

27 May 2020: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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B. GS 2 Related

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. U.N. says both Koreas violated armistice deal

Context:

The U.S.-led United Nations Command (UNC) said both North and South Korea violated the armistice agreement that ended the 1950-53 Korean War and governs their shared border, when their troops exchanged gunfire on May 3, 2020.

Details:

- The recent gunfire exchange was the first shooting inside the Korean Demilitarized Zone in about 2½ years.
- The recent incident came amid a deadlock in negotiations between North Korean and US officials on Pyongyang's nuclear weapons programme.
- About 28,500 US troops are stationed in South Korea.
- Affairs in the heavily fortified Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) is jointly overseen by North Korea and the US-led UN Command.
- The DMZ was established as a buffer at the end of the Korean War.
- Unlike its name, the DMZ is the world's most heavily fortified border, guarded by mines, barbed-wire fences and combat troops on both sides.
- The two sides remain technically at war, since fighting in the Korean War ended with an armistice in 1953 that was never replaced with a peace treaty.

Category: HEALTH

1. 'No WHO bar on India testing HCQ as preventive'

Context:

The World Health Organization (WHO) said that it had temporarily suspended clinical trials of hydroxychloroquine as a potential treatment for [COVID-19](#) being carried out across a range of countries as a precautionary measure.

Background:

- The Lancet study found that both drugs (hydroxychloroquine, as well as the anti-malarial chloroquine) can produce potentially serious side effects, particularly heart arrhythmia.
- And neither drug benefitted patients hospitalised with COVID-19, according to a Lancet study, which looked at the records of 96,000 patients across hundreds of hospitals.

Details:

- Soumya Swaminathan, Chief Scientist, WHO has said that the moratorium on testing hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) for treating COVID-19 doesn't imply that India should pause testing the drug as a preventive.
- She stressed that India ought to be doing stricter trials to test the drug's efficacy in staving off infection in asymptomatic people at high-risk of contracting the virus.
- WHO has consistently said that the best way of proving the efficacy of a drug for prevention or treatment is through well conducted randomised clinical trials.
- HCQ was one of four drug-combinations being tested in a global clinical trial, called Solidarity Trial, coordinated by the WHO.
- Four hundred hospitals in 35 countries would be comparing the benefits to COVID patients from taking either Remdesivir; Lopinavir/Ritonavir; Lopinavir/Ritonavir with Interferon beta-1a; and hydroxychloroquine.

- They are all drugs for other diseases but have shown varying degrees of promise in blunting the COVID-19 infection.
- To objectively assess the benefit of these drugs over standard-of-care treatments, clinicians would be assessing these drugs in Randomised Clinical Trial (RCT) — the most medically legitimate approach — whereby some groups of patients, unknown to the administering doctors and recipient patients — would get the drug and some wouldn't.

Read more about HCQ covered in [20th May 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

C. GS 3 Related

Category: INTERNAL SECURITY

1. PM reviews LAC standoff with NSA, CDS and 3 Service Chiefs

Context:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi reviewed the current situation on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and the ongoing standoff with China, with the National Security Adviser, the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and the three Service Chiefs. The meeting comes a day before the biannual Army Commanders conference.

Read more about the Line of Actual Control (LAC) standoff, covered in [26th May 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

Details:

- Defence Minister, at a meeting to review ongoing military reforms with the CDS, the three Service Chiefs and other officials of the Ministry, also discussed the situation along the LAC.
- The meeting was to review the implementation of the recommendations of the Shekatkar Committee.

Shekatkar Committee:

- In 2016, the then defence minister Manohar Parrikar had ordered the constitution of the Committee of Experts (CoE) under Lt Gen Shekatkar with a mandate to 'suggest measures to enhance combat capability and rebalance defence expenditure of the armed forces'.

Read more about Shekatkar Committee covered in [18th May 2020 PIB Summary and Analysis](#).

Category: SECURITY

1. Aarogya Setu app is now open source, says govt.

Context:

Amid concerns over privacy of data being collected by [Aarogya Setu](#) - the COVID-19 contact tracing app, the government said it was open-sourcing the application.

