

May 7, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. North Korea has amended its Constitution to reaffirm its policy that it will never reunify with South Korea under any circumstances.

(i) North Korean leader Kim Jong Un had earlier declared that the two Koreas, located on the Korean Peninsula, are separate sovereign nations and that South Korea is the country's "primary enemy." This position has now been formally incorporated into the Constitution. Reports indicate that the North Korean Parliament has also approved the amendment.

(ii) According to the revised Constitution, North Korea's territory is defined as being bordered by China and Russia to the north and South Korea to the south.

(iii) Previously, the entire Korean Peninsula had been regarded as one nation. For the first time, North Korea has now officially identified and defined its southern border separately.

(iv) However, due to ongoing maritime boundary disputes, the amendment does not provide any clear explanation regarding the disputed boundary lines in the Yellow Sea between Japan and the Korean Peninsula.

(v) Through this Constitutional amendment, Kim Jong Un's authority has been further strengthened. His position has now been redesignated as the "Head of State." As a result, he is officially recognized as North Korea's formal representative at the international level.

(vi) In the section related to national security, North Korea is described as a "responsible nuclear weapons state." The Constitution states that nuclear weapons development will continue in order to protect the people, safeguard development rights, prevent war, and maintain regional as well as global peace.

(vii) Furthermore, it has been legally established that the authority to command and control all of the country's nuclear armed forces will rest solely with Kim Jong Un.

2. More than 35 countries will participate in the Commonwealth Table Tennis Championships, which is scheduled to be held in New Delhi from July 27 to August 2.

3. India's Ministry of Sports has once again reaffirmed that the ban on bilateral sporting events between India and Pakistan will continue. However, it clarified that there is no restriction on Pakistani athletes travelling to India for international tournaments and competitions.

4. India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has stated that India-Suriname relations are rooted in family ties.

(i) As part of his nine-day visit to the Caribbean nations of Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago, Jaishankar first visited Jamaica and later arrived in Suriname.

(ii) In an article written for a newspaper in Suriname, he noted that India-Suriname relations have expanded into a strong and multifaceted partnership covering infrastructure, trade, and cultural cooperation.

(iii) Several development projects in Suriname have been completed with Indian financial assistance. To support Suriname's food security, India supplied 425 metric tonnes of food materials worth 10 million US

dollars (approximately ₹94.32 crore) last year.

(iv) India and Suriname have shared similar positions on several international issues, including reforms in the United Nations Security Council.

5. An unprecedented political situation has emerged in the history of Tamil Nadu politics. Even during the first Legislative Assembly, when the Congress party did not have an absolute majority, such a hung situation had not arisen.

(i) In 1952, even though the Congress lacked a clear majority, it was able to prove its strength by bringing back C. Rajagopalachari (Rajaji), who had retired after serving as Governor-General of India and was staying at the residence of his friend "Rasikamani" T.K. Chidambaranatha Mudaliar in Courtallam, and appointing him as Chief Minister.

(ii) In 1987, after the death of then Chief Minister M. G. Ramachandran, a split occurred within the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK). Even then, a ministry was formed under the leadership of V. N. Janaki. However, since her Government failed to prove its majority, the administration collapsed and President's Rule was imposed. At that time, both the Congress party and the opposition Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) voted against the Janaki Government, preventing it from securing a majority.

(iii) Actor Vijay's Tamilaga Vetti Kazhagam, despite contesting the elections for the first time and securing 34.92% of the vote share with widespread public support, could not achieve the kind of absolute majority victory that the DMK under C. N. Annadurai achieved in 1967 or the AIADMK under M.G. Ramachandran achieved in 1977. As no party has secured an outright majority, Tamil Nadu is facing a hung Assembly for the first time.

(iv) What can the Governor do?

