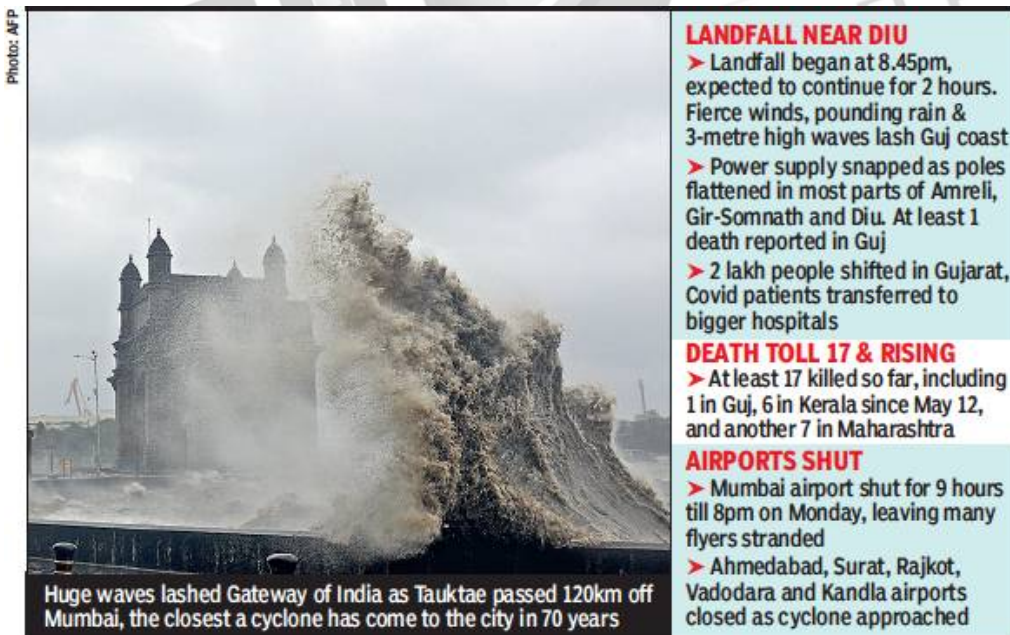


## EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MAY 18, 2021

### NATIONAL

- **Cyclone Tauktae – caused huge destruction to Gujarat coast after making landfall near the Union Territory of Diu late on May 17 as a ‘very severe’ cyclone**
- ✓ It had caused severe damage in the coastal districts of Saurashtra with pounding rain and ferocious winds



Huge waves lashed Gateway of India as Tauktae passed 120km off Mumbai, the closest a cyclone has come to the city in 70 years

#### LANDFALL NEAR DIU

- Landfall began at 8.45pm, expected to continue for 2 hours. Fierce winds, pounding rain & 3-metre high waves lash Guj coast
- Power supply snapped as poles flattened in most parts of Amreli, Gir-Somnath and Diu. At least 1 death reported in Guj
- 2 lakh people shifted in Gujarat, Covid patients transferred to bigger hospitals

#### DEATH TOLL 17 & RISING

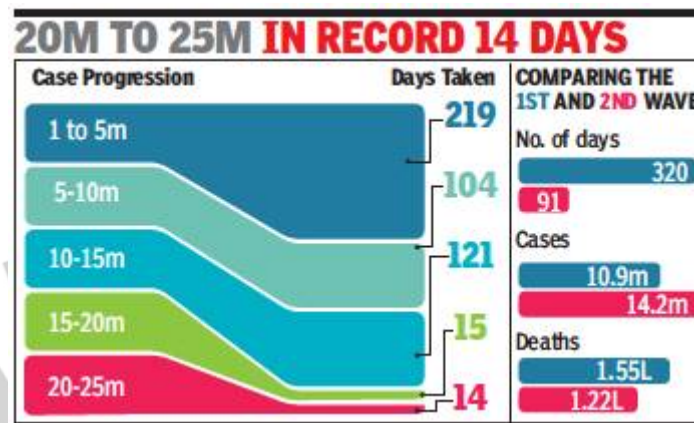
- At least 17 killed so far, including 1 in Guj, 6 in Kerala since May 12, and another 7 in Maharashtra

#### AIRPORTS SHUT

- Mumbai airport shut for 9 hours till 8pm on Monday, leaving many flyers stranded
- Ahmedabad, Surat, Rajkot, Vadodara and Kandla airports closed as cyclone approached

- ✓ Tauktae’s landfall began around 8.45pm and continued till late into the night, according to IMD’s cyclone centre.
- ✓ Tauktae, with an elliptical eye of around 42km in diameter, was packed with winds gusting up to 150-160kmph.
- ✓ For the first time in at least a decade, the “great danger” signal was hoisted at all ports and private jetties.
- ✓ At least 12 deaths were reported so far across the coastal districts of the four states of Karnataka, Maharashtra, Goa and Kerala.

