

**Theme:**

- In March 2020, World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic. From then, all the countries are fighting against Covid. Some countries could reduce the number of infections and several countries faced a second wave of Covid. In India, the number of cases started to reduce from September 2020 and from February 2021, the number of cases started rising. So, at present India is facing a second wave of Covid.
- On 8th April 2021, India reported 1.26 new Covid cases in just 1 day.

**Reasons for the COVID second wave:**

- Initially, almost everybody followed social distancing rule and used masks to prevent the spread of the virus. But when the number of cases started declining, many people stopped following rules and resumed normal life. 'Pandemic fatigue' is also one of the reasons why people stopped following rules. People got tired of spending so much energy to prevent the spread of the virus and hence they just want to live normally. Thereby virus spread rapidly and the number of cases is increasing.
- In the initial days of the Covid pandemic, patients were traced and those who are close contacts were quarantined to prevent further spread of the virus. But later, with the increasing number of infected people, tracing and quarantining became difficult. Moreover, negligence on the part of officials also played a role.
- Containment zones are also not being taken seriously.
- When the lockdown is over, most of the businesses are running as usual. Several offices have opened and called their employees to offices. Some schools are also started running before being closed down due to the rising number of infections. All these factors contributed to the faster spread of the virus.
- More variants of the Covid virus started spreading. Homegrown mutants, and also mutants that originated in the US, UK and other countries started spreading globally and contributed to second waves in several countries. These variants have the capability to spread faster than the earlier variants.
- The Indian government is giving covishield and covaxin to the people aged 45 years or more. As of April 2021, only 7% are vaccinated. Slow vaccination drive can also be stated as one of the reasons for the rising number of infections
- After taking the vaccine, some people are not following rules such as masks and social distancing, thinking that the vaccine provides 100% protection against covid. But in reality, even after taking the vaccine, people may get covid but the infection will not be severe. So, lack of awareness is also increasing the number of cases.
- Even now, religious gatherings and political gatherings are happening, which is

accelerating the spread of the virus.

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### **Consequences:**

- The virus is spreading faster. More people are getting infected by Covid.
- Covid second wave is turning into a heavy burden on the healthcare sector.
- The economy is just recovering from the first wave of Covid. And the present second wave may reverse the recovery of the economy.
- Businesses may face losses and hence banks may have to cope up with loan defaults.

### **What the Indian government is doing:**

- India's vaccination program began on 16th Jan 2021. The vaccines - 'Covaxin' and 'Covishield' are being given. At first, vaccines are given to frontline workers - healthcare professionals, sanitation workers and municipal workers. And then, people after 60 years are given vaccination. Now, people aged above 45 years are receiving the vaccine.
- The Indian government has imposed strict rules on wearing masks.
- Russia's vaccine 'Sputnik V' is being imported to compensate for the vaccine shortages.
- To fight against the second wave, the Indian government is locking the 'micro-containment zones' instead of opting for the complete lockdown. This decision is taken to prevent further job losses.

### **Way forward:**

- Vaccination drive should be at a fast pace.
- Rural areas should be given preference and need to be protected from the virus because lack of proper healthcare services in rural areas can result in severe infections and loss of lives.
- Awareness programs should be conducted to encourage people to take the vaccine. In those programs, all the vaccine hesitations should be cleared.

### **Conclusion:**

Just like the past pandemics, the Covid pandemic too is coming in waves. Vaccination should be conducted at a fast pace to reduce the number of cases. And awareness programs should be conducted to encourage people to follow covid protocol even after getting



vaccinated.

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