



## News Analysis (05 May, 2020)

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### Virtual NAM Summit

#### Why in News

The virtual **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)** Contact Group Summit on “**United against Covid-19**” through video conferencing was held recently.

- The meeting was **convened at the initiative of President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan, in his capacity as chair** of the Non Aligned Movement.
- Moreover 30 Heads of State and other leaders had joined the Summit. The Summit was also addressed by the UN General Assembly president and **World Health Organisation (WHO)** chief.
- It was the first time that Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in a NAM Summit since he assumed the office in 2014.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi **became the first Indian Prime Minister to skip the NAM Summit in 2016 and in 2019.**

#### Key Points

- **Adoption of the Declaration:**  
The Summit adopted a Declaration underlining the **importance of international solidarity in the fight against Covid-19.**
- **Creation of Task Force:**
  - It also announced the creation of a ‘Task Force’ to identify needs and requirements of member States.
  - A common database reflecting countries’ basic medical, social and humanitarian needs in the fight against Covid-19 will be created.

### India’s Stand at the Summit

- **India's Role in Fight Against Covid-19:**
  - India is regarded as the pharmacy of the world especially for affordable medicines.
  - Despite its own needs during Covid-19 pandemic, it has ensured supply of medicines to 123 partner countries including 59 NAM members.
  - India is also active in global efforts to develop remedies and vaccines for Covid-19.
- **Need for the New Template of Globalisation:**
  - India stated that Covid-19 has shown limitations of the existing international system. The world needs more representative international institutions and thus world order should be more representative.
  - Thus, in the post-Covid world, a new template of globalisation, based on fairness, equality, and humanity is needed.
- **International Cooperation:**
  - NAM should call upon the international community and the WHO to focus on building health-capacity in developing countries.
  - World needs to ensure equitable, affordable and timely access to health products and technologies for all.
- **Other Issues:**
  - India also flagged the issues of "terrorism" and "fake news", calling them "deadly viruses" at a time when the world fights the novel coronavirus.
  - The above issues divide communities and countries creating difficult situations.

## **Non-Aligned Movement**

- The Non-Aligned Movement was formed **during the Cold War** as an organization of States that did not seek to formally align themselves with either the United States or the Soviet Union, but sought **to remain independent or neutral**.
- The basic concept for the group originated in **1955** during discussions that took place at the **Asia-Africa Bandung Conference held in Indonesia**.
- The Non-Aligned Movement was founded and held its **first conference (the Belgrade Conference) in 1961** under the leadership of **Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, and Sukarno of Indonesia**.
- NAM **does not have a formal constitution or permanent secretariat**, and its administration is non-hierarchical and rotational. Decisions are made by consensus, which requires substantial agreement, but not unanimity.
- It has 120 members as of April 2018 comprising 53 countries from Africa, 39 from Asia, 26 from Latin America and the Caribbean and 2 from Europe (Belarus, Azerbaijan). There are 17 countries and 10 international organizations that are Observers at NAM.

- The purpose of the organization was enumerated in the **Havana Declaration of 1979** to ensure "the national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of non-aligned countries" in their struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, and all forms of foreign subjugation.

**Source:IE**

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## Manufacturing Hits Record Low

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### Why in News

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According to a recent **IHS Markit India** monthly survey, Manufacturing **Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)** fell to 27.4 in April, 2020 from 51.8 in March, 2020.

### Key Points

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- India's **manufacturing sector activity** has witnessed **contraction** in April, 2020 due to national lockdown restrictions.
  - The new **business orders** have **collapsed** at a record pace **severely hampering the demand**.
  - This is the **sharpest deterioration** in business conditions across the manufacturing sector since data collection began over 15 years ago.
- The deteriorating demand conditions has led the **manufacturers to drastically cut back staff numbers**.
- **Export orders** have also witnessed a sharp decline.
- There was also **evidence of supply-side disruption** due to the lockdown.
- The **PMI slipped into contraction mode**, after remaining in the growth territory for 32 consecutive months.

In PMI's language, a reading above 50 means expansion, while a score below that denotes contraction.
- According to the **12-month outlook for production** the demand will rebound once the Covid-19 threat is diminished and lockdown restrictions are eased.
- The **Index (PMI)** is compiled by **IHS Markit** for more than 40 economies worldwide. IHS Markit is a global leader in information, analytics and solutions for the major industries and markets that drive economies worldwide.

## Listless in lockdown

The Purchasing Managers' Index for manufacturing has shown a sharp contraction in activity in April, an expected fallout of the lockdown in many countries.



### Purchasing Managers' Index

- Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) is an indicator of business activity - both in the manufacturing and services sectors.
  - It is **calculated separately** for the manufacturing and services sectors and then a **composite index** is also constructed.
  - The PMI summarizes whether **market conditions as viewed by purchasing managers are** expanding, neutral, or contracting.
- The purpose of the PMI is to provide information about **current and future business conditions to company decision makers, analysts, and investors.**
- The PMI is a number from 0 to 100.
  - PMI **above 50 represents an expansion** when compared to the previous month;
  - PMI **under 50 represents a contraction**, and
  - A reading at 50 indicates no change.
- The PMI is usually released at the start of every month. It is, therefore, considered a good leading indicator of economic activity.
- It is **different from the Index of Industrial Production (IIP)**, which also gauges the level of activity in the economy.

### Index of Industrial Production

- The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) is an index which details out the growth of various sectors in an economy such as mineral mining, electricity, manufacturing, etc.

- It is compiled and published monthly by the **National Statistical Organisation (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.**
- The **Base Year of the Index of Eight Core Industries** has been revised from the year 2004-05 to 2011-12 from April, 2017.
  - The eight core industries comprise 40.27% of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).
  - The eight Core Industries in decreasing order of their weightage: Refinery Products> Electricity> Steel> Coal> Crude Oil> Natural Gas> Cement> Fertilizers.

### Difference between PMI and IIP

- IIP covers the **broader industrial sector compared to PMI.**
  - IIP shows the **change in production volume** in major industrial sub sectors like manufacturing, mining and electricity.
  - Similarly, the IIP also gives **use based (capital goods, consumer goods etc) trends in industrial production.**
- **PMI is more dynamic compared to a standard industrial production index.**
  - The PMI senses dynamic trends because of the variable it uses for the construction of the index compared to **volume based production indicators like the IIP.**
  - For example, new orders under PMI show growth oriented positive trends and not just volume of past production that can be traced in an ordinary Index of Industrial Production.

**Source: IE**

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## Liquor Revenue for States

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### Why in News

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Recently, the central government eased restrictions in the third phase of the nationwide **lockdown** and **allowed the sale of liquor.** The **Delhi government** announced a **70% hike as 'Special Corona Fee'** in the price of liquor across categories.

This shows the **importance of liquor to the economy of the states.**

### Key Points

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- **State's Earnings from Liquor**

- Liquor contributes a **considerable amount to the exchequers** of all states and Union Territories (UTs) **except Gujarat and Bihar**, both of which have **enforced prohibition**.

**Andhra Pradesh announced prohibition** in 2019, however, sale of the liquor has been allowed with **"prohibition tax"**.

- States levy excise duty on **manufacture and sale** of liquor.
- States also **charge special fees** on imported foreign liquor, **transport fee**, and **label & brand registration charges**.
- A few states like **Uttar Pradesh**, have imposed a **'special duty on liquor'** to collect funds for special purposes, such as maintenance of stray cattle.

- The **Reserve Bank of India** published the report **'State Finances: A Study of Budgets of 2019-20'** in September 2019.

- It shows that **state excise duty** on alcohol accounts for around **10-15% of Own Tax Revenue** of a majority of states.
- In fact, state excise duties on liquor is the **second or third largest contributor** to the category State's Own Tax revenue; **Goods and Services Tax-GST** is the largest. This is the reason states have always wanted liquor kept out of the purview of GST.
- According to the report, in 2019-20, **state GST had the highest share, 43.5%, in states' Own Tax Revenue**, followed by **Sale Tax** at 23.5% (mainly on petroleum products which are out of GST), **state excise** at 12.5%, and **taxes on property and capital transactions** at 11.3%.

- **State Excise**

- Excise duty on production of few items including that on **liquor and other alcohol-based items** is imposed and collected by state governments and is called 'State Excise' duty.

