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1. Increase in Commercial LPG Cylinder Prices

The price of commercial LPG cylinders has been increased by ₹993. Similarly, the price of a 5 kg cylinder has been raised by ₹261.50.

(i) Public sector oil companies such as Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum, and Hindustan Petroleum revise LPG cylinder prices on the 1st of every month. Accordingly, the prices were revised on Friday, May 1.

(ii) The price of the 19 kg commercial LPG cylinder, used in restaurants and other establishments, has been increased by ₹993. Following this, it is now being sold at ₹3,071.50.

(iii) The price of the 5 kg cylinder has been increased from ₹549 to ₹810.50, marking a rise of ₹261.50.

(iv) The bulk purchase price of diesel, used for industries and telecom towers, has been increased from ₹137 per litre to ₹149 per litre.

(v) No change in domestic LPG cylinder prices:

- The price of LPG cylinders for household use remains unchanged.
- Prices of fuel for domestic flights have also not been revised.
- However, the price of aviation fuel for international flights has increased by more than 5%.
- According to a statement by Indian Oil, retail prices of petrol and diesel have not been changed. Similarly, kerosene prices also remain unchanged.
- The company noted that LPG prices (used by around 330 million people) and aviation fuel prices have not been altered.

2. Possible Increase in Petrol and Diesel Prices

Sources from the Central Government have indicated that a rise in petrol and diesel prices in the near future cannot be ruled out.

(i) Although global crude oil prices have fluctuated, petrol and diesel prices in India have remained unchanged for the past four years.

(ii) Recently, due to the conflict in West Asia and issues related to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, crude oil prices have surged. This week, crude oil prices reached \$126 per barrel — the highest in four years. Since the conflict began, prices have consistently remained above \$110.

(iii) Domestic LPG cylinder prices in India are already at ₹913. Commercial LPG cylinders have reached a new high of ₹3,071.50. However, public sector oil companies have not increased petrol and diesel prices. Meanwhile, private companies like Shell have already raised their fuel prices.

(iv) Government sources stated that petrol and diesel prices have remained unchanged since April 2022. During this period, crude oil prices fluctuated, but fuel prices were neither reduced when crude prices fell nor increased when they rose. Oil companies managed price stability using surplus profits earned when crude prices were lower.

(v) However, with crude oil prices now consistently high, oil companies are reportedly facing losses of

around ₹20 per litre on petrol and up to ₹100 per litre on diesel.

(vi) It is noteworthy that Government officials denied recent reports suggesting that petrol and diesel prices would be increased after the final phase of elections in West Bengal.

3. Tribute to King Adhiyamaan

On the birth anniversary of the generous king Athiyaman, who ruled Tagadur, the Tamil Nadu Government paid tribute to his statue.

(i) Athiyaman, one of the "Kadai Ezhu Vallalgal" (the last seven great philanthropists), is believed to have been born in Taladur (present-day Dharmapuri) on the day of Chitra Pournami. Historical accounts say that during his reign, he offered a rare gooseberry (nellikani) to the poet Avvaiyar. In recognition of his legacy, the Tamil Nadu Government has established a memorial named "Athiyaman Kottam" in the Athiyaman Fort area of Dharmapuri.

(ii) Every year, on the day of Chitra Pournami, the Tamil Nadu Department of Information and Public Relations commemorates Athiyaman's birth anniversary.

(iii) This year, the celebration was held on May 1 (Chitra Pournami day) at the Athiyaman Fort complex located in Athiyamankottai.

4. Political Setbacks for Brazil's President Lula da Silva

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva is facing continuous setbacks in Parliament, raising questions about his political influence.

(i) The Brazilian Parliament has overturned Lula da Silva's veto that had blocked a bill aimed at reducing the sentence of former President Jair Bolsonaro.

(ii) After Lula da Silva won the October 2022 election, supporters of Bolsonaro attacked key Government institutions including the Prime Minister's Office, Parliament, and the Supreme Court.

