

## **EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS–SEPTEMBER 26, 2020**

### **TAMIL NADU**

- **The state health department – has proposed to open at least ten emergency care and recovery centres (ECRC) in various districts for treatment and care of homeless persons with mental illness**
  - ✓ These centres will be set up by the government along with the support of non-governmental organizations in the next few months
  - ✓ Each of these centres will have 20 to 30 beds, with at least one such centre to be established in each district
  - ✓ A physiatrist, a nurse, two social workers and two attendants will take care of the treatment and rehabilitation of the patients
  - ✓ These centres will also act as a hub and refer only the patients who require tertiary care into medical college hospitals.
  - ✓ Those who require even more specialised care will be referred to the Institute of Mental Health, Chennai
  - ✓ The aim of the initiative is to ensure treatment accessible to all and limit overcrowding at higher centres of mental care
  - ✓ The government has tied up with the mental health care NGO ‘The Banyan’ to set up such centres across the state.
  - ✓ There are about 3 lakh people having mental health issue or related issues in the streets of Chennai without access to care and psychosocial support
  
- **The government – is planning to set up mental health review boards within a week in 13 locations across Tamil Nadu**
  - ✓ The board will comprise of a retired district judge, a psychiatrist, a medical practitioner holding an MBBS degree, and a member of an NGO working in the field of mental health
  - ✓ It will also have a person who has recovered from mental illness or a caregiver as one of the members, as they would be in a better position to guide those with mental health issues

- ✓ All the supported admissions to the government mental health care facilities will be brought before the review board.
- ✓ The decisions were taken at the annual meeting of the Tamil Nadu State Mental Health Authority on September 24, convened by health secretary Dr J Radhakrishnan.
- **On September 25, Tamil Nadu - reported 5,679 new Covid-19 infections and 72 deaths, taking the state's cumulative tally to 5,69,370 and casualties to 9,148**
- ✓ The state has 46,386 active infections undergoing treatment at various health facilities
- ✓ Another 5,626 persons were discharged on the day, taking the total cured to 5,13,836 people
- ✓ For the second consecutive day, Chennai's fresh cases crossed the 1000-mark and recorded 1,193 cases and 18 deaths

## STATE COVID TRACKER

Zone	New cases today	Death	Active cases	Toll total	Cured
Chennai Region	1,864	27	15,277	4,504	2,27,656
North	884	12	6,165	1,082	78,649
Central	591	5	5,280	672	42,771
South	562	5	5,650	1,823	1,01,334
West	1,771	23	13,965	1,066	61,183
Other	7	0	49	1	2,243
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5,679</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>46,386</b>	<b>9,148</b>	<b>5,13,836</b>

- ✓ Chennai's neighbours added 671 new cases with Chengalpet reporting 277, Kancheepuram 165 and Tiruvallur 229.
- ✓ Further, Coimbatore added 661 fresh infections, while Salem and Cuddalore reported 297 and 235 cases respectively.
- ✓ A total of 93,002 people and 94,877 samples were tested, which are highest so far tested on a single day.
- ✓ The state has a total of 116 private testing facilities and 66 government laboratories, as on date.

## STATES

- **Bihar - is set to make history as India's first major election is scheduled to be held in the state amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.**
- ✓ On September 25, the Election Commission announced polls to the 243-seat state assembly

