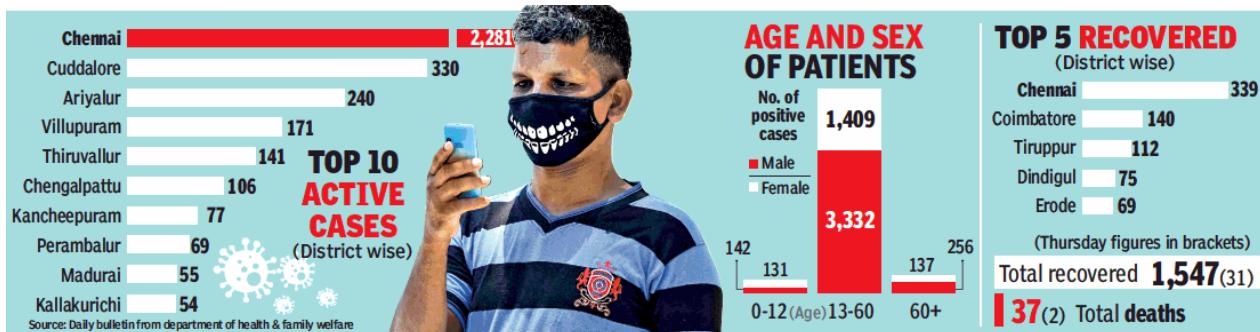
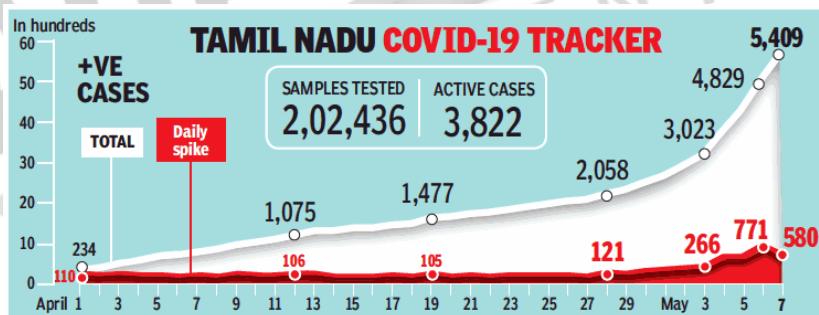


## EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MAY 8, 2020

### TAMIL NADU

- On May 7, Tamil Nadu - reported 580 Covid-19 cases, taking the state's cumulative infections above 5,000 to 5,409.
- ✓ Of the new cases, 316 were recorded in Chennai, taking the capital city's tally to 2,644.
- ✓ Apart from Chennai, Tiruvallur recorded 63 cases taking its total to 192, Chengalpet recorded 13 cases taking its cumulative tally to 158, and Kancheepuram recorded two cases taking its count to 89.



- ✓ On the day, atleast 22 districts reported positive cases due to the Koyambedu cluster, which includes Villupuram (45 new cases), Perambalur (33), Cuddalore (32), Ariyalur (24), 17 in Tiruvannamalai, 13 in Chengalpattu, seven in Ranipet, five in Tiruchi, four in Krishnagiri, three each in Theni and Tirunelveli, two each in

Kancheepuram, Karur, Pudukottai, Ramanathapuram, Thanjavur, Tirupattur and one each in Kallakurichi, Thoothukudi and Vellore.

- ✓ On the day, nineteen more children aged 0 to 12 have tested positive, taking the total number of children affected in the State to 273.
  - ✓ The state's toll increased to 37 with the reporting of two deaths – a 56-year-old woman admitted to Kilpauk Medical College died on May 6 and a 48-year-old woman treated at the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital died on May 7.
  - ✓ On May 7, the health authorities have conducted tests for 14,102 people as against 13,281 a day earlier.
  - ✓ As on date, the State has tested 2,02,436 samples and 1,92,574 individuals, while the testing of 1,196 samples is under process.
  - ✓ According to data from the ICMR National Institute of Epidemiology, Chennai has done 2,476 tests per million compared to the national average of 983.
  - ✓ On a comparative scale, Maharashtra has done 1,549 tests per million, Delhi 3,578, Andhra Pradesh has done 2,845, Kerala 977 and Gujarat 1,339.
  - ✓ Tamil Nadu has reported 63 positive cases per million compared to the national average of 38 positive cases for the same population count
  - ✓ On the day, another 31 persons were discharged from various hospitals in the state, taking the total number of persons recovered to 1,547.
  - ✓ As on date, there are 3,822 active cases in the state, while the number of persons admitted to isolation wards stands at 3,935.
  - ✓ Meanwhile, the Greater Chennai Corporation has identified seven zones that have reported a majority of COVID-19 positive cases for intensive screening purposes.
  - ✓ Thiru. Vi. Ka. Nagar, Royapuram, Kodambakkam, Anna Nagar, Teynampet, Tondiarpet and Valasaravakkam zones had reported most of the positive cases in the city.
  - ✓ As many as 451 containment zones have been created to prevent the spread of infection.
- **On May 7, a boiler blast – was reported at NLC India Limited's Thermal power station (TPS) II in Neyveli, with eight workers sustaining burn injuries.**



- ✓ Two of the eight injured are regular workers while others are contract workers.

- ✓ All the injured were administered first aid treatment at NLCIL Hospital and then referred to a private hospital in Trichy for advanced treatment.
  - ✓ As per the company sources, excess heat and high pressure may have caused the explosion of the outlet unit of the boiler
  - ✓ However, the company has constituted an expert committee to probe the reason for the blast.
  - ✓ It may be recalled that there was a minor fire accident at the conveyor belt in the TPS II two days ago.
  - ✓ The TPS II has seven units, with a capacity of 210MW each
  - ✓ During the day, only a section of the total workforce of 2000 employees was on duty due to the lockdown restrictions.
- **On May 7, the Tamil Nadu government - increased the retirement age of its staff from 58 years to 59 years**
- ✓ The move is seen as an attempt to postpone an outlay of □5,000 crore towards retirement benefits for the current fiscal to more than 25,000 government employees, who were set to superannuate this financial year.
  - ✓ The order has come into immediate effect and applicable to those who will retire beginning May 31
  - ✓ It will be applicable to all government employees, teaching and nonteaching staff in government and aided educational institutions, and employees of constitutional statutory bodies, PSUs, corporations, local bodies, boards, commissions and societies.
  - ✓ The move is expected to benefit around 12 lakh-odd government employees and teachers, whose DA increase and leave surrender facility have been frozen for a year.
  - ✓ Earlier, the State government, during the tenure of former Chief Minister Dr. M.G.Ramachandran, raised the age of superannuation from 55 to 58 years in April 1979.
- **The Madras Medical College and Madurai Medical College - will soon start trials for convalescent plasma therapy for the treatment of Covid-19 disease patients.**
- ✓ Both the institutes have already got the nod from the Centre for taking up the trial.
  - ✓ The Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital (RGGGH) has got approval for both the multi-centre trial under the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)
  - ✓ It had also got a separate approval from the Drug Control General of India and Clinical Trial Registry of India institutional trial.
  - ✓ The ICMR has already initiated a multi-center clinical trial, in which both RGGGH and Madurai Medical College are taking part.

- The state government - is making arrangements to send more than 9,000 guest workers, pilgrims and patients and their caregivers to Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal on special trains
- ✓ These point-to-point trains are scheduled to be run from Chennai, Coimbatore and Vellore, from May 8
- ✓ The arrangement comes a day after sending 1,130 patients and their caretakers from Vellore to Ranchi by train

## HOMEBOUND

Guest workers registered on TN govt portal	<b>60%</b>
<b>2.75 lakh</b>	of registered workers from Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal
Tamils stranded in other states	<b>50,000</b>
Tamils stuck in foreign countries	<b>60,000</b>

- ✓ The stranded people will be sent in seven batches to the three states.
- ✓ A special train to Bihar, two to Jharkhand and four to West Bengal would be operated from Chennai, Coimbatore and Vellore.
- ✓ On May 8, another train will take 1,140 fishermen and workers to Srikakulam in Andhra Pradesh, about 911km from Chennai.
- ✓ The second train to Jharkhand from Katpadi would also start on the same night with 1,140 patients and caretakers.
- ✓ Meanwhile, the government is considering sending workers belonging to neighbouring districts of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka and Kerala by road.
- ✓ On May 5, chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami hinted that guest workers and others stranded here would be sent home in batches by train after making requisite arrangements
  
- The Airports Authority of India (AAI) - has started the preparatory works to receive the 1,800 people from various countries in Chennai airport from May 8.
- ✓ The authorities have drawn social distancing markers apart from training the safety measures to baggage handlers
- ✓ They have also arranged personal protection equipment for CISF and some airline staff.
- ✓ The AAI has worked out fresh norms to be followed by airlines, ground staff, immigration, customs, CISF and medical staff to handle the flight and passengers.

- ✓ Aerobridges have been assigned for planes to dock and passengers will disembark in batches of 15 to 20 people.
- ✓ Once the passengers are sprayed with sanitisers on their hands, they will head towards the medical counter for thermal check.

## WHAT'S IN STORE

- 15 to 20 passengers disembark at a time
- Social distancing markers inside aerobridge and at immigration counters
- More than one baggage conveyor to be used to deliver bags
- Medical counter set up for thermal scanning
- Those with flu-like symptoms to be moved to hospitals
- Quarantine centres ready at Air Force station in Tambaram, star hotels, govt institutions



File photo

- Those who can afford it can stay at the hotels

- ✓ Passengers who have high temperature or flu-like symptoms will be moved to a small isolation unit in the terminal from where they will be sent directly to a hospital.
- ✓ All employees, including baggage handlers, have been told to wear masks and gloves.
- ✓ The pilots and the cabin crew are advised to wear hazmat-type overalls
- ✓ A total of about 200 passengers each will be arriving on flights from Dubai, Kuwait, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Muscat, London, Manila, Dhaka and from the US via Mumbai.
- ✓ The first two flights are expected to arrive from UAE late on May 8.
- ✓ The state government will be coordinating with the AAI to move passengers to quarantine facilities.

## STATES

- **The Uttar Pradesh (UP) government - has cleared an ordinance that suspends most of the labor laws for a period of three years**
- ✓ The decision has been taken to revive the state's economy by encouraging new investments and new industrial infrastructure and also for the benefit of existing industries and factories
- ✓ Currently, the economic activity of the state has been disrupted due to the lockdown following the Covid-19 pandemic

- ✓ On May 7, the UP cabinet gave a nod to the 'Uttar Pradesh Temporary Exemption from Certain Labour Laws Ordinance, 2020'
- ✓ The new ordinance relaxes all labor laws in the state, except three Acts
  - ✓ The Acts which continue to be in force include Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976; Employee Compensation Act, 1923; Building and Other Construction Workers Act, 1996; and Section 5 of Payment of Wages Act, 1936
  - ✓ These Acts are related to abolition of bonded labor, ex gratia to workers in case of work-related diseases and disabilities, and timely wage payments.
- ✓ Apart from these Acts, all labor laws related to labor unions, settling work disputes, regulations for working conditions, contracts, among others shall be suspended for three years in Uttar Pradesh.
  - ✓ This includes 38 laws such as The Minimum Wages Act, The Maternity Benefit Act, The Equal Remuneration Act, The Trade Unions Act, The Industrial Employment Act, The Industrial Disputes Act, The Factories Act.
- ✓ The ordinance covers all the existing industries and manufacturing units as well as the new ones that are expected to be set up in the next few years.
- ✓ The ordinance has been sent to Governor Anandiben Patel for her approval.
- ✓ Uttar Pradesh is the second BJP-ruled state to announce the relaxation in labour laws in the last few days.

- **On May 7, Madhya Pradesh - allowed employers to increase working hours in factories by four hours, from eight to 12**
- ✓ It has also allowed up to 72 hours a week in overtime.
  - ✓ This was announced by the State Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan
  - ✓ He announced that the state government will exempt new manufacturing units from all, except a few provisions, in the Factories Act, 1948 for the next 1000 days.
  - ✓ These labour law changes are expected to be passed by the State cabinet on May 8.
  - ✓ These changes will allow more factories to operate without following safety and health norms and give a free hand to new companies to "hire and fire" the workers as per their convenience
  - ✓ The increased working hours are applicable only if employees are willing to work overtime, for which they must be paid separately.

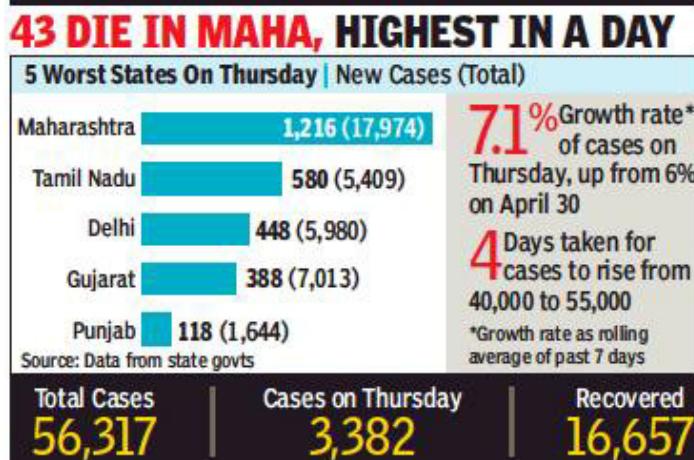
#### New norms to the new factories

- ✓ The newly opened industrial units can organise third-party inspections.
- ✓ They will be exempted from the requirement of keeping registers and inspections, as instead of 61 registers, just one will be maintained.
- ✓ The industries can change shifts as per their convenience.
- ✓ They will not be penalized in case of not maintaining cleanliness on premises and ensuring safe disposal of waste and effluents.

- ✓ Further, maintenance of register of adult and child workers and allowing for advance payments will not apply to new units.
- ✓ The entire chapter on 'Penalties and Procedure', fixing responsibility on employers in case of the violation of the Act, will not be applicable to the new units
- ✓ Further, the employer is not expected to provide the facilities of ventilation, lighting, toilets, sitting facilities, first aid boxes, protective equipment, canteens, crèches, weekly holidays and interval of rest to workers.
- ✓ As per the new exemptions, not even providing drinking water is mandatory.
- ✓ The government has said factory registration will be done in a day now, instead of 30 days
- ✓ The licence should be renewed after 10 years, instead of the current practice of a year.
- ✓ The factories will be exempted for 1,000 days from all provisions of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, except Section 25, which prohibits financial aid for illegal strikes and lockouts.
- ✓ The Labour Department or the labour court will not interfere in the action taken by industries, which means they are free to do things as per their convenience.
- ✓ The aim was to generate employment opportunities, encourage industrial activities, bring in investments, protect the rights of workers, and convert the challenges of a distressed economy hit by Covid-19 into opportunities for the state

## NATIONAL

- On May 7, a total of 3,382 Covid-19 positive cases - were reported across states in the country, as the cumulative count raced past 55,000 and reached 56,317
- ✓ This is the second consecutive day of registering over 3,000 cases, taking just four days to reach the count after crossing 40,000 on May 3.



- ✓ On the day, Maharashtra recorded 1,216 fresh cases, again crossing 1,200 for the second straight day, while the infection touched a new high in Delhi, where 448 more cases emerged.

- ✓ The capital's previous single-day peak was 428 registered on May 5.
- ✓ The country's toll on the day stood at 106, marking the second time more than 100 Covid-19 patients have died in India in a day.
- ✓ Out of this, Maharashtra reported its highest single-day death toll of 43, with Mumbai alone adding 25.
- ✓ As per the latest data, more than 16,600 people have recovered from Covid-19 across the country, accounting for nearly 30% of the total cases so far.
- ✓ The coronavirus count in Gujarat, the second-most affected state, crossed 7,000 on the day.
  - ✓ Out of the new cases, Ahmedabad district alone recorded 275, or 71% of the total.
  - ✓ With 29 deaths in a single day, the infection has so far claimed 415 lives in the state, the second highest after Maharashtra's 694
- ✓ In Odisha, thirty-four people, including 30 migrant workers who had returned from Surat, tested positive for Covid-19.
  - ✓ This is the biggest single day spike in patients so far, and has pushed up the state's total positive cases to 219.
- ✓ In Chhattisgarh, five migrant workers who returned to their homes tested positive, taking the state's tally of coronavirus cases to 132.
  - ✓ Of these, 89 are active cases while 41 have recovered and two have died during treatment.
- ✓ Similarly, two returning migrants from Gurgaon had tested positive in Dumka, Jharkhand.
- ✓ In Telangana, too, three migrant workers tested positive among 15 new cases, taking the total number of positive cases to 1,122
- ✓ In Andhra Pradesh, two persons died and 56 others tested positive for Covid-19, taking the total count to 1,833.
  - ✓ It had reported two deaths, one each in Krishna and Kurnool districts, taking the cumulative toll to 36.
- ✓ Bihar recorded a death and eight new cases, taking its toll to five and the total tally to 550.
- ✓ Rajasthan recorded 110 new cases, including 21 from Jaipur, taking the state's Covid-19 count to 3427 and death toll to 99
- ✓ In Kerala, no new Covid-19 cases were reported for the second consecutive day.
- ✓ At present, only 25 active cases are undergoing treatment in six districts of the state
- ✓ Meanwhile, India's doubling rate for Covid-19 cases worsened to 10.2 days over the last seven days with cases increasing rapidly in states like Maharashtra, Gujarat and Delhi
- ✓ However, there is good news on the improving recovery rate, currently at 28.8%, and the fatality rate at the national level at 3.3%
- ✓ Earlier, on May 5, the health ministry had reported a doubling time of 12 days, the same day which saw the highest jump in cases and deaths.

- ✓ India's testing capacity has also increased to 95,000 per day from around 75,000 daily at the beginning of the week.
- ✓ This is spread out in 327 government laboratories and 118 private laboratories. Cumulatively, over 13.57 lakh tests have been done so far.
- ✓ There are currently 319 unaffected districts in the green zone, 130 red districts and 284 orange ones.
- ✓ On date, 180 districts having no case between seven and 13 days; 164 districts with no case between 14 and 20 days; and 136 districts with no case from 21 to 28 days.
- ✓ On May 7, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan launched the 'Sanjivani' App and two AYUSH-based studies related to COVID-19
  - ✓ The App will assist in collecting information from around 50 lakh people regarding the use of medicines advised by Ayush to boost immunity.
- ✓ During the occasion, the Minister also announced that the clinical trials of Ayush medicines have been started by the Health Ministry for COVID-19.
  - ✓ The trials will be of age-old medicines such as Yashtimadhu, Ashwagandha, and Guduchi Pippali.
  - ✓ It will be a joint initiative between the Ministry of Ayush, the Ministry of Health and Welfare, and the Ministry of Science and Technology via Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) along with the technical support of the Indian Council of Medical Research.
- ✓ Already, the trials of Ayurvedic tablet Zingivir-H has got approval from the clinical trial registry of India (CTRI).
  - ✓ The tablet is currently used for treating respiratory illness, acute viral bronchitis and viral fever
  - ✓ The tablet was developed by Pankajakasthuri Herbal Research Foundation, an ayurvedic organisation from Kerala

- **On May 7, the leakage of toxic styrene gas – was reported in the R R Venkatapuram area of Andhra Pradesh's Visakhapatnam**
- ✓ The leakage from a chemical plant, owned by South Korean firm LG Polymers, left at least 11 people died and hundreds sick.
  - ✓ The gas leak began around 3.30 a.m. in the plant, which is situated in the midst of a densely populated area.
  - ✓ The state government evacuated 10,000 people living in atleast 5 villages within a radius of 5km of the plant
  - ✓ The plant's holding company LG Chem was later booked for culpable homicide based on a complaint filed by the revenue officer of Venkatapuram village.
  - ✓ Around 800 people were taken to hospitals, many of whom have since been discharged
  - ✓ Animals and plants were also affected, with several cattle, dogs, cats and birds were found lying still on roads and open spaces

- ✓ More than 25 ambulances and fire engines were pressed into service, besides medical staff of the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation, who were involved in the rescue operation.

## LG CHEM BOOKED FOR CULPABLE HOMICIDE

### THE TRAGEDY

► 11 people killed and more than 1,000 fell ill after toxic styrene gas leaked from LG Polymers plant around 2.30am



► People living between 3km & 5km radius of the plant complained of vomiting, headache, nausea, skin rashes and eye irritation; many people found unconscious in lanes, bylanes and houses

► Cattle, dogs and cats perished, even trees affected

► 10,000 people evacuated

► South Korea's LG Chem, which owns LG Polymers, booked for culpable homicide

### WHAT IS STYRENE?

► A benzene derivative, it is



Children being treated at King George Hospital in Vizag

an oily odourless liquid which evaporates and mixes with air

► Used in manufacturing of plastics, resins – from plastic bottle containing drinking water to styrofoam cups used for tea, coffee and soft drinks

► According to WHO-affiliated International Agency for

Research on Cancer, it is a 'possible' cancer-causing agent

### THE COMPANY

► LG Polymers began operation on May 4 after a 43-day shutdown; LG Polymers acquired Hindustan Polymers in 1997 from Vijay Mallya's UB Group

- ✓ Chief minister Y S Jaganmohan Reddy, who rushed to the port city, announced ex gratia of ₹1 crore each to the kin of the deceased and a compensation package for the sick.
- ✓ He said the Aarogyasri medical insurance facility would be extended to all those affected by the styrene leak
- ✓ A National Disaster Response Force 10th Battalion team from Pune landed in the city while ICMR deputed an expert team to study the health hazards of styrene exposure.
- ✓ After the leakage, LG Polymers India had requested the permission of Centre to airlift 500kg of a special chemical, called 4-Tertiary Butylcatchol (PTBC) available with a chemical factory in Gujarat, from Daman airport to Visakhapatnam to neutralise the impact of the hazardous gas styrene that leaked at a plant.
- ✓ LG Polymers, which is part of South Korea's LG Group, had acquired the plant from the erstwhile Hindustan Polymers in 1997.
  - ✓ The Hindustan Polymers was set up in 1961 in the area, then a suburb.
  - ✓ The plant manufactures plastics and plastic compounds like polystyrene, EP (expandable polystyrene) and EPC (enhanced plastic compounds).
  - ✓ LG Polymers had partially resumed production only this week after a lockdown-induced gap of about 40 days.
- ✓ Styrene monomer is a hydrocarbon which is stored at minus 20 degrees Celsius in liquid form
  - ✓ Styrene belongs to the category of chemical compound known as neuro-toxins.

- ✓ It is also known as ethenylbenzene, vinylbenzene, and phenylethene and represented by the chemical formula C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>CH=CH<sub>2</sub>
- ✓ It can leak at high temperature and evaporate easily into the atmosphere as Styrene gas.

<h2 style="margin: 0;">WHAT IS <b>STYRENE?</b></h2> <p>Styrene is a benzene derivative. It is an oily liquid and usually odourless. It evaporates and mixes with air. It is used in the manufacture of plastics and resins</p>	 <p>The LG Polymers factory after the gas leak on Thursday</p>
<p><b>Is styrene harmful?</b></p> <p>According to International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), a body affiliated with the World Health Organisation, styrene is a 'possible' cancer-causing agent. Before 2018, IARC had classified as 'probable' carcinogen and upgraded the threat level to 'possible carcinogen'</p> <p>► Exposure to styrene may cause irritation of eyes and mucous membrane in mouth, nose and digestive tract, including the intestines. Long-term or heavy exposure may</p>	<p>impact functioning of the central nervous system. Reproductive system may also be affected. It has low acute toxicity, says WHO</p> <p><b>Is styrene present in water and air?</b> Traces are found in water and air and even in food. WHO warns that smoking may raise daily exposure by up to 10 times, while those living near plastics and resins units inhale a few hundred micrograms per day. The impact on health may not be visible immediately. The permissible level of styrene in drinking water is 0.02 mg/litre</p>
<p><b>What are the symptoms of exposure?</b> The symptoms of styrene exposure include headaches, weakness, tiredness, loss of hearing and depression</p>	<p><b>Where do we find styrene in our daily use?</b> Right from the plastic bottle containing drinking water to styrofoam cups, we find styrene in common things of daily use</p>

- ✓ Styrene Gas is a poisonous, colour-less and odour-less compound, which is capable of quickly spreading in air.
- ✓ The gas is not lethal but prolonged exposure to it could affect the central nervous system, which may lead to depletion of oxygen to the brain and cause nausea, vomiting and breathlessness
- ✓ Styrene is used as a raw material for making products that are commonly used in electric fan blades, cups and cutlery as well as containers in which cosmetic products are stored.
- ✓ It is widely used in plastic and rubber industry as a raw material.
- ✓ The inhalation of Styrene can lead to immobilisation and eventual death (in confused in concentrated doses) within ten minutes.
- ✓ Gopalapatnam Society, a red zone, is barely a kilometre from the LG plant.
- ✓ The leakage evokes memory of the Bhopal gas tragedy, even though the scale of damage is much lesser

- ✓ The Bhopal gas tragedy killed around 3,800 people and affected over 5.5 lakh people
  - ✓ The Methyl isocyanate (MIC) gas leaked out of the Union Carbide plant around midnight on December 2, 1984, causing the worst industrial disaster in the world
- **The mammoth Vande Bharat Mission - began with two Air India Express flights landing in Kochi and Kozhikode from Abu Dhabi and Dubai on May 7 with 363 people on board.**
- ✓ The Vande Bharat Mission is undertaken to fly back lakhs of Indians stranded abroad following the imposition of lockdown regulations globally and also in the country



- ✓ The two flights — the 189-seater Boeing 737s of AI Express, the lowcost arm of AI – has kept last two rows of each aircraft vacant to seat in isolation any passenger showing Covid symptoms en route
- ✓ Both the Abu Dhabi-Kochi and Dubai-Kozhikode flights had all 177 available seats occupied, with infants in their parents' laps as per the rules.
- ✓ Meanwhile, AI Express has started taking bookings for the “Vande Bharat” Thiruvananthapuram-Bahrain flights on May 8 and 11.
- ✓ The protocol for Indians returning on these flights, and for the crew, involves crew members wearing full protective gear on reaching the destination
- ✓ Indians facing deportation in the Gulf are among those on top of the list for repatriation.
- ✓ These Indian nationals were granted general amnesty and the Gulf countries had been insisting that India take them back.
- ✓ In this regard, Kuwait, had already said it was even willing to send them back free of cost.
- **The Indian Navy – will be collecting \$40 per head as an “evacuation service charge” from Indians embarking on Naval ships from the Maldives under Operation Samudra Setu**
- ✓ This is the first instance of passengers being evacuated by the Navy are charged.

- ✓ Earlier, INS Jalashwa had arrived off the port of Male on May 7 under Operation Samudra Setu.
- ✓ It is scheduled to set sail from Male to Kochi on May 8 with about 750 persons.
- ✓ This is the first of the two ships sent to the Maldives under the Operation



- ✓ Operation Samudra Setu has been launched by the Navy for the evacuation of Indians stranded due to the pandemic.
  - ✓ INS Magar, the second ship, is scheduled to reach the Maldives on May 10.
  - ✓ The naval ships and Air Force aircrafts would be sent on payment basis and that would be determined by the Ministry of External Affairs in consultation with the Department of Military Affairs.
  - ✓ INS Jalashwa, the Navy's Landing Platform Dock (LPD), has extensive medical facilities
  - ✓ Meanwhile, INS Shardul and INS Airavat are heading to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for evacuation and are in addition to the civilian aircraft being sent.
- **The Indian Railways - has kept 5,231 coaches ready to be used as Covid care centres across the country to meet demand in case the infection increase significantly in the coming days.**



- ✓ These coaches can be deployed across 23 states in the country and major cities, including Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Nagpur, Pune and Lucknow.
  - ✓ Using these coaches, the Railways will be able to provide healthcare facilities in 85 stations.
  - ✓ In another 130 stations, states can request Covid care coaches only if they agree to provide staff and essential medicines.
  - ✓ The national transporter has deployed over 2,500 doctors and 35,000 paramedic staff to meet the Covid-19 challenge.
  - ✓ The 23 states where these coaches can be parked and used include - Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal.
  - ✓ The Railways has so far run 189 'Shramik Special' trains, transporting about 1.9 lakh migrants stranded in different parts of the country.
  - ✓ Each train, with 24 coaches, can carry 1,000-1,200 passengers.
- **In a departure from the past, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) - has started mentioning areas in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) in its regional forecast bulletin**
- ✓ From May 5, the IMD has mentioned the areas of Gilgit-Baltistan and Muzaffarabad as part of its Jammu and Kashmir meteorological subdivision in its forecast bulletin



प्रादेशिक मौसम विज्ञान केंद्र, नई दिल्ली  
भारत मौसम विज्ञान विभाग  
पृथ्वी विज्ञान मंत्रालय

Regional Meteorological Centre, New Delhi  
India Meteorological Department  
Ministry of Earth Sciences

Dated: 06 MAY 2020  
Time of Issue 1200 HRS IST

**WEATHER WARNING FOR NORTHWEST INDIA**

MET-SUBDIVISION	06 May	07 May	08 May	09 May	10 May
Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan and Muzaffarabad	Thunderstorm /Lightning accompanied with gusty winds (Speed 30-40 kmph) and hail at isolated places.	NIL	NIL	Thunderstorm /Lightning at isolated places.	Thunderstorm /Lightning accompanied with gusty winds (Speed 30-40 kmph) at isolated places.

- ✓ Gilgit-Baltistan is located in the northwest subdivision of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK).
- ✓ The move assumes significance, as the Government has been consistently maintaining that PoK belongs to India.
- ✓ The IMD had been mentioning PoK areas in its national forecast for the last six months after J&K's bifurcation last year

