

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS—JANUARY 21, 2023

TAMIL NADU

- **On January 20, Sports Development Authorities of Tamil Nadu (SDAT) - signed an MoU with the sports department of Odisha for overall sports development in the state**



- ✓ Udhayanidhi Stalin, minister of youth welfare and sports development, government of Tamil Nadu, and senior officials of the two state governments were present during the occasion
- ✓ The MoU will facilitate exchange of young talents, coaches, sportspersons, sports administrators and sports scientists.
- ✓ It will seek to create platforms for sharing of sports infrastructure between the two states
- ✓ Further, both the agencies will share inputs on creating quality training facilities, sports academies, centres of excellence and other such facilities to create world class sportsmen and conduct international events.

STATES

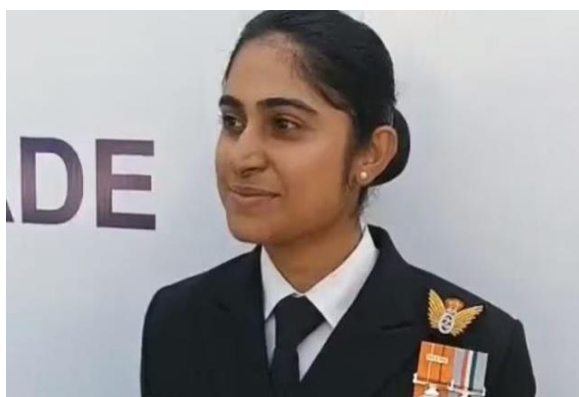
- **Wayanad district in Kerala – has become the first district in the country to provide essential documents to all tribal people under the Akshaya Big Campaign for Document Digitization (ABCD).**



- ✓ The district administration launched the project after it was noticed that the marginalized tribal communities failed to get government benefits owing to lack of essential documents.
- ✓ Under ABCD, 64,670 tribal beneficiaries were issued ration cards, Aadhaar cards, birth certificates, voter ID cards, bank accounts, health insurance cards, among other services through special camps.
- ✓ The documents are stored in digital lockers so that they can be retrieved in the event of loss of documents due to natural calamities or mishaps.
- ✓ The project was launched in Thondernad grama panchayat in November 2021.
- ✓ Wayanad district has the largest tribal population in Kerala

NATIONAL

- **Lt Cdr Disha Amrith, an observer with the Navy's Dornier 228 maritime patrol aircraft - will lead the naval contingent at the Republic Day parade.**

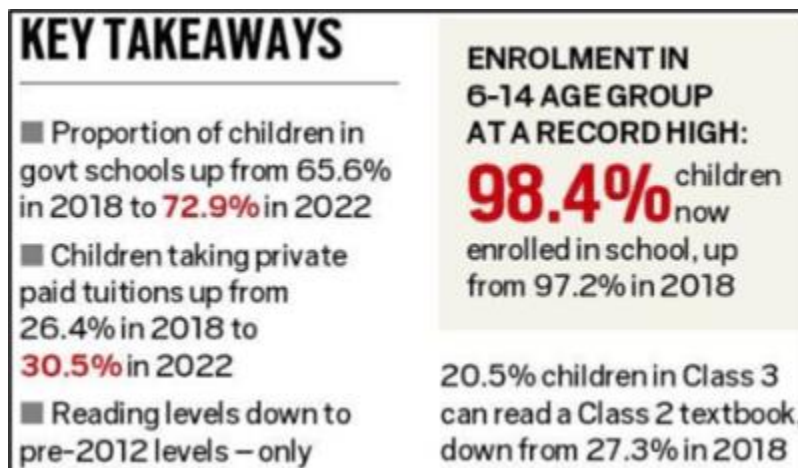


- ✓ Besides Amrith, another woman officer — Sub Lt Valli Meena S — will be among the three platoon commanders of the naval contingent of 144 sailors.
- ✓ Lt Cdr Inderjeet Chauhan will be the tableau commander

- ✓ Lt Cdr Amrith, who is a trained computer science engineer from Mangalore, got into the Navy in 2016 and is currently posted in the tri-service Andaman Nicobar Command
 - ✓ The 29-year-old Amrith was part of the National Cadet Corps's Republic Day team in 2008
 - ✓ The theme of the naval tableau would be 'Indian Navy — Combat Ready, Credible, Cohesive and Future Proof' with 'Nari Shakti' as its central theme
 - ✓ The renowned brass band of the Indian Navy of 80 musicians will be led by M Antony Raj, playing the Indian Navy Song 'Jai Bharti'.
 - ✓ The main section of the tableau will illustrate the 'Make in India' initiatives of the Navy like the Scorpene or Kalvari submarines and Nilgiri class of frigates.
 - ✓ In the rear section of the tableau, three models of autonomous unmanned systems being developed indigenously under IDEX-Sprint Challenge will be displayed.
 - ✓ These products are being developed under the innovation for defence excellence scheme of the Ministry of Defence and Technology Development Acceleration Cell of Indian Navy
 - ✓ The sprint initiative was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the Naval Innovation and Indignation Organisation Seminar in July last year.
 - ✓ Last month, the Indian Navy decided to allow women to be part of its elite special forces the Marine Commandos (Marcos)
 - ✓ It is to be noted that Divya Ajith was the first to lead the all-woman contingent at the Republic Day parade in 2015
 - ✓ The week-long Republic Day celebrations will start on January 23, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, and culminate on January 30, which is observed as Martyrs' Day.
 - ✓ After the Republic Day parade, the 'Beating the Retreat' ceremony will be held at Vijay Chowk on January 29.
 - ✓ The Conductor for the ceremony will be the IAF's Director of Music, Flt Lt L.S. Rupachandra.
- **Squadron Leader Sindhu Reddy— a Mi-17 pilot—will be the contingent commander for IAF on the Republic Day Parade 2023**



- ✓ She will be joined by three supernumerary officers Flt Lt Ayush Agarwal, Flt Lt Tanuj Maik and Flt Lt Pradhan Nikhil at Kartavya Path - earlier known as Rajpath.
 - ✓ They will lead a contingent consisting of four officers and 144 air warriors who have been selected through a stringent process from across the Air Force
 - ✓ The IAF is set to take the lead Service this year and the guard will be commanded by squadron leader Akash Ganghas.
 - ✓ IAF Tableau is set to be on the theme of “Indian Air Force: Power Beyond Boundaries”.
 - ✓ The Republic Day flypast will comprise 45 IAF aircrafts, including nine Rafale fighter aircrafts, LCA Tejas MK-II, LCH Prachand, Dhvaj, Rudra, Baaz, Tiranga and the Airbus C-295
 - ✓ The IAF’s vintage IL38 SD will fly overhead as part of flypast on Republic Day.
 - ✓ Another notable display on the tableau is ‘Netra’, which is an Airborne Early Warning & Control aircraft that carries indigenous payloads.
 - ✓ The Airforce band would be led by Warrant Ashok Kumar who has the distinction of participating in the Republic Day Parade Airforce band contingent for the past 26 Years, and of leading the contingent for the past 16 years.
 - ✓ The IAF had won the Best Marching Contingent trophy in the years 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2020.
 - ✓ The award of the Best Marching Contingent in the popular choice category in 2022 was also won by it.
 - ✓ According to a statement from the Defence Ministry, female officers will take centre stage on Republic Day in 2023
 - ✓ The Defence Ministry announced in an official statement that Flt Lt Komal Rani would accompany the President in raising the national flag.
- **The findings of Annual Status of Education Report, 2022, or the ASER 2022 report - were announced on January 18**



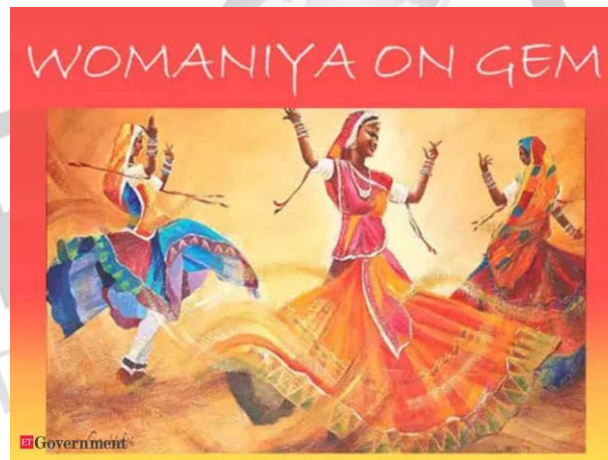
- ✓ ASER is a nationwide, citizen-led household survey, conducted by Pratham Foundation, which provides an overview of children’s schooling and learning in rural India.

