

## **EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – DEC 15, 2019**

### **TAMIL NADU**

- **The Greater Chennai Corporation - has started implementing the 'On Street Smart Parking Management System' in 7,667 parking slots across Chennai from December 13.**



- ✓ As per the new system, motorists have to download the 'Greater Chennai Corporation Smart Parking' (GCC Smart Parking) mobile application to find a slot and pay the fee by cash or card to the attendant.
- ✓ The Corporation, along with S.S. Tech and Toorkmedia Services, has started implementing the system in Chennai
- ✓ The facility is now available for parking in streets in various localities like Pondy Bazaar, Besant Nagar, Purasawalkam and Anna Nagar
- ✓ A total of 500 cameras have been installed to monitor the occupancy/vacancy of parking slots
- ✓ Around 58 attendants, wearing uniforms with the GCC logo, caps and shoes have been appointed to collect the parking fees
- ✓ As of now, a parking charge of ₹20 an hour is collected for cars, and for two-wheelers, it is ₹5 an hour
- ✓ The owners can park the vehicle for a maximum of eight hours, and beyond this, the owners will first be informed about the parking norms, and then a penalty will be imposed on repetition
- ✓ The corporation is planning to increase the number of parking slots in the city to 23,000 in the next three months, after obtaining the permission from the Highways Department for stretches on OMR, Ennore High Road and other highways.

## STATES

- **The Haryana Police Department - has adopted a unique barcoding software, 'Trakea'**



- ✓ The software is used to ensure that the vast digital forensic reports are stored in a safe and secure manner.
- ✓ It offers a foolproof security to the samples collected from the crime scene.
- ✓ The Software features two stages of bar coding to maintain the secrecy of the samples, which are sent through biometrically authorized chain
- ✓ Even the police and forensic experts will now know any details of the case or the names associated with case.
- ✓ The android based system, besides reducing time lags, will also help in maintaining the secrecy and reducing malpractices

- **The 'Hornbill festival' – was celebrated in Nagaland between December 1 and December 10.**



- ✓ It is also called Festival of Festivals.
- ✓ The festival is organized by the State Tourism and art and culture department in Kohima.
- ✓ The festival aims to protect and revive the rich culture of Nagaland.
- ✓ Various traditional arts of the state such as wood carvings, paintings and sculptures are displayed in the festival
- ✓ Hornbill is a revered bird that is featured widely in the songs of Nagaland tribes
- ✓ They are found in tropical and sub-tropical Asia, Africa and Melanesia.

## NATIONAL

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi - chaired the first meeting of the National Ganga Council along with Union Ministers and CMs of Ganga basin states in Kanpur on December 14**



- ✓ The council was constituted in 2016 to oversee the cleaning of the river, Ganga
- ✓ It is supposed to meet at least once a year with the Prime Minister chairing the session.

- ✓ The PM also reviewed the Namami Gange project at Kanpur Atal Ghat, accompanied by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath
  - ✓ He also visited the Sisamau Nala, which was closed in 2018, that discharged 140 MLD of unregulated sewage into the river
  - ✓ The Council reviewed 10 projects at estimated cost of Rs 2315 crores, including the diversion of Sisamau Nala drain
  - ✓ The Council has also planned to launch organic farming on the banks of the river.
  - ✓ The Sisamau Nala drain, the largest drain in Asia was used as a sewerage conveyance channel since 1890.
  - ✓ The work of coordinating, supervising and deliberating on funding Namami Ganga projects is carried out by an executive committee of the National Mission for Clean Ganga, which meets every month.
  - ✓ The National Ganga Council holds overall responsibility to protect, prevent and control the environmental pollution in River Ganga and in its basin.
  - ✓ The PM is the chair person of the council.
  - ✓ The Union Minister of Water Resources, river development and Ganga Rejuvenation are the ex-officio vice-chairperson of the council.
- **The Lok Sabha - has recently approved the Central Sanskrit University Bill 2019 on December 12.**
- ✓ It grants the status of Central University to three honorary 'deemed' Sanskrit Universities in the country
  - ✓ The bill was introduced by Human Resource Development Minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'
  - ✓ The three universities, Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, New Delhi, and Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri Vidyapeeth, as well as the Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha at Tirupati, have been accorded the status of Central University.
  - ✓ All three had been declared "deemed to be universities" and were run by societies.
  - ✓ Once the Bill becomes law, the societies will stand dissolved.
  - ✓ Sanskrit language is taught in 250 universities in 100 countries across the world, including 14 universities in Germany.
- **The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi – approved the introduction of the Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2019 in the Parliament.**
- ✓ The Bill is intended to carry out amendments to the Aircraft Act, 1934 (XXII of 1934).
  - ✓ The Bill increases the maximum limit of fine from the existing ₹10 lakhs to ₹one crore in cases of negligence in the operation of aircrafts

