



P.L.RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY

Building Bureaucrats Since 2006

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1. A conference of the Chief Ministers of the southern states, chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, will be held at 10 a.m. on Thursday (August 20) at Kovalam near Chennai.
 - i. The conference will be held at a star hotel in Kovalam. Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Telangana, along with representatives of the Union Territory of Puducherry, are expected to participate and discuss key issues concerning the southern states.
 - ii. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister S. Joseph Vijay, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, Kerala Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan and Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy are expected to attend.
 - iii. The conference is expected to hold detailed discussions on inter-state river-water sharing, border issues and law-and-order challenges. The meeting assumes significance amid concerns that the Parliamentary representation of the southern states could decline if delimitation is carried out.
2. The Tamil Nadu Health Department has stated that 44.2% of women and 38.8% of men in Tamil Nadu are affected by obesity. It also warned that the prevalence could increase due to lifestyle changes.
 - i. According to a global study, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) account for 75% of all deaths in Tamil Nadu. In particular, the number of people suffering from heart disease, cancer, diabetes, kidney disorders and respiratory diseases has increased several-fold.
 - ii. Irregular eating habits, lack of exercise, insufficient physical activity and

consumption of fast food contribute to obesity. This, in turn, leads to the development of non-communicable diseases.

iii. According to the National Family Health Survey, 44.2% of women and 38.8% of men in Tamil Nadu are affected by overweight and obesity, the Tamil Nadu Health Department said. Department officials stated:

- The prevalence of hypertension in Tamil Nadu is 29.4%, while diabetes affects 19.5% of the population. Most people do not follow a balanced lifestyle. Fast food, tobacco use and alcohol consumption are major causes of non-communicable diseases. If this situation continues, the number of people affected by NCDs will increase over the next decade. The death rate due to NCDs could also exceed 80%, officials said.

3. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has approved a law granting conditional amnesty to tens of thousands of Kurdish militants.

- i. However, the law will come into force only after Turkey's National Security Council confirms that the Kurdish militants have completely dissolved their organisations and surrendered their weapons.
- ii. Under the law, which was passed by the Turkish Parliament last week with majority support, prison sentences of some militants will be suspended. Depending on the seriousness of the offence, pending investigations and cases against others will be postponed for five or ten years.

4. Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema has won re-election with 61.4% of the votes in the Presidential election held in the southern African country.

- i. Brian Mundubile, the prominent opposition leader who contested against him, secured second place with 38% of the votes.
- ii. Vote counting was halted following attacks on election officials and incidents involving the theft of ballot papers. Counting resumed later under heavy security.

- iii. Several prominent opposition leaders were arrested on election night on charges of threatening peace in the country.

5. The Union Sports Ministry has announced the 2025 Arjuna Awards for 17 sportspersons, including athlete Tejaswin Shankar and chess player Divya Deshmukh.

- i. The Dronacharya Awards for coaches have also been announced. However, the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award, the highest sporting honour in the country, has not been announced.

Arjuna Awardees:

- Tejaswin Shankar, Mohammed Afsal, Priyanka Goswami — Athletics
- Rajkumar Pal, Lalremsiami — Hockey
- Surjeet, Pooja — Kabaddi
- Divya Deshmukh, Vidit Gujrathi — Chess
- Treesa Jolly, Gayatri Gopichand — Badminton
- Narender Berwal — Boxing
- Dhanush Srikanth — Deaf shooting
- Rudransh Khandelwal — Para-shooting
- Ekta Abhiyan — Para-athletics
- Arvind Singh — Rowing
- Akhil Shoran — Shooting

Arjuna Award — Lifetime Achievement:

- ii. Arumainayagam — Football

Dronacharya Award:

- Parveer Singh — Athletics
- Chhot Lal Yadav — Boxing
- Neha Chavan — Shooting

- iii. Dronacharya Award — Lifetime Achievement:

- Dharmendra Yadav — Boxing
- Virender Kumar — Wrestling

6. The PM CARES Fund, established by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the COVID-19 pandemic, received ₹479 crore in domestic donations during the financial year 2024–25.

