APP LO STUDY CENTRE

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – JULY 19, 2020

TAMIL NADU

➢ **The Tamil Nadu government - has removed the condition that farmers must withdraw their applications for free power connections if they want to get covered under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha Evem Utthan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM)**

✓ PM-KUSUM is a Central government scheme for installation of solar pumps with a 70% subsidy.

Kisan Urja Suraksha Utthaan Maha Abhiyaan (KUSUM)

✓ The decision behind the move is the keen interest of the State government in promoting solar-powered pumps among farmers

✓ The advantage of the decision is that once agriculturists get free power connections, the solar-powered pumps can even be made grid-connected, and they will feed electricity into the State grid.

✓ For Tamil Nadu, the Centre has set a target of installation of 17,000 standalone solar pumps and 20,000 grid-connected solar pumps by March 2022

✓ The first target is being handled by the Agricultural Engineering Department while the second target is handled by the Tamil Nadu Energy Development Agency (TEDA), along with the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (Tangedco).

- ✓ Under the earlier scheme of subsidised solar-powered pumps, those opting for the solar-powered pumps must withdraw applications for the conventional scheme of free power.
- ✓ Under this scheme, which was supported by the Central and State governments, 4,826 solar pumps were installed till now.
- ✓ Under the PM-KUSUM, which is being implemented on a "first come, first serve" basis, a farmer gets total subsidy of 70% of the cost of a pump.
- ✓ Of this, the State contributes 40%, Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy allocates 30% while the balance 30% has to be borne by the beneficiary.
- ✓ During 2020-21, the plan is to cover 6,000 solar pumps, and ☐138.73 crore has been set aside by the State and Central governments towards subsidy.

- ➢ **The Greater Chennai Corporation - has conducted 5 lakh RT-PCR tests for Covid-19, making the city the first in the country to achieve the feat.**
- ✓ In this regard, the State government had spent ☐200 crore on testing residents in the city's 15 zones.
- ✓ Further, a total of ☐400 crore had so far been spent on containment measures
- ✓ On July 18, Tamil Nadu reported another new high of 4,807 fresh cases of Covid-19 and 88 deaths, including 32 in Chennai and 14 in the three adjoining districts
- ✓ Of the fresh cases, Chennai accounted for 1,219 infections, while all 37 districts in the state recorded cases

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

	Until July 11	July 12	July 13	July 14	July 15	July 16	July 17	July 18	Total
Cases reported	134,226	4,244	4,328	4,526	4,496	4,549	4,538	4,807	1,65,714
Recovered and discharged	85,915	3,617	3,035	4,743	5,000	5,106	3,391	3,049	1,13,856
Deceased	1,898	68	66	67	68	69	79	88	2,403

Persons tested
- 17,56,998
- 18,04,177

Active cases	Discharged	Died
47,782	1,10,807	2,315
49,452	1,13,856	2,403

Districts with maximum cases
- Chennai — 84,598
- Chengalpattu — 9,360
- Tiruvallur — 8,702
- Madurai — 8,044
- Kancheepuram — 4,519

*Changes in 24 hours   As on July 17, 6 p.m.   As on July 18, 6 p.m.

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

- ✓ The new infections took the State's tally to 1,65,714, while the State's toll rose to 2,403.
- ✓ A total of 49,452 persons are under treatment after the discharge of 3,049 persons on the day
- ✓ With this, the total number of persons recovered climbed to 1,13,856
- ✓ Apart from Chennai, other districts recording surge of cases includes - Tiruvallur 370, Chengalpattu 323, Vellore 191, Madurai 185, Thanjavur 181, Virudhunagar 179, Sivagangai 170, Thoothukudi 160 and Tirunelveli 155

- ✓ A total of 48,195 samples were tested in the last 24 hours.
- ✓ With this, the state has tested 18,79,499 samples and 18,04,177 individuals so far.
- ✓ Two more testing facilities — the Government Headquarters Hospital in Tenkasi and Genelab Biotechnologies Pvt Ltd in Kilpauk, Chennai — were approved for testing.
- ✓ With this, there are 56 testing facilities in the government sector and 55 in private sector.
- ✓ **Meanwhile, on July 18, the health department permitted 'pooled testing' in some districts to reduce turnaround time for results**
- ✓ Pooled testing refers to the screening of small groups or pools of samples using only one test
- ✓ It will be used in 21 districts that have a test positivity rate (positive samples over total samples) between 2% and 5%.
- ✓ Instead of testing one person at a time, samples from five individuals would be tested as one.
- ✓ If the test comes back negative, everyone is cleared of the viral infection.
- ✓ If positive, each member is then tested individually
- ✓ The pooled testing will be used for frontline workers, screening vendors at market places, interstate passengers or those coming from abroad, factory workers and offices.
- ✓ This method is cost efficient, saves time and resources and helps to increase the rate of testing.
- ✓ **On July 18, the United States Food and Drug Administration issued emergency use authorization to allow 'pool sampling' from up to four individuals to test Covid-19.**
- ✓ India began pool testing in April 2020
- ✓ India has also adopted antigen and rapid antibody testing to speed up the testing process.
- ✓ However, the time consuming and expensive method of RT-PCR is the most effective testing method to detect Covid-19.

