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1. The Monsoon Session of Parliament will commence on Monday (July 20) and continue until August 13.

- i. The session is expected to witness intense debates over issues including the alleged irregularities in donations to the Ayodhya Ram Temple, the NEET question paper leak, ethanol blending with petrol, and the issue relating to dissident Trinamool Congress MPs.
- ii. Against the backdrop of a politically charged atmosphere, the Monsoon Session begins on Monday. During the session, the Government is expected to introduce eight Bills, including replacement Bills for certain ordinances recently promulgated by the Union Government.
- iii. A key proposal is the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill. It seeks to replace an ordinance that granted foreign investors exemption from income tax on interest earned from Government securities and on capital gains, with the objective of attracting foreign investment and easing pressure on the Indian rupee.

Other Bills expected to be introduced include:

- A Bill replacing the ordinance increasing the strength of Supreme Court judges to 38.
 - A Bill making it a punishable offence to insult the national song "Vande Mataram."
 - The Births and Deaths Registration (Amendment) Bill.
- iv. The Constitution Amendment Bill for implementing Women's Reservation along with delimitation of constituencies has not been listed in the agenda. However, it may still be introduced as an additional Bill. Its passage would require a two-thirds majority in Parliament.

2. England secured third place by defeating France 6-4 in a thrilling match. This is England's best World Cup finish since winning the title in 1966.

France, two-time champions and one of the tournament favourites, bowed out with disappointment as head coach Didier Deschamps ended his tenure with a defeat.

- i. England scored four goals in the first half and added two more in the second half, while

France scored four goals. The match produced 10 goals, the highest total in a World Cup match since 1982.

- ii. France's Kylian Mbappé overtook Lionel Messi to become the highest goal scorer in FIFA World Cup history. Mbappé scored two goals against England, taking his tally to 22 goals, while Messi is second with 21 goals, followed by Miroslav Klose with 16 goals.

3. Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan met Zanzibar President Hussein Ali Mwinyi in New Delhi.

- i. Zanzibar is a semi-autonomous region of Tanzania. President Hussein Ali Mwinyi is currently on an official visit to India.
- ii. He met Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan at the Vice President's residence in New Delhi.
- iii. The meeting reaffirmed the long-standing India-Tanzania partnership as well as the centuries-old maritime, cultural, and people-to-people ties between India and Zanzibar.
- iv. The two leaders discussed strengthening cooperation in:
 - Trade
 - Investment
 - Development partnership
 - Tourism
 - Blue Economy
 - Education
 - Training programmes
 - Technology
 - Cooperation in multilateral organisations
- v. President Hussein Ali Mwinyi described his participation in an event at IIT Madras as significant and appreciated India's support in establishing the IIT Madras Zanzibar Campus, calling it a major milestone in bilateral educational cooperation.
- vi. Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan reiterated India's commitment to expanding cooperation with Tanzania and Zanzibar across key sectors to achieve shared development goals.

4. Andhra Pradesh Health Minister Satya Kumar Yadav announced that the Omicron RF.5 variant has been detected in samples collected from four COVID-19 patients in the state.

- i. After four COVID-19 cases were confirmed in Kadapa district, their samples were sent to the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune for testing.
- ii. Genome sequencing identified the RF.5 sub-variant of Omicron in these samples.
- iii. RF.5 is one of the sub-lineages of the Omicron variant that has been identified in several parts of the world.
- iv. The World Health Organization (WHO) is monitoring the RF.5 variant. Based on current research, it has not been found to be more dangerous than other Omicron variants. Therefore, the public has been advised not to panic, but to remain alert and follow precautionary measures.

5. President Droupadi Murmu departed from New Delhi on an official visit to Moldova, North Macedonia, and Romania.

- i. According to Rashtrapati Bhavan, the visit is expected to strengthen India's relations with these countries in areas such as trade, technology, and people-to-people exchanges.

Key highlights include:

- This is the first-ever visit by an Indian President to Moldova and North Macedonia.
- It is the first presidential visit to Romania in 30 years.

Moldova (July 20–21):

- President Murmu will meet President Maia Sandu and Parliament Speaker Igor Grosu.
- She will also interact with the Indian community living in Moldova.

