

September 28, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. Chief Minister Joseph Vijay has congratulated the Tamil Nadu player who won a silver medal in the Asian Squash Championship and announced a prize of ₹50 lakh for him. In a post released by him on Sunday, he said:

- “I extend my heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to squash player Abhay Singh, who has brought pride to Tamil Nadu and India by winning the silver medal in the men’s singles squash event at the 20th Asian Games, currently being held in Japan.”

2. Pakistan’s military said that the country’s first Hangor-class submarine has begun its first weapons trials in the Arabian Sea.

(i) The Hangor-class submarine, built under a bilateral agreement between Pakistan and China, arrived in Karachi last June.

(ii) Pakistan plans to build a total of eight Hangor-class submarines equipped with advanced technologies, including sensors and weapon-countermeasure systems.

3. Ishaan Madhesh, Sai Shiva, and Sri Lanka’s Kavin secured notable positions in the MRF Indian National Racing Challenge Car Championship.

(i) The fourth round of the race was completed at the Madras International Circuit (MIC) in Irungattukottai, near Chennai.

4. At the 46th Chess Olympiad held in Uzbekistan, the Indian teams won silver in the Open (Men’s) section and bronze in the Women’s section. Uzbekistan and China respectively won the championship titles in the two sections.

(i) At the competition held in Samarkand, after 11 rounds, India and Germany were tied for second place in the Open section with 18 points each.

(ii) A tie-break was conducted to determine the winner of the second position. India won the tie-break and secured the silver medal, while Germany won bronze. Uzbekistan became the champion with 20 points. In the Open section, India recorded 8 wins, 2 draws and 1 loss.

5. Methanol is set to be exported from Assam to Bangladesh by vessels through the Brahmaputra River.

(i) According to an Assam government official, Assam Petro-Chemicals Ltd. (APL) will export methanol to Bangladesh. The company will transport the methanol using two vessels through the Brahmaputra River.

(ii) For this purpose, APL has leased two vessels from the Assam government’s Inland Waterways Transport Department. The two vessels had remained unused for the past 30 years because they were damaged. They have now been repaired in Guwahati.

(iii) Following the repairs, APL will use these vessels to transport methanol to Bangladesh, the official said.

6. Russia has expressed its support for India becoming a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), while opposing permanent membership for Germany and Japan.

(i) The current five permanent members of the UN Security Council are the United States, Russia, China, the United Kingdom and France. These five countries enjoy special privileges, including veto power. In addition, 10 countries are elected as non-permanent members on a rotational basis.

(ii) India, Brazil, Germany and Japan, among other countries, have been calling for reforms to the UN Security Council so that it reflects the current global situation. They have also been demanding permanent membership for themselves.

(iii) Speaking at the UN General Assembly meeting in New York, United States, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said:

- "Reform of the UN Security Council should be carried out on the basis of principles. Such reforms should not be aimed at providing additional seats to Western countries. In particular, seats should not be given to Germany and Japan, which have returned to a path of militarisation and retaliation.
- At the same time, Russia supports reforms that would provide permanent membership in the UN Security Council to countries from Asia, Africa and South America. In particular, we support Brazil and India becoming permanent members of the UN Security Council. We also want reforms that ensure representation of countries from the African continent.
- Russia is pursuing efforts towards this through its foreign policy. Russia is working together with its partner countries, diplomatic partners, BRICS countries, SCO countries, and the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union," Sergey Lavrov said.

7. El Niño Impact and Preparedness for Northeast Monsoon in Tamil Nadu

(i) European Centre forecast

- The European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF), headquartered in the UK and studying the impact of El Niño, issued a forecast in August.
- It warned that Tamil Nadu and adjoining regions could receive 50–200 mm more rainfall than normal.

(ii) Expected impact of El Niño

- Due to El Niño, the Southwest Monsoon is reportedly ending with around 15% rainfall deficiency in northern states.
- In contrast, southern states, including Tamil Nadu, may receive above-normal Northeast Monsoon rainfall.
- Research institutions and expert groups have also warned about this possibility.

(iii) Tamil Nadu Government expert committee

- In July, the Tamil Nadu Government constituted a 7-member expert committee to study El Niño and climate-change impacts and recommend precautionary measures.
- The committee is headed by Dr. Sivananda Pai, Head of the Regional Meteorological Centre, Chennai, of the India Meteorological Department.

- The committee recently submitted an interim report to the Chief Minister.

(iv) Forecast for October–December

- The committee has warned that Tamil Nadu could receive heavy rainfall during the Northeast Monsoon period from October to December.
- Possible consequences include:
 - Urban flooding
 - Flooding of rivers
- The Government has therefore been advised to make appropriate advance preparations.

(v) Districts identified for additional rainfall

- The Chief Minister held a review meeting with the Collectors of 10 districts expected to receive additional rainfall:
 1. Coimbatore
 2. Dindigul
 3. Erode
 4. Karur
 5. Madurai
 6. Nilgiris
 7. Sivaganga
 8. Tenkasi
 9. Theni
 10. Virudhunagar
- The meeting focused on precautionary measures and dengue prevention.
- Some of these districts contain areas vulnerable to landslides.

(vi) Private weather forecast

- A private weather forecaster has predicted that Tamil Nadu could receive around 500–600 mm of rainfall, compared with the normal rainfall of approximately 430 mm.
- Technological advances have improved weather forecasting.
- Private forecasters are increasingly producing forecasts considered sufficiently reliable to be taken into account alongside government agencies.
- Therefore, such private forecasts cannot simply be ignored.

