

## EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – FEBRUARY 19, 2023

### TAMIL NADU

- On February 18, the Tamil Nadu government - signed an MoU with Ola Electric for investment of Rs.7,614 crore in the state, generating employment for 3,111 people.



- ✓ The memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed in the presence of chief minister M K Stalin.
- ✓ The project comprises an EV cell plant and an electric four-wheeler plant to be set up in SIPCOT Bargur, Krishnagiri district
- ✓ As part of the MoU, Ola will set up an EV hub which includes advanced cell and electric vehicle manufacturing facilities, vendor & supplier parks and the larger ancillary ecosystem for EVs at a single location.
- ✓ The Ola EV Hub will be located in Krishnagiri and Dharmapuri districts
- ✓ It will be the world's largest EV facility at a single location, spread across approximately 2,000 acres.

- ✓ Ola will begin the mass production of its cell from its upcoming EV hub by end of 2023
  - ✓ During the next decade, the company is planning to focus on building local supply chains for new materials and components including rare earth magnets, power electronics, semiconductors, lithium processing and electrode production from minerals like graphite and nickel.
  - ✓ **Further, during the day, CM Stalin also inaugurated a new ultra-high purity cryogenic medical oxygen and industrial gases plant at SIPCOT Phase II in Hosur**
  - ✓ Commissioned by INOX Air Products (INOXAP), the plant has a manufacturing capacity of 200 tonnes per day.
  - ✓ INOXAP is India's largest manufacturer of industrial and medical gases with a liquid medical oxygen production capacity of 3,400 tonnes a day across its 47 operating locations.
  - ✓ The air separation plant will produce ultra-high purity cryogenic medical oxygen and industrial gases including liquid nitrogen and liquid argon.
  - ✓ The plant has the capacity to produce 150 tonnes of liquid oxygen a day
  - ✓ With this plant, INOXAP's liquid oxygen manufacturing capacity in Tamil Nadu has gone up from 150 tonnes to 300 tonnes a day.
  - ✓ The new plant will help fulfil the oxygen demand of more than 100 hospitals in Tamil Nadu as well as cater to the industrial gases needs of various industries.
  - ✓ Commissioned with a project outlay of Rs.150 crore, the new plant will also generate 150 direct and indirect employment opportunities in the state.
- **President of India Droupadi Murmu - arrived at Madurai on February 18 to offer prayers at the Meenakshi Amman temple.**



- ✓ This is her maiden official visit to Tamil Nadu
- ✓ She was welcomed by governor R N Ravi, minister of information and technology Mano Thangaraj, Madurai district collector S Aneesh Sekhar and mayor V Indrani Ponvasanth.
- ✓ Murmu was given a bronze idol of goddess Meenakshi by the temple administration.

- ✓ Later in the day, Murmu left for Coimbatore by flight to attend various functions there, including the Mahashivratri celebrations at the Isha Yoga Centre.
- **Southern Railway - has started running parcel trains with India Post from February 17**



- ✓ The railways have planned to commence 15 services across the country to attract more businesses to send the freight of India Post by train under the Gati Shakti scheme.
- ✓ Divisional railway manager Ganesh and postmaster general Natarajan flagged off the first train from Royapuram to Guwahati on February 17.
- ✓ As per the tie-up, India Post will pick up and deliver parcels at the doorstep, while railways will transport them from Chennai to other places.
- ✓ The first trip from Royapuram transported 29 tonnes of goods, which included readymade clothes, motor parts, stainless steel items, courier, and mosquito-repellents.
- ✓ It has brought in a revenue of Rs.2.2 lakh to the Indian Railways
- ✓ The train transports goods primarily to Vijayawada, Balasore, Kharagpur, Sankrail, and Malda Town.

## STATES

- **On February 18, the Uttarakhand government - announced that the doors of Kedarnath Dham will open on April 25 for the annual Char Dham Pilgrimage.**



- ✓ With this, the date for the opening of all the four revered shrines — Kedarnath, Badrinath, Gangotri and Yamunotri — have been announced by the state administration.
- ✓ The annual Char Dham pilgrimage will start on the occasion of Akshaya Tritiya on April 22 with the opening of Gangotri and Yamunotri Dham gates, while portals of Badrinath will open on April 27.
- ✓ This year's yatra will be held against the backdrop of the recent land subsidence in Joshimath, about 45km from Badrinath
- ✓ Known as the 'Gateway to Badrinath', Joshimath is the last major halt for pilgrims travelling on the lone route to the holy city of Badrinath
- ✓ Since January 2 this year, at least 868 houses have developed cracks in and around Joshimath.