North Macedonia (July 21–22):

- At the invitation of President Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, President Murmu will hold bilateral talks.
- She will also meet Prime Minister Hristijan Mickoski and address the country's Parliament.

Romania (July 23–25):

- At the invitation of President Nicușor Dan, President Murmu will participate in several official engagements.

- She will hold discussions with President Nicușor Dan and Prime Minister Ilie Bolojan, and meet members of the Indian diaspora.

6. The Union Government plans to introduce a Bill in the Rajya Sabha making it a punishable offence to insult the national song “Vande Mataram” or disrupt its rendition.

- Under the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, insulting or damaging the National Flag, the Constitution, or the National Anthem is punishable with up to three years’ imprisonment.
- To extend similar legal protection to Vande Mataram, Union Home Minister Amit Shah will introduce the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026.
- Under the proposed law:
 - Insulting Vande Mataram, or
 - Disrupting its singing,will become punishable offences, providing the song with legal protection similar to that enjoyed by the National Anthem “Jana Gana Mana.”
- Vande Mataram, composed by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, was first published in the literary magazine Bangadarshan in November 1875. The Bill is being introduced as the song marks 150 years since its publication.
- Earlier, the Union Home Ministry had written to all States directing that Vande Mataram should be sung or played at all Government functions where the National Anthem is played.

7. The Madhya Pradesh Cabinet has approved the draft Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill.

- The State Government stated that the Bill is an important step towards women’s empowerment. According to the Government, 80% of Muslim women and 40% of Muslim men who appeared before the drafting committee supported the proposal.
- Under the proposed Bill:
 - The minimum marriage age is fixed at 21 years for men and 18 years for women.Registration of marriages will be mandatory under the Uniform Civil Code.

8. Improper waste disposal in major cities is a primary driver of climate change.

(i) The Role of Methane in Global Warming

- Methane (CH₄) is identified as one of the most potent greenhouse gases.
- Compared to Carbon Dioxide (CO₂), Methane has a much higher capacity to trap heat in the atmosphere, meaning even small emissions have a massive impact on global warming.
- Atmospheric methane levels have surged by approximately 188% compared to the pre-industrial revolution era.

(ii) Waste Statistics and Landfill Management

- Thousands of tons of solid waste are generated daily in cities like Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai, and Trichy.
- Chennai alone produces about 6,500 tons of solid waste every day.
- This waste is dumped in the Kodungaiyur and Perungudi landfills, which together span approximately 450 acres.
- Roughly 60% of the waste collected in these landfills consists of bio-waste (organic material).

(iii) Methane Generation Mechanism

- Bio-waste from homes, restaurants, markets, and wedding halls is frequently mixed with plastic waste.
- When this mixture is dumped in landfills, the organic matter rot in oxygen-free (anaerobic) conditions, which triggers the massive release of methane gas.
- Although the 2016 Solid Waste Management Rules mandate segregating waste into four categories (degradable, recyclable, hazardous, and sanitary), experts note this is not being fully implemented.

(iv) Environmental and Safety Risks

- Experts link these emissions to intensified heatwaves, sudden heavy rainfall, urban flooding, and sea-level rise.
- Methane is highly flammable, making it the primary cause of frequent landfill fires during summer, which release toxic smoke and further pollute the air.

(v) Proposed Solutions and Strategies

- Transforming organic waste into fertilizer at the household level to reduce the volume of

waste sent to landfills.

- Establishing Community Composting centers and setting up Bio-methanation plants at large waste sources like markets and wedding halls.
- Implementing Landfill Gas Capture projects to collect and utilize methane currently escaping from dump sites.
- Moving toward a "Zero Waste Ward" model in all municipalities and conducting awareness programs in schools and colleges.

Achieving climate change goals is impossible without first addressing the systemic failures in solid waste management.

9. Critical challenge of scientist attrition at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the impact of private sector competition.

(i) The Private Sector Surge

- There are currently more than 400 registered space startups in India.
- These startups attracted total investments of approximately ₹50,000 crore, with ₹15,000 crore raised in the year 2025 alone.
- Successful launch of the Vikram-1 rocket, the first domestic rocket manufactured by a private company, is a significant achievement but also highlights the growing competition for talent.

