

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MAY 15, 2021

TAMIL NADU

- The Tamil Nadu government – announced stringent restrictions from May 15 as part of the lockdown protocol to prevent the aggressive spread of Covid-19
- ✓ Henceforth, except grocery, vegetable, meat and fish shops, no outlets will be allowed, and even these essentials will be allowed to remain open only for four hours – from 6am to 10am.
- ✓ E-commerce entities like Dunzo are allowed to deliver goods only till 10am.
- ✓ Also, tea shops are not allowed to be kept open and the pavement sale of vegetables, fruits and flowers is also prohibited.
- ✓ Since May 10, these shops had been allowed to remain open till noon.
- ✓ Chief Minister M K Stalin announced these fresh restrictions saying these were inevitable to curb movement of people and spread of Covid-19.

RESTRICTIONS FROM 6AM TODAY

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Only non-air-conditioned grocery shops, veg shops and meat/fish stalls can function for four hours a day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ People can visit only nearby shops for buying essentials; those travelling far will be stopped
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Only 50% of customers allowed at a time in these outlets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Allopathic & native medical pharmacies open, along with ATMs and fuel outlets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ E-comm firms can deliver goods only till 10am 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ E-registration must for those entering TN and for people travelling to other districts from 6am on May 17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Tea shops closed; pavement sales of vegetables, fruits, flowers prohibited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 10pm to 4am curfew to continue; full lockdown on May 16 and May 23

- ✓ Consequently, only non-airconditioned grocery shops, vegetable shops and meat/fish stalls can function for four hours a day, and in these places, only 50% of customers would be allowed at a time.
- ✓ However, allopathic as well as native medical pharmacies will be allowed to remain open as usual, along with ATM and fuel outlets.

- ✓ E-commerce companies delivering food items can function from 2pm to 6pm.
 - ✓ E-registration has been made compulsory for those entering Tamil Nadu from other states and other countries.
 - ✓ Even those travelling to other districts on essential purposes such as weddings, deaths, treatment or elderly care have to seek e-registration.
 - ✓ However, this e-registration system would come into effect from 6am on May 17.
 - ✓ The 10pm to 4am night curfew in force will continue and complete lockdown will be imposed on two Sundays — May 16 and 23.
 - ✓ In another development, the Tamil Nadu government has set a maximum limit on charges of private ambulances transporting Covid-19 patients.
 - ✓ A basic patient transport ambulance is allowed to charge ₹1,500 for the first 10km and ₹25 for every additional kilometre.
 - ✓ For a basic life support ambulance with oxygen, the cost should not exceed ₹2,000 for the first 10km and ₹50 for every additional kilometre.
 - ✓ Advanced life support ambulances with ventilators, defibrillators and multiple monitors can charge ₹4,000 for the first 10km and ₹100 for every additional kilometre.
 - ✓ Meanwhile, DMK President and chief minister M K Stalin said that DMK MPs and MLAs would offer one-month salary to the chief minister's relief fund to help the state in its fight against Covid-19
 - ✓ On May 13, DMK Trust announced that it would donate ₹1 crore to the CM relief fund.
- **The Tamil Nadu government – extended the suspension of the annual leave surrender facility of government employees, teachers and those in statutory and constitutional bodies for one more year**
- ✓ Last year, the Tamil Nadu government issued an order suspending the annual leave surrender facility of the employees in view of the Covid-19 pandemic
 - ✓ Employees are allowed to surrender earned leave for 15 days every year and encash it.
 - ✓ The order is applicable to all constitutional, statutory bodies, including corporations, local bodies, companies, institutions and societies
- **The Justice (retired) Aruna Jagadeesan Commission - submitted an interim report to Chief Minister M K Stalin on May 14**
- ✓ The Commission is probing the riots and police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters that killed 14 people in Tuticorin in 2018
 - ✓ The 35-page report offered recommendations to the government based on its findings
 - ✓ The commission's key recommendation includes withdrawal of the 235 cases against nearly 400 people.
 - ✓ The commission also made a few other recommendations including providing government jobs based on qualification to the kin of the victims.

