

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-APRIL 3, 2022

TAMIL NADU

- For the first time, the Union ministry of culture - has appointed a transgender person, activist Oorvasi Gandhi, as the non-officio member of the council and executive committee of the National Culture Fund.



संस्कृति मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
CULTURE

सत्यमेव जयते

- ✓ Born in Usilampatti, Tamil Nadu, Oorvasi left her home at an early age and has fought hard against the trans/hijra 'jamaat' system.
- ✓ She has been working for the rural transgender communities of the state for more than two decades
- ✓ Through her work, Oorvasi has provided the transgender community in the villages with fundamental property rights and essential health and sanitation facilities
- ✓ Oorvasi became the first to inherit property under the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.
- ✓ Over the years, Oorvasi has provided shelter to hundreds of transgender persons in her home.
- ✓ In 2005, she became a community advisor, working under the Tamil Nadu AIDS Initiative project, to create awareness on HIV-AIDS among transgender and underprivileged women
- ✓ The project was initiated by Voluntary Health Services hospital in Chennai and sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

- ✓ During the visit of Bill and Melinda Gates to Madurai in 2008, Oorvasi had discussed the issues, problems and discriminations that people from the trans-community are facing.
 - ✓ For the past seven years, she is closely involved with Srishti Madurai LGBT Student Volunteer Movement
 - ✓ She was the president of Madurai District Aravanigal Association for four years and ensured identity cards, basic certificates and house pattas were distributed to the members of the community
 - ✓ Oorvasi would share the chair with eminent people like Harshavardhan Neotia, chairman of Ambuja Neotia Group and Sudha Murthy, the chairwoman of the Murthy foundation.
- **On April 2, IIT Madras – has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Renault Nissan Technology and Business Centre India Private Limited (RNTBCI) to carry out research projects**
- ✓ They will collaborate to initiate two research projects to reduce road accident fatalities in Chennai and its neighbouring districts.
 - ✓ RNTBCI has given funds to IIT-Madras as part of CSR to carry out the projects under the agreement
 - ✓ The first project aims to improve public safety with a focus on reducing fatal accidents involving public buses in Chennai.
 - ✓ The second project will focus on using low-cost technology to prevent accidents in Chennai, Kanchipuram, Tiruvallur and Chengalpet.
- **The ministry of civil aviation - has selected Parandur and Pannur near Chennai for the city's second airport.**
- ✓ Parandur is located at around 70km and Pannur 60km from Chennai near Sriperumbudur on the Chennai-Bengaluru route.
 - ✓ The Tamil Nadu government had suggested Tiruporur, Parandur, Pannur and Padalam as the possible sites for the second airport.
 - ✓ The ministry studied the proposed sites and selected Parandur and Pannur.
 - ✓ The second airport project had been delayed by more than 15 years.
 - ✓ It will take seven to 10 years to plan and complete the project.
 - ✓ The AAI has been pushing for land for the second airport since 2017-end as the Chennai airport passenger traffic was reaching a saturation point.

STATES

- **Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha - launched MyGov - the citizen engagement platform for Jammu & Kashmir.**
- ✓ With this, Jammu and Kashmir became the first Union Territory to be on the MyGov app

- ✓ The app was launched to provide an interface between the government and the people to promote people's participation in the government.
- ✓ MyGov Jammu and Kashmir is the 16th MyGov Instance.
- ✓ MyGov was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 26th July 2014 for healthy exchange of ideas and views between the government and people towards the social and economic transformation of India
- ✓ Today, MyGov has more than 2.29 crore registered users, called as MyGov Saathi's
- ✓ They actively engage with MyGov and share their ideas and suggestions on various policy issues, and also take part in Pledges, quizzes and contests
- ✓ Taking forward the idea of participative governance, MyGov initiated the implementation of MyGov State Instances.
- ✓ As on date, MyGov has been successfully implemented in Instances for 15 states namely Haryana, Maharashtra, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Nagaland, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

NATIONAL

- **The government – has merged four film media units with the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC).**
- ✓ The Films Division, the Directorate of Film Festivals (DFF), the National Film Archive of India (NFAI) and Children's Film Society of India (CFSI) are now merged into the NFDC.
- ✓ The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting transferred the mandate of production of documentaries and short films, organising film festivals and preservation of films to the NFDC
- ✓ The National Film Heritage Mission aiming at digitization and restoration of films and documentaries will now be implemented by NFDC.
- ✓ The film preservation related activities that are carried out by National Film Archives of India have also been transferred to NFDC
- ✓ The merger of units was aimed at reducing the overlap of various activities and to ensure better utilisation of public resources
- ✓ The government has also made a budgetary allocation of Rs 1304.52 crore up to 2026 for all these activities, which will be implemented through NFDC
- ✓ The NFDC will be organising the 53rd International Film Festival of India (IFFI) this year, instead of the Directorate of Film Festivals.
- ✓ In December, 2020, the Union Cabinet had decided to merge these four film media units with the NFDC by expanding the Memorandum of Articles of Association of NFDC
- ✓ Audio visual service is one of the 12 champion service sectors identified by the Department of Commerce, and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is the nodal ministry for this sector

