Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami announced the split of Vellore district into Vellore, Ranipet and Tirupattur districts on August 15.

- This takes the total number of districts in Tamil Nadu to 37.
- The CM also announced K V Kuppam as a new taluk in the Vellore district.
- The district currently has 13 taluks and a population of 39,36,331.
- Vellore district was created in 1989 by bifurcating the erstwhile North Arcot district into Vellore and Tiruvannamalai districts.
- In July, the government announced the creation of Tenkasi from Tirunelveli district and Chengalpet from Kancheepuram district.
- In January, Villupuram was divided into Villupuram and Kallakurichi districts.
- This is the first time that the government has announced five new districts in the short span of eight months.
- The CM also declared that November 1 would be celebrated as Tamil Nadu Day to mark the birth of the state on November 1, 1956.
- The CM also announced a special CM grievance redressal programme in August and September to redress public grievances within a month.
- During the independence day speech, the CM also announced the hiking of pension of freedom fighters from ₹15,000 to ₹16,000, pension for their legal heirs from ₹7,500 to ₹8,000 a and financial aid of ₹2,000 per month to all Below Poverty Line families in the state.

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman K Sivan was awarded Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Award by Tamil Nadu.
government for his role in promoting science and technology in the country

✔ K Sivan is a native of Kanniyakumari district of Tamil Nadu.
✔ Popularly known as 'Rocket Man', he graduated from Madras Institute of Technology in 1980
✔ He joined Isro after completing his masters degree in aerospace engineering from Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bengaluru
✔ He has served as the director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre and Liquid Propulsion Centre
✔ He was the chief architect of SITARA, a 6D trajectory simulation software
✔ He is the proud recipient of several awards including Dr Vikram Sarabhai Research Award (1999)
✔ The Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Award is conferred for promoting scientific growth, humanities and students’ welfare to those who hail from Tamil Nadu
✔ It is given on Independence Day every year.
✔ The inaugural Kalam award was presented by the then CM Late J Jayalalithaa in 2015 to ISRO scientist N Valarmathi.

◆ Regional Meteorological Centre, Nungambakkam - was recently recognised by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), for recording weather data for more than a century and contributing to long-term climate studies.
✔ The Nungambakkam observatory is Asia’s oldest and has 100 years of data which is helpful for climate change studies

✔ It was among five stations in the country to receive the recognition at the recent executive council meeting of the WMO.
✔ The others were at Mumbai (Colaba), Panjim, Goa, Pune and Trivandrum.
✔ The Nungambakkam observatory has rainfall records from 1901 and except for a gap of seven years between 1943 and 1950 when it was shut during World War II, it has been tracking weather without a break.

NATIONAL

◆ Prime Minister Narendra Modi - announced the appointment of a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) in his first Independence Day speech of his second term
✓ The Chief of Defence Staff will integrate all three services – the Indian Army, the Air Force and the Indian Navy
✓ In effect, the CDS will rank higher than the Army, Navy and IAF chiefs
✓ This post was recommended for the first time after the 1999 Kargil War
✓ The main objective of the post is to ensure better coordination between all three services.
✓ The CDS will be the head and highest-ranked military officer of the country’s armed forces
✓ He will advise the government on matters related to all three services - Army, Navy and Air Force
✓ The Chief of Defence Staff also works as military adviser to the PM on nuclear issues
The creation of the position of CDS was strongly recommended by both the Kargil Review Committee in 1999 as well as the L K Advani-led group of ministers’ report in 2001.

In 2012, the Naresh Chandra Taskforce recommended a permanent chairman of the chief of staff committee (PC-CoSC) — a diluted version of the CDS — with a fixed two-year tenure.

The CoSC currently comprises the three service chiefs, with the seniormost among them acting as its ex-officio chairman till he retires.

The present Air Chief Marshal (ACM) B.S. Dhanoa took over as the Chairman, COSC on May 31 from outgoing Navy Chief Adm Sunil Lanba.
After his retirement on September 30, 2019, Army Chief Gen Bipin Rawat will be appointed as the next Chairman of COSC

Prime Minister Narendra Modi - announced the launch of 'Jal Jeevan Mission' to bring piped water to households within the next five years during his independence day speech from Red fort

The mission, which will be coordinated by Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, would cost more than Rs.3.5 lakh crore in the coming years.

It seeks to integrate with other Central and State Government Schemes to achieve the objectives of sustainable water supply management across India.

It focusses upon the involvement of people in creating local infrastructure for source sustainability such as groundwater recharge, rainwater harvesting, and management of household wastewater for agricultural reuse.

In July 2019, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced that government has identified 1592 Blocks (spread across 256 districts), which are over-exploited, for centre's Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA)

The Government has also created a 'Jal shakti' ministry to achieve the target of providing piped water to all households by 2024.

Air India - hoisted its Boeing 777 aircraft over the North Pole to become the first Indian airline to operate commercial flights overflying the polar region

Its Delhi-San Francisco flight, which usually overflies the Atlantic or the Pacific ocean, cut across latitudes instead to fly over zero degree north.

Delhi-San Francisco flight AI-173 lifted with about 243 passengers on board, overflew Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Russia and overflew the North Pole to cross over to the other side of planet Earth.

AI's Delhi-SFO, launched in December 2015, might be the only flight in the world which has three routing options that take it over the Atlantic or Pacific or the North Pole

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

Saudi Arabia - regains the position of being the biggest supplier of oil to India, world's fastest-growing oil market.

Saudi Arabia, which traditionally has been India's top oil source, lost the slot to Iraq during the last two financial years.

Saudi Arabia in 2018-19 exported 40.33 million tonnes of crude oil to India, over 15% short of the 46.61 million tonnes sold by Iraq.
It has to be recalled that Saudi Arabian Oil Co (Aramco) is buying a 20% stake in Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) with an enterprise valuation of $75 billion. The deal also covers the supply of 500,000 barrels per day or 25 million tonnes a year of crude oil. Additional oil supplies following the Reliance deal will catapult Saudi Arabia to top spot again.

**SPORTS**

**Virat Kohli - has become the first batsman to score 20,000 international runs across all the three formats in a decade**

- He achieved this feat during his match-winning hundred against the West Indies in the third ODI match on August 14.
- Overall, he has scored 20,502 runs till now, out of which he has scored 20,018 runs in the ongoing decade.
- Former Australian cricketer Ricky Ponting held the record for scoring most international runs in a decade with 18,962 to his credit in the 2000s.
- Virat Kohli also scored the fastest 10,000 runs in international cricket as a captain in 176 innings.
- Earlier this record Ricky Ponting was holding this record that had done it in 225 innings.

**Chepauk Super Gillies – wins the fourth edition of Tamil Nadu Premier League**

- Chepauk Super Gillies’ G Periyasamy took 5 for 15 to help his side beat Dindigul Dragons by 12 runs at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on August 15.
- The win marks the second title victory in three years for the Super Gillies after their win in 2017.
- It also marks a second defeat in the final for Dindigul Dragons in two years.
- He was named the Man of the match in the final.

**20,000 RUNS FOR CAPTAIN KOHLI – A REPORT**
WINNERS OF TAMIL NADU CHIEF MINISTER’S INDEPENDENCE DAY AWARDS - REPORT
Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Award - K Sivan, chairperson, Indian Space Research Organisation
Kalpana Chawla Award - P Ramyalakshmi, assistant director of fisheries (marine), Cuddalore, for courage and daring enterprise
CM’s special award for extraordinary act of bravery - P Shanmugavelu and Sentharamarai of Tirunelveli

