

September 10, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1.The new Secretariat of the Tamil Nadu Government will be constructed at Pattinapakkam in Chennai at a cost of ₹1,200 crore. The Tamil Nadu Government has issued a Government Order granting the first-stage approval for the project.

(i) The Secretariat is currently functioning from Fort St. George, which was constructed during British rule. The Legislative Assembly offices are also located in the area under the control of the military. The Tamil Nadu Government pays lease charges to the Union Ministry of Defence for using the premises.

(ii) The newly formed TVK Government in Tamil Nadu is showing keen interest in constructing a new Secretariat. Chief Minister S. Joseph Vijay recently announced in the Assembly under Rule 110 that a new Secretariat would be constructed in Chennai at a cost of ₹1,200 crore.

(iii) The new Secretariat will be constructed on a total area of 22 acres. The land belongs to the Tamil Nadu Housing Board and the Revenue Department. The Tamil Nadu Government has issued a Government Order granting the first-stage approval. It is planned to constitute a consultation committee comprising architects and teams to prepare the building design and blueprint.

2.An unprecedented measles outbreak continues to spread in Bangladesh without any decline in intensity. Since March, 999 people have died due to the disease.

(i) As sick infants continue to be admitted to hospitals, Bangladesh's overall healthcare infrastructure is under severe strain due to shortages of beds and medical facilities.

(ii) Health experts state that the severe outbreak has occurred mainly because routine vaccination programmes were severely disrupted during 2024 and 2025 due to the political turmoil in the country following the uprising against former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

(iii) Since March, more than 1.66 lakh people have been affected with measles-like symptoms. Of these, 1.46 lakh patients have been admitted to hospitals, while the disease has been confirmed in 19,835 people. In this regard, the outbreak has emerged as one of the largest measles outbreaks in the world.

3.The United States has imposed restrictions on various two-wheelers, alcoholic beverages and dairy products imported from Canada. These restrictions will come into full effect from September 29.

(i) After several rounds of trade talks between the two countries failed to reach an agreement, the US had imposed an additional 50% tariff on Canadian goods worth around US\$20 billion.

(ii) In response, Canada imposed retaliatory tariffs ranging from 15% to 50% on US goods worth US\$20 billion, including steel and furniture. Following this, the US has now announced these import restrictions. US President Donald Trump is increasing economic pressure on Canada day by day. He has threatened to increase the tariff on Canadian vehicles from 25% to 50% from the New Year.

(iii) Trump has also ordered that Canadian Bombardier private aircraft would be banned unless their production is started within the United States. He has further ordered the immediate removal of Canadian products from the Government's procurement list.

4. Heavy rainfall continuing for the past five days has led to persistent flooding in several rivers, including the Ganga, in Bihar. As many as 40.21 lakh people have been affected across 14 districts, including Patna.

(i) A Disaster Management Department official said:

“Heavy rainfall in the catchment areas of Nepal, along with continuous rainfall in Bihar over the past five days, has caused flooding in several rivers, including the Ganga. Water levels in rivers such as the Gandak, Kosi, Budhi Gandak, Punpun, Bagmati and Ghaghara have crossed the danger mark. In the Sultanganj area of Bhagalpur, the water level of the Ganga rose to an unprecedented 36.75 metres on Wednesday.”

5. Prime Minister’s Adviser Tarun Kapoor said that the Government is considering increasing the current 20% ethanol blending level in petrol.

(i) Tarun Kapoor addressed the 4th India Sugar and Bio-Energy Conference 2026, held in Delhi, through video conferencing. He said:

- The E20 programme, involving 20% ethanol blending with petrol, has become highly successful. Several vehicle manufacturers are expected to introduce vehicles powered by alternative fuels soon. The Central Government is focusing on the production of such vehicles.
- The Government is also considering permitting ethanol blending in petrol at levels exceeding 20%. Along with introducing alternative-fuel vehicles, it is necessary to expand the availability of pure ethanol at fuel stations.
- Amid the ongoing West Asian crisis, the demand for biofuels has become increasingly important. The conflict in West Asia has affected fuel supplies, pushing crude oil prices to nearly US\$100 per barrel. There are concerns that prices may rise further. In such circumstances, it is important to make maximum use of whatever resources are available domestically.
- Ethanol producers should diversify their investments into the production of Compressed Biogas (CBG) and other value-added by-products such as potassium.

He said the Government is committed to providing strong support to the biofuel sector.

6. India and Sri Lanka have agreed to jointly give priority to regional security. The agreement was reached during talks held in Colombo on Wednesday between Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake and Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

(i) Rajnath Singh was on the second day of his visit to Colombo, becoming the first Indian Defence Minister to visit Sri Lanka in 38 years. During the visit, he held separate meetings with Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, Prime Minister Harini Amarasuriya, Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa, the Sri Lankan Defence Secretary and the chiefs of the three armed forces.

(ii) In the presence of Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, three important agreements aimed at strengthening defence, military training and education between the two countries were signed.

- Defence cooperation:

The L-70 air-defence guns previously supplied by India to the Sri Lanka Air Force will be modernised and upgraded with Indian financial assistance.

- Military training:

Educational, research and strategic information-sharing between the National Defence Colleges of India and Sri Lanka will be strengthened.

- NCC exchange programme:

An agreement was signed to formalise cooperation between the National Cadet Corps (NCC) of the two countries. Under this arrangement, students from both countries will have opportunities to participate together in annual camps and cultural exchange programmes held in New Delhi.

(iii) Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh stressed that the fishermen's issue between India and Sri Lanka should be resolved amicably by both countries, taking into consideration its humanitarian and livelihood dimensions and within the framework of their respective laws.

- At a special event held in Colombo on Wednesday titled "Maritime Security and MAHASAGAR Vision," Rajnath Singh spoke on "India-Sri Lanka Maritime Cooperation."
- He said that respecting international law, ensuring uninterrupted maritime trade and guaranteeing freedom of navigation are the top priorities in the Indian Ocean region. He emphasised the need for a real-time information-sharing mechanism between the navies and coast guards of the two countries to prevent illegal fishing, drug trafficking and terrorism.

He also said that India and Sri Lanka should establish a joint maritime humanitarian assistance and disaster relief mechanism to respond rapidly during disasters.

7. Due to the continuing conflict in West Asia, international crude oil prices have crossed US\$100 per barrel. Experts said that this could result in losses of ₹5 per litre on petrol and ₹23 per litre on diesel for Indian public-sector oil companies.

(i) Brent crude oil, considered the international benchmark for crude oil prices, has increased by 2.5% from US\$100 per barrel.

(ii) Due to the renewed escalation of attacks between Iran and the United States, crude oil prices have reached their highest level since July.

(iii) India, the world's third-largest crude oil-importing country, meets 88% of its domestic requirement through imports. Experts said that a continued rise in crude oil prices would affect India's trade position and the value of the rupee.

8. The BRICS Summit will begin in Delhi on Saturday, September 12. Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping are expected to participate.

(i) BRICS, regarded as one of the world's most influential groupings, comprises Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia.

(ii) The partner countries of BRICS are Belarus, Bolivia, Kazakhstan, Cuba, Malaysia, Nigeria, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan and Vietnam. Eleven of the world's major economic powers are members of BRICS.

(iii) BRICS countries account for 40% of global economic output. Their share of global trade is 26%.

(iv) India currently holds the chairmanship of BRICS. India has previously held the chairmanship three times.

9. Roads under surveillance :-

(i) Alarming National & State Road Accident Statistics

- Up to July 2026, India recorded 2.96 lakh road accidents, resulting in 1.01 lakh fatalities.
- Tamil Nadu ranked first in total road accidents with 39,666 incidents, followed by Madhya Pradesh in second place with 34,847 incidents.
- In terms of total deaths, Uttar Pradesh ranked first with 14,794 fatalities, while Tamil Nadu ranked second with 10,298 fatalities.
- Most fatalities occurred on National Highways; Uttar Pradesh topped the list with 7,575 highway accidents, while Tamil Nadu ranked fourth with 3,520 highway accidents.
- On average, 480 people die every day in road accidents across India—equivalent to one death every three minutes.
- There are currently 40 crore registered vehicles across the nation.

(ii) Major Causes and Accident Severity

- Excessive speeding was the single largest cause, accounting for 15.54% of total recorded accidents.
- Inattention/distraction of drivers and road quality/design flaws were identified as major contributing factors.
- The severity rate stood at 34 to 35 deaths per 100 recorded road accidents (35 deaths per 100 in 2025, and 34 per 100 up to July 2026).

(iii) AI-Driven Surveillance and Automated Enforcement

- To monitor the vast volume of 40 crore registered vehicles without manual traffic police deployment, authorities are integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) with CCTV cameras at intersections and highways.
- The AI camera system automatically identifies specific violations, including speeding, red-light jumping, riding without a helmet, and using mobile phones while driving.
- The system captures video/photographic evidence, identifies the vehicle registration number, and automatically generates and sends an e-challan (digital fine) to the owner's smartphone.
- AI-driven monitoring is currently being implemented on a trial basis in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Kerala, and key urban centers in Tamil Nadu.
- Nationwide implementation of AI surveillance is projected to potentially reduce road accident fatalities by 10%.

(iv) Automated Documentation Check & Global Precedents

- AI systems are being programmed to cross-reference vehicle registration data to automatically detect and fine vehicles with expired permits, insurance policies, or pollution-under-control (PUC) certificates.
- Similar AI-integrated traffic monitoring systems are already operational in countries such as

Singapore, the United Kingdom, and Australia.

