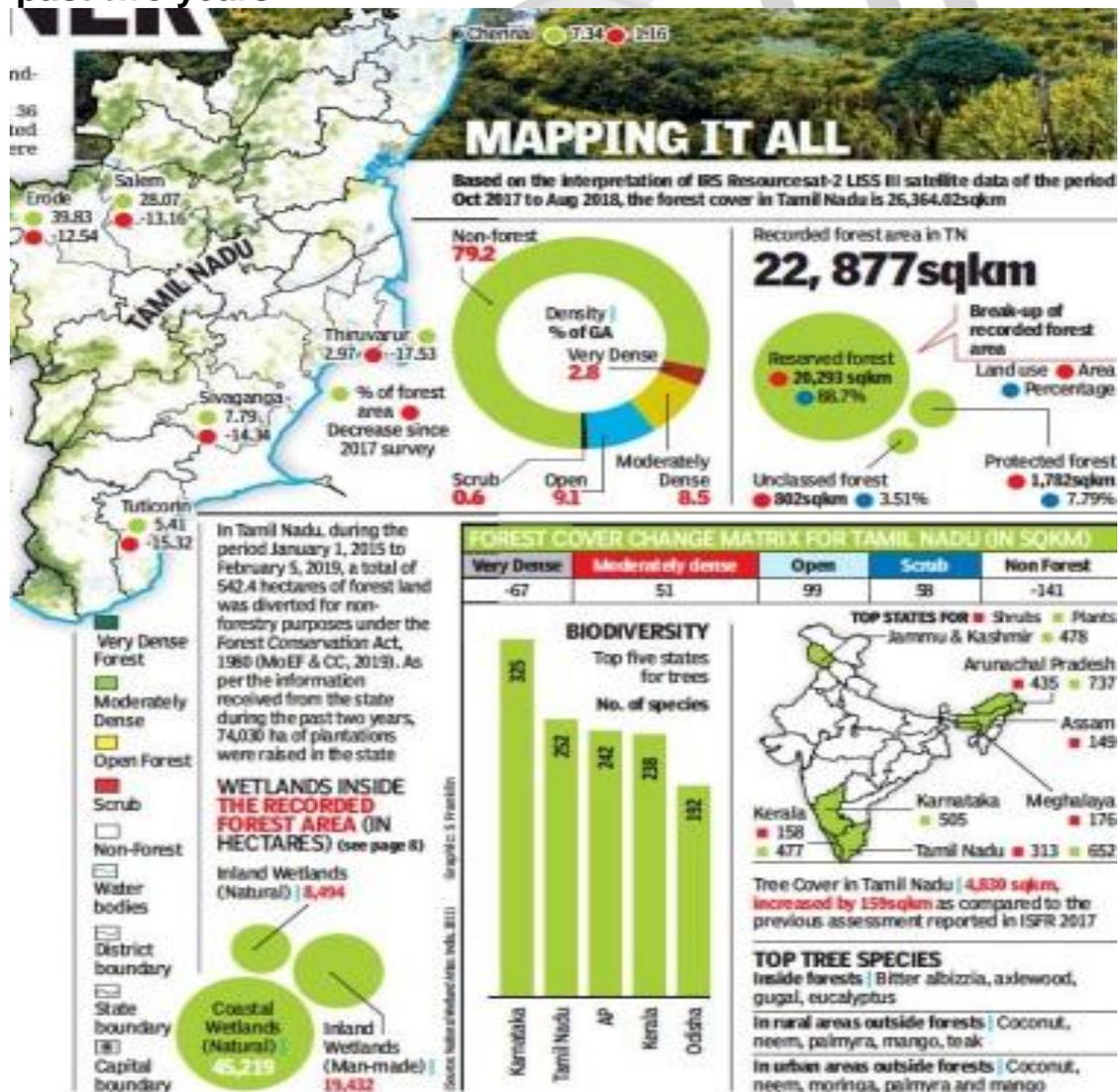


EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – DEC 31, 2019

TAMIL NADU

- The forest cover in Tamil Nadu - has shown an increase by 83.02 sqkm in the past two years





- ✓ Its overall green cover currently stands at 20% of its geographical area.
- ✓ The state has been following a two-pronged approach to improve the tree cover inside and outside the forest areas, which has contributed to the increase
- ✓ It has taken up the technique of 'Gap planting' inside the forest areas where degradation had occurred to increase density and productivity as part of the 'Tamil Nadu Biodiversity and Greening Project' (TBGP), for which funds were provided by 'Japan International Cooperation Agency' (JICA)
- ✓ For the areas outside forests, the state has implemented 'Tree Cultivation in Private Land' (TCPL).
- ✓ Also, about 15 crore saplings have been planted in the state since 1997 under two different programmes
- ✓ The first programme was the 'Tamil Nadu Afforestation Programme' (TAP) that aims to regenerate forests by roping in tribals.
- ✓ The second one is the 'TBGP'.
- ✓ Both these projects were funded by 'JICA'
- **The area under mangrove forest cover in Tamil Nadu - has reduced by 4sq km, while the overall mangrove cover in the country increased by 54sqkm**
- ✓ These details are released in the 'Mangrove Cover Assessment' in the latest India State of Forest Report 2019.
- ✓ Tamil Nadu's mangrove cover is estimated to be close to 45sqkm, as against 49sqkm assessed in the last report published in 2017
- ✓ According to the 'Mangrove Cover: 2019 Assessment', there has been a net increase of 54sqkm in the mangrove cover in the state
- ✓ It comprises of very dense, moderately dense and open mangroves
- ✓ Of the 4,975 sq km mangrove cover in the entire country, West Bengal leads the entire country with 42.45%, followed by Gujarat (23.66%) and Andaman & Nicobar Islands (12.39%).
- ✓ Gujarat has the maximum increase of 37sqkm in mangrove cover.
- ✓ Tamil Nadu has just 1 sqkm of very dense mangrove and about 27sqkm of moderately dense mangrove forest cover, contributing 0.9% of total mangrove cover in India.
- ✓ Open mangrove cover is present in 17sqkm in the state.
- ✓ As per the 2017 assessment, the state had 1 sqkm of very dense mangrove forest, about 25sqkm of moderately dense cover and 23sqkm of open mangrove cover.

THE GREEN SHIELD

How mangrove forests act as a protective barrier and provide ecological balance

- > The complex root system of mangroves dissipate sea wave energy very efficiently
- > Their protective role has been widely recognized, especially after the devastating tsunami of 2004
- > Their roots slow down water flows and enhance sediment deposition
- > Acts as a fertile breeding ground for many fish species and other marine fauna
- > Acts as an important source of livelihood for the coastal communities dependent on collection of honey, tannins, wax and fishing

LR Shan kar

Mangrove cover in TN

Very dense	1sqkm
Moderately dense	27sqkm
Open	17sqkm

Tamil Nadu accounts for a mere 0.9% of total mangrove cover of India

- ✓ In the case of Tamil Nadu, mangrove cover is spread on the coastal belts of Cuddalore, Nagapattinam, Pudukottai, Ramanathapuram, Thanjavur, Thiruvallur, Thiruvarur and Tuticorin districts.
- ✓ While Thiruvarur and Thanjavur contribute bulk of the mangrove forest cover at 25.1 sq km in the state, Thiruvallur has the least cover at 0.91sq km.
- ✓ According to the report, mangroves have a complex root system, which is very efficient in dissipating the sea wave energy, thus protecting the coastal areas from tsunamis, storm usage and soil erosion.
- ✓ Mangrove ecosystems are under threat due to increased human population in coastal areas and rising demand for timber.
- **The Tamil Nadu government - granted administrative sanction on December 30 to establish Advanced Institute for Integrated Research on Livestock and Animal Sciences at Thalaivasal Koot Road in Salem.**
 - ✓ The facility will come up at an estimated cost of ₹564.44 crore
 - ✓ It will be implemented by Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Sciences department
 - ✓ 10 major complexes have been planned in the institute
 - ✓ The complexes include, livestock farm, dairy processing and product manufacturing, fisheries demonstration, post graduate education, extension and skill development, research, business incubation and seamless integration, meat production and processing, forage research zone, public interaction zone, besides common facilities.
 - ✓ The government has also approved constitution of a high level project monitoring committee led by Animal Husbandry minister for the project.
 - ✓ The convenor of the committee will be the Director of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services.

