

1. Chak-Hao, Gorakhpur Terracotta and Kovilpatti Kadai Mittai

Why in News?

- Recently, Kovilpatti Kadai Mittai of Tamil Nadu, Chak-Hao, the black rice of Manipur and the Gorakhpur terracotta of Uttar Pradesh have bagged the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

About Kovilpatti Kadai Mittai:

- It is a candy made of groundnuts, jaggery and dyed coconut wisps.
- It is manufactured in Kovilpatti region in Thoothukudi district of Tamil Nadu.
- It is made from locally cultivated groundnuts (grown in black soil).
- It is shelled and roasted before combining with Syrup made of a Traditional Type of Jaggery called Vellam.
- It is then topped with coconut wisps that are dyed pink, green and yellow.



About Chak-Hao:

- It is a scented glutinous (sticky) rice which has been in cultivation in Manipur over centuries, and is characterised by its special aroma.
- It is black in colour and takes the longest cooking time of 40-45 minutes due to the presence of a fibrous bran layer and higher crude fibre content.
- It is normally eaten during community feasts and is served as Chak-Hao kheer.
- It has also been used by traditional medical practitioners as part of traditional medicine.



About Gorakhpur Terracotta:

- The terracotta work of Gorakhpur is a centuries-old traditional art form. The entire work is done with bare hands.
- The clay used in the terracotta products is 'Kabis' clay which is found in the ponds of Aurangabad, Bharwalia and Budhadih village areas.
- This clay is found only in the months of May and June, as for the rest of the year, the ponds are filled with water.



- The potters do not use any colour, they only dip the clay structure in a mixture of soda and mango tree barks, and bake it.
- Their Major works of craftsmanship include the Hauda elephants, Mahawatdar horse, deer, camel, five-faced Ganesha, single-faced Ganesha, elephant table, chandeliers, Hanging Bells etc.

2. Mobile Phones act as Reserves for Virus

Why in News?

- A new study has warned that mobile phones could be acting as “Trojan horses” for coronavirus. It found that phones host a cocktail of live germs.
- While all those studies predate the current pandemic, the authors said SARS-CoV2 is probably present on mobiles and other touch-screen devices of coronavirus sufferers.

Highlights:

- The research found that 68% of the phones sampled in these studies were contaminated. Golden staph and E. coli microbes were among the most common bugs on phones. Researchers recommended that phones should be decontaminated daily and regularly with either 70% isopropyl or by sanitising with (ultraviolet) devices like PhoneSoap.
- The systematic review found golden staph and E.Coli microbes were among the most common bugs on phones.
- According to the researchers, mobile devices were ‘five-star hotels with premium heated spas, free buffet for microbes to thrive on’.
- According to the researchers, community transmission could occur when an infected person touched their phone and then a pole on a bus which was grasped by an elderly person.
- The wider research community needs to do more work here to find out exactly what types of microbes can live on a phone and for how long, so that people understand the risk of this thing they carry around with them every day.

3. Honey Bee Disease

Why in News?

- Honey Bee colonies from across the UK are increasingly suffering from a viral disease, a new study has shown.

- The team found that the number of honey bee colonies affected with Chronic Bee paralysis Rose Exponentially between 2007 and 2017.

Highlights:

- The scientists also found that clusters of chronic bee paralysis, where disease cases are found close together, were becoming more frequent.
- Chronic bee paralysis symptoms include abnormal trembling, an inability to fly, and the development of shiny, hairless abdomens.
- The disease is caused by a virus known as chronic bee paralysis virus (CBPV), and infected bees die within a week.
- This leads to piles of dead bees just outside honey bee hives and whole colonies are frequently lost to the disease.
- The study also investigated whether disease risk was associated with honey bee queen imports.
- Honey bee queens head up honey bee colonies and beekeepers use imported honey bee queens to replenish their stocks.
- Future work will concentrate on the susceptibility of different honey bee races and comparing the management practices of professional and amateur beekeepers to help discover the reasons behind the current disease emergence.

Significance of Honey bees:

- It is estimated that one third of the food that we consume each day relies on pollination mainly by bees, but also by other insects, birds and bats.
- In addition, honey bees play a significant role in the pollination of other important crops such as cotton and flax.
- And there are also a number of valuable non-food products produced by the honey bee, such as beeswax used in cleaning and beauty products.
- If bees contribute in the production of fruits and vegetables, the quality improves and the yield will grow by up to 71%.

4. COVID-19 Effects on Global Energy Sector

Why in News?

- The International Energy Agency (IEA) has released a report detailing the impact of Covid-19, which it has called a “once-in-a-century crisis”, on Global Energy Demands and CO2 Emissions.

Highlights:

- With lockdowns imposed in several countries, transportation such as road and air travel has been largely restricted, due to which global energy demands have plummeted.
- As per the report, countries in full lockdown are seeing an average decline of 25 per cent in energy demand per week, while in those with a partial lockdown, the fall in energy demand is about 18 per cent per week.
- This may not be a reason to celebrate as it is expected that emissions will soar once economies restart, unless governments take a conscious decision to change the sources of energy.
- The report estimates that the global demand for oil could drop by nine percent on average this year, which will return oil consumption to 2012 levels.
- As a result of lockdowns, road transport has dropped between 50-75 percent with the average global road transport activity falling to 50 percent of what it was during this time in 2019.
- Aviation activity the world over dropped by 60 percent at the end of March 2020. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) expects the flight capacity utilisation to average below 65 percent of what it was in 2019 in the second quarter of 2020, further impacting the demand for jet fuel and kerosene.
- Coal demand could decline by eight percent, mainly due to a fall in electricity demand of over five percent over the course of the year.
- In advanced economies, coal demand will fall by 25 percent in the US, 20 percent in the European Union (EU) and 5-10 percent in Korea and Japan. In the coming months, the demand for coal will be impacted based on how its biggest consumers, such as China, recover from the crisis.
- Regardless of the lengths of global lockdowns or a second pandemic wave, the demand for renewable is likely to Increase.

- Renewable sources of energy have been the “most resilient” to Covid-19 lockdown measures and the total global use of renewable energy is expected to rise by 1 percent by 2020.
- Emissions declined the most in regions which were impacted the highest by the disease. For instance, there was an 8 percent decline in emissions in China and Europe, and a 9 percent decline in the US.
- India, which is one of the IEA association countries, has seen a reduction in its energy demands by over 30 percent as a result of the nation-wide lockdown. This translates to a fall in energy demand by 0.6 per cent with every additional week of lockdown.

