

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – DEC 14, 2019

TAMIL NADU

- **Tamil Nadu's Molugamboondi - has topped the 2019 rankings of gram panchayats in the country**
- ✓ The panchayat top scored on implementation of development and infrastructure programmes under the Mission Antyodaya scheme of the rural development ministry

SHARE IN RANKING

State	No. of Panchayats
Gujarat	99
Punjab	66
Kerala	29
Tamil Nadu	21
Maharashtra	14
Haryana	10
Andhra Pradesh	9
Karnataka	8
Chhattisgarh	5
UP	2

- ✓ The second rank has gone to Bambhaniya gram panchayat of Bhavnagar in Gujarat while four more Gujarat panchayats are tied for third ranking.
- ✓ One in Maharashtra, two each in Punjab and Tamil Nadu, and five Gujarat panchayats are tied at fourth ranking.
- ✓ The list this year marks a drastic change from the 2018 ranking, in which 49 out of 50 gram panchayats in the top six rankings were from Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh, with only one from Patan in Gujarat being the sole exception.
- ✓ The national rankings under Mission Antyodaya are done to assess the implementation of schemes across various fields ranging from agriculture,

roads, health parameters to poverty alleviation, rural housing, electrification, drinking water, PDS, and education.

- ✓ While the villages were ranked on 46 parameters in 2017 and 2018, the number of target parameters has been increased to 112 in 2019.
- ✓ As many as 269 panchayats from just 15 states are ranked in the top 10 places.
- ✓ Gujarat has the maximum number of panchayats with 99, followed by Punjab with 66, Kerala with 69 and Tamil Nadu with 21.

➤ **Greater Chennai Corporation's commissioner G Prakash - inaugurated a new website 'www.madraswasteexchange.com' on December 13**

Adding value to waste

Chennai Corporation has launched Madras Waste Exchange, an online waste trading platform

- The exchange is both a web portal as well as an application
- Currently a pilot, the initiative will go State-wide later
- Residents can use the platform to sell household waste
- Initially, only recyclable waste will be accepted
- Later, based on new initiatives by entrepreneurs, bio-degradable waste will also be accepted
- The Android app can be downloaded from Google Play and the link to the portal is www.madraswasteexchange.com

HOW IT WORKS

- Buyers and sellers will have to register on the portal to trade; the portal has been integrated with the app
- On Day 1 itself, 30 buyers have registered
- Residents who want to sell a particular type of waste will be able to browse through a list of potential buyers and the prices quoted by them
- Buyers, including 2,600 scrap dealers in Chennai, will also be able to find a list of sellers who have waste products that they need
- The buyer and seller can decide a mutually convenient pick-up time
- Initially, the payment method will be cash-on-delivery; third-party payment gateways will be brought in later



- ✓ With this, Chennai has become the first city in the entire country to have an online waste exchange platform for municipal solid waste.
- ✓ The website will help connect buyers and sellers of different kind of waste.
- ✓ Residents who want to sell their waste online will be able to contact 2,600 scrap dealers and other agencies across the city.
- ✓ The website will be run on a pilot basis for the initial three months.
- ✓ Based on the response from public and waste recyclers, the website will be revamped with more features later.
- ✓ Through the website, members of the public can buy recycled products from the corporation.
- ✓ An android app with the same name will also be soon launched in Google Play store
- ✓ The portal and app has been conceptualised by the Smart City Mission, with support from the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

- ✓ The concept will also help the corporation to fulfil its long-term goal of achieving 'zero' waste by practising the concept of circular economy in waste management
 - ✓ The city generates about 5,220 tonnes of municipal solid waste in the 15 zones covering 426 sq. km
 - ✓ Of this, about 50% is wet waste, half of which is recycled as 'manure' by various methods adopted by the civic body.
 - ✓ The corporation is already providing doorstep delivery of manure and has also set up stalls in a mall too
- **The Siruseri IT Park on Old Mahabalipuram Road (OMR) – is set to launch several measures by January 2020 to improve security for the 35,000 women working there**

STEPS TO BE TAKEN	
	➤ A vehicle with six security personnel to carry out 24/7 patrolling
	➤ Dedicated mobile number for all employees to reach the patrol
	➤ 57 CCTV cameras would be installed
	➤ Additional high-mast lights would be set up at five new locations
	➤ LED lights will replace sodium vapour lamps
	➤ Improvements are likely to be completed by January, 2020
	➤ Nearly 40% of 90,000 employees at the state-owned facility are women
➤ The IT park spread over 800 acres has 46 IT and ITES companies	

