

**IACE**

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

**23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

**DESCRIPTIVE**

## ❖ Kerala Prestigious Literary Award 2020 - 'Neelachadayan'

- The 28-year-old daily wageer, who had to discontinue his studies to look after his family, recently bagged the Kerala Sahitya Akademi's annual award for literature for his 2020 collection of short stories "Neelachadayan".
- The title taken from a cannabis strain found in Kerala's Idukki district. The stories in the book delve into the lives of common people in northern Kerala, for instance, the hardships faced by Theyyam artists, who practise the art form comprising dance, mime and music.
- Akhil's nights at work became a canvas for his creative expression. His triumph over adversity making him a fitting topic for one of his own stories perhaps.

## ❖ India's Pragati Maidan complex transformed into world-class MICE destination, to host G20 leaders meetings on July 26

- The redeveloped ITPO complex, which will host India's G20 Leaders meetings will be inaugurated on 26th July.
- As part of the Pragati Maidan redevelopment project, the IECC (Integrated Exhibition-cum-Convention Centre) is being built as a modern complex.
- In January 2017, the government approved the proposal of ITPO for the redevelopment of Pragati Maidan by setting up of a world-class IECC in the national capital.
- The total cost of the project is Rs 2,254 crore. The growing MICE sector needs this kind of investment in the country.
- The redevelopment of Pragati Maidan was envisaged in two phases.
- With a campus area of about 123 acres, the complex will be one of the largest MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) destinations.
- ITPO is a body under the commerce ministry. It runs the exhibition centre at Pragati Maidan and is developing IECC at level 3 of the complex, a 7,000 seating capacity convention centre has been developed.
- The Group of Twenty (G20) comprises 19 countries (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of

Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Türkiye, United Kingdom and United States) and the European Union.

➤ The members represent around 85 per cent of the global GDP, over 75 per cent of the global trade, and about two-thirds of the world population.

### ❖ **Historic Ukrainian cathedral badly damaged by Russian strikes**

➤ Russian missiles badly damaged a historic Orthodox cathedral in the southern Ukrainian port city of Odesa, sparking outrage and prompting President Zelensky to vow retaliation.

➤ The Transfiguration Cathedral is Odesa's largest church building. It was consecrated in 1809, destroyed during the Soviet era in 1936 before being rebuilt when Ukraine became an independent nation.

➤ The cathedral lies in Odesa's city center, which UNESCO named a World Heritage site amid the threat of Russia's invasion.

➤ Odesa is a key cultural center, and has long links with Russia. It was founded under Catherine the Great and was once Russia's second most important port.

### ❖ **CERT-In cautions internet users against Ransomware 'Akira' attack**

➤ An Internet ransomware virus 'Akira' that steals vital personal information and encrypts data leading to extortion of money from people has been reported in the cyberspace. This computer malware is targeting Windows and Linux-based systems.

➤ A recently emerged ransomware operation dubbed Akira is reportedly active in cyberspace. This group first steals the information from victims, then encrypt data on their systems and conducts double extortion to force the victim into paying the ransom.

➤ "In case the victim does not pay, they release their victim's data on their dark web blog," the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) said in a latest advisory to Internet users.

➤ The ransomware group is "known to access victim environments via VPN (virtual private network) services, particularly where users have not enabled multi-factor authentication."

➤ Ransomware is a computer malware that infects and blocks users from using their own data and system and they can get it back against a pay-off.

➤ This ransomware group has also utilised tools such as AnyDesk, WinRAR, and PCHunter during intrusions, adding these tools are often found in the victim's environment, and their misuse typically goes unnoticed.

- Describing the technical intrusion of the virus, 'Akira' deletes the Windows Shadow Volume Copies on the targeted device.
- The ransomware subsequently encrypts files with a predefined set of extensions and a '.akira' extension is appended to each encrypted file's name during this encryption process.
- In the encryption phase, the ransomware terminates active Windows services using the Windows Restart Manager API. This step prevents any interference with the encryption process, the advisory stated.
- The ransomware encrypts files found in various hard drive folders, excluding the ProgramData, Recycle Bin, Boot, System Volume Information, and Windows folders.
- The CERT-In also advised Internet users to use basic online hygiene and protection protocols to keep safe from such virus attacks in the online space.
- Users should also enforce strong password policies and multi-factor authentication (MFA) and void applying updates/patches available in any unofficial channel among other such measures to counter cyber and ransomware attacks.

#### ❖ Onions to be irradiated with Gamma rays

- The Centre is planning to irradiate onions with Gamma rays before sending them into cold storage on a pilot basis. Irradiation prevents sprouting and thus brings down post-harvest losses.
- Onion noticeably gets rotted and starts sprouting even in cold storage. To reduce post-harvest losses to 10-12% from prevailing 25%, we will send freshly procured onion to irradiation plants and then to cold storage.
- The perishable nature of onions, combined with lower processing penetration and sub-optimal storage infrastructure causes post-harvest losses.
- The Centre is considering irradiating around 4,000 tonnes of Rabi season onion after it kicks off procurement from April. In the 2023-24 Rabi marketing season, the Centre aims to procure about 300,000 tonnes of onion in anticipation of a bumper crop, beating last year's record procurement of 250,000 tonnes.
- Onion production in 2022-23 (July-June) is estimated to be 31.8 MT compared to 31.7 MT.
- Currently, red onions are being procured by the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India and National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India to support farmers amid falling prices. Kharif and late kharif onion or red onion is highly perishable and cannot be stored for over a month.

Therefore, the rabi variety, which accounts for 65% of the onion harvest and has a longer shelf life of about 5-7 months, would be considered for irradiation.

