



# EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – APRIL 7, 2023

## TAMIL NADU

- On April 6, Chief minister M K Stalin - launched excavations at eight archaeological sites in Tamil Nadu, including Keeladi, and unveiled an Augmented Reality app for the Keeladi Museum.



- ✓ The excavations will take place at Keeladi and surrounding areas, such as Agaram and Konthagai in Sivaganga district (ninth phase), Gangaikonda Cholapuram in Ariyalur district (third phase), Vembakottai in Virudhunagar district (second phase), Thulukkarpatti in Tirunelveli district (second phase), and Pattarai Perumbudur in Thiruvallur district (third phase).
- ✓ Further, the first phase of excavation commenced at Keezh Namandi in Tiruvannamalai district, Porpanaikottam in Pudukkottai district, and Boothinatham in Dharmapuri district.
- ✓ This is the first time that excavation works were launched at eight places all at once, according to the state government.
- ✓ The state government plans to excavate all archaeologically significant places in Tamil Nadu to uncover the state's prehistoric and historic periods.

- ✓ Furthermore, the state government launched a reconnaissance mission in the Gulf of Mannar to locate the ancient port city of Korkai.
- ✓ Based on the findings of this mission, the state government plans to carry out a marine archaeological excavation.
- ✓ The augmented reality app, designed by the Tamil Nadu archaeology department, allows users from any part of the world to view 200 artefacts excavated at Keeladi in three dimensions through augmented reality.
- **On April 8, Prime Minister Narendra Modi – will flag off the Vande Bharat train from Chennai to Coimbatore, which will clock 130kmph between Chennai and Jolarpet.**
  - ✓ This will be the first train in Southern Railway to run at the enhanced speed.
  - ✓ The train with improved amenities will reach Coimbatore in five hours and fifty minutes as against the seven hours taken by Shatabdi Express.
  - ✓ The PM will flag off an inaugural special during the occasion, while the regular service of the train will begin on April 9.
  - ✓ The scheduled service will have stoppages at Jolarpet, Salem, Erode, Tiruppur.
  - ✓ The newer version of Vande Bharat will have bigger passenger information and infotainment screens, four emergency windows and four emergency lights in every coach, finer heat ventilation and air-conditioning control and bio vacuum toilets with touch-free amenities.
  - ✓ The scheduled service will depart MGR Chennai Central railway station at 2.25pm and will reach Coimbatore at 8.15pm.
  - ✓ The train will start at 6am from Coimbatore and will reach Chennai at 11.50am.
- **The Tamil Nadu SC/ST start-up fund - is being increased to Rs 50 crore this financial year from Rs 30 crore last year**
  - ✓ This was announced by TM Anbarasan, Minister for MSMEs, in the Assembly on April 6.

<b>TN HAS THIRD HIGHEST MSMEs</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Multi-storey plug-and-play factory spaces to be created in Chennai, Hosur and Madurai at <b>₹223.9 crore</b></li> <li>➤ The ready-built space can generate employment for more than <b>3,150 people</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Five new industrial estates to be established at <b>₹108 crore</b> over 185 acres of land with potential to generate jobs for <b>7,000 people</b></li> <li>➤ Government to set up <b>11 new micro clusters</b> at a project cost of <b>₹36 crore</b></li> </ul>

- ✓ In a bid to raise investments and increase market access opportunities for Tamil Nadu-based startups, the Minister announced that the state government will establish a Global Coordination Centre (GCC) in Dubai this year.
- ✓ The minister also said new regional startup hubs will be established in Cuddalore, Hosur and Salem.


