

February 26, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. Freedom fighter and senior leader of the Communist Party of India R. Nallakannu (100) passed away in Chennai on Wednesday (Feb. 25) due to ill health.

2. The Central Government has made it mandatory to sell E20 petrol, which contains 20% ethanol, with a minimum Research Octane Number (RON) of 95 across the country from April 1.

(i) In a recent notification by the Union Petroleum Ministry, it has been clearly stated that the fuel sold in all states and Union Territories should have this high octane grade as per the norms of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS). This decision has been taken to ensure the safety of the vehicle engines.

(ii) Octane is a measure of the smooth combustion of petrol even under high pressure. When ethanol is mixed with petrol, the fuel burns unevenly inside the engine and can cause unwanted noise and vibration. 95 octane grade will prevent this problem and protect the engine.

(iii) Ethanol naturally has a high octane rating (about 108). Therefore, experts say that the speed and life of the ethanol-blended petrol engine will increase.

(iv) Ethanol-blended petrol, which was introduced with the aim of improving the country's economy, has saved about Rs.1.40 lakh crore in foreign exchange in the last 10 years. The Government says that since ethanol is produced from sugarcane, corn and grains, it has provided additional income to farmers.

(v) Vehicles manufactured in India since 2023 are mostly designed to run on E20 petrol. However, there are allegations that mileage is slightly reduced in older vehicles.

3. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) reported that 129 journalists were killed while covering the news last year worldwide.

(i) This is a new high compared to previous years. Notably, two-thirds of these deaths were caused by Israeli attacks.

(ii) According to the CPJ report, the killings of journalists increased for the second consecutive year in 2025. Of the 129 deaths, more than 75 percent were those working in conflict zones.

(iii) Some 86 people died in Israeli attacks. This includes not only the Palestinian journalists killed in Gaza (60 percent) but also the media staff killed in the attack on the Houthi media center in Yemen. Apart from Israel, nine people were killed in Sudan, which is currently embroiled in a civil war, and four by Russian forces in Ukraine.

(iv) Drones have emerged as a new weapon in modern warfare to kill journalists. Drone attacks, which caused just 2 deaths in 2023, have increased to 39 in 2025. Drone attacks on journalists have been carried out not only in Israel but also in the Gulf, Ukraine, and Yemen.

(v) Even in democracies...!

- The situation is worse in democracies like India, Mexico, and the Philippines, which are not

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surrounded by clouds of war.

- 6 people were killed in Mexico last year and 3 in the Philippines.
- The deaths of people like Mukesh Chandrakar, who exposed corruption in India, have raised questions about the safety of journalists working at the local level. In the last 10 years, at least one journalist has been killed every year in India and Mexico.
- Not only have journalists been killed, but the brutal trend of targeting their families to intimidate them has also increased. Since October 2023, more than 700 journalists' families have been killed in Gaza.

(vi) In prison....

* In addition, as of December 1, 2025, 330 journalists were imprisoned worldwide. Of these, China (50), Myanmar (30) and Israel (29) are in the top three.

4. Prime Minister Modi arrived in Israel on Wednesday on a two-day state visit.

(i) With this speech, Modi became the first Indian Prime Minister to address the Israeli Parliament.

(ii) He was awarded the country's highest civilian award. It is noteworthy that Modi is the first world leader to receive this award. The Speaker of the Parliament Amir Ohana presented Modi with the award.

(iii) The award was given in recognition of Prime Minister Modi's outstanding contribution to strengthening the strategic relationship between India and Israel.

(iv) This is the Prime Minister's second visit to Israel in the last 9 years. When he first visited Israel in 2017, the bilateral relations were elevated to the status of a strategic partnership.