

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – AUGUST 18, 2020

TAMIL NADU

- The Expert Appraisal Committee of the Environment Ministry – has recommended for Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) clearance to the Chennai Port to Maduravoyal elevated corridor project

FACT FILE

Project sanctioned in 2007

Foundation laid in 2009

Estimation cost

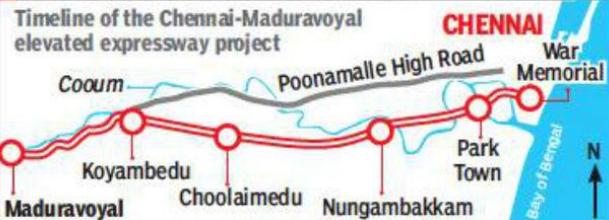
₹1,800 crore

Elevated Expressway starts from Chennai Port and ends in Maduravoyal interchange



MEANDERING FORWARD

Timeline of the Chennai-Maduravoyal elevated expressway project



2010 Project launched by the DMK government	2019 Expert panel examines the project. Submits report in favour of the project
2011 The AIADMK govt stalls it	Sept 25 Stakeholders of the project met and agreed in principle to go ahead with the project
Dec 2016 Project resumed, cost goes up from ₹1,800cr to ₹2700cr	

- ✓ The proposed four-lane project, spanning 20.5 km, will be undertaken by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)
- ✓ The project also includes reconstruction of the Navy Quarters with a built-up area of about 12,846 sq m and three bungalows.
- ✓ The ₹1,815-crore project was commenced in 2010
- ✓ It was put on hold in 2012 following objections over its alignment.
- ✓ Since the alignment of the elevated corridor passes through the naval area, the buildings will be demolished and alternative residential buildings will have to be built, as per the revised design.
- ✓ The old alignment was proposed to have begun from Gate No. 10 of the Port but has been modified now to begin with the Chennai Port.

- ✓ Under the old alignment, the project was supposed to have a total of 1,013 piers, which have now been reduced to 639 piers in the new design.
 - ✓ The proposed corridor will pass through major urban and commercial areas in the city such as Chintadripet, Egmore, Aminjikarai, Nungambakkam, Arumbakkam, Koyambedu and Maduravoyal.
 - ✓ The project will require prior clearance from the Standing Committee of the National Board of Wildlife
 - ✓ Also, the project proponent will have to replant a minimum of five times the number of trees affected due to the project, ensuring their survival rate is not less than 85%.
- **On August 17, Tamil Nadu – reported 5,890 Covid-19 cases and 120 deaths**
- ✓ This takes the cumulative caseload of the state to 3,43,945 and the death toll to 5,886
 - ✓ The state has 54,122 patients still under treatment as ‘active cases’
 - ✓ As many as 1,185 persons tested positive in Chennai, taking the city’s tally to 1,17,839.
 - ✓ A total of 5,667 patients were discharged on the day, taking the total recovered to 2,83,937
 - ✓ While 16% of the cases are still active, the recovery rate was close to 82%, the overall case fatality rate in the state was 1.6%.

COVID TRACKER

Zone	New Cases	Deaths	Active cases
Chennai region	1,891	38	21,510
North	945	22	8,688
Central	627	15	5,483
South	1,413	28	11,892
West	1,002	17	6,384
Other	12	0	165
Total	5,890	120	54,122

- ✓ On August 17, six districts – Ariyalur, Dharmapuri, Krishnagiri, Nagapattinam, Thoothukudi and Villupuram – did not report any death, while all 37 districts reported cases.
- ✓ Coimbatore had the second highest number of fresh cases and deaths after Chennai -- 393 cases and 10 deaths.
- ✓ Chennai’s neighbouring districts, Tiruvallur (308), Chengalpeta (224) and Kancheepuram (174) together reported 706 cases.
- ✓ Further, Cuddalore reported 390 cases, Theni 279 cases, Salem 268, Virudhunagar 212, Kanyaumari 209, Pudukottai 164, Dindigul 154, Ranipet 151,

Tenkasi 147, Villupuram 138, Erode 137, Madurai 136, Trichy 121, Thanjavur 113 and Tirunelveli with 100 also reported cases in three digits

- ✓ A total of 67,532 samples were tested during the past 24 hours, taking the total figure to 37,78,778.
- ✓ There are currently 62 testing facilities in the government sector and 74 in the private sector.

