CURRENT AFFAIRS

42. NIAB develops eCovSens, a tool to detect coronavirus infection

National Institute of Animal Biotechnology (NIAB), Hyderabad, have developed a biosensor that can detect the novel coronavirus in saliva samples.It can be used as a diagnostic tool for the detection of COVID-19 antigens.

- The new portable device named eCovSens, can be used to detect the presence of novel coronavirus antigens in human saliva within 30 seconds using just 20 microlitres of the sample.
- The portable bio-sensor device can be connected to a computer or a cellphone via Bluetooth.
- The in-house built biosensor consists of a carbon electrode and the coronavirus antibody. The antibody is capable of binding with the spike protein found on the outer layer of the virus. An electrical signal is generated when the antigen and antibody binds.
- The device can also be connected to a computer or cellphone via Bluetooth and studied. The signal's intensity was found to be proportional to the concentration of the antigen in the sample.
- In subsequent tests, the device has proved itself to be stable and quite efficient in detecting the virus.
- The device will do early detection of coronavirus which is crucial to help and manage the coronavirus outbreak.

43. 'One nation, one ration card' scheme: 5 more states join the initiative:

This decision to integrate 5 more states has been taken as per the Supreme Court direction to the Centre for taking the appropriate decision regarding the implementation of "one nation-one ration card" under the lockdown scenario, as there have been reports of problems faced by migrant workers in getting subsidised food grains.

Food and Public Distribution ShriRamVilasPaswan approved the integration of 5 more States and Union Territories under "One Nation One Ration Card" plan with the already 12 existing states taking a total number of states/UTs to 17.

- Bihar, Punjab, UP, Himachal and Daman and Diu have been integrated with the 'one nation, one ration card' scheme: Ram Vilas Paswan
- Under the 'one nation, one ration card' scheme a beneficiary will be able to avail benefits across the country using the same ration card.
- Already this plan has been initiated in 12 states viz. Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Kerala, Karnataka Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Telangana and Tripura.

Benefit of One Nation One Ration Card:

The facility of national/inter-State portability will be available for nearly 60 Crore beneficiaries of 17 States/UT under **National Food Security Act (NFSA)** and they may lift their entitled quota of food grains from any Fair Price Shop (FPS) anywhere in these 17 States/UT by using their same/existing ration card.

The Department has shared the necessary guidelines/instructions for the implementation of national portability as also imparted the requisite orientation trainings to the officers/technical teams of these 5 States/UTs.Further,while informing the 5 new States that required web-services for inter-Statetransactions and their monitoring through central dashboards have been activated with immediate effect, all 17 States/UTs concerned have been requestedto formally commence seamless inter-State/national portability operations in a single cluster w.e.f. today, or at the earliest, depending upon their on-field readiness.

44. UP govt makes ArogyaSetu app must for those in hotspot areas:

Uttar Pradesh state government has made it compulsory to **download the ArogyaSetu app** for those living in hotspot areas of the state. The State government has issued instructions regarding the opening of offices and resuming work in industrial areas.

Arogyasetu App is a must for everyone in Hotspot area. If anyone is facing any problem in download and use of the app then teams comprising members of administration, Medical Services and Police personal will help them.

Administrative and health department officials have been directed for contact mapping of every case in the hotspot area.

The total number of active COVID-19 positive cases reaching 1838, Special instructions have been issued for surveillance management in hotspot areas and containment zones. The govt has strictly restricted gatherings of five or more persons at any point as part of the COVID-19 management.

45. Bamboo resources of NE to help boost country's economy:

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances,Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, DrJitendra Singh said that Bamboo is vital to India's Post- COVID economy and will provide an opportunity for India to emerge as an economic power with the support of its Bamboo resources.

- A Bamboo Conclave through Video Conference, he said, Northeast consists 60 per cent of country's reserve of Bamboo and government has accorded highest priority to the development of the North Eastern region.
- The total requirement of "Agarbatti" in India is about 2,30,000 per annum and the market value of it is up to Rs.5000 crore. India has been importing a large bulk of it from countries like China and Vietnam. It is expected that the Post-COVID era, will provide an opportunity for the North-Eastern region to help India become world competitive and self-sufficient in the changed scenario.
- The Ministry of North East will try to work out a time bound plan for promotion of bamboo manufacturing and trade, and also work out feasibility of Public Private Partnership (PPP) in this sector.
- Bamboo can be processed into multiple products, including bio-diesel and green fuel, wooden lumbers and plywood, which can change the entire face of the economy and create employment opportunities in multiple sectors.