- ➢ **Tamil Nadu - will have at least 400 more MBBS seats on its matrix for the 2020-21 medical admissions.**
- ✓ The Medical Council of India has increased 250 seats in existing medical colleges — government and private — and also permitted a new self-financing college to start the UG medical programme in 2021.
- ✓ The Government Kanyakumari Medical College and Hospital has been permitted to add 50 more MBBS seats to the existing 100 seats
- ✓ Further, Panimalar Medical College Hospital and Research Institute, a self-financing medical college affiliated to Tamil Nadu Dr MGR Medical University, has been permitted to start MBBS course with 150 seats this year.
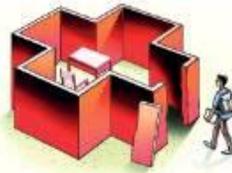
WHAT'S UP FOR GRABS

- Total seats MBBS (Govt) | **3,600**
- Additional seats | **50** (Govt Kanyakumari Medical College)
- Total seats in self-financing colleges | **1,950**
- Additional seats | **150**
- (Panimalar Medical College) Additional seats in deemed universities | **200** (100 each in Meenakshi Medical College Hospital And Research Institute and Saveetha Medical College)

" The policy of the state is to start new medical in every district and increase seats in all existing medical colleges to 250. Besides training doctors, these colleges will function as tertiary health care facilities

| **Dr R Narayanababu**, DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL EDUCATION

- ✓ The MCI website also shows 100 additional seats each at deemed universities Meenakshi Medical College Hospital And Research Institute and Saveetha Medical College in Kancheepuram
- ✓ Earlier this week, health minister C Vijayabaskar said the state is waiting for MCI officials to inspect the campus of 11 new medical colleges the state was permitted to start
- ✓ In August, the cabinet committee on economic affairs had approved setting up of 75 government medical colleges by 2021-22 across the country.
- ✓ Tamil Nadu, which has 24 medical colleges at present, has been given permission to start another 11 medical colleges with 150 seats each.

STATES

- ➢ **The State Government of Andhra Pradesh - recently announced the Renewable Energy Export Policy, 2020.**
- ✓ The policy permits sale of power by the State to other states of India.
- ✓ The policy will be implemented by NREDCAP (New and Renewable Energy Development Corporation of AP Limited).
- ✓ The agency will allocate renewable energy resources to potential developers on first come first serve basis
- ✓ The policy will facilitate establishment of wind, solar and solar-wind hybrid projects.
- ✓ It will help in increasing the energy capacity of the state to 120 GW
- ✓ The energy generated through these projects will be exported to other states.
- ✓ The developers are to get an exemption from the payment of electricity duty for 10 years.
- ✓ The projects are also exempted from obtaining No Objection Certificate from the State Pollution Control Board.

NATIONAL

- **The Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust - has finalized the schedule for the construction of the grand Ram Temple in Ayodhya.**
- ✓ On July 18, the Trust decided to send a formal invite to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to lay the foundation of the temple.
- ✓ It has proposed August 5 to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) as the possible date for the ground-breaking ceremony (bhoomi poojan)

LIKELY TO BE COMPLETED IN 3.5 YRS

➤ Ram Temple Trust to send invite to PM to be part of bhoomi pujan

➤ Consensus on two auspicious dates — August 3 or August 5 — after brainstorming session of Trust members & PM's ex-principal secy Nripendra Mishra

➤ Trust to mobilise 10 crore families across the country for crowd-funding the project

➤ After map is finalised, temple will be completed in 3.5 years

➤ Proposal to raise height of

Chairman Nripendra Mishra (3rd from L), and other Ram Temple construction committee members in Ayodhya on Saturday

temple from 128ft to 161ft

➤ It will have 5 domes, instead of 3, as proposed earlier

➤ The temple premises may be increased from 70 acre to 108 acre

- ✓ At the meeting of the Trust, there was consensus on two auspicious dates for 'Bhoomi Pujan' based on planetary configurations — August 3 or August 5.
- ✓ The crucial meeting of the Trust was also attended by Nripendra Misra, the PM's former principal secretary and chairman of temple construction committee
- ✓ This was the first high-level meeting convened by the Trust in Ayodhya after the apex court ruled in favour of the temple at Ramjanmabhoomi.
- ✓ The Trust is also planning to launch a nationwide outreach to mobilise 10 crore families after the monsoon to crowd-fund the project
- ✓ As per the Trust, it will take 3 to three and half years to complete the temple after the map is finalised.
- ✓ The Trust also agreed to make amendments to the design, laid down by Vishwa Hindu Parishad that had led the temple movement for decades.
- ✓ The changes include a proposal to raise the height of the temple from 128 feet to 161 feet and increase the number of conical domes from three to five.
- ✓ Also, there is a proposal to extend the temple circumference from 70 acres to108 acres.