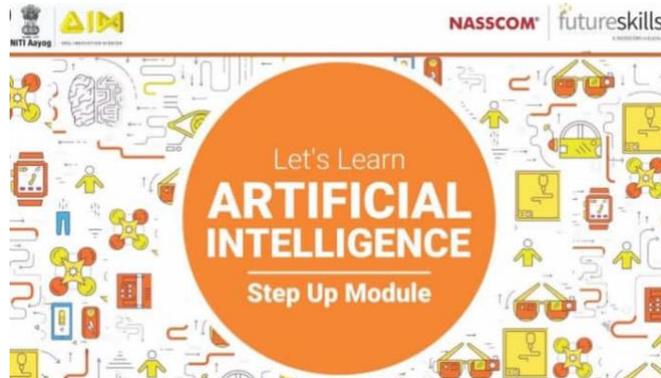
STATES

- **On August 17, Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath - directed the setting up of two tribunals at Lucknow and Meerut**
- ✓ These tribunals will deal with the disposition of compensation claims of private individuals and government authorities whose properties were damaged or destructed during protests and riots.
- ✓ The state had notified the 'Uttar Pradesh Recovery of Damage to Public and Private Property Ordinance 2020' in March this year.
- ✓ As per the ordinance, the government or owner of a private property can file claims for compensation within three months of an incident like protests or riots in which the property has been damaged or destroyed.

NATIONAL

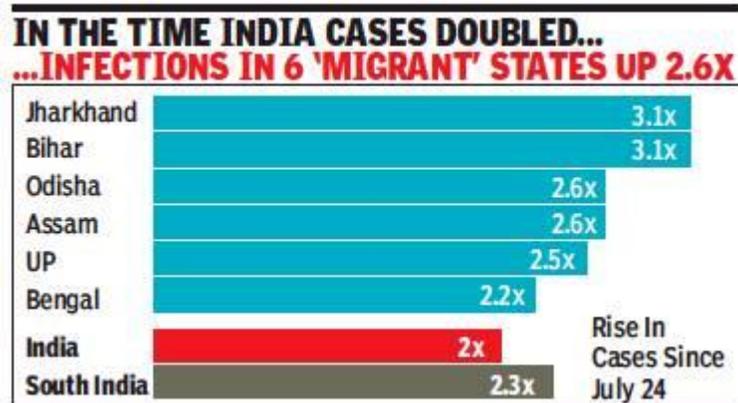
- **The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) - will carry out a safety rating of 1,400km of NHs in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh**
- ✓ The NHAI board has approved to assign this task to India chapter of International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP).
- ✓ Across the globe, safety ratings by iRAP have become popular in recent years
- ✓ Last week Union road transport minister Nitin Gadkari had sought collaboration of Australian government and companies to initiate steps to reduce road fatalities in India.
- ✓ Australia has set the example of reducing road deaths by taking several safety measures in the roads to avoid accidents.
- ✓ The safety star rating of NHs will identify the gaps and will suggest measures to reduce crashes and fatalities
- ✓ Earlier, iRAP has conducted a study in India, which was sponsored by the World Bank
- ✓ According to the study, it was found that 30% of the Delhi-Mumbai and almost half of the Mumbai-Chennai stretches of the Golden Quadrilateral were unsafe for car, bus and truck occupants.
- ✓ The two corridors were rated on a scale of one to five stars, based on crash studies from around the world.

- **The NITI Aayog, Atal Innovation Mission along with the collaboration of NASSCOM - launched the “ATL AI Step Up Module” on the eve of Independence day.**
- ✓ The module aims to take forward Artificial Intelligence education and innovation to next levels in schools all over India.



- ✓ It provides ‘Learn it yourself’ concepts to expand the AI knowledge base of a person, who can be from any discipline background.
 - ✓ It teaches the principles of Artificial Intelligence to students using interactive tools
 - ✓ The module has been developed to succeed ‘AI Base module’ that was launched in February 2020.
 - ✓ The AI Base module provides the basic concepts of the Artificial Intelligence
 - ✓ NITI Aayog has set up Atal Tinkering Labs at school levels that focus on Artificial Intelligence, Computational thinking, Internet of Things, advanced robotics, design thinking among other areas
 - ✓ Atal Tinkering Labs have been set up under Atal Innovation Mission
 - ✓ The Mission promotes entrepreneurship through self employment and talent utilization
 - ✓ It also provides a platform to generate innovative ideas for the day-to-day problems in and around the society
-
- **The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare - recently announced that India ranks first in Organic Farming.**
 - ✓ Also, India achieved ninth rank in terms of areas under Organic Farming.
 - ✓ Sikkim was the first state in the world to become completely organic.
 - ✓ Uttarakhand and Tripura are the other states which have set similar targets
 - ✓ India has launched two schemes to assist farmers in adopting organic farming - Mission organic value chain development for the north east region and Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana
 - ✓ The aim of these missions is to produce pesticide residue free produce and contribute towards improving health of the consumer.
 - ✓ The main organic exports from India include sesame, flax seeds, soya bean, medicinal plants, tea, rice and pulses.
 - ✓ India is exporting its organic products to USA, UK, Italy and Swaziland.

