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DAILY NEWS DIARY

Of

21.04.2021

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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ESSAY PAPER

EDITORIAL

Q- A huge demand for oxygen has underlined its importance in Covid-19 management. What happens in the body that leads to some patients needing oxygen therapy? What is the protocol for such therapy?

INTRODUCTION = How does Covid-19 trigger shortness of breath?

Shortness of breath occurs because of the way Covid-19 affects the patient's respiratory system. The lungs enable the body to absorb oxygen from the air and expel carbon dioxide. When a person inhales, the tiny air sacs in the lungs — alveoli — expand to capture this oxygen, which is then transferred to blood vessels and transported through the rest of the body.

Respiratory epithelial cells line the respiratory tract. Their primary function is to protect the airway tract from pathogens and infections, and also facilitate gas exchange. And the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus can infect these epithelial cells.

To fight such infection, the body's immune system releases cells that trigger inflammation. When this inflammatory immune response continues, it impedes the regular transfer of oxygen in the lungs. Simultaneously, fluids too build up. Both these factors combined make it difficult to breathe. Low levels of oxygen triggered by Covid-19 are inflammatory markers, which include elevated white blood cell counts and neutrophil counts.

1st Wave vs 2nd Wave

1. Data with the National Clinical Registry for Covid-19 shows a new emerging trend during the second wave: shortness of breath is the most common clinical feature among symptomatic hospitalised patients at 47.5%, compared to 41.7% during the first wave.
2. Simultaneously, other symptoms have dropped significantly compared to the first wave: dry cough (5.6% vs 1.5%); loss of smell (7.7% vs 2.2%); fatigue (24.2% vs 11.5%); sore throat (16% vs 7.5%); muscle ache (14.8% vs 6.3%).
3. The national Covid-19 task force said hospital data shows that a significant 54.5% of hospital admissions during the second wave required supplemental oxygen during treatment. This was a 13.4-percentage-point increase compared to the previous wave between September and November

Protocol for Oxygen Therapy –

- According to the clinical management protocol, a person is suffering from **moderate disease** when he or she is diagnosed with pneumonia with no signs of severe disease; with the presence of clinical features of dyspnea (shortness of breath) and/or hypoxia (when the body is deprived of adequate oxygen supply at the tissue level); fever, cough, including SpO₂ (oxygen saturation level) less than 94% (range 90-94%) in room air.
- **Severe cases** are defined in three categories: severe pneumonia, acute respiratory distress syndrome, and sepsis. The clinical management protocol recommends oxygen therapy at 5 litres/min. When respiratory distress and/or hypoxemia of the patient cannot be alleviated after receiving standard oxygen therapy, the protocol recommends that high-flow nasal cannula oxygen therapy or non-invasive ventilation can be considered.

AllIMS has said that the reasons that have been proposed include a **sudden cardiac event**, preceding "silent hypoxia" that went unnoticed, or due to a thrombotic complication such as pulmonary thromboembolism. In silent hypoxia, patients have extremely low blood oxygen levels, yet do not show signs of breathlessness. "In patients with silent hypoxia, the amount of oxygen carried in our blood, otherwise known as blood oxygen level, is lower than expected compared to the other vital signs. Silent hypoxia is not usually an early symptom to occur in Covid-19 patients. It recommends that instead of solely relying on a pulse oximeter, the patient should monitor for gastrointestinal symptoms, muscle

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soreness, fatigue, and changes in taste and smell as well as the more common initial symptoms such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

GS 2

❖ Social Justice

Q- Discuss the plight of Journalism through the findings of the World Press Freedom Index, 2021?

INTRODUCTION= The latest index released on Tuesday ranks 180 countries, topped, yet again, by Norway followed by Finland and Denmark, while Eritrea is at the bottom. China is ranked 177, and is only above North Korea at 179 and Turkmenistan at 178.

India is ranked 142, same as last year, after it had consistently slid down from 133 in 2016. In the South Asian neighbourhood, Nepal is at 106, Sri Lanka at 127, Myanmar (before the coup) at 140, Pakistan at 145 and Bangladesh at 152.

2021 World Press Freedom Index

(Selected countries and territories)

Ranking		Country/ territory	Ranking		Country/ territory
2020	2021		2020	2021	
1	→ 1	Norway	119	↗ 113	Indonesia
2	→ 2	Finland	101	↘ 119	Malaysia
4	↗ 3	Sweden	140	↗ 137	Thailand
9	↗ 8	New Zealand	136	↘ 138	Philippines
26	↗ 25	Australia	139	↘ 140	Myanmar
42	→ 42	South Korea	142	→ 142	India
43	→ 43	Taiwan	158	↘ 160	Singapore
45	↗ 44	U.S.	175	→ 175	Vietnam
66	↘ 67	Japan	177	→ 177	China
80	→ 80	Hong Kong	180	↗ 179	North Korea

Source: Reporters Without Borders

While India has not slipped further on the **World Press Freedom Index 2021** published by the **international journalism not-for profit body, Reporters Without Borders (RSF)**, however, it continues to be counted among the countries **classified “bad” for journalism** (India shares the “bad” classification with Brazil, Mexico and Russia)and is termed as **one of the most dangerous countries for journalists** trying to do their jobs properly.

There a “strategy for suppressing information is often two-fold”. One, it said, “governments use innovative practices often derived from marketing to impose their own narrative within the mainstream media, whose publishers are from the same elite as the politicians” and, second, “politicians and activists wage a merciless war on several fronts against reporters and media outlets that don’t toe the official line”.

It called India’s application of “these methods” as “particularly instructive”

1. For India, the latest report has blamed an environment of intimidation created by **BJP** supporters for any critical journalist, who, the report said, is marked as “anti-state” or “anti-national”.
2. It said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi “tightens his grip on media”. With “four journalists killed in connection with their work in 2020.

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3. Journalists “are exposed to every kind of attack, including police violence against reporters, ambushes by political activists, and reprisals instigated by criminal groups or corrupt local officials”
4. “Indians who espouse Hindutva, the ideology that gave rise to radical right-wing Hindu nationalism, are trying to purge all **manifestations of ‘anti-national’ thought from the public debate. The coordinated hate campaigns waged on social networks against journalists** who dare to speak or write about subjects that annoy Hindutva followers are terrifying and include calls for the journalists concerned to be murdered.”
5. RSF has highlighted that the **“campaigns are particularly violent when the targets are women”**. Further, it said that criminal prosecutions are meanwhile “often used to gag journalists critical of the authorities” with sections for sedition also used.

Case studies to prove the Government’s advantage -

- a. In 2020, the government took advantage of the coronavirus crisis to step up its control of news coverage by prosecuting journalists providing information at variance with the official position.
- b. The situation is still very worrying in Kashmir, where reporters are often harassed by police and paramilitaries and must cope with utterly Orwellian content regulations, and where media outlets are liable to be closed, as was the case with the valley’s leading daily, the Kashmir Times.
- c. The report has also highlighted throttling of freedom of expression on social media, and specifically mentioned that in India the “arbitrary nature of Twitter’s algorithms also resulted in brutal censorship” highlighting that “[a]fter being bombarded with complaints generated by troll armies about The Kashmir Walla magazine, Twitter suddenly suspended its account without any possibility of appeal”.

Global Situation -

Speaking about the larger Asia-Pacific region, the report mentioned that “instead of drafting new repressive laws in order to impose censorship, several of the region’s countries have contented themselves with strictly applying existing legislation that was already very **draconian – laws on ‘sedition,’ ‘state secrets’ and ‘national security’**.”

1. The 2021 report “shows that **journalism, the main vaccine against disinformation, is completely or partly blocked in 73% of the 180 countries ranked by the organisation,**”
2. And, the **“2021 Edelman Trust barometer** reveals a disturbing level of public mistrust of journalists, with 59% of respondents in 28 countries saying that journalists deliberately try to mislead the public by reporting information they know to be false”.
3. The report noted that “only 12 of the Index’s 180 countries (7%) can claim to offer a favourable environment for journalism”.

The Indian government has been concerned about its low rankings in such international indices, and had last year started studying them to understand how to improve.

GS 3

❖ Economic Development

Q- State the reasons for Indian rupee being put on the U.S Currency Watchlist and India’s response to the same?

