

December 13, 2025 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. The Union Cabinet has approved an allocation of Rs.11,718 crore for the population census to be conducted in 2027. This approval was given at a Union Cabinet meeting held in Delhi under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
 - i. The Union Cabinet has also approved the proposal to conduct this population census using digital technology for the first time.
 - ii. The Central Government issued the notification for the population census last June. The census will be conducted in two phases. First, the house listing and house enumeration will take place from April to September 2026. The population enumeration will be conducted in February 2027.
 - iii. A caste-based census will also be conducted along with this population census. In the snow-bound regions of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, the population census along with the caste-based census will begin in September 2026. Regarding this, Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting Ashwini Vaishnaw told reporters after the cabinet meeting:
 - iv. A mobile application will be used for collecting population census data. The data collection will be monitored through a central portal to ensure the highest quality of the collected data.
 - v. Because the details are collected digitally, the data required for policy formulation will be available immediately. This data can also be provided to central ministries in a machine-readable format, he said.
 - vi. 71 Laws Repealed:
 - i. The Union Cabinet approved a bill seeking to repeal 71 laws that have been out of use for a long time. This includes 6 principal laws and 65 amending laws.
 - ii. Regarding this proposed bill, officials stated that it has not recommend repealing all colonial-era laws. It only recommends the removal of 6 principal laws and 65 amending laws that have become obsolete. They added that approximately 1,562 old laws have been repealed in this manner so far.
2. The social media platform Reddit has filed a lawsuit challenging the ban imposed by Australia on children under 16 years of age from using social media, the first such ban in the world.
 - i. This lawsuit follows a case filed last week by the non-profit organization 'Digital Freedom Project' against the same ban.
 - ii. In both lawsuits, it has been alleged that this ban is contrary to the freedom of expression guaranteed by the Australian Constitution.
3. Amidst the intense conflict with Cambodia, Thailand's Parliament was dissolved. This action was taken to pave the way for new elections soon.
 - i. In a Facebook post regarding this, Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul stated

that the Parliament was dissolved to return power to the people. This dissolution, which had already been published in the Royal Gazette with the approval of King Maha Vajiralongkorn, has now come into effect.

- ii. Following the dissolution of Parliament, new elections must be held within 45 to 60 days.
 - iii. The Government led by Anutin will continue as a Caretaker Government. However, this Government does not have the authority to introduce a new budget.
 - iv. It is reported that the dissolution of Parliament will not affect the ongoing conflict with Cambodia. Reports suggest that Anutin decided to dissolve Parliament due to disagreements with the coalition partner, the People's Party, regarding Constitutional Amendments.
4. In a move to further pressure Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro to step down, US President Donald Trump has announced sanctions against his relatives, six oil tankers, and related companies. These new sanctions have been announced following the seizure of the oil tanker 'Skipper', by US forces, which had sailed from Venezuela. The US Treasury Department issued a statement regarding this, which stated:
- i. The sanctions are being extended to three relatives of President Nicolás Maduro's wife, Cilia Flores, six crude oil tankers, and the shipping companies associated with them.
 - ii. These oil tankers have been operating in violation of sanctions and in a dangerous manner, funding President Nicolás Maduro's corrupt 'drug-terrorist regime'. These ships have transported crude oil from Venezuela to China.
 - iii. Nicolás Maduro, who was democratically elected President in the 2013 election, is later accused of leading the country towards dictatorship.
 - iv. Although he was declared the winner in the 2024 election, documents released by the opposition parties reportedly show that Maduro suffered a major defeat in the election. Many countries, including the US, Brazil, and Colombia, have not recognized Maduro's victory.
 - v. In this context, Trump, who accuses Venezuela and other South American countries of smuggling drugs into the US, declared Maduro a 'drug terrorist' in this matter. A reward of \$50 million (approximately ₹420 crore) was also announced for those who help in his arrest.
5. Doctors have stated that former Bangladeshi Prime Minister Khaleda Zia (80) has been placed on a ventilator due to her severely deteriorating health.
- i. Khaleda Zia, the leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), has served as Prime Minister three times.
 - ii. During the tenure of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who was removed from office last year due to student protests, she was sentenced to imprisonment in various cases.
 - iii. She was later released from prison after the Interim Government led by Muhammad Yunus was formed. However, Khaleda, who was already ill, has been hospitalized

since November 23 for various health complications.

6. Former Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat announced that she is withdrawing her retirement decision and will be training with the aim of competing in the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.
7. The senior Congress leader and former Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil (90) has passed away.
8. India imported a record amount of crude oil from Russia last November, the highest in the previous five months. A large portion of the additionally imported crude oil was refined and exported to Australia. India is the second-largest buyer of Russian crude oil after China. An energy research organization from Europe has conducted a study on this and further stated the following:
 - i. Of Russia's total crude oil exports, 47 percent goes to China, 38 percent to India, and 6 percent each to Turkey and the European Union countries.
 - ii. India imported more crude oil from Russia in November than in the previous five months. A total of 2.6 billion euros (approximately ₹27,587 crore) worth of imports took place. It has been reported that this is likely to increase further in December.
 - iii. US President Trump has been accusing Russia of using the money earned from crude oil sales to fund the war against Ukraine. Citing this as a reason, Trump imposed a total of 50 percent tariff on Indian imports last August, including retaliatory tariffs.
9. On the occasion of the 86th anniversary of the women-led uprising in Manipur during the British rule in 1939, the President Droupadi Murmu and Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla paid floral tributes at the Nupi Lal (Women's War) memorial in Imphal, the capital city. The President also offered prayers at the Shri Govindaji Temple.
10. The Union Home Minister Amit Shah and RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat unveiled the statue of freedom fighter Vinayak Damodar Savarkar in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
 - i. The Savarkar statue was unveiled in a park in South Andaman district.
 - ii. The British Government, after arresting the freedom fighter Savarkar, sentenced him to double life imprisonment and imprisoned him in the Port Blair (Sri Vijayapuram) jail in Andaman in 1911. However, he was released in 1924.
11. The Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to embark on a four-day visit to Jordan, Ethiopia, and Oman starting Monday (December 15).
 - i. He will first visit Jordan at the invitation of King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein. This visit commemorates the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Several important decisions to enhance bilateral relations are expected to be made during the meeting between Prime Minister Modi and the King of Jordan.
 - ii. Following this, on the 16th, he will travel to Ethiopia to meet with leaders including Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali to discuss strengthening bilateral relations. This will be the Prime Minister's first visit to Ethiopia.
 - iii. Finally, on the 17th, the Prime Minister will visit Oman and meet with Sultan Haitham bin Tariq to discuss bilateral economic, trade, security, energy, investment, and technological cooperation.
 - iv. It has been stated that this visit by the Prime Minister will further strengthen India's

relations with East Asian and African countries.

12. Tamil Nadu has emerged as the fastest-growing state in the country with a 16 percent economic growth in the 2024-25 financial year. This has been stated in the report titled 'Statistics on Indian States' released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). It further states that:
- Tamil Nadu's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), which was ₹26.89 lakh crore in 2023-24, has increased to ₹31.18 lakh crore at current prices in the 2024-25 financial year. This represents a growth of 16 percent.
 - With this, Tamil Nadu has retained the top position for the third consecutive year, surpassing industrialized states like Gujarat, Karnataka, and Maharashtra.
 - Maharashtra is the leading economy in the country with ₹45.31 lakh crore. Tamil Nadu is in second place (₹31.18 lakh crore), Uttar Pradesh in third (₹29.78 lakh crore), Karnataka in fourth (₹28.83 lakh crore), and Gujarat in fifth (₹26.72 lakh crore).
 - Between 2021-22 and 2024-25, Tamil Nadu's GSDP increased from ₹20.72 lakh crore to ₹31.18 lakh crore.
 - Although Gujarat and Karnataka recorded good growth during the same period, their growth rate is lower compared to that of Tamil Nadu.
 - While Maharashtra's GSDP increased from ₹31.4 lakh crore to ₹45.3 lakh crore during the same period, it did not achieve a growth of 16 percent or more.
 - Per capita income: While Tamil Nadu's per capita income was ₹2.42 lakh in 2021-22, it has increased to ₹3.62 lakh in 2024-25, placing it in third position. Telangana is in first place with ₹3.87 lakh, and Karnataka is in second place with ₹3.80 lakh. The report states that the per capita income of the Union Territory of New Delhi is ₹4.93 lakh.
13. The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin is set to launch a scheme next month to provide the HPV vaccine, which prevents cervical cancer, to 3.38 lakh girls across Tamil Nadu, said Health Minister M.Subramanian.
- Various special measures are being undertaken to create a Tamil Nadu free from HIV-AIDS by the year 2030. While the national HIV prevalence rate is 0.23 percent, it has been reduced to 0.16 percent in Tamil Nadu.
 - The Chief Minister will launch a scheme next month to administer the HPV vaccine to prevent cervical cancer in girls aged 9 to 14 studying in Government and Government-Aided Schools in Tamil Nadu. In the first phase, this scheme will be implemented in four districts: Ariyalur, Perambalur, Tiruvannamalai, and Dharmapuri. 27,000 children will benefit from this. This vaccination program is being launched for the first time in India in Tamil Nadu.
14. The Union Cabinet approved a bill proposing the establishment of a single Higher Education Commission to replace the three existing bodies: the University Grants Commission (UGC), the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), and the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE).
- This bill, previously referred to as the Indian Higher Education Commission Bill, has

