



## EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MAY 14,

### TAMIL NADU

- **The Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC) – to install CCTV cameras and panic buttons in all buses in operation using the Nirbhaya funds**
- ✓ Cameras will also be fitted in all terminals and important bus stops.
- ✓ To begin with, nearly 60 locations have been identified for installing cameras.
- ✓ Tenders have already been floated for the work, and the facilities will be in place within the next 7 to 8 months.
- ✓ Last month, the previous AIADMK government was criticized by the Madras high court when it said Tamil Nadu had used only 10.7% of the Nirbhaya Funds allotted by the Centre to improve safety of women in the state.
- ✓ Though 425 crore is available under the funds, Tamil Nadu utilised only 45.8 crore since 2018



- First set of CCTV cameras were fitted in five routes of MTC buses in 2015
- The objective was to monitor movement of criminals and to identify students pelting stones at the MTC buses
- State government had announced last year that all government buses will get CCTV cameras

- According to the new announcement, the transport corporation will introduce panic buttons in each bus for women in distress
- These buttons will be linked to both police and MTC master control rooms
- Tenders have been floated for this work and it is expected to be completed within 7 to 8 months

- ✓ Now, the transport department has decided to improve safety features on buses by utilising the central funds lying unutilised.
- ✓ In 2015, on trial basis, four cameras each were installed on MTC buses plying on five routes

- ✓ In February 2020, the government announced that all government buses in the state would be fitted with CCTV cameras, and the proposal is yet to be implemented.
  - ✓ The reason behind the initiative is to identify footboard travellers, students pelting stones on buses and to monitor accidents involving government/MTC buses.
  - ✓ The plan to install four panic buttons each, besides cameras, is aimed at improving safety for women travelling in buses.
  - ✓ The buttons are linked to master control rooms of police and MTC
  - ✓ Once it is pressed, the master control room would pass on the info and direct the nearest patrol vehicle to rush to the spot.
  - ✓ The syncing of the buttons with police control room would help reduce incidents of thefts and eve-teasing cases aboard MTC buses.
- **The Greater Chennai Corporation - will conduct a “massive vaccination drive” in the next three days beginning on May 14, covering one lakh people aged above 45 years.**
- ✓ Vaccination will be done at apartment complexes, markets, residential localities and companies.
  - ✓ The traders and associations will be called and administered the vaccine at a marriage hall
  - ✓ Greater Chennai Corporation, which has a stock of 1.2 lakh doses of Covishield doses and 16,000 of Covaxin, will keep about 20% as reserve for second doses and administer the rest.
  - ✓ Of the 16.4 lakh doses administered so far, Covishield accounted for 12 lakh (8.7 lakh 1st dose and 3.3 lakh 2nd dose) and Covaxin 4.3 lakh (2.6 lakh 1st dose and 1.7 lakh 2nd dose).
  - ✓ In the drive that began in February, about 16.38 lakh have been vaccinated (including both doses).
  - ✓ Of the nearly 22 lakh people above 45 years in a population of 80 lakh, about 50% got the first dose.
  - ✓ The Tamil Nadu government hasn't opened vaccination for people aged between 18 and 45 years.
- **The first tanker loaded with 4.8 metric tonnes of medical grade oxygen from the Sterlite plant – was dispatched on May 13**
- ✓ Oxygen production commenced at the plant on May 12 and the first load was flagged off by district collector K Senthil Raj on the next day.
  - ✓ The consignment reached the Tirunelveli medical college hospital along with police escort.
  - ✓ There are two oxygen plants on the premises of the sealed copper smelter plant.
  - ✓ The first has a capacity of 515 metric tonnes a day and has been put to use in the first phase



- ✓ Further work is under way to utilize the second one, with a capacity of 535 metric tonnes a day, in the next few days.
- ✓ The oxygen supplied in the first tanker is 98.6% pure and has received medical-grade certifications.
- ✓ The company will be despatching two oxygen tankers daily to begin with, which will be gradually scaled up as production expands.

