

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – AUGUST 1, 2019

TAMIL NADU

◆ **The State government - has decided to revive the ambitious Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS) along seven key stretches in Chennai.**

- ✓ BRT will be implemented in Old Mahabalipuram Road, GST Road, the stretch between Koyambedu and Poonamallee, and Chrompet-Thoraipakkam Road.
- ✓ The Public hearings for suggestions will be conducted from August 3 to 8 at multiple locations in the city by the transport department's Pallavan Transport Consultancy Services Limited.
- ✓ Once the public hearings are over, the government is likely to call for tenders within three months.

THE PROPOSAL

Length |
120 km

30m to 40m
dedicated lane at the
centre of the road

4m to 5m wide bus
stops

Ticket counters at all stops

2,000 new buses | **9,000** passengers can be
ferried in an hour
Platform-level boarding

240
bus stops, one
every 600m



PUBLIC HEARINGS

CMBT, Koyambedu | Aug 3-4

Poonamalle Bus Stand | Aug 5

Community Hall, CIT Nagar | Aug 6

Community Hall, Maduvankarai | Aug 7

Community Hall, Karapakkam | Aug 8

All meetings will be held between
10am and 5pm

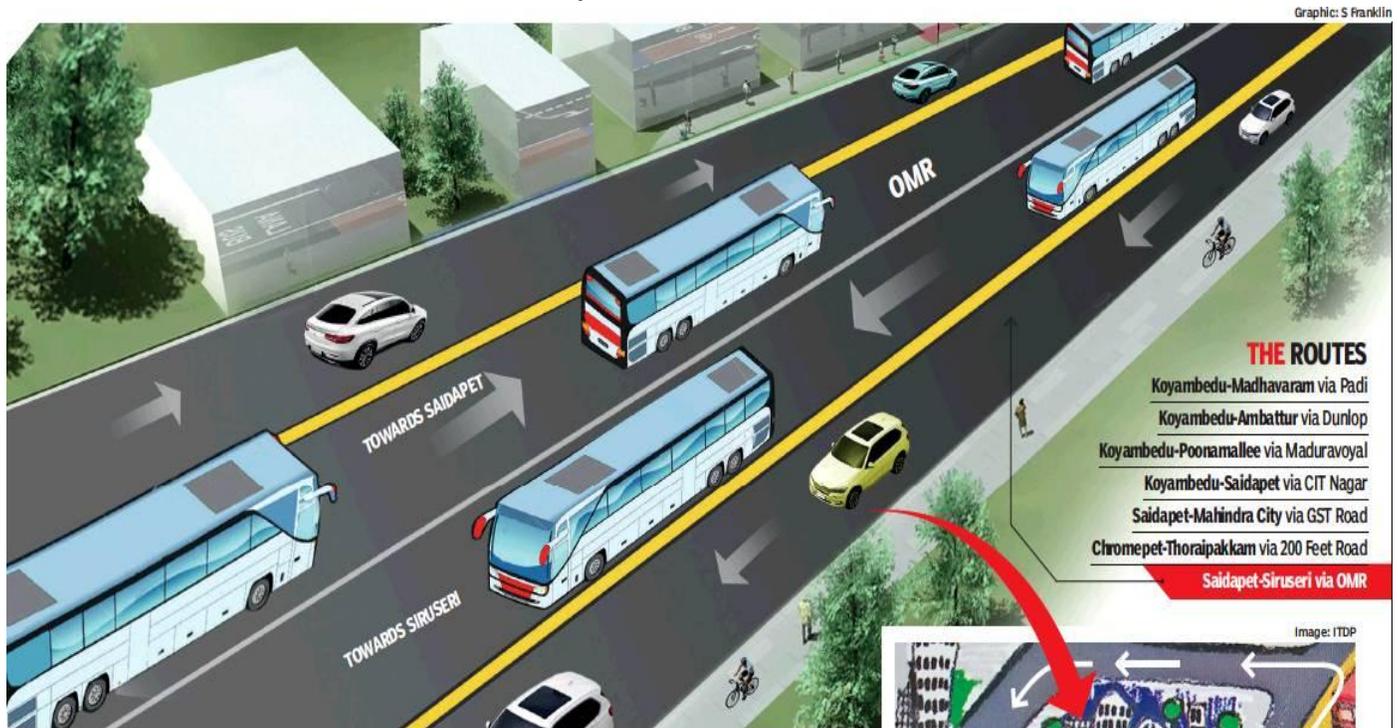
“ BRTS combines
the flexibility and
affordability of buses
with the efficiency and
quality of metro rail

