

## **EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – SEPTEMBER 9, 2020**

### **TAMIL NADU**

- **On September 8, Tamil Nadu chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami – said the state health department will soon open 2,000 single-doctor ‘mini-clinics’ across the state to treat patients for ailments other than Covid-19**
  - ✓ This was announced by the CM after chairing a review meeting on the pandemic with officials and public health experts.
  - ✓ Apart from a doctor, the hyper wellness clinics will have a nurse and a health assistant.
  - ✓ The facility is expected to serve 10,000 people in rural and 50,000 in urban areas
  - ✓ The mini clinics would come up in Corporations, Municipalities and major villages that don’t have primary health centres
  - ✓ In general, these clinics are set up to treat patients with headache, mild fever and other ailments.
  - ✓ These clinics are proposed in the present pandemic scenario, because doctors in several private and government hospitals are reluctant to treat patients suspecting Covid-19 infection
  - ✓ It will also avoid crowding at tertiary and secondary-care hospitals.
  - ✓ The clinics will have adequate stock of equipment and medicines to treat minor ailments and services will be free.
  
- **The Tamil Nadu assembly - will meet for three days at Kalaivanar Arangam in Chennai, starting September 14**
  - ✓ The decision to hold the meeting for three days was taken at a business advisory committee meeting led by Speaker P Dhanapal at the secretariat on September 8.
  - ✓ The first day of the session will witness condolence resolutions passed for former President Pranab Mukherjee, former MLA J Anbazhagan, former MP H Vasanthakumar and for all the people who died of Covid-19.
  - ✓ The House will also condole the deaths of 21 former legislators who died since the previous Assembly session

- ✓ The House will be adjourned as a mark of respect to the deceased.
  - ✓ As per the Speaker, the presentation of first supplementary estimates for the year 2020-21 and introduction and passing of bills will be taken up on the last day.
  - ✓ Compulsory Covid-19 testing will have to be done for MLAs, staff, marshals, officials and reporters, 72-hours prior to the session.
- **On September 8, the Tamil Nadu government - set up a 14-member committee to advise on the policy response on all thrust areas of the National Education Policy**
- ✓ This is the second committee after a seven-member committee was set up last week in the higher education department.
  - ✓ The committee will advise on the implementation of the National Education Policy as is relevant to Tamil Nadu in the short, medium and long term based on resource availability
  - ✓ Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami has already announced that the state will continue to follow the two-language policy.
  - ✓ The committee after consulting all stakeholders will submit its report within a period of one year from the date of constitution.
- **Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami - released the translations of 1,837 select poetic works from '18 lesser texts' (known as Pathinenkilkanakku Noolgal in Tamil) in French and German, through the International Institute of Tamil Studies.**
- ✓ The translations of these works in Hindi, Malayalam and Telugu were released by the Chief Minister in February last year.
  - ✓ Former Chief Minister Jayalalithaa announced in the Assembly on September 13, 2016, that select poetic works from 18 lesser texts would be translated into French and German and also in Indian languages such as Hindi, Malayalam and Telugu.
- **Union Environment Ministry's Expert Appraisal Committee – has granted the approval for the setting up a nine million tonnes per annum refinery of Chennai Petroleum Corporation Ltd (CPCL) in Nagapattinam**
- ✓ This has paved the way for establishment of yet another major refinery in the state
  - ✓ The committee, which met on August 22 through video conferencing, granted the clearance for the project on the premises of an existing refinery at Panangudi village, which has been closed since July 2019.
  - ✓ The approval was granted subject to certain conditions including, creation of green belt in 33% of the project land.
  - ✓ On completion, the refinery would produce BS stage VI petrol and diesel, alongwith liquefied petroleum gas, polypropylene, ATF, sulphur and coke.
  - ✓ The ₹32,908 crore refinery would provide direct employment to 600 persons and benefit indirectly to another 1,000.

- ✓ The existing one million tonne per annum refinery at Panangudi village will be dismantled while retaining some utilities.
- ✓ The total area requirement for the Cauvery Basin Refinery is around 1,350 acres of which the company has around 650 acres, while the remaining land is under acquisition.
- **The phase-2 human clinical trials of indigenous Covid-19 vaccine Covaxin - began at SRM Medical College Hospital and Research Centre at Kattankulathur near Chennai.**
- ✓ As part of the trial, 14 volunteers administered a shot of the vaccine on September 8.
- ✓ SRM was one of 12 institutions chosen by ICMR to conduct trials of the vaccine
- ✓ The vaccine was developed by Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech in collaboration with ICMR and the National Institute of Virology
- ✓ The phase-1 trials began on July 23 and around 30 volunteers site in the age group of 18 to 55 years were administered two doses, each 0.05ml, of the vaccine
- ✓ The vaccine contains inactivated coronavirus to provoke immune response in the infected patients.
- ✓ After the volunteers showed no side effects and their blood samples were sent to ICMR, 14 were given shots under phase-2 trials.
- ✓ In phase-2, parameters like immunogenicity or the vaccine's ability to provoke an immune response, the antibody titer, which is a test to detect the presence and measure the amount of antibodies present in a person's blood as well as the safety of the vaccine will be analysed.
- ✓ In phase-2, around 50 volunteers in the age group of 12 to 65 years will be administered two doses on day one and 28.
- ✓ They will have to visit the hospital for a follow up on day 42, 56, third month and on the sixth month.
- ✓ Based on the data and the analysis of blood samples in phase-2, phase-3 trial will be decided, which will have volunteers in the 1000s
- ✓ The state health department has, meanwhile, called for volunteers for the phase-2 human clinical trials of Covishield vaccine developed by Oxford University, which reached Chennai on September 3.
- ✓ The vaccine will be tested on volunteers at Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital and Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research, Porur.
- ✓ Dr TS Selvavinayagam, director of public health is the principal investigator for the project.
- ✓ This phase, as part of a multi-centric study in India, requires 110 to 150 volunteers
- **On September 8, Tamil Nadu – registered 5,684 fresh Covid-19 cases and 87 more deaths, taking the total caseload to 4,74,940 and deaths over 8,000 mark to 8,012.**

