

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – JANUARY 3, 2019

TAMIL NADU

- **Tamil Nadu Government – announces a Pongal gift of Rs 1000 to every family in the state with a Ration card**



- ✓ Nearly 2 crore ration card holders in the state will benefit from the government's announcement
- ✓ It will be offered in all the districts except Thiruvarur, where the model code of conduct is in force for January 28 by-elections
- **Minister of Health, C Vijayabaskar – inaugurates a new yoga and naturopathy center - at the Omandurar Government Multi-Specialty Hospital, Chennai**
- ✓ The new center is aimed at treating ailments like blood pressure, joint pain, insomnia, diabetes, sinusitis and asthma through natural methods such as yoga and naturopathy

- **Greater Chennai Corporation – to replace all streetlights in Chennai to LEDs by the end of January 2019**
- ✓ The project is being carried out at a cost of Rs 140 crore covering most of the core city areas and some of the added areas
- ✓ The move had already reduced the electricity charges every month to Rs 4.5 crore from around Rs 6.58 crore in 2015

STATES

- **West Bengal – launches ‘Krishak Bandhu’ scheme for the farmers in the state**



- ✓ It has two sub-schemes – Krishak Bandhu 1 and Krishak Bandhu 2
- ✓ Krishak Bandhu 1
 - ✓ The government pays a life insurance cover of Rs 2,00,000 in case of death, irrespective of the cause, of a farmer aged between 18 and 60 years
- ✓ Krishak Bandhu 2
 - ✓ The government will give a yearly financial assistance of Rs 5,000 per acre in 2 installments – one during kharif and another during rabi – for a single crop
- ✓ The registration of farmers under this scheme will start February onwards while the benefits will accrue from January 1, 2019
- ✓ Both the schemes will be implemented by the Agriculture department of the state
- ✓ It will help about 72 lakh farmers in the state
- ✓ The scheme is similar to the Telangana government’s flagship ‘Rythu Bandhu’ in providing financial assistance to farmers

NATIONAL

- **Parivesh, a web-based single window system – to be rolled out in all the states by January 15 – to provide ‘quick and fast’ environmental clearances for industries**



- ✓ Parivesh - Pro-Active and Responsive facilitation by Interactive, Virtuous and Environmental Single-window Hub
 - ✓ It is an automated system for submission, clearance and monitoring of the proposals for seeking Environment, Forest, Wildlife and CRZ Clearances from various authorities
 - ✓ This integrated environmental management system has already been implemented at the Central level
 - ✓ It has been launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in August 2018 on World Bio fuel Day
- **Union Cabinet – approves the merger of Bank of Baroda, Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank on January 2, 2019**



- ✓ The amalgamated entity will come into effect from April 1, 2019
 - ✓ It will be the country's 2nd largest Public Sector Bank and India's 3rd largest bank (after SBI and ICICI) - with a total business of more than Rs 14.82 lakh crore
 - ✓ Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank are the Transferor Banks (transfers the asset) and the Bank of Baroda is the Transferee Bank (receives the assets)
 - ✓ The merger has been proposed earlier by the Union Finance Ministry on September 17, 2018
 - ✓ Post this merger, the number of PSU banks will be 19 in the country
 - ✓ The amalgamation would be carried out under Alternative Mechanism
 - ✓ The Alternative Mechanism is headed by Arun Jaitley, Finance Minister with 2 other members Piyush Goyal, Railway Minister and Nirmala Sitharaman, Defence Minister
- **Union Cabinet – approves restructuring of existing National Health Agency as 'National Health Authority' – on January 2, 2019**
- ✓ The restructuring has been done for better implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) scheme
 - ✓ The Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, launched by PM Narendra Modi from Jharkhand on September 23, 2018, provides free coverage of up to Rs 5 lakh per family per year for pre and post-hospitalisation expenses
 - ✓ The scheme is available for 10.74 crore deprived families and about 50 crore beneficiaries

INTERNATIONAL

- **Donald Trump, President of United States – signs Asia Reassurance Initiative Act 2018 (ARIA)**



- ✓ The act will authorize \$1.5 billion in spending for a range of U.S. programs in East and Southeast Asia
 - ✓ It aims to counter the growing influence of China in the region and lays platform for US leadership in Asia
 - ✓ It draws attention to U.S. relations with China, India, the 10 member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and Northeast Asian allies - Japan and South Korea
 - ✓ The ARIA devotes considerable energy to reasserting U.S. support for Taiwan and also addresses U.S. policy toward North Korea
- **Belgium, Dominican Republic, Germany, Indonesia and South Africa – elected as the 5 new ‘Non-Permanent Members’ of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**



- ✓ They will be in charge for a two-year term in the Council with effect from January 1, 2019
- ✓ They retain the seats vacated by Bolivia, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands and Sweden on December 31, 2018 – after serving their two year term
- ✓ Dominican Republic has been elected in the Security Council for the very first time
- ✓ Constituents of UN Security Council
- ✓ Total Members – 15
- ✓ Permanent members -5 - Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States
- ✓ Non-permanent members – 10 - elected by the UN General Assembly (2 year term)
- ✓ Current Non-permanent members – 5 - Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Kuwait, Peru and Poland
- ✓ Regional Representation of Non-permanent members
 - ✓ African and Asian countries – 5
 - ✓ Latin American and Caribbean countries – 2
 - ✓ Western European and other countries - 2
 - ✓ Eastern European countries – 1
- ✓ Every year, the General Assembly elects 5 non-permanent members

COMMITTEES

- **RBI - constitutes an 8-member expert Committee on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) - under the chairmanship of U.K. Sinha, former Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)**



- ✓ The committee is mandated to propose long term solutions - for the economic and financial sustainability of the MSME sector - by the end of June 2019
- **Union Cabinet – approves the setting up of high-level committee to implement Clause 6 of Assam Accord and measures envisaged in the Memorandum of Settlement, 2003 and other issues related to the Bodo community**



- ✓ The constitution of the committee will be announced within the next 3 days
- ✓ Assam Accord was signed on August 15, 1985 following the Assam agitation of 1979-1985
- ✓ Clause 6 of Assam Accord deals with the safeguarding of interests of ethnic Assamese
- ✓ The Bodo Accord was signed in 2003 that resulted in the establishment of a Bodoland Territorial Council under Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India
- ✓ The cabinet also approved the establishment of a Bodo Museum and the naming of a Superfast Train passing through the Bodoland Territorial council as ARONAI Express

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **Scientists from Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati - have developed a 'Paper kit' to test the freshness of milk and determine the level of pasteurization of milk**



- ✓ The 'Paper kit' will also ensure that the milk is consumed before it turns sour - through a Smartphone App
- ✓ Using the kit, it takes just 15 minutes to detect 'raw' milk from pasteurized milk
- ✓ A milk enzyme, Alkaline Phosphatase (ALP), is considered to be an indicator of milk quality
- ✓ The scientists have used ordinary filter paper to prepare the detector, which was impregnated with chemical probes that preferentially react with ALP resulting in colour change
- ✓ At present, the fabrication of the kit in the lab costs Rs 80 to Rs 125

APPOINTMENTS

- **Saurabh Kumar - has been appointed as the Director General of Ordnance Factories (DGOF) and chairman of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) in Kolkata**



- ✓ He replaces P K Shrivastava, who retired recently
- ✓ An expert in manufacture of ordnance, he was on deputation to the Ministry of Defence at Delhi as the Director of Planning and Coordination from 2002 to 2009
- ✓ Kumar was also instrumental in setting up 2 new green-field Ordnance Factories at Nalanda and Korwa in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh respectively

- ✓ Kumar served as General Manager of the Engine Factory at Avadi, where he was involved in handing over of fully indigenous engines of T-90 'Bhishma' and T-72 'Ajeya' tanks to the Ministry of Defence in July 2018
 - ✓ He also held the position of General Manager of Ordnance Factory Ambajhari, near Nagpur in Maharashtra, where he spearheaded the modernisation programme leading to the successful production of 'Pinaka' rockets
 - ✓ Kumar is currently a member of the Ordnance Factory Board and is looking after Ammunition and Explosive group of factories
- **K P George, an Indian-American – was sworn in as the Judge of Fort Bend County in United States**



- ✓ Thus, he becomes the first person from the Indian community to hold the position at one of the diverse county in US
- ✓ Fort Bend is now the most diverse county in Texas, with 35% Anglos, 24% Hispanics, 21% Asians and others and 20% African-Americans
- ✓ George hails from Kerala's Kakkodu city

AWARDS

- **Dhruv Manoj, a 12-year-old Indian-origin student from Singapore - has bagged two gold medals at the World Memory Championship held in Hong Kong (Dec 20-22)**



- ✓ He won the title in the 'names and faces' and 'random words' categories, beating 56 other contestants in the 'kid's category' at the event
- ✓ Dhruv, who has just finished primary school, memorised more than seven decks of shuffled cards in an hour, 1,155 binary numbers in 30 minutes and 87 names and faces in 15 minutes
- ✓ He has mastered the Roman memory technique of creating 'memory palaces', which associates the objects to be memorised with scenes at familiar locations, such as one's house

OBITUARY

➤ Ramakant Achrekar, renowned Cricket Coach (87 years)



- ✓ Achrekar was the Childhood coach of Sachin Tendulkar, India's greatest Cricketer
- ✓ He was coached by Achrekar at the Shivaji Park, Mumbai
- ✓ Apart from Tendulkar, he had coached numerous cricketers, which includes the likes of Ajit Agarkar, Chandrakant Pandit, Vinod Kambli, Pravin Amre, Sameer Dighe, Lalchand Rajput, Paras Mhambrey, Ramesh Powar and Balwinder Singh Sandhu
- ✓ He had also been a selector for the Mumbai cricket team
- ✓ In 1990, he was honoured with Dronacharya Award for his services to cricket coaching
- ✓ In 2010, he was conferred with Padma Shri on 7 April by the then Indian President Pratibha Patil

