

## EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – AUGUST 19, 2020

### TAMIL NADU

- **The State Higher Education department - plans to introduce a common updated English syllabus to all undergraduate courses in the state to help students improve their command over the language.**
- ✓ The new syllabus will focus more on listening, speaking, reading and writing skills of the students.
- ✓ The course is likely to be renamed 'English for communication'
- ✓ It will be common across the state for first year UG students from 2020-21.
- ✓ As per the proposed changes, the students will learn prose, poetry and non-detail only in the second year of the UG course.
- ✓ The Department is also planning to introduce a mandatory course called 'Professional English' for commerce, management, life sciences, physical sciences, arts and sciences.
- ✓ The course is expected to teach students with vocabulary related to their subjects and will be handled by subject teachers.
- ✓ The vice-chancellors approved the proposed changes at a higher education council meeting in February.
- ✓ However, the government has left it to universities to decide whether this would be an add-on course or core subject, as long as it is mandatory.
  
- **The Centre - has ranked 'Indian Institute of Technology, Madras' as the top innovative educational institute for the second consecutive year.**
- ✓ The institute has retained number one position in Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) under the category of institutions of national importance, central universities and centrally funded technical institutions.
- ✓ It is followed by IIT-Bombay, IIT-Delhi, IISc Bengaluru, IIT Kharagpur, IIT Kanpur, IIT Mandi, NIT Calicut, IIT Roorkee and University of Hyderabad, in that order, under the central university category.

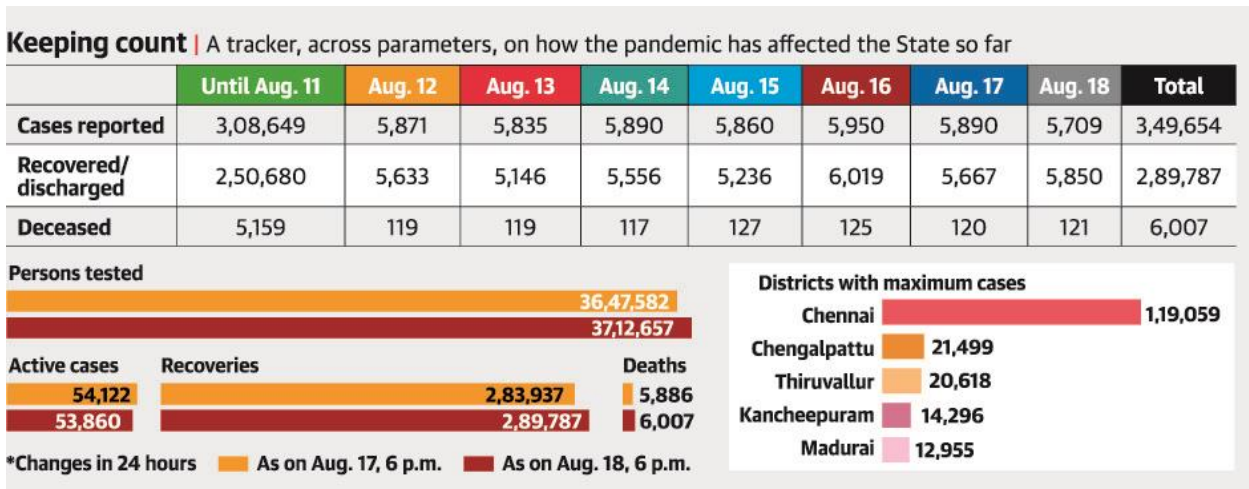


- ✓ Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu announced the rankings at a virtual event on August 18.
- ✓ The Vice President announced the top ten institutes in public funded and five institutes in private and self-reliance categories.
- ✓ ARIIA was launched last year by the Innovation Cell of the Ministry of Education (formerly Ministry of Human Resource Development).
- ✓ It was proposed in the Centre's National Education Policy, 2020.
- ✓ The ARIIA is implemented by All India council for Technical Education (AICTE).
- ✓ Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology, Odisha, bagged the top spot among private universities
  - ✓ It was followed by SRM Institute of Science and Technology and Vellore Institute of Technology, both in Tamil Nadu.
- ✓ Among government and government-aided colleges, Coimbatore Institute of Technology got third place and among private colleges, Sri Krishna College of Engineering and Technology in Coimbatore got second place.
- ✓ Among the self finance category, SR Engineering College, Telangana topped the ARIIA Ranking 2020.
- ✓ Under Women (only higher educational institutions), Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women emerged as the top performer.
- ✓ Under the category of State Funded Autonomous Institutions, College of Engineering Pune, Maharashtra was the top performer.
- ✓ The Institute of Chemical Technology, Maharashtra was the top performer in State funded Universities category.
- ✓ This year, ARIIA studied 674 educational institutions and universities primarily on innovation-related indicators, as against 496 institutions last year
- ✓ The rankings aim at inspiring Indian institutions to reorient mindsets and build ecosystems to encourage high quality research, innovation and entrepreneurship.
- ✓ The IIT-M incubation cell houses incubators such as Healthcare Technology Innovation Centre, Rural Technology and Business Incubator and Bio-Tech Incubators.

- ✓ The cell has incubated over 200 deep tech start-ups (till June 2020) that have attracted VC/Angel Investor funding to the tune of \$ 235 million and having a valuation of \$ 948 million.
  - ✓ They had cumulative revenue of \$ 61 million in 2019-20 financial year, creating over 4,000 jobs and generating over 100 patents.
  - ✓ The start-ups are in sectors such as manufacturing, IoT, energy/renewables, healthcare/medical devices, water, edu-tech/skill development, agri-tech, robotics, AI, ML and, data analytics, among others.
  
- **Tamil Nadu – has recorded a massive 45% rise in crop insurance coverage in terms of area and 34% increase in the number of farmers enrolling under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) for the ongoing Kharif season in comparison with last year.**
  - ✓ The state has reported 4,53,198 acres of 3,66,227 farmers under insurance scheme this year till August 15, as per agriculture department data.
  - ✓ Last year, 3,11,486 acres was covered under the insurance scheme by 2,74,177 farmers across the state
  - ✓ Continuing rains in many parts of the state and fear of flooding are reasons for farmers showing greater interest in insurance coverage.
  - ✓ The Centre has already sanctioned ₹8,855 crore as claims in the last four years for 49 lakh farmers
  - ✓ Villupuram district has recorded the highest enrolment of 1,10,245 farmers, followed by Namakkal with 62,840 farmers and Nagapattinam with 43,300 farmers.
  - ✓ Among the minimum enrolled districts, no farmer in Ramanathapuram took insurance and only 21 and 51 have taken it in Perambalur and Sivagangai respectively.
  - ✓ Premium paid by farmers varies from crop to crop and season to season.
    - ✓ For kharif season (2020-21), premium paid by farmers is 2% of the total sum assured per hectare.
    - ✓ The premium is charged at 5% of the total sum assured for cotton, turmeric, onions, bananas, tapioca, brinjal and chillies.
    - ✓ The state and central Governments' share of the premium subsidy ranges between 5.5% and 21.5%, whereas for paddy, it is 6.42%.
  
