

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-DECEMBER 8, 2021

TAMIL NADU

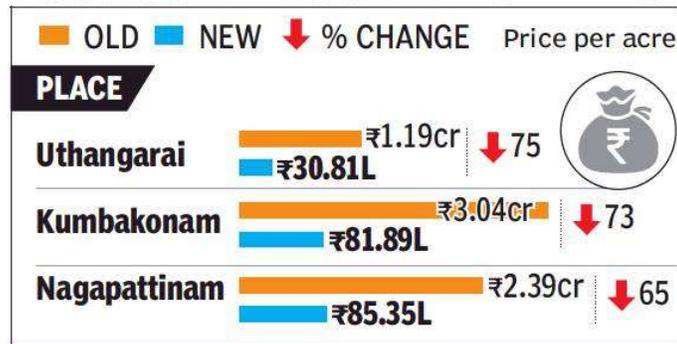
- **Kazhuveli, a brackish water lake in Marakkanam of Villupuram district, has been declared as the 16th bird sanctuary of Tamil Nadu.**



- ✓ Kazhuveli wetland is the second largest brackish water wetland in southern India after Pulicat lake
- ✓ It is located around 18 km north of Puducherry in coastal Tamil Nadu adjacent to Bay of Bengal along the East Coast Road
- ✓ Supriya Sahu, principal secretary in the Union environment, climate change and forests ministry, passed an order in this regard on December 6
- ✓ The proposal to declare the bird sanctuary came from TN principal chief conservator of forests and chief wildlife warden Shekhar Kumar Niraj
- ✓ Accordingly, the order declares the area to an extent of 5,151.6 hectares in Vanur and Marakkanam taluks of Villupuram district as 'Kazhuveli bird sanctuary'.
- ✓ The Tamil Nadu government considers that the Kazhuveli water body is of "adequate ecological, faunal, floral and geomorphological significance for the purpose of protecting, propagating and developing wildlife and its environment"
- ✓ The water body is spread over eight villages in Marakkanam taluk and five villages in Vanur taluk of Villupuram district

- ✓ The sanctuary is one of the 94 identified wetlands under the National Wetland Conservation and Management Programme launched by the Union government.
 - ✓ Point Calimere in Nagapattinam district, Pallikaranai marsh in Chennai and Ousteri lake, spread across Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, are also included under the programme.
 - ✓ During the migratory season (October to March), at least 200 species of long-distance migrant birds from Central Asia and Siberia, including various types of pelicans, storks, heron and ducks, are sighted at Kazhuveli.
 - ✓ Unlike the other wetlands, Kazhuveli is a shallow, fresh water lake and is linked to Uppukkalli creek.
 - ✓ In February this year, the Villupuram district administration issued a 'first declaration' under the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 to list Kazhuveli as a bird sanctuary.
 - ✓ According to the Tamil Nadu Forest Department, Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary, notified in 1936 during the British era, was the first sanctuary for birds in India.
- **On December 7, the state government - reduced the prices of plots at various Sidco (Small Industries Development Corporation) estates across Tamil Nadu to make them affordable for MSMEs to establish industrial units.**
- ✓ The move is aimed at improving industrial investments in the state to achieve chief minister M K Stalin's target of making Tamil Nadu a \$1 trillion economy by 2030.

75% CUT IN SOME ESTATES



- ✓ The price reduction, which ranged between 5% and 50%, went up to 75% in some places.
- ✓ In Chennai and its three neighbouring districts Kancheepuram, Chengalpattu and Tiruvallur, the plot prices were retained at 2016-17 land rate level.
- ✓ The move follows requests made to the state by organizations representing small and medium enterprises.
- ✓ In three recent industrial conclaves held in Chennai and Coimbatore, the state government had signed MoUs with various companies for investments valued at more than ₹1 lakh crore.

- ✓ Sipcot caters to large industries and its board determines the cost of industrial plots, while Sidco has to sell industrial plots as per the norm set by the Tamil Nadu government.
- ✓ Earlier, the price of Sidco plots were increased by an average of 10% to 15% every year
 - ✓ This hike was based on guideline value, notional increase over previous year, notional increase based on simple interest for three different categories of industrial estates, and location of the estates.
- ✓ Sidco has been developing industrial estates for more than 50 years.
- ✓ Due to high prices, there have been no takers for land inside many of the SIDCO.
- ✓ The norm-based increase in price has made these plots too costly for entrepreneurs, particularly MSMEs.
- ✓ As a result, Sidco was left 'unsold' with 1,311 plots and 371 acres.
- ✓ Incidentally, Sidco had stopped implementing its annual price hike for industrial plots in several estates from 2016-17 as per a decision taken by the then AIADMK government to make the rates viable for MSMEs.

