

January 26, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. Britain's Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood has announced plans to establish a new National Police Service (NPS) on the model of America's FBI to prevent terrorism and crimes related to violence.

(i) He further said, 'NPS (British FBI) will be established with well-trained and efficient officers to fight modern day crimes with world-class technologies. Under this system, national-level crime agencies will be brought under one umbrella,' he said.

2. The third and final phase of Myanmar's general election was held.

(i) With the military currently ruling after overthrowing the democratically elected Government of Aung San Suu Kyi (80) in 2021, political analysts in the country stated that military general Min Aung Hlaing is actively seeking to officially assume the Presidency through this election.

(ii) This election, held after five years in 330 townships, did not include 67 townships controlled by anti-military resistance groups.

(iii) Consequently, elections were held for 586 out of the total 664 constituencies in the Myanmar Parliament (Lower House and Upper House). 25 percent of these seats are reserved for the military.

(iv) It is reported that the military-backed 'Union Solidarity and Development Party' (USDP) won a large number of seats in the two phases of voting already held. It is expected that after the election results are announced, and including the 25 percent of seats reserved for the military, General Min Aung Hlaing will assume the Presidency with the necessary majority to form a Government.

3. Novak Djokovic of Serbia, a 24-time Grand Slam champion, had advanced to the fourth round of Australian Open. However, his opponent in that round, Jakub Mensik of the Czech Republic, withdrew from the tournament due to injury, and Djokovic was consequently declared to have advanced to the quarterfinals.

(i) With this, Djokovic set a record for the most quarterfinal appearances (16) at the Australian Open. Previously, this record was held by Swiss star Roger Federer (15 times). Djokovic continues to hold the record for the most quarterfinal appearances (64) across all four Grand Slam tournaments.

4. Indian tennis legend Vijay Amritraj has been announced as a recipient of the Padma Bhushan award, while World Cup-winning cricket captains Rohit Sharma and Harmanpreet Kaur have been announced as recipients of the Padma Shri award. The Central Government announced the Padma Awards for this year. Nine individuals from the sports field have been selected for the awards.

(i) Vijay Amritraj (Tennis) has been selected for the Padma Bhushan award, which is the country's third-highest civilian honour.

(ii) Rohit Sharma, Harmanpreet Kaur (Cricket), Savita Punia (Hockey), Praveen Kumar (Para Athletics), Palanivel from Puducherry (Silambam), Bhagwandas Raikwar (Traditional Martial Arts), Baldev Singh (Hockey), and Vladimir Mestvirishvili from Georgia (Wrestling) have been announced as recipients of the Padma Shri award.

(iii) Vijay Amritraj, the Davis Cup tennis star receiving the Padma Bhushan, a top Indian tennis player during the early stages of the amateur and Open Era.

(iv) Rohit Sharma, a recipient of the Padma Shri, led the Indian team to victory in the T20 World Cup, while

Harmanpreet Kaur led the Indian team to victory in the Women's One Day World Cup.

(v) Praveen Kumar is being awarded the Padma Shri for winning a gold medal at the Paralympics, and Vladimir Mestvirishvili (posthumously) for training Olympic medal-winning wrestlers. Savita Punia, a top goalkeeper in women's hockey, is also on the list of Padma Shri awardees.

5. World number one Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus eliminated Canadian youngster Victoria Mboko. With this victory, Sabalenka set a record for the most consecutive wins (20) in tie-breaks at Grand Slam tournaments. Previously, Novak Djokovic held the record with 19 consecutive tie-break victories, which Sabalenka has now surpassed.

6. The Union Home Ministry announced the President's Police Medal for Chhaya Sharma, a senior Indian Police Service (IPS) officer holding the rank of Additional Director General of Police (ADGP).

(i) The Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) acts as a coordinating body for integrating the diverse skills of those working in Indian police organizations. Chhaya Sharma currently serves as its Director.

(ii) Chhaya Sharma has been commended by the Delhi High Court for her work in the Delhi Police, including developing a strong victim-centric approach in matters related to women and children, leading the investigation into the Nirbhaya gang-rape case that shook the nation in 2012, conducting investigations with a meticulous and scientific approach, leading investigations into various child trafficking cases and rescuing numerous children, and her work as the head of the National Human Rights Commission's investigation division.

