



EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – JANUARY 9, 2021

TAMIL NADU

- **On January 8, Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - inaugurated several projects in the public works department and highways department, the portfolios held by him.**
- ✓ The CM also launched a special Pongal gift hamper for members of the government's Construction Workers Welfare Board.
- ✓ He laid the foundation stone for a tail-end regulator at ₹9.7 crore at Thennampattinam village in Mayildathurai district to prevent intrusion of sea water.
- ✓ An anicut will be built across Gundar river to divert water to Panthanenthal channel at Kariappati in Virudhunagar district.
- ✓ The Rs.10.1 crore project will help irrigate 792 acres of agricultural lands.
- ✓ A check dam will be constructed across Therkkar (Aswamanathi) in Tirumangalam at ₹2.55 crore to benefit 19 wells and irrigation of 293.2 acres.
- ✓ Another check dam will come up across Gounanadhi, a tributary of Gundar river to benefit 40 wells in and around Thirali and benefit 368 acres.
- ✓ In the highways department, the chief minister opened a flyover on Tiruchengode-Ariyanur road in Salem district at a budget of Rs. 45 crore through video conference from the Secretariat.
- ✓ He also opened six bridges at ₹40.7 crore in Thendral Nagar in Rajapalayam block, Sathankulam block in Tuticorin, Karambakudi block in Pudukkottai, and Uthamapalayam block in Theni.
- ✓ A road under bridge replacing a level crossing between Peelamedu and Coimbatore North railway junctions was also opened, along with two bridges at Vazhapadi and Athur blocks in Salem.
- ✓ In another event, the Chief Minister launched special gift hampers for construction workers, benefitting 5.94 lakh men and 6.75 lakh women.

- ✓ The members will get dhoti, shawl, saree, 2kg raw rice, one kg dal, 500gm edible oil, 100gm ghee, one kg jaggery, 5gm cardamom, 25gm cashew nut and 25gm dry grapes.
- ✓ The government has allocated ₹94.4 crore for the scheme.
- **On January 8, the state government - withdrew its earlier order permitting 100% occupancy in cinema theatres and multiplexes**
 - ✓ The move follows the verdict of the Madras high court directing the government not to permit more than 50% occupancy in cinema halls
 - ✓ Earlier, the Centre had raised objections to the state government decision.
 - ✓ The state government, citing the high court order, however, said theatres would be allowed to screen special shows.
 - ✓ The revised order comes into force immediately.
 - ✓ The MHA wrote to chief secretary K Shanmugam on January 6 that the decision of the Tamil Nadu government on 100% occupancy was in violation of its (MHA) standard operating procedure guideline and instructed it to allow only 50% occupancy as per the existing Covid-19 norms.
 - ✓ The State government had relaxed the 50% seat occupancy norms on December 4 to accommodate the entire cinema halls for the public.
- **On January 8, Governor Banwarilal Purohit - administered the oath of office to retired IAS officer M. Malik Feroze Khan as Ombudsman for local bodies in the State.**



- ✓ The new incumbent will hold the post for three years.
- ✓ Minister for Municipal Administration and Rural Development, S.P. Velumani, Chief Secretary K. Shanmugam and senior officials were present during the oath taking ceremony.
- ✓ The Tamil Nadu Local Bodies Ombudsman Act, 2014, was enacted for the establishment of an Ombudsman in case of the local bodies
- ✓ He is responsible for conducting enquiries on allegations against elected members, officers and employees working with the local bodies
- ✓ He will function as per the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994, the Tamil Nadu District Municipalities Act, 1920, and other relevant Acts.

NATIONAL

➤ **India's first ever Annual Lightning Report (2019-2020) - was released recently**

