

## **EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – FEB 5, 2020**

### **TAMIL NADU**

- **The Tamil Nadu government – decided to withdraw its earlier announcement to introduce public examinations for Classes V and VIII, scheduled in March and April**
- ✓ The state school education minister K A Sengottaiyan announced that the old pattern will continue, citing several representations and suggestions received by the government for the rethink
- ✓ The state cabinet led by chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami had a discussion on the subject, immediately after a two-hour session on the state budget.
- ✓ Earlier in September, the school education department announced that students in Classes V and VIII would have to take public examinations like those in Classes X and XII.
- ✓ It had proposed to conduct ‘public’ exam for 60 marks through questions prepared by the Directorate of government examinations, while the remaining 40 marks will be given for formative assessment at the school level.
- ✓ Earlier, the Government had also clarified that no one would be detained for first three years even if they failed the public examinations.
  
- **The 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission – allocates Rs 556 crore for tackling air pollution and handling solid waste management in Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai and Trichy (under the category of cities with more than one million population each) for the next Financial Year.**
- ✓ The Commission had allocated Rs 5,344 crore to local bodies in the state for 2020-21.
- ✓ Of the total allocation, Rs 1,737 crore is set aside for urban local bodies.
- ✓ Chennai will be receiving a maximum assistance of Rs 362 crore.
- ✓ It will also receive another Rs 100 crore separately to prevent flooding in the city

## SPRUCING UP TN CITIES

Chennai, Coimbatore,  
Madurai and Trichy allocated  
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> ₹500 cr allocated to  
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5 million to  
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management in  
view of the regular  
incidence of flooding



> ₹100 cr each to be  
allotted to Chennai,  
Mumbai, Kolkata

> ₹462 cr | Max allocation  
for Chennai in TN

- ✓ A targeted allocation of Rs 500 crore has been made in 2020-21 from the National Disaster Mitigation Fund (NDMF) to enable cities with a population of more than 5 million to prepare integrated solutions for flood management during monsoon period.
- ✓ The commission has also decided to propose grants to all three tiers of panchayats in rural local bodies and also to cantonment boards in urban local bodies.
- ✓ For rural local bodies, 50% of grants are untied, while the remaining 50% will be tied as grants for sanitation and water supply, which are identified by the Centre as national priorities
- ✓ However, for urban and rural local bodies, no conditions have been prescribed for obtaining the grants in 2020-21.
- ✓ But, from 2021-22 onwards, the entry level condition for rural local bodies to get these grants is timely submission of audited accounts
- ✓ Similarly, for the urban local bodies from 2021-22 onwards, the commission has recommended two entry-level conditions to get grants in the subsequent years.
- ✓ The urban bodies should ensure timely submission of audited reports and also must have to increase their own revenue.
- ✓ For the first time, the finance commission has categorised cities into million-plus cities and cities with less than one million population

- ✓ Grants are provided to 50 million-plus cities on agglomeration basis with special 'emphasis' on meeting challenges of poor air quality, ground water depletion and sanitation.
  - ✓ For non-million-plus towns, 50% of the funds are untied and the remaining 50% is tied, with an equal share for drinking water and sanitation
  - ✓ Further, the commission has recommended that states make allotment of grants on the basis of population to the cantonment boards within their territories.
  - ✓ It has identified two cantonment boards in Tamil Nadu — St Thomas Mount in Chennai and Wellington in The Nilgiris district which have a total population of 63,257 people.
- **The Tamil Nadu government - will repair and reinforce 36 dams in the second phase of the Centre's dam rehabilitation and improvement project (DRIP) at an estimated cost of Rs 610 crore, which would be spread across the next 10 years**
- ✓ The state government has given its approval to constitute an additional dam safety review panel to take up the second phase of the World Bank-funded project, for which work will commence in April this year.
  - ✓ Both these panels will inspect and study the selected dams, as part of the project.
  - ✓ Tamil Nadu water resources and agriculture engineering departments is responsible for implementing the project.
  - ✓ The objectives of the Centre's ambitious project are to improve the safety and operational performance of the existing dams and strengthen the dam safety institutional setup of the respective state.
  - ✓ The second panel was constituted to speed up inspection of dams to finalise the estimated cost of works to be taken up in phase II of the project
  - ✓ The panel would visit the remaining selected dams and submit the report before June this year.
  - ✓ The panels comprised of hydrologists, dam design experts, geologists and seismic experts
  - ✓ The government has allocated Rs 99 lakh for the two panels to study the dams.
  - ✓ The first phase of the project, which commenced in April 2012, covering 69 dams in the state, was taken up at a cost of Rs 803 crore.
  - ✓ Out of these, works on 67 dams have been completed and works on Pechiparai dam in Kanyakumari and Manimutharu in Tirunelveli district are about to be completed soon.
  - ✓ In phase-I, works such as strengthening and standardising the earthen bunds, toe drain, rehabilitating shutters and sluices were taken up.
  - ✓ Now, the Centre has added major works such as replacing shutters and revenue generation components in phase II of the project
  - ✓ The department has also received proposals to add a few more dams, including Shenbagathoppu dam in Tiruvannamalai, under the project