- ✓ In the meantime, Larsen & Toubro, the firm which will oversee the construction, has started collecting samples for soil testing
- ✓ Sompura Marble Industries, a firm from Gujarat, would be prodiing the stones for the temple, like it had been doing since the 1990s.
- ✓ The Ramjanmabhoomi Trust was set up by the centre as per the directions of the Supreme Court.
- ✓ In a landmark judgement on November 9, 2019, a 5-judge Supreme Court bench headed by the then CJI Ranjan Gogoi unanimously ruled in favour of the construction of Ram Temple in Ayodhya, on the land claimed by three parties - Sunni Waqf Board/Ram Lalla/Nirmohi Akhara.
- ✓ The apex court said that 5 acres of alternate land will be provided to the Sunni Waqf Board for the construction of a Mosque.

- ➢ **The Centre - has applied an unused provision in the Disaster Management Act, 2005 to allow any person or institution to contribute to the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) for the purpose of disaster management.**
- ✓ The Ministry of Home Affairs said that contributions can be made online or through physical instruments drawn in favour of "PAO (Secretariat), MHA" at New Delhi.
- ✓ The Ministry had invoked the Disaster Management Act, 2005 for the first time in March this year in the wake of Covid-19.
- ✓ The pandemic was notified as a "disaster," paving the way for the States to utilise the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) for treatment of patients and other logistics such as quarantine centres, setting up laboratories among other things.
- ✓ The other notified disasters are cyclone, drought, earthquake, fire, flood, tsunami, hailstorm, landslide, avalanche, cloudburst, pest attack, frost and cold waves.

- ➢ **On July 18, India – reported another record high for a single day with 38,141 fresh Covid-19 infections, while 545 more people succumbed to the virus, taking the total toll to 26,787.**

SHARP SPIKE IN FATALITIES

Covid Deaths In India Per Week		CASES
June 21-27	2,822	Friday	38,141
June 28-July 4	3,178	Total	10,76,861
July 5-11	3,396	DEATHS
July 12-18	4,127	Friday	545
		Total	26,787
		Source: State govt data

- ✓ With this, India's Covid-19 caseload stood at 10,76,861, as per the data collated from the state governments.
- ✓ There were more than 3.74 lakh active cases while the number of those recovered or discharged had risen to more than 6.75 lakh.

- ✓ Regarding the deaths, Maharashtra and Karnataka leads the country with 144 and 93 fatalities, respectively.
- ✓ However, the toll rose in Tamil Nadu (88 deaths) and Andhra Pradesh (52)
- ✓ The Covid-19 caseload in Maharashtra crossed the 3 lakh mark after reporting its second highest count of 8,348, while Mumbai crossed the tally of one lakh cases on the day.
- ✓ Further, at least six states recorded their biggest single-day spikes — Tamil Nadu (4,807 new cases), Karnataka (4,537), Andhra Pradesh (3,963), West Bengal (2,198), Assam (1,218) and Gujarat (960).
- ✓ On July 17, the number of tests conducted across the country had touched a peak of 3.61lakh across 885 government laboratories and 368 private laboratories
- ✓ Meanwhile, the Union health ministry has sent a letter to four states, including Bihar, to make renewed efforts to contain the spread of Covid-19 virus.
- ✓ The other states to receive the letter are West Bengal, Assam and Odisha.

- ➢ **The Indian Medical Association (IMA) – has announced that it is of the view that community spread has started in the country, following the reporting of more than 30,000 cases every day in an exponential growth**
- ✓ This was disclosed by Dr V K Monga, the chairman of IMA Hospital Board of India
- ✓ The IMA has also said that vaccination is the only solution to the current situation.
- ✓ A day before, the Chief Minister of Kerala, Pinarayi Vijayan has confirmed community transmission in two coastal villages near capital Thiruvananthapuram.
- ✓ Community Transmission refers that the disease is in its third stage, out of the possible four stages
- ✓ At this stage, infection spreads in public and the source of the virus cannot be traced.
- ✓ During the first stage, the infection appears through the persons with travel history
- ✓ In the second stage, every person who comes in contact with people who were infected becomes possible victims.
- ✓ In the final stage, the disease becomes epidemic in the country

