

**EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – December 11,
2020**

TAMIL NADU

- **On December 10, Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami - inaugurated a new scheme to provide bicycles to Plus One students in government and government-aided schools for the year 2020-21.**



- ✓ The government will provide 5,45,166 students with free bicycles under this new scheme, which is to be implemented at a cost of ₹214.79 crore.
 - ✓ The CM also laid the foundation stone for the Government Veterinary College and Research Institute in Theni district on the same day.
 - ✓ The institute is to be built at a cost of ₹265.87 crore.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi - to address the International Bharati Festival, 2020, on December 11 via video conferencing**
 - ✓ The ten-day festival will be conducted as part of the 138th birth anniversary celebration of Tamil poet Mahakavi Subramanya Bharati
 - ✓ It will begin at 9am on December 11 with a procession carrying the legendary poet's idol from Triplicane (near the Parthasarathi temple) to the Subramanya Bharati memorial
 - ✓ The procession will be followed by a cultural programme on Bharati's life later in the same day

- **Tamil Nadu government - has urged the Centre to expedite the release of ₹3,758 crore towards temporary and permanent relief and restoration works following the impact of twin cyclones, Nivar and Burevi**
- ✓ The release is significant as the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) is a deficit account at present owing to mounting Covid-19 expenditures.

STATE GETS A PITTANCE

YEAR	DISASTER	STATE'S DEMAND*	CENTRE'S SANCTION
2011-12	Cyclone Thane	₹5,249cr	₹500cr
2012-13	Drought	19,988	656
2015-16	Floods	25,912	1,738
2016-17	Drought	39,565	1,748
2016-17	Cyclone Vardah	22,573	266
2017-18	Cyclone Ockhi	9,302	133
2018-19	Cyclone Gaja	17,899	1,146

*For temporary and permanent relief and restoration | In ₹ crore

- ✓ Last week, the revenue and disaster management department sanctioned ₹80 crore to the district collectors and government departments to take up relief and restoration work.
 - ✓ Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami urged the interministerial central team, which was in the state recently, to expedite the Central aid under National Disaster Response Fund
 - ✓ The SDRF is a corpus fund contributed by the Centre and state in the ratio of 75:25, which is allocated in two instalments in June and December, whereas the NDRF is fully funded by the Centre.
 - ✓ As on November 26, the SDRF had a deficit of ₹538 crore, after incurring Covid expenditure of ₹1,898 crore
 - ✓ As per a government order, 8,271 hectares of agricultural crops was initially assessed as damaged by Nivar, and government sanctioned ₹5 crore relief under SDRF towards input subsidy to affected famers.
- **TNAU's forest college and research institute - has standardised the process of extracting four types of dye products from seeds of the commercially cultivable Achiote tree**
 - ✓ Achiote tree is considered the second-highest dye yielding species in the country.
 - ✓ The institute is also in the process of releasing two high yielding varieties of the Achiote tree, also called Annatto, which farmers can opt for commercial cultivation.
 - ✓ In 2008, TNAU began studying and documenting natural dyes extracted from Achiato trees (called Bixa Orellana).
 - ✓ The seeds of the tree can produce natural pigment bixen, an orange pigment, and orellin, a yellow pigment.

- ✓ Multiple institutes like IIT Kharagpur and AP Agricultural University have worked on identifying different tree species that can produce natural dyes.
 - ✓ They have even created pilot-scale dye extraction units at labs
 - ✓ However none of them have come up with protocols on commercially cultivating any of those species or processes to extract dye in a large scale.
 - ✓ The dye extracts, as part of studies, have been shared with garment, cosmetic and food processing companies for testing.
 - ✓ In T-shirts, the colour has lasted 15-20 washes.
 - ✓ Scientists have also identified 30 more tree species - including Eucalyptus species, Anogeissus latifolia and Tectona grandis - from which they believe dyes can be extracted.
 - ✓ The university is in the process of applying for a patent for the extraction protocol they have come up for four types of dye products
 - ✓ These dye products include - aqueous extract used by the textile industry, bixin in powder form used in food industry, solvent extracts which are used by pharmaceutical industries and oil extract used primarily by the cosmetic industry especially for lipsticks.
- **A documentary film 'Solution' – made by a student of Pondicherry University has bagged the Bronze Beaver award at the 10th National Science Film Festival of India (NSFFI)**
 - ✓ The festival is hosted jointly by Vigyan Prasar, the Department of Science and Technology and the Tripura State Council for Science and Technology.
 - ✓ The documentary was created by postgraduate electronic media student Ponnala Raghavendar
 - ✓ It portrays the work of research scholar (ecology and environmental science) Harsha Kundungal on how wax worms living in beehives are capable of biodegrading plastic waste materials.
 - ✓ Harsha researches on how microorganisms in the gut/digestive tract of the insect larvae disintegrate or digest the plastic waste materials.
 - ✓ These worms generally feed on beeswax for its growth and development.
- **A bas-relief sculpture of Korravai, the Tamil goddess of war - has been found near a pond in Chinnasalem in Kallakurichi district**
 - ✓ It was supposed to have been created by a local sculptor from the 13th century AD.



