

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – SEPTEMBER 5, 2020

TAMIL NADU

- **On September 4, the Tamil Nadu Governor, Banwarilal Purohit - gave the nod for the Tamil Nadu Public Health Act, 1939 (Second Amendment) Ordinance, 2020**
 - ✓ Following the Governor's approval, the state health secretary issued rules that specified punishments for each violation.
 - ✓ Accordingly, the state government is empowered to levy up to Rs 5,000 as fine on institutions and Rs 500 on individuals for violation of Covid-19 pandemic rules, such as not wearing a mask or maintaining social distancing
 - ✓ Under the new rule, individuals not wearing a mask, covering mouth and nose, will be fined Rs 200.
 - ✓ Violating quarantine rules, spitting in public places, not adhering to social distancing norms and not following government guidelines within containment zones can attract a fine of Rs 500 for individuals.
 - ✓ Gyms, salons and spas, commercial establishments and other such public places violating standard operating procedures or violating guidelines in containment zones will be fined Rs 5,000
 - ✓ Fines can be collected by public health officials, police and local/civic authorities authorised by the district collectors and commissioners
 - ✓ The ordinance will allow the state health department to make offences such as not wearing masks, violating social distance and violence against health workers a 'compoundable' offence.
- **On September 3, the American Express Data Analytics, Risk and Technology (DART) Laboratory - was inaugurated at Indian Institute of Technology, Madras.**



- ✓ The lab will function as a hub of research in risk analytics and behavioural sciences by integrating machine learning/artificial intelligence (ML/AI) and related technologies
 - ✓ The lab has been established by utilising the grant from US-based multinational financial services corporation, American Express.
 - ✓ The financial giant has also instituted annual scholarships for economically disadvantaged and meritorious students.
 - ✓ The scholarships include 'Ambition Awards' for deserving women students at IIT-M.
 - ✓ DART would focus on the study of risks that originate from human behaviour and decisions
- **On September 3, the Tamil Nadu government – has issued standard operating procedures (SOP) for the bars, clubs and pubs that are permitted to function in the state**
- ✓ The SOP was prepared by the state prohibition and excise department
 - ✓ However, bars attached to the state-owned Tasmac wine shops will continue to remain shut for the time being.
 - ✓ Senior citizens aged above 65 years, those with comorbidities and pregnant women are not allowed on bar premises attached to hotels and clubs
 - ✓ Bars and such premises are allowed to open in the state, unless they are not located within containment zones.
 - ✓ However, only 50% of seating capacity is permitted in bars and large gatherings and congregations, while the conduct of musical events and cultural programmes have been prohibited.
 - ✓ All licensees must avoid dance floors and spaces allocated for similar forms of such entertainment.
 - ✓ At the entrance, digital pulse oximeter should be made available to detect abnormal oxygen saturation levels
 - ✓ Inside the facilities, the temperature setting of all air conditioning devices should be in the range of 24-30 degrees Celsius.

- ✓ Further, a register with contact details of all the members and guests, who are visiting the bar, must be maintained for contact tracing purpose.
- **The Tamil Nadu government - has constituted a seven-member high-level committee to study the National Education Policy, 2020 and make recommendations to the government for its adoption.**
 - ✓ The committee will be headed by the secretary to the higher education department
 - ✓ A similar committee will be constituted by the school education department within a day or two.
 - ✓ The committee consists of former vice-chancellors of University of Madras S P Thiagarajan and P Duraisamy, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University vice-chancellor K Pitchumani, Alagappa University vice-chancellor N Rajendran, Madurai Kamaraj University vice-chancellor M Krishnan and Thiruvalluvar University vice-chancellor S Thamarai Selvi.
 - ✓ The human resources development ministry has recently released National Education Policy, 2020.
 - ✓ The policy sought to provide equity and inclusion in higher education, teacher education, reimaging the vocational education professional education, promoting high quality research, effective governance and leadership for higher education institutions, transforming the regulatory system of higher education, among others
- **The Tamil Nadu government - would resume distribution of eggs under the Puratchi Thalaivar MGR-Nutritious Meal Programme to the school students from September.**
 - ✓ The scheme, stopped four months ago due to Covid-19 pandemic, would benefit 34 lakh primary and high school students.
 - ✓ However, the government has reduced the number of eggs by half per month.
 - ✓ Under the scheme, the students would be supplied boiled or masala eggs along with a variety of rice in all school working days.
 - ✓ According to the government order, 10 eggs will be distributed to each student per month, until the schools reopen in the state.
 - ✓ Also, the dry rations that are already being provided to students in primary and upper-primary schools under the scheme will be continued.
 - ✓ Following the Madras high court direction, the government has taken the measure and passed the order.
 - ✓ The order will benefit 20.38 lakh primary school students, 13.61 lakh students of upper primary classes and 4,746 students of special schools functioning under the national child labourer project scheme.
- **On September 4, Tamil Nadu – reported 5,976 new Covid-19 cases, taking the case tally to 4,51,827**
 - ✓ The state reported 79 deaths on the day, which took the cumulative toll to 7,687.

