

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS—OCTOBER 10, 2020

TAMIL NADU

- Tamil Nadu – reported 5,185 fresh Covid-19 infections and 68 deaths on October 9, taking the cumulative caseload to 6,46,128 and death toll to 10,120
- ✓ Chennai reported the most number of infections with 1,288 cases
- ✓ It was followed by Coimbatore (397), Chengalpet (343), Salem (295) and Thanjavur (240).
- ✓ Chennai's other neighbouring districts, Kancheepuram (147) and Tiruvallur (226) logged 373 cases together.
- ✓ At the end of the day, 44,197 patients were still under treatment for the viral infection.
- ✓ As on date, the positivity rate – the number of people tested positive over the total number of people tested – was the highest in Chennai (9.9%) followed by Chengalpet (9.1%) and Coimbatore (8.8%).

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

	Until Oct. 2	Oct. 3	Oct. 4	Oct. 5	Oct. 6	Oct. 7	Oct. 8	Oct. 9	Total
Cases reported	6,08,885	5,622	5,489	5,395	5,017	5,447	5,088	5,185	6,46,128
Recovered/ discharged	5,52,938	5,596	5,558	5,572	5,548	5,524	5,718	5,357	5,91,811
Deceased	9,653	65	66	62	71	67	68	68	10,120

Persons tested



*Changes in 24 hours As on Oct. 8, 6 p.m. As on Oct. 9, 6 p.m.

Districts with maximum cases



- ✓ As many as 5,357 persons were discharged on the day, taking the total recovered persons total to 5,91,811

- ✓ The number of samples tested in the last 24 hours was 97,087 — the highest single-day figure so far.
- ✓ With this, a total of 81,41,534 samples have been tested in the State till now.

NATIONAL

- **India's National Butterfly – to be chosen by the government in 2021 among the three topmost contenders, as chosen in a nationwide citizen poll**
- ✓ The three frontrunner species in the race includes - Krishna Peacock (*Papilio krishna*), Indian Jezebel (*Delias eucharis*), and Orange Oakleaf (*Kallima inachus*)



- ✓ These three species exhibit unique characteristics such as ability to camouflage as a dead leaf, exhibit iridescence to stave off predators, and aid farmers in getting rid of pests.
 - ✓ The nationwide poll was organised by the National Butterfly Campaign Consortium, a collective of 50 butterfly experts and enthusiasts
 - ✓ The poll was held from September 10 to the midnight of October 8 garnering 59,754 votes.
 - ✓ The organisers will submit the names of the top three to the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.
 - ✓ The widely-distributed Indian Jezebel, with its vibrant colour pattern including vermilion (kumkum), is known to avoid its predators with its flashy wing colours
 - ✓ Krishna Peacock, a flagship species for biodiversity and conservation, is generally found in large numbers in the Himalayas.
 - ✓ Orange Oakleaf is commonly known as 'dead leaf' for its ability to camouflage as a dry autumn leaf while striking a stationary pose with its wings closed.
 - ✓ They were generally found in the moist forests of northern Western Ghats, central, northern and northeastern parts of India
- **On October 9, Union Minister of State of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Babul Supriyo – released the publications of the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) and the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) titled Animal Discoveries 2019 and Plant Discoveries 2019**
 - ✓ As per the list, 544 new species were added to India's rich diversity, which included 364 animal and 180 plant species in the year 2019



- ✓ The publications were released at an event at the Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose Indian Botanic Garden in Howrah
 - ✓ The publication provides details about 360 new species, four new sub-species and four fossil species, and 116 species recorded for the first time from India
 - ✓ With the new discoveries and new records, Indian faunal diversity stood at 1,02,161 species, accounting for 6.52% of all the species across the globe.
 - ✓ Among the discoveries, 294 species are invertebrates and 74 vertebrates.
 - ✓ Insects outnumbered other groups in general and in vertebrates, fish groups are high with 38 new species and five new records
 - ✓ Plant Discoveries 2019 lists 180 new plant species and 73 new records discovered from the country.
 - ✓ This volume of plant discoveries contains 134 seed plants, five fern and fern allies, six bryophytes, 18 lichen, 51 fungi, 23 algae and 16 microbes
 - ✓ The new records in a country refer to animal or plant species discovered in other parts of the world and recorded for the first time in the country.
 - ✓ The number of plant species found in India according to the BSI is 50,012, and contributes roughly 12% of all flora species in the world.
- **Union Minister for Textiles Smriti Zubin Irani - unveiled a brand and a logo for Indian cotton recently.**



- ✓ The branding — Kasturi Cotton — would initially be applicable to long staple cotton that is grown in India and meets prescribed standards.

