

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – JANUARY 8, 2023

TAMIL NADU

- The state government - has restructured the Teachers Recruitment Board (TRB) in line with the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission to expedite the recruitment of teachers.
- ✓ The board will have an IAS officer as controller of examinations and the secretary of human resource management, the commissioners of school education and technical education and the director of collegiate education as ex-officio members.
- ✓ It will also have two school education directors as members.
- ✓ Further, the government has revised the ratio of shortlisting of candidates to 1:1.25 for all recruitments to limit the scrutiny of documents and litigation.

WHAT IS NEW?

➤ TRB will have an IAS officer as controller of examinations	reduced to 1:1.25 from 1:2 or 1:3 for recruitment
➤ State government sanctions 71 additional staff including programmers, data analysts to strengthen the board	➤ The board is likely to recruitment for universities as well
➤ TRB will have an exclusive building with access control	➤ According to the annual planner for 2023, the board will recruit 15,149 teachers including 4000 assistant professors
➤ The ratio of shortlisted candidates	

- ✓ As per the new guidelines, recruitment of teachers for schools, colleges, polytechnics and universities will be conducted by the TRB
- ✓ So far, the state universities used to recruit assistant professors
- ✓ The government order also permitted increase in the staff strength of the board by 71, including programmers, data analysts, data administrators.
- ✓ The controller of examinations will be in charge of the confidential section, examinations, certificate verification and library

- ✓ To improve the exams, the board plans to revise the syllabus every five years, prepare question banks using experts from top institutes such as the IIT.
 - ✓ The government also accepted the proposal to provide a digitised grievance redress mechanism for submitting complaints 24X7, set up district exam monitoring committees, a system to monitor legal cases, and to raise exam fees every three years.
 - ✓ Earlier, the state government had formed a committee to suggest ways and means to improve the standard of the Teachers Recruitment Board.
 - ✓ The committee submitted its report with 39 recommendations, which has been accepted by the state government with slight modifications.
- **The state government – has proposed to distribute two kilograms of finger millets (ragi) to each ration cardholder in Dharmapuri and the Nilgiris districts soon on a pilot basis.**
- ✓ This was announced by Food and civil supplies minister R Sakkarapani on January 7
 - ✓ The Minister was inaugurating the two-day international millet conference on reviving traditional food products of Tamil Nadu being held in Coimbatore on January 7 and 8
 - ✓ The objective of the conference is to revive the traditional foods of Tamil Nadu and create food entrepreneurs and student entrepreneurs.
 - ✓ During his speech, the Minister said that the government is planning to reduce the supply of rice and increase the distribution of millets across the state soon.
 - ✓ The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2023 as the International Year of Millet
- **The state government - has appointed retired district judge B Mohan as the member (legal) of Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulatory Commission (TNERC).**
- ✓ The member (legal) post has been lying vacant since May last year when former member K Venkatasamy's tenure ended
 - ✓ Mohan is the second member of the regulatory body, after the first member K. Venkatesan
 - ✓ The selection committee comprised retired judge V Bharathidasan, chief secretary V Irai Anbu and Central Electricity Authority chairman Ghanshyam Prasad
 - ✓ TNERC is headed by a chairman, currently M Chandrasekar, who is assisted by two members.
 - ✓ Member (legal) is crucial for disposal of disputes between Tangedco and its various consumers.
 - ✓ Earlier, the State government constituted a selection committee headed by retired justice K Chandru and they had recommended two persons for the post but the government rejected it.
 - ✓ The government later constituted another panel headed by retired judge V Bharathidasan.

STATES

- **Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan - launched the Chief Minister's Residential Land Rights scheme (Mukhyamantri Awasiya Bhu Adhikar Yojana) in Tikamgarh district recently on January 4**



- ✓ The objective of this scheme is to provide free plots to the poor living in rural areas for building their houses.
 - ✓ Under the scheme, plots worth about Rs.129 crore were distributed to 10,918 families of Tikamgarh district
 - ✓ The land will be given completely free of cost and along with the plot, the benefits of all other schemes will also be provided to the beneficiaries
- **The Government of India – has recently signed an agreement with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for a loan of \$1.22 billion to improve connectivity in four states – Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Tripura and Assam**
 - ✓ In Tamil Nadu, the ADB loan for the expansion of the Chennai metro rail network will support the development of three new metro lines - Line 3, Line 4, and Line 5
 - ✓ The proposed new stations will also incorporate disaster- and climate-resilient features and will be responsive to the needs of the elderly, women, children, differently-abled, and transgender people
 - ✓ In case of Maharashtra, the loan will be used for the upgrade of state highways and to incorporate climate and disaster-resilient features to strengthen the state's core road network
 - ✓ The ADB loan for the power sector in Tripura will fund the replacement of the Rokhia power plant with a highly efficient combined cycle gas turbine, which will reduce greenhouse gas emissions through fuel saving
 - ✓ In case of Assam, the funding will be utilised in upgrading six road sections in the state's western, central, and southern regions, which are connected to SASEC corridors linking India with Bhutan and Bangladesh

