

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – DECEMBER 10, 2021

TAMIL NADU

- Chief Minister M K Stalin – inaugurated an ecological park created on 2.5 acres inside the Pallikaranai marshland at a cost of Rs 20 crore on December 10



- ✓ The park has a 2km walking path for bird watchers apart from the four watch towers in the marshland.
- ✓ Members of the public can get permission from the forest department to view the birds from the towers
- ✓ The marshland attracts a large number of rare birds, especially during the migratory season, from October to March.
- ✓ The marshland was originally spread over 7,000 hectares of area and is now left with one tenth of its total area, which is about 695.85 hectares.
- ✓ Pallikaranai is home to more than 450 types of faunal species, including plants, birds, fishes, mammals and reptiles

RAMSAR CONVENTION

Pic: L R Shankar



➤ Ramsar site is a wetland of international significance declared under an inter-governmental treaty in 1971 under Unesco in Ramsar Iran

➤ Point Calimere wildlife and bird sanctuary in Tamil Nadu, is one of the 46 Ramsar sites in India

➤ Declaration facilitates development policies and action and presents an opportunity for conservation and wise use of wetlands

➤ Gives access to expert advice on national and site-related problems

➤ Financial support through grants

- ✓ Tamil Nadu Wetland Authority had already sent a proposal to the centre on November 20 to declare Pallikaranai marshland as a designated protected site under the Ramsar Convention
- ✓ A Ramsar site is to protect environmentally fragile areas after an intergovernmental treaty signed at the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971 under the auspices of the United Nations
- ✓ The Ramsar treaty has come into effect to conserve and maintain wetlands.
- ✓ India is a signatory to the treaty and it came into effect in the country in 1982.
- ✓ The Ramsar Secretariat in Switzerland declares wetlands as Ramsar sites after assessing proposals from the country's designated administrative authority
- ✓ A wetland has to meet at least one of the nine criteria to be declared as Ramsar site, while Pallikaranai fulfills seven of them
- ✓ The Madras high court had recently ordered effective steps to declare the marshland as a Ramsar site.
 - ✓ Justice N. Kirubakaran (since retired) directed the government to explore the feasibility of declaring Pallikaranai marsh as a bird sanctuary under the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972
 - ✓ He ordered that the site should be declared as a protected wetland, under the provisions of the Wetland Rules of 2017
- ✓ In this regard, the State had already sent a proposal to the Centre for eco-restoration of Pallikaranai under Green Climate Fund, which includes entire eco-restoration, removal of invasive species, making it bird-friendly and planting trees and saplings that are suitable to the marshland
- ✓ The marshland is the only urban wetland in Chennai city, situated about 30 km inland of the Bay of Bengal

- ✓ The state had recently launched a wetland mission to identify and map 100 wetlands in five years and restore ecological balance with a focus on livelihood options
- **The Department of Tamil Development - has issued an order making Tamil mandatory in writing initials and names in government documents.**
- ✓ The educational institutions too have been asked to follow the practice and encourage students to affix their signatures in certificates and documents in Tamil.
- ✓ The decision is part of the department's efforts to promote Tamil in daily life among government employees and the student community
- ✓ Minister for Industries, Tamil official language and Tamil culture Thangam Thennarasu made an announcement regarding this in the state assembly during the debate on demands for grants for the department.
- ✓ The minister announced that the department would make an effort to bring the practice of writing the initials in Tamil when the names are written in Tamil in government documents, in government offices, colleges and schools.
- ✓ The public would also be encouraged to follow this practice.
- ✓ The announcement was aimed at discouraging the practice of using an English alphabet as initial even if the names were written in Tamil.
- ✓ The government order asked the government departments to put up posters to create awareness among the public coming to their respective departments to encourage them to follow this practice.
- **Tamil Nadu – has the highest number of medical colleges in the country, after the addition of 17 new medical colleges this year**
- ✓ With this, the state will have 69 medical colleges offering 10,375 MBBS seats – the highest in the country
- ✓ With 17 new medical colleges – government, private and deemed universities – Tamil Nadu will add 2,350 MBBS seats to the seat matrix during the admission in 2021.
- ✓ The state has 37 government colleges offering 5,125 seats, which are attached to government hospitals.
- ✓ In 2021, about 12% of all government medical seats in India are from the state.
- ✓ This means the state will offer the highest number of seats under the 15% all India quota
- ✓ Every year 15% of undergraduate seats from the government medical colleges across the country are given to the medical counselling committee under the Directorate General of Health Services for online admissions.
- ✓ The admission to the remaining 85% of the seats is done by the state based on merit in NEET and rules of reservation.
- ✓ The state has a policy to have at least one government medical College in every district, according to health minister Ma Subramanian

