

**STEP UP: ON CITIZENS' RESPONSIBILITY DURING A PANDEMIC****Citizens must not hide their travel or contact history as authorities deal with the pandemic**

With any big crisis comes great responsibility. In this time of a pandemic, while there is extensive, proven value in adopting recommended personal hygiene standards, maintaining physical distance, and demanding the States and Centre provide adequate facilities for testing and treatment for the ill, it is also essential to leave that word on the top of the pile — Responsibility. Every public health emergency requires community recognition that this is an extraordinary set of circumstances requiring far-from-ordinary responses. A reasonable restriction on citizens' rights may come into play on invoking provisions of the Epidemic Diseases Act. State police are already slapping cases on violators of the lockdown conditions; action is also being taken on those who violate quarantine. However, the strongest weapon that one can unleash against this pandemic is with every individual. The time to say this nicely is over. It is time to insist that every individual respond responsibly during this time: To inform authorities of relevant history of travel, stay in quarantine even if asymptomatic, follow all other protocols. Keeping health authorities in the loop could make the difference between life and death.

Individuals volunteering information will help the Central and State governments narrow down on the cluster cases centred around the Tablighi Jamaat conference in Nizamuddin, Delhi. The spread of cases from this one spot, which reportedly had several foreign nationals who later tested positive, and where six among those who attended died, has emerged as a key milestone in India's management of the epidemic. The conference was held on March 13, more than a week before the Sunday lockdown. Since then, people from the conference moved on, back home, and several, including Indonesian nationals who were present at Nizamuddin, have tested positive. While the State has deployed 'hotspot' containment strategies in ground zero in Delhi, it is the people who have spread out in the community that are absolutely crucial, over the next few days, to shaping one stretch of the course of the epidemic in India. While it is a massive exercise to track down all the attendees (it is now believed that thousands of people were present) and each of their contacts, it must still be done. Some States have already expressed being thwarted, without co-operation from the participants, and their close contacts. Unfortunately, this may leave the job half done, or undone, leading to disastrous consequences. It is indeed a Herculean task, and may even be considered impossible, unless those who went for the meeting in Delhi step up themselves, engage with health authorities, submit themselves to a test, and remain under quarantine for the prescribed period. Humanitarian crises such as pandemics invoke the worst among men and women, but also their best. The latter is eminently possible, as long as people believe that the enemy is the pandemic, and act responsibly.

**Meanings of Difficult Words:**

- ❖ **step up** (phrasal verb) – increase, intensify; quicken, speed up, accelerate.
- ❖ **pandemic** (noun) – the worldwide spread of a new disease; The illness spreads around the world and typically affects a large number of people across a wide area.
- ❖ **hygiene** (noun) - cleanliness.
- ❖ **social/physical distancing** (noun) – a term means actively avoiding crowded public places, is a key element in decreasing the rapid spread of COVID-19. This is an effort intended to limit exposure by reducing face-to-face contact and preventing spread among people in community settings.
- ❖ **at the top of the pile** (phrase) – at the highest point of (a society).

