

October 12, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. Several houses were swept away by another sudden flash flood in Nepal. Two hydropower plants suffered extensive damage.

(i) A sudden flash flood occurred in the Budhi Gandaki River, which flows through Gandaki Province, at around 4 a.m. on Sunday. Several houses located along the river bank in the Sumnubri area were swept away. Bridges were also washed away by the floodwaters. Two hydropower plants in Gorkha District were damaged.

(ii) A total of 82 people, including nine foreign nationals, who were stranded in the flood in Gorkha District were safely rescued using four helicopters. Five people, including two women, remain missing. Search operations are underway to locate them. Following the incident, the Gorkha District administration urged people living along the Gandaki River to move to safer locations and remain extremely cautious.

(iii) The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) stated that a landslide-induced blockage along the course of the river was responsible for the sudden flooding. More than 700 Nepalese Army personnel and other security forces are involved in search and rescue operations in Gorkha District.

(iv) The Nepalese Government stated that no casualties had been reported and that all tourists were safe.

(v) Last August, flash floods in the Bhotekoshi and Trishuli rivers reportedly killed around 1,400 people, while thousands remain missing. Before the tragedy had subsided, another flash flood in the Gandaki River swept away numerous houses, causing widespread concern.

2. Opposition has emerged in the United States to President Donald Trump's decision to lift the ban on diesel imports from Russia. Even lawmakers belonging to Trump's Republican Party have decided to introduce a bill in Congress opposing his decision.

(i) The Russia-Ukraine war has continued for more than four years. The United States, the United Kingdom and several other countries have supported Ukraine in the conflict. As part of efforts to put pressure on Russia, the United States imposed a ban on petroleum and diesel imports from the country. Recently, the US Congress also passed a bill proposing a 100% tariff on goods imported from countries that purchase crude oil and fuel from Russia.

(ii) Against this backdrop, Trump reportedly told Russian President Vladimir Putin during a telephone conversation on Friday that the United States had decided to purchase 300,000 tonnes of diesel from Russia. Reports have also emerged that Trump intends to lift restrictions on Russian diesel exports to facilitate the purchase. The decision has shocked US lawmakers, particularly because a bill proposing 100% tariffs on goods from countries purchasing Russian crude oil had recently been passed.

3. Indian women's cricket team captain Smriti Mandhana was appointed a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador for programmes related to adolescent girls' health and other initiatives.

4. Dutch driver Max Verstappen, representing Red Bull Racing, won the Singapore Grand Prix in Formula One

(FI) racing.

5.Vice-President C. P. Radhakrishnan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other leaders paid tribute to socialist leader Jayaprakash Narayan on his birth anniversary.

(i) Popularly known as Loknayak J. P., Jayaprakash Narayan was born on October 11, 1902, in Sitabdiara, now associated with the Chapra region of Bihar. A freedom fighter, he led nationwide protests against the Government of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi during the 1970s. He passed away in 1979. In 1999, he was posthumously awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour.

6.Atomic Energy Commission Chairman Ajit Kumar Mohanty stated that private companies could invest ₹7.5 lakh crore in India's nuclear energy sector.

(i) India's Nuclear Power Generation Target

In an interview with the Press Trust of India (PTI), Mohanty, who also serves as Secretary of the Department of Atomic Energy, stated:

- India's current nuclear power generation capacity stands at 9 GW.
- The country aims to increase its nuclear power generation capacity to 100 GW by 2047.

(ii) Expected Private Sector Contribution

- The private sector is expected to contribute 30 GW of nuclear power generation capacity through investments of approximately ₹7.5 lakh crore.
- Generating 1 MW of nuclear power is estimated to cost around ₹25 crore.
- The Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) currently operates 24 nuclear reactors. Mohanty expressed hope that some private companies would also begin operating nuclear reactors within the next five years.

(iii) SHANTI Act, 2025

- The SHANTI Act, 2025, which permits private sector participation in nuclear power generation, was introduced to facilitate public-private collaboration in areas of the nuclear energy sector, excluding activities considered critical to safeguarding national sovereignty.

(iv) Focus on Small Nuclear Reactors

- Completing the overall framework for a nuclear power project, including technology selection, construction requirements and regulatory approvals, generally takes around five to seven years.
- Private companies are currently evaluating several factors, including reactor technologies, fuel supply arrangements, land requirements and joint venture agreements with NPCIL.
- India has begun focusing not only on large nuclear power plants but also on small modular reactors and other smaller reactor designs.
- Small nuclear reactors can play an important role in meeting electricity demand.

(v) International Cooperation

- India's commercial nuclear power programme began in 1969. Since then, the country has made considerable progress in nuclear reactor engineering, construction, operation and maintenance.
- Russia, France and the United States have also developed their own nuclear technologies. These technologies create opportunities for international cooperation, subject to Indian regulations.
- The Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant, which uses Russian nuclear technology, is an example of such international cooperation.

7. Nobel Peace Prize 2026

(i) Nobel Peace Prize 2026 Announcement & Committee Decision

- The Norwegian Nobel Committee selected Navanethem "Navi" Pillay, an 85-year-old international legal expert of South African Tamil origin, as the recipient of this year's Nobel Peace Prize.
- The 6-member committee, chaired by Jørgen Watne Frydnes, selected Pillay despite intense pressure and threats from US President Donald Trump, who was eagerly anticipating the award.
- The committee evaluated 208 individuals (including Donald Trump) and 79 organizations before making their final decision.

(ii) Historical Context of the Nobel Peace Prize

- While Swedish institutions determine winners for Medicine, Physics, Chemistry, Literature, and Economics, the Norwegian Nobel Committee selects the Peace Prize laureate.
- First established in 1901, the Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded 105 times to 92 men, 19 women, and 28 organizations.
- Until 1960, the prize was restricted to white individuals from Europe and America—which is why Mahatma Gandhi was never awarded despite being considered four times.
- The prize achieved a true international dimension in 1960 when it was awarded to South African human rights activist Albert John Luthuli.

(iii) Ancestry, Early Life, and Education

- Navi Pillay's ancestors were taken as plantation laborers in the 19th century from Dindigul in the Madras Presidency to South Africa.
- She was born in Durban as the 5th daughter of Narayanasamy Naidu (a bus driver) and Santhamma in a family of 8 children.
- Supported by financial contributions from Durban's Tamil community, she completed her law degree in the US and earned a doctorate (Ph.D.) from Harvard University.
- Rejecting a comfortable life in the US, she returned to South Africa to advocate for victims of apartheid.

(iv) Anti-Apartheid Activism and Judicial Milestones

- In 1962, she married Paranjothy Anthony Pillay, who was also an active anti-apartheid activist.
- She provided legal counsel to political prisoners facing torture and solitary confinement, eventually catching the attention of Nelson Mandela and serving as his defense lawyer.
- In 1967, she became the first female attorney in Natal, though banned from entering judges' chambers as an Indian. In 1995, she made history by becoming a judge on the High Court of South

Africa.

(v) International Judicial Leadership & Legacy

- She served as a judge on the tribunal investigating the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, which claimed 800,000 lives.
- She served as a judge at the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2003 and as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights from 2008 to 2014.
- Her legal crusade against war crimes and genocide was inspired by the Nuremberg trials of Nazi war criminals.
- When her Nobel Prize was announced, she was coincidentally present inside Courtroom 600 at Nuremberg, where the original trials took place.
- Her courageous career and the Nobel Committee's independence honor the vision of Alfred Nobel, who established the peace prize 125 years ago.