- ✓ As per the report, the country recorded 1,771 deaths due to lightning between April 1, 2019, and March 31, 2020.
- ✓ This despite the fact that India has 82 lightning detectors, Apps that deliver alert notifications for upcoming incidents, and the IMD can announce immediate lightning forecasts for the next three hours.
- ✓ The maximum number of lightning deaths – 293 - were reported in Uttar Pradesh, followed by 248 in Madhya Pradesh, 221 in Bihar, 200 in Odisha and 172 in Jharkhand.
- ✓ However, the number of deaths reduced by about 25% from 2018.
- ✓ The report was compiled based on the details as received from state governments, media and volunteers
- ✓ It was released as part of 'The Lightning Resilient India Campaign' launched in April 2019
- ✓ The campaign is a joint initiative by Climate Resilient Observing Systems Promotion Council (CROPC), India Meteorological Department, Ministry of Earth Science, GoI, Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, India Meteorological Society and World Vision India.
- ✓ In India, every third death due to natural hazards is caused due to lightning.
- ✓ According to National Crime Records Bureau's estimate, nearly 42,500 people were killed by lightning strikes between 2001 and 2018.
- ✓ Out of these deaths, only 4% were reported in urban settings and the rest in rural areas.
- ✓ The north-eastern states and the Chota Nagpur Plateau region were identified as lightning hotspots.
- ✓ According to the report, the maximum number of fatalities — more than 200 — were reported between July 25 and 31, 2019.
- ✓ This period saw more than 4,00,000 lightning strikes all over the country.
- ✓ During Cyclone Fani, Odisha (3-4 May, 2019) received more than one lakh intense lightning strikes but there were no fatalities because all the 891 cyclone shelters were fitted with lightning arresters
- ✓ In fact, standing under a tree is the top primary cause of lightning deaths in India
- ✓ As per the report, 71% have died because of standing under the tree, while 25% were a direct hit and 4% indirect hit.

➤ **The Comptroller and Auditor General - has started an audit on Covid-19 pandemic management**

- ✓ The CAG, G C Murmu, will undertake field studies in eight states to evaluate procurement and availability of drugs and equipment and paramedics in public health centres and efficacy of the first response system in hinterlands.

- ✓ The case study will be carried out with field visits in eight states — West Bengal, Karnataka, Maharashtra, MP, UP, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Telangana



- ✓ The audit will also look into areas of vaccine distribution, appraisal of the central government health system, the ESI (Employees' State Insurance Corporation) hospitals and dispensaries and state health infrastructure.
- ✓ The report will be completed within 3-4 months and tabled before Parliament.
- ✓ This audit will also highlight good practices and innovations applied by different states
- ✓ The audit will be carried out by CAG officials having expertise in auditing health systems in the past and also by engaging outside experts, if needed.
- ✓ The auditor had in 2019 audited the districts hospitals in UP where it had compared practices in these hospitals with the national health standards and WHO guidelines with the help of experts hired from the NIPFP (National Institute of Public Finance and Policy) and AIIMS.
- ✓ The CAG emphasised on bringing in more transparency in the system to make it more efficient and professional.

INTERNATIONAL

- **On January 8, a Lahore-based anti-terrorism court (ATC) - sentenced Lashkar-e-Taiba leader Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi to five years of rigorous imprisonment in jail in a terrorism financing case.**
- ✓ He is to serve three sentences of five years each, running concurrently, for running a dispensary in Kot Lakhpat, Lahore, to raise funds to finance terrorism
- ✓ Lakhvi was also fined Pakistani rupees 3 lakh, failing the payment of which he is to spend another one and half years more in jail
- ✓ Lakhvi is mastermind of the 2008 Mumbai attacks and operations commander of the proscribed organisation Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)

PAK DODGING FATF?

► Court sentences 26/11 kingpin on charges not linked to any terror attack



► Finds Lakhvi guilty on 3 counts

- ✓ However, India termed Pakistan's action as "farfical" just ahead of next month's review of its case by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), a global terror watchdog
 - ✓ Pakistan is trying to avoid being put on the FATF black list.
 - ✓ It is currently on the FATF grey, or increased monitoring, list.
 - ✓ While Lakhvi has been accused by India and US of being behind the 2008 Mumbai attacks, the court sentenced him on charges not linked to any specific militant attack.
 - ✓ The UN Security Council sanctions committee has declared Lakhvi LeT's chief of operations and accused him of being involved in militant activity in a number of other regions and countries, including Chechnya, Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan.
 - ✓ Lakhvi was sent to Adiala Jail, in the garrison city of Rawalpindi, to serve his sentence.
 - ✓ On January 2, the Punjab's Counter Terrorism Department had confirmed Lakhvi's arrest on terrorism financing charges.
 - ✓ Regarding his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai carnage, he was first arrested in the same year but was later released on bail.
 - ✓ In April 2015, the Lahore HC had released him on post-arrest bail after nearly five years in jail.
 - ✓ Since then he had been living in an undisclosed location.
- **China - has held its third multilateral dialogue with countries from South Asia through video conferencing on January 6**
- ✓ The dialogue was participated by every country in the region barring India, Bhutan and the Maldives
 - ✓ It was aimed at "anti-epidemic cooperation and poverty reduction cooperation" among the member countries
 - ✓ All three dialogues conducted so far have been attended by Pakistan and Nepal, which are emerging as two key partners in China's regional strategy.
 - ✓ The first such meeting was convened by China in July, and was attended by Pakistan, Nepal and Afghanistan.
 - ✓ This was followed by a grouping in November attended by China, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