- ✓ The interim report was prepared by the commission at least a year ago and it was mentioned before the division bench of the high court.
 - ✓ On May 13, the CM's office sought a status report on the probe, following which the interim report was submitted.
 - ✓ In the 27 sittings conducted till April, the commission summoned 1,052 people and examined 719 of them and marked 1,126 documents.
 - ✓ The 28th sitting was to be held from May 17 to 21 but was postponed due to the lockdown.
- **Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) - has hired 135 final year MBBS students to monitor the health of Covid-19 patients in home isolation in Chennai**
- ✓ They will be calling the patients from May 16 to help them in case of any worsening symptoms
 - ✓ The medicos will be paid ₹40,000 for three months by the civic body
 - ✓ They will sit in a zonal control room where they will be assigned patients to monitor through phone calls
 - ✓ GCC is expected to hire around 300 such doctors for the exercise.
 - ✓ Around 60% of the patients in Chennai are in home quarantine.
 - ✓ As per a protocol sheet prepared by GCC, these doctors will be calling patients at least once a day and take details about their oxygen saturation, symptoms and adherence to home isolation norms.
 - ✓ In case their oxygen levels are below 94 and they show breathlessness or other symptoms, they would co-ordinate with the zonal health officer and send the patient to a covid care centre (CCC), triage centre or a hospital.
 - ✓ They would also be co-ordinating with the state war room (104) for an ambulance.

NATIONAL

- **On May 14, Prime Minister Narendra Modi – released the eighth instalment of ₹20,667 crore to more than 9.5 crore farmers under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) scheme via video-conference**



- ✓ During the event, the PM said the Centre has transferred around ₹1.35 lakh crore to about 11 crore farmers so far under the PM-Kisan scheme
- ✓ Out of the total amount disbursed since the launch of the scheme in February 2019, the PM said around ₹60,000 crore has been transferred during the Covid-19 pandemic time.
- ✓ Under the scheme, which became effective from December 2018, the Centre provides ₹6,000 per year to eligible farmers in three equal instalments of ₹2,000.
- ✓ According to the PM, the scheme was launched to help farmers, especially small and marginal ones, in meeting their input costs.
- ✓ The benefit under the scheme has been provided to West Bengal farmers for the first time now on May 14

➤ **Russia's Sputnik V - became the third anti-Covid vaccine to make its debut in India at a price of ₹995 per dose, which includes 5% GST**

- ✓ The first dose of the vaccine was administered at a private hospital in Hyderabad as part of a pilot rollout on May 14
- ✓ The full-fledged commercial rollout of the vaccine is expected only by mid-June
- ✓ Dr Reddy's Laboratories is the Indian partner of Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF), which has developed the vaccine.
- ✓ The imported doses will cost ₹263 per dose higher as compared to the \$10 (approx ₹732) per dose uniform global pricing due to the import, logistics and distribution costs
- ✓ Dr Reddy's expects to vaccinate around 125 million people in India over the next 8 to 12 months.
- ✓ At this pricing, for state governments, Sputnik V will cost over three times more than Covishield, which is priced at ₹300 per dose and more than double the ₹400 per dose price tag of Covaxin.
- ✓ However, in the private market, Sputnik will be cheaper than Covaxin (₹1,200 per dose) but one-and-a-half times more expensive than Covishield.
- ✓ The Sputnik V will be first available to residents of metros and tier-1 cities due to the constraint of vaccine storage temperature requirement of -18°C.
- ✓ The company expects only about 15-20% of Sputnik doses to be imported with the rest being locally manufactured from July.
- ✓ RDIF has tied up with five Indian manufacturers for manufacturing 852 million doses, which is enough to vaccinate 426 million people
- ✓ Dr Reddy's has tied up with Bengaluru-based Shilpa Medicare for another 100 million people equivalent doses.
- ✓ Dr Reddy's Labs is also trying to bring to India the single-dose Sputnik Light, which has recorded 79% efficacy after 28 days of taking the shot
- ✓ While Covishield is created from a weakened common cold adenovirus that affects Chimpanzees, Sputnik V is created using different Human Adenoviruses.

