

## EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – SEPTEMBER 4, 2020

### TAMIL NADU

- On September 3, Tamil Nadu – reported 5,892 fresh Covid-19 infections and 92 more deaths, taking the cumulative caseload to 4,45,851 and the casualties to 7,608.
- ✓ Fresh Covid-19 infections in Chennai (968) dropped below 1,000 for the first time in the last 20 days, while the capital city reported 29 deaths.
- ✓ Two districts, Cuddalore and Coimbatore, reported nearly 600 case each, with 590 and 593 respectively.
- ✓ There are 52,070 active cases undergoing treatment in the state, including 12,059 in Chennai.

#### STATE COVID COUNT

Zone	New cases	New deaths	Active cases
Chennai region	1,754	45	17,970
North	1,371	11	9,219
Central	600	11	5,445
South	895	11	7,706
West	1,264	14	11,620
Other	8	0	110
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,892</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>52,070</b>

- ✓ The hotspot's neighbouring districts, Chengalpet (378), Tiruvallur (258) and Kancheepuram (150) together reported 786 cases and 16 deaths
- ✓ On the day, 6,110 persons were discharged, taking the total recovered to 3.86 lakh.
- ✓ In the last 24 hours, the state has tested 80,864 people across its various testing facilities.
- ✓ With this, a total of 50,47,042 samples have been tested till date.

- ✓ Meanwhile, Oxford University's COVID-19 vaccine, Covishield, has arrived in Chennai for clinical trials to begin next week.
- ✓ Clinical trials of the vaccine will be taken up at the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital and the Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research.
- ✓ The Director of Public Health and Preventive Medicine has been appointed as the principal investigator.
  
- **In another six months, Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) - will be launching a national common mobility card (NCCM).**
- ✓ The card could also be used in other modes of public transport like MTC and suburban services, once introduced.
- ✓ The CMRL has invited tenders to choose a partner bank for digital fare collection and issuing the card.
- ✓ The NCCM was conceived by the ministry of housing and urban affairs for seamless travel across all transport systems across the country
- ✓ The cards can further be used for purchases in shops at metro stations and eventually at shops in bus terminuses and suburban stations which can accept them.
- ✓ The NCCM will be in addition to the existing smartcard now being used for metro train rides and for vehicle parking at stations.
- ✓ These cards will be issued by banks and the station counters, which can be directly used by the passengers in metro stations.
- ✓ For the passengers, they provide a contactless ticket options and avoid waiting in queues at ticket counters and also protect themselves from contracting Covid-19 infection.
- ✓ Passengers can top up these cards either online or at stations.
- ✓ Scanners at stations are equipped to detect, read and deduct money from the card

## **STATES**

- **The Jammu and Kashmir Government – will be setting up a Biodiversity Council in Jammu and Kashmir soon**
- ✓ The council is to be headed by the Chief Conservator of Forests.
- ✓ The main aim of the council is to ensure the conservation of biological diversity in the UT
- ✓ The council consists of 10 members, out of which five will be non-official members with a 3-year term.
- ✓ It will function in consultation with the Chennai-based National Biodiversity Authority, functioning under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate change.
- ✓ The Authority was established in 2003 under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002.

- ✓ It will facilitate, regulate and advise the centre on the issues of sustainable use of biological resources, conservation and fair and equitable sharing of use of biological resources.
  - ✓ Under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, all the states are mandated to create their own biodiversity management committee or council
  - ✓ These measures were taken after India signed Convention on Biological Diversity in 1992.
  - ✓ After signing the Earth summit held in Rio de Janeiro, India framed 12 National Biodiversity Targets to be achieved by 2020
  - ✓ At the Nagoya conference, the Aichi Targets were adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- **On September 2, the Assam Assembly - passed a new bill to protect Tangible Heritage sites and items in the state, that are not currently covered by the state and national laws**
- ✓ According to the Assam Government, the passage of the Assam Heritage (Tangible) Protection, Preservation, Conservation and Maintenance Bill, 2020 is a historic step towards implementing Clause 6 of Assam Accord of 1985
  - ✓ As per the Clause 6 of the Accord, the bill will develop, restore and promote these heritages to safeguard them from encroachments and damages
  - ✓ The targeted sites and items must have been in existence for not less than 75 years and are not covered in Assam Ancient Monuments and Record Act, 1959
  - ✓ The list includes religious institutions like monasteries, stupas, mosques, dargahs, churches besides other social and cultural institutions.
  - ✓ The new bill will also protect habitation structures having traditional architecture, heritage sites, heritage building structures, monuments, precincts areas or sites, artifacts, sculptures, paintings, handicrafts, and manuscripts as well.
  - ✓ It will also be applicable to various historical items in museums like sculptures, coins, manuscripts, epigraphs and other works of cultural artifacts and craftsmanship.
  - ✓ Tangible Heritage refers to various materials such as historical monuments, archaeological sites, artifacts and objects significant to community, nation and humanity.