Details:

- The government has also launched a **“Bug Bounty” programme**.
- Under the programme, financial rewards will be given to security researchers for finding any vulnerability in the application or suggesting improvements to the source code.
- With the release of the source code in the public domain, the government is looking to expand collaboration and leverage the expertise of top technical brains to collectively build a robust and secure technology solution to help support the work of frontline health workers in fighting this pandemic together.
- This is believed to improve transparency on how the data is used, improve security by minimising bugs and empower experts to improve the app via public contributions.
- The “Bug Bounty” programme will be open to Indian and foreign nationals, but only Indians will be eligible for rewards offered under the scheme.
 - Anyone who points out a security vulnerability in the app source code will be eligible for a reward of up to ₹3 lakh, and up to ₹1 lakh for pointing out a suggestion or improvement in the source code.

Details on Aarogya Setu app and the issues associated with it have been covered in 21st April 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis. [Click here](#) to read.

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. Marauding locust swarms killed in Dausa with insecticide spray

Context:

The huge locust swarms, which appeared in the skies of Jaipur, were killed in Rajasthan’s Dausa district with the spray of high-intensity insecticide by the Agriculture Department officials.

Details:

- The operation to kill locusts in Dausa district’s Kota Patti village, around 53 km from Jaipur, was started after midnight when the swarms arrived from the State capital.
- The spray of high-intensity malathion insecticide helped in killing almost the entire swarm of insects at the pasture land.

Read more about [Locust Swarms](#) in the linked article.

Also read about [Locust Menace in CNA dated 21 May, 2020](#).

Category: ECONOMY

1. Fisheries scheme has no relief component

Context:

Fisheries Minister said that the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) will increase fish production by 9%, double incomes of fishers and double export earnings by 2024-25.

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana:

- PMMSY is a scheme to bring about [Blue Revolution](#) through sustainable and responsible development of fisheries sector in India under two components namely, Central Sector Scheme (CS) and Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS).
- Central Sector Scheme (CS) – The entire project/unit cost will be borne by the Central government (i.e. 100% central funding).
- The Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) Component is further segregated into Non-beneficiary oriented and Beneficiary orientated sub-components/activities under the following three heads:
 - Enhancement of Production and Productivity.
 - Infrastructure and Post-Harvest Management.
 - Fisheries Management and Regulatory Framework.
- The scheme is focused on infrastructure investments that will help fish workers to boost their incomes.
- It involves investments of more than ₹20,000 crore from the Centre, the States and beneficiaries over a five-year period.

Concerns:

- Though the scheme was announced as part of the Centre's economic stimulus package in response to COVID-19, it does not seem to contain any components aimed at relief or financial assistance to provide immediate help for the hard-hit fisheries sector.
- Due to coronavirus restrictions and previous climate reasons, fishers have not been able to go to sea for several months.
- Now [Cyclone Amphan](#) has also hit fish workers on the east coast.
- The annual monsoon fishing ban will come into effect in a few days.
- Quoting these reasons, a demand has been made to the Centre to give a financial assistance of ₹10,000-15,000 a month for each fish worker family by the general secretary of the National Fishworkers Forum (NFF).

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: ECONOMY

1. Oil price pickle

Context:

- The Union Petroleum Minister's remark on Centre's **policy of fuel pricing**.

Background:

- The **global oil prices stand at about 45% lower than 2019 closing levels** despite coordinated supply cuts by major oil producers.
- The travel restrictions and national lockdown in place to control the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic have led to a **sharp slump in demand for crude oil** further subduing the crude oil prices.
- However, the Indian government has chosen not to reduce the pump prices and instead, the Central government has been **raising Excise Duty on petrol and diesel**.

- Currently, the Centre's tax revenue on a litre of petrol sold by IOC in Delhi was 1.8 times the fuel's freight inclusive base price of ₹28 and represented 46% of the final retail price of ₹71.26.

Details:

- The Union Petroleum Minister had recently remarked that the Centre is taking a 'cautious and conscious approach' of **ensuring a balance in fuel prices** and aims to use the resultant savings for **welfare expenditure**.

Government's arguments:

- With economic activity brought to a near standstill by the lockdown, the Centre's overall **revenue prospects have come under severe strain** while the **expenditure is bound to increase** during the crisis.
- The increased revenue from oil excise duty will help **bridge the gap between the revenues and expenditure**.

