

# Polity and Governance Current Affairs April 2020

# Polity and Governance

## 'Stranded in India' Portal

### Why in the news?

- The **Ministry of Tourism** has launched a portal '**Stranded in India**'.

### About the Stranded in India' Portal

- The **aim of this portal** to act as a support network for **foreign tourists** stuck in various parts of the country.
- The portal **strandedinindia.com** consists of **comprehensive information on COVID-19 helpline numbers** or **call-centres** that the **foreign tourists** can reach out to for help.
- It also has information on the **Ministry of External Affairs** control centres along with their contact information and information around state-based/regional tourism support infrastructure.
- It also has a **help and support section** to extend help to the ones in need of further information and connect foreign tourists to authorities concerned.

### Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance

Source- Indian Express

## Prime Minister's National Relief Fund

### Why in the news?

- Opposition leaders have questioned the setting up of **PM CARES Fund** by the Prime Minister as the **Prime Minister's National Relief Fund** is already in existence.
- To deal with the **coronavirus pandemic**. The **PM's National Relief Fund (PMNRF)** has an **unspent balance of ₹3,800 crores** [as of December 16, 2019].

### About Prime Minister's National Relief Fund

- The **Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF)** was **established in January 1948** after PM Jawaharlal Nehru appealed to assist displaced persons from Pakistan.
- It was **established entirely with public contributions** and did not get any budgetary support.
- PMNRF **accepts voluntary contributions** from **Individuals, Organizations, Trusts, Companies and Institutions** etc.
- All contributions towards PMNRF are **exempt from Income Tax under section 80(G)**.
- The **resources of the PMNRF** are **utilized to render immediate relief** to families of those killed in **natural calamities like floods, cyclones and earthquakes**, etc.
- Assists partially to defray the expenses for **medical treatment like heart surgery, kidney transplantation, cancer treatment** of needy people and acid attack etc.

### Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance, Source- The Hindu

## 'Rapid Test' for Coronavirus in Kerala

### Why in the news?



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- Kerala government has recently announced 'rapid tests to tackle suspicions of whether the novel Coronavirus has spread into the community and if not prevent such a scenario.
- This test will ensure speedy results within half an hour.

### **What is the 'rapid test' for Coronavirus?**

- Essentially, a rapid test is conducted to determine whether there has been any recent viral infection in a person's body.
- When a pathogen enters a human body, specific antibodies are released as a response to the virus.
- A rapid test can detect the presence of such antibodies in blood, serum or plasma samples quickly, indicating a viral infection.
- Rapid testing is conducted usually to check for community transmission of a virus during an epidemic.

### **Who can conduct rapid tests?**

- Government and private labs that has the approval of ICMR can conduct rapid tests which require a doctor's prescription too.

### **Topic- GS Paper 2–Health Issue**

**Source- The Hindu**

### **Science and Technology Empowered Committee for COVID-19**

#### **Why in the news?**

- The Health Ministry has constituted a 'Science and Technology Empowered Committee' for COVID-19 response.

#### **About the Committee**

- The committee will be chaired by **Vinod Paul (member, NITI Aayog)** and **K. Vijay Raghavan (Principal Scientific Adviser to the government)**.
- It said this committee would coordinate among science agencies, scientists, industries and regulatory bodies.

#### **Body Involved**

- The Committee will work with the **Department of Science & Technology, Department of Biotechnology, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Defence Research and Development Organisation and Indian Institute for Science** to take quick decisions on research.

### **Topic- GS Paper 3, Sci & Tech**

**Source: PIB**

### **Domicile rule expanded for J&K**

#### **Why in the news?**

- The Centre has recently defined **new domicile rule for Jammu and Kashmir** which includes those who have lived in the **Union Territory for 15 years**.

#### **Key highlights of the rule**



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- The order defines **domicile as one "who has resided for 15 years in the UT of J&K or has studied for seven years and appeared in Class /12th examination in an educational institution located in the UT of J&K or who is registered as a migrant by the Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (Migrants).**
- The notification **scraps all pension benefits such as a car, driver, accommodation, phones, electricity, medical facilities** and rent-free accommodation to former J&K Chief Ministers.
- The order says the domiciles will be eligible **"for appointment to any post carrying a pay scale of not more than Level 4"**.
- The **Level 4 post comprises positions** such as **gardeners, barbers, office peons and waterman, and the highest rank in the category is that of a junior assistant.**

### **Insured Job facility**

- The Union government has also issued a notification defining **"domiciles"** in the new **Union Territory (UT) of Jammu and Kashmir** for **protecting jobs in the Group D category and entry-level non-gazette posts** for the domiciles.

### **Changes in Public Safety Act**

- **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** also makes changes to the **Public Safety Act (PSA)** by removing a clause that **prohibited J&K residents** booked **under the Act** to be lodged in jails outside.

#### **Note:**

- The **reservation for domiciles** would **not apply to Group A and Group B posts**, and like other UTs, recruitment would be done by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).
- **Article 35-A** of the Constitution (now abrogated) **empowered J&K Assembly** to define a J&K resident, who alone were eligible to apply for jobs or own immovable property.

### **Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**

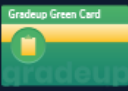
**Source- The Hindu**

### **AarogyaSetu**

#### **Why in the news?**

- The Government of India recently launched a **mobile app** called **AarogyaSetu**, which help to **bring the people of India together** in a brave fight against coronavirus pandemic.





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### About AarogyaSetu app

- It is at **once a bridge between public and private sectors, digital technology and health services delivery** and the **potential of young India with a disease-free and healthy future** of the nation.
- The app is **available in 11 languages**.
- It joins **Digital India for the health and well-being** of every Indian.
- It will **enable people to assess themselves the risk of catching the Corona Virus infection**.
- It will calculate this **risk based on their interaction with others**, using **cutting edge Bluetooth technology, algorithms and artificial intelligence**.

### Benefits:

- The App will **help India** to take **necessary, timely** steps for **assessing the risk of spread of COVID-19 infection** and ensuring isolation where required.
- The App's design **ensures privacy-first**.
- The **personal data collected by the App** is **encrypted using state-of-the-art technology** and **stays secure on the phone until** it is needed for facilitating medical intervention.

### Topic- GS Paper 3–Health Issue

Source- The Hindu

### e-NAM Platform

#### Why in the news?

- Agriculture Minister has recently launched **new features of National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) Platform**.

#### How does it work?

- It will **provide to strengthen agriculture marketing by farmers** who will **reduce their need to physically come to wholesale mandis** for **selling their harvested produce**, at a time when **there is critical need to decongest mandis to fight against COVID-19 effectively**.

#### These software modules are namely:

- **Warehouse based trading** module in **e-NAM software to facilitate trade** from warehouses based on e-NWR,
- **FPO trading module in e-NAM** whereby **FPOs can trade their produce** from their collection centre without bringing the produce to APMC.
- **An enhanced version of the logistic module** has been released to facilitate inter-mandi and inter-state trade at this juncture.

#### About e-NAM

- It was **launched in 2016** as a **pan-India electronic trade portal** linking Agricultural Produce Market Committee - APMCs across the States.
- e-NAM provides for **contactless remote bidding** and **mobile-based any time payment** for which **traders do not need to either visit mandis or banks** for the same.



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**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**  
**Source- PIB**

### **PIB's COVID-19 Fact Check Unit**

#### **Why in the news?**

- The **Press Information Bureau's COVID-19 Fact Check Unit (FCU)** became operational recently which check facts related to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

#### **About the COVID-19 Fact Check Unit**

- The **unit is headed** by the bureau's director-general, **Nitin Wakankar**.
- It will receive messages by **email and will send a response in a stipulated time-frame**.
- The official version of any news on COVID-19 can be obtained from the unit.

#### **About Press Information Bureau**

- It is the **nodal agency of the Government of India** to **disseminate information** to the **print and electronic media** on **government policies, programmes, initiatives and achievements**.
- It acts as an **interface between the government and the media**.
- It **provides governmental information** via **press releases, articles, photographs**, etc. available on its official website.

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**  
**Source- PIB**

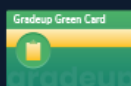
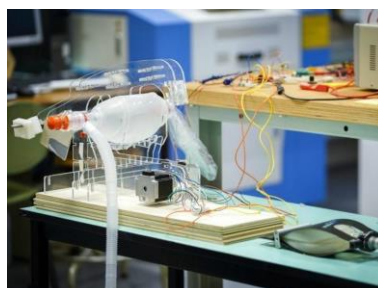
### **Project Praana**

#### **Why in the news?**

- The **Scientists and Students in Indian Institute of Science** have developed a **prototype of an indigenous ventilator** under project Praana.

#### **About the Project Pranna**

- The project is a **voluntary effort to help the nation** at the time of crisis.
- The prototype has **mass flow sensors and controllers**, which **accurately tell how much oxygen is flowing and what volume the patient is inhaling** in one breath.
- **Pneumatics** is built around **mass-produced water filter hardware**.
- The **control system is built around open-source industrial controller**.



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**Source- PIB**

### **Geo-fencing app**

#### **Why in the news?**

• Recently, the **Centre is using powers** under the **Indian Telegraph Act** to “**fetch information**” from **telecom companies every 15 minutes** to **track COVID-19 cases** with the help of **Geo-Fencing app** across the country.

#### **How does it work?**

- It **triggers emails and SMS alerts** to an **authorized government agency** if a person has jumped **quarantine or escaped from isolation**, based on the **person’s mobile phone’s cell tower location**.
- The “**geo-fencing**” is **accurate by up to 300 m**.

