

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MAY 27, 2022

TAMIL NADU

- On May 26, Prime Minister Narendra Modi - dedicated to the nation and laid foundation stones for 11 infrastructure projects costing Rs. 31,530 crore at the Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium in Chennai.

INFRA BOOST FOR TAMIL NADU

PM Narendra Modi on Thursday dedicated to the nation five completed projects and laid foundation stones for six others

₹31,500 crore | value of five completed projects and six others

FOUNDATION STONES LAID FOR

- 21km-long four-lane double decker elevated road** connecting Chennai Port with Maduravoyal at **₹5,852 crore**
- Multi-modal logistic park in Chennai at **₹1,428 crore**
- 263km-long Chennai-Bengaluru expressway**, which would cut travel time by 2-3 hours
- Redevelopment of five railway stations | **Egmore, Rameswaram, Madurai, Katpadi and Kanyakumari** | with separate corridors for arrival and departure

HOW DO YOU DO: PM Narendra Modi greets CM MK Stalin in Chennai on Thursday

The PM also dedicated 1,152 Light House Project houses at Perumbakkam, built under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban

- ✓ This is PM Modi's first official visit to Tamil Nadu after DMK came to power in the 2021 assembly elections.
- ✓ Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, Union Minister L. Murugan and others participated in the function

- ✓ CM Stalin welcomed PM Modi at INS Adyar and presented him a copy of Tamil epic 'Silappathikaram'.



- ✓ During his speech, CM Stalin said Tamil Nadu's share in India's GDP is 9.22% and in the overall tax income of the Union Government, the state's share is 6%, highlighting the 'disparity' in the money set aside for the state, which is just 1.2%
- ✓ Further, he placed various demands, such as the retrieval of Katchatheevu, to release the pending GST dues, to extend GST compensation by at least two years, make Tamil an Official Language of the Union on par with Hindi and recognise as the court language in the High Court, and facilitate NEET exemption to the state at the earliest.
- ✓ PM Modi started his speech with Bharathiyar's poem, written during the Indian Independence struggle – 'Senthamizh Naadenum Podhinile Inba Thaen Vandhu Paayudhu Kaadhinile'
- ✓ Later, he dedicated to the nation five projects worth over Rs 2,960 crore to the nation
- ✓ The five projects are
 - ✓ The 75 km long Madurai-Theni (Railway Gauge Conversion Project), built at a project cost of over Rs 500 crore
 - ✓ The 30 km long third railway line between Tambaram - Chengalpattu, built at a project cost of over Rs 590 crore, on which work began in January 2017
 - ✓ The 115 km long Ennore-Chengalpattu section and 271 km long Thiruvallur-Bengaluru section of Ennore-Thiruvallur-Bengaluru-Puducherry-Nagapattinam-Madurai-Tuticorin natural gas pipeline, built at a project cost of around Rs 850 crore and Rs 910 crore respectively
 - ✓ Inauguration of 1,152 houses constructed as part of the Light House Project - Chennai, built at a cost of Rs 116 crore under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban.
 - ✓ This project makes use of the precast concrete construction system as used in the US and Finland for the first time in the country at such a large scale
 - ✓ The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of Light House Projects at six sites across the country on January 1, 2021
- ✓ PM Modi also laid the foundation stone of six projects, being built at a cost of over Rs 28,540 crore, to the nation
- ✓ These projects include

- ✓ The 262 km long Bengaluru-Chennai Expressway to be built at a cost of over Rs 14,870 crore reducing travel time between Bengaluru and Chennai by 2 to 3 hours
- ✓ The four lane double decker elevated road connecting Chennai Port to Maduravoyal (NH-4), of about 21 km in length, to be built at a cost of over Rs 5,850 crore
- ✓ The 94 km long four lane Neraluru to Dharmapuri section of NH-844 and 31 km long 2 lane with paved shoulders of Meensurutti to Chidambaram section of NH-227, being built at a cost of around Rs 3,870 crore and Rs 720 respectively
- ✓ The reconstruction of five Southern Railway stations—Chennai Egmore, Katpadi, Madurai, Rameswaram, and Kanniyakumari—at a cost of Rs. 1,803 crore
- ✓ The construction of Multi Modal Logistic Park at Chennai worth around Rs 1,430 crore that aims to provide seamless intermodal freight movement