- ✓ The elections would pit the ruling NDA alliance with the opposition RJD-Congress combine.
- ✓ The election is to be held over three phases — on October 28, November 3 and November 9
- ✓ In the first phase, election will be held in 71 of the 243 constituencies, while the second phase will cover 94 seats and the third phase 78 seats.
- ✓ The final counting will be held on November 10
- ✓ The polling hours have been increased, except in the extremism-affected districts, by an hour — from 7 a.m. till 6 p.m. instead of 5 p.m.
- ✓ Persons with disabilities, electors aged above 80, essential service workers and those suspected of or positive for Covid-19 were allowed to vote by postal ballot.
- ✓ In order to reduce crowds at polling stations, the maximum number of electors at a polling station has been reduced from 1,500 to 1,000
- ✓ According to the ECI guidelines, political parties will have to follow social distancing norms while campaigning.
- ✓ Candidates could be accompanied by two people instead of the usual five when filing nominations
- ✓ Further, only five people could be involved in door-to-door campaigning at a particular place.
- ✓ Public meetings and rallies would be allowed at designated grounds identified by the Bihar Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), with social distancing circles marked.
- ✓ CM Nitish Kumar of JD (U) will face the elections along with allies BJP and LJP, as well as some new partners
- ✓ He seeks to repeat NDA's impressive performance in the 2019 LS polls, when it bagged 39 of 40 seats.

## NATIONAL

- **India's new medical education regulator, the National Medical Commission (NMC) - came into force on September 25, following a notification by the Centre**
- ✓ The new 33-member regulator abolishes the 87-year-old Medical Council of India, which faced corruption charges in its later years.
- ✓ The NMC was earlier established for 6 months by an ordinance in January 2019 and approved by President of India on 8 August 2019.
- ✓ It will be chaired for three years by Suresh Chandra Sharma, retired Head of Department, ENT, AIIMS
  - ✓ Dr Rakesh Kumar Vats, ex-secretary general, board of governors, MCI, has been appointed as NMC secretary for three years.
  - ✓ Apart from the chairman, the NMC will consist of 10 ex-officio members and 22 part-time members appointed by the central government.

- ✓ The NMC will have four autonomous boards to regulate undergraduate medical education, postgraduate medical education, medical assessment and ratings, and ethics and medical registration.
  - ✓ The commission will also frame policies to implement the new legislation — National Medical Commission Act 2019 — passed by Parliament last year to reform the medical education sector.
  - ✓ The key provisions of the NMC Act, 2019, includes fee regulation on 50% seats in private medical colleges and deemed universities
  - ✓ The Act also proposes the initiation of final-year MBBS exam as a National Exit Text (NEXT), which will serve as a licentiate exam for entrance to postgraduate medical courses and as a screening test for foreign medical graduates.
  - ✓ Students will be able to get admission to seats in all medical colleges and to institutes of national importance like AIIMS, PGI Chandigarh and JIPMER through a single counselling process.
  - ✓ The Act does not impose any restriction on the number of attempts for NEXT.
  - ✓ Enactment of the new law will also end inspections for college registration renewals.
  - ✓ The NMC will make guidelines for a new cadre of non-MBBS mid-level health service providers such as nursing practitioners and pharmacists with limited rights to dispense medicines.
  - ✓ The Indian Medical Council Act, 1956, stands repealed with the new legislation
  - ✓ Further, all its bodies such as Medical Council of India and board of governors in supersession of the MCI were also automatically dissolved.
- **On September 25, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) - launched 'faceless income tax appeals' in another major reform in the income tax department**
- ✓ As per the new initiative, all appeals in tax dispute cases will be resolved through emails, e-inquiries or e-hearings.
  - ✓ The exceptions being the appeals relating to serious frauds, major tax evasion, search matters, international tax and Black Money Act related cases
  - ✓ The Announcement was made by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the birth anniversary of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay.
  - ✓ He made his statement during the launch of Faceless Assessment and Taxpayers' Charter under the "Transparent Taxation – Honoring the Honest" platform.
  - ✓ Currently, there are over 4.6 lakh appeals pending before I-T commissioners and the amount stuck in these disputes is more than Rs.5.6 lakh crore.
  - ✓ The total amount stuck in litigation till 2018-19 was Rs. 12 lakh crore, including those before various tribunals, high courts and the Supreme Court.
  - ✓ Earlier, the I-T department had launched a faceless return filing system.

