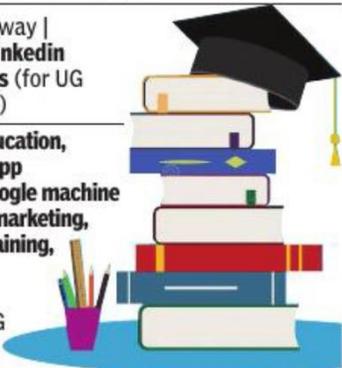


EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – FEBRUARY 18, 2023

TAMIL NADU

- **The Tamil Nadu higher education department - has asked state universities to include skill based courses under the Naan Mudhalvan scheme starting the current semester.**
- ✓ The Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation (TNSDC) has developed 17 courses under the 'Naan Mudhalvan' scheme
- ✓ This includes English language communication assessment and certification from Cambridge, IBM Career education, Google android app development, digital marketing, digital banking, logistics for arts and science undergraduate students.
- ✓ The skill-based courses have been identified by the department for second, fourth and sixth semesters in the UG programmes.

THE COURSES AT A GLANCE

<p>English language communication assessment and certification from Cambridge (for UG second semester)</p> 	<p>➤ Learning Pathway Microsoft and LinkedIn career essentials (for UG fourth semester)</p> <p>➤ IBM Career education, Google android app development, Google machine learning, digital marketing, cyber security training, digital banking, logistics, audit essentials (for UG sixth semester)</p>	
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- ✓ The state universities have conducted the Naan Mudhalvan Up skilling Initiative for arts and science colleges across Tamil Nadu in the last two weeks.
- ✓ The scheme, a massive up skilling programme for the students and youth, was launched on March 1, 2022.
- ✓ It aims to improve the employment opportunities for the students after graduation.

- **The government - has started trial run of Ashok Leyland's low-floor 'kneeling' buses in Chennai this week, following the Madras High Court's direction in this regard.**
 - ✓ Kneeling buses, which are used by many European countries, can lower body or entrance doors to facilitate boarding by people with disabilities (PwDs) and elderly passengers.
 - ✓ The state transport department floated tenders to procure new government buses for the city last year
 - ✓ The trial run covered major corridors without a problem.

- **Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (Cumta) - has fixed a deadline to rollout the common tickets for MTC and Chennai Metro Rail by December 2023**
 - ✓ The integration with railways is expected to be achieved by mid 2024.
 - ✓ Cumta has suggested a QR code-based cashless ticketing system for the benefit of metro rail, road transport and train commuters.
 - ✓ The QR code will have different layers for the metro, one for bus and another for the train.
 - ✓ The mobile app through which the ticket can be booked will serve as a journey planner and integrated ticketing platform and it will provide real time information about different transport modes.

STATES

- **On February 17, the Election Commission – ordered that the party name “Shiv Sena” and the party symbol “Bow and Arrow” will be retained by the Eknath Shinde faction.**
 - ✓ According to the Commission, MLAs backing Eknath Shinde got nearly 76% of votes polled in favour of the 55 winning Shiv Sena candidates in the 2019 Maharashtra Assembly polls.
 - ✓ The Uddhav Thackeray faction's MLAs got 23.5% of votes polled in favour of the winning Shiv Sena candidates
 - ✓ For the ongoing by-elections in Maharashtra, the EC said the Thackeray faction could continue to use the interim name and symbol – Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) and ‘flaming torch’.
 - ✓ The EC froze the unified Shiv Sena's bow and arrow symbol in October 2022 and gave the two factions -- led by Uddhav Thackeray and Eknath Shinde -- different names and symbols.
 - ✓ The Shinde faction opted for the name Balasahebanchi Shiv Sena (Balasaheb's Shiv Sena), and the party symbol was two swords and shields.
 - ✓ The Uddhav faction opted for Shiv Sena – Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray and torch as its symbol.

NATIONAL

- **On February 17, Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman – announced that the Centre will not consider demands for “special category status” for any state**
- ✓ The announcement has dealt a major blow to states like Odisha and Bihar who have been pushing for the demand for some years now.
- ✓ The Finance Minister quoted the opinion of the 14th Finance commission, which has clearly said no special status can be given to any state
- ✓ It has to be recalled that Andhra Pradesh and Telangana were given special category status in the initial years after bifurcation
- ✓ Odisha and Bihar have been pressing for special category status to avail 90% funds in centrally sponsored-schemes, instead of the present arrangement of 60%, besides other benefits.
- ✓ Odisha has been seeking change in criteria to accommodate it keeping in mind its vulnerability to natural disasters.
- ✓ CM Naveen Patnaik had also raised the issue in August last year during the Niti Aayog governing council meeting.
- ✓ Bihar CM Nitish Kumar has also been pressing for special category status for his state.
- ✓ In November last year, Nitish had slammed the Centre for not according special category status to Bihar and other backward states.
- **The Centre - has designated Pakistan-based Harvinder Singh Sandhu alias Rinda, a leader of banned outfit Babbar Khalsa International, an individual terrorist under UAPA.**



- ✓ Two outfits —Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF) and Jammu & Kashmir Ghaznavi Force (JKGF) —were also declared as terrorist organisations.
- ✓ The orders were issued after a review by Union home minister Amit Shah on February 17.

- ✓ With this, now there are 54 designated terrorists and 44 designated terrorist organisations under the I Schedule of the UAPA.
- ✓ As part of India's zero tolerance policy towards terrorism, the government had amended the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) in August 2019 to include the provision of designating an individual as terrorist.
- ✓ Prior to this amendment, only organisations could be designated as terrorist outfits.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **Italian Prime Minister and Europe's rightwing leader Giorgia Meloni - will be the chief guest next month at the Raisina Dialogue.**



- ✓ Raisina Dialogue is India's premier conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics
- ✓ It is being organised by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs.
- ✓ Meloni, who formed Italy's most far-right government since the days of Mussolini after her victory in elections last year, is also Italy's first woman prime minister.
- ✓ She is expected to inaugurate the conference on March 2 with PM Narendra Modi.
- ✓ This will be the second year in succession that a prominent European leader will participate in the Dialogue as the chief guest in the middle of the Ukraine war.
- ✓ European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen was the chief guest last year.
- ✓ The first meeting between both the two leaders was held on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Bali last year
- ✓ During the meeting, both the leaders exchanged views on the need to ensure peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific and food and energy crises resulting from the Ukraine conflict.
- ✓ Defence, trade, energy, counter-terrorism and people-to-people ties are other areas the two leaders are expected to focus on when they meet next month.

OBITUARY

- **Eminent classical singer Pandit Vijay Kumar Kichlu - passed away at the age of 93 in Kolkata on February 17**



- ✓ A recipient of the Sangit Natak Akademi award Pandit Kichlu was a disciple of Ustad Moinuddin Dagar and Ustad Aminuddin Dagar, popularly known as the Dagar brothers.
- ✓ He along with his brother, Ravi Kichlu, had formed a popular classical vocalist pair.
- ✓ He was the founder and head of the ITC Music Research Academy, which is based on the 'gurukul' concept, for 25 years
- ✓ Pandit Kichlu had also founded Sangeet Research Academy to help upcoming talents in Indian classical music and led the formation of the Kolkata Music Circle.
- ✓ He belonged to the Agra gharana and was a recipient of the Padma Shri in 2018 and the Akademi Ratna Sadasyata.

SPORTS

- **Indian cricket board's (BCCI) chairman of selectors, Chetan Sharma - has resigned from his post**



- ✓ He sent his resignation to BCCI secretary Jay Shah who accepted it.
- ✓ The move follows after a sting operation by Zee News' television channel caught him speaking several objectionable things against Indian cricketers.

- ✓ In the programme aired by the channel, Sharma made some drastic comments about Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, Hardik Pandya, former Indian captain and ex-BCCI president Sourav Ganguly and several other Indian players.
- ✓ The 57-year-old Sharma was seen revealing some behind-the-scenes stuff concerning team selection and selection biases.
- ✓ Sharma's stint as chief selector began in December 2020.
- ✓ He had been reinstated as chief selector in January this year after the BCCI sacked the entire previous panel in November 2022 in the wake of India's exit in the semifinals of the T20 World Cup in Australia.
- ✓ India's selection panel now comprises Salil Ankola, SS Das, Subroto Banerjee and S Sharath.
- ✓ Chetan, the former India pacer, who played 23 Tests and 65 ODIs, has been the country's first hat-trick man in the ODI World Cup