NATIONAL

- **On January 7, Prime Minister Narendra Modi - launched the government's Aspirational Block Programme (ABP) during the valedictory session of the second National Conference of Chief Secretaries.**



- ✓ The initiative is aimed at improving performance of blocks lagging on various development parameters.
 - ✓ The Centre had announced its intention to launch this initiative in the Union Budget 2022-23.
 - ✓ During his concluding address, PM Modi urged states to follow the Aspirational District Programme at the block level
 - ✓ The programme will cover 500 districts across 31 states and Union Territories initially.
 - ✓ Over half of these blocks are in 6 states—Uttar Pradesh (68 blocks), Bihar (61), Madhya Pradesh (42), Jharkhand (34), Odisha (29) and West Bengal (29).
 - ✓ The second edition of the chief secretaries' conference had begun on January 5 in New Delhi, while the Prime Minister was present during the deliberations held on January 6 and 7.
 - ✓ The Aspirational Blocks Programme is on the lines of the Aspirational District Programme that was launched in 2018 and covers 112 districts across the country
- **The University Grants Commission (UGC) - announced the draft regulations for 'Setting up and Operation of Campuses of Foreign Higher Educational Institutions in India' on January 5**

AT A GLANCE

HIGHLIGHTS FROM DRAFT RULES FOR FOREIGN UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES

➤ Foreign university within the top 500 global ranking or a reputed foreign institution can apply to set up a campus

➤ They will be allowed to fix their own fees and admission criteria

➤ They can decide qualifications, salary structure and other conditions for

appointing faculty and staff

➤ These campuses to also be allowed to the repatriation of surplus money

➤ Indian educational institutions demand similar privileges and autonomy to create level playing field

➤ Last date to give feedback on draft regulations is on January 18

- ✓ The draft is intended to regulate the entry and operations of Foreign Universities to conduct various degrees, diplomas and certificate programmes in the country
 - ✓ The final norms will be notified by the end of the month after considering feedback from all stakeholders.
 - ✓ According to the draft norms, foreign universities will be able to set up their campuses in India for the first time.
 - ✓ These varsities can also decide on the admission process and fee structure and repatriate their funds back home.
 - ✓ The initial approval will be for 10 years and will be renewed in the ninth year subject to the meeting of certain conditions
 - ✓ Foreign universities with campuses in the country can only offer full-time programmes in offline mode and not online or distance learning
 - ✓ These institutions shall not offer any such study programme which endangers the national interest of India or the standards of higher education
 - ✓ There will be two categories of foreign institutions eligible to apply for setting up their campuses in India---the universities that have secured a position within the top 500 of overall or subject-wise global ranking or a reputed institution in its home jurisdiction
- **President Droupadi Murmu – launched the National Campaign on 'RISE- Rising India through Spiritual Empowerment' at Mount Abu, Rajasthan recently on January 3.**



- ✓ The event was organized by Brahma Kumaris organization, which is running about 5000 meditation centers in 137 countries
- ✓ During the occasion, the President also virtually inaugurated the Brahma Kumaris Silence Retreat Centre, Secunderabad, Telangana and laid the foundation stone for Brahma Kumaris Auditorium and Spiritual Art Gallery at Indore, Madhya Pradesh.
- ✓ The National Campaign on 'RISE- Rising India Through Spiritual Empowerment' is aimed at spiritually empowering Indian nationals in order to fulfill the dream of a "Golden India."

