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1.The Confidence Motion moved in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly was won by the TVK Government, which proved its majority with the support of 144 members.

2.The Central Government announced an increase in the import duty on gold and silver from 6 percent to 15 percent. It also stated that the more-than-double hike in duty would come into effect immediately.

(i) The Union Government has taken this drastic measure to control rising import expenditure caused by the war-like situation in West Asia and to reduce non-essential imports. Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had appealed to the public to adopt various austerity measures, including refraining from buying gold for one year.

(ii) India imports gold, fuel, and certain categories of edible oils in large quantities. As prices of these commodities continue to rise sharply amid the conflict situation, the country's foreign exchange reserves are also being affected.

(iii) Rising imports:

- Import duty on platinum has also been increased from 6.4 percent to 15.4 percent, in addition to gold and silver.
- The duty hike applies to unrefined gold, silver bars, coins, jewellery components, and related items.
- In the 2025–26 financial year, gold and silver imports increased by 26.7 percent year-on-year to 102.5 billion US dollars.
- Their share in India's total imports rose from 11.8 percent in 2024–25 to 14 percent.

(iv) Obsession with gold jewellery:

- After China, India is the world's second-largest consumer of gold. Since Indians buy and accumulate large quantities of gold jewellery, imports remain high, affecting foreign exchange reserves.
- The Indian rupee fell to a historic low of ₹95.75 against the US dollar on Tuesday (May 12). After the increase in import duty on gold, the rupee recovered slightly.
- Along with the 15 percent customs duty, importers must also pay 3 percent Goods and Services Tax (GST). As a result, the total tax burden on gold imports has risen from 9.18 percent to 18.45 percent.

(v) Prices likely to rise:

- Rajesh Rokde, President of the All India Gem and Jewellery Domestic Council (GJC), said: "Due to the customs duty hike, gold prices may rise further. Illegal gold smuggling may also increase, leading to different kinds of economic impacts in the country."

(vi) Sales may decline:

- Suvankar Sen, Chairman of Senco Gold & Diamonds, said: "This customs duty may continue until tensions in West Asia ease. It could remain in place for up to a year. Gold sales volume may decline by 10–15 percent. However, sales in value terms will still rise. People may start buying lighter-weight jewellery."

(vii) Central Government explanation:

- Government sources stated: "This customs duty hike has been implemented as a precautionary measure due to extraordinary international circumstances. It is an effort to reduce unnecessary imports and ease pressure on foreign exchange reserves. This measure is not against people buying gold."
- Due to the West Asian war and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, import costs of crude oil, food products, and fertilizers have risen sharply.
- Before the conflict began, crude oil was priced at around 73 US dollars per barrel. It has now increased to 107 dollars, and on April 30 it touched a four-year high of 126 dollars.
- India imports 87 percent of its crude oil requirement, of which 46 percent comes through the Strait of Hormuz.
- India also imports 60 percent of its LPG requirement, and more than 90 percent of it comes from Gulf countries.

3.The Central Government extended the tenure of Praveen Sood (61), Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation, by another year. This marks the second extension of his tenure.

(i) According to an order issued by the Union Ministry of Personnel:

- Based on the recommendations of the selection committee, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved extending Praveen Sood's tenure beyond May 24 this year for another year.

(ii) Praveen Sood assumed office as CBI Director on May 25, 2023. Though he was originally appointed for a two-year term, his tenure had already been extended by one year last year.

(iii) Recently, a meeting of the selection committee for appointing the new CBI Director was held in New Delhi under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The committee included Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi. Following this meeting, Praveen Sood's tenure was extended.

(iv) Earlier, during the selection committee meeting, Rahul Gandhi expressed disagreement over the process of selecting the new CBI Director and conveyed his objections in writing to Prime Minister Modi. He also stated that he did not wish to participate in what he described as a biased selection process.

4.N. Rangasamy was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Puducherry. Along with him, A. Namassivayam and Malladi Krishna Rao also took oath as ministers. Lieutenant Governor K. Kailashnathan administered the oath of office and secrecy to them.

(i) Elections to the 30-member Puducherry Legislative Assembly were held on April 9. In the election, the National Democratic Alliance led by N. Rangasamy won 18 constituencies and retained power.

(ii) While 16 MLAs were required to form the government:

- All India N.R. Congress won 12 seats,
- Bharatiya Janata Party won 4 seats,
- All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and
- Lok Janshakti Party won one seat each, bringing the alliance tally to 18 seats.

5.The Government of Tamil Nadu has issued an order appointing senior advocate Vijay Narayan as the

Advocate General of the State.

(i) P. S. Raman, who had served as the Advocate General during the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam Government, resigned from the post. Following this, the Tamil Nadu Government appointed Vijay Narayan as the new Advocate General.

(ii) Vijay Narayan is a relative of former Attorney General of India K. K. Venugopal. He had previously served as the Advocate General of Tamil Nadu from 2017 to 2021 during the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam Government led by former Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami.

6.The Tamil Nadu Electricity Board has decided to submit details to the new Government regarding the proposal to shift the Uppur thermal power project to Udangudi.

(i) In 2017, the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation initiated a project to establish two thermal power units of 800 MW each at Uppur in Ramanathapuram district in order to increase Tamil Nadu's electricity generation capacity. The project aimed to generate a total of 1,600 MW of power, with a target of completing the work within 42 months.

(ii) However, construction work was severely affected from March 2021 due to a stay imposed by the National Green Tribunal in an environmental case. Although the Supreme Court of India later granted an interim stay against the tribunal's order in July that year, several difficulties continued in implementing the project at the same location.

(iii) According to estimates, if the thermal plant were to be established at Uppur, a dedicated railway line of around 28 km would have to be built to transport coal required for operations. As a result, transportation and power generation costs were expected to rise significantly beyond the originally planned ₹12,776 crore.

(iv) Meanwhile, work on a thermal power station and a coal handling terminal is already underway at Udangudi. Since the required infrastructure is already available there, the Electricity Board considered shifting the Uppur project to Udangudi in order to reduce additional expenditure.

(v) However, as no final decision has yet been taken, various machines and construction materials at Uppur remain unused.

(vi) In this context, the Tamil Nadu Government had approved in February the transfer of funds allocated for the Uppur project, along with already purchased equipment, to Udangudi for establishing a new 800 MW thermal power unit there. The Electricity Board had planned to begin related works after the completion of the Assembly elections.

(vii) However, since there has now been a change in Government in the state, reports indicate that the Electricity Board is preparing to submit the complete details of the Uppur project to the new administration and proceed further based on its policy decisions and recommendations.

(viii) As electricity demand continues to rise every year, there is increasing urgency for the new Government to take a final decision soon regarding this long-pending project.

7.Donald Trump arrived in Beijing, the capital of China, on a three-day official state visit and was accorded a red-carpet welcome. Trump, who has returned to China as U.S. President for the first time since 2017, is expected to hold talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping on several important issues during the visit, including a trade agreement and the Iran war.

8.The Central Government has increased the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for paddy to ₹2,441 per quintal. This was announced in a statement issued by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs.

(i) The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved an increase in the MSP for Kharif crops for the 2026–27 marketing season. The move aims to ensure remunerative prices for farmers for their produce.

(ii) Accordingly, the MSP for common variety paddy, which stood at ₹2,369 per quintal in 2025–26, has now been increased by ₹72 to ₹2,441 per quintal.

(iii) Similarly, the MSP for Grade-A paddy, which was ₹2,389 per quintal in 2025–26, has been raised by ₹72 to ₹2,461 per quintal.

(iv) The MSP for short staple cotton has been increased from ₹7,710 to ₹8,267 per quintal, while the MSP for long staple cotton has been increased from ₹8,110 to ₹8,667 per quintal.

(v) Likewise:

- MSP for pearl millet has been increased by ₹125 to ₹2,900 per quintal,
- MSP for finger millet has been increased by ₹319 to ₹5,205 per quintal,
- MSP for maize has been increased by ₹10 to ₹2,410 per quintal.

(vi) The Union Cabinet has also approved a semi-high-speed double railway line project between Sarkhej (Ahmedabad) and Dholera in Gujarat at an estimated cost of about ₹20,667 crore. The railway line is designed for trains capable of travelling at speeds of up to 220 kmph. It has been described as the first semi-high-speed railway corridor of Indian Railways to be planned using indigenous technology.

(vii) Coal gasification initiative:

- In a statement issued by the Union Cabinet, it was announced that the Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved a ₹37,500 crore scheme to enhance coal and lignite gasification projects in India.