

A WORLD of

MORE



MORE SPACE. MORE COMFORT. MORE FEATURES.
MORE CONNECTIVITY. MORE VALUE. MORE RETURNS.

LIVE MORE. BE MORE.

—LAUNCHING—

S&P⁺
New Haven 
RIBBON WALK

NEXT TO VIT
ON VANDALUR-KELAMBAKKAM ROAD

2 & 3 BHK
Premium Apartments

384 Units
1063 -1662 Sq.ft.

Land Extent
15 acres

Thriving Location &
Excellent Connectivity

Smart Investment With
High Rental Yield

RERA : TN/35/Building/0161/2025
www.rera.tn.gov.in

EXCITING LAUNCH
OFFER

₹ 55L^{ONWARDS}

Cedila

T&C Apply

WHY SETTLE FOR JUST A HOME, WHEN YOU CAN OWN A WORLD OF MORE!

S&P

New Haven 
RIBBON WALK

NEXT TO VIT
ON VANDALUR-KELAMBakkAM ROAD

DISCOVER THE
LUXURY OF MORE

MORE CONNECTIVITY

- Close To OMR, ECR & GST
- Close To Entertainment, Healthcare & Shopping
- Close To IT Hubs & Offices
- Close To Renowned Educational Institutions
- Close To All Everyday Conveniences

MORE VALUE

- Best Price In The Vicinity
- Maximum Value For Money
- Future- Smart Investment
- Assured Manifold Appreciation
- High Rental Yields

EXCITING
EARLY BIRD
OFFER

₹4290
PER SQ.FT.
Only on 5,6,7 & 8 Feb 2026

PRICE
FROM
9TH FEB

₹4790
PER SQ.FT.

540 HAPPY FAMILIES IN PHASE-1

HANDING OVER IN JAN 2027

T&C Apply

READY-TO-USE CLUBHOUSE

- Swimming Pool • Gymnasium • Indoor Games • Multipurpose Hall • Day Care Centre
- Mini Theatre • Library • Business Centre • Meditation Lounge & Many Other Indulgences For You To Enjoy.

OUTDOOR AMENITIES

- Grand Stepped Entry • Children's Play Area • Basketball Half-Court & Tennis Court • Landscaped Jogging Track
- Skating Rink • Amphitheatre • Outdoor Lawn • Sandpit Play Zones & Much, Much Beyond.



ACTUAL CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS PHOTO



Scan for location

MEMBER
CREDAI

RERA : TN/35/Building/0161/2025
www.rera.tn.gov.in

www.sandp.co.in

For bookings and related queries

9500 11 4884

S&P
ASPIRATIONAL SPACES



New Labour Codes have
redefined Employer
obligations on Gratuity and
Leave Encashment.
Our expertise will ensure
the compliance becomes
Simple, Reliable, and
Future - ready.



Presenting

LIC's GROUP SCHEMES

New Group Gratuity Cash
Accumulation Plan - UIN: 512N281V04

New Group Leave Encashment
Plan - UIN: 512N282V04

New Group Superannuation Cash
Accumulation Plan - UIN: 512N274V03

Group Post Retirement Medical
Benefit Scheme - UIN: 512N352V01

Salient
Features:

Scientific funding Attractive Returns Benefit of insurance protection
Income Tax Benefits as per Rules Multiple options for annuity payments

For more details, email to groupbusiness@licindia.com or contact your Agent/nearest LIC P&GS unit

LIC/PGS/P1/2025-26/31/Eng



Har Pal Aapke Saath

Call Centre Services (022) 6827 6827

Visit: www.licindia.in

Follow us : LIC India Forever | IRDAI Regn No.: 512

BEWARE OF SPURIOUS PHONE CALLS AND FICTITIOUS / FRAUDULENT OFFERS, IRDAI or its officials do not involve in any activities of insurance business like selling insurance policies, announcing bonus or investment of premiums, refund of amounts. Policyholders or the prospects receiving such phone calls are requested to lodge a police complaint. For more details on risk factors, terms and conditions, please read sales brochure carefully before concluding a sale.

CMYK

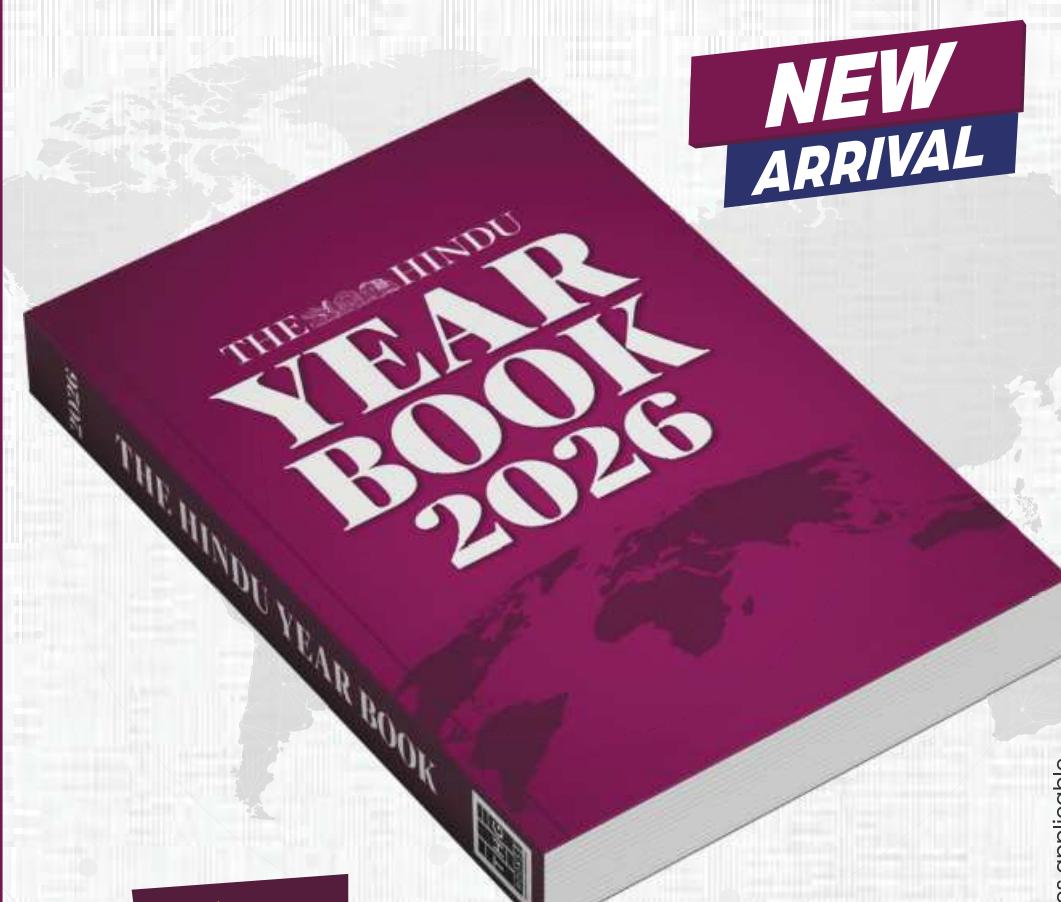


A SPECIAL PUBLICATION
FROM THE HINDU GROUP

The Hindu Year Book 2026

provides chronological, contextual, and factual information on the key events that occupied public attention **between January and December 2025.**

It features a Calendar of Events with Profiles of People, and Data on India and the World. Expert essays cover critical topics such as like AI and the Indus Waters Treaty, while dedicated sections analyse global governance, economy, and sports through evocative photographs and factual reporting.



DATES 2025 | PERSONALITIES
OBITUARIES | OVERVIEW
DATA 2025 | COMMENTARY
SPECIAL ESSAYS



BOOK
YOUR
COPY



To avail this limited period offer, scan QR code or visit
publications.thehindugroup.com

For bulk booking and enquiries,
contact us at bookstore@thehindu.co.in or 1800 102 1878

*Terms and Conditions apply | Shipping charges applicable



NEARBY



Stalin slams Centre over fund allocation to T.N.

CHENNAI
Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Wednesday hit out at the Centre, accusing it of giving a pittance to the Tamil Nadu despite the State doing well on the economic front. » PAGE 6

3 cooking gas cylinders for rice cardholders: EPS

CHENNAI
AIADMK chief Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Wednesday made five electoral promises, including a provision of three cooking gas cylinders to rice-drawing ration cardholders every year. » PAGE 6

METROPLUS » 4 PAGES

Manipur President's Rule ends; Khemchand new CM

Will prioritise peace, says the Chief Minister; BJP's Kuki-Zo member Nemcha Kipgen and Losii Dikho of the Naga People's Front sworn in as Deputy CMs; two more MLAs take oath as Ministers

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

The installation of a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance government, with a Meitei leader at the helm, brought an end to nearly a year of President's Rule in Manipur on Wednesday.

Around 6 p.m., Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla administered the oath of office to former Assembly Speaker and martial artist Yumnam Khemchand Singh as the State's second Chief Minister since the 2022 election. The first, Nongthombam Biren Singh, resigned on February 9, 2025, following the ethnic conflict between the Kuki-Zo and Meitei communities that broke out on May 3, 2023. The



New role: Yumnam Khemchand Singh arrives at the Imphal airport ahead of taking oath as Chief Minister on Wednesday. ANI

swearing-in ceremony followed the revocation of President's Rule, which was imposed on February 13, 2025.

Mr. Khemchand Singh represents the BJP from the Singjamei constituency.

The BJP's Kangpokpi MLA, Nemcha Kipgen,

from the Kuki-Zo community, and Naga People's Front MLA Losii Dikho, a Naga leader representing the Mao constituency, were sworn in as Deputy Chief Ministers. The former took the oath virtually from Manipur Bhavan in New Delhi.

Two other Meitei MLAs

Govindas Konthoujam of the BJP (Bishnupur) and Khurajam Loken Singh of the National People's Party (Wangoi) — were sworn in as Ministers at the Lok Bhawan in Manipur's capital, Imphal. "There will always be challenges. We will prioritise peace and work for the State's development and growth," Mr. Khemchand Singh said after swearing in.

Congratulating the new Chief Minister and his team, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "I'm confident they will work diligently towards furthering development and prosperity for my sisters and brothers of Manipur."

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10
EDITORIAL
» PAGE 8

Denied phone use, 3 minor girls jump off balcony in Ghaziabad

Alisha Dutta
NEW DELHI

Three minor sisters ended their life early on Wednesday after jumping off the balcony of a ninth-floor flat in Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh, as their parents had restricted mobile phone usage, the police said.

Nishika (16), Prachi (14), and Pakhi (12) were found dead on the pavement in the gated community a little after 2 a.m.

According to the police, a note was found which said: "True life story: whatever is written in this diary, all of that is true, read it now. Sorry papa, I'm really sorry."

During their investigation, the police learnt that the children had dropped out of school in 2020, and were addicted to social media, cartoons, and Korean TV shows and music.

To break the addiction,



The residential building in Ghaziabad where three sisters died. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

the parents had restricted their mobile phone access for the past few days.

