

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – DECEMBER 19, 2020

TAMIL NADU

- Vandana Gopikumar, co-founder, the Banyan and the Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental Health - was presented with the 'Faces of Exchange Award' at a virtual programme on December 18.



- ✓ The award marks the 80th anniversary of the International Visitors' Leadership Programme (IVLP) of the U.S. Department of State
- ✓ The U.S. Consulate General in Chennai commemorated the anniversary of the IVLP exchange programme through a discussion forum.
- ✓ The U.S. Department of State recognised 80 accomplished IVLP alumni, as part of the 'Faces of Exchange' initiative
- ✓ The recognition acknowledges their leadership and the impact of their exchanges on the global community.
- ✓ Other prestigious IVLP alumni include former Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Morarji Desai.
- ✓ Apart from Vandana Gopikumar, the other recipient from India, Sunitha Krishnan, is the founder of Prajwala, a non-governmental organisation in Hyderabad.

- **The Tiruvallur district police - won the Skoch Award for their response to the Covid-19 pandemic.**
 - ✓ The award was conferred in recognition of the instant responder to improve social distancing (IRIS), a sensor-based device, installed at the Thirumazhisai temporary vegetable market.
 - ✓ The device was developed by P.R. Rajesh Kumar and M. Sakthi, engineers of Global Thermal Control System Private Limited.
 - ✓ The device, comprising a smartphone and a speaker, was basically an Artificial Intelligence-incorporated smart phone.
 - ✓ The phone uses a motion-image recognition programme to identify the distance between two persons.
 - ✓ If the distance is less than 2.5 feet, it will sound an alarm.
 - ✓ A video will also be recorded, and the beat police officer can monitor the footage from the phone.
 - ✓ If more than four people stand close to each other, the alarm will be louder

- **The Indian Institute of Technology, Madras - has received the ‘Most Innovative Institute of the Year’ award from Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).**



- ✓ The institution has bagged the award under the ‘disruptive innovations’ category in CII Industrial Innovation Awards 2020.
- ✓ The 3 innovations which are recognised by the award includes –
 - ✓ VITALSENS — a platform technology for wearable health monitoring device,
 - ✓ “Arise” — standing wheelchair for disabled people and
 - ✓ Shakti — India’s first indigenous microprocessor.
- ✓ IIT-M was previously adjudged the ‘Top innovative Institution’ in the country in Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) in 2019 and 2020.

- **A 1,000-year-old sluice pillar with Grantha inscriptions about water conservation - has been found in Periyakulam in Vadaputhinatham, a remote village in Tirupur district.**
- ✓ The ancient letters were observed on the bottom of the pillar with bas relief sculptures of Valampirivinayagar and Lakshmi.
- ✓ Senior epigraphist Y Subbarayalu, who deciphered the script, said the pillar is more than 1,000 years old, based on the style and other factors of the pillar
- ✓ The lower part, where the date was supposed to appear, is broken in the pillar



- ✓ The four-line inscriptions begin with “Swasthi Sri” and it shows the water management practices during that time.
- ✓ The water body called Periyakulam gets water from the Thirumurthi Hills and it is still stored and used for irrigation.
- ✓ The sluice gate is 140 cm tall and a 50 cm wide.
- ✓ The bas relief of the god and goddess show that they were installed for a better yield and harvest.

NATIONAL

- **On December 18, India - became the second country after the US to record one crore confirmed Covid-19 cases, amidst the declining number of cases**
- ✓ India’s Covid numbers have been falling for three months now, ever since the caseload crossed five million on September 15.
- ✓ The country’s total caseload crossed the grim one crore milestone after 27,022 fresh infections took the tally to 1,00,04,893 on the day.
- ✓ Meanwhile, the health ministry has advised that even those who have recovered from Covid-19 should be vaccinated
- ✓ As per the guidelines, the vaccination would help in developing a strong immune response against the disease.

- ✓ Getting vaccinated will be voluntary and beneficiaries will have to mandatorily register themselves with a photo ID, after which they will receive information about the session and site to visit.
- ✓ To complete the vaccination schedule, an individual will be required to take two doses of the vaccine 28 days apart
- ✓ Six vaccines are in different stages of clinical trials in India

Rise In Cases	Days Taken	Avg Daily Deaths	LAST 1M CASES
1 to 1m	168	152	Worst-Hit States
1m to 2m	21	763	➤ Kerala: 1.4L cases, 764 deaths;
2m to 3m	16	948	Maha: 1.2L, 2,143;
3m to 4m	13	984	Worst-Hit Metros
4m to 5m	11	1,133	➤ Delhi: 96k cases, 2,141 deaths;
5m to 6m	12	1,124	Kolkata: 53k, 991; Mumbai: 30k, 376
6m to 7m	13	985	➤ Since 5m mark, steady fall in case count, deaths
7m to 8m	18	679	
8m to 9m	22	529	
9m to 10m	29	447	

- ✓ The US leads the world with more than 1.7 crore Covid-19 cases till now while Brazil is in third place with a count of over 71 lakh.
 - ✓ Both countries have recorded a much higher number of cases and deaths than India in the past few days.
 - ✓ In terms of daily cases, India hit its peak almost exactly three months ago on September 17, when 98,795 fresh infections were recorded in a single day.
 - ✓ India remains one of only two nations (other country being Argentina) among the 10 worst-hit countries of the world which is yet to see a second surge in cases.
- **The government – is planning to make it mandatory for all cars, including the economy models, to have air bag for the passenger side on the front seat soon.**
- ✓ The installation of air bag for the driver's side is mandatory in all cars since July 1, 2019.
 - ✓ The apex technical committee on vehicle standards has given its approval to this proposal
 - ✓ In this regard, the government has issued a draft notification to amend automotive industry standard (AIS) dealing with safety features.
 - ✓ The Ministry of Road Transport is in consultation with the car manufacturers to decide the time-line from when the new norm can kick in.
 - ✓ The current regulation mandating single air bag is inadequate since it leaves the co-passenger in the front seat vulnerable to serious injury, or even death, in case of a road crash.

- ✓ Features such as speed alert, reverse parking sensors and seat-belt reminder, which were low-cost inclusions, have been standard features in all the new vehicles
- ✓ But the crucial safety gear for passengers on the front seat — air bag — has not been made mandatory so far.

HIGH COURT VERDICT

- **On December 18, the Madras High Court – restrained the sale of unpackaged edible oil in Tamil Nadu**
- ✓ The ban on the sale of edible oil in loose packets is attributed to the adulteration of these oils, which have serious consequences on the consumers' health
- ✓ The Court has also observed that the state government should bring an amendment to book people who are involved in adulteration of food products under the Goondas Act.
- ✓ A division bench of justices N Kirubakaran and B Pugalendhi passed the orders on a plea to ensure that edible oils sold in the market are in accordance with FSSAI standards and norms
- ✓ According to the petitioner, gingelly oil is prepared by mixing a portion of cashewnut shell liquid (CNSL) in palmolein with both the colour and odour matching the same.
- ✓ CNSL is used in manufacturing resin, paint and varnish
- ✓ Further, by mixing peanut essence with olein oil, a colourless and odourless oil, it can be made to look similar to that of groundnut oil.
- ✓ The judges observed that right to life is a fundamental right, guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution and the right to have healthy food is also one of the fundamental rights.

INTERNATIONAL

- **The United States – has warned its partners and allies that any major defence purchases from Russia would attract sanctions under CAATSA**
- ✓ The announcement will have a significant bearing with India as it is one of the buyer of Russian weapon systems and defence equipment
- ✓ The US imposed sanctions on NATO ally Turkey this week for its purchase of the Russian S-400 missile interceptor systems.
- ✓ India expects delivery of S-400 missile interceptors from Russia by next summer
- ✓ In this context, there are chances that CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act) being applied to India and there will be an impact on bilateral ties.
- ✓ India continues to source weapon systems from Russia and does not intend to change it substantively.

- ✓ According to US, sanctions were not targeted at the country, but at Russia for its malicious cyber activities, unacceptable behaviour in Ukraine, and other malign activities worldwide.

SPORTS

- **On December 17, Bayern Munich's striker Robert Lewandowski – bagged FIFA's 'Best Men's Player' award**
- ✓ Nicknamed 'The Body', the Polish football star won the award for the year's top footballer, ahead of superstars Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi
- ✓ Lewandowski was the winner of European Champions League medal in the current season



- ✓ Though FIFA hosted the virtual ceremony in Zurich, its president Gianni Infantino went to Munich to present the trophy in person to Lewandowski.
- ✓ Lewandowski joined Luka Modric, the Croatia and Real Madrid midfielder who won in 2018, as the only players in the past 13 years to deny both Messi and Ronaldo the victory.
- ✓ This is the first ever world player award for a Bayern player, ever since FIFA created the award in 1991.

- ✓ England defender Lucy Bronze took the women's award, ahead of Wendie Renard and Pernille Harder.
- ✓ Bayern's Manuel Neuer was voted as the Best Goalkeeper of the year, while Liverpool's Jurgen Klopp won the Best Coach of the year award
- **eSports - has been named as a full medal event for the 2022 Asian Games**

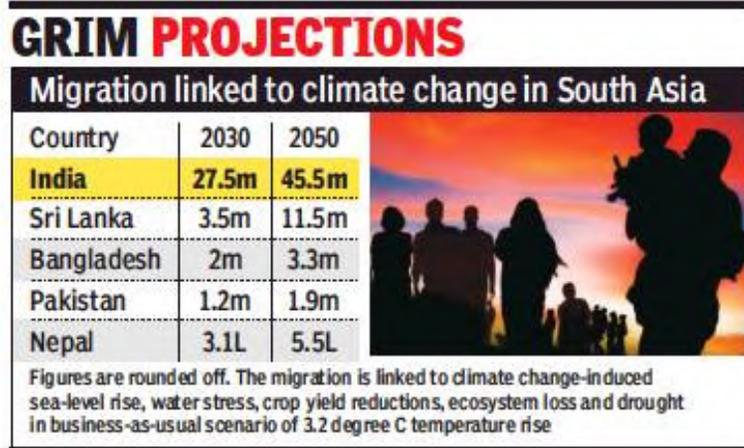


- ✓ The eSports has been named along with breakdancing for inclusion in the programme for the Asiad Games in Hangzhou
- ✓ The decision to bring these sports towards the mainstream was taken at the Olympic Council of Asia's general assembly this week.
- ✓ eSports was a popular demonstration event at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta, and a medal sport at last year's Southeast Asian Games in the Philippines.
- ✓ This month breakdancing, skateboarding, surfing and sport climbing were approved for the Paris 2024 Olympics to appeal to younger audiences

REPORT

- **By the year 2050, 45 million Indians - may be forced to migrate from their homes due to climate disasters, as per a new research study released on the occasion of International Migrants Day on December 18**
- ✓ The study has released the estimated figures of migration across India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka
- ✓ According to the existing climactic conditions, more than 62 million people in South Asia will be affected.
- ✓ In case of India, the level of migration is projected to be more than three times in next 30 years from the 2020 level.
- ✓ The research focused on major climate impact factors such as sea-level rise, water stress, crop yield reductions, ecosystem loss and drought over a period of time
- ✓ As per the report, India may face the highest migration (45.5 million) followed by Sri Lanka (11.5 million), Bangladesh (3.3 million), Pakistan (1.9 million) and Nepal (0.5 million) by 2050.

- ✓ The migration will, however, be restricted to 34 million if countries in general and big emitters of greenhouse gases (GHG) in particular collectively work to restrict the average global temperature rise to around 2 degree Celsius through mitigation and adequate adaptation measures.
- ✓ In the current scenario, global temperatures are expected to rise by 3.2 degree Celsius by 2100.



- ✓ The study was brought out by 'not-for-profit' organisation, ActionAid, in partnership with the Climate Action Network South Asia (CANSA) and Bread for the World
- ✓ It is based on research undertaken by Bryan Jones, one of the authors of the inaugural Groundswell Report of the World Bank on internal climate migration in 2018.
- ✓ As per the report, the South Asian region witnessed climate-induced migration of 18 million people in the past 10 years (between 2010 and 2020) and this figure could go up to 37 million by 2030 and to 62 million by 2050.