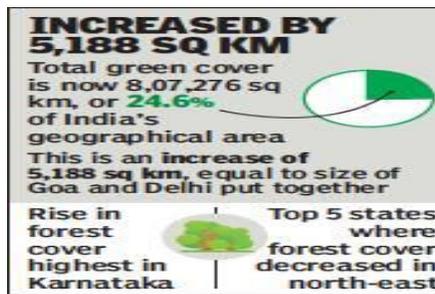
- ✓ The other members of the committee who will be monitoring the project includes TN Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation managing director, fisheries director, TN Veterinary and Animal Sciences University vice-chancellor and special secretary, finance.

STATES

- **Uttar Pradesh government - has identified 5 potential choices for the five-acre land that has to be given to the Sunni Waqf Board as an alternative site for a mosque**
- ✓ This identification was mandated by the Supreme Court in its November 9 verdict in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid case
- ✓ All the five choices are outside the periphery of the “panchkosi prarikama”
- ✓ The “panchkosi prarikama” is the 15-km circle around the Ram Janmabhoomi site along which devotees pass through to pay obeisance.
- ✓ The sites identified are close to Highways passing by Ayodhya.
- ✓ Four of the five choices that have been identified are on the Ayodhya-Faizabad Road, Ayodhya-Basti Road, Ayodhya-Sultanpur Road and Ayodhya-Gorakhpur Road.
- ✓ The reason behind keeping the potential site outside the “panchkosi parikrama” is to ensure that devotees are not offended when Muslim and Hindu festivals fall on the same dates
- ✓ A major chunk of the temple town Ayodhya and its population falls within the “panchkosi parikrama” area.

NATIONAL

- **The Government – released an assessment report on the status of forest and tree covers on December 30.**
- ✓ Union environment minister Prakash Javadekar released the 2019 edition of India State of Forest Report
- ✓ The ISFR is a biennial exercise, which assesses the forest and tree cover, bamboo resources, carbon stock and forest fires in the country.
- ✓ India's green cover increased by 5,188 sqkm (0.6%) in the past two years
- ✓ It is equivalent to an area the size of Goa and Delhi put together
- ✓ The increase consists of rise in forest cover by 3,976 sqkm and tree cover by 1,212 sqkm
- ✓ The country's total green cover now stands at 8,07,276 sqkm, which is 24.56% of its geographical area.



- ✓ Without accounting for tree cover (95,027 sqkm), the total forest cover of the country stands at 7,12,249 sqkm which is 21.67% of the geographical area.
 - ✓ The tree cover includes trees in all formations including scattered trees on roadside or elsewhere of area less than 1 hectare and occurring outside the Recorded Forest Area (RFA)
 - ✓ The forest cover alone has recorded an increase of nearly 0.6% this year compared to 2017
 - ✓ But, the two worrying aspects of the country's greening programme were a decrease of 330 sqkm of forest in 'Recorded Forest Area' (RFA) and continued loss of forests in north-eastern states of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Mizoram, except Assam
 - ✓ The RFA refers all such lands which have been notified as 'Forest' under any government act or rules or recorded as 'Forest' in the government records.
 - ✓ The country, however, recorded 4,306 sqkm of forest cover outside the RFA, including social forestry, putting the total increase of forest cover at 3,976 sqkm.
 - ✓ The top three States showing an increase in forest cover are Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala.
- **Chinese telecom equipment provider Huawei - has been allowed to participate in the 5G trials scheduled in the early part of next year**
- ✓ Huawei will now join other global equipment makers such as Sweden's Ericsson, Finland's Nokia, US's Cisco and South Korea's Samsung in rolling out 5G technology in India
 - ✓ Huawei has been banned in the United States for spying related issues.
 - ✓ 5G technology, the country's next-gen telecom ecosystem, will have an eventual launch around the end of 2021.
 - ✓ The trials for 5G will begin in the first quarter of 2020
 - ✓ The spectrum auctions for the technology are expected around the end of the year.
 - ✓ The 5G services will provide high-speed internet and connectivity.
 - ✓ It will deliver data in 1 millisecond that takes about 70 milliseconds in 4G services
- **All the 58,600 coaches in mail and express trains in the country - will have CCTV cameras installed by March 2022 to monitor criminals and miscreants**
- ✓ This was announced by Railway board chairman V K Yadav on December 30

- ✓ The national transporter will also use artificial intelligence and face recognition software so that analytics can be used to recognise faces of criminals and arrest them.
- ✓ The CCTV coverage process at all 6,100 stations in the entire country is expected to conclude by March 2022
- **India - is revamping its tourism strategy with respect to Chinese tourists**
 - ✓ The country has initiated efforts to target a chunk of the 50 lakh Chinese tourists who travel globally every year.
 - ✓ It plans to open a full-fledged Regional Tourist Office headed by a Top bureaucrat in China
 - ✓ At present, India receives only around 3.5 lakh of the 50 lakh Chinese tourists
 - ✓ Among the measures adopted by the government, the tourism ministry has installed sign boards in Mandarin across key tourist sites, including the Buddhist Circuit, which Chinese tourists frequently visit.
 - ✓ While Chinese are top priority, the ministry is also planning to put up signages in Sinhala, Japanese and Korean at places like Sarnath in Uttar Pradesh and Bodh Gaya in Bihar, which are frequented by large numbers of tourists from Sri Lanka, Japan and South Korea.
 - ✓ The Airports Authority of India is in the process of seeking environmental clearance from the Ministry of Environment, forest and climate change for three first-of-their-kind 'Water aerodromes' in Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
 - ✓ These water aerodromes are planned to come up in Long Island, Swaraj Island and Shaheed Island and are part of the 10 water aerodromes that the Centre plans to develop.
 - ✓ Under the new arrangement, foreigners are now able to apply directly to the Indian Mountaineering Foundation for permits.
 - ✓ India has recently opened up a around 137 Himalayan peaks, including the Kanchenjunga, to mountaineering expeditions and trekking, making it easier for foreigners to scale the peaks.
 - ✓ Reduction in e-visa fee, opening of Himalayan peaks for adventure tourists, besides setting up signages in foreign languages at ASI protected monuments are some of the initiatives taken by the tourism ministry to boost tourism
 - ✓ With these initiatives, the ministry aims to move closer to its target of attracting 20 million global tourists into India by 2020.
- **The Centre - declared the entire state of Nagaland "disturbed area" for six more months until June 30, 2020, under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act. (AFSPA)**
 - ✓ The move follows the opinion of the Centre that the area comprising the whole state of Nagaland is "in such a disturbed and dangerous condition that the use of armed forces in aid of civil power is necessary"

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

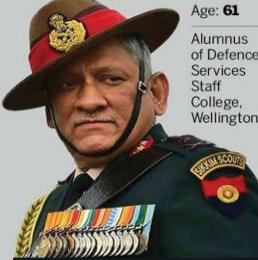
- Bengaluru - is all set to host the 107th edition of the Indian Science Congress from January 3 to 7.



