

## EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS–JANUARY 15, 2022

### TAMIL NADU

- **Union Minister of State for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences Dr Jitendra Singh – inaugurated a new doppler weather radar installed in the National Institute of Ocean Technology campus at Pallikaranai on January 14.**
- ✓ This will be the second radar in Chennai in addition to the existing one at the Chennai Port Trust Centenary Building
- ✓ The radar with Isro's technology is the third doppler weather radar which will be monitoring weather around Chennai in X band
- ✓ Already, two S band radars were installed at Sriharikota and Chennai.
- ✓ Tamil Nadu also has a radar at Karaikal.
- ✓ The new equipment is a dual polarised doppler weather radar capable of providing coverage in an area with a radius of 150km around Chennai.



- ✓ The existing S band radar at Chennai Port, which is nearly two decades old, has a range of 500km and is capable of tracking weather systems like cyclones
- ✓ However, the new X band radar will track clouds apart from other atmospheric parameters to help in daily forecast.

- ✓ The new radar is designed and developed by scientists at Istrac, Isro and is manufactured by Data Patterns, Chennai.
  - ✓ The radar was installed and energised in March 2021 and since then has been undergoing a series of tests and calibration.
  - ✓ Last week, scientists from Isro and IMD carried out a calibration experiment on the radar using a drone.
  - ✓ According to IMD, it was the first time a drone was used in the country to calibrate a weather radar.
- **The 8<sup>th</sup> edition of Pongal Bird Count (PBC), an annual bird monitoring programme - will take place from January 14 to 17, 2022**
- ✓ The four-day bird counting exercise will be undertaken by the Tamil Birders' Network (TBN) and Bird Count India (BCI) in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry



- ✓ The participants will go for 'birding', list and count all the bird species they see for at least 15 minutes each day and upload the observations on [www.ebird.org/india](http://www.ebird.org/india), an online database of bird observations
- ✓ The participants are free to choose any site of their interest for the count, which may be near a pond or a lake or even from the balcony or terrace.
- ✓ Of nearly 525 species recorded in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry region, 356 species were reported during the Pongal bird count in 2021.
- ✓ Last year, 340 birders from all over Tamil Nadu and Puducherry participated in the count.
- ✓ Most of the spottings were recorded from Coimbatore, Tirupur and Salem.
- ✓ Common myna was the most sighted resident bird appearing in 59.7% of all the checklists, followed by the house crow (56.7%) and rose-ringed parakeet (47.2%).
- ✓ The most common migrant appearing in 28.1% of the checklists was barn swallow followed by Blyth's reed warbler (21.2%) and blue-tailed bee-eater (19.3%).

- ✓ The event is part of a worldwide effort to document birds around the globe and to make bird watching popular and scientific.
- ✓ Pongal Bird Count, which began in 2015 with 115 participants attracted 180 participants in 2016, and grew to 340 in 2021.
- **Tangedco, the state-run power utility - is bidding for two coal blocks in Odisha to meet the growing power needs of the state**
- ✓ The two coal blocks are Meenakshi coal block in IB Valley and Bankhui coal block in Talcher
- ✓ The fully explored Meenakshi coal block is spread over an area of 492 hectares, while the partially explored Bankhui coal block is spread over 998 hectares
- ✓ The distance between Ennore Port and the coal blocks is 1,200 km to 1,300 km via Paradip port.
- ✓ The auction process of 88 coal mines for sale of coal was launched by the Union ministry of coal in October 2021.
  - ✓ The ministry had successfully completed the auction of 28 coal mines in the first two tranches.
  - ✓ A total of 53 bids were received by the ministry under the third tranche for 20 coal mines
  - ✓ Out of these 20 coal mines, 16 were fully explored mines and four were partially explored.
- ✓ The existing 4,320 MW generating stations in North Chennai, Mettur and Tuticorin consume 62,000 tonne of coal a day.
- ✓ Further, the Ennore SEZ, Udangudi Stage I, Uppur Supercritical, North Chennai Stage III, and Ennore thermal power station expansion projects are to be launched soon providing an additional generating capacity of 5,700MW
- ✓ Tangedco had also sought the Union government's support to revise the time schedule for the development of Chandrabilla coal block allotted in 2016.
  - ✓ The development of Chandrabilla coal block was affected due to non-issuance of clearance for exploration in the forest area of the coal block by the environment and forests ministry.

