

## **EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS—OCTOBER 20, 2020**

### **TAMIL NADU**

- **On October 19, Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - announced Rs 10 crore from the chief minister's public relief fund to the government of Telangana for flood relief and rehabilitation measures in flood-hit areas.**
- ✓ In this regard, the Chief Minister has written a letter to Telangana chief minister K Chandrashekar Rao
- ✓ The move is intended as a token of support and solidarity of the government and people of Tamil Nadu with the government and people of Telangana during the hour of need
- ✓ Further, the CM said that blankets and mats will be sent as relief material to the affected families
- ✓ Heavy rain and unprecedented floods in Hyderabad and certain districts of Telangana have caused extensive damage to the region
  
- **On October 19, Tamil Nadu – reported 3,536 fresh Covid-19 cases, taking its cumulative caseload to 6,90,936.**
- ✓ With 49 more deaths, the State's death toll climbed to 10,691.
- ✓ A total of 38,093 persons are undergoing treatment in various health facilities as 'active cases'
- ✓ A total of 4,515 persons were discharged after treatment, taking the number of persons discharged so far to 6,42,152.
- ✓ The capital city, Chennai's daily infection count fell below 1,000 to 885 fresh cases
- ✓ Further, Coimbatore reported 290 cases, while Chengalpet recorded 241 cases and Salem 192.
- ✓ As many as 85,130 samples were tested in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of samples tested till now to 90,31,696.

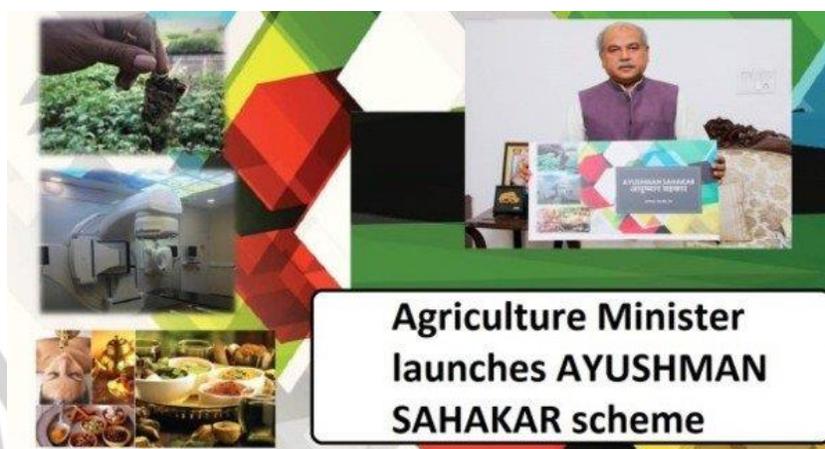
# NATIONAL

- **For the first time, India – starts the cultivation of Asafoetida in the cold deserts of Himachal Pradesh**
- ✓ Asafoetida, known as Heeng, has been used in Indian cuisine since time immemorial, but it was not cultivated in the country till now



- ✓ In a first, farmers have taken it up for cultivation in Lahaul valley in Himachal Pradesh with the help of agro-technology developed by a Palampur-based CSIR institution.
- ✓ The first seedling of asafoetida was planted in village Kwaring of Lahaul valley on October 15 to mark the start of its cultivation in India.
- ✓ Asafoetida is one of the top condiments and is a high value spice crop in India
- ✓ India consumes 40% of the world's heeng cultivation.
- ✓ The country has imported about 1,500 tonnes of raw asafoetida from Afghanistan, Iran and Uzbekistan at ₹942 crore last year for its internal demand
- ✓ The plant prefers cold and dry conditions for its growth and hence, it can be cultivated in cold desert areas of Indian Himalayan region— Ladakh and certain areas of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh.
- ✓ The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research Institute of Himalayan bioresource Technology (CSIR-IHBT) has carried six categories of Heeng from Iran through the National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR), New Delhi, and standardised its production protocols under Indian conditions.
- ✓ The IHBT had partnered with Department of Agriculture of Himachal Pradesh in order to promote heeng production in the region.
- ✓ Asafoetida is a perennial plant and it produces oleogum resin from the roots after five years of plantation.
- ✓ It can be grown in unutilised land of cold desert region.
- ✓ Raw asafoetida is extracted from the fleshy roots of *Ferula asafoetida* as an oleogum resin.
- ✓ The Institute has initially identified 300 hectares for cultivation of asafoetida and plans to cover 750 hectares eventually.

