

## EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – FEBRUARY 19, 2022

### TAMIL NADU

- **Greater Chennai Corporation - won several awards that were announced as part of the “Azadi ka Maha Utsav” by the ministry of housing and urban affairs.**
  - ✓ The civic body has won awards including the ones for the maximum registrations by any city for cycling, maximum kilometres in running, cycle and run challenge
  - ✓ Greater Chennai Corporation commissioner Gagandeep Singh Bedi won the fifth place in the category of the maximum number of activities in running
  - ✓ Further, state health minister Ma Subramanian won the award in four categories, all for running challenge.
  - ✓ The awards for the city leaders challenge were given in the following categories for performance between 1st to 26th January 2022 in two unique national level challenges - “Freedom 2 Walk & Cycle Challenge for City Leaders” & “Inter- City Freedom 2 Walk & Cycle Challenge for Citizens”
  - ✓ The city leaders Challenge saw registration from nearly 130 city leaders from across the country, comprising of Commissioners, Additional/Joint/Deputy Commissioners, Smart City CEOs and key officials
  
- **On February 17, the Tamil Nadu state archaeology department – has unearthed a rectangular dice made of ivory at the Keeladi excavation site**



- ✓ The archaeologists discovered the ivory dice, measuring 4.5cm x 0.9cm x 0.9cm, at the site where the eighth phase of excavation is being carried out
- ✓ This was the first time that the state archaeology department had found the dice of this kind at Keeladi.
- ✓ People who lived in Keeladi had used circles to indicate the numbers on the dice, in which one side has a single circle, another two, then three and four.
- ✓ Four beads were also found in a quadrant at the site at a depth of two feet.

## COURT VERDICT

- On February 18, a special court in Gujarat - awarded death penalty to 38 convicts and sentenced 11 others to life imprisonment in the case related to the 2008 Ahmedabad serial blasts

### 49 convicts sentenced 14 years on

A total of 49 convicts, which included former SIMI chief Safdar Nagori, were on Friday handed sentences for carrying out 21 blasts in Ahmedabad on July 26, 2008



THE SENTENCE	
DEATH TERM FOR <b>38</b> members of IM terror outfit	LIFE IMPRISONMENT <b>11</b> other convicts
This was the first time in history of independent India that so many convicts were awarded the death sentence in a single ruling	
FINE IMPOSED <b>₹2.85 lakh</b> on 48 convicts each, ₹2.88 lakh on one	COMPENSATION <b>₹1 lakh</b> to kin of those who died, ₹50,000 for wounded
HORROR OF THE 2008 AHMEDABAD BLASTS	
<b>56</b> PEOPLE WERE KILLED	<b>July 26, 2008:</b> A series of bombs exploded at several spots through Ahmedabad, including hospitals, on buses, parked bicycles, in cars. The attacks occurred in two waves - the first in crowded locations, then the second in and around hospitals where the casualties were being taken

- ✓ The judgment, pronounced by Special judge A R Patel, handed the death penalty to the highest number of convicts in a single case in the country.
- ✓ As many as 56 people were killed and 246 were wounded when 20 simultaneous explosions ripped through Ahmedabad on July 26, 2008
- ✓ It was found during investigation that one of the targets was Narendra Modi, then Gujarat chief minister.
- ✓ Investigators had claimed to have found that former members of the banned Student Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) formed a new outfit called Indian Mujahideen and carried out disruptive activities.
- ✓ Their motive for planting bombs in Ahmedabad and Surat was to avenge the 2002 Godhra riots.

- ✓ The 38 convicts were awarded capital punishment under section 302 (murder) of Indian Penal Code along with section-10 and 16 (1) (a), (b) of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act or UAPA for waging war against the nation, sedition and murder
- ✓ In the voluminous 7015-page judgement, the court also announced compensation of Rs 1 lakh to the families of 56 persons who were killed and Rs 50,000 to those who sustained injuries and Rs 25,000 to those who suffered minor injuries in the serial bomb blasts

## How the case unfolded

<b>2008</b> <b>JULY 26</b> A total of 21 low-intensity blasts at 16 locations rock Ahmedabad, killing 56 and injuring 243	<b>2009</b> Trial begins after a special court merges 20 FIRs in Ahmedabad and 15 FIRs in Surat
<b>JULY 27</b> Gujarat Police forms an SIT to probe the case as CM, Narendra Modi, announces ₹5 lakh ex gratia for the affected families	<b>2021</b> The trial in the case against 77 people concludes in September
<b>JULY 30</b> Police locate the driver of one of the cars used in the blasts from a toll plaza in Pune	<b>2022</b> <b>FEBRUARY 8</b> The special court convicts 49 people in the case
<b>AUGUST 15</b> Main accused Mufti Abu Bashir, a resident of Azamgarh, is arrested from Lucknow	<b>FEBRUARY 18</b> The court awards death penalty to 38 convicts and life sentence to 11 others

