# P.L.RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY

**Building Bureaucrats Since 2006**

## August 11, 2026 - Dinamani Newspaper - Tit bits

1. A resolution moved by Chief Minister S. Joseph Vijay in the Legislative Assembly, seeking to give precedence to Tamil Thai Vazhthu at events organised by public institutions, was passed unanimously with the support of all parties.
   i. "In order to uphold the cultural identity of Tamil Nadu, I move a resolution that Tamil Thai Vazhthu must mandatorily be sung first, before the commencement of events organised by all educational institutions, universities, government offices, public sector undertakings and other public institutions. I request everyone to support and pass this resolution," he said.
   ii. An order was issued on November 23, 1970, stipulating that Tamil Thai Vazhthu should be sung first at Government functions. Subsequently, on December 17, 2021, it was accorded recognition as the state anthem. There is also a Government order making the singing of Tamil Thai Vazhthu mandatory at functions organised by all industrial and public institutions.
   iii. Based on a separate resolution moved in 1970 by the then Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi, a Government order was issued for the first time on November 23, 1970, making it mandatory to sing Tamil Thai Vazhthu at Government institutions, schools, colleges, public institutions and universities.

2. Bangladesh has once again requested India to extradite former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The demand was made when India's Ambassador to Bangladesh, Dinesh Trivedi, met Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman.
   i. Following the crisis caused by the 'Gen Z' protests in Bangladesh in 2024, Sheikh Hasina resigned as Prime Minister and sought refuge in India. Citing the death sentence awarded by a court in a case against Sheikh Hasina, the Bangladesh Government has repeatedly requested India to extradite her to Bangladesh. However, India has not accepted the request.

3. India's crude oil imports from Russia have reached a new high. In July alone, India purchased crude oil worth ₹60,534 crore from Russia.

i. The United States and European countries have imposed economic sanctions on Russia in an effort to put pressure on Moscow over the Ukraine war. The United States has also imposed stringent restrictions on imports of crude oil from Russia. However, amid the West Asian conflict, the US has allowed countries including India, subject to certain conditions, to purchase crude oil from Russia to prevent shortages of petrol and diesel.

ii. As a result, India has been importing crude oil from Russia at discounted prices. In July alone, India purchased crude oil worth ₹60,534 crore from Russia. This was 2.1% higher than the quantity of crude oil imported in June.

iii. In 2021, India imported around 100,000 barrels of crude oil per day from Russia. This increased to 740,000 barrels per day in 2022 and 1.8 million barrels per day in 2023. In July 2026 alone, India imported 2.8 million barrels of crude oil per day from Russia. India imported 5 million barrels of crude oil per day from various countries in July. Russian crude alone accounted for 55.5% of these imports.

iv. India ranks second in the world among countries importing the largest quantities of crude oil from Russia.

v. China ranks first on the list. Russia exports 50% of its total crude oil exports to China and 37% to India.

vi. India, Turkey, Brunei and Georgia, which import crude oil from Russia, refine it at their domestic refineries and export the refined petroleum products to several countries.

vii. These destinations include European countries that have imposed economic sanctions on Russia, as well as Australia and the United States. The European Union countries have been the largest destinations for such exports.

4. India's Ambassador to the United States, Vinay Mohan Kwatra, has told a US Congressman that regulating foreign funding is a matter related to a country's sovereignty and that similar laws exist in the United States as well.

i. The Union Government is expected to introduce and pass amendments to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) during the ongoing Parliamentary session to regulate funds received from foreign countries.

ii. US Congressman Riley Moore had criticised the proposed amendments, alleging that the legislation would enable the Indian Government to take control of churches and charitable organisations.

iii. Rejecting the allegation, India's Ambassador to the US, Vinay Mohan Kwatra, responded. In a post on his X account, he stated:

- Amendments to the FCRA are being introduced to bring greater transparency to the receipt of funds from foreign countries. Regulating foreign contributions in the public and political spheres is a sovereign measure related to national security.
- Similar laws exist in the United States for the same reasons. The Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) has been in force in the US since 1938. The Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) has been in force since 2010.
- Similar laws were introduced in Australia in 2018 and Canada in 2024. In the United Kingdom, a similar law came into force in July 2025. The European Union is also in the process of creating such legislation.
- If the registration of an organisation receiving foreign funds is cancelled, or if the organisation voluntarily surrenders its licence, the foreign contributions received by it and the assets created through such funds come under the control of a State Government officer under the legal provisions that have been in force since 2010.
- The 2026 amendment Bill only introduces new provisions for appointing an authority to manage those assets and establishing a mechanism for recovering the assets. If the organisation subsequently renews its registration, the assets and unused funds will be returned to it.

iv. Places of worship are protected:

- Places of worship have separate protection under the law. If an organisation whose registration has been cancelled has created assets connected with places of worship, those assets will be transferred to another place of worship belonging to the same religious faith that has a valid FCRA registration.
- There is no truth in the allegation that the law is being introduced to prevent civil society organisations from receiving foreign funding.
- Thousands of organisations are registered under the FCRA. These organisations

continue to receive foreign funds for healthcare, education, disaster relief, research and humanitarian activities. There are more than 3 million Non-Governmental Organisations in India, of which only 14,450 are registered under the FCRA.

- The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) was first introduced in India in 1976. It was subsequently strengthened through amendments in 2010, 2016, 2018 and 2020. The Bill and rules proposed this year are part of the same process.
- This is a move towards greater transparency, better administration and clearer rules. The allegation that the amendments are being introduced specifically to target a particular religious community is incorrect. The law applies equally to everyone, irrespective of religion, community or ideological differences. Organisations will continue to be eligible to receive foreign funding for religious welfare activities, including religious education, maintenance of places of worship, and charitable and other activities undertaken by religious organisations, he said.

### 5. The Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, which provides for the imposition of charges, including the Merchant Discount Rate (MDR), on electronic payment transactions such as UPI, was approved by the Rajya Sabha.

i. At the same time, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman clarified that no charges would be imposed on UPI transactions made by the general public.

ii. The Union Government introduced the Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, to amend Section 10 of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, which prohibits banks from levying service charges on electronic payment transactions, including UPI.

iii. The Bill had been approved by the Lok Sabha last week and has now also received approval from the Rajya Sabha.

### 6. Bankers' Books Evidence Bill, 2026

i. Legislative Milestone

- The Bankers' Books Evidence Bill, 2026, was passed in the Rajya Sabha (Upper House) on August 10, 2026, completing its Parliamentary approval.
- This new legislation replaces the 135-year-old Bankers' Books Evidence Act of 1891, which was established during British rule and was based entirely on paper records.

- The primary driver for the new law is the surge in digital and electronic transactions, for which the 1891 framework was deemed inadequate.

ii. Expanded Legal Scope and Definitions

- Printouts and electronic bank records are now officially recognized as primary evidence in legal proceedings.
- The Central Government is empowered to extend these evidence rules to other specified financial institutions beyond traditional banks.
- The procedures for certifying electronic records as authentic have been simplified and will be implemented uniformly across India to prevent procedural confusion.

iii. Key Modern Provisions

- The bill gives full legal recognition to digital and electronic signatures for document validation, granting them the same status as physical signatures.
- Courts now have strict restrictions on summoning bank managers to appear in person for cases where certified digital records are sufficient, preventing unnecessary operational disruptions.
- The law allows bank records to be submitted in either print or digital formats depending on the specific legal requirement.

iv. Direct Consumer Benefits

- By allowing direct submission of certified digital records, financial disputes—such as cheque fraud—can be resolved significantly faster.
- A standardized certification process across all banks reduces the procedural hurdles consumers face during litigation.
- The bill is intended to strengthen public confidence in both the banking and legal systems by aligning the law with modern technology.

v. Identified Risks and Requirements

- An urgent need for robust privacy protections to ensure sensitive financial data is not leaked during the evidence transfer process.
- Stringent protocols are required to prevent the entry of tampered or fraudulent digital evidence into court records.
- For ordinary consumers, verifying computer data can be difficult in cases of technical glitches or incorrect automated bank transactions.

The approval of this bill is a vital milestone in India's digital transformation, ensuring the legal framework evolves alongside banking technology to protect consumer interests.

## 7. Critical issue of prison overcrowding and violence, using recent incidents in Sri Lanka as a warning for India.

i. Recent Prison Violence in Sri Lanka

- Colombo and Kuruvitta: Recently, one prisoner died in a violent clash at Colombo's Meghsi prison, while another incident at Kuruvitta prison (60 km from the capital) resulted in two deaths and 23 serious injuries.
- Negombo Prison Clash: Last month, a massive clash between two groups involved in drug trafficking at Negombo prison led to the deaths of 33 people.
- The violence is attributed to drug circulation inside prisons, gang rivalries, and attacks on inmates who provide information to officials about illegal activities.

ii. The Crisis of Overcrowding in Sri Lanka

- Sri Lankan prisons are currently holding 300% to 400% more inmates than their designed capacity.
- While the nation's prisons are equipped to house approximately 11,000 people, they are currently forced to accommodate over 40,000 inmates.
- This extreme overcrowding leads to unavoidable friction, food distribution issues, lack of medical facilities, and overall hygiene failure.

