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Suggestions for Covid-19 and Lockdown Exit

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Why in News

Recently, the Prime Minister of India has held a video conference with the Chief Ministers of the States on tackling the **Covid-19** pandemic.

He emphasised on the importance of formulating a common exit strategy to ensure a steady re-emergence of the population after the **lockdown** is over.

Key Suggestions

- Seamless **supply lines for medical equipment and drugs and raw materials**.
- Coordinated and prioritised **testing, tracing, isolation and quarantine** among and in all states.
- **Appointment of district-level disease surveillance officers** for optimum penetration of the combating strategy.
- Ensuring that there are separate hospitals for Covid-19 patients and proper protection to the doctors attending the patients.
- **Speedy online training of doctors** in the treatment of Covid-19.
- **Going beyond the route of Agricultural Produce Marketing Corporations (APMC)** for the procurement of this season's harvest. **Starting a truck pooling scheme** for ferrying produce to the market.
- Using the amount from the **State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF)** to fight COVID-19. The Centre will release ₹11,000 crore from the **SDRF** by the end of April.
- **Rapid disbursement** of grants under the **Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Yojana**.
- Recruitment of volunteers from the **National Cadet Corps (NCC)** and the **National Service Scheme (NSS)** in the effort to combat the crisis.
- Coordination between NGOs and crisis management groups and sharing of strategies.
- Promotion and use of **traditional immunity boosting methods mentioned in Ayurveda** to minimise the number of people with weak immunity. The **Ministry of AYUSH** has also issued an **advisory** regarding this.

Scientists on Lockdown

- **Lockdown is only a temporary solution** and this period should be used to prepare the healthcare system to avoid its social costs and to realise long-term epidemiological benefits.
- The government needs to **reveal a post-lockdown** plan that will ensure that the rate of new infections is kept low in a sustainable manner after the lockdown ends.
 - **Social distancing and better hygiene are helpful** yet **insufficient** measures by themselves.
- If the lockdown period will not be used responsibly, it might lead to a **possible bounce-back effect**.
 - The current restricted testing-policy creates the risk that a large number of mildly symptomatic or asymptomatic cases will remain undetected even at the end of the lockdown period.
 - These cases could easily serve as the nucleus for the epidemic to bounce back.
- The problem of **reverse migration** (from cities to sub-urban/rural areas) has also been highlighted. The exodus triggered by the lockdown will rapidly spread the virus to all parts of the country.
 - This can lead to both an **epidemiological** and a **humanitarian crisis**.
- Instead of stopping the reverse migration, the **forces should be used to stock up food-grains, ensure fast cash transfers for the food-security and welfare** of workers.
- Scientists have **offered their complete support to the people** and **possible expertise** in combating this disease and in ensuring that the country emerges from this difficult period with as little loss of life as possible.

New Developments

- **Alternative Sealant**
 - The **Defence Research and Development Organisation** (DRDO) has developed a **special sealant as an alternative to seam sealing tape** which is critical in **Personal Protective Equipment** (PPE).
 - The alternative sealant is based on the sealant used in **submarine applications**.
 - DRDO can mass produce this glue through the industry to support the seam sealing activity by suit manufacturers.

- **Bio Suit**

- DRDO has also developed a **bio suit to keep medical and other personnel safe from the virus.**
- Scientists developed it with the help of the industry at various DRDO laboratories **by applying the technical know-how and expertise in textile, coating and nanotechnology.**
- It has been **subjected to rigorous testing** for textile parameters as well as **protection against synthetic blood.**
- The production of bio-suits was **hampered due to the non-availability of seam sealing tapes** but the development of the alternative sealant will boost its production now.

- **Handheld InfraRed Temperature Sensor**

- **Naval Dockyard, Mumbai,** has designed and developed its own **handheld InfraRed (IR) based temperature sensor for screening** people at its entry gates.
- The instrument has been **manufactured through in-house resources** at a cost of under ₹1000, a fraction of the cost of the temperature guns in the market.

Source: TH