



EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MAY 18, 2020

TAMIL NADU

- **Tamil Nadu's Covid-19 count – rose to 11,224 with 639 fresh cases reported on May 17**
- ✓ Four people died on the day, taking the state's total toll to 78.
- ✓ Chennai, the most affected district, reported 482 cases to take its tally to 6,750
 - ✓ Apart from Chennai, Chengalpet reported 28 cases, Tiruvallur 18 and Kancheepuram five cases.

Keeping count | A tracker, across parameters, on how the pandemic has affected the State so far

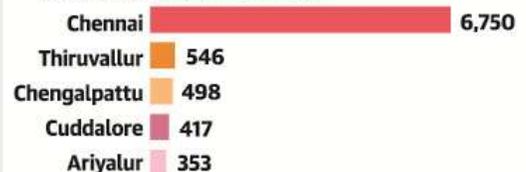
	Until May 10	May 11	May 12	May 13	May 14	May 15	May 16	May 17	Total
Cases reported	7,204	798	716	509	447	434	477	639	11,224
Recovered and discharged	1,959	92	83	42	64	359	939	634	4,172
Deceased	47	6	8	3	2	5	3	4	78

Persons tested



Active cases	Discharged	Died	In hospitals
6,970	3,538	74	4,415
6,971	4,172	78	4,366

Districts with maximum cases

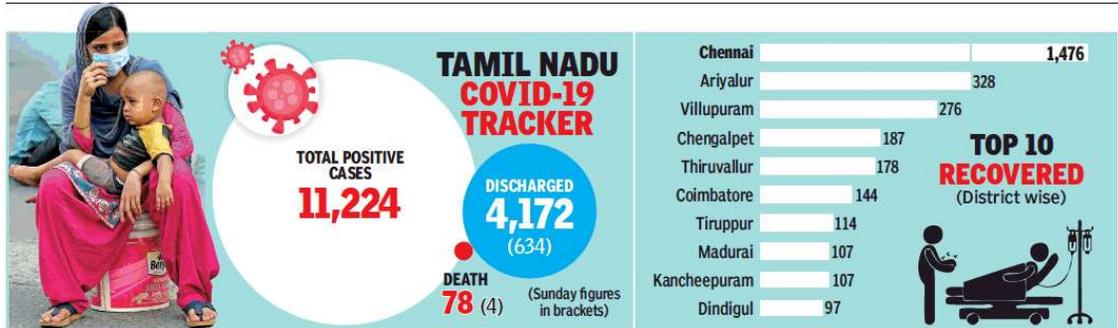


*Changes in 24 hours ■ As on May 16, 6 p.m. ■ As on May 17, 6 p.m.

Active Cases + Discharged + Died will not equal Total Cases as 2 deaths were cross-notified to other States and 1 patient, who initially tested positive for COVID-19, later tested negative after death, as per the Health and Family Welfare Department.

- ✓ Meanwhile, the health department has proposed a comprehensive testing policy and sent it to the government for approval
 - ✓ The testing policy will advise district officials to continue testing all passengers from other states.
 - ✓ As per the policy, those testing positive for the infection will be send for isolation, while others will be advised home quarantine instead of government facility quarantine.
 - ✓ It is expected to be announced on May 18

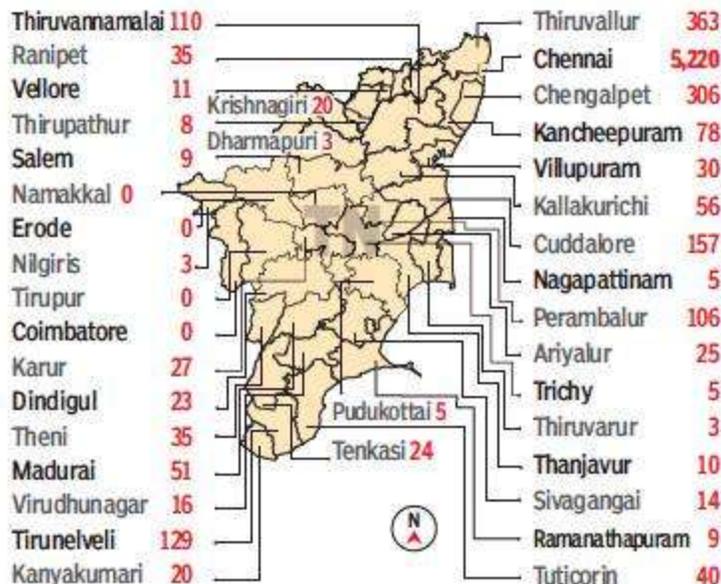
- ✓ Over the weekend, 170 people who arrived from Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Telangana tested positive.



