



P.L.RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY

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1. Tamil Nadu Electricity Board Debt Reaches ₹2.47 Lakh Crore

The white paper released by Tamil Nadu Electricity Minister C.T.R. Nirmal Kumar states that the debt burden of the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board has risen to ₹2.47 lakh crore.

- (i) The report also revealed that there are 65,921 vacant positions in the Electricity Board.
- (ii) The white paper, released at the Electricity Board headquarters, outlines the board's financial status, revenue and expenditure, debt burden, power procurement practices, and other operational details.

2. China-Bangladesh Sign 13 Agreements

China and Bangladesh signed 13 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) aimed at strengthening bilateral relations, including cooperation in the management of the Teesta River.

3. European Union Releases First Installment for Ukraine Reconstruction

The European Union has released €3 billion as the first installment of its pledged financial assistance for the reconstruction of war-affected Ukraine.

4. Zimbabwe Senate Approves Constitutional Amendment Bill

Zimbabwe's Senate approved a constitutional amendment bill that would extend the current President's tenure and pave the way for postponing Presidential elections.

5. Suzlon Receives New 400 MW Wind Energy Order in Andhra Pradesh

Suzlon announced that it has received a new order from Tata Power to establish a 400 MW wind power project in Andhra Pradesh.

- (i) Pune-based Suzlon has installed 21.7 GW of wind energy capacity across 17 countries worldwide. With this new order, the company's total order book in Andhra Pradesh has increased to 1 GW.
- (ii) Similarly, the cumulative partnership between Tata Power and Suzlon across Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh has crossed the milestone of 1 GW.
- (iii) As part of the new project, Suzlon will install 127 advanced S144 wind turbine generators, each with a capacity of 3.15 MW.
- (iv) Suzlon will undertake complete responsibility for land acquisition, infrastructure development, high-voltage transmission facilities, project commissioning, and subsequent operation and maintenance services.

6. Powerful Earthquakes Devastate Venezuela

Two powerful earthquakes struck Venezuela on Wednesday evening (local time), causing widespread devastation.

(i) So far, 188 people have died, around 1,000 have been injured, and rescue operations are underway to save more than 200 people trapped under debris.

(ii) The earthquakes, centered near Morón on Venezuela's Caribbean coast, measured 7.2 and 7.5 on the Richter scale. They are considered the worst earthquakes to hit Venezuela in over a century.

(iii) The country's main airport, Simón Bolívar International Airport, suffered damage and has been closed. Electricity and telecommunications services have been disrupted in several parts of the capital, Caracas.

7. India Provides Fifth Installment of Financial Assistance to Bhutan

India has provided ₹250 crore to Bhutan as the fifth installment of financial assistance aimed at strengthening Bhutan's economy.

(i) India had pledged ₹1,500 crore under Bhutan's Economic Stimulus Programme.

(ii) A total of ₹1,250 crore has been disbursed so far. India continues to provide extensive assistance to Bhutan, with more than 30% of Bhutan's capital expenditure in the 2026-27 budget being financed through Indian grants.

(iii) According to a statement issued by the Indian Embassy in Thimphu, Indian Ambassador to Bhutan Chandru Arya handed over a cheque worth ₹250 crore to Bhutanese Foreign Minister Lyonpo D.N. Dhungyel. The assistance will help address economic challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, generate employment, and promote tourism and other sectors.

8. Mahesh Dixit Appointed New Intelligence Bureau Chief

According to official sources, the Central Government has appointed senior IPS officer Mahesh Dixit as the new Director of the Intelligence Bureau (IB).

(i) The IB is India's domestic intelligence agency. The current IB Director is Tapan Kumar Deka. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved Mahesh Dixit's appointment.

(ii) A 1993-batch IPS officer of the Andhra Pradesh cadre, Mahesh Dixit is currently serving as Special Director of the IB and has extensive experience, including serving as the head of intelligence operations in Jammu and Kashmir.

9. Passport Is Not Proof of Citizenship: Central Government

The Central Government clarified that a passport has never been considered proof of citizenship and that no new policy decision has been taken on this issue in the last 12 years.

(i) Following recent political controversy after the Ministry of External Affairs reiterated that a passport is only a travel document and not proof of citizenship, Government sources clarified:

- Under the Passport Act, 1967, even individuals who do not possess citizenship can, under certain circumstances, be issued passports. Therefore, a passport is solely a travel document and not evidence of citizenship.
- This is not a new policy introduced during the last 12 years; passports have never been treated as citizenship documents.
- The Bombay High Court, in a 2013 judgment, also clarified that a passport is not proof of citizenship.
- Similarly, during the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, the

Supreme Court clarified that Aadhaar is only an identity document and not proof of citizenship. The Central Government has now reiterated that passports likewise do not constitute proof of citizenship.

10. Central Government Considering Changes to Antyodaya Anna Yojana

The Central Government is considering providing 7 kg of free food grains per person per month under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) scheme.

(i) The scheme currently provides 35 kg of free rice or wheat per family every month to poor families living below the poverty line. The Government is considering revising this arrangement.

(ii) Under the proposed system, beneficiaries would receive 7 kg per person. Thus, a two-member family would receive 14 kg, while families with five or more members would continue to receive a maximum of 35 kg per month. To implement this, amendments to the National Food Security Act, 2013 are being considered. The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution has invited public comments on the proposal until July 13.

(iii) If implemented, the current system of distributing a flat 35 kg per family would be replaced by a per-person allocation of 7 kg.

(iv) Consequently, smaller families with fewer than five members may receive less food grain than they currently receive.

(v) Families with five or more members would continue to receive 35 kg of free food grains per month.

11. Integrated International Flight Services Launched Under 'Hub and Spoke' Initiative

Integrated international flight services from Varanasi via Delhi have been launched under the new "Hub and Spoke" initiative.

(i) Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised the initiative launched by Air India, expressing confidence that it would create new global opportunities for India's regional cities.

(ii) The Ministry of Civil Aviation, in partnership with airlines, has introduced the "Hub and Spoke" model to ensure seamless international connectivity from India's tier-2 and tier-3 cities.

(iii) Under this system, flights operate from regional airports to major hub airports, where passengers can easily connect to international flights after completing most formalities at their originating airport.

(iv) Air India has become the first airline to launch such services from Varanasi via Delhi to international destinations. Prime Minister Modi's message was read out during the launch event at Varanasi Airport.

(v) According to the Prime Minister, the initiative marks a significant milestone in India's aviation history. Enhanced international connectivity will create new opportunities in trade, tourism, investment, education, and commerce.

(vi) The initiative will reduce travel time from smaller cities to international destinations, bring global opportunities to regional areas, and enable more efficient utilization of existing airport infrastructure.

(vii) Varanasi, one of the world's oldest cities and a symbol of India's rich civilizational heritage, reflects India's vision of combining development with cultural preservation. Strengthening its global connectivity while preserving its unique identity is especially important.

(viii) India remains one of the world's fastest-growing aviation markets.

12. Amazon CEO Meets Prime Minister Modi

Andy Jassy, CEO of the American e-commerce giant Amazon, met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi.

(i) During the meeting, Amazon announced plans to invest an additional ₹1.22 lakh crore (US\$13 billion) in India over the next five years in areas such as artificial intelligence (AI), cloud computing, and entertainment. This would increase Amazon's total investment in India during the 2026–2030 period to ₹4.52 lakh crore (US\$48 billion).

13. India-UK Trade Agreement to Create Major Opportunities: Piyush Goyal

Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal stated that the trade agreement with the United Kingdom would create significant opportunities for Indian exports and improve the livelihoods of farmers, MSMEs, fishermen, startups, and artisans.

(i) The India-UK trade agreement, scheduled to come into force on July 15, is expected to generate substantial employment opportunities.

(ii) It will advance Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of building a "Developed India by 2047."

(iii) The India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) will ensure full market access for Indian products, particularly in labor-intensive sectors. The agreement covers nearly 100% of trade value, with approximately 99% of traded goods receiving immediate tariff elimination, creating major opportunities for Indian exports.

(iv) Under CETA, products such as turmeric, pepper, cardamom, mango pulp, pickles, and pulses will receive duty-free access to the UK market. Increased agricultural exports are expected to raise farm incomes, improve quality standards, packaging, and certification systems, and generate employment throughout the agricultural value chain.

(v) At the same time, India's sensitive agricultural sectors, including dairy products, cereals, millets, apples, oats, and edible oils, have been excluded from the agreement to protect domestic farmers.

(vi) Immediate duty-free access to the UK market will boost Indian manufacturing. The agreement is expected to positively impact sectors ranging from textile producers in Tiruppur to research laboratories in Bengaluru, diamond artisans in Surat, and software engineers in Hyderabad.

(vii) Another important feature of the agreement is the Double Contribution Convention. This arrangement exempts Indian professionals temporarily working in the UK, and their employers, from making double social security contributions. More than 75,000 Indian professionals and over 900 companies are expected to benefit.

(viii) According to Piyush Goyal, CETA serves as a model for balanced and ambitious trade agreements between major economies and represents a strong example of how New India conducts international trade.

