

22 April 2020: PIB Summary & Analysis

1. Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)

Context:

The Union Cabinet has given its approval to relax the mandatory requirement of Aadhaar seeding of data of beneficiaries of the States of Assam and Meghalaya and UTs of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh for release of benefits to them under PM-KISAN Scheme.

For more on [PM-KISAN](#), click on the linked article.

2. India COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Package

Context:

Cabinet approves Rs. 15,000 Crore for "India COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Package".

Details:

- The funds sanctioned will be utilized in 3 phases and for immediate COVID-19 Emergency Response, an amount of Rs. 7,774 Crore has been provisioned and the rest for medium-term support (1-4 years) will be provided under mission mode approach.
- The key objectives of the package include mounting emergency response to slow and limit [COVID-19](#) in India through the development of diagnostics and COVID-dedicated treatment facilities, centralized procurement of essential medical equipment and drugs required for treatment of infected patients, strengthen and build resilient national and state health systems to support prevention and preparedness for future disease outbreaks, setting up of laboratories and bolster surveillance activities, bio-security preparedness, pandemic research and proactively engage communities and conduct risk communication activities.
- These interventions and initiatives would be implemented under the overall umbrella of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- All health workers including Community Health Volunteers (ASHAs) have been covered with insurance under the "Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package: Insurance Scheme for Health Workers fighting COVID-19".
- Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), N95 masks and ventilators, testing kits and drugs for treatment are being procured centrally.

Also read: [Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana](#)

3. Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897

Context:

Promulgation of an Ordinance to amend the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 in the light of the pandemic situation of COVID-19.

Background:

- During the current COVID-19 pandemic, there have been instances of the most critical service providers i.e., members of the healthcare services being targeted and attacked by miscreants, thereby obstructing them from doing their duties.
- Members of the medical community, even as they continue to perform relentlessly round the clock and save human lives, have unfortunately become the most vulnerable victims as they have been perceived by some as carriers of the virus.
- This has led to cases of their stigmatization and ostracization and sometimes worse, acts of unwarranted violence and harassment.
- This tends to hamper the medical community from performing their duties to their optimum best and maintaining their morale, which is a critical need in this hour of crisis.
- While healthcare service personnel are duty-bound to serve without discrimination, the cooperation and support from society is a fundamental need for them to perform their duties with confidence.
- Several States have enacted special laws to offer protection to doctors and other medical personnel in the past.
- However, COVID-19 outbreak has posed a unique situation where harassment of the healthcare workforce and others working to contain the spread of the disease has been taking place at all fronts, in various places including even cremation grounds.
- The existing state laws do not have such a wide sweep and ambit. They generally do not cover harassment at home and workplace and are focused more on physical violence only.
- The penal provisions contained in these laws are not stringent enough to deter mischief mongering.

Details:

- In this context, the Union Cabinet has approved promulgation of an Ordinance to amend the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 to protect healthcare service personnel and property including their living/working premises against violence during epidemics.
- The President has given his assent for the promulgation of the Ordinance.
- **The Ordinance provides for making such acts of violence cognizable and non-bailable offences** and for the compensation for injury to healthcare service personnel or for causing damage or loss to the property in which healthcare service personnel may have a direct interest in relation to the epidemic.
- The current Ordinance is intended to ensure that during any situation akin to the current pandemic, there is zero tolerance to any form of violence against healthcare service personnel and damage to property.
- Violence as defined in the Ordinance will include harassment and physical injury and damage to property.
- Healthcare service personnel include public and clinical healthcare service providers such as doctors, nurses, paramedical workers and community health workers; any other persons empowered under the Act to take measures to prevent the outbreak of the disease or spread thereof; and any persons declared as such by the State Government, by notification in the Official Gazette.
- **Penalty under the Ordinance:**
 - Commission or abetment of such acts of violence shall be punished with imprisonment for a term of three months to five years, and with fine of Rs.50,000/- to Rs.2,00,000/-.
 - In case of causing grievous hurt, imprisonment shall be for a term six months to seven years and with fine of Rs.1,00,000/- to Rs.5,00,000/-.
 - In addition, the offender shall also be liable to pay compensation to the victim and twice the fair market value for damage of property.

- Offences shall be investigated by an officer of the rank of Inspector within a period of 30 days, and trial has to be completed in one year, unless extended by the court for reasons to be recorded in writing.

4. VidyaDaan 2.0

Context:

Union HRD Minister launches national program VidyaDaan 2.0 for inviting e-learning content contributions.

Details:

- VidyaDaan is a common national programme to develop and contribute e-learning content and a chance to be recognized nationally.
- The content will be used on DIKSHA app to help millions of children across the country to continue their learning anytime and anywhere.
- VidyaDaan has a content contribution tool that provides a structured interface for the contributors to register and contribute different types of content (such as, explanation videos, presentations, competency-based items, quizzes, etc.), for any grade (from grade 1 to 12), for any subject as specified by the states/UTs.
- The contributions can be made by educationists, subject experts, schools, colleges, universities, institutes, government and non-government organisations, individuals, etc.

