

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – JANUARY 9, 2022

TAMIL NADU

- **The Tamil Nadu government - unveiled a set of guidelines to supply river sand to the public in a “fair and transparent manner” for use in construction activities**
- ✓ In this regard, an order was issued by Sandeep Saxena, additional chief secretary of the water resources department.
- ✓ To begin with, the department of water resources permitted 16 lorry quarries and 21 bullock carts’ sand quarries, which had environmental clearance (EC), to operate.
- ✓ Following this, another 63 lorry quarries and eight bullock cart sand quarries, which are in various stages for obtaining EC, would be permitted to operate as per the existing protocol
- ✓ The State government has fixed ₹ 1,000 per unit as basic cost of sand
- ✓ Till a decade ago, river sand was a key construction material, but it became a shortage about five years back.
- ✓ The previous AIADMK government promoted m-sand aggressively, thereby replacing river sand totally in recent years
- ✓ However, according to environmentalists, m-sand causes irreplaceable damage to earth while its exploitation was widespread and unscientific.
- ✓ The order instructed authorities to give priority to online bookings from the general public for sand at a reasonable cost through the portal, www.tnsand.in or through the TNSAND android mobile app
- ✓ The first priority of supplying sand will be given to online bookings done by the public between 8am to 2pm
- ✓ After this, lorry owners can book sand between 2pm and 5pm depending upon the availability of the remaining sand.
- ✓ People who do not have access to online portal can buy sand from the quarries directly on payment of cash at the additional bank extension counters expected to function at the sites.

- ✓ Further, there will be centralised real-time monitoring of sand depots and quarries using IP/CCTV cameras to prevent pilferage.
- ✓ The government's river sand quarries in the State were closed during the Assembly elections in 2021, and are yet to be reopened
- **On January 8, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin - chaired an all-party meeting at the Secretariat to discuss the ways to receive exemption for the State from the National Entrance-cum-Eligibility Test (NEET).**



- ✓ At the end of the meeting, the leaders resolved to take necessary legal steps to abolish NEET
- ✓ The meeting also decided to take other state governments into confidence and put up a collective fight against NEET.
- ✓ Overall, 12 parties endorsed the resolution, including the DMK and the main opposition, the AIADMK.
- ✓ The BJP leaders staged a walkout against the all-party meet and said that they do not support the NEET resolution.
- ✓ The previous AIADMK regime in Tamil Nadu had passed a bill in 2017 seeking exemption from NEET but it was rejected by the President Pranab Mukherjee.
- ✓ The current DMK-led state government passed the Undergraduate Medical Degree Courses Bill, 2021 in the state assembly in September, with the consent of all parties barring the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).
- ✓ The Governor is yet to send it to the President Ram Nath Kovind for his assent
- ✓ The chief minister himself visited the governor and urged him to send the Bill to the President
- ✓ A delegation of MPs representing all parties could not meet the President and submitted a representation to his office, which was later forwarded to the Union home minister.

- On January 8, Chief Minister M K Stalin - launched E-Vaadagai, a mobile app to help farmers get farm machineries on rent



- ✓ E-vaadagai will help farmers book machinery without having to visit agricultural offices
 - ✓ Using the new smartphone app, the farmers can register for agri-machineries and implements to take them on rent
 - ✓ The app will also be used for the distribution of machineries and implements with subsidy from the Centre.
 - ✓ The farmers can also use the app to get details of rent of equipment and conditions for using them.
- ✓ During the occasion, the CM launched a slew of programmes of the agriculture department and announced schemes for the farmers
- ✓ The CM also launched a scheme to provide 2,118 pieces of agricultural machinery for a total subsidy of Rs 50.73 crore
 - ✓ The equipment is being given to women SC/ST farmers at 50% subsidy and other farmers at 40% subsidy.
 - ✓ This scheme will be implemented in all districts except Chennai and can be availed through the web portal 'www.agrimachinery.nic.in'.
- ✓ The CM also inaugurated new buildings for the Tamil Nadu State Agricultural Marketing Board constructed at a cost of Rs 97.01 crore
- ✓ Through the Uzhavan mobile app, farmers can also learn about the State Agricultural Engineering Department's latest initiatives and schemes
- ✓ The CM also launched a scheme to provide agricultural inputs to encourage farmers to cultivate pulses on rice fallow areas after harvesting samba and thaladi crops
 - ✓ The inputs include certified seeds, bio fertilizers and micronutrients.
 - ✓ Cultivation of pulses on such land areas is planned on 11 lakh acres this year