## RISING CASES

Zone	New cases	New deaths
Chennai region	1,751	30
North	1,231	22
Central	667	8
South	849	16
West	1,185	11
Other	1	0
Total	5,684	87

- ✓ Chennai, the worst affected district, reported 988 cases and 18 deaths.
- ✓ Chennai's neighbours Chengalpattu (364), Kancheepuram (122) and Tiruvallur (277) together reported 763 cases and 12 deaths.
- ✓ After Chennai, the highest number of cases was reported in Coimbatore (446).
- ✓ Cases in Cuddalore soared to 407, making it one of the hotspots after Coimbatore.
- ✓ The number of people cured of the infection remains at 4,16,715, after the discharge of 6,599 patients on the day
- ✓ A total of 50,213 persons are presently undergoing treatment in the State.
- ✓ A total of 83,266 samples were tested in the last 24 hours in the State, taking the total number of samples tested to 54.62 lakh.
- ✓ The state has 163 testing laboratories, with 99 in the private sector and 64 in the government sector

## NATIONAL

- **On September 8, the Ministry of health and family welfare - issued standard operating procedures (SOPs) for partial reopening of secondary and senior secondary schools**
- ✓ Apart from the schools, the SOPs are also meant for skill or entrepreneurship training institutions, higher educational institutions conducting doctoral courses and post graduate studies.
- ✓ The new guidelines for school reopening would be effective from September 21, 2020
- ✓ Accordingly, students from class IX onwards would be allowed to visit schools on "voluntary basis, for taking guidance from their teachers."
- ✓ Students will be allowed to visit schools subject to written consent of their parents/guardians
- ✓ The visits and teacher-student interaction must be organised in a staggered manner.

- ✓ The SOP for higher education stated that entrepreneurship training has been permitted in national skill training institutes, industrial training institutes, short term training centres registered with national skill development corporation or state skill development missions or other ministries of Government of India or state government, National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD), Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), and their training providers.
  - ✓ For higher educational institutions, conducting PhD or technical and professional programmes requiring laboratory/ experimental works will be permitted by the department of higher education in consultation with MHA.
  - ✓ Apart from various generic precautionary measures, the SOPs outlined specific measures like physical distancing of at least six feet, mandatory use of face covers/ masks, frequent hand washing, self-monitoring of health by all and reporting any illness and prohibition on spitting, among others.
- **Top five Indian state-run public sector oil and gas companies - have decided to join the International Solar Alliance's (ISA's) coalition for sustainable climate action (ISA-CSCA) as corporate partners**
- ✓ The 5 PSU's to join ISA are Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited, Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum, Hindustan Petroleum and GAIL India Limited
  - ✓ They will be contributing to ISA's corpus fund after joining the ISA-CSCA
  - ✓ This was announced by oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan in his inaugural speech at ISA's first world solar technology summit on September 8



- ✓ In order to reduce carbon footprint, these companies will be focusing more on green energy investments such as renewables, biofuels and hydrogen going forward, the Minister said.
- ✓ According to the Minister, India's oil and gas companies are also making efforts to deploy solar panels across their operations and their current installed solar power capacity is 270MW, while additional 60MW solar capacity will be added in the coming year.

- ✓ The Ministry has also launched the mission of solarising about 50% of fuel stations owned by public sector oil companies in the next five years
  - ✓ In this regard, more than 5,000 fuel stations of Indian Oil, the largest public sector oil marketing company, were solarised last year
  - ✓ Recently, French major Total also announced investments for buying about 2GW operating PV plants in India
  - ✓ International Solar Alliance (ISA) is an alliance of sunshine rich countries that have been set up by India and France on the sidelines of the Paris meeting on Climate Change in November 2015.
  - ✓ The main aim of ISA is to generate 1000 GW of solar generation and mobilize \$1000 billion of solar energy by 2030
- **On September 8, India – reported 88,995 fresh Covid-19 infections and a record high of 1,125 deaths**
- ✓ With this, the country is all set to cross the 9 lakh mark in total caseload on September 9, while taking the total toll to 73,848
  - ✓ Maharashtra continued to contribute the most to the death toll, reporting 380 fatalities, while Karnataka reported a high toll of 146.
  - ✓ Meanwhile, more than 79,000 people recovered from the infection on the day, taking the total recoveries to 33,88,390.
  - ✓ Maharashtra added 20,131 cases on the day, taking its total caseload to 9,43,772, while the total deaths stood at 27,407.

