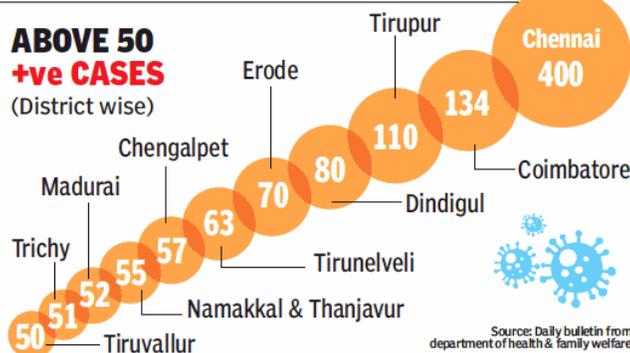
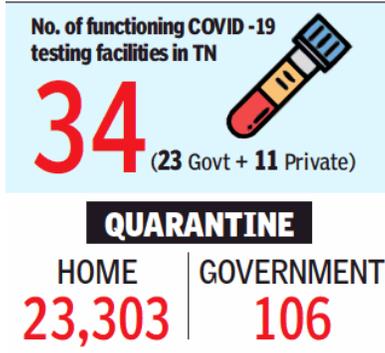
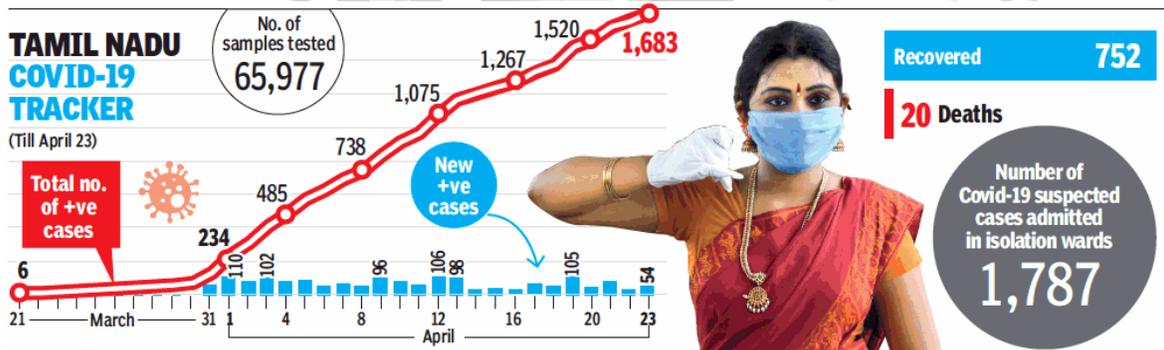


EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – APR 24, 2020

TAMIL NADU

- Tamil Nadu – recorded 54 positive cases, taking the total number of infected persons in the state to 1,683, as on April 23
- ✓ A 70-year-old man at the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital and a 56-year-old woman at the Apollo Hospitals in Vanagaram died on the day due to the viral infection, taking the toll to 20.



- ✓ Out of 54 persons tested positive for the disease, Chennai accounted for half the cases.
- ✓ Among the 54 cases, there were more staff nurses from Ramanathapuram and Namakkal and two hospital workers from a Chennai hospital.
- ✓ As per the health officials, 27 of them were primary sources, who had a travel history and an equal number had contracted the infection from close contacts.

