

PERFECT 7

**Weekly
Current Affairs**

A New Initiative of Dhyeya IAS



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PM CARES Fund : A Noble
Initiative to Combat
COVID-19



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Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
Government of India



Help us to
help you

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)



Protect yourself and others!

Follow these Do's and Don'ts

Do's ✓



Practice frequent hand washing. Wash hands with soap and water or use alcohol based hand rub. Wash hands even if they are visibly clean



Cover your nose and mouth with handkerchief/tissue while sneezing and coughing



Throw used tissues into closed bins immediately after use



See a doctor if you feel unwell (fever, difficult breathing and cough). While visiting doctor wear a mask/cloth to cover your mouth and nose



If you have these signs/symptoms please call State helpline number or Ministry of Health & Family Welfare's 24X7 helpline at 011-23978046



Avoid participating in large gatherings



Have a close contact with anyone, if you're experiencing cough and fever



Touch your eyes, nose and mouth



Don'ts ✗

Spit in public

Together we can fight Coronavirus

For further information :

Call at Ministry of Health, Govt. of India's 24X7 control room number

+91-11-2397 8046

Email at **ncov2019@gmail.com**

**Vinay Kumar Singh****CEO and Founder
DHYEYA IAS**

The guiding philosophy of the institute, throughout, has been creation of knowledge base. Dhyeya IAS inculcates human values and professional ethics in the students, which help them make decisions and create path that are good not only for them, but also for the society, for the nation, and for the world as whole. To fulfill its mission in new and powerful ways, each student is motivated to strive towards achieving excellence in every endeavor. It is done by making continuous improvements in curricula and pedagogical tools. The rigorous syllabi not only instills in them, a passion for knowledge but also attempts to teach them how to apply that knowledge in real-life situations. The programmes lay emphasis on well-rounded personality development of the students and also in inculcating the values of honesty and integrity in them.

**Q H Khan****Managing Director
DHYEYA IAS**

Dhyeya IAS is an institution that aims at the complete development of the student. Our faculty are hand-picked and highly qualified to ensure that the students are given every possible support in all their academic endeavors. It is a multi-disciplinary institution which ensures that the students have ready access to a wide range of academic material.

Our brand of education has broad horizons as we believe in exposure. Our students are encouraged to widen their knowledge base and study beyond the confinements of the syllabus. We aim to lend a gentle guiding hand to make our students recognize their inner potential and grow on their own accord into stalwarts of tomorrow's society.

Perfect 7

AN INTRODUCTION



Qurban Ali

Chief Editor
DHYEYA IAS

(Ex Editor- Rajya Sabha TV)

With immense pleasure I would like to inform you that the new version of '**Perfect 7**', from the Dhyeya IAS, is coming with more information in a very attractive manner. Heartily congratulations to the editorial team. The '**Perfect 7**' invites a wider readership in the Institute. The name and fame of an institute depends on the caliber and achievements of the students and teachers. The role of the teacher is to nurture the skills and talents of the students as a facilitator. This magazine is going to showcase the strength of our Institute. Let this be a forum to exhibit the potential of faculties, eminent writers, authors and students with their literary skills and innovative ideas.

Please do visit our website www.dhyeyaias.com and our youtube channel for regular and updated information on current affairs.



Ashutosh Singh

Managing Editor
DHYEYA IAS

We have not only given the name '**Perfect 7**' to our magazine, but also left no stone unturned to keep it 'near to perfect'. We all know that beginning of a task is most challenging as well as most important thing. So we met the same fate.

Publishing '**Perfect 7**' provided us various challenges because from the beginning itself we kept our bar too high to ensure the quality. Right from the very first issue we had a daunting task to save aspirants from the 'overdose of information'. Focusing on civil services exams '**Perfect 7**' embodies in itself rightful friend and guide in your preparation. This weapon is built to be precise yet comprehensive. It is not about bombardment of mindless facts rather an analysis of various facets of the issues, selected in a systematic manner. We adopted the 'Multi Filter' and 'Six Sigma' approach, in which a subject or an issue is selected after diligent discussion on various levels so that the questions in the examination could be covered with high probability.

Being a weekly magazine there is a constant challenge to provide qualitative study material in a time bound approach. It is our humble achievement that we feel proud to make delivered our promise of quality consistently without missing any issue since its inception.

Your suggestions and popular demands have inspired us to come up with a coloured edition of '**Perfect 7**' on this pious festival of colours. May this version of '**Perfect 7**' instill a new energy and a new spirit in you. We wish that the bond of affection between you and Dhyeya IAS is reaches a new height.

PREFACE



On the joyous occasion of Holi, Dhyeya family has decided to bring a new colourful and vibrant version of **'Perfect 7'** – a panacea for current affairs. Just like vividness of colours, newer version of **'Perfect 7'** will add positive and dynamic energy in your preparation.

'Perfect7' is an outstanding compilation of current affairs topics as per the new pattern of Civil Service examination (CSE). It presents weekly analysis of information and issues (national and international) in the form of articles, news analysis, brain boosters, PIB highlights and graphical information, which helps to understand and retain the information comprehensively. Hence, **'Perfect 7'** will build in-depth understanding of various issues in different facets. **'Perfect7'** is our genuine effort to provide correct, concise and concrete information, which helps students to crack the civil service examination. This magazine is the result of the efforts of the eminent scholars and the experts from different fields. **'Perfect 7'** is surely a force multiplier in your effort and plugs the loopholes in the preparation. We believe in environment of continuous improvement and learning. Your constructive suggestions and comments are always welcome, which could guide us in further revision of this magazine.

Omveer Singh Chaudhary

Editor
Dhyeya IAS

As a proud jewel of Dhyeya IAS, **'Perfect 7'** now comes in a new coloured avatar. **'Perfect 7'** is a quintessential part of your preparation strategy for Civil Services Examination. A regular and manageable dose of current affairs will now reach you in new format, making it more reader friendly. Our humble attempt to serve you is surely rewarded by your appreciations. It encourages us to innovate and provide the best as per our ability.

A dedicated team of experts at Dhyeya IAS toils night and day to make your dream of Civil Services come true. I heartily thank and express my gratitude to the esteemed readers and all the people involved in making this magazine a shining star in the galaxy of Dhyeya IAS.

Rajat Jhingan

Editor
Dhyeya IAS

DHYEYA TEAM

Founder & CEO • Vinay Kumar Singh

Managing Director • Q. H.Khan

Chief Editor • Qurban Ali

Managing Editor • Ashutosh Singh

Editors • Omveer Singh Chaudhary
• Avaneesh Pandey • Rajat Jhingan
• Jeet Singh • Shashidhar Mishra

Editorial Support • Prof. R. Kumar
• Baghendra Pratap Singh

Lead Authors • Ajay Singh • Ahamad Ali
• Girraj Singh Tomar
• Dharmendra Mishra
• Rama Shankar Nishad,

Authors • Swati Yadav • Vivek Shukla
• Ashraf Ali • Hariom Singh
• Anshu • Saumya Upadhyaya

Chief Reviewers • Ranjeet Singh • Ramyash Agnihotri
• Rajhans Singh

Copy Readers • Baghendra Pratap Singh
• Pankaj Rathour

Marketing & Advertisement • Gufran Khan • Rahul Kumar

Design & Development • Vipin Singh • Krishna Kumar,
• Nikhil Kumar • Ramesh Kumar

Computer Operators • Krishna Kant Mandal

Articles Support • Mrityunjay Tripathi • Sneha Tiwari,
• Lokesh Shukla • Vishisth Mishra
• Ankit Mishra • Ayushi Jain
• Preeti Mishra • Ravi Ranjan • Prabhat

Correspondents • Preeti Mishra • Radhika Agarwal
• Saumya Tripathi • Sudheer Verma,
• Satyam Singh • Anurag Singh
• Rashi Srivastava

Office Assistants • Hari Ram, Sandeep • Raju Yadav,
• Subham • Chandan • Arun Tripathi

Content Office

DHYEYA IAS®
most trusted since 2003

DHYEYA IAS
302, A-10/11, Bhandari House
Near Chawla Restaurants
Dr. Mukherjee Nagar
Delhi-110009



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Current Affairs Programmes hosted
by Mr. Qurban Ali
(Ex. Editor Rajya Sabha, TV) & by Team Dhyeya IAS
(Broadcasted on YouTube & Dhyeya-TV)

SEVEN IMPORTANT ISSUES

1. EXODUS OF MIGRANTS WORKERS : COVID-19 FALLOUT

Why in News?

- Recently, the Supreme Court has asked the police and the authorities to treat migrant workers journeying home in fear of COVID-19 in a humane manner.
- The Supreme Court has also sought a report from the government on steps taken about the largescale inter-State movement of migrant workers.
- In response, the government has told the Supreme Court that there is no migrant worker on the road.

Background

- The nationwide 21 days lockdown sparked the exodus of hundreds of thousands of migrant labourers who undertook long journeys from major urban cities such as Delhi on foot to their native places in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and elsewhere.
- The petitions were filed separately by advocates Alok Srivastava and Rashmi Bansal seeking directions to the government to immediately redress the “heart-wrenching and inhuman plight of thousands of migrant workers” who are walking back to their native villages without basic essentials such as food, medical, among others.

What is Lockdown?

Under the constitutional framework, two laws provide the Centre and the states the statutory basis for acting against the Coronavirus. They are the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 (EDA) and the Disaster Management Act, 2005 (DMA).

A lockdown is an emergency protocol that prevents people from leaving a given area. A full lockdown will mean you must stay where you are and not exit or enter a building or the given area. This scenario usually allows for essential supplies, grocery stores, pharmacies and banks to continue to serve the people. All non-essential activities remain shut for the entire period.

Supreme Court's View

- The anxiety and fear of the migrants should be understood by the police and other authorities. As directed by the Union of India, they should deal with the migrants in a humane manner.
- Considering the situation, we are of the opinion that the State governments/Union Territories should endeavour to engage volunteers along with the police to supervise the welfare activities for the migrants.
- The court ordered the government to ensure that migrant workers stopped from crossing the inter-State borders were given food, shelter and medicines.
- The court asked the government to urge community and religious

leaders to speak to the migrant workers lodged in shelters. It also asked the government to have trained counsellors talk to the workers.

- The court directed the government, to set up an expert committee and a dedicated portal within 24 hours to disseminate authentic information about the virus and stop the spread of fake news.
- The court also asked the government to follow up on persons identified as infected and quarantined.

Penal Provision

Chief Justice Bobde said that Section 188 (disobedience to order promulgated by public servant) of the IPC makes it a penal offence to disobey orders made by government authorities in public interest. A person found guilty under the provision can face a six-month term of imprisonment or a fine of Rs. 1000 or both.

Government's Arguments

- The lockdown was necessary to stop the spread of infection, and all the people found walking back were shifted to the nearest shelters.
- The Central government had announced Rs 1.7 trillion financial package for “every poor person”, including migrant workers, to deal with the impact of the coronavirus.
- Indian government pledged \$22

billion to support to migrant workers trapped without work far away from their homes, including the providing community kitchens and food deliveries.

