

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-AUGUST 28,2021

TAMIL NADU

- The Tamil Nadu government - has released a detailed Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) ahead of the reopening of schools for ninth to twelfth standards and colleges from September 1 onwards in the state
- ✓ Schools shall be allowed to function six days a week and sections have to be split into batches of not more than 20 students per classroom.
- ✓ All teachers and non-teaching staff must get themselves vaccinated
- ✓ Classes are going to be held on alternate days and there will be no lunching together, sharing of textbooks, meetings, study tours or sporting activities.
- ✓ Final year students of post graduate courses and professional courses like engineering will have classes on all six days
- ✓ The first years will have online classes, after attending their orientation programme in the first week of college

SOPS AT A GLANCE

Who can come & when

<p>UG and diploma course students</p> <p>2nd yr Monday, Wednesday, Friday</p> <p>3rd yr Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday</p> 	<p>5-yr degree courses</p> <p>2nd yr & 4th yr Monday, Wednesday, Friday</p> <p>3rd yr Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday</p>	<p>PREPARATIONS</p> <p>➤ All faculty, staff should be vaccinated </p> <p>➤ Vaccination camps on campus</p> <p>➤ Tie-up with hospitals for symptomatic staff or students</p>
<p> PG courses</p> <p>2nd yr All six days</p> <p>4-yr degree courses</p> <p>2nd yr Monday, Wednesday, Friday</p> <p>3rd yr Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday</p> <p>4th yr All six days</p>	<p>SCHOOLS TO HAVE</p> <p>Trained health care attendant Regular health check-ups </p> <p>Camps to screen students Mobile medical teams at block level</p>	<p>WHAT TO EXPECT</p> <p>➤ Masks, social distancing must on campus, sanitisers in classes </p> <p>➤ Staggering of entry and exit of different classes</p>

- ✓ The second year graduate students will attend college on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays while third year students will attend classes on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

- ✓ For professional courses like BE and B. Tech, second year students will come on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays while third year students will come on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.
 - ✓ Colleges should have quarantine facilities and tie up with nearest hospitals for students with symptoms.
 - ✓ All students and teachers/staff shall wear face masks compulsorily inside and outside the school premises
 - ✓ Thermal checks will also be conducted at the entry points of each school and college.
 - ✓ Online/distance learning will continue to be an alternate mode of teaching for those who prefer not to attend the physical classes, with the consent of the parents of students
 - ✓ The government has also allowed the reopening of hostels for college students
- **On August 27, the Tamil Nadu government - announced “Chief Minister Road Improvement Scheme” to widen the roads connecting taluk headquarters and the district headquarters in the next ten years**
- ✓ The government will spend Rs.3,200 crore in this fiscal to widen the roads to two-lane and four-lanes to facilitate free movement of traffic.
 - ✓ About 2,000km panchayat/panchayat union roads will be upgraded to ‘other district roads’.
 - ✓ It has been decided to upgrade 2,200km state highways to four-lane and 6,700km to two-lane based on high traffic density.
 - ✓ In the first phase, a 250-km long network will be widened to four-lane at a cost of Rs.2,000 crore and another 600km to two-lane at a cost of Rs.1,200 crore.
 - ✓ A policy note tabled in the assembly by Minister for Highways E.V. Velu outlines the long-term vision of the government for the next 10 years

Representative image



➤ Improvement of highway roads in the urban areas at a cost of ₹400 crore

➤ Eight bypasses will be created at a cost of ₹595.54 crore

➤ 648 causeways to be replaced by high level bridges at ₹ 609.71 crore

➤ ₹200-crore vehicular subway at Inner Ring Road in Madurai

➤ High-level bridges in Trichy and Madurai

➤ 75 bridges across rivers in 16 districts at a cost of ₹425 crore with NABARD assistance

