DAILY NEWS DIARY

(DnD)

10.04.2020

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 he carries 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 – Trump Vs World Health Organisation, who is at the major fault?

INTRO = After blaming the Democrats for investing a ‘hoax’ in the form of corona virus, and pointing fingers at China by calling the SARS-CoV-2 virus a ‘China virus,’ U.S. President Donald Trump has found a new scapegoat — the World Health Organization (WHO). Mr. Trump has, of late, blamed the global health body for the failures of his own administration in containing the spread of COVID-19. And, during a briefing, he also threatened to withhold funding to the WHO, accusing it of not being aggressive enough in containing the spread.

➢ Trump’s Inefficiency -
  1) President Trump brushed aside any concerns about the spread saying, “We have it totally under control. It’s one person coming in from China, and we have it under control.”
  2) On January 25, Mr. Trump even commended China, telling that Beijing was “working very hard to contain the corona virus and the United States greatly appreciates their efforts and transparency”. He kept downplaying the risk in January and February despite being cautioned by intelligence agencies
  3) Even on March 15, he continued to maintain that the U.S. has “tremendous control over” the virus when the number of cases was 3,000.

And has also gone ahead and stated that, “Fortunately I rejected their advice on keeping our borders open to China early on. Why did they give us such a faulty recommendation”.
WHO’s Actions –
1) While Mr. Trump has also taken credit for rejecting WHO’s advice on keeping borders open to China, the truth is that shutting down borders goes against the grain of the International Health Regulations, which were adopted by the 58th World Health Assembly in May 2005. The WHO, be it in announcing H1N1 as a pandemic in 2009 or declaring Ebola and Zika as PHEIC, has always maintained that there should be no travel or trade restrictions on communities or countries. Its recommendation was no different when it called COVID-19 a public health emergency.

2) But one may fault the WHO for not calling it a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) during its first meeting on January 22-23, and for the delay in calling the outbreak a pandemic & WHO had also failed to persuade China to be more transparent, especially till January 20, when it maintained radio silence on critical information such as the number of cases, deaths, spread of the virus and human-to-human transmission.

Nevertheless, the point to be noted by the world and also USA here is that - the WHO is only an advisory and not a regulatory body and it would be naïve to fault it for China or any other country not being transparent.

Cultural identity -
Cultural historians say the gamosa came to symbolise Assamese nationalism in 1916 when the Assom Chatra Sanmilan, a students’ organisation was formed, followed by the Assam Sahitya Sabha, a literary body. Wearing the phulam gamosa around the neck became a standard for cultural identity.

“The Assamese way of life is woven in the gamosa, whether plain or decorative. From a cultural symbol, it became a political symbol before designers explored its potential as dress material such as distinctive shirts,” said B.K. Goswami, a retired banker and writer.

The Gamosa’s graph as a symbol of protest rose during the anti-foreigners Assam Agitation from 1979 to 1985. The extremist United Liberation Front of Assom too used the towel with “revolutionary” motifs.

The gamosa staged a comeback as a political statement with the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act from mid-December 2019. The protests have continued intermittently after the COVID-19 pandemic struck.

Current Relevance –
For Pratibha Das, Mamani Malakar, Rebati Baishya and other members of the non-profit Hargila Army in Pacharia, a village 25 km northwest of Guwahati, sewing the gamosa masks is more than just keeping themselves engaged to beat the lockdown inactivity. Since lockdown has put paid to the Bihu Rangoli celebrations, the women turned the towels into masks for use during the COVID-19 crisis. They have been designing the masks with motifs of the endangered hargila (greater adjutant stork), rhino and elephant to add a dash of wildlife conservation to the protection of human faces. The COVID-19 pandemic has made the ubiquitous gamosa, a decorative cotton towel, evolve from memento to mask.
GS 3

➢ Economic Development

Q – Why is RBI refraining from making growth forecast amid COVID-19 induced fluid circumstances?

ANS = The Covid-19 induced Uncertainties such as-

1) CPI inflation tentatively projected to ease from 4.8% in Q1 of 2020-21 to 4.4% in Q2, 2.7% in Q3 and **2.4% in Q4**, with the caveat that in the prevailing high uncertainty, aggregate demand may weaken further than currently anticipated and ease core inflation further, while supply bottlenecks could exacerbate pressures more than expected. The central bank said, looking ahead, the balance of inflation risks is slanted even further towards the downside.

