

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – NOVEMBER 28, 2021

TAMIL NADU

- **Chennai - has recorded more than 100cm rain in November for the third time in nearly 100 years, with Chennai Nungambakkam weather station crossing the 100cm mark**
- ✓ The observatory recorded rainfall on 24 of the 27 days this month
- ✓ As per Meteorologists, the Chennai-based observatory recorded the highest rainfall for November in 1918 with 1088mm, followed by 1049mm in 2015.
- ✓ Chennai's normal rainfall for the entire North East monsoon season is 87cm.
- ✓ Overall, Tamil Nadu has registered about 75% excess rainfall for the season as on November 27
- ✓ Meenambakkam registered 185cm annual rainfall against 138cm including 1053.1mm since October 1, an excess of 447mm rainfall.

NATIONAL

- **On November 27, Prime Minister Narendra Modi – chaired a meeting to review the situation relating to Covid-19 and vaccination in the country**
- ✓ The meeting was conducted immediately after the World Health Organisation designated the new variant, B.1.1.529 or Omicron, as 'variant of concern' on November 26
- ✓ The PM directed officials to review plans for easing of international travel restrictions following reports related to Omicron, the new SARSCOV2 variant.
- ✓ He also asked officials to increase coverage of second dose of vaccine on time.
- ✓ During the meeting, the PM was briefed about B.1.1.529 or Omicron along with its characteristics, impact in various countries and implications for India.
- ✓ The B.1.1.529 variant was first reported to WHO from South Africa on November 24.
- ✓ The variant has a large number of mutations, some of which are of concern.
- ✓ According to experts, Omicron has 32 mutations on its spike protein, twice as many as Delta, making it the most infectious and vaccine-resistant variant ever

- ✓ WHO said preliminary evidence suggests an increased risk of reinfection with this variant, as compared to other VOCs.
 - ✓ The number of cases of this variant appears to be increasing in almost all provinces in South Africa.
 - ✓ The variant has so far been spotted in South Africa, Botswana, Hong Kong, Israel, Belgium, UK, Germany and some other countries
- **On November 26, the government – advised the public not to subscribe to the satellite-based internet services being advertised by Starlink Internet services, a division of Elon Musk-led SpaceX**
- ✓ The Elon Musk-backed company has not obtained licence from the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) for offering such services.
 - ✓ The government has also asked the company to stop booking/rendering its services in India from "immediate effect".
 - ✓ Earlier this month, Starlink had registered its business in India under a 100% owned subsidiary, Starlink Satellite Communications Private Limited
 - ✓ The SpaceX division aims to have 200,000 Starlink devices in India by December 2022, 80% of which will be in rural districts.
 - ✓ As per the company, it had received more than 5,000 pre-orders for its services in India
 - ✓ The company claims to deliver data speeds of around 50-150 megabits per second in beta stage
 - ✓ In September, SpaceX founder Musk said that the Starlink internet service would soon complete its set-up and start offering commercial internet services to users as early as 2022.
 - ✓ Starlink is currently offering beta service in 20 countries, as of November 2021.
- **The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister – approved the continuation of the umbrella scheme "Ocean Services, Modelling, Application, Resources and Technology (O-SMART)"**
- ✓ The scheme implemented by the Ministry of Earth Sciences is extended during the period from 2021-26 at an overall cost of Rs. 2177 crore.
 - ✓ The scheme encompasses seven sub-schemes - Ocean Technology, Ocean Modelling and Advisory Services (OMAS), Ocean Observation Network (OON), Ocean Non-Living Resources, Marine Living Resources and Ecology (MLRE), Coastal Research and Operation and Maintenance of Research Vessels.
 - ✓ A range of oceanographic and coastal research vessels of the Ministry provide required research support for scheme.
 - ✓ The O-SMART scheme involves oceanographic research activities
 - ✓ A state-of-the-art early warning system for oceanic disasters viz. tsunami, storm surges, has been established at INCOIS, Hyderabad to provide services for India and countries of the Indian Ocean, which have been recognized by UNESCO