- ✓ They included two participants of the Tablighi Jamaat conference and 15 others who were close contacts of people who had tested positive.
 - ✓ Two gynaecologists, one a senior citizen, from a private hospital in RA Puram, who tested positive for the viral infection, were admitted to the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital along with a staff nurse.
 - ✓ At a hospital in Mogappair, a new mother who tested positive after C-section, has been moved to the Kilpauk Medical College Hospital.
 - ✓ On the day, Chennai had recorded 27 of the cases, while Salem recorded five cases, Namakkal had four, Dindugul and Virudunagar had three each, and Madurai had two cases.
 - ✓ Ten other districts recorded one case each
 - ✓ Dharmapuri district, which had no COVID-19 cases so far, recorded its first.
 - ✓ Chennai continued to witness a spike in COVID-19 cases, with its count increasing to 400, as on date.
 - ✓ Meanwhile, 90 patients were discharged, taking the number of people to 752.
 - ✓ There were 908 people undergoing treatment at various hospitals across the state.
 - ✓ The state tested 6,880 people in the last 24 hours and 59,952 so far
 - ✓ Medall healthcare, a diagnostic lab in Chennai, was approved for testing on April 23.
 - ✓ With this, there are a total of 34 testing facilities — 23 in the government sector and 11 in the private sector.
 - ✓ A total of 1,787 persons were in isolation facilities, 23,303 persons were under active home quarantine and 108 in government quarantine facilities.
 - ✓ Till date, 87,159 persons have completed their 28-day home quarantine in the State.
- **On April 23, the state government - issued an order relaxing certain activities, including work under MGNREGA and construction activities in rural areas, in coronavirus non-containment zones across the state.**
- ✓ It has also permitted state and central government offices to function for maintaining essential services, with attendance not exceeding 33% of the total staff strength

33% STAFF ALLOWED IN GOVT OFFICES

➤ MGNREGA work related to irrigation and water conservation in rural areas

➤ Masks for workers and strict social distancing guidelines

➤ Ongoing work on dam safety, buildings, including construction and



maintenance of medical colleges and hospitals, roads and bridges, water supply and sanitation, brick kilns, hardware and electricity related work

➤ Construction work in villages related to irrigation and desilting of tanks and channels

- ✓ The State government has issued an order identifying 10 industries as 'continuous process industries', and allowed exemptions from restrictions.
 - ✓ Continuous process industries are those where either the production is continuous or the flow of processed materials, undergoing chemical reactions or subject to mechanical or heat treatment, is continuous
 - ✓ The industries includes refineries, large steel plants (including TMT bar manufacturers), cement plants, chemical industries, including paint, sugar mills, fertilizers, float glass plants, large foundries, and tyre manufacturing plants and paper mills.
- ✓ The state government has also exempted bed-side attendants and caregivers of senior citizens from lockdown restriction
- ✓ It has also relaxed restrictions to e-commerce companies of food processing units such as bread making units, milk processing plants, flour mills, dal mills located in urban areas, facilities for export/import such as packing houses, inspection and treatment facilities for seeds and horticulture produce, and research establishments dealing with agriculture and horticulture activities.
- ✓ The Government Order was issued soon after chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami held an interactive session via videoconference with industrialists on Covid-19 preventive measures and permitting industries to open in a phased manner.
- **On April 23, Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - launched the 'Arogyam' scheme to boost immunity against infections**
- ✓ After the launch, the Chief Minister has distributed nilavembu kudineer and kabasura kudineer chooranam (herbal concoction powder) to the public.



- ✓ The state government has also planned to distribute kabasura kudineer powder to one lakh families living in containment zones in Chennai.
- ✓ The government release came with an advisory that it will not be considered as a treatment for Covid-19.

- **The state health department - has asked Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) not to permit advertisements of smokeless tobacco products at M A Chidambaram cricket stadium at Chepauk.**
- ✓ It also asked the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) not to allow tobacco companies to use its facilities to advertise their products.
- ✓ The display of tobacco products has been banned since May 2004 as per section 5 of Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act.
- **The state government - had decided to allow resumption of the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Act scheme on April 23.**
- ✓ The world's largest employment scheme provides self-sustainment for around 82.67 lakh workers, including 62.64 lakh women.
- ✓ After a gap of 30 days, the Government has allowed the scheme to resume from April 24, along with certain riders.
- ✓ The workers have to follow the safety restrictions by wearing the masks and not more than one-third of the required number of workers shall be mobilized
- ✓ Strict physical distancing guidelines should also be followed.

