

## EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-JANUARY 1, 2023

### TAMIL NADU

- **Tamil cultural extravaganza, Chennai Sangamam - will henceforth be organised by the state government**
- ✓ This was announced by DMK MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi on December 31.



- ✓ The annual cultural fest is set to return after a decade, as it was discontinued when an AIADMK-led alliance formed the government in 2011
- ✓ Chief Minister M K Stalin will inaugurate the event on January 13, 2023
- ✓ Sangamam events will be held from January 14 at 16 locations in the Chennai city, primarily parks and playgrounds, in the evenings.
- ✓ A total of 800 artists from various parts of the state will perform local art forms during the festival
- ✓ Cultural programmes from Punjab, Karnataka, Assam and West Bengal will also be part of the festival.
- ✓ The cultural events will be held till January 17 in Chennai, and later, the programmes will be held in Madurai, Coimbatore, Salem, Trichy, Thanjavur, and Tirunelveli.
- ✓ Along with these programmes, a food festival featuring traditional food items from various parts of the state will also be organised.
- ✓ Musician Santhosh Narayanan will coordinate musical events for the festival.

- ✓ A steering committee has been formed with minister for Tamil language, culture and archeology Thangam Thennarasu, Kanimozhi and tourism minister K Ramachandran among others, for the successful conduct of the festival
  - ✓ Tamil Maiyam, an organisation with which MP Kanimozhi had a close association, had launched Chennai Sangamam in 2007 with the support of the government
  - ✓ The annual festival showcased dance, music and other rural art forms at different locations during the Pongal festival
  - ✓ DMK MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi organised it till 2011, but in 2022 it was held as Namma Ooru Thiruvizha by DMK youth wing leader Udhayanidhi Stalin and his team.
  - ✓ In 2023, it will be held as Chennai Sangamam-Namma Ooru Thiruvizha.
- **Chief Minister's Core Cell - won bronze medal in the Sepak Takraw event in the doubles category at the 71st All-India police meet in Jalandhar in December**



- ✓ The event is being held for the first time in the police meet
  - ✓ Around seven teams including from Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and Assam Rifles took part in the event
  - ✓ The Tamil Nadu police selected five women belonging to the CM Core Cell to represent the department
  - ✓ Chief Minister's Core Cell comprises sub-inspector Thanush Kannaki, head constable Dilshad Begum and constables V Monisha, J Sumathi and K Kousalya
  - ✓ The Malaysia-origin game, Sepak Takraw, was introduced in Tamil Nadu in 1985 and is yet to gain popularity
- **On December 31, Electricity minister V Senthil Balaji - announced an extension of the deadline for Aadhaar-EB linking by a month till January 31.**
- ✓ As of now, 1.61 crore out of 2.67 crore subsidised consumers including domestic, huts, agricultural and powerlooms have linked their Aadhaar numbers
  - ✓ Out of the 1.61 crore consumers who linked their Aadhaar, 74 lakh consumers linked through using online facilities and rest at the special camps.

- ✓ According to the Minister, Kanyakumari district topped with 77.5 % of the consumers linking their Aadhaar while the Krishnagiri district ranked the lowest with 50 % consumers linking the same
- ✓ Earlier, the minister had announced special camps at section offices to link Aadhaar will end on December 31.

## STATES

- **Maharashtra Women and Child Development department - has launched 'Balsnehi' (child-friendly) buses and vans under an initiative to rehabilitate street children.**



- ✓ Under the initiative, 'flying squads' will move around in dedicated vehicles to help bring street children into the mainstream of the society and ensure their education.
- ✓ Each squad will comprise of a teacher, a counsellor, a driver and an assistant.
- ✓ The project will be implemented in Mumbai city and its suburbs, Thane, Nashik, Pune and Nagpur, over a period of six months.
- ✓ It will be implemented by the district women and child development officers in collaboration with NGOs working in this sector.
- ✓ The Union government has also approved proposing the project under the Integrated Child Protection scheme and sanctioned Rs 50 lakh for the project.
- ✓ The child-friendly buses will have a capacity of 25 children and will be equipped with CCTV cameras inside and a tracking device to ensure the safety of children.
- ✓ The squads have been instructed to admit any orphan children they come across, into the designated organisations with help from the Child Welfare Committee (CWC).
- ✓ The children should be given nutritious meals in case of malnutrition and in case of a person with disability, they should be given appropriate benefits as per the available government schemes.
- ✓ Also, children younger than six years should be enrolled at an anganwadi or one of the closest government-run schools.
- ✓ The squads are instructed to take the children to the closest government hospitals for health and medical check-ups and if eligible, they would receive the COVID-19 vaccine as well.

