



EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – DECEMBER 10, 2020

TAMIL NADU

- **The Tamil Nadu government - has announced to observe February 9 as 'Bonded Labour System Abolition Day' in the state**
 - ✓ Tamil Nadu is the first state in the country to make such an announcement.
 - ✓ The Centre had enacted the Bonded labour system (Abolition) Act on the same day in the year 1976.
 - ✓ Tamil Nadu has already formulated and introduced a state action plan and standard operating procedures to abolish the bonded labour system in the state
 - ✓ The Department of labour has proposed to observe 'bonded labour system abolition day' to create awareness among the public, especially the vulnerable communities, about the laws and provisions available to fight bonded labour system.
 - ✓ The observance of the day will support the vision of the government in making the state 'bonded labourer-free'.

- **On December 9, the state transport department - withdrew a circular mandating installation of Vehicle Location Tracking Devices (VLTDs) in public service vehicles such as taxis and trucks while renewing their fitness certificates (FCs).**
 - ✓ The department has decided not to make compulsory the installation of VLTDs till they establish a command and control centre (CCC).
 - ✓ The decision has been informed to all regional transport officers (RTOs), where FCs are renewed.
 - ✓ A control room, which is not in place currently, will track these vehicles in case a panic alert is raised by passengers or drivers during emergencies.
 - ✓ Till a control centre is set up, the government was planning to share the server links of VLTD manufacturers to install a back-end monitoring system for panic alerts.

- ✓ Earlier, the government had asked vehicle owners to buy VLTDs only from eight private manufacturers.
- ✓ But the decision was reversed by the transport department later, allowing all recognised manufacturers to sell VLTDs in Tamil Nadu.

STATES

- **On December 9, Karnataka legislative assembly - passed the anti-cow slaughter bill named 'Karnataka Prevention of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Bill-2020'**
 - ✓ The bill proposes stringent jail terms and penalties for various offences and empowers police officers to seize and inspect vehicles allegedly used for transporting cattle or beef.
 - ✓ The bill increases the maximum jail term from one year (as per the existing law passed in 2010) to maximum seven years.
 - ✓ The existing penalty of Rs 25,000 has been increased to Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh for various offences.
 - ✓ Earlier, the bill was passed by both the houses in 2010, during the tenure of the then BS Yediyurappa government, but was overturned in 2013 after Siddaramaiah became the chief minister.
 - ✓ The present bill seeks a total ban on slaughter of cows in the state and tougher punishment for those involved in smuggling, illegal transportation, cruelties on cows and slaughtering.
 - ✓ The Bill makes even selling/disposing the cattle for slaughtering or intentionally killing the cattle an offence.
 - ✓ If the accused is convicted, then the court can forfeit the confiscated cattle, vehicle, premises, and material on behalf of the State government.
 - ✓ The government can appoint a tahsildar or officer not below the rank of veterinary officer of the Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Department as competent authority to look into various issues related to slaughtering under the proposed legislation.
 - ✓ Soon after the bill was tabled, some MLAs offered a special puja to cows brought into the Vidhana Soudha premises, in a first such instance
 - ✓ The bill will now be sent to the Upper House for passing.
- **The government of Andhra Pradesh - has signed an MoU with Survey of India, the first-of-its-kind in India.**



- ✓ Chief Minister Y.S Jagan Mohan Reddy described the step as a revolutionary one and said the survey would cover every house site, farm and other properties.
- ✓ After giving the title of the property deed, the survey findings would be kept under observation for two years.

NATIONAL

- **On December 9, the Union Cabinet - approved laying of undersea optical fibre cable to connect 11 islands of Lakshadweep with Kochi by May 2023, to help improve broadband connectivity in the Union Territory.**
 - ✓ The project is estimated to cost about ₹1,072 crore, including operational expenses for five years
 - ✓ It will be funded by the Universal Service Obligation Fund.
 - ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced the vision to connect Lakshadweep with undersea optical fibre cable in 1,000 days during the Independence Day speech.
 - ✓ The project envisages provision of a direct communication link through a dedicated submarine Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) between Kochi and 11 Islands of Lakshadweep viz. Kavaratti, Kalpeni, Agati, Amini, Androth, Minicoy, Bangaram, Bitra, Chetlat, Kiltan and Kadmat
 - ✓ The move is expected to play a vital role for delivery of e-governance services, potential development of fisheries, coconut-based industries, high-value tourism, educational development and healthcare.
 - ✓ The PM had launched the submarine cable connectivity to Andaman and Nicobar Islands in August 2020
- **On December 9, the government - gave permission to setting up of lakhs of public Wi-Fi hotspots**
 - ✓ The Union Cabinet approved the Public Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (WANI), which aims to provide access to easy and seamless Wi-Fi connectivity at minimal cost across the entire country

Who can set up public Wi-Fi hotspots?

