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**MADE EASY
WEEKLY CURRENT
AFFAIRS**

WEEK-2

8th April - 15th April

Targeted Examinations:

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

Current Affairs MADE EASY

(8th April to 15th April 2020)

8th April 2020

SAFE Scheme

- Responsive to the need of the hour to fight Coronavirus from all fronts, Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), the principal financial institution engaged in the promotion, financing and development of Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs), has launched SAFE (SIDBI Assistance to Facilitate Emergency response against Corona Virus) scheme.
- It is a financial assistance program for MSEs which are engaged in the manufacturing of products or offers services related to fighting the novel coronavirus, which has been declared a pandemic.
- MSEs engaged in manufacturing of hand sanitizers, masks, gloves, head gear, body suits, shoecovers, ventilators, goggles, testing labs etc. can avail loans up to Rs. 50 lakh at a fixed interest rate of 5 per cent for maximum loan repayment tenure of 5 years. These are collateral free loans and may be sanctioned within 48 hours of applying and submission of documents.
- Apart from this, it will provide small and medium-sized businesses with Rs. 1 Crore emergency working capital.

COVID-19: Genome Sequencing

- Genome Sequencing is a technique which is used for the identification of full DNA sequence of a virus or other organisms. It would also help in learning about the family tree of a virus.
- Genome sequencing is necessary because:
 - It helps track the transmission route of the virus globally.
 - It can determine how quickly the virus is adapting as it spreads.
 - It identifies targets to therapies.
 - It is required to understand the role of co-infection.
- **Context:** The Genome Sequencing of COVID-19 is being done to understand the evolution of the virus. The technique is being focused on by the Center for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB).

Anti-Microbial Coating

- Anti-microbial coating is a type of coating that can be applied or fabricated into materials or surfaces such as textiles, plastics, etc. The compound developed through the technology is soluble in several solvents such as plastics, textiles, PVC, polystyrene, polyurethane, etc.
- The coating kills the microbes within 30 minutes of contact. The microbes get killed as the coating disrupts the membranes of the pathogens. This includes fungus, bacteria, viruses like influenza virus, COVID-19, etc.
- The coating is to be used in making Personal Protection Equipments (PPEs) such as gowns, face shields, gloves used by health care personnel.
- **Context:** The Department of Science and Technology recently approved anti-microbial coating developed by Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR).

Samadhan

- The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has launched “Samadhan”, a challenge to address Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the country.
- It aims to motivate the students to make new discoveries and perform new experiments and come up with solutions that will help fight COVID-19.
- The mega online challenge was launched by the Innovative Cell of Ministry of Human Resources Development and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) along with Forge and Innovation Curis.

Bharatmala

- Bharatmala is a new umbrella program for the highways sector that focuses on optimizing efficiency of freight and passenger movement across the country by bridging critical infrastructure gaps through effective interventions like development of Economic Corridors, Inter Corridors and Feeder Routes, Border and International connectivity roads, Coastal and Port connectivity roads, Green-field expressways, etc.
- **Context:** National Highway Authority of India has recently finished construction of 3,979 km of national highways during the 2019-20 financial year. This is the authority's highest ever achieved target in a financial year since its inception.

Certificate of Origin

- The Certificate of Origin document is a certificate which attests that the product originated in a particular country. The Guidelines for the issuance of certificate of origin is issued by the International Chamber of Commerce.
- **Context:** The Ministry of Commerce has opened an online portal for providing Exporters and other instructions for Certificates of Origin. The online portal is currently used to receive export certificates under various trade agreements like Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) signed with Chile, South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) signed with Nepal and SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) with SAARC countries and also the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between India and South Korea.

United Nations Peacekeeping Force

- The United Nations has announced that it would suspend its peacekeeping operations until 30 June to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- The United Nations Peacekeeping force provides security and the political and peacebuilding support to help countries make the difficult, early transition from conflict to peace. It was founded in 1945.
- There are more than 90,000 active personnel currently working in the peacekeeping mission of the UN. The force is often referred to as Blue Berets or Blue Helmets.
- UN peacekeeping is a unique global partnership. It brings together the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Secretariat, troop and police contributors and the host governments in a combined effort to maintain international peace and security. Its strength lies in the legitimacy of the UN Charter and in the wide range of contributing countries that participate and provide precious resources.

Marginal Cost of Funds-based Lending Rate (MCLR)

- Marginal Cost of Funds-based Lending Rate (MCLR) is the minimum interest rate that a bank can lend at.
- It is an internal benchmark, which means the rate is determined internally by the bank depending on the period left for the repayment of a loan.
- **Context:** The State Bank of India has reduced the marginal cost of fund-based lending rate (MCLR) by 35 basis points (bps) across all loan tenures. The move comes after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) reduced the repo rate by 75 bps in the last week of March, 2020.

