



P.L.RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY

Building Bureaucrats Since 2006

July 27, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the constitution of a new high-level committee headed by Infosys co-founder Nandan Nilekani to recommend reforms for examinations conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA).
 - i. The committee includes IIT Madras Director V. Kamakoti and experts from various fields.
 - ii. The announcement came after Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigned following sustained protests by students and youth led by the Citizens Janata Party (CJP) in New Delhi.
 - iii. Members of the Committee:
 - Nandan Nilekani (Chairman), Infosys Co-founder
 - S. Somanath, Former Chairman, ISRO
 - Tapan Kumar Deka, Former Director, Intelligence Bureau
 - V. Kamakoti, Director, IIT Madras
 - Anita Karwal, Former Education Secretary
 - Amrit Lal Meena, Expert in Logistics and Administration
 - iv. Responsibilities of the Committee:
 - Recommend reforms for NTA examinations.
 - Develop a cheating-free examination system.
 - Suggest technological and structural reforms for conducting examinations.
 - Recommend maximum use of technology to establish a transparent and robust examination system.
 - v. The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026, aimed at imposing stricter punishment for examination malpractices including question paper leaks, is scheduled to be introduced in the Lok Sabha on July 27. The Bill has been listed for introduction, consideration and passage.
 - vi. Under the proposed amendment:
 - Individuals involved in question paper leaks or examination malpractice will face 5 to

10 years' imprisonment and a fine of up to ₹50 lakh.

- Organized examination frauds will attract 7 to 10 years' imprisonment and a fine of up to ₹10 crore.
- The Bill also proposes the establishment of fast-track courts for speedy trial of such cases.

2. Indian weightlifter Saikhom Mirabai Chanu won the gold medal at the Commonwealth Games being held in Scotland. This is India's first gold medal at the ongoing Games.

- This is Mirabai Chanu's third consecutive Commonwealth Games gold medal, having also won gold in 2018 and 2022.
- Competing in the women's 48 kg category at the Games in Glasgow, she lifted a total of 190 kg to secure first place.
 - Snatch: 85 kg
 - Clean & Jerk: 105 kg
- Her 85 kg Snatch is a new record in both the Commonwealth Championships and Commonwealth Games. Her 105 kg Clean & Jerk and 190 kg total are also new Commonwealth Games records.
- Her Major Achievements
 - Olympic Silver Medal (2020)
 - World Championships:
 - Gold (2017)
 - Silver (2022)
 - Asian Championships:
 - Bronze (2020)
 - Commonwealth Championships:
 - Gold (2015, 2017, 2019)

3. Cauvery Water Shortage Threatens Samba Cultivation in Tamil Nadu

As Karnataka continues to withhold Cauvery river water, the prospects for Samba paddy cultivation following the Kuruvai season in Tamil Nadu's delta districts have become

uncertain.

- i. Due to inadequate storage in the Mettur Dam, water was not released for irrigation on June 12. Consequently, Kuruvai cultivation is expected to cover only about 3.50 lakh acres, compared to 6.31 lakh acres last year.
- ii. The absence of Cauvery water and deficient southwest monsoon rainfall have led to declining groundwater levels. Water scarcity and saline groundwater from borewells have affected paddy crops in several areas.
- iii. At the Cauvery Water Management Authority meeting held in New Delhi on July 22, Karnataka once again refused Tamil Nadu's request to release its share of Cauvery water, creating uncertainty for the upcoming Samba season.

iv. Expected Cultivation Area

Officials estimate that 9.82 lakh acres may be cultivated under Samba and Thaladi crops:

- Thanjavur – 3.25 lakh acres
- Tiruvarur – 3.75 lakh acres
- Nagapattinam – 1.12 lakh acres
- Mayiladuthurai – 1.70 lakh acres

v. Water Requirement

- Samba and Thaladi cultivation requires about 150 TMC of water.
- Kuruvai cultivation through borewell irrigation needs another 40 TMC.
- Total requirement: 190 TMC.

However, the Mettur Dam currently holds only 36.44 TMC, sufficient mainly for drinking water. Hence, irrigation release appears unlikely.

Water may be released only if heavy floods fill Karnataka's reservoirs, though such a possibility currently appears remote.

vi. Expert Opinion

Senior agricultural expert P. Kalaivanan stated:

- Without Cauvery water, farmers must rely on borewells.
- Due to poor southwest monsoon, groundwater levels are falling.
- Excessive extraction is difficult because seawater intrusion occurs at around 50 feet depth.

- Farmers should adopt medium-duration varieties and direct seeding during September to conserve water.
- Success will depend largely on the Northeast Monsoon, but its performance is uncertain due to El Niño conditions.

vii. Need for a Special Package

Farmers expect the Tamil Nadu Government to announce a special Samba cultivation package to support cultivation despite water shortages.

viii. Reservoir Status

Water available in Karnataka reservoirs:

- Krishna Raja Sagara – 17.13 TMC
- Kabini – 13.27 TMC
- Harangi – 7.50 TMC
- Hemavathi – 22.82 TMC

Total: 60.80 TMC

Although the Supreme Court has ordered proportional sharing, Karnataka has not released Tamil Nadu's due share.

Tamil Nadu should have received:

- June – 9.19 TMC
- July – 31.24 TMC
- Total: 40.43 TMC

However, only 3.50 TMC has been received so far, causing serious concern among farmers.

4. Three astronauts safely returned to Earth after completing an eight-month mission aboard the International Space Station (ISS).

i. The crew consisted of:

- American astronaut Chris Williams
- Russian cosmonauts Sergey Kud-Sverchkov
- Sergey Mikayev

They had been conducting scientific research and maintenance work aboard the ISS.

ii. They returned aboard the Russian Soyuz MS-28 spacecraft, which landed southeast of

Dzhezkazgan, Kazakhstan. All three astronauts exited the capsule safely.

- iii. This was the first space mission for Chris Williams and Sergey Mikayev.
 - It was the second mission for Sergey Kud-Sverchkov.

5. Typhoon “Noul” Leaves 10 Dead in China

After Typhoon Noul made landfall in China, severe flooding caused by heavy rainfall claimed 10 lives.

- i. The typhoon formed over the Pacific Ocean, moved across the South China Sea, and made landfall near Huizhou City in Guangdong Province at around 3:50 a.m., packing winds of 162 km/h and bringing torrential rain.

6. India’s Anahat Singh (18) won the World Junior Squash Championship, becoming the first Indian ever to win the title.

7. Nepal has permitted the use of India’s new ₹200 and ₹500 currency notes, ending a restriction that had been in place for nearly 10 years.

- i. After India’s demonetisation announcement on 8 November 2016, when the old ₹500 and ₹1,000 notes were withdrawn, Nepal banned Indian currency notes above ₹100 and allowed only notes worth up to ₹100, with a maximum carrying limit of ₹25,000.
- ii. Nepal has now relaxed these restrictions.
- iii. Indian ₹200 and ₹500 notes issued after 9 November 2016 are now permitted in Nepal. According to the Nepal Rastra Bank, travellers may carry these notes up to a total value of ₹25,000.
- iv. The central bank also clarified that Indian currency notes must not be brought into Nepal from countries other than India, nor taken from Nepal to any country other than India.