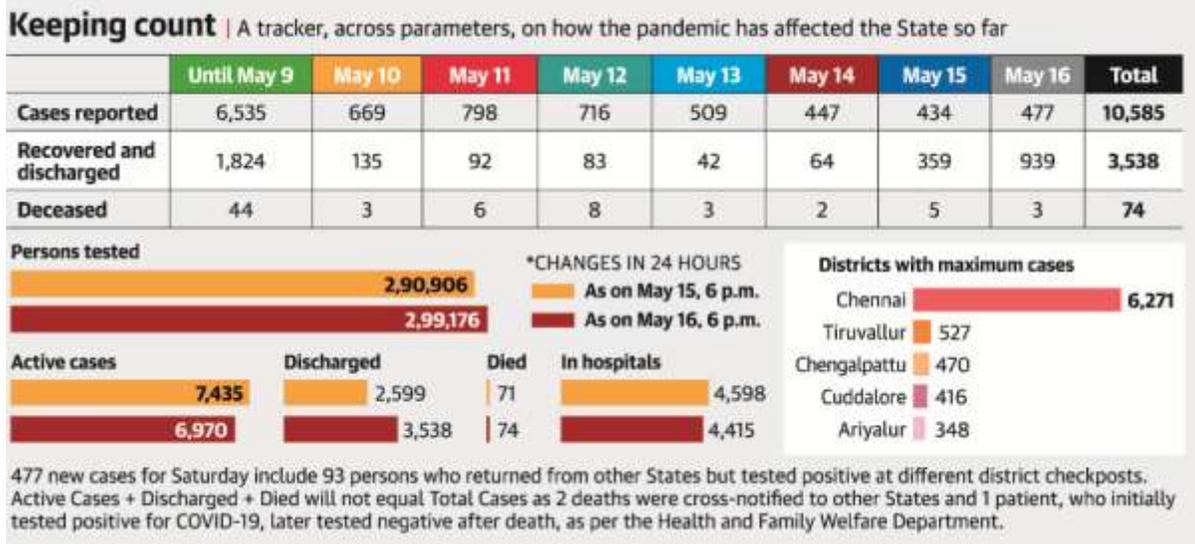




EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MAY 17, 2020

TAMIL NADU

- Tamil Nadu - reported 477 new Covid-19 cases and three Covid-19 deaths on May 16
- ✓ This takes the total number of infections in the state to 10,585 and the fatalities to 74.
- ✓ On the day, a record 939 patients were discharged from hospitals, which is the highest ever on a single day
 - ✓ With this, 3,538 persons have recovered from the viral disease in the state.
- ✓ Nearly 20% of those who tested positive on the day returned from other States and abroad
 - ✓ Four of them had returned from Dhaka, 81 from Maharashtra, seven from Gujarat and one from Andhra Pradesh
- ✓ At the end of the day, 6,970 patients were still under treatment for Covid-19.



- ✓ The reported casualties on the day includes a 65-year-old woman from Chennai admitted at a private hospital, a 55-year-old man who died at a private hospital and a 78-year-old man with comorbidities who died at the Government Medical College Hospital, Omandurar Estate
- ✓ On the day, Chennai recorded 332 new cases and crossed the 6,000-mark
- ✓ There were 13 new cases in Chengalpattu, 10 in Tiruvallur, seven in Tiruvannamalai, four in Kancheepuram, three each in Kallakurichi and Madurai, two each in Dindigul, Nagapattinam and Villupuram, and one each in Kanniyakumari, Ranipet, Tenkasi, Thoothukudi, Vellore and Virudhunagar.
- ✓ The number of people tested dropped to 8,270 from 10,883 tests a day earlier.
- ✓ The state has recorded a 40% drop since May 7 when it screened more than 14,000 people.
 - ✓ On May 6, it had screened 13,281 people.
- ✓ As on date, the recovery rate in the state was more than 33%, while the state's death rate was less than 0.7%, while the national average was 3.21%.

FIGHTING SMART

TN has 7,580 active cases with 2,599 patients having recovered. The recovery rate is 25.71% against the national rate of 34.77%

State	Total cases	Deaths	Mortality rate (in %)
West Bengal	2,461	225	9.14
Gujarat	9,932	606	6.1
Madhya Pradesh	4,674	240	5.13
Maharashtra	29,100	1,068	3.67
Karnataka	1,056	36	3.41
Tamil Nadu	10,108	71	0.7
India	85,786	2,751	3.21

Data as of May 16

- ✓ One more testing facility in the government sector — the Government District Headquarters Hospital, Tiruvallur, and two more in the private sector — Royal Care Super Specialty Hospital, Coimbatore, and Sundaram Medical Foundation, Chennai — have been approved.
 - ✓ With this, there are a total of 61 testing facilities in the State.
- ✓ The Chennai Corporation has reported a rise in COVID-19 containment zones in the city, with the number crossing 700 on May 16.
 - ✓ As a result, the Chennai Corporation has decided to start distribution of a special herbal concoction to residents of such hotspots, in addition to nilavembu kudineer and kabasura kudineer.
 - ✓ Further, the Chennai Corporation is developing better facilities in its hospitals for COVID-19 treatment, considering the summer heat
 - ✓ The civic body is also planning to spend ₹500 per patient every day for nutritious food

- **The Tamil Nadu government - has allowed industrial units located in urban areas to function with 50% of workers on shifts.**
- ✓ Earlier, 33% of workers were allowed to work in these units.
- ✓ However, the relaxation will not be applicable in areas under the jurisdiction of the Chennai City Police.
- ✓ Earlier, from May 3, the Government has permitted to run industrial units located within SEZs, EOUs, industrial estates and industrial townships — both in rural and urban areas —with 50% workers.
- ✓ The State government has also allowed export-oriented units with 50% strength in all areas across the State, excluding Chennai City Police Commissionerate jurisdiction.
- ✓ Also, the proportion of persons employed in MGNREGS in rural areas shall be increased from 33% to 50%
- ✓ On May 16, the state government announced that barbers, even if not registered with the Labour Welfare Board, would be given a cash assistance of ₹2,000, in two instalments.
 - ✓ Earlier, a cash assistance of ₹1,000 was distributed twice to 14,667 barbers, who were registered as members of the Labour Welfare Board

STATES

- **The Uttar Pradesh government - has withdrawn its earlier order increasing daily work hour shifts from the existing 8 hours to 12 hours in manufacturing units**
- ✓ The decision of the government comes a day after the Allahabad high court issued a notice to the state on a PIL which challenged the decision.
- ✓ On May 8, the UP government had ordered increase in duration of working shifts to 12 hours by diluting certain sections of the Factories Act of 1948.
- ✓ As per the order, payment will be accorded for additional hours of work “in proportion of the existing wages”
 - ✓ This clause was opposed by trade unions on grounds that any overtime should be “double” the wages paid.
- ✓ Also, the state government’s decision to increase daily work hour is in contravention of the ILO convention, to which India is a signatory
- ✓ However, there is no change in the recently enacted ‘Uttar Pradesh Temporary Exemption from Certain Labour Laws Ordinance, 2020’, which seeks to put all labour laws, except three, in the state in abeyance for three years, and increasing daily work hours to 10 hours.
- ✓ In the ordinance, UP has invoked Section 5 of the Factories Act which is called in during national emergencies or war situations.
- ✓ Here too, the state has provisioned for payment for extra hours in proportion to existing wages, instead of double wages as done by states like Punjab and Rajasthan.

- ✓ Earlier, ten states have increased working hours from 8 to 12 hours.
 - ✓ Other states which have diluted their labour laws to encourage economic activity include Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Goa, MP, Uttarakhand, Assam, Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh.
- **Kerala - has decided to source weather inputs from four private agencies in addition to the India Meteorological Department (IMD) during the coming monsoon.**
 - ✓ The Kerala State Disaster Management Authority has announced its decision to access inputs from Skymet Weather Services, Windy, IBM Weather Company and Earth Networks “on a nomination basis as a pilot” for one year
 - ✓ The government has granted permission to spend 10% of the funds from the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) for the services.
 - ✓ The IMD has only 15 automated weather stations in Kerala
 - ✓ Out of these, only five stations provide live data in the state, whose near-time data streaming is minimal to nil.
 - ✓ Due to this, the State was unable to issue localised alerts at the taluk level, which has prompted its move towards the private agencies.

