

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS–JANUARY 24, 2022

STATES

- **On January 23, Karnataka - achieved a vaccination milestone in inoculating 100% of the eligible population with one dose against Covid-19.**
 - ✓ The state has also given two doses to more than 85% of the eligible population
 - ✓ Karnataka is the first state in the country with a population of above four crore to achieve this feat.
 - ✓ Himachal Pradesh was the first state in the country to vaccinate all eligible beneficiaries with at least one dose

- **The Telangana cabinet – has approved the launch of ambitious ‘Mana Ooru- Mana Badi’ as a flagship programme**
 - ✓ The initiative seeks to improve infrastructure and quality of education in government schools in the state
 - ✓ A total 19.84 lakh students in 26,065 government schools will benefit from the programme
 - ✓ A budget of Rs 7,289.54 crore has been allocated for the programme to be conducted in three phases over a period of three years.
 - ✓ The first phase of the programme will cover 35% of total schools and 65% of students during the current academic year of 2021-22.
 - ✓ About Rs 3,497.62 crore will be spent in the first phase, which is to be taken up this academic year.
 - ✓ Under the scheme, apart from arranging digital classrooms, works will be taken up to construct additional classrooms and take up repairs, procure necessary furniture and create better infrastructure including toilets

NATIONAL

- **The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) – launched Season 2 of India Cycles4Change challenge and Streets4People Challenge in an online event**

- ✓ During the event, 11 winning cities for the Streets for People Challenge, and 10 winning cities for the pilot stage of the Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge were announced



- ✓ Under the 'Streets for people Challenge', 38 cities innovated important streets each by prioritizing them for pedestrians.
- ✓ The winning cities under the challenge will be awarded Rs. 50 lakhs each by MoHUA
- ✓ The challenge was conducted with technical support from the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP India).
- ✓ Under the Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge, over 70 pilot projects were implemented in neighbourhoods across India since November 2020
- ✓ These projects benefitted over 1 lakh children between the ages of 0-5 and more than 1 million people.
- ✓ The Smart Cities Mission has been organising inter-city challenges since 2020, for making public spaces more people-friendly.
- ✓ These challenges are organised in line with “2006 National Urban Transport Policy”.

INTERNATIONAL

- **The UAE government - has ordered to stop all flying operations of private drones and light sports aircraft in the Gulf country for a month**
- ✓ The decision has been taken after two Indians and a Pakistani national were killed in Abu Dhabi in a rare drone and missile attack claimed by Yemen’s Houthi rebels.
- ✓ In a statement, the ministry of interior ordered to stop all flying operations of drones and light sports aircraft for owners and enthusiasts from January 22.
- ✓ The ban also encompasses air and sail spots.
- ✓ According to the ministry, anyone disregarding the guidelines will be subject to legal liabilities.
- **Auction house Sotheby's Dubai - has unveiled a diamond that's believed to have been forged in outer space**



- ✓ The 555.55-carat black diamond, called 'The Enigma', will be auctioned in London in February and is expected to be sold for the equivalent of nearly \$9.5 million dollars.
- ✓ The number 'five' bears important significance to the diamond, which has 55 facets as well.
- ✓ The shape of the diamond is based on the Middle-Eastern palm symbol of the Khamsa, which stands for strength and it stands for protection (Khamsa in Arabic means five)
- ✓ Black diamonds, also known as carbonado, are extremely rare, and are found naturally only in Brazil and Central Africa.
- ✓ The cosmic origin theory is based on their carbon isotopes and high hydrogen content.
- ✓ This diamond is believed to have been created when an asteroid or a meteorite hit the Earth more than 2.6 billion years ago.

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd - has signed a Joint Development Agreement with Africa50, a pan-African infrastructure investment platform, to develop the 'Kenya Transmission Project' on a public-private partnership basis.**
- ✓ When finished, the project will be Kenya's first Independent Power Transmission (IPT) and will serve as a benchmark in Africa as the first PPP-based financing of transmission lines.
- ✓ Under a public-private partnership (PPP) framework, the project involves the development, funding, building, and operation of the 400kV transmission lines
- ✓ This project will also improve power transmission supply and reliability in Western Kenya
- ✓ Africa50 is an infrastructure investment platform that helps to support Africa's economy by developing and investing in bankable infrastructure projects
- ✓ Africa50 currently has 31 shareholders, comprised of 28 African countries, the African Development Bank, the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO), and Bank Al-Maghrib.

DEFENCE

- **The US-led annual multinational anti-submarine warfare (ASW) training exercise Sea Dragon 22 - has concluded in Guam, the United States on January 20, 2022**



- ✓ The six Indo-Pacific nations taking part in the exercise include Australia, Canada, India, the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force, the Republic of Korea and the US.
- ✓ The exercise aims to enhance interoperability among the participating naval aircrafts and response to regional contingencies.
- ✓ It included more than 270 hours of in-flight training and classroom sessions for pilots and flight officers at Andersen Air Force base.
- ✓ The scope of the programme included tracking simulated targets, as well as finding a US Navy submarine, developing plans and tactics involving the countries' respective capabilities and equipment.
- ✓ The Indian Navy's long-range maritime reconnaissance aircraft P8I participated in the two week exercise, which started on January 5
- ✓ This drill is hosted by the US Navy annually and it has sent in two P-8A Poseidon aircrafts for the exercise this year.

