

## EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS—JANUARY 28, 2022

### TAMIL NADU

- On January 27, the Tamil Nadu government - allowed reopening of schools, colleges and places of worship from February 1, and withdraws night curfew and Sunday lockdowns

#### RETURN TO 'NORMALCY'



##### CURBS RELAXED

- No night curfew starting today
- No full lockdown on Sundays (starting Jan 30)
- Schools, colleges allowed to conduct physical classes from Feb 1
- Devotees allowed at places of worship on weekends
- No seating restrictions on buses, Metro trains

##### ALLOWED BUT WITH SOME RESTRICTIONS

**50% CAP ON** Hotels, restaurants, bakeries, multiplexes, theatres, shops, showrooms, jewellery shops, clubs, gyms, sporting events at indoor stadiums, music and drama at halls, conferences, beauty parlours, salons, spas, entertainment/amusement parks

- Weddings can have a maximum of 100 guests and funerals 50 mourners

##### WHAT'S STILL OFF LIMITS?

No political meetings and social events | No play schools and nursery schools (LKG & UKG) | No trade fairs, water sports at amusement parks | No cultural events by govt and private parties

- ✓ The announcement came after chief minister M K Stalin chaired a meeting with health experts and officials on relaxing the Covid-19 restrictions.
- ✓ Starting February 1, physical classes have been allowed for all students from Class I to Class XII.
- ✓ Colleges, except those being used as Covid care centres, are also allowed to function from February 1 following Covid protocols.

- ✓ However, the government has retained the ban on political meetings, cultural and social gatherings from February 1 to 15.
  - ✓ Marriages will be allowed with just 100 people while funerals will be allowed with 50 people.
  - ✓ The ban on play schools and nursery schools would continue and trade fairs, cultural festivals by government and private people also will not be allowed
  - ✓ The government retained the curbs such as allowing hotels, bakeries, theatres, multiplexes, music events, conferences, gyms, beauty parlours, salons to function with just 50% occupancy.
  - ✓ Sports events will be allowed with 50% occupancy in indoor stadiums.
  - ✓ All amusement parks and entertainment parks (except water sports) will be allowed to function with Covid-19 protocols and 50% capacity.
- **A two-day synchronised bird census in wetlands across the TN coast - will begin on January 28.**



- ✓ The census is aimed at finding the number of species and the number of birds migrating to the state in winter.
- ✓ It will also be used to obtain a baseline data on the approximate waterbird population in the state that can be used to compare the population trends during different years.
- ✓ This is the first time a census on wetland birds close to coastal areas including Pulicat in Tiruvallur district, Pallikaranai in Chennai and Kovalam creek in Chengalpet is being done.
- ✓ As per the census guidelines, there is no restriction in the number of teams of volunteers participating, with each team having 3-7 members.
- ✓ One member will note down the count and another will photograph congregation of birds and their diversity.
- ✓ There will be no additional time for photography as they have to cover a large area.
- ✓ The third team member will note down the coordinates, using GPS, at the start and end of each day.

- ✓ The first phase is for coastal wetlands and the second for inland terrestrial birds for which dates will be announced soon
- **The railways - is installing a new train detection system on all the main routes and will be able to run services even if tracks are flooded and signals malfunction.**
- ✓ The multi-section digital axle counter (MSDAC) will be installed in Central-Gudur, Central-Jolarpet and Egmore-Tambaram routes
- ✓ The MSDAC system uses electromagnetic sensors to count wheels and detect trains, their direction and speed on a track
- ✓ It has already been installed on some sections that are prone to flooding and will be extended to the entire Chennai division in two years.
- ✓ The state-of-the-art system has been installed on Guduvancheri-Chengalpet third line, Egmore-Kodambakkam, Avadi-Pattabiram stretches and at stations like Chennai Egmore, Chennai Central, Omalur, Salem Town, Erode, Virapandy Road, Tirupur, Ernakulam Town, Kayamkulam, Quilon, Irumpanam in 2021-22
- ✓ The new system is more reliable for detecting trains not affected by the condition of tracks like water logging and traction currents.
- ✓ It also helps in easy integration and implementation of a centralized traffic control and train protection system (KAVACH).

## STATES

- **The temple town of Tirupati - is becoming a new district and will be named after the presiding deity Lord Sri Balaji.**
- ✓ In this regard, the state government has issued a draft notification proposing names for a few other districts too
- ✓ Further, the state government decided to name Vijayawada district after the founding president of Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and former chief minister NT Rama Rao.
- ✓ Chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy promised to name a district after NTR during the last election campaign.
- ✓ However, the birth place of NTR, Nimmakuru in Krishna district, is now part of Pamarru assembly constituency and went to the newly proposed Krishna district by retaining Machilipatnam as district headquarters.
- ✓ The state government has decided to name Vijayawada district after NTR in order to protect the historical significance of Krishna district named after the river Krishna and also port town of Machilipatnam.
- ✓ Saint, legendary musician and poet Annamayya's name has been proposed for Rajampet district.
- ✓ Tallapaka Annamacharya (Annamayya) was born in Kadapa district and scripted and composed hundreds of keerthanas praising Lord Sri Venkateswara and Lord Vishnu.

- ✓ Rajampet district lost both the name and the district headquarter status.
- ✓ Rayachoti town is going to be the district headquarters for Annamayya district covering Rajampet Lok Sabha constituency.
- ✓ Araku Lok Sabha constituency will be named after revolutionary freedom fighter Alluri Sitaramaraju.
- **Nellore - has become the first district in Andhra Pradesh to achieve 100% coverage of second dose of Covid-19 vaccine among people aged over 18.**
- ✓ In fact, Nellore was also the first district to attain a similar milestone pertaining to the first dose.
- ✓ Continuing the trend, the district emerged as the first one to complete 100% first dose vaccination for the 15-18 age group.
- ✓ About 99% of the frontline respondents and healthcare workers have been fully immunised against the pandemic.
- ✓ The state already achieved 100% first dose coverage, while the second dose coverage touched the 90% mark as on January 26.

## NATIONAL

- **On January 27, the government - officially handed over Air India to the Tata group along with budget airline AI Express and a 50% stake in ground handler AI-SATS**



- ✓ The divestment was completed exactly two years after the preliminary information memorandum was issued.
- ✓ The government transferred 100% shares in Air India to Tata's wholly owned subsidiary Talace Pvt Ltd along with management control.
- ✓ Ahead of the final handing-over formalities at Airlines House in New Delhi, Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran called upon Prime Minister Narendra Modi
- ✓ Following the conclusion of the deal, the government-appointed directors on the board of Air India, led by recently appointed chairman and managing director Vikram Dev Dutt, stepped down for the Tata-appointed board to take over.



- ✓ As per the bidding conditions, the Tata Group will have to retain all employees of Air India for one year from the close of the transaction and can offer a voluntary retirement scheme (VRS) in the second year.
  - ✓ Further, the Tata Group cannot transfer the Air India brand or logo for five years, and thereafter can do so only to an Indian entity.
  - ✓ The conclusion of the Air India deal also marks a major first step in the Centre's mega privatisation push
  - ✓ The Union Cabinet gave in principle nod for disinvestment of Air India, in June 2017
  - ✓ In October last year, the Tata Group had emerged as winning bidder for 100% of Air India with a bid of Rs 18,000 crore, beating a consortium led by SpiceJet chairman Ajay Singh.
  - ✓ Of this amount, Tatas were to take over Rs 15,300 crore worth of debt and Rs 2,700 crore was to be paid to the government in cash from the Strategic Partner, M/s Talace Pvt Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of M/s Tata Sons Pvt Ltd
  - ✓ As of August 31, 2021, the airline had a total debt of Rs 60,000 crore.
  - ✓ The finance ministry's Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) oversaw the sale
  - ✓ Air India has 12,085 employees – 8,084 permanent and 4,001 contractual, while Air India Express has 1,434 employees
  - ✓ The addition of Air India to its aviation portfolio will give the Tata Group access to 1,800 international landing and parking slots at domestic airports, and 900 slots at airports overseas, in addition to the 4,400 domestic slots.
  - ✓ In addition, the group gets access to Air India's 49 wide-bodied planes, 128 narrow-bodied planes, and Air India Express' 25 narrow-bodied planes.
  - ✓ TCS will be managing AI's IT and digital operations.
  - ✓ The Tata group holds a 51% stake in full-service airline Vistara, in which Singapore Airlines is the minority partner.
  - ✓ It also owns a majority stake in AirAsia India Ltd, with Malaysia's AirAsia Bhd as the junior partner.
  - ✓ AI was originally launched by former industrialist and aviator J R D Tata in 1932 as the nation's first carrier, Tata Airlines, flying mail between Karachi and Bombay
  - ✓ In the year 1948, government acquired a 49% stake in it before the government nationalised the sector in 1953
- **On January 27, the drug regulator - granted regular marketing authorisation to the two commonly used Covid vaccines — Covishield and Covaxin — for use in adults with certain conditions.**
- ✓ However, the vaccines will be available only under “programmatic setting” and all vaccinations done within the country have to be recorded on the CoWIN platform.
  - ✓ This means though the vaccines will continue to be available at both public and private centres that are registered under government's CoWin platform, they cannot be bought in retail at a pharmacy or chemist.

- ✓ The makers of both vaccines would have to submit data of overseas ongoing clinical trials of their formulations with due analysis every six months or earlier if available.
  - ✓ So far, the two vaccines were under emergency use authorisation.
  - ✓ While the vaccines were given approval based on limited data from ongoing clinical trials, the manufacturers had to submit safety and adverse events data to the regulator every 15 days.
  - ✓ With the regular approval in place, manufactures can now submit such data once in six months.
- **The NITI Aayog - has ordered a thorough evaluation study of the country's four agri-commodity boards – Tea Board, Coffee Board, Rubber Board and Spices Board – and their ongoing schemes**
- ✓ The evaluation has been ordered based on an instruction from the department of expenditure under the Union finance ministry.
  - ✓ For over a decade or so, the utility, functioning and importance of these agri-industry regulators have been under the Central government scanner.
  - ✓ The latest study, as initiated by the Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO) of NITI Aayog, may lead to a possible merger or a complete dissolution of this quarter.
  - ✓ The evaluation studies are to be carried out by DMEO
  - ✓ They will involve analyses of time series data and information contained in documents such as annual report, other progress reports, scheme documents and evaluation reports
  - ✓ The study will also focus on multi-stage primary survey involving national, state, district, block and village-level stakeholders and beneficiaries of the schemes.
  - ✓ The Centre also is planning to repeal the Tea Act of 1953 and the Coffee Act of 1942, which are to be replaced by new regulations

## **COURT VERDICT**

- **The Supreme Court - has ruled that constitutional courts cannot direct the states to earmark a certain per cent of reservation to any category in admissions to government-run institutions or jobs**
- ✓ The apex court quashed a Punjab and Haryana HC verdict directing a 3% sports quota in admissions to medical and dental institutions in the state.
  - ✓ The Punjab government had challenged the HC's direction to provide for a 3% quota in admissions to MBBS and BDS courses in government medical and dental colleges in place of 1% reservation provided by the state, which has a large number of sportspersons.
  - ✓ A bench of Justices M R Shah and B V Nagarathna said a constitutional court cannot even direct reservation percentage for SCs and STs.

- ✓ The SC said Article 15(4) of the Constitution is an enabling provision and the state government is the best judge to grant reservation for SC/ ST/backward categories.
- **On January 27, Madras high court - has permanently prohibited authorities from registering any document in respect of any land notified as water body in revenue records.**
- ✓ The first bench of acting Chief Justice Munishwar Nath Bhandari and Justice P D Audikesavalu passed the order in an attempt to stop encroachment of water bodies
- ✓ The court has also made it mandatory the submission of a self-declaration from applicants who seek registration of property/ approval of lay-out/building construction/assessment of property tax/electricity/water connection that the property concerned is not located in a water body.
- ✓ A full bench of the court has already banned reclassification of water bodies even if they remain dry or disused for several years.
- ✓ Physical inspection of the site shall be made so as to confirm that it is not located in the water body and an office note for the same shall be prepared and placed on record, said the bench.
- ✓ The bench further said any public authority who is found to have granted or aided or abetted in granting approval for such applications for a property located on a water body shall be liable for disciplinary action and prosecution for offences relating to encroachment under criminal law.

## CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **On January 27, Prime Minister Narendra Modi – hosted the first India-Central Asia summit through video conferencing**



- ✓ Regional security with a focus on Afghanistan, alongwith connectivity, dominated the summit
- ✓ Three Central Asian countries — Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan — share borders with Afghanistan.

- ✓ During his speech, the PM condemned cross-border terrorism and underlined the significance of transparency, along with respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, in pursuing connectivity initiatives.
- ✓ The PM also emphasized Central Asian region was central to India's vision of an integrated and stable "extended neighbourhood".
- ✓ The two sides agreed to form separate joint working groups to address the Afghanistan situation and encourage connectivity through the Chabahar port with the landlocked region comprising Kazakhstan , Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.
- ✓ The presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan participated in the summit
- ✓ The India-Central Asia summit came only two days after Chinese President Xi Jinping's own summit meeting with the Central Asian leaders in which he offered \$500 million as aid to the five countries.
- ✓ The summit called for the formation of a truly representative and inclusive government, combating terrorism and drug trafficking, central role of the UN, providing immediate humanitarian assistance for the people of Afghanistan and "preserving the rights of women, children and other national ethnic groups and minorities".
- ✓ This is in line with the consensus reached last year at the Delhi Security Dialogue on Afghanistan
- ✓ The leaders reiterated strong support for a peaceful, secure and stable Afghanistan while emphasising the respect for sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity and non-interference in its internal affairs, according to the declaration.
- ✓ India has been planning to hold the summit since PM Modi's visit to these central Asian countries in 2015
- ✓ The first dialogue was held in 2019, after which India and Central Asian countries signed High Impact Community Development Projects in 2020
- ✓ The third dialogue was held in December 2021.

## PERSONALITIES

- **Five-time Punjab chief minister Parkash Singh Badal (94 years) - will be the oldest contestant in any election in the country**





- ✓ Party patron and former Chief Minister Badal's candidature from Lambi Assembly constituency was announced by Shiromani Akali Dal president Aukhbir Singh Badal on January 26
- ✓ Earlier, this record was held by former Kerala chief minister VS Achuthanandan who had contested assembly election in 2016 at the age of 92 years.
- ✓ For the last over five decades, Shiromani Akali Dal patron Badal had been an integral part of the party's election campaign and a source of strength for it.
- ✓ Since the 1969 assembly elections, the senior Badal had always been at the helm of affairs in both parliamentary and assembly elections.
- ✓ Since 1997, Badal has been winning consecutively from this constituency.
- ✓ Born on December 8, 1927, he became the youngest Chief Minister in 1970.
- ✓ Besides, Badal was the youngest sarpanch when got elected from Badal village in 1947.
- ✓ Later, he became the oldest CM in 2012.
- ✓ Badal has served as a Chief Minister from 1970-71, 1977-80, 1997-2002, 2007-12 and 2012-17.
- ✓ He has also served as a Union Minister for a short stint
- ✓ Badal has remained president of the SAD from 1995 to 2008.
- ✓ He was bestowed upon the title of Panth Rattan Fakhr-e-Qaum by the Akal Takht in 2011.
- ✓ Badal was conferred with Padma Vibhushan in 2015, which he returned in 2020 in protest against the three contentious farm laws.

## AWARDS

- **On January 26, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin - announced the Tamil Development Awards of the Government of Tamil Nadu for the year 2021.**



- ✓ The awards were announced for scholars, organisations and media houses that contributed to the development of Tamil language and literature and the upliftment of the Tamil community.

### Winners of various awards

- ✓ Veteran politician Nanjil Sampath - Anna Award,
- ✓ Director and writer Bharathi Krishnakumar - 'Mahakavi' Bharathiyar Award,
- ✓ Pulavar Sendhalai Gowthaman - 'Pavendar' Bharathidasan Award,
- ✓ Writer Suriya Xavier - 'Sollin Selvar' Award,
- ✓ Malaysian Tamil Writers' Association - Tamizhthai award,

- ✓ Dr Siranjeeviyar - 'Arutperum Jothi' Vallalar Award,
- ✓ K Arasendiran - Devaneya Pavanar Award,
- ✓ N Mammadhu - Umarupulavar Award,
- ✓ Dr M Rasendran - KAP Viswanathan Award,
- ✓ Orator Bharathi Baskar - Kambar Award,
- ✓ Veteran Journalist AS Panneerselvan - GU Pope Award,
- ✓ Suki Sivam - Maraimalai Adigalar Award,
- ✓ Nellai Kannan - Ilango Adigal Award,
- ✓ Poet Madukkur Ramalingam – Singaravelar Award,
- ✓ Gnana Aloysius - Ayothithasa Pandithar Award and
- ✓ Uyirmai magazine - Si Pa Aditanar Award
- ✓ The Si Pa Aditanar was instituted in 2019 to recognise newspapers and magazines that portray the culture and tradition of Tamil language without using words from other languages.
- ✓ From this year, the award money has been increased to ₹2 lakh from ₹1 lakh each.
- ✓ The award-winners will be honoured with a one-sovereign gold medal, a shawl and a citation

## SPORTS

- **India's top badminton player PV Sindhu - defeated Malvika Bansod to win the Syed Modi International 2022 women's singles title in Lucknow on January 23**

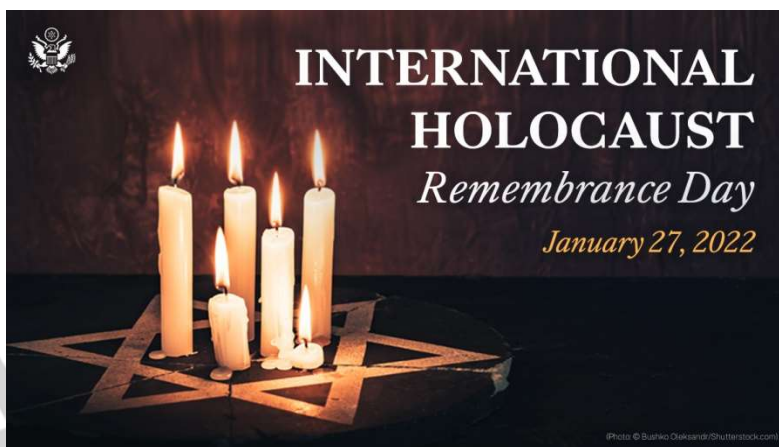


- ✓ It was former world champion Sindhu's second Syed Modi title after having won the BWF World Tour Super 300 event in 2017
- ✓ Sindhu, the world No 7, had not won a title since the world championship at Basel, Switzerland in August 2019
- ✓ It was also Sindhu's first BWF title since 2019 after losing twice in the finals last year at the Swiss Open and at the BWF World Tour Finals.
- ✓ Earlier this month, Sindhu defeated the London 2012 Olympic bronze medallist Saina Nehwal at the India Open

- ✓ Malvika Bansod had earlier clinched the all India senior ranking tournament in December.
- ✓ Earlier, seventh seeded Indians Ishaan Bhatnagar and Tanisha Crasto clinched the mixed doubles title with a win over compatriots T Hema Nagendra Babu and Srivedya Gurazada
- ✓ The men's singles final between Arnaud Merkle and Lucas Claerbout was declared a 'No Match' after one of the finalists tested positive for Covid-19.
- ✓ Malaysia won the men's and women's doubles titles defeating Indian rivals
- ✓ The Syed Modi International 2022 was the second tournament in this year's BWF calendar after the India Open

## INTERNATIONAL DAY

### ➤ International Holocaust Remembrance Day - January 27



- ✓ The United Nations marked the Day in honour of six million Jews killed in the Holocaust, and millions of other victims of Nazism
- ✓ Theme 2022 - "Memory, Dignity and Justice"
- ✓ On the day, the UN Chamber Music Society performed a virtual concert in memory of the victims of the Holocaust
- ✓ The Holocaust resulted in the murder of one third of the Jewish people, along with countless members of other minorities by Nazi Germany between 1933 and 1945.
- ✓ On 27 January 1945, the Auschwitz concentration camp was liberated by the Red Army
- ✓ Holocaust, also known as the Shoah, refers to the genocide of European Jews during World War II.

## MEGA SPORTS CITY PROPOSED IN CHENNAI – A REPORT

- Tamil Nadu government – is planning to develop a 500-acre ₹700-crore Mega Sports City on the outskirts of Chennai




- ✓ The sports city will have swanky facilities like finest athletic tracks, indoor cycling velodrome, hockey stadium, multipurpose indoor stadium for basketball, volleyball and boxing.
- ✓ The project is coming up near Thiruvidadanthal, about 30km south of Chennai on East Coast Road (ECR).

## CATCH 'EM YOUNG

The facility will train young sportspersons and prepare them for national, international events

### LOCATION



- The sports city is coming up near Thiruvidadanthal, about 40 kilometres south of Chennai
- The site encompasses nine villages starting from Thiruvidadanthal to Salavakkam along the ECR and between Kalavakkam and Paiyanur along the OMR
- The stretch of land is situated on either side of the Buckingham canal

### AREA

The facility is established in an area of 500 acres of contiguous land belonging to the government



### FEATURES

The sports city will have infrastructure of international standards for all competitions and training



The facility aims at training athletes from across the state and the country



### LIST OF FACILITIES THAT THE SPORTS CITY WILL HAVE

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Synthetic athletic track </li> <li>➤ Natural turf football field</li> <li>➤ Indoor stadium for basketball, boxing, handball and volleyball</li> <li>➤ Multipurpose indoor hall for indoor games such as</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fencing, judo, kabaddi, Kho-Kho and Taekwondo</li> <li>➤ Hockey stadium </li> <li>➤ Indoor badminton hall and table tennis</li> <li>➤ Indoor and outdoor skating rink </li> <li>➤ Aquatic complex comprising</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>racing pool, warm-up pool and diving pool </li> <li>➤ Stadium for Persons with Disabilities</li> <li>➤ Adventure Sports</li> <li>➤ Sports hostel for boys and girls and accommodation facilities</li> <li>➤ Spectators' gallery </li> </ul>
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### INSPIRATION FOR THE SPORTS CITY

Patiala's Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports, which is one of Asia's largest sports institutes, covering 268 acres



Artist's impression of the upcoming sports city

- ✓ The identified land parcel is spread across both banks of Buckingham canal and located between ECR and OMR
- ✓ It is part of 3,000 acres of government land where, in 2003, the then AIADMK government had planned to build an administrative city.
- ✓ The state-owned Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO) has floated tenders inviting consultants for preparation of techno economic feasibility report for setting up the facility.



- ✓ The consultant will study various revenue models, including Public Private Participation (PPP), to develop the sports city, and indicate the quantum of investment required from government and private sectors.
- ✓ Tamil Nadu has already improved in player contingent by sending 12 athletes in the Tokyo Olympics, which is double the number compared to previous Olympics.
- ✓ Besides basketball, boxing, volleyball, judo and kabaddi, the sports city will have tennis courts and hockey grounds.
- ✓ It will also have a stadium for Persons with Disabilities and accommodation facilities.
- ✓ The sports city will train and conduct competitions for 18 different games and sports.
- ✓ The facility is the best and the biggest thing to happen in Tamil Nadu after 1995 when the state hosted South-Asian Federation (SAF) games at a centralised facility in the SAF Games village at Koyambedu.

