

## EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – AUGUST 29, 2020

### TAMIL NADU

- On August 28, Tamil Nadu - recorded 5,996 fresh Covid-19 cases that pushed the cumulative tally to 4,09,238.
- ✓ Further, the state reported 102 fatalities, taking the death toll over 7,000 mark to 7,050.
- ✓ Out of the total infections, Chennai accounted for 1,296 cases, while Coimbatore and Salem saw a spike in cases with 496 and 437 cases respectively.

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

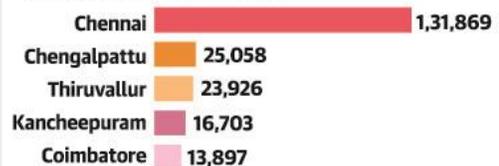
	Until Aug. 21	Aug. 22	Aug. 23	Aug. 24	Aug. 25	Aug. 26	Aug. 27	Aug. 28	Total
Cases reported	3,67,430	5,980	5,975	5,967	5,951	5,958	5,981	5,996	4,09,238
Recovered/ discharged	3,07,677	5,603	6,047	6,129	6,998	5,606	5,870	5,752	3,49,682
Deceased	6,340	80	97	97	107	118	109	102	7,050

Persons tested



\*Changes in 24 hours    As on Aug. 27, 6 p.m.    As on Aug. 28, 6 p.m.

Districts with maximum cases



- ✓ A total of 5,752 persons were discharged on the day, while 3,49,682 persons had recovered from the disease so far.
- ✓ With this the state has 52,506 active cases in various hospitals and covid centres.
- ✓ Chennai's three neighbours, Chengalpet (296), Kancheepuram (194) and Tiruvallur (298) together reported 788 cases and ten deaths.
- ✓ Further, Cuddalore (256), Tiruvannamalai (205), Vellore (157), Villupuram (152) and Ranipet (137) reported a three-digit increase among other districts in the state.

# NATIONAL

- **India - has reported an all-time record acreage of Kharif (summer sown) crops this year despite the Covid-19 pandemic and flood situation in many states.**
- ✓ As on August 28, the total Kharif acreage was reported at 1,082 lakh hectares, compared to 1,010 lakh hectares during the corresponding period last year – an increase by more than 7%

## HARVESTING HOPE

- 1,082L ha sown till now (1,010L ha last yr); paddy, oilseeds, pulses lead to boom
- Sowing of paddy marks a rise of 35L ha+ compared to 2019. Govt hopes for record foodgrains output in FY21

“ Lockdown exemptions to farm sector helped farmers harvest Rabi and then sow Kharif crops almost uninterrupted  
- Narendra Singh Tomar  
Agriculture Minister

- ✓ Sown areas of mainly paddy, oilseeds and pulses contributed to this increase.
  - ✓ India had reported its previous record for Kharif crop sown area in 2016 when the acreage was 1,075 lakh hectares.
  - ✓ On an average, the country's sown area in the past five years has been 1,066 lakh hectares.
  - ✓ The higher acreage can be attributed to a good monsoon rainfall and proactive measures taken by farmers and governments during the lockdown period
  - ✓ Generally, the sown area under paddy occupies the highest acreage among all Kharif crops every year
    - ✓ This year too, the sown area under paddy has so far recorded an increase of over 35 lakh hectares as compared to last year.
    - ✓ Higher area under paddy cultivation is reported from Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal among others
  - ✓ For the 2020-21 crop year, India has set an all-time record target output of 298 million tonnes of food grains
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- **IIT-Indore - has introduced a first-of-its-kind course to teach classical scientific texts to students in Sanskrit**
  - ✓ The institute will start the course with Bhaskaracharya's mathematical treatise 'Lilavati' of almost a thousand years ago.
  - ✓ More than 750 people from across the globe have signed up for the course that started on August 22.

