

October 17, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay inaugurated the Periyar Knowledge World Library and Science Centre, constructed in Coimbatore at a cost of ₹301 crore.

2. Tesla has unveiled a next-generation version of its Roadster electric flying car, enhanced with SpaceX rocket propulsion technology.

(i) After being anticipated worldwide for more than a decade, the commercial production of this state-of-the-art car has officially been announced to begin in 2028.

(ii) Developed jointly by SpaceX and Tesla, the companies founded by leading global entrepreneur Elon Musk, this two-seater car has been designed to perform a variety of spectacular manoeuvres.

(iii) A grand unveiling ceremony for the car was held at the SpaceX testing facility in McGregor, Texas. During the event, the car travelled upside down along slopes using specialised technology. Powered by rocket propulsion, it reportedly flew through the air, cleared trucks and other vehicles, and landed safely, leaving the spectators astonished.

(iv) The advance booking amount for the Roadster Performance model has been fixed at \$50,000, while the rocket-propelled Thrust model requires an advance payment of \$250,000. In addition, a single-seater Rocket model featuring a fully integrated flying system will reportedly be offered to customers exclusively by invitation.

(v) Tesla engineers have stated that the new Roadster can accelerate to 97 km/h (60 mph) in less than one second and achieve a top speed exceeding 370 km/h. It can also travel up to 480 km on a single charge. Elon Musk proudly claimed that the car would reach half the speed of sound.

(vi) Although the long-delayed unveiling of the Roadster has now taken place and attracted investors' attention, Tesla's primary focus has shifted towards artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics. The company is actively working on manufacturing autonomous vehicles, including Optimus humanoid robots and the steering-wheel-free Cybercab robotaxi, as alternatives to conventional human-driven cars.

3. Nithya Raman, whose family originates from Kerala, is reportedly leading incumbent Mayor Karen Bass in the mayoral election campaign in Los Angeles, the second-largest city in the United States.

(i) If 45-year-old Nithya Raman, a member of the Democratic Party, wins the election scheduled for November 3, she will make history as the city's first mayor of Indian origin.

4. Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney has warned that the United States is conspiring to divide Canada in an attempt to establish its dominance.

(i) A public vote is scheduled for Monday concerning Alberta, a Canadian province with substantial crude oil reserves. The vote will determine whether the government should be empowered to hold a referendum on separation from Canada.

(ii) Against this backdrop, Prime Minister Mark Carney attended a gathering in Calgary, Alberta's largest

city, urging the province to remain united with Canada.

(iii) Speaking at the gathering, he said:

“At a time when international tensions and divisions are increasing, this referendum is being held at the wrong time. Foreign powers such as the United States are attempting to divide and control Canada.”

(iv) He emphasised that voting against remaining part of Canada would create nothing but uncertainty and deep divisions for generations to come.

(v) US President Donald Trump’s trade war against Canada, along with his threats to make the country America’s 51st state, has provoked widespread anger among Canadians.

5. Pakistan has been selected to chair the Boards of Governors of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group for 2027.

(i) With this development, Pakistan will once again assume this leadership responsibility after a gap of more than 70 years, having last held the position in 1953.

(ii) During the annual meetings of the IMF and the World Bank, currently being held in Bangkok, Thailand, Ahad Khan Cheema, Pakistan’s Minister for Economic Affairs and Governor of the World Bank for Pakistan, was formally announced as the new chair.

(iii) More than 15,000 delegates from 191 countries are participating in the conference. The Pakistani government has described the country’s appointment to this leadership position as a “historic milestone.”

The Government has also stated that this opportunity will enable Pakistan to contribute to global economic and development discussions and facilitate constructive dialogue among member countries.

(iv) Pakistan, which is facing a severe financial crisis, is receiving financial assistance worth \$7 billion from the IMF to address its foreign exchange shortage and implement economic reforms.

(v) In addition, Pakistan has been provided with an additional \$1.4 billion in funding to address the impacts of climate change. As review negotiations concerning both loan programmes have been completed, Pakistan is expected to receive a further approximately \$1.2 billion after approval by the IMF Executive Board.

6. The Union Sports Ministry has announced that ₹2,000 crore will be provided to the Gujarat Government as financial assistance to host the 2030 Commonwealth Games in Ahmedabad.

7. Vice-President C. P. Radhakrishnan dedicated INS Samarthak, the Indian Navy’s first indigenously built multi-purpose ship, to the nation. Speaking at the commissioning ceremony held in Karwar, Karnataka, he stated:

- Built with more than 75% indigenous content, INS Samarthak stands as an example of the growth of India’s industrial capabilities, technological expertise, and shipbuilding capabilities.
- Self-reliance in the defence sector is no longer merely a goal; it is increasingly becoming a reality.

8. Opportunity waiting

(i) Economic Importance and Domestic Sales Surge

- Automobile sales serve as a primary indicator for evaluating India's overall economic growth, contributing significantly to domestic sales and exports while driving component manufacturing.
- Total car sales in India stood at just 64,013 units in 1984.
- In August alone, domestic car sales crossed 4.5 lakh (450,000) units.
- Over 20 lakh (2 million) cars were sold in the first 5 months of the current financial year, with total sales projected to cross 50 lakh (5 million) units by the end of the year.