➤ **Tamil Nadu - has emerged as a leading tourist destination by topping the country in tourist arrivals in 2020**

- ✓ This was revealed in the India Tourism Statistics 2021 published by the Union ministry of tourism.
- ✓ The state has a 22.9% share of the total tourist visits in 2020 and has been ranked first in domestic tourist visits in 2020 with over 140 million visitors.
- ✓ Regarding the foreign tourist arrivals, the state is ranked second, marginally behind Maharashtra.
- ✓ Tamil Nadu received 1. 23 million foreign tourists, while Maharashtra received 1. 62 million foreign visitors.
- ✓ Bangladesh, the United States and the United Kingdom were the top rated foreign countries, cumulatively contributing to 45% of foreign tourist arrivals in India.
- ✓ The Chennai International Airport was the gateway for 6.6% of the foreign tourists.
- ✓ Of all the foreign tourists, 52% from Sri Lanka, 22.5% from Singapore, 20.4% from Malaysia, 18.8% from France and 16.8% from South Korea opted for Chennai as their preferred port of entry.
- ✓ Tamil Nadu is among the top five states in terms of the total number of rooms in classified hotels depicting the strength of tourism infrastructure in the state.
- ✓ Moreover, the group of monuments at Mamallapuram were ranked as the second most popular centrally protected ticketed ASI monument among domestic tourists and fifth among foreign tourists.
- ✓ Mamallapuram is one of the five Unesco world heritage sites in the state
- ✓ Other popular ASI monuments in the state frequented by tourists include Fort Museum, Fort Vattakottai, Gingee Fort and Rock Cut Jain Temple at Sittannavasal.

STATES

- **On May 27, the Bengal cabinet - passed a unanimous proposal to make chief minister Mamata Banerjee the chancellor of state universities instead of the governor.**
- ✓ The state assembly will be introducing a bill to this effect soon
- ✓ The state is also planning to choose the ordinance route if there was “a delay from the Governor in giving assent to the bill passed by the assembly”
- ✓ Bengal is not the only state where state governments and governors have clashed over key issues, including education, since 2014.
- ✓ Kerala governor Arif Mohammad Khan had suggested recently that CM Pinarayi Vijayan take over as chancellor of state universities.
- ✓ The Tamil Nadu assembly recently passed a bill taking away the governor’s power to appoint state university vice-chancellors
- ✓ The DMK government also tabled a bill proposing that the CM be the chancellor of the upcoming AYUSH university in the state

NATIONAL

- **On May 26, the Centre - formally scrapped the privatisation of the country’s second largest state-owned oil refining and marketing firm BPCL**
- ✓ This is due to the obstacles in the sale process triggered by the pandemic, the current geopolitical situation and the inability of bidders to go ahead with the transaction.
- ✓ The government had planned to offload its entire 53% holding and had invited expression of interest for the privatisation of the firm.
- ✓ The department of investment and public asset management (DIPAM) had invited bids globally on March 7, 2020.
- ✓ But it was forced to extend the date for submitting the initial bids multiple times due to the impact of Covid-19 pandemic
- ✓ With the transition to solar energy and other renewables being fast tracked by several countries, the takers haven’t shown interest in BPCL.
- ✓ Russia’s invasion of Ukraine also emerged as a major reason in not going ahead with the sale, which was once considered a centrepiece of the government’s privatisation drive.
- ✓ Last year estimates had shown that the Centre was targetting nearly Rs 70,000 crore from the privatisation of BPCL
- ✓ Anil Agarwal’s Vedanta and two overseas funds were among the suitors for the blue-chip state-owned company.
- ✓ Later the two funds had dropped out leaving only one bidder in the fray.
- ✓ The Centre had last year launched the sale of a some companies into the new financial year

