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## DAILY NEWS DIARY

of

**20.10.2020**

## 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-According to the newly released 2019 HIV estimates, what are the health programs taken up by India in co-operation with the international organisations in successfully bringing down the AIDS-related deaths?**

INTRO = In this challenging moment when we are confronted with one of the biggest health emergencies in our history, the COVID-19 pandemic, we find our strength in the gains we are making despite this disruption –

- The newly released 2019 HIV estimates by the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO)/Ministry of Health and Family Welfare with the technical support of UNAIDS tell us that there has been a 66.1% reduction in new HIV infections among children and a 65.3% reduction in AIDS-related deaths in India over a nine-year period.
- The number of pregnant women living with HIV has reduced from 31,000 in 2010 to 20,000 in 2019.
- Overall, antenatal coverage has expanded, and HIV testing has increased over time and within target range.
- Treatment coverage has also expanded.

## Summary of the global HIV epidemic (2019)

	People living with HIV in 2019	People newly infected with HIV in 2019	HIV-related deaths in 2019
 Total	<b>38.0 million</b> [31.6 million – 44.5 million]	<b>1.7 million</b> [1.2 million – 2.2 million]	<b>690 000</b> [500 000 – 970 000 million]
 Adults	<b>36.2 million</b> [30.2 million – 42.5 million]	<b>1.5 million</b> [1.1 million – 2.0 million]	<b>600 000</b> [430 000 – 840 000]
 Women	<b>19.2 million</b> [16.4 million – 22.2 million]	<b>790 000</b> 590 000 – 1.1 million]	<b>300 000</b> [220 000 – 420 000]
 Men	<b>17.0 million</b> [13.8 million – 20.4 million]	<b>870 000</b> 630 000 – 1.2 million]	<b>390 000</b> [280 000 – 560 000]
 Children (<15 years)	<b>1.8 million</b> [1.3 million – 2.2 million]	<b>150 000</b> [94 000 – 240 000]	<b>95 000</b> [61 000 – 150 000]

Source: UNAIDS/WHO estimates



Under the leadership of NACO, a 'Fast-Tracking of EMTCT (elimination of mother-to-child transmission) strategy-cum-action plan' was outlined by June 2019, in the run-up towards December 2020:

- 1) From 2010 to 2019, India made important progress in reducing the HIV impact on children through prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. This was done through education and communication programmes.
- 2) Increased access to HIV services with innovative delivery mechanisms for HIV testing (community-based testing, partner testing or index testing);
- 3) Counselling and care;
- 4) And treatment and follow-ups.
- 5) India made HIV testing for all pregnant women free and HIV treatment is offered the same way nationwide without cost to pregnant mothers living with HIV through the national 'treat all' policy. (Cognisant of the challenge of diagnosing 20,000 pregnant women living with HIV in an estimated 30 million pregnancies annually in India, for two years UNICEF has worked with the World Health Organization and NACO to identify high burden districts (in terms of density of pregnant women living with HIV) as the last mile towards disease elimination).

#### **About the EMTCT –**

Since 2002, when the EMTCT of HIV programmes or prevention of parent-to-child transmission of HIV were launched in India and has been made possible in government health centres and grass-root level workers through village health and nutrition days and other grass-roots events under the National Health Mission.

#### **Way Forward –**

However, there remains a need for –

- 1) Increased treatment saturation coverage and for early HIV testing and treatment initiation to become the normal.
- 2) While periodic monitoring of the data and reviews are the mainstay of the programme response, by 2019 it was very evident to all the stakeholders that while there are successes, we have a long way to go towards the final targets.
  - Using data-driven and decision-making approaches, we are certain that AIDS will no longer be a public health threat for children in India by the end 2030, if not before.

#### **GS 2**

##### **➤ International Relations**

#### **Q – Explain how China's GDP growth continues to accelerate in the Post-pandemic world?**

BACKGROUND = China's economic growth continued to gain momentum in the third quarter, **with the GDP expanding 4.9% from a year earlier in the July-September period.** The pace of expansion was faster than the preceding quarter's 3.2% and underlined the rebound in the world's second-largest economy at a time when other major economies are struggling to recover from contractions triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdowns to combat it.

Growth was, however, slower than the 5.2% pace forecast by analysts in a Reuters poll. And IMF has forecasted China's economy will expand by 1.9% in 2020, making it the only major economy to register growth in a pandemic-hit year.

### The economic rebound follows China's broad return to normalcy this summer –

- 1) Following sweeping COVID-19 curbs including stringent lockdowns,
- 2) Extensive contact tracing, and restrictions on international travel through the first half of the year, which allowed the authorities to almost entirely stop transmission of the virus within China, with the exception of a few clusters that were contained locally.
- 3) The country's week-long October national holiday saw 630 million domestic trips and a surge in local tourism that generated \$70 billion in revenue, with travel reported at 80% of last year's numbers, according to Chinese financial magazine Caixin.
- 4) The recovery was driven by a 5.8% growth in industrial production and a revival of exports.
- 5) A surge in investments in infrastructure projects, enabled by measures to boost liquidity, had been sanctioned by the government, which had to grapple with millions of job losses at the start of the year as a result of the pandemic's first outbreak in Wuhan in December.

### Consumption lags

Consumption, however, is yet to regain its normal vigour with retail sales in the January-September period still down 7.2% from a year earlier, even though growth rebounded in September to 3.3%, from August's 0.5% pace.

Whether you look at the most recent month, the quarter, or the year-to-date, it is obvious that the recovery in production vastly exceeds the recovery in consumption, adding this would inflate an already ballooning debt burden.

**While private-sector business investment, which is driven mostly by growth in consumption and exports, was down 1.5% year-to-date, total fixed asset investment was up 0.8% for the year. As a result, China's debt-to-GDP ratio rose dramatically, from roughly 252 last September to roughly 275 last month.**

### GS 3

#### ➤ Economic Development

**Q - Explain how certain Public Sector Unit's (PSUs) buy-backs can help cash-strapped government to raise funds?**

BACKGROUND = India has asked at least eight state-run companies to consider share buy-backs in the fiscal year to March 2021, as New Delhi searches for ways to raise funds to rein in its fiscal deficit. The firms asked include miner Coal India, power utility NTPC, minerals producer NMDC and Engineers India Ltd. "Buy-back is an important tool in our strategy and it helps in building market price,"



**Why the need?**

- India is unlikely to be anywhere near its fiscal deficit target of 3.5% of GDP for 2020/21 as COVID-19 curbs hit tax collections and delayed efforts to privatise Bharat Petroleum Corp. and flag carrier Air India.
- In February, the government had set itself a target of raising more than \$27 billion from privatisations and sale of minority stakes in state-owned companies this fiscal.

However, some PSUs, particularly in the oil sector, may not be able to do buy-backs, as the government's stake is just sufficient to ensure its position as a majority holder. "The government stake in these companies is about 51% and there is a competing claim on their cash in the form of huge capex commitment and dividend payments".

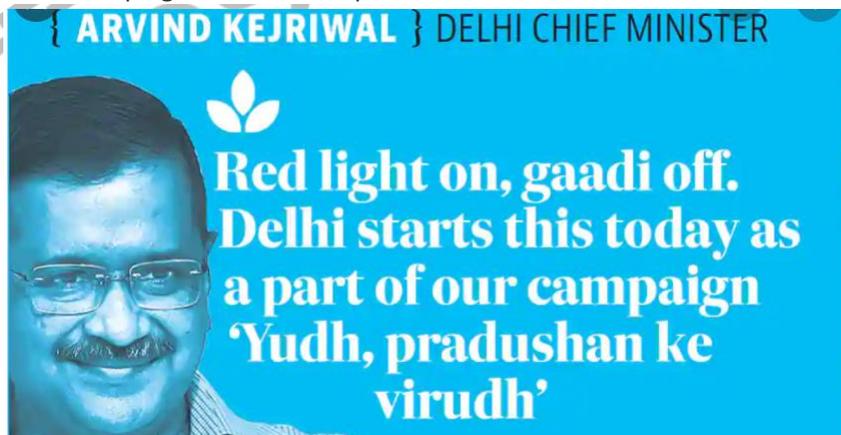
But for those with sufficient funds and capital expenditure below target for this fiscal year, the government could seek approval from the Cabinet to prune its stake to less than 51% in individual firms without giving up control. India had tasked 23 state-run companies with capital expenditure of ₹1.65 trillion (\$22.5 billion) this fiscal year, but some firms face spending challenges as the world's second most populous nation adds virus infections.

The Centre had asked PSUs to either meet their targets for capital expenditure or "reward the shareholder in the form of a dividend".

**Snippets**➤ **Environment**

**Q – Write a short note on how the 'red light on, gaadi off' campaign contributes to pollution control?**

- Environment Minister Gopal Rai said that the odd-even vehicle rationing policy will be used as a "last weapon" if everything else fails in the fight against air pollution in the city of Delhi. And on that note said that the government will launch an awareness programme from October 21 about the "red light on, gaadi off" campaign to reduce air pollution.



- The air quality of Delhi, Gurugram and Noida were in the 'poor' category on Monday, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data. Delhi's AQI was 244 (poor) on Monday. The values for Gurugram and Noida were 245 and 236

- The campaign will be active from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. As many as 100 busy traffic intersections have been selected for the purpose. A total of 2,500 environment marshals will be deployed at these junctions.
- People who are not turning off their vehicles at red lights will be given a rose and environment marshals will appeal to them to turn off their vehicles.
- Meanwhile, the Environment Pollution (Prevention & Control) Authority is to review emission standards of eight thermal power plants in the two States and inform them about it. And may have to direct closure of the plants, which do not meet 2015 standards as air quality deteriorates in the coming days,

➤ **How about this today!?**

🤔 **After Years of discussions, which of the following countries has been admitted in to the “Malabar 2020 naval exercise” bringing together the navies of different countries for maritime exercises?**

- a. Japan
- b. Israel
- c. Australia
- d. Myanmar

➤ **Hey from yesterday....**

🤔 **Consider the following statements:**

1. Agricultural soils release nitrogen oxides into environment.
2. Cattle release ammonia into environment.
3. Poultry industry releases reactive nitrogen compounds into environment.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- a. 1 and 3 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 2 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer: d**

NOTE: Nitrogen oxides are released into the environment due to biological processes in soils and biomass burning. Agriculture remains the largest contributor to nitrogen emissions followed by sewage and organic solid wastes. (Approx. 90% of the emissions come from soils.) Nitrous oxide is formed in soils during the microbiological processes nitrification and denitrification. Because nitrous oxide is a gas it can escape from soil during these transformations. cattle release both ammonia and methane into the atmosphere. Cattle account for 80% of the ammonia production, though their annual growth rate is 1%, due to a stable population. The poultry industry, on the other hand, with an annual growth rate of 6%, recorded an excretion of reactive nitrogen compounds of 0.415 tonnes in 2016.

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