## NATIONAL

- **The 49th meeting of the GST Council, chaired by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman - was held in New Delhi on February 18.**



- ✓ During the meeting, the GST Council made recommendations on GST compensation, the GST Appellate Tribunal, the approval of the GoM Report on Capacity Based Taxation and Special Composition Scheme for certain commodities (such as pan masala, gutkha, chewing tobacco), GST rates, and other trade facilitation measures.

### **Key recommendations of the GST Council meeting**

- ✓ The Government of India has decided to clear the release of Rs.33,500 crore to states and Union territories towards GST compensation balance.
  - ✓ Out of this Rs.16,982 crore will go to states as the remaining compensation for June 2022, when the five-year compensation period ended

- ✓ During the first five years of GST, the Centre had promised to “compensate” states in case revenue growth was under 14% on an annual basis by transferring money collected as cess on soft drinks, tobacco, cars and some other products.
  - ✓ The report that was compiled by the Group of Ministers (GoM) on the GST Appellate Tribunal was approved by the GST Council with some amendments.
    - ✓ The GST Tribunal will have one principal bench in New Delhi and as many benches or boards in states as decided by each state, subject to approval of the council.
    - ✓ The principal bench and state boards would have two technical and two judicial members each, with equal representation from the Centre and states.
    - ✓ While only one member will decide cases with disputes up to Rs.50 lakh, cases above the threshold will be adjudicated by one technical and one judicial member.
  - ✓ The recommendations made by the GoM were approved by the Council in order to improve revenue collection from products like pan masala, gutkha, and chewing tobacco.
    - ✓ Pan Masala and Gutkha will now attract GST on a production basis.
  - ✓ The rate of GST that is applied to “pencil sharpeners” will go down from 18% to 12%
  - ✓ The council also agreed to lower the tax rate for liquid jaggery or raab from 18% to 5% if packaged and labelled and to zero if sold otherwise
  - ✓ It has exempted the National Testing Agency that conducts entrance exams for central and other universities, and engineering and medical colleges from the ambit of the GST levy
  - ✓ The GST Council has decided to rationalise late fees on filing of annual GST returns after the due date.
  - ✓ It also approved an extension of time limit for application for revocation of cancellation of registration and one-time amnesty for past cases.
  - ✓ Services provided by courts and tribunals will be charged at Reverse Charge Mechanism (RCM).
- **On February 18, twelve South African cheetahs - were released into enclosures inside Kuno National Park of Sheopur district in Madhya Pradesh**
- ✓ Union environment minister Bhupendra Yadav and chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan released the tigers as part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Project Cheetah.
  - ✓ Kuno is now home to 20 cheetahs, including eight that were brought from Namibia and released by PM Modi in September last year.
  - ✓ The twelve cheetahs were brought to Gwalior through an Indian Air Force C-17 Globemaster plane from OR Tambo International Airport, Gauteng, South Africa



- ✓ After arriving at Gwalior, they were taken to Kuno in three Mi-17 choppers.
- ✓ All 12 South African cheetahs are wild born, have grown up among competing predators — including lion, leopard, hyena and wild dogs
- ✓ They are expected to be able to respond appropriately when they encounter a new predator population in India that includes tigers, leopards, wolves, dholes, striped hyena, and sloth bears.

## SPORTS

- **Indian team – settled for bronze in the Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championship in Dubai on February 18.**



- ✓ The P.V. Sindhu led side faced a 2-3 defeat against China in the semifinals
- ✓ World No. 9 H.S. Prannoy and P V Sindhu lost their respective singles contest.
- ✓ Men's doubles pair Dhruv Kapila and Chirag Shetty won the contest to keep India in the game, while Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand also won the Women's Doubles.
- ✓ However, Mixed Doubles pair Ishaan Bhatnagar and Tanisha Crasto suffered defeat in straight games
- ✓ In the final, China will face South Korea.