



September - 21

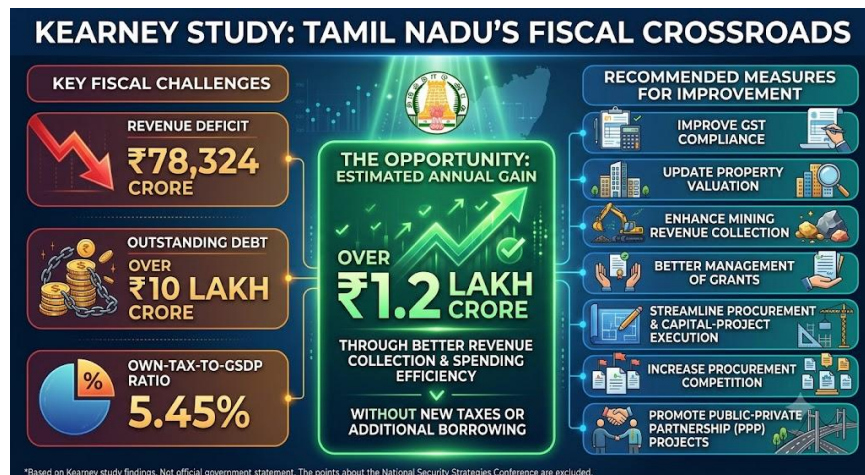
TNPSC BITS

- ❖ Veteran Kannada actor Anant Nag will be honoured with the Dadasaheb Phalke Award for 2024 at the National Film Awards ceremony in Kevadia, Gujarat.
- ❖ The 69th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) is being held in Cape Town, South Africa, under the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) to discuss parliamentary democracy, legislative practices and inter-parliamentary cooperation.
 - The theme is “Strengthening International Law and Parliamentary Democracy in a Changing World Order: Commonwealth Leadership.”
- ❖ Vice-President C. P. Radhakrishnan addressed the 25th anniversary of the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) as an Institution of National Importance in New Delhi on September 15, 2026.
 - ICWA was established to promote the study and understanding of international affairs and India’s foreign relations.
- ❖ Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu inaugurated the first phase of the Veligonda Irrigation Project.
 - The project diverts Krishna River water from the Srisailem Reservoir to the Nallamala Sagar Reservoir through gravity.
- ❖ Denmark has started operations at the European Union’s (EU) first full-scale carbon dioxide (CO₂) storage facility, the Greensand project, which stores CO₂ under the seabed near an old oil platform in the North Sea.
- ❖ India’s 51st Doppler Weather Radar (DWR) was inaugurated at Sambalpur, Odisha, using radio waves to track the location, movement and intensity of rainfall and severe weather.
 - Odisha now has three DWRs at Sambalpur, Gopalpur and Paradip.
- ❖ The International Day of Science, Technology and Innovation for the South is observed annually on 16 September to promote science, technology and innovation (STI) for sustainable and inclusive development in the Global South.
 - The day was proposed by G77 and China at the Summit on Science, Technology and Innovation in Havana, Cuba, on 15–16 September 2023, through the Havana Declaration.

TAMIL NADU NEWS

Tamil Nadu Fiscal Capacity

- ❖ A Kearney study, titled Tamil Nadu's Fiscal Crossroads, has recommended measures to improve the State's fiscal capacity.
- ❖ The study estimates that better revenue collection and spending efficiency could add over ₹1.2 lakh crore annually without new taxes or additional borrowing.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu has a revenue deficit of ₹78,324 crore, outstanding debt above ₹10 lakh crore, and an own-tax-to-GSDP (Gross State Domestic Product) ratio of 5.45%.
- ❖ The study recommends improving Goods and Services Tax (GST) compliance, property valuation, mining revenue collection, grants, procurement and capital-project execution.
- ❖ It also identifies scope to improve procurement competition and public-private partnership (PPP) projects for infrastructure.
- ❖ Union Home Minister inaugurated the 9th two-day National Security Strategies (NSS) Conference 2026 in New Delhi, covering counter-terrorism, intelligence sharing through the Multi Agency Centre (MAC), narcotics control and illegal migration.
- ❖ Discussions also covered cybercrime, proxy warfare, radicalisation, infiltration, Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based security analysis, sub-aerial threats, blue economy security, information warfare and bio-security.