## STATES

- **The State Government of Maharashtra - has recently launched the “Maharashtra Mission Oxygen” with a budget allocation of Rs. 200 crore**



- ✓ Under the mission, the daily oxygen production of the state is to be increased to 3,000 tonnes.
- ✓ The mission will provide special incentives to the private players who are willing to become oxygen generation units.
- ✓ Under the mission, a short-term goal of 2,300 metric tonnes of oxygen per day is to be produced in next six months at an estimated outlay of 1,100 crore.
- ✓ Under the mission, at least one new plant is to be established in each division with the participation of private companies
- ✓ The mission will also waive the registration fee, stamp duty, electricity duty and GST.

- ✓ The State Government will also establish more than 290 Pressure Swing Absorption plants and Liquid Medical Oxygen plants with the help of private players.
- ✓ There are six major players in the state such as Inox Air Products, Linde India, Praxair, Air Liquid India Holdings, JSW Steel and Taiyo Nippon Sanso India.
- ✓ They produce around 1,295 metric tonnes of oxygen in a day as against the present demand of 1,800 metric tonnes in the state.

## NATIONAL

- **On May 13, the Centre - approved extending the gap between two doses of Covishield vaccine from 6-8 weeks to 12-16 weeks following the recommendations of a government panel.**
  - ✓ There is no change in interval of Covaxin vaccine doses.
  - ✓ The Covid working group chaired by Dr N K Arora has recommended extension of the gap between the first and second doses of Covishield vaccine to 12-16 weeks.
  - ✓ Niti Aayog member and head of the expert group on vaccines Dr V K Paul said the decision has been taken on basis of the experience of the United Kingdom where the 12-week gap norm was implemented.
  - ✓ He said the earlier 4-6 week interval was based on studies but now there is data from actual implementation of the more spaced out schedule.
  - ✓ The recommendation of the Covid Working Group was accepted by the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for Covid-19 (NEGVAC).
- **The e-Committee portal of the Supreme Court - is now accessible in regional languages including Hindi, Odia, Tamil, Marathi and Khasi.**
  - ✓ This will ensure more people can now access the website of the apex court
  - ✓ The apex court's e-Committee is implementing judicial reforms that include digitising Indian judiciary through introduction of information technology, conducting proceedings and court processes using modern technology.
  - ✓ An exclusive mobile app besides many other services such e-payment, e-summons, e-judgments are now available to litigants and lawyers online.
  - ✓ A user manual for e-Courts services and mobile applications are now available in eight languages including English, Hindi, Kannada, Marathi, Odia, Tamil, Punjabi and Telugu.
  - ✓ A dedicated portal on judgments, to search past orders, has also been made available through a series of reforms introduced by the e-Committee over the past few years.
- **The Union Cabinet - approved the Production Linked Incentive scheme for Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) Battery Storage with an allocation of Rs. 18,100 crore on May 12**
  - ✓ This has been done as part of the National Programme on Advanced Chemistry Cell Battery Storage.

- ✓ The scheme aims to achieve a manufacturing capacity of 50 GigaWatt Hour of ACC and five Giga Watt Hour of Niche ACC
  - ✓ It will also give a big push to electric mobility, benefiting three-wheelers, four-wheelers and heavy vehicles.
  - ✓ India is currently importing Battery Storage Equipment worth Rs. 20,000 crore and the scheme will be helpful in making the country self-reliant (Atmanirbhar) and reduce imports
  - ✓ ACC are new generation storage devices that store energy in chemical or electrochemical form, which are again converted back to electric energy when required.
  - ✓ The National Programme on Advance Chemistry Cell Battery Storage was proposed by the National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage, which was launched in 2019.
  - ✓ The latest announcement is a part of the Rs 1.97 lakh crore PLI schemes for 13 key sectors to create local manufacturing entities and generate employment opportunities within the country.
  - ✓ Launched last year for mobile manufacturers and pharma ingredient manufacturers, the scheme has been extended to sectors such as telecom and networking products, food products, white goods, solar PV modules, auto and auto components, textile, etc.
  - ✓ The scheme extends an incentive of 4-6% on incremental sales for a period of five years subsequent to the base year.
- **The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare - has recently approved Rs 2,250 crore for the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture for the year 2021-22.**
- ✓ The mission has the goal of developing the horticultural sector in India.
  - ✓ It covers fruits, vegetables, tuber crops, roots, flowers, bamboo, cocoa, coconut, spices, aromatic plants and cashews.
  - ✓ Under the mission, technical support is to be provided by the National Horticulture Board to the State Horticultural Mission, National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture, Saffron Mission and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana.
  - ✓ The Mission is currently focusing on promotion of Farmer Producer Organisation, credit push through Agriculture Infrastructure fund and cluster development programmes.
  - ✓ Under the mission, the area of cultivation of the components was increased by 9% between 2014-15 and 2019-20.



