

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – JULY 16, 2020

TAMIL NADU

- **Tamil Nadu – has launched a trial to study the effect of the BCG vaccine in reducing morbidity and mortality due to Covid-19 in the elderly**
- ✓ This was announced by the State health minister C Vijayabaskar
- ✓ As part of a national trial, the state government will administer anti-tuberculosis BCG vaccine to senior citizens above the age of 60
- ✓ BCG (Bacille Calmette-Guerin) vaccine was administered to infants as part of the National Immunisation Schedule for 50 years in India.
- ✓ The National Institute for Research in Tuberculosis (NIRT), Chennai, an institute under the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), will take up the trial

ICMR TRIAL

➤ Global studies are on to see if BCG, used in kids to prevent severe tuberculosis, can be used in adults to reduce Covid-19 fatalities

➤ Vaccine to be given to 1,300 senior citizens in select districts of TN, Gujarat, Rajasthan, MP, Maharashtra, Delhi

➤ Patients will be followed up for six months to test the vaccine's efficiency in reducing deaths



- ✓ The Bacille Calmette-Guerin (BCG) vaccine will be given to people between 65 and 90 years
- ✓ Six high Covid-19 incidence states — Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Delhi — will be part of the study.
- ✓ In Tamil Nadu, elderly population from Chennai and Tiruvallur districts will receive the vaccine.

- ✓ According to experts, this vaccine, which prevents infant death, helps human immune system to recognize and respond to a variety of infections, including viruses.
 - ✓ The medical team has started administering the live-attenuated vaccine (LAV), which comprises live-but-weakened TB virus, to thousands of senior citizens as part of the trial since July 13
 - ✓ Doctors and health workers are expected to vaccinate at least 1,200 senior citizens across the country by July-end
 - ✓ BCG vaccinations cannot be administered to a person who has a compromised immune system
 - ✓ For instance, people with immune-compromised conditions such as cancer or HIV/ AIDS, those on dialysis, or those who have undergone organ transplant will not be eligible to take the vaccine
 - ✓ Patients given the vaccine will be followed up for at least six months as a part of the study
- **On July 15, Higher education minister K P Anbalagan - announced the Tamil Nadu Engineering Admissions (TNEA) schedule with online counselling to be held from September 17 to October 6**

IMPORTANT DATES		File Photo
		Rank list September 7
		Special counselling September 10 to 14
Last date for applications August 16		General counselling September 17 to October 6
Random number allocation August 21		Supplementary counselling October 8 to 12
Last date to upload documents August 20		SCA to SC counselling October 14 to 15
Certificate verification August 24 to September 1		

- ✓ The 'online' registration of applications began on July 15 with the last date for applications being August 16.
- ✓ Candidates are advised to apply at www.tneaonline.org.
- ✓ The certificate verification, special counselling for differently abled and supplementary counselling would be conducted online this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- ✓ As per the schedule, counselling will be completed on October 15.
- ✓ The AICTE has given state governments time till October 15 to conduct counseling, considering the Covid-19 scenario this year.

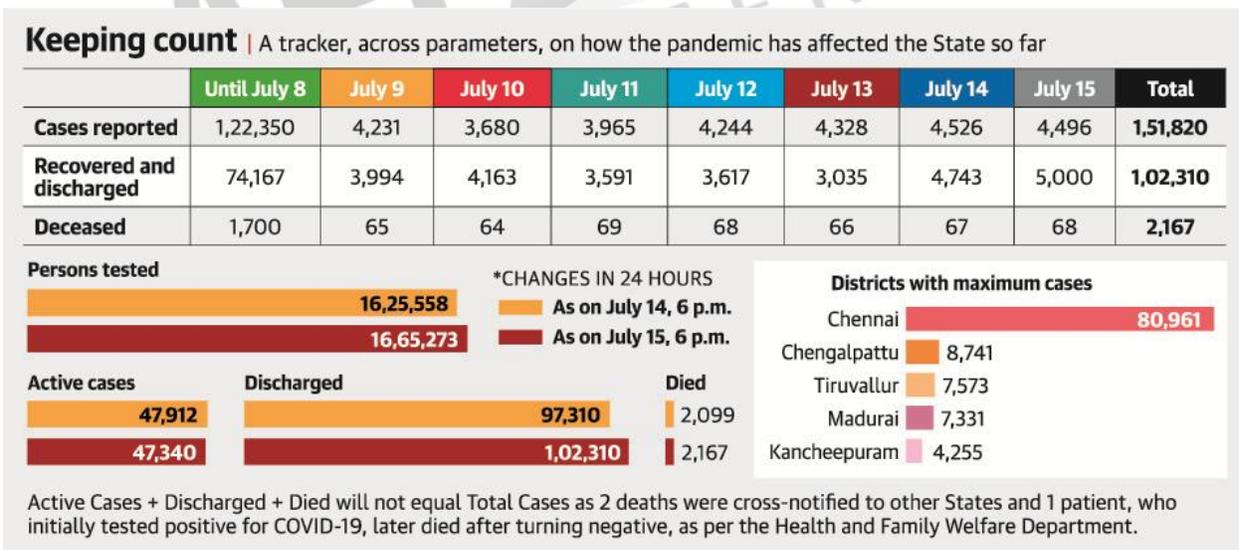
- ✓ The number of engineering colleges participating in counselling has come down from 480 colleges in 2019-20 to 465 colleges in 2020-21.
 - ✓ Last year, 1,33,116 applications were received for online counselling.
 - ✓ The state government has established 52 service facilitation centres across the state to help students with filing the application and online counselling.
- **The Water Resources Department (WRD) - will soon start the improvement works at Tamaraiakkam dam, one of the oldest dam across Kosasthalaiyar river, built in 1868**