## STATES

- **Kerala's Kumbalangi gram panchayat - has become the first sanitary napkin free panchayat in India**
- ✓ This was announced by the State Governor Arif Mohammed Khan on January 13
- ✓ The Governor has also declared Kumbalangi as India's first model tourism village
- ✓ All the women in this gram panchayat use menstrual cups instead of sanitary pads
- ✓ The panchayat is moving towards this eco-friendly change under the Prime Minister's Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) scheme

- ✓ The achievement is part of a unique campaign underway in Ernakulam constituency.



- ✓ A project called 'Avalkayi' (for her) is being implemented in the constituency in connection with the distribution and awareness of menstrual cups
- ✓ Hindustan Latex Limited (HLL) had come up with a scheme called 'Thinkal' for the production and distribution of the cup in association with financial partner, Indian Oil Corporation (IOC)
- ✓ In 2003, Kumbalangi was the first choice when the Kerala government selected a number of villages as part of its model village project
- ✓ Situated 35 km away from Cochin International Airport, the village has nearly 1,20,000 residents – comprising fishermen, farmers, labourers, toddy tappers and coir spinners – and is surrounded by backwaters

## NATIONAL

- **The Ministry of Education – releases draft guidelines to assess the professional standards of school teachers.**
- ✓ As per the draft “National Professional Standards for Teachers” (NPST), the assessment of professional standards of teachers will be based on core values and ethics
  - ✓ This includes constitutional and professional values, commitment to students and profession; professional knowledge like understanding of the subject area, pedagogical knowledge, technology use and integration in education; lesson delivery; and professional development and growth.
- ✓ As mandated by the National Education Policy 2020, the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) has been restructured as a professional standard setting body and is developing the NPST.
- ✓ The NPST document proposes four career stages and professional standards for teachers at each stage – beginner teacher, proficient teacher, expert teacher and lead teacher.
- ✓ Specific competency standards for teachers have been defined in NPST to be achieved at each of the career stages in order to progress to the next stage.



- ✓ It has to be recalled that NEP 2020 restructured school education system to a 5 + 3 + 3 + 4 curricular and pedagogical structure
- **The Ministry of Home Affairs - has proposed creation of a separate enclosure or ward for trans-men and trans-women inmates in prisons**
- ✓ The creation of a ward separate from the male and female enclosures aims to ensure safety of transgenders lodged in jails and their protection from any form of exploitation
- ✓ In this regard, the home ministry has sent a letter to all state chief secretaries, UT administrators and DGPs and IGPs
- ✓ Further, the ministry suggested that there should be adequate preservation of the right of privacy and dignity of transgenders in regard to separate toilets and shower facilities for trans-men and trans-women inmates.
- ✓ The suggestions on treatment and care of transgender persons in prisons are in line with provisions of The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, and the rules framed thereunder.
- ✓ The act guarantees transgenders 'recognition' of their preferred gender identity, prohibition against discrimination and access to state-sponsored welfare measures.
- ✓ As per the Act, transgenders are those whose gender does not match the gender assigned to them at birth, persons with intersex variations or persons having socio-cultural identities such as 'kinnar', 'hijra' etc
- ✓ The Home ministry also suggested that the prison department of the respective states/UTs facilitate the process of acquiring of transgender identity certificate if such a request is received, by registering on the online national portal for transgender persons.
- **The Ministry of Ayush - organized the first ever 'Surya Namaskar Demonstration programme' on 14 January 2022 for 75 lakh people globally on the occasion of Makar Sankranti**



