

February 15, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. The Union Cabinet has approved the Startup India Fund of Funds 2.0 with a corpus of ₹10,000 crore. The approval was given by the Union Cabinet on Economic Affairs chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi.

(i) Prime Minister Modi had earlier signed the file for this capital fund while inaugurating his new office 'Seva Teerth' complex in Delhi.

(ii) The Union Government launched the Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS 1.0) in 2016 with the aim of providing assistance to entrepreneurs for venture capital funding and promoting a long-term capital culture. Following the success of this scheme, the Union Cabinet has approved the allocation with a corpus of Rs.10,000 crore for this scheme in the second phase.

(iii) The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has so far recognized 2 lakh companies as startups. These companies are eligible for incentives under the Innovative India Mission.

(iv) Multimodal Rail Line Projects:

- The Union Cabinet has approved three multimodal rail line projects. The Ministry of Railways has estimated the cost of implementing these projects at Rs.18,509 crore.
- The project includes the construction of third and fourth rail lines from Kasara-Manmad in Maharashtra, Delhi-Ambala in Haryana and Bellary-Hosapet in Karnataka.
- The multimodal rail line project has been proposed with the objective of improving multimodal transport connectivity and freight transport. It was planned to develop this project under the PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan. The Union Cabinet has now approved this project. With this, seamless movement of passengers, goods and services will be ensured.
- These three multi-modal rail projects will add about 389 km of existing rail network in the states of Delhi, Haryana, Maharashtra and Karnataka. This will expand the transport connectivity to about 3,902 villages and benefit about 97 lakh people.
- Apart from this, the project will also improve rail connectivity to various important tourist destinations across the country including Shri Mata Vaishnava Devi Temple in Katra, Srinagar, Bellary Fort, Daroji Sloth Bear Sanctuary in Karnataka, Tungbhadra Dam.

(v) Rs. 1 lakh crore Urban Challenge Fund (UCF) :-

- Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said that the Union Cabinet has approved the Rs.1 lakh crore Centrally assisted Urban Challenge Fund.
- Under this project, at least 50 per cent of the funds are raised from the market, the Central Government will bear 25 per cent of the project cost. The scheme will lead to an overall investment of Rs.4 lakh crore in the urban development sector over the next 5 years and will also lead to citizen-centric reforms with market finance and private participation.

(vi) Underwater twin tube road-cum-rail tunnel project :-

- The Union Cabinet has approved the country's first underwater 34 km long twin tube road-cum-rail tunnel project to be undertaken in the state of Assam at a capital cost of Rs.18,622 crore.

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- The country's first road tunnel was built under the Hooghly River in Kolkata, West Bengal. Similarly, the country's first undersea rail tunnel is being built for the bullet train project between Ahmedabad, Gujarat and Mumbai, Maharashtra..
- The country's first and world's second twin tunnel for road and rail traffic with four lanes is to be constructed under the Brahmaputra river from Gohpur (NH 14) to Numaligarh in the state of Assam. This project will provide significant benefits to Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and other northeastern states. The cost of freight transport will also come down significantly, the Central Government has said.

2. With Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leader Tariq Rahman set to take office as the new Prime Minister of Bangladesh, expectations have been raised as to whether relations with India will improve under his rule.

(i) The Bangladesh Nationalist Party, led by Tariq Rahman, son of the late former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, won the 13th Parliamentary elections in Bangladesh with a more than two-thirds majority (209 out of 297 seats) and came to power.

(ii) With the election results published in the Bangladesh Gazette, Tariq Rahman is expected to take office as the new Prime Minister on February 16 or 17.

3. China will provide full duty-free access to imports from 53 African countries starting next May.

4. Popular actress Anila Bisha has filed a lawsuit against the Government alleging that her face and voice were used in the Cabinet without consent to create a virtual "AI minister"

(i) Last September, when Prime Minister Edi Rama began his 4th term, he introduced a virtual AI minister named 'Diella', which means sun, to prevent corruption in Government contracts.

(ii) The appearance and voice of this 'Diella' Minister are exactly like those of actress Anila Bisha

(iii) Anila Bisha has sued the Albanian Government for 1 million euros (approximately Rs.10.7 crore in Indian currency) in damages for violating her personal rights and tarnishing her reputation.

(iv) However, the Albanian Government has categorically denied these allegations. A Government spokesperson has said that this is an unnecessary case and that they will face it in court as per the law. The court will rule on this case.

5. A new international consortium called 'Trusted Tech Alliance' has been formed to build a trusted and secure infrastructure in modern technology sectors such as telecommunications, semiconductors and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

(i) India's Jio Platforms has also joined the consortium, which includes 15 leading global companies including Microsoft, Google Cloud, Ericsson, Nokia, and Anthropic. The companies joining the consortium have agreed to follow 5 basic principles to ensure transparency and personal data protection.

(ii) This new collaboration aims to gain user trust in everything from cloud services to software, and to encourage the safe growth of the digital economy globally.

6. India's Pramod Bhagat won the world championship title for the 6th time by winning gold in the SL 3 category at the BWF World Para Badminton Championship being held in Manama, the capital of Bahrain.

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7. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced that the allocation for mitigating the financial impacts of climate change has been increased to 5.6 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Nirmala Sitharaman said while inaugurating a seminar on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference in Germany :-

(i) Six years ago, India's climate change mitigation budget was 3.7 percent of GDP. Now, it has increased to 5.6 percent. This is because the Central Government has increased investments in climate action in the last few years.

(ii) Two-thirds of the national targets related to renewable energy have been achieved 4 years ahead of schedule. Investments in this sector will be further increased. Funds have been allocated for carbon saving strategies in the budget for the financial year 2026-27. These strategies will be implemented across the country.

(iii) Countries that emit less environmental pollution should provide less funding for climate action. She said that the rule that all countries must allocate funds in the same way needs to be changed.

8. The External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said that India will support the reform of the UN Security Council.

(i) A global conference on security issues is being held in Munich, Germany. Jaishankar, who has gone to attend it, met the foreign ministers of the G7 countries on the sidelines of the conference and held consultations on various issues.

(ii) The UN Security Council has 5 permanent members, namely the United States, Russia, Britain, France and China. These countries have special powers including veto.

(iii) India has been insisting that the Security Council should be reformed in accordance with the current global environment and that India should be made a permanent member of it.

9. The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) has reported that Rs.3,826.35 crore was donated to political parties in the financial year 2024-25 under the Electoral Trust Scheme.

(i) Out of this, the maximum amount of Rs.3,157.65 crore (82.5 percent) was donated to the BJP.

(ii) The Electoral Trust Scheme was launched in 2013 to ensure transparency in the donations received by political parties. The trusts set up under this scheme collect donations from institutions and distribute them to recognized political parties.

(iii) It is mandatory for institutions to obtain approval from the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) to set up such trusts.

(iv) Funds received by parties:-

The ATR has released a report containing information on the donations received by electoral trusts under this scheme and the distribution made to political parties. It states as follows:-

- In the financial year 2024-25, companies have donated Rs.3,826.34 crore to electoral trusts.
- Including the surplus amount from the last financial year, the electoral trusts have distributed a fund of Rs.3,826.35 crore to the approved candidates.

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- The BJP has received the maximum fund of Rs. 3,157.65 crore (82.5 percent). Congress received Rs.298.77 crore (7.81 percent), Trinamool Congress Rs.102 crore (2.67 percent) and 19 parties received Rs.267.91 crore.

(v) Contribution of companies:-

- In terms of trusts, Prudent Electoral Trust has distributed Rs.2,668.46 crore to 15 parties. Progressive Trust has distributed Rs.914.9 crore to 10 parties.
- A total of 228 corporates have donated Rs.3,636 crore and 99 individuals have donated Rs.187.62 crore.
- Elevated Avenue Realty has donated the maximum amount of Rs.500 crore. Tata Sons (Rs.308.13 crore), Tata Consultancy Services (Rs.217.62 crore), Megha Engineering and Infrastructure Ltd.(Rs.175 crore) are the next largest donors.

(vi) State-wise:-

- Maharashtra has donated Rs.1,225.42 crore. Telangana (Rs.358.25 crore), Haryana (Rs. 212.9 crore), West Bengal (Rs. 203.85 crore), Gujarat (Rs. 200.50 crore) are in the next places.
- It was reported that Rs.1,065.20 crore received from donors without proper address was sent to Prudent Trust.

10. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has announced that the Nisar satellite will release data every 12 days to monitor soil moisture levels in India.

(i) Nisar, an Earth observation satellite developed by ISRO-NASA, was launched last year.

(ii) This operational satellite is conducting research on changes in the Earth's surface, climate change, etc.

(iii) In a press release issued by ISRO regarding its operations, Nisar will accurately measure the soil moisture level of the Indian territory up to 100 meters using both S-band and L-band frequencies and will release two data sets every 12 days.

(iv) Soil moisture is an important factor in agriculture, water management, crop and drought detection.

(v) The data released by Nisar will enable accurate assessment of India's agro-climatic zones ranging from irrigated plains to arid-desert and high rainfall zones.

(vi) It will be useful for agricultural planning and farmers as well as for planning action plans to deal with drought. It was informed that the technology for this was designed at ISRO's Space Operations Centre.

11.A runway facility has been constructed on the Dibrugarh National Highway in Assam for landing aircraft during emergencies.

(i) Prime Minister Narendra Modi landed in a military aircraft to mark the inauguration of this emergency runway, the first of its kind in the North-East region.

(ii) The landing of the Prime Minister's aircraft on the highway is being seen as a historic event.

(iii) A four-lane emergency runway facility has been constructed on the Moran Bypass Road on National Highway No.37 in Dibrugarh district, about 4.2 km away.

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(iv) This multi-purpose runway, built at a cost of Rs.100 crore, has been specially designed to be used by military-private aircraft and helicopters as an alternative to the Dibrugarh airport during emergencies and disasters.

(v) Prime Minister Modi, who was on a visit to Assam, reached the Sabua Air Force Base in Dibrugarh district.

(vi) The AN-32 twin-engine helicopter, described as the 'workhorse' of the Indian Air Force, demonstrated its performance on the runway. The state-of-the-art light helicopters also demonstrated their rapid take-off and landing capabilities.

12. Prime Minister Modi inaugurated a six-lane bridge across the Brahmaputra river in Guwahati at a cost of Rs.3,030 crore. The bridge, named 'Kumar Bhaskar Verma Setu', connects Guwahati and North Guwahati. It is built using a combination of concrete beams and tension cables.

(i) It is the first bridge of its kind in the Northeast. Till now, the only bridge connecting the two banks of the Brahmaputra river in Guwahati was at Jalubari. Officials said that the new bridge will reduce the travel time between the two areas from 30 minutes to 7 minutes. He laid the foundation stone for the construction of this bridge in 2019.

(ii) Inauguration of IIM Campus :-

- Prime Minister Modi also inaugurated the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) in Guwahati, and the state-of-the-art National Data Centre built at a cost of Rs.348 crore in Amingaon area of Kamrup district.
- IIM Guwahati is the second IIM in the North East; the 22nd IIM in the country. He also launched 225 electric buses under the Prime Minister's Electric Bus Service Scheme.