

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-MARCH 19, 2022

TAMIL NADU

- **Tamil Nadu Finance Minister PTR Palanivel Thiaga Rajan - presented the state's first full budget for the financial year 2022-2023 to the Assembly on March 18, 2022**
- ✓ This is the second Budget of the DMK government, and was presented in paperless form as an e-budget
- ✓ Urban sector, welfare schemes, education, and flood prevention measures were the key focus areas of the budget
- ✓ Presenting the budget, the Finance Minister said that for the first time since 2014, the revenue deficit is set to decrease by over Rs 7,000 crore, taking it down from 4.15% to 3.08% of State gross domestic product (GSDP)
- ✓ The fiscal deficit has been contained at 3.8% from 4.3% estimated earlier and the budget seeks to reduce it to 3.6% in 2022-23, which are well within the 4.5% recommended by the 15th Union Finance Commission.
- ✓ Opposition party AIADMK has walked out of the Budget session of the Tamil Nadu Assembly

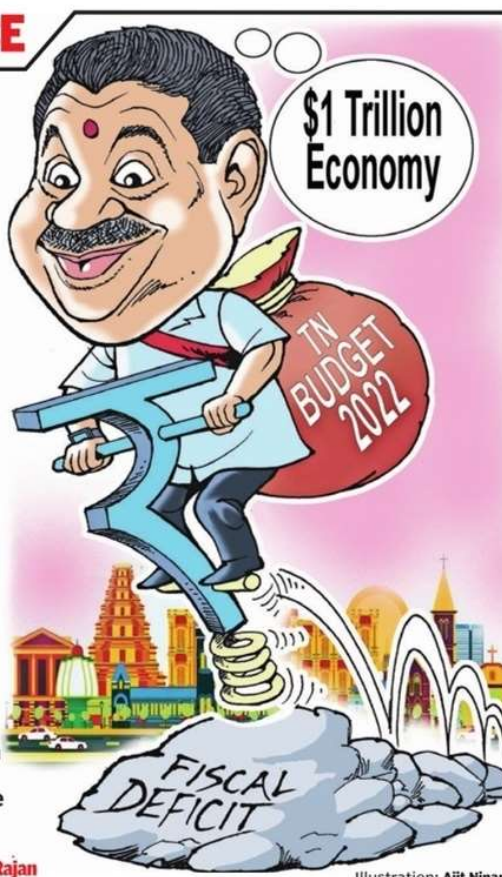
Highlights of Financial Aspects of the Budget

- ✓ The revised revenue deficit for 2021-22 is ₹55,273 crore as against the earlier estimate of ₹58,692.68 crore, while the revenue deficit stood at ₹62,326 crore in 2020-21.
- ✓ The government hopes to reduce revenue deficit further to ₹52,781.17 crore in 2022-23 by increasing the efficiency of tax collection.
- ✓ For 2022-23, the government has projected its revenue receipts at ₹2,31,407 crore, which is a growth of 13.5% over this year's ₹2,03,878.17 crore
- ✓ For 2022-23, the total revenue expenditure is expected to be ₹2,84,188.45 crore.
- ✓ The States' own tax revenue is estimated to be ₹1,42,799.93 crore in the Budget while the non-tax revenue is projected to be ₹15,537.24 crore.

- ✓ Total capital expenditure is expected to be at Rs 43,832.54 crore, which is 23.8% than the revised estimate.
- ✓ Tamil Nadu's outstanding debt as on 31st March 2023 will be ₹6,53,348.73 crore after excluding Back to Back loan for GST Compensation shortfall released by Government of India and it constitutes 26.29% of Gross State Domestic Product in 2022-23
- ✓ The total expenditure of the government is projected at ₹3,33,251 crore for 2022-23, indicating an increase of 10.8% over the revised estimates of 2021-22.

