

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – AUGUST 22, 2019

TAMIL NADU

- ◆ **Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) and ELCOT – have come together to set up ‘Finblue’ — a centre of excellence to fund and mentor Fintech startups**
 - ✓ The TN government has invested ₹5.7 crore, centre has put in ₹1.8 crore, STPI in its capacity has put in ₹4 crore and ₹11 crore has come in from UK based venture capital firm, Pontaq
 - ✓ With Finblue being the first, the STPI is looking to set up 28 centres of excellence at various states in IOT, Medical tech, AR VR etc.
 - ✓ Under the programme, Startups will operate out of Finblue facility in STPI, Taramani after paying ₹10,000 per seat per month for availing facilities
 - ✓ A total of 58 startups are planned to be incubated over the next 5 years.
 - ✓ They will have access to cloud service providers like Amazon Web Services and tools provided by IIT Madras.
 - ✓ Companies including PayPal, Intellect Design, Torus Innovation, Yes Bank, RBS are stakeholders and will provide technology support and help handhold the participant companies.
 - ✓ Startups in the programme must not have an annual turnover exceeding ₹100 crore and must be original entities.
 - ✓ Chennai-based Intellect Design Arena Limited will provide software tools, and its chairman and managing director Arun Jain will be the chief mentor for FinBlue.
- ◆ **M. Mansoor Ali, a social science teacher at Diamond Jubilee Higher Secondary School in Gobichettipalayam and R. Selvakkannan, Headmaster of Panchayat Union Primary School at K. Paramathi in Karur - have been selected from Tamil Nadu for the national award for best teachers for 2018.**
 - ✓ They will receive the award at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi on September 5

- ✓ Mansoor Ali was a resource person for the State Council of Education Research and Training



- ✓ He had also prepared the social science manual for Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation for Class 9
- ✓ Among other awards he had received was the State Environmental Award.
- ✓ Mr. Selvakkannan took over as the headmaster of the school in K. Paramathi in 2005 and had received the State Government's innovative school award.

◆ **Chennai, formerly known as Madras - is celebrating its 380th birthday on August 22**



The Madras Day
CELEBRATING THE FOUNDING OF THE CITY

சென்னை தினம்
நகர நிறமாணக் கொண்டாட்டம்

Madras Week Celebrations

August 18 to 25, 2019

- ✓ Madras Day is celebrated on 22 August every year as it is widely believed that Chennai (Madras) was founded on this date in 1639
- ✓ On this day in 1639, a deal was struck by British administrator Francis Day, his 'dubash' Beri Thimmappa, and their superior, Andrew Cogan, with the local Nayak rulers to buy a piece of land — where Fort St. George stands now — to establish the East India Company.
- ✓ During a meeting of the Chennai Heritage foundation in 2004, journalist Vincent D'Souza had suggested the idea of celebrating Madras Day to historian S. Muthiah
- ✓ Rechristened Chennai in 1996 to get rid of the colonial tag, the capital of Tamil Nadu is now home to over four million
- ✓ The city was initially called Madrasapatnam and Chennapattinam, which soon became Madras and then Chennai.
- ✓ This year, the celebrations will run between 18 and 25 August

STATES

◆ **Rajasthan - has approved a proposal to provide 70 litres of water for free to residents of the 13 desert districts of the state**

- ✓ The state government had previously approved to provide 40 litres of free water to all individuals in rural areas of the state.

◆ **Kerala government - to frame a new law for the appointment of women as drivers in State Public Sector Undertakings and various departments of the Kerala Government**

- ✓ The new law will ensure gender equality in driver posts based on the new policy of the Government
- ✓ Proper training and encouragement will be given to women by the Kerala State Women Development Corporation (KSWDC)
- ✓ This is for the first time when any state government decided to allow women to drive government vehicles
- ✓ In kerala, women already drive auto-rickshaws, taxi, private buses and ambulances.
- ✓ In November 2013, Kerala government started 'She-Taxi' in the state, which didn't take off
- ✓ This initiative bagged the Chief Minister's Award for Innovation in Public Policy in 2014
- ✓ The state government has recently formed the Department of Women and Children
- ✓ The government recently set up the first women battalion with 550 members in it.