NATIONAL

- **India - saw its biggest surge in Covid-19 infections, with 4,885 reported on the day, taking its overall tally to 90,674 as per the reports from state governments.**
 - ✓ The rise from 80,000 to 90,000 is so fast that it took only two days to clock 10,000 new infections in the country
 - ✓ The day’s count of 4,885 is almost 1,100 higher than the previous day’s figure.
 - ✓ On the positive side, at least 2,045 Covid patients across the country were declared cured, taking the total number of recoveries to 31,873 — 35% of the total cases so far.
 - ✓ On the day, Gujarat became the second state to report over 1,000 cases in a day — 709 of which were detected during a weeklong intensive testing of vendors and traders in Ahmedabad.
 - ✓ With this, Gujarat became India’s third state to register over 10,000 cases after Maharashtra (now at 30,706) and Tamil Nadu (10,585).
 - ✓ Gujarat, with 10,989 cases, is again at the No.2 spot in terms of coronavirus infections.
 - ✓ The virus continued its surge in Maharashtra, which saw 1,606 more infections, its second highest single-day addition so far
 - ✓ This was the 11th consecutive day the state added over 1,000 cases in a 24-hour period
 - ✓ With this, the total cases reported by the state crossed the 30,000 mark and the tally is now 30,706.

- ✓ On the day, the state reported its highest single-day death toll of 67 as against the previous high of 54 reported on May 13.
 - ✓ This has taken the toll to 1,135 across the state.
 - ✓ Mumbai continues to be the biggest contributor of new infections as well as casualties.
 - ✓ Of the 67 deaths, Mumbai reported 41, its highest single-day toll so far.
 - ✓ Madhya Pradesh reported 254 new cases on the day, taking its total tally to 4,928
 - ✓ Out of the 254 cases, Indore alone reported 92 while Bhopal accounted for 46 new cases, taking its total tally above 1,000.
 - ✓ Uttar Pradesh too reported high numbers with 203 new infections due to the return of maximum number of migrant workers into the state, taking the total cases to 4,264
 - ✓ For the fourth consecutive day, Rajasthan reported more than 200 cases.
 - ✓ Bhilwara, which was praised for its ruthless containment strategy, reported seven more cases taking its tally to 50 on the day.
 - ✓ A total of 213 people were tested positive for Covid-19 in the state on the day, taking the tally to 4,960.
 - ✓ Meanwhile, J&K recorded its highest count of 108 new positive cases in a day, with one death taking the total toll in the Union territory to 12.
- **Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman – announced the details of fourth tranche of ₹20 lakh-crore ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’ economic package on May 16, 2020, which was aimed at protecting the economy against the Covid-19 induced slide.**
- ✓ This instalment of the package focused on the structural reforms in coal, mining, defence, civil aviation, power distribution, space and atomic energy sector.
 - ✓ The FM announced a major opening up of defence production, power, space and coal and mining sectors for private participation as part of the announcements.

FDI CAP IN DEFENCE PRODN NOW 74%

<div style="background-color: #e0f2f1; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">  <p>COAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Commercial mining introduced ➤ Nearly 50 blocks to be offered immediately ➤ No eligibility conditions, upfront payment with a ceiling ➤ Infrastructure development of ₹50,000 crore ➤ MINING: 500 mining blocks to be offered through open auction process </div> <div style="background-color: #e0f2f1; padding: 5px;">  <p>DEFENCE PRODUCTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ List of weapons/platforms to be notified for </div>	<p>import ban; indigenisation of imported spares</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Corporatisation of ordnance factory board, stock market listing ➤ FDI limit in defence manufacturing raised to 74% from the present 49% <div style="background-color: #e0f2f1; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <p>CIVIL AVIATION</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Curbs on utilisation of Indian airspace to be eased to boost civil flying ➤ Benefit of ₹1,000cr per year for sector from this measure </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 6 more airports to be bid out on PPP basis in 2nd round, 6 more in 3rd round; addl investment by pvt players in 12 airports to be Rs 13,000cr <div style="background-color: #e0f2f1; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">  <p>POWER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Tariff policy reform, direct benefit transfer for subsidy, smart prepaid meters, time bound grant of open access ➤ Discoms to be penalised for load shedding ➤ Privatisation of distribution in Union Territories </div>
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- ✓ According to FM, the new measures will create a better environment for investment and enable companies to get back to business as soon as the lockdown is relaxed.