- ✓ It proposes a penalty of Rs 1 crore on the person convicted of carrying weapons (arms), ammunition or dangerous goods in the aircraft or endangering the safety of the aircraft in any way
  - ✓ The proposed amendments would fulfill the safety requirements of International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).
  - ✓ ICAO, which is the United Nation's global aviation watchdog, had carried out the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme for India in November 2017 and in February 2018.
  - ✓ The audit result showed that the country's score dropped to 57.44% from 65.82% earlier, placing India below Pakistan and Nepal.
  - ✓ The ICAO, during its next visit in November 2018, pointed out major safety issues in 3 areas namely aerodromes and ground aids, air navigation services (ANS) and aircraft accident and incident investigation
  - ✓ Currently, India's score is lower than the world average of 65% on the ICAO's board.
  - ✓ The proposed bill will lead to an improvement in the level of safety and security of aircraft operations in the country
  - ✓ It will also help all the three aviation regulators of India - Directorate General of Aviation (DGCA), Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) and Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) to play their role better
  - ✓ Currently, as per the notification dated July 16, 2009 in the Aircrafts Act, an imprisonment for two years or penalty of 10 lakhs or both is provided for punishable 'safety' related operational offenses under category I
- **The University Grants Commission (UGC) - has directed colleges and universities across the country to allocate from 45 minutes to 60 minutes every day for physical activities and sports from January 2020.**
  - ✓ The Commission wants to implement "Fit India Campaign" in higher educational institutions by allocating the "fitness hour" for each class
  - ✓ The fitness hour may involve in any physical activity, which ranges from athletics, outdoor/indoor sport, yoga, cycling, swimming or any other kind of physical activity that contributes towards fitness
  - ✓ The commission has also asked institutions to constitute a 'fitness club' to organise sports competitions and submit monthly action plan for sports activities at the institution level to the UGC by first week of January.
  - ✓ It would have specific month-wise 'themes' to give country-wide focus to health and fitness issues.
- **The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) - has extended the deadline for fixing FASTags on vehicles to January 15**



- ✓ The radio frequency identification (RFID)-based FASTags will facilitate electronic toll collection and hassle-free movement in all the 523 toll plazas in the country, including 48 in Tamil Nadu.
  - ✓ As a temporary measure, NHAI would now be converting Fastag lanes into hybrid lanes
  - ✓ However, only 25% of the lanes at toll plazas will remain hybrid, accepting cash.
  - ✓ Once the percentage of vehicles with FASTags crosses 75%, the NHAI will commence the compulsory Fastag regime
  - ✓ After that, vehicles plying without FASTags along FASTag lanes will have to pay double the amount as toll.
  - ✓ In Tamil Nadu, only 37% of vehicles have converted to FASTags, despite it being a State with better coverage.
  - ✓ The State has 482 lanes across toll plazas.
  - ✓ The government had earlier announced rollout of mandatory FASTag for electronic toll collection from December 1, which was later extended to December 15, 2019.
  - ✓ The Government has also announced a helpline number '1033' for any assistance related to FASTags
  - ✓ The National Electronic Toll Collection programme, the flagship initiative of the Ministry, has been implemented on a pan-India basis to ensure seamless movement of traffic
- **The 250th session of the Rajya Sabha that was adjourned sine die on December 13 - recorded near 100% productivity.**

## House business

The 250th session of the Rajya Sabha registered productivity of over 99%, House Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu said, praising MPs for their "seriousness and brevity"

**SCHEDULED TIME:**  
108 hours, 33 minutes

**FUNCTIONED FOR:**  
107 hours, 11 minutes

11 hours, 47 minutes were lost due to interruptions but made up by members sitting for 10 hours, 52 minutes beyond the scheduled time