- ✓ The Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) had developed a mobile application called “Cott-Ally” to provide the latest news on weather conditions, the crop situation and best farm practices.
- **On October 9, India – reported 73,357 fresh Covid-19 infections, taking the cumulative caseload towards the seven million mark to 69,75,380.**
- ✓ India was also closer to the six million-mark in recoveries as 59,78,381 patients have been cured of the virus, translating to a recovery rate of 85.7%.
- ✓ The number of active Covid-19 cases in the country has fallen below the nine lakh mark after a month to 8.93 lakh cases, as on date.
- ✓ The country witnessed 934 deaths on the day, taking the cumulative death toll to 1,07,388
- ✓ However, the situation in Kerala, Karnataka and Bengal continued to be alarming.
- ✓ Maharashtra, the worst affected state which has maximum cases and fatalities in the country, has recorded less than 15,000 cases for the seventh day in a row
- ✓ It was followed by Karnataka, which accounted for 10,913 cases and Kerala which reported 9,250 cases.
- ✓ Andhra Pradesh reported 5,145 new infections on the day.

INTERNATIONAL

- **On October 9, China – announced that it is joining a multilateral effort to manufacture and distribute a coronavirus vaccine to improve public health around the world**
- ✓ The decision to join was an important step for China, as it has four vaccine candidates in late-stage trials
- ✓ The decision highlights the efforts of China to position itself as an influential player in international diplomacy at a time when the US has pulled back from its role as a global leader.
- ✓ Over 160 nations have joined the international agreement known as Covax, which aim to ensure both rich and poor countries get vaccines simultaneously.
- ✓ The Covax initiative is spearheaded by the World Health Organisation
- ✓ The Trump administration has said it would not join Covax because it “will not be constrained by multilateral organisations influenced by the corrupt WHO and China.

PERSONALITIES

- **Fifteen-year-old Malika D’Cunha essay - has been shortlisted by the Paris-based Youth & Political Club.**
- ✓ Malika’s essay on rape was picked out of the 53 works contributed by students from various nations for the Youth and Political essay competition.



- ✓ Malika, a student at Mumbai's Cathedral and John Cannon School, is collaborating with Society for Nutrition, Education and Health Action (SNEHA) for an in-depth study of violence against women.
- ✓ Her essay will be judged by a four-member jury, which includes former French president Nicolas Sarkozy.
- ✓ Malika is the daughter of Indian Navy Commodore Sanjay D'Cunha, who hails from Curtorim, and Genevieve, who hails from Assagao.
- ✓ Cmde D'Cunha is the former commanding officer of INS Mandovi and is presently stationed in Mumbai with the Western Naval command.
- ✓ As part of phase two of the competition, which is a knockout phase, Malika has to find solutions to the social issue of rape.
- ✓ Working with SNEHA, which was started by Armida Fernandez, Malika is collecting inputs and trying to find ways to address violence against women.
- ✓ Malika from Goa is competing against the likes of Danbi An from South Korea, Lucas Teixeira Lopes from Brazil, Ava Bergeaud-Marko from the UK, Aminath Shaha from the Maldives and Clement Goy from France.
- ✓ Her final report has to be submitted by October 17
- ✓ It will be judged by Sarkozy, president of the NGO, Innocence en Danger Homayra Sellier, acclaimed journalist Christine Ockrent and economics professor David Schulman.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **On October 9, India - successfully tested a new, indigenous air-launched anti-radiation missile called 'Rudram-1'**
- ✓ This is the country's first indigenous anti-radiation air-to-ground missile developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for the IAF
- ✓ The missile is designed to destroy a variety of enemy surveillance radars, communication sites and other radio frequency-emitting targets on the ground after being fired from Sukhoi-30MKI fighters.



- ✓ They can play a key role in neutralising any jamming platforms of the enemy and clear the path for the fighter jets
- ✓ The new generation anti-radiation missile Rudram-1 has a strike range from 100-200km depending on the altitude from which it is fired.
- ✓ The missile, with a launch speed from Mach 0.6 to 2 (twice the speed of sound), was tested from a Sukhoi jet against a 'radiating target' on the Long Wheeler Island off the Odisha coast.
- ✓ The missile can be launched from altitudes of 500 m to 15 km
- ✓ It can easily be integrated and launched with Mirage 2000, Jaguar, HAL Tejas and HAL Tejas Mark 2.
- ✓ The Rudram-1 missile has Inertial Navigation System (INS)-Global Positioning System (GPS) navigation with a passive homing head for the final attack
- ✓ The missile's passive homing head can detect, classify and engage targets over a wide band of frequencies as programmed.
- ✓ The missile is being developed by Defence Research Development Laboratory (DRDL), Hyderabad, as the nodal agency.
- ✓ It is a joint effort involving DRDO labs, the IAF, Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. and several public and private sector enterprises.
- ✓ According to DRDO, all the objectives of the mission were successfully met during the test.
- ✓ DRDO has conducted a series of tests of different weapon systems in recent days
- ✓ They include the indigenously-developed hypersonic technology demonstrator vehicle (HSTDV), extended range BrahMos supersonic cruise missile (400-km range), nuclear-capable Shourya ballistic missile (750-1,000 km), a laser-guided anti-tank guided missile and a supersonic missile assisted release of torpedo (SMART) weapon system.

