

## EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-SEPTEMBER 21, 2020

### TAMIL NADU

- **On September 19, Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami - launched a website for the Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation (TNSDC).**
  - ✓ The portal functions at '<https://www.tnskill.tnskill.tn.gov.in>'
  - ✓ It was developed as a multilingual integrated skill analytics and e-governance system at a budget of ₹2 crore
  - ✓ This portal consists of a database of beneficiaries, training imparted, recognition of imparting agencies, and ratings, among others
  - ✓ During the event, the TNSDC also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Ramco Cements to set up a centre for construction and infrastructure.
- **The Andankoil (East) panchayat in Karur district - has won the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Sashaktikaran Puraskar (DDUPSP), a national award recognising the best-administered village panchayats.**



- ✓ The village, located on the periphery of Karur town, has around 7,000 houses.
- ✓ From implementing solid waste management to tax collection, the Andankoil (East) panchayat was certified as a well-administered village.
- ✓ The award carries a citation and a cash prize of ₹15 lakh.

- ✓ The local body is among six village panchayats in the State to have received the award.
- ✓ The award and certification were sent to the respective village panchayat presidents, instead of conducting an award distribution function due to the current Covid-19 crisis
- **On September 20, Tamil Nadu – reported 5,516 fresh Covid-19 infections and 60 more deaths**
- ✓ With this, the state’s case tally stands at 5,41,993 and death toll at 8,811.
- ✓ The number of active cases in the state stands at 46,703, after 5,206 people were discharged on the day after treatment

**Keeping count** | A tracker, across parameters, on how the pandemic has affected the State so far

	Until Sept. 13	Sept. 14	Sept. 15	Sept. 16	Sept. 17	Sept. 18	Sept. 19	Sept. 20	Total
<b>Cases reported</b>	5,02,759	5,752	5,697	5,652	5,560	5,488	5,569	5,516	5,41,993
<b>Recovered/ discharged</b>	4,47,366	5,799	5,735	5,768	5,524	5,525	5,556	5,206	4,86,479
<b>Deceased</b>	8,381	53	68	57	59	67	66	60	8,811

**Persons tested**



\*Changes in 24 hours    As on Sept. 19, 6 p.m.    As on Sept. 20, 6 p.m.

**Districts with maximum cases**



- ✓ A total of 4,86,479 persons have recovered from the viral infections till now.
- ✓ Chennai (996 new cases) and its three neighbouring districts – Chengalpet (283), Kancheepuram (156) and Tiruvallur (207) – together had 1,642 fresh cases and 26 deaths.
- ✓ Coimbatore, with 568 new cases, recorded the second-highest number of cases in the State.
- ✓ It was followed by Cuddalore (297) and Salem (291)
- ✓ The state has tested 86,073 samples on the day, taking the number of samples tested so far to 64.74 lakh samples.
- ✓ There are 174 testing laboratories in the state, including 66 government facilities and 108 private ones.

## NATIONAL

- **On September 20, the Rajya Sabha - passed two of the three agriculture-related legislations, that were earlier approved by the Lower House, through voice vote**
- ✓ The two bills — Farmer’s Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020 and the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection)

Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020 — will now be sent to the President for his assent

**GOVT CLEARS THE AIR AS OPPN RAISES OBJECTIONS**

**Gist of doubts (raised by the opposition on farm bills) and government's clarification**

**Bill on Agri Market: The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020**

**DOUBTS:** Procurement at Minimum Support Price (MSP) will stop

- Mandis will stop functioning if farm produce is sold outside APMC mandis
- What will be the future of government electronic trading portal like e-NAM

**CLARIFICATION:** Procurement at MSP will continue and farmers can sell their produce at MSP rates

- Mandis will not stop functioning and trading will continue there as before
- Under the new system, farmers will have option to sell their produce at other places in addition to the regulated mandis
- e-NAM trading system will continue in the mandis
- Trading in farm produce will increase on electronic platforms



**Bill on Contract Farming: The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020**

**DOUBTS:** Farmers will be under pressure and they will not be able to determine prices under contract farming

- How will marginal and small farmers be able to practise contract farming as sponsors will shy away from them
- Big companies will be at an advantage in case of disputes

