

## **EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – AUGUST 8, 2020**

### **TAMIL NADU**

- **On August 7, the number of fresh Covid-19 cases in Chennai - fell below 1,000 for the first time in 52 days**
- ✓ Chennai had reported 984 cases out of the 5,880 new cases in the state
- ✓ With this, the state's total caseload stands at 2,85,024, of which the capital city accounted for 1,07,109 cases.
- ✓ On the day, the state reported its highest toll of 119 deaths, taking its cumulative death toll to 4,690
- ✓ As on date, 52,759 persons were admitted in various hospitals and Covid centres as 'active' cases
- ✓ A total of 6,488 persons were discharged, taking the total recovered to 2,27,575 persons
- ✓ On June 3, hotspot Chennai reported fresh cases in four digits for the first time
- ✓ Later, on June 30, Chennai reported its highest 2,393 cases, which was 61% of the 3,943 fresh cases in the state on that day.
- ✓ Chennai's three neighbouring districts together had 873 fresh cases - Chengalpet 319, Kancheepuram 166 and Tiruvallur 388.
- ✓ Other districts reporting high numbers included Theni with 351 cases, Ranipet 253, Tiruvannamalai 252, Coimbatore 228, Thanjavur 217, Cuddalore 212 and Tirunelveli with 200 cases.
- ✓ Another 67,352 samples were tested, taking the total number of samples tested in the state to 30,88,066.
  
- **The Centre - has announced an allocation of around ₹712 crore to Tamil Nadu under the COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness Package.**
- ✓ On August 6, the Centre released ₹200 crore towards the second tranche of the package.

- ✓ Earlier, in April, the first tranche was provided, in which the State was allotted ₹312.64 crore.
  - ✓ With the latest allocation, the State is yet to get ₹200 crore more from the Centre as part of the package.
  - ✓ The allocated funds will be utilized for the strengthening of the public health infrastructure for testing, including procurement and installation of Reverse Transcription- Polymerase Chain Reaction (PT-RCR) machines and RNA extraction kits, among others
  - ✓ In a circular to the States, the Centre pointed out that the emergency component of the package had been extended from June 30 to March 31, 2021.
- **A start-up founded by an alumnus of the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras - has developed a tool to help small and medium enterprises.**
- ✓ The tool, named as FAST, analyses data to understand the current business scenario and calculate future business trends of the SMEs.
  - ✓ The tool 'FAST' was developed by a start-up geniSIGHTS, incubated by NASSCOM
  - ✓ The newly developed AI-powered business intelligence suite takes just 30 seconds to be set up for the first time.
  - ✓ It then generates data-driven information and responds to voice commands as well.
  - ✓ IIT-M alumnus Rajesh Kumar, with experience in consulting with Fortune 100 organisations, and Parvathy Sarath, an expert in advanced analytics, machine learning and AI, have co-founded the start-up.

## STATES

- **Rajasthan's Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot - recently announced that the state will commence the new scheme 'Indira RasoI Yojana' from 20<sup>th</sup> August 2020**



- ✓ According to the Chief Minister, the scheme is another step towards realising the resolve of Rajasthan Government's "No Hunger No Sleep" policy.
- ✓ Under this scheme, the poor and deprived people will get healthy and nutritious food at Rs.8 per plate.

- ✓ The state government has announced a budget of Rs.100 Crores per year on the scheme
  - ✓ The Indira Rasoi Yojana named after former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, will run in 358 kitchens in 213 urban local bodies of the state.
  - ✓ Under the Yojana a menu of 100 grams of pulses, 100 grams of vegetables, 250 grams of chapati and condiments will be served to 4.87 crore people every year
  - ✓ As per the scheme, beneficiaries won't be fed through a movable kitchen installed in a van.
  - ✓ For the purpose, construction of 2 kitchens per Municipality and 5 kitchens per City council and a maximum of 8 kitchens per Municipal Corporation will be done by the government.
- **On August 5, 2020, the State Government of Karnataka - launched India's first mobile RT-PCR lab in Bengaluru.**



- ✓ The lab, called as iLAB, was developed by Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru
- ✓ It has been named Mobile Infection Testing and Reporting (MITR) lab and is capable of conducting 9000 tests per month.
- ✓ Apart from testing Covid-19, the lab can also be utilised to test HCV, H1N1, TB, HIV, HPV, etc
- ✓ The main advantage of the lab is that it can be used for molecular diagnostic testing in Covid-19 hotspots quickly.
- ✓ The RT-PCR is the Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction, which mainly measures the amount of a specific RNA.
- ✓ During the test, RNA is converted into complementary DNA using the enzyme reverse transcriptase