- ✓ Under faceless appeal system, everything from e-allocation of appeal, e-communication of notice/questionnaire, e-verification/e-enquiry to e-hearing and finally e-communication of the appellate order, would be conducted 'online'
  - ✓ The initiative does away with the need for any physical interface between the appellant and the department.
  - ✓ The faceless appeals system will include allocation of cases through data analytics and AI with centralized notice issuance, which will have a unique 'Document Identification Number' (DIN)
  - ✓ As part of dynamic jurisdiction, the draft appellate order will be prepared in one city and will be reviewed in some other city, resulting in an objective, fair and just order
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi - will address the United Nations General Assembly's 75th session on September 26.**
- ✓ The UNGA this year is being held virtually due to Covid-19.
  - ✓ The PM's address will be broadcasted via a prerecorded video statement at the UNGA hall in New York.
  - ✓ The theme of the session is "The Future we want, the United Nations we need, reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism - confronting the COVID-19 through effective multilateral action"
  - ✓ India will take over as a nonpermanent member of the UNSC for the 2021-22 two-year term from January 1, 2021
  - ✓ Among the priority issues for India during the ongoing session is the need to strengthen global action on counter-terrorism.
  - ✓ Further, India is expected to push for more transparency in the process of listing and delisting of entities and individuals in sanction committees
  - ✓ As one of the largest troop-contributing countries, India will also seek to engage strongly in finalising mandates for UN peacekeeping missions.
  - ✓ India will highlight contribution to global cooperation against Covid-19 by assisting more than 150 countries and providing medicines to the world
  - ✓ The country will also project its active engagement on issues relating to sustainable development and climate change and promoting its role as a net health service provider
  - ✓ India, as it announced earlier, will follow a 5-S approach of 'samman (respect), samvad (dialogue), sahyog (cooperation), shanti (peace) and samriddhi (prosperity)' in the forum.

## **CONFERENCES & SUMMITS**

- **On September 24, the Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Prakash Javadekar - represented India at the Virtual Ministerial Roundtable Dialogue on Biodiversity that was hosted by China.**

- ✓ The dialogue was conducted on the topic of 'Biodiversity Beyond 2020: Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth'



- ✓ The virtual dialogue was held a week ahead of the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity, with the participation of more than 15 ministers from different countries.
- ✓ During the summit, the Minister mentioned about the key leadership role played by India in the conservation of biodiversity by hosting conference of parties (COP).
  - ✓ Earlier, India hosted the United Nations convention to Combat Desertification COP in September 2019 and Conservation of Migratory Species COP in February 2020.
  - ✓ The 15th conference of parties to the convention on Biological Diversity is to be held at Kunming, China in 2021.
  - ✓ It will adopt post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework
- ✓ Further, the Minister said that the country has set up 250,000 Biodiversity Management Committee across the country in order to access the benefits of Convention on Biological Diversity
- ✓ There are two international treaties on biodiversity - Biodiversity Convention and UN Summit on Biodiversity
- ✓ The UN Summit on Biodiversity is to be held on September 30 with the theme 'Urgent Action on biodiversity for Sustainable Development'

## PERSONALITIES

- **Ravindra Gupta, an Indian-origin professor at the UK's University of Cambridge Institute for Therapeutic Immunology and Infectious Disease – was included in Time magazine's list of 100 most influential people this year**
- ✓ Gupta is credited with curing a man of HIV in 2019, only the second such case in the world.

- ✓ The patient, Adam Castillejo, also known as the London patient, written an article on Gupta in the Time magazine.



- ✓ Born in England to parents who had migrated from UP in the 1970s, he has led clinical trials of a rapid Covid-19 testing system in the UK earlier this year.
- ✓ He is now studying the efficacy of antibody tests for Covid-19 as well as Sars-Cov-2 mutations.
- ✓ Gupta got involved in the treatment of Castillejo — also a cancer patient — in 2015 when he was an infectious disease consultant at University College London.
- ✓ Castillejo was supposed to undergo a bone marrow transplant to treat Hodgkin's lymphoma.
- ✓ The donated stem cells that Castillejo was to receive contained a unique mutation — Delta 32 — known to provide resistance against HIV.
- ✓ This had been proven in case of Timothy Ray Brown, the first person to be cured of HIV through a bone marrow transplant in 2007.
- ✓ So the virologist designed a special anti-retroviral treatment to be administered to the patient before and after the transplant.
- ✓ In 2019, the patient was declared free of the virus and the case study was published in journal Nature, earning Gupta instant fame and respect from the research community.

