

April 7, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla rejected the notice submitted by opposition parties—including the Congress—in the Lok Sabha regarding a resolution seeking the removal of India's Chief Election Commissioner, Gyanesh Kumar.

(i) In connection with this same issue, Rajya Sabha Chairman C.P. Radhakrishnan issued an order rejecting a separate notice submitted in the Upper House.

(ii) Following the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in various states—including West Bengal—the names of hundreds of thousands of voters were deleted. Opposition parties had been leveling severe allegations against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, accusing him of functioning under the control of the Central BJP Government regarding various issues, including the SIR process.

(iii) Consequently, seeking to move a resolution for his removal from office, 130 MPs in the Lok Sabha and 63 MPs in the Rajya Sabha signed and submitted notices in both Houses of Parliament on March 12.

(iv) The opposition parties leveled seven key allegations against Gyanesh Kumar, accusing him of failing to uphold the independence and constitutional integrity of the Election Commission and of functioning under the dominance of the Executive branch of the Government. Against this backdrop, the notices seeking a resolution for Gyanesh Kumar's removal have been rejected in both Houses. Both Houses have issued separate explanations regarding this matter.

(v) Lok Sabha's Explanation:

- In a press note issued by Lok Sabha Secretary Utpal Kumar Singh, it was stated: "130 MPs submitted a notice to the Lok Sabha Speaker seeking a resolution for the removal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar. All the issues cited by the MPs in that notice were carefully evaluated." Subsequently, it was reported that the Chairman of the House, exercising his powers under Section 3 of the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, rejected the notice regarding the removal of the Chief Election Commissioner.

(vi) Rajya Sabha Clarification:

- In a press release issued by the Secretary-General of the Rajya Sabha, Pramod Chandra Mody, it was stated that "the Chairman of the House, exercising his powers under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, rejected the notice submitted by 63 Members of Parliament on March 12 regarding a resolution seeking the removal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar."

2. In the Sathankulam father-son murder case, the Madurai District Court delivered a verdict sentencing nine individuals—including a Police Inspector—to death.

(i) Jeyaraj (58), a merchant from Sathankulam in the Thoothukudi district, and his son Bennix (31) were the victims in this case. During the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020, they kept their mobile phone shop open beyond the permitted hours. Consequently, the Sathankulam police took them to the police station for questioning and assaulted them. Both men sustained severe injuries in the attack and subsequently died.

(ii) This marks the first instance in the history of Tamil Nadu where police personnel found guilty in a custodial death case have been sentenced to death. The lawyers who represented the case confirmed



this fact. After delivering the verdict sentencing the police personnel to death, Judge Muthukumaran—before rising from his seat—broke the nib of his pen by pressing it against the table.

3. Alexander Leonov (74), a renowned Russian missile scientist who played a pivotal role in the development of the BrahMos missile—a joint India-Russia venture—has passed away.

(i) Leonov served as both the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chief Designer of 'NPO Mash', Russia's leading defense enterprise.

(ii) He played a significant role in the development of state-of-the-art missiles, including the 'Zircon' hypersonic missile and the 'P-800 Oniks'.

(iii) Notably, Leonov served as the backbone of the BrahMos missile project—a name derived by combining the names of India's Brahmaputra River and Russia's Moskva River. Developed under his technical guidance, the BrahMos missile is today regarded as the world's fastest supersonic missile.

(iv) The contribution of BrahMos missiles to India's defense forces is immense. During 'Operation Sindoor', the Indian Air Force utilized this missile to neutralize key Pakistani airbases. Capable of striking targets with precision up to a range of 800 km, this missile currently stands as a formidable pillar of India's air defense.

4. Due to a new legislative amendment aimed at increasing manpower in Germany's military service, it has become mandatory for men aged between 17 and 45 to obtain prior permission before staying abroad for more than three months.

(i) In Germany—the most populous nation within the European Union—this regulation, which impacts millions of men, recently came to light through a report published in a local daily newspaper, sparking a major debate.

(ii) Currently, military service in Germany operates on a voluntary basis. However, in light of escalating war tensions with Russia and with the aim of meeting NATO objectives, the German Government plans to increase the size of its defense forces to 260,000 personnel by 2035.