## NATIONAL

- **An Air India Express flight from Dubai – crashed at Kozhikode's Calicut International Airport in Kerala on August 7, killing at least 16 people and injuring more than 150 persons**

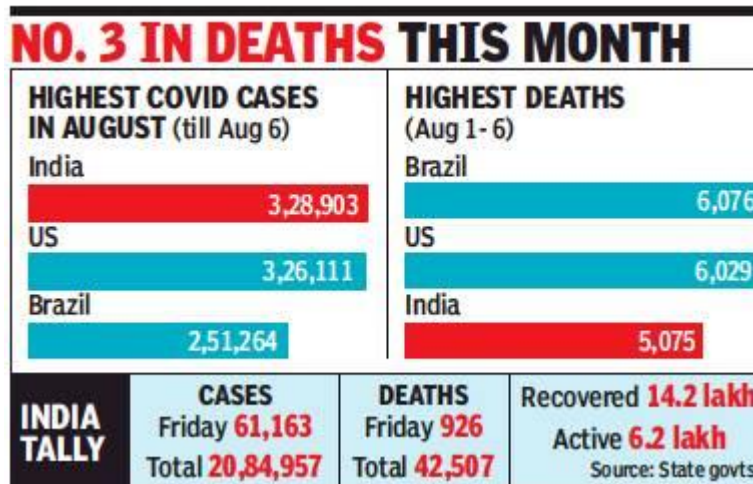


- ✓ The ill-fated flight, trying to land in torrential rain with 191 passengers on board, overshot the tabletop runway, skidded for more than 75m and fell into a 35-foot-deep gorge



- ✓ The deceased include flight commander Deepak V Sathe and co-pilot Akhilesh Kumar.
  - ✓ The flight was part of the Vande Bharat repatriation mission
  - ✓ The plane was carrying stranded non-resident Keralites, who were returning home from the UAE following the Covid-19 pandemic
  - ✓ The nose of the aircraft and the cockpit area were completely destroyed and the fuselage had broken into two pieces
  - ✓ The aircraft, a Boeing 737, also broke in two.
  - ✓ According to Air India, there were 174 passengers, 10 infants, two pilots and five cabin crew on board the aircraft.
  - ✓ It is the first major accident at Calicut International Airport in its 32-year history.
  - ✓ The accident was similar to the fatal crash of another Air India Express aircraft that overshot the Mangalore International Airport 10 years ago.
- **On August 7, India – reported a surge in Covid-19 infections of more than 60,000 cases for the second straight day with 61,163 fresh cases and 926 deaths, the highest single-day toll so far**
- ✓ This takes the total caseload in the country to 20,84,957 along with 42,507 casualties
  - ✓ This month, India is emerging as the biggest Covid-19 hotspot in the world.
    - ✓ The country has so far recorded the most number of fresh cases this month, slightly higher than the US and considerably higher than infections reported in Brazil.
    - ✓ India has the world's third highest death toll from the virus in the first six days of August.
    - ✓ India reported 3,28,903 new coronavirus cases in the first six days of August.
    - ✓ The corresponding figure in the US was 3,26,111 and in Brazil 2,51,264

- ✓ For the first time, India topped the entire world with the maximum number of cases on August 2 and followed it up on August 3, 5 and 6.
- ✓ India's caseload crossed the 2 million (20 lakh) mark on August 6



- ✓ The country registered the fastest rise in cases from 1 million to 2 million among the other worst-affected countries between US and Brazil.
  - ✓ India's infection growth rate of 3.1% was also higher than the US and Brazil at the 2 million stage.
  - ✓ In deaths, however, Brazil and the US have both registered more than 6,000 fatalities so far in August while India's count is 5,075.
  - ✓ On August 7, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh continued to register above 10,000 fresh infections with 10,483 and 10,171 cases respectively.
  - ✓ With this, Maharashtra leads the country in terms of infection count with 4,90,262 cases, while Andhra Pradesh took its caseload to 2,06,960 cases behind Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu (2,85,024)
- **On August 7, Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII) - has entered into a partnership with Gavi (Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation) and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**
- ✓ As per the agreement, SII will manufacture and provide delivery of up to 100 million doses of Covid-19 vaccine for India and low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), as early as the first half of 2021.
  - ✓ Of this, up to 50 million are expected to be made available in India alone
  - ✓ This alliance has been formed to accelerate development of Covid-19 vaccines and ensure their rapid and uniform access to all the stakeholders
  - ✓ It was co-led by Gavi, Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (Cepi) and World Health Organisation (WHO)
  - ✓ The SII, the world's largest vaccine manufacturer by volume, has set a ceiling price of \$3 (₹225) per dose for the proposed Covid-19 vaccine for these countries