- **The Forest Department - started aerial surveillance of Elephants using drones in some ranges of the Coimbatore division, following the recent incidents of deaths of 17 wild elephants**
  - ✓ The department had sought the expertise of a Coimbatore-based UAV geospatial service company to monitor the elephants using drones.
  - ✓ The visuals from drones were helpful in checking whether an individual elephant or a herd was active in the forest.



- ✓ Further, weak or immobile elephants could also be identified through the visuals.
- ✓ The aerial surveillance is free from risks involved in patrolling through the forests, without disturbing the ecosystem.
- ✓ On August 18, the department released a video of surveillance, using a drone from Sirumugai forest range, where eight elephants died of various reasons this year.
  - ✓ The video shot as part of the programme named 'Drones for elephant protection and health monitoring'
  - ✓ It showed the movement of an elephant herd in the Pethikuttai forest area of Sirumugai range.
- ✓ Apart from the Sirumugai forest range, drones were used to monitor elephants in Mettupalayam range too, where four elephants died this year.
- ✓ The department had procured two drones priced at ₹5 lakh and ₹7 lakh in August 2018
- ✓ But, they were not utilized till now due to their weight and poor battery backup.
- **On August 18, Tamil Nadu – reported 5,709 fresh Covid cases and 121 deaths, taking the casetally close to 3.5 lakh mark to 3,49,654 and death toll over 6,000 mark to 6,007.**
- ✓ There are 53,860 active cases in the state, as on date





- ✓ Chennai reported 1,182 cases and 24 deaths, while its neighbours Tiruvallur (489), Chengalpet (344) and Kancheepuram( 249) together reported 1,082 cases and 19 deaths
- ✓ Further, Coimbatore reported 392 cases, Theni 295, Salem 286, Cuddalore (250), Dindigul (150), Kanyakumari (147), Ranipet (129), Thanjavur(129), Tiruvannamalai (123), Tirunelveli (119), Trichy (119) Villupuram (114) and Pudukottai (110) reported fresh cases in three-digits.
- ✓ At the end of the day, 5,850 people were discharged, taking the total number of people discharged to 2, 89,787
- ✓ A total of 67,025 samples were tested during the last 24 hours in the State.
  - ✓ With this, a total of 38,45,803 samples were tested till date.

## STATES

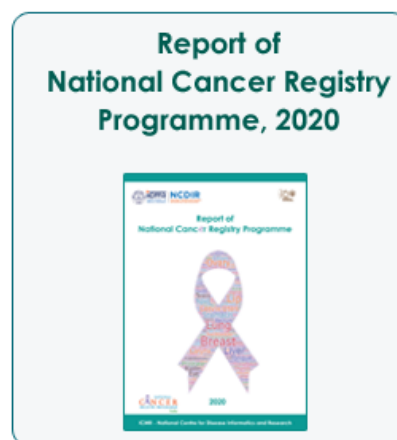
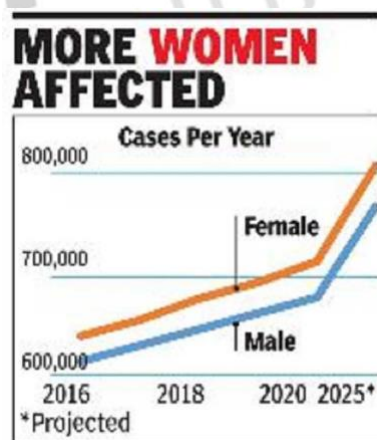
- **Assam government – has launched a series of flagship government programmes called ‘Ashtadash Mukutor Unnoyonee Maala’, one to be announced every week**
- ✓ On August 18, two flagship programmes were unveiled by the State education Minister, Himanta Biswa Sarma
  - ✓ Under the first scheme, 22,000 girl students who secured first-division marks in this year’s Class XII state board exams will be given scooties
  - ✓ The second scheme confirms the recruitment of over 14,000 school teachers, along with provincialisation of nearly 4,000 existing teachers.
- ✓ The assembly elections are to be held by April next year in the state.
- ✓ By the first week of September, the process of recruitment of 7,440 teachers for high schools will start and about 7,000 teachers for lower primary and middle English schools by August 27.
- ✓ Last week, Sarma had announced the state government’s ‘direct benefit transfer’ (DBT) scheme ‘Orunodoi’ at a budget of ₹2,800 crore to support women beneficiaries of over 17 lakh poor families till their economic status improves.
- ✓ The announcement of schemes on August 18 was made under the Assam government’s Pragyan Bharati scheme, which, along with ‘Orunodoi’, was announced in the last state budget
- ✓ Several other benefits, including provision of admission fee waiver up to degree level for students whose parents’ annual income is less than ₹2 lakh, free textbooks to students till Class XII and free uniform to students in government schools up to Class XII have already been implemented in the state.
- **On August 18, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan - announced that government jobs in the State would now be reserved for local people only.**
- ✓ According to the CM, only “children of Madhya Pradesh” will now be eligible for government jobs in the state

- ✓ The CM, however, did not clarify whether “children of the state” meant only those born in MP would qualify as a ‘local’, or the criteria for domicile status.
- ✓ Earlier, former CM Kamal Nath announced to reserve 70% jobs in private sector for locals, which was opposed strongly by industries.

## NATIONAL

- **India’s export of agricultural commodities during March-June period - increased by 23% compared to corresponding period last year.**
  - ✓ In value terms, the exports of agri commodities during March-June were ₹25,552 crore against an export of ₹20,734 crore during the same period in 2019.
  - ✓ The increase is attributed primarily to export of wheat, Bengal gram, groundnut oil and tur dhal.
  - ✓ In 2019-20, India exported agricultural & allied products worth ₹2.52 lakh crore against imports of ₹1.47 lakh crore.
  - ✓ To promote the agri exports sector, the Agriculture Ministry had recently announced a comprehensive plan and created specific export promotion forums (EPF) to promote the exports of agri commodities.
  - ✓ The ministry, in its plan, has emphasised on strengthening the existing ‘agri-clusters’ and creating more product-specific clusters with particular focus upon edible oils, cashew, fruits and spices
  - ✓ The EPFs for eight agri & allied products — grapes, mango, banana, onion, rice, nutriceals (coarse grains), pomegranate and floriculture — have been constituted under the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) as per the agriculture ministry’s plan to promote farm trade.
- **The Union rural development ministry - has included cultivation of ‘medicinal plants’ to the list of permitted works under the rural job guarantee scheme, MGNREGA and allowed the cultivation in the land of small and marginal farmers of all categories.**
  - ✓ The move is directed at supporting the Ayush scheme promoting cultivation of medicinal plants.
  - ✓ The Ayush ministry has recently announced a ₹4,000 crore scheme on medicinal plants with a target of cultivation of 10 lakh hectares of land over three years, with 50% subsidy on cost of cultivation.
  - ✓ The ministry and the National Medicinal Plant Board have identified 142 species of medicinal herbs which will be grown in Ashoka Corridor (ASHOKA-SETU plantation), Himalayan Corridor (Alpine/Temperate plantation), Brihat Panchamula Plantation, Guggulu Corridor (Guggal Plantation), Namami Gange-NMCG program and Van Aushadhi Corridor.

