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**MADE EASY  
WEEKLY  
CURRENT AFFAIRS**

WEEK-1

1<sup>st</sup> April - 7<sup>th</sup> April

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Targeted Examinations:

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

# Current Affairs MADE EASY

*(1<sup>st</sup> April to 7<sup>th</sup> April 2020)*

## 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020

### **COVID-19: Govt. slashed interest rates for saving schemes**

- Amid economic challenges being faced due to Coronavirus pandemic, the Government of India has slashed interest rates of several small saving schemes like Sukanya Samriddhi, Public Provident Fund, Kisan Vikas Patra and National Savings Certificate.

#### **Sukanya Samriddhi:**

- Sukanya Samriddhi scheme encourages the parents to make funds for future education and marriage expenses of their girl child.
- For this scheme, rate of interest has been reduced from 8.4 to 7.6%.

#### **Public Provident Fund:**

- Public Provident Fund is savings-cum-tax saving scheme which aims to increase small savings offering returns based on the investments made with the savings deposited.
- For this, rate of interest has been reduced from 7.9 to 7.1%.

#### **Kisan Vikas Patra:**

- Kisan Vikas Patra is a saving certificate scheme that was launched by India Post in 1988.
- For this, rate of interest has been reduced from 7.6% to 6.9%.

#### **National Savings Certificate:**

- National Savings Certificate is a savings bond scheme launched for income tax and small savings.
- For this, rate of interest has been reduced from 7.9 to 6.8%.

### **PM Cares Fund**

- The Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund (PM CARES Fund) was created on 28 March 2020 following the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in India.
- The fund will be used for combating, containment and relief efforts against the coronavirus outbreak and similar pandemic like situations in the future.
- The funds donated to PM Cares Fund are to be 100% exempted from tax under Section 80G of Income Tax Act.

### **COVID-19: World Bank announced 1 Billion USD assistance for India**

- The World Bank has announced an offer of 1 billion USD to India to implement the Covid-19 Emergency Response and Health Systems preparedness project. India has initiated number of projects in order to mitigate the threats created by coronavirus. The project is to run for 4 years.
- The funding of the project is to come from the World Bank's COVID-19 Fast Track facility.

## Resolution 2518

- United Nations Security Council has adopted Resolution 2518 to ensure safety and security of peacekeepers. This is the first time a resolution was passed for the safety of the peacekeepers.
- The resolution was initiated and sponsored by China. It was co-sponsored by 43 countries including Pakistan, Iran, South Africa, Turkey, Russia, Vietnam, etc.

## Navaratnalu Pedalandariki Illu Programme

- Andhra Pradesh modified the guidelines of Navaratnalu-Pedalandariki Illu programme, also known as “Houses for all the poor”.
- Under this scheme, house sites are to be allotted at Rs. 1 to the poor with white ration cards. The State Government is to collect Rs. 20 from such people (Rs 10 for stamp paper charges and Rs 10 for lamination charges).
- The beneficiaries have to compulsorily construct houses. They cannot sell the land; however, they can sell the houses after occupying them for a minimum of five years.

**2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020**

## Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme

- The Vivad Se Vishwas scheme was introduced to generate timely revenue for the Government while reducing pending tax litigations and help taxpayers settle their tax disputes.
- **Context:** The scheme was in news as National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC), announced that it has saved Rs 888.09 crore by adopting Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme. NMDC is a Government-controlled resource producer, which is engaged in mining of natural resources like iron ore, copper, graphite, limestone, rock phosphate, gypsum, tungsten, dolomite, etc.

## Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana

- Under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana, 80 crore poor people, covering about two-thirds of the country’s population, will get 5 kg rice or wheat each month for the next three months free of charge, in addition to the 5 kg they already get. Each household will get 1 kg of dal of their choice, for next three months, also free of charge.
- **Context:** The scheme was in the news as the Food Corporation of India (FCI) is to conduct an Open Market Sales Scheme to ease the supply of Food Grains in the market. FCI has also opted for the open auction scheme. This will also help in supplying wheat to state governments and also to the empanelled flour mills.

