# VETRII IAS STUDY CIRCLE

# Current Affairs

(A book for TNPSC Examination)

## JANUARY 2023 - PART 1

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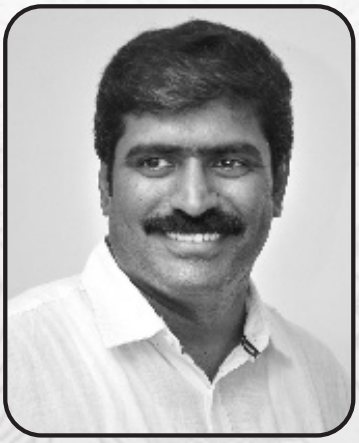
# Preface



**M. SHUNMUGAM**
Director
Vetrii IAS Study Circle.

My Dear Aspirants,

Greetings to all of you! "What we think we become" Gautama Buddha. We all have dreams. To make dreams come into reality it takes a lot of determination, dedication, self discipline and continuous effort.

We at VETRII IAS Study Circle are committed to provide the right guidance, quality coaching and help every aspirants to achieve his or her life's cherished goal of becoming a civil servant.

The class room coaching at VETRII IAS Study Circle is meticulously planned to equip the aspirants with all the relevant facts and fundamentals of the subjects. Further the VETRII IAS Study Circle Study materials aim to support the candidate by providing the most relevant study material in a comprehensive manner.

We also thank other family members of Vetrii for making this effort a reality.

We wish the aspirants ALL THE VERY BEST
for their journey in Civil Services !

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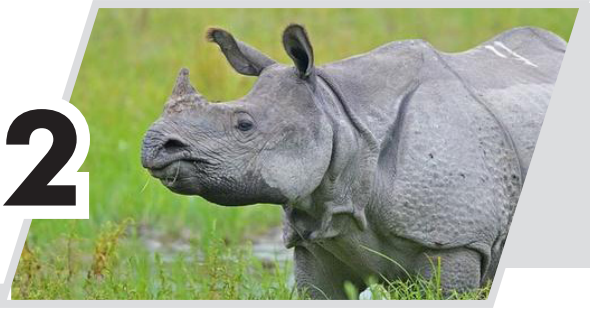

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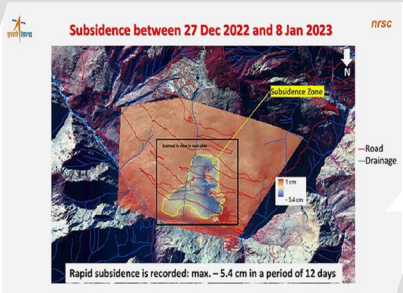


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# 1. HISTORY

## 1.1 IMPORTANT DAYS

| Date | Day | Theme / Remark |
|---|---|---|
| ***January 4*** | ***World Braille Day*** | ▪ The Day is observed to mark the **birth anniversary of Louis Braille**, the **inventor of Braille** for people with visual disabilities.<br>▪ **World Braille Day** was declared **in 2019** by the **United Nations General Assembly.**<br>▪ The Day is observed to raise awareness of the importance of Braille as a means of communication in the full realization of the human rights for blind and partially sighted people<br>***Note***<br>▪ **Louis Braille**, a Frenchman who was accidentally rendered blind at a young age, developed the Braille method in late 1820s<br>▪ According to a report by the **World Health Organization about 39 million people** are visually challenged in the world and about 253 million people are suffering from some kind of eye problem. |
| ***January 5*** | ***National Bird Day*** | ▪ The Day is observed across the world, but particularly in the United States.<br>▪ It was launched with an aim to reduce the suffering of birds by raising public awareness of the destructive bird trade, the realities of cruel bird breeding mills, and ways to improve the welfare of birds already in captivity.<br>***Note***<br>▪ **Vedanthangal** which was declared as a Bird Sanctuary in 1936 was the first Bird Sanctuary in India.<br>▪ There are **17 bird sanctuaries** in Tamil Nadu.<br>▪ In 2022, the Tamil Nadu government notified the **Nanjarayan tank in Tiruppur district** as the **17th bird** sanctuary of the State. |

# 1.2 DEFENCE, NATIONAL SECURITY AND TERRORISM

## K9-Vajra

- The **Defence Ministry** has started the process for the procurement of **100 more K9-Vajra tracked self-propelled howitzers.**
- They are manufactured in India by **Larsen & Toubro (L&T)** using technology transferred from South Korean defence major Hanwha Defense.
- The induction of **Dhanush, K-9 Vajra** and **M777 Ultra Light Howitzers** has enhanced the reach of artillery firepower on the northern borders.

### *About K9-Vajra:*

- It is a **155 mm, 52-calibre** tracked self-propelled howitzer.
- It can be mainly used in deserts, but can be deployed in the mountains as well.
- To ensure that these systems performed optimally,
- The Army also procured winterisation kits for the regiment deployed to enable K9 - Vajra to be used in the extreme cold weather conditions of the mountains.

### *About M777 Ultra Light Howitzers:*

- It is a **155 mm, 39-calibre** towed artillery gun and weighs 4 tonnes.
- It is made of titanium and aluminium alloys.
- It has a range of 2.4 to 30 km.

## 28 Projects inaugurated in Arunachal Pradesh

- **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** also virtually inaugurated the 28 projects of the Border Road Organisation (BRO)
- Out of these, eight have been constructed in Ladakh, four in Jammu and Kashmir, five in Arunachal Pradesh, three each in Sikkim, Punjab and Uttarakhand and two in Rajasthan.

### *Siyom Bridge in Arunachal Pradesh*

- The bridge is a 100-metre 'Class-70' steel arch superstructure built on the Aalo-Yingkiong road between West Siang and Upper Siang districts.
- It is one of the 28 projects completed by the BRO at a cost of Rs 724.3 crore to bolster border infrastructure.

## DAC approves 3 proposals worth Rs 4,276 cr

- Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) approved **three proposals worth 4,276** crore rupees to strengthen the country's deterrence and combat readiness.
- The DAC has accorded approval for procurement of
  - **HELINA Anti-Tank Guided Missiles,** launchers and associated support equipment which will be integrated to the Advanced Light Helicopter.
  - **Very Short Range Air Defence Systems (VSHORAD)** (IR Homing) missile system.
  - **Brahmos** Cruise Missile Launcher
  - **Fire Control System for** the Shivalik class of ships
  - **Next Generation Missile Vessels** for the Indian Navy.

### *About DAC:*

- It is constituted for overall guidance of the defense procurement planning process.
- It is headed by the Minister of Defence.
- It decides new policies and capital acquisitions for the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard.
- It was formed, after the Group of Ministers recommendations on 'Reforming the National Security System', in 2001, post Kargil War (1999).

## Prithvi-II Ballistic Missile successfully tested

- India successfully carried out a test launch of tactical ballistic missile **Prithvi-II** from from the **Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.**
- The Prithvi-II missile has a range of **around 350 kilometers.**

### *Note*

- Prithvi is a tactical **surface-to-surface short-range ballistic missile (SRBM).**
- It was developed by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** under the **Integrated Guided Missile Development Program (IGMDP).**

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# 1.3 EMINENT PERSONS

### Birth Anniversary of Queen Velu Nachiar (3 January 1730 – 25 December 1796)

- **Veeramangai Velu Nachiyar** of Tamil Nadu was the **first woman** to fight the British and the only female hero to recapture her lost kingdom.
- Born in **1730** to the **Ramanathapuram king Muthu Vijayaragunatha Selladurai Sethupathi**.
- She was married to the **Sivagangai Seemai Poligar Muthu Vaduganathar in 1746.**
- She escaped from Sivagangai Seemai when the British killed Muthu Vaduganathar in 1772 and took refuge in the Dindigul and Virupatchi forts.
- With the help of the Marudhu Brothers, she fought the British with modern weapons supplied by Hyder Ali and captured Kalaiyar Kovil
- Later, on a Vijayadasami Day, along with her 'only women army' she besieged and captured the Sivagangai Fort.
- Velu Nachiyar's life testifies to the courage of the Tamil land and the heroism of women

### Centenary celebration of Pollachi Mahalingam

- The TN government christened the road connecting Coimbatore and Palladam Roads in Pollachi after state's prominent industrialist and educationalist **Pollachi N Mahalingam** to honour his contribution to Tamil Nadu in many fronts.

#### *About Mahalingam (March 21, 1923 to October 2, 2014)*

- Mahalingam was a noted industrialist in the Coimbatore region.
- He served three times as Congress MLA from 1952 to 1967.
- He translated Thirukkural into English and Hindi and distributed several copies for free to people in north India.
- He was an ardent follower of Ramalinga Swamigal alias Vallalar.

