DAILY NEWS DIARY

Of

06.11.2021

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.

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ESSAY PAPER

Editorial

Q- India must bet big on antivirals, as it did on vaccines. Explain Why?
INTRODUCTION = UK’s approval for Merck’s antiviral pill molnupiravir and Pfizer’s claim that its version cuts hospitalisation and death risk by 89% opens a new front against Covid after vaccines have succeeded in reducing disease severity.

![Wait Time]

Advantages -
1. Merck claims global clinical trials showed deaths reduced by nearly half among high-risk persons with mild to moderate illness when given early into onset of symptoms.
2. A low-cost antiviral pill can be a boon for countries with both high- and low-vaccination coverages battling Covid surges and those with relatively poor medical infrastructure like India.
3. Merck’s agreement with the UN-backed Medicine Patents Pool offers a royalty-free licence for generic manufacturers to market the drug in 105 low- and middle-income countries.

4. It had separately tied up with some Indian companies which have been conducting local trials for pursuing emergency-use authorisation from DCGI. Indian companies must tie up with Pfizer too because its antiviral technology has been around for decades, and is thus potentially safer. Indian regulators must move energetically on the molnupiravir trial data so that production can scale up, for both India and the world.

During the pandemic, India has carved out exemptions for vaccines and drugs granted EUA by US, UK, EU and Japan regulators besides WHO. UK’s molnupiravir approval is important: It was the first country to approve an mRNA vaccine, the then cutting-edge Pfizer-BioNTech jab, and to demonstrate effectiveness of low-cost steroid dexamethasone in mitigating cytokine storms.

The desperate remdesivir hunt during the second wave surge is reason enough to stockpile large quantities of antivirals. The safety of molnupiravir, which introduces errors into the genetic code of the coronavirus and prevents its replication, must be continually evaluated. Antivirals work best when Covid patients are detected positive early. So there mustn’t be any slack in testing, which is also our only early warning system against another surge.

GS 2

❖ International Relations

Q- Give a brief timeline of the State of Emergency in Ethiopia and its current status?

BACKGROUND =
Recently
Nine rebel groups battling Ethiopia’s government joined forces, as fears grow of Tigrayan fighters advancing on the capital.
The alliance includes the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) and the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF), which has been locked in a year-long war against Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed’s government.
The TPLF said that its fighters had reached the town of Kemissie in Amhara region, 325 km northeast of the capital, and were running “joint operations” with the OLA, which predicted Addis Ababa could fall in a matter of weeks.
The nine groups said they were forming a united front “to reverse the harmful effects of the Abiy Ahmed rule on the peoples of Ethiopia... and in recognition of the great need to collaborate and join forces towards a safe transition in the country”.

United Front
It is unclear whether the alliance, named the United Front of Ethiopian Federalist and Confederalist Forces, will affect the trajectory of the conflict, which Mr. Abiy’s government has termed “an existential war”.
The TPLF and the OLA, which the government officially designated as terrorist groups in May, are well-known, but the alliance’s other seven members are obscure, said one diplomat following security matters.

GS 3
❖ Economic Development

Q- Write a note on the dip in Oil Prices stating their possible reasons?

BACKGROUND = The prices of most major cooking oils dropped about ₹5-10 a litre in Delhi and as much as ₹20 in some other cities –
1. Giving credit to the stabilisation of global prices
2. As well as measures such as duty cuts and stock limits.
However, the national average retail prices for cooking oils showed little change, and mustard oil, which is only produced domestically, continued to see rising prices.

On the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), there were no plans to extend the free ration scheme introduced as COVID-19 relief last year beyond November 30.
PMGKAY was rolled out in March 2020 and has been extended twice. It provides five kg of free foodgrains a month to the 80 crore beneficiaries of the National Food Security Act.

Apart from the cuts in duties and cesses, the Centre had used stock limits to help control prices of both edible oils and pulses this year, using the provisions of the Essential Commodities Act. The amendments to the Act, which were passed by Parliament last year but suspended by the Supreme Court in January due to opposition by farm unions, would not have allowed the imposition of stock limits given the current rate of price hikes.

Extraordinary times
These are extraordinary times. Global commodity prices are extremely high. COVID-19 is a major factor, disrupting supply chains, closing down industry. There is insufficient labour in the oil production industry in many countries. Given the extraordinary circumstances, it is right to invoke this.
The retail prices of most major cooking oils were 35-45% higher than a year ago. However, a clear decline in prices was seen in Delhi from the beginning of the week till the Deepavali eve, with prices falling ₹5-10 a kg over the three-day period.

Some smaller centres saw even greater declines, such as the ₹18 a kg fall in palm oil in Aligarh and the ₹20 a kg fall in sunflower oil prices in Meghalaya.

Nationally, the palm oil prices fell about ₹1.45 a kg, while soybean oil increased the same amount.

Mustard oil, which accounted for 11% of the domestic consumption, saw a ₹2.29 a kg increase in prices, with the 12-15% increase in mustard acreage this winter season would cool down prices once the harvest comes in.

Economic Development

Q- India’s revenue surge to fund welfare and not fiscal gap how?

- India will utilise a big bump in revenue collection to fund welfare programmes instead of trying to beat its fiscal deficit target or lower borrowing.
- The country is set to exceed its revenue collection target of ₹15.45 lakh crore, the first beat in four years, but a big chunk of the extra cash will go to a rural job programme and to provide free cereals to the poor.
- The Centre is also likely to lose ₹550 billion to ₹600 billion in revenue after cutting fuel taxes this week.
- Even after the cut in fuel taxes we should be able to exceed the tax collection target for the year but will use the funds for rural job programme and subsidies. “Fiscal deficit and borrowing will be at the budget estimate levels.”
- Before the fuel tax cut, many economists had predicted India bettering its fiscal deficit target of 6.8% by 30-50 basis points for the year that ends on March 31.
Market participants had also expected the government to review its budgeted borrowing of ₹12.05 lakh crore before starting discussions on its next budget to be presented on February 1.

The government will also have to provide an additional ₹500 billion each for its free food drive and an incentives programme for exporters, said the officials. It has also approved ₹400 billion extra in fertiliser subsidies.
Q. The SPICe+ Portal sometimes seen in news is related to which of the following Ministry?

a) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
b) Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
c) Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
d) Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers’ Welfare

Q. Choose which of the following global Initiatives are being Pioneered by India?

1. International Solar Alliance (ISA),
2. Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)
3. Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT)
4. Third World Network (TWN)

a. 1 only
b. 1 and 2
c. 1, 2 and 3
d. All of the above

Ans – c

NOTE: India said that climate finance cannot continue at the levels decided in 2009, and emphasised that it should be at least $1 trillion to meet the goals of addressing climate change. Speaking at the Ministerial meeting of Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC) at the 26th international climate conference. Underlining the unity and strength of LMDCs as fundamental in the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) negotiations to preserve the interest of the Global South in the fight against climate change, the LMDC members to join hands with India to support the global initiatives it has pioneered, including the International Solar Alliance (ISA), Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) and the Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT).

He also appreciated the efforts of the Third World Network (TWN) for its support to LMDC, and expressed the need to ensure resources to TWN.

The countries collectively underscored that it needs to be ensured that the voices of the LMDC countries are heard loud and clear.
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