- ✓ These products contributed to 50% organic exports in 2018-19 touching Rs 5151 crores
 - ✓ On the whole, the Budget 2020-21 allocated Rs 687.5 crores for organic farming.
 - ✓ The government has also launched Jaivik Kheti Portal, where farmers shall sell all of their organic produce globally.
- **The National Thermal Power Corporation - developed infrastructure at Rihand project in Uttar Pradesh to transport fly ash to cement plants at cheaper cost.**
- ✓ This will help NTPC to achieve its goal of 100% utilisation of fly ash from power plants.
 - ✓ Fly ash is a coal combustion product, which causes harm to the environment
 - ✓ In the year 2019-20, around 44.33 million tonnes of fly ash, amounting to 73.31%, were utilized in other industries
 - ✓ In 1999, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (EFOCC) issued notification to ensure 100% utilization of flyash, without discharging it into the environment
 - ✓ It was further amended in 2003 and 2009
 - ✓ In 2015, the Centre fixed December 31, 2017 as revised deadline to achieve 100% utilisation.
 - ✓ However, only 55.7% of fly ash is being used, as on date
 - ✓ Fly ash is currently used in low to moderate strength concrete and bricks replacing normal clay bricks
 - ✓ In 2016, the fly ash notification issued by the Ministry of EFOCC made it mandatory for the construction projects located within 300 km of a thermal power plant to use fly ash products
- **On August 17, India – reported a drop in fresh cases for the second straight day with 53,230 infections, down from over 67,000 registered a day earlier.**
- ✓ With this, the country’s total caseload stood at 26,98,877, while recoveries rose to over 19.7 lakh.
 - ✓ A total of 902 deaths were also reported on the day, while the total active cases also dropped on the day to 6,74,650 from 6,83,401 a day earlier.



- ✓ Maharashtra reported 8,493 fresh cases, its lowest in the last 13 days, taking its total caseload over 6 lakh mark to 6,04,358
- ✓ Maharashtra also reported a drop in Covid-19 fatalities, recording 228 deaths, the lowest in 21 days.
- ✓ Andhra Pradesh reported 6,780 new Covid-19 cases, the lowest single-day count in the last three weeks, and 82 deaths.
- ✓ With this the cumulative caseload stands at 2,96,609, while the death toll stands at 2,732.

INTERNATIONAL

- **Malaysia - has detected a strain of the new coronavirus that's been found to be "10 times more infectious".**
- ✓ The mutation called D614G was found in at least three of the 45 cases in a cluster
- ✓ The new mutated virus was initially found on a restaurant owner returning from India, breaching his 14-day home quarantine.
 - ✓ The man, who had tested negative when he arrived in Malaysia, has since been sentenced to five months in prison and fined.
 - ✓ The strain was also found in another cluster involving people returning from the Philippines.
- ✓ The strain could mean that existing studies on vaccines may be incomplete or ineffective against the mutation
- ✓ The mutation has become the predominant variant in Europe and the US
- ✓ However, the WHO said that there's no evidence the strain leads to a more severe disease and more contagious.
- ✓ The researchers from Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) have so far found 73 new variants of COVID-19 in their three months of research.
- ✓ Mutation is the change in structure of gene caused due to insertion, deletion or rearrangement of larger sections of genes
 - ✓ It also occurs naturally and mainly when a gene is passed on from one generation to other.
 - ✓ Sometimes, mutation can even lead to a weaker virus.
- ✓ In another development, a late-stage trial of a Chinese vaccine candidate from CanSino Biologics Inc has started in Russia
 - ✓ As China is reporting nil cases, the Chinese firm have stepped up testing abroad to close in on regulatory approval.
 - ✓ The Ad5-nCoV vaccine already has approval for use by China's military, and late-stage trials are being lined up for Mexico and Saudi Arabia.
 - ✓ It has already won a patent approval from the Chinese government.

