

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – SEPTEMBER 8, 2020

TAMIL NADU

- On September 7, the Tamil Nadu government - unveiled an ambitious electronic hardware manufacturing policy
- ✓ The policy aims to provide skill training to more than one lakh people in the next four years for employment in the sector.

E-HUB PUSH

Highlights of new electronics manufacturing policy

➤ To attract global ESDM (electronic system design manufacturing) majors to invest in TN

➤ To make TN's electronics industry output touch \$100 billion by 2025

➤ To contribute 25% of India's electronics exports by 2025

➤ To skill train more than 1 lakh people by 2024 to meet increased requirement

- ✓ The policy, unveiled by chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami, aims to transform the state into a globally competitive Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM) destination.
- ✓ It seeks to increase Tamil Nadu's electronics industry output to \$100 billion and to contribute 25% of total electronic exports from India by 2025.
- ✓ It also propose to increase the level of value addition that is done in Tamil Nadu, especially across focus sectors such as mobile handsets, LED products, fab-less

chip design, PCBs, solar photovoltaic cells, besides medical and automotive electronics.

- ✓ In line with the Centre's electronic manufacturing clusters (EMC) scheme, Tamil Nadu has classified its districts into Class A, B and C to provide state-level incentives to industrially backward districts

BRINGING IN INVESTMENTS				
CLASSIFICATION OF DISTRICTS Class A Chennai, Thiruvallur, Chengalpet and Kancheepuram. Class B 13 districts including Coimbatore, Cuddalore, Erode, Krishnagiri, Trichy and Vellore Class C Comprises 21 districts mostly in south and west TN	CLASSIFICATION OF INDUSTRIES			
	MSME As defined by the Ministry of MSME	employing over 500 people		
	Large Investments in the range of ₹200cr-₹500cr and	Mega Investments over ₹500cr and employing over 2,000 people		
	Category	Class A	Class B	Class C
	Large	15%	20%	25%
	Mega	18%	24%	30%
	STATE ASSURANCE FOR INFRASTRUCTURE			
	> Two or four lane connectivity			
	> Reliable power supply			

- ✓ Chennai and neighbouring Thiruvallur, Kancheepuram and Chengalpet are classified as category A, as units making or assembling electronic hardware and mobile handsets already operate in the region.
- ✓ Coimbatore, Cuddalore and Vellore come under category B.
- ✓ Several southern and western districts as well as industrially backward Tiruvannamalai, Villupuram and Dharmapuri are classified as category C, which will enable new industrial units in these districts to get higher financial incentives.
- ✓ The policy also elaborates on the financial incentives for large and mega categories of investors, besides micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), according to the size of investments and employment potential.
- ✓ The incentives include capital subsidy, subsidy on land lease cost, stamp duty exception, training subsidy, interest subsidy, exemption of electricity tax, environment protection infrastructure and subsidy for intellectual capital and enhanced quality certification.
- ✓ For MSMEs, the government will formulate incentives to help improve their business to serve as vendor base for large and mega investors
- ✓ The policy focuses on skilling, with incentives being offered to industrial units for training first-time employees and a higher incentive for training women.
- ✓ State-owned agencies such as Sipcot, Elcot and Sidco will offer ready built infrastructure while the private sector will be encouraged to establish ESDM parks.