- ✓ On May 17, nearly 12% of the patients who tested positive have come from other states.
- ✓ They included 73 people from Maharashtra, three from Telangana, two each from Rajasthan and Karnataka and one from Andhra Pradesh.

HOW IS TN DOING?

A district-wise map shows the number of active coronavirus cases across the state as on May 17



Source: stopcorona.tn.gov.in

- ✓ **As on May 17, four out of eight western districts – Coimbatore, Tirupur, Erode and Namakkal - do not have even a single active case of virus.**
 - ✓ Incidentally, these are the only four districts in the whole of Tamil Nadu without any active cases.
- ✓ A total of 12,445 people were tested for the viral infection on the day, against 8,000 people on May 16.
- ✓ As on May 17, there were 6,971 active cases in the state
- ✓ A total of 634 people were discharged from hospitals across the state, taking the total number to 4,172.
- ✓ The casualties reported on the day includes - a 63-year-old man admitted to Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital died, a 44-year-old woman admitted to Government Stanley Medical College Hospital, a 45-year-old-woman and a 40-year-old man, who died earlier.
- **On May 17, Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - extended the lockdown in the state till May 31**
 - ✓ The CM further announced the easing of transport restrictions in 25 districts where new Covid-19 cases are nil or have come down significantly.
 - ✓ The intra-district private transportation in these districts were permitted to operate after nearly two months
 - ✓ However, all existing restrictions will continue in containment zones across the state.
 - ✓ In Chennai and 11 other districts — Kancheepuram, Tiruvallur, Chengalpet, Villupuram, Cuddalore, Ranipet, Tirupattur, Kallakurichi, Tiruvannamalai, Ariyalur and Perambalur — restrictions will remain unchanged.
 - ✓ The intra-district movement is prohibited in these 12 districts
 - ✓ Taxis and autos are permitted to operate in these 12 districts only for emergency medical needs by getting e-passes.
 - ✓ Interstate rail services and trains to and from Chennai to other parts of Tamil Nadu will be prohibited
 - ✓ However, air, rail and public transport can operate special permission from Central/state governments
 - ✓ The industries in urban areas like corporations, municipalities and town panchayats, excluding those in Greater Chennai Police limits, with less than 100 workers can operate with 100% strength
 - ✓ However, companies with more than 100 workers can work only with 50% strength or a maximum of 100 workers.
 - ✓ Private and business establishments can use minimum staff for maintenance.
 - ✓ The operation of air-conditioned showrooms, jewellery, textile and department stores, too, will not be allowed.
 - ✓ Movement of tourists to hill stations such as the Nilgiris, Kodaikanal and Yercaud is also not permitted.

- ✓ The government has decided to prohibit opening of educational institutions, religious places, and religious congregations.
- ✓ Cinema halls, shopping malls, gymnasiums, sports complexes, swimming pools, entertainment parks, theatres, bars, auditoriums, assembly halls, political, sports, entertainment, academic, cultural and religious functions, too, will not be allowed.
- ✓ The relaxations for 25 districts were announced following recommendations by the Expert Committee constituted to develop the exit strategy from the lockdown.
 - ✓ The 25 districts includes - Coimbatore, Salem, Erode, Tiruppur, Namakkal, Karur, Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Tenkasi, Kanniyakumari, Theni, Madurai, Sivaganga, Virudhunagar, Ramanathapuram, Dindigul, Pudukkottai, Tiruchi, Tiruvarur, Thanjavur, Nagapattinam, Dharmapuri, Krishnagiri, Vellore and the Nilgiris.
- **The Bar Council of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry - has resolved to provide a financial assistance of ₹4,000 to advocates who were affected by the Covid-19 lockdown.**
- ✓ The council has chosen 12,000 lawyers for receiving the assistance
- ✓ A total of 14,000 applications have been received by the Council for the assistance purpose.

STATES

- **Chhattisgarh state government – has announced the launch of ‘Rajiv Gandhi Kisan Nyay Yojana’ in the state on May 21.**
- ✓ The day will mark the death anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.
- ✓ The scheme aims at stimulating the rural economy of the state which has been affected drastically by the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak.
- ✓ The provision for the scheme had already been made by the state in its budget 2020-21.
- ✓ Under the scheme, the government has allocated Rs. 5,100 crore for developing the rural economy of the state.
- ✓ The scheme will benefit over 1.87 million farmers in the state.
- ✓ As per the provisions of the scheme, the government will directly transfer the grant through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) into the accounts of the farmers.
- ✓ The farmers will be paid Rs. 10,000 per acre by the state government for the corn, paddy and sugarcane crops
- ✓ The grant will be based on the procured and registered area for the Kharif Season.