#### **Legal Authority**

- The **States** have been asked to **seek the approval** of their **Home Secretaries under the provisions of Section 5(2) of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885**, for the **specified mobile phone numbers to request the DoT to provide information by email or SMS** in case of **violation of geo-fencing**.
- Recently, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) shared a **standard operating procedure (SOP)** with **all telecom service providers regarding the application called COVID-19 Quarantine Alert System (CQAS)**.
- The system will **collate phone data, including the device’s location**, on a **common secured platform** and **alert the local agencies** in case of a **violation by COVID patients** under watch or in isolation.
- The CQAS will **prepare a list of mobile numbers, segregating them** based on **telecom service providers**, and the **location data provided by the companies will be run on the application to create geo-fencing**.

#### **Privacy Concern**

• The data collected shall be used only for **Health Management** in the **context of COVID-19** and is **strictly** not for any other purposes. Any violation in this regard would attract penal provisions under the relevant laws.

#### **Data will be deleted:**

• The **phone number should be removed** from the system **after the period for which location monitoring is required** over, and the data would be deleted four weeks from thereon.

#### **Note:**

• **Kerala** is one of the **first States to use geo-fencing to track COVID-19 cases**.

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**

**Source- The Hindu**

### **Laws enforced in India amid the ‘Lockdown’**

#### **Why in the news?**



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- The Home Ministry has recently said that **persons violating the containment measures** will be **liable to be punished** under provisions of the **Disaster Management Act 2005**, besides **Section 188 IPC**.



The related provisions of IPC and Disaster Management are as follows

**i. For disobedience**

**a. Section 188 IPC** deals with those **disobeying an order passed by a public servant** and **provides for imprisonment ranging from one to six months**.

- For those **violating orders passed under the Epidemic Diseases Act**, Section 188 IPC is the provision under which **punishment is awarded**.

**b. Section 51 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005** provides for **punishment for two kinds of offences:**

- **obstructing any officer or employee of the government or person authorized by any disaster management authority** for discharge of a function

- **refusing to comply** with any direction given **by the authorities under the Act**.

- **Punishment** can **extend to one year on conviction**, or two years if the **refusal leads to loss of lives or any imminent danger**.

**ii. For spreading fear**

**a. Section 505 IPC** provides for **imprisonment of three years or fine, or both**, for those who **publish or circulate anything which is likely to cause fear or alarm**.

**b. Section 54 of the Disaster Management Act** provides for **imprisonment, extending to one year**, of those who **make or circulate a false alarm or warning regarding a disaster or its severity or magnitude**.

**iii. For false claim to aid**

- **Under Section 52, Disaster Management Act**, whoever makes a **false claim** for obtaining **“any relief, assistance, repair, reconstruction or other benefits”** from any **official authority** can be sentenced to a **maximum of two years imprisonment** and a **fine will be imposed on the person**.

**iv. For refusing to do duties**

- In case of **refusal or withdrawal of any officer** who has been tasked with **any duty under the Act**, the officer **can be sentenced to imprisonment extending to one year**.

- However, those **who have written permission of the superior or any lawful ground** are **exempt from such punishment**.

- A **case cannot be initiated without the explicit sanction from the state or central government**.

**v. For refusing to help**



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- Any authorized authority can requisitely assign under the Act resources like **persons and material resources, premises like land or building, or sheds and vehicles for rescue operations.**

- Though there is a **provision for compensation under the Act**, any person who disobeys such an order can be **sentenced to imprisonment up to one year.**

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**

**Source- Indian Express**

### **'Empowered group' under NITI Aayog**

#### **Why in news?**

- The government has recently set up an empowered group to undertake discussions with the private sector and international organizations on actions planned and challenges faced in dealing with COVID-19.

#### **About the Empowered Group**

- The Empowered group is chaired by NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant.

#### **Objective**

- This Empowered Group will **address the issues pertaining to identification of problems**, effective solutions and formulation of plans with three groups of stakeholders.

#### **These stakeholders are**

- The **UN agencies, World Bank, Asian Development Bank**
- **Civil Society Organizations** and development partners
- Industry associations – **CII, FICCI, ASSOCHAM, NASSCOM**

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**

**Source- Indian Express**

### **Lifeline Udan flights**

#### **Why in news?**

- The Ministry of Civil Aviation has launched **"Lifeline Udan"** as a part of India's war against the novel Coronavirus pandemic

#### **About the Lifeline Udan flights initiative**

- Under this initiative, flights are being operated for the **movement of essential and medical supplies across the nation.**

- The flights, under Lifeline Udan, are being **coordinated by a control room set up under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Civil Aviation** leadership.

- The cargo of Lifeline Udan includes **COVID-19 related** medical equipment, reagents, enzymes, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), testing kits, masks, gloves as well as other accessories required by Corona Warriors.

#### **Special Focused**

- The **North East Region, island territories** and the **hill states** are being given special focus.

- Lifeline Udan connects **North East Region** through **regional hubs in Kolkata, Guwahati and Bagdogra.**

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**

**Source- The Hindu**

### **'Caruna'- Civil Services Associations Reach to Support in Natural Disasters**



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### Why in the news?

- Recently **Officers of Central Civil Services**, including the **Indian Administrative Service** and the **Indian Police Service**, have formed an initiative called '**Caruna**' to **support and supplement** the government's efforts in fighting coronavirus.



### How will it impact?

- The **Civil Service associations**- IFS, IPS, IFoS, IRS (IT), IRS (C&E), IRPS, IRTS, IPOS, IA&AS, IDES, ICAS, IIS & IAS form CARUNA - Civil services Association Reach to Support in Natural Disasters - a **technology platform** to support Govt in the fight against COVID-19.
- Caruna will support and supplement laudable government initiatives on a real time basis, besides sharing relevant information with Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and also with MyGov platform, the task forces set up by the central and state governments in the fight against COVID19 will assist in coordinated manner.
- The Caruna platform has already created a 10-day action plan for operationalisation of support to both governments and field-level functionaries.
- It has created **themes** (called threads on slack- Slack is a proprietary instant messaging platform developed by Slack Technologies) on
  - a. capacity building/training support to healthcare workers etc.,
  - b. Database collation of health equipment manufacturers etc.,
  - c. Mitigation of migration-related issues and temporary shelters
  - d. Working on food security related issues etc., with specific responsibilities being assumed by dedicated teams of members, according to its website.

### About the initiative Caruna

- The '**Caruna**' is a collaborative platform. The acronym '**Caruna**' stands for **Civil Services Associations Reach to Support in Natural Disasters**.
- It represents a **collaborative platform**, on which **civil servants, industry leaders, NGO professionals** and **IT professionals** among others have come together to contribute their time and abilities.
- It has also sought Government orders. SoPs, protocols, best practices, IEC material and inspiring stories from various stakeholders.

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**

**Source- PIB**

### Members of Parliament Local Area Development (MPLADS) Scheme

#### Why in the news?

- Cabinet has recently approved **Non-operation of MPLADS for two years (2020-21) and 2021-22) for managing COVID 19**.
- These funds will be used to **strengthen the Government's efforts** in managing the challenges and **adverse impact of COVID19** in the country.



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### About Members of Parliament Local Area Development (MPLADS) Scheme

- The **Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS)** was launched on **23rd December 1993**.
- Initially, the **Ministry of Rural Development** was the **Nodal Ministry** for this scheme. Still, in **October 1994** this scheme was transferred to the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation** as a **nodal agency**.



### The salient features of the MPLAD Scheme include:

- It is a **Central Plan Scheme fully funded** by the **Government of India** under which **funds are released** in the **form of grants-in-aid directly** to the **district authorities**.
- The funds released under the **Scheme are non-lapsable**, i.e. the **entitlement of funds not released** in a particular year is carried forward to the subsequent years, subject to eligibility.
- Under MPLADS, the role of the **Members of Parliament** is limited to recommend works.
- After that, it is the **responsibility of the district authority to sanction, execute and complete the works** recommended by **Members of Parliament within the stipulated time**.

### Note:

- The elected Lok Sabha Members can recommend works in their **respective constituencies**.
- The **elected members of the Rajya Sabha** can recommend works anywhere in the state from which they are elected.
- **Nominated Members of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha** can recommend **works for implementation**, anywhere in the country.

### Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance

Source- The Hindu

### WalkMe Platform

#### Why in the news?

- To utilize the **technology efficiently and productively**, **Microsoft** has partnered with the **leading digital adoption platform WalkMe** to **help increase Dynamics 365 adoption** among enterprises.



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### How does this Platform work?

- The companies will now be able to allow enterprise organizations to easily deploy **WalkMe's Digital Adoption Platform** on top of **Microsoft Dynamics 365 without an extension**.
  - **WalkMe offers an all-round solution** to leading organizations worldwide, helping them **ensure employee and customer user adoption** and securing a smooth digital transformation for the organization.
- It will make it easier for **sales to increase productivity and efficiency** and to realize the **full potential of Dynamics 365** within their **technology stack**.

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**  
**Source- PIB**

### **The Salaries, Allowances and Pension of Members of Parliament (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020**

#### Why in the news?

- The **Union Cabinet promulgated an ordinance to reduce the salaries of all the country's Member of Parliaments (MPs) by 30 percent for one year to raise resources for the fight against the novel coronavirus**.
- The **pay cuts in MPs will be implemented by amending the Salaries, Allowances and Pension of Members of Parliament Act, 1954**.

#### Amendment of section 3

- For this purpose, a **new sub-section has been inserted in Section 3 of 'The Salaries, Allowances and Pension of Members of Parliament Act, 1954'** to reduce the **salaries payable to Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha MPs by 30%**.
- This will be **applicable for one year from April 1, 2020**.

#### Constitutional Provision of Article 123

- **Article 123** of the Constitution grants the **President certain law-making powers to promulgate Ordinances** when either of **the two Houses of Parliament** is not in session and hence it is **not possible to enact laws in the Parliament**.
- Following are limitations **exist concerning the Ordinance making power** of the executive
  - a. **The legislature is not in session:** The President can only promulgate an Ordinance when either of the two Houses of Parliament is not in session.



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b. **Immediate action is required:** The President cannot **promulgate an Ordinance unless he is satisfied** that there are circumstances that require taking 'immediate action.'

c. **Parliamentary approval during the session:** Parliament must approve ordinances **within six weeks** of reassembling, or they shall cease to operate.

