

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – FEB 22, 2020

TAMIL NADU

- ✓ The Tamil Nadu government - signed memorandums of understanding with Japan-based Mitsuba Sical, South Korea-based Hanon Automotive Systems and US-based Jogo Health at the two-day 'Diplomatic Outreach' event on February 21
- ✓ Hanon Automotive from Korea has proposed to invest ₹500 crore at Malrosapuram in Kancheepuram district.
- ✓ Jogo Health, U.S., which initially signed an MoU for ₹15 crore had increased its investment to ₹250 crore, which is expected to provide employment to around 10,000 people.



- ✓ During the event, the chief minister also virtually laid foundation stone to Polymer Industries Park project with an investment of ₹217 crore in Tiruvallur district
- ✓ The event aims to focus on economic and investment opportunities in the State
- ✓ It was jointly organised and hosted by the Ministry of external affairs and Tamil Nadu State Government.
- ✓ Tamil Nadu Polymer Industries Park Ltd is a Joint Venture of TIDCO and SIPCOT.

- ✓ The Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO) and the National Industrial Corridor Development and Implementation Trust (NICDIT) joined hands to develop the Ponneri Node of the Chennai-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor.



- ✓ This state-of-art park is planned with a coverage area of 257 acres and aims to generate an additional investment of ₹3000 crore and create employment for around 7,000 people
 - ✓ On the occasion, the Chief Minister released a handbook on “Doing Business in Tamil Nadu” for investors.
 - ✓ The event saw the participation of diplomats from 36 countries, including Denmark, France, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Russia, Singapore, Thailand, the U.K. and the U.S.
 - ✓ A facilitation MoU was signed between Guidance Tamil Nadu and Developers Park – Japan for an investment of ₹800 crore creating 2,500 jobs.
 - ✓ The Chief Minister inaugurated various projects with an investment of ₹1,254 crore, that could generate over 10,330 jobs in the state
 - ✓ The agreements for these investments were exchanged in the presence of the Chief Minister.
- **In a first of its kind, students from University of Madras’s Department of ancient history and archaeology - have excavated a neolithic ash-mound during field training at Sendoor Malai near Gudiyatham.**



- ✓ This is the first time a neolithic ash-mound has been excavated in TN
- ✓ However, such neolithic ash-mounds have earlier been discovered in other parts of south India, including Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh

- ✓ The students also unearthed potsherds and stone tools dating to the neolithic, iron age and early historic periods.
- ✓ The excavation is being carried out at Valasai village, about 12km from Gudiyatham town in Vellore district, since February 3
- ✓ Earlier in 2012, an Archaeological Survey of India team visited the site to understand the cultural sequences and importance, which confirmed the site belongs to the neolithic period
- ✓ In the site, ashmounds were formed by accumulation of burned dung in pastoral settlements in the neolithic era.
- ✓ The earliest date and occurrence of these ashmounds dates to 2,500BC.

NATIONAL

- **The Geological Survey of India (GSI) – confirmed the presence of two big block of gold reserves of approximately 3,000 tonnes, worth more than ₹12 lakh crore in Sonbhadra, east UP's mineral-rich district**



- ✓ The GSI has come out with this estimate after exploring for gold deposits for nearly 20 years.
- ✓ There are two areas where experts are expecting huge gold reserves – one in Sona Pahadi region and the other in Hardi region
- ✓ In the Sona Pahadi region, the total estimated reserve of gold is 2,943 tonnes and another 646 kg gold reserve can be found at Hardi block.
- ✓ If these estimates hold true, India's gold reserve would jump to second place behind US.
- ✓ According to the World Gold Council's data, the US has the largest gold holding with 8,133.5 tonnes
- ✓ It was followed by Germany with 3,366 tonnes and IMF with 2,814 tonnes.
- ✓ Italy (2,451.8 tonnes) and France (2,436 tonnes) make the top five.
- ✓ India currently has 618.2 tonnes of gold in its reserves, accounting for 6.6% of gold in total foreign reserves.
- ✓ In this context, India is at number 9 in the world in terms of gold storage.
- ✓ Besides the gold reserves, the GSI team has also found the presence of ores of other metal and minerals, including Andalusite, aluminium nesosilicate mineral

(95.02 tonnes) in Pulawar and Salaidih blocks, Potash (9.46 tonnes) in Patwadh block and iron (14.97 tonnes) in Bharhari block.

