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**MADE EASY  
WEEKLY CURRENT  
AFFAIRS**

WEEK-4

23<sup>rd</sup> April - 30<sup>th</sup> April

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Targeted Examinations:

**CSE, ESE, PSUs, State Exams,  
SSC and Banking Exams**

# Current Affairs MADE EASY

*(23<sup>rd</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020)*

## 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2020

### **Feluda**

- Feluda is a low-cost, paper-strip test which can detect the COVID-19 within an hour. It has been developed by scientists at the IGIB (Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology) operating under CSIR (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research).
- The test is based on a bacterial immune system protein called Cas9. It uses CRISPR-Cas9 technology which is basically a gene-editing technology that can be used for the purpose of altering genetic expression or changing the genome of an organism.
- The test is expected to cost much less than the Real Time Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) test that costs Rs. 4,500 in private labs. It gives result within an hour.
- The test has been named after a detective character in the stories of legendary filmmaker Satyajit Ray.

### **Apthamitra**

- The Karnataka Govt. has launched 'Apthamitra' app which aims to provide medical guidance and advice on COVID-19.
- A patient can call to the helpline number of Apthamitra app when needed. Patients will be advised by a team of medical experts based on the symptoms.
- The app has a two-tier system. In the first tier the application is manned by AYUSH professionals, nurses or student volunteers. In the second tier, the app is managed by MBBS professionals, volunteer doctors and AYUSH doctors.

### **Nutrient Based Subsidy Scheme**

- Under the Nutrient Based Subsidy Scheme, the fertilizers except urea are to be provided to the farmers at subsidized rates. The scheme focuses on secondary nutrients such as N, P, K and S and micro nutrients.
- The Government of India has been providing potassium and phosphorous fertilizers to farmers in subsidy rates. These subsidies are governed by the Nutrient Based Subsidy scheme that was launched in 2010.
- **Context:** The Union Cabinet recently approved to fix nutrient based subsidies for Phosphatic Potassic fertilizers.

### **VidyaDaan 2.0**

- The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has launched VidyaDaan 2.0 to integrate both school and higher education for children. It has been launched on DIKSHA portal. The main aim of the platform is to contribute e-learning content and help children continue their learning anywhere and anytime in the country.

- Vidyandaan 2.0 will bring together academicians, organizations and e-learning content. The contributors shall share content in the form of videos, assessments, lesson plans and question banks.
- DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing) portal acts as a platform for the teachers to learn and train themselves. It helps them in creating in-class resources, training content, assessment aids and also stay connected with other teacher community.

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

- The Union Cabinet has approved promulgation of an Ordinance to amend the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 to protect lives of doctors and other healthcare service personnel, and property including their living/working premises against violence during epidemics.
- Government has also made this Act a concurrent, which will allow state governments to take actions as well.
- Earlier, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) had declared April 23, 2020 as black day to protest against attacks on health care professionals, workers, staffs and doctors.
- **Key Provisions of Ordinance**
  - The Ordinance provides for making acts of violence cognizable and non-bailable offences.
  - Punishment can be imprisonment for a term of three months to five years, and with fine of Rs.50,000 to 2,00,000. In case of causing grievous hurt, imprisonment shall be for a term of six months to seven years and with fine of Rs.1,00,000 to 5,00,000.
  - The related offences shall be investigated by an officer of the rank of Inspector within a period of 30 days, and trial has to be completed in one year, unless extended by the court for reasons to be recorded in writing.

### **World Press Freedom Index**

- The Reporters Without Borders, a Paris-based non-profit organisation, has published its annual World Press Freedom Index 2020, in which Norway ranks first for the fourth consecutive year and Finland and Denmark in second and third place respectively.
- As per report, India has dropped two places to be ranked 142<sup>nd</sup> out of 180 countries. With no murders of journalists in India in 2019, as against six in 2018, the security situation in the country has improved as per index.
- The World Press Freedom Index measures the level of media freedom in 180 countries. It has been released since 2002. It is based on an evaluation of media freedom that measures pluralism, media independence, quality of the legal framework and the safety of journalists.
- According to the report, Pakistan ranked 145<sup>th</sup>, Bangladesh ranked 151<sup>st</sup>, China ranked 177<sup>th</sup> and North Korea ranked at 180<sup>th</sup> position.