- ✓ Now, the rural development ministry has added medicinal plantation to the list of permissible works under the guidelines, more specific than the general term 'plantation' which has been allowed for a few years now.
  - ✓ Significantly, the Ayush scheme will open up MGNREGA work to personal land assets of all social groups.
  - ✓ Till now, personal land could be used under the job scheme only for vulnerable categories like SC/ST, nomadic and denotified tribes, BPL households, women and disabled-led households, beneficiaries of land reforms, Indira Awas Yojana beneficiaries, Forest Rights Act beneficiaries among others
- **The Home Ministry – announced relaxation of visa and travel restrictions for foreign journalists holding J-I visa along with their dependents holding J-IX visa to enter into the country**
- ✓ The 'journalist' or 'J-I' visas of members of the foreign media working in India were suspended in March in view of Covid-19, disabling their re-entry into India.
  - ✓ The same restrictions applied to their dependents living in India on J-IX visa.
  - ✓ This will be in addition to the categories of foreign nationals who are permitted to enter India as per an earlier office memorandum issued on June 30.
- **The Report of National Cancer Registry Programme, 2020 – was released on August 18**
- ✓ According to the report, cancer cases in India have risen by about 10% over the last four years to reach 13.9 lakh in 2020 and predicted to touch 15.7 lakh by 2025.
  - ✓ The cancer cases were estimated at 12.6 lakh in 2016 and 13.6 lakh in 2019



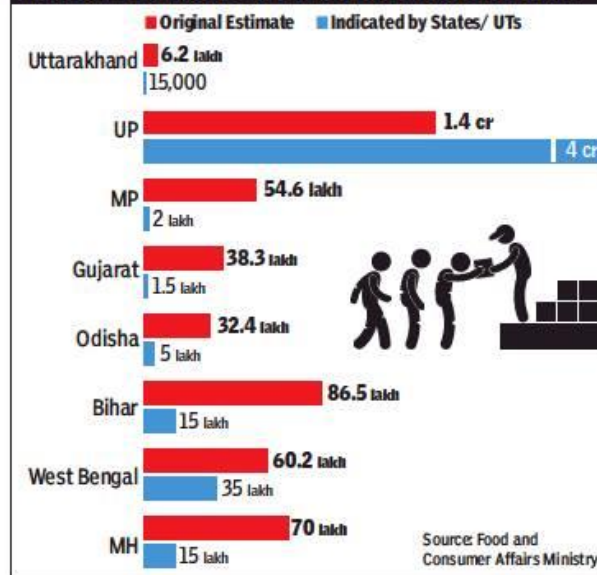
- ✓ The figures were released by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and National Centre for Disease Informatics & Research (NCDIR), Bengaluru in New Delhi
- ✓ The estimates are based on collation of data for the period between 2012 and 2016 and extrapolations from those trends.

- ✓ Already, cancer impacts more women than men in terms of overall numbers going by the data from 2016 and it is projected that this will continue in the years to come.
  - ✓ The report projects that the number of male cancer cases this year would be 6.8 lakh while the number of women impacted is pitched at 7.1lakh.
  - ✓ The numbers are projected to reach 7.6 lakh for men and 8.1 lakh for women in 2025.
- ✓ For the compilation of data, the information related to cancer was collected from 28 population-based cancer registries and 58 hospital-based cancer registries.
- ✓ Breast cancer (2.4 lakh) is expected to be the most common cancer in 2025 followed by lung (1.1 lakh) and mouth (90,000) cancers.
- ✓ In the year 2020, tobacco-related cancers are estimated to contribute to 27.1% of the total cancer burden (3.7 lakh cases), and highest in the northeastern region of the country, especially among men.
- ✓ Among women, breast cancers are estimated to contribute 2 lakh (14.8%) while cervix cancer is estimated to contribute 75,000 (5.4%).
- ✓ For men and women put together, cancers of the gastrointestinal tract are estimated to contribute 2.7 lakh (19.7%) of the total cancer burden.
- ✓ The cancer incidence rate for the male population ranges from 269.4 per lakh population in Aizawl district (the highest in India) to 39.5 in Osmanabad & Beed districts (the lowest)
- ✓ Similarly, the incidence rate for women ranges from 219.8 (Papumpare district) to 49.4 (Osmanabad & Beed districts) per lakh population.
- ✓ Cancers of the lung, mouth, stomach and oesophagus were the most common cancers among men, while those of the breast and cervix uteri were the most common among women
- ✓ As per the report, a combination of surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy are the major treatments in India.
- ✓ The cancer of cervix is usually treated with chemotherapy and radiotherapy, while lung and stomach cancers are treated with systemic therapy.
- ✓ The National Cancer Registry programme is being implemented by the Indian council of Medical Research
  - ✓ The programme is also called “Development of an Atlas of Cancer in India”.
  - ✓ Such an atlas or report about the spread of cancer in India was first published in 2001-2002.
- **The Centre – has announced that 90% of the target beneficiaries received free foodgrains under Atmanirbhar Bharat scheme**
  - ✓ As per the scheme, nearly 2.5 crore migrant workers who didn't have a ration card availed free foodgrains during the lockdown.
  - ✓ While the Centre had estimated that eight crore migrants may need this assistance, states in May had indicated the number would be close to 2.8 crore



## COVER AMID CRISIS

### Identified migrant workers under free foodgrain scheme



- ✓ In several cases, the states could not even distribute the free foodgrain to the beneficiaries they had estimated as there was no demand
- ✓ This is because several states issued ration cards to the migrants during the intervening period.
- ✓ The parliamentary panel headed by BJD MP Bhartruhari Mahtab has sought a report from the food ministry in the next 10 days about the progress of this scheme.
- **On August 18, India - reported its highest single-day death toll from the Covid-19 pandemic, reporting 1,099 fatalities**
- ✓ Meanwhile, fresh cases climbed to over 64,000 after two days of relatively low counts
- ✓ On the day, 64,664 new cases were reported in the country, taking the total Covid-19 caseload to over 27.6 lakh, as per data collated from state governments.
- ✓ Andhra Pradesh became the third state in the country to cross the 3-lakh mark in total cases.
- ✓ On the day, the state recorded 9,652 fresh cases, taking the tally to 3,06,261.
- ✓ Maharashtra reported 422 Covid-19 deaths, its highest single-day toll so far.
- **The century-old Mysuru zoo - has become the second Indian zoo to house the African cheetah, the fastest land animal**
- ✓ The zoo has managed to get one male and two females from a cheetah conservation centre in South Africa under an animal-exchange programme.
- ✓ The big cats landed at the Kempegowda International Airport on August 17 and were safely brought to the zoo here on the same night.



- ✓ They will remain in quarantine for 30 days under close observation.
  - ✓ The zoo claimed it was the country's first international animal exchange post-COVID-19.
  - ✓ Recently, the Supreme Court has lifted its 2012 stay on a proposal to introduce African Cheetahs from Namibia into the Indian habitat.
  - ✓ The SC has now allowed initiating the re-introduction of foreign Cheetahs into the Palpur Kuno sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh on an experimental basis.
  - ✓ The top court has set up a three-member committee to guide the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) in this experimental project to revive the cheetah population.
  - ✓ In 1952, the Asiatic Cheetah was officially declared extinct from India.
  - ✓ According to reports, the last Indian cheetah died around 1948.
  - ✓ According to the United Nations, Cheetahs are listed as "Vulnerable" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species
- **On August 18, the Railways – announced that it has introduced a drone-based surveillance system 'Ninja Unmanned Aerial Vehicles' (UAVs) to enhance security at railway stations, tracks and workshops.**



- ✓ The Railway Protection Force (RPF) had planned extensive use of Ninja drones for security purpose
- ✓ In this regard, it had so far procured nine drones at a cost of ₹31.87 lakh at South Eastern Railway, Central Railway, Modern Coaching Factory, Rae Bareli and South Western Railway.