STATES

- **On December 7, the Nagaland cabinet - decided to formally write to the Centre to repeal the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act of 1958 "from the state"**
- ✓ The state had blamed the Act for the killing of 14 Konyak civilians in a botched counter-insurgency operation by the Army in Nagaland's Mon district on December 4.
- ✓ The firing incidents took place in the Oting-Tiru area on December 4 and Mon town on December 5.
- ✓ The cabinet also called off events scheduled for the last four days of the state-organised 10-day Hornbill Festival at Naga Heritage Village in Kisama near Kohima to mourn the deaths.
 - ✓ The Hornbill Festival, which is called the 'Festival of Festivals', showcases the rich and diverse Naga ethnicity through folk dances, traditional music, local cuisine, handicraft, art workshops etc
 - ✓ The start of this festival on December 1 marks the Nagaland statehood day.
 - ✓ The festival is named after the Indian Hornbill bird as it is displayed in folklore of most of the tribals in the state of Nagaland.
- ✓ According to CM Neiphiu Rio, the "draconian" AFSPA hadn't been withdrawn from Nagaland despite a 25-year ceasefire with insurgent groups.
- ✓ He said every time the state cabinet would recommend that the "disturbed area" tag be removed, the Centre would extend it by another year to keep the AFSPA in force.

- ✓ Rio's demand that the legislation must go was supported by his Meghalaya counterpart Conrad Sangma, also an NDA ally, and thereafter by multiple organisations in Assam.
- ✓ AFSPA, which was extended in Nagaland for six months from June 30, is also in force in Assam, Manipur (barring the Imphal municipal area) and three Arunachal Pradesh districts and eight police stations bordering Assam.
- ✓ AFSPA provides power to the armed forces to maintain public order in disturbed areas
- ✓ Under the act, armed forces have the power to prohibit a gathering of five or more persons in an area, use force or even open fire after giving warning, arrest a person without giving warrant, ban the possession of firearms and enter or search premises without any warrant

NATIONAL

- **The government - has signed two loan agreements of Rs 2,074 crore with Asian Development Bank (ADB) for an affordable housing project in Tamil Nadu and a water sanitation programme in Uttarakhand**
- ✓ The government and the ADB signed a \$150 million (around Rs 1,132 crore) loan agreement to provide access to inclusive, resilient, and sustainable housing for the urban poor in the state of Tamil Nadu.
- ✓ Separately, a \$125 million (around Rs 942 crore) loan was signed to improve access to safe and affordable drinking water supply and citywide inclusive sanitation services in Dehradun and Nainital cities in Uttarakhand
- ✓ The affordable housing project is aligned with the government's development priorities on urban sector development, particularly the flagship programme PMAY-Housing for All (Urban).
- ✓ The affordable housing project will be used to construct housing units in nine separate locations in Tamil Nadu, through the Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board.
- ✓ It will relocate around 6,000 households vulnerable to natural hazards to safer locations
- ✓ The funding will also help Tamil Nadu's Directorate of Town and Country Planning develop regional plans to map the state's economic and infrastructure development
- ✓ A portion of the ADB loan will be invested by the state government as equity into the Tamil Nadu Shelter Fund.
- ✓ Nearly half of Tamil Nadu's 72 million (7.2 crore) population lives in urban areas making it one of the most urbanized states in India
- **The Centre – to introduce visually interpreted rapid Covid test 'RT-LAMP' within two weeks at the airports in India and other places**

