

## December 29, 2025 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. The President Droupadi Murmu, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, embarked onboard in the indigenously built submarine INS Vaghsheer at the Karwar naval base in Karnataka. Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi accompanied the President.
  - i. The first President to travel in a submarine was Abdul Kalam (in 2006, aboard INS Sindhurakshak). Droupadi Murmu has now become the second President to achieve this distinction.
  - ii. Frontline Submarine: INS Vaghsheer, a frontline submarine of the Indian Navy, is the 6<sup>th</sup> and final submarine built indigenously under Project 75 Scorpene. This submarine was commissioned into the Navy in January.
  - iii. It possesses multi-faceted capabilities, including anti-ship and anti-submarine warfare, intelligence gathering, maritime surveillance, and other special operations.
  - iv. Compared globally, it is one of the quietest diesel-electric submarines in operation.
  - v. Weapons and Technology: Equipped with torpedoes for targeting and attacking, anti-ship missiles, and advanced sonar systems, INS Vaghsheer also features 'Air Independent Propulsion' (AIP) technology, which can be upgraded in the future.
  - vi. Murmu's visit aboard the submarine comes as the Karwar naval base is being upgraded to safeguard the nation's interests in the Indian Ocean region.
  - vii. Continuing Achievements: Murmu is also the first President to have travelled in two fighter jets of the Air Force during her tenure. In 2023, She undertook two fighter jet flights, one in a Sukhoi 30 MKI and the other in a Rafale last October.
  - viii. Now, he has achieved a new distinction by traveling in a submarine.
2. The year 2025 is a landmark year for ISRO, the Indian Space Research Organisation. This achievement was further crowned by the successful launch and deployment of a heavy satellite into space on December 24<sup>th</sup> using the LVM-3 rocket.
  - i. The Communication Satellite, called BlueBird-6, belonging to the American Company AST SpaceMobile, weighs 6,100 kilograms. NewSpace India Limited, ISRO's commercial arm that undertakes the launch of foreign satellites, successfully launched the BlueBird satellite.
  - ii. 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.
  - iii. With the success of the BlueBird-6 satellite, ISRO has earned the distinction of launching 434 satellites from 34 countries since 1993. Moreover, the successful launch of this heavy satellite has enhanced ISRO's commercial value internationally, which is a matter of pride for India.
  - iv. ISRO has developed the advanced rocket known as GSLV Mark 3 or LVM-3 specifically for launching heavy satellites. Through this, it is possible to place satellites weighing 8,000 kilograms in Low Earth Orbit and more than 4,000 kilograms in Geostationary Orbit.

- v. The successful launch of the 6,100 kg satellite using the LVM-3 rocket will serve as a boost to the Gaganyaan project, which aims to send humans into space. This ninth successful mission of the LVM-3 rocket has given it a 100 percent reliability record.
  - vi. The Bluebird Block-2 mission is the 6<sup>th</sup> successful mission of the LVM-3 rocket. Its successful journey began in 2017 with the placement of the GSAT-19 Communication Satellite in orbit. Using the same rocket, ISRO launched the 3,850 kg Chandrayaan-2 spacecraft beyond Earth's atmosphere in 2019 and the Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft in 2023, raising eyebrows in the scientific world.
  - vii. ISRO has launched 72 Satellites of the British company OneWeb using the LVM-3 rocket. 36 Satellites each were successfully launched in October 2022 and March 2023. Prior to the Bluebird satellite, ISRO placed the 4,400 kg CMS-3 Communication Satellite in orbit using the LVM-3 rocket last November.
  - viii. ISRO's journey in developing powerful rockets began in 1980 with the launch of the 35 kg Rohini (RS-1) Experimental Satellite using the SLV-3 rocket. After that, ISRO's rocket development evolved rapidly with ASLV, PSLV, and GSLV.
  - ix. ISRO's ambitious Gaganyaan project is also planned to be implemented using the LVM-3 rocket. The astronauts boarding the Gaganyaan Spacecraft will conduct research for 3 days in an orbit 400 km above the Earth. They will then be safely brought back to Earth in the same Spacecraft. This is the objective of the Gaganyaan project.
  - x. Before sending humans into space through the Gaganyaan project, ISRO is preparing to send a female-looking robot named 'Vyomitra' into space using the LVM-3 rocket. All stages of testing for this have been completed, and ISRO is ready to launch Vyomitra into space at any time.
  - xi. If the Vyomitra test is successful, the astronauts selected for the Gaganyaan project will be sent into space in the next phase. This will place India alongside the United States, Russia, and China, which have already sent their own astronauts into space.
  - xii. ISRO is also planning to establish its own space station in the future. The LVM-3 is preparing to carry the dreams for this project, which has been named the Bharatiya Antariksha Station (BAS).
3. For the first time since the military seized power in Myanmar, a general election was held there.
- i. Following the military coup in 2021, with Military General Min Aung Hlaing ruling the country with an iron fist, it is widely expected that he will assume the Presidency after the election.
  - ii. This is the first election to be held in Myanmar in the last 5 years.
  - iii. In 2021, the Military overthrew the democratically elected Government of Aung San Suu Kyi, and the protests against it escalated into a civil war.
  - iv. The Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), which holds a pro-military stance, is expected to win a landslide victory.
  - v. Critics say that this election is being held to appease the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and to justify the support that neighboring countries like India, China, and Thailand have been providing to the Myanmar military junta.

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4. A Senior Official from the American company Lockheed Martin stated that their C-130J Super Hercules military aircraft would be very useful for the Indian Air Force.
  - i. He made this statement as India is preparing to procure 80 military transport aircraft.
  - ii. He added that currently, all four 'Quad' member countries—India, Australia, the United States, and Japan—are using the C-130J aircraft.
  - iii. Lockheed Martin has supplied 560 C-130J Super Hercules aircraft to 23 countries. 12 C-130J aircraft are currently operational in India.
  - iv. Foreign companies in the competition: In 2022, India decided to procure new aircraft to replace the AN-32 and IL-76 Military Transport Aircraft.
  - v. The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) is expected to soon approve the plan to procure 80 aircraft.
  - vi. The American company Lockheed Martin, the Brazilian company Embraer (KC-390 aircraft), and the European Company Airbus Defence and Space (A-400M) are actively vying for this aircraft contract.
  - vii. It is noteworthy that Lockheed Martin, in collaboration with Tata, is manufacturing components for the C-130J aircraft in India.
5. With the new Excise Duty amendment introduced by the Central Government having been passed in Parliament, the prices of cigarettes and tobacco products are set to rise to unprecedented levels. As a result, the price of a single cigarette, currently sold at Rs. 18, is likely to increase to up to Rs. 72.
  - i. During the winter session of Parliament, held from December 1<sup>st</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>, a bill seeking changes in the taxation of tobacco products was introduced. This bill, which paves the way for levying additional excise duty on tobacco products such as cigarettes, hookahs, and chewing tobacco, was debated and successfully passed in both Houses of Parliament.
  - ii. The tax on tobacco will be increased from 25 percent to 100 percent. The tax on hookahs will be increased from 25 percent to 40 percent. At its maximum, the tax on tobacco additives will be increased fivefold, from 60 percent to 300 percent.