Shreya Gadepalli | SOUTH ASIA
PROGRAMME HEAD, ITDP

BRTS VS METRO RAIL

Parameter	Metro rail	BRTS
Investment	₹24,000cr	₹4,400cr
Daily footfall	1 lakh	20 lakh

- ✓ Earlier, a feasibility study of the project was conducted in 2012 following which a detailed project report was prepared in 2014 and a consultant was hired the next year
- ✓ What is BRTS?
- ✓ According to the new design, the system will have a dedicated bus lane in the middle of the road.
- ✓ The route will cover around 120km with lanes between 30m and 60m depending upon land availability.
- ✓ Around 0.5m would be set aside on both sides for barriers to separate the bus lane from other lane on which private vehicles would travel.



- ✓ These stops will have ticket collection counters similar to railway lines, which means there will be no bus conductors.
- ✓ Also, platform level boarding will be possible at all stops.
- ✓ These two will reduce travel time by 40%.
- ✓ Zebra crossings with traffic signals will be set up at all junctions and bus stop intersections so that people can easily enter or leave the platforms.
- ✓ It will hardly take 20 seconds for buses to drop and pick up passengers from these platforms and waiting time at major traffic signals would not exceed three minutes.
- ✓ Chennai BRT will need a special fleet of around 2,000 BRT-compatible buses, which will cost less than a tenth of the first phase of Chennai metro rail

◆ **Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - inaugurated the first medical college in Karur district at Sanapiratti on July 31 through video conferencing from Chennai**



- ✓ It was established at a cost of ₹115.71 crore in an area of 17.45 acres
- ✓ With this, the total number of government medical colleges in the state goes up to 23
- ✓ A total of 150 MBBS seats have been sanctioned at the college and classes will start from this year.
- ✓ As many as 1,000 beds, including 300 beds for critical care, will be ready in the hospital in a week.
- ✓ It was former chief minister J Jayalalitha who announced a government medical college for Karur district in 2014
- ✓ A government order was passed in January 2015 and a budget of ₹269.58 crore was allocated in June 2018 by the state government for establishing the government medical college and hospital.
- ✓ An additional ₹25.64 crore has also been allocated by the state government for procuring necessary equipment for the medical college through the Tamil Nadu Medical Service Corporation.
- ✓ Besides, it is also equipped with MRI scan facility worth ₹6 crore

◆ **The State government - appointed K Manivasan as the principal secretary of public works department.**



- ✓ S K Prabakar was transferred from PWD and posted as secretary to highways and minor ports department, the post additionally held by him since last year
- ✓ Commissioner of civil supplies and consumer protection, S Madumathi, was transferred and posted as secretary to social welfare and nutritious meal programme department, replacing Manivasan

- ✓ Director-cum-mission director of Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), R Kannan, was transferred and posted as commissioner of civil supplies and consumer protection, while director of museums Kavitha Ramu will be the new mission director of ICDS
- ✓ Backward classes, most backward classes and minorities welfare special secretary T Abraham was transferred and posted as commissioner of social welfare, replacing V Amuthavalli

◆ **The School Education Department - has decided not to collect tuition fees from students of Classes VI-XII in the English medium sections of government and government-aided schools.**

- ✓ About 22,314 students were studying in English-medium government and aided high and higher secondary schools
- ✓ The revenue collected as tuition fees from the students was around ₹67 lakh.
- ✓ At present, the State government does not collect tuition fees from students studying in Tamil-medium government and aided schools.