- ✓ The event will underline the importance of the day of Makar Sakranti in our cultural and spiritual heritage, which commemorates the journey of the sun to the Northern Hemisphere
  - ✓ The Surya Namaskar is a set of 8 Asanas performed in 12 steps with coordination of the body and mind, which is preferably performed in the early morning.
  - ✓ Sarbananda Sonowal, Minister of Ayush, addressed the people and gave his message on Surya Namaskar.
  - ✓ As the primary source of energy, the ministry highlighted that Sun is not only critical for the continuation of the food chain but it also energizes the mind and body of human beings.
  - ✓ It stated that exposure to the Sun provides the human body with Vitamin D, which has been widely recommended in medical sciences around the world
  - ✓ Leading yoga institutes, the Indian Yoga Association, National Yoga Sports Federation, Yoga Certification Board, FIT India, and many government and non-government organisations participated in this worldwide program.
- **Pingle, India's first indigenously designed and manufactured car - was located in a scrapyard at Hyderabad.**
- ✓ The low-cost car suitable for Indian road conditions and hailed as the automobile of the middle classes was first displayed at the annual Numaish in Hyderabad about 70 years ago
  - ✓ The Pingle family, which traced the car after decades of search, is restoring the vehicle in the best possible way.



### CARNAMA OF PINGLE

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|---|---|
| ➤ Pingle was meant for lower and upper middle classes       | ➤ It had a twin-cylinder air-cooled and two stroke engine |
| ➤ The target group was people using scooters                |   |
| ➤ It was planned to produce <b>7,000</b> cars in first year |   |
| ➤ The price quoted was <b>₹4,600</b> ex-factory             | ➤ It came with a power of <b>7 bhp</b>                    |
| ➤ Pingle had fewer moving parts in engine and gearbox       | ➤ The chassis was made of reinforced glass fibre          |



- ✓ One of the three prototypes of the car was last seen in good condition at HAL campus in Bangalore in early 1970s, but went missing since 2017.

- ✓ While its whereabouts are still not known, the two other prototypes are now found in an automobile scrapyard in Hyderabad at varying stages of decay.
- ✓ The car was named after Hyderabad-based engineer Captain Pingle Madhusudan Reddy, who had designed and developed the vehicle in the early 1950s while serving as the general manager, HAL.
- ✓ Popularly called PM Reddy, he was a pioneer aviator, flying instructor of Hyderabad state aero club, chief pilot of Nizam State Railway-air department, and general manager of Deccan Airways Limited.
- ✓ The car was a star attraction in Hyderabad during 1950s through 1970s.
- ✓ Former Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru inspected the prototypes and appreciated the engineering execution.
- ✓ HAL planned to begin mass production of the car, but couldn't get the approval and the car never went to mass production
  - ✓ HAL had planned for producing 7,000 such cars at a cost of ₹4,600 each before taxes
  - ✓ The cost was kept low as the production of the parts involved is to be made in the HAL
- ✓ The prototype vehicle was built by another PSU, Praga Tools Corporation (now defunct) in Kavadiaguda, in the region
- ✓ This car was made especially for the Indian roads, being powered by a two-cylinder, two-stroke engine capable of producing 7hp of power

## **SUPREME COURT VERDICT**

- **The Supreme Court – has expanded the definition of vulnerable witness in a criminal case recently on January 11**
- ✓ The apex court expanded the definition to include –
  - ✓ any speech or hearing impaired individual or
  - ✓ a person suffering from any other disability or
  - ✓ age and gender neutral victims of sexual assault or
  - ✓ witnesses suffering from mental illness and
  - ✓ any witness deemed to have threat perception under the witness protection scheme of 2018 of the Union government.
- ✓ The top court directed all the high courts to adopt and notify a Vulnerable Witness Deposition Centre (VWDC) scheme within two months from the date of order
- ✓ Further, the SC ordered all high courts to set up within four months at least one safe, separate and exclusive facility in each district court complex to help vulnerable witnesses record their statements uninhibitedly.
  - ✓ The order is aimed to lessen the trauma and discomfiture of sexual assault survivors in narrating their ordeal in crowded conventional courts
- ✓ A bench of Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and Surya Kant appointed former Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir High Court Gita Mittal as chairperson of the committee for designing and implementing an all India VWDC training programme



- ✓ The training programme aims to manage VWDC centres and sensitise all the stakeholders including judicial officers, members of the bar and staff of the court establishments.
- ✓ The SC asked HC's to ensure that there is one VWDC in each district
- ✓ In order to meet the financial resources requirement, the SC directed that a senior finance department official in the state government would be made a nodal officer and ex-officio member of the HC committee set up for the purpose
- ✓ The definition of vulnerable witness contained in clause 3 of the VWDC scheme formulated by the Delhi high court is limited to child witnesses, who have not attained the age of 18 years
- ✓ The SC gave the Delhi high court the credit for being the pioneer in framing such a scheme.

## INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **The UK government - announced the launch of free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations with India**
- ✓ In this regard, a meeting took place between commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal and UK trade secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan for the 15th UK-India Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) on January 13
- ✓ The meeting reviewed the progress within the UK-India Enhanced Trade Partnership agreed last May by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson.



- ✓ During the meeting, the two countries agreed to launch talks in 16 areas, including intellectual property rights, sustainability, competition, women and MSMEs and anti-corruption, apart from goods, services and investment.
- ✓ The talks for an interim agreement will cover around 60-65% of the goods and 50-60 of the identified services
- ✓ The first round of negotiations is expected to start next week and expected to be concluded by the end of year



- ✓ During the talks, the world's fifth-and sixth-largest economies seek to double trade to \$100 billion by end of the decade.
- ✓ By the time talks conclude, the coverage will expand to include over 90% of the goods.
- ✓ On the goods side, shrimp, textiles, chemicals, footwear and pharma were identified as potential focus areas for India, with telecom, IT, travel, and other business services, comprising consulting, accounting, and back office work being the focus.
- ✓ Agriculture and dairy products were identified as sensitive areas by India.
- ✓ With respect to UK, an India-UK FTA has the potential to boost bilateral trade by up to GBP 28 billion a year by 2035 and increase wages by up to GBP 3 billion across the UK
- ✓ The bilateral trade between both the countries was \$15.5 billion in 2019-20 as opposed to \$16.87 billion in 2018-19.

## PERSONALITIES

- **Poet and activist Maya Angelou - becomes the first Black woman to appear on a US coin**



- ✓ Born in Missouri in 1928, Angelou was an African American author and activist, who worked with civil rights leaders Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X.
- ✓ The coin rolled out by the US Mint is part of the American Women Quarters programme
- ✓ Angelou rose to international prominence after the publication of her groundbreaking autobiography, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," with its raw account of rape and racism in the segregated South.
- ✓ She has written seven autobiographies alongwith several books of poetry and three books of essays
- ✓ The prolific African-American writer died in 2014, aged 86

- ✓ For the last 90 years, the 25-cent coin has shown the nation's first president, George Washington, on one side and an eagle on the other.
- ✓ The new quarters show Washington on one side and Angelou on the other.
- ✓ The recipient of more than 30 honorary degrees, Angelou read "On the Pulse of Morning" at the 1992 inauguration of former President Bill Clinton.
  - ✓ Angelou's reading marked the first time an African-American woman wrote and presented a poem at a presidential inauguration.
- ✓ In 2010, Barack Obama awarded Angelou the Presidential Medal of Freedom
- ✓ In 2013, Angelou was the recipient of the Literarian Award, an honorary National Book Award for contributions to the literary community.
- ✓ The American Women Quarters programme was launched to mint 20 coins and was signed into law in January 2021.
  - ✓ The program directs the US Mint to issue 'quarters' each year between 2022 and 2025 featuring five different female American trailblazers.
  - ✓ The other female personalities to be included are - Sally Ride, the first American woman in space, Wilma Mankiller, the first female principal chief of the Cherokee Nation, Nina Otero-Warren, a New Mexico suffrage leader and Anna May Wong, a Chinese American film star.
- ✓ In 1999, the US launched a series of quarters honoring the 50 states, with a state's design depicted on the coin's reverse

