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Content

Polity & Governance

Specialised courts in the Union Territory of Puducherry

Why in news?
- **Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry**, in **consultation with the High Court of Judicature at Madras**, issued orders to **establish various specialised courts across the Union Territory of Puducherry**.
- A Court of Judicial Magistrate (**Mahila Court**) has been established in Puducherry District **to address cases concerning women**.

Key points:
- **Special courts have been designated to preside over cases involving members of parliament and members of the Puducherry legislative assembly**.
- These specialised courts will be functional after the **posting of judicial officers**.

About Specialised courts:
- **Legislative Authority**: The constitution of Special Courts and their functioning fall within the **domain of the State and Union Territory Governments**.
- **Consultation with High Courts**: The State and UT Governments set up such courts as per their need and resources, in consultation with the High Courts.

Tamil Nadu State Coastal Zone Management Authority (TNSCZMA)

Why in news?
- The **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** has **directed the Tamil Nadu State Coastal Zone Management Authority (TNSCZMA)** to **correct the 'incomplete' draft Coastal Zone Management Plans (CZMPs)**.
- The correction should incorporate **long-term housing plans for coastal communities as per the guidelines prescribed in the CRZ Notification, 2019**.

About Tamil Nadu State Coastal Zone Management Authority (TNSCZMA):
- The TNSCZMA is **responsible for enforcing and monitoring the Coastal Regulation**

Zone (CRZ) regulations.
- Its **primary objective is to protect and improve the coastal environment** and **promote sustainable development** along the **coastal areas of Tamil Nadu**.
- The **authority was established under** the provisions of the **Environment Protection Act, 1986**.
- **Responsibilities**:
  - Implementing the CRZ notifications.
  - Approving and regulating development activities within the coastal zones.
  - Ensuring the protection of the coastal environment including the conservation of coastal and marine biodiversity.

The Goondas Act 1982
Why in news?
- The **Tamil Nadu Prevention of Dangerous Activities of Bootleggers, Cyber Law Offenders, Drug Offenders, Forest Offenders, Goondas, Immoral Traffic Offenders, Sand Offenders, Sexual Offenders, Slum Grabbers and Video Pirates Act of 1982** is commonly referred to as the **Goondas Act or Act 14 of 1982**.
- The **Madras High Court receives numerous habeas corpus petitions challenging the detention orders** passed under the Goondas Act.

Key points:
- It is a **preventive detention law**.
- The law **empowers the State to detain people in prison without a trial**.
- The purpose of the law is to **prevent dangerous activities that are prejudicial to the maintenance of public order**.
- The Goondas Act is **similar to the National Security Act (NSA) of 1980**, which was enacted by the Parliament to maintain public order and national security.

About the Goondas Act 1982:
- The **Act is designed to prevent dangerous activities of individuals involved in various forms of criminal behavior including** bootlegging, cyber crimes, drug
- trafficking, forest offense, goondaism (a term used in India to describe habitual offenders), immoral trafficking, illegal sand mining, sexual offenses, slum grabbing, and video piracy.
- The **decision to detain a person** under this Act **can be made by district magistrates, commissioners of police,** or **other specially empowered officers in the state of Tamil Nadu**.

Tamil Nadu Panchayat Simplified Accounting System (TNPASS)
Why in news?
- **Grassroots level administration in the state** has been **affected due to the**

non-release of funds to panchayats since February.

- This has made it difficult for local bodies to meet their day-to-day expenditure.
- The department adopted the 'Tamil Nadu Panchayat Simplified Accounting System (TNPASS)', to **bring tax collections in local bodies under a single window system**.

About TNPASS:

- It is a significant initiative implemented by the state government **to streamline the financial management and accounting processes of local governing bodies**.
- TNPASS **aims to simplify the accounting procedures for Village Panchayats in Tamil Nadu**, ensuring transparency, accountability, and effective financial management.
- Under this system, the **tax revenue generated by a panchayat will be maintained in one account**, and theDirector of the Rural Development Department will **release it to the panchayats**.

State Information Commission

Why in news?

- The **Tamil Nadu State Information Commission awarded a compensation of Rs 10,000** to RTI activist.

key points:

- The **State Chief Information Commissioner** cited a Supreme Court order (**Girish Ramchandra Deshpande vs Central Information Commission**) and **directed the PIO to furnish the number of pending memos against the RTO staffers**, For not providing information.
- The **information commissioner directed the commissionerate's PIO to pay Rs 10,000 as compensation**.

About State Information Commission:

- State Information Commissions are established under the **Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005**.
- **Purpose**: The SICs are created to **promote transparency and accountability in the working of every public authority** by ensuring the effective implementation of the RTI Act.
- **Each State Information Commission** is **headed by** a **State Chief Information Commissioner**.
- **Information Commissioners (ICs)**: The CIC is **assisted by State Information Commissioners**. **The number of ICs varies by state but cannot exceed ten**.
- The CIC and ICs are **appointed by the Governor** of the respective state.
- The **selection committee for appointment consists** of the **Chief Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly, and a Cabinet Minister nominated by the Chief Minister**

National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL)

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Why in news?

- The **Tamil Nadu Chamber of Commerce and Industry** and the **National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL)** conducted an **awareness programme for food testing laboratories**.
- The focus of the programme was on **NABL accreditation and its benefits**.

About NABL:

- **Establishment**:
  - NABL is an **autonomous body** under the **Department of Science & Technology**, Government of India.
  - It was established with the **objective of providing accreditation to laboratories in India**.
- **Purpose**:
  - **NABL accredits testing and calibration laboratories** in accordance with **ISO/IEC 17025 standards**.
  - It **ensures the quality and reliability of tests** and calibrations performed in accredited laboratories.

International Recognition:

- NABL is a **signatory to international organizations like ILAC** (International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation) and **APLAC** (Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation).
- This **ensures that NABL accredited laboratories' results are globally accepted**.

Appointment of Acting Chief Justice of Madras High Court

Why in news?

- **President** Droupadi Murmu has **appointed Justice R. Mahadevan**, the **seniormost puisne judge of the Madras High Court**, to **perform the duties of the office of the Chief Justice of the High Court**.
- The **incumbent Chief Justice, Sanjay V. Gangapurwala, is set to retire**.
- The **Union Ministry of Law and Justice** has issued a notification announcing the President's decision.

About Appointment of Acting Chief Justice of High Court:

- **Appointment Authority**: The **President of India** appoints the Acting Chief Justice of a High Court.
- **Circumstances for Appointment**:
  - When the **office of the Chief Justice of a High Court is vacant**.
  - When the **Chief Justice is unable to perform their duties** due to absence or any other reason.
- **Eligibility**:
  - Typically, the **senior-most judge of the High Court** is appointed as the Acting

Chief Justice.
- ○ **Must meet the qualifications required for a High Court judge** as per the Constitution of India.
- **Duties and Responsibilities**: Perform all duties and exercise the powers of the Chief Justice of the High Court.
- **Term Duration**: The **Acting Chief Justice serves until a new Chief Justice is appointed** or the **current Chief Justice resumes duties**.
- **Constitutional Provisions**: Governed by Article 223 of the Constitution of India.
- **Procedure**:
  - ○ The **process is initiated by the Collegium of the Supreme Court**, which makes recommendations to the President.
  - ○ The **Ministry of Law and Justice** is involved in the formalities and issuance of the appointment order.

Central Advisory Contract Labour Board

Why in news?
- The **Central Advisory Contract Labour Board**, under the **Union Ministry of Labour and Employment**, has constituted a committee.
- The committee will **address the issue of abolishing contract labour for packing, loading, and incidental works** at Chennai airport.

Reason for Committee Formation:
- Followed a **judgment by the Madras High Court**.
- The directive was to **consider the representation made by the International Air Cargo Workers Union (IACWU)** regarding the issue.

About Central Advisory Contract Labour Board:
- **Purpose**: The Central Advisory Contract Labour Board advises the Central Government on matters related to the **administration of the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970**.
- **Composition**: The Board consists of representatives from employers, employees, the central and state governments, and independent members.
- **Functions**:
  - ○ **Reviews and makes recommendations** on the **working conditions of contract labour**.
  - ○ Suggests **measures for improving the welfare of contract labour**.
  - ○ **Advises on the abolition or regulation of contract labour** in specific industries or establishments.

Environment

Urban Greening Policy

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Why in news?

- The State government of **Tamil Nadu** is drafting an **exclusive 'Urban Greening Policy'** to **coordinate and streamline greening projects** and **tree planting programmes** carried out in cities across the state.
- This new policy is being prepared as **part of the Green Tamil Nadu Mission**.

Key points:

- The mission has been given a task to **plant 265 crore trees across the state in 10 years** to **increase the green cover of the state to 33 per cent** from the **present 23.69 per cent**.
- The new policy **will lay norms** for **planting trees**, **selection of species**, **tree planting sites**, **maintenance methodology**, **permissions to be obtained and other aspects**.
- This **initiative is in line with the 2024-2025 budget**, which **includes various initiatives** such as
  - Planting of tall trees,
  - Miyawaki forests,
  - Green roofs,
  - Vertical gardens,
  - Green subways,
  - Green screens, and
  - Planting trees along pedestrian pavements
- It is to **expand green spaces across all corporations and municipalities in Tamil Nadu**, including the **Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC).**

36 species spotted across seven locations in Thamirabarani

Why in news?

- The **Thamirabarani Fish Count (TFC)**, an **ichthyological survey of fish** in the Thamirabarani, **found nearly 36 different fish species and 1,197 individual fishes**.
- The survey was conducted by the **Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE)'s Agasthyamalai Community Conservation Centre (ACCC)**, in collaboration with the **Sri Paramakalyani Centre for Environmental Sciences**, and the **Department of Zoology of Sadakathullah Appa College**, Palayamkottai.

Key points:

- This is **ATREE's first annual survey**, **aimed at documenting native fish species**, **identifying invasive species**, and outlining effective **conservation strategies**.
- Among the 36 species, 31 were identified as native species, two introduced, and three invasive species.
- **Endemic species such as the Thamirabarani Barb**, **Mahseer**, **Half Beak fish**, and **Torrent Catfish were sighted**.
- **Invasive species** such as the **Pleco Tank Cleaner** and **African Catfish** were **found in significant numbers between Thirupudaimaruthur and Srivaikuntam**

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Pollution Under Control Certificates (PUCC) version 2.0

Why in news?

- The **Tamil Nadu state transport department** has **launched a web-based Pollution Under Control Certificates (PUCC) version 2.0** to **check air pollution** and **curb violations**.

Key points:

- The **new version ensures that the mobile phone linked to the PUCC version 2.0** should be **present at the geo-tagged location of the centres** as the App will work only within **30 metres from the centre**.
- A **picture of the vehicles with number plates** while testing the emissions and a **picture of the vehicle along with the certified person** who tests the emission and **name board of the center should be uploaded**.
- Also, **video clips of testing should be uploaded**.
- **Tamil Nadu is the third state in the country to launch PUCC Version 2.0**.
- The **new system will come into effect from May 6**

Monitor lizard (Varanus bengalensis)

Why in news?

