

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – FEBRUARY 27, 2022

TAMIL NADU

- The world's tallest Muthumalai Murugan statue – is to be consecrated on April 6 at Attur, Salem



- ✓ At 146ft, the statue in Salem is taller than the 140ft Muthumalai Murugan statue in Malaysia.
- ✓ The statue is built by the Sri Muthumalai Murugar Trust by roping in sculptor 'Tirumarur' Thiyagarajan, who constructed the Murugan statue in Malaysia in 2006.
- ✓ Sridhar, a businessman from Attur, has constructed the temple and Muthumalai Murugan statue on his land in 2014.

NATIONAL

- On February 26, the Union Cabinet, chaired by PM Narendra Modi - approved the nationwide roll-out of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) with a five-year budget of ₹1,600 crore.
- ✓ The National Health Authority (NHA) will be the implementing agency of Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM).
- ✓ Under the ABDM, citizens will be able to create their Ayushman Bharat Health Account numbers, to which their digital health records can be linked.

- ✓ The Digital Mission was one of focus areas of Union Budget 2022-23
- ✓ It aims to create an online platform to enable interoperability of health data within the health ecosystem.
- ✓ The National Health Authority has already started creating the 14-digit unique health ID or ABHA (Ayushman Bharat Health Account) number for citizens.
- ✓ The ABHA number can be used to link existing and new medical records and share these with registered health professionals and health service providers.
- ✓ It can also be used to access other digital health services while maintaining a common pool of medical history.
- ✓ The objective of the mission is to make health services equitable, affordable and accessible by the use of technologies such as telemedicine and enable national portability of health services
- ✓ The pilot of ABDM was completed in the six Union Territories of Ladakh, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Puducherry, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep with the technology platform developed by the NHA.
- ✓ During the pilot, digital sandbox was created in which more than 774 partner solutions are undergoing integration.
- ✓ A total 17,33,69,087 Ayushman Bharat Health Accounts have been created and 10,114 doctors and 17,319 health facilities have been registered in ABDM as on February 24
- **On February 26, the Cabinet's economic affairs panel – approved the offering of coal through a common e-auction window**
- ✓ All untied coal from Coal India Ltd subsidiaries and Singareni Collieries Company Ltd will henceforth be e-auctioned through a common window instead of separate sector-specific auctions conducted at present.
- ✓ The approval was given during a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by Prime Minister
- ✓ Due to the move, market distortions would be removed and single rate for each grade of coal for all the consumers will evolve in the e-auction market.
- ✓ It will increase operational efficiencies and lead to an increase in domestic coal demand.
- ✓ The new regime will also end the discretion of coal companies in allotting quantities for auctioning to different end-use industries.
- ✓ This e-auction will cater to all regulated sectors such as power generation and non-regulated consumers.
- **On February 26, the Union Cabinet, chaired by PM Narendra Modi - approved a proposal to allow foreign direct investment (FDI) up to 20% in the state-owned Life Insurance Corporation through the automatic route.**
- ✓ The FDI ceiling for LIC has now been made at par with that of public sector banks.

- ✓ While current FDI policy allows 74% FDI in the insurance sector, LIC being a statutory corporation, is not covered under either “Insurance Company” or “Intermediaries or Insurance Intermediaries”
- ✓ The government is keen to complete the listing of LIC by the end of March as part of its efforts to bolster revenues and close the year with a fiscal deficit of 6.9% of GDP.
- ✓ While a large portion of the issue is proposed to be earmarked for retail investors and policyholders, overseas investors too are expected to invest large amounts in LIC.
- ✓ The existing FDI policy did not prescribe any specific provision for foreign investment in LIC, which is a statutory corporation established under LIC Act, 1956.
- ✓ FDI inflows into India rose to \$81.97 billion in 2020-21, from \$ 74.39 billion in 2019-20.
- ✓ On February 13, Life Insurance Corporation filed draft papers with capital market regulator Sebi for the sale of 5% stake by the government for an estimated Rs 63,000 crore.
- ✓ Employees and policyholders of the insurance behemoth would get a discount over the floor price.
- ✓ According to LIC Act, an entity or a person can hold a maximum of 5% stake in LIC and the government holding cannot fall below 51%.
- ✓ As of September 2021, LIC policyholders had investments of Rs 39,49,516.37 crore on a standalone basis.
- ✓ LIC held stocks worth a “carrying value” of Rs 9,79,843 crore (close to \$130 billion), or 24.77 per cent of its total investments, as on September 30, 2021.
- ✓ The LIC public issue would be the biggest IPO in the history of the Indian stock market.
- ✓ So far, the amount mobilised from IPO of Paytm in 2021 was the largest ever at Rs 18,300 crore, followed by Coal India (2010) at nearly Rs 15,500 crore and Reliance Power (2008) at Rs 11,700 crore.

