

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – JAN 22, 2020

TAMIL NADU

- **Tamil Nadu School education minister K A Sengottaiyan—announced that Class V and Class VIII students will write board exams in their respective schools and not in common exam centres.**
- ✓ Earlier, the Directorate of elementary examination had said, through a circular, that only primary and middle schools with a minimum of 10 students would be made exam centres for the Class V and class VIII board exams
- ✓ It also noted that the students were to write the exam in a nearby school, wherever the strength was less than 10
- ✓ The minister clarified that the board exams were being conducted only to assess the learning outcome of Class V and Class VIII students
- ✓ The school education department has already announced the ‘no detention policy’ for the next three years with respect to these exams
- ✓ Hence, no students will be detained even if they don't clear the board exams for Classes V and VIII.
- ✓ The board exams will be conducted for 60 marks and the remaining 40 marks will be granted to the formative assessments conducted in the classroom.
- ✓ The written exam for Class V students will be based on the basic concepts, practices, and learning outcomes for three subjects — Tamil, English and Maths.
- ✓ Similarly, the Class VIII exams will test the basic concepts, content, and learning outcomes for Tamil, English, Sciences, Social Science and Maths.
- **The Tamil Nadu Government – has decided to expand its Speed Violation Detection System (SVDS) project to Poonamallee - Krishnagiri and Ulundurpet - Salem highways as well**
- ✓ This was announced by the State transport minister MR Vijayabaskar, while inaugurating 31st road safety week celebrations across the state on January 20.



- ✓ The tenders were recently called for to set up the state's first SVDS along GST Road from Chengalpattu to Tiruchi Highway at a budget of Rs 25 crore.
- ✓ The project involves installation of 54 high-definition (HD) cameras with speed guns to capture traffic violators and generate challans automatically.
- ✓ The system will capture and record various offences like over-speeding, not wearing seat belts and jumping traffic signals
- ✓ In Tamil Nadu, the overall accident rate has reduced from 19 deaths per 10,000 vehicles in 2000 down to 3 per 10,000 now.
- ✓ Also, the overall accident rate has come down by 43% compared to last year, due to stringent monitoring of traffic violators.
- ✓ The Road Safety Week will be observed all over the State from January 20 to January 27.

- **Trichy - to become the first district in the state to sensitise school heads on identifying gender non-conformed children**
- ✓ Gender non-conformed children can be easily identified in their adolescence, even though hormonal imbalance begins as early as five years
- ✓ The move to identify these children in schools will enable to provide the counseling to their parents to prevent such children being driven out of home and also to protect them from getting bullied by others.
- ✓ It has to be noted with concern that more than 80% of such children are abandoned by parents due to social and family pressures.

- **The Tamil Nadu Government – has sanctioned a new helipad for the upcoming new government medical college in Ooty**
- ✓ Since the district is a hilly terrain, the new helipad will facilitate air ambulance service for the new medical college
- ✓ The state government has been linking the nearby government hospitals with a travelling time of less than three hours to provide medical aid under the 'hub and spoke' model, which will not be feasible to the proposed Ooty medical college.
- ✓ In the 'hub and spoke' model, small hospitals (spokes) provide primary treatment for heart disease patients before referring them to tertiary care centres (hub)
- ✓ The Government has already identified nearly 25 acres of land at Indu Nagar in Ooty for the medical college

- ✓ It has also started to push the process of getting clearance from the Ministry of environment and forest and climate change under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980.
- ✓ The clearance is mandatory to divert the forest land for non-forestry usage purposes.
- **The Tamil Nadu government - constituted a 21-member high-level committee to conduct consecration of the Thanjavur big temple in accordance with Tamil culture and tradition and also to monitor the overall arrangements of the event.**



- ✓ The State Chief secretary K Shanmugam will be the chairman of the committee
- ✓ Additional chief secretaries of various departments, the director-general of police and director of fire and rescue services would be the members of the Committee.
- ✓ The Collector of Thanjavur would be the convenor of the committee.
- ✓ Earlier, the consecration held in 1980 and 1997 was performed as per Agamas and adhered to the tradition
- ✓ The forthcoming kumbabishekam of the Big temple is scheduled to take place on February 5
- **The Southern Railway - has planned to install toilets at 200 stations, out of which 33 to come up at stations in Chennai division**
- ✓ The Neyveli Lignite Corporation (NLC) will be funding these pre-fabricated toilets as per the requirements of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative.
- ✓ Earlier, the Railway Board has assigned RITES India, the engineering consultancy firm of Indian Railways, to divert the CSR fund of NLC and finalise standard drawing, layouts and tendering
- ✓ After the tendering, RITEs has offered the contract to a Belgaum-based company which will be executing the project across railway stations in Tamil Nadu
- ✓ While 46 stations across Salem division will get the toilets, 55 stations each in Tiruchirapalli and Madurai division have been identified under the scheme.

- **Oscar winning composer A R Rahman - to mentor 20 children from Nagaland and train them to become professional musicians**
- ✓ The renowned music director will train the children through his K M Music Conservatory (KMMC) and the Sunshine Orchestra which trains such underprivileged children for free
- ✓ About 20 children from an orphanage in Kohima, aged between eight and 11, have been selected to be part of the Chennai-based Sunshine orchestra.



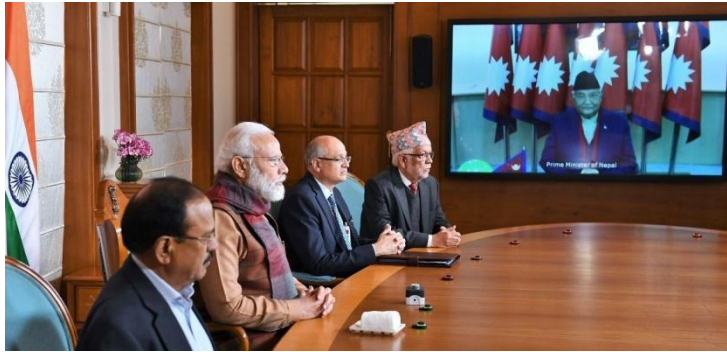
- ✓ In December 2019, the Task Force for Music and Arts (TaFMA), Nagaland, and KMMC signed a memorandum of understanding to promote Naga musicians after the conclusion of Hornbill festival.
- ✓ During his visit, Rahman also announced the launch of the Nagaland chapter of the Sunshine Orchestra
- ✓ Launched in 2009, the Orchestra is one of the flagship projects of the A R Rahman Foundation.
- ✓ The members of the Sunshine Orchestra in Chennai would be accompanying Rahman for concerts in India and abroad.

STATES

- **The Maharashtra government - has made compulsory recitation of the Preamble to the Constitution by students in all schools starting January 26.**
- ✓ The objective of the move was to instill the values such as justice, freedom and equality enshrined in the Constitution in the students.
- ✓ The new advisory also directs the schools to put up a plaque or board with the Preamble and asked them to hold quizzes and essay, drawing, slogan, poster competitions based on the Constitution.
- ✓ A similar resolution was issued in 2013 by the then Congress-NCP government.
- ✓ In 2016, the Directorate of Secondary Education issued a directive asking all schools to recite the Constitution.

NATIONAL

- **Prime Ministers of India and Nepal, Narendra Modi and K P Sharma Oli - jointly inaugurated the second integrated check-post (ICP) on the Jogbani-Biratnagar border on January 21 through video-conferencing.**

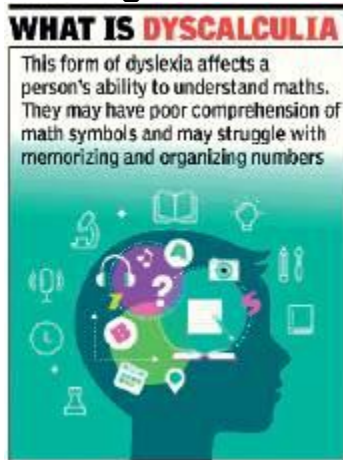


- ✓ The Rs140 crore ICP was built with Indian assistance and spread over 260 acres
 - ✓ India helped in the construction based on its “Neighbourhood First Policy”
 - ✓ It is the second such facility after the Raxaul – Birgunj ICP which was opened in 2018
 - ✓ The Jogbani - Biratnagar facility can handle over 500 trucks daily.
 - ✓ It is expected to facilitate smooth movement of traffic and enhance bilateral trade between both the countries
 - ✓ Integrated Check Posts are trade facilitation centres at borders of India.
 - ✓ The ICP has integrated three main border-related activities -- customs, immigration and border security -- to facilitate ‘seamless’ movement of both passenger and freight traffic between the two countries.
 - ✓ The two leaders also reviewed the progress in Indian-assisted post-2015 earthquake housing reconstruction projects in Nepal.
 - ✓ India has committed to build 50,000 houses in Gorkha and Nuwakot districts, out of which 45,000 have already been completed.
 - ✓ At present, there are 7 Integrated Check Posts in India
- **Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro - will be the chief guest at the Republic Day parade this year.**



