

**EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-SEPTEMBER 22, 2020**

**TAMIL NADU**

- On September 21, the high-level expert committee headed by former RBI governor C Rangarajan – had submitted its 250-page report to chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami at Secretariat
- ✓ The committee was set up in May to suggest short-term and medium-term measures to help revive the state’s economy impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic
- ✓ It had proposed to lift the lockdown completely, spend Rs.10,000 crore more than budgeted capital expenditure and use the Rs.3,200 crore construction sector funds lying idle to stimulate the state’s economic revival.

**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS** A Prathap

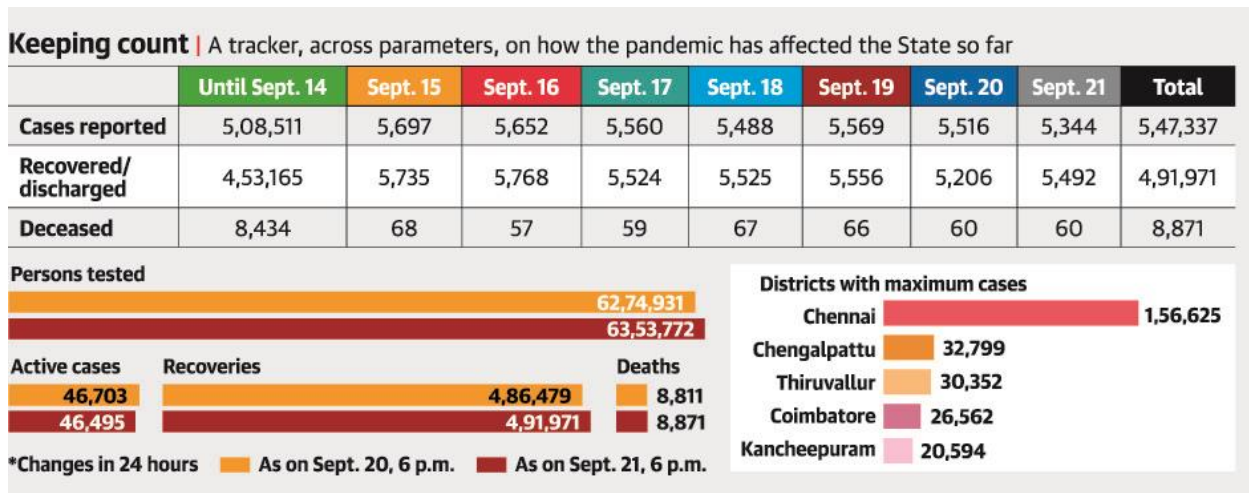
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Spend ₹3,200 crore 'construction sector' fund lying idle to boost economic revival</li> <li>➤ Offer employment guarantee in urban areas</li> <li>➤ Extend distribution of free rice to PDS cardholders beyond November</li> <li>➤ Infuse additional capital of ₹1,000 crore in state-owned Tamil Nadu Industrial Investment Corporation (TIIC)</li> <li>➤ Govt may have to spend ₹5,000 crore more to fight the</li> </ul>	 <p>RBI ex-Governor C Rangarajan after submitting the report to CM Edappadi K Palaniswami on Monday</p> <p><b>Covid-19 pandemic</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Find ways other than a lockdown to contain spread of pandemic</li> </ul>
---	---

- ✓ The committee also mentioned that the state government must find ways other than a lockdown to contain the pandemic.
- ✓ Other key suggestions include offering employment guarantee in urban areas and extending the distribution of free rice to PDS cardholders beyond November.
- ✓ The rise in the state’s debt burden is unavoidable this year, as per the committee

