Trump's Immigration Order

Why in news?

U.S. President Donald Trump has signed an executive order suspending legal immigration to the US, for 60 days.

What is the proposed rationale?

- It comes as a move to protect jobs during the coronavirus crisis.
- This will ensure that unemployed Americans of all backgrounds will be first in line for jobs as the economy reopens.
- The suspension hits people applying for permanent residency, or green cards, for 60 days.

Who are exempted?

- The order is not expected to halt visa processing for many thousands of temporary employees.
- This potentially includes a sizeable number of Indian nationals in the H-1B skilled worker category.
- It also includes seasonal workers in areas like landscaping, agribusinesses, and service jobs in hospitality, who fall into the H-2B category.
- Seasonal workers, such as immigrants vital to US farm labour, are still allowed to enter.
- The order will also likely carve out exemptions for certain categories of essential workers.
- These include the health care workers, those playing a critical role in fighting the pandemic, and those who seek to immigrate via their immediate relatives.

What are the concerns?

- Immigrant and non-immigrant travelling into the U.S. has anyway fallen considerably, due to the rising coronavirus cases and deaths.
- Given this, what impact would the policy have on the job market is uncertain.
- Approximately 22 million Americans have filed for unemployment in recent weeks in the U.S.
- This is more due to the cessation of business activity post the pandemic and not much due to immigration.

- Besides all, Trump has a little more than 6 months left to govern through his first term in office.
- So, his immigration policy is more a campaign point than a response to the impact of the Coronavirus.
- It comes as a move in regards with his core constituent base of blue-collar workers.
- In this case, Trump's strident policy rhetoric on immigration will widen the deep divisions in American society in the months ahead.

Source: The Hindu, The Telegraph

