

February 21 Current Affairs 2018

(TNPSC, SSC, BANK, UPSC, RAILWAY)



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State :

Tamilnadu :

Unable to port out of Aircel, say customers

- Aircel customers across Tamil Nadu have expressed concern that they are not able to port out of the telecom service provider. Some of them said that connectivity has also been an issue for the last few days and calls are getting dropped randomly .
- Company officials say infrastructure is facing capacity issues because of a rise in requests .

Water released from Kuppanatham Dam

- Water was released from Kuppanatham Dam in Chengam taluk for irrigation of 9,728.04 acres of land on Wednesday. The water will be released for 25 days. .
- The water level stood at 58.95 feet as against the dam's total level of 59.04 feet as on 7 a.m. on Wednesday. The dam's present storage is 699.16 mcft, against its total storage capacity of 700 mcft .

Kamal Haasan takes the plunge, launches Makkal Needhi Maiam

- Veteran actor Kamal Haasan February 21 launched his political party, the Makkal Needhi Maiam (People's Justice Centre), projecting himself as a serious alternative to the Dravidian majors in **Tamil Nadu**.
- Explaining where his ideology lay, he said, "People are asking me if I am left or right (in ideology). That's why we have 'maiam' (centre) in our party (name). We will absorb all good things from whichever direction they come."

Fire at railway DRM office

- "The officers were dispersing after a parade when they spotted the smoke. Personnel at the RPF control room on the fifth floor also spotted the smoke and came down," said a RPF officer .

Kerala :

Fire destroys 60 hectares of forest

- Close to 40 hectares of grassland was destroyed in the fire. The timely intervention of forest officials prevented the fire from spreading. Close to 70 persons, including forest watchers and members of the Vana Samrakshana Samithi, took nearly seven hours to douse the fire.

HC restrain on Consumerfed MD

- A Division Bench of the **Kerala** High Court february 21 retrained M. Ramanunny from functioning as Managing Director (MD) of Kerala State Cooperative Consumers' Federation Limited (Consumerfed).Petitioner says appointment not governed by recruitment rules .

Writer-activist K. Panoor dead

- Author and civic rights activist K. Panoor died here on Tuesday. He was 91.Kunhiraman Panoor, who assumed K. Panoor as his pen name, died at a hospital here where he had been admitted owing to age-related ailments. A native of Panur here, he had been active in the literary, cultural and social fields in the region .

Karanataka :

Two private universities to be set up

- Higher Education Minister Basavaraja Rayareddi said Shri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara Educational Society, Ujire, Dakshina Kannada, would establish one university. It would offer a variety of undergraduate and postgraduate courses.
- The Khaja Bandanawaz Educational Society, Kalaburagi, would establish another University for imparting teaching, training, consultancy, research and development in science, social science, management and other subjects.

Amit Shah visits Krishna Mutt in Udupi

- Amit Shah, President of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) visited the Sri Krishna Mutt/Temple in Udupi on Wednesday and offered his prayers. Vidyadheesha Tirtha Swami of Paryaya Palimar Mutt, B.S. Yeddyurappa, former Chief Minister, and Nalini Kateel, MP, were among those present .

Andhra Pradesh :

Mangrove cover registers healthy growth in Andhra Pradesh

- The India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2017, released by the Forest Survey of India on Monday, shows that there has been a net increase of 37 sq. km of mangrove cover across Andhra Pradesh since 2015
- “Protection measures being taken in the sanctuaries, afforestation taken up in the past few years are the very immediate reasons for the increase in mangrove cover. Those planted a few years ago could only be traced in the satellite imagery,” State Chief Wildlife Warden N. Pradeep Kumar told .

Focus on improving crop productivity, researchers told

- Agricultural researchers should focus on improving crop productivity“According to the projections by United Nations, the global population is predicted to rise from 7.2 billion to 9.7 billion by 2050 and it is presumed that about 370 million people will remain undernourished, globally, based on the current pace of agricultural production enhancement.

India :

New law cannot cure pre-Aadhaar Act ‘data breaches’, says SC

- The judge, who is a part of the Constitution Bench led by Chief Justice Dipak Misra, was referring to the mass collection of personal data from citizens during the pre-Aadhaar Act years from 2009 to 2016. The Aadhaar law came into existence in 2016.