"Annoyed with their addiction, the parents took away the phone a few days ago and threatened the girls that they would be married off," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Nimish Patil.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

Theft case against Ajith Kumar closed, CBI tells HC

The Hindu Bureau
MADRASI

In a major twist in the Sivaganga custodial killing case, the CBI on Wednesday informed the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court that the theft case, on the basis of which the victim, B. Ajith Kumar, was detained, had been closed.

During the hearing of the bail petitions filed by the accused police personnel, Justice S. Srimathy asked the CBI about the status of the jewellery theft case, and whether the allegation was true. To this, the CBI said the case had been closed. "So there was nothing?" the judge asked. 'No' was the CBI's reply.

Expressing anguish, the judge said, "So there was nothing. A person was beaten to death in a case where there was nothing."

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 6

Solid Performance. Steady Progress.

TMB Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Ltd.
Be a step ahead in life

Scan QR to View Detailed Financial Results



Statement of Unaudited Financial Results for the Quarter and Nine Months Ended 31.12.2025

Particulars	Quarter Ended 31 st Dec 2025	Quarter Ended 31 st Dec 2024	Change / Growth%	Sl. No.	Particulars	Quarter Ended			Nine Months Ended		Year Ended
						31.12.2025 (Unaudited)	30.09.2025 (Unaudited)	31.12.2024 (Unaudited)	31.12.2025 (Unaudited)	31.12.2024 (Unaudited)	
CASA	15,847	13,788	14.94%	1.	Total Income from Operations	1665.42	1621.46	1519.94	4904.35	4599.69	6141.75
DEPOSIT	56,707	50,392	12.53%	2.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	466.74	432.42	404.44	1303.08	1188.11	1574.89
RAM	47,706	40,329	18.29%	3.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before Tax, (after Exceptional and / or Extraordinary items)	466.74	432.42	404.44	1303.08	1188.11	1574.89
ADVANCE	50,763	43,650	16.30%	4.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after Tax, (after Exceptional and / or Extraordinary items)	341.50	317.51	300.24	963.90	890.71	1182.61
TOTAL BUSINESS	1,07,470	94,042	14.28%	5.	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit/(Loss) for the period (after tax) and other comprehensive income (after tax))	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
OPERATING PROFIT	468.22	407.71	14.84%	6.	Equity Share Capital	158.35	158.35	158.35	158.35	158.35	158.35
NET PROFIT	341.50	300.24	13.74%	7.	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as shown in the Audited Balance Sheet of the previous Year	-	-	-	-	-	8850.34
NIM (%)	4.04%	4.00%	4 bps	8.	Earnings Per Share (of Rs.10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations)	*21.57	*20.05	*18.96	*60.87	*56.25	74.68
ROA (%)	1.97%	1.89%	8 bps	a) Basic:							
GROSS NPA	0.91%	1.32%	41 bps	b) Diluted:	*21.57	*20.05	*18.96	*60.87	*56.25	74.68	
NET NPA	0.20%	0.41%	21 bps								

*Not annualised

NOTE: 1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly / Half yearly Financial Results filed with Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly/ Half yearly Financial Results is available on the website of the Stock Exchange(s) (www.nseindia.com and www.bseindia.com) and on the Bank's Website (www.tmb.bank.in). 2. Information relating to Total comprehensive income and other comprehensive income is not furnished as Ind-AS is not yet made applicable to banks. Place: Thoothukudi Date: 04.02.2026

For and on behalf of Board of Directors,
SALEE S NAIR
Managing Director & CEO

Toll-free: 180 0425 0426 | www.tmb.bank.in
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Ltd.,

Regd. Office: 57, V.E.Road, Thoothukudi, Tamilnadu - 628 002.

TMB 456 Deposit Scheme SCAN TO INVEST
Earn 7.50% p.a. Senior Citizens*
Earn 7.10% p.a. for General Citizens*



*T&C Apply

UTTAR PRADESH

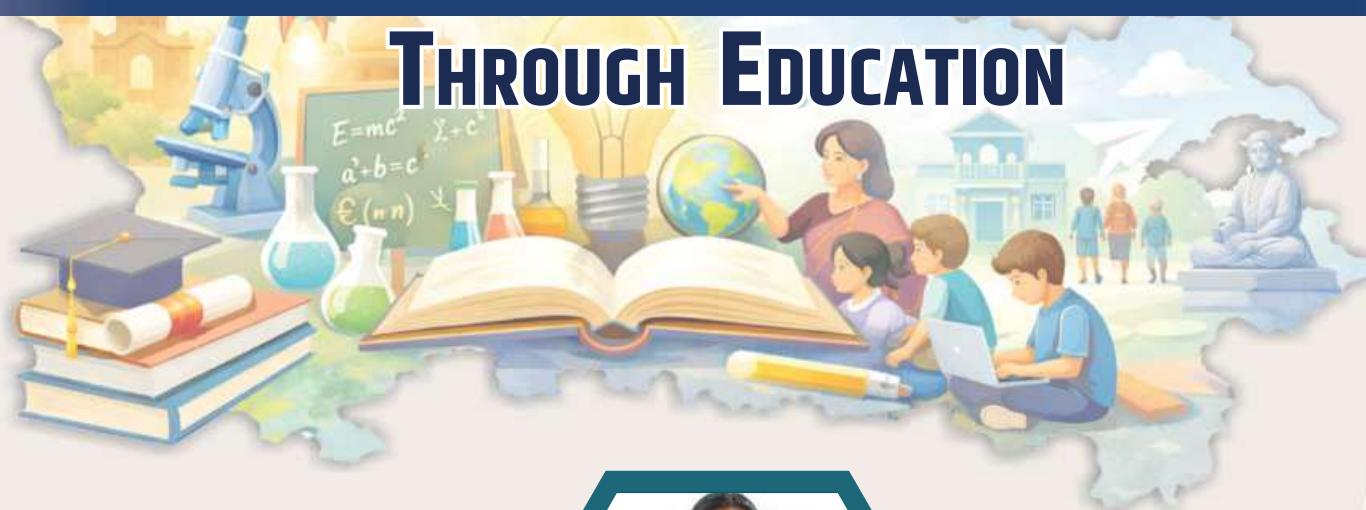
NURTURING A FUTURE-READY GENERATION

THROUGH EDUCATION



‘An ideal society and a strong nation are built only on the basis of education. Culture has special importance in education. The path to success in life can begin from where it is actually education’

Yogi Adityanath
Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh



‘Education is not only the foundation upon which our civilization has been built, but it is also the architect of humanity's future’

Narendra Modi
Prime Minister



AN ERA OF SMART BASIC EDUCATION

- Through innovative initiatives like the School Chalo Abhiyan and the Sharda Program (School Attendance Every Day), an additional 40 lakh children have been enrolled, leading to a significant reduction in dropout rates
- Under the Sharda Program, 88,700 children were enrolled in council schools in 2025-26
- Under RTE, 22,040 children were studying in the year 2016-17, this number increased to more than 4.30 lakhs in 2024-25, whereas in 2025-26 the number is about 1.41 lakhs
- Under Operation Kayakalp, 19 essential infrastructure facilities are being upgraded in primary and upper primary schools
- Digital learning is being strengthened by ensuring:
 - Smart classes in 25,790 council schools
 - 880 Block Resource Centers (BRCs)
 - ICT labs in 5,817 schools
 - Distribution of over 2.61 lakh tablets for teachers
- All 746 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas were upgraded, providing free residential education up to Class 12 to girls from weaker sections
- The first Sainik School of Purvanchal is operational in Gorakhpur
- Atal Residential Schools have been launched in all 18 divisions
- Selected schools under the PM-SHRI scheme are being upgraded and developed as Green Schools
- 377 council schools from Pre-Primary to Class 8 are being upgraded as Chief Minister Abhyuday Composite Schools
- With a budgetary provision of around Rs 4,500 crore, 150 Chief Minister Model Composite Schools (two per district) are being established. These schools will provide education from Pre-Primary to Class 12, with a capacity of 1,500 students each



DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT

- Students are being provided mobile phones/tablets to connect them with digital education.
- 41.7 lakh students have been registered in the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC).
- Establishment of e-content studios, e-suvidha centers, smart classrooms, and e-libraries.
- Smart classrooms have been set up in all universities, government aided colleges, and most self financed institutions.
- Through the SMARTH/SAMARTH (ERP) Enterprise Resource Planning system, admissions, promotions, NOCs, and faculty related services have been fully digitized
- Libraries of government degree colleges are being strengthened by providing pre-loaded tablets enriched with academic material. thereby promoting digital learning.
- A paperless classroom has been launched as a pilot project with the objective of environmental conservation and digital empowerment



ADVANCEMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

- Since 2021-22, Uttar Pradesh has played a leading role in the implementation of NEP-2020
- Choice Based Credit System (CBCS), multidisciplinary education, state-exit options, and flexibility in subject selection have been introduced
- Promotion is being given to Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), value-based education, and research-oriented undergraduate programs
- A uniform academic calendar has been implemented across all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)
- Students are now provided the facility to complete a three-year degree program in two years through online credits

EMPOWERING SECONDARY EDUCATION

- A total of 34,074 teachers were selected in aided secondary schools
- Creation of 7,540 new teaching posts
- Teaching arrangements for the academic session have been made on a honorarium basis against vacant posts by engaging retired teachers. Requisitions have been sent for 780 Government, 3,222 Aided, and 419 Aided Sanskrit vacancies
- Selection of qualified teachers on the basis of written examination
- Appointment letters/postings have been issued to a total of 8,966 selected candidates including 6,808 selected assistant teachers, 1,939 lecturers and 219 principals by the Public Service Commission



CAREER-FOCUSED HIGHER EDUCATION

- CMAPS-HE: Paid internships for final-year students with a dedicated budget of ₹100 crore
- AEDP Yojana: One-year apprenticeship integrated into the academic programme
- Uttar Pradesh is a leader in developing the implementation roadmap for the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020
- The vision of One Division One State University is a reality
- UP Higher Education Promotion Policy- 2024 implemented to boost domestic and foreign investment in the education sector
- Construction of the NCC Training Academy initiated in Gorakhpur district
- Skill courses made mandatory, benefiting 23.9 lakh under-graduate students across 760+ skill-based trades
- Uttar Pradesh Education Service Selection Commission, Prayagraj constituted to ensure transparency in teacher recruitment

Railways cites lack of patronage for not resuming night trains

The suburban services were discontinued in 2023, along with reduction of several peak hour services, after the COVID-19 lockdown was lifted

TRACK TALES

R. Srikanth
CHENNAI

Commuters using the suburban trains on the west and south sections who were demanding the restoration of nighttime train services in the new timetable are in for a disappointment, as the Southern Railway has no plans to bring these services back in the near future. They have cited poor patronage as the reason for their decision.

Night train services were discontinued in 2023 after the COVID-19 lockdown was lifted, along with reduction of several peak hour services.

The Chennai division operates the highest number of suburban train services in both the west and south sections, and the non-availability of train services after 10.30 p.m. is inconvenient to commuters residing in villages of Tiruvallur and beyond till Arakkonam.

Safe travel
Commuters from Tiruvallur and Arakkonam have been seeking restoration of night train services, at least the suburban train, which was operated from Beach to Arakkonam, starting at 1.20 a.m.