## 'NO REASON TO SHOW MERCY'

- The court termed it as 'rarest of the rare' case and handed out death penalty to record 38 convicts.
- There is no reason to show mercy to those handed death sentences as they had not shown mercy to innocents, observed court
- Allowing the convicts to be part of society would amount to setting man-eating leopards free amongst the innocents; even their shadow is dangerous to society, remarked court
- It castigated Muslim terrorist outfits for misusing the word 'jihad' by radicalizing Muslim youths and indulging in anti-national activities
- The court appealed to religious Muslim organisations to boycott terrorist outfits



**CONVICTS FROM 8 STATES:** Of the 49 convicted who were either handed out death sentence or life imprisonment till death hailed from seven different states including Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Kerala and Telangana.

- ✓ In no other case in India have so many people been sentenced to die at one stroke.
- ✓ The previous highest was in January 1998 when a TADA court in Tamil Nadu awarded capital punishment to all 26 convicts for the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991.
- ✓ It took 24 minutes and 22 seconds for the special court to read out the quantum of punishment to the 49 convicts lodged in prisons in six places — Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Gaya, Taloja, Bengaluru and Bhopal.
- ✓ The special court convicted 49 of the 78 accused in the case on February 8 this year and acquitted 28 citing benefit of doubt, while one was pardoned for turning approver.

## INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **On February 18, India and the UAE - signed a comprehensive economic partnership agreement (CEPA) that seeks to strengthen the strategic partnership and take bilateral economic and commercial engagement to the next level.**
- ✓ The deal was signed by commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal and UAE's minister of economy Abdulla bin Touq Al Marri ahead of the India-UAE virtual

meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al Nahyan at New Delhi



- ✓ This is the first significant trade pact signed by the Narendra Modi-led government since coming to power in 2014.
- ✓ The negotiations of CEPA were launched in September last year.
- ✓ The CEPA seeks to reduce tariffs for 80% of goods and give zero duty access to 90% of India's exports to the UAE.
- ✓ The agreement is expected to boost annual bilateral trade to \$100 billion in the next 5 years, up from about \$60 billion currently

## A new dawn in bilateral ties



At a virtual summit between PM Narendra Modi and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, India and UAE unveiled a roadmap for expansion of ties

**ABOUT THE DEAL**  
The comprehensive economic partnership agreement, or CEPA, is India's first such pact in a decade

**WHAT IT ENVISIONS**  
**\$100BN** bilateral trade expected to grow to in the next five years  
India's trade with the UAE is worth \$60bn right now — making it India's third largest trade partner

**A QUICK DEAL**  
Negotiation for the deal was one of the shortest in recent years. The two sides began work on the pact in Sept last year and finalised it in less than three months

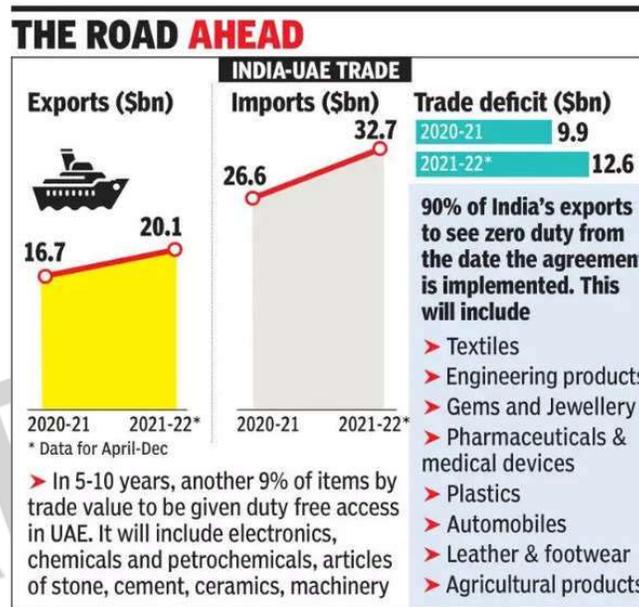
**AREAS OF FOCUS**  
India and UAE also issued a joint vision statement that outlined the future course of ties and highlighted areas of focus, including enhanced maritime cooperation, joint steps to fight terrorism among others

**\$15BN** worth additional trade in services also expected in five years  
It provides benefits such as enhanced market access and reduced tariffs, and also opens up Arab and African markets to the Indian side

**"This agreement reflects the deep friendship, shared vision and trust between the two countries. I am sure this will usher in a new era in our economic relations and our business will grow from \$60 billion to \$100 billion in the next five years." — NARENDRA MODI, Prime Minister**

- ✓ The pact would boost the country's exports in a number of labour-oriented sectors including gems and jewellery, textiles, leather, footwear, sports goods, engineering goods, and pharmaceuticals while giving easier access to the Emirates for Indian professionals in high-skill sectors
- ✓ It is expected to come into effect in about 60 days, by the first week of May
- ✓ Under the agreement, India agreed to provide tariff concessions on gold imports, while the UAE eliminated tariffs on jewellery imports into that country.

