

11 April 2020: PIB Summary & Analysis

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1. Telemedicine Guidelines Approved for Homoeopathic Practitioners

What's in News?

An international webinar was organised by the Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy (CCRH) under the Ministry of AYUSH on 10th April 2020 on World Homoeopathy Day.

Details:

- Telemedicine guidelines for homoeopathic practitioners were announced and also the need to mobilise the AYUSH workforce to align with the COVID taskforce was emphasised.
- The event commemorated the 265th birth anniversary of Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of Homoeopathy.

Homoeopathy is one of the most popular medical systems in India, among the [AYUSH](#) (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy) services.

2. PM CARES Fund

- PM CARES Fund is a public charitable trust set up by the government in the wake of the outbreak of [COVID-19](#) pandemic.
- Contribution made to 'PM CARES Fund' shall qualify as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) expenditure under Schedule VII of the Companies Act, 2013

Read more about PM CARES Fund covered in [31st March 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

Note:

- Contributions made to 'Chief Minister's Relief Funds' or 'State Relief Fund for COVID-19' shall not qualify as admissible CSR expenditure.
- Contribution made to State Disaster Management Authority to combat COVID-19 shall qualify as CSR expenditure.

- Payment of salary/ wages in normal circumstances is a contractual and statutory obligation of the company. Similarly, payment of salary/ wages to employees and workers even during the lockdown period is a moral obligation of the employers, as they have no alternative source of employment or livelihood during this period. Thus, payment of salary/ wages to employees and workers during the lockdown period (including imposition of other social distancing requirements) would not qualify as admissible CSR expenditure.
- If any ex-gratia payment is made to temporary / casual workers/ daily wage workers over and above the disbursement of wages, specifically for the purpose of fighting COVID 19, the same shall be admissible towards CSR expenditure as a onetime exception provided there is an explicit declaration to that effect by the Board of the company, which is duly certified by the statutory auditor.

3. PM Gareeb Kalyan Yojna

What's in News?

- EPFO has put in place Online Mechanism to credit EPF and EPS Accounts of Subscribers as per PM Gareeb Kalyan Yojna.

Details:

- Employees Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) is a statutory body under Union Ministry of Labour and Employment.
- EPF (Employees' Provident Fund Scheme 1952) and EPS (Employees' Pension Scheme 1995) are the two different retirement saving schemes under Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, meant for salaried employees.

PMGK Yojana:

- The Centre has announced a ₹1.7 lakh crore relief package – Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan (PMGK) Yojana in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and countrywide lockdown, providing free food and cash transfers to support the poorest and most vulnerable citizens during the crisis.
- There have been recent updates on the PM Garib Kalyan Yojana as declared by the Finance Minister on March 26th, 2020.
- Garib Kalyan package is a range of measures that the Government of India will take to alleviate the economic, health, and food-related distress of India's poor.

Read more about [PM Gareeb Kalyan Yojna](#)

4. Central Administrative Tribunal

- The Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) was established in 1985 through the Administrative Tribunals Act.
- The CAT is responsible for adjudication or trial of matters connected with recruitment and conditions of service of personnel in public service in India.

- The CAT was created by the Act in 1985 under Article 323A of the Constitution of India. The Tribunal derives its jurisdiction, powers and authority from this Section.
- It was established via the [42nd Constitutional Amendment of the Constitution](#).

Read more about [Central Administrative Tribunal](#)

5. Convalescent-plasma therapy

What is convalescent-plasma therapy?

- Convalescent Plasma therapy involves transfusing certain components from the blood of people who have recovered from a virus attack into people who are very sick with the virus or people who are at high risk of getting the virus.
- When a pathogen like novel coronavirus infects, our immune systems produce antibodies.
- The antibodies span out to identify and mark the invading virus.
- White blood cells attach the identified intruders, and the body gets rid of the infection.
- The therapy, like blood transfusion, harvests the antibody from a recovered patient and ingest into a sick person.
- Helped by the antibody, the immune system mounts robust combat on the virus.

What are antibodies?

- Antibodies are one of the front-line immune response to an infection by a microbe.
- They are a particular type of proteins secreted by immune cells called B lymphocytes when they encounter an invader, such as a novel coronavirus.
- The immune system designs antibodies that are highly specific to each invading pathogen. A particular antibody and its partner virus are made for each other.

How the treatment is given?

- Blood is drawn from a person who has recovered from COVID-19 sickness.
- The serum is separated and screened for virus-neutralizing antibodies.
- Convalescent serum, that is the blood serum obtained from one who has recovered from an infectious disease and especially rich in antibodies for that pathogen, is then administered to a COVID-19 patient.
- The sick acquires passive immunization.
- Potential donor would be examined before the blood serum is extracted and given to a sick person. First, the swab test must be negative and the potential donor has to be declared as cured. Then the recovered person has to wait for two weeks. Or else the potential donor should be asymptomatic for at least 28 days. Either of the two is mandatory.

How is it different from vaccination?

- This therapy is akin to passive immunization.
- When a vaccine is administered, the immune system produces the antibodies. Thus, in a later date, when the vaccinated person is infected by that pathogen, the immune system releases the antibodies and neutralises the infection.

- Vaccination provides lifelong immunity.
- In the case of passive antibody therapy, the effect lasts only up to the time the antibodies injected remain the bloodstream. The protection given is temporary.

Challenges:

- This therapy is not simple to harness, primarily due to the difficulty of obtaining significant amounts of plasma from survivors.
- In diseases like COVID-19, where most of the victims are aged, suffering from other medical conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, and so on, not all recovered patients can volunteer to donate blood.

6. TRIFED asks State Nodal Departments & Implementing Agencies to initiate procurement from available funds under 'MSP for MFP scheme'

What's in News?

- TRIFED under Ministry of Tribal Affairs has asked the State Nodal Departments and Implementing Agencies to initiate procurement of Minor Forest Produces (MFPs) at Minimum Support Price (MSP) from the available funds under MSP for MFP Scheme.
- TRIFED in collaboration with UNICEF is hosting Webinar sessions for the Van Dhan Self Help Group members of the Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs) for creating awareness among the tribal gatherers for following social distancing measures and maintaining necessary hygiene required for carrying out their operations.

The impact national lockdown on the livelihood of forest-dependent communities has been covered in 4th April 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis. [Click here](#) to read.