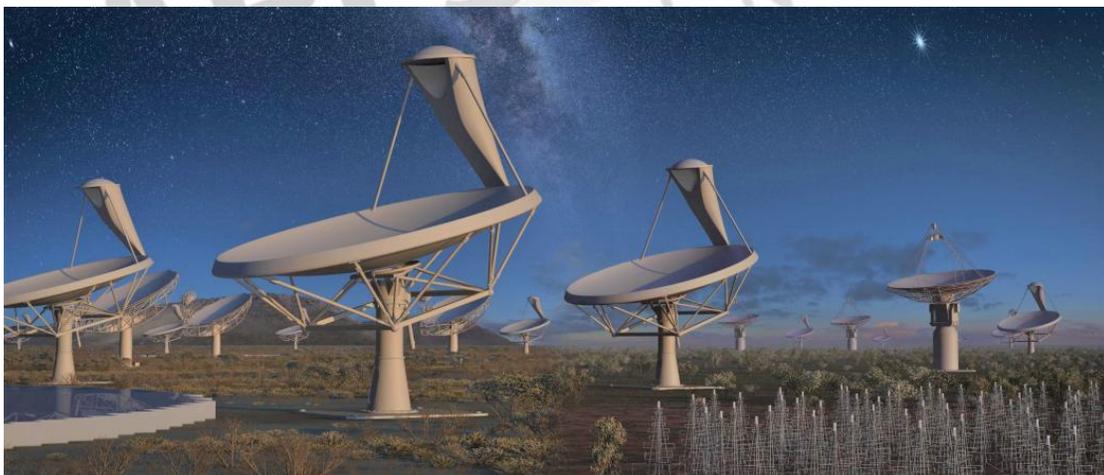
**CLARIFICATION:** Farmers will have full power in the contract to fix a sale price of his choice for the produce

- They will receive payment within three days
- 10,000 Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) are being formed throughout the country. These FPOs will bring together small farmers and work to ensure remunerative pricing for farm produce
- There will be local dispute redressal mechanism and there will be no need to go to court repeatedly in case of disputes

- ✓ Besides the opposition parties, the bill was opposed by the Shiromani Akali Dal, TRS and BJD which, in a rare instance, decided to vote “no”.
- ✓ The bill, however, was backed by AIADMK, JD(U) and the YSR Congress, as well as smaller parties from the north-east
- ✓ While parties like BSP, NCP and Shiv Sena stayed away expressing reservations about certain provisions of the bills, opposition parties including Congress, TMC, DMK, Samajwadi Party, AAP, SAD, RJD and the two Left parties fought vehemently against the bill.
- ✓ The two bills were declared passed by voice vote as the opponents persisted with protests and demanded that the bills be sent to the select committee of the Rajya Sabha for a detailed scrutiny.
- ✓ With the passing of bills now, they are all-set to become law
- ✓ The bills were aimed at liberalising farm trade by ending the monopoly of mandis and loosening the grip of middlemen over trade in agricultural commodities.
- ✓ On September 20, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the system of minimum support price (MSP) and government procurement of crops would continue.
- ✓ In a series of tweets in English, Hindi and Punjabi, the PM said that the Bills were a ‘watershed moment’ in history.

- ✓ Meanwhile, the farmers protest against the bill gained intensity in Punjab, Haryana and in the immediate vicinity of the national capital
  - ✓ Several farm organisations have called for a protest beginning with a dharna on September 25.
  - ✓ In another related development, 12 opposition parties moved a no-confidence motion against Rajya Sabha deputy chairman Harivansh in protest against the manner in which two farm bills were passed in the House.
- **The government – had introduced the FCRA (Amendment) Bill, 2020 in the Lok Sabha on September 20**
- ✓ The bill intends to make the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010 more stringent
  - ✓ As per the proposed amendments, all public servants will be barred from receiving any foreign contribution and NGOs or associations registered under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010
  - ✓ The bill seeks to lower the extent to which NGOs/associations can use their foreign contributions towards meeting administrative expenses, to 20% from the existing 50%.
  - ✓ Any application for prior permission, registration and renewal of registration under FCRA will now have to mandatorily furnish Aadhaar number of all office bearers, directors and key functionaries of the applicant NGO, and, in case of a foreigner, a copy of the passport or overseas citizen of India (OCI) card.
  - ✓ As per the bill, the amendment is required to enhance transparency and accountability in the receipt and utilisation of foreign contributions
  - ✓ Importantly, the bill proposes that if the Centre on basis of any information or report or after holding a summary inquiry, “has reason to believe” that a entity granted prior permission had contravened any provisions of FCRA, it may, pending further inquiry, restrain the person from utilising the unutilized foreign contributions or from receiving further foreign funds without prior approval of the government.
  - ✓ Earlier, this action was invoked only upon after the entity was found “guilty” of a FCRA violation.
  - ✓ Minister of State (Home), Nityanand Rai introduced the bill in the lower house
  - ✓ FCRA regulates foreign donations and ensures that such contributions do not adversely affect the internal security of the country.
  - ✓ The Act, first enacted in 1976 was amended in the year 2010 when a range of new measures were taken by the Union Home Ministry to regulate foreign donations.
- **On September 19, the government – presented a bill in Parliament titled ‘Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code 2020’**
- ✓ It seeks to subsume 13 Acts, including the Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979

