

EVE^R DAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-July 24, **TAMIL NADU**

- The Tamil Nadu government - has given sanction to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to prosecute nine people in the gutka scam case under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

DIARY HELPED ZERO IN ON SUSPECTS

➤ Gutka scam surfaced in 2016 when I-T department conducted searches **on premises of a gutka manufacturer over tax evasion charges** 

➤ I-T sleuths seized a **diary containing details of payouts allegedly to a then minister, two IPS officers and others**

➤ Then CM Edappadi K Palaniswami informed assembly in June 2017 that **DVAC was conducting**

preliminary inquiry into scam

➤ Madras high court **ordered a CBI probe in April 2018** on a petition from DMK; Supreme Court upheld the order

➤ In September 2018, CBI **searched 40 locations**, including residences of former health minister C Vijayabaskar, DGP T K Rajendran, former minister B V Ramana and former Chennai police commissioner S George



- ✓ Accordingly, two former state ministers from the AIADMK, two retired DGPs and eight other officers will be prosecuted for their involvement in the multi-crore gutkha scam
- ✓ The scam was first unearthed under the previous AIADMK government in 2017 during J Jayalalithaa's tenure as chief minister
- ✓ The state government granted permission to CBI's Anti-Corruption (III) Unit to prosecute two former AIADMK Ministers C Vijayabaskar and B V Ramana
- ✓ Ramana and Vijayabaskar held the portfolios of commercial taxes and registration, and health and family welfare respectively
- ✓ The state home department has also written to the Union government to accord sanction for prosecution of retired DGPs S George and T K Rajendran under the Prevention of Corruption Act

- ✓ Both officers were indicted for their alleged role in the scam during their tenure as Chennai city police commissioner.
- ✓ While George retired in 2017, Rajendran retired later in 2019.
- ✓ The Union ministry of home affairs is the competent authority to accord sanction for the prosecution of serving and retired IPS officers.
- ✓ The seven others facing prosecution are V S Kurinjiselvan, former deputy commissioner (enforcement), commercial tax department, S Ganesan, former deputy commercial tax officer of Manali assessment circle, Lakshmi Narayanan, former designated officer of the food safety department, P Murugan, former food safety officer of Gummidi poondi block, R Mannar Mannan, then assistant commissioner of police of Puzhal range, V Sampath, then inspector of police of Red Hills police station, and A Palani, then councillor/ chairman of the health committee, Chennai Corporation
- ✓ They are accused of taking bribes amounting to Rs 39.91 crore to help sell banned gutkha products in Chennai city area.
- ✓ The illegal manufacture, import, supply, distribution and sale of gutkha and other forms of chewable tobacco is banned in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry since 2013.
- ✓ The multicrore gutka scam surfaced on July 8, 2017, when I-T department conducted searches on premises of a gutka manufacturer, Jayam Industries (now Annamalai Industries) over tax evasion charges to the tune of Rs. 250 crore
- ✓ During the search, I-T sleuths seized a diary containing details of payouts allegedly made to a then minister, two IPS officers and others between 2015 and 2016
- ✓ Later, CM Edappadi K Palaniswami informed assembly that DVAC was conducting preliminary inquiry into scam
- ✓ The confidential reports connected to the case were found at Veda Nilayam, late Jayalalithaa's residence, during an I-T raid in November 2017
- ✓ Later, the Madras high court ordered a CBI probe in April 2018 on a petition from DMK, which was upheld by the Supreme Court
- ✓ The CBI had filed the first chargesheet in the case in November 2018
- ✓ In July 2019, ED attached 174 immovable properties in Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Andhra Pradesh with market value of Rs 243.80 crore and moveable properties in the form of shares and vehicles worth Rs 2.29 crore

- **An NCC naval wing - would be set up in Tamil Nadu's Rameswaram in a few months**
- ✓ This was announced by NCC director general Lt Gen Gurbirpal Singh on July 21
 - ✓ The state government had provided the necessary support to the directorate to create two training areas for the cadets in Chennai
 - ✓ Further, the state had procured equipment like four flight simulators, two firing simulators, five rowing simulators, two driving simulators, one digit lab, one rock climbing wall and rifles.

STATES

- **Himachal Pradesh - has become the first state in the country to connect all registered commercial vehicles equipped with Vehicle Location Tracking Device (VLTD) with Emergency Response Support System (ERSS).**
 - ✓ The State has 9,423 vehicles, which can be tracked anywhere in the country through VLTD
 - ✓ Now these vehicles have been registered and linked with ERSS and monitored by both the police and the transport department
 - ✓ Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur formally inaugurated the system at an event organized at Peterhof, in Shimla recently on July 19
 - ✓ Meanwhile, the government of Punjab has also decided to introduce the “Vehicle Location Tracking Device (VLTD)” system in all the passenger service vehicles (PSV).
 - ✓ This facility will be introduced from August 1, 2022 in order to monitor the vehicles effectively in the state

- **Kala-Azar or black fever - is spreading at a massive scale in West Bengal districts**
 - ✓ In the last couple of weeks, eleven districts of Bengal have reported around 65 cases of Kala Azar or Black fever, based on a state-administered surveillance
 - ✓ The West Bengal government has announced that it will provide free treatment to Kala-Azar patients
 - ✓ Earlier this year, Jharkhand had reported its first Kala Azar-related death in over 8 years.
 - ✓ The disease is endemic in Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal
 - ✓ In 2014, around 9,200 cases were reported while in 2021 the number fell to 1,276 cases.
 - ✓ The government aimed to eliminate the disease in India by 2015, but that deadline was missed.
 - ✓ However, the number of cases has been brought down significantly through the National Kala-Azar Elimination Programme.
 - ✓ Kala-Azar or Visceral Leishmaniasis is a protozoan parasitic disease, spread by sandfly bites
 - ✓ The flies are infected with the parasite called ‘leishmania donovani’.
 - ✓ The disease affects some of the poorest people and is linked to malnutrition, population displacement, poor housing, a weak immune system and a lack of financial resources.
 - ✓ Kala-Azar is a fatal disease, if left untreated in over 95% of cases
 - ✓ The common symptoms are persistent fever, weight loss, enlargement of the spleen and liver, and anaemia among others.

- ✓ In people with a light skin tone, greyish discolouration of the skin of hands, feet, abdomen and face may be seen and hence the disease is also called “Black fever”
- ✓ In 2020, more than 90% of new cases reported to WHO occurred in 10 countries - Brazil, China, Ethiopia, Eritrea, India, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Yemen.

NATIONAL

- **On July 24, President Ram Nath Kovind – left Rashtrapati Bhavan after demitting office**
- ✓ A ceremony to bid farewell to President Ram Nath Kovind was held at Parliament's Central Hall
- ✓ Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla attended the farewell ceremony along with members of Parliament.



- ✓ Members of the Union Cabinet, chief ministers of various states and other dignitaries were present on the occasion
- ✓ Terming parliament a "temple of democracy", President Kovind urged parties to use Gandhian philosophy during debates in the house.
- ✓ Three books -- 'Moods, Moments and Memories... Former Presidents of India (1950-2017)', 'The First Citizen' and 'Interpreting Geometries – Flooring of Rashtrapati Bhavan' were released during a function at Rashtrapati Bhavan on the day
- ✓ Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur released the books during the function that was attended by outgoing President Kovind, President-elect Droupadi Murmu, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi among others
- ✓ 'Moods, Moments and Memories...', depicts the visual history of former presidents of India from 1950-2017, while 'The First Citizen' has pictorial record of President Kovind's term

