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**MADE EASY
WEEKLY CURRENT
AFFAIRS**

WEEK-1

1st May - 7th May

Targeted Examinations:

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

Current Affairs MADE EASY

(1st May to 7th May 2020)

1st May 2020

Yash Programme

- The Department of Science and Technology (DST) recently launched a programme YASH (Year of Awareness on Science and Health), which aims at encouraging public engagement and enables communities to increase their sense of awareness against COVID-19.
- Under the initiative, the DST has planned to work out academic, media, research and voluntary organizations to prepare for emergency and also to address challenges.
- The programme will include health, science and risk communication software, audio-visual, folk performances, digital platforms and communicators to address the challenges. The programme is to be launched in regional languages as well.

ATULYA

- Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) has designed ATULYA- a microwave sterilizer which will be used to disintegrate COVID-19 coronavirus. It uses differential heating (the process that creates two different temperatures) to disintegrate the virus in the range of 56 degree Celsius to 60 degree Celsius.
- The time of sterilization depends on the size of the object. The device is cost effective and can be run in fixed and portable installations as well.
- Sterilization is the process by which microorganisms such as fungi, virus, bacteria, spores and other Eukaryotic organisms such as Plasmodium are eliminated, killed, removed or deactivated. The main methods used in sterilization include dry heat, pressure, gas vapor, ultraviolet radiation, chlorine dioxide gas, etc.

Kisan Sabha App

- The Central Road Research Institute (CRRI) of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has launched Kisan Sabha application to connect farmers to freight transportation and supply chain.
- The application minimizes interference of middle men and connects with the institutional buyers directly. Thus, the farmers are able to get best market rates for their crops. The rates are easily obtained well than the nearby mandi.
- It also helps service providers, mandi dealers and other customers like online stores, retail outlets and institutional buyers. Apart from farmers and transporters, the application is also helpful for dealers who are involved in pesticides and fertilizer business.

PAHAL

- PAHAL scheme is a joint initiative of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and IPE Global, with main objective to provide quality and affordable health care solutions to urban poor. This will help reduce out of pocket expenditure of the underserved urban communities by 30%.
- PAHAL is an acronym for Partnerships for Affordable Healthcare Access and Longevity.
- **Context:** Recently, USAID announced that it will provide 3 million USD for India's PAHAL project. Till now, USAID has provided 5.9 million USD. The funds that have been allocated recently are to be used to disseminate public health messages to the public, to provide care to the affected and to strengthen surveillance and case finding.

e-NAM

- National Agriculture Market (eNAM) is a pan-India electronic trading portal which networks the existing Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMC) mandis to create a unified national market for agricultural commodities. It was launched in 2016.
- Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) is the lead agency for implementing eNAM under the aegis of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Government of India.
- It has vision to promote uniformity in agriculture marketing by streamlining of procedures across the integrated markets, removing information asymmetry between buyers and sellers and promoting real time price discovery based on actual demand and supply.
- **Context:** Recently, around 200 Mandis were added to the eNAM platform from the states of Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh. These additions have brought the number of e-Nam mandis in the country to 785. For the first time, a mandi from the state of Karnataka has been added to the e-NAM platform.

State Legislative Council

- The State Legislative Council is the upper house of a state legislature and is established under Article 169 of Constitution of India.
- Every member of the legislative council serves for 6 years. Hence, the terms of one-third of the state legislative council members expire every two years.
- After bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir, 6 out of 28 states of India presently have State Legislative Council, namely Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh.
- **Context:**
 - The Election Commission of India announced that it is to conduct biennial election for 9 vacant seats for the members of Legislative Council of the Maharashtra State Legislature.

- Uddhav Thackeray, the CM of Maharashtra, must get elected in this election as he is currently not a member of any house of state legislature. Constitution of India mandates a member of Union Cabinet or State Cabinet must be elected within 6 months of taking oath.
- Article 324 of Constitution gives powers to the Election Commission of India to conduct parliamentary and state legislature elections.

AYURAKSHA Programme

- The All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) organized AYURAKSHA Programme under the Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy). The main objective of the programme is to fight against simple and time tested Ayurveda immunity boosting measures.
- The programme which was a joint venture of AIIA and Delhi Police, was titled AYURAKSHA “Corona Se Jung-Delhi Police Ke Sang”.
- The programme recommends Chyawanaprash, which has Amla as main ingredient. It also recommends other major formulations such as Sanshamani Vati and anu Taila.
- Under the programme, the proposal is to be implemented in phased manner. In phase-I, the quarantined officials are to be covered. In Phase-II, police officers in containment zones are to be covered. In phase-III, the officers in quarantine zones are to be covered. Finally in Phase-IV, the police men working in front line of the COVID-19 combat are to be covered.

