

December 14, 2025 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. Former IAS officer Rajkumar Goyal has been selected as the new Chief Information Commissioner (CIC).
 - i. President Droupadi Murmu will administer the oath of office to him on Monday (December 15).
 - ii. Earlier, officials said that the names of the Chief Information Commissioner and 8 Information Commissioners were recommended at a consultative meeting attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi.
 - iii. The Central Information Commission can have one Chief Information Commissioner and a maximum of 10 Information Commissioners. Anandhi Ramalingam and Vinod Kumar Tiwari are already serving as Information Commissioners. In this context, the committee headed by the Prime Minister has recommended names for the remaining 8 positions.
 - iv. Accordingly, former Railway Board Chairperson Jaya Varma Sinha, former IPS Officer Swagat Das, former Central Secretariat Service officer Sanjeev Kumar Jindal, former IAS officer Surendra Singh Meena, former Indian Forest Service officer Khushwant Singh Sethi, senior journalists P.R. Ramesh and Ashutosh Chaturvedi, and Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board legal member Sudharani Relangi are set to assume office as Information Commissioners. As a result, the Central Information Commission will function with its full strength after 9 years.
 - v. The post of Chief Information Commissioner had been vacant since the term of the previous Chief Information Commissioner, Hiralal Samariya, ended on September 13. Following this, Rajkumar Goyal has been selected.
2. Eritrea has once again withdrawn from the East African regional organization, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). In a statement issued by the Eritrean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it was stated that:
 - i. The IGAD organization has lost its legal authority and significance, and it has not benefited the member states or contributed to regional stability. It has, in particular, become a tool against Eritrea. Therefore, we are withdrawing from the organization.
 - ii. The IGAD organization, which aims to promote regional peace, food security, and economic cooperation in East Africa, was established in 1996. It comprises eight countries: Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, and Djibouti. Eritrea has now withdrawn.
3. The death toll from the floods and landslides caused by the heavy rains that have lashed northwestern Sumatra island in Indonesia for the past two weeks has exceeded 1000.
 - i. The continuous heavy rainfall over the past two weeks is said to have caused a disaster in the northern part of Sumatra island, second only to the tsunami that struck in 2004.

4. According to the order of Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, 123 prisoners, including political prisoners, who were serving prison sentences for various charges, have been released.
 - i. According to President Lukashenko's humanitarian order, 123 prisoners have been released. This includes many who are suffering from serious illnesses, the elderly, and political prisoners. The statement said that this will contribute to the country's social stability. Thousands were arrested during the protests that followed the 2020 Presidential elections. The European Union and the United States condemned this as an 'abuse of power'. The US imposed sanctions on Belarusian Potash fertilizer in connection with this issue.
 - ii. Following the recent announcement by the US that it would lift those sanctions, the Belarusian Government has now announced the release of 123 people who were arrested during the protests.
5. The Thai army has stated that four Thai soldiers have been killed in the border conflict with Cambodia that has been ongoing for five days.
 - i. The border between Thailand and Cambodia was demarcated in 1904 and 1907. However, a border dispute persists between the two countries, centered around the Preah Vihear area, where an 11th-century Hindu temple is located. The International Court of Justice ruled in 2008 that the temple belongs to Cambodia. Nevertheless, clashes have occurred periodically between the two countries due to the border dispute.
 - ii. Recently, a war between Thailand and Cambodia that lasted for five days in July resulted in 48 deaths and displaced 300,000 people.
 - iii. Subsequently, a ceasefire agreement was signed between Thailand and Cambodia in Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia, on October 26th, in the presence of Trump. This agreement, initiated by Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, was expected to resolve the border dispute between Thailand and Cambodia.
 - iv. However, Thailand accused Cambodia of planting landmines, claiming that one of their soldiers was injured by one, and cancelled the ceasefire agreement on November 10th. Cambodia, however, explained that it was an old landmine that was already there.
 - v. In this situation, both sides engaged in renewed clashes in the border areas of Thailand's Sisaket and Ubon Ratchathani provinces.
6. Famous Chess players – Praggnanandha (India), Arjun Erikaisi (India), Harika (India), Volodar (Russia), Alireza (France).
7. Training classes for the Sanskrit language have been started in two universities in Pakistan.
 - i. For the first time since the India-Pakistan partition, 3-month Sanskrit training classes have been launched at Punjab University, Lahore (Government) and Lahore University of Management Sciences (Private).
 - ii. The Sanskrit language, which holds classical language status due to its significant

role in the heritage of both countries, has been introduced through these training classes. Professor Ashok Kumar of the Hindi Department at Punjab University stated that they plan to teach the Mahabharata and Bhagavad Gita to students in the future.

8. Amidst Mexico's unilateral increase in tariffs on Indian imports, officials stated that the Central Government is engaged in negotiations with that country to find an amicable solution to the issue.
 - i. Mexico has increased tariffs on goods imported from countries including India, China, South Korea, Thailand, and Indonesia, with which it does not have a free trade agreement, by 5 to 50 percent. A 50 percent tariff has been announced for certain goods imported from India. As this is set to come into effect from next year, the Central Government is engaged in efforts to protect the interests of Indian exporters. Accordingly, India is in talks with Mexico to find a mutually beneficial solution.
 - ii. In 2024-25, India exported goods worth \$5.75 billion to Mexico. The value of imports from that country was \$2.9 billion.
9. The meeting of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, held at the historic Red Fort in Delhi, has concluded.
 - i. In the four-day sessions, which began last Monday and concluded on Thursday, 67 elements of intangible cultural heritage were added to UNESCO's list, including the Diwali festival proposed by India, the glass art of Iran, the traditional dance of the United Arab Emirates, and the yodelling of Switzerland. With this, a total of 849 intangible cultural practices from 157 countries are now included in UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage.
 - ii. The closing ceremony of the meeting was held grandly on Friday evening at the Red Fort complex. A senior UNESCO official stated, 'The meeting for next year will be held in Xiamen, China. Holding this meeting at a magnificent and UNESCO-recognized site like the Red Fort was highly appreciated by many of the participants.'
10. Nineteen states in the US have filed a lawsuit against the administration led by President Donald Trump for increasing the fee for the new H-1B visa to Rs.90 lakh (one lakh dollars).
 - i. The Trump administration has decided to increase the new H-1B visa fee manifold. While the fee for this visa is currently Rs.1.47 lakh, Trump signed an order on September 19th to increase it to Rs.90 lakh. American companies use the H-1B visa to select, train, and employ skilled professionals from various fields worldwide. Now, these professionals will have to pay Rs.90 lakh to obtain an H-1B visa to work in the United States.
 - ii. It is noteworthy that Indians are the largest beneficiaries of employment opportunities in the US through this H-1B visa.
11. Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) - General Anil Chauhan
12. The Chief Justice Surya Kant of the Supreme Court emphasized the need to implement a unified judicial policy.
 - i. He stated that despite many petitioners winning their cases, they are unable to

understand the reasoning in the judgments due to complex legal language. Even though the order is in their favor, they do not understand what remedy they have received because the language used in the judgment contains terms that are not commonly used or are difficult to comprehend.

- ii. Therefore, he stated that there is a need to increase the adoption of a uniform method in writing judgments and that a unified judicial approach is necessary in communicating the outcomes of cases.
13. The Congress party has criticized Prime Minister Narendra Modi for India not being included in the US's new strategic alliance, Pax Silica.
- i. According to media reports, the US has launched the 'Pax Silica' alliance, comprising 9 countries, with the aim of reducing China's dominance in the high-tech supply chain. The countries included are the US, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, the Netherlands, the UK, Israel, the UAE, and Australia. However, the US has not included India.
 - ii. It was stated that the objective of this alliance is to protect the materials and capabilities fundamental to Artificial Intelligence technology and to reduce mandatory dependence. Of the four countries in the Quad alliance — India, Japan, Australia, and the US—all but India are included in this new alliance.
14. A resolution was introduced in the US Congress by three influential American Members of Parliament, urging the repeal of the exorbitant 50 percent tariff imposed by US President Donald Trump on goods imported from India.
- i. North Carolina Representative Deborah Ross, Texas Representative Marc Veasey, and Illinois Representative Raja Krishnamoorthi introduced the resolution in the US House of Representatives.
 - ii. Trump initially imposed a 25 percent tariff on India under the guise of reciprocal tariff measures, and later, on August 27th, imposed an additional 25 percent tariff, accusing India of purchasing large quantities of crude oil from Russia, which is waging war against Ukraine. As a result, most goods imported from India are currently subject to a 50 percent tariff in the United States. This action has somewhat strained relations between the two countries. Due to the high tariffs, India is taking steps to strengthen trade relations with other countries, including China.
 - iii. In this regard, a resolution has been introduced in the House of Representatives by the three MPs, urging the repeal of the 50 percent tariff imposed by Trump on Indian goods under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA).