

January 27, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. The Free Trade Agreement negotiations between India and the European Union have been successfully concluded. The details of the agreement are expected to be released at the summit to be held in New Delhi on Tuesday (January 27).

(i) At this summit, chaired by Prime Minister Modi, the European Union will be represented by the President of the European Council, Antonio Costa, and the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen.

(ii) While it has been reported that the agreement has been finalized after 18 years of negotiations, it is expected to be signed this year and come into effect next year.

2. Two panda bears, 'Xiao Xiao' and 'Lei Lei', which symbolized the friendship between Japan and China, returned to their homeland, China, from Japan.

(i) The Chinese Government, under its 'Panda Diplomacy' policy, lends pandas to other countries to foster good relations. However, according to the agreement, China retains full ownership of all pandas, including cubs born abroad. Based on this agreement, the twin pandas returned to China as the contract had expired.

(ii) It is noteworthy that countries like Japan pay China approximately \$1 million annually for the upkeep of these pandas.

(iii) This is the first time since the normalization of Japan-China bilateral relations in 1972 that Japan finds itself without a single panda.

(iv) Currently, there are significant tensions in Japan-China relations over the Taiwan issue. Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi recently announced that Japan would intervene in any Chinese military action against Taiwan.

(v) Angered by this, China has tightened trade restrictions on Japan. Due to these political conflicts, it is considered highly unlikely that Japan will receive new pandas from China in the future.

3. A new app has been launched in Denmark to identify and boycott American products using QR codes.

(i) The US President Donald Trump has been making various attempts to acquire Greenland, an island under Danish control. European countries do not accept his view that it is crucial for Greenland to be under US control to protect it from threats from Russia and China.

(ii) An anti-American sentiment is widespread in Denmark. Several actions are being taken in Denmark to demonstrate their refusal to submit to American dominance.

(iii) A young man in Denmark has developed a new app to identify and boycott American products imported into their country using QR codes. This app, called 'UdenUSA' (Without USA), is being widely downloaded by people living in Denmark.

4. In the general election held in Myanmar, the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party

(USDP) has secured a majority of seats and seized power.

(i) The military seized power in 2021, overthrowing the democratic Government led by Aung San Suu Kyi (80). Elections have been held there only now, after five years.

(ii) However, the victory of the military-backed party was already anticipated, as the main opposition parties, including Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD), were banned from contesting the elections, and strict restrictions were imposed.

(iii) Elections were held in three phases for 586 out of the total 664 seats in both houses of the Myanmar Parliament. Elections were not held in 67 areas controlled by anti-military resistance groups.

(iv) According to the Myanmar constitution, 25 percent of the seats (166 seats) in Parliament are directly reserved for the Military. Through this, the Military and its allied parties now hold more than 450 seats, exceeding the 294 seats required to form a new Government.

(v) After the full election results are released, the new Members of Parliament and military representatives will jointly elect the country's new President.

(vi) It is widely expected that General Min Aung Hlaing, the current head of the Military Government, will assume the Presidency.

5. "A successful India makes this world more stable," said European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen with pride.

(i) She expressed this view after participating as a special guest at the country's 77th Republic Day celebrations in Delhi. European Council President António Costa also participated as a special guest at the Republic Day celebrations.

(ii) This marks the first time that European Union leaders have participated in India's Republic Day celebrations.

6. Student suicides in India :-

(i) Alarming Statistical Trends

- **Rising Numbers:** In 2023, India recorded a total of 1.71 lakh suicides, with students making up 8.1% (13,892) of that figure.
- **Decadal Increase:** A staggering 65% increase in student suicides over the last ten years, rising from 8,423 in 2013.
- **Elite Institutions:** Between 2018 and early 2023, significant numbers of suicides were reported in premier institutions, including 33 at IITs and 24 at NITs.

(ii) Root Causes of Student Distress :-

- **Academic Pressure:** Excessive syllabus loads, poorly planned curricula, and strict attendance requirements create immense stress for students.
- **Institutional Gaps:** A critical lack of support exists, with 65% of higher education institutions operating without any mental health counselors.
- **Administrative Failures:** The lack of transparency in job placements and delays in releasing

student scholarships further aggravate the situation.

(iii) Supreme Court Guidelines and Recommendations :-

Following a study by a National Task Force led by retired Justice S. Ravindra Bhat, the Supreme Court issued nine specific guidelines under Article 142 to prevent student suicides. Key directives include:

- **Counseling Services:** Every institution with more than 100 students must appoint a qualified mental health counselor.
- **Medical Access:** Residential higher education centers are required to ensure 24-hour medical assistance for students.
- **Filling Vacancies:** To ensure academic stability, the post of Vice-Chancellor and Registrar should be filled within one month of becoming vacant, while teaching vacancies and scholarship arrears must be addressed within four months.

(iv) The Path Forward

Simply increasing student enrollment is insufficient if the quality of support remains low. While states like Tamil Nadu have successfully reached high enrollment targets, they still face significant hurdles, such as 50% vacancy rates in teaching staff and several vacant administrative leadership positions.

For India to achieve its "Viksit Bharat" vision, the Central and State Governments must collaborate to prioritize student well-being and institutional quality over mere infrastructure.

7. The Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan and Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed their condolences on the passing away of Professor Gnanasundaram, a senior Tamil scholar and former Vice-Chairman of the Central Institute of Classical Tamil.

8. The Commercial power generation has commenced at the third unit of the North Chennai Thermal Power Station.

(i) The North Chennai Thermal Power Station, owned by the Electricity Board and located in Athipattu, Tiruvallur district, operates with three units of 210 MW capacity each, and the nearby North Chennai Expansion Thermal Power Station operates with two units of 600 MW capacity each. A super-critical 800 MW thermal power plant, named 'North Chennai-3', was constructed near this power station.

9. The Tamil Nadu Government is organizing a Global Women's Summit in Chennai on Wednesday (Jan. 27, 28). The Chief Minister M.K. Stalin will inaugurate it.

10. President Droupadi Murmu conferred the Ashoka Chakra upon Group Captain Subhanshu Shukla for his historic mission to the International Space Station (ISS) in 2025.