2nd May 2020

IDEAthon

- The National Mission for Clean Ganga operating under Ministry of Jal Shakti has launched “IDEAthon”, which focuses to explore how the COVID-19 crisis will change the river management strategies.
- The event finalized that more attention is required towards river management. Also, it highlighted the interconnectivity of cities with the river.
- The Namai Gange Programme is to bring out a policy based on the suggestions provided by IDEAthon.
- **Namami Gange Programme**
 - It is an Integrated Conservation Mission, approved as ‘Flagship Programme’ by the Union Government in June 2014 with budget outlay of Rs.20,000 Crore to accomplish the twin objectives of effective abatement of pollution, conservation and rejuvenation of National River Ganga.
 - The initiative focuses on controlling the pollution of River Ganga. The main pillars of the mission include sewerage treatment, industrial effluent monitoring, bio-diversity, development of river surface cleaning, afforestation, and public awareness. In order to implement the scheme India has joined hands with Germany.

Chakma and Hajong Communities

- The Chakma and Hajong communities are the migrants from the then East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). They came to India in 1964. There are more than 1 lakh Chakma and Hajong refugees in the country, in which around 15,000 Chakmas and 2,000 Hajongs are in the relief camp set up in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The Chakmas are predominantly Buddhists and the Hajongs are Hindus. They inhabited the Chittagong hills in the regions of the then East Pakistan. They migrated to India due to the construction of Kaptai dam across the Karnaphuli river in 1960s. They also faced persecution in the then East Pakistan as they were non-Muslims.
- Currently, these tribes do not have citizenship or land rights. However, they are provided the basic amenities.
- **Context:** The Ministry of Development of the North Eastern Region has directed Arunachal Pradesh Government to include Chakma and Hajong communities in the COVID-19 relief programme.

Recently granted GI Tags

Kashmir Saffron:

- The saffron cultivated in the Kashmir Valley has recently received Geographical Indication (GI) Tag.
- This type of saffron has long, thick and has natural deep red colour. Also, it has high aroma and processed without adding any chemicals.
- The colour of the saffron is unique due to the high quantity of crocin. It has a rich flavour because of safranal and the bitterness is due to the presence of picrocrocin.

Chak-Hao or Black rice (Manipur)

- This rice variety has a deep black colour and is heavier by weight than that of other coloured rice varieties like brown rice, etc.
- The rice is black in colour mainly due to the anthocyanin agent.

Kovilpatti Kadalai Mittai (Tamil Nadu)

Kovilpatti Kadalai Mittai is a peanut candy made in southern parts of Tamil Nadu. The candy is prepared from ground nut and jaggery. The water in making this is exclusively used from the river Thamirabarani, originates in the Western Ghats and flows into the Gulf of Mannar.

Gorakhpur Terracotta (Uttar Pradesh)

The terracotta of Gorakhpur is centuries old. The potters of the town make animal figures like elephants, horses, etc. Every piece of arts created has more toil and has earned less remuneration so far.

Central Vista Redevelopment Project

- The Central Vista Redevelopment Project aims to build a triangular parliament building. It will revamp the 3-km long Raj Path from Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate. The plan is to be completed by 2022.
- The new buildings will have underground parking system. Also, the new building will have metro connectivity and separate metro stations.
- The Central Vista of New Delhi houses Parliament House, Rashtrapati Bhavan, India Gate, North and South Block and National Archives.
- **Context:** The Expert Appraisal Committee has cleared the proposal to new Parliament at Rs 922 crores. The Central Vista committee has also approved the new plan.

One Nation One Ration Card

- Under the One Nation One Ration Card scheme, eligible beneficiaries would be able to avail their entitled food grains under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) from any Fair Price Shop in the country using the same ration card.
- The aim of the scheme is inter-state portability of ration cards. The scheme benefits people taking food grains under public distribution system (PDS). The system is highly useful to the migrant workers. In India around 37% of the population are migrant labourers.
- **Context:** The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution approved the integration of some states and Union Territories under One Nation One Ration Card scheme. These states include Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu and Himachal Pradesh.

