

16 - MARCH 2025

TAMILNADU

Tamil Nadu Seeks to Revive Traditional Water Resources

- ❖ The government has launched an initiative to restore over 2,000 temple tanks and village ponds, with ₹500 crore allocated for water conservation.
- ❖ The plan focuses on rainwater harvesting and groundwater recharge to address increasing water scarcity in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ Urban expansion has led to the encroachment of lakes and reservoirs, worsening the water crisis.
- ❖ Farmers support the initiative as it will enhance irrigation, while public participation is encouraged through awareness programs.
- ❖ Pilot projects have been launched in Kanchipuram and Madurai, with environmentalists emphasizing the need for long-term water management.

Tamil Nadu Rejects National Education Policy (NEP)

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu government has rejected the NEP 2020, calling it regressive and unsuitable for the state's education system.
- ❖ The Centre has withheld ₹2,152 crore under the Samagra Shiksha scheme, but TN has decided to fund the shortfall from its own resources.
- ❖ The Centre insists on a three-language policy, but TN remains firm on its two-language system of Tamil and English.
- ❖ Opposition parties have criticized the Centre's move as coercive, while education experts remain divided on the issue.
- ❖ Students and teachers' unions support TN's decision, and other non-BJP states may also oppose the NEP.

Tamil Nadu Budget 2025-26

- ❖ Presented by Finance Minister Thangam Thennarasu.
- ❖ Focuses on women, government employees, and key economic sectors.
- ❖ ₹9,29,959.3 crore projected as the total state debt.

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NATIONAL

116 New Tourist Spots Sanctioned by Centre

- Government approved the development of 116 new tourism projects across multiple States, boosting local economies. To enhance eco-tourism and cultural heritage sites. Roads, and facilities will be upgraded. It is expected to generate employment and revenue growth. Details on locations and funding yet to be released.

INTERNATIONAL

(Coaching for Civil Services - IAS, IFS, IPS, IRS etc.)

Syria's New Constitution Increases Presidential Power

- ❖ Syria's new temporary constitution grants extensive authority to interim President Abu Mohammad al-Jolani.
- ❖ The declaration eliminates democracy-related provisions from previous constitutions.
- ❖ Islamic jurisprudence is now the "principal source" of legislation.
- ❖ The constitution does not guarantee protections for minorities.
- ❖ Experts warn of increasing authoritarian rule under the new system.

Nepal Witnesses Pro-Monarchy Rally

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- ❖ Former King Gyanendra received support from thousands upon his return to Kathmandu.
- ❖ The rally reflected public frustration with the failures of Nepal's political leadership.
- ❖ Monarchists demand the reinstatement of the royal system.
- ❖ Analysts believe dissatisfaction with the republic is fueling nostalgia for the monarchy.
- ❖ The government has reiterated its commitment to the republican model.



President Trump Holds Ceasefire Talks with Russia

- ❖ US President Donald Trump announced "productive" discussions with Russia regarding a ceasefire in Ukraine.
- ❖ Trump's envoy met with Russian President Vladimir Putin to propose a 30-day pause in hostilities.
- ❖ The proposal seeks to spare Ukrainian soldiers from further conflict.
- ❖ Ukrainian and NATO officials remain cautious about Russia's commitment to peace.
- ❖ The talks signal a potential diplomatic shift amid ongoing military operation



SCIENCE AND TECH

Aditya-L1 Observations:

- ❖ Scientists from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) observed a flareless coronal mass ejection (CME) on July 5, 2024, using the Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC) aboard India's Aditya-L1 mission.
- ❖ VELC provides high-frequency data on the solar corona, aiding in understanding magnetic instabilities that cause flares and CMEs.
- ❖ The observation is significant as CMEs are usually linked to solar flares, but this one occurred without any associated flare.
- ❖ With the sun nearing the peak of solar cycle 25, frequent CMEs are expected, and continuous monitoring will benefit Indian and international scientists.
- ❖ The results will be published in the *Astrophysical Journal*, contributing to research on the complex relationship between flares and CMEs.

ECONOMICS

Global Trade Risks and Economic Fragmentation (UNCTAD Report)

- ❖ UNCTAD warns of rising trade uncertainty and urges global cooperation to prevent economic fragmentation.

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- ❖ Balanced policies are needed to sustain long-term growth amid increasing protectionism.
- ❖ China's stimulus and easing inflation may help trade, but policy shifts in major economies remain a risk.
- ❖ Isolated trade blocs could disrupt global supply chains and investment flows.
- ❖ Governments and businesses must enhance trade resilience to counter unpredictability.
- ❖ Cooperative frameworks are advised over unilateral trade restrictions for stability

Record High Dividends from Indian Public Sector Enterprises:

- ❖ CPSEs in India have paid record-breaking dividends, exceeding estimates by over ₹10,000 crore in FY25.
- ❖ Total dividend collections stand at ₹66,000 crore, expected to reach ₹67,000 crore by year-end.
- ❖ These figures exclude contributions from public sector banks and financial institutions.
- ❖ CPSE dividends play a key role in India's non-tax revenue and help bridge fiscal gaps.
- ❖ The government initially estimated ₹55,000 crore in dividends but has already surpassed ₹65,381 crore from the previous year.
- ❖ 212 out of 272 CPSEs reported ₹3.43 lakh crore in net profits for FY24, a 48% rise from FY23.

U.S. Stock Market Correction and Surge in Gold Prices

- ❖ U.S. stock markets have been highly volatile, with the S&P 500 entering correction territory, erasing \$4 trillion in value.
- ❖ Investor concerns over President Trump's protectionist trade policies have unsettled global markets.
- ❖ Gold prices hit a record \$3,000 per ounce as investors seek safe-haven assets.
- ❖ China's central bank increased gold purchases for the fourth consecutive month, boosting demand.
- ❖ The Federal Reserve is expected to keep rates unchanged, with possible cuts by June.
- ❖ Analysts warn of a potential gold price correction once trade issues stabilize.

Wage Hike Recommendations for MGNREGS Workers

- ❖ A parliamentary committee recommended raising MGNREGS wages, citing inadequate pay amid rising costs.
- ❖ Current wages range from ₹234 (Nagaland) to ₹374 (Haryana) but fail to reflect inflation.
- ❖ The government was criticized for not implementing past wage revision recommendations.
- ❖ Wages are linked to the Consumer Price Index for agricultural laborers, which does not fully capture inflation.
- ❖ The committee proposed a uniform wage rate across all states and union territories for fairness.
- ❖ Wage payment delays persist, with ₹23,446 crore in dues; West Bengal has not received funds since March 2022 due to alleged corruption.

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ENVIRONMENT

Kerala Builds Solar Fence to Stop Elephant Raids

- ❖ The Kerala government installed a 4-km solar fence in Kannur to deter elephants.
- ❖ Frequent elephant raids threaten tribal settlements and farmlands.
- ❖ Solar fencing to be replaced by a permanent elephant wall.
- ❖ Officials are also planning a hanging fence along the river.
- ❖ 3 km of solar fencing completed and electrified.
- ❖ Rapid Response Team deployed for monitoring wildlife movement.



TNPSC FACTS

Vande Bharat Sleeper Train Prototype

- ❖ The Vande Bharat sleeper rolls out in FY 2025-26 under a ₹9,600 crore contract. Titagarh and BHEL handle production. Titagarh also starts Bengaluru metro coach production with CRRC by March-April.

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