

## EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – FEB 17, 2020

### TAMIL NADU

- **The new rule on Vehicle fitness certificate (FC) renewal - is set to commence this week in the State.**
- ✓ Henceforth, the validity of FCs issued to commercial vehicles will be for a period of two years
- ✓ Currently, the validity of FCSs is one year, for vehicles which are less than eight years old.

NEW VEHICLES CAUSE MORE ACCIDENTS		EXPERTS RECOMMEND
Age	No. of accidents	
Less than 5 yrs	24,555	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Increasing FC validity will increase accident rate</li> <li>➤ Average trip length of TN commercial vehicles is more</li> <li>➤ Wear and tear will be high making vehicles accident prone</li> </ul>
5-10	17,751	
10-15	10,507	
More than 15	6,626 (in 2018)	

- ✓ After eight years of service, all taxis, buses and truck owners should renew it once in a year
- ✓ There are 12.2 lakh commercial vehicles in TN now.
- ✓ Though the Union road transport ministry had proposed the change in 2018, Tamil Nadu was one of the last states to adopt it.
- ✓ In this regard, on February 13, the state transport commissioner had written to National Informatics Centre (NIC) to make suitable changes in VAHAN, government's online vehicle registration portal.
- **The Union ministry of human resource development - has asked states, including Tamil Nadu, to consider filling 50% of posts of headmaster in primary and upper primary schools through direct recruitment process, including through limited department exam.**

- ✓ Tamil Nadu has 24,321 government primary schools and 6,966 government middle schools in the state.
  - ✓ In these schools, which have a total of 1.2 lakh teachers, more than 20 lakh children study.
  - ✓ Currently, teachers with years of experience are being promoted as headmasters of primary and middle schools.
  - ✓ Appointing HMs through direct recruitment was one of the components of draft new education policy
- **Combai, a native dog breed of Tamil Nadu - has joined the Dog Breeding and Training School of the Central Reserve Police Force, Bengaluru, on a pilot basis.**



- ✓ At present, the CRPF is using the Belgian Malinois
- ✓ CRPF is the first agency to successfully train the renowned dog breed
- ✓ In Bengaluru, the dogs are trained for multiple tasks, including sniffing, tracking and assault, and the Belgian Malinois perfectly suits the objective.
- ✓ The idea of training native breeds is as part of research and development, so that foreign breeds are not fully dependent on.
- ✓ Last year, two mongrels and two Mudhol hounds were trained, and after 40 weeks of training, they were sent for field trials.
- ✓ Combais had the ability to overcome almost any obstacle in their path.
- ✓ They are fast, muscular, powerful and athletic, known for fearlessness and loyalty to owners
- ✓ The breed is normally used for boar hunting and guarding.
- ✓ In the CRPF, the general training for the dogs will start after they cross 90 days of age, and puppies will be brought to the school when they are 45 days old.

## STATES

- **The Uttar Pradesh Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath - approved the Ground Water Act-2020 recently to improve the falling level and quality of groundwater.**
- ✓ The Ground Water Act makes registration mandatory for installing submersible pumps through an online registration facility
  - ✓ The act also provides for strict punishment and penalty against those individuals and boring companies, who pollute the groundwater through boring pipes.
  - ✓ Besides this, the state government has made rainwater harvesting system mandatory in all private and government schools and colleges.
  - ✓ The penalty for the act of groundwater pollution ranges from
    - ✓ for a first time offender – punishment from 6 months to 1 year with a penalty ranging from Rs 2-5 lakhs.

- ✓ for the second time offender - punishment for up to 2-5 years and a penalty of Rs 5-10 lakh.
- ✓ for the third time offender - punishment from 5-7 years and a penalty of Rs 10-20 lakh.

## NATIONAL

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi - visited Varanasi on February 16, 2020 to participate in the Closing Ceremony of Jagadguru Vishwaradhya Gurukul Centenary Celebrations.**
- ✓ During the visit, PM Modi dedicatee Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Memorial Centre to the nation.
- ✓ Prime Minister also unveiled the 63 ft long Pancha Loha statue of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya at Chandauli.
- ✓ He flagged off IRCTC's Kashi-Maha Kaal Express.