ECONOMY

- **The Reserve Bank of India – has announced that the Real-Time Gross Settlement (RTGS), a mechanism for high-value bank fund transfers, will be made available round-the-clock from December 2020**
 - ✓ Currently, the system is available only during day-time on working days.
 - ✓ The move will improve ease of doing business in India as companies use this platform for commercial payments throughout the day
 - ✓ Earlier, the RBI made available the National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) system on a 24x7 basis in December 2019
 - ✓ The measure was announced earlier by the RBI governor Shaktikanta Das in his post-monetary policy statement
 - ✓ The third-payment platform — Immediate Payment System (IMPS) — which is used for lower-value transactions among individual accounts has been available on a 24-hour basis for several years now.
- **On October 9, the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) monetary policy committee - voted unanimously to keep key interest rates unchanged**
 - ✓ The monetary policy committee was recently formed and its members were recently appointed by the Government of India

Governor's prescription

A look at some of the key announcements made by the RBI

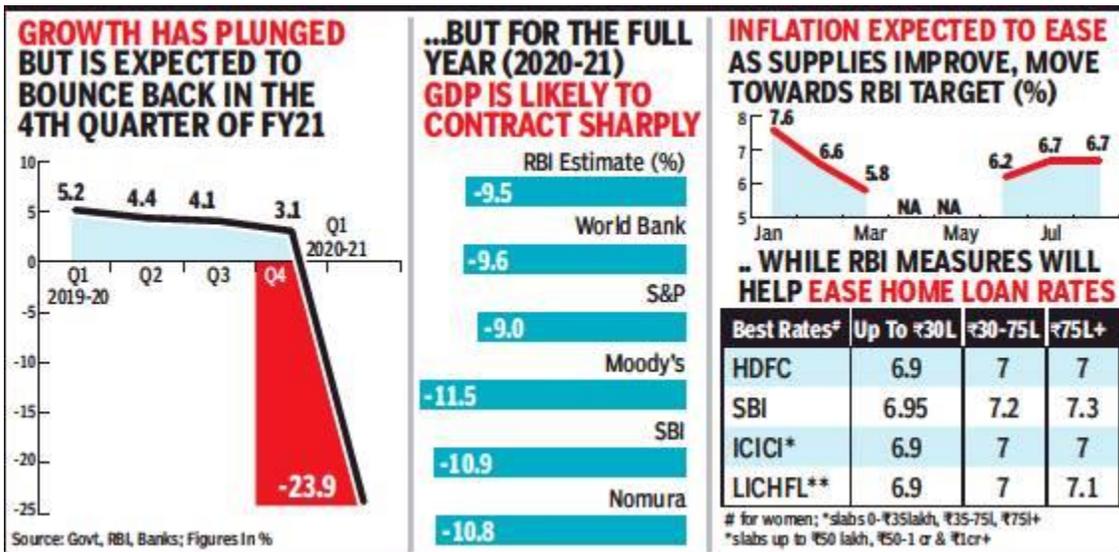
- Repo rate will **remain unchanged at 4%**
- Accommodative stance towards **growth will be extended to next year**
- **Risk weightages** for home loans have been rationalised to spur job-intensive realty sector

- Real Time Gross Settlement **payment system to go 24/7 from December 2020**

PROJECTION

GDP to contract by **9.5%**, with positive growth likely in Q4

- ✓ Newly appointed Monetary Policy Committee members — Ashima Goyal, Jayanth R. Varma and Shashanka Bhide — unanimously voted in sync with the three RBI members to leave the policy repo rate and reverse repo rate unchanged at 4% and 3.5%
- ✓ Further, the central bank announced steps to reduce borrowing costs by making it cheaper for banks to provide high-value home loans and unleashed a ₹1lakh crore liquidity infusion.
- ✓ Accordingly, the interest rates on home loans above ₹30 lakh will become cheaper, with the RBI making it less expensive for banks and finance companies to extend big-ticket home loans
- ✓ The biggest reduction is expected in home loans of over ₹75 lakh.



- ✓ The move is aimed to improve the country's GDP growth in the fourth quarter by 0.5%
- ✓ However, for the current financial year overall, GDP will still decline by 9.5%
- ✓ This assessment of RBI is in sync with the World Bank's estimate of a 9.6% contraction for 2020-21 as the Covid-19 induced lockdown affected industries across sectors.

