

January - 17

TNPSC BITS

- ❖ Cognizant has appointed former Infosys president Ravi Kumar S as its new Chief Executive Officer.
- ❖ US space agency NASA has appointed Indian-American aerospace expert AC Charania as its new Chief Technologist.

TAMIL NADU

Sethusamudram canal project



- ❖ Tamil Nadu Assembly passed a resolution urging the Union government to take up the shelved Sethusamudram project.
- ❖ The aim is to create a sea link between the western and eastern coasts of India so that ships can avoid going around Sri Lanka.
- ❖ This is seen to help maritime trade, akin to Panama and Suez canals.
- ❖ First it was conceived in 1860 by the British.
- ❖ Prime Minister Manmohan Singh launched the project on July 2, 2005.
- ❖ Religious groups and environmentalists have vehemently opposed the project.
- ❖ The project has been stalled since 2007 following a legal dispute involving the Government and the opposition party.
- ❖ Ram Sethu is a chain of limestone shoals between Rameshwaram island off India's southeast and Mannar island off Sri Lanka's northwest.

- ❖ According to Hindu mythology, this bridge was constructed by Hanuman and his army to help Lord Shriram.
- ❖ Construction of the canal will cause considerable damage to the marine ecosystem of Pak Bay and Gulf of Mannar.
- ❖ Meteorological researchers view the region as highly vulnerable due to unpredictable cyclones.

Jallikattu celebrations



- ❖ 'Jallikattu' also known as 'Eru Thazhuvuthal' and 'Manjuvirattu' held in Palamedu of Madurai district.
- ❖ Jallikattu was practiced in Tamil Nadu as a part of Pongal celebrations on the day of Mattu Pongal.
- ❖ The sport is held in various locations across the state, including Avaniyapuram, Palamedu, and Alanganallur.
- ❖ The sport is a traditional way of preserving pure breed native bulls for the peasant community.
- ❖ Except in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, the sport is banned in other states such as Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra.
- ❖ In Karnataka Jallikattu is called Kambala.

NATIONAL

Discretionary Haj Quota for Pilgrims

- ❖ The Indian government has done away with the discretionary Haj quota for pilgrims.

- ❖ The Haj pilgrimage is an annual Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia.
- ❖ Saudi Arabia allots country-wise quotas which determine the total number of pilgrims who can make a journey from a particular country.
- ❖ The “Government discretionary quota” is further divided in two.
- ❖ 200 seats are with the Haj Committee itself and 300 are with people holding important offices at the Centre.
- ❖ These include, 100 with the President, 75 with the Prime Minister, 75 with the Vice President, 50 with the Minister of Minority Affairs.
- ❖ This quota has now been abolished with these seats being added back to the general pool.
- ❖ India signed the Haj 2023 bilateral agreement with Saudi Arabia.
- ❖ According to the agreement, a total of 1,75,025 Indian Haj pilgrims will be able to perform Haj.
- ❖ It is reportedly the highest in history.

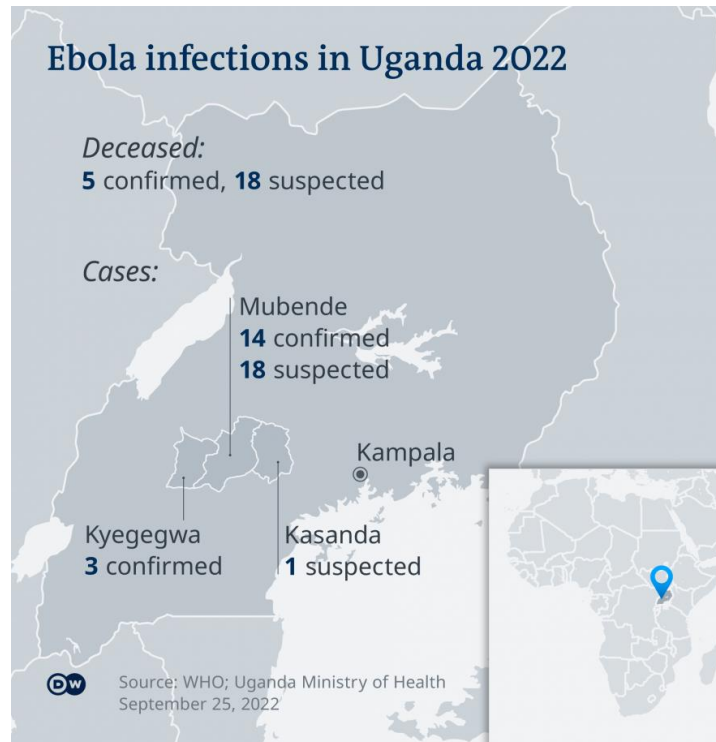


INTERNATIONAL

Ending Ebola Virus Outbreak

- ❖ WHO announced that Uganda had successfully declared the end of the Ebola disease outbreak caused by Sudan ebolavirus.
- ❖ The first case was confirmed in central Mubende district on September 20, 2022.
- ❖ This was Uganda’s first Sudan Ebola Virus outbreak in a decade and its fifth overall.

- ❖ Ebola virus disease is a rare and deadly disease caused by infection with one of the Ebola viruses' strains.
- ❖ The virus was first identified in 1976 near the Ebola River.
- ❖ Uganda's outbreak was caused by the Sudan Ebola virus.
- ❖ It is one of six species of the Ebola virus and for which there is currently no confirmed vaccine.



ENVIRONMENT

Neelakurinji under Protected Species

- ❖ The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF) has listed Neelakurinji (*Strobilanthes kunthiana*) under Schedule III of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, including it on the list of protected plants.
- ❖ Those who uproot or destroy the plant will invite a fine of ₹25,000 and three-years' imprisonment.
- ❖ The cultivation of Neelakurinji and its possession is not allowed, according to the order.
- ❖ In the Western Ghats region, nearly 70 varieties of Neelakurinji plants have been identified.

- ❖ The most popular Neelakurinji is *Strobilanthes kunthiana* which blooms once in 12 years.
- ❖ However, some other rare varieties of Neelakurnji are also found in the Western Ghats region.



STATES

Lohri Harvest Festival



- ❖ Lohri is a popular Indian festival that is celebrated to mark the beginning of the harvest season for winter crops.
- ❖ The festival is also popular in other parts of the country such as Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Jammu.
- ❖ Lohri festival is traditionally associated with the harvest of rabi crops.
- ❖ The origin of the festival can be traced back from the tale of Dulla Bhatti.

- ❖ He was a famous legendary hero of Punjab and led a rebellion against Mughal emperor Akbar.

IMPORTANT DAYS

7th Armed Forces Veterans Day - January 14

- ❖ This day is dedicated to honouring the sacrifices and service of veterans who have served in the country's armed forces.
- ❖ The celebration of this day began in 2017.
- ❖ The origins of this day can be traced back to Armistice Day, which is celebrated on November 11 all over the world.
- ❖ The first Armistice Day was held on November 11, 1919.
- ❖ It aims to commemorate the end of World War I and to honour the brave soldiers who fought in the war.
- ❖ In India, the day was first marked through a resolution passed by the Congress in 1926.
- ❖ In 2017, Armistice Day was renamed Armed Forces Veterans Day in India.



75th Indian Army Day - January 15

- ❖ It aims to commemorate the achievements of the first Indian Commander in Chief of the Indian Army General (Field Marshal) K.M. Cariappa.
- ❖ On this day, Cariappa, took over the command of the Indian Army from General Sir FRR Bucher, the last British Commander-in-Chief in 1949.



- ❖ He became the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of Independent India.
- ❖ The Army Day is celebrated every year to honour Cariappa and the defence forces.

