

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-MARCH 16, 2022

TAMIL NADU

- **Leading international consumer electronics and smartphone maker, Samsung - signed an MoU with the Tamil Nadu government in the presence of Chief Minister M K Stalin and state industries minister Thangam Thennarasu on March 15**



- ✓ Ken Kang, president and CEO, Samsung Southwest Asia and S Krishnan, additional chief secretary – Industries exchanged the MoU documents.
 - ✓ Under the agreement, Samsung has proposed to invest Rs 1,588 crore to establish a new compressor manufacturing plant at Sriperumbudur near Chennai.
 - ✓ The new facility, spread over 22 acres, will have a capacity to produce eight million compressor units per annum
 - ✓ The new compressors will be used in refrigerators that Samsung manufactures in India and also for exports
 - ✓ Samsung already has a manufacturing presence in Tamil Nadu, after setting up a facility at Sriperumbudur in 2007.
- **On March 15, Chief Minister MK Stalin - inaugurated an advanced robotic surgery centre set up at the Tamil Nadu Government Multi Super Speciality Hospital in Omandurar.**



- ✓ The new equipment for robotic surgery worth ₹34. 60-crore was installed and a fully modular operation theatre has been set up at a cost of ₹50 lakh in the hospital
- ✓ Till now, only central government institutions such as AIIMS and Jipmer have such units and no state government hospital has such a robotic surgery centre
- ✓ Of the 75 installations in India, Chennai has six and all are in the private sector.
- ✓ The machine has been procured through the TN Medical Services Corporation
- ✓ It will be used by the departments of urology, surgical gastroenterology, surgical oncology, endocrine surgery and cardiothoracic surgery.
- ✓ The Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme will cover the cost of robotic surgery for patients with state health insurance cards.
- ✓ The advanced equipment offers minimally invasive surgery (smaller surgical cut) and improves precision and surgical outcomes, reduces blood loss, chances of infection, and shortens hospital stay.
- ✓ Surgeons will operate from the console using a computer-controlled robot "hand".

HIGH COURT VERDICT

- On March 15, the Karnataka high court - upheld a state government order banning the hijab in college classrooms, saying that wearing the headscarf is not an essential religious practice of Islam.

'PRESCRIPTION OF SCHOOL UNIFORM IS REASONABLE RESTRICTION'

EXCERPTS FROM THE KARNATAKA HIGH COURT ORDER	
<p>WEARING OF HIJAB IS NOT ESSENTIAL RELIGIOUS PRACTICE</p> <p>“...It can hardly be argued that hijab being a matter of attire, can be justifiably treated as fundamental to Islamic faith. It is not that if the alleged practice of wearing hijab is not adhered to, those not wearing hijab become sinners, Islam loses its glory and it ceases to be a religion”</p> <p>GOVT ORDER ON UNIFORM DOESN'T VIOLATE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS</p> <p>“All rights have to be viewed in the contextual conditions...Schools are 'qualified public places'...</p>	<p>(which) by their very nature repel the assertion of individual rights to the detriment of their general discipline & decorum... prescription of school uniform is only a reasonable restriction”</p> <p>UNIFORM PROMOTES HARMONY, COMMON BROTHERHOOD</p> <p>“(If hijab is allowed) the school uniform ceases to be uniform... That would establish a sense of 'social-separateness', which is not desirable... the accommodation which the petitioners seek (to wear hijab in class) cannot be said to be reasonable”</p>
	 <p>The HC verdict came after 11 days of back-to-back hearings that ended on Feb 25</p>

- ✓ The court's judgment endorsed the spirit of "uniformity" that school and college dress codes/uniforms promote.
- ✓ A three-judge full bench of Chief Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi, Justices Krishna S Dixit and J M Khazi dismissed a batch of petitions filed by Muslim girls studying in pre-university colleges in Udupi seeking the right to wear hijabs in classrooms.

4 QUESTIONS THE HC ADDRESSED

Karnataka high court chief justice Ritu Raj Awasthi said on Tuesday the bench had framed four questions for consideration while deliberating on the petitions



<p>1 Whether wearing a hijab/headscarf is part of "essential religious practice" in the Islamic faith protected under Article 25 of the Constitution</p>	<p>violates Articles 14 and 15 of the Constitution</p>
<p>2 Whether prescription of a school uniform is not legally permissible and violates the petitioners' fundamental rights inter alia guaranteed under Articles, 19(1)(a), (i.e., freedom of expression) and 21, (i.e., privacy) of the Constitution</p>	<p>4 Whether any case is made out in the petition by the four students of Govt PU College for Girls, Udupi, to issue a direction to initiate a disciplinary enquiry against respondent Nos 6 to 14 and for issuance of a writ of quo warranto against the chairman and vice-chairman of the college devpt committee</p> <p>➤ A writ of quo warranto seeks to remove a person from his/her post for acting without right or authority under law. Raghupathi Bhat, Udupi MLA, is the chairman of the college development committee concerned</p>
<p>3 Whether the government order dated February 5, 2022, apart from being incompetent, was issued without application of mind and further is manifestly arbitrary and, therefore,</p>	

- ✓ The HC bench rejected the contention that the hijab ban violates people's rights guaranteed by the Constitution under Articles 14 (equality), 15 (no discrimination on the ground of religion), 19 (freedom of speech and expression), 21 (protection of life and personal liberty) and 25 (freedom of religion)
- ✓ In its 129-page judgement, the HC noted that requirement of uniform is a reasonable restriction on the fundamental right to freedom of expression under Article 19(1)(a), which the students cannot object to.
- ✓ Soon after the judgment was pronounced in the morning, Niba Naaz, a student, filed a special leave petition in the apex court, claiming that the HC erred fundamentally by ruling that hijab is not an essential religious custom though Quran and Islam mandate it.
- ✓ Earlier, on February 5, the state issued an order which suggested that wearing hijabs can be restricted in government colleges where uniforms are prescribed and banned clothes "which disturb equality, integrity and public order" in schools and colleges.

- ✓ On February 10, the full bench started hearing the matter after a single-judge bench referred the pleas to a larger bench saying that they involved “larger Constitutional issues”.
- ✓ The Karnataka High Court had reserved the judgment on February 25 after an 11-day hearing
- **The Madras high court - has asked the state government to frame regulations to check the use of mobile phones and mobile cameras by public servants for personal purposes during office hours**
- ✓ The Court held that their frequent use would cause disturbance and disrupt the functioning of offices.
- ✓ Justice S M Subramaniam observed that use of mobile phones by public servants during office hours is nowadays normal, but it is grave misconduct including taking videos inside the office.
- ✓ If employees are allowed to do so without any restrictions it will have serious consequences, observed the Judge
- ✓ As per the verdict, officials working in government departments should never be allowed to use mobile phones inside the office for their personal use.
- ✓ If an emergency call is to be attended, proper permission must be obtained from superiors to go out to use mobile phones.
- ✓ In all circumstances, mobile phones must be either switched off or kept on vibration/silent mode without causing disturbance or nuisance to the public who visit the office and other officials, held the Judge
- ✓ As per the order, this should be the minimum discipline to be followed in government offices.
- ✓ The verdict asked the government to ensure that public servants are not wandering with mobile phones inside the office during office hours and to regulate it in accordance with the Tamil Nadu Government Servants Conduct Rules, 1973.
- ✓ Appropriate circular/instruction should be given to all offices to ensure that mobile phones are kept in a common cloakroom at the time of entering the office, said the verdict.
- ✓ For emergency calls, the official numbers kept in the office should be utilised.
- ✓ Strict actions should be initiated under the 1973 rules in the event of any violation of guidelines, observed the judge.
- ✓ The judge said that exceptions should be carved out while framing the regulations, for use of mobile phones by authorized field officers and officials.

ECONOMY

- **On March 15, Punjab National Bank - classified its Rs 2,060 crore loan exposure to IL&FS Tamil Nadu Power Co as fraud.**
- ✓ As per the bank, it has made provisions of Rs 824 crore under prescribed prudential norms.

- ✓ Although the government action on IL&FS took place in 2018 following irregularities, the classification of group companies as 'frauds' has been taking place in phases.
- ✓ Banks red flag an account as soon as they find irregularities and under RBI rules have to take a call on declaring the account as a fraud within six months of being notified.
- ✓ Once an account is declared a fraud, the authorities are informed and the borrower is no longer eligible to raise funds from the banking system.
- ✓ In the case of IL&FS, law enforcement authorities have already taken action against erstwhile management.
- ✓ Earlier this year, Punjab & Sind Bank had classified its Rs 148 crore exposure as a fraud.
- ✓ ITPCL had total dues of Rs 6,700 crore to lenders and owed another Rs 900 crore to its parent IL&FS.
- ✓ A restructuring plan involving the sale of stake to the Tamil Nadu government and other investors did not yield any results.

SPORTS

- **Indian golfer Anirban Lahiri - equalled his best-ever result on the PGA Tour with a second place finish at The Players Championship 2022 in Florida, USA, on March 14**
- ✓ The Indian's previous best was a T2 finish at the Memorial Tournament in 2017.



- ✓ Two-time Olympian Anirban Lahiri, with 12-under, fell short by just one stroke behind Australia's Cameron Smith to finish second in the PGA Tour's most prestigious tournament
- ✓ Smith, who finished at 13-under 275, won for the second time this year, and the fifth time in his PGA Tour career, and picked up \$3.6 million from the \$20 million purse, the richest in golf

- ✓ Despite missing the title, Lahiri's earnings were probably the biggest ever for an Indian sports person from a single one-week long event with a career-best \$2.18 million in earnings.
- ✓ A win at the tournament would have made Anirban Lahiri only the second Indian after Arjun Atwal (2010 Wyndham Championship) to win on the PGA Tour and the third Asian golfer after Korea's K.J. Choi (2011) and Si Woo Kim (2017) to win The Players.