8. Agricultural revival in lake restoration

(i) El Niño Impact and Climate Dynamics

- 'El Niño' (literally meaning "bad") alters global climate patterns, reducing or increasing seasonal rainfall across many countries and impacting approximately 80% of India's Southwest Monsoon (June–September).
- Unlike most Indian states that rely heavily on the Southwest Monsoon, Tamil Nadu receives the bulk of its rainfall during the Northeast Monsoon (October–December).
- Out of the solar surface temperature of roughly 6,000°C, a small fraction reaches Earth to evaporate seawater and create rain clouds.
- Over the past 50 years (post-1975), severe El Niño events impacted India/Tamil Nadu in 1982–83, 1997–98, and 2015–16. The 2015 El Niño triggered catastrophic heavy rainfall in November 2015, causing severe damage to Chennai.

(ii) Tank Irrigation Classification and Regional Distribution

- Out of 37 districts in Tamil Nadu, 4 districts (Thiruvavur, Mayiladuthurai, Nagapattinam, and Nilgiris) have no irrigation tanks. The remaining 33 districts contain a total of 41,123 tanks according to 2024–25 statistical data.
- Categorization by Irrigation Area:
 - Small Tanks (<40 hectares): 24,263 tanks managed by local panchayats, covering 2.21 lakh hectares of registered irrigation area.
 - Medium Tanks (40–200 hectares): 14,405 tanks, covering 5.35 lakh hectares.
 - Large Tanks (>200 hectares, e.g., Veeranam, Kaveripakkam): 534 tanks, covering 2.56 lakh hectares.
 - Total Registered Area: The total registered tank irrigation area across Tamil Nadu stands at 10.12 lakh hectares.
- While the Department of Statistics records 41,123 tanks, the Water Resources Department (based on a 1977 PWD survey across 17,500 revenue villages) lists 39,202 tanks—a discrepancy of 1,921 tanks.
- Just 17 of Tamil Nadu's 37 districts account for 81% of all tanks and 97% of total tank-irrigated land. The remaining 16 tank-bearing districts hold only 19.5% of tanks and 3% of irrigated land.

(iii) Water Storage Capacities and Actual Irrigated Area

- The net storage capacity of all tanks in Tamil Nadu is 347 TMC, which substantially exceeds the combined net storage capacity of all 90 dams in the state (224 TMC).
- Between 2020–21 and 2024–25, the average actual tank-irrigated area was only 3.96 lakh hectares—representing just 39% of the registered 10.12 lakh hectares.
- 75-Year Historical Decline: Tank-irrigated land peaked in the 1960s and has declined drastically over seven decades:
 - 1950s: 7.8 lakh hectares.
 - 1960s (Peak): 9.1 lakh hectares.
 - 1970s: 8.5 lakh hectares.
 - 1980s: 6.2 lakh hectares.
 - 1990s: 6.3 lakh hectares.
 - 2000s: 5.1 lakh hectares.
 - 2010s: 3.9 lakh hectares (a loss of 6 lakh hectares over 15 years).

(iv) Key Causes of Tank Degradation

- Tamil Nadu receives an average annual rainfall of 965 mm, with over 80% delivered by the Southwest Monsoon (340 mm) and Northeast Monsoon (480 mm), mostly concentrated across a few days in October–November.
- Tank maintenance has dropped by 70–80%, leading to the decline of traditional community maintenance (Kudimaramathu). Widespread encroachments have blocked tanks and supply channels.
- The expansion of tube-well irrigation and free electricity led farmers to abandon tank care, while Governments focused on revenue extraction rather than long-term maintenance.

(v) Proposed Action Plan and Policy Solutions

- Repairing and desilting tanks across the 17 core districts on a war footing could immediately double active tank-irrigated area from 4 lakh hectares to 8 lakh hectares.
- 'Tamil Nadu Farmers' Management of Irrigation Systems Act, 2000' was revived and implemented to empower local water users and resolve management disputes.
- Government agencies and farming communities must collaborate on a war footing to capture and store incoming heavy rainfall from El Niño-driven Northeast Monsoons.