DAILY NEWS DIARY

(DnD)

20.04.2020

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
ECOOMIC TIMES - ET
TIMES OF INDIA - TOI

Essay Paper

Q – What are IMF’s revised economic outlook projections and India’s respective steps to be prepared?

INTRO = After asserting that “global growth appears to be bottoming out”, the pandemic induced ‘Great Lockdown’ has forced the IMF to junk all its previous projections for economic output in 2020. The fund last week acknowledged that the current “crisis is like no other”. Forecasting the sharpest contraction in world output since the Great Depression of the 1930s, the IMF slashed its projection by 6.3 percentage points from its January forecast for 3.3% growth to a 3% decline.

China’s Forecast –
➢ China’s GDP, she projected, would expand by 5.6% this year, 0.4 percentage points slower than assumed in January. Last week, the IMF slashed China’s forecast to a growth of 1.2%, citing data on industrial production, retail sales, and fixed asset investment.

India’s Forecast –
➢ On India, the IMF has cut its projection for growth in the fiscal year that started on April 1, from January’s 5.8%, to 1.9%. Based on the scenario that assumes that the pandemic would ‘fade in the second half of 2020’, allowing containment efforts to be unwound and economic activity to normalise.
➢ Another key assumption by the IMF’s economists is the availability of policy support to nurture the revival once activity restarts.
➢ In the current context, India’s fiscal measures pale in terms of scale when compared with what several other nations have undertaken. Given the size of the informal sector in India as
The anticipated prolonged disruption in labour supply even in more formal parts of the economy

The fund’s chief economist, Gita Gopinath, has advocated ramping up a broad-based and coordinated stimulus once the disease has been contained, a measure that would help avoid the errors of the Great Depression years when premature efforts to prune budget deficits prolonged the downturn. Thus, the Centre needs to proactively commit to a substantial stimulus package in order to ensure that once the economy reopens, it has the legs to run.

**GS 2**

- **International Relations**

  Q – ‘WHO’s limitations in handling the pandemic, a fault of the member nations’. Discuss?

  BACKGROUND = As the World Health Organization (WHO) grapples with its greatest crisis, facing criticism over its initial response to the COVID-19 pandemic and a funding cut from the United States, Shashi Tharoor, a former Under Secretary General of the United Nations, says the situation is an indictment, not so much of the agency alone but of the member states that demand it remain beholden to them.

  One of the institutional challenges for any UN body is that it tends to be beholden to its most powerful member states.

  The fact is, if you look at what the WHO did or didn’t do, one can certainly accept the charge that they were willing to give China a free pass at the beginning of the crisis. I don’t think it’s easy to blame the WHO for it, if this was something that started in the U.S., they would have probably been deferential to the U.S. also. The difference is the U.S. being a democracy with a free press; they would have not found it easy to suppress the kind of details that are only now emerging from China.

  The principal fault is with Beijing and not the WHO, which is still a body that is dependent on member states. The governments of the world actually want UN agencies to be beholden to governments, for the most part. When they fail to assert enough independence and autonomy, the same governments start making these agencies a scapegoat.

  On one hand, we are seeing countries turning inward. On the other, the pandemic is bringing an awareness of the limitations of global institutions. Faced with two somewhat opposing impulses, the signs are indeed for a resurgence of national sovereignty.

  If the world has to draw from this a conclusion that we actually need institutions of greater independence in all our collective interest, then maybe we can reform these institutions, to give them that independence. I hope a country like India must play a role in defying this impulse of closing countries off to the international community and will be a sane voice for this.

**GS 3**

- **Bio diversity**

  Q – How does Human-Primate contact lead to higher transmission of COVID-19?

  ANS = Feeding monkeys during the COVID-19 pandemic could have profoundly negative effects in the long-term, such as –

  1) This could lead to many scenarios, such as the virus affecting the health of the affected animal populations or the animals serving as reservoirs or hosts and spreading the disease to other species or human populations.

  2) And also helping the SARS-CoV-2 virus mutate and infect primates, biologists have said.
Honnavalli M. Kumara, principal scientist at the Salim Ali Center for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON), said it was well documented that viruses and endoparasites could transmit between humans and primates.

- Feeding primates should be discouraged regardless of the pandemic, in order to prevent not just the spread of diseases but also to minimise problematic human-primate interaction.

Thus, it is a matter of common sense to limit interaction between humans and wildlife, especially primates – The principal scientist added.

Snippets

- **Governance**
  - **Goa – 1st Green State in the country**
    - Goa on Sunday became the first zero COVID-19 State in the country with the last seven cases also testing negative.
    - But this is no time for complacency, with all guidelines to be strictly in place such as –
      1) The government to scrutinise reports of its three-day door-to-door citizens survey done last week and decide on testing people for COVID-19 wherever felt necessary.
      2) The lockdown will continue till the Central government decides.
      3) Goa’s borders with Maharashtra and Karnataka will continue to remain sealed.
      4) Anyone entering the State under special circumstances will have to stay in a government quarantine centre to ensure that Goa remains a zero COVID-19 state.

- **Governance**
  - MHA’s recent guidelines include –
    - The Ministry of Home Affairs issued guidelines on April 15 that States will decide the additional public activities to be allowed from April 20 in non-hotspot zones and rural areas.
    - The guidelines mentioned e-commerce firms but did not specify the products, other than essential items to be sold online.
    - On Sunday, the MHA clarified that supply of non-essential goods by e-commerce companies will remain prohibited.
    - States have to adhere to the guidelines issued under the Disaster Management Act 2005, invoked for the first time.
How about this today!?

Which from the following is not included in the ‘Draft Intangible Culture Heritage List’ recently released by the Union Culture Ministry?

a. Chhau, Odisha  
b. Tying a Turban, Rajasthan  
c. Buddhist Chanting, Leh & Kargil  
d. Kolam, Kerala

Hey from Yesterday....

According to India, which of the following IMF’s liquidity boosts may be costly in easing COVID-19 driven financial stress?

a. Rapid Financing Instrument  
b. Extended Credit Facility  
c. Special Drawing Rights  
d. Extended Fund Facility

Answer: c