## **SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT**

- **Hyderabad-based space tech startup Skyroot Aerospace – is all set to start the country's first private cryogenic rocket engine project.**
- ✓ Earlier, it became the country's first private company to successfully test-fire an upper-stage rocket engine
- ✓ The firm unveiled the prototype engine — Dhawan-I, named after former Isro chairman Satish Dhawan
- ✓ The company had completed fabrication of a 3D-printed prototype engine, which is to be used as a technology demonstrator
- ✓ It plans to conduct a series of tests on the engine later this year in Nagpur

- ✓ The new engine will use liquefied natural gas (LNG) containing 90% methane and liquid oxygen (LOX).
- ✓ Globally, the trend is to now use methane as it's both easily available and much easier to handle.
- ✓ Companies like SpaceX and Blue Origin have also moved to methane.

## DEFENCE

- **The fourth edition of India-Japan Maritime bilateral exercise (JIMEX) - began in North Arabian Sea from September 26**



- ✓ The three-day exercise is being conducted in a 'non-contact at-sea-only format' this year, considering the Covid-19 related restrictions
- ✓ The exercise is expected to focus on high degree of inter-operability and joint operational skills through several advanced exercises related to maritime operations.
- ✓ The two navies will conduct tactical exercises that will involve weapon firings, cross deck helicopter operations, anti-submarine and air warfare drills.
- ✓ The Indian Navy will be represented by INS Chennai which is a destroyer ship, INS Tarkash which is a Teg class frigate, and INS Deepak which is a fleet tanker
- ✓ The JIMEX exercise was first commenced in 2012 emphasizing on maritime security cooperation.
- ✓ It is conducted biennially between the Indian Navy and Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF).
- ✓ The last edition of JIMEX was conducted in October 2018 along the Visakhapatnam coast.

## ECONOMY

- **Global telecom giant, Vodafone - has won a long-pending arbitration against India with the Permanent Court of Arbitration in Hague, Netherlands**
- ✓ The Court held that income tax authorities had violated provisions of the Bilateral Investment Treaty with the Netherlands by amending the law retrospectively to demand over Rs. 20,000 crore in tax and penalties.

- ✓ The tribunal ruled that the tax demand was in breach of “equitable and fair treatment standard” provided for under the Bilateral Investment Protection Agreement (BIPA).
- ✓ The original tax demand was under Rs. 8,000 crore, but has increased to Rs. 22,000 crore due to interest and penalty claimed by the tax department.
- ✓ India had claimed a total of ₹27,900 crore (\$3.79 billion), including about \$2 billion in tax, as well as interest and penalties
- ✓ The tribunal held that any attempt by India to demand the tax amount would be a violation of India’s international law obligations

## LAW AMENDED RETROSPECTIVELY

**2007** Hutch sells 67% stake in Hutchison Essar to Vodafone for \$11b; tax authorities issue notice asking why it didn't deduct tax; Vodafone moves SC after Bombay HC rules that tax authorities had jurisdiction over some aspects of the deal

**Jan 2012** Voda wins case in SC

**March** Then finance minister Pranab Mukherjee changes law via retrospective amendments

**2013** Voda receives a tax notice for ₹14,200 crore

**May, 2014** Then Finance Minister P Chidambaram says the govt's conciliation offer to Vodafone is no longer valid

**July 2014** Then FM Arun Jaitley says NDA govt will not ordinarily bring about any change retrospectively that creates fresh liability; panel formed to scrutinise fresh cases arising from 2012 amendment