## ECONOMY

- **India's economy - is expected to grow 8. 3% in the fiscal year ending March 2022, unchanged from the June 2021 outlook**
- ✓ This was revealed in the World Bank forecast in its latest global economic prospects report.
- ✓ The forecast for fiscal year 2022-23 and fiscal year 2023-24 for India has been upgraded to 8.7% and 6.8%, respectively
- ✓ However, the economic growth in China is forecast to slow to 5. 1% in 2022 due to the effects of the pandemic and tighter regulations on certain segments of the economy.
- ✓ The government estimates the economy to grow by 9. 2% in the fiscal year ending March, slightly below the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) estimate of 9.5%.
- ✓ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has also projected a 9. 5% growth for India.
- **Asia's first cryptocurrency exchange-traded fund (ETF) - could be launched in India's GIFT City this year.**
- ✓ Torus Kling Blockchain IFSC has signed an MoU with BSE's international arm India INX to launch digital asset-based products, which will be traded on GIFT City's IFSC (International Financial Services Centre).

- ✓ Torus Kling Blockchain IFSC is a joint venture between Mumbai-based Cosmea Financial Holdings and Hyderabad-based Kling Trading India
  - ✓ The development comes after the US securities regulator SEC in October 2021 allowed launch of crypto futures ETF, the first such in the US.
  - ✓ ETFs track returns from cryptocurrencies without investing directly in the digital tokens.
  - ✓ The Torus Kling crypto futures ETF will be launched in a sandbox environment, which is under GIFT regulatory authority IFSCA.
    - ✓ Such a sandbox allows regulated entities to launch and live-test products under strict controls.
  - ✓ Once the Torus Kling ETF obtains regulatory nod, Indians will be able to invest in this ETF using the RBI's liberalised remittance scheme (LRS) route.
  - ✓ Global investors, who have similar options in the US and Switzerland, will have another alternative to invest through the regular process.
  - ✓ The exchange has already made an application to IFSCA under the regulatory sandbox.
  - ✓ According to estimates, global annual derivatives trading volume in the cryptocurrency market is about \$3.2 trillion, while total spot volume is at approximately \$2.7 trillion.
  - ✓ ETFs allow trading through regular investment accounts, bypassing the hassle and security concerns of cryptocurrency exchanges.
- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) - has set up a Fintech department to focus on the "dynamically" growing financial sector and to facilitate innovation**
- ✓ Ajay Kumar Choudhary, who was recently promoted as the Executive Director of RBI, will head the department
  - ✓ All matters related to inter-regulatory coordination and internal coordination on fintech shall also be dealt with by the Department
  - ✓ Recently, the Central Bank revised its guidelines for Fintech companies for accessing credit data bureaus and registering as customers.
  - ✓ According to a circular issued by RBI, the FinTech department was set up on January 4, 2022.
  - ✓ Earlier, RBI had set up a FinTech Unit in the Department of Regulation after June 2018 to act as a central point of contact in bank for all activities associated to fintech.
  - ✓ Now, RBI had upgraded the "FinTech Unit" into a "FinTech department" to focus on the sector so as to address the related issues in a time bound manner.

## APPOINTMENTS

- **Former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor, Urjit Patel - has been appointed as the vice-president for investment operations in South Asia, the**



## Pacific Islands and Southeast Asia at the Beijing-based Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)



- ✓ He will take over from D Jagatheesa Pandian, a former Gujarat chief secretary who has been AIIB's vice-president and chief investment officer since its inception in 2016
- ✓ D J Pandian was head of the Gujarat State Petroleum Corp (GSPC) when the PM Narendra Modi was the chief minister of Gujarat.
- ✓ The appointment of Patel will be effective from February 1, 2022
- ✓ Patel is currently the chairperson of the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, a leading think tank on fiscal policy and tax matters, affiliated to the finance ministry.
  - ✓ He was also Executive Director and member of the Management Committee of the Infrastructure Development Finance Company Ltd.
  - ✓ The Nairobi-born Ujjit Patel, 58, was the 24th governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), succeeding Raghuram Rajan on September 5, 2016
  - ✓ He quit his job as RBI governor in 2018 following differences with the NDA government over fiscal policies
  - ✓ A PhD in economics from Yale University, Patel is the recipient of the Wilbur Cross Medal from Yale University in 2019 and has authored many scholarly publications and papers
- ✓ AIIB's senior management team is headed by President Jin Liqun of China, who started his second five-year term in January 2021
- ✓ Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is on the board of governors of the bank
- ✓ AIIB currently has five vice-presidents, with a three-year term each
- ✓ India is AIIB's largest borrower since it was set up six years ago with India as its second largest shareholder after China.
- ✓ Indonesia, Turkey, Bangladesh and China are the next four borrowers from the bank with over \$7 billion investment.
- ✓ As of October 22, AIIB has overall approved 147 projects in 31 countries valued at \$28.97 billion
- ✓ In December, AIIB approved the \$150 million "Chennai City Partnership: Sustainable Urban Service Program" aiming to strengthen institutions and

improve the quality and financial sustainability of selected urban services in Chennai