- **The ministry of defence (MoD) - has issued an order to stop admissions at all schools aided by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for this academic session**
 - ✓ Further the ministry had directed to shut down one DRDO school in Mussoorie — the Institute of Technology Management (ITM) School — on April 1.
 - ✓ Former President APJ Abdul Kalam, who served in DRDO for almost four decades, had mooted the idea of DRDO schools to develop scientific temperament among students.
 - ✓ He had also envisaged the schools benefiting children of officials of DRDO, which has a network of 50 laboratories working on defence technology.
 - ✓ Of the 11 DRDO-aided schools in India, three are slated to be transferred to Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan - one each in Bangalore, Hyderabad and Kochi.
 - ✓ Seven others, including one each in Dehradun, Chandigarh, Pune, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh, and two in Telangana are to be handed over to other agencies.

- **The Indian Council of Medical Research's (ICMR) Indian Tuberculosis Research consortium – is in advanced stage of developing a vaccine against tuberculosis to end its transmission**
 - ✓ Presently the consortium is conducting a multicentre trial in order to study the efficacy and safety of two candidate TB vaccine
 - ✓ The phase 3 trials are expected to be over by 2024, after which the patient data will be compiled and results will be analysed
 - ✓ Presently, the phase 3 placebo controlled trials is being conducted in 18 sites across six states — Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Hyderabad, Delhi, Telangana and Odisha.
 - ✓ The trial includes subjects above six years of age.
 - ✓ Childhood TB remains a major problem contributing to around 31% of the global burden.
 - ✓ ICMR's National AIDS Research Institute (NARI) is also involved in the study and is conducting trials in two of its clinics.
 - ✓ Tuberculosis is highly prevalent among HIV positive people who are low on immunity.
 - ✓ India witnessed a sharp 19% rise in tuberculosis cases in 2021 over the previous year, as per the recently released India TB report 2022 and National TB Prevalence Survey shows.
 - ✓ A total of 19.33 lakh new and relapsed TB patients were notified in 2021, against 16.28 lakh in the previous year.
 - ✓ Deaths due to TB also increased to 4.93 lakh, excluding HIV patients, in 2020, up 13% from a year ago, while the mortality rate due to all forms of TB between 2019 and 2020 rose by 11%.
 - ✓ Delhi, with 534 cases per 1 lakh population, has the highest prevalence of TB, followed by 484 in Rajasthan, 481 in Uttar Pradesh and 465 in Haryana and 454 in Chhattisgarh.

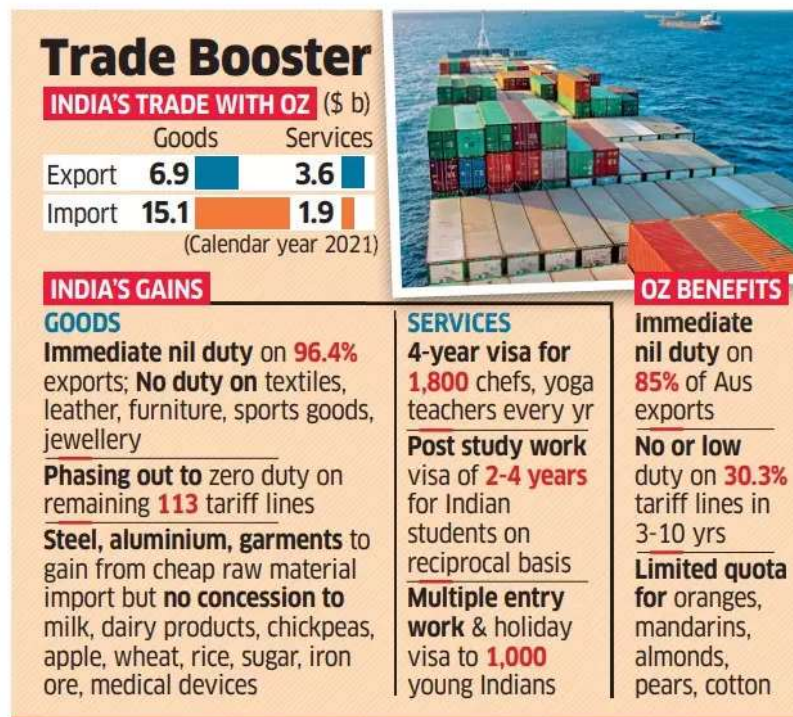
- ✓ Kerala has the lowest prevalence with 115 per 1 lakh people.
- **The Union Cabinet-led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi - approved \$808 million (₹6,062.45 crore) for a new World Bank-assisted scheme 'Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance' (RAMP)**
 - ✓ The new scheme is expected to commence in the financial year of 2022-23.
 - ✓ Out of the total budget, Rs.3750 crore or \$500 Million would be obtained as a loan from the World Bank and the remaining Rs.2312.45 crore or \$308 Million would be funded by the Government of India
 - ✓ The programme aims at improving access to market and credit, strengthening institutions and governance at the Centre and State, improving Centre-State linkages and partnerships, addressing issues of delayed payments and greening of MSMEs
 - ✓ It also supports various Covid-19 Resilience and Recovery Interventions of the Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MoMSMEs)
 - ✓ The programme has identified two areas - strengthening institutions and governance of the MSME programme, and support to market access, firm capabilities and access to finance – to focus under the initiative
 - ✓ RAMP programme will directly or indirectly benefit all 63 million enterprises that qualify as MSMEs
 - ✓ The recommendations for the RAMP scheme were made by KV Kamath Committee, U K Sinha Committee, and Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (PMEAC).

