

06 April 2020: PIB Summary & Analysis

1. MPLADS

Context:

Cabinet approves non-operation of MPLADS for two years (2020-21 and 2021-22) for managing [COVID-19](#).

Details:

- As part of the ongoing efforts to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, the Union Cabinet has decided not to operate the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) for two years (2020-21 and 2021-22).
- These funds will be used to strengthen the Government's efforts in managing the challenges and adverse impact of COVID-19 in the country.

To know more on [MPLADS](#), click on the linked article.

2. Exercise NCC Yogdan

Context:

NCC cadets start serving people during COVID-19 pandemic under Exercise NCC Yogdan.

Details:

- Civil and police administration have started requisitioning for services of senior division National Cadet Corps (NCC) cadets in the fight against the Coronavirus pandemic.
- The Ministry of Defence (MoD) had allowed temporary employment of NCC cadets under 'Exercise NCC Yogdan' and guidelines were also issued in this regard.
- These cadets will give a helping hand to state and municipal authorities to augment relief efforts.
- The types of tasks envisaged for cadets include manning of helpline/call centres; distribution of relief materials, medicines, food/essential commodities; community assistance; data management and queue & traffic management and manning of CCTV control rooms.

About the National Cadet Corps (NCC):

To know more about the NCC, check [PIB dated Nov 24, 2019](#).

3. Management of COVID-19 in National Parks/Sanctuaries/Tiger Reserves

Context:

In view of the spread of COVID-19 in the country and a recent news report on a tiger being infected with COVID-19 in New York, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has issued an advisory regarding containing and management of COVID-19 in National Parks/Sanctuaries/Tiger Reserves.

The advisory has asked the Chief Wildlife Wardens of all States/UTs to:

- Take immediate preventive measures to stop the transmission and spread of the virus from humans to animals and vice versa, in National Parks/Sanctuaries/Tiger Reserves.
- Reduce the human-wildlife interface.
- Restrict the movement of people to National Parks/Sanctuaries/Tiger Reserves.
- Constitute a Task Force/Rapid Action Force with field managers, veterinary doctors, frontline staff, to manage the situation as quickly as possible.
- Create a 'round the clock' reporting mechanism with a Nodal Officer for swift management of any cases noticed.
- Set up essential services for emergency treatment of animals and their safe release back to their natural habitats, as and when required.
- Enhance disease surveillance, mapping and monitoring system through coordinated effort amongst various Departments.

For more information on wildlife protection in India, check the table below:

[Wildlife Protection Act, 1972](#)

[List of national parks in India](#)

4. Updates on COVID-19

Context:

The government has released a few figures on the COVID-19 situation in the country.

Details:

- As of now, **4067 confirmed cases** and **109 deaths** have been reported. 291 persons have been cured/discharged after recovery.
- As per the currently available data, an analysis of the total confirmed cases has presented the following distribution:
 - Gender distribution:
 - 76% are male
 - 24% are female
 - Age distribution:
 - 47% people - below 40 years age group
 - 34% people - between 40 to 60 years age group
 - 19% people - 60 and above age group
 - Following observations are made while analysing the reported 109 deaths due to COVID-19:
 - Gender distribution:
 - 73% are male
 - 27% are female
 - Age distribution:
 - 63% deaths reported for elderly people (60 and above)
 - 30% deaths reported for people between 40 to 60 years
 - 7% deaths reported for people below 40 years
 - As of now, 86% death cases have exhibited comorbidity related to diabetes, chronic kidney issues, hypertension and heart related problems.

- Although 19% confirmed cases have been reported among the elderly, since 63% deaths have been observed among them, **elderly people form a high risk population.**
- Further, though 37% deaths are reported from people below 60 years, approximately, 86% of deaths amongst people with co-morbidities indicate that **young people with co-morbidities are also at high risk of COVID-19.**

5. Income Tax Appellate Tribunal

Context:

The Income Tax Appellate Tribunal holds All India Video Conference on 'The Direct Tax Vivad Se Vishwas Act, 2020'.

To read about the Vivad Se Vishwas Act, check [CNA dated Mar 14, 2020](#).

About the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT):

- The ITAT is a quasi-judicial institution that specializes in dealing with appeals under the Direct Taxes Acts.
- It was formed in 1941.
- The orders passed by the ITAT are final, an appeal lies to the High Court only if a substantial question of law arises for determination.
- Starting with just six benches, currently, the ITAT has 63 Benches at 27 different stations covering almost all the cities having a seat of the High Court.
- The ITAT draws inspiration from its motto 'Nishpaksh Sulabh Satvar Nyay', which means impartial, easy and speedy justice.
- The ITAT is referred to as 'Mother Tribunal' being the **oldest Tribunal in the country.**
- More importantly, it is the success of the ITAT, which has prompted the Government of India to constitute similar Appellate Tribunals for indirect taxes i.e., Customs, Excise, Service Tax Appellate Tribunal (CESTAT), [Central Administrative Tribunal \(CAT\)](#), Railway Claims Tribunal, Foreign Exchange Appellate Board, etc.

Also read: [Tribunals in India](#)

6. National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)

Context:

NHAI achieves highest ever construction of national highways in FY 2019-20.

About the NHAI:

NHAI is the nodal agency of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways in India.

To know more about the [National Highways Authority of India](#), click on the linked article.

7. Nano Mission

Context:

DST invites short-term proposals for developing antiviral Nano-coating and Nano based material for scale up by industry and start-ups to combat COVID-19.

Details:

- The Department of Science and Technology, using the Science and Engineering Board (SERB) portal, is inviting ideas in the form of short-term proposals for developing antiviral Nano-coating and new Nano based material for use in Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), which can be transferred to a partnering industry or start-up for scale up.
- Such Nano coatings could contribute immensely in the emerging health care requirements in India's fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.
- This is a part of the DST's Nano Mission.

About the Nano Mission:

- The Mission on Nano Science and Technology (Nano Mission) was launched by the GOI in 2007.
- The DST is the mission's nodal implementing agency.
- The chief aim of the mission is to create the background and infrastructure for R&D in Nano-science & technology.
- The mission has been working to help scientists, institutions and the industry in terms of promoting basic research, development of adequate manpower resources, international collaborations, augmentation the infrastructure for research and generation of socially useful products.

8. COVID-19 Testing

Context:

The Department of Science & Technology has funded "Module Innovations", a Pune-based healthcare start-up working on point of care diagnostics to build up on its platform technology for rapid diagnosis of diseases to develop a product for detecting COVID-19 with a 10 to 15 minute test.

Details:

- Using the proven concept from its flagship product USense, Module is now developing **nCoVSENSEs** (TM) which is a rapid test device for the detection of antibodies that have been generated against COVID-19 in the human body.
- With the current stage that India is in, doing a mass screening is of extreme importance.
- With the rapid test device it will be possible to confirm infection in patients and also determine whether an infected patient has recovered and also identify the stage of infection in the patients.
- The current confirmatory method of Real-Time Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) through a proven method, takes a longer time and needs trained manpower. This new rapid test will help manage the problem in a more efficient way at a lesser cost.
- **How nCoVSENSE works?**

- The nCoVSENSe test is aimed at detecting the IgG and IgM antibodies generated in the human body upon the onset of viral infection and is targeted against the Spike proteins making it specific for COVID-19.
- While the feasibility of the technology has been proved, the Proof of Concept (PoC) and Prototype illustrating functionality of product are to be demonstrated.