Meenakshi Temple - The making of Madurai's greatest landmark

- ❖ Consecrated after a gap of 17 years, the Meenakshi-Sundareswarar Temple, built and expanded by successive dynasties, is one of India's architectural marvels.
- ❖ It boasts 14 gopurams, including four towering raja gopurams at its eastern, western, southern and northern entrances; gold-plated vimanas above the



sanctums of Sundareswarar and Meenakshi; the famed Golden Lotus Tank; and a train of magnificent mandapams.

- ❖ Built of granite, these halls are grand edifices supported by massive pillars and adorned with life-size sculptures, intricate carvings, friezes, murals and, most importantly, inscriptions.
- ❖ Equally striking is the Indra Vimanam above Sundareswarar's sanctum, held aloft by eight silver-coated elephant sculptures.
- ❖ The Cholas, the Pandyas, the Vijayanagara rulers and the Nayaks contributed to transforming the Meenakshi-Sundareswarar Temple into the spectacular complex.
- ❖ The Nayaks, who presided over the temple's final great phase of architectural expansion, left the most visible imprint.
- ❖ Viswanatha Nayak, the dynasty's founder, Tirumalai Nayak and Rani Mangammal renovated and extended the temple, building several mandapams and introducing the distinctive composite pillars featuring yalis and human figures.
- ❖ The inscriptions recording the Cholas' contributions, however, were lost during later Nayak-era renovations.
- ❖ There was intense hostility between the Cholas and the Pandyas for about 200 years.
- ❖ One of the most striking features of the temple are its mandapams — Ashta Shakti, Meenakshi Nayak, Mudali Pillai, Unjal, Veerappa Nayak, Veera Vasantha Raya, Kalyana, 16-pillared, 1000-pillared, Sangathar, 63-Nayanmars, Nagara and Pudhu mandapams.
- ❖ The Ashta Shakti Mandapam, located on the eastern side, serves as the main entrance to the temple.
- ❖ Apart from featuring the sculptures of dwarapalakis and eight forms of Shakti, it also houses sculptures of Tirumalai Nayak and his two wives, Rudrapathi Ammal and Dhoni Ammal, who built the mandapam.
- ❖ The mandapam was built when the Shakti cult was dominant in Tamizhagam.
- ❖ There is no temple, other than this one, which has a mandapam dedicated to Ashta Sakti.
- ❖ The pillars on the northern corridor have intricate stone carvings of Sangam-age poets, holding palm leaf manuscripts and a stylus.
- ❖ It also features sculptures of Viswanatha Nayak, and Perumal, who built the corridor.
- ❖ On the western side of the tank is the Unjal Mandapam, built in 1653 by Chettiappa Nayak.



- ❖ Its ceiling and walls are decorated with exquisite murals, created during the rule of Rani Mangammal.
- ❖ The paintings are based on three themes: The wedding of Meenakshi and Sundareswarar witnessed by Rani Mangammal, her minister Ramappaiyer and grandson Vijayaranga Chokkanathar; Rani Mangammal receiving the royal sceptre from the goddess; and Parvati's dik vijayam.
- ❖ The sanctum of Goddess Meenakshi was built in the 12th century CE during the reign of Kulasekhara Pandya.
- ❖ Until then, Meenakshi did not have a separate shrine.
- ❖ During the 7th century CE, when the famous Saivite saint Thirugnanasambandar visited and sang verses (Tevaram) praising the deity, Meenakshi did not have her own shrine.
- ❖ Instead, an idol of Angayarkanni (the one with fish-like eyes) was installed in the sanctum of Alavay Annal, as Sambandar called Chokkar or Shiva.
- ❖ The temple is believed to be about 1,800 years old.
- ❖ While Sangam-age works such as Madurai Kanchi and Purananooru, as well as the post-Sangam Paripadal, refer to a Shiva temple in Madurai, none mentions the present Meenakshi-Sundareswarar Temple.
- ❖ The Sangam era was extant from third century BCE to third century CE.
- ❖ It is Sambandar, who, in his Madurai decads (Madurai Padhigams) describes the temple's architectural layout, its location on the southern bank of the Vaigai river, and the long compound wall (neel madhil).
- ❖ He also talks about the Pandya king Ninraseer Nedumaran, his queen Mangayarkarasi and his minister Kulachirayar worshipping at the shrine of Alavay Annal.
- ❖ Tirunavukkarasar alias Appar, another revered Saivite saint and a contemporary of Sambandar, too has sung decads about this temple.
- ❖ To appreciate its grand architecture, mention should be made about the Kambathadi Mandapam, in front of Sundareswarar's sanctum.
- ❖ It was built by Nattukkottai Chettiars or Nagarathars in 1870.
- ❖ There are 25 sculptures of Shiva on these pillars representing his anugraha, samhara and nritta aspects.
- ❖ Their iconography is distinct from Nayak-period sculptures.
- ❖ The Kambathadi sculptures are heavily ornamented and characterised by cleft chins, razor-sharp shin bones and bulging kneecaps.

