

## EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS–JANUARY 14, 2022

### TAMIL NADU

- On January 13, Chief minister M K Stalin - announced the state government's Thanthai Periyar award for social justice to Dravidian scholar and historian K Thirunavukkarasu and Dr Ambedkar award to retired judge of Madras high court, Justice K Chandru.
- ✓ The Chief Minister also announced that the cash prizes of the annual awards have been increased to ₹5 lakh each from ₹1 lakh.
- ✓ The awards, to be presented at a later date, carry a gold medal and citation too.
- ✓ The Periyar Award is given every year to honour those striving for social justice in the State, while the Ambedkar Award recognizes the work of eminent persons towards the socio-economic and educational development of Adi Dravidar and Tribal welfare in the State
- ✓ Thanthai Periyar awardee, S Thirunavukkarasu is fondly called the mobile encyclopedia of the Dravidian movement.
- ✓ He has authored two volumes on the history of the Justice Party in a book titled 'Needhi Katchi Varalaru', covering the period since its founding in 1916 till the party was rechristened as Dravidar Kazhagam in 1944
- ✓ Some of Thirunavukkarasu's other famous books are Dravida Iyakka Vergal and Dravida Iyakkath Thoongal
- ✓ In appreciation of his writings, former Chief Minister M Karunanidhi had honoured him with the Thiru Vi.Ka Award in 2006.
- ✓ As an advocate, Chandru had dealt with criminal and civil cases in the Madras High Court.
- ✓ He was appointed as an additional judge of the High Court on July 31, 2006, and was made a permanent judge on November 9, 2009.
- ✓ Justice Chandru is renowned for judgements that emancipated poor and underprivileged people.

- ✓ He has always fought caste discrimination, and travelled across the State to live amongst marginalised sections of the society.
  - ✓ Justice Chandru had pronounced over 96,000 verdicts, and authored several books on his experiences in the judiciary
  - ✓ His works, 'My Judgments in the Light of Ambedkar' and 'Listen to My Case! When Women Approach the Courts of Tamil Nadu', were widely appreciated
- **On January 13, Chief Minister M K Stalin - launched a revamped pension scheme for temple priests and staff.**
- ✓ The government has enhanced the pension for priests and temple staff by ₹1,000.
  - ✓ The enhanced pension scheme would be applicable to eligible priests who retired after serving in various temples including those being managed by the State Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR & CE) department



- ✓ The move would be beneficial to about 1,804 retired village temple priests to get a pension of Rs 4,000 (as against Rs 3,000 in the past) each
- ✓ Further, another 100 Archakars, Odhuvars, Vedaparayanars, Arayars, Divya Prabandham reciters and musicians would receive a monthly pension of Rs 3,000 (as against Rs 1,000 in the past).
- ✓ Besides, the CM also announced a marriage assistance scheme of providing 8-gram gold coins for women
- ✓ The scheme is being implemented through the Social Welfare and Women Empowerment Department
- ✓ Under the scheme, 94,700 women will receive the aid, for which Rs. 762.23 crore has been sanctioned by the Government during 2021-22 fiscal
- ✓ Higher Education Minister K Ponmudi, HR & CE Minister P K Sekar Babu, Social Welfare Minister P Geetha Jeevan, Chief Secretary V Irai Anbu and senior officials participated in the event

## STATES

- **On January 13, the Kerala government - declared January 14 as Pongal holiday in six districts, where there is sizeable Tamil population.**

- ✓ The one-day local holiday was announced in Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Idukki, Palakkad and Wayanad districts.
- ✓ The Kerala government had declared Pongal holiday on January 15.
- ✓ Earlier, Tamil Nadu chief minister M K Stalin sent a letter, urging his Kerala counterpart Pinarayi Vijayan, to continue the practice of declaring January 14 as a local holiday for the Pongal festival.
- ✓ He requested that a local holiday be declared for Pongal in six districts of Kerala where Tamil speaking people live in large numbers.

