



EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS –FEBRUARY 23, 2021

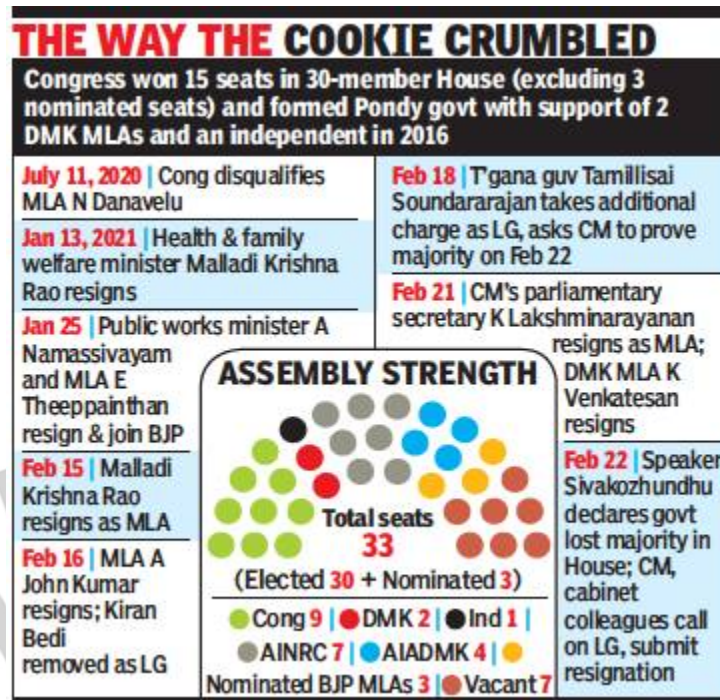
TAMIL NADU

- **Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - announced a frozen semen station will be set up in Karumandurai at the cost of ₹100 crore.**
- ✓ The frozen semen station will involve in developing high milk yielding indigenous and cross-bred cows
- ✓ The CM made the announcement after inaugurating the Advanced Institute for Integrated Research on Livestock and Animal Sciences (AIIRLAS) on February 22.
- ✓ The Asia's biggest cattle park is spread over 1,600 acres and constructed at a cost of ₹1,023 crore near Thalaivasal in Salem district
- ✓ The CM also inaugurated a veterinary medical college and Thalaivasal revenue taluk office.
- ✓ The importance of the frozen semen station is highlighted by the fact that the exotic breeds in foreign countries were giving 60 litres of milk a day as against only 15 litres of milk by the local breeds.
- ✓ The number of head of cattle had increased in the state to 95.19 lakh, which was 7.4% higher when compared with previous cattle census.
- ✓ Similarly, the number of goats has increased to 98.89 lakh, which is 17.65 % higher when compared with the previous census.

- **The AIADMK government - will present an interim budget, the last budget of its current term, on February 22.**
- ✓ Deputy Chief minister O Panneerselvam, who also holds the portfolio of finance, will present the budget at 11am in Kalaivanar Arangam, Chennai
- ✓ As per the convention, the interim budget may not have new announcements but confine to the achievements of the current dispensation.
- ✓ Any announcement, if at all, will be made by the chief minister outside the budget, like under Rule 110

STATES

- **The Congress ministry in Puducherry - fell on February 22 after the speaker V P Sivakozhundhu declared it had lost majority in the assembly.**
- ✓ Consequently, Chief Minister V Narayanasamy and his cabinet resigned after calling on Telangana governor Tamilisai Sounderrajan, who is holding additional charge as lieutenant-governor of the Union Territory
- ✓ A motion of confidence moved by the CM Narayanasamy in the Assembly was not put to vote



- ✓ With the fall of its government in Puducherry, Congress is now out of power in south India
- ✓ This is a rare occurrence in the history of the party that has counted South India as its stronghold.
- ✓ The polls for the assembly of the UT is likely by April end.
- **West Bengal government – has forwarded list of beneficiaries of the central ‘income support scheme’, PM-Kisan, to the Ministry of Agriculture after due verification process**
- ✓ Under the scheme, each landholder farmer family gets ₹6,000 per annum.
- ✓ The central government transfers money directly into their bank accounts in three equal instalments of Rs 2,000.
- ✓ West Bengal resisted joining the scheme for the last two years
- ✓ At present, around 55% (38 lakh) of the total 69 lakh farmers in the state have registered themselves on the PM-Kisan portal voluntarily

