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## DAILY NEWS DIARY

Of

**05.04.2021**

**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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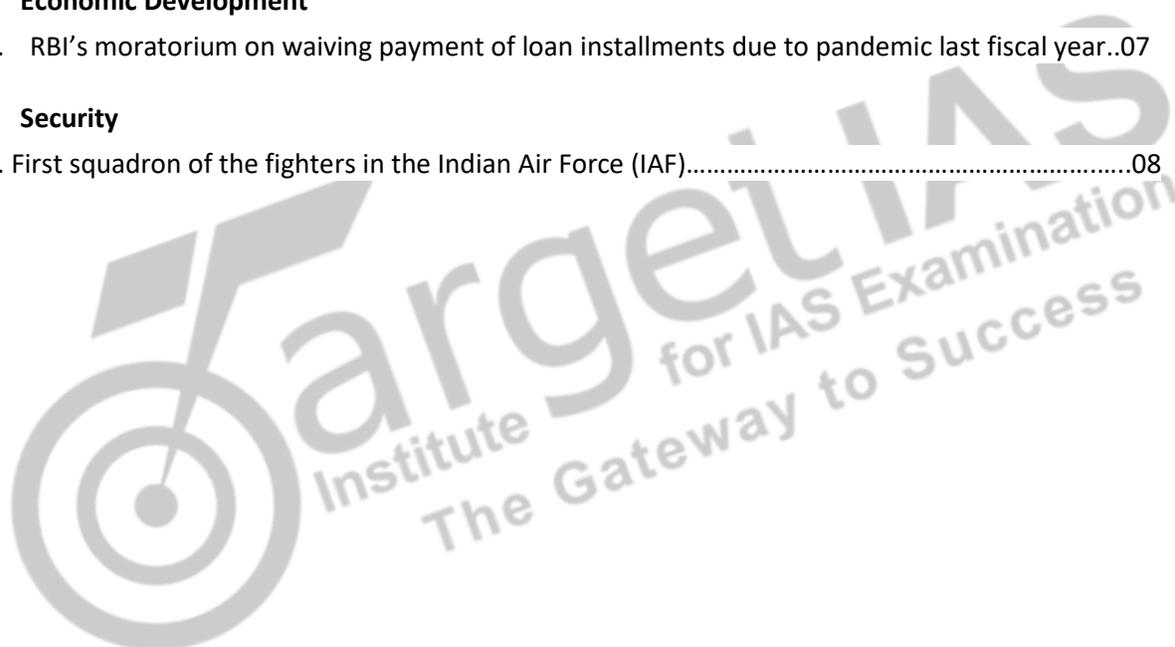
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**ESSAY PAPER****EDITORIAL**

**Q- What are rare diseases and comment as to how India's National Policy for Rare Diseases 2021 is off to a good start?**

**INTRODUCTION** = Rare diseases are broadly defined as diseases that infrequently occur in a population, and three markers are used —

1. The total number of people with the disease,
2. Its prevalence,
3. And the availability/non-availability of treatment options.

WHO defines rare disease as having a frequency of less than 6.5-10 per 10,000 people. As per an estimate, there are 7,000 known rare diseases with an estimated 300 million patients in the world; 70 million are in India. According to the Organization for Rare Diseases India, these include -

- a. Inherited cancers,
- b. Autoimmune disorders,
- c. Congenital malformations,
- d. Hirschsprung's disease,
- e. Gaucher disease,
- f. Cystic fibrosis,
- g. Muscular dystrophies
- h. And Lysosomal Storage Disorders (LSDs).

And India being a welfare state to take care of every single citizen. Securing the wellbeing of every one, particularly those unable to help themselves, irrespective of whether they constitute a critical mass or not, is important. The recent notification of the **National Policy for Rare Diseases 2021** after various interventions, including the court, is pegged on this principle of inclusion. A good start –

1. It offers financial support for one-time treatment of up to ₹20 lakh,
2. Introduces a crowdfunding mechanism,
3. Creates a registry of rare diseases,
4. And provides for early detection.

## National Policy for Rare Diseases 2021 approved



Provides for financial support upto Rs 20L to individuals with certain rare diseases that require one-time treatment.