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **India - abstained on United Nations Security Council resolution that condemned Russia's "aggression" against Ukraine**



- ✓ The resolution also demanded the withdrawal of Russian forces from the neighbouring country.
- ✓ The Council's resolution reaffirmed its commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders.
- ✓ India did not endorse the harsh language used in the resolution condemning Russia's actions.
- ✓ Earlier, on January 31, India abstained on a procedural vote on whether to discuss the issue of Ukraine.
- ✓ The UN Security Council voted on the draft resolution sponsored by the US and Albania on February 26
- ✓ Eleven countries voted in favour of the resolution while three countries, including India, China and UAE, abstained.
- ✓ The 11 countries that voted in favour of the resolution are Albania, Brazil, France, Gabon, Ghana, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Norway, the UK and the US, while Russia vetoed the resolution as a permanent member.
- ✓ Eighty-one non-security Council members also co-sponsored the resolution.
- ✓ Russia chaired the meeting of the UNSC since it holds the presidency for the month of February
- ✓ A similar resolution against Russia is now likely to be brought up in the UN General Assembly where Russia does not have a veto.
- ✓ Meanwhile, Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelenskyy called up PM Modi and briefed him on the situation.
- ✓ The Russian embassy in New Delhi said the country "highly appreciates India's independent and balanced position" during the UNSC resolution.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **On February 25, Union Culture Minister G Kishan Reddy - inaugurated Devayatanam, a one-of-a-kind conference on temple architecture of India, at Hampi, Karnataka.**
- ✓ During the event, the Union Culture Minister also released a booklet consisting of 75 glorious temples from across India



- ✓ The inaugural session took place at Pattabhirama Temple in Hampi
- ✓ The two-day international conference is being organized on February 25-26 by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) of the Ministry of Culture under the aegis of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- ✓ The conference, Devayatanam aims to highlight the architectures of Indian temples
- ✓ The conference will deliberate on philosophical, religious, social, economic, technical, scientific, art, and architectural aspects of temples such as the Nagara, Vesara, Dravida, Kalinga, and others.
- ✓ There are three main kinds of temple architecture in India - Nagara or the Northern Style, Dravida or the Southern style, and Vesara or the Mixed styles.
- ✓ Various academic sessions are a part of the conference and are being held in Kannada University, Hampi
- ✓ There are more than 2 million Hindu temples in the country.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **The Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee - has organized a regional farmers' awareness programme as part of the 'Gramin Krishi Mausam Sewa' (GKMS) project and launched KISAN mobile application for the farmers**
- ✓ Farmers can now easily access the block-level weather forecast and weather based Agromet Advisory Bulletins on their mobile phones through the 'Kisan' App.
- ✓ The special feature of the 'KISAN' App is that the weather forecast and advisory bulletin will be displayed only for the block selected by the farmer.
- ✓ The App is bilingual and users can select either Hindi or English at their convenience.
- ✓ Regional Remote Sensing Centre (RRSC), National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), New Delhi has developed the 'KISAN' app in association with RRSC, NRSC, ISRO, Hyderabad.
- ✓ The Ministry of Earth Sciences launched Gramin Krishi Mausam Sewa to provide farmers with crop-specific information twice a week via print, visual, radio, and IT such as SMS.
- ✓ GKMS has been implemented by Indian Meteorological Department in association with different state agriculture universities and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research.
- ✓ As of now, the app provides information to the farmers of Haridwar, and soon it will cover the farmers of the districts of Pauri Garhwal and Dehradun, Uttarakhand

