

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-MARCH 30, 2022

TAMIL NADU

- On March 29, Chief Minister M K Stalin – inaugurated the new office of Amazon India in Chennai

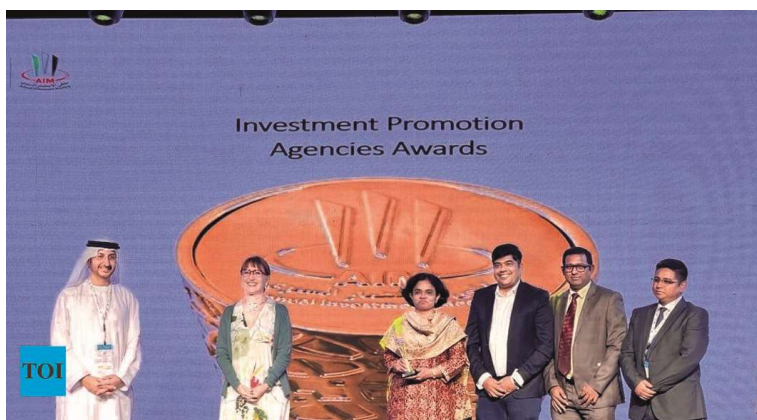


- ✓ Minister for Information Technology Mano Thangaraj and other senior officials from the state government took part in the event.
- ✓ This is the company's largest in the state and the second largest in the country after the Hyderabad campus.
- ✓ The new facility spans 18 floors across 8.3 lakh sq ft at the World Trade Centre at Perungudi
- ✓ The new development centre is the e-commerce giant's fourth in Tamil Nadu.
- ✓ It will have around 6,000 employees across various Amazon divisions including tech, engineering and customer support
- ✓ The centre is expected to play a key role in R&D relating to Amazon's flagship devices including Amazon Echo.
- ✓ Amazon, whose total office area in Tamil Nadu has now increased to more than 2.1 million sq ft, also has two offices on OMR, Chennai's IT Corridor, and one in Saravanampatti, Coimbatore.

- ✓ The company first began operations in Tamil Nadu with around 50 people in Chennai in 2005.
 - ✓ Now, Amazon has more than 14,000 employees and counts the state as a significant hub.
 - ✓ Among other modern workspace elements, the new office houses huddle rooms, wellness rooms, inter-faith prayer rooms, mother's room, recreation spaces and a 24-hour multi-cuisine food court accessible to all employees.
 - ✓ Besides its development centres, Amazon also has four Fulfilment Centres and three Sort Centres in the state.
 - ✓ In 2021, Amazon set up its first devices manufacturing unit in India in Chennai.
- **Tamil Nadu - secured third prize in the best state category of the National Water Awards instituted by the Union Jal Shakti ministry.**



- ✓ Union Jal Shakti minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat presented the award to Tamil Nadu additional chief secretary (water resources department) Sandeep Saxena in New Delhi.
 - ✓ Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan got the first and second prizes, ahead of TN in the best state category for exemplary work in management of water resources.
 - ✓ The award is to create awareness on the significance of water and motivate stakeholders to adopt best practices in water management.
 - ✓ Vellaputhur panchayat in Chengalpattu district won second prize in the best village panchayat (south zone) category, while Madurai Corporation secured third prize in best urban local body category.
 - ✓ Government girls higher secondary school in Kaveripattinam was the best school, Hyundai Motor India, Tamil Nadu won second position in best industry category, and Vivekananda Kendra, NARDEP, Kanyakumari bagged second prize in best NGO category.
- **On March 20, the Tamil Nadu Industrial Guidance and Export Promotion Bureau (Guidance) - bagged the 'Best Investment Promotion Agency' award in Asia Oceania Region at the Annual Investment Meeting 2022**



- ✓ The meeting is an initiative of the Ministry of Economy of the United Arab Emirates.
- ✓ Guidance Tamil Nadu is the designated nodal agency for investment promotion and facilitating single window approvals for industries.
- **On March 29, Tamil Nadu governor R N Ravi - appointed professor J Kumar the new vice-chancellor of Madurai Kamaraj University for three years from the date of assumption of office.**



- ✓ Kumar, currently UGC BSR faculty fellow at Crystal Growth Centre in Anna University, was registrar (in-charge) of Anna University from 2018 to 2019.
- ✓ With 29 years in teaching and research, he has completed 20 sponsored research and development projects and has two patents.
- ✓ Kumar has published more than 160 research papers in peer-reviewed international journals and has guided 25 research scholars.
- ✓ He was also director of the Centre for Technology Development and Transfer and director of Planning and Development.
- ✓ The V-C search committee headed by Anna University former vice-chancellor E Balagurusamy submitted names of three shortlisted candidates for the post on February 5.
- **On March 28, the University Grants Commission (UGC) - declared that the degrees awarded by the Annamalai university under the open and distance learning mode (ODL) programme after 2014-15 were invalid**

- ✓ Every year 30,000 to 40,000 students enrol in the distance mode programmes of Annamalai University
- ✓ The UGC said Annamalai University was only recognised to offer distance mode programmes till 2014-15.
- ✓ It also warned the public not to enrol in any programme offered by Annamalai University through ODL mode.

