two countries have also decided to institute a regular dialogue on Afghanistan and reiterated support for Afghan-owned, Afghan-led, and Afghan-controlled peace.
- **The two sides have agreed to scale up bilateral trade from \$300 million to \$1 billion by 2020.**
- **The cities of Samarkand and Agra are named as sister cities.**

History of India-Uzbekistan Relations

- There are frequent references to Kamboja in Sanskrit and Pali literature, which is stated to include parts of present-day Uzbekistan.
- Ancient trade route Uttarpath passed through Uzbekistan.
- The eminent Uzbek scholar **Al-Beruni visited India in the 11th century.**
- Babur, the founder of the Mughal empire in India, is believed to have come to India from the Fergana valley in Uzbekistan.
- Mirza Ghalib and Amir Khusro are notable Indians of Uzbek parentage. Indian movies have traditionally been popular in Uzbekistan.
- India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru had visited Uzbekistan in 1955 and 1961 when it was part of the erstwhile Soviet Union.
- India had close interaction with the Uzbek Soviet Republic during the Soviet times. Indian leaders often visited Tashkent and other places. Prime Minister, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri passed away in Tashkent on 11 January 1966 after signing the Tashkent declaration with Pakistan.
- Uzbekistan's independence in August 1991 has led to the expansion and strengthening of bilateral ties between New Delhi and Tashkent in the political, economic and cultural spheres.
- India was the first country visited officially by President Karimov in August 1991. This was a historic visit outlining the framework for mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries.

Importance of India-Uzbekistan Relationship

- **Energy Needs**
 - India's need for energy can be fulfilled by gaining access to the natural resource of Uzbekistan, at the same time India can also prove to be a viable market for Uzbek oil and gas resources.
 - India has signed a pact on the import of over 2,000 tonnes of uranium with Uzbekistan.

- **Military and Security Interest**

- India views itself as a stabilizer and security provider in Central Asia.
- India has long wanted to play a larger role in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Uzbekistan being the largest military power among central Asian Countries, cooperating with it can help us achieve our objective.
- Military Cooperation with Uzbekistan is of utmost importance for our strategic interest and protection of our assets in Afghanistan.

- **Afghanistan**

- Both Uzbekistan and India have a shared goal of peace and prosperity in Afghanistan as any turmoil in Afghanistan can adversely impact both the countries.
- India is also exploring with Uzbekistan the possibility of extending the Friendship Railway Bridge to Herat in western Afghanistan.
- The rail route to Herat, if extended to Kabul, would also link to India's "air corridor", allowing trade, especially dry fruits, and agricultural produce to travel along the routes from India to Central Asia and back in much shorter time.

- **Economic and Trade Relations**

At the same time, growing economies of Central Asia are a big market for Indian exports like pharmaceuticals with a lot of potential for improvement.

Hayabusa 2

Hayabusa 2 is an Asteroid exploration mission by the Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) to study Asteroid 1999 JU3 (Ryugu).

- Hayabusa 2 was launched in December, 2014 and is planned to complete a mission of six years
- It arrived at Ryugu in July 2018 and will spend 18 months studying the asteroid before making its return to Earth in December 2020.
- The mission builds on the original Hayabusa mission that was launched in 2003 and successfully linked up with asteroid Itokawa in 2005.
- It returned samples to Earth in 2010 marking the first time sample materials from an asteroid were brought back to Earth.

The Spacecraft Consists of:

- Two remote sensing spectrometers dedicated to studying the energy balance of the asteroid and its surface composition.
- Four landers – the 10-Kilogram Mobile Asteroid Surface Scout (MASCOT) lander built in Europe (France and Germany) for an in-situ study of surface composition and properties.

- Three MINERVA landers to deliver imagery and temperature measurements. All landers will make several hops across the asteroid's surface to take measurements at different locations.
- An impactor device that will be deployed towards the asteroid and uses high-explosives to generate a high-speed impact that is hoped to expose material from under the asteroid's surface for later collection by Hayabusa 2.