### TIME SPENT

**39%** Legislative business

**25.4%**  
Discussion on matters of public importance

**13%**  
Question Hour

**5%** Private Members' Bills



- ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi was present during the valedictory remarks.
  - ✓ The Upper House delivered the best performance in 49 years with an average 9.5 starred questions orally replied every day and 39% of the time spent on passing Bills.
  - ✓ 199 Zero Hour submissions and 115 Special Mentions were made at the rate of a record 14 and 7 a day, respectively, as against 9 and 5.5 during the previous session.
  - ✓ Overall 15 bills were passed in the session
- **The Ministry of Railways - has provided sanction to the Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Chennai to roll out 45 rakes (720 coaches) of the Vande Bharat Express.**



- ✓ The procurement process will be commenced immediately according to the specifications issued by the Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO).
  - ✓ Earlier, ICF had manufactured Train18, India's first semi-high speed train, in a record 18-month time in 2018.
  - ✓ The indigenously built self-propelled train was launched as Vande Bharat Express between New Delhi and Varanasi by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in February 2019
  - ✓ The second rake, flagged off a couple of months ago, is operating between New Delhi and Katra
  - ✓ The train has been regarded as one of the most successful products of the Make in India campaign
  - ✓ The Rail Coach Factory, Kapurthala, and the Modern Coach Factory, Raebareli may also be included in the programme at a later stage to roll out the 45 rakes by 2021-22.
- **World Design Organization (WDO) - will be launching its new global programme 'World Design Protopolis' in Bengaluru, Karnataka.**
- ✓ This was announced at the recently concluded 3-day Kochi Design Week (KDW), India's largest design conclave that commenced at Bolgatty Island in Kerala.
  - ✓ The programme aims to measure the progress of a city, attract investments and becomes sustainable, so that the city becomes a better place for citizens.
  - ✓ With this project, the WDO is trying to prototype a future city.
  - ✓ It has selected Bengaluru as first ever city in world to implement this project, which is exclusively for big cities.

- **The Ministry of Culture - approved Rs 2.95 crores financial assistance for the development of 'Gandhi Paedia'.**
  - ✓ The project is to be implemented by National Council of Science Museums, Kolkata.
  - ✓ The aim is to promote Gandhian philosophy and thoughts through social media platforms.
  - ✓ The Government had earlier sanctioned financial assistance of Rs 5.25 crores rupees for the commemoration of 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
  
- **The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) - has launched a pilot project for using FASTags named 'FASTag 2.0' for parking purposes at Hyderabad Airport.**
  - ✓ The move would ensure the benefits of FASTag beyond tolling and covering parking payments, fuel payments, etc
  - ✓ After the success of project in Hyderabad, it will be launched at Delhi airport.
  - ✓ The GST council has also announced to use FASTags for all commercial vehicles which would be generating an E-way bill from 1 April, 2020.
  - ✓ Government has recently decided to declare all lanes of fee plazas on National Highways as 'FASTag lanes'

## **INTERNATIONAL**

- **Around 73 countries - have joined the Climate Ambition Alliance (CAA) at the ongoing COP 25 in Madrid, Spain**
  - ✓ The alliance is led by Chile and was launched at the Climate Action Summit, New York in 2019.
  - ✓ Chile will also work together with UK towards COP26 that is scheduled to be held in November 2020 at Glasgow, UK.
  - ✓ The main purpose of the CAA is to upscale 2020 targets of members of UN and to achieve Net Zero Carbon Emissions by 2050.
  - ✓ It will focus in resilience in infrastructure, management of water and sustainability of cities
  - ✓ The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has released its Emissions Gap Report, 2019 recently to bridge the gap between measures undertaken and measures needed to tackle climate change
  - ✓ As per the report, it is essential to reduce the emissions by 7.6% between 2020 and 2030 in order to achieve a goal of 1.5°C increase in temperatures over pre-industrial levels
  - ✓ The report says that the global temperature will increase by 3.2 degrees by 2100 as compared to pre-industrial levels.
  - ✓ The top four emitters of the world namely China, USA, European Union and India contributed to 55% of total emissions in the last decade.

