

December 27, 2025 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. The first phase of Myanmar's general election is scheduled to be held on Sunday (December 28).
 - i. This is the first election to be held there in the last 5 years. Voting will take place in three phases across various parts of the country. The Election Commission has announced that the first phase will be on Sunday, the second phase on January 11, and the third phase on January 25.
 - ii. However, critics say that this election, held after the military seized power in 2021, will not restore democracy in the country.
 - iii. In 2021, the military overthrew the democratically elected Government of Aung San Suu Kyi. The protests against it escalated into a civil war. Opposition parties and human rights organizations allege that this upcoming election will not be free and fair.
 - iv. Accordingly, the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), which holds a pro-military stance, is expected to win a landslide victory.
 - v. Critics say that the election is being held to appease the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and to justify the support given to Myanmar's military Government by neighboring countries such as India, China, and Thailand.
2. The Southern Transitional Council (STC), a Yemeni separatist armed group, has reported that Saudi Arabia carried out airstrikes on their positions.
 - i. Saudi Arabia launched this attack the day after ordering STC forces to withdraw from the country's Hadhramaut and Mahra provinces.
 - ii. In 2014, the Iran-backed Houthi rebels seized significant parts of Yemen, including the capital Sana'a. Subsequently, in 2015, Saudi Arabia, in alliance with the internationally recognized Government forces and the STC, began a war against the Houthis. As a result, the Saudi-backed Government forces maintained control over southern Yemen.
 - iii. However, STC forces recently captured the Hadhramaut and Mahra provinces, which were previously under the control of the Government forces. Saudi Arabia ordered them to withdraw from these provinces. The subsequent airstrikes by Saudi planes on STC forces have caused considerable tension.
 - iv. While South Yemen existed as a separate country from 1967, it was unified with Yemen in 1990. However, the STC separatist group, with the support of the United Arab Emirates, continues to fight for an independent South Yemen.
3. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has warned that strict action will be taken against products made from extracts of herbs and plants and label them as 'tea'.
 - i. The FSSAI stated that only products made from substances directly or indirectly derived from the Tea plant can be called Tea. In an order issued last Wednesday (Dec. 23), the FSSAI noted that some food businesses were labelling products as 'Rooibos tea', 'Herbal tea', and 'Flower tea'.

- ii. The word 'tea' should only be used for beverages made from substances derived from the tea plant (*Camellia sinensis*).
 - iii. Beverages and products made from extracts of herbs and other plants, without using any substances from the tea plant, should not be labelled or advertised as 'tea'.
 - iv. Companies violating this will face action under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.
 - v. It was stated that companies involved in any activity, including manufacturing, marketing, importing, and online distribution of such food products, must strictly adhere to the aforementioned order.
4. The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has introduced a new standard for the manufacture of incense sticks (Agarbatti).
- i. India is the largest producer and exporter of incense sticks (Agarbatti) in the world.
 - ii. With the increasing demand for incense sticks, complaints arose about the inclusion of banned and health-damaging chemicals. Following this, the Bureau of Indian Standards has taken action considering consumer welfare and safety.
 - iii. Incense sticks manufactured following this standard will not affect air quality in the places where they are used, will not harm the environment, and will not contain certain internationally restricted artificial fragrances and chemicals.
 - iv. Incense sticks manufactured according to the standard announced by BIS will be given the code 'IS 19412 : 2025'. This will allow the public to identify and use quality products, according to a statement released by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs.
 - v. Chemicals such as Allethrin, Permethrin, Cypermethrin, Deltamethrin, and Fipronil should not be used in incense sticks. Furthermore, artificial fragrances such as Benzyl cyanide, Ethyl acrylate, and Diphenylamine should not be added.
 - vi. According to the new standard, incense sticks are categorized as machine-made, hand-made, and traditionally made.
 - vii. The annual value of the Indian incense stick market is ₹8,000 crore. In addition, incense sticks worth ₹1,200 crore are exported annually to 150 countries including the USA, Malaysia, Nigeria, Brazil, and Mexico. The industry includes cottage industries, micro, small and medium enterprises, and some large corporations.
 - viii. The incense stick manufacturing industry also plays a leading role in providing ample employment opportunities for women. Traditional artisans are also finding significant employment in jobs related to this sector.
5. The President Droupadi Murmu is scheduled to travel in a submarine from Karwar port in Karnataka on Sunday (December 28).

- i. This submarine journey is part of her four-day visit to the states of Goa, Karnataka, and Jharkhand, according to a press release issued by the Rashtrapati Bhavan. President Droupati Murmu will travel to Goa on Saturday (December 27) and the following day, she will travel in a submarine from Karwar port in Karnataka.
 - ii. The Rashtrapati Bhavan stated that she will participate in the 15th convocation ceremony of the Indian Institute of Technology in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand on December 28, and will attend an event in Gumla the following day.
 - iii. The late former President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam traveled in a submarine in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh on February 13, 2006. Droupadi Murmu will have the distinction of being the second President of the Country to travel in a submarine after him.
 - iv. President Droupadi Murmu is also the first President to have traveled in two fighter jets of the Indian Air Force during her tenure. She undertook two fighter jet journeys: in a Sukhoi 30 MKI in 2023 and in a Rafale in October of the same year.
6. December 26th has been observed as Veer Bal Diwas (Day of Valor of Children) since 2022, in order to commemorate the sacrifice of Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, the sons of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru of the Sikhs, who refused to convert to Islam during the Mughal rule and embraced death.
7. Police are investigating the disappearance of a 17th-century sword from the Danish Fort Museum in Tharangambadi.
- i. In Tharangambadi, Mayiladuthurai district, the Danes built a Fort with Danish architectural style in 1620 AD.