These services had helped hundreds of factory



Busy route: The Chennai division operates the highest number of suburban trains in the west and south sections. FILE PHOTO

The non-availability of train services after 10.30 p.m. is inconvenient for those residing in places like Tiruvallur

workers who were on night duty travel back home safe.

A senior official of the Chennai division of Southern Railway confirmed that low patronage and the need to take up maintenance work were the reasons for not operating night train services. He added that the night train bound towards Tiruvallur was stopped as there were hardly 25 persons using the train.

Also, maintenance work takes precedence, the rail-

way official added.

K. Bhaskar, a regular commuter from Tiruvallur, said the Beach to Arakkonam train at 1.20 a.m. was a boon for those finishing their night duty and returning home. He said low patronage was not true as he had travelled in that train for years to Tiruvallur before it was stopped and was aware that several commuters used it.

He said more than 100 commuters used to get down at Tiruvallur railway station. He said the railway officials would have gone by the number of tickets sold at the counter but normally the commuters travelling during nighttime are season card holders and this would not have been recorded in the patronage.

These services had helped hundreds of factory

IJCCI invites companies in various sectors to take part in Eco Tech

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Indo-Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IJCCI), has invited companies in various sectors to take part in the CEO Business event- Eco Tech 2026 to be held in July.

A press release said various sectors, including new energy, water and wastewater treatment, urban development, would be covered

in the Eco Tech 2026. The event will be hosted by Organisation for Small and Medium Enterprises and Regional Innovation, Japan.

IJCCI has invited venture/startup enterprises working

The deadline for sending applications is February 15 and there is no registration fee

in these sectors to mail to info-japan@ijcci.com. The deadline for sending applications is February 15. There is no registration fee. IJCCI-recommended companies, which would be selected by the Japanese Government Organisation, will be invited for the CEO business event.

Other CEO business events during the year will feature the medical sector and innovative industry, the release said.

Avian Influenza strains found in crow samples

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Strains of Avian Influenza (H5NI) have been confirmed in crow samples lifted from Adyar, according to the Union government.

In a communication dated January 22, 2026, the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying informed the Chief Secretary of Tamil Nadu that the ICAR-National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases, Bhopal, had confirmed the H5NI avian influenza virus in samples collected from a dead crow on January 21, 2026.

The samples were submitted by the Assistant Director, Animal Disease Intelligence Unit, Kanchipuram. It has requested implementation of the 'One-Health' approach, involving multiple sectors and departments to effectively control the spread.

The communication said local municipalities should strengthen biosecurity and undertake thorough disinfection in areas where bird mor-

tality has been reported.

Dead birds must be disposed of through deep burial, and entire carcasses are to be sent to laboratories for testing with appropriate biosecurity measures.

Any unusual mortality in poultry or other avian species must be reported immediately. Enhanced surveillance of poultry and ducks in affected areas was recommended.

Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) City Health Officer M. Jagadeesan said medical camps have been held since last month for people, especially in Indira Nagar of Adyar, where many birds were reported dead.

Domestic Breeding Checkers (DBC) are conducting door-to-door medical check-ups in areas where the birds were found dead.

"This seems to be a species-specific disease affecting only crows, as far as GCC has observed. The civic body is following up on the issue. The number of birds dying has also decreased compared to January," he added.

CINEMA + ARTS + EVENTS

MUSIC DANCE DRAMA

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, East Mada Street, Mylapore, Chennai-4

is conducting "Bhavan's Tamizh Isai Vizha" upto 6th February 2026 at its Main Auditorium, Mylapore.
Today: 5th Feb: 5.30 pm: High Tea, 6 pm: Dr.Gayatri Girish (Vocal), Sri V.V.S.Murali (Violin), Sri N.C.Bharadwaj (Mridangam), Sri N.Rajaraman (Ghatam). Tomorrow: 6th Feb: 6pm: Smt.Brinda Manickavasagan (Vocal).

All are Welcome.

Powered by:

SRI PARTHASATHRY SWAMI SABHA (Estd:1900) Ph: 9444701446

DANCE FESTIVAL
at R.K. Swamy Auditorium,
(Sir Sivaswamy Kalaya S.S. School)
Sundareswarar St., Mylapore
Today - Feb 5 - 5.30 pm. Bharatanatyam by SYONI SHANEESH (Disciple of Guru Pada Bushan Shobana)

7.00 p.m. Bharatanatyam by ANUSHIYA HARIRAHAN (Disciple of Guru Thiruveezhimizhalai Dr. Kanak Krishna Prashanth) - All Are Welcome.

Presented by:

To advertise visit
www.thehinduads.com

044-28576300

Toll Free: 1800 102 4161

CLASSIFIEDS MART

TO ADVERTISE VISIT

www.thehinduads.com

CALL: 044-28576300 ■ TOLL FREE: 1800 102 4161

or Contact your nearest Authorised space sellers

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

R. Rajeshwari, Daughter of Thiru Ramam, (Native District: Chennai), residing at Akshabakkam, Chennai - 600 038, shall henceforth be known as SANDHYA RAMAN.

I, BIMAL kishin Pandya, s/o: Bimal p. pandya, /o: tower E3, fno 701, ekanta phase, north town, Dr Ambedkar clg rd, puliyathope, chennai-600012. Have changed my name as Kishin Bimal Pandya.

I, AJITHKUMAR R, s/o Mrs. Mala, residing at No. 60, Venkateswara Nagar, Srinivaspuram, Ayappanthangal, Kancheepuram, Tamil Nadu - 600056, have changed my name to Ajith Kumar vide affidavit dated 02/02/2026.

I, Sasikala S/W/o, S R Sathyaranayanan R/o No. 231, Sree Parimalam Flats, Abinandhan Nagar, Namangalam, Chennai - 600117 have changed my name to S R Sathyaranayanan for all future purposes.

I, Sathyaranayanan S S/o T Sivakumar Residence No. 1/231, Abinandhan Nagar, Namangalam, Chennai - 600117 have changed my name to S R Sathyaranayanan for all future purposes.

I, DEVARAJ S/o Gangadharan, Date of Birth: 25/04/1962, residing at No.651, Phase 1, TNHB Tirupattur. Dt. Pin :- 635601, shall henceforth be known as Devarajan.

I, NAVNEET Kumar, (Sur name) Devaraj S/o, Devarajan, Date of Birth: 08/11/1996, residing at No.651, Phase 1, TNHB Tirupattur. Dt. Pin :- 635601, shall henceforth be known as Navneet Kumar, (Sur Name) Devarajan.

Notice for e-Tender
Tender No. VJ/DC/2/2026/E
Online bids are invited under two bid system for "Construction of At-grade road connecting Anna Salai, Port Madras Royal Elevated Corridor (PMRC) & Other internal roads and improvement of the Intersections on Engineering Procurement & Construction (EPC) basis".

Estimated Cost Put to tender: Rs.3599.16 lakhs (approx.) excl. GST. For details visit our website:

www.chennaiport.gov.in & <http://eprocure.gov.in>

Chief Engineer

TENDERS

Chennai Port Authority Civil Engineering Department

Notice for e-Tender
Tender No. VJ/DC/2/2026/E

Online bids are invited under two bid

system for "Construction of At-grade road connecting Anna Salai, Port Madras Royal Elevated Corridor (PMRC) & Other internal roads and improvement of the Intersections on Engineering Procurement & Construction (EPC) basis".

Estimated Cost Put to tender:

Rs.3599.16 lakhs (approx.) excl. GST.

For details visit our website:

www.chennaiport.gov.in &

<http://eprocure.gov.in>

Chief Engineer

PUBLIC NOTICE

Form No. URC-2
Advertisement giving notice about registration under Part I of Chapter XXI [Pursuant to section 374(b) of the companies Act, 2013 and rule 4(1) of the companies (Authorised to Register) Rules, 2014]

1. Notice is hereby given that in pursuance of sub-section (2) of section 366 of the Companies Act, 2013, an application has been made to the Registrar at Block No. 6, B Wing, 2nd Floor, Shastri Bhawan, 26, Haddows Road, Vadapalani, Chennai - 600026 may be registered under Part I of Chapter XXI of the Companies Act 2013, as a company limited by shares.

2. The principal objects of the company are as follows:

(i) Deal with renowned Multinationals brands such as Boston Scientific, 3M, Gore, Getinge, Ambu and Aerogen and national brands like Premier, TI Medicals, Polymed and Amaplysis.

(ii) Implants, instruments, Disposables, devices and various products related to Cardiology, Cardi surgery, Nephrology and similar field and any other field of their liking and mutual acceptance.

3. A copy of the draft memorandum and articles of association of the proposed company may be inspected at the office at New No. 9 Old No. 6, Venigeeswarar Nagar, 1st Main Road, Vadapalani, Chennai - 600026.

4. Notice is hereby given that any person objecting to this application may communicate their objection in writing to the Registrar at Block No. 6, B Wing, 2nd Floor, Shastri Bhawan, 26, Haddows Road, Chennai - 600026, within twenty-one days from the date of publication of this notice, with a copy to the company at its registered office.

Dated this 5th day of February 2026

For Vinayak Enterprises
Sd/-
Mrs. K. S. Geethalakshmi
(Authorised Signatory)

PAN NO.: AJEPG0636M

ADMISSIONS OPEN

ADVERTISEMENT

DIGITAL HEALTH SKILL IS NOW THE MOST SOUGHT AFTER SKILL IN HEALTHCARE

Learn Directly from the Global Leaders who have shaped Digital Health

CALLING CLINICIANS AND HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

GLOBALLY ACCLAIMED COURSES



Diploma in Global Digital Health
With American University of Barbados
1 Year - Online



Executive Leadership Programme
for Founders & CEOs of Hospitals
with IIM Raipur. 6 Months - Online



Dr. Rajendra Pratap Gupta,
Creator of 'Functional AI
Pyramid Model' & Chairman,
Academy of Digital Health Sciences

"Make Digital Health your
sub specialization".



Dr. Devi Shetty,
Founder and Chairman,
Narayana Health

"Digital Health is an essential skill
today. Learn it from the world's
best at the Academy of Digital
Health Sciences."



Mr. Brian O'Connor, Chair,
Global Health Connector

"Wherever you practice in the world, the
skills you need are the same- Digital,
data-driven & AI-enabled. I strongly
recommend the truly global, world-class
courses offered by the Academy of
Digital Health Sciences."



Prof. K. Srinath Reddy,
Founding President,
Public Health Foundation of
India (PHFI)

"Digital competence enhances clinical
competence in providing appropriate
and timely care to patients.
The Academy of Digital Health Sciences
prepares leaders who can ably steer this
much needed transformation of our
health system."



**Mr. Ajinkya Rahane, Cricket
Legend & Former Captain,
Indian Cricket Team**

"Healthcare is fast evolving.
Champions prepare before
the game begins. Join the
World-class digital health
courses from the Academy
of Digital Health Sciences to
future-ready your career."