For more on the DIKSHA Platform, check [PIB dated 9th April, 2020](#).

5. National Panchayati Raj Day

Context:

PM will interact with various Gram Panchayats across the country on 24th April, which is observed as the National Panchayati Raj Day.

Details:

- As the country is observing social distancing through lockdown, the Prime Minister shall be interacting with various participants through video-conferencing.
- The PM will also launch the unified **e-GramSwaraj** Portal and Mobile App on the occasion.
- The Unified Portal is a new initiative of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj which will provide Gram Panchayats with a single interface to prepare and implement their Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP).

Swamitva Scheme:

- This scheme will also be launched on the occasion.
- It provides for an integrated property validation solution for rural India.
- The demarcation of inhabited land in rural areas would be done by the use of latest surveying methods – Drones technology with the collaborated efforts of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, State Panchayati Raj Department, State Revenue Department and the Survey of India.

About the National Panchayati Raj Day:

- The Ministry of Panchayati Raj commemorates 24th April of every year as the National Panchayati Raj Day as the 73rd Constitutional Amendment came into force on this date.
- This Act institutionalised the Panchayati Raj system in the country in the year 1993.
- Every year, on this occasion, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj has been awarding the best performing Panchayats/States/UTs across the country under the Incentivization of Panchayats in recognition of their good work for improving delivery of services and public goods.
- This year, three such awards viz. Nanaji Deshmukh Rashtriya Gaurav Gram Sabha Puraskar (NDRGGSP), Child-friendly Gram Panchayat Award (CFGPA) and Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) Award have been finalized which will be shared with the concerned States/UT.

Also read: [Panchayati Raj – 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act](#)

6. Van Dhan Samajik Doori Jagrookta Abhiyaan

Context:

Initiatives of TRIFED in view of the COVID-19 situation.

Details:

- The current situation due to COVID-19 has dealt a serious blow to the livelihoods of the poor and marginalized communities including the tribal artisans and gatherers, being the most vulnerable people in the country.
- This is the peak season for harvesting and gathering of forest produce in many regions, which will lead to engagement of tribal gatherers and endanger their safety.
- TRIFED, under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, is addressing the situation by:
 - Publicity and Awareness Generation
 - Personal Protective Healthcare
 - NTFP (Non-timber forest products) Procurement

About the Van Dhan Samajik Doori Jagrookta Abhiyaan:

- This scheme is intended to educate the tribals through the almost 15000 SHGs under the [Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana](#) spread across 28 States/UTs.
- TRIFED teamed up with UNICEF and [WHO](#) for launching a digital campaign spreading awareness about the importance of social distancing amid the coronavirus crisis in India.
- UNICEF is providing the necessary IEC materials (posters, flyers, leaflets, brochures, booklets, messages for health education sessions, radio broadcast or TV spots, etc.) for the campaign christened as “ Van Dhan Samajik Doori Jagrookta Abhiyaan OR Van Dhan Social Distancing Awareness Movement”.
- Extensive outreach through Train of Trainer Programs and Webinars focused on basic orientation on COVID-19 response, key preventive behaviour, social media campaigns on social distancing, home quarantine has been initiated.

7. New Varieties of Anthurium

Context:

A woman innovator from Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, has developed ten varieties of Anthurium, a flower with high market value, by cross-pollination.

Details:

- Anthurium is a vast group of beautiful blooming plants available in a wide range of colours.
- The plants of the varieties have a high demand due to its use as indoor decorative plants.
- During the last year, over 8500 plants as well as flowers, have been sold in the market mainly in Pune and Thiruvananthapuram.
- The innovator has been propagating it through cuttings & seeds and supplying some plants and flowers throughout the country, but she was unable to meet the demand due to the time-consuming technique of propagation method.
- Therefore, the National Innovation Foundation - India (an autonomous body under the Department of Science and Technology) has facilitated mass multiplication and large scale production of four highly demanded varieties through tissue culture technique at the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR), Bangalore, for the diffusion of the varieties in similar agroclimatic zones of the country.
- **Salient features of the new varieties of anthurium are:**
 - Large beautiful flowers
 - Different colours of spathe and spadix
 - Long stalks
 - Better shelf life
 - Good market value
- **Anthurium:**
 - Anthurium is one of the best domestic flowering plants in the world.
 - They are beautiful but also purify the surrounding air and remove harmful airborne chemicals like formaldehyde, ammonia, toluene, xylene, and allergens.
 - Because of its importance in removing toxic substances from the air, NASA has placed it in the list of air purifier plants.
 - Anthurium has larger economic importance because of its eye-catching and beautiful inflorescence and fetches a good market price.