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DAILY NEWS DIARY

OF

17.10.2020

For Prelims and Mains

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

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ESSAY PAPER

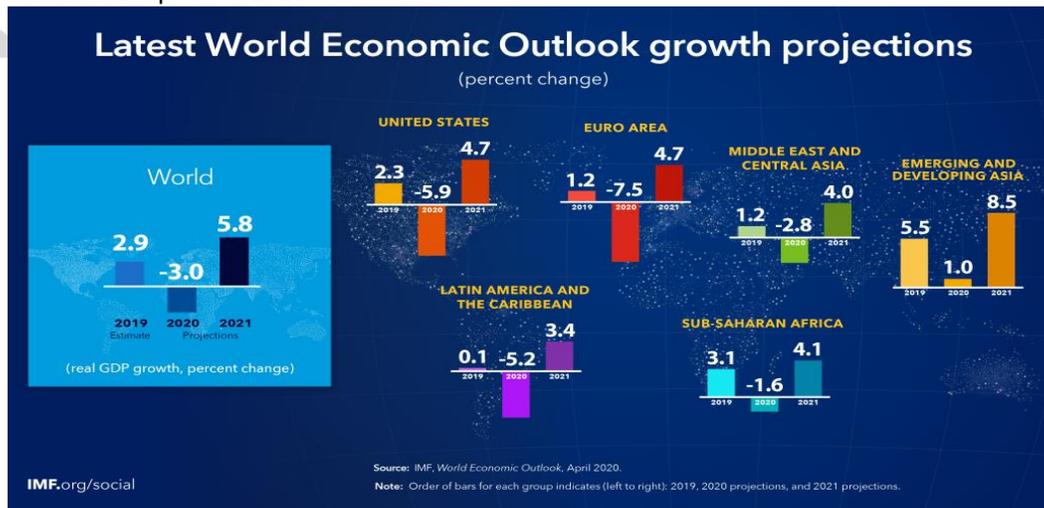
EDITORIAL

Q – Comment upon IMF’s World Economic Outlook 2020 report and the need for international co-operation as the world economy recovers slowly?

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INTRO = The IMF’s latest World Economic Outlook sums up the challenges ahead in the report’s title: ‘A long and difficult ascent’. With COVID-19 having already extracted a toll of over a million lives, accompanied by an evisceration of livelihoods and output in economies, prognosticating the economic future even as the pandemic rages on is an unenviable task.

- The Fund’s economists have gamely sought to make forecasts for world output through 2020, 2021 and into the medium term.
- While the global economy is projected to shrink 4.4% this year, reflecting a less severe contraction than the 5.2% drop estimated in June, output is seen rebounding at a marginally slower 5.2% pace in 2021.



- The IMF has based its revision on “better-than-anticipated second-quarter GDP out-turns, mostly in advanced economies” where activity improved after lockdowns were eased, as well as signs of a stronger recovery in the July-September quarter.
- But the IMF has been prudent in pointing out that even as the world economy ascends out of the depths it plunged to in April, following the worldwide lockdown, there remains the danger of a resurgence in infections that is prompting countries in Europe to reimpose at least partial closures.
- And the risks associated with predicting the pandemic’s progression, the unevenness of public health responses, and the extent to which domestic activity can be disrupted, magnify the uncertainty.

Pointing out that the pandemic is set to leave scars well into the medium term –

- 1) As labour markets take time to heal,
- 2) Investment is held back by uncertainty and balance sheet problems,
- 3) And lost schooling impairs human capital.

IMF Chief Economist Gita Gopinath contends that global growth will gradually slow to about 3.5% in the medium term. With the cumulative loss in output relative to the pre-pandemic projected path estimated to more than double to \$28 trillion over 2020–25, efforts to improve average living standards are certain to be severely set back.

Way Forward –

Observing that the pandemic is set to widen inequality between economies and within nations, the Fund has urged greater international cooperation –

- 1) It is imperative for all countries to work closely to ensure that new treatments and vaccines are made available to all since wider and faster availability of medical solutions could boost global income by almost \$9 trillion by end-2025, reducing income divergence.
- 2) With no visibility yet on vaccine availability, the IMF has also stressed the need for policymakers to persist with direct income support for the most vulnerable and regulatory forbearance for stressed but viable firms.