- This represents a 30% decline compared with the previous financial year. Foreign donations to the PM CARES Fund also declined.
- In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Prime Minister Modi established the PM CARES (Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations) Fund to address emergency situations and provide relief to affected people.
- The fund, headed by the Prime Minister, receives no budgetary allocation and consists entirely of donations.
- According to an audit report released by the Central Government, as of March 31, 2025, the PM CARES Fund had a total balance of ₹8,452 crore. Of this, ₹7,846 crore was held in fixed deposits and ₹605 crore in savings bank accounts.
- During the financial year 2024–25, the fund received ₹479 crore in domestic donations. In the previous financial year (2023–24), it had received ₹681.8 crore, representing a 30% decline.
- Similarly, foreign donations declined from ₹1.13 crore to ₹92.8 lakh, a decrease of 18%.
- The fund spent ₹15.37 crore on child welfare schemes in 2023–24, whereas only ₹87.8 lakh was spent for the same purpose in 2024–25.
- The PM CARES Fund received its highest-ever domestic donation of ₹7,184 crore and foreign donation of ₹495 crore in 2020–21. Subsequently, domestic donations declined to ₹1,896 crore in 2021–22 and ₹909 crore in 2022–23.
- Similarly, foreign donations declined to ₹40 crore in 2021–22 and ₹2.57 crore in 2022–23.

7. Historical and factual overview of anti-corruption institutions in India and the urgent need for public education regarding them.

(i) Historical Origin and Global Context

- The concept of an independent body to address citizen grievances originated in Sweden in 1809 as the "Ombudsman".
- In India, the First Administrative Reforms Commission (1966) recommended establishing a "Lokpal" at the Central level and "Lok Ayukta" at the State level to investigate corruption complaints.

(ii) The Long Road to Legislation (1968–2013)

- A Lokpal Bill was first introduced in Parliament in 1968. Although it passed in the Lok Sabha, it lapsed in the Rajya Sabha.
- Subsequent versions of the bill were introduced in 1971, 1977, 1985, 1989, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2005, and 2008, but none became law due to various political and parliamentary shifts.
- While the Center lagged, Maharashtra became the first State to pass its own Lok Ayukta Act in 1971, followed by many other states like Rajasthan, Bihar, and Karnataka.
- India signed the UN Convention Against Corruption in 2005 and ratified it in 2011.
- After nearly half a century of effort, the Lokpal and Lok Ayuktas Act was finally passed in 2013.

(iii) Institutional Structure and Status in Tamil Nadu

- The Chairperson of the Lokpal holds a status equivalent to the Chief Justice of India and members are equivalent to Supreme Court judges.
- Following the 2013 Act, the Tamil Nadu Lok Ayukta Act was passed in 2018, and the institution began functioning in 2019.
- In Tamil Nadu, the Chairperson is equivalent to a High Court Chief Justice, and members are equivalent to High Court judges.
- Currently, the Lokpal and 28 State Lok Ayuktas are operational across India.

(iv) Statistics and Current Functioning (2025–26)

- Central and State Governments spend hundreds of crores annually on the infrastructure, officers, and staff for these bodies.
- Despite the high cost, the number of registered complaints remains low. From April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026, the Lokpal registered only 431 corruption complaints.
- Of these, 2 were against the Prime Minister, 2 against Union Ministers, and 6 against Members of Parliament.
- States that established Lok Ayuktas after 2013 generally see a lower volume of complaints compared to older institutions.

(v) Comparison of Powers and Suo Motu Authority

- Lok Ayuktas established before 2013 (such as in Karnataka) often possess stronger investigative powers than those formed later.
- Unlike Human Rights or Child Rights Commissions, which have explicit legal mandates to take up cases on their own (suo motu) and conduct public awareness research, the Lokpal and Lok Ayukta Acts do not define these powers as clearly.
- The Central and State Governments must amend the Acts to explicitly grant these bodies the power to initiate investigations and conduct awareness programs.

(vi) The Urgent Need for Public Awareness

- There is a significant lack of public awareness regarding these high-level anti-corruption bodies, which prevents the public from fully utilizing this protective infrastructure.
- Corruption eradication is not just a Government duty but a democratic responsibility of every citizen.
- Formal education regarding anti-corruption laws and institutions to be provided in schools and colleges.
- A specialized "Awareness Wing" should be established within the Lokpal and Lok Ayukta offices to educate the public on how to approach these bodies and what their jurisdictional limits are.