APPOINTMENTS

- **The International Monetary Fund (IMF) - has appointed French-born University of California-Berkeley economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas as the next chief economist**
- ✓ Gourinchas will succeed Gita Gopinath, who was the first woman to serve as the Fund's chief economist since 2019
- ✓ Gopinath will take over as IMF's first deputy managing director from January 21 from Geoffrey Okamoto.
- ✓ Gourinchas will join the IMF on a part-time basis from January 24 to conclude his prior teaching commitments at UC Berkeley

- ✓ He will transition to a full-time position from April 1



- ✓ From 2009 to 2016, Gourinchas had worked as a visiting scholar at the IMF and the editor of the fund's premier research journal, the IMF Economic Review.
- ✓ Between 2012 and 2013, Gourinchas was part of the council of economic advisors to the French Prime Minister.
- ✓ In 2007, the French economist was awarded the Bernacer Prize for the best European economist under 40 working in the field of macroeconomics and finance.
- ✓ Presently, Bulgarian economist Kristalina Georgieva is the managing director (MD) and Chairwoman of the IMF.

AWARDS

- **Minister of State for Education, Subhas Sarkar - launched the Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar (SVP) 2021 – 2022 for schools in virtual mode**



- ✓ Under the scheme, the schools will be assessed through an online portal and mobile app in six sub-categories - Water, Sanitation, Hand Washing with soap, Operation and Maintenance, Behaviour Change and newly introduced category - Capacity Building and Covid-19 preparedness and response
- ✓ The award is open to all categories of schools i.e. government, government aided and private schools in both rural and urban areas

- ✓ A total of 40 schools will be selected for awards this year under the overall category
- ✓ Schools will be awarded at the district, state and national level based on an internationally acclaimed five-star rating system.
- ✓ The award money for the schools has been enhanced this year from Rs. 50,000/- to Rs. 60,000/- per school, under Samagra Shiksha scheme.
- ✓ The schools can apply for the awards till March 2022
- ✓ The Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar was first launched by the Department of School Education and Literacy, in 2016-17 to create self-motivation and awareness about sanitation

OBITUARY

- **Renowned archaeologist, art historian and epigraphist, R Nagaswamy (91 years) – passes away due to age related ailments in Chennai on January 23**



- ✓ Nagaswamy served as a curator for art and archaeology at the Madras Museum from 1959, and later joined the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology as an assistant special officer in 1963
- ✓ He was the first director of Tamil Nadu government's Department of Archaeology in 1966 and founded the Institute of Epigraphy and Archaeology in 1973
- ✓ Nagaswamy was an expert witness in a London court in the famous Pathur Nataraja case and played a key role in bringing back the Chola-era bronze Nataraja to Tamil Nadu.
- ✓ He provided expert advice to the Allahabad High Court's Lucknow bench, which heard the Ayodhya title suits.
- ✓ A great scholar in Tamil and Sanskrit, he had published numerous research papers on art of ancient Tamil country.
- ✓ Nagaswamy has published several books including "Master pieces of South Indian Bronzes", "Siva Bhakti", "Tantric Cult in Tamilnadu", "Uttaramerur" in French with Dr. Francoise Gros (1970) and "Facets of South Indian Art and Architecture".
- ✓ He has written over 40 books in Tamil, English and Sanskrit and published over 100 books through the department.

- ✓ Nagaswamy's articles have been translated into 23 languages and published in the journal of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.
- ✓ Nagaswamy was a post graduate in Sanskrit language and literature from University of Madras and also held a doctorate in Indian arts awarded by Pune University
- ✓ As an archaeologist, he had excavated many sites in Tamil Nadu, including Korkai, the ancient Pandyan port and the palace site of Virapandya Kattabomman at Panchalamkurchi.
- ✓ He had also taken initiatives to protect several historic monuments like the Chera inscriptions at Pugalur, the palace site of the imperial Cholas at Gangaikonda Cholapuram, the famous 17th century Thirumalai Nayak Palace in Madurai, the 17th century Danish Fort at Tranquebar, and the birthplace of the great national poet Subramanya Bharati at Ettayyapuram
- ✓ He was also the first to carry out an under-sea archaeological survey in Tamil Nadu off the Pampuhar coast in Mayiladuthurai
- ✓ He composed several dance dramas on historic themes such as the lives of Rajaraja Chola, Rajendra Chola, Manimekhalai, Arunagirinathar, and Appar
- ✓ He started and founded the now world-famous Chidambaram Natyanjali festival as a tribute to Ananda Tandava of Lord Nataraja
- ✓ The now famous sound and light programme at Thirumalai Nayakar Mahal in Madurai was the brainchild of Nagaswamy
- ✓ Nagaswamy, along with historian B.B Lal, was the first 'Guru' to be chosen under ICHR-Gurukul Fellowship introduced in 2016.
 - ✓ Under the ICHR Gurukul-Fellowship, a disciple will be allocated to a senior historian for the former to understand the “nuances of historical research”
- ✓ After his retirement in 1988, he became a consultant for the Central government in the Documentation of Cultural property, Thanjavur Brahadisvara Project (UNDP programme)
- ✓ Besides archaeologist and epigraphist, Nagaswamy contributed immensely to related fields like architecture, paleography, numismatics, temple rituals and philosophy, ancient law and society, music, dance and South Asian art
- ✓ He was awarded the prestigious Padma Bhushan in 2018 for his outstanding contribution to archaeology.
- ✓ He was a recipient of various other awards, including the Tamil Nadu government's 'Kalaimamani' Award