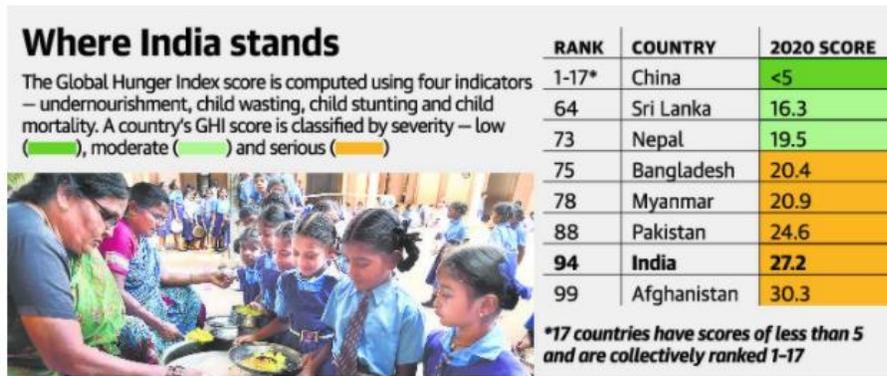
The message is clear. In a world as interconnected as it is today, the cost of economic insularity would only be more protracted pain for all.

GS 2

Q - In light of the World Zero Hunger Day, write a note analysing the Global Hunger Index 2020 on India's and its neighbours ranking?

BACKGROUND = India has the highest prevalence of wasted children under five years in the world, which reflects acute undernutrition, according to the Global Hunger Index 2020. The situation has worsened in the 2015-19 period, when the prevalence of child wasting was 17.3%, in comparison to 2010-14, when it was 15.1%.

Overall, India ranks 94 out of 107 countries in the Index, lower than neighbours such as Bangladesh (75) and Pakistan (88). In the region of south, east and south-eastern Asia, the only countries which fare worse than India are Timor-Leste, Afghanistan and North Korea. 2020 scores reflect data from 2015-19. The Index, which was released on Friday, is a peer-reviewed report released annually by Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe.



- It uses four parameters to determine its scores. India fares worst in child wasting (low weight for height, reflecting acute undernutrition) and child stunting (low height for age, reflecting chronic undernutrition), which together make up a third of the total score.
- Although it is still in the poorest category, however, child stunting has actually improved significantly, from 54% in 2000 to less than 35% now. Child wasting, on the other hand, has not improved in the last two decades, and is rather worse than it was decade ago.
- India has improved in both child mortality rates, which are now at 3.7%, and in terms of undernourishment, with about 14% of the total population which gets an insufficient caloric intake.

Pandemic effect

Globally, nearly 690 million people are undernourished, according to the report, which warns that the COVID-19 pandemic could have affected the progress made on reducing hunger and poverty. "The world is not on track to achieve the second Sustainable Development Goal — known as Zero Hunger for short — by 2030. At the current pace, approximately 37 countries will fail even to reach low hunger, as defined by the Global Hunger Index Severity Scale, by 2030". COVID-19 has made it clearer than ever that our food systems, as they stand, are inadequate to the task of achieving Zero Hunger."

PATH TO ZERO HUNGER BY 2030



In September 2015, the 193 UN Member States commit to 17 SDGs, including **ZERO HUNGER BY 2030**

BY THE YEAR 2030 WORLD POPULATION IS PROJECTED TO GROW TO AROUND 8.3 billion

DEMAND FOR FOOD WILL GROW

- Increase investment in agriculture. Build market infrastructure and improve public goods to help raise productivity and rural incomes. SDGs 1, 2, 8, 12
- Sustainably manage forests, oceans, water, land and soil – and promote an ecosystem approach to extract greater agricultural yield with fewer inputs. SDGs 2, 3, 6, 13, 15

ABOUT 800 MILLION PEOPLE GO HUNGRY TODAY

- Establish social protection systems to improve food access, such as school food and cash transfers. Without enrichment, humans cannot learn, or lead healthy and productive lives. SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 10
- Promote nutrition policies, including dietary education, and shift to consumption and production approaches that promote biodiversity and long-term health benefits. SDGs 2, 3

INCREASING COMPETITION FOR NATURAL RESOURCES

MALNUTRITION AFFECTS 1 IN 3 PEOPLE AND ALL NATIONS

OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY IS RISING

- Make food systems more efficient, inclusive and resilient. SDGs 2, 3, 10, 12
- Improve the way food commodity markets function, and limit extreme food price volatility. SDGs 1, 2, 5, 10, 17