- ✓ Also, the pulses thus produced will be procured through regulated markets.
- ✓ The scheme aims to protect the soil and environment and increase farmers' income.
- ✓ Under the Sustainable Cotton Cultivation Mission, long-staple cotton variety, which is in high demand, will be cultivated on 25,000 hectares using integrated methods.
 - ✓ Farmers who produce seeds of long-staple cotton varieties will get an incentive of Rs 60 per kg.
- ✓ The CM commenced disbursal of Rs 150.89 crore as part of sugarcane production incentive and special incentive scheme to 91,120 farmers who supplied sugarcane to sugar mills
 - ✓ Farmers will get an incentive of ₹192.5 per tonne as cane price, in addition to the fair and remunerative price of ₹2,707.5 per tonne announced by the Centre.
- **The state government – has sanctioned ₹33.1 crore for the purpose of digitising the activities of state forest department**
 - ✓ In this regard, the government has issued an order on January 6
 - ✓ The grant will be utilised for the digital mapping of forest boundaries and to digitise daily activities of the department.
 - ✓ The order was issued following a digitization proposal by the principal chief conservator of forests
 - ✓ The proposal seeks to develop a strong geo-spatial database for better management of forest and wildlife habitats, project formulation, and delineation of wildlife corridors, eco-sensitive zones and wetlands, among other things.
 - ✓ The differential global positioning system survey will help to prepare a geo database with boundary details
 - ✓ A centralized special database will also be created for the department using the funds
 - ✓ Further, end-to-end computerization of departmental activities will be taken up and a documentation cell will also be created at the headquarters in Chennai.
 - ✓ As per the order, the digitisation would be carried out in two years and allocated ₹6.1 crore for the current fiscal, while ₹27 crore is allocated for 2022-23.

NATIONAL

- **On January 8, the Election Commission - announced seven-phase polls between February 10 and March 7 in five states — Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Manipur and Goa**
 - ✓ Punjab (117 seats), Goa (40 seats), and Uttarakhand (70 seats) will vote in a single phase on February 14 and Manipur (60 seats) in two phases on February 27 and March 3.

- ✓ Uttar Pradesh (403 assembly seats) will witness seven-phase polling (February 10, 14, 20, 23, 27, March 3 and March 7).
- ✓ The first phase polling will be held on February 10, second phase on February 14, third phase on February 20, fourth phase on February 23, fifth phase on February 27, sixth phase on March 3 and seventh phase on March 7.

POLLING CALENDAR				
UTTAR PRADESH		UTTARAKHAND		
Phase 1	Feb 10	All seats	Feb 14	
Phase 2	Feb 14	GOA		
Phase 3	Feb 20	All seats	Feb 14	
Phase 4	Feb 23	MANIPUR		
Phase 5	Feb 27	Phase 1	Feb 27	
Phase 6	Mar 3	Phase 2	Mar 3	
Phase 7	Mar 7	— THE VERDICT —		
PUNJAB		MARCH 10		
All seats	Feb 14			
POSITIVITY RATE		ELIGIBLE VOTERS		
State	Positivity Rate*	State	2017	2022
Goa	16.54%	UP	13.85 crore	15.05 crore
Punjab	6.98%	Manipur	18.07 lakh	20.56 lakh
Manipur	1.93%	Uttarakhand	73.81 lakh	82.38 lakh
Uttarakhand	2.70%	Punjab	1.92 crore	2.13 crore
Uttar Pradesh	0.93%	Goa	10.85 lakh	11.56 lakh
<small>*Dec 31-Jan 7</small>				

- ✓ The term of the current Uttar Pradesh Assembly ends on May 14 and those of the other four state Assemblies ends on different dates in March.
- ✓ The Model Code of Conduct has come into effect in the five states with the announcement of elections.
- ✓ The counting of votes for all the states will be done on March 10.
- ✓ Of the five states going to the polls, the BJP is in power in four - UP, Goa, Manipur and Uttarakhand, while the Congress is in power in Punjab.
- ✓ Meanwhile, Election Commission announced ban on public rallies, roadshows & corner meetings till Jan 15 in 5 poll-bound states
- ✓ It had also urged parties to shift to digital mode of campaigning and announced doubling of air time allocated to parties on Doordarshan
- ✓ Victory processions will not be allowed and only two people will be allowed to collect victory certificates.
- ✓ All polling centres will also have to ensure that they have masks, sanitizers, gloves and thermal scanners available
- ✓ Moreover, all officials on election duty will be fully vaccinated and also receive a precautionary booster dose.
- ✓ Further, the number of persons allowed for door-to-door campaigns is limited to five, including candidate
- ✓ Also, the polling time is extended by an hour and only 1,250 people will be allowed per booth, indicating the addition of over 30,000 new booths.