- ✓ Sillimanite, an aluminosilicate mineral (9.8 tonnes) have also been explored in Chhipiya block of district.
 - ✓ UP's geology and mining department has sent a team to the district for mapping and geo-tagging of the area
 - ✓ A gold reserve is the specific amount of gold held by the central bank of any country
 - ✓ In India, the Reserve Bank of India keeps a specific amount of gold in its store, to be used by the government during the economic crisis.
 - ✓ India is the largest importer of gold in the world.
 - ✓ For the year 2018-19, the country's annual gold import is 800-900 tonnes or 33 billion dollars by value
- **India's largest known burial site (necropolis) in UP's Sanauli — where 126 burials have been discovered until now — is estimated to be 3,800 years old, according to the results of carbon dating tests**



- ✓ Excavations in Sanauli were started first in 2005 and resumed in 2018
- ✓ During the excavations, several horse-drawn chariots, burials, four-legged wooden coffins, pottery, a copper antenna sword, war shields were discovered.
- ✓ The elaborate burials, which included underground chambers, decorated legged coffins and rice in pots buried with the bodies, belong to an indigenous warrior tribe which inhabited the region,
- ✓ According to the carbon dating, it has now been confirmed that the burials date back to 1,900 BC.
- ✓ Between 2005 and 2006, 116 burials were found while 10 more were discovered in the last two years, making it India's largest known necropolis
- ✓ The burial pits had legged coffins along with systematically arranged vases, bowls and pots.
- ✓ One of the coffins was decorated with eight anthropomorphic figures
- ✓ Sanauli is located at around 68km from Delhi in UP's Baghpat district

- **The Institute of Women's Studies of Lucknow University – to offer new certificate and diploma courses on 'garbha sanskar', which will be launched in the new academic session this year.**
- ✓ The Lucknow University will be the first state university to introduce such a course
- ✓ The move comes after state governor Anandiben Patel, who is also the chancellor of all state universities, asked the authorities to train girls on how to perform their prospective role as mothers
- ✓ She claimed that an institute in Germany had implemented such a course
- ✓ In her convocation address in Lucknow University last year, Patel had mentioned that in India, no formal education is imparted to girls about pregnancy, whereas in Germany, there is a dedicated institute for training the girls about it.

INTERNATIONAL

- **Global terror financing watchdog, FATF - decided to retain Pakistan in its 'grey list' till June 2020.**
- ✓ It had warned the country of stern action of being put in the 'black list', if it fails to prosecute and penalise those involved in terror funding.

No reprieve

Pakistan has been retained on the 'grey list' of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) for four more months



- Pakistan was given a September 2019 deadline to shut down access to funding of UN Security Council-designated terror groups and prosecute their leadership

- In November 2019, after Pakistan was judged to have complied with only four points, the FATF extended the

deadline to February

- Pakistan is among 12 countries on the 'grey list' or 'other monitored jurisdictions' that are being reviewed for actions to stop terror financing and money laundering

- A 'black list' refers to countries for whom there has been a "call to action" or strict banking and international finance sanctions

- ✓ The decision was taken at the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) plenary, which concluded in Paris on February 21 after six days of deliberations
- ✓ According to a statement issued by the FATF, all deadlines given to Pakistan to check terror funding have come to an end but still it has failed to complete its action plan in line with agreed timeline.