- ✓ The city hosts the annual convention for the ninth time.
- ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate it at the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Bengaluru
- ✓ Theme 2019 - 'Science and technology: rural development'
- ✓ For the first time, a Farmer's Science Congress will be part of the event, providing a platform to innovative farmers.
- ✓ The convention will see the participation of over 15,000 delegates, including 8,000 students from across the country and 74 scientists from abroad.
- ✓ The 106th edition of Indian Science Congress was held in Punjab from January 3-7, 2019
- ✓ Lovely Professional University became the first private university in India to host the Prime Minister, who inaugurated the event.
- ✓ The theme of the event was "Future India : Science & Technology"

DEFENCE

- The government - announced that General Bipin Rawat, who turns 62 in March, will take over as the country's first-ever Chief of Defence Staff or tri-service chief
- ✓ Gen Rawat completes his three-year-tenure as Army chief on December 31

<p>RESPONSIBILITIES AS CDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To provide single-point military advise to govt ■ Better manage country's strategic resources & nuclear arsenal ■ Bring synergy among Army, Navy & IAF by resolving inter-service doctrinal, planning, procurement & operational problems ■ Streamline long-term defence planning & procurement process ■ Truly integrate Service HQs with defence ministry & reduce civil-military divide 	<p>Age: 61</p> <p>Alumnus of Defence Services Staff College, Wellington</p>  <p>GEN. BIPIN RAWAT INDIA'S FIRST CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF</p> <p> Holds vast experience in high altitude warfare and counter insurgency operations</p>
<p>THE HISTORY</p> <p>The post was strongly recommended by GoM report after the 1999 Kargil conflict</p>	<p>JOURNEY</p> <p>Dec 16, 1978: Commissioned into the 5th battalion of 11 Gorkha Rifles</p> <p>Sept 1-Dec 31, 2016: Served as 37th Vice Chief of the Army Staff</p>
<p>GLOBAL SCENARIO</p> <p>Over 70 countries (the US, UK, France, Germany etc) have CDS-like post for integration in military planning & operations</p>	<p>Dec 31, 2016: Assumed the post of 27th Chief of the Army Staff</p> <p>Sept 27, 2019: Took over as 32nd Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee</p>

- ✓ As per the latest amended military rules, a CDS can serve till the age of 65, while the three Service chiefs will continue to have tenure till 62 or for three years, whichever is earlier.
 - ✓ Gen Rawat will be the country's fifth four-star general after the Army, Navy, IAF chiefs and Director of Intelligence Bureau
 - ✓ As the CDS, he will strive to push the three Services to integrate in planning, procurements, logistics, doctrines and training
 - ✓ Gen Rawat will act as the permanent Chairman of the chiefs of staff committee and head of the new Department of military affairs (DMA) in the defence ministry
 - ✓ He will act as the military advisor to the Government of India.
 - ✓ Gen Rawat, who was appointed Army chief in December 2016, will also work towards establishing tri-Service commands to handle the critical new warfare domains of Space and Cyberspace as well as Theatre commands.
 - ✓ The charter for the CDS was approved by the Union Cabinet on December 24
 - ✓ The other countries that hold Chief of Defence Staff in the world includes Italy, France, China, Spain, UK, Canada and Japan.
 - ✓ However, officially the suggestion for such a post in India came in after Kargil war in 1999.
- **Lt Gen Manoj Mukund Naravane – to take charge as the 28th chief of Army staff succeeding General Bipin Rawat on December 31**



- ✓ Lt Gen Naravane is currently serving as vice-chief of the Army
- ✓ Before taking charge as vice-chief of the Army staff in September 2019, Lt Gen Naravane was heading the Eastern Command of the Army which takes care of India's nearly 4,000-km border with China.
- ✓ In his 37 years of service, Lt Gen Naravane has served in several command and staff appointments in peace, field and highly active counter-insurgency environments in Jammu and Kashmir and in the Northeast regions
- ✓ He has commanded a Rashtriya Rifles battalion in Jammu & Kashmir and an infantry brigade on the eastern front

APPOINTMENTS

- **Umesh Sinha, Deputy Election Commissioner in the Election Commission of India - given a one-year extension by the Appointments Committee**
- ✓ Sinha was set to retire on December 31, and was given an extension on December 30.