THE PLAN



- ▶ Total registered workers for the scheme | 1.23cr
- ▶ Active workers | 82.67L
- ▶ Wage revised from ₹229 to ₹256 a day
- ▶ 56 types of works permitted during lockdown: Includes work related to groundwater recharge, soil and water conservation, agriculture, natural resource management, drains

- ✓ Around 56 types of agriculture and allied work were allowed to be taken up, as per the revised guidelines
- ✓ The work should not be taken up in the Covid-19 containment zones and red blocks.
- ✓ Thus, the work would be allowed in 187 of the 388 blocks in 37 districts (excluding Chennai).
- ✓ Following the enhancement of the wage by the Government from ₹229 to ₹256 per day, the MGNREGA scheme was much sought-after among the rural households during these troubled times

- **Greater Chennai Corporation – has decided to provide free food at all the 407 Amma canteens in the city till May 3, the day lockdown 2.0 is scheduled to end.**



- ✓ This has been made possible by using the donations provided by various people and organisations.
- ✓ The corporation had earlier announced that it will accept donations from people or companies under corporate social responsibility.
- ✓ The canteens provide idlis at ₹1, variety rice at ₹3, Pongal with sambar at ₹5 and chapati dal at ₹3.
- ✓ Every day, around 4.5 lakh people were fed by the canteens in Chennai.
- ✓ Before the lockdown, average sales would be around Rs 6 lakh a day, which has now also doubled.

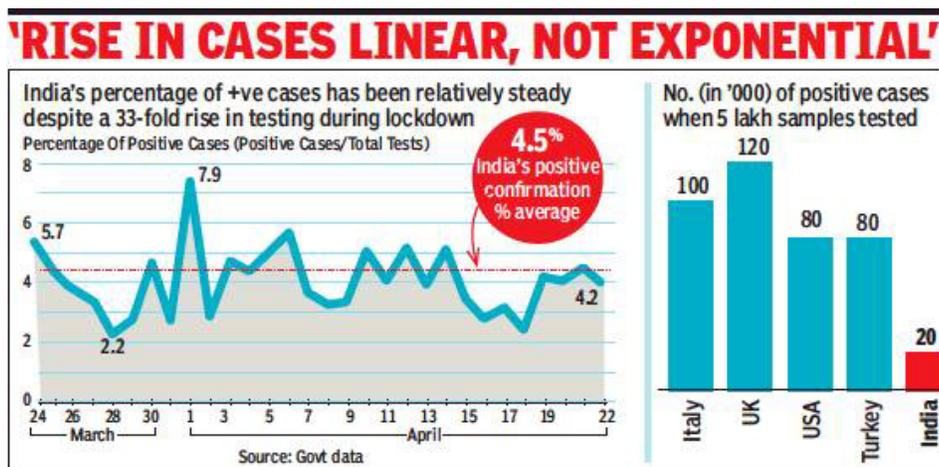
NATIONAL

- **On April 23, the number of coronavirus cases in India - has jumped from 21,358 reported a day before to 23,113, an 8.2% rise as per latest reports from states.**
- ✓ In Maharashtra, 778 people were tested positive during the past 24 hours, taking the national count of new cases to 1,755, the highest single-day surge so far.

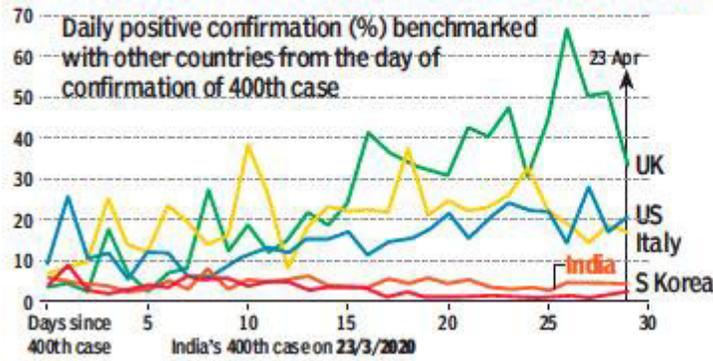
47% OF NEW CASES FROM MAHA

Name of state/UT	Cases on April 23	Total cases	Recovered	Deaths
Maharashtra	778	6,427	164	283
Gujarat	217	2,624	258	112
Delhi	128	2,376	808	50
Rajasthan	76	1,964	451	28
Madhya Pradesh	101	1,688	196	83
Tamil Nadu	54	1,683	752	20
Uttar Pradesh	62	1,527	206	26
Telangana	27	970	262	25
Rest of India	216	3,758	954	98
Total	1,659	23,017	4,051	725