STATES

◆ **The Kerala government - to help the Netherlands to address the acute shortage of nurses in the European nation**



- ✓ The Netherlands required 30,000 to 40,000 nurses
- ✓ The King of the Netherlands Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima would visit Kerala in October.
- ✓ During the two-day visit, the king would discuss means to support the state government's rebuild Kerala initiative, launched after the devastating floods of August, 2018

NATIONAL

◆ The Rajya Sabha – passed the Motor Vehicle Amendments Bill on July 31

- ✓ The bill will now go back to Lok Sabha for minor corrections before it gets presidential assent to become law.
- ✓ It proposes stiff penalties and categorisation of increasingly common offences on Indian roads like wrongside driving, using mobiles and jumping lights as “dangerous driving”

OFFENCE	EXISTING PENALTY	PROPOSED PENALTY
No seatbelt	₹100 fine	₹1,000 fine
No helmet	₹100 fine	₹1,000 fine and up to 3 months disqualification from holding licence
Blocking way of emergency vehicles	No provision	₹10,000 fine or up to 6 months in jail or both
Driving without licence	₹ 500 fine or up to 3 months in jail or both	₹5,000 fine or up to 3 months in jail or both; ₹10,000 fine or up to 1 year in jail or both for subsequent offence
Driving despite disqualification	₹ 500 fine or up to 3 months in jail or both	₹10,000 fine or up to 3 months in jail or both
Speeding or racing	₹ 500 or up to 3 months in jail or both	₹5,000 fine or up to 3 months' jail for first offence; ₹10,000 fine or up to 1 year in jail or both for subsequent offence
Overloading	₹2,000 fine & ₹1,000 per tonne over limit	₹20,000 fine and ₹2,000 per tonne over the limit
Offences by juveniles	No provision	Guardian/owner deemed guilty; ₹25,000 fine with 3 years in jail; cancellation of vehicle registration for 1 year, no licence to accused juvenile till the age of 25
Drunk driving	₹2,000 fine or up to 6 months in jail or both for first offence; ₹3,000 fine or up to 2 years in jail or both for subsequent offence	₹10,000 fine or up to 6 months in jail or both for first offence; ₹15,000 fine or up to 2 years in jail or both for subsequent offence
Jumping traffic light/using handheld phone/wrong overtaking & driving against traffic flow	₹1,000 fine or up to 6 months in jail or both; ₹2,000 fine or up to 2 years in jail or both for subsequent offence	₹5,000 fine or 6-12 months in jail or both; ₹10,000 fine or 2 years in jail or both for subsequent offence

ALSO PROPOSED IN THE BILL

Officials to pay double | In case of a violation by an enforcement official, the fine will be double. That is, if a traffic cop is caught without helmet he has to pay ₹2,000 fine

Fines subject to annual hike | There is also a provision for an automatic hike of 10% yearly in the fines prescribed in the bill

- ✓ The measures are intended to reduce road deaths, which annually add up to around 1.5 lakh.
- ✓ The bill primarily focuses on increasing penalty for traffic violations, bringing in an automated mechanism for issuing driving licences and making auto manufacturers responsible for faulty products

- ✓ There are significant penalties for manufacturers failing to comply with vehicle standards that can go up to ₹100 crore and very hefty fines for road contractors
- ✓ Keeping in mind that same people often repeat offences, the proposed law has provisions for higher penalty including jail term for habitual offenders

◆ **Lok Sabha – passes the Inter-State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2019 on July 31**

- ✓ The bill was moved by Union 'Jal Shakti' minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat
- ✓ The bill seeks to resolve inter-state disputes in a time-bound manner through a single tribunal in place of the several ones which have been functional for years without a final decision.
- ✓ The Inter-State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2019 seeks to fix total time period for adjudication of a water dispute by the tribunal at two years, unlike the current law which doesn't have such timeline.
- ✓ Once the proposed law becomes an Act after Rajya Sabha's approval and Presidential assent, the existing tribunals will be subsumed under single standing tribunal with multiple benches
- ✓ A retired Supreme Court judge will head the tribunal and Benches will be formed as and when required.
- ✓ In order to resolve water disputes amicably by negotiations, the bill seeks to introduce a mechanism through Disputes Resolution Committee (DRC).
- ✓ So far, only four (including Cauvery river water tribunal) of nine tribunals have made awards, that too after 7 to 28 years delay
- ✓ The balance five tribunals are on the job for years with the one on Ravi-Beas (Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan) being in existence for over 33 years
- ✓ The original Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, enacted in 1956, was amended 17 years ago to make five years the maximum period within which river water disputes need to be resolved, which never happened

◆ **Lok Sabha - passed the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Amendment Bill, 2019 on July 31 - for speedy eviction of unauthorized occupants of government residential accommodation**

- ✓ Currently, the Centre has to evict unauthorized occupants from government accommodation under the provisions of the PPE Act, 1971, which takes longer time
- ✓ Under the proposed bill, the estate officer will not be required to follow elaborate proceedings like serving notice, show cause, inquiry, rather he/she can initiate summary eviction proceedings.

- ✓ It will now enable the estate officer to apply summary proceedings for evicting unauthorized occupants from residential accommodation and to levy damage charges for accommodation held during the period of litigation.
- ✓ The three-day notice for evacuation would be given only after all other means were exhausted.

◆ **The Union Cabinet - approved a bill to increase the strength of the Supreme Court from current 30 to 33, excluding the Chief Justice of India**

- ✓ The decision follows the proposal from Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking to increase the strength of the apex court in view of rising pendency of cases in the country's top court.
- ✓ As on July 1, the apex court had 59,331 cases pending and the high courts had 43.55 lakh pending cases
- ✓ The high courts have at least 400 judges' posts vacant against a sanctioned strength of 1,070.
- ✓ Earlier in 1988, the judge strength of the SC was increased from 18 to 26, and then again after two decades in 2009, it was increased to 31, including the CJI

◆ **The Government - approved to extend the 10% reservation for economically weaker sections (EWS) in government jobs and educational institutions to Jammu & Kashmir on July 31**

- ✓ This will be in addition to the existing reservations in the state.
- ✓ The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Second Amendment) Bill, 2019
- ✓ Earlier in January, the Centre approved a constitutional amendment to provide a 10% reservation to EWS across the country through the 103rd Constitution Amendment
- ✓ It has set ₹8 lakh annual income as the cut-off for identifying people belonging to the EWS category.

◆ **The CSIF (Central Industrial Security Force) – to reduce 6,000 personnel from the 29,000 manpower stationed at 61 airports**

- ✓ The freed-up manpower will be redistributed to airports (not currently under CISF cover) and for augmenting strength at some other airports
- ✓ The move aims the increased use of automation and allowing airport operators to use private security in certain areas

◆ **Assam's Maijan Gold Tea - fetched a new world record of ₹70,501 for a kilo at the Guwahati Tea Auction Centre**

- ✓ Maijan Orthodox Golden Tea is produced by the oldest tea company in the world, Assam Company India Limited (ACIL), at its Maijan tea estate in Dibrugarh
- ✓ A batch of specially-crafted orthodox tea of around 1.7 kg was auctioned off to Guwahati-based Mundhra Tea Company.
- ✓ Earlier, a day before, the Manohari Gold Tea from the Manohari tea estate at Mohanbari in Dibrugarh fetched ₹50,000 a kilo, setting a world record for price commanded by a specialty tea at a tea auction.

INTERNATIONAL

◆ Sri Lanka - announced to give free visa on arrival to visitors from India and 47 other countries

- ✓ The scheme, starting from August 1, will seek to revive the country's tourism sector which witnessed a slump following the Easter Sunday bombings.
- ✓ In April, Sri Lanka suspended its plans to grant visas on arrival to citizens of 39 countries after the devastating Easter suicide bombings that killed 258 people.
- ✓ Now, it has re-launched the free visa on arrival scheme for the suspended 39 countries and has expanded the service to tourists from India, China and other countries as well

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

◆ Thailand - is in talks with India for the purchase of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles



- ✓ Once the talks materialize, it could possibly be the first sale of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles to another country
- ✓ Thailand expressed interest in the missiles some time ago, after the visit of Royal Thai Navy Chief Admiral Ruddit to India in December last year.
- ✓ Thailand has also made a request for repair and refurbishing their Dornier maritime patrol aircraft

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

◆ **Indian space research organization (Isro) - to set up a technical liaison unit (ITLU) in Moscow to collaborate with space agencies and industries in Russia and neighbouring countries for Gaganyaan mission**

- ✓ In the last week of June, Isro had signed an agreement with Russian launch service provider Glavkosmos for providing advanced training to its astronauts for the space mission
- ✓ The process to set up an ITLU office, which would be managed by an Isro scientist or engineer designated as “counsellor (space)”, will be completed in six months.
- ✓ Isro will spend around ₹1.5 crore per annum for maintaining this unit.
- ✓ Department of Space had earlier set up such units in Washington and Paris
- ✓ Under the Gaganyaan mission, India would send three astronauts to space for seven days by 2022

◆ **Nasa's new planet-hunting spacecraft, the Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite – finds three new worlds that orbit a dim red dwarf star only 73 light-years from Earth in the southern constellation Pictor.**

- ✓ The system goes by the name TOI-270, for Tess Object of Interest
- ✓ Since its launch in April 2018, TESS has already discovered 21 new planets and 850 more potential worlds that have yet to be confirmed
- ✓ However, none of the three planets are likely habitable

APPOINTMENTS

◆ **Rakesh Asthana – was appointed as the director general of Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)**



- ✓ The Ministry of Home Affairs had announced that the 1984 batch IPS officer will hold the position as an additional charge
- ✓ Asthana is currently director general of Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS).
- ✓ He was posted there in the aftermath of his feud with sacked CBI director Alok Verma last year.

SPORTS

◆ **Vidit Gujrathi – wins the Biel International Chess Festival**



- ✓ The 24-year old from Nashik clinched the title with a round to spare in the Swiss town of Biel
- ✓ Gujrathi was seeded second in the tournament, behind Samuel Shankland of the United States
- ✓ Gujrathi won the tournament in a demanding format that combined all the three formats of chess — classical, rapid and blitz.
- ✓ Gujrathi is ranked No. 35 at the moment, with 2703 Elo points.
- ✓ Only two other Indians are ranked higher — Anand (No. 9) and Pendyala Harikrishna (No. 24).

MANPOWER REQUIREMENTS IN TAMIL NADU – A REPORT

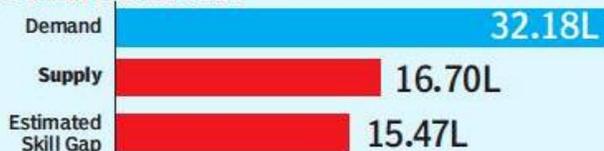
◆ **Tamil Nadu - will need 32 lakh skilled and semiskilled workers in key areas such as manufacturing, education and health, construction and IT/ ITES over the next six years but is set to end up with a shortfall of 48% as per the present trend**

- ✓ This was the finding of a study by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) for the Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation (TNSDC)
- ✓ TNSDC is now preparing district skill development plans (DSDP) focusing on region-wise requirements and training, the first-ever such exercise in Tamil Nadu.
- ✓ The study identified relevant work experience, soft skills and certified technical skills as key factors that determine employability and employment.
- ✓ Better job opportunities (68%), lower wage (67%) and candidate disinterest (45%) were found to be key reasons for attrition.
- ✓ There are 10 lakh to 12 lakh migrant workers in the state with around 27% of the industries employing migrant workers, mainly from eastern and central India

Expected demand for workers in Tamil Nadu during 2019-2025

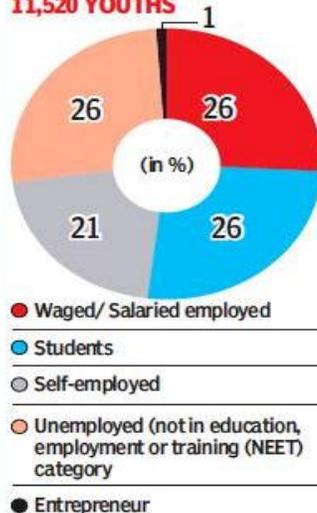


TOTAL SKILL WORKFORCE



THE SURVEY | As part of state-wide skill gap study, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) surveyed 11,520 youth in 193 blocks, six in each district. As many as 1,076 employers from large, medium, small and macro industries across key sectors defining district economies were also surveyed.

RESPONDENTS 11,520 YOUTHS



THE JOBLESS | One third of unemployed respondents (those who aren't students, employed or undergoing training) cited lack of jobs in their locality as a reason

> About 25% of unemployed women cited lack of support from family to keep a job as reason

DREAM JOB

29% of surveyed youths want to be self-employed
Summer | It doesn't translate into entrepreneurship. Just 1% of the youths are entrepreneurs

25% want wage and salaried employment with the public sector



> Job in private sector | 17%

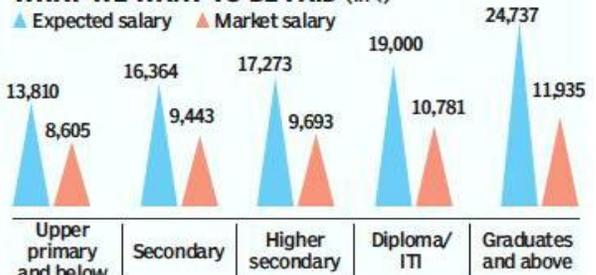
> Jobs preferred in either of the sectors | 21%

> Others (unorganized, family-run businesses) | 7%

PREFERRED SECTORS

WOMEN	MEN
Food processing 20%	Automobile 14%
Banking, finance 13%	Iron & steel industry 12%
Construction 12%	Handloom, handicrafts 11%
Agro-business 11%	Agro-based 8%
Health 5%	Construction 8%
Education & skill development 4%	Banking & finance 7%
	Chemicals & Pharma 7%

WHAT WE WANT TO BE PAID (In ₹)



NATIONAL MEDICAL COMMISSION (NMC) BILL – A DETAILED REPORT

- ✓ Entry and Exit exams for Doctors
 - ✓ NEET will continue as the entry exam for all institutes including AIIMS
 - ✓ There will also be “a common final year undergraduate medical examination”, National Exit Test, to grant licences to practice medicine.
 - ✓ The exit test is expected to become operational within three years of the NMC bill becoming law
 - ✓ The exit exam will be common for Indian and foreign medical graduates
 - ✓ The exit exam will also serve as an entrance exam for post-graduate education in any institution under this law.
 - ✓ Currently, students with MBBS degrees from US, UK, Canada, Australia or New Zealand are automatically entitled to practice in India
 - ✓ Going forward, even those who get MBBS degrees from these countries would also have to pass the exit exam if they want to practice here
- ✓ Medical College Fees and inspections