- ✓ Additionally, 17 more drones are planned for purchase at an estimated ₹97.52 lakh.
  - ✓ In total, 19 RPF personnel have been trained in operation and maintenance of drones, of which four have received licences for flying drones.
  - ✓ The Ninja UAV procured by Railways will be able to help inspect safety of railway assets, yards, workshops and car sheds.
  - ✓ It can also be used to launch surveillance on criminal and anti-social activities like gambling, throwing of garbage, hawking etc in Railway premises.
  - ✓ It may be deployed for analysis of data collected which may prove to be extremely useful in vulnerable sections for safe operations of trains
  - ✓ In addition, these drones can also be utilised at disaster sites for helping in rescue, recovery, restoration and coordinating efforts of various agencies as well as mapping of railway assets to assess encroachments.
  - ✓ A drone camera can cover a large area which otherwise might require around 8-10 RPF personnel for monitoring.
  - ✓ The National Drone Policy of India (or Drone Regulations 1.0) came into effect on December 1, 2018.
    - ✓ As per the new policy, the registration of drones of all categories is essential except for the nano category.
  - ✓ The categories of drones in India are classified as follows
    - ✓ Nano - Less than or equal to 250 grams
    - ✓ Micro - between 250 grams and 2 kg
    - ✓ Small - Between 2 kg and 25 kg
    - ✓ Medium - Between 25 kg and 150 kg
    - ✓ Large - Greater than 150 kg
  - ✓ The Directorate General of Civil Aviation is the authority responsible for providing permission to fly drones in Indian skies.
    - ✓ The permission is provided through a Unique Identification Number.
  - ✓ Digital Sky Portal is an online platform for the registration of drones
- **The Indian Railways - is constructing world's tallest pier bridge at a height of 141 metres in the state of Manipur.**





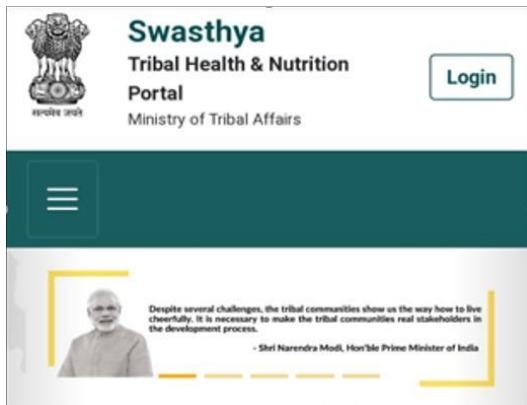
- ✓ On completion, it surpasses the record of 139 metres tall Mala-Rijeka bridge in Montenegro, Europe.
  - ✓ The bridge is a part of the 111 km long Jiribam-Tupul-Imphal railway line project.
  - ✓ The project will have a total of 45 tunnels, out of which the 12<sup>th</sup> tunnel will be the longest tunnel in the North East.
  - ✓ The total length of the bridge is 703 metres, which is constructed by using 'Slip form technique'
  - ✓ The piers that will hold the bridge are to be constructed with hydraulic augers.
  - ✓ On August 17, 2020, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari laid foundation stone for 13 highway projects in Manipur spanning 316 km of highways with a budget allocation of Rs 3,000 crores.
  - ✓ The projects will help boost Act East Policy of India.
  - ✓ The "Look East Policy" was launched by the former PM Mr Narasimha Rao in 1991.
  - ✓ This was later upgraded to Act East Policy in 2014 at the East Asia Summit held in Myanmar.
  - ✓ The Act East Policy focuses on economic and security integration of South East Asia and East Asia, whereas 'Look East Policy' mainly focused on trade with South East Asian countries
- **On August 15, the Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur - announced that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate "Atal Tunnel" by the end of September 2020.**



- ✓ The 8.3 km tunnel is being built under Rohtang Pass in the Pir Panjal range on the Leh-Manali highway.
- ✓ It is located at 3,100 metres above the sea level.
- ✓ The tunnel will reduce distance between Manali and Leh by 46 kms.
- ✓ The strategic location of the Tunnel is important as it feeds military supplied to the military sub sector that are located in Siachen Glacier and Aksai Chin.
- ✓ The excavation of the tunnel was done from both ends.
- ✓ In 2000, the then PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee proposed the 'Rohtang tunnel' project at \$5 billion
- ✓ In 2002, the Border Road Organization was entrusted to construct the tunnel.



- ✓ Later in 2019, PM Modi renamed the 'Rohtang Tunnel' as 'Atal Tunnel'
  - ✓ The Keylong Railway station located on the Leh-Manali Highway was the first under tunnel railway station in India
  - ✓ The operations of BRO, coming under the Ministry of Defence, are spread across Bhutan, India, Tajikistan, Myanmar and Afghanistan.
- **On August 17, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs - launched tribal health and nutrition portal called "SWASTHYA".**



- ✓ Also, the ministry launched the "ALEKH" e-newsletter on health and nutrition.
- ✓ The first-of-its-kind portal provides information related to health and nutrition of tribal population in India.
- ✓ It will also act as an integrated repository for research studies, innovative practices, case studies and best practices among tribals from different parts of the country.
- ✓ The Government of India has launched other initiatives as well to improve the lives of tribal in the country, which includes the 'GOAL' initiative launched in October 2019
  - ✓ GOAL refers to 'Going Online as Leaders'.
  - ✓ The programme aims to mentor 5000 tribal youths in the country to enable them becoming the future leaders in their communities.
  - ✓ The initiative is being implemented by Ministry of Tribal Affairs along with Facebook and Niti Aayog.
- ✓ The 'Alekh' E-Newsletter is to be released on quarterly basis.
- ✓ It is to showcase the pioneering works of various stakeholders in improving health and nutrition of tribal communities.
- ✓ According to 2011 census, the tribal population in India is 104 million.
- ✓ Most of the tribal are living in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Maharashtra and also in North Eastern states.

➤ **On August 17, the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) - opened a Quality Control Laboratory to test seafood processors and exporters in Porbandar, Gujarat**

- ✓ It is equipped with equipment to analyse antibiotic residues and heavy metals such as lead, cadmium, arsenic and mercury in fishes
- ✓ According to Central Marine Fisheries Institute, Gujarat is second to Tamil Nadu in fish production, accounting to 7.49 lakh tonnes in 2019.
- ✓ The major sea foods being exported from Gujarat are frozen fin fish, frozen shrimp and dried items.
- ✓ They are exported to European Union, China, South-East Asia, US and Japan.
- ✓ Also, Gujarat is the major exporter of Suirmi mainly to Japan
- ✓ In 2019-20, India shipped 1,289,651 tonnes of seafood, equivalent to \$6.68 billion worth as against the target of \$7 billion
- ✓ In 2019-20, the frozen shrimp was the major export item.
- ✓ The MPEDA has set target to increase seafood exports of the country to Rs 1 trillion by 2030
- ✓ China emerged as the largest seafood export destination for the year 2019-20, accounting for 25.55% of total sea food exports.