- ✓ The test was developed by the Indian Council of Medical Research-National Institute of Virology (ICMRNIV)
 - ✓ It has been transferred to Chennai and Delhi-based companies for production
 - ✓ The test could cut down the cost and the turnaround time by almost 40%
 - ✓ The molecular-based technology used in this rapid test kit neither requires expensive machines like RTPCR, high-speed centrifuges nor a skilled workforce to conduct the test.
 - ✓ The reverse transcription loop-mediated isothermal amplification test or RT-LAMP has 100% sensitivity and 100% specificity.
 - ✓ It takes only 30-40 minutes to deliver the result, which can be visually interpreted.
 - ✓ Also, the test can be very easily deployed at the airports, docks, railway stations and other entry points for the screening of patients for Covid-19 as it does not require sophisticated machinery and skilled workforce
 - ✓ However, RT-LAMP will not be able to differentiate between variants of SARS-CoV-2.
- **The law ministry - has issued a draft law seeking public opinion to amend the Notaries Act, in order to streamline appointments of notaries across the country**
- ✓ The draft law proposes to restrict terms of an advocate to practice as a notary for a maximum of 15 years.
 - ✓ This is intended to allow more young lawyers to enter the field.
 - ✓ The proposed amendment bill also seeks to suspend the certificate in cases of professional misconduct.
 - ✓ The bill proposes to restrict the renewal of certificates of practice of notaries up to two terms, i.e., original term of five years and two renewal terms of five years each.
- **Reliance Industries (RIL) - along with Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) and ADQ will set up a \$2-billion petrochemicals facility in Abu Dhabi, UAE's largest emirate.**
- ✓ This will be RIL's first investment in a greenfield petchem project outside of India.
 - ✓ The petchem facility in Abu Dhabi's Al Ruwais city is expected to be operational by 2025
 - ✓ It will produce chlor-alkali, ethylene dichloride and polyvinyl chloride (PVC).
 - ✓ Chlor-alkali enables the production of caustic soda, crucial to the alumina refining process.
 - ✓ Ethylene dichloride is used to produce PVC, which has a wide range of applications across housing, infrastructure and consumer goods.
 - ✓ The Abu Dhabi facility will have a capacity to produce 9.4 lakh tons of chlor-alkali annually, 1.1 million tons of ethylene dichloride and 3.6 lakh tons of PVC.
 - ✓ The petchem project was initiated based on the demand potential for these products.

- ✓ In 2019, RIL and Abu Dhabi had signed a framework to explore joint investments in petchem.
- ✓ The unit will create export opportunities to Southeast Asia and Africa, as well as provide local industry with a source of critical raw materials manufactured in the UAE.

PERSONALITIES

- **Indian-origin Anil Menon - was among 10 new candidates for Nasa's human spaceflight mission to Moon under the Artemis programme**



- ✓ Menon is a lieutenant colonel with the US Air Force and former first flight surgeon of Elon Musk-owned SpaceX
- ✓ The Artemis programme is scheduled for launch by 2024-25 and plans to send humans to the lunar south pole.
- ✓ Menon is among the six men and four women chosen from more than 12,000 people, who applied to 'Nasa' to join the two-year rigorous Artemis training programme in March 2020.
- ✓ Their inclusion in the training programme, however, does not guarantee that all of them will be sent to Moon.
- ✓ Menon is a emergency medicine physician with fellowship training in aerospace medicine.
- ✓ Born to parents who migrated from India and Ukraine and raised in Minneapolis, Menon completed doctor of medicine from Stanford Medical School.
- ✓ The 45-year-old had helped launch SpaceX's first humans to space in 2018 and was the lead flight surgeon for five SpaceX launches and also worked on its Starship project.
- ✓ He also spent a year in India as a rotary ambassadorial scholar to study and support polio vaccination programme.
- ✓ Just like his Nasa colleague Raja Chari, Menon had served in the US air force as a lieutenant colonel and logged over 100 sorties in the F-15 fighter jet and transported over 100 patients as part of the critical care air transport team.

- ✓ He also served as a first direct responder during the 2010 earthquake in Haiti and later during the 2015 earthquake in Nepal.
- ✓ Menon was also deployed in Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom.
- ✓ In 2014, Menon started as a Nasa flight surgeon and supported four long-duration crew members on the ISS as deputy crew surgeon for Soyuz missions Soyuz 39 and Soyuz 43 and prime crew surgeon for Soyuz 52.
- ✓ Anil Menon and the members will join the training programme in January.
- ✓ After their training, they could be assigned to Nasa missions involving research aboard the ISS, deep space missions to destinations, including Moon, on the Orion spacecraft and space launch system rocket.