- ✓ As on date, 51,633 people are still under treatment in various hospitals and covid centres as 'active cases'.
- ✓ For the second day, Chennai cases stayed below 1000 at 992, while 12 people died due to the infection.
- ✓ Chennai's neighbours - Chengalpeta had 370, Kanchipuram had 154 and Tiruvallur had 260 new cases.
- ✓ Among other districts, Coimbatore added 595 new cases while Cuddalore reported 499 cases, followed by Salem with 239 and Tiruvannamalai with 216 cases.

TN COVID TRACKER					
Zones	New cases	Deaths	Active cases	Total cases	Total deaths
Chennai region	1,776	25	1,7645	2,11,174	3,965
North	1,374	17	9,457	64,751	833
Central	679	7	5,437	34,658	525
South	813	17	7,147	94,183	1,652
West	1,328	13	11,839	44,844	711
Other	6	0	108	2,217	1
Total	5,976	79	51,633	4,51,827	7,687

- ✓ The state's recovery rate was at 87% with 6,334 people discharged after treatment in the past 24 hours.
- ✓ This takes the total number of people cured of the infection to 3,92,507.
- ✓ The state tested 83,699 samples across its testing facilities on September 4, taking the total samples tested to 51,30,741.
- ✓ The state's average positivity rate is 9.1%, while the fatality rate was 1.7%.
- ✓ Sivaganga (2.6%) had the highest fatality rate followed by Madurai (2.5%), Ramanathapuram (2.2%) and Chennai (2%).

STATES

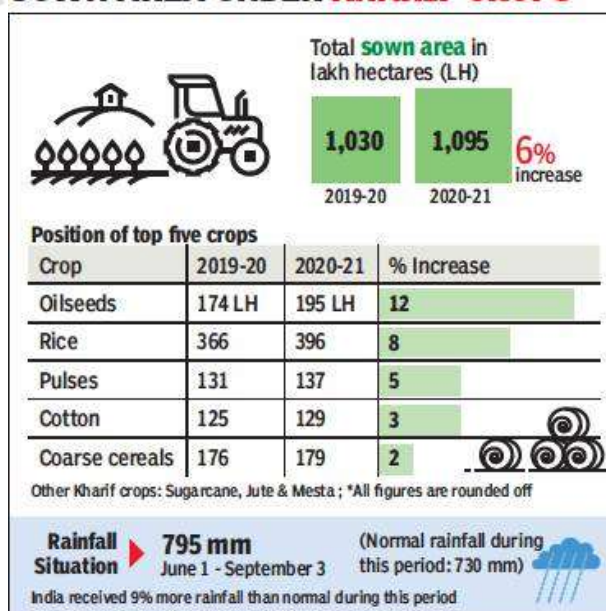
- **The Uttarakhand government – has announced its decision to offer a onetime payment of Rs 40 lakh for each mobile tower that is installed in remote villages by telecom service providers.**
- ✓ The decision has been taken by the government to boost mobile connectivity in remote villages along the India-Nepal and India-China border
- ✓ On September 4, the state cabinet had approved the proposal in this regard by the information technology department
- ✓ The move assumes significance as about 250-odd villages near the China border and the Nepal border have no mobile network.
- ✓ It is common for residents in the areas adjoining Nepal to use Nepalese sim cards that provide connectivity.

