



EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – NOVEMBER 28, 2020

TAMIL NADU

- On November 27, Tamil Nadu Health Department - won the national award for organ donation for the sixth consecutive year in a virtual award ceremony
- ✓ The 11th Indian Organ Donation Day was celebrated on November 27, and the virtual event was organised by the Union Health Ministry in New Delhi.
- ✓ Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan and Minister of State for Health Ashwini Kumar Choubey participated in the event.
- ✓ Tamil Nadu Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar participated in the ceremony from Pudukottai, and Health Secretary J. Radhakrishnan from the Directorate of Medical Services in Chennai.

A STEADY DECLINE

Since 2008, Tamil Nadu has harvested 8245 organs from 1392 donors

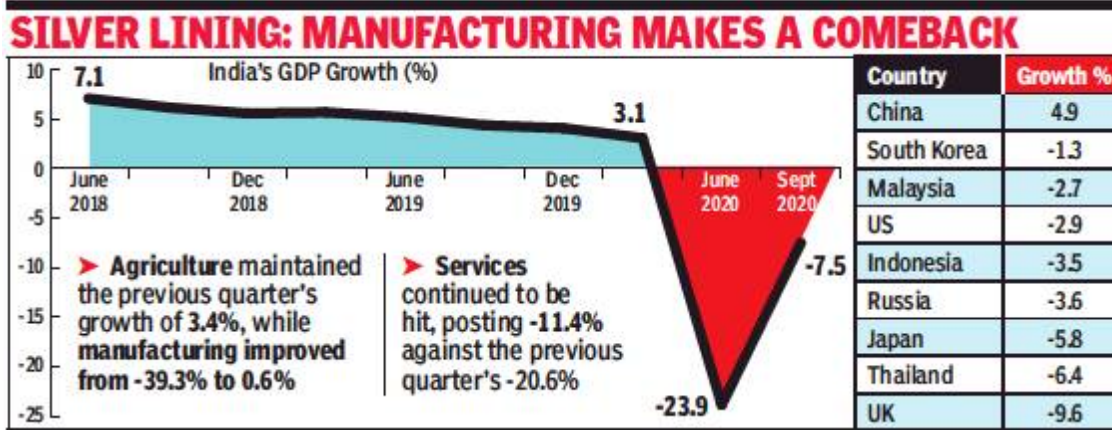
YEAR	ORGAN DONATIONS
2016	185
2017	160
2018	140
2019	127
2020	27 (Pandemic period)

- ✓ The state health department has written to the Union health minister and chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami asking for a government job reservation for families of organ donors.
- ✓ Since February, the state transplant authority (transtan) recorded organ donations from 27 brain dead patients from whom 97 organs were harvested.
- ✓ The State had also received more than five donations from other states.
- ✓ In Tamil Nadu, an organ transplant registry was set up in 2008

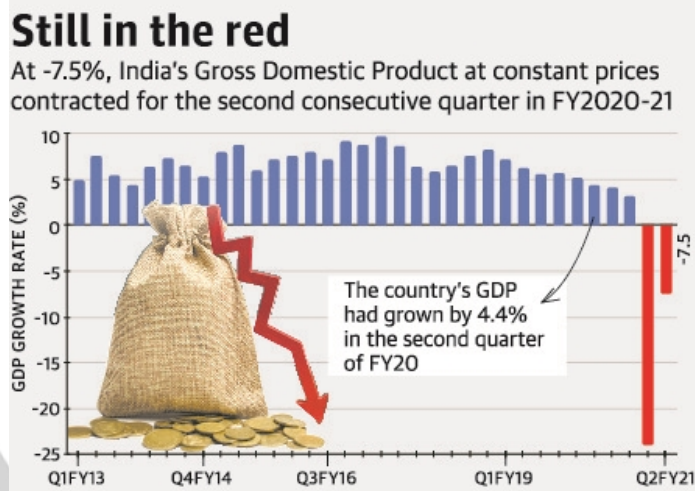
- ✓ The number of donations came down from 185 donations in 2016 to 160 in 2017, 140 in 2018 and 127 in 2019.
 - ✓ At least 90% of organ donations came from road accident victims.
 - ✓ From 1,392 donors, 8,245 organs have been harvested and distributed so far to those who needed them, on the basis of seniority
 - ✓ So far, this year, 107 liver and 186 renal transplants have been done in the State.
 - ✓ Tamil Nadu has achieved the rare distinction of performing lung transplants on six persons who recovered from Covid-19
 - ✓ The State had also performed the first bilateral cadaveric hand transplant in the country
 - ✓ Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital and Christian Medical College Vellore received the best hospital awards for donations, along with Kovai Medical Centre in the west and Vellammal Medical College and Hospital in the south.
 - ✓ Stanley Medical College Hospital and Rela's Institute of Medical Sciences won the award for highest number of liver transplants in Tamil Nadu in 2019-20.
 - ✓ Similarly, MGM Healthcare bagged the award for heart and lung transplants, and Apollo Hospitals for renal transplants.
 - ✓ The Transplant Authority of Tamil Nadu presented the award.
 - ✓ At a function held on the occasion of the 11th Indian Organ Donation Day, Health Secretary J. Radhakrishnan presented the award to the winners.
- **On November 27, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - announced a compensation of ₹4 lakh each from the state disaster relief fund and ₹6 lakh from the chief minister's public relief fund to the families of four people who died in cyclone Nivar-related incidents.**
- ✓ Further, relief of ₹30,000 to those who lost cows, ₹25,000 for buffaloes, ₹16,000 for calves, and ₹3,000 for goats was also announced by the government.
 - ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi called Tamil Nadu chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami on phone and inquired about the situation after cyclone Nivar made a landfall in the state.
 - ✓ Meanwhile, ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh each was announced to the next of kin of the persons deceased and ₹50,000 each to the injured from the Prime Minister's national relief fund.