- **The Centre – is to establish a national tracking platform soon to determine the impact of the vaccines against Covid-19**
 - ✓ The platform will also track the breakthrough infections that are likely to occur among those with complete and partial immunisation
 - ✓ The National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) had recommended to establish such a platform
 - ✓ The recommendation has been accepted by the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for Covid-19 and the Union health ministry.
 - ✓ The vaccine tracker will be particularly important to monitor the impact of increasing the dosing schedule of Covishield, which has been extended now from 12 to 16 weeks
 - ✓ The government panel has also recommended that pregnant women may be offered the choice to take any of the Covid-19 vaccines and that lactating women can be inoculated any time after delivery.

- **On May 14, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) – announced that the onset of southwest monsoon over Kerala is likely to be on May 31 with a model error of ± 4 days**
 - ✓ The normal onset date falls on June 1 with standard deviation of seven days.
 - ✓ The IMD has been issuing operational forecasts for the date of monsoon onset over Kerala from 2005 onwards.
 - ✓ As per IMD, the operational forecasts of the date of monsoon onset over Kerala during the past 16 years (2005-2020) were proved to be correct except in 2015.
 - ✓ In the Indian monsoon region, initial rains are experienced over south Andaman Sea and the monsoon winds then advance north-westwards across the Bay of Bengal.
 - ✓ As per the new normal dates of monsoon onset/progress, the southwest monsoon advances over the Andaman Sea around May 22.
 - ✓ This year, the monsoon advance over Andaman & Nicobar Islands is very likely around May 21.
 - ✓ The IMD had last month predicted overall ‘normal’ monsoon rainfall in the country during the June-September period.
 - ✓ **Meanwhile, the Tauktae cyclone has become the first cyclone to form in Arabian Sea**
 - ✓ This is going to be the first cyclonic storm of this year along the Indian coast.
 - ✓ It is expected to cross the Gujarat coast between Porbandar and Naliya on around May 18
 - ✓ The name “Tauktae” has been given by Myanmar, which means “gecko”, meaning a highly vocal lizard in Burmese
 - ✓ Tropical cyclones are officially named by the warning centres spread across the globe under the aegis of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).
 - ✓ In the Indian Ocean and South Pacific region, tropical cyclones receive names alphabetically, and women and men’s names are alternated.

- ✓ The WMO/United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (WMO/ESCAP) Panel on Tropical Cyclones (PTC) has members from 13 countries
- ✓ India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Maldives, Oman, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Iran, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen are the countries that decide the name of the cyclone.
- ✓ Last year, a new list was released that has 169 names of cyclones, a compilation of 13 suggestions each from 13 countries.
- ✓ The name Amphan for the cyclone that caused massive destruction in India last year was the last name on that list.

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **On May 14, Japan - extended an emergency grant aid of \$18.5 million to India in response to the current surge of Covid-19 infections.**
- ✓ Earlier, on April 30, Japan had announced its decision to provide 300 oxygen concentrators and 300 ventilators to India in coordination with the Indian government.
- ✓ They will be transported to India by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).
- ✓ Japan also expressed readiness to provide additional grant assistance of up to \$50 million to India, based on the India's requirement.
- ✓ Moreover, the additional 500 ventilators and 500 oxygen concentrators will be provided to India through UNOPS as a part of the assistance of up to \$50 million announced on May 5.