- ✓ A mobile patrol being operated by the city police will be deployed next month to cover the entire 800-acre campus 24X7
 - ✓ Also CCTV cameras will be erected at 57 more locations, whose feed would be linked to the Kelambakkam police station and five high mast floodlights will also be installed.
 - ✓ Henceforth, 6 security personnel will be deployed in three shifts in an SUV that will constantly patrol the 13 km of roads within the IT park.
 - ✓ Employees of the various firms will be given a dedicated mobile number to contact the patrol SUV in any emergency
 - ✓ There are 17 CCTV cameras at the IT park now, largely present at the entrance and exit
 - ✓ State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamilnadu Ltd (SIPCOT) maintains the IT park, which houses 46 IT and ITES firms employing 90,000 people
- **Additional chief secretary and commercial tax commissioner of Tamil Nadu, T V Somanathan – was appointed as the new Union expenditure secretary.**



- ✓ The post of Union expenditure secretary post was lying vacant since October, after G.C. Murmu was made Lieutenant-Governor of the newly created Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory
- ✓ An expert in finance, Somanathan is returning to the Centre, where he already served in the Prime Minister's Office between 2015 and 2017.
- ✓ Somanathan, a 1987 IAS cadre officer, holds a Doctorate in economics, besides being a Chartered Accountant, Chartered Management Accountant and Chartered Secretary.
- ✓ He has wide experience in serving senior policy making positions in various departments in the central and state governments.
- ✓ As the commercial tax commissioner, he was responsible for the successful implementation of GST in the state, after he took charge when the new tax regime was introduced.
- ✓ He was also in charge of a Tamil Nadu team which was consulting with the 15th Finance Commission

STATES

- **The Andhra Pradesh assembly passed the Disha Bill, which prescribes harsh punishment for crimes against women - on December 13.**
- ✓ As per the provisions of the bill, Andhra Pradesh becomes the first state in the country to provide the death penalty for rape cases.
- ✓ According to the Andhra Pradesh Disha Bill-Criminal Law (Andhra Pradesh Amendment) Bill 2019, all cases regarding offences against women shall be investigated and tried expeditiously with provisions for the death penalty.
- ✓ Now, the Disha Bill will be sent to the President for his approval as criminal law is in the Concurrent List which can be considered by both the state and the Centre
- ✓ The bill calls for speedy trial within 14 days and judgment within 21 days in case of serious crimes against women such as acid attacks and rape with conclusive evidence.
- ✓ Currently, there is a four-month trial period for such serious offences against women.

Dealing with an iron fist

- Setting up of special courts for specified offences against women and children

- **Setting up of 'Women and Children Offenders Register' in electronic form**

- Amendments to Indian Penal Code (1860); new sections added

- **Section 354E to deal with cases relating to harassment of women, which includes abuse on social media platforms and making romantic**



- **overtures repeatedly**

- Section 354G to deal with aggravated sexual assault on children by those in uniformed service, public servants, etc

- **Amendments to Sections 376, 376D and 376DA providing death sentence to convicts in cases relating to rape and murder of a woman**

- Period of disposal of appeals to be reduced to three months

- ✓ The assembly also passed the Andhra Pradesh Disha Bill-Andhra Pradesh Special Court for Specified Offences Against Women and Children Bill, 2019
- ✓ The new bill enables the state government to set up exclusive special courts for speedy trial of specified offences against women and children.
- ✓ The bill reduces the judgment period to 21 working days with investigation being completed in 7 days and trial closing in 14 days.
- ✓ It prescribes a minimum of 10 years of jail term and a maximum of life imprisonment for other sexual offences against children, based on severity of the case
- ✓ The special courts will deal with serious offences such as acid attacks, rape, gang rape, sexual harassment, stalking and voyeurism.
- ✓ It would also deal with cases under the POCSO Act.
- ✓ Further, the current sentence for those convicted of sexual abuse on children is 3-5 years of jail term
- ✓ The bill also proposes taking strict action against those who upload malicious posts about women on social media
- ✓ The first-time offenders will be punished with two years of jail term, while the subsequent offenders will be punished with four years of jail term.
- ✓ Both the bills amend the Indian Penal Code, 1860, and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 by adding new sections

NATIONAL

- **The deadline for the government's Accessible India campaign - has been extended to March 2020 due to "slow progress"**
- ✓ The campaign aims at making public spaces 'friendlier' for persons with disabilities
- ✓ The decision was taken by the Central Advisory Board chaired by Social Justice and Empowerment Minister, Thawar Chand Gehlot.

