



EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – SEPTEMBER 8, 2021

TAMIL NADU

- **On September 7, Chief Minister M K Stalin announced several measures for government employees, while making a suo motu statement in the state assembly**
- ✓ The Chief Minister said that the state government would implement the dearness allowance hike from January 1, 2022 despite a financial crisis three months in advance
- ✓ Due to this decision, 16 lakh government employees and pensioners will be benefited.
- ✓ The government will incur an additional expenditure of Rs.620 crore and an annual expenditure of Rs. 6,480 crore due to the hike.
- ✓ The CM said the government would end the practice of suspending government employees, facing disciplinary and other charges, on the last working day.
- ✓ He further announced that the government would release new guidelines simplifying the norms for appointment under compassionate grounds.
- ✓ The government also decided to regularize the strike and suspension periods of government employees, who participated in various strikes called by unions in 2016, 2017 and 2019.
- ✓ The government will cancel all disciplinary actions initiated against teachers during the strike and in case their promotion is affected by the disciplinary action, it will be rectified, the CM said.
- ✓ Further, the retirement age for noon meal workers would be increased from 58 to 60 years.
- ✓ The CM said the increment for higher educational qualification which was cancelled in 2020 would be restored again by following the Union government's guidelines.
- ✓ The chief minister said steps would be taken to fill vacancies for posts of junior assistants in government schools through Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission (TNPSC).

- ✓ Moreover, an order would be passed to include sons and daughters of government employees, dependent on them, without considering their age, under the health insurance scheme for government staff.
 - ✓ For Covid-19 treatment, the government would fund the excess amount in case the treatment cost exceeds Rs.10 lakh.
- **On September 6, Minister for Labour Welfare and Skill Development C V Ganesan - introduced a Bill to amend the Tamil Nadu Shops and Establishments Act, 1947**
- ✓ The Bill makes it mandatory for shops and establishments to provide seating arrangements for employees working in shops and commercial establishments.
 - ✓ For those with health issues, standing for hours at a stretch takes a toll on their health.
 - ✓ In 2018, neighbouring Kerala passed a legislation mandating seating arrangements after women workers protested condemning the same.
 - ✓ A common health ailment in people who stand for long hours is varicose vein, found among traffic cops, sales persons, waiters and those working in factory units.
 - ✓ If left unattended, blood vessels start enlarging leading to ulcers, blood clots or chronic inflammation on legs.
- **The Tamil Nadu government - has announced a cash aid of Rs.5,000 each to 3,000 Vinayaka idol makers in the state.**
- ✓ Tamil Nadu chief minister M K Stalin made the announcement in the state assembly on September 7
 - ✓ The CM was responding to questions relating to the Covid-19 restrictions and the ban on public celebration of Vinayaka Chaturthi in the state.
 - ✓ This is besides the Rs.5000 given to the idol makers during monsoon when they are out of work.
 - ✓ The chief minister said the government was providing financial relief of Rs. 5,000 to around 12,000 potters, who could not work during monsoon.
 - ✓ Considering the public safety and welfare, a ban on all religious festivals was imposed till September 15, which will also apply to Vinayaka Chaturthi, the CM said in the assembly.
 - ✓ He further said the restrictions had been announced to avoid public gatherings till September 30 as per the instructions from the Union home ministry.
- **On September 7, the state government - announced solar power parks across the state to generate 4,000MW of solar energy with battery storage system of 2,000MW in areas excluding corporations and municipalities.**
- ✓ The government also committed to install smart meters to make it easier for monitoring power consumption, and facilitate payments either post-paid or prepaid with zero-error assessment.

- ✓ Electricity minister V Senthil Balaji said the government would set up 11 pumped storage hydropower projects in several districts based on the feasibility to augment the capacity by 7,500MW.
 - ✓ Distribution transformers will also get smart meters at 1,270 crore.
 - ✓ The government will re-examine the implementation of Udangudi expansion projects II and III, said the Minister
 - ✓ Tangedco has already applied to the government to shift Uppur thermal power plant to Udangudi.
- **Chief Minister M K Stalin – to discuss with a business delegation from Denmark on September 8 to explore the possibility of establishing offshore wind mills on the Tamil Nadu coast**
- ✓ The state's long coast, especially between Rameswaram and Kanyakumari, offers a potential to generate 20-30 GW offshore wind energy.
 - ✓ Denmark is also planning to establish a Centre of Excellence (CoE) for offshore wind energy in Tamil Nadu.
 - ✓ The state has been taking efforts to establish 4-5 CoEs in emerging sectors to enlarge the potential for both manufacturing and services.
 - ✓ The CoE for off-shore wind energy is most likely to come up in Chennai.
 - ✓ State Industries minister Thangam Thennarasu addressed the Danish delegation at a meeting organized by Guidance Tamil Nadu in Chennai on September 7
 - ✓ Offering Denmark's support to Tamil Nadu, Danish minister for climate, energy and utilities, Dan Jannik Jorgensen said Denmark has established itself in green energy, especially wind energy.
- **The state government – to utilise used cooking oil to power government vehicles, including public buses, as part of a national campaign**

HAZARDS OF RE-USING COOKING OIL



➤ Edible vegetable oils are used for frying food, during which the quality of oil deteriorates

➤ Using the same oil time and again leads to changes in its physical, chemical and nutritional properties. It also leads to formation of Total Polar Compounds (TPC), which makes the oil

hazardous for human consumption beyond certain limits

WHAT CAN TPC CAUSE?

➤ **FSSAI says vegetable oil having TPC more than 25% should not be used.** It increases risks of hypertension, heart diseases, Alzheimer's disease and liver problems

- ✓ The food safety wing has started collecting used cooking oil from various hotels and eateries as part of a national campaign to repurpose used cooking oil.

- ✓ The used oil, which is toxic to health and hazardous to the environment, will be converted into biodiesel that will be used along with diesel in government vehicles including cars, vans and public buses.
- ✓ The aim is to stop resale of cooking oil from big food and beverage operators to smaller units.
- ✓ The move will also prevent heart diseases and cancer among consumers, stop soil and water pollution as it will be disposed of in a secure pathway, reduce air pollution due to vehicular emissions and bring down diesel cost for the government.
- ✓ The city is estimated to generate up to 500 tonne of used oil every month, which can produce up to 4.2 lakh litres of biodiesel.
- ✓ The government pays up to Rs. 34 per litre of used oil, which is then handed over to biodiesel manufacturers.
- ✓ At least 85% of the volume is retained when the used oil is converted into biodiesel.

NATIONAL

- **On September 7, Prime Minister Narendra Modi - launched the National Digital Educational Architecture (N-DEAR), which is likely to play a major role in eradicating inequality in education and its modernisation.**

The poster for 'SHIKSHAK PARV 2021' is a promotional graphic for an event held from September 5th to 17th. It features the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, on the right side. The text on the poster includes the Ministry of Education logo, the 75th Independence Anniversary logo, and a list of initiatives to be launched during the event: Indian Sign Language Dictionary of 10,000 words, Talking Books, NISHTHA 3.0 - NIPUN Bharat, Vidyanjali, and School Quality Assessment and Assurance (SQAA) Framework. The event is scheduled for September 7th, 2021, at 10:30 AM, and is available to watch live on YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook.

- ✓ During the event, the PM launched several academic initiatives, which will play an important role in shaping the country's future.
- ✓ PM Modi addressed the inaugural conclave of the 10-day 'Shikshak Parv' through video-conferencing in New Delhi
- ✓ The theme of Shikshak Parv is 'Quality and Sustainable Schools: Learnings from Schools in India'

- ✓ The PM also launched the Indian sign language dictionary (audio- and text-embedded sign language video for the hearing impaired, in conformity with the Universal Design of Learning), talking books (audiobooks for the visually impaired), school quality assurance and assessment framework of CBSE, Nishtha teachers' training programme for Nipun Bharat and Vidyanjali portal (for facilitating education volunteers/donors/CSR contributors for school development).
 - ✓ The 'Shikshak Parv 2021' is organised by the Ministry of Education to honour the contribution of teachers, especially in ensuring the continuity of education amid the pandemics
 - ✓ The celebration began on September 5 on the account of National Teachers' Day and will continue till September 17
- **On September 7, Cairn Energy Plc - said it is looking to settle its decade-long tax dispute with the Indian government following the recent amendments to the retrospective tax law.**

UK FIRM TO DROP LITIGATION SOON

➤ Cairn Energy Plc is likely to get a refund of ₹7,900 crore (approximately \$1.06bn) from the government

➤ The British company will drop all litigation, penalty and interest claims soon as per recent amendments to the retrospective tax

➤ The company says it will pay up to \$700 million to shareholders in a filing to London Stock Exchange

➤ Cairn had filed cases in France and the US to get its claims following favourable rulings in international tribunals

- ✓ The expected near-term resolution of the India tax dispute would result in a refund to Cairn by the government of India of Rs.7,900 crore (approximately \$1.06bn).
- ✓ In accepting the terms of the new legislation in India, Cairn would be required to withdraw its international arbitration award claim, interest and costs and to end all legal enforcement actions in order to be eligible for the refund.
- ✓ In a filing at the London Stock Exchange, the British company offered to pay up to \$700 million to its shareholders.
- ✓ Cairn may be the first among 17 cases to be resolved and requires the government to refund tax that had been collected from the British company.
- ✓ As part of the amendments moved by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the government had made it a precondition for companies to drop all litigation and penalty and interest claims.
- ✓ The present government moved amendments to reverse a decision during Pranab Mukherjee's term as finance minister in the Manmohan Singh government
- ✓ The previous government had sought to levy capital gain tax on all transactions with underlying assets in India, even if the companies were not in India.

- ✓ Before this, the Supreme Court had dismissed a claim made by tax authorities on Vodafone after its acquisition of a 67% stake in Hutch Essar through an overseas entity with Hutchison Whampoa also holding interest in the Indian entity through a local company.
- ✓ Following the amendments, Cairn and Vodafone had challenged the decision under bilateral investment protection agreements and got a favourable ruling in international tribunals.
- ✓ The government had challenged both the rulings but came under pressure after Cairn filed cases in France and the US to enforce its claims based on the tribunal award.

INTERNATIONAL

- On September 7, the Taliban - announced a 33-member interim government and declared the country would now be called the “Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan”.

INTERIOR MINISTER ON US TERROR LIST

MOHAMMAD HASAN AKHUND Acting PM

Longtime head of Taliban's powerful decision-making body Rehbari Shura, he was foreign minister & dy PM during Taliban's last stint in 1996-2001. Was a 'close associate & political adviser' to Taliban founder Mullah Omar. Highly respected by outfit's supreme leader Haibatullah Akhundzada. Akhund was on a UNSC sanctions list



ABDUL GHANI BARADAR Deputy PM

The Taliban co-founder was named dy PM alongside Abdul Salam Hanafi, a member of the outfit's political office in Doha. Ghani was a close friend of Mullah Omar, who gave him his nom de guerre, 'Baradar', or brother. Was deputy defence minister when Taliban last ruled Afghanistan. Was arrested and jailed in Pak in 2010 & freed in 2018 under US pressure. Led talks with the US and signed the deal that led to its final withdrawal from Af last month



SIRAJUDDIN HAQQANI Interior Minister

Head of the pro-ISI Haqqani network – a group on the US terror list that also has close involvement in the drugs trade – he became its leader following

the death of his father, Jalaluddin, in 2018. Sirajuddin is one of FBI's most wanted men with a \$5 million bounty on his head. Has ties with al-Qaida

MULLAH YAQOOB Defence Minister

Son of Mullah Omar, he sought to succeed his father in 2015, but failed. In 2020, named overall head of the Taliban military commission. In his early 30s, he commands the loyalty of a section of Taliban because of his father. Yaqoob is considered a relative moderate by some analysts

AMIR KHAN MUTTAQI Foreign Minister

Minister for culture & information & also education during previous Taliban govt. Later sent to Qatar as a member of the peace commission and negotiation team that held talks with US. He recently projected a moderate voice, calling on forces holed up in provinces, including Panjshir, to talk to Taliban and avoid fighting and bloodshed



SHER MD ABBAS STANEKZAI Junior Foreign Minister

'Sheru' to his batchmates at Dehradun's Indian Military Academy. During the Taliban's 1996-2001 rule, served as dy minister for foreign affairs & later deputy health minister. Known to have links with Pak military intelligence agency

- ✓ It will be headed by Mullah Mohammad Hasan Akhund, one of the movement's founding members.
- ✓ The group's co-founder, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, whose negotiations with the US led finally to the latter's pullout from Afghanistan, will be his deputy.
- ✓ In March 2020, Baradar became the first Taliban leader to communicate directly with an American president, when he spoke with Donald Trump by phone.
- ✓ Akhund, now acting prime minister, has been the head of the Taliban's Rehbari Shura, or leadership council, for about two decades.

- ✓ Baradar, or brother, a fighting name bestowed on him by the late Taliban founder Mullah Omar, had been deputy defence minister in the group's last stint in power and had served prison time in Pakistan
- ✓ All 33 members were picked up from the group and not a single non-Talib has been included.
- ✓ Women were also not part of the caretaker setup.
- ✓ Many are on the United Nations terror list and all are considered extremely close to the ISI.
- ✓ Sirajuddin Haqqani, the head of the Haqqani network, has been appointed acting interior minister
- ✓ Sirajuddin Haqqani is a designated global terrorist.
- ✓ The other Haqqani in an important position is Khalil Haqqani, the new minister for refugees.

AFGHANISTAN

Taliban acting government structure

The group names members of the Cabinet in the new interim government nearly three weeks after taking over Afghanistan.



MULLAH MOHAMMAD HASAN AKHUND
Acting Prime Minister



MULLAH ABDUL GHANI BARADAR
Acting Deputy Prime Minister



MULLAH RAHMATULLAH NAJIB
ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR NATIONAL
DIRECTORATE OF SECURITY



MULLAH HEDAYATULLAH BADRI
ACTING MINISTER OF FINANCE



SIRAJUDDIN HAQQANI
ACTING MINISTER OF INTERIOR



**MULLAH MOHAMMAD
YAQOOB**
ACTING MINISTER OF DEFENCE



KHALIL UR REHMAN HAQQANI
ACTING MINISTER OF REFUGEES



MAWLAWI TAJ MIR JAWAD
ACTING DEPUTY INTELLIGENCE CHIEF



**MAWLAWI AMIR KHAN
MUTAQI**
ACTING MINISTER OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS



**SHEIKH MAWLWAI
NOORULLAH MUNIR**
ACTING MINISTER OF EDUCATION



MULLAH ABDUL HAQ WASIQ
ACTING HEAD OF NDS



Source: Al Jazeera, Khalil ur Rehman image courtesy Geo News, Pakistan | Updated: September 7, 2021



- ✓ Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob, son of the slain Taliban founder Mullah Omar, has been named as the defence minister.
- ✓ Hidayatullah Badri will be the acting minister of finance.

- ✓ Amir Khan Muttaqi has been made acting foreign minister and Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai will serve as his deputy.
 - ✓ Zabhiullah Mujahid has been given charge of the information ministry, and Fasihuddin Badakhshani is the new army chief.
 - ✓ However, there is no mention of any role in government for the Taliban chief, Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada, who has not been seen or heard in public for almost two years.
 - ✓ In 2001, Akhund ordered the destruction of the magnificent standing Buddha statues that were carved into the side of a cliff in the Bamiyan valley in the sixth century.
 - ✓ Akhund had served as foreign minister and deputy prime minister during the Taliban's first government in Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001.
 - ✓ He was also the governor of Kandahar, and vice president of the council of ministers in 2001.
 - ✓ Sirajuddin Haqqani was responsible for the terrorist attack on the Indian Embassy in Kabul in 2008 that killed 58 people, and the attacks against Indians and Indian interests in Afghanistan in 2009 and 2010.
 - ✓ He is the head of the Haqqani Network, an Islamist terrorist mafia with close ties to al-Qaeda, based in Pakistan's North Waziristan.
 - ✓ The Rewards for Justice Program of the United States Department of State has offered a reward of up to \$ 10 million for information leading directly to his arrest
 - ✓ Sirajuddin Haqqani was also allegedly involved in planning the attempted assassination of then Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai in 2008
 - ✓ He is believed to have coordinated and participated in cross-border attacks against the US and coalition forces in Afghanistan.
 - ✓ Khalil Haqqani too is a specially designated global terrorist who has close ties to al-Qaeda, and has aided and "acted on behalf of" al-Qaeda's military.
 - ✓ The US State Department has announced reward of up to \$ 5 million for "information that brings to justice" Khalil Haqqani.
 - ✓ Afghanistan fell on August 15 as Taliban fighters marched on Kabul, forcing President Ashraf Ghani and his top ministers to flee the country.
 - ✓ This was followed by the pullout of US and NATO forces from the war-ravaged country by the August 31 deadline
 - ✓ The U.S. has frozen roughly \$9 billion in assets belonging to Da Afghanistan Bank, or DAB, the nation's central bank, and the International Monetary Fund cut off the group from using fund reserve assets
- **On September 7, El Salvador - became the first country in the world to accept bitcoin as legal tender**
- ✓ President Nayib Bukele pushed for adoption of the cryptocurrency
 - ✓ Bukele said using bitcoin will help Salvadorans save \$400 million a year on commissions for remittances, while giving access to financial services to those with no bank account.

- ✓ According to World Bank data, El Salvador received more than \$5.9 billion in 2020 from nationals living abroad, mainly in the United States.
- ✓ The government is installing more than 200 bitcoin teller machines, some guarded by soldiers to prevent possible arson by opponents.
- ✓ The US dollar remains the country's legal currency for the last 20 years.
- ✓ In June, El Salvador's parliament approved a law to allow the crypto money to be accepted as tender for all goods and services in the small Central American nation, along with the US dollar.

ECONOMY

- **Global retail giant, Amazon - will offer wealth management services in India, a first for one of the world's most valued companies.**
- ✓ Its wholly owned subsidiary Amazon Pay has tied up with homegrown investment advisory services startup Kuvera to offer wealth management services to 50 million customers in India.
- ✓ The tie-up will facilitate investments into Mutual Funds, Fixed Deposits, and more over time.
- ✓ The move comes within days of a similar one by Google Pay to offer fixed deposits to its customers in the country in association with Setu, which specialises in API development
- ✓ At 600 million users and growing, India is the second largest internet market globally

