

February – 17

TNPSC BITS

- ❖ Senior bureaucrat Pramod Chandra Mody has been appointed as chairman of Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), a top policy making body for income tax department.
- ❖ Reliance Industries chairman Mukesh Ambani and also richest person in Asia, topped the Hurun India Philanthropy list with donation amount of 437 crores.
- ❖ International Paralympics Committee (IPC) lifted the ban on Russian Para athletes under certain conditions, which was active since August 2016.

TAMIL NADU

Awards and Recognition received by Tamil Nadu

- ❖ India Today Magazine presented 4 Awards to TN Government for
 - Overall Best Performing State in all sectors,
 - Best State in maintenance of Law and Order,
 - Best performing State in Tourism and
 - Most improved State in Law and Order.
- ❖ Prestigious Krishi Karman award, the highest award given by Government of India, bagged 4 times in the past 5 years.
- ❖ “Public Affairs Centre”, Bengaluru in their report for 2018 has ranked Tamil Nadu 2nd in good governance, on the basis of socio-economic growth.
- ❖ TN ranked as the 2nd biggest economy in India due to rich human resources, strong infrastructure facilitates, surplus power and natural resources.
- ❖ TN ranked first on the basis of number of factories and number of employees.
- ❖ TN ranked as the 2nd ideal State for industrial investment in 2018 in the survey conducted by National Economic Utility Research Bureau.
- ❖ Periyakulam Police Station selected as the 8th best Police Station in India.
- ❖ Five Awards from Central Government for effective implementation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme.
- ❖ Best Practice Award for end to end computerisation of Public Distribution System.

- ❖ Government of India Award for best infrastructure facilities in Non-conventional Energy Sector.
- ❖ Best State Award consecutively for the 4th year from the Government of India for implementation of Organ Transplantation from deceased persons.
- ❖ 11 Awards to Tamil Nadu Transport Corporations from Government of India for their best performance.
- ❖ National and International Awards to Coimbatore, Erode, Madurai and Tiruchirappalli Corporations for good governance.
- ❖ Skoch Platinum Award for Solid Waste Management.
- ❖ Government of India Award to TWAD Board for Integrated Management Information System.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu ranked first in the country for effective implementation of “Protech girl children and educated girl children” programme.

NATIONAL

Vande Bharat Express

- ❖ Vande Bharat Express, also known as Train 18, is India’s first semi-high-speed train.
- ❖ Its inaugural trip was flagged off by Prime Minister at New Delhi on 15 February 2019.





- ❖ The centrally air-conditioned luxury train will connect New Delhi to Varanasi, a distance of more than 750 km at a speed of 130 kmph, completing the journey in around eight hours.
- ❖ It will make stops at Kanpur and Allahabad or Prayagraj.

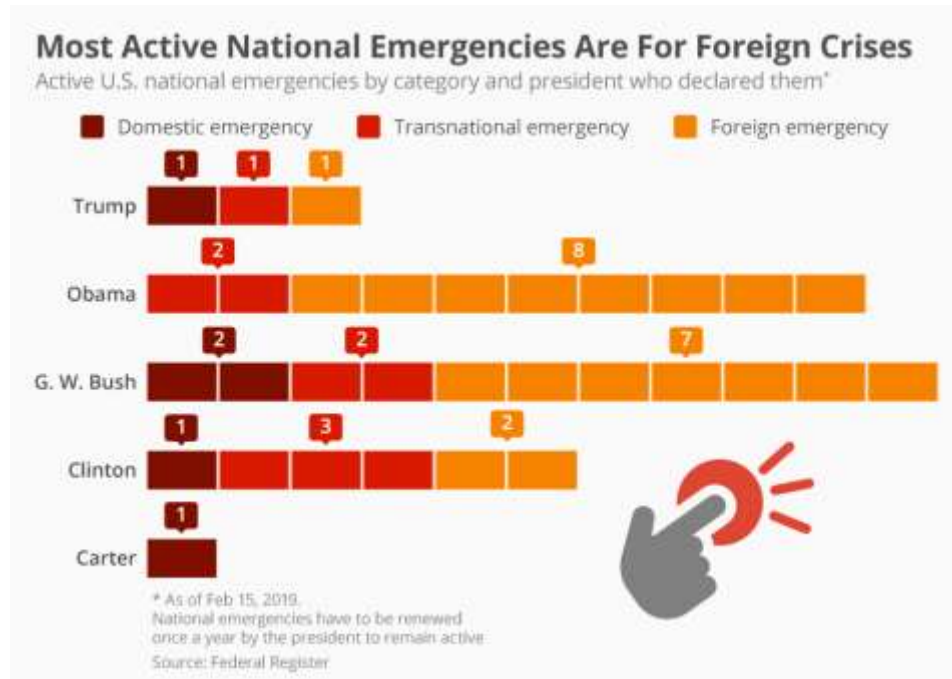
Contract with Dassault Aviation

- ❖ The Directorate of Employment and Training has entered into a three-year contract with French aircraft manufacturer Dassault Aviation.
- ❖ It has selected three Industrial Training Institutes in the country, of which two are in Tamil Nadu to train students in aeronautical structure and equipment fitter trade.
- ❖ Two institutes selected in Tamil Nadu are:
 - National Skill Training Institute in Chennai run by the Union government,
 - The state run ITI in Coimbatore.
- ❖ The third institute selected for this programme is in Nagpur, Maharashtra.