LEARN ESSENTIAL SKILLS: • Become a Subject Matter Expert in Digital Health

• Plan your AI roadmap • Data-driven decision making • Emerging Technologies in patient care/Disease management

PARTIAL SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE: Upto ₹1,00,000. Available for the first 100 applicants only

LIMITED SEATS

Last Date of Admission:

28TH February 2026

• Flexible Self

IN BRIEF



Minister reviews GCC projects in Harbour constituency

A total of ₹14.63 crore worth of development work being implemented by the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) in the Harbour Assembly constituency were inspected on Wednesday by P.K. Sekarbabu, Minister for Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments and Chairman of the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority. According to a press release, the works reviewed included the construction of a new community hall at V.O.C. Road in the Royapuram Zone, being built at a cost of ₹13.43 crore. The community hall is expected to be opened to the public on February 8 by Deputy Chief Minister Udhayandhi Stalin.

Text & Context and Science

Weekday features on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carry explainers, special articles and quizzes. In the latest issue (February 5, Thursday), the following articles are available:

▪ Issues surrounding UGC regulations newsthrive.ugcregulations

▪ Could the near-extinct Asiatic cheetah rewild Saudi Arabia? newsthrive.asiaticcheetah

You can use your smartphone's inbuilt features to access these articles. If it's an Android phone, use Google Lens to read and tap the url to access an article. If it's an iPhone, use Live Text on camera to do the same.

Mild rain likely in parts of south T.N., delta districts today

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Some parts of southern Tamil Nadu and the delta districts may receive mild rainfall on Thursday, while dry weather and cool

nights may persist in the interior parts of the State.

The Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC) has predicted that weak easterly activity may trigger light to moderate rain at isolated places in Karaikal too

on Thursday. Tamil Nadu may witness dry weather conditions from Friday till February 10.

Officials of the RMC said the minimum temperature may fall by one or two degrees Celsius in one or two

places in Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, and Karaikal till Sunday. On Wednesday, Thuvakudi in Tiruchi district reported mild rain till 5.30 p.m. The maximum temperature remained largely normal or close to nor-

mal in the State, with Erode district recording 34.6 degrees Celsius. This was the State's highest maximum temperature recorded for the day.

V.R. Durai, Director, Area Cyclone Warning

Centre, RMC, said that while minimum temperatures largely remained near normal, observations indicated that the State recorded a 1-2 degree Celsius fall in maximum temperatures during January.



V. Kamakoti, Director, IIT Madras, releasing the cancer genome database at the institute on Wednesday. M. SRINATH

IIT-M releases cancer genome database to help strengthen research, treatment

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) has released a genome database covering paediatric leukaemia, colorectal and pancreatic cancers.

The Bharat Cancer Genome Atlas (BCGA) has been made publicly accessible to researchers and clinicians in India and abroad at bcga.iitm.ac.in.

Identifying biomarkers
The database can help identify biomarkers, enable early diagnosis, monitor disease progression and guide population-specific treatment.

Indian Council of Medical Research report shows that one in nine Indians is likely to develop cancer, with about 2.5 million people currently living with the disease and incidence rising by 12.8% annually since 2022.

Despite this, patients in India are under-represented in global cancer genome studies.

To bridge this gap, IIT

Madras had launched the Indian Cancer Genome Programme in 2020, completing whole genome sequencing of patient samples collected nationwide, with principal support from Hyundai Motor India's Hyundai Hope for Cancer initiative, including ₹56 crore in funding and an additional ₹3 crore to support treatment for economically weaker families.

The research, led by IIT Madras' Centre of Excellence on Cancer Genomics and Molecular Therapeutics, involved collaborations with Karkinos Healthcare, Mumbai, and multiple hospitals in the city. Alongside BCGA, the institute also launched the Bharat Cancer Genome Grid (BCG2), a clinician-centric platform to integrate genomic data into routine oncology practice.

The initiative, supported by the Department of Science and Technology and the National Center for Precision Medicine in Cancer, also includes screening camps, technician training, and mobile healthcare outreach.

Residents' welfare associations urge voters to reject poll freebies

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Alliance of Resident Welfare Associations (AORWA) has issued an open letter addressed to the people of the State, calling for ethical voting, and opposing the practice of accepting money or gifts during elections.

This campaign is to raise awareness across sections of society about corruption linked to electoral practices.

The letter, released as part of the 'My Vote is Not for Sale' campaign, stated that votes should not be

The campaign aims to raise awareness among the people on corruption linked to electoral practices

treated as a transaction, and that it must be for development.

According to the letter, the association's volunteers would focus on educating the public and encouraging voters to commit to ethical voting.

The letter urged citizens to publicly pledge that their vote is not a commodity, remain vigilant, report

to authorities instances of cash or freebies distribution, and spread awareness through social media, local gatherings, and businesses.

It also highlighted the role of young voters, noting that nearly 23 per cent of the electorate comprises voters aged between 18 and 29.

AORWA said the campaign would involve individuals, residents' welfare associations, civic and social organisations, non-governmental organisations, self-help groups, educational institutions, and corporate entities.

Sewage flow to be affected in three zones

CHENNAI: The Chennai Metrowater said some sewage pumping stations in Madhavaram, Anna Nagar, and Thiru. Vi. Ka. Nagar zones will not be operated between 2 p.m. on February 6 and 2 a.m. on February 8.

Residents can contact 8144930303 to make sewage-related complaints.

THE HINDU

DISCLAIMER: Readers are requested to verify and make appropriate enquiries to satisfy themselves about the veracity of an advertisement before responding to any published in the newspaper. The publisher and printer of this newspaper does not vouch for the authenticity of any advertisement or advertiser for any of the advertiser's products and services. The editor, owner, publisher, printer, editor, director, or employees of this newspaper/company shall be held responsible/liable in any manner whatsoever for any claims and/or damages for advertisements in this newspaper.

Centre, RMC, said that while minimum temperatures largely remained near normal, observations indicated that the State recorded a 1-2 degree Celsius fall in maximum temperatures during January.

Despite this, patients in India are under-represented in global cancer genome studies.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

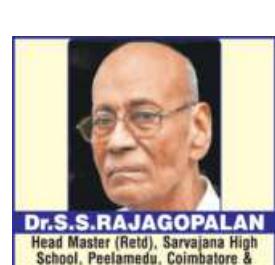


Dr. R. Padmavathy (78)

(MBBS, M.D. Radiology, Retd. Tanjore Medical College) Daughter of R. Rangachari, passed away in Karunya Nagar, near Coimbatore during the evening of 4th February 2026.

She leaves behind her sister, Jayalakshmi. She is deeply mourned by her beloved nieces and nephews, Dheeba, Srinath, Vikram, Spatika and Anitha, her caretaker Jayanthi, the staff of Seesha Old Age Home, and our extended family of Thanjavur.

DEATH



Dr. S.S. Rajagopalan

Head Master (Retd.), Sarvajana High School, Peelamedu, Coimbatore & Educational Activist expired on 3.2.2026. Body donated to Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education & Research, Chennai. No Ceremonies & No Condolences Please.

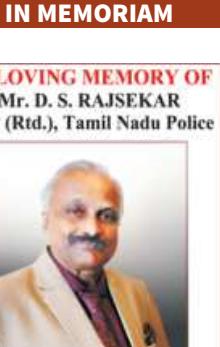
DEATH ANNIVERSARIES



11th Anniversary
In fond memory of

Mrs. Beulah Thomas
19.10.1936 - 05.02.2015
"Your Loving Children, Grand Children, Great Grand Children & Alex Gama Family"

IN MEMORIAM



IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Mr. D. S. RAJSEKAR
DSP (Rtd.), Tamil Nadu Police

Beloved Husband and Father who passed away this day in 2023
Your life was a blessing, Your memory a treasure. You are loved beyond words and missed beyond measure. Everloved and Deeply Missed by Geetha Rajsekhar, Aarthi Rajsekhar Sharan, Family & Friends

DEATH



Dr. M Bagavandas

June 15th, 1948 - February 3rd, 2026
It is with profound grief and sorrow that we announce the sad demise of our beloved Dr. M Bagavandas on February 3rd, 2026. He was former Professor and Head of Statistics in Madras Christian College and former Head for Center of Statistics in SRM Institute of Science and Technology. His gentle soul and wisdom will be deeply missed.

His final rites were held on February 4th 2026 in Tambaram Sanatorium. Mourned by: Family, Relatives and Friends.

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

OPEN TENDER NOTICE INVITING ONLINE E-TENDER

Tender Notice No. EL-50-DNR-Open-46-2025-26

Danapur

The Divisional Railway Manager, E.C. Railway, Danapur for and on behalf of the President of India is inviting online (E-tendering). Open from the reputed contractors working in State/Central Govt. having valid Electrical Contractor license for the required voltage level (as per scope of work) issued by State/Central Govt. licensing board for the following work:

1. Name of work with its location : Provision of smart prepaid metering system in place of conventional electric energy meters for all railway installations over DNR division.
2. Approx. cost of the work : Rs. 2,71,35,676.87/- (Rs. Two Crore Seventy One Lakh Thirty Five thousand Six Hundred Seventy Six and Eighty Seven paisa Only).
3. Earnest Money to be deposited : Rs. 2,85,700/- (Rs. Two Lakh Eighty Five Thousand Seven Hundred only).
4. Date & time for online submission and closing of all above tenders: Date & time for online submission of tender - 24.02.2026 up to 12.00 Hrs. (5) Website particulars, notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where all the above tender form can be seen : CRIS website <http://www.reps.gov.in> Office of the Sr. DEE (G)E.C. Ry., Danapur, D.R.M. Building, 1st Floor, East Central Railway, Danapur.
NOTE: All corrigendum will be uploaded on website before 15 days if required.

Divnl. Railway Manager (Electrical/G), Danapur PR/1734/DNR/Elect./T/25-26/48

Tamil Nadu Power Generation Corporation Ltd Notice Inviting Tenders (E-Tendering Process)

Specification No.

Tender Inviting Authority

Name of the Work

145 SE / P&A / MTPS Supply Erection Testing and Commissioning of New Ingeren IG 541 fire suppression system Unit - I

For details of works / Procurement / Due date of submission / Opening, viewing and downloading of e-tenders, please visit websites: www.tnpsc.org, www.tenders.tn.gov.in, DIPR/747/Tender/2026

Tamil Nadu Power Distribution Corporation Ltd. Notice Inviting Tenders (E-Tendering Process)

Specification No. 17 SE / CDC-I Kumaran Nagar SS 33 and 11 KV Cable laying work

18 SE / CDC-I Kundrathur Amarprakash SS 33 KV Cable laying work

19 SE / CDC-I Arcot Road SS 11 KV Cable laying work

20 SE / CDC-I 11th Avenue Ashok Nagar 33 and 11 KV cable laying work

22 SE / CDC-I Vengadamanigal SS 33 and 11 KV Cable laying work with 1 no OD Bay extn

23 SE / CDC-I Supply erection commissioning of 5 Nos RTU in 33 and 11 KV Indoor SS

C286 CE / Chennai North Laying of 33 KV 1X630 sqmm UG cable from Gummidipoondi Sipcot IV 110KV Gummidipoondi 33 KV SS

C287 CE / Chennai North Laying of 33 KV 1X630 sqmm UG cable from Gummidipoondi Sipcot I 110 KV Gummidipoondi 33 KV SS

C290 CE / Chennai North Laying of 33 KV 1X630 sqmm UG Cable from manali 33 KV SS 2 pole structure to napalayam 33 KV SS F1

C291 CE / Chennai North Laying of 33 KV 1X630 sqmm UG Cable from manali 33 KV SS 2 pole structure to napalayam 33 KV SS F2

08 CE / Tirunelveli Construction of Control room with allied civil work at Serakulam 33 - 11 KV SS

For details of works / Procurement / Due date of submission / Opening, viewing and downloading of e-tenders, please visit the websites www.tnpsc.org, www.tenders.tn.gov.in, www.intenders.gov.in

DIPR/757/Tender/2026

Tamil Nadu Power Generation Corporation Ltd Notice Inviting Tenders (E-Tendering Process)

Specification No.