BUDGET AT A GLANCE

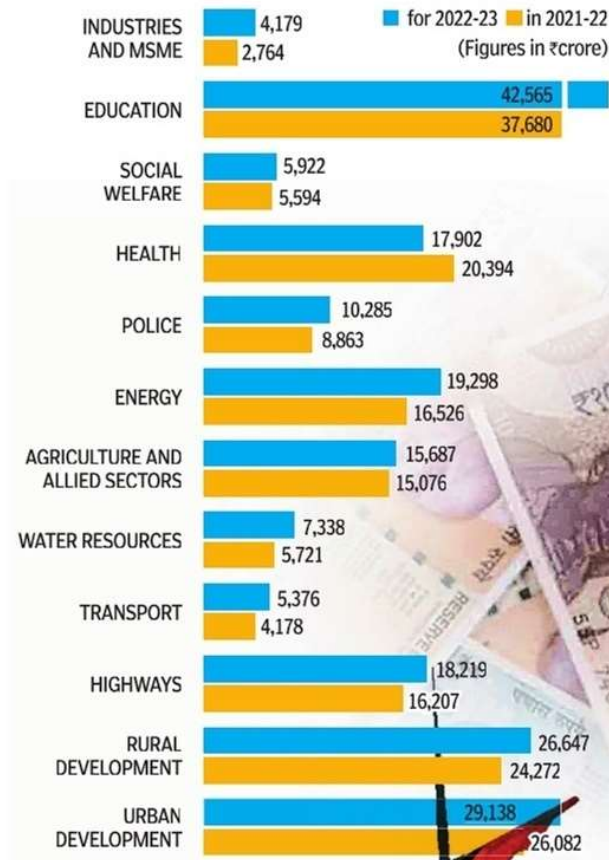
TAMIL NADU'S FINANCES	Reduction of revenue deficit by over ₹7,000 crore reversed trend of increasing deficits since 2014
The fiscal deficit as a % of GSDP reduced to 3.8% in revised estimates, from 4.33% in budget estimates	As economy bounces back, govt pushes to "rebalance priorities and focus on social infrastructure and development without compromising on welfare schemes"
Total revenue receipts expected to be ₹2.31 lakh crore	Government's action taken report on state finance commission's recommendations to be soon released
Revenue expenditure expected to be ₹2.84 lakh crore	FOR SPORTS At ₹25 crore, 'Olympics Gold Quest' programme will work to identify hidden sporting talent in TN
Revenue deficit estimated at ₹52,781 crore	“This budget has been prepared with a vision keeping in mind not just the present but the future, including generations of Tamils yet unborn - Palanivel Thiaga Rajan
Fiscal deficit estimated at ₹90,113 crore	
State's tax revenue estimated to be ₹1.42 lakh crore	
Non-tax revenue projected to be ₹15,537 crore	



- ✓ During his speech, the Finance Minister said Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has requested the Centre for extension of the GST compensation period, which ends in June 2022, by two years.
- ✓ He also said that the State government will file a report on actions taken on the recommendations made by the Sixth State Finance Commission, which had recently submitted its report.
- ✓ The minister also gave a clear roadmap to Tamil Nadu by setting a 10-point charter of broad focus areas for the State to move ahead in the new financial year.
- ✓ The key focus areas for 2022-23 include enhancing the growth rate of the primary sector, making youth employable by specific interventions at the school and college level, socio-economic development of the marginalised, achieving social

justice in all walks of life, using data-driven governance to eliminate leakages, and giving focused delivery of funds and services.