- ✓ The new train will run between Varanasi to Indore from February 20.
- ✓ The PM also inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of several schemes worth about Rs 1200 crore in Varanasi.
- ✓ In the last six years, it was the 22nd visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Varanasi
- **The eight-member expert committee constituted to assess availability of medicines - has submitted its suggestions to the Government**
- ✓ It has suggested imposing export restrictions on 12 drugs including antibiotics like chloramphenicol, neomycin, metronidazole, azythromycin, clindamycin, vitamin B1, B2 and B6 as well as hormones like progesterone used during pregnancy and in menstrual related problems.

### CORONA FALLOUT

- Antibiotics, vitamins and hormones on export-ban list. Panel formed to assess availability of medicines
- States told to invoke provisions of the Essential Commodities Act and launch vigil against hoarders
- Hubei and Shandong are the two provinces that supply 20-25% of raw material for drugs



- ✓ Also, the panel has urged the Centre to ask states to invoke provisions of the Essential Commodities Act and launch a strong alert against hoarders and any kind of artificial shortage.
  - ✓ The government is exploring various measures to ensure there is no shortage of essential drugs in India, following the lockdown of China's Hubei's province, the epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak
  - ✓ Hubei is a major supplier of raw material or active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) used in medicine formulations.
  - ✓ Hubei and Shandong are the two provinces that supplies 20-25% of the pharmaceutical raw material to India
- **The exercise to update the National Population Register (NPR)- will commence on April 1 in the New Delhi Municipal Corporation area**
- ✓ President Ram Nath Kovind will be the first resident to be enrolled.
  - ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu too are likely to be enumerated the same day.
  - ✓ Usually the NPR process starts with the President, as per precedent
  - ✓ However, this year, Office of the Registrar General of India (ORGI) and census commissioner are planning to cover the top three functionaries of the government on the very first day of NPR enrolment in the country.
  - ✓ The President's enumeration is likely to be done in the presence of the Union Home minister, the RGI and Census commissioner and the Director of census operations, Delhi.
  - ✓ The same team may also proceed with the enumeration of the PM and the V-P on the same day.
- **The government – has decided to organise elders into 'action groups aimed at social reconstruction' (AGRASR).**
- ✓ They will function as elderly self-help groups across the country under the National Action Plan for Senior Citizens (NAPSrC), which is expected to be rolled out in April, 2020.
  - ✓ The government proposes to set up 15,000 AGRASR groups covering 3 lakh senior citizens across rural and urban areas in 2020-21.
  - ✓ The elderly members to be enrolled will be in the age group of 60-69 years from poor households.
  - ✓ Supported by the government, the action group members will take up activities like helping academically backward children in government schools by tutoring them after school hours, running creches or day care centres for children, helping patients in nearby hospitals and adopting any social asset for upkeep with the approval of the local body.
  - ✓ The AGRASR groups will work on their project for at least four days a week.
  - ✓ Each group will receive an honorarium of Rs 50,000 in two instalments every year.

- ✓ Apart from this, the institution where they are working can also give them an honorarium based on their ability.
  - ✓ The social justice ministry also plans to launch a national helpline to connect senior citizens to regulatory authorities and care givers by August, under this action plan
  - ✓ The action plan will kick off in April and state level plans will also be prepared.
  - ✓ The ministry hopes to reach out to 1 crore senior citizens below the poverty line, by means of various schemes proposed under the action plan
  - ✓ Apart from the SHGs, under the Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana for assisted elders, the Government is planning to provide assistance through the distribution of devices and home care to 1.54 lakh elders in 2020-21.
- **The Union Government - has decided to rename the National Institute of Financial Management (NIFM), Faridabad as Arun Jaitley National Institute of Financial Management (AJNIFM)**
  - ✓ The NIFM facilitates the training of employees of state governments, defense establishments, banks, other financial institutions and PSUs, apart from providing management education to them.
  - ✓ Former Finance Minister, Arun Jaitley introduced the historic Goods and Services Tax (GST), which brought the country under a single tax system.
  - ✓ During his stint, the railway budget was merged with the general budget.
  - **The central Government - launched the School Health Ambassador Initiative recently, to spread awareness about the preventive health aspects to school students.**



- ✓ Under the initiative, two teachers will be identified in every government school as 'health and wellness ambassadors'.
- ✓ Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal and Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan jointly released the curriculum for the School Health Ambassador Initiative in New Delhi recently.
- ✓ A proper 24-hour curriculum has been developed for the health programme by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).
- ✓ Eleven themes have been selected under the health programme
- ✓ The initiative has been launched as a part of Ayushman Bharat.
- ✓ It will be jointly coordinated by the Union ministries of Health and Human Resources Development.