- ✓ The announcement comes after the earlier launch of regional startup hubs in Madurai, Tirunelveli and Erode districts
- ✓ The minister also said a startup manufacturing centre will be established in Guindy, exclusively to provide manufacturing facilities for startups.
- ✓ Replying to the demand for grants, the Minister said that multi-storey plug-and-play factory spaces will be created in Chennai, Hosur and Madurai at a cost of Rs.223.9 crore by TANSI (Tamil Nadu Small Industries Corporation) and TANSIDCO (Tamil Nadu Small Industries Development Corporation).
- ✓ Further, five new industrial estates will be established by TANSIDCO at a cost of Rs.108 crore over 185 acres of land with potential to generate jobs for around 7,000 people.
  - ✓ The new industrial estates are set to come up in Kothakottai in Pudukottai district, Mullikolathur in Chengalpet, Muthoor in Tirunelveli, Vaiyavoor in Kancheepuram and Ayankollankondan in Virudhunagar.
- ✓ The government is also setting up 11 new micro clusters at a project cost of Rs. 36 crore to promote specific products for the small businesses in the state
  - ✓ These include clusters for areca nut in Coimbatore, honey processing and pottery in Vellore, wood carving in Madurai and Kallakurichi, coffee powder processing in Dindigul, artificial silk garment in Theni, embroidery in Tenkasi, powerloom in Dharmapuri and palm leaf and women's garments in Sivaganga district.
- ✓ To encourage more MSME associations to develop private industrial estates, the state MSME ministry has reduced the minimum land area needed to receive 50% subsidy from 50 acres to 10 acres.
- **The State government – has floated tenders to introduce iris authentication, in addition to biometrics, to get PDS goods in 35,941 PDS outlets in the state**
  - ✓ This was announced by Food minister R Sakkarapani in the Assembly.
  - ✓ A pilot project of the new system was launched in Chepauk-Triplicane assembly constituency in Chennai on April 5.
  - ✓ Replying to the debate for demand for grants for the food and consumer protection department, the minister said the state had been making history by procuring 45 lakh tonnes of rice in 2021-22 and 43 lakh tonnes in 2022-23 and 32 lakh tonnes till date.
  - ✓ As per an agreement with the India Posts, on April 5, the civil supplies department launched online distribution of new PDS cards and replacements on payment of Rs. 20 service charges and Rs. 25 postal charges through QR code or netbanking.
  - ✓ So far, 5,743 fair price shops have got ISO certification, according to the Minister

# NATIONAL

- On April 6, the Ministry of Education - released a "pre-draft" of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for school education and invited suggestions from stakeholders such as students, parents, teachers and scholars.
- ✓ The pre-draft has been prepared by the 12-member national steering committee headed by K Kasturirangan, former ISRO Chief.

**NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL EDUCATION 2023**

**ASSESSMENT**  
NCF 2023 suggested three approaches to assessments - **assessment of learning, for learning and as learning**



**Types of Assessment**

Formative assessments are continuous and ongoing	Summative assessments evaluate student learning at the end of a lesson or a logical period of teaching
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**Assessment across stages**

<b>Foundational Stage</b>	Assessment via observations of the child & analysing artefacts that the child has produced
<b>Preparatory Stage</b>	A comprehensive assessment at the end of the preparatory stage to measure the readiness to enter the middle school
<b>Middle Stage</b>	By the end of the middle stage, there should be a comprehensive summative assessment of student achievement of competencies in each curricular area
	Assessments should also be able to indicate special interest or inclination in specific curricular areas students may have demonstrated
<b>Secondary Stage</b>	Self-assessment where students to monitor what they are learning & use the feedback to adjust, adapt, and decide their own strategies
	Summative assessments using case-based questions, simulations, & essay-type questions

**CHANGES IN BOARD EXAMINATIONS**

- Board exams should provide a valid & reliable picture of student performance
- Education Boards should have no role in the design of the curriculum or the articulation of competencies
- Board examinations should be offered at least twice a year
- Students can then appear for a board examination in courses they have completed and feel ready for
- Boards should ensure that all test developers, reviewers & evaluators go through formal university-certified courses on test development
- Vocational/ Arts/ Physical education are an integral part of the curriculum. Boards of examination will need to design high-quality test instruments for these & need to be assessed differently from what is normally done

- ✓ The national curriculum framework (NCF) addresses education for the age group of 3 to 18 years, across an entire range of diverse institutions.
- ✓ The new framework for school education proposes major restructuring of the school system in the country
- ✓ It recommends board examinations twice a year, a semester system for class 12, freedom to students to pursue a mix of science, humanities and commerce subjects among others.
- ✓ Among the most significant recommendations in the draft NCF on school education are about choice of subjects and exams in classes IX-XII.
- ✓ According to the draft document, the secondary stage of schooling will be divided into two phases - classes 9 and 10, and classes 11 and 12
- ✓ Over two years, in class IX and X, the students will have to choose from 16 courses categorised under eight curricular areas.