9th April 2020

iGOT

- The Department of Personnel and Training has launched iGOT, an online training platform in the fight against COVID-19. iGOT is an acronym for Integrated Government Online Training.
- It offers online training for doctors, nurses, paramedics, hygiene workers, technicians, Auxiliary Nursing Midwives (ANMS), central & state govt. officers, civil defence officials, various police organisations, National Cadet Corps (NCC), Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), National Service Scheme (NSS), Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS), Bharat Scouts & Guides (BSG) and other volunteers to help fight the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **The platform currently hosts nine courses on topics like:**
 - Basics of COVID.
 - ICU Care and Ventilation Management.
 - Clinical Management, Infection Prevention through PPE.
 - Infection Control and Prevention.
 - Quarantine and Isolation.

- Laboratory Sample Collection and Testing.
- Management of COVID 19 Cases.
- COVID 19 Training.
- It was launched on DIKSHA website. The DIKSHA platform was launched by the Ministry of Human Resources and Development (MHRD) in 2017. The aim of the portal was to provide a digital platform for the teachers to make their lifestyle digital. The portal was launched with a tagline “National Platform for Our Teachers, Our Heroes”.
- DIKSHA is an abbreviation of Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing.

Consumer Price Index (CPI)

- Consumer Price Index is a weighted average of prices of consumer goods and services such as food, transportation and medical care. It is calculated by taking price changes of every item in the basket and averaging them.
- **Context:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has projected that the Consumer Price Index is to ease from 4.8% in Q1 to 4.4% in Q2 of the financial year 2020-21.

Biofortification

- Biofortification is the process of increasing nutritional value of food crops by increasing the density of vitamins and minerals in a crop through either conventional plant breeding; agronomic practices or biotechnology.
- It entails application of minerals such as zinc or iron as foliar or soil applications, drawing on plant management, soil factors, and plant characteristics to get enhanced content of key micronutrients into the edible portion of the plant.
- **Context:** A farmer of Junagadh, Gujarat has developed biofortified carrots, which are rich in β -carotene and iron. The carrots are locally called “Madhuban Gajar”. It is being planted in an area of over 200 hectares in Junagadh, and the average yield, which is 40-50 t/ha, has become the main source of income to the local farmers. Madhuban Gajar carrot variety possesses a significantly higher root yield (74.2 t/ha) and plant biomass (275 gm per plant) as compared to check variety.

10th April 2020

Operation Shield

- The Delhi Government has announced Operation Shield in the Coronavirus containment zones of the National Capital Territory (NCT). The activity shall be carried out in the Delhi’s all containment areas.
- SHIELD stands for Sealing, Home quarantine, isolation and tracing, essential supply, local sanitation and door-to-door checks.
- The Government of Delhi had already initiated 5T initiative that is being enforced in Delhi. It includes Testing, Tracing, Teamwork, Treatment and Tracking-Monitoring.

Gamosa

- Gamosa is a white rectangular piece of cloth with primarily a red border on three sides and red woven motifs on the fourth.
- Gamosa was also a symbol of protest rose during the anti-foreigners Assam Agitation from 1979 to 1985. The extremist United Liberation Front of Asom too used the towel with revolutionary motifs.
- **Context:** The COVID-19 pandemic has made the ubiquitous Gamosa, a decorative cotton towel, evolve from memento to mask.

Targeted Long-Term Repo Operation (TLTRO)

- TLTRO is a tool under which the central bank provides one-year to three-year money to banks at the prevailing repo rate, accepting government securities with matching or higher tenure as the collateral.
- TLTRO operations are intended to prevent short-term interest rates in the market from drifting a long way away from the policy rate, which is the repo rate.
- It also shows the market that RBI will not only rely on revising repo rates and conducting open market operations for its monetary policy, but also use new tools to achieve its intended objectives.
- **Context:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has received Rs 1.13 lakh crore worth of bids in the targeted long term repo operation (TLTRO) conducted for an amount of Rs 25,000 crore with a three-year tenor.

State of the World's Nursing Report

- World Health Organisation (WHO), along with the International Council of Nurses (ICN) and the Nursing Now campaign, has released a report titled, "State of the World's Nursing".
- **Key Observations:**
 - Globally, there are roughly 36.9 nurses per 10,000 people, with variations within and across regions.
 - There are almost 10 times more nurses in the Americas than in the African region.
 - By 2030, there will be a shortage of over 5.7 million nurses worldwide.
 - The largest shortfall in absolute numbers is in the South-East Asian region,
 - As nurses and other medical workers are at the frontlines of this global pandemic, some of the key issues they face include shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE) including face masks, eye-protective gear and gloves, and also the psychological stress faced by some medical staff.
- **Key Data Regarding India:**
 - As of 2018, there were over 1.56 million nurses in India and 772,575 nursing associates. Out of this, the share of professional nurses is 67%.
 - Within the health workforce, nurses comprise 47% of the medical staff, followed by doctors (23.3%), dentists (5.5%) and pharmacists (24.1%).
 - An overwhelming majority of the nurses are women- 88% in India, while globally 90% are women.