(vii) Risk of extreme rainfall

- Experts have warned that some parts of Tamil Nadu could experience very heavy rainfall accompanied by cloudbursts.
- This could cause flooding in:
 - Urban areas
 - Rivers
 - Coastal regions
- The Government needs to prepare specifically for these possibilities.

(viii) Rainfall may not be evenly distributed

- Above-normal rainfall across the state does not necessarily mean that every region will receive excess rainfall.
- Some areas could actually receive below-normal rainfall.
- Such regions could face:
 - Reduced inflow into dams
 - Water shortages in other water bodies
 - Drought-like conditions

(ix) Possible impacts of deficient rainfall areas

- Low rainfall could adversely affect:
 - Public health
 - Agriculture
 - Drinking-water supply
 - Livestock
 - Fisheries

(x) Recurring urban flood problem

- Urban flooding during the monsoon is not a new phenomenon in Tamil Nadu. Adequate lessons were not learned even after the Chennai floods of December 2015.

(xi) Thirupugazh Committee

- Following the 2021 floods, a committee headed by retired IAS officer V. Thirupugazh was established to recommend measures for future flood prevention and management.
- The committee submitted its final report in 2023.
- However, the report has not yet been officially released.
- Of its 161 recommendations, the previous Government had stated that 101 had been implemented.
- It remains unclear:
 - What exactly the 161 recommendations were.
 - Which 101 recommendations were implemented.

(xii) Flooding beyond Chennai

- Flood-related problems occur not only in Chennai but also in other parts of Tamil Nadu.
- However, floods in other regions sometimes fail to receive adequate Government attention.

(xiii) Major causes of flooding

- Poor maintenance of storm-water drains
- Encroachments on waterways
- Dumping of waste
- Unauthorised construction
- Residential settlements in lakes and ponds
- Other forms of illegal encroachment

- A major underlying reason identified is the failure of Government departments to properly enforce regulations.

(xiv) Three implementation timeframes suggested

- The Sivananda Pai Committee has classified required measures into three timeframes:
 1. Before the Northeast Monsoon this year
 2. Medium term – before summer 2027
 3. Within the next 3–5 years

(xv) Emergency restoration works

- The committee has recommended urgent restoration and preparedness work involving:
 - Major rivers
 - Canals
 - Waterways
 - Outfall/outlet structures
 - Lakes and ponds
 - Sluices
 - Flood-control structures
 - Dams
 - Embankments/bunds
- These works are described as an urgent necessity before the expected heavy monsoon.

(xvi) Question over repeated annual works

- Officials may argue that such maintenance and restoration works are carried out every year.
- Why flood-related problems continue despite these annual measures.
- The authorities should explain why the problems persist if the recommended works are being regularly carried out.

(xvii) 2026 may not be a normal Northeast Monsoon season for Tamil Nadu, given the warnings of possible excess and extreme rainfall.

- The State Government should act quickly and seriously, without delay, particularly on flood-prevention infrastructure and emergency preparedness.
- At the same time, authorities must recognise that excess rainfall in some areas can coexist with deficient rainfall and water shortages in others, requiring region-specific preparedness.

8. Social Media

(i) EU Legislation & International Context

- The European Union is enacting legislation to completely prohibit social media use for children under 13 years of age across all member states.
- European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen introduced the draft bill to establish unified, EU-wide regulatory controls, building upon individual bans previously enacted by select European nations.

- In December 2025, Australia introduced a complete ban on social media use for all children under 16 years old.

(ii) Account Creation Rules and Technical Controls

- Individuals under 13 years of age are strictly prohibited from creating any social media account.
- Teenagers aged 14 and 15 cannot hold independent accounts; they may only operate minor accounts linked directly to their parents.
- Minor accounts must operate under parental supervision and are restricted to limited communication and interaction features.
- These minor accounts are designed to automatically deactivate after a set duration each day and remain non-functional until the following day.

(iii) Social Media Company Accountability & Enforcement Challenges

- Previously, social media platforms disclaimed responsibility by asserting that users create accounts independently based on self-declared ages; under the new law, platforms must actively prove that young users on their sites are eligible and safe.
- Critics argue that the political and economic influence of tech giants could hamper practical enforcement.
- Tech and legal experts question how platforms can verify that every user operates from a genuine personal account, noting that bypassing controls is increasingly feasible in the age of Artificial Intelligence.
- Although platforms claim they do not permit under-13 users, in practice, children frequently operate or manage accounts registered under adults' names.

(iv) International Best Practices and Global Examples

- France previously banned social media for minors under 15 years old, though implementation has encountered legal obstacles.
- Countries including Spain, Denmark, and Sweden actively enforce restrictions and bans on minor social media usage.
- The legislation acts as a preventive safety measure—analogueous to villagers wetting neighboring thatched roofs during a house fire to lower temperatures and prevent the spread of flames before emergency services arrive.
- As demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic when global activity was temporarily halted, state authorities possess the regulatory power to enforce widespread compliance when supported by public awareness.

(v) Rationale and Implications for Countries like India

- The primary objective of restricting early social media exposure is to ensure children remain focused on education during their foundational learning years rather than spending excessive hours online.
- Observers note that legal bans alone are insufficient—similar to how underage youth often drive vehicles without licenses—making adult and societal role-modeling essential.
- In countries like India, where parents increasingly rely on mobile phones to occupy young children,



societal debate is urgently needed.

- Today, while many households may lack individual bank accounts, social media accounts are ubiquitous among both adults and minors.

