

October 19, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. US President Donald Trump has ordered the suspension of 100% tariffs on goods imported from countries, including India and China, that purchase large quantities of petroleum products from Russia.

(i) Although the 100% tariffs were introduced under a recently enacted law, Trump has suspended their implementation by exercising the special powers granted to him under the same legislation.

(ii) The decision comes after the United States recently entered into an agreement to procure diesel from Russia for immediate supply to the US and the international market, with the aim of easing the severe fuel shortage in the United States. Against this backdrop, Trump ordered the suspension of the new tariffs.

(iii) Notably, Trump issued this executive order just one day before the 30-day deadline for implementing the new law expired. The executive order, which he signed on Friday night, stated the following:

- Exercising the authority granted to him under Section 115 of the recently enacted Lindsey O. Graham Russia and Iran Sanctions Act of 2026, which provides for imposing 100% tariffs and other restrictions on goods imported from countries purchasing large quantities of petroleum products from Russia, I hereby order the waiver of the tariffs specified in Sections 112 and 113 of the Act.
- The US Trade Representative, in consultation with other senior officials, must continue monitoring efforts to help prevent sanctions from being imposed on countries purchasing crude oil and natural gas from Russia. If circumstances arise that require additional measures, officials must inform the President accordingly. This includes reviewing the tariff exemptions granted at present.
- Trump stated that he had also submitted a certification to the US Congress explaining that these tariffs and restrictions were being waived in the interest of the United States.

2. Government caps trade margins on 137 anti-cancer drugs at 30%

(i) Trade Margin Capping on Cancer Drugs

- The Union Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers announced that the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) has capped the trade margin for 137 non-scheduled cancer drugs at a maximum of 30% on the Maximum Retail Price (MRP).
- This regulatory measure aims to prevent profiteering, make cancer treatment affordable, and ensure smooth access to essential cancer medications.

(ii) Expert Selection & Up to 70% Price Reduction

- The list of 137 cancer drugs was compiled based on recommendations from a committee of leading oncologists, hospital medical experts, and Government officials under the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).
- By capping trade margins at 30%, the Maximum Retail Prices of these drugs are expected to decrease by up to 70%.
- The drug list is published in the official gazette notification on the NPPA website (<https://nppa.gov.in>) and will be periodically updated.

(iii) Implementation Timeline & Manufacturer Deadlines

- The official gazette notification was issued on Saturday, October 17.
- All pharmaceutical manufacturers must submit their revised price details to the NPPA within 7 days of the notification.
- The revised reduced prices will officially take effect on November 9.

(iv) Price Display & Consumer Verification

- Drug manufacturers must publish the revised price lists on their websites and distribute them to all retailers and hospitals.
- From November 9 onward, retailers and hospitals must sell these drugs at the reduced prices and prominently display the updated price list in their premises for public view.
- Patients and consumers can verify the revised prices using the Pharma Sahi Daam mobile app or the NPPA website.

(v) Enforcement, Hospital Accountability, & Patient Relief

- Because a significant portion of cancer drugs is supplied directly to hospitals and healthcare institutions, these facilities are responsible for ensuring patients receive the reduced prices from November 9.
- State Drug Control Officers will oversee and enforce compliance across manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers, and hospitals.
- This measure is expected to provide substantial economic relief to cancer patients and families facing high medical costs.

3. Tamil Nadu to Introduce Dengue Vaccine for the First Time in India

Tamil Nadu Health Minister K. G. Arunraj announced that the dengue vaccine would be introduced in Tamil Nadu for the first time in the country.

(i) Development and International Approval

- Takeda, a Japanese pharmaceutical company, has developed a vaccine against dengue fever.
- Dengue has four different serotypes. The vaccine is designed to provide protection against all four serotypes.
- The vaccine has been approved for use in more than 40 countries, including those in Europe, the United Kingdom, Indonesia and Thailand.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has also previously granted prequalification to the vaccine.

(ii) Approval in India and Tamil Nadu's Initiative

- In India, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has approved the vaccine for individuals aged 4 to 60 years.
- However, no state had come forward to use the vaccine so far.
- The Tamil Nadu Government, led by Chief Minister Vijay, has come forward to introduce the vaccine and conduct a study, making it the first state in the country to take this initiative.

(iii) Dosage, Protection and Study Location

- The vaccine must be administered in two doses, with an interval of three months between them.
- It is expected to provide approximately 80% protection against dengue fever.
- The Minister stated that the study to assess how effectively the vaccine works in Tamil Nadu would begin in Kadayanallur.

4. The use of the internet by children cannot be banned: Supreme Court

(i) Fundamental Right to Internet Access for Minors

- The Supreme Court affirmed that accessing the internet is a fundamental right under Articles 21 and 19(1)(a) of the Constitution for every individual, including minors regardless of age.
- A total ban on minors using the internet is unacceptable and inappropriate, as no legal system globally has proven that such restrictions enhance child safety.
- For many children, particularly those residing in remote regions, the internet is the sole medium for learning and accessing information.
- Imposing legal prohibitions does not stop minors from using the internet; instead, children continue accessing it secretly without parental knowledge, risking exposure to unregulated and higher-risk online platforms.
- Court records and news reports demonstrate that preventing minors from using social media platforms does not reduce crimes committed against them.

(ii) Case Background & Supreme Court Intervention

- A case was previously brought against a Chennai resident named Harish for downloading child sexual abuse material (CSAM) on his mobile phone. The Madras High Court quashed criminal proceedings against him, ruling that downloading and viewing child pornography was not a crime under the POCSO Act or IT Act.
- Following an appeal by two child welfare NGOs, the Supreme Court expressed strong dissatisfaction with the High Court's interpretation and overturned the judgment in 2024, explicitly declaring that viewing and downloading child pornography is a punishable crime under the POCSO and IT Acts.
- A Supreme Court bench comprising Justices J.B. Pardiwala and K.V. Chandran observed that social media platforms and online intermediaries have repeatedly failed to comply with its 2024 directions.

(iii) Mandatory Rules for Social Media & Heavy Fines

- All social media platforms must ensure that content involving child sexual abuse, harassment, or harm is prevented from being uploaded, advertised, circulated, or monetized (whether directly or via subscription fees).
- The Supreme Court directed the Central Government to consider implementing heavy financial fines on defaulting social media platforms under the IT Act and rules.
- Any financial revenue generated through the circulation of child sexual abuse photos and videos must be confiscated.

(iv) National Database Creation & Next Hearing

- The Supreme Court ordered the Central Government to establish a dedicated national database based on digital hashes (fingerprints) and URLs to track, identify, and remove CSAM content.
- The bench warned that without genuine multi-stakeholder efforts and technological safeguards to eliminate CSAM, such material will continue to spread and embolden perpetrators.
- The Supreme Court instructed the Central Government to file a compliance affidavit detailing implementation progress, setting the next hearing for December 10.

5. India's foreign exchange reserves declined to \$726.027 billion in the week ended October 9. According to data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI):

(i) The country's foreign exchange reserves fell by \$8.578 billion during the week ended October 9, bringing the total to \$726.027 billion. In the previous week, total reserves had declined by \$12.952 billion to \$734.606 billion.

(ii) Earlier, India's foreign exchange reserves had reached an all-time high of \$785.706 billion in the week ended September 4. This increase was attributed to an inflow of approximately \$133 billion raised by banks through a foreign currency deposit scheme for Non-Resident Indians (NRIs). Since then, the country's foreign exchange reserves have been declining for several consecutive weeks.

(iii) During the week under review, foreign currency assets, the largest component of foreign exchange reserves, declined by \$7.142 billion to \$597.605 billion. Foreign currency assets include the value of holdings in currencies other than the US dollar, such as the euro, pound sterling, and Japanese yen, expressed in US dollar terms. Fluctuations in the exchange rates of these currencies affect their reported dollar value.

(iv) During the week under review, India's gold reserves declined by \$1.319 billion to \$105.094 billion. Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) fell by \$109 million to \$18.548 billion. India's reserve position with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) declined by \$10 million to \$4.78 billion, according to RBI data.