NATIONAL

- **India – has registered 5,000 new cases in a single day for the first time on May 17 along with the reporting of 154 deaths**

- ✓ This takes the total number of cases to just over 95,000 and the total casualty to 3,023, with a mortality rate of 3.2%
- ✓ As per the Health ministry, the doubling time of the infection had improved to 13.6 days in the last three days from 11.5 in the past 14 days
- ✓ The country's fatality rate had fallen to 3.1% and the recovery rate had improved to 37.5%.

COVID COUNT: LOCKDOWN 1.0 TO 4.0

How India's Corona Numbers Changed Through Each Phase

Lockdown Eve	Total Cases	Deaths	Growth Rate (%)*
Phase 1 (Mar 24)	562	11	21.5
Phase 2 (April 14)	11,393	392	11.4
Phase 3 (May 3)	42,456	1,390	6.2
Phase 4 (May 17)	95,679	3,023	5.2

* Growth rate as rolling avg of cases in previous 7 days. Source: State govts

- ✓ According to Health minister Harsh Vardhan, India had reached the 80,000 mark in 106 days while many developed nations took just 44-66 days to reach that mark.
- ✓ On the day, Maharashtra reported a record 2,347 fresh infections and 63 deaths, 38 in Mumbai alone
- ✓ It was followed by 34 deaths in Gujarat (31 in Ahmedabad alone) and 19 in Delhi
- ✓ Of the 2,347 new cases reported from Maharashtra — the first time over 2,000 cases were added in a day by any state — Mumbai alone accounted for 1,595.
- ✓ The number of new cases remained high in Delhi (422) and Gujarat (391) while Tamil Nadu again saw a spike with 639 cases
- ✓ Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh had their highest single-day spike in cases, with 242 and 208 cases being reported, respectively, which are mostly linked to migrants
- ✓ Bihar reported its eighth death due to Covid-19 and 106 fresh cases, including the highest 57 in Patna district in a single day, taking the state's tally to 1,284.
- ✓ Gujarat recorded 34 deaths in a single day, or one death every 42 minutes, taking the total death toll in the state to 659.
 - ✓ The figure was second highest for the state after 49 deaths recorded on May 5.
 - ✓ With 31 deaths recorded in Ahmedabad alone, the district crossed 500 deaths mark with total toll of 524.
 - ✓ The district is ranked second in India in total death toll, after Mumbai which has recorded 696 deaths as on May 17.
- ✓ Sixty-two people, including 14 policemen, tested positive for coronavirus in J&K on the day, taking the total number of infected persons to 1,183 in the UT
- ✓ Andhra Pradesh reported 25 Covid-19 cases on the day, the lowest one-day figure since April 16.

- ✓ Meanwhile, in Kerala, as many as 14 persons, including 10 who came from other states and two from abroad, were tested positive for Covid-19
 - ✓ This takes the number of people under treatment in the state to 101.
 - ✓ The total number of cases reported in the state as on date is 601, of whom 497 have recovered
 - ✓ A total of 3,467 people have reached Kerala by flights, 1,033 in ships, 55,086 through checkposts and 1,026 in trains after the launch of Vande Bharat and Samudra Setu missions
 - ✓ Of these, 156 people have been put under isolation in various hospitals while 13,064 are under institutional quarantine.
- ✓ On May 17, the country's testing capacity had increased to 1,00,000 tests per day, which are done through 373 government laboratories and 152 private laboratories
- **The Centre – has extended the nationwide lockdown yet again till May 31, 2020, with certain relaxations.**
 - ✓ The guidelines for the same were released by the Union Home Ministry on May 17, 2020
 - ✓ In the Lockdown 4.0, the centre has allowed reopening market places in addition to standalone shops, allowed intrastate and inter-state passenger vehicle and bus travel and removed the 33% staffing restriction for businesses to kickstart the economy.
 - ✓ The activities that remain specifically prohibited are domestic and international passenger flights, metro rail services, hotels and dine-in at restaurants, shopping malls, educational institutions and large public gatherings, including religious congregations irrespective of zones
 - ✓ The states have been allowed to draw up lists of red, orange and green zones, according to the detailed guidelines provided by the Centre
 - ✓ Inter-state bus travel are permitted with the consent of concerned states
 - ✓ Earlier, inter-state movement of persons was listed as a prohibited activity, except for medical reasons and for those permitted by the home ministry.
 - ✓ Movement of people for non-essential services will, however, continue to be prohibited between 7pm and 7am which will be treated like a night-time curfew.
 - ✓ The passenger train services are removed from the list of prohibited activities, and have already started on a limited scale.
 - ✓ Inter-state and intra-state movement of buses and passenger vehicles is permitted across all zones, except containment areas.
 - ✓ Taxi, auto rickshaws, cab aggregators and e-rickshaw services are no longer barred in red zones.
 - ✓ The employers have now been asked to ensure that Aarogya Setu is installed by employees “on best effort basis” on their phones “for safety of offices and workplaces”