Defence

- ✓ In a major boost for the 'Make in India' initiative, the government is now issuing a list of items where imports will be banned and indigenisation of spares promoted
- ✓ At the same time, the government has decided to increase the FDI limit for defence production under the automatic route to 74%, from the current 49%.
- ✓ Earlier, 100% FDI was allowed on a case by case basis.
- ✓ India attracted a paltry ₹1,834 crore as FDI in the defence and aerospace sectors since 2014

DESI WEAPONS TO UNDERCUT EXORBITANT FOREIGN ONES

TOI, MAY 10, 2020

Negative list: Imports of certain weapons/platforms to be banned. List will be expanded every year as domestic production capacity increases

Capital Budget: Separate budget to procure indigenous weapon & platforms

FDI Limit: Will be increased from 49% to 74% under automatic route, with security clearances

Ordnance Factory Board: Will be corporatised to improve functioning of 41 ordnance factories

Forces must shun imports, go for 'Make In India', says Rawat

Maintenance & Spares: Indigenisation of expensive imported spares

Procurement Process: Time-bound, with faster decisions through a project management unit, realistic framing of technical parameters & overhauling trial procedures

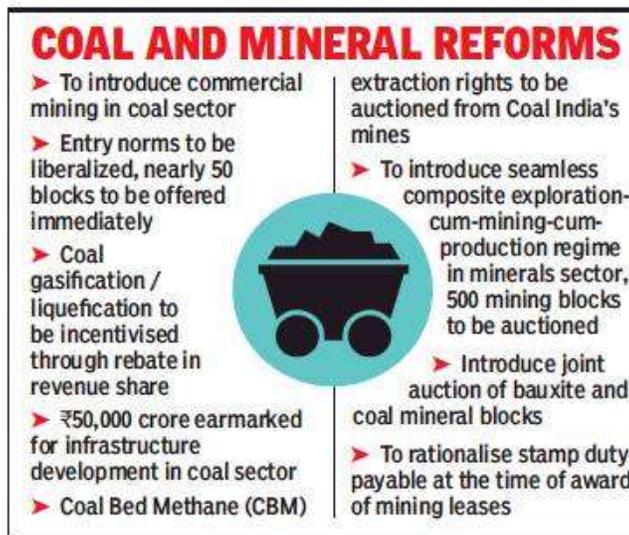
- ✓ Further, the FM said 41 factories under the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB), will also be “corporatised” but stressed this did not add up to privatisation.
- ✓ These factories, with an annual turnover of around ₹19,000 crore, are the main source of supply of arms and ammunition for the Army
- ✓ As part of privatization strategy, the ordnance factories would eventually be listed on the stock market to improve transparency, autonomy, efficiency and accountability
- ✓ The Kolkata-headquartered OFB functions as a department under the Department of Defence Production.
- ✓ Late last year, the Defence Ministry set up a high-level committee to work out the modalities of various aspects of corporatisation of the OFB.
- ✓ India, with an annual defence budget of about \$70 billion, is behind only the US (\$732 billion) and China (\$261 billion) in terms of military expenditure around the globe

Power discoms

- ✓ Along with the defence sector, the government also decided to push privatisation of power distribution companies after a gap of over a decade
- ✓ To kickstart the process, the government said discoms in Union territories will be privatized first
- ✓ Among the UTs, Jammu & Kashmir, Puducherry and Chandigarh are largely populated ones which can attract investors.
- ✓ The small UTs are Dadra Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Andaman and Nicobar, Ladakh and Lakshadweep.
- ✓ The FM also said that a new tariff policy would soon be introduced, which will ensure that inefficiencies of discoms do not burden consumers.
- ✓ She said privatisation of discoms will lead to better service to consumers and improvement in operational and financial efficiency in power distribution.
- ✓ Earlier, discoms in Mumbai, Delhi and some other cities had been privatized successfully.

Coal sector

- ✓ The government has decided to immediately offer 50 coal mines for commercial mining by private sector without end-use restrictions.
- ✓ The government's move is expected to boost domestic production and lead to reduced coal imports, resulting in estimated savings of ₹1.7 lakh crore or more.
- ✓ The private investments in new mines will also create thousands of jobs and big earnings for coal-bearing states.



