

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – NOV 2, 2019

TAMIL NADU

- ◆ **Governor Banwarilal Purohit - launched a Coom cleaning drive by NDRF personnel near Napier Bridge in Chennai on November 1**



- ✓ A team from the battalion 4 of the National disaster relief force of Arakkonam will clean the river on second and fourth Saturdays for the next six months.
- ✓ The assistance of NDRF will compliment the cleaning drive of Greater Chennai Corporation and Chennai River Restoration Trust.
- ✓ It is proposed to collect at least half a tonne of garbage from each location in the city, where Coom flows along.
- ✓ Apart from NDRF involving its 450 personnel, around 1000 volunteers from Central Industrial Security Force, Central Reserve Police Force, corporation, Indian Red Cross Society, National Cadet Corps, student volunteers from Saveetha Medical College and Hospital also took part in the drive
- ✓ At least 22,000 tonnes of trash was removed from the river during the drive last year
- ✓ The Coom and Adyar rivers were covered under the National River Conservation Programme and funds were provided to agencies earlier.
- ✓ Coom river was once a clean river with 49 species of fish in 1950s that was later reduced to 21 species and currently due to toxic pollutants, marine species were reduced to zero.

◆ **Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami – announced that the state government would establish a world-class museum at Konthagai village in Sivagangai district**



- ✓ The CM made the announcement during his speech at the Tamil Nadu Day celebration in Chennai
- ✓ The museum would be set up at a cost of ₹12.21 crore to display the rare artifacts unearthed from Keeladi excavation site.
- ✓ The CM honoured the family members of martyrs who had sacrificed their lives in defending the state's boundary during creation of linguistic states in 1956.
- ✓ The Chief Minister also announced that Memorial pillars will be erected in Magipalanpatti village in Sivaganga district for the poet Kaniyan Poongundranar and six others.

◆ **Chief minister Edapaddi K Palaniswami – inaugurated an exhibition to showcase Keeladi artefacts at the World Tamil Sangam building in Madurai on November 1 through video conferencing.**



- ✓ The antiquities excavated in the fourth and fifth phases were displayed in the exhibition temporarily till a permanent museum comes up at Keeladi itself.
- ✓ The exhibition was set up like a museum with each artefact showcased along with relevant explanations about them.
- ✓ The antiquities, displayed in beautifully designed glass showcases, include the famous wild boar engraved Carnelian stamp - which is seen balanced on top of a glass holder, shell ornaments, ivory dices, bead chains and many red black potsherds
- ✓ People can visit the exhibition from 11am to 7pm on all working days.
- ✓ The state archaeology department recently published the report of the fourth phase of excavation at Keeladi in Sivaganga district
- ✓ The fifth phase which concluded recently drew around 3,500 people a day in the last two weeks.

◆ **A high-powered committee, headed by chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - cleared 'at one go' the implementation of 21 projects with ₹ 8,120 crore investment in the state**

HURDLES REMOVED

▶ Clearances for 21 projects such as pathway, plan permit and exchange of land, besides environment clearance

▶ At least six projects faced issues such as exemption of fee, and clearances from town and country planning department

▶ Mahindra & Mahindra gets clearance for exchange of 22-acre poramboke land in SIPCOT industrial park for its upcoming ₹4,000 cr project in Tiruvannamalai

- ✓ The committee was set up in September for the single-window clearances to the committed investments in the state
- ✓ The projects cleared include 15 units for which memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed in the second investors' meet in January this year.
- ✓ These projects were to come up in Chennai, Kancheepuram, Tiruvallur, Coimbatore, Salem, Villupuram, Tiruvannamalai, Dindigul and Tiruchi districts
- ✓ They are expected to generate employment for 16,000 people and are in various stages of implementation

◆ **Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - inaugurated the additional capacities of government-owned Tamil Nadu Cement Corporation Limited's Ariyalur facilities.**

