

January 20, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. The Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly session begins on Tuesday (Jan. 20) with Governor RN Ravi's speech. As the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly elections are going to be held soon, heated debates are expected to arise in this series of meetings.

2. The Chief Minister M. K. Stalin laid the foundation stone for the construction of 'Mamallan' reservoir at Rs. 342.60 crore in Nemmeli, Chengalpattu district.

(i) 170 million litres of drinking water per day can be supplied to the people through the Mamallan' new reservoir.

3. The President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. announced that new natural gas reserves have been discovered in the Philippines' territorial waters along the South China Sea. About 5 km northwest of Palawan Province, closest to the currently active Malambaya gas field.

(i) It is predicted that there may be around 9,800 crore cubic feet of gas. This can provide energy to around 57 lakh households per year.

(ii) Experts have warned that the Malampaya gas field, the main source of energy for the Philippines, will be depleted within a few years. In these circumstances, this new discovery has strengthened the country's energy security. In particular, it is expected to play an important role in meeting the energy demand of the Luzon region, the country's industrial and commercial hub.

(iii) There are long-standing border disputes between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea. In this case, the discovery of this gas reserve within the Philippines' own economic zone has attracted attention.

4. In China, the lowest birth rate of 5.63 percent was recorded last year, since the 1949 Communist revolution.

(i) The number of children born in China last year was only 7.92 million. This is 1.62 million (17 percent) less than the previous year.

(ii) Since last year was considered as the 'Year of the Snake' (according to the Chinese calendar), astrological beliefs are also cited as a reason for this decline. However, severe economic hardship, the high cost of raising children, and lifestyle changes are considered the main factors contributing to people's reluctance to have children.

(iii) These new statistics show that the slight increase in the birth rate in 2024 was a temporary change. It is noteworthy that the birth rate had been continuously declining for 7 years until 2023.

(iv) China, which fell behind India in terms of world population in 2023, is now experiencing a population contraction for the fourth consecutive year. According to 2025 figures, the country's population has decreased to 1.404 billion, which is 3 million less than the previous year.

(v) With the number of people over 60 years of age in China now increasing to 323 million, the declining number of young people poses a major challenge to the country's future economic growth.

(vi) Consequently, the Chinese Government is taking measures such as providing direct incentives to couples who have children and offering tax exemptions and support to sectors such as marriage services and primary schools.

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5. The Russian Presidential Palace has announced that it is considering the invitation extended by US President Donald Trump to Russian President Vladimir Putin to join the US-led Gaza peace initiative.

6. The European Union is planning to take retaliatory measures if US President Donald Trump imposes additional tariffs on European countries over the Greenland issue.

7. In Guatemala, seven police officers were killed in clashes between prisoners who had rioted & seized control of prisons, and the security forces. Following this, the country's President has declared a nationwide 30-day state of emergency to combat illegal gangs.

8. The first phase of the 6th Khelo India Winter Games is scheduled to begin on Tuesday (Jan. 20) in Leh, Ladakh.

(i) The Khelo India program, a flagship initiative of the Central Government's Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, operates with the dual objectives of promoting sports participation among the general public and nurturing exceptional sporting talent. Under this program, various national-level sports competitions are conducted. The Youth Games have been held nine times, the University Games six times, the Winter Games five times, the Para Games twice, and the Beach Games once.

(ii) This year's Khelo India Winter Games will be held in Leh in Ladakh and Gulmarg in Jammu and Kashmir.

9. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan arrived in India on a one-day state visit. In his presence, various agreements were signed between India and the UAE, and a target has been set to increase trade between the two countries to \$200 billion (about Rs.18.17 lakh crore) by 2032. In this regard, the Foreign Ministry Secretary Vikram Misri told reporters:

(i) The Prime Minister Modi and President Al Nahyan discussed cooperation in new and emerging sectors between India and the UAE. They also discussed nuclear energy cooperation, as a law has been enacted to allow private companies in Nuclear Power generation in India.

(ii) They also discussed the issues of Yemen, Gaza and Iran. Both condemned cross-border terrorism.

(iii) Following the visit of UAE President Al Nahyan, it was decided that India-UAE will work together to develop advanced Nuclear Technology, including the construction of large and small nuclear reactors, and that there will be cooperation between the two countries in nuclear safety and the construction and maintenance of Nuclear Power Plants.

(iv) 5 lakh metric tonnes of LNG:

The UAE is the second largest supplier of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) to India after Qatar. In this context, an agreement was finalized between the two countries for the UAE to supply 5 lakh metric tonnes of LNG annually to Hindustan Petroleum Corporation, a Central Government company.

(v) The two countries also decided to cooperate in the field of Artificial Intelligence Technology. Accordingly, it was decided to establish a high-performance computing application system in India in partnership with the UAE.

(vi) The value of trade between the two countries was \$84 billion (about Rs.7.63 lakh crore) in the financial year 2023-24. The target is to increase this to \$200 billion (about Rs.18.17 lakh crore) by 2032.

(vii) A Memorandum of Understanding was signed to finalize an Action Plan Agreement for Strategic Defence Cooperation between the two countries.

Similarly, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed to work together to develop space infrastructure. According to this, the two countries will work together to establish new space launch pads, spacecraft manufacturing centers, a space academy and training centers.

(ix) Another Memorandum of Understanding was signed to establish a Special Investment Zone in the Dholera region of Gujarat. According to this, an international airport, a green port, energy infrastructure, etc. will be developed in that zone.

(x) A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on food security was also signed. This agreement will promote the export of food and other agricultural products from India to the UAE. This will benefit Indian farmers and the food security of the UAE, he said.

10. The External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar personally conveyed India's strong objection to Polish Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Radosław Sikorski regarding the inclusion of a reference to Kashmir in the Pakistan-Poland joint statement.

(i) Radosław Sikorski is on a three-day official visit to Delhi. He met with External Affairs Minister Jaishankar. During the meeting, Jaishankar pointed out the reference to Kashmir in the Pakistan-Poland joint statement issued last October. He further stated that Poland should show zero tolerance towards terrorism and should not encourage the growth of terrorist infrastructure in India's neighbouring country (Pakistan).