- ✓ During his four-day visit to India, the Brazilian President will sign a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) with India
- ✓ Brazil will become the first country to sign such an investment protection agreement with India
- ✓ The bilateral investment treaty (BIT) will be one of the first that the Modi government will sign since 2015, when it decided to scrap all existing treaties with 83 countries
- ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bolsonaro are expected to focus on bilateral ties during the scheduled visit from January 24.
- ✓ Brazil and India will also exchange a Social Security Agreement (SSA), first signed in March 2017, to allow investments in each other’s pension funds, to help business processes and encourage the flow of investment.

- ✓ In 2018, Indian investments in Brazil were around \$6 billion and Brazilian investments in India are estimated at \$1 billion
- ✓ Brazil is the largest producer and exporter of sugar in the world
- **For the first time in its history, CBSE – has decided to allow the use of calculators for students with dyscalculia, (difficulty in learning or performing arithmetic's) starting from this summer's board exams**



- ✓ However, this facility is not a default option for students with dyscalculia.
- ✓ It can be availed only by those students with dyscalculia who have already registered themselves under the “children with special needs” (CWSN) category for the exams.
- ✓ The board has also specified that only a ‘simple basic calculator’ can be used
- **India – seeks the shifting out of the world’s largest Telescope project from the proposed site at Mauna Kea, a dormant volcano in Hawaii.**
- ✓ India is a partner in the construction of one of the largest telescopes in the world in Hawaii
- ✓ The TMT or Thirty Metre Telescope, as it is known, is a joint venture (JV) involving five countries – USA, Canada, China, Japan and India
- ✓ The proposed site is considered sacred to indigenous Hawaiians and also has too many observatories already in the region



- ✓ The \$2 billion project has been delayed by nearly five years and should have begun operations by 2025
- ✓ India has already committed \$200 million, which is about a tenth of the proposed cost.
- ✓ The telescope needs 492 precisely polished mirrors and India has agreed to contribute 83 of them

SUPREME COURT VERDICT

- The Supreme Court - set three months as the outer limit for the Speaker to complete the disqualification proceedings against an MP or an MLA who has switched sides for money and power, in an order aimed at strengthening the anti-defection law

'FINISH PROCEEDINGS IN 3 MTHS'

➤ SC sets three months as the outer limit for Speakers to conclude disqualification proceedings against defectors

➤ Recommends that Parliament should amend Constitution to set up a permanent tribunal to decide cases. Tribunal can be headed by retired SC judge or HC CJ

➤ SC emphasises that ensuring purity of anti-defection law under

the 10th Schedule is vital to democracy's functioning

➤ SC decision came in a case related to Manipur Congress MLA T Shyam Kumar, who switched to BJP and became a minister after the party formed govt in 2017

➤ A dozen pleas seeking Shyam's disqualification were filed but Speaker sat over them. SC asks Speaker to decide in four weeks

- ✓ It has also recommended the Parliament to amend the Constitution by setting up a permanent tribunal to decide such cases under the 10th Schedule.
- ✓ The Tribunal will substitute the Speaker of Lok Sabha and legislative assemblies as the Chief arbiter of disputes concerning disqualification of 'defectors'
- ✓ A permanent tribunal headed by a retired Supreme Court judge or a retired chief justice of a high court, or some other outside independent mechanism can be constituted to ensure that such disputes are decided both swiftly and impartially
- ✓ A bench of Justices R F Nariman, Aniruddha Bose and V Ramasubramanian held that a person liable to be disqualified must not be allowed to sit in the House even for a single day as the term of an assembly was just five years.
- ✓ The SC verdict came in a case related to Manipur Congress MLA T Shyam Kumar, who switched to BJP and became a minister after the party formed government in 2017
- ✓ The SC asked the Manipur speaker to decide on the petitions seeking the disqualification within four weeks and on failure to do so, the SC may have to interfere.
- **A five-judge bench of the Supreme Court – announced that it would refer the contentious constitutional issue to scrap Jammu & Kashmir's special status under Article 370 of the Constitution and its reorganization into two Union territories to a larger 'seven-judge' bench.**
- ✓ A bench of Justices N V Ramana, Sanjay K Kaul, B Subhash Reddy, B R Gavai and Surya Kant observed that there were three separate SC rulings by five-

judges benches on the nature and character of Article 370 which were conflicting and hence it had sought reference of the matter to a seven-judge bench