INTER-STATE TRAVEL, CABS ALLOWED

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|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Marketplaces can be opened in addition to standalone shops. Salons and barber shops can open in red zones too. However, shops will have staggered timings and will have to ensure social distancing➤ Inter-state movement of vehicles and buses with consent of states. Most are agreeable. They'll also decide on intra-state bus services➤ E-comm players can deliver non-essentials, even in red zones➤ Restaurants permitted to operate kitchens for home-delivery of food items➤ All states/UTs shall allow inter-state and intra- | <ul style="list-style-type: none">state movement of medical professionals and ambulances without any restriction➤ In containment zones, only essential activities allowed➤ States will demarcate zones in keeping with central norms➤ Movement and activities allowed even in red zones outside hotspots➤ Sports can be held in stadia but without spectators➤ Taxi, autos, cab aggregators & e-rick services no longer barred in red zones➤ No 33% staff rule for offices, industry and business, states will draw up social distancing norms |
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WHAT'S STILL NOT ALLOWED

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Domestic & int'l air travel of passengers and Metro services➤ Schools, colleges, hotels, restaurants, movie halls, malls, swimming pools and gyms➤ All social, political, religious functions and places of worship | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Movement of people will remain prohibited across country from 7pm to 7am, except for essential activities➤ People above 65, with co-morbidities, pregnant women, under-10 kids shall stay at home |
|---|--|

- ✓ Social distancing, wearing of face covers and frequent sanitisation are to be followed 'strictly' at workplaces.
 - ✓ All shops and markets as well as e-commerce selling essential and non-essential items and services can now open except in containment areas
 - ✓ The specific ban on barber and salon and spa services is also lifted, though the state governments will take the final decision on this.
 - ✓ Running of canteens at bus depots, railway stations and airports has been allowed. Cinema halls, gymnasiums, swimming pools and bars will remain closed
 - ✓ Sports complexes and stadia can open but no spectators will be allowed.
 - ✓ Interestingly, the 'buffer' zones can now be a district, municipal corporation or municipality or even smaller administrative units such as sub-divisions as decided by states and UTs.
 - ✓ Within red and orange zones, containment and buffer areas will be demarcated by the district administration or local urban bodies.
 - ✓ Buffer zones are areas around each containment zone, where new cases are more likely to appear and where more caution needs to be exercised.
 - ✓ States can toughen these rules but cannot dilute the guidelines.
 - ✓ Earlier, PM Narendra Modi had announced a complete lockdown for 21 days on March 24, 2020 to combat the spread of coronavirus.
 - ✓ The lockdown first got extended till May 3rd and then till May 17.
- **On May 17, Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman - announced the fifth and last tranche of the ₹20 lakh crore Covid-19 Atmanirbhar Bharat package,**

aimed at bringing the economy back on track in the wake of a declining impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

- ✓ During the announcement, the FM unveiled structural reforms for 7 key sectors including health and education, MNREGA, state governments, ease of doing business, decriminalisation of Company Act, business during coronavirus era and policy related to PSUs
- ✓ The reforms included - limiting the role of public sector companies, while announcing assistance to help migrants, companies and state governments and providing more money for the rural job guarantee programme.
- ✓ It has also included initiatives such as infectious disease blocks in every districts and labs in every block.
- ✓ There were also announcement to enable children to attend classes from home using a television broadcast with 200 new electronic textbooks to be added to aid learning.
- ✓ The FM gave a detailed break-up of over the five packages totalling ₹20.97 lakh crore or 10% of gross domestic product
- ✓ The steps announced by her will result in a stimulus of over Rs 11 lakh crore, while the RBI's moves and the PM GaribKalyan Yojana related announcements will contribute another Rs 10 lakh crore.

