

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS –FEBRUARY 22, 2021

TAMIL NADU

- On February 21, Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami and Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam - laid the foundation stone for the first phase of the Cauvery-South Vellar – Vaigai– Gundar river linking project



- ✓ They have described the scheme as a 100-year-old dream of the people of Pudukottai district to prevent excess water from Cauvery river getting wasted in the sea.
- ✓ In this regard, a function was organized at Kunnathur in Pudukottai district
- ✓ The CM also laid the foundation for the renovation of irrigation infrastructures under the Extension, Renovation and Modernisation of Cauvery Sub-basin Project
 - ✓ The ₹3,384 crore project is aimed at ensuring irrigation for over 4.6 lakh acres of land in Thanjavur, Nagapattinam, Tiruvarur and Mayiladuthurai districts, served by the Cauvery, and 21 of its tributaries falling in the lower Cauvery sub-basin.
- ✓ The ₹14,400 crore Cauvery-Gundar link project aims to divert excess water in Cauvery from Mayanur dam in Karur district to south Vellar river, to Vaigai and subsequently to Gundar river.
- ✓ The people of Tiruchi, Pudukottai, Sivaganga, Virudhunagar and Ramanathapuram districts would benefit by the scheme.

- ✓ To achieve this, 262-km long, 23-metre wide and six-metre deep canals are to be laid to benefit 4 lakh acres of agricultural land across seven districts
- ✓ The first phase to lay a 118.45-km-long canal from Kattalai in Mayanur dam till south Vellar river will be carried out at a cost of Rs 6,491 crore.
- ✓ The project will feed 342 tanks in Karur, Trichy and Pudukkottai districts alone benefiting 42,170 acres of agriculture land.

- **The government – has decided to route all infrastructure projects identified in the draft Comprehensive Mobility Plan for Chennai Metropolitan Area through Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (CUMTA)**
- ✓ Accordingly, government departments have to seek permission of the CUMTA while implementing new infrastructure and transportation projects.
- ✓ They can no longer take up projects individually within the Chennai Metropolitan Area (CMA).
- ✓ This decision was taken at a virtual meeting conducted recently with World Bank officials.
- ✓ The decision will be binding on 18 key government agencies and departments including metro rail, highways, Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) and Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC) before seeking funds
- ✓ The move aims to help enhance the role of CUMTA as a self-reliant body.
- ✓ The draft Comprehensive Mobility Plan in CMA released in August last year had identified several projects including setting up of new satellite towns, Mass Rapid Transit (MRT), Light Rail Transit (LRT), bridges and bus terminuses to ease transportation in and around the city.
- ✓ However, ongoing projects will not come under the purview of CUMTA.

STATES

- **Uttar Pradesh - has become the first Indian State to table the paperless budget.**
- ✓ The State finance minister, Suresh Khanna presented the State Budget for 2021-2022 on February 22 in the paperless mode.
- ✓ The state has developed a new budget App named “Uttar Pradesh Sarkar Ka Budget” for uploading the budget documents
- ✓ This App can be downloaded from the Google Play Store
- ✓ The members of the State Legislature were provided with the iPads so as to follow the budget proposals.
- ✓ Further, budget highlights were also displayed on two big screens in the house.
- ✓ The UP government has presented the state budget for Rs 5,50,270.78 crore during the fiscal year 2021-22.
- ✓ In the budget, the government has allocated Rs 101 crores for the airport in Ayodhya District named as “Maryada Purushottam Shri Ram Airport” which is under construction.



- ✓ Further, it has set aside Rs 200 crores for the 'Mahila Samarthyा Yojana' to boost the women empowerment in the State.
- ✓ While highlighting the budget, the UP CM Yogi Adityanath stated that a new scheme 'Abhyuday Yojana' was launched for the students studying competitive exams.
 - ✓ Under the scheme, eligible students for the competitive exams like UPSC, banking, Railway, NEET and IIT-JEE will be given tablets for preparation.
- **Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Shivraj Singh Chouhan - has announced the renaming of the Hoshangabad city as Narmadapuram, after the river Narmada**



- ✓ The CM made the announcement while he was addressing the Narmada Jayanti programme that was held in Hoshangabad.
- ✓ The decision to change the name was taken after asking the local gathering on the banks of Narmada.
- ✓ The proposal to change the name will now be sent to the centre.
- ✓ Hoshangabad city was named after Hoshang Shah who was the first ruler of Malwa.
- ✓ It became the state of Madhya Bharat and later the Madhya Pradesh after India attained its independence in the year 1947.
- ✓ River Narmada is the lifeline of Madhya Pradesh.