- ✓ The State government, through ELCOT, would also establish a state-of-the-art electronics testing facility.
 - ✓ Special focus is also on semiconductor fabrication for which Tamil Nadu will constitute a special task force to create an appropriate ecosystem.
 - ✓ A separate package of incentives will be offered for units in the fabrication sector.
 - ✓ Further, a mega Electropreneur Centre is to be established.
 - ✓ The Centre will focus on hardware, products and build a robust ecosystem for entrepreneurs and start ups.
- **Tamil Nadu – has decided to continue with the two-language policy in education sector and communicated the same to the centre**
- ✓ The state expressed its opposition to the three-language policy proposed in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020
 - ✓ This was stated by the higher education minister K P Anbalagan in a letter to Union minister for education Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank on the NEP
 - ✓ The Minister also opposed the proposal to conduct entrance exams for undergraduate courses by the National Testing Agency stating that it would discourage rural students.
 - ✓ He also pointed out about the setting up of a seven-member committee headed by the higher education secretary, which will go through the policy and offer comments and recommendations that could be adopted by the state.
 - ✓ According to the Minister, the state will be able to achieve the NEP's target of 50% Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) by 2035 in the 2020-21 academic year itself
 - ✓ He also added that the state would achieve the ambitious target of 65% GER by 2035 due to various measures, including opening of new colleges, introducing new courses and increasing the capacity of existing colleges.
 - ✓ Moreover, the teacher-student ratio in the State was 1:17 while the all India ratio stood at 1:26, he pointed out.
 - ✓ The Minister also welcomed the centre's move to convert B.Ed into a four-year integrated degree programme with two major subjects
- **On September 7, Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami - handed over the Dr. Radhakrishnan Award to 15 best teachers selected from Chennai district as part of the National Teachers' Day celebrations organised by the School Education Department.**
- ✓ The award carries a medal and a cash prize of ₹10,000.
 - ✓ A total of 375 teachers have been selected for the award from across Tamil Nadu this year.
 - ✓ The two recipients of the National Teachers' Awards from Tamil Nadu this year — R.C. Saraswathi, headmistress of Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Ashok Nagar in Chennai and S. Dhilip, an English teacher at the Government Higher Secondary School at Sathyamangalam in Villupuram district — met the Chief Minister during the event.

- **Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami - has pledged to donate his eyes as part of the National Eye Donation Fortnight.**
- ✓ As part of the fortnight, the CM launched an online portal 'www.hmis.tn.gov.in/eye-donor' on September 7
- ✓ The portal was created by the Tamil Nadu Tele Ophthalmology Network (TNSBCS)
- ✓ It will be helpful for the persons who wish to pledge to donate their eyes
- **On September 7, Tamil Nadu – reported 5,776 new Covid-19 cases and 89 deaths**
- ✓ Chennai continue to remain as the hotspot with 949 cases, followed by Coimbatore (524), Cuddalore(398) and Chengalpattu (330).

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

	Until Aug. 31	Sept.01	Sept.02	Sept.03	Sept.04	Sept.05	Sept.06	Sept.07	Total
Cases reported	4,28,041	5,928	5,990	5,892	5,976	5,870	5,783	5,776	4,69,256
Recovered/ discharged	3,68,141	6,031	5,891	6,110	6,334	5,859	5,820	5,930	4,10,116
Deceased	7,322	96	98	92	79	61	88	89	7,925

Persons tested

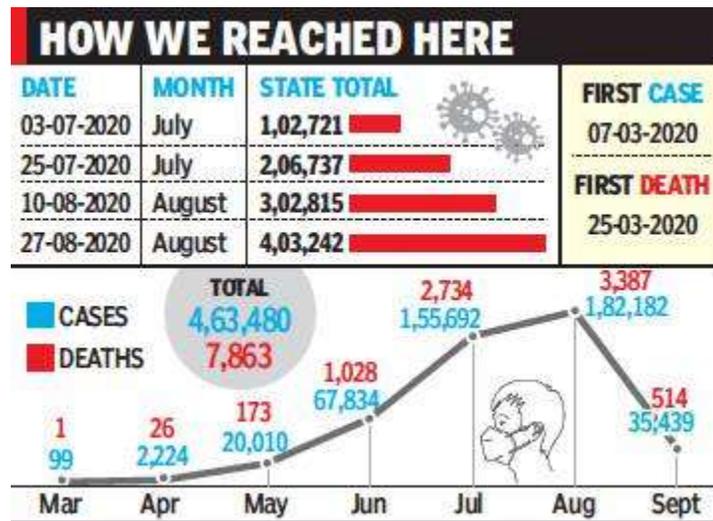


*CHANGES IN 24 HOURS As on Sept. 6, 6 p.m. As on Sept. 7, 6 p.m.

