

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MAY 1, 2021

TAMIL NADU

- **The Tamil Nadu government - has constituted a seven-member monitoring committee to supervise the entire functioning of the oxygen plants on Vedanta's Sterlite premises in Tuticorin district**
- ✓ The committee has been constituted as per the recent orders of the Supreme Court
- ✓ The monitoring committee will be led by the Tuticorin district collector
- ✓ The other members of the committee includes district superintendent of police, sub-collector, district environmental engineer of pollution control board and deputy chief chemist of Tuticorin thermal power station
- ✓ The committee will also comprise of two other environmental experts, who will be nominated as per the orders of the Supreme Court.
- ✓ The chairperson of the monitoring committee, the Tuticorin District collector, is directed to send a fortnightly report in this regard to the government
- ✓ The Sterlite plant remained shut since May 2018
- ✓ The owners of the plant, Vedanta submitted recently in the Supreme Court that it could produce 1,000 tonnes of oxygen in the plant
- ✓ The oxygen plant will be run and managed by Vedanta as per the directions issued by the monitoring committee and in compliance with environmental and safety norms.
- ✓ The committee will oversee the functioning of the plant in compliance with the directions of the court.
- ✓ It will also decide on the number of persons to be permitted on the premises of the plant to manage and conduct the oxygen production facility.
- ✓ The committee will also engage with the locals to redress their legitimate concerns about the nature or modalities of operating the oxygen plan on a stand-alone basis.
- ✓ It will also conduct a safety audit before the commencement of operations and issue suitable directions to ensure safety of operations.

- ✓ On the other hand, Sterlite will submit a detailed action plan regarding starting of oxygen production to the committee
- **The prestigious Geographical Indication (GI) tag - has been sought for the Kanyakumari Matti banana.**



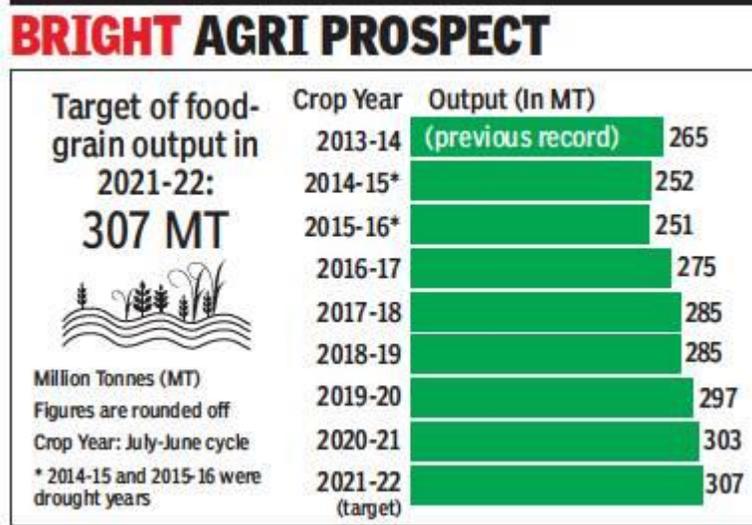
- ✓ The application for the GI tag was filed by Kanyakumari Banana and Horticulture Farmers Producer Company Limited
- ✓ It was facilitated by NABARD's Madurai Agri Business Incubation
- ✓ The Nagercoil area of Kanyakumari district is believed to be the area of origin of cultivation of Matti banana
- ✓ The Nagercoil banana is also mentioned in many ancient books.
- ✓ It is a traditional table variety, is highly fragrant, sweet with sub-acid flavour, firm texture and powdery nature.
- ✓ The fruit is used as baby food and has medicinal value for health improvement.
- ✓ The tribes of Western Ghats use the corm extract of Matti for curing from jaundice.
- ✓ Normally, banana isn't recommended to infants' diet to avoid cold problems up to six months
- ✓ But, Matti is included in the diet of the infants in the Kanyakumari area due to low TSS (total soluble solids) value
- ✓ The Matti takes about 15 months to mature from the time of planting to harvest stage.
- ✓ 'Semmati' (red Matti), 'Then Matti' (honey Matti) and 'Malai Matti' (Hill Matti) are the varieties of Matti banana.
- ✓ For long distance transport, harvesting is done when it has attained 75%-80% maturity.
- ✓ GI tags are issued for produce or products originating from, and having unique qualities corresponding to a specific geographical area.
- ✓ The tag gives exclusive right to its holders over the uniqueness of the product.
- ✓ This also ensures that none other than the right holders can claim or use the product name attributing to its geographical origin.

- ✓ Tamil Nadu is the only state to have a nodal officer for the GI scheme in the entire country
- ✓ The Union ministry of commerce had asked earlier all the states to appoint nodal officers to promote GI registration of native products.

NATIONAL

- **The nationwide vaccination drive for the 18-44 age group – to commence only in six states on May 1**
 - ✓ All other states and Union territories are facing vaccine shortage
 - ✓ Hence, they have either deferred vaccination by a few days or not sure about starting the exercise.
 - ✓ The six states that will commence the exercise are Maharashtra, Rajasthan, UP, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat and Odisha
 - ✓ Even in these six states the start will just be a ‘formality’ and limited to few districts
 - ✓ In Maharashtra, CM Uddhav Thackeray announced that everyone in the 18-44 age group would be vaccinated and the state would bear the cost of the coverage.
 - ✓ In Uttar Pradesh, the drive will start on May 1 in only seven of the total 75 districts.
 - ✓ Rajasthan will start the drive in only three of the 33 districts — Ajmer, Jaipur and Jodhpur
 - ✓ Gujarat CM Vijay Rupani announced that vaccination for the age group will start in 10 out of 33 districts which have the highest load of Covid-19 positive cases.
 - ✓ The Odisha government announced the start of vaccination from May 1 after it received a consignment of 1.5 lakh doses of Covaxin a day earlier
 - ✓ Further, Chhattisgarh government will roll out the drive from May 1, but will give priority to Antyodaya cardholders and Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).
 - ✓ **In Tamil Nadu, there is no adequate stock of vaccines and hence the next phase of vaccination for all adults above 18 years of age will not start on May 1.**
 - ✓ The existing programme of vaccinating citizens above 45 will, however, continue across the state.
- **The railways - will go for 100% online payment for all services related to freight movement from June 1, 2021**
 - ✓ The online payment system will be provided through Freight Business Development (FBD) portal via SBI’s payment gateway
 - ✓ The online payment will be available through all modes such as net banking, RTGS, NEFT, credit card, debit card and UPI through the customer’s dashboard.
 - ✓ Till now, the Indian Railways was issuing electronic railway receipts and customers were making e-payment.
 - ✓ As of today, even for ancillary charges other than freight charges, customers are not using this online payment facility.

- ✓ At present, the customers keep bank guarantees to avail the facility, which is being removed now.
 - ✓ The online payment system will be available 24x7.
 - ✓ Customers willing to avail the facility will be required to register themselves on the FBD portal.
- **The Centre – set a record foodgrain production target of 307 million tonnes (MT) for the 2021-22 crop year**
- ✓ The target has been kept based on predictions of ‘normal’ monsoon rainfall this year
 - ✓ The target is 1.3% (4 MT) higher than the estimated foodgrain production of 303 MT in the pandemic-hit year of 2020-21.
 - ✓ Almost all foodgrains saw a higher target compared to the previous year’s output
 - ✓ In particular, the government set the highest target of 4% higher than 2020-21 for climate resilient and less water-consuming coarse cereals such as jowar, bajra, maize, ragi and small millets.
 - ✓ Under the 2021-22 targets, wheat, pulses and water-consuming paddy or rice may see a growth of less than 1% compared to their 2020-21 production.
 - ✓ The target also includes 151 MT of Kharif crops, that includes 121 MT paddy, and 156 MT of Rabi crops, which includes 110 MT of wheat
 - ✓ The new higher target of almost all foodgrains was released during the Kharif conference on April 30
 - ✓ During the conference, the agriculture ministry discussed preparedness of the upcoming sowing season with representatives of states



- ✓ On April 16, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) had predicted overall ‘normal’ monsoon rainfall during June-September period across the country
- ✓ Accordingly, the seasonal rainfall is likely to be 98% of the long period average (LPA) with a model error of +/- 5%.
- ✓ The LPA of the season rainfall over the country as a whole for the period 1961-2010 is 88 cm.

- ✓ The rainfall to an extent of 96-104% of the LPA is considered 'normal' while rainfall below 90% of the LPA is considered deficient or 'drought'
- ✓ The IMD's prediction shows that the 2021 monsoon will be the third consecutive year of good rainfall after 2019 and 2020
- ✓ The country had also seen the best results in overall food-grains production in 2019-20 and 2020-21.
- ✓ On the other hand, two consecutive drought years (2014 and 2015) had seen a dip in foodgrains production in 2014-15 and 2015-16 crop years

DEFENCE

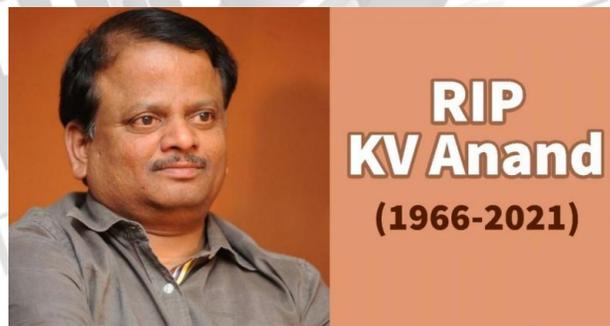
- **On April 30, Defence minister Rajnath Singh – granted special emergency financial powers to the armed forces for providing Covid-related assistance to the general public**
 - ✓ The Minister invoked "special provisions" to grant the financial powers to formation commanders around the country
 - ✓ Accordingly, the 15-lakh strong armed forces can now establish and operate quarantine facilities and hospitals
 - ✓ It can also undertake procurement of equipment and stores, apart from provisioning of various services and works required to support the ongoing efforts against the pandemic.
 - ✓ Under the powers, the Army, Navy and IAF vice chiefs, chief of integrated defence staff, general officer commanding-in-chiefs and equivalents have been given full authority.
 - ✓ Corps commanders/area commanders, in turn, have been delegated powers up to ₹50 lakh per case
 - ✓ The division/sub area commanders and equivalents have been delegated powers up to ₹20 lakh per case.

OBITUARY

- **Soli Sorabjee (91 years), former Attorney General of India**



- ✓ Soli Sorabjee, a veteran lawyer and legal luminary, passed away on April 30 after being admitted to a private hospital in South Delhi for treatment of the Covid-19 infection.
 - ✓ Soli Sorabjee began his legal career in 1953 at the Bombay High Court.
 - ✓ He was designated a senior advocate by the Supreme Court of India in 1971 and went on to become the Attorney General of India.
 - ✓ Sorabjee served as the Attorney General from 1989-90 and then from 1998-2004.
 - ✓ He was famously assisting Nani Palkhivala, another courtroom genius, alongwith Fali Nariman, in the landmark Keshavananda Bharati vs State of Kerala case - who argued against the government.
 - ✓ In his long innings at the Bar, Soli was renowned for his work on human rights.
 - ✓ In 1997, he was appointed by the UN as a Special Rapporteur for Nigeria to report on the human rights conditions in the country.
 - ✓ From 1998-2004, he was also the Chairman of the UN sub-committee on the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights
 - ✓ In March 2002, Soli Sorabjee was honored with the Padma Vibhushan, the second-highest civilian honour in the country, for his work to defend freedom of speech and human rights.
- **K V Anand, ace cinematographer and film director (54 years)**



- ✓ The National award recipient, K V Anand died in Chennai on April 30 due to Covid-related complications.

TIMELINE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Started his career as a photo-journalist before joining ace cinematographer P C Sreeram's team for a career in films 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ He has directed seven films till 2019, including 'Kaappaan' his last film, and all in Tamil
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Debut as cinematographer in 'Thenmavin Kombath' in 1994. Bagged national award for best cinematography in 1994 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Had worked as a cinematographer for 17 films in Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu and Hindi ➤ Became a director in 2005 with the Tamil film 'Kana Kandaen' 	

- ✓ Anand started his career as a photo journalist and worked with Vikatan group for some time.
- ✓ He then moved to the film industry and made his debut as a cinematographer with Mohanlal-starrer “Thenmavin Kombath” in Malayalam in 1994.
- ✓ He won the national award for cinematography for the debut movie.
- ✓ He also worked as cinematographer alongside director Shankar in three of his hit films — “Mudhalvan,” “Boys” and “Sivaji”.
- ✓ Later, he debuted as director with “Kana Kanden” and went on to direct several films including “Ko”, “Ayan” “Kavan” and “Kaappaan”.