# 1.4 SPORTS AND GAMES

### FIH Men's Hockey World Cup

- The **15th edition** of **International Hockey Federation** (FIH) Hockey World Cup 2023 would be held in **Bhubaneswar and Rourkela** from January 13 to 29.
- The state **Odisha** would be hosting this event

#### *About International Hockey Federation (FIH)*

- FIH is founded in 1924
- It is the **international governing body of field hockey** and indoor field hockey
- Headquarters - **Lausanne, Switzerland.**

# 1.5 BOOKS & AUTHORS

### "Revolutionaries: The other story of how India won its freedom"

- This book is written **by Sanjeev Sanyal**
- The book narrates the **stories of Armed Revolutionaries** and their role in Freedom Struggle

#### *About Sanjeev Sanyal:*

- He is an **Indian Economist and Member of Economy Advisory Council to Prime Minister Narendra Modi**.
- **His other works**
  - The Incredible History Of The Indian Ocean
  - India In The Age Of Ideas: Select Writings
  - The Ocean Of Churn
  - The Incredible History Of India's Geography
  - The India Renaissance: India's Rise After a Thousand Years of Decline

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### Braving a Viral Storm: India's Covid-19 vaccine Story

- Minister Mansukh Mandaviya releases the book "Braving a Viral Storm: India's Covid 19 vaccine Story" in New Delhi.
- It is the book written by Ashish Chandorkar and Suraj Sudhir
- It tells about the story of how India got its two indigenously made vaccines.

***Note***

- India was the first country to announce a clear Public Private Partnership to develop vaccines for Covid-19.

## 1.6 AWARDS & HONOURS

### UN-Habitat's World Habitat Awards 2023

- Odisha won the **UN-Habitat's World Habitat Awards 2023** for **Jaga Mission, a 5T initiative (5T** denotes - Team work, technology, transparency, transformation and time limit) of the state.
- **UN-Habitat's World Habitat Awards**
- Initiated in 1985, the annual World Habitat Awards recognise and highlight innovative, outstanding and revolutionary housing ideas, projects and programmes from across the world.
- **Jaga Mission**
- It is the world's largest land titling and slum upgrading program that aims at empowering the lives of slum dwellers.

***About UN- Habitat***

- United Nations Human Settlements Programme programme established for human settlements and sustainable urban development.
- Formation - 1977
- Headquarters - Nairobi, Kenya.

***About Odisha***

- Capital - Bubaneswar
- Governor - Ganeshi Lal
- Chief Minister - Naveen Patnaik
- Awards and Honour

### Digital India Awards 2022

- President Draupadi Murmu conferred the **Digital India Awards, 2022.**
- These awards aim to inspire and motivate not only the government entities but also start-ups and grassroot level digital initiatives in fulfilling the Digital India vision.
- DIA has been instituted by the **Minister for Electronics & Information Technology, under the aegis of National Portal of India.**
- The **7th edition of Digital India Awards** was presented under the following seven categories:
  - **Digital Empowerment of Citizens - e-NAM** (Pan-India electronic trading portal to create a unified national market for agricultural commodities)
  - **Digital Initiatives at Grassroots Level - e-Vivechna App** (Madhya Pradesh) (To help in crime investigation)
  - **Digital Initiatives for Ease of Doing Business** - Mine Mitra (Uttar Pradesh) (For online approval of Mining plan)
  - **Data Sharing and Use for Socio Economic Development** - Smart Cities Mission, M/o Housing and Urban Affairs
  - **Public Digital Platforms**
- **Central Ministries, Departments - ICEGATE Portal** (Makes Customs clearance process transparent)
- States - **DUARE SARKAR** (West Bengal) (For service delivery and welfare schemes at peoples' doorsteps)
- **Digital Initiatives in Collaboration with Startups - Digital Workforce Management System (Kerala)**
- **Best Web & Mobile Initiatives Complying with GIGW & Accessibility Guidelines - Bilaspur District Website** (Chhattisgarh)

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### 80th Golden Globe Awards

- RRR's "Naatu Naatu" song bagged Golden Globe award 2022 in the category of Best Original song
- It becomes the first Asian song to win this award
- M.M. Keeravani is the Music composer of this song

***Other category***

- Best flim(Drama) - Steven Spielberg's "The Fablemans"
- Best flim (Musical/Comedy) - Martin McDonagh's "The Banshees of Inisherin"

***About Golden Globe Awards***

- It is presented annually by The Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA) since 1943.
- Objective: To recognise excellence in film, both American and international, and American television.

## 1.7 CULTURAL PANORAMA

### Octave 2023

- Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi inaugurated the **Octave 2023** in Chennai.
- Octave 2023 is a **cul1tural festival** held under the aegis of the **South Zone Cultural Centre, Thanjavur,** to showcase the indigenous art and culture of the **North East India.**

### Site Museum at Keezhadi

- The Tamil Nadu Government stated that the setting up of a **site museum at Keezhadi** will be completed soon.

***About the Keezhadi Excavation***

- The first phase of excavation began in Keezhadi in the year **2014** and three phases **namely 2nd and 3rd phase of excavation** were carried out by the C**entral Archeology Department in 293 sites** along the Vaigai river valley in Theni, Dindigul, Madurai, Sivaganga and Ramanathapuram districts.
- It was followed **by 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th** excavations by the **Tamil Nadu Archeology Department.**
- The **8th phase of excavation** work in Keezhadi areas was completed last September.
- Carbon dating of charcoal found at the Keezhadi site in February 2017 established that the settlement there **belonged to 200 BC.**
- The excavations proved that urban civilisation had existed in Tamil Nadu since the Sangam age.
- More than 20 thousand antiquities have been discovered through the excavations that have been completed so far.
- Important Artifacts found so far are
  - **A beautifully crafted earthen pot with leaf decoration**
  - **Pallichandai Thidal.**

### 26th National Youth Festival, 2023

- The Prime Minister inaugurated the 26th National Youth Festival on January 12 in **Hubballi-Dharwad, Karnataka.**
- The festival is to be held from **January 12-16**
- Theme: "Viksit Yuva Viksit Bharat" **(Developed Youth - Developed India)**
- It is organized by the **Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, in collaboration with the Government of Karnataka**
- **Objective:** To empower the youth of India and promote their active participation in shaping the country's future.

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# 1.7 APPOINTMENTS – WHO IS WHO?

### Siachen gets first woman Army officer

- **Captain Shiva Chouhan**, an officer from the Corps of Electronics and Mechanical Engineers, became the **first woman officer** to be operationally deployed at Kumar Post in the Siachen Glacier.
- The post is located at an altitude of **15,632 feet.**
- Siachen Glacier is the **longest glacier** in the **Karakoram range** and second-longest in the world's non-polar areas.

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# 2. POLITICAL SCIENCE

## 2.1 INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

### India and Austria to sign migration and mobility agreement

- India signed a **"Comprehensive Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement"** (MMPA) **with Austria.**
- While India has been keen to sign the agreement with Austria to resolve issues over facilitating Indian professionals working in these countries, Austria wants to find a way to curb illegal immigration from India.

***About Austria***

- Capital - Vienna
- President - Alexander Van der Bellen
- Currency - Euro

### 36th round of the Indo-French Strategic Dialogue

- **National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval** and **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar** met with the **French National Security Adviser Emmanuel Bonne** in New Delhi.
- India- France discussed on a variety of issues which include
  - Current global security situation in the context of the conflict in Ukraine.
  - Regional security in the context of Afghanistan.
  - Counter terrorism
  - Cybersecurity
  - Defense cooperation in the Indo -Pacific region.

***About France***

- President - Emmanuel Macron
- Prime Minister - Élisabeth Borne
- Capital - Paris
- Currency - Euro

### Young Professional Scheme in London

- High Commissioner of India to the **UK, Vikram K Doraiswami and Matthew Rycroft**, the permanent secretary at the Home Office of the UK signed and exchanged letters for formalising the **Young Professional Scheme.**
- The event took place at the High Commission of India in London.

***About the Scheme***

- The scheme will permit up to **3,000 of their degree¬-holding citizens aged between 18 and 30** to live and work in each other's countries for a period of two years.
- The scheme was conceived as part of an India¬ U.K. Migration and Mobility MoU signed in May 2021, was announced in November at the G20 summit in Bali.
- Migration and Mobility agreement of 2021 seeks to address the return of illegal migrants to their home countries.

***About United Kingdom***

- Capital - London
- Monarch - Charles III
- Prime Minister - Rishi Sunak
- Currency - Pound sterling

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# 2.2 PUBLIC AWARENESS & GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

## Women outnumber men in the electoral roll of State

- As per the integrated final electoral roll of special summary revision of photo electoral roll, 2023 the total electorate of Tamil Nadu is **6,20,41,179.**
- Women **outnumber men in the final list.**
- The total number of male voters is 3,04,89,866 and the total number of female voters is 3,15,43,286. As many as 8,027 third gender voters are there in the final roll. The number of voters between the age group of 18 and 19 is 4,66,374.
- **Highest** number of voters - **Sholinganallur** Assembly constituency (6,66,295 voters).
- **Lowest** number of voters - **Harbour** constituency (1,70,125 voters).

