Partially Relaxing the Lockdown

Why in News?

India prepares to partially relax the national lockdown for COVID-19 from April 20 in zones that do not have high concern.

What is the status of the cases?

- Delhi has ramped up tests per million people and reported a high percentage of positive cases.
- Kerala has managed to test, trace, quarantine and treat effectively, preventing new infections.
- Highest prevalence can be mapped to States with high economic output or significant urbanisation, such as Maharashtra, Delhi and Tamil Nadu.
- Other factors may be driving up case numbers in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Telangana, Rajasthan, Jammu and Kashmir, etc.

What does this say?

- These are clear pointers for the Centre and States, as they try to alleviate the deep distress and damage caused to millions.
- There are many uncertainties surrounding the long-term effects of SARS-CoV-2 on people.
- The pandemic has laid bare the inadequacy of the public health system, to roll-out enough tests in all States, etc.

What should be India's strategy?

- The COVID-19 strategy of India has to focus on testing, containment and treatment on the one hand.
- It should also focus on distress alleviation for vulnerable sections on the other hand.

What could be done?

- **Testing** - Looking ahead, the need for testing can only grow when a phased exit strategy is attempted.
- The complete testing data generated by all labs should be shared in real time by the Centre to aid policy-making.

- **Flattening** the curve of infection will require clear messages on preventive health.
- It will also require steps to help people maintain strict quarantine where indicated without suffering economic losses.
- It would also require carrying out regular surveillance testing and symptom monitoring.

Source: The Hindu

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