- ✓ Several short-term facilities like standard ramps, non-slippery walkways, signages, disabled-friendly toilets and help desks are included in the plan.
- ✓ In the long-term, inter-platform transfer and engraving on the edges of the platforms are proposed.
- ✓ A total of ₹354.45 crore had been released for making 1,058 public buildings accessible around the country
- ✓ Under the Rights of PwD Act, 2016, all existing and new public buildings have to follow the accessibility standards notified on June 15, 2017
- ✓ The existing buildings were given five years to comply.
- ✓ The original deadlines under the Accessible India campaign were July 2016 for conducting an accessibility audit of around 25 to 50 of the most important government buildings in 50 cities and making them completely accessible and March 2018

SUPREME COURT VERDICT

- **The Supreme Court - said it cannot order Kerala government to forcibly implement a five-judge bench's verdict on September 28, 2018 allowing women in the age group of 10 to 50 years to enter Sabarimala**
- ✓ On December 13, the bench of Chief Justice of India S A Bobde and Justices B R Gavai and Surya Kant instructed to continue its earlier order granting police protection to the women devotees, if they insist, till a seven-judge bench reconsider the judgment on the "emotive" issue, based on a 1,000-year-old tradition.
- ✓ On November 14, a five judge bench headed by then CJI Ranjan Gogoi had asked a seven-judge bench to provide guidelines in cases involving clash of fundamental rights and faith regarding women's entry to temples, mosques and Parsi agiyaris

INTERNATIONAL

- **UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson - won a thumping majority of 80 seats in December 12 general election**
- ✓ This is the Conservative Party's biggest majority since Margaret Thatcher's victory in 1987
- ✓ The victory provides the mandate to the PM to pull Britain out of the European Union by January 31, 2020, the date agreed with the EU.
- ✓ Brexit was one of the key campaign promises of Boris Johnson.

NUMBER OF PIO MPs RISES BY 4

15 PIO candidates (7 Tory, 8 Labour) win out of 63 who contested. Increase of 4 PIO MPs from last Parliament (11 won, 56 contested)

Labour's 203 seats (down 59 from previous election) is its **worst showing since 1935**. Jeremy Corbyn to step down

▶ Scottish National Party gets 48 of Scotland's 59 seats. Strong performance could lead to renewed calls for referendum on independence

▶ Johnson's decisive win a strong mandate for Brexit, setback to Pakistan-backed Kashmiri lobbies

PM Boris Johnson and his partner Carrie Symonds at 10, Downing Street



- ✓ The Conservatives won 365 seats out of the total 650 seats in the British House of Commons, while the Labour Party won 203 seats.
- ✓ The Conservations have won 298 seats in the last election

BIGGEST TORY WIN SINCE '87

80 -seat majority for Conservatives (total 365) is Tories' largest since a 102-seat majority for Margaret Thatcher in 1987

203 This is Labour's worst showing since 1935. Last defeat of near magnitude was in 1983 when it won 209 seats

Conservative: 365

Labour: 203

SNP: 48

Lib Dem: 11

DUP: 8

Sinn Fein: 7

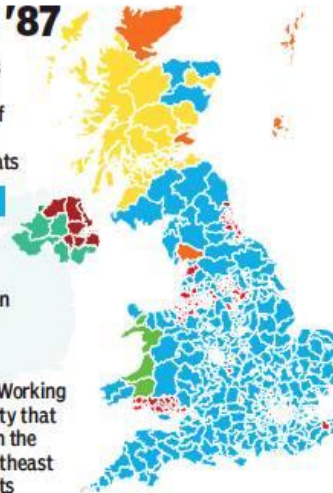
Plaid Cymru: 4

Green: 1

Other: 3

220 Seats won by women candidates; in the mid-'80s there were only 23

RED WALL BREACHED | Working class vote base of Labour Party that stretched from north Wales in the southwest to Yorkshire in northeast shattered as Tories claim seats



WHAT CONSERVATIVE MAJORITY GOVT IS LIKELY TO DO

BREXIT BY JAN 31: PM Boris Johnson's commanding majority means it is clear for the first time since 2016 Brexit referendum that Britain will leave the EU, likely in orderly fashion, by January 31, 2020

BUDGET IN FEB: Party plans a post-Brexit budget in February, boosting spending on domestic issues such as health service, education and police

IMMIGRATION: Conservatives plan to introduce an 'Australian-style' points-based immigration system, which will ensure fewer low-skilled migrants. Under the new system most immigrants will need a job offer to come to Britain. There will be special visa schemes for migrants who will fill shortages in public services, or who are leaders in fields such as science and technology. **Highly skilled Indians are likely to benefit**

TRADE: Conservatives want to have 80% of UK trade covered by free trade agreements within 3 years. They plan to prioritise deals with the US, Australia, NZ and Japan. India and UK had started talks on a possible trade deal post-Brexit, which may happen if India pushes the agenda at a faster clip

- ✓ The House of Commons will now have 15 Indian-origin candidates after four new nominees — including a PIO set to be Britain's youngest serving MP – won the elections with all 11 sitting MPs retaining their seats in the new Government.
- ✓ One of Labour's two new MPs, Nadia Whittome, won Nottingham East to become the youngest serving MP at 23

- ✓ The Indian-origin winning candidates include seven from governing Conservative Party and eight from opposition Labour.

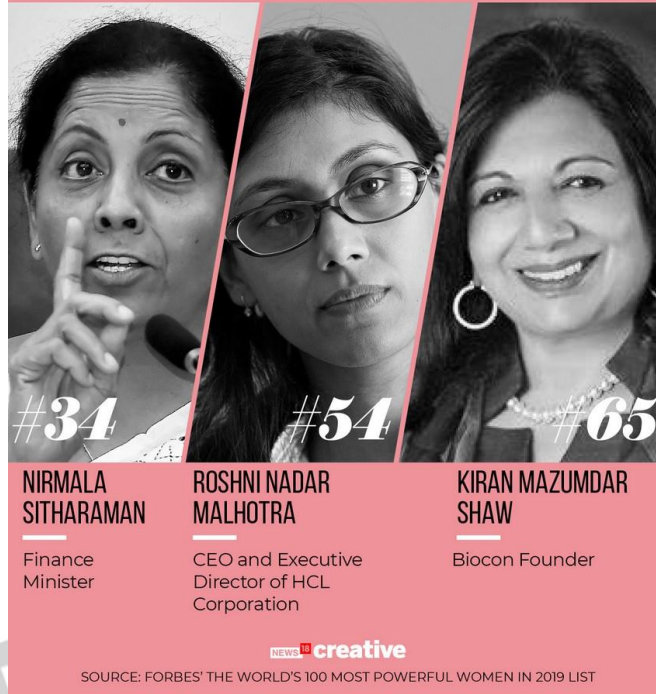
CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **The annual India-Japan summit, scheduled for December 15-17 in Guwahati, has been cancelled.**
- ✓ The announcement follows the widespread protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, bringing the city to a standstill
- ✓ Both the countries have now decided to defer the visit to a mutually convenient date in the near future
- ✓ The Indian government was keen to hold the summit on schedule and move it to Delhi
- ✓ The Japanese side felt it would be better to postpone the meeting until it was held in Guwahati, so as to maintain the theme of this year's summit that focusses on Japan's investment in the northeastern region.
- ✓ In case the summit is not reconvened in the next few weeks, two annual summits will have to be scheduled in 2020.
- ✓ The summit would have allowed PM Narendra Modi and his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe to take stock of bilateral ties and improvise the first India-Japan ministerial 2+2 dialogue that took place last month in New Delhi
- ✓ Abe and then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had in 2006 upgraded the relationship to a Global and Strategic Partnership with the provision of annual prime ministerial summits.

PERSONALITIES

- **Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, HCL Corporation CEO and executive director Roshni Nadar Malhotra and Biocon Founder Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw - have been named among the world's 100 most powerful women by Forbes.**
- ✓ The Forbes 2019 list of 'The World's 100 Most Powerful Women' has been topped by German Chancellor Angela Merkel.
- ✓ European Central Bank Chief Christine Lagarde (2nd) and Speaker of the US Parliament, Nancy Pelosi (3rd) are among the top 100 powerful women of the world.

WHERE DO INDIAN
WOMEN STAND AMONG...
**WORLD'S MOST
POWERFUL WOMEN**



- ✓ Ms. Sitharaman is ranked 34th on the list
- ✓ Queen Elizabeth II is ranked 40th and Ivanka Trump is ranked 42nd in the list.
- ✓ Nadar Malhotra is ranked 54th in this list, while Kiran Mazumdar Shaw is ranked 65th in this list
- ✓ The list includes noted celebrities such as Melinda Gates (6th), IBM CEO Jinny Rometty (9th), Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg (18th), Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina (29th), New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern (38th), Rihanna (61st) Beyoncé (66th), Taylor Swift (71st), Tennis star Serena Williams (81st) and environmental activist Greta Thunberg are ranked in 100th.

