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Operation Breathing Space: India-Israel

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Why in News

Recently, an Israeli team arrived in India with a multi-pronged mission, codenamed Operation **Breathing Space** to work with Indian authorities on the **Covid-19** response.

Key Points

- **Development of Test Kits:**

India's **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** and **Israel's defence ministry research and development team** are working together to develop **four different kinds of rapid testing kit for Covid-19** which can give the result within **30 seconds**.

- **Types of Tests:**

The tests include an **audio test, a breath test, thermal testing, and a polyamino test** which.

- In the **audio test**, a patient's voice would be recorded and evaluated through artificial intelligence and machine learning.
- In the **breath test the patient** will blow into a tube that will detect the virus using terra-hertz (high frequency) waves.
- **Thermal testing** will enable identification of the virus in a saliva sample.
- **Polyamino acids test** seeks to isolate proteins related to Covid-19.

- **India Specific Approach:**

The kits will be jointly developed after trials on Indian Covid-19 patients. The tests have already been tried on a small sample of Israeli patients.

- **Other Assistance:**

- The Israeli team has brought **robotic equipment, and wrist monitors** that will help doctors and nurses monitor a patient without increasing risks of infection to themselves.
- The team has also brought **83 advanced respirators** to help patients with severe symptoms.

- **Benefits:**

- The success of rapid tests will help India's overworked health-care professionals, who are experiencing fatigue. It will also help to address the public impatience over the Covid-19 test.
- The quicker test will help authorities to take quicker prevention measures, which will reduce the spread of the virus among people.

Way Forward

- As a vaccine or a cure is not yet visible and the country is gradually moving towards unlocking, it is time the testing should be made available on demand as close to home as possible.
- With most cases turning out to be asymptomatic, wider and cheaper availability of testing must be a thrust area for the government now. Easy, early diagnosis of infections, even when asymptomatic, will go a long way in containment. The concerns regarding increased dependence on rapid antigen tests in some places must also be addressed.
- Further, the proclivity shown by some States and cities to conceal data has been self defeating. There must be efforts to harvest accurate data, and with ease of availability. Normalcy, albeit a new one, could be reached faster with the right efforts.

Source: TH