



EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MARCH 12, 2021

TAMIL NADU

- **The Greater Chennai Corporation - has set up a gender lab at Amma Maligai in Ripon Buildings to ensure its existing and future urban infrastructure policies are gender-sensitive.**
- ✓ Five consultants from the World Bank who are working on the project commenced discussions with various department heads on March 8 and have already begun field surveys.
- ✓ They will submit their findings that will define the civic body's policy of urban infrastructure and planning.
- ✓ Four more experts will be hired to study all data available on accessibility, mobility, safety, health and hygiene, climate resilience and social security.
- ✓ They will be from the field of urban planning, mobility, gender policy, and behavioral training.
- ✓ The urban policies with respect to the availability of clean and accessible toilets on pavements and streets, better street lighting at night, safe public transport and public spaces are usually planned, developed and executed by men.
- ✓ These policies are not designed keeping women or children in mind

WHAT IS A GENDER LAB

An office where experts on gender policy and urban planning study data available with the civic body on its existing urban infrastructure and make suggestions for gender-inclusive policies

FOCUS AREAS

➤ Clean, secure, accessible toilet facilities

➤ Adequate lighting and space for changing children's diapers in all public parks

➤ Provide adequate disposal options for menstrual products



➤ Provide paid opportunities for women and sexual and gender minorities to be included in the maintenance and long-term upkeep of the space

➤ Setting up of a network of public spaces that are accessible within a 250 metre distance from habitats

- ✓ To change this right from the policy level, the Chennai Corporation has now set up the gender lab on women's day as part of the Nirbhaya project implemented by the World Bank.
 - ✓ Along with this, a road safety cell will also be set up this week.
 - ✓ As part of the plan to implement various big budget projects, the specific needs of women will be taken into account.
 - ✓ This was the first such lab set up by a city corporation in the country.
- **On March 11, US Consulate General in Chennai, Judith Ravin – honoured Tamil Nadu-based anti-caste activist and human rights defender Gowsalya Shankar**
- ✓ Gowsalya was U.S. Mission India's nominee for the 2021 U.S. Secretary of State's International Woman of Courage (IWOC) Award.



- ✓ This award honors women who have demonstrated exceptional courage, strength, and leadership in acting to improve the lives of others, from families to communities to countries, often at great personal risk and sacrifice.
- ✓ U.S. Consul General Judith Ravin presented Gowsalya with an IWOC Award Certificate of Nomination at the event.
- ✓ Gowsalya was speaking at the event themed 'Courageous Women Inspire a Better World', at the US Consul General's residence in Chennai
- ✓ The programme was held in honour of Women's History Month, which is observed in March.
- ✓ Gowsalya has been fighting against caste-based violence since her husband, V Shankar was hacked to death in 2016 by a gang
- ✓ In her late husband's honour, Gowsalya launched the Shankar Social Justice Trust in March 2017 to fight atrocities against caste-based violence.
- ✓ The trust provides psychological, legal, and moral support to victims and builds awareness against social discrimination and injustice.

- ✓ Each March, the president of the United States designates Women's History Month to highlight the extraordinary achievements of pioneering women and girls who have built, shaped, and improved upon the societies
- ✓ The International Women of Courage award was first conferred in 2007
- ✓ Since then, the U.S. State Department has recognised more than 155 women from more than 75 different countries, who are nominated by the respective overseas U.S. diplomatic missions

NATIONAL

- **On March 10, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation – has released the quarterly periodic labour survey (PLFS) for the period between April-June 2020**
- ✓ As per the data, the urban unemployment rate in the country rose to 20.9% during this period of the strict lockdown imposed to prevent the spread of the deadly Covid-19 pandemic
- ✓ The unemployment rate went up in the April-June 2020 quarter from 9.1% in the previous quarter (January-March quarter) and 8.9% recorded in the April-June period of 2019.
- ✓ The lockdown that started on March 25, 2020 halted the economic activity and led to job losses in key sectors such as hospitality, airlines, tourism and other segments of the services sector.
- ✓ Since the lifting of the lockdown in phases from June 1, 2020, the economy has made a swift recovery.
- ✓ The PLFS was launched by the National Statistical Office (NSO) in April, 2017
- ✓ It estimates the employment and unemployment indicators (worker population ratio, labour force participation rate, unemployment rate) in the short time interval of three months for urban areas, as per the current weekly status (CWS) approach
- ✓ As per the CWS, a person is considered as unemployed in a week if he/she did not work even for one hour on any day during the reference week but was available for work during the reference week.
- ✓ The unemployment rate among males at the all India level for all ages was at 20.8% in the April-June 2020 period, as per the survey
- ✓ It was higher than the previous quarter's 8.7% and above the 8.3% rate in April-June 2019.
- ✓ Among females it was at 21.2%, higher than the January-March quarter's 10.5% and above the 11.3% recorded in April-June 2019.
- ✓ The unemployment rate among those in the 15-29 years of age at the all India level stood at 34.7%, higher than the previous quarter's 21.1% and above the 21.6% in April-June 2019.
- ✓ Among states, Maharashtra had the highest urban unemployment rate at 35.6%, followed by Jharkhand 32% and Madhya Pradesh at 28.9%.

