DAILY NEWS DIARY
(DnD)

16.04.2020

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

1. Q – Discuss the guidelines to restoration of normalcy phase wise post April 20?

INTRO = Some of the directives in a fresh order issued on Wednesday by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to manage the pandemic, with the State and local administrations continuing with a tighter level of control on economic and social activities are –

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**Lockdown guidelines**

A look at the activities which will be allowed post April 20 and those which will not be allowed until May 3

**What will be allowed**
- All agricultural and horticultural activities
- MGNREGA works with strict implementation of social distancing and mask use
- Postal services, including post offices
- Bank branches and ATMs
- Operation of animal husbandry farms
- Collection, processing, distribution and sale of milk and milk products

**What will not be allowed**
- Public transport, taxis, autos and cab aggregators
- All passenger movement by trains, except for security purposes
- All domestic and international air travel, except for medical reasons and security purposes
- Religious places, educational institutes, places of entertainment

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Police personnel deployed outside a Delhi market. • GETTY IMAGES

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Along with the above, new measures also include punishment for spitting and a ban on tobacco and gutkha at workplaces. Those violating the quarantine could face up to six months in jail.

Nevertheless, with Coercive measures like this falling heavily on the poor, a more comprehensive strategy must involve -

- **Helping people stay at home** = Incentives to employers to pay salaries, and expansion of welfare support for the most vulnerable (MGNREGA, which is meant to guarantee a minimum income to the poorest in situations of distress such as this, has completely collapsed).
- Need of urgent attention of governments is the breakdown of **general health care** in many parts of the country, claiming several lives and leaving far too many begging for treatment
- Going into the future, getting the country back on track will require **mass education** on mask use, hand hygiene and physical distancing to change social behaviour.

### 2. Q – Critically analyse EU and the African Union leader’s condemnation of Mr. Trump’s decision to cut WHO’s funding as “deeply regrettable”?

**INTRO** = U.S. President Donald Trump has ordered a freeze on funding for the World Health Organization (WHO) for “mismanaging” the coronavirus crisis.

With the world battling to get on top of the pandemic that has killed 1,25,000 people, Mr. Trump fired a broadside at the WHO and halted payments amounting to $400 million last year. Funding would be frozen pending a review into the WHO’s role in “severely mismanaging and covering up the spread of the coronavirus,” said Mr. Trump, who accused the Geneva-based body of putting “political correctness above life-saving measures”. The outbreak could have been contained “with very little death” if the WHO had accurately assessed the situation in China, where the disease broke out late last year, charged Mr. Trump.

**Why Irrational –**

Halting funding at a crucial time will not only impact the functioning of the global body but also hurt humanity. Many low and middle-income countries that look up to WHO for guidance and advice, and even for essentials such as testing kits and masks, will be badly hit for no fault of theirs. Failures due to oversight or other reasons, by WHO or member-states can always be looked into but not in the midst of a pandemic.

1) Contrary to what Mr. Trump claims, WHO cannot independently investigate but can only rely on individual member-states to share information.

2) There has not been one instance when it has been found “covering up” the epidemic in China. Rather, it has been continuously urging countries to aggressively test people exhibiting symptoms and trace, quarantine and test contacts to contain the spread.

3) Historically, WHO has been against travel and trade restrictions against countries experiencing outbreaks, and its position was no different when, in January, it declared COVID-19 a public health emergency of international concern. But it did support China’s large-scale mitigation measures to contain the virus spread.

**International Response –**

Leaders around the globe fired back at the U.S. President for attacking WHO, and blaming everyone else for his own shortcomings in dealing with the pandemic.

- **“There is no time to waste,”** WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on Twitter following Mr. Trump’s decision.
- UN chief Antonio Guterres and billionaire Bill Gates, tweeted that **cutting funding was “as dangerous as it sounds”**.
- Beijing, warned the move would “undermine the international cooperation” at a “critical moment” in the pandemic.
- But India refused to criticise the United States defunding of the World Health Organisation (WHO), saying that it was currently occupied with the domestic campaign to defeat the COVID-19 pandemic.
Thus, moving beyond blaming and actually withholding WHO funding can have disastrous outcomes. If indeed he fervently believes that the U.S. has been misled, it is China that he must hold responsible for a delayed alert by not diluting the world of WHO. As albeit it’s rumoured political inclinations and failures – WHO is a key channel for the even flow of epidemiological intelligence and medico-technological coordination amongst diverse countries.