- ✓ The MCI had no powers to regulate fees.
- ✓ The commission will be “framing guidelines” for determining fees on 50% of the seats in private colleges.
- ✓ Moreover, most states have fee regulatory committees to fix fees
- ✓ The MCI inspected medical colleges using faculty from government colleges
- ✓ Going forward, the NMC bill says the medical assessment and rating board can “hire and authorise any third party agency or persons for carrying out inspection”
- ✓ Members in NMC
 - ✓ NMC itself will have 11 part-time members with 2 years tenure representing states or state medical councils, who were a majority in MCI

	MCI	NMC
Members	100+	25
Tenure	5 yrs	4 yrs (part-time members 2 yrs)
Appointment	70% Elected	Majority nominated
Extension	Could be renominated/reelected	Those nominated by Centre cannot be renominated
Quorum	15 of 100+ members	13 of 25 members
Meeting mandate	At least once a year	Every quarter

- ✓ States’ representation is primarily in the medical advisory council, which will include 72 members from states and state councils
 - ✓ The advisory council to advise the NMC will be chaired by the NMC chairperson and will include all 25 NMC members
 - ✓ Thus, these 25 will be part of the advisory council and then decide as the National Medical Commission on whether to accept its advice or not.
- ✓ Non medical members
 - ✓ Three of the 25 members of the commission, one in the search committee, one in the medical assessment and rating board and one in the ethics and medical registration board will not be doctors
 - ✓ There are also four non medical members in the medical advisory council
 - ✓ The secretary to NMC, also appointed by the Centre, too could be a non-doctor as the bill does not mandate it should be a doctor.
- ✓ Centre’s authority in NMC
 - ✓ The Centre has most of the nominees in NMC
 - ✓ Moreover, the Centre is the appellate authority for almost all decisions taken by NMC The bill also gives the Centre the power to give NMC and the boards policy directions
 - ✓ It also categorically states that the Centre can give directions to state governments for carrying out provisions of the Act and they will have to comply with such directions.
- ✓ MCI vs NMC
 - ✓ MCI decisions were not binding on state medical councils

- ✓ NMC bill clearly states that the ethics board of the commission will “exercise appellate jurisdiction with respect to actions taken by state medical councils” on issues of compliance with the ethical code
- ✓ The Centre did not have direct powers to take action against the MCI if it violated the IMC Act
- ✓ In the NMC bill, the Centre has the power to remove the chair or any member of the commission for several reasons
- ✓ Unlike MCI members, NMC members will have to declare assets and liabilities at the time of entering and demitting office
- ✓ They will also have to give a conflict of interest declaration of professional and commercial engagements or involvements and these are to be displayed on the NMC website.
- ✓ They will also have a two-year cooling off period after their tenure during which they cannot be employed in any capacity, including as consultant or expert in any private medical institution that they might have dealt with directly or indirectly.
- ✓ However, this cooling off period can be waived by Centre.
- ✓ Bridge Course for Ayush doctors and CHPs
 - ✓ Open reference to a bridge course for Ayush doctors has been dropped
 - ✓ The bill also provides for “Community Health Providers” (CHPs) defined as persons granted a licence to practice medicine at mid-level.
 - ✓ CHPs would be allowed to prescribe specified medicines independently in primary and preventive healthcare, but at higher levels “only under the supervision of medical practitioners”.
 - ✓ Eligibility to become a CHP will be set via regulations framed under the Act.
 - ✓ The number of CHPs licensed “shall not exceed one third of total number of licensed medical practitioners”, which means there will be around 2.7 lakh CHPs for 8-lakh plus registered doctors in the country
- ✓ Missing link in NMC
 - ✓ As in the IMC Act, there is no stipulation for re-registration or re-accreditation of doctors every few years
 - ✓ It means state medical councils cannot maintain updated registers, as doctors refuse to re-register
 - ✓ But, the Bill says all state medical councils shall maintain and regularly update the state registers.
 - ✓ The NMC has no provision to regulate working conditions of faculty and resident doctors or on their salary or stipend.