- ✓ The river is the 5th largest river across India.
- **Uttar Pradesh - is all set to export a consignment of 20 tonnes of Kala Namak rice to Singapore from Siddharth Nagar.**



- ✓ Soon, the state will start observing the Kala Namak Rice festival on the line of the Strawberry Festival.
- ✓ The government has also planned to set up a Kala Namak Rice Research Centre at Siddharth Nagar in association with the International Rice Research Centre, Varanasi.
- ✓ The state government has also declared the Kala Namak rice as 'Once District One Product' of Siddharth Nagar.
- ✓ Kala Namak Rice, also called as Buddha Rice, is one of the finest varieties of aromatic rice that are grown in India.
- ✓ The rice was offered to the Buddhist monks so as to promote the rice in Buddhist countries.
- ✓ It is mainly cultivated in Deoria, Gorakhpur, Kushinagar, Gonda, Maharajganj, Siddharth Nagar, Balrampur, Sant Kabir Nagar, Bahraich, Shravasti districts of the State
- ✓ The Geographical Indications (GI) claims that these regions share a similar climate.

INTERNATIONAL

- **Saudi Arabia – opened up the armed forces to female recruits in the Kingdom**
- ✓ Saudi Arabian women can be recruited as soldiers, lance corporals, corporals, sergeants, and staff sergeants
- ✓ This move is the latest in a series of measures aimed at increasing the rights of women in the kingdom.
- ✓ These female-centric measures were started in 2017, when Mohammed bin Salman was appointed the Crown Prince
- ✓ The plan to allow Saudi Women in military was first announced in 2019.
- ✓ The female applicants are required to pass admission procedures in accordance with the specified conditions

- ✓ As per the World Economic Forum's 2016 Global Gender Gap Report, the Saudi Arabia was ranked at 141 out of 144 countries with respect to gender parity.
- ✓ The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) had elected Saudi Arabia to the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women for 2018–2022.
- ✓ As of 2019, women just constituted 34.4% of the native workforce in the country.
- ✓ In the year 2015, women were allowed to vote in elections and allowed to be appointed in the consultative assembly in 2015.
- ✓ In 2017, women were allowed to drive the vehicles and get access to government services like health and education
- ✓ In 2019, women were given right to register the divorce, while their marriage age revised to 18 years.
- ✓ In 2021, the Kingdom decided that women can be appointed as court judge.

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **India and Maldives - signed a \$50 million Line of Credit to fund defence projects in the island nation**



- ✓ This was announced by the foreign minister S Jaishankar, who completed a two-day visit to Maldives
- ✓ Jaishankar met President Ibrahim Solih, his counterpart Abdulla Shahid, defence minister Mariya Didi and head of the Majlis Mohamed Nasheed during his visit
- ✓ During the meeting, the leaders reviewed and agreed to enhance India's participation in infrastructure projects in Maldives.
- ✓ India openly reiterated its support for the Maldives foreign minister's candidature for president of the 76th session of the UN General Assembly.
- ✓ Interestingly, since the pandemic, Indians have overtaken all others as the top source country for tourists to Maldives.
- ✓ An agreement to develop, support and maintain a Maldives National Defence Force Coast Guard harbour at Sifvaru (Uthuru Thilafalhu) was also signed during the visit.

CONFERENCES, FESTIVALS & SUMMITS

- The six-day Khajuraho Dance Festival - started on February 21, 2021.