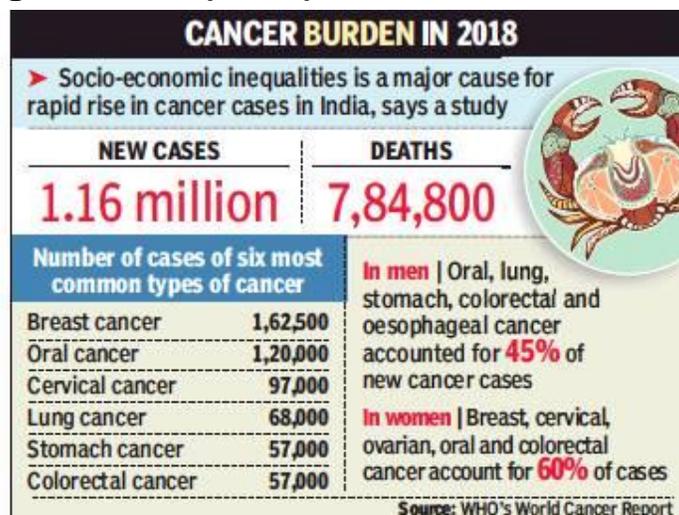
- **K. Thiagarajan, population expert and founder of the United Writers' Association, has been selected for the Global Award of Accomplishment alongwith a medal**



- ✓ The award will be conferred at the Global Achievers' Summit, to be held in Hyderabad next month
- ✓ Thiagarajan will be awarded for his contribution towards educating the poor.

## NATIONAL

- **The Government - introduced a bill in the Lok Sabha to amend the Aircraft Act on February 4**
- ✓ As per the proposed bill, the fine amount for violations will be raised from ₹10 lakh to up to ₹1crore.
- ✓ The Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2020 also proposes to keep “aircraft belonging to any armed forces of the Union, other than naval, from military or air force outside the purview” of the Aircraft Act, 1934.
- ✓ As per the bill, once the amendments are passed, the government would have the power to issue directions to review any order passed by Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) and Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB)
- **One in 10 Indians will develop cancer during their life-time and one in 15 Indians will die of cancer, according to the World Cancer Report released by World Health Organisation (WHO)**



- ✓ According to the report, “socio-economic inequalities” are cited as a major reason for the rapidly increasing cases of cancer in the country.
  - ✓ Lower socio-economic status is usually associated with oral and cervical cancer
  - ✓ Urbanization, improvement in education and increasing disposable income with higher overall socio-economic status are associated with an increasing risk of breast and colo-rectal cancer cases
  - ✓ India had an estimated 1.16 million new cancer cases and around 7.84 lakh cancer deaths in 2018.
  - ✓ The six most common cancer types are breast, oral, cervical, lung, stomach, and colo-rectal cancer, which account for almost half (49%) of all new cancer cases
  - ✓ Over 90% of patients with oral cancer have lower socio-economic status in India, who were not aware about harms of tobacco use
  - ✓ According to WHO, there are 120 million smokers in India, contributing to 12% of world smokers
  - ✓ The number of tobacco smokers in India grew by 36% between 1998 and 2015.
  - ✓ Similarly, cervical cancer affects predominantly women with lower socio-economic status, as they have limited access to public health services for prevention and early detection.
  - ✓ Globally, India accounts for about 20% of cervical cancer cases
  - ✓ On the contrary, incidence of colo-rectal and breast cancer is increasing in the most developed states in India among the urban population
  - ✓ As per the report, if current trends continue, the world will see a 60% increase in cancer cases over the next two decades
  - ✓ The biggest increase (an estimated 81%) in new cases will be seen in low and middle-income countries, where survival rates are currently the lowest.
  - ✓ According to WHO, low socio-economic status, consumption of tobacco products and poor child and maternal health along with limited health resources for combating infectious diseases are the main reasons for the rapidly increasing cancer cases in the country
  - ✓ It also emphasized on the need for health services to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer.
  - ✓ As per the report, globally the cancer cases will increase by 81% by 2040.
  - ✓ In developed countries, the mortality rate due to cancer was brought down by 20%.
  - ✓ However, in poorer countries the reduction was merely 5%, due to lack of huge investment required to tackle the disease burden
- **The Bengaluru-based company, Qness - has the largest strength of employees and associates — 3.85 lakh — in the private sector in India.**
- ✓ The company provides staffing solutions for some of the biggest brands in the country
  - ✓ Showing an overall growth at 38% every year since 2016, Qness has moved past Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) now.