A LARGE SHARE OF FOOD PRODUCED IS LOST OR WASTED

ALMOST 4 IN 5 POOR PEOPLE LIVE IN RURAL AREAS

- Develop pro-poor growth strategies in rural areas, focusing on small-scale farmers and the people left furthest behind. SDGs 1, 2, 8, 10, 15

YOUTH NUMBERS ARE RISING FAST

IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA AND SOUTH ASIA

- Diversify rural employment into non-agricultural activities targeting youth to draw their talents to cities. SDGs 1, 2, 5, 8, 10, 17

GENDER EQUALITY IS A PREREQUISITE FOR PROSPERITY

- Ensure rural women have equal access to resources, income opportunities, and education. SDGs 2, 5, 8, 9, 10, 13, 15

INEQUALITIES ARE INCREASING

BOTH WITHIN AND BETWEEN COUNTRIES

- Address root causes of inequality. Give poor people access to health, education, land, finance and new technology. SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 10

CLIMATE CHANGE IS ESCALATING

IS ESCALATING CROP AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION AND FISH STOCKS

- Adopt holistic approaches, such as agro-ecology, agroforestry, climate-smart and conservation agriculture. SDGs 2, 3, 13, 15

INCREASING GHG EMISSIONS ARE EXACERBATING CLIMATE CHANGE

- Transform agriculture so that it contributes to food loss reduction. SDGs 2, 3, 13, 15

OUTBREAKS OF TRANSBOUNDARY PESTS AND DISEASES ARE GROWING ALARMINGLY

- Establish best practices in preventing diseases and anti-microbial resistance that threaten plant and animal production, public health and trade. SDGs 2, 3, 6, 12

INCREASING GHG EMISSIONS ARE EXACERBATING CLIMATE CHANGE

- Build the resilience of rural communities to withstand shocks, crises and disasters. Tackle distress migration. SDGs 1, 2, 3, 10, 13

GLOBALIZATION IS INCREASING DEMAND

FOR INFORMATION, TECHNOLOGY AND PARTICIPATION

- Build institutions and mechanisms that provide international access, standards and data, and promote cooperation among countries and partners. SDGs 2, 3, 10, 17

CONFLICTS AND CRISES ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY PROTRACTED



GS 3

➤ Science and Technology

Q – What is the New research that sheds light on declining star formation in Milky Way?

- In a vital discovery which may help understand the mystery behind declining star formation activity in the Milky Way, a team of astronomers from the Pune-based National Centre for Radio Astrophysics (NCRA-TIFR) and Raman Research Institute (RRI) in Bengaluru have used the upgraded Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT) to measure the atomic hydrogen content of galaxies seen as they were eight billion years ago when the universe was young.



Key tool: The Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope was used to search for a spectral line in atomic hydrogen. File PhotoHandout E Mail

- Galaxies are made up mostly of gas and stars, with gas being converted into stars during the life of a galaxy. Understanding galaxies requires us to determine how the amounts of both gas and stars change with time. Astronomers have long known that galaxies formed stars at a higher rate when the universe was young than they do today. The star formation activity in galaxies peaked about 8-10 billion years ago and has been declining steadily till today.
- He observed that the cause of this decline was unknown as there had been no information regarding the amount of atomic hydrogen gas — the primary fuel for star formation — in galaxies in these early times.
- Given the intense star formation in these early galaxies, their atomic gas would be consumed by star formation in just one or two billion years. And, if the galaxies could not acquire more gas, their star formation activity would decline, and finally cease, adding that the observed decline in star formation activity could thus be explained by the exhaustion of the atomic hydrogen.

- Unlike stars which emit light strongly at optical wavelengths, the atomic hydrogen signal lies in the radio wavelengths, at a wavelength of 21 cm, and can only be detected with radio telescopes.
- Unfortunately, this 21 cm signal is intrinsically very weak, and difficult to detect from distant individual galaxies even with powerful telescopes like the upgraded GMRT. To overcome this limitation, the team used a technique called “stacking” to combine the 21 cm signals of nearly 8,000 galaxies that had earlier been identified with the help of optical telescopes. This method measures the average gas content of these galaxies.
- The big jump in sensitivity was due to the upgrade of the GMRT in 2017. “The new wide band receivers and electronics allowed us to use 10 times more galaxies.

