Curbs on large gatherings of people and World major protests & Moment

Part of: GS-II- INTERNATIONAL Issue (PT-MAINS-PERSONALITY TEST)

In India
Protest movements in India against the implementation of the CAA and NRC appear to have been temporarily halted, due to corona outbreak but still many countries the protest seems to reappear.

Hong Kong protest

The Umbrella Movement was a political movement that emerged during the Hong Kong democracy protests of 2014. Its name arose from the use of umbrellas as a tool for passive resistance to the Hong Kong Police’s use of pepper spray to disperse the crowd during a 79-day occupation of the city demanding more transparent elections, which was sparked by the decision of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (NPCSC) of 31 August 2014 that prescribed a selective pre-screening of candidates for the 2017 election of Hong Kong’s chief executive.

Almost all students in universities of Hong Kong were in echo of 2014 Hong Kong class boycott campaign, and fully supported the “Umbrella Movement”. Many secondary schools established political reform concern groups, for supporting student protests and “Umbrella Movement”. Hong Kong’s protests took another turn in June against plans to allow extradition to mainland China. Critics feared this could undermine judicial independence and endanger dissidents.

Until 1997, Hong Kong was ruled by Britain as a colony but then returned to China. Under the ”one country, two systems” arrangement, it has some autonomy, and its people more rights. The bill was withdrawn in September but demonstrations continue and now demand full democracy and an inquiry into police actions.

- Some protesters have adopted the motto: “Five demands, not one less” These are:
  - For the protests not to be characterised as a "riot"
  - Amnesty for arrested protesters
  - An independent inquiry into alleged police brutality
  - Implementation of complete universal suffrage
  - The fifth demand, the withdrawal of the bill, has already been met.

Protests supporting the Hong Kong movement have spread across the globe, with rallies taking place in the UK, France, US, Canada and Australia.

LEBANON

Lebanon has been hit by civil protests since October 2019 that show no signs of stopping more than six months later.

What started as hundreds of people taking to the streets of Lebanon to protest plans for new
taxes during the 2020 budget season on everything from tobacco to social media platforms like WhatsApp, escalated and expanded to wide-scale protests against an unstable economy, sectarian rule, unemployment and corruption. Lebanon’s financial crisis resulted in a sovereign debt default and also affected its currency’s value. Protest camps were ordered to be removed by the country’s security forces and curfews were imposed on public gatherings. Lebanon’s government is contemplating extending the lockdown at least until May 10 with proposals to potentially restore certain parts of the economy.

Since April 21, protests across the country, including in places like Beirut, Tripoli, Sidon, Nabatieh, Akkar, Bekaa Valley (PT) have become more volatile, resulting in deaths and injuries of civilians as well as soldiers.

FRANCE
The yellow-vest movement that started in France in October 2018, followed by mass demonstrations a month later, have shown no signs of stopping. This movement also started as a protest against high taxes that would further burden the middle class and the poor and against income inequality. France has been under lockdown since March 17 to curb the spread of Covid-19 and amid the global health crisis.

COLOMBIA
Protests have been ongoing in Colombia since November 2019 against a range of proposed economic and political reforms. While they stopped in January 2020, following the outbreak of coronavirus, they appear to have started once again. Since March 24, Colombia has been under lockdown, first starting at city levels and expanding across the country.

Following the announcement of the lockdown, many daily-wage workers gathered at the Plaza Bolivar, the main square in the capital of Bogotá and protested the sudden imposition of these government orders fearing that they may not be able to pay rent or purchase food due to the loss of wages.

UNITED STATES
With the US recording the highest rates of coronavirus infections around the world, and witnessing those numbers rising each day, it now has an additional challenge with which it needs to contend. While most of the country has still been ordered to stay at home, some states have been easing restrictions by allowing the opening of parks, beaches and some businesses.

However, in several states around the country, protestors have taken to the streets and have engaged in blocking streets using cars and car horns in their protest.

The protestors say these restrictions are preventing them from leading their daily lives and are impacting businesses. Some have even come carrying firearms, claiming infringement of rights and civil liberties.
Reports suggest unemployment has also spiked across the country. Some other protestors have said they are desperate to start earning a regular salary. In April, Trump appeared to endorse these protests on Twitter by posting messages with calls to “liberate” different states like Minnesota, Virginia, Michigan etc. that had placed curbs to control coronavirus.

Across political lines, the response towards these protests has also been divided. Some public health experts and state governors and other political leaders have stated that social distancing is necessary for the US given the high infection rates. Two weeks ago, Facebook announced that it would remove events listings for such protest gatherings if they violate state laws that have instituted bans against them.