

## **EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-SEPTEMBER 18,2021**

### **TAMIL NADU**

- **Tamil Nadu government - has launched the Rs.1,000-crore Kalaingar Nagarpura Membattu Thittam (KNMT) to fill infrastructure gaps in urban local bodies, especially municipalities and town panchayats.**
- ✓ In this regard, a ward level detailed survey would be taken up soon to prepare an urban development plan (UDP) on availability of water, sanitation, roads, streetlights, burial grounds/crematoriums, and other community infrastructure.
- ✓ Construction of bus stands, rejuvenation of water bodies, procurement of vehicles for solid waste management, development of parks and renovation of public toilets will also be covered under KNMT.
- ✓ The initiative also covers community infrastructure like community halls, markets and modern libraries with computers to assist the students and job aspirants
- ✓ However, work within places of worship or land belonging to or owned by religious faiths/ groups, acquisition of land, assets for individuals and work in government-aided, self-financing schools and colleges are among those prohibited under the KNMT
- ✓ Tamil Nadu Urban Finance and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (Tufidco) is the nodal agency for KNMT
- ✓ The state has 14 corporations, 121 municipalities and 528 town panchayats
- ✓ While the Smart Cities Mission and AMRUT initiative improve the infrastructure of 11 corporations and 28 towns, the new scheme is now rolled out to support the municipalities and the town panchayats
  
- **On September 17, the Tamil Nadu and Kerala governments - agreed to set up technical sub-committees to assess the Nirar-Nallar multipurpose straight-cut scheme**
- ✓ The panel will discuss ways and means to avoid a long circuitous route and convey water from Upper Nirar to river Nallar.

- ✓ This was one of the decisions taken during a bilateral talk between the secretaries of water resources of both states through video-conference.
- ✓ The discussions included building a new dam under Pandiyar-Punnampuzha project to divert water to Noyyal and Bhavani basin in Tamil Nadu.
- ✓ The Kerala government gave in-principle approval to divert 2.5tmcft of water from Anamalayar, which formed part of the original Parambikulam-Aliyar Project, and the long-pending demand of the Tamil Nadu government.
- ✓ The proposed technical sub-committee will look into the Anamalayar project as well.
- ✓ The Tamil Nadu government had suggested a new location for the construction of dam under Pandiyar-Punnampuzha project to control floods to a certain extent in river Chaliyar of Kerala.
- ✓ Kerala has given in-principle nod to the project, while both sides are interested in generating power from the project.
- ✓ Kerala has raised the issue of safety of Mullaperiyar dam to which the Tamil Nadu government replied that the state was taking all steps as per Supreme Court order.
- ✓ Kerala wanted a new dam as there was a fear of flooding among those in downstream areas.

## STATES

- **The Andhra Pradesh government - has decided to launch English as medium for teaching across all conventional degree colleges in Andhra Pradesh from the 2021-22 academic year.**
- ✓ The state government released an order to this effect on September 17.
- ✓ The move to introduce English medium education at the undergraduate level seeks to enhance the career prospects of students.
- ✓ Of the 2.62 lakh students, who have taken admissions into degree colleges in 2020-21, only 65,989 students were admitted into Telugu medium.
- ✓ This means, more than 75% students have opted for English medium even before it was made mandatory in all colleges from the 2021-22 academic year.
- ✓ The Andhra Pradesh State Council of Higher Education, which is preparing to roll out English medium from this academic year, is working on bilingual textbooks.
- ✓ The unique move will have curated lessons published in both Telugu and English in the same non-language textbooks.
- ✓ While one page will contain Telugu medium lessons, the next page will have the lesson in English.
- ✓ These textbooks are expected to help in the smooth transition of students from Telugu to English medium.
- ✓ Further, special training programmes are being designed to improve English speaking and writing skills of degree students.
- ✓ Earlier, the state government had decided to introduce English medium schools across the state.

- ✓ But the decision was challenged in the Andhra Pradesh High Court.
- ✓ Andhra Pradesh is perhaps the first state to offer English as the medium of instruction at degree level in all degree colleges across the state.
- **On September 17, Rajasthan assembly - passed the compulsory registration of marriage (amendment) Bill 2021**
- ✓ Speaking on the bill, urban development and housing minister Shanti Dhariwal said it has been brought in compliance with the orders of the Supreme Court.
- ✓ Under the Section 8 of the Act, if parties to the marriage have not completed the age of marriage, the parents or guardians shall be held responsible to submit the application within a period of 30 days.
- ✓ Provision of registration of marriage in case of death of husband or wife has also been made.
- ✓ Marriage certificate is a legal document which is required to avail governmental benefits including reservation for widows in government service and widow pension.
- **On September 17, the Karnataka government - introduced a bill in the legislative assembly to ban online gaming for profit, online gambling and betting**
- ✓ The bill aims to curb the harmful effects of placing bets via the internet and mobile apps by making these offences cognisable and non-bailable.
- ✓ They will attract a maximum imprisonment of three years and a penalty of up to Rs.1 lakh.