STATES

- **On March 29, Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma and his Meghalaya counterpart Conrad K Sangma - signed an agreement to end 50-year interstate boundary dispute**



- ✓ The two leaders signed the pact at the Union Home Ministry in Delhi, in the presence of Home Minister Amit Shah and officials from both the states and the Ministry.
- ✓ The pact will resolve the long pending dispute in six of the 12 places along the 884.9 km border between the two states.
- ✓ There are 36 villages in the six places, covering an area of 36.79 sq km, with regard to which the agreement has been reached
- ✓ According to the proposed recommendations for the 36.79 square km of land, Assam will keep 18.51 square km and give the remaining 18.28 square km to Meghalaya
- ✓ With the signing of the agreement, 70% of the border dispute between the two states has been resolved.
- ✓ The freshly demarcated border will have to be passed by Parliament by amending the North Eastern Region (Reorganisation) Act of 1971 which then will have to be ratified by the legislative assemblies of both states.
- ✓ Earlier, the Chief Ministers of both the north eastern states have submitted a draft resolution to Union Home Minister Amit Shah on January 31 for examination and consideration by the Home Ministry.

- ✓ Last year, both state governments identified six of the 12 areas under dispute — Hahim, Gizang, Tarabari, Boklapara, Khanapara-Pilingkata, Ratacherra — for resolution in the first phase.
- ✓ The long-standing land dispute was sparked in 1972 when Meghalaya was carved out of Assam
- ✓ After its creation, Meghalaya had challenged the Assam Reorganisation Act, 1971, leading to dispute in 12 border locations.
- ✓ Assam shares a 2743 km boundary with Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and West Bengal.
- ✓ It is locked in border disputes with Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh.


NATIONAL

- **On March 29, President Ram Nath Kovind - presented the 3rd National Water Awards and launched the Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain campaign 2022 in New Delhi**



- ✓ The campaign focuses on water conservation and aims to solve intensifying water crisis in the country for the period from 29 March, 2022 to 30 November, 2022.
- ✓ During his speech, the President mentioned about the ‘Catch the Rain, Where it Falls, When it Falls’ annual campaign launched last year
- ✓ Under this campaign, massive water conservation works are taken up in all districts (rural as well as urban areas) of the country during the pre-monsoon and monsoon period.
- ✓ On 22nd March 2021, the Prime Minister of India launched the “Catch the Rain, where it falls, when it falls” campaign on the occasion of World Water Day
- ✓ The campaign this year will continue till November 30.
- ✓ The President presented third National Water Awards to different states, districts and local bodies for their good works in water conservation efforts.

- ✓ The Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti gave 57 awards to States, Organizations, Individuals etc. in 11 different categories
 - ✓ **Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu have got the first, second and third prizes respectively in the best state category of the national awards**
 - ✓ Muzaffarnagar (UP) and Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar (Punjab) secured the first and second positions among the best performing districts in the north while Thiruvananthapuram and Kadapa in Andhra Pradesh stood first and second in the south zone.
 - ✓ East Champaran in Bihar, and Godda in Jharkhand secured the first and second rank respectively in the east zone while Indore won the first prize in west and Vadodara and Banswara were declared joint second winners in the west zone
 - ✓ Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board won the award for being the best in water conservation practices in the category of 'Best Institution/Resident Welfare Association/Religious Organisation for Campus Usage'
 - ✓ The first National Water Award was launched by the Jal Shakti Ministry in 2018
 - ✓ The First Information Brochure of the 7th edition of India's International Water Resources Event India Water Week (IWW) -2022 was released by the Union Minister for Jal Shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on the day.
 - ✓ It is planned to be organized from 1-5 November, 2022 at India Expo Centre, Greater Noida
 - ✓ The theme of the 7th IWW is "Water Security for Sustainable Development with Equity"
 - ✓ In May 2019, the Ministry of Jal Shakti was created after the merger of erstwhile Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation and Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation.
 - ✓ In the same year 'Jal Jeevan Mission' was also launched.
- **On March 29, the All India Council for Technical Education - announced its new guidelines for 2022-23**

| NEW AICTE GUIDELINES FOR 2022-23 | |
|---|---|
| Maths is not mandatory for these diploma/UG degrees: <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Agriculture engineering ➤ Architecture (physics, chemistry also not mandatory) ➤ Biotechnology ➤ Food engineering ➤ Leather technology ➤ Fashion technology (physics, chemistry also not mandatory) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Packaging technology (physics, chemistry also not mandatory) ➤ Printing engineering ➤ Pharmaceutical Engineering ➤ Textile chemistry |
| | Chemistry not must for these: <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Computer science engineering ➤ Electrical engineering ➤ Electronics engineering |