- ✓ The first ASER survey was conducted in 2005, while the last physical survey was conducted in 2018
- ✓ In ASER 2022, around 7 lakh candidates from 19,060 schools in 616 districts were surveyed to calculate the learning outcomes post pandemic on school children.
- ✓ The ASER reading test assesses whether a child can read letters, words, a simple paragraph class first level of difficulty, or a “story” class second level of difficulty.
- ✓ During the Covid-19 pandemic, the report highlighted an increase in enrollment in government schools
 - ✓ Further, it noted that the basic reading comprehension of school students in all classes has fallen to the levels before 2012, while the fundamental mathematics skills have fallen to the levels of the previous year.
 - ✓ Reading proficiency has declined the most in Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, and Haryana, while math proficiency has declined the most in Tamil Nadu, Mizoram, and Haryana.
- ✓ The report reveals that there has been an improvement in enrollment levels of children in the age bracket of 6 to 14 years have gone from 96.6% in 2010 to 96.7% in 2014 and 97.2% in 2018 to 98.4% in 2022.
- ✓ The report also witnessed an increase of 7.3 percentage points in government school enrollment in the period 2018 to 2022.
- ✓ Between 2018 and 2022, in all states except Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Tripura, there is an increase in the proportion of children who attend tuition classes
 - ✓ Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have over 86% enrolled students attending schools, while UP, MP, Bihar, Tripura are among states with lowest attendance rate
- ✓ As per the ASER 2022, there has been a record high in the number of enrollment, reaching the highest level since the introduction of the Right to Education Act in 2009
- ✓ In 2022, for the first time, the percentage of children currently not enrolled in school has dropped to 2% or below
- ✓ Another improvement in the latest report is the lowest ever rate for the proportion of girls out of school – down to 2% from 4.1% in 2018 and 10.3% in 2006.
 - ✓ However, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh still have more than 10% of 15 to 16 years age group girls out of schools
- ✓ In 2022, 68.9% schools have a playground, up slightly from 66.5% in 2018.
- ✓ As part of the survey, 30,737 students in the age group of 3–16 from 920 villages in Tamil Nadu were surveyed in September to November 2022.
- ✓ In Tamil Nadu, the survey found out that the enrolment remained above 99% in the state and particularly students enrolled in government schools has increased from 67.4% in 2018 to 75.7% in 2022.

30,737 STUDENTS AGED 3-16 SURVEYED

LEVEL	2018 (Before pandemic)	2022 (After pandemic)
Reading Tamil (Class II level text) (in %)		
Class III students	11.6	4.7
Class V students	40.8	25.2
Class VIII students	73.1	62.9
Arithmetic (Basic maths)		
Class III (Subtraction)	25.9	11.2
Class V (Division)	25.6	14.9
Class VIII (Division)	50	44.3
Reading English (Students who can read English sentences)		
Class V	37.2 (in 2016)	24.5
Class VIII	58.8 (in 2016)	57.8

- The government's public procurement initiative Government eMarketplace (GeM) - has registered over 1.44 lakh Udyam-verified women-led micro and small enterprises (MSEs) under its Womaniya programme



- ✓ This was revealed in the recent data shared by the commerce ministry in a statement on January 14.
- ✓ As per the commerce ministry, women MSE sellers have fulfilled over 14.76 lakh orders worth Rs 21,265 crore in gross merchandise value (GMV) since 2019
- ✓ Women entrepreneurs have a share of 74% in the order value of products sold on GeM and 26% in the order value of service categories.
- ✓ The top five product categories with the maximum number of women entrepreneurs were desktop computers, smartphones, special purpose telephones, smartphone for integrated child development service – ICDS and hopper tipper dumper
- ✓ The Womaniya initiative also aligns with the government's target of 3% procurement from women MSEs annually
- ✓ It also aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

- ✓ Further, GeM has signed memorandums of understanding with Self-Employed Women's Association — SEWA Bharat - to support women-led micro and small enterprises, women entrepreneurs and SHGs in public procurement
 - ✓ The Womaniya programme was launched by GeM in 2019 to encourage women entrepreneurs and self-help groups (SHG) from the informal sector to sell their products directly to various government ministries, departments, and institutions, via GeM
 - ✓ GeM was set up in 2016 and has 731,431 product categories, with 180,862 registered sellers and 32,114 government buyers.
- **The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) - has allowed Indians abroad to use fast payments network UPI, if their domestic bank accounts are linked to their foreign mobile numbers**
- ✓ Till now, only Indian telephone numbers have been allowed on UPI, leaving out non-resident financial institution accounts linked to their telephone numbers overseas.
 - ✓ In the first part, telephone numbers from 10 international locations including Singapore, Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Oman, Qatar, the US, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and the UK have been allowed for use on UPI.
 - ✓ NRIs who live in these countries can use UPI to send and receive money from their international mobile numbers.
 - ✓ As per the recent NPCI advisory, post April 30, 2023, NRIs will no longer have to use their international cards to shop and they can simply scan a QR code or use their UPI ID to pay for their purchases in India
 - ✓ Total monthly transactions on UPI registered a new record when it reached the 782 crore mark in December 2022 – highest ever monthly transaction in UPI's history.

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **India – has overtaken China as the most populous country in the world, as per the World Population Review report**
- ✓ As per the report, India's population stood at 1.417 billion as of December 2022, a little over 5 million more than the 1.412 billion reported by China
 - ✓ In its recent estimate by the United Nations, more than half of the estimated increase in global population between 2022 and 2050 will be in just eight countries - Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines and Tanzania.
 - ✓ Vatican City is the least populated country in the world with a population count of 500 people.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **The 53rd World Economic Forum (WEF) summit – has ended in Davos, Switzerland on January 20.**



- ✓ The five-day meeting, which commenced in January 16, was attended by nearly 100 Indian leaders
 - ✓ This includes four Union ministers - Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani, health minister Mansukh Mandaviya, power minister RK Singh and railway minister Ashwini Vaishnav - and one chief minister - Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.
- ✓ The theme of the meeting was 'Cooperation in a Fragmented World'.
- ✓ More than 50 high-impact initiatives were launched or profiled during the annual gathering to address ongoing economic, energy and food crises
- ✓ With over 480 sessions, more than 2,700 leaders -- including over 350 government leaders and 47 heads of state -- came together at the annual meeting to address the world's most pressing challenges.
- ✓ EC President Ursula von der Leyen highlighted the Green Deal Industrial Plan to make Europe the home of clean tech and innovation.
- ✓ During the conference, the WEF has launched the Giving to Amplify Earth Action (GAEA) initiative on January 17
 - ✓ GAEA is a global initiative to fund and grow new and existing public, private and philanthropic partnerships (PPPPs)
 - ✓ It seeks to provide the \$3 trillion of financing needed each year to reach net zero, reverse nature loss and restore biodiversity by 2050
 - ✓ The global initiative is supported by more than 45 partners, including HCL Technologies through its chairperson Roshni Nadar Malhotra and McKinsey Sustainability as a knowledge partner
 - ✓ GAEA's growing body of philanthropic partners includes Active Philanthropy, the African Climate Foundation, Andre Hoffmann Family Office, the Arab Foundations Forum, Bezos Earth Fund, BMW Foundation and Children's Investment Fund Foundation
 - ✓ It also includes the Clean Air Fund, Climate Leadership Initiative, ClimateWorks Foundation, Eleven Eleven Foundation, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, Growald Climate Fund, IKEA Foundation, Laudes Foundation, Noa's Ark Foundation, United Nations Foundation, the Wellcome Trust, WINGS and Workday Foundation.

- ✓ Philanthropic financing for climate mitigation has risen in recent years, but still represents less than 2% of total philanthropic giving, estimated at \$810 billion in 2021.
- ✓ Earlier, on January 16, it was announced that the **World Economic Forum will set up a Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (C4IR Telangana) in Hyderabad.**
 - ✓ The autonomous non-profit organisation will focus on healthcare and life sciences.
 - ✓ C4IR Telangana is the 18th centre in the WEF's Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) network, spanning four continents.
 - ✓ As the first 4IR centre in the region, it will facilitate and accelerate development of newer technologies, including genomics and personalised medicine.
 - ✓ The initiative will be a collaboration between the WEF and the government of Telangana, which will be led by the Telangana Life Sciences Foundation
- ✓ On January 19, Global IT giant Microsoft announced that it will establish three more data centres in Hyderabad in addition to the three that it would be setting up in Telangana,
 - ✓ All the six data centres are estimated to be deployed phase-wise in the next 10-15 years to serve Microsoft's Azure's customers in India and worldwide.
 - ✓ Telangana has earlier signed an MoU with Microsoft to enable several beneficial activities such as skilling, internship programmes, and cloud adoption
- ✓ Further, India participated in the First Movers Coalition (FMC) Leadership Meeting of the WEF and deliberated the need for clean energy technologies.
 - ✓ The FMC was launched by US President Joe Biden in 2021 at the Climate Change Conference held in Glasgow.
 - ✓ India, Japan, Norway, Italy, Sweden, UK, USA, Singapore, Germany, Denmark, Canada along with 60 other multinational companies are part of FMC.
- ✓ The WEF and the government of the United Arab Emirates signed an agreement to host the annual meeting of the Forum's Global Future Council 2023 in Dubai on October 16-17
- **The three-day meeting of the first Health Working Group under India's G20 presidency - concluded in Thiruvananthapuram on January 20**
 - ✓ Union Minister of State for Health, Bharti Praveen Pawar and Union Minister of State for External Affairs V. Muralidharan addressed the meeting.
 - ✓ Niti Aayog member V.K Paul, Eminent Scientist Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, Dr. Sylvie Bryan, Director of the Pandemic and Epidemic Diseases Department at WHO and other health experts participated in the discussions
 - ✓ India has been the Chair of the Global Digital Health Partnership, the largest inter-governmental body (33 countries as members) for Digital Health.



- ✓ The Health Track of the G20 India Presidency will comprise four Health Working Group (HWG) meetings and one Health Ministerial Meeting (HMM).
- ✓ The meetings will be held in different locations across the country, including Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala), Goa, Hyderabad (Telangana) and Gandhinagar (Gujarat), highlighting India's rich and diverse cultures.
- ✓ They will be attended by representatives of G20 member countries, special invitee countries and relevant international organisations.
- ✓ India assumed the presidency of the G20 on December 1, 2022.
- ✓ India is currently part of the G20 Troika comprising Indonesia, India and Brazil, marking the first time that the troika features three developing and emerging economies.

PERSONALITIES

- **A British Sikh army officer and physiotherapist, Captain Harpreet Chandi - has set a new world record for the longest solo, unsupported, and unassisted polar expedition by a woman.**



- ✓ Captain Harpreet Chandi, also known as Polar Preet, travelled 1,397 km across Antarctica in temperatures of around minus 50 degrees Celsius.
- ✓ The previous record was an expedition covering 1,381 km, set by Anja Blacha in 2020.
- ✓ Chandi has already completed a trekking challenge to become the first Indian-origin woman to set the record of a solo unsupported trek to the South Pole
- ✓ The 33-year-old from Derby in England is working at a regional rehabilitation unit in Buckinghamshire, UK
- ✓ As an “endurance athlete”, Chandi has run marathons and ultra-marathons and, as a British Army officer, completed large scale exercises and deployments in Nepal, Kenya and a United Nations peacekeeping tour of South Sudan.
- ✓ The University of Derbyshire had already conferred her with an honorary degree

DEFENCE

- **The US Navy and Marine Corps – has commenced exercise “Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT)/Marine Exercise (MAREX) Sri Lanka 2023” with the Sri Lanka Navy and Sri Lanka Air Force in Colombo**



- ✓ The exercise commenced on January 19, and will end on January 26.
- ✓ This is the fifth CARAT/MAREX exercise between the US and Sri Lanka
- ✓ This year’s exercise includes participants from the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and Maldives National Defence Force.
- ✓ The week-long exercise aims to prepare for disaster relief and maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific
- ✓ The bilateral exercise is designed to promote regional security cooperation, maintain and strengthen maritime partnerships, and enhance maritime interoperability.
- ✓ China claims nearly all of the disputed South China Sea, though Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam all claim parts of it.
- ✓ Beijing has built artificial islands and military installations in the South China Sea.

- ✓ Exercise CARAT is conducted annually by the United States Pacific Fleet with member nations of ASEAN in Southeast Asia
- ✓ Currently, nine nations - Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand - participate in the exercise

APPOINTMENTS

- **Retired director general of the Border Security Force (BSF), Pankaj Kumar Singh - has been appointed deputy national security adviser (NSA) in National Security Council Secretariat**

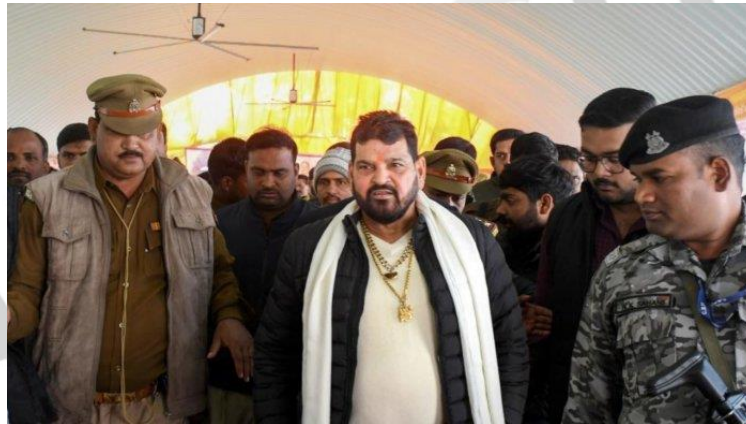


- ✓ A 1988-batch IPS officer of the Rajasthan cadre, Singh has been appointed on a re-employment contract for a period of two years.
- ✓ Singh retired as DG of BSF, India's border guarding organisation, on December 31, 2022
- ✓ As the BSF chief, Singh oversaw the force coming up with low-cost anti-drone technology to tackle intruding drones at the Indo-Pakistan border
- ✓ Consequent to his petition to the Supreme Court in 1996, the government started giving a fixed tenure of two years at least to the chief of the Intelligence Bureau, the CBI, foreign secretary, the RAW chief and the Union home secretary.
- ✓ When Singh took charge of the BSF on August 31, 2021, he had created history of a son and a father holding the top post of a paramilitary force during their services.
- ✓ His father and retired IPS officer of the 1959-batch, Prakash Singh, had also headed the BSF from June, 1993 to January, 1994.
- ✓ Ajit Doval is India's National Security Adviser since May 30, 2014.
- ✓ He previously served as Director of the Intelligence Bureau (IB).
- ✓ After assuming the new role, Singh will assist NSA Ajit Doval in the creation, implementation and improvisation of India's national security strategies
- ✓ Currently, retired IPS officer Dattatray Padsalgikar, former R&AW chief Rajinder Khanna and retired IFS officer Pankaj Saran also serve as Deputy National Security Advisors.
- ✓ In the security matrix of the country, all aspects of national security are deliberated upon by the National Security Council (NSC)

- ✓ The National Security Council is a three-tier structure headed by the Prime Minister with the Ministers of Home Affairs, Defence, External Affairs and Finance as its members and the National Security Adviser as its Secretary.
- ✓ The three-tier structure of the NSC comprises the Strategic Policy Group (SPG), the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) and the National Security Council Secretariat
- ✓ The SPG chaired by the Cabinet Secretary is the principal forum for inter-ministerial coordination and integration of the relevant inputs.
- ✓ The NSAB undertakes long-term analysis and provides perspectives on issues of national security.