(iii) Bolsonaro was sentenced to 27 years in prison on charges of attempting a coup. In December, the Brazilian Parliament passed a bill to reduce the sentences of Bolsonaro and others involved in the case.

(iv) Although Lula had blocked the bill using his veto power, Parliament has now passed it again, thereby reducing Bolsonaro's sentence to 2 years.

(v) Bolsonaro, aged 71, has been placed under house arrest on humanitarian grounds due to health issues. He is currently hospitalized for shoulder surgery, during which these political developments took place.

(vi) Earlier, the Senate (upper house of Parliament) rejected Lula's nomination of General Jorge Messias for the position of Supreme Court judge.

(vii) In the 81-member Senate, 41 votes were required for approval, but he received only 34 votes. This marks the first time in a century that a presidential nominee for the Supreme Court has been rejected by Parliament.

5. India's First Multi-Lane Free-Flow Toll System Launched

India's first multi-lane free-flow toll collection system has been launched in the state of Gujarat.

(i) This new system has been introduced at the Suryashi toll plaza on the Surat–Bharuch stretch of National Highway–48. Under this system, vehicles do not need to stop to pay toll charges.

(ii) Advanced technologies such as Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR), Artificial Intelligence analytics, and FASTag have been integrated. Using cameras and QR codes, toll charges will be collected while the vehicle is in motion.

(iii) Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, stated on the social media platform X that this system marks a milestone in digitizing toll plazas and modernizing highway infrastructure in India.

(iv) This new toll collection method is expected to reduce traffic congestion, vehicle emissions, and human intervention at toll plazas. It will also improve fuel efficiency of vehicles.

(v) Additionally, it will promote ease of doing business and ensure faster movement of goods and logistics across the country.

(vi) Earlier, at the Second Logistics Efficiency Conference and Awards 2026 held last week, Nitin Gadkari had stated that the Central Government plans to introduce barrier-free toll services at selected toll plazas across the country starting December.

6. The Union Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has granted additional powers to the Enforcement Directorate to combat the “cancer” of illegal money transactions, and not to target individuals.

(i) The Enforcement Directorate (ED) was established in 1956. Its 70th anniversary event was held in Delhi.

7. Buddha Purnima Celebrations

On the occasion of Buddha Purnima, which marks important events such as the birth and enlightenment of Gautama Buddha, Buddhist monks performed special prayers at the Dorje Drak Monastery in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh.

8. Analysis of the persistent sexual violence against women and minor girls in India

- Despite the enactment of numerous laws, sexual violence against women and young girls remains unabated. The sexual assault on girls under the age of 18 is a significant shame to all of humanity.
- Impact of Violence Against Women: Beyond the immediate physical trauma, victims—especially minors—face lifelong psychological pressure and are forced to live with a sense of social guilt. A major social complication arising from these crimes is the pregnancy of minor victims.
- Supreme Court Directions:
 - The Supreme Court, in a judgment on April 30, emphasized that in cases of pregnancy resulting from sexual assault, doctors or the Government should not decide what is “good” for the victim. Instead, the choice regarding medical termination of pregnancy should be left to the victim and her parents.
 - The Court noted that while the 2021 amendment to the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act increased the limit from 20 to 24 weeks, there should be no fixed time limit for terminating a pregnancy in rape cases to prevent further trauma for the minor.
 - On April 24, a bench comprising Justice B. Nagarathna and Justice Ujjal Bhuyan permitted

a 15-year-old victim, who was nearly 30 weeks pregnant, to undergo an abortion.