- ❖ The temple had faced debilitating vicissitudes from three Delhi Sultanate invasions by Malik Kafur in 1311, Khusroo Khan in 1314 and Ulugh Khan in 1323.
- ❖ Parakrama Pandya, who built the west raja gopuram, valiantly fought the invaders but fled to Kalaiyar Kovil during the third invasion.
- ❖ The invaders ransacked and looted the Madurai, Srirangam and Chidambaram temples.
- ❖ The Meenakshi-Sundareswar temple was shut down for 48 years from 1323 to 1371.
- ❖ The Vijayanagara army commander, Kumara Kampanna, arrived in Madurai in 1378 and drove out the invaders.
- ❖ Madurai was liberated and worship revived in the temple.

The Meenakshi Amman Temple in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India, has a history dating back over 2,000 years. It is believed to have been built in the 6th century CE by the Pandya king Kulasekara Pandya. The temple complex has undergone numerous renovations and expansions over the centuries, particularly during the Nayak dynasty in the 16th century.

NATIONAL NEWS

SEMICON India 2026

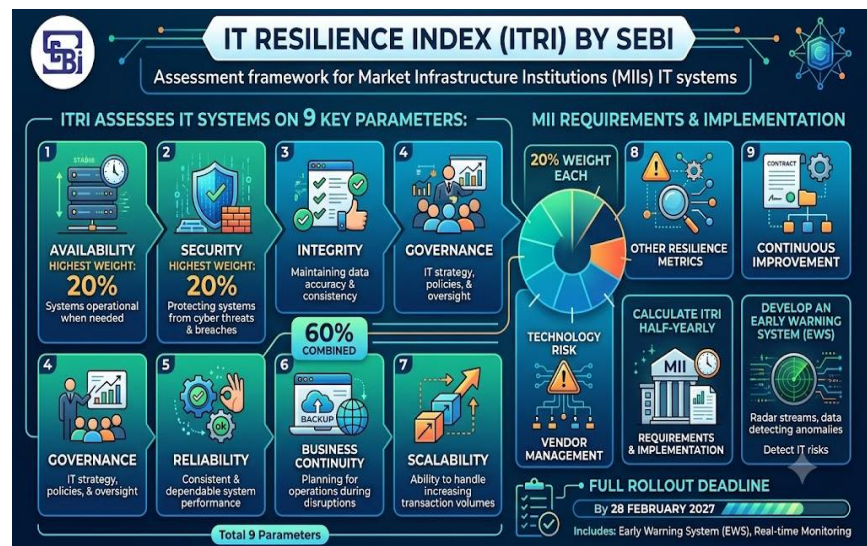
- ❖ SEMICON India 2026, India's fifth major semiconductor conference held in New Delhi.
- ❖ Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the event and highlighted India's shift towards commercial semiconductor production.
- ❖ Its aim was to strengthen India's semiconductor ecosystem and promote chip design, manufacturing and advanced packaging.
- ❖ Commercial production lines were virtually inaugurated at CDIL Semiconductor in Mohali and Suchi Semicon in Surat.

- ❖ The event saw 56 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), announcements and strategic initiatives covering chip design, fabrication, advanced packaging, equipment, materials, power electronics and Artificial Intelligence (AI).



ECONOMY NEWS

IT Resilience Index - SEBI



- ❖ The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) introduced the Information Technology Resilience Index (ITRI) for Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs).
- ❖ ITRI will assess IT systems on nine parameters, including availability, security, integrity, governance, reliability, business continuity and scalability.
- ❖ Availability and security carry the highest weightage of 20% each.

- ❖ MIIs must develop an Early Warning System (EWS) to detect IT risks and calculate ITRI half-yearly.
- ❖ Full rollout, including EWS and real-time monitoring, is due by 28 February 2027.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY NEWS

Elias 2-24 b Planet

- ❖ Astronomers confirmed Elias 2-24 b as the youngest known planet, aged less than 1 million years.
- ❖ It orbits Elias 2-24, about 450 light-years from Earth, and has a mass similar to Jupiter.
- ❖ The planet lies in a gap in its protoplanetary disk and is still gathering material from it.
- ❖ Its confirmation used observations from W. M. Keck Observatory, Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array (ALMA) and Very Large Telescope (VLT).
- ❖ It was first inferred from a disk gap in 2017, before being confirmed later.



REPORTS AND INDICES

V-Dem Report on India

- ❖ The Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute's 2026 report says India's Electoral Democracy Index has reached its lowest level since 1975.

- ❖ V-Dem measures democracy through indicators covering elections, institutions, rights and freedoms.
- ❖ India's score has gradually declined since 2009, with declines in judicial accountability, corruption control, Election Management Body (EMB) autonomy and impartial public administration.
- ❖ The report also records declines in academic freedom, cultural expression and conditions for journalists.
- ❖ The findings came amid concerns raised by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UN CERD) over voter exclusion during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

An analysis by the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute headquartered in Sweden, has observed that India has gone from being an electoral democracy to an 'electoral autocracy'.

The report – which carries a data-based analysis measuring the erosion of democracy – has listed India as a 'major autocratiser' in its summary.

Last year, the V-Dem report had said that India was on the verge of losing its status as a democracy.

PERSONALITIES, AWARDS, AND EVENTS

Tenzing Norgay Awards 2024

- ❖ The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports announced four recipients of the Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Awards 2024.
- ❖ Baljeet Kaur (Himachal Pradesh) received the Land Adventure award for becoming the first Indian to scale five 8,000-metre peaks in a single season.
- ❖ Skalzang Rigzin (Ladakh) received the Land Adventure award for summiting Mount Everest without supplemental oxygen or Sherpa support.

- ❖ Rimo Saha (West Bengal) received the Water Adventure award for achievements in national and international para-swimming competitions.
- ❖ Shiv Prasad Chamoli (Uttarakhand) received the Lifetime Achievement award for contributions to winter sports and adventure sports promotion.



IMPORTANT DAYS

International Day for Interventional Cardiology 2026 – September 16



- ❖ The United Nations (UN) General Assembly proclaimed the day in 2022 to raise awareness about cardiovascular diseases and interventional cardiac procedures.

- ❖ September 16 marks the date of the first coronary angioplasty, performed by Dr. Andreas Grüntzig in 1977.
- ❖ Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) are a leading cause of death globally and include diseases affecting the heart and blood vessels.
- ❖ Interventional cardiology includes procedures such as balloon angioplasty, which uses a small balloon to open blocked arteries.
- ❖ The day also promotes awareness of prevention, treatment, complications and access to appropriate cardiac care.

World Bamboo Day 2026 - September 18

- ❖ The day aims to raise awareness about the importance of bamboo.
- ❖ Bamboo is a fast-growing grass, and some species can grow up to 36 inches (91 cm) in 24 hours.
- ❖ There are more than 1,500 bamboo species worldwide, with uses in construction, furniture, food, musical instruments and other products.
- ❖ The day was declared on September 18, 2009, during the 8th World Bamboo Congress in Bangkok, Thailand.
- ❖ The date coincides with Royal Thai Forestry Day.
- ❖ The theme for the year 2026 is “Bamboo Beyond Borders”.