INTERNATIONAL

National emergency in USA

- ❖ U.S. President Donald Trump declared a national emergency to fulfil his pledge to construct a wall along the U.S.- Mexico border on 15 February 2019.
- ❖ Now he can access billions of dollars that Congress refused to give him to build a wall on the border of Mexico.
- ❖ Declaring a national emergency gives a U.S. president special powers, like suspending certain laws, authorizing military projects single-handedly and re-allocating defence funds.
- ❖ Previously, lawmakers voted to fund in the bill for border barriers, about \$1.4 billion, is far below the \$5.7 billion Mr. Trump insisted.
- ❖ Trump's declaration was unprecedented in that no previous declaration involved circumventing Congress to spend money it had not authorized.
- ❖ It is Trump's third in overall emergency as well as first in Domestic Category.



Science and Technology

Expiry of Opportunity rover's mission

- ❖ NASA announced the end of its Opportunity rover's mission 15 years after its arrival on Mars.
- ❖ This decision to end the mission was made after all the efforts to restore contact with the Opportunity Mars rover didn't yield desired results.



- ❖ Opportunity last contacted Earth in early June as “an historic” global dust storm reached its location on Mars.

About the Mission

- ❖ Opportunity was the second of the twin Mars Exploration Rovers to land on Mars in January 2004.
- ❖ Opportunity landed 90 days after its twin rover Spirit landed.
- ❖ Spirit landed at Gusev Crater and Opportunity landed on the opposite side of Mars at Meridiani Planum.
- ❖ NASA expected 90-day lifetimes for the rovers. Both Opportunity and Spirit far exceeded their expected lifetime.

ENVIRONMENT

World Sustainable Development Summit 2019

- ❖ World Sustainable Development Summit 2019 was inaugurated by the Vice President of India in New Delhi.
- ❖ It was organized by The Energy and Resources Institute – TERI.



- ❖ It is an annual flagship event of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) and the sole summit on global issues taking place in the developing world.
- ❖ Theme of the 2019 edition of the Summit is 'Attaining the 2030 Agenda: Delivering on Our Promise'.



Small Grants Program (SGP)

- ❖ Workshop on Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) - Global Environment Facility, UNDP Small Grants Programme (SGP) was held recently in New Delhi.
- ❖ It was launched in 1992 with 33 participating countries.
- ❖ Small Grants Program (SGP) is implemented by UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) on behalf of the GEF (Global Environment Facility) partnership.
- ❖ It is specifically designed to mobilize bottom-up actions by empowering local civil society organizations, and poor and vulnerable communities, including women and Indigenous Peoples.
- ❖ It is functioning through a decentralized, national-level delivery mechanism.
- ❖ SGP finances community-led initiatives to address global environmental issues.

STATES

Rajasthan Backward Classes Amendment Bill- 2019

- ❖ Rajasthan government on introduced a Rajasthan Backward Classes Amendment Bill- 2019 in the assembly.
- ❖ It aims to give a five per cent quota in jobs and educational institutes to Gujjars and four other communities agitating for it.
- ❖ This bill seeks to increase the backward classes' reservation from the present 21 per cent to 26 per cent with five per cent reservation to Gujjars, Banjaras, Gadia Lohars, Raikas and Gadaria.
- ❖ The statement on the objective and reasons of the bill stated that the five castes are most backward and require five per cent separate reservation.
- ❖ With this Reservations in Rajasthan crosses the 50 % cap on reservations set by the Supreme Court.
- ❖ To avoid the possible legal tussle the Rajasthan Assembly passed a resolution and urged the Centre to incorporate it in the 9th schedule to ensure the reservation for these communities.

Above 50 percent

- ❖ Already Tamilnadu is providing 69 percent reservation.



- ❖ The Maharashtra state, which already had 52 percent reservation, had in November 2018 added another 16 percent for Marathas thus became the second highest state to the tune of 68 percent.
- ❖ Moreover Haryana, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh have also passed laws to provide reservation 67, 62, 55 respectively.

MISCELLANEOUS

Forbes's 30 Under 30 Europe List

- ❖ Forbes released the fourth annual edition of its “30 Under 30 Europe” list.
- ❖ It is featuring 300 young disruptors, visionaries and rising stars from across the region who are transforming industries and setting a new agenda.
- ❖ The list includes 30 honourees in each of the 10 categories, all aged under 30 years old.
- ❖ The 2019 list features a diverse set of Under 30 honourees, with women making up 36% of the list and 56 different countries represented.
- ❖ Among those featured on this year's list is Antoine Greizmann, French National Football Player;