- ✓ TCS remains the largest overall employer with 4.46 lakh on the rolls, out of which about 90,000 are overseas, leaving its Indian employees at about 3.6 lakh

TOP HIRERS	
<b>PUBLIC SECTOR</b>	
Armed Forces	13-14L
Railways	13L
Postal Dept	4.2L
<b>PVT SECTOR</b>	
Quess Corp	3.85L
TCS	3.56L (plus 90,000 overseas)
Infosys	2.43L
Reliance Ind	1.94L
Swiggy said in October that it might increase its strength from 2L to 5L in 18 months	

- ✓ Companies like Quess have benefited from the demand for outsourced workers to reduce cost in the industries
- ✓ These outsourced workers were placed in areas ranging from e-commerce delivery to facilities management for commercial buildings.
- ✓ TCS mostly employs engineers, while Quess depends largely on 'grey-collar' workers
- ✓ The employees of Quess were placed as outsourced service providers for its over 2,000 clients, including Samsung, Amazon, Reliance, Vodafone India and Bajaj Finance
- ✓ The company also has about 5,000 workers employed in overseas markets like Singapore.

## SUPREME COURT VERDICT

- **The Supreme Court - directed the states to set up 'Gram Nyayalayas' within four weeks time on February 3, 2020**
- ✓ The ruling was delivered by an SC bench headed by Justice N V Ramana.
- ✓ Gram Nyayalayas are village courts that facilitates speedy and easy access to the judicial system in rural areas of the country
- ✓ Currently the Gram Nyayalayas, as per the notifications by the respective states, are functioning only in 3 states, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Kerala, in the entire country
- ✓ Overall, only 208 Gram Nyayalayas are functioning across the country, as against the required 2500 as per the 12th five-year plan.
- ✓ The Supreme Court had in September 2019 agreed to hear a plea seeking a direction to the Centre and all the states to set up Gram Nyayalayas under the supervision and monitoring of the apex court.
- ✓ The Gram Nyayalayas Act, 2008 provides for the establishment of Gram Nyayalayas at the grassroots level.

## INTERNATIONAL

- **Hong Kong - reported its first coronavirus death on February 4, the second outside mainland China**
- ✓ The fast-spreading virus outbreak has killed 427 people so far, threatening the global economy.
- ✓ Hong Kong's first casualty was a 39-year-old man who had visited China's Wuhan city, the epicentre of the outbreak, recently
- ✓ Meanwhile, Chinese authorities reported a record daily jump in deaths of 64 to 425.
- ✓ The only other death outside mainland China was a man who died in the Philippines last week after visiting Wuhan.
- ✓ The total infections in mainland China rose to 20,438, while there are nearly 200 cases across 24 countries and China's special administrative regions Hong Kong and Macau.
- ✓ Apart from China, Thailand's tally of infections jumped to 25, the highest outside China, while Singapore's casualties increased to 24
- ✓ Belgium reported its first case of the new virus, with an individual who was among nine Belgians repatriated from Wuhan recently, contracting the virus

## INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

- **Bhutan – has decided to end free entry to Indian tourists and introduce a “sustainable development fee” for regional tourists**
- ✓ The move follows an increase in Indian visitors causing disturbances and concerns for the unique Himalayan kingdom's delicate ecology.
- ✓ Bhutan's lower house of Parliament, Tshogdu, passed a 'Tourism Levy and Exemption Bill of Bhutan', 2020 for levying the fee on February 3
- ✓ As per the legislation, visitors from India, Bangladesh, and the Maldives have to pay a fee of 1,200 ngultrums (US\$ 16.85 or Rs 1,200) per day, beginning from July.
- ✓ The SDF is considerably lower than the \$65 charged to other foreign tourists, who are also charged a compulsory flat “cover charge” of \$250 per day, which includes meals, transport and accommodation
- ✓ The 'Carbon negative' Bhutan government has taken this decision as per their 'High Value, Low Impact' tourism policy
- ✓ In 2018, a total of 202,290 tourists visited Bhutan, out of which India and Bangladesh contributed 1,91,836 and 10,450 tourists respectively.

## CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **The Ministry of External Affairs – to organize East Asian Summit (EAS) to discuss maritime security cooperation as part of its ‘Indo-Pacific’ policy in Chennai on February 6-7, 2020**
- ✓ India views the Indo-Pacific policy as a non-binary, less contested space which will increase the country’s diplomatic space.
- ✓ India’s Indo-Pacific policy has 7 pillars –
  - ✓ maritime domain awareness
  - ✓ marine environment
  - ✓ humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR)
  - ✓ sustainable use of maritime resources
  - ✓ science and technology
  - ✓ capacity building
  - ✓ maritime transportation and
  - ✓ trade
- ✓ The Indo-Pacific conference in Chennai will feature about 100 senior officials and experts including 50 from EAS countries
- ✓ They will deliberate upon various aspects of maritime security cooperation under five thematic ‘interactive’ sessions –
  - ✓ Holistic Maritime Security,
  - ✓ Maritime Safety,
  - ✓ Transition to a Regional Blue Economy,
  - ✓ India’s Indo-Pacific Oceans’ Initiative and
  - ✓ The Way Forward.
- ✓ The conference is being jointly organised by India, Australia and Indonesia
- ✓ This is the fifth maritime security conference
- ✓ The first such conference was organized in New Delhi in November 2015, the second in Goa in November 2016 and the third in Bhubaneswar in June 2018.
- ✓ In 2019, the fourth conference was held in Bangkok.
- ✓ The conference is expected to facilitate a free and open dialogue among all the EAS partners on various issues of maritime security cooperation
- ✓ It is expected to come up with suggestions on tackling the challenges in the maritime domain in a cooperative manner

## SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **Uttar Pradesh-based ‘The Indian Institute of Veterinary Research’ (IVRI) of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) – has developed a new vaccine to control classical swine fever**
- ✓ Classical Swine Fever is the most common disease in pigs that causes a high mortality rate of swine in India



- ✓ This disease has led to a decrease in the population of pigs in 2019.
- ✓ India has been using UK-based swine fever vaccine, since 1964, which are manufactured by killing rabbits.
- ✓ The total requirement of the vaccine in India is 22 million doses per year
- ✓ However, hardly 1.2 million doses are being produced currently.
- ✓ Also, the newly developed vaccine will be cheaper than the earlier one.
- ✓ It is expected to cost about Rs. 2 per dose while the existing vaccine costs Rs. 15-20 per dose.
- ✓ This new vaccine will provide 2 years of immunization capacity, while the existing vaccines only provide 3 to 6 months of immunization capacity
- ✓ The new vaccine will be a part of the government's One Health Initiative.

## DEFENCE

- **Chief of Defence staff General (CDS) Bipin Rawat – announced that India will kick off the process to set up joint theatre commands from next year onwards**
- ✓ The process will begin after first integrating air defence, drone operations, logistics, medical services etc., among the Army, Navy and IAF
- ✓ The setting-up of “geographical” theatre commands along with “functional” tri-service commands for air defence, logistics and training will be the biggest-ever military restructuring in India's history.
- ✓ The theatre commands will have all assets and manpower of the Army, Navy and IAF placed under one operational commander in a region
- ✓ The proposed plan will be to establish one or two commands (a northern one west of Nepal and an eastern one east of Nepal) to handle China, one or two commands on the western front to confront Pakistan (one in J&K and the other to include Punjab, Gujarat and Rajasthan) and a southern command for peninsular India
- ✓ The aim is to cut costs and right-size manpower in the almost 15-lakh strong armed forces, and to build integrated land-air-sea machinery for future wars
- ✓ The only two tri-service commands in the country are the geographical Andaman and Nicobar Command and the functional Strategic Forces Command that handle the country's nuclear arsenal.