- ◆ Around 23 lakh people have been provided food, which include migrants and daily wagers. Those who were still on the road trying to make it to their native villages have been moved to shelters.
- ◆ The Centre also asked states to utilise the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) to provide food and shelter to the returning migrants.

Critical Analysis

- ◆ In its callous haste, the Union government, when it announced the lockdown, did not think through how migrants, caught unawares, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, would respond.
- ◆ Being jobless and stranded, migrants workers are not only struggling to make ends meet, but are now also fighting a stigma as 'virus' carriers. Hence, they are not likely to be accepted by their respective villages once they reach there.
- ◆ Even otherwise, it is not safe to allow these migrant labourers, who might be infected from deadly Coronavirus, from mixing up with their village populations, as it may exponentially increase the said virus with fatal consequences.
- ◆ There is a lack of cohesion and cooperation between states. For example, Uttar Pradesh government had initially provided buses for movement of migrant

labourers for two days but later stopped them.

- ◆ With a lockdown, migrant workers dependent upon casual and daily wage labour, unorganised retail and other such jobs, were severely affected and sought the comfort of the social net in their towns over the uncertainty of employment.

Impact

- ◆ The massive exodus of casual wage labour from the metropolis is now beginning to lead to labour shortages not only in the transportation sector but across the supply chain.
- ◆ Herding the families of the migrant workers into ill-equipped quarantine camps will only incentivise others to leave for their native States. Further, herding them and locking them down would only defeat the lockdown's purpose of social distancing.
- ◆ The potential mass migration may undermine attempts by government to prevent the localized spread of the coronavirus.

Way Forward

- ◆ Governments must use schools and college hostels for the migrants to stay and also utilise the Public Distribution System to provide food.
- ◆ Better coordination with the States and a more transparent approach would have helped people prepare for the lockdown.
- ◆ A two-pronged approach can be considered. Promise them that, if they want to, arrangements will be made to take them home — but

only if they came, registered and stayed in designated shelters. This has to be a credible promise — either from the Home Minister or Prime Minister.

- ◆ To control transmission, we need to identify the migrants and their destination so that local governments can be informed. Panchayats need to be prepared to combat the epidemic.

Is 'Physical Distancing' better than 'Social Distancing'?

Recently, the World Health Organization (WHO) has started using the phrase 'physical distancing' instead of 'social distancing' as a way to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus from people to people. The WHO also recommends being more than one metre (three feet) away from the nearest person, while some health experts have suggested maintaining a distance of at least two metres from others.

According to the experts, 'physical distance' is measured in metric metres or centimetres. It is the geographical distance from person A to person B while 'social distance' is a measure of distance across social boundaries. We need to do physical distancing to protect everyone's physical wellbeing, but mental wellbeing is obviously also important, and social isolation is not good for mental wellbeing.

Coronavirus is spread mainly through respiratory droplets, especially when people cough or sneeze. Therefore, maintaining a safe distance is recommended to decrease transmission.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.



Q. The nationwide 21 days lockdown sparked the exodus of hundreds of thousands of migrant labourers to their native places. Discuss the impact of this movement of migrant labourers in the fight against COVID-19.

2. JEOPARDISING JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE : AN ANALYSIS

Why in News?

- ◆ The present government's move to nominate Justice Ranjan Gogoi to the Rajya Sabha only four months after his retirement as the Chief Justice of India (CJI) has raised the questions relating to the independence of judiciary in India. He is the first former CJI to be nominated to Rajya Sabha under sub-clause (a) of clause (1) of Article 80 of the Constitution of India, read with clause (3) of that Article which enables the President to nominate a person (advised by Council of Ministers) to the Council of States to fill the vacancy caused due to the retirement of one of the nominated members.

Previous Cases

- ◆ Justice Baharul Islam resigned as a judge from Supreme Court in 1983 to contest Rajya Sabha elections as a Congress candidate and won the elections.
- ◆ Ex-CJI Justice Ranganath Mishra was elected to Upper House as a Congress candidate in 1998. It was seven years after his retirement.
- ◆ Former CJI, P. Sathasivam, right after his retirement was appointed as the Governor of Kerala in 2014.

Several Landmark Judgements by Benches Presided Over by CJI Ranjan Gogoi

- ◆ Ramjanambhoomi land dispute,
- ◆ The abolition of homosexuality in India,
- ◆ Entry of women in Sabrimala temple and
- ◆ Right to Privacy as a fundamental right.

Judgements Under the Scanner which raises the questions of quid pro quo:

- ◆ Justice Ranjan Gogoi was heading a bench which gave a clean chit to the Modi government twice - first on the writ petition and then on the pleas seeking review of the December 14, 2018 verdict - in the Rafale fighter jet deal with French firm Dassault Aviation.
- ◆ The bench warned Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for wrongly attributing certain remarks to the Supreme Court in the Rafale case and asked him to be more careful in the future.
- ◆ On the same day, a 5-judge Constitution bench headed by him struck down in entirety the rules formulated by the Centre on appointment and service conditions for members of various tribunals and referred to a larger bench the issue of examining the validity of the passage of the Finance Act, 2017 as Money Bill.
- ◆ His tenure in the Supreme Court will also be remembered for being part of a presser by the 'gang of four' senior-most judges which questioned the then CJI's way of functioning.

Observations by CJI Ranjan Gogoi on Independence of Judiciary

- ◆ In March 2019, a Supreme Court bench (Roger Mathew Case), headed by Gogoi, said that there is a valid "strong viewpoint" that the post-retirement appointment of judges in tribunals is a "scar" on the "independence of the judiciary". The bench was hearing a bunch of petitions relating to challenges to the laws governing quasi-judicial tribunals.

- ◆ Though the observations were in the context of the appointment of members of Tribunals, they are relevant with respect to constitutional courts as well.
- ◆ Justice Ranjan Gogoi's tenure as judge and as CJI was marked by some controversies and allegations of sexual harassment, of which he was later cleared. Rather, the zealous defence by Attorney General and Solicitor General was quiet surprising.
- ◆ At a public function, Justice Ranjan Gogoi had remarked that "independent judges and noisy journalists are democracy's first line of defence"
- ◆ A "revolution, not reform" was needed to keep the institution of judiciary serviceable for the common man was also been said by Justice Ranjan Gogoi.
- ◆ Justice Ranjan Gogoi headed a bench which, in a landmark verdict, held that the office of the CJI is a public authority under the Right to Information Act, but "judicial independence has to be kept in mind" while disclosing information in "public interest".

Independence of Judiciary and Indian Polity

Independence of judiciary has three meanings:

- ◆ The judiciary must be free from encroachment from other organs in its sphere i.e. separation of power.
- ◆ Freedom of the judgments and free from legislative interference.
- ◆ The decisions of the judiciary should not be influenced by either the Executive or the Legislature—it means freedom from both, fear and favour of the other two organs. The framers of the Constitution

enshrined various provision in our Constitution to secure the independence of the judiciary. Some of them are as under:

- ◆ The judges are appointed by the President after consultation with judicial authority.
- ◆ The security of tenure is guaranteed to every judge.
- ◆ A judge of Supreme Court or High Court can be removed only on the ground of proved misbehavior or incapacity.
- ◆ The President can remove a judge after an address presented to him by each house of Parliament.
- ◆ The privileges, rights and allowances of the judges cannot be altered to their disadvantages after appointment.
- ◆ The Supreme Court and High Courts are given authority to recruit their staff and frames rules. The salaries and allowances of the judges are not put to the vote of the Legislatures.
- ◆ The administrative expenses including salary allowances and pensions of the Supreme Court and High Court judges are charged to the consolidated fund of India and the states respectively.
- ◆ The judges of the Supreme Court are debarred from pleading after retirement before any court or judicial authority in India.
- ◆ The conduct of the judges of Supreme Court and High Courts in discharge of their duties shall not be discussed in legislature.
- ◆ The First Law Commission in its Fourteenth Report in 1958 considered the question of the Supreme Court Judges taking up

employment under the State or the Union after retirement. The Commission was of the view that it was necessary to safeguard the independence of the Supreme Court Judges by enacting a law barring further employment except as ad hoc Judges of the Supreme Court under Art. 128.

- ◆ In paragraph 28 of the report, the Law Commission says, "we have noticed the only bar imposed on a Judge of the Supreme Court who has retired is that he shall not thereafter plead or act in any Court or before any authority. In the result some Supreme Court Judges have, after retirement, set up chamber practice while some others have found employment in important positions under the government. We have grave doubts whether starting chamber practice after retirement is consistent with the dignity of these retired judges and consonant with the high traditions which retired judges observe in other countries."
- ◆ Paragraph 29 of the same report of the Law Commission is more direct saying, "But there can be no doubt that it is clearly undesirable that Supreme Court Judges should look forward to other government employment after their retirement."
- ◆ Explaining the reason for why Supreme Court judges should resist such offers from the government, the Law Commission report says, "The

government is a party in a large number of causes (cases) in the highest Court and the average citizen may well get the impression, that a judge who might look forward to being employed by the government after his retirement, does not bring to bear on his work that detachment of outlook which is expected of a judge in cases in which government is a party."

Way Forward

The judicial independence seems to have suffered erosion due to the practice which has been developed by the government of employing judges in various capacities after retirement. The talent of retired judges may be used for discharging judicial functions and improvement of judicial system in public good. It is shameful and undesirable, if the Supreme Court judge has to look forward to government employment after retirement. If a judge wishes to have government job or any government appointment after his retirement, then a normal citizen and litigant may well get the impression that judge is not fully detached in a case where the government is a party. The Law Commission has expressed that this practice has a tendency to effect the independence of the judges and should be discontinued.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary; Ministries and Departments of the Government: pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.

○○○

Q."The judicial independence seems to have suffered erosion due to the practice which has been developed by the government of employing judges in various capacities after retirement." Do you agree? Given reasons.

3. EASE AT THE TIME OF LOCKDOWN

Why in News?

- ◆ The Covid-19 pandemic is a serious threat to many lives and livelihoods in India. Sensing the gravity of the situation, the government of India has announced a three-week lockdown for the entire country till April 14.
- ◆ In order to alleviate the distress of lockdown, the government has announced a Rs. 1.7 lakh crore Covid-19 mitigation economic relief package under the PM Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY).

Concerns

- ◆ Money managers and people of business are concerned over the 21-day lockdown which came into force on March 24. Concerns about the impact of the lockdown on various sectors remain, and there are also rising concerns about the impact the moratorium will have on the banking system. The lockdown is scheduled to end around mid-April, but investors are concerned that if the number of cases continue to rise in the country, the lockdown could be extended.
- ◆ India is a developing economy and a lockdown will not just threaten a major recession but could put the country's economy in back gear by many decades. But saving human lives is more important even at the cost of economy. The government and the regulatory authorities must have to take steps to rescue the economy along with the precious lives.
- ◆ Unlike developed countries, India does not have automatic economic stabilisers such as universal health coverage and unemployment insurance. Therefore, it is important to ensure that no company, small or big, faces the risk of closure or bankruptcy because of the Covid-19 lockdown.