- **The Horticulture Department of Karnataka – has announced to set up a flower processing centre in collaboration with the International Flower Auction Bangalore (IFAB).**
- ✓ The flower processing centre will process the unsold flowers and convert them into value-added products like floral arts, natural dyes, incense sticks, floral papers, floral embedded works, flower petal powder for cosmetic usage and silica-stored flowers.
- ✓ This unit will be used to process all kinds of flowers.
- ✓ Karnataka accounts for 75% of total flower production in India.
- ✓ The state also has India's first and only flower auction centre.
- ✓ Further, it accounts for 14% of total area under flower cultivation in the country.

NATIONAL

- **On February 22, the IIT Council – decided to adopt “One IIT, One Thrust Area” and decided to facilitate mobility of faculty between the IITs and industry.**
 - ✓ The IIT Council is headed by the Education Minister and includes the directors of all IITs, and the chairs of each IIT's Board of Governors.
 - ✓ The Council advises on admission standards, duration of courses, degrees and other academic distinctions, and also lays down policy regarding cadre, methods of recruitment and conditions of service of employees.
 - ✓ Four working groups were constituted to work on graded autonomy, grooming distinguished academics for directorships of IITs, restructuring of the senate and innovative funding mechanism
 - ✓ Further, they will work on several issues related to implementation of the new National Education Policy (NEP).
 - ✓ The meeting was chaired by education minister Ramesh Pokhriyal.
 - ✓ The working groups will also work on areas including empowered and accountable Board of Governors (BoG) and director.
 - ✓ Another new group will also be created to work on faculty development and rationalisation of staff
 - ✓ The Council also suggested arranging online IIT research and development fair to showcase the quality research being done by IITs to the industry.
 - ✓ Earlier, a committee was constituted under the chairmanship of K Radhakrishnan, chairperson, standing committee for the IIT Council for faculty recruitment and the issue of industry interaction and mobility of faculty.
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- **The Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) and the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) - have signed an MoU to promote Export-Oriented Marine Products in fisheries and allied sectors**



- ✓ It was signed by the chairman of MPEDA, KS Srinivas and the managing director of NCDC, Sundeep Kumar Nayak.
- ✓ The MoU will also provide support for the post-harvest management in marine products export sector.

INTERNATIONAL

- **On February 22, the Paris-based terror watchdog Financial Action Task Force (FATF) – began its three day meeting**
 - ✓ A final decision on whether Pakistan should continue in the grey list will be taken on completion of the FATF plenary
 - ✓ Pakistan has been in the FATF's 'greylist' since June 2018 when it was presented with a 27-point action plan.
 - ✓ The decision will be based on Pakistan's compliance with the remaining six items in its 27-point action plan meant to check terror-financing.
 - ✓ Pakistan was yet to take action against all UN1267 and 1373 designated terrorists like Masood Azhar, which was one of the action plan
 - ✓ FATF had retained Pakistan in the grey list in October during its last meeting
 - ✓ It's unlikely that FATF will downgrade Pakistan to the blacklist as it enjoys support of China, Malaysia and Turkey.

- **Bangladesh - has become the first country to ban the painkiller ketoprofen, which is toxic to vultures but used widely to treat the cattles.**
 - ✓ Earlier, veterinary medicine, diclofenac was also banned around 10 years ago to save the threatened vulture population
 - ✓ As per the Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinction (SAVE) report, ketoprofen is widely used as a main anti-inflammatory drug by vets in Bangladesh.
 - ✓ But, Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs) such as diclofenac and ketoprofen are a major threat to vultures of South Asia.
 - ✓ These drugs led to the catastrophic 99.9% decline of white-rumped vultures in this region.
 - ✓ Indian government had earlier banned the use of diclofenac for veterinary purpose in the year 2006.

- ✓ In the December 2020, Oman became the first country in Arabian Peninsula to ban the veterinary use of diclofenac to conserve the endangered species such as vultures.
- ✓ Vultures have been listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List since 2002.

INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

- **India - signed a free trade and investment agreement with Mauritius on February 22**



- ✓ It is the first ever free trade agreement signed with any country in Africa.
- ✓ It was also the first time since 2011 that India was signing a free trade pact with any country.
- ✓ The signing of the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) was announced by foreign minister S Jaishankar in Port Louis
- ✓ It was signed in the presence of Prime Minister of Mauritius, Pravind Jugnauth and the external affairs minister of India, S Jaishankar.
- ✓ CECPA was approved by the Indian Cabinet on February 17 and will come into effect from March, 2021.
- ✓ In his first visit to Mauritius as foreign minister Jaishankar also handed over another 100,000 doses of Covid vaccines to Mauritius Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth
- ✓ India had earlier flown over 100,000 doses in late January.
- ✓ For Mauritius, the Indian market for frozen fish, speciality sugar, biscuits, fresh fruits, juices, mineral water, soaps, bags, medical and surgical equipment, and apparel will open up, alongwith financial services, software, and telecommunications.
- ✓ As per the limited agreement CECPA, India will be given preferential access to the markets in Mauritius and vice versa.
- ✓ India will get access to 310 products on the other hand, Mauritius will get access to 615 products.
- ✓ India will also get access to 115 sub-sectors in the 11 broad services sectors.
- ✓ The agreement also allows unrestricted movement of skilled professionals.

- ✓ The bilateral trade between India and Mauritius have increased from \$207 million in 2005-06 to \$690 million in the Financial Year 2020.
- ✓ India's exports to Mauritius have increased from \$199 million to \$662 million in the same period.
- ✓ On the other hand, India's imports from Mauritius have just increased from \$7 million to almost \$28 million.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **The Ministry of Ports, Shipping And Waterways - is to conduct a Virtual Maritime India Summit 2021 from March 2 to 4.**



- ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the summit.
- ✓ Around 1 lakh delegates and more than 40 partner countries are expected to participate in the event.
- ✓ The summit will be a platform for international collaboration and bring in partner countries for mutual exchange of knowledge and opportunities in the maritime sector
- ✓ The Chennai Port Trust will sign more than 15 MoUs with various institutions ahead of the Virtual Maritime Summit 2021
- ✓ One of the important MoUs would be for the formation of a special purpose vehicle between Chennai Port, the State government and the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) for a multi-modal logistics park at Mappedu
- ✓ Another important MoU included exploring the feasibility of running passenger ferry services between Chennai and Puducherry and Karaikal

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **Vaccine maker Bharat Biotech - is all set to kick off phase 1 clinical trials of its intranasal Covid-19 vaccine, codenamed BBV154, from February 24.**
- ✓ This was announced by Bharat Biotech chairman & managing director Dr Krishna Ella on the sidelines of the BioAsia 2021 inaugural on February 22.
- ✓ The company was also keen on partnering with the World Health Organisation (WHO) for the intranasal vaccine for faster approvals

- ✓ The single-dose, chimpanzee adenovirus vectored vaccine candidate is being developed by Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the University of Washington School of Medicine at St Louis (WashU).
- ✓ Bharat Biotech will be conducting the phase 1 trial of BBV154 on 75 volunteers to ascertain its safety and immunogenicity
- ✓ The company plans to produce 1 billion doses of the non-invasive, vaccine, which is not only be quicker but also easier to administer.

DEFENCE

- **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) - has successfully launched the two indigenously designed and developed Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile (VL-SRSAM) on February 22**
- ✓ The missiles were launched with the help of static vertical launcher from Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the Odisha Coast.
- ✓ VL-SRSAM was indigenously developed and designed by DRDO.
- ✓ The missile will neutralize the various aerial threats including the sea-skimming targets.
- ✓ During the missile testing, vehicle performance and flight path parameters were also monitored.
- ✓ The missile will replace the older Barak-1 surface to air missile system.
- ✓ It will be used as short-range air defence system in the Indian navy and Indian Air Force.
- ✓ The missile has a 360° interception capability.

SPORTS

- **Karnataka – to host the second Khelo India University Games (KIUG) in the year 2021**
- ✓ This was announced by the Chief Minister of Karnataka, BS Yeddyurappa
- ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Games, which are to be held in the Jain University and other centres
- ✓ Jain University will organise the games in collaboration with the Association of Indian Universities (AIU).
- ✓ Khelo India University Games (KIUG) is organised by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports and Sports Authority of India (SAI) in collaboration with the Association of Indian Universities, Indian Olympic Association and National Sports Federation.
- ✓ It is a national level multi-sport largest University game in India.
- ✓ The first edition of the event was organised in the Bhubaneswar in February 2020
- ✓ This year, Yogasana and Mallakhamb have also been added to list of games.