- ✓ The first edition will end on October 2, Gandhi Jayanti.
  - ✓ The institute is also planning fortnightly programmes to teach metallurgy, astronomy, medicines and plant sciences in Sanskrit.
  - ✓ The move will enable students study classical Indian scientific texts in their original forms and converse about them in the ancient language.
  - ✓ In the first phase, the programme will help students grasp enough Sanskrit to converse in the language
  - ✓ Further, the students will move to the second phase where they can discuss technical subjects in Sanskrit, facilitated by experts in the same language.
- **On August 28, India's daily count of Covid-19 fresh infections - stayed above 76,000 for the third day running and fatalities over 1,000 for the fourth straight day.**
- ✓ Further, the country's death toll surged to the third highest in the world after overtaking Mexico
    - ✓ With 1,015 fatalities reported the day, the death toll from the virus rose to 62,635, going past Mexico's Covid-19 toll of 62,594, as per worldometers.info data
    - ✓ Only the US, with 1,85,272 deaths recorded so far, and Brazil (1,18,988) have a higher toll than India.
    - ✓ However, India's mortality rate from the infection, at 1.8%, remains the lowest among these three countries.
  - ✓ With 76,464 fresh infections, India's total Covid-19 caseload stood at 34,57,720, with 26,42,180 recoveries and 7,52,905 active cases.
  - ✓ A total of 9,01,338 samples were tested in a span of 24 hours on August 27, taking the cumulative tests to 3.94 crore
    - ✓ The government has the capacity to conduct 10 lakh tests per day across 1,564 labs — 998 in the government sector and 566 private labs.
  - ✓ Maharashtra (20%), Andhra Pradesh (17%), Karnataka (14%), Chhattisgarh(9%), West Bengal (9%), Tamil Nadu (8%) and Delhi (7%), in that order, had the highest positivity rates, total confirmed cases per 100 tests, in the country

### POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT

States	July 15-28 (%)	Aug 1-14 (%)	Aug 14-27 (%)
Maharashtra	20.7	16.6	19.6
Andhra	14.1	16.5	16.6
Karnataka	17.5	14.8	13.9
Chhattisgarh	4.9	5.9	9.2
West Bengal	15.1	11.2	8.6
Tamil Nadu	10.3	8.8	8.3
Delhi	6.4	6.3	7.4
<b>All India</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>7.9</b>

Note: Positivity rate is total confirmed cases per 100 tests. A positivity rate of 5% or below over a 14-day period is considered safe for relaxing lockdown measures.  
Data sourced from Covid19India.org

- ✓ The all-India positivity rate for the period between the period August 14-27 now stands at 7.87%
- ✓ A positivity rate of 5% or below over a 14-day period is considered a 'green zone' where a state can safely relax lockdown measures.
- **Malayalam film 1956, Madhyathiruvithamkoor (Central Travancore), directed by Don Palathara - has been chosen for screening at the 42nd edition of the Moscow International Film Festival to be held in October.**



- ✓ Films such as Adoor Gopalakrishnan's Swayamvaram and Venu's Munnariyippu were screened at the festival in the past.
- ✓ The film was set around themes of migration and human-animal conflict
- ✓ The Moscow festival was supposed to happen in April but got postponed owing to Covid-19

## SUPREME COURT VERDICT

- **On August 28, the Supreme Court – held that the final examinations are a must to get degrees and upheld the UGC's decision on the same.**
- ✓ However, in a pandemic situation, states had power under the Disaster Management Act to postpone examinations beyond the September 30 deadline set by the University Grants Commission (UGC), as per the apex court
- ✓ The Supreme Court justified the UGC's insistence on final examinations for undergraduate and postgraduate courses for award of degrees and said this was an important process to seek evidence of students' knowledge and evaluate it.
- ✓ The court said the state or the disaster management authority could delay the final exams but not scrap them.
- ✓ The SC said UGC guidelines had taken the pandemic situation into account and had given three options to universities for conducting final examinations — offline, online and a mix of both

## REGULATOR'S MANDATE UPHELD

➤ SC says final-year exams will need to be rescheduled in consultation with UGC, **upholding regulator's mandate to set rules for award of degrees**

➤ Apex court says UGC norms have taken pandemic situation into account and **given three options to universities for conducting final exams** – offline, online and a mix of both



➤ State governments say the **UGC guidelines are advisory and not mandatory**

➤ Disagreeing with their stand, SC says **states and varsities have no power to 'promote students in the final year or terminal semester' without exams** and says UGC is the sole authority to take a decision

➤ But SC says if a state has decided it **can't hold exams by Sept 30**, then it shall approach UGC for a new exam schedule

- ✓ Maharashtra has decided to cancel final-year examinations, citing rising Covid-19 cases.
- ✓ Later, West Bengal and Delhi termed the UGC guidelines an advisory and not mandatory.
- ✓ A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, R S Reddy and M R Shah said states and universities had no power to “promote students in the final year or terminal semester” without holding final examinations.
- ✓ It said UGC was the sole authority to take a decision on this count.
- ✓ The states had argued that UGC could not have taken a unilateral decision to fix September 30 deadline for completion of final examinations without consulting states and universities
- ✓ However, the court said if the state or SDMA has decided that it cannot hold final examinations by September 30, then the state shall approach UGC for fixing a new schedule for final examination for undergraduate and postgraduate courses.
- ✓ The July 6 UGC guidelines were based on the recommendations of the R.C. Kuhad Expert Committee, the court pointed out.

## INTERNATIONAL

- **On August 28, Japan's PM Shinzo Abe – announced his resignation as the country's premier, because of health-related issues.**



- ✓ Abe, 65, announced his decision to step down just four days after he had set a record for the longest uninterrupted run as a Japanese leader — nearly eight years.
- ✓ He served as the Prime Minister of Japan from 2006-2007 and also from 2012-2020.
- ✓ Since taking over in 2012 as the sixth PM in five years, he had overseen Japan's recovery from an earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster.
- ✓ The ruling Liberal Democratic Party is expected to appoint an interim leader until a leadership election can be held.
- ✓ Abe's term was set to expire in September 2021.
- ✓ Abe has battled ulcerative colitis, a bowel disease, for many years
  - ✓ It is a chronic digestive disease that is characterised by inflammation of inner lining of colon
- ✓ He was the first Japanese Prime Minister to attend India's Republic day parade in Delhi as chief guest.
- ✓ It was Abe who introduced the concept of Abenomics
  - ✓ Abenomics refers to a set of policies aimed at increasing money supply in the country, enacting reforms, boosting government spending.
  - ✓ It consists of three targets – first to achieve 2% of inflation target, second on flexible fiscal policy and third on growth strategy.

## PERSONALITIES

- **World War II British secret agent, Noor Inayat Khan - has become the first woman of Indian origin to be honoured with a blue plaque in London**



- ✓ Khan worked as a British spy in Nazi-occupied France before being executed in a concentration camp, having revealed nothing to the Gestapo, not even her name.
- ✓ She posthumously received the George Cross.
- ✓ Khan was born in Moscow to an Indian father, Sufi master Inayat Khan, a descendant of Tipu Sultan, and to white American Sufi poet who adopted the name Pirani Ameena Begum

- ✓ But they decided to move to England in 1940 to join the fight against fascism.
  - ✓ In England, Khan enrolled for the Special Operations Executive, a secret service set up by Winston Churchill
  - ✓ In June 1943, she was the first female radio operator to be sent into Nazi-occupied France.
  - ✓ The blue plaque is erected at the building at 4 Taviton Street, Bloomsbury
    - ✓ This was her mother's home where she lived from mid-1942 until she left for France.
  - ✓ In France, she was captured by the Gestapo and later sent to Dachau concentration camp where in 1944, aged 30, she was shot dead.
  - ✓ The English Heritage 'London blue plaques scheme' identifies and links significant figures of the past to the buildings in which they lived or worked.
- **State Bank of India managing director Dinesh Kumar Khara – has been recommended as the first choice candidate to succeed SBI's current chairman Rajnish Kumar as the bank's chairman**
- ✓ The 59-year old Khara has been recommended by the Bank Board Bureau, the selection panel for top jobs at state-run lenders
  - ✓ Unlike his predecessor, Rajnish Kumar did not get an extension to his term, which ends on October 7 after three years.