Concerns:

Detrimental to consumers and companies:

- The increasing excise duty undermines the benefits from pricing deregulation that ought to have accrued to oil companies and consumers.

Decline in demand:

- By failing to pass on the benefit of largely benign oil prices to consumers, the government has **lost an opportunity to provide a fillip to decreased oil consumption**.
- The government's goal of maximising revenue from fuel products to fund welfare measures can only bear fruit if demand for petrol and diesel remains unaffected by the continuing high costs.
 - With curbs on inter-State road transport still in place, contracting automobile sales unlikely to recover, job losses and pay cuts shrinking household budgets, it would be hard for the transport fuel demand to rebound to pre-lockdown levels in the next one or two quarters.

Arbitrary methods:

- The increased duty on fuel though can help fund welfare expenditure, but arbitrary methods of oil pricing may have negative implications.
 - Previously, in 2018, the Centre had cut the excise duty on oil at a time when global crude prices were on the increase based on electoral calculations.

Detrimental to disinvestment targets:

- The Centre's ambitious **disinvestment target of Rs. 2.1-lakh crore** for the current fiscal includes a **stake sale in BPCL**.
- In the light of the government's approach, potential investors are unlikely to be impressed by the **lack of autonomy in the sector**.

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. How India can become self-reliant

Context:

- The current focus on **self-reliance for India**.
 - Addressing the nation on the COVID-19 pandemic, Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised the necessity of a self-reliant India.

Background:

Indian Scenario:

- Self-reliance in state-run heavy industries and strategic sectors in the decades following independence had placed India ahead of most developing countries.
- In the 1970s and 80s, however, India did not modernise these industries to climb higher up the technological ladder.
 - The private sector stayed content with near-monopoly conditions in non-core sectors in a protected market.
 - Little effort was made to modernise light industries or develop contemporary consumer products.
- The **concept of self-reliance was neglected** when India embarked on **liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation in 1991** as it was believed that advanced technologies could be bought from anywhere at lower costs.

Concerns:

- The author evaluates the concerns associated with India's approach.

Lagging behind:

- India's industrial ecosystem has been characterised by **low productivity, poor quality and low technology, and has been globally uncompetitive**.
- India completely missed out on the '**third industrial revolution**' comprising electronic goods, micro-processors, personal computers, mobile phones and decentralised manufacturing and global value chains.
 - India still imports large volumes of smartphones, solar photovoltaic cells and modules despite the huge domestic demand conditions.
- The **lack of focus on indigenous R&D** may have resulted in India lagging behind the U.S., Europe and China in many of the modern technologies.

Neglect of PSUs:

- The public sector undertakings (PSUs) have been **inefficient and sluggish for the competitive globalised scenario**.
- No efforts have been made to either grant real autonomy to the PSUs or help them transition to new technological directions.

Research and Development:

- Nascent research and development (R&D) efforts (in photovoltaics, semiconductors and advanced materials) have been undermined or abandoned.
- Presently, **most R&D in India is conducted by PSUs**, and much of the smaller but rising proportion of private sector R&D is by foreign corporations in information technology and biotechnology/pharma.

Private sector:

- The private sector has displayed little interest in heavy industries and has shown no appetite for technology upgradation.
 - With entry of foreign corporations, most Indian private companies **retreated into technology imports or collaborations**.

Fallacy of FDI:

- It is generally believed that inviting [foreign direct investment](#) and manufacturing by foreign majors would bring new technologies into India's industrial ecosystem, avoiding the need for indigenous efforts towards self-reliance.
- However, mere setting up of manufacturing facilities in India is no guarantee of absorption of technologies (the ability to independently take them to higher levels).
- The foreign companies have **guarded commercially significant or strategic technologies** in off-shore manufacturing bases.

COVID-19 crisis:

- The absence of domestic production of personal protective equipment (PPE) when COVID-19 struck highlighted the drawbacks in India's approach.

International experience:

- The experience and achievements in other countries in Asia could act as a guide to India's actions.

The achievers:

- Countries like Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong took huge **technological and industrial strides** in the 1970s and 80s.
 - South Korea has climbed up the technology ladder and value chains in electronic goods, consumer durables, automobiles, micro-processors, personal computers and heavy machinery. It has emerged as a global powerhouse in manufacturing and also indigenously developed technologies.
 - Taiwan developed technologies and manufacturing capacities in robotics and micro-processors, while Singapore and Hong Kong adapted advanced technologies in niche areas.
 - China has advanced from low-end mass manufacturing to a dominant role in global supply chains. It is now shifting to advanced manufacturing and has set itself a **target of becoming a world leader by 2035** in 5G, supercomputing, Internet of Things, [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\)](#), autonomous vehicles, biotech/pharma and other technologies of the 'fourth industrial revolution'.
- The self-reliant capabilities were enabled, by **planned state investments in R&D including basic research (3-5% of GDP)**, technology and **policy support to private corporations**, infrastructure and, importantly, **education and skill development** (4-6% of GDP).

Laggards:

- Countries like Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam have focused on off-shore manufacturing lower down the value chain and without the thrust on self-reliance.

Way forward:

- There needs to be **improvement in quality and domestic supply chains** going forward for which India will have to make major course changes in development strategies.
- **Indian self-reliance in science and technology (S&T) and industry** in a globalised world is the way forward.

Domestic efforts:

- The key ingredient for self-reliance is the need for resolute **indigenous endeavour in R&D**, moving away from the reliance on foreign technology induction through FDIs.
- There would be the need for large-scale concerted endeavours across various domains.
- Though India lags behind many countries in niche technologies, yet self-reliant capabilities in electric and fuel cell vehicles, electricity storage systems, solar cells and modules, aircraft including UAVs, AI, robotics and automation, biotech/pharma and others are well within reach.

Role of government:

- Given the disinclination of most of the private sector towards R&D, **significant government reinvestment in PSUs and R&D is essential for self-reliance**.
- There needs to be significant government reinvestment in public sector undertakings and R&D.
 - State-funded R&D, including in basic research, by PSUs and research institutions and universities needs to be scaled-up significantly, well above the current level of 1% of GDP.

Role for private sector:

- Though PSUs would be given their distinctive place in the revamped R&D ecosystem, **private sector delivery-oriented R&D could also be supported**, linked to meaningful participation in manufacturing at appropriate levels of the supply chain.

Focus on education:

- Given the fact that self-reliance without mass quality public education is not possible, India's meagre public expenditure on education needs to be substantially ramped up, including in skill development.

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. A time for reform in courts

Context:

- The author of the article argues for the need to **revamp procedural law in the judiciary** to make it more efficient.

COVID crisis:

- The pandemic and the subsequent lockdown have affected the functioning of courts and tribunals.
- The judiciary has limited its work to hearing urgent matters via video conferencing.
- There have been suggestions to use this as an opportunity to improve IT infrastructure of courts so that they can move to video conference hearings as the norm.
- However, to make the above suggestions relevant, there is a need for revamping procedural law in the judiciary.

The current system:

Subordinate courts:

- In subordinate civil courts and High Courts, a significant time of daily proceedings is taken up by cases where only **adjournments are sought for procedural matters** like filing of replies.

Supreme Court:

- **Article 136 of the Constitution** enables people to file a petition seeking leave to appeal a decision of any judicial or quasi-judicial authority.
 - The **Supreme Court grants leave to appeal** if the petition raises a question of law of general public importance, or if the judgment appealed against is especially perverse, which would require interference from the Court.
- The provision has been abused over the years to **burden the Supreme Court**.
 - Reports show that SLPs (Special Leave Petitions) comprise about 60-70% of the Supreme Court's docket. Out of this, 80-90% of SLPs are dismissed, which means only 10-20% of such cases raise important questions of law. This takes up a lot of time of the Court.

Suggestions to improve functioning of the judiciary:

Subordinate courts:

- To enable more efficient usage of court's time, a system can be devised where cases are not listed before the court unless all the documents are filed within strict timelines and every procedural requirement complied with.
- Listing can be done before the court only in cases requiring urgent interim intervention from the court, after verification of urgency by a judicial officer or a judge upon oral or written application.
- When courts reopen, apart from fresh cases, only a limited number of cases which require arguments can be posted. This will ensure that court rooms are not crowded.