- ✓ The initiative will be coupled with other government initiatives such as the Eat Right campaign, Fit India movement and Poshan Abhiyaan for the overall development of children's health.
- ✓ In the first phase, the programme will be launched in all government primary, secondary and senior secondary schools of aspirational districts.
- ✓ The School Health Programme (SHP) was launched under Ayushman Bharat by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 14, 2018 in Bijapur, Chhattisgarh.

## INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **India and Portugal - signed 7 agreements recently to boost cooperation in different fields between both the countries**
- ✓ The agreements were signed in various areas, which includes maritime transport, port development, audio-visual co-production, industrial, investment, culture and intellectual property rights.



- ✓ Both the sides signed agreements after the conclusion of talks between PM Narendra Modi and Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa.
- ✓ The Portuguese President arrived in New Delhi on February 13 for a 4-day state visit along with other Ministers of State.
- ✓ This is his first visit to India.
- ✓ Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had visited Portugal in June 2017
- ✓ During the visit in 2017, 11 MoUs were signed across different fields including avoidance of double taxation, nano-technology, biotechnology, space and higher education.

## PERSONALITIES

- **Aam Aadmi Party Chief, Arvind Kejriwal - took oath as the Delhi Chief Minister for the third consecutive term at Delhi's Ramlila Maidan on February 16**



- ✓ The Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, Anil Bajjal administered the oath of office to the new CM.
- ✓ Six cabinet ministers were also sworn in along with the Chief Minister
- ✓ Kejriwal took oath as the CM for the first time from the Ramlila Maidan after the 2013 Delhi Assembly Elections.
- ✓ Kejriwal took oath as the Chief Minister of Delhi for the second time on February 14, 2015, again from the Ramlila Maidan.

- ✓ The Aam Aadmi Party registered a landmark victory in the Delhi Assembly Elections 2020 recently by winning 62 seats in the 70-member assembly.
- ✓ The BJP won 8 seats, while the Congress failed to win even a single seat.

## DEFENCE

- **Defence PSU, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) – to supply 83 Tejas jets to IAF, in one of the biggest deal in the indigenous military aviation sector**
- ✓ After prolonged negotiations in over a year, the overall cost of 83 single-engine Tejas Mark-1A jet fighters and their support package was reduced from the earlier cost of around Rs 56,500 crore to Rs 39,000 crore.
- ✓ Now, the deal is awaiting the final nod of the cabinet committee on security (CCS)
- ✓ It should be cleared before this fiscal ends on March 31, 2020
- ✓ Once the contract is signed, HAL promises to begin deliveries of the Mark-1A jets in three years

**THE DELAYED DESI FIGHTER**

**TIMELINE:**

**Aug 1983:** Govt approves LCA project, with initial Rs 560 crore, to replace ageing MIG-21s

**Jan 2001:** First prototype flies

**Dec 2013:** Single-engine Tejas gets Initial Operational Clearance (IOC)

**Jan 2015:** IAF gets 1st jet (in IOC configuration)

**July 2016:** IAF raises first squadron (Flying Daggers) with only 2 jets

**Feb 2019:** Tejas gets final operational clearance (FOC)

**Feb 2020:** Only 16 jets (IOC) inducted by IAF till now (trainers yet to get FOC)



**TOTAL COST: OVER ₹65,000 CRORE TILL NOW**

Development of IAF/Naval variants, trainers & failed Kaveri engine: <b>₹17,269cr</b>	March 2006 contract for 20 Tejas for IAF in IOC configuration: <b>₹2,813cr</b>
Dec 2010 contract for 20 Tejas for IAF in FOC configuration: <b>₹5,989cr</b>	Impending contract for 83 Mark-1A Tejas for IAF: <b>₹39,000cr</b>

**FUTURE PLANS**

- Delivery of 83 Tejas Mark-1A jets to begin 3 years after contract inked. Total of 123 Mark-1 & Mark-1A jets
- Development of Tejas Mark-II or Medium Weight Fighter (MWF), with more powerful engines & advanced avionics. First test-flight planned for 2023. IAF wants 170 of them
- Get sanction this year to develop stealth fifth-generation fighter aircraft, the advanced medium combat aircraft (AMCA). First test-flight by 2025-2026. IAF wants at least 126 (seven squadrons) of them