STATE GOVTS MAY FIND IT EASIER TO BORROW

Measure	Impact
➤ ₹1L-crore targeted long-term repo operations	➤ Should credit pick up, funds are assured for banks. Sectors that drive growth to get more funds
➤ Banks' govt bond holdings up to 22% of deposits are allowed in 'held to maturity' category	➤ Banks won't have to make depreciation provisions if rates rise
➤ RBI to buy back state govt bonds through open market operations (OMOs)	➤ State governments will find it easier to borrow
➤ Exporters who delay collecting proceeds of sales not to be put on caution list	➤ Relief for exporters whose collections were hit by pandemic. Being in list caused distrust
➤ Risk weightage on retail loans up to ₹7.5 crore now eligible for lower risk weightage (75%) as against ₹5 crore earlier	➤ Capital requirements for banks to fall. More small businesses will get loans
➤ Banks can fund borrowers sourced by NBFCs for all priority sectors	➤ Will improve flow of capital to unserved and underserved sector of the economy
➤ Perpetual validity for certificate of authorisation (CoA) issued to payment system operators (PSOs)	➤ Will encourage payment operators to make large investments as this removes uncertainty

- ✓ Going ahead, prices are expected to ease in the fourth quarter.
- ✓ Consumer price index inflation is projected at 6.8% for Q2/2020-21, at 5.4-4.5% for H2/ 2020-21 and 4.3% for Q1/2021-22, as per the apex bank
- ✓ GDP growth for the first quarter of 2021-22 is placed at 20.6%.
- ✓ This is the first time that the RBI has shared its growth and inflation projections this year.

APPOINTMENTS

- **On October 9, Harvard Business School - named Srikant Datar as its next dean, succeeding another Indian-American Nitin Nohria.**



- ✓ Datar, who is currently the Arthur Lowes Dickinson Professor of Business Administration and the senior associate dean for university affairs at HBS, will take over on January 1.
- ✓ Datar will be the 11th dean in the Business School's 112-year history
- ✓ This will be the first time HBS will have back-to-back Indian-American deans.
- ✓ Nitin Nohria announced his plans to conclude his deanship at the end of June 2020 after 10 years of distinguished service in last November
- ✓ However, he had agreed to continue through this December in view of the pandemic.
- ✓ Datar received his bachelor's degree, with distinction, from the University of Bombay in 1973.
- ✓ A chartered accountant, Datar went on to receive a postgraduate diploma in business management from the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad
- ✓ Datar had completed master's degrees in statistics (1983) and economics (1984) and a Ph.D. in business (1985), all from Stanford University

AWARDS

- **On October 9, the Nobel Peace Prize - was awarded to the World Food Programme of the United Nations**
- ✓ The UN food agency is honoured with the award for its efforts to combat hunger in regions facing war, conflict and hardship

HELPS 97 MILLION WORLDWIDE EACH YEAR

“ Until the day we have a medical vaccine, food is the best vaccine against chaos —Nobel committee citation

➤ Rome-based organisation says it helps 97 million people in about 88 countries each year and that **1 in 9 people worldwide still do not have enough to eat**

➤ WFP runs a logistics service that has dispatched **medical cargo to 120+ countries** throughout the pandemic to help govts and health partners fighting Covid

➤ Peace Prize has gone to UN, a related agency or person for **12th time** — more than any other laureate



- ✓ The award assumes significance in the midst of Covid-19 pandemic, which has driven millions of people to the brink of starvation.
- ✓ The World Food Programme runs a logistics service to dispatch medical cargoes to over 120 countries throughout the pandemic to help governments and health partners fighting Covid-19.
- ✓ It also has provided passenger services to send humanitarian and health workers where commercial flights were unavailable
- ✓ The Rome-based United Nations agency has been instrumental in providing assistance to some of the world's most dangerous and precarious places
- ✓ It has been airdropping food in South Sudan and created an emergency delivery service in Syria to offer humanitarian aid, even as pandemic grounded commercial flights.
- ✓ Eradicating hunger is one of UN's Sustainable Development Goals, which was adopted in 2015.
- ✓ According to the agency, one in nine people worldwide still do not have enough to eat.
- ✓ Founded in 1961 and funded entirely by donations, the UN body helped 97 million people last year, distributing 15 billion rations to people in 88 countries.
- ✓ The world food programme is implementing the Country Strategy Plan for India (2019-23) in India
- ✓ It is aimed at reducing high risk of malnutrition in adolescent girls, women and children and seeks to improve their nutrition status by 2025.
- ✓ The Nobel Peace Prize 2019 was awarded to Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali for his efforts to resolve 20-year-long border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