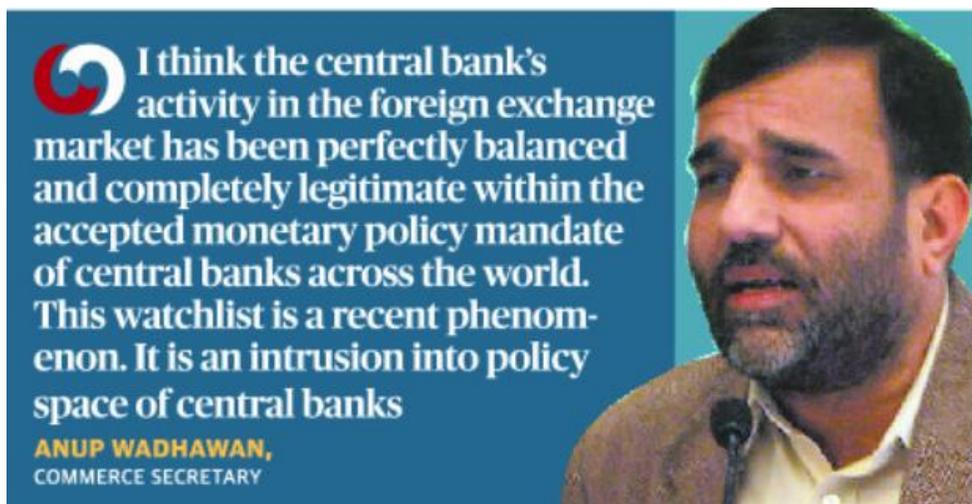
BACKGROUND = Questioning the rationale behind the U.S. government’s decision to put India on the watchlist for currency manipulators, India said the list constituted an intrusion into the policy space needed by central banks around the world to meet their mandates.

Reasons stated by U.S -

1. The U.S. Treasury Department had firstly cited higher dollar purchases (close to 5% of the gross domestic product) by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as a reason
2. Another trigger for the inclusion on the currency watchlist is a trade surplus of \$20 billion or more.

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3. India's trade surplus with the U.S. grew by about \$5 billion to \$23 billion in 2020-21, from around \$18 billion in the previous fiscal year, as imports fell more sharply than exports in the COVID-affected year. **In response to this, India responded that the above are** very legitimate market-based operations of a central bank. It is a mandate of the central bank to provide stability in the currency as a result of which central banks buy and sell foreign currency. Our overall reserves have been fairly steady at \$500 billion to \$600 billion. We are not accumulating reserves like China, which at one point had reserves of \$4 trillion.



India had a steady holding pattern of forex reserves “with ups and downs” based on market-based transactions that central banks may undertake.

❖ Science & Technology

Q- What are the reasons behind Russia mooting to launch its own space station?

BACKGROUND = Russia's space agency hoped to launch its own orbital station in 2025 as Moscow considers withdrawing from the International Space Station programme to go it alone. One of the few successful examples of cooperation with the West.

1. The announcement came with tensions soaring with the West.
2. “The first core module of the new Russian orbital station is in the works,”. Russia's Energia space corporation was aiming to have the module “ready for launch” in 2025 and released a video of Energia staff at work.
3. Launched in 1998 and involving Russia, the United States, Canada, Japan, and the European Space Agency, the ISS is one of the most ambitious international collaborations in human history. Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Yury Borisov said in recent days that **Moscow was considering whether to leave the ISS programme from 2025 because of the station's age.**
4. Russia lost its monopoly for manned flights to the ISS last year after the first successful mission of U.S. company Space X.

A decision on quitting the ISS had not yet been made. “When done we will start negotiations with our partners on forms and conditions of cooperation beyond 2024,” Despite its much-lauded history — Russia this month marked the 60th anniversary of Yuri Gagarin becoming the first person in orbit — the country's space programme has struggled in recent years. Analysts say Mr. Putin is more interested in military technology than space exploration.

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For Prelims -



International Space Station (ISS)

The largest man-made orbiting structure has more than 20 years of history



EUROPE
LATAM
MIDDLE EAST
UNITED STATES

www.aertec.com

Una nave espacial enviada desde la Tierra llega a la estación en un viaje de tan solo 6 horas

Measurements
109x73m

Habitable volume
388 m³

Weight
419,7 toneladas

Altitude
350 a 400km

Milestones in the evolutions of ISS



The station circles Earth at 28,000 km per hour. It makes a full orbit of Earth every 90 minutes.