ECONOMY

- **Moody's Investors Service - said it had lowered its 2019 GDP growth forecast for India to 5.6% on December 13 due to slow employment growth**
- ✓ It expected economic growth to pick up in 2020 and 2021 to 6.6% and 6.7%, respectively
- ✓ The country has recorded a growth of 7.4% in 2018
- ✓ India's economic growth has dropped since mid-2018, with real GDP growth declining from nearly 8% to 5% in the second quarter (April-June) of 2019
- ✓ Growth further slipped to 4.5% in July-September quarter.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

- **Five-time World champion, Viswanathan Anand – launched his book titled 'Mind Master' in Chennai on December 13**



- ✓ The book was co-written by Susan Ninan, a sports journalist
- ✓ The book offers an insight into Anand's greatest clashes and worst losses apart from sharing his experience of facing the best minds in the world.

INTERNATIONAL DAY

- **National Energy Conservation Day – November 14**



- ✓ The observance of the day aims to highlight India's achievements in energy efficiency and conservation
- ✓ The Energy Conservation Act in India was implemented in 2001 by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE).
- ✓ The BEE is celebrating 'National Energy Conservation Week' from 9 to 14 December 2019 to raise awareness about the importance of energy efficiency and conservation.

CHINA'S ARTIFICIAL MOON – A REPORT

ARTIFICIAL MOON?

NOT A GREAT IDEA

In 2018, Chinese scientist Wu Chunfeng had shared his vision of replacing the streetlights in the city of Chengdu by boosting the glow of Moon with that of a fake one, which will be eight times brighter. The city plans to launch an illumination satellite in 2020, followed by three more in 2022. Not much is known about how this will come about in China. Lets see how it will likely be done

Can be placed between Earth and ISS

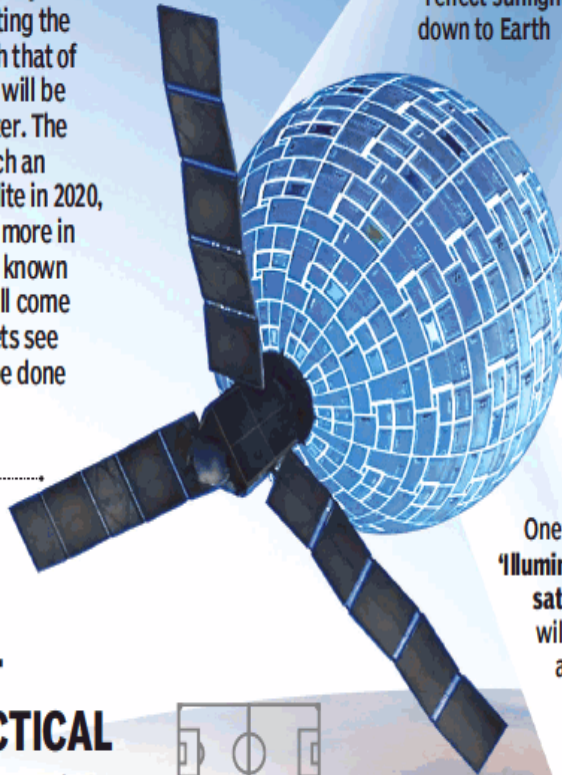
Surface will have mirror-like coating to reflect sunlight down to Earth

WHAT WILL IT DO

Cut Costs
Help save Chengdu approx. \$174m each year in electricity bills

Disaster Relief
Location and brightness will be controlled, can help in disaster relief by beaming light on areas that lost power

Must move at speed of 27,400kmph to avoid fall



One 'illumination satellite' will light an area with a diameter of 10-80km

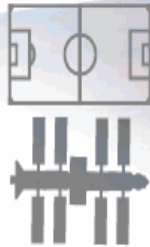
380,000 km

400 km

Distance not to scale

WHY IS IT NOT PRACTICAL

Size Matters | ISS, as long as a football field, was assembled in pieces in several launches. It will be difficult to launch an artificial moon that is much bigger



Biggest Flaw | Satellite flying low enough to light up a city wouldn't be able to stay in one place. It could be made to stay put with rocket thrusters but that would eat up fuel, adding to cost

Constellation of satellites circling Earth would be necessary to keep lights on all night. And even then, fuel is necessary to counteract atmospheric drag

Cost of launching and refuelling multiple satellites would likely far outpace the savings on electricity

Light Pollution

All-night light will disrupt activities of nocturnal animals, block out stars and could even interfere with our circadian rhythms, impacting our health