- ✓ The SC referred to the rulings by five-judge benches, in Prem Nath Kaul case and Sampat Prakash case
- ✓ In these cases, the SC had said Parliament could not change the character of Article 370 which gave special status to the state as it was in the form of a constitutional obligation due to the instrument of accession signed by the maharaja of Kashmir.
- ✓ Article 370 required the Centre to take the prior concurrence of the J&K Constituent Assembly, which, however, was dissolved in 1957 after framing the J&K Constitution.
- ✓ Hence, it was argued that Article 370 has been frozen in time and cannot form the basis of the August 5, 2019 notification which negated the special status and privileges enjoyed by J&K.

DEFENCE

- **The Ministry of Defence - has short-listed defence shipyard Mazagon Docks (MDL) and private ship-builder L&T to construct 6 new stealth submarines with foreign collaboration in the over Rs 50,000 crore deal**
- ✓ It rejected a joint bid by Adani Defence and Aerospace and Hindustan Shipyard Ltd. on technical grounds.
- ✓ The first DAC meeting after the creation of the post of Chief of the Defence Staff was also attended by the incumbent, General Bipin Rawat.
- ✓ On January 21, the Defence acquisition council (DAC) chaired by Rajnath Singh also approved the names of five foreign submarine builders who can tie up with either of the two Indian “strategic partners (SPs)”, MDL or L&T, to present their joint bids to execute the complex “Project-75 India”.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

<p>Depleting underwater strength</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ India requires 18 diesel-electric subs, 6 nuclear-powered attack subs (SSNs) & 4 nuclear-powered subs with nuclear-tipped missiles (SSBNs) ➤ But has only 2 new Scorpene & 13 old conventional subs. Also 1 SSBN (INS Arihant) & 1 SSN (INS Chakra) ➤ 4 more Scorpene subs, being built at MDL under ₹ 23,652 crore Project-75, to be delivered by 2021-22 ➤ 3 more SSBNs, after INS Arihant, being built at Vizag for ₹ 90,000 crore ➤ India to get 2nd SSN on 10-year lease from Russia under \$1.5 billion deal. First one, INS Chakra, came in 2012 for \$900 million 		<p>Project-75-India</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Project for 6 stealth diesel-electric submarines for around ₹ 50,000 crore first got 'acceptance of necessity' in Nov 2007 ➤ Govt promulgated strategic partnership model in May 2017 ➤ 2 Indian shipyards (L&T and MDL) & 5 foreign 	<p>companies (Russian Rubin Design Bureau, French Naval Group-DCNS, German ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems, Spanish Navantia & South Korean Daewoo) now shortlisted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Will take around 2 years for contract to be inked ➤ Will thereafter take 7 to 8 years for the first submarine to roll out
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- ✓ The original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) are Rubin Design Bureau (Russia), Naval Group-DCNS (France), ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems (Germany), Navantia (Spain) and Daewoo (South Korea)
- ✓ It will take around two years from now for the actual contract to be signed with the selected SP-OEM combine, with another seven to eight years thereafter for the first submarine to be ready.
- ✓ The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) was established in 2001
- ✓ It is the highest decision making body for purchasing of new and sophisticated equipment for all three services – Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force

ECONOMY

- **Zomato - announced the acquisition of Uber's food delivery business Uber Eats, in India**



- ✓ The all-stock deal gives the US-headquartered Uber 9.99% stake in Zomato
- ✓ With the conclusion of the deal, Uber Eats' operations in the country have been discontinued and its users, along with restaurants and delivery partners are being directed to Zomato.
- ✓ Uber, which is aiming to turn profitable by 2021, had launched Uber Eats in India in 2017, and has about 26,000 restaurants listed on the platform across 41 cities.
- ✓ Despite this transaction, Swiggy remained arguably the leading market player in the country
- ✓ With new players such as Reliance and Amazon likely to enter the market, 2020 could be a ground-breaking year for food delivery in India

SPORTS

- **Shivangi Sarma– won the fifth 'individual' swimming gold medal to emerge as the most successful individual athlete at the ongoing Khelo India Youth Games in Guwahati, Assam**



- ✓ Shivangi dominated the pool, adding the 50m freestyle to the 100m, 200m, 400m and 800m freestyle gold medals that she won over the last three days.
- ✓ Her decision to compete for Assam in this edition of the Games helped the hosts rise to the 6th place on the medals table ahead of the formidable teams from Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

- ✓ 16-year old Mumbai girl, Kenisha Gupta won her third gold to add to the two relay crowns for which she anchored Maharashtra's teams to victory
- ✓ Maharashtra is leading the medals tally with 74 gold, 68 silver and 92 bronze and a total of 234 medals
- ✓ It was much higher than the 228 that their athletes won at home in Pune last year.
- ✓ Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka are placed above Assam in the medal tally.

