

December 12, 2025 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. President Donald Trump's 'Gold Card' scheme, which allows US citizenship for a deposit of one million dollars (about Rs.9 crore), has come into effect.
 - i. The Gold Card scheme was introduced to facilitate foreign students studying at top US universities to stay and work in the US for a long time.
 - ii. Trump made this announcement after a roundtable conference held at the White House with various leading industry executives, including IBM's Indian-American CEO Arvind Krishna and Dell Technologies CEO Michael Dell.
 - iii. Those who receive this Gold Card will be eligible to obtain US citizenship after 5 years.
2. The US Navy has seized an oil tanker off the coast of Venezuela.
 - i. The seizure is part of President Donald Trump's war on drugs.
 - ii. The "Skipper", which was carrying 2 million barrels of Venezuelan crude oil, set sail on December 2. Half of the cargo was reportedly from a Cuban state-owned oil import company, according to documents.
 - iii. The Skipper, previously known as the M/T Adisa, was sanctioned by the US in 2022 for allegedly smuggling oil to Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Lebanon's Hezbollah.
 - iv. Venezuela has the world's largest oil reserves, producing 1 million barrels of crude oil per day. State-owned oil company PDVSA is the backbone of the country's economy.
 - v. The United States has seized a ship carrying oil from Venezuela. Some US MPs have expressed fear that this could spark a new war.
3. Bulgaria's Government has resigned following violent protests against the Government over allegations of corruption and economic fraud. The country, a member of the European Union, is just weeks away from joining the Eurozone.
 - i. Prime Minister Rosenfeld made the announcement ahead of a vote of no confidence in Parliament against the Government.
4. The Bangladesh will hold its first general election since the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government in a student uprising on February 12, 2026.
 - i. The same day, a referendum will be held on the reform proposals of the National Consensus Committee, led by the Government's Chief Adviser, Muhammad Yunus.
 - ii. Hasina's Awami League party has been barred from contesting the election.
 - iii. The BNP, led by ailing former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, is currently in the lead.
 - iv. In the absence of the Awami League, its former ally, Jamaat-e-Islami, is another major party. Both parties have already announced their candidates for the 300-seat Parliament.
5. At the Asian Youth Para Games in Dubai, India's Abdul Qadir Indori won gold medals in the men's 50m butterfly and 50m backstroke.
6. The Mexican Government has approved a new tariff of up to 50 percent on hundreds of products imported from India starting next year.
 - i. The Mexican Senate recently approved a proposal to impose this tariff hike on more

- than 1,400 products imported from Asian countries, including India and China, which do not have a formal trade agreement with Mexico.
- ii. The Government of that country has stated that the main objective of this measure is to protect local employment and domestic production in Mexico.
 - iii. This sudden tariff hike is expected to significantly affect exports from Asian countries. There will be a major setback for Indian automakers. Because Mexico is the third largest car export market for India, after South Africa and Saudi Arabia. Hence, India's car exports worth about \$1.08 billion have been affected.
 - iv. India's total exports to Mexico this year is \$5.63 billion. Automobile exports are at the top of this. After automobiles, electrical and electronic equipment (\$612.3 million), machinery and boilers (\$560.8 million), chemicals (\$388.0 million), aluminum (\$386.0 million), and pharmaceuticals (\$211.2 million) are exported in large quantities. Therefore, these sectors are also likely to be affected by the additional duty.
 - v. This drastic decision by Mexico has threatened to significantly reduce the export earnings of Indian automobile manufacturers.
 - vi. Therefore, the demand of the sector is that the Union Commerce Ministry should immediately hold talks with Mexico and get exemption from this new customs duty or find alternative solutions.
7. India's first indigenously developed hydrogen fuelled ship was flagged off by Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.
- i. It is a matter of pride for India to join the ranks of countries like China, Norway, Netherlands and Japan in using hydrogen fuelled ships.
 - ii. In the last ten years, the number of national waterways has increased from 5 to 111. The cargo traffic on inland waterways has increased from 80 million tonnes in 2014 to over 145 million tonnes today.
 - iii. The foundation for this transformation was laid by the 'Jal Marg Vikas' scheme. Under this scheme, a modern waterway has been developed on the first national waterway from Haldia to Varanasi with multi-modal terminals, modern equipment and community boat fleets.