Districts with maximum cases

Chennai	1,42,603
Chengalpattu	28,641
Tiruvallur	26,559
Coimbatore	19,479
Kancheepuram	18,501

- ✓ The day marked the passing of six months, ever since the first case of Covid-19 was detected on March 7 in the state
- ✓ As on date, Tamil Nadu has the third highest case tally in the country with 4,69,256 cases and the second highest toll of 7,925 deaths
- ✓ The only bright spot is the less number of active cases in the state at 51,215 when compared with other heavy-burden states like Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh.
- ✓ On March 7, a Kancheepuram-based man from Muscat tested positive for the viral infection.
- ✓ On September 7, only Maharashtra (9.1 lakh) and Andhra Pradesh (50.6 lakh) had seen more cases than the state.
- ✓ The state recorded its first Covid death on March 25, a 54-year-old businessman in Madurai.
- ✓ As on date, only Maharashtra (26,604) had recorded more deaths.
- ✓ In the last six months, the state ramped up its testing infrastructure after getting approvals for 161 RT-PCR testing centres, including 64 labs in the government sector.



- ✓ The state has more than 27,000 oxygen beds and an equal number of non-oxygen beds and more than 5000 ICU beds for Covid patients.
- ✓ With these facilities, the state has managed to have a recovery rate of 87% and mortality rate of less than 2%
- ✓ As many as 5,930 persons were discharged after treatment on the day, taking the total cured to 4,10,106 persons
- ✓ A total of 80,503 samples were tested in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of samples tested so far to 53,79,011

NATIONAL

- **On September 7, the Union Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry - launched a 24/7 toll-free helpline 'KIRAN'**
- ✓ The helpline was formally launched by Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thaawarchand Gehlot



- ✓ The new helpline aims to provide support to people facing anxiety, stress, depression, suicidal thoughts and other mental health concerns.
- ✓ The mental health rehabilitation helpline, KIRAN, can be reached from landline and mobile phones across the country at the number 1800-599-0019

- ✓ According to the Ministry, the helpline had been launched “in view of the growing incidence of mental illness, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.”
 - ✓ In India, there was a shortage of qualified mental health professionals while 10.6% of adults and 7.3% of adolescents faced mental illness, according to a NIMHANS survey in 2015-2016.
 - ✓ The helpline operators had been sensitised not to ask the caller for name or any identification details.
 - ✓ The helpline would function as the first step for callers to get advice, counselling and referral to psychologists and psychiatrists
 - ✓ The helpline will be available in 13 languages and has 660 clinical/rehabilitation psychologists and 668 psychiatrists as volunteers.
- **India – has recorded the highest ever rainfall for the month of August since 1926 this year, as per the data released by the India Meteorological Department (IMD)**
- ✓ The August rainfall this year has been the highest since 1926 with 32.7 cm
 - ✓ It was about 27% more than what is normal for the month of August
 - ✓ In August 1926, the rainfall recorded was 34.8 cm, exceeding the normal by 33%.
 - ✓ However, the figure for this year’s monsoon as a whole were likely to be within the IMD’s June forecast of a normal (96 to 104% of the long period average) rainfall
 - ✓ From June to September 6, India had registered 7% more rainfall than what is normal for this period.
 - ✓ The surplus rain was primarily registered in the states of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Odisha.
 - ✓ This year the IMD launched urban flood forecasting services for Mumbai and Chennai and it would extend it to Bengaluru and Kolkata soon.
 - ✓ Among the various zones of the country, North-West India has seen 10% less rainfall than what is normal, while Central India has seen a 17% surplus
 - ✓ Further, South India has witnessed a 20% surplus and Northeast India received exactly what it normally gets every year.
- **On September 7, India – reported 74,960 fresh Covid-19 infections and 1,125 deaths, the highest ever for a single day**
- ✓ With this, the total caseload of the country has gone up to 42.5 lakhs while the number of casualties reached 72,725
 - ✓ India has contributed more than 40% of all cases recorded worldwide, as on September 6
 - ✓ Cases in India during the last weekend on September 5 and 6 were higher than those recorded in the US and Brazil, the other two worst-hit countries, added together.
 - ✓ Put together, India recorded nearly 1,84,000 fresh infections over the weekend, whereas the US reported 73,202 infections over the week and Brazil 45,805, according to data from worldometers.info.