(ii) Mass Resignations and Talent Drain

- Recently, more than 100 to 120 experienced scientists have voluntarily resigned from ISRO to join private firms.
- Specific Impact Zones:
 - UR Rao Satellite Centre (URSC), Bengaluru: More than 80 scientists have left.
 - Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), Thiruvananthapuram: More than 20 scientists have left.
- Scientists are being lured away by higher salaries and better perks offered by the private sector.
- The departing individuals are technical experts with specialized skills in specific space technologies, making it extremely difficult for ISRO to fill their positions immediately.

(iii) Operational and Strategic Risks

- This brain drain is occurring at a time when ISRO is moving forward with ambitious national projects like Gaganyaan.
- The mass departure of scientists poses a threat to the confidentiality and security of ISRO's future project plans.
- The Government has invested thousands of crores of taxpayers' money into ISRO over several decades to build its current capabilities; losing this expertise to the private sector represents a significant loss of public investment.
- ISRO is globally renowned for its ability to launch satellites at a much lower cost than other space powers, a competitive advantage that could be jeopardized if its core team is weakened.

(iv) Manpower and Vacancy Statistics

- There are currently more than 2,600 vacant positions within ISRO that need to be filled urgently to maintain the organization's momentum.

(v) Policy Changes and Administrative Action

- While the private sector was allowed entry into the space field in 2020, a formal policy was released in 2023, which catalyzed the current talent shift.
- In response to the crisis, the Central Government has issued orders to ISRO to not accept voluntary retirement or resignation letters from scientists working in certain critical sections.
- ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan stated that resignation and retirement rules have been made more stringent. Resignation letters must now be forwarded to the Department of Space for final approval before any scientist can leave.

While private sector participation is necessary, the Government must ensure that public sector pillars like ISRO are not disabled or hollowed out in the process.

10. Analysis of the current state of bus transport in Tamil Nadu.

(i) Historical Milestones of Bus Transport

- Private bus services were first started in 1912 by the TVS Group, followed by G.D. Naidu's services in Coimbatore in 1920.
- In 1947, the Government began operating a small fleet of 30 buses in Chennai.
- Based on the Somasundaram Committee's recommendations in 1971, bus routes longer

than 120 km were nationalized.

- The Government Transport Corporation was formally established in 1972 with an initial fleet of 1,029 buses.

(ii) Current Scale and Statistics

- On average, 1.8 crore (18 million) people travel by city and mofussil buses daily in Tamil Nadu, a number that doubles during festival seasons.
- The state currently operates over 21,000 Government buses and approximately 3,000 private buses.
- More than 1 lakh (100,000) employees work within the various state transport corporations.

(iii) Critical Problems Faced by Passengers

- City buses frequently fail to stop at designated bus stands; this problem has intensified following the introduction of free travel for women.
- Suburban buses operating on 60–80 km routes often refuse to pick up passengers from small villages along their path.
- There are frequent complaints regarding the rude behavior of some drivers and conductors and their lack of respect toward passengers.
- To collect higher fares, ordinary buses are often rebranded as "Express," "L.S.S." (Limited Stop Service), or "Point-to-Point" simply by changing the nameplate without any actual improvement in service.
- Despite the development of four-lane highways, many small villages remain isolated because buses do not enter them as per their designated routes.

(iv) Strategic Recommendations for Improvement

- All buses should be fitted with GPS, and a mobile app should be provided for passengers to monitor real-time bus locations.
- Every bus must prominently display complaint numbers for passengers to report issues immediately.
- The Government should conduct a comprehensive re-evaluation of routes based on current population trends and increase "Link Bus" services for smaller towns.
- Authorities must strictly enforce the rule that long-distance buses stop at designated village intervals.
- Buses should be maintained for cleanliness, equipped with CCTV for safety, and designed

with facilities for persons with disabilities.

- Bus stations should be equipped with digital information boards to provide accurate timing and route data.
- The Government must urgently fill all manpower vacancies in the transport department and shift from a profit-only mindset to a service-oriented model, similar to the system in Germany.