- They will also **cease to operate in case resolutions disapproving the Ordinance** are passed by **both the Houses**.

#### **Minister of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS)**

- The Cabinet also gave the go-ahead to the **temporary suspension of the MPLADS fund** (Minister of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme) for **two years (2020-21 and 2021-22)**.

- The suspension of the MPLADS fund for two years implies that the **amount which works out to a total of Rs. 7,900 crores will be given to the Consolidated Fund of India**.

#### **What is it?**

- It was launched in **December 1993**, to provide a mechanism for the **Members of Parliament** to recommend **works of developmental nature** for **creation of durable community assets** and provision of basic facilities including **community infrastructure**, based on locally felt needs.

- The **MPLADS is a Plan Scheme** fully funded by **Government of India**.

- The annual **MPLADS fund entitlement per MP constituency is Rs. 5 crores**.

#### **Special focus:**

- MPs are to recommend every year, works costing at least **15 per cent of the MPLADS entitlement for the year for areas inhabited by Scheduled Caste population** and **7.5 per cent for areas inhabited by Scheduled Tribe population**.

- To **encourage trusts and societies for the betterment of tribal people**, a ceiling of **Rs. 75 lakh is stipulated for building assets by trusts** and societies subject to conditions prescribed in the scheme guidelines.

#### **Recommendation of works:**

- The **Lok Sabha Members** can recommend **works in their respective constituencies**.

- The **elected members of the Rajya Sabha** can recommend works anywhere in **the state** from which they are elected.

- **Nominated members of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha** may select **works for implementation anywhere in the country**.

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**

**Source- PIB**

### **Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP)**

#### **Why in the news?**

- **Pharmacists**, popularly known as "**Swasth Ke Sipahi**", of **Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Kendra**, are delivering essential services and medicines at the doorstep of patients and elderly under Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP).



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### About Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana

- Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) is a **campaign launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals to provide quality medicines at affordable prices to the masses**. PMBJP stores have been set up to **provide generic drugs, which are available at lesser prices but are equivalent in quality and efficacy as expensive branded drugs**.
- The **Department of Pharmaceuticals** launched it in **November 2008** under the name **Jan Aushadi Campaign**.
- **Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India (BPPI)** is the **implementation agency for PMBJP**.

### Vision

It envisages to bring down the **healthcare budget expenditure** by a citizen. It seeks to ensure **quality generic medicines at affordable prices**.

### Mission

- Create awareness among the **public regarding generic medicines**.
- Create demand for generic medicines **through medical practitioners**.
- Create awareness through **education and awareness program** that **high price need not be synonymous with high quality**.
- Provide all the commonly used **generic medicines covering all the therapeutic groups**.
- Provide all the **related health care products** too under the scheme.

### Objective

- Making quality medicines available at affordable prices for all, mainly the poor and disadvantaged, through exclusive outlets, "**Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendras**", to **reduce out of pocket expenses** in the healthcare of a citizen.
- It ensures availability of "Quality generic Medicines at Affordable Prices".

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**

**Source- PIB**


### World Health Day 2020

#### Why in the news?

- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** observes **World Health Day on 7 April** every year to acknowledge the contribution of doctors, nurses and other health workers.
- **WHO chose the year 2020** as the "**Year of the Nurse and Midwife**" because of the **contribution which nurses and midwives** are making in making the world a **healthier place**.
- The theme for **World Health Day 2020** is to **support nurses and midwives**.

#### World Health Day 2020: History

- WHO started the **World Health Day campaign in 1950** with the **motive of promoting awareness** about **physical and mental health** and offer the **necessary support**. The main aim is to **create awareness of a specific health theme** to highlight a priority area of concern for the **World Health Organization**.
- 7 April 2020 is the day to celebrate the work of nurses and



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**Note:** The WHO also released a '**State of the World's Nursing Report 2020**' which provides the "**most up-to-date evidence on and policy options for the global nursing workforce**". The report also makes a case for **higher investment in nursing education, jobs and leadership**.

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**  
**Source- The Hindu**

### **Samadhan -MHRD Innovation Cell**

#### **Why in News?**

• Amid the coronavirus outbreak, the **Ministry of Human Resource Development (MoHRD)** launched "**Samadhan**" to fight against COVID-19.

#### **About Samadhan**

- It is an **initiative of the Innovation Cell of the MoHRD and All India Council for Technical Education** in collaboration with **Forge and InnovatioCuris**.
- It is aimed at **testing the ability of students to innovate**.
- Under the "**Samadhan**" challenge, the students and faculty will be motivated for doing new experiments and **discoveries and provide** them with a **strong base leading to a spirit of experimentation and discovery**.



#### **MHRD Mega Online Challenge**

## **SAMADHAN**

#### **TRACK 1**

**Ideate-Simulate-Win**

Inviting student innovators, researchers, educators and startups to share their ideas (design/simulation mandatory) to solve the challenges posed by the pandemic.

#### **TRACK 2**

**Validate-Pitch-Deploy**

Inviting student innovators, researchers, educators and startups with a working prototype of a technologically advanced solutions which can be validated & deployed immediately to support the fight against the the pandemic.

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**  
**Source- TOI**

### **SAFE PLUS Scheme**

#### **Why in the news?**

• The **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** has launched the **SIDBI Assistance to Facilitate Emergency response against Coronavirus (SAFE PLUS) Scheme**.



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### Objective

- It aims to **provide financial assistance** to **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)** that are involved in **making essential items** such as **manufacturing of hand sanitizers, masks, gloves, headgear, bodysuits, shoe-covers, ventilators and goggles** to **combat COVID-19 pandemic**.
- It seeks to ensure quick release of funds with minimum formalities and with no collateral property requisite.



### How will it be beneficial?

- Emergency working capital of up to **one crore rupees** to can be availed by **small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)** against their **confirmed government orders**.
- The **SIDBI Assistance to Facilitate Emergency response** against **Coronavirus - SAFE PLUS** will be offered **collateral-free and disbursed within 48 hours**.
- Loans will be offered at an interest rate of **five per cent**.

The **limit of SAFE loans** announced a few days back has been **enhanced from Rs. 50 lakhs to 2 crores**.

### Eligibility Criteria

- SAFE Scheme:** Both, existing **SIDBI customers** and **new to SIDBI customers** can avail of this loan.
- SAFE Plus Scheme:** MSMEs executing government orders, which are eligible under the respective State Government's special policy package for interest subsidy/subvention or capital subsidy can avail a loan up to Rs. 2 crores.
- SMILE:** SIDBI's existing customers or new to SIDBI customers, both are covered, including greenfield.

### What is covered?

- Production or service of **all medical products** being **procured by the respective State Government** under the **fight against Covid-19**.
- The loans can be used to **acquire equipment, plant and machinery, or other assets** including the **purchase of raw material** required for production or service or to ramp up supplies of these products **to meet additional emergencies**.

### What is not covered?

- Greenfield projects, items not directly related to Covid19, Traders etc.

### Comparative aspects:

SAFE	SAFE Plus	SMILE
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To finance MSMEs who are manufacturing any products or providing any services related to fighting coronavirus such as permitted drugs, sanitisers, masks, bodysuits, gloves, shoe covers, ventilators, testing labs, etc. The list is indicative.	To provide emergency working capital to MSMEs, which are producing goods and services directly related to fighting the coronavirus, against specific orders from the government/government agencies.	A special window available for financing the healthcare sector including hospitals, nursing home, clinics, etc. for their requirements related to fighting Corona Virus.
All existing MSMEs – whether SIDBI’s existing customers or new to SIDBI customers.		SIDBI’s existing customers or new to SIDBI customers, both are covered, including greenfield.
No collateral		As per loan policy
Within 48 hours		5 days
Note: Withdrawals under the scheme shall be valid till 30 September 2020.		

**About Small Industries Development Bank of India**

- The **SIDBI** act as the **Principal Financial Institution** for **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) sector** as well as for **coordination of functions of institutions** engaged in **similar activities**.
- It was **established on April 2, 1990**, through an **Act of Parliament** (thus, it is a **statutory body**).
- It is **headquartered in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh**.
- It aims to **facilitate and strengthen credit flow** to **MSMEs** and address both **financial and developmental gaps** in **MSME eco-system** across the country.
- Currently, the **shares of SIDBI** are held by **the Central Government** and **29 other institutions**, including **public sector banks (PSBs), insurance companies owned and controlled by Central Government**.

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**  
**Source- AIR**


**Integrated Government Online Training (iGOT) Portal**

**Why in the news?**

- The **Government of India** has launched a **training module for the management of COVID-19** named **"Integrated Government Online training" (iGOT) portal** on **DIKSHA platform**.

**About Integrated Government Online Training (iGOT) portal**

- It is **aimed at catering the training needs** of the **frontline workers fighting the COVID-19 pandemic**.
- Courses on **iGOT** have been launched for doctors, nurses, paramedics, hygiene workers, technicians, Auxiliary Nursing Midwives (ANMs), State Government officers,



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civil defence officers, various police organisations, National Cadet Corps (NCC), Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), National Service Scheme, Indian Red Cross Society, Bharat Scouts and Guides and other volunteers.

• It is also **focused on enhancing the capacity building of frontline workers** to handle the **pandemic efficiently**.



### About DIKSHA platform

- It was **launched in 2017** as an initiative of **the Ministry of Human Resource Development**.
- It is **Digital Infrastructure Knowledge Sharing platform** for **education and training**.
- It is equipped with **explanation, practice and assessment content** linked to **NCERT and state curriculum**.
- The portal will **record complete work and accomplishment of teachers in educational institutes** from **start to endpoint** till their retirement.
- It serves as **National Digital Infrastructure for Teachers**.

### Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance

Source- PIB

### Operation SHIELD

#### Why in the news?

- Delhi Chief Minister has recently announced a comprehensive plan **named 'SHIELD'** to **control the spread of coronavirus** in the national capital.

