

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – FEBRUARY 18, 2022

TAMIL NADU

- **The department for the welfare of the differently-abled - has formed a commission to report on the adoption of specified policy reforms for dyslexia in Tamil Nadu.**
- ✓ In an order dated February 2, the department formed a team comprising animal welfare activist Antony Rubin, Dr Shanthi B of Institute of Child Health, Lalitha Ramanujan, founder of Alpha to Omega School, and Lakshmi Hariharan, Resource Rooms Head, Madras Dyslexia Association, to submit a report.
- ✓ Antony Rubin, a person with dyslexia, submitted a requisition to the department highlighting low awareness of the learning disability and the complexity among schoolchildren.
- ✓ In general, schools need to be sensitized by experts on the entire spectrum of Special Learning Disabilities (SLDs), as defined by the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.
- ✓ To help students with dyslexia, the government has given concessions like extra time, scribes and second language exemptions when they appear for public exams
- ✓ The department for the welfare of the differently-abled is functioning under the direct control of the Chief Minister in the State

- **Chief Minister M K Stalin - has given his consent to make appropriate amendments in law to establish an exclusive media body, the Press Council of Tamil Nadu**
- ✓ This was announced by the State Government to the Madras High court bench of Chief Justice M N Bandari and Justice D Bharatha Chakravarthy
- ✓ The process of circulation and approval from the competent authorities for formation of Press Council of Tamil Nadu likely to be completed soon
- ✓ The amended Tamil Nadu State News Media Representative Accreditation Rules, 2021 will be issued later as a government order.

- ✓ The accreditation rules have been amended in tune with the time and were vetted by the Law department of the state government and the Law Officer attached to the High Court.
 - ✓ The decision to create a separate body to regulate the media-persons, in addition to the Press Council of India in New Delhi, was made following a Madras high court order.
 - ✓ Earlier, the Madras High Court has directed the Tamil Nadu government to create a Press Council of Tamil Nadu, which would act as a State-level media regulatory body, within a span of three months in an order dated August 19, 2022
 - ✓ According to the earlier order by a division bench headed by Justice N Kirubakaran (since retired), the State Press Council should be headed by retired judges of the Supreme Court or the State High Court
 - ✓ Section 4 of the Press council of India Act empowers the Central Government to establish the Press Council of India and Section 25 of the Act grants Centre the power to make Rules under the Act
- **The Tamil Nadu government - has sent a proposal to the Union government to designate 13 potential wetlands of international significance in the state as Ramsar site**

GREEN ZONES

The wetlands which the state govt wants Centre to notify as Ramsar sites



Pallikaranai Marsh

Koonthakulam Bird Sanctuary	Tirunelveli
Chitrangudi Bird Sanctuary	Ramanathapuram
Vembanur	Kanyakumari
Suchuindram – Theroor wetland complex	Kanyakumari
Vaduvur Bird Sanctuary	Tiruvarur
Udayamarthandapuram Bird Sanctuary	Tiruvarur
Vellode Bird Sanctuary	Erode
Pallikaranai Marsh	Chennai
Gulf of Mannar Marine Biosphere Reserve	Ramanathapuram
Kanjirankulam Bird Sanctuary	Ramanathapuram
Pichavaram Mangrove	Cuddalore
Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary	Chengalpattu
Karikili Bird Sanctuary	Chengalpattu

- ✓ This was informed by the State government to the Madras high court on February 17

