



World Bee Day

For Prelims: [World Bee Day](#), [United Nations General Assembly](#), [National Bee Board](#), [Western Ghats](#), [Indian black honeybee](#), Sweet Revolution

For Mains: Significance of Bees, Threats and Challenges Related to Bees, Status of Beekeeping in India, Sweet Revolution.

Why in News?

The **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW)**, recently celebrated **World Bee Day** on **May 20th, 2023** at Balaghat, Madhya Pradesh.

- The event aimed to **promote and popularise beekeeping nationwide** through the [National Beekeeping & Honey Mission \(NBHM\)](#) under the Atma-Nirbhar Bharat initiative.
- The Theme of 2023 is **“Bee engaged in pollinator-friendly agricultural production”**.

What is World Bee Day and Why is it Important?

- **About:**
 - **World Bee Day** is an annual event that is celebrated on **May 20th** to raise awareness about the importance of bees and other [pollinators](#) for the environment, food security and biodiversity.
 - The date was chosen to **commemorate the birthday of Anton Janša**, a pioneer of modern beekeeping from Slovenia.
 - The [United Nations General Assembly](#) declared **World Bee Day** in 2017, following a proposal by Slovenia and the support of **115 countries**.

Note: Pollinators are agents that assist in the process of pollination. Pollination is the **transfer of pollen grains from the male reproductive organs (anthers) of a flower to the female reproductive organs (stigma) of the same or a different flower**, leading to fertilization and the production of seeds.

- **Significance of Bees:**
 - **Pollination:**
 - Bees are vital for the **survival of many plants and animals**, as they pollinate about **one-third of the world’s crops and 90% of the wild flowering plants**.
 - They also produce **honey, wax, propolis and other valuable products** that have nutritional, medicinal and economic benefits.
 - **Tackling with Climate Change:**
 - Bees **help plants to grow faster and healthier**, which increases their carbon uptake and storage. Bees also reduce the **need for chemical fertilizers and pesticides, which emit harmful gases into the atmosphere**.

- They are also **indicators of the health of ecosystems**, as they respond to changes in the environment such as **climate change, pollution, habitat loss and [pesticides](#)**.
- **Enhancing Crop Productivity:**
 - They help in **enhancing crop productivity and quality** by providing pollination services to various crops such as fruits, vegetables, oilseeds, pulses etc.
 - It is estimated that **bee pollination can increase crop yields by 20-30% on average**.
- **Generating Employment Opportunity:**
 - Generating **income and employment opportunities for rural households by producing honey and other bee products** such as wax, propolis etc.
 - Honey is a high-value product that has a huge demand in domestic and international markets. It is also a source of **nutrition and health for consumers**.
 - It can also help in **empowering women and youth** by involving them in beekeeping activities as **entrepreneurs or [self-help groups](#)**.
- **Threats and Challenges:**
 - **Loss and fragmentation of natural habitats** due to urbanization, agriculture and deforestation
 - **Intensive and monoculture farming practices** that reduce floral diversity and expose bees to pesticides and herbicides
 - **Diseases, pests and invasive species** that affect bee health and productivity
 - **Climate change that alters the flowering seasons**, distribution and availability of plants.
 - **Lack of awareness, knowledge and support for beekeeping** among farmers and consumers

What is the Status of Beekeeping in India?

- **Production Statistics:**
 - India is **one of the largest producers and consumers of honey in the world**, with an estimated annual production of **1.2 lakh metric tonnes**. India has a rich tradition and culture of beekeeping, dating back to ancient times.
 - At present, about **12,699 Beekeepers and 19.34 lakhs honey bees colonies** are registered with the **[National Bee Board](#)** and India is producing about 1,33,200 Metric tonnes of Honey (**2021-22 estimate**).
 - In **November 2022**, a new species of endemic honeybee named **[Indian black honeybee \(Apis karinjodian\)](#)** was discovered in the **[Western Ghats](#)** after a **gap of more than 200 years**.
- **Exports:**
 - India is one of the **major honey exporting countries in the World** and has exported 74,413 MT of Honey during 2021-22.
 - More than **50% of the honey production in India is being exported** to other countries.
 - India exports honey to about **83 countries**. The major markets for Indian honey are the **USA, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bangladesh, Canada, etc.**
- **Honey Producing States:**
 - As per the National Horticulture Board (NHB), **Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Punjab, Bihar, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka** were the **top ten honey-producing states in 2021-22**.

What is National Beekeeping & Honey Mission (NBHM)?

- The NBHM, implemented through the **National Bee Board**, focuses on promoting **scientific beekeeping and entrepreneurship among small and marginal farmers**.
- It encompasses infrastructure development for post-harvest management, support for research and development, and aims to achieve the goal of a **"[Sweet Revolution](#)."**
- The scheme is aligned with the **[Atma-Nirbhar Bharat initiative](#)** and plays a crucial role in increasing farmer incomes and enhancing agricultural productivity.

SWEET REVOLUTION



- An ambitious initiative of the Govt for **promoting apiculture**
- Launched in 2016 under **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)** (Ministry of MSME)
- Along its lines, the **Honey Mission** was launched in 2017

BEEKEEPING IN INDIA (APICULTURE)

About Beekeeping

- An agro-based activity undertaken by farmers/ landless labourers in rural areas as a part of **Integrated Farming System (IFS)**

Significance

- **Useful in pollination** of crops
- **Increases income** of the farmers
- **High value beehive products** - honey, beeswax, bee pollen, etc.

World Bee Day

- 20 May

NATIONAL BEEKEEPING AND HONEY MISSION (NBHM)

About

- **Central Sector (CS) Scheme**
- Announced as a part of **Atmanirbhar Bharat Scheme** (for 2020-21-2022-23)
- Implemented by the **National Bee Board (NBB)** (under MoA&FW)

Objectives

- Development of scientific beekeeping to **achieve the goal of 'Sweet Revolution'**
- Enhance **agri/ horticulture production**
- Set up **Integrated Beekeeping Development Centre (IBDC)**, Api-therapy centres and Bee disease diagnostic labs
- **Empowerment of women** through beekeeping

Way Forward

- **Awareness Among Farmers:** There is a need to create **awareness among farmers about the benefits of beekeeping through mass media campaigns, demonstrations, field visits etc.**
 - Also it's time to encourage farmers to adopt beekeeping as an **integral part of their cropping system through incentives, awards etc.**
- **Strengthening the Supply Chain:** There is a need to strengthen the supply chain of inputs such as **bee colonies, hives etc.** through **public-private partnerships, cooperatives etc.** Ensuring quality control of inputs through **standardization and certification mechanisms such as BIS marks etc.** Making inputs affordable to farmers through subsidies or vouchers etc.
- **Developing Market Linkages:** There is a need to develop market linkages for honey or other bee products through platforms such as **e-NAM (National Agriculture Market), APEDA (Agricultural & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority)** etc.
 - Also, value added products can also be promoted for honey or other bee products through processing units such as **Honey Parks etc.**

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQ)

Prelims:

Q. Consider the following kinds of organisms: (2012)

1. Bat
2. Bee
3. Bird

Which of the above is/are pollinating agent/agents?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (d)

Mains:

Q. Assess the role of National Horticulture Mission (NHM) in boosting the production, productivity and income of horticulture farms. How far has it succeeded in increasing the income of farmers? **(2018)**

Source: PIB

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