- ✓ Although, there are about 130 species of Ferula found in the world, but only Ferula asafoetida is the economically important species used for the production of Heeng.
  - ✓ In India, Ferula asafetida does not exist.
  - ✓ Other species, that don't yield asafetida, are reported from the western Himalaya (Chamba, HP), and from Kashmir and Ladakh.
  - ✓ Asafoetida is said to have several medicinal usage, ranging from curing kidney stones, whooping cough, ulcers to bronchitis
  - ✓ The spice is greyish white in colour when fresh while turns to dark amber when it is dried up
- **The Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar - has launched the AYUSHMAN SAHAKAR scheme on October 19, 2020.**



- ✓ The scheme has been formulated by the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC)
- ✓ The NCDC is the apex autonomous development finance institution, functioning under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- ✓ The scheme aims to assist cooperatives to play an important role in creation of healthcare infrastructure in the country.
- ✓ Under the scheme, the NCDC would extend term loans to prospective cooperatives by 10,000 crore in coming years.
- ✓ The loans would provide a working capital and margin money to meet operational requirements of health facilities operated by cooperatives
- ✓ It also provides interest subvention of one percent to cooperatives where women are in majority.
- ✓ The NCDC's scheme has aligned itself with the National Health Policy, 2017.
- ✓ The investments in cooperative healthcare services will provide affordable health care to farmers, access to technologies, development of human resources etc.
- ✓ The scheme comprises the comprehensive approach-hospitals, healthcare, health insurance, nursing education, medical and paramedical education
- ✓ The scheme fund would be assisting the cooperative hospitals to take up medical and Ayush education.

## CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **India - is set to sign the fourth and final 'foundational military pact' with the US during the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of 'two-plus-two' ministerial dialogue scheduled next week in New Delhi**
- ✓ The pact will be called the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geospatial Cooperation (BECA)
- ✓ It will enable the US to share advanced satellite and topographical data for long-range navigation and missile-targeting with India
- ✓ Defence minister Rajnath Singh and foreign minister S Jaishankar will hold the dialogue with their US counterparts Mark Esper and Mike Pompeo on October 26-27.
- ✓ US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defence Secretary Mark Esper are expected to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval on the sidelines of the ministerial dialogue
- ✓ India has already activated foundational agreements like General Security of Military Information Agreement, Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement, and Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement
- ✓ India signed the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) with the US in 2002
- ✓ It was followed by the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) in 2016, and then the Communications, Compatibility and Security Arrangement (COMCASA) in 2018.
- ✓ LEMOA provides for reciprocal logistics support like refuelling and berthing facilities for each other's warships and aircraft
- ✓ COMCASA has paved the way for India to get greater access to advanced military technologies with encrypted and secure communications and data links like armed Predator-B and Sea Guardian drones.
- ✓ The first edition of the two-plus-two dialogue was held in New Delhi in September 2018 after Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump approved the mechanism, which is often used by Japan for its diplomatic exchange.
- ✓ The second and the previous 2+2 dialogue between India and the US was held in Washington in December 2019.

## DEFENCE

- **India - has finally invited Australia to take part in its top-notch trilateral Malabar naval exercises with the US and Japan next month.**
- ✓ Australia, too, accepted the invite and confirmed its participation in the exercise this year.
- ✓ The 24th edition of Malabar is scheduled to be held in the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea in two phases in the first and third weeks of November

- ✓ It will mark the first time the “Quad” countries will come together for the combat manoeuvres on the high seas after a gap of 13 years.
- ✓ This year, the exercise had been planned on a ‘non-contact - at sea’ format.
- ✓ The four-nation war games will clearly signal their intent against China’s expansionist behaviour in the entire Indo-Pacific region.
- ✓ Since January, India was considering inviting Australia to take part in the Malabar exercise
- ✓ But the final decision was kept on hold after the military confrontation with China erupted in eastern Ladakh in early-May.
- ✓ The exercise is held alternately in the Indian and the Pacific Oceans.
- ✓ The Malabar naval exercise had started as a bilateral one between India and the US in 1992.
- ✓ Later in 2015, it was formally made a trilateral exercise by including Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force.
- ✓ The decision to add Japan taken seven years after India and Japan signed a 2008 joint declaration on security cooperation.
- ✓ The Royal Australian Navy last participated in Malabar in September 2007, which included a small Singaporean contingent too
- ✓ In 2017, Australia requested for a observer status but it was denied as inclusion of Australia would give message that QUAD grouping is aimed at China.

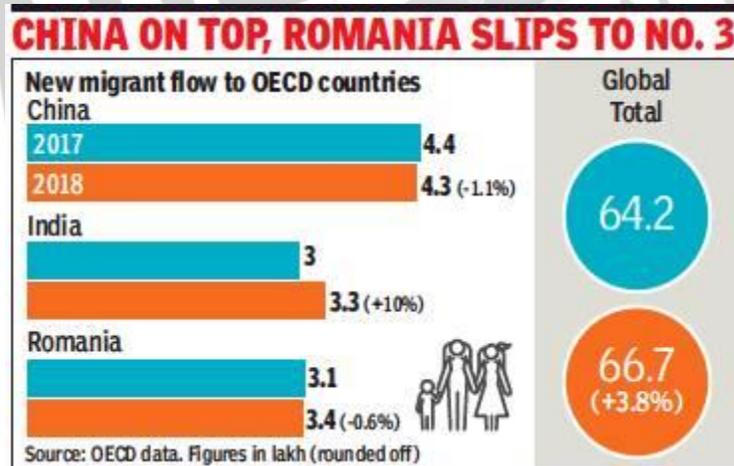
## ECONOMY

- **Regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) - has constituted a market data advisory committee (MDAC) for effective dissemination of its data for research, decision making and innovations in the financial market.**
- ✓ The MDAC will be headed by Madhabi Puri Buch, a whole time member
- ✓ This is a part of Sebi’s initiatives “to make shareable data on the Indian securities market, available for researchers, policy makers, general public alike and to enhance the quality of such data”
- ✓ The committee will recommend appropriate policy for access to securities market data, identify segment-wise data perimeters, data needs & gaps, recommend data privacy and data access regulations applicable to market data.
- ✓ Chief executive officers (CEOs) of stock exchanges & depositories, representatives of various stakeholders and senior officials of Sebi are members of the committee.

## REPORT

- **The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) – has released the “International Migration Outlook 2020” at a virtual press conference on October 19**

- ✓ As per the report, India has emerged as the second largest source country both in terms of the “total” inflow of new migrants to OECD countries in 2018 and with respect to the number of Indians acquiring citizenship of these countries.
- ✓ The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is an association of 37 countries, including a few from Europe, US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan.
- ✓ As these are well-developed economies, they attract a large share of immigrants, be it for work, studies or even asylum.
- ✓ While China continued to retain its top slot as the largest source country, India replaced Romania to emerge as the second largest source.
- ✓ In 2018, about 4.3 lakh Chinese migrated to OECD countries, accounting for nearly 6.5% of the total migration inflows.
- ✓ However, there was a slight decline of 1% as compared to the previous year.
- ✓ On the other hand, immigration from India to OECD countries increased sharply by 10% and reached 3.3 lakh.
- ✓ The migration from India represents about 5% of the overall migration to OECD countries.
- ✓ While Canada saw a huge spike in numbers, other OECD countries such as Germany and Italy also saw more arrivals as compared to the previous year.
- ✓ As per the data released, the “total” inflow of new migrants to OECD countries was 66 lakh, a slight rise of 3.8% over the previous year.



- ✓ Following the onset of the coronavirus, almost all OECD countries restricted admission to foreigners.
- ✓ As a result, issuances of new visas in these countries dropped by 46% and 72% in the first and second half of 2020 compared with the same period in 2019.