- ✓ The Cabinet Committee approved the extension of Mr. Sinha, a 1986 batch IAS officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre, on contract basis from January 1, 2020 till December 31, 2020
- ✓ Earlier, Mr. Sinha has served as Chief Election Commissioner, Uttar Pradesh.

SPORTS

- **The government – has announced to formally bid for both Commonwealth Games and Youth Olympics in 2026, and Commonwealth Games and Asian Games in 2030**
- ✓ It has also decided to bid for the 2032 Summer Olympics
- ✓ The Indian Olympic Association has decided to withdraw its threat to boycott the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham over the expulsion of 'shooting' from the scheduled games.
- ✓ India had earlier hosted the 2010 edition in New Delhi.
- **India skipper Virat Kohli and pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah - were named in Wisden's T20 International Team of the decade**



- ✓ The duo were the only Indian players who figure in the Wisden's squad
- ✓ Australia's limited overs captain Aaron Finch was named captain of the team
- ✓ Kohli, who ranks third in the list of leading run-scorers of all time with 21,444 runs, was also included in Wisden's Test and ODI teams of the decade
- ✓ He was also named in Wisden's list of 5 cricketers of the decade which also features Steve Smith, Dale Steyn, A.B. de Villiers and Ellyse Perry.
- ✓ **Wisden's T20I team of the decade**
- ✓ Aaron Finch (c), Colin Munro, Virat Kohli, Shane Watson, Glenn Maxwell, Jos Buttler, Mohammad Nabi, David Willey, Rashid Khan, Jasprit Bumrah, Lasith Malinga.

- **Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal - launched the torch relay of the Khelo India Games in Guwahati on December 29.**
- ✓ The opening ceremony of the third Khelo India Youth Games will take place at the Indira Gandhi Stadium in Guwahati on 10 January 2020.



- ✓ The tournament is scheduled to be held between 10th January 2020 to 22nd January 2020.

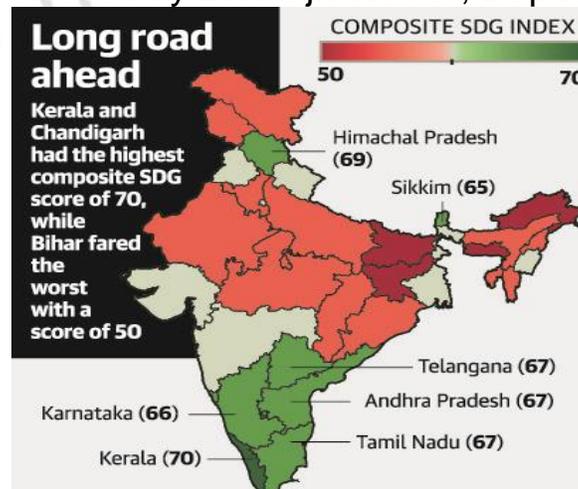
- **Renowed footballer Cristiano Ronaldo – was named as the best men’s soccer player at the Globe Soccer Awards in Dubai**



- ✓ The 34-year-old, considered as one of the best footballers of his generation, got his fourth successive prize at the awards
- ✓ He was instrumental in his club Juventus claiming the 2018-19 Serie A title in his first season in Italy while also playing a key role in Portugal winning the Nations League.
- ✓ England international Lucy Bronze was awarded the best women’s player of the year, while Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp was named the best manager.
- ✓ This year, Ronaldo could not win the Ballon d’Or, finishing behind Lionel Messi who bagged it for the record sixth time and Liverpool’s Dutch defender Virgil van Dijk.

