



## **FIVE** RYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-august

### **TAMIL NADU**

- **On August 13, Tamil Nadu - got the prestigious Ramsar site tag for four more wetlands**
- ✓ This takes the number of wetlands in the state with the tag of international importance under the Ramsar Convention to 14
- ✓ This is the highest in the country followed by Uttar Pradesh with 10.



- ✓ Vadavoor bird sanctuary in Tiruvarur district, Kanjirankulam and Chitrangudi bird sanctuaries in Ramanathapuram district and Suchindram Theroor in Kanniyakumari district are the latest additions from the state to the prestigious list.
- ✓ Of the four Ramsar sites declared, Chitrangudi in Ramanathapuram, attracts 50 species of birds during the migratory season (October to March)
- ✓ Vaduvvoor sanctuary, spread over 112.638 hectares, acts as a shelter for migratory birds.
- ✓ Kanjirankulam near Mudukulathur in Ramanathapuram district, declared a protected area in 1989, is a nesting site for several migratory birds including painted stork, spot-billed pelicans, white ibis, black ibis, little and large egrets.

- ✓ Suchindram Theroor wetland complex, part of the Suchindram Theroor Manakudi conservation reserve, lies at the southern tip of the Central Asian flyway of migratory birds and attracts thousands of migratory birds every year.
- ✓ According to a recent study by the Madras Institute of Development Studies (MIDS), a wetland's annual ecological services system is worth at least Rs.65.9 crore with an estimated maximum potential of Rs.837.7 crore.
- ✓ **On August 13, the Union Environment Ministry announced the addition of 11 Indian sites to the Ramsar list**
- ✓ With this, the number of wetlands of international importance in the country has increased to 75 during the country's 75th year of Independence
- ✓ Of the 11 new sites, four are in Tamil Nadu, three in Odisha, two Jammu and Kashmir, and one each in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra
- ✓ The new additions include Tampara Lake, Hirakud Reservoir and Ansupa Lake in Odisha; Hygam Wetland Conservation Reserve and Shallbugh Wetland Conservation Reserve in Jammu and Kashmir; Thane Creek in Maharashtra and Yashwant Sagar in Madhya Pradesh
- ✓ The 65,400-hectare Hirakud reservoir is the biggest on the list.
- ✓ India with 75 now has the most Ramsar sites in Asia, surpassing China's 64.
- ✓ The 75 Ramsar sites in the country cover an area of 13,26,677 hectares.
- ✓ Chilika lake in Odisha and Keoladeo National Park in Rajasthan are the country's first two Ramsar-recognised sites
- ✓ The Ramsar convention, initiated in 1971, is an intergovernmental global treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, preserving their ecological character
- ✓ The convention is named after Iranian city of Ramsar where the agreement was first signed
- ✓ India became a contracting party to the Ramsar Convention on February 1, 1982.
- ✓ From 1982-2013, only 26 Indian sites were added to the list of Ramsar sites, while from 2014-2022, India added 49 new wetlands to the list
- ✓ This year alone, 28 Indian sites have been declared wetlands of international importance.
- ✓ Wetlands play a key role in flood control and as sources of water, food, fibre and raw material.
- ✓ They also support mangroves that protect coastlines and filter pollutants.
- ✓ The designation of wetlands under the Ramsar Convention would help in conservation and management of wetlands and wise use of their resources.

## STATES

- **The Himachal Pradesh assembly - approved the Himachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion (Amendment) Bill, 2022, on August 13**
- ✓ It is a more stringent version of The Himachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act, 2019



- ✓ Introducing the bill on August 12, Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur said the 2019 Act did not have a provision to curb mass conversion, and "therefore, a provision to this effect is being made."
  - ✓ The bill inserts the reference to "mass conversion", which is described as two or more people converting at the same time and proposes to increase the punishment for forced conversions to a maximum of 10 years from 7 years.
  - ✓ Further, according to the proposed provision in the Bill, no police officer below the rank of sub-inspector will be able to investigate all complaints made under the anti-conversion law.
  - ✓ The amendment bill also provides that if a person hides his religion to marry a person of another religion, the guilty person can be punished for a minimum of 3 years.
  - ✓ Further, in the Bill, the minimum penalty has been raised to Rs 50,000, which can be increased to Rs 1 lakh
  - ✓ The Bill will become a law after the governor approves it.
  - ✓ The 2019 Act was notified on December 21, 2020, 15 months after it was passed in the state assembly.
  - ✓ The 2019 version had in turn replaced a 2006 law, which prescribed lesser punishments.
  - ✓ The ruling BJP has been a vocal supporter of anti-conversion laws and many party-ruled states have introduced similar measures.
  - ✓ The Madhya Pradesh government has doubled the jail term for forced religious conversions for marriage from five years to 10 years in its draft bill".
  - ✓ The Uttar Pradesh and the Haryana governments have also passed similar laws.
  - ✓ The Karnataka government has also passed a ordinance against forced religious conversion.
- **On August 13, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann - announced that Governor Banwarilal Purohit has given his assent to the "One MLA - One Pension" Bill.**
- ✓ Mann-led Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Government passed the Punjab State Legislature Members (Pension and Medical Facilities Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2022 on June 30





- ✓ In May, the Punjab cabinet had approved an amendment to the Punjab State Legislature Members (Pension and Medical Facilities Regulation) Act, 1977.
  - ✓ The new Bill is aimed at giving pension to the members of the state assembly for a single term only, irrespective of the number of times the leader has been elected, at new rate of Rs 60,000 per month plus dearness allowance.
  - ✓ Besides, if an MLA attains the age of 65, 75, or 85, he/she will be entitled to an increase of 5%, 10%, and 15% of the basic pension respectively
  - ✓ The previous rule stated that if an MLA won the election three times, his pension would also increase accordingly.
  - ✓ The state government is expected to save around Rs.19.53 crore annually through the move
- **Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao - launched the Nethanna Bima scheme recently on August 7 on the occasion of National Handloom Day**



- ✓ This scheme will provide Rs. 5 lakh insurance cover to the weavers' families in case of the unfortunate demise of an eligible beneficiary
- ✓ The scheme is one-of-its-kind scheme for weavers that has been introduced in the country and nearly 80,000 weavers' families will be benefitted through this insurance plan
- ✓ Under the scheme, the Telangana government will collaborate with Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India

- ✓ The annual premium of the beneficiaries will be paid by the government on their behalf to the LIC
- ✓ The state department of handlooms and textiles will act as the nodal agency for the implementation of the scheme

## NATIONAL

- **Tech giant, Microsoft - has partnered with Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), and Capacity Building Commission (CBC) to impart future-ready skills to the country's civil servants**



- ✓ The partnership aims to enhance the functional computer literacy of nearly 2.5 million civil servants of Government of India
- ✓ The association was launched under the project 'Capacity Building by MSDE in Microsoft Digital Productivity Skills'
- ✓ The project will digitally empower the civil servants to provide efficient and effective citizen centric services to the vulnerable and underprivileged sections of the society, thereby enabling last mile delivery of social welfare services.
- ✓ As part of the collaboration, Microsoft will develop an online, self-paced learning course on Microsoft Office 365 digital productivity suite offerings for MSDE to provide digital skills training to the officials in central government ministries and departments
- ✓ Microsoft would host the course content on Microsoft Community Training portal (MCT) which the learner can easily access 'free of cost'
- ✓ The courses will be created under two categories - Beginners and Advanced courses of 12 hours duration each
- ✓ In addition, MSDE would monitor the project progress and keep track on the training outcomes.

## INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

- **On August 13, the Sri Lankan government - said that it has allowed a high-tech Chinese research ship to dock at the southern port of Hambantota from August 16 till 22 for "replenishment purposes"**

- ✓ Earlier, Colombo asked Beijing to defer the port call amid India's concern over the vessel's presence in its neighbourhood.
- ✓ The Chinese ballistic missile and satellite tracking ship, 'Yuan Wang 5', was earlier scheduled to arrive on August 11 and remain at the port until August 17 for replenishment.
- ✓ However, the Sri Lankan foreign ministry requested the Chinese embassy in Colombo last week to postpone the vessel's visit following security concerns raised by India.
- ✓ Subsequently, the vessel did not dock at the Hambantota port as planned.

## AWARDS

- **Congress MP Shashi Tharoor - will be honoured with France's highest civilian award, the Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur (the Legion of Honour), for his speeches and writings.**



- ✓ Last year, Tharoor had surprised the officials of the Embassy, Consulates, Alliance Francaise and military attaches by delivering a speech in French.
- ✓ The honour will be conferred on him during the next visit of any minister of the French government to India.
- ✓ Maharaja Pratap Singh of Udar was the first Indian to receive this honour in 1918
- ✓ Since then, over 40 Indians have been awarded the honour, with Azim Premji being the last recipient in 2018
- ✓ This honour is presented to people with 20 years of civil achievement in peacetime or to those who showcased extraordinary military bravery in war times.
- ✓ Napoleon Bonaparte had set up the honour for excellent civil or military conduct in 1802
- ✓ In 2010, Tharoor received a similar honour, from the Spanish government.
- ✓ The King of Spain had bestowed upon him the Encomienda de la Real Order Espanola de Carlos III