Anyone with commercial broadband connection can provide the facility

HOW TO USE IT?

- One can connect to public Wi-Fi by simply using the Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (WANI)-authorised apps
- Only one-time registration will be required with any Wi-Fi provider
- Payments can be made through a specially-created wallet linked to the app



Govt hopes to have lakhs of public Wi-Fi hotspots

- ✓ According to the new scheme, anyone — from an individual in a residential area (with commercial broadband connection) to a shop owner in the neighbourhood to a tea shop vendor — can provide the Wi-Fi facility
 - ✓ And, the method to access public Wi-Fi will be as easy as checking into a WANI-authorized app on the phone.
 - ✓ This method is very much similar to that of the PCO model (PCO is Public Call Office) launched in 1990s
 - ✓ Payments for the usage can range from a few rupees (under Rs 10 for small usage), and will be deducted from a wallet which is loaded up for the purpose, something similar to the UPI payments network.
 - ✓ Only one-time registration will be required with any Wi-Fi provider, and thereafter there will not be any need of re-registration or mandatory authentication to access the Wi-Fi network
 - ✓ It is inter-operable, making it seamless and hassle-free for users, who may require faster networks when viewing content such as videos, movies, or sports.
 - ✓ The idea of setting up public Wi-Fi hotspots was recommended by telecom regulator, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) in 2017, to boost digital connectivity
 - ✓ The move also aimed at providing a source of income to people in smaller towns and rural areas.
 - ✓ This will involve multiple players, including PDOs, Public Data Office Aggregators (PDOA), app providers, and a central registry.
 - ✓ On suggestions of Trai, the government has approved a structure that will lead to creation of Public Data Office Aggregators (PDOAs) at the top, who will then enlist the Public Data Offices or PDOs (like small shops or individual households) to provide public Wi-Fi.
 - ✓ The Public Data Office Aggregators are proposed to perform the functions of accounting and authorisation.
 - ✓ The app provider will develop the app to register users and discover PM-WANI compliant WiFi hotspots nearby.
 - ✓ The details of all three will be maintained by the central registry, to be maintained by C-DoT
 - ✓ While no registration will be required for PDOs, the PDOAs and app providers will get themselves registered with the Department of Telecommunications through an online registration portal without paying any registration fee.
 - ✓ The government has decided there will not be any licence fee for providing broadband internet through public Wi-Fi networks.
 - ✓ Around one crore data centres are to be set up to launch the massive Wi-Fi network as per the scheme.
- **On December 9, the Union Cabinet - approved an outlay of ₹22,810 crore to the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana'**

- ✓ Under the scheme, the government will contribute to the EPFO on behalf of both employee and employer for two years, for recruitments made between October 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021.
 - ✓ The scheme will benefit nearly 58.5 lakh employees.
 - ✓ The ABRY scheme will see an outflow of ₹1,584 crore in the current fiscal.
 - ✓ The scheme has been launched to boost employment in the formal sector and incentivise new employment opportunities following the Covid-19 induced lockdown.
 - ✓ Under the scheme, the government will pay the employee and employer contribution of 12% each towards the Employees Provident Fund in respect of new employees for establishments employing up to 1,000 employees for two years.
 - ✓ In case of companies that employ more than 1,000 employees during the scheme's two year period, the government will pay only the employees' share of EPF contribution, that is, 12% of wages for two years.
 - ✓ The government clarified that persons drawing less than ₹15,000 per month will be eligible to avail benefits under the scheme.
 - ✓ Those persons who were not working in establishments registered with EPFO before October 1, 2020, and who did not have a Universal Account Number or EPF Member account number before the cut-off date will be eligible to avail benefits under the scheme.
 - ✓ The scheme will also be open to existing EPF members who lost their jobs between March and September this year and could not be re-employed in an establishment with a membership of EPFO until September 30, 2020.
 - ✓ The government's contribution to the EPFO will be credited to members' Aadhaar-seeded account electronically
- **The Centre - has allowed nine states to raise over ₹23,500 crore via market borrowings after they completed the mandated reform on 'One Nation One Ration Card' to be eligible for additional fund-raising.**
- ✓ The states eligible for additional borrowing permission for 0.25% of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) after completing Public Distribution System (PDS) reforms include Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Telangana, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh.
 - ✓ UP is the biggest beneficiary and can raise ₹4,851 crore through the borrowing window, followed by Karnataka and Gujarat at ₹4,509 crore and ₹4,352 crore respectively.
 - ✓ These allocations are made based on the suggestion of Department of Food and Public Distribution, that operates under Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
 - ✓ To be eligible for additional borrowings, the states need to complete the stipulated reforms by the end of December 31, 2020

