

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – APRIL 1, 2022

TAMIL NADU

- Chief Minister M K Stalin - met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on March 31 to seek the PM's intervention on various issues

Tamil Nadu's **wish list**

Highlights of the memorandum submitted by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi

■ PTI



- Extend the period of **GST compensation** by at least two years beyond June 2022

- Expedite the **transfer of land** not used by SAIL to the State government

- Revoke the **National Education Policy** 2020

- Early approval for Phase II of Chennai Metro Rail Project under **50:50 equity sharing** basis between the Centre and Tamil Nadu

- Drop the **Neutrino** Observatory Project

- Transport the **Spent Nuclear Fuel (SNF)** back to Russia instead of storing it in Kudankulam

- Include **Narikorava/ Kurivikkar** communities in the list of Scheduled Tribes in Tamil Nadu

- ✓ These include allocation of funds, flood relief and pending dues for shared schemes.
- ✓ During this three-day visit, the chief minister is to meet five Union ministers — Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadkari on March 31, and Nirmala Sitharaman and Piyush Goyal on April 1.

- ✓ The CM's visit to the national capital will also witness the opening of Anna-Kalaignar Arivalayam, the DMK party office in New Delhi on April 2.
- ✓ Chief minister M K Stalin has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Congress chief Sonia Gandhi, Vice President Venkaiah Naidu, Lok Sabha speaker Om Birla, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman and several party leaders for the inauguration of DMK's first party office in the National Capital
- ✓ Statues of Dravidian stalwarts C N Annadurai and K Karunanidhi, both former chief ministers, will be unveiled at the new premises.
- ✓ The three-storied offices which is being constructed at Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Marg is built according to Dravidian architecture and has all the amenities of a modern building along with a library

WHAT'S ON THE AGENDA	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Inter-state water disputes involving Karnataka and Kerala governments > Release of pending GST dues and dues for shared schemes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Speedy execution of infrastructure projects, including AIIMS in Madurai > Traditional fishing rights of Indian fishermen in Palk Bay
<p>19 bills pending with Raj Bhavan for seeking assent for several months</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Drop NEET for medical students 	



- ✓ During the meeting with the PM, the CM raised 14 issues in a memorandum
- ✓ In his meeting with the PM and later with Union home minister Amit Shah, the CM sought action on the anti-NEET Bill.
- ✓ Against the recent allocation of Rs 1,000 crore by Karnataka to build a dam across river Cauvery at Mekedatu, the CM urged the PM to advise the Cauvery Water Management Authority not to give approval to the project.
- ✓ The CM sought extension of the period of GST compensation by two years beyond June 2022 and merger of all cesses and surcharges with the basic rate of tax so that states get a legitimate share of revenue.
- ✓ Further, he sought the centre's approval to provide essential commodities and life-saving medicines to the Sri Lankan Tamils in the wake of economic crisis in the island nation
- ✓ The CM also sought preferential allotment to the Tamil Nadu defence industrial corridor.
- ✓ During the meeting with Defence minister Rajnath Singh, the CM requested to create an aviation technology hub in Coimbatore
- ✓ In a meeting with highways minister Nitin Gadkari, the CM sought six-laning of the Chennai-Kanyakumari highway, extension of Chennai Port-Maduravoyal elevated corridor to Sriperumbudur and sanction for Tambaram-Chengalpattu elevated corridor.

- **Tamil Nadu's biodiversity conservation and greening project - has received a loan of ₹680 crore (10,535 million yen) from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)**
 - ✓ In this regard, the Japanese agency had signed an agreement with the Indian government.
 - ✓ Using the assistance, the State forest department will implement the project focusing on ecosystem-based climate change measures, human wildlife conflict measures, supply chain development, livelihood improvement and capacity development.
 - ✓ JICA has been implementing several afforestation projects in Tamil Nadu since 1997.
 - ✓ JICA conducted an impact study on the previous project in the State in 2021.
 - ✓ The new project seeks to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by 243,054 tonnes CO₂ equivalent.
- **The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) – has announced the hike in rates at 28 toll plazas across the state with effect from April 1.**
 - ✓ These include four toll plazas (Paranur in Chengalpattu, Chennasamudram, Vanagaram, Surapattu) in Chennai's suburbs, which the state government wanted to close down.
 - ✓ In this regard, the NHAI has issued a notification on the revised toll rates on March 30
 - ✓ Highways minister E V Velu had requested the Union ministry to remove five toll plazas as they were located within corporation or municipality limits
 - ✓ Last week, Union minister Nitin Gadkari told the Parliament that only one toll plaza will function for every 60km on national highways and those violating this norm will be closed
 - ✓ As per the new norms, cars will pay ₹5 to ₹10 extra for one-way trips at toll plazas near Chennai.
 - ✓ As far as trucks are concerned, they will pay up to ₹20 extra at each of the toll plazas

