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1. The Chief Minister M.K. Stalin inaugurated the operations of the new thermal power plant, established at a cost of ₹13,077 crore in Udangudi, Thoothukudi district.

(i) During this event, conducted via video conferencing from the Secretariat, Chennai, he commissioned the power plant, which features two units with a generation capacity of 660 MW each.

(ii) The Government has been undertaking a series of measures to enhance power generation capacity within Tamil Nadu. As a continuation of these efforts, a decision was made to establish two 660 MW thermal power units (Unit 1) in Udangudi—at a cost of ₹13,077 crore—through Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL). The construction work for this project has been completed, and various stages of trial runs have been successfully conducted.

(iii) Thermal power plant projects using high-temperature technology are generally 5 to 6 percent efficient. The Udangudi power plant is built in such a configuration.

(iv) This reduces the cost of fuel produced and requires less time to start power generation. An additional highlight is that the coal required for this thermal power plant is supplied very efficiently. That is, 2,000 tons of coal each will be transported directly to the power plant through specially constructed port landing stages 9 km away from the coast.

(v) This mechanism results in a reduction in transportation costs. Furthermore, since the coal consumption required to generate one unit of electricity is limited to a range of 0.50 to 0.55 kilograms, carbon dioxide emissions are reduced by 25 to 30 percent, making this project environmentally friendly.

(vi) All water requirements for this power plant are met through a seawater desalination plant established within the thermal power plant complex itself. Consequently, there is no need to utilize groundwater or water from the Thamirabarani River.

(vii) Through this project, the State's power generation capacity will be further enhanced, thereby reducing the need to procure electricity from the open market. As a result, the financial position of the Electricity Board will improve. Furthermore, it will make a significant contribution to the socio-economic development of the State.

(viii) It is noteworthy that a tree-planting initiative—aimed at environmental conservation—was launched within the Udangudi Power Project complex, and to date, 52,000 saplings have been planted.

2. Opposition parties have submitted notices in both Houses of Parliament regarding a motion to remove Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar from office.

(i) Opposition parties—including the Congress and the Trinamool Congress—have alleged that the names of hundreds of thousands of voters have been deleted from electoral rolls in states where assembly elections are scheduled to take place (including West Bengal and Tamil Nadu), and that the BJP and the Election Commission are solely responsible for this. Furthermore, the opposition parties decided to move a motion to remove Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar from his post.

(ii) Notices to move a motion for the removal of the Chief Election Commissioner must be submitted in both Houses of Parliament. According to Parliamentary rules, such a notice requires the signatures of at



least 100 Members of Parliament (MPs) in the Lok Sabha and 50 MPs in the Rajya Sabha. Accordingly, the opposition parties secured the signatures of 130 Lok Sabha MPs and 63 Rajya Sabha MPs. Parties belonging to the 'INDIA' alliance, MPs from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), and several independent MPs have signed these notices.

(iii) Following this, the opposition parties submitted the notices in both Houses of Parliament to move the motion for the removal of the Chief Election Commissioner. In these notices, the opposition parties have leveled seven specific charges against Gyanesh Kumar. Prominent among these allegations are acting with bias towards political parties, deliberately obstructing inquiries into electoral fraud, and repeatedly acting in a manner favorable to the BJP.

(iv) If both Houses accept the notices, a resolution will subsequently be introduced, and a debate will be held. During this debate, Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar will be given the opportunity to appear in person to offer explanations and refute the allegations leveled against him. Subsequently, if the resolution is passed by a majority vote, Gyanesh Kumar will forfeit his position. He will not be entitled to receive any benefits, including pensionary benefits. Conversely, if Gyanesh Kumar voluntarily tenders his resignation during the debate, it will be accepted, and he will be relieved of his duties; in such a scenario, he will be entitled to receive benefits, including pensionary benefits.

(v) In the history of Indian politics, no resolution seeking the removal of a Chief Election Commissioner has ever been introduced in Parliament to date. It is for the very first time that opposition parties have currently embarked upon such an endeavor.

3. At the World Para Athletics Grand Prix held in Delhi, India secured the first place with a total of 208 medals, comprising 75 gold, 69 silver, and 64 bronze. Russia, with 35 medals (15, 14, 6), and Bosnia, with 3 medals (1, 2, 0), secured the second and third positions, respectively.

4. The Union Ministry of Commerce has clarified that reports claiming bilateral trade agreement negotiations with the United States have been halted are untrue; the two nations remain actively engaged in discussions.

(i) The U.S. Supreme Court recently ruled that the drastic reciprocal tariffs imposed by U.S. President Donald Trump on various nations, including India, are invalid. Following that verdict, Trump imposed a new uniform 10 percent tariff on nations worldwide and also announced that this rate would be raised to 15 percent.

(ii) Meanwhile, the United States has initiated a new investigation against its trade partners, including India, China, and Japan. The U.S. launched this investigation under Section 301 of its trade laws with the aim of determining the extent to which the unfair trade practices of these nations have impacted American manufacturing.

(iii) Against this backdrop, the Union Ministry of Commerce has refuted media reports suggesting that India has suspended its bilateral trade agreement negotiations with the United States.

(iv) Several nations—such as Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Cambodia—have already signed trade agreements with the United States. Other nations have finalized the terms of their agreements but have yet to formally sign the requisite legal documents.

(v) As far as India is concerned, the contours of the first-phase trade deal have been mutually agreed upon.



(vi) During the April–January period of the current financial year, India's exports to the US rose to \$72.46 billion. This represents an increase of 5.85 percent. Imports increased to \$43.92 billion (13.87%).

5. The Lok Sabha approved the Central Government's proposal to establish an Economic Stabilization Fund, with an allocation of ₹1 lakh crore, to tackle unforeseen crises such as the impact of the ongoing conflict in West Asia. This fund was proposed as part of the second batch of Supplementary Demands for Grants for the current financial year.

6. Tamil Nadu's electricity requirements and the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP):

(i) Context and Demand Growth

- Tamil Nadu currently houses 15.66% of all factories in India, leading to high electricity requirements across industrial, domestic, agricultural, and transport sectors.
- The peak electricity demand for the state is estimated to reach 22,150 MW this year, an increase of 1,320 MW over the previous year's peak of 20,830 MW.
- Electricity demand is estimated to increase by approximately 6% this year.

(ii) Existing Nuclear Power Supply (Units 1 & 2)

- KKNPP Units 1 and 2 have been operational since 2014.
- From the 2,000 MW produced by these two units, Tamil Nadu is allotted 1,152 MW daily.
- TANGEDCO (Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation) currently purchases this power at an average rate of ₹5.40 per unit.

(iii) New Expansion and Pricing Conflict (Units 3 & 4)

- Units 3 and 4, each with a capacity of 1,000 MW, are nearing completion and are set to begin production sequentially this year and next year.
- The Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) has set a price of ₹5.91 per unit for the electricity from these new units.
- This proposed rate is significantly higher than the historical price of nuclear power, which was ₹3 to ₹3.80 per unit, effectively doubling the cost.
- TANGEDCO currently acquires renewable energy (stored in batteries) at approximately ₹4 per unit, making the new nuclear rate financially burdensome for the already debt-laden utility.

(iv) State and Central Negotiations

- TANGEDCO has officially requested the Central Ministry of Power to allot its full 50% share of electricity from Units 3 and 4 at a reduced price.
- The DAE has informed Tamil Nadu that the neighboring state of Karnataka is ready to purchase the surplus power from these units if Tamil Nadu does not agree to the set price.
- For Gujarat's Kakrapar Atomic Power Station, the Central Government initially set a price of ₹5.60 per unit but reduced it to ₹4.50 per unit following a request from the Gujarat State Government.
- Tamil Nadu has written to the Southern Regional Power Committee under the Union Ministry of Power, urging them to recognize the fairness of the state's request for a price reduction similar to Gujarat's.

(v) Future Outlook (Units 5 & 6)



- Work on KKNPP Units 5 and 6 (1,000 MW each) is progressing rapidly.
- Tamil Nadu is entitled to a 50% share from these units as well. Settling the price now will allow TANGEDCO to properly plan the necessary transmission infrastructure.
- While ₹5.91 is high, it is still lower than the ₹12 to ₹17 per unit which the TANGEDCO must pay when purchasing power from private entities during the peak demand periods.

7. Mental Strength is the Way to Success :-

(i) The Modern Context and Global Crisis

- Technological Pressure: Although modern youth have unprecedented access to information and career guidance through the internet, they live in a fast-paced world that has significantly increased mental stress.
- The World Health Organization reports that 10% to 20% of children and youth globally face mental health issues, yet the majority do not seek help or find effective solutions.
- Over 100 crore people worldwide live with mental health conditions.
- Between 2011 and 2021, mental health problems among youth aged 20–29 increased by 1.8%.

(ii) Societal Causes and Developmental Milestones

- The breakdown of the traditional joint family system into small nuclear families (3 to 4 members) has removed essential emotional support systems for youth.
- Research shows that for 50% of sufferers, mental health issues begin as early as age 14.
- If unaddressed, these early issues often transition into suicidal thoughts between the ages of 15 and 19.

(iii) The Indian Crisis

- Approximately 9 lakh Indian youth aged 13 to 17 suffer from mental health anxieties.
- Common causes for mental distress include the fear of exams, poor academic results, and failure in love.
- In 2023, India recorded 1.7 lakh suicides, of which 13,892 (8.1%) were students.
- Student suicides have increased by 65% over the last ten years (compared to 2013 data), with incidents occurring even in premier institutions like NITs and IITs.

(iv) Defining Mental Strength and Current Mindsets

- Mental strength is defined as the integrated power of thinking, feeling, and acting, which provides the energy to face complex life events.
- The "Instant" Mindset: Today's students often expect success and solutions to happen instantly and easily. When they face obstacles or negative outcomes, they frequently suffer a mental breakdown.
- Worries and thoughts are common to all, but focusing on them excessively causes harm; often, looking back after months or years reveals those worries were unnecessary and meaningless.

(v) Proposed Solutions and Institutional Changes

- Subjects related to mental health must be made a mandatory part of school and college curricula.
- Educational institutions should conduct regular seminars to create awareness, followed by consistent monitoring of student well-being.



- Parent-Teacher meetings should not stop at the school level but are essential in colleges as well, particularly during exam periods, to bridge emotional gaps during the transition to adulthood.

