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ACTOR VAAGAI CHANDRASEKAR AMONG SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI AWARDEES

- The Sangeet Natak Akademi, India's National Academy for Music, Dance, and Drama, is the country's highest national institution for the performing arts. Established in 1953, it functions under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.
- The awardees for the Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards 2024–25 have been selected. Seven eminent artists have been chosen for the prestigious Akademi Ratna (Fellowship).
- Among them is renowned Tamil Bharatanatyam artist Sudharani Raghupathy. In the music category, N. Vijay Siva and A.S. Krishnan from Tamil Nadu have been selected among the 12 awardees.
- In the dance category, Tamil artistes Rojha Kannan and K. Hariprasad of Kalakshetra have been selected for Bharatanatyam. Nagajyothi and Seetha Nagajyothi have been chosen for Kuchipudi.
- Nagajyothi, one of the Delhi-based couple, is a former Vice-President of the Delhi Tamil Sangam and the Delhi Education Society. Among the 10 theatre awardees, Tamil actor Vaagai Chandrasekar has been selected.
- K. Murugan of Puducherry is among the 13 recipients in the folk arts category. Five artists have been selected for special awards across disciplines. Forty artists have been selected for fellowships and will receive a cash award of Rs.3 lakh each.
- Additionally, 106 young artists have been chosen for the Sangeet Natak Akademi Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar. The awards will be presented by the President of India.

FIRST PHASE OF POPULATION CENSUS COMPLETED IN 23 STATES/UTS

- The first phase of India's population census involves House Listing and Housing Census, scheduled from April 1 to September 30 this year. Key highlights : A list of 33 questions to be asked from households has been released.
- Information includes : Basic household amenities; Name and gender of the head of the household; Ownership status of the house; Other housing-related details. For the first time, citizens are allowed to self-enumerate online. A 15-day self-registration period is provided, followed by : Door-to-door verification and enumeration by field staff, A verification period of about one month
- The first phase began on April 1 in states such as Karnataka, Odisha, Goa, and Sikkim. The work has now been completed in 23 States and Union Territories.
- Field operations are continuing in : Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Puducherry, Kerala and Nagaland are currently undergoing the 15-day self-registration process. In Tamil Nadu, self-registration is scheduled to begin on July 17.

- The current census exercise, being conducted at a cost of Rs.11,718 crore, is the 8th Census after India's Independence. After completion of the housing census, the second phase (Population Enumeration) will be undertaken. During this phase, details regarding each individual's : Socio-economic status, Caste-related information will be collected. The exercise is expected to continue until February next year.

EL NIÑO MAY AFFECT 9–10 INDIAN STATES

- The El Niño phenomenon is intensifying globally. During El Niño : Sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean become warmer than normal. It often leads to : Higher temperatures, Reduced rainfall, Drought conditions, Crop failures and food shortages
 - Meteorologists indicate that by July : The Western Indian Ocean (near Africa) may become warmer than usual. The Eastern Indian Ocean (near Indonesia) may become cooler. This pattern could still support a favorable monsoon for India.
- » **Minister's Review Meeting**
- Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan chaired a high-level meeting in New Delhi to discuss the possible impact of El Niño. Major points highlighted : Around 9–10 states may face severe impacts.
 - States should identify vulnerable districts and implement precautionary measures. Emergency planning must be completed in advance for districts likely to experience : Deficient rainfall, Uneven rainfall distribution
 - Cultivation of crops such as : Cotton, Pulses should be encouraged in vulnerable regions. Districts facing rainfall shortages must be identified and crop-specific contingency plans prepared. Farmers should receive timely : Alternative farming options, Advisory services, Support measures. Strong coordination is needed among : Agricultural Universities, ICAR institutions, State Agriculture Departments

13 STATES RECORDED REVENUE SURPLUS IN 2024–25

- The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India, K. Sanjay Murthy, released the report on the financial position of states for 2024–25.
- Revenue Position : 18 states had budgeted for a revenue surplus, 3 states had budgeted for a revenue deficit, 7 states targeted a zero revenue deficit. However, actual outcomes showed : 13 states recorded a revenue surplus, 15 states recorded a revenue deficit
- States that recorded a revenue surplus include : Goa, Jharkhand, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and several others. States that recorded a revenue deficit include : Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and others
- Fiscal Deficit - 18 states exceeded the fiscal deficit target of 3% of GSDP (Gross State Domestic Product) recommended by the 15th Finance Commission.
- Key Financial Figures : Combined net revenue deficit of states: Rs.2.19 lakh crore, Total revenue receipts of 28 states: Rs.40.52 lakh crore. About 50% of revenue receipts came from states' own tax revenues.
- State GST (SGST) alone contributed more than 43% of own tax revenue. Expenditure Pattern : Total budget expenditure of states: Rs.51.20 lakh crore. Mandatory expenditures such as : Salaries, Pensions, Interest payments accounted for more than 43% of total expenditure.
- State-wise variation : Nagaland had the highest share of mandatory expenditure at 74%; Maharashtra had the lowest at 29%. These figures highlight the differing fiscal capacities and expenditure pressures across Indian states.