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **The eighth meeting of the Nepal-India oversight mechanism - took place on August 17 in Kathmandu**

- ✓ The mechanism was set up in 2016 to monitor progress of various India-assisted projects
- ✓ This is the first diplomat-level meeting between the two sides in the current year that saw the Kalapani territorial dispute.
- ✓ The discussion came two days after Nepal PM K.P. Sharma Oli greeted his Indian PM Narendra Modi on the eve of 74th Independence Day and sought “meaningful bilateral dialogue”.
- ✓ The meeting was co-chaired by Nepal Foreign Secretary Shankar Bairagi and Indian Ambassador in Kathmandu Vinay Mohan Kwatra



- ✓ The meeting carried out a comprehensive review of bilateral economic and development cooperation projects since its seventh meeting held on July 8, 2019.
 - ✓ Both sides deliberated on the issues and agreed to expedite the implementation of India-aided development projects in Nepal
 - ✓ They also reviewed progress in efforts to promote the Ramayan circuit which is meant to promote religious tourism in both countries.
- ✓ Nepal PM K P Oli had recently created a controversy by claiming Ram was from Nepal
- ✓ As expected, there was no discussion on the Kalapani dispute that has been triggered by Nepal’s decision to issue a new political map claiming Indian territories.
- ✓ According to Nepal, the two sides agreed to undertake “necessary measures” to address problems and obstacles in the course of speedy implementation of bilateral projects.
- ✓ It added that the co-chairs noted the progress made in the development projects in the last one year
- ✓ The meeting discussed the reconstruction of 46,301 earthquake affected houses (out of 50,000 houses committed by India) in Gorkha and Nuwakot districts, operationalisation of the Motihari-Amlekhgunj cross-border petroleum products pipeline, the integrated check post in Biratnagar and other ‘high impact community development projects’.
- ✓ Nepal also noted “with appreciation” Covid-19 related assistance, including the supply of medicines and medical equipment to Nepal by India.

- ✓ The meeting further dealt with the status of bilateral cooperation covering Terai roads, cross-border railways, Arun-III hydropower project and petroleum products pipelines
- ✓ The meeting also discussed issues related with Pancheshwar multi-purpose project, post-earthquake reconstruction, irrigation, power and transmission lines, construction of Nepal Police Academy, integrated check posts, Ramayan circuit, HICDPs, motorable bridges over Mahakali river, agriculture and cultural heritage, among others.

- **India - has sent 58 tonnes of emergency humanitarian aid to the people affected by Beirut Explosion in Lebanon.**
- ✓ This includes Personal Protective Equipment, surgical gowns, surgical gloves as well.
- ✓ India dispatched the humanitarian aid through C-17 heavy lift aircrafts.
- ✓ It included wheat flour, pulses, sugar, blankets, sleeping mats, dignity kits, medical supplies, etc.
- ✓ On August 4, 3,000 tonnes of stored Ammonium Nitrate exploded killing 170 people and injuring 6,000 near the Port of Beirut.
- ✓ According to the World Bank, around 5,000 homes were damaged due to the blast and has estimated the total damage to be \$10-15 billion
- ✓ Following the explosion, there were outrageous protests in the country due to which the Lebanese PM Hassan Diab resigned
- ✓ The United Nations World Food Programme has promised to provide 50,000 tonnes of wheat flour to Lebanon.
- ✓ The world leaders have pledged more than \$300 million support for the Lebanese people.
- ✓ The recent 2019-20 Lebanon protests, also known as October Revolution, targeted the failure of the Government to provide basic services such as water, electricity, sanitation and imposition of taxes on tobacco, gasoline and VOIP calls on applications such as WhatsApp.
- ✓ Lebanon is the third most indebted country in the world following Japan and Greece.

- **On August 16, India - has deployed a 10-member Indian Coast Guard team under Mission SAGAR to contain oil spill in the south-east coast of Mauritius**
- ✓ Earlier in August 2020, a Japanese bulk carrier struck a coral reef coast of Mauritius that leaked tonnes of oil in the environment sensitive regions of Mauritius.
- ✓ India has sent 30 tonnes of technical equipment and material to Mauritius to contain the oil spill
- ✓ The equipment includes river booms, ocean booms, heli skimmers, blowers, power packs, oil absorbent graphene pads.



- ✓ Mission SAGAR refers to 'Security Growth for All in the Region'
 - ✓ It was launched in 2015 to enhance economic and security cooperation with maritime neighbours.
 - ✓ The Mission also aims to check the influence of China in the Indian Ocean Region
- ✓ In May 2020, around 580 tonnes of essential medicines, Ayurvedic medicines and food supplies were sent to Mauritius under Mission SAGAR.
- **On August 17, 2020, the United Kingdom - launched 3 million pounds of Innovation Challenge Fund in India.**
 - ✓ The financial assistance will support Indian scientists in industries and academia to tackle COVID-19 and climate change.
 - ✓ The funds will connect the persons involved in the research activities to the Artificial Intelligence Clusters in Karnataka and future mobility cluster in Maharashtra.
 - ✓ The British High Commission is to select the best of the projects and provide required funds.
 - ✓ The initiative will help to build on UK-India Tech partnership, which was launched in 2018 by the Indian and British Prime Ministers.
 - ✓ The funding is one among the step taken by the government to support talented Indians to do research projects within the country, without going abroad
 - ✓ In a related development, Project Nirmanshree was launched by European Union to help in Women Empowerment on August 13, 2020
 - ✓ The project aims to train women in housing sector and proposed to be implemented in four districts of Odisha and Maharashtra.
 - ✓ The total cost of the project is 9,49,694 Euros, out of which 90% of the funds are provided by EU and remaining 10% are to be issued by Habitat for Humanity India.
 - ✓ Around 3,000 women are to be trained under entrepreneurial skills focusing on masonry, electrical fitting, plumbing etc.,