➤ **The International Solar Alliance - will hold World Solar Technology Summit for the first time on September 8, 2020.**

- ✓ The summit will showcase next generation solar technologies and address the challenges to make it 'affordable' energy
- ✓ It is expected that the World Solar Bank will be launched in the ISA Assembly during the summit.
  - ✓ The bank would be of the size of \$15 billion in next five years.
- ✓ The ISA has already initiated projects that are worth \$1.4 billion in different countries
- ✓ According to the Central Electricity Authority, the solar power generation in India stood at 35 GW by July 2020.
- ✓ India has set an ambitious target of achieving 100 GW of solar power by 2022.
- ✓ ISA is an alliance of 121 countries that are located between Tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn
  - ✓ The alliance was initiated by India to tap benefits of solar power and promote clean energy applications.
  - ✓ It was proposed at the Paris Climate Change conference held in 2015.
  - ✓ The Indian government has allocated 5 acres of land to construct the headquarters of ISA in Gurugram.
  - ✓ Also, a sum of Rs 160 crores has been released to meet day to day recurring expenditure and building infrastructure by 2022.
  - ✓ The first ISA assembly was held in 2018.

# COURT VERDICTS

- **On August 18, the Madras High Court - refused to order reopening of the Vedanta-owned Sterlite copper smelting plant, located in a government industrial park in Thoothukudi district, due to environmental concerns.**
- ✓ The court ruled that the closure and permanent sealing of the Sterlite plant at Tuticorin is 'just and proper' as the unit operated 'for 16 years and 92 days without mandatory valid consent from TNPCB, and for 10 years, 2 months and 15 days without a valid hazardous waste management authorization

## WHAT NEXT IN THE STERLITE SAGA?

➤ **Vedanta will file an appeal in the SC. Will seek an interim stay**

➤ **Activists and others like Vaiko may file a caveat in the SC**

➤ **Once the caveat is in place, parties may get notice and be heard by the SC before the supreme court passes any order while admitting the appeal from the copper major**

➤ **Firm may seek a stay on HC order. May also seek SC nod to access the unit for maintenance, press for resumption of power supply**



- ✓ The Sterlite unit has been lying shut after a series of protests against its expansion plan led to the death of 13 protesters in police firing on May 22, 2018
- ✓ The Court observed that the closure of the plant is neither political nor knee-jerk reaction of Tamil Nadu government.
- ✓ A special division bench of Justice T S Sivagnanam and Justice V Bhavani Subbaroyan delivered an 815-page verdict, after hearing a batch of petitioners including MDMK leader Vaiko and the CPM
- ✓ Dismissing all 10 writ petitions filed by Vedanta challenging closure orders passed by the government and TNPCB, the Bench said, "The petitioner has no fundamental right to establish a polluting industry."
- ✓ The bench highlighted as to how the company was continuously operating for the past 22 years with utter non-compliance of conditions to maintain air, water and environment quality besides using copper with high arsenic levels
- ✓ The bench also mentioned the submission of the state that copper smelters are generally located in third world countries and even in those countries it is not located in areas inhabited by people
- ✓ They held that the copper unit fell under the 'red category industry', and therefore, it ought not to have been established inside the industrial park.
- ✓ Such highly polluting industries must be permitted only in areas classified as 'special hazardous use zones', they said.

## AS IT HAPPENED

**2018 | Feb 12** | Protest against the plant's massive expansion plan begins at Kumarattiyapuram

**Mar 27** | TNPCB does not renew the consent to operate the plant

**May 22** | Day 100 of the protest turns violent and 12 people killed in police firing

**May 23** | Madras HC grants interim stay on the expansion of plant. TNPCB issues closure notice

**May 24** | Electricity and water supply to the plant disconnected

**May 28** | Plant sealed based on a GO issued by the state government

**Dec 15** | NGT allows reopening of Sterlite, terming closure order issued by TNPCB unjustifiable

**Dec 21** | HC orders status quo on NGT order to allow reopening of plant. The court refrains from making any observations in a petition seeking permanent closure of the plant

**2019 | Jan 2** | TN govt challenges NGT order in SC

**Jan 8** | SC upholds NGT order to reopen the plant

**Feb 18** | SC bench refuses to allow Sterlite to reopen

## LEGAL TIMELINE

**1996** | PIL filed in Madras HC challenges the environmental clearances and license issued to the plant

**Sept 2010** | Madras HC orders shutting down of Sterlite for violating pollution control norms

**Sept 2010** | Supreme Court stays the HC order

**April 2013** | SC imposes Rs100cr penalty on Sterlite Copper under 'polluter pays' doctrine

**May 28, 2018** | TN govt orders closure of the plant

**July 3, 2018** | Sterlite moves NGT against closure order

**Dec 15, 2018** | NGT orders reopening of the plant.

**Jan 2, 2019** | TN govt moves SC against NGT order

**Feb 18, 2019** | SC Court sets aside NGT order. Directs Sterlite to move Madras HC

**Feb 27, 2019** | Sterlite moves Madras HC challenging the closure order

**Jan 08** | Madras HC reserves order after 42 days of marathon hearing

**Aug 18** | Madras HC refuses to set aside closure order. Dismisses pleas moved by Sterlite

- ✓ Pointing out that the copper plant was situated within a radius of 25 km from the ecologically sensitive Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park, the judges said it had escaped relocation only because of a delay in notifying the national park since 2003.
- ✓ As to the claim of Vedanta that if their plant is shut the requirement of copper in India cannot be met, and it will be a great blow on the economy, the court said, "Courts have held that when it comes to the economy pitted against the environment, the environment will reign supreme"
- ✓ "The state has taken a stand that the country can import copper from outside and is not reliant on the petitioner and therefore, the plant can be shut," the court said.
- ✓ The bench said that Sterlite had already escaped punishment after generating a minimum of quantity of 25.91 tonnes of mercury between 2004 and 2018, whereas the Hindustan Unilever Plant in Kodaikanal was shut down for discharging 7.95 kg of mercury
- ✓ Authoring the verdict, Justice Sivagnanam held the petitioner responsible for having dumped 3.52 lakh tonnes of copper slag by obstructing the course of Uppar River, thereby causing floods.
- ✓ The bench had also highlighted a series of accidents in which at least 53 employees of the company were killed since the inception of plant in 1997