- ◆ Amid lockdown, the common people and specially the poor will suffer. The daily wage workers and homeless will be affected. The shortage of supplies are a big question to be addressed.

Steps Taken to Address the Concerns

- ◆ As the lockdown will stall all economic activity and throw the normal life out of balance, there were some measures adopted by the government of India and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to keep the economy afloat and liquid while making sure that the daily needs of the common man are met while keeping him safe from the virus and to slow down its spread.

Measures Taken by Government of India

- ◆ On 26 March, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced Rs. 170,000 crore (US\$24 billion) stimulus package to help those affected by the lockdown. The package was aimed to provide food security measures for poor households through direct cash transfers, free cereals and cooking gas for three months. It also provided insurance cover for medical personnel.
- ◆ The relief package, 'Prime Minister Garib Kalyan Yojana' is expected to mitigate the hardships and support migrant workers, farmers, urban and rural poor and women. This will include a cash transfer scheme as well as a food security programme for the poor.
- ◆ For the next three months, the package offers the following:

- ◆ Additional 15 kg grain (rice or wheat) and 3 kg of dal free to 80 crore poor Indians; ex gratia Rs. 1,500 (Rs. 500 over the next three months) to 20 crore Jan Dhan account-holding women; addition support of an extra one-time Rs. 1,000 to the three crore senior citizens, widows and divyangs (differently abled). Besides, the five crore families of MGNREGA workers will receive increased wage support of up to Rs. 2,000.
- ◆ Women in 8.3 crore below-poverty-line families covered under 'Ujjwala Scheme' will get free cylinders for three months.
- ◆ Government will pay provident fund contribution for both employer and employee for three months. This would cover those establishments which have up to 100 employees and 90 percent employees earn less than Rs 15,000 per month, benefiting 80 lakh workers.
- ◆ The government was already expedite payment of the first instalment (Rs.2,000) due in 2020-21 under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN). For the organised sector worker, government will pay the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) contributions of both sides for 80 lakh employees of small companies who earn up to Rs.15,000 a month.
- ◆ The package will surely help the 800 million poor — landless workers, small and marginal farmers in rural areas, the aged, poor women and construction workers — to mitigate the hardship caused by the Covid-19 lockdown.
- ◆ The government has announced to provide medical insurance cover of

Rs 50 lakh per person to those at front-lines of fighting the virus. This would cover doctors, nurses, paramedical staff, sanitation and ancillary workers.

- ◆ Provident fund scheme regulations to be amended to allow non-refundable advance of 75 percent of amount in account or three months of wages, whichever is lower. To benefit 4.8 crore workers.
- ◆ The Supreme Court of India has directed the Media, including print, electronic and social media, to maintain a strong sense of responsibility and ensure that unverified news capable of causing panic is not disseminated.
- ◆ Price Monitoring & Resource Unit (PMRU) has been set up by National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), the PMRU shall help NPPA and State Drug Controllers in ensuring availability and accessibility of medicines at affordable prices. It has been set up in 12 states till now.
- ◆ The order issued by the Home Ministry on 24 March allowed the functioning of shops dealing with food items as well as the manufacturing units and transportation of "essential goods".

Measures Taken by Reserve Bank of India

- ◆ The Monetary Policy Committee today reduced the repo rate by 75 basis points and reverse repo rate by 90 basis points. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) cut repo to 4.4

per cent, the lowest in at least 15 years.

- ◆ Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) of all banks to be reduced by 100 basis points to 3 percent beginning March 28, for one year. This will release liquidity of 1,37,000 crore across the banking system
- ◆ Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) raised from 2 percent of Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) to 3 percent with immediate effect. Applicable upto June 30, 2020.
- ◆ Lending institutions are being permitted to allow a moratorium of three months on repayment of installments for term loans outstanding as on March 1, 2020.
- ◆ Deferring payments will not result in asset classification downgrade.

An Analysis

- ◆ The wage rate revised by Rs. 20 can result in additional transfer of up to Rs. 2,000 crore annually for MGNREGA workers. But is it fair to expect workers to turn up for manual labour under the MGNREGA in lieu of social distancing? Instead, cash should be transferred to the five crore families holding MGNREGA job cards without requiring them to turn up for work. Perhaps the sums need to be bigger.
- ◆ An impression is fast gaining ground that the government is dithering on a larger relief package out of concern for its tight revenue position. The Finance Minister must immediately dispel these doubts. A clear message must go out from the government that the revenue position or the

fiscal deficit target are not the principal challenge or constraint in combatting the economic consequences of the pandemic.

- ◆ The Central government spends more than Rs. 3.4 lakh crore annually on Centrally-sponsored schemes. These schemes can be halted this year, and the full allocation can be transferred as on-time relief cash transfers to the poor and the vulnerable.
- ◆ In the villages, no amount of cash or food grains can make up for the limited availability of health infrastructure such as hospital beds and ventilators. Therefore, simply providing cash and PDS food grains will not suffice in an overall supply-side vacuum in the economy. The lockdown has disrupted availability of essentials. What is needed, therefore, is an urgent administrative solution to make these available in rural India.

Way Forward

- ◆ At the time when pandemic is threatening the humanity as a whole, economy takes a back seat and survival of citizens is the top most priority. For India, being a developing nation, the limited capacity of health services is alarming, given that we are the second most populous nation on the planet.
- ◆ A lockdown threatens the supply of goods and services and endangers the livelihood of millions in the economy. Though social distancing is currently the only strategy to slow down the virus spread, keeping the

economy afloat and normal lives of people well supported by essential items are extremely important.

- ◆ Lockdown has not just been implemented in India, but it is being implemented in many nations across the globe. But being a second most populous and a developing country, the challenges for India are unfathomable.

- ◆ The support by citizens and coordinated steps by government and other regulatory agencies are only the way to manage through a global crisis given the limited resources but a successful track record of India on containing diseases like HIV, malaria, measles, etc.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Topic: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.



Q. The lockdown during the pandemic has jolted the Indian economy and threatens an external recession. In the light of the given statement, what are the steps taken by the concerned authorities to support the economy during the lockdown?

4. THE MEDICAL TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2020 : AN OVERVIEW

Why in News?

- ◆ Lok Sabha has passed 'The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020' which seeks to extend the upper limit for permitting abortions from the present 20 weeks to 24 weeks for "special categories of women" which include rape survivors, victims of incest, differently-abled and minors.
- ◆ It will amend the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971.

Background

- ◆ One in three of 48.1 million pregnancies in India end in an abortion, with 15.6 million abortions taking place in 2015, according to the country's first large-scale study on abortions and unintended pregnancies, study published in The Lancet in November 2017.
- ◆ Of these, around 12.7 million (81%) were medical abortions, and 2.2

million were surgical terminations of pregnancy done by certified doctors in registered facilities. The World Health Organisation (WHO)-recommended combinations of the oral pills, mifepristone and misoprostol, are the most common methods of medical abortion.

- ◆ Unsafe abortions were a major reason for mortality of pregnant women.
- ◆ Recently several petitions were received by the Courts seeking permission for aborting pregnancies at a gestational age beyond the present permissible limit on grounds of foetal abnormalities or pregnancies due to sexual violence faced by women. The proposed increase in gestational age will ensure dignity, autonomy, confidentiality and justice for women who need to terminate pregnancy.
- ◆ In order to increase access of women to safe abortion services and taking into account the advances in medical technology, the Ministry of Health and Family

Welfare proposed amendments after extensive consultation with various stake holders and several ministries.

Highlights of the Amendment

- ◆ The Bill adds the definition of termination of pregnancy to mean a procedure undertaken to terminate a pregnancy by using medical or surgical methods.
- ◆ Under the Act, a pregnancy may be terminated within 12 weeks, if a registered medical practitioner is of the opinion that:
 - ◆ Continuation of the pregnancy may risk the life of the mother, or cause grave injury to her health, or
 - ◆ There is a substantial risk that the child, if born, would suffer physical or mental abnormalities.
 - ◆ For termination of a pregnancy between 12 to 20 weeks, two medical practitioners are required to give their opinion.
- ◆ The Bill amends this provision to state that a pregnancy may

be terminated within 20 weeks, with the opinion of a registered medical practitioner.

- ◆ Approval of two registered medical practitioners will be required for termination of pregnancies between 20 to 24 weeks.
- ◆ The termination of pregnancies up to 24 weeks will only apply to specific categories of women, as may be prescribed by the central government.
- ◆ The Central Government will notify the norms for the medical practitioner whose opinion is required for termination of the pregnancy.
- ◆ Under the Act, if any pregnancy occurs as a result of failure of any device or method used by a married woman or her husband to limit the number of children, such an unwanted pregnancy may constitute a grave injury to the mental health of the pregnant woman.
- ◆ The Bill amends this provision to replace 'married woman or her husband' with 'woman or her partner'.
- ◆ The Bill states that the upper limit of termination of pregnancy will not apply in cases where such termination is necessary due to the diagnosis of substantial foetal abnormalities. These abnormalities will be diagnosed by a Medical Board.
- ◆ Under the Bill, every state government is required to constitute a Medical Board. These Medical Boards will consist of the following members:
 - ◆ A gynaecologist,
 - ◆ A paediatrician,
 - ◆ A radiologist or sonologist, and

- ◆ Any other number of members, as may be notified by the state government.
- ◆ The central government will notify the powers and functions of these Medical Boards.
- ◆ Name and other particulars of a woman whose pregnancy is terminated shall not be revealed except to a person authorised in any law which is in force, according to a provision.
- ◆ Another positive inclusion is allowing all women, and not just married ones, to legally seek abortions, and striking out the need for the opinion of a second registered practitioner for aborting pregnancies up to 20 weeks.

Criticism

- ◆ Creation of medical boards is not an encouraging step. Most often it has been observed that girls and women face delays, stigma, and repeated invasive exams by different doctors. It's another layer that is not just a barrier to seeking abortion care but also disrespectful towards women's dignity and rights. It legitimises third party authorisation when abortion is a decision best left to a woman and her service provider.
- ◆ Study shows that the court cases relating to abortion between 2017 and April 2019 shows that 41% of rape survivors who sought Court intervention had crossed 24 weeks of gestation.
- ◆ The training requirements specified in the medical termination of pregnancy rules could be modified to include a two to three days short training on medical abortion for MBBS doctors (traditional training is

for 12 weeks) to make them eligible to provide abortion using abortion drugs. This would dramatically expand the provider base. India has very low numbers of medical practitioners who are trained to provide abortion services. On a demand of about 60,000 we have only 9,000 available.

