



Current Affairs of the Day

Prelims:

- Centre to certify shrimp farms
- Villagers lose grazing grounds at Pangong Tso
- Centre bans export of Remdesivir



Centre to certify shrimp farms

To bolster confidence in India's frozen shrimp produce, the country's biggest seafood export item, the Centre has kicked off a new scheme to certify hatcheries and farms that adopt good aquaculture practices.

Challenges:

1. India exported frozen shrimp worth almost \$5 billion in 2019-20 to the U.S. and China — its biggest buyers. But a combination of factors had hurt export volumes in recent months, including container shortages and incidents of seafood consignments being rejected because of food safety concerns.
2. Frozen shrimp is India's largest exported seafood item. It constituted 50.58% in quantity and 73.2% in terms of total U.S. dollar earnings from the sector during 2019-20.
3. Some recent consignments sourced from Indian shrimp farms being rejected due to the presence of antibiotic residue and this is a matter of concern for exporters.
4. The Marine Products Exports Development Authority (MPEDA) has developed a certification scheme for aquaculture products called Shaphari, a Sanskrit word that means superior quality of fishery products suitable for human consumption.
5. We already have a National Residue Control Programme for food safety issues in farm produce and a pre-harvest testing system in place, but this certification was proposed as a market-based tool for hatcheries to adopt good aquaculture practices and help produce quality antibiotic-free shrimp products to assure global consumers.
6. Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Odisha, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu are the major shrimp producing States, and around 95% of the cultured shrimp produce is exported.

Shaphari scheme: Certified aquaculture products

1. Overall, certified aquaculture products will help exporters to export their consignments to markets under stringent food safety regulations without the fear of getting rejected.



2. The Shaphari scheme is based on the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization's technical guidelines on aquaculture certification and will have two components — certifying hatcheries for the quality of their seeds and, separately, approving shrimp farms that adopt the requisite good practices.
3. The certification of hatcheries will help farmers easily identify good quality seed producers. Those who successfully clear multiple audits of their operations shall be granted a certificate for a period of two years.

Villagers lose grazing grounds at Pangong Tso

After the February disengagement, Army has restricted access to traditional pastures on the south bank.

Preventive measure:

1. The Army has said they have taken this step to prevent grazers from inadvertently crossing over to the Chinese side.
2. The south bank of Pangong Tso (lake) — one of the two locations from where Indian and Chinese troops disengaged in February — has become a “no man's land” for the cattle grazers of Chushul in Eastern Ladakh, the area's councillor says.

Crucial for cattle

1. The areas around the foothills of Helmet Top, Black Top and Gurung Hill were accessible to the grazers, but they were out of bounds now.
2. This area is not frequented by the Chinese grazers much; the Army should not set a precedent by not allowing the Indian grazers at these locations. Before you know, this might become a permanent arrangement, much to our disadvantage.

Centre bans export of Remdesivir

Precious doses: The Centre has prohibited the exports of Remdesivir injection and Remdesivir Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API) to manage a sudden spike in the demand for the drug used in COVID-19 treatment.



Highlights:

1. India is witnessing a recent surge in COVID-19 cases and there is a potential for a further increase in the demand for injection Remdesivir in the coming days.
2. Seven Indian companies are producing injection Remdesivir under a voluntary licensing agreement with Gilead Sciences of the U.S. They have an installed capacity of 38.8 lakh units a month.
3. The release issued by the Health Ministry noted that to ensure easy access to the injection, all domestic manufactures of Remdesivir have been advised to display on their website, details of their stockists and distributors.
4. Drug inspectors and other officers have been directed to verify stocks and check malpractices and also take other effective action to curb hoarding and black marketing. The State Health Secretaries will review this with the drug inspectors of the respective States/Union Territories.