## United Nations Climate Change Conference 2020 (COP-26)

- The United Nations has announced that the Conference of Parties (COP 26) for climate change that was to be held in Glasgow (United Kingdom) in November 2020 has been postponed to 2021.

- This has been done over the threat of COVID-19 virus and its impact on the world.
- COP 25 was held in Madrid, Spain in 2019.

## **RT-PCR Technique**

- Reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) is a laboratory technique combining reverse transcription of Ribonucleic acid (RNA) into Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) and amplification of specific DNA targets using polymerase chain reaction (PCR). It is primarily used to measure the amount of a specific RNA.
- **Context:** This technique was in the news as the International Atomic Energy Agency has sent COVID-19 testing gears to around 40 countries, which uses RT-PCR technique. In this method, the respiratory samples obtained from sputum or from nasopharyngeal swabs are tested.
- **Remarks:** Currently India is using the RT-PCR (Real time-Polymerase Chain Reaction) testing recommended by the US. Along with this, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has recommended the use of Truenat test.
- The Truenat test is currently used to detect drug-resistant TB. Truenat is a battery-operated device that requires minimal training. The device uses chip-based technology and takes minimum of 60 minutes for a test.

## **National Monitoring Dashboard**

- The Union Government has established National Monitoring Dashboard to quick and timely implementations of COVID-19 response and containment activities.
- Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) is the nodal department to create and enforce the Dashboard.

## **Arogya Setu**

- National Informatics Center (NIC) operating under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, has developed an app 'Arogya Setu' to track patients infected with Coronavirus (COVID-19).
- The app uses Bluetooth and GPS of a smartphone to inform the user if he is in a radius of 6 feet from a COVID-19 infected person. The application also provides information about the best practices and advisories regarding containment of the Coronavirus.

## **Multi-feed Oxygen Manifold**

- The Andhra Pradesh Government has acquired Multi-feed Oxygen Manifold (MOM) developed by Naval Dockyard, Visakhapatnam to meet the requirement of oxygen supply to COVID-19 patients.
- This portable MOM equipment ensures a single oxygen cylinder which can be used to provide oxygen to six patients at a time.

## **Project Praana**

- Project Praana is a voluntary prototype ventilator design project run by a group of engineers primarily associated with IISc Bengaluru.
- Under the Project Praana, the researchers of IISc Bengaluru have developed indigenous ventilators which were made using a pressure sensor that widely finds its application in the automobile industry. Apart from the sensor, the scientists also used Reverse Osmosis Water Filters.
- Under the project, all the components used are found or made in India. Hence the manufactured ventilators are 100% indigenous.

**3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020**

## **Action COVID-19 Team**

- The Action COVID Team is funded by leading private sector fund managers and blue chip venture capital corporations in India, which will raise funds and identify ventures that are working on products and services to fight against COVID-19. The initiative is first of its kind in the world.
- Apart from this, MyLab is the first Indian company to obtain permission to manufacture and sell test kits for coronavirus.

## **Corona Kavach**

- The Union Government has launched an application, named 'Corona Kavach' to map the location of a COVID-19 positive patient through GPS. The mobile app tracks the data of the user every hour. It then alerts him if he has crossed a Corona Positive patient.
- The application has been jointly developed by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

## **Bio-Suit**

- The Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) has developed Bio-Suit to keep the medical professionals working with COVID-19 safe.
- It was developed using a special sealant used in submarine applications.

## **Exercise NCC Yogdan**

- The National Cadet Corps (NCC) has launched Exercise NCC Yogdan which aims to offer a helping hand to the authorities fighting against COVID-19. The cadets are expected to work in call centers and helpline centers established specifically for COVID-19, community service, distribution of relief products, medications and other critical food supplies, data management and traffic management under the exercise.
- Under the exercise, the senior NCC volunteers above 18 years of age are to be employed.

