

February 5, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. In Myanmar, the military junta is planning to create a new high-level authority called the 'Union Consultative Council' to integrate and oversee both the military and the civilian administration.

(i) Following the recent elections in Myanmar, the new Parliament is scheduled to convene next month. This new council will be an organization with more power than the country's executive, legislature, and judiciary combined.

(ii) Through this, even if General Min Aung Hlaing assumes the Presidency, he will retain his grip on the military.

(iii) This five-member council will completely oversee national security and all Parliamentary functions. It is said that Min Aung Hlaing has taken this decision to keep the civilian administration under his shadow authority while simultaneously preventing excessive power from being vested in the new military chief.

2. Direct talks between Iran and the United States regarding nuclear disarmament are scheduled to take place in Oman.

(i) The US delegation will include President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner and Special Envoy Steve Witkoff, while the Iranian delegation will include Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi.

(ii) While countries like Saudi Arabia and Qatar have shown interest in these talks, considering regional peace, Iran, which had previously insisted on indirect negotiations, has now agreed for direct talks.

(iii) Initially, these talks were planned to be held in Turkey. At that time, the US imposed a condition that Iran's missile program and the insurgent groups it supports should also be discussed. Iran strongly opposed this.

(iv) Following this, the US accepted Iran's request to shift the venue of the talks to Oman. It is noteworthy that Oman has previously facilitated several rounds of talks between Iran and the United States.

3. India has also joined the race to host the 2031 AFC Asian Cup football tournament. Australia, Indonesia, South Korea, and Kuwait, along with a joint bid from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, are already in contention for the opportunity.

4. In the National Weightlifting Championship, Mirabai Chanu became the champion in the women's 48 kg category by lifting a total of 205 kg. The weight she lifted in all three categories – snatch (89 kg), clean & jerk (116 kg), and total – constitutes a new national record.

5. A direct bus service has been launched between Delhi and Beni city in Nepal.

(i) Nepal has numerous famous Hindu and Buddhist temples. Among them is the Muktinath temple, which is worshipped jointly by Hindus and Buddhists. Beni city, located in the Gandaki province of Nepal, is considered the gateway to this temple.

(ii) A direct bus service has been launched between Beni and Delhi. This bus service has been named the

Building Bureaucrats Since 2006

Nepal-India Friendship Bus Service. The bus will depart from Beni and travel through Syangja, Waling, Bhairahawa, Ayodhya, and Agra before reaching Delhi. It will operate on the same route back to Nepal.

(iii) Until now, there was no direct travel option from India to the Muktinath temple. One had to fly to Kathmandu, then take another flight to Pokhara and Jomsom, and from there travel to the Muktinath temple by jeep. This bus service will reduce both travel time and cost.

(iv) Beni city is 1,400 kilometers away from Delhi. The bus journey takes 27 hours. The bus will depart from Delhi daily at 4 PM and from Beni at 6:45 AM.

(v) The bus fare has been fixed at NPR 5,400 in Nepalese currency and INR 3,200 in Indian currency.

(vi) The Muktinath temple is located at an altitude of 3,710 feet above sea level. Indian citizens do not require a passport to travel to Nepal; a valid identity document is sufficient.

6. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit Malaysia on February 7th and 8th. This will be his third visit to Malaysia since assuming office as Prime Minister.

(i) During this visit, Prime Minister Modi will meet with Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim. They will discuss important issues including bilateral trade, investment, energy, maritime security, financial technology, health, education, culture, and tourism.

(ii) The 10th India-Malaysia CEO Forum meeting is also planned to be held during the Prime Minister's visit. Approximately 2.9 million people of Indian origin reside in Malaysia. Globally, Malaysia ranks third among countries with the largest Indian diaspora.

(iii) The two countries share a long-standing friendship, history, culture, and deep historical ties. The Ministry of External Affairs stated in a press release that the meeting between the leaders of the two countries will help them continue to work together for mutual benefit.

7. World Cancer Day - February 4

8. Current Status of Forest Cover

- National Policy Goal: According to the National Forest Policy, a country should ideally have 33% of its total land area covered by forests.
- Data from the Indian Forest Survey indicates that India's current forest cover is only 21.71%.

(i) Alarming Survival Rates

- A report from the Union Environment Ministry suggests that only 30% to 40% of saplings planted under various schemes actually survive.
- The real survival rate is often less than 10%, meaning the vast majority of saplings never grow into trees.
- Despite millions of saplings being planted annually, groundwater levels continue to deplete to extreme depths during summers.

(ii) Critique of "Photo-Op" Afforestation

- Tree planting has shifted from a vital life duty to a mere "photo ceremony" for social media and

advertisements.

- In many public ceremonies, the expenditure on stages, banners, and arrangements is thousands of times higher than the actual cost of the saplings being planted.
- Saplings are often abandoned immediately after the high-profile guests leave, with no provisions for watering or protection from cattle.

(iii) To move beyond symbolic planting, the following reforms are suggested:

- At least 50% of the budget allocated for tree planting should be reserved specifically for maintenance (watering and fencing).
- Government departments should be evaluated based on the number of surviving trees after one year, rather than the initial number of saplings planted.
- Maintaining saplings for at least three years should be made a legal obligation for the respective departments.
- Planting should focus exclusively on native species suited to the local soil, such as Banyan, Pipal, Neem, and Pongamia.

(iv) Technology and Community Involvement

- Digital Monitoring: Using "Geo-tag" technology and mobile apps to track the growth of each sapling and mandate periodic photo updates.
- Saplings should be given to students, and those who successfully maintain them throughout their schooling should receive special marks/credits.
- Afforestation projects should be subjected to social audits to verify survival rates.
- Maintenance should be handed over to local Resident Welfare Associations, small traders, or NGOs to ensure long-term care.

"Ten well-protected and maintained trees are far superior to one thousand neglected saplings."