- ✓ **The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has also agreed to provide funding of \$150 million (₹1,125 crore) to Gavi (Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation)**
  - ✓ This funding will be used to support SSI to manufacture potential vaccine candidates, including the ones from UK firm Astra-Zeneca, and US biotech company Novavax.
  - ✓ However, the ceiling price will be applicable only for vaccines proposed to be distributed to 92 countries under the Covax alliance
  - ✓ Besides, India is also expected to get up to 50% of the 1-billion doses from Astra Zeneca, and a part of the 1-billion doses from Novavax, as part of their agreement with Serum Institute.
  - ✓ The collaboration will provide upfront capital to Serum to increase manufacturing capacity, so that once a vaccine gets regulatory approval and WHO prequalification, doses can be produced at a scale for distribution to India and LMICs.
  - ✓ Doses are expected to be allocated on a proportional basis across 92 countries as per World Health Organization's global allocation framework, which is currently under development.
  - ✓ The framework prioritizes healthcare professionals and frontline and essential workers in each country, in addition to those most at-risk from the virus, such as people over 65 or those with underlying health conditions
  - ✓ The Gavi is an international organisation that was set up in 2000.
    - ✓ The main objective of the alliance is to improve access to immunization for children living in the world's poorest countries
  - ✓ India's top drug regulator, Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has earlier granted permission to SII to conduct phase 2 and 3 human clinical trials in India on the potential Oxford COVID19 vaccine candidate.
- **The Minister of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises, Nitin Gadkari – has given the approval for the 'Khadi Agarbatti Atmanirbhar Mission'**
- ✓ The mission was proposed by KVIC (Khadi and Village Industries Commission)
  - ✓ It aims to generate employment for the local artisans involved in the agarbatti process, thereby making India self-reliant in agarbatti production.



KVIC's Khadi Agarbatti Atmanirbhar Mission (KAAM) 2020

- ✓ The programme aims to create employment for unemployed and migrant workers across the country along with increasing domestic agarbatti production
  - ✓ The scheme is designed by KVIC on PPP mode, where a two-party agreement will be signed between KVIC and the Private Agarbatti manufacturer for the successful implementation of the project
    - ✓ Under the mission, the automatic machine and powder mixing machine will be provided by the KVIC to the artisans through the private Agarbatti manufacturers
    - ✓ These manufacturers will sign the agreement with the artisans as 'business partners'
    - ✓ KVIC will provide a subsidy of 25% on the cost of the machines, while the remaining 75% will be recovered from the artisans in easy instalments every month
    - ✓ As per the agreement, the business partner or manufacturers will provide the raw material to the artisans for making Agarbatti and will pay them wages on a job work basis
    - ✓ The wages to the artisans and labourers will be provided by the business partners directly in their accounts through Direct Benefits Transfer (DBT).
  - ✓ One automatic agarbatti making machine can make approximately 80 Kg of aggarbatti per day, providing direct employment to 4 persons and Rs 1200 per day wage
  - ✓ Further, each artisan will earn a fixed amount of Rs. 250 per day while working on a powder mixing machine.
  - ✓ The current consumption of incense sticks in the country is 1490 MT per day, whereas, the country's daily production is just 760 MT
  - ✓ This indicates the gap between the demand and supply in the agarbatti production industry.
- **The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) - has finally extended the timeline for the public to review 80-page long draft on Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) notification 2020.**
- ✓ The extension of the timeline to August 11 has been provided based on Delhi High court interventions
  - ✓ The recently released draft aims to replace the existing EIA notification 2006
  - ✓ This is the second time there will be a change in the policy under the Environment Protection Act 1986.
  - ✓ The EIA framework provides a legal platform for regulating any activities which pollute the environment.
  - ✓ Earlier, on March 23, a draft Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2020 was issued by the MoEF&CC, inviting comments and objections from the public.
  - ✓ Later, the environment minister, Prakash Javadekar, set a deadline of June 30 to receive comments on the draft Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) notification.



