

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MAY 20, 2020

TAMIL NADU

- **Tamil Nadu - recorded a surge with 688 new cases of COVID-19 on May 19, taking the state's tally to 12,448**
- ✓ On the day, Chennai too witnessed a sharp rise
- ✓ It had accounted for 552, or 80% of the new cases, taking its total to 7,672, of which 5,691 are active cases.
- ✓ Of the 688 patients — 407 men and 281 women — 87 had returned from abroad and other States.
- ✓ On the day, three more persons died in the State, which included a 64-year-old man, a resident of Tiruvallur, admitted to the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital (RGGGH) , a 72-year-old man and a resident of Chennai, referred from a private hospital to RGGGH and an 82-year-old man from Chennai, admitted to RGGGH
- ✓ Till now, the capital city alone reported 58 of the 84 deaths in the State.
- ✓ The State's recovery rate now stands at 39%
- ✓ A total of 4,895 persons discharged so far, which included 489 persons who were discharged on the day.
- ✓ There are 7,466 active cases, and 4,775 individuals suspected to have symptoms of COVID-19 are lodged in isolation wards.
- ✓ While Chennai reported the maximum number of cases with 552 cases, Chengalpattu reported 22 more cases and Tiruvallur eight cases.
- ✓ There were five cases reported in Kancheepuram, three in Thanjavur, two each in Kanyakumari and Ramanathapuram, and one each in Dindigul, Kallakurichi, Nagapattinam, Ranipet, Theni, Thoothukudi and Tiruchi.
- ✓ The number of samples tested stood at 10,333, while the number of persons tested was 9,844.
- ✓ The total number of samples tested so far in the State is 3,48,174.
- ✓ Two more testing facilities were approved - the Government District Headquarters Hospital, Namakkal and VRR Diagnostics, Chennai.

- ✓ With this, there are 63 testing facilities in the State.
- **On May 19, Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami - laid the foundation stone for the construction of a government medical college at Perumbakkam in Tiruvallur district through video conference.**
 - ✓ The medical college will be constructed at a total cost of ₹385 crore and provide 150 MBBS seats.
 - ✓ For the construction of the college, 60% of the funds would be borne by the Centre, while the remaining would be provided by the State government
 - ✓ Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam, Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar, Chief Secretary K. Shanmugam, Health Secretary Beela Rajesh were present during the 'virtual' inauguration.
- **The State Health Department - has revised the discharge policy for COVID-19 patients and has issued fresh guidelines for the management of the viral disease**
 - ✓ The patients with mild or very mild symptoms, and those in the pre-symptomatic stage admitted to COVID-19 Care Centres (CCCs), can be discharged after 10 days from the date of testing positive, or the date of the start of home isolation, or the date of admission to a CCC, provided that they have no fever for three consecutive days.
 - ✓ The moderate cases, which are asymptomatic for three consecutive days and can maintain oxygen saturation without support, can be discharged after 10 days of symptom onset — absence of fever without antipyretics, resolution of breathlessness and no oxygen requirement
 - ✓ In case symptoms persist and the demand for oxygen therapy continues, they can be discharged only after clinical symptoms are resolved and they have the ability to maintain oxygen saturation for three consecutive days.
 - ✓ As per the Government of India's guidelines, there is no need for testing for both categories of patients prior to their discharge, and patients should be advised to undergo home isolation for seven days after their discharge.
 - ✓ As per the earlier protocol, patients had to test negative twice to be discharged.
 - ✓ The containment operations would be considered to be over in 14 days, if there are no active cases in the zone during this period, starting from the date on which a positive case was last confirmed.
 - ✓ A containment zone is created around areas where a cluster of cases or clusters of cases emerge.
 - ✓ A cluster is an area where more than five index cases have been reported or five or more families have been affected by COVID-19.
 - ✓ If more than five cases or five households are affected, then, in the case of a village, the entire village is demarcated as a containment zone, while the affected street or part of the street is demarcated in a Corporation or a Municipality.

