

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-MARCH 8,2023

TAMIL NADU

- On March 7, Minister for youth welfare and sports Udhayanidhi Stalin - launched a free training programme under the Naan Mudhalvan scheme to help Tamil Nadu college students prepare for recruitment exams for various government jobs.



- ✓ Under the scheme, students will also be trained for IIT JEE, CLAT and other entrance tests to enable them to enrol in IITs, NITs and National Law University.
- ✓ During the event, Higher education minister K Ponmudy said the Naan Mudhalvan scheme would be extended to arts and science colleges from next academic year.

STATES

- National People's Party (NPP) president Conrad K Sangma and NDPP leader Neiphiu Rio - were sworn in as chief ministers of Meghalaya and Nagaland respectively on March 7.
- ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah attended both the swearing-in ceremony, along with BJP president J P Nadda.

- ✓ Meghalaya Governor Phagu Chauhan has administered the oath of office and secrecy at a grand ceremony held at Shillong, while Nagaland Governor La Ganesan administered the oath of office at a ceremony held in Kohima



- ✓ This is 72-year-old Rio's fifth and 45-year-old Sangma's second term as CMs of their respective states.
- ✓ Apart from this, history was scripted in Nagaland when the state elected its first women legislators in its 60 years of statehood.
 - ✓ The two women lawmakers - Hekhani Jakhalu and Salhoutuonuo Kruse - of the ruling NDPP defeated the sitting MLAs in Western Angami and Dimapur-III seats.
- ✓ The BJP along with alliance partners retained power in all the three states – Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura - in the just concluded Assembly elections.
- ✓ The NDPP-BJP coalition in Nagaland won 37 seats in the 60-member Assembly in the recently-concluded Assembly polls
- ✓ This is the second time that the Meghalaya Democratic Alliance 2.0 came into power after the NPP garner the support from BJP, UDP, PDF, HSPDP and a few Independents.
 - ✓ The NPP became the single-largest party, winning 26 seats in the recently-held election in Meghalaya, while the UDP bagged 11 seats while the BJP, HSPDP and People's Democratic Front (PDF) got two seats each.
 - ✓ Under the rules, Meghalaya, with a 60-member Assembly, cannot have more than 12 ministers, including the CM.
- ✓ BJP's Manik Saha will be sworn in on March 9 as the chief minister of Tripura where the saffron party has secured a majority.

INTERNATIONAL

- **Li Qiang, an ally of China's president Xi Jinping - will be the next premier as Li Keqiang steps down after two terms**
- ✓ He is likely to formally become China's next premier at the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) this week.



- ✓ Li Qiang was instrumental in pushing for a sudden end to the zero-Covid policy late last year
- ✓ Li Keqiang stepped down from the Communist Party of China's (CPC) Politburo Standing Committee in October last year, following which Qiang was picked as China's second-in-command.
- ✓ Meanwhile, the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) is set to elect Xi for his third presidential term.
- ✓ As Xi became China's president in 2013, Qiang was promoted to the governor of Zhejiang, which is known as an economic powerhouse, the same year.
- ✓ Qiang was also Shanghai's CPC chief, a post earlier held by Xi himself.
- ✓ A former factory worker and bureaucrat, Qiang played a crucial role in bringing Tesla to China and advocated opening China's market to foreign investors
- ✓ In 2015, he accompanied Jinping to the United States to meet then-President Barack Obama.

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese - will be on a three-day state visit to India from March 8 to March 11, during which he will visit Mumbai, Ahmedabad and New Delhi**



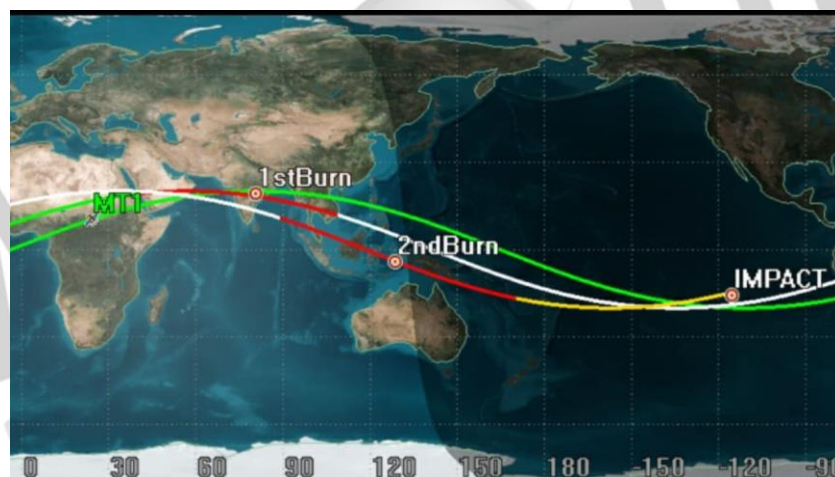
- ✓ Albanese will be in India along with a delegation of ministers and business leaders for the first in-person India-Australia Annual Summit