- ✓ Further, the government was also directed to pay a partial compensation of \$5.47 million to Vodafone as legal costs
- ✓ While one option is to implement the award, the government can file an appeal in a Singapore court, but on limited grounds.
- ✓ In the past, the government had contended that an international tribunal did not have jurisdiction on an issue that had been legislated by Parliament.
- ✓ The case relates to Vodafone’s \$11 billion acquisition of Hutchison Telecom Whampoa’s 67% assets in its Indian operations in 2007
- ✓ The government then said that Vodafone was liable to pay for tax deduction at source (TDS) on the acquisition as per the Income Tax (IT) Act and demanded capital gains tax
- ✓ On January 20, 2012, the apex court had dismissed the capital gains tax demand on the transaction involving two overseas entities with underlying assets in India.
- ✓ Later, then finance minister Pranab Mukherjee retrospectively amended the Income Tax Act to overturn the impact of a Supreme Court ruling and collect tax
- ✓ The move faced massive criticism from global investors
- ✓ In April 2014, Vodafone filed arbitration proceedings against India in the International Arbitration Tribunal.
- ✓ Capital gains tax is levied on the positive difference between the sale price and original purchase price of an asset

## AWARDS

- **Kerala Tourism's internationally-acclaimed 'Human by Nature' campaign - won the prestigious PATA (Pacific- Asia Travel Association) Grand Award 2020 for Marketing.**
- ✓ The award will serve as a big boost to the tourism industry in the state which has been severely affected due to Covid-19 pandemic.



- ✓ Kerala has bagged one of the three PATA Grand Awards, announced during a virtual presentation ceremony in Beijing
- ✓ This year's PATA Gold Awards was supported and sponsored by the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) for the first time.
- ✓ The Kerala Tourism's idea of 'Human by Nature' campaign was conceptualized and scripted by Stark Communications
- ✓ The campaign showcases the culture and daily life of the people of Kerala.
- ✓ It has helped the state in achieving a record tourism growth rate of 17.2% in 2019 which stands to be the highest growth rate in tourism arrivals in the last 24 years.
- ✓ The PATA Gold Awards, launched in 1984, acknowledge and reward the very best of Asia Pacific's travel industry.
- ✓ PATA Grand and Gold Awards winning projects have set industry standards for excellence and innovation
- ✓ This year, the award had 121 entries from 62 organizations and individuals worldwide.
- ✓ An independent judging committee of 16 personalities chose 21 Gold Awards and three Grand Title Winners for best show entries in the Marketing, Sustainability and Human Capital Development categories.
- ✓ This year, PATA introduced new categories such as Climate Change initiative, Tourism for All, and Youth Empowerment Initiative
- ✓ The move was aimed at redefining its position as an innovative and prestigious award for the Asia Pacific travel and tourism industry.

## OBITUARY

- **Legendary playback singer, actor and musician S P Balasubrahmanyam - died in a Chennai hospital on September 25 after a 51-day battle with Covid-related complications**
- ✓ The 74-year old genius singer breathed life into lyrics of more than 40,000 songs in 16 languages.

### SPB: A LEGEND IN HIS OWN LIFETIME



➤ The 74-year old singer suffered a cardio- respiratory arrest after a 51-day battle for life at MGM Healthcare where he was admitted for Covid-19

➤ Born as Sripati Panditaradhyula Balasubrahmanyam in Nellore on June 4, 1946, SPB originally wanted to become an engineer

➤ Entered the Guinness Book of World Records for recording more than 40,000 songs in 16 languages over 50 years. Holds record for recording maximum number of songs – 21 in 12 hrs

➤ The six-time national award winner was honoured with Padma Shri in 2001 and Padma Bhushan in 2011