Way Forward

- ◆ Instead of denying services to women because of the apprehension of untrained practitioners profiteering, the government should focus on regulating the healthcare sector to ensure basic quality services, such as contraception, safe delivery and abortion, are available for the asking.
- ◆ With an estimated 90% of women seeking before 12 weeks gestation, training village-level healthworkers (auxiliary nurse midwives) and nurses to prescribe simple abortion pills will help take safe services to the doorsteps of vulnerable women and, in case of complications, lead to timely referrals.
- ◆ Abortion should be made a right and available on request for at least for up to 12 weeks gestation.
- ◆ Though it is a right step and is much applauded in legal circles, the implementation at ground level is what that will make a difference.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

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Q. The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Amendment Bill, 2020 extends the upper limit for abortions for 'special categories of women'. In the light of the above given statement, highlight the main provisions of the Bill and what more could have been done to address the issue of abortions.

5. STRENGTHENING OF INDO-GERMAN RELATIONS

Why in News?

- Recently, German Chancellor Angela Merkel has paid official visit to India.

Background

- India was amongst the first countries to establish diplomatic ties with the Federal Republic of Germany after the Second World War.
- Today, Germany is amongst India's most important partners both bilaterally and in the global context.
- India and Germany have a 'Strategic Partnership' since 2001, which has been further strengthened with the launch of Intergovernmental Consultations (IGC) in 2011 at the level of Heads of Governments which allows for a comprehensive review of cooperation and identification of fresh areas of engagement.
- India is amongst a select group of countries with which Germany has such a dialogue mechanism. The 4th IGC was held in Berlin on May 30, 2017 during which 12 bilateral cooperation documents in various sectors were signed.
- The 5th IGC was held in New Delhi on 1 November, 2019, during which 22 bilateral cooperation documents in various sectors were signed.

Bilateral Relations

High Level Visits

- Regular visits take place from both sides, including at the highest level. PM Shri Narendra Modi undertook his first official visit to Germany in April 2015, when India was the Partner Country at the Hannover Messe-2015. PM visited Germany twice in 2017: for a bilateral visit on

May 29-30, 2017 to Berlin for the 4th Intergovernmental Consultations and to attend the G20 Summit on July 06-07, 2018. At the invitation of Chancellor Merkel, PM paid a short official visit to Berlin on April 20, 2018. German President.

- Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier undertook 5-day State Visit to India in March 2018 during which he visited Delhi, Varanasi and Chennai.
- Chancellor Merkel has visited India in 2007, 2011 and in October 2015. Chancellor Merkel last visited India from October 31 - November 01, 2019 to attend the 5th Intergovernmental Consultations.

Parliamentary Exchanges

- There is an Indo-German Parliamentary Friendship Group, in German Bundestag since 1971. The Indo-German Parliamentary Friendship Group (constituted in May 2018) for the present term of German Parliament consists of 24 Members from all the six parties represented in the German Parliament.
- Visit by Parliamentarians from both sides take place regularly. The last visit by an official Parliamentary Delegation from Germany to India was in 2015.
- A Goodwill Parliamentary Delegation from India led by Mr. Arjun Ram Meghwal, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs visited Berlin from October 17-19, 2018.

Sister States

- Some States and Cities of India and Germany have entered into twinning arrangements. Karnataka and Bavaria have Sister State arrangement since 2007. Mumbai and Stuttgart are sister cities since

1968. In January 2015, Maharashtra and Baden-Wurttemberg signed an MoU to establish a Sister State relationship.

Defence Cooperation

- India-Germany Defence Cooperation Agreement (2006) provides a framework for bilateral defence cooperation. The then, German Defence Minister Ms. Ursula von der Leyen visited India in May 2015 and Defence Minister of India visited Berlin in February 2019.
- To further enhance the Defence Industry and defence cooperation between Germany and India, an Arrangement on Implementation of the Agreement of 6th October 2006 concerning Bilateral Defence Cooperation was signed on February 12, 2019 during the visit of Raksha Mantri to Berlin.

Economic & Commercial Relations

- Germany is India's largest trading partner in Europe. India was ranked 25th in Germany's global trade during 2018. India's exports were Euro 8.91 bn and imports were Euro 12.5 bn. Bilateral trade grew from Euro 15.96 billion to Euro 2.41 bn in 2018.
- Germany is the 7th largest foreign direct investor in India since April 2000. Germany's total FDI in India from April 2000 until June 2019 amounted to US\$ 11.9 billion.

Facilitating Trade

- A Fast-Track System for German companies has been operating in Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) since March 2016. India and Germany signed a Joint Statement on April 1, 2019 to set up a Fast-

Track system for Indian Companies in Germany.

- ◆ To facilitate the entry of German Mittelstand (Medium Sized Companies) in India, the Embassy of India, Berlin runs the Make in India Mittelstand (MIIM) Programme since September 2015.
- ◆ Currently, 135 German Mittelstand (MSMEs) companies are being facilitated through MIIM Programme for market entry and investment in India.

Science & Technology

- ◆ Indo-German Science & Technology cooperation started with the signing of the Intergovernmental S&T Cooperation Agreement in 1971 and 1974. There are more than 150 joint S&T research projects and 70 direct partnerships between Universities of both countries.
- ◆ India's scientific establishments have close partnerships with German R&D institutions, including the Max Planck Society, Fraunhofer Laboratories and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.

Culture

- ◆ India and Germany have a long tradition of academic and cultural exchange. Max Mueller was the first scholar of Indo-European languages to translate and publish the Upanishads and the Rig-Veda. German interest in the Indian philosophy and languages resulted in the setting up of the first Chair of Indology at the University of Bonn in 1818.

- ◆ The Government of India has funded 31 short term rotating chairs of Indian studies in German Universities so far.
- ◆ There has been growing interest in Germany in Indian dance, music and literature, as well as motion picture and TV industry.
- ◆ Indian films and artists regularly feature at the Berlin International Film Festival and at Indian Film festivals held in other parts of Germany.

Indians in Germany

- ◆ There are about 1.7 lakh Indians and people of Indian origin (2018) in Germany. The Indian diaspora mainly comprises of professionals, technocrats, businessmen/traders and nurses.
- ◆ There has been an increase in the last few years in the number of qualified Indian professionals in Germany in the fields of IT, banking, finance, etc. There are a number of Indian associations in Germany.
- ◆ More than 17,000 (2018) Indian students are pursuing various courses in Germany.

Agreements Signed During Visit

- ◆ German Chancellor pledged to invest 1 billion euros over the next five years on environmentally-friendly urban mobility in India.
- ◆ Germany would also put in 200 million euros to reform the bus sector in Tamil Nadu.
- ◆ Both countries inked over 20 agreements, including in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI), agriculture, healthcare

and resolved to jointly combat terrorism.

- ◆ The two countries have also agreed to explore cooperation in new areas like e-mobility, fuel cell technology, smart cities, inland waterways, coastal management, cleaning of rivers and climate change.
- ◆ India and Germany agreed to deepen efforts to resume stalled negotiations for a free trade agreement (FTA) between India and the European Union (EU). ((Launched in June 2007, the negotiations for the proposed pact have witnessed many hurdles with both sides having major differences on key issues like intellectual property rights, duty cut in automobile and spirits, and liberal visa regime)).
- ◆ Both sides agreed to crystallize efforts for an early conclusion of an investment protection agreement between the European Union, the EU member states and India.
- ◆ Both sides signed Joint Declaration of Intent (DoI) for cooperation in the field of skills development and vocational education. It was signed between Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship of India and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of Germany.
- ◆ The second Declaration of Intent (DoI) was signed for Dual VET initiative marking Sustainable Growth of Skills with Siemens Limited, India.

Way Forward

- ◆ The expertise of a technological

and economic powerhouse like Germany would be game changer in the path of building a 'New India' by 2022.

- ◆ The symbiotic relationship between the two countries is very much needed to bring reforms in the UN. It is significant to build an efficient pool of skilled human resources for creating sustainable

livelihoods and opportunities for the youths in India.

- ◆ The intended cooperation agreements will give special emphasis to enhance the quality of trainees and subsequently help them to find employment in innovative, sustainable sectors and technologies such as renewable energy, e-mobility and energy-efficiency.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

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Q. The expertise of a technological and economic powerhouse like Germany would be game changer in the path of building a 'New India' by 2022. Elaborate.

6. CORONAVIRUS GRIPPLING GLOBAL ECONOMY

Why in News?

- ◆ According to the United Nations (UN), the global economy could shrink by up to 1 per cent in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic, a reversal from the previous forecast of 2.5 per cent growth, warning that it may contract even further if restrictions on the economic activities are extended without adequate fiscal responses.

Global Outlook

- ◆ After an initial outbreak in China which brought the world's second largest economy to a virtual halt last month, an ever growing number of countries and territories have reported a spike in infections and deaths.
- ◆ The coronavirus outbreak represents a major external shock to the macro outlook, akin to a large-scale natural disaster.
- ◆ Some analysts estimate that the United States (U.S.) economy will contract by 25 percent in the second quarter, that 14 million

jobs will be lost and that high unemployment rates will lead to low spending and a continued sluggish economy. These are economic conditions not seen since the Great Depression.

- ◆ The coronavirus pandemic could cost the global economy \$4.1 trillion as it ravages U.S. Europe and other major economies, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) warned.
- ◆ With billions of people in lockdown and economies at a standstill, the ADB said Asia is forecast to grow 2.2 percent this year, its slowest pace since a 1.7 percent expansion during the Asian financial crisis in 1998.
- ◆ Growth in China, the region's largest economy, could slow to 2.3 percent this year from 6.1 percent in 2019, before bouncing back in 2021.
- ◆ Close to five percent, or \$628 billion, of China's GDP could be lost.

- ◆ The analysis by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) said the COVID-19 pandemic is disrupting global supply chains and international trade.
- ◆ Worldwide, foreign direct investment is on track to decline by 40% this year, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

Indian Scenario

- ◆ The Covid-19 crisis comes at a time when GDP growth is slowing. If it was rolling down a hill earlier, now it seems to go for a free fall.
- ◆ India's recent run of economic growth is slow to just 1% this year, the lowest it has been for over 40 years according to some analysts.
- ◆ The greater part of the non-agricultural work force will have no livelihood for at least 21 days (and possibly longer as the lockdown may continue beyond mid-April, given the spike in positive cases). In the absence of

massive public intervention, there will be widespread increases in poverty.

