

## **EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MAY 13, 2022**

### **STATES**

- **On May 12, the Uttar Pradesh Department of Minority Welfare – has directed all district minority welfare officers to ensure singing of the national anthem in the morning assembly in all madrassas of the state.**
- ✓ Earlier in March, the board had decided to make the singing of the national anthem mandatory at all of the 16,000 madrassas in UP, including 560 government-aided madrassas and all recognised ones.
- ✓ The decision could not be implemented then as the madrassas were closed for Ramzan and the academic activities in madrassas resumed now.
- ✓ The examinations for 1.62 lakh students of secondary, senior secondary, all three years of 'Kamil' (equivalent to graduation) and two years of 'Fazil' (equivalent to post graduation) will be held from May 14.

### **NATIONAL**

- **On May 12, Prime Minister Narendra Modi – addressed 'Utkarsh Samaroh' in Bharuch, Gujarat through video conference.**



- ✓ The event was organised to celebrate 100% coverage of four Gujarat government schemes for widows, poor, aged and the destitute in Bharuch district.

- ✓ During the address, the PM interacted with people and talked about how the schemes under 'Utkarsh Initiative' helped them.
- ✓ 'Utkarsh Initiative' was carried out by the district administration from January 1 to March 31 this year
- ✓ The four schemes were Ganga Swaroopa Aarthik Sahay Yojana, Indira Gandhi Vrudh Sahay Yojana, Niradhar Vrudh Aarthik Sahay Yojana and Rashtriya Kutumb Sahay Yojana.
- ✓ According to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), a total of 12,854 beneficiaries were identified across the four schemes.
- ✓ Utkarsh camps were organised in all villages and wards of municipality areas of the district for applicants to provide on-spot approval.
- ✓ Incentives were also given to Utkarsh assistants to further facilitate the drive
- ✓ During the drive, taluk-wise WhatsApp helpline numbers were announced to collect information about those who were not receiving benefits of the scheme.

## INTERNATIONAL

- **Opposition leader and former premier Ranil Wickremesinghe - was sworn-in as Sri Lanka's 26th prime minister on May 12**



- ✓ The 73-year-old United National Party (UNP) leader Wickremesinghe was sworn-in as prime minister by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa
- ✓ On May 9, his predecessor Mahinda Rajapaksa was forced to resign following violent protests over the worst economic crisis in the island nation
- ✓ Wickremesinghe, a lawyer-turned politician who has been in Parliament for 45 years, has served as the prime minister on five previous occasions.
- ✓ Wickremesinghe, the nephew of Sri Lanka's first executive president Junius Jayewardene, was first appointed Prime Minister from 1993-1994 after the assassination of President Ranasinghe Premadasa.
- ✓ He was also elected as the Prime Minister from 2001-2004 when the United National Front Government won the general elections in 2001.
- ✓ In 2002, Wickremesinghe negotiated a ceasefire agreement with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

- ✓ But he lost power in 2004, after Chandrika Kumaratunga called early elections.
  - ✓ Wickremesinghe had handed a shock defeat to Mahinda Rajapaksa in 2015 polls and led a minority government.
  - ✓ United National Party (UNP) was routed and failed to win a single seat in the general election held in August 2020.
  - ✓ Sri Lanka is facing its worst economic crisis since gaining independence from Britain in 1948
- **On May 12, Finland - said it would apply to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) without delay and Sweden is also expected to follow the same within days**
- ✓ Sweden has avoided military alliances for more than 200 years, while Finland adopted neutrality and military non-alignment stand after its defeat by the Soviets in World War II.

## WHY FINLAND, SWEDEN JOINING NATO WILL BE BIG DEAL

If Finland and Sweden enter the 30-country military alliance, it's likely to be the quickest Nato enlargement ever and one that would redraw Europe's security map. A look at what will it mean:

### END OF MILITARILY 'NONALIGNED' POLICY

Not neutral like Switzerland, Finland and Sweden have been traditionally militarily 'nonaligned'. **They have been Nato's closest partners but maintaining good ties with Russia has been an important part of their foreign policy.** But Russia's invasion of Ukraine sparked a sharp U-turn. Support in Finland for Nato membership has hovered around 20-30% for years. It now stands at 70%

### Nato's expansion since 1997



### HIKE MILITARY SPENDING

After end of Cold War, both countries slashed their defence spending. Finland says it's already hit Nato's defence spending guideline of 2% of GDP. Sweden too is ramping up military budget, expects to reach target by 2028

**DOUBLE NATO'S BORDER WITH RUSSIA** | If Finland joins, it would double the length of Nato's border with Russia, adding a further 1,340km for Moscow to defend. Sweden doesn't have a border with Russia

**STRONGER NORDIC REGION** | Nato entry for the two, joining regional neighbours Denmark, Norway and Iceland, would formalise their joint security and defence work in ways that their Nordic Defence Cooperation pact hasn't. NORDEFCO focuses on cooperation but working within Nato means putting forces under joint command. **Accession would tighten the strategic Nordic grip on the Baltic Sea – Russia's maritime point of access to the city of St. Petersburg and its Kaliningrad exclave**



- ✓ Such an expansion of the alliance would leave Russia surrounded by NATO countries in the Baltic Sea and the Arctic

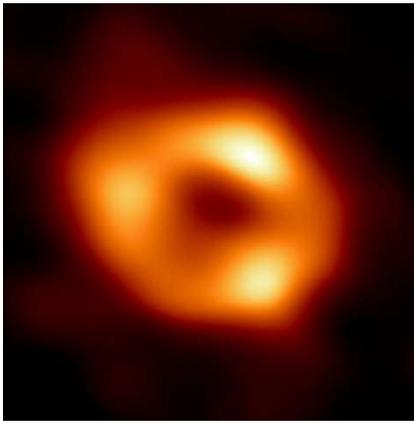
- ✓ Russia's invasion of Ukraine was mainly aimed at preventing the expansion of the Western military alliance, NATO.
- ✓ The decision by the two Nordic countries to abandon the neutrality they maintained throughout the Cold War would be one of the biggest shifts in European security in decades.
- ✓ These countries have stayed away from joining such alliances so far, as they always wanted to maintain cordial relations with neighbouring country Russia.
- ✓ NATO membership would strengthen the country's security and defence system, said the Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin
- ✓ Moscow called Finland's announcement a direct threat to Russia, and threatened retaliation, including unspecified "military-technical" measures.
- ✓ Russia might consider potential retaliatory measures including stationing nuclear-armed missiles on the Baltic Sea.
- ✓ Nato secretary-general Jens Stoltenberg said the Finns would be "warmly welcomed" and promised a "smooth and swift" accession process.
- ✓ Sweden's government plans to submit an application to join Nato next week.
- ✓ Finland and Sweden are the two biggest EU countries yet to join Nato.

## **INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES**

- **India and Pakistan - were among the 12 countries which abstained from voting on a UN Human Rights Council resolution**
- ✓ The resolution seeks to address the deteriorating situation in Ukraine "stemming from Russian aggression"
- ✓ China and Eritrea were the only two countries to vote against the resolution in the 47-member body.
- ✓ The Geneva-based Council closed its 34th special session after adopting the resolution on May 12 with 33 votes in favour
- ✓ The resolution sought an additional mandate for the Commission of Inquiry established earlier to specifically probe violations in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Chernihiv and Sumy in Ukraine.
- ✓ It resolution also urged Moscow to provide international agencies unhindered access to people who have been "transferred" from conflict-affected areas of Ukraine and are allegedly being held in Russian territory.
- ✓ India had also abstained in March from voting in the Council on the resolution that established the Commission of Inquiry.
- ✓ India has so far abstained from voting on all resolutions and procedural votes, totalling 12, on Ukraine in various UN bodies.

## **SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT**

- **On May 12, astronomers – announced the presence of a supermassive black hole, known as Sagittarius A\*, at the centre of Milky Way galaxy**