**Excise duty** is basically a **production tax**. It is imposed on manufactured items in India that are meant for domestic consumption.

- Revenue receipts from state excise come mainly from commodities such as Country Spirits; Liquor; Foreign Liquors and Spirits; Medicinal and Toilet Preparations containing Alcohol, Opium etc; Opium, Hemp and other Drugs; Sales to Canteen Stores Depots.
- Apart from these, a substantial amount comes from **licences, fine and confiscation of alcohol products**.

- **Sources of Revenue for States**

- **Tax Revenue**

- **State's Own Tax Revenue**

- Taxes on **Income** (agricultural income tax and taxes on professions, trades, callings and employment)
      - Taxes on **Property and Capital Transactions** (land revenue, stamps and registration fees, urban immovable property tax)
      - Taxes on **Commodities and Services** (sales tax, state sales tax/VAT, central sales tax, surcharge on sales tax, receipts of turnover tax, other receipts, state excise, taxes on vehicles, taxes on goods and passengers, taxes and duties on electricity, entertainment tax, state GST, and "other taxes and duties")

- **Share in Central Taxes**

**Article 280** of the Indian Constitution requires the composition of the **Finance Commission** in every five years so that the states can get a reasonable part in the tax revenue of the union government.

- **Non-Tax Revenue**

- These are collected by the governments for **providing/facilitating any goods and service.**
    - It is compulsory to pay a part of the income earned/generated and amount of goods and services consumed as tax. However, non-tax revenue **becomes payable only when services offered by the government are availed.**
    - **Components:**
      - **Interest:** It comprises interest of loans given to states and union territories for reasons like non-plan schemes and planned schemes with a maturity period of 20 years and also interest on loans advanced to **Public Sector Enterprises** (PSEs), Port Trusts and other statutory bodies etc.
      - Dividends and profits, Petroleum license, Power supply fees, Fees for Communication Services, Broadcasting fees, Road, Bridges usage fees, Examination fees etc.

**Source: IE**

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## Insurance Claims amid Covid-19 Outbreak

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### Why in News

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Companies that suffered business interruption losses due to the **Covid-19 outbreak** and lockdown are likely to bat for the **"loss of profit" clause** in their insurance contracts.

- Many companies had taken insurance policies to cover loss arising due to certain unforeseen circumstances but the question has risen whether Covid-19 outbreak is covered by such policies.
- The net result is that they **may not get any insurance claim** from the insurance companies under the **Standard Fire and Special Perils Policy, commonly known as property policy.**

**Note:**

Corporations usually take two types of insurance policies -Material damage policy and Business interruption policy.

- Material damage policy is triggered if there is loss of property due to fire or flood or machine breakdown.
- Business interruption, on the other hand, only comes into force if loss of profit has happened due to the clauses mentioned under the material damages policy.

## Key Points

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- **Provisions of Property Policy:**
  - If the insured plant or office is shut down due to any damage or fire, the company is eligible for claims.
  - Also the Policy specifies if the building insured or containing the insured property becomes unoccupied and so remains for a period of more than 30 days (not applicable for dwellings), the insurance claims may not be applicable.  
For claim, before the occurrence of any loss or damage to the property, the continuation of the coverage needs to be ensured.
- **Relaxation from Policy Lapse:**
  - The insurers have given relief to corporates, which shut their units for more than a month. Their policies will be allowed to be operational despite the clause that if a unit is shut for 30 days continuously, the policy cover will lapse.
  - The above relief is **applicable for the “unoccupied properties”** for more than one month till May 3 under the property policy.
  - It means companies can claim insurance if the property is damaged due to fire or any other loss even if the factory or unit is not operational during the period till May 3.



- **Force Majeure, or “Act of God” Clause :**

- Most insurers will also use the **Force Majeure, or “Act of God”** clause but again there is no concrete conclusion or clause stating that loss of profit due to Covid-19 is Force Majeure.
- Force majeure is a common clause in contracts that essentially frees both parties from liability or obligation when an extraordinary event or circumstance beyond the control of the parties occurs. It prevents one or both parties from fulfilling their obligations under the contract.

**Source:IE**

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## Saras Collection

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### Why in News

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Recently, the Indian government launched the **Saras Collection** on the **Government e Marketplace (GeM) portal**.

