



## EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MAY 24, 2021

### STATES

- **Haryana - to launch an anti-Covid “Sanjeevani Pariyojana” on March 24, 2021**
- ✓ The initiative aims to provide a supervised and quick medical care at home for people with mild to moderate symptoms of Covid-19, who are residing in rural areas
- ✓ Under the initiative, around 200 final year & pre-final year medical students and interns will be mobilized and they will be connected to consultants and experts.
- ✓ Further, a separate ‘Integrated Command and Control Centre’ will also be set up to manage critical resources such as ambulance tracking, oxygen supply, hospital beds availability besides, door-to-door awareness campaign.
- ✓ A separate ‘Covid hotline’ will be set up to improvise existing call centre capabilities that will support basic triaging and guidance for patients suspected or clinically diagnosed with Covid-19 symptoms.
- **Tripura Government – has recently launched an online portal named ‘Jagrut Tripura’**



- ✓ This digital platform has been launched by the Chief Minister of Tripura, Biplab Kumar Deb.

- ✓ The new portal is designed to help the people avail benefits of various schemes launched by the State as well as the Centre.
- ✓ A total of 109 schemes from various departments have been made available through this platform.
- ✓ These schemes were split up under various categories, which included Education- 43 schemes, Small Business- 16 schemes, Agriculture- 14 schemes, Pension – 12 schemes, Health and Medical- 10 schemes, Housing- 7 schemes, Social Services- 6 schemes and Fisheries- 1 scheme.
- ✓ The online portal has been developed by a company of the Jio Group, EasyGov.

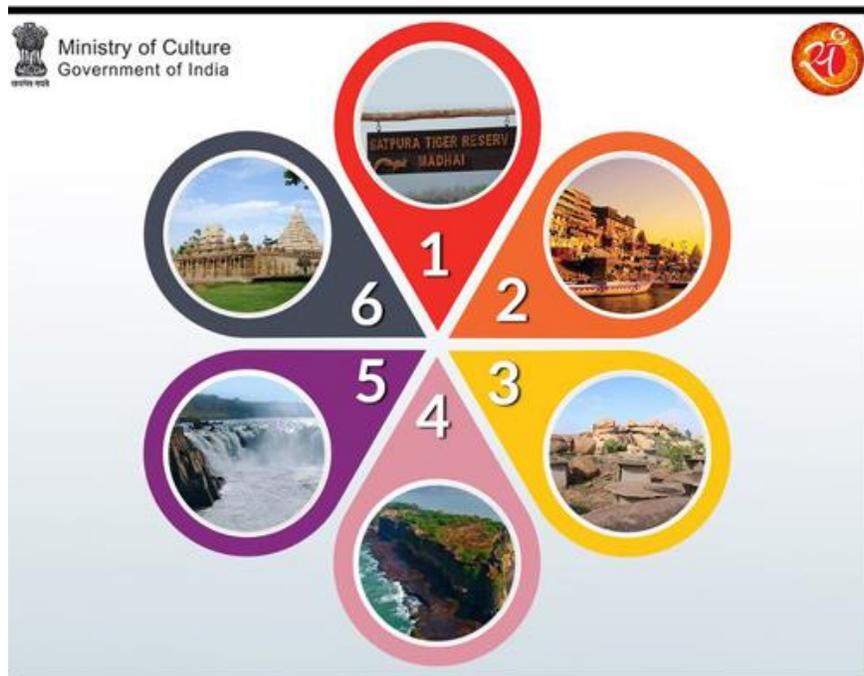
## NATIONAL

- **Massachusetts-based biotechnology company Moderna - has declined the Punjab government's request for direct supply of its vaccine to the state.**
  - ✓ Moderna has developed a messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccine to tackle Covid-19
  - ✓ The US firm said as per its policy, the company only deals with central governments and not with states and private entities to supply Covid-19 vaccines
  - ✓ Further, Moderna made it clear that it really did not have extra supplies till the year end.
  - ✓ The mRNA vaccine is authorised for use in almost 50 nations, including the US, EU, UK, Canada, Singapore and South Korea.
  - ✓ Earlier, Pfizer had also said it wanted to deal only with the Centre and not with the states.
  - ✓ The company has been talks with the government to enter India and has sought certain exemptions and safeguards.
  - ✓ It has followed a similar model across most countries.
  - ✓ Pfizer and BioNTech are looking to ramp up production to 2.5 billion doses by the end of the year.
  