PERSONALITIES

- **Nuklu Phom of Nagaland – has become the only Indian to receive the Whitley Award, also called as ‘Green Oscar’, for the year 2021**

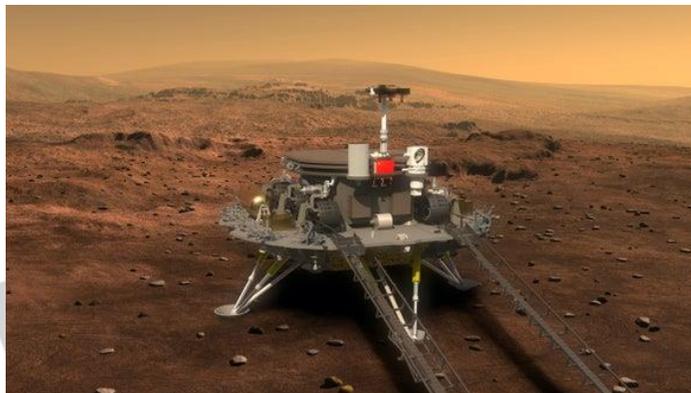


- ✓ Whitley Awards are presented annually by the Whitley Fund for Nature in recognition of the services of grass root level conservation leaders.
- ✓ The Whitley Fund for Nature was established by Edward Whitley in 1994.

- ✓ It has so far given 16 million pounds to support the work of two hundred environmental leaders.
- ✓ The winner of the award receives 40,000 pounds towards the conservation efforts.
- ✓ Nuklu Phom is creating “Biodiversity Peace Corridors” across four districts with 16 villages and working to extend the “Yaongyimchen Community Biodiversity Area”.
- ✓ He has also founded Lemasachenlok Society to raise awareness about the Amur Falcons to the locals
- ✓ Nuklu Phom is popularly known as the “Amur Falcon Man of Nagaland”.
- ✓ Nagaland is called the “Falcon Capital of the World”.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **On May 14, the Chinese Spacecraft Tianwen 1 - landed on Mars successfully.**



- ✓ The 5-tonne spacecraft was launched in July 2020 on a Long March 5 rocket from the southern Chinese island of Hainan
- ✓ The uncrewed spacecraft landed on a site on a vast plain known as Utopia Planitia
- ✓ This makes China the second country after US to land on the Red Planet
- ✓ The rover, named Zhurong, will now survey the landing site before leaving it to conduct inspections.
- ✓ Named after a mythical Chinese god of fire, Zhurong, has six scientific instruments including a high-resolution topography camera to study the planet's surface soil and atmosphere
- ✓ Zhurong will also look for signs of ancient life, including any sub-surface water and ice, using a ground-penetrating radar.
- ✓ The name Tianwen refers to "Questions to Heaven", which is a Chinese poem written two millennia ago
- ✓ Tianwen-1 is China's first independent mission to Mars.
- ✓ If Zhurong is successfully deployed, China would be the first country to orbit, land and release a rover in its maiden mission to Mars.
- ✓ Tianwen-1 was one of three missions that reached Mars in February 2021

- ✓ The U.S. rover Perseverance successfully touched down on February 18, 2021 in a huge depression called Jezero Crater, more than 2,000 km away from Utopia Planitia.
- ✓ Hope Mission - the third spacecraft that arrived at Mars in February this year - is not designed to make a landing.
- ✓ Launched by the United Arab Emirates, it is currently orbiting above Mars gathering data on its weather and atmosphere
- ✓ The first successful landing ever was made by NASA's Viking 1 in July 1976 and then by Viking 2 in September that year.
- ✓ A Mars probe launched by the former Soviet Union landed in December 1971, but communication was lost seconds after landing.

INTERNATIONAL DAY

➤ International Family Day or World Family Day - May 15



- ✓ The Day aims to highlight the role played by the families in shaping the life of individuals
- ✓ Theme 2021 - Families and New Technologies
- ✓ The World Family Day was introduced in the United Nations in 1993.
- ✓ The Day intends to address family related issues and create awareness about various demographic, social and economic processes affecting families.
- ✓ The United Nations is to celebrate International Year of Families in 2024.
- ✓ In India, around 78 million or 17% of the total population live in slums and there is a shortage of 18.78 million homes for the people