- ✓ All states recorded double digit urban unemployment rate in the April-June quarter, as per the survey
 - ✓ Of the total number of workers of the age 15 years and above, 64.5% were in the tertiary sector, 29.7% in the secondary sector and 5.9% in agriculture.
 - ✓ India's gross domestic product shrank an unprecedented 24.4% in the first quarter of FY21.
- **The government - is targeting over half of its asset monetisation target of ₹2.5 lakh crore from railways and telecom sectors alone.**
- ✓ In the budget tabled recently, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a massive asset monetisation initiative
 - ✓ Further, new areas, including warehouses to store foodgrains, coal and other mines and tourism infrastructure are also proposed to create fresh assets to the Government.



- ✓ In this regard, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set an ambitious target, which has to be met over the next three to four years.
 - ✓ Asset monetisation and privatization are the two key focus areas of the 2021-22 Budget
 - ✓ Following the PM's push, NITI Aayog has been tasked with preparing the roadmap and also given the authority to tie-up with ministries.
 - ✓ After deliberations with ministries and departments it has fixed a ₹90,000 crore target for the railways with a focus on modernizing stations and launching private trains.
 - ✓ Separately, telecom towers owned by state-owned loss-making BSNL and MTNL and their optic fibre infrastructure are proposed to be sold to realize around ₹40,000 crore.
- **India - to manufacture the US-developed Johnson & Johnson's single-dose Covid shot as part of the first Quad vaccine initiative.**
- ✓ The project will be financed by Japan and the US, while Australia will use its logistics capability to ship the vaccines to Southeast Asia and Pacific countries.

- ✓ This is to be finalized in the first ever Quad summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi, US President Joe Biden, Japanese PM Yoshihide Suga and Australian PM Scott Morrison to be held on March 12
 - ✓ The other takeaway may be in the area of technology as well as climate change, from joint development of 5G networks to fabricating semi-conductors.
 - ✓ The concept of the Quad forum was initiated in 2017, in the aftermath of the Doklam crisis between India and China.
 - ✓ For the first time in 2020, India invited Australia to join the Malabar naval exercise, which strengthened the security cooperation of the Quad grouping.
 - ✓ Quad forum was initiated in August 2007 by the then Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe with the support of Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh, Vice President of US, Dick Cheney and Prime Minister of Australia, John Howard.
- **The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) - has made mathematics and physics at Class XII-level optional for admissions to BE and BTech courses from 2021-22.**
- ✓ Currently, Class XII-level maths and physics are mandatory for admission to undergraduate programmes in engineering and technology.
 - ✓ The approval process handbook for 2021-22 released by the nodal statutory body for technical education, AICTE, has changed the eligibility criteria for UG admissions.

NEW NORMS FROM 2021-22

➤ **Physics, maths now must for joining BE, BTech courses**

➤ The AICTE's approval process handbook for 2021-22 says that students who had passed Class XII with any of the three following subjects -- physics / mathematics / chemistry / computer science / electronics / information technology / biology /

informatics practices / biotechnology / technical vocational subject / agriculture / engineering graphics / business studies / entrepreneurship -- can join engineering and technology UG programmes

➤ AICTE says the move will bring flexibility in line with national educational policy

- ✓ As per the new guidelines, students have to pass 10+2 with any three of the following subjects - Physics / mathematics / chemistry / computer science / electronics / information technology / biology / informatics practices / biotechnology / technical vocational subject / agriculture / engineering graphics / business studies / entrepreneurship.
- ✓ Candidates have to score 45% marks (for reserved category students it is 40% marks) in the above subjects taken together.
- ✓ After admission, Universities will offer suitable bridge courses such as mathematics, physics, engineering drawing for the students coming from diverse backgrounds to achieve learning outcomes of the programme