#### What does it stand for?

The acronym SHIELD can be elaborated as follows:

- 'S' stands for Sealing of localities
- 'H' for Home quarantine
- 'I' for Isolation and tracing
- 'E' for Essential supplies
- 'L' for to Local sanitization,
- 'D' for Door-to-door checking



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### About the SHIELD Plan

- The Operation Shield will be **implemented in 21 localities** identified as **containment zones in Delhi**.
- It is a comprehensive plan named 'SHIELD' to control the spread of coronavirus in the national capital.
- **Sealing of localities:** People from a locality will not go to other areas and vice-versa.
- **Home quarantine:** People will remain in their homes only.
- **Isolation and tracing:** COVID-19 patients will be isolated, and people whom they have met will be traced, identified and will be isolated too.
- **Essential supplies:** The Delhi Govt will ensure door to door delivery of essential services.
- **Local sanitization:** Local areas will be disinfected on a regular basis.
- **Door-to-door checking:** The govt will ask every family whether there is any person having symptoms of coronavirus. If any such person is found, their samples will be taken, and further procedure will be followed.

### Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance

#### Source- Business Standard

### R0 (R zero) or reproduction number

#### Why in the news?

- Researchers are recently calculating **mathematical figure 'R0'** to understand the nature of **transmission of Coronavirus**.

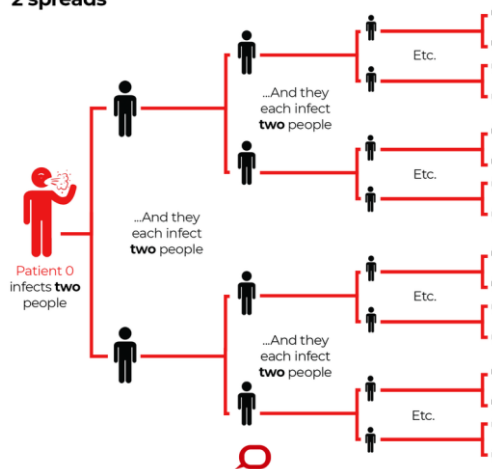
#### What is Basic reproduction number (R0)

- It **measures the rate at which a virus is transmitted based on the average number of people** who will contract the virus from a person who has already been infected.
- **R0 = new infections/existing infections**
- When the **R0 is 1**, it means the **number of infected persons in a population is constant**. For every person who is cured of the disease or dies due to it, there will be one new case in the population.
- By this logic, **the ideal scenario is when the R0 is below 1**, means the infection is transmitted to fewer people.
- When such a rate is maintained over a considerable period of time, the disease is eradicated.



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### How a virus with a reproduction number (R0) of 2 spreads



- **World Health Organization (WHO)** has estimated the **R0** for coronavirus at **1.4 to 2.5**.
- The same strategy has been used in the past for **eliminating diseases such as polio and smallpox**. **Note:** The **higher the R0**, the **more contagious the infection**.

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Health and Issues**

**Source- Indian Express**

### Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Minor Forest Produces

#### Why in the news?

- **Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED)** has asked the **State Nodal Departments and Implementing Agencies** to initiate **procurement of Minor Forest Produces (MFPs)** at **Minimum Support Price (MSP)** from the available funds under **MSP for MFP Scheme**.

#### About MSP for MFP scheme:

- The Minimum Support Price (MSP) for the MFP scheme was **started by the Government of India in 2013** to **ensure fair and remunerative prices** to MFP gatherers.
- It is a **Central Sector scheme**. Under the scheme "**Mechanism for Marketing of Minor Forest Produce** through Minimum Support Price and **development of Value chain for MFP**."
- **Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Minor Forest Produce (MFP)** has been fixed for select MFP.
- The Scheme is designed as a **social safety net** for **improvement of livelihood of MFP gatherers** by providing them with a fair price for the MFPs they collect.

#### Objectives of the Schemes

- To **provide a fair price to the MFP gatherers** for the produce collected by them and enhance their income level
- To **ensure sustainable harvesting** of MFPs.



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- The Scheme will have a huge social dividend for MFP gatherers, the majority of whom are tribals.

### Implementation

- The Scheme has been **implemented in eight States** having **Schedule areas** as listed in the **Fifth Schedule of the constitution of India**.
- **Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India**, is the Nodal Ministry for implementation of the Scheme.
- From **November 2016**, the Scheme is **applicable in all States**.
- **TRIFED acts as the Central Nodal Agency** for implementation and monitoring of the Scheme through State level implementing agencies.
- Further, the **State designated agencies** will undertake procurement of **notified MFPs directly from MFP gatherers** at haats **notified procurement centres at grass root level at prefixed Minimum Support Price**.

### List of Commodities covered under Minor Forest Produce

Minimum Support Price Scheme includes the following non-nationalized / non-monopolized MFPs.



- Nearly fifty items are covered under the list:

Tamarind (with seeds), Wild Honey, Gum Karaya, Karanj seeds, Sal seed, Mahua seed, Sal leaves, Chironji pods with seeds, Myrobalan, Lac, Kusum seeds, Neem seeds, Puwad seeds, Baheda, Hill Broom Grass, Dry Shikakai Pods, Bael pulp (Dried), Nagarmotha, Shatavari Roots (Dried), Gudmar/Madhunashini, Kalmegh, Tamarind (De-seeded), Guggul, Mahua Flowers (dried), Tejpatta (dried), Jamun dried seeds, Dried Amla Pulp (deseeded), Marking Nut, Soap Nut (dried), Bhava Seed (Amaltas), Arjuna Bark, Kokum (Dry), Giloe, Kaunch Seed, Chirata, Vaybidding/Vavding (dry seeds), Vaybidding/Vavding (dry seeds) Dhavaiphool dried flowers, Nux Vomica, Ban Tulsi Leaves (dried), Kshirni, Bakul (dried bark), Kutaj (dried bark), Noni / Aal (dried fruits), Sonapatha/Syonak pods, Chanothi seeds, Kalihari (dried tubers), Makoi (dried fruits), Apang plant, Sugandhmantri roots/tubers.

**Note:** It is important to have a glance at the list as UPSC sometimes frames questions on commodities included in MSPs.



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Source- PIB

### YUKTI Portal

#### Why in the news?

- Union Human Resource Development Minister has launched a web-portal **YUKTI (Young India Combating COVID with Knowledge, Technology and Innovation)** in New Delhi.

#### About the YUKTI Portal

- It's a **unique portal and dashboard to monitor the initiatives of HRD Ministry – in academics, research and social initiatives – taken in the wake of COVID-19.**
- This portal will **help in critical issues related to student promotion policies, placements related challenges and physical and mental well-being of students** in these challenging times.



- The portal will also **allow various institutions to share their strategies** for various challenges because of coronavirus.
- It will also establish a **two-way communication channel between the Ministry of HRD and the institutions** so that the Ministry can provide the **necessary support system** to the institutions.

## Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance

Source- The Hindu

### Red, orange and green zones under the lockdown

#### Why in the news?

- The **Central government** is likely to **categorize the country into red, orange and green zones** depending on the number of **Covid-19 cases during the proposed extended period of lockdown.**

These zones can be explained as follows:

- **Red zone** It is a zone where **a sizeable number of cases** have been detected or areas which were **declared hotspots.**
- **No activity will be allowed** in the red zone
- **Orange zones**
- It is a **zone where only a few cases were detected** in the past with **no increase in the number of cases.**



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- In these zone, **minimal activities like opening of limited public transport, harvesting of farm products** will be allowed in orange zones.
- **Green Zone**
- It is a zone where there were **none of the cases concerning the viral outbreak**.
- It will see **further relaxation such as MSME industries** will be allowed to **function with in-house lodging facilities** for employees with proper maintenance of social distance.

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**  
**Source- HT**

### **Market Intervention Scheme (MIS)**

#### **Why in the news?**

- The **Central government** has asked the **state governments to procure perishable agricultural and horticultural items** from the **farmers under the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS)**.

#### **About the Market Intervention Scheme**

- As the name suggests, MIS is a **Non-Plan Scheme**, implemented **on the request of State Governments**.
- MIS is an **ad-hoc scheme** under which are **included horticultural commodities and other agricultural commodities which are perishable**, and which **are not covered under the minimum price support scheme**.
- It is a **price support mechanism** implemented for **procurement of perishable and horticultural commodities** in the **event of a fall in market prices**.
- Market Intervention Scheme **works similarly to the Minimum Support Price based procurement mechanism** for food grains **but is an ad-hoc mechanism**.

#### **Objective of the MIS:**

- To intervene the market **to protect the growers of their commodities from making distress sale** in the event of a **bumper crop during the peak arrival period** when the prices tend to fall below economic levels and cost of production.

#### **Salient features**

- The Scheme is implemented when there is at least a **10% increase in production or a 10% decrease in the ruling rates over the previous normal year**.
- The **Department of Agriculture & Cooperation** is implementing the Scheme.
- The central share of losses as per the guidelines of MIS is released to the State Governments/UTs, for which MIS has been approved, based on specific proposals received from them.
- A **pre-determined quantity at a fixed Market Intervention Price (MIP)** is procured by the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED).
- Further, the extent of the total amount of loss shared is restricted to 25% of the total procurement value, which includes the cost of the commodity procured plus permitted overhead expenses.
- NAFED as the Central agency and the agencies designated by the state government for a fixed period or till the prices are stabilized above the MIP whichever is earlier.
- The area of operation is restricted to the concerned state only.



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### Eligibility to avail MIS

- The amount of loss is shared on **50:50 basis** between the **Central government and the State government** (on **75:25 basis in case of North-Eastern States**) and is restricted to 25 % of the total procurement value.
- In other words, the proposal of MIS is approved on the specific request of State/Union Territory (UT) Government, if the **State/UT Government** is ready to **bear 50% loss (25% in case of North-Eastern States)**, if any, incurred on its implementation.

### Commodities covered under the MIS

- The MIS has been implemented in case of commodities:  
Apples, kinnoo/malta, garlic, oranges, galgal, grapes, mushrooms, clove, black pepper, pineapple, ginger, red-chillies, coriander seed, isabgol, chicory, onions, potatoes, cabbage, mustard seed, castor seed, copra, palm oil etc.
- The States/UTs, where MIS is implemented are:  
Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Kerala, Jammu and Kashmir, Mizoram, Sikkim, Meghalaya, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep etc.

### Comparative aspects

Particulars	Minimum Support Price	Market Intervention Scheme
<b>Commodities included</b>	Fixed, presently 24	Not fixed
<b>Regularity</b>	Regularly announced every year	Not regular but ad-hoc
<b>Support Price</b>	Decided by GoI in the recommendation of CACP	Decided by Central or State Govt
<b>Applicability</b>	Throughout the country	Specified limited markets of the states
<b>Time of Operation</b>	Throughout the year	Specified period
<b>Incidences of losses if any</b>	Borne by Central government	Equally shared by the central and state governments
<b>Infrastructure required for implementation</b>	Large scale	Limited Scale

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**

**Source- PIB**

### **CollabCAD launched in ATL schools**

#### **Why in the news?**

- Recently, **Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog and National Informatics Centre (NIC)** jointly launched **CollabCAD**.

#### **About CollabCAD**



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- It is a **collaborative network, computer enabled software system**, providing a total engineering solution from **2D drafting & detailing to 3D product design**.
- **The aim** of this initiative is to **provide a great platform** to students of **Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs)** across the country **to create and modify 3d designs** with free flow of creativity and imagination.
- This software would also **enable students to create data** across the network and concurrently **access the same design data for storage and visualization**.

#### **About Atal Innovation Mission**

- Atal Innovation Mission housed at **NITI Aayog** is the **Government of India's flagship initiative** to **promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship**.
- **At the school level**, AIM is establishing ATLs in all districts across India.
- ATLs established across India, provide **tinkering spaces to children to hone their innovative ideas** and creativity.

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**

**Source- The Hindu**

### **Amendments to Environment Impact Assessment (EIA)**

#### **Why in the news?**

- To ramp up **availability/production of various drugs against COVID-19**, **Ministry of Environment** has amended **Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification 2006**.



#### **Highlights of the amendments**

- All projects or activities in respect of **bulk drugs and intermediates, manufactured for addressing various ailments, have been re-categorized from the existing Category 'A' to 'B2' category**.
- Projects falling under **Category B2** are **exempted from the requirement of collection of Baseline data, EIA Studies and public consultation**.
- The re-categorization of such proposals has been done to **facilitate decentralization of appraisal to State Level to fast track the process**.
- This amendment applies **to all proposals received up to 30th September 2020**.

#### **What are the important procedural changes in EIA?**

- **Screening:** It is the first and most straightforward process in the project that do not require EIA.



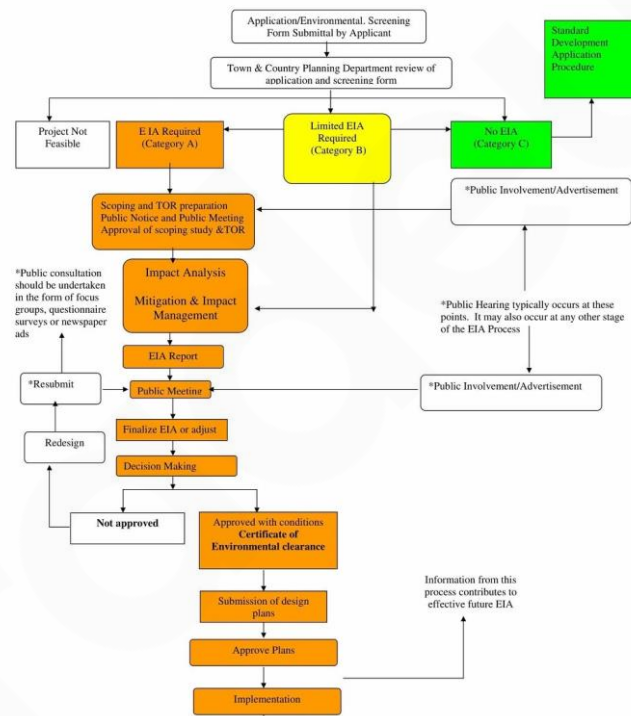
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- **Identification:** A project is defined and identified; all aspects are taken into account from range to the reach of the project. By doing so, the possible zone of environmental impacts is considered.
- **Scope:** After a preliminary assessment, discussions with developers, investors and regulatory bodies are carried out, and issues are addressed diligently.
- **Impact Prediction:** Both qualitative and quantitative impacts are considered, such as changes in air quality, noise levels, impact on wildlife, impact on biodiversity, impact on local communities etc.
- **Mitigation:** Measures are taken to avert the negative impact if any, and scopes concerning the project. This is done in preventive, corrective and compensatory means.
- **Review:** Detailed project report and questionnaire filled therein, is taken into account with due care.

Generalized EIA Process Flowchart



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**Source- PIB**

**National Legal Services Authority**

**Why in the news?**

- The **National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)** has released around **11,077 undertrials from prisons** nationwide as part of the mission to decongest jails following the COVID-19 pandemic.



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### About NALSA

• It has been constituted under the **Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987**, to **provide free legal services to weaker sections of society**. The aim is to **ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reasons of economic or other disabilities**.

### Composition

- As per **section 3(2) of the Legal Service Authorities Act**, the **Chief Justice of India** shall be the **Patron-in-Chief**.
- Second **senior-most judge of the Supreme Court of India** is the Executive-Chairman.

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**

**Source- The Hindu**

### **Fit India Active Day Programme**

#### Why in the news?

- **Fit India and CBSE will organize first-ever live fitness sessions for school students** in the **second phase of lockdown**.
- The live sessions will **cover all aspects of children’s fitness** from **daily workouts to yoga, nutrition to emotional well-being**.

#### About Fit India Movement

- It was **launched in 2019 by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports** to encourage people to **inculcate physical activity and sports** in their everyday lives.
- **Fit India** is the Government of India’s **flagship fitness movement**, has launched the **Fit India Active Day Program**.
- **Fit India, in partnership with Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)** is organizing a **live session for school students**, which is a new series of fitness sessions.



- The **online lessons** commenced on 15th April 2020 at 9.30 am and would be available on **Facebook, and Instagram handles of Fit India and CBSE**, as well as on YouTube.
- During the program **guidelines of Ministry of AYUSH** to stay healthy were shared with students.



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The lessons comprise **daily workouts and information on yoga, nutrition, and emotional well-being.**

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**

**Source- AIR**

### **Kisan Rath Mobile App**

#### **Why in the news?**

• **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare** has recently **launched Kisan Rath Mobile App to facilitate transportation of food grains and perishables** during lockdown.

#### **About the Kisan Rath Mobile App**

• This **mobile application is developed by the National Informatics Centre** to ensure farmers and traders are able to find **transport for Agriculture and Horticulture produce.**

• It will **facilitate farmers, FPOs and Cooperatives in the country** to have the **choice to find a suitable transport facility to transfer their agriculture produce** from farm gate to markets.

• The app will **facilitate farmers and traders** in searching for **transport vehicles for primary and secondary transportation** for movement of agriculture and horticulture produce.

a. The **primary transportation** include **movement from farm to mandis**, food produce collection centre and warehouses.

b. The **secondary transportation** would include **movement from mandis to intra-state and inter-state mandis**, processing units, railway station, warehouses and wholesalers.



#### **Highlights of the App functioning**

• The farmer, FPOs, buyer/ trader will place a requirement for transportation which will be disseminated to transport aggregators in the market.

• The transport aggregators will then interface with truckers and fleet owners for obtaining a competitive quote.

• Then the quote by truckers will be passed back to the consignor.

• the consignor will directly negotiate offline with the trucker and finalize the deal.

• The consignor can also share their feedback and give ratings to the truckers on the app.

• The rating would help the consignors in the selection process of logistics service providers in future.



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**Source- AIR**

**Government nod mandatory for FDI from neighboring countries**

**Why in the news?**

- The **Union government** recently made its **prior approval mandatory for foreign investments** from countries that **share land border with India** to curb "**opportunistic takeovers**" of domestic firms following the **Covid-19 pandemic**, a move which will **restrict FDI from China**.
- Countries which **shares land borders with India** are **China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, and Afghanistan**.



**Changes adopted by government**

- According to **Department for promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**, an entity of a country, which **shares land border with India** or where the **beneficial owner of an investment into India** is situated in or is a citizen of any such country, **can invest only under the government route**.
- In the event of the **transfer of ownership of any existing or future FDI** in an entity in India, **directly or indirectly**, resulting in the **Govt approval must for all FDI**s from neighboring countries.
- **A citizen of Pakistan or an entity incorporated in Pakistan can invest, only under the Government route**, in sectors/activities other than defense, space, atomic energy and sectors/activities prohibited for foreign investment.

**FDI in India**

- FDI is an **important monetary source** for **India's economic development**. Economic liberalization **started in India** in the **wake of the 1991 crisis** and since then, **FDI has steadily increased** in the country.
- India is **globally ranking number one** in the **Greenfield FDI ranking**.

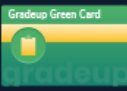
**Routes through which India gets FDI:**

**What are the provisions of an 'Automatic route'?**

- The **non-resident or Indian company** does not **require prior nod of the RBI or government of India for FDI**.
- FDI is **allowed through automatic route** in **most of the sectors**, certain areas such as **defence, telecom, media, pharmaceuticals and insurance, government approval is required** for foreign investors.

**What is the Government route?**

- The government's approval is mandatory.