- ✓ Infusing an additional capital of Rs.1,000 crore in state-owned Tamil Nadu Industrial Investment Corporation (TIIC) was also suggested by the Committee
- ✓ The committee also wanted the government to promote more industrial parks and set aside parts of them for MSMEs to sustain the focus on their revival
- **The State government - has announced that it will set up electric vehicle charging stations in Chennai, Coimbatore, Tiruchi, Madurai, Salem and Tirunelveli**
  - ✓ This was informed to the National Green Tribunal by the Government
  - ✓ The government will provide charging points for the vehicles at parking lots in government offices.
  - ✓ Further, the charging stations will also be set up on NHAI and State Highways
  - ✓ According to the government, EV related and charging infrastructure manufacturing industries in the State will be provided 100% exemption on electricity tax till December 31, 2025.
  - ✓ Moreover, stamp duty exemption will also be given for purchase of land to set up such industries
  - ✓ The government has also mentioned about its plan to promote conversion of all auto rickshaws to electric vehicles in the six major cities within the next 10 years and extend it to other cities and towns gradually.
  - ✓ It will also support conversion of all taxis in these six cities into EVs and introduce 1,000 electric buses every year.
  - ✓ Apart from this, private operators and educational institutions would be encouraged to transition to EVs
  - ✓ The vision of the government is to attract ₹50,000 crore investment in EV manufacturing, providing infrastructure for charging, shared mobility, recycle and reuse batteries and dispose of the rejected batteries in an environment friendly manner
- **Water from the Kandaleru reservoir, released by the Andhra Pradesh government a few days ago - reached Poondi reservoir on September 21.**
  - ✓ This is the first time the neighbouring state has released water for the current water year (July 2020 to June 2021)
  - ✓ Water reached the zero point near Uthukkottai on September 20
  - ✓ It started flowing into the Poondi reservoir at the rate of 230 cusecs (cubic feet per second) on the next day
  - ✓ The Andhra Pradesh government has agreed to share 4tmcft (thousand million cubic feet) of water from the Kandaleru reservoir in the first installment.
  - ✓ The State PWD and Metrowater authorities have asked their counterparts in AP to release 4tmcft of water in the next two months.
  - ✓ As per the agreement, the AP government has to release 12tmcft of water.
  - ✓ Last year, the AP government released 8.25tmcft of water to the state.

- **Researchers from IITM - have developed nano-coated magnesium alloy mesh cage implants, as an alternative for titanium support for fractured bones**
- ✓ These implants can degrade slowly and get absorbed in the body as the bone heals.
- ✓ The team has tested the material on rabbits and has plans to study its application in larger animals like sheep and goats and eventually repairing human bones.
- ✓ Magnesium is the fourth abundant metal found in the body and known to accelerate bone healing
- ✓ Magnesium's biocompatibility and biodegradability also makes it difficult to use in bone repair.
- ✓ The research on use of magnesium as a degradable bone implant is widely undertaken.
- ✓ However, the issue with magnesium is that it degrades even before the bone heals.
- ✓ The IITM research team has come up with a solution by nano-coating AZ31 magnesium alloy with two biocompatible materials — polycaprolactone, a biodegradable polymer and hydroxyapatite, a calcium phosphate-based biomaterial to help the implant degrade slowly.
- ✓ With the coating, magnesium implant would take about one to one-and-a-half years to degrade in the body and by that time, the bone would have healed completely
- ✓ In general, small fractures or defects can be treated with plates and rods, while fractures longer than 5cm in long bones (like the bones of the arm, leg and thigh) would take a long time to heal.
- ✓ Hence they need some support like the Titanium mesh cage, which is usually used to heal and stabilise the bone.
- ✓ At present, titanium is used but it does not degrade and leads to stress shielding as it has mechanical strength much more than the bone
- ✓ Magnesium is now being looked at as an option as it degrades slowly and it's mechanical properties are closer to that of the bone.
  
- **The Coimbatore district forest department - will work with the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) to study the effect of cropping pattern on man-animal conflicts in the region.**
- ✓ The study would analyse the use of pesticides and the possibility of them causing long-term poisoning of elephants.
- ✓ It would also prepare an inventory of native grass and tree species that serve as fodder for elephants and identify ways to produce them in large quantities.
- ✓ The project has been undertaken after a series of elephant deaths in the district's forest ranges.
- ✓ The main aim of the study was to look into the causes for 'human-wildlife negative interaction', commonly called as man-animal conflict.

