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**MADE EASY  
WEEKLY CURRENT  
AFFAIRS**

WEEK-3

16<sup>th</sup> April - 22<sup>nd</sup> April

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Targeted Examinations:

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

# Current Affairs MADE EASY

(16th April to 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020)

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

## **OBICUS**

- The Reserve Bank of India has recently launched OBICUS survey, which provides an insight into the demands of the Indian manufacturing sector.
- This survey is for the period of January to March 2020. It has been conducted quarterly since 2008.
- OBICUS is an acronym for *Order Books, Inventories and Capacity Utilization Survey*.
- **Features of OBICUS:**
  - The data collected in the OBICUS includes quantitative data, pending orders, work in progress, backlog of orders and finished goods.
  - It covers 2,500 companies both in public and private sector.
  - It provides ratio of total inventories to sales.
  - It also provides ratio of raw materials to finished goods.
  - It helps to measure economic activity in the country.

## **Chitra GeneLAMP-N**

- Chitra GeneLAMP-N is a diagnostic test kit that can confirm COVID-19 virus in 2 hours at low cost. It has been developed by Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology, Trivandrum.
- The test kit detects the N Gene of SARS-CoV2 using Reverse Transcriptase Loop-mediated Amplification (RT-LAMP). It is used in the detection of viruses.
- The test kit is highly specific for SARS-CoV-2 N-gene and can detect two regions of the gene, which will ensure that the test does not fail even if one region of the viral gene undergoes mutation during its current spread.

## **Sahyog**

- The Survey of India has launched “Sahyog”, a mobile app, to collect information about COVID-19 through community engagement.
- The data collected through the Sahyog application will be used for Arogya Setu app that has been launched for contact tracing, self-assessment and public awareness for Coronavirus (COVID-19).
- It will also provide other relevant information about COVID-19 which includes containment areas, ICMR testing laboratories, hospitals, and quarantine camps.

## **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)**

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has recategorized all the bulk drugs manufacturers under category ‘A’ to category ‘B<sub>2</sub>’ under EIA. In order to achieve this, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification 2006 has been amended.

- The projects that are falling under Category A require mandatory EIA, whereas the projects under Category B<sub>2</sub> are exempted from EIA. The recategorization will fasten the process.
- Environment Impact Assessment is a process to evaluate environmental impacts caused due a proposed project. It has been notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

## **MGNREGA**

- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a labour law and social security measure that aims to guarantee the 'right to work' to poor and marginal unemployed people. This Act was passed by Parliament in 2005.
- It is the biggest source of employment generation in the country. It provides work to more than 50 to 60 million households annually.
- **Context:** Government of India has issued guidelines for the extended lock down till 3<sup>rd</sup> of May. Under the guidelines, the Government allows industrial works, road construction works and MGNREGA to begin in the rural areas.

## **Disaster Management Act, 2005**

- The Ministry of Home Affairs has issued guidelines for lockdown that has been extended till May 3, 2020. According to the new guidelines, spitting in the public was made offensive under Disaster Management Act, 2005.
- With COVID-19 made a “notified disaster”, order passed under the Disaster Management Act applies to throughout India. Under the Section 51 of Act, if a person denies obeying orders will be punished and it shall lead to imprisonment till one year.
- The guidelines also had made wearing masks in public places mandatory.

## **NALSA**

- National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) 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 of NALSA:**
  - As per section 3(2) of the Act, the Chief Justice of India shall be the Patron-in-Chief.
  - Second senior-most judge of Supreme Court of India is the Executive-Chairman.
- **Context:** The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) has said that around 11,077 undertrials have been released from prisons nationwide as part of the mission to decongest jails following the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **IPL 2020**

- The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has decided to suspend the Indian Premier League (IPL), 2020 indefinitely, due to the extension of the lockdown and also with the increase in spread of the Coronavirus.
- Apart from IPL, BCCI also organizes Ranji Trophy, Irani cup, Duleep Trophy, Vijay Hazare Trophy, Deodhar Trophy, Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, Women's IPL, etc.

## **17<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

### **COVID-19: RBI announced major economic measures**

- The Reserve Bank of India announced major economic measures to contain impact of COVID-19 on economic ecosystem of the country.
- **Key Announcements**
  - RBI has cut the repo rate to 4.4% from 5.15%.
  - The reverse repo rate has been cut to 3.75%.
  - Rs 50,000 crore has been allotted for Long Term Repo Operation (LTRO). It has been named LTRO 2.0 because, this time the LTRO is to focus on liquidity needs of microfinances and Non-banking Financial Company (NBFC), instead of Public Sector Undertakings and larger corporations.
  - Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR), which is the assets held by the banks to make sure its ongoing ability to meet short-term obligations are fulfilled, has been eased from 100% to 80%.
  - The RBI will also provide Rs. 50,000 crore special finance assistance to institutions such as SIDBI, NABARD, National Housing Bank (NHB), etc.