MAJOR SECTORAL ALLOCATIONS IN THE BUDGET



Highlights of Sector-wise Budget announcements

Education:

- ✓ For the third consecutive year, school education department has been accorded the highest allocation in the State Budget, at Rs 36,895.89 crore.
 - ✓ Last year, the allocation was Rs 34,181 crore.
- ✓ Further, 5,668 crore has been allotted to the Higher Education Department, ₹300 crore more compared to last year.
- ✓ School kits, including textbooks and notebooks, will be provided for students studying from classes 1 to 10 in private unaided schools which teach exclusively in Tamil medium, at an estimated cost of Rs 15 crore.
- ✓ Tamil Nadu will launch a massive scheme 'Perasiriyar Anbazhagan School Development Scheme' to modernise government schools (including Adi Dravidar, Tribal & Kallar Reclamation Schools) over the next 5 years
 - ✓ Under the scheme, an allocation of Rs 7,000 crore has been made for modernization of the government schools with the required infrastructure by

constructing 18,000 new classrooms and smart classrooms with all essential technology.

- ✓ "Knowledge City" will be established in the state with international collaboration to promote higher education.
 - ✓ This city will have branches of world-renowned universities with research and development hubs, skill training centres and knowledge-based enterprises.
- ✓ Also, to develop a reading habit among the students, book fair will not only be held in Chennai, but all major districts in Tamil Nadu.
- ✓ A high-level committee has been constituted for the revival of public libraries.
- ✓ The government also allocated ₹250 crore to upgrade government colleges.
- ✓ Model schools to be opened in 15 more districts in the coming academic year to ensure students from government schools get admissions in reputed institutions to pursue higher education in science, technology, engineering, arts and medicine.
 - ✓ The department had already established 10 such model schools in educationally backward districts this year.
- ✓ To motivate government school students to aspire to join premier higher education institutions like IIT, IISC & AIIMS, the Tamil Nadu government will bear the full cost of undergraduate education of students who studied in government schools from classes 6-12.

EYE ON EDUCATION

➤ **TN allocates ₹200 crore in budget to continue with Illam Thedi Kalvi for next year as well.** Currently, 1.8 lakh volunteers teach 30 lakh children to bridge the learning gap

➤ In order to promote education in Tamil medium, the government has extended the **scheme providing free textbooks and notebooks to students studying in private schools.** ₹15 crore has been allocated

➤ To ensure students from government schools get admissions in reputed academic institutions, **the government will establish 15 more model schools in the coming year at a cost of ₹125 crore**

➤ **The government will establish central libraries** in newly established six districts at the cost of ₹36crore

➤ **Book fairs will be organised in**



all districts from next year at a cost of ₹5.6crore

➤ Allocation of school education has been increased to ₹36,885 crore from ₹32,599 crore last year. **The budget allocation for higher education is increased**

from ₹5,369crore to ₹5,669crore this year

➤ **₹204crore allocated towards reimbursement of fees for government school students** who join professional courses under 7.5% special reservation

- ✓ Over the next 5 years, a special scheme will be implemented to create new classrooms, hostels, laboratories and smart classrooms in the higher education sector at a total cost of ₹1,000 crore.

Disaster warning systems:

- ✓ In order to receive timely warnings on floods, the government will establish an advanced early warning system with super computers, a system of weather balloons, two weather radars, 100 automatic weather stations, 400 automatic rain gauges, and 11 automatic water level instruments.
- ✓ For this, an allocation of Rs 10 crore has been made.

Loan waiver:

- ✓ A total of Rs 2,531 crore has been budgeted for waiver of agricultural loans, Rs 1,000 crore for waiver of jewel loans, and Rs 600 crore for waiving self-help group loans, totalling an amount of ₹4,131 crore.

Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar scheme:

- ✓ Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Marriage Assistance Scheme is being transformed as the Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Higher Education Assurance Scheme in line with the changing times.
- ✓ The earlier 'Thalikku Thangam' scheme or Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Marriage Assistance Scheme provided gold and financial assistance for women's marriages
- ✓ The new scheme is a higher education assurance scheme for all girl students who studied from Classes 6 to 12 in government schools.
- ✓ They will be paid Rs 1,000 per month directly into their bank account till the uninterrupted completion of their undergraduate degree, diploma and ITI courses.
- ✓ The students will be eligible for this in addition to other scholarships.
- ✓ The new scheme aims to increase the enrollment of girls in higher education.
- ✓ The original marriage assistance scheme was started in 1989 by former chief minister M Karunanidhi to promote education and support the marriage of girls from poor families.
- ✓ Under the scheme, Rs 25,000 and eight gram gold coins used to be distributed for girls who completed Class X.
- ✓ Those girls who completed their degree used to get Rs 50,000 and eight gram gold coins.

Funds for newly formed corporations:

- ✓ A special fund of Rs.60 crore will be provided to create basic infrastructure in the six newly formed corporations of Tambaram, Kanchipuram, Kumbakonam, Karur, Cuddalore and Sivakasi at Rs.10 crore each.
- ✓ Further, 28 newly created municipalities will receive Rs.2 crore each.

- ✓ In the next two years, the Tamil Nadu government will establish District Central Libraries with modern infrastructure in the newly-created 6 districts at an estimated cost of ₹36 crore.
- ✓ These library buildings will be named after Tamil scholars

Rs. 4216 crore earmarked for implementing old age pension and other social security schemes.

Rs. 200 crores earmarked for the 'Illam Thedi Kalvi' scheme.

A new Social Media Monitoring Cell by the Police Dept to be formed to tackle communal hatred on social media.

TN mental health infrastructure to be strengthened. Kilpauk IMH to be upgraded to TNIMHANS at Rs 40 crores.

Rs 3384 Crores rupees allocated for water management in the state.

Writings & speeches Dravidian stalwart EVR Periyar will be translated into 21 languages and electronic editions will be published. Rs 5 crore allotted.

Rs. 10,825 crores allotted for police department related projects.

Palanivel Thiagarajan
Minister of Finance, Tamil Nadu

Restoration of ancient temples:

- ✓ The government will take steps to renovate and restore ancient temples that are more than 1000 years old without affecting their heritage at a total cost of Rs 100 crore.
- ✓ A total of Rs 340 crore has been allocated to the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department.

Social Media:

- ✓ A new special “Social Media Monitoring Cell” will be established within the police department at the state headquarters to prevent the increasing crimes resulting from fake news and to tackle the menace of hatred on social media.
- ✓ It will monitor the fake posts, inflammatory comments, photos and videos uploaded on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp.
- ✓ The new unit will have an exclusive team of 30 personnel, working in three shifts, and will be part of the state-level Cybercrime Investigation Centre (CIC) set up at the Police Training College, Ashok Nagar.
- ✓ In 2018, Tamil Nadu first formed exclusive cybercrime units in the state and created 37 cyber crime police stations in district headquarters and nine more units in police commissionerates.
- ✓ The CIC will coordinate with the central agencies like ED and CBI.

Welfare of Communities:

- ✓ A sum of Rs 1,230 crore has been allocated to the Backward Classes, Most Backward Classes and Minorities Welfare Department.

- ✓ An amount of Rs 450 crore has been provided towards the maintenance allowance for severely affected persons with disabilities.
- ✓ A sum of Rs 838 crore has been allocated to the Department for the Welfare of Differently Abled Persons.

Environment:

- ✓ The government will set up a botanical garden at a cost of Rs.300 crore near Chennai in partnership with Kew Gardens of London.
- ✓ The Government announces 'Project Nilgiri Tahr' to protect & conserve the 'State Animal' of Tamil Nadu.
 - ✓ Steps would be taken to protect Nilgiri Tahr, the state animal of Tamil Nadu, at a financial outlay of Rs 10 crore.
- ✓ A total of 500 new parks will be created in urban local bodies.
- ✓ A separate organisation will be set up for Climate Change and green initiatives for which funds would be raised from aided institutions.
- ✓ Tamil Nadu government has decided to set up a Children's Nature Park at an estimated cost of ₹20 crore which will house birds, butterflies and animals by remodelling the Guindy Children's Park.
- ✓ The government has proposed to develop Sethumadai in Coimbatore district, Manavanur and Thadiyan Kudisai in Dindigul district and Yelagiri in Tirupattur district as ecotourism sites under public-private partnership.
- ✓ The government has allotted ₹849.21 crore for environment, climate change and forests department in the budget.

Sports:

- ✓ A total of Rs 10 crore allocated for multi-purpose sports facility at Chennai's Radhakrishnan Nagar.
- ✓ The proposed centre will have facilities for volleyball, badminton, basketball, boxing, kabaddi and indoor games as well as a gymnasium will come up over 4.7 acres in ward 41 near 'Sunnambu Kalvai' in North Chennai.
- ✓ The government announced allocation of ₹25 crore towards a programme to develop world class athletes and Olympic medalists from Tamil Nadu.

Industries:

- ✓ A Tamil Nadu Coir Business Development Corporation will be set up in Coimbatore for developing the coir sector to popularize value added coir products made in Tamil Nadu.
- ✓ The new industrial parks would come up in Coimbatore, Perambalur, Madurai, Vellore and Tiruvallur districts to attract investments worth ₹50,000 crore to revive the state's economy.
- ✓ The government would soon come up with a new policy to create a conducive environment for the sector to flourish and generate more employment.

- ✓ In order to promote employment intensive sectors, a new footwear and leather industry development policy will be released.
- ✓ For the manufacturing of electronic products, two exclusive clusters would be established at Pillaipakkam (Kancheepuram district) and Manallur (Thiruvallur district) with financial assistance from the Union government.
- ✓ In order to ease traffic movement and to regulate parking of heavy vehicles, truck terminal facilities would be created at Cheyyar and Gummidipoondi.
- ✓ A furniture park of international standards would come up in Tuticorin district .
- ✓ The allocation of ₹3,267 crore in the budget for the industries department exclusively for the development of logistics and supply chain systems.

Schemes:

- ✓ The allocation of Rs 2,800 crore for Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) scheme.
- ✓ The Budget allots Rs 3,000 crore for Jal Jeevan Scheme to provide piped water supply to the homes
 - ✓ A total of Six new combined water supply schemes will be implemented this year at ₹2,208 crore sanctioned already to benefit 5. 64 lakh people.
- ✓ The state budget allocated Rs 3,200 crore for the Prime Minister's Model Housing Board scheme
- ✓ A sum of ₹50 crore has been allocated for 'Naan Mudhalvan' scheme, the Chief Minister's project for upgrading skills of students.
- ✓ The government has allocated ₹4,816 crore in the Budget for various social security pension schemes such as Old Age Pension, Destitute Widow Pension and Pension for Differently Abled.
- ✓ The state will also set aside ₹22,487 crore as assistance to Tangedco as subsidies towards agriculture and domestic consumers and taking over 100% of its losses.

Agriculture:

- ✓ The government announces a special desilting scheme for ₹4,964km of canals in 10 districts in the Cauvery delta region.
 - ✓ The ₹80 crore project is aimed at ensuring that Cauvery water reaches the tail-end regions for the kuruvai crop.
- ✓ The state has allotted ₹2,787 crore for ongoing projects such as restoration of water bodies, and construction of groundwater recharge structures like check dams, barrages and subsurface dykes.
- ✓ The work on extension, renovation and modernisation in the irrigation system of the Cauvery basin delta would commence soon at a cost of ₹3,384 crore to achieve better efficiency in utilisation and management of water resources and to provide assured access to irrigation.

- ✓ Under the Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project phase II, 64 major dams would be taken up, including Sathanur, Sholaiyar, Mettur and Papanasam to improve their safety and operational efficiency at a cost of ₹300 crore this year.
- ✓ This scheme is being implemented with the assistance of World Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment (AIIB) at a cost of ₹1,064 crore



Transportation:

- ✓ The government has proposed to purchase 500 new electric buses and 2,213 BS-VI diesel-powered buses under the 'Climate-Friendly Modernisation of Buses in Major Cities of Tamil Nadu' Project being implemented with KfW assistance.
- ✓ In the budget, Rs 1,520 crore will be provided as subsidies towards free bus travel for women, Rs 928 crore as subsidy for student concession in bus fare and Rs 1,300 crore as diesel subsidy.
- ✓ Mobile help centres will be set up for migrants in Tamil Nadu
 - ✓ In the first phase this will cover Kancheepuram, Tirupur and Tiruvallur.
- ✓ The overall budgetary allocation for transport department is ₹5,375 crore

Museums/Public Structures:

- ✓ The government has allotted Rs 10 crore to set up new museums in the Villupuram and Ramanathapuram districts.
- ✓ Another Rs 10 crore has been allotted to redevelop three museums in the state.
- ✓ A sum of Rs. 50 crore has been set aside for the rebuilding and renovation of the state's oldest public structures.
- ✓ The government will upgrade the tribal on-site museum at Courtallam in Tenkasi district, the pre-historic onsite museum at Poondi in Tiruvallur district and the herostone on-site museum in Dharmapuri district at an estimated cost of ₹10 crore.

Government Departments:

- ✓ The Tamil Development Department will receive an amount of Rs 82.86 crore in the budget.
- ✓ A budget of Rs. 496.52 crore has been provided for the fire and Rescue Department.
- ✓ The overall budget allocation for the highways department has increased from Rs. 17,899 crore in 2020-21 to Rs.18,218 crore this year.
- ✓ The municipal administration department received an allocation of Rs. 20,400 crore, around Rs. 2,000 crore more than last year

Judiciary:

- ✓ A sum of Rs. 1,461.97 crore has been allocated for the administration of justice.
- ✓ The Tamil Nadu government has sanctioned constitution of seven commercial courts exclusively for the settlement of commercial cases.
- ✓ Commercial Courts deal with all types of business dispute including breach of contract, judicial review, corporate mergers, global restructuring, intellectual property among others.
- ✓ As on date, there are no commercial courts constituted below district judge level in the state.
- ✓ At the district judge level, for now, the court of principal judge, City civil court in Chennai and Principal district courts in other districts are dedicated as commercial courts.

Health:

- ✓ For strengthening the State's mental health infrastructure, an allocation of Rs 17,901 crore has been done for the health and family welfare department.
- ✓ To provide quality medical care, the quality of government hospitals in Tamil Nadu will be further enhanced and a budget of ₹1,019 crore has been allocated.
- ✓ The government has planned to establish a Tamil Nadu Institute of Mental Health & Neuro Sciences, by upgrading the Institute of Mental Health (IMH), Kilpauk.
 - ✓ A provision of ₹40 crore has been made for the first phase of this project.
- ✓ The state will set aside ₹100 crore for the upgradation of the Government Arignar Anna Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre in Kanchipuram district into a 750 bed "autonomous institution of excellence"
 - ✓ The 290-bed hospital established in 1969 is being expanded into a 500-bed hospital at ₹120 crore.
 - ✓ With assistance from the World Bank and the National Health Mission, this hospital will be upgraded

Community:

- ✓ A sum of Rs 7,500 crore sanctioned towards subsidy for public distribution system.
- ✓ A budget of Rs 4,130 crore allocated for disbursing loans to the self help groups.

- ✓ A total of 1,000 more houses will be built for people hailing from the Irular community at a cost of Rs 500 crore.
- ✓ The project to provide surveyors with "Rover Machine" equipment to carry out survey work has been allocated Rs. 15 crore.
- ✓ A total of Rs. 50 crore has been set aside for the protection and upkeep of government lands, as well as the recovery from occupation.
- ✓ A total of 149 Samathuvapurams, which have been neglected without maintenance for the last ten years, will be renovated in the first phase at a cost of ₹190 crore.

Historical Significance:

- ✓ 3 sites - Courtallam, Boondi, and Dharmapuri excavation sites will be improved at a cost of Rs 10 crore.

Literature:

- ✓ A sum of ₹5 crore has been allocated to translate Periyar's writings and works in 21 other Indian and foreign languages, which would be published in print and digital editions.
- ✓ With a view to establishing the relationship between the Tamil language and the Indo-European language family, a committee of Tamil etymologists will be formed to prepare an etymological dictionary.
- ✓ Four literary festivals will be held annually to celebrate the literary traditions of the rich Tamil language.

Policies:

- ✓ In order to encourage transit-oriented development (TOD) in certain corridors such as Metro Rail, suburban rail, National Highways and by-pass roads, the Tamil Nadu government has decided to raise the existing Floor Space Index (FSI) in adjoining areas

Start-ups:

- ✓ The Tamil Nadu government has allocated ₹50 crore for emerging sector seed funds in the State Budget.
- ✓ Additionally ₹30 crore have been allocated towards TANSIM (Tamil Nadu Start up and Innovation Mission) for promoting start-ups in Tamil Nadu.
- ✓ An iconic State Startup Hub Centre with all facilities will be established by the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO) at Nandambakkam, Chennai at an estimated cost of ₹75 crore

Chennai:

- ✓ The Tamil Nadu government will revive and implement the Maduravoyal - Chennai Port Elevated Corridor Project.

- ✓ Under the project, a 20.6 km long double-decker elevated corridor at an estimated cost of ₹5,770 crore will be constructed.
- ✓ To implement this project, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the NHAI, Government of Tamil Nadu, the Navy and Chennai Port will be signed soon.
- ✓ The project was conceived in 2010 by the then DMK government headed by M Karunanidhi.
- ✓ The project commenced in September 2010.
- ✓ However, it was stalled after the AIADMK came to power in 2011.
- ✓ The NHAI resumed the project after the government signed a state support agreement (SSA) for the project in December 2016.
- ✓ It was aimed at easing the city traffic and free movement of freight to the port.
- ✓ The 50-metre wide stretch of land adjoining the eastern side of the Outer Ring Road (ORR) from Minjur to Vandalur with a length of 62 km will be developed as a Development Corridor at a budget of Rs.2,250 crore.
- ✓ To widen the 14km stretch of the East Coast Road (ECR) from Thiruvannamiyur to Akkarai covering Neelankarai, Injambakkam, and Sholinganallur villages to a six-lane carriageway, Rs. 135 crore has been allocated in the budget.
 - ✓ Road expansion works beyond Mahabalipuram are entrusted to the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).
- ✓ A sum of Rs.1,200 crore allotted for the Chennai-Kanyakumari industrial corridor.
- ✓ The state highways department will soon construct a grade separator at Kattupakkam at an estimated cost of Rs 322 crore.
 - ✓ Kattupakkam junction is the meeting point of arterial routes like Chennai-Bangalore road, Mt. Poonamallee-Avadi road and Poonamallee Kundrathur-Pallavaram road.
- ✓ The Greater Chennai Corporation will spend the Rs. 500 crore funding provided in the state budget for Singara Chennai 2.0 primarily on toilets and parks.
- ✓ Funding for toilets comes from three schemes Nirbhaya, Swachh Bharat and Singara Chennai – but they would be used as a single component.
- ✓ In addition to this, the Tamil Nadu government has allotted Rs. 500 crore for flood mitigation works, following recommendations by the Thirupughal committee.
- ✓ Road projects will be taken up under the AMRUT 2.0 scheme, under which Rs. 13,000 crore have been allotted overall for the state.
- ✓ Further, Rs. 1,875 crore has been allotted in the state budget for the smart city projects.
- ✓ Under the Kalaignar Nagapura Mempattu Thittam, works worth Rs.1,000 crore would be taken up to provide basic infrastructure in corporations other than Chennai.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **The 26th International Film Festival of Kerala - began in the state capital Thiruvananthapuram on March 18**
- ✓ The festival was inaugurated by Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan
- ✓ During the inaugural ceremony, the CM presented the 'Spirit of Cinema' award to Kurdish filmmaker Lisa Calan