- ✓ The present decade has been declared as the 'Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development' by the United Nations (UN)
- ✓ The O-SMART scheme, launched on August 29, 2018, aims at promoting ocean research through technology development and setting early warning weather forecast systems.
- **The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by PM Narendra Modi - has approved the continuation of the National Apprenticeship Training Scheme (NATS) for the next five years**
 - ✓ It has also approved the stipendiary support of Rs. 3,054 crore to apprentices who undergo apprenticeship training up to March 31, 2026
 - ✓ This budget allocated is about 4.5 times the expenditure made during the previous 5 years,
 - ✓ This increased expenditure on apprenticeship is in line with the thrust which National Education Policy 2020 has given to apprenticeship.
 - ✓ Under the scheme, about 9 lakhs apprentices will be trained by industry and commercial organizations in the next 5 years
 - ✓ The NATS will provide apprenticeships in the emerging areas under 'Production Linked Incentive' (PLI) such as mobile manufacturing, medical devices manufacturing, pharma sector, electronics/ technology products, automobile sector etc
 - ✓ The scheme will also be preparing skilled manpower for connectivity/logistics industry sectors, identified under Gati Shakti, a national master plan for Multi-modal connectivity, essentially a digital platform.
 - ✓ Under this scheme, apprentices who have completed graduate and diploma programme in Engineering, Humanities, Science and Commerce will receive stipend of Rs. 9,000 and Rs. 8,000 per month, respectively
- **Indian government and Asian Development Bank (ADB) - signed a loan agreement of \$300 million to enhance primary health care in urban areas.**
 - ✓ The agreement will benefit over 256 million urban dwellers in 13 states, including 51 million from slum areas.
 - ✓ Rajat Kumar Mishra, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs in the Ministry of Finance, signed the agreement for 'Strengthening Comprehensive Primary Health Care and pandemic preparedness in Urban Areas Program'
 - ✓ The programme will be implemented in urban areas across 13 states - Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and West Bengal
 - ✓ The programme is supported by a \$2 million technical assistance grant from ADB's Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction to provide support for programme implementation

- **The Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) - collaborates with Vigyan Prasar to promote scientific attitude among students**
 - ✓ As part of this partnership, AIM's Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL) and 'Engage with Science' (EWS), an interactive platform powered by Vigyan Prasar will come together to bring students closer to science and technology
 - ✓ Vigyan Prasar is an autonomous organization working under the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India
 - ✓ As part of this mission, more than 9.2 thousand schools equipped with ATL capability will be linked to the program by EWS
 - ✓ With a vision to prepare a million children in India as modern innovators, Atal Innovation Mission has established more than 9.2 thousand Atal Tinkering Laboratories in schools across the country
 - ✓ The main aim of ATL is to promote curiosity, creativity and imagination in the young minds through Do it Yourself approach
 - ✓ Engage with Science is part of Vigyan Prasar's 'India Science' OTT channel project, which aims to promote Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) based video content on India Science (www.indiascience.in) web portal
- **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) - has tied up with Google India Pvt Ltd to help provide loans to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the country**



- ✓ SIDBI is the country's apex regulatory body for overall licensing and regulation of financing to micro, small and medium enterprises
- ✓ The partnership will provide financial assistance up to ₹1 crore at competitive interest rates to MSMEs.
- ✓ It also brings a corpus of \$15 million (around ₹110 crore) to MSMEs as a crisis response related to Covid-19
- ✓ The loans will be disbursed by SIDBI and its ticket size will range from 25 lakhs Indian rupees (\$33,728) to 1 crore (\$135,000).
- ✓ The program will prioritize women-owned businesses and those that are engaged in production of equipment for the country's fight against the pandemic
- ✓ Last year, Google has committed to invest \$10 billion in India over the next 5 to 7 years

- ✓ In August, Facebook launched a similar program to help small and medium-sized businesses secure loans in the South Asian market
- **The first batch of Indian contingent to Antarctica – has reached the Indian Antarctic station Maitri recently**



- ✓ Four more batches shall be landing in Antarctica by air using DROMLAN facility and onboard chartered ice-class vessel MV Vasiliy Golovnin by mid-January 2022.
- ✓ This is the 41st Scientific Expedition of India to Antarctica, which has 2 major programs
- ✓ The first program involves geological exploration of the Amery ice shelf at Bharati station.
- ✓ The second program involves reconnaissance surveys and preparatory work for drilling of 500 meters of ice core near Maitri
- ✓ The ice core drilling will be done in collaboration with the British Antarctic Survey and the Norwegian Polar Institute.
- ✓ The Indian Antarctic program, which began in 1981, has completed 40 scientific expeditions
- ✓ India has built three permanent research base stations in Antarctica, named Dakshin Gangotri (1983), Maitri (1988) and Bharati (2012).
- ✓ The National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR), Goa—an autonomous institute under the Ministry of Earth Sciences—manages the entire Indian Antarctic program
- ✓ The crew is expected to return to Cape Town in late March/early April of 2022
- **The first-ever All-India Survey on Domestic Workers - was flagged off by Labour and Employment Minister Bhupender Yadav on November 22**
- ✓ The survey, being carried out by the Labour Bureau, would be completed in a year.
- ✓ On the occasion, the Minister also released an instruction manual with a questionnaire for the survey, which will cover 37 states/ UT's and 742 districts across the country.



- ✓ The survey is aimed to estimate the number and proportion of domestic workers at national and state level, percentage distribution of domestic workers with respect to live-in/live-out, formal/ informal employment, migrant/non-migrant, their wages and other socio-economic characteristics
- ✓ It will also provide the household estimates of live-in/live-out domestic workers and average number of domestic workers engaged by different types of households.
- ✓ This is the latest of a set of five national jobs enumeration campaigns aimed at collecting data on the country's vast informal workforce
- ✓ The other four surveys are the All-India Survey of Migrant Workers, All-India Survey of Domestic Workers (launched Monday), All-India Survey of Employment Generated by Professionals and All-India Survey of Employment Generated in the Transport Sector.
- ✓ In September, the government released the results of the first All-India Quarterly Establishment-based Employment Survey (AQEES) for the April-June quarter.

INTERNATIONAL

- **The Ugandan government - has lost its major airport to China for failing to repay a loan.**
- ✓ The government failed to reverse a loan agreement with the Chinese which had repayment conditions of attaching the Entebbe airport.
- ✓ On November 17, 2015, the Uganda government, represented by the finance ministry and the civil aviation authority, signed an agreement with Export-Import Bank of China (Exim Bank)
- ✓ The agreement was signed to borrow \$207 million at 2% upon disbursement with a maturity period of 20 years including a seven-year grace period.
- ✓ Under the deal, some provisions expose Entebbe airport and other Ugandan assets to be attached and taken over by Chinese lenders upon arbitration in Beijing.
- ✓ The Ugandan government waived international immunity in the agreements it signed to secure the loans, exposing the airport to take over.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **The World Trade Organization (WTO) - has postponed the “World Trade Organization ministerial conference” (WTO MC 12) scheduled from November 30 in Geneva for an indefinite period**
 - ✓ According to a WTO statement, no date has been set for the rescheduling of the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC).
 - ✓ The conference was postponed four days before it was due to start, hours after Omicron was declared a variant of concern by the World Health Organization.
 - ✓ Fears surrounding the spread of the variant saw countries banning flights from southern Africa, where the strain was first detected on November 9
 - ✓ The WTO's 12th ministerial conference (MC12) has already been postponed once before due to the pandemic.
 - ✓ It was originally due to take place in Kazakhstan's capital Nur-Sultan in June 2020.
 - ✓ WTO is a 164-member Geneva-based multilateral organisation which frames rules for global exports and imports besides adjudicating in trade disputes between the member countries
 - ✓ The conference is held once every two years, under the Marrakesh Agreement.
 - ✓ It is attended by trade ministers and other senior officials from the member countries of WTO.
 - ✓ The first Ministerial Conference (MC1) was held in 1996, in Singapore.
 - ✓ The last conference (MC11) was held in 2017 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.
 - ✓ Afghanistan is the newest member to join WTO in 2016.
 - ✓ New director-general Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Nigerian former foreign minister, became the first African and first woman to lead the WTO in March 2021

- **The Election Commission of India - organized an international webinar on the theme ‘Enhancing electoral participation of Women, Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) & Senior citizen Voters: Sharing Best Practices and New Initiatives’ at New Delhi on November 26, 2021**
 - ✓ The webinar was organized to mark the completion of two years of Chairmanship of the Election Commission of India at A-WEB
 - ✓ It was attended by over 100 delegates from 24 countries, 4 international organizations and 20 diplomats
 - ✓ Chief Election Commissioner of India, Sushil Chandra is the current Chairman of A-WEB, Association of World Election Bodies
 - ✓ During the event, the CEC said that after 7 decades and 17 General Elections since Independence, women's participation in India has exceeded that of men and stood at more than 67% in the 2019 General Election
 - ✓ Gender gap, a crucial parameter, which was -16.71% in 1962, has not only closed but reversed to +0.17% in 2019.