- ✓ The cost of expansion is estimated at ₹ 809 crore
- ✓ With the expansion, the unit will produce 1.7 million tonnes of cement a year in 2020-21 from the existing 0.7 million tonnes.
- ✓ The former CM, J Jayalalithaa government had originally planned in 2011-12 to increase the capacity to 1.5 million tonnes and laid the foundation stone in January 2016.
- ✓ The expansion will create direct employment to 250 people and indirect work to 1,000 people
- ✓ The chief minister also laid foundation stone for capacity expansion programme of Tamil Nadu Newsprint and Papers Limited's Trichy unit at a budget of ₹ 1100 crore
- ✓ The CM also released TNPL's postage stamp, "My Stamp" during the occasion

◆ **The Tamil Nadu Government – announces the relaxing of certain rules for the Maternity leave of its employees**

Steady progress
The Tamil Nadu government's relaxation of the rules governing the grant of maternity leave are part of a process that's played out over the years

- In 1993, the government granted maternity leave of 90 days
- 18 years later, the government enhanced maternity leave to 180 days
- In 2013, the government issued consolidated guidelines for granting maternity leave
- T.N. enhanced maternity leave from 180 days to 270 days in 2016
- In 2018, the government clarified that a woman can be granted maternity leave for the second delivery too, if the first delivery resulted in the birth of twins



- ✓ As per the new relaxed rules, women employees of the Tamil Nadu government will be eligible for maternity leave even if they joined service after delivery recently
- ✓ So far, married women among government servants (appointed in a regular capacity and yet to become permanent pending probation) were allowed to avail only their earned leave (EL) for maternity purposes.
- ✓ As per the Rule 101(a) of the Tamil Nadu Fundamental Rules, maternity leave with full pay can be granted to permanent married women government servants (with less than two surviving children) for not exceeding 270 days.

◆ **The Administrative Judge of high court Madurai bench, Justice T S Sivagnanam - inaugurated the 'justice clock' on the court premises in Madurai on November 1**



- ✓ Justice clock is an LED display board which displays various information such as the ranking of all the courts across the country based on the filing of cases, their pendency and disposal by the courts
- ✓ Earlier in 2017, Prime Minister Narendra Modi suggested the installation of justice clocks at all courts in the country.
- ✓ Such clocks are proposed to be installed in 3,350 courts across the country at a cost of Rs 436 crore.
- ✓ In the first phase, the clocks are being installed in all the 24 high courts and subsequently in the other courts.

◆ **The temple town of Kancheepuram – tops the state with the maximum tourist visitors in 2018, followed closely by Chennai**

- ✓ The two neighbouring districts collectively account for 20% of the total 38.59 crore domestic tourists who visited the state in 2018.

- ✓ This is as per the District tourist ranking list released by the Directorate of tourism for the year 2018
- ✓ As per the rankings, Spiritual tourism is bringing huge numbers of tourists to Tamil Nadu, indicating that districts with popular temples have emerged as top draws
- ✓ Accordingly, Ramanathapuram, Dindigul and Thanjavur that have ancient temples such as Ramanathaswamy Temple at Rameswaram, Dhandayuthapani Swamy Temple in Palani and UNESCO-notified Brihadeeswarar Temple have been ranked third, fourth and fifth, based on the number of domestic tourist arrivals
- ✓ However, the rankings vary with regard to international tourist arrivals.
- ✓ Tamil Nadu topped in receiving domestic tourists consecutively between 2014 and 2017, accounting for about 20% of the total domestic travellers in the country.
- ✓ Though it retained the first position receiving the maximum tourists in 2015 and 2016, in the foreign tourist arrivals, it fell to second spot in 2017
- ✓ Last year, tourist arrivals increased compared to the last four years.