- ✓ Implementation of the 'One Nation One Ration Card' portability scheme was one of the identified areas for reforms to be eligible for additional market borrowings during 2020-21
- ✓ The other reforms are related to steps on ease of doing business reform, urban local body/utility reforms and power sector reforms.
- ✓ These reforms had been identified and proposed by the Finance Commission.
- **On December 9, the talks between the government and the farmers' groups protesting against the farm laws – ended on a failure note with the unions rejecting the Centre's offer to amend the legislation**
- ✓ The farmers' groups resolved to step up the stir by organising a 'Delhi chalo' and an all-India protest on December 14
- ✓ Further, they announced a blockade of the Delhi-Jaipur highway on December 12 during which no toll booth would be allowed to levy any charge.

AGITATORS' APPREHENSIONS	CENTRE'S ASSURANCES
➤ MSP regime for procurement will be scrapped	➤ Will give written assurance MSP will continue
➤ APMCs to be weakened in favour of pvt mandis	➤ States can register pvt mandis, levy cess
➤ Anyone can trade outside APMC mandis	➤ States can be empowered to register all traders
➤ No right to go to civil courts in case of dispute	➤ Will provide for appeal mechanism in courts
➤ Big corporates will take over farmlands	➤ No buyer can take loans against farmland
➤ Can't register under 'contract farming' law	➤ States have right to register such contracts
➤ Land can be seized in case of contract breach	➤ Farmers can annul contracts without penalty
DEMANDS	GOVT RESPONSE
➤ Repeal proposed Electricity Amendment Bill	➤ No change in tariff subsidy regime for farmers
➤ Scrap stubble burning penalty in new ordinance	➤ Will 'adequately resolve' farmers' concern

- ✓ The farmers' leaders said they want the scrapping of all three recently passed agri laws
- ✓ The farm laws seek to increase the role of private trade in agriculture, encourage contract farming and set a higher bar for imposing stock limits.
- ✓ The announcements also put an end to five rounds of negotiations with the Centre, the last being with home minister Amit Shah on December 8.
- ✓ In its draft, the Centre assured it would give a written guarantee of continuing the minimum support price (MSP) and the APMC Act
- ✓ The state governments will be empowered to allow private persons to work outside the APMC only after registration and paying market fee.
- ✓ Further, the states would be authorised to register entities which deal in foodgrains and that jurisdiction of the SDM to listen to grievances would be enlarged to judicial courts.
- **The Railways - have changed the classification of 'high-speed' trains by increasing the maximum speed limit to more than 130 kmph, due to the proliferation of Linke Hoffman Busch (LHB) rakes**
- ✓ However, the norm for levying superfast surcharge on passengers still remains 'unchanged' at 55 kmph on broad gauge and 45 kmph on meter gauge trains.

- ✓ The deployment of co-drivers or co-locopilots on 'high-speed' trains was also examined.
- ✓ It was decided that no co-locopilot needs to be deployed on trains having speed up to 130 kmph.
- ✓ However, a duly qualified assistant locopilot (ALP) could be deployed for these trains.
- ✓ Such ALPs should be sufficiently experienced and capable of attending failures en route, and in the event of the locopilot getting immobile/incapacitated, he should take the train to the nearest station.
- ✓ The new scheme would be implemented on an experimental basis for a period of six months
- ✓ The co-locopilots could be deployed on all trains having a speed of more than 130 kmph.
- ✓ Earlier, the Ministry of Railways decided to raise the speed of trains to 130 kmph along the Golden Quadrilateral and Diagonals routes.
- ✓ In June 2019, the board directed that the sectional speed on the Delhi-Mumbai and Delhi-Howrah route be enhanced to 130 kmph, with the approval of the Commissioner of Railway Safety.
- ✓ On other routes (Howrah-Chennai, Chennai-Mumbai, Delhi-Chennai and Howrah-Mumbai), the increased speed was planned by 2020-21.
- ✓ These routes, running over a stretch of 9,100 km, constitute a sizable volume of passenger and freight traffic in the railway network

