EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS–APRIL 18,2023

TAMIL NADU

- **On April 17, Chief minister M K Stalin - launched an initiative at the state secretariat to telecast in sign language the proceedings of the Tamil Nadu legislative assembly for the benefit of the hearing impaired.**

- ✓ The initiative has been launched in compliance with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act of 2016.
- ✓ The proceedings of the assembly sessions would be telecast on Youtube channel after it is recorded in sign language.
- ✓ The state government has launched the initiative to ensure equal opportunities for people with disabilities.
- ✓ Cabinet ministers P Geetha Jeevan, Ma Subramanian and other members of the Assembly were also present during the event.
- ✓ To assist the disabled persons, district collectors were issued directions to appoint sign language interpreters in all meetings organised by them as well as during other public events to assist people with hearing impairment.

- **On April 17, the department for the welfare of differently-abled people - announced a new 'Home Again' rehabilitation scheme in the state assembly.**
  - ✓ This was announced by minister for social welfare and women empowerment P Geetha Jeevan, while speaking during the debate on demand for grants
  - ✓ The scheme aims to integrate those people who recover from mental disabilities with the society
  - ✓ The new programme would seek to rehabilitate the mentally-challenged people who are cured after their stay in the rehabilitation homes
    - ✓ There were 56 homes for the rehabilitation of mentally challenged run by the department for the welfare of differently-abled people across Tamil Nadu
  - ✓ The new scheme is to be initially implemented in five districts, in two homes each, for the benefit of 40 inmates at a cost of Rs.50 lakh.
  - ✓ Among other announcements, the three-wheeler scooter scheme for the disabled people would be expanded to benefit people, who are disabled in one limb.
    - ✓ An allocation of Rs.4. 5 crore has been made for the benefit of 500 people, said the Minister.
  - ✓ In another scheme, the minister said when commercial complexes constructed in local bodies are allocated for rental purposes, 5% of it would be reserved for the disabled.
  - ✓ Educational assistance for the special education of students with disabilities has been doubled.
    - ✓ For the purpose, an allocation of Rs. 7 crore has been made for the benefit of 22,300 students.
  - ✓ The minister also announced that the Chief Minister's Girl Child Protection scheme would be revamped to benefit more girls, including the inmates of government homes.
  - ✓ Further, mobile phones would be purchased at a cost of Rs.17. 53 crore to replace old phones for monitoring the nutrition levels of children and pregnant women.
  - ✓ The 18,573 centres under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme would get growth monitoring devices at a cost of Rs.14.85 crore, the minister said.
  - ✓ It was noted that the government has allocated a sum of Rs 1,10,648.96 to the department as Budget estimate for the year 2023-2024, the highest since the 2020-21 Budget.

- **On April 17, the state government - tabled a bill to amend Indian Stamp Act, to revise the rate of stamp duty for certain instruments, including affidavits, power of attorney and attestation by a notary public.**
  - ✓ Commercial Taxes and Registration Minister P Moorthy moved the bill in the state assembly

- ✓ After the passage and the Presidential assent, the ‘rationalisation’ of payment would be effective in the range between Rs.20 and Rs.1,000 from the existing range between Rs.5 and Rs.100 on these instruments.
- ✓ The stamp duty for documents is chargeable at the rate indicated in Schedule I of the Indian Stamp Act, 1899.
- ✓ It is fixed ad valorem for some of the instruments and charged on a fixed basis for some of the instruments.
- ✓ The rate of stamp duty for most of the instruments has not been revised since 2001.
- ✓ The amendment Bill named "Indian Stamp (Tamil Nadu Amendment) Act 2023" enables fixing of 1% of the guideline value as stamp duty for a Power of Attorney executed outside the family, while it would continue to be Rs 1,000 within the family.
- ✓ Likewise, the amendment would also enable the government to collect 0.05% (maximum Rs 5 lakhs) as stamp duty for registration of Memorandum of Association of companies.
- ✓ Under the revised rate, the minimum denomination of non-judicial stamp paper in the State will be Rs 100.
- ✓ Owing to the amendment, payment of stamp duty below Rs 100 denomination would continue to be made available through e-stamping (RTGS payment).
- ✓ A unit of Stockholding Corporation of India is available in all sub registrar offices.
- ✓ The stamp duty has been revised now for instruments like adoption, articles of association of company, cancellation of deed, copy or extract certified to be a true copy by order of any public officer, counterpart or duplicate of any instrument, memorandum of association of a company, reconveyance of mortgaged property, security bond or mortgage deed, settlement, surrender of lease, transfer and deed of trust.

