

February 6, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. Russia has expressed its regret over the expiration of the 'New START' treaty, the last remaining nuclear arms control agreement with the United States, on Thursday.

(i) At the same time, the country stated that "even though nuclear arms controls have been removed, Russia will act responsibly considering the security of the world."

(ii) According to this treaty, both countries could possess only 1,550 nuclear weapons each. Fears arose that the end of the treaty would lead to a new nuclear arms race.

(iii) Russian President Putin had proposed extending the key provisions of this treaty for another year. However, the US President Trump, without directly responding to this, stated that he preferred a trilateral agreement including China.

(iv) Meanwhile, it is noteworthy that, as a significant development in the peace talks regarding the Ukraine war, both Russia and the United States have agreed to re-establish high-level direct military contact.

2. The US intelligence agency CIA has announced that it is discontinuing 'The World Factbook', a renowned information service that compiles and provides various statistics on countries around the world.

(i) The discontinuation of this service, which has served as a highly reliable source of international information for over 60 years, has caused shock among academics and researchers.

(ii) It was first introduced in 1962 as a confidential document for the secret use of US intelligence officials. It contained highly accurate information on a country's economic status, military strength, natural resources, and social structure. Considering its importance, it was made available to the public in the 1970s. Later, after becoming a website in 1997, it became an indispensable source of information for millions of students and journalists worldwide. Now, its publication has been completely stopped.

(iii) The CIA has not yet given an official reason for this sudden decision. However, experts in the field cite key reasons such as a shift in priorities, staff reductions, and financial constraints. CIA Director John Ratcliffe had already instructed the agency to abandon projects unrelated to its core intelligence functions.

(iv) Similarly, at the beginning of US President Trump's second term, the number of employees at the CIA and the National Security Agency was reduced. Furthermore, due to financial constraints, the CIA has been forced to focus only on the most critical intelligence tasks with limited resources.

(v) Last update: Before the Factbook website was shut down, the information on countries around the world was last updated in January.

(vi) The Factbook is not just a collection of information; Many people are expressing their sorrow on social media, stating that 'it was a bridge to understanding the countries of the world'.

3. Jio-BP (British Petroleum)'s new 'Active' technology petrol was recently launched.

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(i) Key Features: This 'Active' technology petrol removes dirt and deposits that accumulate in the engine's vital parts, ensuring the engine performs efficiently for a longer period.

(ii) Compared to using regular petrol, this fuel allows you to travel approximately 100 km further per year. In short, this petrol restores the engine's original performance and protects it from wear and tear.

(iii) It is noteworthy that this petrol, with all these advanced features, is offered to customers at the regular price without any additional cost.

4. In the men's 60 kg weight category of the National Weightlifting Championship, Gururaja Poojary of Karnataka won the gold medal by lifting a total of 269 kg (119 kg in the snatch and 150 kg in the clean & jerk).

5. India has secured the opportunity to host the Billie Jean King Cup, described as the World Cup of women's tennis. The tournament, which will be held in Delhi from April 7th to 11th, will feature India, Indonesia, South Korea, Mongolia, New Zealand, and Thailand.

6. The 25th Winter Olympic Games begin on Friday (Feb. 6) in the Italian cities of Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo. 92 countries, including India, are participating in the event.

7. The 'Bharat Taxi' app was launched by Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah.

(i) Companies like Ola, Uber, and Rapido provide taxi, auto-rickshaw, and bike services across the country through their apps. Similarly, the Bharat Taxi app has been launched to provide car, auto-rickshaw, and bike services through 8 cooperative societies. So far, 3 lakh drivers have joined, and one lakh users have registered.

(ii) All drivers are referred to as 'Sarathi' (charioteer). They are provided with benefits including health insurance, accident insurance, and pension savings. Unlike private companies, surge pricing is not implemented during peak demand. No commission is collected from the drivers. The profits earned are shared among the drivers.