## ECONOMY

- **Billionaire industrialist Gautam Adani's group and South Korea's Posco - have signed a \$5-billion (nearly Rs 37,000 crore) pact for setting up an integrated steel plant in Gujarat.**
- ✓ With this, the Adani Group is set to compete with Tata Steel, JSW Steel and Arcelor Mittal Nippon Steel
- ✓ The infrastructure conglomerate, which is India's largest player in ports and renewable energy, has been making efforts to make an entry in the metals sector.
- ✓ Last month, it incorporated a new arm for aluminium and, before that, it announced an entry into copper.
- ✓ Earlier, world's sixth-largest steel maker Posco made unsuccessful attempts to set up mega steel projects in Odisha and Karnataka.
- ✓ In June 2005, the company had agreed to incorporate an Indian subsidiary and build a steel plant in Odisha, but the project didn't take off following protests, controversies and delays in land acquisition.
- ✓ Similarly, in 2010, the company signed a pact with the Karnataka government but dropped the investment plans in 2013 amid a delay in the acquisition of land by the state government.
- ✓ Under the existing agreement, Adani would bring land in Mundra, Gujarat for setting up the plant that seeks to make hot-rolled steel used in construction activities
- ✓ Mundra already houses Adani's port, power and processed food facilities.
- ✓ Posco already runs a 1.8-million ton mill in Maharashtra for cold-rolled and galvanised steel that is used in home appliances and automobiles
- ✓ The \$709 million steel mill began operations in 2015.
- ✓ Besides, Posco has four processing centres in the country in Pune, Delhi, Chennai and Ahmedabad.
- ✓ Adani is likely to hold a majority stake in the steel venture with Posco
- ✓ Apart from steel, Adani will collaborate with Posco to explore opportunities covering renewable energy, hydrogen and logistics industries in response to carbon reduction requirements
- ✓ Adani is making a \$20-billion push into green energy to make its businesses a net-zero carbon emitter by 2030.

- ✓ Adani Group, which started as a commodity trading firm in 1988, entered into seaports, power generation and distribution, renewable energy, coal and city gas retailing
  - ✓ It has ventured into managing airports and now runs data centres and digital services.
  - ✓ The group run by Adani, who is Asia's second-richest person, has also announced plans to manufacture solar modules, batteries, electrolyzers, and wind turbines, and is looking at opportunities to retail petrol and diesel and set up a petrochemical plant
  - ✓ Posco is South Korea's largest steel producer and has a presence in non-steel sectors of trading, infrastructure, EV materials, chemicals and energy.
  - ✓ In FY21, the production of crude steel and finished steel in the entire country stood at 102.49 mt.
- **On January 13, the Reliance Industries (RIL) - signed an MoU with Gujarat government for a total investment of Rs 5.95 lakh crore as part of investment promotion activity for Vibrant Gujarat Summit 2022.**
- ✓ These projects, that aims to make Gujarat net-zero and carbon-free, will create 10 lakh direct and indirect employment opportunities in the state
  - ✓ The proposal includes Rs 5 lakh crore investment from RIL in the state over 10-15 years to set up 100 GW Renewable Energy Power Plant and Green Hydrogen Eco-System development
  - ✓ The country's largest private sector company will develop an ecosystem for assisting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and encourage entrepreneurs to embrace new technologies and innovations, leading to captive use of renewable energy and green hydrogen.
  - ✓ In consultation with the government of Gujarat, RIL has started the process of identifying land for 100GW renewable energy power projects in Kutch, Banaskantha and Dholera.
  - ✓ The Mukesh Ambani-led company has requested 4.5 lakh acres in Kutch.
  - ✓ RIL will invest another Rs 60,000 crore in setting up 'new energy manufacturing-integrated renewable facilities' including solar PV module (for manufacture of polysilicon, wafer, cell & module), electrolyser, energy-storage battery and fuel cells.
  - ✓ Additional investments to the tune of Rs 25,000 crore will be made by RIL in existing projects and new ventures over next three-to-five years.
  - ✓ Further, RIL has also proposed to invest Rs 7,500 crore over three to five years for Jio Network upgradation to 5G and another Rs 3,000 crore over 5 years in Reliance Retail.
  - ✓ The MoUs were signed by additional chief secretary to industries department of the Gujarat government, Rajiv Kumar Gupta, and RIL Group president Parimal Nathwani in the presence of Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel.