- ❖ **far-from-ordinary** (adjective) - the opposite of ordinary; extraordinary, exceptional, remarkable; tremendous, huge, substantial/considerable.
- ❖ **come into play** (phrase) - become effective/active.
- ❖ **invoke** (verb) – cite, refer to, adduce.
- ❖ **provision** (noun) – term/condition, clause, requirement.
- ❖ **slap on** (verb) – impose, put on, add (case/penalty/fine).
- ❖ **lockdown** (noun) – a state of isolation; confinement, restraint, encirclement.
- ❖ **quarantine** (noun) - a process of separating out people, animals and things (such as plants) from others for a period of time in order to control/restrict the spread of a contagious disease; setting apart, keeping apart, sorting out.
- ❖ **unleash** (verb) – let loose, release, set free.
- ❖ **insist** (verb) - demand, command, stress/emphasize.
- ❖ **asymptomatic** (adjective) – relating to a condition with no symptoms.
- ❖ **keep in the loop** (phrase) – keep informed everything (related to the particular subject).
- ❖ **make a difference** (phrase) – be important, have a significant effect on, to cause a change.
- ❖ **volunteer** (verb) - put forward, say, declare, submit/suggest (something without being asked).
- ❖ **narrow down** (phrasal verb) – reduce, lessen, decrease.
- ❖ **local transmission (cluster)** (noun) – local spread/transmission means spread of an illness/disease for which the source of infection is known. An infected person has travel history to an affected area. We could able to identify and trace individual cases, and ring-fence a cluster (of them) to prevent the spread of infection.
- ❖ **community transmission** (noun) – community spread/transmission means spread of an illness/disease for which the source of infection is unknown. An infected person has no travel history to an affected area and no known contact with a person previously diagnosed with a particular disease. It is possible the patient is exposed to a returning traveler who is infected.
- ❖ **centre around** (verb) - be based, focus; happen/occur mainly around (a specified place).
- ❖ **milestone** (noun) – turning point, critical point.
- ❖ **move on** (phrasal verb) – go somewhere, cause to leave somewhere.
- ❖ **back home** (phrase) – in one’s country/hometown.
- ❖ **deploy** (verb) – employ.
- ❖ **hotspot** (noun) – a place of significant activity.
- ❖ **containment** (noun) – an act of keeping something (harmful) under control.
- ❖ **ground zero** (noun) – the exact place/area where something is happening practically.
- ❖ **shape** (verb) - determine, create, define.
- ❖ **stretch** (noun) - area, sweep, extent, spread (of something).
- ❖ **attendee** (noun) - a person who attends a conference.
- ❖ **thwart** (verb) – prevent, hamper/hinder, obstruct/block.
- ❖ **half done** (adjective) – partly completed, unfinished.
- ❖ **undone** (adjective) – defeated, beaten, foiled, ruined (by reversing something).
- ❖ **disastrous** (adjective) – catastrophic, devastating, detrimental.
- ❖ **consequence** (noun) – outcome, ramification, repercussion.
- ❖ **indeed** (adverb) – in fact, actually, undeniably.
- ❖ **Herculean** (adjective) – arduous, hard/tough; demanding/exhausting.
- ❖ **submit oneself** (verb) - agree to undergo a certain treatment.
- ❖ **prescribed** (adjective) – advised, directed, ordered.

- ❖ **humanitarian crisis** (noun) – it is also called as humanitarian disaster; a situation with high levels of human suffering in which basic human welfare is in danger on a large scale.
- ❖ **invoke** (verb) - cause, evoke, bring forth, give rise to.
- ❖ **eminently** (adverb) – very, greatly, highly, extremely.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **WEAKER, LATER: ON OLYMPICS POSTPONEMENT**

#### **The postponement is better than cancellation, but Olympics is not on anyone's mind now**

Sport at its best is a glorious indulgence that blends adrenaline rush, exultant joy and mind-numbing grief both for the athlete and the expectant fan. However, in its worst form, sport is war minus the shooting while the cause of nationhood whips up jingoistic passions. But whatever be its intrinsic nature governed by context and history, sport can never exist in a vacuum and it needs a functional society to serve as its bedrock. In these distraught times of the pandemic and the resultant social distancing, basic survival takes precedence over moving limbs and the frenzied applause from a thrilled audience. And it was no surprise that sports events have been postponed or cancelled and the latest to face a disruption in its schedule is the Olympics. Football continues to be the beautiful game but the Olympics remains the world's greatest congregation adhering to its eternal 'faster, higher, stronger' motto. Originally slated for a July 24 to August 9 slot at Tokyo this year, the high-voltage event got derailed once the coronavirus took flight from Wuhan's wet market and coursed through the veins of an inter-connected globe. Initially, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and host Japan were in denial and Australia and Canada threatened to boycott the event before better sense prevailed and the Olympics was pushed to a July 23 start, next year.