- ✓ The dance festival is being organised at the Khajuraho Temple which is a UNESCO World Heritage site
 - ✓ Located in Madhya Pradesh, Khajuraho is known for its ancient Hindu temples as well as Jain temples.
 - ✓ The festival is being held in the temple premises after 44 years with the permission granted by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)
 - ✓ It is organised by the Department of Culture of Madhya Pradesh Government.
 - ✓ The dance festival was started in 1974 at the temple premises with the objective of promoting the heritage and tourism.
 - ✓ ASI cancelled the permission after two years in 1976 following the reports of destruction of monuments and defacement of idols present in the temple premises.
 - ✓ Since then, the festival was conducted in an open garden for the past 44 years.
 - ✓ The week-long classical dance festival is organised by the Madhya Pradesh Kala Parishad annually from February 20th to February 26th.
 - ✓ It is performed in the premises of the Khajuraho temples in Chhatarpur, Madhya Pradesh.
 - ✓ The dance festival showcases the richness of Indian classical dance styles including the Odissi, Kathak, Bharatanatyam, Manipuri, Kuchipudi, and Kathakali.
 - ✓ Recently, the Modern Indian dance was also added to the festival.
 - ✓ Khajuraho temples are famous for nagara-style architectural symbolism.
 - ✓ Most of the temples were built between 885 AD and 1050 AD by Chandela dynasty.
- The first-ever National Toy Fair - will be starting from the February 27th in virtual format



- ✓ During the event, the Centre for Creative Learning (CCL) based in IIT Gandhinagar, will display its 75 toy creations in the fair.
- ✓ The CCL develops various scientific and educational toys for students and teachers.
- ✓ The toy fair is being organised by the Ministry of Textiles in association with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of commerce & industry
- ✓ The fair would also showcase 75 exhibition stalls of the Ministry of Education, National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT), State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERT) and Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL).
- ✓ The festival will conclude on March 2, 2021.
- ✓ The idea of toy fair was first suggested from the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Mann Ki Baat address on August 30, 2020 to promote indigenous toy market
- ✓ Recently, on February 11, 2021, the government had launched a website for the toy fair.

DEFENCE

- **India-made Uttam radars – are to be installed in at least 51% of the 123 Tejas fighters that will be inducted into the Indian Air Force (IAF)**



- ✓ The decision to install the Uttam radars replacing the Israeli variant has been taken as part of the government's efforts to indigenize defence technologies

- ✓ IAF will get 123 Tejas fighters — 40 in initial and final operational clearance (IOC and FOC) configurations and 83 Mark-1A models
- ✓ The orders for these fighter jets were placed in the first week of February.
- ✓ While the first 40 will have mechanical radars (all Israeli), the 83 Mk-1As will have active electronically scanned array (AESA) radars.
- ✓ The Uttam radar will be fixed from the 21st Tejas Mk-1A to be produced by HAL
- ✓ In this regard, DRDO has already signed an MoU with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)
- ✓ This means 63 of the 83 will be indigenous Uttam radars developed by LRDE (Electronics and Radar Development Establishment), a DRDO lab in Bengaluru.
- ✓ Earlier, in 2019, it was announced that Uttam radars were likely to replace the AESA radars — EL/M 2052 — made by Israeli firm ELTA.
- ✓ Uttam is state-of-the-art AESA radar that can track multiple targets and take hi-resolution pictures to aid in identifying them.
- ✓ Utham is being tested on two LCAs — LSP2 and LSP3 — and one executive jet.

ECONOMY

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) - has brought the State Bank of Sikkim under its regulation.**