- ✓ It plays a crucial role in storing and diverting surplus water for Chennai's drinking water supply.
 - ✓ The 190.80m long Tamaraiakkam anicut is located 15 km downstream of Poondi reservoir, one of the prime storage points for Chennai city's water supply, near Ammanambakkam village, Tiruvallur district
 - ✓ The dam needs renovation, as portions of it were damaged during the 2015 floods
 - ✓ The WRD will soon call for bids to take up repair work at a cost of ₹4 crore.
 - ✓ The surplus water from the Poondi reservoir in this dam is usually diverted to Cholavaram reservoir through a 13-km upper supply channel and further to the Red Hills reservoir.
 - ✓ The work would be taken up in August with financial assistance from NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development).
- **The Corporation school students in Chennai – has started using 'Tara', a virtual voice teacher, for improving language skills.**
- ✓ Tara is a dynamic, two-way interactive personalised teacher assistant that works on Amazon Echo Dot, Google Home and smartphones.



- ✓ The voice-recognition technology associated with 'Tara' has been used by the students to train themselves in English
 - ✓ This initiative is user-friendly and easier without consuming much memory, as video lessons could consume more Internet data
 - ✓ Learning Matters, a Bengaluru-based edutech company, provided the required equipment to the schools.
 - ✓ Tara can imitate a human teacher by listening to students and responds to their queries by giving feedback.
 - ✓ Tara was used to provide teacher training to teachers as well
 - ✓ It is different from other apps available in Playstore, as most of them say only whether the answers are right or wrong, without attempting to suggest corrections.
 - ✓ So far, the platform was made available in three GCC schools on a trial basis and is likely to be expanded.
 - ✓ A total of 150 Tamil and English-medium students (from Classes VI to X) have been trained so far
- **On July 15, the total number of Covid-19 cases in Tamil Nadu crossed the 1.5 lakh-mark, while the number of people discharged crossed the 1-lakh mark**
- ✓ The state added 4,496 fresh cases on the day taking the case tally to 1,51,820
 - ✓ The total number of recovered people stood at 1,02,310, as 5,000 more persons were discharged across the State.



- ✓ As per guidelines issued by the Indian Council of Medical Research, exit tests are no longer needed.
- ✓ Earlier, patients were discharged after two samples returned negative.
- ✓ The number of persons under treatment stands at 47,340 with the recovery rate of 67%.
- ✓ The state reported 68 deaths on the day, taking the toll to 2,167.

- ✓ Chennai recorded 1,291 new cases, while its neighbouring districts together reported 627 cases -- Tiruvallur (278), Kancheepuram (163) and Chengalpet (186).
- ✓ Madurai reported 341 cases, taking the total cases in the district to 7,331 of which 3,347 are active.
- ✓ A total of 41,382 samples were tested in the State on the day, taking the total number of samples tested to 17,36,747.
- ✓ One more sample testing facility was approved at the Government Headquarters Hospital, The Nilgiris.
- ✓ With this, there are 107 testing facilities in the State.
- ✓ Meanwhile, the Tamil Nadu government has announced ₹2,000 each in ex gratia to 26,413 barbers in 17 districts.
- ✓ They have not registered themselves with any labour welfare board and their livelihood has been affected by the Covid-induced lockdown

