



P.L.RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY

Building Bureaucrats Since 2006

July 4, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. Tibetan Rights Activist Dies After Self-Immolation Near UN Headquarters in New York

A Tibetan rights activist who set himself on fire near the headquarters of the United Nations in New York, USA, has died in hospital while undergoing treatment.

- i. The deceased has been identified as Lobka Rangtsen, a Tibetan who worked as an Uber driver in New York. On Thursday evening, he reportedly carried out the act outside the UN headquarters while carrying the Tibetan national flag.
- ii. Since China brought Tibet under its control in 1950, international human rights organizations and exiled Tibetans across the world have continued their struggle against what they describe as China's repressive rule.
- iii. In this context, Tibetans worldwide have strongly opposed China's new ethnic unity law, which came into effect on Wednesday. The law aims to create a single national identity by integrating Tibetans, Uyghurs, and 55 other ethnic minority groups. The United States and the European Union have also expressed concern, as the law grants China legal authority to undertake cross-border actions.
- iv. It is reported that Lobka Rangtsen's self-immolation was a protest against this new Chinese law.
- v. China's Response:
 - Responding to questions from journalists, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun stated that "Tibet has been an integral part of China since ancient times."
 - He further emphasized that Western countries should stop interfering in China's internal affairs by raising ethnic issues.

2. Public Tribute Begins for Former Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei

The body of former Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was killed during the Middle East conflict, was placed for public homage in Tehran from midnight on Thursday.

- i. This marks the formal beginning of a week-long state funeral ceremony. Iranian clerics, senior leaders, Government officials, foreign dignitaries including Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and thousands of members of the public paid their final respects on Friday.
- ii. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed in an airstrike carried out jointly by U.S. and Israeli forces on February 28. His son, Mojtaba Khamenei, who was seriously injured in the same attack, assumed

the position of Supreme Leader but has not yet appeared in public.

- iii. Representing the Government of India, Union Minister of State Pabitra Margherita and Bihar Governor Syed Ata Hasnain attended the funeral and paid their respects.

3. India's Tanvi Khanna won the women's title at the Challenger Squash Tournament held in Mumbai.

4. After eight rounds of the Zagreb Rapid Chess Tournament, India's R. Praggnanandhaa and D. Gukesh were placed in the second and third positions respectively.

5. Time Has Come to Consider a Separate Law for Artificial Intelligence: IT Secretary S. Krishnan Union Information Technology Secretary S. Krishnan has stated that the time has come to examine the possibility of enacting a separate law for Artificial Intelligence (AI).

- i. He said that the Government has so far relied on existing Information Technology regulations and other legal provisions to address issues such as deepfakes, including fake voice recordings, photographs, and videos generated using AI technology.
- ii. He further stated that Union IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and he had already discussed the need to consider framing regulations specifically for AI technologies.
- iii. According to him, the time has probably come to seriously consider a dedicated AI law. Although officials may prepare a draft law, he could not specify when such legislation would come into force.

6. Central Government Orders Removal of Three Chinese Apps Linked to E-Rickshaw Disruptions

The Central Government has directed Google Play Store and Apple App Store to remove three Chinese applications allegedly capable of disabling electric rickshaws.

- i. The applications — Bat-BMS, Laisiji, and Epoch-Eon — were developed in China and were used to monitor battery voltage, current, temperature, and other parameters in electric vehicles through Bluetooth connectivity.
- ii. Recently, videos circulated on social media showing unidentified individuals accessing these applications and using Bluetooth to locate nearby electric rickshaw batteries. The videos demonstrated how the apps could connect to batteries and disable them remotely. They also claimed that the same applications were required to reactivate the disabled batteries.

- iii. Concerns were widely raised that such unauthorized access in internet-connected vehicles could pose significant cybersecurity risks. Following these concerns, the Central Government ordered Google and Apple to immediately remove the three applications from their app stores.