➤ **Poland - left 2050 Climate Neutrality Agreement of European Union on December 13**

- ✓ Poland, whose 80% of energy needs are relied on coal, requested the EU to extend the plan execution deadline to 2070, which was declined
- ✓ The Union demanded for more funds to support nuclear power, as it recognized the nuclear power is the way forward to reduce GHG (Green house Gas) emissions
- ✓ The Climate Neutrality Plan is a key commitment under 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change.
- ✓ It is a 100 billion Euro plan that aims for 'net zero' greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.
- ✓ Climate Neutrality means emissions will have no impact on climate.
- ✓ It is also called European Green Deal or Europe's man on the moon moment.
- ✓ Earlier under the Paris Agreement, the EU had committed to reduce its emission by 40% by 2030 as compared to 1990.
- ✓ EU bloc that comprises of 28 countries is the third largest economic bloc after China and US in contributions to climate change.

## **INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS**

➤ **India - is planning to expand its Indo-Pacific policy, to include the western Indian ocean and Arabian Sea**

- ✓ This was announced by the country's foreign minister S Jaishankar in his valedictory address at the end of the joint Indian Ocean Dialogue and Delhi Dialogue in New Delhi
- ✓ So far, the Indo-Pacific covered Indian Ocean and the Arabian sea.
- ✓ With the expansion, the region will now cover Gulf states and Africa.
- ✓ In June 2018, PM Modi outlined India's vision on the Indo-Pacific region while addressing the Shangri-La Dialogue.
- ✓ The Indo-Pacific region includes regions between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean.
- ✓ The expansion will help India in its Act East Policy, focusing more on the Indian Ocean element of the Indo-Pacific rather than Pacific Ocean element.
- ✓ With the expansion, ASEAN becomes the geographical centre of a greater focus and becomes heart of Indo-Pacific.
- ✓ This is for the first time that these two dialogues, Indian Ocean Dialogue and Delhi Dialogue, will be held consecutively with similar themes
- ✓ The two dialogues are the key elements of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and India-ASEAN calendars
- ✓ Theme for Indian Ocean Dialogue - 'Indo-Pacific: Re-imagining the Indian Ocean through an Expanded Geography'
- ✓ Theme for Delhi Dialogue - 'Advancing Partnership in Indo-Pacific'

- ✓ The summit was earlier preceded by 25th Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group (IORAG), that took place on 12 December
- ✓ Almost 50% of world's container ships and two-thirds of world's oil shipments pass through the Indian Ocean Rim (IOR) region, which is home to around 2.7 billion people.

## CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **The third edition of coveted Military Literature Festival (MLF) - is being held from 13 to 15 December at UT Lake Club, Chandigarh.**



- ✓ It was inaugurated by Punjab Governor and UT Administrator, VP Singh Badnore.
- ✓ The annual festival would bring together the intellectuals from battle grounds and literary fields to discuss information on defence issues.
- ✓ The Festival was led by Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh, who held discussions in various aspects of military and shared his experiences of serving country in armed forces
- ✓ The festival will be marked by presence of legendary litterateur Sir Mark Tully, historian Pushpesh Pant, Ramon Magsaysay awardee Ravish Kumar as well as gallantry award winners and defence experts.

## PERSONALITIES

- **Climate change activist, Greta Thunberg - has been selected as 'Person of the Year' by 'TIME' magazine for the year 2019**



- ✓ The 16 year old Greta is the youngest person to ever receive the honor, as until this year, Charles Lindbergh, who was named TIME's 1927 Person of the Year at age 25, was the youngest recipient.
- ✓ As per Time Magazine's report, Greta emerged as the biggest voice on the biggest issue of the earth

- ✓ Greta, born in Stockholm, Sweden, protested before Sweden's parliament to reduce carbon emissions according to the Paris Agreement of 2015.
- ✓ She urged students in other countries of the world to stand against global warming and climate change.
- ✓ Greta Thunberg gave a captivating speech at the United Nations Climate Action Summit this year, which was widely appreciated
- ✓ Greta suffers from Asperger syndrome, an autism spectrum disorder.
- ✓ Greta, nominated for Nobel peace prize, is also famous for a campaigning movement, known as “Fridays for Future”