### **Crisis Recovery Facility**

- The Crisis Recovery Facility has been created by Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to respond to urgent financial, public and economic health pressures. The Bank has allocated 10 billion USD for this facility.
- The facility is an international response to combat COVID-19 that came up at the Special G20 Summit, 2020, which was held through video-conferencing.
- It will help countries to reduce health care pressures in pandemic preparedness and health infrastructure, to provide liquidity support and to support fiscal and budgetary support.
- **Context:** AIIB is to finance 500 million USD projects in India to help the country improve its healthcare systems. AIIB is currently doubling its funds under COVID-19 Crisis Recovery Facility.

### **International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC)**

- The International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC) advises and reports to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Board of Governors on the supervision and management of the international monetary and financial system, including on responses to unfolding events that may disrupt the system.

- IMFC meets twice a year, during the Spring and Annual Meetings.
- It has 24 members, which are drawn from the pool of 187 governors.
- **Context:** Union Minister of Finance & Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman recently attended Meeting of the International Monetary and Financial Committee through video-conference.

### **Assess Koro Na**

- Delhi Government has launched Assess Koro Na, an app to conduct door to door survey in COVID-19 containment zones.
- The real-time data collected is to be uploaded to the servers and then analyzed immediately. The control centres will access this data and make quick decisions on fulfilling the needs such as ambulance services, medical expert, etc.
- The surveyors will ask questions like travel history, COVID-19 like symptoms. The data are to be uploaded on real time basis.

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

### **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI): Govt. amended key policy**

- Government of India has amended the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy, to prevent opportunistic acquisitions of Indian companies due to COVID-19 economic crisis. The amendments have been made to the Consolidated FDI policy, 2017.
- As per revised conditions, every investor from a neighbouring country is required to invest through Government route.
- Earlier, any non-resident entity from countries sharing borders with India was allowed to make investments in India freely in some of the sectors. However, entities in Bangladesh and Pakistan were required to obtain government's permission.
- The decision was taken by keeping China in focus as it is now investing and acquiring companies all over the world which have been severely affected due to COVID-19. With the amendment, any foreign firm will now have to get permission from Government of India in order to make an acquisition in India or acquire an Indian firm.

### **Ways and Means Advances (WMA)**

- Ways and Means Advances (WMA) are temporary loan facilities provided by RBI to the government to enable it to meet temporary mismatches between revenue and expenditure.
- The rate of interest of WMA is the same as the repo rate, while the tenure is three months.
- The limits for WMA are mutually decided by the RBI and the Government of India.
- The WMA scheme for the Central Government was introduced on April 1, 1997. Before that, adhoc (temporary) Treasury Bills were used to finance the deficit of Government.

- **Context:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced that a 60% increase in the WMA limit of state governments over and above the level as on March 31, to be provided with a view to enabling them to undertake COVID-19 containment and mitigation efforts as well as to better plan their market borrowings.

### **Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2020**

- Union Ministry of Power has made changes to the Electricity (Amendment) bill, 2020, to promote electricity generation from renewable sources.
- The bill proposes that all State Energy Research Centre are to specify renewable energy in power generation including hydropower as the Central Government recently recognized hydropower as renewable power.
- **Major Highlights of Bill**
  - National Renewable Energy Policy to be launched
  - Electricity Contract Enforcement Authority is to be created
  - The appellate tribunal of electricity is to have similar powers as that of civil courts
  - Privatization of distribution companies is to be done using franchises and sub-licenses
  - Power Tariff is to be determined without subsidy

### **World Heritage Day**

- Every year, 18th April is celebrated as World Heritage Day worldwide to create awareness about Heritage among communities.
- The theme of World Heritage Day 2020 is “*Shared Culture, Shared Heritage and Shared Responsibility*”.
- International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) announced, 18 April as the “World Heritage Day”, with the aim of enhancing awareness of the importance of the cultural heritage of humankind, and redouble efforts to protect and conserve the human heritage.

### **Kisan Rath**

- Union Govt. has launched the Kisan Rath app to help farmers to transport their agriculture produce to the market during lockdown.
- The app is developed by the National Informatics Centre to facilitate farmers and traders in searching transport vehicles for movement of Agriculture and Horticulture produce.
- The App will also facilitate traders in transportation of perishable commodities by Refrigerated vehicles.
- The application will help in delivering timely service. It also offers competitive price. Besides, the rating option of transporters will help in providing quality services.