- ✓ It is PM Albanese's first bilateral visit to India since the Labour Party government was sworn in May 2022 and the first visit by an Australian prime minister in six years
 - ✓ Prime Minister Albanese is the first Prime Minister of Australia to visit New Delhi twice a year since the diplomatic relations between India and Australia began in 1943
 - ✓ The visit to India aims to further strengthen India-Australia bilateral relations, to boost trade and defence ties and also enhance cooperation in multi-lateral forums like Quad
 - ✓ Albanese and Prime Minister Narendra Modi are likely to watch the first day of the fourth Test of Border-Gavaskar trophy at the Narendra Modi Stadium at Motera on March 9.
 - ✓ During his India visit, the Australian prime minister is likely to announce significant investments in the rare earth sector in Australia.
 - ✓ KABIL (Khanij Bidesh India Limited) is set to make a significant investment in the rare earth sector in Australia
 - ✓ The Economic Cooperation Trade Agreement (ECTA), signed between India and Australia in December recently, has resulted in immediate reduction of duty to zero on 96% of Indian exports to Australia in value (that is 98% of the tariff lines) and zero duty on 85% of Australia's exports to India.
 - ✓ ECTA is the first free trade agreement (FTA) signed by India with any developed country in a decade
 - ✓ In February 2022, India and Australia signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) on New and Renewable Energy, which provides for cooperation towards bringing down the cost of renewable energy (RE) technologies, especially ultralow-cost solar and clean hydrogen.
 - ✓ The relationship between the two countries went to another level when the Strategic Partnership between them got elevated to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in June 2020.
 - ✓ Australia is the 17th largest trading partner of India and India is Australia's 9th largest trading partner.
- **India - announced a new additional supply of 20,000 metric tonnes (MT) of wheat to Afghanistan at the first meeting of the India-Central Asia working group on Afghanistan**
- ✓ The meeting of the Indian Central Asia Joint Working Group was held in New Delhi on March 7.
 - ✓ The meeting was attended by special envoys or senior officials from India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.
 - ✓ The meeting emphasized that the territory of Afghanistan should not be used for sheltering, training, planning or financing any terrorist acts

- ✓ It also reaffirmed that no terrorist organizations, including those designated by the UNSC resolution 1267, should be provided sanctuary or allowed to use the territory of Afghanistan
- ✓ The meeting coincided with another multilateral meeting on Afghanistan held in Tashkent on the same day, but between three Central Asian nations, China, Pakistan, Russia and Iran.
- ✓ Now, India announced supply of 20,000 MTs of wheat assistance to Afghanistan in partnership with the UN World Food Programme (UNWFP) through Chabahar Port in Iran
- ✓ Earlier, in February 2022, India sent 40,000 MT of wheat through the land route in the stipulated period permitted by Pakistan

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

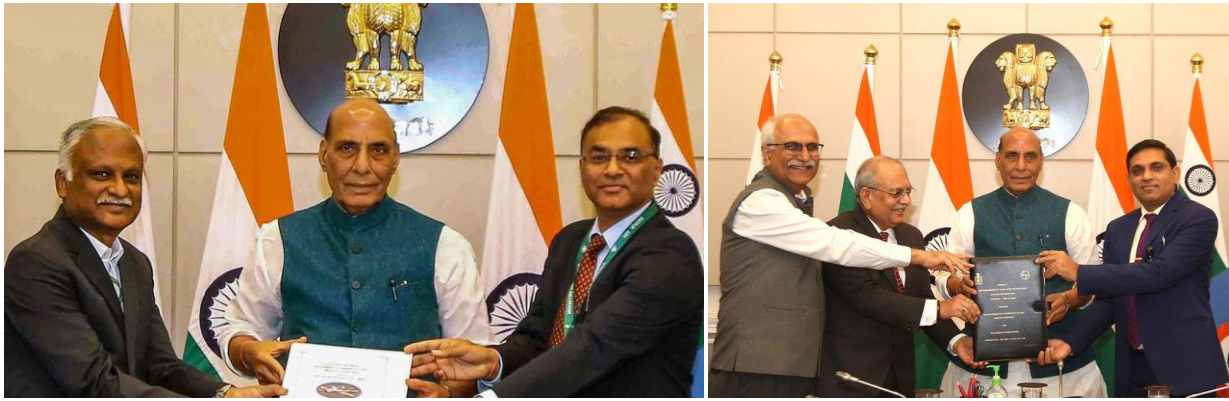
- **Isro - successfully completed the controlled reentry for the decommissioned satellite Megha-Tropiques-1 or MT-1 on March 7.**



