

## EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – SEPTEMBER 8, 2020

### TAMIL NADU

- On September 2, Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - announced that inter-district public and private bus transport and passenger train services within the state will resume from September 7.
- ✓ Earlier, the state government restarted bus service within districts on September 1
- ✓ According to the CM, the passenger trains would be allowed in the state adhering to the standard operating procedure.
- ✓ The government's decision follows representations from the public for the resumption of services to facilitate business and work-related travel to other districts.
- ✓ On September 2, Tamil Nadu reported 5,990 more Covid-19 cases, taking the case tally to 4,39,959.
- ✓ Further, the state reported 98 deaths that took the cumulative death toll to 7,516.
- ✓ There were 52,380 people still under treatment in various hospitals and covid care centres

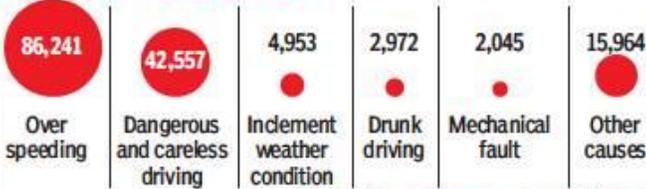
COVID TRACKER 					
ZONE	New cases	Deaths	Active cases	Total death	Recovered
Chennai Region	1,833	37	18,558	3,896	1,85,178
North	1,247	16	8,814	805	52,392
South	858	21	7,805	1,624	83,053
Central	664	8	5,558	507	27,305
West	1,375	16	11,543	683	30,035
Other	13	0	102	1	2,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,990</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>52,380</b>	<b>7,516</b>	<b>3,80,063</b>

- ✓ The recovery rate was more than 86%, after 5,891 people were discharged in the past 24 hours, taking the total recovered count to 3,80,063.
  - ✓ The average positivity rate is 9.2% in the state and around 15% in Chennai, while the fatality rate was 1.7% in the state
  - ✓ Sivaganga (2.6%) had the highest fatality rate followed by Madurai (2.5%), Ramanathapuram (2.2%) and Chennai (2%).
  - ✓ Chennai, the worst affected district, recorded 1,025 new cases and 19 deaths. Neighbouring Chengalpet (390), Kancheepuram (133) and Tiruvallur (285) together clocked 808 cases and 18 deaths.
  - ✓ Further, Coimbatore reported 579 cases, Cuddalore 405 and Salem 403 cases
  - ✓ A total of 49,64,141 samples, including 75,829 in the last 24 hours, have been tested in the State across 154 testing facilities, which included 64 in government sector
- **The Tamil Nadu government - has allocated a budget of Rs. 1 crore for setting up a bee park in seven hectares of land in Melsilambadi village in Jamunamarathur block in the Eastern Ghats.**
- ✓ The bee park will generate considerable employment in the region and provide pollination for local food crops.
  - ✓ It is also aimed to maximise the collection of nectar or honey production
  - ✓ Several self-help groups (SHGs) in Jawadhu Hills in Tiruvannamalai district were involved in honey collection.
  - ✓ With the help of NABARD and some NGOs, around 150 tribal farmers are involved in collecting and processing honey through the traditional method
  - ✓ They mostly collect honey from rock beehives in deep forests.
  - ✓ They will be taught on various aspects of beekeeping such as how to produce different types of honey and value-added products along with various methods of processing honey (multi-floral and many types of unifloral)
  - ✓ The bee park would be established by Tamil Nadu Horticulture Development Agency
  - ✓ Six years ago, the district administration had extended financial aid to three SHGs under the state's common livelihood programme.
  - ✓ They had also obtained 'Agmark' quality standard to add value to their honey products.
- **Tamil Nadu - has recorded the highest number of road accidents in the country for the third successive year in the year 2019**
- ✓ In 2019, Tamil Nadu reported 57,228 road accident cases, while Madhya Pradesh stood second with 51,641 cases and Karnataka third with 40,644.
  - ✓ Earlier, the state recorded 63,920 road accidents in 2018.
  - ✓ Fatalities as a result of these accidents, however, declined in Tamil Nadu from 12,216 in 2018 to 10,525 in 2019.
  - ✓ The number of those injured also fell from 68,538 in 2018 to 62,261 in 2019

## UNSAFE ROADS

A statistical overview of accident cases in the country in 2019

### CAUSES OF FATAL ACCIDENTS



### TOTAL ACCIDENT CASES

Cases (including fatal and non-fatal)



(Source: NCRB)



### OVER SPEEDING

State	Deaths	Total deaths in India
Karnataka	9,314	86,241
Tamil Nadu	8,832	

- ✓ These are revealed by the latest report released by the national crime records bureau (NCRB).
- ✓ Chennai topped in road accidents among 53 cities across the country
- ✓ The capital city witnessed 6,671 road accidents in 2019, followed by Delhi with 5,349 cases and Bengaluru with 4,684 cases.
- ✓ Delhi, however, recorded the most deaths in road accidents, 1,400, followed by Chennai with 1,252.
- ✓ Overall, 1,54,779 people were killed in road accidents across the country, of which 86,241 died because of overspeeding by vehicles.
- ✓ Among these, Tamil Nadu accounted for 8,832 of the overspeeding deaths.
- ✓ During the year 2019, maximum deaths because of driving under influence of drugs/alcohol were reported in Uttar Pradesh, followed by Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana.

## KILLING FIELDS

No. of farmers and agricultural labourers who ended their lives in the country in 2019

STATES	Farmers/cultivators	Agricultural labourers
Maharashtra	2,680	1,247
Karnataka	1,331	661
Andhra Pradesh	628	401
Chattisgarh	458	266
Madhya Pradesh	142	399
Telangana	491	8
Tamil Nadu	6	421

Source: Accidental Deaths and Suicides of India, 2019, National Crime Records Bureau



- ✓ Regarding the suicides in farm sector, 427 people engaged in agriculture in Tamil Nadu committed suicide in 2019, showing an increase of 6% over the previous year figure.
  - ✓ They include six 'land-holding' farmers and 421 agricultural labourers.
  - ✓ Among them, 294 were men and 133 women.
  - ✓ The state had seen a declining trend of suicides among the agricultural community from 895 in 2014 to 401 in 2018.
  - ✓ It now stands seventh in the country.
  - ✓ Incidentally, certain states and Union territories like West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Uttarakhand, Manipur, Chandigarh, Puducherry and Delhi had reported nil suicides of farmers and agricultural labourers in 2019.
  - ✓ Earlier, the centre had conducted a Pan-India study on farmers' suicides in 13 major suicide-prone states, including Tamil Nadu and its neighbouring states, in 2015-16.
  - ✓ According to the study, alcohol addiction, illness, family issues, gambling, expectation of non-institutional credit, lack of access to expected credit, failure of rain, cyclone, drought, non-realisation of higher output/ prices and crop failure were found to be the reasons for suicides.
- **The state department of archaeology - has certified that the stone pillar found in a Pallipadai mutt in Kinnimangalam village in Madurai is the oldest memorial stone to be discovered in Tamil Nadu till date.**
- ✓ The stone pillar contains inscriptions in Tamil Brahmi language relating to the period between second century BC and first century BC



- ✓ Few weeks ago, the pillar with inscriptions in Tamil or Tamil brahmi letters and another with 'vatteluthu' were found on the premises of Ekanathan mutt temple in Kinnimangalam village, about 20 kms from Madurai.
- ✓ Four Tamil Brahmi letters inscribed on the stone have a 'pulli' or dot on top, indicating that they belong to the period between 2nd century BC and 1st century BC.

- ✓ “Ekan Athan Kottam”, which means the region or territory of Ekan Athan which refers to a king or chieftain of the region, is inscribed in the pillar.
- ✓ Even though ‘Athan’ is a common name that appears in many Brahmi inscriptions found in Tamil Nadu, this is the first time ‘Kottam’ has figured on an inscription pillar
- ✓ The other stone-inscribed pillar, belonging to the period between 7th century AD and 8th century AD, has the words, “Irayili Ehanathan Pallipadai Mandali ienthar” in vatteluthu’.
- ✓ This makes it the first pillar to have the word ‘Pallipadai’ mentioned in it, a word which was used to describe memorials.
- ✓ This is cited as proof of it being the first such memorial to be found in Tamil Nadu, that too in Madurai which was part of the flourishing Pandiya kingdom.
- ✓ Many more inscriptions were being found on the temple premises, like a recent find on August 19 pertaining to the period of Vijayaranga Sokkanathar — 1722 AD.
- ✓ It has 43 lines inscribed on it, where the words ‘Pallipadai’ and ‘Samadhi’ have been used frequently.
- ✓ Hence, it is understood that the mutt temple was constructed in memory of a single family.
- ✓ Another stone inscription dated 1942 also has the words “Jeeva samadhi” inscribed on it.
- ✓ Till date this temple is known as a samadhi temple.

## NATIONAL

- **On September 2, the Union Cabinet - cleared ‘Mission Karmayogi’ or the National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB), a new national capacity-building and performance evaluation programme for civil servants.**
- ✓ The programme aims to upgrade the knowledge and skills of civil servants on a continuous basis with the aid of modern technology
- ✓ It will ensure that the right person with the right competencies is placed in right position in government.
- ✓ According to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the mission will radically improve human resource management practices in the government whereas home minister Amit Shah said it will bring transformational changes in civil services.
- ✓ The NPCSCB will use state-of-the-art infrastructure to augment the capacity of civil servants
- ✓ Under the Mission, the capacity building will be through shared content to be made available to civil servants on integrated government online training (iGOT) platform
- ✓ For sharing the content, a nominal subscription fee of ₹431 will be payable by the civil servants to the special purpose vehicle (SPV) managing the platform.

- ✓ The iGOT platform will enable the transition from a rules-based to a role-based HR management and continuous learning.
  - ✓ Through this training, Mission Karmayogi is to prepare civil servants for the future by making them more creative, constructive & innovative through transparency and technology.
  - ✓ The initiative will benefit around 46 lakh central government employees
  - ✓ For implementing the Mission, the Centre has estimated the required funds as Rs 510.86 crores over a five year period
  - ✓ The scheme is to be implemented between 2020-21 and 2024-25.
  - ✓ The civil servants will be provided access to shared, world-class learning content developed in partnership with premier world institutions like Harvard University, UC Berkeley and London School of Economics etc, via iGOT platform.
  - ✓ The Prime Minister's Public Human Resource Council will be set up as the apex body to direct the reforms
  - ✓ Further, an autonomous Capacity Building Commission is to be established to manage the reformed system and synchronise training standards across the country
- **On September 2, the Union Cabinet - approved a bill that seeks to make Kashmiri, Dogri and Hindi, the official languages of Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.**
- ✓ Currently, Urdu and English are the two official languages of the UT of J&K.
  - ✓ This was announced by Union Minister Prakash Javadekar at a press briefing
  - ✓ As per the Minister, the Jammu and Kashmir Official Languages Bill, 2020, shall be introduced in Parliament in the upcoming monsoon session
  - ✓ The Parliament is scheduled to meet from September 14 to October 1.
  - ✓ The bill will be introduced as per the long pending demand of the people in the region to include the three new languages as official languages of the erstwhile state.
  - ✓ Till the approval, Dogri and Kashmiri were not official language in any of the states in India though they were included in eighth schedule.
  - ✓ Apart from these two, Sindhi is still not an official language in state though it has been included in eighth schedule.
  - ✓ The Eight Schedule of Indian Constitution lists 22 scheduled languages as official languages of the states.
  - ✓ According to Article 343, the official language of the union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script.
- **On September 2, the government – announced a ban on 118 Chinese and Chinese-controlled apps**
- ✓ The reason for the ban was attributed to the engaging in activities “prejudicial to the sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of state and public order”.

## INDIA BIGGEST PUBG MARKET

➤ PUBG, the world's most lucrative mobile app, is controlled by Tencent. It doubled its lifetime revenue in just over 7 months to more than \$3bn globally

➤ PUBG has more than 175m installations in India, 24% of the worldwide total, according to Sensor Tower Store Intelligence. China has 17% and US 6%

### MAJOR CATEGORIES OF BANNED APPS

**GAMES:** PUBG; Ludo World; Chess Rush; Rise of Kingdoms; Cyber Hunter; War Path; Dank Tanks; Game of Sultans

**COMMUNICATION:** Voov Meeting; We Chat Reading; Government WeChat; WeChat Work; ZAKZAK Pro

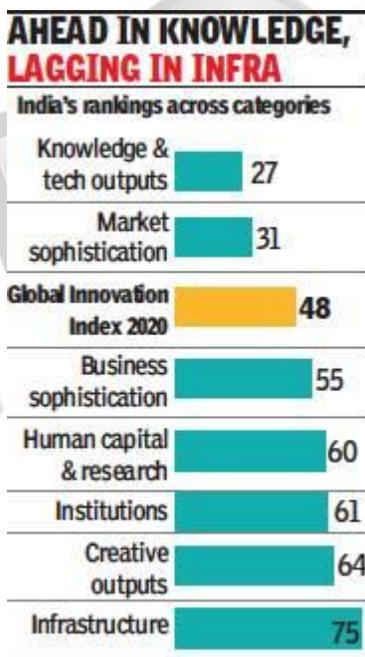
**BUSINESS & UTILITIES:** Baidu; Baidu Express Edition; Gallery Vault, AppLock, CamCard

**ENTERTAINMENT & DATING:** Music Player: MP3; Lamour Love All Over The World; Amour Video Chat; LivU Meet New People; Malay Social Dating

- ✓ Earlier, a total of 106 apps had already been blocked by the government in two separate decisions over the last couple of months
- ✓ The biggest casualty in the fresh round of bans is PUBG, the world's most lucrative mobile game whose largest subscriber base is in India
- ✓ With the latest announcement of ban, the total number of Chinese apps that have been banned in India now stands at 224
- ✓ They include such popular apps as TikTok, UC Browser, Helo, Likee, Shareit, Mi Community, WeChat, Baidu, Club Factory, Cam-Scanner, and now PUBG.
- ✓ According to the government, the targeted move would not only safeguard the interests of Indian mobile and internet users, but also ensure safety, security and sovereignty of Indian cyberspace.
- ✓ The decision has been taken by the government following the receipt of several complaints from various sources by the ministry of electronics and information technology (Meity)
- ✓ The complaints were related to the misuse of some mobile apps available on Android and iOS platforms for stealing and transmitting users' data in an unauthorised manner to servers which have locations outside India.
- ✓ Many of the apps that have been banned now are from random categories such as utility, business and communication, camera and photo-editing, entertainment and dating, productivity and news
- ✓ These include AliPay, Baidu, CamCard, Ludo World, Rise of Kingdoms:Lost Crusade, WeChat Work, Baidu Express Edition, Amour Video Chat among others.
- **The Centre - has now allowed biosafety research field trials of two new transgenic varieties of indigenously developed Bt Brinjal in eight states during 2020-23.**
- ✓ These states are Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, Odisha and West Bengal.
- ✓ The biosafety safety report of GM crops' field trials is a mandatory requirement for applying for commercial release in future.

- ✓ The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) is the central regulator which allowed confined field trials of new varieties of Bt Brinjal
  - ✓ These indigenous transgenic varieties of brinjal hybrids - namely Janak and BSS-793, containing Bt Cry1Fa1 gene (Event 142) - are developed by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research's (ICAR) National Research Centre on Plant Biotechnology (NRCPB).
  - ✓ The GEAC had asked the applicant to begin it only after taking no-objection certificate (NOC) from states concerned and confirmation of availability of isolated stretch of land for this purpose
  - ✓ After taking permission from the states, the applicant - Beejsheetal Research Private Limited, Jalna – will have to provide the name of the lead scientist responsible for each trial to the central regulator.
  - ✓ Earlier, in 2010, the government had imposed a moratorium on commercial release of genetically modified Bt Brinjal
- **On September 2, the health ministry - issued standard operating procedures (SOPs) to be followed while conducting examinations to avoid risk of spread of Covid-19 infection**
- ✓ Accordingly, only those examination centres which are outside the containment zone shall be allowed to function.
  - ✓ Further, staff and examinees from containment zones will not be allowed at the centres and educational institutions will have to make separate arrangements for them at a later date and via other means.
  - ✓ Only asymptomatic students and staff will be allowed inside an examination centre.
  - ✓ Any symptomatic student will be referred to the nearest health centre and the institution shall arrange for arranging the candidate's exam at a later date, when the person is declared physically fit.
  - ✓ However, if a 'symptomatic' student insists on writing an examination, the candidate may be allowed to do so in a separate isolation room with due permission from the authorities conducting the examination.
  - ✓ If the candidate's symptoms deteriorate, the nearest health facility needs to be informed.
  - ✓ The examination premises will also need to be disinfected if a person is found positive.
  - ✓ The educational institutions, examination conducting authorities and the centres may plan out the examination schedule in a staggered manner to avoid overcrowding
  - ✓ Besides, it also advised all the centres to ensure masks, hand sanitisers and hygiene inside the premises.
  - ✓ Staff belonging to highrisk groups such as older employees, pregnant women and those with underlying health conditions will not be deployed at examination centres.

- ✓ In case such deployment can't be avoided, such people will be given tasks that do not involve direct contact with students.
  - ✓ Further, the health ministry has suggested multiple entry and exits gates to avoid crowding.
  - ✓ Students will be taken in batches for registration, and then sent in batches inside the examination rooms.
  - ✓ In case of PwD (Persons with Disabilities) candidates availing a scribe, both the candidate and scribe must wear masks and be made to sit with adequate physical distance.
- **India - has been ranked 48th on the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2020 among 131 economies, entering into the bracket of top 50 countries for the first time.**
- ✓ The country has been ranked at 52th spot last year
  - ✓ This year, three 'clusters' — Bengaluru, Delhi and Mumbai — feature in the top 100 science & technology hotspots



- ✓ High-income countries Switzerland, Sweden, the US, the UK and the Netherlands lead the innovation ranking as the Top-5 countries.
- ✓ Among Asian countries, Singapore is ranked at the eighth position, while a second Asian economy — South Korea — joining the top 10 for the first time
- ✓ The GI rankings are released by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
- ✓ The agency ranks global economies according to their innovation capabilities, including roughly 80 indicators, grouped into innovation inputs and outputs.

- ✓ Together with three other economies — China, Vietnam and the Philippines — India has made the most significant progress in the GII innovation ranking over time.

1	Switzerland
2	Sweden
3	US
4	Netherlands
5	UK
8	Singapore
10	Israel
11	S Korea
14	China
15	Japan
35	Malaysia
46	Russia
52	India



GLOBAL INNOVATION INDEX 2020



INDIA

48th

India ranks 48th among the 131 economies featured in the GII 2020.

- ✓ The top-performing economies in the GII are still almost exclusively from the high-income group, with China (14th) remaining the only middle-income economy in the GII top 30, and Malaysia at the 33rd position.
- ✓ India was at the top position among central and southern Asian countries.
- ✓ The theme of the GII for this year is ‘Who will Finance Innovation?’
- ✓ Along with WIPO, Cornell University and INSEAD Business School were a part in framing the rankings this year
- ✓ One of the reasons for the good performance of the country is the National Innovational Council, which promotes innovation in MSMEs
- ✓ It supports several activities around innovation, particularly through the India Inclusive Innovation Fund
- **On September 2, India - recorded its biggest single-day surge in Covid-19 infections by adding 83,029 fresh cases, crossing the 83,000-mark for the first time since the outbreak of the pandemic.**
  - ✓ No other country in the world has come anywhere close to the 83,000-mark in a day.
  - ✓ Earlier, the US had set a record in daily infections by reporting 77,255 cases on July 16 as per Johns Hopkins University figures— a grim milestone which India crossed on August 29 with 78,903 fresh cases.
  - ✓ With 1,023 fresh deaths, India’s cumulative toll reached 67,415.
  - ✓ On the day, Maharashtra reported a massive 17,433 fresh cases, breaching the 17,000-mark for the first time and becoming the only state in the country to do so.
  - ✓ Maharashtra also crossed another harsh record by crossing the 25,000-mark in fatalities with 292 fresh deaths, taking the total toll to 25,195.
  - ✓ Further, Karnataka reported its highest single-day increase of 9,860 new cases, while Andhra Pradesh accounted for 10,392 new infections

- ✓ In further easing of restrictions, the government permitted Indian airlines to increase the number of domestic passenger flights to 60% of their pre-Covid services
- ✓ Earlier, on June 26, the ministry of civil aviation had allowed the airlines to operate a maximum of 45% of their pre-virus domestic flights.
- ✓ On September 2, Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri said Metro train services will resume in a graded manner from September 7 across the country, except in Maharashtra
- ✓ Passengers have been advised to follow preventive measures against Covid-19 such as maintaining social distancing and wearing face mask.
- ✓ All Metro lines will become operational from September 12.

## **SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT**

- **A team of researchers at the Delhi-based Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB) and the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) - have detected Covid-19 with 95% sensitivity and 100% specificity with respect to RT-PCR (reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction) by using a Mass Spectrometer**
- ✓ With the new method, the detection of the virus takes less than three minutes, while the time from sample preparation to detection takes less than 30 minutes.
- ✓ The new method can directly detect the virus without amplifying the RNA for detection, as is the case with RT-PCR method.
- ✓ The new method is based on detecting the presence of two peptides unique to SARS-CoV-2 and not seen in any other coronavirus or other viruses.
- ✓ Though seven peptides were found to be unique to SARS-CoV-2, only two peptides are used for quick virus detection.
- ✓ One of the peptides is the spike protein and the other is a replicase protein.
- ✓ Even though the mass spectrometer is expensive, the method of testing would cost only about ₹100 per test, and hence considerably cheaper than RT-PCR method employed currently for testing coronavirus.

## **DEFENCE**

- **‘Establishment 22’, a little-known secret force, also known as the Special Frontier Force (SFF) or Vikas battalion – was positioned against the Chinese in some key heights on the south bank of Pangong Tso in eastern Ladakh for special operations, if needed.**
- ✓ They were brought into limelight during the operations on August 29 along the LAC
- ✓ The SFF is directly under the administrative control of the cabinet secretariat and the Prime Minister’s Office.
- ✓ Their interaction with the Army is minimal and all command and control is with the cabinet secretariat.

- ✓ It is headed by an Inspector General, who is an Army officer in the rank of Major General.
- ✓ It may be recalled that former Chief of Army Staff, General Dalbir Singh had held that office at one point during his service



- ✓ The SFF commandos were raised for the first time towards the end of the 1962 Sino-Indian war on November 14 1962
- ✓ It was on the advice of Intelligence Bureau Chief Bhola Nath Mullik that the SFF was formed
- ✓ They were hardened fighters drawn from among Tibetan refugees settled in India, who are known for their ferocity.
- ✓ These commandos were initially trained by the Intelligence Bureau, RAW (India's external intelligence agency) and the American CIA to carry out covert operations behind enemy lines.
- ✓ In the first few decades after it was raised, the special force was used to keep an eye on Chinese plans to deploy nuclear warheads in the event of another Indo-China war
- ✓ The SFF gained its nickname 'Establishment 22' after its founder chief, Inspector General Sujan Singh Uban, a retired major general of the Indian Army who commanded the 22nd Mountain Regiment in the British Indian Army during World War II in Europe.
- ✓ Women soldiers are also part of the SFF and perform specialised tasks.
- ✓ Under 'Operation Eagle', the SFF operated along the Chittagong hill tracts in East Pakistan (later Bangladesh) in the 1971 war
- ✓ The force took part in Operation Blue Star at the Golden Temple in Amritsar and also in the Kargil War.
- ✓ Following the assassination of Indira Gandhi, the SFF was briefly used for VIP security around the Prime Minister, the role which was later handed over to the Special Protection Group (SPG).