DAILY NEWS DIARY

(DnD)

15.04.2020

For Prelims & Mains
Dear Student,

Warm Greetings.

- DnD aims to provide every day news analysis in sync with the UPSC pattern.
- It is targeted at UPSC – Prelims & Mains.
- Daily articles are provided in the form of Question and Answers
  - To have a bank of mains questions.
  - And interesting to read.
  - Providing precise information that can be carried straight to the exam, rather than over dumping.

Enjoy reading.

THE HINDU - TH
INDIAN EXPRESS - IE
BUSINESS LINE - BL
ECONOMIC TIMES - ET
TIMES OF INDIA - TOI

Essay Paper

Editorial

Q – Analyse the lockdown thus far and recommend suggestions on how to take it forward?

INTRO = Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the extension of the current nationwide lockdown till May 3, with intensive containment measures at hotspots till April 20 in order for areas to qualify (litmus test) for any relief measures and freedom of mobility, especially for hawkers and daily-wage workers. “Even before our first case, we had put in place screening at airports for international travellers and quarantine measures; when we hit 550 cases, we went in for a strong lockdown, and if you compare where we are at with the number of our cases, our situation — with our limited resources — is still better than other, richer countries,” he said.

The Centre’s lockdown is the most rigorous globally, but it has witnessed severe gaps in implementation. Such as –

1) Many States did not abide by the Home Ministry’s original 21-day order and subsequent enabling amendments on farming with clauses; so much so, the Union Home Secretary has had to restate the order’s provisions allowing inter- and intra-State movement of goods vehicles.

2) Active follow-up with State governments and clear instructions to enforcement agencies are necessary to help the public adhere to a curfew.

3) Prime Minister’s affirmations to make full use of the rabi harvest, must ensure that intentions translate into results, and produce reaches the market.
4) Failed communication, for which States are partly responsible — has resulted in distressing instances of arbitrary and often violent policing.

5) Further extensions builds up pressure in an economy rendered moribund by the corona virus.

6) Overall, Millions of workers are already dependent on meagre income substitution measures and food donations, and many face escalating private debt.

Suggestions for an orderly exit are —

1) The Finance Ministry’s welfare schemes need to be reviewed and enhance relief provided to all workers rendered unemployed - through funds infusion and provision of food for at least six months

2) Those who have lost jobs, and senior citizens, should be able to enrol in the PDS online immediately.

3) A gradual reopening of activity after May 3, going beyond essential services will require classification of infection risk for various groups, such as school and college students, teachers, and workers.

- The reality of COVID-19 is that there cannot be a return to normal overnight, and governments must plan for a sequential restoration of activity.

GS 2

➢ Social Justice

Q - Write an account of IMF and WHO’s reports and analysis’s regarding the Pandemic?

ANS =

- WHO says that –

1) “The overall world outbreak, 90% of cases are coming from Europe and the United States of America. So we are certainly not seeing the peak yet”.

Where the number of new cases was easing in some parts of Europe, including Italy and Spain, but outbreaks were growing in Britain and Turkey. Thus, Spain and Austria allowed partial returns to work on Tuesday but Britain and France extended lockdowns to try to rein in the pandemic.

2) The epicentre has moved from China, where the virus first emerged in December, to the U.S., which now has the highest death toll at 23,568.

3) Spain was flattening the curve on the graph, representing the rate of growth of the outbreak. While, Italy, which has the world’s second highest death toll of 20,465, maintained some tight restrictions on movement. Denmark will reopen day care centres and schools for children in first to fifth grade on April 15. And Thousands of shops across Austria reopened on 14th April following phase wise easing to restrictions.

- Russia might need to call in the Army to help tackle the crisis, President Vladimir Putin said on Monday.under the scheme, and almost 5.5 crore families found work under the scheme last year).