- ✓ TNAU had nominated its Forest College and Research Institute, Mettupalayam, for the task.
  - ✓ The next phase of the project was to study the crop management practices along the Bhavani River basin
  - ✓ This phase will study if a change in cropping pattern could be brought in to avoid the movement of elephants into fields.
- **On September 21, Tamil Nadu – reported 5,344 fresh cases and 60 deaths, pushing the state’s caseload to 5,47,337 and the cumulative toll to 8,871.**
- ✓ There are 46,495 people still under treatment as ‘active cases’ for the viral infection.



- ✓ As many as 5,492 persons were discharged after treatment on the day, taking the total cured figure to 4,91,971.
- ✓ Chennai reported 982 fresh cases and 16 deaths due to the infection.
- ✓ Its neighbours Chengalpet(219), Kancheepuram(117) and Tiruvallur(212) together logged 548 cases and 15 deaths
- ✓ Further, Coimbatore had 648 cases and Salem 295.
- ✓ The state has tested 65,55,328 samples as on date, after the testing of 80,672 samples in the last 24 hours.

## STATES

- **On September 21, Prime Minister Narendra Modi - has launched Ghar tak Fiber scheme in Bihar.**
- ✓ The Ghar tak fiber scheme aims to provide optical fibre services to households
  - ✓ It will connect 45,945 villages in the state, reaching several remote villages
  - ✓ The scheme ensures digital connectivity under the Bharat Net programme.
  - ✓ It is designed to provide optical fibre enabled internet connections to every household in the country, especially in village and rural areas.



- ✓ It is to be implemented by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
- ✓ Over 1.5 lakh village panchayats have been provided internet connectivity under the scheme after 2014

## NATIONAL

- On September 21, the Centre - announced increases in minimum support price (MSP) of six Rabi crops, ranging from 2% to 6% with lentils (pulses) and mustard (oilseed) getting the highest raise.
- ✓ Wheat has been provided an increase of 2.6% in its MSP, as against 4.6% last year
- ✓ The MSP rates were also hiked for five other winter crops — barley, gram, masur dal, safflower, and rapeseed and mustard.
- ✓ The announcement comes a day after passage of two farm bills in Parliament amid opposition protests and allegations that farmer interests were being sacrificed

HIGHER MSPS FOR RABI CROPS				MSP HIKE OF RABI CROPS IN PAST SEVEN YEARS			
Crops	2019-20 Rs/Quintal	2020-21 Rs/Quintal	Hike (%)	Crops	2013-14 Rs/Quintal	2020-21 Rs/Quintal	Hike (%)
Lentil	4800	5100	6.3	Safflower	3000	5327	78
Mustard*	4425	4650	5.1	Lentil	2950	5100	73
Barley	1525	1600	4.9	Gram	3100	5100	65
Gram	4875	5100	4.6	Mustard*	3050	4650	52
Wheat	1925	1975	2.6	Barley	1100	1600	45
Safflower	5215	5327	2.1	Wheat	1400	1975	41

\*Mustard & Rapeseed

- ✓ Among the two farm bills, one is on agri market and the other on contract farming.
- ✓ The two contentious bills are - the Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020 and the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020.