7. India to Oppose U.S. Proposal for Additional 12.5% Tariff on Indian Goods

India's Ministry of Commerce will present its arguments against a proposal by the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) to impose an additional 12.5% tariff on Indian exports during a public hearing scheduled for July 8.

- i. Last month, the USTR proposed imposing the additional tariff on Indian goods exported to the United States under Section 301 of the U.S. Trade Act of 1974.
- ii. The proposal was based on regulations intended to prevent imports into the United States of products manufactured using forced labor. A total of 54 countries, including India, were recommended for the imposition of the tariff.
- iii. Section 301 of the U.S. Trade Act is a powerful trade instrument that allows investigations into foreign trade practices and the imposition of tariffs or other restrictions.
- iv. India's written response to the USTR stated:
 - India's legal framework reflects a carefully designed and progressively implemented approach that combines legally mandated restrictions, enforcement mechanisms, and policy measures aimed at minimizing the risk of forced labor.
 - The USTR's recommendation for additional tariffs overlooks this robust legal framework.

A public hearing on the proposal will be held in Washington, D.C., on July 8. Officials from India's Commerce Ministry, representatives of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), and automobile component manufacturers' associations will present arguments opposing the proposed tariffs.

8. Defence Acquisition Council Approves Procurement of Defence Equipment Worth ₹52,000 Crore

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, has granted approval in principle for the procurement of various defence systems worth ₹52,000 crore.

- i. The approved acquisitions for the Indian Army include:
 - The Akash Tarang electronic warfare system capable of detecting enemy drones through radio frequencies, radar signals, and other electronic emissions;
 - Man-portable anti-armour missile systems;

- Medium-range surface-to-air missile systems;
 - Very short-range air defence systems.
- ii. For the Indian Navy, approvals were granted for:
- Ship-launched drones;
 - Advanced naval mines capable of identifying and destroying enemy vessels based on multiple signatures rather than direct contact;
 - The establishment of a dedicated land-based testing facility for electric propulsion systems used in ships.
- iii. Approval was also granted for the Indian Air Force to procure solar-powered high-altitude long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicles capable of providing surveillance and communication services similar to satellites. The total value of these procurements is estimated at ₹52,000 crore.

9. Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Visit Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand from July 6 to 11

The Ministry of External Affairs announced that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will undertake official visits to Indonesia, Australia, and New Zealand from July 6 to July 11.

- i. According to Secretary (East) Rudrendra Tandon, the Prime Minister will first visit Indonesia, followed by Australia and then New Zealand. He also noted that this will be the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to New Zealand in the past 40 years.
- ii. New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Nixon posted on social media regarding the visit, stating:
- He was pleased to announce Prime Minister Modi's first visit to New Zealand next week.
 - India is one of the world's largest and fastest-growing economies and is of immense importance to New Zealand's economic prosperity.
 - The New Zealand-India Free Trade Agreement signed in April has elevated bilateral relations to a new level. It is expected to create more jobs, boost exports, and strengthen economic growth in New Zealand while opening access to India's market of 1.4 billion people.
 - The agreement seeks to increase bilateral trade in goods and services and encourage investment.
 - It provides 100% duty-free access for Indian exports to New Zealand.
 - For New Zealand, it ensures secure market access to India's rapidly growing economy amid global trade uncertainties.
 - During 2024-25, bilateral trade in goods and services between India and New Zealand amounted to US\$2.4 billion (₹22,843 crore), while merchandise trade alone accounted for US\$1.3 billion (₹12,373 crore).

10. Nearly 91,748 Schoolgirls in Tamil Nadu Benefit from Cervical Cancer Vaccination Programme

The Tamil Nadu Public Health Department has stated that 91,748 schoolgirls have benefited so far under the cervical cancer vaccination programme for adolescent girls.