- ✓ The bill gives prominence to the interest of migrant workers, considering the recent mass movement of migrants due to Covid-19 induced lockdown.
  - ✓ It mandates that central and state governments maintain a database or record on a portal for migrant workers
  - ✓ An inter-state migrant worker may register himself on such a portal on the basis of self-declaration and Aadhaar.
  - ✓ Workers who have migrated from one state to any other state and are self-employed in that other state may also register themselves on that portal
  - ✓ It also stipulates journey allowance for migrant workers and benefits of the public distribution system either in their native state or the state where they work.
  - ✓ The bill has a separate section on inter-state migrant workers
  - ✓ According to the bill, the new rules shall apply to every establishment in which ten or more inter-state migrant workers are employed or were employed on any day of the preceding twelve months.
  - ✓ The bill says that it shall be the duty of every contractor or the employer, of an establishment employing inter-state migrant workers to ensure suitable conditions of work to such worker having regard to the fact that he is required to work in a state different from his own.
- **The Square Kilometre Array (SKA) programme, a global initiative to build the world's largest radio telescope - will have control systems designed and built by Tata Consultancy Services.**



- ✓ Apart from TCS, several Indian scientific institutions are contributing to the project.
- ✓ The National Centre for Radio Astrophysics (NCRA) of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) is the lead telescope manager (TM) of the project
- ✓ Other institutes like Raman Research Institute (RRI) and Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) in Bengaluru, Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA) in Pune, multiple IITs, among other Indian institutes are scientific partners.

- ✓ On September 16, SKA Organisation announced it has passed all final reviews regarding the detailed design, costing, future operations plan and business support functions of the SKA
  - ✓ This paves the way for moving from planning phase to the start of construction works
  - ✓ The SKA project was funded by 15 member countries, including India and China
  - ✓ SKA, which will have an approximately one sqkm collecting area, will feature two sets of instruments — in Australia and South Africa — and will be run from project headquarters in the UK.
  - ✓ NCRA-TIFR, which is leading the consortium in developing the telescope's control systems, collaborated with TCS and a consortium of global agencies.
  - ✓ TCS has been collaborating with the National Centre for Radio Astrophysics on the SKA programme since 2013.
- **The Centre - has made it mandatory for all medical students pursuing MD or MS to undergo compulsory posting for three months at district hospitals in rural areas as part of their medical course curriculum**
- ✓ The move is aimed at ensuring availability of specialist doctors in rural areas and better on-ground training of doctors.
  - ✓ It will be applicable from the 2020-21 academic session.
  - ✓ As per the government, a new district residency programme will be introduced for all PG students under the new medical education regulations.
  - ✓ The satisfactory completion of the district residency will be a vital condition before the candidate is allowed to appear in the final exam of the respective PG course.
  - ✓ While PG medical education is a three-year programme, students will be posted at a district hospital in their third, fourth or fifth semester
- **The Centre – is planning to engage the neighbourhood countries in the next few weeks with series of official meetings**
- ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to have his first virtual summit with Sri Lankan PM Mahinda Rajapaksa on September 26, his first with any leader in the neighbourhood.
  - ✓ The summit could follow the PM's address to the UN General Assembly, which will be delivered virtually this year, during the UN's high level segment which begins this week.
  - ✓ Foreign minister S Jaishankar is expected to hold a meeting of the India-Bangladesh consultative mechanism at the end of the month
  - ✓ The meeting will work out the roadmap for the next two years to take forward the relationship
  - ✓ An India-Myanmar foreign office consultation is also planned separately.
  - ✓ Foreign secretary Harsh Shringla was supposed to travel to Yangon with Army chief General Naravane to resume the talks, which had to be postponed due to the China crisis.

