

January – 09

TNPSC BITS

- ❖ The 42nd edition of the Chennai Book Fair, organised by the Booksellers and Publishers Association of South India (BAPASI), started on January 4 up to 20 on the YMCA grounds in Nandanam in Chennai.
- ❖ Egypt has recently opened the West Asia's largest cathedral in its New Administrative Capital, 45 kms away from its capital, Cairo.
- ❖ In a bid to make Islam more compatible with Socialism, Beijing has passed a law to "implement measures to Sinicize" Islam within the next five years.
- ❖ The Civil Aviation Security Head and senior IPS officer Kumar Rajesh Chandra was appointed as the Director General of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) up to 31st December 2021 for a tenure of around 2 years.
 - He will succeed SS Deswal, chief of Indo-Tibetan Border Police.

TAMIL NADU

Minister P Balakrishna Reddy Convicted

- ❖ A special court sentenced P Balakrishna Reddy to 3 years' imprisonment & imposed a fine of Rs 10000 for damaging buses with stones in 1998.
- ❖ Following the conviction, Reddy, the Minister for Youth Welfare and Sports Development, submitted his resignation from the ministry and it was accepted.
- ❖ Reddy, who represents Hosur constituency in the state assembly, is the first minister to have been convicted by the special court.
- ❖ The portfolio held by him has been allocated to School education minister Thiru KA Sengottaiyan.

Under Section 8(3) of the RPA, a person convicted of any offence and sentenced to imprisonment for not less than 2 years shall be disqualified for that period and a further 6 years after release.



Tamilnadu's 33rd district

- ❖ Tamil Nadu CM announced the formation of a new district Kallakurichi by bifurcating Villupuram district on 08th January.
- ❖ It is one of the large districts in the State.
- ❖ Kallakurichi will be the headquarters of the new district and its creation has increased the number of districts in Tamil Nadu to 33.
- ❖ The district will have four Assembly constituencies and one parliamentary constituency.
- ❖ Tiruppur was the last district to be formed in Tamil Nadu before this announcement in 2009.

NATIONAL

Alok Verma as CBI Chief again

- ❖ The Supreme Court, as per orders penned by CJI Ranjan Gogoi, reinstated the CBI Director Alok Kumar Verma without giving him any major policy decision making powers.
- ❖ This was done against the October 23, 2018 orders which had earlier divested him of his powers completely as per the corruption charges brought against him.
- ❖ After the successful conduct of the CVC inquiry against those charges, further steps have to be taken against him by the high-powered committee which selects and appoints the CBI Director.
- ❖ The high-powered committee will comprise of the Prime Minister, Chief Justice of India and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha.

Defence India Startup Challenge

- ❖ The Defence India Startup Challenge has been launched by the Defence Innovation Organization.
- ❖ It aims to boost innovations under the Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) scheme.
- ❖ The initiative has been launched with support from the Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defense, Atal Innovation Mission and NITI Aayog.



Issuance of FASTags through petroleum retail outlets

- ❖ The Indian Highways Management Company Ltd. (IHMCL), a company promoted by NHAI (National Highways Authority India), has signed MOUs with state-run Oil Marketing Companies (IOCL, BPCL, and HPCL).
- ❖ It will ensure availability of FASTags at petroleum outlets across India.
- ❖ IHMCL had launched the national electronic toll collection program (NETC) under the brand name “FASTag” in April 2016.

Personal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2018

- ❖ The Lok Sabha has passed the Personal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2018.
- ❖ The bill seeks to remove leprosy as a ground for divorce in five personal laws –
 - Hindu Marriage Act
 - Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act
 - Divorce Act (for Christians)
 - Special Marriage Act
 - Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act.

Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019

- ❖ ‘Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019’ has been passed in the Lok Sabha on January 8, 2019.
- ❖ The bill seeks to provide Indian citizenship to non-Muslims from Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- ❖ The bill was first introduced in Parliament in 2016 and was examined later by the Joint Parliamentary Committee.
- ❖ It enables grant of Indian nationality to people from minority communities from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan after 6 years of residence in India instead of 12 even if they don’t possess any proper document.
- ❖ It also nullifies the 1985 Assam Accord, under which any foreign national, irrespective of religion, who had entered the state after March 25, 1971, should be deported.



ECONOMY

5-member panel to boost digital payments

- ❖ The RBI constituted a 5-member high-level committee to suggest measures to strengthen the safety and security of digital payments in the country.
- ❖ The high-level committee will be headed under the Aadhaar architect Nandan Nilekani.
- ❖ The decision aims to encourage digitisation of payments and enhance financial inclusion through digitisation.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

New planet - HD 21749b

- ❖ NASA's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) has discovered a planet named HD21749b orbiting around the star HD 21749.
- ❖ The planet lies about 53 light years from earth in the faint constellation reticulum.



- ❖ HD 21749b completes one orbit of its host star, which is nearly as bright as our sun, every 36 earth days.
- ❖ It is a “sub Neptune”, around three times bigger than earth and 23 times more massive than earth, which means it’s likely gaseous rather than rocky.



PERSONALITIES, AWARDS AND EVENTS

First female chief economist of IMF

- ❖ Mysore-born Gita Gopinath joined the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as its 11th chief economist, thus becoming the first woman to occupy the top IMF post.
- ❖ She succeeded Maurice (Maury) Obstfeld who retired on December 31, 2018.



- ❖ The Chief Economist is also the Director of the Fund's Research Department.

First Indian to Head Global Solar Council, USA

- ❖ The chairman of National Solar Energy Federation of India (NSEFI), Pranav R Mehta, has taken over as the President of Global Solar Council (GSC).
- ❖ He is dubbed as the Solar Man of India.
- ❖ He has been recently conferred with the 'Visionary Disruptor Award' by Solar Future Today at the side-lines of the World Future Energy Summit in Abu Dhabi.

MISCELLANEOUS

Khelo India Youth Games - 2nd edition

- ❖ Maharashtra is going to host the 2nd edition of the Khelo India Youth Games which includes competitions in 18 different disciplines at Balewadi Sports Complex in Pune.



- ❖ Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG) is a part Khelo India which is the revamped national programme for development of sports in India.

Kumbh JioPhone application

- ❖ Reliance Jio Infocomm launched the Kumbh JioPhone application.
- ❖ This is specially designed for millions of pilgrims who will congregate during this year's Ardh Kumbh Mela at Prayagraj.
- ❖ The new app has a feature called 'Khoya Paya' that will help users stay close to near and dear ones by finding their exact location.