3rd May 2020

African Swine Flu

- The African Swine Flu is a double-stranded DNA virus and is a causative agent of African Swine fever. It infects pigs, warthogs and its natural hosts.
- **Context:**
 - On May 3, 2020, the Assam Government confirmed that more than 2,500 pigs in 306 villages were killed due to African Swine Flu in Assam.
 - Though the Union Government has passed order to cull the pigs and declared them vermin, the state government is looking for alternative measures to save the pigs before use option to culling them.
 - **Vermin:** When an animal is classified as “vermin” by the Central Government, the protection over the animal under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 is removed. Vermin are wild animals that are believed to be harmful. When a species is declared vermin, it can be culled or hunted without restriction.

eCovSens

- The scientists at National Institute of Animal Biotechnology (NIAB), Hyderabad have developed a biosensor called the eCovSens, which will be used to detect COVID-19 virus in saliva samples.
- The electrode of the device is coated with the antibody of COVID-19 virus. When the saliva sample of the infected person is put in the device, it gets applied to the electrode. A reaction then occurs between the antibody in the electrode and the antigen in the saliva. The reaction creates an electric flow that confirms the presence of the virus.

Bharat Market

- The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) has launched a national e-commerce market place, named Bharat Market, which will integrate the capabilities of technology companies in order to provide end to end services.
- The portal will include participation of retailers and aims to bring 95% of retail traders into the platform. It will mainly focus on technology companies to provide end to end services.
- The initiative is to be guided and supported by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

4th May 2020

UV Blaster

- The Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) has developed an ultraviolet disinfection tower, named UV Blaster for chemical free and rapid disinfection.
- It is highly helpful for disinfecting high tech surfaces such as computers, electronic equipment and other gadgets.
- UV Blaster is helpful in offices where chemical methods may not be suitable. It can be operated through mobile phone or laptop remotely. There are six lamps each of 43 watts. The lamps emit Ultraviolet light of wavelength 254 nm in 360 degrees of illumination. The tower will switch off during human intervention or accidental opening of the room.

NAM Summit 2020

- On May 4, 2020, PM Modi attended the NAM Summit representing India through a video conference.
- **Key Highlights:**
 - PM Modi emphasized the importance of a coordinated, inclusive and equitable response by the world to this COVID-19 crisis, outlining the steps India has taken domestically and internationally.

- He was joined by over 30 other Heads of State and Government and other leaders, including from member States in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe.
- The Summit was also addressed by the UN Secretary General Mr. Antonio Guterres.
- **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM):**
 - It is a forum of 120 developing countries. After the United Nations, NAM is the largest grouping of states. The summit was agreed to convene at the Bandung Conference in 1955.
 - NAM was established in 1961 through initiatives of then PM Jawaharlal Nehru, Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito and Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser.
 - The main aim of the summit is to build aspiration towards collective security, terminating dominance of one country over other and expansion of freedom.
 - The five major principles of NAM include mutual respect, mutual non-aggression, equality and mutual benefit, mutual non-interference in domestic affairs and peaceful coexistence.

Saras Collection

- Recently, the Indian Government launched the Saras Collection on the Government eMarketplace (GeM) portal.
- It is a unique initiative by the GeM, Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) and Ministry of Rural Development.
- The on-boarding of the self-help groups (SHGs) has been initially piloted in the states of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.
- The Saras Collection will provide SHGs with direct access to Government buyers which will do away with intermediaries in the supply chain, thus ensuring better prices for SHGs and spurring employment opportunities at the local level.

Arogya Setu Mitr

- Arogya Setu Mitr, an initiative under the public-private partnership, has been launched, which is to be available in the Arogya Setu application. It offers free COVID-19 related consultation.
- It was launched in partnership with the Tech Mahindra, Tata Group and Swasth, among others, which will provide video consultation with doctors.
- The Arogya Setu Mitr is to perform as an individual site. It cannot access data from the application Arogya Setu. It was initiated with the advice of NITI Aayog and Principal and Scientific Advisor of the Prime Minister.
- The Arogya Setu application was launched to achieve contact tracing of COVID-19. The application helps to track people infected by the virus. It uses GPS and Bluetooth features in smart phones in order to achieve this. It was developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC).

5th May 2020

COVID-19: Israel isolated a key Antibody

- In a major breakthrough, the Israel Institute of Biological Research has isolated the key COVID-19 antibody, which will neutralize COVID-19 virus inside the infected person.
- Antibodies are proteins naturally produced in human bodies in order to respond to the foreign particles that invade human bodies. The antibodies are specific to the invader. This concept is used to test COVID-19 as well.
- The scientists believe that the antibody can possibly be the antidote that can be used in the treatment of COVID-19. The antibody is called monoclonal as it was isolated from a single recovered cell. The monoclonal antibodies have greater potential values in treating the disease.

Global Report on Food Crisis 2020

- The Global Report on Food Crisis 2020 has been released by the Global Network against Food Crisis, which says that around 135 million people are living under food crisis.
- The Global Network against Food Crisis is an initiative that was launched by European Union, World Food Programme, and Food and Agriculture Organization.
- **Key Highlights:**
 - According to the report, the number of people living under food crisis has increased which were 113 million in 2019.
 - The top 10 countries that were under food crisis contributed to 65% of the world population. These countries were Yemen, DR Congo, Afghanistan, Venezuela, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Syria, Sudan, Northern Nigeria and Haiti.

6th May 2020

Ayush Kavach

- The Uttar Pradesh Government has launched Ayush Kavach application to help people access prescriptions which will help the people to strengthen their resistance through ancient practices Ayurveda and Yoga. The application aims to boost the immunity of the people through Ayurveda medicines.
- The application provides information about natural resources that help boost immunity. The application was developed by the AYUSH Department of Uttar Pradesh.
- Earlier, the Ministry of AYUSH had introduced several measures to increase the immunity against COVID-19 in specific. One such government approved practice is the “Kabasura Kudineer” which is usually recommended for respiratory ailments such as cold and flu. It consists of 15 ingredients including ginger, Clove, ajwain, etc.

Lost at Home Report

- UNICEF has released its report called 'Lost at Home', which enforces the risks and challenges of internally displaced children and the need to protect them.
- **Key Highlights:**
 - According to the report, at the end of 2019, around 46 million people were internally displaced due to conflict and violence. Among them, every four out of 10 were children.
 - The regions where the displacement of children were high includes west and central Africa, eastern and southern Africa, Latin America and Caribbean, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, South Asia, East Asia and Pacific and Western Europe.
 - The three major countries that accounted to more than half of persons displaced due to conflict and violence are Syria, Democratic Republic of Congo and Yemen.
 - In India, according to the report, the displacements were mainly due to disasters. Around 5 million were displaced in India in 2019 due to natural disasters. This mainly includes floods and storms.

Nigah Programme

- The Himachal Pradesh Government is to launch a new programme called 'Nigah' which aims at educating family members that are coming from other parts of the country due to COVID-19 crisis.
- The Nigah Programme is to deploy Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA), anganwadi and health workers to create awareness about maintaining social distancing during home quarantine.
- Nigah will help to keep the family members of these migrated workers till they are tested for the infection. Also, these measures will help save the family members from possible infections.

MNGREGA: Jharkhand Government launched three schemes

- Jharkhand Government has launched three schemes to increase working hours of MNREGA workers.
- **Birsa Harit Gram Yojana:** Under the scheme, fruit bearing plantations are to be planted on either side of the roads. This will help the villagers earn an annual income of Rs 50,000 after three years. Meanwhile, during the plantation and growing phase, the MNREGA would support them.
- **Nilamber-Pitamber Jal Samridhi Yojana:** The aim of the scheme is to increase ground water level. It intends to create 5 lakh crore litres of ground water reserve. This will help in cultivation of waste lands.
- **Veer Shahid Poto Ho Khel Vikas Yojana:** Under the scheme, playgrounds at panchayat levels are to be constructed to promote sports and reserve jobs under sports quota.

Surakshit Dada-Dadi and Nana-Nani Abhiyan

- NITI Aayog along with Primal Foundation has launched Surakshit Dada-Dadi and Nana-Nani Abhiyan. The scheme focuses to ensure the wellbeing of the senior citizens amid COVID-19 pandemic.
- The campaign targets to reach senior citizens in Aspirational Districts (Those districts in the country that are affected by poor socio-economic factors.). These districts are spread in Jharkhand, Bihar, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.
- The scheme is aimed to create awareness about several aspects of senior citizens including their lifestyle and health.

GARUD Portal

- The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) operating under Ministry of Civil Aviation has launched GARUD Portal.
- GARUD is acronym of Government Authorisation for Relief Using Drones.
- The portal will assist state entities to obtain exemptions from Central Government to operate drones for COVID-19 mitigation purposes. The portal is important as several state entities are deploying drones to disinfect public places.

Operation Samudra Setu

- Indian Navy has launched Operation Samudra Setu to bring back the Indians that are stranded in Maldives. They are stranded due to the grounding of airlines. After evacuation, these people from Maldives are to be kept in quarantine at Kochi.
- The Indian ships INS Jalashwa and Magar are being sent to the port of Male, Maldives. INS Jalashwa is an amphibious warfare ship.

7th May 2020

Soil Health Card Programme

- The Soil Health Card programme was launched in 2015, under which soil cards are provided to the farmers that report the soil quality.
- The cards provide nutrient status of the soil and also information about the application of proper dosage of nutrients to improve soil fertility. As per a study, Soil Health Card Programme has decreased the application of fertilizer by 8-10%.
- **Context:** The Union Minister of Agriculture Shri Narendra Singh Tomar has called for farmers' movement to integrate soil nutrient management. The announcement was made during progress review of Soil Health Programme.
Farmer's movement will include soil testing and campaigns addressing the importance of application of fertilizers based on reports of soil testing. The movement will cover more than 1 lakh villages. It is to be launched and implemented in 2020-21. It also aims at promotion of Bharatiya Prakritik Krishi Padhati (BPKP).

- **Bharatiya Prakritik Krishi Padhati:** The scheme aims to promote natural farming. It plans to cover 12 lakh hectares of land. It is a centrally-sponsored scheme.

Toman: Iran's New Currency

- The Iran Government has recently come up with the decision of changing the name of its currency to Toman. Currently, the unit of Iranian currency is Rial.
- Due to USA pulling out from Nuclear Deal and its sanctions on Iran gave heaviest blow to the Iranian currency. The currency became 600% weaker than the US Dollar.
- **Key Highlights**
 - According to the Iranian Government, one Toman is 10,000 Rials.
 - Gheran is another new denomination. 100 Gheran makes a Toman.
 - The new system was authorized by the Iranian Parliament recently to manage high inflation in the country.
 - In order to make Toman, the four zeros in the older currency notes are alone removed. Rial will still remain legal.

Vandhe Bharat Mission

- Government of India has begun "Vandhe Bharat Mission" which aims at bringing stranded Indians from all over the world due to COVID-19 lockdown.
- The mission also aims at operating non-scheduled commercial flights. These commercial flights will carry people to London and Singapore and also selected places in USA.
- Under the mission, the people evacuated are to compulsorily download "Arogya Setu" application. After returning to India, these people are to be kept under quarantine for 14 days.
- During evacuation, people facing medical emergencies, pregnant women, students, elderly people are to be given priority. Also, the mission is to conduct medical screening before the flights. Among them, only asymptomatic patients are alone allowed to board the flight.

IMD

- The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has begun to include Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, Ladakh and Muzaffarabad into its meteorological sub-division of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The change reflects the changed status of Ladakh.
- It also comes with underlying message to the Pakistan Government. The change comes after Pakistan Government decided to hold elections in Gilgit-Baltistan.

Vesak Day

- Vesak, the Day of Full Moon is the most sacred day to the Buddhists, which was celebrated on 7th May all over the world. On this day, Gautam Buddha attained enlightenment. The Day is commemorated by the United Nations every year.
- Since 2004, International Vesak Summit is being organized. In 2019, it was held in Vietnam. So far, the summit has been held 11 times in Thailand, 3 times in Vietnam and 1 time in Sri Lanka.

Miscellaneous This Week

- Russia is to launch first Arktika-M satellite by December 2020 from Baikonur space. The satellite is to be used to monitor Arctic climate and environment.
- Every year, on May 5, World Asthma Day is organized by Global Initiative for Asthma. The day is observed on first Tuesday of May every year. The World Asthma Day is observed under the theme 'Enough Asthma Deaths'.
- The 2021 Commonwealth Youth Games is being postponed to 2023 as it faced clash of dates with the Tokyo Olympics. The Tokyo Olympics that was scheduled to be held from July 23 to August 8, 2020, was postponed by a year.
- The National Science and Technology Management Information (NSTMIS) has conducted a survey on Research and Development Statistics and Indicators 2019-20. The report says that India ranks 3rd globally in the scientific publication. The first two ranks were occupied by USA and China.
- Every year, International Astronomy Day is celebrated twice a year. Once on September 26 and other on May 2. On this day, astronomical institutions, planetariums, museums organize fun filled activities and spread awareness about the world of astronomy.
- Every year, World Tuna Day is observed on May 2 by the United Nations to spread the importance of conservation of the Tuna Fish species. The tuna like species are economically important for both developing and developed countries.
- The 1985 Indian Foreign Officer T S Trimurti has succeeded Syed Akbaruddin as the permanent representative of the United Nations..
- Germany has classified the organization Hezbollah as a terrorist organization in its soil.
- The United States of America has placed India on the "Priority Watch List" due to lack of measurable improvements in intellectual property framework.
- According to the Open Budget Survey conducted by the International Budget Partnership, India ranked 53rd among 117 countries in budget transparency and accountability.
- Recently, around 40 countries took part on an online summit called Global Response International Pledging Conference which was initiated by European Union. The main aim of the conference was to raise funds for research of COVID-19, especially vaccine development.