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

## **National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)**

- Union Ministry of Culture has launched the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of India, which is an attempt to recognize the diversity of Indian culture embedded in its intangible heritage.
- This initiative is a part of the Vision 2024 of the Ministry of Culture.
- The list has more than 100 elements. It also includes the 13 elements of India that have already been inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
- UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage list is made up of those intangible heritage elements that help demonstrate diversity of cultural heritage and raise awareness about its importance. The list was established in 2008.
- From India, the 13 Intangible Cultural Heritages have been added into the list, which include:
  - Yoga
  - Nawrouz
  - Kumbh Mela
  - Chhau dance
  - Tradition of Vedic chanting
  - Ramlila (the traditional performance of the Ramayana)
  - Kutiyattam (Sanskrit theatre)
  - Ramman (religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas)
  - Mudi yettu (ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala)
  - Kalbelia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan
  - Buddhist chanting of Ladakh (recitation of sacred Buddhist texts in the trans-Himalayan Ladakh region, Jammu and Kashmir)
  - Sankirtana (ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur)
  - Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab

## **TriboE Mask**

- TriboE Mask is a type of mask indigenously developed in India that can hold electric charges to restrict the entry of infections, without any external power used.
- It is three-layered, in which a layer of nylon cloth sandwiched between polypropylene layers.
- **Working:** When two non-conducting layers are rubbed against each other, the layers develop positive and negative charges instantly and continue to hold the charges for some time. This electric field, quite strong at proximity, is used to deactivate or possibly even kill the germs.

- **Triboelectric Effect:** It is a type of contact electrification on which certain materials become electrically charged after they are separated from a different material with which they were in contact.
- **Context:** A team of researchers at the Centre for Nano and Soft Matter Sciences (CeNS), Bengaluru, an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), has recently developed this type of mask.

### **Goa: First COVID-19 free state of India**

- Goa has become the first COVID-19 free State in the country with the last seven positive cases also turning negative.
- This makes Goa the first State in the country with no case of coronavirus being reported since April 3.
- Besides, Manipur becomes second State after Goa which has been declared as COVID-19 free.

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

### **Leather back Sea Turtles**

- The Leather back Turtles are the world's largest living sea turtles. They are considered vulnerable under International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) red list of threatened species.
- **Context:** The largest number of nests of the rare Leather back sea turtles was recently found in Thailand. This was mainly because the beaches in Thailand were deserted due to COVID-19 lock down.

### **Community Kitchens**

- Recently, Uttar Pradesh became the first state to geotag community kitchens, to learn about their locations. For this, Uttar Pradesh government has collaborated with Google for better coordination.
- An application has been developed by the Remote Sensing Application Centre (RSAC) to feed data of the latitudes and longitudes of the community kitchen.
- These kitchens produce 12 lakh food packets per day, which help to feed poor and marginal people who have been affected due to COVID-19 pandemic.
- For this, State Government has mobilized state resources on massive scale to establish the kitchens. This has been done through religious organizations and non-governmental organizations.

### **COVID-19: Govt. constituted high-level task force**

- The Government of India has constituted a high-level work force to set up vaccine development process for COVID-19. The task force consists of members from NITI Aayog, Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) and Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).



- It will create a list of national and international organizations that work on vaccine development.
- Currently, there are 70 clinical trials being conducted all over the world to find a vaccine for COVID-19, of these, 5 have entered in human trials.

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

### **Civil Service Day**

- India celebrates Civil Service Day on April 21, every year, to motivate the efforts and works of civil servants. It was on this day in 1947, Sardar Vallabhai Patel addressed the first batch probationers of administrative services of Independent India. However, the day was celebrated for the first time in 2006.
- On the Civil Service Day, Government of India rewards various officers with Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration.

### **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) Scheme**

- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi is implemented as a centrally-sponsored scheme which was introduced to augment the source of income of small and marginal farmers. Under the Scheme, an amount of Rs.6000 per year is transferred directly into the bank accounts of the farmers, subject to certain exclusion criteria relating to higher income status.
- Affluent farmers have been excluded from the scheme such as Income Tax payers in last assessment year, professionals if they have farms- like doctors, engineers, lawyers, chartered accountants, etc. and pensioners drawing at least Rs.10,000 per month (excluding Group-D employees).
- The entire responsibility of identification of beneficiaries rests with the State/UT Governments.
- **Context:** Under PM-KISAN Scheme, Rs. 17,793 crores released for 8.89 crore farmers families during the lockdown.