## **SUPREME COURT VERDICT**

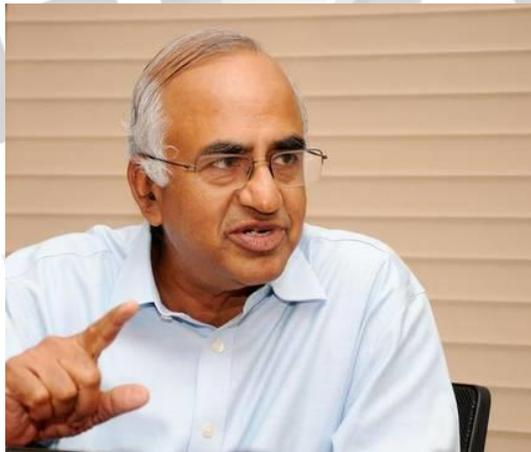
- **On September 8, the Supreme Court - ordered the Centre to adhere to norms as per the Union Road Ministry circular of March 2018 regarding the Char Dham project**
- ✓ The apex court had advised not to build full-fledged roads cutting across the fragile Himalayan slopes, while implementing the ₹12,000-crore ambitious Char Dham project for better connectivity to pilgrimage centres in Uttarakhand.
  - ✓ A Bench led by Justice Rohinton Nariman also directed the government to undertake re-forestation of the area to compensate the loss of trees caused by the construction.
  - ✓ The project had proposed the widening of single-lane roads into double-lanes by up to 10 metres, thereby developing the highways
  - ✓ The project aims to improve access to the Char Dham (four shrines) — Yamunotri, Gangotri, Badrinath and Kedar Nath.
  - ✓ The government had said the programme for development of road connectivity was launched by the Prime Minister on December 27, 2016.
  - ✓ It had said most of the project works were sanctioned before the issuance of the Ministry's circular on March 23, 2018.

## INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **Russia - has asked India to seek the collaboration of Indian companies in manufacturing vaccines against Covid and also whether phase III or bridging studies could be done here.**
- ✓ In this regard, the Centre has approached several companies, of which three firms agreed for the proposal and many others are evaluating the technology.
- ✓ The regulator, ICMR, will also facilitate phase 3 or bridging studies on Indian patients for the Russian vaccine.
- ✓ India is working to start large-scale manufacturing as well as phase 3 clinical trials locally for Sputnik V — the Covid-19 vaccine developed by Russia
- ✓ The phase 1 and phase 2 trials on the vaccine have already concluded and the results have been published in The Lancet journal recently

## PERSONALITIES

- **Former TCS Chief Finance Officer, S. Mahalingam - has been appointed Honorary Consul of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg in Chennai, with consular jurisdiction over Tamil Nadu and Kerala.**



- ✓ The “commission of appointment” was signed by the Grand Duke of Luxembourg, following the recommendation of the government in April 2020.
- ✓ President Ram Nath Kovind signed the exequatur confirming the appointment of the new Honorary Consul on July 31.
- ✓ Mahalingam retired as chief financial officer and executive director of Tata Consultancy Services.
- ✓ He is on the board of many companies and is associated with several social causes.
- ✓ Mahalingam is replacing former Honorary Consul Suhasini Maniratnam, whose mandate was terminated after five years.

# ECONOMY

- **On September 8, Global ratings agencies Fitch and Goldman Sachs – announced a sharp downward revision in India’s GDP forecast for the fiscal year ending March 2021 (FY21) in the global economic outlook**
- ✓ Fitch had estimated that the country’s GDP will contract 10.5% in 2020-21 as against -5% forecasted in the previous global economic outlook
- ✓ Goldman Sachs also expected it to decline by 14.8% in the current fiscal year as against -11.8% predicted in the previous forecasts
- ✓ As per the data released last month, Indian economy contracted a record 23.9% in the June quarter, the sharpest decline globally
- ✓ The decline has been attributed to the impact of strict lockdown aimed at tackling the spread of the deadly coronavirus pandemic.
- ✓ Fitch Ratings projected global GDP to contract 4.4% in the current year, but revised upwards China’s growth estimate to 2.7% for 2020.
- ✓ It projected the U.S. GDP to contract 4.6% in 2020, less than the 5.6% decline it had forecast in June.
- ✓ Fitch said India imposed one of the most stringent lockdowns worldwide in the second quarter of 2020 and domestic demand fell massively.
- ✓ Also, Fitch does not expect GDP to return to pre-virus levels until the first quarter of 2022-23
- ✓ But Goldman Sachs upgraded its expectations of a rebound next year.

