



# WHO launches CoViNet

[Source: DTE](#)

## Why in News?

The [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) has introduced a new initiative, [Coronavirus Network \(CoViNet\)](#), aimed at enhancing global surveillance and response capabilities against coronaviruses.

## What is Coronavirus Network (CoViNet)?

### ▪ About:

- CoViNet is designed to facilitate and **coordinate global expertise and capacities** for the early detection, monitoring, and assessment of various coronaviruses.
- Beyond focusing solely on [SARS-CoV-2](#), CoViNet will also assess other coronaviruses, including **Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV)** with a particular emphasis on enhancing laboratory capacity and surveillance.
  - MERS-CoV is a **zoonotic virus** (transmitted between animals and people). It has been identified and **linked to human infections in dromedary camels** in several Member States in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia.
- The establishment of CoViNet builds upon the foundation laid by the **WHO Covid-19 reference laboratory network**, initially set up during the early stages of the pandemic in January 2020.

### ▪ Significance of CoViNet:

- The network's establishment underscores the **persistent epidemic and pandemic risks** associated with coronaviruses and the necessity for proactive surveillance and response measures.

### ▪ Key Features of CoViNet:

- CoViNet includes 36 labs from 21 countries across all six WHO regions, with **three Indian labs**: [Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-National Environmental Engineering Research Institute](#), [Indian Council of Medical Research-National Institute of Virology](#) in Pune, and Translational Health Science and Technology Institute.
  - It emphasises a comprehensive **One Health approach** encompassing human, animal, and environmental health.
- The network's objective is to equip WHO Member States with enhanced **capabilities for early detection, risk assessment, and response to coronavirus-related health challenges**.

### ▪ Outcomes of CoViNet:

- CoViNet's efforts will provide vital data to inform **WHO policies and support decision-making**, particularly through Technical Advisory Groups on Viral Evolution and Vaccine Composition.

## Similar WHO Initiative

### ▪ Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator

- The **Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator** is a global collaboration launched by the WHO and partners in 2020.
- It aims to accelerate the development, production, and equitable access to COVID-19 tests,

treatments, and vaccines.

- The initiative is organised into four pillars: diagnostics, therapeutics, vaccines, and the health systems and response connector, each vital to the overall effort.

▪ **Zero-Draft of Pandemic Treaty**

# UN SPECIALISED AGENCIES

UNSAAs are 15 autonomous international organizations working with the UN

Part III  
ILO, WHO  
and ITU

ILO



The only tripartite (govt., trade unions, employers) and the 1<sup>st</sup> affiliated UNSA

- Estd. - 1919 (Treaty of Versailles)
- Headquarters - Geneva, Switzerland
- Functions -
  - » Set labour standards
  - » Develop policies & programmes for promoting decent work for all
- Member States - 187 (India a founding member + permanent member of ILO Governing Body)

- International Labour Conference -
  - » Meets annually in Geneva
  - » aka International Parliament of Labour
- ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work 1998 (Principles) -
  - » Freedom of Association and The Right to collective bargaining
  - » Elimination of forced or compulsory labour
  - » Abolition of child labour
  - » Elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation



WHO

WHO became functional on April 7, 1948 (now celebrated as World Health Day)

- Estd. - 1948
- Headquarters - Geneva, Switzerland
- Functions -
  - » Provides leadership on global health matters
  - » Shaping health research agenda
  - » Monitoring, assessing health trends
- Member States - 194 (incl. India)

WHO's regional office for SE Asia is located in New Delhi

- World Health Assembly - WHO's decision-making body, held yearly at Geneva
- Major Initiatives -
  - » UN Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030)
  - » UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025)
  - » GLASS Initiative (AMR)
  - » WHO 1+1 Initiative (2019) (TB)

ITU



- Estd. - 1865
- Headquarters - Geneva, Switzerland
- Functions -
  - » Facilitate intl. connectivity in communication networks
  - » Allocate global radio spectrum and satellite orbits