An example of international political, scientific and technological collaboration

The International Space Station (ISS) is a joint project involving five space agencies: NASA (USA), Roscosmos (Russia), ESA (Europe), JAXA (Japan) and CSA (Canada).

The station is divided into two sections: the Russian segment, made up of components built in Russia and operated by Roscosmos, and the USA segment, shared by the remaining space agencies: NASA, ESA, JAXA and CSA.

Since 1998, 16 countries have participated in the construction of the ISS: the United States, Russia, Canada, Brazil, Japan, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Did you know...?

Thanks to its privileged view of the Earth and celestial bodies, the Cupola has scientific applications in the fields of Earth Observation and Space Sciences, while also providing great psychological benefits for the crew.

Crew facilities

- 6 bedrooms (which have a lamp, shelf and desk)
- 2 bathrooms (designed by Russia, with a waste cation system; crew must wear a safety belt to use them). Crew use a mechanical hose, wet towels and soap paste to clean themselves.
- 1 gym

Space for visitors

Visitors attach their sleeping bag to the wall of a common area, as they do not have their own module.

Timeline of ISS modules:

- Zarya** (11.20.1998) - First component launched.
- Unity** (12.04.1998) - First part of the ISS provided by the USA.
- Zvezda** (07.12.2000) - First Russian contribution.
- Destiny** (02.07.2001) - Research laboratory.
- Harmony** (19.23.2007) - Internal connection port.
- Columbus** (02.07.2007) - Pressurized lab.
- Kibo** (03.11.2008) - Japanese module.
- Tranquility + Cupola** (02.08.2010) - Additional space and observation dome.

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Which of the following statements is/are correct about petcoke?

1. Petcoke itself has a low level of toxicity.
2. There are evidences that Petcoke has carcinogenic substances.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2



The Makran Coast which if the flash point for disruption of the illegal narcotics smuggling routes towards Indian, Maldivian and Sri Lankan destinations is located near ?

- a. The Bay of the Bengal
- b. The Arabian Sea
- c. The Mediterranean Sea
- d. None of the above

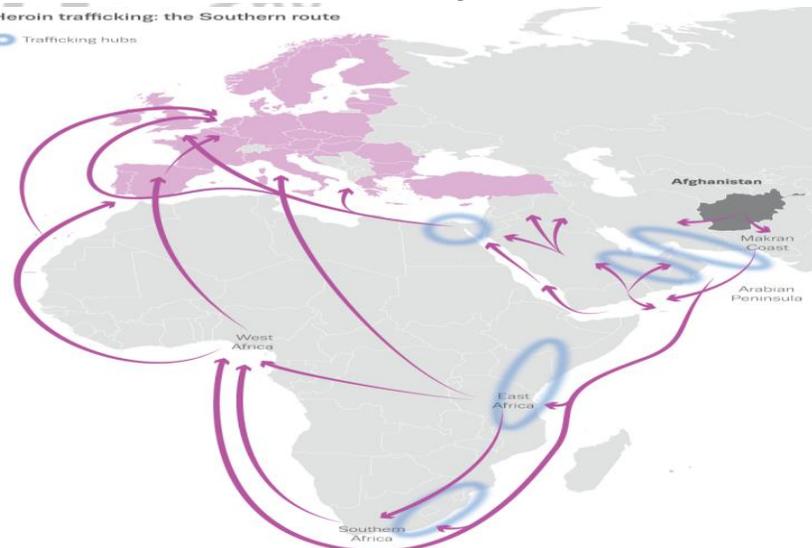
Answer – B

NOTE: The Navy seized over 300 kg of narcotics, estimated to cost ₹3,000 crore in the international market, from a fishing vessel in the Arabian Sea. It was a major catch not only in terms of the quantity and cost but also from the perspective of disruption of the illegal narcotics smuggling routes, which emanate from the Makran coast and flow towards Indian, Maldivian and Sri Lankan destinations. Apart from the human costs from drug addiction, the spoils of narcotics trade feed syndicates involved in terrorism, radicalisation and criminal activities.

INS Suvarna, whilst on surveillance patrol in the Arabian Sea, encountered a fishing vessel with suspicious movements. To investigate the vessel, the ship's team conducted boarding and search operation, which led to the seizure of more than 300 kg of narcotics substances

Heroin trafficking: the Southern route

● Trafficking hubs



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