- ✓ In the case of a multi-storey building, either the entire building or a part of it will be demarcated.
- **The Class X board examinations - have been rescheduled by the State Government, and will be held from June 15 to 25**
- ✓ This was announced by the State Minister for School Education K.A. Sengottaiyan on May 19
- ✓ The exams were originally supposed to be held from June 1 to 12.
- ✓ As per the new norms, each classroom will have a maximum of 10 students writing the exams
- ✓ A total of 12,690 centres have been chosen for the current year's examinations.

STATES

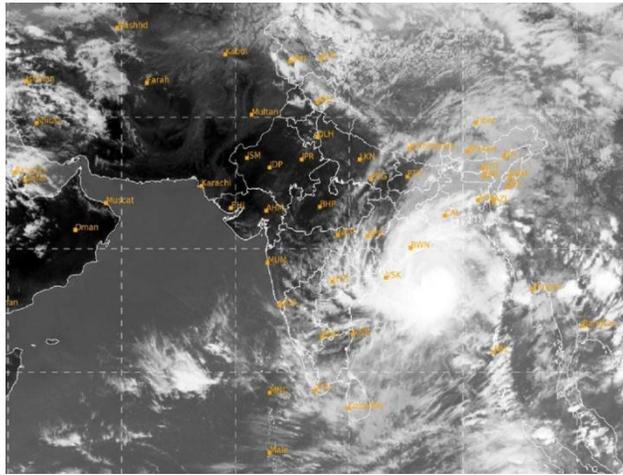
- **Madhya Pradesh Government – has launched the Charan Paduka Campaign for the benefit of migrant workers passing through the state.**
- ✓ As per the campaign, the migrant workers were provided with shoes and slippers to reduce their leg pain.
- ✓ The Charan Paduka campaign is being conducted by the Police of Madhya Pradesh state.
- ✓ It was started from Rau police station of Indore

NATIONAL

- **On May 19, India - reported 5,680 new cases, taking the tally to 1,06,425, according to reports from the State Health Departments.**
- ✓ This is the single biggest jump in infections so far
- ✓ The number of active cases stood at 60,885, while 42,224 people have recovered.
- ✓ With 158 deaths reported on the day, the toll rose to 3,316.
- ✓ Maharashtra accounts for around half of the deaths after reporting over 2,000 new cases for the third day in a row.
- ✓ Out of this, over 1,400 infections were detected in Mumbai alone, which was its second highest tally in a day.
- ✓ Delhi too showed the biggest surge, after adding as many as 500 cases taking its total tally over 10,500.
- ✓ Apart from Delhi, Rajasthan (338), Uttar Pradesh (292), Assam registered their highest total as on date in a single day.
- ✓ Uttar Pradesh reported more cases due to migrants, while Rajasthan breached the 300 mark to take its tally to 5,845 cases on date.
- ✓ Gujarat recorded 395 new COVID-19 infections and 25 deaths, bringing its total to 12,141 cases and 719 fatalities.
- ✓ The State is the second largest in COVID-19 casualties after Maharashtra.

- ✓ In Ahmedabad, 262 new cases and 21 deaths were reported, taking its cumulative tally have increased to 8,945 cases and 576 deaths.
 - ✓ Ahmedabad's death rate is almost 6.5%, which is nearly double the national average mortality rate.
 - ✓ With 149 new cases and three deaths, Karnataka had another record single-day spike on the day.
 - ✓ Over 75% of the new COVID-19 cases were those with travel history to Maharashtra.
 - ✓ Telangana recorded four more deaths, while two people died in Andhra Pradesh.
 - ✓ Kerala had 12 cases on the day, all of them registered as 'imported' cases.
 - ✓ The country is registering a recovery rate of 38.73%
 - ✓ A record number of 1,08,233 samples were tested on the day, taking the total so far to 24,25,742
- **On May 19, the Union Health Ministry - announced fresh workplace guidelines**
- ✓ As per the new norms, anyone diagnosed as a suspected/confirmed case of COVID-19 should immediately inform the office authorities and isolate themselves.
 - ✓ There was no need to close the entire office building/halt work if one or two cases were detected
 - ✓ However, in case of a large outbreak, the building will be shut down for 48 hours and disinfected
 - ✓ The guidelines make it mandatory to maintain a physical distance of at least one metre to be followed at all times along with use of face covers/masks.
 - ✓ The Ministry also said that no decision has been taken as yet to replace hydroxychloroquine (HCQ), as a prophylactic, with HIV combination drugs, after experts questioned the effectiveness of the malarial drug.
- **Super cyclone Amphan, which has weakened slightly - is expected to make landfall between Digha in West Bengal and Hatiya Islands in Bangladesh on May 20**
- ✓ This was announced by the India Meteorological Department (MD) on May 19.
 - ✓ As a precautionary measure, about 3,35,000 people in West Bengal and Odisha have been evacuated.
 - ✓ On May 19, the cyclone was lying about 360 km south of Paradip in Odisha and 510 km south-southwest of Digha.
 - ✓ Very high wind speeds ranging up to 155-165 kmph gusting to 185 kmph are expected along the coast
 - ✓ It will be accompanied by heavy rainfall and storm surges of 4-5 metres in the coastal districts of the West Bengal.
 - ✓ Districts of East Medinipur, South & North 24 Parganas, Howrah, Hooghly, and Kolkata are expected to be impacted in West Bengal

- ✓ 36 teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) have been deployed in both States.



- ✓ Rescue and relief teams of the Army and Navy along with ships and aircraft of the Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard have been put on standby.
 - ✓ The Odisha government has deployed 16 units of the NDRF and 15 units of the Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force.
 - ✓ Four districts — Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapara and Jagatsinghpur — were likely to be severely affected.
 - ✓ The impact of the super storm is likely to be stronger than that of Cyclones Aila (2009) and Bulbul (2019).
 - ✓ Super cyclone Amphan is the strongest storm to have formed in the Bay of Bengal since the Super Cyclone of 1999 that ravaged Paradip in Odisha
 - ✓ Cyclone Amphan intensified from a category-1 cyclone to category-5 in 18 hours, in an unusually quick evolution.
 - ✓ The cyclone's intensity is expected to be similar to Fani, the strongest tropical cyclone to strike India since the 1999 Odisha cyclone, that hit the eastern coast in May last year.
 - ✓ Fani, a category 4 cyclone, swept through the Odisha coast, was fuelled by high temperatures in the Bay of Bengal.
 - ✓ Between 1965 and 2017, around 46 severe cyclonic storms have hit Bay of Bengal
- **The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) - has alerted all the States, Union Territories and the Central agencies on malicious software 'Cerberus' that uses an update related to the COVID-19 pandemic.**
- ✓ The alert has been sent on the basis of inputs received from the Interpol.
 - ✓ The software is primarily used to steal financial data, such as credit card numbers.
 - ✓ This malicious software impersonates and send SMS with a COVID-19-related content to download the embedded malicious link.
 - ✓ It deploys its malicious application usually spread via phishing campaigns to trick users into installing it on their smartphones

- ✓ The Trojan can also use overlay attacks to trick victims into providing personal information and can capture two-factor authentication details.
- ✓ The Interpol had recently launched an awareness campaign on cyberthreats during the COVID-19 pandemic, in coordination with the law enforcement agencies across the world.
- **On May 19, the Railways - announced that it would run 200 new trains with a timetable from June 1.**
 - ✓ The new trains would be added apart from the Shramik Special trains, whose numbers too would be doubled soon to provide relief to migrants.
 - ✓ The new trains would be non-AC trains, for which booking would be done online.
 - ✓ The Railways had earlier this month started running 15 pairs of special trains to and from New Delhi as part of efforts to restart passenger services after a gap of almost two months.
 - ✓ For these trains, the advance booking period was kept at seven days.
 - ✓ The Railways has till now run 1,600 Shramik Special trains transporting about 21.5 lakh migrants in 19 days
- **The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare - has issued specific guidelines for the functioning of dental clinics in Lockdown 4.0.**
 - ✓ It had warned that some patients making dental visits may be asymptomatic carriers of COVID-19 and emphasised that all those visiting a dentist must be treated with due precautions.
 - ✓ Most dental procedures require close contact with the patient's oral cavity, saliva, blood, and respiratory tract secretions, and saliva is rich in COVID-19 viral load.
 - ✓ Hence all urgent procedures should be undertaken only after consultation, tele-triage, consent, and through pre-fixed appointments only
 - ✓ The dental clinics would remain closed in the containment zones.
 - ✓ However, they could continue to provide tele-triage.
 - ✓ In the red zone, emergency dental procedures can be performed
 - ✓ In orange/green zones, the dental clinics will function to provide consultations.
 - ✓ Dental operations should be restricted to emergency and urgent treatment procedures only
 - ✓ Oral cancer screening under the National Cancer Screening programme shall also be postponed until new guidelines are issued because of the high-risk associated with the examination of the oral cavity.
- **Six Indian cities - have been given a five-star rating for their garbage management by the Central government on May 19, 2020**
 - ✓ Chhattisgarh's Ambikapur, Madhya Pradesh's Indore, Gujarat's Rajkot and Surat, Karnataka's Mysore and Maharashtra's Navi Mumbai have received 'five-star' garbage-free cities tag from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

