

## **EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MAY 3, 2023**

### **TAMIL NADU**

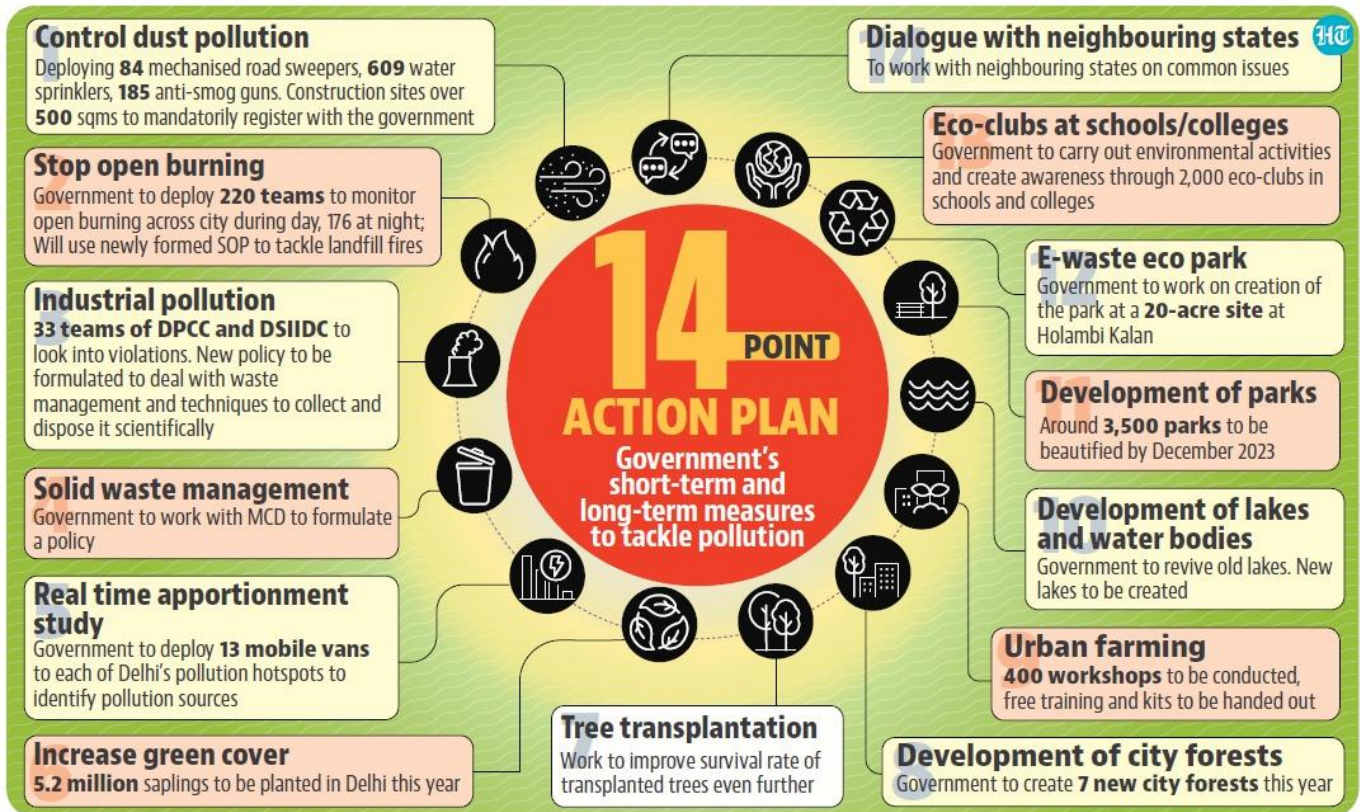
- **A first-time panchayat president from Sivaganga, K S M Manimuthu – was praised by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the 100th episode of his ‘Maan ki baat’ programme.**
- ✓ K S M Manimuthu is the president of Kanjirangal panchayat in Sivaganga union
- ✓ He was instrumental in powering streetlights in the panchayat by establishing a biogas plant.
- ✓ Manimuthu set up the plant under the Rurban mission of the central government.
- ✓ The panchayat collects vegetable and other biodegradable wastes from the weekly markets and households in seven panchayats and Sivaganga municipality.
- ✓ It processes it in the biogas plant having a capacity of more than a tonne of waste per day.
- ✓ The electricity thus generated powers 120 streetlights, three battery vehicles used for collecting waste and the plant itself.
- ✓ In the ‘Mann ki baat’ episode, the Prime Minister mentioned Manimuthu’s efforts to turn waste into a wealth of the nation.

