

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS—JANUARY 17, 2023

TAMIL NADU

- **On January 15, the ruling DMK - opposed the proposal to hold simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies.**
 - ✓ Chief Minister and party president M K Stalin has written to the Law Commission stating that the move was against the federal structure, the key feature of the Constitution.
 - ✓ DMK MP P Wilson submitted the chief minister's letter to the commission in Delhi.
 - ✓ The letter has pointed out that only nine state assemblies would have their terms ending in 2024, while the remaining states would have their terms until 2027.
 - ✓ Tamil Nadu would go to polls in 2026.
 - ✓ The Law Commission had asked all political parties to submit their views on holding simultaneous polls by January 15
 - ✓ Except AIADMK and BJP, most other political parties in Tamil Nadu, too, have opposed the move.
 - ✓ India had simultaneous elections from 1951 to 1967.
 - ✓ However, the cycle got disrupted due to premature dissolution of some assemblies in 1968 and 1969.
- **Japanese electronics major Mitsubishi Electric - is setting up its first air conditioner plant in India in Tamil Nadu.**
 - ✓ The company is investing 26.7 billion yen (around \$222.5 million or Rs.1,800 crore), in its Indian subsidiary Mitsubishi Electric to establish a factory for the production of room air conditioners and compressors.
 - ✓ Spread across 88,000 sq m, the factory is planned to be built on a 2.1 lakh sq m site.
 - ✓ According to Mitsubishi Electric, it targets to start production in India from October 2025
 - ✓ The initial annual capacity will be 3,00,000 room air conditioner outdoor units and beginning in December 2025, it will be increased to 6,50,000 compressors.

- ✓ The plant will meet demand for the Indian market, and not for export purposes.
- ✓ The new facility is part of the Japanese giant's plans to invest 180 billion yen (about \$1.5 billion) in facilities worldwide, including Europe and the United States, over a five-year period ending in March 2026.
- ✓ Tamil Nadu has emerged as a top destination in electronics manufacturing considering the presence of a robust ecosystem comprising Foxconn, Pegatron, Flex, Salcomp and others.
- ✓ Earlier, consumer electronics major Samsung announced its plans in March 2022 to set up a new compressor manufacturing plant in Sriperumbudur near Chennai with an investment of Rs.1,588 crore.
- ✓ According to Mitsubishi, its new factory will meet sustainable development goals through measures such as reusing wastewater through underground filtration treatment
- ✓ The factory will also implement initiatives for carbon neutrality, including the minimisation of CO₂ emissions, use of air conditioning and heated-water systems.

STATES

- **Rajasthan – has become the first State in the country to implement a policy for blindness control with the objective of 'Right to Sight'.**
- ✓ Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has launched this innovative initiative under the concept of “Nirogi Rajasthan” (Healthy Rajasthan)
- ✓ The medical and health department of the State, on the directions of the Chief Minister, released the policy document for the prevention of blindness
- ✓ The policy has been introduced with an aim to bring light in the lives of more than three lakh people suffering from visual impairment in the state.
- ✓ Under the policy, the Rajasthan government will mandatorily run Keratoplasty Centres and Eye Banks at all the government medical colleges.
- ✓ Also, cornea collected by private organisations and NGOs getting financial help from the government will have to be provided to the government institutions on priority.
- ✓ Further, efforts to eliminate visual impairment would be made in the districts in collaboration with voluntary organisations, trusts, hospitals and other charitable institutions working in this field.
- ✓ In this regard, the state government will carry out a campaign for eye donation on an extensive level along with the private institutions.
- ✓ Special training will be imparted to eye experts, eye surgeons, post-graduate students, counsellors working for eye donation and eye assistants etc.
- ✓ The prevalence rate of blindness in the country was 1.1% in 2020 and work would be done to bring it down to 0.3% through the blindness control policy.
- ✓ The “Nirogi Rajasthan” campaign, launched by the Rajasthan government on December 17, 2019, aims to improve the overall health and well-being of the state's citizens.

- **Kollam district in Kerala - has become the first constitution literate district in the country.**



- ✓ The announcement of the achievement was made by Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in a ceremony on January 14
- ✓ The district's feat is the result of the seven-month long Constitution literacy campaign launched jointly by the Kollam district panchayat, District Planning Committee and Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KLA)
- ✓ The various agencies have collaborated to create awareness about various aspects of the country's laws and citizen rights.
- ✓ The aim was to provide constitution literacy to 23 lakh citizens belonging to 7 lakh families in the district.
- ✓ Under the initiative, awareness classes were organised to around 90 % of the people in Kollam.
- ✓ Around 16.3 lakh people, above 10 years of age, were educated by 2,200 trainers called 'senators', who visited schools, offices, auto stands and tribal councils to create awareness.

NATIONAL

- **India's five leading cooperatives - have come together to set up a multi-state cooperative society for organic products with an authorised share capital of Rs.500 crore.**
- ✓ Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), the promoter of Amul brand; National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd.(NAFED); and National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India Limited (NCCF); National Dairy Development Board's (NDDB); and National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) are the members of the new society
 - ✓ The society will have nation-wide operations with its registered office at Anand, Gujarat.
 - ✓ The move is in response to the recent cabinet decision that approved setting up a national-level cooperative society as an umbrella organisation of organic products under the Multi State Cooperative Societies (MSCS) Act, 2002

- ✓ The new society will be responsible for aggregation, certification, testing, procurement, storage, processing, branding, labelling and marketing of organic products through niche markets among both domestic and global consumers.
 - ✓ Though the size of the world organic food market by retail sales is around 10 lakh crore, India accounts for only 2. 7% of the world market and thus has a huge potential to expand.
 - ✓ The move will not only help India gain better access to the global market but also help the country's farmers to produce fertilizers and pesticides-free farm crops
- **The First Education Group of G20 countries - will meet in Chennai from January 31 to February 2.**
- ✓ In this regard, the Ministry of External Affairs, the Ministry of Education, the State government and a team from IIT Madras held a meeting on January 9 to review the preparations for the meeting.
 - ✓ The summit is scheduled to take place in Mamallapuram and will host 100 guests arriving from 20 countries across the globe.
 - ✓ The 19 countries of the G20 are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, England, USA and the European Union.
 - ✓ In the last G20 summit held in November 2022 in Bali, the responsibility of chairing the next G-20 summit was handed over to India
 - ✓ The first 'Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion' meeting of the G20 began in Kolkata on January 9, 2023.
- **Minister of State for Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Rajeev Chandrasekhar - announced that India's first Centre of Excellence (CoE) of online gaming will be set up in Shillong, Meghalaya by March 2023.**
- ✓ The CoE will be set up under Digital India Startup Hub through the Software Technology Parks of India (STPI).
 - ✓ The STPI was set up in 1991 as an autonomous society in the field of Science and Technology under the MeitY.
 - ✓ MeitY will also set up a state-of-the-art facility under the National Institute of Electronics and IT (NIELIT) in Shillong to provide training on digital skills.
 - ✓ The Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) recently circulated Draft amendments to the IT Rules 2021 in relation to online gaming for public consultation.
 - ✓ Understanding the significance of digital skills in today's era, the MeitY is re-launching Skill India through Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) 4.0.
- **Union Minister of MSME, Narayan Rane - recently launched the web portal for the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) scheme**

- ✓ The Rs 6,062.45 crore World Bank-assisted central government scheme aims to improve the capacity, coverage and performance of 5.55 lakh MSMEs in the country
- ✓ Of the total budget, Rs 3,750 crore was approved by the World Bank, while the remaining Rs 2,312.45 crore will be funded by the government.
- ✓ The scheme was originally announced back in 2020 to support Covid-hit MSMEs in the country.
- ✓ It will initially be implemented in five states - Gujarat, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu, which are having about 54% of all registered MSMEs in the country.
- ✓ It will be overseen by a National MSME Council headed by the MSME Minister.