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- The company will have to **file an application through Foreign Investment Facilitation Portal**, which facilitates **single-window clearance**.
- The application is then **forwarded to the respective ministry**, which will **approve/reject the application** in consultation with the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**, Ministry of Commerce.
- **DPIIT** will issue the **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)** for processing of applications under the **existing FDI policy**.

### Sectors where FDI prohibited

- There are **nine sectors where FDI is prohibited** and that includes lottery business, gambling and betting, chit funds, Nidhi Company, real estate business, and manufacturing of cigars, cheroots, cigarillos and cigarettes using tobacco.

### Topic- GS Paper 3–Economics

Source- The Hindu

### A, E, I, O, U: A new business and work culture

#### Why in the news?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi with his post on LinkedIn, emphasized that the **new business and work culture** should be redefined on the vowels of **A, E, I, O, U** will become **essential ingredients of any business model in the post-COVID world**.



- The acronym of '**A, E, I, O, U**' can be elaborated as:

**A - Adaptability**

**E - Efficiency**

**I - Inclusivity**

**O - Opportunity**

**U - Universalism**

- He also emphasized on the **need to develop business models** that attach **primacy to care for the poor, the most vulnerable as well as the planet**.

**a. Adaptability:** The need of the hour is to think of business and lifestyle models that are easily adaptable. Embracing digital payments is a prime example of adaptability. Shop owners big and small should invest in digital tools that keep commerce connected, especially in times of crisis.

- **India** is already witnessing an **encouraging surge in digital transactions**. Another example is **telemedicine- several consultations** without actually going to the clinic or hospital.



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b. **Efficiency (E):** this is the time to think of reimagining what we refer to as being efficient. Efficiency cannot only be about- how much time was spent in the office. The emphasis should be on completing a task in the specified time frame.

c. **Inclusivity (I):** develop business models that attach primacy to care for the poor, the most vulnerable as well as our planet. There is a significant future in developing technologies and practices that reduce our impact on the planet. With investment in innovations there is a need to make sure that farmers have access to information, machinery, and markets no matter what the situation, that our citizens have access to essential goods.

d. **Opportunity (O):** Every crisis brings with it an opportunity. COVID-19 is no different. Evaluate what might be the new opportunities/growth areas that would emerge now. India must be ahead of the curve in the post-COVID world. our skills sets, our core capabilities can be used in doing so.

e. **Universalism (U):** COVID-19 does not see race, religion, color, caste, creed, language, or border before striking. The response and conduct thereafter should attach primacy to unity and brotherhood.

### Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance

Source- PIB

#### National Vaccine Task Force

#### Why in the news?

- The **central government** has recently **constituted another national task force on vaccine development and drug testing**.

#### Functions

- The **main job of this task force** will be to work as a **bridge between academia, research institutions, and international collaborations** in the field of drug testing and vaccine development.
- The task force will **create clinical cohorts focussing on long term follow-up of people for better understanding of the disease**.
- It will also **collect bio-specimens** which will form the basis for further **trials of drugs and vaccines**. **Department of Biotechnology (DBT)** work as a **Central coordinating authority of the task force**.
- DBT will also **monitor the progress of research works** and facilitate the process

#### Members

- The task force has been **representatives from the ministry of Ayyash (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy)** among others as members.
- The other members will be from the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, department of science and technology (**DST**), Department of Biotechnology (**DBT**), the council of scientific and industrial research (**CSIR**), defence research and development organization (**DRDO**), directorate general of health services (**DGHS**) and drug controller general of India (**DCGI**).

### Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance

Source- PIB



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## **Strategic petroleum reserves**

### **Why in the news?**

- **Ministry for Petroleum & Natural Gas** has allowed the **domestic public sector refiners** to use the **strategic petroleum reserves (SPR)** for **storing their oil purchases** due to **low global oil price**.

### **Objective**

- These oil reserves are a **boost to the energy security of the nation** as they act as a **buffer against volatility** in crude oil prices.

### **About Strategic Petroleum Reserves**

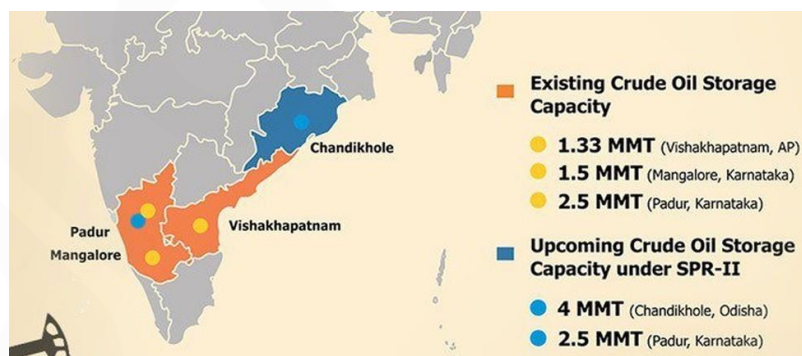
- It is a **national supply of emergency crude oil** established primarily to **reduce the impact of disruption in supplies**.
- The **construction and maintenance of the strategic petroleum reserves (SPR)** are given to the **Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd (ISPRL)**.

### **About Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited**

- It is **responsible for maintaining** the **country's strategic petroleum reserves**.
- ISPRL is wholly owned **subsidiary of Oil Industry Development Board (OIDB)** which functions under the **administrative control** of **Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas**.

### **Background of Strategic Petroleum Reserves**

- Due to the **first Gulf War in the year 1990**, **crude oil prices** in the international market had been **very high**, due to which **India's Foreign Exchange Reserves have declined**, and India had foreign currency reserve just (\$ 1.2 billion) to pay import bill of only three weeks.
- Indian Government learned a new lesson from this incident.
- To get a **long-term solution to this problem**, the **Government** had given the idea to **construct oil reserves in India** in **1998**.



### **Locations of Indian Petroleum Reserves**

- The Strategic Petroleum Reserve programme in India is being developed in several phases.
- In **Phase I**, strategic oil storages are built at **Mangalore (1.55 MMT, Karnataka), Padur ( 2.5 MMT, Karnataka) and Visakhapatnam ( 1.33 MMT, Odisha)**.
- It has a storage capacity of 5.33 million tonnes.



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- In **Phase II**, two more underground reserves will be developed at **Chandikhol (Odisha) and Udupi (Karnataka)**, giving an **extra storage capacity of 6.5 million tonnes**. It will amount to 12 days of national consumption.

### Why India Need Strategic Petroleum Reserves?

- **India** is **one** of the **largest importers** and consumer of crude oil and natural gas.
- Due to this, India is **vulnerable to global oil shocks** which could occur out of any reason- **economic, political or natural**.
- In **1990, the Gulf War** led to an energy crisis in India which is at that time **India's oil reserves** were **adequate only for three days**.
- Despite promising to move to **non-fossil fuel-based resources for 40% power generation by 2030**, India's dependence on fossils is **not visible** to go down anytime soon.

**Note:** The **USA, China and Japan** are the nations with the **biggest Global Strategic Petroleum Reserves**.

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**

**Source- PIB**

### **VidyaDaan 2.0 for inviting e-learning content contributions**

#### Why in the news?

- **Human Resources and Development Minister** has launched a **national program VidyaDaan 2.0** for inviting **e-learning Content contributions** in New Delhi.

#### About VidyaDaan

- It is a **common national programme** to develop and **contribute e-learning content** and a chance to be recognized nationally.
- It provides a **platform for individuals and organizations across the country** to contribute e-learning resources for both school and higher education to ensure continuity of quality learning.
- The content will be used on the **DIKSHA app** to help millions of **children across the country to continue their learning** anytime and anywhere.

#### About Diksha - National Teacher Platform

- The DIKSHA Platform of the **Ministry has been operating since 2017** with **more than 30 States and Union Territories** leveraging DIKSHA for augmenting teaching and learning processes.

#### National Teacher Platform envisages providing:

- **Teacher training courses** (example - training on learning outcomes, CCE, etc.)
- **Teaching resources** such as lesson plans, concept videos, worksheets, mapped to the curriculum
- **Assessments for teachers**, to find out their strengths and areas of improvement
- Teachers will be able to **access this material offline on their smartphones**, tablets and other devices anytime and anywhere.
- **The material will be contextualized to local languages** as well as mapped to the curriculum.



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**Source- PIB**

### **Cabinet approves fixation of Nutrient Based Subsidy rates**

#### **Why in the news?**

- The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs** has recently given its **approval for fixation of Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) rates** for **Phosphatic and Potassic (P&K) Fertilizers** for the year **2020-21**.



#### **New Addition in NBS scheme**

- The **CCEA** also recently approved the **inclusion of a complex fertilizer**, namely **Ammonium Phosphate (NP 14:28:0:0)** under the NBS Scheme.

#### **About Nutrient Based Subsidy Scheme**

- **Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) programme** for fertilizer was **initiated in the year 2010**. Under the scheme, a **fixed amount of subsidy** decided on an **annual basis** is provided on each grade of **subsidized Phosphatic and Potassic (P&K) fertilizers**, except for Urea, based on the nutrient content present in them.
- It is largely for **secondary nutrients like Nitrogen, Phosphorous, Sulphur and Potassium and micronutrients** which are very important for crop growth and development.
- The Department of Fertilizers is implementing the scheme.

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**  
**Source- The Hindu**

### **Ordinance to amend the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897**

#### **Why in the News?**

- Recently the **President of India** has approved **promulgation of an Ordinance** to amend the **Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897** to **protect healthcare service personnel and property** including their living/working premises against violence during epidemics.