- ✓ Kurdish filmmaker Lisa Calan lost both her legs in an ISIS bombing in 2015 and now uses prosthetic legs
- ✓ Actor and director Anurag Kashyap was the chief guest at the function
- ✓ Bangladeshi film 'Rehana Maryam Noor' was the inaugural movie at the weeklong festival that will end on March 25 and which will screen over 170 films from various countries across 15 screens
- ✓ About 10,000 delegates have registered to participate in the festival.

SPORTS

- **World Championships bronze medallist Lakshya Sen and the women's doubles pair of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand - scripted history after reaching the semi-finals at the 2022 All England Open Badminton Championships in their respective categories at Birmingham on March 18**



- ✓ Lakshya Sen made the semifinals following a walkover against Lu Guang Zu, who pulled out of the quarters due to a back injury.
- ✓ With this, Lakshya became only the third Indian men's player to enter the semi-finals of the All England Open Badminton Championships.
- ✓ Prakash Padukone in 1980, 1981 and Pullela Gopichand in 2001 were the only Indian men's singles players to have made the All England Open semi-finals in the open era previously.
- ✓ While Padukone finished as runners-up in 1981, He and Gopichand went on to win the title on the other two occasions.
- ✓ Meanwhile, the Indian women's doubles pair of Treesa Jolly-Gayatri Gopichand, ranked world No. 46, moved into the semi-finals after scoring an upset win against the world No 2 South Korean duo of Lee Sohee and Shin Seungchan
- ✓ With their sensational win, Treesa-Gayatri became the first Indian women's pair to make the semi-final of the All England Open
- ✓ However, the fifth-seeded Indian pairing of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty lost to world No 1 Indonesian pair of Marcus Fernaldi Gideon and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo in the quarter-final
- ✓ Earlier, P.V Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medallist, suffered an upset loss to world No. 13 Sayaka Takahashi of Japan while Saina Nehwal lost against the reigning world champion Akane Yamaguchi in three games.
- ✓ Kidambi Srikanth also crashed out after losing to Indonesia's Anthony Ginting in a close match.

RANKINGS

- **Finland - has been named the happiest country for the fifth successive year in the 10th edition of World Happiness Report 2022, released on March 18**



- ✓ The annual UN-sponsored index ranked Denmark in the second place, with Switzerland, Iceland, and the Netherlands rounding up the top five happiest places in the world.
- ✓ Luxembourg, Sweden, Norway, Israel and New Zealand complete the Top 10 happiest places
- ✓ Finland reported just over 70,000 cases and 805 deaths due to coronavirus.
- ✓ Austria is the only country that dropped out from the list of last year's top 10 happiest counties in the world.
- ✓ Published ever since 2012 by United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network, the World Happiness Report is based on people's own assessment of their happiness, as well as economic and social data.
- ✓ The report also assigns a happiness score on a scale of zero to 10, based on an average of data over a three-year period
- ✓ For the World Happiness Report 2022, people across 149 countries were asked to rate their happiness
- ✓ While Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia recorded the biggest jumps in wellbeing, the largest falls in the world happiness table came in Lebanon, Venezuela and Afghanistan.
- ✓ New Zealand remained the only non-European nation in the top 10.
- ✓ The UK fell from 13th to 17th spot, the US rose three places to 16th and France climbed to 20th, its highest ranking yet in this year's rankings
- ✓ Russia and Ukraine, currently at war with each other, have been ranked 80 and 98 respectively
- ✓ India saw a marginal improvement in its happiness ranking, jumping up three spots to 136 and was placed even below Pakistan, which is at 121, on the list.
- ✓ The latest list, which was compiled before the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, ranked Afghanistan as the unhappiest, closely followed by Lebanon and Zimbabwe

