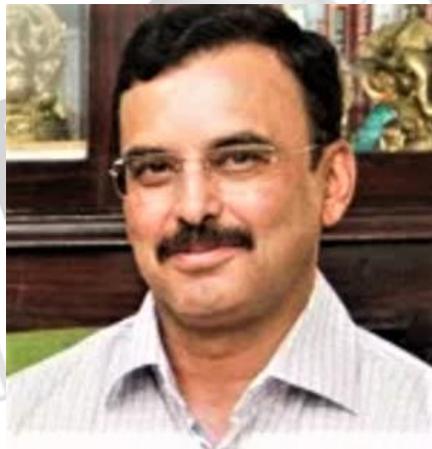


EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS—JANUARY 28, 2021

TAMIL NADU

- **The state government - is all set to recommend the 1985-batch officer Rajeev Ranjan as the next chief secretary of the state.**



- ✓ His name will be recommended to the Governor on January 28
- ✓ The incumbent, K Shanmugam, is likely to become advisor to the CM Edappadi K Palaniswami government.
- ✓ On January 27, the Appointments Committee of the Union cabinet approved the repatriation of Ranjan to the parent cadre on request of the state.
- ✓ Ranjan is currently serving as the Secretary to Department of Fisheries, Union ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying
- ✓ The state government had earlier requested the Centre to extend the service of K Shanmugam for the third time, as his second extension of service will be ending on January 31.
- ✓ Ranjan, a native of Bihar, served in finance, industries, revenue and energy departments, before taking over the reins of highways department in 2013, the portfolio held by CM Palaniswami for the past ten years.
- ✓ In 2018, Ranjan went on Central deputation and became special secretary of GST council.

- ✓ Ranjan is due for superannuation in September this year.
- **The Indian Oil Corporation - will initially launch the tatkal scheme for supply of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) refills for customers having a single cylinder on a trial basis in Vellore in Tamil Nadu.**
- ✓ Under this scheme, the customers would be able to get refills within two hours of booking on payment of an additional ₹25 per cylinder
- ✓ The payment for the refill has to be done online.
- ✓ The scheme is expected to be launched pan India soon
- ✓ Around 60% of customers in the State, especially in rural areas, manage with only cylinder and do not opt for a second cylinder.
- ✓ Vellore town was chosen for the trial due to its size and large number of customers with single cylinder.