- ✓ The horticultural production in the country has almost doubled between 2001 (146 million tonnes) and 2019 (314 million tonnes).
- **The Wildlife Institute of India - recently conducted a “Monkey Census” in the state of Haryana.**
- ✓ The “Monkey Census” was undertaken as part of the “Wildlife Census of Haryana-2021” and the “Wildlife Census 2021”.
- ✓ Around 600 local people participated in the census and spotted 6,000 monkeys in three days
- ✓ The Census was conducted for the first time using a mobile application called “Wildlife Census Haryana”, which was designed by Wildlife Institute of India.
- ✓ The ‘Monkey Census’ was conducted in Haryana considering the increasing number of ‘Human-Monkey’ conflicts in the state
- ✓ The species of monkeys that are frequently indulged in Human-Monkey Conflict are protected under Schedule II of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

## HIGH COURT VERDICT

- **The Madras High Court – has ruled that the candidates who have studied in Tamil medium in all stages from Class I to degree alone would be eligible for appointment under 20% Persons Studied in Tamil Medium (PSTM) quota**
- ✓ The court also held that the PSTM Act, 2010, and the Amendment Act, 2020, were constitutionally valid and said 20% reservation should be applied at every stage of recruitment.

- ✓ The verdict was given by a division bench of Justice N Kirubakaran and Justice B Pugalendhi
- ✓ The term 'Persons Studied in Tamil Medium' as defined in Section 2(d) of the Act would necessarily mean those who have studied their entire education in Tamil medium.
- ✓ The court passed the order while hearing the petition challenging the notification of TNPSC Group I Services exam

## INTERNATIONAL

- **On May 13, K P Sharma Oli - was reappointed as Prime Minister of Nepal after opposition parties failed to secure majority seats to form a new government.**



- ✓ Oli has been reinstated in his capacity as leader of the largest political party in Nepal's parliament
  - ✓ President Bidya Devi Bhandari reappointed CPN (UML) chairman Oli as prime minister, three days after he lost a trust vote in the House of Representatives.
  - ✓ Bidya Devi Bhandari will administer the oath of office to Oli on May 14.
  - ✓ The president had asked opposition parties to come up with the support of majority lawmakers to form a new government by May 13.
  - ✓ Oli's appointment came shortly after the president's office said no parties laid claim to form a coalition.
  - ✓ Oli will now have to take a vote of confidence within 30 days, failing which, an attempt to form a government under Article 76 (5) would be initiated.
  - ✓ In case both the steps fail, the House may face another dissolution.
  - ✓ The political crisis began in December last year after the president dissolved the house and announced fresh polls at the recommendation of PM Oli.
  - ✓ But the apex court reinstated the house.
- **Bolivia - has become the first country to seek flexibility in the TRIPS Agreement to import 15 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines**
  - ✓ In this regard, it has formally notified to the World Health Organisation about the need to import vaccines