### **3-YR JAIL, ₹1L FINE**

- Bill seeks to **ban online gaming** for profit; **proposes 3-year jail**, up to ₹1 lakh fine
- **Not clear if online gambling and betting on cricket matches** will be banned
- **Playing web fantasy cricket not banned**; playing it for profit by placing bets will be banned
- **No ban on lottery or betting on horse races** at any course within or outside Karnataka

- ✓ For the first offence, punishment will be six months imprisonment and fine of Rs.10,000.
- ✓ For the second offence, it's one year imprisonment and fine of Rs.15,000.
- ✓ For the third offence, it's 18 months imprisonment and fine of Rs.20,000.
- ✓ Persons aiding or abetting online gaming will also be punished.
- ✓ Home minister Araga Jnanendra tabled the Karnataka police (Amendment) Bill, 2021

- ✓ The Bill seeks to “ban online games, involving all forms of wagering or betting, including in the form of tokens valued in terms of money paid before or after issue of it by amending the Karnataka Police Act of 1963”

## NATIONAL

- **The 45th GST council Meeting - was chaired by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on September 17, 2021 in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh**



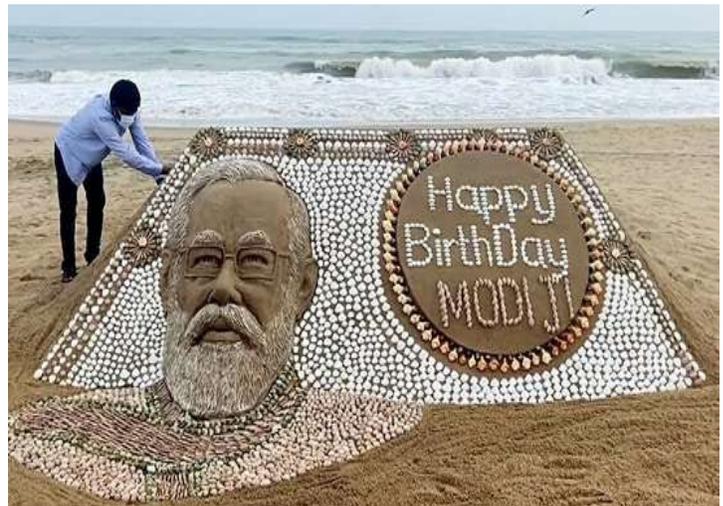
- ✓ The council was convened for its first physical meeting in 20 months with the last one held on December 18, 2019
- ✓ Significantly, the GST Council has turned down the proposal to bring petrol and diesel under the ambit of the uniform GST tax regime during its meeting
- ✓ Further, the council reduced the GST levy on four drugs related to Covid-19 treatment till December 31, as well as announced tax cuts for more life-saving drugs.
- ✓ It had also decided to charge 5% GST on services by cloud kitchens and food delivery platforms like Zomato and Swiggy with effect from January 1, 2022
- ✓ The food delivery aggregators will have to collect and deposit 5% GST with the government, in place of restaurants, for deliveries made by them
- ✓ Meanwhile, the council has decided to revise GST rates to correct Inverted duty structure anomalies in footwear and textile sectors, which is to be implemented from January 1, 2022
- ✓ Finance Minister announced the creation of two groups of ministers to look into certain changes in the GST regime
  - ✓ The first group to look at rate rationalisation issues and submit a report in two months
  - ✓ The second GoM to look into related issues of e-way bills, fastags, technology, compliance, composition schemes and submit report in two months

- ✓ GST rate on fortified rice kernels which can be used in schemes like Integrated Child Development Services Scheme has been reduced from 18% to 5%
  - ✓ Further, the GST rate on retro-fitment kits for vehicles used by Divyang/Persons with Disabilities reduced to 5% and GST rate on biodiesel (supplied to oil marketing companies for blending with diesel), reduced from 12% to 5%
  - ✓ The GST rates are increased from 5% to 18% on iron, manganese, copper, nickel, cobalt, aluminium, lead, zinc, tin, chromium – ores and concentrates
  - ✓ Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that the cess collected on goods such as soft drinks, tobacco, coal and cars for the repayment of loans to compensate states for GST shortfall will continue up to March 2026
  - ✓ Tamil Nadu finance minister Palanivel Thiaga Rajan, who was in Madurai, said he did not participate in the GST council meet as the initial agenda did not have anything important.
  - ✓ The State, meanwhile, opposed any move to bring fuel under GST as it is one of the last few taxing rights left with the states.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi – turned 71 on September 17, 2021**
- ✓ The BJP will observe 'Seva aur Samarpan Abhiyan' from September 17 to October 7, the day PM Modi was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Gujarat for the first time in 2001.
  - ✓ Born in Gujarat in 1950, PM Modi joined the RSS at an early age and worked with the BJP at the national and state level.
  - ✓ He has also been the longest-serving chief minister of Gujarat with his term spanning from October 2001 to May 2014.
  - ✓ PM Modi led the BJP to power at the Centre back to back in 2014 and 2019.
  - ✓ India administered more than 2.26 crore Covid vaccine doses on the day, setting a record for single-day inoculation as part of a special drive to mark PM Narendra Modi's birthday.