STATES

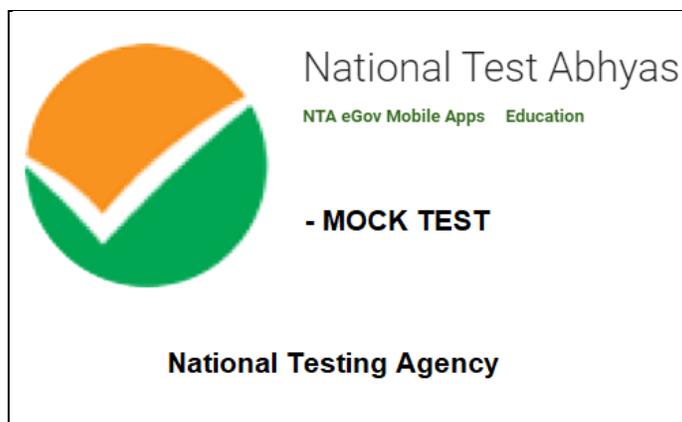
- **The Chief Justice of Calcutta high court – has asked the members of the district judiciary in West Bengal as well as registry staff of courts to address him as ‘Sir’ instead of ‘My Lord’ or ‘Lordship’.**
- ✓ This was announced in a letter sent from the high court registrar-general via e-mail to all district judges and chief judges on July 14.
- ✓ The trendsetting move culminates the observation of then Chief Justice of India, H L Dattu, who asked to address the Judges in a dignified manner instead of ‘Lordship’ to put an end to the practice dating back to the British Raj

NATIONAL

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi - co-chaired the first virtual India-EU summit via videoconference on July 15**
- ✓ The EU was represented by European Council President Charles Michel and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.
- ✓ The summit concluded with the signing of five documents –
 - ✓ A political joint statement,
 - ✓ EU-India strategic framework called Roadmap 2025,
 - ✓ An agreement for civil nuclear cooperation,
 - ✓ Renewal of science and technology agreement for five years and
 - ✓ A joint declaration on resource efficiency and circular economy
- ✓ The Roadmap 2025 strives to make a commitment to a framework between India and the European Union for strategic cooperation until 2025
- ✓ Further, a high-level trade dialogue between India and the EU was also set up after the Summit



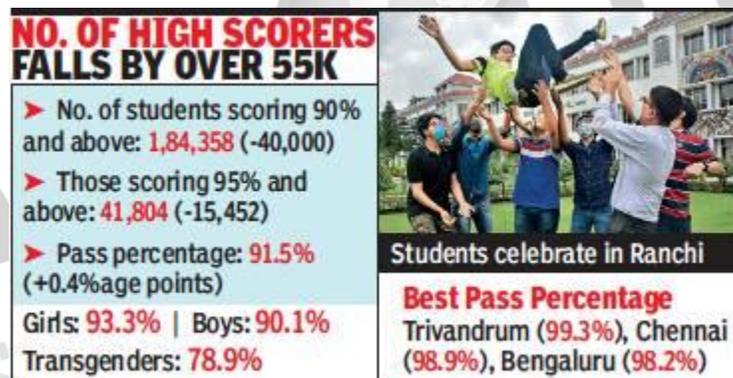
- ✓ The dialogue is expected to focus towards a broad-based free trade agreement that have been suspended since 2013
- ✓ In this regard, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and EU Trade Commissioner Phil Hogan will try and take the Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA) forward.
- ✓ Both sides stressed the importance of bilateral trade, as EU is India's largest trading partner, while India is the EU's ninth biggest trading partner.
- ✓ Both sides also agreed to to ensure a "high level of protection of personal data and privacy, including through possible data adequacy decisions, with a view to facilitating secure cross-border data flows"
- ✓ The reference is important in view of concerns over China's state-sponsored data theft.
- ✓ The EU-India summit was last held in 2017.
- **On July 12, the National Test Abhyas App - touched a new milestone of delivering 3 million free online practice sessions to JEE and Neet-UG aspirants in just 55 days.**
- ✓ The App was launched during the Covid-19 lockdown by the National Testing Authority (NTA)



- ✓ The App was launched on May 19, after the regular test practice centres (TPCs) of NTA were closed due to the Covid-induced lockdown

