

## **EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MAY 17, 2021**

### **TAMIL NADU**

- **Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) - has opened bulk vaccination registration from May 15 for resident welfare associations, big companies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and communities.**
- ✓ In this regard, the civic body has circulated a 'form' which will collect details of a nodal person, the number of people to be vaccinated, the organisation or community and a preferred location for the vaccination.
- ✓ In case there are more than 100 people above the age of 45, GCC will bring its staff and vaccines to the preferred location and conduct the drive.
- ✓ If there are less than 100 people, then the vaccination will be done at the nearest primary health centre (PHC) run by GCC.
- ✓ GCC has strictly prioritised vaccinations for frontline workers and essential service providers as a first phase and hence vaccinations will be organised accordingly.

### **NATIONAL**

- **The government - has reconfigured the Co-Win platform to reflect the new dosing schedule of 12-16 weeks for Covishield vaccine**
- ✓ Under the previous scheme, vaccination bookings could be made six weeks after the first shot.
- ✓ However, if an online appointment has already been made for a second dose of Covishield as per the previous schedule, the government said that it would remain valid and a shot can be received as planned.
- ✓ Further online or on-site appointments for second dose can be booked only with a gap of at least 84 days from the first dose.
- ✓ On May 13, the Centre had extended the gap between the first and second doses of Covishield vaccine to 12-16 weeks based on recommendations of the Covid Working Group chaired by N K Arora.
- ✓ The dosing schedule for Covaxin remains unchanged.

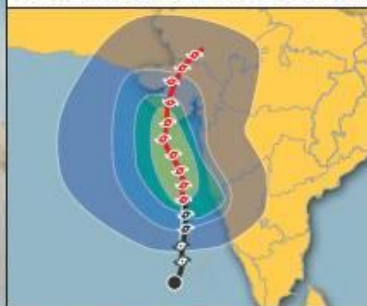
- **On May 16, the Centre - issued new guidelines for containment of Covid-19 virus in peri-urban and rural areas across the country**
  - ✓ Considering the spread of infection in villages, the centre decided to strengthen primary level healthcare infrastructure at all levels to intensify Covid-19 response
  - ✓ The health ministry released the 'SOP on Covid-19 Containment and Management in Peri-urban, Rural & Tribal areas'.
  - ✓ The Centre also advised planning a minimum 30-bedded Covid Care Centre in such areas for asymptomatic cases with co-morbidities or mild cases where home isolation is not feasible.
  - ✓ Besides, provisions for RAT testing should be made at all public health facilities including sub-centres or health and wellness centres and primary health centres.
  - ✓ Further, health workers are advised to carry out periodic active surveillance in every village for influenza-like illness/ severe acute respiratory infections (ILI/SARI)
  - ✓ Symptomatic cases can be triaged at village level by teleconsultation with community health officer (CHO)
  - ✓ Alternatively, cases with comorbidity or low oxygen saturation should be sent to higher centres.
  
- **On May 16, Tauktae - intensified into a “very severe” cyclonic storm and remained on course to hit Gujarat coast as a strongest cyclone since 1998**
  - ✓ The cyclone is predicted to make landfall between the UT of Diu and Mahuva in Bhavnagar on May 18.

### **CYCLONE MENACES WEST COAST, 8 DEAD, 29 MISSING**



High waves lash dredger Bhagvati Prem at Surathkal Beach near Mangaluru in Karnataka on Sunday

#### **OBSERVED AND FORECAST TRACK OF CYCLONE TAUKTAE**



☉ Less than 34KT      ● Forecast Track  
 ☉ 34-47KT (knots)      ● Cone of uncertainty  
 ☉ >48KT              ● Area of sustained wind speed  
 ● Observed track

**GUJARAT** 1.5L shifted, set to be strongest storm since 1998  
 Tauktae landfall likely between Porbandar & Mahuva (Bhavnagar dist) Tuesday early morning as a very severe cyclone with wind speeds up to 185kmph. Could be strongest storm to hit state after 1998 Kandla cyclone

**GOA, KARNATAKA** 8 dead, widespread damage  
 8 deaths reported, all in Karnataka. Hundreds of houses damaged, highways blocked by fallen trees, poles. Highest rainfall (385mm) in Kundapura taluk in Udupi dist

**MUMBAI** Bracing for manic Monday  
 Tauktae hit Maharashtra coast on Sunday, no casualties so far. It's likely to pass by Mumbai Metropolitan Region coast early Monday

- ✓ Tauktae — Myanmarese term for lizard “gecko” — is estimated to arrive with wind speeds of 155-165 kmph, gusting up to 185kmph, according to the IMD.
  - ✓ It is expected to reach the Gujarat coast on May 17 and cross the areas between Porbandar and Mahuva by dawn the next day.
  - ✓ The major impact of the projected landfall will be felt in Porbandar, Amreli, Junagarh, Gir Somnath, Botad and Bhavnagar districts.
  - ✓ With the aim of zero human casualty, 44 NDRF teams, assisted by SDRF and fire brigade personnel, have been deployed along coastal areas for rescue and relief work
- **British oil major, Cairn Energy - has identified \$70 billion of overseas Indian assets for potential seizure to collect \$1.7 billion due from the government**
- ✓ If successful, this puts India alongwith Pakistan and Venezuela which also faced similar enforcement action over failure to pay arbitration awards.

<b>MAY SEIZE AI PLANES &amp; SCI SHIPS</b>	
<p><b>What could Cairn move to seize?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Air India aircraft</li> <li>2 Shipping Corporation of India vessels</li> <li>3 State-owned banks' properties</li> <li>4 Oil and gas shipments of PSUs</li> </ol>	<p><b>Pakistan, Venezuela faced similar actions for not paying arbitration dues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Hotels owned by Pakistan International Airlines in New York and Paris were ordered to be used to settle a claim against Pakistan's government by a Canadian-Chilean copper co</li> <li>➤ A Canadian gold mining co too similarly attached property of Venezuela state-owned oil company after it failed to pay dues awarded by an arbitration tribunal</li> </ul>

- ✓ The assets identified range from Air India’s aircraft to vessels belonging to the Shipping Corporation of India, and properties owned by state-owned banks to oil & gas cargoes of PSUs
- ✓ Cairn plans to move courts in the US to Singapore for seizure of the assets in absence of Indian government’s refusal to honour an international arbitration award.
- ✓ Cairn has got an international arbitration award which overturned levy of retrospective taxes and ordered India to return the value of shares it had sold, dividends seized and tax refunds withheld to recover such taxes

## INTERNATIONAL

- **The European Union - recently approved Norway, Canada and United States to participate in Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) defence initiative.**
- ✓ This is the first time the European bloc has allowed a third state to participate in the PESCO project.

- ✓ The three countries will now participate in the Military Mobility Project in Europe.
  - ✓ The Military Mobility Project is designed to support the free movement of military units in the European Union through improvement of infrastructure and removal of bureaucratic barriers.
  - ✓ PESCO is part of the European Union security and defence policy.
  - ✓ It was launched based on the Treaty of European Union introduced by Treaty of Lisbon in 2009.
  - ✓ The members of NATO are predominantly members of PESCO project
  - ✓ The United States has raised concerns against PESCO several times.
  - ✓ In November 2020, the European Union allowed non-EU members to participate in PESCO.
  - ✓ Following this, Canada, US and Norway had requested to participate in PESCO.
- **The United Kingdom - has become the first country to announce driving regulations for self-driving vehicles at low speeds.**
- ✓ According to the UK government, around 40% of UK cars will have self-driving capabilities by 2035, thereby generating 38,000 jobs in the country.
  - ✓ The Government of UK has been working on a highway code for the use of self-driving vehicles, beginning with Automated Lane Keeping Systems (ALKS).
  - ✓ The speed limit of the ALKS is to be set at 37 miles per hour in a single lane
  - ✓ A self-driving vehicle is fully autonomous without any requirement for a driver.
  - ✓ Self-driving technologies have been developed by Uber, Google, Nissan, Tesla etc.,
  - ✓ These self-driving systems use an internal surrounding map consisting of lasers, sensors and radars
  - ✓ Based on the map created, instructions are delivered to the actuators of the vehicle.