- ✓ Finally, the Delhi High Court extended the deadline for receiving the comments till August 11 this year.
- ✓ The history of the country's Environment Protection Act dates back to 1972
  - ✓ In the year 1972, Stockholm Declaration on Environment was signed, of which India was also the one among the various signatories
  - ✓ Then in the year 1974 and 1981, India enacted a law to control water and air pollution respectively.
  - ✓ In the year 1984, the Bhopal Gas leak disaster forced the nation to enact a new law, following which the government launched the Environment Protection Act, 1986
  - ✓ In the Environment Protection Act 1986 itself, it was mentioned that the country will frame EIA norms which finally came into effect in the year 1994 and later modified by a draft in 2006.
- ✓ Many activists claim that the recently launched policy is less stringent than the previously launched environment policy in the year 2006
- ✓ A huge list of projects has been excluded from the view of public consultation in the new policy, some being, gas and shale exploration, offshore and onshore oil, irrigation projects, small and medium mineral beneficiation units, hydroelectric projects up to 25 MW, small foundries involving furnace units, small and medium cement plants, acids other than phosphoric or ammonia, small clinker grinding units, Sulphuric acid, micro, MSMEs in dye and dye intermediates, synthetic rubbers, bulk drugs, all inland waterway projects, medium-sized paint units, aerial ropeways in ecologically sensitive areas, specified building construction and area development projects and expansion or widening of highways between 25 km and 100 km with defined parameters

## INTERNATIONAL

- **President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna party and its allies – claimed majority by winning 150 seats in the 225-member Sri Lankan parliament.**





- ✓ The two-thirds overwhelming majority will see Gotabaya's brother and former president Mahinda Rajapaksa, 74, taking over as the next Prime Minister on August 9 at the Kelaniya Raja Maha Vihara, a famed Buddhist temple near Colombo.
- ✓ The ruling group, one of Sri Lanka's newest parties founded by the Rajapaksas, won 150 seats in the 225-member parliament along with its allies.
- ✓ The result seems to provide the family the required 'authority' to enact sweeping changes to the constitution of the island nation
- ✓ Earlier, President Gotaboya said the restoration of full executive powers was necessary to implement his agenda to make the country of 21 million economically and militarily secure
- ✓ However, no timeline has been set for such a move.
- ✓ Currently, significant power is bestowed on parliament and the PM after a previous government led by the now-opposition amended the constitution
- ✓ The previous government had also set up independent panels to oversee the police and the judiciary, among other arms of the government
- ✓ Recently, 10 international human rights organisations —including Amnesty International, Forum Asia and South Asians for Human Rights — issued a joint statement urging the Sri Lankan government to end “targeted arrests, intimidation and threats” of lawyers, activists, human rights defenders and journalists.

## INDIA AND OTHERS

- **On August 5, 2020, India - contributed \$15.46 million to the India-UN Development Partnership Fund.**
- ✓ India has contributed the funds to the United Nations Office for South-south Cooperation (UNOSSC) as a permanent representative of the UN.
- ✓ Of this, \$9.46 million has been dedicated to the Commonwealth countries and \$6 million to the overall fund.
- ✓ The fund is managed by UNOSSC.
- ✓ Established in 2017, the Fund supports developing countries in achieving their 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development.
- ✓ Currently, there are 36 projects being implemented in 37 countries with the help of the fund.
- ✓ The fund mainly focuses on the development of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small Island developing states.
- ✓ Till now, India has contributed \$41.8 million towards the fund.
- ✓ Overall, India has committed \$150 million towards the funds in the next decade.
- ✓ The first project under the India-UN Development Partnership Fund focused on averting natural disasters in six Pacific Island nations - Kirbati, Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Micronesia, Solomon Islands and Kingdom of Tonga.
- ✓ The UNOSSC is hosted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
  - ✓ It was established in 1974 by the United Nations General Assembly.

- ✓ It promotes, coordinates and supports South-South cooperation globally and also within United Nations.
- ✓ The South-South Cooperation refers to the technical cooperation among developing countries
- ✓ There are other terms of cooperation in the United Nations.
  - ✓ The North-South Cooperation indicates the social, economic and political cooperation between a developed and a developing country.
  - ✓ The terms north and south are being used as most of the countries in the northern hemisphere are 'developed' nations and those in the southern hemisphere are 'developing' nations
  - ✓ The Triangular cooperation involves the association between three countries such as one from the north and two from the south.