65% RISE IN MGNREGS OUTLAY

JOBS: Additional ₹40,000cr for MGNREGS, will help generate 300cr person days work	raised to ₹1cr (from ₹1 lakh, which insulates MSMEs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Suspension of fresh initiation of insolvency proceedings up to 1 year depending on situation ➤ Empowering Centre to exclude Covid-19-related debt from definition of 'default' for triggering insolvency ➤ Direct listing of securities by public companies in permissible foreign jurisdictions 	Item	₹ Crore
PSU REFORMS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All sectors open to the private sector ➤ Number of PSEs in strategic sectors will ordinarily be 1-4; others will be privatised/merged/ brought under holding companies ➤ In other sectors, PSEs will be privatised 	HEALTH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Infectious diseases hospital block in all districts ➤ Integrated public health labs in all districts and block level labs and public health units to manage pandemics 	Tranche 1	5,94,550
SUPPORT TO STATES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increase in borrowing limits of states from 3% to 5% of GDP, for 2020-21 only, linked to reforms. This will give states extra resources of ₹4.3 lakh cr 	EDUCATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ PM e-vidya for multi-mode access to digital education 	Tranche 2	3,10,000
EASE OF DOING BUSINESS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Minimum threshold to initiate insolvency action 		Tranche 3	1,50,000
		Tranche 4 & 5	48,100
		Sub Total	11,02,650
		Earlier Steps, Including PMGKY	1,92,800
		RBI Measures	8,01,603
		Sub Total	9,94,403
		Total	20,97,053
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ One TV channel per class from 1 to 12 ➤ Top 100 universities will be permitted to automatically start online courses by May 30 	

MGNREGA

- ✓ The latest announcements were aimed to support the migrants earning some income once they return home
- ✓ The FM announced an additional allocation of 65%, or ₹40,000 crore for MGNREGA for 2020-21 and generate a total 300 crore persondays of work.

- ✓ The additional allocation takes total budgetary support for the job scheme for current financial year to slightly over ₹1 lakh crore.
- ✓ The 2020-21 budget allocated was ₹61,500 crore for MGNREGA, whereas the total expenditure in the previous year was ₹71,000 crore, including the arrears cleared.

Public sector enterprises

- ✓ According to the FM, the government will soon announce a new policy for public sector enterprises to facilitate the entry of private companies in all sectors where government firms are present.

FRAMING A NEW POLICY

<p>➤ The government will soon announce a list of strategic sectors, which will require presence of public sector enterprises (PSEs)</p> <p>➤ In strategic sectors, at least one enterprise will remain in the public sector, but private sector will also be allowed</p>	 <p>➤ In other areas, the PSEs will be privatised and the timing would be based on feasibility</p> <p>➤ According to experts, the new policy may open up opportunities for private companies in some key sectors</p>
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- ✓ As per the new policy, the government will retain only a maximum of four Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) in Strategic Sectors
 - ✓ All other Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) in Non-Strategic sectors will be privatised with an aim to minimise the administrative cost of the Central Government.
 - ✓ Even in the strategic sectors, PSU presence will be limited to 1-4 companies while in the other sectors, the government will privatise state-run companies.
 - ✓ That means, if a particular strategic sector has more than 4 PSUs, then either they will be merged or privatised so that the total number remains a maximum of four and not more than that.
- ✓ The strategic sectors includes Arms & Ammunition of defence equipment, Defense aircraft & warships, Atomic energy, Applications of radiation to agriculture, medicine and non-strategic industry, Railways etc.,
- ✓ All other PSUs apart from the strategic sectors fall under Non-strategic Sector, which includes Power Distribution Companies, Discoms etc.,
- ✓ Companies in which Central Government or a CPSE holds 51% stake or direct holding are known as Central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) or Public Sector Units (PSUs).
- ✓ There were around 300 Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs) in India as on March 31, 2019

State Governments

- ✓ The Centre had raised the borrowing limits of States from 3% to 5% for 2020-21
- ✓ This will allow the states to collect another Rs 4.3 lakh crore to help them deal with a revenue shortfall and higher spending.
- ✓ States have so far borrowed only 14% of the limit authorised.

Education and Technology in Covid times

- ✓ The Government announced its focus as 'Technology-driven education' and announced the launch of 'PM eVIDYA' programme
 - ✓ PM eVIDYA, a comprehensive initiative, will unify all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education to enable multimode access to education
 - ✓ The PM e-VIDYA initiative will bring together digital platforms such as Diksha (the nation's digital infrastructure for providing quality content for school education), Swayam (the online courses in MOOCS format for school and higher education), radio, community radio and CBSE podcast Shiksha Vani, special e-content for visually and hearing impaired, and IITPAL (for IITJEE/NEET preparation).
 - ✓ This will benefit nearly 25 crore schoolgoing children across the country.
- ✓ By the end of this month, the top 100 universities in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) will be allowed to offer online courses 'automatically'.
 - ✓ The top 100 universities will include IITs, IIMs, institutes of eminence, national institutes as well as private universities.
 - ✓ Under this programme, 12 Swayam Prabha DTH channels will be introduced, with one each dedicated to classes 1 to 12 to support and reach those who do not have access to the internet.
- ✓ The minister also announced the launch of 'Manodarpan' — an initiative for psycho-social support of students, teachers and families for mental health and emotional wellbeing — with immediate effect.