- ✓ In fact India has witnessed a 235.72% increase in female electors since the 1971 elections.
 - ✓ Chandra highlighted various initiatives taken by the ECI to enhance women participation
 - ✓ This includes involving more women as polling booth officials, larger number of All Women Managed Polling Stations, crèche facility at Polling Stations, separate toilets and waiting area at the polling booths, ensuring ease of registration with women Block level Officers motivating women in their own socio-cultural milieu, amongst others.
 - ✓ During his address, Sushil Chandra also elaborated on the concept of Absentee voter facilitation, introduced by ECI in 2020 to ensure voting facility at the doorstep especially for 80+ senior citizens, PwDs and COVID-affected voters
 - ✓ He cited various initiatives taken by ECI like PwD app, provision of wheelchair, volunteer assistance, Braille EPIC card, Braille signage in EVMs, free transport to and from polling station, priority voting and provision of AMFs to provide a hassle-free experience to PwD electors.
 - ✓ He added that such postal ballot facility had been successfully implemented across six state assembly elections including Bihar, Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and UT Puducherry, which had a cumulative elector base of 73.6 million.
- **Minister of State (MoS) for Ayush, Munjpara Mahedrabhai - virtually inaugurated the Ayurveda Parv-2021 on November 26 in New Delhi.**
- ✓ The three-day event has been organised to promote Ayurveda.
 - ✓ An exhibition has been arranged with 40 stalls and participation of Pharmaceutical companies.
 - ✓ Ayurveda Parv has been organized for proper utilization of Ayurvedic health care and also for coordination and better utilization of Ayurvedic research, education and manufacturing of medicines.
 - ✓ Secretary of Ministry of Ayush Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha was also present on the occasion



- ✓ In India, Ayurveda is promoted by Ministry of AYUSH, which was constituted by Indian government on November 9, 2014.
- ✓ India also celebrates “National Ayurveda Day” on Dhanteras, which marks the birth of Dhanvantari.
- **Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh - addressed the 9th BRICS Science & Technology Ministers' meet at New Delhi on November 26**



- ✓ During the meeting, the Minister said that BRICS countries must come together and innovate cost-effective, affordable, accessible, sustainable and scalable scientific solutions for many similar and unique challenges.
- ✓ He called for working towards rightful place for BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) in the Global Innovation Index (GII)
- ✓ The Minister informed that India under 'Vaccine Maitri' initiative has delivered around 70 million doses of vaccines to 95 countries
- ✓ GI is an annual ranking of countries by their capacity and success in innovation.
- ✓ The index is published by the World Intellectual Property Organization, in association with INSEAD, Cornell University, and other organisations and institutions.

- **Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu - led the Indian delegation at the two-day ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) summit held virtually on November 25 and 26, 2021**



- ✓ The Summit was held under the theme “Strengthening Multilateralism for Shared Growth”
- ✓ It was attended by leaders and high-level representatives from all 51 member countries of Asia and Europe alongwith ASEAN & European Union.
- ✓ This Summit will also mark the 25th anniversary of the ASEM process.
- ✓ The 13th Summit is being hosted by Cambodia as ASEM Chair.
- ✓ Along with the Opening Ceremony, Vice President will also participate in the First Plenary Session as well as the Retreat Session of the Summit
- ✓ ASEM is the only summit-level forum between Asia and Europe, covering 3 main pillars - politics, economics and social and cultural cooperation
- ✓ Thailand is a founding member of ASEM and was host of the first ASEM Summit in Bangkok in 1996, and is the current Regional Coordinator for the ASEAN Group
- ✓ The ASEM grouping comprises of 51 member countries and 2 regional organizations – European Union and ASEAN.
- ✓ Countries in the grouping represent 65% of global GDP, 60% of the global population, 75% of global tourism and 55% of global trade.
- ✓ The ASEM Summit is a biennial event alternating between country in Asia and Europe
- ✓ India joined ASEM process in 2006.
- ✓ The 7th ASEM Summit held in 2008 saw the first Summit level participation from India.
- ✓ Turkey is the newest member of ASEM that joined in 2021.

PERSONALITIES

- **Uttarakhand mountaineer, Harshwanti Bisht - has become the first woman in the history of the Indian Mountaineering Foundation to become its president.**
- ✓ The award-winning climber, educationist and environmentalist secured 70 out of 107 votes in the 60-year-old organisation’s latest election to clinch the victory.

- ✓ IMF, founded in the year 1958, is the apex body for mountaineering and allied adventure sports activities in the country.



- ✓ After completing her BA and MA in economics, Bisht joined the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering in Uttarkashi from where she did a course in climbing in 1975.
 - ✓ In 1981, she became one of the first three women to scale the main peak of Nanda Devi.
 - ✓ Bisht has been honoured with the Arjuna award for her achievements in the field of mountaineering
- **Olympic medalist and Padma Vibhushan, MC Mary Kom - was selected as brand ambassador of the TRIFED Aadi Mahotsav**



- ✓ Aadi Mahotsav is a celebration of the spirit of tribal culture, cuisine, craft, and commerce, which showcases their arts and crafts at the national level
- ✓ Union Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda inaugurated TRIFED Aadi Mahotsav at Dilli Haat on November 16, 2021 in New Delhi.
- ✓ The Aadi Mahotsav was launched in the presence of Sukhram Munda, who is the Grandson of Bhagwan Birsa Munda.
- ✓ In the 15-day Aadi Mahotsav, 1000 tribal artisans participated from 26 states to display their hand-made products.
- ✓ A significant feature of the event is “TRIBES India cuisines”, which are created and presented in various forms to suit urban taste by special tribal chefs.

- ✓ TRIFED had organized 16 Aadi Mahotsav in 2019-20.
- ✓ The most recent Aadi Mahotsav was organised in New Delhi, in November 2020 for a period of two weeks

ECONOMY

- On November 26, the Reserve Bank of India – said it has accepted 21 of the 33 recommendations made last year by an internal working group

TOUGHER ENTRY

- RBI accepts 21 of 33 proposals of an internal working group to review ownership and corporate structure for pvt banks
- A suggestion RBI hasn't accepted in full is that payments banks be allowed to convert into small finance banks after 3 years
- Capital requirement for new applicants raised from ₹500cr to ₹1,000cr

- ✓ The panel was set up to review extant ownership and corporate structure for Indian private sector banks
- ✓ A key proposal that was accepted was to increase the capital requirement for new applicants to ₹1,000 crore instead of ₹500 crore.
- ✓ However, the RBI has not accepted a proposal to consider large corporates and industrial houses for a banking licence.
- ✓ It has allowed promoters of banks to hold up to 26% (from the 15% now) in their banks, which is a positive for many lenders, including Kotak Mahindra Bank, IndusInd Bank, Bandhan Bank and CSB Bank.
- ✓ The new norms allow those who have diluted stakes to hike their shareholding.
- ✓ The minimum requirement on a track record of the experience of promoting entity, including for a converting NBFC, continues at 10 years for Universal Banks, and 5 years for Small Finance Banks (SFBs) and Payment Banks (PBs).
- ✓ The central bank set a track record requirement of five years for Payments Bank (PB) intending to convert into an SFB (earlier recommendation was three years).
- ✓ In November 2020, the internal working group to review extant ownership guidelines and corporate structure for Indian private sector banks had said that

corporates may be allowed as promoters of banks only after necessary amendments to the Banking Regulations Act, 1949.

- ✓ This would enable RBI to have the power to do consolidated supervision of conglomerates.
- ✓ It had also said that well-run NBFCs including those owned by corporate houses should be considered for bank licences.
- ✓ Another proposal that has been accepted with modifications was permitting non-promoters shareholders to hold up to 15% of the voting shares in a company.