- ➢ **Taiwanese firm Pou Chen - will set up a factory in SIPCOT Industrial Park at Ulundurpet in Kallakurichi district to make non-leather footwear**

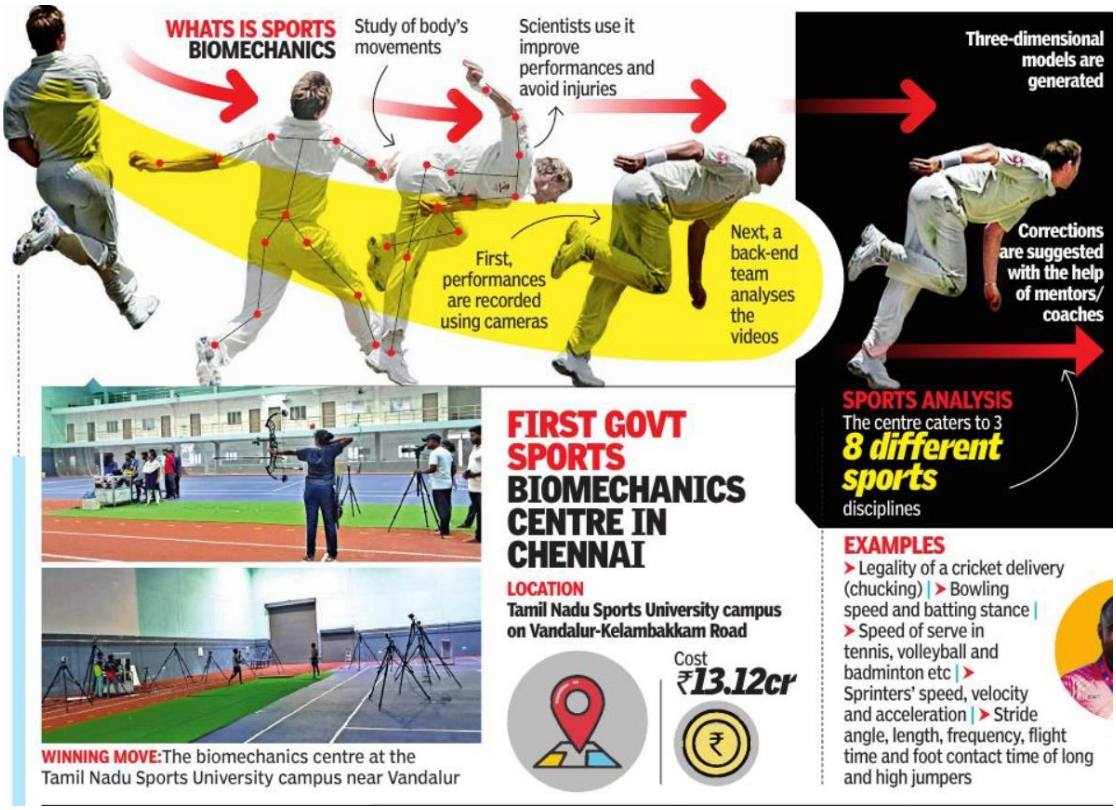
- ✓ Its Indian subsidiary, High Glory Footwear India Private Limited, signed the MoU with the Tamil Nadu government in the presence of chief minister M K Stalin on April 17

- ✓ Industries Minister Thangam Thennarasu and officials from the state government and the company were present.
- ✓ The factory will bring an investment of Rs. 2,302 crore over the next 12 years and will generate jobs for more than 20,000 people.
- ✓ Pou Chen, one of the world's largest branded athletic and casual footwear manufacturer, makes footwear for a dozen leading brands including Adidas, Nike and Reebok.
- ✓ The investment has been attracted in the wake of the government releasing a Footwear and Leather Products Policy 2022 in August last year.
- ✓ The agreement would further strengthen Tamil Nadu's lead position in production and export of footwear.
- ✓ The state has been home to several major non-leather footwear manufacturing clusters, including Ambur, Vaniyambadi, Ranipet, and Cheyyar.
- ✓ These SMEs employ a large number of people and contribute significantly to the state's economy
- ✓ Tamil Nadu accounts for 26% of footwear made in the country and 48% of exports.