- If any party or alliance has a clear majority, under Article 164(1) of the Constitution, the Governor must appoint its leader as Chief Minister and, based on the Chief Minister's advice, appoint the other ministers.
- Only when no party or alliance has a majority does the Governor have discretionary powers to make decisions independently.
- If the Governor believes that a party or alliance leader can prove majority support in the Assembly, he may appoint that leader as Chief Minister even without an outright majority and provide time to prove majority support on the Assembly floor.
- In the absence of a clear majority for anyone, constitutional conventions, precedents, and the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission suggest that the Governor should first invite the single largest party or alliance to attempt to prove its majority. However, if this could encourage horse-trading or party defections, the Governor also has the authority to avoid such a course.
- The Governor's primary constitutional duty is to ensure a stable Government. Accordingly, the Constitution gives the Governor the authority to make decisions toward that objective. If the Governor believes that a stable administration can be formed under a person who is not a member of the Legislative Assembly and does not belong to any political party, he may appoint that individual as Chief Minister and grant time to prove majority support.

6. Dissolution of the 16th Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly

Governor R. V. Arlekar approved the dissolution of the 16th Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly. The official

statement issued by the Raj Bhavan said:

(i) Tamil Nadu Governor R. V. Arlekar has ordered the dissolution of the 16th Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly with effect from May 5, 2026.

(ii) Term ending on May 10: Elections to the 16th Legislative Assembly were held on April 6, 2021. The Cabinet led by M. K. Stalin assumed office on May 7, 2021. Subsequently, the first session of the 16th Legislative Assembly convened on May 11, 2021.

(iii) Accordingly, the tenure of the Assembly ends on May 10, 2026. Since members have now been elected to the 17th Legislative Assembly, the Governor has issued orders dissolving the 16th Assembly.

7. India–Vietnam Bilateral Trade Target Set at 25 Billion Dollars by 2030

India and Vietnam have set a target of increasing bilateral trade to 25 billion US dollars (approximately ₹2.36 lakh crore) by 2030.

(i) This important decision was taken during extensive talks held in Delhi between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Vietnamese President Tô Lâm.

(ii) In addition, 13 agreements were signed to strengthen bilateral cooperation in areas including rare earth minerals, pharmaceuticals, education, banking, culture, and digital transactions.

(iii) Vietnamese President Tô Lâm arrived in India on a three-day state visit. Having assumed office as President in April, this is his first state visit to India.

(iv) During his meeting with Prime Minister Modi in Delhi, the two leaders held bilateral discussions focusing on strengthening ties in trade, defence, rare earth minerals, and other sectors amid ongoing geopolitical tensions.

(v) 13 Agreements Signed:

- Against the backdrop of China's attempts to assert dominance in the South China Sea, the two leaders also discussed developments in the Indo-Pacific region and agreed to continue contributing to the rule of law, peace, stability, and prosperity in the region.
- Following the talks, 13 agreements were signed in the presence of the two leaders to enhance cooperation in digital transactions, rare earth minerals, pharmaceuticals, education, banking, culture, and traditional medicine.

(vi) Comprehensive Strategic Partnership:

Later, addressing reporters jointly, Prime Minister Modi said:

- Vietnam is a key pillar in India's "Act East Policy."
- Ten years ago, Vietnam became India's first comprehensive strategic partner from the ASEAN, and since then bilateral relations have expanded rapidly and extensively.
- Building on this strong foundation, bilateral ties have now been elevated to an advanced comprehensive strategic partnership. This will take cooperation in defence, sustainable development, supply-chain resilience, culture, transport, and capacity building to new heights.

(vii) 25 Billion Dollar Trade Target:

- Bilateral trade has doubled over the last ten years to reach 16 billion dollars. A target has now been set to raise it to 25 billion dollars by 2030.
- Under the Memorandum of Understanding signed in the pharmaceutical sector, Indian traditional medicines will now become available in Vietnam.
- India and ASEAN have also agreed to update their trade agreement by the end of this year. This will make exports of Indian agricultural products and seafood to Vietnam easier.
- Vietnamese people will soon be able to enjoy Indian grapes and pomegranates.
- Cooperation in rare minerals and the energy sector will strengthen the economic security of both nations, Modi said.

(viii) Linking Digital Payment Platforms

- To strengthen bilateral financial connectivity, India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and Vietnam's fast payment system will soon be integrated.
- Prime Minister Modi thanked Vietnam for strongly condemning the Pahalgam terrorist attack and for standing with India in counter-terrorism efforts.
- He added that despite global instability and economic challenges, India and Vietnam are among the world's fastest-growing economies due to talent, good governance, and economic reforms.