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **On April 2, India and Australia – signed an interim free trade agreement to boost bilateral economic and trade cooperation.**



- ✓ The India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) was signed by Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal and Australian Minister for Trade Dan Tehan in a virtual ceremony in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Australian PM Scott Morrison.



- ✓ Speaking on the occasion, PM Modi said that signing of the agreement is "truly a watershed moment" for India-Australia bilateral relations
- ✓ The India-Australia ECTA is the first trade agreement that India has signed with a developed country after over a decade
- ✓ It will be the second such pact after the one with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which was signed in February 2022
- ✓ The agreement will help in taking bilateral trade from \$27 billion to \$45-50 billion in the next five years and generate over one million jobs in India
- ✓ The ECTA will eliminate or reduce tariffs on goods of either country entering the other, making them cheaper and therefore much more competitively priced.
- ✓ The agreement is likely to be implemented in about four months.
- ✓ Under the agreement, Australia would provide duty free access in its market for about 96.4% of Indian goods such as textiles, leather, jewellery and sports products.
- ✓ The agreement will also give about 85% of Australia's exports zero-duty access to the Indian market, including coal, sheep meat and wool, and lower duty access on Australian wines, almonds, lentils, and certain fruits.
- ✓ There will be eight chapters in the agreement -- goods, services, rules of origin, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, technical barriers to trade, customs procedure and trade facilitation, legal and institutional issues and movement of natural persons, and trade remedies.
- ✓ Under the agreement, Indian graduates from STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) will be granted extended post-study work visas.
- ✓ Australia will also set up a programme to grant visas to young Indians looking to pursue working holidays in Australia.

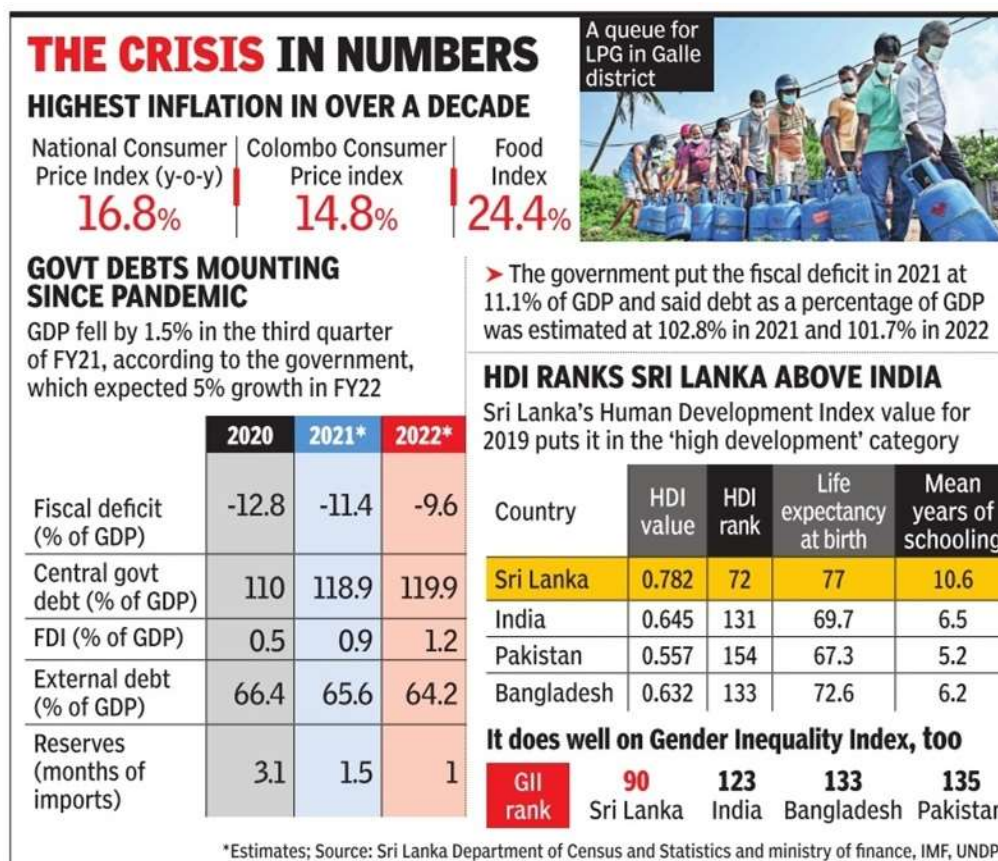
- ✓ Besides, mutual recognition agreements for professionals such as nurses and doctors will ensure that the qualifications of Indian medical professionals will be recognised in Australia
 - ✓ Under the pact, Indian IT professionals and managers can get up to four-year visas, either as contractual workers on an onsite job or as part of intra-company transfers.
 - ✓ For corporate and contractual workers, the visa concessions go beyond IT to include engineering, consulting (excluding legal), architectural and accounting.
 - ✓ The elimination of duties on coking coal, which accounts for about 73% of coal imports, is also expected to boost the competitiveness of Indian steel exports
 - ✓ The agreement also includes strict rules of origin to prevent any routing of products from other countries and provides for a safeguard mechanism to address any sudden surges in imports of a product.
 - ✓ Australia is the 17th largest trading partner of India, while India is Australia's 9th largest partner
 - ✓ India's goods exports were worth USD 6.9 billion and imports aggregated to USD 15.1 billion in 2021.
 - ✓ Major exports by India to Australia include petroleum products, textiles and apparels, engineering goods, leather, chemicals and gems and jewellery, while the imports mainly include raw materials, coal, minerals and intermediate goods.
 - ✓ The negotiations for the trade pact were formally re-launched on 30 September 2021 and concluded on a fast-track basis by the end of March 2022
- **Nepal and India - signed four agreements during Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's three-day visit to India on April 2**
- ✓ The agreements were signed following delegation-level talks between Nepal and India that were held after a meeting between prime ministers of the two countries.

