

May 15, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

I.V.D. Satheesan has been selected as the new Chief Minister of the neighboring state of Kerala.

(i) Assembly elections in Kerala, which has 140 constituencies, were held in a single phase on April 9. The votes were counted and the results were announced on May 4. In the election, the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) captured power with 102 seats. The Congress alone won 63 constituencies. With this victory, the 10-year rule of the Left Democratic Front (LDF), led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist), came to an end. The Left alliance secured only 35 seats, while the BJP won 3 seats.

2.The U.S. Senate approved the appointment of Kevin Warsh (56) as the next Chair of the U.S. Federal Reserve.

(i) In the Senate vote held last Wednesday regarding the nomination recommended by President Donald Trump, 54 senators voted in favor and 45 voted against.

(ii) Since the term of current Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell ends on Friday (May 15), Kevin Warsh is set to assume office as the new Chair.

(iii) It is considered the first time in U.S. history that the appointment of a Federal Reserve Chair has been confirmed amid such intense political division.

(iv) John Fetterman of the Democratic Party was the only Democrat to join the ruling Republican Party members in supporting Kevin Warsh.

(v) Warsh is assuming office at a highly challenging time for the U.S. economy. Inflation in the country has been rising unexpectedly, forcing the Federal Reserve to consider increasing interest rates.

(vi) As a result, Warsh may face difficulties in fulfilling President Trump's long-standing demand for lowering interest rates.

(vii) Expectations are therefore high for the next Federal Reserve meeting, scheduled for June 16 and 17 under Warsh's leadership, where interest rates will be decided.

3.Chinese President Xi Jinping directly warned U.S. President Donald Trump that mishandling the Taiwan issue could trigger a direct conflict between the two countries.

(i) U.S. President Donald Trump, who is on an official visit to China, participated in bilateral talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

(ii) The meeting lasted for about two hours and covered several important issues, including bilateral trade, the Iran war, and the Taiwan issue. During the talks, Xi Jinping stated: "The Taiwan issue is the most important aspect of China-U.S. relations. Stability in bilateral relations can continue only if it is handled properly. Otherwise, serious conflicts could erupt, affecting overall international peace."

(iii) He further said, "No one wins in a trade war; negotiations are the only solution. Progress has recently been made in trade talks held in South Korea. This year will become historically significant in our bilateral relations."

(iv) Despite tensions over Taiwan, both leaders pledged to elevate bilateral relations to the next stage

based on a new long-term vision. As part of this, Trump formally invited Xi Jinping to visit the United States on September 24.

4. Bengaluru motor racer Hemanth Muthappa won his 18th national championship title.

5. Sahadev Yadav, President of the Indian Weightlifting Federation, has been appointed President of the South Asian Weightlifting Federation.

6. The Central Government has imposed a ban on sugar exports until September 30.

(i) This step has been taken to ensure adequate domestic sugar stocks and to control price rises.

(ii) Earlier, exports were allowed only for limited quantities of sugar with the required licenses. Now, however, a complete ban on exports has been imposed. According to the notification issued by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT):

- The export policy for all categories of sugar — including raw sugar, white sugar, and refined sugar — has been shifted from the “restricted” category to the “prohibited” category until September 30.
- The export ban will continue until further orders are issued.
- However, the ban will not apply to sugar exports made to the European Union and the United States under Tariff Rate Quota (TRQ) agreements.
- Similarly, the restriction will not apply to Government-to-Government sugar exports under advance authorization schemes and to shipments already in the export process.
- According to data from the Indian Sugar and Bio-energy Manufacturers Association, India’s sugar production during the 2025–26 market season increased by 7.32 percent to 27.5 million tonnes by April.
- Previously, in October 2022, the Central Government imposed export restrictions on sugar to ensure domestic availability and control prices. Those restrictions were later extended periodically.

7. India has emphasized that the BRICS grouping must identify ways to tackle global challenges and trade disruptions.

(i) India currently holds the Presidency of BRICS, which includes Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, and Indonesia. The BRICS summit is scheduled to be held in India in September.

(ii) In this context, a two-day meeting of the foreign ministers of BRICS countries began in New Delhi. Foreign ministers from Russia, Brazil, Iran, and other member countries participated. Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar chaired the meeting and delivered the inaugural address. During his speech, he pointed out that shipping traffic through the Strait of Hormuz had been affected due to the Iran-U.S.-Israel conflict in West Asia, disrupting global crude oil supplies and creating economic challenges for many countries. He also indirectly referred to the United States imposing additional tariffs unilaterally on other nations and expressed concern that such measures disproportionately affect developing

8. Indus Water Treaty – current geopolitical tensions.

(i) Origin of the Treaty

- Post-Partition Crisis: Following the 1947 partition, the Indus river system—comprising the Indus, Chenab, Jhelum, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej—was divided between the two nations. India controlled the

upstream headwaters, while Pakistan's agricultural heartlands were downstream and dependent on that flow.

- Negotiation Process: India initiated negotiations in 1960 to secure water for the development of its Punjab and Rajasthan states.
- Signing of the Treaty: The Indus Water Treaty was officially signed on September 19, 1960, mediated by the World Bank.
- India's Compromise: Initial World Bank proposals in 1954 were highly favorable to Pakistan, suggesting India abandon development on the upper reaches of the Indus and Chenab. To achieve a swift resolution, India accepted these harsh terms immediately, while Pakistan delayed its decision for five years.

(ii) Key Terms and Water Allocation

- River Division:
 - India was granted exclusive rights over the three Eastern rivers: Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi.
 - Pakistan was granted exclusive rights over the three Western rivers: Indus, Chenab, and Jhelum.
- 80% to Pakistan: In terms of volume, the Eastern rivers provide approximately 33 Million Acre Feet (MAF) annually, whereas the Western rivers provide 135 MAF. Consequently, Pakistan receives about 80% of the total water from the system.
- Restricted Indian Usage: India is permitted limited "non-consumptive" use of the Western rivers (such as for hydro-power generation) within its borders, but must adhere to strict international design and storage regulations.
- Financial Compensation: India agreed to pay Pakistan approximately \$2.5 billion (in current value) to develop water infrastructure in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir as part of the settlement.

(iii) Consequences and Impact on India

- Unequal Restrictions: The treaty imposes one-sided restrictions on India regarding how it manages resources within its own territory, while it does not impose equivalent transparency or regulatory requirements on Pakistan.
- Economic Loss: For over 60 years, India has suffered uncalculable agricultural losses; parts of Rajasthan and Punjab remain arid or rely on expensive alternative water sources because India cannot fully utilize the Western rivers.
- Stifling Jammu & Kashmir: The Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir is the most severely affected. Despite sitting on the banks of these rivers, its massive potential for hydro-power remains untapped due to treaty hurdles and persistent Pakistani objections.
- External Interference: Locals in J&K often view the treaty as an external imposition that prevents them from developing their own natural resources.

(iv) Present Status and Modern Challenges

- Pakistani Propaganda: Pakistan frequently portrays India as a "water aggressor" on the global stage to gain sympathy and hinder India's legitimate development projects allowed under the treaty.
- Cross-Border Terrorism: India has strictly followed the treaty for 65 years despite Pakistan's continued support for state-sponsored terrorism and multiple wars against India.
- India's Shift in Stance: Safeguarding its fair interests in the Indus basin has now become a top



priority for India.