- ◆ As the lockdown affects supply. The dramatic curtailment of production and distribution means that relatively soon, all sorts of shortages will appear.
- ◆ Consumption demand, the bedrock of the Indian economy, will also fall due to the collapse of incomes, and erosion of private investors will be shaken and uncertain.
- ◆ Many small entrepreneurs will be facing a shut down as well.
- ◆ Banking sector, which is already grappling with a bad loans crisis, insurance companies may see their business become unviable depending on the claims that will be made when the dust settles.
- ◆ Moody's Investors Service changed the outlook for Indian banking system to negative from stable, as it expects deterioration in banks' asset quality due to disruption in economic activity from the coronavirus outbreak.
- ◆ Moody's Investors Service has also slashed its estimate of India's GDP growth during 2020 calendar year to 2.5 per cent, from an earlier estimate of 5.3 per cent, saying the coronavirus pandemic will cause unprecedented shock to the global economy.
- ◆ The Indian tourism and hospitality industry may see a potential loss of nearly 38 million, nearly 70 per cent of the total workforce. The housing sector may see weak demand with a significant reduction in the new launches.

Counting the Blessings

- ◆ Under normal times, the government's hands are tied by fiscal prudence and danger of inflation. Now is the time the government is unshackled. Even if fiscal deficit goes up to around 5% in such times, neither economists nor critics would mind it.
- ◆ As we deal with recession and deflation, there is no threat of spectre of inflation either.
- ◆ Some leeway from fiscal deficit and \$50 billion windfall from lower oil prices can allow government to put together a stimulus plan of \$100-120 billion, unprecedented but justified for the worst-ever crisis. This would still pale in comparison to \$2 trillion planned by the U.S. Senate and White House, but will work for India.
- ◆ There are lessons to learn from the U.S. on how to convert a crisis into a windfall. The global financial crisis of 2008 had its roots in an over-leveraged U.S. economy. Yet, the U.S. with bold measures turned it into the biggest opportunity driving income and wealth of Americans to a new high through uninterrupted 11-year bull run in the U.S. stock markets. They are doing it again. India can do it too. In fact, with favourable demographics and oil prices, India has a lot better chance of rejuvenating the momentum in the economy.
- ◆ Over the years, domestic savings' flow into capital markets has already overtaken the same by the foreign investors. Historically, it has been always politically right to tax the rich and dole out goodies

to the poor. Whenever there is a crisis, the wealthy or the domestic corporates can be well expected to make sacrifice. The problem is that sacrifice is not sustainable, but trust is. 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas' will work only if Sabka includes all the rich and the poor, the small.

Changing Face of the Economy

- ◆ The physical world is giving way to the virtual world for perhaps the foreseeable future. Yet online shopping cannot entirely pick up the slack from offline stores. Grocery deliveries from stores like Big Basket, Grofers, Amazon Pantry, etc. are subject to incomplete inventory and uneven delivery.
- ◆ E-commerce sales are up across many categories, in some cases by triple digits, though sales are down in others (i.e., travel).
- ◆ Yet unlike Amazon itself, third party sellers on the platform are going to suffer as the company prioritizes essential products (i.e., household staples and medical supplies) over non-essential items. The company is likely to emerge from a post-COVID recession much stronger than most of its peers and competitors.
- ◆ Seems government's 'Digital India' will gain more traction as consumer behaviour will automatically shift towards digital payments.
- ◆ Information technology seems to be filling the gap created due to social distancing, work from home, faster broadbands, deeper internet penetration and increased digital literacy will

dominate the post corona virus economy. Only those tasks which cannot be performed digitally will be done physically in most advance economies. In countries like India, though a major shift towards IT based solutions is on the cards.

- ◆ Acceptance of larger culture of online procedures, tasks, cloud storage and emergence of IT infrastructure to support daily lives of the masses.

Way Forward

- ◆ The crisis of coronavirus will surely change the economic terrain of the world in general and India too. New ways of doing things will emerge and many old ways will be replaced.
- ◆ Though change is difficult, it is also painful. The digital world will be becoming the part of personal, business and social lives. People will have to become a digital

citizen. In light of this, the risks of digital world and regulatory laws will be the new front runner.

- ◆ Only those tasks, which cannot be replaced with online world will remain open in physical world.

General Studies Paper- III

Topic: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment.



Q. Discuss the impact of Coronavirus Crisis on Indian economy.

7. PM CARES FUND : A NOBLE INITIATIVE TO COMBAT COVID-19

Why in News?

- ◆ Keeping in mind the need for having a dedicated national fund with the primary objective of dealing with any kind of emergency or distress situation, like posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to provide relief to the affected, a public charitable trust under the name of 'Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund' (PM CARES Fund) has been set up.

Feature of PM CARES Fund

- ◆ The Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund (PM CARES Fund) was created on 28 March 2020.
- ◆ The fund will be used for combating, containment and relief efforts against the coronavirus outbreak and similar pandemic like situations in the future
- ◆ Prime Minister is the Chairman of this trust and its Members include Defense Minister, Home Minister and Finance Minister.
- ◆ The fund will also enable donations.

The minimum donation accepted for the PM CARES Fund is INR 10.

- ◆ Donations to PM CARES Fund would qualify for 80G benefits for 100% exemption under the Income Tax Act, 1961. Donations to PM CARES Fund will also qualify to be counted as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) expenditure under the Companies Act, 2013.
- ◆ Further, the limit on deduction of 10% of gross income shall also not be applicable for donation made to PM CARES Fund
- ◆ India will accept foreign funds into Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund (PM CARES Fund) to combat the coronavirus pandemic.

Other Funds

- ◆ The Constitution of India provides for creation of a Consolidated Fund of India, Contingency Fund of India and Public Account under Article 266(1), Article 266(2) and Article 267(1) respectively.
- ◆ Consolidated Fund of India is the most important of all government

accounts. Revenues received by the government and expenses made by it, excluding the exceptional items, are part of the Consolidated Fund.

- ◆ **Description:** This fund was constituted under Article 266 (1) of the Constitution of India. All revenues received by the government by way of direct taxes and indirect taxes, money borrowed and receipts from loans given by the government flow into the Consolidated Fund of India.

- ◆ All government expenditure is made from this fund, except exceptional items which are met from the Contingency Fund or the Public Account. Importantly, no money can be withdrawn from this fund without the Parliament's approval.

- ◆ Contingency Fund of India is created as an imprest account to meet some urgent or unforeseen expenditure of the government.

- ◆ **Description:** This fund was constituted by the government under Article 267 of the Constitution of India. This fund is at the disposal of the President.

- ◆ Any expenditure incurred from this fund requires a subsequent approval from the Parliament and the amount withdrawn is returned to the fund from the Consolidated Fund.
- ◆ All revenues received, loans raised and all moneys received by the Government in repayment of loans are credited to the Consolidated Fund of India and all expenditures of the Government are incurred from this fund. Money can be spent through this fund only if appropriated by the Parliament. The consolidated Fund has further been divided into 'Revenue' and 'Capital' divisions.
- ◆ Contingency Fund enables the Government to meet unforeseen expenditure, which cannot wait approval of the Parliament. For meeting such exigencies, advances are made to the executive from the Contingency Fund which are subsequently reported to the Parliament for recoupment from the Consolidated Fund of India.

About PMNRF

- ◆ In pursuance of an appeal by the then Prime Minister, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru in January, 1948, the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF) was established with public contributions to assist displaced persons from Pakistan. The resources of the PMNRF are now utilized primarily to render immediate relief to families of those killed in natural calamities like floods, cyclones and earthquakes, etc. and to the victims of the major accidents and riots.

How is PM CARES Fund Different from PMNRF?

- ◆ PMNRF is for all kinds of natural disasters, PM CARES fund is specially meant for COVID-19 similar pandemic situations.
- ◆ PM CARES, however, now delegates that power of deliberation and decision making to three other ministers of the government. As chairman of the PM CARES trust, Prime Minister still has the responsibility of sanctioning and approving his ministers' recommendations; but unlike PMNRF, he is not the proverbial 'judge, jury and executioner.'
- ◆ While the modalities and operational framework of PM CARES are yet unknown, PMNRF over the years has not been allowed to be audited by Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India. The vetting of PMNRF's account has been done by third party auditors till date.
- ◆ The minimum donation one can make in PMNRF is Rs 100 while PM CARES accepts micro donations as low as Rs 10. Both PMNRF and PM CARES are charitable public trust and can also accept foreign donations.
- ◆ The government officials say that any spending from the Consolidated Fund of India needs to be passed by the Parliament, therefore, creation of a donation-based fund means that legislature hurdle is taken care of.
- ◆ Further, experts believe that a separate fund for COVID-19 relief would encourage more people to contribute in the fund

because everyone is impacted by Coronavirus outbreak.

- ◆ COVID-19 has impacted people across the country. Therefore, PM CARES attaches a cause to it. Everyone is feeling for this cause. An earthquake in Andaman or a storm in Orissa is not something for which people would have same level of concern as that of a pan-India disaster like COVID-19. Hence, a separate fund for COVID-19 relief makes perfect sense.
- ◆ The PM NRF Fund had a balance of Rs 3,800 crore as on 31 March 2019. While, PM CARES Fund has crossed over Rs 6,500 crore till date.

If and But

- ◆ PMNRF's evolution over the past decade-and-a-half has been a tale of many hits and misses. Its present corpus of Rs 3,800 crore is grossly insufficient to meet the massive financial implications of tackling an emergency situation like the Coronavirus pandemic which has spread its tentacles with vicious speed across India.
- ◆ The fund that was primarily meant to tackle emergency situations has now become an investment vehicle instead of fulfilling its primary objective of keeping a war chest ready for situations like the one currently being faced by India.
- ◆ It was also mentioned that the Consolidated Fund of India needs legislative jurisdiction to be used; creation of a fund like the PM CARES Fund takes care of legislative hurdles.
- ◆ Since the Country follows a Plan based model of economy, the expenditure of Government is divided into Plan and Non-Plan.

As the name suggests, the Plan expenditure is directly related to expenditure on schemes and programmes envisaged in the plans. The Non-Plan expenditure is the expenditure incurred on establishment and maintenance activities.

Conclusion

- ◆ The PM CARES Fund tries to differentiate itself from PMNRF by enabling micro-donations. The statement issued by the government specifically says

that the fund will enable micro-donations as a result of which a large number of people will be able to contribute with smallest of denominations.

- ◆ PM CARES fund can potentially meet the expenses to fight covid-19. PM CARES will be on driving seat to meet the unexpected needs and demands by states. While PMNRF will be on back seat and will immediately help if any natural calamity occurs such as earthquake, flood, cyclone etc.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/ Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

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Q. What is PM CARES Fund? How is PM CARES Fund different from PMNRF? Discuss.

SEVEN BRAIN BOOSTERS

1. ELECTRONICS MANUFACTURING CLUSTERS 2.0

Why in News?

- ◆ The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister of India has approved financial assistance to the Modified Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMC2.0) Scheme.
- ◆ This new policy also advances the government's vision expressed in the National Policy for Electronics (NPE), 2019 to make India a global hub for mobile and component manufacturing.

About the Scheme

- ◆ To build and create requisite infrastructure ecosystem for electronics manufacturing; Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) notified Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMC) Scheme which was open for receipt of applications upto October, 2017.
- ◆ A period of 5 years (i.e. upto October, 2022) is available for disbursement of funds for the approved projects.
- ◆ EMC 2.0 Scheme would support setting up of both EMCs and Common Facility Centers (CFCs).