- ✓ As of July 12, close to 25 lakh JEE and Neet-UG aspirants appeared for the real-time free practice tests online.
 - ✓ The App has been delivering 54,558 sessions every day.
 - ✓ A total of 30,00,713 sessions have been delivered via this App and candidates have spent over 34 lakh hours solving the papers.
 - ✓ The TPCs were set up by the NTA to help the underprivileged categories who could not afford or have no access to private coaching.
 - ✓ A candidate has to book a slot at the centre and come for the computer-based practice test.
 - ✓ In comparison to the Abhyas App, TPCs have delivered 64 lakh sessions (11,530 sessions per day), which ran for 558 days before the lockdown.
 - ✓ The HRD ministry is now looking into the possibility of structuring the platform for schools.
- **Twitter – has launched a dedicated search prompt in association with National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) on July 15**
- ✓ The search prompt will provide the users latest information from authoritative sources around disaster relief and preparedness efforts
 - ✓ Accordingly, Twitter users will be directed to relevant information and sources of help available on Twitter if they type certain keywords like #Cyclone, #Earthquake, #floods, associated with disaster relief.
 - ✓ The information will be available in English and Hindi.
 - ✓ The search prompt will also generate a list of government agencies working towards Disaster Response and Relief in India, so that people looking for support can easily identify and establish contact with credible authorities
- **The final draft rules to implement the Transgender law – has been put in the public domain for feedback till August 13**
- ✓ As per the proposed rules, there will be no medical examination for establishing the identity of a transgender person.
 - ✓ Instead, an affidavit declaring gender identity from the applicant will form the basis for an identity certificate from the district magistrate
 - ✓ The law provides an inclusive educational curriculum, public spaces, hospitals and non-discriminatory workplaces by making it mandatory for establishments publish and prominently display an equal opportunity policy for transgender persons.
 - ✓ Enacted six months before, the law was aimed at securing rights and mainstreaming of transgender persons.
 - ✓ The draft of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020 will be notified after taking into consideration the objections and suggestions raised by August 13
 - ✓ Implementation of the law will only commence after that

- ✓ Further, the draft rules state that those transgender persons who have already recorded the change in gender identity as male, female or transgender prior to the enactment of the law will not need to apply for a certificate of identity under these rules.
- **The CBSE – has declared the Class 10 board exam results on July 15**
- ✓ Contrary to the Class XII results, the number of students scoring 90% and above in Class X dropped to 1,84,358, a drop of more than 40,000.
- ✓ The ones scoring 95% and above this year was 41,804, a drop of 15,452
- ✓ The pass percentage reached 91.46% this year, with a marginal 0.36 percentage points increase.
- ✓ In 2019, the increase in pass percentage was 4.4 percentage points.
- ✓ CBSE was able to conduct the exams for Class X main papers before the lockdown, except in north east Delhi
- ✓ The students of northeast Delhi had missed the papers due to the riots and the four exams were to be conducted between July 1 and 15.
- ✓ For them, the marks were calculated on the basis of the average of the best three performances



- ✓ The board will only hold compartment exams when the situation is “conducive”, which means there will no second chance for the students to improve their performance.
 - ✓ A total of 1,50,198 students have been placed in compartment, which comes to 8.02%, an increase from 7.88% last year.
- ✓ Overall, girls have a better pass percentage at 93.31%, an increase from 92.45% in 2019.
- ✓ There has been no change in pass percentage for boys at 90.14%.
- ✓ The figure for transgender students has fallen sharply — 78.95% this year as against 94.74% in 2019.
- ✓ Trivandrum region is again at the top with 99.28%, followed by Chennai and Bengaluru at 98.95% and 98.23%, respectively.
- ✓ Among institutions, Kendriya Vidyalayas have retained its top position, followed by Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas.
- ✓ KVs’ pass percentage dropped from 99.47% last year to 99.23% this year.

- ✓ However, the performance of private schools has seen a drop — from 94.15% last year to 92.81% in 2020.
- ✓ The PSBB Senior Secondary School, KK Nagar, student P Harini of Chennai got centum in English, Hindi, Maths and Science and 99 in Social Science to score 499 out of 500 marks in CBSE Class X exam.

CELEBRATING A JOB WELL DONE



<p>No. of TN students who took the exam 62,260</p> <p>No. of students who passed 62,019</p>	<p>➤ Teachers attributed high scores to liberal evaluation</p>
	<p>➤ Among regions, Thiruvananthapuram region topped with 99.28% pass percentage while Chennai region bagged second place with a pass percentage of 98.95%</p>
<p>➤ TN stood first when it came to pass percentage in Class X exams, registering 99.61%. AP came second (99.44%) followed by Kerala (99.3%)</p>	<p>➤ Girls (99.85%) beat boys (99.42%) in terms of pass percentage</p> <p>➤ Many scored centums in Sanskrit and Maths</p> <p>➤ Around 30% to 40% students in city schools have scored more than 90%</p>

- ✓ Tamil Nadu, which topped the national ranking among states with highest pass percentage of 99.61% was followed by Andhra Pradesh (99.44%) and Kerala (99.30%).
 - ✓ Of the 62,260 who took the exam in the state, 62,019 had cleared it.
 - ✓ Pass percentage for girls was 99.85% while for boys it is 99.42%.
- **India - recorded its highest single-day peaks in Covid-19 deaths as well fresh cases on July 15, even as the number of recovered patients breached the six-lakh mark.**

15 DAYS OF JULY Vs ALL OF JUNE

	Cases	Fatalities
June	4,00,413	11,988
July 1-15	3,83,361	7,468
Fresh Cases On Wednesday		
32,498		
Fresh Fatalities		
615		
Cumulative Toll		
24,860		

- ✓ The number of fresh cases reached the 32,000-mark for the first time to 32,498 cases, taking the country's caseload to 9,68,835.
- ✓ India also recorded its highest daily casualty of 615 - discounting the 2,003 backdated deaths that were reported on June 16 – taking the cumulative toll closer to the 25,000-mark at 24,860.
- ✓ On the positive side, 6,11,973 people have recovered from the infection.
- ✓ At least seven states reported their highest single-day peak – Karnataka (3,176 fresh cases), Andhra Pradesh (2,431), Kerala (623), Gujarat (925), Goa (198), Bengal (1589) and Rajasthan (866).
- ✓ Karnataka also became the fourth state in the country to record 3,000 or more cases in a day while Andhra Pradesh became the fifth state to register more than 2,000 cases in a day.
- ✓ Bengal became the fifth state in the country, after Maharashtra, Delhi, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat, to record thousand or more deaths
- ✓ Maharashtra continues to be the worst affected state, reporting 233 deaths on the day, taking the state's cumulative toll to 10,928.
- ✓ The state reported 7,975 fresh cases in the last 24 hours.

INTERNATIONAL

- **In a surprise reversal, the Donald Trump administration - has dropped its controversial plan to deport hundreds and thousands of international students, including Indians**
- ✓ The US immigration authority 'The Immigration and Customs Enforcement' (ICE) had announced on July 6 that foreign students will have to leave the country or risk deportation if their universities switch to 'online-only' classes during the September to December 'fall' semester.
- ✓ The rule would have applied to holders of two types of visas, F-1 and M-1 visas, which allow non-immigrant students to pursue academic coursework in the US.
- ✓ The change comes following a nationwide and international outrage against its order and a series of lawsuits filed by more than 200 educational American educational institutions, including MIT and Harvard University
- ✓ In March last, the Trump administration permitted international students to take online classes during the pandemic.
- ✓ This special policy for the spring and summer semesters was to be dropped for the fall semester, as per the July 6 announcement
- **US biotech company Moderna - is all set to start the final stage of clinical trials of a vaccine that produced antibodies to the coronavirus in all 45 patients tested**
- ✓ The antibodies produced were higher than those seen in people who have recovered from Covid-19

- ✓ Moderna's vaccine was developed by researchers at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
 - ✓ It was the first coronavirus vaccine to be tested in humans
 - ✓ Although there are nearly two dozen vaccine candidates currently in clinical trials across the world, Moderna is said to be fastest on the track
 - ✓ Moderna is expected to test its vaccine on 30,000 people, many of them in virus hotspots around the world, in a large phase-III trial from July 24.
 - ✓ The Moderna vaccine uses genetic material from the virus, called mRNA, to prompt the immune system to fight the coronavirus.
 - ✓ The vaccine also produced a favourable response involving T-cells, another part of the immune system.
 - ✓ In another development, positive news on initial trials of the University of Oxford's potential Covid-19 vaccine that has been licensed to AstraZeneca could be announced by July 17
 - ✓ The potential vaccine is already in large-scale Phase III human trials, but its developers have yet to report Phase I results which would show whether it is safe and whether or not it induces an immune response.
- **US President Donald Trump – has announced that he had signed into law the Hong Kong Autonomy Act**
- ✓ The new law authorises sanctions against Chinese officials and Hong kong police responsible for cracking down on political dissent in the city and, crucially, any banks that make significant transactions with them.
 - ✓ This puts an end to Hong Kong's special status with the US
 - ✓ Trump had threatened to take action ever since Chinese officials imposed the sweeping national security law on Hong Kong about two weeks ago.
 - ✓ Under the sanctions law, banks are granted a kind of year-long grace period to stop doing business with entities and individuals that are "primary offenders" when it comes to undermining Hong Kong's autonomy.
 - ✓ Hong Kong will now be treated the same as mainland China without any special privileges or special economic treatment with no export of sensitive technologies
- **On July 15, the Trump administration – said that it will impose travel bans on employees of the Chinese technology giant Huawei**
- ✓ It had also imposed travel bans to other Chinese companies which are assisting authoritarian governments in cracking down on human rights, including in China's western Xinjiang province.
 - ✓ Secretary of state Mike Pompeo made the announcement a day after the UK said it would ban Huawei from its 5G networks over concerns that sensitive data could be compromised by the Chinese Communist Party
 - ✓ Huawei has over 194,000 employees in more than 170 countries
 - ✓ The move drew a strong criticism from China and adding fresh uncertainty for businesses including banks in the financial hub.