Epidemic Diseases (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020

- Odisha Government has promulgated an ordinance to deal with COVID-19 spread by amending Section 3 of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897.
- Key Highlights of Ordinance:
 - Anyone who disobeys any regulation or order made under the Act, is liable for imprisonment up to two years or with a fine of up to Rs 10,000 or with both.
 - All offences under the Act shall be cognisable and bailable.
 - Any person disobeying any regulation or order made under the 1897 Act was deemed to have committed an offence punishable under Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), under Section 3 of the Act.
 - A provision has also been made in the Ordinance for special procurement of critical drugs and consumables to manage the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak.
- Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 is routinely enforced across the country for dealing with outbreaks of diseases such as swine flu, dengue, and cholera. It was introduced by British Government in India to tackle the epidemic of plague that had spread in the erstwhile Bombay Presidency in the 1890s.

PC&PNDT Act

- The Pre-conception & Pre-natal Diagnostics Techniques (PC & PNDT) Act, 1994 was enacted in response to the decline in Sex ratio in India, which deteriorated from 972 in 1901 to 927 in 1991.
- The main purpose of enacting the act is to ban the use of sex selection techniques before or after conception and prevent the misuse of prenatal diagnostic technique for sex selective abortion.
- **Context:** The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has clarified that it has not suspended the PC&PNDT Act, which prohibits sex selection before or after conception.

In view of the on-going lockdown, due of COVID19 pandemic, the Health Ministry has issued a Notification to defer/suspend certain provisions pertain to applying for renewal of registration

11th April 2020

Bharat Padhe Online Campaign

- The Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD) has launched a week-long Bharat Padhe Online Campaign to crowd-source ideas for improving the online education ecosystem of India.
- It aims to invite the best suggestions and solutions to overcome the constraints of online education while promoting the available digital education platforms.

Wormivet

- The National Innovation Foundation that operates under Department of Science and Technology has developed Wormivet, an indigenous herbal medicine, which can be used to treat endoparasite worms in livestock. A patent has been filed on the invention.
- Internal Parasite in worms leads to loss in body weight, anaemia, loss in reproductive health. It limits growth and productivity. On the other hand, inappropriate use of chemical dewormers creates resistance.

WHO: US stopped funding

- US President Donald Trump put a hold on America's funding to the World Health Organization, accusing it of becoming China-centric during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.
- **Types of contributions to WHO**
 - **Assessed Contributions:** These are the amount each Member State must pay which is calculated relative to the country's wealth and population.
 - **Voluntary Contributions:** These are come from Member States (in addition to their assessed contribution) or from other partners. Their range in flexible.
 - **Core Voluntary Contributions:** They allow less well-funded activities to benefit from a better flow of resources and ease implementation when immediate financing is lacking.
 - **Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) Contributions:** These were started in 2011 to improve and strengthen the containment of influenza viruses with human pandemic potential, and to increase the access of developing countries to vaccines.
- **Largest Contributors:**
 - The United States is currently the WHO's biggest contributor, making up 14.67% of total funding by providing \$553.1 million.
 - The US is followed by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation forming 9.76% or \$367.7 million.
 - The third biggest contributor is the GAVI Vaccine Alliance at 8.39%, with the UK (7.79%) and Germany (5.68%) coming fourth and fifth respectively.
 - The four next biggest donors are international bodies: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (5.09%), World Bank (3.42%), Rotary International (3.3%), and the European Commission (3.3%).
 - India makes up 0.48% of total contributions, while China 0.21%.

12th April 2020

COVID-19: Colour-code Lockdown

- Amid growing cases of COVID-19 virus in India, the Government has demarcated affected areas into red, orange and green zones.
- **Red zones:**
 - These are regions that were declared as hotspots.

- Here no economic activity is to be allowed.
- **Orange zones:**
 - These are regions where limited public transport is to be allowed.
 - In these regions harvesting of farm products will also be allowed.
- **Green zones:**
 - In these zones, along with farm activities, MSME industries will also begin to function.
 - These industries will provide in-house lodging facilities for employees along with social distancing facilities.
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Virosomes

- Virosomes are enveloped virus like particles. They are lipid-based carriers (envelopes) containing the functional fusion viral proteins and natural membrane proteins of the natural virus.
- Virosomes based vaccines are designed to maintain the immunogenicity of a live-attenuated virus but with the safety of a killed virus. The virosomes are devoid of the nucleocapsid and without the genetic material of the source virus, they are unable to replicate, cause an infection or a disease.
- **Context:** It was in recently in news, due to Coronavirus pandemic.