Star Rating

Garbage Free Cities

5 Star★★★★★

Ambikapur

Rajkot

Surat

Mysore

Indore

Navi Mumbai

3 Star★★★

Tirupati

Vijayawada

Chandigarh

Bhilai Nagar

Jashpur Nagar (M)

Narharpur (NP)

Patan (NP)

Raigarh

Rajnandgaon

Bilaspur

Saragaon (NP)

Barsur(NP)

New Delhi

Ahmedabad

Bagasra

Gandhinagar

Jamnagar

Talala

Karnal

Jamshedpur

Bhopal

Burhanpur

Chhindwara

Kanthaphod

Katni

Khargone

Omkareshwar

Pithampur

Singrauli

Ujjain

Ambarnath

Bhiwandi Nizampur

Brahmapuri

Chandrapur_M

Deolali Pravara

Dhule

Gadhinglai

Indapur

Jalgaon

Jalna

Jejuri

Junnar

Kagal

Karhad

Khed

Lonavala

Mahabaleshwar

Malkapur_S

Matheran

Mauda CT

Mira-Bhayandar

Murgud

Narkhed

Panchgani

Panhala

Rajapur

Ratnagiri

Sasvad

Shirdi

Tasgaon

Thane

Vadgaon

Vengurla

Vita

Nawanshahr

1 Star★

Chirala

GVMC Visakhapatnam

Palamaneru

Sattenapalli

Baramkela (NP)

Berla (NP)

Chikhalakasa (NP)

Katghora (NP)

Pakhanjur (NP)

Delhi Cantt.

Bhavnagar

Tarsadi

Vadodara

Visavadar

Vyara

Rohtak

Badnawar

Gwalior

Hathod

Khandwa

Maheshwar

Sardarpur

Shahganj

Ahmednagar

Akola

Anjangaon Surji

Ashta_MH

Ballarpur

Barshi

Bhagur

Daund

Georai

Jamner

Jawhar

Kalyan Dombivali

Khanapur_M

Khapa

Khopoli

Kulgaon-Badlapur

Kurundvad

Mahad

Mahadula

Malkapur_K

Mangalvedhe

Murbad

Nagbhid

Nashik

Paithan

Panvel

Pen

Phulambri

Rajura

Ramtek

Raver

Sailu

Sangamner

Shahada

Shendurjanaghat

Shirpur- Warwade

Uran Islampur

Vaijapur

Varangaon

Vasai Virar

Waduj

Aligarh

Gajraula (NPP)

Ghaziabad

Jhansi

Lucknow

Noida



Source: Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs

PTI GRAPHICS

- ✓ Overall, six cities were rated 5-star, 65 cities were rates 3-star and 70 cities were rated with one star.
- ✓ A total of 1,435 cities applied for the 'Star Rating Assessment'
- ✓ While 698 cities cleared the desktop assessment, 141 cities have been certified with Star Rating during field assessment.
- ✓ During the release of the rankings, the Housing and Urban Affairs Minister, Hardeep Singh Puri also launched the revised protocol for the star rating of garbage free cities.
- ✓ The Ministry has now brought importance of sanitation and effective solid waste management to the forefront in the rankings due to the coronavirus crisis.
- ✓ The star rating protocol was launched by the Ministry in January 2018
- ✓ It aims to create a mechanism for cities to achieve garbage free status and motivate other cities to achieve higher degrees of cleanliness.

- On May 19, 2020, the Indian Railways - launched the country's first 12,000 HP electric locomotive into operation.