- ✓ The Defence acquisitions council (DAC) had first approved the procurement of 83 Tejas jets at a cost of Rs 49,797 crore in November 2016
- ✓ But HAL had responded with a quote of around Rs 56,500crore, which led to prolonged cost negotiations
- ✓ The IAF is currently having just 30 fighter squadrons (each has 18 jets) against the requirement of at least 42 to fight Pakistan and China
- ✓ The first four Rafale fighters will arrive at Ambala airbase in May 2020, while the remaining 32 will arrive subsequently in batches by April 2022, under the Rs 59,000 crore deal signed with France in September 2016.

- ✓ Till now, the IAF's 'Flying Daggers' squadron at Sulur has inducted only 16 of the original 40 Tejas Mark-1 fighters, which were all scheduled for delivery by December 2016 under two contracts worth Rs 8,802 crore signed earlier.
  - ✓ The Mark-1A fighters are designed to have 43 "improvements" over the Mark-1 jets in terms of improved maintainability, AESA (active electronically scanned array) radar to replace existing mechanically-steered radar, air-to-air refuelling, long-range BVR (beyond visual range) missiles and advanced electronic warfare to jam enemy radars and missiles.
  - ✓ The flight testing for Tejas Mark-1A is proposed to be completed by 2022.
  - ✓ After these 123 fighters, the IAF is also planning to induct 170 Tejas Mark-2 or the MWF (medium weight fighter) jets with more powerful engines and advanced avionics to its armoury.
- **Indian and Russian companies – have signed 14 MoUs for setting up various joint ventures covering a range of equipment from modern T-90 tanks to legacy Pechora air defence systems.**
- ✓ The MoUs were signed during the 5th India Russia military industry conference held during the Defexpo 2020 in Lucknow
  - ✓ They come under the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) on joint manufacturing of spares in India signed last September for mutual cooperation
  - ✓ It covers the manufacturing of spares, components, aggregates and other material related to Russian or Soviet-origin arms and defence equipment
  - ✓ One important MoU was signed between the Bharat Dynamics Limited and the Almaz Antey of Russia for exploring the feasibility of a joint venture in India for the production of various sub systems of "air defence missile systems like Tunguska, Kavadrat, the OSA-AKA, Pechora air defence system as well as the Shilka self-propelled air defence gun system".
  - ✓ The pacts were also signed for cooperation on emerging technologies — Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, blockchain and robotics based on Russian technologies, under the proposed Indo-Russian Joint Venture ICT Center of Excellence.
- **President Ram Nath Kovind - presented President's Colour to Indian Navy's INS Shivaji in Lonavala, Maharashtra recently**



- ✓ The President's colour is the highest honour conferred upon any Indian military unit.
- ✓ INS Shivaji is commanded by Commodore Ravnish Seth.
- ✓ INS Shivaji, established in 1945, has served the Indian Navy in training officers and sailors of the Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard.
- ✓ INS Shivaji motto - Karmasu Kaushalam, which means imbining the concept of skill at work in all aspects of human endeavour.
- ✓ Since its establishment, INS Shivaji has trained over 2 lakh officers and sailors, both Indian and foreign nationals from 20 countries

## SPORTS

- **Australia's James Duckworth - defeated Benjamin Bonzi of France in the finals to lift the \$162,500 Bengaluru Open title in Bengaluru on February 16**



- ✓ Duckworth took just 68 minutes to beat Benjamin at the KSLTA Courts in Bengaluru.
  - ✓ Duckworth has won four challenger titles out of last six final appearances, the most by any player
  - ✓ He had also reached the last four of the ATP 250 in Pune last week
  - ✓ His opponent Benjamin defeated four seeds on the way to the final, including India's No.1 and defending champion Prajnesh Gunneswaran
- **Barcelona and Argentinian football legend Lionel Messi, ace sprinter Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, and Liverpool - are the frontrunners for top prizes at the Laureus World Sports Awards 2020.**
  - ✓ The annual ceremony will take place at the Verti Musik Hall in Berlin on February 17.
  - ✓ Messi will compete for the Sportsman of the Year (2019) award with F1 star Lewis Hamilton, 19-time Grand Slam winner Rafael Nadal, MotoGP star Marc Marquez, golf legend Tiger Woods, and Kenyan long distance runner Eulid Kipchoge
  - ✓ Kipchoge, another favourite to win the award, became the first athlete to run a marathon in under two hours last October, covering the 26.2 miles in 1 hour, 59 minutes and 40.2 seconds.
  - ✓ Shelly-Ann will compete for the Sportswoman of the Year (2019) award with fellow sprinter Allyson Felix, American footballer Megan Rapinoe, skier Mikaela

