

September 26, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. Tamil Nadu athlete Paranikā Ilangovan wins bronze in women's pole vault at the Asian Games

(i) She created history by becoming the first Indian to win a medal in pole vault at the Asian Games. She cleared 4.15 metres to finish third in the competition. Paranikā suffered a serious knee injury in 2020 but made a strong comeback and is currently the national champion. She also holds the national record of 4.23 metres.

2. Stanford researcher Sarah Peluse of the United States selected for this year's SASTRA–Ramanujan Prize

(i) Considering the achievements of mathematical genius Srinivasa Ramanujan, who accomplished many feats during his 32-year life, the SASTRA–Ramanujan Prize has been awarded annually since 2005 by SASTRA Deemed University, Thanjavur, to young mathematicians who make outstanding contributions.

(ii) Accordingly, Sarah Peluse, Associate Professor in the Department of Mathematics at Stanford University, has been selected for the 2026 SASTRA–Ramanujan Prize. She will receive the prestigious award for her outstanding contributions to analytic number theory and for making several important advances and developing new solutions to challenging mathematical problems.

(iii) The award carries a cash prize of US\$10,000 and a citation certificate. Following the tradition of previous years, the university administration said that the award will be presented to Sarah Peluse at the SASTRA campus on December 22, the birth anniversary of Srinivasa Ramanujan.

3. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has introduced a new 'Digital Connectivity' rating platform to enable consumers to know in advance the quality of telecommunication facilities available in a building before purchasing or renting residential or commercial properties.

(i) Through this platform, consumers can search for and obtain information about buildings based on their name, certificate number or location. Buildings are rated on various parameters, including fibre-cable readiness, signal availability, in-building telecom solutions and Wi-Fi infrastructure.

(ii) TRAI Chairman Anil Kumar Lahoti said that the platform would provide reliable information and enable people to clearly choose homes and offices with strong telecommunications infrastructure suitable for uninterrupted calls and internet services. He also said that the platform would encourage developers to plan appropriate digital infrastructure facilities while constructing buildings.

4. Four Indian scientists selected for American Geophysical Union (AGU) awards

(i) Roxy Mathew Koll and Neelima Satyam have been selected for the 2026 AGU awards for excellence in research, education and innovation in the Earth and space sciences, as well as for demonstrating leadership qualities. Roxy Mathew Koll is a climate scientist at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune. He has previously received the Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar.

(ii) The AGU has now selected him for the Pavel S. Molchanov Communications Award.

(iii) He was selected for the award for documenting rising temperatures in the Indian Ocean, resulting

changes in the monsoon, marine heatwaves, cyclones, extreme rainfall, and their impacts on the lives and livelihoods of people in South Asia. He will receive a cash prize of US\$25,000 along with the award. The award is generally presented annually to researchers working on climate change.

(iv) Another scientist, Neelima Satyam, is a professor at IIT Indore. She has been selected by the AGU for the Devendra Lal Memorial Medal. The award is generally presented annually to an early- or mid-career scientist conducting research in the Earth and space sciences.

(v) Similarly, Abdul Qadir and Faisal Hossain, Indian-origin scientists living in the United States, have been selected for the Science and Solutions Award and the Ambassador Award, respectively. Qadir is an Assistant Research Professor at the University of Maryland. Hossain is a professor at the University of Washington, Seattle, and is an alumnus of Banaras Hindu University (BHU).

5. Senior IAS officer Mandeep K. Bhandari has been appointed as the new Chairman of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).

6. Interlinking of Rivers is the Need of the Hour

- Recent progress in resolving inter-State river disputes. Many of the disputes have continued for decades, some dating back to the British period.

(i) Haryana–Rajasthan: Yamuna water agreement

- Discussions on using Yamuna river water from Haryana for Rajasthan have been continuing since 1994.
- After about 32 years without major progress, an agreement was signed on 29 June in the presence of the Home Minister.
- Signatories:
 - Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini
 - Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma
- Under the agreement, Rajasthan will receive about 580 MCM (million cubic metres) of water annually.
- The project is expected to address drinking-water problems affecting lakhs of people in:
 - Rajasthan: Sikar, Churu and Jhunjhunu
 - Haryana: Bhiwani and Fatehabad.

(ii) Narmada–Sardar Sarovar-related agreement

- An agreement concerning the Sardar Sarovar Dam on the Narmada River was signed on 7 July.
- The participating states are:
 - Gujarat
 - Rajasthan
 - Maharashtra
 - Madhya Pradesh
- Their Chief Ministers at the time:
 - Bhupendra Patel – Gujarat
 - Bhajan Lal Sharma – Rajasthan

- Devendra Fadnavis – Maharashtra
- Mohan Yadav – Madhya Pradesh
- The states had differences for more than 50 years over:
 - Financial contributions
 - Land acquisition
 - Compensation for affected families.
- The agreement is presented as a major step towards resolving these issues.

(iii) Son River dispute: Bihar–Jharkhand

- A dispute concerning the Son River had continued for more than 25 years.
- An agreement was signed on 31 August by:
 - Bihar Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary
 - Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren
- The agreement is expected to benefit:
 - Bihar: Bhojpur, Buxar, Rohtas, Kaimur, Arwal, Aurangabad, Gaya and Patna districts.
 - Jharkhand: Palamu and Garhwa districts.

