

Target

TNPSC

WEEKLY

CURRENT AFFAIRS
(ENGLISH)

For TNPSC Group I, II/IIA,
IV & VAO Exams

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Tamil Nadu

Singara Chennai 2.0 Veedhi Vizha:

The Greater Chennai Corporation recently launched Singara Chennai 2.0 Veedhi Vizha, a cycling and walking initiative for residents of the city.

As part of the festival, the Corporation has invited residents to take up the walking and cycling challenge this year.

Nalamigu Chennai is one of the main themes of the Singara Chennai vision.

The initiative is also part of the walking and cycling challenge among 75 cities in the country.

New Police Commissionerates.

The government recently inaugurated Police Commissionerates in Tambaram and Avadi, which have been carved out of the Greater Chennai City police jurisdiction.

The Tambaram police commissionerate will function with two police districts — Tambaram and Pallikaranai comprising 20 police stations.

The Avadi police commissionerate will function with two police districts of Avadi and RedHills comprising 25 police stations.

Vellavedu, Sevvapet, Sholavaram and Minjur police stations have been attached to the Avadi commissionerate.

Iyothee Thass

Iyothee Thass Pandithar is a legendary figure in classical Tamil literature and philosophy, and practitioner of the Siddha system of medicine who could also easily work in English, Sanskrit and Pali.

After organizing the tribes of Nilgiris in the 1870s, he established Advaidananda Sabha in 1876.

He launched a magazine called Dravida Pandian along with Rev John Rathinam in 1885.

In 1886, Thass issued a statement, almost half-a-century before Ambedkar, saying that the so-called untouchables were not Hindus.

Thass established 'Dravida Mahajana Sabai'.

Thass submitted a petition to the Congress Committee, with hundreds of signatures by Dalits, asking them to declare the word 'pariah' as contemptuous.

During the time of the 1901 Census, he urged the untouchables to register themselves as casteless Dravidians.

Thass also urged the British to refer to untouchables as 'original Buddhists' even if Dalits chose to mention their sub-caste.

Humayun Mahal.

The Public Works Department (PWD) has restored the historic Humayun Mahal in Chepauk Palace complex, Chennai.

The 250-year-old Humayun Mahal was built in Indo-Saracenic style of architecture between 1868 and 1871.

It functioned as Revenue department's headquarters during the British era and then had various State government offices, including Horticulture and Revenue, functioning in the building.

Humayun Mahal has nine halls on the ground floor and four on the first floor.

Pongal gift.

Recently, the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu launched the distribution of Pongal gift hampers to over 2.15 crore rice ration cardholders and Sri Lankan Tamils living in camps across the State.

Each hamper contains grocery items, including rice, jaggery, dry fruits, spices and sugarcane.

Weather radar.

The calibration of X Band Radar, installed at the campus of National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Pallikaranai, was carried out recently using a drone.

Scientists from Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and India Meteorological Department (IMD) carried out the calibration of the indigenous weather radar.

This was the first time that such a drone-based calibration was done for the weather radar.

This radar would capture weather events occurring within a radius of 100 km in all directions and provide information, including rain intensity and wind variations, and detect cyclonic storms approaching the region.

Bills to create new local bodies.

The State Government recently introduced bills for establishing more municipal corporations in the State Legislative Assembly.

Bills for creation of Municipal Corporations for Cuddalore, Kancheepuram, Sivakasi, Karur, Tambaram and Kumbakonam were introduced.

It is being done considering the rapid pace of urbanisation in the State.

As per the 2011 Census, 48.5% of people in the State lived in urban areas, over 53% of the people in the State live in urban areas now.

Rani Velu Nachiyar.

Rani Velu Nachiyar is the 18th century queen from Sivagangai district in Tamil Nadu, who fought against British rule to recapture her kingdom.

She was known as the first queen to fight against the colonial power during that time.

In 1772, the British troops and the Nawab of Arcot came together and invaded Sivagangai. During the Kalaiyar Koil war, Muthuvadugananthur (her husband) died fighting for his kingdom.

Velu Nachiyar escaped with her daughter Vellachi and lived in Dindugal for a few years and formed an alliance with other kingdoms and plotted her revenge against the British.

Velu Nachiyar recaptured her kingdom and hence became the queen of Sivagangai again.

During her reign, the queen also formed a women's only army called Udaiyaal.

National

Multi Agency Centre.

Multi Agency Centre (MAC) is a common counter-terrorism grid under the Intelligence Bureau (IB) that was made operational in 2001 post-Kargil war.

Recently, the Centre asked the States to share more intelligence inputs through MAC.

As many as 28 organisations, including the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), armed forces and State police are part of the platform and various security agencies share real-time intelligence inputs on the MAC.

Plans are afoot for more than a decade to link the system up to the district level.

Scheduled Banks.

Recently, Airtel Payments bank has been upgraded to the category of a scheduled Commercial Bank.

Scheduled banks are those banks that are listed under Schedule II of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.

These banks have a paid up capital of Rs. 5 lakhs or more and comply with all the requirements of the RBI.

They maintain a cash reserve ratio with RBI.

They are authorized to borrow funds from the Reserve Bank of India.

They are comparatively more financially stable.

NEAT 3.0.

The Education Ministry recently launched NEAT 3.0, a single platform to provide the best-developed ed-tech solutions and courses to students of the country.

National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT) is an initiative to provide the use of best-developed technological solutions in the education sector to enhance the employability of the youth on a single platform for learners' convenience.

These solutions use artificial intelligence for a personalised and customised learning experience for better learning outcomes and skill development in the niche areas.

NEAT will be a game-changer in bridging the digital divide, especially among the economically disadvantaged students and also in fulfilling the knowledge-based requirement of India and the world.

58 global and Indian start-up ed-tech companies are onboard NEAT and are offering 100 courses and e-resources for bettering learning outcomes, developing employable skills and overcoming learning loss.

Gangasagar Mela.

Gangasagar Mela held in Kardwip in West Bengal is celebrated during January 13 – 15, and annually attracts thousands of pilgrims from all around the world.

Gangasagar Mela, also known as Ganga Sagar Yatra or Ganga Snan, takes place during Makar Sankranti.

It is believed that taking a dip here will absolve the pilgrim of all his sins.

The importance of taking a dip in Gangasagar goes back to the time of Mahabharata.

Legend has it that the significance of taking a bath at Sagar was explained to Bhishma by a learned sage.

Smart cities and Academia Towards Action & Research

As part of the Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav (AKAM) celebrations across the country, the Smart Cities Mission, MoHUA has launched "Smart cities and Academia Towards Action & Research (SAAR)" program.

It is a joint initiative of MoHUA, National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) and leading Indian academic institutions of the country.

Under the program, 15 premier architecture & planning institutes of the country will be working with Smart Cities to document landmark projects undertaken by the Smart Cities Mission.

The documents will capture the learnings from best practices, provide opportunities for engagement on urban development projects to students, and enable real-time information flow between urban practitioners and academia.

Article 348.

Recently, the Gujarat High Court refused to accept submissions in Gujarati and Hindi citing article 348 of the constitution.

Article 348 (1) of the Constitution of India provides that all proceedings in the Supreme Court and in every High court shall be in English Language until Parliament by law otherwise provides.

Under Article 348 (2), the Governor of the State may, with the previous consent of the President, authorize the use of the Hindi language or any other language used for any official purpose of the State, in the proceedings of the High Court.

Section 7 of the Official Languages Act, 1963, provides that the use of Hindi or official language of a State with the consent of the President of India, by the Governor of the State for the purpose of judgments etc. made by the High Court for that State.

AT1 bonds.

AT1 bonds are recently in the news as the RBI has changed its policy on AT1 bonds.

AT1 bonds are a type of perpetual debt instrument that banks use to augment their core equity base and thus comply with Basel III norms.

These bonds were introduced by the Basel accord after the global financial crisis to protect depositors.

They offer higher returns to investors compared with other products and carry a higher price.

If the capital ratios of the issuer fall below a certain percentage or in the event of an institutional failure, the rules allow the issuer to stop paying interest or even write down these bonds.

International

SAARC.

Pakistan recently asked India to attend the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit virtually.

SAARC was established with the signing of the SAARC Charter in Dhaka in 1985.

SAARC comprises eight Member States: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The Secretariat of the SAARC was set up in Kathmandu in 1987.

In SAARC summits, decisions at all levels are to be taken on the basis of unanimity.

Bilateral and contentious issues are excluded from the deliberations of SAARC.

Kazakhstan

There has been unrest in Kazakhstan over the increased prices of LPG and other commodities.

The city of Almaty in Kazakhstan is in chaos and Russia has sent in a military to aid the Kazakhstan administration.

President: Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

Capital: Nur-Sultan

Currency: Kazakhstani tenge.

U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC):

The former Chargé d'Affaires at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, Atul Keshap, has been appointed president of the U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC), an industry body.

The U.S.-India Business Council was formed in 1975 as a business advocacy organization to enlighten and encourage the private sectors of both India and United States to enhance investment flows

Sudan protests

Recently, the Sudan army has taken the reins of the government in that country.

Pro-democracy activists have stepped up protests which saw Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok resign.

The protests have been taking place in Khartoum's twin city Omdurman and the South Darfur capital Nyala.

Sudan's ruling council is currently headed by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan.

Capital: Khartoum

Currency: Sudanese pound

Maharaja Paramhans Ji temple.

Over 200 Hindu pilgrims from India, the U.S. and the Middle East prayed at the 100-year-old renovated Maharaja Paramhans Ji temple in Pakistan recently.

The temple and samadhi of Paramhans Ji in Karak district's Teri village of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The temple underwent extensive repair last year after it was demolished by an angry mob in 2020, an incident that was condemned globally.

Maharaja Paramhans Ji died at Teri village in 1919.

Nuclear & gas energy.

The EU is planning to label energy from nuclear power and natural gas as "green" sources for investment.

It will support the EU's shift towards a carbon-neutral future and gild its credentials as a global standard-setter for fighting climate change.

France has led the charge for nuclear power to be included, despite robust opposition from Austria and scepticism from Germany, which is in the process of shutting all its nuclear plants.

Trincomalee oil fields agreement.

Sri Lanka recently announced its decision to sign three lease agreements on developing the strategic Trincomalee oil tank farm with India.

The Trincomalee project pertains to some 100 oil storage tanks — built by the British during the Second World War — in Sri Lanka's eastern Trincomalee district.

It has dominated bilateral talks for decades, from the time of the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987, but has seen little progress.

Lanka Indian Oil Corporation will execute the project on behalf of India.

Defence

Hypersonic missile test.

North Korea has successfully tested a hypersonic missile.

Hypersonic missiles move far faster and are more agile than standard ones, making them much harder for missile defence systems to intercept.

Rafale-M.

India recently tested the Rafale-M (Marine) jet for use on its Vikramaditya aircraft carrier as well as the indigenous aircraft carrier 1 (IAC1), which will be deployed as the INS Vikrant, at the INS Hansa in Goa.

The Rafale-M aircraft is the F4 equivalent standard naval version of the Rafale.

The marine version of the Rafale jet has a reinforced undercarriage and nose wheel, a bigger arrester hook, an integrated ladder, and other minor differences from the Rafale currently in use in the Indian Air Force.

The Rafale-M can carry up to four-five tonnes of external load (with full internal fuel) for a ski take-off.

With lesser internal fuel, it can carry more weapons depending upon mission requirements.

Thus it can carry out all roles, including combat air patrol, intercept, AD escort, as well as sea and land-strike with full internal fuel.

Intermediate Jet Trainer.

The Intermediate Jet Trainer (IJT), designed and developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited for stage-II training of IAF pilots, has successfully demonstrated the capability to carry out six turn spins to the left hand and right hand sides.

The IJT, replacement to the ageing Kirans of IAF fleet, had completed demonstration of its capabilities in terms of altitude and speed envelope, load factor, satisfactory stall characteristics and limited armament capability.

The capability to enter and recover from spin is a necessity for a trainer aircraft in order to familiarise the trainee pilot to recognise departure from controlled flight.

Leclerc Main Battle Tanks.

The French government will export next-gen tanks to the Indian Army.

The Leclerc tank is a main battle tank (MBT) built by Nexter Systems of France.

It has relatively light weight, a stunningly good engine, a great gun, and one of the most advanced autoloaders ever built.

Digital combat uniform.

The Indian Army is going to unveil a new digital pattern combat uniform, which would be lighter and more climate friendly, on this Army Day, January 15.

The new camouflage uniform will be based on a "digital" pattern.

The decision to bring out the new combat dress for the Army was taken at the Army Commanders' Conference.

These camouflage uniforms would be totally different from the existing dress and the shirts would not be required to be tucked in by troops.

The new camouflage dress would include a mix of colours including earthen and olive.

Sub Hunting Exercise

Six countries have started a 'submarine hunting' exercise at mid-sea using specialised maritime reconnaissance planes, among other equipment.

The exercise "Sea Dragon 22" is being conducted from a US base, Andersen Air Force Base in Guam, in the western Pacific.

Apart from the 'Quad' countries of India, the US, Australia and Japan, the Canadian Air Force and South Korea will join in.

Science & Technology

Omisure.

Indian researchers have developed a test kit, Omisure, that can detect the Omicron variant by combining S-gene target failure (SGTF) and S-gene mutation amplification (SGMA).

Omisure was approved by the Indian Council of Medical Research and received a licence from the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation for commercial production.

Globally, all other test kits for Omicron are either made for gene dropout or mutation specific detection. Omisure is the first test kit combining both.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Omisure picked up all sequence samples with 100 percent accuracy.

Hydrogen sulphide & HIV.

Researchers have identified a key role played by hydrogen sulphide (H₂S) gas in suppressing the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

Increased H₂S was found to have a direct effect on reducing the rate at which the virus multiplies in HIV-infected human immune cells.

The finding paves the way for developing a more comprehensive antiretroviral therapy against HIV.

Current state-of-the-art combined antiretroviral therapy (cART) is not a cure for HIV. It can only suppress the virus – cause it to become latent.

Aquamation.

The body of Desmond Tutu underwent aquamation, a green alternative to traditional cremation methods.

Aquamation, or alkaline hydrolysis, is a process in which the body of the deceased is immersed for a few hours in a mixture of water and a strong alkali in a pressurized metal cylinder and heated to around 150 degree centigrade.

The combination of gentle water flow, temperature and alkalinity accentuate the breakdown of the organic materials.

Aquamation uses energy which is five times less than fire. It also reduces by about 35% the amount of greenhouse gases that are emitted during cremation.

Molnupiravir.

Dr Reddy's Laboratories recently launched antiviral drug molnupiravir used for treating covid 19 disease.

Molnupiravir prevents the SARS-CoV-2 virus RNA replication process through "error catastrophe".

It is a pro-drug that needs to undergo processing in the body to become active.

It is metabolised to a ribonucleoside analog, a sugar molecule linked to a nucleic acid.

If molnupiravir is used, the viral enzyme instead of using real cytidine or uridine uses a molecule that is generated by metabolism of molnupiravir called NHC-TP.

New plant species.

Researchers have reported two new plant species from the biodiversity-rich Western Ghats regions in Thiruvananthapuram and Wayanad districts of Kerala.

They have been named *Fimbristylis sunilii* and *Neanotis prabhuii*.

Fimbristylis sunilii, stands 20-59 cm tall and was collected from an elevation of 1,100 metres and belongs to the Cyperaceae family

Neanotis prabhuii is a prostrate perennial herb hailing from the family Rubiaceae and grows on high-altitude grasslands.

Both the plants have been provisionally placed under the data deficient category of the IUCN red list.

Important Days

Global Family Day:

Global Family Day is celebrated every year on January 1st every year to promote the concept of harmony and unity in the world.

It emphasizes the idea of the world as a global village in which we are all family, regardless of citizenship, borders, or race.

World Braille Day:

World Braille Day is held every year on January 4th on Louis Braille, inventor of the braille script's birthday .

World Braille Day is a reminder of the importance of accessibility and independence for people who are blind or visually impaired.

This day spreads awareness about braille and other accessible forms of communication.

World Day of War Orphans:

The World Day of War Orphans is observed on January 6 every year.

The day aims to raise awareness about children who have been orphaned due to wars.

The objective of the day is to voice out the predicament of war orphans and highlight the emotional, social, and physical challenges children face while growing up.

Awards

Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism awards:

Hindi (Print): Anand Choudhary, Dainik Bhaskar

Hindi (Broadcast): Sushil Kumar Mohapatra, NDTV India

Regional Languages (Print): Aniket Vasant Sathe, Loksatta

Regional Languages (Broadcast): Sunil Baby, Media One TV

Uncovering India Invisible (Print): Shiv Sahay Singh, The Hindu

Uncovering India Invisible (Broadcast): Tridip K Mandal, The Quint

Business And Economic Journalism (Print): Sumant Banerji, Business Today.

Business And Economic Journalism (Broadcast): Ayushi Jindal, India Today TV

Reporting On Politics And Government (Digital): Dheeraj Mishra, The Wire

Reporting On Politics And Government (Broadcast): Seemi Pasha, Thewire.in

Sports journalism (Print): Nihal Koshie, The Indian Express

Sports journalism (Broadcast): Team NewsX, which included Aishvarya Jain, Siddharth Reg, Riyanka Choudhary and Prerna Sandilya

Investigative Reporting (Print): Kaunain Sheriff M, The Indian Express

Investigative Reporting (Broadcast): S Mahesh Kumar, Manorama News

Reporting On Arts, Culture And Entertainment: Uday Bhatia, Mint

Prakash Kardaley Memorial Award for Civic Journalism: Chaitanya Marpakwar, Mumbai Mirror

Photojournalism: Zishaan A Latif, The Caravan

Books (Non-Fiction): Arun Mohan Sukumar

PM excellence awards:

Recently, the Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh launched a web portal for the PM Excellence Award registration.

Sports

U-19 Asia Cup cricket:

India won the U-19 Asia Cup for a record eighth time defeating Sri Lanka in the finals.

World blitz title:

Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France claimed the World blitz chess title in Warsaw.

India's K. Humpy, missed a medal after losing the final round.

Books & Authors

Books	Authors	Description
Rebels against the Raj	Rama Chandra Guha	It tells the story of seven people who chose to struggle for a country other than their own: foreigners to India who across the late 19th to late 20th century arrived to join the freedom movement fighting for independence from British colonial rule.
What's Left of the Jungle: A Conservation Story.	Nitin Sekar	This story helps us understand both why some of the tropics' most crowded landscapes still host the world's most stunning wildlife - and what we might need to do to keep it that way.