- ✓ The government had earlier distributed satellite phones to gram pradhans in these regions, but prohibitive costs prevented residents from using them.
- ✓ Most of these villages lie in border areas in Uttarkashi, Chamoli and Pithoragarh districts.
- ✓ The decision was taken after the meeting with telecom providers, who sought a one-time financial aid or asked the government to cover 60% of the project cost.
- ✓ The service providers avoid installing towers in remote areas due to low population density, which results in lower revenue.

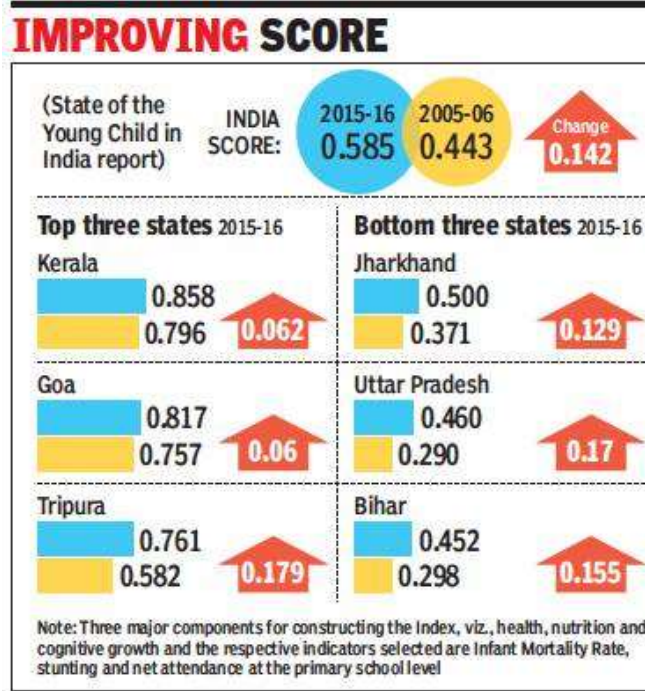
NATIONAL

- **On September 4, the Agriculture Ministry – has released the Sown area figures of all Kharif crops for this year.**
- ✓ As per the figures, 12 states reported higher acreage of oilseeds this season compared to corresponding period last year
- ✓ Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and Karnataka are the top-ranked states with a record acreage of oilseeds cultivation this year.
- ✓ The country has reported the highest percentage increase this year in the coverage of oil seeds, when compared with last year.
- ✓ Along with the record acreage of paddy cultivation, this could take total Kharif (summer crops) sown area to an all-time record level this year
- ✓ It has to be noted that India spends over ₹70,000 crore annually on edible oil import to meet domestic demand
- ✓ In this context, the 12% increase in acreage of oilseeds cultivation this year against last year, indicates an encouraging sign for the country.