## **SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT**

- **The scientists - have recently created lightest-ever known form of Uranium called the Uranium-214.**
- ✓ The researchers created the new uranium isotope at the Heavy Ion Research Facility in Lanzhou, China.
  - ✓ The newly discovered uranium is an isotope, or a variant of Uranium
  - ✓ It has 30 more neutrons than protons, one neutron lesser than the next-lightest known uranium isotope
  - ✓ Because neutrons have mass, uranium-214 is much lighter than more common uranium isotopes, including uranium-235, which is used in nuclear reactors and has 51 extra neutrons.
  - ✓ The discovery could reveal more about an alpha particle that gets ejected from certain radioactive elements as they decay

- ✓ The new uranium-214 isotope had a half-life of just half a millisecond, meaning that's the amount of time it takes for half of the radioactive sample to decay
- ✓ The most common isotope of uranium — called uranium-238 — has a half-life of about 4.5 billion years, which is about the age of Earth.

## DEFENCE

- **The Indian and French Navies - recently conducted the VARUNA Naval Exercise in the Arabian Sea as part of the Clemenceau 2021.**



- ✓ The exercise included surface and anti-weapon firings, tactical manoeuvres, rotary wing flying operations including cross deck helicopter landings and air defence and anti-submarine exercises.
- ✓ The Indian Navy was represented by Stealth destroyer INS Kolkata, INS Talwar, INS Tarkash, Fleet Support Ship INS Deepak, Chetak Integral helicopters and a Kalvari class submarine, alongwith the P81 Long range Patrol Aircraft.
- ✓ The French Navy was represented by E2C Hawkeye aircrafts, Rafale-M fighter and Horizon class air defence destroyer Chevalier Paul.
- ✓ After VARUNA, 2021, the INS Tarkash continued its exercise with the French Navy Carrier Strike Group.
- ✓ On February 21, 2021, the French Carrier Strike Group set sail for a long operational deployment called “Clemenceau 21”.
- ✓ With this mission, the French Navy deployed its military presence in areas of strategic interests namely Mediterranean Sea, Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean.
- ✓ As a part of Clemenceau 21, France held the GASWEX exercise with its allies - Japan, Belgium and US forces - in the Arabian Sea and in the Gulf of Oman.

## ECONOMY

- **India - recently notified digital tax limit of Rs. 2 crore and 3,00,000 users under the Significant Economic Presence principle introduced in the Finance Bill 2018-19.**
- ✓ This revenue threshold is applicable for non-resident technology firms such as Netflix, Facebook, Google etc., in order to pay tax in India under new or revised bilateral tax pacts.

- ✓ This will come into effect from April 1, 2022.
- ✓ However, in order to tax multinationals like Facebook, Google etc., India will require to renegotiate the tax treaty with the US
- ✓ The existing double taxation avoidance agreements will not be covered under the proposed change
- ✓ The digital companies will come under India's tax net only when the existing treaties get reviewed or when new ones are signed
- ✓ The Significant Economic Presence concept was introduced in 2018 under Income Tax Act, 1961.
- ✓ It means that a transaction in goods or services or property carried out by a Non-Resident in India, which includes download of software or data, is taxable.

## RANKINGS

- **India - ranked 49<sup>th</sup> in the Chandler Good Governance Index out of 104 countries**
- ✓ The Chandler Good Governance Index is released by the Chandler Institute of Governance headquartered in Singapore.