Assistance to be extended to not just BPL families, but to about 40% of the population who are covered under Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana

The financial support will be provided under the umbrella scheme of Rastriya Arogya Nidhi & not PM-JAY

Much of the effort in the sector, from the medical side, has been to evolve formal definitions, in the hope that it would support the development of and commercialisation of drugs for treatment, and improve funding for research on rare diseases. Patient support groups have worked towards drumming up funding assistance for the treatment — one time or continual. The notification of the Policy comes as a logical conclusion to a long-fought battle, and yet, stops short of delivering the complete mandate.

**In its final form the policy has left the rare diseases lobby sorely disappointed on a crucial note –**

1. As per the Policy, diseases such as LSD for which definitive treatment is available, but costs are prohibitive, have been categorised as Group 3.
2. However, no funding has been allocated for the immediate and lifelong treatment needs, for therapies already approved by the Drugs Controller General of India.

#### **Way Forward –**

Experts point out that the costs to help already-diagnosed patients might be in the range of ₹80-₹100 crore annually.

1. If the Centre can extend the cost-sharing agreements that it has worked out with Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, with other States too, its share of the annual costs will be halved.
2. The Centre can, however, still set aside a substantial corpus to fund life-saving treatments, even as it rolls out the policy.

Doing so will not only complete a job well begun — even if not yet half done — but also cement its commitment towards the welfare of every single citizen in India.

#### **For Prelims-**

The Rare Diseases Policy aims to lower the high cost of treatment for rare diseases with increased focus on indigenous research with the help of a National Consortium to be set up with Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare as convenor. Increased focus of research and development and local production of medicines will lower the cost of treatment for rare diseases. The policy also envisage creation of a national hospital based registry of rare diseases so that adequate data is available for definition of rare diseases and for research and development related to rare diseases within the country.

The Policy also focuses on early screening and prevention through primary and secondary health care infrastructure such as Health and Wellness Centres and District Early Intervention Centres (DEICs) and through counselling for the high-risk parents. Screening will also be supported by Nidan Kendras set up by Department of Biotechnology. Policy also aims to strengthen tertiary health care facilities for prevention and treatment of rare diseases through designating 8 health facilities as Centre of Excellence and these CoEs will also be provided one-time financial support of up to Rs 5 crores for upgradation of diagnostics facilities.

A provision for financial support up to Rs. 20 lakhs under the Umbrella Scheme of Rastriya Arogya Nidhi is proposed for treatment, of those rare diseases that require a one-time treatment (diseases listed under Group 1 in the rare disease policy). Beneficiaries for such financial assistance would not be limited to BPL families, but the benefit will be extended to about 40% of the population, who are eligible under Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana.

Besides, the Policy also envisages a crowd funding mechanism in which corporates and individuals will be encouraged to extend financial support through a robust IT platform for treatment of rare diseases. Funds so collected will be utilized by Centres of Excellence for treatment of all three categories of rare diseases as first charge and then the balance financial resources could also be used for research.



- 1. Framework for granting special orphan drug status to fast-track a drug to treat rare diseases under an Orphan Drug Designation Program** with the aim of advancing the evaluation and fast-tracking the development of drugs that show potential in helping in the diagnosis and treatment of rare disorders.
- 2. Develop a robust public-private model to help researchers and startups developing treatments for rare diseases** and working towards addressing other major challenges relating to funding, diagnosis, drug development and manufacturing, among others.
- 3. National Policy for Rare Diseases** to be notified after taking into account the recommendations put forth by the scientist, advocacy, and patient/caregiver communities as well as startups working in the field.
- 4. Funding grants dedicated for clinical trials of rare disease drugs and incentives** to sponsors of orphan drugs to incentivise the development of treatment solutions for rare disorders as well as research material aimed at prevention of rare disorders.
- 5. CSR arms of major corporates and philanthropic organisations to have dedicated Rare Disease Programs**, in line with the model followed for funding and aiding COVID-19 pandemic relief and treatment efforts, to help advance efforts made by scientists, researchers, and startups