13th April 2020

YUKTI Portal

- The Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD) has launched the YUKTI portal which will record, cover and monitor initiatives of MHRD and other educational institutes in the country during Coronavirus pandemic.
- The main aim of the portal is to act as a two-way communication between the institutions and the ministry. It will act as a platform for the institutions to share their knowledge about challenges faced in encountering COVID-19. It will also include social initiatives taken for the betterment of students.
- YUKTI is an acronym for Young India Combating COVID with Knowledge, Technology and Innovation.

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)

- Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana aims to provide LPG connections to families below poverty line. The scheme helps in improving the health conditions of women, reduce the cooking time and effort. It was launched in 2016
- There are 27.87 crore LPG consumers in the country. Of this, the PMUY beneficiaries are 8 crores.
- **Context:** The GoI has so far transferred Rs 5,000 crores to Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY). This has been done to provide free LPG cylinders to PMUY beneficiaries for a period of three months. This was done to ease lives of the poor during lockdown amid COVID-19 pandemic.

CollabCAD

- NITI Aayog, Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and National Informatics Centre have jointly launched CollabCAD initiative. The initiative aims to provide a platform to find solutions in terms of 2D drafting and 3D product design.
- The initiative will provide platform for the students of Atal Tinkering Labs to create and modify 3D designs.
- The CollabCAD is a software that is highly relevant to school students. It helps to materialize their creativity and ideas.

Helicopter Money

- Helicopter Money is the monetary policy tool which is used to invest money into a struggling economy. In simple terms, it is an extension of non-repayable money towards state and Central governments from central bank.
- The policy intends to make more money available for the people to nudge them to spend more. With the increasing economic crisis, Helicopter Money is a solution being suggested by economic specialists all over the world.
- Helicopter Money was the term framed by an American Economist Milton Friedman.
- **Context:** Recently, Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao has suggested this concept for the state governments to revive economic growth. He asked the RBI to release 5% of GDP as Helicopter money.

Besides, the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) has also recommended direct cash transfer of Rs 5000 to all the account holders whose annual income is below Rs 5 lakh.

14th April 2020

US approved missiles sales to India

- On April 14, 2020, the United States approved missiles sales to India, which include Torpedoes lightweight missiles and Harpoon air-launched missiles. The missiles will help India to improve its capability against threats from enemy weapon system.
- The missiles are being sold at 155 million USD.
- The lightweight Torpedoes will be used to in anti-submarine warfare missions. The torpedoes are underwater missiles that can be launched below or above the water.
- The Harpoon is an anti-ship missile used to attack an enemy boat or ship.

Dekho Apna Desh

- Ministry of Tourism has launched Dekho Apna Desh which is a webinar that caters in-depth information about tourist destinations in the country. It also provides details about culture and heritage of India.
- The first webinar series was titled as “City of cities-Delhi’s Personal Diary”, to explain long history of Delhi. The second series has been named “Calcutta-A Confluences of Culture”.

15th April 2020

COVSACK

- The Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) has developed COVSACK, a COVID-19 Sample Collection Kiosk to receive samples from infected patients.
- In COVSACK, a patient walks into the Kiosk cabin and a health care professional from outside the cabin collects samples with oral swabs. After the patient leaves the cabin, four nozzle sprayers spray disinfectants mist for around 70 seconds. Further, the cabin is flushed with water and UV light.
- The main benefit of the system is that it is ready in less than 2 minutes for the next use. The cost of COVSACK is around Rs 1 lakh. There is no involvement of manual disinfection in the entire process. Therefore, the system is safe to use.

Nihang

- Nihang is an order of Sikh warriors. The group is characterised by blue robes, antiquated arms such as swords and spears, and decorated turbans surmounted by steel quoits.
- Nihangs observe the Khalsa code of conduct in its strictest sense. They do not profess any allegiance to an earthly master. Instead of saffron they hoist a blue Nishan Sahib (flag) atop their shrines.
- Nihangs had a major role in defending the Sikh panth from Mughals and during the onslaught of Afghan invader Ahmed Shah Durrani (1748-65).
- **Context:** Recently, a group of Nihangs attacked a Punjab police party when stopped for a curfew pass in Patiala, and the subsequent seizure of weapons and narcotics from, has put the spotlight on the Nihangs.

Online ASEAN Special Summit

- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit held online, in which leaders of the virus-hit region warned of the crippling economic cost of COVID-19, calling for trade routes to reopen to protect jobs and food supplies, as well as the stockpiling of medical equipment.
- ASEAN is a regional organization which was established to promote political and social stability among southeast Asian nations.
- **Secretariat:** Jakarta, Indonesia.