



P.L.RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY

Building Bureaucrats Since 2006

August 20, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. Under the Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme, Chief Minister S. Joseph Vijay announced that the free medical insurance coverage would be increased from ₹5 lakh to ₹25 lakh.
 - i. Chief Minister S. Joseph Vijay announced in the Legislative Assembly that the milk procurement price would be increased by ₹3 per litre.
 - ii. To ensure easy access to high-quality medical services for the people of North Chennai, a world-class multi-speciality super-speciality hospital with 400 beds would be established in Perambur at a cost of ₹300 crore.
 - iii. Additional medical and surgical services for transgender persons would be provided under the Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme at seven Government medical college hospitals—Stanley Medical College Hospital in Chennai, Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Chengalpattu, Tiruvarur, Dharmapuri and Kanniyakumari.
 - iv. Seven new Government nursing colleges would be established, creating 660 B.Sc. Nursing seats. In addition, 1,925 seats would be added to existing nursing colleges and schools; 2,778 seats would be created in 12 paramedical courses, including physiotherapy; and 735 additional seats would be added in pharmacy courses. Thus, a total of 6,098 additional student seats would be created.
 - v. To prevent the increasing incidence of cancer in Tamil Nadu and provide quality treatment, the 'Chief Minister's Cancer Care Mission' would be upgraded at a cost of ₹673.44 crore. An integrated cancer treatment facility with a ground floor and 14 floors would be established at Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital in Chennai at a cost of ₹471.80 crore.
 - In addition, five regional cancer centres would be established at the medical

college hospitals in Thanjavur, Coimbatore, Madurai, Tirunelveli and Villupuram. As the first phase, a regional cancer centre would be established at Madurai Rajaji Government Hospital, with a ground floor and eight floors, at a cost of ₹84 crore.

- ₹106.17 crore would be provided to government medical college hospitals for robotic surgery, linear accelerator radiation therapy, modern medical equipment, targeted therapy and immunotherapy.

2. The Supreme Court warned that if encroachments in the Meghamalai forest areas of Tamil Nadu were not removed expeditiously as already ordered, it might be necessary to deploy paramilitary forces.

- i. It also categorically directed that the cultivation of silk-cotton trees (Ilavam panju) in the Meghamalai forest area must be completely discontinued.
- ii. The case concerning issues including the protection of reserved forests, wildlife sanctuaries and tiger reserves in Tamil Nadu was heard by a bench comprising Supreme Court judges Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Sandeep Mehta.
- iii. Background:
 - Encroachments have continued and increased over several years in protected areas of the Agasthyamalai landscape, including the Kalakkad–Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve, Srivilliputhur–Meghamalai Tiger Reserve and Kanniyakumari Wildlife Sanctuary. While hearing a case relating to these encroachments, the Supreme Court, on May 29, directed the State Government to prepare and implement, on a priority basis and within a stipulated timeframe, a plan to remove encroachments from protected areas of the Agasthyamalai ecological landscape. The court also directed that disciplinary and legal action be initiated against 118 serving and retired Government employees identified as encroachers.

3. The United States has imposed economic sanctions on International Criminal Court (ICC) President Tomoko Akane and senior prosecutor Karim Khan.
- i. The ICC condemned the sanctions, which were imposed on the grounds that the court was attempting to investigate U.S. and Israeli military personnel, even though the United States is not a member of the ICC. The court said that the sanctions amounted to an attack on judicial independence and an attempt to undermine the rule of law.
 - ii. The United States has launched an extensive campaign aimed at weakening the international court and has been pressuring its 125 member states to withdraw. So far, the United States has imposed sanctions on several senior ICC officials, including nine judges.
4. In neighbouring Bangladesh, voting for the Presidential election is scheduled to take place on Thursday (August 20).
- i. The election is being held to choose a new President after former President Mohammed Shahabuddin suddenly resigned last month due to ill health.
 - ii. Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir (78), Secretary-General of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), is contesting the election on behalf of the party.
 - iii. Opposing him is Oli Ahmed, leader of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), who has been fielded by an alliance led by the main opposition party, Jamaat-e-Islami.
 - iv. Voting will take place in the Parliament complex on Thursday between 2 p.m. and 5 p.m., with Members of Parliament voting to elect the president.
 - v. This is the first Presidential election by voting in Bangladesh in 35 years.
 - vi. Since the BNP currently has a two-thirds majority in Parliament, Mirza Fakhrul is expected to win easily and become Bangladesh's 23rd president.
5. U.S. President Donald Trump announced a three-day temporary postponement of the 50% tariff imposed on imports from Canada.

- i. The tariff, which could affect Canadian goods worth \$20 billion, was scheduled to take effect from midnight on Tuesday. It was postponed following a last-minute agreement reached between the two countries.
- ii. With the U.S. midterm elections scheduled for November, the Trump administration is aware of the risk that price increases resulting from the new tariffs could create public dissatisfaction. Canada had warned that it would impose retaliatory tariffs on U.S. goods. However, around 72% of Canada's total merchandise exports last year went to the United States. Thus, both countries were under pressure to step back from the trade war.

6. India defeated Sri Lanka by 165 runs in the first Test match, thereby taking the lead in the two-match series. It was India's 600th Test match, and the team marked the historic milestone with a victory.

7. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has reconstituted the Committee on Subordinate Legislation, which examines the subordinate rules and regulations framed to implement laws enacted by Parliament.