- ✓ The state also plans to increase seats in all existing medical colleges to 250.
 - ✓ All these undergraduate medical college hospitals will start postgraduate courses and specialty departments within five years.
 - ✓ Further, the state has sought funds from the centre to start secondary care hospitals in districts with new medical colleges.
- **The Madras School of Economics (MSE) - is planning to unveil its first BA in economics programme in 2022-23 with 50 seats.**



- ✓ It will also reserve 35% of seats for students from Tamil Nadu, while students from the state can also compete for the remaining 65% of seats
- ✓ The state recognised Madras School of Economics (MSE) as an institute of special importance in economics and allied subjects and management with degree granting power through Madras School of Economics Act, 2020.
- ✓ The school, which ranks second after Delhi School of Economics, has nearly 100% placement for its postgraduate degree programmes with average salary of ₹12 lakh per annum.
- ✓ Students wishing to join this degree programme may have to write an entrance test in June next year.
- ✓ The institute also plans to allow UG students to study on for five years for an integrated degree.
- ✓ MSE will award its own degree for UG, PG and PhD students.
- ✓ So far, the institute offered these programmes jointly with Central University of Tamil Nadu in Tiruvarur.

STATES

- **Uttarakhand assembly – approved a proposal to name the under-construction Sanskrit University at Devprayag after CDS General Bipin Rawat**



- ✓ Devprayag MLA Vinod Kandari moved a proposal in this regard on the first day of the two-day winter session of the Uttarakhand assembly
- ✓ The assembly paid glowing tributes to the late Chief of the Defense Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat, who died in a chopper crash near Coonoor in Tamil Nadu on December 8
- ✓ A three day state mourning was declared in the state of Uttarakhand from December 9
- ✓ A condolence motion on the death of General Rawat was the only agenda of the house on the first day of the session.
- ✓ The members of the house also observed a silence of two minutes as a mark of respect for General Rawat.
- ✓ Haridwar MLA and state BJP chief Madan Kaushik also tabled a proposal to name the Sainya Dham, being built in Dehradun in memory of those who died in the line of duty, after General Rawat.
- ✓ Apart from this, a Sainik Coaching Institute is proposed to be opened in the name of General Rawat, in which free coaching will be given to the youth going to the army
- ✓ General Bipin Rawat was born in the Pauri Garhwal district of Uttarakhand

NATIONAL

- **The resumption of scheduled international flights - will remain suspended till January 31, 2022**
- ✓ This was announced by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) in a circular on December 9.
- ✓ However, air bubbles with specific countries will continue till regular flights resume
- ✓ India now has 'air bubble' agreement with 32 countries, with the latest being Switzerland.
- ✓ Last month, India had announced a graded resumption of regular international flights from December 15, 2021.

- ✓ This restriction shall not apply to international all-cargo operations and flights specifically approved by DGCA
- ✓ However, international scheduled flights may be allowed on selected routes by the competent authority on case-to-case basis.
- ✓ The scheduled international flights were suspended on March 23, 2020
- **On December 9, Lok Sabha - passed two bills to fix the tenures of directors of the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Enforcement Directorate to a maximum of five years**
- ✓ The Central Vigilance Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2021, and the Delhi Special Police Establishment (Amendment) Bill, 2021 passed will set fixed tenure for the heads of investigative agencies.
- ✓ The Central Vigilance Commission Bill, 2021 seeks to amend Section 25 of the Central Vigilance Commission Act, while the DSPE (Amendment) Bill, 2021 seeks to amend Section 4B of the DSPE Act
- ✓ According to Union minister Jitendra Singh, the fixed tenure for the investigative agency heads will increase speed in the disposal of cases, bringing down pendency.
- ✓ The two bills were passed separately by voice vote in Lok Sabha
- ✓ These Bills seek to replace the two ordinances on the subject promulgated on November 14, 2021
- ✓ Earlier, the directors of the CBI and the ED enjoyed a fixed tenure of two years from the date of their appointment following directives of the Supreme Court in the Vineet Narain case
- ✓ The Bills are to be tabled for the Rajya Sabha's consideration and passing.