### A SUPER MAX VAX DAY

DAYS WHEN OVER 1CR SHOTS WERE GIVEN	FRIDAY'S TOP SHOT STATES No. of jabs till 10pm, in lakh
September 17 <b>2.26*</b>	Bihar <b>27.81</b>
August 31 <b>1.41</b>	Karnataka <b>27.80</b>
September 6 <b>1.19</b>	UP <b>25.89</b>
August 27 <b>1.08</b>	MP <b>24.92</b>
	Gujarat <b>21.62</b>
	Rajasthan <b>12.91</b>
<b>79.25cr</b> Total doses given so far (till Friday 10pm)	<b>59.52cr</b> Total 1st doses
	<b>19.72cr</b> Total 2nd doses

\*Till 10pm, all numbers in crore



- ✓ This is almost double the previous high of 1.41 crore doses given on a day on August 31.

- ✓ A total of 79.25 crore doses have been administered since the beginning of the vaccination drive.
- ✓ This includes more than 59.52 crore first doses and 19.72 crore second doses.
- ✓ With this around 63% of the country's adult population above 18 has received at least one anti-Covid jab, while nearly 21% have received both doses.
- ✓ Among nations with large populations, China has covered 73%, US 63% and UK 71%.
- ✓ Sulabh International celebrated Prime Minister's 71st birthday as "Swachhta Divas" by organising cleanliness drives at 71 locations in Uttar Pradesh.
- ✓ Union Minister Kapil Patil inaugurated 100 Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha offices to mark the 71st birthday of the Prime Minister
- ✓ The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation undertook a drive to plant 71,000 saplings to mark the 71st birthday of Prime Minister, with participants including Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel

## INTERNATIONAL

- **The World Bank Group - has decided to discontinue publication of its 'Doing Business report' on investment climates following irregularities in the 2018 and 2020 reports.**
- ✓ As per an internal probe of data irregularities, "undue pressure" was exerted by top bank officials, including then-CEO Kristalina Georgieva, to boost China's ranking in 2017
- ✓ The board investigation conducted by the law firm WilmerHale had raised "ethical matters, including the conduct of former Board officials as well as current and/or former Bank staff

### THEN WORLD BANK CHIEF IMPLICATED

➤ A report by a law firm cited 'pressure' from senior staff in the office of then-World Bank (WB) president Jim Yong Kim to change the report's methodology to **boost China's score in 2017**, likely to be at his direction



➤ It also said that **then-WB CEO Kristalina Georgieva** (now IMF MD) pressured staff to 'make specific changes to China's data points' and boost its ranking at a time when the bank was **seeking China's support** for a big capital increase

- ✓ The Wilmer Hale report cited "direct and indirect pressure" from senior staff in the office of then-World Bank president Jim Yong Kim to change the report's methodology to boost China's score
- ✓ Georgieva is now serving as the managing director of the International Monetary Fund
- ✓ China's ranking in the "Doing Business 2018" report published in October 2017, rose 7 places to 78th after the data methodology changes were made

- ✓ The Doing Business report assesses regulatory environments, ease of business startups, infrastructure and other business climate measures.
- ✓ In the 2020 report, India had jumped 14 places to 63rd position on the ease of doing business ranking.

## CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi - addressed the annual summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) via video conferencing on September 17.**



- ✓ This year marks the 20th anniversary of founding of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.
- ✓ In his six-minute virtual speech, the PM addressed the plenary session of the 21<sup>st</sup> meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State held in Tajikistan's Dushanbe
- ✓ The meeting was chaired by Tajikistan's President Emomali Rahmon
- ✓ External Affairs Minister, S Jaishankar represented India at the meeting
- ✓ This is the first SCO summit held in hybrid mode and the fourth summit participated by India as a fully fledged member of SCO
- ✓ During the speech, PM Modi spoke about increasing radicalization, which has become the biggest challenge to peace, security and trust deficit in the region, considering the developments in Afghanistan
- ✓ The PM also welcomed Iran as a new member country of the SCO along with three other new dialogue partners - Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Qatar
- ✓ He also flagged his concerns over the serious humanitarian crisis unfolding in Afghanistan and leading to an uncontrolled flow of drugs, illegal weapons and human trafficking.
- ✓ Further, PM Modi called upon the world leaders to ensure that humanitarian aid reaches Afghanistan in an unhindered manner.
- ✓ The group is also said to be considering the establishment of the SCO Counter-Terrorism Centre in Dushanbe as a separate permanent body to counter security threats
- ✓ At the end, the Dushanbe Declaration on the 20th anniversary of SCO was unveiled

- ✓ The SCO is an eight-member economic and security bloc, founded at a summit in Shanghai in 2001 by the presidents of Russia, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan
- ✓ India was made an observer at the SCO in 2005
- ✓ India and Pakistan became its permanent members in 2017.

## DEFENCE

- **The 15th edition of Indo–Nepal Joint Military Training Exercise Surya Kiran will be held from September 20, 2021, at Pithoragarh in Uttarakhand**
- ✓ The joint military training between Indian army and Nepali army seeks to improve bilateral relations and strengthen the traditional friendship between the two nations.
- ✓ Infantry battalions from both countries will participate in the exercise and share their experiences during the conduct of various counterinsurgency operations.
- ✓ Both the Armies would familiarise themselves with each other's weapons, equipment, tactics, techniques and procedures of operating in mountainous terrains
- ✓ The exercise also includes series of Expert Academic Discussions on various subjects such as Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, High Altitude Warfare, Jungle Warfare etc.
- ✓ Towards the end, a gruelling 48 hours exercise will be undertaken to validate the performance of both the armies in counter-insurgency in mountainous terrain.
- ✓ The last "Surya Kiran" exercise was held in Nepal in 2019.

## INTERNATIONAL DAY

- **International Coastal Cleanup Day – September 18**

### International Coastal Cleanup

Saturday, Sept 18 10 am - 12 pm



- ✓ International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) is one of the world's largest annual preservation and protection events and volunteer efforts for protecting the marine biodiversity
- ✓ The day is traditionally observed on the third Saturday of September

- ✓ Theme 2021 - “Keep trash in the bin and not in the ocean”
- ✓ Coastal Cleanup Day was established by the Ocean Conservancy, an organization that works to help protect the ocean from various challenges
- ✓ The clean-up drive was launched to create awareness among people to keep beaches clean, safeguarding our environment and prevent littering on oceans and coastlines
- ✓ The ICC was first started as part of UN Environment Programme in 1986 to engage volunteers to clean the ocean and create awareness among the local population
- ✓ In India, the 36th International Coastal Cleanup Day was celebrated consecutively for the tenth year by the Indian Coast Guard and Indian Naval Commands by carrying out clean up activities at various sea fronts

➤ **World Ozone Day – September 16**



- ✓ The Day is observed every year to highlight the depletion of the Ozone Layer and the need to practice possible solutions to preserve it
- ✓ A number of commonly used chemicals have been found to cause excessive damage to the ozone layer.
- ✓ The ozone layer, a delicate gas shield having high ozone concentrations, protects the Earth from the harmful portion of the rays of the sun, thus helping preserve life on the planet.
- ✓ The layer absorbs about 97 to 99% of ultraviolet rays and maintains the ozone-oxygen cycle.
- ✓ Most of the ozone stays within the stratosphere, whereby it acts as a shield, protecting the surface of the Earth
- ✓ The first ozone hole was discovered 30 years ago in May 1985 over Antarctica.
- ✓ Ozone is a gas that is made of three oxygen atoms, O<sub>3</sub>.
- ✓ The phaseout of controlled uses of ozone depleting substances helped protect the ozone layer and contributed significantly to global efforts to address climate change

- ✓ A mechanism for cooperation to take action to protect the ozone layer was formalized in the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, which was adopted and signed by 28 countries, on 22 March 1985.
- ✓ In September 1987, this led to the drafting of The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.
- ✓ Theme 2021 - 'Montreal Protocol Keeping us, our food, and vaccines cool.'
- ✓ The Montreal Protocol is a global agreement to protect the ozone layer, making it one of the most successful environmental agreements to date
- ✓ The principal aim of the Montreal Protocol is to take measures to control total global production and consumption of substances that deplete the ozone layer with a fixed time table
- ✓ The Protocol requires the control of nearly 100 chemicals in several categories.
- ✓ In 1994, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 16 September the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, commemorating the date of the signing of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer in 1987
- ✓ On 16th September 2009, the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol became the first treaties in the history of the United Nations to achieve universal ratification.
- ✓ The Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer reached agreement at their 28th Meeting of the Parties on 15 October 2016 in Kigali, Rwanda to phase-down hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs).