NATIONAL

◆ **Union HRD minister Ramesh Pokhriyal - launched the new national mission, National Initiative for School Heads and Teachers Holistic Advancement (NISHTHA) on August 21**



- ✓ This is the largest teachers' training programme of its kind in the world
- ✓ It aims a capacity building of 42 lakh in-service teachers and heads of schools at the elementary level in all government schools

- ✓ The basic objective of this massive training programme is to motivate and equip teachers to encourage and improve critical thinking in students
- ✓ The programme includes training of faculty members of State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs), District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) as well as block resource coordinators and cluster resource coordinators in all states and UTs.
- ✓ This training will be conducted directly by 33,120 key resource persons and state resource persons identified by the state and UTs, who will in turn be trained by 120 national resource persons identified from NCERT, NIEPA, CBSE and KVS, among others.
- ✓ Teachers will get awareness and develop their skills on various aspects related to learning outcomes, competency based learning and testing, learner-centered pedagogy, school safety and security, personal-social qualities, inclusive education, ICT in teaching-learning including artificial intelligence, health and well being including yoga.
- ✓ To boost the mission, a Mobile App and Learning Management System (LMS) based on MOODLE (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment) have been developed by NCERT.

◆ **The 63 clauses of new Motor Vehicle Act and the updated traffic fines - will come into effect from September 1, 2019.**

- ✓ Apart from stiffer penalties, the 2019 Motor Vehicle Bill also addresses other talking points such as new rules for issuing driving licenses, recognising app based cab aggregators and even setting guidelines for vehicle recalls.
- ✓ The bill (Motor Vehicles [Amendment] Bill, 2019) was recently passed in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha
- ✓ It also proposes that the amount of traffic violation fines should be increased at the rate of 10% per year.
- ✓ The bill reduces the validity of the driving licence from the current 20 years to just 10 years, upto the age of 60 years

◆ **The government - has granted Minister of State (MoS) status to the mayors of Srinagar and Jammu Municipal Corporations**

- ✓ BJP leader Chander Mohan Gupta and People's Conference leader Junaid Maattu are the mayors of JMC and SMC respectively.
- ✓ Municipal Corporations of Jammu and Kashmir held the elections in four phases in October last year after a gap of 13 years
- ✓ On August 6, 2019, the centre had revoked Article 370 and the special status of Jammu and Kashmir apart from splitting the state into two Union Territories - Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh
- ✓ Ladakh region will be a Union Territory (UT), without legislature, while Jammu and Kashmir will be a Union Territory with the legislature.

◆ **Google - has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Telangana government to get more local language content online by using the Google's digital publishing tool, Navlekha**

- ✓ Navlekha will help digitise the government's content in Telugu to make it easier for people to get access to all the information and services on government sites in their local language.

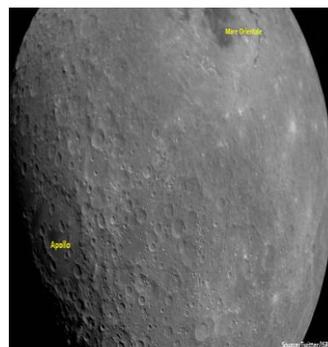
INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

◆ **India - terminates its 1989 agreement of sharing hydrological data during flood season, between July 1 and October 10, with Pakistan**

- ✓ The agreement, a result of an earlier India's goodwill gesture, was renewed every year
- ✓ However, this decision was not related with the Indus Water Treaty (IWT), which was signed between India and Pakistan in 1960 for sharing waters of the Indus system
- ✓ Under the IWT, waters of eastern rivers (Ravi, Beas and Sutlej) are allocated to India while the country is under obligation to allow water of the western rivers (Indus, Jhelum and Chenab) flow to Pakistan.
- ✓ India can also use the water from the western rivers for its domestic purposes, irrigation and generating hydro-electric power to an extent.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

◆ **ISRO - has shared the first image of moon captured by Chandrayaan 2.**



- ✓ It was taken by Chandrayaan 2's L14 camera at 12.33am IST on August 22, 2019 at a height of about 2650 km from Lunar surface.
- ✓ Chandrayaan-2 had successfully conducted the first manoeuvre and entered the lunar orbit on August 20, 2019
- ✓ Chandrayaan 2's Vikram lander is expected to land on the darker side of the moon, near its south pole on September 7, 2019 for the very first time