Why Study Asteroids?

- Asteroids, like comets, are primitive bodies that can be considered to be the building blocks of the early solar system.
 - They hold a record of the birth and initial evolution of the solar system.
 - Larger planets like Earth went through a more complex evolution over which the pristine materials were melted and altered significantly.
 - Due to this change, the materials found on large planets do not hold information into their early stages of formation.
 - Comets and asteroids, formed early in the evolution of the Solar System, retain a record of when, where and in what conditions they were formed. Exploration of these primitive bodies is essential in gaining insight into the formation of the Solar System.
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Important Facts for Prelims (04th October 2018)

Champions of the Earth Award

- Recently Prime Minister of India received the Champions of the Earth Award. It is the UN's highest environmental honor.
- Prime Minister has been selected in the leadership category for his pioneering work in championing the International Solar Alliance and for his unprecedented pledge to eliminate all single-use plastic in India by 2022.
- Launched in 2005, it recognizes outstanding figures from the public and private sectors and from the civil society whose actions have had a transformative positive impact on the environment.
- Through their extraordinary achievements – whether through political leadership, grassroots action, scientific innovation, or entrepreneurial vision – each of these Champions has inspired critical action on behalf of the global environment.

- Champions of the Earth recognizes laureates in the following categories:
 - Lifetime Achievement
 - Policy Leadership
 - Action and Inspiration
 - Entrepreneurial Vision
 - Science and Innovation

Dwarf planet: 'Goblin'

- A new dwarf planet was discovered by scientist which is named as 'The Goblin'.
- It was named Goblin as it was spotted by astronomers in 2015 around Halloween.
- Its provisional name, 2015 TG387.
- At the time of discovery, the Goblin was 80 astronomical units (AU) from the Sun (1 AU is equal to the distance between the Earth and the Sun).
- At its closest, the Goblin is 65 AU from the Sun.
- It orbits the Sun once in 40,000 years.
- According to the International Astronomical Union "dwarf planet" is a celestial body that
 - is in orbit around the Sun,
 - has sufficient mass for its self-gravity to overcome rigid body forces so that it assumes a hydrostatic equilibrium (nearly round) shape.
 - has not cleared the neighborhood around its orbit, and(meaning it has not become gravitationally dominant in its orbit)
 - is not a satellite.
- Five recognized Dwarf Planets are:
 - Ceres: It is only dwarf planet located in the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter.
 - Pluto: Pluto was formerly a planet and was reclassified to a Dwarf Planet status.
 - Eris: It is located in Kuiper Belt. It is the second largest dwarf planet after Pluto.
 - Makemake: It is located in Kuiper belt.
 - Haumea: It is located in Kuiper Belt.

Asian Development Bank(ADB)

- The government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed \$240 million loans for providing safe and sustainable drinking water to about 1.65 million people in three districts of the state of West Bengal affected by arsenic, fluoride, and salinity.

- Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India signed a \$150 million Loan Agreement to establish a Global Skills Park (GSP), which is under Department of Technical Education, Skill Development and Employment. Govt. of Madhya Pradesh.
 - It is the First Multi-Skills Park in India.
 - The purpose is to enhance the quality of Technical and Vocational Education And Training (TVET) System in the State and create a more skilled workforce.
- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India signed a \$100 Million Loan Agreement to provide sewage treatment and strengthen the capacity of Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) for resilient urban services.

Asian Development Bank (ADB)

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is a regional development bank established on 19 December 1966.
- ADB is headquartered in Manila, Philippines. It aims to promote social and economic development in Asia.
- ADB now has 67 members, of which 48 are from within Asia and the Pacific and 19 outside.
- Japan holds the largest proportion of shares in ADB followed by the USA.

Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act

- The Centre has extended the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act in three districts of Arunachal Pradesh bordering Assam by another six months, in view of continuing activities of banned insurgent groups of the Northeast.
- The groups like National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM), United Liberation Front Of Assam (ULFA) and National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB) are active in these areas of Arunachal Pradesh.

Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act

- The Act was enacted in 1958 to bring under control what the government considered 'disturbed areas'.
- Jammu & Kashmir has a similar but separate act Armed Forces (Jammu & Kashmir) Special Powers Act, 1990.
- Section 3 of the Act empowers the Governor/Administrator of state/UT to declare an area as 'disturbed'. Once declared, the region has to maintain status quo for minimum three months (according to Disturbed Areas (Special Courts) Act, 1976).
- As per the Act, it can be invoked in places "where the use of armed forces in aid of the civil power is necessary."

- The AFSPA gives power to the Army and Central forces deployed in “disturbed areas” to search premises and arrest without warrant, to use force even to the extent of causing death.
- It also gives immunity to security forces in carrying out various operations and provides cover to forces from prosecution and legal suits without the Centre’s sanction.
- To check arbitrariness there should be a periodic review of ‘disturbed area’ every six months.

Udyam Abhilasha

- On the occasion of 149th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), has launched a National Level Entrepreneurship Awareness Campaign, Udyam Abhilasha in 115 Aspirational Districts identified by NITI Aayog in 28 States.
- The campaign would create and strengthen cadre of more than 800 trainers to provide entrepreneurship training to the aspiring youths across these districts.
- SIDBI has partnered with Common Services Centre (CSC) e-Governance Services India Limited, a Special Purpose Vehicle, (CSC SPV) set up by the Ministry of Electronics & IT, Govt. of India for implementing the campaign through their CSCs.
- The objectives of the missionary campaign includes :-
 - inspiring rural youth in aspirational districts to be entrepreneurs by assisting them to set up their own enterprise,
 - imparting trainings through digital medium across the country,
 - creating business opportunities for CSC Village Level entrepreneurs (VLEs),
 - focussing on women aspirants in these aspirational districts to encourage women entrepreneurship and
 - assisting participants to get connected to banking facilities and avail credit facility from banks to set up their own enterprise.
- This is part of the programmatic approach to induce entrepreneurship as dream choice by turning job seekers as job creators.
- Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), is the Principal Financial Institution for the Promotion, Financing, Development, and Coordination of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) sector.
- SIDBI, under its revamped strategy SIDBI 2.0, has adopted the theme of ease of access to MSEs and being Impact Multiplier & Digital Aggregator.

Purana Qila

- Recently, the rejuvenated lake and illumination of Purana Qila (Delhi) was inaugurated and opened for public.

- Earlier National Green Tribunal had rejected the the claim that the project was being undertaken in a manner that would damage the environment by permitting the revival of the iconic Purana Qila lake.
 - Purana Qila is one of the oldest forts belonging to Mughal era.
 - The massive gateway and walls of Purana Qila were built by Humayun and the foundation was laid for the new capital, Dinpanah.
 - The work was carried forward by Sher Shah Suri,who displaced Humayun.
 - The walls of the Purana Quila are made of enormous red stones having minimal ornamentation and decoration.
 - The major attractions inside the fort are the Qila-i-Kuhna mosque of Sher Shah Suri, Sher Mandal (a tower, which is traditionally associated with the death of Humayun), a stepwell and the remains of the extensive rampart, which has three gates.
 - The Qila-I-kunha Mosque is an example of Indo Islamic architecture.
 - The unique features of Indo-Islamic architecture like horseshoe-shaped arches, bracketed openings, marble inlay, carving etc are very prominent in the structure.
 - The mehrabs (prayer niches) inside the Qila-i-Kunha mosque are richly ornamented with concentric arches.
 - The mosque has an inscription which says 'As long as there are people on this earth, may this edifice be frequented, and people be happy in it.'
 - Excavations have revealed that the Purana Quila stands at the site of Indraprastha, the capital of the Pandavas.
 - Excavations near one of the walls of the fort show that the site had been occupied since 1000 B.C.
 - The PGW (Painted Gray Ware Pottery) recovered from the site date back to around 1000 B.C.
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