

October 1, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. Morocco's King Mohammed has appointed Fatima Zahra Mansouri (50), who had been serving as the Minister of Urban Development, as the country's new Prime Minister.

(i) With this, she has created history by becoming the first woman to serve as Prime Minister of Morocco, an Islamic country. She will also be the second woman from an Arab country to become Prime Minister, after Najla Bouden of Tunisia.

(ii) Under Morocco's electoral system, it is difficult for any single political party to secure an absolute majority. At the same time, following constitutional reforms introduced in the aftermath of the 2011 Arab Spring protests, the King is required to appoint the Prime Minister from the party that wins the highest number of seats in the election.

(iii) Accordingly, following the recently held parliamentary elections, the royal palace has invited Fatima Zahra Mansouri's PAM (Authenticity and Modernity Party), which secured the highest number of votes, to form the new government. Fatima Zahra Mansouri is expected to form the new government in alliance with coalition parties in the coming days.

(iv) The new Government led by Fatima Zahra Mansouri will have major responsibilities, including controlling inflation, increasing wages, creating employment opportunities, and undertaking investments worth hundreds of billions of dollars for the 2030 FIFA World Cup.

2. The United States on Wednesday completely ended the joint military operation it had been conducting with Iraq against the ISIS terrorist organization for the past 12 years.

(i) Based on a bilateral agreement reached between the United States and Iraq, US troops and military equipment formally withdrew from the Erbil Air Base, located in the autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq.

3. The Union Cabinet has approved an allocation of ₹1.86 lakh crore for the third phase of the Green Power Transmission Corridor Scheme (PM-TARA) to facilitate the transmission of renewable electricity between States and Union Territories.

(i) The scheme, which will help strengthen renewable power transmission infrastructure of up to 135 GW, also provides for the installation of 50 GW-hour battery energy storage systems.

(ii) The PM-TARA scheme, with a financial allocation of ₹1.86 lakh crore, was approved at a Union Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi. PM-TARA stands for a scheme aimed at integrated and accelerated access to renewable energy. The approval assumes significance as India has set a target of generating 500 GW of renewable energy by 2030.

(iii) The scheme will help address problems such as disruptions in power generation, shortages in electricity supply during peak demand hours, and the additional power demand arising during periods when solar power is not being generated. It will also facilitate the strengthening of power infrastructure, coordination, and electricity transmission between States and Union Territories.

(iv) The scheme is targeted for full implementation by the financial year 2032–33. The total estimated cost of the scheme is ₹1,86,405 crore. Of this, ₹1,36,378 crore will be spent on strengthening Inter-State power transmission infrastructure, while ₹50,000 crore will be spent on installing battery energy storage systems with a capacity of 50 GW-hours. According to the Union Government, the scheme is expected to generate a large number of direct and indirect employment opportunities in the power generation, construction, and related sectors.

4. Development, Heritage: Progress in the Tourism Sector

(i) Global Tourism Ranking & Growth

- India achieved 31st rank among 160 countries in the 2026 Global Tourism Index.
- This position marks a 4.3% growth compared to 2024.
- India's ranking improved from 65th in 2014 to 39th in 2024 before reaching 31st place in 2026.
- India ranks 1st among South Asian and middle-income nations.
- India places in the top 10 countries globally across 13 evaluation indicators used to assess tourism growth.
- This international recognition reflects policy initiatives driven by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Development and Heritage'.

(ii) Infrastructure & Transport Connectivity

- Beyond natural and cultural attractions like mountains, temples, and beaches, sustained tourism growth relies on quality roads, flight connectivity, suitable accommodation, and memorable travel experiences.
- Upgraded national highways, expanded railway networks, new airports, and regional air services have provided significant momentum to the sector.
- Under the regional connectivity UDAN scheme, 95 airports have been connected through 687 routes.

(iii) Government Schemes & Financial Allocations

- Swadesh Darshan Scheme (Phase 1): 76 tourism projects worth over ₹5,295 crore across 15 themes received approval, with 75 projects completed.
- Swadesh Darshan Scheme (Phase 2): 53 projects valued at over ₹2,207 crore are currently underway.
- PRASHAD Scheme: Focuses on upgrading cleanliness, security, visitor amenities, and local employment opportunities at pilgrimage sites.

(iv) Digital Services & Visa Reforms

- Electronic visa facilities are available to tourists from 172 countries, with 92% of applications approved within 72 hours.
- Information and travel services are streamlined through the Incredible India Digital Platform, Nidhi Plus, and a multilingual tourism helpline.
- Digital technology links small lodges, local guides, tour operators, and service providers to larger commercial markets.

(v) Economic Impact, Revenue, and Employment

- The tourism sector contributes 5.22% to India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- In FY 2023–24, the sector generated 8.46 crore (84.6 million) jobs across the country.
- Foreign tourist arrivals generated ₹2,76,831 crore in foreign exchange revenue.
- Tourism serves as a key driver for connecting India's civilization globally while spurring regional job creation.

5. Local Democracy

"Every village will become a republic or panchayat with full powers. In India's true democracy, the village will be its basic unit."