### **STATES**

- **On May 1, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal - launched a 14-point action plan to tackle air pollution during the summer months.**



- ✓ The Delhi government already has a winter action plan to curb air pollution.
  - ✓ The winter plan focuses on stubble burning, firecracker pollution and industrial and vehicular emissions.
- ✓ The summer plan involves the participation of 30 government departments.
- ✓ The primary focus of the action plan is on dust pollution, which has been a major contributor to the city's worsening air quality



- ✓ As part of the plan, the government will deploy 84 mechanised road sweepers, 609 water sprinklers, 185 anti-smog guns, along with patrolling teams in both during the day and at night
- ✓ The chief minister also said the efforts of the Delhi government were resulting in the reduction of pollution levels by around 30% in 2022 compared to 2016.
- ✓ Further, to tackle dust pollution, the chief minister said construction sites larger than 500sqm have to register with the Delhi government, which is an exercise started last year, with 750 sites already registered.
- ✓ The government will increase green cover by planting 59 lakh saplings, besides distributing another 4 lakh saplings to people for free.
- ✓ Besides, the government is preparing a new policy to deal with industrial waste management and techniques to collect and scientifically dispose industrial waste.
- ✓ Pollution in summer generally starts to peak in April and can continue till June, with dust and PM10 being the primary pollutants, until Delhi experiences pre-monsoon and monsoon showers.

# NATIONAL

- **Veteran politician and former Union Minister Sharad Pawar - has decided to step down as the president of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP).**



- ✓ Pawar announced his decision at the launch of the second edition of his autobiography Lok Maze Sangati
- ✓ A stalwart of Maharashtra politics, 82-year-old Pawar stated that he would no longer contest elections

## A CAREER SPANNING SIX DECADES

**May 1, 1960 to May 1, 2023:**

**1960** | Pawar becomes member of Pune Youth Congress

**1967** | Elected as MLA for the first time from Baramati

**1978** | Splits Congress in the state. Is vocal about excesses committed during Emergency. Goes on to form a coalition with Janata Party, PWP, RPI and CPI(M). Youngest Maharashtra CM as leader of Congress (Socialist)

**1988** | Returns to Congress fold citing "the need to save Congress culture in Maharashtra" amidst the rise of Shiv Sena. Rajiv Gandhi installs Pawar as CM

**1990** | In a stiff contest with Sena-BJP, Congress falls short of absolute majority but forms government with support from independents. Pawar is CM

**1992** | Rajiv's death and upheaval in

Congress takes him to Centre. With Narasimha Rao as PM, he is defence minister. Deteriorating law and order in Maharashtra after 1992 riots and crisis in state Congress leads to Rao replacing Sudhakarrao Naik with Pawar as CM

**1999** | Pawar objects to Sonia Gandhi being proposed as Congress's PM candidate on grounds of her foreign origin. Is expelled along with Tariq Anwar and P A Sangma. Trio forms NCP

**1999** | Is diagnosed with oral cancer. Survives after oral surgery five years later

**2004** | After Lok Sabha polls, NCP joins Manmohan Singh-led UPA government and Pawar becomes Union agriculture minister

**2012** | Announces he would not contest 2014 Lok Sabha polls. Is elected in 2014 to Rajya Sabha

## HIS CRICKET CONNECTION

**2001-2010** | Headed Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA)

**2005-2008** | Was chairman of BCCI

**2010-2012** | International Cricket Council president

**2015-2016** | Mumbai Cricket Association chief



- ✓ Sharad Pawar formed the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) with PA Sangma and Tariq Anwar in 1999 after being expelled from the Indian National Congress (INC)

for objecting to Italian-born Sonia Gandhi staking her claim to the post of Prime Minister.

- ✓ In the same year, he was diagnosed with oral cancer and had undergone surgery in April 2004.
- ✓ In his 55-year-long political career, Pawar has occupied top government posts, serving as MP, MLA, and Union minister.
- ✓ Pawar has served as a four-time chief minister of Maharashtra.
  - ✓ In fact, he was the youngest Chief Minister of Maharashtra, elected in 1978 when he was just 38, followed in 1988, 1990 and 1993
- ✓ He has also served as the Minister of Defence in the cabinet of PV Narsimha Rao and handled the portfolio till March 1993
- ✓ After the 2004 Lok Sabha elections, Pawar became the Union Minister of Agriculture in the Manmohan Singh-led central government.
- ✓ Other than politics, Pawar served as the Chairman of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) from 2005 to 2008 and as the president of the International Cricket Council (ICC) from 2010 to 2012.
- ✓ He was also the chief of the Mumbai Cricket Association from October 2013 to January 2017.
- ✓ Pawar, who hails from Maharashtra's Baramati city, was a crucial person who put together an unlikely coalition of the NCP, Congress and Shiv Sena (Uddhav Thackeray) to form the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in the 2019 state assembly polls.
- ✓ In 2017, he was awarded with Padma Vibhushan, the second-highest civilian honour of India.
- ✓ In June 2020, Pawar was re-elected to the Rajya Sabha.
- **The Centre - has decided to extend the Smart Cities Mission deadline by one year, from June 2023 to June 2024.**
- ✓ The flagship mission, which involves development of 100 cities into smart cities, had an initial deadline of June 2021.
- ✓ This would be the second extension of the mission, which was launched on June 25, 2015.
- ✓ The decision to extend the mission period follows an extensive review of all 100 cities by the housing and urban affairs ministry.
  - ✓ The review showed that only 50 cities would be able to complete projects conceived under the mission by June 2023.
  - ✓ The extension would help cities to complete 100% of the projects by June 2024.
- ✓ The 100 cities to be made smart were selected through a two-stage competitive process from January 2016 to June 2018.
- ✓ Under the mission, all 100 cities had set up integrated command and control centres at a total cost of Rs 11,775 crore.

- ✓ A total of 526 projects of smart mobility, 116 of smart energy, 411 of water, sanitation and hygiene, 343 each of creating vibrant public spaces and economic infrastructure, 203 of social infrastructure and 145 of smart governance are still under progress
- ✓ In addition, 232 projects under the public-private partnership worth Rs 15,006 crore have been taken up in 53 cities.
  - ✓ These projects include infrastructure like multi-modal transport hubs, common mobility cards and public bike sharing.
- ✓ In total, Rs 71,000 crore has been released to the cities, of which Rs 38,000 crore is from the Centre and the remaining from states and urban local bodies

## **INTERNATIONAL**

- **Pakistan - has overtaken Sri Lanka to become the top country in South Asia with the fastest inflation rate**
- ✓ In Pakistan, consumer prices rose by 36.4% in April compared to a year ago, when it was 13.4% in April 2022
  - ✓ Transport prices climbed 56.8% while food inflation went up by 48.1% in April from a year earlier.
  - ✓ Clothing and footwear prices gained 21.6% and housing, water and electricity costs rose 16.9%.
- ✓ Pakistan is facing an unprecedented inflationary crisis with prices across the country rising to levels not seen since 1964.
- ✓ Pakistan's inflation rate is one of the highest in Asia and is as high as 35.4% as of March.
- ✓ Its inflation has surpassed the price rise in Sri Lanka which stood at 35.3% in April
- ✓ The Pakistani currency is one of the worst performing currencies globally in 2023 as it depreciated by 20% against the dollar, making imported goods more expensive.
- ✓ Pakistan has been in economic turmoil for several months with a severe balance of payments crisis, while talks with the IMF to secure \$1.1 billion as part of a \$6.5 billion bailout have not been successful.
- ✓ Inflation is the term used to describe a sustained increase in the general price level of goods and services in an economy over a certain period of time