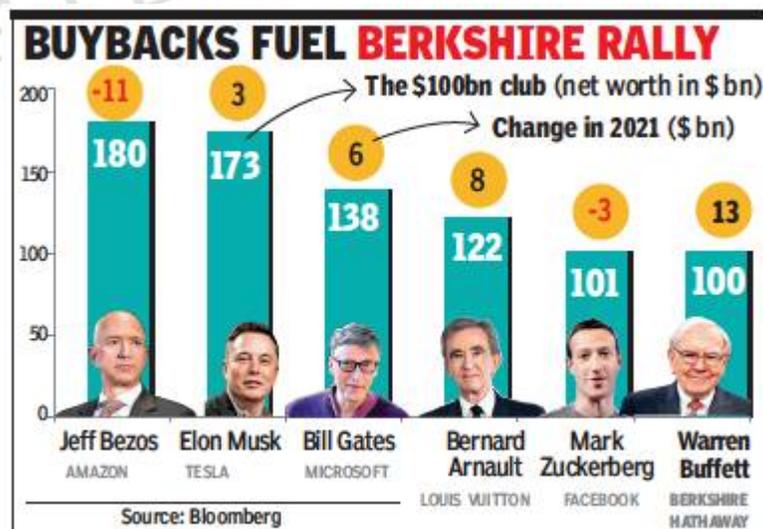
- ✓ The AICTE's model curriculum for engineering programmes has mathematics running up to fifth semester in almost all programmes.

INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

- **On March 11, the Chinese Parliament – proposed a controversial hydropower dam on the Brahmaputra river in Tibet, close to the Arunachal Pradesh border**
- ✓ Announced as part of the 14th five-year plan for 2021-25, the dam project in the lower reaches of the river Brahmaputra, locally known as Yarlung Zangbo, is a cause of concern for both India and Bangladesh
- ✓ However, it still has to be ascertained if the project will lead to any diversion of water from the river Brahmaputra
- ✓ India remains engaged with China under the 2006 expert level mechanism, and also through diplomatic channels on developments related to the Brahmaputra.
- ✓ The proposal for the dam was first reported late last year after which China had said that there was no reason for any anxiety over the project
- ✓ The National People's Congress, China's legislature with over 2,000 members, adopted the plan in the presence of President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Keqiang and other senior leaders.

PERSONALITIES

- **The Chairman of Berkshire Hathaway, Warren Buffett – became the sixth member to join the \$100 billion club**
- ✓ On March 10, the 90 year old Buffett's net asset worth has soared to \$100.4 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.



- ✓ With this, Buffett joins a group which includes Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk and his friend Bill Gates.
- ✓ A co-founder of the Giving Pledge, a campaign to encourage philanthropy, Buffett has donated more than \$37 billion in Berkshire stock since 2006.

- ✓ Without those philanthropic gifts, Warren's net worth would have been more than \$192 billion.

AWARDS

- Eminent author, Mani Shankar Mukhopadhyay, known as Shankar - will be conferred the Sahitya Akademi Award 2020 for his memoir titled 'Eka Eka Ekashi'.



- ✓ The 87-year-old writer Shankar published his first novel 'Koto Ajanare' in the year 1954
- ✓ That was also the year the Sahitya Akademi Award was instituted for recognizing the most outstanding books of literary merit published in any major Indian language recognized by the Akademi.
- ✓ The award distribution function will be held in June-July this year

SPORTS

- Mumbai team captain Prithvi Shaw - became the highest scorer in a single edition of the Vijay Hazare Trophy.
- ✓ On March 11, three-time champions Mumbai stormed into the final thanks to the brilliance of Shaw, who scored 165 runs off 122 balls

MOST RUNS IN A SINGLE EDITION OF THE VIJAY HAZARE TROPHY

Batsman	Runs
PRITHVI SHAW (Mumbai, 2020-21)	754
DEVDUTT PADIKKAL (Karnataka, 2020-21)	737
MAYANK AGARWAL (Karnataka, 2017-18)	723
RAVIKUMAR SAMARTH (Karnataka, 2020-21)	613
DEVDUTT PADIKKAL (Karnataka, 2019-20)	609



—Stats: Rajesh Kumar

- ✓ Mumbai will face Uttar Pradesh, who registered a five-wicket win over Gujarat, in the final.

- ✓ Shaw raced to his fourth ton of the tournament in just 79 balls
- ✓ This is the first time in 16 years that UP has qualified for the Vijay Hazare Trophy final.

- **Competitors at this year's Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics and the 2022 Beijing Winter Games - will be offered coronavirus vaccines purchased from China**
- ✓ This was announced by Olympic chief Thomas Bach on March 11 in a significant move for the holding of the Covid-delayed Tokyo Games.
- ✓ The Chinese Olympic Committee have made an offer to make additional vaccine doses available to participants for Tokyo 2020 and Beijing 2022
- ✓ The IOC will pay for these additional doses of vaccines for the Olympic and Paralympic teams