| <h2 style="color: red;">BILATERAL LINKS</h2> |  | | | | |
|--|---|-------------------|--|---|--|
| <p>Major takeaways</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Operationalisation of rail services along the Jaynagar (India) - Kurtha (Nepal) section, the first broad-gauge passenger rail link between the two countries, for cross-border connectivity 2 Handing over of Solu corridor transmission project, a major power project undertaken with Indian LOC 3 Progress in construction of 132 health facilities across 10 districts in Nepal under a grant from India 4 Launch of RuPay in Nepal, seen as a milestone in bilateral financial connectivity. Expected to facilitate bilateral tourist flows, strengthen people-to-people linkages. Nepal is now the fourth country outside India where RuPay is live, others being Bhutan, Singapore and UAE | <p>PM Modi with his Nepal counterpart in Delhi on Saturday</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="background-color: #007bff; color: white;">Agreements signed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ MOU for Enhancing Technical Cooperation in Railway Sector ➤ Agreement for Supply of Petroleum Products between Nepal Oil Corporation and Indian Oil Corporation Ltd ➤ Agreement for </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing Technical Expertise between Nepal Oil Corporation and Indian Oil Corporation Ltd ➤ Framework Agreement of International Solar Alliance (ISA). Nepal 105th country to join ISA </td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Agreements signed | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ MOU for Enhancing Technical Cooperation in Railway Sector ➤ Agreement for Supply of Petroleum Products between Nepal Oil Corporation and Indian Oil Corporation Ltd ➤ Agreement for | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing Technical Expertise between Nepal Oil Corporation and Indian Oil Corporation Ltd ➤ Framework Agreement of International Solar Alliance (ISA). Nepal 105th country to join ISA |
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- ✓ The two countries signed an agreement on Nepal becoming the 105th member of the International Solar Alliance (ISA), technical assistance related to railways, supply of petroleum products and exchange of technical expertise between Nepal Oil Corporation and Indian Oil Corporation.
- ✓ Prime Minister's Deuba and Modi also discussed trade and commerce and initiatives to be taken for border connectivity as well as construction of Nepal Police Academy, Integrated Check Post in Nepalgunj, the Ramayana Circuit.
- ✓ Further, both the leaders issued a vision statement for cooperation in the power sector and agreed to expedite work on the delayed Pancheshwar multipurpose dam project
- ✓ Earlier, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and Indian Prime Minister Modi jointly flagged off the 35-km cross border railway line linking Jaynagar in Bihar to Kurtha in Nepal.
 - ✓ This is the first broad-gauge passenger rail link between the two sides that was completed with grant assistance of Rs. 548 crore from India
 - ✓ Out of the total length of 35 km, 3 km lies within India while the rest lies in Nepal
 - ✓ Till 2014, this was an existing rail service on a metre-gauge rail link between Jaynagar and Janakpur
 - ✓ With this, India and Nepal now have road, air and rail connectivity
- ✓ Among other initiatives launched, India handed over the Solu Corridor to Nepal, that seeks to provide electricity to several remote districts in northeastern Nepal by connecting them to the national grid of Nepal
 - ✓ The 90-km and 132 kV power transmission line has been built at Indian line of credit for Rs. 200 crore.
- ✓ The two countries announced the launch of the Indian RuPay card in Nepal, with the domestic variant of the RuPay card (roughly 83% of all RuPay cards issued) to be functional on about 1400 Point of Sale (POS) machines in Nepal
- ✓ The move makes Nepal the fourth country outside India where RuPay is functional after Bhutan, Singapore and UAE
- ✓ The last Head of State visit from Nepal was in May 2019, when then PM K P Oli visited India for the swearing-in ceremony of PM Narendra Modi
- ✓ The most recent meeting between PM Modi and Sher Bahadur Deuba took place on November 2, 2021, on the sidelines of COP 26 in Glasgow
- **On April 2, India – delivered a consignment of 40,000 metric tonnes of diesel to Sri Lanka to ease the economic and energy crisis faced by the nation due to shortage of foreign exchange**
 - ✓ This is the fourth such assistance from India to Sri Lanka
 - ✓ Power cuts lasting over 13 hours were imposed on March 31, the longest cut since 1996 when a strike by the state power entity employees caused a 72-hour black out.