***About Tamil Nadu State Election Commission***

- Formation - July 15, 1994
- Tamil Nadu State Election Commissioner - V. Palani Kumar.
- State Election Commissions are formed as per Article 243K of the Constitution of India

## Policy to make IST mandatory soon

- The government is planning to develop a comprehensive policy and regulatory framework for mandatory **adoption of Indian Standard Time** under the **Legal Metrology Act, 2009.**
- The purpose is to ensure synchronization of all networks and computers to IST and adoption of IST by Telecom Service Providers, Internet Service Providers, power grids, banks, stock exchange, etc.
- The **Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA)** is working in coordination with the **National Physical Laboratory (NPL)** and **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** to generate and disseminate accurate time traceable to IST.
- The Project aims to create technology and infrastructure to **disseminate** IST from **five sites (Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar, Faridabad and Guwahati)** across India to all the telecom operators, power grids, financial institutions, data centres, common citizens etc.

## Home Ministry seeks another six months to frame the rules of CAA

- The Union Home Ministry has sought another extension of six months to frame the rules of the **Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA)** without which it cannot be implemented.
- This is the **seventh such extension** sought by the Ministry.
- **CAA Act**
  - The CAA was passed on **December 11, 2019** for fast-tracking the citizenship of people from the **Hindu, Sikh, Parsi, Christian, Buddhist and Jain communities** from **Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh** who entered India before December 31, 2014 without any documents.
  - The Ministry noted that the Act would come into force from January 10, 2020. However, the rules have not been notified.
- The **Manual on Parliamentary Work** states that if a Ministry is not able to frame the rules governing a law within six months after the law is passed it should seek extension of time **from the Committee on Subordinate Legislation** stating reasons for such extension.

## Revised norms mandate under BEE's star label

- The **ceiling fans** are included in the **mandatory abelling** under the revised norms for BEE's star labelling.
- BEE has tightened norms **for refrigerators from January 1**, which require separate star labelling for freezers and refrigerator provisioning units (storage section) of frost-free versions in addition to strengthening labelling.
- An existing refrigerator with 3-star rating will become 2-star labelled.

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***About BEE's Star Label***

- The scheme was launched by the **Minister of Power in May,2006.**
- The Star Labeling Programme has been formulated by the **Bureau of Energy Efficiency,** under the **Energy Conservation Act, 2001.**
- It is invoked for household equipment/ appliances which includes 26 appliances. BEE's star label is a way of describing the energy performance of a product. It denotes the energy efficiency of an appliance of a particular brand in comparison to similar offerings from other brands. It is thus a comparative label rather than an endorsement label.

***Note***

- The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) was formed on **March 1, 2002** under the provisions of the **Energy Conservation Act, 2001.**

## Centre adopts new standards for digital TV receivers

- The **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)** has published new country ¬specific standards for the manufacturing of digital television receivers with built¬in satellite tuners, for Universal Serial Bus (USB) Type C receptacles, plug and cables and for video surveillance systems.
- The measure is in line with meeting international standards in the area of electronics.
- Under the new standard,
- The digital television receivers will be manufactured with in¬built satellite tuners.
- It will enable reception of free to air TV and radio channels of Doordarshan (DD) and All India Radio (AIR) just by connecting a dish antenna.
- The move can save the cost of purchasing set top boxes for viewing various paid and free channels.

***About BIS***

- BIS is the National Standards Body of India under Department of Consumer affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.
- It is formed under **BIS Act, 2016.**

## Cabinet approved Three New Cooperative Bodies

- The Union Cabinet approved setting up of **three new Cooperative Bodies under Multi-State Cooperative Societies (MSCS)Act, 2002**
- They are,
- National Multi-state cooperative Export society
- National Multi-state cooperative Organic society
- National Multi-state cooperative Seed society
- Their objective is to promote Organic products, seeds and exports
- These societies will manage various activities related to organic sector by providing certified and authentic organic products
- Apex organization for the three new cooperatives bodies is Seed Cooperative Society

***About Multi State Cooperative Societies ACT, 2002***

- **Objective**: To facilitate the voluntary formation and democratic functioning of co-operatives as people's institutions to promote their economic and social betterment and to provide functional autonomy.

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# 2.3 GOVT – WELFARE ORIENTED GOVT SCHEMES, THEIR UTILITY

## Women break new ground in MGNREGS

- Women's participation in **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)** has increased to a **10 year high in the financial year 2022-23.**
- According to the latest statistics available with the Union Rural Development Ministry 57.8% of the workers who used the scheme in 2022 were women which is their highest level of participation since 2012-13.
- For the past five years, in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, women's share in the **MGNREGS workforce** has been hovering **between 85% and 90%.**
- Women's participation increased due to **two factors - market forces** and **welfare incentives for women MGNREGS workers.**
- The growth spike was **higher in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.**
- The proportion of women workers in Bihar grew 3.7 percentage points this year, while U.P. saw a 3.3 percentage point hike.

### *About MGNREGA*

- Launched on **August 25, 2005.**
- The MGNREGA provides a legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment to adult members of any rural household willing to do unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage.
- Implemented by the **Ministry of Rural Development (MRD).**
- Aims to improve the purchasing power of the rural people, primarily semi or unskilled work to people living below poverty line in rural India.
- The employment will be provided within a **radius of 5 km:** if it is above **5 km extra wage will be paid.**

## SMART program for Ayurveda professionals

- **SMART (Scope for Mainstreaming Ayurveda Research in Teaching Professionals) program** has been launched by **National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM)** and **Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS)** under **Ministry of Ayush (MoA).**
- It is aimed to boost scientific research in priority healthcare research areas like Iron Deficiency Anaemia, Obesity, etc. through Ayurveda colleges and hospitals.
- It has been launched for regulating medical education and conducting scientific research respectively.
- The proposed initiative is conceptualised with an objective to identify, support and promote innovative research ideas in healthcare research areas including Osteoarthritis, Iron Deficiency Anaemia, Chronic Bronchitis, Dyslipidemia, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Obesity, Diabetes Mellitus, Psoriasis, Generalised Anxiety Disorder, Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD).

### *About NCISM*

- It is a **statutory body** established under **MoA through NCISM Act, 2020** for regulating medical education.
- Works to improve access to quality and affordable medical education, ensures availability of adequate and high-quality medical professionals of Indian System of Medicine in all parts of the country etc.

### *About CCRAS*

- An autonomous body of MoA.
- Apex body for undertaking, coordinating, formulating, developing and promoting research on scientific lines in Ayurvedic Sciences.
- Its research activities include Medicinal Plant Research (Medico-Ethno Botanical Survey, Pharmacognosy and Tissue Culture), Drug Standardization, etc.

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***Initiatives to promote Ayurveda***

- Central Sector Scheme for **Ayush Oushadhi Gunavatta evam Uttpadan Samvardhan Yojana (AOGUSY).**
- **9th World Ayurveda Congress** was held **in Goa** to showcase the efficacy and strength of AYUSH systems of medicine at Global level.

## Office of Banking Ombudsman (OBO)

- The **Reserve Bank of India** stated that the **volume of complaints** received under the Ombudsman Schemes/ Consumer Education and Protection Cells during 2021¬-22 was **increased by 9.39% in 2022** and stood at 4,18,184.
- **Complaints related to ATM/ debit cards** were the **highest at 14.6% of the total,** followed by mobile/ electronic banking at 13.6%.

***Note***

- The **Banking Ombudsman Scheme** was introduced under **Section 35 A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949** by RBI with effect from **1995.**
- Presently the **Banking Ombudsman Scheme 2006** (As amended upto July 1, 2017) **is in operation.**
- The Banking Ombudsman is a senior official appointed by the Reserve Bank of India to redress customer complaints against deficiency in certain banking services

## Samudrayaan Mission

- India is planning to send **three explorers to a depth of 500 meters** under the sea in an indigenously built vessel, MATSYA 6000′ under **Samudrayaan Mission.**
- MATSYA 6000′ vehicle is being designed and developed by **National Institute of Ocean Technology** (NIOT), Chennai under Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- It is **India's first unique manned ocean mission** and is a part of the Rs 6000-crores **Deep Ocean Mission.**

***About Deep Ocean Mission***

- It was approved **in June 2021** by the **Ministry of Earth Sciences.**
- The mission aims to explore the deep ocean for resources, develop deep-sea technologies for sustainable use of ocean resources, and support the Blue Economy Initiatives of the Indian Government.

## PM SVANidhi scheme had aided over 9,000 street food vendors

- More than 9000 street food vendors have been onboard on food delivery platforms like Swiggy and Zomato as part of PMSVANidhi scheme

***About PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbharNidhi (PM SVANidhi)***

- It is launched by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** (MoHUA) in June 1, 2020
- It is a scheme **to empower Street Vendors by extending loans** to them and focus on their holistic development and economic upliftment.
- Objective:
  - To facilitate **working capital of loan** up to 10,000
  - To incentivize regular repayment
  - To reward digital transactions

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# 3. GEOGRAPHY

## 3.1 POLICY ON ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

### Zero Poaching of Rhinos in Assam in 2022

- Assam recorded zero poaching of Rhinoceros for the first time in nearly 45 years in 2022.

#### *About India Rhinoceros*

- Indian Rhinos are Asia's largest species of rhino.
- They are found in India (Assam, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh), Nepal and Bhutan.
- IUCN Status - Vulnerable
- Indian Rhinos have only one horn Rhino horn is made up of keratin - protein which forms the basis of our hair and nails.
- Habitat: Tropical and subtropical grasslands, savannas and shrublands, tropical moist forests, deserts and shrublands.
- Threats: Horn poaching for medicinal value, habitat loss.
- Highest Population : **Kaziranga National Park**
- Highest Population density of Indian Rhinos : **Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary**

#### *Initiatives for rhino conversion in India*

- Indian Rhino Vision 2020 was launched in 2005 to increase the rhino population in Assam to 3,000 by establishing populations in seven protected areas.
- Special Rhino Protection Force constituted by Assam to check rhino poaching and related activities

### Green Hydrogen Mission

- The Union Cabinet approved the **National Green Hydrogen Mission** with an initial outlay of ₹19,744 crore
- The Mission was aimed at making India a global hub to produce, utilise and export green hydrogen and its derivatives.
- The **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)** will formulate the scheme guidelines for its implementation.

#### *Main Objectives*

- To develop a green hydrogen capacity of at least 5 MMT (million metric tonnes) per annum.
- Creation of more than 6 lakh jobs in the sector.
- To abate nearly 50 million tonnes (MT) of annual greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 which is in line with our Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) targets.
- To cumulatively reduce fossil fuel imports estimated at over ₹1 lakh crore.
- To make India energy independent and in decarbonising major sectors of the economy.

#### *Note*

- The **National Hydrogen Mission was launched on August 15, 2021**, with a view to cutting down carbon emissions and increasing the use of renewable sources of energy.
- **Green hydrogen** is the hydrogen produced by splitting water by **electrolysis from renewable energy.**

### Report by Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air

- According to the report, there is no change in air quality in most cities since the induction of the **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)**
- Air quality has improved only in 49 out of 131 cities in 2021-22.

#### *About NCAP:*

- It was launched by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) in **January 2019.**

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- It is the **country's first national policy** on curbing air pollution.
- **Goal**: To meet annual average ambient air quality standards.
- **Target 2024:** To reduce the concentration of coarse and fine particulate matter in the atmosphere by at least 20% to 30% with 2017 as the base year for comparison
- **Method:** Through city specific air pollution abatement action plan

## Neelakurinji on the list of protected plants

- The **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF)** has included Neelakurinji on the list of protected plants under **Schedule III of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**

***About Neelakurinji:***

- **Botanical name** - Strobilanthes kunthiana
- It is found in the **shola forests** of the **Western Ghats** in Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu
- The purplish blue flowers bloom only once in 12 years.

***About Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972***

- The Act was enacted for the protection of plants and animal species
- **Bodies Constituted under the Act**
  - National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)
  - State Board for Wildlife (SBWL)
  - Central Zoo Authority
  - National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)
  - Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB)

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# 4. ECONOMICS

## 4.1 NEW ECONOMIC POLICY AND GOVERNMENT SECTOR

### UPI payments record high of ₹12.82 lakh crore in December

- **Unified Payments Interface (UPI) payments** have touched record high of ₹12.82 lakh crore in December, 2022.
- In December, 782 crore transactions in volume terms were done on the platform.

***About UPI Platform***

- It is a system that powers multiple bank accounts into a single mobile application (of any participating bank), merging several banking features, seamless fund routing & merchant payments into one hood.
- It also provides the "Peer to Peer" collect request
- Pilot launch was **on 11th April 2016** when **Dr.Raghuram G Rajan was the Governor of RBI** at Mumbai.
- The service is provided by the **NPCI (National Payments Corporation of India)**

### RBI to issue green bonds in two tranches

- The maiden **Sovereign Green Bonds (SGrBs)** would be issued **by RBI** in two tranches of Rs.8,000 crore each on January 25 &February 9.
- The proceeds from the bonds will be utilised for funding public sector projects seeking to reduce carbon emissions.
- The proceeds from the green bonds issuance cannot be used for extraction, production and distribution of fossil fuels or where the core energy source is fossil-fuel based, and nuclear power projects.
- Centre will be issuing the SGrBs for mobilising resources for green infrastructure.
- The bonds are **eligible for trading** in the **secondary market.**
- The green bonds would be available in **5-year and 10-year tenure**

***Note***

- The Government of India issued the Sovereign Green Bond Framework **on November 9, 2022.**
- **Sovereign Green Bond** : It is a debt instrument issued by the central or state government to borrow money from investors with the commitment that the mobilised fund will be spent on climate or eco-system related activities

## 4.2 CURRENT TRENDS IN INDIAN ECONOMY

### GST revenues in December rise from November lows

- The Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenues rose to nearly ₹1.5 lakh crore in December, 2022.
- It is the **third highest monthly collection** so far and 15% higher than in December 2021.
- This is **the 10th month in a row that GST collections have crossed the ₹1.4 lakh crore mark,** with revenues from import of goods rising 8% and revenues from domestic transactions (including import of services) increasing 18% from the revenues yielded by these sources during December 2021.
- **Central GST (CGST) is ₹26,711 crore, State GST (SGST) is ₹33,357 crore, Integrated GST (IGST) is ₹78,434 crore** (including ₹,263 crore collected on import of goods) and cess is ₹11,005 crore (including ₹crore collected on import of goods).

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***About GST***

- 101st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2016 introduced the GST from 1 July 2017
- GST had replaced the old Indirect tax regime in India.
- It was introduced with the idea of **"One Nation- One Market- One Tax".**
- GST is an indirect, multi-stage, consumption-based tax system. It subsumes several domestic indirect taxes like service tax, purchase tax, value-added tax, excise duty, and others under one head.
- It does not include Petroleum, Liquor, and stamp duty.
- The Three taxes application under the GST are CGST (Central) SGST (State) and IGST (integrated)
- The Four tax slabs are **5%, 12%, 18%, 28%.**

## Manufacturing ends 2022 on a high note

- As per the **S&P Global India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI),** India's manufacturing sector recorded its sharpest increase in output in 13 months in December 2022, with new orders rising at the fastest pace since February 2021.
- However the selling prices surged more than input costs for the first time in two and half years.
- The seasonally adjusted PMI reading for December 2022 rose to 57.8 from 55.7 in November, reflecting 'a robust improvement in the health of the sector that was the best seen since October 2020'.
- For the October to December quarter, the PMI averaged 56.3, the highest in a year.

***Note***

- The **Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)** is an index of the prevailing direction of economic trends in the manufacturing and service sectors.
- PMI focuses mainly on the **five major Survey Areas:**
  - **Employment**
  - **New orders**
  - **Production**
  - **Inventory levels**
  - **Supplier deliveries**

## Services PMI shows surge in December 2022

- As per the S&P Global India Services Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), India's services sector reported a sharp growth in new business in December, 2022 led by finance and insurance services.
- The index rose to 58.5 last month from 56.4 in November 2022.
- A reading of 50 on the index indicates that there is no change in business activity levels.
- Real estate and business services saw the slowest expansion in new orders.

***Note***

- India's Manufacturing PMI also reported a strong rise in December 2022 as per the data released by S&P Global

## Coal production grew 10.8% in December

- As per provisional data from the **Coal Ministry,** December 2022 was the second straight month of **double-digit growth** in coal output.
- Production levels for the **first nine months** of 2022-23 were 16.4% higher at 608 MT, compared with **522.34 MT** produced in the **same period of 2021-22.**
- India's coal production increased by 10.8% in December 2022 to almost 83 million tonne (MT) from 74.8 MT in 2021.

***Note***

- Top 5 States in terms of total coal reserves in India are: **Jharkhand > Odisha > Chhattisgarh > West Bengal > Madhya Pradesh.**
- In April 2018, the Ministry of Coal launched **UTTAM (Unlocking Transparency by Third Party Assessment of Mined Coal) Application** for coal quality monitoring.

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# 4.3 REPORTS AND INDICES

- Unemployment rate rises to 8.3% in December says report
- According to the data from the **Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) India's unemployment** rate **rose to 8.3%** in December from 8% in November 2022.

***Key Highlights of the Report***

- The Unemployment rate is the **highest in the past 16 months.**
- **The urban unemployment rate rose to 10.09%** in December **from 8.96%** in the previous month.
- The rural unemployment rate slipped to 7.44% from 7.55%.
- The rise in the unemployment rate was not all bad as there is a healthy increase in the labour participation rate which shot up to 40.48% in December, the highest in 12 months.
- The employment rate has increased in December to 37.1%, which is the highest since January 2022.
- In December, the unemployment rate rose to 37.4% in Haryana which is the highest in India.

## The Preliminary report of economic survey predicts a growth of 7%

- The Union Government has released the **preliminary report of the Economic Survey** for the current financial year 2022-23 prior to the presentation of the Economic Survey.
- It is reported that the country's economy will grow by 7 percent.
- Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present the financial statement for the financial year 2023-24 in the Lok Sabha on February 1.

***Key Highlights of the Report***

- The preliminary report states that the country's economy **will grow by 7 percent** in the current financial year to **Rs.157.60 lakh crore.**
- The country's **exports** will be **Rs 35.70 lakh crore** and imports will be **Rs 46.88 lakh crore.** The **per capita income** will be **Rs.96,522.**
- **Rice production** will decrease by **6.1 percent** and crude oil production by 1.4 percent.
- **Coal production** will increase by **17.2 percent, cement production by 10.8 percent** and **steel consumption** by **11.5 percent.**
- Aggregate savings in banks will increase by 8.9 percent and aggregate credit by 17 percent.
- **Manufacturing sector** will grow by **1.6 percent** and the **construction sector** by **9.1 percent.** Mining sector output will increase by 2.4 percent.
- It has been mentioned that the agriculture sector will grow by 3.5 percent and the industrial sector by 6.4 percent.
- Projection of India's Economic Growth according to various organisation are
  - **Reserve Bank of India (RBI) - 6.8 percent**
  - **International Monetary Fund (IMF) - 6.8 percent**
  - **World Bank - 6.9 percent.**
  - **Asian Development Bank - 7 percent in the current financial year.**

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# 4.4 MONEY AND BANKING

## Incentives to Promote Digital Payments

- The Union Cabinet approved an **incentive scheme worth Rs.2,600 crore** to promote payments using **RuPay cards** and the **Unified Payments Interface (UPI).**
- Under this scheme, the financial incentives will be given to banks for promoting point of sale and e commerce transactions using Rupay cards and BHIM-UPI.
- The fund will be paid to banks in order to compensate the loss incurred by **Merchant Discount Rate (MDR)**

***About BHIM-UPI (Bharat Interface for Money - Unified Payments Interface)***

- It is launched on **30th December 2016**
- It is developed by **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)**
- BHIM is a payment app uses **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** for transactions.
- **Objective:** To bring in Financial Inclusion to the nation and a digitally empowered society.

***About National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI):***

- It is an initiative of **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** and **Indian Banks' Association (IBA)** under the provisions of the **Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007**
- It is an umbrella organisation for operating retail payments and settlement systems in India.
- Objective: To create a robust Payment and Settlement Infrastructure in India

***About Merchant Discount Rate (MDR):***

- MDR is a fee that a **merchant is charged by their issuing bank** for accepting payments from their customers via credit and debit cards or through online transactions

## Slow economic growth in Financial Year 2024

- According to recent update of **World Bank,** India's economic growth **will slow to 6.6**% in the next fiscal year from an expected 6.9% in the current year.

***About World Bank:***

- The World Bank was created in 1944 according to the Bretton Woods Agreement
- Headquarters - Washington, D.C
- President – David Malpass
- Objective: To provide financing, advice, and research to developing nations to aid their economic advancement

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# 5. SCIENCE

## 5.1 LATEST INVENTIONS ON SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### Lumpi-ProVacInd

- **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)** has developed **the Lumpi-ProVacInd vaccine for Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD).**
- Vaccine has been jointly developed by **ICAR's National Research Centre on Equines (NRCE) at Hisar, Haryana and Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) at Izatnagar, Uttar Pradesh.**
- It is a homologous, live attenuated vaccine to protect cattle against LSD virus.

***Note***

- There has been a loss of livestock in many States due to the lumpy skin disease in the recent past.
- Lumpy skin disease is a **viral disease** caused by **Capripoxvirus** that affects cattle.
- It is **transmitted by blood-feeding insects**, such as certain species of flies and mosquitoes, or ticks.
- It causes fever, nodules on the skin and can also lead to death, especially in animals that have not previously been exposed to the virus.
- Control options include vaccinations and culling of infected animals.

### Arsenic in water – Risks of Gallblader Cancer

- Public Health Foundation of India, Centre for chronic disease control, B. Borooah cancer institute and IIT-Kharagpur collaborated with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine conducted study on effects of Arsenic.
- **Aim of the study**: To investigate exposure of Arsenic in drinking water and finding its risk of getting affected to Gallbladder Cancer (GBC)
- **Report Findings**: The **chronic arsenic exposure in drinking water**, even at low-moderate levels, may be a **potential risk factor for Gallbladder cancer.**

***About Arsenic:***

- Arsenic is a **heavy metal atom** and **highly toxic in its inorganic form**
- Long-term exposure to arsenic from drinking-water and food can cause **cancer** and **skin lesions**
- **WHO** recommended the **limit of arsenic in drinking-water is 10 µg/L**

## 5.2 SPACE

### IN-SPACe inks MoU with Nascent Info Technologies

- The **Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe)** made an MoU with Nascent Info Technologies Private Limited
- This collaboration is for the development of various Geographic Information System (GIS) applications.

***About IN-SPACe:***

- Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe) is inaugurated on **10th June 2022**
- Objective: To enable, promote, authorize and supervise **private enterprises** and **start-ups** to undertake space activities

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# 5.3 LATEST COURT VERDICTS

### SC majority ruling finds no flaw in 2016 demonetisation process

- A **majority of four judges** on a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court found no flaw in the Union government's process to demonetise ₹500 and ₹,000 banknotes through a Gazette notification issued on November 8, 2016.
- The sole woman judge on the five member Bench, **Justice B.V. Nagarathna,** gave the dissent verdict stating that the government's notification issued under Section 26(2) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Act was unlawful.

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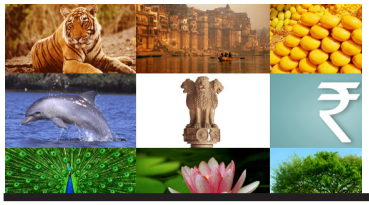

# 6. NATIONAL – DIARY OF EVENT

## Union government offices to go digital

- The Government has directed all the Union government Ministries and Departments to migrate to **e-office 7.0 by February 2023.**
- So far, **74 Ministries and Departments** have migrated to e-office version 7.0.
- At least **13 offices** that are yet to migrate to the updated system

### *About e-office 7.0*

- It is an in house system developed by the **National Informatics Centre (NIC).**
- Highly secure system with timely security audits and adequate firewalls.
- It is used for unclassified files, with two factor authentication and is not available on the Internet but on **NICNET (ICT network of NIC).**
- The e-office application will be regularly audited for known vulnerabilities by third party agencies on the panel of CERT¬-IN

### *Reasons to migrate to e-office 7.0*

- The half yearly report of the **Computer Emergency Response System (CERT- IN)** states that there were ransomware incidents in 2022.
- Recent cyber and ransomware attack on the servers of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi.

### *Note*

- **CERT-IN, the nodal agency** for responding to computer security incidents.

## 108th Indian Science Congress

- The **108th session of Indian Science Congress (ISC)** has been launched in **Nagpur, Maharashtra.**
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually addressed the Indian Science Congress 2023.
- The event is being hosted by the **Nagpur University at its Amravati Road Campus.**
- The focal theme of ISC 2022 is **"Science and Technology for Sustainable Development with Women Empowerment."**
- The key highlight of ISC is sustainable development with inclusive involvement of all sections of society including women.

### *History*

- The Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA) owes its origin to the foresight and initiative of **two British Chemists, namely, Professor J. L. Simonsen and Professor P.S. MacMahon.**
- The **first meeting** of the Congress was held **in January, 1914** at the premises of the **Asiatic Society, Calcutta.**

## Samvidhan Udyan (Constitution Park) at Raj Bhavan in Jaipur

- President Droupadi Murmu inaugurated the **Constitution Park at Raj Bhavan.**
- The Constitution Park was built by the Jaipur Development Authority at an estimated cost of Rs 9 crore
- The Park showcases the Constitution's journey from its making to its implementation through sculptures and pictures on paneled glass, among others.

### *Background of Indian Constitution*

- In 1928, the All Parties Conference convened a committee in Lucknow to prepare the Constitution of India, which was known as the Nehru Report.
- Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is widely regarded as the father of the Indian Constitution.
- It was adopted by the Constituent Assembly of India on 26 November 1949 and became effective on 26 January 1950.

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## Cabinet panel clears scheme to upgrade Prasar Bharati

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved the "Broadcasting Infrastructure and Network Development (BIND)" scheme with an outlay of ₹ 2,539.61 crore up to 2025¬-26.
- The initiative aims at upgradation and expansion of the public service broadcasting infrastructure across the country.
- Outcomes of the initiative
- FM broadcasting of All India Radio (AIR) is expected to cover over 80% of the country's population.
- Distribution of over Eight lakh Doordarshan Free Dish DTH set top boxes for people living in remote, tribal and border areas, aspirational districts and zones affected by Left Wing Extremism.

***Note***

- Currently, Doordarshan operates 36 TV channels, including 28 regional ones, and AIR operates over 500 broadcasting centres.
- Doordarshan was established on 15 September 1959.

## All India Annual State Ministers Conference on Water

- The Ministry of Jal Shakti organised **the first All India Annual State Ministers Conference on Water in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.**
- Theme - **"Water Vision@2047"**
- It was proclaimed that the **5 P mantra** is essential for the sustainability of water.
- 5P stands for political will, public financing, partnerships, public participation and persuasion.

## India's Largest Hockey Stadium

- The **Birsa Munda International Hockey Stadium** was inaugurated in Rourkela, Odisha.
- The stadium is the **largest hockey stadium in India.**
- The facility was opened ahead of the **FIH Men's Hockey World Cup 2023.**
- Rourkela is the second venue for the international event after the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar.

***About Odisha***

- Capital - Bubaneswar
- Governor - Ganeshi Lal
- Chief Minister - Naveen Patnaik

## India's first Y20 Summit

- Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Anurag Thakur launches **the theme, logo and website of Y20 Summit** at the **Curtain Raiser event** in New Delhi.
- The Y20 is the official youth engagement group **for the G20 (Group of 20),** the forum for the world's largest and most advanced economies.
- Y20 will focus on global youth leadership and partnership.
- India is hosting the Y20 summit for the **first time.**
- In Youth 20 Engagement Group, India's key focus is to bring young leaders from all across the globe together and discuss ideas for a better tomorrow and draft an agenda for action.

***About G20***

- The G20 or Group of Twenty is an intergovernmental forum of major developed and developing economies comprising 19 countries and the European Union (EU).
- Formation - 26 September 1999.
- Chairman - Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India
- First Meeting in Cologne, Germany
- G20 Countries - Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Japan, India, Indonesia, Italy, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union.

## Astro Tourism – A Sky Gazing event at Delhi's India Gate

- **National Council of Science Museums (NCSM)** in association with **Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML)** organised the **Astro Tourism – A Sky Gazing event at New Delhi's India Gate.**

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- The Astro Tourism event includes various activities like Astro Talks by expert Astronomers, Exhibition on Astronomy, Storytelling related to celestial objects, Experience of using telescope to see craters of Moon, Astronomy Activities, Photographic Panel Exhibition, and Astro-Photography.
- The programme will help in developing scientific temper among the people.

***Note***

- **Article 51 A** of our constitution deals with fundamental duties which makes it a duty of every citizen to develop Scientific Temper

## National Geospatial Policy (NGP) 2022

- The **Ministry of Science and Technology** has notified a **National Geospatial Policy (NGP) 2022**, with the goal of making India a world leader in the Global Geospatial Sector.

***Key Highlights of the policy***

- It is a **citizen-centric policy** that seeks to strengthen the geospatial sector.
- The policy is aimed to set up high resolution topographical survey and mapping, with a high-accuracy **Digital Elevation Model (DEM) by 2030.**
- It develops a framework for holistic development of the Geospatial ecosystem.
- **Geospatial Knowledge Infrastructure (GKI):** The government will establish an 5. Integrated Data and Information Framework by 2030 (to develop GKI)
- A **Geospatial Data Promotion and Development Committee (**GDPDC, will be a **17-member body**) at the national level shall be the apex body for formulating and implementing strategies related to promotion of the Geospatial sector.
- The government will also establish **National Digital Twin for high-resolution topographical survey and mapping by 2035.**

## 17th Edition of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) convention.

- The Three day plenary session of the **Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD)** convention commenced in Indore, Madhya Pradesh.
- The first day today of the convention was celebrated as **Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas** with the theme : **Role of Diaspora Youth in Innovation and Technology.**
- The Indian Diaspora brings a multi-layered gain to the IT industry in terms of enhanced skills and capital formation - human, social & financial.
- The Indian IT industry has created a strong motivation for the mobility of highly skilled professionals and provided the Diaspora with the much needed opportunity to engage with their motherland.
- The theme of the 17th edition of the convention is **'Diaspora: Reliable partners for India's progress in Amrit Kaal'.**
- Various Initiatives include
  - **Know India Programme KIP** - to expose diaspora Indian youth to various aspects of contemporary India and its vibrant art,heritage and culture.
  - The scholarship programme **GIAN (Global Initiative for Academic Network)**
  - The **VAJRA Faculty Scheme** : It aims to bring a strong international connect to the R&D ecosystem of India.
  - The **Mission Shodh GANGA** (Global Alliance for New Generation Acceleration)
  - **Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children (SPDC)**
  - **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC)**

***Note***

- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is observed on **January 9** to mark the contribution of the **overseas Indian community** towards the development of India.
- The day commemorates the **return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa** to Mumbai **on 9 January 1915.**

## Kerala becomes country's first fully digital banking state

- Kerala has become the **first state in India** to go fully digital in its banking service.

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- The State now has at least one product in 3.76 crore accounts enabled digitally, according to the State-Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC)
- **Right to Internet**
- Kerala is the only State in India that has declared 'the right to Internet' as a basic right of its citizens.
- Kerala Fibre Optic Network (K-FON) project:
- The K-FON will ensure internet facility to everyone in the state.
- Optical fibre cable had been drawn over a distance of 17,155 km.
- The project will enable internet to be available to everyone in the state either at lower price or for free-of-cost.

***About Kerala***

- Capital - Thiruvananthapuram
- Governor - Arif Mohammad Khan
- Chief Minister - Pinarayi Vijayan

## RACE testing facility, Sivakasi

- Council of Scientific and Industrial Research - National Environmental Engineering Research Institute **(CSIR - NEERI)** laid the foundation stone for Raw materials/chemicals, compositions emissions (RACE) testing facility at **Sivakasi, Virudhunagar district.**
- The facility will test and certify the **Green Crackers** produced in the district.
- This laboratory is set up based on MoU between CSIR-NEERI and Tamil Nadu Fireworks and Amorces Manufacturers Association (TANFAMA)

***About CSIR***

- The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) is known for its cutting edge (R&D-Research and Development) knowledge base in diverse Science and Technological areas, is a contemporary R&D organization.
- Present Director General - Dr. N. Kalaiselvi (1st Women DG of CSIR)

***About NEERI:***

- National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) is a pioneer laboratory in the field of environmental science and engineering.
- Objective: To strive for providing innovative and effective solutions for environmentally sustainable development and to help Government, industry and the society.

## MV Ganga Vilas - World's longest river cruise

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** flagged off the world's **longest river cruise "MV Ganga Vilas", at Varanasi.**

***About My Ganga Vilas***

- It is the **river cruise** travels from **Kashi in Uttar Pradesh** to **Dibrugarh in Assam**
- It is **the first indigenously made cruise vessel** in India.
- It covers destinations like Kashi, Patna Sahib, Bodh Gaya, Vikramshila, Dhaka and the Sundarbans

## Soul of Steel endurance challenge

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh launched the Soul of Steel alpine challenge at Dehradun
- The expedition will test one's high-altitude endurance
- It is an initiative to promote tourism in border areas

***Note:***

- A website for volunteers is launched to sign up for various adventure activities
- It is a joint initiative of the Indian Army and CLAW Global, a veteran's organisation

## Rajasthan to implement a blindness control policy

- **Rajasthan** has become the **first State to implement a policy to control blindness**
- **Objective:** To ensure the **"Right to Sight"**
- **Features:**
  - A drive will be undertaken in the State **to reduce the rate of blindness**
  - The policy aims **to bring down the prevalence rate of blindness** in the State, from 1.1% in 2020 to 0.3%.

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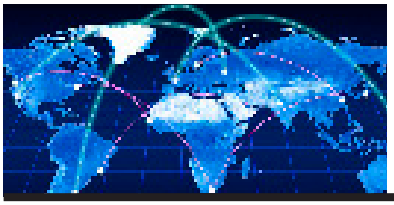

# 7. INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

## New President of Brazil

- **Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva** took office for a **third term as Brazil's President**
- He replaced the previous President Jair Bolsonaro.
- The 77-year-old ex-metalworker, who previously led Brazil from 2003 to 2010, took the oath of office before Congress.

### *About Brazil*

- Capital - Brasília
- Currency - Real

## International Organisation

### *Asian Pacific Postal Union (APPU)*

- India is set to become the **Secretary General of APPU** for a tenure of **4 years** from **January 2023**
- Dr. Vinaya Prakash Singh will assume the charge of Secretary General of the Union during India's four year tenure there.

### *About APPU*

- APPU is an **intergovernmental organization** of 32-member countries of the Asian-Pacific region.
- Goal of APPU is to extend, facilitate and improve postal relations between member countries and to promote cooperation in the field of postal services.
- It is a **specialized agency of the UN.**
- Headquarter: Bangkok, Thailand.

## Voice of Global South summit, 2023

- It is a special **virtual Summit to be held on 12-13 January 2023.**
- The inaugural and concluding sessions would be hosted by the Prime Minister of India
- Theme of the Inaugural Leaders' session - **"Voice of Global South - for Human-Centric Development"**
- Theme of the Concluding Leaders' session - **"Unity of Voice-Unity of Purpose".**

### *About Voice of Global South summit*

- It is the **initiative of India's Ministry of External affairs**
- **Objective**: To bring together countries of the Global South to share their perspectives and priorities on a common platform.