INTERNATIONAL

- **Mexico - has enforced a complete ban on smoking in public places from January 15, thereby implementing one of the most stringent anti-tobacco laws in the world**
- ✓ The law follows Mexico's 2008 legislation to set up smoke-free zones in offices, restaurants and pubs.
- ✓ Now, the ban, which was approved in 2021, extends to all public places, including hotels, beaches, and parks.
- ✓ The policy prohibits the promotion and advertisement of smoking, besides enforcing a complete ban on promoting, sponsoring, and advertising tobacco products.
- ✓ Moreover, alternatives such as e-cigarettes and vapes will also face new restrictions, specifically when used indoors
- ✓ The ban has been appreciated by the WHO's Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO), which has lauded the Mexican government
- ✓ Mexico now joins nations such as Ireland, Greece, Hungary, and Malta as those with the most stringent smoke-free environments.
- ✓ In the UK, the smoking ban in public spaces, including bars and restaurants, was implemented in 2007
- ✓ Thailand banned smoking on tourist beaches in 2018, and Russia banned smoking on balconies in 2020.
- ✓ According to WHO, nearly one million deaths occur in the Americas annually, either through direct use or passive smoking.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **On January 16, the inaugural ceremony of India's civil C20 working groups and their focus areas - was held through video conferencing**
- ✓ The Government of India had appointed Mata Amritanandamayi Devi as the Chair of Civil 20 (C20), an official engagement group of the G20

- ✓ She launched a sustainable-clothing line and incorporates eco-friendly techniques into her sewing lessons at Magpies & Peacocks, a nonprofit organization where she works.
- ✓ During the competition, Gabriel said she also hoped that Miss Universe would allow women older than 28 to compete in the pageant.
- ✓ She's also the first Filipino American to win Miss USA.
- ✓ The first and second runners-up are Miss Venezuela Amanda Dudamel, followed by Miss Dominican Republic Andreína Martínez
- ✓ Over 80 women from all over the world competed for the coveted title during the three-hour competition on January 14
- ✓ Miss India Harnaaz Kaur Sandhu won the title in 2021.
- ✓ India's representative for the pageant Divita Rai did not make it to the top 5 and ended up the pageant with top 16 round
- ✓ The last Miss USA to take the crown was Olivia Culpo in 2012.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **Indian scientists - have reported the first evidence of the presence of solitary waves or electric field fluctuations in the Martian magnetosphere.**
- ✓ Despite several missions to Mars, the presence of solitary waves in the Martian magnetosphere had never been reported by any space agency or institute in the world.
- ✓ The waves were identified by a four-member team led by an Indian scientist of the Indian Institute of Geomagnetism (IIG), an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DST)
- ✓ They were identified with the help of high-resolution electric field data recorded by Langmuir Probe and Waves instrument on the Mars Atmosphere and Volatile Evolution (MAVEN) spacecraft of Nasa

DEFENCE

- **On January 15, India and France - kicked off the bilateral 'Varuna' naval combat exercise in the Arabian Sea**



- ✓ France has deployed its nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Charles De Gaulle, frigates FS Forbin and Provence, support vessel FS Marne and maritime patrol aircraft Atlantique for the five-day war games.
 - ✓ India, in turn, is participating with indigenous guided-missile stealth destroyer INS Chennai, guided-missile frigate INS Teg, long-range maritime patrol aircraft P-8Is, Dorniers, helicopters and MiG-29K fighter jets.
 - ✓ The exercise will witness advanced air defence exercises, tactical manoeuvres, surface firings, underway replenishment and other maritime operations.
 - ✓ The two navies will strive to hone their war-fighting skills, enhance their interoperability to undertake multi-discipline operations, and demonstrate their ability as an integrated force to promote peace, security and stability in the region
 - ✓ The bilateral exercise, which was initiated in 1993, was named 'Varuna' in 2001
 - ✓ This is the 21st edition of the Varuna series of exercises, which have become a vital part of strategic ties between the two countries.
- **Squadron Leader Avani Chaturvedi – has been named part of the IAF contingent in Japan for the 'Veer Guardian' exercise being held from January 12 to 26 at the Hyakuri airbase**



- ✓ With this, Avani becomes the first IAF woman fighter pilot to take part in such aerial wargames in a foreign country
- ✓ Earlier, Avani became the first woman to fly a MiG-21 'Bison' solo in February 2018
- ✓ 'Veer Guardian' is the first-ever air combat exercise between India and Japan
- ✓ India is deploying four Sukhoi-30MKI fighters, along with two C-17 Globemaster-III strategic lift aircraft, one IL-78 mid-air refueller and around 150 IAF personnel, for the exercise.
- ✓ Japan, in turn, will deploy F-2 and F-15 fighters, among other assets.
- ✓ Squadron Leader Chaturvedi was among the first three women to be commissioned into the IAF fighter stream after basic training in 2016.
- ✓ There are now 17 women fighter pilots in the IAF.

- ✓ Squadron Leader Chaturvedi and her course-mate Bhawana Kanth now fly the Russian-origin Sukhois at the Jodhpur airbase.
- ✓ Flight Lieutenant Shivangi Singh, in turn, has become the first woman to fly the new French-origin Rafale omni-role jets as part of the 17 'Golden Arrows' Squadron in Ambala.
- ✓ Women officers, however, are still not allowed to serve in the Army's main combat arms like the infantry, armoured corps, mechanised infantry and artillery or on-board submarines in the Navy.

ECONOMY

- **German engineering company, Siemens - has signed a 3 billion euro (\$3.25 billion) contract to supply and service freight trains in India**



- ✓ Siemens will deliver 1,200 electric locomotives and provide servicing for 35 years under the agreement.
- ✓ This is the biggest locomotive deal in the history of Siemens and also its biggest ever in India.
- ✓ The Siemens-designed, 1,200-horsepower trains will be assembled in the Indian Railways Factory in Gujarat state over the next 11 years, with deliveries starting in 24 months.
- ✓ The maintenance of the new trains will be done in four Indian Railways depots located in Vishakhapatnam, Raipur, Kharagpur and Pune
- ✓ Siemens Mobility will design, manufacture, commission and test the locomotives, which are specified to carry loads of 4,500 tons at a maximum speed of 120 km per hour.
- ✓ In addition, they will be equipped with advanced propulsion systems produced locally in Siemens Mobility factories in India.
- ✓ Indian Railways and the Indian Government are committed to investing in state-of-the-art products to reach net zero CO₂ emissions by 2030.

AWARDS

- **Filmmaker SS Rajamouli's magnum opus RRR - has won the 28th Critics Choice Award for Best Foreign Language Film in Los Angeles**



- ✓ RRR was contending against films such as All Quiet on the Western Front, Argentina 1985, Bardo, False Chronicle of a Handful of Truths, Close and Decision to Leave.
 - ✓ The film was also awarded the trophy for best song once again, for its 'Naatu Naatu' track, which has become an international phenomenon.
 - ✓ The track has been composed by veteran music director MM Keeravaani and voiced by singers Kala Bhairava and Rahul Sipligunj.
 - ✓ The song edged out tracks like Taylor Swift's 'Carolina' from Where the Crawdads Sing, 'Ciao Papa' from Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio, Lady Gaga and Bloodpop's 'Hold My Hand' from Top Gun: Maverick, Rihanna's 'Lift Me Up' from Black Panther: Wakanda Forever and 'New Body Rhumba' from White Noise.
 - ✓ Naatu Naatu also received the best music core award at the Los Angeles Film Critics Association (LAFCA) recently.
 - ✓ It also features in the Oscars shortlist announced last month.
 - ✓ Earlier this month, India won its first Golden Globe as musician MM Keeravani bagged the Golden Globe for the Best Original song in a Feature Film.
 - ✓ Last week, the movie made it to the BAFTA longlist for the 'film not in the English language' category.
 - ✓ RRR tells the fictional story of two real-life Indian revolutionaries, Alluri Sitarama Raju and Komaram Bheem, and is set in the 1920s.
 - ✓ The film secured nominations in five categories at the 28th annual Critics Choice Awards — Best Picture, Best Director, Best Foreign Language Film, Best Song, and Best Visual Effects
- **Bhavin Rabari, the lead child actor in Pan Nalin's Oscar-nominated Gujarati film Chhello Show (The Last Film Show), bagged the International Press Academy (IPA) award on January 15**
- ✓ Rabari bagged the award in the 'Best Breakthrough Performance' category at the 27th Satellite Awards held in the United States.
 - ✓ The film is the first Indian film to be shortlisted for the Oscars in the 'Best International Feature Film' category after 21 years.



- ✓ The film has also bagged top honours in other international festivals like Tribeca, Busan, Mill Valley, and Seminci.
- ✓ Rabari, 13, the child actor who played the character of the protagonist named Samay, is among the youngest recipients of the prestigious award

SPORTS

- **On January 15, BCCI secretary Jay Shah - announced that Viacom 18 have secured the media rights for the inaugural edition of the Women's IPL (WIPL) for Rs 951 crore for five years (2023-2027).**
 - ✓ The only other bidder for the media rights was Disney Star.
 - ✓ The BCCI will announce the names of the five WIPL franchises on January 25
 - ✓ All the 10 IPL franchises have bid for owning a team in the WIPL.
 - ✓ The inaugural edition of the WIPL is likely to be in Mumbai and the matches are likely to be held in just three stadiums - the DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai, Brabourne Stadium at the Cricket Club of India and the Wankhede Stadium in Churchgate.
 - ✓ The tournament, which will have 22 matches, is likely to start on March 5 or 7 and end on March 23, in all likelihood, just before the start of IPL-2023.
 - ✓ There will be 20 league games, one qualifier (mostly between the second and third-placed teams) and the final.
 - ✓ The base price of the capped players has been kept at Rs 20 lakh, Rs 30 lakh and Rs 50 lakh, without the option of any icon player.
- **India - thrashed Sri Lanka by 317 runs in the final ODI at the Greenfield Stadium in Thiruvananthapuram on January 15**
 - ✓ The victory helped India complete a 3-0 series clean sweep, after winning the first match in Guwahati by 67 runs and the second in Kolkata by four wickets
 - ✓ According to the ICC, this is the highest margin of victory in any men's ODI and the first time any team has won a men's ODI by over 300 runs.
 - ✓ India's victory surpasses New Zealand's 290-run victory over Ireland in Aberdeen in July 2008

- ✓ Prior to this, India's largest margin of victory was a 257-run triumph over Bermuda during the 2007 World Cup in Port of Spain.

NATIONAL DAY

➤ National Startup Day – January 16



- ✓ In 2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced January 16 as the National Startup Day, to recognize, promote and celebrate the spirit of the Indian startup ecosystem
- ✓ This year, as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations, several events are being organised in more than 75 places across the country, with the aim to promote a spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation by involving the startup community.
- ✓ The day is marked by a week-long event, the Startup India Innovation Week, held from January 10 to 16
 - ✓ The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has organized the Startup India Innovation Week
 - ✓ The event provides a platform for startup business owners to connect with investors, mentors, and other entrepreneurs, and to share their ideas and experiences.
- ✓ T-Hub has won the “Best Incubator in India” award at the National Startup Awards 2022.
- ✓ Revamp Moto – one of India’s leading electric two-wheeler manufacturers - became winners of the ‘Transport’ segment at National Startup Awards 2022
- ✓ The awards were presented by Piyush Goyal, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry and Consumer Affairs on National Startup Day.
- ✓ At the event, 41 startups, two incubators, and one accelerator were recognised as winners.
- ✓ On January 15, 2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the adoption of National Startup Day on January 16.
- ✓ The first ever National Startup Day was observed in 2022
- ✓ The Start-up India scheme was launched on January 16, 2016 by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade with the goal of supporting and promoting start-ups in India

- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways - is observing the Road Safety Week from January 11 to 17 as part of the “Swachhata Pakhwada” initiative.



- ✓ During the Week, various activities are being organised throughout the country to create awareness among general public to contribute to the cause of road safety.
- ✓ This includes various awareness campaigns related to causes of road accidents and measures to prevent them.
- ✓ The National Road Safety Week was celebrated for the first time in 1989.
- ✓ On March 15, 2010 the Centre sanctioned the National Road Safety policy, recommended by the Sunder Committee.
- ✓ The theme for National Road Safety Week 2023 has not been announced yet.
- ✓ Last year, the theme was 'Sadak Suraksha – Jeevan Raksha.'