- ✓ During her speech, the President said that, for the past nearly 80 years, the Brahma Kumaris Sansthan has been making invaluable contributions towards spiritual progress, inner transformation of personality and revitalization of the world community.
 - ✓ Brahma Kumaris is the largest spiritual organization run by women and which is playing an active role in the empowerment of women.
 - ✓ During her two-day visit to Rajasthan, the President also virtually inaugurated the Transmission System for Solar Energy Zones in Rajasthan and laid the foundation stone for one thousand Mega Watt Bikaner Solar Power Project
- **Rajeev Chandrasekhar , Minister of State , Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) – released the ‘Draft Amendments to the IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021’ for public consultation for two weeks recently on January 2**
- ✓ The proposed rules, aimed at safeguarding users against potential harm from skill-based games, have been introduced as an amendment to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.
 - ✓ The draft rules propose a ban on betting and wagering in online games.
 - ✓ According to the draft rules, an online game is one that “is offered on the internet and is accessible by a user through a computer resource if he makes a deposit with the expectation of earning winnings”
 - ✓ “Online gaming intermediary” is defined as an intermediary that offers one or more online games
 - ✓ The rules propose setting up a ‘self-regulatory body’ for grievance redressal and mandating know-your-customer (KYC) rules for gamers and online gaming intermediaries
 - ✓ The self-regulatory body will comprise five members from diverse fields such as medicine, online gaming, public policy, IT and psychology.
 - ✓ It will be responsible for determining and certifying what is the permitted online gaming intermediary on the internet
 - ✓ Each online game offered by the intermediary will have to be vetted and registered with the self-regulatory body.
 - ✓ This body must either be a section 8 company under the Companies Act, 2013 or a society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.
 - ✓ Online gaming intermediaries will have three months to comply after the amendments are notified.
 - ✓ The draft rules were announced less than a week after the government had designated the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology as the nodal ministry for all online gaming related matters.
 - ✓ The online gaming segment was handed over to the IT ministry in December last year
 - ✓ Until this, online gaming was considered to be under the purview of the states.

- ✓ The revenue of the Indian mobile gaming industry is expected to exceed \$1.5 billion in 2022 and is estimated to reach \$5 billion in 2025

INTERNATIONAL

- **The International Labour Organisation (ILO) – has released a report titled ‘Working Time and Work Life Balance Around the World’.**
- ✓ As per the report, average hours of work per week was found to be the highest in Asia and the Pacific in 2019, particularly in South and East Asia
- ✓ Similarly, it was shortest in North America and Europe and Central Asia, particularly in northern, southern and western Europe
- ✓ Among developing countries, India, China and Brazil have much longer working hours, with Brazil showing a downward trend which began in the 1970s.
- ✓ Globally, the sectors that had the longest weekly work hours in 2019 were wholesale and retail trade (49. 1 hours), transport and communications (48. 2 hours) and manufacturing (47. 6 hours).
- ✓ Those with the shortest weekly hours of work were agriculture (37. 9 hours), education (39. 3 hours) and health services (39. 8 hours).
- ✓ The occupational group with the longest average hours of work was plant and machine operators and assemblers, who worked 48.2 hours a week, followed by service and sales workers at 47 hours a week.
- ✓ In contrast, both professionals and workers in elementary occupations, including skilled agricultural workers, worked an average of 40.2 hours a week.
- ✓ As per the report, substantial portion of the global workforce are working either long or short hours when compared to a standard eight-hour day/40 hour working week.
- ✓ More than one-third of all workers were regularly putting in more than 48 hours per week, while a fifth of the global workforce was working short (part-time) hours of less than 35 per week.
- ✓ The ILO study is based on data collected from 160 countries
- ✓ It is the first one conducted by the Organization that focuses on work-life balance

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **A newly discovered comet - could be visible to the naked eye as it moves past Earth and the Sun in the coming weeks for the first time in 50,000 years.**
- ✓ The comet is called C/2022 E3 (ZTF) after the Zwicky Transient Facility, which first spotted it passing Jupiter in March last year.
- ✓ After travelling from the icy portion of our Solar System, it will come closest to the Sun on January 12 and pass nearest to Earth on February 1.
- ✓ It will be easy to spot with a good pair of binoculars and likely even with the naked eye.

- ✓ Made of ice and dust and emitting a greenish aura, the comet is estimated to have a diameter of around a kilometre

SPORTS

- **The Indian cricket board (BCCI) - has reappointed Chetan Sharma as the chairman of selectors for the senior national team**



- ✓ Sharma and Harvinder Singh were the only ones from the previous committee to reapply for the job.
- ✓ Sharma's committee will now have former India opener Shiv Sundar Das, former India pacers Subroto Banerjee and Salil Ankola and former Tamil Nadu batting stalwart Sridharan Sharath.
- ✓ Das was picked as a candidate from central zone as he finished his first-class career at Vidarbha.
- ✓ The Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) comprising Sulakshana Naik, Ashok Malhotra, and Jatin Paranjape undertook an extensive process for selecting members.
- ✓ Sharath, meanwhile, is the only selector in the panel who has not played international cricket and the first such instance since Rajinder Hans, who served till 2016.

- **On January 5, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik - inaugurated the world's largest hockey stadium at Rourkela, ahead of the men's FIH Hockey World Cup.**



- ✓ As a tribute, the Stadium is named after Birsa Munda, the legendary tribal freedom fighter from western Odisha who fought the British and protected the tribal heritage and culture
- ✓ Built at a cost of over Rs 260 crore in a record 15 months, the world-class Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium (BMHS) is capable of hosting over 20,000 spectators.
- ✓ The chief minister also dedicated the World Cup village developed at a cost of around Rs 85 crore on the stadium campus
 - ✓ The complex has all amenities, including a practice pitch, fitness centre, hydrotherapy pool, dressing and changing room and a 225-room residential complex, developed in a record nine months, with five-star facilities capable of accommodating 400 players
- ✓ Both the stadium and the Hockey Practice Centre have been certified Level 1 by FIH which is the highest in its category.
- ✓ Prior to the inauguration, CM Naveen Patnaik met the Indian Hockey Team and committed to award Rs. 1 crore for each member of the Indian Hockey Team if they win the Hockey World Cup 2023.
- ✓ The Hockey World Cup, being hosted by Odisha for the second time, will be played in the iconic Kalinga Stadium in the capital Bhubaneswar and Birsa Munda Stadium in Rourkela from January 13 to 29.
- ✓ 16 teams will compete with each other in the prestigious world tournament
- **Cape Verde - has become the first African country to name a stadium after Pele, following a request by Fifa president Gianni Infantino**



- ✓ African Portuguese speaking country, Cape Verde will rename their national stadium to 'Pele Stadium'
- ✓ The 15,000-seat Estadio Nacional de Cabo Verde will be called the 'Pele Stadium' in honour of the football legend who died due to cancer recently.
- ✓ The decision comes just days after Infantino called on every country to honour the three-time World Cup winner, who died aged 82 on December 29, by naming a stadium after him
- ✓ Pele is the only man in football history to win the World Cup three times, having won it in 1958, 1962 and 1970.

SINKING JOSHIMATH – A REPORT

- **Joshimath - has been declared a landslide-subsidence zone and atleast 25% area of the city, which has a population of about 25,000, has been affected by the problem**



- ✓ This was concluded by an eight-member expert panel, who has conducted a field survey of Joshimath in Uttarakhand on January 5-6.
- ✓ The panel was led by Ranjit Sinha, secretary of the disaster management department
- ✓ The panel has recommended that “houses in Joshimath with maximum damage should be demolished, areas which have become inhabitable must be identified and relocation of the people at risk should be done as an immediate measure”.
- ✓ The main problem has been the fact that the town has come up on relatively loose soil, deposited by landslides triggered by earthquake
- ✓ The panel has observed “aggravated damages” and an “increased land-subsidence with the burst of the aquifer” in some areas.
- ✓ The team went to the Tapovan-Vishnugad hydropower project site of NTPC as well.
- ✓ More detailed studies have been suggested, including fresh geo-technical, geophysical and hydrological investigations along with seismic and slope movement monitoring.
- ✓ The National Remote Sensing Centre, Hyderabad and the Indian Institute of Remote Sensing, Dehradun have been asked to conduct a study of Joshimath through satellite imagery and submit a detailed report with photographs.
- ✓ Meanwhile, the number of affected structures — residential, commercial and even temples — which have developed large cracks has increased from 561 to 603 within a span of a mere 48 hours.
- ✓ The holy town has been facing massive land-subsidence, aggravated significantly in the past few days.
- ✓ Fresh cracks have been reported in Shankaracharya Madhavashram temple too.
- ✓ Meanwhile, the Chamoli district magistrate ordered immediate suspension of work on Tapovan-Vishnugad hydro project and ongoing construction of Helang bypass — the projects that are considered to be one of the main reasons for subsidence.

- ✓ Joshimath is an ancient Uttarakhand town where religious reformer Adi Shankaracharya attained enlightenment in the eighth century
- ✓ Notably, Joshimath in Chamoli district is important not only due to its proximity to the Indo-Tibet border but also as it is the last major town on the routes to Badrinath, Valley of Flowers and Hemkund