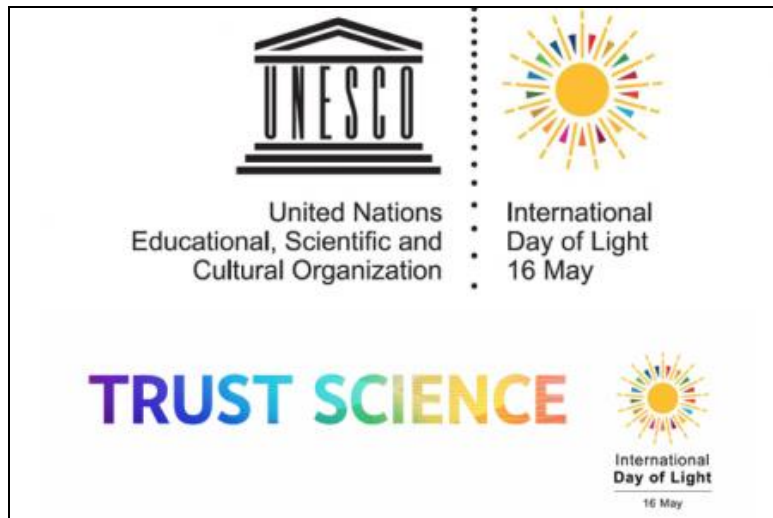


- ✓ The index is prepared based on seven pillars namely leadership and foresight, strong institutions, robust laws and policies, attractive market place, financial stewardship, helping people rise, global influence and reputation.
- ✓ Finland topped the ranking following Switzerland, Singapore, Netherlands, Denmark and Norway.
- ✓ Pakistan was ranked at 90<sup>th</sup> place, while Sri Lanka was placed at 74<sup>th</sup> and Nepal at 92<sup>nd</sup>.

- ✓ Among BRICS countries China ranked 140<sup>th</sup>, Brazil at 67<sup>th</sup>, Russia at 48<sup>th</sup>, South Africa at 70<sup>th</sup>.
- ✓ India celebrates Good Governance Day on December 25.

## **INTERNATIONAL DAY**

### ➤ **International Day of Light - May 16**



- ✓ The day aims to raise awareness on the critical role played by light-based technologies in everyday life
  - ✓ The observation of the day aims to highlight the contribution of light in science, technology, art, culture, education and in the overall sustainable development of the world, thereby helping achieve the UNESCO goals of education, equality, and peace.
  - ✓ Theme 2021 - 'Trust Science'
  - ✓ On this day in the year 1960, the first ever successful operation of LASER was conducted by physicist and engineer, Theodore Maiman
  - ✓ The International Day of Light is administered from the International Basic Science Programme (IBSP) of UNESCO, and its Secretariat is located at the Abdus Salam International Centre of Theoretical Physics (ICTP) at Trieste, Italy
  - ✓ In 2015, to raise global awareness of the achievements of light science and its applications, the UN observed the International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies 2015 (IYL 2015).
  - ✓ Following the success of IYL 2015, Ghana, Mexico, New Zealand and Russia placed a resolution before the UNESCO Executive Board supporting the idea of an International Day of Light.
  - ✓ The Board decision was endorsed by the UNESCO General Conference at its 39th session on November 7, 2017, and the first IDL was held on May 16, 2018.
- **The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) – is celebrating the month of 'May' as Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month.**



- ✓ The month is observed to honour the contributions made by the Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans to the culture, history and achievements of United States.
- ✓ The Month of May was chosen as it was the first time when the Japanese immigrants arrived to the US.
- ✓ This year, NASA has organised several events to celebrate the month in the following theme - Advancing Leaders Through Purpose-Drive Services Legislation
- ✓ In April 2021, the US Senate passed a bill to combat the rise of hate crimes against the Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.
- ✓ The Pacific Islanders are people belonging to the Pacific Islands
- ✓ New Zealand has the largest population of Pacific Islanders in the world.
- ✓ Asian Americans are naturalised Americans who immigrated from Asia.