NATIONAL

- **India's economy – plunged into recession after contracting for the second successive quarter, as per the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) on November 27**
- ✓ This is the first time that the economy posted two successive contractions since the government started publishing quarterly GDP data in 1996.
 - ✓ The NSO data showed the economy contracted by 7.5% in the July-September quarter, which is the second quarter of the country's 2020-21 fiscal year



- ✓ This is much lower than the record 23.9% decline posted in the April-June quarter.



- ✓ While most estimated a contraction of around 10%, the Reserve Bank of India projected 8.6% decline in the second quarter.
- ✓ India's economy still remains in the league of large economies which have contracted the most in the second quarter, with only the UK, which declined 9.6% in the September quarter, faring worse.
- ✓ China is the only large economy that posted growth in the September quarter (4.9%).
- **The Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar - recently inaugurated a cooperative programme for the beekeepers and honey collectors across 5 states.**
- ✓ Under the programme, five farmer producer organizations (FPO) are to be set up in five states by NAFED, National agricultural Cooperative marketing federation of India.
- ✓ They are to be established in East Champaran, Bihar; Bharatpur, Rajasthan; Morena Madhya Pradesh; Mathura, Uttar Pradesh; and Sundarbans, West Bengal.
- ✓ These farmer producer organisations were launched under the Scheme of Formation and Promotion of 10,000 FPO.



- ✓ NAFED will act as an intermediary to fill up the gaps between the elements of supply chain of beekeeping.
- ✓ It will ensure price remuneration to the beekeeping farmers and will work towards promotion of beekeeping as an occupation for unemployed women in the rural and tribal areas.
- ✓ According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, India ranks 8th in the world in terms of honey production.
- ✓ It produces 64.9 thousand tonnes of honey per year.
- ✓ Globally, China stands first in Honey production, producing 550 thousand tonnes of honey per year.
- ✓ The Central government has allocated 500 crores under Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan to increase Honey production in the country.
- ✓ The National Honey mission has been launched and around 30 lakh farmers have been trained in beekeeping.
- ✓ The National Bee Board has created four modules to provide training to the farmers under the National Beekeeping and Honey mission.
- ✓ As compared to 2005, the honey production in the country has increased by 242 % in 2019.
- ✓ The Beekeeping Development Committee was formed under the leadership of Bibek Debroy in 2019.
- ✓ The committee worked under the Economic Advisory Council of Prime Minister of India.

SUPREME COURT VERDICT

- **On November 27, the Supreme Court – ordered the completion of the counseling in super-specialty medical courses for 2020-21 in Tamil Nadu and Kerala, without providing the quota for in-service doctors**
- ✓ With the verdict, the apex court has struck down the 50% reservation provided by Tamil Nadu for government doctors in super-specialty medical courses this year
- ✓ A bench of Justices L Nageswara Rao, Hemant Gupta and Ajay Rastogi passed the order without expressing any opinion on the validity of the November 7 order

passed by the TN government providing the reservation from the current academic year.

- ✓ The bench also made it clear that this order would be operative only for the current academic year.
 - ✓ As per the current legal provisions prevailing in the country, there cannot be reservation of any kind in admission to super-specialty courses.
 - ✓ In Tamil Nadu, there are 369 seats in super specialty courses in the state
 - ✓ On Kerala, the court said the State government was unable to implement the Kerala Medical Officers Admission to Postgraduate Courses under Service Quota Act of 2008, which provides for 40% reservation for in-service doctors in super-specialty courses.
- **On November 27, the Supreme Court - directed the setting up of an independent National Tribunals Commission to supervise appointments and functioning of tribunals.**
- ✓ A bench of Justices L Nageswara Rao, Hemant Gupta and S Ravindra Bhat passed directions to streamline the process to fill vacancies in tribunals and make the quasi-judicial bodies independent from government interference
 - ✓ While passing the verdict, the apex court expressed concern over “a disturbing trend” of the government not implementing directions of tribunals
 - ✓ There are 19 tribunals comprising around 475 members in the country.
 - ✓ The National Tribunals Commission shall have the mandate to conduct disciplinary proceedings against members of tribunals
 - ✓ It will also manage administrative and infrastructural needs of the tribunals, in an appropriate manner.
 - ✓ Till the National Tribunals Commission is constituted, a separate wing in the Ministry of Finance, Government of India shall be established to cater to the requirements of the tribunals,” as per the SC.
 - ✓ It also directed that search-cum-selection committees be headed by the Chief Justice of India or his nominee.