- ➢ **The Indian Council of Medical Research - is carrying out a study to evaluate effectiveness of BCG vaccine to prevent morbidity and mortality of Covid-19 elderly persons**
- ✓ The study will be conducted on people aged between 60 and 95 years in 19 hotspots in the country.
- ✓ ICMR will be carrying out the studies in six states namely Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi.
- ✓ The ICMR-NIRT (Indian Council of Medical Research-National Institute for Research in Tuberculosis) is to lead the study.
- ✓ Countries such as Brazil, Iran that administered BCG programme have reported lesser mortality rates

- ✓ On the other hand, US, Italy and Netherlands where BCG vaccines were not being used accounted for more Covid-19 deaths.
- ✓ The World Health Organization does not recommend BCG vaccine for Covid-19.
- ✓ According to WHO, BCG prevents severe form of Tuberculosis in children and hence it is administered to new born babies under National Immunization Programme in the country

➢ **Indian Railways - will move towards 100% electrification in the next 3.5 years and 100% Net Zero operator in the next 9-10 years.**
- ✓ This was announced by Railways Minister Piyush Goyal while addressing an event organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on July 16, 2020.
- ✓ The Minister also highlighted that the central government is promoting Make in India for renewable energy and is fully committed to making the industry Atma Nirbhar.
- ✓ He also spoke about the concept of 'One Sun, One World, One Grid', which has been promoted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi
- ✓ The minister further added that with PM-KUSUM Yojana, the government plans to bring farmers too in renewable energy fold.

➢ **The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) - has launched development projects in Andaman & Nicobar Islands worth Rs. 44 lakhs.**
- ✓ The projects to be undertaken by NABARD will include the formation and development of Self-help groups, SHG.
- ✓ The bank will conduct 385 village-level programmes and will provide training to the leaders of the newly formed Self-help groups with the budget of more than Rs. 10 lakh.
- ✓ In Little Andaman, women attached to these groups will be trained in Bamboo handicraft making and Mushroom cultivation.
- ✓ A yearly Micro-entrepreneurship development programme will also be carried out for 150 members of these Self-help groups in Mayabunder in Middle Andaman.
- ✓ In order to make Atmanirbhar Bharat a reality, the development bank has also been providing a platform for the sales of local products by financing the Rural Haats in Gram Panchayat.
- ✓ For this, an allocation of Rs. 7.6 lakhs has been released to establish one such Haat in Namunaghar Panchayat of South Andaman.
- ✓ A 4-month long training programme for the tour and travel agents in Swaraj Deep has also been listed in the project schedule.
- ✓ The development bank has also tied up with the Centre of Agriculture Research Institute (CARI) for conducting the agricultural programmes with an allocation of Rs. 20 lakh.

➢ **Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) - has signed a contract with ASKO Maritime AS, Norway for the construction and supply of the two autonomous electric ferries with zero carbon emissions, along with an option to build two more identical vessels.**

✓ With this project, the CSL joints an elite league of premier shipbuilding yards in the world, which are capable of handling high tech vessel construction.

✓ This is one of Norway's ambitious projects, which is partially funded by the Norwegian government.

✓ The project aims at emission-free transport of goods across the Oslofjord islet in Norway

✓ ASKO Maritime AS is a subsidiary of Norges Gruppen which is one of the largest players in the Norwegian retail segment.

✓ The vessels will be managed by Massterly AS which is the first company that has been set up to operate autonomous vessels and take technical management.

✓ It is a joint venture between Wilhelmsen, one of the largest maritime shipping companies and Kongsberg, an autonomous technology company.

✓ Naval Dynamics, Norway has designed the ships using Kongsberg Maritime systems along with detailed engineering that will be carried out by CSL.

✓ The vessels will be built under DNV GL Classification.

✓ The value of the ships will be around Rs 125 crores each.

✓ The 67 km long vessels will initially be delivered as a full electric transport ferry, which are powered by 1846 kWh capacity batteries.

✓ After the commissioning of autonomous equipment as well as field trials in Norway, it will start operating as a fully autonomous ferry of ASKO that will be able to transport almost full loaded 16 Standard EU trailers in one go across the fjords.

✓ The Cochin Ship Yard, which is the country's largest ship builder, is already building 23 hybrid electric boats for Kochi water metro.

➢ **On July 15, India and Israel - signed an agreement to expand collaboration in dealing with cyber threats.**

✓ The agreement was signed between Sanjiv Singla, India's ambassador to Israel, and Yigal Unna, Director-General of Israel's National Cyber Directorate (INCD).

✓ The MoU has been signed between the INCD and Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT), functioning under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

✓ The agreement will further expand the operational cooperation between two sides and will also deepen the scope of exchange of information on cyber threats to raise the level of protection in the field.

✓ India and Israel have been cooperating in the cyber field since 2018.

✓ During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Israel in 2017, cybersecurity was identified as an important area of cooperation between the two countries.

✓ Later, an agreement was signed between the two countries during Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's visit to India in 2017.

✓ Also, Lt General Rajesh Pant, National Cyber Security Coordinator visited Israel in June 2019 to attend Cyber Week.