- ✓ As per the FM, the mines will be auctioned on revenue-sharing basis under a simplified regime to increase ease of doing business.
- ✓ To ensure wide participation in the auction and create competition, the Government will not put any eligibility restriction but only upfront payment with a ceiling

- ✓ This means, companies can bid even if they do not have experience in coal mining and sell the output in the open market.
- ✓ This will help in transferring mining leases and also allow sale of surplus unused minerals
- ✓ Till now, private coal mining is allowed only for captive mining with restricted end-use such as generating power or making cement and steel.
- ✓ In 2018 the private coal mining agencies were allowed to sell 25% of the output but it failed to attract much investment.
- ✓ The successful bidders will also be allowed to raise production by up to 40% from a mine every year without applying for green clearance afresh.
- ✓ The announcement aims to release the coal mining process from the nationalisation of 1973 and opens doors for large private investments by ending the monopoly of public sector Coal India Ltd (CIL) in the market
- ✓ Currently only CIL is allowed to sell coal to end-users.
- ✓ Apart from coal blocks, the government is also planning to auction bauxite ores
- ✓ It is also planning to introduce a new regime, where a seamless exploration-cum-mining-cum-production will take place.
- ✓ The Ministry of Minerals will come up soon with a new Mineral Index.

Civil Aviation

- ✓ The Government has announced to introduce direct commercial flight routes through restricted airspaces
- ✓ The move will lead to savings of about ₹1,000 crore annually in operating cost for airlines through lower fuel burn and crew cost through reduction in flying time, apart from having a positive environmental impact.
- ✓ This was one of the three major announcements made by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman for India's critically ill aviation sector on May 16.
- ✓ The other two are - six more Airports Authority of India (AAI) airports will be handed over for being run in public-private partnership and aircraft maintenance centres will be facilitated in India.
- ✓ Only 60% of Indian airspace is freely available.
- ✓ Last year, AAI had decided to hand over six more airports — Bhubaneswar, Varanasi, Raipur, Indore, Amritsar and Trichy — to PPP players.
 - ✓ The bidding was held in 2018 for six airports and Adani Group had emerged as the highest bidder for all of them.
 - ✓ So far it has signed agreements to operate Ahmedabad, Lucknow and Mangaluru airports for 50 years and is yet to get Jaipur, Trivandrum and Guwahati airports due to some procedural issues.
 - ✓ The additional investment by private companies in 12 airports in first and second rounds is expected to be around ₹13,000 crore.
 - ✓ Another six airports are also planning to be privatized in the third round of bidding

- ✓ All these announcements were made after Prime Minister Narendra Modi had reviewed aviation sector on May 1

Space sector

- ✓ The Government has decided to introduce private sector in India's inter-planetary and outer space exploration and opened up facilities of Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) for their use.
- ✓ Till now, the space sector was considered a government monopoly
- ✓ As per the FM, future projects like planetary explorations (like Chandrayaan, Venus and Aditya missions) and outer space travel will be opened for the private sector
- ✓ Earlier, the Finance Minister, in her July 2019 Budget speech, had mentioned the creation of a public sector company by ISRO called New Space India Limited.
 - ✓ This was similar to its existing commercial arm, Antrix, and allows small satellite technology to be transferred to private industry and outsource the development of ISRO's workhorse Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle to the private sector.
- ✓ The government is also planning to ease geo-spatial data policy to make such remote-sensing data more widely available to tech entrepreneurs, with safeguards put in place.
- ✓ During her announcement, the FM also said the country's start-up system will soon be linked to the nuclear sector
 - ✓ In this regard, technology development-cum-incubation centres will be set up to coordinate research facilities and tech-entrepreneurs.