ECONOMY

- **The largest bank in the US, JP Morgan – became the first leading bank to enter 'Metaverse' by opening a lounge in the blockchain-based 3D virtual metaverse platform called 'Decentraland'**



- ✓ The metaverse is a virtual world where people can interact, attend events, and explore, as digital avatars of themselves.
 - ✓ JP Morgan has created the 'Onyx' lounge, referring to the bank's existing suite of permissioned Ethereum-based services
 - ✓ The Onyx lounge resides in Metajuku mall, a virtual version of Tokyo's Harajuku shopping district
 - ✓ The visits to the lounge reveal a roaming tiger at the entrance and a digital portrait of Jamie Dimon, the CEO of JP Morgan.
 - ✓ JP Morgan can operate as a bank in the virtual world much like it does in the real world since the virtual worlds in the metaverse have their own population, GDP, and currencies.
 - ✓ Within just six months in 2021, the average price of a plot of virtual land across the four main Web3 metaverses — The Sandbox, Decentraland, Cryptovoxels, and Somnium Space — doubled to \$12,000 from \$6,000
- **On February 24, Global banking group, Standard Chartered - announced it has partnered with the International Air Transport Association (IATA) to launch IATA Pay in India**
- ✓ IATA Pay is already available in several European markets
 - ✓ It is an airline industry payment platform that brings options, convenience and an enhanced experience to consumers when purchasing tickets directly from participating airlines.
 - ✓ The service uses the Unified Payment Interface (UPI), a domestic real-time payments scheme in India, thereby enabling consumers to instantly pay for airline tickets from their bank accounts.
 - ✓ In addition to existing payment options such as credit cards, IATA Pay will be a new payment option that enables participating airlines to offer instant payment options such as UPI Scan & Pay and UPI Collect (Request to Pay).
 - ✓ IATA Pay in India is powered by Standard Chartered's Straight2Bank Pay, a payment platform that helps online merchants digitalise collections via multiple payment options through a single global connectivity.

- ✓ In 2021, the two organisations launched IATA EasyPay in India, a pay-as-you-go payment solution that streamlines the ticketing and settlement process among IATA-affiliated travel agents, member airlines and IATA.

APPOINTMENTS

- **On February 25, Anoop Kumar Mendiratta - became the first Union Law Secretary to be appointed as a judge in High Court.**



- ✓ Mendiratta was appointed as judge based on his seniority as a judicial officer and his name was recently recommended by the Supreme Court collegium.
- ✓ He was appointed as law secretary on a contractual basis till March 30, 2023, till his attaining the age of 60 years
- ✓ In October 2019, Anoop Kumar Mendiratta became the first serving judge to be appointed as Union Law Secretary, among 60 candidates.
- ✓ Mendiratta was serving as the District and Sessions Judge of Karkardooma in northeast district when he was made the Law Secretary
- ✓ As Union Law Secretary, Mendiratta had hosted the meeting of Ministers of Justice of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).
- ✓ He also served as the Principal Secretary (Law) in the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi.
- ✓ Besides Mendiratta, three other judicial officers - Neena Bansal Krishna, Dinesh Kumar Sharma and Sudhir Kumar Jain - have also been elevated as judges of the Delhi High Court.

SPORTS

- **Indian boxer Nandini - ended with a bronze medal in the 73rd Strandja Memorial Tournament in Sofia, Bulgaria**
- ✓ Nandini lost to former world champion Lazzat Kungeibayeva of Kazakhstan in the semifinals.
- ✓ Nandini lost 0-5 in the bout held on February 25 in the +81 kg category
- ✓ Former youth world champion Nikhat Zareen (52kg) and Nitu (48kg) are the only Indians left in the event after they advanced to the finals of their respective weight categories.



- ✓ Zareen defeated Tokyo Olympics and world championship silver-medallist Buse Naz Cakiroglu, while Nitu prevailed over Ukrainian rival Hanna Okhota
- ✓ Nitu will be up against Italy's Erika Prisciandaro while Zareen will face Ukraine's three-time European Championships medallist Tetiana Kob in the finals.
- ✓ Zareen had won a gold medal at the Strandja Memorial's 2019 edition.
- ✓ India won two medals in the last edition with Deepak Kumar and Naveen Boora securing silver and bronze respectively.