- ✓ Isro progressively lowered the satellite's perigee (nearest point to Earth) through a series of 20 manoeuvres, spending about 120kg fuel since August 2022.
- ✓ The latest telemetry has confirmed that the satellite re-entered the Earth's atmosphere and would have disintegrated over the Pacific Ocean.
- ✓ The final impact region estimated is in Pacific Ocean within the expected boundaries.
- ✓ The sequence was carried out from the Mission Operations Complex in Isro Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network (Istrac) in Bengaluru.
- ✓ In recent years, Isro has taken up proactive measures to improve the compliance level with the internationally accepted guidelines on space debris mitigation.

DEFENCE

- **On March 7, the Ministry of Defence – has signed contracts worth almost Rs.10,000 crore for 70 basic trainer aircraft (BTA) for the Air Force and three cadet training ships for the Indian Navy**



- ✓ The approval for these purchases was cleared by the cabinet committee on security on March 1.
 - ✓ The Rs.6,828 crore deal for 70 Hindustan Turbo Trainer-40 (HTT-40) aircraft was signed with defence PSU Hindustan Aeronautics, in the presence of defence minister Rajnath Singh.
 - ✓ The trainer aircraft, which have an indigenous content of around 56% at present, will be supplied to the IAF over the next six years.
 - ✓ The Rs.3,108 crore contract for the three cadet training ships, in turn, was signed with private sector major Larsen & Toubro.
 - ✓ The ships will be designed and built at the L&T shipyard in Kattupalli (Tamil Nadu), with the first vessel slated for delivery in 2026.
 - ✓ The turbo-prop HTT-40s will address the existing shortage of BTA for rookie pilots in the IAF.
 - ✓ The three ships to be built by L&T will cater to the training of officer cadets, including women, at sea after their basic training to meet the future requirements of the Navy.
 - ✓ The ships, which will also provide training to cadets from friendly countries, can also be deployed for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.
- **The Indian Air Force - has assigned Group Captain Shaliza Dhami as a Commander of a Frontline Combat Unit in the western sector.**



- ✓ This is the first time in the history of the Indian Air Force that a woman has been given command of a frontline combat unit.
- ✓ Captain Dhama is currently assigned to the Operations division of a frontline Command Headquarters
- ✓ Dhama will now oversee missile readiness and command-control in the country's sensitive border sectors.
- ✓ Captain Dhama was commissioned in 2003 as a helicopter pilot and has over 2800 hours of flight experience, flying the Chetak and Cheetah helicopters
- ✓ As a helicopter pilot, she flew several search-and-rescue missions, and also undertook flood relief operations.
- ✓ She was also a Flight Commander of a Chetak helicopter unit at the Hindon air base in the Western sector.
- ✓ Dhama is the first female flying instructor as well as the first female to acquire a permanent commission in the flying branch of the Air Force.
- ✓ The Indian Air Force started inducting women fighter pilots in 2016 – the first batch had three women fighter pilots.
- ✓ Earlier this year, Captain Shiva Chouhan of the Fire and Fury Corps of the Indian Army became the first female officer to be operationally deployed in Siachen.
- ✓ There are 10,493 women officers serving in the armed forces, the majority in the medical services.
- ✓ The Indian Army, being the largest of the three services, has the largest number of women officers at 1,705, followed by 1,640 women officers in the Indian Air Force, and 559 in the Indian Navy, as per the data provided by the Government in Parliament last year.

INTERNATIONAL DAY

➤ International Women's Day – March 8



- ✓ The day commemorates the cultural, political, and socioeconomic achievements made by women in various fields

- ✓ This day is celebrated to embrace equity and equality among both genders.
- ✓ The first National Women's Day was observed in the United States on February 28, 1909, to honour the 1908 garment workers' strike in New York.
- ✓ In 1945, the United Nations Charter became the first international agreement to affirm the principle of equality between men and women.
- ✓ On March 8, 1975, the United Nations celebrated its first official International Women's Day during International Women's Year.
- ✓ In December 1977, the General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming a United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace
- ✓ Theme 2023 - "DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality"