INTERNATIONAL

- **On December 8, US President Joe Biden - signed an executive order to make the federal government's contracts for goods and services 'carbon-neutral' by 2050**
- ✓ The order aims for a 65% reduction in planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and an all-electric fleet of car and trucks by 2035.
- ✓ The order will reduce emissions across federal operations, as part of a government-wide effort to confront climate change.
- ✓ The order also directs that all government buildings use 100% carbon pollution-free electricity like solar energy and wind by 2030, while being carbon-free by 2045, which includes a 50% emissions cut by 2032.
- ✓ The White House said the order will utilize the nation's 300,000 government buildings, 600,000 cars and trucks, and the country's yearly purchasing of about \$650 billion in goods and services to reduce emissions.
- ✓ The executive action is a part of Biden's commitment to support the growth of clean energy and clean technology industries

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi – virtually addressed the US President Joe Biden’s ‘Summit for Democracy’ on December 9**



- ✓ At the outset, the PM said that he was proud to represent the world’s largest democracy at the Summit and commended the initiative
- ✓ He emphasised the need for democratic countries to deliver on values enshrined in their constitutions and also called on technology companies to contribute in efforts to preserve open and democratic societies.
- ✓ During his address, the PM outlined sensitivity, accountability, participation and reform orientation as four pillars of Indian democratic governance.
- ✓ As a special gesture, PM Modi was invited to participate in the main leaders’ plenary session hosted by President Biden.
- ✓ His remarks came during a closed-door session that saw interventions by 12 ‘select’ countries, including India.
- ✓ The second Leaders’ Plenary Session was hosted by the President of the European Commission, Ms Ursula von der Leyen
- ✓ PM will deliver India’s national statement, which will be open to the public, at the summit on December 10.
- ✓ According to the PM, India’s struggle for freedom is a struggle that led to a democratic system, which keeps on flourishing even after the 75 years of independence
- ✓ He also recalled that exactly on this date 75 years ago, India’s Constituent Assembly had held its first session (December 9, 1946)
- ✓ The PM highlighted India’s civilizational ethos as one of the original sources of democracy and mentioned that the structural features like multi-party elections, independent judiciary and free media are important elements of a democracy.
- ✓ Speaking about the role of technology in democracies, the PM said that nations should jointly shape global norms for social media and cryptocurrency.

- ✓ This virtual summit by the US witnessed participation of leaders from government, civil society, and the private sector.
- ✓ More than 100 countries are participating in the virtual summit, which was convened to discuss and counter threats to democracy worldwide.
- ✓ PM Modi's address came as the two-day virtual Summit for Democracy, hosted by US President Joe Biden, concludes on December 10
- ✓ On the summit's first day, Biden announced plans for the US to spend up to 424 million around the world to support independent media, anti-corruption work and more
- ✓ Biden is scheduled to deliver closing remarks to leaders and civil society groups on December 10
- ✓ China and Bangladesh were not invited to the Washington Summit for Democracy.
- ✓ Pakistan, despite being invited, chose not to attend the summit.

OBITUARY

- **Italian writer-director Lina Wertmuller, the first woman ever to be nominated for best director at the US Academy Awards - has died at the age of 93**



- ✓ A filmmaker since the early 1960s, Wertmuller took world cinema by storm with her politically charged films of the 1970s, including "The Seduction of Mimi", "Love and Anarchy" and "Swept Away".
- ✓ She was the first woman to be nominated for a best director Oscar for her film "Seven Beauties" in the year 1977
- ✓ The movie earned her four Oscars nominations, including her historic win for best director and best original screenplay.
- ✓ Wertmuller received a lifetime achievement award from the Oscars film academy in 2019

SPORTS

- **Manipur - secured their third national title in a row and 21st overall at the 26th Senior Women's National Football Championship at the EMS Corporation Stadium, Kozhikode on December 9**



Image tweeted by @IndianFootball

- ✓ In the final game, Manipur had defeated Railways on penalties, after both sides finished the regular time without scoring any goal
- ✓ Manipur goalkeeper Okram Roshini Devi made all the difference in the title decider pulling off three saves in the penalty shootout for a 2-1 win.
- ✓ Earlier, Manipur had defeated Railways in the 2019-20 final as well.
- ✓ Manipur team was coached by former India international midfielder Oinam Bembem Devi.
- ✓ It was a special moment for Manipur coach Oinam Bembem Devi as well, who had won the national women's title as a player
- ✓ Champions Manipur had emerged on top of Group A - beating Daman & Diu, Pondicherry and Meghalaya - in all three matches.
- ✓ They defeated Tamil Nadu 2-0 in the quarter-finals before beating Odisha 3-0 in a penalty shootout in the semis.
- ✓ In another semi-final, Railways defeated Mizoram, who had made the semis for the first time in their history