- ✓ The locomotive was constructed by the French Company Alstom under the 'Make in India' initiative.
- ✓ It was manufactured at the Madhepura Electric Locomotive in Bihar.
- ✓ The train is capable of hauling 6000 tonnes at a top speed of 120 km/hr.
- ✓ It was manufactured as a joint venture between the Indian and French share holding of 74% and 26%.
- ✓ With this, India has become the sixth country in the world to develop a high HP locomotive.
- ✓ The project is considered as the largest FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) in the railways sector.
- ✓ According to the terms of the Indo-French project, around 4 locomotives were to be delivered in 2018, 35 in 2019-20, 60 in 2020-21 and 100 every year till the end of 11-year long delivery

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- Union Health Minister, Harsh Vardhan – represented India in the 73rd World Health Assembly (WHA) on May 18, 2020, via video conferencing.



- ✓ WHA is a decision-making body of the World Health Organisation (WHO).
- ✓ During the virtual meet, the minister highlighted the timely and proactive measures undertaken by the country to tackle the spread of COVID-19 pandemic
- ✓ The Minister also announced that India has also supplied COVID-19 related essential medicines to 123 nations under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi.
- ✓ WHO Director-General, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus announced that the forum provides an opportunity for the health leaders to fight COVID-19 in unity and in solidarity.
- ✓ During the meeting, it was agreed that the WHO will be initiating an independent review into its handling of the coronavirus pandemic
- ✓ The European Union drafted a resolution to call for an independent inquiry into the coronavirus pandemic, which was backed by over 116 nations including India
- ✓ The motion 'Resolution on COVID 19 Response' calls for a review of the coronavirus origin with the aim to put to rest the international blame game about its origin and the response
- ✓ Currently, the available information reveals that the coronavirus is a zoonotic disease, which is spread from animals to humans.
- ✓ The comprehensive draft resolution is co-sponsored by Australia
- ✓ The draft resolution has 116 co-sponsors now including India, EU nations, entire African Group and Australia, Russia, Japan and the United Kingdom.
- ✓ The United States has not extended its support to the independent inquiry but it has expressed its no-objection on the matter.
- ✓ China is also not its signatory but it also expressed its no-objection.
- ✓ In the forum, the United States has condemned Taiwan's exclusion from the World Health Assembly.
- ✓ China still considers Taiwan as a part of its territory and feels that Taiwan should not have any diplomatic relations with countries that recognise it as an independent state.
- ✓ Taiwan had been requesting to join this year's World Health Assembly as an observer after its successful tackling of the coronavirus outbreak despite its close proximity with Wuhan, the original epicentre of the pandemic.
- ✓ Due to its exclusion from the WHO, Taiwan has been launching its own efforts to develop a vaccine while working along with other industry partners.
- ✓ Meanwhile, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan is likely to take charge as the Chairman of the World Health Organization (WHO) Executive Board on May 22, 2020.
- ✓ He is expected to succeed Japan's Dr. Hiroki Nakatani, who is the current Chairman of the 34-member board.
- ✓ India was elected to the executive board for a period of three years beginning May 2020.
- ✓ The post of Chairman of the WHO Executive Board is rotational and is held for one year among the regional groups.