SOWN AREA UNDER KHARIF CROPS



- ✓ The record-level increase in acreage of oilseeds can be attributed to a good hike in their minimum support price (MSP) and better procurement of last season's produce during initial months of the Covid-19 pandemic phase.
 - ✓ All five summer sown oilseeds — Niger (hike of ₹755 per quintal), Sesamum (hike of ₹370 per quintal), Sunflower (hike of ₹235 per quintal), Groundnut (hike of ₹185 per quintal) and Soybean (hike ₹170 per quintal) — were announced a much higher increase in their respective MSP than paddy (hike of ₹53 per quintal) this year
 - ✓ The agriculture ministry announced minimum support prices (MSPs) of 17 Kharif crops at the beginning of the sowing season in June.
 - ✓ On a brighter side, the total sown area acreage this year (1,095 lakh hectares) remains 6% more than the sown area of last year (1,030 lakh hectares), even after deducting the flood-affected crop areas from its tally
 - ✓ This year, nearly 20 lakh hectares of crop area is estimated to be affected by floods in 14 states due to higher than normal rainfall in the country
 - ✓ The states which shared the exact figures of their respective flood-affected crop area with the Centre till last week include Karnataka (3.49 lakh hectares), Assam (2.65 LH), Odisha (2.54 LH), Uttar Pradesh (1 LH), Andhra Pradesh (19,907 hectares) and Chhattisgarh (2,146 hectares).
 - ✓ However, the details of other flood-affected states such as Bihar, West Bengal and Kerala are still awaited.
 - ✓ Hikes in MSPs of Niger and Sesamum were highest this year, prompting the farmers to go for sowing of such oilseeds which have potential to reduce India's import bills.
 - ✓ The main reasons for the large coverage of Kharif crops even during the lockdown has been attributed to the timely availability of inputs — seeds, pesticides, fertilizers, machinery and credit —by the government
- **On September 4, Vice President Venkaiah Naidu – released the Young Child Outcomes Index (YCOI) and Young Child Environment Index (YCEI) for the year 2015-16**
- ✓ The YCOI findings are part of the “State of the Young Child in India” report, released by civil society organisation Mobile Creches and supported by Bernard Van Leer Foundation.
 - ✓ Kerala and Goa are the top two states in both indices while Jharkhand, UP, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh are among the bottom five.
 - ✓ Overall, most of the states have registered different levels of improvement between 2005-06 and 2015-16, except eight states which have scored below the national average of 2015-16.
 - ✓ These are - Assam (0.583), Meghalaya (0.562), Rajasthan (0.556), Chhattisgarh (0.555), Madhya Pradesh (0.526), Jharkhand (0.500), UP (0.460) and Bihar (0.452).
 - ✓ All these eight states fare poorly on both the YCOI and YCEI.



- ✓ YCOI
- ✓ Kerala emerged on top while Bihar fared the worst in children of 0-6 years age group, based on a comparative analysis of public data for 2005-06 and 2015-16.
- ✓ The overall India score on a scale of 0-1 remains at 0.585, far from impressive, though it portrays an improvement of 0.142 over the 2005-06 score of 0.443.
- ✓ In YCOI, Kerala leads with an impressive score of 0.858 in 2015-16, while Goa comes second with a score of 0.817 in 2015-16.
- ✓ Tripura has made significant improvement moving from a score of 0.582 for 2005-06 to 0.761 in 2015-16.
- ✓ Bihar has the lowest score of 0.452 in 2015-16.
- ✓ YCOI takes into account three major components — health, nutrition and cognitive growth — and the respective indicators selected include infant mortality rate, stunting and net attendance at the primary school level.
- ✓ YCEI
- ✓ The India score for 2015-16 for the Young child environment Index is 0.672.
- ✓ On the YCEI, Kerala yet again tops the child environment index (0.855), followed by Goa (0.846) and Sikkim (0.819).
- ✓ Arunachal Pradesh has the lowest score with 0.533 followed by Manipur at (0.537) and Jharkhand (0.578).
- ✓ The YCEI is based on indices using data related to various indicators on gender, poverty, health, safe water supply and education.
- **On September 4, India – reported a new high of more than 87,800 fresh Covid-19 cases, taking the country’s cumulative caseload over the 4-million mark**
- ✓ India is the third country after the US and Brazil to record 4 million cases of Covid-19.

- ✓ As on date, U.S. and Brazil has 6.253 million and 4.047 million cases respectively.
- ✓ While India took the longest time for cases to rise from one to 1 million (168 days), its subsequent growth in infections has been the fastest.
 - ✓ Cases in India have grown from 1 million to 4 million in just 50 days, when compared to 75 days in Brazil and 86 in the US to reach the similar figure.
 - ✓ India's tally went from 3 million to 4 million in just 13 days, the fastest 1 million rise yet.
 - ✓ The previous fastest was 16 days, recorded in both India and the US.
- ✓ However, India's fatality rate remains by far the lowest among the three countries.
 - ✓ At the 4 million mark, India has recorded 69,552 fatalities from the virus, third behind the U.S.'s 1.898 lakh and Brazil's 1.247 lakh
 - ✓ At the same stage, the US had reported more than 1.4 lakh deaths and Brazil more than 1.2 lakh.
- ✓ On September 4, India recorded a rise of 87,852 fresh cases, led by a massive spike of 19,218 infections in Maharashtra
- ✓ The deaths from the infections numbered 1,062, the fourth straight day of 1,000-plus casualties in the country.
- ✓ The country has nearly 8.5 lakh active cases, while 31 lakh persons have recovered from the infection at around 77% recovery rate
- ✓ Further, Andhra Pradesh reported 10,776 Covid-19 cases, taking the cumulative caseload to 4,76,506
- ✓ On September 3, the country has tested more than 11.7 lakh samples to detect Covid-19, taking the total number of people tested to 4.66 crore.
- ✓ The country's cumulative positivity rate stands around 8.5%, as on date.
- ✓ According to health ministry data, five high burden states — Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu — account for 62% of active cases.
- ✓ These five states also account for 70% of the 68,472 deaths so far.

INTERNATIONAL

- **At the age of 93 and nearly five months, Benedict XVI - officially became the oldest pope in history on September 4**



- ✓ However, the record becomes complicated by the fact that he stepped down and 'retired' in 2013 and holds the status of "pope emeritus".
- ✓ Benedict was the first pope to retire in 700 years — citing his diminishing strength — after eight years in office.
- ✓ Born on April 16, 1927, Benedict — whose civilian name is Josef Ratzinger — officially broke the previous longevity record held by Italian Leo XIII who died in 1903 at the age of 93 years, four months and three days
- ✓ Further, the record could also be disputed because, going back 1,400 years, the ages of previous popes may not always be completely accurate

INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

- **Japan's ministry of economy, trade and industry (METI) - announced it would add India and Bangladesh to a list of Asean countries to qualify for subsidies for Japanese manufacturers moving out of China.**
- ✓ The METI announcement comes days after India, Japan and Australia decided to extend mutual cooperation on building trusted, resilient supply chains.
- ✓ The SCRI (Supply Chains Resilience Initiative) is intended to build alternative supply chains
- ✓ PM Narendra Modi and Shinzo Abe, the outgoing Japanese prime minister, will hold their last India-Japan virtual summit on September 10.
- ✓ The two countries are expected to sign the ACSA (Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement) which will allow military services of both countries to share logistics.
- ✓ It has to be noted that India signed a similar pact with Australia in June
- **An Indian Coast Guard ship, Shaurya – has been put into service to extinguish the fire from the Panamanian-registered crude oil tanker MT New Diamond at some 60km off Sri Lanka's eastern coast**



- ✓ A two-metre crack was also noticed in the ship after two explosions, but there has been no oil spill in the area so far

- ✓ An oil tanker carrying crude from Kuwait to India burst into flames off the eastern coast of Sri Lanka on September 3, leaving one of its 24 crew members missing and another injured.
- ✓ The Panama registered tanker New Diamond was carrying 2,70,000 tonnes of crude oil from Kuwait to Paradip in Odisha when its engine room caught fire off the coast of Sangamankanda in the eastern district of Ampara.
- ✓ Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has also deployed its ship 'Sarang' and aircrafts for search and rescue and firefighting mission at approximately 37 nautical miles east of Tirrukkovil (south-east Sri Lankan coast).
- ✓ ICG's Sujay with helo and divers and CG Dornier for aerial recce - have also been despatched from Chennai.
- ✓ Further, ICG's pollution response vessel Samudra Paheradar has sailed out of Vishakapatnam for oil spill response.
- ✓ Two Sri Lankan tugs Ravana and Vishaba, along with ALP Winger, were assisting in firefighting with spray of water and foam and undertaking boundary wall cooling around the main crude oil tanks.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **On September 4, India and China - held their first high-level political meeting, on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) defence ministers' meet in Moscow.**
- ✓ The meeting was held to break the continuing deadlock in the ongoing military confrontation between both the countries in eastern Ladakh since early May
- ✓ It was held between Indian defence minister Rajnath Singh and his Chinese counterpart, Gen Wei Fenghe on September 4



- ✓ During the meeting, Indian defence minister has reiterated India's demand for restoration of 'status quo ante' as it existed in April by withdrawing its forces from the face-off sites at Pangong Tso, Gogra and Depsang, while also reducing its military build-up along the Line of Actual Control.
- ✓ The foreign ministers of both the countries, S Jaishankar and Wang Yi, are scheduled to meet each other on September 10, also on the sidelines of an SCO ministerial meet in Moscow.

