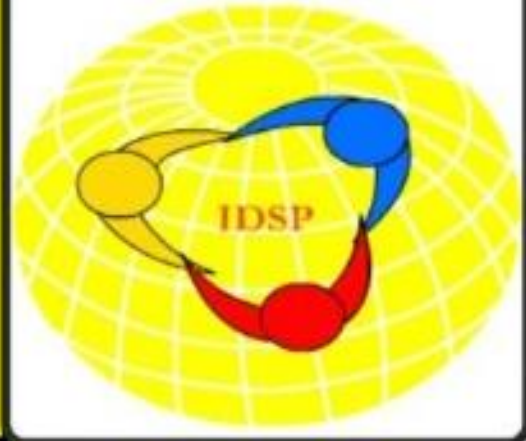




Staying Alert

INTEGRATED DISEASE SURVEILLANCE PROGRAMME



Context:

- Functioning of the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme.

What is Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme?

- The Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) functions as **India's disease monitoring network**.
- It is responsible for alerting the Centre and the world about the emergence of disease outbreaks, a surge in novel pathogens, the rate of spread and remedial action taken.

Details:

- On average, there are 30-40 alerts every week from the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme. However, the advent of COVID-19 has resulted in **decreased alerts from the IDSP**.
- Once COVID-19 was declared a pandemic and a **lockdown imposed**, movements came to a standstill, with hospitals shut, and only testing and treatment for COVID-19 available at government healthcare facilities, the **reporting of other diseases suffered**.
- The other explanation is that akin to a decline in deaths from accidents, the **lockdown has contributed to a decline in transmission of contagious diseases**. Many of the outbreaks that are routinely reported involve pathogens that are airborne and spread through social interaction.



What are concerns?

- The lack of public updates from IDSP in recent times seems unacceptable. This might lead to a **lack of surveillance** and might result in an outbreak of diseases in India.
- The pandemic has taught the world that no modelling can quite forecast the spread of disease and infection may turn uncontrollable in a short duration.
- The IDSP also faces a **manpower crunch**.

Conclusion:

- It is essential **to improve the overall routine surveillance as well as provide timely updates** to the public and international health agencies.
- The pandemic needs serious focus, but India cannot afford to ignore other diseases.