- ✓ It seeks to import from 50 countries, including India, that have laws allowing production and export of medicines using the compulsory licence window.
  - ✓ The provision being used by Bolivia has only been used once by Rwanda, over a decade ago.
  - ✓ While India is one of the countries that has a law, its domestic vaccine shortage will prevent it from helping Bolivia
  - ✓ TRIPS or Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights came into existence in November 1995, eleven months after creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO).
  - ✓ In 2020, the WTO separately marked the 25th anniversary of TRIPS along with its own, highlighting the importance of the agreement.
  - ✓ The TRIPS agreement was an attempt to streamline, standardise and enforce Intellectual Property Regimes (IPR) across the world.
  - ✓ The developing countries objected to the IPRs as it was seen as a prerogative of the developed countries
- **The United Nations - recently announced that the world food prices have reached the highest level since May 2014**
- ✓ The food price index has increased for the eleventh consecutive month in April 2021.
  - ✓ This announcement based on the Food Price Index was released by the Food and Agriculture Organisation
  - ✓ The Food Price Index measures monthly changes of a basket of food grains such as oil seeds, cereals, dairy products, sugar and meat.
  - ✓ In April 2021, the Food Price Index was 120.9 as against 118.9 in March 2021.
  - ✓ The Food and Agriculture Organisation also announced that the cereal price index increased by 1.2% in April 2021 as compared to March 2021 and increased by 26% as compared to the previous year.
  - ✓ The vegetable oil prices increased by 1.8%, while the dairy prices increased by 1.2%.
  - ✓ Sugar prices increased by 60% as compared to the previous year mainly due to slow harvest in Brazil and also due to large frost damage in France.
  - ✓ In 2021-22, the Food and Agriculture Organisation predicted that wheat production is to increase by 0.5% as compared to that of 2020-21 due to increase in cultivable areas

## CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **The first meeting of BRICS Employment Working Group (EWG) - was held virtually from May 11-12 in New Delhi**
- ✓ Apurva Chandra, Secretary, Labour and Employment chaired the meeting
  - ✓ The prime agenda for the discussions were promoting social security agreements amongst BRICS Nations, formalization of labour markets, participation of women in labour force and gig and platform workers – role in labour market.



- ✓ Apart from representatives of member nations - Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa - the representatives of International Labour Organization (ILO) and International Social Security Agency (ISSA) also participated in the discussions
- ✓ During the meeting, the member-countries agreed to formulate a framework on Social Security Agreement to help the international workers
- ✓ The social security agreement is an agreement signed by a country to regulate the procedure of providing social security for its citizens who are permanently or temporarily residing in another country.
- ✓ India has such agreements signed with Brazil, South Korea, Switzerland, Sweden, Portugal, Norway, Netherlands, Japan, Hungary, Germany, France, Finland, Denmark, Czech Republic, Canada, Belgium, Austria and Australia.
- ✓ India has assumed BRICS Presidency this year.

## SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **The world's first mass Covid-19 inoculation campaign for children - kicked off in the United States on May 13**
- ✓ Earlier, the federal government recommended making the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine available to those aged 12 to 15.
- ✓ The various authorities were making plans to offer vaccines not only in schools, but also at pediatricians' offices, day camps, parks and even beaches.
- ✓ President Biden, who hailed the vaccine as "safe, effective, easy, fast and free," said that as many as 20,000 pharmacies stood ready to start giving shots
- ✓ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention voted to recommend use of the vaccine for the kids on May 12
- ✓ Some states, including Delaware, Georgia and Maine, had already started to offer doses to children after the approval of the vaccine by the Food and Drug Administration a day earlier.
- ✓ But the ruling by the CDC was the final step in the federal process that allows for widespread inoculations of the roughly 17 million children in the US ages 12-15.
- ✓ Meanwhile, the UAE government has also approved the Pfizer and BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine for emergency use in children aged 12-15, having already permitted its use for 16 years and above

- **The Perseverance rover of Mars 2020 mission – has commenced the study of the rocks on the floor of Jezero crater, an ancient crater of Mars which held a lake once.**