Health reforms

- ✓ The Government will raise the expenditure on public health and health reforms will be implemented to strengthen hospital and lab infrastructure at the grassroots level
- ✓ This includes creating dedicated infectious diseases hospital blocks in all districts and establishing government diagnostic labs till the block level
- ✓ In this regard, the health ministry has already released ₹4,113 crore for Covid-19 activities so far, of the ₹15,000 crore funds allocated by the Centre for containment.
- ✓ Essential items worth ₹3,750 crore and testing labs and kits worth ₹550 crore have also been disbursed.
- ✓ Besides, an insurance cover of ₹50 lakh per person for health professionals was earlier announced under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana.

Decriminalization of Companies Act

- ✓ The government will soon bring an Ordinance for the decriminalisation of Companies Act violations
- ✓ The Ordinance will cover minor technical and procedural defaults such as shortcomings in CSR reporting, inadequacies in board report, filing defaults, delay in holding AGM etc.,

Ease of doing business

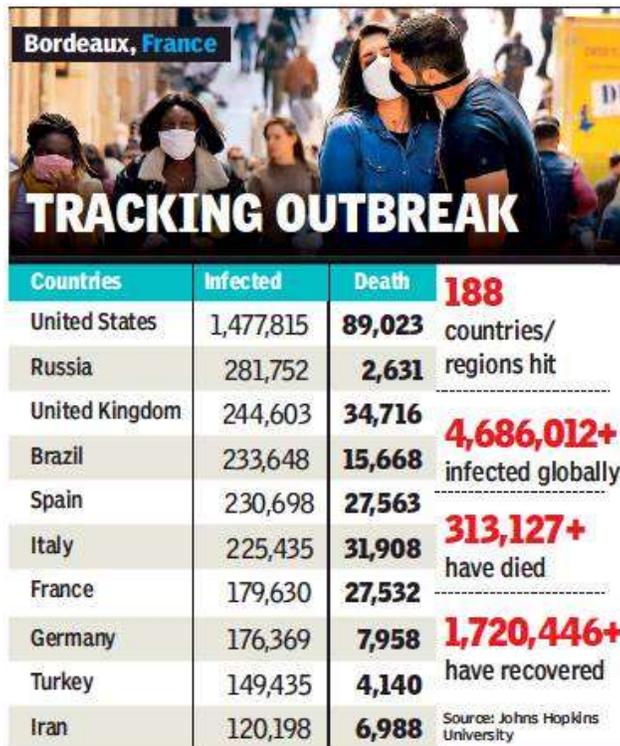
- ✓ Henceforth, private companies which list NCDs on stock exchanges will not be regarded as listed companies.
- ✓ The other reforms planned by the government include lower penalties for all defaults for small companies, one-person companies, producer companies & Start Ups.

Business and Covid-19

- ✓ The Government has raised the minimum threshold to initiate insolvency proceedings to Rs. 1 crore from Rs. 1 lakh, which largely insulates MSMEs from action.
- ✓ Also, the fresh initiation of insolvency proceedings was suspended up to one year depending upon the Covid-19 progress.

INTERNATIONAL

- **China - faces a potential second round of Covid-19 wave due to a lack of immunity among its population.**
- ✓ Officials have quarantined 8,000 people and reintroduced lockdown measures in northeastern China
 - ✓ Residents of Jilin in Jilin Province have been mostly barred from leaving the city, after a cluster of infections was reported there and in Shulan, another city under its administration.
 - ✓ China reported five new confirmed infections on May 16, down from eight the previous day.
 - ✓ Two of the five confirmed cases were the 'imported' infections, while three were locally transmitted in the northeastern Chinese city of Jilin.
 - ✓ Jilin is the second largest city of Jilin province, which borders North Korea and Russia.
- ✓ The number of confirmed cases in the mainland now stands at 82,947 and the death toll at 4,634.
- ✓ Elsewhere, in Spain, the number of daily deaths due to Covid-19 fell to 87 for the latest 24-hour period.
 - ✓ It is the lowest figure since March 16