✓ India ranks 11th in the world wide cyber-attacks

➤ **On July 17, 2020, PM SVANidhi app - was launched by the Minister of Urban Affairs.**

✓ The application aims to provide user-friendly digital interface for lending institutions and their functionaries to source and process loan applications of street vendors.

✓ The application will help in business transactions of micro lending institutions, banks, Non-Banking Financial Corporations to get maximum coverage with paper-less lending facilities

✓ The main features of the new App include e-KYC (Know Your Customer) feature, real-time monitoring, vendor search in the survey and processing of applicants

✓ The scheme was launched to help more than 50 lakh street vendors in the country

✓ It will provide a working capital of Rs 10,000 to the street vendors for improving their trade

✓ The capital can be repaid within a year, as per the terms of the scheme.

➤ **On July 14, 2020, Atal Innovation Mission of NITI Aayog - coordinated and concluded the series of Covid-19 "Demo Days" initiative.**

- ✓ The initiative will identify promising startups that have the potential to produce Covid-19 related innovations.
- ✓ The "Demo Days" initiative was launched by Atal Innovative Mission in partnership with government bodies such as Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), Department of Science and Technology, Department of Biotechnology (DBT), AGNI, Startup India.
- ✓ Under the initiative, 9 Demo Days were held on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), medical devices, technology solutions etc.,
- ✓ Around 70 startups were shortlisted under the initiative.
- ✓ These startups will receive support in the form of funding, supply chain and logistics and access to manufacturing abilities
- ✓ The initiative has helped to make 340 developments involving more than 50 startups

- ➢ **On July 15, 2020, the Minister of State for Shipping Shri Manasukh Mandaviya - reviewed the development activities of Vallarpadam terminal at Cochin.**

- ✓ The terminal accommodates India's first trans-shipment hub.
- ✓ A trans-shipment hub handles containers and stores them temporarily, before transferring them to other ships for onward destination
- ✓ The Vallarpadam terminal of Cochin seaport where the hub is located is the most preferred gateway for South India and also a leading trans-shipment hub for South Asia
- ✓ The port is located very close in terms of proximity to international sea routes and other feeder ports of the country.

- ➢ **On July 15, 2020, the Union Minister of Human Resource and Development Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank - launched world's most affordable RT-PCR based Covid-19 diagnostic kit 'COROSURE', developed by IIT Delhi**
- ✓ Around 10 companies have been given licenses to manufacture the kit, whose base price is set at Rs. 399
- ✓ According to Indian Council of Medical Research, the testing capacity of the country is to go up to 20 lakhs per day with the development of this new kit.
- ✓ Currently India is performing 3 lakh testing per day.

✓ The testing cost of the method is greatly reduced as the kit uses a probe-free method to conduct the test.
✓ All the current methods used in India for testing uses probes
✓ Both ICMR and DCGI (Drug Controller General of India) have approved the test kit.
✓ ICMR has approved the kit with highest score and DCGI has approved the kit with highest sensitivity and specificity.

➢ **On July 15, 2020, the World Health Organization - released its 'Guidance Note' on Public Health Criteria to adjust Public Health and Social Measures.**
✓ Under the guidance note, the organization advised 'comprehensive surveillance' for suspected cases.
✓ By comprehensive surveillance, WHO advises that a country has to conduct 140 Covid-19 tests per day per million population.
✓ According to Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, India is already conducting 140 and more tests per day per million.
✓ There are 885 labs in government sector and 368 private labs.
✓ In India, CBNAAT is used to detect Covid-19 virus along with TrueNat and RT-PCR tests
✓ CBNAAT is a Cartridge-based nucleic acid amplification test, which is a molecular test for Mycobacterium Tuberculosis.

➢ **On July 15, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) - released data on alarming decline in number of children receiving vaccines.**
✓ As per the report, around 14 million children missed out measles and DTP3 (Diphtheria, Tetanus and Petrussis) vaccine this year.
✓ This is the first time in 28 years that the coverage of DTP3 vaccine has reduced.
✓ Two-thirds of them live in Brazil, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Indonesia, India, Nigeria, Mexico, Pakistan and Philippines
✓ According to the data released by the organizations of the United Nations, the Human Papilona Virus (HPV) is under great danger of lapsing
✓ The vaccine was administered in 106 countries.
✓ Also, at least 30 measles vaccination campaigns are at risk of being cancelled.

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- ✓ The report says that in India, most of the states had halted immunization activities.
- ✓ In Uttar Pradesh, at least 1.5 million children missed their vaccination drives
- ✓ The decline in vaccination is mainly because people are unable to leave home due to Covid-19 lock down.

- ➢ **On July 16, 2020, the Union Minister of fisheries, Husbandry and Dairying - launched guidelines for Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF)**
- ✓ The AHIDF aims to provide incentives to various investments in establishing infrastructure for dairy and meat processing.
- ✓ The fund will help to increase milk production to 330 million tonnes by 2024.
- ✓ The Government of India is planning to increase milk processing up to 40%
- ✓ Under Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, Rs 15,000 crores was approved by the Union Cabinet for the Fund.
- ✓ The Centre is to set up credit guarantee fund of Rs 750 crores to achieve the targets in the dairy sector.
- ✓ This is to be managed by NABARD.
- ✓ The Udyami Portal operating under SIDBI has been opened for the beneficiaries of the initiative to register online
- ✓ India is currently producing 188 million tonnes of milk, out of this only 20% to 25% are coming under processing sector.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- ➢ **On July 18, 2020, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman - participated in third G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meet**
- ✓ The meet was presided by Saudi Arabia.

- ✓ During the first meeting, India shared its G20 Action plan in response to Covid-19
- ✓ During the third meet, India shared the global economic outlook amid evolving Covid-19 crisis.
- ✓ India discussed two of the deliverables at the meet - one was about enhancing access to opportunities for women and youth, while the other was about international taxation agenda related to digital sector.

- ➢ **On July 17, 2020, India and US - held a strategic virtual energy partnership meet**
- ✓ The meeting reviewed the progress of major accomplishments and also prioritized new areas of cooperation.
- ✓ After the meeting, both the countries announced new areas of research on transformational power generation.
- ✓ The countries will also work together on advanced coal technologies including carbon capture, storage and utilization.
- ✓ The main outcome of the ministerial meet is the participation of India in the multilateral platform ACT.
- ✓ The 'Accelerating CCUS Technologies' (ACT) is an international initiative to establish CO_2 capture, utilization and storage.
- ✓ The main aim of the initiative is to accelerate CCUS (Carbon Capture Utilization storage).
- ✓ ACT is an international initiative to facilitate R&D innovation in CCUS technology. Around 14 countries from all over the world are working together in ACT
- ✓ The Smart Grids being implemented by India-US joint venture comprises of 30 Indian and US entities with an investment of $7.5 million.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- ➢ **The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) - has warned that a 'gigantic asteroid' by name 'Asteroid 2020ND' is heading towards Earth.**

- ✓ The Asteroid 2020ND will be coming close to Earth in a few days and it is expected to make its closest approach to the Earth on July 24.
- ✓ Asteroid 2020ND is massive one, measuring about 170 metres.
- ✓ As per space experts, the Asteroid is labeled as "potentially hazardous".
- ✓ It is because the Asteroid will be making a threateningly close approach to the Earth, especially on July 24, when it will come within 0.034 astronomical units (AU) of our planet.
- ✓ All asteroids with a minimum orbit intersection distance (MOID) of 0.05 au or less are considered as PHAs.

- ✓ Comets and Asteroids are largely unchanged remnant debris, which were created during the formation of our solar system around 4.6 billion years ago.
- ✓ The four outer planets, also known as gas giants- Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune were formed from a cluster of billions of comets and the left over pieces from the formation process are known today as comets.
- ✓ Asteroids, also called minor planets, are bits and pieces leftover during the initial formation of the four inner planets, also known as rocky planets - Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars
- ✓ Larger asteroids are also known as planetoids.
- ✓ Asteroids are mainly composed of mineral and rock
- ✓ They are much more solid and self-contained, even when near the sun.

- ➢ **The scientists from the International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and new materials (ARCI) - have developed low cost, environment friendly 'Super capacitor' from industrial waste cotton.**

- ✓ The capacitor can be used as energy harvester storage device.
- ✓ The scientists have used natural seawater as the aqueous electrolyte in this super capacitor.
- ✓ This has reduced the cost of super capacitors greatly.
- ✓ Also, the sea-water based super capacitor shows good durability with 99% of capacitance retention and 99% of Coulombic Efficiency.
- ✓ Coulombic Efficiency is the efficiency with which the charge is transferred in a system.
- ✓ The scientists have converted the industrial cotton waste into porous carbon fibres, which are then used as electrodes.
- ✓ Supercapacitors are next generation energy storage devices.
- ✓ They have high power density, ultra charging and long durability as compared to other conventional capacitors and lithium-ion batteries.
- ✓ The four main components of super capacitors are electrolyte, electrode, separator and current collector.