- ✓ The court also censured the TNPCB and its authorities for their failure to keep the company under check and ensure that it complied with all mandatory conditions to operate.
  - ✓ The Bench pointed out that the plant had increased its production capacity from 391 tonnes of blister copper per day in 1999 to 2,400 tonnes of blister copper per day in 2010 without the mandatory public hearing, taking advantage of the slackness of the TNPCB
  - ✓ Even the mandatory green belt condition was diluted by TNPCB, the judges said, adding that while the ministry of environment mandates maintenance of 500m of green belt by such red category industries, TNPCB ordered Sterlite to maintain 250m initially, which was further reduced to 25m without justification.
  - ✓ After the announcement of verdict without any relief, Sterlite said it will move higher judiciary seeking relief 'very soon'.
  - ✓ The judgment also upheld the powers of the State government and TNPCB to order closure and permanent sealing of the copper plant.
  - ✓ The Thoothukudi smelter accounts for 40% of the country's copper smelting capacity.
  - ✓ In February last year, the apex court set aside the National Green Tribunal (NGT) decision to reopen the plant.
  - ✓ The tribunal had directed the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) to pass fresh orders of renewal of consent and issue authorisation to Vedanta Limited, which owns the plant, to handle hazardous substances.
- **On August 18, the Supreme Court – held the PM CARES Fund as a “public charitable trust” to which donors contribute voluntarily to fight the Covid-19 pandemic and national emergencies**
- ✓ Hence, the money in the PM-CARES Fund could not be transferred to the statutory National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF), held the apex court.
  - ✓ Also, there is “no occasion” for the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) to audit a public charitable trust, which does not receive any budgetary support or any government money.

**Points of view**

A look at some of the observations made by the top court

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ PM CARES Fund is a public charitable trust. Funds are voluntarily given</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ No need for CAG audit</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ There is no occasion to direct the transfer of PM CARES funds to NDRF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ No need for a fresh National Disaster Management Plan to combat COVID-19</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Donors can also contribute to the National Disaster Response Fund</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ No reason to lay down new 'minimum standards' of relief for COVID-19</li> </ul>

**Existing guidelines under Section 12 for minimum standards hold good**



- ✓ NGO Centre for Public Interest Litigation, represented by advocate Prashant Bhushan, had argued that the PM-CARES Fund was not subject to CAG audit, was not under “public scrutiny” and contributions to it were “100% tax-free”.
- ✓ A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, R S Reddy and M R Shah rebuked petitioner NGO for making false statements about the government tweaking the rules to stop individual and corporate donations to NDRF and route those to PMCF.
- ✓ In a 75-page judgement, the bench said individuals and corporate houses could still donate to NDRF, according to Section 46 (of Disaster Management Act), which have been in place since 2015-16.
- ✓ The Bench refused to direct the transfer of funds from the PM CARES Fund to the NDRF, saying they were two separate entities.
- ✓ The PM CARES Fund collected more than ₹3,076 crore in the first five days of its formation during 2019-20, according to data available on its website.
  - ✓ It does not provide any information on contributions made from April onwards
  - ✓ The Fund was registered as a public charitable trust on March 27, 2020, five days before the end of the financial year.
  - ✓ The Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) has repeatedly denied Right to Information (RTI) requests for details on donations and donors, on the grounds that the Fund is not a public authority under the Act.
- ✓ The Prime Minister’s National Relief Fund (PMNRF), which is also headed by the PM, also publishes information on contributions and disbursements, including foreign contributions, on a yearly basis.
  - ✓ The latest data available on the PMNRF website is for 2018-19, when more than ₹534 crore was collected.
  - ✓ It had an unspent balance of ₹3,800 crore as of December 2019.
- ✓ The two Funds currently share an independent auditor — Delhi-based chartered accountants SARC and Associates.
- ✓ The Centre had brought in COVID-19 pandemic under National Disaster Management Act, 2005 and declared it as a “Notified Disaster”.
  - ✓ This was done for the purpose of providing assistance to the states under SDRF (State Disaster Relief Funds).
  - ✓ The SDRF was established under the Disaster Management Act, 2005.
  - ✓ Under the Act, the Central Government shall contribute 75% of the SDRF allocation.
  - ✓ However, the funds can be used by the states only for disasters.
- **On August 18, the Supreme Court - rejected the charge that the Centre had failed to frame a Covid-19-centric national plan under the Disaster Management Act, 2005**
- ✓ The apex court held that the 2019 national plan comprehensively dealt with all aspects of ‘biological and public health emergencies’ and was adequate to fight the pandemic.

- ✓ In addition, the Centre also issued a series of national guidelines, standard operating procedures and manuals to manage the Covid-19 situation, the Court said.
- ✓ Senior advocates Kapil Sibal and Dushyant Dave and others had argued that the Centre had failed to discharge its obligations under Section 11 of the Disaster Management Act, which mandated formulation of a pandemic-specific national plan.
- ✓ They said the Centre was carrying on with the national plan formulated in 2019, when there was no pandemic, and this was inadequate to meet the exigencies thrown up by Covid-19.
- ✓ A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, R S Reddy and M R Shah noted that though the DM Act was enacted by the UPA government in 2005, the first national plan was framed by the NDA government in 2016.
- ✓ An exercise to revise the plan began on April 17 and was completed in November 2019, just four months before WHO declared Covid-19 as a pandemic.

## **INTERNATIONAL**

- **Qatar and Turkey - have signed an agreement to send military advisers and instructors for the armed forces of Libya's Government of National Accord**
- ✓ This was announced by the UN-recognised Government of National Accord of Libya
- ✓ As per the tripartite agreement, a military institute will be set up in Libya for training purpose
- ✓ Under the accord between the three countries, Turkey and Qatar will send military advisers and provide training at their military academies for Libyan cadets
- ✓ Libya has been in chaos since a Western-backed uprising toppled and killed longtime dictator Muammar Gaddafi in 2011.

## **INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES**

- **Russia – has finally agreed to host a virtual meeting of Brics foreign ministers, after pushing for a physical meeting earlier.**
- ✓ The foreign minister meeting will be a precursor to the Brics summit later in the year
- ✓ Russia, in fact, had proposed a physical meeting of foreign ministers of both Brics and SCO on September 10.
- ✓ The Brics meeting is now likely to take place virtually late this month or in early September because of the pandemic situation.
- ✓ Russia currently holds the chairmanship of both Brics and SCO and plans to host both summits in St Petersburg in October.
- ✓ Russia was keen to physically host the foreign ministers' meetings as it didn't want the engagements to be reduced to just a formality in the form of a video conference.

- ✓ It is still keen on having the SCO meeting with the physical presence of ministers as the Eurasian group's agenda is relatively more complex with its focus on political and security issues.
- ✓ The SCO heads of government meeting is scheduled to take place in India on November 30, depending on the Covid-19 situation then.
- ✓ The government had said in January that heads of government of all eight member-states, including Pakistan, would be invited for the meeting "as per established practice and procedure" of SCO.

## **CONFERENCES & SUMMITS**

- **On August 17, India and UAE - held their 13<sup>th</sup> Joint Commission Meeting virtually.**



- ✓ The five sub-committees from India and UAE participated in the meeting
  - ✓ It includes committees on economic, trade and investment cooperation, defence and security cooperation, education, culture and youth cooperation, consular and community affairs cooperation and overview and high-level exchanges
- ✓ During the meet, India sought investments from UAE in areas such as renewable energy, defence, airports, ports, highways and infrastructure.
- ✓ Finally, India and UAE agreed to hold the next joint session in Abu Dhabi in 2021.
- ✓ On the sidelines of India-UAE Joint Commission Meeting, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman held a bilateral meeting with her UAE counterpart.
  - ✓ The minister has sought for Rs 111 trillion of investment from UAE for the National Infrastructure Pipeline projects.
  - ✓ India has identified around 7,000 projects between the years 2020 and 2025 for investment from UAE.
- ✓ UAE is the third largest trading partner of India after China and US.
  - ✓ The bilateral trade between India and UAE was 60 billion UAE in 2019-20.
  - ✓ Also, UAE is the second largest export destination for India.