DEFENCE

◆ **The first of 36 Rafale fighter jets for the Indian Air Force – will be handed over to Defence minister Rajnath Singh and Air Chief Marshal B S Dhanoa in Paris likely on September 20**

- ✓ India had signed an intergovernmental agreement with France in September 2016 for procurement of 36 Rafale fighter jets at a cost of around ₹58,000 crore.
- ✓ The first squadron of the aircraft will be deployed at Ambala air force station, considered one of the most strategically located bases of the IAF
- ✓ The aircraft is capable of carrying a range of potent weapons and missiles.
- ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi is leaving for France on August 22 on a bilateral visit during which the discussions will take place on further boosting of defence cooperation between the two countries

ECONOMY

◆ **Amazon - inaugurated a three-million sq ft campus building on 9.5 acres in Gachibowli in Hyderabad**

- ✓ It is the company's first owned office building outside the U.S. and the single-largest building globally



- ✓ Hyderabad employs one-third of the India headcount of over 60,000 for Amazon.
- ✓ The built-up area at the new campus includes 1.8 million sq.ft. of office space that can accommodate 15,000 people, a large space that Amazon planned to use to consolidate its operations.

APPOINTMENTS

◆ **The government - appointed Rajiv Gauba as the new cabinet secretary and designated Ajay Kumar as the new defence secretary.**

- ✓ Gauba, the outgoing Home secretary, will move in as officer on special duty (OSD) in the cabinet secretariat and will take over from P K Sinha once his term ends on September 12 for a tenure of two years



- ✓ Sinha, who was appointed Cabinet Secretary in 2015, is likely to be inducted as a member of the NITI Aayog

- ✓ Ajay Kumar will replace Sanjay Mitra, who was Defence Secretary for more than two years.
- ✓ The Appointments Committee of Cabinet also cleared the appointment of IAS officer Brij Kumar Agarwal as secretary to Lokpal and Subash Chandra as secretary defence production

SPORTS

- ◆ **E-commerce company and BCCI's incumbent partners, Paytm - retained the title sponsorship rights - with a winning bid of Rs 326.80 crore for all international and domestic matches between October 2019 and September 2023 at Rs 3.80 crore per match.**



- ✓ The only other bidder in the race was fantasy sports platform Dream 11 as BCCI disqualified the third bidder, another e-commerce company Ebix, on the eve of the auction citing 'conflict'
- ✓ India is set to host at least 86 international men's matches in bilateral series over the next four years
- ✓ Paytm's parent company, One 97 Communications Pvt. Ltd, had replaced Micromax with a bid of ₹2.42 crore per match in October 2015
- ◆ **Two Tamil Nadu girls - V Varshini and PV Nandhidhaa became the new Women Grand Masters (WGMs) in Chess recently**
- ✓ Nandhidhaa achieved her third and final WGM norm at the Abu Dhabi Masters to become the country's 18th WGM on August 10
- ✓ Varshini became the 19th WGM, a day later at the Riga Technical University open chess meet in Latvia
- ✓ Nandhidhaa has achieved all her WGM norms in the last 6 months



- ✓ Both Nandhidhaa and Varshini have their next targets to become GM — so far achieved by only two women in India — Koneru Humpy and D Harika

RANKINGS

- ◆ **Karnataka - has topped the SARAL index, followed by Telangana, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh ranked 2nd, 3rd and 4th respectively**
- ✓ The State Rooftop Solar Attractiveness Index (SARAL) was launched by Union Minister of State for Power and New & Renewable Energy (IC) RK Singh on August 21, 2019



- ✓ The index promotes the incentivisation of rooftop solar by creating healthy competition among the states
- ✓ It has been jointly designed by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation (SSEF), ASSOCHAM and Ernst & Young (EY).
- ✓ The Union Renewable Energy Ministry has set the target of achieving 175 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2022, of which 100 GW solar power will be operational by March 2022 and 40 GW is expected to come from grid-connected solar rooftops.