- ✓ The EC has recently increased the expenditure limits for candidates to Rs 40 lakh
 - ✓ This is the second round of state elections to be held in India since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - ✓ Elections were held in the states of West Bengal, Assam, Kerala, Puducherry and Tamil Nadu during the second coronavirus wave in March-April 2020.
- **On January 7, the Union home ministry - has restored the registration of Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity (MoC) under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010**



- ✓ The FCRA licence was restored after the charity submitted “certain documents” rectifying the accounts-related violations flagged by the Ministry
- ✓ The new registration certificate is now valid from January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2026.
- ✓ On December 25, the MHA had refused to renew the NGO’s FCRA registration after it had received some “adverse inputs” and for not meeting the eligibility conditions under FCRA 2010 and Foreign Contribution Regulation Rules (FCRR) 2011
- ✓ According to the Ministry, as of January 7, there are 16,908 active or alive FCRA organisations in the country, including MoC
- ✓ The Kolkata-headquartered MoC is one among the 5,968 non-profits taken out of FCRA ambit in December 2021.
- ✓ The FCRA registration is mandatory for any association and NGO to receive and utilise foreign funding.
- ✓ On December 31, the Ministry had extended the validity certificates of all organisations that were expiring between September 29, 2021 and March 31, 2022 who had applied for a renewal before the expiry of their certificates
- ✓ The Missionaries of Charity (MoC) is a Catholic religious congregation established in 1950 by Nobel laureate Mother Teresa to help the poor and destitute
- ✓ All over India, the MoC has over 240 houses for orphans, the destitute and AIDS patients

- **On January 6, the Government - approved the second phase of the Green Energy Corridor (GEC) with an outlay of ₹12,031 crore**
 - ✓ The scheme will facilitate grid integration and power evacuation of about 20 GW of renewable energy (RE) projects in seven states — Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.
 - ✓ Announcing the decision, Union Minister Anurag Thakur said the second phase will be implemented during 2021-22 to 2025-26 fiscal years.
 - ✓ The scheme will help in achieving the target of 450 GW installed RE capacity by 2030.
 - ✓ This scheme is in addition to GEC Phase-I which is already under implementation in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu for grid integration and power evacuation of about 24 GW of RE
 - ✓ The Minister added that 80% of the phase one work has been completed.
 - ✓ The Phase-I is for addition of 9,700 circuit kilometres [ckm] of transmission lines and 22,600 Mega Volt-Amperes (MVA) capacity of substations having estimated cost of transmission projects at an outlay of ₹10,141.68 crore
 - ✓ The Phase-II seeks Intra-State Transmission System for addition of approximately 10,750 ckm of transmission lines and around 27,500 MVA transformation capacity of substations
 - ✓ Out of the proposed outlay for the second phase, the Central Financial Assistance (CFA) will be 33% of the project cost, that is ₹3,970.34 crore.
 - ✓ The CFA will help in offsetting the intra-state transmission charges and keep the power costs down, thereby benefitting the end users
 - ✓ The Green Energy Corridor aims at synchronizing the electricity produced from renewable resources, such as wind and solar, with the conventional power stations in the grid
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- **On January 6, Union Minister of State for Science and Technology, Dr Jitendra Singh - has inaugurated India's first Open Rock Museum in Hyderabad**



- ✓ The Museum displays around 35 different types of rocks from different parts of India with ages ranging from 3.3 billion years to around 55 million years of the Earth's history.
 - ✓ These rocks also represent the deepest part of the earth, up to 175 kms from the surface of the earth.
 - ✓ The rocks have been sourced from Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Jammu & Kashmir and others.
 - ✓ The Open Rock Museum was set up with the aim of educating and enlightening the public about several lesser-known facts about the rocks
 - ✓ During the event, the Union Minister also released Earthquake Risk Maps of Lucknow and Dehradun and handed over the maps to the chairpersons or nominees of UPSDMA and UKSDMA
 - ✓ Both the maps were shared with Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh State Disaster Management authorities, who are the main stakeholders
- **Union Minister of Power and New & Renewable Energy R.K. Singh - dedicated Automatic Generation Control (AGC) to the nation recently on January 3**



