

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – FEB 29, 2020

TAMIL NADU

- Greater Chennai Corporation - will finalise the design consultants for the first phase of the 'Mega streets project' by March-end
- ✓ Out of sixteen consultants from across the country who have applied to be part of the project, six will be eventually selected for the execution.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Scope of project 886km > Cost ₹10,000 crore 	<p>MAJOR ROADS TO BE REDEVELOPED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Cathedral Road, Dr Radhakrishnan Salai, Gandhi Mandapam Road, LB Road, Sardar Patel Road, New Avadi Road, Anna Nagar 2nd and 3rd Avenues, Race Course Road, CP Ramasamy Road, Velachery Main Road 	<p>with safe access to schools, parks and public transport modes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Tackling parking needs in a neighbourhoods
<p>PHASE 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Area 70sqkm > Road length 110km road that includes Anna Nagar, Tondiarpet, Nungambakkam, Mylapore, Velachery and Adyar > Cost ₹1,500 crore 	<p>OBJECTIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Designing network of walking and cycling routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Integrating utilities by using ducts, no road cuts for next 30 years > Developing cycling and walking trails along canals/river edges > Improving safety on streets

- ✓ Each consultant will be allotted a neighbourhood in the first phase, which consists of six packages.
- ✓ The selected consultants will study 110km of arterial and sub arterial roads in six neighbourhoods — Anna Nagar, Tondiarpet, Nungambakkam, Mylapore, Velachery and Adyar — and come up with a detailed plan for the pilot project.
- ✓ The project was mentioned in the Tamil Nadu budget also, by allocating ₹750 crore for the Integrated Urban Development Mission (IUDM) and ₹500 crore for Chennai Mega City Development.
- ✓ The launch of the project was announced earlier this month
- ✓ The project intends to provide sufficient space for pedestrians, cyclists, and the differently-abled in the roads to encourage walking and maintain active lifestyle

- ✓ Similar project plans are already proposed in Singapore and London
 - ✓ Earlier, Chennai became the first city in the country to adopt a non-motorised transport policy in 2014, to give priority to the pedestrians.
 - ✓ The city's first pedestrian plaza in Pondy Bazaar inaugurated three months ago is an example of the vision in this direction.
 - ✓ In 2017, 3,507 pedestrians were killed in Tamil Nadu, the highest in the country followed by Maharashtra (1,831) and Andhra Pradesh (1,379).
- **The draft rules for the state government's land pooling scheme - was released on February 28**
- ✓ The government launched the scheme two years ago to acquire land for housing, industries and infrastructure projects.
 - ✓ As per the rules, the planning authority should constitute committees to explain the 'scheme' to owners of lands and buildings, and discuss with them when the number of people likely to be affected by the scheme is more than 100.
 - ✓ The planning authority should take into consideration all suggestions made and objections raised and hold land surveys and ownership verification meetings, as may be required.
 - ✓ The rules also deal with multiple issues relating to land pooling, including for industries.
 - ✓ For developing industrial parks by government agencies such as SIPCOT or SIDCO, constitution of a 'special purpose vehicle' to govern the scheme should be considered.
 - ✓ All or part of land can be marketed by the government, SIPCOT or SIDCO and the benefits from such sales can be shared with the land owners, instead of returning the unused portions to the land owners.
 - ✓ The rules further said if the landlord is not found, the land acquisition notice can be left at his last known place of residence or business or given to some adult member or servant of his family
 - ✓ The concept of 'land pooling' was formulated keeping in mind problems in land acquisition.
 - ✓ In Gujarat, making use of the land pooling concept, a highway was built.
 - ✓ For implementing the concept, the assent of Governor Banwarilal Purohit was obtained in July, 2018 to amend the Town and Country Planning Act
 - ✓ Another important objective of the concept is the creation of public amenities like roads, water supply and bus stands.
 - ✓ Planning authorities such as the DTCP or the CMDA will implement the schemes and upon completion, the facilities will be handed over to local bodies concerned.
 - ✓ On an average, the size of each parcel of land so pooled will be in the range of 100 to 400 acres.
 - ✓ As much as 40% of land developed will be returned to owners, a feature which is not available in other States where it is being implemented.

- ✓ 15% of the remaining portion will be sold through auction after setting aside a certain part for roads, parks, playgrounds, garden, open space reservation and housing for economically weaker sections.
- **Tamil Nadu Electricity Board - has launched a new facility, 'Renewable Energy Management Centre' (REMC), to do real-time renewable energy forecasting, scheduling and generation.**
- ✓ The centre was opened by state power minister P Thangamani on February 28

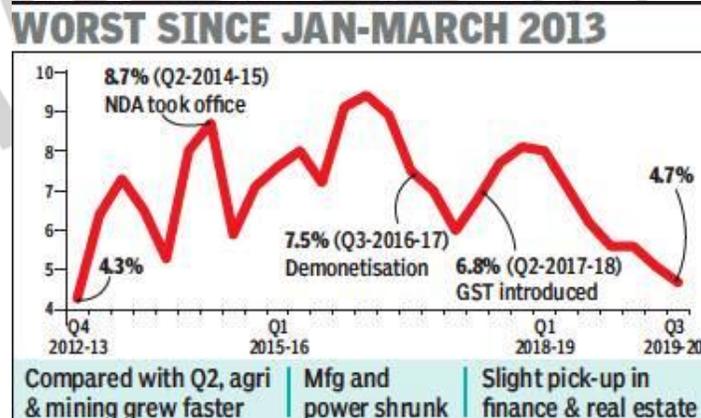


- ✓ REMC enables optimum utilisation of renewable power by monitoring and utilising the wind and solar power throughout the day.
- ✓ The new centre is connected to 154 pooling stations
- ✓ Similar centres have been set up in seven other states that are rich in wind and solar power generation.
- ✓ Also, such centres are already functioning at the state load despatch centres in four regions of the country.
- ✓ The REMC was approved by the Centre
- ✓ Each such facility is being set up at a cost of ₹49 crore.
- ✓ The REMCs are being managed by Power System Operation Corporation of India Ltd. (POSOCO) at regional and national level and by SLDC at the state level
- **Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - will lay foundation stone for ₹565 crore diversion of flood surplus from Mettur to the dry tanks in Sarabanga basin in his native, Edappadi panchayat union, on March 4**
- ✓ The Chief Minister is expected to launch the project in Mettupatti Tank in Iruppali village.
- ✓ A detailed project has been prepared to divert the Cauvery river flood surplus to 100 tanks and ponds in four taluks of Omalur, Mettur, Edappadi, Sankari in Salem district.
- ✓ It also covers drought prone blocks like Nangavalli, Mecheri, Tharamangalam, Omalur, Konganapuram, Edappadi and Sankari

- ✓ The diversion scheme is being planned against the backdrop of allegations that Mettur surplus goes waste into Bay of Bengal
- ✓ Earlier, the CM held a review meeting with PWD officials at the Secretariat and directed them to complete the ongoing projects by next March
- ✓ During the meeting, the chief minister took stock of other projects, including fifth reservoir in Thervoy Kandigai in Tiruvallur district, progress of kudimaramath, the traditional restoration of water bodies, barrage across Coleroon between Athanur and Kumaramangalam villages in Cuddalore and Nagapattinam, and new regulator at Mukkombu
- ✓ He also discussed about taking forward Nadanthai Vazhi Cauvery and Cauvery-Gundar inter-link, the flagship programmes with funds being allocated in the budget
- ✓ The Chief Minister will lay foundation stone for the construction of new medical college in Virudhunagar and Ramanthapuram on March 1.
- ✓ The state government allotted Rs 1,200 crore against its share in the construction of 11 colleges sanctioned by the Centre.

NATIONAL

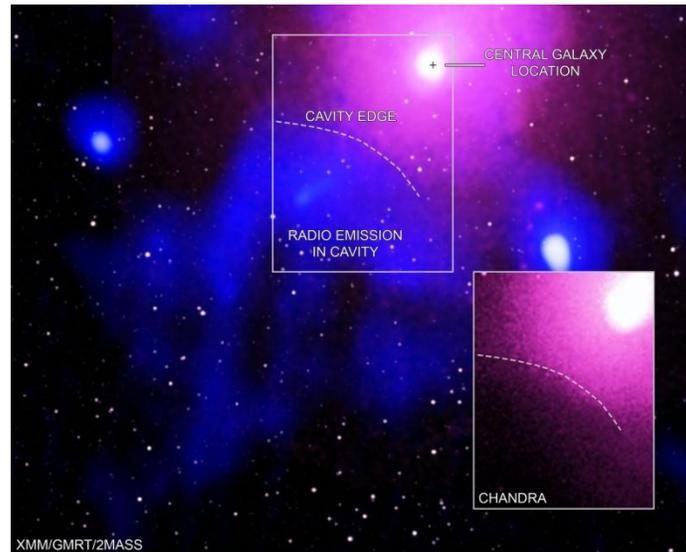
- **The National Statistical Office (NSO) – has released the country's quarterly economic growth on February 28**



- ✓ As per the data released, the country's quarterly economic growth dropped to a near seven-year-low in the October-December period of 2019-20
- ✓ The growth was estimated at 4.7% in the December quarter, slower than the upwardly revised growth of 5.1% in the previous quarter and much below the downwardly revised 5.6% in the December quarter of 2018-19
- ✓ The October-December GDP growth of 4.7% is the slowest in 27 quarters and slowest since the 4.3% expansion in the January-March quarter of 2012-13.
- ✓ The NSO also released the second advance estimate, projecting a GDP growth of 5% for 2019-20, in comparison with 6.1% in 2018-19.
- ✓ The reason for the decline in growth is attributed to the decline in manufacturing and electricity

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- An international team of scientists - has detected a blast from a supermassive black hole at the centre of the Ophiuchus galaxy cluster, 390 million light years away, which is the biggest explosion in the universe since the big bang discovery.



- ✓ The colossal explosion, five times bigger than anything observed before, was discovered using four telescopes, including the Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT) in Pune.
- ✓ The other three were Nasa's Chandra X-ray observatory, ESA's XMM-Newton and the Murchison Widefield Array in western Australia.
- ✓ Scientists detected the explosion by studying the cavity in the hot gases surrounding the black hole.
- ✓ The explosion is said to have happened many million light years ago and wasn't in the visual range
- ✓ Radio data from the GMRT played an important role in discovering the mystery about the nature of this explosion.
- ✓ The data was taken in 2008 and was available in the observatory archive, which was reanalyzed for a detailed look at the cluster
- ✓ All black holes have super-heated gas surrounding it, which is called the cluster plasma.
- ✓ A massive cavity is present in the plasma of this supermassive black hole in the centre of the Ophiuchus galaxy cluster.
- ✓ The cavity around the plasma of this black hole had been previously spotted with X-ray telescopes
- ✓ The GMRT was commissioned in 2002.

DEFENCE

- **Union Minister of State for Shipping (Independent) Mansukh L. Mandaviya - commissioned a new offshore patrol vessel 'ICGS Varad' for the Indian Coast Guard in Chennai on February 28.**



- ✓ ICGS Varad was designed and built by Larsen & Toubro at Kattupalli near Chennai
- ✓ The ICGS Varad will be deployed at Paradip in Odisha, under the operational control of the North-Eastern Region's Coast Guard.
- ✓ The coast guard vessel, helmed by Commandant Pintu Bag, will be manned by 11 officers and 91 personnel.
- ✓ The induction of the vessel into the fleet of the Indian Coast Guard has taken its total tally to 147 ships and boats apart from the 62 aircrafts possessed by ICG.
- ✓ The vessel is the first major defence ship to clear all the sea trials in one single sea sortie, which is a record of sorts in the Indian shipbuilding industry.
- ✓ The 98m-long vessel is fitted with state-of-the-art advanced navigation and communication equipment, machinery, sensors along with 30 mm and 12.7 mm guns.
- ✓ The ship also has the capacity to carry four high-speed boats and a twin-engine helicopter for search and rescue operations and law enforcement and maritime patrol
- ✓ ICGS Varad will be deployed for the surveillance of India's Exclusive Economic Zone.
- ✓ The vessel will also carry pollution response equipment in case of an oil spill at the sea.
- ✓ ICGS Varad is the fifth in the series of seven offshore patrol vessels, being constructed by L&T as a part of their March 2015 contract with the Union Defence Ministry.

SPORTS

- **Ace squash player Saurav Ghosal and noted junior Veer Chotrani - are the two Indians featured in the Asian Squash Federation performance award list for 2019.**



- ✓ Saurav Ghosal has been nominated for the Dato Alex Award for 'outstanding performance of the year' in the senior category (men)
- ✓ Veer Chotrani has been chosen for the Hassan Musa Award for 'outstanding performance of the year' in junior boys.
- ✓ Veer has won the Asian Junior individual squash championship in 2019
- ✓ Saurav has claimed the senior National squash championship in 2020
- ✓ He has been nominated to lead the men's squad for the 20th Asian Team squash championship this year
- ✓ Saurav has finished runner-up at the 2020 Pittsburgh Open in January 2020.