(iii) In addition, she has received commendation from the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for her efforts in preventing juvenile drug trafficking and abuse. Several crime web series based on cases she has solved during her police career have been released on OTT platforms.

(iv) A 1999 batch officer of the AGMUT (Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram, and Union Territories) cadre, she has already received two Special Duty Medals, the President's Police Medal, the Leadership and Courage Award from the International Leadership Organization, and the Union Home Minister's Medal for Excellence in Investigation for her services in the police force in the northeastern states.

7. The India-European Union Free Trade Agreement (FTA) will be finalized on Tuesday (Jan. 27). An official announcement in this regard is expected to be made on the same day.

(i) While the treaty negotiations started in 2007, the successful completion of the negotiations after 18 years is to be formally announced.

(ii) The Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal has described this agreement as the 'Mother of all Free Trade Agreements', India has entered into so far.

(iii) Since 2014, India has entered into Free Trade Agreements with Australia, Britain, Oman, New Zealand, United Arab Emirates, European Free Trade Association and Mauritius. Earlier these agreements were signed with ASEAN (10 countries), Japan, South Korea, Malaysia and Singapore.

(iv) In this case, the Free Trade Agreement with the European Union, a major bloc comprising 27 countries including France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Netherlands, Portugal, Poland, Denmark and Sweden, will be finalised.

(v) European Council President Antonio Costa and European Commission President Ursula van der Leyen

have arrived in India to participate as Chief Guests in the Republic Day celebrations to be held in Delhi on Monday (Jan.26).

(vi) They will participate in the India-EU summit in Delhi. Then, the above announcements will be published.

(vii) When is signature?

As far as India is concerned, the approval of the Union Cabinet is sufficient for this agreement. However, the implementation is likely to take some time as the European Union needs its Parliamentary approval.

(viii) The European Union is India's largest trading partner. 17 percent of India's total exports go to these countries. The value of bilateral merchandise trade in 2024-25 was \$135.53 billion. The value of services trade was \$83.10 billion.

(ix) The European Union with a population of over 45 crore has a GDP of \$20 trillion. Including India's population, the deal will create a huge market with a total of 200 crore people.

(x) It is to be noted that this agreement will lead to duty exemption or reduction of duty on about 90 percent of goods including textiles and footwear.

8. The Government of Tamil Nadu has informed that devices worth Rs.6.40 crore have been distributed to fishermen to protect sea turtles in coastal districts. A press release issued in this regard:

(i) To protect the sea turtles coming to the beach for breeding from fishing trawlers in the coastal districts of Tamil Nadu, a scheme of Rs.6.40 crore for free supply of Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) to fishermen by the Department of Fisheries and Fishery Welfare is provided every year from January 1 to April 30, the breeding season of sea turtles.

(ii) They mainly prohibit fishing by fishing boats within 5 nautical miles from the coast, fishing by traditional fishing boats equipped with engines of more than 10 horse power and use of seine nets in declared sea turtle spawning areas.

(iii) 2,613 Accordingly, steps have been taken to provide turtle repellent devices to 50 fishing barges at a cost of Rs.11.75 lakhs on a trial basis and subsequently to boats at a cost of Rs.6.29 crores.

(iv) It is reported that with these devices provided free of cost to the fishermen, the sea turtles will not get caught in the fishing trawls and the livelihood of the fishermen will also be protected.

9. Subhanshu Shukla, the first Indian astronaut to travel to the International Space Station, has been awarded the Ashoka Chakra.

(i) Shukla, an Indian Air Force pilot, travelled to space in June 2025 aboard a spacecraft from an American company. He also stayed at the International Space Station for 18 days.

(ii) Through this achievement, he became the second Indian astronaut to go to space after Rakesh Sharma, and the first Indian astronaut to visit the International Space Station.

10. The relocation of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) from its long-standing home in South Block to a newly constructed building named "Sewa Teerth" (Place of Service) marks a significant transition in India's administrative history. This move is portrayed not merely as a change of address but as the dawn of a new era in governance.

(i) Historical Significance and Legacy -

A Witness to History: Since 1947, the PMO has operated out of the South Block, serving as the workplace for 15 Prime Ministers, starting with Jawaharlal Nehru and continuing through to Narendra Modi.

(ii) The "War Room": The South Block has been the "center of power" where the fate of the nation was decided. Notably, it served as a critical "War Room" during the 1971 India-Pakistan war, where Prime Minister Indira Gandhi coordinated with military and diplomatic leaders.

(iii) Formal Naming: While it functioned as the leader's secretariat for decades, it was officially designated as the "Prime Minister's Office" in 1977 during the Janata Party government led by Morarji Desai.

(iv) "Sewa Teerth": A New Architectural Philosophy

The move to the new building, which is part of the ₹1,189 crore Central Vista project, represents a deliberate shift in symbolism and functionality:

(v) From Colonial to Modern: The old blocks were designed in 1931 by British architect Sir Herbert Baker; the new "Sewa Teerth" was designed by Padma Shri awardee Bimal Patel. This shift is described as an effort to move away from the "slave mentality" of the colonial era.

(vi) Transparency vs. Secrecy: The sources contrast the architectural styles of the two buildings. While the South Block was often perceived as an "Iron Curtain"—opaque and secretive—the new building features an "open space design". This is intended to symbolize transparency in administration and facilitate better communication and idea exchange.

(vii) Global Standing: The PMO is compared to other world-renowned centers of sovereignty, such as the Kremlin, the White House, and Westminster, standing as an equal symbol of national authority.

Vision for the Future

(viii) As India moves toward its centenary of independence, "Sewa Teerth" should represent more than just a strong administrative center. It is envisioned as a place that fosters inclusive growth, self-reliance, and equal opportunity for all citizens.

II. The status of girls in Indian society.

While women are making strides in fields as advanced as space research, they simultaneously face a multitude of deep-rooted challenges.

(i) Safety and Violence

Rising Crimes - Data from the National Crime Records Bureau indicates that violence against girl children is increasing, with approximately 30% of all crimes against women being committed against minor girls.

Abuse by Known Persons - Alarming, over 90% of sexual harassment cases are perpetrated by individuals known to the victim, such as relatives or neighbors.

Digital Vulnerability - The digital age has introduced new threats, including cyber-harassment and the misuse of private photos on social media, which severely impacts the mental health of young girls and often leads to social isolation.

(ii) Education and Socio-Economic Barriers

Rural-Urban Divide - While educational progress is visible in urban centers, higher education remains a

distant dream for many girls in rural areas.

High Dropout Rates – According to UNICEF, dropout rates among girls increase significantly at the high school level. Major factors include:

- Lack of proper sanitation and toilet facilities, especially critical during menstruation.
- Safety fears regarding long-distance travel to schools.
- The burden of domestic work and the responsibility of caring for younger siblings while parents are at work.

(iii) Health and Nutrition

- Gender Bias in Nutrition: A disparity exists in the quality of food provided to boys versus girls in many households, leading to widespread health issues.
- Anemia Crisis: The National Family Health Survey reports that more than 57% of adolescent girls in India suffer from anemia and malnutrition.

(iv) Proposed Solutions for Improvement –

- Infrastructure: Schools must provide private toilets and install sanitary napkin vending machines and incinerators on a priority basis to prevent dropouts.
- Self-Defense: Mandatory self-defense training should be integrated into the school curriculum to build physical strength and self-confidence.
- Support Systems: Every school should have a dedicated psychological counselor to help girls navigate sexual threats and social media pressures.
- Sensitization: Gender equality must begin at home by teaching boys to respect the rights and identity of girls from a young age.
- Accessibility: Governments should expand schemes providing bicycles or exclusive school buses for girls traveling from remote rural villages.

While educating a boy educates an individual, educating a girl educates an entire generation.

It invokes the vision of the poet Bharathiyar,

“நிமிர்ந்த நன்னடை நேர்கொண்ட பார்வை, நிலத்தில் யார்க்கும் அஞ்சாத நெறிகள்” suggesting that society does not need to “gift the sky” to girls, but simply stop “clipping their wings” so they may fly on their own