

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-APRIL 28, 2022

TAMIL NADU

- **Chief Minister M K Stalin - has constituted a one-man commission to probe the temple chariot fire accident at Kalimedu village in Thanjavur that claimed 11 lives due to electrocution on April 27**
- ✓ The commission will be headed by Kumar Jayant, principal secretary of revenue and disaster management



TN GOVT SETS UP PROBE PANEL

- Chief minister M K Stalin sets up **one-man commission headed by Kumar Jayant**, principal secretary of revenue & disaster management to probe incident
- CM hands over **₹5 lakh solatium** to each victim's family
- PM Modi gives **₹2 lakh to each family from PMNRF**
- The **state legislature adopted a resolution moved by the CM**, expressing condolence to the bereaved families

CHARRED: The chariot on fire in Kalimedu area of Thanjavur district in the wee hours of Wednesday

- ✓ The CM handed over a cheque of Rs.5 lakh on behalf of the government and Rs. 2 lakh as solatium from DMK to each family.
- ✓ Further, the CM also handed over a cheque of Rs.50,000 each to the every severely injured and Rs.25,000 each to those who sustained minor injuries.
- ✓ The AIADMK has announced Rs.1 lakh each to the families of the 11 victims and Rs.25,000 each to the 15 injured.
- ✓ After five people were similarly electrocuted during a temple chariot procession in Vellore in 2012, the government had said such processions should end by 6pm and power should be switched off along the routes.

- ✓ As per the government rules, officials from the departments of electricity, revenue, police, fire, and local administration should be part of festival committees, which should ensure safety protocols are followed.
- **The prison department - proposes to implement a new scheme titled 'Seerthirutha Siragugal'**
- ✓ The initiative seeks to reform and rehabilitate prisoners and appoint social casework experts and welfare officers for central prisons and special prisons for women.
- ✓ The department is also planning to change the diet of jail inmates to ensure a supply of nutritional food as part of the rehabilitation programme
- ✓ This was announced by minister for law and prisons S Regupathy in the assembly while replying to the demand for grants on April 27
- ✓ In this regard, a committee has been constituted with senior government officials and nutrition experts from Rajiv Gandhi General Hospital as members to review the scale and pattern of diet given to prisoners.
- ✓ The committee has considered prisoners' diet patterns by comparing their existing diet to neighbouring states and submitted its recommendations to the DGP of prisons and correctional service.
- ✓ The minister announced an allocation of Rs.1 crore for the reform programme.

NATIONAL

- **On April 27, the Union Cabinet - approved an additional subsidy of Rs. 40,000 crore for phosphate-based fertilizers for the upcoming kharif season (April-September)**
- ✓ Accordingly, farmers will continue to get the Di-ammonium Phosphate (DAP) at the current rate and the government will bear the entire burden of the price impact due to global conditions.
- ✓ The government had earlier allocated a subsidy of Rs.21,000 crore for the first half of the year and will now spend Rs.61,000 crore towards subsidy on phosphate-based fertilizers.

ABSORBING THE PRICE IMPACT			
Fertilizer subsidy over the years Figures in ₹ crore			
Year	P&K fertilizer	Urea	Total Subsidy
2019-20	26,368	57,109	83,477
2020-21	38,990	99,537	1,38,527
2021-22	57,202	1,04,982	1,62,184
2022-23	60,940*	67,187*	1,28,127*

*Estimates likely to go up as Urea prices have also gone up

- ✓ The hike in Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) is likely to push the government's fertiliser subsidy bill to around Rs. 2 lakh crore, based on current price trends.

- ✓ The Union government has decided to provide a subsidy of Rs.2,501 per bag on DAP instead of the existing subsidy of Rs.1,650 per bag which is a 50% increase over the last year's subsidy rates
 - ✓ The subsidy on DAP has been increased five times to Rs. 2,501 per bag from Rs. 512 per bag in 2020-21
 - ✓ However, the cost of DAP for Indian farmers was lower than in the neighbouring countries, the US and Brazil.
 - ✓ The total NBS subsidy approved only for the upcoming kharif season is more than the total subsidy provided for both kharif and rabi season at Rs.57,000 crore.
 - ✓ In the budget estimate the government had estimated the entire subsidy for P&K fertilizers for the entire year at Rs.42,000 crore.
- **On April 27, the government - approved the continuation of the flagship scheme to provide loans to street vendors under the PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) scheme till December 2024.**
- ✓ The scheme launched after the first surge of Covid-19 is aimed at providing quick loans to street vendors to restart their business.
 - ✓ The scheme was originally planned till March 2022.
 - ✓ Through the scheme, affordable subsidised collateral-free loans are being facilitated to the street vendors.
 - ✓ The scheme had envisaged to facilitate loans for an amount of ₹5,000 crore.

SUPREME COURT VERDICT

- **On April 27, the Supreme Court - asked the Union government why it cannot release A.G. Perarivalan who has served 31 years of his life term in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, as the court has granted similar relief to many other convicts.**



- ✓ A bench of Justices L Nageswara Rao and B R Gavai held that the TN governor has no authority to refer the pardon plea of AG Perarivalan to President, as it is against the federal structure of the country
- ✓ The bench was hearing a petition filed by Perarivalan seeking release from the prison based on the recommendation made by the Tamil Nadu government.

- ✓ At the outset of hearing, the bench said that the court could pass order for his release without deciding the issue on whether the President or the governor is competent authority in this case
- ✓ Perarivalan was among seven persons convicted by a Special TADA [Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act] court for being part of the conspiracy to assassinate former PM Rajiv Gandhi on May 21, 1991.
- ✓ His role was limited to supplying the battery used in the bomb that led to the tragic incident.
- ✓ Perarivalan was arrested in June 1991 and his death sentence was commuted to life by the Supreme Court on February 18, 2014.
- ✓ The convict submitted a mercy plea under Article 161 to the Tamil Nadu governor on December 30, 2015 and had approached the top court in 2016 over the delay to decide on his clemency.
- ✓ The Supreme Court in September 2018 asked the governor to decide the pardon plea “as he deemed fit”.
- ✓ The state government in the same month had recommended to the governor to remit the sentence of all the seven convicts and release the convict forthwith.
- ✓ The governor after a gap of more than three years, decided on January 25, 2021 to refer the matter to the President, who is the competent authority to take a call on the mercy plea.
- ✓ On March 9, 2022, the Supreme Court had granted interim bail to Perarivalan while imposing several conditions and taking into account he had spent over 30 years in prison.
- ✓ Recently, files on the early release of seven Rajiv Gandhi assassination convicts were referred to the President by Governor RN Ravi.

INTERNATIONAL

- **China - has recorded its first human infection with the H3N8 strain of bird flu, which has low risk of spread among people.**
- ✓ The variant was found in a four-year old boy from the central province of Henan province who showed fever and other symptoms on April 5
- ✓ The child had been in contact with chickens and crows raised at his home.
- ✓ The H3N8 variant is common in horses and dogs and has even been found in seals, but not in humans
- ✓ According to whole genome sequence analysis, the H3N8 virus in this human case is a re-assortant, with genes from viruses that have been detected previously in poultry and wild birds
- ✓ Its implication in the 1889 influenza pandemic, known as the Russian flu, was “a major concern for the risk of the virus”.
- ✓ China’s huge populations of both farmed and wild birds of many species provide an ideal environment for avian viruses to mix and mutate.
- ✓ Some sporadically infect people, usually those who work with poultry.

- ✓ Last year, China reported first human case of H10N3.
- **Nepal - banned imported liquor, playing cards and nearly a dozen other “nonessential” goods to address the country’s widening trade deficit and declining foreign currency reserves.**
 - ✓ Falling remittances and tourism earnings, along with a blowout budget deficit, have severely affected Nepal's fiscal position during the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - ✓ The central bank has said reserves are only sufficient to cover just over six months of imports, down from 10 months in mid-2021.
 - ✓ A commerce ministry directive announced prohibitions on the import of several items including diamonds, large televisions, expensive mobile phones and tobacco until July.
 - ✓ The ban also banned imports of toys and playing cards.
 - ✓ To conserve fuel, the government said that it would reduce the work week from five-and-a-half days to five.
 - ✓ Nepal’s trade deficit rose by nearly 34.5% on-year to \$9.35 billion in mid-March, while forex reserves have fallen below \$10 billion.

APPOINTMENTS

- **Former PM Benazir Bhutto’s son and Pakistan People’s Party chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari - took oath as Pakistan’s new foreign minister on April 27**



- ✓ President Arif Alvi administered the oath in the presence of the PM Sharif at a ceremony that was attended by cabinet members and senior politicians
- ✓ Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari becomes one of the world’s youngest and the youngest foreign minister in Pakistan at 33 years, seven months, and six days of age
- ✓ Ex-prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was 35 years, five months, and ten days old when he was sworn in as the foreign minister, while Hina Rabbani Khar was 33 years, eight months, and one day old.
- ✓ It is for the first time when Oxford-educated Bilawal has been given a key post in the government and assigned the key portfolio of foreign minister of the country.

- ✓ He was first elected to the National Assembly in 2018.
- ✓ PPP is the second largest party in the current coalition government of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif who was appointed on April 11.
- ✓ Prime Minister Shehbaz is the president of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)
- ✓ Bilawal is son of three-time former premier Benazir Bhutto who was killed in a bomb and gun attack at a political rally in Rawalpindi in 2007.
- ✓ Benazir was daughter of former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto
- ✓ His grandfather Zulfikar Ali Bhutto – also a former foreign minister and later prime minister – was hanged by a military dictator in 1979.