- ✓ Chief Minister Vijay Rupani said close to 2 lakh people in 17 “vulnerable” districts had been shifted to safer locations.
  - ✓ Ahmedabad, Surat, Rajkot, Vadodara, Kandla and other airports were shut as the cyclone approached.
  - ✓ The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has deployed 50 teams in Gujarat for evacuation and rescue operations in view of the landfall of “extremely severe” cyclone Tauktae
  - ✓ The NDRF has deployed more than 100 teams across six states which have been affected by Cyclone Tauktae.
- **On May 17, India - became only the second country after the US to cross 25 million Covid infections since the beginning of the pandemic**
- ✓ Brazil, the world’s third worst-hit country, has reported about 15.6 million cases so far.



- ✓ India added the last 5 million cases to reach 25 million in a record 14 days.
  - ✓ Ten states, including Karnataka, Maharashtra, Kerala, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu, together account for 74.7% of total active cases
  - ✓ Maharashtra accounted for 21.4% of these 25 million cases while the share of Karnataka and Kerala is 8.9% and 8.6% respectively.
  - ✓ The share of both Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh is 6.5% each.
  - ✓ From April 21 to May 15, India has reported over the 3 lakh cases for 25 consecutive days.
- **India – loses the ONGC Videsh Ltd-discovered \$3 billion Farzad-B gas field in the Persian Gulf, after a decade of negotiations with Iran**
- ✓ On May 17, National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) awarded the \$1.7 billion deal contract for production to Petropars, a local gas producer
  - ✓ Farzad-B is the second Indian investment proposal that was rejected by Iran.
  - ✓ Last year, Iran had dropped India’s \$2 billion offer and decided to build the Chabahar railway link on its own.
  - ✓ The Indian consortium led by ONGC Videsh had signed the exploration agreement in 2002 and invested \$400 million.

- ✓ An ONGC Videsh-led consortium discovered Farzad B gas field within the Farsi offshore gas block in 2008 together with Oil India and Indian Oil.
  - ✓ Iran allowed the agreement to expire in 2009, a year after the discovery.
  - ✓ Since then, several deadlines for a deal were missed despite commitments by the top leadership of both countries.
- **On May 17, the government - revised the clinical guidance for Covid-19 treatment, dropping the use of convalescent plasma therapy**
- ✓ The move is attributed to the results showing that plasma therapy was not found beneficial in reducing the progression to severe disease or death.
  - ✓ The development came following a meeting of the ICMR national task force for Covid-19 last week
  - ✓ During the meeting, all members were in favour of removing the use of convalescent plasma from the guidelines citing its ineffectiveness.
  - ✓ Previous guidelines recommended off-label use of plasma therapy at the stage of early moderate disease, that is, within seven days of the onset of symptoms and if there is availability of a high-titre donor plasma.
  - ✓ Under the therapy, the blood component called plasma from a Covid-19 recovered patient is injected into the Covid-19 infected patient.
  - ✓ China and Netherlands have also reported that Plasma Therapy is not effective for Covid-19 treatment.
  - ✓ Earlier it was used during H1N1 Influenza outbreak and Ebola outbreaks.
  - ✓ One of the major drawback of the therapy is that the artificially injected plasma, which is a rich source of antibodies, stay only for three to four days in the patient's body.
- **On May 17, Reliance Jio - said it is constructing the largest international submarine cable system centred on India to cater to increased data demand.**
- ✓ The project will have global partners alongwith submarine cable supplier Subcom
  - ✓ The company plans to deploy two submarine cable systems
  - ✓ One system will connect India with Asia Pacific markets through Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia and the other one with Italy, middle and North Africa region.
  - ✓ According to Jio, the construction of the first of its kind, India-centric IAX and IEX subsea systems is aimed at meeting the demands of streaming video, remote workforce, 5G, IoT, and beyond
  - ✓ The submarine cable networks are used to connect several countries for flow of internet and telecom services.
  - ✓ The high capacity and high-speed systems will provide more than 200 Tbps (terabits per second) of capacity spanning over 16,000 kilometres, according to Jio.

- **The Ministry of Commerce - has recently initiated the anti-dumping investigation on the import of solar cells against China, Vietnam and Thailand.**
- ✓ The investigation has been initiated by the Ministry based on a request submitted by the Indian Solar Manufacturer Association.
- ✓ The solar cells are the basic ingredient in the manufacturing of solar modules.
- ✓ The solar cells that are being imported from China are 15% to 20% less expensive when compared to the solar cells produced in India.
- ✓ This price difference affects the local industries, which uses indigenous raw materials, eventually leading to a price rise in domestic solar modules
- ✓ In 2018, the centre had imposed 25% safeguard duty on solar imports from Malaysia and China
- ✓ This was later extended until July 2021 at a rate of 15%.
- ✓ With the safeguard duty against import of solar cells ending in July 2021, there will be no import barriers beyond the time period
- ✓ However, after the imposition of this safeguard duty, the imports from Thailand and Vietnam have increased by 5,750% and 800% respectively between 2018 and 2020 .
- ✓ Meanwhile, an anti-dumping investigation against the import of solar cells from Malaysia, Taiwan and China was initiated by the Government in 2017.
- ✓ However, it was eventually called off on 2018.
- ✓ The solar cell and solar module imports will attract a customs duty of 25% and 40% respectively from 2023.

## ECONOMY

- **The Wholesale price inflation (WPI) – rose to an 11-year high of 10.5% in April 2021, compared to 7.4% in March 2021**
- ✓ According to the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade data released on May 17, the 10.5% rate is the highest in the current series unveiled in April 2013.
- ✓ According to the methodology for comparison with various other series, it is the highest since 10.9% recorded in April 2010.
- ✓ The wholesale price inflation had declined 1.6% in April 2020
- ✓ The rise in WPI comes against the backdrop of a decline in retail inflation, which slowed to a three-month low of 4.3% in April.
- ✓ The Reserve Bank of India relies on the retail inflation data for its decisions on interest rates.

## AWARDS

- **Mumbai's Adline Castelino - emerged as the 3rd Runner-up at the 69th edition of the Miss Universe pageant held on May 16 in Florida, USA**
- ✓ She is the only Asian to win a spot in the Top 5 at the pageant this year.

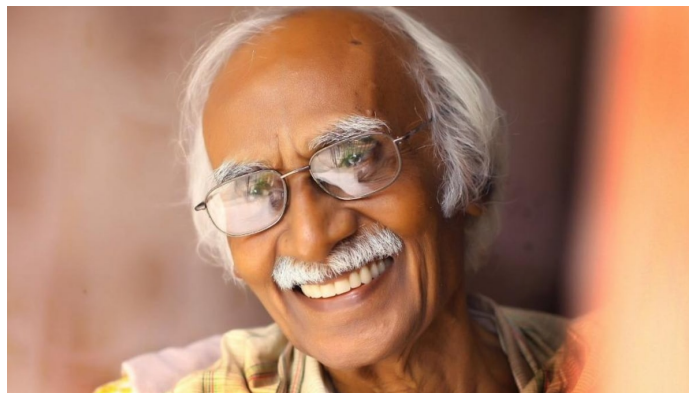
- ✓ Mexico's Andrea Meza was crowned Miss Universe 2020 at the grand finale



- ✓ Brazil's Julia Gama was the 1st Runner-up while Janick Maceta from Peru was the 2nd Runner-up.
- ✓ Miss Myanmar, Thuzar Wint Lwin won the award for best National Costume, while using the opportunity to draw attention towards the coup in Myanmar.
- ✓ She wore traditional Burmese patterns and held a sign "Pray for Myanmar".
- ✓ Adline competed against 73 other beauty queens from across the globe
- ✓ The 22-year-old Adline Castelino took India to the Top 5, 20 years after Celina Jaitly, who was the 4th Runner-up in 2001.
- ✓ Adline went on to represent the country after winning the LIVA Miss Diva Universe 2020 title
- ✓ She looked stunning in her exquisite dual-toned, metallic gown designed by Falguni Shane Peacock at the finale.
- ✓ Through various platforms, Adline has been creating awareness about polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) and focusing on providing access to affordable healthcare for women.
- ✓ She has also used her voice to support the LGBTQIA+ community in India.

## OBITUARY

- **Popular Tamil writer, short story teller and novelist, Ki Rajanarayanan (98 years) - passed away late on May 17**



- ✓ Ki Ra, as he was popularly known in the Tamil literary circles, won the Sahitya Akademi award in 1991 for his acclaimed 'Gopallapuratthu Makkal' novel.

- ✓ Ki Ra was a master of Karisal Kaattu Kadhaigal, for narrating the folklore and stories from the arid lands of southern Tamil Nadu, especially the Kovilpatti region.
- ✓ Ki Ra, the pioneer of the literary genre 'Karisal Illakkiyam' (the literature of the dry lands) and a master folklorist, was a school drop-out.
- ✓ Ki Ra, who has published over 30 books, focused in recording rural lives, complete with their harsh realities.
- ✓ Five of his books were released at the Chennai Book Fair in 2017.

## **INTERNATIONAL DAY**

### ➤ **World AIDS Vaccine Day - May 18**



- ✓ The day is observed in honour of thousands of volunteers, health professionals and scientists who worked together to develop AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) vaccine.
- ✓ The day is also called the HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) Vaccine Awareness Day.
- ✓ Theme 2021 – “Global Solidarity”
- ✓ On this day in the year 1997, the then US President Bill Clinton first talked about the concept of AIDS Vaccine in his speech at the Morgan State University.
- ✓ Currently, there is no licensed HIV vaccine in the market.
- ✓ However, medical treatments like Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy (HAART) are recommended to control HIV infection.
- ✓ The World AIDS Day is celebrated on December 1 every year.
- ✓ The total number of HIV patients in India as of 2017 is 21.4 lakhs.