COMMITTEES

- **On August 14, 2020 the Arunachal Pradesh Government – announced the creation of a committee under the chairmanship of Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein to discuss possible solutions of the Patkai Autonomous Council and Mon autonomous Region**
- ✓ The regions under the Autonomous councils of Arunachal Pradesh are currently under the Fifth Schedule of Indian Constitution.
- ✓ This does not provide special rights for the indigenous communities in the autonomous councils
- ✓ Hence, the autonomous councils in the state are demanding to include Arunachal Pradesh under the sixth schedule
- ✓ The Sixth Schedule will give legitimate ownership and special rights to the indigenous communities to make them self sufficient and owners of natural resources rather than being just protectors.
 - ✓ The Sixth Schedule includes 10 autonomous district councils in 4 north eastern states - Assam, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Tripura
 - ✓ The Article 244 and Article 275 provide these special provisions to safeguard the rights of the tribal population by forming Autonomous District Councils.
- ✓ There are 10 autonomous councils in the North East and 2 in Ladakh
- ✓ It includes 3 in Meghalaya, 3 in Mizoram, 3 in Assam, 1 in Tripura and 2 in Ladakh (Kargil and Leh)
- ✓ These Autonomous Councils can pass their own laws on land management, forest management, formation of village council, public health and sanitation, marriage, social customs, mining, money lending, inheritance of property, village and town level policing
- ✓ The Governors has the powers to organize and re-organize these autonomous districts.
- ✓ Bordoloi Committee framed the concept of Autonomous Administration Councils in India.
- ✓ The Committee was set up by the Constituent Assembly to provide limited autonomy to the tribal regions in the North-East.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **The fourth session of BRICS Anti-Drug Working Group - was held virtually with the participation of all member countries, India, Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa**
- ✓ The meeting reaffirmed the group's commitments towards the Anti-Drug Conventions and focused on misuse of technologies for drug trafficking.



- ✓ During the meeting, India highlighted the need for real time information sharing on drug trafficking
- ✓ On the occasion of International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (June 26), Anti-Drug Action Plan for 2020-21 was launched by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
 - ✓ The plan includes identification of drug-use population, awareness generation programme and focus on treatment facilities.
 - ✓ Accordingly, de-addiction facilities are to be set up in more than 272 districts across the states of Punjab, Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and the North East.
 - ✓ Further, an Integrated Rehabilitation Centre for Addicts will be set up, apart from setting up drop-in centres for addicts as part of peer-led community-based outreach programmes.
- ✓ The Action plan has been developed based on a survey undertaken by the Ministry, which estimated around 8,50,000 people in India using the drugs with 50% being children
 - ✓ As per the survey, the use of opioids in India is thrice that of global average.
- ✓ The 11th BRICS Summit was held in 2019 under the theme “Economic Growth for an Innovative future” in Brasilia, Brazil

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **The Department of Science and Technology (DST) - has funded two companies, FastSense Diagnostics (FD) and Module Innovations (MI) for collaboration on Covid-19 testing**
- ✓ The two companies shall develop antibody kits as well as a quicker version of the Rapid RT-PCR (reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction) test that is now the most widely used diagnostic approach to test for Covid-19.
- ✓ MI is a Pune-based healthcare start-up that is working on a diagnostic kit which can detect the virus in “10-15 minutes”.
- ✓ The diagnostic kit is being developed on the lines of one of its products called ‘Usense’, which is a point-of-care diagnostic kit that can detect urinary tract infections within 15 minutes.