INTERNATIONAL

- **The United Arab Emirates - became the first and mostly the last Arab country to generate electricity from coal recently**
- ✓ The coal plant, Hassyan, is to be set up in Dubai at 3.4 billion USD with a capacity of 600 MW.
 - ✓ By 2023, the capacity of the plant is proposed to be increased to 2,400 MW.
 - ✓ UAE is opting for coal-based power plant because the standards for pollution are to be based on guidelines for Natural Gas Power Plant, which prescribe less carbon emission
 - ✓ These standards are not so tighter when compared to the standards set by the World Bank and European Union.
 - ✓ The proposed power plant will fulfil 20% of its energy requirements of Dubai.

- ✓ The coal-based power plants in the Gulf region have been abandoned considering the pollution associated with them.
- ✓ Mostly Gulf countries obtain their electricity requirements from gas based power plants, as the region is rich in oil and natural gas.
- ✓ The United Arab Emirates is currently transitioning from a 100% natural gas based electricity generation system to a 100% powered by solar, nuclear and other renewable to reduce carbon emissions.
- **The International Air Transport Association - recently announced that Shanghai is the world's most connected city in the world.**
- ✓ Following Shanghai, the other cities such as Beijing, Guangzhou, Chengdu, Chicago, Shenzhen, Los Angeles were ranked at second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh places respectively among the most connected cities in the world
- ✓ Earlier, London was ranked the most connected city in the world according to the International Air Transport Association.
- ✓ It has now fallen to eighth spot.
- ✓ However, Heathrow Airport of London is the second busiest airport in the world after hosting more than 80 million passengers in 2019.
- ✓ The air traffic and connectivity of London has now declined by 67% according to the international Air Transport Association.
- ✓ Similarly, the air traffic and connectivity of Tokyo has fallen by 55%, while the connectivity of Seoul has dropped by 69%, Hong Kong and Bangkok by 81%.
- ✓ The Middle East countries saw a decline of 88% in the air connectivity.
- ✓ On the other hand, Europe and Africa suffered a decline of 93% of air connectivity.
- ✓ All these above announcements were made by the International Air Transport Association at its 76th annual general meeting.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **On November 27, India's remote sensing satellite Cartosat-2F – has come “dangerously close” to a Russian earth observation satellite (Kanopus-V) in the near-earth orbit**
- ✓ The space agencies of both countries are monitoring the satellites closely.
- ✓ According to Russian space agency Roscosmos, Cartosat-2F weighing over 700kg has dangerously approached Kanopus-V spacecraft
- ✓ The minimum distance between the satellites was found to be just 224m.
- ✓ Both spacecraft are designed for Earth's remote sensing
- ✓ Isro has been tracking the Cartosat-2F satellite and will perform a manoeuvre only when the distance between two satellites touches close to 150m
- ✓ Cartosat-2F was launched from Sriharikota on January 12, 2018, and is operational.

- **Pharma player Hetero Labs – to collaborate with Russia’s sovereign wealth fund, Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) for manufacturing over 100 million doses of Russian Covid-19 vaccine Sputnik V in India**
 - ✓ Sputnik V will be manufactured by Hetero’s biologics arm Hetero Biopharma in Hyderabad
 - ✓ The production of the vaccine is slated to commence in the first quarter of 2021
 - ✓ The vaccine’s interim clinical trial results show 95% efficacy on the 42nd day after the first dose.
 - ✓ The RDIF has received requests for over 1.2 billion doses of Sputnik V from over 50 countries and that vaccine supplies for the global market will be produced by RDIF’s international partners.
 - ✓ RDIF already has a tie-up with Hyderabad-based pharma giant Dr Reddy’s Laboratories for conducting Phase 2/3 clinical trials for Sputnik V and for distribution of 100 million doses of the vaccine in the Indian market.

- **The CSIR (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research)-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) – has received approval from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) to commercially use the “game-changing technology” of dry swab RNA-extraction-free testing method for Covid-19 on Friday.**
 - ✓ The testing method, developed by an in-house research team, will help to conduct testing at a fraction of the current cost of conventional RT-PCR tests and also give results more quickly.
 - ✓ The CCMB sought the ICMR’s nod after finding the trial runs successful in association with the Telangana health authorities in July.
 - ✓ In the conventional testing method, nasopharyngeal — nose or oropharyngeal — throat swab samples are collected from suspected Covid-19 patients.
 - ✓ These samples are transported to far-off testing centres after placing them in a liquid called Viral Transport Medium (VTM)
 - ✓ Moreover, to avoid leakage, they are packed heavily, which adds to sample processing times.
 - ✓ Researchers found that the ‘VTM’ can be avoided, which added to the logistics issues.
 - ✓ The dry swab technique also does not require the RNA-extraction process, and can be directly used for RT-PCR testing with sensitivity and specificity similar to the current gold standard.
 - ✓ The dry-swab direct RT-PCR method is easy to implement with no requirement of new kits, and existing manpower can perform this with no additional training.