

## EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – DECEMBER 31, 2022

### TAMIL NADU

- On December 30, Chief minister M K Stalin - released a booklet announcing special packages of assistance for green tech, rural impact and women-led startups at Secretariat in Chennai



- ✓ During the event, CM Stalin also unveiled MentorTN, a mentor portal to help startups get the right advise and turn more startups into success stories.
- ✓ The special package assistance has been launched to ensure an innovation-driven economy in the state as it targets to become \$1 trillion economy by 2030.
- ✓ A key element of the special package for the startups in these select categories is 50% increase in grant provided by the government
  - ✓ Accordingly, a grant of Rs.15 lakh as against the present Rs.10 lakh will be provided through StartupTN's flagship grant initiative 'Tamil Nadu Startup Seed Grant Fund' (TANSEED).
  - ✓ The grant will be disbursed in three equal instalments of Rs.5 lakh each
  - ✓ Out of the total grant, 25% of total TANSEED assistance is earmarked for women-led startups and 10% for rural impact startups
- ✓ Eligible startups will also be provided higher amounts of seed funds as equity or convertible debentures from the state's emerging sector seed fund.

- ✓ Further, exclusive co-working spaces will be made available in state-supported incubation centres for women-led startups and these facilities will be available free of rent.
  - ✓ Commercially viable infrastructure projects that promote sustainability and circularity will be funded through the Green Climate fund.
  - ✓ StartupTN will set up a government procurement facilitation desk for eligible startups in Chennai and a regional startup hub in Madurai to facilitate testing and use of products in government and public agencies including local bodies.
  - ✓ Meanwhile, TANSEED has sanctioned Rs.1. 25 crore grant as first tranche to 25 startups at Rs.5 lakh each under its StartupTN initiative.
  - ✓ These startups were selected under the fourth edition till August 31, 2022 and the chief minister handed over the cheques to the selected startups.
- **The Tamil Nadu government – has unveiled the Project Nilgiri Tahr, and allocated an initial funding of Rs 10 crore for the project.**



- ✓ The state environment, climate change and forest department has issued orders on December 28 for setting up 'The Nilgiri Tahr' project that seeks to ensure the protection and conservation of the animal.
- ✓ The Nilgiri tahr is recognised as the state animal of Tamil Nadu
- ✓ The project aims to restore the original habitat of Nilgiri Tahr and also attempt to re-introduce the species in some of those areas where they originally lived
- ✓ This is the first such initiative taken in the country to conserve the species.
- ✓ The project will be implemented at a cost of Rs. 25.14 crore over a period of 5 years from 2022 to 2027.
- ✓ The project will have a major component to restore the fragmented habitats of the Tahr.
- ✓ The restoration of shola grasslands which is the major habitat for the animal will be taken up as a priority activity under the project.

- ✓ The project will follow a multi-pronged strategy including synchronized surveys to estimate numbers of Nilgiri Tahr individuals through the use Radio Telemetry including Radio collaring and others.
  - ✓ These synchronised surveys will be conducted by the forest department across the Tahr range, including at the Nilgiri hills and the Asambu highlands.
- ✓ The project also proposes to re-introduce development of tahr-based eco tourism
- ✓ The project will have a dedicated team chaired by a project director to deal with species conservation.
  - ✓ The team will be tasked to explore the possibility of undertaking captive breeding of the animal for reintroduction in forest patches where it has become locally extinct
- ✓ **The government order also highlighted that October 7th every year shall be celebrated as the Nilgiri Tahr day to enhance awareness about the need for conservation of the animal.**
  - ✓ The day coincides with the birth anniversary of ERC Davidar who pioneered the first study on the animal in 1975, to spread awareness on the need for conserving the animal
- ✓ Nilgiri Tahr locally known as "Varaiaadu" has been classified as a critically endangered species in the IUCN red list of threatened species and is protected under schedule-I of the Wildlife (protection) Act of India, 1972.
- ✓ The species was assessed as endangered as per the 1994 Red List Categories.
- ✓ It is estimated that there are 3,122 Nilgiri Tahrs as per World Wide Fund for Nature Report 2015.
- ✓ According to the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF), Nilgiri tahr is “the only mountain ungulate in southern India amongst the 12 species present in India.”
- ✓ Nilgiri Tahr is endemic to Western Ghats which are internationally recognized as a region of immense global importance due to its incredible Bio-diversity.
- ✓ The presence of Nilgiri Tahr has been confirmed in a total of 123 habitat fragments ranging in area from 0.04 sq km to 161.69 sq km, totalling 798.60 sq km.
- ✓ The species has become locally extinct in around 14% of its traditional habitat in the past few decades
  - ✓ This was because of habitat loss, biotic pressure, invasive and exotic species and the adverse impact of climate change.
- ✓ There are several references to the Nilgiri Tahr in 2,000-year-old Tamil Sangam literature.
- ✓ Two of the five great epics of the Sangam period - Silappatikaram and Seevaka Chintamani - include descriptions of the Nilgiri Tahr and its habitat
- ✓ In one of the ancient Tamil literary works titled Thirukutrala Kuravanji, the Nilgiri Tahr was mentioned as an animal that reflected the ecological diversity of the region.