It is a **unique initiative** by the **GeM, Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission** (DAY-NRLM) and **Ministry of Rural Development**.

### Key Points

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- The Saras Collection **showcases daily utility products made by rural Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** and **aims** to provide SHGs in rural areas with **market access** to Central and State Government buyers.
- The on-boarding of the SHGs has been **initially piloted in the states** of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.  
SHGs from all the states and Union Territories (UTs) will be covered rapidly in the upcoming phases.
- The Saras Collection will **provide SHGs with direct access to Government buyers** which will **do away with intermediaries** in the supply chain, thus **ensuring better prices** for SHGs and **spurring employment opportunities** at the local level.
- **Mechanisms:**
  - **For Functionaries:** They will be provided dashboards at the national, state, district and block level for real time information about the number of products uploaded, their value and volume of orders received and fulfilled.
  - **Government buyers:** They will be sensitized through system generated messages/ alerts in the Marketplace about availability of SHG products on the portal.

- GeM will **collaborate with State functionaries** to address the **capacity building and training needs** of SHGs and **build up their competencies** required for order packaging, catalogue management and logistics.
- GeM will **develop online learning resources in vernacular content** for SHGs with inputs and assistance from the NRLM and the **State Rural Livelihoods Missions (SRLMs)**.
- For a **seamless learning experience**, GeM will conduct online webinars, develop videos, eBooks, manual and repository of FAQs.

## Government e-Marketplace

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- GeM is a one-stop **National Public Procurement Portal** to facilitate **online procurement of common use goods and services** required by various central and state government departments/organizations/public sector undertakings (PSUs).
- It was **launched in 2016** to bring transparency and efficiency in the government buying process.
- It has been developed by **Directorate General of Supplies and Disposals** (Ministry of Commerce and Industry) with technical support of **National e-governance Division** (Ministry of Electronic and Information Technology).
- It **functions under Directorate General of Supplies and Disposals** (DGS&D), Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- The procurement of goods and services by Ministries and the **Central Public Sector Enterprises** (CPSEs) is **mandatory** for goods and services available on GeM.
- It also provides the tools of **e-bidding and reverse e-auction** to facilitate the government users achieve the best value for their money.
- GeM is a **completely paperless, cashless and system driven e-market place** that enables procurement of common use goods and services with minimal human interface.

**Source: PIB**

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## Covid-19 in States with High Swine Flu Rates

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### Why in News

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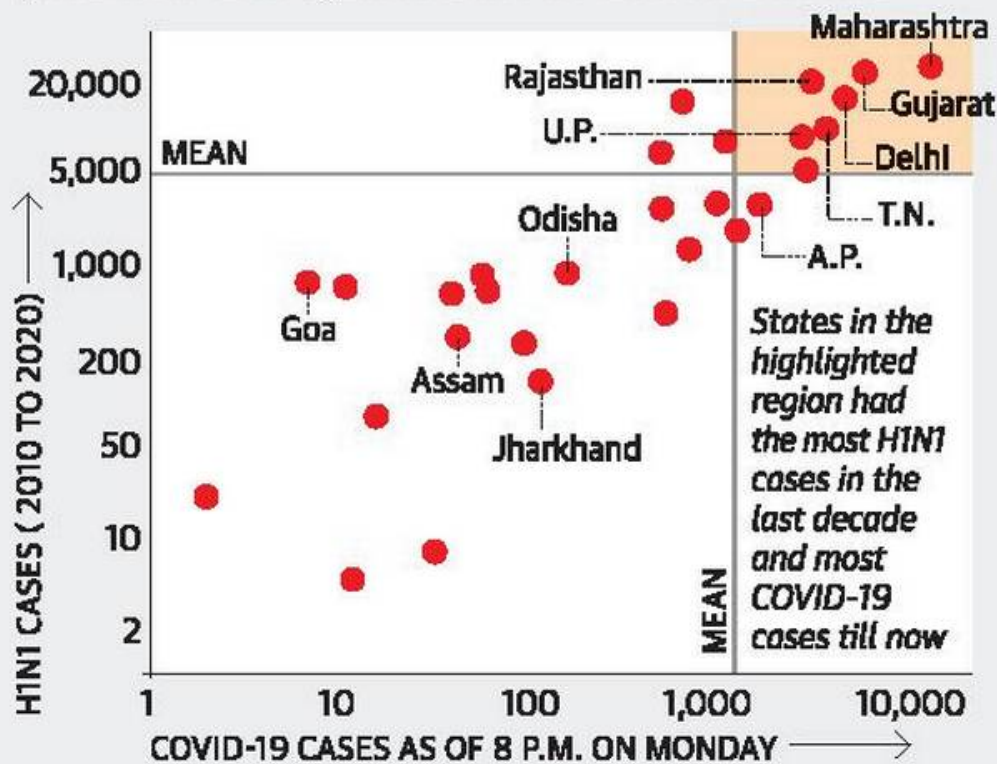
**Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Delhi and Tamil Nadu** account for about **70%** of India's confirmed **Covid-19** cases till now.