- ✓ On July 15, China vowed to take countersteps and sanction US officials and entities.
- ✓ It further urged the US to “correct its wrongdoings” and stop interfering in Hong Kong.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **India - has got its first locally-developed pneumonia vaccine on July 14**
- ✓ The new vaccine is expected to reduce the country’s dependence on imports for immunisation against pneumonia, a disease that contributes to most deaths in children under five years of age
- ✓ The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) approved Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Conjugate Vaccine developed by Serum Institute of India.
- ✓ The Pune-based company can now manufacture the vaccine in India for use.
- ✓ The vaccine is administered intramuscularly.
- ✓ It is used for active immunisation against invasive disease and pneumonia caused by “streptococcus pneumonia” in infants.
- ✓ Pneumonia is the most important cause of child deaths, and pneumococci are responsible for half of serious pneumonias
- ✓ India accounted for the second highest number of deaths in under-five children in 2018 because of pneumonia.
- ✓ According to Unicef, India reported 1,27,000 under five deaths due to pneumonia in 2018.
- ✓ Earlier, this vaccine was purchased by licensed importers in the country since the manufacturers were all vaccine companies based outside India.
- ✓ The regulatory approval is based on clinical evidence secured by the company after conducting Phase I, Phase II and Phase III clinical trials of the vaccine.
- ✓ According to information on the clinical trials registry, the first phase of the trial was conducted in 2013 in 34 young Indian adults, while the second phase in 114 toddlers of 12-15 months.
- ✓ The third phase of trials was conducted on 448 infants between the age of six to eight weeks old, and this was completed in October last year, as per the registry.
- ✓ Serum Institute has conducted these trials in India as well as in Gambia.
- **Pharmaceutical and healthcare major Zydus Cadila - has begun human clinical trials of its Covid-19 vaccine candidate called ZyCov-D with the first human dosing on July 15.**
- ✓ The adaptive phase I & II human clinical trials of its plasmid DNA vaccine has commenced with the first human dosing.
- ✓ The adaptive phase I & II dose escalation study will assess the safety, tolerability and immunogenicity of the vaccine,
- ✓ According to Zydus Cadila, the accelerated vaccine development programme for Covid-19 was launched in February 2020

ECONOMY

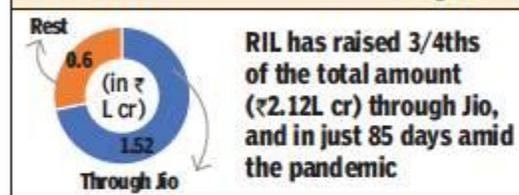
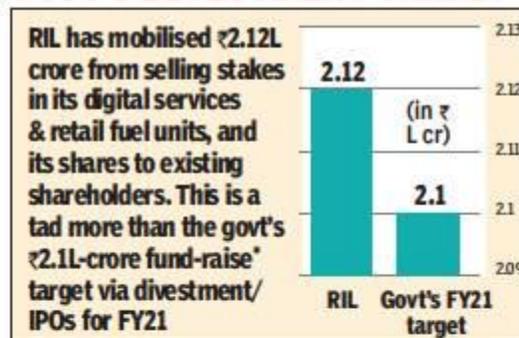
- **Google - also announced that it had agreed to invest ₹33,737 crore (\$4.5 billion) to acquire a 7.7% minority stake in Jio Platforms.**
- ✓ This is a rare distinction of getting the US search giant partnering with a company where social media major Facebook (having 9.9% stake) is also present.
- ✓ In the process, Ambani has raised ₹2.12 lakh crore (in excess of RIL's net debt of ₹1.61 lakh crore) in the past few months
- ✓ The announcement was confirmed by Reliance Industries Chairman and MD Mukesh Ambani during RIL's 43rd Annual General Meeting on July 15, 2020.
- ✓ Further, Ambani said that Reliance Industries Ltd.'s Jio Platforms unit has developed a 5G technology which will be deployed in India next year
- ✓ Moreover, Jio and Google would partner to develop an entry level 4G or even 5G smartphone with Android operating system
- ✓ It means, through Jio, the group will not just offer telecom services and equipment but also handsets for which it intends to use Google's Android platform.
- ✓ The plans for entering into indigenous 5G technology puts Reliance against global telecom tech and infrastructure majors like China's Huawei, Finland's Nokia, Sweden's Ericsson, and Korea's Samsung

