

### **Food Corporation of India directed to provide grains to NGOs**

The Government has directed Food Corporation of India to provide wheat and rice to NGOs. The food grains will be provided at the Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS) rates without going through the e-auction process.

Key takeaways:

FCI has network of more than 2000 godowns in the country. Large network of godowns will ensure smooth supply of food grains to these organisations in this hour of crisis posed by COVID-19.

It will help relief camps in their philanthropic work of feeding poor and migrant workers.

### **States asked to invoke Essential Commodities Act, 1955**

States are asked to invoke Essential Commodities (EC) Act, 1955 by the Ministry of Home Affairs to maintaining smooth supply of essential items at fair prices in the country. The measures include fixing of stock limits, capping of prices, enhancing production, etc.

Key takeaways:

States can now notify orders under the EC Act, 1955 without prior agreement from the Central Government up to June 30, 2020.

Offences under EC Act are criminal offences and may result in imprisonment of 7 years or fine or both.

Offenders can also be booked under the Prevention of Black-marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980.

### **Funding for developing nasal passage gel approved**

Department of Science and Technology (DST) has approved funding for Department of Biosciences and Bioengineering, IIT Bombay.

The team from the department shall develop a gel that can be applied to nasal passage.

It will capture and inactivate novel corona virus, the causative agent of COVID-19.

This solution will ensure the safety of health workers.

It can lead to reduction in community transmission of COVID-19.



## **Biofortified carrot variety benefits local farmers**

It means breeding crops to increase their nutritional value. This can be done either through conventional selective breeding, or through genetic engineering.

Madhuban Gajar, a biofortified carrot variety, developed by a farmer scientist has benefited hundreds of farmers in Gujarat. The carrot has high  $\beta$ -carotene (beta-carotene) and iron content.

The variety is being cultivated in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh since the last three years. The Madhuban Gajar is used for various value-added products. It was developed by Shri Vallabhhai Vasrambhai Marvaniyawas. He has received a National Award (2017) and a Padma Shri (2019) for his extraordinary work.

## **The President of the United States has threatened to freeze US funding to the World Health Organization (WHO) for not taking necessary steps to combat Covid-19.**

The President of the United States has raised allegations that the WHO has praised China for its transparency on the virus even though there has been reason to believe that more people died of Covid19 than the country's official tally.

The United States is currently the WHO's biggest contributor, making up 14.67% of total funding by providing \$553.1 million.

The World Health Organization is a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for international public health. It was founded in 1948 and is headquartered at Geneva, Switzerland.

## **70 Years of Indian Council for Cultural Relations**

Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) observed its 70th foundation day on 9th April 2020. However, owing to the Covid-19 pandemic it has decided not to hold any celebrations to mark the occasion.

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), is an autonomous organisation of the Government of India, involved in India's external cultural relations (cultural diplomacy), through cultural exchange with other countries and their peoples.

It was founded in 1950 by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, independent India's first Education Minister.

ICCR has been assigned the responsibility of facilitating the celebration of the International Day of Yoga by Indian Missions/Posts abroad since 2015.