- Data from the Health Ministry's **National Centre for Disease Control** (NCDC), show that these are **also the states** which consistently accounted for the **majority of Swine Flu (H1N1) cases**, since 2015.

- The NCDC recorded Swine Flu cases this year as well as part of India's **Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme**.

## Viral connection

Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Delhi and T.N., together account for about 68% of all COVID-19 cases and 63% of all the H1N1 cases recorded in the last decade. The chart plots H1N1 cases against COVID-19 cases for all States



## Key Points

- **Data History of Swine Flu**
  - **2019:** Rajasthan, Gujarat, Delhi and Maharashtra accounted for 54%.
  - **2018:** Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Gujarat accounted for 65%.
  - Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are among India's most populous states and see intense **migration** to other states for work still they have not been in the top list always.

- **Parallels between Covid-19 and Swine Flu**

- Both are **caused due to pathogens** that trace their **origins to viruses from non-human hosts** even though they **belong to different families**.  
Both **respiratory** viruses that **spread through contact**.
- Both **infiltrate the lungs** and cause characteristic **pulmonary** infections but they have varying lethality.
  - **Swine flu** infections have a **higher case fatality rate** (deaths per confirmed cases) and can cause significant **deaths in children as well as those less than 60**.
  - Covid-19 is relatively **more dangerous** to those **above 60** and **almost harmless in children**.

However, due to lack of sufficient research, it cannot be said which age group is safer or not.

- High number of Covid-19 and Swine Flu cases have been observed in Gujarat and Maharashtra.

The **relative dominance** of these diseases **can be attributed to the migration for work**.

- **Observations**

- **February-March** are typical months for influenza (viral infection of upper or lower respiratory tract) in India.
- Most influenza activity in **northern India** has been seen during the **summer** months but in **southern and western India**, cases occurred mostly during **winter** months.
- According to scientists, due to the novel nature of Covid-19, the **possibility of another spike later in the year cannot be ruled out**.
- For Swine flu, this year there is an **exceptional rise in testing and active surveillance** across states otherwise only few states have the infrastructure and system to actively report cases.

Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu have 50 testing laboratories each for Covid-19 many of which are also deployed for Swine flu.

## **Swine Flu**

- It is caused by the **swine flu virus**, the **H1N1**.
- It is an **infection of the respiratory tract** characterized by the usual **symptoms of flu** like cough, nasal secretions, fever, loss of appetite, fatigue and headache.
- It is called swine flu because in the past it was known to occur in people who had been in the **vicinity of pigs**.
- The virus is **transmitted by short-distance airborne transmission**, particularly in crowded enclosed spaces. **Hand contamination** and **direct contact** are other possible sources of transmission.

## Coronavirus Causes Blood Clots

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### Why in News

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Recently, doctors around the world have noticed a raft of clotting-related disorders in **Covid-19** patients, which causes **benign skin lesions on the feet (Covid toe) to strokes** and blood-vessel blockages.

Thus, Covid-19 is being seen as less of a typical respiratory disease, and more of one that involves dangerous clotting.