- ✓ This new system is expected to help achieving the government's ambitious target of 500 GW non-fossil fuel-based generation capacity by 2030.
- ✓ The AGC is being operated by Power System Operation Corporation (POSOCO) through National Load Despatch Centre.
- ✓ Through AGC, POSOCO sends signals to power plants every 4 seconds to maintain frequency and reliability of the Power System.
- ✓ This will ensure more efficient and automatic frequency control for handling variable and intermittent renewable generation
- ✓ During the event, R.K. Singh also released a report titled "Assessment of Inertia in Indian Power System" which has been prepared by POSOCO in collaboration with IIT Bombay
- ✓ POSOCO Day is observed on 3rd January to commemorate its independent functioning from January 3, 2017
- ✓ POSOCO functions under Ministry of Power as one of the Power PSUs after separating from POWERGRID as its subsidiary organization

- ✓ It is responsible to ensure the integrated operation of the Grid in a reliable, efficient, and secure manner.

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **The United States - had agreed to easier rules to allow the export of Indian mangoes and pomegranates in return for the entry of American cherries and Alfalfa hay as well as pork.**
- ✓ The move will end a two-year restriction on the export of Indian mangoes to the US
- ✓ Earlier, the US was allowing imports of Indian mangoes but subsequently linked it to the export of Indian cherries and fodder.
- ✓ The decision to ease the rules was taken during a recent meeting between commerce minister Piyush Goyal and USTR Katherine Tai.
- ✓ On January 8, the commerce department said that a framework agreement for implementing the “2 vs 2 Agri market access issues” had been signed between the department of agriculture and farmer’s welfare and US department of agriculture.
- ✓ Mango and pomegranate exports will start from January-February 2022 and pomegranate aril exports from April 2022, while exports of Alfalfa hay and cherries from USA will begin in April 2022

APPOINTMENTS

- **India’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations, TS Tirumurti - was named the new Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the United Nations on January 4, 2022.**



- ✓ Beginning January 1, 2022, India is chairing the Counter-Terrorism Committee
- ✓ This is the second instance of India chairing the Counter-Terrorism Committee
 - ✓ Former Indian Ambassador to the UN, Hardeep Singh Puri, had chaired the Counter-Terrorism Committee for the term 2011-12.
- ✓ The Counter-Terrorism Committee is assisted by the Executive Directorate (CTED), which carries out its policy decisions and conducts expert assessments of the 193 United Nations Member States

- ✓ The United Nations Security Council Counter-terrorism committee was formed in September 2001 soon after the attack of 9/11 in New York
- ✓ In 2021, India was asked to chair three important Committees of the United Nations Security Council.
 - ✓ It includes the Counterterrorism Committee, Taliban Sanctions Committee, and the Libyan Sanctions Committee.
- ✓ Prior to taking up his current position as Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, in May 2020, Tirumurti served as Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, handling the Economic Relations portfolio
 - ✓ The permanent Representative (UN ambassador) is the head of the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations in New York City
 - ✓ The current Permanent Representative to the UN was appointed in April 2020.
- ✓ T. S. Tirumurti is one of the most reputed, prominent, and well-known diplomats with extensive experience in multilateral affairs
 - ✓ He previously worked at the Indian Embassy in Cairo, the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations in Geneva, as the first Indian Representative to the Palestinian Authority in Gaza, as Counsellor in the Indian Embassy in Washington, D.C., as Deputy Chief of Mission in the Indian Embassy in Indonesia, in Jakarta, and as the High Commissioner of India to Malaysia, in Kuala Lumpur.
 - ✓ During his service in the Indian Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi, Tirumurti held positions as Under Secretary (Bhutan), Director (Office of the Foreign Secretary), Joint Secretary (Bangladesh, Maldives, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka), and Joint Secretary (United Nations Economic and Social Council)
- ✓ India achieved a big diplomatic victory by entering the non-permanent category of the UN Security Council for 2021-22 when elections were held for the five non-permanent members.
- ✓ Recently, PM Narendra Modi became the first Indian Prime Minister to preside over a UN Security Council Open Debate as he chaired the high-level session on 'Enhancing Maritime Security – A Case for International Cooperation.'
- ✓ In a historic decision, the UN General Assembly granted observer status to the International Solar Alliance.