- ✓ According to Sangam literature, Korravai was the goddess of the warrior class who lived in the 'paalai' region, one of the five land divisions.
- ✓ The four-foot-high bas relief sculpture was found by heritage activist Pon Venkatesan, while documenting abandoned inscriptions and sculptures in and around Kallakurichi.
- ✓ Korravai is considered as the oldest goddess of Tamil Nadu, who was revered as Goddess 'Durga' in later period.
- ✓ After the amalgamation of Hinduism with local traditions during the Pallava period in 5th-6th century AD, many Gods became part of the Brahmanical cult.
- ✓ The earliest figure of Korravai was found on a potsherd in Adichanallur.

NATIONAL

- **On December 11, Prime Minister Narendra Modi – laid the foundation stone of the new Parliament building at New Delhi**



- ✓ The ceremony was attended by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha Harivansh, and Union Ministers Hardeep Puri and Pralhad Joshi, along with members of the Union Cabinet, diplomats, and Members of Parliament.
- ✓ The ceremony included an all-faith prayer and rituals by priests from the Sringeri Sharada Peetham, Karnataka.
- ✓ The shankha (conch shell) and navaratnas (nine precious stones) for the ceremony had come from the Peetham
- ✓ During the speech to mark the ceremony, the PM said democracy has always been a medium to resolve differences, citing the teachings of Guru Nanak
- ✓ The Prime Minister's remarks came in the backdrop of several opposition parties skipping the function.
- ✓ No Congress leader was present barring former Speaker Shivraj Patil (former PM Manmohan Singh sent a message), and DMK, TMC, NCP, Left parties, Shiv Sena, SAD and SP did not attend the ceremony.
- ✓ Several opposition parties have opposed the Central Vista re-development plan.
- ✓ Those who attended include YSRCP and BJD among some others.

- ✓ Terming the foundation stone ceremony a milestone, the PM said the laws made inside the existing Parliament and the debates there are a part of the country's democratic heritage
- ✓ The PM said while the old Parliament House gave direction to the country post-independence, the new one would fulfil the aspirations of the 21st century.

New seat of power		NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDING	
A look at some of the features of the proposed four-storey Parliament building			
Shape: Triangular Total area 64,500 square metres Main spaces Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and Central Lounge	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The National Emblem will crown the new Parliament building 	Gearing up: Construction workers walking past a hoarding featuring the new Parliament building. ■ REUTERS	
THEME OF INTERIORS Lok Sabha Peacock (National bird) Rajya Sabha Lotus (National flower) Central Lounge Banyan (National tree)		CAPACITY  Lok Sabha 888 seats (current chamber can accommodate 552 people)  Rajya Sabha 384 seats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Lok Sabha Hall will also have additional capacity, up to 1,272 seats, to host joint sessions 	
		Estimated cost ₹971 crore	Contractor Tata Projects Ltd. Architect HCP Design, Planning and Management
		Completion deadline: October 2022, in time for the winter session of Parliament in the 75th year of Independence	

- ✓ The New Parliament Building will have a life of more than 150 years with a more than 150% increase in seating capacity
- ✓ While the interior of the new Lok Sabha will be on the theme of peacock, the national bird, Rajya Sabha will have national flower lotus as its theme.
- ✓ Besides the two Houses, the triangular building will have a Constitution Hall which will exhibit an original Constitution and a digital form for readers who can read page-by-page.
- ✓ This will be the only portion of the building that will have no storeys, while the rest of the complex will have four storeys.
- ✓ Each floor will have offices of ministers and committee rooms.
- ✓ The first floor will have dining space for MPs, VVIPs and visitors.
- ✓ Besides being earth-quake proof, the new building will be eco-friendly and would consume significantly less power.
- ✓ The project will be completed in time in 2022 and the winter session is expected to be held in the new building
- ✓ Ministry of housing and urban affairs is the nodal agency for the project

INTERNATIONAL

- **Morocco - has announced normalising relations with Israel, as per the White House statement made on December 10**