# NATIONAL

- **The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) - has been announced as the Secretariat for “Science 20” (S20), the G20 summit’s science working group.**
- ✓ The S20 inception meeting will take place on 30-31 January in Puducherry with the theme “Disruptive Science for Innovative and Sustainable Development.”
- ✓ S20 will play a key role in helping resolve global issues like poverty and integrate the developments made by the G20 member states for development.
- ✓ It will be a platform for addressing issues like climate change and sustainable development in G20 nations.
- ✓ Under the theme, many deliberations will be held through the year in Agartala, Lakshadweep and Bhopal, during India’s presidency at the G20
- ✓ The S20 will focus on three key issues - Universal Holistic Health, Clean Energy for Green Future and Connecting Science to Society and Culture
- ✓ The S20 summit, which will be held in Coimbatore, will bring together all the science ministers from the G20 countries.
- ✓ The G20 forum has 19 countries and the European Union as its members.
  
- **The Ministry of Railways - has launched a new scheme 'Amrit Bharat Station scheme' for the modernisation of the railway stations across the country**
- ✓ The scheme envisages infrastructural development of more than 1,000 stations on a continuous basis with a long-term vision.
- ✓ The new scheme will be implemented as per needs and patronage of the railway stations
- ✓ Under the Scheme, stations will be equipped with facilities such as provisions for roof top plazas with shopping centres, food courts etc., longer platforms, ballastless tracks, and 5G connectivity
- ✓ Along with developing the stations, the Amrit Bharat Scheme envisages the development of the infrastructure around railway stations also
  - ✓ This includes widening of roads, removing obstructive structures, installing correctly-designed signage, creating designated pedestrian walkways, organising parking areas, upgrading the lighting, etc.
- ✓ The re-development will also ensure improved amenities for disabled individuals
- ✓ The scheme will subsume all previous redevelopment projects where work is yet to begin.
- ✓ As part of the first phase of the Amrit Bharat Scheme, 120 railway stations have been proposed for re-development within the next two-three years.
- ✓ The model envisages low-cost redevelopment of small railway stations which can be executed timely.
- ✓ Most suburban railway stations, halt stations, and some non-suburban railway stations will be considered 'small' stations under the Amrit Bharat Scheme



- ✓ 'Small' railway stations have been identified as those with annual revenue of less than Rs 20 crore, and passenger volume of less than 5 million.
- ✓ This is a part from the ambitious plan to revamp 200 big stations under a separate redevelopment programme.
- **The Centre – has proposed to develop a mobile app — “CBuD” (Call Before You Dig) – to alert about diggings in the streets**
- ✓ The app will act as an interface for excavating agencies to enquire about the availability of existing underground utility assets and to inform the asset owners about upcoming excavation activities
- ✓ It seeks to avoid inconveniences caused by diggings leading to disruptions in electric cable or gas supply, save existing underlying utility assets like optical fibre cables and water pipelines
- ✓ The new app is downloadable from Google PlayStore for android devices.
- ✓ A portal is also being developed for the CBuD by BISAG-N and the pilot is already operational in the state of Gujarat and UT of Dadra and Nagar Haveli since 6th October, 2022.
- ✓ It is now decided to extend its roll out to all other states/UTs across the country.

## **INTERNATIONAL**

- **On January 1, Croatia - becomes the 20th member of the eurozone and the euro becomes its official currency**
- ✓ Further, it will also become the 27th member of the EU- border free and passport-free Schengen area, which was created in 1985 to allow free movement for all 420 million nationals of the signatory countries.
- ✓ This was the first time a European country joined both the eurozone and the Schengen area on the same day, an important milestone for Croatia
- ✓ To help people adjust to the use of the euro, as of January 1, the dual circulation of Croatia's currency kuna and euro will last two weeks.
- ✓ The kuna was adopted in 1994, during the independence war.
- ✓ Croatia's inflation rate reached 13.5 % in November compared to 10 % in the eurozone.
- ✓ Croatia, a former Yugoslav republic of 3.9 million people that fought a war of independence in the 1990s, joined the European Union in 2013.
- **New York – has become the 6th US state to approve human composting**
- ✓ On December 31, New York has legalized natural organic reduction, popularly known as human composting, and allowed that method of burial.
- ✓ Washington state became the first state to legalize human composting in 2019, followed by Colorado and Oregon in 2021, and Vermont and California in 2022.
- ✓ Under the process, the body of the deceased is placed into a reusable vessel along with plant material such as wood chips, alfalfa and straw.



- ✓ The organic mix creates the perfect habitat for naturally occurring microbes to do their work, quickly and efficiently breaking down the body in about a month's time.
- ✓ The end result is a massive amount of nutrient dense soil - about 36 bags -which can be used to plant trees or enrich conservation land, forests, or gardens.

## INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **India - has abstained in the UN General Assembly on a resolution requesting an opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the legality of Israel's occupation of Palestine.**
- ✓ The resolution asked the Hague-based top UN court for its opinion on the legal consequences of Israel's "prolonged occupation" and annexation of the Palestinian territory since 1967
- ✓ Along with Gaza and East Jerusalem, the Palestinians seek the occupied West Bank for a state
- ✓ The ICJ, also known as the World Court, is the highest UN court responsible for handling disputes between states.
- ✓ Its rulings are binding, though the ICJ has no power to enforce them.
- ✓ The draft resolution was titled 'Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem'
- ✓ It was adopted by a recorded vote on December 30, with 87 votes in favour, 26 against and 53 abstentions, including by India.
- ✓ The US and Israel voted against the resolution while Brazil, Japan, Myanmar and France were among those that abstained.
- ✓ The vote took place the day after the new Israeli government led by Benjamin Netanyahu was established.

## COMMITTEES

- **The Centre – has constituted a committee to better the country’s ranking in Rule of Law Index**
- ✓ India has been ranked 77 out of 140 countries in 2022 Rule of Law Index
- ✓ The Rule of Law Index (ROLI) was developed and published by World Justice Project (WJP).
- ✓ The committee, set up by the law ministry, works with 23 other ministries and departments to improve India’s performance in the Index
- ✓ A project management unit has also been set up in the department of justice, consisting of experts, including those previously engaged by the WJP to formulate an action plan to improve India’s ranking.
- ✓ The project is headed by a joint secretary-level officer.
- ✓ The government has also hired MarketXcel Data Matrix Pvt Ltd, the agency that was previously hired by WJP for conducting surveys and polling in India to assess the state of rule of law in India.
- ✓ World Justice Project (WJP) is a US-based civil society group that rates countries based on accountability of executives and respect for fundamental rights of people.
- ✓ ROLI 2022 covers 140 countries in which the rankings are based on the country-specific data collected across 8 factors and 44 sub-factors.
- ✓ ROLI quantitatively measures rule of law-in-practice by way of survey/polling of general public and sector experts.

## PERSONALITIES

- **Jiya Rai from Colaba – created a Guinness record by swimming 1,100km from Mumbai to Goa in a record 11 days’ time**
- ✓ The 14-year-old daughter of an Indian Navy sailor, Rai suffers from Autism Spectrum Disorder



- ✓ She, along with five others (part of a relay team), took part in the World’s Longest Open Water Sea Swimming Relay from Mumbai to Goa and back to Vasai Fort



- ✓ The total time taken by the relay team to complete is 11 days 22 hours and 13 minutes.
- ✓ Rai is an international swimmer and recipient of the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya BAL Puraskar award 2022
- ✓ This is a relay event where each swimmer swims for four hours per day and rests for 20 hours before their turns come up.
- ✓ Rai is the youngest and only female member of this team.
- ✓ The event was conducted under the observation of the Para Swimming Federation of India.
- ✓ Cabinet Minister Deepak Kesarkar provided the logistic support for the team.
- ✓ The attempt will be registered in the Guinness Book of World Records as “World’s Longest Open Water Sea Swimming Relay”.
- ✓ As per the Guinness Book of World Records, the previous record was 1,031km, registered by team SeaHawks
- ✓ Para Swimming Federation of India, Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guard, Mumbai Port Trust and Captain of Port Goa, National Institute of Water Sports, and Government of Goa supported this event

## **SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT**

- **In 2023, Isro - will launch big-ticket inter-planetary missions like Aditya L1 Sun and Chandrayaan-3 and also launch the first uncrewed mission of the long awaited Gaganyaan mission.**
- ✓ The space agency also has plans to conduct the first runway landing experiment of the reusable launch vehicle early next year from the aeronautical test range in Karnataka’s Chitradurga.
- ✓ In the year 2022, Isro launched five crucial missions, including a launch dedicated to a foreign customer (OneWeb)
- ✓ During the year, Isro also helped the launch of India’s first privately-produced rocket built by a Hyderabad-based startup, Skyroot Aerospace.
- ✓ Since 2014 to December 2022, Isro has launched 44 spacecraft missions, 42 launch vehicle missions and five technology demonstrators.
- ✓ Isro is planning to launch the Aditya Sun mission in early months of 2023.
  - ✓ The spacecraft will be placed in a halo orbit around the Lagrange point 1 (L1) of the Sun-Earth system, which is about 1.5 million km from our planet.
  - ✓ The mission will include the study of Sun’s corona, chromosphere and photosphere and particle flux emanated from the Sun, and variation in magnetic field strength.
- ✓ The agency is also scheduled to launch its third lunar mission, Chandrayaan-3, in June 2023.
  - ✓ The lander-rover mission will rely on the Chandrayaan-2 orbiter, which is already circling the moon.
- ✓ The first uncrewed mission of Gaganyaan expected in the last quarter of 2023



- ✓ This mission is aimed at validating the performance of the human-rated launch vehicle, orbital module propulsion system and recovery operations.
- ✓ It will be followed by another unmanned mission and the three-crew manned mission.

## DEFENCE

- **The defence ministry - has reduced construction restrictions near the establishments to just 50 metres from the earlier 500 metres**
- ✓ The decision will serve as a major relief for civilians living near naval installations across India, especially in Mumbai, making it impossible for them to redevelop their properties.
- ✓ The defence ministry's circular dated December 23,2022, will now allow the redevelopment of hundreds of buildings near the naval installations
- ✓ The local military authority's NOC for construction of buildings will now be required only for projects coming up within a 50m radius of defence establishments.
- ✓ In October 2016, the defence ministry had reduced the security barrier from 500m to just 10m for Army installations across India.

## OBITUARY

- **On December 31, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, the former head of the Catholic Church and the predecessor of Pope Francis - passed away at the age of 95 in the Mater Ecclesiae Monastery in the Vatican after a prolonged illness**



- ✓ Pope Francis will preside over his funeral on January 5 in St Peter's Square of Benedict, the first conservative German pope in the last 1000 years.
- ✓ This will be the first time in the modern age that a current pope will eulogize a retired one
- ✓ In 2013, former Pope Benedict became the first pope to resign in 600 years, citing his declining mental and physical health.

- ✓ The last Pope to resign before his death was Gregory XII, who in 1415 quit ending a civil war within the Catholic Church in which more than one man claimed to be Pope.
  - ✓ Under Benedict's tenure India got its first woman saint - Kerala nun Sister Alphonsa became saint Alphonsa after being canonised by Pope Benedict XVI in 2008.
    - ✓ She was a nun belonging to the Syro Malabar Church, one of 23 "Oriental" or "Eastern" churches in full communion with the Catholic Church.
  - ✓ For nearly 25 years, as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Benedict was the powerful head of the Vatican's doctrinal office, then known as the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF).
  - ✓ He was elected pope on April 19, 2005 to succeed the widely popular Pope John Paul II, who reigned for 27 years
  - ✓ Benedict was the first German pontiff since Victor II in the 11th century and the oldest cardinal elected since Clement XII, who was also 78 when chosen in 1730.
  - ✓ Born April 16, 1927, in Marktl Am Inn, in Bavaria, Benedict wrote in his memoirs of being enlisted in the Nazi youth movement against his will in 1941, when he was 14 and membership was compulsory
  - ✓ Benedict was ordained, along with brother Georg, in 1951.
  - ✓ After spending several years teaching theology in Germany, he was appointed bishop of Munich in 1977 and elevated to cardinal three months later by Pope Paul VI.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his elder brother - performed the last rites of their mother Heeraben Modi in accordance with rituals**
- ✓ The PM and Somabhai Modi lit the pyre of their mother at the crematorium in Sector 30 in Gandhinagar city with the entire family surrounding them.



