

28 March 2020 PIB Summary & Analysis

1. COVID-19 National Teleconsultation Centre (CoNTeC)

Context:

- The Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare Dr. Harsh Vardhan launched the National Teleconsultation Centre (CoNTeC)

Details:

- It has been conceptualised by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and has been implemented by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi.
- The CoNTeC is a Telemedicine Hub wherein expert doctors from various clinical domains will be available 24x7 to answer the multifaceted questions from specialists from all over the country.
- It is a multi-modal telecommunications hub through which 2 way audio-video and text communications can be undertaken from any part of the country as well as the world at large.
 - The modes of communication will include simple mobile telephony as well as two way video communications, using WhatsApp, Skype and Google Duo.
- CoNTeC has been made operational at AIIMS with a view to connect the Doctors across the country to AIIMS in real time for treatment of the COVID-19 patients.
 - CoNTeC has been set up in the AIIMS so that the small states should also make use of the vast experience of the Doctors at AIIMS.
- The CoNTeC is also fully integrated with the National Medical College Network (NMCN) to conduct a full fledged Video Conference (VC) between the 50 Medical Colleges connected through the NMCN with its National Resource Centre located at SGPGI, Lucknow.
- The patient management advice offered will be standardized as per the national guidelines supplemented protocols developed by the team at AIIMS, nominated by the Director, AIIMS.

Significance:

- The goal of the facility is to at least connect the doctors in the country together to discuss amongst themselves the protocols undertaken and provide the best treatment accordingly.
- The telemedicine guidelines have also been notified by the Government of India and with the help of digital platform and technology, the public at large will get the benefit not only for COVID- 19 but other diseases also.

Way Forward:

- All the medical colleges and AIIMS need to be connected together so that they can interact and help in the policy implementation for the country in the health sector.
- AIIMSs should become the hub of activity for the district hospitals to connect with them for consultation, telemedicine, education, training, interaction and exchange of protocols between themselves.

2. Green Channel

- It will facilitate mergers and acquisitions (“Combination“) in the country

- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) characterizes the 'green channel' as an automatic system of approval for Combinations wherein the Combination is deemed to be approved upon filing the notice in the format prescribed

Benefits of the green channel:

- The green channel is aimed to sustain and promote a speedy, transparent and accountable review of combination cases, strike a balance between facilitation and enforcement functions, create a culture of compliance and support economic growth.
- This system would significantly reduce time and cost of transactions.
- It is a step towards improving ease of doing business.

Context:

- CCI has revised guidance notes to Form I with a view to incorporate the changes made in Green Channel.
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3. State Disaster Response Fund for migrant workers during COVID-19 lockdown

Context:

- The Union Home Secretary has again written to States/ UTs requesting them to immediately set up Relief Camps for migrant workers/pilgrims etc who are returning to their domicile states or trying to do so during this lockdown period.

Details:

- States/UTs have been advised to give wide publicity and awareness, using public address systems, technology and by utilising the services of volunteers and NGOs, to give precise information on:
 - The location of the relief camps and the facilities being made available,
 - Relief package under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana and measures being taken by the State Government/ UT Administration.
 - States/UTs have been also advised to set up Relief Camps along the Highways for people moving on highways, including setting up of tented accommodation to ensure that these persons will stay in the relief camps till the lockdown orders are in place.
 - The shelters are to be organised, keeping in view various precautions including social distancing, with adequate Medical check up drives to identify and separate cases requiring quarantine or hospitalisation.
 - MHA has also authorised all States to use the State Disaster Response Fund for providing such relief measures. These measures would further strengthen them to deal with this issue.
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4. Agriculture-Farming and allied activities exempted from Lockdown

Context:

- Government has granted relaxation in the nationwide lockdown for activities related to agriculture-farming and allied activities with a view to address problems being faced by the farming community.
- This will also ensure uninterrupted harvesting of crops.

Details

- The Union Home Ministry has issued second Addendum to the Guidelines related to the nationwide lockdown
- Under this Addendum, activities related to Agriculture and related products, services and such other activities have been brought under the exception categories from the 21 day lockdown. This will also allow unhindered harvesting of crops.
- Under the 2nd Addendum issued by the Union Home Ministry the following categories have been exempted from the lockdown:
 - Agencies engaged in procurement of agriculture products, including MSP operations.
 - 'Mandis' operated by the Agriculture Produce Market Committee or as notified by the State Government.
 - Farming operations by farmers and farm workers in the field.
 - 'Custom Hiring Centres (CHC)' related to farm machinery.
 - Manufacturing and packaging units of fertilisers, pesticides and seed, and
 - Intra and Inter-State movement of harvesting and sowing related machines like combined harvester and other agriculture/horticulture implements.