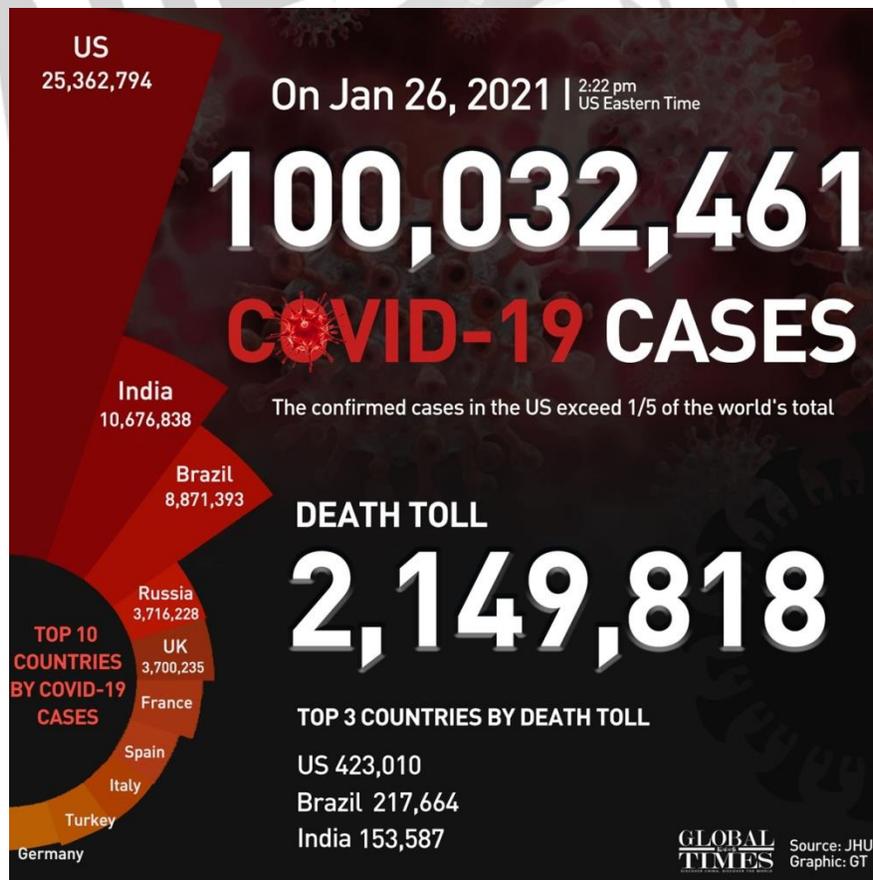
NATIONAL

- **The Ministry of Home Affairs – has extended the lockdown guidelines till February 28, while announcing further relaxations for surveillance, containment and caution**
- ✓ The guidelines under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, issued in December are applicable till January 31.
- ✓ The new norms allow states and Union territories to decide on the extent of attendance at social, cultural and religious gatherings
- ✓ It also removes the 50% occupancy limit for cinema halls and allows swimming pools to all, following the steady decline of Covid-19 cases over the past four months
- ✓ Importantly, the MHA allowed more international air travel of passengers, saying the civil aviation ministry may take a decision in consultation with the home ministry depending on the assessment of the situation.
- ✓ For the first time since March 2020, the Ministry had refrained from advising those above 65 years of age, those with comorbidities, pregnant women and children below the age of 10 years to stay at home, except for essential and health purposes.
- ✓ The new guidelines merely advise these vulnerable categories to take necessary precautions, without specifying that they should try and stay at home.
- ✓ All activities are now permitted outside containment zones, except for a few that will be subject to strict adherence of standard operating procedures (SOPs).
- ✓ Social and other types of gatherings will not need to be limited to the previous restriction of 50% of hall capacity with a ceiling of 200 people in closed spaces.
- ✓ States and UTs can now allow such gatherings subject to their own SOPs from February 1.
- ✓ Cinema halls and theatres, which were permitted up to 50% of seating capacity till January 31, will be allowed to operate at higher capacity

- ✓ This will be in accordance with a revised SOP to be issued by the I&B ministry in consultation with the MHA.
- **The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the PM Narendra Modi - approved an increase in the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for copra**
- ✓ This was announced by the Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar on January 27
- ✓ The decision would benefit copra farmers in 12 coastal States.
- ✓ The MSP for Fair Average Quality of milling copra was increased by ₹375 to ₹10,335 a quintal for 2021 from ₹9,960 last year
- ✓ The MSPs of both ball and milling copra were increased by the Government
- ✓ The government will be giving 52% and 55% more than the cost of production, which is around Rs. 6,800 for both the varieties
- ✓ The increase in the MSP was in line with the recommendations of the Swaminathan Committee
- ✓ The MSP is fixed for 23 commodities, twice a year, based on the guidelines of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).

INTERNATIONAL

- **On January 27, global coronavirus cases - surpassed 100 million, with the emergence of new virus variants, as per Reuters analysis**



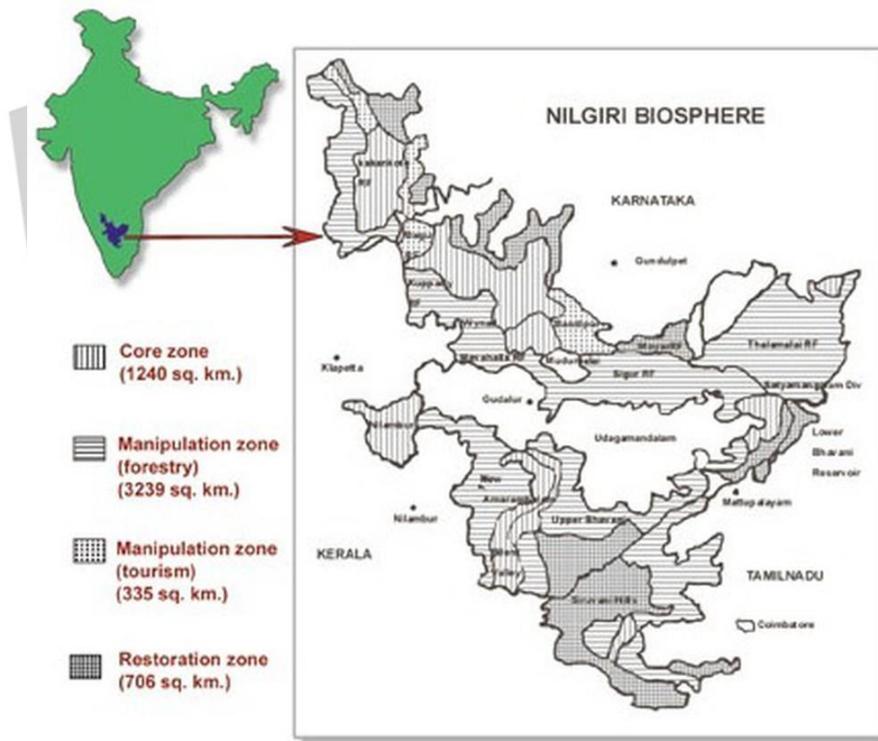
- ✓ Almost 1.3% of the world's population has now been infected with Covid-19 and over 2.1 million people have died.
- ✓ One person has been infected every 7.7 seconds, on average, since the start of the year.
- ✓ Around 668,250 cases have been reported each day over the same period, and the global fatality rate stands at 2.15%.
- ✓ The worst-affected countries —the US, India, Brazil, Russia and the UK— reported more than 50% of all reported Covid-19 cases, but represent only 28% of the global population.
- ✓ It took the world 11 months to record the first 50 million cases of the pandemic, compared to just three months for cases to double to 100 million.
- ✓ Around 56 countries have begun vaccinating people for the coronavirus, administering at least 64 million doses.
- ✓ Israel leads the world on per capita vaccinations, having covered 29% of its population with at least one dose.
- ✓ With over 25 million cases, the US has 25% of all reported cases although it accounts for just 4% of the world's population.
- ✓ The US leads the world in the daily average number of new deaths reported, accounting for one in every five deaths reported worldwide each day.
- ✓ With just under 4,25,000 fatalities, the US has reported almost twice as many deaths as Brazil, which has the second-highest death toll in the world.
- ✓ As the worst-affected region in the world, Europe is currently reporting a million new infections about every four days and has reported nearly 30 million since the pandemic began.
- ✓ Britain reached 100,000 deaths on January 26.
- ✓ The Eastern European region, including countries like Russia, Poland and Ukraine, contribute to nearly 10% of all global Covid-19 cases.
- ✓ Africa is still struggling to secure vaccine supplies after reporting more-infectious variants of the virus first in South Africa and later in Britain in Europe.
- ✓ According to the Reuters, African countries have nearly 3.5 million cases and over 85,000 deaths.
- ✓ The South African variant, also known as 501Y.V2, is 50% more infectious and has been detected in at least 20 countries.
- ✓ Australia and New Zealand have fared better than most other developed economies through swift border closures, lockdowns, strict quarantine for travellers and widespread testing and distancing.