(iv) Kishau Dam Project – Six-State Agreement

- An Agreement involving six states for the Kishau Dam Project was reached on 15 September.
- Estimated project cost: ₹15,824 crore.
- The project is expected to provide irrigation facilities to 97,000 hectares.
- States expected to benefit:
 - Uttar Pradesh
 - Delhi
 - Himachal Pradesh
 - Uttarakhand
 - Haryana
 - Rajasthan

(v) Amit Shah's emphasis on river interlinking

- At the 31st Southern Zonal Council meeting, held near Chennai at Kovalam on 20 August, Amit Shah spoke about linking major rivers.
- Rivers specifically mentioned include:
 - Brahmaputra
 - Ganga
 - Cauvery
 - Godavari
- Linking major rivers could help ensure that the country does not face water scarcity.
- Southern States have agreed to seek solutions to long-standing river-water-sharing disputes through negotiations.

(vi) Tamil Nadu's long-pending river-water disputes

- Tamil Nadu has had river-water disputes with neighbouring states for several decades.

- Cauvery water dispute remains unresolved.
- Other issues are:
 - Pennaiyar/Ponnaiyar dispute
 - Siruvani water issue with Kerala
 - Palar water issue with Andhra Pradesh.

(vii) Anaimalaiyar–Nallar project

- Farmers have been demanding for a long time that the Anaimalaiyar–Nallar project be implemented.
- The project would particularly benefit Coimbatore and Tiruppur districts.
- Discussions with the Kerala Government are necessary for implementing it.

(viii) Lessons from Bihar, Jharkhand and Himachal Pradesh

- Solutions have been reached even in these states where political parties differ.
- It therefore calls for similar efforts to resolve Tamil Nadu's water disputes with:
 - Kerala
 - Andhra Pradesh
 - Karnataka.

(ix) Politics should not obstruct water cooperation

- River-water issues should not be handled by:
 - Political animosity
 - Vote-bank considerations
 - Provoking public emotions.
- Instead, negotiations and practical solutions should be prioritised.
- Resolving these disputes would benefit future generations.

(x) Nationalisation and interlinking of rivers

- Nationalisation of rivers
 - Ganga–Cauvery river linking are presented as a need of the times.
 - The broader argument is that coordinated management and interlinking of rivers could help address India's uneven distribution of water.

7. Time to discuss

(i) Nature of Democratic Mandate and Public Trust

- An election held once every five years is a formal agreement of trust between citizens and their chosen representatives.
- A legislative seat represents a throne of trust rather than just an instrument of power.
- Changing political alignment for explicit ideological reasons or public welfare can be openly explained to voters; however, switching parties out of ambition for power leaves a lasting negative

impression that is difficult to erase.

(ii) Voter Expectations vs. Post-Election Defection

- On polling day, citizens vote based on political ideology, party affiliation, election manifestos, and specific policy stances.
- While countering political opponents is straightforward, overcoming voter doubts and skepticism is significantly harder.
- Politicians must move away from the mindset of "I won, so I can do whatever I want" and adopt the principle of safeguarding the trust placed in them by voters.
- Winning candidates often switch parties shortly after elections to secure personal positions or advance their political futures.

(iii) The Dilemma of Mid-Term Resignation

- A candidate's success is built on the day-and-night labor of party workers and administrators across all levels of the constituency.
- While resigning a legislative seat is administratively just a signature on a document, it carries a heavy moral weight in the minds of constituents.
- Defections raise fundamental questions about whether the election victory belongs to the candidate, the political party, or the voters who supported the election symbol.
- Returning to the electorate under a new party flag, with different symbols and leaders, poses a major psychological challenge because the voters' discerning perspective remains unchanged.

(iv) Lessons from Sangam Literature on Political Stature

- In ancient Sangam literature (such as Purananuru), a ruler's greatness was evaluated by generosity, justice, and public service rather than the physical height of his palace.
- In a modern democracy, a legislator's true standing is determined by the height of public trust rather than the official power of their position.

(v) Duty of Accountability and Public Integrity

- Contesting an election is an opportunity, winning is a blessing from the public, serving as a representative is a responsibility, and fulfilling that role is an absolute duty.
- Campaigning should not be a simple plea for votes, but an invitation for voters to review past performance and decide whether to renew their trust.
- Constituents demand integrity alongside victory; once public trust is lost, regaining it is exceptionally difficult.

(vi) Proposed Legal Reforms and Democratic Culture

- The country needs serious debate on enacting legal mechanisms—such as mandatory disqualification, temporary bans on contesting elections, and requiring resigning members to cover additional election expenses—to deter voluntary mid-term resignations that trigger unnecessary by-elections.
- Individual political ambitions must not waste the hard work of constituency voters or drain taxpayers' money through avoidable elections.



- Stricter laws alone are insufficient; developing a mature political culture that respects the value of every vote is essential so that elections remain a sacred duty to protect public trust.