- ✓ In late December, the AIIB approved the application of Iraq to join, becoming the bank's 51st regional member to bring its membership to 105.
- ✓ AIIB is a multilateral development bank that aims to improve economic and social outcomes in Asia

## NATIONAL DAY

### ➤ Indian Army Day – January 15



- ✓ Indian Army Day is celebrated every year on January 15 in recognition of Field Marshal K.M Cariappa taking over as the first commander-in-chief of the Indian army
- ✓ M Cariappa took over from General Sir Francis Butcher to become the Indian Army's first Commander-in-Chief on January 15, 1949
- ✓ This year marks the 74th Army Day by honouring the selfless fighters of the country, who have given their lives for the country
- ✓ To mark the occasion, the chiefs of the tri-services, General Naravane (Army), Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari (Air Force), and Admiral R Hari Kumar (Navy), paid tributes at the National War Memorial in New Delhi.
- ✓ Every year, the day is marked by conducting a military parade and many other martial displays at Delhi Cantonment's Cariappa Parade Ground.
- ✓ The Chief of the Army Staff reviewed the Army Day Parade at the Cariappa Parade Ground, Delhi Cantonment and awarded 15 Sena Medals (including five posthumously) for individual acts of gallantry and 23 COAS Unit Citations to units for their commendable performance.
- ✓ A song titled 'Maati', sung by famed singer Hariharan, dedicated to the Army and the nation was exclusively released during the event
- ✓ As a part of celebrations, 'Monumental National Flag', the world's largest national flag made from Khadi, was displayed along the India-Pakistan border in Rajasthan's Longewala



- ✓ Longewala was the center stage of the battle between India and Pakistan in 1971.
- ✓ The Southern Command unveiled the flag at Jaisalmer Military Station.
- ✓ A massive 4500 meters of hand-spun, hand-woven Khadi cotton bunting has been used in making the flag which covers a total area of 33,750 square feet
- ✓ On the flag's dimensions, it is 225 feet long, 150 feet wide and weighs around 1400 kilogram, while the Ashoka Chakra in the centre has a diameter of 30 feet.
- ✓ Manufactured by Khadi Dyers and Printers, the flag is a "befitting tribute to the Indian heritage" as it is made of 100% Khadi material
- ✓ According to the Ministry of micro, small and medium enterprises, this is the fifth public display of the national flag since its unveiling in Leh on October 2, 2021.
  - ✓ It was then displayed at Hindon Airbase on the occasion of Air Force Day on October 8, 2021 and at the Red Fort on October 21, 2021, that marked the completion of 100 crore Covid-19 vaccinations in India.
  - ✓ On December 4, 2021, the national flag was displayed for the fourth time at the Naval Dockyard near Gateway of India in Mumbai to celebrate Navy Day
- ✓ **The new uniform of the Indian Army was unveiled at the parade ground on the occasion of the Army Day Parade**
- ✓ The new uniform has been designed by a team of eight students and professors from National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) as per the specifications provided by the Indian Army.





- ✓ The army had been planning to change the pattern as well as the material used in the uniform to make it easy and comfortable to be worn by men and women in the Army.
- ✓ The new uniform is of digital pattern like the troopers of the US Army use.
- ✓ Also, one of the key features of the uniform is that the soldiers will not have to tuck in the dress
- ✓ The new camouflage dress is an amalgamation of colours including earthen and olive.
- ✓ It will be introduced in the Indian Army by August this year.
- ✓ The decision to introduce the new Army battle gear was made at the last Army Commanders' Conference