- ✓ As per the new norms, Maths in Class XII is no longer mandatory to apply for one-third of engineering courses, including architecture, biotechnology and fashion technology
- ✓ The AICTE also made chemistry in Class XII optional for studying computer science, electrical engineering and electronics engineering.
- ✓ Maths has been made optional for 10 out of 29 diploma/UG courses.
- ✓ Instead, students who studied any of 14 subjects, including computer science, electronics, information technology, biology, biotechnology, technical vocational subject, agriculture, engineering graphics, informatics practices, business studies and entrepreneurship can now pursue engineering courses.
- ✓ AICTE also gave new guidelines for giving options for students to give multiple entry and exits.
- ✓ Further, it has said engineering colleges cannot reduce the capacity in core engineering branches such as civil, mechanical and electrical more than 50% of approved capacity
- ✓ The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) extended the moratorium for setting up new engineering colleges till 2024 with some exceptions.
- ✓ This is based on the recommendations of the committee headed by IIT Hyderabad chairman BVR Mohan Reddy set up to overhaul engineering education.

INTERNATIONAL

- **US President Joe Biden - has proposed \$1. 8 billion in his budget plan to support his Indo-Pacific strategy**
- ✓ Further, the US allocated another \$400 million to counter China's aggressive behaviour in the strategically vital Indo-Pacific region.
- ✓ The American budget included nearly \$1. 8 billion to support a free and open, connected, secure, and resilient Indo-Pacific region and the Indo-Pacific Strategy, and \$400 million for the Chinese malign influence fund.
- ✓ Both the proposals are part of the \$773 billion annual defence budget of the US for the year 2023
- ✓ This was submitted by the White House to Congress as part of its annual budgetary proposals.

INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

- **On March 28, India and Sri Lanka - have signed an MoU for implementation of hybrid power projects in three islands off Jaffna in northern Sri Lanka.**
- ✓ The MoU was one among several agreements signed between the two countries following a meeting between external affairs minister S Jaishankar and his Sri Lankan counterpart G L Peiris.
- ✓ In December, China had announced that it was suspending its own plan to build power plants on three Sri Lankan islands due to security concerns.



- ✓ Sri Lanka is in the middle of a key sea route connecting East and West and is important to China's ambitious 'One Belt One Road' initiative.
- ✓ The cancelled Chinese power plant project was planned near India's southern coast.
- ✓ Sri Lanka is facing massive problems with debt and is enduring its worst economic crisis in recent memory with shortages of power, medicine, fuel, fertilizer and milk.
- ✓ The debt crisis partly stems from infrastructure projects that were financed with Chinese loans but are not making money.
- ✓ Sri Lanka's foreign reserves are dwindling while it needs to repay \$7 billion in foreign debts this year.
- ✓ India provided a \$1 billion credit line to buy essentials and \$500 billion to buy fuel.
- ✓ China is considering a request for \$2. 5 billion in economic assistance but has been noncommittal about restructuring billions in debt.
- ✓ Sri Lanka's government previously scrapped a plan to allow China outright ownership to land on the Colombo Port City.
- ✓ It instead provided 62 hectares (153 acres) on a 99-year lease.

APPOINTMENTS

- **American courier delivery company, FedEx - has announced Indian-born Rajesh Subramaniam as its new CEO from June 1, 2022**
- ✓ Subramaniam will replace chairman and current CEO Frederick W. Smith, who will step down serve as the company's executive chairman
- ✓ Subramaniam serves as the company's president and chief operating officer since 2019
- ✓ He will continue to serve as a director on the FedEx board to which he was elected in 2020.
- ✓ Hailing from Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, Subramaniam earned his bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from IIT Bombay
- ✓ FedEx is the only company he has worked for from the time he earned an MBA from University of Texas, Austin, in 1991

FROM T'PURAM TO MEMPHIS

And Desi CEO' List Grows...

➤ **Raj Subramaniam**, currently president and COO, will be CEO of Fedex effective June 1, taking over from the package-shipping company's legendary founder Fred Smith (77), who will become executive chairman

➤ 56-year-old Subramaniam, who hails from Thiruvananthapuram, **joined FedEx in 1991** and has been chief operating officer since 2019

➤ He earned a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from **IIT-Bombay** in 1987, a master's degree

from **Syracuse University** in 1989, and an MBA from **University of Texas, Austin** in 1991



SATYA NADELLA | MICROSOFT

SUNDAR PICHAI | ALPHABET

SHANTANU NARAYEN | ADOBE

V NARASIMHAN | NOVARTIS

PUNIT RENJEN | DELOITTE

ARVIND KRISHNA | IBM

IVAN MENEZES | DIAGEO

L NARASIMHAN | RECKITT

PARAG AGRAWAL | TWITTER

*CEOs of select major global companies; Source: Agencies

- ✓ FedEx, which currently has over 6 lakh employees around the globe, was founded by Smith in 1973, delivering small parcels and documents.
- ✓ FedEx, the global package and courier services company, is ranked 45th on the Fortune list, with \$84 billion in revenues and 700 aircrafts.