DIVINE CALLING

Top districts based on **DOMESTIC TOURIST** footfalls

1. Kancheepuram
2. Chennai
3. Ramanathapuram
4. Dindigul
5. Thanjavur
6. Madurai
7. Kanyakumari
8. Trichy
9. Tuticorin
10. Coimbatore
11. The Nilgiris
12. Salem

Top in **FOREIGN TOURIST** arrivals

1. Chennai
2. Kancheepuram
3. Thanjavur
4. Madurai
5. Trichy
6. Kanyakumari
7. Dindigul
8. The Nilgiris
11. Coimbatore
12. Ramanathapuram
13. Tuticorin
17. Salem

Arupadai Veedu, comprising the six temples dedicated to Murugan, are extremely popular among tourists – both international and domestic

The Ramanathaswamy temple in Rameswaram could soon have a sound and light show on Ramayana

- ✓ The Department of tourism arrives at the tourist figures based on data from multiple stakeholders, including check-in at hotels, information from the Hindu Religious & Charitable Endowments Department and number of visitors to ticketed monuments of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

◆ **The World's tallest Murugan statue at 145 feet - is getting ready in Salem district and will be completed before October 2020**

- ✓ Sri Muthumalai Murugar Trust (SMMT) is building the statue at Puthiragoundampalayam near Vazhapadi



- ✓ Sridhar, a businessman from Attur, is constructing the temple and statue in his own land since 2014
- ✓ He initiated the construction process involving sculptor 'Tiruvarur' Thiyagarajan, who had constructed the 140ft Murugan statue in Malaysia in 2006.
- ✓ The trust had earlier performed bhoomi puja on March 13, 2016, and named the statue 'Muthu Malai Murugan'
- ✓ At the site, Lord Murugan statues were built in different postures as in the 'Arupadai veedu' (six abodes) temples - Tirutani, Swamimalai, Palani, Pazhamudhircholai, Tirupparankundram and Tiruchendur.
- ✓ An 80-foot-long spear (vel) has already been completed.
- ✓ An elevator will be set up near the location of statue to take devotees up to a height of 120 ft to have close darshan.
- ✓ There were also plans to build a hospital that will offer free medical care, a marriage hall, an 'Annadhana' hall to offer free prasadam and an old age home on the temple premises

STATES

◆ **The Supreme Court-appointed Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority - declared a Public health Emergency in Delhi-NCR and banned all construction activity till November 5**



- ✓ The Delhi government also announced shutting down of schools during the same period.
- ✓ It also announced staggered office hours for its employees, during the implementation of the 12-day odd-even scheme, from November 4 till 15.
- ✓ However, no private firm has been included in the plan which also excludes government employees like teachers, nurses, doctors, etc
- ✓ The idea behind staggering the office hours is to ensure less congestion on the roads which will minimise the rising pollution levels.
- ✓ As the pollution levels in the region entered the season's worst 'severe plus' category, the EPCA also banned setting off fireworks during the winter season.
- ✓ Delhi's Air Quality Index (AQI) on November 1, according to Central Pollution Control Board, was at 484 — highest this season.
- ✓ The previous high in 2019 was on January 3 when the AQI stood at 444.
- ✓ Earlier, the previous highest level was on November 9, 2017, when the index had touched 486, while on November 6, 2016, it had clocked an all-time high of 497.
- ✓ In terms of NCR, Noida was the most polluted city in India with an AQI of 499, followed by Ghaziabad and Greater Noida, with both at 496, Faridabad at 479 and Gurgaon at 469.
- ✓ As the air quality continues to get worse, people face burning sensation in the eyes when exposed to the outside air besides facing breathing issues.
- ✓ According to the Government, the pollution level in the city has risen due to an increase in stubble burning

◆ **Madhya Pradesh - will be the first state in the country to have a 'time bank', where a voluntary service can be offered to earn credit hours and get repaid in the same way**

- ✓ It's a reciprocity-based system that encourages people to help each other in exchange for hourly time credits
- ✓ The orders for the unique 'time bank' were issued by the 'adhyatm' (spirituality) department of the Kamal Nath-led government
- ✓ Time banks will be opened in every district and there is no cap on the number of banks that can be set up
- ✓ It will bring people willing to help and needing help on a single platform.
- ✓ Those who help will get credit hours in 'time bank account', while those taking help will assist anyone in need in the bank's network.
- ✓ It is not necessary that a person has to help the same person who helped him
- ✓ The services offered are limitless — from teaching school and colleges lessons, teaching music to hospital service, driving, looking after an elderly person, tending garden or teaching underprivileged children - and get paid 'in kind' for the credit hours earned.