A postponement is a first in the chequered history of the modern Olympics since its inception at Athens in 1896. But worse has happened, especially the cancellations, during 1916, 1940 and 1944, when the World Wars drew vicious lines of hate. There were also the Cold War years when the United States and its allies boycotted the Moscow Games in 1980 and the erstwhile Union of Soviet Socialist Republics retaliated along with the Eastern Bloc by skipping the 1984 Olympics at Los Angeles. The most heart-rending was the 'Munich Massacre' during the 1972 edition in then West Germany when a Palestinian terrorist group, Black September, killed 11 members of Israel's squad. Seen through that prism of a bloodied past, the latest postponement seems a mere quibble. IOC president Thomas Bach and Tokyo 2020 president Yoshiro Mori concurred that fresh logistics had to be worked out and ideally a year's preparation was mandatory. Initially estimated to cost about \$28 billion, a delayed Olympics will have to factor inflation and a shrinking economy coping with a pandemic. Over the next 12 months, it is hoped the virus will wane and a semblance of normalcy will set the stage for the Olympics. Sport then would be a welcome balm. But for now, universal health is the overriding priority.

#### **Meanings of Difficult Words:**

- ❖ **at one's best** (phrase) – on top form, in great shape; peak, prime.
- ❖ **glorious** (adjective) – famous, great, impressive.
- ❖ **indulgence** (noun) – satisfaction, gratification, fulfilment, pleasure seeking, extravagance/treat.
- ❖ **adrenaline rush** (noun) – a surge/sudden increase of energy when faced with an exciting or dangerous situation due to the production of adrenaline occurs in the adrenal glands.
- ❖ **exultant** (adjective) - happy, delighted, euphoric, joyful.
- ❖ **mind-numbing** (adjective) - extreme/intense, tedious, dull/monotonous.
- ❖ **expectant** (adjective) - waiting, anticipatory, hopeful, excited.

- ❖ **war minus the shooting** (phrase) - serious sport has nothing to do with fair play. It is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence. It is war minus the shooting.
- ❖ **nationhood** (noun) – the fact of being a nation.
- ❖ **whip up** (phrasal verb) – stimulate, arouse, trigger, prompt/induce.
- ❖ **tingoistic** (adjective) – hyper-nationalistic, super-patriotic, relating to extreme patriotism.
- ❖ **intrinsic** (adjective) – essential, deep-rooted/natural, inherent.
- ❖ **context** (noun) – circumstances, conditions, situation.
- ❖ **in a vacuum** (phrase) - isolated from outside events.
- ❖ **bedrock** (noun) – core, basis/base, foundation.
- ❖ **distraught** (adjective) – very worried, distressed, devastated, fraught.
- ❖ **pandemic** (noun) – the worldwide spread of a new disease; The illness spreads around the world and typically affects a large number of people across a wide area.
- ❖ **social/physical distancing** (noun) – a term means actively avoiding crowded public places, is a key element in decreasing the rapid spread of COVID-19. This is an effort intended to limit exposure by reducing face-to-face contact and preventing spread among people in community settings.
- ❖ **precedence** (noun) – priority, preference, first place, primacy.
- ❖ **limb** (noun) – arm, leg; part, section.
- ❖ **frenzied** (adjective) – uncontrolled, intense, furious/mad.
- ❖ **applause** (noun) – praise, acclaim, commendation.
- ❖ **it is no surprise** (phrase) – as expected, as anticipated, as predicted.
- ❖ **congregation** (noun) – gathering, assembly, meeting.
- ❖ **adhere to** (verb) – abide by, stick to, hold to, comply with.
- ❖ **eternal** (adjective) – everlasting, boundless, timeless, permanent.
- ❖ **motto** (noun) – slogan, expression, saying/phrase, catchphrase.
- ❖ **slate** (verb) - arrange, plan, schedule.
- ❖ **high-voltage** (adjective) - electrifying, electric, dynamic.
- ❖ **derail** (verb) – obstruct, interrupt, impede/thwart..
- ❖ **course through** (verb) - move, cascade, flow.
- ❖ **vein** (noun) - channel, passage.
- ❖ **boycott** (verb) – avoid, ignore, reject, snub/spurn.
- ❖ **better sense prevailed** (phrase) – a sensible decision is made.
- ❖ **chequered** (adjective) – varied, mixed, eventful, up and down.
- ❖ **chequered history** (phrase) - having a varied past with both good and bad periods.
- ❖ **inception** (noun) – setting up, origination, establishment, institution, foundation/formation.
- ❖ **vicious** (adjective) – serious, dangerous, dreadful.
- ❖ **the Cold War** (noun) – The Cold War was a state of political and military tension after World War II between powers in the Western Bloc and powers in the Eastern Bloc.

\*\*\*\*\*