- ✓ The eight broad curricular areas include – mathematics and computing, science, social studies, humanities, physical education, arts education, vocational education and interdisciplinary courses.
- ✓ In classes 11 and 12 also, a number of subjects will be offered to students under these broad areas.
- ✓ Overall, the students will have to complete 16 courses from three curricular areas to complete their Class 12 while Class 10 students have to complete two courses from eight curricular areas
- ✓ The final scores of students in Classes X and XII will be based on their cumulative performance over two years that may involve at least four board exam sessions beginning from Classes IX and XI, respectively
- ✓ The NCF has also suggested environmental education through a theme 'World Around Us'
- ✓ The draft has proposed that for higher secondary, the curriculum will be prepared with 20% local content, 30% regional, 30% national and 20% global content

<b>NEW BOARD GAME NCF proposals for Classes IX-XII</b>		
<b>Classes IX-X</b>	To pass Class X, students to take <b>2 curricular areas</b> (list below, Physical Edu instead of Sports) for 2 years	Recommended: 2 board exams in each class
<b>Classes XI-XII</b>	<b>Humanities</b>   Languages, Litt, Philosophy <b>Social Science</b>   History, Geography, Pol Sc, Psychology, Economics <b>Science</b>   Physics, Chem, Biology <b>Maths &amp; Computing</b>   Maths, Comp Sc, Business Maths <b>Arts</b>   Music, Dance, Theatre,	Sculpture, Painting <b>Vocational Education</b>   Aligned to national skills qualifications framework <b>Sports</b>   Courses on specific sports, games or yoga <b>Interdisciplinary</b>   Commerce, Sustainability & Climate Change, Health, Media & Journalism, Indian Knowledge
> For Classes XI & XII, each year divided into 2 semesters > Curricular areas further sub-divided into <b>choice-based</b>		<b>courses (disciplines)</b> > Students must complete <b>any 16 choice-based courses</b> to complete Class XII

- ✓ The NCF is a key document based on which textbooks are prepared
- ✓ The government recently announced that textbooks based on the revised NCF will be taught in schools starting from the 2024-25 academic session
- ✓ The Education Ministry has designed four National Curriculum Frameworks (NCFs) based on the 5+3+3+4 curricular and pedagogical structure that NEP 2020 has recommended for school education.
- ✓ The four National Curriculum Frameworks are NCF for School Education, NCF for Early Childhood Care and Education, NCF for Teacher Education and NCF for Adult Education
- ✓ As per the 5+3+3+4 system under the National Education Policy 2020, children will spend five years in the foundational stage (Kindergarten to Class 2); three years in the preparatory stage (Classes 3 to 5); three years in the middle stage (Classes 6 to 8), and four years in the secondary stage (Classes 9 to 12).

- ✓ The ministry launched the NCF for foundational stage (NCF-FS) for children between ages 3-8 years in October 2022.
  - ✓ In continuation of that policy, the next NCF for school education is being prepared.
  - ✓ Till now, the NCF has been revised four times – in 1975, 1988, 2000 and 2005 with the proposed revision being the fifth.
- **The Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha - were adjourned sine die on April 6, a day ahead of schedule, bringing an end to the Budget session**
- ✓ The productivity of the Lok Sabha during the Budget Session 2023 was around 34% and that of the Rajya Sabha was 24.4%, according to Union Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Arjun Ram Meghwal
  - ✓ The first part of the 11th session of the 17th Lok Sabha had 83.8% productivity, while the second part of the session had a mere 5.3% productivity.
  - ✓ The Lower House functioned for over 45 hours against a scheduled duration of 133.6 hours, while Rajya Sabha worked for over 31 hours out of 130.
  - ✓ Excluding the Finance and Appropriation Bills, the Competition (Amendment) Bill, 2022 was the only bill passed during this session.
  - ✓ The bills were passed without any discussion in either House.
  - ✓ Of all the Lok Sabhas that completed the full five-year term, the 16th Lok Sabha – elected in 2014 – recorded the lowest number of sitting days, having sat for 331 days in five years.
  - ✓ With one more year remaining in the term, and 58 average sitting days a year, the 17th Lok Sabha is unlikely to sit for more than 331 days.
  - ✓ This could make it the shortest full-term Lok Sabha since 1952.
- **On April 6, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology - released a set of new rules for online gaming, putting a ban on any game that involves betting and wagering.**
- ✓ According to the new IT Rules, 2023, the government will ban any online games or websites promoting betting as well as advertisements promoting such games.
  - ✓ The ban is part of the amendments in the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, notified by the government on April 6.
  - ✓ The amendments provide for multiple self-regulatory organisations (SRO), which will decide on permissibility of online games based on the framework.
  - ✓ The new rules mandate that there will be no surrogate advertising by firms that promote betting online.
  - ✓ Further, the newly amended IT intermediaries' rules mandate institution of an entity that will flag 'false' or 'untrue' or 'misleading' information about the central government posted online
  - ✓ As per the new law, if a government agency or government information is misrepresented on any online platform, the fact checking unit will flag it

- **Rare earth resources in India - are reported to be the fifth largest in the world.**
- ✓ However, Indian resources are significantly less with respect to grade and it is tied with radioactivity, making the extraction process from reserves to a finished product 'long, complex and expensive'.
- ✓ The process includes obtaining statutory clearances, mining, mineral beneficiation, rare earth extraction, separation, refining in oxides, metal extraction and alloy making
- ✓ This was informed by Union science and technology and earth science minister Jitendra Singh in the Rajya Sabha on April 6.
- ✓ More than 80% of the usage of rare earths in value terms is in rare earth permanent magnets, which require magnetic rare earth elements (REE) i.e. neodymium, praseodymium, dysprosium and terbium.
- ✓ These are precious REE as they find use in energy-transition initiatives.
- ✓ High-value REE are dysprosium and terbium, which are not available in extractable quantities in Indian reserves.
- ✓ In Indian deposits, only neodymium and praseodymium are available and are being extracted with upto 99.9 % purity level.
  
- **On April 6, the Union Cabinet - approved the Indian Space Policy 2023 that seeks to streamline the process of participation by private players.**
- ✓ The entry of the private sector in the space sector would enable the ISRO to focus on research and development of advanced space technologies.
- ✓ The Indian Space Policy was approved by the Cabinet Committee on Security chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- ✓ The policy will state the roles and responsibilities of private players and also bodies such as the public-private mediator, Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Center (IN-SPACe) and the commercial arm of the department, New Space India Limited.




- ✓ This was announced by space minister Jitendra Singh on April 6

- ✓ Since the space sector was opened up to private players in 2020, over 200 space start-ups have come up in the country and many of them are also working towards providing launch services.
    - ✓ Private company Skyroot Aerospace has already conducted a sub-orbital flight with its solid fuel based single-stage Vikram S rocket
  - ✓ **The Cabinet also approved setting up of LIGO (Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory) at Maharashtra's Hingoli.**
  - ✓ The observatory is meant to detect and track cosmic gravitational waves.
  - ✓ According to Space Minister Jitendra Singh, there were only two LIGO observatories in the world, both of them in the US, before India signed an MoU in 2016.
  - ✓ The minister said the observatory is scheduled to be completed by 2030
- **On April 6, the Cabinet - announced a new gas pricing mechanism by linking domestic gas prices to imported crude prices**
- ✓ Accordingly, gas produced from legacy fields of state-run ONGC and Oil India Ltd will be priced at 10% of India's monthly average import price of crude oil with a floor of \$4 per unit and a cap of \$6.5.
  - ✓ The intention is to shield domestic natural gas producers and consumers from any extreme volatility in international prices.
  - ✓ The move will effectively reduce costs of piped natural gas (PNG) supplied to kitchens and compressed natural gas (CNG) for automobiles by up to 11% from April 8.

<b>RATES CAPPED</b>				
City	CNG price*		PNG price**	
	Current	Expected	Current	Expected
Delhi	79.56	<b>73.59</b>	55	<b>50</b>
Mumbai	87	<b>79</b>	54	<b>49</b>
Bengaluru	89.5	<b>83</b>	58.5	<b>52</b>

\* ₹/kg \*\* ₹/per standard cubic meter Source: Govt of India

- Gas from legacy fields to be priced at 10% of crude
- CNG, PNG rates to slide by up to 10%
- New policy to take effect from Saturday



- Floor of \$4 per unit and cap of \$6.5 to protect interest of producers, consumers
- Price cap to be valid for 2 years and raised by 25 cents every year thereafter

- ✓ The price will be revised monthly instead of the current system of revision every six months — on April 1 and October 1 every year — based on a six-monthly rolling average of gas prices at global hubs.
- ✓ The ceiling will be valid for two years after which it will be raised by 25 cents every year



- ✓ The Cabinet's decision is based on the recommendations of an expert panel chaired by economist Kirit Parikh, which submitted its report on November 30, 2022
- ✓ Currently, domestic gas prices are determined as per the new Domestic Gas Pricing Guidelines, 2014 which were approved by Government in 2014.
  - ✓ Under this, domestic gas prices were declared for a six month period based on the volume weighted prices prevailing at four gas trading hubs - Henry Hub, Albena, National Balancing Point (UK), and Russia for a period of 12 months and with a time lag of a quarter.
- ✓ India is heavily dependent on import of energy, as it imports over 85% of crude oil it processes and 55% of natural gas.
- ✓ The government has targeted to increase the share of natural gas in primary energy mix in India from current 6.5% to 15% by 2030.