### **ANNIM**

- Researchers from Indian Institute of Geomagnetism (IIG), Mumbai, have developed Artificial Neural Networks based global Ionospheric Model (ANNIM), a global model to predict the ionospheric electron density with larger data coverage- a crucial need for communication and navigation.
- Artificial Neural Networks (ANNs) replicate the processes in the human brain to solve problems such as pattern recognition, classification, clustering, generalization, linear and nonlinear data fitting, and time series prediction. The output of ANNs is the electron density as a function of altitude for any given location and time.

## West Texas Intermediate (WTI)

- West Texas intermediate, also known as Texas light sweet, is a grade of crude oil used as a benchmark in oil pricing. This grade is described as light crude oil because of its relatively low density, and sweet for its low sulphur content. It is considered as best quality of crude oil in the world.
- It is the underlying commodity of New York Mercantile Exchange's oil futures contracts.
- **Context:** Recently, prices of WTI, fell to minus \$40.32 a barrel in New York. This is the lowest crude oil price ever known.

## Chief Minister COVID-19 Yoddha Kalyan Yojana

- Madhya Pradesh Government has recently launched the Chief Minister COVID-19 Yoddha Kalyan Yojana, under which around 1 lakh Anganwadi workers are to be benefitted by getting special health insurance of Rs 50 lakhs.
- Health insurance to Anganwadi workers is needed as they are at greater risk of COVID-19 infection because they conducting door-to-door survey of COVID-19 infected persons and also visiting every house to provide nutritional food to children.
- Anganwadi is a rural child care centre, which was begun by the Government of India in 1975 as part of the Integrated Child Development Services program. These centres provide pre-school education, health education, immunization and health check-up.
- The responsibilities of the Anganwadi workers have been listed by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

## National Development Bank (NDB)

- New Development Bank was established in 2014 by BRICS member countries, namely Russia, Brazil, India, South Africa and China. It works to complement efforts of regional and multilateral financial institutions to enhance global growth and development.
- It supports both public and private projects.
- The initial authorized capital of the bank was 100 billion USD.
- NDB has also announced to provide a financial assistance of 1 billion USD of COVID-19 funds to India
- **Context:** Recently, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman attended the fifth annual meeting of the Board of Governors of the National Development Bank through video conferencing.

## World Wide Help (WWH)

- IIT Bombay has developed a platform named World Wide Help (WWH) which can be used to connect people seeking medical help with doctors.
- The WWH platform can be used with an app or a phone. The user simply calls a dedicated number and can input basic data such as the age of the person in need of help and whom they wish to solicit help from.

## Matterhorn Mountain

- Matterhorn is a mountain of the Alps, situated on the border between Switzerland and Italy. Its summit is 4,478 metres (14,692 ft) high, making it one of the highest summits in the Europe.
- **Context:** Indian Tricolour of more than 1,000 meters in size was projected on Matterhorn Mountain to express solidarity to all Indians in the fight against COVID-19.

## Milk Tea Alliance

- Milk Tea Alliance is a pro-democratic front formed by thousands of internet users from Thailand, Taiwan and Hong Kong on social networking sites against the authoritarianism of the Chinese Government and its supporters.
- The informal movement began by defending itself against the insults of pro-Chinese Twitter users against Thailand.

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

## COVID India Seva

- The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has launched COVID India Seva platform, an interactive medium, to provide a channel of communication between the citizens and the Government.
- The platform aims at providing transparent e-governance delivery.
- This is achieved by answering queries of the citizens as early as possible, preferable on real-time basis.

## World Earth Day

- World Earth Day is celebrated on April 22, every year, to demonstrate environmental protection. It is being celebrated since 1970.
- The theme of this year's World Earth Day is *Climate Action*.
- This 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World Earth Day is celebrated through digital mobilizations.
- This year, the five components that are to be included in the celebrations, include: Citizen Science, Advocacy, Volunteering, Education and Programmes for Artists.

## Saiyam

- Pune Municipal Corporation has launched "Saiyam" mobile application, which aims to monitor home quarantine citizens.
- Under this, a home quarantined person will have to download the application. The app has GPS tracking and will help in tracking the home quarantined persons whenever they leave their homes. The City Administration gets alerts on such situations and the local police are informed.
- The application uses colour code to monitor the citizens. Red signifies that the person has stayed out for a longer duration; yellow says that the person had made limited movements and green says that he had confined himself to house limits.