Benefits

- ◆ The Scheme will create a robust infrastructure base for electronic industry to attract flow of investment in ESDM sector and lead to greater employment opportunities.
- ◆ Following are the expected outputs/outcomes for the Scheme:
 - ◆ Availability of ready infrastructure and Plug & Play facility for attracting investment in electronics sector;
 - ◆ New investment in electronics sector;
 - ◆ Jobs created by the manufacturing units; and
 - ◆ Revenue in the form of taxes paid by the manufacturing units



Sector Outlook and Strategy

- ◆ The scheme has the potential of creating 8,00,000 direct and indirect jobs.
- ◆ Currently, 85% of the global mobile exports are catered to by two countries - China and Vietnam.
- ◆ India's electronics production has increased from Rs. 1,90,366 crore (US\$29 billion) in 2014-15 to Rs. 4,58,006 (US\$ 70 billion) in 2018-19, at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of about 25%.
- ◆ India's share in global electronics manufacturing grew from 1.3% (2012) to 3.0% (2018). It accounts for 2.3% of India's GDP at present.
- ◆ The Cabinet also cleared a Rs. 3,285 crore scheme for promotion of manufacturing of electronics components and semiconductors (SPECS).

2. VIRTUAL SAARC EMERGENCY MEETING ON COVID-19

Why in News?

- ◆ A Virtual South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Emergency meeting on COVID-19 was held on March 15 countries.
- ◆ It aimed to discuss and coordinate a regional response to the deadly outbreak.

COVID-19: Challenges for SAARC

- ◆ SAARC, one of the most densely populated regions in the world, home to one fifth of humanity.
- ◆ Countries in the region face significant challenges in terms of access to overstretched healthcare facilities.
- ◆ Open borders in several sectors allow movement of people, and closing the border is not an option because people, especially in border areas, would face difficulty obtaining basic goods.

SAARC COVID-19 Emergency Fund

- ◆ The purpose of this fund is to tackle and mitigate the risks associated with the coronavirus pandemic in the South Asian region.
- ◆ Contributions for the fund from member countries are voluntary. India pledged \$ 10 million as a contribution to the COVID-19 Emergency Fund. Other SAARC countries also made significant contribution, except Pakistan.

India's Initiatives

- ◆ India also announced that it would be putting together a team of specialists for the SAARC states.
- ◆ Using its strength of information technology, India has offered to share the Integrated Disease Surveillance Network for contact tracing and the management of the pandemic.
- ◆ India sent a rapid response team of experts to Male within hours of the country's request for help along with sophisticated equipment for testing and screening people.
- ◆ Indian authorities also brought back foreign nationals trapped in areas vulnerable to COVID-19 from various countries including from Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Nepal and the Maldives.
- ◆ With regard to Afghanistan medical supply consisting of surgical masks, gloves & sodium hydrochloride solution (disinfectant) is being provided.
- ◆ For Bangladesh and Sri Lanka India is extending supply consisting of surgical masks, shoe covers, hand disinfectant/ hand sanitizers, disposable gloves and disposable surgical caps.



About SAARC

- ◆ SAARC is the regional intergovernmental organization and geopolitical union of states in South Asia.
- ◆ Its member states are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

3. WORLD HAPPINESS REPORT - 2020

Why in News?

- ◆ The World Happiness Report has been released by United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network.
- ◆ Criteria for Ranking
 - ◆ Life Evaluation: To evaluate how people perceive themselves on a scale of 1 to 10 for being a worst possible life (0) or best possible life (10).
 - ◆ Well-being Measures: how people experience their lives on a day-to-day basis.
 - ◆ Future life evaluation.

Global Findings

- ◆ Top 3 Ranks: 1st – Finland; 2nd – Denmark; 3rd – Switzerland
- ◆ Bottom 3 Ranks: 153rd – Afghanistan; 152nd – South Sudan; 151st – Zimbabwe
- ◆ India is ranked 144, way lower than its neighbours. Nepal is ranked 15, Pakistan is at the 29, Bangladesh at 107 and Sri Lanka at 130.

Other Observations

- ◆ City dwellers to be generally happier than rural dwellers in most countries, with these advantages being less, and sometimes reversed, in a number of the richer countries.
- ◆ In India, the peri urban population is much happier as compared to urban population in India.
- ◆ People in urban areas have become relatively better off compared with those in rural areas in Northern and Western Europe (in terms of life evaluations and positive affect), Sub-Saharan Africa (life evaluations and negative affect), South Asia, and Middle East and North Africa.
- ◆ Mixed evidence is found in East Asia, Australia-New Zealand and Northern America, where the rural population has become relatively better off in terms of life evaluations while urban populations reported less negative effect.

Reasons Why Nordic Countries are Always Ranked Higher

- ◆ People tend to be happier in countries where there is easy access to relatively generous welfare benefits, and where the labour market is regulated to avoid employee exploitation.
- ◆ Low levels of income inequality might be important for the happiness of Nordic citizens, even though the same direct effect is not visible in many other countries.
- ◆ High sense of autonomy and freedom – and the resulting high well-being – that Nordic citizens experience can be attributed to relatively high material prosperity combined with well-functioning democracy and liberal values that prevail.
- ◆ The Nordic countries, due to the extensive welfare benefits, are better able to make their citizens less vulnerable to economic insecurity.



4. ARUNACHAL TRIBE AND LOCKDOWN RITUALS

Why in News?

- ◆ Tribals in the state of Arunachal Pradesh have invoked their “lockdown rituals” to combat the outbreak of COVID-19.

Ritualistic Lockdown by Tribes

- ◆ The Arunachal Pradesh’s West Siang district ceremonially entered the Arr-Rinam phase.
 - ◆ Arr-Rinam is the Galo equivalent of lockdown imposed by consensus for 48 hours whenever an epidemic strikes.
- ◆ The Adi community inhabiting East Siang and Lower Dibang Valley districts too performed a similar ritual called Motor or Pator.
- ◆ In districts such as Papum Pare and East Kameng, the dominant Nyishi community observed Arrue which involves self-quarantine.

About Galo Tribe

- ◆ Galo Tribe is one of the 26 major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh.
- ◆ Main Festival: Mopin; Dance: Popir dance.
- ◆ Ali-Ternam — Ali means epidemic and Ternam forestall. Ali-Ternam is performed by Bos (deputy priests), under the guidance of Nyibi (Shamans).
- ◆ Tribe has been performing these rituals periodically for livestock, primarily the semi-wild mithun, that are prone to contagious diseases.

About Adi Tribe

- ◆ They are believed to come from southern-China in 16th century.
- ◆ They locked down several villages by putting barricades to disallow the entry of outsiders. No person was allowed to enter or exit the villages. It is a customary self-restriction.
- ◆ Adi tribe which is expert for making cane or bamboo related items belong to the population related to Tibeto-Burman language family.
- ◆ Major Festivals: Aran (Hunting festival) and Solung (harvesting festival involving rituals and animal sacrifices)
- ◆ Belief in the power of shamans to locate wild herbs in order to combat an epidemic



About Nyishi Tribe

- ◆ It is the largest tribe of Arunachal Pradesh also known as Bangni. Nyishi community performed Arrue which includes self-quarantine.
- ◆ They also have rituals such as Khyasang-Ratarand Merii for preventing the entry of an epidemic to a village.
- ◆ Ethnically they are tribal people of eastern Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh and their dialect belongs to Tibeto-Burman language of the Sino-Tibetan family.
- ◆ They believe in power of spirits associated with natural elements and phenomenas.

5. SOUTH KOREA MODEL TO CONTROL COVID-19

Context

- ◆ The Korean Model, a vigorous regime of “trace, test, treat” (3T), has shown remarkable results in controlling the spread and mortality of the novel coronavirus.

Situation till Now

- ◆ South Korea has registered more than 9,976 cases, but more than 5,000 of the Covid-19 patients have recovered. There were 169 deaths—less than 1% fatality.
- ◆ South Korea might be the only country that hasn’t imposed a lockdown within its territories or even of its international borders

What is Korean Model?

- ◆ ‘Korean model’ is grounded on concentrated testing of high-risk areas and clusters.
- ◆ Korea found out at the beginning of the spread of the virus that a certain religious cult group and its gathering was the cause of a large portion of the spread in a certain area of the country.
 - ◆ This group had massive gatherings in a closed-off space with congregation in close contact with each other
- ◆ The government listed all members of the group across the country, tracked their whereabouts and conducted tests on a massive scale (18,000 cases a day), leading to the rapid increase in the number of confirmed cases
 - ◆ However, Korea succeeded in identifying and isolating potential cases at a very early stage and finally flattened the curve.
- ◆ Korea made available over 650 testing centers nationwide.

Lessons for India

- ◆ First, the government must stay prepared to re-purpose existing facilities and massively scale up its quarantine square footage
- ◆ Second, without detection and patient classification, there can be no intelligent quarantining; the government must use the interval to get its act together on testing
- ◆ Finally, it is time for India to avert its perennial Westward gaze. Many of the most innovative deployment of ideas and systems are being birthed right here to India’s East
 - ◆ India must learn lessons from the successful prevention and containment strategies employed by South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and China
 - ◆ The tide in these countries was only turned after testing was expanded from the low hundreds in end-January to the several thousand by mid- February



6. NIDHI PROGRAMME

Why in News?

- ◆ In the fight of COVID-19, a Pune based Start Up has developed a technology, named, 'Scitech Airon'. It is a Negative Ion Generator.
- ◆ The technology has been developed under the NIDHI PRAYAS program initiated by the Department of Science and Technology (DST).

About NIDHI

- ◆ NIDHI (National Initiative for Development and Harnessing Innovations), an umbrella program for nurturing ideas and innovations (knowledge-based and technology-driven) into successful startups.

Need for NIDHI

- ◆ The Indian startup ecosystem has seen a lot of activities in terms of growth of number of startups that emerged and also in terms of deals for funding that got closed and amount that were funded.
- ◆ Startup launch, product development and validation require some investment part of the young innovator.
- ◆ The initial funds needed at this time usually come from friends, family, Angel investors and HNI who would invest in an early stage startup.

Components of NIDHI

- ◆ There are 8 components of NIDHI that support each stage of a budding startup from idea to market.
- ◆ They are as follows
 - ◆ NIDHI GCC - Grand Challenges and Competitions for scouting innovations
 - ◆ NIDHI - promoting and accelerating Young and Aspiring Innovators and Startups (NIDHI-PRAYAS) - Support from Idea to Prototype
 - ◆ NIDHI-Entrepreneur In Residence (NIDHI-EIR)-Support system to reduce risk
 - ◆ Startup-NIDHI
 - ◆ NIDHI-Technology Business Incubator (TBI)-Converting Innovations to start-ups
 - ◆ NIDHI-Accelerator-Fast tracking a start-up through focused intervention
 - ◆ NIDHI-Seed Support System (NIDHI-SSS)-Providing early stage investment
 - ◆ NIDHI Centers of Excellence (NIDHI-CoE)-A World class facility to help startups go global



7. SCHEDULE H1 DRUGS

Why in News?

- ◆ The government has notified anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine under Schedule-H1.

Introduction

- ◆ India has stopped exporting the malaria drug Ipca (hydroxychloroquine).
- ◆ The move is aimed at stopping misuse of the drug which has now been allowed by the government for prophylactic use in high risk contacts of Covid-19 patients and healthcare workers treating such patients.

About Rules

- ◆ The Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 are the set of rules under The Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 which contains provisions for classification of drugs under given schedules and there are guidelines for the storage, sale, display and prescription of each schedule.
- ◆ The Schedule H1 notification of the Government of India on Aug 30, 2013, as an amendment to the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules of 1945, has now come into force from Mar 1, 2014.
- ◆ This schedule imposes certain conditions in the dispensing of listed medicines, which are somewhat midway between Schedule H (that stipulates retail dispensing only against a valid prescription) and Schedule X (that stipulates prescription in duplicate, separate license requirement and meticulous storage and dispensing records).
- ◆ This schedule has been anticipated for some time but now that it is in force, needs wide publicity and a critical look, from all physicians and healthcare providers in general and the community of pharmacologists and pharmacists in particular.
- ◆ The schedule is primarily intended to control the rampant use (that probably includes a large component of misuse through over-the-counter (OTC) dispensing) of antibiotics in India.
 - ◆ This intention is laudable. It is an open secret that practically any drug is OTC in India and can be procured in small or large quantities if one knows the right retailers and distributors.

The Notable Schedules

- ◆ Schedule G: Most of these drugs are hormonal preparations.
- ◆ Schedule H: The drug label must display the texts "Rx" and "Schedule H drug. Warning 'To be sold by retail on the prescription of a Registered Medical practitioner only' must be displayed.
- ◆ Schedule H1: It has been introduced through Gazette notification GSR 588 (E) dated 30-08-2013 to check the indiscriminate use of antibiotics, anti-TB and some other drugs in the country.
- ◆ Schedule J: It contains a list of various diseases and conditions that cannot be treated under any drug currently in market. No drug may legally claim to treat these diseases.



SEVEN MCQ's WITH EXPLANATORY ANSWERS

(Based on Brain Boosters)

1. Electronics Manufacturing Clusters 2.0

Q. With reference to the 'Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMC2.0)', consider the following statements:

1. EMC 2.0 is one of the major components of 'Make in India' Scheme.
2. It aims to make India a global hub for mobile and component manufacturing by 2030.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d)

Both statements are incorrect. The Union Cabinet chaired has approved financial assistance to the Modified Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMC2.0) Scheme for development of world class infrastructure along with common facilities and amenities through Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMCs).

This new policy also advances the government's vision expressed in the National Policy for Electronics (NPE), 2019 to make India a global hub for mobile and component manufacturing.

2. Virtual SAARC Emergency Meeting on COVID-19

Q. Consider the following statements with reference to the 'Virtual SAARC Emergency Meeting on COVID-19':

1. India pledged \$ 10 million as a contribution to the SAARC COVID-19 Emergency Fund.
2. The purpose of this fund is to develop a vaccine for the COVID-19.
3. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, China, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are the SAARC members.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 1 only
(c) 3 only (d) 1 and 3 only

Answer: (d)

Statement 1 is correct. India pledged \$10 million toward a COVID-19 emergency fund and it also announced that it would be putting together a team of specialists for the SAARC states.

Statement 2 is incorrect. The purpose of this fund is to tackle and mitigate the risks associated with the coronavirus pandemic in the South Asian region.

Statement 3 is correct. SAARC is the regional intergovernmental organization and geopolitical union of states in South Asia. Its member states are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

3. World Happiness Report - 2020

Q. With reference to the 'World Happiness Report 2020', consider the following statements:

1. It has been released by United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network and World Bank.
2. It has been ranked India at 144th position.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Statement 1 is incorrect. The World Happiness Report has been released by United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

Statement 2 is correct. India is ranked 144, way lower than its neighbours. Nepal is ranked 15, Pakistan is at the 29, Bangladesh at 107 and Sri Lanka at 130.

4. Arunachal Tribe and Lockdown Rituals

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. Galo tribe, Adi Tribe and Nyishi Tribe are one of the 26 major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh.
2. Adi tribe which is expert for making cane or bamboo related items.
3. Aran and Solung festival belong to the Adi Tribe.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (d)

All statements are correct. Galo tribe, Adi Tribe and Nyishi Tribe are one of the 26 major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh.

Adi tribe which is expert for making cane or bamboo related items belong to the population related to Tibeto-Burman language family. 4 Major festivals of the Adi Tribe are Aran (Hunting festival) and Solung (harvesting festival involving rituals and animal sacrifices).

5. South Korea Model to Control COVID-19

Q. With reference to the South Korean model to control COVID-19, consider the following statements:

1. The Korean Model is grounded on a vigorous regime of "trace, test, treat" (3T).
2. This model is based on concentrated testing of high-risk areas and clusters.
3. India is also following the Korean Model to control the COVID-19.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a)

Statement 1 and 2 are correct. The 'Korean model', a vigorous regime of "trace, test, treat" (3Ts) is grounded on concentrated testing of high-risk areas and clusters. The moment the virus DNA pattern was confirmed in Wuhan, Korean medical teams and bio-companies were able to develop new testing kits with surprising speed. This made it possible for Korea to conduct mass-scale testing of 18,000 cases a day. Hence, it has shown remarkable results in controlling the spread and mortality of the novel coronavirus.

Statement 3 is incorrect. India is not following this model. But, India could learn lessons from this model to control COVID-19.

6. NIDHI Programme

Q. Consider the following statements with reference to 'NIDHI Programme':

1. It is an initiative of NITI Aayog.
2. It is an umbrella program for nurturing ideas and innovations (knowledge-based and technology-driven) into successful startups.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Statement 1 is incorrect. It has been developed by the Innovation & Entrepreneurship division, Department of Science & Technology, Government of India.

Statement 2 is correct. It is an umbrella program for nurturing ideas and innovations (knowledge-based and technology-driven) into successful startups.

7. Schedule H1 Drugs

Q. With reference to the 'Schedule H1 drug', consider the following statements:

1. 'Schedule H1' has been introduced to check the indiscriminate use of antibiotics, anti-TB and some other drugs in the country.
2. The package of the drugs will have a mandatory warning printed in a box with red colour border.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Both statements are correct. This schedule was included in 2013 to check the indiscriminate use of antibiotics, anti-TB and some other drugs in the country.

These drugs cannot be sold without a valid prescription. The package of the drugs will have a mandatory warning printed in a box with red colour border.



SEVEN IMPORTANT NEWS

1. SunRISE Mission

- ◆ NASA has selected the proposed Sun Radio Interferometer Space Experiment (SunRISE) mission to study how the Sun creates and releases Giant Solar Particle Storms.

Background

- ◆ The SunRISE mission was one of two missions chosen by NASA in August of 2017, for the Mission of Opportunity program as a part of the Explorers Program, to conduct an 11-month concept study. The mission is expected to launch in 2023.

Key Highlights

- ◆ The mission relies on six solar-powered CubeSats, each about

the size of a toaster oven, to simultaneously observe radio images of low-frequency emission from solar activity and share them via NASA's Deep Space Network.

- ◆ The array of CubeSats would fly within six miles of each other, above Earth's atmosphere, which otherwise blocks radio signals SunRISE want to detect.
- ◆ The CubeSats will create 3D maps that pinpoint where giant particle bursts originate on the sun and how they evolve as they expand into space.
- ◆ This, in turn, will help determine what initiates and accelerates these giant radiation jets of radiation.

- ◆ The spacecraft will also work together to map the magnetic field lines reaching from the sun out into interplanetary space.

Significance

- ◆ This mission will further aid scientists to understand how the Solar System works. It will also help protect future astronauts from Solar Storms while going to the Moon or Mars.
- ◆ NASA designed it to learn more about how the sun generates and throws off giant space weather storms, known as solar particle storms. SunRISE will gather information on how the solar system works. Knowing this could help NASA protect astronauts traveling to the Moon and Mars. ■

2. Himalayan Ibex

- ◆ A recent study by scientists of the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) has proved that Himalayan Ibex is a distinct species from the Siberian Ibex. Siberian Ibex is a species of wild goat and is distributed in diverse habitats, ranging from cold deserts, rocky outcrops, steep terrain, high-land flats and mountain ridges to low mountains and foothills. Its IUCN status is least concerned.

Key Highlights

- ◆ The research was funded through the National Mission on Himalayan Studies. The national mission is implemented by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- ◆ The genetic analysis conducted with the inclusion of the sequences available from all across the distribution ranges in Central

Asia, Tajikistan, Altai Mountains, Mongolia and Russia provided first evidence to claim that Himalayan Ibex is genetically different from all other ranges of Siberian Ibex.

- ◆ The results of the genetic analysis surprisingly revealed that I-T clade (referred to as Siberian Ibex) was estimated to have diverged from Alpine Ibex during the Pleistocene epoch (2.4 million years ago)

than the Siberian Ibex during the Miocene-Pliocene boundary (6.6 million years ago).

- ◆ Researchers presumed that the 'montane systems', formed by a series of climatic oscillations and temporal topographic metamorphosis, have broken up the contiguous distribution of widespread species and accelerated allopatric speciation

(speciation because of geographic and reproductive isolation).

Ibex Distribution

- ◆ From Mongolia, its distribution extends towards Altai, Hangai, Gobi-Altai, the Hurekh mountain ranges as well as Sayan Mountains near Russia and scattered populations in the small mountains of Trans-Altai Gobi.

- ◆ In Asia, Ibex is distributed in the Montane habitats, ranging in elevations from 500 m to 6,700 m in countries like India, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Southern Siberia and China. In India, the Ibex is distributed mainly in the trans-Himalayan ranges of the Union Territories of Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh up to the river Sutlej.

3. Extraordinary Virtual G20 Leaders' Summit

- ◆ The 'Extraordinary Virtual G20 Leaders' Summit' on coronavirus pandemic through video conferencing was held on March 26, 2020. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has attended the Virtual Summit.

Key Highlights

- ◆ The Virtual Summit convened by Saudi Arabia, which currently holds the rotating presidency of G20. The Summit discussed ways to move forward in coordinating global efforts to combat the Corona pandemic and to limit its humanitarian and economic impact.
- ◆ The G20 leaders pledged full support and committed to further strengthen the World Health

Organisation (WHO's) mandate in coordinating the international fight against the pandemic, including the protection of front-line health workers, delivery of medical supplies, especially diagnostic tools, treatments, medicines, and vaccines.