➢ **'Ingenuity', a robotic helicopter – will be deployed in Mars 2020 mission of NASA, which is to be launched on July 30, 2020.**

✓ It is the first aircraft to perform 'powered' controlled flight on another planet.
✓ The helicopter being attached to the mission will check how the conditions on Mars affect aviation prospects
✓ The Mars mission will seek signs of habitable conditions on Mars.
✓ It will also search for bio signatures of past microbial life.
✓ The mission will also carry Perseverance Rover, as a part of Mars Exploration Programme of NASA
✓ The rover will provide images of mars, apart from collecting martian rocks and dust samples.
✓ The Perseverance Rover is to deliver experimental helicopter 'Ingenuity'.
✓ The Mars Exploration Programme is a long-term project, funded by NASA, to explore planet mars.
✓ NASA's Perseverance rover and Ingenuity helicopter are currently undergoing final assembly and checkout at the agency's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.
✓ They will be launched on a United Launch Alliance Atlas V rocket from Space Launch Complex 41 at nearby Cape Canaveral Air Force Station on July 30, 2020 and land at Mars' Jezero Crater on Feb. 18, 2021.
✓ The name 'Ingenuity' was given by Indian-origin girl Vaneeza Rupani, a junior at Tuscaloosa County High School in Northport, Alabama as part of NASA's "Name the Rover" essay contest
✓ Rupani's was among 28,000 essays submitted to NASA by K-12 students from every U.S. state and territory recommending names for the next Mars rover
✓ In March, the agency announced that seventh-grader Alexander Mather's essay earned him the honor of naming the rover Perseverance
✓ The Mars 2020 Perseverance rover mission is part of a larger program that includes Moon missions as a means to prepare for human exploration of the Red Planet.
✓ Through its Artemis program, NASA aims to land the first woman and the next man on the lunar surface in 2024 and establish a sustained human presence on and around the Moon by 2028

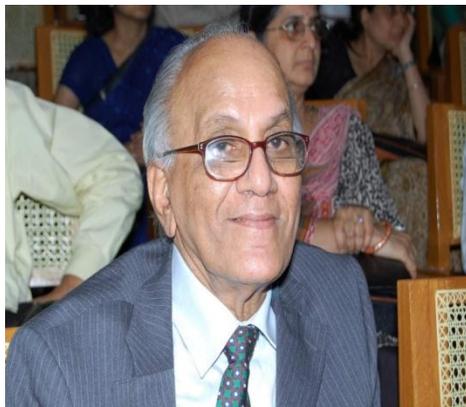- ✓ This program will be seen as a stepping stone to send astronauts to Mars.

ECONOMY

- ➢ **From this assessment year, taxpayers - will see an improved Form 26AS in the Income Tax website**
- ✓ It would carry some additional details on taxpayers' financial transactions as specified in the statement of financial transactions (SFTs) in various categories.

- ✓ Form 26AS is an annual consolidated tax statement that can be accessed from the income-tax website by taxpayers using Permanent Account Number (PAN).
- ✓ The new income tax return form 26AS is a faceless hand-holding of the taxpayers to e-file their income tax returns quickly and correctly
- ✓ This is to facilitate voluntary compliance, tax accountability and ease of e-filing of returns so that the same can be used by the taxpayer to file her or his income tax return (ITR).
- ✓ This would also bring in further transparency and accountability in the tax administration
- ✓ The earlier form 26AS used to give information regarding tax deducted at source and tax collected at source relating to a PAN, besides certain additional information including details of other taxes paid, refunds and TDS defaults.
- ✓ But now, it will have SFTs to help the taxpayers recall all their major financial transactions so that they have a ready reckoner to enable them while filing the ITR
- ✓ This would help the honest taxpayers with updated financial transactions while filing their returns, whereas it will discourage those taxpayers who inadvertently conceal financial transactions in their returns.
- ✓ The new Form 26AS would also have information of transactions which used to be received up to financial year 2015-16 in the annual information returns (AIR).

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OBITUARY

➢ **Renowned mathematician, Conjeevaram Srirangachari Seshadri (88 years), who founded Chennai Mathematical Institute (CMI) - died in Chennai on July 18**

✓ Seshadri's area of interest in mathematics was algebraic geometry and algebraic groups.
✓ He worked to broaden the scope of the subject and also brought in the practice of researchers teaching undergraduates in the country, back in the1980s.
✓ He also worked to ensure that science students were exposed to other streams like humanities.
✓ Born on February 29, 1932, in Kancheepuram, Seshadri did his BA in mathematics from Loyola College.
✓ He started his career at Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) in Bombay after his PhD, but moved to Chennai in the mid-1980s.
✓ Together with M.S. Narasimhan, he proved a theorem which is now a cornerstone of geometry.
✓ Along the way, he discovered his ampleness criterion and the 'Seshadri constant.'
✓ In 1989, he started the School of Mathematics (SPIC Science Foundation), which evolved into the Chennai Mathematical Institute (CMI).
✓ CMI, an unique institution which grew out of Seshadri's conviction that learning and research go together, ranks among the best schools for undergraduate studies in mathematics and theoretical computer science.
✓ Elected Fellow of the Royal Society in 1988 and a Foreign Associate of the National Academy of Sciences (USA) in 2010, Seshadri was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 2009.
✓ Seshadri stepped down as director of CMI around 10 years ago

