

October 14, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay met and held discussions with Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, urging him to release additional Krishna River water to Tamil Nadu.

(i) He also requested that the Godavari–Cauvery river-linking project be implemented.

(ii) Telugu Ganga Project

- Under the Telugu Ganga project, initiated in 1983 by the then Chief Ministers of the two states, M. G. Ramachandran (MGR) and N. T. Rama Rao (NTR), Andhra Pradesh is required to release 12 TMC (thousand million cubic feet) of water annually to Tamil Nadu.

(iii) Godavari–Cauvery River-Linking Project

- According to a press release issued by the Tamil Nadu Government, Chief Minister Vijay urged his Andhra Pradesh counterpart to implement the Godavari–Cauvery river-linking project to find a permanent solution to water scarcity, as Tamil Nadu depends on neighbouring states for more than 30% of its water requirements.
- It was further stated that Chief Minister Vijay had said, “This project would support the southern states and strengthen water security for drinking and agricultural purposes. I have therefore requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to declare it a project of national importance. Hence, I urge the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister to take the initiative to implement the Godavari–Cauvery river-linking project.”

(iv) Additional Water for Chennai

- At present, Chennai’s five drinking-water reservoirs contain only about 35% of their total storage capacity.
- Krishna River water supplied to Chennai through a canal is extremely important for meeting the city’s drinking-water needs. The Tamil Nadu Government stated that Chief Minister Vijay had requested Andhra Pradesh to take steps to release additional water during the current water year.

(v) Despite the prevailing water scarcity in Andhra Pradesh, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu assured Tamil Nadu that his state would provide the water required by Tamil Nadu.

2. Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a telephone conversation with Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney. During the conversation, the two leaders discussed ways to further strengthen cooperation between the two countries in various sectors, including trade, energy, technology, security, and people-to-people relations.

(i) Canadian Trade Delegation Visits India

- A delegation comprising 300 business representatives, led by Canada’s Minister of International Trade, Maninder Sidhu, has arrived in India. Against this backdrop, the telephone conversation between the two prime ministers is noteworthy.
- The delegation is scheduled to participate in bilateral trade discussions in Mumbai and Bengaluru

until the 17th of the month.

(ii) Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)

- Earlier, during his visit to India in March, Mark Carney held discussions with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Following their meeting, the two leaders announced a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) aimed at further strengthening bilateral relations.
- Both countries are actively working towards finalising the agreement within the current year.

3. China opposes India's move to map 28 places in Ladakh

(i) India Maps 28 Strategic Locations in Ladakh

- On October 2, India officially mapped and identified 28 security-sensitive locations along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Union Territory of Ladakh (including Gogra and Hot Springs) in consultation with the local administration to raise public awareness.
- In May 2022, military standoffs and clashes occurred between Indian and Chinese troops at Gogra and Hot Springs, leading to heavy troop deployments before disengagement was achieved through dialogue.
- 28 Mapped Locations: Alisha Giri, Brangsa, Sachingal Pass, Kanishka Peak, Karun Pir Mountain, Kuksel, Martand Giri, Parbik Glacier, Skamri Glacier, Sachmirik Pass, Shkorka Valley, Zorawar Peak, Dehra Compass, Drak Karpo, Jolmori, Kumarayana Point, Panglung, Rinchen Zangpo, Sakyasri Giri, Guru Rinpoche, Shamal Lungpa, Yangpa River, Marpa Lotsawa Ri, Milarepa Kangri, Shiva Ri, and Maheshwara Ri.

(ii) Strong Opposition from China

- Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning voiced strong opposition during a media briefing in Beijing.
- Mao Ning stated that China does not recognize the "unilaterally and illegally established" Union Territory of Ladakh, claiming that mapping these 28 locations cannot alter the ground reality that these areas belong to China.

(iii) India's Firm Rejection of Chinese Claims

- Indian Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal firmly rejected China's objections in New Delhi.
- Jaiswal reiterated that the Union Territory of Ladakh is an integral and inalienable part of India, and repeated denials by China cannot alter this established fact.
- He highlighted that, according to the Ministry of Home Affairs press release issued on October 2, these 28 names were identified using standardized nomenclature from official Survey of India maps in consultation with local authorities.

4. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has projected that India's economic growth rate will be 7% in the current financial year, 2026–27.

(i) The IMF had previously projected India's growth rate at 6.4% in July. It has now revised the forecast upwards to 7%. The IMF also stated that India would continue to be the world's fastest-growing major

economy.

(ii) The IMF's annual meeting is being held in Bangkok, Thailand. The above information was included in the World Economic Outlook report released during the meeting.

(iii) According to the report, India will continue to be one of the world's fastest-growing major economies, with a projected growth rate of 7% in the current financial year.

(iv) Factors Supporting India's Economic Growth

- Despite elevated international crude oil prices, India's economic growth is expected to be stronger than previously anticipated, driven by a recovery in domestic demand and robust performance in the services sector.
- Unlike many other major economies, India enjoys sustained growth momentum supported by favourable demographic factors, an expanding domestic market, and continued structural reforms.

(v) Impact of Free Trade Agreements

According to the IMF report, the free trade agreements concluded by the European Union and the United Kingdom with India will help remove trade-related tariff barriers between the countries. These agreements are also expected to strengthen the resilience of supply chains.