- ✓ Till date, Pakistan has only addressed 14 of 27 action items given to it in controlling funding to terror groups like the LeT, the JeM and the Hizbul Mujahideen, which are responsible for a series of attacks in India.
 - ✓ With Pakistan's continuation in the grey list, it will be difficult for the country to get financial aid from the IMF, the World Bank, the ADB and the EU.
 - ✓ Pakistan is one of the 12 countries on the "grey list" or "other monitored jurisdictions" that are being reviewed for actions to stop terror financing and money laundering.
 - ✓ In last November, after Pakistan was judged to have complied with only four points of the plan, the FATF extended the deadline to February, where it was cleared of compliance with 14 points.
 - ✓ The "black list" refers to countries which are put under "call to action" or strict banking and international finance sanctions
 - ✓ The black list at present includes Iran and North Korea.
- **The U.S. and the Taliban - will sign an agreement on February 29, after the end of a week-long period of 'cease fire' and violence reduction in Afghanistan**
- ✓ The agreement could represent a chance for peace after 18 years of war and a roll back of U.S. troop presence, which dates back to 2001, out of Afghanistan.
 - ✓ However, past attempts at negotiating peace agreements have been resisted with renewed Taliban attacks on international forces.
 - ✓ The reduced violence period, to be observed by Afghan, international and Taliban forces, will begin at midnight on February 21 (1930 GMT, 1:00 am IST)
 - ✓ The U.S. and the Taliban have been engaged in talks to facilitate a political settlement in Afghanistan and to reduce the U.S. presence in the region.
 - ✓ The agreement will be signed in Doha between Taliban representatives and U.S. special envoy, Zalmay Khalilzad.
 - ✓ U.S. and Taliban negotiators have been meeting in Doha since 2018 even though fighting has continued in Afghanistan, killing thousands of civilians
- **A global anti-money laundering watchdog - placed Iran on its blacklist on February 21**
- ✓ The sanctions were slapped after Iran failed to comply with international anti-terrorism financing norms
 - ✓ The move is expected to deepen the country's isolation from financial markets.
 - ✓ The decision came after about three years of warnings from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), urging the Islamic Republic to enact terrorist financing conventions.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **India's first ever mission to study the Sun, Aditya L1 – may take another six months to be ready for launch**
 - ✓ The delay is due to the current development of one of the key payloads, which is a high precision instrument to measure and analyse the Sun's outermost atmosphere consisting of plasma or hot ionised gas
 - ✓ According to Isro, the 1,500kg Aditya L1 satellite's main payload is a visible emission line coronagraph
 - ✓ The main payload will study the diagnostic parameters of solar corona
 - ✓ The instrument will study the magnetic field measurement of solar corona.
 - ✓ It is being developed by Indian Institute of Astrophysics
 - ✓ The satellite will also carry six other payloads developed by various laboratories.
 - ✓ It includes a solar low energy X-ray spectrometer that will monitor the X-ray flares for studying the heating mechanism of the Sun's corona
 - ✓ It is developed by Isro Satellite Centre.
 - ✓ A high energy L1 orbiting X-ray spectrometer will observe the dynamic events in Sun's corona
 - ✓ It will also provide an estimate of energy used to accelerate the particles during the eruptive events.
 - ✓ Isro was working on two other major missions – Chandrayaan-3 and Gaganyaan – which will be launched in a year.
 - ✓ It is working with Japanese Space Agency on Chandrayaan-3
 - ✓ Also currently, four Indian Air Force pilots, who will be astronauts of Gaganyaan in the country's first crewed flight to space, are undergoing training in Russia
- **The year 2020 - is already “virtually certain” to be among the 10 warmest years on record**
 - ✓ Also, it has nearly a 50% chance of being the warmest ever, as per the scientists with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in US
 - ✓ The predictions follow a January that was the warmest ever in 141 years of record-keeping
 - ✓ The global average temperatures recorded last month were 1.14° Celsius above average, slightly higher than in January 2016, the previous record-holder.
 - ✓ The forecasts are in sync with a long-term trend of global warming that is occurring as a result of human caused emissions of carbon dioxide and other gases that trap heat in the atmosphere.
 - ✓ All of the 10 current warmest years on record have occurred since 2004, and the past 5 years have been the hottest five.

DEFENCE

- **The foundation stone for the new Army headquarters or the “Thal Sena Bhawan (TSB)” - was laid by Defence minister Rajnath Singh at Delhi Cantonment on February 21.**
- ✓ The proposed headquarters will accommodate 1,684 officers and 4,330 other staff personnel by combining 8 existing offices of the Army in different parts of the Capital



- ✓ The TSB is spread over 39 acres and includes the 6,104 offices in a multi-storey “green” building complex
- ✓ The proposed office will take at least five years to be completed at a cost of around ₹750 crore
- ✓ The centralized office will collectively contribute towards national security, besides effectively dealing with defence-related issues
- ✓ The newly created Department of Military Affairs (DMA), headed by the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), would also work from Thal Sena Bhawan
- ✓ The proposed TSB would bring all Army Headquarters offices under one roof, thereby improving the working efficiency, while reducing the carbon footprint and logistics requirements.