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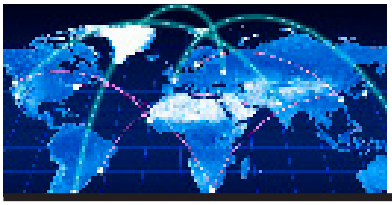

# 8. TAMILNADU AFFAIRS

## Whole Day Annadhanam Scheme at three more temples

- The TN Government launched the whole day annadhanam in three more temples:
  - **Ramanathaswamy temple in Rameswaram.**
  - **Arunachaleswarar temple in Tiruvannamalai.**
  - **Meenakshi Sundareswarar temple in Madurai.**
- With this, the scheme to provide annadhanam **from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.** covers **eight temples** in Tamil Nadu.
- A total of **754 temples in the State** provide annadha nam to nearly 82,000 devotees a day in the afternoons.

## Plans to borrow ₹51,000 cr. in Q4

- Tamil Nadu is planning to raise **₹51,000 crore in the fourth quarter (January, March) of fiscal 2022 - 2023** by auctioning off bonds called State Development Loans, according to the Reserve Bank of India's borrowing calendar.
- This is **45.7% higher than the ₹35,000 crore** the State borrowed in the fourth quarter (Q4) of fiscal year 2022.
- From April-December 2022, the State borrowed ₹49,000 crore, which is lower than the ₹52,000 crore it borrowed during the same period in 2021.

***Note***

- The **State Development Loans** are the major source of borrowing for the States to **fund their fiscal deficit**, which arises when total expenditure exceeds total revenue.
- Tamil Nadu is planning to become **revenue neutral in two to three years.**
- Tamil Nadu hikes DA for govt employees to 38%
- Tamil Nadu Government hiked the **Dearness Allowance (DA)** for government employees including teachers, pensioners and family pensioners **from 34 per cent to 38 percent** with immediate effect.
- The increase, effective January 1, 2023, would benefit about 16 lakh staff.

***Note***

- The Dearness Allowance is a **calculation on inflation and allowance paid to government employees and pensioners.**
- Dearness Allowance is calculated as a **percentage of an Indian citizen's basic salary** to mitigate the impact of inflation on people.

## Chennai Literary Festival

- TN CM MK Stalin inaugurated the pre events of **Chennai Literary Festival** which will be held from January 6 to 8, 2023 **at Anna Centenary Library.**
- The TN government planned to organise five literary festivals, among which four are named after rivers - **Vaigai, Cauvery, Porunai and Siruvani.**

## TN govt launches toll-free number to help devotees raise temple related grievances

- The Ministry for Hindu religious and charitable endowments launched a toll-free telephone number **18004251757** and a 24-hour helpline to help devotees report grievances and get information on temples in Tamil Nadu **24x7**.
- A grievance centre was launched on June 25, 2021 to help public and devotees register grievances related to temples. However, the centre used to function only between 10 am and 6 pm.
- Now, the newly launched centre will function 24x7.

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## Special Cover on IMSc issued

- The Department of Posts, Chennai City Region, released a special cover on **'60 Years of the Institute of Mathematical Sciences (IMSc)' at Taramani.**

***Note***

- The Institute of Mathematical Sciences (IMSc) is a research centre located in Chennai, India.
- The institute was founded by **Alladi Ramakrishnan in 1962.**

## 'SEVAI' launched in Tirunelveli

- For the first time in Tamil Nadu, the Tirunelveli district administration has introduced a WhatsApp¬ based chatbot, **'SEVAI' (Searches Explored Via Artificial Intelligence)** to take government welfare programmes to the public.
- Earlier, the chatbot won the first prize in **Tamil Nadu's first 'GovTechThon'** event which was organised by the Tirunelveli Administration, in association with Tamil Nadu Startup and Innovation Mission (TANSIM).
- The district administration decided to fine tune the chatbot to make it more user friendly.
- The chatbot informs the user about the welfare schemes based on the user's age, financial status and qualifications and guides the user to the relevant welfare programme.

***Note***

- **Thai Care Nellai app** is another app in use by the Tirunelveli Administration for constant monitoring of pregnant women by doctors, nurses and paramedical staff from their early pregnancy to post delivery to avert the death of babies and the mothers.

| Region | Normal area (5 years average | Target | Coverage* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 2022–23 | 2021–22 |
| Cauvery Delta | 3.609 | 5.046 | 5.476 | 5.389 |
| Non–Delta | 8.792 | 8.848 | 9.174 | 9.4 |
| Total | 12.401 | 13.894 | 14.65 | 14.789 |

***Note:***

- The Delta comparises the districts of Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Mayiladuthurai and Nagapattinam wholly, and parts of Karur, Tiruchi, Cuddalore, Pudukottai and Ariyalur.

**Cumulative coverage of major crops in 2022-2023 (in lakh hectares)**

| Crop | Annual target for 2022-23 | Coverage** | | Rise (+) or decline (-) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 2022-23 | 2021-22 | |
| Paddy | 19.7 | 19.593 | 19.836 | (-) 0.243 |
| Millets | 9.67 | 9.086 | 9.242 | (-) 0.156 |
| Pulses | 9.48 | 5.518 | 5.335 | (+) 0.183 |
| Total foodgrains | 38.85 | 34.197 | 34.413 | (-) 0.216 |
| Cotton | 1.74 | 1.275 | 1.051 | (+) 0.224 |
| Sugarcane | 1.71 | 1.467 | 1.295 | (+) 0.172 |
| Oilseeds | 5.5 | 3.462 | 3.382 | (+) 0.080 |
| Total agricultural crops | 47.8 | 40.401 | 40.141 | (+) 0.260 |

Source:State Agricultue Department

***Key Highlights***

- Cash crops have recorded higher coverage in Tamil Nadu this time than the previous year, while the coverage of food crops is marginally lower than last year.
- For the damage, the government has sanctioned around Rs.50.88 crore for nearly 48,600 farmers.

## Book Fair was inaugurated in Chennai

- Chief Minister M.K. Stalin inaugurated the 46th Chennai Book Fair on the YMCA College of Physical Education campus in Nandanam in Chennai.
- The fair was organised by the Booksellers and Publishers Association of South India (BAPASI).
- **Muthamizharignar Kalaignar M.Karunanidhi Porkizhi Award 2023** to six persons on the occasion.
  - P.R. Subramanian
  - Devibharathi (Novel)
  - Chandra Thangaraj (Short Stories)
  - Poet Devedeven (Quotes)
  - C Mohan (Translation)
  - Piralayan (Drama)
- Linguist P.R. Subramanian, who translated Robert Caldwell's The Comparative Grammar of Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages, received the award for prose/ research.
- BAPASI award recipients
  - M Pattazhagan
  - K Rathina Sababathi
  - Deepak Mathiyalagan
  - Devi Natchiyappan
  - S Thirugnasampantham
  - Indumathi
  - Aisha R Nadarajan
  - Vivek (Cinema Lyricist)
  - Mervin

## Sangham Literary Monthly Calendar released

- Chief Minister M.K.Stalin released the monthly calendar based on Sangham literature songs.
- The Calendar was published at the Chennai Book Fair.
- Based on Sangham Literary Songs, the Sangham Literary Month Calendar has been developed under the Tamil Advocacy Association for Tamil Development.
- It contains 12 Sangham literature songs based on various categories like gift of Tamil, heroism, ethics of life, love, love, science, life in harmony with nature, business.

## Tree loans to farmers as part of Green Mission

- Tamil Nadu government asks banks to offer **tree loans as part of its Green Mission.**
- The **Green Tamil Nadu Mission** launched on **September 24, 2022** is aimed at increasing the State's green cover (areas including forest and the tree cover around it) **to 33% from 23.71%.**
- Under the mission, the State plans to encourage farmers to take up tree plantation on their farmland, besides the cultivation of food crops, to augment wood production and their revenue.
- Agro forestry plays a crucial role in achieving the forest and green cover target and the State government has asked banks to consider financing plantation of agroforestry trees.
- The government plans to encourage farmers to grow long rotation crops like Red Sanders and sandalwood.
- Such trees cannot be sold in the short term like 5 - 10 years but after 20 - 25 years. This would ensure that the green cover is maintained in the State.
- The tree loans are loans which are offered to the farmers to pay for seedlings, inputs and maintenance of trees for 7-8 years.

## T.N. Government reconstitutes State Library Committee after over 10 years

- The Tamil Nadu government has issued orders reconstituting the **State Library Committee** and the **Local Library Authority for Chennai** city after more than a decade.
- The 15-member **State Library Committee** will include the School Education Minister, Minister for Rural Development, three legislators,

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expert G. Gopanna, Tamil Nadu Library Association's G. Rathinasabapathy, Madras Library Association's K. Nithyanandam, Director of Roja Muthiah Research Library G.Sundar and others.