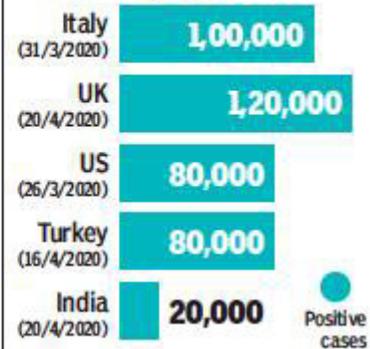
- ✓ The massive surge in Maharashtra was the highest reported by a state in a day, beating its own previous record of 552
 - ✓ Mumbai, the capital of the State too recorded its biggest rise in cases at 522.
 - ✓ On the day, both Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh too reported high numbers with 217 and 184 new cases
 - ✓ Madhya Pradesh recorded the surge in infections after a relative lull in the past few days
 - ✓ Delhi also showed an increase after several days of low numbers, with 128 more people testing positive in the last 24 hours across the city and two more deaths.
 - ✓ The number of deaths due to coronavirus has been gradually rising.
 - ✓ On April 23, 43 deaths were reported from across the country, a majority of these from Maharashtra (14), Gujarat (9), Madhya Pradesh (5) and Uttar Pradesh (4).
 - ✓ Exactly a month after the lockdown, Maharashtra's total case tally stood at 6,427 and deaths at 283, as on April 23
 - ✓ The majority of positive cases came from Mumbai, which crossed the 4,000-mark to record 4,206 cases.
 - ✓ Madhya Pradesh reported not just 184 fresh cases but also five more deaths from the virus.
 - ✓ Andhra Pradesh registered its highest single day increase in cases with 80 people testing positive for the virus, and three deaths.
 - ✓ Bihar too saw a surge in the infection, with 29 new cases in the state, taking the total number to 170.
 - ✓ On the healthier side, there have been over 4,324 recoveries, taking the recovery rate to 19.89 % across the country
 - ✓ As on April 23, there are 12 districts that did not have a fresh case in the last 28 days
 - ✓ Also, 78 districts from 23 States/Union Territories have not reported any fresh cases during the last 14 days.
- **On April 23, the government – said that India's coronavirus positivity average is 4.5%, even after increasing the testing rate by 33 times in the last 30 days**



CONFIRMATION RATE OF MANY COUNTRIES INCREASED IN THE MONTH AFTER 400TH CASE



India tested half a million samples by April 22



- ✓ On March 23, 14,915 samples had been tested and the number crossed 5 lakhs, as of now.
- ✓ The charts were shared by the empowered committee on testing and health infrastructure for Covid-19, headed by environment secretary C K Mishra on April 22
- ✓ As per the chart, though the number of Covid-19 patients in India is rising, the graph is linear and not exponential and could indicate a flattening of the curve
- ✓ As of now, on an average more than 35,000 tests are conducted daily
- **On April 23, the finance ministry - announced an 18-month freeze on additional installments of Dearness Allowance for central government employees and dearness relief for pensioners**

SPEND CUT BY ₹15K Cr

- Freeze on additional DA instalments will help govt immediately cut spending by over ₹15,000cr, freeing up funds to battle pandemic
- Centre hopes to save ₹37,530cr during current & next fiscal; states could gain by over ₹82k cr if they follow
- DA & dearness relief fixed at 17% of basic pay, won't be affected by the order

- ✓ With the announcement, the Centre is proposing to save ₹37,530 crore during the current and next financial years and states are also expected to gain by over ₹82,000 crore, if they also follow the move
- ✓ The Centre has also announced the rollback of last month's cabinet decision of a 4% increase in the dearness allowance for 48 lakh employees and the dearness relief for 65 lakh pensioners.

- ✓ It included paying arrears for three months, since the decision was effective January 1.
 - ✓ Following the announcement, two future instalments have been put on hold and no arrear will be paid for this period.
 - ✓ The dearness allowance and the dearness relief is part of the government's policy to offset the impact of inflation on salaries and pension.
 - ✓ The payment is made twice a year, in January and July
 - ✓ It is calculated as per the formula prescribed by the 7th Pay Commission.
 - ✓ The DA is typically linked to retail inflation and was increased by around 4% in recent months
 - ✓ Currently, DA and dearness relief are fixed at 17% of the basic pay or pension, which will not be impacted by the government order.
 - ✓ In general, around 8.5% of the Union Budget is used as salaries to the central government employees.
- **The Union Government - has reconstituted the National Shipping Board (NSB), which will now be headed by former Director General of Shipping, Malini Shankar**
- ✓ The NSB is the highest advisory body on matters related to Indian shipping along with its development plans.