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

### **National Security Act (NSA)**

- National Security Act allows preventive detention for months, if authorities are satisfied that a person is a threat to national security or law and order. The aim of Act is to prevent the individual from committing a crime.
- Under the National Security Act, an individual can be detained without a charge for up to 12 months, however, the state government needs to be intimated that a person has been detained under the NSA. A person detained under the National Security Act can be held for 10 days without being told the charges against them.
- **Context:** The Uttar Pradesh government has announced that six persons associated with the Tablighi Jamaat who have been accused of misbehaving with women staff at the district hospital in Ghaziabad will be charged under the National Security Act (NSA).

### **Bacillus Calmette-Guerin (BCG) vaccination**

- Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine is a vaccine primarily used against tuberculosis (TB).
- In countries like India where TB or leprosy is common, one dose is recommended in healthy babies as close to the time of birth as possible.
- **Context:** According to a US-based research, Bacillus Calmette-Guerin (BCG) vaccination can become a game-changer among children in the fight against Novel coronavirus.

### **CARUNA**

- The associations of civil servants formed an initiative called Civil Services Associations Reach to Support Natural Disasters (CARUNA), which also includes IAS and IPS officers. The platform is to be represented by NGO, industry leaders, IT professionals along with the civil servants. The initiative is being launched to support government's efforts to fight Coronavirus.
- It will help in generating data base of information about migration, medical equipment, essential supplies, ventilators and masks. The initiative will help address shortages at district level.
- CARUNA will also work towards augmenting human resources, facilitating supply chain, information dissemination, public awareness, data management, welfare measures, etc.

### **Operation Sanjeevani**

- Indian Air Force delivered 6.2 million tonnes of essential medicines to Maldives under Operation Sanjeevani. The medicines were transported through transport aircraft Hercules C-130J.
- The medicines included lopinavir and ritonavir, influenza vaccines. Apart from medicines, the IAF also delivered nebulisers, catheters, urine bags and feeding tubes.

## **Arogya Sanjeevani Insurance Policy**

- The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has issued guidelines for the health insurance providers to implement Arogya Sanjeevani Insurance Policy, launched to cover the hospitalisation expenses of the COVID-19 patients.
- The cost of the premium shall cover between Rs. 1000 and Rs 1 lakh, and interested customers shall opt for coverage up to Rs 5 lakhs. It is to be availed for citizens above the age of 18 years and up to the age of 65 years.
- The room rent shall also be covered under the policy. It has been capped at 2% of the sum.

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

## **Mo Prativa Programme**

- Odisha Government has launched “Mo Prativa” programme in collaboration with United Nations Children’s Funds (UNICEF), for the children to participate in online competitions such as writing slogans, drawings, short story writing, paintings, etc.
- Under this programme, children have to upload their works and they will receive certificate every week.
- Children of age 5 to 18 years are eligible to participate in the competition.

## **JEEVAN**

- JEEVAN, is a low-cost energy efficient ventilator made by the Rail Coach Factory, Kapurthala.
- The ventilator consists of an air container which is considered as the heart of the device. The machine is completely silent. It does not use link mechanism, servo motor or piston mechanism.

## **Asian Youth Games**

- The Olympic Council of Asia has announced that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Asian Youth Games is to be held in China in November 2021. Total of 18 sports to be included such as rock climbing, athletics, gymnastics, aquatics, boat racing, among others.
- The Asian Youth Games is held once in four years.
- **First Asian Youth Games (2011):** Singapore
- **Latest Asian Youth Games (2013):** China

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

## **Union Cabinet approved ordinance to cut salaries of dignitaries**

- The Union Cabinet approved ordinance to cut the salary of Prime Minister and other MPs by 30%. Apart from them, the salaries of President, Vice-President and Governors also to be cut which will be deposited in Consolidated Fund of India.



