

## EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – JANUARY 5, 2022

### NATIONAL

- On January 4, Prime Minister Narendra Modi - inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of various developmental projects in Manipur



- ✓ Overall, the PM inaugurated 13 projects worth around Rs 1,850 crore and laid the foundation stone of 9 projects worth around Rs 2,950 crore in Imphal.
- ✓ These projects relate to various sectors including Road Infrastructure, Drinking Water Supply, Health, Urban Development, Housing, Information Technology, Skill Development, Art and Culture, among others
- ✓ During the ceremony, the PM inaugurated the Steel Bridge built over the Barak River on NH-37, at a cost of over Rs 75 crore, which seeks to decongest traffic between Silchar and Imphal.
- ✓ Further, a total of 2,387 mobile towers built at a cost of nearly ₹1,110 crore were inaugurated by the Prime Minister
- ✓ The Prime Minister also inaugurated three projects under the 'Imphal Smart City Mission,' developed at a cost of more than ₹170 crore, including the Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC)

- ✓ The projects for which foundation stone was laid include a state-of-the-art cancer hospital in Imphal worth around ₹160 crore on public-private partnership (PPP) basis
- ✓ The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of 'Centre for Invention, Innovation, Incubation and Training' to be built in the state at a cost of about Rs 200 crore.
- ✓ He also laid the foundation stone for the construction of the Manipur Institute of Performing Arts at Gurgaon, Haryana, to be built at a cost of around Rs 240 crore.
- ✓ Other projects launched by the PM include the Thoubal multipurpose project, water supply schemes in Tamenglong and Senapati and Imphal's renovated Govindajee temple
- ✓ The Prime Minister further said January 21 would be the 50th anniversary of Manipur's statehood

## **INTERNATIONAL**

- **On January 4, Scientists in France - have announced the discovery of a new coronavirus variant IHU, which has more mutations than the Omicron variant**
- ✓ It was discovered by the academics at institute IHU Mediterranee Infection.
- ✓ This variant, B.1.640.2, has been found mostly in France so far, although it has also been detected in several other countries
- ✓ The variant was reported to have 46 mutations, including some in the spike protein.
- ✓ At least 12 cases of the new variant have been reported near Marseilles, and has been linked to travel to the African country Cameroon.
- ✓ The sub-lineage B.1.640.2 has not been spotted in other countries or labelled a variant under investigation by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- ✓ However, way back in November, the World Health Organization (WHO) had classified B.1.640 as a variant under monitoring, or VUM, the entry-level categorisation of a variant
- ✓ The Omicron variant was detected in a sample taken from South Africa on November 24 last year

## **INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS**

- **India and Sri Lanka - have reached an agreement to jointly develop 61 tanks out of the 99 tanks in the Trincomalee oil tank farm.**
- ✓ The project will be implemented by a Special Purpose Vehicle, Trinco Petroleum Terminals Ltd
- ✓ The Sri Lankan cabinet has approved the proposal to allocate 24 and 14 oil tanks of Trincomalee Oil Tank Complex to Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) and the Indian Oil Subsidiary, Lanka Indian Oil Company (LIOC) respectively
- ✓ The CPC and the Lanka IOC will have 51% and 49% stake on the jointly developed 61 tanks respectively.



- ✓ This joint venture will be for a lease period of 50 years.
  - ✓ The World War II-era oil storage facility, with a capacity of nearly 8 million barrels of oil, is located in the strategically advantaged port district of Trincomalee
  - ✓ The China Bay tank farm in Trincomalee of Sri Lanka was built by the British in the 1930s to supply fuel to Royal Navy ships during the Second World War.
  - ✓ The farm initially had 101 tanks built within an area of 850 acres
  - ✓ The government of Sri Lanka had taken over the farm from the British in 1957
  - ✓ On July 29 1987, India and Sri Lanka agreed to jointly restore and operate the Trincomalee oil tank farm as per the India-Sri Lanka agreement signed between then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lankan President J R Jayewardene.
  - ✓ In 2003, Sri Lanka leased out the oil tank farm to India, for the upgradation and commissioning of 99 tanks in it for a period of 35 years by signing an agreement
  - ✓ Lanka IOC, a subsidiary of Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), was set up for the implementation of the project and mainly for retail distribution of petrol
  - ✓ Since then, the company is using 14 of the 99 tanks and regularly paying US\$100,000 annual fees
  - ✓ The remaining 85 tanks were undeveloped and unworthy of use.
  - ✓ In March 2015, during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Sri Lanka, the two sides agreed to set up a petroleum hub in Trincomalee, for which a "joint task force" would draw up plans
  - ✓ In 2017, both countries reached a "political agreement" to jointly develop the upper tank farm
  - ✓ In this regard, an MoU on Economic Package was signed between India and Sri Lanka during the Sri Lankan PM Ranil Wickremesinghe's visit to India in April 2017
  - ✓ However, like most of the projects on that list, the Trincomalee agreement too did not materialize
- **Sri Lanka - has decided to procure a fleet of 750 jeeps and 500 buses from India under the credit line it received from New Delhi**

- ✓ The decision to purchase the 750 jeeps from Indian auto manufacturer Mahindra and Mahindra was taken by Sri Lankan cabinet on January 3.
- ✓ The fleet of jeeps will be used by the country's Police department
- ✓ Further, another proposal from the minister of transport was also approved to purchase 500 buses of 32-35 seating capacity from India in pursuance to a cabinet decision made in January 2020.

## COMMITTEES

- **The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas - has set up the Energy Transition Advisory Committee (ETAC), headed by the former petroleum Secretary, Tarun Kapoor**

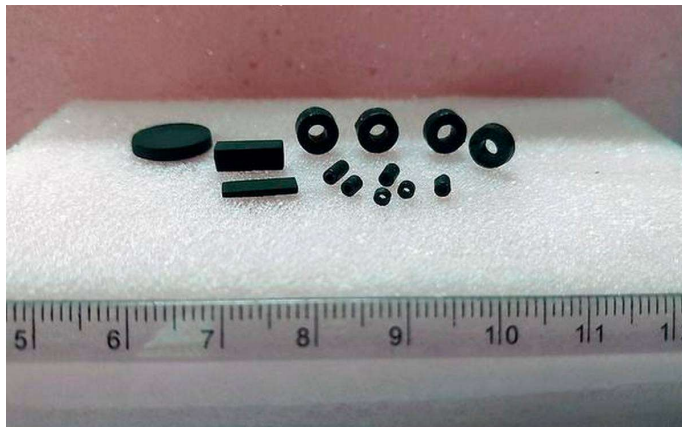


- ✓ The government is planning to prepare an energy transition roadmap for the oil and gas sector that could prove to be a key step on India's path to net-zero emissions by 2070.
- ✓ The panel will include representatives of all public-sector oil and gas companies and will recommend a roadmap for the sector's transition.
- ✓ Oil companies are already preparing their respective plans to increase clean energy portfolio and set net-zero targets
- ✓ Apart from developing transition plans for the oil companies, the committee will also prepare plans for alternatives to hydrocarbons.
- ✓ It will focus on improving infrastructure for biofuels that is based on a sustainable biomass supply chain
- ✓ Green hydrogen, which has been identified as a priority, will be a focus area for the committee.
- ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced a national green hydrogen mission in his Independence Day speech
- ✓ Before his appointment as petroleum secretary, Kapoor was instrumental in framing policies for the power and the renewable energy sectors
- ✓ Tarun Kapoor demitted office in November 2020 to prepare the strategy of the transition for the oil and gas sector



# SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **Researchers from Kerala University – developed fifth-generation (5G) microwave absorbers to protect electronic devices against electromagnetic radiations**



- ✓ The researchers have developed a new shielding material called 'mayenite electride' that's chemically secure and possess distinctive microwave absorption capability within the excessive frequency area, particularly within the 5G band
- ✓ This material has high conductivity, highly porous and consists of a coating of graphene.
- ✓ The macropores and the graphene interface within the materials causes the electromagnetic waves to repeatedly withstand reflections and subsequent absorption
- ✓ The analysis was undertaken as a part of the Kerala College-funded Microwave Supplies Laboratory scheme.
- ✓ The research was additionally supported by the Kerala State Council for Science, Expertise and Atmosphere with an analysis grant by its Kerala State Younger Scientist Analysis Award

