



## **EVE** **RYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-july 21,** **NATIONAL**

- **India - added nearly 1.16 lakh km to its road network in 2018-19 to take the total length to nearly 63. 32 lakh km**
- ✓ This was revealed in the Basic Road Statistics for 2018-19, which was published on July 20
- ✓ As per the report, India has a network of over 63, 31,757 Km of roads as on 31.03.2019, which is the second largest in the world.
- ✓ The total road constructed has registered a growth of 1.9% from 62,15,797 km in 2018
- ✓ Road transport is the dominant segment in India's transport sector and has contributed 3.06% to GVA against the total transport sector contribution of 4.58% for the year 2019-20.
- ✓ India also increased the length of surfaced road network by 1.64 lakh km during 2018-19
- ✓ Further, the length of rural roads increased to 45.2 lakh km in March 2019 compared to 44.1 lakh km during 2017-18.
- ✓ While the length of National Highways (NHs), district and urban roads also increased during this period, the length of State Highways (NHs) fell by 7,300 km.
- ✓ This was because more state highways were notified as NHs to be developed by the Central government under different highway development schemes.
- ✓ As per the report, 71.4% of India's total road network falls under the rural road category and it has increased significantly from 61% in 2015.
- ✓ Maharashtra accounted for the largest network of Rural Roads with 4,26,327 km (11.7%) followed by Assam 3,72,510 km (10.2%), Bihar 2,59,507 km (7.1%), Uttar Pradesh 2,55,576 km (7.0%) and Madhya Pradesh 2,32,344 km (6.4%).
- ✓ Similarly, the share of NHs has also gradually increased to 2.1% of the entire road network in 2019 compared to 1.8% in 2015.
- ✓ Despite having little share of the total road network, NHs carry a large share of the freight and passenger vehicles.

- ✓ Maharashtra has the largest network of National Highways with 17,757 km (13.4%) followed by Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan with 11,737 km (8.9 %) and 10,342km (7.8 %) respectively, as on 31.03.2019
- ✓ The State Highways constitutes 2.8% of total road network in the country
- ✓ Maharashtra has the largest State Highways network in the country 17.83 % (32005 Km) followed by Karnataka 10.85 % (19473 Km), Gujarat 9.33 % (16746 Km), Rajasthan 8.39 % (15061 Km) and Andhra Pradesh 7.52 % (13500 Km).
- ✓ The Basic Road Statistics of India is an annual publication on the road sector, brought out by Transport Research Wing of Ministry of Road Transport & Highways.
- ✓ In the latest edition, it has eight sections and covers information relating to road length, surfaced road length, major initiatives of Ministry of Road Transport and Highways

## INTERNATIONAL

- On July 20, Sri Lankan Parliament - elected Acting President Ranil Wickremesinghe as the country's ninth President in place of Gotabaya Rajapaksa

### 6-TIME PM BECOMES PREZ

- **Ranil Wickremesinghe**, a 6-time former PM, was backed by Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna party of Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who fled abroad and then resigned after protesters overran his palace
- Gotabaya had appointed Wickremesinghe, 73, as PM in May after his brother Mahinda was forced to quit in the face of widespread protests
- He ran for presidency twice before -- in 1999 and 2005 -- losing both times. His party UNP was annihilated in 2020 elections, leaving the silver-haired veteran as its only MP
- His uncle Junius Jayewardene was one of its longest-serving leaders -- in power for 12 years until stepping down in 1989. Jayewardene brought Wickremesinghe into politics by making him a deputy foreign affairs minister in 1977
- Wickremesinghe started work as a rookie reporter at one of the family newspapers. He turned to legal career and then politics after the family firm was nationalised in 1973

Wickremesinghe faces the task of leading the country out of its economic collapse



#### HOW THE SRI LANKA PARLIAMENT VOTED

|                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Ranil Wickremesinghe     | 134 |
| Dullas Alahapperuma      | 82  |
| Anura Kumara Dissanayaka | 3   |



- Wickremesinghe long had a relatively clean image, but it was muddied during his PM term in 2015-19, when his administration was rocked by an insider trading scam involving central bank bonds. He has also been accused of protecting members of the Rajapaksa clan
- His status as a pro-Western, free-market reformist could smooth bailout talks with IMF, but he has already warned there will be no quick fix to the economic woes

- ✓ In a three-way contest, the six-time PM received 134 votes in the 225-member House, ahead of former government minister Dullas Alahapperuma, who received 82 votes and the Marxist candidate Anura Dissanayake, who had three votes
- ✓ In the 225-member Parliament, 223 MPs voted to elect a new President
- ✓ A candidate needed to secure at least 113 votes to win the election
- ✓ The 73-year-old President-elect will take oath of office on July 21.
- ✓ He will serve the remainder of Gotabaya Rajapaksa's term that ends in 2024.
- ✓ Last week, protesters had burnt down his private home and also damaged his Prime Ministerial office in Colombo in demonstrations against his leadership.
- ✓ The presidential election was necessitated by the forced resignation of Gotabaya Rajapaksa who fled to Singapore amid widespread protests against the government.
- ✓ Ranil Wickremesinghe had earlier unsuccessfully contested for President twice
- ✓ He took over as prime minister in May after the former president's elder brother, Mahinda Rajapaksa, quit from the position following clashes between pro and anti-government protesters causing a deadly wave of violence.
- ✓ For the first time in 44 years, the Sri Lanka's Parliament directly elected a president.
- ✓ Sri Lankans presidents were elected by popular vote in 1982, 1988, 1994, 1999, 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2019

## INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **On June 20, India and Namibia - signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for reintroduction of cheetahs into the historical range in India.**



- ✓ The first batch of eight cheetahs comprising four male and four female cheetahs are expected to arrive in India before Independence Day.
- ✓ The cheetahs will be released in Kuno National Park, Sheopur district of Madhya Pradesh.
- ✓ India plans to introduce 8-10 cheetahs every year with a total 50 from Namibia, South Africa and other African countries over the next five years.

- ✓ Environment minister Bhupender Yadav signed the MoU to promote Wildlife Conservation with the deputy prime minister and foreign minister of Namibia, Netumbo Nandi Ndaitwah in New Delhi
- ✓ Under the MoU, both the countries will also collaborate in areas of climate change, environmental governance, environmental impact assessments, pollution and waste management and other areas of mutual interest.

## **SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT**

- **Ten in-orbit operational communication satellites - have been transferred from the government to space PSU New Space India Ltd (NSIL) to push space reforms**
- ✓ This was informed in the Lok Sabha as a written reply to a question by space minister Jitendra Singh

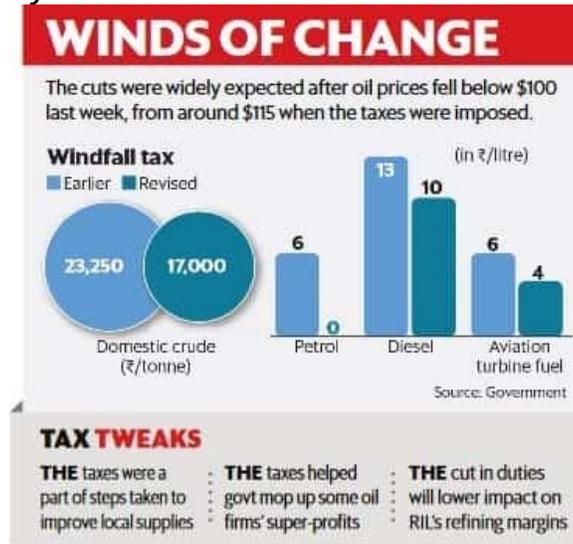


- ✓ The ten communication satellites includes — Gsat-8, Gsat-10, Gsat-12R (CMS-01), Gsat-14, Gsat-15, Gsat-16, Gsat-17, GSAT-18, Gsat-30 and Gsat-31
- ✓ They have been transferred at a written down value of Rs. 4,697.6 crore against issue of equity to the government with April 1, 2021 as effective date of transfer.
- ✓ The transfer is part of the space sector reforms aimed at strengthening the role of NSIL to enhance the nation's share in global space economy.

## **ECONOMY**

- **On July 20, the Centre - slashed the windfall tax on crude oil producers and exempted petrol, diesel and jet fuel from an export levy, following a decline in international rates**
- ✓ It reduced the windfall tax on diesel and aviation turbine fuel (ATF) by Rs 2 a litre and scrapped Rs 6 per litre tax on export of petrol.
- ✓ The tax on ATF has now been cut to Rs 4 a litre from Rs 6 and on diesel to Rs 11 from Rs 13 per litre.
- ✓ All the changes took effect on July 20.
- ✓ India imposed windfall taxes on July 1, joining a growing number of nations that taxes super normal profits of energy companies

- ✓ On July 1, the government levied Rs 6 per litre tax on the export of petrol and jet fuel (ATF) and Rs 13 a litre on the export of diesel to address the issue of fuel shortage in the country



- ✓ Further, the Ministry of Finance imposed a cess of Rs 23,250 per tonne (by way of special additional excise duty - SAED) on crude oil produced domestically with effect from July 1, 2022
- ✓ Now, the Rs 23,250 per tonne additional tax on crude oil produced domestically has been cut to Rs 17,000 per tonne by the government
- ✓ The government also exempted petrol, diesel and ATF from levy of duties when exported from refinery units located in the Special Economic Zones.

## SPORTS

- On July 20, India - finished the ISSF Shooting World Cup campaign at Changwon, South Korea by topping the medal's tally with a haul of 15 medals, including five gold, six silver and four bronze.



- ✓ On the final day of competitions, the Indian trio of Anish Bhanwala, Vijayveer Sidhu and Sameer won the silver in the men's 25m Rapid Fire Pistol team event.
- ✓ The Indians lost the gold medal to Czech side of Martin Podhrasky, Tomas Tehan, and Matej Rampula.

- ✓ India had won all five ISSF World Cup stages in 2019, one in the curtailed 2021 season and yet again this year in the first stage in Cairo.

## **PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS - A REPORT**



# IN PREZ POLLS, LANDSLIDES HAVE BEEN THE NORM

In the 75th year of Independence, tribal leader Droupadi Murmu is the frontrunner to become the 15th President of India, which will make her the first from the community, and also the second woman President of India. As Rashtrapati Bhavan gets ready to welcome its next occupant, here's a look at how the past presidential polls have panned out.

**TIMES Special**

## TENURE 1950-1962

ELECTION YEAR 1952

WINNER  
**Rajendra Prasad**

WINNER'S VOTE SHARE



**Rajendra Prasad** is the only person to have served two terms as President. He secured the highest vote share in a presidential poll at 99.2% to win his second term in 1957.

ELECTION YEAR 1957

WINNER  
**Rajendra Prasad**

WINNER'S VOTE SHARE



Note: The first presidential poll was held by ECI in 1952. In 1950, Prasad was elected by the Constituent Assembly but didn't have to contest

## TENURE 1962-1967

ELECTION YEAR 1962

WINNER  
**Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan**

WINNER'S VOTE SHARE



Philosopher and statesman **S Radhakrishnan** served as the first Vice-President of India from 1952 to 1962 before becoming the second President. He **denounced capital punishment** and accepted all the 57 mercy petitions he received.

## TENURE 1969-1974

ELECTION YEAR 1969

WINNER  
**VV Giri**

WINNER'S VOTE SHARE



The fifth presidential election, in 1969, which brought **VV Giri** to office, was the first to be decided on the basis of second preference votes. It was also the first to ensure strict secrecy of voting with concealed serial numbers on ballot papers and the only one in which the winner did not get a majority of the votes cast.

## TENURE 1982-1987

ELECTION YEAR 1982

WINNER **Giani Zail Singh**

WINNER'S VOTE SHARE



**Giani Zail Singh** is the only Sikh to have held the post and worked with both Indira and Rajiv Gandhi.

## TENURE 1967-1969

ELECTION YEAR 1967

WINNER  
**Zakir Hussain**

WINNER'S VOTE SHARE



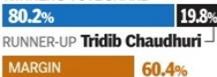
**Zakir Hussain**, the third President of India, was the first President to die in office.

## TENURE 1974-1977

ELECTION YEAR 1974

WINNER  
**Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed**

WINNER'S VOTE SHARE



**Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed** died in harness in early 1977 just after the lifting of the Emergency by then-PM Indira Gandhi and the announcement of fresh general elections.

## TENURE 1977-1982

ELECTION YEAR 1977

WINNER  
**N Sanjiva Reddy**

WINNER'S VOTE SHARE



**N Sanjiva Reddy**, who succeeded Ahmed in early-1977, won uncontested. While 37 candidates had entered the fray, the nominations of 36 were rejected by the returning officer, obviating the need for polling.

## TENURE 2007-2012

ELECTION YEAR 2007

WINNER  
**Pratibha Patil**

WINNER'S VOTE SHARE



**Pratibha Patil** was the first woman to become President. The Congress leader was reportedly the compromise candidate after some parties in the ruling UPA failed to agree on the nomination.

## TENURE 1992-1997

ELECTION YEAR 1992

WINNER  
**Shankar Dayal Sharma**

WINNER'S VOTE SHARE



**Shankar Dayal Sharma** had the distinction of working with four PMs. He served as the Vice-President before he was elected President and rejected all 18 mercy petitions put before him.

## TENURE 2017-2022

ELECTION YEAR 2017

WINNER  
**Ram Nath Kovind**

WINNER'S VOTE SHARE



**Ram Nath Kovind** was the second Dalit President. He rejected all six mercy petitions put before him and instituted Central rule twice.

## TENURE 2012-2017

ELECTION YEAR 2012

WINNER  
**Pranab Mukherjee**

WINNER'S VOTE SHARE



The 13th President, **Pranab Mukherjee**, was one of six to receive the Bharat Ratna, the others being Radhakrishnan, Prasad, Hussain, Giri and Kalam. Rashtrapati Bhavan's Twitter account started under him.

## TENURE 2002-2007

ELECTION YEAR 2002

WINNER  
**APJ Abdul Kalam**

WINNER'S VOTE SHARE



After the NDA nominated **APJ Abdul Kalam**, the 'missile man', for the top post, both the Samajwadi Party and the Nationalist Congress Party backed his candidacy. As a result, President KR Narayanan chose not to seek a second term.

## TENURE 1997-2002

ELECTION YEAR 1997

WINNER  
**KR Narayanan**

WINNER'S VOTE SHARE



**KR Narayanan** was the first Dalit President. In 1997, he became the first President to send back for reconsideration a Cabinet recommendation for the imposition of Central rule in a state (UP).

## TENURE 1987-1992

ELECTION YEAR 1987

WINNER  
**R Venkataraman**

WINNER'S VOTE SHARE



**R Venkataraman** was witness to India's first fractured mandate that led to the formation of a coalition government. He invited the single-largest party despite it not being in the majority.

Graphic: Karthic R Iyer