- ✓ Singh said all member countries of the SCO, which consists of over 40% of the global population, should work towards the objective of 'Security and Growth for all in the Region (Sagar)'
 - ✓ The minister reaffirmed India's commitment to the evolution of a global security environment, which will be "open, transparent, inclusive, rules-based and anchored in international laws".
 - ✓ The bilateral meeting with China, sought by Gen Wei in the aftermath of India's proactive military moves in Pangong Tso area, happened at Hotel Metropole where Singh is staying.
 - ✓ Singh was accompanied by defence secretary Ajay Kumar, joint secretary (East Asia) in the foreign ministry Naveen Srivastava and Indian ambassador to Russia D Bala Venkatesh Varma, among others
 - ✓ Singh is on a three-day visit to Russia for the combined meeting of defence ministers of the SCO, collective security treaty organisation (CSTO) and commonwealth of independent states (CIS) member states in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of victory in the Second World War.
 - ✓ Earlier, he was in Russia in June to attend the Victory Day parade of the Second World War, which was also attended by Wei but there was no bilateral meeting then.
- **External affairs minister S Jaishankar - addresses the Brics foreign ministers' meeting via video conferencing in New Delhi on September 4.**
- ✓ Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi participated in the meeting held under the chairmanship of Russia
 - ✓ The external affairs minister S Jaishankar called for enhanced Brics cooperation in countering terrorism and expressed satisfaction on the conclusion of Brics 'counter-terrorism strategy'.



- ✓ Significantly, the Brics ministers expressed concern at the rise of violence and continuing conflicts in different parts of the world that have "significant impact at both regional and international levels".
- ✓ The ministers reiterated their strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations "whenever, wherever and by whomsoever committed" and asserted that it should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilisation or ethnic group.

- ✓ The ministers also reaffirmed the commitment to upholding and respecting international law, including the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations
- ✓ The MEA, Jaishankar called for reformed multi-lateralism, including reform of international bodies like UN, WTO, IMF and WHO

DEFENCE

- **On September 4, Indian Navy - kicked off a two-day war-games with the Russian Navy in the southern Bay of Bengal in the Andaman Sea off the Strait of Malacca**
- ✓ The 11th edition of the 'Indra-Navy' exercise is being held to the east of Sri Lanka
- ✓ The exercise will further consolidate the long-term strategic relationship between the two armed forces.
- ✓ The primary aim of the exercise is to further consolidate the interoperability built between the two navies over the years, as well as enhance understanding and procedures for multi-faceted maritime operations.
- ✓ Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Indra 2020 will be in a 'non-contact, at sea only' format this year.
- ✓ India is being represented by guided-missile destroyer INS Ranvijay, stealth frigate INS Sahyadri and fleet tanker Shakti, along with their integral helicopters.

ECONOMY

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) - has revamped its priority sector lending (PSL) norms to boost fund flows to districts that have been excluded**
- ✓ As part of the overhauling, the regulator has doubled its lending limit for health infrastructure to ₹10 crore, and for renewable energy to ₹30 crore.
- ✓ According to the new norms, loans of up to ₹50 crore to startups (as defined by the industry ministry) also qualify as PSL.
- ✓ With agriculture being the only sector that is expected to grow during the current fiscal year, the RBI has decided to increase credit flow to this segment
- ✓ Banks can now lend up to ₹5 crore to Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and individual households can get loans up to ₹10 lakh for renewable energy generation.
- ✓ Banks can also give loans up to ₹5 crore for setting up schools, drinking water facilities and sanitation facilities.
- ✓ The new norms will benefit microlenders who cater to the priority sector as defined by the RBI.

