

## **EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – JUNE 24, 2023**

### **TAMIL NADU**

- **Two writers from southern Tamil Nadu, Udayasankar and Ram Thangam - have bagged the Sahitya Akademi's Bal Puraskar and Yuva Puraskar awards for the year 2023.**
- ✓ Udayasankar from Tuticorin district has won the Bal Puraskar for his novel 'Aadhanin Bommai'
- ✓ Ram Thangam from Nagercoil in neighbouring Kanyakumari district has been selected for the Yuva Puraskar for his short story 'Thirukarthiyal'.
- ✓ Udayasankar's work includes eight short story collections and seven essay collections.
  - ✓ He has also translated about seven books from Malayalam and three books from English into Tamil.
  - ✓ 'Aadhanin Bommai' is based on Keeladi, the ancient civilization that has been unearthed on the banks of river Vaigai.
  - ✓ It is a fiction based on the historical happenings 2600 years ago, about the living and lifestyle of people of those times.
- ✓ Yuva Puraskar awardee, Ram Thangam, from Nagercoil in Kanyakumari district, published his first book 'Gandhiraman' in the year 2015.
  - ✓ He has also written other books like 'Oor suttri paravai' and 'Meenava Veeranukku koi'.
- ✓ The Sahitya Akademi has announced a list of 22 recipients of its Bal Sahitya Puraskar and 20 winners of its Yuva Puraskar for this year on June 23.
- ✓ Among the selected awardees of the Bal Sahitya Puraskar is renowned children's author Sudha Murty, who will be awarded for her collection of stories titled 'Grandparents' Bag of Stories'
- ✓ In the Hindi language category of the same award, Suryanath Singh has been selected for his collection of short stories, 'Kotuk App'.
- ✓ The Sahitya Akademi did not announce any Yuva Puraskar winner for Odia and Bal Sahitya Puraskar for Kashmiri.

- ✓ The winners of both awards will receive an engraved copper plaque and a cheque of Rs 50,000 each at a ceremony to be held later
- **The agriculture and farmers' welfare department - has given administrative sanction for the Rs.75. 95 crore kuruvai special package for delta districts**
- ✓ The package was announced by chief minister M K Stalin on June 12 after releasing water from the Mettur reservoir.
- ✓ Under the package, farmers will get 45kg urea, 50kg DAP and 25kg potash per acre in 100% subsidy for 2. 5 lakh acres while seeds will be given at 50% subsidy for 1. 23 lakh acres.
- ✓ The government will also distribute millet, pulses and oil seeds for 15,818 acres at 50% subsidy.
- ✓ The package also included seeds for green manure at 50% subsidy.
- ✓ Under the mechanization scheme of agriculture, farmers can utilize machineries like power weeder and power tiller at 50% subsidy.
- ✓ In the case of fertilizer inputs, 20% will be given to SC and ST farmers.

## **INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi - addressed a joint sitting of the US Congress in Washington on June 22, 2023.**



- ✓ This historic moment came at the invitation of H.E. Kevin McCarthy, Speaker of the US House of Representatives, H.E. Charles Schumer, Senate Majority Leader, H.E. Mitch McConnell, Senate Republican Leader and H.E. Mr. Hakeem Jeffries, House Democratic Leader.
- ✓ Kamala Harris, Vice President of USA was also present on the occasion.
- ✓ In his address, PM Modi conveyed his appreciation for the long-standing and strong bipartisan support in the US Congress for the deepening of India-US relations.

- ✓ He also outlined the enormous progress made by India and the opportunities that it presents for the world.
  - ✓ The PM also touched on issues of global concern, such as the war in Ukraine and the situation in the Indo-Pacific.
  - ✓ He highlighted that India is the only G20 country to meet its Paris commitment.
  - ✓ The PM also said that there have been many advances in AI (Artificial Intelligence) in the past few years and mentioned that there has been even more momentous development in another AI- America and India.
  - ✓ The word “democracy” featured as many as 14 times in PM Modi’s address to the joint session of the US Congress, which was ranked next only to ‘India’ (mentioned 37 times), ‘world’ (24) and ‘US/America’ (18).
  - ✓ 15 standing ovations, 79 applauses marked PM Modi’s address to the joint session of the US Congress
  - ✓ This was PM’s second address to the Joint Sitting of the US Congress.
    - ✓ He previously addressed the US Congress during his official visit to USA in September 2016.
    - ✓ Notably, PM Modi became the first Indian prime minister to be accorded this honour twice.
    - ✓ He is the second world leader after Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to be accorded the privilege of addressing a joint House more than once.
  - ✓ PM Modi and President Biden hailed the inauguration of the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET) in January 2023 as a major milestone in India-U.S relations.
  - ✓ Earlier in the day, US President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden hosted PM Modi for a state dinner, an honor typically reserved for the closest allies of the US.
  - ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi is on a three-day state visit to the United States, where he met with Nobel laureates, industry leaders, authors, academicians, mathematicians and medical professionals.
  - ✓ Prime Minister Modi’s first visit to the US took place in 2014, during which he had a working visit and delivered his inaugural speech at the 69th session of the United Nations General Assembly.
  - ✓ In 2016, he returned to attend the Nuclear Security Summit and held a meeting with then-President Barack Obama at the White House
- **India – has become the newest partner in the US-led Mineral Security Partnership (MSP)**
- ✓ This was announced in a joint statement issued after PM Narendra Modi’s meeting with President Joe Biden in Washington on June 23
  - ✓ MSP was created in 2021 to reduce dependency on China and to weaken China’s grip on supplies of critical minerals worldwide