- ✓ Among the prominent ones on the list were BPCL, Shipping Corporation of India, Concor, BEML
- ✓ All these have faced delays, upsetting the government's plan to privatise state-run firms.
- ✓ The government hopes to raise Rs 65,000 crore from the asset sales drive in the current financial year that ends in March 2023
- ✓ It has so far raised Rs 23,575 crore from divestment and is all set to raise another nearly Rs 38,000 crore from the 29.5% residual stake sale in Hindustan Zinc Ltd (HZL).

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare and Chemicals and Fertilizers, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya – delivered an historic address at the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland**



- ✓ The Health Minister delivered the opening remarks for “Unlocking the Power of Digital Health” and “Closing Vaccines Gap” Sessions on May 25
- ✓ During his speech, the Minister said that the government has been promoting the digitalization of healthcare and the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission was launched with this in mind.
- ✓ Further, the government's focus is also on creation of a longitudinal Electronic Health Record for more than 1.3 billion people of India
- ✓ The Reproductive & Child Healthcare IT platform tracks more than 120 million pregnant women for their check-up, delivery planning and over 90 million children for immunization.
- ✓ Further, Health Management Information system regularly integrates data regarding health programmes from more than 200,000 health facilities
- ✓ Among others, Telemedicine platform e-Sanjeevani has benefited more than 390 million beneficiaries through video consultations during COVID-19 pandemic, making it the biggest such platform in the world.

- ✓ CoWIN platform monitors name-based vaccination and has monitored administration of more than 1.92 billion vaccination doses, including beneficiary registration and a QR code based digital certificate
- ✓ Through the NCD application, more than 80 million citizens were screened for diabetes, hypertension and cancers,
- ✓ India has promoted digital health agenda at global level as Chair in Global Digital Health Partnership.

DEFENCE

- **Nirdeshak, a survey vessel of the Navy - was launched at Kattupalli near Chennai on May 26.**



- ✓ Sarbani Dasgupta, wife of Vice-Admiral Biswajit Dasgupta, Flag Officer Commanding in Chief, Eastern Naval Command, launched the vessel to the chanting of invocation from Atharva Veda.
- ✓ Vice Admiral Biswajit Dasgupta was the chief guest on the occasion.
- ✓ Nirdeshak is one of the four survey vessels expected to enhance the hydrographic and oceanographic survey capabilities of the Navy.
- ✓ The ship has taken its name from erstwhile Nirdeshak which was also an Indian Naval Survey ship and was decommissioned after 32 years of glorious service in Dec 2014.
- ✓ According to the defence ministry, Nirdeshak is another milestone in indigenous shipbuilding, upholding the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- ✓ The contract for building four Survey Vessel Large (SVL) ships was signed between Ministry of Defence and Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata on October 30, 2018.
- ✓ The first of class ship 'Sandhayak' was launched on December 5, 2021 at GRSE, Kolkata
- ✓ Of the four survey vessels, three are built by L&T and one by GRSE. (Nirdeshak)
- ✓ Nirdeshak is the second of survey vessels to be launched, while the remaining two will be delivered in 2023 and 2024.


- ✓ The ships would also be deployed for collecting oceanographic and geophysical data for defence as well as civil applications

ECONOMY

- **The finance ministry - has decided to allow government departments to roll over unspent funds from one quarter to another to promote public spending.**
- ✓ This guideline will be implemented after getting an approval by the expenditure secretary.

BETTER TIMING OF SPENDING

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Spending of ₹ 500-2,000 crore to be allowed between 21st and 25th of a month in line with GST revenue ➤ Expenditure of over ₹ 2,000 crore to be timed between 17th and 25th day of the last month of the quarter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Spending on food, fertiliser and fuel subsidies is rising due to surge in prices ➤ Government has ruled out higher borrowings for now ➤ It hopes increased tax collections will help check fiscal deficit
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- ✓ Further, the budget division has retained the cap on spending during the fourth quarter of the full year allocation, while limiting the spending during March at 15% of the annual spend.
- ✓ The revised norms have also suggested better cash flow management.
- ✓ As per the new norms, financial advisors in ministries to allow spending of Rs 500-2,000 crore between the 21st and 25th of a month as GST revenue comes around this time.
- ✓ Similarly, expenditure of over Rs 2,000 crore is sought to be “timed” towards the end of the quarter — between 17th and 25th day of June, September, December and March.
- ✓ Besides, the financial advisers have been asked to closely monitor the release of funds to autonomous bodies and other organisation so that they do not sit on funds.
- ✓ Further, dividend receipts from public sector entities are proposed to be pushed during the first half of the year with a similar focus on non-tax receipts.

SPORTS

- **India's premier long jumper Murali Sreeshankar - won the gold medal at the 12th International Jumping Meeting in Kallithea, Greece with an effort of 8.31m.**



- ✓ The Tokyo Olympian is the current national record holder with a jump of 8.36m, which he had achieved last month.
- ✓ Sreeshankar was followed by Swede Tobias Montler, who claimed silver with an 8.27m jump, and Jules Pommery of France, who bagged bronze with an 8.17m effort in the 10-man field.

AMBASSADOR TO MAKE A COMBACK - REPORT

- The most popular car of India, the HM Ambassador - would make a grand comeback in 2024 with a new look and new name 'Amby'



- ✓ The upcoming Ambassador is a joint venture of Hind Motor Financial Corporation of India (HMFCI), a subsidiary of Hindustan Motors, and the French car maker, Peugeot
- ✓ The new model of the iconic car brand will be rolled out from the Chennai plant of Hindustan Motors (HM), which is now operating under HMFCI, an associate company of the CK Birla Group
- ✓ HM's Chennai plant was once used for the production of Mitsubishi cars, while its Uttarpara facility was dedicated to manufacturing the Ambassador.

- ✓ The last Ambassador car, Ambassador Encore, was rolled out from HM's Uttarpara factory in September 2014.
- ✓ That year, India's oldest carmaker HM stopped production citing huge debt and lack of demand.
- ✓ HM owners CK Birla Group sold the car brand for Rs 80 crore to the French automaker Peugeot in 2017.

FRENCH MAKEOVER FOR ICONIC CAR

<p>➤ Hindustan Motors (HM) was established before independence in Gujarat's Port Okha</p> <p>➤ In 1948, ops were moved to West Bengal's Uttarpara, where Ambassador production began</p> <p>➤ Modelled on the iconic British car Morris Oxford (series III), Ambassador was India's best-selling car for over three decades</p>		<p>➤ Till the mid-90s, Ambassador was a status symbol</p> <p>➤ But its annual sales had dropped from 20k units in the mid-1980s to about 2,000 in 2014 when production ceased</p> <p>➤ CK Birla Group, the owners of India's oldest carmaker, sold the Ambassador brand for ₹80cr to French co Peugeot in 2017</p>
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- ✓ Peugeot was one of the first international automakers to do so in the mid-1990s, coinciding with the country's economic liberalization.
- ✓ Hindustan Ambassador was the first ever car to be manufactured in India
- ✓ It was first made by Morris Motors Limited at Cowley, Oxford in the UK from 1956 to 1959
- ✓ Ambassador, once called the 'Wheels of India', was a status symbol in India from 1960s till mid-1990s, and it was the lone mass-produced luxury car in the market
- ✓ When production was halted in 2013-14, annual sales had declined from over 20,000 units in the mid-1980s to under 2,000 units.