- IMF’s World Economic Outlook (WEO) Report says –

1) World leaders, in considering easing curbs, have to balance risks to health and the economy, as the lockdowns strangle supply lines and bring economic activity to a virtual halt. The world economy is expected to shrink by 3% this year, marking the steepest downturn since the Great Depression.

2) India’s growth is expected to dip to 1.9% in 2020 and rebound to 7.4% in 2021.

3) The global forecast is characterised by ‘extreme uncertainty, where the cumulative loss to global GDP over 2020 and 2021 from the pandemic crisis could be around $9 trillion, greater than the economies of Japan and Germany, combined.

4) China is projected to grow at 1.2% in 2020 and 9.2% in 2021.
5) Emerging Asia is projected to be the only region that grows in 2020, at a rate of 1% — still more than 5 percentage points below the previous decade’s average.

6) IMF calling on policymakers to make targeted fiscal, monetary and financial sector interventions to support impacted households and businesses. Fiscal measures should be two-fold, cushioning the impact on the most-exposed households and businesses and reducing firm closures, i.e., preserving economic relationships.

GS 3

➤ Security

Q – What are the details about the recent U.S approved missile deals with India?

BACKGROUND = The Indian Navy operates eight P-8I long-range maritime patrol aircraft procured under a $2.2 billion deal in 2009. The first of the four aircraft was to be delivered in May and the deal completed by January 2022. However, the initial delivery is expected to be delayed by a couple of months due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the meanwhile, The U.S. State Department has approved two potential missile deals with India, for an estimated $92 million and $63 million.

I. First deal being - 10 AGM-84L Harpoon Block II air-launched missiles and related equipment
   a. For which Boeing is the contractor
   b. These missiles can be fitted onto Boeing’s P-8I (Poseidon-Eight India) maritime patrol aircraft, and are intended to enhance India’s capability in anti-surface warfare while defending its sea lanes.

II. And the second deal, is for 16 MK 54 All Up Round Lightweight Torpedoes (LWT); three MK 54 Exercise Torpedoes (MK 54 LWT Kit procurement required); and related equipment.
   a. principally contracted with Raytheon Integrated Defense System

b. Also included are MK 54 spare parts, torpedo containers, two Recoverable Exercise Torpedoes (REXTORP) with containers and related equipment and support from the U.S. government and contractors.

c. The torpedoes are expected to enhance India’s anti-submarine warfare capability and can be used with the P-8I.

There are no known offset agreements for both deals yet, the State Department said, and any offset agreement will be defined in negotiations between India and the contractors.

Snippets

GS 3

➤ Technology

The Sol’s (Survey of India) – ‘Sahyog’ mobile application to complement the ‘Arogya Setu App’.

- The Arogya Setu App, a government endorsed application that helps trace the contacts of those who may have been infected by COVID-19, the Survey of India (SoI), the country’s apex map maker, has made public a trove of maps.

- This could improve geospatial data as well as help develop maps that could be customised to a variety of ‘COVID-related applications’ such as healthcare facilities, infection clusters and disaster management, according to officials associated with the project.

- Problem - Arogya Setu’s terms of use were unclear on several aspects including how long data would be stored, what would happen to it once the pandemic ceased, who else the data was being transferred to. The government has said that data would be collected only for managing the pandemic.
How about this today!

Which of the following statements are true for ICMR’s testing of pooled samples?

A. Pooling of samples is only recommended in areas or population with positivity rates of >5% for COVID-19.
B. A pooled testing algorithm involves the PCR screening of a specimen pool comprising multiple individual patient specimens, followed by individual testing only if a pool screens positive.
C. Considering higher possibility of missing positive samples with low viral load, it is strongly discouraged to pool more than five samples.
D. Pooled sampling results in substantial cost savings when a large proportion of pools tests negative.

a. A alone  b. A,B  
c. A,B,C  d. B,C,D

Hey from Yesterday....

Which of the following is untrue regarding OPEC+ Group?

Answer: The founding members are namely Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

Note - The founding members are namely Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela.