

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-AUGUST 17,2023

TAMIL NADU

- Chief Minister M K Stalin - unveiled the bronze statue of renowned playback singer T M Soundararajan at the Madurai corporation's south zonal office on August 16.



- ✓ The statue was erected at a cost of Rs.50 lakh to commemorate the birth centenary of the legendary singer.
- ✓ Earlier, the chief minister had, on March 24, named a street at Mandaveli in Chennai after Soundararajan.
- ✓ Madurai MP Su Venkatesan had laid the foundation stone for erecting the bronze statue on July 1 after the CM announced in the state assembly the plan to erect the statue.
- ✓ TMS was born in a Sourashtra family in Madurai in 1922.
- ✓ Songs sung by him for late actors Sivaji Ganesan and M G Ramachandran made him a star to be remembered for decades.
- ✓ Former chief minister M Karunanidhi had praised him with the title 'Yezhisai Mannar'.
- ✓ Though born in Madurai, TMS had lived at Mandaveli in south Chennai, and passed away in 2013.

- **The Union territory of Puducherry - celebrated its 61st 'De Jure Transfer Day' on August 16 at the historic memorial at Kizhur village in Villianur commune panchayat.**
- ✓ It was on this day in 1962, Puducherry formally merged with the Indian union after the French government ratified 'Treaty of cession' in its Parliament.
- ✓ The French rule continued in the Union territory even after India attained Independence on August 15, 1947.
- ✓ The French government came forward to liberate the territory from its rule only after a referendum at Kizhur, 22km from Puducherry town on November 1 in 1954.
 - ✓ Kizhur is a village bordering Puducherry and Tamil Nadu and the village was selected for peaceful polling without any political or administrative interferences.
 - ✓ The referendum was held to decide whether Puducherry should continue under French rule or join the Indian Union.
 - ✓ Of 181 councillors, 174 councillors voted against French rule.
- ✓ It took almost eight years for the French government to ratify the formal merger of Puducherry with the Indian Union in its Parliament on August 16, 1962.
- ✓ Since then, the Union territory celebrates its formal merger with the Indian Union on August 16 every year.

NATIONAL

- **The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by PM Modi - approved a new Central Sector Scheme 'Vishwakarma Kaushal Samman Yojana' with a financial outlay of Rs.13000 crore for a period of five years**
- ✓ PM Modi announced the introduction of this scheme to uplift workers with traditional skills, during his Independence Day speech on August 15.
- ✓ The scheme will benefit about 30 lakh families of traditional artisans and craftsmen, including weavers, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, laundry workers and barbers.
- ✓ The scheme is scheduled to be launched on Vishwakarma Jayanti on September 17.
- ✓ Under PM Vishwakarma scheme, the artisans and craftspeople will be provided recognition through PM Vishwakarma certificate and ID card, collateral-free subsidised loans of upto Rs.1 lakh (First Tranche) and Rs.2 lakh (Second Tranche) with a concessional interest rate of 5%.
- ✓ The Scheme will further provide skill upgradation, toolkit incentive, incentive for digital transactions and marketing support.
- ✓ Eighteen traditional trades will be covered in the first instance under PM Vishwakarma.
- ✓ Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, who announced the initiative, said that in the first year, the scheme will cover six lakh families of craftsmen including

carpenters, boat makers, blacksmiths, cobblers, masons, barbers, washermen, tailors and makers of brooms, toys and garlands.

- ✓ The scheme also will provide low interest credit support for expansion of business and market outreach.
- ✓ Further, Vaishnav said, in the first tranche, the government will roll out basic and advanced skilling programmes with a stipend of Rs.500 per day to beneficiaries identified during training.
- ✓ The Centre will also provide Rs.15,000 support to each of the beneficiaries for buying modern tools.

➤ **On August 16, the Union Cabinet - approved seven multi-tracking of railway projects with an investment of Rs.32,500 crore, with 100% funding from Central Government.**

- ✓ The proposals of Multi-tracking will ease operations and reduce congestion, providing the much-required infrastructural development on the busiest sections of Indian Railways
- ✓ The projects covering 35 districts in 9 States - Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Odisha, Jharkhand and West Bengal - will increase the existing network of Indian Railways by 2339 Kms
- ✓ The selected routes are essential for transportation of varied basket of commodities such as foodgrains, fertilizers, coal, cement, fly-ash, iron and finished steel, clinkers, crude oil, lime stone, edible oil etc.
- ✓ The projects are result of PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan for Multi-model connectivity which have been possible through integrated planning and will provide seamless connectivity for movement of people, goods and services.
- ✓ The entire scope of these projects will follow the Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) model, streamlining execution and ensuring swift development.

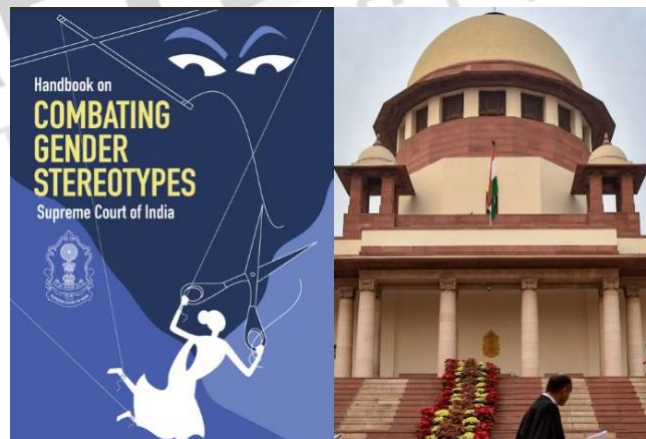
➤ **On August 16, the Union Cabinet - approved the 'PMe-Bus Sewa' scheme to provide financial support for operation of 10,000 electric buses in 100 cities that have 3-40 lakh population.**

- ✓ The Centre will provide Rs.20,000 crore financial assistance out of the total estimated investment of Rs.57,613 crore.
- ✓ The approval came more than two-and-a-half years after it was announced in the 2021-22 Budget speech.
- ✓ The scheme will be on public private partnership (PPP) mode and will support bus operations for 10 years.
- ✓ It will give "priority to cities having no organised bus service".
- ✓ The 100 cities will be selected through a "competition" among 169 eligible candidates.
- ✓ Big cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Surat and Kolkata won't be covered as these have more than 40 lakh population.

- ✓ The scheme has two components — augmenting the city bus service and green urban mobility initiatives.
- **On August 16, the Union Cabinet - approved the extension of the Digital India programme with an outlay of Rs.14,903 crore for the period from 2021-22 to 2024-25**
- ✓ The programme aims to reskill over 6.2 lakh IT professionals and train over 2.6 lakh in information security.
- ✓ The other components will include cyber security, high performance computing and simplifying technology for masses.
- ✓ The Digilocker app will also be extended to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to help them avail of credit and other services by verifying their document stores in the app.
- ✓ Besides, new initiatives in the area of cyber security, including development of tools and integration of more than 200 sites with the National Cyber Coordination Centre, will be carried out.

SUPREME COURT

- **The Supreme Court - released a handbook meant to be used by judges as a guide to gender-just language.**
- ✓ Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud released the 'Handbook On Combating Gender Stereotypes' on August 16



- ✓ The 'gender stereotype handbook' contains words, phrases which judges, lawyers should avoid using in orders, judgements, pleadings, submissions, as well as the alternatives to be used in place.
- ✓ It cited several offensive words that have been used for women in past court judgments
- ✓ The 30-page long handbook seeks to help judges and lawyers identify stereotypes in order to avoid their usage in the future
- ✓ The handbook also cites important precedents laid down by the Supreme Court "that categorically reject several of the stereotypes discussed."

- ✓ The handbook will be uploaded in the Supreme Court website shortly.
- ✓ The legal glossary was prepared by a committee chaired by Calcutta High Court judge Moushumi Bhattachar

INTERNATIONAL

- **On August 16, Germany's cabinet - passed a contentious bill to legalise recreational marijuana use and cultivation**



- ✓ The legislation, which still has to pass parliament, would allow adults to possess up to 25 grams of the drug, grow a maximum of three plants, or acquire weed as associates of nonprofit cannabis clubs.
- ✓ The centre-left government of Olaf Scholz hopes the law will curb the black market, protect consumers against contaminated marijuana and reduce drug-related crime.
- ✓ Many countries in Europe have already legalised cannabis for limited medicinal purposes, including Germany since 2017, while others have decriminalised its general use.
- ✓ Malta became the first European nation to allow limited cultivation and possession of cannabis for personal use in 2021.
- ✓ Germany would be the first major European country to do so.

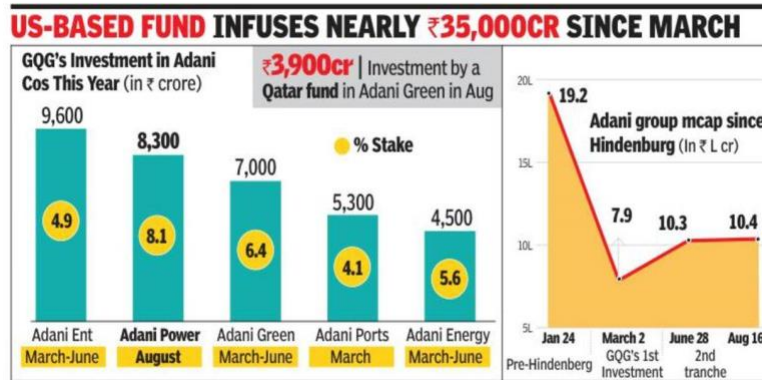
DEFENCE

- **The government - has finally approved the long-pending project to indigenously build five advanced fleet support ships, with a budget of over Rs 19,000 crore**
- ✓ These support ships will be responsible for replenishing warships with fuel, water, ammunition, spares, and stores on the high seas, thus extending their operational range.
- ✓ The Cabinet Committee on Security, headed by PM Modi, approved the project, which was originally sanctioned in December 2015, and will be executed by Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL) in Visakhapatnam.
- ✓ The first fleet support ship, with a displacement of approximately 45,000 tonnes, is expected to be delivered in four years, followed by the delivery of one ship each year thereafter.

- ✓ Currently, the Navy only has four aging fleet support ships, the oldest of which was commissioned over 30 years ago.
- ✓ Indian Navy currently has approximately 130 warships and submarines, along with 230 aircraft, helicopters, and drones.

ECONOMY

- On August 16, the Adani family - sold shares worth over Rs 8,700 crore (\$1.1 billion) in Adani Power through secondary transactions.



- ✓ About half of the stocks were purchased by US-based GQG Partners, which has invested about Rs 35,000 crore (\$4.2 billion) in various Adani companies since early March.
 - ✓ Adani Power is the fifth company of the conglomerate where GQG has invested amid the fallout of Hindenburg's allegations against the group.
 - ✓ GQG, which was co-founded in June 2016 by India-born Rajiv Jain, is on the Australian stock exchange and manages assets worth \$92 billion.
 - ✓ Apart from Adani Power, it holds shares of Adani Enterprises, Adani Green, Adani Transmission and Adani Ports, besides holding shares of Ambuja Cements
- **Hyundai Motor India Limited (HMIL) - has signed an asset purchase agreement (APA) for the "acquisition and assignment of identified assets" related to General Motors India (GMI)'s Talegaon plant in Maharashtra**



- ✓ Apart from land and buildings, the APA covers the acquisition of machinery and manufacturing equipment at the GMI plant.
- ✓ HMIL signed the 'term sheet' for this acquisition five months ago.
- ✓ Manufacturing operations at the plant are expected to commence in 2025 and will help boost HMIL's manufacturing footprint.
- ✓ With the Sriperumbudur (Chennai) and Talegaon plants, HMIL aims to cumulatively achieve a production capacity of one million units a year
- ✓ Earlier this year, HMIL entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to invest Rs 20,000 crore in Tamil Nadu for expanding capacity and establishing an electric vehicle ecosystem.
- ✓ GMI's Talegaon plant currently has an annual production capacity of 1.3 lakh units.

OBITUARY

- **Eminent scientist and former scientific advisor to the defence minister V S Arunachalam - passed away in California at the age of 87 years**



- ✓ Arunachalam was the founder-chairman of Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP), a not-for-profit think tank, in Bengaluru.
- ✓ His career spanned across Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), National Aerospace Laboratory (NAL), and Defence Metallurgical Research Laboratory.
- ✓ He served as the scientific adviser to the defence minister from 1982 to 1992.
- ✓ Arunachalam was conferred the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Vibhushan.
- ✓ He was a Fellow of the Indian National Science Academy, the Indian Academy of Sciences and the Indian National Academy of Engineering.
- ✓ Along with being the first Indian Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering (UK), Arunachalam was a Distinguished Service Professor at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh

