

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-SEPTEMBER 12, 2020

TAMIL NADU

- **The State Development Policy Council (SDPC), formerly the State Planning Commission - has launched a new mobile application named 'Assess-Implement-Monitor (AIM)'**
- ✓ The new App will ensure efficient administration in districts where Special Area Development Programmes (SADPs) are going on.
- ✓ It will be tested in a pilot study of SADP in Ambasamudram block of Tirunelveli district.
- ✓ The App was launched by Anil Meshram, member-secretary, SDPC, Chennai on September 11.
- ✓ The manual of the App was released by C. Ponnaiyan, vice-chairman, SDPC.
- ✓ The first copy was received by Durairasu, principal chief conservator of forests, Chennai.
- ✓ The App will be useful for field-level officers, who can update details of ongoing projects and maintenance of existing infrastructure in various parts of the State with relevant pictures and videos
- ✓ The SADP is currently implemented in 11 districts.
- ✓ The web and mobile application can be of great use for administrators, police and forest officers who take charge in a district of the SADP

- **On September 11, the Tamil Nadu and Kerala governments - decided to proceed with the implementation of the Pandiyar-Punnampuzha scheme, that utilizes the west flowing waters of Pandiyar and Punnampuzha rivers that drains into the Arabian sea.**
- ✓ The project is aimed at diverting the water eastward so that drought-prone areas of Tamil Nadu would benefit alongwith the generation of hydropower on both eastern and western sides.

- ✓ This was decided in the meeting held between the senior officers of irrigation and electricity departments of both states in Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala
 - ✓ The meeting discussed various inter-state water disputes, including Parambikulam-Aliyar Project that benefits the western districts.
 - ✓ Both the governments set up high-level committees last year following a meeting of chief ministers of both states in Thiruvananthapuram in October.
 - ✓ The last meeting between the chief ministers took place in Chennai in 2004.
 - ✓ Pandiyar-Punnampuzha has its origin in The Nilgiris and joins Chaliyar river in Kerala near Nilambur.
 - ✓ The Tamil Nadu government is keen on diverting at least 7tmcft of water from the Chaliyar basin to Moyar arm of Bhavani river
 - ✓ An agreement was signed in 1965 itself between both governments for hydroelectric projects utilising the Pandiyar and Punnampuzha rivers.
 - ✓ But the scheme did not take off despite interventions.
 - ✓ The plan was to generate 100MW in phase I and 150MW in phase II utilising 14tmcft of water for Tamil Nadu.
 - ✓ The first review of the PAP agreement was pending since 1988, with both states accusing each other of not sharing adequate water.
- **In a record time of nine hours, the Southern Railway - has rebuilt two waterway bridges at Karamadai in Coimbatore district using reinforced cement concrete (RCC) within a single day on September 10**
- ✓ These bridges were located on the route of the Blue Mountain Express (Mettupalayam-Chennai-Mettupalayam).
 - ✓ They were constructed as stone slab waterway bridges under the railway tracks more than 50 years ago
 - ✓ Located near Karamadai railway station and Mariyapuram in Karamadai, the two bridges avoid rainwater stagnation in these areas.
 - ✓ Since the bridges were not in usable condition, the railway authorities decided to rebuild the bridges.
 - ✓ Due to the pandemic, the Mettupalayam-Coimbatore passenger train service that passes through the bridges has been stopped.
 - ✓ However, Blue Mountain Express (Mettupalayam-Chennai-Mettupalayam) is currently being operated.
 - ✓ The waterway bridge located near Karamadai railway station was 20m in length and at least 6ft wide.
 - ✓ Another waterway bridge at Mariyapuram was 13m in length.
- **A coal-fired steam locomotive, being made at the Golden Rock Railway Workshop in Trichy for the Nilgiri Mountain Railway (NMR) - is expected to roll out in February.**
- ✓ This is the first time that the over 90-year-old workshop has taken up the manufacture of a coal-fired locomotive

- ✓ The workshop had earlier manufactured oil-fired steam locomotives for operation on the scenic NMR section.
 - ✓ The core activities of the workshop include periodic overhaul of broad gauge diesel locomotives and passenger coaches
 - ✓ It has commenced the work on manufacture of the 'X' class coal-fired locomotive.
 - ✓ The boilers and cylinders are to be supplied by private companies based in Tiruchi and Coimbatore.
 - ✓ The metre gauge locomotive is being built at an estimated cost of ₹8.89 crore.
 - ✓ Previously, metre gauge coal-fired steam locomotives were made and imported from Switzerland.
- **On September 11, Tamil Nadu - recorded 5,519 new Covid-19 cases and 77 deaths.**
- ✓ With this, the state's cumulative caseload has reached 4,91,571 while the death toll remains at 8,231
 - ✓ As on date, the state has 47,918 patients still under treatment as active cases.

AS IT STANDS

The Covid-19 situation in Tamil Nadu as on Friday

Zone	Fresh Cases	Deaths today	Total cases	Total toll
Chennai	1728	33	2,23,224	4,160
North	1251	13	73,200	928
Central	654	7	39,514	594
South	659	9	99,632	1,733
West	1,225	15	53,769	815
Other	2	0	2,232	1
Total	5,519	77	4,91,571	8,231

- ✓ The recovery rate rose close to 88.6%, the overall case fatality rate remains flat at 1.6%, while active cases fell below 10%.
- ✓ A total of 6,006 persons were discharged, taking the total number of people recovered from the infection to 4,35,422 persons.
- ✓ Chennai reported 987 cases and 21 deaths on the day
- ✓ Its neighbouring districts, Tiruvallur (312), Chengalpet (297) and Kancheepuram (132) together reported 741 cases and 12 more deaths.
- ✓ Coimbatore (394) had the second highest number of fresh cases after Chennai
- ✓ Further, there were 298 cases in Salem, 296 in Tiruvannamalai and 289 in Cuddalore.
- ✓ With 84,893 samples tested in the last 24 hours, the total number of samples tested so far has gone up to 57,15,216.

- ✓ There are 165 testing facilities in the State - 100 in the private sector and 65 in the government sector, after the approval of few more laboratories

STATES

- **On September 11, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) Manoj Sinha -launched the Jammu and Kashmir Integrated Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (JK-IGRAMS)**
 - ✓ The system will create an interface with the public and focus on governance issues in the Union Territory.
 - ✓ The system is being launched on a pilot basis in three districts — Jammu, Srinagar, and Reasi — and will gradually be rolled out in the remaining districts by October 2.
 - ✓ It will replace the current portal that was launched in 2018.
 - ✓ District Collectors and Deputy Commissioners will be the primary nodes for receiving, disposing and monitoring grievances.
 - ✓ Earlier, Sinha had also announced the 'Back to Village' campaign, wherein officers will visit villages and address public grievances.
 - ✓ Sinha took over as the Lieutenant-Governor on August 7
- **The Adani Group – was handed over the operations of the Thiruvananthapuram international airport.**
 - ✓ The Airports Authority of India issued a letter of award to the Adani Enterprises Ltd to go ahead with the handing over of the airport.
 - ✓ The Adani Enterprises Ltd of the Adani Group won the bid to manage and operate the airport for 50 years.

NATIONAL

- **Gujarat and Andaman and Nicobar Islands - have been named as the best performers among states and union territories in the 2019 states startup rankings**
 - ✓ Karnataka and Kerala have been ranked as the top performers among the states, while Chandigarh was named the Leader among the UTs.

THE WINNERS	
Best Performer Gujarat (also 2018 winner)	Top Performers Karnataka, Kerala
Category Y (NE states except Assam; all UTs except Delhi)	
Best Performer Andaman & Nicobar Islands	Leader Chandigarh

- ✓ The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) released the rankings for the year 2019
 - ✓ Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal unveiled the rankings on September 11
 - ✓ This is the second edition of the ranking exercise, which was launched in 2018.
 - ✓ Gujarat had emerged as the best performer in 2018, while the top performers among states were Karnataka, Kerala, Odisha and Rajasthan.
 - ✓ Bihar, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Chandigarh were among the leaders category in various states and union territories.
 - ✓ Under the 'leader' category, the states which have set up their startup initiatives and measurable goals for their startup community are recognized.
 - ✓ These states also have a robust institutional mechanism for implementing their startup policy, with effective communication systems.
 - ✓ The states among the aspiring leaders category include Haryana, Jharkhand, Nagaland, Punjab, Telangana and Uttarakhand.
 - ✓ Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, Sikkim, **Tamil Nadu** and Uttar Pradesh are among the emerging startup ecosystem category.
 - ✓ The key objective of the rankings is to promote competitiveness and motivate states and union territories to work towards uplifting the startup ecosystem.
 - ✓ The ranking framework had 7 broad reform areas, consisting of 30 action points ranging from institutional support, easing compliances, relaxation in public procurement norms, incubation support, seed funding support, venture funding support, and awareness and outreach.
 - ✓ A total of 22 States and 3 UTs participated in the exercise.
- **On September 11, the Union Housing and Urban Affairs (HUA) Ministry - launched an initiative for making cities more pedestrian-friendly to provide walkable urban spaces**
- ✓ The 'Streets for People Challenge' would help cities provide safer means of transport with social distancing, along with the recent initiative promoting cycling in cities
 - ✓ The challenge, organised by the Smart Cities Mission of the Ministry, is not be limited to the 100 Smart Cities as all cities with a population of over 5 lakh, and capital cities, can apply.
 - ✓ Cities have to submit their proposals by February 11, 2021 and implement their interventions by May 31, 2021.
 - ✓ Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Puri launched the challenge, along with the Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework 2.0, which gives cities a roadmap for tackling climate change.
- **On September 11, India – reported a record number of 97,937 fresh Covid-19 infections and a record high of 1,249 deaths**

- ✓ Maharashtra, the state worst hit by the pandemic, crossed the 1 million mark in terms of its total caseload after reporting 24,886 fresh cases on the day.
 - ✓ With more than 1 million cases, Maharashtra accounts for nearly 22% of India's total Covid-19 caseload of 46,53,193.
 - ✓ The state has also reported the maximum of 442 deaths on the day, which included 49 predated deaths.
 - ✓ Outside of India, the highest single-day count of cases is 78,427 recorded in the US on July 25.
 - ✓ Among other states in the country, Andhra Pradesh reported 9,999 cases, while Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka reported 7,103 and 7,067 cases respectively.
- **On September 11, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) – has released the results of the first serological survey conducted from May 11-June 4**
- ✓ According to the study, the adjusted all-India sero-prevalence stood at less than 1% at 0.73% in mid-May
 - ✓ The study estimated a total of 64,68,388 adult Covid-19 infections in India by early May, as against the official tally of 85,940 detected till May 15

SERO PREVALENCE LESS THAN 1%

Stratum Of Districts	Total No. Of Districts	Households Visited	Adjusted Prevalence*	Estimated Infections In All Districts
0 Cases	233	6,301	0.68	8,56,062
Low No.	229	9,202	0.62	18,17,118
Medium	84	7,340	1.03	15,18,367
High	190	7,440	0.72	22,76,841
Total	736	30,283	0.73	64,68,388

*Adjusting for test performance

- ✓ This would indicate most cases may have been missed during the first few months of the pandemic outbreak in the country.
- ✓ According to the results, for every confirmed case, 82 to 130 infections went undetected
- ✓ During the initial stages, the country was having limited test kits and lab capacity
- ✓ Moreover, a significant number of infections may have been asymptomatic.
- ✓ A sero survey estimates the percentage of population exposed to a virus by finding the presence of antibodies.
- ✓ A total of 30,283 households were visited and 28,000 individuals enrolled for the sero survey across 21 states in the country.
- ✓ The survey had identified 83 districts but eventually sampled participants in only 70.
- ✓ In June, too, ICMR had estimated prevalence of infection at 0.73%.

- ✓ It had also said risk of the spread was 1.09 times higher in urban areas as compared to rural areas.
- ✓ In urban slums, it was 1.89 times higher than rural areas.
- ✓ Of the 157 people found positive in the survey, 43.3% were in the age group 18-45, 39.5% were those aged 46-60 and the remaining 17.2% were over the age of 60.
- ✓ Seropositivity was, however, highest in the 46-60 age group, with 62 out of 9,525, or 0.65%, testing positive and lowest in the youngest age group at 0.5% (68 out of 13,552).

INTERNATIONAL

- **Bahrain - has become the latest Arab nation to restore bilateral ties with Israel**
- ✓ The move is seen as part of a broader diplomatic push by US President Trump and his administration to fully integrate the Jewish state into the Middle East.
- ✓ On September 11, Trump announced the agreement, following a three-way phone call he had with Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu and Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.
- ✓ The three leaders also issued a joint statement, attesting to the deal.
- ✓ The announcement came on the 19th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.
- ✓ Like the UAE agreement, the Bahrain-Israel deal will normalise diplomatic, commercial, security and other relations between the two countries.
- ✓ **The agreement makes Bahrain the fourth Arab country, after Egypt, Jordan and the UAE, to have full diplomatic ties with Israel.**
- ✓ Last week, Bahrain said it would allow flights between Israel and the UAE to use its airspace.
- ✓ This followed a Saudi decision to allow an Israeli commercial airliner to fly over it on the way to the UAE.
- ✓ Bahrain, a small island state, is a close ally of Saudi Arabia and the site of the U.S. Navy's regional headquarters.

INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

- **On September 10, India and China - agreed to a five-point course-of-action to disengage and reduce tensions along the border, after two hours of tough negotiations in Moscow**
- ✓ Both sides agreed to "quickly disengage" as the current situation on the border was not in the interests of either country.
- ✓ The points were spelled out in a joint statement after the meeting of India's external affairs minister S Jaishankar with Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi

5-POINT CONSENSUS TO EASE BORDER TENSION

- 1** Both sides should take guidance from the consensus of their leaders on developing India-China relations, including not allowing differences to become disputes
- 2** Current border situation not in interest of either side... so troops should continue dialogue, quickly disengage, maintain proper distance and ease tensions
- 3** The two shall abide by all existing agreements and protocols on China-India boundary affairs and maintain peace & tranquillity & avoid any action that can escalate matters
- 4** India & China will continue communications through the Special Representatives mechanism. Meetings of Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on border affairs to continue
- 5** As situation eases, the two sides should expedite work to conclude new confidence-building measures to maintain and enhance border peace and tranquillity



“ We are ready to take conciliatory steps. Most important.. is to avoid new violations of the obligations on border ... Troops and equipment should be withdrawn from LAC
- Wang Yi | Chinese foreign minister at a press conference

- ✓ The statement said the two sides shall avoid any action that escalates matters, and abide by all existing agreements and protocol on China-India boundary affairs, besides maintaining peace and tranquillity in the border areas.

Face to face

A timeline of the stand-off between India and China at the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh

MAY 5: Scuffle reported after Chinese mobilisation on the north bank of Pangong Tso, several soldiers injured

MAY 5-MAY 15: PLA transgressions, clashes with Army reported at Pangong, Galwan, Depsang, Sikkim, and other points on LAC

JUNE 6: Corps Commanders hold meeting, agree on disengagement plan. Four rounds held since

JUNE 15: Twenty Indian soldiers killed in clashes at the Galwan Valley, no word on Chinese casualties

JUNE 19: PM holds all-party meet, says 'no one has transgressed India's borders'



Crucial talks: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Moscow. ■ ANI

JULY 5: Ajit Doval and Wang Yi speak, agree to expedite disengagement process. Troop build-up continues

JUNE-AUGUST: Four meetings of Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) on India-China border affairs

AUG. 29/30: Clashes on the south bank of Pangong; Indian troops dominate peaks

SEPT. 4: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh meets his Chinese counterpart in Moscow

SEPT. 7: Army says PLA fired gunshots; tensions escalate

- ✓ It also noted that once the situation eases, the two sides should expedite work to conclude “new confidence-building measures” to maintain calm along the border.
- ✓ Ahead of the meeting, Indian forces had taken charge of key heights in the Pangong Tso area as part of a four-and-a-half-month long stand-off
- ✓ Meanwhile, the two armies remain in stand-off positions in different areas along the LAC, primarily on the northern and southern banks of Pangong Tso.

- ✓ The meeting between the Foreign Ministers was facilitated by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.
- ✓ In November, Indian PM Modi and Chinese Premier Xi are expected to attend the G-20 summit in Saudi Arabia, which will be the first time the two leaders, who have not yet spoken to each other during the stand-off, could meet.

COMMITTEES

- **The government - has constituted an Empowered Group of Ministers (EGoM) under the Chairmanship of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to oversee the corporatisation of Ordnance Factory Board (OFB)**
- ✓ This was announced by the Ministry of Defence on February 11
- ✓ This follows the recent decision of the government to convert the OFB into one or more than one 100% government-owned corporate entities
- ✓ Other Ministers in the EGoM are Home Minister Amit Shah, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister for Law and Justice Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister of State for Labour and Employment Santosh Kumar Gangwar and Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievance and Pension Jitendra Singh.
- ✓ The terms of reference of the EGoM include subjects related to various categories of employees including protection of their salary and pension of existing employees and extension of financial support to the entity.

PERSONALITIES

- **On September 10, an Indian mixologist, Yangdup Lama - entered into the 2020 Bar World 100 list with 73rd spot in the rankings**



- ✓ This is the first ever instance of an Indian mixologist entering into the bar list
- ✓ The ranking lists out 100 most influential people in the global beverage industry — mixologists, bartenders, bar owners, journalists et al.
- ✓ It was released by Drinks International, the UK-based magazine covering the beverage trade across the world
- ✓ Monica Berg of London bar Tayer + Elementary has topped the list in this year's ranking.

- ✓ The Bar World 100 is a respected guide to the leaders of the bar industry, chosen by a voting panel of more than 100 worldwide commentators.
- ✓ 48-year-old Lama has been mixing drinks for the past 25 years and runs two bars in Delhi-NCR, one in south Delhi and the other in Gurugram.
- ✓ Sidecar, his south Delhi bar, won a spot on this year's Asia's 50 Best Bars
- ✓ It was only the second Indian bar to be on this prestigious list which is an offshoot of the World's 50 Best Bars, owned and organised by William Reed, a B2C media company in the UK.
- ✓ Lama, who hails from Darjeeling, has been working in Delhi for more than two decades

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- The US-based aerospace and defence company, Northrop Grumman – is naming its next spaceship as 'S S Kalpana Chawla', after the first woman of Indian origin to enter space.



- ✓ The S.S. Kalpana Chawla will be the company's next Cygnus spacecraft to head to the International Space Station (ISS)
- ✓ Cygnus spacecraft is the company's next space station resupply ship
- ✓ The spacecraft is tentatively scheduled to launch on the NG-14 mission atop a Northrop Grumman Antares rocket from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Wallop Flight Facility in Virginia on September 29.
- ✓ The S.S. Kalpana Chawla will deliver 3,629 kilos of cargo to the ISS that will be loaded onto the spacecraft 24 hours before liftoff
- ✓ Once the Cygnus spacecraft departs the station, S.S. Kalpana Chawla will host the Spacecraft Fire Experiment -V (Saffire-V) to study the behavior of large-scale fires in microgravity