- i. Cervical cancer is caused by infection with the Human Papillomavirus (HPV). Cancer cells develop in the cervix and may spread to other organs such as the lungs, liver, urinary bladder, and rectum if not detected and treated in time.
- ii. To address this, the previous DMK government allocated ₹38 crore to administer HPV vaccines to girls aged 9 to 14 years. Under this initiative, Tamil Nadu became the first state in India to launch free cervical cancer vaccination programmes for adolescent girls in Tiruvannamalai, Ariyalur, Perambalur, and Dharmapuri districts.
- iii. Accordingly, two doses of the vaccine are being administered to girl students studying in government and government-aided schools.
- iv. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a nationwide programme on February 28 to provide free HPV vaccination to girls below 14 years of age.
- v. Under this programme, the Central Government has supplied 600,000 vaccine doses to Tamil Nadu. Through both schemes, a total of 91,748 beneficiaries have received the vaccine so far. The vaccines are stocked at primary health centres and hospitals and are being administered there.
- vi. Public health officials stated that:
 - The HPV vaccine provides approximately 90% protection against the primary HPV strains responsible for cervical cancer.
 - The vaccine has been approved by the World Health Organization (WHO).
 - No major adverse effects have been observed.
 - Therefore, parents should not hesitate to ensure that their children receive the HPV vaccine.

11. Scientific potential and logistical challenges of establishing human colonies on the Red Planet.

- i. Historical Context of Research
 - For over 20 years, scientists have been rigorously exploring the possibilities of human settlement on Mars.
 - Researchers at a meeting organized by an American Geological Association recently shared significant findings regarding the use of Martian frozen ice to build sustainable habitats.
- ii. Geographical Facts of Mars
 - Mars is the fourth planet from the sun and is Earth's nearest neighbor, located approximately 5.46

crore kilometers away.

- The planet has a very thin atmosphere comprised primarily of carbon dioxide.
- Mars contains an estimated 5 million cubic kilometers of water in the form of frozen ice.
- The planet is known for experiencing frequent and intense dust storms.

iii. Climatic and Scientific Challenges

- Martian temperatures vary wildly, reaching a maximum of 70°F but dropping to lows between -153°F and -225°F.
- Unlike Earth, the Martian atmosphere is incapable of retaining solar heat or blocking dangerous radiation; as soon as the sun sets, the temperature plunges.
- Because the atmosphere cannot deflect solar rays, human habitats must be specifically designed to provide protection from high-energy cosmic radiation.

iv. Proposed Infrastructure and Construction

- To avoid the cost of transporting materials from Earth, scientists propose using frozen ice and Regolith (Martian soil and rock) for construction.
- By mixing Martian ice with substances like "Hydrogel," engineers believe they can create a strong building material that also acts as a radiation shield.
- Plans involve constructing dome-shaped "Igloo" structures made of ice, which would allow natural sunlight to enter through window-like openings.
- The goal is to maintain indoor temperatures at approximately -20°C, utilizing supplemental heaters to make the environment manageable for inhabitants.

v. Feasibility and Economic Factors

- While current technology makes settling on Mars a possibility, the cost would be astronomical, likely running into crores of rupees, making it accessible only to the extremely wealthy.
- Scientists are currently planning for small groups to live there initially to conduct further research on mineral resources and agricultural potential.
- Although Mars presents significant biological and environmental hurdles, scientific advancements are slowly turning the dream of a "City of Ice" into a potential reality.

12. Safety of women in India, with a specific focus on the statistical discrepancies in Tamil Nadu.

i. Global Rankings and Comparative Safety

- Since 2017, Georgetown University (USA) and the Oslo Peace Research Institute (Norway) have jointly analyzed women's welfare and safety across 181 countries.
- In the 2025-26 "Women, Peace and Security Index," India ranks 131st. This represents a decline from

its 128th position in the 2023–24 report.