Supreme Court:

Reducing appeals:

- The **Supreme Court Rules, 2013** should amend provisions pertaining to **Special Leave Petitions (SLPs)**.
 - The SC must do away with immediate oral hearing of SLPs. The Supreme Court Rules could be amended to provide for a structure of pre-hearing of SLPs.
 - To assist the Court regarding the SLPs, a cadre of **judicial research assistants** made up of qualified lawyers should be created. The research assistants can go through each SLP and cull out the important questions of law as envisioned in Article 136.
 - The Court may or may not allow applications for oral hearings based on whether such questions of law merit its attention. Only such SLPs in which oral hearing is permitted should be listed for hearing.
 - SLPs in which no questions of law are raised, or frivolous ones are raised, should be dismissed without oral hearing and upon imposition of costs.
- The above measures will ensure that **only meritorious SLPs get judicial attention** and will deter people from filing frivolous SLPs.

Hastening the process of appeals:

- Even in cases of statutory appeals, and appeals where leave is granted in SLPs, the Court **should do away with the system of filing reply to the appeals** and every case can be decided based on records of the subordinate courts.
- Appeals can be dwelled upon by judges and their research assistants in chamber, and only such appeals should be granted detailed hearings where the judges require clarifications.
- The above mechanisms will ensure that the Supreme Court **moves away from an oral hearing-based system to a written submission-based one.**

F. Prelims Facts

1. Milestone in building Chardham tunnel

What's in News?

The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has achieved a milestone in the construction of a 440-m tunnel under Chardham Pariyojana, below the densely-populated Chamba town on National Highway 94 in Uttarakhand.

This topic has been covered in 26th May 2020 PIB Summary and Analysis. [Click here](#) to read.

G. Tidbits

1. China's virus apps could survive the outbreak

- At the height of China's coronavirus outbreak, officials made quick use of smartphones as tracking devices to identify and isolate people who might be spreading the illness.
- China's official statistics suggest that the worst of the epidemic has passed, but the government's monitoring apps are hardly fading into obsolescence. Instead, they are tiptoeing toward becoming a permanent fixture of everyday life, one with potential to be used in troubling and invasive ways.

Concerns:

- The government's virus-tracking software has been collecting information, including location data, of people.
- It has prompted concern in China, where people are increasingly protective of their digital privacy.
- Companies and government agencies in China have a mixed record on keeping personal information safe from hacks and leaks.
- Authorities have also taken an expansive view of using high-tech surveillance tools in the name of public well-being.
- Governments worldwide are trying to balance public health and personal privacy as they pull out the stops to protect their people from the virus.
- In China, however, the worry is not just about potential snooping. The country's leaders have long sought to harness vast troves of digital information to govern their sprawling, sometimes unruly nation more efficiently.
- But when computer systems have so much authority over people's lives, software bugs and inaccurate data can have big real-world consequences.
- "Epidemic prevention and control needs the support of big data technology, but this does not mean agencies and individuals can randomly collect citizens' information by borrowing the name of

prevention and control,” a researcher at Huazhong University of Science and Technology in Wuhan, wrote in a recent commentary.

2. Hospital staff developed neutralising antibodies: study

What's in News?

- Virtually all hospital staff sampled from 13 days after the onset of mild COVID-19 symptoms in eastern France showed antibodies capable of neutralising the SARS-CoV-2 virus, a non peer-reviewed article has claimed.
- This may be associated with immunity against further infection with the same virus, the authors have argued.

Details:

- The paper showed that neutralising antibodies were found in 91% of the individuals who participated in the study.
- Hospital staff who had recovered from mild forms of PCR-confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection were tested for anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibodies using two assays: a rapid test and the S-Flow assay.
- The authors state: “We further report that the neutralisation activity of the serum increases with time, reaching 97% four weeks after the onset of symptoms. Therefore, it is a fair assumption that the majority of individuals with mild COVID-19 generate neutralising antibodies within a month after onset of symptoms.”
- They go on to add: “Although not yet demonstrated, several lines of evidence suggest that the presence of neutralising antibodies may be associated with protective immunity for SARS-CoV-2 infection.”

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to Financial Stability and Development Council:

1. It is chaired by the RBI Governor.
2. The heads of RBI, SEBI, Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA), IRDA & FMC are its members.
3. No funds are separately allocated to the Council for undertaking its activities.

Which of the given statement/s is/are incorrect?

- a. 1 only
- b. 3 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 2 and 3 only

Answer: a

Explanation:

- With a view to strengthening and institutionalizing the mechanism for maintaining financial stability, enhancing inter-regulatory coordination and promoting financial sector development, the Financial

Stability and Development Council (FSDC) was set up by the Government as the apex level forum in December 2010.

- The Chairman of the Council is the Finance Minister and its members include the heads of financial sector Regulators (RBI, SEBI, PFRDA, IRDA & FMC) Finance Secretary and/or Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Secretary, Department of Financial Services, and Chief Economic Adviser
- No funds are separately allocated to the Council for undertaking its activities.

Q2. Which of the following Locusts are found in India?

1. Desert Locust
2. Migratory Locust
3. Bombay Locust
4. Tree Locust
5. Red Locust
6. Brown Locust

Choose the correct option:

- a. 1, 3, 4 and 5 only
- b. 1, 2, 3 and 4 only
- c. 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 only
- d. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Answer: b

Explanation:

There are 10 important species of locusts in the world. Only four species viz. Desert Locust (*Schistocerca gregaria*), Migratory Locust (*Locusta migratoria*), Bombay Locust (*Nomadacris succincta*) and Tree locust (*Anacridium sp.*) are found in India. The desert locust is the most important pest species in India as well as in intercontinental context.



Desert Locust



Migratory Locust



Bombay Locust



Tree Locust

Q3. Which of the following is/are the recommendation/s of Shekatkar Committee?

1. Creation of the post of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS).
2. The Government Owned Contractor Operated (GOCO) model for its base workshops and ordnance depots.
3. India's defence budget should be in the range of 2.5 to 3 per cent of the GDP.

Choose the correct option:

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 2 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: d

Explanation:

Some of the recommendations of the Shekatkar Committee include the following:

- **India's defence budget should be in the range of 2.5 to 3 per cent of the GDP, keeping in mind possible future threats.**
- A Joint Services War College for training middle-level officers should be established.
- It had also recommended that the Military Intelligence School at Pune be converted to a tri-service intelligence training establishment.
- The Committee recommended the enhancement in standards for recruitment of clerical staff and drivers in the Army.
- Other recommendations of the committee that are already being implemented include optimisation of Signals establishments, restructuring of repair echelons, redeployment of Ordnance echelons, better utilisation of supply and transportation echelons and animal transport units, closure of military farms and Army postal establishments in peace locations, enhancement in standards for recruitment of clerical staff and drivers in the Army, improving the efficiency of the National Cadet Corps.
- **The Army has started implementing the Government Owned Contractor Operated (GOCO) model for its base workshops and ordnance depots, aiming to improve operational efficiency as recommended by the committee.**
- **The creation of the post of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) is also one of the recommendations of the Shekatkar Committee.**

Q4. "Bug Bounty" programme has been launched by the government to:

- a. Kill and contain the locust swarm upsurge
- b. Find vulnerability in the Aarogya Setu app or suggest improvements to its source code
- c. Protect the computers at the Kundankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP) from malwares
- d. Keep a check on cyber-threats in India during the COVID-19 pandemic

Answer: b

Explanation:

- The government has launched a "Bug Bounty" programme, under which financial rewards will be given to security researchers for finding any vulnerability in the application or suggesting improvements to the source code.
- With the release of the source code in the public domain, the government is looking to expand collaboration and leverage the expertise of top technical brains to collectively build a robust and secure

technology solution to help support the work of frontline health workers in fighting this pandemic together.

- This is believed to improve transparency on how the data is used, improve security by minimising bugs and empower experts to improve the app via public contributions.
- The “Bug Bounty” programme will be open to Indian and foreign nationals, but only Indians will be eligible for rewards offered under the scheme.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. The key ingredient for self-reliance is the need for indigenous endeavour in Research and Development in niche technologies. Evaluate India’s performance so far in this domain and suggest a suitable way forward. (15 marks, 250 words)
2. There is an urgent need to revamp procedural law at subordinate courts and at the apex level to make them more efficient. Comment. (10 marks, 150 words)