SPACE REFORMS

➤ To allow private sector companies in satellites, launches and space-based services

➤ Private sector will be allowed to use ISRO facilities and other relevant assets to improve their capacities

ATOMIC ENERGY REFORMS

➤ To set up a research reactor in PPP mode for the production of medical isotopes to help make available affordable treatment for cancer and other diseases

➤ Establish facilities in PPP mode to use irradiation technology for food preservation – to complement agricultural reforms and assist farmers

Atomic energy

- ✓ During the announcement, the FM also said the government is planning to establish an atomic research reactor in public–private partnership (PPP) mode
- ✓ The new reactor will facilitate production of medical isotopes for treatment of cancer and other diseases
- ✓ Apart from this, the government will also set up food preservation facilities with irradiation technology to preserve perishable food items to complement agriculture reforms and assist farmers.
- ✓ This will be very much useful in the perishable food items sector, as perishable items like onions, because of their short-shelf life, are either sold at less price or left to rot.
- ✓ Through this technology, such perishable food items can be provided a longer life

- **The final draft of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 - has proposed a new 'Higher Education Promotion Commission' (HEPC) for implementing the higher education in country in future.**
- ✓ This Commission consists of four separate verticals — regulation, accreditation, funding, and academic standard
- ✓ At present, there are separate regulators for different sets of institutions.
- ✓ Technical institutions are under AICTE, universities and colleges under UGC, medical colleges under Medical Council of India etc.
- ✓ Under the proposed regulatory system, distinct functions of regulation, accreditation, funding and setting academic standards will be performed by independent and empowered bodies irrespective of the branch of study.
- ✓ HEPC will have four independent verticals —
 - ✓ National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) as common, single regulator for the entire higher education sector;
 - ✓ National Accreditation Council (NAC), a 'meta-accrediting body';
 - ✓ Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) for funding and financing of higher education; and
 - ✓ General Education Council (GEC) to frame expected learning outcomes for higher education programmes.
- ✓ These verticals will have powers for initiating action to shut down or penalise higher educational institutions (HEIs) for dishonesty in self-disclosures or for not conforming to basic minimum norms and standards.
- ✓ The draft policy aims to provide greater autonomy to all HEIs and the responsibility and accountability will rest on its Board of Governors.
- ✓ The new regulatory regime will also make setting up of new institutions easier.
- ✓ These four verticals will subsume the present regulatory bodies as their specific roles will be redistributed.
 - ✓ For example, UGC's functions relating to academic standards will be subsumed under GEC, while its funding powers will go to HEGC.

- ✓ Similarly, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council will be incorporated in NAC
- **On May 16, the HRD ministry - postponed the announcement of exam schedule for pending Class X and XII board exams, as the CBSE is still considering certain technical aspects before finalising the datesheet.**
- ✓ The ministry had earlier announced that it would notify the schedule at 5pm on May 16
- ✓ Union HRD minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' said that the datesheets will now be released on May 18
- ✓ The ministry had last week announced that the pending Class X and XII CBSE exams, which were postponed due to the Covid-19-induced lockdown, would be conducted from July 1 to 15
- ✓ However, the schedule as well as the modalities and guidelines have not been announced yet.
- ✓ Class XII exams will be conducted across the country, while the Class X exams are pending only in North East Delhi where they were affected due to the law and order situation.
- **The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) – has said that the manufacturers of N-95 masks don't need to have in-house testing facility for obtaining licence**
- ✓ As per the new norms, the manufacturers can get their product tested in any BIS recognized lab or facilities available with BIS licence-holders.
- ✓ The announcement is seen as a major relaxation to push production of N-95 masks by new manufacturers in the country
- ✓ The setting up of a new in-house laboratory requires at least Rs 1 crore investment



- ✓ Till now there were only six manufacturers of N-95 masks in the entire country
- ✓ The current capacity of the country is 2.3 lakh N95 masks per day
- ✓ The Government is planning to soon increase it by another 2 lakh as more manufacturers start producing them.
- ✓ The BIS has also started a campaign with the firms manufacturing 'ordinary' masks to encourage them to obtain licence for the production of N-95, which is also known as FFP2 mask, as per Indian standards.

- ✓ In a related announcement, on May 16, the Centre opened up export of non-medical, non-surgical masks, which was prohibited so far.
 - ✓ As per the new guidelines, all types of masks, made of cotton, silk, wool, or knitted fabric, are permitted for exports, except medical and surgical masks.
 - ✓ India is aiming to export masks worth \$1 billion in the next one month, as the exports were prohibited for almost two months now.
- ✓ Textile hubs such as Tiruppur will benefit from this as these manufacturers were able to meet the international standards required for the masks.
- **The Centre - has asked the States to upload the details of migrants on an online dashboard to facilitate speedy communication among them and help in contact tracing.**
 - ✓ The dashboard — National Migrant Information System (NMIS) — has been developed by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).
 - ✓ The system will generate a unique ID for the migrants and their mobile numbers could be used for contact tracing and movement monitoring during COVID-19
 - ✓ Other details such as Aadhaar card number, train or bus details will be collected and fed into the system.