- The report highlights that neighboring countries, including Bhutan, Nepal, China, and Sri Lanka, offer better safety and welfare for women than India.

ii. National Crime Statistics (2024)

- According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data for 2024, the States and Union Territories with the highest crime rates against women (per 100,000 women) are:
 - New Delhi: 130
 - Telangana: 128
 - Odisha: 118
 - Rajasthan: 106
 - Andhra Pradesh: 95
 - Kerala: 80
- The national average crime rate against women in India is 65.
- Tamil Nadu reports a rate of only 29 crimes per 100,000 women, which is less than half the national average.

iii. The Paradox of Low Crime Rates in Tamil Nadu

- Criminologists suggest that Tamil Nadu's low crime rate is not necessarily an indicator of superior safety but rather a result of police hesitation to register all complaints.
- There is an entrenched fear in the Police Department that registering every crime will lead to public debate and political embarrassment for the ruling Government.
- Police stations often lack the manpower required to conduct full investigations for every complaint received.

vi. Illustrative Case Studies of Systemic Failure

- In a Chennai suburb, a woman's complaint of sexual assault was ignored by an Assistant Inspector who deemed it false. Within a month, two other women went missing in the same area; subsequent investigations revealed they were murdered by a worker who had been assaulting women along that railway track.
- A school girl reported sexual abuse by an orphanage warden to a Government doctor. Despite high-level police involvement, a local investigating officer dismissed the case as false after a perfunctory inquiry with the warden.
- In an engineering college, a student was murdered inside a classroom by a former student. The Madras High Court later criticized the police for not conducting a proper and scientific investigation into the incident.

vii. Inadequate Investigative Oversight

- Senior officials often exert pressure on subordinates to make quick arrests to satisfy public outcry.
- Once an arrest is made, there is often no oversight regarding the quality of the investigation, leading to many criminals being acquitted in court.
- Only effective way to prevent crime is to register every complaint immediately and ensure that every case is followed by a thorough, professional investigation.

13. Transition from the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) to the newly introduced "Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) [VB-G RAM G].

i. Historical Context and Policy Transition

- Effective July 1, 2026, the Central Government replaced the UPA-era MGNREGS with the Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) [VB-G RAM G].
- Historically, the previous scheme (implemented under PM Manmohan Singh) followed a "need-based" approach focused primarily on providing manual labor.
- VB-G RAM G marks a historical shift from merely guaranteeing work to utilizing rural labor for productive and planned national development using modern seed and information technology.

ii. Geographical Implementation and Scope

- The scheme is designed for implementation across all village panchayats in India.
- While non-BJP ruled states like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka have accepted the scheme, some states like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Jharkhand have raised concerns regarding funding ratios and operational pauses.
- Geographical areas suffering from severe groundwater depletion are prioritized, with at least 65% of Central spending allocated to these regions.

iii. Key Features and Target Groups

- VB-G RAM G increases the guaranteed work period to 125 days per year for rural residents.
- The scheme issues special work cards for women living alone, differently-abled persons, those over 60 years old, released bonded laborers, and tribal communities.
- The V-GPP Model: The "Viksit Gram Panchayat Plan (VGPP)" utilizes geospatial information to create specific improvement models for village infrastructure rather than simple wish lists.

iv. Core Themes for Rural Improvement

The scheme focuses on five critical geographical and environmental themes:

1. Water Conservation: Specifically managing groundwater in drought-prone blocks.
2. Rural Infrastructure: Identifying and fixing gaps in public assets.

3. Livelihood Support: Building long-term economic stability for rural families.
4. Disaster Prevention: Strengthening local resilience against natural calamities.
5. Climate Change Resilience: Integrating impact assessments into panchayat planning.

v. Operational and Financial Structure

- The total cost is shared between the Central and State Governments in a 60:40 ratio.
- To prevent labor shortages in farming, the scheme mandates a 60-day pause during peak agricultural seasons such as sowing and harvesting.
- Work must be provided within 14 days of an application; failing this, the State Government is legally required to pay an unemployment allowance.

vi. Conclusion

VB-G RAM G is a constructive advancement. By moving away from a goal-less expenditure of tax money and toward a technologically driven development path, the scheme serves as a foundational pillar for a "Developed India".