- ✓ The January 6 meeting was attended by all five countries that have taken part in these dialogues — Pakistan, Nepal, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh — and was a follow-up to the two earlier meetings
- ✓ In the previous two rounds, the countries also discussed how to work more closely together under China's Belt and Road Initiative to boost their post-COVID-19 economic recovery
- ✓ At the July quadrilateral dialogue with Afghanistan, Nepal and Pakistan, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi proposed extending the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Afghanistan
- ✓ Further, the meeting discussed about the proposal taking forward an economic corridor plan with Nepal, called the Trans-Himalayan Multi-dimensional Connectivity Network.

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **India and France - held their annual strategic dialogue in New Delhi recently**



- ✓ During the meeting, the countries mainly focused on the topics of Covid-19 vaccines, nuclear technology, Indo-Pacific, space, environment, maritime safety, digital economy, environment and defence sectors.
 - ✓ The India-France Strategic dialogue is held annually with both the countries alternating as hosts.
 - ✓ The India-France Strategic Dialogue, 2020 was held in Paris.
 - ✓ India and France recently signed a logistics sharing agreement to enable the sharing of military facilities by each other
 - ✓ Earlier, India and France signed the landmark Nuclear Agreement in 2008.
 - ✓ France was the first country to sign a nuclear deal with India following India-specific NSG waiver.
- **India – has been asked by the UNSC to chair three crucial UN subsidiary committees, namely Taliban sanctions committee, Libya sanctions committee and the Counter-Terrorism Committee**

- ✓ This was announced by the government on January 8
- ✓ India began its two-year tenure at the UNSC as a non-permanent member on January 1.
- ✓ The UN Security Council establishes subsidiary bodies on specific issues, including on the sanctions regimes
- ✓ The Taliban sanctions committee, also known as the 1988 Sanctions Committee, strives to ensure the UN's commitment to peace, security, development and progress of Afghanistan.
- ✓ The Libya Sanctions Committee of the United Nations Security Council implements the sanctions regime in Libya.
- ✓ It also monitors the travel embargo, assets freeze and illicit export of petroleum to Libya
- ✓ The United Nations imposed an Arms Embargo on Libya since February 2011
- ✓ According to UN Ambassador/Permanent representative of India, T S Tirumurti, India will also chair the Counter-Terrorism Committee in 2022, which coincides with the 75th anniversary of India's Independence.
- ✓ The Counter-Terrorism committee of the United Nations Security Council was established in the wake of 09/11 terrorist attack in the United States
- ✓ It monitors and implements counter terrorist activities
- ✓ This committee consists of 15 member countries namely Belgium, Dominic Republic, China, Germany, France, Niger, Indonesia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Russia, South Africa, UK, Vietnam and US.
- ✓ This is the second time India chairs this committee, the first occasion being in 2011-12

NATIONAL DAY

➤ Pravasi Bharatiya Divas - January 9



- ✓ The day is observed every year to highlight the contribution of overseas Indian community towards the development of India
- ✓ Theme 2021 - Contributing to Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

- ✓ The day aims to reconnect the Non-Resident Indians with their roots to celebrate their achievements and acknowledge the difficulties faced by the Indian expatriate workers living abroad.
- ✓ The day acts as a platform to create a network of NRIs in all the countries and connect the younger generation with immigrants.
- ✓ The Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas was celebrated by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports on January 8, 2021.
- ✓ Theme 2021 - Bringing together Young Achievers from India and Indian Diaspora.
- ✓ On this Day, the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards are presented by the President of India to recognize the achievements of NRIs, PIOs or organizations established by NRIs.
- ✓ The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is celebrated on January 9 to mark the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to Mumbai on January 9, 1915.
- ✓ The first Pravasi Bharatiya Divas celebrated in the year 2000
- ✓ The celebration of the Day is sponsored by the Ministry of External Affairs, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, Confederation of Indian Industries.
- ✓ The L M Singhvi committee, which was set up by the late PM Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, recommended the celebration of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