Shiffrin, top gymnastic wonder Simone Biles and 2018 US Open and 2019 Australian Open winner Naomi Osaka

- ✓ As far as Team of the Year (2019) honours is concerned, Liverpool are leading the race.
- ✓ The Reds won the 2018-19 Champions League title and are also in the running for the Comeback of the Year with their astonishing Champions League semifinal turnaround against Barcelona.
- ✓ Among those challenging Liverpool for the award are the United States women's football team that won the 2019 Fifa Women's World Cup, NBA team Toronto Raptors, Formula One team Mercedes, the Spanish national basketball team, and the South African rugby team that won the 2019 Rugby World Cup.
- ✓ Batting legend Sachin Tendulkar is in the fray competing to win the Laureus Sporting Moment (2000-2020).
- ✓ The moment is titled 'Carried on the Shoulders of a Nation', a reference to the Indian cricket team's 2011 World Cup triumph
- ✓ South African female amputee swimmer Natalie du Toit is another sports person who is competing with Tendulkar
- ✓ Toit became the first female amputee swimmer ever to qualify for the able-bodied Olympics in 2008 in Beijing.
- ✓ The Laureus Sport for Good award was bagged by South Bronx United, a project which used football to change the lives of young people and poor communities in New York.
- ✓ The award was received by Andrew So, SBU's co-founder and executive director, and two youngsters who benefited from the project — Mohammed Konate and Maria Martinez.

## **INTERNATIONAL DAY**

### ➤ **National Women's Day of India - February 13**

- ✓ The day marks the birthday of 'Nightingale of India', Sarojini Naidu
- ✓ This year the 141<sup>st</sup> birth anniversary of 'Bharat Kokila', Sarojini Naidu was celebrated across the country
- ✓ Sarojini Naidu was India's first women governor of the United Provinces, the present Uttar Pradesh.
- ✓ She became the second woman President of the Indian National Congress in 1925 and went to South Africa as the representative of India in 1932.
- ✓ She actively participated in the Indian National Movement for the independence of the country.
- ✓ She was awarded Kaiser-i-Hind for her work by the British Government in 1928 during the plague epidemic in India
- ✓ Her first collection of poems was titled "Golden Threshold".
- ✓ Sarojini's poems "Bird of Time" and "Broken Wing" were some of the excellent collections ever written.

# SAROJINI NAIDU

THE NIGHTINGALE OF INDIA

An independence activist & poet; it was through her poems that she inspired many an Indian to fight the British & to stand up for their rights.

Born: 13 Feb 1879  
Died: 2 March 1949

A Cambridge graduate, she was an ardent follower of Mahatma Gandhi & actively propagated the non-cooperation movement.

**1st** Woman President of the Indian National Congress

Woman Governor of an Indian state - United Provinces, currently Uttar Pradesh.

Her birthday on February 13th is celebrated as National Women's Day.



- ✓ Apart from this, International Women's Day is celebrated on March 8 every year.

## ➤ World Radio Day – February 13



- ✓ The day is observed throughout the world by UNESCO to highlight the importance of radio
- ✓ Radio is the most accessible media in the world, connecting lives and bringing people together from across the globe.
- ✓ It was first celebrated globally on February 13, 2012
- ✓ Theme 2020 - "Radio and Diversity"
- ✓ The theme also highlights the fact that radio has its value in every religion, region, and language.
- ✓ Radio was first introduced to India by Madras Presidency Club in 1924.
- ✓ In 1932, the Indian Government (British India) took the rights of it and started a separate department called Indian Broadcasting Services.
- ✓ In 1936, it was renamed All India Radio (AIR), which was managed by the Department of Communications.
- ✓ At present, AIR broadcast 607 news bulletins in 92 different languages every day.