- ✓ It seeks to ensure that critical minerals are produced, processed and recycled in a way that helps countries secure a stable supply of critical minerals for their economies.



- ✓ The focus of the initiative is primarily on the supply chains of critical minerals such as cobalt, nickel, lithium and the 17 "rare earth" minerals.
  - ✓ Rare earth (RE) comprises 17 elements which are classified as light RE elements (LREE) and heavy RE elements (HREE).
  - ✓ Currently, there is an overwhelming dependence on countries such as China for HREE, which is one of the leading producers of RE with an estimated 70% of the global production.
  - ✓ These minerals are used to manufacture advanced technologies, such as mobile phones, tablets, electric vehicles, solar panels, wind turbines, fibre optic cables, and defence and medical applications.
- ✓ Besides the US, the MSP includes Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, UK, the European Commission, Italy, and now India.
- ✓ The two countries also decided to develop a "first-of-its kind, multibillion-dollar investment platform for renewable energy projects".
- ✓ Further, both the countries discussed joint development of next-generation small modular reactor (SMR) technology as a means to speed up energy transition and non-fossil power generation capacity.
- ✓ The statement mentioned collaboration on green hydrogen, offshore and onshore wind energy and innovative payment security mechanism for electric buses, removing an impediment in their deployment in Delhi and other cities.
- ✓ **Indian companies will invest about \$2 billion in the US to boost renewable energy and clean mobility supply chains**
  - ✓ The investment will be supported by incentives under the Biden administration's Inflation Reduction Act that reduces costs to boost renewable energy
  - ✓ The biggest investment plan of \$1.5 billion in solar module manufacturing came from VSK Energy, a joint venture of Kolkata-based solar panel maker

Vikram Solar and New York-based sustainability-focused private equity firms Phalanx Impact Partners and Das & Co.

- ✓ Mumbai-based Epsilon Carbon Ltd, which produces coal tar derivatives and carbon black used for making tyres etc., announced a \$650 million greenfield factory for making electric vehicle battery components.
- ✓ **Further, India and the US have decided to collaborate on the development of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) and key vaccine input materials**
- ✓ Currently, India is dependent on China and others for many pharmaceutical raw materials that are crucial for manufacturing drugs and vaccines
- ✓ The leaders committed to holding a US-India Cancer Dialogue, hosted by President Biden's Cancer Moonshot, to bring experts together from both countries to identify concrete areas of collaboration to accelerate the rate of progress against cancer.
- ✓ The two leaders are also committed to develop joint and international collaboration on trustworthy and responsible AI, including generative AI.
- ✓ They sought broadening of India-US partnership in critical areas such as developing trusted and secure 5G and 6G telecom networks, while deepening ties in high performance computing, developing joint Open RAN (Radio Access Network) solutions and space.

## CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **On June 22, US President Joe Biden and PM Narendra Modi – issued a joint statement after the India-US summit**



- ✓ The statement outlined unprecedented engagement in artificial intelligence, semiconductors, quantum science and space exploration among other areas.
- ✓ The India-US summit saw PM Modi and President Biden discussing a wide range of issues, with China in focus
  - ✓ The message to both China and Russia was that the “rules-based international order” must be respected.

- ✓ The two sides also launched two joint task forces on advanced telecommunications, including development in 5G/6G technologies, standards cooperation, facilitating access to chipsets for system development, and establishing joint research and development projects.
- ✓ They also welcomed the launch of a \$2million grant program under the US-India Science and Technology Endowment fund for the joint development and commercialisation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and quantum technologies.
- ✓ As part of the enhanced cooperation, the two sides will launch 35 innovative joint research collaborations in emerging technologies funded by the US National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Indian Department of Science and Technology (DST).
  - ✓ Under this, both sides will fund joint research projects in computer and information science and engineering, cyber physical systems, and secure and trustworthy cyberspace.
- ✓ India and the US have agreed to end half a dozen trade disputes — three each from either side – at the WTO, which cover actions on steel and aluminium products and some related to renewable energy and withdrawing retaliatory tariffs on goods ranging from chickpea and lentils to almonds and apples

