



FIVE RYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-august

TAMIL NADU

- On August 2, Tamil Nadu chief minister MK Stalin – announced that a new hub for startups is getting ready at Nandanam and will be launched in three months
- ✓ He was speaking at the Tamil Nadu Startups and Incubators Meet held at the Chennai Trade Center



- ✓ During the event, the CM handed over seed grants to 31 startup beneficiaries under the TANSEED challenge and launched various initiatives for the state's startups.
- ✓ He highlighted that Tamil Nadu had improved its status in the Ease of Doing Business rankings from 14th place to 3rd place, and it had also moved from being

an “emerging ecosystem” in the national startup rankings to now being a “Leader State ”

- ✓ The new mini startup hub will come up over 32,000 sq ft of space in the new CMRL building in Nandanam
 - ✓ It will host TANSIM's (Tamil Nadu Startup and Innovation Mission) new office and act as a facility where startups can start functioning by booking spaces in advance.
 - ✓ The new hub will also have a training hall / seminar facility among other features.
 - ✓ During the event, the CM launched various initiatives to improve the startup ecosystem in the state.
 - ✓ One such initiative was the inauguration of regional hubs of TANSIM at Madurai, Erode and Tirunelveli to promote entrepreneurship and encourage startups in these cities and surrounding districts.
 - ✓ He launched five accelerator programs to be conducted along with various partner organisations under the themes of Industry 4.0, Commerce tech, Agritech, Livelihood & Social Impact, and Climate Action.
 - ✓ This program is expected to benefit over 100 startups and will span from 3-12 months.
 - ✓ The CM also launched eight TANSIM community circles, which are basically micro groups of 20-50 members comprising entrepreneurs, mentors, investors, and others to promote grassroots entrepreneurship.
 - ✓ Further, the state has also devised a new governance framework for its incubators
 - ✓ During the event, TANSIM, along with a panel of experts, announced a ‘Tamil Nadu Framework for Incubator Maturity Model.’
 - ✓ The model, released by the CM, will help participating incubators to understand their current maturity level and support them to mature to the next level.
- **The ‘Longwood Shola’ forest in Kotagiri in the Nilgiris - has been awarded the Queen’s Commonwealth Canopy (QCC) accreditation**
- ✓ This is a first of its kind honour for Tamil Nadu and second in the entire country.



- ✓ Tillari Conservation Reserve (TCR) in Maharashtra was the first in the country to get this accreditation in March 2021.
- ✓ To establish a global network of protected woodlands, the QCC was initiated in 2015 as a forest conservation programme among 54 Commonwealth Nations.

- ✓ Till 2019, 46 countries have become involved in these conservation initiatives.
- ✓ Longwood Shola, known to the local Badagas as 'Dodda Solai or Big Forest', has been a source of water and firewood for villages around Kotagiri.
- ✓ Spanning more than 100 acres, Shola forest is life-giving as it retains water during rain and releases it slowly.
- ✓ Last May, the government set aside Rs. 5 crore to construct a centre, under the 'Longwood Shola Eco-Conservation Initiative', to research and conserve the forest.

INTERNATIONAL

- **The United States - killed al-Qaida fugitive and Osama bin Laden's successor Ayman Al Zawahiri in a drone strike in Kabul**
- ✓ This was announced by the US President Joe Biden on August 1


LIFE & DEATH OF A TERROR MASTERMIND

Strike occurred at 7.18am IST on Sunday. Drone fired 2 Hellfire missiles as Zawahiri (71) stepped onto balcony of house allegedly owned by top aide of Af minister Sirajuddin Haqqani in Shirpur area

Sr officials were briefed in April that Zawahiri was believed to be living in the house. Intel community spent months confirming his identity

Biden met his top advisers July 25 and authorised strike

Justice has been delivered, and this terrorist leader is no more — JOE BIDEN



The house was in a posh locality in central Kabul

After the strike, Haqqani network members tried to conceal that Zawahiri was at the house and restricted access to the site

FROM ARMY SURGEON TO QAIDA NO. 2

- Zawahiri's father was pharmacology prof, maternal grandfather was president of Cairo University
- Academically gifted youth, opposed contact sports as inhumane, was influenced by extremist leader Sayyid Qutb
- Execution of Qutb in 1966 inspired Zawahiri, then 15, to band friends into Jamaat al-Jihad, or Jihad Group
- Earned degree in medicine from Cairo University, briefly served as army surgeon. Married Azza Nowair, had a son and five daughters
- Visited refugee camps along Af-Pak border, befriended bin Laden
- Jailed for 3 yrs after Jihad Group played role in slaying of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat on Oct. 6, 1981
- In 1997, helped plan attack

Was senior adviser to Bin Laden during 1998 bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania that killed hundreds. **In 2001, helped oversee the planning of 9/11**

at Egypt's Luxor, killing 62 people. As support for Jihad Group dried up, it merged with Qaida

- Zawahiri had little of bin Laden's charisma but was widely depicted as Qaida's intellectual spine, its 'COO'
- After bin Laden's death, became the figurehead leader of al-Qaida

- ✓ Zawahiri was hit by two Hellfire missiles as he stepped onto the balcony of a Taliban-controlled safe house in Kabul
- ✓ Al-Zawahiri was hiding in a posh locality called Sherpur in Kabul under protection of Taliban regime since January this year.

- ✓ This was the first US drone strike since its withdrawal from Afghanistan in August last year.
- ✓ The Hellfire R9X missile fired from a US Reaper drone is equipped with six razor-like blades, which fly in at high speed, crushing and slicing the targeted person.
- ✓ The 'R9X' variant, also called the "ninja bomb", is deployed to target a terrorist without damage to civilians, which a conventional missile cannot do without exploding.
- ✓ It is little more than five feet long and weighs just over 100 pounds and doesn't leave behind any signs such as burnt-out shell marks
- ✓ The Hellfire R9X was first used in a drone strike to kill senior Al-Qaeda figure Abu Khayr al-Masri while he was travelling in a car in Syria during March 2017



Ayman al-Zawahiri, the Egyptian-born surgeon-turned-jihadi, helped al-Qaida chief Osama bin Laden plot the 9/11 attacks and helped the terror group survive and spread in the years after

WHY HE WAS IMPORTANT | On the run after 9/11, al-Zawahiri rebuilt al-Qaida leadership in the Afghan-Pakistan border region and was the supreme leader over branches in Iraq, Asia, Yemen and beyond. With a credo of targeting near and far enemies, al-Qaida after 9/11 carried out years of unrelenting attacks: in Bali, Mombasa, Riyadh, Jakarta, Istanbul, Madrid, London. Attacks that killed 52 in London in 2005 were among Qaida's last devastating strikes in the West

TAKING DOWN A TERRORIST

THE ATTACK

Strike involved a US drone, armed with two precision-guided Hellfire missiles, which were launched at 6.18am (Kabul time) on July 31. Zawahiri was killed on the balcony

THE WEAPON | Zawahiri was killed at his Kabul home, but pictures showed no sign of an explosion, and US officials say no one else was harmed. That points to the use of **Hellfire R9X**, a warhead-less missile

THE PLANNING

Attack plan formed over May and June. US monitored the residence to understand the family's pattern of life, study the construction of the home, and aiming to hit Zawahiri without threatening the building's structural integrity to minimise risk to civilians

July 1 | Defence, intelligence officials presented final plan to Biden, using a detailed model of the residence

July 25 | Biden gave the go-ahead, after all key cabinet officials backed the operation

R9X, first appeared in March 2017 when Qaida commander Abu al-Khayr al-Masri was killed by a drone strike in a car in Syria. Photos of the vehicle showed a large hole through the roof, with the car's metal, and all of the interior, including its occupants, physically shredded. But the front and rear of the car was intact. It is US munition of choice for killing extremists

DID TALIBAN KNOW OF HIS PRESENCE IN AF | Undoubtedly, say US officials. The safe house was owned by a top aide to senior Taliban leader Sirajuddin Haqqani



Reaper Drone carrying the missile flies over target

Hellfire R9X is believed to be equipped with **six razor-like blades** extending from the fuselage that slices through its target but does not explode

6 ft

Seeker System

No Warhead

The house was in a posh locality in central Kabul

international airport

Sherpur

US embassy

Kabul

Afghanistan

Pakistan

Graphic: Sunil Singh

- ✓ Ayman al-Zawahiri, once a close confidante of slain Al Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden, was the mastermind of September 11 terror attacks in the US in 2001.
- ✓ Born in Egypt, al-Zawahiri was a trained surgeon

- ✓ He masterminded simultaneous attacks on US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998 and the suicide bombing of the American destroyer USS Cole in Yemen in 2000.
- ✓ He was among hundreds arrested and accused of involvement in the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981.
- ✓ The US had placed a \$25 million (nearly Rs 200 crore) bounty on the head of al-Zawahiri, one of FBI's Most Wanted Terrorist
- ✓ After Osama bin Laden was killed by US Navy SEAL team in Pakistan's Abbottabad in May 2011, al-Zawahiri took over the reins of Al Qaeda
- ✓ In September 2014, Zawahiri announced the Indian subcontinent chapter of the al Qaeda, known as AQIS, or Qaedat al-Jihad in the Indian Subcontinent.
- ✓ The US and the Taliban signed a peace agreement in February 2020 under the Presidency of former US President Donald Trump, prompting the withdrawal of the US troops from Afghan soil

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **On August 2, Prime Minister Narendra Modi - met Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih in New Delhi.**
- ✓ President Solih is on a four-day visit to India



- ✓ On his third visit to India as president, Solih had discussions with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who also hosted a luncheon in his honour.
- ✓ Solih was also the first foreign leader to be received by the new Indian president, Droupadi Murmu.
- ✓ Following the discussion between the leaders, India announced the supply of a second Landing Craft Assault (LCA) to the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) and a replacement for an earlier provided ship.
- ✓ Besides, India is also gifting 24 utility vehicles to the Maldivian National Defence Force (MNDF).
- ✓ The Indian prime minister also announced a new line of credit of \$100 million for the neighbouring country to complete development projects in a time-bound manner.

- ✓ The six pacts signed between the two sides after discussion will facilitate cooperation in capacity building, cyber security, housing, disaster management and infrastructure development in the Maldives.
- ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi also reaffirmed India's commitment to strengthen cooperation in line with India's Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) vision
- ✓ Further, both the leaders launched the "Greater Male connectivity projects in the Maldives"
- ✓ The Male connectivity projects will be built under India's \$100 million grant and \$400 million line of Credit.
- ✓ India helped Maldives in establishing the National College for Policing and Law Enforcement (NCPLE) at Addu City which was inaugurated in March 2022.

DEFENCE

- **India - will dispatch four Sukhoi-30MKI fighter jets, a C-17 Globemaster-III strategic airlifter and an IL-78 mid-air refuelling aircraft for the major 'Pitch Black' air combat exercise**
- ✓ The exercise to be hosted by Australia this month will feature around 100 aircraft and 2,500 military personnel from 17 nations.
- ✓ Recently, the Indian Air Force (IAF) also sent Sukhoi fighters and C-17 aircraft for the "tactical leadership programme" to the Egyptian Air Force (EAF) Weapon School at Cairo West Airbase in June-July
- ✓ The aircrew of the IAF also took part as instructors in the programme.
- ✓ Apart from Australia and India, this year's Pitch Black exercise will see the US, UK, Canada, France, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand and the UAE.

SPORTS

- **The Indian women Lawn Bowls team - has won a historic gold medal at the ongoing Commonwealth Games in Birmingham on August 2, 2022**



- ✓ Nayanmoni Saikia, Pinki, Lovely Choubey and Rupa Rani Tirkey created history after defeating 2018 silver medalists South Africa in the women's four lawn bowls final to win the gold medal
- ✓ The victory has given India its fourth gold medal of the campaign
- ✓ Notably, this was also the Indian team's maiden appearance in the women's fours format of the finals of the tournament
- ✓ Lawn bowls is often considered a mix of ten-pin bowling and the winter sport of curling.
- ✓ Since its inaugural edition in 1930, lawn bowls has been a part of the Commonwealth Games.
- ✓ So far, England, Australia and South Africa have won the most medals in the game, having won 51, 50 and 44 medals respectively
- ✓ India has participated in lawn bowls events at the 2010, 2014 and 2018 Commonwealth Games
- ✓ The country's previous best was at fourth place in the 2010 women's triples lawn bowling event in Delhi and in the 2014 men's fours event at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow
- ✓ **Defending champions in Table Tennis - Team India - won the Gold after defeating Singapore in the men's team event finals on August 2**
- ✓ The Indian men's team consisting of Sharath Kamal, G. Sathiyar and Harmeet Desai had entered into the final after remaining unbeaten through the tournament
- ✓ In badminton, defending champions India won silver after losing to Malaysia in the mixed team badminton final.
- ✓ Further, India's Vikas Thakur became the eighth weightlifter to win medal at the 2022 CWG after bagging the silver medal in the men's 96kg in Birmingham
- ✓ The 2014 silver medallist and 2018 bronze medallist, Thakur lifted 346kg (155kg snatch + 191kg clean and jerk) at the National Exhibition Centre in Solihull to win his second silver medal in the Games



- ✓ Earlier, on the night of August 1, Harjinder Kaur brought India its seventh weightlifting medal and ninth overall in the Games
- ✓ She clinched a bronze medal at the women's 71kg final with a total lift of 212kg (93kg snatch+119kg clean and jerk)
- ✓ This is her second major international competition in the seniors category after winning silver at the Commonwealth Championships in 2021.

- ✓ In the Medal Tally, India is at 6th place currently with 13 medals, which includes five gold, five silver and three bronze.
- ✓ Australia is ranked first with 52 medals, including 22 Gold medals, 13 silver medals, and 17 Bronze medals.