- ✓ In the United Kingdom, Covid death toll rose by 170, the lowest increase in the official toll since March 24.
- ✓ Italy marked an increase of 145 deaths over the last 24 hours.
 - ✓ This is the lowest daily increase recorded since March 4.
- ✓ Brazil has overtaken Spain in number of infections, becoming the fourth worst-hit country
 - ✓ Brazil's registered 14,919 new confirmed cases in the prior 24 hours, taking the total to 2,33,142, behind the U.S., Russia and the U.K.
- ✓ Kuwait and Qatar, meanwhile, announced that they would jail people or fine them thousands of dollars for failing to wear a mask

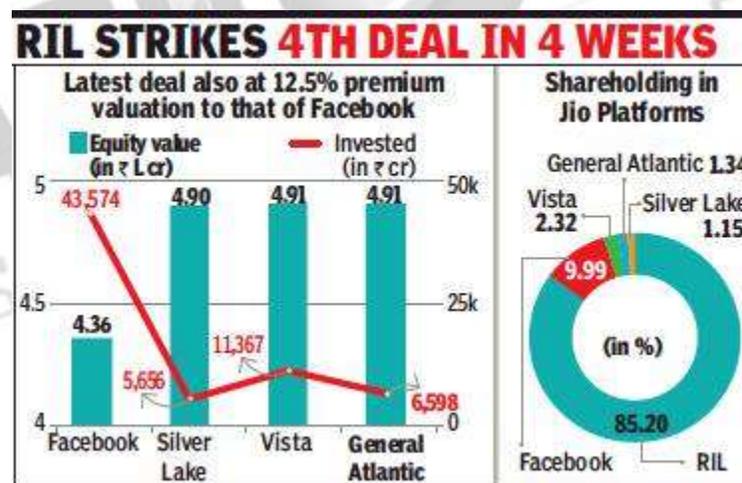
INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **Australia – is pushing for an independent inquiry into the origin of the COVID-19 virus by moving a new resolution named “Resolution on COVID 19 Response”**
- ✓ The European Union will be putting forward a draft resolution before the World Health Assembly on May 18.
- ✓ The resolution lists out a whole range of steps that need to be taken in relation to COVID-19, apart from finding its source.
- ✓ **India has joined a group of 116 nations which have backed the draft EU motion**
- ✓ The motion seeks an “impartial, independent and comprehensive evaluation” of the international health response under WHO to Covid-19 along with a timeline.

- ✓ The US and China have not yet joined the group of countries which have declared support for the motion.
- ✓ The EU resolution too doesn't name China or Wuhan and is backed by China's ally Russia.
- ✓ Apart from EU and Australia, which jointly pushed for an impartial evaluation, UK, Japan, entire African group, Russia, Indonesia, Canada, Brazil, New Zealand, South Korea and Turkey were also among countries which backed the draft motion.
- ✓ India will take over as the chair of the WHO executive board on May 18
- ✓ The World Health Assembly is convened annually in Geneva after the meeting of its Executive Board.
- ✓ Currently, the available information reveals that the coronavirus is a zoonotic disease, which is spread from animals to humans.

ECONOMY

- **New York's General Atlantic - will invest Rs 6,598 crore (\$868 million) into Jio Platforms, marking its largest investment in India.**
- ✓ The deal, which requires regulatory approvals, will give the private equity firm a 1.34% stake in Jio, a subsidiary of Reliance Industries (RIL)



- ✓ General Atlantic will be the fourth American investor in Jio after Vista Equity Partners, Silver Lake Partners and Facebook.
- ✓ With the latest deal, RIL has raised Rs 67,195 crore (around \$9 billion) from external companies in less than four weeks.
- ✓ The General Atlantic's investment assigns Jio an equity value of Rs 4.9 lakh crore, which is similar to the valuation given by the other two private equity firms, Vista and Silver Lake Partners.
- ✓ However, the Rs 4.9-lakh-crore equity valuation represents a 12.5% premium to Facebook's investment in Jio.