## DEFENCE

- **The bilateral military exercise between India and Russia, Indra 2019 - started at Babina (near Jhansi) recently under the aegis of the United Nations (UN)**



- ✓ It is aimed at combating terrorism and insurgency and will take place between 10-19 December 2019 at Babina (near Jhansi), Pune and Goa
- ✓ The exercise will include a five-day training phase with a comprehensive training course, followed by a 72-hour verification exercise.
- ✓ There will be training exercises on the land, sea and in the air during the joint combat exercise.
- ✓ The inaugural Indra exercise was conducted in the year 2017, marking the 70th anniversary of military friendship between India and Russia
- ✓ About 900 military personnel of the Indian army and 1000 troops of Russia participated in INDIRA 2017.

## APPOINTMENTS

- **Congressman Ami Bera, the longest-serving Indian American lawmaker - has been named the Chairman of a key Congressional sub-committee that has jurisdiction over India.**



- ✓ Bera, a four-time Democratic Congressman from California, will replace Brad Sherman as the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and Nonproliferation.

- ✓ As the Chair, Bera will work to ensure that the U.S. will utilise all of its political, military, cultural and economic tools to support American interests and maintain and enhance the U.S. commitments in Asia and the Pacific.
- ✓ Currently, Bera also serves as the Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on Korea and previously chaired the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans.

## AWARDS

- **Suman Rao, the winner of Miss India 2019 - emerged the second runner-up at Miss World 2019 in London on December 14**
- ✓ She was also announced as the Continental winner for Asia
- ✓ Suman was born in a village near Udaipur in Rajasthan, but now lives in Mumbai with her family and has trained as a CA.



- ✓ The 23 year old, Indian-origin, Tony Ann Singh of Jamaica was crowned as 69<sup>th</sup> Miss World, and Ophely Mezino of France was first runner-up
- ✓ Her mother Jahrine Bailey-Singh is of African-Caribbean descent and hails from Jamaica, while her father, Bradshaw Singh, is of Indo-Caribbean descent from Jamaica
- ✓ Singh was crowned by last year's winner, Vanessa Ponce de Leon of Mexico.
- ✓ This is the fourth time that a representative from Jamaica is crowned as Miss World since 1959.
- ✓ Jamaica has previously won Miss World titles in 1963, 1976 and 1993
- ✓ Suman Rao was named Miss India World 2019 in June this year
- ✓ Around 120 national representatives from around the world competed for the famous blue crown.
- ✓ It's also the first time that all top beauty pageants -- Miss USA, Miss Teen USA, Miss America, Miss Universe and now, Miss World -- have crowned black women as their winners.
- ✓ Last weekend, Zozibini Tunzi from South Africa was named Miss Universe
- **Abu Dhabi - has been selected as the World's leading Sports Tourism Destination for seventh time in a row.**
- ✓ The coveted award was conferred at 26th edition of World Travel Awards (WTA), being held in Muscat, Oman.
- ✓ Abu Dhabi, the capital of UAE, has been in the forefront of sports tourism by developing and promoting sports facilities and events.

# WHEN DOES THE NEXT DECADE BEGIN? – A REPORT

- The next decade - to begin on Jan 1, 2021 and conclude on Dec 31, 2030



- ✓ Contrary to popular belief, the next decade will not begin on Jan 1, 2020, and end on Dec 31, 2029.
- ✓ A decade is a period of 10 years
- ✓ The confusion here is - whether decades should begin in years ending with a zero or one
- ✓ It has to be noted that there is no “year zero” in our calendar system
- ✓ The lack of a year ‘zero’ (remember the Indians invented it but it wasn’t until the 15th century that it was finally accepted) means the only consistent way to measure ‘decades’ is to start them in years ending in one.
- ✓ The basis of this argument is a single calendar year that happened more than two millennia ago.
- ✓ At that point in time, our current calendar system pivots from years labeled BC — “Before Christ” — to years labeled AD — “anno Domini” or “in the year of the Lord.”
- ✓ The lack of a year ‘zero’ means the first AD decade started at year 1 and ran until the end of year 10, while the second decade started on year 11.
- ✓ Going by this pattern, the next decade will begin on Jan 1, 2021.