- ✓ Finally, S.S. Kalpana Chawla spacecraft will perform a safe, destructive reentry into Earth's atmosphere over the Pacific Ocean.
- ✓ The spacecraft is not the first time that Chawla has been honoured for her contribution to space.
- ✓ In 2003, shortly after Chawla's death, India's Prime Minister at the time — Atal Bihari Vajpayee — renamed the MetSat-1 to Kalpana-1 in her honour
- ✓ NASA has also named the world's first single-system image (SSI) Linus supercomputer after Chawla.
- ✓ In 2004, it was integrated, as the first node Columbia supercomputer.
- ✓ Kalpana Chawla received a bachelor's degree in aeronautical engineering from India's Punjab Engineering College in 1982.
- ✓ She moved to the United States to go to graduate school at the University of Texas-Arlington, where she received a master's degree in aerospace engineering in 1984.
- ✓ Then, she moved to Boulder, Colo., to pursue a doctorate in aerospace engineering, which she received in 1988.
- ✓ Her career with NASA began in 1988 when she went to work in the area of powered-lift computational fluid dynamics for the Ames Research Center in California.
- ✓ After a brief career outside NASA, she returned as an astronaut candidate in December 1994.
- ✓ Her first flight was STS-87, the fourth U.S Microgravity Payload flight, on Space Shuttle Columbia from November 19 to December 5, 1997.
- ✓ She returned to space on January 16, 2003, aboard Columbia for a 16-day research flight.
- ✓ The STS-107 crew conducted more than 80 experiments.
- ✓ Chawla and her six STS-107 crewmates passed away in February 1, 2003, over Texas as Columbia was re-entering Earth's atmosphere.

OBITUARY

- **Swami Agnivesh, renowned social activist, Arya Samaj leader and former politician (80 years)**



- ✓ Swami Agnivesh passed away at the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences in New Delhi on September 11
- ✓ He was suffering from liver cirrhosis.
- ✓ Swami Agnivesh had several distinguished profiles, ranging from lawyer to politician
- ✓ But, his role as the face of the movement against bonded labour in the 1980s is what Swami Agnivesh will be remembered for most.
- ✓ In 1981, he founded the Bandhua Mukti Morcha (Bonded Labour Liberation Front).
- ✓ The Bandhua Mukti Morcha continues to raise issues surrounding bonded labour in India.
- ✓ Over the years, BMM estimates to have secured the release of more than 1,72,000 bonded labourers.
- ✓ Renowned internationally, Swami Agnivesh was thrice elected as chairperson of the UN Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery from 1994 to 2004.
- ✓ He was the proud recipient of several national and international awards, including the Anti-Slavery International Award in London, 1990, the Freedom and Human Rights Award in Berne, 1994, the Rajiv Gandhi Award for Communal Harmony, and the Right Livelihood Award from Sweden, 2004.
- ✓ Swami Agnivesh was born Vepa Shyam Rao on September 21, 1939, in Srikakulam in Andhra Pradesh.
- ✓ He gained degrees in law and commerce, became a lecturer in management at the reputed St Xavier's College in Kolkata and for a while practised law.
- ✓ In his student days, he was attracted towards the Arya Samaj and began a life-long relationship with it.
- ✓ Agnivesh became president (2004–2014) of the World Council of Arya Samaj, the highest international body of the Arya Samaj.
- ✓ He finally entered into political and social activism, leaving Kolkata for Haryana.
- ✓ In 1968, he became a full-time worker at the Arya Samaj, and two years later, embraced sanyas and became Swami Agnivesh.
- ✓ He also founded a political party, the Arya Sabha in 1970, based on Arya Samaj principles
- ✓ His political life started with the struggle for Haryana's fair share as it was emerging as a state separated from Punjab.
- ✓ He was elected to the Haryana Assembly in 1977 and was made Education Minister after two years.
- ✓ He, however, resigned in protest against the Haryana government's inaction against policemen who opened fire at workers protesting bonded labour.
- ✓ He led marches against the liquor policy, calling for prohibition in Haryana, and on the issue of remunerative prices for farmers' produce.
- ✓ He was a prominent associate of Anna Hazare during the India Against Corruption campaign in 2011 to implement the Jan Lokpal Bill.

COVID-19 RELAXATIONS ACROSS CITIES IN INDIA - A REPORT

Metro rail services have mostly resumed and limited reopening of educational institutions is permitted later this month. Among the cities assessed by TOI, **Bengaluru is the most 'open'** while **Mumbai and Pune have the widest restrictions in place amid a spike in cases in Maharashtra**