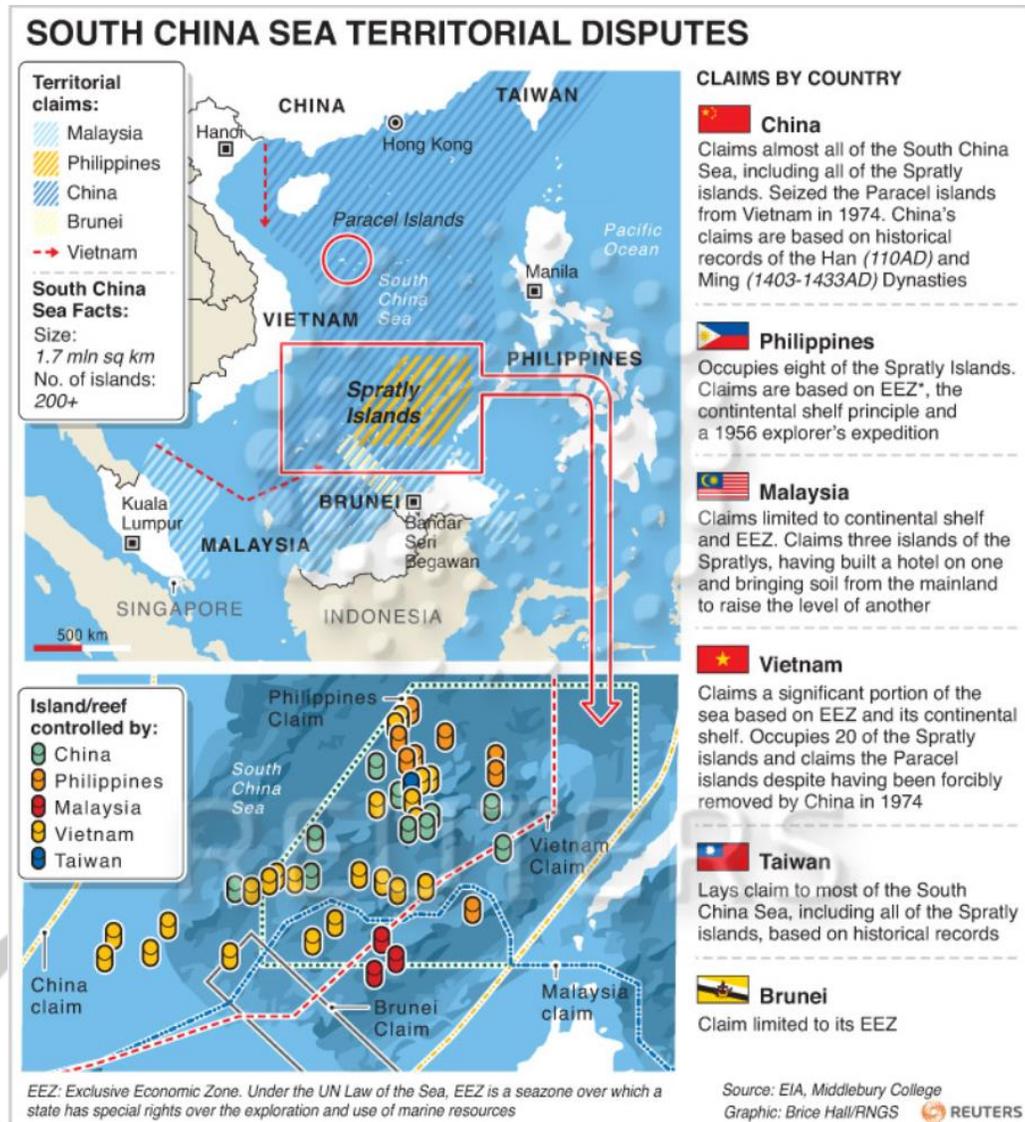
## GS 2

### Snippets

#### ❖ International Relations

##### **Q- What is the history of China's expansionist policy in South China Sea?**

- The Philippines' Defence Secretary said that China was looking to occupy more areas in the South China Sea, citing the continued presence of Chinese vessels that Manila believes are manned by militias in disputed parts of the strategic waterway.
- Chinese diplomats have said the boats anchored near the reef — numbering more than 200 based on initial intelligence gathered by Philippine patrols — were sheltering from rough seas and that no militia were aboard.
- **An international tribunal invalidated China's claim to 90% of the South China Sea in 2016, but Beijing does not recognise the ruling and has built artificial islands in the disputed waters equipped with radar, missiles batteries and hangars for fighter jets.**



China has done this (occupy disputed areas) before at Panatag Shoal or Bajo de Masinloc and at Panganiban Reef, brazenly violating Philippine sovereignty and sovereign rights under international law

**GS 3**

**Snippets**

❖ **Economic Development**

**Q- Discuss the effects of RBI's moratorium on waiving payment of loan instalments due to pandemic last fiscal year?**

- The RBI on March 27 last year announced a moratorium on payment of instalments of term loans falling due between March 1 and May 31, 2020. It was later extended to August 31.
- The judgment covers loans above ₹2 crore as loans below this got blanket interest on interest waiver in November last year.