STATES

- **Maharashtra - has become the first state in the country to make the use of masks in public places optional.**
 - ✓ The State government has decided to withdraw all Covid-19 restrictions imposed under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 and Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 in the state from April 2, which marks Gudi Padwa, the Marathi New Year.
 - ✓ Maharashtra began imposing curbs on March 16, 2020, and announced a complete lockdown from March 23.
 - ✓ The national lockdown was announced on March 24.

T'GANA FOLLOWS SUIT; K'TAKA IN LINE

▼ Delhi & Maharashtra to do away with fines for not wearing masks but **insist practice to continue**

▼ From April 2, **Maharashtra not to insist on double vax** to access public transport

▼ **Telangana** says masks to be voluntary from April 1. The **elderly, pregnant women**



and people with comorbidities asked not to hang up mask yet

▼ **West Bengal** lifts all restrictions but "wearing of masks at all times...shall continue to be strictly observed until further order"

▼ **Karnataka** contemplates doing away with mandatory masking

- ✓ Apart from Maharashtra, Delhi, Telangana, West Bengal have announced complete relaxation of the Covid-19 norms starting from April in view of the steady decline in the Covid-19 pandemic situation
- ✓ Like Maharashtra, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority has also decided that there will be no fine for not wearing a mask.
- ✓ The West Bengal government has lifted all restrictions imposed because of the pandemic but said the mask mandate will continue.
- ✓ Last week, the Centre announced that all containment measures will end on March 31.
- ✓ But it has advised wearing of face mask and maintaining social distancing
- **On March 29, the National Commission for Women (NCW) in collaboration with Delhi State Legal Services Authority (DSLISA) - launched a legal aid clinic in Delhi**



- ✓ The new facility will act as a single-window facility for resolving the grievances of women.
- ✓ Any woman will be able to walk-in to the facility for accessing free legal advice and counselling where legal services advocates in the panel of DSLISA will help women.
- ✓ NCW is also planning to set up similar legal services clinics in other State Commissions for Women

- ✓ The clinic was inaugurated in the presence of NCW's Chairperson, Rekha Sharma
- ✓ Information regarding various schemes of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) will also be provided through the clinic

NATIONAL

- **On March 31, the Centre - decided to take out several areas of Assam, Manipur and Nagaland from the purview of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA)**
- ✓ According to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), AFSPA is being removed from 15 police station areas in seven districts of Nagaland, 15 police station areas in six districts of Manipur and 23 districts entirely and one district partially in Assam
- ✓ The notification of "disturbed areas" under AFSPA has been in force in Assam since 1990, in Nagaland since 1995, and in Manipur, except the Imphal Municipality area, since 2004

AFSPA STATUS

ASSAM In force in the whole state since November 11, 1990. Since 2017, Assam govt has been deciding on extending AFSPA by continuing to declare the entire state as 'disturbed area'

➤ From April 1, 2022, disturbed area notification will be completely removed from 23 of Assam's 33 districts and partially from one district. Notification will remain completely in force in nine districts and partially in one district

NAGALAND Mon district was initially notified as a disturbed area by the central govt on September 17, 1991. On April 4, 1995, the Nagaland govt declared the whole state as 'disturbed area'. Centre continued this position vide its notification dated July 22, 2003

➤ From April 1, 2022, the disturbed area notification will stand withdrawn from 15 police stations spread across seven districts. Due to this, AFSPA will be in force only in the remaining 57 police stations in 13 districts of the state

MANIPUR Since the enactment of AFSPA, some areas of the state have been declared as disturbed area. The entire state of Manipur has been continuously declared as a disturbed area since 1999, out of which the Imphal Municipality area was removed with effect from 2004. From April 1, 2022, 15 police stations across six districts will not be 'disturbed area'. AFSPA will remain in force in 82 police stations in 16 districts (out of a total 97 police stations in 16 districts)

ARUNACHAL PRADESH Some areas of Tirap and Changlang districts and 20-km belt bordering Assam was declared as 'disturbed area' by the Centre from September 17, 1991. In 2015, AFSPA was extended to three districts and 20-km belt bordering Assam and 16 police stations in nine other districts, which has gradually been reduced to only three districts and two police station areas of another district. Status quo continues

BACKGROUND

➤ The Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in its original form was promulgated by the British in response to the Quit India movement in 1942

➤ After Independence, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru decided to retain the Act, which was first brought in as an ordinance and then notified as an Act in 1958

➤ In 2005, the Justice Jeevan Reddy Committee had recommended the repeal of AFSPA and suggested an amendment to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967 by inserting a new Chapter with respect to the northeastern states

➤ In 2018, the Supreme Court had held that "there is no concept of absolute immunity from trial by a criminal court" if an Army man has committed an offence

- ✓ Starting 2015, the Government removed AFSPA entirely from Tripura and Meghalaya, and partially from Arunachal Pradesh, which currently has three districts and two police station areas in a fourth district under the Act.
 - ✓ In Nagaland, the Centre accepted the recommendation of a high-level committee formed in the aftermath of the Mon killings and decided to withdraw AFSPA in a phased manner from April 1.
 - ✓ The withdrawal covers an area of 4,138 sq km, which is about 25% of the total area of the state
 - ✓ In Assam, around 60% of the state's area will be free from AFSPA following the latest announcement
 - ✓ Manipuri activist Irom Sharmila had sat on a hunger strike for 16 long years to press for repeal of AFSPA in Manipur.
 - ✓ The first major move at the Central level on AFSPA was taken in 2004, when the Jeevan Reddy Committee set up by the then UPA government had recommended its repeal
 - ✓ The AFSPA empowers security forces to conduct operations anywhere and arrest anyone without any prior warrant.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi – bid farewell to 72 members of different parties in Rajya Sabha, whose term will be over soon**



- ✓ During the event, Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed their contribution and MPs fondly reminisced on their experiences.
- ✓ Rajya Sabha chairperson, M Venkaiah Naidu informed the house that retiring members from 19 states had a total parliamentary experience of 181 terms, including 143 terms in the Rajya Sabha and 38 in the Lok Sabha.
- ✓ The 72 Rajya Sabha members are set to retire between March and July.
- ✓ Sixty-five of them represent 19 states while seven are nominated members
- ✓ While there are 45 first-time members retiring, 27 have served two terms or more
- ✓ Those retiring include A K Antony, Ambika Soni, P Chidambaram, Anand Sharma, Jairam Ramesh, Suresh Prabhu, Praful Patel, Subramanian Swamy, Sanjay Raut,

Naresh Gujral, S C Mishra, Prasanna Acharya, Narendra Jadhav, M C Mary Kom and Swapan Dasgupta.

- ✓ The terms of finance minister Nirmala Sitharman, commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal and minority affairs minister and deputy leader of the House in RS, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, are coming to an end as well.
 - ✓ Among those retiring, A. K. Antony and Ambika Soni have served five terms, while Anand Sharma, Suresh Prabhu and Praful Patel have completed four terms each
 - ✓ Subramanian Swamy, Jairam Ramesh, Prasanna Acharya, Sanjay Raut, Naresh Gujral, Sardar Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa and Satish Chandra Misra have served three terms each, while another 15 members have served two terms each
 - ✓ P. Chidambaram has the longest legislative experience — one term in Rajya Sabha and seven terms in Lok Sabha
 - ✓ Praful Patel served four terms each in both Houses.
 - ✓ The four ministers completing their terms are Nirmala Sitharaman, Piyush Goyal, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi and Ramachandra Prasad Singh.
 - ✓ Floor leaders of four parties — Prasanna Acharya of BJD, Sanjay Raut of Shiv Sena, Satish Chandra Misra of BSP and Sardar Balwinder Singh Bhunder of Shiromani Akali Dal — are also completing their tenures.
 - ✓ Chairpersons of five department-related Parliamentary Standing Committees of Rajya Sabha are retiring — Anand Sharma, Jairam Ramesh, T G Venkatesh, Vijayasai Reddy and Vinay Sahasrabuddhe.
 - ✓ 84-year-old AIADMK veteran SR Balasubramoniyar is the only member who attended all the 234 sittings of the House during the 12 sessions from 2017 till the winter session last year.
- **On March 31, Chief Justice N V Ramana - launched FASTER (Fast and Secured Transmission of Electronic Records), a digital platform to communicate interim orders, stay orders, bail orders of the SC to authorities concerned through secured electronic channel**



- ✓ The idea of electronic transmission of orders was mooted by the CJI in July 2021 when the court took suo motu cognisance of delay in compliance with bail orders passed by Supreme Court.
 - ✓ Subsequently, the secretary general of the apex court, in consultation with solicitor general Tushar Mehta, and senior advocate Dushyant Dave presented a report outlining the scheme and rules governing implementation of such a scheme.
 - ✓ The system was developed in collaboration with NIC.
 - ✓ To reach all districts of India, 73 nodal officers have been nominated so far at various levels.
 - ✓ A total of 1,887 e-mail IDs have been created for this system across the country and a FASTER cell has been established in the Registry of the Supreme Court.
 - ✓ The cell will transmit digitally signed record of proceedings or orders related to bail and release passed by the court to the nodal officers and duty holders concerned through email.
 - ✓ For the purposes of authentication, all such Orders or Record of Proceedings would bear digital signatures of authorised Nodal Officers of the Supreme Court as well as Institutional digital signatures.
 - ✓ Justices AM Khanwilkar, DY Chandrachud, and Hemant Gupta, and Chief Justices and Judges of High Courts were present at the online launch event.
- **Insurance firms - have launched an online portal, e-DAR, as per the direction of the Supreme Court**
- ✓ A bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and M M Sundresh has approved the app
 - ✓ It is a one-of-its-kind app having around 19 applications which are to be filled by the authorities to enable road accident victims claim compensation
 - ✓ The app will alert and activate all stakeholders, including police, insurance companies and Motor Accident Claim Tribunal, at once immediately after any untoward incident.
 - ✓ The app will get filled up automatically once the vehicle number and the driver licence number are entered, as the app is linked with the central database.
- **Transactions under the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) - crossed the 5-billion count for the first time in March 2022**
- ✓ According to the National Payments Corporation of India, UPI recorded 504 crore transactions up to March 29 for a value of Rs 8,88,169 crore.
 - ✓ Earlier, the account-to-account fund transfer platform had crossed 400 crore transactions in the month of October 2021, hitting a new record.
 - ✓ The number of transactions in February also dropped marginally to 452 crore from 461 crore in January.
 - ✓ The payment channel, which is only five years old, grew from zero in June 2016 to a billion transactions a month in October 2019.

- ✓ UPI has been scaling new records month-on-month in terms of transaction volume and value because of increased penetration among users and accepting merchants.
- ✓ Also, NPCI has been adding new functionalities such as UPI Autopay to enable recurring payments and IPO via UPI.

SUPREME COURT VERDICT

- **On March 31, the Supreme Court - struck down the 10.5% reservation provided to Vanniyars, a Most Backward Community (MBC) in the State**
- ✓ The Supreme Court said caste alone cannot be the sole basis to decide backwardness and reservation cannot be granted on superficial grounds.
- ✓ A bench of justices L Nageswara Rao and BR Gavai upheld the Madras high court's November 1 verdict that held the quota as "unconstitutional and illegal".
- ✓ The Bench held that the sub-classification of vanniyars within the remaining 115 communities was not backed by relevant quantifiable data in violation of Articles 14, 15 and 16 of the Constitution of India
- ✓ The state government, Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK), which represents the Vanniyars, and a host of individuals filed appeals against the high court order.
- ✓ The law "Vanniyar Reservation Act 2021" granting 10.5% reservation to Vanniyars within the 20% quota for Most Backward Classes (MBCs) and de-notified communities (DNCs) was passed in February 2021 ahead of the assembly polls
- ✓ The Tamil Nadu Backward Classes Commission, headed by Justice M.S. Janarthanam, recommended an internal quota for Vanniyars up to 10.5% within the 20% quota in 2012
- ✓ Tamil Nadu has 69% reservation, which includes 30% for Backward Castes, 20% for Most Backward Castes, 18% for Scheduled Caste and 1% for the Scheduled Tribes.

INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

- **PM Narendra Modi and his Nepal counterpart Sher Bahadur Deuba - will jointly inaugurate passenger train services between the 34.5 km stretch from Jayanagar in India to Kurtha in Nepal through videoconferencing from New Delhi's Hyderabad House on April 2.**



- ✓ The launch of the much-awaited rail services between India and Nepal would give further impetus to the bilateral relations between the two countries.
- ✓ The ministry of external affairs (MEA) had sanctioned ₹784 crore for this ambitious project.
- ✓ The first and second phases of the project between Jayanagar and Kurtha and Kurtha and Bijalpura, respectively, have already been completed.
- ✓ Work on the third phase between Bijalpura and Bardibas, a stretch of 69km, is currently under progress
- ✓ The rail service between Jayanagar and Bijalpura in Nepal had been introduced for the first time in 1937 by the British.
- ✓ It was suspended in 2001 after the devastating floods in Nepal.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and visiting British Foreign Secretary Elizabeth Truss – addressed the the first India-UK Strategic Futures Forum on March 31, 2022**



- ✓ During the bilateral meeting, India and Britain called for upholding principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, the UN charter and international law, besides favouring more robust economic, strategic and defence ties
- ✓ Further, the two ministers discussed ways to further enhance cooperation in the strategically important Indo-Pacific region
- ✓ The British minister also said she will work to deepen cyber security and defence cooperation between the two countries and announced a new joint cyber security programme.
- ✓ The new programme will aim to protect online infrastructure in both countries from attack
- ✓ Further, India and the UK have committed to deliver a comprehensive and balanced free trade agreement (FTA) by the end of this year
- ✓ The two Ministers also took stock of the “Roadmap 2030” launched by both countries in May last year, which include comprehensive plans for the relationship over the next ten years

- ✓ Last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his British counterpart Boris Johnson launched the India-UK Enhanced Trade Partnership that aims to more than double bilateral trade by 2030.
- ✓ The India-UK relationship was elevated to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership during the India-UK virtual summit held between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his British counterpart Boris Johnson in May last year.

ECONOMY

- **The government - is selling 1.5% in homegrown oil explorations major ONGC for about Rs 3,000 crore through an offer for sale (OFS) that completed on March 31, 2022.**
- ✓ Accordingly, the government is selling nearly 18.9 crore ONGC shares at a per unit base price of Rs 159
- ✓ As per the latest shareholding disclosure by ONGC, the government had a 60.4% holding in the company, as of December 2021
- ✓ The offer is part of the government's annual divestment plan
- ✓ According to the DIPAM, the ministry in charge of divesting the government's stakes in various PSUs, its total receipt for fiscal 2021-22 was Rs 68,397 crore while the initial Budget target was Rs 1.75 lakh crore.

APPOINTMENTS

- **The Union Government - has appointed retired IAS Officer CS Rajan as Chairman and Managing Director of Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services (IL&FS) for a period of six months with effect from April 3, 2022**



- ✓ Rajan is an IAS officer of the 1978 batch who retired as Rajasthan Chief Secretary in 2016
- ✓ He is the current Managing Director of the IL&FS group after replacing Vineet Nayyar in 2019
- ✓ The term of Uday Kotak, who was appointed as chairman of crisis-hit IL&FS is ending this week

- ✓ Last year in September, the Union government extended by six months, the term of Kotak as chairman of IL&FS to maintain continuity in the resolution plan being worked out for the indebted group
- ✓ Kotak is MD and chief executive officer (CEO) of Kotak Mahindra Bank.
- ✓ Till March end, the IL&FS group has addressed a debt of about Rs 55,000 crore, or 90% of its original estimate of Rs 61,000 crore
- ✓ In 2018, the Government of India took control of the company after the company defaulted on its loans
- ✓ Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee Tunnel, India's longest tunnel, which was opened to the public in April 2017 was funded by the IL&FS group