- The **wildlife officials in Tamil Nadu seized more than 300 monitor lizard skins** from different districts.
- These **skins were intended** for **making the percussion instrument kanjira**.

Key points:

- The **state wildlife crime control bureau raided shops selling musical instruments**.
- The shop owners informed officials about the **source of the monitor lizard skins**, which made kanjiras.
- **Monitor lizard (Varanus bengalensis)** is **protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act**.
- As per the provisions of the Act, **illegal possession and trade of any Scheduled species, or parts thereof, is a punishable offence that attracts imprisonment for up to seven years**.

New species of jumping spiders discovered

Why in news?

- Researchers recently **discovered a new species of jumping spiders in Tamil Nadu** were named **Stenaelurillus feral** (from **Villupuram**) and **Stenaelurillus judithblesternae** (from **Coimbatore**).
- Also other two species found in **Solapur** and **Dharashiv districts of Maharashtra**, named **Stenaelurillus solapur** and **Stenaelurillus naldurg** were **found only in the habitat they were discovered in**.

Key points:

- The spiders were **found in a compact and fragmented semi-arid grassland patch**.
- The species of **spiders lived secluded in colonies and were rare to find**.
- **Researchers conducted the exploration** of the species in the **Western Ghats, Deccan Plateau** and the **eastern coastal region**.
- **Jumping spiders play a crucial role in maintaining the ecological balance**.
- **Acting as predators**, they **help control the population of insects and other arthropods**, thus **reducing the spread of diseases and damage to crops**.

Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Plan of Tamil Nadu - Forest Habitat Suitability

Why in news?
- The **Centre for Climate Change and Disaster Management (CCCDM)**, **Anna University**, prepared a draft report titled 'Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Plan of Tamil Nadu - Forest Habitat Suitability'.

Key points:
- The **report predicts that by 2050, evergreen and deciduous forest areas** in **Tamil Nadu, mainly in the Western and Eastern Ghats**, **may reduce by 32% and 18% respectively**.
- At the same time, the **suitability for thorn forests is expected to increase by 71%**.
- The **degradation is primarily due to high temperature, altered rainfall pattern,** and **prolonged dry spells** in the post-monsoon season.

Spotted deer

Why in news?
- A total of 26 **spotted deer** were released into the wild at the **Siruvani foothills**, which fall under the **Boluvampatti forest range**.

About spotted deer:
- **Species and Habitat**:
  - The spotted deer, or **chital/cheetal**, is a **deer species native to the Indian subcontinent**.
  - It is the **most common deer species in Indian forests**.
  - Its habitat includes **subtropical grasslands** and forests.
- **Distribution**:
  - It is widely **distributed in Asia**, especially in **India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan**, and a small group in **Pakistan**.
- **Conservation Status**:
  - According to the **IUCN Red List**, the conservation status of the spotted deer is classified as '**Least Concern**'

Ariosoma Thoothukudiense

Why in news?

- Ariosoma Thoothukudiense is a **new species of Congrid Eel** that was **discovered at the Thoothukudi fishing harbour**.
- This **discovery was made by marine biologists** and was **led by research scholar P Kodeeswaran**.

About Ariosoma Thoothukudiense:

- The **eels were captured at a depth of 60 metres**, **off the Thoothukudi coast**.
- The species is expected to be **distributed in the Indian Ocean**.
- The **new species differs from all the congeners of Indian waters in that it has more total vertebrae**, except A. Albimaculatum.
- The **new species** is closely **related to Ariosoma Maurostigma and Ariosoma Albimaculatum**

Hump-backed mahseer

Why in news?

- The **hump-backed mahseer species is restricted to the Cauvery river system** and is currently **under threat due to reservoirs, sand mining, and pollution**.

About Hump-backed mahseer:

- **Scientific Name**: Tor remadevii
- Common Names: Hump-backed Mahseer, Orange-finned Mahseer, Deccan Mahseer, also known as '**Tiger of Cauvery**'.
- **Conservation Status**: **Critically Endangered**
- **Habitat**: **Endemic to the Western Ghats of India**, primarily found in the **Cauvery River basin**.
- **Diet**: Omnivorous, feeding on a variety of plant material, small fish, and invertebrates.
- **Reproduction**: Spawns during the **monsoon season** when water levels rise.

Draft elephant corridor plan of Tamil Nadu

Why in news?

- The **Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam** has **opposed the draft elephant corridor plan** recently released by the forest department.

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● The draft plan report is to **identify elephant routes and establish a migration path**.

About draft elephant corridor plan:
● The draft elephant corridor plan was **released by the Tamil Nadu government** and the **forest department**.
● The plan was prepared in response to **increasing cases of human-elephant conflicts and aims at restoring habitat connectivity for the substantial elephant population in the state**.
● The **Elephant Corridor Committee identified a 53.8 km stretch** in the **Anthiyur - Chennampatti forests** in Erode division, and a **3 km stretch in the Sujilkuttai – Bannari forests**, falling under the **Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve (STR)**, as corridors frequently used by wild elephants.
● The **plan addresses critical disruptions to the elephant corridors**.
● The draft plan proposes to **relocate the shooting range, maintain the elephant proof trenches, fill up the water troughs in the corridor, monitor the four paper industries located near the corridor** to prevent the discharge of effluents into water bodies and also **acquire patta land to widen the width of the corridor so that elephant can travel through easily**.

Lion-tailed macaques
Why in news?
● **Lion-tailed macaques**, a species of shy primates, are **leaving their forest habitats and moving into Valparai in search of food**.
● These primates have **lost their fear of humans**.

Key points:
● **This change in behavior is attributed to several factors**:
   ○ **Habitat degradation**: The natural habitats of these macaques are being destroyed.
   ○ **Roads through habitats**: The construction of roads through their habitats has disrupted their living conditions.
   ○ **Increased vehicular movement**: The increase in traffic and human activity in their habitats has affected their behavior.
   ○ **Food offered by tourists**: Tourists feeding these macaques have made them dependent on human food.
   ○ **Improper waste managemen**t: The improper disposal of waste has attracted these macaques to human settlements.

About Lion-tailed macaques:
● **Scientific Name**: Macaca silenus
● **Common Name**: **Lion-tailed macaque**
● **Habitat**: Primarily found in the **tropical rainforests of the Western Ghats in India**.
● **Behavior**:
   ○ **Arboreal** and **diurnal**.

  ○ Live in social groups of 10-20 individuals.
  ○ Known for their loud calls and complex vocalizations.
- **Reproduction**:
  ○ **Gestation period**: Approximately **6 months**.
  ○ Usually give birth to a single offspring.
- **Conservation Status**: **Endangered** (IUCN Red List).
- **Threats**:
  ○ Habitat destruction due to deforestation and land conversion for agriculture.
  ○ Hunting and poaching.
- **Lifespan**: Can live up to **20-30 years in the wild**.

Pygmy killer whale

Why in news?

- A **Pygmy killer whale** was found stranded near the Thoothukudi shore in the **Narippaiyur area of Mannar Marine National Park**.

About Pygmy killer whale:
- **Scientific Name**: Feresa attenuata
- **Family**: Delphinidae
- **Conservation Status**: **Data Deficient** (IUCN Red List)
- **Appearance**: Dark gray to black with a lighter underside. They have rounded heads and a small, slender body. There is a white patch on the belly and lips.
- **Dorsal Fin**: Tall and falcate (curved backward).
- **Diet**: **Carnivorous**, primarily feeding on fish and squid.
- **Behavior**: Known to be **elusive and rarely seen**. They can be **aggressive towards other dolphins and whales**.
- **Habitat**: Prefer deep, warm tropical and subtropical waters.
- **Geographic Range**: Found in oceans worldwide, including the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans.

Chromium contamination

Why in news?

- A **Public Interest Litigation (PIL)** petition has been filed in the Madras High Court, **to seek a direction to the Centre and the State government to take immediate remediation steps towards reported chromium contamination** at a defunct factory of Tamil Nadu Chromate and Chemicals Limited (TNCCL) in Ranipet.

About Chromium contamination:

- **Overview**:
  - Chromium contamination refers to the **presence of chromium, a toxic heavy metal, in the environment**, particularly in **soil and water**.
- **Types of Chromium**:
  - Chromium exists mainly in two forms: trivalent **chromium (Cr(III))** and **hexavalent chromium (Cr(VI))**.
  - **Cr(III) is an essential nutrient in small amounts**, while **Cr(VI) is highly toxic and carcinogenic**.
- **Sources**:
  - **Industrial processes** such as leather tanning, stainless steel production, textile manufacturing, and electroplating.
  - **Improper disposal of industrial waste**.
  - **Natural sources** include weathering of chromium-containing rocks.
- **Health Effects**:
  - **Cr(VI) exposure can cause respiratory problems, skin irritation, and lung cancer**.
  - **Long-term exposure** can lead to kidney and liver damage.
  - Cr(III) is less harmful but can still cause health issues in large amounts.
- **Environmental Impact**:
  - **Contaminates soil**, affecting plant growth and entering the food chain.
  - **Pollutes water sources**, impacting aquatic life and drinking water quality.

IUCN lists Tamil Nadu mangroves 'critically endangered'

Context:

- **The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has classified the mangroves along the east coast of Tamil Nadu as "critically endangered."**
- This assessment was part of the Red List of Ecosystems initiative.

Key Points:

- **Affected Areas:** Mangroves in South India, including Tamil Nadu, face severe threats.
- **Causes**: Sea-level rise and climate change are major factors.
- **Consequences**: Potential loss of carbon storage and protection against coastal flooding.
- **Statistics:** Without conservation, 50% of global mangrove ecosystems may collapse by 2050.

Additional Information:

- **Biodiversity Impact**: Mangroves support diverse flora and fauna, crucial for ecosystem balance.
- **Economic Impact:** Mangroves contribute to fisheries and protect shorelines, impacting local economies.

Conservation Efforts: Urgent measures needed include reforestation, policy changes, and community involvement to protect and restore these critical ecosystems..

First Global Assessment of Mangrove Ecosystems

Why in news?

- The **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** has **classified mangroves in coastal regions of Tamil Nadu, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives as 'critically endangered'** in its **first global assessment of mangrove ecosystems**.
- To protect the mangrove cover, the **Tamil Nadu Forest Department has established 20 village mangrove committees**.

First Global Assessment of Mangrove Ecosystems:

- **Initiative**: Conducted by the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and partners**.
- **Objective**: To **evaluate the status, distribution, and threats to mangrove ecosystems** worldwide.
- **Coverage**: Assessments conducted across all major mangrove regions globally.
- **Key Findings**:
  - **Mangrove Extent**: Mangroves cover approximately 137,600 square kilometers across 123 countries and territories.
  - **Biodiversity**: Mangroves are home to a unique biodiversity, including many endemic and endangered species.
  - **Ecosystem Services**: Provide critical services such as coastal protection, carbon sequestration, and support for fisheries.
  - **Carbon Storage**: Mangroves store up to 10 times more carbon per hectare than terrestrial forests.