- ✓ The deal covers areas including goods, services, rules of origin, Customs procedures, government procurement, intellectual property rights, and e-commerce
- ✓ It also focuses on expediting work on a dedicated investment zone for UAE companies and joint ventures, focusing on setting up a food corridor and establishing a dedicated India Mart in the Jebel Ali Free Zone.
- ✓ Under the agreement, the UAE has also, in a first, agreed to facilitate market access and regulatory approval within 90 days of approval in the US and UK for Indian pharmaceutical products and medical products
- ✓ The UAE is expected to benefit from potentially larger exports of metals & minerals, petrochemicals, petroleum products and dates



- ✓ UAE is India's third-largest trade partner after China and the U.S. and hosts a large Indian community of around 3.5 million.
- ✓ Bilateral trade between both nations stood at \$43.3 billion as of 2020-21.
- ✓ India's exports to UAE grew by 77% year-on-year in April-December 2021 to \$20 billion, accounting for 6.6% of India's total outbound shipments.
- ✓ UAE's investments in India are around \$17 billion out of which USD 11.67 billion is in the form of Foreign Direct Investment, while the rest are portfolio investments
- ✓ India is participating with one of the largest pavilions in the Dubai Expo 2020

## PERSONALITIES

- **IndiGo co-founder and promoter Rahul Bhatia - will now have complete control over India's largest domestic airline, IndiGo**
- ✓ On February 18, IndiGo co-founder Rakesh Gangwal has resigned as non-executive, non-independent director from the board of the airline's holding company InterGlobe Aviation



- ✓ Gangwal will reduce his stake gradually over the next five years
- ✓ Earlier, on February 4, Rahul Bhatia took charge as the company's managing director for a five-year term.
- ✓ This happened after 3 years of feud between Bhatia and co-founder Gangwal who has stopped participating in the airline's operational and financial decisions.
- ✓ The two had major differences in early 2020 when Gangwal wanted to modify certain rules in the company's articles of association.
- ✓ The differences between the promoters became public in July 2019 after Gangwal wrote to the Securities and Exchange Board of India, seeking its intervention to address corporate governance lapses at the company
- ✓ Gangwal and his family entities own 36.61% stake in the company and going by the latest market capitalization, his stake is worth around Rs 29,900 crore.
- ✓ Bhatia and his related entities own around 38% in InterGlobe Aviation
- ✓ An American and aviation industry veteran, Gangwal has spent several years in senior roles at United Airlines and U.S. Airways, while Bhatia manages the operations in India.
- ✓ Meanwhile, in another development, IndiGo took delivery of its first aircraft from Airbus that operated on a blend of sustainable aviation fuel and normal fuel.
- ✓ The fuel is yet to be approved for commercial flights.

## SPORTS

- **Bihar's Shakibul Gani – created history by hitting a triple century on his First Class debut in Kolkata on February 18**



- ✓ With this, Gani became the world's first-ever player to score a triple century on first-class debut

### **MOST RUNS ON DEBUT IN FIRST CLASS CRICKET**

Runs	Balls	Batsman	For	Vs	Series
341	405	Sakibul Gani	Bihar	Mizoram	2021-22
267*	345	Ajay Rohera	MP	Hyderabad	2018-19
260	516	Amol Muzumdar	Mumbai	Haryana	1993-94
256*	417	Bahir Shah	Speen Ghar Region	Amo Region	2017-18
240	NA	Eric Marx	Transvaal	Griqualand West	1920-21

Stats: Rajesh Kumar

- ✓ Batting in the Ranji Plate tie against Mizoram, the 22-year-old scored 341 runs off just 405 balls at a splendid strike rate of 84.20.
- ✓ Gani and Babul Kumar, who scored unbeaten 229 off 398 deliveries, shared a marathon partnership of 539 runs against Mizoram on Day 2 of the plate group match.
- ✓ This was also the first 500-plus stand involving any debutant player in the history of first-class cricket.
- ✓ Overall, the 539-run stand became the third-highest partnership in first-class cricket
- ✓ The other two being 577 (Vijay Hazare & Gul Mohd for Baroda vs Holkar in 1947) and 574\* (CL Walcott & FMM Worrell for Barbados vs Trinidad in 1945/46)
- ✓ Notably, it is the second-highest fourth-wicket partnership in the history of the Ranji Trophy.