- ✓ With this, it becomes the fourth Arab state to resume diplomatic relations with Israel
 - ✓ Kingdom of Morocco now follows Bahrain, Sudan and the UAE to recognize and end hostilities with Israel
 - ✓ The move is part of US President Donald Trump's campaign to stabilise the Middle East and North African regions
 - ✓ Under the agreement, Morocco will open full diplomatic relations and formalise economic ties with Israel
 - ✓ It will also allow overflights of its air space and direct commercial flights from Tel Aviv.
 - ✓ More than 1 million Israelis are descended from those who originally lived in Morocco.
 - ✓ Morocco and Israel had respectively maintained liaison offices in Tel Aviv and Rabat in the 1990s, before closing them in 2000.
 - ✓ The White House also announced that the US would recognise the disputed Western Sahara territory as a sovereign part of Morocco.
- **On December 10, Saudi Arabia - approved the use of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for coronavirus**
- ✓ With this, it becomes the second Gulf country after Bahrain to approve the drug.
 - ✓ After the approval by the Saudi Food and Drug Authority, health authorities in the kingdom are permitted to import and use the vaccine for general public.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **Union Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh - addressed 10th anniversary of the founding of ASEAN defence minister meeting plus at Hanoi, Vietnam from New Delhi on December 10**



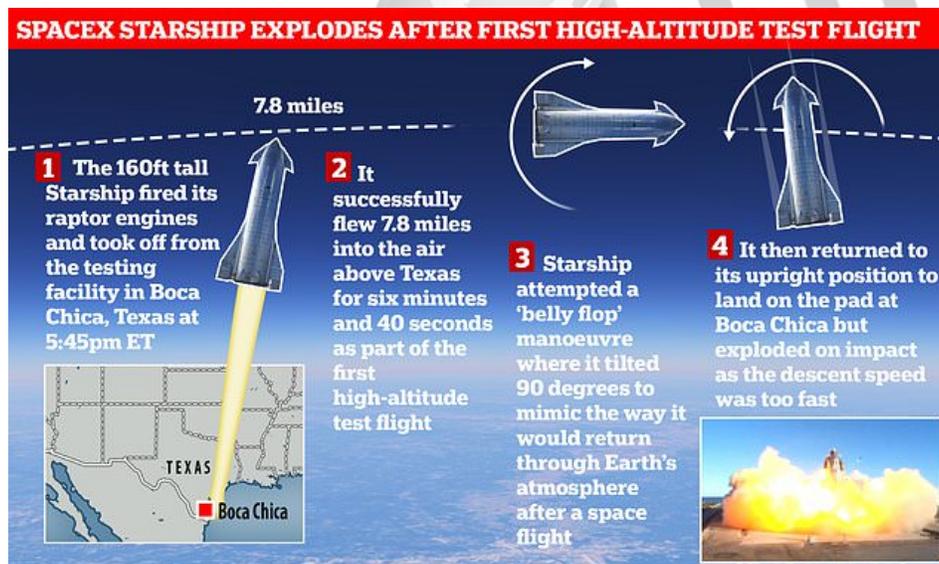
- ✓ During his speech, the minister said countries should exercise self-restraint and refrain from taking actions that can complicate situations in the region, in a veiled reference to China
- ✓ Speaking at a virtual gathering of defence ministers of the 10-nation ASEAN and its eight dialogue partners, the Minister said, "Threats to the rules-based order,

maritime security, cyber-related crimes and terrorism, just to name a few, remain the challenges that we need to address as a forum.”

- ✓ The gathering included Chinese defence minister Wei Fenghe
- ✓ The minister emphasised India’s call for an open and inclusive order in the Indo-Pacific, based upon the respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations, peaceful resolutions of disputes through dialogue and adherence to international rules and laws.
- ✓ Singh reiterated India’s support to freedom of navigation and overflight for all in international waters in accordance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
- ✓ The ‘ADMM Plus’ (annual meeting of defence ministers of ASEAN and dialogue partners) has grown in the last decade “to become the fulcrum of peace, stability and rules-based order in this region”, the Minister added.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **On December 10, Space X’s prototype rocket ‘Starship’ – blasted off into space and burst into flames and exploded on landing**



- ✓ Launched on a test mission, Starship lifted off from the Cameron County launchpad in Texas
- ✓ It returned six-and-a-half minutes later after attaining an altitude of 41,000 feet — 100 times higher than what earlier Space X had reached
- ✓ The Starship — code named SN8 — would be used for flying to the Red Planet Mars
- ✓ Despite the catastrophic finale, Space X founder Elon Musk called the mission a ‘successful ascent’.
- ✓ It was the highest and most elaborate flight yet for the ‘Starship’
- ✓ The mission’s “success” is significant because Space X will use the Starship to fly humans to the moon and Mars within the next six years