Tender Inviting Authority

Name of the Work

140 SE / MM-H / NTPC-I NCTPS I SE M II Circle AHP Dn Unit I II O and M PDFACS period 90 days or until completion 78000 MT

60 SE / Mech Maint II / MTPS MTPS I O AHS PDFACS O and M UNIT I

61 SE / Mech Maint II / MTPS MTPS I O AHS PDFACS O and M UNIT II

62 SE / Mech Maint II / MTPS MTPS I O AHS PDFACS O and M UNIT III

63 SE / Mech Maint II / MTPS MTPS I O AHS PDFACS O and M UNIT IV

622 SE / P&A / MTPS MS ERW Pipe 350 NB 300 NB 150 NB

403 SE / Civil Maint / TTPS TNPGL TTPS Civil Maintenance Circle CMD 2 Strengthening and Providing Protective Coating in the RCC

404 SE / Civil Maint / TTPS Strengthening and Providing Protective Coating in the RCC PSC Structures in Conveyor 70 Span 13 24

405 SE / Civil Maint / TTPS Strengthening and Providing Protective Coating in the RCC PSC Structures in Conveyor 70 Span 25 34 i.

627 SE / P&A / MTPS Supply of 1800 mtr. M.S.ERW 350 NB pipes 355.60mm OD 9.5 mm thick with standard length of 10 mtr

For details of works / Procurement / Due date of submission / Opening, viewing and downloading of e-tenders, please visit websites: www.tnpsc.org, www.tenders.tn.gov.in, www.intenders.gov.in

TAMIL NADU POWER GENERATOR CORPORATION LTD TUTICORIN THERMAL POWER STATION

"RARE OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC"

Wet ash is available in abundant quantity at Tuticorin Thermal Power Station. Interested General public / traders / beneficiaries and Government sector organizations are requested to contact the following address for lifting wet ash. The wet ash will be issued at free of cost and the lifting and transport charges to be borne by the beneficiaries.

O/o the Superintending Engineer / Civil, Tuticorin Thermal Power Station, Harbour Estate, Tuticorin - 628 004. Phone No: 0461 - 2352468

DIPR/750/T

No.27-7/2018-Lib
Government of India
Ministry of Culture
Library Section**RECRUITMENT**

This is to inform that the Ministry of Culture invites applications for the post of **Director General on deputation** (including short term contract) basis in Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation, Kolkata, an autonomous organisation under the Ministry. The detailed advertisement may be seen on the Ministry's website (<https://culture.gov.in/>)

The last date for submission of the applications is 60 days from the date of publication of this advertisement in the Employment News/Rozgar Samachar.

CBC 09101/11/0035/2526

**REGIONAL DEPUTY REGISTRAR (HOUSING)
THANJAVUR****Co-operative Society Properties for sale****e-TENDER NOTICE****Property Details**

S.No	Tender Reference	Property Details
1	RRCHS/T1072/2026	Thanjavur Raja Rajan Co-operative Housing Society owned property sale. Thanjavur District, Thanjavur Town, Nilagiri Therku thottam, Daniel Thomas Nagar Plot No 18 Land Area 35316 Sq.ft, Contact No: 9364566866

Tender Document Available : <https://tntenders.gov.in>

Bid submission start date and Time : 05.02.2026 at 09.00 AM

Bid submission End date and Time : 07.03.2026 at 09.00 AM

Bid Opening Date and Time : 09.03.2026 at 11.00 AM

DEPUTY REGISTRAR (HOUSING) THANJAVUR

**E-Open Tender Notice**

E-tender notice no.: HRTWS-CRS-Bio-tank-25-26 Date: 30.01.2026

For and on behalf of President of India, Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer, Carriage Repair Workshop, Harnaut invites open e-tender for the following works as detailed:-

- Name of work with its location : "Maintenance of Bio toilet tanks at CRWI/HRT". 2. Approx. cost of the work: Rs. 1,64,88,576.00 (Rupees One Crore Sixty-Four Lakh Eighty-Six Thousand Five Hundred and Seventy-Six only). 3. Cost of Tender Form : Nil. 4. Earnest Money to be deposited : Rs. 2,32,500.00 (Rupees Two Lakhs Thirty Two Thousand Five Hundred Only). 5. Date & Time for submission of tender and opening of tender : The tender have to be submitted online on <https://www.irops.gov.in> website up to 11.00 hrs. on 20.02.2026 and will be opened on the same day at 11:30 hrs. 6. Website particulars, Notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc. : Detailed tender notice, eligibility criteria & tender documents can be seen from the CRIS website: <https://www.irops.gov.in> & full details of notice can be seen on notice board in the office of Chief Workshop Manager, Administrative Building, Carriage Repair Workshop, Harnaut, Nalanda, Bihar - 803110. All corrigendum will be uploaded on website if required.

Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer, Carriage Repair Workshop/Harnaut PR/1731/CRW-HRT/CRW/T/25-26/44

**E-Open Tender Notice**

E-open Tender Notice No. S&T/SEE / E-OT/25-26/24 Date: 02.02.2026

The DRM (Sig. & Telecom)/SEE for and on behalf of the President of India invites Open E-Tenders for the following works. The last date of online E-tendering is 27.02.2026 up to 12:00 hrs. All information and tender documents related to E-tender is available on website - www.irops.gov.in

SI. No., 1, E-Tender No. : S&T/ SEE / E-OT/ 25-26/24, Name of work : Provision for replacement of overaged battery bank confirming RDSO Spec. No.-RS-S-88/93 or latest amdt. of SMS based power plant for Telecom equipments at all stations under Sonpur Division. Approx. cost (In Rs.) : 1,23,09,794.00, Earnest Money (In Rs.) : 1,21,600.00, Cost of Tender Document (In Rs.) (Non-refundable) : 0.00, Completion period : 06 (Six) Month from date of issue of LOA.

The above tender notice is available on website www.irops.gov.in Uploading date 02.02.2026 . RIGHT OF RAILWAY TO DEAL WITH TENDER: Railway Administration reserves the right to postpone / modify or to cancel any one or all the tenders without assigning any reasons.

Sr. DME (C&W)
East Central Railway, DDU PR/1739/DDU/C&W/T/25-26/44

**OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE**

No. RS-WCC-Tender-DDU-25, Date : 03.02.2026

Sr. DME/ECR/DDU on behalf of the President of India invite "Open" E-Tender on Single Packet System from the eligible and experienced agency or contractor for tender no. RS-WCC-Tender-DDU-25, Particular are as under:-

SI. No. : 1, Name of the work with its location : Outsourcing of various activities at WCC/DDU during wagon maintenance at sick line and ROH shed for a period of 02 years., SI. No. : 2, Approx. Cost of the work : ₹ 6,92,97,658.60/- (Rupees Six crore Ninety two lakh Ninety seven thousand six hundred fifty eight and sixty paise), SI. No. : 3, Earnest Money to be deposited : ₹ 4,96,500.00 only, SI. No. : 4, Date & Time for submission of tender and opening of Tender: From 10.02.2026 up to closing of tender at 11:00 hrs. on 24.02.2026., SI. No. : 5, Website particulars, Notice Board location where complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc. : IREPS Website :- www.irops.gov.in Bidders will be able to submit their original/ revised bids online through their website only. Manual offer are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Note : Detail information may be seen in the tender documents.

Sr. DME (C&W)
East Central Railway, DDU PR/1739/DDU/C&W/T/25-26/44

**AIR SURCHARGE AS APPLICABLE:**New Delhi - Rs. 15/-;
Port Blair - Rs. 20/-

A FAIRFAX Company

**10 DAYS OF UNBEATABLE HOLIDAY DEALS****Thomas Cook**

FREE Rescheduling & Cancellation in case of visa rejection*

Get Discount up to ₹ 100 000.00* per couple

+ Loyalty Points

Book a Europe Holiday, Get a cruise holiday FREE.

Holiday Pe Holiday Free

Book today & Get 1 Night Taj Staycation for Free

Up to ₹ 15,000* Instant Discount on Credit Cards

Europe Holidays

8 D - Swiss French Magic
France & Switzerland
₹ 2 77 000.00 pp11 D - Fusion Europe - South Special
France, Switzerland, Italy, Vatican City & Austria
₹ 3 33 500.00 pp15 D - Grand Bargain Tour of Europe - South Special
UK, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Leichtenstein, Austria, Italy & Vatican City ₹ 4 61 000.00 pp

Quick Getaway Holidays

6 D - Dubai With Abu Dhabi
₹ 1 10 500.00 pp10 D - Singapore -Malaysia with Cruise
₹ 1 62 900.00 pp10 D - Vietnam With Phu Quoc
₹ 1 81 800.00 pp7 D - China Extravaganza
₹ 1 81 900.00 pp

Experiential Holidays

5 D - Egyptian Dhamaka
₹ 1 65 000.00 pp10 D - New Zealand
₹ 3 97 000.00 pp10 D - Grand Bargain Australia
₹ 3 58 000.00 pp

12 D - Grand Bargain America ₹ 3 47 500.00 pp (without Flights)

Spiritual Journeys (without Flights)

6 D - Char Dham Yatra By Helicopter
₹ 2 30 500.00 pp14 D - Kailash Mansarovar Yatra by Road
₹ 2 37 000.00 pp

India & Around Holidays

7 D - Himachal
₹ 29 900.00 pp (without Flights)

7 D - Bhutan Direct Flights from Bangalore ₹ 75 900.00 pp

Inclusions: Airfare, Hotels, Meals, Visa Fees, Insurance, Sightseeing & Services of our 'Experience Managers'.

CHENNAI: Adyar: 8879828056 | Alwarpet: 8879653932 | Anna Nagar: 8879837422 | Chromepet: 9619878047 | Nungambakkam: 8879832212 | Sholinganallur: 8879893551 | T Nagar: 8879656241 | Vadapalani: 8879657443 | Velachery: 8879643656 | COIMBATORE: R.S.Puram: 8879643451 | MADURAI: Anna Nagar: 8879643587 | Kochadai: 8879643506 | PONDICHERRY: 9619680522 | SALEM: 8879649983 | TIRUCHIRAPPALLI: 8879648325

T & C Apply: The prices are Ex-Chennai inclusive of discount per adult on twin sharing basis subject to change basis the inventory left & availability of offers/services may vary based on market conditions and prevailing Forex Rates. Taxes as applicable are calculated at 1 EUR = INR 10.1 USD = INR 65.92. 1 SGD = INR 73.81 and will vary on the date of payment. Confirm all relevant details with our sales staff or visit thomascook.in before making a booking. Guaranteed Departure refers to the operation of the Group on dates indicated & does not guarantee individual customer visas - which are purely Consular decisions. Thomas Cook utilizes the services of various third party service providers to deliver specific services in the products/tours. Discount up to ₹ 100 000.00 is valid only on select products on minimum booking of two Pax. Taj offer is valid on minimum booking of ₹ 2 00 000 per person for select hotels on select dates for base room category.