— Mahatma Gandhi

(i) Historical Evolution of Local Self-Governance

- Group organization and collective decision-making practices existed even during hunter-gatherer times, with village-level committees managing local lifestyles long before modern constitutions emerged.
- Villages functioned as autonomous units during the Maurya Empire, and Kautilya's Arthashastra detailed the principles of administrative decentralization.
- The Chola reign represented the pinnacle of ancient local administration, employing the Kudavolai system detailed in the Uttiramerur inscription to select village administration committee members.

(ii) Colonial & Post-Independence Policy Milestones

- Lord Ripon introduced elected local governance bodies in 1882, earning him recognition as the "Father of Modern Local Self-Government in India".
- Article 40 of the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Indian Constitution directed State Governments to organize Village Panchayats.
- Balwant Rai Mehta Committee (1957): Recommended a three-tier rural governance structure, which was first launched in Rajasthan in 1959.
- Ashok Mehta Committee (1977): Alongside subsequent committees, it advocated for constitutional status and legal protection for local self-governing bodies.

(iii) Constitutional Amendments & Tamil Nadu Statutory Framework

- 73rd and 74th Amendments (1992): Granted Constitutional status and legal protection to rural and urban local bodies, creating a three-tier system consisting of Village Panchayats, Block Panchayats, and District Panchayats.
- Article 243A: Empowered State Governments to enact detailed legislation and administrative rules for local governance.
- Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act 1994: Formally established the current local administration structure and operational rules across Tamil Nadu.

(iv) Composition, Functions, and Judicial Standing of the Gram Sabha

- Formed under Article 243A, the Gram Sabha encompasses all registered voters in a village panchayat without requiring elections, serving as the bedrock of direct democracy.
- Gram Sabha meetings are convened on Gandhi Jayanti (October 2), with the power and duty to call the meeting resting with the Village Panchayat President.
- The Gram Sabha selects beneficiaries for Government welfare programs, assesses the local impact of external department schemes, and conducts social audits of local projects.
- The Supreme Court of India has affirmed across multiple judgments that the Gram Sabha acts as a transparent democratic tool and a robust foundation for inclusive social justice.

(v) Continuous Requirements & Future Strategic Roadmap

- Strengthening Village Panchayats requires continuous capacity building, public awareness, administrative training, and the adoption of modern technology.
- Government bodies, academic institutions, and grassroots activists must collaborate to educate citizens and replicate successful state, national, and international models.
- Continuous review and discussion regarding the decentralization of administrative authority, financial resources, and functional powers remain essential for local governance success.

6. Discharge of Untreated Sewage from Bengaluru into Tamil Nadu Rivers

(i) Sewage Generation and Topography of Bengaluru

- Bengaluru is India's 5th largest city, situated on the Southern Deccan Plateau at an elevation of 3,000 feet above sea level.
- Due to this high elevation, wastewater discharged from the city flows rapidly down natural drainage channels into the Cauvery and Thenpennai rivers.
- Bengaluru produces approximately 2,825 MLD (million liters per day) of sewage.

(ii) Discharge of Untreated Sewage into Tamil Nadu Rivers

- Only 1,364.5 MLD of Bengaluru's sewage is treated and diverted for agricultural use in Kolar and neighboring districts in Karnataka.
- The remaining 46% of untreated sewage is discharged into the Vrishabhavathi River near Kanakapura, flowing directly into the Cauvery and Thenpennai rivers toward Tamil Nadu.
- Under Indian law, sewage treatment is mandatory for all urban areas, and the Central Government established the National Green Tribunal (NGT) to enforce environmental compliance.
- Karnataka includes this untreated sewage volume in its official calculations when reporting the total water released to Tamil Nadu under the Cauvery Water Management Authority's orders.
- Karnataka routinely refuses to release Tamil Nadu's mandated share of Cauvery water as per tribunal and Supreme Court orders, opening dam gates only during heavy floods and effectively treating Tamil Nadu as a drainage basin.

(iii) Public Health and Environmental Impacts

- Untreated sewage contains dangerous pathogens, risking the spread of infectious diseases to millions of people in Tamil Nadu.
- Contamination from untreated sewage was exposed as the underlying cause behind an incident

a few years ago when Mettur Dam water turned green and thousands of dead fish floated on the surface.

(iv) Legal Action and Proposed Sewage Infrastructure

- The Tamil Nadu Government filed a lawsuit in the NGT challenging Karnataka's discharge of untreated sewage into shared river systems.
- Following the NGT petition, Karnataka Environment Minister Ramalinga Reddy publicly acknowledged that 46% of the city's sewage enters Tamil Nadu untreated.
- The Minister announced plans to construct 43 new sewage treatment plants (STPs) to treat 1,174 MLD of wastewater going toward Tamil Nadu.
- The timeline for completing these 43 plants remains undefined, leaving untreated sewage flowing into Tamil Nadu in the interim.

(v) Ethical, Literary, and Historical Criticisms

- Tirukkural Benchmark: Cites Kural 997 - அரம்போலும் கூர்மைய ரேனும் மரம்போல்வர் மக்கட்பண்பு இல்லா தவர். Which states that individuals lacking human morality/character are like trees, regardless of how sharp their intellect may be.
- Sivaprakasa Swamigal's Nanneri, comparing those who commit grave, unethical actions without fear of sin to visually impaired individuals who do not fear darkness.