

The beneficiaries of coronavirus

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Source: *The Hindu*

Manifest pedagogy: The COVID-19 pandemic has provided a breather for the activities on earth and has enabled the environment to restore itself. As a fodder for essay and environment questions in mains, this dimension would help.

In news: Coronavirus outbreak has reduced carbon emissions

Dimensions:

- Impact of coronavirus outbreak on environment
- Challenges ahead

Content:

Impact of coronavirus outbreak on environment:

- There is a **significant decline in air pollution in major cities worldwide** as countries have implemented stricter quarantines and travel restrictions.
- The European Space Agency (ESA) observed a particularly **marked decline in emissions of nitrogen dioxide, in northern Italy.**
- **Venice's typically murky waterways have turned clear** as the sediment has remained on the ground without boat traffic.
- Though the water quality in the canals has not necessarily changed, the air quality has improved due to the slowdown of day-to-day life and economic activity.
- NASA's Earth Observatory pollution satellites show **"significant decreases" in air pollution over China** since the Coronavirus outbreak began.
- According to **China's Ministry of Ecology and**

Environment, the average number of 'good quality air days' increased 21.5% in February, 2020 compared to the same period last year.

- **According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), around 85 cities across India have seen a drop in air pollution** since the country started its nationwide lockdown.
- **The Himalayan mountain range is now visible in Punjab** from more than 100 miles away, for the first time in almost 30 years due to the reduction in air pollution.
- **Delhi saw up to a 44% reduction in PM10** air pollution levels on the first day of its restrictions.

Challenges ahead:

- With the restrictions imposed on travel, **major airlines** have issued statements about **huge dips in demand**.
- The International Energy Agency (IEA), has warned that the **virus would weaken global investments in clean energy and industry efforts to reduce emissions**.
- It has called on governments to offer **stimulus packages that consider climate change**, but which are likely not the response from many countries.
- The **Prime Minister of the Czech Republic** which largely depends on nuclear energy and coal, has **urged the European Union to abandon its landmark green law** focusing on carbon neutrality.
- **Major U.S. airlines are asking for billions of dollars in government aid** as they face potential bankruptcy from travel decline.
- **Air travel** is expected to bounce back after the pandemic subsides and the industry's **emissions are expected to triple by 2050**.
- According to the **Global Carbon Project report**, companies that are getting hurt financially will likely delay or cancel climate-friendly projects that require investment up front.

- Hence climate researchers have warned that the virus will hinder climate change action from corporations and countries in the long-run.