- ✓ The 16-member National Shipping Board has also been reconstituted.
- ✓ The National Shipping Board advises the Government on all matters arising out of the Merchant Shipping Act
- ✓ The members of the NSB include –
 - ✓ DG Shipping, Joint Secretary in Ministry of Shipping,
 - ✓ One representative each from Indian Coast Guard and Indian Navy not below the rank of Directors and
 - ✓ One representative each from the National Union of Seafarers of India, Maritime Union of India and National Ship Owners' Association.

INTERNATIONAL

- **Lebanon - has become the first Arab nation to legalise the cultivation of Marijuana**

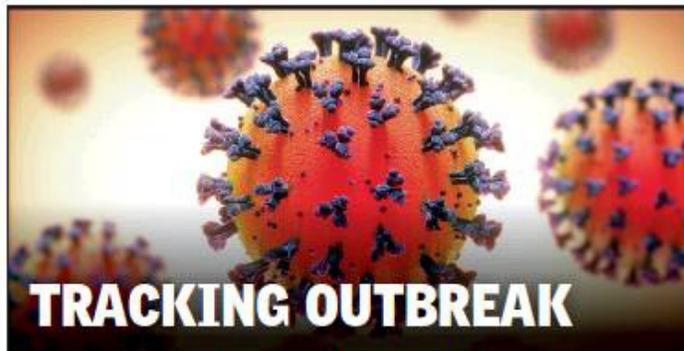


- ✓ The Lebanese parliament passed the order on April 23 to boost the country's export of marijuana.
 - ✓ The country has legalised marijuana cultivation for industrial and medical purposes to deal with its economic crisis.
 - ✓ As per the United Nations, Lebanon is the third-largest exporter of cannabis resin in the world, after Morocco and Afghanistan.
 - ✓ Though illegal, the cannabis plant was widely grown in the fertile Bekaa Valley in Lebanon.
 - ✓ The new law will legalise and regulate all the existing marijuana cultivation efforts and avoid any unlawful production of the plant.
 - ✓ However, the recreational production and use of the plant will still continue to remain illegal.
 - ✓ Apart from Lebanon there are two other regions in the world, where the cannabis plant is used in opium production – namely the Golden Triangle and the Golden Crescent.
 - ✓ The Golden Crescent includes three countries namely Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan, which together form the shape of a crescent in the map.
 - ✓ Afghanistan was the largest opium producer in 1990s and still stays as one of the largest producers of Opium in the entire world
 - ✓ The Golden Triangle includes Thailand, Myanmar and Laos, where the regions meet at the confluence of Ruak and Mekong river forming a golden triangle.
-
- **Two cats – were tested positive for coronavirus in New York recently, thus becoming the first confirmed cases of pets getting infected by the virus in the US.**

- ✓ The cats were detected with symptoms of mild respiratory illnesses and are expected to recover.



- ✓ The two cats live in different parts of New York
- ✓ While one cat's owner tested positive for the coronavirus before the cat showed symptoms, the other cat's household members were tested negative for the virus.
- ✓ It has to be recalled that, a tiger tested positive for coronavirus in New York's Bronx Zoo a few weeks before
 - ✓ The Malayan tiger named 'Nadia' got infected from the caretaker who was asymptomatic.
 - ✓ The tiger was the first confirmed coronavirus case among animals in the United States.
 - ✓ Following this, three other tigers and three lions were also tested positive at the same zoo.