- ✓ Long lines for fuel, cooking gas, short supply of essentials and long hours of power cuts have triggered public unrest in the island nation.
- ✓ Meanwhile, a 36-hour curfew has been imposed in Sri Lanka from April 2, 6pm to April 4, 6 am in the midst of protests by locals over the economic crisis
- ✓ The Sri Lankan government has also blocked access to all social media sites, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp and YouTube, in an attempt to prevent misinformation
- ✓ Sri Lanka's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa declared a state of emergency on April 1, giving sweeping powers to security forces.
- ✓ He also invoked the tough laws allowing the military to arrest and detain suspects for long periods without trial
- ✓ Further, Indian traders were also preparing to despatch 40,000 tonnes of rice to Sri Lanka as food aid even without such request yet by Sri Lanka to the Indian government.
- ✓ The local importers had started to order from India through the Line of Credit announced earlier.
- ✓ India recently announced that it will extend a USD 1 billion line of credit to Sri Lanka as part of its financial assistance to the country to deal with the economic crisis
- ✓ Earlier, a USD 500 billion line of credit (LoC) was announced in February to help the island nation purchase petroleum products.
- ✓ Sri Lanka, a nation of 22 million people, is struggling to pay for essential imports after a 70% drop in foreign exchange reserves in two years
- ✓ Overall, the country has \$51 billion in foreign debts, of which \$4 billion is due in 2022
- ✓ About half of Sri Lanka's foreign debt was owed to capital markets while China accounted for about 10% in April 2021
- ✓ The country, however, has only \$2.31 billion in reserves and current debt is 119% of GDP.
- ✓ A controversial organic farm policy hurt the agriculture sector pushing food prices higher and led to shortages



- ✓ The pandemic dealt a severe blow to the country's economy as the crucial tourism sector crumbled under the devastating impact of Covid-19
- ✓ Consequently, foreign investment dried up, exports collapsed, inflation is high, jobs losses have increased, the foreign debt situation seems precarious, depleting foreign exchange reserves and business confidence is low and there are signs of social stress
- ✓ The problem was aggravated by the ill-considered tax breaks given in 2019.
- ✓ Inflation recently accelerated to 14% in January 2022 and is projected to remain double-digit in the coming quarters
- ✓ Sri Lanka is seeking a bailout from the International Monetary Fund and has also approached China for aid.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **The world's largest passenger airliner, Airbus - has completed a three-hour flight powered by cooking oil for the first time.**
- ✓ European plane manufacturer Airbus recently flew A380 test double-decker jet from its base in Toulouse, France
- ✓ During the flight, one of the four Rolls-Royce Trent 900 engines was powered by 100% Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) that's essentially made up of cooking oil and waste.
- ✓ This isn't the first Airbus aircraft to have successfully flown on SAF.

- ✓ The wide-body A350 made a similar flight in March 2021, as well as the single-aisle A31-9neo last October.
- ✓ Airbus wishes to get all its fleet to be certified to run on SAF by the end of this decade.