### WHO IS KHARA?

➤ SBI's senior-most MD

**Dinesh Kumar Khara** heads the Global Banking division of SBI.



He holds a board-level position and supervises the businesses of SBI's non-banking subsidiaries

➤ He was appointed as managing director of SBI in August 2016 for a three-year term. He got a two-year extension in 2019 after review of his performance

➤ Interestingly, Khara was among the contenders for the chairman's post in 2017 as well

➤ Khara, who joined SBI in 1984 as a Probationary Officer, was instrumental in merging five associate banks and Bharatiya Mahila Bank with SBI effective April 2017

- ✓ BBB, headed by former union personnel secretary Bhanu Pratap Sharma, has also said that C S Setty, another MD at the country's largest bank, is the second option.

- ✓ Setty is expected to lead the bank after Khara retires.
- ✓ A final decision on Khara's candidature will be taken by the appointments committee of cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- ✓ SBI chairman's post is the most coveted job in the financial services sector, given that the bank controls around a quarter of lending and deposits business in the country
- ✓ Unlike the other state-run lenders, the bank's head will be an SBI employee who join as a probationary officer and rise through the ranks.
- ✓ In 1984, Khara too started out as a probationary officer after graduating in commerce.
  - ✓ He also holds an MBA degree from Delhi University's Faculty of Management Studies.
  - ✓ An officer of the Delhi circle, he has held various posts and also headed the Bhopal circle
  - ✓ He has also had a stint in Chicago and oversaw the merger of five associates and Bhartiya Mahila Bank with SBI.
  - ✓ He was also the head of SBI Mutual Fund and SBI General.
  - ✓ He took over as an MD of SBI in August 2016 and was given a two-year extended term.
- ✓ Khara is currently the senior most MD among four MD's in the bank.

## **SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT**

- **A team of researchers from National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) – have captured diurnal or 24-hour vertical migration of planktons using the data from an Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler (ADCP) accidentally.**
- ✓ ADCP is an instrument deployed by Chennai-based NIOT researchers in the Arabian Sea to study underwater currents
- ✓ Using the instrument, the researchers have accidentally captured daily migration pattern of microorganisms, which is otherwise difficult to study without water samples physically collected from the sea.
- ✓ Normally, a team remains at sea for days to collect water samples at various depths
  - ✓ During the research, nets are used to collect the organisms depending on their size before they are examined in the laboratories.
- ✓ The planktons, which are the organisms at the base of sea, go up and down the depths of the sea depending on sun and moonlight for food and to protect themselves from predators.
- ✓ The ADCP has been deployed about 400km from the coast in the central Arabian Sea at a depth of 4,000 metres for about 257days
- ✓ It is normally used to horizontal movement of underwater currents using sound waves.

- ✓ The ADCP emits sound waves that hit particles or plankton suspended in moving water.

## ACCIDENTAL CATCH

An acoustic doppler current profiler (ADCP), used to measure the horizontal movement of underwater currents using soundwaves, accidentally recorded the diurnal vertical movement of planktons, microorganisms living in the depths of the sea



**WHAT WAS FOUND** | The instrument at 4,000m depth about 400km from the coast at Central

Arabian Sea measured a 24-hour migration pattern of planktons

➤ The ADCP deployed for 257 days at 4000m depth recorded the vertical migration of organisms that move to the water surface for photosynthesis during the day and go to the seabed at night to get nutrients. Some other organisms move up at night to feed and then move deeper in the day to avoid predators

➤ The migration was also found in tandem with the phases of the moon i.e they remain in dark depths in the sea during full moon days compared to new moon days

**WHAT'S NEW** | The migration was otherwise studied by manually collecting water samples at various depths of the sea. This machine simplifies this process

- ✓ Some sound waves are reflected back to the instrument, which then calculates the current velocity.
- ✓ NIOT has so far deployed about 20 ADCPs in Bay of Bengal, Arabian Sea and in the Arctic.
- ✓ According to US researchers, similar data from an ADCP had been captured once in the Pacific
- ✓ According to the researchers, plankton move to the water surface for photosynthesis during the day and to the seabed at night for nutrients.
- ✓ The migration was also found in tandem with the moon's phases — they remain in dark depths on full moon days compared to new moon days.
- ✓ Planktons are classified into plants (phytoplanktons) and animals (zooplanktons) based on their type, size and time taken to drift.

## OBITUARY

- **H Vasanthakumar, Congress Lok Sabha MP from Kanyakumari (70 years)**
- ✓ TNCC working president, H Vasanthakumar passed away on August 28 at Apollo Hospitals in Chennai, after developing symptoms of Covid-19 on August 10
- ✓ Born on April 14, 1950 at Agastheeswaram in Kanyakumari, he was the younger brother of former TNCC president Kumari Ananthan and the uncle of Telangana Governor and former BJP Tamil Nadu president Tamilisai Soundararajan.



- ✓ Vasanthakumar started his career as a salesman in VGP & Co selling 'Murphy' transistors door-to-door on instalment basis on a bicycle.
- ✓ Starting from scratch in 1978, he established Vasanth & Co., after obtaining loan from Indian Bank, to sell home appliances
  - ✓ Initially he sold wired chairs in the shop, being the owner, marketer and salesman for the consumer durable firm
  - ✓ As years passed, the firms started selling branded television sets, fans, air-conditioners, mobile phones and other home appliances.
- ✓ Always seen wearing the badge 'Vetri Nichchayam' (victory is sure), he motivated youngsters to work hard to come up.
- ✓ He also popularised the concept of EMI that became a hit among the poor and the middle class.
- ✓ An ardent fan of former Chief Minister K. Kamaraj, Vasanthakumar, when he was an MLA, created 'evening schools' in more than 100 villages for conducting special coaching classes for children from poor families.
- ✓ He also launched interest-free loan schemes for hawkers and pavement vendors.

## SELF-MADE

- Came to Chennai driven by poverty
- Started his career as a salesman with VGP & Co. Sold transistors on instalments to households on a cycle
- Established Vasanth & Co in 1978
- Entered politics and was elected to TN assembly from Nanguneri in 2006
- Lost in 2011 assembly polls
- Contested from Kanyakumari Lok Sabha seat and lost in 2014
- Won from Nanguneri assembly segment in 2016 assembly polls
- Resigned to contest 2019 Lok Sabha polls from Kanyakumari and won
- Was made one of four working presidents of TNCC



- ✓ He met senior branch manager M Gopalakrishnan, who later went on to become CMD of the bank, who sanctioned him a small loan

- ✓ The company later became the state's largest consumer durable retail chain, having over 80 branches in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka.
- ✓ Vasanthakumar was elected to the Tamil Nadu assembly from Nanguneri assembly segment for the first time in 2006
  - ✓ He lost the 2011 assembly elections and 2014 Lok Sabha elections from Kanyakumari
  - ✓ In the 2016 assembly elections, Vasanthakumar got elected from Nanguneri to the assembly for the second time.
  - ✓ But he contested the 2019 Lok Sabha polls from Kanyakumari and won the seat
  - ✓ Later, he resigned the MLA post.
- ✓ He also has the record of asking the maximum number of questions in Parliament
- ✓ Vasanthakumar was one of the working presidents of the TNCC and one of the 'richest' candidates to contest in the Lok Sabha election, declaring assets worth ₹412 crore.

## SPORTS

- **The National Anti-Doping Agency (Nada) - has announced amendments to the proposed anti-doping legislation**
- ✓ The revised draft of the bill has been circulated among various stakeholders, including the sports ministry and the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), for wider consultation.
- ✓ The legislation was pending for more than a year.

### REVISED DRAFT

- > Clause in the 'National Anti-Doping Bill 2018' for 4-yr jail and Rs.10-lakh fine for doping has been removed after WADA objection
- > Coaches will be jailed only for trafficking drugs for commercial purposes
- > Pharmacists and others involved in trafficking drugs to athletes will face jail and fine of ₹10 lakh

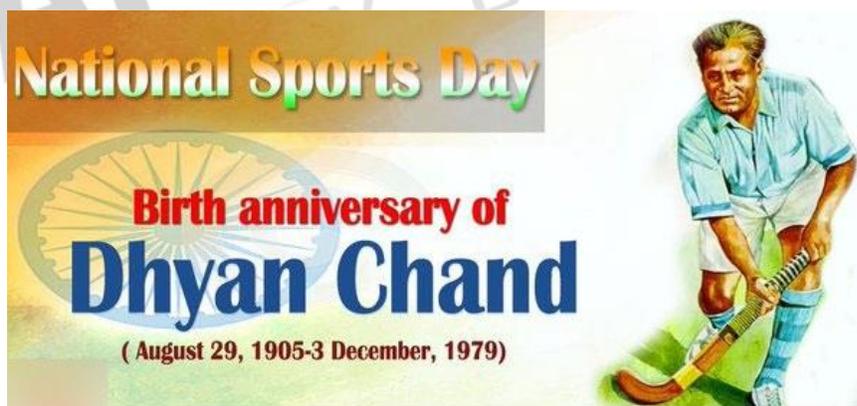
- ✓ As per the draft legislation, Indian athletes will no longer face the possibility of being imprisoned or fined heavily for alleged participation in dope-related activities.
- ✓ The clause in the 'National Anti-Doping Bill 2018', which mandated imprisonment of up to four years or imposition of fine of ₹10 lakh on a sportsperson involved

with an organised doping syndicate, has been removed after the World Anti-Doping Agency (Wada) objected to this clause

- ✓ The coaches, too, would only be jailed or fined if their involvement in trafficking prohibited substances to athletes for commercial purposes or their collusion with the syndicate is proven beyond doubt
- ✓ In the original bill, the coaches can be scrutinized by the investigating authorities and were liable to be sentenced if their athletes tested positive for banned substances.
  - ✓ Now, only the pharmacists and individual entities involved in trafficking drugs to athletes will remain liable for imprisonment and fine of Rs 10 lakh.
- ✓ Further, the criminality part involving athletes was removed because some prohibited substances can legally be purchased and consumed
- ✓ As per the existing system of penalty to drug cheaters, there's a provision to ban an athlete for a period of four years for his first-time doping offence and a subsequent life ban for his/her second offence.
- ✓ Similarly, the involvement of coaches and support staff in promoting drug culture among athletes could lead to similar sanctions or complete life ban from sporting activities under the present set-up.
- ✓ In the draft, the provision has also been made on the insistence of Wada to constitute an independent commission protecting the athletes' right.

## NATIONAL DAY

### ➤ National Sports Day - August 29



- ✓ The day commemorates the birth anniversary of the legendary hockey player Dhyhan Chand, who was born on August 29, 1905.
- ✓ National Sports Day is celebrated in India by presenting awards such as Arjuna Award, Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award, Dronacharya Award, Dhyhan Chand Award, Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar, and Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award.
- ✓ Major Dhyhan Chand was known as "The Wizard" and had scored more than 1000 goals during his international career.

- ✓ He won three Olympic gold medals in the field of hockey in 1928 (Amsterdam), 1932 (Los Angeles) and 1936 (Berlin).
- ✓ He has represented India in more than 185 matches and has scored more than 400 goals.
- ✓ In 1956, he was conferred with Padma Bhusha (the third highest civilian award)
- ✓ This year, the prize money in four of the seven categories of the National Sports and Adventure Awards has been enhanced.
  - ✓ The prize money of Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award has been increased to 25 lakh rupees from the earlier 7.5 lakh rupees.
  - ✓ The Dhronacharya Award whose prize money was Rs 5 lakh rupees earlier, has now been enhanced to Rs 15 lakhs.
  - ✓ The Dhyan Chand award prize money has been increased from Rs 5 lakhs to Rs 10 lakhs now