## APPOINTMENTS

- **The University of Oxford - has appointed Indian-origin academic Professor Soumitra Dutta as the new dean of its Saïd Business School.**
- ✓ Dutta is currently serving as professor of management at the Cornell SC Johnson College of Business at Cornell University in New York
- ✓ He will take up his new UK post on June 1, 2022.
- ✓ Dutta has a distinguished three-decade academic career behind him, including being current chair of the Global Business School Network and 13 years in leadership roles at INSEAD in France.
- ✓ He serves on the boards of listed global corporations and has founded several successful start-ups
- ✓ Dutta has also co-chaired the World Economic Forum's Global Future Council on Innovation Ecosystems and created major global technology and innovation indices.
- ✓ He has acted as a senior adviser to governments on technology and innovation policies.
- ✓ Dutta replaces Peter Tufano, who stepped down after 10 years as dean in 2021.

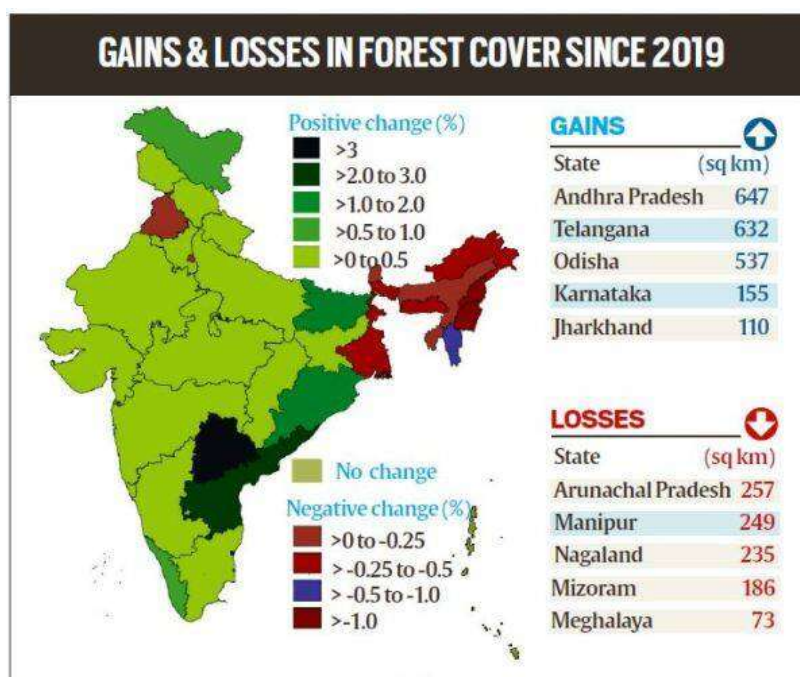
## SPORTS

- **India - pulled out of the ASBC Asian U22 boxing championships to be held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan from January 20-30, 2022**
- ✓ The pull out is due to the rising numbers of Covid-19 cases in the ongoing elite men's national camp in NIS Patiala.
- ✓ A total of 63 male boxers and 27 coaching and support staff personnel have returned positive for the coronavirus.
- ✓ The year's first international event has attracted entries from major Asian boxing playing nations.
- ✓ The first edition of championships was planned to be hosted in Tashkent from December 7 to 17 in 2021
- ✓ However, the event was postponed following the decision of the management of the Asian Boxing Confederation and the Uzbekistan Boxing Federation.

## INDIA STATE OF FOREST REPORT 2021

- **Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bhupender Yadav - released the 'India State of Forest Report 2021' (ISFR-2021) prepared by the Forest Survey of India (FSI) on January 13, 2022**