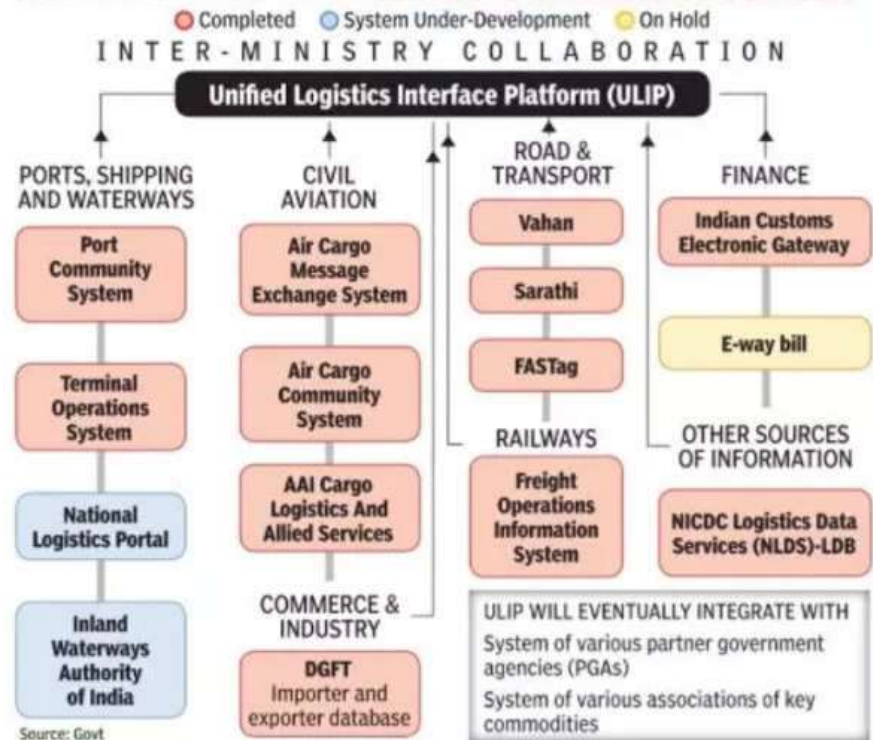
- ✓ The proposal to designate 13 wetlands in the state as Ramsar sites is awaiting the nod of Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
- ✓ A Ramsar site is a wetland designated to be of international importance under the 1971 Ramsar Convention established by UNESCO, to which India is also a signatory
- ✓ The proposal has been made as part of the 'Tamil Nadu wetlands Mission' with a sole purpose of promoting the wise use of wetlands for creating more livelihood opportunities for the local communities
- ✓ The State government has launched the Tamil Nadu Wetland Mission (TNWM) on August, 2021, for restoration of 100 wetlands over a period of five years
- ✓ As of now, no wetland in Tamil Nadu could get notified under the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017.
- ✓ In order to bring the wetlands in the state under the ambit of the rules, for the first time, the state has submitted draft notification proposals to the Union Government
- ✓ Once approved, the draft will be placed for public consultation before it is finalized
- ✓ Point Calimere Wildlife and Bird Sanctuary is the only wetland that has been designated as a Ramsar protected site in Tamil Nadu
- ✓ Further, recommendations have been made to notify Pallikaranai Marshland and Kazhuveli wetland located on East Coast Road in Villupuram district as Ramsar sites
- ✓ At Kazhuveli wetland, licence for shrimp farming was not given for the last two years and an extent of 5151.60 hectares have been declared as birds sanctuary in December last year
- ✓ In Tamil Nadu, wetlands spread over 9,02,534 hectares occupying 6.92% of the total geographic area of the State

NATIONAL

- **On February 17, a five-member team of experts - left for Namibia to finalise modalities for the translocation of 8 to 10 cheetahs to the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh.**
- ✓ India has a plan to bring 12-14 cheetahs from South Africa, Namibia and other African countries over five years.
- ✓ The team consists of representatives from National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), environment ministry, Wildlife Institute of India, and the Madhya Pradesh government
- ✓ It will finalise sources and destinations of the project and the timeline to carry out the inter-continental translocation.
- ✓ The experts will also take a call on the port on which the cheetahs will arrive before being transported to the national park.
- ✓ They will also be identifying suitable cheetahs to begin the process of health screening and putting them under quarantine for travel to India

- ✓ The team, being led by NTCA's Amit Mallick, will be in Namibia for a week's time, and will return to India on February 23, 2022
 - ✓ It was in January 2020 that the Supreme Court, while responding to an application of NTCA, had given "permission to reintroduce cheetahs from Africa to suitable sites in India".
 - ✓ Earlier, the "Action Plan for Introduction of Cheetah in India" was released by the environment ministry during the 19th meeting of National Tiger Conservation Authority last month
 - ✓ Accordingly, around 12-14 cheetahs will be imported from South Africa or Namibia and each of them will be fitted with a satellite-GPS-very high frequency radio-collar.
 - ✓ Brainchild of former Environment Minister, Jairam Ramesh, the project was first planned and launched in 2010.
 - ✓ The cheetah was declared extinct from India in 1952 and currently there are no cheetahs in any National Park or Wildlife Sanctuary in India.
 - ✓ It is the only large carnivore to have become extinct in independent India.
 - ✓ The Centre has allotted Rs 38.70 crore for the cheetah introduction project up to year 2025-26, as per Minister of State for Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, Ashwini Kumar Choubey's statement in Lok Sabha on February 7.
- **On February 17, Calcutta High Court – allowed abortion of a woman at 34 weeks on the grounds that the fetus had spina bifida, an incurable disorder**
- ✓ This will be most delayed abortion in the country to receive legal sanction
 - ✓ A 37-year-old woman from north Kolkata was allowed to medically terminate her pregnancy at 34 weeks
 - ✓ A baby born with the condition of spina bifida cannot move or perform normal bodily functions and could die within weeks.
 - ✓ Until now, the most delayed abortion in the country had been at 33 weeks.
 - ✓ It was sanctioned in August last year by the Bombay high court to a 20-year-old woman
 - ✓ In this case, her foetus suffered from Arnold Chiari malformation II — a group of brain malformations that lead to serious spinal disorders — and bilateral clubfoot.
 - ✓ The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971 allows a woman to undergo abortion till 24 weeks of pregnancy, subject to the condition that the pregnancy, if allowed to continue, poses a threat to the mother's life, or if the fetus has an incurable abnormality.
 - ✓ Beyond 24 weeks, court approval is required.
- **The Centre – to soon roll out the Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP) to drastically reduce logistics costs and make Indian goods competitive**