- ✓ It's the first direct observation confirming the presence of the black hole
  - ✓ The image is obtained from the international consortium behind the Event Horizon Telescope, a collection of eight synchronised radio telescopes around the world
  - ✓ It is an international effort in which more than 300 researchers from 80 institutes around the world participated
  - ✓ Black holes are regions of space where the pull of gravity is so intense that nothing can escape, including light.
  - ✓ The image thus depicts is not the black hole itself, because it is completely dark, but the glowing gas that encircles the phenomenon -- which is four million times more massive than our Sun -- in a bright ring of bending light.
  - ✓ Black holes don't emit light, but the image shows the shadow of the black hole surrounded by a bright ring, which is actually light being bent by the gravity of the black hole
  - ✓ Sagittarius A\* owes its name to its detection in the direction of the constellation Sagittarius.
  - ✓ Its existence has been assumed since 1974, with the detection of an unusual radio source at the centre of the galaxy.
  - ✓ A stellar black hole is formed when a huge star burns up all its fuel and collapses in on itself.
- **Multinational pharma giant Roche – has announced the launch of a new drug 'PHESGO' for the treatment of breast cancer patients**
- ✓ Roche Pharma has combined two monoclonal antibodies that can be administered by a single injection, thus significantly reducing the treatment time by 90% and treatment cost by 20%
  - ✓ PHESGO is a combination of Perjeta (pertuzumab) and Herceptin (trastuzumab) with hyaluronidase
  - ✓ It is the world's first-ever subcutaneous fixed-dose formulation in the history of cancer treatment
  - ✓ The rollout of the drug is also likely to enhance the efficiency of healthcare systems since it requires less preparation and administration time.
  - ✓ PHESGO is to be used for treatment of early and metastatic HER2-positive breast cancer in combination with intravenous (IV) chemotherapy

- ✓ HER2-positive breast cancer is a type of breast cancer in which the patient tests positive for a protein called human epidermal growth factor receptor 2 (HER2).
- ✓ PHERGO was first approved by the US drug regulator in June 2020 during the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic and by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) in December 2020.
- ✓ In India, PHERGO was approved by the drug regulator, Drug Controller General of India (DGCI) in October 2021 and the import license was granted in January this year.
- ✓ Globally, over 17,000 breast cancer patients have benefitted from PHERGO as on December 2021.
- ✓ Breast cancer is one of the most common type of cancer occurring in women.
- ✓ As per a 2021 World Health Organisation (WHO) report, there were 2.3 million women diagnosed with breast cancer and 6.85 lakh deaths occurred globally in 2020.
- ✓ During the end of 2020, there were 7.8 million women alive who were diagnosed with breast cancer in the past five years, making it the world's most prevalent cancer.
- ✓ According to WHO, survival of breast cancer for at least five years after diagnosis ranges from more than 90% in high-income countries, to 66% in India and 40% in South Africa.
- ✓ Early detection and treatment has proven successful in high-income countries.

## DEFENCE

- **On May 12, India - successfully tested the extended range BrahMos supersonic cruise missile from a Sukhoi-30MKI fighter jet in the Bay of Bengal.**



- ✓ This is the first time the new BrahMos missile with a strike range of over 450-km (original range 290-km) has been tested from the air.
- ✓ The Sukhoi, with a combat radius of almost 1,500-km without mid-air refueling, combined with the 450-km range BrahMos missile forms a formidable weapons package for the country's defence

- ✓ These air-to-ground BrahMos missiles can carry out accurate strikes on high-value military targets, underground nuclear bunkers, command-and-control centres on land or aircraft carriers and other warships on the high seas.

## APPOINTMENTS

- **On May 12, Former finance secretary and Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar - was appointed as the next chief election commissioner**



- ✓ He will oversee the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, besides various assembly polls, including Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh over the next one year
  - ✓ He will assume charge on May 15 after incumbent Sushil Chandra demits office on May 14
  - ✓ Rajiv Kumar is a 1984 batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, who has worked in various ministries at the centre and his state cadre of Bihar and Jharkhand
  - ✓ After retiring as finance secretary in February 2020, he was appointed as the Chairman, Public Enterprises Selection Board from April 2020 till demitting office on August 31 2020.
  - ✓ He took charge as an election commissioner on September 1, 2020, after a vacancy was created following the resignation of then election commissioner Ashok Lavasa.
  - ✓ Kumar has also been establishment officer, department of personnel and training from 2015-17
  - ✓ Prior to that, he served as joint secretary, department of expenditure with earlier assignments in ministry of tribal affairs, ministry of environment and forests as also education department in state cadre
- **The Tata Group - has appointed Campbell Wilson as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Managing Director (MD) of Air India**
  - ✓ Wilson is the CEO of Scoot, wholly-owned low cost subsidiary of Singapore Airlines (SIA).
  - ✓ New Zealand-born Campbell Wilson has 26 years experience in the aviation industry and started as a Management Trainee with Singapore Airlines in 1996.



- ✓ He then worked for SIA in Hong Kong, Canada, Japan, before returning back to Singapore as the founding CEO of Scoot, which he led till 2016
- ✓ Wilson then worked as the Senior Vice President, Sales and Marketing at SIA, before returning back as the CEO of Scoot in 2020.
- ✓ Wilson will join Air India's board of directors, currently comprising Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran, alongside Hindustan Unilever CEO & MD Sanjiv Mehta and former General Insurance Corporation chairperson Alice Vaidyan, who are both independent directors.
- ✓ Wilson's appointment will be subject to security clearance by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- ✓ Earlier in February this year, Tata Sons had announced the appointment of former chairman of Turkish Airlines Ilker Ayci as the CEO and MD of Air India.
- ✓ However, he declined the offer on March 1 amid controversies over his views related to India
- ✓ Earlier in March this year, Tata Group chief N Chandrasekaran was appointed as the Chairman of Air India
- ✓ Air India is the third airline brand in the Tata Group's stable
- ✓ Tata Group holds a majority interest in AirAsia India and Vistara, a joint venture with Singapore Airlines.
- ✓ At present, Air India controls over 4,400 domestic and 1,800 international landing and parking slots at domestic airports as well as 900 slots abroad.
- ✓ In October last year, the government had sold Air India to Talace Private Limited - - a subsidiary of the Tata group's holding company -- for Rs. 18,000 crore.
- ✓ Tatas had set up Tata Airlines in 1932, which was later -- in 1946 -- renamed Air India
- ✓ The government had taken control of the airline in 1953, but JRD Tata continued to be its chairman till 1977.

## OBITUARY

- **Noted Sanskrit grammarian, spiritual master, and author, professor Bhagirath Prasad Tripathi (88 years) - passed away after a prolonged illness on May 11.**



- ✓ Popularly known as Vagish Shastri, Prof Shastri's disciples and followers can be found across the world.
- ✓ Pop icon Madonna sought him out to teach her how to pronounce Sanskrit hymns she used in her album, Ray of Light, 24 years ago.
- ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed grief over his demise.
- ✓ Shastri devised a unique technique of teaching Sanskrit grammar called "Vagyoga", a mnemonic method to enter into the soul of words.
- ✓ Hundreds of scholars from all over the world learned Sanskrit from him in a very short time and made translations of Sanskrit texts in their own languages.
- ✓ People would also come to him to learn meditation and kundalini awakening.
- ✓ In 2018, the government of India awarded him Padma Shri for his work in the field of literature and education.
- ✓ In 1998, when Madonna was preparing for her album "Ray of Light", which had the "Yoga Taravali" hymn of Adi Shankaracharya, she was told that her Sanskrit pronunciation was not up to the mark.
- ✓ Then, through a telephonic conversation with Shastri, the pop star learnt the diction over two days to recite the shlokas properly

## SPORTS

- **On May 12, Tamil Nadu's Jerlin Anika - won three gold medals in the women's singles badminton event in the ongoing 24<sup>th</sup> summer Deaflympics at Caxias do Sul in Brazil.**



- ✓ She bagged gold in individual women, mixed doubles and India team events.
  - ✓ 18-year old Jerlin Anika of Villapuram in Madurai is a special child who can neither hear nor speak
  - ✓ Earlier, Anika won the district title in under-9 category and followed her winning streak in the state league a few years later in under-13 category.
  - ✓ With the help of Tamil Nadu Deaf Association she participated in the national level competition in deaf category and won 'India Number 1' title at age 13.
  - ✓ Anika participated in her first international tournament in the Deaf Olympics held in Turkey in 2017 as the youngest player and finished fifth then.
  - ✓ In 2019, she participated in the Asia Pacific tournament in Malaysia and clinched two gold medals, one silver and a bronze.
  - ✓ At the Junior World Championship 2019 in Taiwan, Anika won one gold, a silver and a bronze.
  - ✓ Apart from Anika, Indian golfer Diksha Dagar prevailed over Ashlyn Grace in the final to bag gold medal at the Deaflympics in Brazil
  - ✓ Diksha won the silver medal at the 2017 Deaflympics edition
- **On May 11, India - picked up seven medals in the ISSF Junior World Cup in Suhl, Germany, after bagging individual men's and women's 10m air pistol events.**
- ✓ Shiva Narwal and Sarabjot Singh won medals each with the former prevailing in the final.



- ✓ Later, Palak and Manu Bhaker dominated the women's pistol event with the former winning gold in the final.
- ✓ India's tally at the end of the day stood at three gold and four silver out of the total 12 medals on offer.
- ✓ Earlier, Rudranksh Patil and Abhinav Shaw won the gold and silver in the men's 10m air rifle, while Rimita won silver in the women's 10m air rifle event