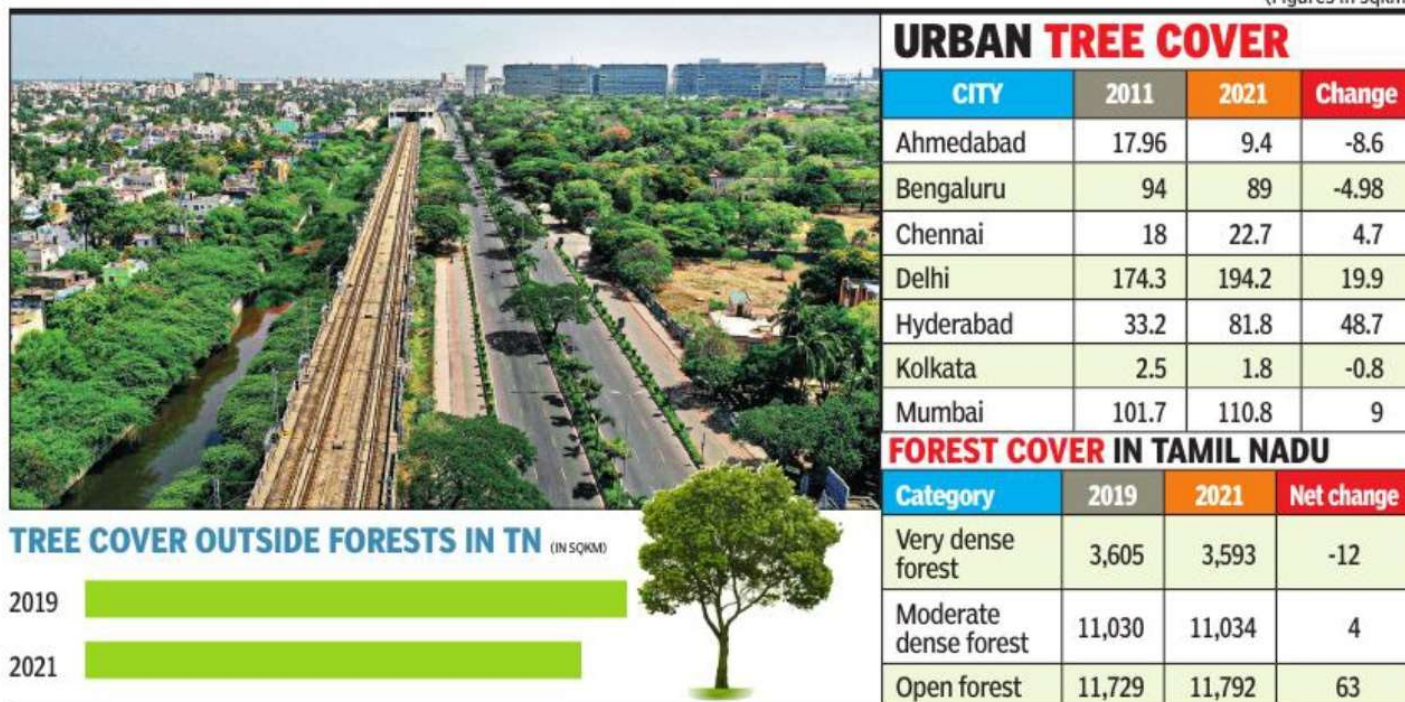




- ✓ As per the report, the total forest and tree cover of the country stood at 80.9 million hectare, which is 24.62% of the geographical area of the country.
  - ✓ As compared to the assessment of 2019, there is an increase of 2,261 sq km in the total forest and tree cover of the country
  - ✓ Out of this, the increase in the forest cover has been observed as 1,540 sq km and that in tree cover is 721 sq km.
- ✓ The report records the increase in forest cover during 2019 and 2021, as the last such report was published in 2019.
- ✓ The present assessment reveals that 17 states/UT's have above 33% of the geographical area under forest cover
  - ✓ Out of these, five states/UTs namely Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya have more than 75% forest cover
  - ✓ Further, 12 states/UTs namely Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, Goa, Kerala, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Assam, Odisha, have forest cover ranging between 33% to 75%
- ✓ Top three states showing increase in forest cover are Andhra Pradesh (647 sq km) followed by Telangana (632 sq km) and Odisha (537 sq km).
- ✓ In terms of Area, Madhya Pradesh has the largest forest cover in the country followed by Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Maharashtra.
- ✓ In terms of forest cover as percentage of total geographical area, the top five States are Mizoram (84.53%), Arunachal Pradesh (79.33%), Meghalaya (76.00%), Manipur (74.34%) and Nagaland (73.90%).
- ✓ Total mangrove cover in the country stands at 4,992 sq km, showing an increase of 17 sq Km from the previous assessment of 2019.
  - ✓ Top three states showing mangrove cover increase are Odisha (8 sq km) followed by Maharashtra (4 sq km) and Karnataka (3 sq km).