- ➢ **Several rare copper plate manuscripts of an explication of the hymn 'Thevaram' - have been unearthed near the Sattanathar temple in Sirkazhi in Mayiladuthurai district**
- ✓ The temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva and is classified as 'Padal Pettra Sthalam'
- ✓ While a number of copper plates of Pandyas, Cholas, Pallavas and other kings who ruled Tamilagam were found before, they all deal with grants to individuals or temples.
- ✓ This is the first time that the manuscripts of the 'Thevaram' have been discovered in the form of copper plates.
- ✓ The temple is under the administration of Mayiladuthurai-based Dharmapuram Adheenam, a Saiva Mutt that has been in existence for centuries.

- ✓ Sattainathar Temple kumbhabhishekam is slated to be held on 24 May after a gap of 32 years.
- ✓ The rare findings have been unearthed when the workers were digging a place for constructing the yaga sala for the kumbhabhishekam near the west gopuram
- ✓ There were 22 panchaloka vigrahas including those of Ganapathi, Murugan, Somaskandar, Saiva saints such as Appar and Gnanasambandar.
- ✓ Apart from them, 55 peetas, a number of puja utensils, 493 copper plates were all found in the same location.
- ✓ Based on the initial assessment, these panchaloka vigrahas were found to be from the 12th-13th Century CE, which was towards the end of the later Chola era.
- ✓ Based on the style of Tamil letters written on the copper plates, they also seem to be from the same period.
- ✓ The copper plates contain the Thevaram hymns sung by Thirugnanasambandar, one of the four Saiva saint poets who belong to the 7th century AD.
- ✓ It must be noted that Seerkazhi is the birth place of Sambandar.
- ✓ The HR and CE department is engaged in digitising the rare palm leaf and copper plate manuscripts
- ✓ Further, a six-member expert team is working on identifying and preserving the palm leaf and copper plate manuscripts in the temples and mutts.

➢ **The state's first government-funded biomechanics centre, located on the Tamil Nadu Sports University campus near Vandalur – is now open to the general public**



- ✓ Built at a budget of Rs. 13 crore, the centre aims to help improve performance of athletes and help them avoid injuries.
- ✓ The centre caters not only athletes from 38 different sports including cricket, tennis and volleyball but also amateurs seeking suggestions on running, jogging or playing and students looking for a career in sports.

LAB EQUIPMENT

21 high-end cameras worth **₹12 lakh** each

- Ten force plates | One isokinetic machine | Electromyography
- Motion analysis software
- Speed guns and photocells

TARGET POPULATION AND COST

	Cost (₹)	Parameters analysed	Suggestions/solutions provided
Athletes/ sportspersons	₹5,000 per evaluation and ₹20,000 for annual package	Completed 3D motion, muscle strength, force and fitness profile, etc	Improve technique and rehabilitation
Commoners/ amateurs	₹2,000 per evaluation	Gait analysis, anthropometry to analyse complete body structure etc	Correct the way they walk, jog or play a sport
Government school students	Free	Complete body profiling and advice on sports career	Advise on sports career
Other students	₹5,000		

- ✓ The centre is using an isokinetic machine, a rehabilitative exercise device, to access parameters such as knee strength and guide sportspersons on how to improve their muscle strength and joint movements so that they perform better.
- ✓ The biomechanic centre offers tests and training free of cost for government school students and charges public at about 20% of the fees charged by private biomechanics centres
- ✓ As a first step, the performance of athletes is recorded using high-end cameras and force plates imported from Switzerland.
    - ✓ Next, a back-end team analyses it with the help of specialised, high-end software.
    - ✓ Three-dimensional models are generated, and corrections are suggested on the spot to the coaches who work with athletes to correct their technique.
- ✓ The Sports Authority of India (SAI) has also planned to recreate the centre's model at their 13 National Centre for Excellence.

- ➢ **Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras - have developed a portable device called 'Artsens' to assess condition of blood vessels for early screening for cardiovascular diseases.**
- ✓ The device comprises pressure cuffs to be affixed to the upper arm and thighs and a probe to be applied to the surface of the neck to detect the carotid artery.
- ✓ It measures carotid arterial stiffness, aortic pulse wave velocity and central blood pressure.
- ✓ Artsens is already being used by researchers in the Netherlands, and multiple hospitals in India.

NATIONAL

- ➢ **On April 18, the Army - launched its new computer-based online common entrance exam (CEE) for recruitment of Agniveers, junior commissioned**

officers and other categories at 375 centres in 176 locations around the country.

- ✓ The online CEE, with the assistance of Education Consultancy Services Ltd under the Union education ministry, will continue till April 26.
- ✓ Under the new process, the shortlisted candidates after the CEE will be called for physical fitness tests at recruitment rallies in phases from June 2023 onwards.
- ✓ In the third stage, the selected candidates will undergo medical tests before the final merit list is declared.

- ➢ **On April 13, National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) and Bengaluru-based NGO Ashraya Hastha Trust (AHT) – signed an MoU to test the feasibility of a comprehensive rural mental health programme named "NAMAN"**

- ✓ 'NAMAN' stands for 'NIMHANS-AHT Comprehensive Mental-Health Action Program for Rural Communities'
- ✓ The two taluks that are selected for the pilot implementation of NAMAN are Munsiyari in Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand and Belur Taluk in Hassan district of Karnataka.
- ✓ The NAMAN programme aims to deliver promotive, preventive, therapeutic and rehabilitative care for the entire population of the target taluks.
- ✓ NAMAN will be implemented over three years in four different phases – resource building, situational analysis, intervention and evaluation
- ✓ NIMHANS will develop and implement the overall road map of the programme.
- ✓ The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) - Rishikesh will collaborate with NIMHANS to deliver the programme in Uttarakhand.
- ✓ Other implementation partners include the Government of Karnataka and the Government of Uttarakhand.

INTERNATIONAL

- ➢ **On April 17, Slovakia - became the third European Union country to ban food imports from Ukraine**

- ✓ Slovakia banned the distribution of a batch of Ukrainian grain last week after it detected higher-than-allowed levels of pesticides in the shipment
- ✓ The bans came in response to anger from farmers who say the grain imports are causing economic hardships.
- ✓ Besides, the government said it would continue to allow transit of Ukrainian grains and other products under an EU initiative to help Ukraine export its production despite the Russian invasion
- ✓ Earlier, on April 15, Poland and Hungary announced bans on Ukrainian food imports, which will remain in-force till June 30.

BUSINESS/ECONOMY

- ➢ **Apple CEO Tim Cook – to inaugurate the country's first ever Apple retail store in Mumbai on April 18, followed by a second outlet in Delhi on April 20.**

- ✓ The company at present sells its products in India through exclusive Apple Premium Reseller (APR) stores, large format retail chains like Reliance Digital, Croma etc, mutli-brand retail stores and through e-commerce platforms.
- ✓ The launch of the new official company-owned stores was announced earlier this month by Apple.
- ✓ In Mumbai, the 22,000-sq.ft. flagship store is coming at Reliance Industries' Jio World Drive mall, while the Delhi store in Select Citywalk Mall in Saket will be spread over 10,000 sq.ft.
- ✓ Apple Chief Executive Tim Cook will meet India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, IT & electronics minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and minister of state Rajeev Chandrasekhar during his visit
- ✓ With the PM, the Apple CEO is expected to talk about the company's expansion plans in India, both in terms of domestic sales as well as in exports.

- ✓ A day prior to the visit, Cook had a special message for India where he praised the country's "incredible energy" and "beautiful culture" as Apple completes 25 years of operations in India.
- ✓ The new store format that Apple introduced in 2017 will be implemented in the two retail stores in India as well.
    - ✓ Both stores will have spaces for classes and meetings, new screens and hardware, and "Genius groves," a tree-lined area where the "Genius Bar" once was.
    - ✓ In addition, both stores will also hold informative classes by creative professionals like photographers.
- ✓ Apple has over 500 retail stores in major parts of the world, including Dubai, New York, Istanbul and London.
- ✓ According to CyberMedia Research (CMR), Apple captured 4% market share in India with 17% year-on-year increase in its shipments in 2022.
- ✓ Apple has over 100 APR stores in India that sell Apple products only.
- ✓ According to the India Cellular and Electronics Association, around $9 billion worth of smartphones were exported from India between April 2022 and February this year and iPhones accounted for more than 50% of that.
- ✓ In India, iPhones are assembled by three of Apple's contract manufacturers - Foxconn (2317.TW), Wistron Corp (3231.TW) and Pegatron Corp (4938.TW).
- ✓ On the international front, Apple introduced a long-promised high-yield savings account with Goldman Sachs Group, venturing into financial services in US.
- ✓ The new offering will let Apple Card users earn a 4.15% annual yield, more than 10 times the national average.