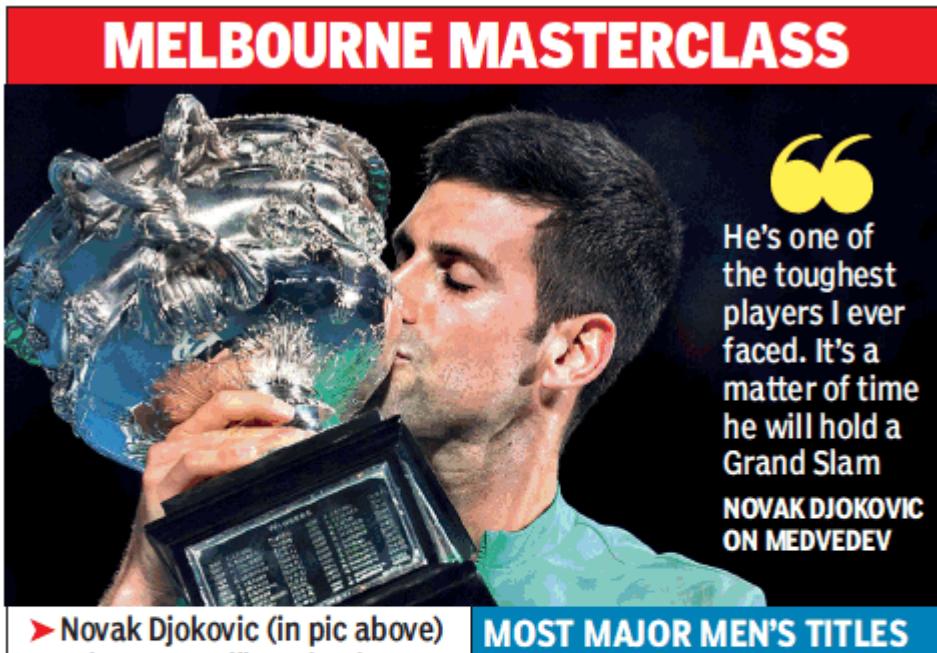
- ✓ The State Bank of Sikkim is an autonomous banking institution working under the Government of Sikkim.
- ✓ The bank has its headquarters at Gangtok, Sikkim
- ✓ The bank handles the banking services as well as the treasury functions of State Government of Sikkim.
- ✓ It was established by the State Bank of Sikkim Proclamation, 1968
- ✓ The bank has currently 42 branch offices and it operates three revenue counters.
- ✓ Till now, it was not regulated by Reserve Bank of India
- ✓ The State of Sikkim was made a part of India following a referendum in the year 1973
- ✓ Thus, this state enjoys a special status under article 371F and follows old laws
- ✓ Hence, Banking Regulation Act 1949 and Companies Act does not extend to Sikkim

- ✓ Further, the central direct taxes are also not extended to Sikkim.
- ✓ The people of Sikkim are also not subject to Income Tax.

SPORTS

- **Serbia's Novak Djokovic – won a record ninth Australian Open crown and his 18th Grand Slam title on February 21 at Melbourne Park, Australia**
- ✓ In the final played at the Rod Laver Arena, Djokovic defeated Daniil Medvedev in three straight sets

MELBOURNE MASTERCLASS



“ He's one of the toughest players I ever faced. It's a matter of time he will hold a Grand Slam ”

NOVAK DJOKOVIC
ON MEDVEDEV

► Novak Djokovic (in pic above) outclasses Daniil Medvedev 7-5, 6-2, 6-2 to win his 9th Australian Open title, more than Roger Federer and Roy Emerson (6 Oz open crowns each)

► Djoker has reached 9 Oz Open finals & won all of them. Latest victory cements his No. 1 status, where he will mark his 311th week, surpassing Federer's 310

MOST MAJOR MEN'S TITLES

20 Roger Federer (6 Oz Open, 1 French, 8 Wimbledon and 5 US)

20 Rafael Nadal (1 Oz Open, 13 French, 2 Wimbledon and 4 US)

18 Novak Djokovic (9 Oz Open, 1 French, 5 Wimbledon and 3 US)

14 Sampras (2 Oz, 7 Wimbledon, 5 US)

12 Roy Emerson (6 Oz Open, 2 French, 2 Wimbledon and 2 US)

P16

- ✓ The victory put Djokovic just two behind Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal (20 each), in the hunt for major titles.
- ✓ The Big 3 have won 54 of the last 63 titles, starting with the 2005 French Open that was won by Rafael Nadal
- ✓ Djokovic also became only the second man, after Nadal, to win nine or more titles at the same Major
- ✓ The champion took home \$2,750,000 (AUD) for his effort while the Russian received \$1,500,000.

- ✓ The victory reinforced Djokovic's status as World No. 1, where he will mark his 311th week when the new rankings are to be announced on February 22, surpassing Roger Federer's (Switzerland) record of 310.
- ✓ Medvedev will move to a career-high three in the rankings, behind Nadal.

INTERNATIONAL DAY

➤ World Day of Social Justice - February 20



- ✓ The celebration of the day aims to fight discrimination, unemployment and poverty, by upholding the human rights and by promoting Gender Equality
- ✓ Theme 2021 - "A call for social justice in the Digital Economy"
- ✓ The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) gave its approval to observe the first ever World Day of Social Justice on November 26, 2007.
- ✓ In the 63rd session of the UNGA held in September 2008, February 20th was announced as the World Day of Social Justice.

