



P.L.RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY

Building Bureaucrats Since 2006

August 18, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. The Supreme Court directed Karnataka to continue releasing Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu.
 - i. The Supreme Court also instructed the Karnataka Government to ensure the implementation of the order issued by the Cauvery Water Management Authority in this regard.
2. Chief Minister Joseph Vijay launched the mandatory implementation of online, contactless registration of sale deeds for the first plot in a residential layout and the first house in an apartment complex in Tamil Nadu. The initiative was launched at the Secretariat in Chennai.
 - i. The Registration Department has already introduced a system that enables the public to register documents directly online, with the aim of simplifying the document-registration process. Through this system, people can register their documents online through the Registration Department's website from anywhere and at any time, without having to visit Sub-Registrar Offices in person.
3. More than 2,300 people have so far died from the Ebola outbreak that is spreading rapidly in the Republic of the Congo.
 - i. This has become the worst Ebola outbreak in the country's history in terms of fatalities. It is the 17th Ebola outbreak in the Congo. Previously, the outbreak during 2018–2020 was the deadliest, with 3,481 cases and 2,299 deaths.
4. A total of 143 athletes from 27 countries will participate in the World

Athletics Continental Tour Silver Meet, which will begin on Saturday (August 22) in Bhubaneswar, the capital of Odisha.

5. The overall unemployment rate among people aged 15 years and above has declined to 5.1%, according to a report released by the Union Government. The unemployment rate stood at 5.5% in June this year and declined slightly in July.

The July Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), stated the following:

- i. The unemployment rate among people aged 15 years and above was 4.5% in rural areas and 6.7% in urban areas. Consequently, the overall unemployment rate declined to 5.1%.
- ii. In June, the unemployment rate was 5% in rural areas and 6.6% in urban areas. Compared with July 2025, the overall unemployment rate in rural and urban areas remained largely stable in July 2026.
- iii. Male-Female Unemployment Rate:
 - In urban areas, the overall unemployment rate among men aged 15 years and above declined to 5%. It was 5.3% in June.
 - In rural areas, the unemployment rate among men stood at 4.6%, compared with 4.9% in June. In July, the unemployment rate among women aged 15 years and above was 4.5% in rural areas and 8.8% in urban areas. In June, the corresponding rates were 5% and 8.4%, respectively.
 - Overall, the unemployment rate among both men and women declined in July compared with June.
- iv. Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR):
 - The Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) among people aged 15 years and above stood at 55.4% in July 2026, up from 54.4% in June.

- The LFPR had remained on a declining trend from March to May and remained unchanged in June. However, it increased in July.
- v. Worker Population Ratio (WPR):
The Worker Population Ratio (WPR) increased to 52.5% in July 2026, compared with 51.4% in June, according to the report.

6. The Ministry of Defence announced that it has signed an agreement with US defence company General Atomics to lease two Sea Guardian unmanned aerial vehicles.

- i. The Indian Navy is already operating two Sea Guardian unmanned aerial vehicles that were leased earlier. According to a press release issued by the Ministry of Defence, an agreement has been signed with General Atomics to lease two MQ-9B Sea Guardian unmanned combat aerial vehicles at a cost of ₹1,943 crore. India will operate the two unmanned aircraft for the next 30 months. The agreement was signed in the presence of the Additional Secretary and Director General (Acquisition) of the Ministry of Defence. Equipped with advanced technologies, the two unmanned aircraft are expected to strengthen the Indian Navy by undertaking various missions, including surveillance and patrolling, in India's maritime region.

7. Analysis of a recent audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) regarding the state of facilities and water quality in the Indian Railways.

- i. Overview of the CAG Audit
 - The CAG conducted a comprehensive audit of 512 selected railway stations across the country to evaluate basic amenities, cleanliness, and the quality of drinking water.
 - The report acknowledges that while the Indian Railways has seen significant modernization in the last 10 years—including high-speed trains, new routes, and improved coaches—basic passenger facilities have been largely neglected.

- Every year, approximately 292.4 crore passengers travel via 7,424 trains across a network of 5,908 stations.

ii. Shocking Findings on Basic Amenities

- Of the 512 stations audited, 458 stations (89%) were found to be lacking in standard quality requirements for basic amenities.
- Despite the Railway Board issuing strict guidelines in 2018 to ensure basic facilities, only 54 stations nationwide were found to be fully compliant.
- Infrastructure Deficiencies:
 - 42% of stations either have no fans or non-functional fans on platforms and in waiting rooms.
 - 13% of platforms lack roofs or adequate shelters.
 - 15% of stations do not have adequate seating for passengers.
 - 22% of stations have no toilets or have facilities that are in such poor condition they are unusable.

iii. Critical Water Quality Concerns

- Audit samples from drinking water taps on platforms revealed the presence of E. coli and coliform bacteria.
- Contaminated water was identified at several major stations, including Coimbatore, Palakkad, Hyderabad, Chennai (CSMT Mumbai), and Madhupur.
- The presence of these bacteria in the water supply poses severe health risks, including food poisoning, diarrhea, and kidney-related issues.
- The report noted that chlorine levels in the water at many stations were significantly higher than the permitted safety limits.
- 40% of stations lack cold water dispensers (coolers), and 27% do not have enough functional water taps.

iv. Project Delays and Financial Neglect

- Out of 395 planned projects intended to improve passenger facilities, 59% have been stalled for more than four years.

- The audit highlighted that financial resources are not the primary hurdle; between 36% and 44% of the budget specifically allocated for passenger facilities remained unspent over the last five years.
- The irony of launching high-tech trains like Vande Bharat while the most fundamental needs, such as clean water and toilets, are not being met for the average traveler.

v. Ministerial Response

- Following the release of the CAG report, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has ordered immediate action to ensure the supply of clean, safe drinking water and to rectify the lack of basic amenities at all stations.