(v) Essential Infrastructure Beyond Technology

- AI surveillance alone cannot completely solve road accidents.
- Achieving comprehensive road safety requires improving physical infrastructure, including proper footpaths, well-designed intersections, and proper road dividers/barriers.

10. Environment : A cursed blessing

(i) Six Foundational Elements of Environmental Rights

- A healthy environment is guaranteed by six core elements: clean air, a safe climate, safe and adequate water, sustainably produced healthy food, a toxic-free environment, and healthy ecosystems and biodiversity.
- When these six environmental rights are ensured, citizens can lead long and healthy lives; otherwise, environmental degradation severely impacts public health and longevity.

(ii) Air Pollution Crisis and Implementation Deficits in Chennai

- Air pollution in Chennai alone causes approximately 11,000 deaths annually and results in an economic loss of ₹11,000 crore.
- Ensuring clean air according to World Health Organization (WHO) standards could increase the average life expectancy of Chennai residents by 4 years.
- Chennai was added to the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) in 2021 (a scheme launched in 2019), but 90% of the announced projects remain incomplete despite the expiration of the timeline.
- IIT conducted a study in 2022 on the sources of air pollution in Chennai, but the report has not been published to date.
- National evaluations indicate that Chennai ranks last in India regarding the implementation of clean air plans.
- Out of ₹593 crore received for the Chennai Clean Air Plan, only ₹194 crore was spent, with the remaining funds diverted to ineffective projects.
- Tamil Nadu formulated a state "Clean Air Plan" on January 31, 2025, but its details remain unpublished.

(iii) Chemical Contamination and Industrial Toxic Waste

- At the Ranipet SIPCOT industrial estate, Tamil Nadu Chromates and Chemicals Ltd (operated from 1975 to 1995) left behind 2.5 lakh tonnes of hazardous chromium waste that has remained uncleared for over 35 years.
- Chromium contamination has rendered surrounding agricultural lands infertile and triggered severe health crises, including cancer, high blood pressure, lung cancer, cardiac disease, liver/kidney damage, and infertility.
- On September 2, 2022, the Southern Bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) directed temporary remediation within one year, a comprehensive plan within 6 months, and execution within the following 6 months under the "Polluter Pays Principle"; however, work has not started four years after the order.

- In the Cuddalore SIPCOT chemical complex, toxic industrial effluents have contaminated groundwater, resulting in the detection of toxic dioxins even in coconut water.

(iv) Degradation of Major Rivers and Judicial Orders

- The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) identified 9 heavily polluted rivers in Tamil Nadu: Sarabanga, Thirumanimutharu, Vasishta, Cauvery, Bhavani, Thamirabarani, Cooum, Adyar, and Amaravathi.
- In 2018, the NGT ordered the restoration of these 9 rivers to bathing-water standards within 6 months. Eight years later, action plans have not been framed for 3 rivers (Cooum, Adyar, Amaravathi), while plans for the remaining 6 rivers remain unexecuted.
- Regarding tannery effluent discharge into the Palar River across Ranipet, Vellore, and Tirupathur districts, the Supreme Court issued directives on January 30, 2025.
- The State formed the Justice Sathyanarayanan Committee in March 2025, but due to lack of progress, the Supreme Court re-ordered inspections on September 16, 2025.

(v) Ecological Concerns in Pallikaranai Marshland & Wetlands

- The Tamil Nadu Government secured a ₹1,200 crore loan from the World Bank for coastal protection; under "Pallikaranai Marshland Restoration Works," it spent ₹21 crore to construct a 6-foot high, 3-km long concrete wall inside the western boundary along with granite/tiled footpaths.
- Constructing concrete walls inside the marshland damages the wetland ecosystem and increases flood risks rather than offering protection.
- The root cause is that the boundaries of Pallikaranai (a designated Ramsar site) have not been legally demarcated or notified, nor has a 1-km buffer zone been established to prevent illegal dumping and sewage discharge.
- Tamil Nadu possesses 20 Ramsar sites and 26,883 wetlands covering over 2.25 lakh hectares that require boundary notification under the Wetland (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017.
- The Supreme Court set a deadline of September 28, 2026, for the state to complete legal boundary notifications for these wetlands.

(vi) Waste Management and Bulk Generator Enforcement

- Entities occupying more than 20,000 sq. metres, consuming over 40,000 litres of water daily, or generating over 100 kg of waste per day (commercial complexes, hotels, high-rise apartments, public institutions) are classified as bulk waste generators under Solid Waste Management Rules.
- Bulk waste generators are legally required to manage their own waste at the source.
- On August 18, the Supreme Court directed all District Collectors to compile lists of bulk waste generators within 6 weeks and enforce mandatory disconnection of electricity and water connections for non-compliant entities.