◆ **Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar - has secured the fourth position in the Forbes list of world's highest-paid actors in 2019**

- ✓ Akshay Kumar is the only Bollywood actor who has featured on the list with an earning of \$65 million (about Rs 450 crore).
- ✓ Dwayne Johnson of Hollywood (popularly known as The Rock) topped the list of world's highest-paid actors with an earnings of \$89.4 from June 2018 to June 2019
- ✓ In 2018, Salman Khan, along with Akshay Kumar, secured a place in the top 10 list of world's highest-paid actors
- ✓ In that list, Akshay Kumar was at number seven, while Salman Khan was at the 9th position



✓ **List of the World's Top 10 Highest-Paid actors of 2019**

- ✓ Dwayne Johnson - USD 89.4 million (approx Rs 640 crores)
- ✓ Chris Hemsworth - USD 76.4 million (approx Rs 547 crores)
- ✓ Robert Downey Jr. - USD 66 million (approx Rs 473 crore)
- ✓ Akshay Kumar - USD 65 million (approx Rs 466 crores)
- ✓ Jackie Chan - USD 58 million (approx Rs 415 crores)
- ✓ Bradley Cooper - USD 57 million (approx Rs 408 crores)
- ✓ Adam Sandler - USD 57 million (approx Rs 408 crores)
- ✓ Chris Evans - USD 43.5 million (approx Rs 311 crores)
- ✓ Paul Rudd - USD 41 million (approx Rs 293 crores)
- ✓ Will Smith - USD 35 million (approx 250 crores)

WHY US WANTS TO BUY GREENLAND? - REPORT

GREENLAND IS PACKED WITH MINERALS, AND IT'S ALL WITHIN REACH NOW

- Greenland, the world's largest island (Australia is defined as a continent), is rich in natural resources that have for long been difficult to exploit due to ice and permafrost covering the island
- But as **global warming melts the Arctic ice**, these resources, like iron ore, diamond, oil, uranium, etc. are becoming more accessible



IT IS ALSO OF STRATEGIC INTEREST TO US

- Although Greenland is an autonomous territory of Denmark, it is physically part of the North American continent and lies between the North Atlantic and Arctic oceans on the shortest possible route between Europe and North America
- US already has a military presence on Greenland with the **Thule Air Base** being its northernmost installation

NO WONDER IT HAS TRIED TO BUY GREENLAND BEFORE

US had first looked to buy Greenland and Iceland in 1867 under President Andrew Johnson. Then, in 1946, President Harry Truman offered Denmark \$100m for the territory, but that came to nothing

Area 2.1 m sq.km	Popn 56,000	GDP (PPP) \$1.8 bn
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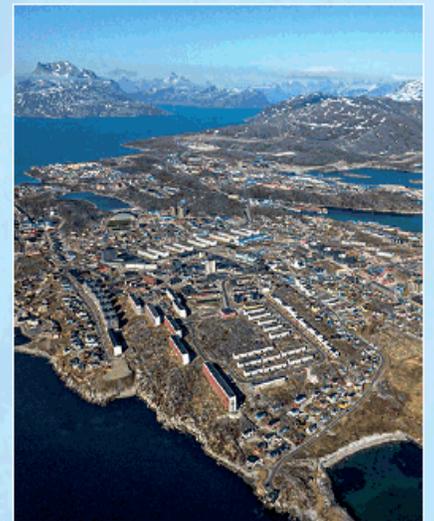


TRUMP MAY HAVE AN EYE ON CHECKMATING CHINA

- Beijing last year unveiled plans for a 'Polar Silk Road' along the lines of its 'Belt and Road' initiative and plans to develop new shipping lines passing near Greenland
- Chinese scientists have been studying mineral sites in Greenland and China is also reportedly backing five big mining projects

BUT HOW MUCH WOULD GREENLAND COST?

- According to various estimates, the island could cost between \$200 million to \$1.7 trillion
- But while Greenland might be rich in minerals, it also has its own share of problems. It relies on Denmark for two-thirds of its budget revenue and has high rates of suicide, alcoholism and unemployment, so Trump would have to factor all that in before he pushes for a deal



Greenland's capital Nuuk is closer to New York than to Copenhagen

BUT IT'S NOT DENMARK'S TO SELL

- An outright sale would have to be approved by US, Denmark, and the people of Greenland, and chances of that are rather bleak
- Also, Denmark's constitution says the future of Greenland's sovereignty is up to its population to decide in a referendum

NOTE: Map shows some of the mineral deposits in Greenland. The island has 80% ice cover which, however, is facing a threat from global warming; Source: Media reports