- ✓ The decision to increase MSP was taken at the meeting of Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs
  - ✓ The centre has released Rs 1.13 trillion as MSP to farmers for Rabi crops
  - ✓ The government had announced the new MSPs in Lok Sabha much ahead of the beginning of the Rabi sowing season
  - ✓ The move is seen as an attempt by the government to dispel doubts of farmers over the future of the MSP regime
  - ✓ It has to be recalled that BJP's longtime partner Akali Dal quit the cabinet over the issue.
  - ✓ In the past 12 years, the government had not made an announcement on MSPs for Rabi crops in September.
  - ✓ The prices were either announced in October or November and, at times, even in December.
  - ✓ In 2009, MSP was announced as late as on January 29, almost the end of the Rabi sowing season.
  - ✓ Usually, cereals will deliver highest returns to the farmers, with this year's MSPs being an exception.
  - ✓ The reforms envisaged in the bills provide more options to the farmers other than Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee procurement and also facilitate leasing of land for contract farming.
  - ✓ The MSP is the rate at which the government purchases crops from farmers
  - ✓ This rate acts as a safeguard for the farmer as it provides a minimum profit for the harvest irrespective of the market conditions
  - ✓ A committee set up under the M. S. Swaminathan in 2006 had recommended that the MSP must be at least 50% more than the cost of production
  - ✓ The MSP is fixed on the recommendations of the Agricultural Costs and Prices Commission.
  - ✓ The Food Corporation of India is the nodal agency to procure the crops.
- **On September 21, the Lok Sabha - passed the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code amendment bill**
- ✓ The amendment bill stays insolvency proceedings against companies for at least six months during the coronavirus pandemic period, starting from March 25.
  - ✓ It was aimed to safeguard companies from the effect of the Covid-19 induced lockdown.
  - ✓ The bill was earlier passed by the Rajya Sabha
  - ✓ The proposed amendments, brought in the form of an Ordinance on June 5, suspended the application of three provisions to prevent any stressed company due to the COVID-19 situation, from being pushed into insolvency proceedings.
  - ✓ A proviso for further extension of six months has also been given, as the first six months expires on September 24

- ✓ During the introduction of the bill, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman praised the performance of IBC, saying default recovery had gone up to 42.5% from mere 14.5% under SARFESHI.
- **Chairman of Rajya Sabha, M Venkaiah Naidu –rejected the notice for a no-confidence resolution against deputy chairman Harivansh on September 21, saying the notice was not in proper format.**
- ✓ Further, eight opposition members of the Rajya Sabha were suspended for a week for “unruly behaviour” during passage of the two farm bills on September 20
- ✓ The eight MPs are Trinamool leader Derek O’Brien, Sanjay Singh of the Aam Aadmi Party, Rajeev Satav, Syed Nasir Hussain and Ripun Bora of Congress, Dola Sen of Trinamool, and K KRagesh and Elamaram Kareem of CPM
- ✓ This is the second such suspension of a significant number of MPs in recent years.
- ✓ In 2010, seven MPs — four from the Samajwadi Party, one each from JD(U), RJD and LJP — were suspended for unruly behaviour during passage of the women’s reservation bill.
- ✓ The code of conduct adopted by the House in 2005 lays down several guidelines relating to behaviour of members.
- **The Union government – is planning to establish around 21 neutrino observatories in the country.**
- ✓ This was announced by the Union Minister of state of North Eastern region Dr Jitendra Singh
- ✓ Out of the proposed 21 observatories, a maximum of six will be set up in Karnataka, four in Uttarakhand and one each in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Meghalaya, Maharashtra, Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Puducherry, and the Andaman and Nicobar Island
- ✓ The Indian Neutrino Observatory Project was launched to build a world-class underground laboratory having a rock cover around it in order to conduct basic research on neutrino.
- ✓ The Tata Institute of Fundamental Research is the nodal agency for implementing the project.
- ✓ The construction would jointly be done by the department of Science and Technology and Department of Atomic Energy and would be operated by the Indian Institute of geomagnetism.
- ✓ The project intends to study about the properties of Neutrino particles, which are present in the earth’s atmosphere and also comes from the Sun
- ✓ Neutrinos are tiny particles with specific mass and no charge
- ✓ They are available abundantly in the universe and difficult to detect, as they have negligible interaction with other particles

➤ **The Union Minister of Science and Technology, Earth Sciences and Health and Family Welfare, Dr Harsha Vardhan - recently mentioned about the 'O-SMART scheme' in the Rajya Sabha**

- ✓ The scheme is implemented by the Ministry of earth sciences.
- ✓ Under the scheme, the Indian tsunami early warning Centre is currently serving 25 Indian ocean countries
- ✓ O-SMART scheme refers to the Ocean Services, Modelling, Applications, Resources and Technology scheme.
- ✓ It generates and updates information on Marine living resources in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
- ✓ The scheme provides range of forecasts, warnings, advisories regarding the coastal and ocean related information
- ✓ The Indian tsunami early warning Centre was established at Indian national Centre for Ocean information Services (INCOIS), Hyderabad
- ✓ It operates under the aegis of Ministry of Earth Sciences since 2007

## **SUPREME COURT VERDICT**

➤ **On September 21, the Supreme Court - set aside the separate entrance exam conducted by National Law School of India University (NLSIU), Bengaluru for admission to LLB course**

- ✓ The apex court had directed that the admissions of all students be done on the basis of NCLAT, the common law entrance examination
- ✓ The NCLAT is scheduled to be held on September 28.
- ✓ A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, R Subhash Reddy and M R Shah ruled against NLSIU for deviating from other law schools by holding a separate National Law Aptitude Test (NLAT) 2020.
- ✓ It said NLSIU issued notification for the examination without taking the mandatory approval from the Academic Council.
- ✓ The bench also held that NLSIU's decision to conduct home-based online examination could not be considered as a test which would maintain transparency and integrity of the examination.
- ✓ The test was conducted by NLSIU on September 12 as the Supreme Court allowed it, but the court had directed that the results would not be declared without its approval.
- ✓ Over 23,000 of the scheduled 78,000 aspirants had taken the online exam
- ✓ Accordingly, admissions in all 22 national law universities will be done on the basis of CLAT.

## **INTERNATIONAL**

➤ **On September 21, the United States - slapped additional sanctions on Iran administration**



- ✓ The move follows the Trump administration's unilateral weekend declaration that all United Nations penalties that were eased under the 2015 nuclear deal had been restored.
  - ✓ The announcement comes in defiance of the world community, which has rejected US legal standing to impose the international sanctions
  - ✓ The unilateral decision of the US could face an ugly showdown at the annual UN General Assembly this week.
  - ✓ As per the new sanctions, US administration was hitting more than two dozen Iranian individuals and institutions with penalties.
  - ✓ Nearly all of them were already subject to US sanctions that the administration had re-imposed after Trump withdrew from the nuclear deal in 2018
  - ✓ The sanctions were also directed at the Iranian defence ministry and its atomic energy agency
- **The US-based aviation company Airbus - launched three concepts for the first-ever zero emission commercial Hydrogen Aircraft on September 21, 2020.**
- ✓ The aircrafts would be operational by 2035.
  - ✓ The three concepts announced under the code 'ZEROe' includes Turbofan design, Blended wing body design and Turboprop design
  - ✓ Earlier, Russian manufacturer Tupolev had built a prototype of the aircraft called Tu-154 which was the first experimental aircraft that operated on liquid nitrogen.
  - ✓ Hydrogen is the lightest element and hence can lift the aircrafts easily

## INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

- **The Minister of State for Shipping, Mansukh Mandaviya - launched the first direct Cargo Ferry service to Maldives.**
- ✓ This cargo service will help in boosting the business and trade relations between the countries



- ✓ It will be connecting the Tuticorin and Cochin ports of India with Male and Kulhudhufushi ports of Maldives.
- ✓ The service, funded by India with \$3 million, is operated by the Shipping Corporation of India.
- ✓ It is being launched as per the MoU signed between both the countries in 2019

- ✓ Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) had done the study to operate the ferry service.

## CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi – to hold India’s first virtual summit among its neighbours post pandemic, with his Sri Lankan counterpart Mahinda Rajapaksa on September 26**
- ✓ The meeting will come two days after a scheduled virtual meeting of Foreign Ministers of the two countries, along with other regional counterparts, at the SAARC foreign ministers’ forum on September 24
- ✓ The virtual summit is the first official interaction between the leaders after they met in New Delhi in February this year.
- ✓ Following the global pandemic, India held its virtual summit in June with Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison
- ✓ The first summit between the PM Narendra Modi and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison saw the signing of nine agreements, while the two countries issued a joint declaration on a ‘Shared Vision for Maritime Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.’

## DEFENCE

- **Sub Lt. Kumudini Tyagi and Sub Lt. Riti Singh - will be the first women airborne tacticians (combatants) in the country who will operate from the warships.**



- ✓ They passed the Indian Navy’s Observer Course from the Southern Naval Command, Kochi, on September 21
- ✓ The two were awarded “Wings” on graduating as “observers” to handle the myriad sensors and other systems on board multi-role weapon-armed helicopters, at naval air station INS Garuda in Kochi
- ✓ Both are engineering graduates in computer science and were commissioned into the Navy in 2018.

- ✓ Till now, women have only been allowed only on fixed-wing aircraft like P-8Is and Dorniers, which take off and land ashore.
- ✓ Two other women officers, Sub Lt. Afnan Sheikh and Sub Lt. Kreeshma R., too passed out from the Naval command on September 21.
  - ✓ They will operate fixed-wing aircraft of the Navy, a domain where women already operate.
- ✓ The four women officers from the Short Service Commission batch were part of 20 Navy and Coast Guard personnel who passed out on the day.
- ✓ **Meanwhile, the Indian Air Force has short-listed a women fighter pilot to fly the new omni-role Rafale fighter jets at the Ambala airbase**
- ✓ The new women fighter pilot is expected to soon join the No. 17 Golden Arrows squadron of the Indian Air Force (IAF)
- ✓ The officer has been trained on the MiG-21 fighters and is currently undergoing conversion training to fly the Rafale
- ✓ However, the IAF does not want the woman officer to be named as yet.
- ✓ Last week, the government informed Parliament that there were 10 women officer fighter pilots in the Indian Air Force since the stream was opened up for women in 2016.
- ✓ Since 2016, IAF has inducted 10 women as fighter pilots, with Flight Lieutenant Avani Chaturvedi scripting history by becoming the first to fly a solo sortie in a MiG-21 'Bison' in February 2018.
- ✓ Early this month, the IAF formally inducted five Rafale fighter jets into service at Ambala.
- ✓ A second batch of four Rafales is likely to arrive in India in October.
- ✓ The Rafale jets arrived in India at the end of July and were inducted on September 10

## OBITUARY

- **Nepal's Ang Rita Sherpa, the first man to climb Mt Everest 10 times - died of a prolonged illness on September 21.**



- ✓ Ang Rita climbed the world's tallest mountain 10 times without carrying bottled oxygen between 1983 and 1996

- ✓ The 72-year-old Kathmandu-based Anghad been suffering brain and liver ailments for a long time
- ✓ Ang Rita was also known as the “snow leopard” for his climbing skills.

## INTERNATIONAL DAY

### ➤ World Rhino Day – September 22



- ✓ The day is observed to raise awareness about the conservation efforts of the Rhinoceros, considering the threats faced in Asia and Africa region.
- ✓ The day was launched by the World Wildlife Fund
- ✓ The first World Rhino Day was announced by the World Wildlife Fund, South Africa in 2010.
- ✓ Theme 2020 - Five Rhino Species Forever
- ✓ On the eve of the day, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar said that India is home to the largest number of One-Horned Rhinoceros in the world.
- ✓ Globally, the population of one horned Rhinos stands at 3584.
- ✓ Out of this, India has 2938 and Nepal has 646 rhinos.
- ✓ In India, the Rhinos are mostly found in Assam, West Bengal and UP
- ✓ Further, the Environment Ministry has launched a National Conservation Strategy for Indian One-Horned Rhino, on the eve of the occasion
- ✓ The strategy includes conservation of Greater one horned rhinoceros in India as well as in Nepal.
- ✓ The strategy follow the same protocol to manage the population of rhinos in Valmiki Tiger Reserve in India, Shuklaphanta in Nepal and Chitwan National Park in Nepal and Dudhwa