

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-JUNE 12, 2022

TAMIL NADU

- On June 11, chief minister M K Stalin - addressed the 100th birthday celebration of legendary IAS officer P Sabanayagam in Chennai



- ✓ The iconic retired bureaucrat P Sabanayagam served as chief secretary to three stalwart-chief ministers and led the state bureaucracy with military discipline
- ✓ Besides, he also served as Vigilance Commissioner, Development Commissioner and headed the Police Commission
- ✓ Known for his integrity, courage and leadership, Sabanayagam is a university from whose life and service young IAS officers can learn a lot, said the CM.
- ✓ He was chief secretary to C Rajagopalachari, K Kamaraj and M Karunanidhi and retired in 1980 after working under then Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran.
- ✓ Among those present in the event were former Union finance minister P Chidambaram, a host of state ministers and serving and retired officials.

STATES

- Chief Minister of Goa, Pramod Sawant - launched a 'Beach Vigil App' recently to monitor the beaches in Goa and thereby to promote the tourism sector



- ✓ The app aims for a holistic management of the beaches, benefiting both the travellers and those working in the tourism sector
 - ✓ Using the app, stakeholders will be able to raise issues safeguarding the interest of the travellers.
 - ✓ The mobile app enables people to file a complaint on any illegal activity or violations along the state's beaches directly to the tourism department.
 - ✓ It will allow users to report violations like drinking/cooking on the beach, unattended litter, illegal hawking, touting for services like massages, tattoos as well as illegal services.
 - ✓ The Beach Vigil App is developed by Goa Electronics Limited.
 - ✓ Currently five agencies have access to its operations – Goa Police, tourism department, DRISHTI workers, Shack operators and Karnataka Commercial & Industrial Corporation Pvt Ltd
 - ✓ In 2019, the Goa Legislative Assembly passed amendments to the Goa Tourist Places (Protection and Maintenance) Act banning alcohol consumption in tourist places including drinking in the open, cooking in the open, littering and breaking glass bottles
 - ✓ Any violation of the provisions will invite a fine of Rs. 2,000 and in case the violation is committed by more than one person in a group, the group will have to pay Rs. 10,000.
- **Chief Minister of Sikkim P.S. Golay - declared 'Blue Duke' as the State Butterfly of Sikkim recently during the World Environment Day celebrations**



- ✓ Blue Duke, a native butterfly species of Sikkim, overtook another contender Krishna Peacock to be announced as the State Butterfly of Sikkim.
- ✓ The two butterflies, among the 720-odd butterfly species, had been shortlisted for the State Butterfly nominations
- ✓ Among the 4036 votes registered 'online', 57% of the votes went in favour of Blue Duke while 43% voted for Krishna Peacock.
- ✓ The Blue Duke represents Sikkim with its two unique colours - blue representing the sky and white depicting the snow clad mountains of the Himalayas
- ✓ Blue Duke is found at an altitude below 1,500 metres in the Himalayas and is commonly found in South Sikkim, West Sikkim and closer to the State capital
- ✓ Blue Duke, which is also called Bassarona durga durga, is unique to Sikkim and Eastern Himalayas and it was first discovered in the State in 1858
- ✓ Blue Duke falls in the Schedule 2 of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and is a highly protected species of butterfly in the Himalayas.

NATIONAL

- **On June 11, Union home minister Amit Shah – addressed the 25th meeting of the Western Zonal Council at union territory Diu**



- ✓ The meeting was attended by chief ministers of Goa and Gujarat, administrator of Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, senior minister of Maharashtra besides chief secretaries of the member states in the Western Zone.
- ✓ The main issues discussed at the meeting included improvement of banking services in rural areas, monitoring of rape and sexual offences cases against women and children and implementation of Fast Track courts for such cases
- ✓ Further, verification of the identity of marine fishermen on high seas, development of local contingency plan by coastal states for mass rescue operation in high seas and encouragement of Make in India initiative through Preference in Public Procurement were also discussed.
- ✓ Out of the 30 other issues that were discussed in these meetings, 27 issues were resolved and only three were retained for further deliberation.

