

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS—JANUARY 21, 2022

TAMIL NADU

- The Tamil Nadu government - has given nod for the eighth phase of excavation at Keeladi, excavations in six other places, and the search to identify the ancient Korkai harbour.



- ✓ The excavations will begin in the first week of February and will be carried out till September at a budget of ₹5 crore allocated by the state government
- ✓ This was announced by the Chief Minister M K Stalin in a statement.
- ✓ The recent excavations in Keeladi, Alagankulam, Korkai, Sivagalai, Adhichanallur, Kodumanal, Mayiladumparai and Gangaikonda Cholapuram, have clearly proved the ancientness of Tamil culture.
- ✓ Keeladi continues to remain as the forerunner to all other excavations at present.
- ✓ The findings at Keeladi indicate that Tamil Nadu had an urbanised riverbed civilization like the Indus valley civilization which dates back to the 6th century BC, and that brahmi script was Mauryan in origin.
- ✓ Further, Keeladi proved that a literate and artistic civilization flourished on the banks of river Vaigai as early as the 6th century BC.

- ✓ The de-husked paddy grains found in a burial urn in Sivagalai, dates back to 1155 BC.
- ✓ It has been proved that the Thamirabarani riverbed civilization is over 3,200 years old
- ✓ Hence, the government has decided to carry out excavations throughout Tamil Nadu to discover the pre-historic and early historical regions in the state.
- ✓ As a part of this, excavations have been planned in Keeladi and its cluster villages of Agaram, Manalur and Konthagai, in the eighth phase.
- ✓ The Tamil Nadu state archaeology department has planned excavations along the coastal regions, to find the remains of the ancient Korkai harbour on the estuary of Thamirabarani river.
- ✓ This excavation would be carried out by the state archaeology department in coordination with the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO).

NATIONAL

- **Amar Jawan Jyoti or the 'eternal flame' at the iconic India Gate - will be extinguished after 50 years**



- ✓ It will be merged with the flame at the adjoining National War Memorial (NWM) in the run-up to this Republic Day at 3.30 pm on January 21.
- ✓ India Gate was built by the British to pay homage to 84,000 soldiers who died in World War I and the Anglo-Afghan war.
- ✓ The Amar Jawan Jyoti was built under the arch of the India Gate by the Indira Gandhi government to honour the 3,843 soldiers who died liberating Bangladesh in 1971.
- ✓ It had burned ever since, fuelled first by cylinders of liquified petroleum gas and later with piped gas
- ✓ All national-level functions to pay homage to fallen soldiers, including the Republic Day and Independence Day, have been shifted from the Amar Jawan Jyoti to the NWM
- ✓ The National War Memorial, spread over 40 acres, was built at a cost of ₹ 176 crore and inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in February 2019.

- ✓ The names of 26,466 fallen soldiers, who laid down their lives in wars and counter-insurgency operations since Independence, are etched on the NWM walls.

SUPREME COURT VERDICT

- **On January 20, the Supreme Court - held that daughters of Hindu fathers would be entitled to inherit his self-acquired and other inherited properties, if the father dies without making a will.**
- ✓ The landmark judgement, which came on an appeal against the Madras High Court verdict, dealt with the property rights of Hindu women and widows under the Hindu Succession Act, 1956
- ✓ As per the judgement, such daughters would get preference over other collateral members of the family such as sons and daughters of brothers of the deceased father.
- ✓ A bench of Justices S Abdul Nazeer and Krishna Murari held the validity of the judgement even prior to codification of Hindu personal laws and enactment of the Hindu Succession Act in 1956
- ✓ The bench was examining the matter concerning the right of the daughter to inherit the self-acquired property of her father in the absence of any other legal heir
- ✓ It said the law of inheritance would apply to partition of properties even if the father died intestate before 1956.
- ✓ In August 2020, the apex court ruled that daughters will have inheritance rights equal to those of sons in the properties of fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers right from the codification of the Hindu laws in 1956.
- ✓ In case a female Hindu dies without leaving a will, the court said, the property she inherited from her father or mother would go to the heirs of her father.
- ✓ On the other hand, the property she inherited from her husband or father-in-law would go to the heirs of the husband.
- **On January 20, the Supreme Court - upheld the Constitutional validity of 27% reservation for OBCs in All India Quota seats for admission in post-graduate and undergraduate medical courses in government-run medical colleges.**
- ✓ Earlier, on January 7, the SC allowed NEET counselling to proceed while maintaining 27% reservation for Other Backward Classes and 10% for Economically Weaker Sections in All India Quota seats
- ✓ A bench of Justices D Y Chandrachud and A S Bopanna held that providing reservation in the AIQ seats is a policy decision of the government, which is subject to judicial review similar to every reservation policy

- ✓ The question of the validity of the EWS criteria, including the ₹8 lakh income threshold, would be heard finally and decided upon by the Supreme Court in the third week of March 2022
- ✓ The ₹8 lakh gross annual family income limit criterion for identifying the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) was recommended for retention by the government-appointed former Finance Secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey-led Expert Committee on December 31, 2021
- ✓ This criterion would be implemented for the admission year 2021-2022 so that the admission process is not disturbed
- ✓ The top court was hearing petitions against the July 29, 2021 notification issued by the Directorate General of Health Services of the Ministry of Health implementing 27% and 10% reservation for OBC and EWS categories, respectively, while filling up 15% undergraduate and 50% postgraduate AIQ seats under NEET.
- ✓ The income ceiling for OBCs is revised every three years, and the Union cabinet had last hiked it from ₹6 lakh to ₹8 lakh on August 23, 2017, and a notification was issued later
- ✓ The Constitution (One Hundred and Third Amendment) Act, which introduced the 10% EWS quota, came into force on January 14, 2019.

INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

- **India and Sri Lanka - extended their existing science & technology cooperation for three more years**
- ✓ This decision was arrived at the 5th India-Sri Lanka Joint Committee meeting on Science and Technology held virtually on January 20
- ✓ India was represented by S K Varshney, Advisor and Head, International Cooperation, Department of Science and Technology, while Sri Lanka was led by Deepa Liyange, Secretary, State Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational Education, Research and Innovation.
- ✓ Both the countries resolved to focus on new areas like waste-water technologies, biotech, sustainable agriculture, aerospace engineering, robotics, big data analytics and artificial intelligence.
- ✓ Both countries also reviewed the ongoing collaborative activities in nine areas spanning food technology, plant-based medicines, meteorology, space research & applications, robotics and automation, industrial electronics, renewable energy, waste management, information and communication technology
- ✓ Under the e-ITEC fellowship program offered by India, since April 2020, 550 Sri Lankan nationals have benefitted from training in various Indian institutions in areas like biotech, medical research, renewable energy, and so on

- On January 20, PM Narendra Modi and his Mauritius counterpart Pravind Kumar Jugnauth - virtually inaugurated a social housing project in Mauritius, and launched a couple of other projects



- ✓ The two sides further signed an agreement for extension of a \$190 million Line of Credit by India to Mauritius.
- ✓ The credit line will be used for Mauritius' Metro Express and other infrastructure projects.
- ✓ As India looks to further strengthen its presence in Indian Ocean, the two countries signed another MoU for implementation of Small Development Projects.
- ✓ On the occasion, the two Prime Ministers also took part in a virtual foundation stone laying ceremony for two other projects
 - ✓ The construction of a state-of-the-art Civil Service College and a 8 MW Solar PV Farm are undertaken as part of India's development support

PERSONALITIES

- On January 20, British-Belgian teenager, Zara Rutherford - became the youngest woman to fly solo around the globe after a five-month, five-continent journey in her Shark ultralight.



- ✓ Nineteen-year-old Zara landed back at Kortrijk-Wevelgem Airport in Belgium after flying 51,000 km over 52 nations since her August 18 departure.
- ✓ During the process, Zara also became the first person to fly solo in a microlight plane
- ✓ She broke the record from Afghan-born American Shaesta Wais, who in 2017 became the youngest woman to fly solo at 30.
- ✓ The male record holder, American Mason Andrews, was 18 when he did it in 2018.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- On January 20, the Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) – said it successfully completed a 25-second qualification test of the high thrust Vikas engine for the Gaganyaan programme.



- ✓ The qualification test was carried out at the Isro Propulsion Complex at Mahendragiri in Tamil Nadu to verify the robustness of the engine by operating beyond its nominal operating conditions
- ✓ According to Isro, the engine met all the performance objectives during the test and its parameters, during the test, closely matched the prediction of the engineers
- ✓ Already, two engines have undergone tests under nominal operating conditions for a total duration of 480 seconds
- ✓ Further, three more tests are planned for a cumulative duration of 75 seconds under varying operating conditions.
- ✓ Subsequently, another high-thrust Vikas engine will undergo a long-duration test for 240 seconds to complete the Vikas engine qualification for the Gaganyaan Programme
- ✓ Prior to the latest qualification test, Isro had fired its cryogenic engine for a duration of 720 seconds also as part of the Gaganyaan mission

- ✓ According to ISRO, these engines will be used in the launch vehicles meant to carry Indian astronauts to space in 2023.

DEFENCE

- **On January 20, India - successfully test-fired the new version of BrahMos supersonic cruise missile from the Chandipur integrated test range off the Odisha coast**



- ✓ According to the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the missile with a strike range of 290km was equipped with several new indigenous systems for improved performance
- ✓ The launch was conducted by Brahmos Aerospace in close coordination with DRDO teams
- ✓ The DRDO had said that the missile hit the designated target "precisely".
- ✓ On January 11, an extended range Sea to Sea variant of BrahMos Supersonic Cruise Missile was successfully test-fired from Indian Navy's newly commissioned stealth guided-missile destroyer INS Visakhapatnam on the Western seaboard
- ✓ BrahMos missiles are designed, developed and produced by BrahMos Aerospace, a joint venture company set up by DRDO and NPO Mashinostroyeniya of Russia
- ✓ BrahMos Aerospace has been continuously upgrading the highly versatile missile to increase its effectiveness and lethality against sea and land targets.
- ✓ The missile derives its name from two rivers - the Brahmaputra in India and the Moskva of Russia.
- ✓ BrahMos missiles flies almost three times the speed of sound at Mach 2.8
- ✓ The first test launch of the initial version Brahmos took place in 2001.
- ✓ On December 8 last year, the Air version of BrahMos supersonic cruise missile was successfully test fired from the Indian Air Force's frontline fighter aircraft Sukhoi-30 MKI clearing the system for the serial production within the country.

- ✓ Various types of the BrahMos including those which can be fired from land, warships, submarines and Sukhoi-30 fighter jets have already been developed and successfully tested by the DRDO.
- ✓ An underwater version is also being developed which will not only be used by the submarines of India but will also be offered for export to friendly foreign nations

