

**P.L.RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY****Building Bureaucrats Since 2006****September 8, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits**

1. A full-thrust test of the 200-tonne semi-cryogenic engine, which can be fitted onto rockets used to launch satellites into space, was successfully conducted at ISRO's Mahendragiri facility near Kavalkinaru in Tirunelveli district.
 - i. ISRO has been conducting tests on the Mahendragiri semi-cryogenic engine in several stages. In this context, a test was conducted on the Semi-Cryogenic Engine's Power Head Test Article (PHTA).
 - ii. The PHTA is a module that contains all the engine systems except the thrust chamber. This was the ninth event in the series of hot tests conducted using the PHTA.
 - iii. This was the first time that the PHTA was tested at the engine's full thrust of 200 tonnes (100% thrust).
 - iv. Such engine tests are being conducted to increase the payload capacity of ISRO's advanced Launch Vehicle Mark-3 (LVM3).
 - v. ISRO is developing the SC120 semi-cryogenic propulsion stage, powered by the 2,000-kN-capacity SE2000 engine, as a replacement for the liquid-fuelled core stage currently used in the LVM3, ISRO's advanced heavy-lift launch vehicle.
 - vi. Combining the semi-cryogenic stage with the upgraded cryogenic upper stage (C32) will increase the propulsion capability of the LVM rocket.
 - vii. It is noteworthy that spacecraft including Chandrayaan-3 were launched into space using the LVM3 rocket, ISRO sources said.
2. The far-right party Alternative for Germany (AfD) has won the State Parliament election in Germany's Saxony-Anhalt state.
 - i. This has created the possibility of a far-right party forming a Government in a German state for the first time since World War II.

- ii. In the 83-member Saxony-Anhalt State Parliament, the AfD won 39 seats with 43.8% of the votes. However, this is three seats short of a majority.
- iii. Since other parties remain firm that they will not form an alliance with the AfD, questions have arisen as to whether the other opposition parties, despite their differences, will unite to form an alternative Government or whether political uncertainty will continue.
- iv. Meanwhile, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), led by German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, which had governed the state for the past 24 years, suffered a major defeat, winning only 15 seats with 17.2% of the votes.

3. While the United States, South Korea and Japan are conducting a trilateral military exercise, North Korea has commissioned its second advanced warship.

- i. North Korean President Kim Jong Un, accompanied by his daughter, formally commissioned the 5,000-tonne Kang Kon warship at an event held at Wonsan Port. The vessel is capable of carrying and launching nuclear weapons and advanced missiles.
- ii. As a defensive measure to jointly counter North Korea's nuclear threats, the United States, South Korea and Japan began the five-day trilateral joint military exercise Freedom Edge on Monday in the waters around South Korea's Jeju Island.
- iii. First road bridge between Russia and North Korea opened:
 - The first road bridge between Russia and North Korea has been opened for use. The bridge, approximately 1 km long and consisting of two lanes, has been constructed across the Tumen River, which separates the two countries. It will enable around 300 vehicles to cross the border each day.

4. India's reigning world champion Sheetal Devi advanced to the final of the Stage 3 World Archery Para Series being held in Gujarat. With this, she has secured a medal.

5. The National Film Awards ceremony has been shifted from Delhi to Gujarat. This is the first time in the 72-year history of the awards that the ceremony has been moved out of Delhi.
- The National Film Awards ceremony was scheduled to be held in New Delhi on the 22nd of this month. It has now been shifted from New Delhi to Ekta Nagar (Kevadia) in Gujarat. Ekta Nagar is associated with the birthplace of former Union Home Minister and India's first Deputy Prime Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. His 597-foot-tall statue, the Statue of Unity, is located there. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the statue in 2018.
 - The National Film Awards ceremony has been continuously held at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi since 1954. For the first time in the 72-year history of the event, it has now been shifted from New Delhi to Gujarat. President Droupadi Murmu will attend the ceremony and present the awards.
6. Railway officials from India and Bangladesh will hold discussions for two days beginning Tuesday (September 8) on the resumption of railway services between the two countries, which have remained suspended.
- Following the violence in Bangladesh in 2024 that led to the fall of Sheikh Hasina's government, India suspended railway services with Bangladesh, including the Kolkata-Dhaka, Kolkata-Khulna and New Jalpaiguri-Dhaka services. Discussions on restarting these express trains — Maitree, Bandhan and Mitali — will begin in Dhaka on Tuesday and continue for two days.
7. ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan has firmly rejected speculation that the Indian Space Research Organisation is being privatised, stating that ISRO will continue to function as a Government organisation.
- The Central Government is encouraging private companies and start-ups to develop technologies required by ISRO for India's space programme, including

rocket development and other requirements.

- ii. V. Narayanan, who inaugurated the 9th Space Expo in Bengaluru, Karnataka, made the following remarks at a subsequent press conference:
- India's space programme is around 64–65 years old. Currently, 56 space assets are in orbit to serve the common people of the country. This number needs to be increased further.
 - Reforms in the space sector have been underway for around six years. As part of these reforms, it is necessary to guide private-sector companies and start-ups and strengthen the space ecosystem.
 - Whenever a PSLV or GSLV rocket is launched, nearly 80% of its budget is invested in Indian industries. Around 450 industrial companies are currently working for ISRO.
 - Against this background, concerns regarding ISRO's privatisation are understandable, and it is ISRO's responsibility to clarify the matter.
 - To achieve India's growing space ambitions, the number of satellite launches must be increased substantially. Around 50 rockets will be required annually for this purpose, making the contribution of private companies essential.
 - However, ISRO will not be privatised. It will continue to function as a Government organisation. This will also be clarified to ISRO employees, he said.

8. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will leave for Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, on Tuesday (September 8) for a three-day official visit.

- i. The visit is being viewed as an important turning point in the diplomatic history of the two countries. Before this, the then Defence Minister K. C. Pant visited Colombo in 1988. Thus, this is the first visit by an Indian Defence Minister to Sri Lanka in 38 years.
- ii. Economic partnership:
- Indian-provided patrol vessels, Dornier surveillance aircraft and financial

assistance will enable Sri Lanka to strengthen its military capabilities. For India, the domestic defence-production sector will gain an expanded market for exports of spare parts. In addition, a bilateral information-sharing centre will strengthen maritime routes and enable India to monitor the movement of foreign submarines in the Indian Ocean in real time.

- India's economic assistance and the Adani Group's Colombo Port West International Terminal development project have helped reduce Sri Lanka's dependence on a single external power, such as the 99-year lease of Hambantota Port to China.
 - Rajnath Singh's visit is expected to strengthen the SLINEX Sri Lanka-India joint military exercises and the Mitra Shakti joint military exercises. Security at the Trincomalee oil-storage complex will also be strengthened. The number of training programmes provided to Sri Lankan armed forces at Indian defence institutions will be increased. In this regard, Rajnath Singh's visit is being regarded as the beginning of a new chapter in bilateral relations.
- iii. One of the most sensitive issues in India-Sri Lanka relations is the fishing dispute involving Tamil Nadu fishermen. Although discussions have been continuing between the foreign ministers and secretaries of the two countries, it is believed that direct discussions by India's Defence Minister in Sri Lanka could increase political pressure on the fishermen's issue.

9. Nigel Clarke, Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), who is visiting India, met Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Delhi on Monday.

- i. The two discussed India-IMF relations and the impact of global economic developments in detail.

10. The Defence Ministry has approved the procurement of military equipment worth ₹1.10 lakh crore, including radars, advanced light helicopters and mine-laying systems, to

enhance the overall combat capabilities of the three armed forces. The approval was granted at a meeting of the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in Delhi.

- i. The DAC has approved the procurement of military equipment worth ₹1.10 lakh crore for the three armed forces.
- ii. For the Indian Army, the procurement will include Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) reconnaissance vehicles, high-mobility vehicles, automated mine-laying systems, advanced light helicopters and the Sarvatra bridging system, among other equipment.
- iii. For the Indian Navy, Arudhra radars and marine gas turbines will be procured.
- iv. For the Indian Air Force, fighter aircraft, transport aircraft, helicopters and ground-based multi-purpose jammers, among other equipment, will be procured. These jammers are capable of disrupting enemy radars.
- v. It has been stated that 98% of this military equipment for the three services will be procured from Indian companies.

II. Smartphone Dangers

- i. During an address to 82 National Best Teacher Awardees on Teachers' Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged excessive mobile phone use as a primary threat to student well-being alongside drug abuse.
- ii. The Prime Minister explicitly called upon the nation's educators to act vigilantly and help rescue students from the clutches of smartphone addiction.
- iii. Short-Term Physical and Mental Health Ailments
 - Continuous excessive mobile phone usage is proven to trigger immediate physical issues, including severe eye strain, sleep disorders, and obesity.
 - Physically, it leads to chronic pain and joint degeneration in the neck bone, spine, and thumb joints.
 - Mentally, it is scientifically linked to severe depression, elevated stress levels, and

chronic memory loss.

iv. Long-Term Evolutionary and Adaptive Risks

- Researchers warn that the most dangerous long-term threat of smartphones is evolutionary adaptation.
- Under evolutionary principles, frequently used human organs adapt and alter structurally over generations, while unused organs gradually degenerate and disappear.
- Continuous smartphone usage over multiple generations has the potential to permanently alter the biological and skeletal structure of future humans.

v. Skeletal and Bone Deformations

- Bending down continuously to view screens exerts high pressure on the neck, which is predicted to naturally alter the curvature of the neck bone in future generations.
- The extra strain on neck muscles to support the head is causing a small bone growth to develop at the back of the skull.
- Consistently gripping a smartphone can lead to the structural deformation of the bones and joints in the thumb and little finger.

vi. Cognitive and Sensory Degeneration

- Since human eyes evolved to focus on distant objects, constantly staring at close-up screens is threatening to make short-sightedness a permanent genetic trait.
- Relying entirely on apps and search engines instead of active mental recall causes the memory-storing region of the brain to shrink, reducing natural critical thinking.
- Blue light emitted by screens suppresses melatonin, disrupting the body's biological clock and leading to damage at the DNA level.

vii. The Parasitic Dependency and Addictive Design

- A study by researchers from the University of New South Wales, Australia, published in May 2025, concluded that the human-smartphone dynamic has

devolved into a parasitic relationship.

- Smartphone apps are intentionally engineered to induce continuous mental excitement and trigger addictive compulsive behaviors in users.
- Because modern banking and essential Government services have mandated mobile integration, users are forced into this parasitic loop with no easy individual escape.

viii. Global Regulatory Bans in Schools

- Globally, more than 100 countries (approximately 58% of nations) have officially banned or heavily restricted smartphone use for minors in schools or public spaces.
- According to UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report, over 114 educational systems worldwide are actively enforcing these bans.
- The implementation of these restrictions has surged rapidly, rising from 24% of countries in June 2023, to 40% in early 2025, and reaching 58% by March 2026.