- ✓ The chairmanship of India was unanimously decided by WHO's South-East Asia group in 2019
- ✓ The Health Minister will just chair the WHO Executive Board meetings and is not a full-time role.
- ✓ World Health Assembly, world's highest health body, is a forum through which its 194 member states govern the World Health Organisation (WHO).
- ✓ The WHO Executive Board convenes twice a year, once in January for the main meeting and for the second time in May, which is a shorter meeting that is held following the World Health Assembly.
- ✓ The WHA members generally meet every year in Geneva, Switzerland at the Palace of Nations, which is also a location of WHO headquarters.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **US based firm, Moderna's Coronavirus Vaccine - becomes the first in the world to show positive results by generating immune response against the SARS-CoV-2 Virus (COVID-19).**
- ✓ The 'mRNA-1273' vaccine has been developed by Biotechnology firm Moderna Inc in collaboration with the National Institutes of Health (NIH).
- ✓ The vaccine was considered a 'success' after the first batch of 8 people in United States who received two doses began to show positive results.
- ✓ LNP-encapsulated mRNA-1273 vaccine works on the concept of messenger RNA (mRNA).
- ✓ It injects mRNA into the human body to generate immune response against the Covid-19 virus.
- ✓ The vaccine-injected people produced antibodies that were able to stop the reproduction of virus, which is considered as one of the key requirement for tackling the coronavirus.
- ✓ The level of these neutralizing antibodies in volunteers was almost similar to the levels found in patients who recovered from the Coronavirus.
- ✓ The health professionals gave three doses of vaccine to volunteers - low, medium and high.
- ✓ The positive results witnessed in volunteers are based on low and medium doses with not-so-severe side reactions.
- ✓ The Vaccine has been under Phase-1 of Clinical trials on healthy volunteers since March 2020.
- ✓ Moderna will soon commence the second phase of clinical trials of mRNA-1273 wherein 600 people will be involved.
- ✓ The company has already received the approval of FDA in this regard.
- ✓ The final and third phase of vaccine will be carried out in July on thousands of healthy people.
- ✓ If all the trials complete successfully, the vaccine could be ready and be available in market for Coronavirus treatment by December 2020 or early 2021

DEFENCE

- **The Indian Air Force (IAF) - has decided to drop three major acquisition projects worth Rs. 8000 crore following the central government push for 'Make in India' initiative.**
- ✓ These projects included - IAF's plan to buy 20 additional Hawk Planes from Britain, 38 Pilatus basic trainer aircraft from Switzerland, and the plan to upgrade 30 Jaguar fighter planes with engines from Honeywell Corporation from the US.
- ✓ This was announced by the Air Force Chief RKS Bhaduria, while stating that the country will be using the support of HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Limited) for its requirement.
- ✓ Instead of 38 additional Pilatus basic training aircraft, worth around Rs. 1000 crore from Switzerland, HAL will be supplying HTT-40 trainer planes, which is already in the advanced stages of development.
- ✓ The deal of 20 additional hawk planes, worth around Rs. 2000 crore, has been dropped as the project was stuck for over 3-4 years mainly because of the price of the planes.

SPORTS

- **On May 18, the International Cricket Council's (ICC) cricket committee - recommended the ban on the use of saliva to shine balls during matches.**



- ✓ The recommendation is expected to counter the risks posed by COVID-19 and to protect the players and match officials.
- ✓ The committee was chaired by former India leg-spinner Anil Kumble
- ✓ It was convened to specifically address the issues related to COVID-19 in a conference call.
- ✓ The virtual call also dealt with other issues regarding the maintenance of the condition of the match ball and the appointment of referees and non-neutral umpires to the international cricket, due to the ban on international flights and quarantine regime.
- ✓ Apart from this, the committee also recommended to increase use of DRS review per innings from two to three.

- ✓ The cricket committee noted the medical advice that it is unlikely that the virus will be transmitted through sweat and there will be no need to prohibit the use of sweat to polish the ball.
- ✓ The recommendations proposed by the cricket committee will be presented to the ICC Chief Executives Committee in early June 2020 for the approval.
- ✓ Shining the cricket ball is one of the major things for bowlers as it extracts 'reverse' swing from the ball.

INTERNATIONAL DAY

➤ World Bee Day – May 20



- ✓ The World Bee Day is celebrated every year by the United Nations to commemorate the birthday of Slovenian apiculture pioneer, Anton Jansa.
- ✓ The first ever World Bee Day was officially observed in 2018.
- ✓ Theme 2020 – 'Save the Bees'
- ✓ The day aims to raise awareness about the importance of pollinators, hummingbirds, butterflies, bats.
- ✓ The Convention on Biological Diversity focuses on conserving these pollinators as well.
- ✓ In 2000, the International Pollinator Initiative was launched at the COP V (Conference of Parties)
- ✓ Bees are the greatest pollinators, contributing to more than 35% of world agriculture
- ✓ The International Pollinator Initiative mainly aims to promote coordinated worldwide action on the conservation of pollinators
- ✓ The initiative, which has India also as a partner, is expected to run till 2030.
- ✓ The Convention on Biological Diversity is a multilateral treaty.
- ✓ It was signed at the Earth Summit that was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.