CM’s best practices
- Greater Chennai Police commissionerate - for installing CCTV cameras and using ‘Facetagr App’ for crime detection
- Department of rural development and Panchayat Raj - for Naganathi River Rejuvenation Project in Vellore district
- Department of commercial taxes - for developing a mobile app and launching 24x7 help desk to assist migration to GST
- Certificate of appreciation to Greater Chennai Corporation - for establishing Infinity Park at Santhome as a pilot project for creating sensory parks for differently-abled children

Best institution for differently-abled - Opportunity School for Intellectually Disabled, Vepery, Chennai
Best doctor - Dr S Vetrivel Chezian, Institute of Orthopaedics and Traumatology, Government Coimbatore Medical College Hospital
- Dr V Ramadevi, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, Government Kilpauk Medical College Hospital, Chennai
Best Private Employer Award - Everest Stabilizers Pvt. Ltd.
Best Social Worker Award - Chandra Prasad of Pathway
Best cooperative Bank award - Salem District Central Cooperative Bank Ltd
Best services rendered towards the welfare of women - M. Soosai Marian
Best institution for serving of women - Bothimaram in Salem district
Chief Minister’s State Youth Award - P. Naveenkumar of Namakkal district, M. Anandakumar of Dindigul district and R. Kalaivani of Madurai district
Best Corporation - Salem Municipality
Best Municipalities
- First prize – Dharmapuri
- Second prize - Vedaranyam
- Third prize - Aranthangi

50 YEARS OF ISRO – A REPORT
August 15, India’s 73rd Independence Day, also marks the golden jubilee year for Isro, which was founded on this day in 1969.

- The year also marks the centenary year of Vikram Sarabhai, the father of the Indian space programme.
- India’s space journey began after Dr Vikram Sarabhai formed Indian National Committee for Space Research (INCOSPAR) in 1962.
- In 1969, INCOSPAR was renamed as ISRO (Indian Space Research organisation).

Isro’s achievements

- **Apr 19, 1975**
  - ISRO built India’s first satellite, Aryabhata, which was launched by the Soviet Union on April 19, 1975.

- **Jul 18, 1980**
  - Rohini became the first satellite to be placed into orbit by an Indian-made launch vehicle, SLV-3.

- **May 20, 1992**
  - Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle (ASLV) & Insat - 2A were launched by ISRO.

- **Oct 22, 2008**
  - ISRO sent an unmanned lunar orbiter, Chandrayaan-1, into orbit.
  - The spacecraft carried 11 scientific instruments built in India, USA, UK, Germany, Sweden and Bulgaria.
  - The mission was concluded when the communication with the spacecraft was lost on August 29, 2009.

- **Sep 09, 2012**
  - ISRO’s 100th space mission was successfully launched using PSLV-C21 rocket, by placing two foreign satellites in earth’s orbit.

- **Nov 5, 2013**
  - India launched Mars Orbiter Mission on 5 November 2013 and entered Mars’ orbit on 24 September, 2014, making India the first nation to succeed on its maiden attempt to Mars.
  - ISRO became the fourth space agency in the world, as well as the first space agency in Asia, to reach the Mars orbit.

- **Feb 15, 2017**
  - On 15 February 2017, ISRO launched 104 satellites in a single rocket (PSLV-C37), a world record.
  - ISRO launched its heaviest rocket, Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle-Mark III (GSLV-Mk III), on 5 June, 2017 and placed a communications satellite GSAT-19 into the orbit.

- **Nov 14, 2018**
ISRO successfully launched GSAT-29 satellite from Sriharikota, the heaviest satellite weighing at 3,423 kg aims at providing better communication for remote areas of country.

Jul 22, 2019

- On 22 July, 2019, India launched GSLV-Mk III, India’s second moon mission 'Chandrayaan-2'
- Chandrayaan-2 is India's first space mission that will conduct a soft landing on the moon's south polar region.
- The mission will make India 4th country to soft land rover on the surface of the moon after Russia, America and China.

In the past three years, ISRO has launched 239 commercial satellites helping ISRO’S commercial arm, Antrix Corporation, garner Rs 6,289 crore revenue.