- **The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) - is training 48000 postmen of India Post Payment Bank to go door to door in the remotest areas of the country**
 - ✓ They will be entrusted with linking Aadhaar number with mobile numbers, update details, and conducting enrolment of children at the people's doorstep.
 - ✓ The training is being given as a part of UIDAI's expansion plans aimed at reaching out to more people and enrolling as many citizens as possible.
 - ✓ Apart from IPPB postmen, UIDAI is also looking to onboard around 13,000 banking correspondents who are currently working with the Common Service Centre under Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
 - ✓ The UIDAI is the agency responsible for the generation of Aadhaar, a 12-digit unique identity number for Indian citizens
- **Union Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia - launched the country's first ever National Air Sports Policy 2022 recently on June 7**



- ✓ The policy will cover air sports such as aerobatics, aeromodelling, model rocketry, amateur and experimental aircraft, ballooning, drones, gliding and powered gliding, hang gliding and powered hang gliding, parachuting, skydiving, base jumping, wing suit flying, paragliding and para-motoring.
- ✓ The Air Sports Federation of India will be the apex governing body for such sports.
 - ✓ This federation will be chaired by civil aviation ministry secretary Rajiv Bansal
 - ✓ The Air Sports Federation will have 33 members of which only 4 will be government officials, while the rest will be involved from the private and sector-related organizations.
 - ✓ It will publish draft guidelines within six months after consulting stakeholders
 - ✓ The federation will be an autonomous body, and represent India at the Switzerland-headquartered Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI) and other global platforms related to air sports
- ✓ According to the policy, each sport will have its own central and state-level association

- ✓ The National Air Sports Policy will bring new possibilities to the country and is likely to create an industry of about \$8 billion to \$80 billion.
 - ✓ This will create possibilities in many potential states such as Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Karnataka, and Kerala
 - ✓ The government announced earlier it would make India one of the top air sports nations by 2030
- **State-owned National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) - has created a Guinness World Record for the longest continuously laid bituminous lane of 75 kilometres in 105 hours and 33 minutes**



- ✓ The work on the NH-53 between Amravati and Akola districts in Maharashtra was started on 3 June, at 7:27 am and was completed on 7 June, at 5 pm
 - ✓ The bitumen mix of 36,634 metric tonnes, consisting of 2,070 metric of bitumen, was used for the project
 - ✓ A total of 720 workers, including a team of independent consultants, worked day and night to complete this task
 - ✓ The previous Guinness World Record for the longest continuously laid bituminous was for building 25.275 kilometres of road that was achieved in Doha, Qatar in February 2019 and that task was completed in 10 days
 - ✓ The Amravati to Akola section is part of NH 53 and this is an important east-west corridor which connects major cities like Kolkata, Raipur, Nagpur, Akola, Dhule and Surat.
- **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways - has formulated a new scheme by name 'Sagarmala Young Professional Scheme' to focus on young professionals**
- ✓ The scheme seeks to engage talented, forward-thinking and dynamic young professionals in various divisions of the Ministry
 - ✓ The professionals will have the opportunity to learn about the functioning of the government as well as developmental policy concerns.
 - ✓ They will be required to deliver high-quality inputs in areas such as infrastructure, data analysis, project management, start-up, innovation, skill development, digital transformation and the environment, among others, in order to meet Ministry's needs.

- ✓ Initially, more than 25 young professionals will be hired under this scheme.
- ✓ Professionals will be required to have qualification in B.E/ B.Tech, B. Planning and/or MBA or equivalent degree in relevant subject/ field and minimum three year of relevant work experience.
- ✓ Professionals in Accountancy, Finance, Legal, Statistics, Economics/Commerce, Data Analytics will also be engaged based on requirement of the Ministry.
- ✓ The initial period of engagement shall be 2 years which can be extended to additional 2 years on the basis of performance

INTERNATIONAL

- **On June 11, Iran and Venezuela - signed a 20-year cooperation plan in Tehran**
- ✓ The signing ceremony was overseen by Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his Venezuelan counterpart Nicolas Maduro and took place at the Saadabad Palace in north Tehran.



- ✓ The plan includes cooperation in the fields of oil, petrochemicals, defence, agriculture, tourism, and culture.
- ✓ It also includes repair of Venezuelan refineries and the export of technical and engineering services.
- ✓ Iran and Venezuela are oil producers grappling with crippling US sanctions
- ✓ Defying US sanctions, Iran has sent several cargos of fuel to Venezuela and helped in refinery repairs.
- ✓ Last month, Venezuela began importing Iranian heavy crude, widening a swap deal signed last year to exchange Iranian condensate for Venezuelan heavy crude.