APPOINTMENTS

- **Indian-American Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal - has been elected as the chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus (CPC) on December 9**



- ✓ The election makes her one of the most powerful US lawmakers in the 117th Congress.
- ✓ Jayapal, 55, said the caucus is going to advance racial justice, tackle poverty and inequality and help transform the USA.
- ✓ Indian-American Congressman Ro Khanna has been elected as deputy whip of the CPC

OBITUARY

- **Paolo Rossi, Italian football legend who led them to victory in the 1982 World Cup - has died at 64 years**



- ✓ He was caught up in a bribery scandal and banned for three years in 1980 for his part in a betting event, but returned to win the World Cup in Spain and the Ballon D'Or the same year.
- ✓ Rossi finished top scorer in the tournament with six goals.
- ✓ Along with Christian Vieri and Roberto Baggio, he holds the Italian record for nine goals scored in the World Cup.

- ✓ Italian football legend Paolo Rossi is the only male player in history to win the World Cup, the Golden Boot, the Golden Ball and Ballon d'Or in the same year (1982)
- ✓ Rossi is one of only three players to have won all three awards at a World Cup, along with Garrincha in 1962, and Mario Kempes in 1978.
- ✓ Paolo Rossi won two Serie A titles, a European Cup and a Coppa Italia with Juventus team.

INTERNATIONAL DAY

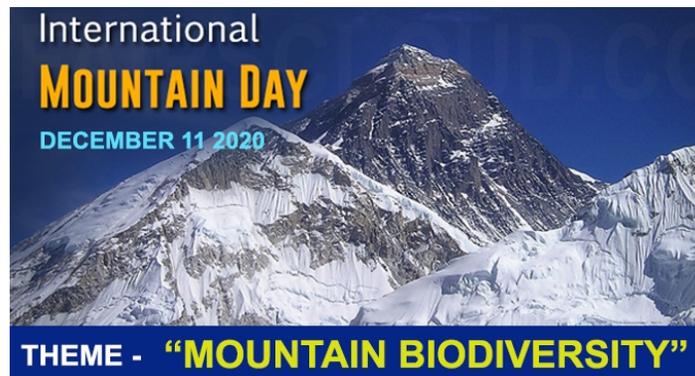
➤ UNICEF Day – December 11



- ✓ The day is observed every year by the United Nations to mark the creation of UNICEF by the United Nations General Assembly on December 11, 1946
- ✓ It was created in order to provide assistance, supplies and improve health, education, nutrition of children after World War II.
- ✓ The organisation was originally named UNICEF referring to 'United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund'
- ✓ However, in 1953, the words International and emergency were removed from its name by the United Nations, even though the acronym continued to exist.
- ✓ The United Nations adopted Declaration of the Rights of Child on November 20, 1959.
- ✓ It also adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child on November 20, 1989.
- ✓ To mark the event, November 20 is observed as Universal Children's Day or World Children's Day.
- ✓ The day is celebrated by UNICEF in order to promote international togetherness and raise awareness in child development.
- ✓ UNICEF has the presence in more than 190 countries and territories.
- ✓ It was awarded the Nobel Prize for peace in 1965.
- ✓ The work of UNICEF includes child Protection, child environment, child development and nutrition, education, polio eradication, children and age, reproductive and Child Health, advocacy and partnership, emergency preparedness and response, etc.
- ✓ The UNICEF releases the State of World Children Report every year

- ✓ According to the state of world children report, 2019, at least one in three children under five is overweight or undernourished, while at least one in two children suffer from hidden hunger.
- ✓ The three main concerns that threaten the survival and growth of children are - undernutrition, overweight and hidden hunger - called the triple burden of malnutrition.

➤ **International Mountain Day – December 11**



- ✓ The day is observed every year by the United Nations and other organizations to create awareness about the importance of conserving mountains
- ✓ Serving as home to 15% of world population, the mountains host more than half of world biodiversity hotspots
- ✓ Also, conserving mountains is a key part of Goal 15 of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- ✓ Theme 2020 - Mountain Biodiversity
- ✓ The first International Mountain Day was celebrated in 2003.
- ✓ The UN declared the year 2002 as the UN International Year of Mountains, marking the increasing attention gained by the mountains and their conservatory measures
- ✓ In 1992, the Managing Fragile Ecosystems: Sustainable Mountain Development was adopted by the United Nations.
- ✓ This was a part of the action plan Agenda 21 of the Conference on Environment and Development.
- ✓ The target four of the Sustainable Development Goal 15 is dedicated to the conservation of mountains biodiversity.
- ✓ Also, the decade 2021 to 2030 was declared as the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