## CHANGE OF STANCE BY GOVT

<p><b>ELIGIBILITY:</b> Up to ₹2cr loan</p> <p><b>PERIOD:</b> March to August</p> <p><b>WAIVER CATEGORIES (Finmin affidavit in SC)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ MSME loans, education, housing, auto, consumer durable loans, credit card dues, personal loans to professionals and consumption loans</li> <li>➤ Benefit also available to those who were clearing dues</li> <li>➤ RBI had allowed borrowers</li> </ul>	<p>to seek 6-month moratorium on all loans but lenders were charging interest on the entire amount (principal+interest), which meant repayment period extending by over 6 months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Modalities of how it translates for those paying EMIs or credit card dues during moratorium not yet clear</li> <li>➤ Centre reversed stand following recommendations of expert panel headed by ex-CAG Rajiv Mehrishi</li> </ul>
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- The public sector banks may have to bear a burden of ₹1,800 crore-₹2,000 crore arising out of a recent Supreme Court judgment on the waiver of compound interest on all loan accounts which opted for moratorium during March-August 2020
- The compound interest support scheme for loan moratorium cost the government ₹5,500 crore during 2020-21 and the scheme covered all borrowers, including the prompt ones who did not opt for the moratorium.
- According to banking sources, initially 60% of borrowers availed themselves of the moratorium and gradually the percentage came down to 40% and even less as collections improved with the easing of the lockdown. In the case of corporates, this was as low as 25% as far as public sector banks were concerned.

❖ **Security**

**Q- Write a short note on the update of the first squadron of the fighters in the Indian Air Force (IAF)?**

- Last September, the IAF inducted the batch of five Rafales, of the 36 contracted from France under a €7.87 billion Inter-Governmental Agreement signed in September 2016 with 13 India Specific Enhancements (ISE).
- The first batch of five jets, three single-seat and two twin-seater trainers, were formally inducted into the No. 17 'Golden Arrows' squadron of the IAF last September at the Ambala Air Force station. They arrived in India in July 2020 with a stopover at Al Dhafra airbase in the United Arab Emirates.



aircraft

**DEVELOPED BY FRENCH AIRCRAFT MANUFACTURER DASSAULT**

**Specifications**

- Top speed: 2,223km/h
- Max weight: 24,500kg
- Range: 3,700km
- Height: 5.3m
- Length: 10.3m
- Load-carrying capacity: 9,500kg

**CAPABLE OF**

- Ground support
- Aerial reconnaissance
- In-depth strikes
- Interception
- Nuclear deterrence

- India will receive another 8 to 9 Rafale jets from France by mid-May, with some expected later this month. The number of jets that will arrive in India by the month-end is being finalised. In all, around 8-9 jets are expected by mid-May.
- India currently has 14 jets, and the IAF is all set to operationalise the second Rafale squadron at Hasimara in West Bengal later this month.

Last December, IAF Chief Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhadauria said the Force would get three to four Rafales every two to three months till all 36 jets are delivered and added that the first squadron would be fully ready by the end of 2021 and the second squadron by 2023.



**Which of the following statements regarding the President's rule is incorrect?**

- It must be approved by both of houses of the Parliament through simple majority
- It is valid only for six months
- Revocation of President's rule does not require Parliamentary approval
- State Legislative Assembly is either dissolved or suspended



**Consider the following statements about Election Commission of India-**

- Election Commission of India is a permanent Constitutional Body.
- The Chief Election Commissioner can be removed from office only through impeachment by Parliament.
- If elections are being held only for the State Legislature, the expenditure is borne entirely by the concerned State.

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

- A, C
- A only
- A, B
- A, B, C

**Answer: A**

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