Detecting the 21 cm signal from the most distant galaxies in the universe was the main science goal of the GMRT, when it was designed and built by a team led by the late pioneering astrophysicist Govind Swarup in the 1980s and 1990s.

Snippets

➤ International Relations

Q – What does it mean for U.K. to go for ‘Australia-style pact’?

- Prime Minister Boris Johnson said it was now time to prepare for a no-trade deal Brexit unless the European Union fundamentally changed course. A tumultuous “no deal” finale to the United Kingdom’s five-year Brexit crisis would sow chaos through the delicate supply chains that stretch across Britain, the EU and beyond — just as the economic hit from the pandemic worsens.
- A so-called “Australia deal” means that the U.K. would trade on World Trade Organization terms: as a country without an EU trade agreement, like Australia, tariffs would be imposed under WTO rules, likely causing significant price rises.

➤ Social Justice

Q – Mention what is an effective policy planning to monitor and prevent instances of stubble burning?

- A Supreme Court Bench led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sharad A. Bobde on Friday appointed Justice Lokur as a one-man committee to monitor and prevent instances of stubble burning by farmers in the three States.
- Former Supreme Court judge Madan B. Lokur, helped by student volunteer forces deployed from the National Cadet Corps, the National Service Scheme and the Bharat Scouts and Guides, will protect Delhi-NCR (National Capital Region) from pollution caused by stubble burning in the neighbouring States of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh this winter.
- Student forces will patrol highways and fields in the three States and ensure that no fires are started in the fields. The Chief Secretaries of the three States will provide facilities to the committee and provide the student volunteers with adequate transportation to aid their vigil.

- Existing mobile teams and nodal officers of the States will report to the committee. The Supreme Court's own Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA) would consult with the committee on issues related to stubble burning.
- The committee will file status reports with the court at least every fortnight. The court chose Justice Lokur for the task as he had headed the Green Bench that was monitoring stubble burning for two years before his retirement.
- The committee is an effective policy planning now due to the onslaught of incoming waves of smog caused by unbridled stubble burning in the three States this winter.

➤ Science & Technology

Q – What are the results of the world's largest randomised control trial on COVID-19 therapeutics on the effectiveness of repurposed drugs for the treatment of COVID-19?

BACKGROUND = Interim results from the Solidarity Therapeutics Trial, coordinated by the World Health Organization (WHO), have indicated that remdesivir, hydroxychloroquine, lopinavir/ritonavir and interferon regimens appeared to have little or no effect on 28-day mortality or the in-hospital course of COVID-19 among hospitalised patients.

Multi-country trial tracked the use of remdesivir, HCQ, lopinavir, interferon



- As a multi-country study, it offers the advantage of large patient numbers needed to reach meaningful conclusions on this very important clinical outcome and also provides generalisability of its conclusions across diverse populations across the world.
- The study, which spans more than 30 countries, looked at the effects of these treatments on overall mortality, initiation of ventilation, and duration of hospital stay in hospitalised patients.

- Other uses of the drugs, for example in treatment of patients in the community or for prevention, would have to be examined using different trials.
- The Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR), an active partner in the trials, said it conducted PLACID trial for convalescent plasma indicating no benefit of it in COVID-19 treatment.
- India contributed one-tenth of the participants in the trial.

➤ **How about this today!?**

🕒 **Q – Which of the following factors led to the improvement of the air quality Index of Gurugram, and Noida to “poor” category from “very poor”?**

1. Control on Stubble Burning
 2. Due to the Low pressure area in south drifting towards the north
 3. Smog Towers
 4. Low Surface Winds
-
- a. 4 only
 - b. 1 and 3
 - c. 2 only
 - d. 3 only

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➤ **Hey from yesterday....**

🕒 **Q – Which of the following statements are TRUE with regard to a kilo-class submarine “INS Sindhuvir” of India?**

1. In this context, India will be delivering INS Sindhuvir, to the Myanmar, the first submarine of the Myanmar Navy.
 2. This is in accordance with our vision of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region).
 3. And also in line with our commitment to build capacities and self reliance in all our neighbouring countries.
-
- a. 2 only
 - b. 2 and 3
 - c. 1 only
 - d. 1,2,3

Answer -d

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