(ii) Household Penetration and Living Standards

- Currently, only 8% of Indian families own a car.
- The remaining 92% of households have not yet reached the economic capacity to purchase and maintain a car.
- Enabling these remaining families to purchase cars will serve as a direct sign of an improved standard of living across India.

(iii) Massive Employment Generation & Industrial Ecosystem

- US studies indicate that every worker employed in an automobile factory creates employment for 18 people in external sectors.
- According to Indian Government estimates, the automobile sector provides direct and indirect employment to over 3 crore (30 million) people.
- Auto manufacturing sustains key input industries including steel, rubber, plastics, and electronics.
- Employment opportunities span rubber plantations, iron and aluminum mining, oil refineries, sales dealerships, repair workshops, spare parts vendors, banking, and insurance companies.

(iv) Contribution to GDP and Government Policy

- According to a NITI Aayog report, the automobile sector contributes 7.1% to India's total GDP.
- The sector accounts for 49% of India's manufacturing GDP.
- The Central Government reduced GST on small cars last year, contributing to the recent surge in automobile sales.
- India is projected to become one of the top 5 global producers of cars and auto components in the coming years.

(v) Export Growth and International Market Opportunities

- India exported 9 lakh (900,000) cars in 2025–26, surpassing China's 2009 export total.
- China exported 83 lakh (8.3 million) cars last year, highlighting the massive scope India has to expand its automotive exports.
- In the United States, where cars priced under \$30,000 are scarce, over 10 lakh (1 million) people purchase used cars annually—presenting a huge opportunity for India to produce low-cost, feature-rich cars for export.

(vi) Tamil Nadu's Manufacturing Leadership

- Tamil Nadu accounts for approximately 30% of India's total automobile production.

- Tamil Nadu manufactures:
 - 36% of India's two-wheelers.
 - 25% of India's cars.
 - 60% of India's electric two-wheelers.
 - 40% of India's tires.
- Both the Central Government and the Tamil Nadu State Government must strategically plan to capture expanding international market opportunities.

9. Welfare of the elderly should be given priority

(i) Demographic Trends & Projections in India

- India currently has approximately 17.3 crore (173 million) senior citizens aged 60 and above, representing 10.5% of the total population.
- The elderly population is estimated to reach 23 crore by 2036 and 34.7 crore by 2050 (accounting for 21% of the total population).
- According to the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the number of senior citizens in India will surpass the total population of children by the year 2046.
- The proportion of elderly in the total population was 10.6% in 2011 and is projected to rise to 18.2% by 2031.
- Globally, the population of people aged 50 and above is expected to exceed 200 crore (2 billion) by 2050, with the majority residing in developing countries like India.

(ii) Rapid Aging Trend in Tamil Nadu

- According to a recent report by the Tamil Nadu Finance Minister, Tamil Nadu is transforming into an elderly society much faster than other Indian states.
- By the year 2100, approximately half of Tamil Nadu's population will consist of senior citizens.

(iii) Health Drivers, Vulnerabilities, and Recommended Lifestyle

- World Health Organization (WHO) statistics indicate that life expectancy among the elderly is rising due to medical advancements, improved nutrition, sanitation, medical science, healthcare, and education.
- Reduced immunity in old age causes bone-related complications, diabetes, dementia (memory disorders), sleep disturbances, and body tremors, which negatively impact mental health and lead to dependency, social isolation, and neglect by family members.
- Senior citizens should undergo regular preventive health check-ups and consume a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, proteins, vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber.
- Moderate exercise, walking, yoga, and meditation help maintain physical strength, balance, and flexibility. Senior citizens should avoid smoking, alcohol, and tobacco, ensure sufficient sleep, stay socially connected with family and friends for mental health, and take medications strictly as prescribed by doctors.

(iv) Government Policies, Concessions, and Hospital Grievances

- Senior citizen railway travel concessions were temporarily suspended in March 2020 due to COVID-

19. Despite the pandemic subsiding, these concessions have not been restored, forcing senior citizens to pay full fares even in difficult financial circumstances.

- Senior citizen organizations across the country are continuously petitioning the Central Government to reinstate the railway fare concession.
- Free health insurance under Ayushman Bharat up to ₹5 lakh per year has been expanded to cover all senior citizens aged 70 and above, regardless of their economic status.
- Allegations persist that hospitals are failing or refusing to extend this health insurance benefit to senior citizens.

(v) Social Rights, Legal Framework, and Toll-Free Helpline

- Elderly health and care must be recognized as a collective societal challenge rather than an individual issue, treating senior citizens as invaluable national assets.
- Governments, families, social media, and society must prioritize elderly welfare, enact protective laws, ensure dignified living conditions, and avoid treating senior citizens merely as an election vote bank.
- Senior citizens facing issues or seeking assistance can contact the dedicated national toll-free helpline number 14567.