RANKINGS

- **India - improved its overall score by 3 points over last year from 57 to 60 as per the Sustainable Development Goals India Index 2019, released by NITI Aayog**
- ✓ The rankings are based on progress made by States and Union territories so far towards achieving the 2030 SDG targets.
- ✓ India achieved an overall score of 60 points, driven mostly by progress in clean energy and sanitation (88); peace, justice and strong institutions (72); and affordable and clean energy (70).
- ✓ The rankings were released by Dr. Rajiv Kumar, Deputy Chairman, NITI Aayog



- ✓ Kerala claimed the top slot like last year among states improving from its earlier score of 69 to touch 70 this year.
- ✓ The state shares the “front runners” category with 7 other states and 2 Union territories Chandigarh and Puducherry.
- ✓ It is followed by Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana

- ✓ Tamil Nadu scored 66 in 2018
- ✓ On the other hand, UP, Sikkim and Odisha were among maximum improved states.
- ✓ The score of UP improved from 29 in 2018 to 23 in 2019.
- ✓ Also, the rank of Odisha improved from 23 in 2018 to 15 in 2019.
- ✓ Bihar was ranked at the bottom of the list of “27 performer states” with a score of 50, but still it moved out of the red zone of “aspirants” last year
- ✓ Among Union territories, Chandigarh picked up the top slot like last year with a score of 70 which was an improvement of last year’s 68.
- ✓ Puducherry is on the second position while Dadra and Nagar Haveli ranked third in the index.
- ✓ Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh are ranked at the bottom of the index

Holding steady

Tamil Nadu's performance in the SDG India Index 2019

Rank 2019	Score 2019	Rank 2018	Score 2018
3	67	3	66

GOALS IN WHICH T.N. SAW AN IMPROVEMENT

Goal	Score in 2019	Score in 2018
Clean water and sanitation	90	66
Life on land	91	74
Peace, justice and strong institutions	78	61
Gender equality	40	38
Affordable and clean energy	90	89
Decent work and economic growth	74	71
Industry, innovation and infrastructure	53	46
Sustainable cities and communities	51	33

GOALS IN WHICH T.N. SAW A DROP

Goal	Score in 2019	Score in 2018
Zero hunger	48	61
Reduced inequalities	65	85
Quality education	70	75
No poverty	72	76
Good health and well-being	76	77

- ✓ In the 2nd edition of SDG India Index that deals with the progress across 16 SDGs, India has been now placed in the “performers” category which has a score range of 50 to 64

Top-10 SDG Index States of India

Rank	State	Score
1	Kerala	70
2	Himachal Pradesh	69
3	Andhra Pradesh	67
4	Tamil Nadu	67
5	Telangana	67

6	Karnataka	66
7	Goa	65
8	Sikkim	65
9	Gujarat	64
10	Maharashtra	64

- ✓ This year, no state could get close enough to the “achiever” tag with a full score of 100
- ✓ Also, this year no state falls in the lowest category of “aspirants” with a score range of 0-49 score
- ✓ Last year besides Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Assam figured in the last category of ‘aspirants’.
- ✓ Only three states — Himachal Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu were placed in the category of front runners in 2018.
- ✓ In 2019, 5 more states joined this league — Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Sikkim and Goa
- ✓ The states with scores between 0 and 49 were categorized ‘Aspirant’, between 50 and 64 were ‘Performers’, between 65 and 99 were ‘Front Runner’ and with a score of 100 were categorized ‘Achiever’.
- ✓ All states have been given scores range between 50 and 70 for their performances.
- ✓ The report attributes the improvement in performance of states to essentially five goals — clean water and sanitation (goal 6), affordable and clean energy (goal 7), industry, innovation and infrastructure (goal 9), life on land (goal 14) and peace, justice and strong institutions (goal 15).
- ✓ With respect to these goals, India has scored between 65-99 bringing it into the reckoning of front runners
- ✓ The SDG Rankings are based on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, and intended to be achieved by 2030
- ✓ The rankings are based on the assessment of progress of States and UTs on 100 indicators drawn from the National Indicator Framework prepared by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme implementation.
- ✓ Last year 13 goals were assessed using 52 indicators.
- ✓ The United Nations has developed 232 indicators to measure compliance by member nations.