DEFENCE

- **The 20th edition of the bilateral Naval Exercise between Indian and French Navies – ‘VARUNA’ is being conducted in the Arabian Sea from March 30 to April 3, 2022**
- ✓ Various units including ships, submarines, maritime patrol aircraft, fighter aircraft and helicopters of the two navies are participating in the exercise.
- ✓ The bilateral naval exercises between the two Navies were initiated in 1993.
- ✓ The exercise was named as ‘VARUNA’ in 2001 and has become a vital part of India – France strategic bilateral relationship

ECONOMY

- **Citigroup – has announced that it has sold its India retail business, including banking, credit cards, home loans, and wealth management, to private lender Axis Bank for \$1.6 billion in an all-cash deal**
- ✓ The transaction also includes the sale of the consumer business of Citi’s non-banking financial company, Citicorp Finance (India) Ltd, comprising the asset-backed financing business
 - ✓ This includes commercial vehicle and construction equipment loans, as well as the personal loans portfolio, while excluding Citi’s institutional client businesses in India
- ✓ The transaction will also include approximately 3,600 Citi employees supporting the consumer businesses in India, who will be transferred to Axis Bank upon completion of the proposed transaction.
- ✓ The transaction is expected to close in the first half of the calendar year 2023 subject to requisite regulatory approvals
- ✓ Citi’s Banking, Capital Markets and Advisory Group is acting as exclusive financial advisor to Citi in respect of the transaction.
- ✓ Apart from the institutional banking business, Citigroup in India will now focus on offshoring or global business support rendered from centres in Mumbai, Pune, Bengaluru, Chennai and Gurugram.
- ✓ In April 2021, the US-based investment bank had announced its plan to exit its consumer-facing business in India as part of its global strategy.
- ✓ Citi’s global exit from its consumer banking franchises in 13 markets across Asia is expected to release approximately \$7 billion of allocated tangible common equity over time
- ✓ Citigroup had entered India in 1902 and started the consumer banking business in 1985.

- ✓ It is a banker of choice for large and mid-sized corporates, financial institutions and multinational companies operating in the country.
 - ✓ The bank has 35 branches in the country and employs about 4,000 people in the consumer-banking space.
 - ✓ Citi is actively engaged in various government initiatives, including working with clients to channelize foreign capital through FDI investments under the PLI (Performance Linked Incentive) scheme of the Government of India, as well as FII / FPI flows into the country.
 - ✓ HDFC Bank is the largest card issuer in the country with 16.27 million cards, followed by SBI Card (13.52 million) and ICICI Bank (12.77 million).
 - ✓ Among major players, Kotak Mahindra Bank (KMB) reported strong growth of cards (27.5% YoY), followed by RBL Bank (25.6%), ICICI Bank (23.1%), and Axis Bank (22.2%).
- **The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) - has announced the launch of 'Manthan', an Ideathon for supporting new ideas and innovations in the securities market.**
- ✓ SEBI has tied up with other market infrastructure institutions to launch Manthan which aims to highlight the adoption of Financial Technology (FinTech) in the securities market
 - ✓ The latest Ideathon by SEBI will be a 6-week long program launched in association with BSE, NSE, NSDL, CDSL, KFinTech, CAMS, Link Intime and MCX to promote innovation in the securities market
 - ✓ The participants will need to submit their ideas in a video format of maximum 5 minutes in length and the submission will be evaluated on criteria such as completeness, viability, functionality, Originality and impact.
 - ✓ Anyone over 16 years of age - students, startup founders, professionals from any field - can participate by submitting their ideas at <https://manthan.devfolio.co/>.
 - ✓ The event is open for registration from March 30 to May 14, 2022.
 - ✓ The top 10 winners of the Ideathon stand to win cash prizes worth a total of Rs. 5,00,000.
 - ✓ The Manthan Ideathon will be based on four themes namely, Investor Education, Protection and ease of investing, Securities Market Development, Market Regulation and Integration within the Financial ecosystem

SPORTS

- **Tamil Nadu's Rosy Meena Paul – bagged the gold medal in the women's pole vault at the Federation Cup Senior Athletics Championships on April 2**
- ✓ This is the 25th edition of the Championships, that began at the CH Mohammed Koya Stadium in University of Calicut, Tenjhipalam
 - ✓ Rosy, who had won the event earlier with a 3.90m leap in 2021 at Patiala, clinched the gold medal with a career best 4-metre effort

- ✓ With the effort, Rosy becomes only the fifth Indian women to clear that mark.

NEW MGNREGA WAGE RATES - REPORT

- The government – has notified fresh wage rates under rural job guarantee programme, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) for the financial year 2022-23
- ✓ As per the new scheme, 21 out of 34 states and Union Territories will get less than 5% increase and 10 states get more than 5% hike
- ✓ There is no change in the wage rates of three states – Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura.
- ✓ The wage rates, notified by Ministry of Rural Development under sub-section (1) of Section 6 of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005, will be effective from April 1

| | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | Percent increase | Absolute change |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|------------------|-----------------|
| Andaman & Nicobar | 294 | 308 | 4.76 | 14 |
| Andhra Pradesh | 245 | 257 | 4.9 | 12 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 212 | 216 | 1.89 | 4 |
| Assam | 224 | 229 | 2.23 | 5 |
| Bihar | 198 | 210 | 6.06 | 12 |
| Chhattisgarh | 193 | 204 | 5.7 | 11 |
| Dadra & Nagar Haveli | 269 | 278 | 3.35 | 9 |
| Daman and Diu | 269 | 278 | 3.35 | 9 |
| Goa | 294 | 315 | 7.14 | 21 |
| Gujarat | 229 | 239 | 4.37 | 10 |
| Haryana | 315 | 331 | 5.08 | 16 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 254 | 266 | 4.72 | 12 |
| Jammu & Kashmir | 214 | 227 | 6.07 | 13 |
| Jharkhand | 198 | 210 | 6.06 | 12 |
| Karnataka | 289 | 309 | 6.92 | 20 |
| Kerala | 291 | 311 | 6.87 | 20 |
| Lakshadweep | 266 | 284 | 6.77 | 18 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 193 | 204 | 5.7 | 11 |
| Maharashtra | 248 | 256 | 3.23 | 8 |
| Manipur | 251 | 251 | 0 | 0 |
| Meghalaya | 226 | 230 | 1.77 | 4 |
| Mizoram | 233 | 233 | 0 | 0 |
| Nagaland | 212 | 216 | 1.89 | 4 |
| Odisha | 215 | 222 | 3.26 | 7 |
| Puducherry | 273 | 281 | 2.93 | 8 |
| Punjab | 269 | 282 | 4.83 | 13 |
| Rajasthan | 221 | 231 | 4.52 | 10 |
| Sikkim | 212 | 222 | 4.72 | 10 |
| Tamil Nadu | 273 | 281 | 2.93 | 8 |
| Telangana | 245 | 257 | 4.9 | 12 |
| Tripura | 212 | 212 | 0 | 0 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 204 | 213 | 4.41 | 9 |
| Uttarakhand | 204 | 213 | 4.41 | 9 |
| West Bengal | 213 | 223 | 4.69 | 10 |

- ✓ Of the 31 states and UTs, which saw a hike in wages, the maximum 7.14% has been recorded in Goa — from Rs 294 per day in 2021-22 to Rs 315 per day in 2022-23.
- ✓ The lowest increase of 1.77% is in Meghalaya where the new wage rate has been fixed at Rs 230 per day from the existing Rs 226 per day
- ✓ Apart from Meghalaya, two other states — Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland — have also witnessed an increase of less than 2 % in the wages.
- ✓ The wages have been increased 2-3% in Assam, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry
- ✓ In Maharashtra, Odisha, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, the wages have been increased 3-4%
- ✓ In Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, the hike is 4-5%
- ✓ Only 10 states — Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Jammu & Kashmir, Lakshadweep, Kerala, Karnataka and Goa — have seen an increase of more than 5%
- ✓ According to the new wage rates, five states and UTs with the highest wages are Haryana (Rs 331 per day), Goa (315), Kerala (311), Karnataka (309) and Andaman & Nicobar Islands (308).
- ✓ Five states with lowest wages are Tripura (212), Bihar (210), Jharkhand (210), Chhattisgarh (204) and Madhya Pradesh (204).
- ✓ The MGNREGA wage rates are fixed according to changes in the CPI-AL (Consumer Price Index-Agriculture Labour), which reflects the increase in the inflation in rural areas.