Puffer fish

Why in news?

- A large number of **dead Pufferfish were found on the shore near Pamban** in Ramanathapuram.
- Locals speculate **climate change may have caused the fish to wash ashore**.
- Pufferfish are generally **found in** the waters around the **Gulf of Mannar and Palk Bay**.
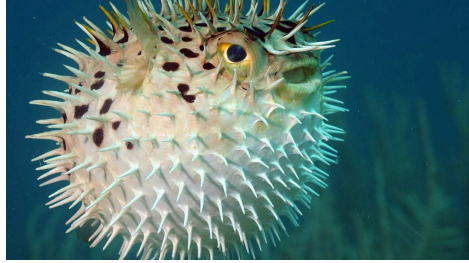
About Puffer fish:

- **Scientific Family**: Tetraodontidae
- **Habitat**: Found in **tropical and subtropical ocean waters**, including **coral reefs, estuaries, and mangroves**.
- **Physical Characteristics**:
  - **Ability to inflate their bodies** by swallowing water or air.
  - Possess a tough, **spiny skin**.
  - Typically have a beak-like mouth with fused teeth.
- **Defense Mechanism**:
  - Inflate to appear larger and deter predators.
  - Many species contain **tetrodotoxin**, a **potent neurotoxin**, in their organs and skin, which is **highly poisonous to predators and humans**.
- **Conservation Status**: Many species are **not currently endangered**, but **habitat destruction and overfishing pose threats**.

Palmyra

Why in news?

- The **Agro Food Chamber, Madurai**, has launched efforts to **revive Palmyra**, the **traditional crop of Tamil Nadu**.

Key points:

- **Palmyra is the State Tree of Tamil Nadu** and has **ecological and economic value**.

- It's hailed as a **Karpaga Viruksha** (**divine tree**, which offers everything one asks for) in Tamil culture as no part of it goes to waste.
- **Palmyra is valued for its multi-purpose usage**, such as sweet toddy (pathaneer), fruits, ice apple (nungu), palm jaggery (panam karuppatti), palm candy (panam kalkandu), palmyra tuber (panam kilangu), palmyra oil, palm leaves, several handicraft products, palm trunk wood (panam kattai) and in traditional medicine

Sloth bear

Why in news?
- A **sloth bear** has been **causing panic** among the residents of Coonoor in The **Nilgiris district**.

About Sloth bear:
- **Scientific Name**: **Melursus ursinus**
- **Geographic Range**: Found in the **Indian subcontinent**, including India, Sri Lanka, and Nepal.
- **Primary Diet**: Insectivorous, primarily feeding on termites and ants.
  - Other Foods: Fruits, honey, flowers, and occasionally small mammals or carrion.
- **Feeding Behavior**: Uses long claws to break into termite mounds and uses its lips to suck up the insects.
- **Activity**: Mostly **nocturnal** and **solitary**, except for mothers with cubs.
- **IUCN Status**: **Vulnerable** due to habitat loss, poaching, and human-wildlife conflict.
- **Threats**: Deforestation, habitat fragmentation, and exploitation for body parts.

Geography & Places in News

Disaster Preparedness Plan

Why in news?
- The **Directorate of Public Health (DPH)** and **Preventive Medicine in Tamil Nadu** is planning to **create a Disaster Preparedness Plan**.
- The **plan is based on** lessons learned from the **flood in 2023**.

Timely action

Various public health measures were put in place following the extensive flooding during December 2023. A look at the number of people who were able to get help through medical camps and some of the key public health interventions that were made

KEY STRATEGIES

Incident command system established at State and district levels

Helpline number put in place for immediate assistance

Disease surveillance and prevention

Data from medical camps and integrated health information platform utilised

Geographical localisation and reporting of acute febrile illness and acute diarrhoeal disease were done through choropleth mapping. Trend analysis of each reported disease served as a valuable tool for monitoring disease trends

Analyses aided in prioritising vulnerable populations, carrying out risk stratification of areas and provision of healthcare services for high-risk focus areas

Risk stratification of areas was done based on number of illness reported

Task-specific teams such as for flood response, vector control and water analysis were formed to address different aspects of the emergency

DEPLOYMENT OF MOBILE MEDICAL TEAMS IN FLOOD-AFFECTED DISTRICTS OF TAMIL NADU

District	Number of additional external medical teams	Total number of medical camps conducted	Total number of beneficiaries
Chennai	159	7,834	4,85,109
Chengalpattu	60	2,953	1,68,526
Tiruvallur	51	2,308	1,22,806
Kancheepuram	30	1,270	69,328
Thoothukudi	30	3,885	2,75,346
Tirunelveli	30	2,945	1,02,458
Tenkasi	5	2,055	59,280
Kanniyakumari	5	1,569	50,358
Total	370	24,819	13,33,211

Source: Adapting to Adversity: Public Health Flood Response Strategies Following Twin Disasters/Tamil Nadu Journal of Public Health and Medical Research

Key points:
- The aim is to **draw up a Disaster Preparedness Plan for Tamil Nadu**, and also **district-level plans in the longer run**.
- The **directorate has documented its public health response strategies** following extensive flooding in the **aftermath of Cyclone Michaung in Chennai** and its suburbs, and during heavy downpour in southern districts in December 2023.

Orange alert in Tamil Nadu

Why in news?
- The **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** has **issued an orange-level heatwave alert** for several **districts in Tamil Nadu**.
- The **conditions are likely to continue** for the next three days, with **temperatures ranging from 38°C to 42.5°C1**.

About Color-coded Alerts:
- **IMD** uses a **color-coded alert system to indicate the severity of heat conditions**:
  - **Green Alert**: the weather is normal.
  - **Yellow Alert** (Be Aware): Indicates severe heat but not extreme conditions. Public awareness is advised.
  - **Orange Alert** (Be Prepared): Warns of hot weather that could impact significantly, requiring preparations for potential health risks.
  - **Red Alert** (Take Action): Issued when extremely hot conditions are expected, posing a risk of health emergencies. Immediate action and intervention are necessary.

Retteri Lake
Why in news?

- The **Water Resources Department (WRD)** has initiated a **project to rejuvenate the Retteri Lake** in **Chennai**.
- The **project aims to increase the lake's storage capacity from 33 million cubic feet (mcft) to 45 mcft**.
- The **rejuvenation work includes desilting, bund strengthening, compound wall construction, and island formation**.

About Retteri Lake:
- Retteri Lake is **situated near Kolathur** in Chennai.
- The **lake serves as a rain-fed reservoir** and is **part of the city's stormwater drainage system**.
- It **helps in groundwater recharge** and acts as a **flood buffer during the monsoon season**.

Mullaperiyar dam
Why in news?
- **Tamil Nadu** has accused **Kerala** in the Supreme Court of **raising concerns about the safety of the over 125-year-old Mullaperiyar dam** while **simultaneously obstructing essential maintenance work**.

About Mullaperiyar dam:
- **Location**: The Mullaperiyar Dam is located on the **Periyar River in the Idukki District** of **Kerala**. It is **situated in the Western Ghats near Thekkady**.
- **Construction**: The dam was **constructed between 1887 and 1895 by the British Colonial government of India**, and it was engineered by **Colonel John Pennycuick**.
- **Purpose**: The primary purpose of the dam is to **divert water eastwards to the Madurai district in Tamil Nadu for irrigation** via a tunnel through the Western Ghats.
- **Structure**: The dam is a **masonry gravity dam**.
- The reservoir, known as the **Periyar Lake**.
- **Inter-State Agreement**: The **dam is located in Kerala but is operated by the Tamil Nadu** state under a **999-year lease agreement made during British rule**, which has been a **point of contention between Kerala and Tamil Nadu**.
- **Environmental Impact**: The area around the Mullaperiyar Dam is ecologically sensitive, part of the **Periyar Tiger Reserve**.

Paliyar Tribe
Why in news?
- A recent **research was conducted** on the **'Paliyar Tribals' living in Kodaikanal and Theni areas**.
- The **research found** that **none of the individuals** from the 1,173 families residing in 36 villages **had a government job**.

About Paliyar Tribe:

- The Paliyar tribe primarily **resides in the hilly and forested regions of the Western Ghats in Tamil Nadu and Kerala**.
- They are especially **concentrated around the areas of Madurai, Theni, Dindigul, and Tirunelveli** in Tamil Nadu.
- The Paliyar tribe has a **rich oral tradition with stories, folklore, and songs** that are passed down through generations.
- The **Paliyars practice animism**, **worshipping nature and ancestral spirits**. They believe in a close **spiritual connection with nature**.

Madhavaram Horticultural Park

Why in news?
- **Madhavaram Horticultural Park suffers from lack of maintenance**.

About Madhavaram Horticultural Park:
- Madhavaram Horticultural Park, also known as **Madhavaram Botanical Garden**, is a significant **green space located in Chennai**.
- The park was **set up by the horticulture department of the Government of Tamil Nadu**.
- It is the **second botanical garden in Chennai** after the **Semmoli Poonga and is the largest botanical garden in the city**.
- The foundation stone for the garden was **laid on September 15, 2010**.
- The garden is **located at the State horticulture farm in Madhavaram Milk Colony**.

Soil Nailing
Why in news?
- The **Tamil Nadu State highways department** is undertaking a **project for the stabilisation of slopes around the Nilgiris'** major roads.
- The project involves **growing grasses at five locations to prevent soil erosion**.

Key points:
- The project is known as '**slope stabilisation using soil nailing and Hydroseeding method**'.
- The locations where the project is being undertaken are **Ketti, Kattabettu, Perar, Kudah, and Udhagamandalam**.

About Soil Nailing:
- A **geotechnical engineering technique** is being **used to strengthen the soil** in a specified area.
- This technique **involves the insertion of reinforcing elements into the soil**.
- The soil reinforcement process **uses steel tendons** which are **drilled and grouted into the soil**.
- This **creates a composite mass similar to a gravity wall**.

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Soil nailing, Hydroseeding, and Geo grids

Why in news?

- The **Tamil Nadu Highways Department** is implementing innovative **techniques to prevent landslides in the Nilgiris**.
- They are **using soil nailing, hydroseeding, and geo grids** along the Ooty-Kotagiri-Mettupalayam Road **to stabilize slopes that are prone to landslides**.

Key points:

- **Soil nailing** involves **inserting iron bars into the soil to reinforce it**.
- **Hydroseeding** promotes the **growth of vegetation** to prevent erosion.
- **Geo grids** involve the **use of knitted steel mats on the slopes**.
- These **methods are part of a broader effort to address the issue of landslides in the region**

Pichavaram mangrove forest

Why in news?

- **Pichavaram in Tamil Nadu**, the **world's second largest mangrove forest**, offers rich biodiversity, boat rides, and birdwatching.
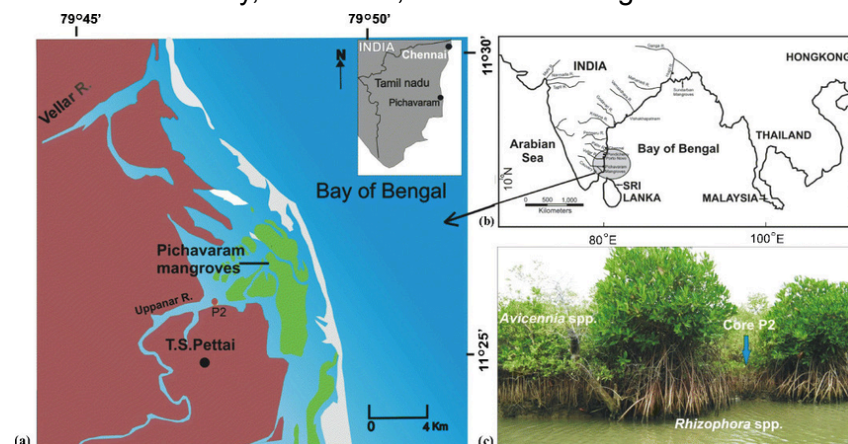
About Pichavaram mangrove forest:

- **Location**: Pichavaram is **located near Chidambaram in the Cuddalore District of Tamil Nadu**.
- **Flora**: The forest is **predominantly composed of** mangrove species like **Avicennia** and **Rhizophora**.
- **Fauna**: It is home to many species of fish, prawns, crabs, and several types of birds, including pelicans, storks, and kingfishers.
- **Ecological Importance**: Mangroves act as a **buffer zone protecting the coastline from erosion and extreme weather events like storms and tsunamis**.
- **Threats**: Like many mangrove forests, Pichavaram faces threats from **pollution, overfishing, and climate change**.

Floating restaurant project

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Why in news?
- The **Tamil Nadu Tourism Department** has completed a **'floating restaurant' project** in **Muttukadu Boat House on East Coast Road**.

Key points:
- This Rs 5 crore project is the **first of its kind in the state**.
- The project is implemented through a **public-private partnership with the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation** and **Cochin-based Grandeur Marine International**.
- The cruise, named '**Seanz Cruise**', will be inaugurated in the first week of June.
- The **floating restaurant is a double-decker**

Nagamalai Pudukottai hill range

Why in news?
- Conservationists demand **sanctuary status for Nagamalai range as a reptile**.

About Nagamalai Pudukottai hill range:
- **Location**: Situated in the **Madurai district of Tamil Nadu, India**.
- **Name Meaning**: "Nagamalai" translates to "**Snake Hill**" in Tamil, reflecting the serpent-like appearance of the hill range.
- **Geology**: **Composed mainly of granite**, the hill range is **part of the Eastern Ghats**.
- **Flora and Fauna**: The region is home to diverse plant species and wildlife, including various types of snakes, birds, and small mammals

Thanjavur forest officials laud fishermen for rescuing dugongs
Context:
- **Fishermen in Thanjavur, India, were recognized by forest officials for their efforts** in r**escuing dugongs, an endangered marine mammal.**
- The **felicitation ceremony took place on World Dugong Day.**
- **Fishermen rescued three dugongs and over ten sea turtles this year, returning them safely to the sea.**

Key Points:
- The **government plans to establish a Dugong Conservation Centre along a 50-kilometer stretch of coastline to further protect these vital marine creatures.**

About:
- **Dugongs, also called sea cows, are gentle marine mammals** that **munch on seagrass in shallow coastal waters**.
- They are related to manatees, but unlike manatees, **dugongs are strictly saltwater dweller**s.
- Found in the **Indian and Pacific Oceans**, **dugongs are unfortunately listed as vulnerable due to habitat loss and entanglement in fishing gear.**

Nilgiri Mountain Railway (NMR) train

Why in news?
- A man was run over by the **Nilgiri Mountain Railway (NMR) train** bound for Mettupalayam from Ooty.

About Nilgiri Mountain Railway (NMR) train:
- **Location**: Runs between **Mettupalayam and Udagamandalam (Ooty) in Tamil Nadu**.
- **Established**: The railway was completed in **1908**.
- **Gauge**: Meter gauge (1,000 mm).
- **UNESCO World Heritage Site**: Part of the "**Mountain Railways of India**" recognized in **2005**.
- **Operators**: Southern Railway zone of Indian Railways

Vivekananda Rock Memorial

Why in news?
- **The Prime Minister of India meditated at the Vivekananda Rock Memorial** in **Kanniyakumari**, Tamil Nadu.
- This site is **significant as Swami Vivekananda once meditated there**, and it is also the **confluence point of the Indian Ocean, Bay of Bengal, and Arabian Sea**.

About Vivekananda Rock Memorial:
- **Location**: Situated on a **small island off the coast of Kanyakumari**, Tamil Nadu.
- **Inauguration**: The memorial was inaugurated on September 2, **1970**.
- **Purpose**: Built in **honor of Swami Vivekananda**, **commemorating his meditation on the rock in December 1892**.
- **Architectural Style**: The memorial is a **blend of various Indian architectural style**s.
- **Key Structures**:
  - **Vivekananda Mandapam**: Contains a statue of Swami Vivekananda and meditation halls.
  - **Shripada Mandapam**: Marks the spot where the **footprint of Goddess Kanyakumari** is believed to be

Kadar tribe

Why in news?
- A **Kadar tribesman** recently **died in an elephant attack** in Tamil Nadu's **Anamalai Tiger Reserve**.

● The **Kadars are known to have co-existed with wild elephants for ages**.

About Kadar tribe:
● The Kadar are a **small indigenous tribal community in South India**.
● They **reside along** the hilly **border between Cochin in Kerala and Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu**.
● They have a **symbiotic relationship with nature**, and they **believe in the coexistence of Kadar and Kaadu (forest)**.
● Their **population was estimated at approximately 2,000 individuals** in the early 21st century.
● They **speak the Dravidian languages of Tamil and Kannaḍa**.
● They are listed as a **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) in Kerala**, **but not in Tamil Nadu**.

History & Culture

13th century inscriptions discovered in Vanavareddy

Why in news?
● **Yakkai Heritage Trust discovered inscriptions** on a memorial stone **dating back to the 13th century in Vanavareddy, Kallakurichi district**.
● The team uncovered a **memorial stone with inscriptions from the Kaliamman Temple** and a fragmentary inscription from a nearby **Aiyanar temple**.

Key points:
● The **findings shed light on** the establishment of a **Sapthamadhar Temple**, **honouring the Ezhupidari**.
● The **Vanagovaraiyar dynasty** historically **reigned over vast territories**, including present-day Salem, Perambalur, Kallakurichi, Villupuram, Tiruvannamalai, and parts of the Cuddalore district.
● The dynasty's reign marked an era of flourishing **religious diversity**, with patronage extended to **Buddhism, Shaivism, Vaishnavism, and folk deities**.
● Inscriptions outside the Vanavareddy Kali Temple, dating back to the fifteenth regnal year of **Kulothunga III**, provide insights into the administrative and religious landscape of the region.

- The **inscriptions mention the establishment of a temple dedicated to seven Pidaaris** by Ponparappinaan, a title bestowed upon the kings of the Vanagovaraiyar dynasty

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Chola-era inscription found in Tamil Nadu

Why in news?
- A team of researchers from the **Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment department** has **discovered an inscription near Thiruvennailalur** that **sheds light on Chola King Aditha Karikalan**.
- The team has been conducting inspections at the thousand-year-old **Vedapureesawarar temple**.

Key points:
- The **inscription dates back to the rule of Aditha Karikalan**, the **son of Sundara Cholan** and **younger brother of Raja Raja Chola**.
- It **mentions his act of defeating Pandian king Veerapandian** and placing his head at the palace in Tanjore.
- The newly found inscription in Emappur begins with **"Swasthi Sri Veerapandian Thalai Konda Koppara Kesari" and is dated to 960 AD**.
- It mentions the area as Emapperur Nattu Emapperur in Thirumunaipadi country, serving as its **headquarters**

Thanjavur Big Temple

Why in news?
- The **Department of Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR&CE)** in **Tamil Nadu** has announced that it will take **legal action against individuals who have been circulating video clips of renovation works** at the **Arulmigu Peruvudaiyar temple**, also known as the **Thanjavur Big Temple**.
- The **HR&CE department's role is limited to conducting the poojas, rituals, and temple festivals**, while the **maintenance of the centuries-old temple is the responsibility of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)**.

About Thanjavur Big Temple:
- The Thanjavur Big Temple, also known as the **Brihadishvara Temple or Rajarajesvaram**.

- It is **one of the largest Hindu temples** and an **exemplar of Tamil architecture**.
- The **temple was constructed under the rule of Rajaraja I** and **completed in 1010 CE**.
- It is considered a **symbol of the power and wealth of the Chola dynasty**.
- The temple **houses the largest Shiva linga in India** and is the **first place to commission the brass Nataraja**, **representing Lord Shiva as the Lord of Dance**.
- The temple is a **UNESCO World Heritage site** and is **part of the "Great Living Chola Temples"** along with the **Chola-era Gangaikonda Cholapuram temple and Airavatesvara temple**.

Koothandavar festival

Why in news?

- The **Koothandavar festival** is a significant event for the **transgender community** at **Koovagam in Tamil Nadu**.

Key points:

- The **Koothandavar festival** takes place in the **Tamil month of Chithirai (mid-April to mid-May)** and lasts for 18 days.
- **Transgender women dress as brides** on the 17th day, and **the priests of Koothandavar temple tie thaali for them**.
- **Transgender women gather and perform the kummi dance** as the chariot moves.
- The **festival traces the legend of a character from the Tamil version of the Mahabharata**, **Aravan**, who **offered himself as a sacrifice for the Pandavas' triumph in war**.
- It is said he had a boon of marriage before his sacrifice but no woman wanted to marry him as it would mean widowhood. Eventually, **it is said Lord Krishna married Aravan after taking the form of Mohini. Lord Krishna grieved for Aravan as a widow.**

St. Vallalar

Why in news?

- **Tamil Nadu government** has decided **to construct a Vallalar International Centre in Vadalur** as part of its electoral promise.
- The **location of the centre is close to where St. Vallalar attained siddhi** 149 years ago.

Key points:

- **Ramalinga Adigalar**, also known as **Ramalinga Swamigal** or **St. Vallalar**, was born two centuries ago.
- **Vallalar** has made lasting **contributions to spirituality and Tamil literature**.

About St. Vallalar:

- St. Vallalar, was a notable **Tamil saint and poet of the 19th century**.

- Born on October 5, 1823, in **Marudur**, near Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu.
- He belonged to a line of Tamil saints known as "**gnana siddhars**", which means '**higher wisdom**'.
- He founded a group known as "**Samarasa Suddha Sanmarga Sathiya Sangam**" **to eliminate caste in India**.

Gowmariamman Temple

Why in news?

- Thousands of devotees witnessed the **holy car procession**, a major event of the **annual Chithirai festival** at the **Gowmariamman Temple at Veerapandi**.