INTERNATIONAL

- **Canada – has announced that the International students enrolled in Canadian educational institutions will be able to commence their courses online from their home countries and still be eligible for the postgraduate work programme (PGWP), which is available for up to three years.**
 - ✓ The new rules were announced following the Covid-19 induced travel interruptions around the world
 - ✓ The tenure of the work permit typically depends on the length of the educational course in Canada
 - ✓ Under normal circumstances, the stringent PGWP norms do not allow an international student to pursue the programme via distance learning.
 - ✓ The time spent studying outside Canada is deducted from the length of the work permit for which they would otherwise be eligible
 - ✓ As per the new norms, International students may begin their classes while outside Canada and complete up to 50% of the programme via distance learning
 - ✓ If studies were completed outside of Canada up to December 31, 2020, this time will not be deducted from their future work permit tenure.
 - ✓ This move will help students garner higher points under the Express-Entry route, if he or she wishes to become a permanent resident of Canada.
 - ✓ Canadian permanent residency is similar to a green card in the US.
 - ✓ Around 54,000 former students had opted to become permanent residents in 2018.

- ✓ With 1.39 lakh study permits (34.5% of the total), Indians were the highest constituent of international students in 2019.
- ✓ Meanwhile, in a separate move, US is planning to curtail or altogether eliminate the guest worker visa programmes and end the Optional Training Programme (OTP) for foreign students
 - ✓ Currently, more than a 100,000 Indian students in US are enrolled in the OTP at any given time.
- **On May 16, Russia - recorded its highest daily death toll from COVID-19 while new cases fell to the lowest level in two weeks.**
- ✓ It is currently in second place in the world to the U.S. with 2,72,043 cases, with 9,200 new cases announced on the day, the lowest number since May 2.
 - ✓ But the number of deaths announced on the day for the last 24 hours was the highest yet, at 119.
 - ✓ The total number of officially confirmed deaths is now 2,537, lower than a number of other countries with fewer cases.
- ✓ Meanwhile in Asia, Nepal reported its first Covid-19 death and Pakistan partially resumed domestic flights amid easing of curbs.
- ✓ Germany and the UK have started to relax some of the restrictions on movement and gatherings, but businesses have been hard hit and face uncertain futures.



Countries	Infected	Death	188
United States	1,456,029	88,211	countries/ regions hit
Russia	272,043	2,537	
United Kingdom	241,455	34,546	4,599,738+ infected globally
Spain	230,698	27,563	
Italy	224,760	31,763	310,010+ have died
Brazil	222,877	15,046	
France	179,630	27,532	1,666,834+ have recovered
Germany	175,752	7,938	
Turkey	148,067	4,096	
Iran	118,392	6,937	

Source: Johns Hopkins University

- ✓ In other developments, China said it planned to shorten its annual legislative session next week in Beijing to protect public health.
- ✓ In Wuhan, where the outbreak began, the government had conducted 1,13,609 virus tests on May 15 after a cluster of cases was reported.

- ✓ In Europe, several cities witnessed demonstrations against Covid-19 induced restrictions, which included Poland's Warsaw, London's Hyde Park and Germany's Berlin
- **U.S. President Donald Trump - announced a new effort to combat the Covid-19 pandemic, 'Operation Warp Speed' and said he hopes there will be a COVID-19 vaccine by the end of the year while officially**