### Key Points

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- **Misconception of Only Lung Damage:**
  - Initially it was considered that the vast **majority of lung damage in Covid-19 patients was due to viral pneumonia.**
  - But the **autopsies** of the Covid-19 patients shows that **clumps of platelets inside blood vessels, or microthrombi,** to be the reason for rapid and dramatic deterioration of condition of patients.
- **Development of Thrombi:**
  - Usually these blood clots are called **thrombi** — that form in patients' arterial catheters and filters used to support failing kidneys.
  - The clots impede blood flow in the lungs, which develop severe blood-oxygen deficiency, causing difficulty in breathing.
- **Pulmonary Embolism:**
  - Studies have found that as many as **30% of severely ill Covid-19 patients** suffered a so-called **pulmonary embolism** — a potentially deadly blockage in one of the arteries of the lungs.
  - **Pulmonary embolism** often occurs when bits of **blood clots** from veins deep in the legs travel to the lungs.
  - According to a study, the prevalence of pulmonary embolism was 1.3% in critically ill patients without Covid-19.
- **Detection of Blood Clots:**

The D-dimer blood test is being used around the world to monitor clot formation in patients, including those with Covid-19, and patients are also being dosened with heparin and other anticoagulant medications.

- **History of Blood Clotting Diseases:**

- The 1918 **Spanish flu** pandemic, caused by a novel strain of influenza, was also linked to downstream damage from clots that could end lives dramatically.
- Viruses including HIV, dengue and **Ebola** are all known to make blood cells prone to clumping.
- The pro-clotting effect may be even more pronounced in patients with the coronavirus.

## Issues Involved : Blood Clottings with Covid-19

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- **Lung damage:** If untreated, **large arterial lung clots can put overwhelming strain on the heart**, causing cardiac arrest.  
Even **tiny clots in the capillaries of lung tissue** may interrupt blood flow, undermining attempts to help oxygenate patients with ventilators.
- **Vital organ damage:** Clots may form in other parts of the body, potentially damaging vital organs including the heart, kidneys, liver, bowel, and other tissues.
- **Mistaken of Covid-19 recurrence:** Covid-19 survivors who have subsequent difficulty breathing, might mistakenly believe it's a recurrence of coronavirus infection, when it may actually be a reactivation of the whole clotting problem.
- **Subsequent disease:** Pulmonary embolism also causes **pulmonary hypertension**, another dangerous complication that can cause fatigue and shortness of breath.
- **Risk:** Patients and doctors alike may not be aware of the risks or the potential need for treatment.

**Source: IE**

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## Jharkhand Launches Employment Schemes

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### Why in News

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Recently, Jharkhand launched three employment schemes — Birsa Harit Gram Yojana (BHGY), Neelambar Pitambar JAL Samridhi Yojana (NPJSY) and Veer Sahid Poto Ho Khel Vikas Scheme (VSPHKVS) — to create wage employment for workers in rural areas.

Earlier, the **Odisha government has announced a Rs 100-crore Urban Wage Employment Initiative** to generate employment for the urban poor in 114 urban local bodies.

### Key Points

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- These three schemes have been devised in convergence with the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)**.
- **Issue:** According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CIME) data, the State is reeling under severe joblessness with unemployment rate pegged at 47.1% — double that of the national average (23.5%).  
The arrival of an estimated 5 lakh to 6 lakh stranded migrant workers (due to Covid-19 lockdown) from other states is likely to worsen the situation.
- Through MGNREGA and these special schemes the state government plans to create 30 crore person days and provide wage employment to the rural people in the coming 5 years.
- **Birsa Harit Gram Yojana (BHGY):**
  - The BHGY is envisaged at **bringing over two lakh acres of unused government fallow land** under the **afforestation programme**.
  - About five lakh families will be provided 100 fruit-bearing plants.
  - The initial plantation, maintenance, land work and afforestation will be taken up through MGNREGA.
  - Each family is estimated to receive an annual income of ₹50,000 from fruit harvest after three years while the ownership of land will remain with the government.
- **Neelambar Pitambar Jal Sammridhi Yojna (NPJSY):**
  - Under this, the government is aiming at creating agro-water storage units by arresting rainwater and runaway groundwater.
  - Nearly 5 lakh acre of cultivable land can be irrigated through the initiative.
  - An estimated 10 crore person days will be generated through the scheme in the next 4-5 years.
- **Veer Sahid Poto Ho Khel Vikas Scheme (VSPHKVS):**
  - Under VSPHKVS, the government is linking sports with rural job schemes for creation of assets in the rural areas in order to give a boost to sports.
  - About 5,000 sports grounds are being planned to be set up, with one each in all the 4,300 panchayats.