- NCRB State-wide Statistics (Girls under 18): Data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) detailing reported cases of sexual violence against minors across various states:
 - 2018 (Total 9,312 cases): Madhya Pradesh led with 2,830 cases, followed by Uttar Pradesh (1,353) and Kerala (1,137). Tamil Nadu reported 6 cases.
 - 2019 (Total 4,936 cases): Rajasthan reported 1,313 cases and Kerala 1,262. Interestingly, Madhya Pradesh reported 0 cases this year. Tamil Nadu had 9 cases.
 - 2020 (Total 2,640 cases): Rajasthan remained high with 1,279 cases, followed by Andhra Pradesh (577) and Uttar Pradesh (204). Tamil Nadu and Kerala reported 0 cases.
 - 2021 (Total 3,033 cases): Rajasthan had 1,452 cases, Andhra Pradesh 614, Jharkhand 295, and Uttar Pradesh 256. Tamil Nadu and Kerala reported 0 cases.
 - 2022 (Total 1,004 cases): Uttar Pradesh reported 458 cases, Himachal Pradesh 213, and Jharkhand 184. Tamil Nadu reported 5 cases, while Kerala reported 0.
 - These figures only reflect reported cases, and many more likely go unreported.
- Steps and Suggestions for the Government:
 - Legal amendments to ensure that court trials for sexual assault cases are completed within a single week.
 - The Chief Justice (DY Chandrachud) suggested that the entire property of the accused should be transferred to the victim as a form of justice.
 - It stresses that any action to end sexual violence must be implemented rapidly, as "justice delayed is justice denied".

9. Analysis of the degradation of the democratic voting process into a marketplace where votes are bought and sold.

(i) Global Historical Context

The right to vote was not a gift but was earned through centuries of brutal struggle.

- Ancient Greece (Athens): While a voting system existed, it was restricted to the elite; slaves and women were excluded.
- The French Revolution: This marked the true "springtime" of democracy, opening the doors for popular governance.
- The American Revolution: It established the unique revolutionary principle that the Government must derive its power from the consent of the governed, famously declaring "no taxation without representation".
- The British Chartist Movement: This movement demanded universal suffrage. The struggle for women's voting rights in Britain was particularly fierce.
- The Australian Exile (1787): To suppress those demanding voting rights, the British Government declared them criminals and exiled them to Australia. On June 13, 1787, 11 ships carried 6,000 prisoners on a 260-day journey; many died of disease before reaching the shore.

(ii) Historical Facts: India's Journey to Universal Suffrage

- Pre-Independence Restrictions: Under the Acts of 1919 and 1935, voting rights were limited strictly to property owners and the educated elite.
- The 1945 Reality: During the elections for the Constituent Assembly, only those paying a minimum of ₹30 in taxes could vote, representing a mere 15% of the population.

- The Long Struggle: The demand for universal suffrage in India began in 1928 with a committee headed by Motilal Nehru.
- Key Influences: The Communist Party, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia's Socialist Party, and Periyar's Self-Respect Movement played vital roles in advocating for equal voting rights for all, regardless of caste or status.
- Constitutional Victory: Finally, Article 326 of the Indian Constitution granted universal adult suffrage, a move that faced significant opposition from those who did not want "lower castes" to have equal power.

(iii) The "Black Market" Analysis (Current Scenario in India)

- The Commercialization of Votes: Voting has shifted from a democratic duty to a black market commodity.
- Failure of Surveillance: Despite massive security (approx. 1 lakh police and 23,000 paramilitary personnel) and 24-hour monitoring, illegal money distribution still reaches almost every household.
- Legal Impotence: While Section 171B of the IPC mandates imprisonment or fines for bribery, and Section 123 of the 1951 Act allows for the disqualification of winning candidates for such acts, these laws are rarely effectively enforced to stop the "gambling" nature of current elections.

(iv) Impact and Global Efforts for Reform

- International Initiatives: The United Nations has established a joint convention for clean elections, and European nations created the "Venice Commission" to combat electoral corruption.
- The Kenya Model: Kenya is highlighted as a prime example where a mass movement of citizens successfully removed systemic corruption from their electoral process.

(v) Conclusion and Path Forward

- The Election Commission's "cVIGIL" app is currently viewed as a mere "paper organization." It must be transformed into a platform for active public surveillance.
- A radical change is needed to uproot the "Parthenium-like" corruption in the political system, expressing hope that the new generation has the strength to reclaim the purity of the vote.