## NATIONAL

- **The road transport ministry - has published a draft notification proposing changes in the Central Motor Vehicle Rules (CMVR) in order to increase penetration of FASTags.**
- ✓ Accordingly, the third party insurance of all four wheelers including cars can be renewed only if the vehicle has a valid FASTag, from April next year
  - ✓ This is not applicable to two and three-wheelers

- ✓ Further, all vehicles with four or more wheels would need to have FASTag from January 1, 2021 and violation would attract a penalty of ₹300-500.
- ✓ The notification assumes significance as there are a huge number of old vehicles which don't have the smart tags
- ✓ The FASTags were made mandatory for registration of all cars and other bigger vehicles, which were sold after December 1, 2017
  
- **Indian Railways – to have new administrative set up with a CEO-cum-chairman alongwith members, similar to a corporate company**
- ✓ This is the biggest change since the board was formed in 1905
- ✓ The decision to have a CEO was taken last year when the government had approved merger of all eight railway services into one service, Indian Railway Management Service (IRMS), as part of restructuring
- ✓ The incumbent chief of the railway board, V K Yadav, was designated as the first chairman and CEO on September 2.
- ✓ The board also has four other members to deal with infrastructure (Pradeep Kumar), traction and rolling stock (Rajesh Tiwari), operations and business development (P S Mishra), and finance (Manjula Rangarajan)
- ✓ Earlier, the board had eight members including the chairman.
- ✓ With this new arrangement, three apex level posts — member (staff), member (engineering) and member (materials management) — have been removed and the post of member (rolling stock) has been utilised for creation of the post of director general (HR).
- ✓ The chairman and CEO will be the cadre controlling officer responsible for human resources with assistance from a DG (HR)
- ✓ Anand S Khatri will be the Director General (Human Resources) in the apex grade.
  
- **On September 3, the twitter account “@narendramodi\_in” linked to PM Narendra Modi’s personal website -was hacked by cyber criminals seeking donations in cryptocurrency for Covid-19 relief.**
- ✓ The account was restored within an hour and the malicious tweets deleted.
- ✓ CERT-In , India’s top cybersecurity nodal agency, is now looking into the matter and has sought explanations from Twitter
- ✓ On its part, Twitter said that it is probing the matter while assuring that it is “not aware of additional accounts being impacted”
- ✓ Interestingly, the government had served a notice on Twitter in mid-July too after the global hack to find out whether there was any breach in India as well at that point in time.
- ✓ During that instance, the twitter accounts of major public figures and corporations, including U.S. presidential candidate Joe Biden, former U.S. President Barack Obama, billionaire Elon Musk, Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos and Apple were compromised.

- ✓ In an email, the hackers claimed that they are based in Korea and had hacked the PM's website account to "clear their name" from an earlier data breach incident with Paytm Mall

**MESSAGE IN HACKING**

**Number Of Followers**

@narendramodi\_in  
**2.5 million+**

@PMOIndia  
**38.4 million**

@narendramodi  
**61.8 million**

➤ Hackers, who identified themselves as "John Wick", said they broke into @narendramodi\_in to clarify they were not behind the Paytm Mall breach in Aug

➤ On July 15, hackers took over nearly 130 high-profile handles, including those of Elon Musk, Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos & Joe Biden, and asked for cryptocurrency