About Gowmariamman Temple:

- The Gowmariamman Temple, **dedicated to the goddess Mariamman**.
- The temple is dedicated to Mariamman, a **form of the goddess Parvati**, who is **worshiped primarily as a mother goddess associated with fertility and health**.
- The temple is famous for its elaborate festivals, especially the "**Mariamman Thiruvizha**," which involves **rituals for rain and fertility** and is **celebrated during the summer months**.

Thillai Govindarajaswamy temple

Why in news?

- The **Madras High Court** has decided to explore the possibility of **conducting a mediation**.
- The mediation is between the **Podhu Dikshitars in Chidambaram town** and the **trustees of Thillai Govindarajaswamy temple**.
- The issue at hand is the **conducting of a Brahmotsavam for the Thillai Govindarajaswamy temple**.

About Thillai Govindarajaswamy temple:

- The temple is **located in the city of Chidambaram**, Tamil Nadu.
- It is **dedicated to Lord Vishnu**, known here as **Govindaraja**.
- This **temple is one of the 108 Divya Desams—holy shrines for Vaishnavites**, as mentioned in the works of the **Tamil Azhvars (saint poets)**.

Tevaram

Why in news?

- The **Tevaram**, part of **Panniru Tirumaraigal** (**12 holy scriptures of Saivism**), and the **Nalayira Divya Prabandam of Vaishnavism** are **crucial for the resurgence and sustenance of the country's culture, tradition, and practices**, according to the **Madras High Court**.
- The HC stated that Hinduism, as defined by the British, is an assortment of different cults with a **polytheistic concept**.

About Tevaram:
- Tevaram refers to a **collection of Tamil hymns composed during the Saiva bhakti movement**, dedicated to the Hindu god **Shiva**.
- Tevaram comprises hymns composed by the **three prominent Tamil poet-saints** known as the Nayanmars: **Thirugnana Sambandar**, **Thirunavukkarasar (Appar)**, and **Sundarar**.
- The hymns were composed between the **6th and 8th centuries CE**, during a period when **Tamil Nadu witnessed a strong Saiva (devotees of Shiva) movement**.
- The **preservation of Tevaram hymns was notably supported by the Chola dynasty**, which **promoted their inclusion in temple rituals**.
- Over the centuries, **these hymns have been preserved orally by "Othuvars"** who are dedicated to singing these hymns in Shiva temples.

15th-century copper coins unearthed from Thenpennai riverbed
Why in news?
- A team of **archaeological researchers unearthed two 15th-century copper coins** in the **Thenpennai riverbed**.
- These **coins date back to the Vijayanagar Kingdom**.

Key points:
- The **name of King Devarayar is inscribed in ancient Telugu on one side of the coins**, and **oxen are carved on the other side**.
- The researchers confirmed that these **coins are from the Vijayanagar Kingdom period**.
- **Previous recoveries of coins** and ancient artefacts in the Thenpennai riverbed **indicate settlements and civilizations along the riverside since the Sangam era**

Arulmigu Mathurakaliamman temple
Why in news?
- Revenue authorities of Tamil Nadu have planned to **desilt and renovate the supply channel leading to the temple pond of the Arulmigu Mathurakaliamman temple**.

About Arulmigu Mathurakaliamman temple:
- **Location**: **Siruvachur, Perambalur District**, Tamil Nadu
- **Deity**: **Goddess Mathurakaliamman**, a **form of Kali**
- **Historical Significance**: It is believed to have been established by the **Chola dynasty**.
- **Architecture**:
  - **Dravidian architectural style**
  - Features a prominent gopuram (tower) and intricately carved pillars

Koodal Azhagar Temple
Why in news?

- The **annual Vaikasi celebrations** have commenced at the **Koodal Azhagar Temple** in **Madurai**.
- The festival is fortnight-long and is **overseen by Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department officials**.

About Koodal Azhagar Temple:
- The Koodal Azhagar Temple is located in **Madurai**, **Tamil Nadu.**
- The temple is **dedicated to the Hindu god Vishnu**, who is **worshipped as Viyooga Sundarrajan**, and **his consort Lakshmi as Mathuravalli**.
- It is **one of the 108 Divya Desams dedicated to Vishnu**. These are the **holy abodes of Vishnu that were glorified by the Alvar saints** in their hymns during the **6th–9th centuries CE**.
- The temple is believed to have been originally **built by the Pandyas**, with later additions by the **Vijayanagara empire** and **Madurai Nayaks kings** who commissioned pillared halls and major shrines of the temple during the 16th century.

Economy & Infrastructure

Tourism survey in Tamil Nadu
Why in news?
- The **Tamil Nadu Tourism Department,** in **collaboration with** the **United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)**, will **conduct a tourism survey** in **all 38 districts** of the state **for the first time**.
- The proposed survey will **collect information from tourist destinations, exit points, and accommodations**.

Key points:
- The survey **aims to assess the internal tourism volume** in accordance with the **definition prescribed by the UNWTO**.
- This **includes counting exercises at the entry gates and entry points of the destination**, **assessing the average number of destinations visited** and **intended to be visited in the district**, and the **place of stay of leisure visitors**.
- The survey will **also be conducted at exit points of the district**, such as **railway stations, bus stands, and airports**.
- The whole survey will be **conducted through volunteers and locals in each district**.

Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)

Why in news?

- The **Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) rejected Tamil Nadu's demand for further release of Cauvery river water** from Karnataka's reservoirs due to water scarcity.
- As per the **Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT)**, Karnataka needs to **ensure environmental flows** at Biligundulu.
- The **Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) project** was expected **to end the water crisis** across Kushalnagar, but there is no water in the river to enable pipelined supply.

About AMRUT:
- The Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) is a pivotal **initiative by the Government of India** designed **to upgrade urban infrastructure and improve the quality of life in cities across the country**.
- AMRUT **aims to provide basic civic amenities** like **water supply, sewerage, urban transport, parks** as a means to **improve the quality of life for all, especially the poor and disadvantaged**.

Tamil Nadu Startup and Innovation Policy 2023
Why in news?
- Start-ups have increased four-fold in 3 years in Tamil Nadu.

Key points:
- A total of **6,384 start-ups have been established in the state**.
- The **Tamil Nadu Startup and Innovation Policy** was introduced in **2023**.
- The **number of start-ups registered in the state has increased four-fold** from **2,032 in 2021 to 8,416 at present**.
- The **number of start-ups led by women has also increased** from 966 to 3,163 in the same period.
- **Tamil Nadu was ranked first by the centre for creating a favourable environment for start-ups**.

Severe Water Crisis Hits South India
Context:
- South India, particularly **Tamil Nadu, is grappling with an acute water shortage this summer, with live water storage levels plummeting to a critical 16% of the total capacity.**
- According to a May 2 report by the Central Water Commission (CWC), this figure stands starkly below the national average of 28%. The report highlights the dire situation across 42 reservoirs in the southern states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Kerala, collectively holding only 8.353 billion cubic meters out of a potential 53.334 billion.
- This year's storage levels not only fall short compared to last year's 28% but also dip below the ten-year average of 22%.

- The CWC monitors a network of 150 major reservoirs nationwide, which collectively showed a significant drop from **69.35% capacity in January to 28% currently,** **influenced by factors such as irrigation demands, drinking water provision, and evaporation.**
- The situation in **Tamil Nadu is particularly severe, with a staggering 43% decrease in normal water storage levels early this month.**

Integrated Coastal Community Development project

Why in news?

- The **Southern Zone of the National Green Tribunal has taken suo motu cognisance** of pathway laying **activities at Injambakkam beach**.
- These activities are **part of the Integrated Coastal Community Development project** by the **Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA)**.

About Integrated Coastal Community Development project:

- The Integrated Coastal Community Development project is an initiative that **aims to provide alternative livelihood opportunities to benefit coastal communities**.
- The project is being **implemented in the shores of Injambakkam-Akkarai, Kasimedu, and Thiruvottiyur**.
- The project takes a **comprehensive approach**, **combining sustainable marine and coastal natural resource management** with **economic and livelihood development in coastal and small island communities** where poverty is endemic.

Combined Water Supply Scheme (CWSS)

Why in news?

- The **Combined Water Supply Scheme (CWSS)** for 434 rural habitations across 22 village panchayats in the **Chennimalai union** is nearing completion.
- **The scheme is implemented by the Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board (TWAD).**

About CWSS:

- The Combined Water Supply Scheme (CWSS) is an **initiative by the Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board (TWAD)**.
- The CWSS is **designed to provide water supply to multiple areas**, including **both urban and rural regions**.
- The scheme involves **drawing water from a major source, treating it, and then supplying it to the designated areas**.
- The scheme includes **Mega Combined Water Supply Schemes** and **schemes under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)**.

Hogenakkal drinking water project

Why in news?

- **Adequate water is being released to fulfill the daily supply requirement** under the **Hogenakkal project**, despite low inflow in the Cauvery.
- In response to reports of **severe drought in Hogenakkal due to non-release of water in the Cauvery by Karnataka**, the district administration has stated that it has not affected the drinking water supply.

About Hogenakkal drinking water project:

- The Hogenakkal drinking water project, officially known as the **Hogenakkal Water Supply and Fluorosis Mitigation Project**, is a significant **initiative in Tamil Nadu**.
- The **main goal of the project is to provide safe drinking water** to the **Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri districts of Tamil Nadu**, which are **affected by high fluoride content in groundwater causing fluorosis**.
- The **water for this project is sourced from the River Cauvery at Hogenakkal**, which is on the **border of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka**.
- One of the **primary health objectives is to mitigate the effects of fluorosis**, a disease **caused by fluoride ingestion, which affects bones and teeth**

Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board (TNUHDB)
Why in news?

- The **Tamil Nadu government** has announced **plans to construct 31,000 flats** at an estimated cost of Rs 8,000 crore.
- The development of infrastructural facilities under the **Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board (TNUHDB)** in Chennai and other cities have been finalised and are in progress.

About TNUHDB:

- TNUHDB, **originally known as the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board**, was **founded in 1970**.
- It was created **to improve living conditions for slum dwellers** through various housing, slum development, rehabilitation, and resettlement programs.
- The Board operates under the **Tamil Nadu Urban Areas (Improvement & Habitat Development) Act of 1971**.
- This legislative framework guides its operations and projects **aimed at urban habitat improvement**.
- The Board has been involved in significant initiatives like the **JNNURM** and the **"Housing for All" program**, which are aimed at achieving slum-free cities by providing sustainable housing solutions.

Tamil Nadu Leadership and Excellence to Nurture Talent (TALENT) scheme

Why in news?
- The **Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu (SDAT)** has **shifted to a digital selection process for athletes**.
- This new system **ensures accuracy in recording and ranking performances and enhances transparency**.

Key points:
- **Athletes can view their performance metric**s and results in **real-time online**.
- The system is used to select young athletes for the government-sponsored **Tamil Nadu Leadership and Excellence to Nurture Talent (TALENT) scheme**.

About TALENT scheme:
- The Tamil Nadu Leadership and Excellence to Nurture Talent (TALENT) scheme is an **initiative by the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu (SDAT)** designed **to identify and cultivate sports talent within the state**.
- The TALENT scheme **focuses on young student-athletes**, especially those in **school**, **from standard VI to college**.
- Potential candidates are **admitted to sports hostels and centers of excellence** through **state-level selection trials and counseling**.

PM – Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana

Why in news?
- The **Prime Minister's Rooftop Solar Scheme** in **Tamil Nadu has faced some challenges**.
- While officials **attributed the delay in the commissioning of the rooftop solar plants to the ongoing Lok Sabha elections**, sources said the actual reason was **glitches in the national portal**.

About PM – Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana:
- The scheme, also known as PM – Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, **aims to provide free electricity to households in India**.
- It was **launched by Prime Minister** on February 15, **2024**.
- Under the scheme, **households are provided with a subsidy** to **install solar panels** on their roofs.
- The **subsidy covers up to 40% of the cost** of the solar panels.
- The scheme is **expected to benefit 1 crore households** across India.
- It is estimated that the **scheme will save the government Rs. 75,000 crore per year in electricity costs**.

Important Government schemes of TN

Why in news?

- The **various schemes implemented by Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu** that are **contributing to Tamil Nadu's growth**.

Government schemes of TN:

- **Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam Scheme**: This scheme **ensures doorstep delivery of healthcare to the needy people** in the state.
- **Naan Muthalvan Scheme**: About Rs 200 crore was allocated for **establishing skill labs and training students of 100 arts and science and engineering colleges** under this scheme.
- **Monthly Honorarium**: The government allocated Rs 13,720 crore for **distributing Rs 1,000 each as a monthly honorarium to 1.15 crore eligible homemakers** in the state.
- **Puthumai Penn Scheme**: This scheme **promotes higher education among girls who studied from Classes 6 to 12 in government school**s.
- **CM's Village Roads Development Project**: Under this project, **10,000 km long panchayat roads were developed**.

India Skills Competition 2024

Why in news?

- The **India Skills Competition 2024** has drawn **maximum participation from the southern states**.
- **Tamil Nadu** has the highest number of participants (**86**), followed by **Karnataka (61)**.

Key points:

- **Other southern states** participating are **Andhra Pradesh (42)**, **Kerala (34)**, and **Telangana (33)**, making a combined force of 265 skilled competitors.
- **Odisha has 64 candidates, while Maharashtra and Punjab have 57 and 53 participants** respectively.
- The competition is **implemented by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)**, under the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship**.
- **Winners of IndiaSkills 2024 will prepare for the WorldSkills Competition in Lyon, France** in September 2024.
- About 2.5 lakh candidates registered for the competition on the **Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH) Portal**, out of which 26,000 were shortlisted for state and district level competition, and 900+ students were further shortlisted for the national competition.
- New-age skills like **autonomous mobile robotics, automobile repairing, cloud computing**, and **mechatronics** are popular in this edition of IndiaSkills 2024.

Tamil Nadu Government Employee New Health Insurance Scheme

Why in news?

- The **Tamil Nadu Government Employee New Health Insurance Scheme** and a **private hospital** in Madurai asked to **pay a compensation of ₹1 lakh**.
- The compensation is **due to the denial of cashless treatment to a consumer**.

About Tamil Nadu Government Employee New Health Insurance Scheme:

- The Tamil Nadu Government Employee New Health Insurance Scheme is a **health care assistance program for the employees of Government Departments, State Public Sector Undertakings, Statutory Boards, Local Bodies, State Government Universities, and their eligible family members**.
- The scheme provides **health care assistance up to the limit of Rs. 5.00 lakh** in a block of 4 years **commencing from 01-07-2021 to 30-06-2025**.
- A sum of **Rs.10/-** is recovered as **subscription every month** from the Government employee.
- Assistance to the tune of **75% of the expenses or Rs.1.00 lakh whichever is less is granted to those who apply for assistance** with the documents relating to treatment taken for ailments approved under the scheme.
- The scheme also **includes the empanelment of Accredited Tamil Nadu Medical Services Corporation Limited Radiotherapy Centres**

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)

Why in news?

- The **Tamil Nadu government revised the wage rate for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)**.
- The Tamil Nadu government issued an order on Friday to **revise the wage rate for MGNREGS from Rs 294 to Rs 319 per person per day**.

About MGNREGS:

- MGNREGS is an Indian **social security measure** aimed at **guaranteeing the 'right to work'**.
- It was **launched in 2006 by the Ministry of Rural Development**, Government of India.
- **Objective**: The primary objective is to **enhance livelihood security in rural areas** by providing **at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every household** whose **adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work**.
- MGNREGS is implemented under the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005**.
- The scheme is **applicable to all rural areas of India**.
- It is a **centrally sponsored scheme** with the central government bearing the majority of the costs.
- Every registered household is provided with a **job card**, which **entitles them to apply for work and record the number of days worked**.

6,208 rural roads have been developed in the last three years

Context:
- The **Tamil Nadu government has made significant stride**s in **improving rural connectivity by developing over 6,208 rural road**s in **the last three years**.
- According to the **release issued by the state government**, **6,208 roads in rural areas (under Rural Development and Panchayat Raj department) of Tamil Nadu have been developed at the cost of Rs 1,484 crore.**
- **Also the construction of 2,97,414 houses have been completed under the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj department**.
- **Concrete roof structures were developed at Rs 4,035.65 crore and bank loans of Rs 71,960.43 crore were given to the 2,56,508 women self-help-groups.**
- Also **employment opportunities for 92,003 youths were created through 511 private employment camps**.

Wind energy in Tamil nadu

Why in news?
- **Wind energy** is making a **significant contribution to Tamil Nadu's power supply**, providing nearly **one-fourth of the state's total energy demand**.
- It has allowed the **Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (Tangedco) to reduce its power purchase costs**.

Key points:
- **Tamil Nadu has an installed wind power capacity of 9,019 MW**, which is the **second largest in the country after Gujarat**.
- **Windmills in Tamil Nadu generated 94 million units (MU)**, out of the **state's total energy consumption of 393 MU**.

About Wind energy:
- It is a **clean, renewable power source** that **harnesses the natural wind to generate electricity**.
- It's **created using wind turbines**, which **convert the kinetic energy of the wind into mechanical power** to spin a generator.

Science & Technology

Cybersecurity
Why in news?
- The **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras** has launched a **program to teach the basics of cybersecurity to school students**.
- The **program is a joint effort by IIT-Madras Pravartak Technologies Foundation, Rotary District 3232**, and the **Forensics Intelligence Surveillance and Security Technologies (FISST) Academy**.

Key points:
- The **students will learn the basics of cybersecurity**, including **understanding cyber threats, safe internet practices, data privacy, and digital hygiene**.
- The training will feature interactive sessions, workshops, and hands-on activities led by seasoned professionals and cybersecurity experts.
- The **training will teach students the need to protect their personal information, safeguard sensitive data**, and **prioritize privacy in digital interactions**

West Nile fever

Why in news?
- **The Tamil Nadu Health Department has increased surveillance**.
- This action is **focused** on villages in the **Coimbatore district that border Kerala**.
- The **reason for this is the confirmed cases of West Nile fever** in the neighbouring state, Kerala.

About West Nile fever:
- **Cause and Transmission**:
  - West Nile fever is **caused by the West Nile virus**, which is **part of the Flaviviridae family**.
  - It is **primarily transmitted to humans through the bites of infected mosquitoes**, with the **Culex species being the most common vector**.
- **Symptoms**:
  - Many people infected with West Nile virus **do not show symptoms**.
  - Less than 1% of infected people develop a serious **neurological illness** such as **encephalitis or meningitis**.
- West Nile virus is **found in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, North America, and West Asia**.

Yellow fever
Why in news?
- The **Tamil Nadu Health Department** has designated three centres in the state to **administer the vaccine for yellow fever**.
- No other private or government agency is authorised to offer the vaccine.

About Yellow fever:
- Yellow fever is a **viral hemorrhagic disease transmitted primarily by mosquitoes**.
- **Causative Agent**: The yellow fever virus, a **Flavivirus**.
- **Transmission**:
  - Primarily through the bite of infected **Aedes aegypti mosquitoes**.

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○ Can also be transmitted by other **Aedes and Haemagogus species** mosquitoes.
● Found in **tropical and subtropical areas** of **Africa** and **South America**.

Dengue

Why in news?

● The **Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine (DPH)** in Tamil Nadu issued **guidelines to control dengue cases** in the state.

About Dengue:

● Dengue is **caused by the dengue virus (DENV)**, which is **transmitted to humans through the bites of infected Aedes mosquitoes**, primarily **Aedes aegypti**.
● **Symptoms**: Sudden high fever, Severe headaches, Pain behind the eyes, Joint and muscle pain, Nausea and vomiting, Fatigue, Skin rash, which appears 2-5 days after the onset of fever, Mild bleeding (nosebleeds, gum bleeding, easy bruising)
● **Dengvaxia** is the **only licensed dengue vaccine**, recommended for individuals aged 9-45 years who have had a prior dengue infection

Centre for Energy Research

Why in news?

● The **Indian Institute of Technology Madras' energy consortium** has partnered with **Shell India** to **establish the Shell IIT-M Centre for Energy Research**.
● This collaboration will **focus on innovation, research and development, and commercialization of technologies in the energy sector**.
● Initiatives will include the **creation of a Shell chair professorship at the institute**

Radiation Metrology and National Standards for Ionising Radiation (RM-NSIR)

Why in news?

● The two-day theme meeting on **Radiation Metrology and National Standards for Ionising Radiation (RM-NSIR)** was **organized by the Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research (IGCAR)** and held in **Kalpakkam**.

About RM-NSIR:

● **Overview**:
  ○ Radiation Metrology involves the **measurement of ionizing radiation and its properties**.
  ○ **National Standards for Ionising Radiation (NSIR) ensure the accuracy and consistency** of these measurements.
● **Objectives**:
  ○ **Establish and maintain national measurement standards** for **ionizing radiation**.
  ○ Ensure **traceability of radiation measurements** to international standards.
  ○ Support regulatory frameworks and safety protocols involving ionizing radiation.
● **Applications**:

- ○ **Healthcare**: Ensuring accurate dosimetry in radiotherapy and diagnostic imaging.
- ○ **Nuclear Industry**: Monitoring radiation levels for safety and environmental protection.
- ○ **Research**: Supporting scientific studies involving ionizing radiation.
- ○ **Regulatory Compliance**: Assisting in the enforcement of radiation protection standards.

Agnibaan SOrTeD

Why in news?

- **Agnikul Cosmos Private Limited**, a **Chennai-based space start-up**, successfully **launched its first rocket, Agnibaan Sub Orbital Technology Demonstrator (SOrTeD)**.

About Agnibaan:

- **Rocket Name**: **Agnibaan SOrTeD** (SubOrbital Technological Demonstrator)
- **Launch Date**: Thursday, May 30, **2024**
- **Location**: **Satish Dhawan Space Centre**, Sriharikota
- **Significance**:
  - ○ **First launch from a private launchpad** in India.
  - ○ **First semi-cryogenic engine powered rocket** launch in India.
  - ○ **World's first single piece 3D printed engine** designed and **built indigenously**.

Agriculture & Animal Husbandry

Cauvery Water Regulation Committee

Why in news?

- The **Tamil Nadu government has decided to take legal action against Karnataka** for **refusing to release water**, as the state is facing a water crisis with low reservoir levels.
- The government is seeking the **intervention of the Supreme Court to resolve the dispute**.
- This move comes after the **Cauvery Water Regulation Committee** recommended the release of water from Karnataka reservoirs.

About Cauvery Water Regulation Committee:

- The Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) is an essential body **established to oversee the implementation of water sharing** and **regulation among the states in the Cauvery River basin**.
- The **CWRC was set up** following **directions from the Supreme Court of India**, which mandated its formation to ensure the proper implementation of the **Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal's (CWDT)** final order.
- The **committee includes members** from the central government and the states of **Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, and Puducherry**, which are the parties involved in the

Cauvery water dispute.

Artificially-ripened mangoes

Why in news?
- The **Food Safety Department of Tamil Nadu** is continuing its **drive against the sale of artificially-ripened mangoes**.

About Artificially-ripened mangoes:
- Artificially ripened mangoes are often **treated with chemicals like calcium carbide to speed up the ripening process**.
- **Ripening Agents**: Common chemicals used include **calcium carbide, ethylene gas, and ethephon**.
- **Calcium carbide is strictly prohibited** under the **FSSAI's Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales Regulation, 2011**.
- The **chemical has traces of arsenic and phosphorous hydride**, which may result in vomiting, diarrhea, weakness, ulcers on the skin, permanent eye damage, and shortness of breath.
- **Artificially ripened mangoes often have a uniform color** and **may appear more yellow or orange than naturally ripened ones**.

Decentralised Seed Multiplier (DSM)

Why in news?
- The **ICAR-Central Tuber Crops Research Institute (ICAR-CTCRI)** is planning to expand a **Decentralised Seed Multiplier (DSM) programme** to more States.
- The programme aims to ensure the **availability of good quality planting material of tropical tuber crops**.
- **Currently**, the Decentralised Seed Multiplier (DSM) **programme is being implemented in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha**.

About Decentralised Seed Multiplier (DSM):
- DSM is a system designed to **enhance the availability of quality seeds by involving local farmers** in the production and distribution process.
- **Objectives**:
  - Increase seed accessibility and affordability.
  - Improve seed quality and yield.
  - Empower local farmers through training and participation.
- **Key Components**:
  - **Farmer Selection**: Identifying and training local farmers to become seed multipliers.
  - **Training and Support**: Providing technical training, resources, and ongoing support to seed multipliers.
  - **Quality Control**: Implementing standards and protocols to ensure the production of high-quality seeds.

- ○ **Distribution Networks**: Establishing efficient distribution channels to ensure seeds reach a wide range of farmers.

Social & Welfare Issues

Manual scavenging

Why in news?
- The **Madras High Court** expressed concern over the **conditions of conservancy workers employed in manual scavenging** and the **resultant deaths**.
- The court issued a set of 19 guidelines to the government to effectively deal with the issue and asked to **eradicate the practice by at least 2026**.

Key points:
- The court acknowledged the **right of a human corpse for decent burial/cremation** and **right to sleep as fundamental rights**, but noted that the practice of manual scavenging still persists.
- The **court termed manual scavenging as a bane on society** that **perpetuates the violation of human rights and dignity of marginalised communities**.
- The guidelines included steps to ensure **mechanisation of clearing of sewer, septic tank and stormwater drains**
- The court urged the authorities to ensure strict implementation and compliance of the **Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2023**.

'En Kalloori Kanavu' initiative

Why in news?
- The '**En Kalloori Kanavu**' **initiative** has been launched by the **Adi Dravidar** and **Tribal Welfare Department.**
- The aim is **to imnprove the higher education enrolment rate among students from the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) communities** and **reduce the number of dropouts**.

Key points:
- The initiative is a **higher education and career guidance program**.
- The program **aims to help nearly 1.28 lakh SC and ST students who studied in government**, **government-aided**, **Adi Dravidar and tribal welfare schools** in the State and appeared for the **Class XII board exams**.
- The **department has also created a database of the various higher education courses** available and mapped them district-wise to help students know the availability of various courses in the colleges near their locality.

Tamil Nadu Kasanoi Erappila Thittam (TN-KET)

Why in news?

- A **study published in the Tamil Nadu Journal of Public Health and Medical Research** suggests that **therapeutic nutrition** and **inpatient care** should be **given to those with very severe undernutrition at TB diagnosis**.
- **34 percent of incident TB** in India is **attributed to undernutrition**.

Key points:

- **Therapeutic nutrition** involves **liquid formula feeds** that can be **prepared in hospital kitchens using available ingredients**.
- It should also be **in line with the standards of the World Health Organisation** and **Central TB Division recommendations**.
- The **Tamil Nadu Kasanoi Erappila Thittam (TN-KET)**, a **TB death-free initiative**, has been implemented since April **2022**, with an **aim to reduce mortality due to TB**.

About key features of the TN-KET initiative:

- **Differentiated TB Care**: This is at the heart of the initiative, which aims at assessing whether people with TB need ambulatory care or admission in a health facility to manage severe illness at the time of diagnosis.
- **Radiological Assessment**: The guidelines require comprehensive assessment of 16 clinical, laboratory, and radiological parameters.
- **Triage of Assessment**: The preliminary assessment of patients based on just **three conditions** — **very severe undernutrition**, **respiratory insufficiency**, and **inability to stand without support** — was found to be feasible for quick identification at diagnosis.

Fish processing units affecting quality of life
Context:

- **Residents of Pottaloorani village in Ellainayakkanpatti panchayat, Thoothukudi, have filed a petition with the State Human Rights Commission (SHRC)**, demanding the revocation of licenses for three fish processing units accused of polluting the environment.
- This complaint arises from concerns over compromised hygiene, fresh air, and clean water. The village recently made headlines when locals boycotted the Lok Sabha elections on April 19, leading to a confrontation that **blocked Fisheries Minister Anitha R Radhakrishnan from entering the village.**

College Dream' Programme Launches in Tamil Nadu to Guide Students

Context:

- **Tamil Nadu's 'College Dream' programme, initiated by Chief Minister MK Stalin** under the 'Naan Mudhalvan' scheme, commenced today across multiple districts including Chennai, Trichy, and Coimbatore.

Aims:

- **This initiative, aimed at helping students navigate their higher education options, follows the release of the Class 12 examination results.**

- Designed to provide comprehensive guidance on choosing the right degree and diploma courses, the programme also offers insights into potential job opportunities post-graduation.
- **Counsellors assigned to various schools across the state will assist students in their higher education applications.**

Goal:

- The programme is set to expand to other districts such as Chengalpattu, **Tiruppur, and Erode over the coming days, ensuring that students across Tamil Nadu receive the support they need to fulfill their educational aspirations**

Innuyir Kaappom programme

Why in news?

- The **Tamil Nadu Government** introduced the **Innuyir Kaappom programme** to **provide immediate medical assistance to those injured in road accidents**.
- The programme is particularly **aimed at helping those who are not accompanied by their families**.

About Innuyir Kaappom programme:

- The "Innuyir Kaappom" program, launched by the Tamil Nadu government, aims to **provide critical medical aid to road accident victims**.
- The scheme is **designed to cover emergency medical expenses for road accident victims within the first 48 hours of the incident**, offering **up to ₹1 lakh per person for treatment**.
- It is **operational in 683 hospitals** across Tamil Nadu, including **both government and private hospitals**.
- The program is **available to all**, **irrespective of their domicile status** or **whether they are insured** under the Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme.

Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu (SDAT)

Why in news?

- The **Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu (SDAT)** has announced the postponement of the state level examinations for the admission of sports hostel students.

About SDAT:

- The Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu is the **official sports organ of the Government of Tamil Nadu**.
- **Establishment**: SDAT was established in **1992**.
- **Primary Objective**: **Promote and develop sports activities** and **infrastructure** in Tamil Nadu.
- **Headquarters**: Located in **Chennai**, Tamil Nadu.
- **Functions**:

- ○ Organizing state-level and national-level sports competitions.
- ○ Implementing sports development schemes and policies.
- ○ Providing coaching and training facilities for athletes.
- ○ Managing and maintaining sports infrastructure across the state.

Puthiya Bharatha Ezhutharivu Thittam 2022-2027

Why in news?

- The **School Education Department** is conducting a survey under the **New India Literary Programme (NILP) or Puthiya Bharatha Ezhutharivu Thittam 2022-2027**.
- The **survey is being conducted through the Tamil Nadu Directorate of Non-Formal and Adult Education**.

About Puthiya Bharatha Ezhutharivu Thittam 2022-2027:

- The Puthiya Bharatha Ezhutharivu Thittam 2022-2027 is a **comprehensive literacy program** aimed at **making Tamil Nadu a fully literate state by 2030**.
- **Objective**: The program **aims to provide basic literacy**, **numeracy, and life skills** to **all illiterate adults aged 15 and above in Tamil Nadu**.
- **Implementation Period**: It is a five-year plan running from **2022 to 2027**.
- **Target Population**: Initially, the **program targets adults aged 15-35**, with a **goal to educate 5 crore individuals by 2027**. The focus will then expand to include those aged above 35.
- **Curriculum**: The program covers **foundational literacy and numeracy**, as well as **critical life skills such as financial literacy, digital literacy, healthcare, vocational skills, and family welfare**.

Naan Mudhalvan scheme

Why in news?

- The **Naan Mudhalvan scheme** was **introduced by the Tamil Nadu government**.
- The scheme has **positively impacted the lives of 6,714 students in Madurai district**.

About Naan Mudhalvan scheme:

- **Objective**:
  - ○ To **enhance the skills and employability of students in Tamil Nadu**.
  - ○ Aimed at **bridging the gap between academic education and industry requirements**.
- **Target Group**:
  - ○ **Students from schools and colleges** in Tamil Nadu.
  - ○ **Focuses on final year students** who are about to enter the job market.
- **Key Features**:
  - ○ Provides **industry-relevant training** in various domains.
  - ○ **Offers career guidance and counseling sessions**.
  - ○ Includes **courses on soft skills, technical skills, and emerging technologies**.

○ Incorporates hands-on training and internship opportunities with industry partners

Tamil Nadu Seeks Approval for Six New Government Medical Colleges from NMC

Context:

- Tamil Nadu is seeking approval from the National **Medical Commission (NMC) to establish six new government medical colleges.**
- This initiative aims to **enhance the state's healthcare infrastructure and increase the availability of medical education.**

Key Points:

- **Approval Request:** Tamil Nadu to seek NMC approval for six new government medical colleges.
- **Objective:** Improve healthcare infrastructure and expand medical education.
- **Locations:** Proposed locations include Ramanathapuram, Virudhunagar, Nilgiris, Kallakurichi, Tenkasi, and Namakkal.
- **Benefits**: Increase in medical seats, better access to healthcare services, and regional development.

NSS in schools, colleges of Tamil Nadu are top source for environment info among students: Study

Context:

- A r**ecent study by the Citizen Consumer and Civic Action Group** revealed that **activities conducted by the National Service Scheme (NSS) in Tamil Nadu schools and colleges are the primary source of environmental information for students.**
- The survey findings show that **NSS programs contribute 15.4%** of the learning materials on environmental protection, **surpassing other sources like social media (12.8%)** and **even mandatory environmental studies courses (11.4%).**

- This **highlights the effectiveness of the NSS in engaging students in practical environmental activities beyond the classroom**.
- These activities, likely conducted in adopted villages or communities, provide firsthand experience and raise awareness about environmental issues.

Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam scheme

Why in news?
- The **Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam scheme** in **Virudhunagar**, Tamil Nadu, has **significantly benefited the local population**.

About Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam scheme:
- **Objective**: To **deliver essential healthcare services directly to the doorsteps of beneficiaries**, particularly targeting the elderly and those with chronic illnesses.
- **Launch Date**: August 5, **2021**.
- **Launched By**: Government of **Tamil Nadu**.
- **Target Beneficiaries**:
  - Elderly citizens
  - Individuals with mobility issues
  - Patients with non-communicable diseases like diabetes and hypertension
- **Services Provided**:
  - Screening for non-communicable diseases
  - Distribution of necessary medications
  - Physiotherapy services
  - Home-based healthcare consultations

International Relations

Global conference on Lord Murugan to be held on August 24, 25 in Palani

Context:
- A **two-day global conference on Lord Murugan, titled "Muthamizh Murugan Manadu 2024"**, will be **held on August 24th and 25th in Palani, Tamil Nadu.**
- This **holy town is one of the six sacred abodes of Murugan.**
- **It is organized by the Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR&CE) department.**

About:
- **Lord Murugan, also known as Kartikeya, Skanda, and Subrahmanya**, is a prominent Hindu deity in South India, particularly among the Tamils.
- He is considered the:

- **God of War**: A powerful warrior, depicted riding a peacock and wielding a spear (Vel) symbolizing his divine power.
- **Son of Shiva and Parvati: The elder brother of Ganesha.**
- **Symbol of Youth and Victory**: Often worshipped for his youthful energy and ability to overcome challenges

World Species Congress

Why in news?
- A **World Species Congress** was organised at the Cairn Hill Eco-Awareness Centre, **Ooty**.
- The event was **organised by Muddy Boots Nilgiris in collaboration with the BERU Foundation**.

About World Species Congress:
- The World Species Congress is a **global movement that aims to ignite strategic cooperation** and **action to ensure the survival of wild species and ecosystems**.
- The **first-ever World Species Congress is scheduled to take place on May 15, 2024**.
- The **idea for a World Species Congress was proposed in 2008** during the **World Conservation Congress in Barcelona**.

Person in News & Awards

Uma Ramanan

Why in news?
- **Popular Tamil playback singer Uma Ramanan** has **passed away**.
- She was **known for her song** '**Poongathave Thal Thiravai**'.

About Uma Ramanan:
- **Birth and Background**: Uma Ramanan was born in Tamil Nadu, India. Her exact birth year is noted as either 1954 or 1955.
- **Musical Style and Training**: Uma Ramanan was known for her **Carnatic music skills** and had undergone training under **Pazhani Vijaylakshmi**

Moosa Raza

Why in news?
- Moosa Raza, aged 87, the **former Chief Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir** and **chairman of the Southern Indian Education Trust (SIET)**, **passed away** in Chennai.

About Moosa Raza:
- Mr. Raza was born in Meenambur village in **Villupuram district, Tamil Nadu**.
- He **joined the Indian Administrative Service in 1960** after earning his honours in English language and literature from the **University of Madras**.

- He **served the Gujarat and Central governments** in various capacities, including the **Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister of Gujarat** and **Chief Secretary, Government of Jammu and Kashmir**.
- After retiring from Government service, he **served as a member of the National Integration Council of India**

Temple Chariot Rangoli art work

Why in news?
- A **Temple Chariot Rangoli artwork** by a student has been displayed on the **campus of NIFT TEA College of Knitwear Fashion in Tiruppur**.
- **This artwork has earned an entry into the Limca Book of Records**.

Key points:
- Arun Kumar took inspiration from artists who skillfully **use a combination of geometric shapes, floral patterns, and traditional motifs to create visuals that resemble the grand chariots used in temple processions**.
- He used a **single stroke technique to create the intricate designs in a space of 525 square feet**.
- In ancient times, **chariots were an essential part of temple festivals**, **used to carry deities in grand processions**

Nursing Excellence Award 2024

Why in news?
- **TwinTech Healthcare Academy in Chennai** recently awarded 20 nurses with the **'Nursing Excellence Award 2024'**.
- The awards were given on the occasion of **International Nurses Day** to **highlight the crucial role nurses play in society's well-being**.
- **International Nurses Day** is observed on **May 12**

M. Selvaraj

Why in news?
- **M. Selvaraj**, a **Lok Sabha MP from Nagapattinam passed away**.

About M. Selvaraj:
- M. Selvaraj was a **member of the Communist Party of India (CPI)**.
- He was **elected as the Lok Sabha MP four times** – in 1989, 1996, 1998, and 2019.

- He started his political career as a local committee member from Needamangalam and rose up the ranks to become the district secretary of Nagapattinam and a **national council member of the CPI**.

Importants Days

World Red Cross Day: A Global Tribute to Humanitarian Efforts

Significance of World Red Cross Day

- World Red Cross Day, celebrated annually on May 8, marks the birth of Henry Dunant, founder of the Red Cross and first Nobel Peace Prize winner.
- This day honors the organization's pivotal role in global humanitarian efforts.

Historical Background

- Originating from the 1859 Battle of Solferino, the Red Cross was formalized in 1863 by Dunant.
- It focuses on non-partisan aid to the wounded in wars and conflicts and upholds the Geneva Conventions—principles ratified globally for the treatment of wartime individuals.

2024 Celebrations and Theme

- The 2024 theme, **"I give with joy, and the joy I give is a reward,"** highlights the joy of giving through service.
- Activities include blood drives, first aid sessions, and public awareness campaigns, emphasizing community and volunteerism.

Global Impact

- Today, the Red Cross operates worldwide, advocating for peace and supporting those in crisis zones, symbolizing a beacon of hope and humanity.

International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers

Context:

- **International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers is observed annually on May 29t**h
- This day **honors the establishment of the first UN peacekeeping mission in 1948**
- It recognizes the **service and sacrifice of peacekeepers globally**.
- This day commemorates the bravery of those currently serving and pays tribute to peacekeepers who lost their lives working for peace.

Theme:

- Theme for 2024 International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers is **"Fit for the Future: Building Better Together"**
- It emphasizes adapting to evolving challenges and collaboration for effective peacekeeping.

Kodai Vizha

Why in news?

- The **61st 'Kodai Vizha'**, **Kodaikanal's famed flower show festival for the summer**, is all set to begin **at Bryant Park**.

About Kodai Vizha:

- Kodai Vizha is an **annual festival** that takes place in **Kodaikanal**, hill station located in **Tamil Nadu**.
- Kodai Vizha is **held in May during the summer**.
- The festival showcases a **display of flowers**.
- The festival is **organized by the Department of Tourism**, Tamil Nadu.
- The festival also **showcases both traditional and folk arts**

Governor RN Ravi Declares Vaikasi Anusham as True Thiruvalluvar Day

Context:

Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi has stated that "Vaikasi Anusham" is the true Thiruvalluvar Day, aligning with the birth star of the revered Tamil poet and philosopher Thiruvalluvar.
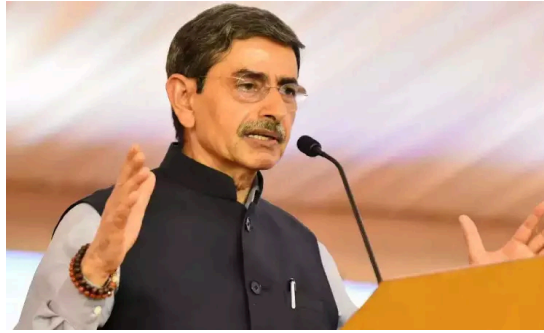
Key Points:

- **Historical Accuracy**: Governor Ravi emphasizes celebrating Thiruvalluvar Day on Vaikasi Anusham to honour the poet's actual birth star.
- **Cultural Significance**: Thiruvalluvar is celebrated for his contributions to Tamil literature, particularly the "Thirukkural".

About:

- Thiruvalluvar, also known as **Valluvar, was a celebrated Tamil poet, sage, and philosopher**, widely known for his work, the **Thirukkural**, considered one of the **most important works in Tamil literature.**
- The Thirukkural is a collection of 1,330 couplets or aphorisms, organized into 133 sections, **providing guidance on various aspects of life such as moral and civic virtues, love and romance, politics and governance, and family and society.**
- Thiruvalluvar is **revered as a great moralist and thinker in Tamil culture.**

CM Stalin Criticizes Kerala's Mullaperiyar Dam Plan, Citing Supreme Court Rulings

Context:

- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin has condemned **Kerala's plan to construct a new dam at Mullaperiyar, citing a violation of the Supreme Court's orders.**
- He has written to Union Minister Bhupender Yadav, expressing strong objections.

Key Points:

- **Objection Raised:** CM Stalin objects to Kerala's proposal for a new dam at Mullaperiyar, stating it violates Supreme Court rulings.
- **Supreme Court Rulings:** The Supreme Court had previously deemed the existing Mullaperiyar Dam safe.
- **Legal Action**: Tamil Nadu plans to take legal action if the Supreme Court's orders are not followed.
- **Coordination**: Kerala's Irrigation Design & Research Board's environmental impact assessment (EIA) study is under scrutiny.

Additional Information:

- The existing Mullaperiyar Dam, managed by Tamil Nadu, has been a point of **contention between the two states, with safety and water resource management being critical issues.**

Tamil Language and Research Conference

Why in news?
- **Anna University** is set to **host a Tamil Language and Research Conference** on August 13, 2024.
- The **conference will focus on the multifaceted development of the Tamil language and literature**, as well as the **status of Tamil in modern technology**.

Key points:
- It is **organized in collaboration with** the **Centre for Development of Tamil in Engineering and Technology**, **Anna University**, the **International Academy of Tamil Language and Culture**, and the **Madras Development Society**.
- **The conference will cover a wide range of topics, including**
  - the **use of Tamil in various educational institutions**, **government offices**, and in **fields such as law, medicine, engineering, and the arts**.
  - It will also **explore the role of Tamil in media** and **artificial intelligence**.
- This event follows the **first World Tamil Development Conference** held on August 12, 2023, at Tamil Nadu Open University, Chennai.