- ✓ Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, former chief ministers Vijay Rupani and Shankersinh Vaghela, business tycoon Gautam Adani, writer and religious leader Swami Sachchidanand, Assembly Speaker Shankar Chaudhari, Rajya Sabha member Jugalji Thakor, former speaker Ramanlal Vora and Gujarat BJP president C R Paatil were present for the cremation ceremony.

- ✓ Hiraben passed away at the UN Mehta Institute of Cardiology and Research Centre in Ahmedabad on December 30 at the age of 99
- ✓ Honouring her "glorious" long life, the prime minister said that a "century rests at feet of God".
- ✓ **PM Modi is only the second Indian prime minister to lose his mother while in office**
- ✓ The first being HD Devegowda whose mother died just weeks after he took charge as the PM back in 1996
- ✓ Devegowda served as the 11th prime minister of the country from 1 June 1996 to 21 April 1997.
- ✓ His mother Devamma died a few weeks after he assumed office

## SPORTS

- **Arunachal Pradesh's Geta Sora, a rising badminton prodigy - won the under-9 division of the Top Arena Junior International Badminton Championship in Malaysia recently**



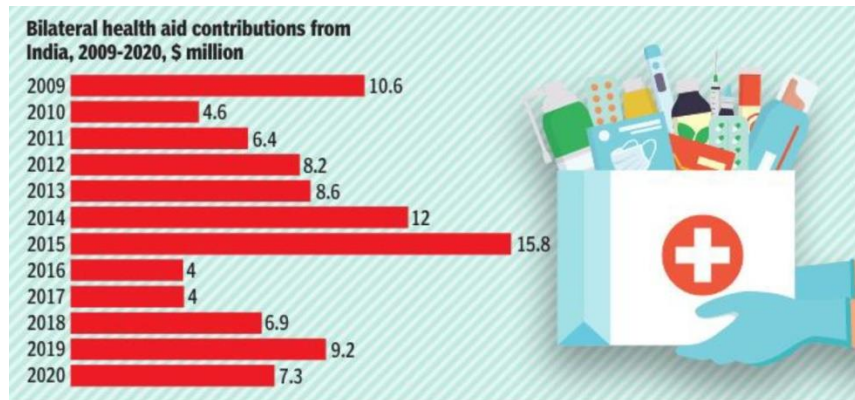
- ✓ Sora won the competition after defeating Jaryl Teh, the second seed from Malaysia, in two sets
- ✓ Sora, a 7-year-old, won the U-9 boys singles event of BTY-Yonex-Singha Championship held in November at the Banthongyord Badminton School in Bangkok, Thailand
- ✓ Earlier, Sora bagged gold at the PNB MetLife Junior Badminton Championship in Guwahati, Assam in 2020.

## INDIA'S HEALTH GRANTS – A REPORT

- **India – has given the maximum health aid to Nepal, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka in terms of bilateral assistance between 2009-2020**
- ✓ Over the past decade, India has generally increased its contributions, both bilateral and multilateral, towards development assistance for health (DAH) in low and middle-income countries.
- ✓ From under \$15 million in 2009, cumulative contributions peaked in 2019 at more than \$35 million, before dipping in 2020 to below \$10 million.



- ✓ After reaching the peak in 2015 at \$15 million, India's DAH contributions dipped to \$4 million in 2016 but have been gradually rising since then.
- ✓ Between 2009 and 2020, India has contributed a total \$206 million in bilateral and multilateral health assistance
- ✓ However, this is much lesser when compared with the \$652 million China gave in 2017, and accounts for only a fraction of the \$52 billion in global DAH.



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**Nepal top recipient since 2018**

India's neighbours, including Nepal, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan, have been among the top aid recipients since 2009. In recent years, Nepal has overtaken Afghanistan as the top recipient with a growing number of African and Indian ocean islands featuring in the list too.

In total, since 2009, India has given the most aid to Nepal at \$14.5 million, followed by \$7 million to Afghanistan and \$2 million to Sri Lanka. The top African recipient is Seychelles at \$2 million, followed by Ghana at just over \$1 million.