- ✓ The start-up is now developing nCoVSENSE, a test device that can detect antibodies generated against COVID-19
- ✓ FastSense Diagnostics will develop a modified PCR test for confirmatory analysis in lesser time compared to existing detection methods
- ✓ They are working on a testing method that can provide on-the-spot results in less than 15 minutes per sample
- ✓ There are several companies that have been authorised to market indigenous or foreign RT-PCR test kits approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration in India
- ✓ However, there are only three companies that have been approved to sell rapid antigen tests - SD Biosensor, Vishat Diagnostics and Mylab Discovery Solutions, another Pune-based company that was also the first indigenous company approved to market its own RT-PCR kits.
- ✓ Antigen tests detect the presence of the virus quicker than the PCR, but have a higher rate of missing out on those who may be carriers of the virus.
- ✓ Sri Chitra Tirunal Institute of Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST), an autonomous DST institute, has developed RT-LAMP, a rapid PCR test using an alternate technology to provide faster results
 - ✓ The Institute has also transferred the technology to the Kochi-based Agappe Technologies for bulk production
 - ✓ However, the testing method was not approved by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)
- ✓ Another company being supported by DST was Seagull Biosolutions, Pune, a start-up working on developing platform technologies to produce vaccine and immunotherapeutic agents.

DEFENCE

- **On August 16, 2020, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh - approved a major Expansion Scheme for the National Cadet Corps (NCC)**
- ✓ According to the scheme, around 1,00,000 new cadets of NCC will be inducted in 173 border areas and coastal districts.



- ✓ With this, the border areas are to get trained manpower for disaster management apart from providing a career in armed forces to the trained youth
- ✓ One-third of the deployed NCC personnel are to be girls.

- ✓ Under the Expansion Scheme, the NCC programme is to be introduced in more than 1,000 schools and colleges located in the border areas
- ✓ During his address at the 74th Independence Day celebration, PM Modi announced that around 1 lakh NCC cadets from bordering areas are to be extended for the youths in the region
- ✓ During Bangladeshi-Pakistani war of 1971 and Indo-Pakistani war of 1965, NCC cadets were the second line of defence, assisting ordnance factories and supplying arms and ammunitions to the fighting forces

APPOINTMENTS

- **On August 17, Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) chief Rakesh Asthana – was appointed as Director General, Border Security Force (BSF).**



- ✓ Asthana, a 1984 batch IPS officer of Gujarat cadre, has earlier served as CBI special director
- ✓ He will continue to also hold additional charge as DG, Narcotics Control Bureau.
- ✓ BSF has not had a full-time chief for several months now
- ✓ ITBP DG S S Deswal was holding additional charge as DG of the border-guarding force, BSF.
- ✓ The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the appointment of Asthana as DG, BSF along with the additional charge till July 31, 2021 — the date of his superannuation or under further orders.
- ✓ Asthana is also seen a strong contender for the post of CBI director when the incumbent's term ends in February next year
- ✓ Presently, he is D-G, Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), after he was removed from the CBI in November 2018.
- ✓ Asthana was earlier Special Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) where he had a row with the then CBI Director Alok Verma, who had filed a bribery case against Asthana in 2018.
 - ✓ Following the tussle between the two officials, the Central government had removed them as per the order of the Central Vigilance Commission.
 - ✓ Asthana was later given a clean chit on all the allegations made against him.

OBITUARY

- **Pandit Jasraj, a doyen of Hindustani classical music - passed away at the age of 90 after suffering a cardiac arrest in New Jersey on August 17**
- ✓ Jasraj belonged to the Mewati gharana, which drew from both Hindu kirtankar and Islamic sufi traditions.
- ✓ He lived in Mumbai but spent large parts of the year teaching across the globe, especially the US and Canada.

PANDIT JASRAJ | 1930-2020

EARLY LIFE & FAMILY

Born in a Brahmin family hailing from Hissar, Haryana. Father Pandit Motiram was exponent of Mewati gharana. Motiram died when Jasraj was 4, on the day he was to be appointed officially as royal musician in the last Nizam's court. Jasraj was married to filmmaker V Shantaram's daughter **Madhura**. They have 2 children, son Shaarang Dev and daughter Durga



INFLUENCES

Jasraj trained under his father and later his brothers Pandit Maniram and Pandit Pratap Narayan (father of film music composers Jatin-Lalit) and then Jaywant Singh Waghela. Begum Akhtar too was a big influence. When he was 30, Bade Ghulam Ali Khan had offered to make him a disciple. Jasraj declined saying he was already learning under his brother

AWARDS

He began with his first public concert at 22 in the court of the King of Nepal. In an over 7-decade career, he has been a recipient of many awards and honours including Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhushan, Master Dinanath Mangeshkar Award. An asteroid has been named after him



TURNING POINT

For a livelihood, Jasraj accompanied Maniram on the tabla. But the shabby treatment meted out to the instrumentalists in every singer's entourage left him troubled. He swore to learn singing and vowed not to cut his hair until then

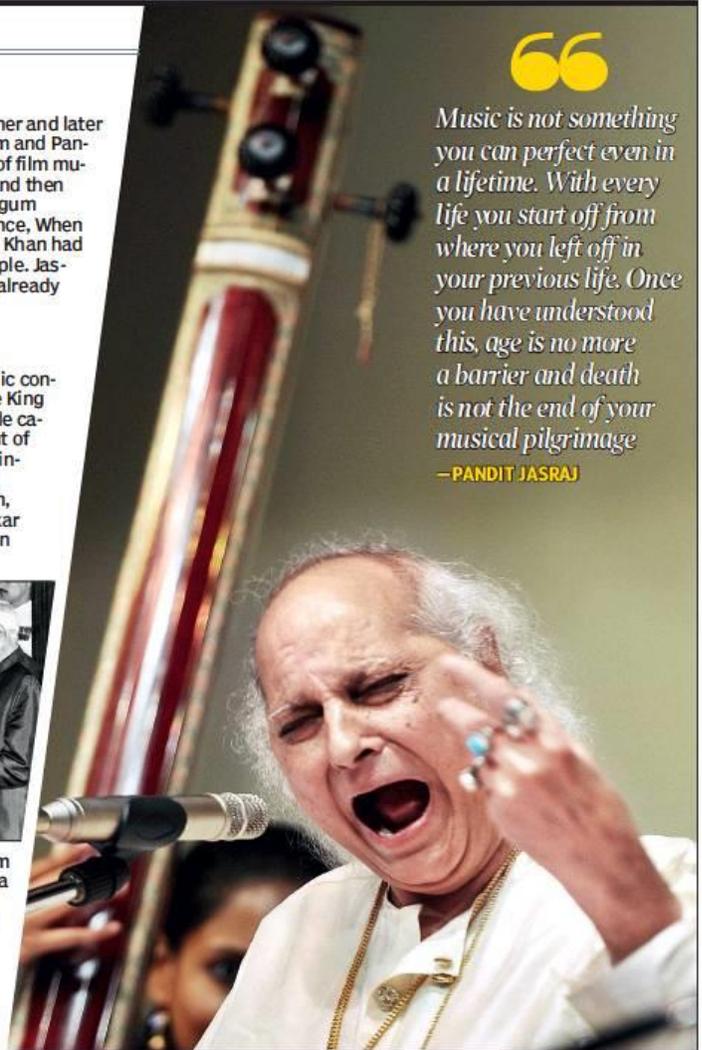


HIGH NOTES: (Clockwise from above) Receiving the Padma Bhushan from President R Venkatraman; with veteran artiste Lata Mangeshkar who described him as a "mahaan gaayak" and a disciple of Saraswati in her tribute

“

Music is not something you can perfect even in a lifetime. With every life you start off from where you left off in your previous life. Once you have understood this, age is no more a barrier and death is not the end of your musical pilgrimage

—PANDIT JASRAJ



- ✓ Born in a village in Hisar district of Haryana, Pandit Jasraj started as a tabla player and was known as an able accompanist in the classical circuit in Kolkata before turning to classical singing.
- ✓ Jasraj received training as a tabla player from his brother Pratap Narayan
- ✓ He was trained in vocal music by his father, Pandit Motiram, and later by his elder brother, Pandit Maniram, but drew inspiration from various sources, including Begum Akhtar.

- ✓ He performed his first stage concert as a vocalist at the age of 22 in the court of Nepal's King Tribhuvan Bir Bikram Shah in Kathmandu.
- ✓ Pandit Jasraj would return every year to the country in the last five decades to hold the 'Pandit Motiram and Pandit Maniram Annual Music Festival' in honour of his father and eldest brother.
- ✓ Jasraj was conferred with several of India's most prestigious awards – including Padma Shri in 1975, Padma Bhushan in 1990, Padma Vibhushan in 2000 and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1987.
- ✓ In 2019, International Astronomical Union had named a minor planet had named a minor planet after Pandit Jasraj.
- ✓ The minor planet is located between Mars and Jupiter.

NATIONAL DAY

- **On August 14, the 74th Naga Independence Day - was celebrated by the Naga tribals in the states of Nagaland and Manipur by hoisting Naga National Flag.**
- ✓ In Nagaland, a section of Naga leaders are continuing the movement claiming for sovereignty.



