

March 3, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. Informed sources said that despite the increase in international crude oil prices, there is no possibility of increasing petrol and diesel prices in India.

(i) Central sources said that despite the international crude oil prices having increased by 9 percent to \$80 per barrel due to the conflict between Iran and Israel-US, petrol and diesel will be sold in India without any change in price.

(ii) The sources further said that the Central Government is likely to consider increasing petrol and diesel prices only if the international crude oil prices increase immensely.

(iv) India imports 88 percent of the crude oil required by the country. Iran has warned that it will close the Strait of Hormuz due to the attacks by Israel and the US on it.

2. Iran's ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has accused Israel of carrying out an airstrike on Iran's most important nuclear facility, Natanz.

(i) Speaking at an emergency meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, he said the attack was aimed at crippling Iran's peaceful nuclear programs. He also told reporters:

- Our secure nuclear facilities have been attacked. Their claim that Iran is trying to develop nuclear weapons is completely false.
- The attack on the Natanz facility, located about 220 km from the capital Tehran, is against international law. All member states of the International Atomic Energy Agency should condemn it unanimously.

(ii) IAEA denial:

- IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi has denied this allegation by Iran. In his explanation, he said, 'There is no evidence so far that any nuclear facility in Iran has been damaged in the attacks. All of Iran's major facilities, including the Bushehr nuclear power plant, are safe.'
- He also pointed out that there has been no increase in radiation levels in neighboring countries as evidence that nuclear facilities were not attacked.

3. The Union Minister of State for Sports Raksha Katse announced that more than 2 lakh people will participate in the 'Asmita' sports competitions to be held in 250 districts across the country on the occasion of International Women's Day on the 8th and 9th.

4. The West Bengal Government has given its first-phase approval to allot 105 acres of land to the Central Government for the construction of fences and border posts along the country's border.

(i) This land has been allotted to the Border Security Force (BSF) and check posts will be set up along the 17 km long border.

(ii) In this regard, West Bengal Government officials said on Monday:

- An inter-ministerial meeting of the state was held recently at the Secretariat in Kolkata. In this, the plan related to allotment of land to central agencies for construction of fences and border posts along the border was considered and first-phase approval was given in-principle. A total of 105 acres of land will be allotted. The state cabinet will have to approve this in the next phase.
- The BSF plans to construct fences and 9 border posts along the 17 km long border.
- The Central Government has decided to increase security and surveillance there due to the high incidence of smuggling and infiltration from Bangladesh. West Bengal shares a border of over 2,000 km with Bangladesh. A fence has already been erected in most of these places. West Bengal also shares borders with Nepal and Bhutan.

5. The Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan released a total of 16 works by the Publications Division of the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, including 13 works on eminent Tamil scholars, heritage, architecture, literature, culture and civilisational thoughts, and Tamil, Hindi and English language books on Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, the author of the song Vande Mataram, at a function held at his residence.

(i) Rameswaram (V.Veda Salam),

(ii) Ramanuja (I.R. Gurunathan),

(iii) Nadugal Worship and Society (R. Poonkundran),

(iv) Arikamedu, K.Rajan,

(v) Devotional Literature (T. Gnana Sundaram),

(vi) Natural Agriculture (Munaivar R.Raman),

(vii) Musical Instruments of Ancient Tamils: A Multifaceted View (S. Subbulakshmi),

(viii) Tamil Nadu National Deities from a Historical Perspective (K.Sasikala).

(ix) New Scientific and Technological Technologies (P.Kuppusamy),

(x) Madurai Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple (Munaivar V.Vedachalam),

(xi) Thanjavur Peruvudaiyar Temple (V.Vedachalam),

(xii) Manimekalai (P.Suyambu).

(xiii) Mahavidhuvan Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai (P. Suyambu),

(xiv) Nava Bharata Sculptors (Bankim Chandra Chatterjee-Translated by S.K. Bose).

6. Prime Minister Modi and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney have decided to expeditiously finalize the India-Canada Free Trade Agreement (officially known as the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement).

(i) Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney is on a four-day official visit to India. Carney met Prime Minister Modi in New Delhi and held talks.

(ii) During the meeting, the two sides reviewed the existing cooperation between the two countries in key sectors including the India-Canada Strategic Partnership, trade and investment, energy, agriculture, education and research. Modi and Carney also decided to expeditiously finalize the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. They also discussed the dire situation prevailing in West Asia.

(iii) Following the talks between the two sides, the two countries signed agreements including cooperation in the field of key minerals, use of renewable energy, and cultural cooperation.

(iv) Following this, the two sides jointly addressed the media. At that time, Prime Minister Modi said:

- Currently, India and Canada have signed an agreement for long-term supply of uranium in the civil nuclear sector. India and Canada will also work together on small nuclear reactors and high-performance nuclear reactors.
- The goal of India and Canada is to increase trade between the two countries to \$ 50 billion (about Rs. 4.58 lakh crore) by 2030. In this regard, we have decided to quickly finalize a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement between the two countries. This will create new investments and jobs in both countries.
- \$ 100 billion (about Rs. 9.15 lakh crore) of the Canada Pension Fund has been invested in India. This is a sign of Canada's deep confidence in India's development.
- In order to take cooperation in the energy sector to the next level, the focus will be on hydrocarbons, renewable energy, green hydrogen and energy storage.
- We have decided to establish an India-Canada Security Dialogue. We have also decided to open Canadian universities in India.
- The two sides discussed ways to enhance India-Canada cooperation in combating terrorism. India and Canada agree that terrorism and its recruitment are serious challenges to humanity. Global Peace and Stability

(v) \$2.6 Billion Agreement – Canada to supply 22 million pounds of uranium to India

- The two countries signed an agreement to cooperate in the supply of uranium. Under this agreement, Canada will supply uranium to India. Under this agreement worth \$2.6 billion (approximately Rs. 23,833 crore), Canada will assist India's civil nuclear energy sector. Accordingly, from 2027 to 2035, Canada will supply about 22 million pounds of uranium to India for nuclear power generation.

7. In Tamil Nadu, 29 percent of the medicines tested in January were classified as substandard. Karnataka and Rajasthan had the next highest number of substandard medicines.

(i) In January, 215 medicines were found to be substandard across the country. Out of these, 43 medicines were from Tamil Nadu alone.

(ii) The Tamil Nadu Drug Control Department tested 147 medicines that month. Of these, 29 percent were found to be substandard. It is noteworthy that 22 medicines were tested in a laboratory in Chennai and 21 medicines in a laboratory in Madurai.

(iii) Similarly, 21 percent of medicines in Karnataka and 17 percent in Rajasthan were found to be substandard. Telangana, Kerala, Odisha, Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh also reported substandard medicines.

(iv) The Drugs Control Board has clarified that failure of a particular batch of drugs in the quality test is applicable only to that batch and there is no need to worry about other drugs in the market.

8. Pasture Land is for Grazing!" (மேய்ச்சல் நிலம் மேய்ப்பதற்கே...) - critical importance of rangelands and the pastoralist communities that depend on them.

(i) Global Recognition:

- UN Declaration: On March 15, 2022, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution declaring 2026 as the "International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists".
- This resolution was initially proposed by Mongolia and received support from 60 countries, including India, and over 450 international organizations.
- Rangelands cover nearly half of the Earth's land surface, making them one of the planet's largest and most vital ecosystems.

(ii) Impact on Livelihoods and Food Security

- Globally, pasture lands support the livelihoods and food security of approximately 50 crore (500 million) pastoralists.
- In India, livestock products contribute 4.5% to the total GDP.
- It is estimated that 53% of milk and 74% of meat in India are sourced from pastoralist-managed livestock.
- Traditional livestock rearing provides employment to nearly 70% of people in rural areas.

(iii) Pastoralism in the Indian and Tamil Nadu Context

- Breed Diversity: Out of 202 registered livestock breeds in India, 75 breeds are maintained specifically by pastoralist communities.
- Approximately 1.3 crore (13 million) people from 46 different communities in India are involved in pastoralism.
- Tamil Nadu Communities: Key pastoralist groups in Tamil Nadu include the Toda, Bargur Lingayat, Yadava, Kurumba Gounder, and Vanniyar.
- Pastoralists follow a traditional cycle, moving to forest areas during rainy months (October to January) and returning to agricultural lands after harvest for "folding" (penning livestock on fields), which provides natural fertilizer to the soil.

(iv) Environmental and Ecological Benefits

- Carbon Sequestration: Research indicates that grasslands have a higher capacity than forests to absorb carbon and store it safely underground.
- Climate Change Mitigation: One-third of the Earth's carbon is stored in rangelands, playing a major role in mitigating climate change.
- Biodiversity and Fire Prevention: Grazing helps increase biodiversity, protects water bodies, and serves as a natural barrier to the spread of forest fires.

(v) Critical Challenges and Encroachments

- Over the last 60 years, traditional pasture lands have faced forced evictions, illegal encroachments, and diversion for non-grazing industrial or developmental uses.
- While the Forest Rights Act of 2006 recognizes traditional grazing rights, these rights are often not implemented on the ground.
- The practice of converting natural grasslands into forests by planting trees would disrupt the natural ecosystem.

(vi) Recent Policy Directives

- The Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying recently sent a circular to all Panchayats in India to protect and maintain at least 25 acres of pasture land.
- Call for the identification and removal of encroachments and the transformation of unused fallow lands back into productive grasslands.
- "Pasture land is for grazing; the grazing profession is for survival".

9. Wheat production and export policies in India :-

(i) Export Policy and Quantities

- The Union Government has granted permission for the export of 25 lakh tons of wheat.
- Additionally, the export of 5 lakh tons of wheat-based products, including flour (atta), rava, and maida, has been permitted.
- To facilitate this, the Government has lifted the previously imposed stock limits on flour mills, traders, retailers, and producers of value-added products.

(ii) Cultivation and Production Targets (2025–26)

- Wheat has been sown across 3.34 crore hectares this season, a slight increase from 3.28 crore hectares last year.
- The official production target for the 2025–26 period is set at 11.9 crore tons.
- The Government has fixed the Minimum Support price (MSP) for wheat at ₹2,585 per quintal (100 kg).

(iii) Current Stock Levels

- As of January 1, the Food Corporation of India (FCI) had 2.75 crore tons of wheat in its godowns.
- The Government anticipates that by April 1, approximately 2 crore tons of wheat will remain in storage after meeting internal welfare scheme requirements.

(iv) Climatic Risks and Challenges

- Healthy wheat growth and high yields require a consistent daytime temperature of 21 to 22 degrees Celsius during the current final growth stage.
- Higher-than-normal temperatures in North and Central India (specifically East Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh) are causing concern for crop health.
- A lack of adequate winter rainfall in these regions has led to lower humidity levels, which may

negatively impact the final harvest.

- Early signs of an "El Niño" effect are appearing, which could lead to drought conditions and impact the subsequent 2026–27 Kharif crops.

(v) Global Market Dynamics

- Indian wheat is currently priced at approximately \$300 per ton.
- Countries like Argentina are offering wheat at \$250 to \$260 per ton, making it difficult for Indian exports to compete in the international market despite the depreciating value of the rupee.

(vi) Conclusion

- The Government may have been too hasty in allowing exports before the final harvest results are confirmed.
- If weather fluctuations lead to a drop in total production, domestic market prices could surge, and the Government may struggle to meet its own procurement targets.