## **Sujalam Sufalam Jal Sanchay Abhiyan**

- Launched in 2018 by Gujarat Government, the scheme aims to deepen water bodies in the state to increase storage of rainwater to be used during times of scarcity.
- It involves cleaning and desilting of riverfronts, and sprucing up of irrigation canals. It also involves deepening of lakes, tanks and reservoirs.
- The scheme runs on a Public Private Partnership model and contribution from the government shall remain 60% of the expenditure of the work while 40% share will be from people's contribution.
- **Context:** Amid the lockdown for the coronavirus outbreak, Gujarat government has given the green signal for the third edition of Sujalam Sufalam Jal Sanchay Abhiyan.

## **Team Mask Force**

- The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has created Team Mask Force which intends to spread awareness of the importance of wearing face masks in public places amid COVID-19 pandemic. It features India's most revered cricketers such as Sachin Tendulkar, Virat Kohli, Saurav Ganguly Rahul Dravid, among others.
- Under the initiative, a video to be made with the Indian leading cricketers sharing awareness messages. The cricketers will also encourage making masks at home by sharing their own self-made personalised masks.

**24<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

## **Nano Blitz 3D**

- The International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials (ARCI) operating under Department of Science and Technology, has developed Nano Blitz 3D- a tool that is used for mapping mechanical properties of Nano materials such as multi-phase alloys, multi-layered coatings and composites.
- The mapping is done through Nano-indentation tests which are conducted at a speed where an indent takes less than a second. Based on the indentations of the material, the tool measures the hardness and elastic modulus of the material.
- The tool can be used to establish structure property linkages.

## **Classical Swine Fever (CSF)**

- Classical swine fever (CSF) or Hog Cholera is a contagious viral disease of domestic and wild swine. It contracts viral diarrhoea in pigs and ailments in sheep.
- The matter of concern is that India requires 22 million doses of the Classical Swine Fever vaccine every year, however, currently, only 1.2 million doses are being produced. The reason behind its less production is that only 50 doses can be prepared from the spleen of a rabbit.
- **Context:** More than 1,300 pigs have died across five districts of eastern Assam due to classical swine fever.

## National Panchayati Raj Day

- India celebrates April 24 every year as National Panchayati Raj Day, also known as National Local Self Government Day. The National Panchayati Raj Day was first declared in the year 2010.
- On this date the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act came into effect in the year 1993, which gave constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj System. It institutionalized Panchayati Raj system through the village, intermediate and District level Panchayats.
- On the eve of National Panchayati Raj Day 2020, PM Modi launched the E-Gram Swaraj application and portal. He also launched Swamitva scheme to integrate lands and reduce land disputes, which will be launched in 6 states initially.
- **E-Gram Swaraj Portal:** It will act as a single platform to implement Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP).
  - Information related to the rural areas will be found in E-Swaraj website and also on mobile application.
  - The portal will ensure real time monitoring and accountability.
- **Swamitva Yojana:** Swamitva Yojana or Ownership Scheme has been launched to map residential land ownership in the rural sector using modern technology like the use of drones.
  - The Ministry of Panchayati Raj is to be joined by State Revenue Department, and Survey of India.
  - The scheme is to be initially launched in six states namely Karnataka, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand and Madhya Pradesh.
  - Property card for every property in the village 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.

## Dearness Allowance (DA)

- Dearness Allowance is a monetary benefit given by Government to its employees and pensioners. The DA is revised twice every year in the month of July and January. The allowance is provided to compensate inflation every year.
- Currently, the central government employees are receiving DA at 17% of their salary.
- Context: The Government has put on hold to the hike in dearness allowance, which it had planned to increase the allowance by 4%. This is being done by the union government to save Rs. 1 lakh crore. The hold in the hike of DA applies only to central government employees and pensioners.

## **Krishi Kalyan Abhiyan (KKA)**

- Krishi Kalyan Abhiyan was launched in 2018 which aims to aid, assist and advise farmers to improve their farming techniques and increase their incomes. It was launched by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
- Krishi Kalyan Abhiyaan will be undertaken in 25 Villages with more than 1000 population each in Aspirational Districts identified in consultation with Ministry of Rural Development as per directions of NITI Aayog.
- Under KKA, the activities to promote best practices and enhance agriculture include:
  - Distribution of Soil Health Cards to all farmers
  - 100% coverage of bovine vaccination for Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)
  - Demonstrations of integrated cropping practice
  - Distribution of Mini Kits of pulses and oilseeds
  - Distribution of Horticulture/Agro Forestry/Bamboo plant
  - Artificial insemination saturation
- **Context:** The Krishi Kalyan Abhiyan (KKA) is being implemented in 112 Aspirational districts of the country.