- ✓ Nagaland became the country's 16th State on December 1, 1963
- ✓ In 1947, after the country's independence, the Nagas under the Naga National Council wished to remain free.
- ✓ It conducted a Plebiscite in 1951 where 99.9% voted for Naga independence.
- ✓ Hence, the Nagas did not take part in the first and second general elections that were held in 1952 and 1957 respectively.
- ✓ According to the Nagas, the Bordoloi and Hydari Agreements were not implemented.
- ✓ The main recommendation of Bordoloi Sub-committee was establishment of Autonomous District Councils and Regional Councils for the tribal areas within the state of Assam, which were subsequently created in Assam except in the Naga Hills (suffering from the separatist violence) and extremely backward Frontier Tracts
- ✓ The Hydari agreement was signed between Sir Akbar Hydari, the then Governor of Assam with the Nagas
- ✓ It was a nine-point agreement that was signed in Kohima in June 1947.

COVID-19 PROGRESS IN INDIA – A REPORT

For Past 10 Days, India No. 1 In New Covid Cases

Since August 7, India has added more Covid cases every day than any other country. On August 16, it had 63,490 new cases, which was higher than the number of new cases in either the US or Brazil – the top two countries in terms of total cases



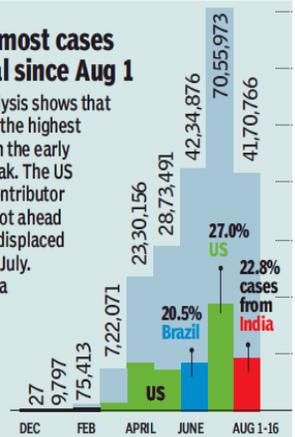
Among top 3 for daily deaths also

On all but three days in August, India, Brazil and the US have also been the top 3 for daily Covid deaths. Mexico pushed India out of the top 3 on August 12, and Peru on August 14. The US was at No. 4 on August 11 when India had the maximum deaths, followed by Mexico and Brazil



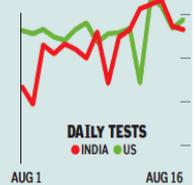
India added most cases to world total since Aug 1

A month-wise analysis shows that China contributed the highest number of cases in the early days of the outbreak. The US became the top contributor in March. Brazil shot ahead in June only to be displaced again by the US in July. But in August, India emerged as the top contributor



India ramps up testing, US reduces

In August, India substantially upped the number of daily tests, on certain days even surpassing the US, which, on the other hand, has sharply reduced tests. This could also be one of the reasons why daily new cases in the US have come down. However, the US, which has a fourth of India's population, has conducted more tests than India in August so far – 1.15 crore against India's 1.06 crore



Every 4th case and every 6th Covid death from India

In the past one month, India's share in both global cases and deaths has steadily increased. On July 18, India had 13.7% of global daily cases. This increased to 24.6% on August 16. The share in deaths also increased from 9% to 16.7% in the same period

Cases and deaths rising at alarming rate

There are 27 countries with over a lakh cases each so far, and India's growth rate is the third highest among them

Among the 14 countries with over 10,000 deaths each, India's growth rate for deaths is also the third highest

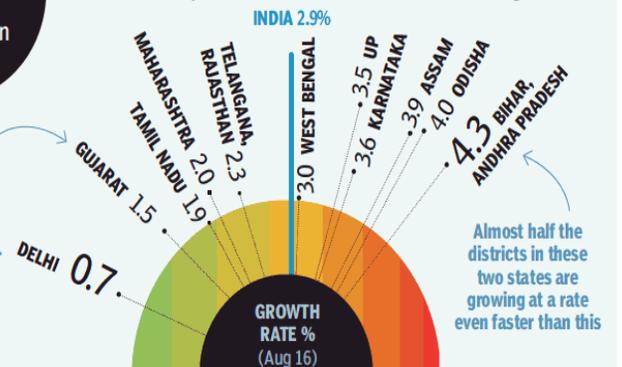
WORST FIVE COUNTRIES WITH OVER A LAKH CASES		GROWTH RATE % ON AUG 16
Philippines	1,57,918	3.6
Colombia	4,56,689	3.0
India	25,89,682	2.9
Argentina	2,82,424	2.9
Iraq	1,72,583	2.2

WORST FIVE WITH OVER 10,000 DEATHS		GROWTH RATE % ON AUG 16
Colombia	14,810	2.6
South Africa	11,677	2.5
India	49,980	2.1
Peru	26,075	2.0
Mexico	56,543	1.3

Why daily cases are breaking records despite low growth rate in states

Cases in 28 out of 33 districts (85%) in Gujarat are growing faster than the state average

There are 13 states with over 50,000 cases each so far and the growth in many of the initial epicentre states appears to have slowed down. While daily cases in the large cities that had the early outbreaks have reduced, they are growing in the other districts – mostly rural – at a rate faster than the state average



Almost half the districts in these two states are growing at a rate even faster than this

Research: Atul Thakur | Graphics: Sajeev Kumarapuram | Source: ECDC, covid19india.org