Countries	Infected	Death	
United States	854,490	47,178	185 countries/ regions hit
Spain	213,024	22,157	
Italy	189,973	25,549	2,678,585+ infected globally
France	157,135	21,373	
Germany	151,285	5,367	186,640+ have died
United Kingdom	139,245	18,791	
Turkey	101,790	2,491	730,766+ have recovered
Iran	87,026	5,481	
China	83,878	4,636	
Russia	62,773	555	

Source: Johns Hopkins University

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **Three premier institutes, AIIMS Delhi, AIIMS Bhopal and PGIMER Chandigarh — were permitted to give a commercial drug used to treat sepsis on severe Covid-19 patients.**
- ✓ Overall, 50 coronavirus positive patients in ICUs at the three centres will be given a tiny dose of Sepsivac — 0.3 ml — in the form of an intra-dermal injection
- ✓ The drug aims to reduce mortality in critically-ill Covid-19 patients and promote faster recovery.
- ✓ These three institutions were selected for clinical trials of the drug by the Directorate general of health services and Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation.
- ✓ Sepsivac is used as a major drug to treat gram-negative sepsis, thereby reducing mortality rate by 50%.
- ✓ Sepsis is a life threatening blood infection
- ✓ The drug was developed jointly under a 2007 public private partnership between Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Ahmedabad-based pharmaceutical firm Cadilla Pharmaceuticals Ltd.
- ✓ As per CSIR, the clinical trial and study would continue for six months
- ✓ In a related move, the Indian subsidiary of a South Korean company, Biosensor, has started production of Covid-19 rapid antibody testing kits in its plant in Manesar (Haryana)
 - ✓ The plant, with a capacity of 5 lakh kits per week, has already rolled out its first batch of kits on April 19.
- ✓ Meanwhile, India is planning to source six high-speed testing machines from the US
 - ✓ These machines can conduct between 6,000-8,000 tests for coronavirus simultaneously.
 - ✓ The Government will be sourcing six 'SUV-sized' high speed testing machines, which are in high demand, from Roche in USA

DEFENCE

- **On April 23, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh - inaugurated through videoconference a mobile virology research and diagnostics laboratory (MVRDL).**
- ✓ It has been developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), together with ESIC Hospital, Hyderabad, and the private industry.
- ✓ The mobile lab will carry out diagnosis of COVID-19 and engage in several treatment/therapy methodologies, drug screening activities, vaccine development and clinical trials, as per the needs of Indian population
- ✓ The MVRDL follows two bio-safety levels, BSL-3 and BSL-2 and was set up in a record time of 15 days.

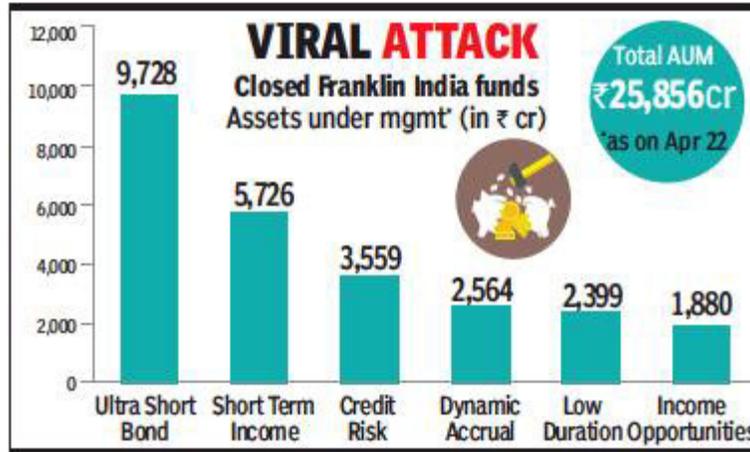


- ✓ It can process 1,000-2,000 samples a day
- ✓ The laboratories comply with the bio-safety standards of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) as per the international guidelines.
- ✓ The first such MVRDL was developed by the Research Centre Imarat (RCI), Hyderabad, in consultation with ESIC Hospital.
- ✓ The main advantage of the MVRDL was that it can be positioned anywhere in the country
- ✓ There are 4 Bio-Safety Levels (BSL) followed as per the Indian Standards, in compliance with the WHO guidelines.
- ✓ They are BSL-1, BSL-2, BSL-3 and BSL-4.
 - ✓ The BSL-1 laboratories are used to study infectious agents, toxins and they don't require special equipment or design features.
 - ✓ The BSL-2 laboratories study moderately infectious agents and they are required to include hand washing sinks, eye washing stations, automatic-closing doors and lock in case of accidents
 - ✓ The BSL-3 laboratories should have a controlled and directional air flow along with the required equipment to decontaminate laboratory wastes
 - ✓ The BSL-4 laboratories handle high risks of aerosol transmitted infections, which examine life threatening infections for which no vaccines are available.
 - ✓ These labs require significant training to access them.