- ✓ Total carbon stock in country's forest is estimated to be 7,204 million tonnes and there an increase of 79.4 million tonnes in the carbon stock of country as compared to the last assessment of 2019.
- ✓ The annual increase in the carbon stock is 39.7 million tones

(Figures in sqkm)



- ✓ **In the past two years, Tamil Nadu expanded its forest cover by 55sqkm, but lost 406sqkm of tree cover.**
  - ✓ The state is ranked ninth in the country in terms of forest cover at 20% of its total geographical area
  - ✓ In terms of canopy density, very dense forest and moderate dense forest account for 55% of the total forest cover in the state
  - ✓ Significant additions have been recorded in Kancheepuram (17. 5sqkm), Pudukkottai (12. 3sqkm) and Ariyalur (11. 5sqkm) districts since the last assessment report published two years ago.
  - ✓ Villupuram district has lost forest cover of 23sqkm.
  - ✓ Chennai has turned greener in the past 10 years as tree cover in the city has increased by nearly 1,200 acres or 5sqkm
  - ✓ In 2011, only 4% of the total city was covered by forests and the green cover was largely because of the Guindy National Park and the total green cover was around 4,400 acres (18sqkm).
  - ✓ Despite losing thousands of trees to cyclones, the green cover in Chennai has increased by 25% in the past decade
  - ✓ Among several reasons, this growth could be attributed to the Greater Chennai Corporation's Miyawaki initiative and citizen activism

- ✓ In the present ISFR 2021, FSI has included a new chapter related to the assessment of forest cover in the Tiger Reserves, Corridors and Lion conservation area of India
  - ✓ Pakke Tiger Reserve in Arunachal Pradesh has the highest forest cover, at nearly 97%
  - ✓ Buxa, Anamalai and Indravati reserves have shown an increase in forest cover while the highest losses have been found in Kawal, Bhadra and the Sunderbans reserves.
  - ✓ The forest cover in tiger corridors has increased by 37.15 sq km (0.32%) between 2011-2021, but decreased by 22.6 sq km (0.04%) in tiger reserves.
- ✓ A new initiative of FSI has also been documented in the form of a chapter, where the 'Above Ground Biomass' has been estimated in collaboration with Space Application Centre (SAC), ISRO, Ahmedabad
- ✓ FSI in collaboration of with Birla Institute of Technology & Science (BITS) Pilani, Goa Campus has performed a study based on 'Mapping of Climate Change Hotspots in Indian Forests' in three future time period scenarios of 2030, 2050 and 2085
  - ✓ The data for this purpose was obtained from the India Meteorological Department (IMD).
  - ✓ Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand are projected to witness the highest temperature increase
  - ✓ Andaman & Nicobar Islands, West Bengal, Goa, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh may face least temperature rise over these short, medium and long time periods
  - ✓ Further, northeastern states and Upper Malabar Coast are projected to experience the highest increase in rainfall, while part of the northeastern states like Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim and north-west parts of the country such as Ladakh, J&K and
  - ✓ Himachal Pradesh are projected to experience "least increase and sometimes even decline" in rainfall.
- ✓ The biennial assessment of forest cover of the country using mid-resolution Satellite data is based on interpretation of LISS-III data from Indian Remote Sensing satellite data (Resourcesat-II)
- ✓ The accuracy of forest cover classification has been assessed 92.99%
- ✓ The Forest Survey of India defines 'forest cover' as all lands of a hectare or more with tree patches with canopy density of more than 10%, which includes all lands, irrespective of legal ownership and land use
- ✓ 'Recorded forest area' includes only those areas recorded as forests in government records and includes pristine forests.
- ✓ The Forest Survey of India has listed four categories of forests and the state of forest survey is based on these –
  - ✓ Very Dense Forest (with tree canopy density of 70% or above)



- ✓ Moderately Dense Forest (tree canopy density of 40% or above but less than 70%)
- ✓ Open Forest (tree canopy density of 10% or above but less than 40%)
- ✓ Scrub (tree canopy density less than 10%)
- ✓ Open forests currently have the biggest share in the country's forest cover, with 9.34% of the total forest cover (307,120 sq km).
- ✓ Very dense forests (the pristine natural forests) account for just 3.04% (99,779 sq km) of the total forest cover.
- ✓ The ISFR-2021 provides information on forest cover, tree cover, mangrove cover, growing stock, carbon stock in India's forests, forest fire monitoring, forest cover in tiger reserve areas, above ground estimates of biomass using SAR data & climate change hotspots in Indian forests
- ✓ The first survey was published in 1987, and ISFR 2021 is the 17th.