- ✓ On September 7, Maharashtra reported 16,429 new cases and 423 deaths, the highest in a single day in the state
- ✓ Andhra Pradesh has the second highest case count in the country after Maharashtra and Karnataka is at the fourth spot below Tamil Nadu.
- ✓ Andhra Pradesh crossed the five lakh Covid-19 caseload with 8,368 fresh infections reported on the day
- ✓ Karnataka added 5,773 fresh cases, taking the state's caseload to 4,04,324, along with 141 deaths

INTERNATIONAL

- **The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) - has announced that it will be leading the procurement and supply of COVID-19 vaccines among the various countries**
- ✓ The UN agency will also ensure that all countries have safe, fast and equitable access to initial doses, when they are available.
- ✓ UNICEF is the world's largest single vaccine buyer
 - ✓ It procures over 2 billion doses of various vaccines annually for routine immunisation and outbreak response on behalf of nearly 100 countries.
- ✓ The UN agency will lead efforts to procure and supply doses of Covid-19 vaccines on behalf of the COVAX Global Vaccine Facility for the purchase of vaccines to 92 low and lower middle-income countries
 - ✓ It will collaborate with the Revolving Fund of the Pan American Health Organization in the initiative
- ✓ UNICEF is the world's largest single buyer of vaccines for diseases like measles and polio
- ✓ It will also serve as a procurement coordinator to support purchases by 80 higher-income economies
 - ✓ These countries have expressed their desire to participate in the COVAX Facility and would finance the vaccines from their own budgets
- ✓ COVAX facility is a universal platform setup established in April to ensure equitable access to the Covid-19 vaccine.
 - ✓ It has nearly 165 countries 'onboard', which is nearly 60% of the world's population.
 - ✓ The COVAX facility is a joint initiative of WHO, GAVI alliance and Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI)
 - ✓ On September 1, the United States informed that it will not join the COVAX global vaccine facility due to the involvement of the World Health Organisation
 - ✓ India is also in talks about joining the facility with the WHO
- ✓ Till date just one vaccine has reached up-to the final approval stage. Sputnik-V, erstwhile known as Gam-COVID-Vac, is researched and developed by the Gamaleya Research Institute in Moscow.

- ✓ The vaccine was approved by the Ministry of Health of the Russia Federation

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **On September 7, India - successfully tested an indigenously developed Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle (HSTDV) powered by a scramjet engine**
- ✓ The technology is expected to serve as a critical building block for the next-generation hypersonic cruise missiles capable of flying at speeds above Mach 5.
- ✓ The HSTDV test was demonstrated by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) from the Dr Abdul Kalam Island off the Odisha coast at 11.03am
- ✓ The test demonstrated the autonomous flight of a scramjet integrated vehicle, capable of flying at speeds of over five times the speed of sound (Mach 5)
- ✓ The testing puts India into an extremely exclusive hypersonic club consisting of the US, Russia and China.
- ✓ The manoeuvring capability of hypersonic missiles makes them very effective offensive weapons, capable of defeating enemy missile defence and tracking systems.
- ✓ The US, Russia and China are far ahead in the race to develop aerodynamically manoeuvrable hypersonic weapons.
 - ✓ China displayed its DF-17 missile with a hypersonic glide vehicle at its military parade last year.
- ✓ In the test conducted on September 7, the hypersonic 'cruise vehicle sustained its scramjet-powered flight path at a velocity of six times the speed of sound (Mach 6 or 2 km/sec) for 22-24 seconds.
 - ✓ The hypersonic cruise vehicle auto-ignited at very high temperatures of up to 1,000°-2,000° Celsius to fly on its own after separating from the 'launch vehicle', which took it to an altitude of 30 km.
 - ✓ The launch vehicle, in turn, was powered by the proven solid propellant rocket motor of an Agni ballistic missile.
- ✓ The next phase in the project will be to develop long-range hypersonic cruise missiles within the next five to six years.
- ✓ It has to be recalled that the maiden launch of the HSTDV had failed in June last year
- ✓ The complex technology behind the HSTDV also has civilian applications like low-cost launch of small satellites.
- ✓ However, India still has to achieve sustained scramjet-powered hypersonic flight for a few minutes, which has been repeatedly achieved by the US, Russia and China.
- ✓ The Indian armed forces already have the ramjet-powered BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles, which fly at Mach 2.8 speed, developed jointly with Russia.
- ✓ Their strike range is being enhanced from the original 290km to well over 400 km.