- ✓ The objective of the Operation Warp Speed is to finish the development and manufacture of a proven coronavirus vaccine quickly and then distribute it as fast as possible
- ✓ The US President had appointed former head of vaccines at pharma company GlaxoSmithKline, Moncef Slaoui, and General Gustave Perna, who heads the U.S. Army's Material Command, to lead the vaccine development and distribution effort.
- ✓ As per the US President, roughly 100 vaccine candidates from around the world were evaluated, out of which 14 were considered promising and the list is being narrowed further.
 - ✓ Meanwhile, the Democrats have powered a massive \$3 trillion coronavirus relief Bill through the House, to protect the U.S. economy from free fall and a healthcare system struggling to contain a pandemic
 - ✓ The enormous package would cost more than the prior four coronavirus Bills combined.
 - ✓ It would provide almost \$1 trillion for State and local governments, another round of \$1,200 direct payments to individuals and help for the unemployed, renters and homeowners, college debt holders and the Postal Service.
- ✓ On May 16, Donald Trump also said that his administration was considering numerous proposals about the World Health Organization (WHO), including one in which Washington would pay about 10% of its former level.
 - ✓ If the U.S. decides to match China's contribution, its new funding level will be about one-tenth its previous funding amount of about \$400 million per year.

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **The US President Donald Trump – has announced that US will donate ventilators to India to help it in its fight against Covid-19**
- ✓ According to the US agencies, some of these ventilators would be repurposed.
- ✓ After the pandemic hit the US, Trump had ordered companies like GM to manufacture ventilators.
- ✓ Earlier, India lifted its ban on hydroxychloroquine exports after Trump requested for consignments to the US.
- ✓ India had imposed a ban on the import of the hydroxychloroquine in March 2020, to ensure that it has adequate quantities of the drug to support its battle against COVID-19 pandemic.
- ✓ India allowed export of almost 50 million Hydroxychloroquine tablets to the United States, which is the worst-hit nation by the COVID-19 outbreak.
- ✓ Following this, the US sold six Roche high-capacity testing machines to conduct RT-PCR tests in India.
- ✓ US President Donald Trump also lauded Indian-American scientists and researchers for their efforts in developing medicines and vaccines to treat the deadly coronavirus
- ✓ The announcement elicited a word of thanks from India's PM Narendra Modi.

SPORTS

- **Germany's Bundesliga - has become the world's first major sports competition to resume its season post nationwide lockdown imposed to contain coronavirus pandemic.**
- ✓ In the first game, Borussia Dortmund powered to a 4-0 win over their local rivals Schalke



SETTING THE PACE IN NUMBERS

28,000: Viewers on average, during the Dortmund-Schalke derby match shown on Hotstar.

7 OF TOP 10 TRENDS: The Bundesliga was top trending at different times during the match. They included #Bundesliga, #BVBS04, #BundeligatsBack, #Haaland, #Brandt, #Hakimi and #Hazard.

10 lakh: Number of tweets on Bundesliga during the match.

130K: Tweets on Haaland, who showed that the Covid-19-induced break has had no impact on his goal-scoring form.

- ✓ In another match, RB Leipzig were held to a 1-1 draw by Freiburg
- ✓ The goal scorers celebrated by dancing alone -- making no contact with teammates, who clapped him on -- to comply with the strict hygiene guidelines which allowed the league to return.

- ✓ The European Football League's remaining matches from the 2019-20 season kickstarted from May 16, 2020.
- ✓ The Bundesliga games resumed with empty stadiums, behind closed doors with no fans to minimise the risk of coronavirus infection.
- ✓ Social distancing will be followed among players as well, which means no hugging or patting.
- ✓ The players will be celebrating with forearm bumps
- ✓ The last Bundesliga match was played on March 11
- ✓ As per the new norms, all players are being tested twice a week and were kept in quarantine before the games
 - ✓ They were shuttled to the stadium in multiple buses rather than one keeping in mind the social distancing protocol
 - ✓ The teams also used more than one dressing room per team.
 - ✓ The coaches will be wearing face masks and the substitutes will be sitting at least 1.5 meters away from each other
 - ✓ The ball used during the match was also disinfected before kickoff and the referee entered the field last.
- ✓ Germany has largely been able to control the coronavirus outbreak.
- ✓ The nation's COVID-19 cases currently stand at 1,75,699, which includes 1,51,700 recoveries and 8001 deaths.
- ✓ Bundesliga was founded in 1962 in Dortmund
 - ✓ It is a top German football league and one of the top football leagues in Europe
 - ✓ It is ranked third in Europe according to UEFA's league coefficient ranking for the 2019–20 season.
 - ✓ The teams that finish within Top 4 in the competition automatically qualify for the group phase of the UEFA Champions League.