NATIONAL

◆ **The Election Commission - announced elections to the 81-member Jharkhand assembly with voting scheduled in five phases between November 30 and December 20**



- ✓ Congress has announced to keep its alliance with Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) intact, agreeing to a junior partner position.
- ✓ BJP, on the other hand, will lead the fight to defend the Raghubar Das government with the All Jharkhand Students Union (AJSU) as its partner.
- ✓ BJP had won Jharkhand in 2014 in the aftermath of Prime Minister Narendra Modi leading BJP to an unexpected full majority.

◆ **The 22-year-long peace dialogue between the NSCN-IM and the Centre - finally concluded on October 31**

- ✓ After the conclusion of the dialogue, the Centre announced “resolving” three contentious issues in mutual agreement — a separate flag, own constitution and territorial integration of Naga-inhabited areas.
- ✓ Like the other insurgent outfits, which have surrendered their weapons, Naga outfits would also have to give up fighting and surrender the weapons now.
- ✓ Earlier, PM Narendra Modi gave a three-month deadline till October 31 to talks interlocutor RN Ravi to wind up negotiations
- ✓ Now, the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isak-Muivah) or NSCN-IM would have to urge Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam to hand over their territories inhabited by the Naga people for creation of ‘Greater Nagalim’.
- ✓ As per the Union Government, under a federal structure, The Centre is not in a position to ask a state to give away parts of its territory
- ✓ Next on the interlocutor Ravi’s agenda is to bring all the stakeholder states, particularly Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur, on board by addressing their concerns.

◆ **Telecom regulator Trai - fixed 30 seconds as ‘ringing time’ for mobile phones and 60 seconds for landlines**

- ✓ There was no such limit for calls within India till now
- ✓ Hence, telecom operators on their own were reducing incoming call ring time to attract reverse call from subscribers of other networks as shorter rings meant more missed calls leading to a gain in interconnection charges
- ✓ Earlier, both Bharti Airtel and Vodafone had alleged that Jio had slashed ring time of calls from its network to 20 seconds in some circles to draw call-backs
- ✓ While Jio reacted to its rivals’ protests by increasing ring time to 25 seconds, both Airtel and Vodafone Idea cut their own ring time to 25 seconds from 45 seconds
- ✓ Jio contended that 15-20 seconds was a global norm and its network was being flooded by missed calls originating from other telcos as it offered free voice services.

INTERNATIONAL

◆ **Russia – announces a new ‘firewall’ to cut its internet traffic from international servers from November 1**

- ✓ The law, which President Vladimir Putin signed in May, requires Russian internet providers to install technical devices provided by the authorities to enable centralised control of traffic
- ✓ The authorities will also filter content to prevent access to banned websites.
- ✓ The aim behind the move is to ensure Russian sites keep working if they are unable to connect to international servers or in the case of a threat from abroad such as cyber attacks.
- ✓ With the new move, the government can directly censor content and will gain even greater control over freedom of speech and information online
- ✓ A similar firewall namely China’s Great Firewall is already in place in China, which heavily restricts internet access.

◆ **China’s three major state run telecom operators - have unveiled their superfast 5G network across the country**

- ✓ State-owned carriers China Mobile, China Unicom and China Telecom unveiled their 5G data plans on October 31
- ✓ 5G commercial services are now available in 50 Chinese cities.

INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

◆ **Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan - announced that Sikh pilgrims visiting the gurdwara at Kartarpur Sahib will not require passports to enter Pakistan and also would not have to register their intention to visit 10 days in advance.**

- ✓ Imrankhan also mentioned that the \$20 fee will not be charged on the opening day of the Kartarpur corridor on November 9, and also on the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev on November 12.
- ✓ India and Pakistan on October 24 signed the four-page Kartarpur Sahib Corridor Agreement, which is valid for five years
- ✓ As per the agreement, Indian pilgrims could travel to Kartarpur Sahib without a visa but would have to pay a service fee of \$20 per person per visit.
- ✓ Accordingly, the pilgrims would have to carry their passports and persons of Indian origin would have to carry their OCI cards.
- ✓ The Kartarpur Corridor will connect the Dera Baba Nanak shrine in India’s Punjab with Darbar Sahib at Kartarpur, four kilometres from the International Border, in Narowal district of Pakistan’s Punjab province.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

◆ **Spain - to host the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP25) from December 2 to 13 in Madrid**

- ✓ Earlier Chilean President Sebastian Pinera announced on October 30 that his country was not in a position to host either the climate convention as well as the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation summit due to anti-government protests
- ✓ Brazil was the initial host of COP25 but the newly elected President Jair Bolsonaro withdrew from hosting the event due to economic reasons
- ✓ COP25 indicates the 25th Conference of the Parties on climate change.

DEFENCE

◆ **The first batch of 100 women - to start training for the Corps of Military Police (CMP) in December and will be inducted by end-2021**

- ✓ So far, women were being inducted only as officers and this would be the first time they would be joining the Army as the soldiers or “personnel below officer rank”
- ✓ The Army plans to induct 1700 women MP over the next 17 years.

ECONOMY

◆ **The Income tax (IT) department, Mumbai - has cancelled registrations of six Tata Trusts with “immediate effect”**

- ✓ The six cancelled trusts owned by Tatas are Jamsetji Tata Trust, R D Tata Trust, Tata Education Trust, Tata Social Welfare Trust, Sarvajanic Seva Trust, and Navajbai Ratan Tata Trust
- ✓ According to IT Rules, if a charitable organisation’s registration is cancelled it has to pay tax on accreted income, which is 33% of the fair market value of the assets held by it.
- ✓ Earlier in 2013, the 6 Trusts were pulled up for investing in prohibited instruments and claiming tax exemptions.
- ✓ Tata Trusts is the controlling shareholder of Tata Sons, which is valued at \$49 billion by chartered accountant Y H Malegam in 2016

PEGASUS SPYWARE – A REPORT

◆ **Israel’s NSO Group, which is at the centre of the snooping row - allegedly used ‘operators’ with codenames such Pricklypear,**

Ganges and AK-47 for their targets in 45 countries between 2016 and 2018

- ✓ The group's spyware 'Pegasus' was behind the cyber-attacks that infected mobile phones
- ✓ The report, prepared by Toronto-based Citizen's Lab, showed that apart from Android-based WhatsApp, even iPhone and other phones were allegedly subjected to similar surveillance for a two-year period over regular text messages.
- ✓ The operators in countries including US, India, Bahrain, Pakistan were allegedly involved in spying, surveillance operations and crossborder surveillance operations

THE LIMITLESS POWERS OF PEGASUS

Provide unlimited access to target's mobile devices: Remotely and covertly collect information about your target's relationships, location, phone calls, plans and activities - whenever and wherever they are	protocols and any hurdle introduced by the complex communications world
Intercept calls: Transparently monitor voice and VoIP calls in real-time	Pinpoint targets: Track targets and get accurate positioning information using GPS
Collect unique and new types of information: Contacts, files, environmental wiretap, passwords etc	Service provider independence: No cooperation with local Mobile Network Operators (MNO) is needed
Handle encrypted content and devices: Overcome encryption, SSL, proprietary	Discover virtual identities: Constantly monitor the device without worrying about frequent switching of virtual identities and replacement of SIM cards



(Source: WhatsApp's lawsuit against NSO in California court)

- ✓ One of the prominent operator was called Pricklypear in the US and Mexico
- ✓ The other one, that was operating in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Brazil and Hong Kong, was code-named Ganges.
- ✓ According to the report, "operators" even used names such as Pearl in Bahrain, Falcon in UAE to AK 47 in Mozambique.
- ✓ The report is based the SMS and web-generated links sent to several people between August 2016 and August 2018