# NATIONAL

- **India - has confirmed its first case of Omicron's XBB. 1. 5 in Gujarat this December.**
  - ✓ XBB. 1. 5 is a sub-variant that international scientists have flagged for being responsible for a surge in Covid cases and hospitalisations in New York.
  - ✓ XBB itself is a recombinant of two different BA. 2 sub variants of Omicron.
  - ✓ Its descendant, XBB. 1. 5, is believed to have a tighter bind to the ACE2 receptor, which would explain its higher level of transmissibility.
  
- **Retirement fund body EPFO - has decided to implement an option for higher pension to eligible subscribers within eight weeks, in accordance with the earlier Supreme Court order**
  - ✓ On November 4, 2022, the Supreme Court had upheld Employees Pension (Amendment) Scheme 2014.
  - ✓ The EPS amendment of August 22, 2014 had raised the pensionable salary cap to Rs 15,000 a month from the earlier Rs 6,500 a month
  - ✓ It had allowed members along with their employers to contribute 8.33% on their actual salaries (if it exceeded the cap) towards the EPS, instead of 8. 33% of pensionable salary
  - ✓ It gave all EPS members, as on September 1, 2014, six months to opt for the amended scheme
  - ✓ The move is expected to allow subscribers to contribute more to the pension scheme and also get higher benefits.
  - ✓ The apex court in its order gave four more months to eligible subscribers to opt for higher pension under EPS-95.
  - ✓ The court had also struck down the requirement in the 2014 amendments mandating employee contribution of 1.16% of the salary exceeding Rs 15,000 per month
  
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi – will flag off the world's largest river cruise from Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh to Dibrugarh in Assam via Bangladesh on January 13.**
  - ✓ The luxury cruise with foreign tourists will cover around 4,000 km of 27 river systems including Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly, Brahmaputra and West Coast Canal in India in a span of 50 days.
  - ✓ The cruise will cover 50 major tourist sites, including some heritage sites, the famous Ganga Aarti at Varanasi and sanctuaries such as Kaziranga National Park and the Sundarbans Delta.
  - ✓ The cruise will travel around 1,100 km in Bangladesh.

# INTERNATIONAL

- **On December 30, Myanmar's ousted civilian leader, Aung San Suu Kyi - was found guilty of corruption and sentenced to seven years in prison, taking her overall jail time to 33 years**



- ✓ She was jailed now for seven years on five counts of corruption related to the hiring, maintaining and purchase of a helicopter for a government minister, a case in which she allegedly caused “a loss to the state”
  - ✓ The country's former democratically-elected leader, Suu Kyi has been under house arrest in the capital Nay Pyi Taw, since a military ousted her government in a coup in February 2021
  - ✓ Suu Kyi, 77, a Nobel laureate in 1991, had already begun serving a 26-year prison sentence in connection with more than a dozen charges she has faced since being detained.
  - ✓ She had been convicted of 14 different crimes including breaching Covid public safety rules, importing walkie-talkies, sedition, election fraud and violating the official secrets act.
  - ✓ Suu Kyi, the daughter of Myanmar's martyred independence hero Gen. Aung San, spent almost 15 years as a political prisoner under house arrest between 1989 and 2010.
  - ✓ Myanmar has been in turmoil since the coup, with more than 2,600 people since killed in the military's crackdown on dissent
- **Russia - has rejected Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy's peace formula as a basis for negotiations**
  - ✓ It had reiterated that Ukraine must accept Russia's annexation of the four regions - Luhansk and Donetsk in the east, and Kherson and Zaporizhzhia in the south
  - ✓ Zelenskiy is pushing a 10-point peace plan that envisages Russia respecting Ukraine's territorial integrity and pulling out all its troops
  - ✓ Zelenskiy first announced his peace formula at a November summit of the Group of 20 major economies.



So, here are the proposals of Ukraine:

1. Radiation and nuclear safety.
2. Food security.
3. Energy security.
4. Release of all prisoners and deported persons.
5. Implementation of the UN Charter and restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity and the world order.
6. Withdrawal of Russian troops and cessation of hostilities.
7. Restoration of justice.
8. Countering ecocide.
9. Preventing escalation.
10. Confirmation of the end of the war.



57.2K 8:47 AM

- ✓ He has been discussing it with U.S. President Joe Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose country has assumed the G20 presidency, among others, and urging world leaders to hold a Global Peace Summit based on it.
- ✓ The proposed 10-point peace plan of the Ukrainian President includes
  1. Radiation & Nuclear Safety
  2. Food Security
  3. Energy Security
  4. Release of all Prisoners of War, Deported Persons
  5. Implementation of UN Charter, Restoration of Territorial Integrity, World Order
  6. Withdrawal of Russian Troops, End of Hostilities
  7. Justice, War Tribunals and Reparations
  8. Countering Ecocide
  9. Security Guarantees
  10. Confirmation of War's End

## SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **IIT-Madras researchers - have devised a statistical approach to detect petroleum and hydrocarbon reserves underground.**
- ✓ The study was successful in providing data on rock type and reserves of hydrocarbon at the depth of 2km in north Assam region.
- ✓ The method proposed was successful in providing critical information on the rock type distribution and hydrocarbon saturation zones in 'Tipam formation' located in upper Assam basin.
- ✓ The researchers used this approach to analyse data obtained from seismic surveys and well logs from the north Assam region known for its petroleum reserve.

- ✓ Since the discovery of the Digboi oilfield in upper Assam more than 100 years ago, the Assam-Arakan has denoted that they have significant amounts of hydrocarbon reserves.

## DEFENCE

- **The Indian Coast Guard - has signed its first contract for indigenous multicopter drones towards boosting maritime surveillance and interdiction capabilities.**



- ✓ The maiden contract for 10 multirotor drones will include VTOL (vertical take-off and landing) capabilities
- ✓ They will play “a significant role” in the Coast Guard’s reach during surveillance and security operations, apart from assisting in search and rescue missions.
- ✓ They will also be capable of being launched from patrol vessels for day and night operations
- ✓ The Coast Guard plans to induct one hundred additional drones by 2025.
- ✓ In the last 18 months, the Coast Guard has conducted seven joint operations with the Gujarat ATS (anti-terrorism squad) to seize around 350 kg of heroin worth over Rs.1,900 crore on the high seas.
- ✓ In these operations, 44 Pakistani and seven Iranian nationals were also arrested.

## BUSINESS/ECONOMY

- **On December 30, the finance ministry - announced a hike in interest rates for several small savings schemes including post office term deposits, NSC and senior citizen savings scheme.**
- ✓ The hike in interest rate will come into effect from 1 January.
- ✓ The rates on the various schemes have been raised between 20 to 110 basis points and now range from 4.0 % to 7.6 %
- ✓ It is the second quarterly increase in a row announced for the upcoming January-March quarter
- ✓ However, the interest rates on Public Provident Fund (PPF) and the girl child savings scheme Sukanya Samridhi has not been changed.

## BIGGER EARNINGS ON SMALL SAVINGS

| (In %)                    | Current | New |   |
|---------------------------|---------|-----|---|
| One-year fixed deposit    | 5.5     | 6.6 | > SBI FD (1-3 years) fetches 6.75%                                      |
| Five-year FD              | 6.7     | 7.0 | > PF deposits earned 8.1% last year, this year's rate yet to be decided |
| Sr Citizen Savings Scheme | 7.6     | 8.0 | > New rates effective from Jan 1 to March 31, 2023                      |
| Monthly Income Scheme     | 6.6     | 7.1 | > Kisan Vikas Patra will mature in 120 months instead of 123 months     |
| NSC                       | 6.8     | 7.0 |   |
| PPF                       | 7.1     | 7.1 |   |
| KVP                       | 7.0     | 7.2 |   |
| Sukanya Samridhi          | 7.6     | 7.6 |   |

Source: Govt

- ✓ The National Savings Certificate (NSC) will yield a 7% interest rate from January 1, compared to 6.8% at present.
- ✓ Similarly, the senior citizen savings scheme will give 8% interest against 7.6 % currently.
- ✓ The monthly income scheme too will yield 7.1% interest, up from 6.7%
- ✓ The 1 year time deposit will give 6.6 % interest against 5.5 % currently, while 2 year time deposit will give 6.8 % interest against 5.7 % currently
- ✓ Since April, the Reserve Bank of India has hiked the key policy rate by 225 basis points

## OBITUARY

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mother, Heeraba Modi - passed away at the age of 100 at a hospital in Ahmedabad on December 30**



- ✓ She was admitted to the super-specialty UN Mehta Institute of Cardiology and Research Centre recently due to health issues.
- ✓ Heeraba Modi is survived by five sons — Prime Minister Modi and his brothers Somabhai, Amrutbhai, Prahladbhai and Pankajbhai — and daughter Vasantiben.
- ✓ PM Modi paid tribute to his late mother, describing her as a selfless Karmayogi whose life was dedicated to values.
- ✓ Heeraben, also called Heeraba, lived with her youngest son Pankaj, a retired Gujarat government official, at Raysan in Gandhinagar district
- ✓ The prime minister regularly visited Raysan and spent time with his mother during his visits to Gujarat.
- ✓ Her demise is the first instance of an Indian Prime Minister losing a parent while in office.
- ✓ President Droupadi Murmu, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, BJP president J P Nadda, Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel and leaders from various political parties condoled the death of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mother Hiraben
- ✓ Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and party leader Rahul Gandhi, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee were among the host of leaders from the ruling party and others who mourned the death.
- ✓ Soon after performing the last rites of his mother, PM Narendra Modi continued with work, launching Rs 7,600 crore worth of rail and infrastructure projects in West Bengal via video conferencing.

| Projects Launched By PM   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Vande Bharat Express</b> between Howrah &amp; New Jalpaiguri flagged off</li> <li>➤ <b>Joka-Taratata</b> stretch of Joka-Esplanade Metro flagged off. Cost ₹2,475cr</li> <li>➤ <b>25 sewage projects under Namami Gange.</b> 18 of these complete. 5 new ones with outlay of ₹1500cr launched</li> <li>➤ ₹600cr project for <b>cleaning of Adi Ganga</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Cruise from Kashi to Dibrugarh via Kolkata and Bangladesh</b> covering 3200km. To set sail on Jan 13 2023</li> </ul> |  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>4 railway connectivity projects</b> (Boinchi-Shaktigarh; Dankuni-Chandanpur; Nimitita-New Farakka; Ambari Falakata-New Maynaguri-Gumanihat). Cost ₹2,304cr</li> <li>➤ <b>Foundation stone laid for redevelopment of NJP railway station.</b> Cost ₹335 crore</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">➤ FULL COVERAGE P 4</p> |
|   |  <p>(L) PM flags off the Vande Bharat Exp virtually. Rly min Ashwini Vaishnaw, Governor CV Ananda Bose and CM Mamata Banerjee wait for the Jai Sri Ram slogans to die down before the start of the programme at Howrah station</p>   |

- ✓ These included key connectivity-related projects and a meeting of the National Ganga Council.
- ✓ Later, the PM virtually flagged off the Vande Bharat Express, connecting Howrah to New Jalpaiguri.
- ✓ He also inaugurated the Joka-Taratata stretch of the Joka-Esplanade Metro Project (Purple Line) and dedicated four railway projects to the nation.
- ✓ PM Modi also laid the foundation stone for the redevelopment of New Jalpaiguri railway station.

## SPORTS

- **Indian GM Koneru Humpy - won the silver medal in the women's section of the FIDE World Blitz Chess Championship in Almaty, Kazakhstan on December 30**
- ✓ The 35-year-old became the first Indian woman to win medal at the prestigious tournament
- ✓ She is also only the second Indian to clinch a medal at this prestigious event after the legendary Viswanathan Anand.
- ✓ With 12.5 points in 17 games, Koneru finished just half a point behind gold medal winner Bibisara Balabayeva of Kazakhstan



- ✓ This was Humpy's first medal at World Blitz Championships
- ✓ In the past, she has won the title at World Rapid (in 2019).
- ✓ The open event was won by World No. 1, Magnus Carlsen of Norway, while no Indian player managed a top-10 finish

## REPORT

- **Telangana and Odisha – are the only states where every police station has CCTV cameras**
- ✓ Northeastern states have among the most ill-equipped police stations, with many lacking even basic utilities like telephones and CCTV cameras.
- ✓ These details were provided according to an answer to a recent question in Parliament
- ✓ In Meghalaya and Manipur, more than 10% of police stations don't have vehicles.
- ✓ In Manipur, no police station has CCTV cameras installed and only one in Rajasthan has them.
- ✓ Nationally, there are 10 computers in every police station
- ✓ However, in six states — including large ones like Bihar and Tamil Nadu — there are fewer than 5 computers in each station
- ✓ Assam has the least number of computers (0.8) in each police station, while Delhi has the most number of computers (39.4)

Parliament sessions reveal details and data on many aspects of the country at large as MPs pose questions to the government. TOI is diving into the replies made in winter session 2022 to bring you the standout numbers

# TELANGANA, ODISHA ONLY STATES WHERE EVERY POLICE STATION HAS CCTV CAMERAS

Northeastern states have among the most ill-equipped police stations, with many lacking even basic utilities like telephones and CCTV cameras, according to an answer to a recent question in Parliament. In Meghalaya and Manipur, more than 10% of police stations don't have vehicles. In four NE states, more than half the police stations lack landline telephones, relying instead on mobile phones. In Manipur, no police station has CCTV cameras installed and only one in Rajasthan has them. Nationally, there are 10 computers in every police station, but in six states – including large ones like Bihar and Tamil Nadu – there are fewer than 5 computers in each station

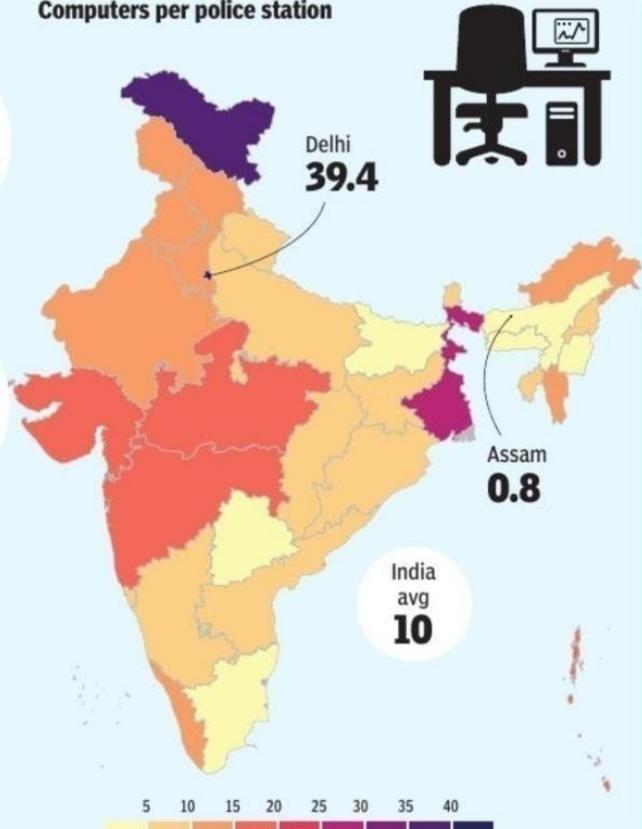


### Share of police stations without vehicles (%)

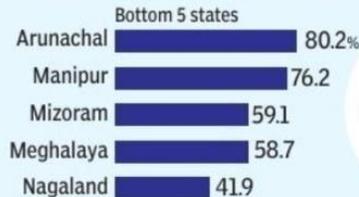


In 25 states and UTs, every police station has at least one vehicle. In 11 states there are police stations that have no vehicles at all

### Computers per police station



### Share of police stations without telephones (%)



In 20 states and UTs, every police station has landline telephones but there are 16 where some police stations don't have telephones

### Share of police stations with CCTV cameras, bottom 5 states

| State/UT  | Total no. of police stations | Police stations with CCTV cameras | Share of total |
|-----------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Manipur   | 84                           | 0                                 | <b>0.0%</b>    |
| Rajasthan | 894                          | 1                                 | <b>0.1%</b>    |
| J&K       | 241                          | 51                                | <b>21.2%</b>   |
| Meghalaya | 75                           | 23                                | <b>30.7%</b>   |
| Nagaland  | 86                           | 27                                | <b>31.4%</b>   |

Only two states – Telangana and Odisha – and the UT of Puducherry have all police stations equipped with CCTV cameras

Graphic: Anil Dinod  
Note: Data as of 2021. Among UTs, data for only J&K and Delhi included