- ✓ Both these books highlight some of the rarest photographs of President Ram Nath Kovind and former presidents of the country
- ✓ The third book 'Interpreting Geometries – Flooring of Rashtrapati Bhavan', is a unique repository of flooring patterns designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens for the residence of the Viceroy of India in 1912
- ✓ President Ram Nath Kovind's session ends on July 24 and Droupadi Murmu will be sworn in as India's 15th president on the next day
- ✓ Ram Nath Kovind was sworn in as the 14th President of India on July 25, 2017

➤ **Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh - launched National Standards for Civil Service Training Institutions at Capacity Building Commission (CBC) headquarters, New Delhi recently on July 18**



- ✓ During the event, the Minister said India became the first country in the world to design a unique model to create standards for civil service training institutions at national level
- ✓ The national standards are developed by the CBC to create a benchmark for central training institutes on their current capacity, for elevating their quality and capacity of training delivery and to ensure uniform standards for training
- ✓ The country is already having standards and accreditation in higher education, healthcare and environment, but for the first time it became applicable for training institutions also
- ✓ The minister also inaugurated a web portal and approach paper for the national standards, as part of the launch event
- ✓ The event witnessed participation of over 103 participants from 25 central training institutions, 33 state level administrative training institutions and other civil service training institutions, along with CBC.
- ✓ The Capacity Building Commission was created as a part of Mission Karmayogi for civil servants.
- ✓ The CBC will help in preparing and monitoring annual capacity building plans as well as audit human resources present in the government.
- ✓ Mission Karmayogi is a "National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB)".

- ✓ It seeks to prepare civil servants in India for future with right skill, knowledge and attitude
- ✓ The initiative has been launched on September 20, 2020 with an outlay of Rs. 510 crore for a period of five-years.
- **National Legal Services Authority Chairman Uday Umesh Lalit - launched the country's first AI-powered, digital Lok Adalat during the 18th All India Legal Services Authorities' meet held recently in Jaipur on July 17**



- ✓ The digital Lok Adalat by Rajasthan State Legal Services Authority (RSLA) was designed and developed by its technology partner Jupitice Justice Technologies
- ✓ The two-day event was inaugurated by N V Ramana, the Chief Justice of India, in the presence of Union Minister of Law & Justice Kiren Rijiju and Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot.
- ✓ The Digital Lok Adalat will be used to dispose of pending disputes or disputes that are at the pre-litigation stage.
- ✓ In this set-up, individuals and organisations can file and resolve the disputes under ADR (Alternate Dispute Resolution) mechanism online on a single platform without any physical interaction.
- ✓ Recently, a district court in Bihar gave a verdict in a land dispute case after 108 years, making it one of the oldest pending cases in the country
- ✓ Further, a NITI Aayog report also suggested it would take approximately 324 years to dispose all cases pending in India.
- ✓ Earlier in 2020, the then CJI SA Bobde talked about the possibility of developing AI for the court system to prevent undue delay in justice
- **On July 18, State-run National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) and Indian Oil (IOC) - signed an agreement to set up a 50:50 joint venture (JV) company that will meet the power requirements of IOC's upcoming refinery projects.**
- ✓ NTPC Green Energy (NGEL), a wholly owned subsidiary of NTPC, will form the JV company for supply of round the clock renewable energy power to IOC



- ✓ IOC plans to meet additional power requirement of its refineries using round-the-clock renewable energy to the tune of 650MW by the end of 2024 through the newly formed JV.
 - ✓ NGEL will act as an umbrella company for consolidating NTPC's total renewable energy businesses.
- **The Department of Consumer Affairs - launched a mascot, 'Jagriti', to "empower consumers and generate awareness of their rights".**



- ✓ 'Jagriti' would be projected as an empowered consumer, who spreads awareness regarding consumer rights and addresses solutions to the issues faced by the consumers
 - ✓ The mascot would be showcased with the tagline "Jago Grahak Jago" in all its media campaigns
 - ✓ The 'Jagriti' mascot will be used to generate consumer awareness about various themes of the Department.
 - ✓ The Themes include provisions of Consumer Protection Act 2019, Hallmarking, National Consumer Helpline toll-free number 1915, provisions of weights and measures Act, decisions of the Central Consumer Protection Authority and testimonials by consumers on grievance redressal.
- **The holy city of Varanasi - will be declared the first “Cultural and Tourism Capital” of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)**



- ✓ Varanasi will become the “Cultural and Tourism Capital” of the SCO for 2022-23 under a new rotating initiative to promote people-to-people contacts and tourism among the member states.
- ✓ Varanasi, India’s ancient city showcasing India’s culture and traditions over the ages, will be the first to be granted the title.
- ✓ Under this initiative, each year, a city of the cultural heritage of a member country that will take over the rotating Presidency of the organisation will get the title to highlight its prominence
- ✓ The new initiative will come into force after the Samarkand summit in Uzbekistan on September 15-16 this year, following which India will take over the Presidency and host the next Heads of the State summit.
- ✓ India hosted the Head of the Government of the SCO meet in 2020
- ✓ Earlier, Kazakhstan has announced a visa-free policy for tourists from India and other countries
- ✓ The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is an intergovernmental organisation founded in Shanghai on June 15, 2001
- ✓ The Beijing-headquartered SCO is an eight-member economic and security alliance comprising China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan.
- ✓ India and Pakistan became its permanent members of the grouping in 2017.
- ✓ There are six dialogue partners — Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Turkey.
- ✓ SCO is all set for expansion with Iran joining the grouping as its ninth member while Belarus has applied for membership

INTERNATIONAL

- **Pakistan's cabinet - has approved an ordinance to bypass all the procedures for selling assets to foreign countries in order to prevent the country from defaulting.**
- ✓ They also abolished regulatory checks including the applicability of six relevant laws in a desperate move to save the country from default through the emergency sale of state assets to foreign countries
 - ✓ The six relevant Acts are the Companies Act, 2017, Privatisation Commission Ordinance, 2000, Public Procurement Regulatory Authority

Ordinance, 2002, Public-Private Partnership Authority Act, 2017, Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan Act, 1997 and Securities Act, 2015

- ✓ The government has also barred the courts of the country not to entertain any petition against the sale of assets and shares of the government companies to foreign countries, as per the ordinance
- ✓ The ordinance makes the federal cabinet so powerful that it can even issue binding instructions to provinces to hand over any piece of land and enter into a transaction with a foreign state.
- ✓ Further, the Cabinet Committee on the Inter-Governmental Commercial Transactions will be formed that will have sweeping powers, including those overriding six Acts of parliament.
- ✓ No suit, prosecution or any other legal proceedings or action in damages can be claimed against people who will be involved in selling these assets, as per the ordinance
- ✓ However, President Arif Alvi has not signed the Inter-Governmental Commercial Transactions Ordinance 2022 yet.
- ✓ Earlier, on July 21, the federal cabinet approved the ordinance to sell stakes of oil and gas companies and government-owned power plants to the UAE to raise \$2 billion to \$2.5 billion to avoid the default.
- ✓ Pakistan Petroleum Limited, Oil Gas Development Company Limited and Mari Gas Company are some of the companies under the scrutiny of the government to be sold to foreign companies
- ✓ In May, the UAE had refused to give cash deposits due to Islamabad's inability to return previous loans and instead asked to open its companies for investment
- ✓ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has placed a condition that Pakistan's case could not be taken to the board until it arranged \$4 billion from friendly countries to bridge the financing gap.
- ✓ The cash-strapped country has been going through its worst financial crisis in recent times and needs cash liquidity on an almost urgent basis.
- ✓ The Pakistan rupee has fallen 8.3% this week alone, which is the steepest fall since 1998.
- ✓ According to estimates, Pakistan needs at least \$41 billion in the next 12 months to fund debt repayments and boost foreign exchange reserves

- **On July 23, the World Health Organisation (WHO) - declared monkeypox a public health emergency of international concern**
- ✓ For the second time in two years, the WHO has taken the extraordinary step of declaring the highest alert of a global emergency.
- ✓ The monkeypox has spread in just a few weeks to dozens of countries and infected tens of thousands of people.
- ✓ According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly 16,000 cases of monkeypox have been reported in 75 countries since May.

- ✓ The threat level, however, is moderate for all regions across the world — barring Europe, where it is assessed to be high



- ✓ Until now, the declaration of “public health emergency of international concern” had been used seven times by the WHO since 2009
 - ✓ The earlier instances are - H1N1 pandemic (2009), increasing polio cases (2014), Ebola outbreak in Western Africa (2014), Zika virus epidemic (2015-16), Kivu Ebola epidemic in Democratic Republic of Congo (2018-20), and Covid-19 (2020)
- ✓ Last month, the expert committee said the monkeypox outbreak did not yet amount to an international emergency
- ✓ The members of the WHO’s expert committee that met on July 21 were split on the decision, with 9 members against and 6 in favour of the declaration, prompting Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus to declare the decision
- ✓ It was apparently the first time that the director-general has sidestepped his advisers to declare an emergency without an expert recommendation
- ✓ The WHO declaration signals a public health risk requiring a coordinated international response.
- ✓ India has reported three cases of the viral illness from Kerala, with the Union Health Ministry issuing guidelines for its surveillance.
- ✓ On July 22, the United States identified its first two monkeypox cases in children
- ✓ A viral infection resembling smallpox and first detected in humans in 1970, monkeypox is less dangerous and contagious than smallpox, which was eradicated in 1980.
- ✓ Monkeypox is transmitted to humans through close contact with an infected person or animal, or with material contaminated with the virus
- ✓ It is usually a self-limited disease with symptoms lasting from two to four weeks,
- ✓ The first symptoms of monkeypox are fever, headaches, muscle pain and back pain during the course of five days.
- ✓ The first human case was reported in 1970 in Democratic Republic of the Congo and subsequently became endemic to several West and Central African countries.
- ✓ The European Union’s drug watchdog recommended for approval the use of Imvanex, a smallpox vaccine, to treat monkeypox

- ✓ Unlike the numerous companies that made Covid-19 vaccines, there is only one maker for the vaccine used against monkeypox, Denmark's Bavarian Nordic
- **On July 22, Nepal's House of Representatives - passed the Nepal Citizenship Act, 2006 (First Amendment), Bill, 2022 through a majority vote**
- ✓ The bill will help grant citizenship by descent to the thousands of children born to naturalised Nepalese citizens
- ✓ The bill will now move to the National Assembly before being sent to the president.
- ✓ Eligible Nepalis born before September 20, 2015, the day when the constitution was promulgated, were granted naturalised citizenship.
- ✓ However, their children hadn't got citizenship in the absence of a federal law as per the constitution
- ✓ The bill has been under discussion in the House of Representatives since 2020, but it failed to be endorsed due to differences among the political parties over various provisions.
- ✓ In 2018, the then KP Sharma Oli government registered the bill at the Parliament Secretariat.

SPORTS

- **India's Annu Rani - finished seventh in the women's javelin throw final with a below-par effort of 61.12m at the World Championships.**



- ✓ This is the second consecutive final in the Worlds for Annu Rani
- ✓ Rani achieved her best of the day in her second attempt, but failed to cross the 60m mark in other five throws on July 22.
- ✓ The 29-year-old Rani has a season's and personal best of 63.82m.
- ✓ The national record holder had qualified for the final as eighth best in the qualification round with a throw of 59.60m.
- ✓ Defending champion Kelsey-Lee Barber of Australia won the gold with a best and world leading throw of 66.91m.
- ✓ American Kara Winger bagged the silver with 64.05m, while Japan's Haruka Kitaguchi of Japan won a surprise bronze with her best throw of 63.27m.

- ✓ Olympic champion Shiying Liu of China was fourth with a best performance of 63.25m