- ✓ It includes the upgradation of all state highways with high traffic density to four-lane, and elevated highways in the most-congested areas in the cities.
 - ✓ All railway level crossings on state highways and major district roads will get rail over bridges.
 - ✓ To reduce the number of accidents, works will be taken up at Rs.200 crore under the Integrated Road Infrastructure Development Scheme
 - ✓ Further, funds to the tune of Rs.150 crore from the Road Safety Fund will be spent to improve accident-prone areas.
 - ✓ With loans from NABARD, 75 river bridges will be constructed at a cost of Rs. 425 crore to benefit over 15 lakh people in 558 villages across 16 districts
 - ✓ The government would construct high-level bridges across waterways against a total of 1,281 old causeways at a cost of Rs.2,401 crore
 - ✓ In the first phase, 648 causeways will be replaced as high-level bridges at a cost of Rs.609.71 crore
 - ✓ The state highways will be widened to four-lane in urban areas at a cost of Rs.400 crore, a 10% of which will be availed from comprehensive road infrastructure development programme.
 - ✓ New bypasses will be built in Sivaganga, Parthibanur, Kamudhi, Thiruthuraipoondi, Ambasamudram, Bhavani, Aruppukkottai (west) and Uthiramerur at a cost of Rs. 595 crore.
- **On August 27, the state government - announced cancellation of the “performance-based maintenance contract (PBMC)” scheme of the previous AIADMK government, which encouraged “monopoly of contractors”.**
- ✓ All state highways and major district roads were given a five-year contracts division-wise under the scheme
 - ✓ The contracts will cover initial rectification, periodical renewal, improvements and maintenance to increase the efficiency.
 - ✓ The difference between the government and PBMC to maintain a kilometre of state highway was Rs.50,000.
 - ✓ According to the leader of the opposition Edappadi K Palaniswami, the scheme was based on e-tender and any eligible contractor could participate from anywhere.
 - ✓ The AIADMK introduced the scheme in 2001-06, which was done away by the next DMK regime and the AIADMK reintroduced the package system in 2011-16.
 - ✓ According to Minister for Highways E V Velu, the Class I contractors in the state could execute road work worth Rs.300 crore, but the estimates under the PBMC were in the range of Rs.600 crore and Rs.800 crore, preventing local contractors from participating.
- **On August 27, Tamil Nadu chief minister M K Stalin - announced welfare measures to the tune of Rs.317.4 crore to improve the living conditions of Sri Lankan Tamils in refugee camps in the state.**

- ✓ The CM made the announcement under Rule 110 in the state assembly
 - ✓ The government planned the schemes based on reviews on basic amenities in Sri Lankan refugee camps in the state
 - ✓ A total of 3,04,269 Lankan Tamils, who came to Tamil Nadu from 1983, were living in the state.
 - ✓ Of them, 58,822 lived in 108 camps, including two special camps, in 29 districts.
 - ✓ The government would reconstruct 7,469 dilapidated houses in the camps at a cost Rs.231.54 crore.
 - ✓ In the first phase, a total of 3,510 houses would be reconstructed at a cost of Rs.108.89 crore this fiscal year.
 - ✓ The government would allocate Rs.30 crore to provide basic amenities in the camps this year.
 - ✓ On the education front for wards of Sri Lankan Tamils, the CM said the government would extend free education and accommodation to 50 students, who score high marks, to pursue engineering courses.
 - ✓ Similarly, the government would bear all expenses of the students who pursue post graduation.
 - ✓ It would bear the education expenses of five students, who score high marks, to pursue agriculture courses.
 - ✓ The government would enhance the scholarship for students and monthly incentive to the family head from Rs.1,000 to Rs.1,500, that of adults from Rs.750 to Rs.1,000, and children from Rs.400 to Rs.500.
 - ✓ The government had allocated Rs.6.16 crore to disburse loans to women SHGs in the camps
 - ✓ A consultative committee would also be constituted to look into the welfare of Sri Lankan Tamils in the camps.
- **On August 27, two bills – were tabled in the Tamil Nadu State Assembly**
- ✓ State law minister S Regupathy tabled the Tamil Nadu Court Fees and Suits Valuation (amendment) Bill
 - ✓ The Bill seeks to fix the court fees for probate or letters of administration as 3% on the amount or value of the estate in respect of which the grant of probate or letters of administration is made, subject to a maximum of Rs.25,000.
 - ✓ Commercial taxes and registration minister P Murthy tabled the Registration (Tamil Nadu Amendment) Bill, 2011
 - ✓ The Bill aims to remove the need of physical presentation of documents such as agreements relating to deposit of title deeds for registration to facilitate ease of doing business.

NATIONAL

- **On August 27, India - hit a record one crore doses of anti-Covid jabs**



- ✓ With this, the government has surpassed the previous high of 92 lakh shots on August 16
- ✓ Now almost 37% of India's 1.3 billion population is covered with at least one dose, whereas 10% have received both doses.
- ✓ In terms of the 94 crore adult or 18-plus population currently eligible to receive shots, 51% have been covered with at least one dose and of these, 15% have got both doses.
- ✓ India has delivered the most number of full vaccinations after the US.
- ✓ The US has 172 million people fully vaccinated and India has 136 million.
- ✓ In terms of number of people who have received at least one dose, India is behind only China which has delivered 2 billion shots overall as of August 26.
- ✓ The government aims to cover all of the adult population by December this year, before it starts vaccination among children.