## **Reverse Vaccinology**

- Reverse vaccinology is the process of antigen discovery starting from genome information. This is done with the aid of computers without culturing microorganism.
- This process includes comparative in-silico analysis (means performed on computer or via computer simulation) of multiple genome sequences in order to identify conserved antigens within a heterogeneous pathogen population and identification of antigens that are **unique** to pathogenic isolates but not present in commensal strains.
- **Context:** Researchers from Tamil Nadu have developed a vaccine candidate against SARS-CoV-2 through reverse vaccinology.

**25<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

## **National Food Security Act**

- The National Food Security Act was introduced by Government of India in 2013. The main aim of the act was to provide subsidized food grains to the citizens.
- The Act is in line with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations, in which the Goal-2 aims to end hunger by the 2030.
- **Context:** The National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED) is to distribute 6 lakh metric tonnes of pulses to around 20 crore households under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana. The pulses are distributed on the lines of National Food Security Act.

## Immunity Passports

- Immunity passports are provided to persons that have been recovered from COVID-19. The presence of antibodies according to immunity passports say that the person will not get infected by COVID-19 again.
- **Context:** The World Health Organization has recently warned against issuance of immunity passports. The organization is against the concept as there is no evidence till now that people who have recovered from COVID-19 or developed antibodies will not get infected again.

## World Immunization Week

- Every year, last week of April is marked as the World Immunization Week, to increase awareness of immunization. This year, the week is being marked under the theme '*Vaccines work for All*'.
- According to the World Health Organization, immunization can help protect from 25 different infectious diseases or disease-causing agents.
- The first vaccine developed to immunize against a disease was the small pox vaccine. It was developed by an English Physician Edward Jenner in 1796.

## PRACRITI

- Researchers from IIT Delhi have developed PRACRITI (Prediction and Assessment of Corona Infections and Transmissions in India)- a web-based dashboard to predict the spread of COVID-19 district-wise and state-wise in India.
- The dashboard provides basic reproduction number "R naught" ( $R_0$ ), which refers as the number of people that the virus spreads to from a single infected person.
- The dashboard provides  $R_0$  value for every district, state based on the data available from the National Disaster Management Authority, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and World Health Organization.
- The dashboard divides mathematical model into four classes: Exposed, Susceptible, Infected and Removed.
  - Susceptible are those people that are not exposed to the virus.
  - Exposed are those people that are exposed to the infected person.
  - Infected are those people that are infected by the virus.
  - Removed are those people that are no longer the carrier of the virus.

## World Malaria Day 2020

- World Malaria Day 2020 was observed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on April 25 with the theme '*Zero Malaria Starts with Me*'.
- Malaria is caused by a parasite that is spread by female Anopheles mosquitoes which deposit parasite sporozoites into the skin of a human host.



- **Durgama Anchalare Malaria Nirakaran (DAMaN) initiative:**
  - The initiative aims to deliver services to the most inaccessible and hardest malaria-hit people of Odisha. The initiative has in-built innovative strategies to combat asymptomatic malaria.
  - The programme is jointly implemented by National Institute of Malaria Research (NIMR), National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP) and Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV).

## Operation Twist

- Operation Twist is RBI's simultaneous selling of short-term securities and buying of long term securities through Open Market Operations (OMO). Under this mechanism, the short-term securities are transitioned into long-term securities.
- This operation has been launched in order to bring down long-term interest rates and bolster short-term rates.
- Open Market Operations (OMO) is a monetary tool under which the RBI manages and controls the liquidity, rupee strength and monetary management through purchase and sale of government securities.
- **Context:** The Reserve bank of India has decided to bring back its bond swapping programme named as Operation Twist with an aim to help monetary transmission. The RBI has said that it will conduct purchase and sale of government securities under open market operations (OMO) for Rs.10,000 crore.

## Anthurium

- Anthurium is one of the best domestic flowering plants in the world. It purifies the surrounding air and removes harmful airborne chemicals like formaldehyde, ammonia, toluene, xylene, and allergens.
- NASA has placed it in the list of air purifier plants.
- **Context:** D. Vasini Bai, a women innovator from Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, has developed 10 varieties of Anthurium.

**26<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

## UNCLOS

- United Nation Convention on the Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS) defines the rights, responsibilities of nations with respect to their use of world's oceans, establishing guidelines for businesses, environment, and the management of marine natural resources.
- **Context:** In the middle of the global coronavirus pandemic, China has been busy increasing its presence in the South China Sea. It claims on two disputed archipelagos of the Spratly Islands and the Paracel Islands in the South China Sea waters, situated between Vietnam and the Philippines.