5.Nandan Nilekani, co-founder of Infosys and chairman of the high-level task force constituted by the Central Government, stated that examination paper leaks could be prevented effectively by adopting a systematic approach supported by technology.

(i) Formation and Composition of the High-Level Task Force

- Following the major controversy surrounding irregularities in the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) for medical admissions, the Central Government constituted a high-level task force under the leadership of Nandan Nilekani.
- The task force was established to recommend reforms to the examinations conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA). The members of the task force include:
 1. S. Somanath – Former Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
 2. Tapan Kumar Deka – Former Director of the Intelligence Bureau.
 3. V. Kamakoti – Director of IIT Madras.
 4. Anita Karwal – Former Secretary of the Department of School Education.
 5. Amrit Lal Meena – Expert in logistics and administration.

The committee invited and examined opinions and suggestions from all stakeholders, including members of the public, regarding reforms to public examinations. It recently submitted an interim report to the Central Government. The final report is expected to be submitted soon.

6.The implementation of Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) charges on commercial transactions exceeding ₹2,000 through the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) has been postponed indefinitely. Under the proposed system, merchants would be charged an MDR fee of 0.4% per transaction.

(i) The new fee structure had initially been scheduled to come into effect on October 15. However, its implementation has now been deferred. The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) stated that a new implementation date would be decided after the Diwali festival.

(ii) The postponement is expected to provide significant relief to merchants who would otherwise have been subject to the proposed transaction charges.

(iii) To enable the collection of MDR charges from merchants on UPI transactions, the Central Government passed the Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026. The Government amended Section 10 of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, which prohibits banks from imposing charges on electronic payment transactions, including UPI transactions. The amendment provides a legal basis for imposing charges on such transactions under the Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) framework.

(iv) Based on the legislation, a Gazette notification regarding MDR charges was issued recently. According to the notification, the proposed fee structure was as follows:

- Transactions exceeding ₹2,000: Merchants would be charged an MDR fee of 0.4% per UPI commercial transaction.
- Transactions worth ₹75,000 or more: The MDR charge would be capped at ₹300 per transaction.
- Essential service sectors: A fixed charge of ₹5 per transaction was prescribed for sectors such as railways, telecommunications, and fuel distribution.

(v) The fee structure was originally scheduled to come into effect on October 15. However, its implementation has now been postponed indefinitely, with a revised date expected to be announced after Diwali.

7. "Navanethem Pillay — The Great Shadow of Justice"

(i) Nobel Peace Prize Announcement & Dedication

- On October 9, Navanethem "Navi" Pillay, an 85-year-old human rights defender of Tamil heritage, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo for her lifelong efforts in advancing international law and human rights.
- She is the fifth South African personality—standing alongside figures like Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu—to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.
- She dedicated her Nobel Prize to survivors of international crimes and to those fighting for international criminal justice, stating that their compassion and courage prevent impunity for perpetrators.
- The award faced criticism and opposition from the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and certain Jewish organizations.

(ii) Family Heritage, Indentured Labor, and "Pillay" Surname Origin

- During a meeting with the author at the 2019 World Tamil Research Conference in Chicago, Navi Pillay clarified that "Pillay" was not her family's actual caste name, stating her family did not know their original caste.
- Research reveals her grandparents were among the Tamil indentured laborers brought overseas under British colonial agreements known colloquially as "Girmit" (from "Agreement"), earning the

laborers the name "Girmitiyas".

- British officials who did not understand Tamil social structures assigned generic surnames like Pillai, Chettiar, or Naidu to grouped ship passengers, which became fixed in official records.
- Her grandparents worked 12 to 14 hours daily for nominal wages and lived in segregated "coolie lines".
- Bavi Pillay was born in Durban, South Africa, as the fifth of eight children.

(iii) Struggles Against Apartheid & University Segregation

- Growing up under apartheid in South Africa, she faced systemic discrimination. Under the Extension of University Education Act of 1959, non-white students faced severe restrictions entering premier universities (such as Johannesburg and Cape Town), were relegated to underfunded regional colleges, barred from certain campus areas, and held separate graduation ceremonies.
- After earning her law degree, no legal firm would hire her due to her race, and she was barred from entering judges' chambers.
- Undeterred, she established her own independent law firm to fight for civil rights.
- She courageously mounted legal challenges for political prisoners detained on Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela was incarcerated for 18 of his 27 years in prison.

(iv) Judicial Milestones & International Leadership

- Following the collapse of apartheid, she became the first non-white/Black woman appointed as a judge to the High Court of South Africa.
- As President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), she delivered a landmark ruling establishing that sexual violence during wartime constitutes genocide and war crimes.
- She served as a judge on the International Criminal Court (ICC) and as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (2008–2014), fearlessly confronting human rights abuses by global superpowers.

(v) Advocacy for Eelam Tamils & War Crimes Investigation

- In May 2009, immediately following the final phase of the Sri Lankan civil war at Mullivaikkal, she demanded an independent, credible international investigation into civilian deaths.
- Fact-Finding Mission (2013): In August 2013, despite severe slander from the Sri Lankan Government and media, she personally visited war-affected regions in Northern Sri Lanka, including Jaffna and Mullaitivu.
- Her official report exposed that Sri Lanka's domestic inquiry was merely nominal, laying the foundation for the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to establish a formal international war crimes investigation mechanism.
- Although 12 years have passed since the UN resolution, full accountability for Mullivaikkal remains pending on the international stage.