SPORTS

- **The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) - formed a seven-member committee in New Delhi to probe allegations of sexual harassment against Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh**

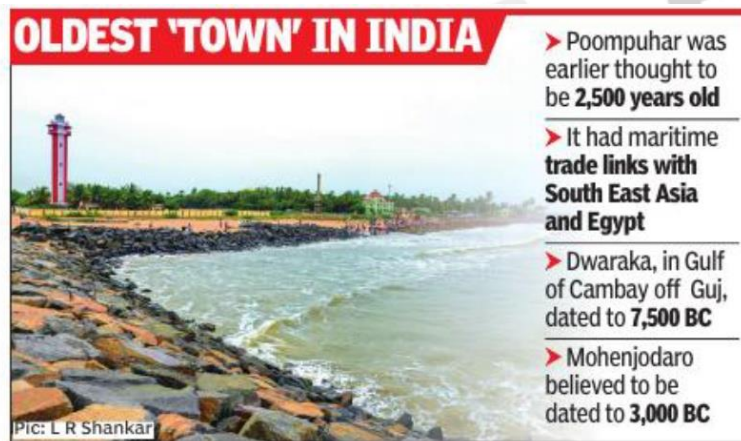


- ✓ The decision was taken during IOA's emergency Executive Council meeting which was attended by the likes of Abhinav Bindra, Yogeshwar along with IOA president PT Usha and joint secretary Kalyan Chaubey on January 20
- ✓ The allegations against Singh have been made by some of the country's top wrestlers, including Vinesh Phogat, Bajrang Punia, Sakshi Malik and Ravi Dahiya.
- ✓ The committee will be headed by six-time world boxing champion M C Mary Kom
 - ✓ The other panel members include wrestler Yogeshwar Dutt, archer Dola Banerjee and IOA treasurer Sahdev Yadav
 - ✓ The committee also has two advocates — Talish Ray and Shlok Chandra — besides former shuttler and IOA joint secretary Alaknanda Ashok, who is its vice chairperson.
- ✓ No time frame has been set for the committee to submit its report to IOA president P T Usha and its executive council (EC).
- ✓ The members have been tasked to hold dialogues with the agitating wrestlers and investigate the charges.
- ✓ The members will meet the alleged victims of harassment if the protesting wrestlers wish to share their names with the committee.

- ✓ The members will also try and convince the wrestlers to call off their protest till the inquiry is completed.
- ✓ The government has given WFI President 72 hours till January 21 to respond to the allegations.

HISTORICAL STUDY ABOUT POOMPUHAR – A REPORT

- **Researchers at the department of remote sensing of Bharathidasan University– have identified that the ancient port city Poompuhar might have existed 15,000 years ago**
- ✓ Poompuhar, also called Kaveripoompattinam, is the submerged ancient port city situated in modern-day Mayiladuthurai district in Tamil Nadu
- ✓ As per earlier studies, it was believed that Poompuhar might have existed 2,500 years ago before it disappeared from the maritime map around 1,000 years ago



- ✓ Poompuhar had maritime trade links with South East Asia and Egypt and gained prominence during the Chola dynasty around 2,500 years ago
- ✓ The latest study is based on offshore explorations and geological features interpreted on the sea floor, without the collection of any samples for carbon dating.
- ✓ If scientific dating confirms the estimate, Poompuhar could be the oldest known 'town' in India and, arguably, across the world.
- ✓ The study found structures that could've been a harbour, dockyards, human settlements and a lighthouse, around 40km from the present coast, at a depth of 50m-100m.
- ✓ The team studied around 6,000sqkm around the ancient port city and found most of the ruins at a depth of 25m to 50m below the seabed
- ✓ It found rowed settlements with compound walls and geological evidence of pits dug on the seafloor.
- ✓ Further, remains of an ancient lighthouse were found at a depth of 50m, with a spiral staircase and causeway pillars having a design like the Cleopatra lighthouse of Egypt.

- ✓ The Poompuhar study was sponsored by the department of science and technology and technically supported by National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT)
- ✓ The study compared offshore exploration findings near Poompuhar coast with sea level data generated by Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).
- ✓ In the next phase, NIOT will collect samples from the sea to substantiate the findings.
- ✓ Around 12 government and private educational institutions including Tamil University, Annamalai University and SASTRA University will be engaged in further studies of the research
- ✓ Similar undersea explorations in the Gulf of Cambay off the Gujarat coast in the early 2000s had discovered a lost city believed to be the ancient Dwaraka, then dated to 7,500 BC and which predates Mohenjodaro by 4,500 years.