8. Analysis of the current state of school education in India, specifically Tamil Nadu

- Across India, student enrollment in Government schools is decreasing while Private school enrollment is rising. Many Government schools are being reduced to single-teacher or two-teacher institutions, and some are closing entirely.
- According to Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, 89,441 Government schools have closed nationwide. In Tamil Nadu specifically, 210 Government schools closed during the 2025–26 academic year, and in 2024–25, 1,204 schools reported zero student enrollment.
- A major cause for the shift to private schools is the lack of basic facilities in Government institutions, including inadequate buildings, drinking water, desks, chairs, electricity, fans, and toilets.
- The Funding Gap: India's investment in education per student is significantly lower than its neighbors. India spends only \$260 per student annually, compared to \$2,600 in Bangladesh and \$17,000 in China.
- There is a noted decline in language skills; students in Tamil medium struggle with English, while those in English medium struggle with Tamil grammar and spelling.

(i) Comparative Statistics: Tamil Nadu vs. Global Standards

- School Hours (Daily):
 - Tamil Nadu: Significantly shorter than international peers.
 - Thailand: 9.5 hours.
 - Cambodia: 8 hours 45 minutes.
 - China: 12 to 16 hours.
 - South Korea: 10 to 14 hours.
- Working Days (Annually):
 - Tamil Nadu: 200 days.
 - China: 240 days.
 - South Korea: 220 days.

- In India's economic analysis reports, Kerala ranks first in school education performance, while Tamil Nadu ranks second.

(ii) Steps for Success and Recommendations

- Kindergarten and nursery classes should be started in all Government schools to attract students early.
- Appointing permanent teachers instead of temporary staff is essential for increasing student numbers and maintaining quality.
- The quality of teacher training colleges must be improved and monitored to prevent irregularities. Teachers already in service should receive continuous refresher training to enhance their teaching skills.
- The Government must significantly increase the budgetary allocation for education to improve infrastructure and match global spending standards.
- The curriculum should focus on teaching and protecting the regional language, history, and culture for the next generation.
- The Government and teachers must work together to rebuild parent confidence in the quality of Government schools. It notes that high achievers, from APJ Abdul Kalam to Sundar Pichai, were products of the Government school system.

9. Analysis regarding the ethics and credibility of organ donation following brain death in India.

(i) There is a growing awareness across India—regardless of wealth, education, or location—about donating the organs of individuals who have suffered brain death. Statistics show that most brain death cases occur due to road accidents.

(ii) While families donate organs with the noble intention of saving lives, there is rising criticism and doubt regarding whether these organs are actually provided as a free service to the needy or if they are being commercialized by private hospitals.

(iii) Legal Challenge from Kerala: A 78-year-old doctor from Kerala filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in 2017, alleging that some hospitals declare patients brain dead prematurely just to harvest organs. After the Kerala High Court dismissed the case based on government assurances, the doctor appealed to the Supreme Court.

- Supreme Court Directions (May 2, 2026):
 - A bench comprising Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Sandeep Mehta issued a significant order regarding brain death certification.
 - The Court directed the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in New Delhi to form a committee of three experts in neurology or neurosurgery.
 - The committee must evaluate if more advanced methods, such as Cerebral Angiogram and Electroencephalogram, should replace the current Apnea test to determine brain death more reliably.
 - The committee is required to submit its recommendations within two months, and the next hearing is scheduled for July 21.

(iv) Issues with the Present System: The current Apnea test is often unreliable, and there is frequently no evidence that the test was even conducted. While Government hospitals video record the brain death certification process, private hospitals generally do not, leading to a lack of transparency.

(v) National and Global Statistics:

- Global Rank: India currently ranks 3rd in the world for organ transplant surgeries.
- National Rank: At the national level, Tamil Nadu ranks 1st in organ donation and transplants.

(vi) Steps and Suggestions for the Government:

- The Central Government provides crores of rupees to both Government and Private hospitals to promote organ donation awareness.
- The State and Central Governments have a responsibility to ensure that donated organs are distributed strictly according to the registration waiting list.
- To maintain public trust, the Government must ensure total transparency so that the selfless act of donor families is not exploited for profit.