(iii) In the first phase, this app will provide taxi, auto-rickshaw, and bike services in the National Capital Region and the state of Gujarat. It is planned to expand the service nationwide within three years. In a post regarding this, Union Minister Amit Shah stated that within three years, Bharat Taxi will operate across the country, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Dwarka to Kamakhya.

8. The Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated that India and Sri Lanka share deep civilizational and spiritual ties.

(i) The sacred relics of Buddha, unearthed at Devni Mori, a Buddhist archaeological site in the Aravalli district of Gujarat, have been put on public display at the renowned Gangaramaya Buddhist temple in Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka.

(ii) This is the first time these sacred relics are being displayed internationally. Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake inaugurated the exhibition in the presence of Gujarat Governor Acharya Devvrat, Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi, Buddhist monks, and officials from both sides.

(iii) Key Archaeological Site:

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- Devni Mori is one of the important Buddhist archaeological sites in the country. Excavations there unearthed a stupa containing caskets with the sacred ashes of Buddha, a copper box, and gold and silver plates. One of the caskets is inscribed with Brahmi and Sanskrit scripts.
- These sacred relics, preserved at the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda in Vadodara, Gujarat, were transported to Colombo by a special Indian Air Force aircraft.
- Earlier, during Prime Minister Modi's visit to Sri Lanka last year, India's grant assistance for the development of the sacred city complex in Anuradhapura was announced. It is noteworthy that a grant of \$15 million (Rs. 135 crore) was announced in 2020 to promote India-Sri Lanka Buddhist ties.

9. Both sides signed the framework documents to initiate negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement between India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

(i) The Gulf Cooperation Council comprises 6 countries: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. India had already concluded free trade agreements with the UAE in 2022 and with Oman last December.

(ii) In this context, both sides signed the framework documents to formally commence negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement with the Gulf Cooperation Council.

(iii) This event took place in New Delhi in the presence of the Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal. The objectives and procedures of the Free Trade Agreement are included in the aforementioned document.

(iv) Trade and Investment will be strengthened:

- Goyal stated, "This agreement will further strengthen bilateral trade and investments; and promote bilateral food and energy security. The Central Government has finalized 9 free trade agreements covering 38 countries in the last 10 years."
- While two rounds of negotiations between India and the GCC had already taken place during the 2006-2008 period, further negotiations did not proceed due to a decision by the GCC. Now, with the signing of these preliminary documents, negotiations are set to resume.
- Approximately one crore Indians work in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries. Crude oil and natural gas are India's main imports from Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Pearls, precious gems, metals, imitation jewellery, electrical machinery, iron and steel, and chemicals are among the items exported.
- India's exports to GCC countries, which stood at \$56.32 billion in 2023-24, increased to \$57 billion in 2024-25. This is a one percent increase. Meanwhile, imports, which were \$105.5 billion, increased to \$121 billion (15 percent).

10. The Central Government launched the BharatGPT project in October 2024 to develop AI models for Indian languages, including text-to-speech and automatic speech recognition.

(i) The Union Minister of Science and Technology, Jitendra Singh, stated that text-based services in all 22 official languages will soon be completed in the indigenously developed BharatGPT multilingual artificial intelligence (AI) model.

11. The UN Secretary-General António Guterres praised India for hosting the Artificial Intelligence (AI) summit.

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(i) He made this statement while confirming his participation in the 'AI Impact' summit to be held in Delhi on February 19 and 20.

(ii) My recommendation to the world is that, based on the outcomes of the global digital compact undertaken in 2024, we should discuss further developing AI infrastructure and other technologies in developing countries, and establishing an independent international scientific panel to scientifically understand the impact of AI.

(iii) It is noteworthy that António Guterres has recommended the appointment of Balaram Ravichandran, head of the Wadhvani Institute for Artificial Intelligence and the Responsible AI Centre at IIT Madras, to the first international scientific panel that will conduct research on the impact of AI.