now been renamed the 'Viksit Bharat Education Supervision Commission Bill'.

- ii. The National Education Policy 2020 proposed the creation of the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) to replace the UGC, AICTE, and NCTE. The related bill has now been renamed the 'Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill'.
 - iii. Officials stated that the bill was approved at a Union Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi. It is expected that this bill will be introduced and passed during the ongoing winter session of Parliament.
 - iv. This single body, to be established for higher education, will undertake functions such as granting recognition to and regulating universities. However, the responsibility for funding educational institutions will remain with the Ministry of Education. Medical and law colleges have not been brought under the purview of this body.
15. The Union Cabinet approved a bill that allows for increasing Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the insurance sector to 100 percent. Government sources indicated that the bill is likely to be introduced in the Lok Sabha on Monday.
- i. According to the Lok Sabha agenda, this 'Insurance Amendment Bill 2025' is among the 13 bills listed for introduction during the winter session. It is stated that this bill is being introduced to promote the growth of the insurance sector and attract investments. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman proposed this plan during her budget speech this year. As part of the new generation of reforms in the financial sector, the Finance Minister had stated that the Foreign Direct Investment in the insurance sector, currently at 74 percent, would be increased to 100 percent. So far, the insurance sector has attracted investments of Rs.82,000 crore through Foreign Direct Investments.
 - ii. CoalSETU window: The Union Cabinet approved the Coal Linkage for Seamless, Efficient & Transparent Utilisation (CoalSETU) window scheme for coal mine auction procedures without any end-use restrictions. Under this window system, coal mines will be allocated on a long-term lease basis for any corporate use and export purposes. Domestic companies can participate in this auction and lease coal mines without any end-use restrictions, according to a Government press release. It was also stated that coking coal would not be permitted under this scheme.
 - iii. Increase in support price for copra: The Union Cabinet approved increasing the minimum support price for milling copra by Rs. 445 to Rs. 12,027 per quintal and the minimum support price for ball copra by Rs. 400 to Rs. 12,500 per quintal for the 2026 season. Officials stated that this minimum support price has been fixed based on the recommendation of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices. Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala are the leading states in copra production.
 - iv. The Union Cabinet approved a bill to allow Private Sector Participation in Nuclear Power Generation. Nuclear power plants across the country are under the control of the Nuclear Power Corporation of India. These plants generate 8.7 gigawatts of electricity. The Central Government has set a target to increase this power

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generation to 100 gigawatts by 2047. To achieve this target, the Government planned to allow private sector participation in this sector. The Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman made an announcement regarding this in this year's budget. Following this, the Union Cabinet has approved the bill to allow private sector participation in nuclear power generation.

- v. The Union Cabinet approved a bill recommending a name change for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and an increase in the number of workdays. Accordingly, the name of this employment guarantee scheme is to be changed to ' Poojya Bapu Grameen Rozgar Yojana', and the number of workdays is to be increased from 100 days to 125 days. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was enacted in 2005 with the aim of improving the livelihood of rural people.