COMMITTEES

- **On January 27, the Supreme Court - appointed conservationist Nandita Hazarika as member of a Technical Committee constituted by it on October 14, 2020 to hear elephant corridor case**



- ✓ The committee is to hear complaints by land owners against the action taken by the Nilgris Collector, which included sealing of their buildings and allegations about the “arbitrary variance in acreage of the elephant corridor.”
- ✓ Nandita replaces one of the committee members, Ajay Desai, who passed away recently
- ✓ The order was passed by a Bench led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde.
- ✓ On October 14, the top court upheld the Tamil Nadu government’s authority to notify an ‘elephant corridor’ and protect the migratory path of the animals through the Nilgiri biosphere reserve.



- ✓ The reserve is the largest protected forest area in India, spanning across Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala.
- ✓ A three-judge Bench led by CJI Bobde had said it was the State’s duty to protect a “keystone species” such as elephants, immensely important to the environment.

- ✓ The corridor is situated in the ecologically fragile Sigur plateau, which connects the Western and the Eastern Ghats and sustains elephant populations and their genetic diversity.
- ✓ It has the Nilgiri Hills on its southwestern side and the Moyar River Valley on its north-eastern side.
- ✓ The elephants cross the plateau in search of food and water.
- ✓ The Supreme Court judgment was based on 32 appeals filed by resorts/private land owners, including Bollywood actor Mithun Chakraborty, against a Madras High Court decision of July 2011.
- ✓ The High Court had confirmed a State government order of August 2010, notifying the corridor.
- ✓ The three-member Technical Committee of the National Elephant 2 Action Plan also includes former Madras High Court judge, Justice K. Venkatraman and Praveen Bhargava, trustee of Wildlife First.

DEFENCE

- **The Army – is planning to introduce a new course on Tibetology for its officers**
 - ✓ The new course will focus on studying Tibetan history, culture and language on “both sides” of the Line of Actual Control and the international boundary
 - ✓ This will be as part of the measures being discussed to “counter the propaganda and spread of influence by China”
 - ✓ The Tibetology proposal was first initiated in the Army commanders’ conference in October
 - ✓ It is now being “further analysed” by the Shimla-based Army Training Command (ARTRAC) on the directions of General M M Naravane.
 - ✓ ARTRAC has identified seven institutes that offer postgraduate courses in Tibetology where Army officers can go on “study leave”.
 - ✓ It has also been recommended that officers can also be sent to these institutes for “small capsules” on Tibetology.
 - ✓ They are Department of Buddhist Studies (Delhi University), Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies (Varanasi), Nava Nalanda Mahavihara (Bihar), Visva Bharati (West Bengal), Dalai Lama Institute for Higher Education (Bengaluru), Namgyal Institute of Tibetology (Gangtok) and Central Institute of Himalayan Culture Studies (Dahung, Arunachal Pradesh).
- **Three more Rafale fighters - touched down in India flying ‘non-stop’ from France on January 27, adding to the eight such omni-role fighter jets already inducted by the IAF.**
 - ✓ The three Rafales were refuelled mid-air by Airbus MRTT tankers of the UAE Air Force, during their over 7,000km flight to the Jamnagar airbase.

- ✓ The IAF has now inducted 11 of the 36 twin-engine Rafales, which are capable of delivering nuclear weapons



- ✓ The purchase of the jets was under the ₹59,000 crore Inter-Governmental Agreement signed with France in September 2016.
- ✓ All 36 jets were expected to be delivered by 2022.
- ✓ The 4.5-generation fighters have a combat range of 780km to 1,650km, without mid-air refuelling, depending on the nature of their mission.
- ✓ The IAF fighters are armed with long stand-off weapons like the over 300-km range 'Scalp' air-to-ground cruise missiles.
- ✓ The fighters are also being equipped with the top-notch 'Meteor' air-to-air missiles
- ✓ With a strike range of 120 to 150km, these missiles can outgun any missile that can currently be unleashed by Pakistani or Chinese jets.
- ✓ The IAF has also ordered the 'Hammer' air-to-ground precision-guided munitions for the Rafales

ECONOMY

- TCS CEO Rajesh Gopinathan, RIL chairman Mukesh Ambani and Infosys CEO Salil Parekh - are among the top executives globally who have safeguarded their company's brand
- ✓ Ajay Banga of Mastercard tops the list, and is followed by Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang and Netflix CEO Reed Hastings.

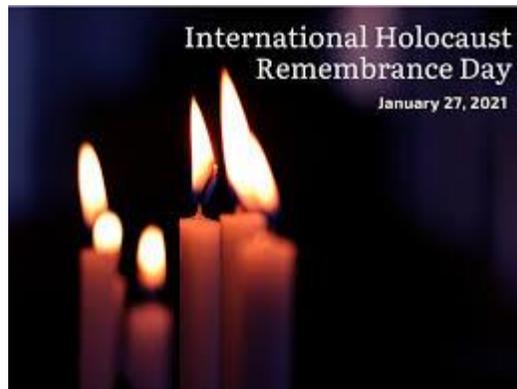




- ✓ This was revealed by the 2021 Brand Guardianship Index, which lists the top 100 CEO globally, released by valuation firm, Brand Finance.
- ✓ Gopinathan is ranked 5th, followed by Ambani at 6th and Parekh at 17th.
- ✓ As per the report, TCS was ranked as the most valuable IT firm in the world in market capitalization surpassing Accenture
- ✓ Also, the company was ranked as the most valuable Indian firm in the country, overtaking Reliance Industries
- ✓ Apart from TCS, Accenture was ranked at 60th position, while Infosys was ranked at 212th position, Cognizant at 219th position, HCL at 353rd position and Wipro at 457th spot.
- ✓ Earlier, in 2018, TCS reached the \$100 billion valuation mark and bagged the top spot in the market, overtaking Accenture
- ✓ The company brand value stood at \$14,924 million in 2021
- **Bank of Baroda (BoB) – has become the first public sector bank to consider work-from-home (WFH) as a permanent policy for a section of its employees.**
- ✓ BoB has appointed management consultancy firm McKinsey & Co to help implement a strategy for a post-Covid world.
- ✓ The bank had recently concluded the integration of Dena Bank and Vijaya Bank with itself
- ✓ The terms of reference for appointment of the consultancy firm was to leverage staff resources better, provide flexibility and hire fresh talent for part-time employment under hybrid environment
- ✓ On January 27, the financial results of the bank were released for the third quarter
- ✓ It had reported a net profit of Rs 1,061 crore for the quarter ended December 2020 as against a loss of Rs 1,407 crore in the corresponding period of previous year.
- ✓ In the fourth quarter, the bank was aiming to raise Rs 2,000-4,000 crore by way of equity to support growth.
- ✓ Instead of branches, the bank would focus on customer touch-points or outlets, which numbered 25,000.

INTERNATIONAL DAY

- **International Holocaust Remembrance Day - January 27**



- ✓ The day was observed in India at the Bengaluru International Centre with a ceremony consisting of clergy of various religious communities
- ✓ Theme 2021 - "Facing the Aftermath: Recovery and Reconstitution after the Holocaust"
- ✓ The day is observed every year to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust.
- ✓ Holocaust refers to the genocide of European Jews by Nazi Germany during 1941-1945 period.
- ✓ The day of January 27 marks the liberation of Auschwitz concentration camp by the Red Army in 1945.
- ✓ The day was designated by the United Nations General Assembly resolution on November 1, 2005 marking the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps.
- ✓ During 1941-1945, Nazi regime and its collaborators led to the killing of 6 million Jews and 11 million others.