- i. According to a press release issued by the Lok Sabha Secretariat on August 17, Jana Sena Party MP Vallabhaneni Bala Shouri, representing the Visakhapatnam Lok Sabha constituency in Andhra Pradesh, has been appointed as the new Chairperson of the Committee on Subordinate Legislation.
- ii. Key members:
 - Several prominent Members of Parliament have been included in the committee. From Tamil Nadu, Congress MP Karti P. Chidambaram and DMK MP A. Raja are members.
 - Other opposition members include Mahua Moitra of the Trinamool Congress from West Bengal, N.K. Premachandran of the Revolutionary Socialist Party from Kerala, and Mohammad Javed of the Congress from Bihar.

- From the ruling BJP, Madhavaneni Raghunandan Rao, MP from Medak in Telangana, and Vivek Thakur, MP from Nawada in Bihar, have been appointed.
- One member each from the alliance parties—Telugu Desam Party in Andhra Pradesh, Janata Dal (United) in Bihar, and Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas Paswan)—as well as from the opposition Samajwadi Party, has also been appointed.
- The committee is supposed to have 15 members, including the Chairperson, but three positions are currently vacant.

iii. Functions of the committee:

- The Committee on Subordinate Legislation is one of the important Parliamentary Committees. Its primary function is to examine whether the rules, regulations and subordinate legislation framed by Union ministries are within the scope of the powers delegated to them by Parliament through legislation or conferred upon them by the Constitution, and to submit reports on its findings to the Lok Sabha.

8. Indian Prime Minister's 13th Independence Day speech, highlighting five key messages and seven future target areas.

i. India's Progress: 1947 vs. 2026

The country has made monumental strides across various socio-economic indicators since achieving independence:

- Since 1947, India has been led by 15 Prime Ministers (including caretaker PM Gulzarilal Nanda), with Jawaharlal Nehru and Narendra Modi contributing significantly to the nation's growth.
- The population has grown from 38 crore in 1947 to 140 crore in 2026. Meanwhile, the population living below the poverty line has plummeted from 80% to just 11%.
- Literacy rates have risen from 18.3% to 80%, and the average life expectancy

has more than doubled from 32 years to 72 years.

- India's GDP has grown from a mere \$30 billion in 1947 to nearly \$4 trillion today.
- Power generation capacity has skyrocketed from 1,362 MW to making India one of the world's top electricity producers. Today, India boasts over 100 crore internet users and accounts for nearly 40% of the world's digital transactions.

ii. The Five Core Messages ("News 5")

In his Red Fort address, the Prime Minister emphasized five critical structural and political messages:

- India is rising not just as an economic force, but as an unavoidable and essential global power.
- The country must achieve complete self-reliance, eliminating its dependence on imports for raw materials and manufacturing inputs.
- Ensuring that cutting-edge, modern technologies are readily available to Indian youth.
- Addressing and tackling internal security threats, including the spread of violence and "urban Naxal" ideologies.
- Criticizing opposition narratives that focus on fear and negative criticisms that weaken the nation, rather than building trust, self-reliance, and development.

iii. The Seven Target Areas ("Targets 7" / Sapta Dhara)

The Prime Minister outlined "Sapta Dhara" (Seven Streams) as the key sectors where India must focus its efforts over the next 20 years to build a developed nation:

- Manufacturing Sector
- Agricultural Sector
- Technology
- Infrastructure
- Security and Defense
- Green and Maritime Economy

- Software

9. Digital arrest which was virtually unknown to the public a few years ago, has quickly emerged as a prominent new face of online fraud.

i. The Escalating Trend and Current Statistics

- According to a report submitted to the Supreme Court by the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), digital arrest fraud complaints have dropped from over 1.23 lakhs in 2024 to about 58,000 in 2025, and down to around 16,000 by the end of June 2026.
- Through coordinated efforts, Rs.18.05 crore has been recovered and returned to victims in over 36,000 cases. While the decline in cases shows that integrated actions are working, it does not mean the problem is entirely resolved.

ii. Modus Operandi and Real-World Impact

- Most digital arrest scams succeed not because of advanced computer skills, but by manipulating human psychology. Fraudsters create an atmosphere of fear, extreme urgency, and authority to prevent victims from thinking logically.
- In a recent high-profile case, an elderly couple in Haryana was defrauded of Rs.1.05 crore. Criminals posed as officials from various Government agencies, using fake documents and video calls to deceive them. This serves as a stark warning that anyone can fall victim regardless of age, education, or profession.
- The Golden Rule of Defense: Public awareness remains the strongest shield. It is vital to remember that no Government agency will ever conduct an arrest over a video call or demand money to avoid legal action.

iii. Systemic Interventions and Financial Controls

- A collaborative ecosystem is being built among banks, regulatory agencies, investigative bodies, telecom providers, and tech platforms. The grievance redressal system now spans over 1.23 lakh branches across 69 banks.
- Efforts are underway to create a uniform, swift protocol to immediately and

temporarily freeze funds leaving suspected bank accounts. Because stolen money is quickly transferred across multiple accounts within minutes, halting transactions at the onset is critical to recovering victims' money.

- States are working to fully operationalize localized cybercrime coordination centers and expand electronic First Information Report (e-FIR) procedures to match the borderless speed of digital crime.
- Prioritizing the rapid return of recovered money to victims is essential to strengthening public confidence in both the justice system and the digital economy.

iv. Global Precedents and Lessons

- Singapore: Employs real-time information sharing across its banks, telecom companies, and Government agencies.
- Australia: Maintains tight, structured cooperation between its Government, financial systems, and law enforcement agencies.

v. The Path Forward

- Future efforts to strengthen security must continue to respect individual privacy, legal procedures, and legitimate communication.
- As technology evolves, cybercrimes will continuously change form. National defense systems must upgrade even faster than the criminals to counter these emerging threats. A truly safe Digital India relies on the trifecta of responsible institutions, aware citizens, and constant vigilance.