2) According to the recently released Monetary Policy Report (MPR), given the lockdown, the compilation of the CPI for March and the following few months by the National Statistical Office could also become challenging. For 2021-22, assuming a normal monsoon and no major exogenous or policy shocks, structural model estimates indicate that inflation could move in a range of 3.6-3.8%

3) The sharp reduction in International crude prices, is not expected to offset the drag from the shutdown and loss of external demand

4) And also the uncertainty of macroeconomic impact of the COVID-19, as in February-March 2020, could **exert pressure on the Indian rupee**.

However, it added, such uncertainties make the forecasting of inflation and growth highly challenging.

Despite the mitigative steps taken, where RBI had reduced the repo rate by 75 basis points (bps) to 4.4% in the monetary policy review while cash reserve ratio was reduced by 100 bps to 3%. The central bank, however, refrained from making any prediction on growth.

“Under highly fluid circumstances in which incoming data produce shifts in the outlook for growth on a daily basis, forecasts for real GDP growth in India are not provided here, awaiting a clear fix on the intensity, spread and duration of COVID-19,” the RBI said while observing the economy was looking up before the virus broke out

Snippets

GS1

➢ Governance

1. **15,000 Crore Rupees sanctioned to states.**

   ▪ The Centre announced this, under the India “COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Package.”

   ▪ The **100% Centrally-funded scheme** will be utilised for immediate COVID-19 Emergency Response (₹7,774 crore) and rest for medium-term support (1-4 years).

   ▪ The **key objectives** of the package include mounting emergency response to slow and limit COVID-19 through the development of diagnostics and dedicated treatment facilities.

2. **Odisha becomes first State to extend lockdown till April 30.**

   ▪ He also requested the Centre not to start airline and railway services till April 30.” Educational institutions in the State would remain closed till June 17, saving lives is the topmost priority now, he noted.

   ▪ People who are stranded in Odisha, activities related to agriculture, animal husbandry and MGNREGS would all be facilitated during the lockdown period, and there will not be any problem in transport of goods.

3. **Kejriwal launches ‘Operation Shield’ against COVID-19.**

   ▪ At 21 locations identified as containment zones in the capital.
The operation involves – SHIELD - S-Sealing of the immediate area after geographical marking, H-Home quarantine of all in the area, I-Isolation and tracing of people who have been first and second contacts, E-Essential supplies delivered at the doorstep, L-Local sanitisation and disinfection and D-Door-to-door checking, so that people having symptoms of the novel corona virus infection are isolated, and testing can be done after taking samples,” he said.

He said the pandemic would necessitate tough decisions. “As no economic activities are taking place, tax collection has stopped. In view of this, we have decided that except for the expenses to contain the spread of the virus and provide free ration and food, no other expenses will be incurred by the government”.

**GS 3**

- **Economic Development**

  **Industrial Output grows 4.5% in Feb.**

- The growth in the Index of Industrial Production came on the back of higher output in mining, electricity and manufacturing sectors, according to the data released by the National Statistical Office

  1. The mining sector saw a robust 10% growth in production in February, while the electricity sector saw 8.1% growth in comparison to the previous year. Manufacturing sector output grew more cautiously, at a rate of 3.2%.
  2. In terms of industries, 13 out of 23 groups in the manufacturing sector showed positive production growth in February.
  3. Industries manufacturing basic metals saw the highest output growth of more than 18%, while chemicals manufacturing saw production rise 8%.
  4. However, the auto sector saw a major slump in February, with the manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers contracting 15.6%. Computer and electronics manufacturing output also saw negative growth of almost 15%.

However, the IIP is likely to plunge drastically again for March, due to the lockdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has resulted in a halt in most business operations.

**How about this today!?**

Which of the following Study statements point to community transmission In India?

A. ICMR’s test samples of hospitalised Severe Acute Respiratory Illness (SARI) patients
B. SARI’s positive cases increasing from 0 during 1st week to 2.6% in the 14th week
C. The fact that, 40% of these positive Covid-19 cases lacked any history of contact or international travel
D. The 50-59 age groups were most susceptible for the infection.

a. B alone   b. A,B
   c. All of the above   d. None of the above

**Hey from Yesterday....**

Which amongst the following are contributing factors for the Rupee’s Fall 70 Paise against the dollar?

A. Rising Crude Prices
B. Volatility in the markets
C. Nation Lockdown
D. Strengthening of Dollar Index

Answer: All of the above