**Source: TH**

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## Mathematical and Simulation Aspects of Covid-19

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### Why in News

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The **Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB)** has approved **funding for 11 projects under the MATRICS scheme** for studying mathematical modelling and computational aspects to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic.

It is a **statutory body under the Department of Science and Technology (DST)**, Government of India.

## Key Points

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- These studies attempt to propose mathematical/simulation models to account for various factors relevant to Covid-19 by **modifying the basic SIR (Susceptible-Infected-Recovered) models**.
  - An SIR model is an epidemiological model that computes the theoretical number of people infected with a contagious illness in a closed population over time.
  - The name of this class of models derives from the fact that they involve coupled equations relating the number of susceptible people , number of people infected , and number of people who have recovered .
- Some of such **factors** are heterogeneity of population, the role of asymptomatic (showing no symptoms) population, migration and quarantine, effect of social distancing and lockdown, socioeconomic factors and so on.
- **Aim**

To study Indian conditions and provide an estimate of Basic Reproduction Number ( $R_0$ )- the qualitative indicator of the degree of contagiousness of the disease.

  - $R_0$  tells the **average number of people who will catch the disease from one contagious person**.
  - The **larger this number, the more contagious** is the disease caused by the virus and the faster it will spread in the community.
- It also aims to identify the maximum likelihood infection tree when infection reports and contact network structure are known to the administration.
- To identify possible cures of Covid-19 through the study of DNA (DeoxyriboNucleic Acid) structures by creating patterns of DNA of different viruses.

## MATRICS Scheme

- It was launched in 2017 **by the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB)**.
- It aims to provide fixed grant support to active researchers with good credentials in Mathematical Sciences, Theoretical Sciences and Quantitative Social Sciences.
- The support is provided in the form of research grant of Rs. 2 lakh per annum plus overheads for a period of three years.

**Source: PIB**

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## Year of Awareness on Science and Health (YASH)

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## Why in News

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The **National Council for Science & Technology Communication (NCSTC)**, Department of Science & Technology (DST) has launched **a programme on health and risk communication** 'Year of Awareness on Science & Health (YASH)' with focus on Covid-19.

The programme is a comprehensive and effective science and health communication effort for promoting grass-root level appreciation and response on health.

## Key Points

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- The programme is aimed at minimizing risks at all levels with the help of public communication and outreach activities, promoting public understanding of common minimum science for community care and health safety measures like:
  - personal sanitation and hygiene,
  - physical distancing,
  - maintaining desired collective behaviour and so on.
- It aims to reduce the fear of risks and build confidence with necessary understanding for adopting sustainable healthy lifestyles and nurturing scientific culture among masses and societies.

**Source: PIB**

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## UV Blaster

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## Why in News

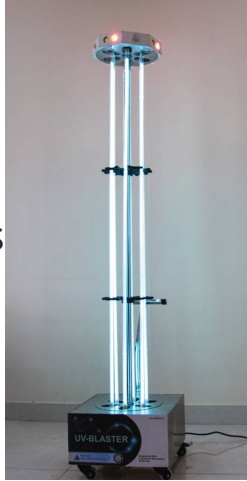
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Recently, the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** has developed an **Ultra Violet (UV) Disinfection Tower** for rapid and chemical free disinfection of high infection prone areas.

The equipment named **"UV blaster"** is designed and developed by Laser Science & Technology Centre (LASTEC) with the help of M/s New Age Instruments and Materials Private Limited, Gurugram

LASTEC is the Delhi based premier laboratory of DRDO.

## Key Points



- The UV blaster is a UV based area sanitiser useful for **high tech surfaces** like electronic equipment, computers and other gadgets in laboratories and offices that are not suitable for disinfection with chemical methods.
- The product is also **effective for areas with large flow of people** such as airports, shopping malls, metros, hotels, factories, offices, etc.
- The UV based area sanitiser may be used by remote operation through laptop/mobile phone using wifi link.
- The sanitiser switches off on accidental opening of room or human intervention.
- It is also being considered as the key to arm operation.

**Source:PIB**

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