ECONOMY

- **Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund, one of the top fund houses in India - has decided to close down six of its debt funds with effect from April 24**
- ✓ This is the first time such an incident has happened in India
- ✓ These debt funds currently manage nearly ₹25,900 crore together.
- ✓ The six funds to be closed are Low Duration Fund, Dynamic Accrual Fund, Credit Risk Fund, Short-Term Income Plan, Ultra Short Bond Fund and Income Opportunities Fund.

- ✓ The move is due to liquidity troubles in the bond market following the Covid-related issues
- ✓ Subsequent to the announcement, all the systematic investment plans (SIPs), systematic withdrawal plans (SWPs), systematic transfer plans (STPs), and also all redemptions and inflows will stop.



- ✓ The assets of these six funds will be handed over to an administrator, who will take care of a staggered payment to the existing investors, till all the assets are liquidated.
- ✓ The fund house has not given any specific timeline to pay back the investors in the funds.
- ✓ As on March 31, Franklin Templeton MF was managing assets worth about ₹1.16 lakh crore in the country.
- ✓ Globally, its parent managed nearly \$700 billion — that is about ₹53.6 lakh crore as per the current exchange rates.

SPORTS

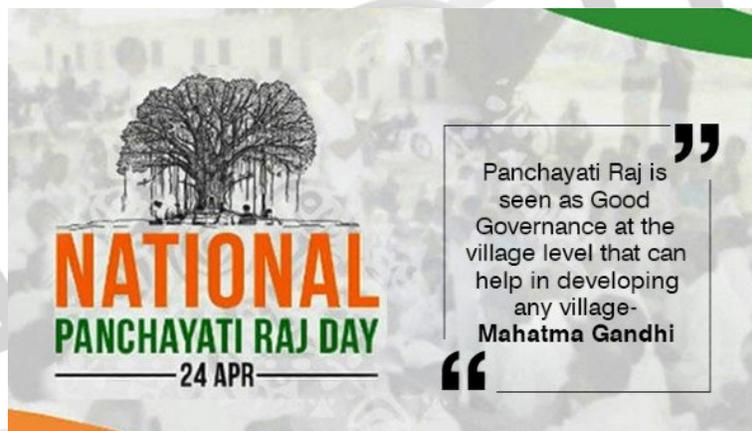
- **Indian Badminton ace, PV Sindhu – was chosen as one of the ambassadors for the 'I am badminton' awareness campaign on April 22, 2020**
- ✓ The campaign was organized by the Badminton World Federation (BWF)



- ✓ The campaign intends to provide a platform for players to express their love and respect for the game by promoting clean and honest play.
- ✓ PV Sindhu, an Olympic silver medalist hailed the decision and announced that playing 'clean and honest' game is very important for any sport
- ✓ The campaign also aims to stress that match manipulation, match-fixing, and doping are contrary to the spirit of the sport.
- ✓ Michelle Li from Canada, Jack Shepherd from England, Zeng Si Wei and Huang Ya Qiong from China, Valeska Knoblach from Germany, Chan Ho Yuen from Hongkong and Marc Zwiebler from Germany were the other ambassadors of the campaign
- ✓ P V Sindhu is the first Indian to become Badminton World Champion.
- ✓ She rose to world rank 2 in 2017.

NATIONAL DAY

➤ National Panchayati Raj Day – April 24



- ✓ The observance marks the day when the 73rd Amendment of the Indian Constitution came into effect.
- ✓ The Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992, came into effect from April 24, 1993.
- ✓ The Act gave constitutional status on Panchayati Raj institutions, marking a defining moment of decentralising political power to the grassroot level.
- ✓ The day is also called National Local Self Government Day.
- ✓ The National Panchayati Raj Day was first declared by PM Modi in 2010.
- ✓ The day is organised every year by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.