- **World's fastest land animal, Cheetah - is expected to be re-introduced into the country in November this year at the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh**



- ✓ The country's last spotted cheetah died in Chhattisgarh in 1947 and it was declared extinct in the country in 1952.
  - ✓ The Wildlife Institute of India (WII) prepared a cheetah re-introduction project few years back.
  - ✓ The Supreme Court had earlier given its approval to introduce African cheetahs to a suitable habitat in India on an experimental basis.
  - ✓ The Government is taking efforts to bring around 10 cheetahs, including five females, from South Africa by August 2021
  - ✓ Officials from India will be sent to South Africa for sensitisation and training in June and July this year.
  - ✓ According to the plan, the transportation of the cheetahs will take place in October and November 2021.
  - ✓ Kuno, located in the Chambal region, is spread over an area of over 750 sq km and has a favourable environment for the cheetahs.
  - ✓ The protected area, comprising a considerable population of four-horned antelopes, chinkara, nilgai, wild boar, spotted deer and sambar, has a good prey base for the cheetahs.
  - ✓ According to the approved timeline sent by the ministry of environment, forest and climate change, the tentative budget outlay of the 'Project Cheetah' is ₹1,400 lakh for this fiscal.
  - ✓ The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) is to release the money for the project to Madhya Pradesh and the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) at Dehradun next month.
  - ✓ An expert from South Africa visited the Kuno National Park on April 26 this year along with scientists from the WII and inspected the facilities and habitat created there for the introduction of African cheetahs.
  - ✓ They approved it and now the final process of bringing the cheetah is underway.
  - ✓ Earlier, experts from the WII had visited four places in Madhya Pradesh to look for the best habitat for the introduction of African cheetah in last year.
  - ✓ Cheetah is listed in "vulnerable category" of International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) red list of threatened species.
- **Union Culture Minister Prahlad Singh Patel - recently announced that six cultural heritage sites have been added to the tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.**
- ✓ They are Ganga Ghats in Varanasi, temples of Kancheepuram in Tamil Nadu, Satpura Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh, Maratha Military Architecture in Maharashtra, Hirebenakal Megalithic site in Karnataka and Bhedaghat-Lametaghat of Narmada Valley in Madhya Pradesh
  - ✓ With this, the total number of sites in the UNESCO World Heritage Sites tentative list has increased to 48.
  - ✓ The tentative list of a site for a period of one year is a requirement before the final nomination of any site into the prestigious list

- ✓ UNESCO has accepted six of the nine sites submitted by the Archaeological Survey of India for inclusion in the tentative list
- ✓ The Ghats of Varanasi are the riverfront steps that lead to the banks of river Ganges.



- ✓ There are 88 ghats, most of which were built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century during the rule of Marathas.
  - ✓ Satpura Tiger Reserve consists of Pandav Caves, Bee falls, Dhoopgarh Peak, Denwa Backwaters and rock paintings.
  - ✓ In Maharashtra, there are more than 500 forts, exhibiting extensive military architecture, were built between 1500 and 1800
  - ✓ There are more than 400 megalithic funerary monuments in Hirebenakal Megalithic site.
  - ✓ Megalithic site is a large pre-historic stone that is used to construct a monument or structure.
  - ✓ The Bhedaghat-Lametaghat of the Narmada valley are referred to as the Grand Canyon of India
  - ✓ Here, several dinosaur fossil fuels have been found and the site exhibits huge marble rocks on the side of Narmada river
  - ✓ Kanchipuram is famous for several ancient temples, which were famous for their grandeur and artistic values
- **On May 23, the Centre - said that it is vigorously defending its case in legal dispute with Cairn over the arbitration award.**
- ✓ According to finance ministry, the government has filed an application on March 22 this year to set aside the December 2020 international arbitral award in The Hague Court of Appeal.

