

May 21, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. The Tamil Nadu Cabinet led by Chief Minister Vijay is being expanded. The swearing-in ceremony for the new ministers will be held at 10 a.m. at the Raj Bhavan. Tamilaga Vetti Kazhagam (TVK) MLAs and Congress MLAs Rajesh Kumar and P. Viswanathan will be sworn in as ministers by Governor R. N. Ravi. This is the first cabinet expansion to take place 10 days after the TVK government assumed office.

(i) Coalition Government in Tamil Nadu for the first time

- For the first time in Tamil Nadu's political history, a Coalition Government has been formed. That is, for the first time, a party supporting the Government has been given representation in the Cabinet.
- Earlier too, Governments had been formed in Tamil Nadu without a single party securing a majority, with support from alliance parties. However, alliance parties were never given cabinet positions. This is the first time a supporting party (Congress) is entering the cabinet.
- Significantly, this is happening on the 35th death anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi (May 21).

(ii) How many ministers can there be?

- According to Article 164(1A) of the Constitution of India, the number of ministers cannot exceed 15% of the total strength of the Legislative Assembly.
- Accordingly, in the 234-member Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly, the maximum number of ministers allowed is 35.

2. Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping expressed concern in a joint statement that some countries are trying to dominate world affairs with a colonial mindset, but have failed. At the same time, they warned that divisions within the international community could lead to a return of "law of the jungle" conditions globally.

(i) Just a week after U.S. President Donald Trump visited China, Putin arrived in China on a two-day state visit.

(ii) In this context, bilateral talks were held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, the Chinese capital. Xi Jinping accorded Putin a grand ceremonial welcome with full military honors.

(iii) The two leaders discussed strengthening strategic and political ties. Both countries agreed to cooperate in various sectors ranging from artificial intelligence to wildlife conservation. Following the meeting, the two leaders issued a joint statement indirectly criticizing the approach of the United States.

(iv) Russia and China strongly criticized Donald Trump's "Golden Dome" missile defense project and U.S. nuclear policies. They warned that such actions by the United States threaten global stability.

(v) The two leaders also pointed out that the Trump administration failed to renew the nuclear arms reduction treaty with Russia, thereby endangering international security. They condemned U.S. involvement in international issues, including matters related to Iran, and accused both the United States and Israel of violating international law.

(vi) No agreement on gas pipeline project

- Although both countries described their relationship as a “friendship without limits,” a major gas deal long expected by Russia was not signed during the visit.
- Russia has been trying for years to export gas to China through the “Power of Siberia-2” gas pipeline project.
- While officials said some common understanding had been reached, significant disagreements reportedly remain regarding pricing and contract terms.

3.The Nepalese Government has announced relief measures for landless settlers who had been living in encroachments removed from the banks of the Bagmati River and other public places in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal.

(i) According to a cabinet decision taken under the leadership of Prime Minister Balen Shah, families evicted from encroachments will receive Rs.15,000 per month for the next three months toward temporary accommodation expenses. After verification of details, they will also receive a one-time rehabilitation grant of Rs. 25,000.

(ii) The anti-encroachment drive, which began last month, has affected around 15,000 people from approximately 2,600 families. The matter is currently being heard in Nepal’s Supreme Court.

4.Hockey coach Baldev Singh will be honored with the Padma Shri award by President Droupadi Murmu on May 25, officials said.

5.To celebrate 100 years of sports cooperation between India and New Zealand, a high-performance rugby training camp involving the national rugby federations of both countries will begin on Thursday in Bhubaneswar and continue for two days.

6.In West Bengal, Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari allocated 25 km of long-pending land to the Border Security Force for fencing along the India-Bangladesh border. He also announced that illegal infiltrators would henceforth be handed over directly to the BSF.

7.The United Nations has projected India’s economic growth at 6.4% this year. Earlier, the UN had estimated the growth rate at 6.6%, but it has now revised it downward. According to a report released by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs:

(i) The West Asian crisis caused by the U.S.-Iran conflict has delivered another shock to the global economy.

(ii) This could slow growth, revive inflationary pressures, and increase uncertainty further.

(iii) Nevertheless, India remains one of the fastest-growing major economies in the world.

(iv) India’s economy grew by 7.5% last year, while this year it is expected to grow by 6.4%. Growth is projected to rise to 6.6% next year.

(v) Meanwhile, the global economy is expected to grow by 2.5% this year, which is 0.2 percentage points lower than the estimate made in January.

8.The Union Rural Development Ministry informed the Parliamentary Standing Committee that 25 states have already allocated funds for the 125-day employment scheme.

(i) The VB-G RAM G, introduced as a replacement for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (100-day work scheme), was passed in Parliament last December. After receiving assent from President Droupadi Murmu, the bill became law.

(ii) According to the new law:

- The 100-day employment scheme has been extended to 125 days.
- In states and Union Territories with legislatures, the Central Government will bear 60% of the scheme cost and the states/UTs will bear 40%.
- In northeastern states and the Himalayan regions of Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, the Centre will bear 90% of the cost and the states will bear 10%.

(iii) A meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj was held in New Delhi on Wednesday. Rural Development Secretary Rohit Kansal briefed the committee headed by Congress MP Saptagiri Ulaka regarding implementation of the scheme.

(iv) He reportedly stated that the 125-day employment scheme would come into effect from July 1. Twenty-five states have already allocated funds, and all administrative and policy measures required for implementation have been completed.

(v) New smart job cards will replace the existing cards issued under the 100-day scheme. To ensure transparency and accountability, these cards will include facial recognition features.

(vi) Central government's share: Rs. 95,692 crore. The scheme is estimated to require Rs.1.51 lakh crore annually for wages, materials, and administrative expenses. This includes the share of state governments. Of the total amount, the Centre's share is estimated at Rs. 95,692.31 crore.

9. Officials from the Union Health Ministry stated that there are currently no Ebola infections in India. In the eastern regions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 131 people have reportedly died due to the rapidly spreading Ebola outbreak.

10. A joint military exercise involving India, Sri Lanka, and 11 other countries has begun in Meghalaya. According to Defence PRO Lieutenant Colonel Mahender Rawat:

(i) The exercise, named "Pragati 2026," has begun at the Umroi military station in Meghalaya's Ri-Bhoi district.

(ii) The participating countries are India, Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam.

(iii) The two-week exercise will focus on counter-terrorism operations in semi-mountainous and dense forest areas.

(iv) The objective of the exercise is to strengthen defense ties through joint training and cultural exchange.

(v) "PRAGATI" stands for regional militaries cooperating for growth and transformation in the Indian Ocean region. The exercise is being conducted in a spirit of equality, friendship, and mutual respect.

(vi) The exercise also provides an opportunity for professional exchanges, learning from shared



experiences, and building closer military relations.