- ✓ The bilateral cooperation between India and UAE strengthened after PM Modi visited UAE in 2015.
  - ✓ This was the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to UAE after 24 years
  - ✓ Earlier, PM Modi proposed the 'Link West' Policy in 2014-15 with a nine-point agenda
  - ✓ The policy resulted in increased interaction with the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

## **PERSONALITIES**

- **Election Commissioner Ashok Lavasa - has submitted his resignation to the President Ram Nath Kovind, asking to be relieved by August 31, 2020**



- ✓ He will succeed Diwakar Gupta at the Manila-based Asian Development Bank, whose term will end on August 31
- ✓ Lavasa's appointment as a Vice-President for private sector and public-private partnerships at the ADB was announced on July 15.
- ✓ He will be joining his new position in September 2020.
- ✓ Lavasa, in the normal course, would have succeeded chief election commissioner Sunil Arora upon the latter's retirement in April next year and would have remained in the post until October 2022.
- ✓ However, in a surprise move, he was picked as one of the vice-presidents of ADB. Lavasa's exit will pave the way for election commissioner Sushil Chandra's appointment as CEC, going by the seniority convention, in April 2020.
- ✓ Ashok Lavasa is a bureaucrat who joined Election Commission on January 23, 2018.
- ✓ Lavasa who was a 1980 batch IAS officer of Haryana cadre, had led an Indian delegation in the climate change negotiations for the Paris Agreement.
- ✓ He also worked as a Joint Secretary in the Department of Economic Affairs where he worked closely with many ADB projects that had private sector components

# SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT


- India - is planning to make available the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine candidate as the likely first shot against Covid-19 for Indians by end of 2020

**WHY OXFORD-AstraZeneca COVID vaccine candidate is top on the Govt's Priority List**

**PRELIMINARY RESULTS ARE PROMISING**

➤ The data from the early phase 1&2 stage of trial in UK shows the vaccine induces an antibody response within 28 days in the similar range to that in individuals who have recovered from COVID-19	➤ A second "booster" dose of the vaccine increased antibody response to even higher levels, and 100% of blood samples given the second dose showed neutralising activity	➤ The vaccine demonstrates an acceptable safety profile, with no major vaccine-induced severe adverse events
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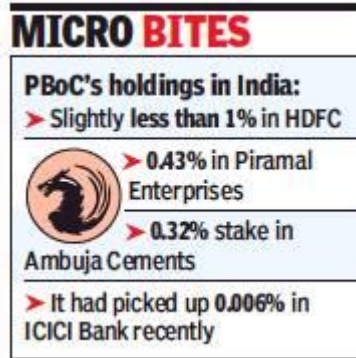
**IN INDIA**

➤ Indian vaccine major Serum Institute has partnered with AstraZeneca for the vaccine candidate	participants in 8 sites, whereas the other is in 5 sites with 1,000 participants
➤ The candidate has entered advanced phase 2 & 3 of human trials and is ahead of locally developed candidates	➤ Serum Institute has partnered with British pharma giant AstraZeneca for the Oxford University's COVID-19 vaccine candidate which showed promising results in early human trials (Phase 1 and 2) in UK
➤ The human trials by Serum Institute involves around 1600 people across 17 selected sites	
➤ For one of the other two locally developed vaccine candidates, there are 1,150	

- ✓ The government is also keeping a watch on two indigenous vaccine candidates as they may enter the market within a gap of few weeks, if cleared in trials
- ✓ However, the Oxford candidate is ahead of the other two local vaccine candidates that have also entered the human trials stage.
- ✓ Pune-based Serum Institute is the manufacturing partner of British pharma giant AstraZeneca to develop the vaccine in India
- ✓ Serum Institute has started advanced phases of human trial (Phase 2 and 3) in India with around 1,600 people aged above 18 years in across 17 selected sites across the country
- ✓ The other two indigenous vaccine candidates - Bharat Biotech's Covaxin, jointly developed with ICMR, and Zydus Cadila's Zycov D are both in early phases 1 and 2
- ✓ The Serum's trial is so far the largest for Covid-19 vaccine in the country, the other two companies have around 1,000-1,100 participants enrolled in five to eight sites.

## ECONOMY

- **The People's Bank of China (PBoC) - has invested a minor stake at ICICI Bank and entered as its shareholder.**
- ✓ Earlier, its disclosure about having an over 1% stake in housing finance major HDFC had led to some hectic activity at the Centre, including a change of rules for FDI (foreign direct investment) from neighbouring countries.



- ✓ The Chinese central bank has picked up a minuscule stake through a ₹15-crore investment in the bank's recently concluded qualified institutional placement (QIP)
  - ✓ The stake was bought through an arm of PBoC
  - ✓ At current market capitalisation, the stake in ICICI Bank is about 0.0065%,
  - ✓ PBoC's stake is very insignificant when compared to ICICI Bank's market capitalisation of almost ₹2.4 lakh crore
- ✓ Current rules require that all listed companies should disclose the names of shareholders who hold 1% or more of the listed entity's equity capital.
  - ✓ Additionally, rules require that the names of all those investors who pick up at least 5% in a qualified institutional placement offer should be disclosed.
  - ✓ Hence, PBoC's name does not show up in any of ICICI Bank's recent disclosures
- ✓ Currently, among Indian companies, PBoC has stakes in HDFC, Ambuja Cement and Piramal Enterprises.
- ✓ In all the companies, the holding is below the 1% level, which does not necessitate compulsory disclosure.
- ✓ By March-end, PBoC's stake in HDFC was slightly above the 1% level as it bought some shares just before the Indian and Chinese military forces' skirmish in the Galwan valley in Ladakh region.
- ✓ However, during the April-June quarter, the Chinese central bank sold part of its stake in HDFC and, as of June-end, it had fallen below the 1% level

## APPOINTMENTS

- **Goa governor Satya Pal Malik - was transferred to Meghalaya on August 18, after a tenure of ten months in the State**
- ✓ Maharashtra governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari will hold additional charge of Goa

- ✓ This was announced by the Rashtrapati Bhavan in a statement.
- ✓ Malik will replace Tathagata Roy in Meghalaya
  - ✓ Roy has completed his five-year tenure by serving as Governor of Tripura for three years and the remaining two years as Governor of Meghalaya.



- ✓ Malik was the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir when its special status under Article 370 was revoked last August
- ✓ He saw the reorganisation of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh into Union Territories as its governor before moving to Goa
- ✓ Satya Pal Malik was appointed as the 18th Governor of Goa by President Ram Nath Kovind on October 25, 2019.
- ✓ He was also the last Governor of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.
- ✓ Malik served as the Governor of J&K from August 2018 till October 2019 when the state was bifurcated into two Union Territories.
- ✓ In March 2018, he was given the additional charge to serve as Governor of Odisha till May 2018.
- ✓ Prior to this, he had served as the Governor of Bihar from October 2017 to August 2018.
- ✓ Malik had also been elected to the Lok Sabha previously
  - ✓ He was elected as Member of Legislative Assembly of Uttar Pradesh in 1974.
  - ✓ He was the member of the 9th Lok Sabha from Aligarh parliamentary constituency from 1989 to 1991.
- ✓ He was elected as Rajya Sabha representative in 1980-86.