5G DEBUT

- Debt-free RIL prepares for larger play in telecom, retail, entertainment
- Eyes 500m phone subscribers, debuts in 5G with '100% made in India' tech
- Looks at entry-level Android-run 4G and 5G phones with Google partnership
- After Jio fund-raise, now plans to induct international partners in retail business as well
- Deal with Saudi Aramco has not progressed as envisaged due to unforeseen circumstances in energy market and Covid-19 situation

- ✓ This comes amid Huawei's global blacklisting — from the US and the UK to Australia, and a possible bar in India too — over concerns about its links with Chinese PLA
- ✓ Reliance Jio has attracted investments worth over USD 15 billion in just a matter of few months
- ✓ Google's is the 13th investor to bet big on Jio Platforms in the past 12 weeks.
- ✓ Interestingly, Google's investment pegged Jio's equity value at ₹4.36 lakh crore— lower to the equity valuation assigned by Facebook to the Indian company.
- ✓ The investment in Jio by Google and Facebook is a rare case of two 'FANG'— Facebook, Apple, Netflix and Google — companies investing in the same unit.
- ✓ Facebook was the first one to announce an investment worth Rs 43574 crore in Jio for a 9.9% stake on April 22, 2020.

RIL RAISES MORE CASH THAN GOVT'S DIVESTMENT TARGET



Global tech biggies to PE giants have invested in Jio. The total fund-raise is in excess of RIL's net debt[#] of ₹1.16L cr



*The govt plans to raise ₹90,000cr from selling shares in LIC & IDBI, and ₹1.2L cr through other divestments in FY21

#Net debt refers to amount of debt on the balance sheet after accounting for cash

- ✓ Qualcomm Ventures was the latest to invest Rs 730 crore in Jio Platforms for a 0.15% stake.
- ✓ Alphabet CEO Sundar Pichai in a video message said that Jio investment will be “the first and the biggest” investment Google will make via the \$10 billion fund.
- ✓ Google-RIL deal was announced just two days after Google CEO Sundar Pichai announced that Google will be investing around Rs 75000 crore in India over the next 5-7 years through its ‘Google for India Digitization Fund’.
- ✓ Google investment comes as part of its \$10 billion (□75,000 crore) India-focused digitisation fund.
- ✓ Further, the meeting unveiled JioTV+, which will be a content aggregator that will curate OTT platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video and Hotstar into one app. Jio TV+ will have voice-enabled search.
- ✓ Reliance Jio has also launched a new and innovative technology- Jio Glass, a new mixed reality headset, which will enable holographic video calling.

- ✓ Jio Glass will provide best-in-class mixed reality services to the users.
 - ✓ It will bring teachers and students together in virtual 3D classrooms and conduct holographic classes through the Jio Mixed Reality cloud in real-time
 - ✓ Recently, RIL Chairman Mukesh Ambani became the sixth richest person in the world on July 14, 2020 after he overtook Larry Page, as per the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.
 - ✓ According to the index, Mukesh Ambani's net worth was \$72.4 billion around 4 pm on July 14.
- **Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Limited – has announced its plan to sell stake in its business to Saudi Aramco has “not progressed” as envisaged “due to unforeseen circumstances in the energy market”**
- ✓ This was announced by the company chairman Mukesh Ambani at the company's annual shareholder meeting
 - ✓ Last year, Ambani had announced that Saudi Aramco would acquire a 20% stake in the business of RIL, valued at \$75 billion including debt, with the deal to be closed by March 2020.
 - ✓ RIL has been sourcing crude oil from Saudi Aramco for many years and it recently sold a 2.32% stake in Jio to the Kingdom-managed Public Investment Fund (PIF) for ₹11,367 crore (\$1.5 billion).
 - ✓ PIF is managed by Yasir al-Rumayyan, who is also the chairman of Saudi Aramco.
- **The country's trade - turned surplus for the first time in 18 years as imports dropped by a steeper 47.6%.**
- ✓ Further, India's exports fell for the fourth straight month in June as shipments of key segments like petroleum and textiles declined
 - ✓ Exports in value terms declined by 12.4% to \$21.9 billion in June on weak global demand due to Covid-19
 - ✓ The outward shipments in June, however, recovered from a steeper decline of 60.3% in April and 36.5% in May.
 - ✓ Imports also plunged for the fourth month in a row by 47.6% to \$21.1 billion in June, leaving a trade surplus of \$0.8 billion.
 - ✓ It was in January 2002 when India last posted a trade surplus of \$10 million.
- **Four banks, Bank of Maharashtra, Axis Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank and RBL Bank - have imposed charges for cash withdrawal or increased minimum balance requirements effective August 1.**
- ✓ A SB (savings bank) account holder at Bank of Maharashtra, will now have to maintain a minimum of monthly average balance of ₹2,000 with branches in metro and urban areas, compared to ₹1,500 earlier, failing which there is a penalty of maximum of ₹75 in metro and urban branches, ₹50 in semi-urban branches and ₹20 in rural branches per month.

- ✓ For current account holders, a monthly average balance of ₹5,000 to be maintained, compared to the previous rule of quarterly maintenance.
- ✓ A cash handling fee of ₹100 on deposits and withdrawals, after three free transactions (each) in a month in both home & non-home branches put together has also been introduced.
- ✓ While deposit for locker has been reduced, the penalty for locker rent arrears has been increased
- ✓ Axis Bank account holders will have to ₹25 per ECS transaction, which was zero earlier. It has introduced charges for locker access beyond a threshold limit.
- ✓ It has also introduced a cash handling fee of ₹100 per bundle (1,000 notes) on lower denominations notes of ₹10/₹20/₹50 only.
- ✓ For savings and corporate salary account holders at Kotak Mahindra Bank, debit card-ATM charges stand at ₹20 per cash withdrawal and ₹8.5 per non-financial transaction, after five free transactions per month.
- ✓ A ₹25 fee will be levied on every failed transaction at merchant outlets or websites or ATMs, due to insufficient balance.
- ✓ Account holders in Kotak Mahindra Bank will have to pay a penalty if they do not maintain an average minimum balance, depending on the account category.
- ✓ Besides, a cash withdrawal fee of ₹100 per transaction for every fourth transaction has been introduced.

APPOINTMENTS

- **Manila-based Asian Development Bank (ADB) - has appointed election commissioner Ashok Lavasa as the vice-president for private sector operations and public-private partnerships.**
- ✓ He will succeed Diwakar Gupta, whose term will end on August 31
- ✓ This was announced by the multi-lateral funding agency on July 15.



- ✓ Lavasa, who as election commissioner enjoys a status at par with a Supreme Court judge, will have a three-year term as one of the six vice-presidents working under ADB president Masatsugu Asakawa.

- ✓ Asakawa, prior to becoming ADB president, was special advisor to Japan's prime minister and finance minister.
- ✓ Lavasa was tipped to take over as chief election commissioner from Sunil Arora in April, 2021 being the senior-most EC
- ✓ Ashok Lavasa would have retired as the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) in October 2022.
- ✓ Lavasa, a retired 1980-batch IAS officer of the Haryana cadre, was appointed an Election Commissioner in January 2018
- ✓ Earlier, he had led an Indian delegation in the climate change negotiations for the Paris Agreement.
- ✓ He also worked as a Joint Secretary in the Department of Economic Affairs where he worked closely with many ADB projects that had private sector components.
- ✓ Vice President of the ADB is appointed for the term of three years, which can be later extended by another two years.
- ✓ The ADB Vice President heads a management team which comprises of six vice presidents.

SPORTS

- **On July 15, World football governing body, FIFA - released the schedule for the 2022 FIFA World Cup to be played in November and December in Qatar**
- ✓ The 2022 World Cup will have four games every day in a 12-day group stage and matches later in the tournament that go into extra time will extend past midnight in Qatar.



- ✓ The games will have the kickoff times at 1 p.m. (1000 GMT), 4 p.m. (1300 GMT), 7 p.m. (1600 GMT) and 10 p.m. (1900 GMT)
- ✓ Host Qatar will open the Middle East's first World Cup in the 60,000-capacity Al Bayt Stadium at 1 p.m. on November 21.
- ✓ The final starts at 6 p.m. on Dec. 18 at the 80,000-capacity Lusail Stadium.
- ✓ Those are the same kickoff times from the last World Cup in Russia.
- ✓ Eight venues in close proximity to Doha will be used at the tournament, which will be played in 28 days rather than the 32 days used in Russia to minimize the disruption to the European season.

- ✓ Teams and fans will not need to fly around Qatar because stadiums are within a 30-mile radius.
- ✓ Both semifinals like some games in the previous rounds will kickoff at 10 p.m. and will spill over into the next day if there is extra time, or even just long injury and VAR delays in regular time.
- ✓ There is no space for a gap without games between the group stage and round of 16.
- ✓ Most teams will get three days of rest between games, which FIFA said was “optimum for sporting performance.”
- ✓ But teams in two last-16 matches will only have two days of rest.
- ✓ For the third-place playoff, one losing semifinalist will have two recovery days while the other has three.