GS 2

➢ Social Justice

Q - Reasons for the outdation of the census data and their results?

ANS = Reasons –

1) With the 2021 census process being delayed due to the COVID-19 crisis - economists Jean Dreze and Reetika Khera made observations that over 10 crore people have been excluded from the Public Distribution System because outdated 2011 census data is being used to calculate State-wise National Food Security Act (NFSA) coverage.

- Under the NFSA, the PDS is supposed to cover 75% of the population in rural areas and 50% of the population in urban areas, which works out to 67% of the total population, using the rural-urban population ratio in 2011. India’s population was about 121 crore in 2011 and so PDS covered approximately 80 crore people.

However, applying the 67% ratio to a projected population of 137 crore for 2020, PDS coverage today should be around 92 crore. Even taking into account growing urbanisation, the shortfall would be around 10 crore people who have slipped through the cracks, said the two economists and Right to Food campaigners in a statement on Wednesday.

2) Lack of Updation & Issuance of new ration cards by states - Right to Food activists have long argued that the numbers should have been updated using projected population figures, allowing State governments to issue new ration cards over time.

Instead, the Centre’s calculation of the actual number of people to be covered in each State has remained “frozen.” Many State governments are reluctant to issue new ration cards beyond the numbers that will be provided for by the Central quota, making it difficult to reduce exclusion errors in the PDS.

Consequent Results being –

1) The disastrous impact of this gap is being seen in the middle of a crippling lockdown, as people who have lost their livelihoods depend on PDS for daily survival.

2) The biggest gaps are in Uttar Pradesh, where 2.8 crore people may have been left out, and Bihar, which would have had almost 1.8 crore people excluded from the NFSA.
Snippets

**GS 2**

- **Governance**

170 out of 736 Indian districts identified as Hotspots.

- The government said it had classified every district into a hotspot, potential hotspot or a green zone.
- ‘Hotspots’, were defined as places with at least 15 confirmed infections or where there was an exponential rise in cases.
- There were 207 ‘potential hotspots’
- Potential or not — testing would be ramped up to include checking even those who displayed ‘influenza-like illnesses’ and breathlessness.
- Special teams had been set up to trace all contacts and to conduct house-to-house surveys. These teams will include health staff, local revenue staff, corporation staff, Red Cross and volunteer groups who have undergone an online training course.
- District Magistrates had the authority to declare regions as hotspots, and a protocol would be in place to check how a district was performing in containing the spread of the virus.

**GS 3**

- **Economic Development**

International Energy Agency (IEA) forecasts huge drop in oil demand in 2020.

- It forecasted a 29 million barrel per day (bpd) dive in April oil demand to levels not seen in 25 years and warned no output cut by producers could fully offset the near-term falls facing the market.
- However, the past week’s achievements are a solid start,” the IEA said. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and other producers including Russia on Sunday agreed to a record cut in output from May of 9.7 million bpd, or almost 10% of global supply, to help support prices.

- Separately, Saudi Aramco has offered refineries in Asia and Europe the option to defer payments for crude cargo deliveries by up to 90 days, as plants struggle with shrinking demand, refining industry sources said.

Consider the following statements –

1) The Indian government had said that it was committed to meeting relief and rehabilitation requirements “through domestic efforts”.
2) In August 2018, the Indian government had refused to accept offers of aid from several countries including the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar and the Maldives during the Kerala floods.
3) Thus far, the government had been only open to contributions from “NRIs, PIOs and international Companies”.

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How about this today!

Consider the following statements –

A. The Indian government had said that it was committed to meeting relief and rehabilitation requirements “through domestic efforts”.

B. In August 2018, the Indian government had refused to accept offers of aid from several countries including the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar and the Maldives during the Kerala floods.

C. Thus far, the government had been only open to contributions from “NRIs, PIOs and international Companies”.

Which of the above statements is correct regarding the donation offer to PM CARES fund from Rosoboronexport, a Russian firm being a departure from precedent for New Delhi?

a. A alone  

b. C alone  

c. A,C  

d. A,B

Hey from Yesterday....

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

Answer – d

NOTE: Pooling of samples is not recommended in areas or populations with positivity rates of >5% for COVID-19.