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- The Ordinance is **intended to ensure** that during any situation akin to the current pandemic, there is **zero-tolerance to any form of violence against healthcare service personnel and damage to property.**

#### **Key Provision of the Ordinance**

- The **Ordinance provides for making acts of violence cognizable and non-bailable offences.** It has **provisions for compensation for injury to healthcare service personnel** or for causing damage or loss to the property in which healthcare service personnel may have a direct interest concerning the epidemic.
- **Violence** includes **harassment and physical injury and damage to property.**

#### **Healthcare service personnel include**

- a. **Public and clinical healthcare service providers** such as doctors, nurses, paramedical workers, and community health workers.
- b. Any other persons **empowered under the Act** to take measures to **prevent the outbreak of the disease or spread thereof.**
- c. **Any persons declared** as such by the **State Government, by notification in the Official Gazette.**

#### **Punishment**

- Punishment can be **imprisonment for a term of three months to five years** and with fine of **Rs.50,000/- to Rs.2,00,000/-.**
- In case of causing grievous hurt, imprisonment shall be for a term six months to seven years and with fine of Rs.1,00,000/- to Rs.5,00,000/-.

#### **About Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897**

- The **Epidemic Diseases Act** was **introduced by the British** to tackle the **epidemic of bubonic plague** that **broke out in the then state of Bombay.**
- This law aims to **provide for the better prevention** of the spread of dangerous epidemic diseases.
- Under the Act, **temporary provisions or regulations** can be made to be observed by the public to **tackle or prevent the outbreak of a disease.**
- The **Epidemics Diseases Act** is **routinely enforced across the country** for dealing with outbreaks of diseases such as **Swine Flu, Dengue.**

#### **Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**

**Source- AIR**

#### **Parliamentary Committee on Labour**

##### **Why in the news?**

- Recently **Parliamentary Committee on Labour** in its report on the **Industrial Relations Code, 2019**, has recommended that **“in case of natural calamities, payment of wages to the workers** until the **re-establishment of the industry** may be **“unjustifiable”.**
- **Bhartruhari Mahtab** is the **chairman of Parliamentary Committee on Labour.**

##### **Recommendation of the Committee**

- The Committee has suggested that **clarity be brought in so that employers** not **responsible for closure or lay off**, are not **disadvantaged in case of such natural**



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**calamity of high intent.** The basic idea about **recommendations is that the industry** should also not be forced when the **situation is beyond their control.**

- The law must be **reasonable, and it is for the government to step in** and extend a **helping hand for the industries.**

#### **About the Industrial Relations Code 2019:**

- It is an **amalgamation of three laws - Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, Trade Unions Act, 1926, and Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946.**

- The **Industrial Code** makes it **incumbent upon the employer to pay 50% wages** to the **workers/employees who are laid off due to shortage of power, coal, raw material etc. for 45 days.**

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**

**Source- The Hindu**

### **Technology Development Board**

#### **Why in the news?**

- **Technology Development Board (TDB)** has recently **approved funding for Mylab Discovery Solutions** to develop **Covid-19 kits.**

#### **Objective:**

- To provide **financial assistance to Indian industrial concerns** and other agencies **attempting development and commercial application of indigenous technology** or adapting **imported technology** to wider domestic applications.



#### **About the Technology Development Board (TDB)**

- It is a **statutory body established in 1996** under the **Technology Development Board Act, 1995.** The **TDB** works under the **Department of Science and Technology, Ministry of Science and Technology.** The TDB is the **first organization of its kind** within the government framework with the sole objective of commercializing the fruit of indigenous research.

- The Board plays a pro-active role by encouraging enterprises to take up technology-oriented products.

#### **Composition**

- It consists of **11 members with Secretary, Department of Science & Technology** as Ex-officio Chairperson.



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### Functions of the Board:

- **Facilitates interaction** between industry, scientists, technocrats, and specialists
- Fosters and **innovation culture** through the contract and cooperative research between industry and institutions
- Provides an **interface with financial institutions** and commercial banks for leveraging funds
- Facilitates the **creation of a new generation of entrepreneurs**
- **Assists partnerships** with other, similar technology financing bodies
- Provides vistas for **venturing into hi-tech areas**
- Creates **new job opportunities**.

### About Mylab Discovery Solutions

- It is a **Pune-based firm developing a diagnostic kit** for Covid-19.
- Mylab was the first Indian firm to **develop a real-time PCR-based molecular diagnostic kit**, which can **screen people who display flu-like symptoms**, based on **nasal and throat swabs collected** from them.
- The **development and deployment of these kits** will result in a reduction of dependence on imported Covid-19 test kits.
- **Mylab kit** has already been approved by the **Indian Council of Medical Research** and **Central Drugs Standard Control Organization**.

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**

**Source- Hindustan Times**

### **e -Gram Swaraj Portal and the mobile app**

#### **Why in the news?**

- Prime Minister has recently launched **Gram Swaraj portal & the mobile app** at the occasion of **National Panchayati Raj Day (April 24)**.



#### **Objective:**

- To strengthen **e-Governance in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)** across the country, **Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR)** has launched **eGramSwaraj**, a **user-friendly web-based portal**. 'eGramSwaraj' aims to bring in **better transparency** in the **decentralized planning, progress reporting** and **work-based accounting**.



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### About the e-Gram Swaraj Portal

- It is a **user-friendly web-based portal**. eGram Swaraj which aims to bring in better **transparency in the decentralized planning**, progress reporting and work-based accounting.
- It will ensure real-time monitoring and accountability and is a significant step towards digitization down to the Gram Panchayat level.

### National Panchayati Raj Day

- **National Panchayati Raj Day** is the national day of Panchayati Raj System in India celebrated by Ministry of Panchayati Raj on **24 April annually**.
- The then **Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh** declared the first National Panchayati Raj Day on 24 April 2010. He mentioned that if Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) functioned properly and locals participated in the development process, the Maoist threat could be countered.
- Addressing the Elected Representatives, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on **24 April 2015** called for an end to the practice of "husbands of women sarpanches" or "sarpanch pati" exercising undue influence on the work of their wives elected to power.
- He also interacted with various gram panchayats across the country through a video conference as the nation continues to battle COVID-19.

### Highlights

- **Two important schemes for rural welfare** which **seek to employ technology and connect gram panchayats** on a seamless platform for advisory, regulation and service provision.
- The first is the **e-gram Swaraj** portal that will **help in the digitization of gram panchayats across the country**. This will be the **single platform for all digital needs of gram panchayats**. A **single interface to prepare and implement** the government's Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP).
- This portal will also help in settling land and property disputes and loan availability in rural areas.
- The service will be rolled out in six states, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Haryana before gradually expanding to other areas.
- He launched the **Swamitva** scheme which provides for an integrated property validation solution for rural India.
- The **surveying and demarcation of inhabited land in rural areas** will be done **using latest surveying methods** such as **drone technology** with the **collaborated efforts** of the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj, State Panchayati Raj Departments, State Revenue Departments and Survey of India**.

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance, Source- AIR**

### **Swamitva Yojana to boost rural economy**

#### **Why in the news?**

- Recently the Prime Minister has launched 'Swamitva Yojana' or Ownership Scheme to map residential land ownership in the rural sector using modern technology like the use of drones.

#### **Objective**



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- **Swamitva Yojana** is aimed to **create property ownership** record of land in **villages and empower the rural population** with a grant of an official document confirming their ownership of land titles.

#### About the Swamitva Yojana

- The **Swamitva scheme**, which is **launched in pilot mode in 6 states** helps to **map rural inhabited lands using drones** and latest survey methods.
- Swamitva Yojana is aimed to **create property ownership record of land in villages** and **empower the rural population** with a grant of an official document confirming their ownership of land titles.
- The **residential land** in communities will be **measured using drones to create a non-disputable record**. It is the **latest technology for surveying and measuring of land**.

#### Agencies/Department Involved

- The scheme will be carried out in **close coordination with** the Central Panchayati Raj ministry, Survey of India, Panchayati Raj departments and Revenue departments of various states.

#### Benefits

- Drones will draw a **digital map of every property falling** within the **geographical limits of a village and demarcate the boundaries of every revenue area**.
- **Property card for every property** in the town will be **prepared by states** using **accurate measurements delivered** by drone-mapping.
- These cards will be **given to property owners** and will be **recognised by the land revenue records department**.
- The **delivery of property rights** through an **official document will enable villagers to access bank finance using their property as collateral**.
- The **property records for a village** will also be **maintained at the Panchayat level**, allowing for the **collection of associated taxes from the owners**.
- The **money generated from these local taxes** will be used to **build rural infrastructure and facilities**.
- The **accurate property records** can be used for **facilitating tax collection**, new building and structure plan, issuing of permits and for thwarting attempts at property grabbing

#### Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance

Source- PIB

#### Central Vigilance Commissioner

##### Why in the news?

- Shri Sanjay Kothari was **sworn in as the Central Vigilance Commissioner**.

##### About the Central Vigilance Commission

- The **Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)** was set up by the **Government in 1964 on the recommendations of the Committee on Prevention of Corruption**, headed by K. Santhanam.
- It is a **statutory body governed by the Central Vigilance Commission Act 2003**.



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### Purpose

• The **main purpose** for which this **important body** had been **established was to ensure all sorts of corruptions in the government sector could be well prevented and addressed minutely**. It will include inquiring **into offences** alleged to have been committed under the **Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988** by specific categories of **public servants of the Central Government, corporations established by or under any Central Act**, Government Companies, societies and local authorities owned or controlled by Central Government.

### Composition:

• The **Commission shall consist of a Central Vigilance Commissioner (Chairperson)**; and not more than two **Vigilance Commissioners (Members)**.

### Appointment:

The President appoints them on the recommendation of a committee consisting of

- the **Prime Minister (Chairperson)**
- the **Minister of home affairs**
- the **Leader of the Opposition in the House of the People.**

**Note:** It is often considered a **powerless agency** as it is **treated as an advisory body** only with **no power to register a criminal case** against **government officials or direct CBI** to initiate **inquiries against any officer of the level of Joint Secretary and above**.

Topic- GS Paper 2–Polity

Source- The Hindu

### Ventilator Intervention Technology Accessible Locally (VITAL)

#### Why in the news?

• **NASA engineers** have developed a new, **easy-to-build high-pressure ventilator** called **VITAL**, specifically to **treat COVID-19 patients**.