INTERNATIONAL

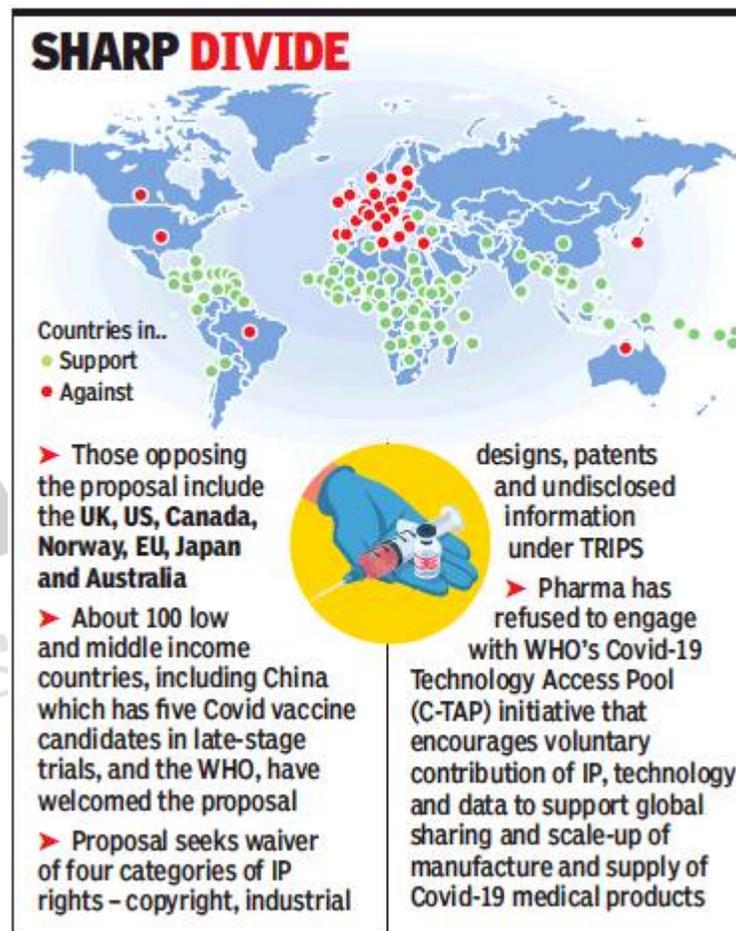
- **The UK's first Covid-19 vaccine rollout - hit serious problems within 24 hours after two NHS workers reported allergic reactions after being administered the vaccine.**

POSSIBLE SIDE-EFFECTS	
<p>Very Common (Likely To Affect More Than 1 In 10 People)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pain at spot where dose was injected ➤ Tiredness ➤ Muscle pain ➤ Chills ➤ Joint pain ➤ Fever ➤ Headache 	<p>Common (Likely To Affect Up To 1 In 10)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Injection site swelling ➤ Redness at injection site ➤ Nausea <p>Uncommon (May Affect 1 In 100)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Enlarged lymph nodes ➤ Feeling unwell

Source: Daily Mail

- ✓ This led to a new advisory from the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency asking those with a serious allergy to vaccines, medicines or food not to take the Pfizer jab.

- ✓ According to Pfizer, this vaccine was generally well tolerated with no serious safety concerns as reported by the independent data monitoring committee during the Phase 3 clinical trial
- ✓ The trial was conducted over 44,000 participants till date, out of whom over 42,000 have received a second vaccination
- **On December 10, the World Trade Organisation (WHO) – will debate the proposal of the Council for Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) to exempt Covid-19 vaccines from IP rights**
- ✓ South Africa and India had proposed earlier to temporarily suspend intellectual property rights for Covid-related technologies



- ✓ The WHO has welcomed the proposal stating that the waiver would help make treatments and tests available and affordable.
- ✓ If no consensus is reached, the negotiations could extend to the next year.
- ✓ Even if it happens in the first part of next year, it could help as patent applications are still in the process of getting published.
- ✓ The IP waiver would allow countries to suspend patents and other IP rights related to all Covid-19 drugs, vaccines, diagnostics, and other technologies, including masks and ventilators, for the duration of the pandemic.

- **On December 9, the UAE – became the first country to approve a Chinese coronavirus vaccine, citing preliminary data showing that it was 86% effective.**
- ✓ The announcement was made by the UAE's ministry of health and prevention
- ✓ This was the first official indicator of a Chinese vaccine's potential to help stop the pandemic.
- ✓ But China and Sinopharm, the state-owned maker of the vaccine, haven't made any disclosures till now.
- ✓ The news that a Chinese vaccine is 86% effective — exceeding the 50% threshold set by many governments — comes as a boost to China's biomedical ambitions.
- ✓ The UAE is among 10 countries where Sinopharm is testing its two vaccines
- ✓ The vaccine has been undergoing third-phase trials in the Emirates since July, and it was approved for emergency use for healthcare workers in September.
- ✓ China has four vaccine products in the final stages of development
- ✓ Three of these vaccines — including Sinopharm — use an inactivated form of the novel coronavirus to boost immunity.
- ✓ This means they only need to be refrigerated and can be easily distributed compared to vaccines developed by rivals Pfizer and BioNTech or Moderna, which have reported efficacy of 95% and 94% respectively but need to be transported at -70 to -20 degrees Celsius.
- ✓ According to the UAE government, the review of an interim analysis of data from late-stage clinical trials by Sinopharm also showed the vaccine was 100% effective in preventing moderate and severe cases with no serious safety concerns.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) - has recognised the ISRO-developed Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC) or desi GPS as a component of the World-Wide Radio Navigation System (WWRNS)**
- ✓ With this, India becomes the fourth country in the world to have its independent regional navigation satellite system get this recognition
- ✓ The other three countries that have its navigation systems recognised by the IMO are the US, Russia and China.
- ✓ The development will enable the utilisation of NavIC in the fields of maritime navigation, surveying and geodesy
- ✓ Geodesy refers to the science of accurately measuring Earth's geometric shape, its orientation in space and its gravity field
- ✓ The recognition was awarded at the 102nd meeting of maritime safety committee of the IMO held last month

- ✓ NavIC or IRNSS has been represented at the IMO by the Directorate general of shipping (DGS), ministry of ports, shipping and waterways with technical support from the space agency.
- **The United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) 'Emission Gap Report' – was released on December 9**
- ✓ As per the report, the world is heading for a temperature rise in excess of 3°C this century
- ✓ Further, the report predicted a fall of 7% in Carbon dioxide emission globally this year following the Covid-19 induced lockdown and reduced travel and industrial activities
- ✓ The report noted that the emissions of the richest 1% of the global population account for more than twice the combined share of the poorest 50%
- ✓ This highlights the greater responsibility that wealthy countries such as the USA, EU, Australia, New Zealand and others have towards meeting their Paris Agreement commitments.
- ✓ The annual report analysed the gap between anticipated emissions and levels consistent with the Paris Agreement goals of limiting global warming this century to well below 2°C and pursuing 1.5°C.
- ✓ The global GHG emissions have increased by 1.4% per year since 2010 on average, with a more rapid rise of 2.6% in 2019 due to a large increase in forest fires.
- ✓ The report noted that the total greenhouse gas emissions, including land-use change, reached a new high of 59.1 gigatonnes of CO2 equivalent (GtCO2e) in 2019.
- ✓ So far, 126 countries, covering 51% of global GHG emissions had announced their net-zero goals.
- ✓ As far as India is concerned, the country was ranked at fourth spot in terms of overall emissions (3.7 GtCO2e) in 2019, with China (14 GtCO2e), the USA (6.6 GtCO2e) and EU+UK (4.3 GtCO2e) being the top three.
- ✓ In terms of per capita emission, India's numbers are nearly one-third of the global average and nearly one-seventh of the biggest historical polluter, the USA.

INTERNATIONAL DAY

- **Human Rights Day or International Human Rights Day - December 10.**
- ✓ The celebration of the day aims to create awareness about human rights among people
- ✓ The day was chosen to honour the United Nations General Assembly adoption of Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948.
- ✓ The United Nations Prize in the field of Human Rights is awarded on the Human Rights Day.



- ✓ Theme 2020 - Recover Better-Stand Up for Human Rights
- ✓ The Allies of World War II, formally known as the United Nations, adopted four freedoms namely freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom from want and freedom from fear.
- ✓ They created the Charter of United Nations based on the faith in fundamental human rights.
- ✓ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights forms one of the bases of the United Nations.
- ✓ It aims to improve socio-cultural and physical well being of the people throughout the world.

➤ **International Anti-Corruption Day – December 9**



- ✓ Every year, the day is observed by United Nations and several other international organizations.
- ✓ Theme 2020 - Recover with Integrity
- ✓ United Nations Convention Against Corruption is the only legally binding universal anti-corruption instrument.
- ✓ It covers five main areas such as international cooperation, criminalisation and law enforcement, preventive measures, asset recovery, technical assistance and information exchange.
- ✓ The ranking of India in the Corruptions Perceptions Index has slipped from 78 in 2018 to 80 in 2019
- ✓ The Corruption Perception Index is launched by Transparency International, which is based in Berlin, Germany.

- ✓ According to the India Corruption Survey 2019, the percentage of people who paid corruption fell to 51% in 2019 from 58% in 2018.