Letter No: 98 Notice Inviting e-Tender Date: 04/02/2026

Office of the EE (Solar), "Ujjwal", Maharani Bagh, G.M.S. Road, Dehradun-248006

Telephones: 0135-2763808, Fax: 0135-2763508

CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866 Website: <https://ujvn.uk.gov.in>

Bid Identification Nos.: T-07/EE/Solar/2026

Name of the Work: Setting-up of 16 MW/40 MWh Stand alone Battery Energy Storage System(BESS) near Pathri HEP, District-Hardwar, Uttarakhand.

Date for availability of bid document on the portal: 06-02-2026 from 17:00 Hrs.

Last Date /Time of Receipt of bid on the portal: 05-03-2026 till 16:00 Hrs.

Detail of subsequent addendum/corrigendum/cancellation etc. may be obtained from the website.

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <http://uktenders.gov.in>

Executive Engineer (Solar)

"AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY"

**REGIONAL DEPUTY REGISTRAR (HOUSING)
THANJAVUR****Co-operative Society Properties for sale****e-TENDER NOTICE**

S.No	Tender Reference	Property Details
1	SNCBS/T834/2026	Shanmuga Nagar Cooperative Building Society, Thanjavur owned property sale of House Vacant site in Thiruvarur District Mannargudi Taluk, Kumarapuram Village, Cholan Nagar, Plot No. 48-1800 Sq.ft. and Plot No. 49-1800 Sq.ft Contact No: 944362274

Tender Document Available : <https://tntenders.gov.in>

Bid submission start date and Time : 05.02.2026 at 09.00 AM

Bid submission End date and Time : 07.03.2026 at 09.00 AM

Bid Opening Date and Time : 09.03.2026 at 11.00 AM

DEPUTY REGISTRAR (HOUSING) THANJAVUR



Information Technology Department

Central Office: 763, Anna Salai, Chennai-600002

Indian Overseas bank (IOB) invites bids for the following:

GOVERNMENT E-MARKET PORTAL - SELECTION OF LICENSING SOLUTION PROVIDER (LSP) FOR RENEWAL OF MICROSOFT ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT FOR A PERIOD OF 3 YEARS**BID NO: GEM/2026/B/7176657 DATED 02.02.2026**The Above GEM Tender document is also available and can be downloaded from the following websites www.job.in & www.gem.gov.in For Tender details and future amendments, if any, keep referring to the following website www.gem.gov.in**Tender Notice**

Tender Ref. No: UPMSC/L-Drugs-246/24 Dated: 27th February, 2026

e-TENDER FOR SUPPLY OF DRUGSOnline tenders are invited from licensed manufacturers for supply of drugs to UPMSCL. The details of tender, list of items and Tender documents are made available on website [https://tender.up.nic.in](http://tender.up.nic.in) and www.upmsc.in. The last date/time of online submission of the tender documents is 17th February, 2026 upto 15:00 Hrs.

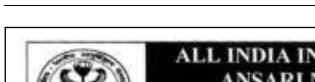
Managing Director

UPMSCL, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

Department of Medical Health & Family Welfare, Uttar Pradesh

CBC 33121/12/0001/2526

Head (HR), DGH

Email ID: dghrecruitment@dghindia.gov.in**ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES
ANSARI NAGAR, NEW DELHI – 110 029
EXAMINATION SECTION**

From Page One**Theft case against Ajith Kumar closed: CBI to HC**

The judge asked the CBI whether action would be initiated against the complainant, Nikitha, who was the root-cause of the incident. The CBI said it would file a report before the court in this regard.

With regard to the 10 police personnel who have been named as accused in the custodial death case, the CBI told the court that the investigators had filed a charge-sheet and a supplementary charge-sheet before the Fifth Additional District and Sessions Court in Madurai – the trial court.

Police excess

It was submitted that the incident was a case of police excess. The court adjourned the hearing of the bail petitions.

Ajith Kumar was a security guard at the Badrakali Amman Temple in Madapuram in Sivaganga district.

On June 27, 2025, Nikitha, a resident of Thirumangalam in Madurai district, and her mother visited the temple. Nikitha reportedly handed over the car key to Ajith Kumar and asked him to park the vehicle, saying she had to help her mother, who had difficulty walking. It was alleged that when they returned, they found the bag they had kept in the car open, and the gold ornaments stored in it missing. Ajith Kumar was picked up for an interrogation. On June 28, 2025, he died during the interrogation.

Both cases transferred to CBI

The State government transferred the investigation into both cases to the CBI. Five police personnel – Prabhu, Kannan, Sankara Manikandan, Raja, and Anand – were arrested and remanded in judicial custody. Subsequently, Ramachandran (a police driver) was also named as an accused in the case and remanded in judicial custody.

Later, the then Manamadurai Deputy Superintendent of Police, N. Shammugam Sundaram, then Thirupuvanam Inspector P. Ramesh Kumar, then Sub-Inspector Siva Kumar, and then Head Constable Ilayaraja were also named as accused.

DVAC assures HC of proper probe into ED's plaint against K.N. Nehru's dept.**Mohamed Imranullah S.**
CHENNAI

The Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC) on Wednesday assured the Madras High Court of a “proper and full-fledged inquiry” in a cash-for-jobs complaint lodged by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) against Minister K.N. Nehru’s Municipal Administration and Water Supply Department.

Appearing before the first Division Bench of Chief Justice Manindra Mohan Shrivastava and Justice G. Arul Murugan, senior counsel N.R. Elango, representing the DVAC, said the latter would also be writing to the ED, asking the agency to share any other material in its possession.

The submissions were made before the Bench reserved its orders on two

writ petitions, one filed by K. Athinarayanan of Madurai and another by AIADMK Rajya Sabha member I.S. Inbadurai, seeking a direction to the DVAC to register a First Information Report (FIR) regarding the alleged scam.

Mr. Elango said the information shared by the ED with the Tamil Nadu police had been treated as the first information and the DVAC had begun a ‘detailed inquiry’ into the issue as per the provisions of the Vigilance Manual.

Hence, the information shared by the writ petitioners could not be treated as the first information and an FIR could not be filed without awaiting the outcome of the ‘detailed inquiry’, the senior counsel said, adding that the DVAC would probe without any preconceived notions.

During the beginning of the hearing, the Chief Justice expressed displeasure over the first writ petitioner not having disclosed his antecedents in his affidavit though he had been facing several criminal cases, including one for the charge of attempt to murder.

Thereafter, the Bench went on to hear the arguments of senior counsel V. Raghavachari, for the AIADMK MP, who relied upon three Supreme Court judgments in support of his argument that the DVAC was duty-bound to register an FIR on the basis of information shared by the ED and that a detailed inquiry would not suffice.

ED Special Public Prosecutor N. Ramesh said the agency had actually shared evidence running to 232 pages that clearly demonstrate the commission of a

cognisable offence, and therefore, the DVAC could not but register an FIR on the basis of the materials.

However, Advocate General P.S. Raman said the ED had collected those materials during a search and seizure operation carried out in April 2025 in connection with a bank fraud case. He said a Division Bench of the High Court had in July 24, 2025 quashed the Enforcement Case Information Report booked in that case.

“Thereafter, the ED was supposed to have returned all those materials to the individuals concerned. However, it had retained a copy of all those materials, waited for about three months, and then shared them with the Director-General of Police of Tamil Nadu on October 27, 2025,” he said.

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Higher Education Minister Govi Chezhiaan skipped the Anna University convocation in Chennai on Wednesday, where Governor-Chancellor R.N. Ravi participated and gave away medals and certificates to graduands.

The Minister was not reachable over the phone, but sources said his decision to miss the convocation was “inevitable”. He abstained from the University of Madras convocation last month as well.

The acrimony between the Governor and the State government has, of late, led to a stalemate over the appointment of Vice-Chancellors to 16 of the 22 State universities; the posts have since been lying vacant.

On several occasions,



Governor R.N. Ravi handing over a degree certificate to a student at Anna University. Former ISRO scientist Mylswamy Annadurai and Higher Education Secretary P. Shankar are seen. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

753 research scholars their PhD degrees.

Delivering the convocation address, Mylswamy Annadurai, former director, Satellite Centre, Indian Space Research Organisation, urged students to acquire new skills to stay relevant in the future.

Quoting the World Economic Forum’s *Future of Jobs Report 2025*, Mr. An-

nadurai said that by 2030, 170 million new jobs would be created globally, while 90 million jobs would change forms or disappear, the rapid growth of AI being an important factor.

P. Shankar, Higher Education Secretary and head of the Vice-Chancellor Convenor Committee of Anna University, presented the annual report, stating that this year, 69 research projects had been awarded to Anna University under the Chief Minister’s Research Grant, with funding of ₹6.55 crore.

Besides, the university had secured Tamil Nadu Innovation Initiatives funding of ₹18.66 crore for an unmanned aerial vehicle project and recycling of composite wind blades. The university, he said, has got 69 patents granted out of the 89 filed.

Panel will decide seats for Congress, says Kanimozhi**The Hindu Bureau**
CHENNAI

DMK Parliamentary Party leader Kanimozhi on Wednesday said seat-sharing talks with the Congress were under way and only the committee appointed for the purpose would discuss seat allocation and related issues.

When asked whether the Congress’s demand was high, she declined to respond, saying it had not yet been discussed.

She added that DMK president and Chief Minister M.K. Stalin would announce if more political parties joined the DMK alliance.

Speaking to reporters after holding discussions



with representatives of various organisations to elicit their views and suggestions for inclusion in the manifesto, Ms. Kanimozhi, who heads the manifesto committee, said the panel would consider appropriate inputs for inclusion with the Chief Minister’s approval.

Eminent educationist S.S. Rajagopalan dies at 95**The Hindu Bureau**
CHENNAI

Eminent educationist S.S. Rajagopalan, who was part of the committee that formulated the Samacheer Kalvi (Tamil Nadu Uniform System of School Education) scheme under the DMK government led by former Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi, died in Chennai late on Tuesday. He was 95.

His body has been handed over for medical research to Sri Ramachandra Medical College in Porur.

Beginning his career in the 1950s, Rajagopalan declined job offers at the then Imperial Bank of India and the civil services to pursue teaching. He started out as a math teacher and retired as the headmaster of Sarvajana Higher Secondary School in Coimbatore.

He dedicated his life to championing equitable



education, education in mother tongue, and neighbourhood schools. He was also a member of the technical committee of the All India Forum for Right Education. He fought for the rights of students and teachers.

Speaking to *The Hindu* in 1997, Rajagopalan said: “Four maxims should motivate all teachers. Every child is educable; No two children are alike; every

S.S. Rajagopalan was part of the panel that formulated the Samacheer Kalvi scheme

teacher is an eternal learner; and it is the teacher who has to evolve a strategy to cater to every individual learner.”