JOINING HANDS TO RAISE COMPETITIVENESS



- ✓ The Platform aims to integrate about 24 logistics systems across 6 ministries and departments to provide real time data to all stakeholders and ensure efficient movement of goods through different modes.
- ✓ During her Budget speech, Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman referred to the ULIP platform and said it will reduce logistics cost and time, assisting just-in-time inventory management, and in eliminating tedious documentation.
- ✓ The platform is in line with the PM Gati Shakti programme.
- ✓ It promotes integration of information among various ministries such as ports and shipping, railways, civil aviation, road transport and highways, finance ministry and other sources.
- ✓ It will also serve as a nationwide single-window logistics platform for end-to-end visibility for efficient movement of goods.
- ✓ The platform can be utilised by various government and private agencies, service providers, industry bodies, enterprises, startups
- ✓ It enables exchange of information on a real time basis, ranging from cost to availability of containers and vacancy at ports among other critical information.
- ✓ Various authentication and e-locker services of the Centre such as Aadhaar, PAN, GSTN, Digi-locker will also be integrated into the platform for faster clearances.
- ✓ Once information exchange within the system is set up, ULIP is likely to develop a unified documentation and reference system for the logistics sector.
- ✓ Through this interface, the platform will be able to bring all processes linked to requests, compliances, certifications, approvals, feedback of all the ministries under one umbrella.
- ✓ Logistics costs in India are high, accounting for 14% of GDP.

- ✓ Transportation and inventory costs account for more than 90% of these costs.

INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

➤ **The National Payments Corporation of India's global arm NPCI International Payments (NIPL) – to help implementing the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) platform in Nepal.**

- ✓ NIPL has partnered Gateway Payments Service (GPS), an authorised payment system operator in Nepal, and Bengaluru-based Manam Infotech.
- ✓ UPI will be deployed in Nepal as a digital public benefit to bolster interoperable real-time person-to-person (P2P) and to merchant (P2M) payment transactions.
- ✓ Nepal will be the first country outside of India to adopt UPI as a payments platform.
- ✓ Besides enabling an open interoperable system for real-time payments and enabling financial inclusion, it will lay the foundation for real-time cross-border P2P remittances between Nepal and India.
- ✓ In 2021, UPI enabled 39 billion financial transactions amounting to commerce worth \$940 billion, which is equivalent to approximately 31% of India's GDP.
- ✓ NPCI, the specialised division of Reserve Bank of India (RBI), comes under the Ministry of Finance and was created by the central bank for operating retail payments and settlement systems in India.
- ✓ GPS is a payment system operator (PSO) licensed by Nepal Rastra Bank (central bank of Nepal).
- ✓ Nepal has a population of about 3 crore with around 45% people using banking related services.
- ✓ Before this, NPCI International collaborated with a company to facilitate UPI payments in the UAE.
- ✓ In this regard, Middle East and Africa-based Network International has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with NPCI International Payments Ltd (NIPL), the international arm of NPCI in November 2021.

➤ **Foreign minister S Jaishankar - will be on a visit to Germany and France from February 18-23, according to the government**

- ✓ In Germany, he will participate in the Munich Security Conference (MSC) in which US Vice President Kamala Harris will speak to world leaders on addressing the threat from Russian troops stationed at the Ukraine border.
- ✓ US secretary of state Antony Blinken will also participate in MSC
- ✓ Russia has chosen not to send a representative this year to MSC where countries are expected to reaffirm support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- ✓ In Paris, the External Affairs Minister will hold a bilateral meeting with his French counterpart JeanYves Le Drian on February 20.
- ✓ He will also attend the EU Ministerial Forum for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific on February 22, an initiative of the French Presidency of the European Council.

- ✓ External affairs minister, on the sidelines of the Forum, will also give an address at the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI)

ECONOMY

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) - had set March 31, 2022 as the deadline for PPI interoperability under its new guidelines**
- ✓ Accordingly, in cases where PPIs are digital wallets, the interoperability will have to be provided through Unified Payments Interface (UPI), and where they are physical (payment cards) they should be acceptable across card networks.
- ✓ Prepaid instruments that are used for transport — Metro and other public transport cards — are exempt from the interoperability guidelines.
- ✓ Issuers of gift cards, however, will have the option to make their cards interoperable.
- ✓ The service providers who acquire merchants will also have to make their acceptance network interoperable.
- ✓ Meanwhile, Juspay Technologies has launched OpenPPI, which helps digital wallets implement and comply with RBI's PPI interoperability regulations.

NEWS IN PICTURE