iii. Prison Statistics and Trends in India

- According to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data (2024), India's 1,333 prisons have a total capacity of approximately 4.53 lakh (453,000), but are housing about 5.11 lakh (511,000) inmates.
- In states like Maharashtra, West Bengal, and Uttar Pradesh, the inmate population in some prisons exceeds capacity by 150%.
- Tamil Nadu: Prisons such as Puzhal-1 & 2 (Chennai), Coimbatore, Madurai, and Palayamkottai are currently holding inmates beyond their designated capacity.

iv. Historical Precedents and Causes of Violence

- Chennai 1999: A violent incident at the old Chennai Central Prison resulted in the deaths of 11 people, including a Deputy Jailor.

- 2017 violence in Mumbai's Byculla women's prison and Kolkata's Dum Dum prison are examples of the consequences of poor prison management.
- Investigations into these riots consistently point to population surges, space shortages, and allegations of torture as the primary triggers.

v. The Challenge of Undertrial Inmates

- Over 70% of the individuals currently housed in prisons are undertrials (those awaiting trial).
- Many remain incarcerated despite being granted bail because they lack the necessary documents or the financial means to pay the bond amount.
- There is an urgent need for free legal aid centers and NGOs to intervene and help these individuals navigate the legal system to reduce prison populations.

vi. Proposed Reforms and Recommendations

- Reducing crowds by implementing personal bail for minor offenses, house arrest, and the use of electronic monitoring devices instead of physical incarceration.
- Experts emphasize that various recommendations from the Justice A.N. Mulla (1980–83), Justice Krishna Iyer (1987–88), and Justice Amitava Roy (2018) commissions regarding rehabilitation and the separation of hardened criminals from first-time offenders have not yet been fully implemented.

Governments must act swiftly to reform the prison system and address overcrowding before similar self-inflicted disasters occur in India.

## 8. Critical need for elephant conservation on the occasion of World Elephant Day.

i. World Elephant Day

- World Elephant Day is observed globally every year on August 12.
- The day aims to raise awareness regarding the protection and preservation of elephants.
- Elephants are described as the "Chief of the Forest" (Kattin Mulavar); their presence is essential for the health and prosperity of forest ecosystems.

ii. Elephant Population Statistics

- According to the 2017 forest department census, there were 29,964 elephants across India.

- State-wise Leaders (2017):
  i. Karnataka: 6,049.
  ii. Assam: 5,719.
  iii. Kerala: 5,706.
  iv. Tamil Nadu: 2,761.
- The southern region (including TN, Kerala, and Andhra) holds 14,612 elephants, while the northeast holds 10,139.
- The 2023 census showed an increase in Tamil Nadu's elephant population to 2,961, a growth of 200 elephants over five years.
- Of the state's population, 1,858 are in the Western Ghats, 1,105 in the Eastern Ghats, and 237 in the Agasthyamalai Elephant Reserve.

iii. Mortality Rates and Causes of Death

- On average, 130 elephants are killed annually in India due to human activities.
- Causes:
  - ➢ Illegal Electric Fences: Approximately 75 deaths per year.
  - ➢ Train Collisions: Approximately 20 deaths per year.
  - ➢ Poaching/Hunting: Over 15 deaths per year.
  - ➢ Poisoning: Approximately 20 deaths per year.

iv. Key Threats to Habitats and Migration

- The establishment of quarries, crushers, and factories near elephant habitats disrupts their living space.
- Construction of buildings at mountain foothills under the guise of tourism blocks ancient migratory paths.
- Farmers planting elephant-attracting crops like sugarcane, banana, and coconut near forest borders leads to crop raids and retaliatory killing via high-voltage fences.
- The use of crude explosives or snares hidden in fruits like pineapple continues to kill elephants.
- Discharge of dye waste into rivers (e.g., Bhavani River) and the dumping of plastic waste at foothills by local bodies cause fatal health issues in elephants.

v. Strategic Recommendations for Protection

- Implement strict prohibitions on crushers and factories within a specific kilometer radius of elephant habitats.

- Local bodies must relocate garbage dumps away from mountain foothills.
- Farmers near corridors should consult with the forest department to plant crops that do not attract elephants and prioritize natural thorny fences or legal solar fences.
- Install Artificial Intelligence (AI) and thermal cameras at high-risk railway crossing points (similar to the pilot between Walayar and Madukkarai) to prevent train accidents.
- Amend laws to provide stricter, more severe punishments for those responsible for killing elephants through explosives or poaching.