## DEFENCE

- **India - will take part in the Russian Kavkaz 2020 strategic command-post exercise next month.**
- ✓ This marks a resumption of bilateral and multilateral military exercises between both the countries which were deferred due to COVID-19
- ✓ The invitees also include China and Pakistan, apart from other member-states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)
- ✓ The invitation comes amid the ongoing standoff with China along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh.
- ✓ A small tri-service contingent will take part in the exercise to be held in Astrakhan
- ✓ The Indian contingent includes 150 Army personnel and smaller number of personnel from the Navy and Air Force

## ECONOMY

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) - has constituted a five-member committee with former ICICI Bank chief K V Kamath as its chairman to suggest the process for a framework for banks to restructure bad loans due to Covid-related issues.**
- ✓ The other members of the committee are Diwakar Gupta, currently serving at Asian Development Bank, T Manoharan, currently chairman of Canara Bank, and Ashvin Parekh, a strategy consultant.
- ✓ The CEO of the Indian Banks' Association will serve the committee as its member secretary.
- ✓ If required, the RBI may bring in more new members also, as per the central bank
- ✓ The committee has been mandated to submit its report within 30 days to RBI, after which the recommendations will be put in the public domain
- ✓ Earlier, on August 5, while announcing a one-time loan resolution scheme, RBI governor Shaktikanta Das had announced that Kamath would lead the panel, although the names of other members had not been disclosed.

- ✓ The latest appointment marks the return of the former ICICI Bank chief, K V Kamath, into the domestic arena after spending the last five years in Shanghai as the first head of New Development Bank, the multilateral funding agency set up by BRICS member nations — Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

<b>HELPING OUT THE ECONOMY</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; In addition to veteran banker <b>K V Kamath</b>, the panel's other members are Diwakar Gupta (of ADB), T Manoharan (Canara Bank), and Ashvin Parekh (a consultant)</li> <li>&gt; The CEO of the Indian Banks' Association will also be a member</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The panel will submit its recommendations on the financial parameters to the central bank</li> <li>&gt; The RBI, in turn, will notify these along with any modifications, if needed, within 30 days</li> </ul>



- ✓ Kamath was a veteran banker credited with transforming the 'sedate' development financial institution into a universal bank
- ✓ He has been instrumental in helping the revival of stressed companies
- ✓ The Committee will be recommending the financial parameters to be included in the resolution plans, with sector-specific benchmark ranges for such parameters.

## AWARDS

- **The US-based Rockefeller Foundation - has selected Hyderabad-based non-profit, Naandi Foundation, as one of the 'Top 10 Visionaries' in the world for the Food Vision 2050 Prize**
- ✓ The award, which confers prize money of \$200,000 to Naandi, was announced in New York on August 6.



- ✓ The award recognised the application of the Arakunomics model in regions of Araku, Wardha and New Delhi, leading to the Food Vision 2050 award
- ✓ The Food Vision 2050 award follows an "ABCDEFGH" framework that focus revolutionary approaches on - Agriculture, Biology, Compost, Decentralised decision-making, Entrepreneurs, Families, Global Markets, and 'Headstands'



- ✓ Naandi competed with over 1,300 entries in a two-level contest that was spread over almost a year.
- ✓ The Rockefeller Foundation will be releasing immediately \$1,50,000 and the balance \$50,000 after a three-month accelerator programme that is intended to help Naandi realise its vision.
- ✓ Naandi's vision titled "Arakunomics" was based on work with tribal farmers in Araku for nearly 20 years.
- ✓ It is a new integrated economic model that ensures profits for farmers, quality for consumers through regenerative agriculture.
- ✓ The model is a tribute to the tribal farmers of Araku region for the world-class coffee produced and launched in Paris in 2017
- ✓ The tribal farmers were also responsible for the high carbon landscape transformation they did in over 955 villages by planting 25 million trees.

## BOOKS & AUTHORS

- The Union Jal Shakti Minister, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, along with the Union Textiles and Women & Child Development Minister Smriti Irani - launched the book 'Swachh Bharat Kranti'



- ✓ The book "Swachh Bharat Kranti" is the Hindi translation of the book "The Swachh Bharat Revolution".
- ✓ It was edited by Parameswaran Iyer, Secretary of Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation
- ✓ The book is arranged in four key sections which are the four key pillars of SBM's (Swachh Bharat Mission) success - Public financing, Political leadership, Partnerships and People's participation.
- ✓ The book starts with a foreword by Prime Minister Narendra Modi
- ✓ It consists of a compilation of essays written by Amitabh Kant, Amitabh Bachchan, Arun Jaitley, Akshay Kumar, Bill Gates, Ratan Tata, Sadhguru, Tavleen Singh, and other eminent personalities in various fields



- ✓ Totally, it has 35 essays contributed by a range of stakeholders of the programme.
- ✓ The Swachh Bharat Mission was started in 2014 to provide universal coverage on sanitation of the country.
  - ✓ It is being implemented by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.
  - ✓ It consists of two main components - SBM Urban and SBM Rural
  - ✓ The urban component of the mission mainly focuses on waste management techniques
  - ✓ The rural component focuses on achieving Open Defecation Free (ODF) India.
  - ✓ Currently, the second phase of the mission is being implemented, which is between 2020-21 and 2024-25.
  - ✓ An outlay of Rs. 1,40,881 crores has been set aside for the second phase of the mission.
- ✓ The second phase has been named as ODF+.
  - ✓ The ODF+ aims to focus on the areas of Grey water management, Plastic waste management, Faecal sludge management and Biodegradable solid waste management
  - ✓ The second phase also aims to provide employment in the rural areas by constructing soak pits, compost pits, material recovery facilities, waste stabilization ponds etc.,

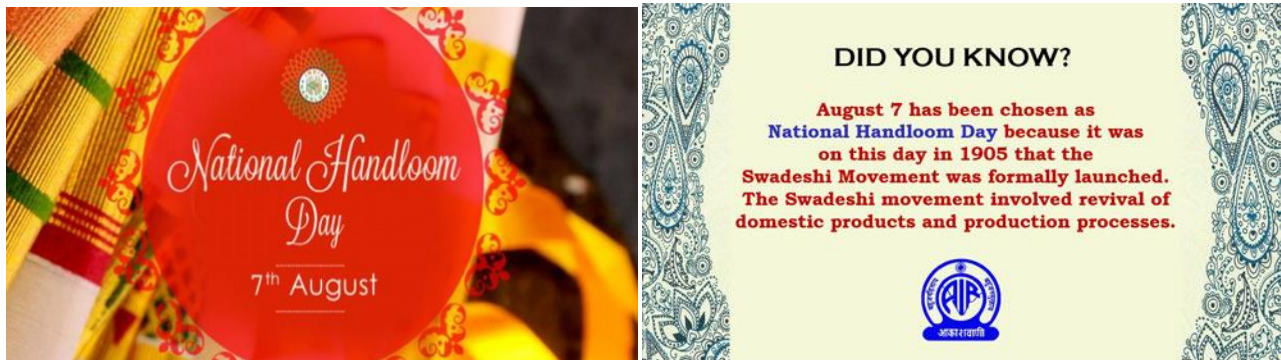
## SPORTS

- **On August 7, the ICC – announced that India retained the right to host the 2021 T20 World Cup, while Australia will host this year’s postponed edition in 2022**
- ✓ This year's T20 World Cup had to be postponed because of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has severely impacted all sports calendars globally.
- ✓ The global body also confirmed that next year’s women's ODI World Cup in New Zealand has been postponed until February-March 2022 because of the global Covid-19 pandemic impact.
- ✓ The format of the 2021 T20 World Cup will remain as it was for 2020
- ✓ It means, all teams that qualified for that event will now participate in India in 2021.
- ✓ Further, a new qualification process will be started for the 2022 edition in Australia.

## INTERNATIONAL DAY

- **National Handloom Day - August 7**

- ✓ The main objective of celebrating the day is to create awareness about importance of handloom industry and to honour the handloom weavers in the country



- ✓ The first National Handloom Day was observed in the year 2015
- ✓ This year, the sixth National Handloom Day is being observed under the coordination of Ministry of Textiles.
- ✓ The day, August 7, was chosen as National Handloom Day to commemorate the launch of Swadeshi movement on this day in the year 1905
- ✓ The movement was launched in Calcutta town hall to protest against partition of Bengal by the British government.
- ✓ The Government of India has launched several schemes to boost handloom sector, which includes - National Handloom Development Programme, Comprehensive Handloom cluster Development Scheme, Yarn Supply Scheme, Handloom Weavers Comprehensive Welfare Scheme and Weavers MUDRA Scheme