- ✓ Sripathi Panditaradhyula Balasubrahmanyam was born in Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh on June 4, 1946
- ✓ He debuted as a playback singer in 1966 with the Telugu film 'Sri Sri Maryadha Ramanna'.
- ✓ He went on to sing in 16 languages, predominantly in Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam before taking Bollywood by storm
- ✓ He had also sung in Badaga, a little known dialect of the Nilgiris
- ✓ SPB holds the Guinness World Record for recording the highest number of songs by a singer with over 40,000 songs.
- ✓ In 1981, SPB created a record by recording 21 new songs in the Kannada language in 12 hours for music composer, Upendra Kumar
- ✓ The musical legend was also credited with the recording of 19 songs in Tamil on a single day and 16 songs in Hindi on a single day for various composers
- ✓ He was also honoured with the Padma Shri in 2001 and the Padma Bhushan in 2011, the fourth-highest and third-highest civilian awards respectively of the government of India.
- ✓ He also won six National Film Awards for Best Male Playback Singer for his works in four different languages- Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Hindi.

- ✓ SPB bagged his first national award for the Telugu film Sankarabharanam, in which all the songs are based on pure Carnatic ragas.
- ✓ His first work in Hindi films was for Kamal Haasan's film Ek Dooje Ke Liye in 1981, for which he received the second National Film Award for Best Male Playback Singer
- ✓ He received two more national awards for the Telugu films Sagarasangamam and Rudraveena.
- ✓ Then, the fifth national award came his way for the Kannada film, Sangeetha Sagara Ganayogi Panchakshara Gavai
- ✓ He won the award for the sixth time for the number Thanga Thamarai in the film Minsara Kanavu, whose music was scored by A.R. Rahman.
- ✓ He was also honoured with Andhra Pradesh government's 25 Nandi awards, the Filmfare Award for the Hindi movie 'Maine Pyar Kiya' and six Filmfare Awards, South.
- ✓ He was also the proud recipient of four Tamil Nadu state government music awards and three Karnataka state music awards.
- ✓ He also composed music for more than 45 films in Telugu, Kannada, Tamil and Hindi and acted in more than 40 Tamil, Telugu and Kannada movies.
- ✓ SPB, as he is fondly known to his fans, was hospitalized with symptoms of mild Covid-19 on August 5
- ✓ He was put on life support for severe pneumonia on August 14.
- ✓ The legendary singer tested negative for the viral infection on September 4, but by then his lungs were affected
- ✓ On September 24, the singer's health condition suffered a serious setback with the development of a cerebral haemorrhage
- ✓ The President, Vice-President, Prime Minister, Governor and Chief Minister offered immense tributes to the departed music legend
- ✓ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister also announced that the singer will be cremated with full state honours on September 26 at his farmhouse in Thamaraiakkam.

## **SPORTS**

- **On September 25, Indian men's team goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu and women's mid-fielder Sanju - were declared the winners of the All India Football Federation (AIFF) Footballer of the Year awards for the 2019-20 season.**
- ✓ This is the first time Gurpreet received the award
- ✓ With this, he becomes the second goalkeeper after Subrata Paul in 2009 to be named the AIFF Player of the Year.
- ✓ Meanwhile, national women's team midfielder Sanju was named the winner after an excellent season.
- ✓ Ratanbala Devi won the 2019-20 Emerging Women's Footballer of the Year Award.



- ✓ Mid-fielder Anirudh Thapa was named the Men's Emerging Footballer of the Year.

## INTERNATIONAL DAY

- **World Environmental Health Day – September 26**



- ✓ The day is celebrated globally to raise awareness about various activities being done on the environmental health around the world.
- ✓ Theme 2020 - Environmental health, a key public health intervention in disease pandemic prevention
- ✓ The World Environmental Health Day was launched by the International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH) council.
- ✓ The day was first inaugurated in 2011 in Indonesia.
- ✓ In 2012, the event was observed in Africa and Europe and in 2013 the event was further supported by Canadian, British, American, Australian and Asian activists.
- ✓ Theme for 2019 - 'Climate change challenges, time for global Environmental Health to act in unison' in order to tackle climate changes
- ✓ According to the world health organization's (WHO) 2020 report, 24% of global deaths or about 13.7 million deaths per year are related to the environment
- ✓ The International Federation of Environmental Health was established in 1986 with its headquarters in London