- ✓ A scramjet engine is an improvement over the ramjet engine

1ST TEST IN '19 FAILED

- India successfully tested a scramjet engine-powered hypersonic technology demonstrator vehicle (HSTDV) off Odisha coast at 11.03 am
- Maiden test of HSTDV had failed in June 2019
- HSTDV will pave the way for development of hypersonic (Mach 5) cruise missiles. Tech will also help launch of small satellites at low cost
- Only US, Russia and China have developed such vehicles

CRUISE CONTROL

- India will need to achieve longer duration scramjet-powered hypersonic flights (at least a few minutes) in future tests
- HSTDV will pave way for development of hypersonic (over Mach 5 speed) cruise missiles. It also has civilian applications like launching of small satellites at low cost
- Only US, Russia and China have developed such hypersonic vehicles for conventional as well as nuclear missiles
- Manoeuvrable hypersonic missiles can defeat an adversary's missile defence shields



- ✓ In a scramjet engine, the air undergoes combustion using hydrogen fuel at supersonic speed and comes out at hypersonic speed
- ✓ Ramjets, in contrast, operate well at supersonic speeds around Mach 3 but their efficiency drops at hypersonic speeds.
- ✓ On September 7, the parameters of the launch and cruise vehicles were continuously monitored by multiple tracking radars, electro-optical systems and telemetry stations.

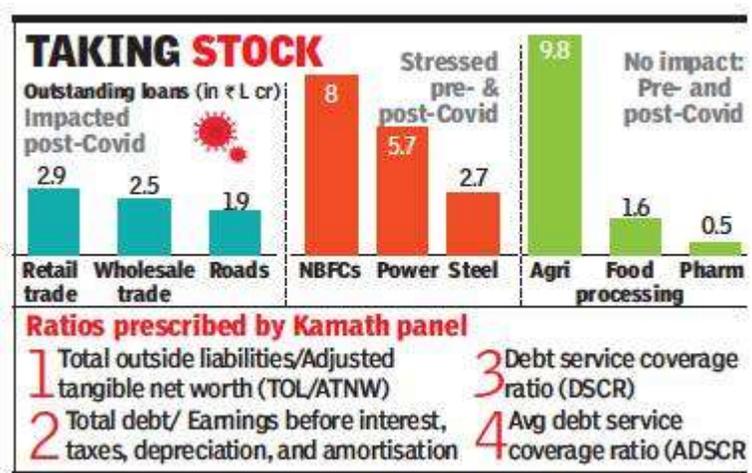
DEFENCE

- **The IAF – had announced that the formal induction ceremony of the Rafale fighter jets will be held at the Ambala Air Force station on September 10**
- ✓ Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and French Defence Minister Florence Parly will be present for the induction ceremony
- ✓ The second batch of four Rafale jets is likely to arrive in October
- ✓ On July 29, five Rafale jets, three single-seat and two twin-seater trainers, landed at the Ambala air base, the home base of the No. 17 Golden Arrows squadron
- ✓ These are part of the €7.87-billion Inter-Governmental Agreement with France for 36 jets in fly-away condition signed in September 2016.

ECONOMY

- **On September 7, the Reserve Bank of India - said it has broadly accepted the recommendation of the five-member expert committee headed by K V Kamath, former chief of New Development bank**
- ✓ The panel was formed to make recommendations on financial parameters to be considered for one-time restructuring of loans that were affected by COVID-19 pandemic
- ✓ It has identified 26 sectors impacted by the crisis and has announced six key ratios, within which the loan resolution plan has to be finalised.