## SPORTS

- **Fantasy sports platform Dream11 - has bagged the title sponsorship rights for the Indian Premier League's 2020 edition with a bid of ₹222 crore.**
- ✓ The other bidders were e-learning platforms Unacademy (₹170 crore) and Byju's (₹201 crore).
- ✓ In effect, all three participants turned out to be Indian tech start-ups.
- ✓ The Tata group, despite submitting the Expression of Interest (EoI) document last week, pulled out of the race.



- ✓ A tech start-up Dream 11 was founded in 2008 by two young Mumbai-based entrepreneurs, Harsh Jain and Bhavit Sheth
- ✓ BCCI's previous title rights partner Vivo India and IPL separated ways two weeks ago due to the controversies over India-China relationship.



- ✓ Vivo were contracted to pay the IPL ₹440 crore a year as part of a ₹2,190 crore deal for five years
- ✓ Dream 11 will continue to own the title rights for the next two years – 2021 & 2022 – should Vivo not return.
- ✓ If Vivo does not return, Dream 11 will pay the BCCI ₹240 crore each in the second and the third year, under the new arrangement
  - ✓ Should Dream 11 continue until 2022, the BCCI will earn an average of Rs 234 crore from Dream 11 each year for three years, which is technically around 50% of what Vivo was paying for the rights.
  - ✓ Further, Unacademy and Byju's will pay an additional Rs 40 crore every year to the BCCI as sponsors.
  - ✓ At an additional Rs 80 cr per year, added to the average of Rs 234 cr that Dream 11 will pay the BCCI for the title, the IPL will be assured of sponsorships close to Rs 310 cr per year for the next three editions – making up for almost 65% of what Vivo was paying.
- ✓ The 13<sup>th</sup> IPL tournament is to be played in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from September 19 to November 10.
- ✓ The Dream 11 platform allows its users to play fantasy sports including cricket, football, hockey, basketball and kabaddi.
- ✓ Vivo India had won the IPL title sponsorship rights in 2017 for a period of five years for Rs 2199 crore.
  - ✓ Vivo had then replaced Soft drink giant PepsiCo as IPL Title sponsor.

# COVID-19 PROGRESS IN INDIA – A REPORT



## When will India's Covid-19 cases peak?

India has the world's third highest Covid-19 case tally and is quickly nearing the 30-lakh mark. But the rising recovery rate suggests it may be close to hitting its peak, a State Bank of India analysis says. But with most states yet to reach their peaks and rural districts increasingly reporting a larger share of cases, India still has a long way to go in its fight

### Cases could peak at 75% recovery rate

Since July 30, India has an average of 58,000 cases per day but is yet to peak, or reach its highest level of daily new cases. SBI estimates that India will reach its peak of cases when it hits 75% recovery rate, based on trends in other countries. India's recovery rate currently stands at 71%

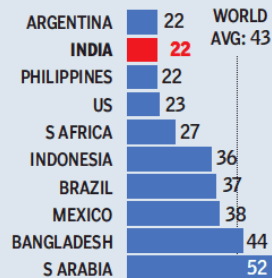
COUNTRY	PEAK DATE	DAILY NEW CASES AT PEAK TIME	RECOVERY RATE % AT PEAK TIME
CHINA	Feb 12	14,108	71.5
MALAYSIA	June 4	277	79.5
IRAN	June 4	3,574	77.6
CHILE	June 14	8,120	70.4
SAUDI ARABIA	June 17	4,919	64.9
BAHRAIN	June 26	724	77.1
BRAZIL	July 29	70,869	69.9

However, the data doesn't necessarily show a causal relationship between recovery rate and peak. Hitting a peak doesn't mean the pandemic has reached its end – countries will likely still see cases and deaths increase, albeit at a slower pace, and may even hit new peaks if proper precautions aren't kept in place

### India's cases doubling every 22 days

The time taken for India's cases to double has been shrinking as the case tally grows. India took 65 days to reach 1 lakh cases but only another 59 days to reach 10 lakh cases. India's current doubling rate is 22 days, among the world's lowest

#### DOUBLING RATE (IN DAYS)

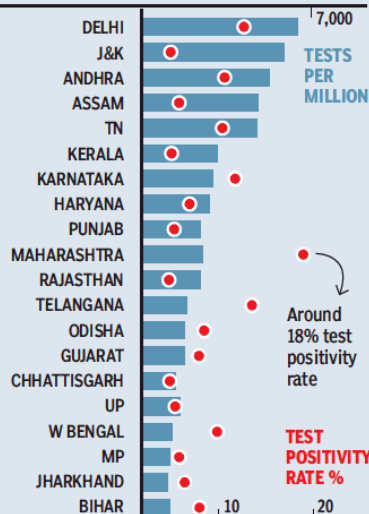


India has also recorded one of the highest deaths per million in Asia, though not nearly as high as values reported in Europe and the US

WORST 5	MAY 31	JUN 30	JUL 31	AUG 14
INDIA	4	12	36	35
PAKISTAN	7	19	27	28
BANGLADESH	4	11	19	22
PHILIPPINES	9	11	18	22
INDONESIA	6	10	18	22

### At least 22 states' case tallies yet to peak

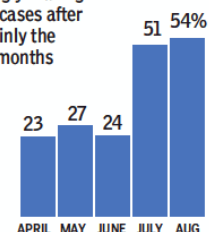
Several states, like Delhi and Tamil Nadu, are estimated to have already hit their peaks. But states like Maharashtra, Telangana, Bihar and West Bengal are yet to reach their peaks as their test positivity rate remains high despite a low tests-per-million level. The SBI analysis says at least 22 of the 27 states it studied have yet to hit their peak



### Rural districts now have majority of cases

Rural districts are increasingly making up a larger share of India's cases after the pandemic impacted mainly the urban regions in the initial months

Now, more than half of India's cases – 54% – are in rural districts. Of the 50 worst-hit districts in India, Andhra Pradesh has the most at 11, followed by Maharashtra with 6



### GDP decline a killer too?

The report estimates that GDP loss from Covid could be in the double digits and, apart from the toll it takes on livelihoods, the economic impact of the outbreak will be visible in an increase in the death rate in Indian states

● The report estimates an increase in mortality if a state's GDP falls by 10% or

more, pointing out that the average loss in Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) is 16%

0.5% to 3.5% is the increase in death rate (in this case, deaths per 1,000 people for 2018) that the various states may be looking at, including the additional mortality due to Covid-19 even as states respond with "unplanned exit from

lockdown and fresh lockdowns across states", the report said

● Given the level of GSDP loss and the health infrastructure of the states, it is a grim picture indeed

₹38 lakh crore Total GSDP loss due to Covid-19, it represents about a sixth of states' cumulative GSDP

Data as on August 13; Source: SBI Ecowrap