- Besides, Cabinet has also approved that the MPLADS (Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme) is to be suspended for 2 years i.e. between 2020-21 and 2021-22.
- Under the MPLADS, each MP has the choice to suggest to the District Collector for works to the tune of Rs.5 Crores per annum to be taken up in his/her constituency. The Rajya Sabha Members of Parliament can recommend works in one or more districts in the State from where he/she has been elected. The Nominated Members of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha may select any one or more Districts from any one State in the Country for implementation of their choice of work under the scheme.

### **Artemis Base Camp**

- NASA has unveiled plan for Artemis base camp on the moon beyond 2024. The camp is meant to be a long-term foothold for lunar exploration, probably in Shackleton Crater at the moon's South Pole.
- The base could also be used as a site for testing new techniques for dealing with lunar dust and the long, cold lunar nights, turning local materials into resources like water, and developing new power and construction technologies.
- Artemis stands for "Acceleration, Reconnection, Turbulence and Electrodynamics of Moon's Interaction with the Sun". It is NASA's next mission to the Moon. It aims to measure what happens when the Sun's radiation hits our rocky moon, where there is no magnetic field to protect it.
- With the Artemis program, NASA will land the first woman and another man on the Moon by the year 2024.

### **Lifeline UDAN**

- The Lifeline UDAN has been launched by the Ministry of Civil Aviation to help India fight against COVID-19. Under this initiative, flights were operated in transporting essential equipment and medicines all over the country. The products transported included masks and gloves, consumables, etc.
- The initiative provided a special focus to the north-eastern region and to the Ladakh region. For the ease of flight operation, the flight hubs were set up in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad and Bengaluru.

### **CAWACH**

- The Centre for Augmenting WAR with COVID-19 Health Crisis (CAWACH) is an initiative by Department of Science and Technology (DST), which supports innovations in the areas of diagnostics, devices, informatics including bio-informatics & information management systems and start-up ideas to mitigate various challenges faced by country due to severe impact of COVID-19.



- DST has nominated Society for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (SINE), IIT Bombay to implement CAWACH initiative to source and support start-ups having solutions to fight pandemic COVID-19 by way of funding.

## **Prana-Vayu**

- IIT Roorkee has developed low cost portable ventilator called Prana Vayu, which are portable ventilators that are highly suited for the modified railway coaches. So far more than 20,000 train coaches have been modified into hospital beds.
- The ventilator delivers required amount of air to the patient based on controlled operation of the prime mover. It controls the flow rates of oxygen in inhalation and exhalation lines by controlling the pressure applied. The major benefit of the design is that the manufacturing time of the ventilator is minimal.

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

## **Corona Bonds**

- Corona Bonds are the proposed financial bonds by European Union (EU) which could be a possible resolution to alleviate Eurozone financial struggles amid the coronavirus crisis. However, the idea has received mixed responses amongst the EU. Not all countries in the European Union are in favour of this idea.
- The funds would be mutualised and supplied by the European Investment Bank, with the debt taken collectively by all member states of the European Union.

## **5T Plan**

- The Government of NCT of Delhi has announced 5T Plan to tackle the spread of Coronavirus which includes Testing, Tracing, Teamwork, Treatment and Tracking-Monitoring.
  - **Testing:** Under the Testing Programme, the Government is to conduct 1 lakh rapid tests in coronavirus hotspot areas of Delhi.
  - **Tracing:** Under the Tracing programme, the government is to identify the people who have come in contact with the COVID-19 positive patients. The identified persons will be quarantined.
  - **Treatment:** Around 2,950 beds have been reserved exclusively for COVID-19 positive patients. Apart from this, beds in private hospitals have been also identified to treat COVID-19 positive patients.
  - **Teamwork:** The State will work as a team with the Union Government for this programme. The technology professionals, doctors and nurses are the main members of this programme.
  - **Tracking-Monitoring:** Under this programme, the Government will actively monitor the step being taken in implementing the 5T programme, and will also take actions to contain the spread of the virus.