## **Plasma Therapy**

- The Drug Controller General of India (DGCI) recently cleared the proposal of plasma therapy that was submitted by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).
- The DGCI gives its nod to use plasma from recovered COVID-19 patients. The patients recovered from COVID-19 generate antibodies against the virus. These antibodies are assessed from the samples of the donors through rapid tests. The plasma collected from the volunteering donors is then transfused into patients that are critically sick due to the virus.
- **Context:** King George Medical University in Uttar Pradesh became the first government hospital to launch plasma therapy to treat COVID-19.

**27<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

## **Unified Geologic Map of the Moon**

- Unified Geologic Map of the Moon has been released virtually by the United States Geological Survey (USGS), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Lunar Planetary Institute. It is the first ever digital, unified, global, geological map of the moon.
- The map is a seamless, globally consistent, 1:5,000,000-scale geologic map, which will serve as a blueprint for future human missions and a source of research and analysis for the educators and the general public interested in lunar geology.

## **Special Liquidity Facility for Mutual Funds (SLF-MF)**

- The Reserve Bank of India has recently announced the special liquidity facility for mutual funds of Rs 50,000 crores. RBI is increasing liquidity flow in capital markets as COVID-19 has imposed liquidity strains on mutual funds.
- SLF-MF is to conduct repo operations for 90 days. Under the scheme, the banks shall submit their bids on any days between Monday and Friday.
- The funds are to be used by the banks exclusively to meet their liquidity requirements like- to extend the loan period, to undertake purchases of investment-grade corporate bonds, debentures and certificates of Deposit, etc.

## **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Report**

- The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has recently released its report on military spending of different countries in the world. According to the report, US, China and India are the three top most military spenders in 2019.
- Besides, Russia and Saudi Arabia were on the fourth and fifth places respectively. The top three military spenders accounted to 62% of the world military expenditure.

- **Key Highlights:**

- The total military expenditure increased by 3.6% in 2019 as compared to 2018. In 2019, the global expenditure spent was 2 trillion USD.
- According to the report, the military expenditure of India increased due to its increasing tensions with Pakistan over the Kashmir issue. In 2019, India has spent 71.1 billion USD over its military. This has increased by 6.8% as compared to 2018.

**28<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

## **COVID-19 Active Response and Expenditure Support (CARES) Programme**

- The CARES Programme of Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been launched as the first support to meet the immediate requirements of the governments in the wake of global crisis due to COVID-19. The programme will contribute directly to the improvement of access to health facilities and care, as well as social protection for more than 800 million people.
- It is funded through the COVID-19 Pandemic Response Option (CPRO) under ADB's Countercyclical Support Facility.
- **Context:** The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a \$1.5 billion loan agreement under CARES which will be used to implement COVID-19 containment plan to rapidly ramp up test-track-treatment capacity, and social protection for the poor, vulnerable, women, and disadvantaged groups.

## **New Names for Cyclones**

- The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has released 169 new names for the tropical cyclones in the Indian Ocean Region.
- The names were contributed by 13 countries namely India, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Thailand, Qatar, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Iran.
- The decision to create new list of cyclones was taken during the 45th session of Panel on Tropical Cyclones (PTC) held by World Meteorological Organization.
- **Important rules for fixing of new names for cyclones:**
  - The name should be short with less than 8 characters and easy to pronounce.
  - The proposed names should be neutral to cultures, politics, gender and religious beliefs.
  - The name should not hurt the sentiments of the group of population in the world.
  - The name should not be rude or cruel in nature.

## Ruhdaar

- Students from IIT Bombay, Islamic University of Science and Technology (Jammu and Kashmir), NIT Srinagar have come together to invent a low-cost ventilator called 'Ruhdaar'. The cost of production of one ventilator is Rs 10,000.
- In order to increase the number of ventilators in the country, the Government of India rely on domestic production of ventilators as well as supplies from different parts of the world. The latter option is challenging as ventilators are of high demand in every country.

**29<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

## Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD)

- Biochemical oxygen demand represents the amount of oxygen consumed by bacteria and other microorganisms in water bodies while they decompose organic matter under aerobic (oxygen is present) conditions at a specified temperature.
- **Context:** As per latest report by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the lockdown due to Coronavirus pandemic has improved water quality as well as air quality across the country.

According to CPCB, around 40 million litres of waste water enters water bodies in normal days, which have been avoided. After lockdown, the real time monitoring data from the CPCB say that out of 36 monitoring points of the Ganges, 27 are now clean and suitable for wildlife and fisheries propagation. In Varanasi, the improvement has been from 6.8 mg/litre oxygen concentration as compared to 3.8 mg/litre before lockdown.