- ✓ Further, a series of high level visits from Afghanistan is expected in the coming days.
  - ✓ Interestingly, there is no outreach planned with Nepal.
  - ✓ The last time Nepal and India interacted at a high level was when PM K P Sharma Oli called the PM on Independence Day.
  - ✓ On September 20, Maldives received \$250 million in budgetary support from India
  - ✓ The assistance followed after a request by Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih to the PM for financial assistance to overcome the declining economic situation as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **The government - has mandated a 5% import duty on prices of TV open cell panels from October**
- ✓ The move is aimed in promoting indigenous manufacturing and tackle competition from other low-cost countries such as Vietnam and China
  - ✓ The duty is being re-imposed following the end of one-year exemption that was granted last year
  - ✓ The increase in duty is expected to result in marginal price hikes ahead of the festive period.
  - ✓ These include brands such as LG, Panasonic, Thomson, and Sansui, whose TV prices will go up by around 4%, or a minimum of ₹600 for a 32-inch television, and about ₹1,200- ₹1,500 for a 42-inch, and even higher for larger screen ones
  - ✓ Earlier, top companies such as Samsung shifted its manufacturing from Vietnam to India, after contracting the work to homegrown Dixon Technologies.
- **On September 20, the Ministry of Ayush – signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) to control malnutrition in the country**



- ✓ The MoU was signed under the Poshan Abhiyaan scheme
- ✓ As per the agreement, medicinal and nutri Gardens would be established at the Anganwadi centres
- ✓ It also seeks to control malnutrition through the principles and practices of Ayurveda, Yoga and other Ayush initiatives.

- ✓ Yoga programmes will be conducted at Anganwadi centers, while the AYUSH medical officers and workforce will make periodic visits to the centres
  - ✓ The agreement also seeks the development of Poshan Vatika and the implementation of region specific nutrition values.
  - ✓ The Anganwadi worker may be designated as 'DHATRI' – Dedicated Health Activist to Replenish the Innutrition
  - ✓ The DHATRIs were entrusted of providing the Ayurveda nutrition messages at the ground level.
  - ✓ The Ministries will also launch the hashtag #Ayush4Anganwadi to generate awareness on the activities through digital media.
  - ✓ In India, 194.4 million people or 14.5% of the population are undernourished, as per the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
  - ✓ As per the Global Nutrition report 2020, 20.8% of children are wasted while 37.9% of children are stunted.
  - ✓ In the Global Hunger Index, India ranked 102 out of 117 countries in 2019.
  - ✓ Poshan Abhiyaan is the scheme that aims to spread awareness and to improve nutritional intakes for children, pregnant women and lactating mothers
- **The Ministry Of Social justice and empowerment – has launched Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan in more than 272 districts across the country, till now**
- ✓ These districts were identified by the narcotics control bureau.
  - ✓ The larger drug-incidence districts have been selected mostly from Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and North Eastern States.
  - ✓ This was announced by the minister of state for Social justice and Empowerment Ratan Lal Kataria In Lok Sabha on September 20
  - ✓ The Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan is the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction
  - ✓ It has been formulated and is being implemented by the Ministry Of Social justice and empowerment.
  - ✓ The scheme was launched in 2018 and would be implemented till 2025.
  - ✓ It aims to reduce the consequences of drug abuse by organizing awareness generation programs
  - ✓ The Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan was launched by the Shiromani Akali Dal in Punjab in 2015.
  - ✓ Further, a Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan action plan 2020-21 was launched on international day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking, which is celebrated on 26 June every year.

## **INTERNATIONAL DAY**

- **International Day of Peace - September 21**
- ✓ The day is also observed as the World Peace Day

- ✓ On this day, the countries are encouraged to observe 24 hours of ceasefire or non-violence
- ✓ The day is also commemorated through education and public awareness on issues related to peace.



- ✓ Theme 2020 - "Shaping Peace Together"
- ✓ The day was established by the UN General Assembly in the year 1981
- ✓ In 2001, UNGA voted to designate the Day for non-violence and cease-fire.

➤ **World Alzheimer's Day – September 21**



- ✓ The observance of the day aims to create awareness about Alzheimer's disease, which is a neurological condition along with its underlying causes, symptoms and its management.
- ✓ Theme 2020 - 'Let's talk about dementia'
- ✓ The month of September is also observed as the World Alzheimer's Month
- ✓ The campaign of World Alzheimer's Month was launched in 2012
- ✓ As per the Dementia India Report 2010 by the Alzheimer's and Related Disorders Society of India (ARDSI), there were around 3.7 million Indians with dementia in 2010.
- ✓ The report also predicted that the number would rise to 7.6 million by 2030.
- ✓ Alzheimer disease is a neurological disorder that causes problems of memory loss, thinking skills, and behaviour.