



21 Days Lockdown

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Why in News

Recently, the Prime Minister of India has announced a **21-days lockdown** as a preventive measure against the **pandemic COVID-19**.

The period of 21 days was chosen due to **public health/epidemiological significance**.

Epidemiology is the study and analysis of the distribution, patterns and determinants of health and disease conditions in defined populations.

Key Points

- The decision of 21-days lockdown is **supported by scientific data**.
 - The calculations are based on the **estimated incubation period of the virus in a human host**.
 - The 21-day quarantine value is derived from **interpretations of outbreak data** from past and present epidemics and pandemics.
 - For example, the cases of **Spanish Flu** and **Ebola** have been discussed elaborately in the context.
- **Explanation:**
 - In epidemiological terms, **14 days** are of the **initial incubation period** and adding another week, i.e. 21 days is to ensure that residual infection dies out.
 - It is estimated that being a **new strain of coronavirus**, its **median incubation period** (the time between the entry of virus to the onset of symptoms/ disease) falls within the period of 14 days.
 - According to a recent study the median incubation period for COVID-19 is **just over five days** and 97.5% of people who develop symptoms will do so **within 11.5 days** of infection.
 - So, the current period of active monitoring (14 days) recommended by the **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** is well supported by the evidence.

- **Impact of Lockdown:**

- Lockdown or quarantine is the **most effective way of preventing the spread** of the infection from those already infected into the community.
- This period gives time to **convince people of the seriousness** of the situation and **build positive public opinion, carry out disinfection** of all buildings, vehicles and surfaces and **allows hospitals to prepare themselves for the next phase** of operations.
- Maintaining **personal hygiene** and **practising personal distancing** are other helpful preventive measures.

Source: TH