## Ber-D

- The scientists of Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR) operating under Department of Science and Technology has invented a natural product, named Ber-D, for Alzheimer disease.
- The Berberine used in traditional medicines has been converted into Ber-D which is antioxidant and soluble. On the other hand, Berberine is toxic to cells and poorly soluble. The medicine invented also helps to prevent DNA damages.
- Alzheimer is caused due to abnormal build-up of protein around the brain cells. Proteins are made up of amino acids. Therefore, the drug invented prevents deposition of these proteins called Amyloid Beta around the brain cells.

## Petersberg Climate Dialogue

- The Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar recently attended the 11th session of Petersberg Climate Dialogue representing India through video-conference.
- **Key Highlights:**
  - The dialogue was hosted by Germany and co-chaired by United Kingdom.
  - The dialogue discussed about measures to tackle COVID-19, save lives and to overcome social and economic consequences of the disease.
  - It also discussed about the preparatory steps in moving into the implementation phase of Paris Agreement.
  - India suggested having a climate technology that is open to everyone at affordable cost.
  - India also suggested to create 1 trillion USD grant to the developing world immediately.

## Jal Shakti Abhiyan

- Jal Shakti Abhiyan is the largest water conservation movement in India that brings all stakeholders under one ambit. Under the scheme, more than 5 lakh water bodies have been renovated. Around one crore rain water harvesting and water conservation structures have also been created.
- This includes Central government, state governments, Panchayati raj institutions, etc.
- **Context:** The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) had recently announced that the monsoon rains in the country are to be normal. With this, the Jal Shakti Abhiyan had made preparations to conserve water and recharge and replenish water sources.

**30<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

## Global Terrorism Index (GTI)

- The Global Terrorism Index report is issued by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), Australia which is based primarily on the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) collated by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) at the University of Maryland (the USA).
- The index provides a comprehensive summary of the key global trends and patterns in terrorism since 2000. It produces a composite score in order to provide an ordinal ranking of countries on the impact of terrorism.
- **Context:** India has moved to the seventh position from the previous year's eighth rank in the annual Global Terrorism Index (GTI), 2019. The countries ahead of it are Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Syria, Pakistan and Somalia. India has questioned the methodology adopted to rank India as the seventh worst terrorism affected country.

## Hospital Care Assistive Robotic Device (HCARD)

- The CSIR laboratory located in Durgapur has developed a robotic device HCARD (Hospital Care Assistive Robotic Device) which is capable of working in both automatic and manual mode.
- It was launched to help frontline health care workers. The robot will help them in maintaining physical distance from the COVID-19 infected persons. The device will also collect samples from patients.
- It can be monitored and controlled using a control station or a nursing booth. The cost of the device is Rs 5 lakhs and it weighs 80 kilograms.

## *Miscellaneous This Week*

- Lebanon became the first Arab country to legalize marijuana cultivation.
- Every year, April 23 is celebrated as World Book Day or International Day of Book or World Book and Copyrights Day. It is organised by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
- Iran has launched its first military satellite Noor 1. Iran has used Ghased (Messenger satellite launcher) to put the satellite in its orbit.
- China National Space Administration (CNSA) has named its first Mars Exploration mission as Tianwen-1.
- Retired IAS officer Sanjay Kothari has been sworn in as the Central Vigilance Commissioner (CVC). He was sworn in by the President Ram Nath Kovind.
- Every year, the World Intellectual Property Day is marked on April 26 to encourage creativity and innovation. This year, the World Intellectual Property Day is being marked under the theme '*Innovate for Green Future*'.
- Saudi Arabia has abolished flogging as a punishment for crime.
- The NTPC recently launched 10 Hydrogen Fuel Cell based buses and 10 similar electric cars in New Delhi and Leh.
- Borders Roads Organization has built Kasowal Bridge which is a 484- metre long permanent bridge on the river Ravi to connect the Kasowal enclave of Punjab along the Pakistan border to the rest of the country.
- The Education for Justice (E4J) initiative was launched by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes to teach next generation about crime prevention and address problems under law.
- In a bid to revive and conserve 'Devanahalli Pomelo', an endangered GI-tagged citrus fruit, the operators of Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru have started a plantation drive in the region as part of their flagship CSR Programme 'Namma Ooru'.
- The National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI) has developed herbal decongestant to prevent COVID-19 infection and to ease wearing masks.