AWARDS

- **Union Minister of Jal Shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat - announced 3rd National Water Awards - 2020 at New Delhi on January 7**
- ✓ In the Best State category, Uttar Pradesh has been awarded first prize, followed by Rajasthan and **Tamil Nadu**.



- ✓ National Water Awards recognise and encourage exemplary work and efforts made by States, districts, individuals, and organisations across the country in attaining the Centre's vision of Jal Samridh Bharat in the field of water resources management
- ✓ The first National Water Award was launched by the Jal Shakti Ministry in 2018.
- ✓ Under the Awards, the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti is giving 57 awards to States, Organizations, Individuals etc. in 11 different categories
 - ✓ This includes the awards for Best State, Best District, Best Village Panchayat, Best Urban Local Body, Best Media (Print & Electronic), Best School, Best Institution/RWA/Religious organization for Campus usage, Best Industry, Best NGO, Best Water User Association, and Best Industry for CSR Activity
- ✓ The award winners in different categories will be given a citation, trophy and cash prize.
- ✓ **Vellaputhur Panchayat, Chengalpattu district**, won the second prize in the category 'Best Village Panchayat - South zone' and **Madurai Municipal Corporation** won the third prize in the category 'Best Urban Local body'.
- ✓ Under the 'Best School Category', **Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Kaveripattinam** came first.
- ✓ Further, two schools from Puducherry - Amalorpavam Lourds Academy and Govt. Middle School, Manapet, Puducherry were named as the 2nd and 3rd (joint) prize winners in the same category
- ✓ **Hyundai Motor India Ltd., Tamil Nadu** was named as the 2nd best Industry in the entire country
- ✓ **Vivekananda Kendra NARDEP, Kanyakumari** bagged the 2nd prize under the 'Best NGO' category

SPORTS

- **The upcoming AFC Women's Asian Cup - is set to create history as Video Assistant Referee (VAR) will be used for the first time in India from the quarterfinals stage of the continental competition.**



- ✓ The tournament will be played across three venues in Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Pune from January 20 to February 6.
- ✓ The event will see VAR making its tournament debut for the games to be played from January 30 onwards.
- ✓ The referees' training sites will also be equipped with a similar VAR setup and simulators will also be made available to the referees in their hotel.

NATIONAL DAY

➤ Pravasi Bharatiya Divas – January 9



- ✓ Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is celebrated every year to mark the contribution of Overseas Indian community in the development of the country
- ✓ The main idea behind this event is to reconnect the Non-Resident Indian community with their original roots.
- ✓ On this day in 1915, Mahatma Gandhi returned to India from South Africa, led India's freedom struggle and changed the lives of Indians forever
- ✓ Since 2003, the PBD Convention has been organising this Divas from 7 to 9 January every year.
- ✓ Later on, in 2015, the format was revised to mark and observe the PBD convention once in every two years.
- ✓ Previous year, the 16th PBD Convention was held on 9 January virtually due to the pandemic with the theme "Contributing to Aatmanirbhar Bharat".

➤ Guru Gobind Singh Jayanti – January 9, 2022



- ✓ The birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh is being observed this year on January 9, 2022
- ✓ The tenth and last guru of Sikhs was born in Patna on December 22, 1666, Bihar in the Sodhi Khatri family.
- ✓ His birth anniversary, also known as Prakash Parv, is observed every year according to Nanakshahi calendar between the months of December and January.
- ✓ A great warrior, poet and a writer, Guru Gobind Singh was also the founder of Sikh warrior community Khalsa in 1699
- ✓ He is also known to introduce five Ks - the five articles of faith that Khalsa Sikhs wear – Kesh, Kanga, Kara, Kirpan and Kachera
- ✓ Guru Gobind Singh laid the rules of Khalsa warriors, like abstaining from tobacco, alcohol, halal meat, and imbibing the duty of protecting innocent people from prosecution
- ✓ He introduced the turban to cover the hair of his followers and also named all his followers with the title Singh, which means lion
- ✓ Guru Gobind Singh is also credited with composing the hymns that form Dasam Granth, one of the key scriptures of Sikhs.
- ✓ Dasam Granth or Dasveh Padshah Ka Granth is the second most important religious book in Sikhism after Guru Granth Sahib.
- ✓ It was Guru Gobind Singh who declared Guru Granth Sahib to be the eternal Guru for Sikhs.
- ✓ He also wrote the Zafarnama, a letter to the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb.
- ✓ Guru Gobind Singh was assassinated in 1708.