## STRUGGLE SET TO INTENSIFY

➤ The dispute started, with the government in 2011 demanding from Cairn Rs 10,247 crore, plus interest and penalty, as tax on income from a restructuring of the company's Indian operations before the 2006 IPO

➤ The tax department also seized and sold the Scottish company's residual shares in Cairn India, which had by then been bought by NRI Anil Agarwal's Vedanta group.

➤ Cairn launched arbitration proceedings against the tax claim in The Hague under the India-UK bilateral investment treaty. The arbitration

tribunal settled the case in December, asking the Indian government to pay \$1.7 billion, including costs and interest

➤ The government challenged the verdict. Cairn offered to invest the \$500 million interest component in India to settle the dispute. The government asked it to utilise a special scheme for tax settlements, envisaging partial payment of claims

➤ Talks between the Cairn brass and top finance ministry officials failed to break the logjam, prompting Cairn to target Indian government assets abroad



- ✓ The Scottish firm, Cairn Energy Plc has recently sued loss-making Air-India in a US court to force recovery of a \$1.2 billion international arbitration award it won against the Indian government's retrospective tax claim.

## PERSONALITIES

- **Anvee Bhutani**, a Punjabi whose family is from Delhi - has been elected president of Oxford university student union (OUSU) in a by-election.



- ✓ The by-election took place after the previous winner, the first Indian female OUSU president-elect Rashmi Samant from Karnataka, was forced to quit following her controversial social media posts.
- ✓ Bhutani won by 655 votes after 11 stages of counting in a close contest with Yannis Baur, social secretary of the OU LGBTQ+ society, who got 649 votes.
- ✓ Bhutani is a second-year human sciences undergraduate student at Magdalen College.

- ✓ She is co-chair of the Campaign for Racial Awareness and Equality, president of the Oxford India Society and treasurer of the Oxford Hindu Society.
- ✓ Bhutani, 20, was born in California and her family still lives there.

## DEFENCE

- **INS Rajput - has been decommissioned after 41 years of service by the Indian Navy on May 21, 2021 in Naval Dockyard located in Visakhapatnam**



- ✓ INS Rajput was the first destroyer as well as the lead ship of the Rajput class of the Indian Navy.
- ✓ Rajput class ships of the Indian Navy are guided missiles destroyers that were built by the former Soviet Union (USSR) by modifying Kashin class destroyers
- ✓ Indian Navy commissioned 5 such ships in the 1980s and they are all attached to the Eastern Naval Command of the Indian Navy, headquartered at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh
- ✓ INS Rajput was commissioned on 4<sup>th</sup> May, 1980 by the then Indian Ambassador to USSR, I K Gujral.
- ✓ Captain Gulab Mohanlal Hiranandani was appointed as the first commanding officer of INS Rajput.
- ✓ INS Rajput took part in Operation Aman to assist the Indian Peace Keeping Force during the Sri Lankan Civil War and in Operation Cactus to resolve the Maldives hostage crisis situation, among others.
- ✓ INS Rajput was fitted with the BrahMos missile, while Prithvi-III missile was also test fired from INS Rajput.

## OBITUARY

- **Srikumar Banerjee, former chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission - died due to a heart attack at his residence in Navi Mumbai on May 23**



- ✓ Banerjee, who was in his 70s, had recovered from Covid-19 last month
- ✓ He retired as chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and secretary of the Department of Atomic Energy in 2012.
- ✓ Banerjee also served as the director of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) for six years till 2010.
- ✓ He was a veteran nuclear scientist who led nuclear establishment when India and USA signed their nuclear deal and legislated Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Bill.
- ✓ Banerjee was conferred “Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize for science and technology” in 1989 and the ‘Padma Shri’ award in 2005
- ✓ A metallurgy engineer from IIT Kharagpur, Banerjee joined the BARC after completing his BTech degree
- ✓ Banerjee’s work focused on physical metallurgy and material science.