21 April 2020: PIB Summary & Analysis

1. World Earth Day

Context:

Vice President greets people on the occasion of World Earth Day.

About the World Earth Day:

- April 22 is observed as 'World Earth Day' every year.
- 2020 is the 50th anniversary of this celebration.
- **The theme for World Earth Day 2020 is "Climate Action".**
- The first Earth Day, observed in 1970, was a unified response to an environment in crisis — oil spills, smog, rivers so polluted they literally caught fire.
- The first observance launched a wave of action, including the passage of landmark environmental laws in the United States.
- Many other countries also followed suit.

2. Civil Services Day

Context:

PM greets civil servants and pays tributes to Sardar Patel on Civil Services Day.

About Civil Services Day:

- April 21 is observed every year in India as 'Civil Services Day'.
- On April 21, 1947, Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, the Home Member of Parliament inaugurated the All India Services.
- Then, the previous Indian Civil Services under British India were changed to All India Services with subject to complete Indian control.
- He gave a powerful speech at the All India Administrative Service Training School at Metcalfe House, Delhi. In his speech he referred to civil servants as the **'steel frame of India'.**
- The first such formal observance of civil services day started in 2006.
- On this day, the **'Prime Minister Award for Excellence in Public Administration'** is given.
  - The award is given in three categories, dividing the states and UTs into different categories.
  - The award was instituted in 2006.
  - All the officers individually or as a group or as an organization are eligible.
  - The award includes a medal, scroll and a cash amount of Rs 1 lakh. In the case of a group, the total award money is Rs.5 lakh subject to a maximum of Rs.1 lakh per person. For an organization, the cash amount is limited to Rs.5 lakh.
  - The award function is organized by the Department of the Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances and the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.

3. KISAN RATH

Context:

The Ministry of Agriculture has initiated several steps to decongest wholesale markets & to boost the supply chains during the prevailing lockdown situation occurred due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Details:

- The National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) portal has been revamped by adding two new modules:
  - Warehouse based trading module
    - The warehouse based trading module enables farmers to sell their produce from Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA) registered warehouses notified as deemed markets.
  - Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) module
    - The FPO trading module enables FPOs to upload their produce from collection centres with picture/quality parameter for on-line bidding without physically reaching the mandis.
  - The e-NAM has become a tool for social distancing during lockdown. States are promoting virtual trading platform like e-NAM thereby reducing human intervention in handling of the produce and trading ensured through online mode from the places from where they are stored.
- Transportation of agricultural produce is critical and an indispensable component of supply chain.
- The Ministry launched "KISAN RATH", a farmer friendly mobile application, to facilitate farmers & traders in searching vehicles for Primary and Secondary transportation of Agriculture & Horticulture produce.
  - Primary transportation includes movement of goods from Farms to Mandis, FPO centres, Village Haats/GrAMs, Railway Stations and Warehouses.
  - Secondary Transportation includes movement of goods from Mandis to Intra-state & Inter-state mandis, Processing units, Railway Stations, Intra-state and Inter-state Warehouses and Wholesalers, etc.
  - This will ensure smooth and seamless supply linkages between Farmers, Warehouses, FPOs, APMC mandis and intra-state & inter-state buyers along with competitive transport prices and help in reduction of food wastage by providing timely services.
  - ALL these will contribute in better price realization for perishable commodities.
  - The KISAN RATH Application is designed for the users of both e-NAM and non-e-NAM mandis.

4. COVID India Seva

Context:

The Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare launched the COVID India Seva.

About the COVID India Seva:

- This is a Twitter handle which can serve as an interactive platform to establish a direct channel of communication with millions of Indians amid the pandemic.
- This initiative is aimed at enabling transparent e-governance delivery in real-time and answering citizen queries swiftly, at scale, especially in crisis situations like the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- Through this, people can pose queries @CovidIndiaSeva and get them responded to in almost real time.

- @CovidIndiaSeva works off a dashboard at the backend that helps process large volumes of tweets, converts them into resolvable tickets, and assigns them to the relevant authority for real-time resolution.
- As these responses are transparent and public, everyone can benefit from the responses received around common queries.
- It is important to note that the Ministry will respond to broader queries and public health information. This does not require the public to share personal contact details or health record details.

5. Pune's mobile App Saiyam tracks Home Quarantined Citizens

Context:

In order to effectively track the home-quarantined citizens and ensure they are actually staying at home, a mobile application named Saiyam has been developed by the Pune Municipal Corporation under Smart Cities Mission (SCM).

Details:

- All the Home Quarantined citizens are given the mandate to download the app and install it.
- These identified citizens are advised to keep the GPS feature on the device always switched-on and the mobile device should be switched-on throughout the 24 hours, during the quarantine period.
- Citizens' movements can be monitored centrally real-time from the monitoring cell and are marked as Red, Amber or Green.
  - Red signifies that the person has ventured out for longer duration; Yellow signifies that the person has limited movements and Green signifies that the person is confined to house limits.

6. Technology Development Board (TDB)

Context:

TDB approves support for indigenous company for ramping up production of COVID-19 diagnostic kits.

Details:

- The Technology Development Board (TDB), a statutory body of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), has approved financial support to MyLab Discovery Solutions, Pune, for ramping up production of COVID-19 diagnostic kits they have developed.
- The company has submitted an application in response to its invitation for proposals for technologically innovative solutions towards fighting COVID-19.
- Mylab Discovery Solutions is the first indigenous company to develop real-time PCR based molecular diagnostic kit that screens and detects COVID-19 from samples of people who display flu-like symptoms.
- With support from TDB, they will ramp up production of the kits through automation of the facility from current manual process, thereby increasing its current capacity from 30000 tests per day to one lakh test per day.
- The company is expected to complete the automation within the next few months.

- This kit has been approved by ICMR and CDSCO. The kit will be deployed in a very short time, considering the national emergency.
- **Background:** TDB invited applications from Indian companies and enterprises to strengthen the nation's core capacities in surveillance, infection prevention, control, laboratory support, and in particular, the preparedness in terms of isolation and ventilator management of critically-ill patients for containing and preventing the spread of COVID-9 in March 2020.

For more on the TDB, check PIB dated 22nd March, 2020.

7. Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC)

Context:

TIFAC explores best methods to revive Indian economy post COVID-19.

About TIFAC:

- TIFAC is an autonomous think tank under the Department of Science and Technology, GOI.
- In 1985, as per the recommendation of the Technology Policy Implementation Committee (TPIC), the Cabinet approved the formation of TIFAC in mid 1986 and TIFAC was formed as a registered Society in February, 1988.
- It was mandated to assess the state of technology and set directions for future technological development in India in important socio-economic sectors.
- As a unique knowledge network institution in India, TIFAC activities encompass a wide array of technology areas and fill a critical gap in the overall S&T system of India.
- The organization has carried out technology foresight exercise, facilitated and supported technology development; prepared technology linked business opportunity reports and implemented mission-mode programmes.