- The Library authority for Chennai city will be reconstituted with 11 members, including writers Manushya Puthiran alias A. Abdul Hameed and Tamildasan.

## 2023's first Jallikattu of T.N

- The year's first 'Jallikattu' was held at Thatchankurichi in the Gandarvakottai taluk of Pudukkottai district.

### *Note*

- Jallikattu is a traditional sport of Tamil Nadu.
- It is celebrated in the month of January, during the Tamil harvest festival, Pongal.
- It is protected as a collective cultural right **under Article 29 (1).**

### *Legal Background*

- In 2011, the Centre added bulls to the list of animals whose training and exhibition is prohibited.
- The Supreme Court banned Jallikattu through a **judgment in May 2014 in the Animal Welfare Board of India vs A. Nagaraja** case on the grounds of cruelty to animals.
- In 2018, the Supreme Court referred the **Jallikattu case to a Constitution Bench**, where it is pending now.

## Global Tamil Angels Platform

- Chief Minister M.K. Stalin launched the **Global Tamil Angels platform (www.tamilangels.fund) of Startup** TN at the **"Global Startup Investors Summit".**
- The Summit was jointly organised by **Tamil Nadu Startup and Innovation Mission** and **FeTNA International Tamil Entrepreneur Network.**

### *Benefits of the Platform*

- It will enable investors from the Global Tamil Diaspora to **make investments in Tamil Nadu** based start ups.
- It will help in connecting the Tamil Nadu based start ups with the global Tamil angel investors.
- It will offer legal consultation for investing and help take products to global markets.

## Row over TN Governor's deviation from Speech

- Governor R.N. Ravi walked out of the Tamil Nadu Assembly as Chief Minister M.K. Stalin disapproved of his selective deviation from the approved text of the Governor's Address to the House and moved a resolution to take on record only the transcript distributed to the members.
- This is the **first time in the history of Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly** that a Governor has walked out during his speech.

### *Assembly Rule 17*

- The Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly rule 17 states that when the Legislative Assembly is assembled **under Article 175 or Article 176 of the Constitution**, no member shall obstruct or interrupt the Address either before or after the address or during its duration with any speech or point of order or in any other manner.
- Such obstruction or interruption shall be regarded as a gross breach of order of the House and shall be dealt with by the Speaker as such at the next sitting of the Assembly.
- **Rule 17 states that appropriate action** will be taken **by the Chairman in the next meeting.**
- **Government relaxed Rule 17** through resolutions moved by Chief Minister MK Stalin, to 'remove' the Governor's speech made with 'addition' and 'omission', and only include the speech printed and circulated to the MLAs.

## Tamil Nadu tops in disbursal of Mudra loans

- Minister of State in the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting L.Murugan stated that **Tamil Nadu topped in disbursal of loans under Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)**
- Women beneficiaries are in large numbers under the scheme.

### *About Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana*

- The scheme was launched **in 2015** to provide

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**loans to non- corporate, small and micro-enterprises.**

- Under the scheme, **loans up to Rs 10 lakhs** are provided.
- The loans are given by Regional Rural Banks, Commercial banks, Small Finance Banks, Non-Banking Financial Corporations, Micro-Financial Institutions.

## Tamil Nadu launches crop insurance disbursal to 2 lakh farmers

- Chief Minister M.K.Stalin initiated the disbursal of **compensation of Rs.318 crore to 2.21 lakh farmers** who were affected by natural disasters under the **Prime MInister Crop Insurance Scheme (Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana)**

### *About PMFBY*

- The Prime Minister's Crop Insurance Scheme is aimed at compensating the farmers for the crop yield loss due to natural calamities.
- It was implemented in 14 clusters of 37 districts through Agriculture Insurance Company of India Ltd. and IFFCO Tokio General Insurance Company Limited during 2021-22.
- Government of Tamil Nadu has implemented **PMFBY from Kharif 2016 onwards** in all the districts of Tamil Nadu except Chennai.

## "Kaaval Karangal" initiative

- 160 destitute persons who were of north Indian origin were rescued under the 'Kaaval Karangal' project.

### *About "Kaval Karangal"*

- Launched **in April 2021 by Chennai City Police.**
- **Theme:** "Respect Human" and "Serve the Humanity".
- Mission: To reach out to the abandoned/ uncared citizens who are in need of care and protection.
- The initiative won the **Chief Minister's Best Practising Award 2022.**

## Agricultural power supply connection to the 50,000 beneficiaries

- **Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation Limited (TANGEDCO)** provided 50,000 agri power supply connections to **50,000** beneficiaries so far.

### *About TANGEDCO*

- TANGEDCO was formed on 2010 after the restructuring of **Tamil Nadu Electricity Board (TNEB).**
- **Function**: To promote the coordinated development of Generation and Distribution of electricity within the state in most efficient and economical manner.

## World Tamil Diaspora Day (January 12, 2023)

- Tamilnadu Government observe this as Day of Non-Resident Tamils every year since 2022
- **Theme: "Thamizhaal Inaivom"**
- **Objective:** To stay connected with the Non-resident Tamils through language, culture, trade, education and other avenues

## Resolution on Sethusamudram project

- The **Tamil Nadu Assembly** adopted a resolution, urging the Centre to **implement the Sethusamudram project.**

### *About Sethusamudram Project:*

- **Sethusamudram Shipping Canal Project** was included in **4th Five Year Plan**, approved by the Jawaharlal Nehru's Cabinet
- **Proposal**: To dredge a channel across the Palk Strait between India and Sri Lanka to allow ships to sail between the east and west coasts of India, instead of circumventing the Sri Lanka.

## The "Trends in Revenue Receipts and Expenditure" report:

- It is placed in the assembly by **Minister of Finance and Human Resource Development,** Palanivel Thiagarajan
- The report deals with the **economic progress of the state during 1st half of the fiscal year 2022-2023**

### *Highlights of the Report:*

- **State's own tax revenue** had a **37% increase** to Rs. 72,441 Crore in the first six months of the fiscal year 2022-2023; compared to Rs. 52,908 Crore in the same period of 2021-2022
- It also achieved higher growth in State's own Non-tax revenue

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- **Overall Revenue Receipts increased by 32%** to Rs. 1.1 Lakh Crore compared to Rs. 85,210 Crore in previous year

## Chennai - 3rd Least Polluted City

- Four year analysis of the **National Clean Air Programme** showed that **Chennai is the 3rd least polluted city amoung 131 cities.**

***About NCAP:***

- National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) is launched by **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** on January 2019.
- It is **country's first national policy on curbing air pollution.**
- **Goal:** To meet annual average ambient air quality standards.
- **Target 2024:** To **reduce** the **concentration of course and fine particulate matter** in the atmosphere by at least 20% to 30% with 2017 as the base year for comparison
- **Method**: Through **city specific air pollution abatement action plan**

## First Transgender Village Assistant

- **Ms. Sruthi from Ettayapuram**, Tuticorin District had been selected for the post of **Village Assistant**
- She is the **state's first transgender** to get appointed for this post

## All-India police shooting competition

- The **Tamilnadu organized the 23rd all-India police shooting competition** at the Tamil Nadu Police Academy, **Oonamanchery**, Chennai.
- **R. Sathi Shivanesh**, an Armed force constable of Pazhani won the first prize
- The **Assam Rifles** won the **Overall Championship**
- **Tamilnadu Police** and Central Reserve Police Force won the **second** and third prize respectively

## Chennai Sangamam-Namma Oor Thiruvizha

- Chennai Sangamam, **a cultural extravaganza** is being held at Chennai city in 18 locations from January 13-17
- Series of cultural performances, literary events like seminars, poetry, dramas, and debates by eminent personalities will also take place.
- **Objective of the event**: To **spread awareness** among the public on **less known artforms**

## Operation Black

- The 'Operation Black' was launched **to capture a wild elephant nicknamed Karuppan**
- It is also planned to **fix a radio collar** and **translocate it in Talavadi Hills**

***About Karuppan:***

- Karuppan is **wild tusker** found involved in **human-elephant conflict** and massive crop destruction at **Rangasamy Kovil and Joraikadu areas of Erode district**

## Tamilnadu Government Awards

- Tamilnadu government announced various awards for tamil scholars, late leaders and to eminent personalities
- The awards are given as part of the **Thiruvalluvar Day celebrations**
- **Ambedkar award - SV Rajadurai**
- **Bharathiyar award - AR Venkatachalapathy**
- **KAP Viswanatham award - Mu Metha**
- **Devaneya Pavanar award - Dr R Mathivanan.**
- **Kamarajar award - EVKS Elangovan**
- **Periyar award - Kali Poongundran**
- **Thiru. Vi. Ka award - Namakkal P Velsami.**
- **Thiruvalluvar award - Eranian NK Ponnusamy.**
- **Bharathidasan award - Valajah Vallavan**
- **Anna award - SNM Ubayadullah**

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