14. Intensifying crisis of forest fires and the necessity of ecological balance.

(i) The Surge in Wildfires (2026)

- In April and May 2026, severe heatwaves and dry weather triggered large-scale forest fires across more than 12 Indian states, including Uttarakhand, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu (specifically in the Nilgiris and Parson's Valley).
- These fires destroyed rare species of birds, animals, and medicinal plants, which can be compared to the destructive power of natural disasters like cyclones and floods.
- A 2022 UN Environment Programme report predicts that global wildfires will increase by 14% by 2030, 30% by 2050, and 50% by 2100.

(ii) Climate Change and Human Impact

- The primary driver of these fires is the "unnatural" hot climate created by human activities that destroy nature.
- Current research indicates that forest fires now destroy twice as many trees as they did twenty years ago.
- Rapid urbanization and forest encroachment have narrowed the gap between humans and wildlife, contributing to the fact that 60% to 70% of new diseases in the last 30 years have originated from wildlife.

(iii) Carbon Sequestration and Environmental Risk

- Forests act as "carbon storage tanks," absorbing carbon dioxide through branches, leaves, and soil via photosynthesis.
- When forests burn, decades of stored carbon are released instantly as carbon dioxide, further heating the planet.
- In 2024 alone, the world lost 1.35 crore hectares of forest cover—an area larger than the country of Greece.

(iv) Scientific Research and Projections for India

- A study by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), BITS Pilani, and Lund University predicts that by 2100, carbon storage in India's forests could increase by 35% to 97% depending on emission levels.
- While increased storage sounds positive, researchers (including IITM's Abidha Fathima and Dr. Roxy Mathew Koll) warn that these forests will be more vulnerable to droughts and fires, particularly in Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Central India.
- The exchange of carbon in forests is heavily dependent on rainfall patterns, with the effects typically manifesting over a two-year cycle.

(v) Mitigation and Preventive Measures

- Creating "Fire Control Lines"—clear paths within forests where dry leaves and flammable materials are removed to stop the spread of sudden fires.
- To save the forests, the world must aggressively reduce greenhouse gas emissions and limit the burning of fossil fuels.

(vi) Conclusion: Ecological Harmony

- Protecting forests means protecting life, genetics, and the human mind.
- The health of the forest is the health of the soil, and the health of the soil is the wealth of the people. Humanity's only permanent solution for survival is to live in harmony with the environment rather than provoking nature's fury.

15. Mental health crisis in Tamil Nadu, specifically focusing on the high suicide rates among housewives and the challenges faced by single women.

(i) Contradictions in Social Progress

- While Tamil Nadu is often praised as a leader in social and economic development, several indicators suggest a deeper underlying crisis.
- The state has successfully reduced child mortality and malnutrition compared to other Indian states.
- However, the state now faces a growing elderly population and a shrinking youth demographic, which will present significant social challenges in the future.

(i) The Vulnerability of Single Women

- Tamil Nadu has the highest proportion of women in India who are widowed, divorced, unmarried, or living alone.
- While the national average for "single women" is 3.6%, in Tamil Nadu, this figure stands at 6.8%.
- Psychologists warn that as life expectancy increases and urbanization continues, these women face severe loneliness and social isolation, particularly as they enter old age.

(ii) Housewife Suicide Crisis

- Data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) for 2024 reveals that housewives in Tamil Nadu are under extreme stress.
- Tamil Nadu accounts for 13% of all housewife suicides in India.
- On average, seven married housewives commit suicide every day in the state.
- In 2024 alone, 2,821 housewives in Tamil Nadu took their own lives.

(iii) Primary Triggers: Family and Health

- Nationally, family problems account for 33.5% of housewife suicides, but in Tamil Nadu, this figure is significantly higher at 38.8%.
- Physical health issues and the inability to bear chronic pain contribute to 29.3% of housewife suicides in the state, which is much higher than the national average of 18%.
- This high rate persists despite Tamil Nadu having superior medical facilities and social protection compared to other states.

(iv) Socio-Economic Factors and Stress

- While dowry-related deaths have decreased, housewives still feel they have no platform to express their emotions or stress.
- Contributing factors to mental distress include:
 - The alcohol habits of husbands.
 - Financial pressure caused by buying luxury items on installments (EMIs).
 - Negative psychological impacts from television serials.
 - A lack of recognition and appreciation for their domestic labor.
 - The forced economic dependence on husbands, even for educated women.

(v) Recommendations for Intervention

- The numbers have slightly declined from 3,221 in 2021 to 2,821 in 2024, but the state still maintains a grim national lead.

- Establishment of more psychological counseling centers specifically for women.
- Expanding the reach of social support organizations like "Sneha" are vital solution to curb this tragic trend.