## **INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES**

- **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh - handed over a Fast Patrol Vessel and a Landing Craft Assault ship to the Maldives National Defence Forces (MNDF) on May 2**
- ✓ The Fast Patrol Vessel, capable of coastal and offshore surveillance at high speeds, was commissioned as MNDF Coast Guard ship 'Huravee'.
- ✓ President of Maldives Ibrahim Mohamed Solih and Defence Minister Mariya Ahmed Didi were present on the occasion.



- ✓ On the first day of his three-day official visit, Singh held talks with his Maldivian counterpart and Foreign Minister of Maldives Abdulla Shahid
  - ✓ On India's strong defence cooperation with Maldives, Rajnath Singh asserted that the ties emanate from the twin policies of Neighbourhood First and SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region).
  - ✓ Rajnath Singh recalled Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the Maldives in June 2019, wherein he emphasised that 'Neighbourhood First' was the priority and in the neighbourhood, 'Maldives is priority'
  - ✓ The Maldives is one of the biggest beneficiaries of India's Neighbourhood First policy.
  - ✓ In 2021, India extended a \$50 million line of credit to the Maldives for defence projects, and the two countries signed a pact to develop the harbour at Uthuru Thila Falhu, which is under progress.
  - ✓ Concurrently, IAF chief Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari held talks with Sri Lanka's top military leadership in Colombo and presented AN-32 propellers to ensure high operational readiness of the medium-lift aircraft of the Sri Lankan Air Force.
- **The Young Leaders Program – was conducted by the France India Foundation (FIF) in New Delhi and Bangalore recently**



- ✓ The flagship 'Young Leaders Program' aims to identify exemplary and promising young leaders from various fields, including business, politics, sports, and culture.

- ✓ The first cohort of the program had 25 young leaders from India and France.
- ✓ The France India Foundation is a private not-for-profit organisation which aims to promote meaningful dialogue between youth leaders.
- ✓ It has been launched in India as a new strategic initiative as a part of the Paris-based France Asia Foundation
- ✓ The Foundation is supported by the Ministry of External Affairs and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **Researchers at IIT Madras - are building a computer using the Shakti microprocessor along with a new AI interface called 'ShaktiMAAN'**



- ✓ ShaktiMAAN is an indigenous hardware accelerator for artificial intelligence, which can power indigenous microprocessor Shakti to run applications several times faster.
  - ✓ It can be used in a range of AI applications including object detection, self-driving cars and large language models similar to ChatGPT.
- ✓ 'Shakti' is an IIT Madras-developed microprocessor and the component called 'ShaktiMAAN' ('MAAN' for 'Multiply and Accumulate Network') will specialize in handling Deep Learning Inference
- ✓ Traditional computers cannot handle the emerging AI applications because their architectures are more tuned towards general purpose computation.
- ✓ The team of researchers is planning to demonstrate a speed of up to more than 50 times running on the Shakti-ShaktiMAAN system with the smallest ShaktiMAAN.
- **A new low-cost star sensor 'StarBerrySense' launched as part of PSLV C-55 mission - has been validated for its design and function, based on the initial data received.**
- ✓ The StarBerrySense payload developed by the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), was launched on April 22 on the fourth stage of the PSLV C-55 mission

- ✓ On its maiden space test, the sensor was launched onboard the PSLV Orbital Experimental Module (POEM) and began functioning after the deployment of the two primary and secondary satellites of the mission.
  - ✓ POEM is a unique initiative by ISRO that utilises the spent fourth stage of the PSLV as an orbital platform for carrying out scientific experiments.
- ✓ The main function of the sensor is to image the field of view, correctly identify the stars it sees, and calculate the pointing direction of the satellite
- ✓ The low-cost sensor has been designed to quickly calculate where the satellite is pointing and provides the most accurate information about a spacecraft's orientation

## DEFENCE

- **Air Marshal Saju Balakrishnan - has taken charge as the Commander-in-Chief of the Andaman and Nicobar Command on May 1, 2023**
- ✓ The post was earlier held by Lieutenant General Ajai Singh, a fifth-generation army officer, who retired after four decades of military service.



- ✓ Air Marshal Balakrishnan is the 17th Commander-in-Chief of the Port Blair-based Andaman and Nicobar Command (CINCAN)
- ✓ The Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) is the only tri-services command in India which is serving as a model for the country's planned theaterisation of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force capabilities.
- ✓ Air Marshal Saju Balakrishnan is a distinguished alumnus of the National Defence Academy Khadakwasla
- ✓ He has been commissioned into the fighter stream of the Indian Air Force (IAF) in 1986
- ✓ Saju Balakrishnan has more than 3200 hours of accident-free fighter flying on various Mig-21 Bison and Kiran aircraft
- ✓ Additionally, he was the first air officer in charge of the prestigious air force station Jodhpur and the first commanding officer of an AWACS Squadron.



- ✓ He also served as the senior air staff officer at the IAF training command in Bengaluru before taking over the ANC's leadership.
  - ✓ For his distinguished service, Saju Balakrishnan was awarded the Presidential Awards of Ati Vishisht Seva Medal and Vayu Sena Medal.
  - ✓ The strategically vital Andaman and Nicobar Command was established in September 2001 to protect India's interests in Southeast Asia and the Strait of Malacca by accelerating the quick deployment of military resources.
  - ✓ It offers administrative and logistical support to naval ships deployed to East Asia and the Pacific Ocean
- **The Indian and ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) navies - are conducting their maiden joint drills in the South China Sea from May 2 to May 8, 2023**
- ✓ China has longstanding territorial disputes in the resource-rich South China Sea with several members of the regional bloc including Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam.
  - ✓ The opening ceremony of the inaugural ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise (AIME-23) was held at the Changi Naval Base in Singapore on May 2
  - ✓ The drills are aimed at promoting maritime cooperation and enhancing trust, friendship and confidence amongst ASEAN and Indian Navies
  - ✓ Navy chief Admiral R Hari Kumar and his Singaporean counterpart Rear Admiral Sean Wat, and senior dignitaries from ASEAN were present.
  - ✓ The regional bloc consists of Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.
  - ✓ The inaugural edition of AIME is being co-hosted by the Republic of Singapore Navy and Indian Navy.
  - ✓ Two major Indian Navy warships-- the INS Delhi and INS Satpura -- are part of the exercise with the ten ASEAN nations.
    - ✓ INS Delhi is India's first indigenously-built guided missile destroyer, while INS Satpura is an indigenously-built Shivalik-class guided missile stealth frigate.
    - ✓ Both the ships are part of the navy's Eastern Fleet based in Visakhapatnam
    - ✓ The ships, during their port call at Singapore, will also participate in the International Maritime Defence Exhibition (IMDEX-23) and the International Maritime Security Conference (IMSC) being hosted by Singapore
  - ✓ A P-8I, a maritime reconnaissance aircraft will also be involved in the exercise.
  - ✓ The harbour phase of the exercise will be held at the Changi Naval Base from May 2 to May 4, and the sea phase will be conducted from May 7 to May 8 in the South China Sea.
  - ✓ This is the first time India has been involved in exercises with the ASEAN though there have been exercises with ASEAN nations separately

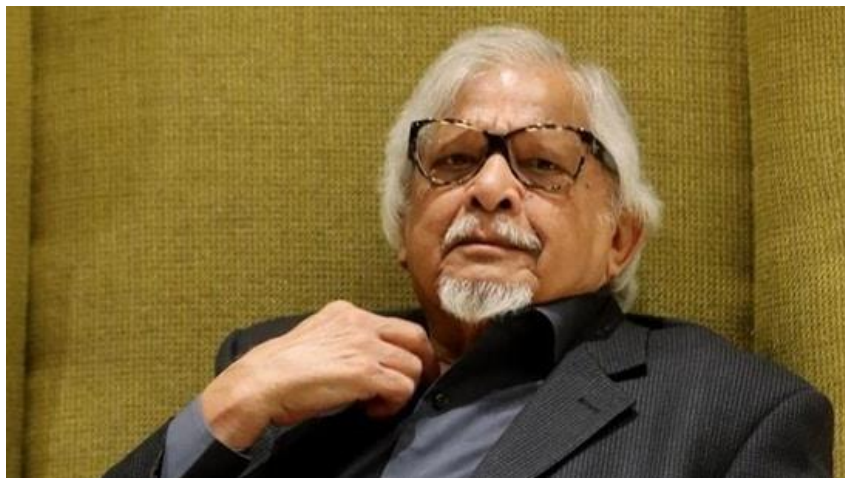
- ✓ ASEAN is at the core of India's Indo-Pacific Policy as mentioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his speech at the Shangri La Dialogue in Singapore in 2018.

## **BUSINESS/ECONOMY**

- **The World Bank - announced a new methodology under its flagship “Business Ready” project for assessing the business climate in up to 180 countries**
- ✓ The “Business Ready” project improves upon and replaces the World Bank Group's earlier “Doing Business project”, cancelled in September 2021
- ✓ The first annual “Business Ready” report, covering 54 economies, will be published in the spring of 2024.
- ✓ Over the next three years, the project will grow to cover about 180 economies worldwide annually, starting with 54 economies in 2023-24, 120 economies in 2024-25, and reaching 180 economies in 2025-26.
- ✓ The new flagship project aims to help countries attract investment and boost jobs and productivity to accelerate development.
- ✓ It focuses on 10 topics covering the lifecycle of a firm, including business entry, utility services, labor, dispute resolution, market competition, taxation and insolvency
- ✓ The “Doing Business project” was cancelled after an independent probe found senior World Bank leaders had pressured staff to alter data to favour China, and cited data irregularities that also boosted rankings of other countries, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Azerbaijan.

## **OBITUARY**

- **Indian American social activist, journalist, writer and grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, Arun Manilal Gandhi – passed away at the age of 89 on May 2 at Hanbwarwadi village in Kolhapur district of Maharashtra following a brief illness.**



- ✓ The staunch Gandhian had arrived India this February from the US's Rochester, where he lived.
- ✓ Arun Gandhi spent his last days at the campus of Avani, an organisation he had been associated with for the last three decades
  - ✓ Avani Sanstha, located at Hanbarwadi near Kolhapur city, is notable for its work towards the empowerment of the marginalized children, child labourers, migrant brickyard and sugar cane workers and the women in the labour force
  - ✓ The sanstha has had a long association with Gandhi Worldwide Education Institute, founded by Arun Gandhi in 2008.
- ✓ Arun Gandhi was born on April 14, 1934 at Durban in South Africa to Sushila Mashruwala and Manilal Gandhi, second of the four sons of Mahatma Gandhi.
- ✓ He was married to a nurse, Sunanda, in 1957 until her demise in 2007
- ✓ Sunanda and Arun came to Canada in 1987 and started the MK Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence in 1991 at the Christian Brothers University in Memphis.
- ✓ The couple began the Gandhi Legacy Tour of India in 1997.
- ✓ Later, Arun Gandhi developed two more tour itineraries – the Gandhi Lifescapes Tour of India and Gandhi Satyagraha Tour of India.
- ✓ Arun Gandhi was also elected to the Board of Trustees of the Council for a Parliament of the World Religions in 2013.
- ✓ Arun Gandhi penned several books including 'The Gift of Anger: And Other Lessons from My Grandfather Mahatma Gandhi' and 'A Patch of White' about life in prejudiced South Africa.
- ✓ He also co-wrote the book 'The Forgotten Woman: The Untold Story of Kastur, the Wife of Mahatma Gandhi' with his wife Sunanda
- ✓ In 2014, Gandhi co-wrote a picture book on Mahatma Gandhi titled 'Grandfather Gandhi' with Bethany Hegedus.