- ✓ The rover will use a special camera called “WATSON” located on the end of the rover’s robotic arm to capture detailed shots of the rocks.
  - ✓ Also, it will use a pair of zoomable cameras which are located on its head to survey the terrain.
  - ✓ Scientists are still wondering if the rocks in Mars are igneous or sedimentary.
  - ✓ Igneous rocks are formed by volcanic activity, while sedimentary rocks are formed in the presence of water from mineral fragments such as clay, sand, etc.
  - ✓ The rocks around Perseverance have been eroded by wind over time and were covered with young sand and dust.
  - ✓ The Perseverance rover holds a LASER instrument called SuperCam to detect the chemistry of rocks.
  - ✓ It will burn the rocks on the Martian surface and will study about the rocks based on the features of vapours coming out.
  - ✓ The study of rock samples will enable the scientists to come out with a time line of the formation of lake and create a record of ancient microbial life
  - ✓ The Perseverance rover landed on the Jezero crater and has shot the fourth flight of Ingenuity helicopter successfully recently
- **China – launched the eighth group of three Yaogan-30 satellites into orbit on a Long March 2C rocket from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in Southwest China recently**
  - ✓ This group of satellites will join the seven previous groups in the orbit that had been launched in 2017.
  - ✓ They will be used for electromagnetic environment surveys and other related technical tests.
  - ✓ A small satellite for the Internet of Things (IoT) called Tianqi-12 satellite was also aboard the flight.

- ✓ It would serve the purpose of data connectivity for Guodian Gaoke, a commercial company based in Beijing.
  - ✓ Prior to the launch of the Yaogan-30 satellites, China had launched an optical remote sensing satellite, Yaogan-34 on April 30, 2021.
  - ✓ Yaogan satellites are a series of reconnaissance satellites launched by China
  - ✓ Reconnaissance satellite is a spy satellite deployed for military or intelligence applications
  - ✓ The first Yaogan 1 satellite was launched in 2006.
  - ✓ According to Chinese media, they are optical remote sensing satellites that will be used for disaster prevention and reduction, surveying land resources, road network design, urban planning, and crop yield estimation, electromagnetic environment surveys, and related technical tests.
- **The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) - signed an agreement with Axiom Space to send its astronauts to International Space Station.**
- ✓ This is the first private astronaut mission to the space station.
  - ✓ Under the mission named as Ax-1, the Axiom astronauts will spend eight days in the space station.
  - ✓ They will conduct activities to coordinate with the space station on the ground.
  - ✓ Axiom will purchase crew supplies, orbit resources, cargo delivery to space and storage from NASA.
  - ✓ The International Space Station is to retire by 2024 or 2028.
  - ✓ Russia had already announced that it is moving out of International Space Station after the agreement ends in 2024 as it is currently building its own space station.

## ECONOMY

- **On May 13, the Reserve Bank of India - said it has cancelled the licence of West Bengal-based United Co-operative Bank as it does not have adequate capital and earning prospects.**
- ✓ Consequently, the bank ceases to carry on business, with effect from May 13, 2021, the RBI said.
  - ✓ On liquidation, depositors will receive deposit insurance claim amount up to ₹5 lakh.
  - ✓ Also, the bank with its present financial position would be unable to pay its present depositors in full, the RBI added.

## SPORTS

- **Former India off-spinner Ramesh Powar – has returned as the head coach of the India women’s team ahead of the team’s tour of England**



- ✓ The 42-year-old Mumbaikar has replaced former India opener WV Raman, who had taken Powar's position in late 2018.
- ✓ Powar was removed as the head coach after a fallout with skipper Mithali Raj earlier
- ✓ After shortlisting eight candidates for the job, the Madan Lal-led Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) chose Powar ahead of Raman, Hrishikesh Kanitkar, Ajay Ratra and four female candidates.
- ✓ Powar has played two Tests and 31 ODIs for India.
- ✓ His first stint as India coach was from July to November 2018.
- ✓ In this period, India won 14 games in a row, and reached the T20 World Cup semis in the West Indies.
- ✓ After being removed from the job, Powar worked as a bowling coach at the National Cricket Academy, before coaching Mumbai to Vijay Hazare trophy triumph in March this year.
- ✓ W V Raman had coached the team to the final of the T20 World Cup in March last year in Australia