State Platform for Common School System - Tamil Nadu general secretary P.B. Prince Gajendra Babu said: “He had great faith in students and student movements, and firmly believed that students would win equal educational opportunities for the people of India as their right.”

Speaking to *The Hindu* in 1997, Rajagopalan said: “Four maxims should motivate all teachers. Every child is educable; No two children are alike; every

teacher is an eternal learner; and it is the teacher who has to evolve a strategy to cater to every individual learner.”

The Chief Minister extended his condolences to the bereaved family members.

In a post on X, School Education Minister Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi said, “The demise of the senior educationist is a great loss to the field of education.

He was one who emphasised that examination does not merely evaluate learning. It also evaluates teaching. While guiding pioneering projects, he never hesitated to critique them and always stood for the welfare of students.”

Finance Minister Thanangam Thennarasu, who was the School Education Minister during the deliberations on Samacheer Kalvi, took to X to console his de-

ceased.

“S.S. Rajagopalan was not only an excellent teacher and educationist, but his social outlook continues to serve as an inspiring example for today’s generation,” he said.

Research fellowship

CPI(M) State secretary P. Shanmugam requested the State government to institute a research fellowship in Rajagopalan’s name.

In his condolence message, he said Rajagopalan, popularly known as SSR, worked to ensure quality education for all in their mother tongue. He recalled that Rajagopalan’s father had launched a Tamil-medium school in Coimbatore under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi.

An activist, Rajagopalan worked closely with teachers’ associations and championed constructive initiatives in the field of education, he said.

TNCC chief’s padayatra to begin today**The Hindu Bureau**
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Congress Committee president K. Selvarperunthigai, who is set to begin his *padayatra* near the Madras Christian College on Thursday, has said he would tell the people of the State how the BJP had destroyed the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act.

He told *The Hindu* he would cover one district a day until the notification of the Assembly election.

“Telangana Deputy CM Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka will flag off the *padayatra*. We will demand that MNREGA be continued, and that the Centre funds the scheme,” he said, adding that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will take part in the closing ceremony.

Tamil Nadu is the most urbanised State and has the most number of industries, Stalin says, adding that it is one of the major contributors of tax revenue and works hard for country’s development



Welfare assistance: Chief Minister M.K. Stalin distributing aid at Palakuppam near Tindivanam on Wednesday. S.S. KUMAR

tic, and they allocated funds to Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha. But with Tamil Nadu, which was headed for the elections, the BJP avoided this stunt. This only shows the level of hatred they have towards Tamil and Tamil Nadu, he said.

New portal

Earlier, the Chief Minister inaugurated the portal of *Unga Kanava Sollunga* (<http://enkanavu.tn.gov.in>).

Under the programme, volunteers will meet the general public, receive a list of their dreams that they want fulfilled and record them digitally.

He also distributed welfare assistance to the tune of ₹43.75 crore to 13,879 beneficiaries.

Ministers M.R.K. Panneerselvam and C.V. Ganesan; Members of Parliament D. Ravikumar (Villupuram) and M.S. Tharainiventhan (Arani); former Ministers K. Ponmudi and Gingee K.S. Masthan; MLAs R. Lakshmanan, A.J. Manikandan and Anniyur Siva; and Collector Sheik Abdul Rahman were present.

AIADMK’s new poll promises include 3 cooking gas cylinders for rice cardholders**The Hindu Bureau**

CHENNAI



Edappadi K. Palaniswami

AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Wednesday made five more electoral promises, including the provision of three cooking gas cylinders each to rice-drawing ration cardholders every year.

Other assurances include the waiver of educational loans drawn from banks and hike in old-age pension to ₹2,000 from ₹1,200 per month.

The State Assembly election is due in April-May this year.

Addressing the media after attending a meeting of district secretaries at the party headquarters in Chennai, Mr. Palaniswami announced that in the event of the death of a jallikattu participant while trying to tame the bull, the family of the deceased would be paid a solatium of ₹10 lakh. Similarly, the injured would be given ₹2 lakh.

Besides, a subsidy of ₹5 lakh would be granted for the conduct of a jallikattu event at the government-sanctioned site and the manual system of registration would be re-introduced, replacing the current online system.

Interest-free loans would be given to women

Kerala passes resolution over 'neglect' in Budget

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

In a resolution passed on Wednesday, the Kerala Assembly slammed the Centre for its "continuing neglect of the State" a situation which, it said, was reflected ever more strongly in the Union Budget.

The resolution sought the Centre's attention to the State's demands, including approval for an All India Institute of Medical Sciences and a high-speed rail corridor that were "ignored" in the Budget.

The resolution presented by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan strongly urged the Centre to "correct its approach to Kerala and ensure justice to the State, respecting the spirit of cooperative federalism and the need for the balanced development of the nation."

Sabarimala issue
The House adopted the resolution in the absence of the Congress-led Opposition UDF, which had boycotted the Assembly proceedings earlier in the morning over the Sabarimala gold theft issue. The UDF walked out during Question Hour. The session was disrupted as the Opposition and ruling-front MLAs hurled accusations at each other over the issue.

Speaking to the media outside the Assembly, Leader of the Opposition V.D. Satheesan said the government had not informed the Opposition about the resolution.

Karnataka adopts resolution for restoration of MGNREGA

BJP and JD(S) oppose the resolution and stage walkout; the Opposition had ample opportunities to discuss the VB-G RAM G Act and defend it, but it failed to do so, the Deputy Chief Minister says

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU



Mulling move: Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his Deputy D.K. Shivakumar during the Assembly session. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A resolution tabled by the Karnataka government in the Legislative Assembly, opposing the repeal of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005, and replacing it with the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Act, 2025, was passed on Wednesday, even as BJP and JD(S) members staged a walkout.

Overnight dharna

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah tabled the resolution on Tuesday, with two days dedicated for its debate. However, the BJP and

the JD(S) members launched an overnight dharna demanding the resignation of the Excise Minister over corruption allegations on Tuesday and continued it during the legislature session on Wednesday.

Amid non-stop slogan-

neering, the Speaker allowed a debate on the resolution.

Before it was put to vote, Leader of Opposition R. Ashok opposed the resolution and the Opposition members staged a walkout.

Deputy Chief Minister

D.K. Shivakumar said that despite having ample opportunities to discuss the VB-G RAM G Act, 2025, and defend it, the Opposition had failed to do so. The resolution was passed with a voice vote.

Earlier in the day, Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Priyank Kharge responded to the debate and argued that the new law was "anti-federal" for increasing the expenditure of the State governments without consultation, which he termed "economic terrorism".

He pointed out that even NDA allies such as Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu had expressed concern over increasing the State's share from 10% to 40%.

12 persons get five years in jail in Belagavi stripping case

The Hindu Bureau
HUBBALLI

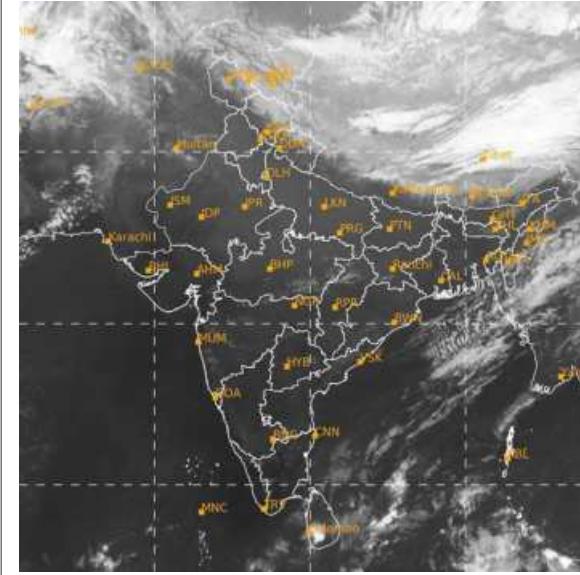
All the 12 accused persons charged with their involvement in disrobing and assaulting a 42-year-old woman belonging to a Scheduled Tribe community have been found guilty and sentenced to five-year rigorous imprisonment (RI).

A court in Belagavi, Karnataka announced the verdict on Wednesday. Judge H.S. Manjunath convicted all the 12 accused under Section 235 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

The incident occurred in 2023, in Vantamuri village of Belagavi district. The woman was assaulted before being tied to a pole and partially stripped after her son eloped with a girl belonging to the same community.

WEATHER WATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD; POLLUTION DATA: CPCB; MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.15 HRS)

Forecast for Thursday: Dense fog likely at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Assam, Meghalaya and west Madhya Pradesh. Ground frost likely at isolated places over Uttarakhand. Squally wind likely to prevail over Gulf of Mannar, adjoining Coromorin area

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	28.8	16.4	Kozhikode	—	34.4	25.0
Ahmedabad	—	29.7	18.7	Kurnool	—	32.8	19.2
Atizawl	—	29.7	15.3	Lucknow	—	7	22.7
Allahabad	—	0.5	22.8	Madurai	—	33.4	21.7
Bengaluru	—	29.2	15.5	Mangaluru	—	33.9	22.8
Bhopal	—	22.8	14.0	Mumbai	—	35.0	19.6
Bhubaneswar	—	29.6	15.4	Mysuru	—	30.6	17.0
Chandigarh	—	22.1	7.4	New Delhi	—	22.9	8.2
Chennai	—	31.2	21.9	Patna	—	24.8	14.4
Coimbatore	—	32.0	19.4	Port Blair	—	30.5	25.9
Dehradun	—	24.0	19.4	Puducherry	—	29	20.4
Gangtok	—	17.2	8.4	Pune	—	32.0	19.4
Goa	—	35.4	21.0	Raipur	—	31.2	18.3
Guwahati	—	28.6	13.5	Ranchi	—	26.6	13.0
Hubballi	—	32.0	17.2	Shillong	—	18.9	7.5
Hyderabad	—	28.8	19.2	Shimla	—	17.2	6.4
Imphal	—	26.1	11.4	Srinagar	—	2	11.1
Jaipur	—	25.1	11.2	Thiruvananthapuram	—	34.1	23.7
Kochi	—	30.6	24.8	Tiruchi	—	31.3	20.6
Kohima	—	18.0	8.2	Vijayawada	—	30.0	21.2
Kolkata	—	27.7	17.2	Visakhapatnam	—	29.7	21.8

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE
Ahmedabad	10	104	23	100	107
Bengaluru	5	18	37	108	144
Chennai	9	13	54	62	90
Delhi	15	215	65	377	354
Hyderabad	4	11	74	105	126
Kolkata	9	98	55	230	135
Lucknow	6	55	61	97	243
Mumbai	13	88	20	166	148
Pune	51	32	263	205	205
Visakhapatnam	8	34	23	158	135

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 pm, Balabagh, Haryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 370 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir recorded a healthy AQI score of 22

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as monuments.

NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM_{2.5} & PM₁₀: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease.

SIR exercise is turning voters to 'living dead': Kamal

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



Kamal Haasan

Citing the SIR in Bihar, he said the State had become a land of "many living dead", and added this disease should not be allowed to spread across the country.