➤ No indication that Thursday's breach & July one linked: Twitter

- ✓ The hackers had identified themselves as "John Wick" (hckindia@tutanota.com)
- ✓ The PM's twitter account, which has over 2.5 million followers and follows 968 accounts, has so far posted 37,000 tweets since it was created in May 2011.
- **On September 2, the Union Cabinet - approved Memorandum of Understanding between India and Finland for the cooperation in the field of geology and mineral resources.**
- ✓ The MoU was signed between Geological Survey of India, Ministry of Mines and Geological Survey of Finland and Ministry of Employment and Economy, Finland.
- ✓ The agreement will also help each other to share experiences on geological data and information dissemination to reinforce and strengthen scientific links between the countries
- ✓ It will also facilitate conducting the ground, marine and air-borne surveys for multi-disciplinary geoscientific, geo-environmental, geo-technical and natural hazards studies.
- ✓ Finland is rich in minerals such as iron, copper, chromium, nickel and gold.
- ✓ Finland has been the world's happiest country in the years 2018, 2019 and 2020 under UN's World Happiness Report.
- ✓ India was ranked 140 in the report released for the year 2020
- **The Coal India Limited - is to invest Rs 1.22 lakh crores to develop 500 projects by the year 2023-24**

- ✓ The investment will be pumped into several projects dealing with coal evacuation, infrastructure, project development, exploration and clean coal technologies.
  - ✓ It will also help to achieve production target of 1 billion tonnes by 2023-34
  - ✓ Initially, the first-mile connectivity projects that transports coal from pitheads to dispatch points will be given priority
  - ✓ During the first phase, 49 such first mile connectivity projects will be executed by the National miner
  - ✓ The project will also include computer-aided loading technology of coal to replace the age-old road transportation
  - ✓ The Coal India Limited has also identified 15 green field projects to be completed with a budget of Rs 34,600 crore
  - ✓ These projects are to be operated under Mine Developer and Operator Model.
  - ✓ Recently, the government had decided to offer coal blocks to private companies on revenue sharing basis
  - ✓ India has the fourth largest coal reserves in the world.
- **The Centre – bans the ‘physical’ printing of diaries, desktop and wall calendars, coffee table books and festival greeting cards by various ministries, departments, autonomous bodies, public sector units and public sector banks from the year 2021**



- ✓ The order, issued by the Ministry of Finance, urges the government entities to use digital or online method to publish these materials
- ✓ The printing of Coffee Table books is also banned and appropriate use of E-Books is encouraged
- ✓ It will ensure the transition of the government to the ‘paperless’ mode and save crores of rupees to the exchequer
- ✓ Earlier this year, the government asked all the central ministries and departments to make use of the calendars and diaries printed only by the Information and Broadcasting Ministry.

- ✓ The Bureau of Outreach and Communication (BOC) has been directed to collect the printed materials from the government bodies.
- ✓ Created in 2017, the BOC is responsible for advertising ministries and organizations apart from planning their media campaigns
- **The Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti - has launched the 'Water Heroes – Share Your Stories' contest**
- ✓ The contest aims to highlight the important subject of water conservation and management through people's movement
- ✓ Starting from September 1, the Ministry will nominate a maximum of 10 entries every month for consideration of awards.
- ✓ All selected entries will be awarded a cash prize of Rs 10,000 each and a certificate.
- ✓ To take part in the contest, the participants will have to post their success stories on water conservation through a specially made video of one to five minutes as YouTube links.
- ✓ They have to also send a write-up of up to 300 words and some photographs depicting the efforts and significant contributions to conserve and manage water resources



- ✓ The participants can share their videos on the MyGov portal ([www.mygov.in](http://www.mygov.in)) or to the e-mail id [waterheroes.cgwb@gmail.com](mailto:waterheroes.cgwb@gmail.com)
- ✓ According to the Ministry, this series of contests will end on 31st August next year.
- **On September 3, India's Covid-19 daily tally - touched another new high, with fresh infections topping 83,000 for the second consecutive day.**
- ✓ The country witnessed 1,088 deaths on the day, which is the second highest single-day toll so far, taking the death toll to 68,501.
- ✓ With 83,065 new cases reported on the day, slightly higher than the count of 83,029 registered a day earlier, India's coronavirus caseload went past 39 lakh to 39,28,110, as per data collated from state governments.