Meet Avani, first Indian woman to fly a fighter aircraft solo

- Scripting history, Flying Officer Avani Chaturvedi has become the first Indian woman to fly a fighter aircraft solo, an IAF official said.“Chaturvedi became the first Indian woman to fly a fighter aircraft solo when she flew a MiG-21 Bison,” the official said. She undertook the sortie from IAF’s Jamnagar base .
- Three women pilots — Ms. Chaturvedi, Bhawana Kanth and Mohana Singh — had undergone strenuous training programme to fly fighter jets .

‘Illegal immigration from Bangladesh planned

- “When we talk of the Jana Sangh with two MPs in Parliament and where they have reached, the AIUDF is moving at a much faster pace in the state of Assam,”Talking of the population dynamics of the northeast, Gen. Rawat said “inversion has taken place” and it cannot be changed.
- Illegal immigration from Bangladesh into India, Gen. Rawat said it was being done in a planned manner by the western neighbour with support from the northern neighbour.

World :

Mobile banks roll into German villages

- Bank manager Juergen Schaller never expected to end up getting a trucker's licence and driving 20,000 kilometres per year. But as brick-and-mortar branches vanish from the rolling Franconia region of northern Bavaria, the neatly dressed savings bank executive jumps behind the wheel four days a week to bring mobile services — including cash machine and consultation room — to tiny countryside villages.

Pakistan Supreme Court disqualifies Nawaz Sharif as PML-N chief

- Pakistan's Supreme Court on February 21 disqualified former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif as head of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz. This followed his disqualification as Prime Minister in July 2017 for not being truthful in his tax returns.
- "An individual disqualified under Articles 62 and 63 cannot serve as party head," a three-judge Supreme Court bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Mian Saqib Nisar said in a short order.

Bangladesh fears exodus of Bengalis from Assam

- The ongoing process of compiling the National Register of Citizens in Assam may trigger an exodus of Bengalis and create one more Rohingya-like refugee crisis for **Bangladesh**, senior officials of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government said .

Business :

EPFO lowers interest rate to 8.55 p.c. for 2017-18

- Retirement fund body EPFO february 21 lowered the rate of interest on employees provident fund to 8.55 per cent for its over 6-crore subscribers for 2017-18, from 8.65 per cent in the previous fiscal.
- This year, we have decided to recommend 8.55 per cent for 2017-18, which will leave a surplus of Rs 586 crore," Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar told reporter after the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation's (EPFO) trustees meet.

CPS eyes 250 cr. from vehicle users

- Central Parking Services, a parking management company, is targeting revenues of ₹ 250 crore during the next financial year, an increase of 257%, as metropolitan cities in India expand and people owning cars grow, a top official said .
- The Bengaluru-based firm is also planning to raise \$50 million from private equity investors within the next six months to fund its growth

Blockchain tech could help prevent frauds like at PNB

- The adoption of blockchain by India's banks could help avert frauds such as the one at Punjab National Bank as the disaggregated and transparent nature of the technology, which updates information across all users simultaneously, would have ensured that various officials would have instantly been alerted to the creation of the letters of undertaking (LoUs), according to bankers and blockchain specialists.

Science :

Rare creatures found in cold abyss off Australian coast

- More than 100 rarely seen fish species were hauled up from a deep and cold abyss off Australia during a scientific voyage, researchers said on Wednesday. The haul included a cousin of the "world's ugliest animal" nicknamed Mr Blobby.

IIT student wins prize at Clean Energy Conference in Paris

- A fourth year undergraduate student of the IIT Kharagpur has won an award at an international conference on 'Clean and Green Energy' in Paris, an IIT KGP statement said .
- Ankur Mehta, a chemical engineering student, was awarded the 'Best (Oral) Presentation Certificate' in the seventh edition of the three-day International Conference on Clean and Green Energy .

Sports :

Hazare Trophy: Karnataka and Maharashtra storm into the semifinals

- Adopting contrasting styles, an irrepressible Mayank Agarwal and a methodical R. Samarth smashed centuries to take Karnataka past a hapless Hyderabad on the way to the semifinals of the Vijay Hazare Trophy here.
- If Karnataka effectively batted Hyderabad out of the contest at the Ferozeshah Kotla, Maharashtra was clinical in its domination of a struggling Mumbai at the Air Force ground .

Champions League: Lionel Messi breaks Chelsea duck

- Barcelona talisman Lionel Messi finally opened his account against Chelsea with a 75th-minute equaliser to earn his side a 1-1 draw in a fascinating Champions League last 16, first leg duel at Stamford Bridge .Bayern punishes 10-man Beskitas .