

February - 26

TNPSC BITS

- ❖ The 94-year-old Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad resigned over political issues.
 - Recently India slowly stopped importing Palm oil from Malaysia. Alternately, India started to import Palm oil from Bangladesh.

TAMIL NADU

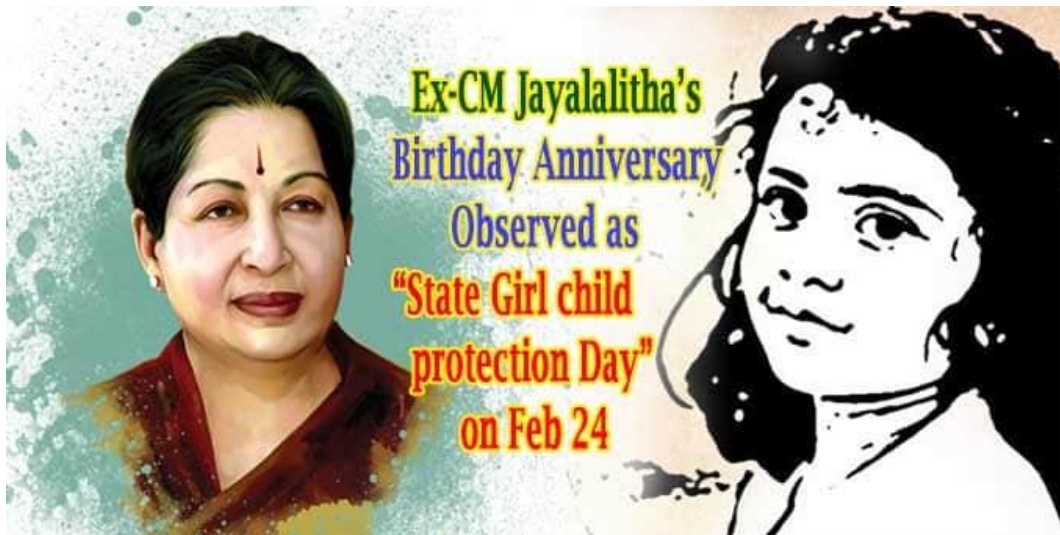
Tamil Nadu Protected Agricultural Zone Development Bill, 2020

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on February 20th introduced a bill in the state legislative assembly to declare the Cauvery Delta region in the state as a Protected Special Agriculture Zone.
- ❖ The Bill received the assent of the State Governor Banwarilal Purohit within 24 hours of its passage (On February 21st) by the State Assembly.
- ❖ The bill declares the Cauvery delta region a Protected Special Agriculture Zone (PSAZ).
- ❖ The proposed PSAZ would comprise of Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam districts and five blocks each in Cuddalore and Pudukkottai districts.
- ❖ However, the Bill excluded from its ambit Tiruchi, Ariyalur and Karur districts, which geographically fall within the Delta region.
- ❖ The bill states that the government may add or omit any areas in the future.
- ❖ The bill denies permission to any new chemical processing plants or hydrocarbon exploration in this region in the future.
- ❖ The bill would not affect infrastructure developments in the protected agricultural zone such as harbour, pipelines, road, telecommunications, power, water supply and other utilities.
- ❖ The government has identified zinc smelter, iron ore process plants, copper smelter, aluminium smelter, tannery, and ship breaking industries among others as industries that adversely affect agriculture developments in the PSAZ.
- ❖ The Bill also sought to establish a 30-member Tamil Nadu Protected Agricultural Zone Authority headed by the Chief Minister to advise the government on various measures to protect and improve farming activities to increase farm production and farm productivity to serve the interest of farmers.

- ❖ The State government has cancelled the notification issued on July 19, 2017 declaring 45 villages of Nagapattinam and Cuddalore districts as a long planning area for constitution of Petroleum, Chemicals and Petrochemicals Investment Region (PCPIR).

Girl Child Protection Day

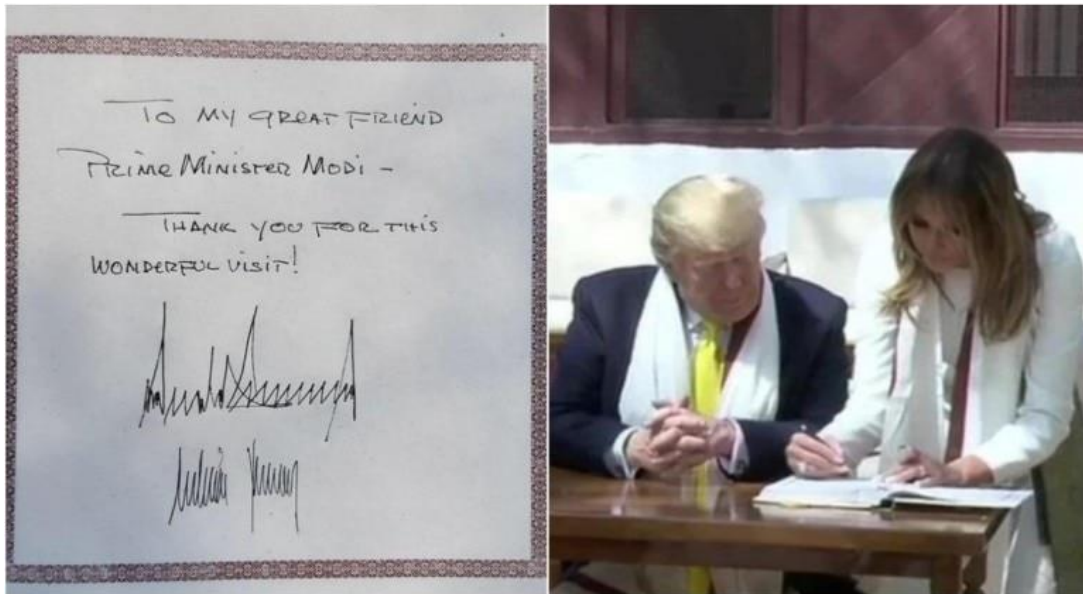
- ❖ The birth anniversary of former Chief Minister Jayalalithaa's birth anniversary will be observed as 'Girl Child Protection Day' on February 24th.
- ❖ In this regard, the state government has announced the following measures.
- ❖ When the orphan girl residing in government-run homes completes 21 years of age, the state government will deposit ₹2 lakh in the bank in their name.
- ❖ The state Government also increased the monthly amount paid to the foster parents of the girls to ₹4,000 from ₹2,000.
- ❖ The govt. announced employment of destitute children from government homes in social welfare, social justice, ICDS departments, the categories of C and D, which would not fall in the purview of the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission.
- ❖ A scheme for girls who face difficulties after leaving government-run homes on completion of 18 years of age was announced.
- ❖ It also announced a 50 % subsidy for 'ulemas' (Muslim scholars who are recognized as having specialist knowledge of Islamic sacred law) to purchase a new two-wheeler and increase their pension to Rs 3,000.



NATIONAL

Trump Visit

- ❖ On February 24, 2020, the US President Donald Trump visited India.
- ❖ Trump later visited Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad and Taj Mahal.
- ❖ He did not mention anything about Mahatma Gandhi in the visitors' book.
- ❖ The leaders then addressed a large gathering at Motera stadium or Sardar Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad, India.
- ❖ As of 2020, it is the largest cricket stadium in the world
- ❖ India celebrated the visit of the US President by naming the event as “Namaste Trump”.



- ❖ India and US will sign two defence deals for helicopters.
- ❖ Around 24 MH-60R helicopters are to be signed for Indian Navy and six AH-64E helicopters are to be signed for Apache helicopters.
- ❖ Donald Trump became the seventh US president ever to travel to India and the first one to land in Ahmedabad.
- ❖ And he is only second White House occupant to travel to India in their first term.
- ❖ Barack Obama was the first U.S. president to do so in 2010.
- ❖ Dwight D Eisenhower was the first US President to visit India in 1959.
- ❖ Richard Nixon travelled to India in 1969 and Jimmy Carter in 1978.
- ❖ Bill Clinton visited India in 2000 and George W Bush in 2006.
- ❖ Obama visited India twice in 2010 and 2015.

Deal done

India and the U.S. concluded agreements for the purchase of 24 MH-60R Seahawk and six AH-64E attack helicopters


MH-60R SEAHAWK HELICOPTERS

- The procurement is through the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) route of the U.S. government and is worth **\$2.12 bn**
- MH-60R is the mainstay of the U.S. Navy's Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) capability
- These helicopters are being procured as replacement for 15 Sea King Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) helicopters de-inducted in 1991 and one Sea King 42B MRH lost in an accident. The current MRHs in service, Sea King 42Bs, were inducted in the 1980s and are in need of replacement
- They are capable of carrying out anti-ship, anti-submarine, electronic warfare, net-centric over-the-horizon offensive and defensive roles

APACHE

- These will be operated by the Army and deployed with its strike Corps in the western sector
- In September 2015, India contracted 22 AH-64E attack helicopters at a cost of **₹13,951.57 crore** for the IAF and the entire fleet will be in service in 2020
- In August 2017, the government approved the procurement of six Apaches under the optional clause for the Army
- On June 12, 2018, the Defence Security Cooperation Agency notified the U.S. Congress of the possible sale to India
- Apache is a heavy attack helicopter and the most advanced craft currently in service globally
- India is the 16th nation to select the Apache and the AH-64E is its most advanced variant, Boeing said
- The Apache is the most advanced multi-role heavy attack helicopter in the world

The six Apaches and associated equipment will cost about **\$800 million**



ECONOMY

Temperature controlled Terminal

- ❖ The Mumbai airport has recently launched the world largest temperature-controlled facility to store agro and pharma products.
- ❖ The “Export Cold Zone” launched is capable of holding more than 700 tonnes of cargo.
- ❖ Mumbai Airport is one of the few airports in the world, first in the country and third in Asia to obtain IATA CEIV PHARMA accreditation.
- ❖ It is an accreditation provided by International Air Transport Association.
- ❖ The Centre of Excellence for Independent Validators in Pharmaceuticals Logistics (CEIV Pharma) was launched by IATA in order to enhance the supply chain of pharma products all over the world.

ENVIRONMENT

Craspedotropis gretathunbergae

- ❖ It is a new species of land snail discovered recently at Brunei.
- ❖ It is named in honour of Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg.
- ❖ The new species comes from tropical rainforests and is sensitive to drought and extreme temperatures.



Pakke tiger reserve

- ❖ Arunachal Pradesh State government is planning to build a highway through the Pakke Tiger Reserve (PTR) in East Kameng district.
- ❖ Pakke Tiger Reserve is also known as Pakhui Tiger Reserve.
- ❖ This Tiger Reserve has won India Biodiversity Award 2016 in the category of 'Conservation of threatened species' for its Hornbill Nest Adoption Programme.

Cheetah Reintroduction Project

- ❖ On January 28, 2020, the Supreme Court of India cleared way for the reintroduction of Cheetah Project.
- ❖ It is expected that the National Tiger Conservation Authority will reintroduce it in Kuno-Palpur Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ Cheetah is the only flagship species to become extinct in India.
- ❖ The IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Red List has categorized Cheetah as Vulnerable.
- ❖ Cheetah has become extinct in India mainly because of hunting.
- ❖ The last Cheetah was shot in Chhattisgarh in 1947.



STATES

Malai Mahadeshwara Wildlife Sanctuary

- ❖ The Karnataka state government has proposed to notify the Malai Mahadeshwara Wildlife Sanctuary in Chamarajanagar district as a tiger reserve.
- ❖ The approval from the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) is expected.

In Karnataka

- ❖ Once notified, Chamarajanagar district will have the rare distinction in the country of having three tiger reserves.
- ❖ It already has Bandipur and Biligiri Ranganatha Temple (BRT) Tiger Reserve within its territorial limits.
- ❖ Also, with this, Karnataka will have six tiger reserves, the others being Nagarahole, Bhadra, and Anshi-Dandeli, apart from Bandipur and BRT Tiger Reserves.

PERSONALITIES, AWARDS, AND EVENTS

SERB Women Excellence Award - 2020

- ❖ Dr Niti Kumar, Senior Scientist from Division of Molecular Parasitology and Immunology, CSIR-CDRI, Lucknow has received this award.
- ❖ This award is given to women scientist below 40 years of age who have received recognition from national academies.