DEFENCE

- **On August 27, the Ministry of Defence - signed a Rs.1,350 crore contract with Mahindra Defence Systems Limited (MDS) to manufacture 14 integrated anti-submarine warfare defence suites (IADS) for front-line warships of the Navy.**



- ✓ The contract with an Indian firm under 'Buy and Make' category is an important boost to 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' mission
- ✓ IADS is high-end underwater equipment that uses latest technology to detect and protect warships from underwater threats.
- ✓ It is a versatile system capable of operations from all sizes of warships - small, medium, and large
- ✓ The system will enhance anti-submarine warfare capability of Indian Navy by detecting enemy submarines and torpedoes at extended ranges
- ✓ The anticipated delivery time lines for the first vessel is maximum of 60 months followed by delivery of one vessel every 12 months.
- ✓ The ministry has also approved Navy's procurement of four Landing Platform Docks (LPDs), also called amphibious warfare ships, that can transport and land equipment and troops for land warfare
- ✓ At present, the Navy has only one such ship, INS Jalashwa, purchased from US and commissioned in service in 2007

ECONOMY

- **On August 27, RBI governor Shaktikanta Das - said that the central bank may launch a pilot of its digital currency by December 2021.**
- ✓ However, the RBI is yet to finalise whether to launch the currency using distributed ledger technology (DLT) or a centralised ledger.
- ✓ DLT is the platform on which cryptocurrencies are based, enabling them to be held and traded without any central authority.
- ✓ During the monetary policy press conference on August 6, RBI deputy governor T Rabi Sankar had said that the central bank would come out with a mode for operations of fiat digital currency by the end of the year.
- ✓ Countries are bringing virtual currency as the use of paper currency is decreasing due to widespread use of digital transactions
- ✓ Further, the RBI has said that it will triple the incentive it offers banks for distribution of coins in rural areas.
- ✓ From September 1, banks will be given an incentive of Rs.75 per coin bag for distribution of coins in rural and semi urban areas and Rs 65 per bag for other centres.

WHAT IS IS-KHORASAN? – A REPORT

- **The Islamic State in Khorasan Province, ISKP (ISIS-K) - has claimed responsibility for the deadly suicide attacks outside Kabul airport on August 26, that killed at least 175 civilians, 13 US soldiers, atleast 28 Taliban members and leaving several injured**
- ✓ The bombings are said to be the deadliest terror attack on US forces in the strife-torn country since 2011

- ✓ "Khorasan" refers to a historical area covering parts of modern-day Afghanistan, Central Asia, Iran, Turkmenistan and Pakistan.
- ✓ ISKP is known as an offshoot of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) armed group that claimed to be seeking to establish an Islamic "caliphate" in Iraq and Syria.

WHAT IS IS-KHORASAN?	
<p>➤ Started in 2014 (though officially founded in 2015) by Hafiz Saeed Khan, a veteran Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan commander who pledged allegiance to so-called Islamic State's former leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. It was a small band of mostly Pakistani militants operating in eastern Afghan province of Nangarhar</p>	<p>fighters. That figure was cut in half after American airstrikes and Af commando raids. UN estimates that IS-K retains core group of 1,500-2,200 fighters in Konar and Nangarhar</p> <p>➤ Hafiz Saeed Khan was killed by a US airstrike in Nangarhar on July 26, 2016. IS-K's three</p>
	 <p>Screengrab from an IS-K propaganda video</p>
<p>➤ Khorasan translates to 'The Land of the Sun'. It refers to a historical region that includes parts of Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan</p> <p>➤ IS-K has been antagonistic towards Taliban, denouncing their takeover of Af, saying the group's version of Islamic rule was insufficiently hard line</p> <p>➤ In 2016, IS-K was at its peak size with about 3,000 to 4,000</p>	
<p>Source: NYT, Washington Post, CSIS</p>	

- ✓ The armed group was formed in 2014 by fighters of the Pakistan Taliban and fighters from Afghanistan who pledged allegiance to the late ISIL leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.
- ✓ They are adversaries of the Taliban, with different teachings of strict Sunni beliefs.
- ✓ At present, the IS-Khorasan is estimated to have 1,500-2,000 fighters at its command
- ✓ Shahab al-Muhajir, who had worked for al-Qaeda is currently heading IS-Khorasan
- ✓ The latest killings brought the total number of US military personnel who died in Afghanistan since 2001 to 2,325