SPORTS

➢ **The Ranji Trophy and the Under-19 Vinoo Mankad Trophy - are the only two domestic tournaments that will be played in the country this coming season**
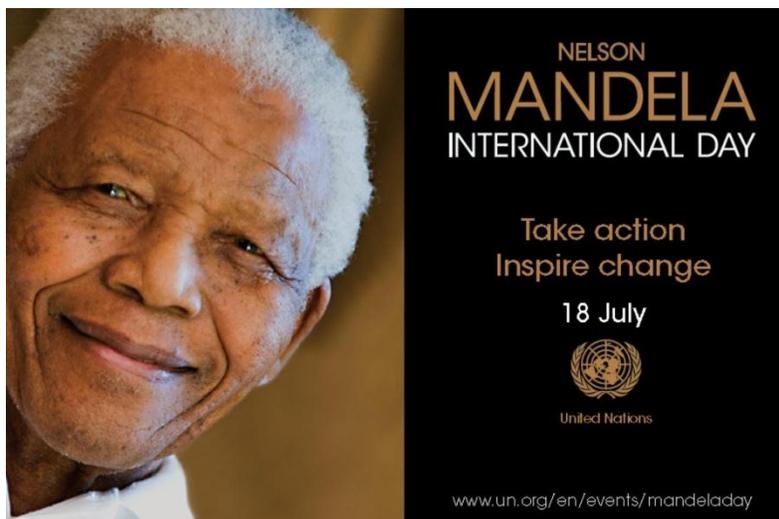
- ✓ The BCCI has decided not to conduct the Duleep Trophy, the Deodhar Trophy, the Vijay Hazare Trophy and the CK Nayudu Under-23 tournament this year
- ✓ However, it will try to conduct the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 tournament based on the situation this year.
- ✓ This Year, the Ranji Trophy is likely to go back to its most initial phase format for this year alone with teams being grouped geographically into five zones – North, West, South, East and Central.
- ✓ The initial matches will be played within the zones to determine a winner following which, the five individual zone winners will compete in a knockout tournament to decide the final winner.
- ✓ Meanwhile, Saba Karim, the BCCI General Manager (Operations), is learnt to have quit from his position and a formal announcement on the same is likely soon

- ✓ Karim had come on board in Dec 2017
- ✓ Karim's exit from BCCI comes a week after the Board accepted the CEO Johri's resignation.

INTERNATIONAL DAY

➢ **Nelson Mandela International Day – July 18**

- ✓ The day was officially declared by the United Nations in 2009 and the first UN Mandela day was observed in 2010.
- ✓ Nelson Mandela International Day is celebrated on his birth anniversary.
- ✓ He was born on July 18, 1918
- ✓ Mandela served as the president of South Africa between 1994 and 1999.
- ✓ He was the first black head of the state
- ✓ In 1961, Mandela co-founded the militant Umkhonto we Sizwe, which was the armed wing of African National Congress
- ✓ Nelson Mandela ended apartheid, which was a system of institutionalized racial segregation that prevailed in South West Africa and South Africa from 1948
- ✓ Nelson Mandela received more than 260 awards, including the prestigious Nobel Prize for peace in 1993.
- ✓ In 1990, the India Government awarded the Bharat Ratna for his role in anti-apartheid movement.

WHAT IS A KURMA APP? – A REPORT

- ➢ **KURMA, a mobile-based application and a citizen science initiative – has been launched as part of the conservation efforts of the turtles**
- ✓ It was launched on May 23, 2020, World Turtle Day by a number of conservation agencies.

- ✓ The application was developed by the Indian Turtle Conservation Action Network (ITCAN) in collaboration with the Turtle Survival Alliance-India and Wildlife Conservation Society-India
- ✓ It provides users a database to identify turtle species and also provides the location of the nearest rescue centre for turtles across the country.
- ✓ The KURMA App is free to download.
- ✓ It serves as a digital database, with a built-in digital field guide covering 29 species of freshwater turtles and tortoises of India, and information on turtle identification, distribution, vernacular names, and threats
- ✓ Tortoise and freshwater turtles are among the most trafficked in the country.

- ✓ According to a report released in 2019 by TRAFFIC, an international wildlife trade monitoring organisation, at least 200 tortoises and freshwater turtles fall prey to illicit poaching and smuggling every week amounting to 11,000 each year
- ✓ This adds up to over 1,11,130 turtles poached or smuggled between September 2009 and September 2019.
- ✓ One of the major challenges for freshwater turtle conservation in the country is that wildlife crime prevention agencies are not sufficiently equipped to distinguish one species from the other, or their protection status in accordance with CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) and the Wildlife Protection Act.
- ✓ Within only a few weeks, 90 assistance facilities have been registered on the app.
- ✓ If anyone reports a turtle from any part of the country using KURMA, he or she receives advice about the species and its conservation.

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