- ✓ The money from General Atlantic will help reduce RIL's debt, which stood at Rs 3.36 lakh crore as on March 31
- ✓ The US-based General Atlantic was established in the year 1980
 - ✓ It manages assets worth \$34 billion and has already invested on disruptive companies like Airbnb, Snapchat, Uber, Box, ByteDance among others.
- ✓ The four foreign firms together own 14.8% of Jio, with RIL holding the balance 85.2%.
- ✓ RIL launched Jio in 2016 by offering free voice calls and ultra cheap 4G data plans.
- ✓ Since then, it has transformed India's telecom sector, emerging as the largest player with 388 million subscribers.
- ✓ General Atlantic's deal with Reliance Jio is its largest till date in Asia.
- ✓ It has invested in other Indian companies as well in past, some of which include PNB Housing Finance, Byju's, Mu Sigma and IIFL Wealth Management.
- ✓ Earlier, Vista Equity Partners announced that it will be picking up a 2.32% stake in Jio for ₹11,367 crore on May 8.
- ✓ Before that, another US private equity firm Silver Lake committed to investing around ₹5,655.75 crore for a 1.15% stake in Jio Platforms
- ✓ Prior to this, Facebook announced that it will invest about \$5.7 billion for a 9.99% stake in Reliance Jio Platforms on April 22.
- ✓ RIL is the major provider of cellular and digital services in the country
- ✓ Its other digital properties and investments includes Jio Cinema, Jio Saavn and Haaptik, which are housed in Jio Platforms.

NEW PROTOCOL IN AIRPORTS – A REPORT

- **The Airports Authority of India (AAI) – has announced new protocol for the checkout and screening of domestic passengers in the airports.**
- ✓ The AAI and ministry of civil aviation have suggested that domestic passengers reach the airport two to three hours before departure to avoid delays caused by social distancing restrictions
- ✓ In addition to social distancing norms, AAI is planning to try used camera-based systems to check tickets and IDs at the entry gates of terminals
- ✓ The check-in counters will close almost an hour before departure.



OVER THE LONG HAUL

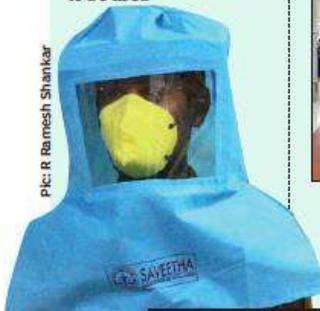
With airports seen as a potential space for the spread of Covid-19, here are some of the changes brought in by Airports Authority of India (AAI) that passengers can expect at the city airport

GENERAL GUIDELINES



- > Extensive use of protection gear by staff and passengers
- > All airport staff to maintain social distance while working
- > Curbs on airport operations to 20% of scheduled flights
- > Touchscreen feedback machines to be withdrawn
- > Display of Do's and Don'ts for awareness of passengers along with pre-recorded messages at regular intervals
- > Limited number of sanitised baggage trolleys to be used

Pic: R Ramesh Shankar



PRECAUTIONS BY AAI

- > Sanitisation of all touch points every 3 hours
- > Hand sanitisers at all check-in counters
- > In reserved lounge, only tea and biscuits to be served
- > Markings for social distancing placed in washrooms
- > 17 bio-hazard bins to be placed across the terminal



PASSENGER HYGIENE NORMS



All flyers must have the Aarogya Setu app installed

Flyers to be encouraged to do web check-in and print boarding passes at home



Flyers encouraged to use staircases, escalators; only 2 people allowed in lifts



Hands-free sanitisers to be placed at several locations around airport

Mandatory self-declaration during the flights

Flyers to use masks and gloves at the airport and on plane

SECURITY CLEARANCE

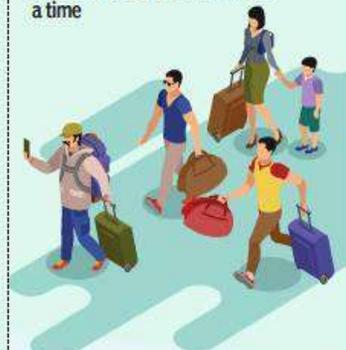
CISF staff to use cape or hazmat suit, baggage trays and scanners to be sanitised every 3 hours

CHECK-IN

Check-in counters will have glass or fibre shields

SECURITY HOLD AREA

- > Sitting together prohibited. Physical distancing must be maintained between people
- > Zone-wise seating as per boarding gates
- > Alternate gates to be used for boarding
- > Boarding in batches of 15 people
- > Eateries to be open but only for takeaways
- > Nursing rooms to be kept open but only one mom allowed at a time
- > Smoking lounge will be open but only 4 people can use it at a time



ARRIVAL AREA

- > Touch-free hand sanitisation devices
- > Social distance markers at baggage carousels
- > Health desks at both exits with thermal scanning
- > Writing desks and self-declaration forms to be taken
- > State govt to depute medical staff at exits for mandatory screening
- > Fumigation and fogging of the arrival area on daily basis
- > Regular sanitisation every 3 hours

OUTSIDE THE TERMINAL

- ID checking to be through cameras
- Floor marking for social distancing
- Health desks for thermal screening

✓ The trial runs of the new procedures for check-ins have already begun at the airports