

March 4, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. Under the social security schemes of the Tamil Nadu Government, a special fund of Rs.2,000 has been credited to the bank accounts of 37.79 lakh beneficiaries receiving old age pension, differently-abled persons, widows and elderly transgenders along with the assistance for the month of March.

(i) Not only that, a fishing ban period assistance of Rs.8,000 per family is being provided to a total of 1,62,900 families from April to June.

(iii) To benefit 14,870 tea farmers from the Nilgiris district, a base price of Rs.2 per kg is being provided to the Government, totaling Rs.8.53 crore, for green tea purchased through 15 cooperative tea factories.

2. In the context of the escalating war in West Asia, the Ministry of External Affairs said that India attaches the highest priority to the security of the one crore Indians living in the region.

(i) The Ministry of External Affairs has expressed concern that a major disruption in energy supplies due to the war would have a severe impact on the Indian economy.

(ii) It has also urged for dialogue and diplomatic means to end the war at the earliest.

(iii) The US-Israeli joint forces launched a large-scale air strike on Iran, accusing it of enriching uranium for nuclear weapons.

(iv) In this attack, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed, and Iran retaliated by targeting US military bases in Israel and various Gulf countries.

(v) The war has intensified due to the alternating attacks. This has raised concerns about the safety of one crore Indians living in the West Asian region. Air traffic has been severely affected as almost all airspace in the region has been closed.

(vi) India's views have assumed significance as Iran has threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz, one of the main routes for oil transport, and to attack cargo ships passing through it.

- 20 per cent of the world's oil and gas supply passes through the Strait of Hormuz. As far as India is concerned, almost 50 per cent of its oil imports are carried out through this strait.
- Earlier, when war broke out in West Asia, India had urged all parties to exercise restraint and de-escalate tensions.

3. The health department has urged the public to be vigilant even though bird flu has spread only among crows in 14 districts of Tamil Nadu.

(i) The Central Veterinary Research Institute recently found that crows that died in Adyar, Chennai, were infected with bird flu called 'H5N1'. Following this, the Central Government had instructed the Tamil Nadu Chief Secretary to intensify surveillance.

(ii) Based on this, the State Health Department is taking various precautionary measures. Chickens infected with bird flu are likely to spread the infection to humans from other birds. Humans can also be easily infected from their droppings. Moreover, since mosquitoes can transmit the 'West Nile virus' infection from infected birds or humans to others, there is a high chance of spreading the disease.

(iii) The public health department had advised people to seek medical attention immediately if they experience fever, headache, muscle cramps, cough, shortness of breath, etc.

4. The UN's International nuclear watchdog, the IAEA, has confirmed that parts of Iran's Natanz nuclear facility have been damaged in an airstrike by the US and Israel.

(i) The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said in a statement that "the US-Israeli strike damaged the entrance buildings to the underground section of the reactor at the Natanz nuclear facility in central Iran."

(ii) However, the attack did not damage any of the reactor's most critical components. The investigation has determined that there is no risk of radiation leakage."

(iii) Earlier, the IAEA had denied Iran's accusations of responsibility for the attack on the Natanz nuclear facility.

5. The Indian women's cricket team, which won the World Cup for the first time, has been nominated for the 2026 Laureus Team of the Year award, the most prestigious award in sports.

6. India's Smriti Mandhana has moved up to the top spot in the ICC Women's ODI rankings for batsmen.

7. The Union Ministry of Defence has signed an agreement with Hindustan Aeronautics (HAL) for the purchase of 6 state-of-the-art light helicopters at a cost of Rs.2,901 crore.

(i) In this, MK-3 light helicopters are being purchased for the use of the Indian Coast Guard. A press release issued by the Ministry of Defence in this regard states:

- The procurement and commissioning of these MK-3 twin-engine light helicopters will significantly enhance the capabilities of the Indian Coast Guard.
- The Coast Guard can provide assistance to ships at sea through these helicopters, not only for coastal security operations. This will also protect artificial islands, fishermen and the marine environment. An agreement has been signed with HAL to purchase 6 helicopters at a cost of Rs.2,901 crore.

(ii) Missiles at Rs. 2,182 crore:

- Furthermore, an agreement has been signed with Russia's JSC Rosoboronexport for the procurement of surface-to-air missiles and missile launchers worth Rs.2,182 crore for use on Indian Navy warships.
- It was reported that the purchase of these missiles will enhance the capabilities of the warships to effectively deal with air threats.

8. Kepler Business Analytics has reported that India has 100 million barrels of crude oil reserves.

(i) While petrol and diesel are extracted from crude oil, India meets about 88 percent of its crude oil requirements through imports. Out of this, more than 50 percent of crude oil is imported from Middle Eastern countries.

(ii) This crude oil is imported through the Strait of Hormuz, which connects the Persian Gulf to the Arabian Sea. Cargo shipping through this strait has been disrupted due to the Iran-US-Israel war.

(iii) Regarding whether this will affect India, Sumit Ritolia, Chief Research Analyst at Kepler Business Analytics, headquartered in Brussels, Belgium, said:

- According to detailed data available with Kepler, India currently has 100 million barrels of crude oil reserves.
- If India is blocked from getting crude oil through the Strait of Hormuz, India can use 100 million barrels of crude oil for 40 to 45 days.

(iv) What are the alternatives?

- If the supply of crude oil from the Middle East is completely blocked for some time, the immediate result will be an increase in the price of crude oil. If the price increases, it will cost India more to import crude oil.
- Since the Strait of Hormuz route is completely closed and the supply of crude oil from the Middle East countries decreases, India can import crude oil from West Africa, South America and the United States to compensate for it, he said.

9. The Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri has said that India has adequate crude oil reserves.

(i) While petrol and diesel are extracted from crude oil, India meets about 88 percent of its crude oil requirement through imports. Out of this, more than 50 percent of crude oil is imported from Middle Eastern countries through the Strait of Hormuz.

(ii) Cargo shipping through the Strait has been affected due to the Iran-US-Israel war.

(iii) 24-hour control room:

- The Union Petroleum Ministry has set up a control room that can operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to continuously monitor the supply and stock situation of petroleum products in the country. At present, India has a comfortable amount of crude oil reserves.
- Based on continuous monitoring, the Central Government will take gradual steps to further mitigate the situation, if necessary, he said.

(iv) For 6 to 8 weeks:-

A Union Petroleum Ministry official said in this regard:

- India has sufficient crude oil and fuel reserves to meet the domestic requirements of petrol, diesel and other fuels for 6 to 8 weeks.

10. The Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin inaugurated the newly established Sports Medicine Department at Omandurar Government Multipurpose Hospital, Chennai.

(i) It has been informed that it will function as a specialized high-level center for the treatment of injuries suffered by athletes.

(ii) The Tamil Nadu Government has announced that a Sports Medicine and Arthroscopy Center will be set up at Omandurar Government Hospital at a cost of Rs.9 crore.

(iii) A robotic surgery center was started at Omandurar Multipurpose Hospital 3 years ago at a cost of Rs.

34.60 crore.

11. Historic first-time victory of the Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) cricket team in the Ranji Trophy.

(i) A Historic Milestone

- For the first time in its history, the Jammu & Kashmir team won the Ranji Trophy by defeating the 8-time champion, Karnataka.
- The tournament began on October 15, 2025, with 38 teams participating nationwide.
- The final match took place from February 24 to 28, 2026, at Hubballi, Karnataka. J&K secured the win based on their first-innings lead.

(ii) The Long Journey to Success (1960–2026)

- The J&K team played its first Ranji match on January 15, 1960, against East Punjab in Jalandhar, resulting in a loss.
- It took 22 years for the team to record its first win, which occurred in 1982.
- In 66 years, the team reached the quarterfinals only three times (2013–14, 2019–20, and 2024–25).
- In this winning season, J&K defeated powerhouse teams like Delhi, Hyderabad, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh, before beating Bengal in the semi-finals.

(iii) Overcoming Elite Competition

- In the final, J&K faced a formidable Karnataka side featuring Indian national players such as KL Rahul, Mayank Agarwal, Devdutt Padikkal, Karun Nair, and Prasidh Krishna.

(iv) Key Performers and Statistics

- Aqib Nabi: Named Player of the Series for taking 60 wickets in 10 matches at a remarkable average of 12.57.
- Batting Leaders: Abdul Samad scored a total of 748 runs, while 41-year-old Captain Parvez Rasool contributed 637 runs.
- Final Match Heroes: Centurions in the final included Subham Pundir (121), Kamran Iqbal (160 not out), and Sahil Lotra (101 not out).
- Bowling Support: Sunil Kumar took 31 wickets across 9 matches.

(v) Socio-Political and Geographical Context

- The victory is significant because it was achieved despite 40 years of unrest and terrorism, geographical barriers (mountains and valleys), and a lack of basic sporting infrastructure.

(vi) Broader Impact and Future Outlook

- Youth Inspiration: The victory will increase interest in sports in J&K, potentially steering youth away from the path of terrorism.
- A healthy trend in Indian cricket where traditional giants like Mumbai and Delhi are being challenged by rising teams like Gujarat, Vidarbha, Saurashtra, and now J&K.
- The State Government and BCCI should be urged to provide better facilities and training to capitalize on this historic momentum.