### ❖ **Central Government Officers will be Entitled To Electronics Up To ₹ 1.3 Lakh**

- Central government officers will be entitled to mobile, laptop or similar devices costing up to ₹ 1.3 lakh, which can be retained by them for personal use after 4 years.
- The Finance Ministry's Expenditure Department, in an office memorandum, listed out guidelines for the issuance of mobile, laptop, tablet, phablet, notebook, notepad, ultra-book, net-book or devices of similar categories to eligible officers for official work.
- As per the guidelines, all central government officers of the rank of deputy secretary and above will be entitled to such electronic devices.
- In the case of Section Officers and Under Secretaries, 50 per cent of the sanctioned strength can be issued such devices.
- Regarding the cost of the device, the office memorandum could be ₹ 1 lakh plus taxes. However, for devices with a Make-in-India component of more than 40 per cent, the price ceiling will be ₹ 1.30 lakh plus taxes.
- "No new device may be sanctioned to an officer who has already been allotted a device, in a ministry department, up to 4 years except in case of repair, which is declared as 'beyond economical repairs'".
- It further said post completion of four years of usage, the officer shall retain the device.
- "Concerned Ministry Department shall ensure that the data in the device is completely wiped out (data sanitised) before the device is handed over to the officer for retention," the memorandum.
- The memorandum dated July 21, 2023, supersedes the earlier one, which was issued on March 27, 2020, as per which the cost of such devices was capped at ₹ 80,000 and there was no provision for retention of devices for personal use.

## ❖ 108 feet tall statue of Lord Shri Ram in Kurnool, A.P

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah laid the foundation stone of 108 feet tall statue of Lord Shri Ram in Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh through video conferencing.
- The statue will be built at a cost of over 500 crore rupees. In his address, the statue to be installed in Mantralayam will give the message of Sanatan Dharma to the entire world, and it will strengthen the Vaishnava tradition.
- This project is spread over an area of 10 acres in Mantralayam village. It would be completed in two and a half years.
- The village is very famous for the temple of Raghavendra Swamy and the place has historical significance.
- He informed that under the Mantralayam Das Sahitya Prakalp, many initiatives, such as housing, Anna Daanam, Pran Daanam, Vidya Daanam, drinking water and cow protection have been taken.

## ❖ Korea Open 2023 badminton Satwiksairaj Rankireddy-Chirag Shetty win men's doubles title

- The Indian pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty came from behind to win the men's doubles title at the Korea Open 2023 badminton tournament in Yeosu.
- Satwik and Chirag beat Indonesian top seeds Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Rian Ardianto, world No. 1 in the badminton rankings, by a 17-21, 21-13, 21-14 scoreline in the title decider at the Jinnam Stadium.
- This was Satwik and Chirag's seventh title on the BWF World Tour. The Indian duo, who won the Swiss and Indonesia Open titles this year, have now been unbeaten on the BWF World Tour for 10 matches.
- Former world champion PV Sindhu is the only other Indian to clinch the Korea Open title, clinching the title in 2017.
- Results at the Korea Open count towards players' qualifying rankings for the Paris 2024 Olympics. The qualification window for badminton started on May 1 this year.

### ❖ **NTPC-Ramagundam reached its full capacity - 800MW**

- The first ultra-supercritical unit of the 2×800 MW Telangana Super Thermal Power Project of NTPC Ramagundam reached its full capacity performance by producing 801.6 MW. Chief General Manager, NTPC (Ramagundam & Telangana) Kedar Ranjan Pandu along with other staff celebrated the event.
- It may be recalled that the first of the two 800 MW units of the TSTPP was synchronized to the grid on March 24. Though the unit was prepared for full production, it failed to achieve the target due to technical problems.
- On July 18, the unit was resumed again and achieved the target by gradually increasing the production. A commercial operation declaration will be made after 72 hours of testing.

### ❖ **New Chief Justice Of Telangana High Court - Justice Alok Aradhe**

- Alok Aradhe, who was previously a judge of the Karnataka High Court, was administered the oath of office by Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan at an event held at the Raj Bhavan in Hyderabad.
- Justice Alok Aradhe succeeds justice Ujjal Bhuyan, who has been elevated to the post of judge of the Supreme Court.
- Born on April 13, 1964 at Raipur, Alok Aradhe enrolled as lawyer on July 12, 1988.
- He practiced at the High Court of Madhya Pradesh in Jabalpur, dealing with Civil and Constitutional, Arbitration and Company matters.
- He was appointed as the Additional judge of the High Court of Madhya Pradesh on December 29, 2009 and Permanent Judge on February 15, 2011.

### ❖ **E-auction of 808 FM radio stations across 284 cities soon - Anurag Thakur**

- The government will soon conduct an e-auction of 808 FM radio stations across 284 cities to further increase the footprint of radio communication.
- Addressing the Regional Community Radio Sammelan (North) here, the government has also eased the processes for getting a license to operate radio stations, particularly community radio, by reducing the number of compliances.
- India currently has 388 FM radio stations in 113 cities across 26 states and five Union Territories.
- Government is now planning a third batch of e-auction of 808 channels across 284 cities soon to further expand radio services.
- The government is setting up radio towers in remote areas to further improve coverage.

- The government plans to expand the FM network in Tier-II and Tier-III cities with a focus on aspirational and Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected districts.
  - Earlier this year, the government approved the Broadcasting Infrastructure and Network Development scheme which is expected to increase the coverage of AIR FM transmitters in the country to 66 % by geographical area and 80 % by population up from 59 % and 68 % respectively.
- The scheme also envisages free distribution of more than eight lakh DD Free Dish set-top boxes to people living in remote, tribal, LWE affected and border areas.