AWARDS

- **Union Home Minister Amit Shah - conferred the Maharashtra Bhushan Award 2022 on Social worker and reformer 'Nirupankar' Dattatreya Narayan Dharmadhikari, known as Appasaheb Dharmadhikari, at a function in Kharghar in Navi Mumbai on April 16**

- ✓ Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Cabinet ministers were present at the function attended by roughly two million people.
- ✓ Shah felicitated the 76-year-old with a shawl, a citation, a memento and a cheque of Rs 25 lakh, which the social worker donated to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund
- ✓ Appasaheb Dharmadhikari is a social worker from Maharashtra who heads Dr Nanasaheb Dharmadhikari Pratishthan.
- ✓ The Pratishthan was formed by his father late Narayan Vishnu Dharmadhikari known as Nanasaheb Dharmadhikari, who was himself conferred the Maharashtra Bhushan 2008 award.
- ✓ Nanasaheb had launched the popular meetings 'Shri Baithaks' in October 1943 which his son had been carrying forward for the past few decades.
- ✓ Following the footsteps of his father, Appasaheb has been instrumental in conducting various tree plantations, blood donation camps, free medical camps, job fairs, cleanliness drives, superstition eradication and de-addiction centres, etc not just in Maharashtra and India but also abroad.
- ✓ The Pratishthan entered the Guinness World Record in December 2013 by conducting the world's biggest medical camp in which 1,571 doctors were deployed and over 1,52,000 people participated.
- ✓ Appasaheb Dharmadhikari's efforts in the area of cleanliness have also been recognized, and he was appointed as 'Swachata Doot' (cleanliness ambassador) by the then Maharashtra governor.
- ✓ In 2014, he was conferred with a doctorate by Dr D Y Patil University, Nerul and in 2017, he was awarded Padma Shri, India's fourth highest civilian honour.
- ✓ The Maharashtra Bhushan award was conferred for the first time in the year 1996

SPORTS

- ➢ **India - will host the Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament for the first time from August 3-12 at the Mayor Radhakrishan Stadium in Chennai**

- ✓ This was announced by Tamil Nadu sports minister Udhayanidhi Stalin on April 17.
- ✓ The seventh edition of the prestigious sporting event, which was inaugurated in 2011, will be a precursor to the Asian Games hockey competition in Hangzhou, China to be held in September.
- ✓ Asian hockey giant and three-time champions Pakistan as well as China are yet to confirm their participation in the tournament.
- ✓ Other teams in the continental tournament, being held under the aegis of Asian Hockey Federation, will be defending champion South Korea, Malaysia and Japan.
- ✓ India have also won the tournament three times (2011, 2016 and joint winner with Pakistan in 2018) while South Korea clinched the last edition title in 2021 in Dhaka.
- ✓ Chennai last hosted an international hockey event in 2007 when the Asia Cup was held at Mayor Radhakrishnan stadium where India clinched the title after beating Korea 7-2 in the final.

- ➢ **Chennai-based Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh - won the Menorca Chess Open for the second year in a row.**

- ✓ The 16-year-old finished with 7 points in 9 rounds before winning a tiebreak.
- ✓ Gukesh was one of the eight leaders after drawing his final round game against Vladimir Fedoseev.
- ✓ Gukesh had equal tiebreak score against fellow Indian V Pranav and bagged the tournament after winning a blitz tiebreak

INTERNATIONAL DAY

- ➢ **World Heritage Day – April 18**
- ✓ World Heritage Day, also known as the International Day for Monuments and Sites, is celebrated annually to raise awareness about the importance of cultural heritage and the diversity of our shared human history.
- ✓ Theme 2023 - "Heritage Changes"

- ✓ The day was established by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in November 1982 during a seminar in Tunisia
- ✓ It was later approved by the United Nations General Assembly in 1983 at the 22nd session of the UNESCO Conference.
- ✓ April 18 was chosen to be the day that UNESCO adopted the Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1982.
- ✓ The ICOMOS organization was established on the principles put down in the Venice Charter, also known as the 1964 International Charter on the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites.