

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-APRIL 17,2022

TAMIL NADU

- On April 16, Chief minister M K Stalin – announced that the state government has made a historic achievement by giving one lakh free agricultural power connections within a year of assuming office.



- ✓ To facilitate this, the government had allocated ₹803 crore to Tangedco to support farmers, who had been awaiting connections for more than a decade
 - ✓ The free power has helped the farmers to increase the area under cultivation by 2.13 lakh acres.
 - ✓ The CM gave the order to the last identified beneficiary out of the one lakh farmers to P Kannapillai of Ulundurpet at an event in TNEB headquarters
 - ✓ The CM addressed the beneficiaries across the state via videoconferencing from Chennai.
 - ✓ Electricity minister V Senthil Balaji said the government would incur an additional expenditure of ₹181 crore per annum as power subsidy to the one lakh farmers
- **The 273.8-hectare Nanmangalam reserve forest along the Velacherry-Tambaram road - is set to be declared a sanctuary soon.**
 - ✓ In this regard, an advisory committee was constituted by the government



- ✓ Jayashree Vencatesan of Care Earth Trust, K Sankar, former director of Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, C Arivazhagan of Indo-American Wildlife Society, and former chief wildlife warden R Sundarraju will be the members of the committee
- ✓ The committee will also draft a proposal to declare Pulikundram reserve forest in Tiruvallur as a conservation reserve.
- ✓ Nanmangalam forest is a breeding ground for the endangered Eurasian Eagle Owl (formerly known as the great horned Indian owl).
- ✓ It is also home to jackals, mongooses, black-naped hares, monitor lizards and porcupines.
- ✓ The forest has more than 100 types of birds including raptors such as white-eyed buzzards, oriental honey buzzards, barn owls, miniveta, orange-footed pigeons, Indian pittas, green-billed malkohas, chestnut-winged cuckoos and orange-headed thrushes.
- ✓ The lake on the periphery of the forest attracts migratory birds from October to March.

STATES

- **The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Punjab - has announced 300 units of free electricity to the domestic consumers from July 1**



- ✓ This was announced by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann in Jalandhar on April 16

- ✓ The announcement was related to a 30-day report card of the AAP government in Punjab.
 - ✓ Providing free electricity to every household for up to 300 units was one of the major promises made by AAP in Punjab in the recently concluded assembly elections
 - ✓ According to the CM Mann, Punjab will be the second state after Delhi to provide free power to the people.
 - ✓ The freebie comes with a rider that if a household exceeds more than 600 units in two months, it will have to pay the full bill, as Punjab has a two-month billing cycle
 - ✓ The move will put an estimated additional burden of ₹5,000 crore on the state exchequer
 - ✓ The members of scheduled castes, backward classes below the poverty line, and freedom fighters currently getting 200 free units each month, will get 300 units and charged just for the usage over and above the free 600 units in two months
 - ✓ Further, Mann said rates of industrial and commercial units will not be hiked and free electricity for the agriculture sector will continue.
 - ✓ He also announced a waiver of pending bills up to 2KW load till December 31, 2021.
 - ✓ There are 73.80 lakh domestic power consumers in the state and 85% of them consume up to 300 units per month
 - ✓ On March 19, in its first decision since being sworn in, the Punjab cabinet said it would provide a total of 25,000 government jobs, including 10,000 in the Police Department.
 - ✓ The CM has also announced an anti-corruption helpline, which was his personal WhatsApp number.
 - ✓ Mann rolled out a doorstep ration delivery scheme in the state last month which was also AAP's key campaign agenda in the polls
 - ✓ The AAP scored a massive win in the February assembly elections, winning 92 of the state's 117 seats.
- **Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha - launched a dedicated 'Vision India' portal to connect job aspirants with the industry.**



- ✓ Launched under Mission Youth, the initiative aims to create more than 10,000 job opportunities for aspirants in 2022.
- ✓ The newly launched 'AVSAR-'Connect to Opportunities Initiative' aims to provide real-time information to the youths about pre-placement activities & job opportunities
- ✓ All ITIs & other technical institutions in the UT were included in the program to guide youths
- ✓ The easily accessible online platform would act as an interface between a trained & skilled workforce and Industry requirements in the UT
- ✓ Further, Mission Youth under its AVSAR (Connect to Opportunities Initiative) has signed an MOU with Vision India for providing job opportunities to the youth of J&K.
- ✓ The program aims to connect various corporate, national, and multi-national companies, with the youth of J&K having skill and employability.

NATIONAL

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi - unveiled the 108-ft-tall statue of Lord Hanuman in Morbi, Gujarat via video conferencing on April 16 on the occasion of Hanuman Jayanti**



- ✓ This statue is the second of the four statues being set up in 4 parts of the country, as part of the Hanumanji Char Dham project.
 - ✓ The statue has been set up in the west at the Ashram of Bapu Keshvanand ji in Morbi
 - ✓ The first statue of the series was set up in the north in Himachal Pradesh's Shimla in 2010
 - ✓ The remaining statues will be coming up in the south at Rameswaram and in the east at West Bengal
- **The 40th edition of the Centre's 'Hunar Haat' festival – to be inaugurated by Union Minister Anurag Thakur in Mumbai on April 17**



- ✓ The festival, which will conclude on April 27, is aimed at promoting ancestral crafts from remote areas of India.
 - ✓ It provides a platform to preserve, protect and promote local artisans and craftsmen
 - ✓ The fair has 400 stalls with the participation of around 1,000 of artisans and craftsmen from more than 31 States/UTs across the country
 - ✓ "Hunar Haat" has provided employment opportunities to more than 9 lakh artisans and craftsmen in the span of just six years, with 50% of them being women artisans
 - ✓ On an average, 8 to 10 lakh people have visited every "Hunar Haat".
- **India - is setting up a first-of-its-kind standalone renewable battery power bank at an investment of ₹2,000 crore**
- ✓ This will ensure the immediate availability of green energy for discoms and grid operators during peak demand
 - ✓ The project will have storage capacity to supply 500MW for two hours, or 1,000MWh (mega watt hour)
 - ✓ In this regard, tenders were floated by SECI (formerly Solar Energy Corporation of India Ltd), the government entity implementing India's solar and wind energy plans, earlier this week
 - ✓ The project is to be located in the vicinity of the Fatehgarh-III substation of the interstate transmission system in Rajasthan.
 - ✓ Discoms can hire storage capacity, which will be charged using renewable energy, and draw power to manage peak demand.
 - ✓ The project will be set up on a build-own-operate basis, with the developer being responsible for securing connectivity and necessary permissions.
 - ✓ Land will be provided by the central transmission utility on a right-to-use basis.
 - ✓ The developer has to make storage capacity available for two operational cycles per day, or two complete charge-discharge cycles a day.
 - ✓ SECI will offtake 60% capacity for third-party leasing, while 30% will be earmarked by northern and national grid operators for their ancillary services.

- **India - was elected to four key United Nations Economic and Social Council Bodies on April 13**
 - ✓ The four bodies include the Commission for Social Development, Committee on NGOs, Commission on Science & Technology for Development, and Committee for Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights
 - ✓ Out of these, India was re-elected to the Committee for Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights with Ambassador Preeti Saran representing the country.
 - ✓ In December 2018, senior Indian diplomat Saran had been elected unopposed to the Asia Pacific seat on the UN's Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR).
 - ✓ In April 2021, India was elected to only three ECOSOC bodies -- Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the Executive Board of UN Women, and the Executive Board of the World Food Programme.
 - ✓ The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is one of the six principal organs of the UN System established by the UN Charter in 1945.
 - ✓ It consists of 54 members of the United Nations elected by the General Assembly.
 - ✓ The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) coordinates the work of the 14 UN specialized agencies, 10 functional commissions and five regional commissions, receives reports from nine UN funds and programs, and issues policy recommendations to the UN system and to the Member States.
- **The Union Cabinet - approved the continuation of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) till 2025-26 with an outlay of ₹5,911 crore.**
 - ✓ The scheme is aimed at empowering elected representatives of Panchayati raj institutions (PRIs) for leadership roles
 - ✓ It also seeks to help 2.78 lakh rural local bodies achieve sustainable development goals.
 - ✓ The scheme has been extended for a period of four years from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2026
 - ✓ Of the total financial outlay of the scheme, the central share is ₹3,700 crore and that of the state share is ₹2,211 crore.
 - ✓ The RGSA, a centrally sponsored scheme, was first approved by the Union Cabinet in 2018 for implementation from 2018-19 to 2021-22.
 - ✓ The main central components of the scheme included incentivisation of panchayats and mission mode project on e-Panchayat alongwith other activities at central level
- **The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs – has approved a proposal to distribute fortified rice through several government schemes in three phases by March 2024**
 - ✓ In this regard, the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and state agencies have already procured 88.65 LMT of fortified rice for supply and distribution

- ✓ The entire cost of rice fortification (around ₹ 2,700 crore per annum) would be borne by the Centre as part of food subsidy till its full implementation up to June 2024.
 - ✓ Fortified rice will be provided through Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), PM POSHAN and Other Welfare Schemes (OWS) of the government
 - ✓ Phase-I of the scheme focusing on covering ICDS and PM POSHAN across the entire country by March, 2022 is under implementation.
 - ✓ Phase-II will include the plans under Phase I plus TPDS and OWS in all aspirational and high burden districts on stunting (total 291 districts) by March 2023.
 - ✓ Under Phase III of the system, the remaining districts of the country will be covered by March 2024.
 - ✓ On August 15 last year, PM Narendra Modi had announced that the government will fortify the rice distributed to the poor via different schemes to provide nutrition to every poor person of the country to overcome malnutrition and lack of essential nutrients in women, children, lactating mothers etc.
 - ✓ Earlier, the Centrally Sponsored Pilot Scheme on "Fortification of Rice and its Distribution under Public Distribution System" was implemented for a period of 3 years beginning from 2019-20.
 - ✓ As many as 11 states had successfully distributed the fortified rice in their identified districts (one district per state) under the pilot scheme.
 - ✓ These states include Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jharkhand.
- **The Airport Authority of India (AAI) – has launched the 'Airport as Venue for Skilled Artisans of the Region' (AVSAR) scheme to encourage the talent of women, artisans and craftsmen**



- ✓ Under the scheme, the AAI will allocate space to Self Help Groups (SHGs) at its airports for selling/showcasing the self-made products of their region to promote self-reliance and self-dependence
 - ✓ Under this scheme, an area of 100-200 square feet has been earmarked at each AAI operated airport to the self- help groups, turn on turn basis, for a duration of 15 days
 - ✓ Under the initiative, outlets have already been commissioned at Chennai, Agartala, Dehradun, Kushinagar, Udaipur & Amritsar Airport
 - ✓ At these airports, SHGs operated by local women are showcasing and marketing their homemade local products like puffed rice, packaged papad, pickles, bamboo based ladies bag/bottle/lamp sets, local artefacts, traditional craft, natural dyes, embroidery and indigenous weaves with contemporary design to the air travellers
 - ✓ The initiative is being expanded to Ranchi, Kolkata, Varanasi, Indore, Bhopal, Vadodara, Ranchi, Belagavi, Madurai, Coimbatore, Calicut, Surat, Bhubaneswar, Raipur, Silchar, Dibrugarh and Jorhat airports.
 - ✓ The initiative to strengthen SHGs will provide huge visibility to these small groups and prepare them to promote/market their products to the wider spectrum, reaching out to the larger population
- **The Union Culture Ministry – has launched a unique portal — Temple 360 — through which devotees can perform online darshan of prominent pilgrimage sites or temples anytime and from anywhere.**



- ✓ At present, live streaming of rituals from four famous temples — Somnath (Gujarat), Kashi Vishwanath (UP), Trimbakeshwar and Ghrishneshwar (both in Maharashtra) can be viewed on the portal.
- ✓ Live camera feeds across temples of India from 12 Jyotirlinga and four Dhams — Dwarka (Gujarat), Badrinath (Uttarakhand), Puri (Odisha) and Rameshwaram (Tamil Nadu) will be made available soon on the website.
- ✓ The ministry will also add more features to the portal including 'e-services' through which one will be able to pay for services.

- ✓ The devotees apart from doing online darshan, will also be able to do e-Aarti and get e-Prashad.
 - ✓ Moreover, the facilities of e-Shringar and e-Donation will also be available for the devotees to have a personal experience of visiting the respective temple.
 - ✓ Temple 360 is an offering of the ministry under the aegis of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- **The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi - has approved the continuation of Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), till March 2023.**
- ✓ The intended targets that will be achieved by AIM include establishing 10,000 Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs) as well as 101 Atal Incubation Centers (AICs), and supporting 200 startups via the Atal New India Challenges
 - ✓ Under the mission, total budgeted expenditure of over ₹2,000 crore shall be incurred in the process of the establishment and supporting the beneficiaries
 - ✓ The mission has been set up under the NITI Aayog, in accordance with the finance minister's declaration in the 2015 Budget speech.
 - ✓ The objectives of the AIM are to create and promote an ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship across the country via interventions at school, university, research institutions, MSME, and industry levels.
- **The Union government - has approved the financial support for 61 companies under the ₹10,683-crore production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for the textiles and garment sector**
- ✓ The proposed total investment expected from the selected applicants is Rs 19,077 crore and a projected turnover is ₹184,917 crore over a period of 5 years, creating 240,134 jobs in this sector
 - ✓ The PLI scheme is for textiles products, namely MMF apparel, MMF fabrics and products of technical textiles
 - ✓ The scheme has two parts — Part 1 and Part 2
 - ✓ Under part 1, the minimum investment is ₹300 crore and minimum turnover required to be achieved for incentive is ₹600 crore.
 - ✓ Under part 2, the minimum investment will be of ₹100 crore and minimum turnover required to be achieved for incentive is ₹200 crore.
 - ✓ To further boost the growth of the sector, the Centre also removed the import duty of cotton.

COMMITTEES

- **The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting - constituted an Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comics (AVGC) Promotion Task Force to promote the AVGC sector in the country**
- ✓ The AVGC promotion task force shall be headed by secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

- ✓ The other members of the taskforce includes secretaries of Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade
- ✓ The AVGC promotion task force will submit its first action plan within 90 days.
- ✓ Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced to set up the task force in February during the budget speech, to suggest ways to markets and global demand.
- ✓ The Task Force also includes State Governments of Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Telangana
- ✓ It also includes heads of education bodies such as the All India Council of Technical Education, National Council of Educational Research and Training and representatives of industry bodies-MESC, FICCI and CII
- ✓ It will also have industry partners – Biren Ghosh (Country Head at Technicolor India); Ashish Kulkarni (Founder of Punaryug Artvision); Keitan Yadav (COO and VFX Producer at Redchillies VFX); Chaitanya Chinchlikar (CTO at Whistling Woods International); Kishore Kichili (Senior VP and country head at Zynga India) and Neeraj Roy (CEO and MD at Hungama Digital Media Entertainment).
- ✓ The terms of reference of the Task Force include
 - ✓ the framing of a national AVGC policy,
 - ✓ boosting employment opportunities,
 - ✓ recommending a national curriculum framework for Graduation, Post-Graduation and Doctoral courses in AVGC related sectors,
 - ✓ facilitating promotion and market development activities to extend the global reach of Indian AVGC Industry and
 - ✓ enhance exports and recommend incentives to attract FDI in the AVGC sector.
- ✓ According to the I&B Ministry, India has the potential to capture 5% (nearly \$40 billion) of the global market share by the year 2025, with an annual growth of around 25-30% and creating over 1,60,000 new jobs annually in the AVGC sector

APPOINTMENTS

- **US President Joe Biden - has nominated Indian-American diplomat Rachna Sachdeva Korhonen as his envoy to Mali**



- ✓ This is the third such nomination of an Indian-American in over a month.
- ✓ Korhonen currently serves as deputy assistant secretary and the executive director of the combined executive offices of the state department's bureau of near eastern affairs and the bureau of south and central Asian affairs
- ✓ A career member of the US Foreign Service, Korhonen previously served as the consul general and principal officer of the US consulate in Dharam, Saudi Arabia

AWARDS

- **Mumbai - has been recognised as '2021 Tree City of the World' by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (UN) in association with Arbor Day Foundation.**
- ✓ Mumbai received recognition for its "commitment to growing and maintaining urban trees and greenery in building healthy, resilient and happy cities".
- ✓ The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) had applied for the recognition in January citing its initiative for tree plantation, Miyawaki forests and various innovative tree care activities
- ✓ The United Nations' 'Tree City of the World' programme provides direction, assistance, and worldwide recognition for communities' dedication to its urban forest, and provides a framework for a healthy, sustainable urban forestry
- ✓ In this year's rankings, Mumbai was named along with Hyderabad for the honour
- ✓ Mumbai is the second city in India to receive this distinction.
- ✓ Previously, Hyderabad was the only city in India to receive this honour
- ✓ While Mumbai has made the list for the first time, Hyderabad has featured on it for the second consecutive year.
- ✓ While Hyderabad planted more than 3.5 crore trees in 500 volunteer hours, Mumbai planted 4,25,000 trees in 25,000 volunteer hours
- ✓ A total of 138 cities have been recognised for the year 2021 under the programme.
- ✓ The countries with maximum tree cities include the US, UK, and Canada, with 37, 19, and 18 cities respectively.

RANKINGS

- **Gujarat, Kerala and Punjab - have been adjudged as top three performer states in the NITI Aayog's State Energy and Climate Index (SECI).**
- ✓ NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Dr. Rajiv Kumar and Chief Executive Officer Amitabh Kant released the first ever State Energy and Climate Index - Round One in New Delhi recently
- ✓ States like Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand were placed at the bottom.
- ✓ Among the smaller states, Goa topped the Aayog's index, followed by Tripura and Manipur, while Meghalaya, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh are the bottom three states.

- ✓ The report aims to rank States and Union Territories on six parameters - Discoms' Performance, Access, Affordability and Reliability of Energy, Clean Energy Initiatives, Energy Efficiency, Environmental Sustainability and new initiatives.
- ✓ Punjab was the best performer in discom performance parameters among larger states, while Kerala emerged top performer in access, affordability and reliability category.
- ✓ Haryana topped in Clean Energy initiatives, while Tamil Nadu performed exceptionally well in energy efficiency and Himachal Pradesh topped in two categories - environmental sustainability and new initiatives
- ✓ Among Union Territories, Chandigarh, Delhi, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu are the top performers, whereas Andaman and Nicobar, Jammu and Kashmir, and Lakshadweep are the bottom three performers
- ✓ Based on the outcome of SECI Round-1 scores, states and union territories have been categorised into three groups -- front runners, achievers, and aspirants.



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