- ✓ The day's death toll of 1,088 was the second highest after 1,099 fatalities reported on August 18.
- ✓ Meanwhile, recoveries crossed the 30 lakh milestone, with 30,28,172 people having been declared cured till September 3, accounting for 77% of all cases.
- ✓ On the day, Maharashtra reported a massive 18,105 infections, crossing the 18,000 mark for the first time.
- ✓ Let alone other states, only three countries across the world currently have a higher count of daily cases than Maharashtra.
- ✓ The first is India, and the other two, US and Brazil.

## **SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT**

- **For the very first time, forest officials in Uttarakhand - have recorded sightings of king cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*) at heights of 2,200m to 2,400m in the Himalayas**



- ✓ This is a new altitude record for the species of King Cobra, indicating the highest altitude at which a king cobra has ever been sighted
- ✓ King cobra is the national reptile of the country
- ✓ The sighting of King cobra at Uttarakhand needs a detailed study on the how the world's largest venomous snake was thriving at such elevations.
- ✓ The observations were part of a report prepared by the Uttarakhand forest department's research wing in Haldwani
- ✓ As per the report, the species' habitat range varies from 400m in Terai region to up to 2,400m in the hills.
- ✓ The report said that such a wide variation in habitat for a cold-blooded or ectothermic species was "unusual" and demands scientific investigation
- ✓ Reptiles are cold-blooded, meaning they depend on external heat sources for thermo-regulation and generally prefer warmer climates.
- ✓ But during a nine-month study, forest officials found nests of the snake at heights of up to 2,400m in Mukteshwar (Nainital district) where winter temperatures are close to freezing and snowfall is common.

- ✓ King cobra are classified under the 'vulnerable' category in the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) list
- ✓ A study published in the journal Herpetology Notes in 2018 had mentioned the highest recorded altitude for the king cobra at 2,303m after a hatchling was found in the Indian Veterinary Research Institute's (IVRI) campus in Mukteshwar in 2012.
- ✓ It was authored by Jignasu Dolia, a researcher at the Dehradun-based Wildlife Institute of India
- ✓ Further, the species has been sighted at 1,840m in Sikkim, 1,170m in Mizoram and 1,830m in the Nilgiris.

## SPORTS

- **India's 17-year old Grandmaster P Iniyar - became the first Indian to win the annual \$3100 World Open chess tournament last month.**



- ✓ The 9-round event was played in classical time control mode.
- ✓ At the end, Iniyar and Russian Grandmaster Sjugiro Sanan tied up for the first place with 7.5 points each.
- ✓ However, Iniyar was declared the winner due to his better tie break scores.
- ✓ The results of the competition were officially announced on September 3 after a fair play analysis conducted by the organisers.
- ✓ Usually held in Philadelphia, the 48th edition of the event was held online this year, due to the prevailing covid-19 situation.
- ✓ A total of 122 participants from 16 countries like India, US, UK, Russia, Spain, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Poland, Uzbekistan, Belarus, Israel, Bangladesh, Mexico, Peru and Cuba featured in the tournament.
- ✓ In May this year, Iniyar had raised about Rs 1.21 lakh by organising a 'Chess Marathon' for the victims affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- ✓ The proceeds from his efforts went to the PM CARES Fund and the CM's Relief Fund
- ✓ The three-day affair saw the youngster play online matches against 271 rivals one after another in a blitz format.

# COVID PROGRESS IN INDIA – A REPORT

## Why India is setting new Covid records every day

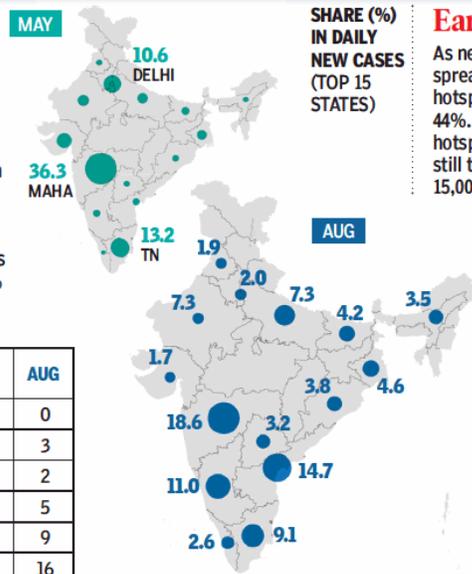


India added nearly 2 million Covid cases in August – a world record. Since July 30, it has had at least 50,000 new cases every day, rising to more than 78,000 each on the last two days of August, which is also a record. Data analysed by Atul Thakur shows the outbreak is no longer confined to some 'hotspot' districts but is spreading more evenly across the states

### Not a few states' problem anymore

In May, more than a third of India's new Covid cases were in Maharashtra, while 19 other states had less than 1% of the cases. Since then, there has been an explosion of cases across the country, leading to a more even spread. No state now has more than 20% of cases. Maharashtra's share has almost halved to 18.6% and the number of states in the 1-20% zone has increased

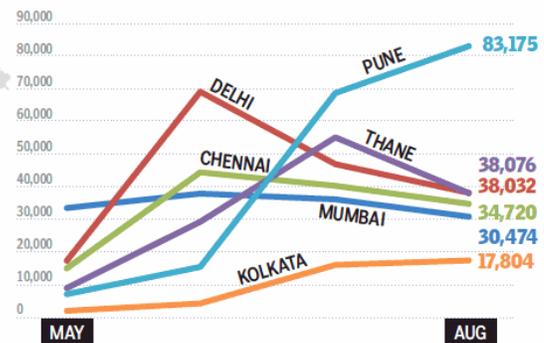
STATES THAT CONTRIBUTED...	MAY	AUG
Over 20% cases	1	0
10-20% cases	2	3
5-10% cases	1	2
3-5% cases	4	5
1-3% cases	8	9
Less than 1% cases	19	16



### Early hotspots remain hot

As new cases become more evenly spread, the share of the top three hotspots has declined from 60% to 44%. However, many of the early hotspots (1000-plus cases in May) are still the top contributors with 15,000-plus cases each in August

Mumbai, Delhi and Chennai – the top three in May-June – have not slowed down much after peaking. All three added more than 30,000 cases each in August. With 83,000 new cases, Pune moved to the top of the order in August



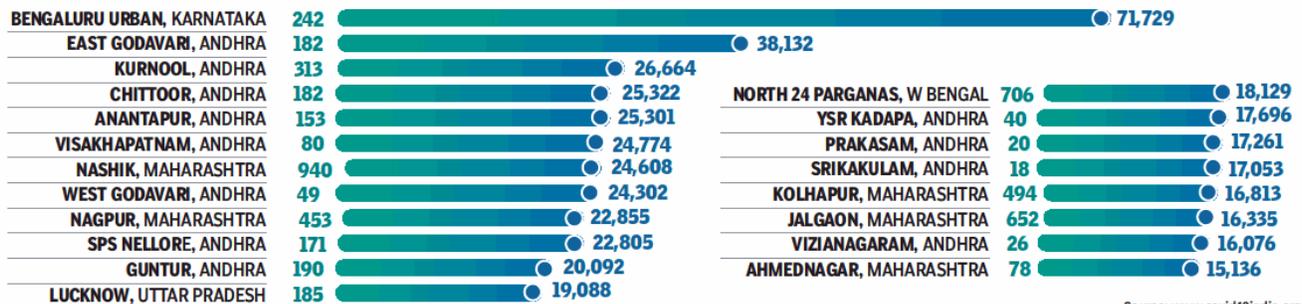
### 'Cooled' spots still have many cases

Nine districts that contributed over 1,000 cases each in May are not among the top contributors in August. But while the cases in cities like Ahmedabad, Indore and Jaipur are fewer, they remain significant



### 20 new hotspots have emerged

There are 20 districts that had less than 1,000 cases each in May but over 15,000 each in August. Bengaluru Urban went from less than 300 in May to over 70,000 in August. Similarly East Godavari, Kurnool, Chittoor and Anantapur went from less than 500 cases in May to over 25,000 each in August



Source: www.covid19india.org