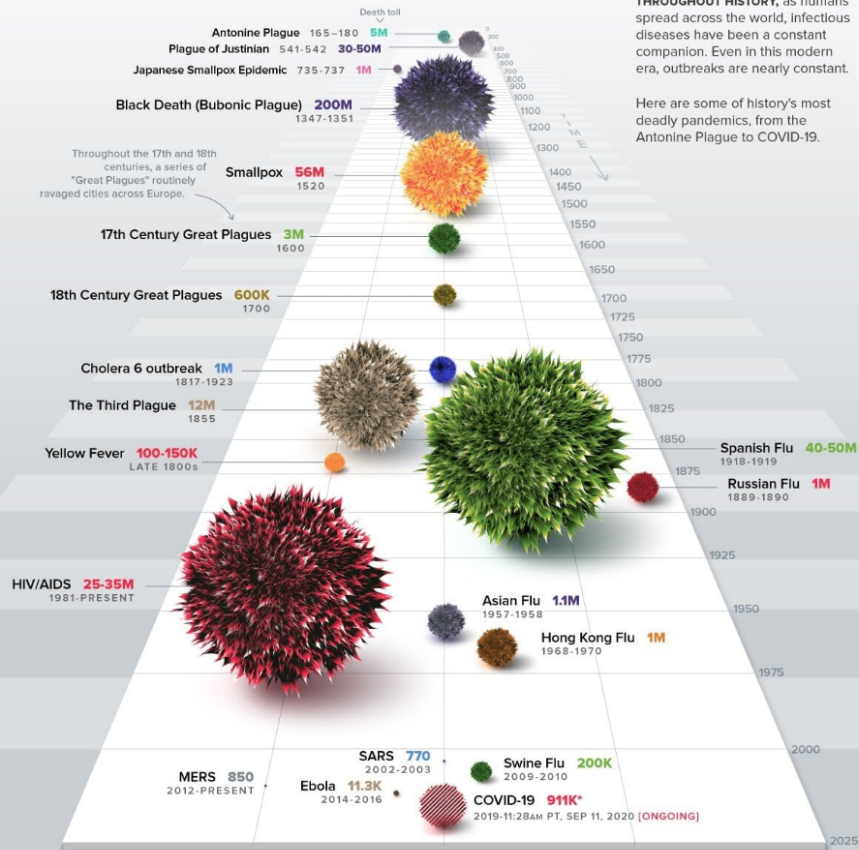
- Member States - 193 (India a regular member since 1952)
- Important Publication -
  - » Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI)

# HISTORY OF PANDEMICS

PAN-DEM-IC (of a disease) prevalent over a whole country or the world.

THROUGHOUT HISTORY, as humans spread across the world, infectious diseases have been a constant companion. Even in this modern era, outbreaks are nearly constant.

Here are some of history's most deadly pandemics, from the Antonine Plague to COVID-19.



## DEATH TOLL [HIGHEST TO LOWEST]

WHO officially declared COVID-19 a pandemic on Mar 11, 2020.

It is hard to calculate and forecast the impact of COVID-19 because the disease is new to medicine, and data is still coming in.

\*Johns Hopkins University estimates

**200M**  
Black Death (Bubonic Plague)  
1347-1351



**56M**

Smallpox  
1520



**40-50M**

Spanish Flu  
1918-1919



**30-50M**

Plague of Justinian  
541-542



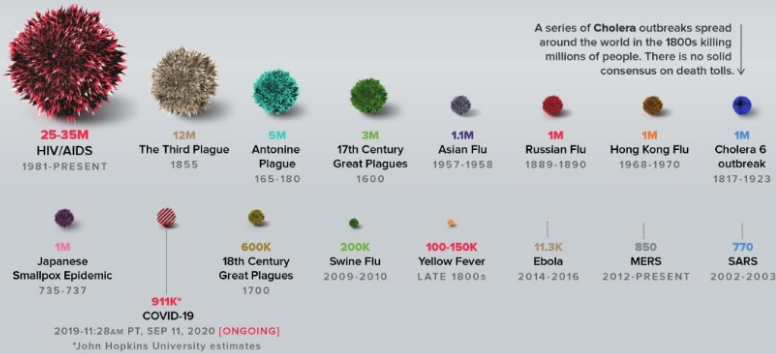
The plague originated in rats and spread to humans via infected fleas.

The outbreak wiped out 30-50% of Europe's population. It took more than 200 years for the continent's population to recover.

Smallpox killed an estimated 90% of Native Americans. In Europe during the 1800s, an estimated 400,000 people were being killed by smallpox annually. The first ever vaccine was created to ward off smallpox.

The death toll of this plague is still under debate as new evidence is uncovered, but many think it may have helped hasten the fall of the Roman Empire.

A series of Cholera outbreaks spread around the world in the 1800s killing millions of people. There is no solid consensus on death tolls.



\*Johns Hopkins University estimates



## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### Prelims

**Q. Which of the following are the reasons for the occurrence of multi-drug resistance in microbial pathogens in India? (2019)**

1. Genetic predisposition of some people
2. Taking incorrect doses of antibiotics to cure diseases
3. Using antibiotics in livestock farming
4. Multiple chronic diseases in some people

**Select the correct answer using the code given below.**

- (a) 1 and 2  
(b) 2 and 3 only  
(c) 1, 3 and 4  
(d) 2, 3 and 4

**Ans: (b)**

### Mains

**Q. COVID-19 pandemic accelerated class inequalities and poverty in India. Comment. (2020)**

**Q. Appropriate local community-level healthcare intervention is a prerequisite to achieve 'Health for All' in India. Explain. (2018)**