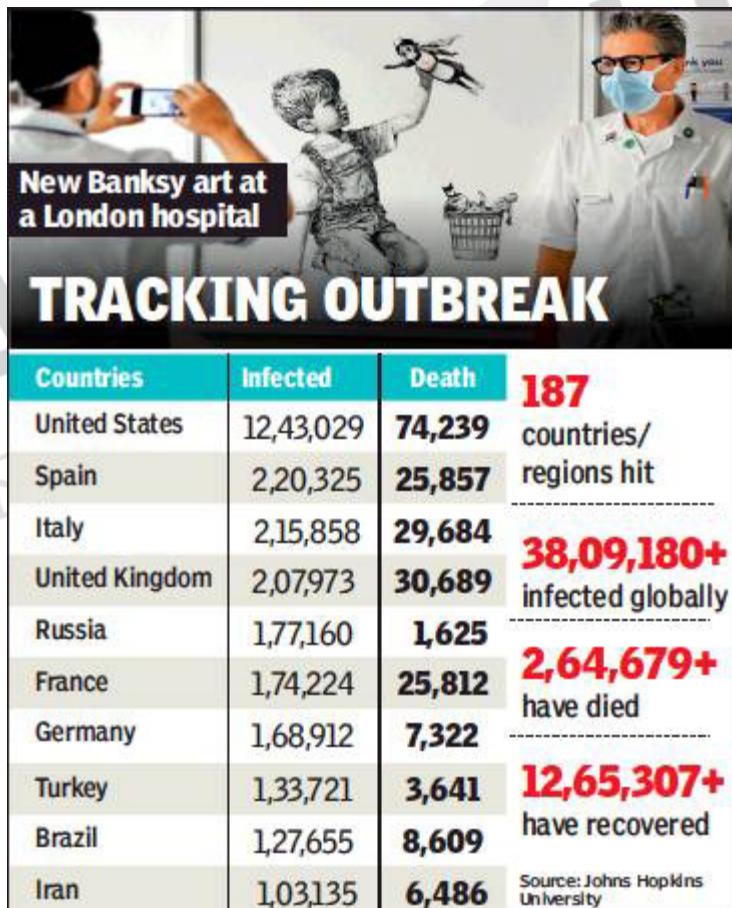
- ✓ However, its regional forecasts started specifying the areas explicitly in its bulletins now only
  - ✓ Accordingly, the J&K subdivision is now being specified in the regional bulletin as J&K, Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan and Muzaffarabad subdivision
  - ✓ The IMD, as part of the World Meteorological Organisation's regional meteorological centre, has been providing weather warning (rainfall, heat and cold wave etc) and cyclone forecasts to all neighbouring SAARC countries in South Asia, including Pakistan, since 2016.
- **The Union Government - has introduced the Aarogya Setu IVRS service across the country, exclusively for people having feature phones or landline.**



- ✓ The Aarogya Setu IVRS service is a toll-free service, which can be used by giving a missed call to 1921.
- ✓ Following the missed call, the users will get a call back requesting for queries regarding their health.
  - ✓ The questions asked on the call will be linked with the Aarogya Setu App.
  - ✓ These interactions will be used to find out whether the person has coronavirus symptoms or not.
  - ✓ Then, based on the response of the person, the caller will get an SMS indicating their health status.
  - ✓ They will also get further inputs regarding their queries.
- ✓ The Aarogya Setu Interactive Voice Response System service has been made available in 11 regional languages, exactly similar to the Aarogya Setu mobile app.
- ✓ Aarogya Setu Mobile App has been developed by the Ministry of Electronics and IT to help people assess themselves the risk of catching coronavirus.

# INTERNATIONAL

- The death toll in the US from Covid-19 infections - neared 75,000, provoking President Trump to describe it as an attack worse than Pearl Harbour and 9/11
- ✓ On May 7, the US government reported that an additional 3.2 million jobless claims were filed in the past week.
- ✓ That means, over 33 million people (one out of five Americans or nearly 20% of the 162 million workforce) have joined the unemployment rolls in seven weeks.
  - ✓ The Japanese attack on the Pearl Harbor naval base in Hawaii drew the United States into Second World War.
  - ✓ The September 11, 2001 jihadist attacks on US killed about 3,000 people and triggered two decades of war.
- ✓ On May 7, Russia's coronavirus cases overtook France and Germany to become the fifth highest number in the world after a record daily rise



- ✓ The official tally jumped to 1,77,160, as the number of new cases of the novel coronavirus soared to 11,231 in the past 24 hours.
- ✓ More than half of all cases and deaths are in Moscow, the epicentre of Russia's outbreak

- ✓ Moscow has reported a record overnight increase of 6,703 new cases, bringing its official total to 92,676.
- ✓ Russia's official death toll, which remains far lower than in many countries
- ✓ It rose to 1,625 on the day after 88 people died overnight
- ✓ Globally, the virus has infected 3.7 million people and killed more than 2,60,000 — a quarter of them in the U.S.

## INTERNATIONAL DAY

### ➤ World Thalassemia Day – May 8

- ✓ The observance of the day aims to create awareness about Thalassemia and the means to avoid its transmission to other people.
- ✓ It also provides a platform for others to think about providing better quality of life to people suffering from Thalassemia.
- ✓ Theme 2020 – ‘The dawning of a new era for Thalassemia: Time for a global effort to make novel therapies accessible and affordable to patients’



- ✓ The World Thalassemia Day is being observed since 1994.
- ✓ It is organized by the Thalassemia International Federation.
- ✓ Thalassemia is genetic blood disorder that is characterized by abnormal haemoglobin production.
- ✓ There are two major types of Thalassemia namely - Alpha Thalassemia and Beta Thalassemia.
- ✓ Globally, over 3.7% of the total Thalassemia patients are in India.
- ✓ West Bengal is the most affected state of Thalassemia in the entire country