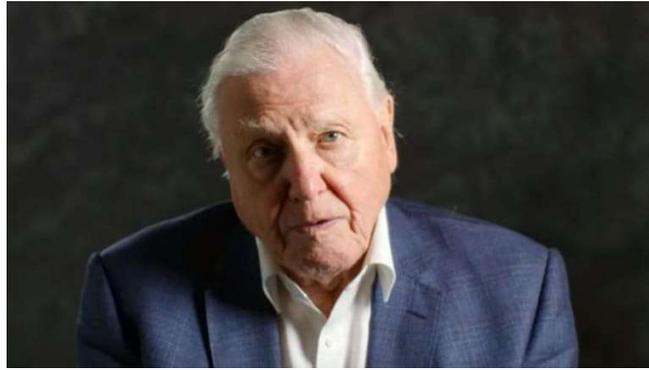
- ✓ For sectors not mentioned, the ratios can be decided by the individual bank.
- ✓ These ratios essentially determine how much debt a company can build up in relation to its capital and income
- ✓ The panel did not identify the amount that would be required for restructuring
- ✓ As per the committee's recommendations, companies in sectors such as retail and wholesale trade, textiles, engineering which were repaying loans before the Covid crisis can have easier terms of repayment
- ✓ But, NBFCs, power, steel and real estate businesses that were struggling even before the crisis may have to face the pain of recovery action



- ✓ Considering the large volume and the fact that only standard assets are eligible under the proposed scheme, the panel proposed simplified restructuring for mild and moderate stress and comprehensive restructuring for severe stress
- ✓ As per the panel, all sectors must have a debt service coverage ratio equal to or more than 1.
 - ✓ It means the company has to generate operating income to cover its annual debt and interest payments after restructuring.
- ✓ Also, all banks are required to have a current ratio of at least 1, indicating the company's debt due in a year or less are at par with their assets.
- ✓ The only exception is aviation where a ratio of 0.4 has been allowed because airlines follow the cash and carry model for revenue purpose.
- ✓ Also, airlines enjoy six to nine months of credit from vendors.
- ✓ The 26 sectors specified by the RBI include automobiles, power, tourism, cement, chemicals, gems and jewellery, logistics, mining, manufacturing, real estate, and shipping among others.

AWARDS

- **On September 7, former PM Manmohan Singh - conferred the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for the year 2019 on British broadcaster David Attenborough in a virtual event.**



- ✓ Congress President Sonia Gandhi was also present during the online award function.
- ✓ Attenborough is a historian, writer and presenter of BBC Natural History unit
- ✓ The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development was instituted in the memory of the former prime minister by a trust in her name in 1986.
- ✓ It consists of a monetary award of Rs 25 lakh along with a citation.
- ✓ The award is given to individuals or organisations who work towards ensuring international peace and development and creating new international economic order.
- ✓ The other recipients of the award are Centre for science and Environment in 2018, United Nations High Commission for Refugees in 2015, ISRO (Indian Space Research Organization) in 2014, Kofi Annan in 2003, UNICEF in 1989 and Parliamentarians for Global Action in 1986.

INTERNATIONAL DAY

➤ International Literacy Day – September 8



- ✓ The day is being celebrated by UNESCO and other global organizations since 1967
- ✓ The observance of the day is to raise awareness about the importance of literacy to the mankind.
- ✓ Theme 2020 - Literacy teaching and learning in COVID-19 crisis and beyond
- ✓ The celebrations of the day were first announced at the 14th session of UNESCO General Conference in 1966

- ✓ According to UNESCO, South Asia has the lowest adult literacy rate followed by sub-Saharan Africa.
- ✓ The day was adopted as a part of United Nations Sustainable Development Goal Programme in 2015
- ✓ Globally, 775 million people lack literacy, of which 60.7 million are children and two-thirds are women
- ✓ As per the recent literacy report released by the National Statistical Office, 77.7% of Indians are literate.