APPOINTMENTS

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi - appointed two retired bureaucrats, Bhaskar Khulbe and Amarjeet Sinha, as his advisers for two years.**



- ✓ Khulbe earlier served as the PM’s Secretary in the PMO.

- ✓ Sinha served as Secretary-Rural Development and Panchayati Raj in the government before his retirement.
- ✓ Both are 1983 batch IAS officers belonging to West Bengal and Bihar cadre, respectively.
- ✓ Former Cabinet secretary P.K. Sinha is serving as Principal Adviser to the Prime Minister.
- ✓ He was appointed in the PMO after the resignation of Nripendra Misra, the then Principal Secretary
- ✓ The Principal Secretary post is now occupied by P.K. Misra.

SPORTS

- **Indian driver, Jehan Daruvala – has been inducted by four-time champions Red Bull Racing into their junior program**



- ✓ The move could pave way for Jehan to drive in Formula 1 circuit some day in his career, based on his success in Formula 2 circuit.
 - ✓ The Red Bull junior program has played an instrumental role in the rise of Sebastian Vettel, with whom the team won four titles from 2010-2013, Daniel Ricciardo, Alex Albon and the outfit's current star Max Verstappen.
 - ✓ The 21-year-old from Mumbai will return to Carlin Racing for his maiden stint in the FIA Formula 2 Championship, which runs alongside the Formula 1 season
- **India - clinched one silver and three bronze medals on February 21 as the women's wrestling competition concluded at the Asian championships in New Delhi**
 - ✓ The Olympics bronze medallist, Sakshi Malik settled for silver in the non-Olympic 65kg weight category
 - ✓ Vinesh Phogat (53kg), Anshu (57kg) and Gursharan Preet Kaur (72kg) had to be content with a bronze each on the fourth day of the Asian meet



- ✓ The victory of Indians is not so significant in the event, as women's wrestling powerhouse, China and North Korea have not sent their teams this year.
 - ✓ Besides, Japan has not also sent its full-strength contingent
 - ✓ India's Tokyo medal hope, Vinesh Phogat, suffered third straight defeat against the Japanese reigning world champion, Mayu Mukaida in the event.
- **The Motera stadium, world's biggest cricket ground - was unveiled to the media by Gujarat Cricket Association (GCA) on February 21 ahead of US President Donald Trump's visit on February 24**



- ✓ The 110,000 seat capacity stadium, spread over 63 acres, will host the 'Namaste Trump' event.
- ✓ US President Donald Trump will open the world's biggest cricket stadium in India during his visit on February 24.
- ✓ The stadium is named after Sardar Vallabhai Patel, Iron Man of India and India's first Home Minister
- ✓ Patel is already immortalised by the world's biggest statue in Gujarat with the massive Statue of Unity, which was completed in 2018 and measures 182 metres (597 feet) twice the height of the Statue of Liberty.
- ✓ The \$100 million, perfectly round venue, with seats in the blue and saffron of the Indian team, is designed to provide unobstructed views from every angle
- ✓ It surpasses the current largest cricket stadium, 100,000-seat Melbourne Cricket Ground, the venerable venue that was built in 1853 by the Melbourne Cricket Club
- ✓ Then, Eden Garden in Kolkata is the oldest and second largest cricket stadium in India

RANKINGS

- **Global software major Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) - has bagged a spot as one of Fortune's Best Big Companies to Work For in 2020**
- ✓ TCS is the only Indian company to be in the top 20 Great Places to Work in US alongside US mega-companies.
 - ✓ The list was made by Great Place to Work, the global authority on workplace culture.
 - ✓ Since 2014, TCS has been among the top two US job creators in the IT services and consulting sector, hiring more than 20,000 new employees