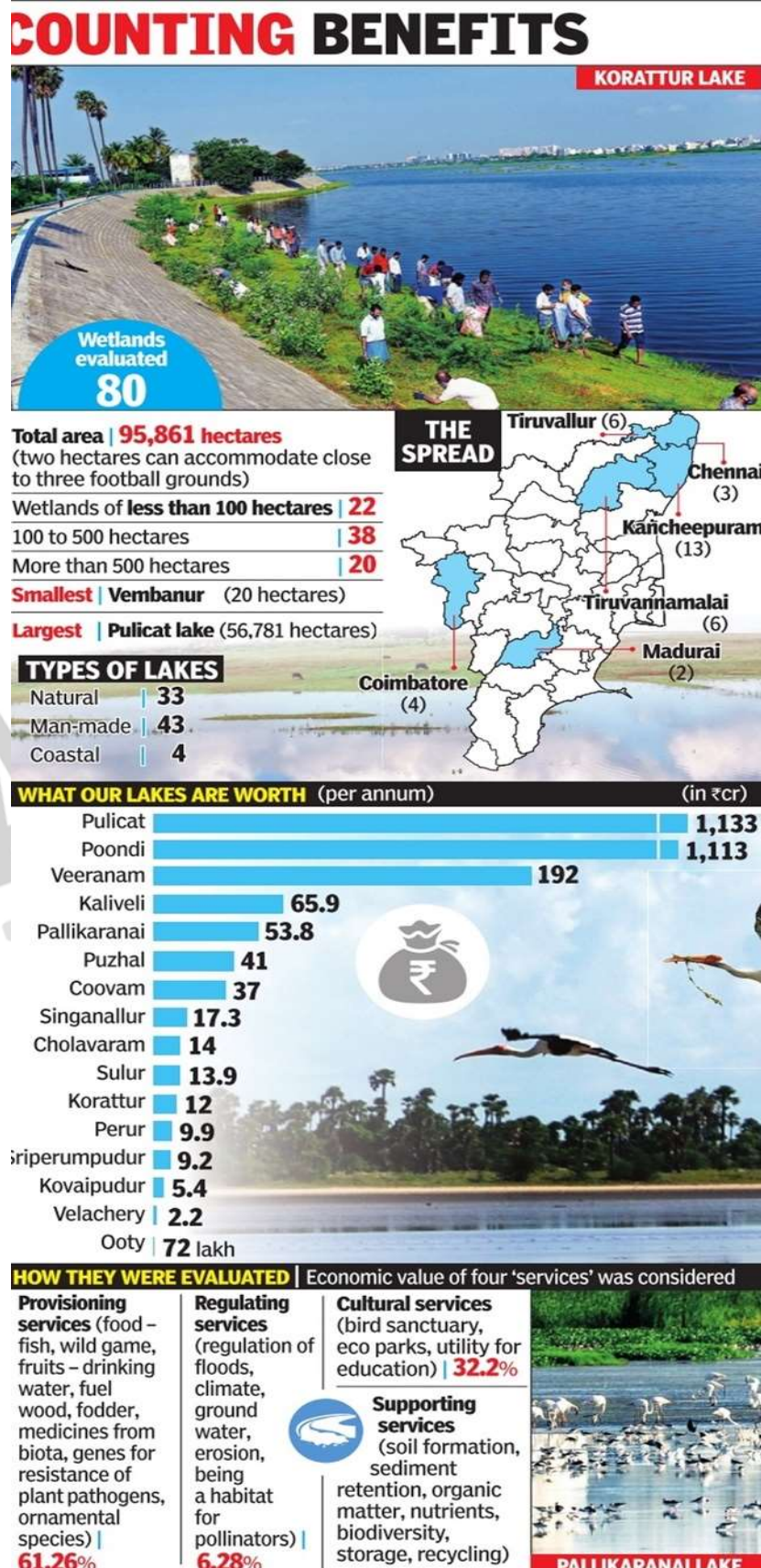
WETLANDS IN TAMIL NADU – A REPORT

- The value of 80 wetlands in Tamil Nadu, if properly maintained - is ₹17,467.9 crore per annum through direct and indirect benefits, says a study commissioned by the government

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| <p>THE STUDY CALCULATED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Actual economic value of services obtained by people dependent on wetlands and market prices ➤ Willingness of people to pay for these services ➤ Maximum potential value of these services if the wetland was restored to its full capacity which was termed as benefit transfer value. For instance, Chennai pays ₹200cr every summer for water from Veeranam. If that benefit is transferred to locals around Veeranam, they would be willing to maintain the lake |  <p>WHAT KILLS OUR WETLANDS</p> <p>Encroachment, pollution, open defecation, garbage, water theft, over exploitation by fishing, hunting, medical waste dumping, industrial effluents, invasive species, stray animals, mosquito breeding</p> |
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Source: Madras Institute of Development Studies

- ✓ Even in their present state, these wetlands provide services worth ₹4,386.6 crore per annum, said the report by the Madras Institute of Development Studies (MIDS).



- ✓ The study was commissioned by the Tamil Nadu State Wetland Authority, which oversees more than 42,000 wetlands in the state.
- ✓ As a first step, MIDS researchers studied 80 of the wetlands over three years and submitted a report recently.
- ✓ MIDS researchers said the benefits from a lake can be calculated based on the direct and indirect services it offers.
 - ✓ Direct services include fish, fuel, genetic materials and fresh water that people use.
 - ✓ Indirect services are its role in regulating erosion, pollution and the water table.
 - ✓ Cultural services are its role in recreational activity and aesthetics, and in nutrient cycling.
- ✓ Using this matrix, the Pulicat lake's value has been put at ₹1,133 crore a year, that of Veeranam lake at ₹192 crore, and of Cholavaram at ₹1,113crore.
- ✓ The MIDS report says it will take only ₹203 crore to restore these 80 wetlands.
- ✓ The action to be taken includes curbing construction, removing encroachment, stopping dumping of waste and effluents, besides checking overfishing and overexploitation of water.
- ✓ The Tamil Nadu State Wetlands Authority (TNSWA) was formed in 2016 based on a Supreme Court direction after a PIL was filed in 2001.
- ✓ Since its formation, the TNSWA has asked the water resources department to notify 29 wetlands in the state as priority wetlands.
- ✓ Later, the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017 were framed.
- ✓ The TNSWA will be one of the owners of the wetlands and help manage them by implementing Section 4 of the rules that aims to do away with illegal activities, encroachments, exploitations, solid waste and effluent dumping in wetlands and so on.
- ✓ The state government allocated ₹150 crore exclusively for the ecological restoration of 100 wetlands in 2021-2022.
- ✓ The government has forwarded 13 Ramsar site proposals to the Union ministry of environment, forests and climate change under the Tamil Nadu Wetlands Mission