DEFENCE

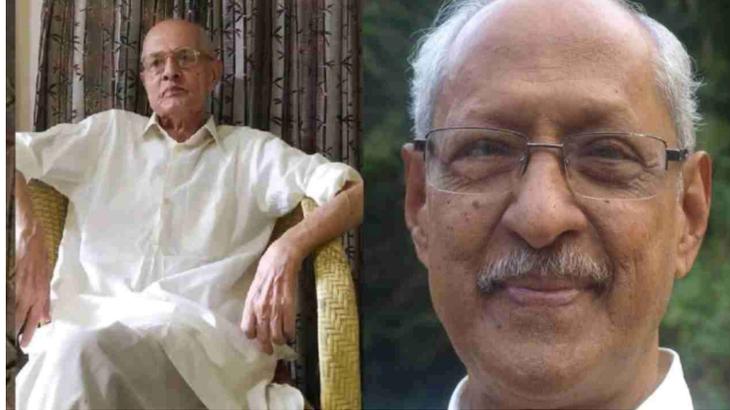
- **On December 7, the DRDO - successfully flight-tested a vertical-launch short range surface-to-air missile (VL-SRSAM) designed for warships to intercept hostile aircraft, helicopters and drones at very low altitudes.**



- ✓ The test was conducted at the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur off the coast of Odisha
- ✓ The missile's flight-path against an 'electronic target' and its parameters were monitored using a number of tracking instruments.
- ✓ The launch was conducted to validate integrated operation of all components of the weapon system which are required for its operational deployment on warships.
- ✓ The VL-SRSAM seeks to replace "Barak 1 surface to air missile system" onboard Indian Navy warships.
- ✓ The first trial of the surface-to-air missile was conducted on 22nd February this year
- ✓ DRDO conducted the second test on December 7, 2021 as a confirmatory trial for validating the configuration and integrated operation of all weapon system components.
- ✓ Defence minister Rajnath Singh said the system will enhance the air defence capability of Indian warships against aerial threats.

AWARDS

- **Acclaimed Assamese poet Nilmani Phookan Jr and Konkani novelist Damodar Mauzo - won the 56th and 57th Jnanpith Award respectively.**



- ✓ Phookan is the third literary stalwart from the state to be selected for the coveted award for last year after Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya in 1979 and Mamoni Raisom Goswami in 2000
- ✓ Phookan, 90, is a Sahitya Akademi (1981) and Padma Shri awardee (1990)
- ✓ In 1997, he was awarded the Assam Valley Literary Award, and in 2002 he received the Sahitya Akademi Fellowship given by Sahitya Akademi.
- ✓ Based out of Guwahati, he is a poet of renown and has written Surya Henu Nami Ahe Ei Nodiyedi, Gulapi Jamur Lagna, and Kobita.
- ✓ Mauzo, 77, is based out of Majorda, Goa, and has previously won the Sahitya Akademi Award.
- ✓ He is known for his novels, such as Karmelin, and Tsunami Simon, and short stories Teresa's Man and Other Stories from Goa.
- ✓ His books have been translated into several Indian languages.
- ✓ Mauzo's achievement comes in Goa's 60th year of liberation from the Portuguese Estado da India in 1961
- ✓ It was only after 1961 that Konkani literature was able to find a place in the country.
- ✓ This is the second Jnanpith Award for a Konkani writer— the first being Ravindra Kelekar in 2006.
- ✓ The country's highest literary award, the Jnanpith, is bestowed on writers for "their outstanding contribution to literature"

SPORTS

- **India's young GM R Praggnanandha - was given an honour of making the first celebratory move in the ninth game of the World Chess Championship at Dubai**



- ✓ The 14-game World championship match is being played between reigning champion Magnus Carlsen and his Russian opponent Ian Nepomniachtchi
- ✓ The 16-year-old Praggu played 1.c4 for the Nepomniachtchi, who is playing with the white pieces
- ✓ However, it is not necessary for the player playing with the white piece that he/she continues with the same first move, called 'ceremonial' move
- ✓ However, in this game, Ian Nepomniachtchi continued the match with the move played by Praggnanandhaa.
- ✓ The ninth game was comfortably won by Magnus Carlsen with black pieces
- ✓ It was also the first win for Black in the World championship after 24 games
- ✓ Earlier, Karjakin had defeated Carlsen with Black pieces in Game 8 in 2016 World Championships
- ✓ The Norwegian Carlsen has not suffered a defeat in 25 successive world championship classical games, starting with Game 9 of his World title match against Sergey Karjakin in 2016.

