

December 25, 2025 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. The LVM-3 rocket, carrying the American Bluebird-6 Communication Satellite, was successfully launched on Wednesday (December 24). The satellite, the heaviest ever launched by ISRO (6,100 kg), was precisely placed in its planned orbit.
 - i. NewSpace India Limited, operating under the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), undertakes commercial activities for launching foreign satellites.
 - ii. NewSpace India Limited has successfully launched more than 430 foreign satellites to date. ISRO contributes to the space research activities of most countries worldwide.
 - iii. In this regard, ISRO's NewSpace organization entered into a memorandum of understanding to launch the Bluebird-6 satellite of the American company AST SpaceMobile.
 - iv. Since this satellite is heavy, ISRO decided to launch it using India's 'Bahubali' rocket, the LVM 3.
 - v. The total weight of the Bluebird-6 satellite is 6,100 kg. ISRO has developed the advanced GSLV Mark 3 or LVM 3 rocket specifically for launching such heavy satellites. Through this, it is possible to place satellites weighing 8,000 kg in Low Earth Orbit and Satellites weighing more than 4,000 kg in Geostationary Orbit.
 - vi. Consequently, it was decided to launch the Bluebird-6 satellite using the LVM-3 rocket from Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.
 - vii. With this success, ISRO has achieved the distinction of launching 434 satellites from 34 countries since 1993.
 - viii. The Bluebird-6 satellite will provide high-speed internet service directly to mobile phones from space. This will enable internet access, video calls, and messaging services at 5G speeds in dense forests, mountainous regions, and waterways where there are no signal towers.
 - ix. Following the success of the Bluebird-6 mission, ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan told reporters: This is the 9th successful mission of the LVM3 rocket. With this, the LVM3 rocket has achieved 100 percent reliability. The LVM3 has already successfully undertaken various missions such as Chandrayaan-3 and OneWeb satellites. Through this, ISRO has gained prominence on the global stage. Moreover, various countries are approaching ISRO to launch their satellites into space. This success has provided impetus to the Gaganyaan mission, which aims to send humans into space. He added that the rocket launch pad work in Kulasekarapattinam will be completed, and the rocket will be launched by March 2027.
2. The Chief Minister M.K. Stalin inaugurated the service of 20 state-of-the-art air-conditioned luxury buses.
 - i. Twenty multi-axle, state-of-the-art air-conditioned luxury buses were procured for the State Express Transport Corporation at a cost of Rs. 34.30 crore. These buses have been introduced for the first time by the Tamil Nadu Transport Department.
 - ii. Furthermore, coinciding with the golden jubilee of the State Transport Corporation, the Chief Minister also launched the distribution of wall clocks worth Rs. 3.33 crore to 1,05,778 employees.

3. The Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has approved the policy of creating demilitarized zones in eastern Ukraine. He told reporters the following:
- i. In the ongoing ceasefire talks with the United States regarding the Ukraine war, we have accepted the policy of creating demilitarized zones in eastern Ukraine. However, we have insisted that Russia should also withdraw its troops accordingly.
 - ii. There is still no agreement on crucial issues such as territorial control in the Donbas region and the management of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant.
 - iii. Nevertheless, a consensus has been reached between the United States and Ukraine on several key issues to end the war.
 - iv. A 20-point ceasefire plan has been developed after lengthy negotiations in the US state of Florida. The United States has informed Russian representatives about this plan. A response from Russia is expected soon.
 - v. The control of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in the Donbas area remains the most critical issue. This will be discussed and decided at the leaders' level.
 - vi. The security guarantee that the US is providing to Ukraine under this agreement plan is similar to Article 5 of the NATO treaty. Accordingly, it is assured that if Russia attacks again, the coalition countries will take retaliatory action, Zelenskyy said.
 - vii. Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, opposing Ukraine's membership in NATO, and seized significant parts of the eastern regions of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia. Currently, most of Luhansk and 70 percent of Donetsk are under Russian control. Russia has been insisting that for the war to end, Ukrainian troops must withdraw from the remaining areas. Ukraine has categorically rejected this.
 - viii. Therefore, with the aim of facilitating a compromise, the US has planned to transform these areas into free economic zones. The US is also demanding that troops be withdrawn from these areas and an international force be stationed there.
 - ix. In this regard, Ukraine's agreement to withdraw from the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and create demilitarized zones in those areas is considered a significant breakthrough in the peace talks.
 - x. However, who manages the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, the Europe's largest, remains a contentious issue. The US has suggested that Ukraine, Russia, and the US could jointly manage the nuclear power plant. But Ukraine is insisting that only the US and Ukraine should jointly manage the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant.
 - xi. The newly drafted 20-point peace plan specifies that the Ukrainian army should have a maximum of 800,000 soldiers during peacetime. Furthermore, the date for Ukraine's accession to the European Union has also been set in the plan.
 - xii. The draft plan also emphasizes expediting a Free Trade Agreement between the US and Ukraine and providing short-term concessions to Ukraine in the European market.

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- xiii. It also sets a target for investing \$800 billion (approximately ₹71.87 lakh crore) in Ukraine. The draft plan includes provisions such as holding elections after the agreement is signed and releasing all prisoners of war arrested since 2014.
 - xiv. It is said that the future of this plan will depend on how Russia responds to it. Nevertheless, this draft plan is considered a significant turning point in the fourth year of the war.
4. The FIDE World Rapid & Blitz Chess Championship, with Indians including D. Gukesh and Koneru Humpy, begins in Doha.
5. To protect the natural environment of the Aravalli Mountain range, the Central Government has prohibited State Governments from granting new leases for mining activities there. The Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) has been instructed to identify additional areas where mining should be prohibited, beyond the existing restrictions. Officials from the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests further stated:
- i. This decision has been taken to protect the Aravalli Mountain range, which stretches from Gujarat to Delhi, and to curb unregulated mining. This ban is applicable to the entire Aravalli range.
 - ii. The ICFRE has been instructed to identify additional areas where mining should be prohibited by studying the natural structure and topography of the region. The organization has also been ordered to conduct this study while preparing a science-based Management Plan for Sustainable Mining (MPSM) for the Aravalli range.
 - iii. Currently operating mines will now be subjected to very strict monitoring. The Government is committed to protecting the Aravalli range, as it plays a crucial role in preventing desertification in the northern states and in conserving groundwater.
 - iv. Earlier, an expert committee appointed by the Central Ministry submitted a new definition regarding the Aravalli range to the Supreme Court. According to this, any elevation with a minimum height of 100 meters above the local terrain will be considered an 'Aravalli hill'. Similarly, two or more 100-meter-high hills located within a 500-meter radius will be called the 'Aravalli Mountain range'.
 - v. The Supreme Court accepted this definition last month. Environmental activists expressed concern that this would allow mining operations to continue in hilly areas less than 100 meters in height, potentially leading to groundwater depletion and the area turning into a desert.