(iii) Against this backdrop, opposition parties have severely criticized the new law, arguing that it creates unnecessary administrative complications. The German Ministry of Defense, however, has clarified that this data registration system is essential to ensure the availability of accurate information regarding individuals staying abroad during times of emergency.

(iv) Speaking further on the matter, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Defense stated, "The Ministry is currently working intensively to avoid unnecessary procedural hurdles and to formulate appropriate regulations for specific categories of individuals who may be eligible for exemptions."

(v) It is noteworthy that German Prime Minister Friedrich Merz had previously urged military commanders to rapidly bolster the nation's self-reliance in defense, rather than relying solely on the United States.

5. As a measles outbreak spreads rapidly in neighboring Bangladesh, the Government has launched an emergency vaccination drive aimed at inoculating over one million children.

(i) More than 7,500 people across the country have been infected by the disease. While 17 deaths have been officially confirmed so far, it is feared that another 113 deaths may have occurred under suspicious circumstances.

(ii) In collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF, the first phase of this vaccination campaign has been launched in 18 high-risk districts. Priority is being given to children aged between 6 months and 5 years who have missed their routine immunization shots.

6. Vinay Muraleedhar Tonse has assumed charge as the new Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the private sector lender, YES Bank.

(i) The tenure of the bank's former CEO, Prashant Kumar, concluded on April 5th. Following this, the bank's management has announced that Vinay Tonse, who has stepped into this role, will serve in this position for the next three years.

7. 'Valura AI'—an AI-driven global investment platform headquartered in the UAE—has onboarded over 1,000 financial advisors prior to the official launch of its services in India.

(i) This group comprises independent financial advisors, registered investment experts, and chartered accountants. Through this initiative, the platform has set a target to manage investments exceeding ₹3,000 crore over the next 18 months.

(ii) Through this platform, investors can invest in over 100,000 stocks and bonds across the globe. In the last financial year, overseas investments by Indians surged by 67 percent, reaching \$4.16 billion. Against this backdrop, the entry of Valura assumes significant importance.

8. Gilbertson Sangma (70), a former player of the Indian national football team and a figure described as the "Pele of Assam," passed away recently.

9. Jessica Pegula –American professional Tennis player.

10. At the Asian Wrestling Championships currently underway in Kyrgyzstan, India's Lalit has advanced to the final round.

11. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman stated that India possesses the fiscal space necessary to provide assistance to sectors adversely affected by tensions in West Asia.

(i) In Mumbai, the Monetary Policy Committee—led by Reserve Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra—is scheduled to announce its decision regarding interest rates for banks on Wednesday (April 8). Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman made these remarks amidst expectations that there would be no changes to the interest rates set during the previous review. Speaking on this subject at an event organized by the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP) in Delhi, she further elaborated:

- Compared to the previous year, the current year has presented a diverse array of economic challenges. The tensions in West Asia have transcended regional boundaries, triggering various ripple effects that impact global energy markets and pave the way for a new global order.
- Economies across various nations worldwide are currently grappling with extraordinary circumstances. Public debt levels have surged manifold.
- However, in India, the Debt-to-GDP ratio stands at 81 percent. When compared to other major economies—with the exception of Germany—this represents a remarkably low Debt-to-GDP ratio.

(ii) Debt-to-GDP Ratio Projected at 50% by 2030:

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has projected that by 2030, the Debt-to-GDP ratios of

nations such as China, the United States, and Germany are likely to deteriorate further; conversely, the IMF has indicated that in India alone, this ratio is expected to decline to 75.8 percent.

- Thanks to the concerted efforts of the Central Government, the fiscal deficit has been brought down to 4.4 percent.
- Various initiatives are currently underway to reduce the debt-to-GDP ratio to 50 percent by 2030–31.
- The economies of several nations are currently in decline due to ineffective fiscal management. In our country, however, the fiscal environment remains robust enough to provide assistance to sectors adversely affected by the tensions in West Asia.

(iii) Curbing Price Rises:

- The Central Government is well-positioned to extend support to affected sectors through measures such as strategic capital investment management and interest rate reductions facilitated by the Reserve Bank.
- He cited as an example the measures undertaken to ensure that price hikes—triggered by the tensions in West Asia—do not adversely impact the common man; these measures include the reduction of excise duties levied on petrol and diesel, as well as the granting of excise duty exemptions for petrochemical products.

12. The Indian Army released a 50-page report outlining technical guidelines for small unmanned aerial vehicles (drones).

- Against the backdrop of evolving warfare paradigms globally—exemplified by conflicts such as the Russia-Ukraine war and the tensions in West Asia—the report underscored the critical importance and technological advancements of unmanned aerial systems.
- Furthermore, the report features information on 30 distinct types of small unmanned aerial systems, categorized across five key domains: surveillance, munitions, air defense, special operations, and logistics.
- Senior officials—including Rahul RC Singh, Deputy Chief of the Indian Army (Capability Development and Sustainment), and C.S. Mann, Additional Director General of the Army Design Bureau—participated in the report's launch ceremony held in Delhi. Titled "Indian Army Guidelines for Small Unmanned Aerial Systems and Munitions," the event was also attended by representatives from various organizations, including the Drone Federation of India, the Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers, and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

13. The Central Government has imposed restrictions on the export of eco-friendly wood logs used as a substitute for firewood.

(i) Previously, no restrictions were imposed on the export of wood products. However, following difficulties in the availability of cooking gas (LPG) caused by the conflict in West Asia, many restaurants were compelled to resort to using firewood.

(ii) Against this backdrop, the Central Government has imposed restrictions on the export of eco-friendly wood logs that serve as a substitute for firewood. Consequently, obtaining permission or a license from the Government is now mandatory for exporting these materials.

(iii) At the same time, the Central Government has relaxed the restrictions previously imposed on the

export of sawdust, wood blocks, and wood chips. A press release issued by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)—which functions under the Union Ministry of Commerce—states that the export of these materials will be permitted only under specific, defined authorizations.

14. The Supreme Court has ordered the Union Home Secretary to appear in person on Tuesday (April 7) regarding the scheme for installing surveillance cameras (CCTV) in police stations.

(i) The Supreme Court has taken “suo motu” cognizance of the issue concerning the inadequate number of CCTV cameras in police stations across the country, as well as their improper functioning. This matter came up for hearing before a bench comprising Supreme Court Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta.

(ii) During the proceedings, the Justices raised queries regarding media reports stating that the Central Government had issued an advisory to remove CCTV cameras manufactured by a Chinese company—which had been installed in various locations—citing national security concerns.

(iii) Responding on behalf of the Central Government, Additional Solicitor General Raja Thakare stated, “The Central Government has not formally issued any order directing the removal of CCTV cameras.”

(iv) Senior Advocate Siddhartha Dave, who has been appointed as “Amicus Curiae” (friend of the court) to assist the Supreme Court in this case, observed, “CCTV cameras have been installed in police stations across most states; among them, Kerala has performed exceptionally well.”

(v) Upon hearing this, the Bench of Justices ordered the Union Home Secretary to appear in person before the Supreme Court.

15. Custodial torture and the Sathankulam case :-

(i) Historical and Statistical Reality (2010–2021)

- Legislative Failure (2010): A bill to prevent torture was passed by the Lok Sabha in 2010 but lapsed because it was never discussed in the Rajya Sabha.
- Reports submitted to Parliament in 2021 revealed that 11,419 deaths occurred in police custody between 2016–17 and 2020–21, averaging five deaths every single day across India.
- The Law Commission of India prepared a draft bill to prevent torture in 2017, but it remains pending in the Law Ministry.
- Although India joined the UN Convention against Torture in 1997, it has not yet passed the domestic legislation required to fully implement it.

(ii) The Sathankulam Case (June 2020)

- The Incident: Jayaraj (58) and his son Bennix (31) were taken to the Sathankulam police station for keeping their mobile shop open beyond allowed COVID-19 lockdown hours.
- Custodial Violence: The father and son were subjected to extreme physical torture throughout the night inside the station, leading to their deaths shortly after being remanded to judicial custody.
- Accused Personnel: Initially, 10 police officers were arrested, including Inspector Sridhar and Sub-inspectors Balakrishnan and Raghu Ganesh.

(iii) Judicial Verdict and Sentencing (March–April 2026)

- The Conviction (March 23, 2026): The Madurai First Additional Sessions Court found nine police officers guilty of the murders.
- The Death Sentence (April 6, 2026): For the first time in Tamil Nadu's history, a court awarded the death penalty to all nine convicted police officers for custodial murder.
- Judge Muthukumaran described the case as "rarest of rare," noting that the police—who are meant to protect the public—acted like "fence grazing the crop".
- The court imposed a fine of ₹1.40 crore on the convicted officers, to be paid to the victims' family. If unpaid, the Government is ordered to seize the officers' assets.

(iv) Continuing Patterns of Violence (2023–2025)

- Ambasamudram (2023): An ASP was accused of using pliers to pull out the teeth of individuals brought to the station for investigation.
- Sivaganga (June 2025): A 29-year-old youth named Ajit Kumar died in custody after being picked up on theft charges that were later proven to be false.

(v) Government Steps and Infrastructure Mandates

- CCTV Implementation: The Supreme Court previously ordered the installation of CCTV cameras in all police stations to monitor conduct.
- Recent Scrutiny (April 2026): On April 7, 2026, the Supreme Court ordered the Union Home Secretary to appear personally to explain why many station cameras are either missing or non-functional.
- Judicial Oversight: The Sathankulam case was monitored directly by the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court, which ensured the case was not "buried" along with the victims.

(vi) Analysis of Institutional Gaps

- The "Silent" Safeguards: The Judicial Magistrate and the Medical Officer both failed in their duty to record the visible injuries on the victims before they were sent to jail.
- Lack of Definition: The Indian Penal Code (IPC) Sections 330 and 331 deal only with "voluntarily causing hurt to extort confession," but do not provide a broad legal definition of "torture" as an independent crime.
- The "Police Station" Culture: As long as police officers do not face personal legal accountability under a specific anti-torture law, they will continue to ignore Supreme Court guidelines regarding the treatment of detainees.

16. Historical evolution of voting rights and current political landscape in Tamil Nadu.

(i) Historical Evolution of Voting Rights

- Ancient Roots: The origins of voting in Tamil Nadu can be traced back to the "Kuda Olai" (pot-ticket) system used in ancient times.
- Direct elections were first established in India in 1920 following the Montagu-Chelmsford recommendations.
- At that time, voting was a privilege reserved for the wealthy and property owners; women were initially excluded from both voting and contesting.
- The voting age was reduced from 21 to 18 based on the recommendations of the V.M. Tarkunde Committee. This was enacted through the 61st Constitutional Amendment Act of 1988, which officially came into effect on March 28, 1989.

(ii) Global Comparison of Voting Ages :-

- 16 Years: Argentina, Cuba, and Ecuador.
- 17 Years: East Timor, Greece, and Indonesia.
- 20 Years: Taiwan.
- 21 Years: Lebanon, Kuwait, and Oman.
- 25 Years: The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has the highest voting age in the world.

(iii) The "Power of Youth" in the 2026 Tamil Nadu Elections

- Approximately 1.18 crore voters in Tamil Nadu are under the age of 30.
- First-Time Voters: There are 12,51,742 voters in the 18–19 age group.
- Young voters (ages 18–29) constitute 21% of the total electorate, meaning one in every five voters is a young person.
- Following a special intensive revision, approximately 73 lakh names were removed from the rolls to ensure accuracy.

(iv) 2026 Election Logistics and Nominations

- The filing of nominations for the 234 constituencies in Tamil Nadu concluded on Monday, April 6, 2026.
- Over 7,000 nominations were filed across the state.
- Karur recorded the highest number of nominations with 108 candidates, followed by Tondamuthur (77) and Perambur (66).
- Scrutiny of nominations is scheduled for April 7, with the final list of candidates to be released on April 9 after the withdrawal period.

(v) Political Strategies and Trends

- The "Same Name" Confusion: The common election tactic where independent candidates with the same name as popular leaders are fielded to confuse voters.
 - Current Instance: In the Perambur and Trichy East constituencies, multiple candidates named "Vijay" or "Joseph" have filed nominations to counter the influence of actor-turned-politician Vijay.
 - Safeguard: To prevent this, the Election Commission now includes candidate photographs on the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).
- "One Nation, One Election": Prime Minister Modi highlighted that the Government is making significant progress toward implementing 'One Nation, One Election' and the Uniform Civil Code, with 2029 as a potential implementation target.
- Youth in Politics: Political parties must overcome their "fear of defeat" and provide more opportunities for new faces and youth in elections rather than repeatedly fielding experienced veterans.