RANKINGS

- **With 373 green buildings, Maharashtra - tops the US Green Building Council's LEED green building certification for the consecutive second year**
- ✓ Maharashtra was ranked as the No. 1 state in the entire country, followed by Karnataka, Haryana, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh, respectively.



- ✓ In a change from last year, Haryana has moved up in the list, edging out Tamil Nadu for the third spot.
- ✓ The ranking of India's top 10 states was released by GBCI India (Green Business Certification Inc.) for LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), the world's most widely-used green building rating system.
- ✓ This is the third year that the ranking of Top 10 states has been released in India
- ✓ The ranking of Indian states is done in terms of cumulative gross square meters (GSM) of LEED-certified space.
- ✓ Maharashtra has attained over 1 crore GSM development as per LEED green building norms.
- ✓ The 5 main parameters considered to get a LEED certificate include energy savings, water savings, waste management, reducing carbon footprint and focusing on the health of building occupants.
- ✓ The Top 10 states for LEED are home to more than 843 million Indians, and together include more than 48.3 million gross square meters of LEED-certified space.
- ✓ India boasts more than 1,400 LEED-certified buildings, which include schools, hospitals, offices, residential buildings and more
- ✓ LEED certified buildings provide healthier spaces for people
- ✓ They use less energy and water, reduce air pollution, provide cleaner air indoors and save money for businesses and families
- ✓ They also generate fewer emissions, compared to traditional buildings, throughout the entire life cycle of a building.

SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS – A REPORT

- **The outbreak of coronavirus in central China - has spread more widely across Asia and crossed borders to five other countries, including the US**
- ✓ Six deaths have been reported till now due to the outbreak of the deadly virus
- ✓ A new case had been identified in Washington State from a person recently travelled to China.
- ✓ Since the new coronavirus was first detected in December in China's Wuhan province, the number of infections has grown to 291, with 139 of them over the past weekend.

VIRUS ALERT



What We Know So Far

2019-nCoV belongs to a family called Coronaviridae, same as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) – which killed nearly 800 people after an outbreak that started in China in 2002 – and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS) virus – first reported in the Middle East in 2012. Three to four out of every 10 patients infected with MERS died



How It Spreads

- From human contact with animals. MERS started in camels and in case of SARS, civet cats were to blame
- Human-to-human transmission often happens when someone comes into contact with the infected person's secretions
- Cough, sneeze or handshake can cause exposure



Countries have begun body temperature checks at airports and railway stations

China's new coronavirus has the world on tenterhooks. Can we arrest its spread in time? TOI takes a look

What Is A Coronavirus

A large group of viruses that are common among animals. But only 6 (the new one would make it 7) are known to infect people

What Are The Symptoms

- Runny nose, cough, sore throat, possibly headache and maybe fever, which can last for a couple of days
- For people with weak immune system, the elderly and the very young, it can lead to pneumonia or bronchitis



Can We Treat It?
No reliable vaccine is currently available

The confirmation of human-to-human transmission has heightened fears of virus spreading rapidly

WHO recommends washing hands, avoid eating meat and covering mouth and nose while coughing and sneezing

Where Did It Come From

Initial cases reported from in Wuhan, China. Virus believed to have spread from infected animals at a seafood market



Cases Recorded As Of Tuesday

Wuhan	270
Guangdong	14
Beijing	10
Shanghai	6
Zhejiang	5
Thailand	2
Taiwan	1
South Korea	1
Japan	1

- ✓ While the vast majority of the cases are in Wuhan, a city of 11 million in the eastern inland of China, infections have been reported in Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Zhejiang and Henan across China.
- ✓ Four cases have been confirmed overseas among Chinese travellers in South Korea, Japan, Taiwan and Thailand.
- ✓ Coronaviruses (CoV) belong to a large family of viruses that cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)
- ✓ The infection, which can cause pneumonia in patients, is also similar to SARS.
- ✓ SARS, or severe acute respiratory syndrome, originated in China and spread around the globe in a matter of months in 2002/2003.
- ✓ A Novel Coronavirus (nCoV) is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans.