#### About Ventilator Intervention Technology Accessible Locally



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- It is designed to **treat patients with milder symptoms**, thereby keeping **the country's limited supply of traditional ventilators** available for patients with **more severe COVID-19 symptoms**.

#### Benefits

- **VITAL** can be **built faster and maintained more easily** than a **traditional ventilator**, and is composed of **far fewer parts**, many of which are currently available to potential manufacturers through **existing supply chains**.
- **NASA** is now **seeking FDA approval** for the **device via an emergency use authorization**, a **fast-track approval process** developed for crisis situations that takes just **days rather than years**.

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**

**Source- AIR**

### **Mid-day meals Scheme**

#### **Why in the news?**

- **Union Government** has recently announced around **11 per cent increase in annual central allocation** of cooking cost under Mid-day meal scheme to **8,100 crores** in view of the situation arising out of COVID-19.

#### **About Mid-day meals Scheme**

- It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**.

#### **Objectives**

- To **enhance the enrolment and attendance** and simultaneously **improve nutritional levels** among school-going children studying in **Classes I to VIII of Government**, Government - aided schools, Special Training Centres (STC) and Madarasas and Maktabas supported under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.
- The **Midday Meal Scheme** is covered by the **National Food Security Act, 2013**.

#### **Background of the Mid-day meal scheme**

- In 1925, a **Mid-Day Meal Programme** was introduced for disadvantaged children in **Madras Municipal Corporation**.
- The **National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE)** was launched as a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** on **15th August 1995**, initially in **2408 blocks** in the country.
- It was **further extended in 2002** to cover **not only children in classes I -V of Government, Government aided and local body schools**, but also children studying in **Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS)** and **Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE)** centres.
- In **October 2007**, the scheme was **further revised to cover children in upper primary (classes VI to VIII)**; initially in **3479 Educationally Backwards Blocks (EBBs)**.
- From **2008-09**, the **programme covers** all children studying in Government, Local Body and **Government-aided primary and upper primary schools** and the EGS/AIE centres including Madarsa and Maqtabs **supported under Sarva Siksha Abhiyaan (SSA)** of all areas across the country.



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### About Tithi Bhojan

- **Tithi Bhojan in the Mid-day meal scheme** to encourage local community participation in the programme.
- This concept was **first implemented in Gujarat** from where the Indian Government has borrowed it to **replicate across the country**.
- It seeks to involve the members of the community in the **effort to provide nutritious and healthy food to the children**.
- The members of the community may **contribute/sponsor** either **utensils or food on special occasions/festivals**.
- This is **completely voluntary**, and the **people in the community** may **contribute food items supplementary to the mid-day** already being provided like **sweet, namkeen or sprouts**.
- The **participation and involvement of religious and charitable institutions** are also being promoted.

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**

**Source- The Hindu**

### 'Jagananna Vidya Deevena' Scheme

#### Why in the news?

- **Andhra Pradesh government** has launched the '**Jagananna Vidya Deevena' Scheme** in **Guntur District** in **Andhra Pradesh**.

#### About the 'Jagananna Vidya Deevena' Scheme

- Under this scheme, **fee reimbursement will be credited directly to mothers' accounts instead of college accounts** in the coming academic year 2020-21.
  - The government is going to **provide Fee Reimbursement for ITI, B.Tech, B. Pharmacy, MBA, MCA, and B.Ed Courses** through this scheme.
- An amount of **Rs. 15,000 to Rs. 20,000** will be **offered for the eligible candidates** through the **Jagananna Vidya Deevena Scheme**.

**Topic: GS Paper 2–Governance**

**Source- AIR**

### 'Jeevan Amrit Yojana' scheme

#### Why in the news?

- **Madhya Pradesh government** has recently launched **Jeevan Amrit Yojana**, a **unique scheme** to **boost the immunity system** of **citizens of the state**.

#### About the Jeevan Amrit Yojana' scheme

- Under this scheme, the **State Government** will **distribute a packet of special Trikut Churna** prepared by the **AYUSH Department free of cost** to the citizens.
- Under **Jeevan Amrit Yojna**, **packets of 50 grams** each of the kadha have been prepared by **Madhya Pradesh Laghu Vanopaj Sangh** in **collaboration with the Department of AYUSH**.

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**



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Source- AIR

### **NEET applies to minority-run medical colleges: Supreme Court**

#### **Why in news?**

- The **Supreme Court** recently held the **National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET)** is **mandatory for admission to medical colleges** run by **religious and linguistic minority communities**.
- The **judgment** was **based on a challenge by the colleges** to **several notifications issued by the Medical Council of India (MCI)** and the **Dental Council of India (DCI)** under **Sections 10D** of the **Indian Medical Council Act of 1956** and the **Dentists Act of 1948** for **uniform entrance examinations**.



#### **Highlights of the judgment**

- A **three-judge Bench** led by **Justice Arun Mishra** held that **admissions solely through NEET** for graduate and postgraduate medical/dental courses do not violate any **fundamental and religious rights of minorities**.
- They said that the right to **freedom of trade or business is not absolute**.
- It is subject to **"reasonable restriction in the interest of the students"** community to promote merit, recognition of excellence, and to curb the malpractices.
- Provisions do not violate the rights available under Article 30 [right of minorities to administer their institutions] carved out in **Section 10D of the MCI Act and the Dentists Act and Regulations** framed by MCI/DCI," the court held.
- **Uniform entrance exams** would **ensure improvement in future public health** by **encouraging merit** in furtherance of the **Directive Principles enshrined in the Constitution**.

Topic- GS Paper 2–Polity

Source- The Hindu

### **National Infrastructure Pipeline**

#### **Why in the News?**

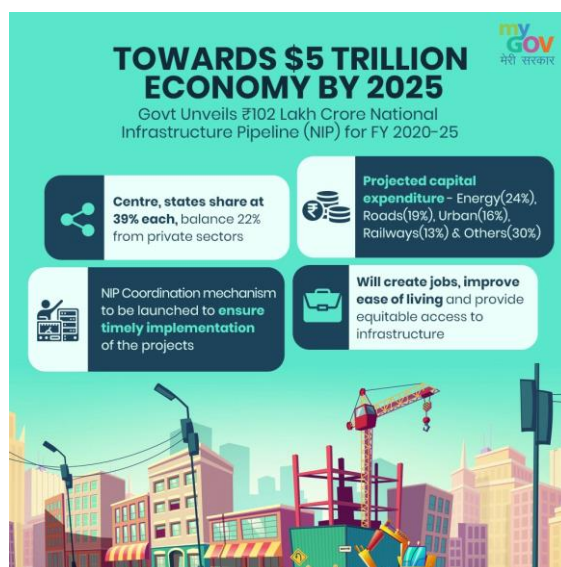
- The **Task Force** on **National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP)** submitted its **Final Report on NIP** for **FY 2019-25** to the **Union Minister for Finance**.



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### About the Report

- The **Final Report of NIP Task Force** is **projecting total infrastructure investment of Rs 111 lakh crore** during the **period FY 2020-25**.
- Out of the total expected **capital expenditure of Rs. 111 lakh crores**:
  - a. projects worth Rs 44 lakh crore (40% of NIP) are under implementation,
  - b. projects worth Rs 33 lakh crore (30%) are at conceptual stage
  - c. projects worth Rs 22 lakh crore (20%) are under development
  - d. Information regarding project stage are unavailable for projects worth Rs 11 lakh crore (10%).
- Sectors such as **energy (24%), roads (18%), urban (17%) and railways (12%) amount to around 71%** of the projected infrastructure investments in India.
- The **Centre (39%) and States (40%)** are expected to have almost equal share in implementing the NIP in India, **followed by the private sector (21%)**.

The Task Force has recommended that three Committees be setup:

  - i. a Committee to **monitor NIP progress and eliminate delays**;
  - ii. a **Steering Committee in each Infrastructure ministry level** for following up **implementation**; and
  - iii. a **Steering Committee in DEA** for **raising financial resources for the NIP**.
- The **NIP project database** would be **hosted on India Investment Grid (IIG)** shortly to **provide visibility to the NIP** and **help in its financing** with **prospective investors; domestic and foreign**, able to access updated project-level information.

**Note: Union Finance Minister** in her **Budget speech 2019-20** announced that **Rs. 100 lakh crores** would be **invested on infrastructure** over the **next five years**.

**Topic- GS Paper 3–Infrastructure**  
**Source- PIB**

### **Special 301 Report**

#### **Why in the news?**

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- **India** continues to be on the '**Priority Watch List**' of the **United States Trade Representative (USTR)** for lack of adequate intellectual property (IP) rights protection and enforcement, the USTR said in its Annual Special 301 Report.

### **Highlights of the report**

- **India** remained **one of the most challenging economies** for **IP enforcement and protection**.
- While India made "**meaningful progress**" to **enhance IP protection and enforcement** in some areas over the past year, it **did not resolve recent and long-standing challenges and created new ones**.
- These **long-standing concerns** were about
  - a. innovators being able to receive, maintain and enforce **patents particularly in the pharmaceutical sector**.
  - b. **concerns over copyright laws** not incentivising the creation and commercialisation of content; and
  - c. an **outdated trade secrets framework**
- The **report** also **mentioned high customs duties** on **medical devices and Information and Communications Technology**.
- The report noted, **continues to urge India** to **join the Singapore Treaty** on the **Law of Trademarks**, a **treaty that harmonises trademark registration**.



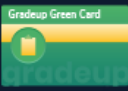
### **About Special 301 Report**

- It is prepared annually by the **Office of the United States Trade Representative**.
- It was first **published in 1989**.

### **Objective**

- It identifies **trade barriers to United States** companies and products due to the **intellectual property laws**, such as **copyright, patents and trademarks**, in other countries.
- The **Special 301 Report** is published **pursuant to Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974** as amended by **Section 1303 of the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988**.

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance, Source- Indian Express**



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