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **India - will send four holy relics of Lord Buddha to be displayed for 11 days at the Batsagaan temple in Gandan Monastery of Ulaanbataar.**
- ✓ The sacred 'Kapilvastu relics' will be flown to Mongolia in two special bulletproof caskets on board an Indian Air Force aircraft on June 12



- ✓ India is sending a 25-member delegation headed by law minister Kiren Rijiju, with sacred Buddhist relics, believed to contain Gautam Buddha's remains.
 - ✓ Singer Mohit Chauhan, Cultural Envoy of Mongolia to India, will be part of the delegation
 - ✓ The delegation will head to Mongolia ahead of Mongolia's Buddha Purnima on June 14.
 - ✓ The relics will be received in Mongolia by their culture minister, advisor to the President of Mongolia and a large number of monks among other dignitaries.
 - ✓ The relics are currently kept at the National Museum, and were first discovered in 1898 from the ancient city of Kapilavastu during excavations at Piprahwa in present-day Bihar
 - ✓ These sacred relics of Lord Buddha will be reaching Mongolia after 29 years
 - ✓ According to the culture ministry, the last time these relics were taken out of the country was in 2012, when they were taken to Sri Lanka and were on display at several locations across the island nation.
 - ✓ However, later guidelines were issued and the Holy Relics were placed under the 'AA' category of those Antiquities and Art Treasures which should not be ordinarily taken out of the country for exhibition, considering their delicate nature and rarity
 - ✓ PM Narendra Modi's visit to Mongolia in 2015 was the first by an Indian prime minister
 - ✓ In his 2015 visit, PM Modi had visited Gandan Monastery and also presented a Bodhi Tree Sapling to Hamba Lama
 - ✓ Further, India has printed 75 copies of 108 volumes of Mongolian Kanjur for the Mongolian government, and that it is currently digitising the Kanjur manuscripts.
- **Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu - launched the 'India-Qatar Startup Bridge' at the India-Qatar Business Forum held in Doha, Qatar recently on June 5**



- ✓ It is a joint initiative that aims to link the start-up ecosystems of the two countries and help their economies mutually.
- ✓ The India-Qatar Business Forum was jointly organised by FICCI, CII and ASSOCHAM, along with Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
- ✓ The forum is expected to offer networking, trade, and investment opportunities to the start-up ecosystem between both sides

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and Prasar Bharati - are testing the feasibility of a 'Direct-to-Mobile' (D2M) Broadcasting technology**
- ✓ The D2M technology allows broadcasting video and other forms of multimedia content directly to mobile phones, without needing an active internet connection.
- ✓ The technology is based on the convergence of broadband and broadcast, using which mobile phones can receive terrestrial digital TV.
- ✓ It would be similar to how people listen to FM radio on their phones, where a receiver within the phone can tap into radio frequencies.
- ✓ The idea behind the technology is that it can possibly be used to directly broadcast multimedia content related to citizen-centric information along with live news, sports etc. on mobile phones
- ✓ For consumers, the technology would provide access to multimedia content from Video on Demand (VoD) or Over The Top (OTT) content platforms without needing mobile data, and more importantly, at a nominal rate.
- ✓ The technology will also allow people from rural areas, with limited or no internet access, to watch video content.
- ✓ The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has set up a committee to study the feasibility of a spectrum band 526-582 MHz for offering broadcast services directly to users' smartphones
- ✓ At the moment, this band is used by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting across the country for TV transmitters.
- ✓ Public service broadcaster Prasar Bharati had last year announced a collaboration with IIT Kanpur to test the feasibility of the technology.

DEFENCE

- **The joint military training exercise between India and Bangladesh 'Ex SAMPRITI-X' – is being held at Jessore military station in Bangladesh**
- ✓ The exercise, which started on June 5, will continue till June 16 as part of bilateral defence cooperation.
- ✓ The military training exercise is aimed at strengthening the aspects of interoperability and cooperation between both armies
- ✓ The Indian contingent is being represented by a battalion of the Dogra regiment.



- ✓ During the joint military exercise, the armies of both nations will share expertise in multiple simulated scenarios of counter-terrorism, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and UN peacekeeping force under the UN mandate.

ECONOMY

- **Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman - unveiled EASE 5.0 — Enhanced Access and Service Excellence or EASENext recently on June 8**
- ✓ EASE 5.0 is a common reform agenda for public sector banks (PSBs) aimed at institutionalising clean and smart banking.



- ✓ The latest edition will focus on customer-centric initiatives and emphasise on customer-first strategy along with focus on employee development.
- ✓ EASE 5.0 will focus on digital customer experience, and integrated and inclusive banking, with emphasis on supporting small businesses and agriculture.
- ✓ EASE has evolved over four annual editions from FY19 to FY22 and has catalysed reforms in diverse areas in PSBs.
- ✓ EASE Agenda was launched by government in collaboration with PSBs in January 2018.
- ✓ It was authored by Boston consulting Group and commissioned through Indian Banks' Association.

APPOINTMENTS

- **Senior Indian diplomat Amandeep Singh Gill - was appointed by United Nations secretary-general Antonio Guterres as his envoy on technology**



- ✓ Gill was India's ambassador and permanent representative to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva from 2016-to 2018
- ✓ He is the chief executive officer of the International Digital Health and Artificial Intelligence Research Collaborative project, based in Geneva.
- ✓ Previously, Gill was the executive director and co-lead of the UN secretary-general's high-level panel on digital cooperation (2018-2019).

AWARDS

- **Union Minister Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Dharmendra Pradhan – addressed the 2nd edition of 'Awards for Excellence in District Skill Development Planning' (DSSP) in New Delhi**



- ✓ About top 30 districts were awarded for their innovative best practices in skill development in the region
- ✓ The top three rankers among all participating districts are Rajkot in Gujarat, Cachar in Assam and Satara in Maharashtra.
- ✓ District Collectors, District Magistrates and other representatives from across 30 states attended the award ceremony

- ✓ IIT Delhi and IIT Kharagpur were chosen as evaluation partners to assess the award entries
- ✓ DSDP Awards were instituted under the Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) Scheme by Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) in June 2018
- ✓ They were given away to promote decentralised planning, acknowledge and reward the extraordinary and innovative work done by districts in the field of skill development.
- ✓ The first DSDP Awards were held in 2018-19, with 228 districts from 19 states participating in the initiative.
- ✓ The districts with plans of supporting innovation and enabling local livelihoods with skill development initiatives were shortlisted for the awards

SPORTS

- **Nineteen-year old Peddi Rahul Srivathsav – became India's 74th Grand master after crossing the ELO mark of 2500 on June 10**



- ✓ Rahul is the fourth GM from Telangana after Arjun Erigaisi in 2018, Harsha Bharathakoti (2019) and Raja Rithvik in 2021.
- ✓ Rahul achieved the feat after drawing his eighth round game against GM Levan Pantsulaia at the 9th Cattolica Chess Festival in Italy.
- ✓ A player has to secure three GM-norms and cross the live rating of 2500 ELO points to become a GM.

INTERNATIONAL DAY

- **World Day Against Child Labour – June 12**



- ✓ The day is observed every year to raise awareness about the exploitation of children who are engaged in child labour
- ✓ The International Labour Organization (ILO) started observing the Day in 2002 with an aim to highlight the plight of children who are the victims of child labour.
- ✓ The ILO Convention No. 182, which deals with the worst forms of child labour as well as ILO Convention No. 138, that deals with the minimum age for employment, are the two main global conventions on the issue
- ✓ Theme 2022 - "Universal Social Protection to End Child Labour"
- ✓ According to the UN, a total of 160 million children are still engaged in child labour, with some of them as young as five years old.
- ✓ Africa has the biggest share of child labourers- 72 million.

A PRECURSOR TO WTO MEETING ON JUNE 12

Pandemic, Ukraine War Fallout Key Issues As WTO Meets After 5 Yrs

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE WTO

July 8, 1948: General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) put in place, with India as a member, but the rules and the organisation are provisional

Jan 1, 1995: WTO is born following the Uruguay Round of negotiations. Scope included goods, services, IT, intellectual property rights, some aspects of investment and a forum to resolve disputes between member countries

Nov, 2001: Trade ministers launch the ambitious Doha Round of negotiations to improve the rules for global trade in agriculture, industrial goods and services. But little progress is made with developed and developing countries blaming each other for the logjam

Dec 2013: In Bali, trade ministers come to their first agreement since the WTO was set up with the trade facilitation pact meant to improve flow of goods through customs by putting disciplines in place. India manages to extract a bargain by ensuring that it will not face penal action in case subsidies offered on food procurement exceeded the prescribed limit

After a gap of nearly five years, trade ministers from 164 member countries of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) converge in Geneva to breathe fresh life into the multilateral body that sets the rules for global trade. The meeting, which was to be held in 2020, was postponed twice and ministers are now focused on preparing an action plan to combat not only Covid-19 but also the fallout of the Ukraine-Russia conflict, especially on global food supplies. **Sidhartha** explains what's on the table when ministers assemble at the WTO headquarters from Sunday.

WHAT THE 12TH MINISTERIAL MEETING WILL DISCUSS

1 AGRICULTURE



A. Food Security & Export Restrictions

With food prices soaring and several countries facing shortages of wheat and other products, developed countries want to check imposition of export curbs, although the WTO agreement allows temporary controls

PROPOSAL

- Exempt foodstuffs purchased for non-commercial humanitarian purposes by the World Food Programme from export restrictions
- Provision of advance notification of export restrictive measures

INDIA'S POSITION

- Blanket exemption for WFP may hit domestic food security
- Notification burdensome for developing nations
- Wants to use public stocks for meeting govt-to-govt supplies

B. Domestic Support

PROPOSAL

- Developed countries want more market access from developing countries and want them to cut subsidies
- Need for more transparency requirements

INDIA'S POSITION

- Developed countries have greater space to cut subsidies, as was proposed in Doha Round
- Proposal seeks to dilute special status given to developing countries

C. Permanent Solution To Public Stockholding

PROPOSAL

- G-33, including India, seeking protection for schemes like minimum support price, which were agreed to in Bali nearly a decade ago
- Developed countries postponing a decision, hoping to extract something in return

INDIA'S POSITION

A permanent solution to the interim "peace clause" should be finalised soon



2 FISHERIES



While the mandate for the negotiations, launched in Doha in 2001, comes from the Sustainable Development Goals, the fear is that developed countries in Europe, and China, are looking to continue their deep-sea fishing in international waters while limiting the scope for others, such as India, to grow in the future

INDIA'S POSITION

- Big subsidisers should take greater responsibility to cut subsidies, fishing capacities. Countries like India, which are yet to establish large fishing capacities, can't be expected to sacrifice their future policy space
- Sovereign rights of coastal states to explore and manage the living resources within their maritime jurisdiction, enshrined in international instruments, must be protected
- Need for special status to protect the livelihoods of poor fishers, address food security concerns
- Allowing phase-out of non-specific fuel subsidies over 25 years

PROPOSAL

- Disciplines to eliminate subsidies to illegal, unreported, unregulated (IUU) fishing
- Prohibiting certain forms of fishery subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing
- Provide special status for developing, least-developed countries

3 PANDEMIC RESPONSE



In October 2020, India and South Africa proposed that waivers be given on patent and other intellectual property rights to ensure access to Covid-19 vaccines, medicines and supplies to poor and developing countries, which was blocked by the likes of the US, EU, Switzerland and UK

PROPOSAL

- Scope narrowed down now to patent waiver in a limited manner and only for vaccines
- Allow for transfer of technology, keep checks on tariffs and allow flow across borders
- Keep markets open, no new export curbs to be imposed

INDIA'S POSITION

- Focus should be on solving issues posed by Covid, including intellectual property-related matters, in augmenting production and supply
- Wants reaffirmation of TRIPS waiver decision and recognition of difficulties faced by poorer countries in using flexibilities under TRIPS
- Backs developing countries' demand to address supply-side constraints and increased access to services such as healthcare

4 WTO REFORMS



A major area of concern since developed countries, led by US, are seeking to change the rules of the game. There is also pressure from EU and other countries to have rules on e-commerce, gender and MSMEs, which India believes will hurt it. Developed countries also want India, China, South Africa to be treated on a par with them instead of being clubbed with developing countries that undertake lower commitments

INDIA'S POSITION

- Special status, consensus-based approach should not be allowed to change
- Wants the element of reforms to be clearly spelt out before discussions begin