- ◆ The leaders agreed to injecting over \$5 trillion into the global economy, as part of targeted fiscal policy, economic measures, and guarantee schemes to counteract the social, economic and financial impacts of the pandemic. The leaders also committed to continue working together to facilitate international trade and coordinate responses in ways that avoid unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade.

Emergency measures aimed at protecting health will be targeted, proportionate, transparent, and temporary.

India and G20 Summit

- ◆ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has urged the G20 group of developed and developing countries to rework its definition of globalization which would focus.
- ◆ He also highlighted the need for reforming and empowering international organizations like the World Health Organisation to deal with pandemics like the Covid-19 so that it was effective in assisting countries and developing prescribing health protocols.

4. Biofortified Wheat Variety

- ◆ Scientists from Agharkar Research Institute (ARI), Pune, an autonomous institute under the Department of Science & Technology have developed a biofortified durum wheat variety MACS 4028, which shows high protein content.

Key Highlights

- ◆ The wheat variety shown high protein content of about 14.7%,

better nutritional quality having zinc 40.3 ppm, and iron content of 40.3ppm and 46.1ppm respectively, good milling quality and overall acceptability.

- ◆ MACS 4028 is a semi-dwarf variety, which matures in 102 days and has shown the superior and stable yielding ability of 19.3 quintals per hectare. It is resistant to stem rust, leaf rust, foliar aphids, root aphids, and brown wheat mite.

- ◆ The MACS 4028 variety is also included by the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) programme for United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to alleviate malnutrition in a sustainable way and can boost the Vision 2022 "Kuposhan Mukh Bharat", the National Nutrition Strategy. An endeavor to tackle the hidden hunger in the rural areas of India is being continued using traditional plant breeding

approach to achieve “Kuposhan Mukh Bharat.”

- ◆ The wheat variety MACS 4028 has been notified by the Central Sub-Committee on Crop Standards, Notification and Release of Varieties for Agricultural Crops (CVRC) for timely sown, rainfed condition of Peninsular Zone, comprising

Maharashtra and Karnataka. Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has also tagged this variety under the Biofortified category during the year 2019.

About Wheat Cultivation

- ◆ Wheat crop in India is grown under six diverse agroclimatic

zones. In the peninsular zone of India (Maharashtra and Karnataka states), wheat cultivation is majorly done under rainfed and limited irrigation conditions. Under such conditions, the crop experiences moisture stress. Hence, there is a high demand for drought-tolerant varieties. ■

5. Earth Hour

- ◆ The Earth Hour is observed every year on the last Saturday of March at 8:30 pm. As the world grapples with the Covid-19 pandemic, Earth Hour 2020 was celebrated digitally by World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

What is Earth Hour?

- ◆ The Earth Hour is a movement to protect and conserve our environment. It has gained immense support since its inception in 2007 from Sydney in Australia. Further, it has now reached to almost all countries with millions of people switching of lights and shutting down electrical equipment to create awareness about environmental

degradation and need to protect it. The penetration of Earth Hour has increased with rising awareness about global warming among the masses across the world.

Need of the Earth Hour

- ◆ Global warming and climate change have dominated the scientific discourse in the past more than one decade. With ever rising population of the world, the climate change has put the humankind at a great risk along with other species.
- ◆ Global warming, rising levels of pollution due to ever increasing industrialisation, declining forest cover and rising sea levels are some of the dangers that drastically

affect the workings of life on the earth.

- ◆ Though the largest polluters are big industries, the WWF tries to make the masses more and more aware about the impending dangers of adverse climate so that they could put pressure on the respective governments to frame environment-friendly policies and laws.
- ◆ With Earth Hour, the WWF aims to engage people across the globe to adopt more sustainable lifestyle. Turning off lights for an hour is just an annual reminder that if the world does not mend its ways, it will be heading to a dark age, literally. ■

6. 70 Years of Diplomatic Ties of India-China

- ◆ India was the first non-communist country in Asia to establish diplomatic ties with the People's Republic of China on April 1, 1950. But the plans for celebrating the 70th anniversary of the event have been hit by the coronavirus pandemic.

Key Highlights

- ◆ Looking back at the past 70 years, China-India relations have moved ahead despite wind and rain and gone through an extraordinary development path.

- ◆ In the 1950s, the leaders of the older generation of the two countries made the historical decision to establish diplomatic relations between China and India, and jointly advocated the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.

- ◆ From the 1980s, the two sides agreed to solve the boundary question through peaceful and friendly consultation, established strategic and cooperative partnership for peace and

prosperity, and achieved all-round development of bilateral relations.

- ◆ After 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi initiated the "hometown diplomacy", held two informal summits in Wuhan and Chennai respectively, carried out strategic communication on overarching, long-term and strategic issues of global and regional importance, and agreed to strengthen the closer

partnership for development between the two countries.

- ◆ At present, China-India relations stand at a new starting point and usher in new opportunities. We

should draw wisdom from our thousands of years of civilizations and explore a way for neighboring and emerging major countries to get along with each other in

accordance with enhancing mutual trust, focusing on cooperation, managing differences and seeking common development. ■

7. 99.9% of Potential Zoonotic Viruses are Unknown

- ◆ In 2018, the World Health Organization (WHO) released a list of 10 diseases that can cause epidemics. These were all viral diseases. In addition to viruses such as Zika, Ebola and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS - Corona Virus), the list also mentioned unknown virus-borne disease X (disease X). It is now believed that COVID-19 is the only unknown virus-borne disease X.

Key Highlights

- ◆ Despite the human and economic impact of viral epidemics, the

world is not well enough prepared for the next emerging viral outbreak. Global trends indicate that new microbial threats will continue to emerge at an accelerating rate, driven by our growing population, expanded travel and trade networks, and human encroachment into wildlife habitat.

- ◆ Most emerging viruses are zoonotic, that is, transferred between vertebrates and humans. Nearly all zoonoses originate in mammalian or avian hosts; for example, type 1 human

immunodeficiency virus (HIV-1) originated in chimpanzees and Ebola virus in bats.

- ◆ Estimations show that there are more than 1.6 million mammalian and waterfowl viruses, spanning 25 viral families known to cause human infections.
- ◆ Compared to just over 260 viruses known in humans, the unknown viruses represent 99.9% of potential zoonoses. These viruses usually remain undetected until they cause disease in humans. ■

SEVEN PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAINS EXAM

1. What do you understand by 'physical distancing'? 'How do physical distancing measures contain coronavirus? Discuss.
2. In the middle of COVID-19 adversity lies a biggest opportunity for India reboot its rural and urban landscape. Do you agree? Give reasons.
3. What makes the Indian society unique in sustaining its culture? Discuss.
4. What is water stress? How and why does it differ regionally in India?
5. A planning institution must be a systems reformer and a force of persuasion, not just a control centre. In the given context evaluate the performance of NITI Aayog.
6. "Despite the emergence of evidence of a rise in Indian defence exports, India's defence model is still inadequate." Evaluate.
7. How do ocean currents and water masses differ in their impacts on marine life and coastal environment? Give suitable examples.



SEVEN IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIMS

1. Which scheme is launched by the Central Government to combat the economic impact on the poor and needy due to COVID-19 lockdown?

- *Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY)*

2. Which Ministry of the Central Government does control over implementation and monitoring of MPLADS scheme?

- *Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation*

3. Which drug's use is recommended by the National Task Force for COVID-19, constituted by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) for preventive treatment of healthcare workers and individuals in close contact of coronavirus patients?

- *Hydroxy-chloroquine*

4. Which award is given to Hillel Furstenberg, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel and Gregory Margulis, Yale University, USA, recently?

- *The Abel Prize for 2020*

5. Which Ministry has launched an online portal 'Stranded in India' to help foreign tourists?

- *Ministry of Tourism*

6. Which two nations are involved in the Kuril Islands dispute?

- *Russia and Japan*

7. Which state government has launched an App "Mothers for Sports and Fitness" to seek the assistance of young mothers in the state to encourage their children to take up some kind of sporting activity?

- *Haryana*



SEVEN PERFECT QUOTES

(IMPORTANT FOR ESSAY AND ANSWER WRITING)

1. "Peace and Justice are two sides of the same coin."

- *Dwight D. Eisenhower*

2. "Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world."

- *Nelson Mandela*

3. "Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet."

- *Aristotle*

4. "I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved."

- *B R Ambedkar*

5. "Hold faithfulness and sincerity as first principles."

- *Confucius*

6. "Blind belief in authority is the greatest enemy of truth."

- *Albert Einstein*

7. "Doubt everything. Find your own light."

- *Gautam Buddha*





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AN INTRODUCTION

Dhyeya IAS, a decade old institution, was founded by Mr. Vinay Singh and Mr. Q.H. Khan. Ever since its emergence it has unparalleled track record of success. Today, it stands tall among the reputed institutes providing coaching for Civil Services Examination (CSE). The institute has been very successful in making potential realize their dreams which is evident from success stories of the previous years.

Quite a large number of students desirous of building a career for themselves are absolutely less equipped for the fairly tough competitive tests they have to appear in. Several others, who have a brilliant academic career, do not know that competitive exams are vastly different from academic examination and call for a systematic and scientifically planned guidance by a team of experts. Here one single move invariably put one ahead of many others who lag behind. Dhyeya IAS is manned with qualified & experienced faculties besides especially designed study material that helps the students in achieving the desired goal.

Civil Services Exam requires knowledge base of specified subjects. These subjects though taught in schools and colleges are not necessarily oriented towards the exam approach. Coaching classes at Dhyeya IAS are different from classes conducted in schools and colleges with respect to their orientation. Classes are targeted towards the particular exam. Classroom guidance at Dhyeya IAS is about improving the individual's capacity to focus, learn and innovate as we are comfortably aware of the fact that you can't teach a person anything you can only help him find it within himself.

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Distance learning Programme, DSDL, primarily caters the need for those who are unable to come to metros for economic or family reason but have ardent desire to become a civil servant. Simultaneously, it also suits to the need of working professionals, who are unable to join regular classes due to increase in work load or places of their posting. The principal characteristic of our distance learning is that the student does not need to be present in a classroom in order to participate in the instruction. It aims to create and provide access to learning when the source of information and the learners are separated by time and distance. Realizing the difficulties faced by aspirants of distant areas, especially working candidates, in making use of the institute's classroom guidance programme, distance learning system is being provided in General Studies. The distance learning material is comprehensive, concise and exam-oriented in nature. Its aim is to make available almost all the relevant material on a subject at one place. Materials on all topics of General Studies have been prepared in such a way that, not even a single point will be missing. In other words, you will get all points, which are otherwise to be taken from 6-10 books available in the market / library. That means, DSDL study material is undoubtedly the most comprehensive and that will definitely give you added advantage in your Preliminary as well as Main Examination. These materials are not available in any book store or library. These materials have been prepared exclusively for the use of our students. We believe in our quality and commitment towards making these notes indispensable for any student preparing for Civil Services Examination. We adhere all pillars of Distance education.

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