"Election Commission is surely facilitating the spread of this disease," he said.

"My imminent concern is the forthcoming elections... We want to cast a vote, and the Election Commission is checking our right to vote. They are checking the spellings and addresses, and that too erroneously. We just want to cast our vote," he said.

"We fear that there could soon be nearly one

crore living dead on paper in Tamil Nadu," he added and demanded that the "living dead be resurrected".

"If you refuse to help us with this redirection, to achieve nothing but half-baked, half-finished illegal electoral conquest," Mr. Haasan said.

"This democratic juggernaut will roll over differences, but should never roll over people. We will not allow it. Nobody is immortal. No government can or should aim for per-

manency," Mr. Haasan said while asking all to "grow up along with a growing progressive democracy".

Sitharaman responds
Later in the day, referring to a statement by Mr. Haasan in the Rajya Sabha that she had allegedly used derogatory words about the Tamil language in March 2025, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman clarified on X that she had only quoted Periyar E.V. Ramasamy Naicker and that it was not her views.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU ELECTRONICS CORPORATION OF TAMIL NADU LIMITED						
9th Floor, Sigappi Aachi Building, 18/3 Rukmani Lakshmi Path, Egmore, Chennai - 600 008 gmhr@elcot.in 044 - 2855 6100						
Engagement of Consultant (Finance) for PMU and Chief Technology Officer						
Notification No: 3761048/2026						
Applications are invited for engagement of Consultant (Finance) and Chief Technology Officer (CTO) on contract for one year, renewable every year up to three years. For complete details please visit www.elcot.tn.gov.in .						
MANAGING DIRECTOR, ELCOT						

DIPR/145/DISPLAY/2026

Government of Maharashtra

Directorate of Municipal Administration CBD Belapur, Navi Mumbai

E-Tender Notice No. 10 for 2025-26

- Work Name:** "Setting up a Project Monitoring Unit (PMU) for Nagarotthan Mahabhiyan for Urban Development Department, Government of Maharashtra"
- Information regarding the E-Tender notice, Tender documents and other information etc. will be available on 05/02/2026 on this website - <https://mahatenders.gov.in/>

Sd-

(Sanjay kakade)

Jt. Commissioner

DGIPR/2025/2026/5557 Directorate of Municipal Administration

Tamil Nadu Maanisil Vaasiniik Kudukam						

<tbl_r cells



Joining hands

The BJP manages internal unity in Manipur; the State still awaits it

Early a year after former Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh resigned on February 9, 2025, leading to President's Rule, President Droupadi Murmu revoked the order on Wednesday to facilitate the return of a popular government – Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Yumnam Khemchand Singh was sworn in as the 13th Chief Minister. The two Deputy Chief Ministers are Nemcha Kippen, from the Kuki-Zo community, and Losii Dikho of the BJP's ally, the Naga People's Front. While these moves were taken to avoid extending President's Rule beyond one year, which would have required moving a Constitution Amendment Bill in Parliament, they also allow the ruling BJP to provide a semblance of democratic governance to help it regain public support during the final year of the Assembly's tenure. As seen in the general election, the disastrous second tenure of N. Biren Singh had led to discontent in the hills and valley of Manipur, reflected in the victory of Opposition candidates. Subsequently, as sporadic violence spread across even relatively peaceful areas, a coalition of internal critics in the BJP, which included Mr. Khemchand Singh, successfully lobbied for a change in leadership. That Mr. Biren Singh was present when Mr. Khemchand Singh was nominated by the BJP leadership to the posts of Legislature Party leader and Chief Minister suggests party consensus. Mr. Khemchand Singh had also signalled his intent in working towards reconciliation between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities by visiting a Kuki-Zo relief camp in the Naga-dominated Ukhral district last year.

President's Rule was also intended to dismantle the impunity of armed radical groups and facilitate the safe return of the displaced. While security forces had managed to recover a significant portion of looted weapons and tamp down the fervour of radical groups, the human cost of the ethnic strife still remains unaddressed. Only 9,000 of the estimated 60,000 displaced persons have returned home, reflecting the enduring trust deficit. Dastardly acts, such as the execution of a Meitei man in the Tuirang area of Churachandpur, in January, while visiting his Kuki-Zo wife, underscore the urgent need to defang radical groups that continue to hold sway. The BJP has successfully leveraged political survival as a glue for its leaders. However, engineering a similar detente between the communities remains a daunting task. With Kuki-Zo groups continuing to demand an untenable "separate administration" which will lead to further discord beyond just the two communities, the new government must move beyond token concessions such as accommodating different community representatives in leadership positions. True stability will require an inclusive dialogue that engages all political and civil society stakeholders to rebuild the foundation of trust.

Generations apart

Despite being separated by 16 years, Djokovic fought as an equal with Alcaraz

Ever since Carlos Alcaraz won his maiden Grand Slam title at the 2022 US Open and scaled the pinnacle of ATP rankings as a tender 19-year-old, he was said to be on a fast lane to success. On Sunday, with his first Australian Open singles crown and seventh Major overall, the Spaniard proved that those predictions were not ill-founded. The four-set triumph over the legendary Novak Djokovic drew Alcaraz level with greats such as John McEnroe and Mats Wilander in the all-time Slam tally. At 22 years, eight months and 28 days, Alcaraz is also the youngest to complete the career Grand Slam (acquiring all four Majors at least once), surpassing 22-time Slam winner Rafael Nadal's record of 24 years, three months and 10 days. Melbourne had long been Alcaraz's Achilles heel. He had not gone past the quarterfinals in four prior attempts, and this time, he had arrived Down Under without his long-term coach Juan Carlos Ferrero, from whom he recently split. But the World No.1 thrived, often under pressure, not just in the final where he fended off a resurgent Djokovic aiming for his 25th Major, but also in the semifinals where he battled from the brink – both tennis-wise and health-wise – to outlast Germany's Alexander Zverev in a five-hour, 27-minute humdinger.

The fortnight also served as a timely reminder of Djokovic's enduring genius. The rousing four-hour, nine-minute semifinal victory over World No.2 and two-time defending champion Jannik Sinner – his first over the Italian in six attempts – showed that even at the grand old tennis age of 38, the Serb is among the very best. He may have benefitted from a walkover in the fourth round and a retirement in the quarterfinals, but what shone were his technical mastery and the ability to hit peak level when needed. Djokovic is now up to No. 3, and such is his recent record – four semifinals and a final in the last five Majors – that any talk of retirement appears incongruous. However, it will be in the best interest of men's tennis if a contemporary star can be unearthed to challenge the Alcaraz-Sinner duopoly than just depending on a seemingly timeless patriarch. The women's game does not suffer from such lacuna as Elena Rybakina captured her second Slam title – after Wimbledon 2022 – with a stunning three-set defeat of World No. 1 and four-time Major winner Aryna Sabalenka. The 26-year-old Kazakh is now ranked No. 3, and the fact that she beat No. 2 Iga Swiatek – who was on her own mission to achieve a career Slam – and No. 6 Jessica Pegula en route will halo her achievement.

The Budget and the imperative of fiscal consolidation

While presenting the Union Budget 2026-27, a considerable part of the Finance Minister's Budget speech dealt with the expenditure programmes that will be launched to enable India to become developed by 2047. The emphasis on the advanced technology sectors such as Artificial Intelligence, biopharma, semiconductor and critical minerals among others, is well taken. The concern with these expenditure programmes is on how well they are going to be implemented and the pace at which they will enable the goal of Viksit Bharat to be achieved.

Expenditure priorities, revenue prospects
In order to provide fiscal space for these changing priorities, the Government of India has been successfully undertaking a restructuring, particularly of its revenue expenditures. For more than a decade, the share of revenue expenditure to total expenditure has been going down, from 88% in 2014-15 to about 77% in 2026-27 (BE), that is a fall of 11% points. Within this, the fall in central subsidies was 7% points of total expenditure. Correspondingly, the share of capital expenditure in total expenditure has increased.

The Centre's emphasis on capital expenditure has played an important role in supporting GDP growth. As a percentage of GDP, the Centre's capital expenditure, in the post-COVID-19 years, has been at a high level. However, its annual growth rate has fallen over time. Thus, from a recent peak growth of 28.3% in 2023-24, it fell to 10.8% in 2024-25 and to 4.2% in 2025-26 (RE). It is budgeted to increase now to 11.5% in 2026-27 (BE), which is only marginally higher than the assumed nominal GDP growth of 10.0%. Thus, it will almost remain static at 3.1% of GDP in 2025-26 (RE) and 2026-27 (BE). It may be noted that the budgeted capital expenditure growth in 2025-26 was 10.1%, but a growth of only 4.2% was achieved as already noted.

The Government of India's revenue receipts,



C. Rangarajan

is Chairman, Madras School of Economics, and a former Governor of the Reserve Bank of India



D.K. Srivastava

is Member, Advisory Council to the Sixteenth Finance Commission, and a former Director of the Madras School of Economics

The Budget pinpoints the critical areas where the government needs to focus on, but sustained growth needs monetary and fiscal stability

particularly projections for 2026-27 (BE) of tax revenues are cautious and are likely to be achieved. But the concern is that the buoyancy of Centre's gross tax revenues in 2026-27 (BE) has fallen to 0.8, well below the benchmark of 1. This consists of a buoyancy of 1.1 of direct taxes, which has a share of 61.2%, and a buoyancy of 0.3 of indirect taxes, which has a share of 38.8% in Centre's gross tax revenues. The main reason for the lower overall buoyancy is linked to the Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections, which are not expected to keep pace with GDP growth in 2026-27 (BE). In view of the high pressure on increasing expenditure, both developmental and welfare, the government should take a good look at the indirect taxes structure and raise their buoyancy to 1.

The recommendations of the Sixteenth Finance Commission (FC16) have not provided for any change in the share of States in the divisible pool of central taxes, keeping it at 41%.

The assignment of taxes to the States, therefore, has remained the same at 3.9% of GDP in 2025-26 (RE) and 2026-27 (BE). Also, the FC16 did not recommend any revenue deficit grants or sector/State-specific grants. Because of discontinuation of revenue deficit grants, there would be a reduction in the overall transfers to the States as compared to FC15. In fact, there has also been a reduction in other components of FC grants – the reason why total FC grants to the States have fallen from 0.43% of GDP in 2025-26 (RE) – the last year under the recommendations of FC15 – to 0.33% in 2026-27 (BE), the first year under the recommendations of the FC16. Usually, in the first year of an FC award period, there is a step jump in the volume of grants.

Pace of fiscal consolidation
The slowdown in the pace of fiscal consolidation is also a major concern. The pace of reduction in the fiscal deficit to GDP ratio has progressively fallen in the post-COVID-19 years. Considering the period from 2023-24, the annual reduction in this ratio in successive years was 0.7% points in

2024-25, 0.4% points in 2025-26 (RE) and only 0.1% point in 2026-27 (BE). The change in the targeting strategy from fiscal deficit to targeting the debt-GDP ratio also does not give much confidence. In fact, the debt-GDP ratio and fiscal deficit to GDP ratio are interdependent and move in tandem depending on the nominal GDP growth.

A transparent strategy would be to give the glide path of debt-GDP ratio and fiscal deficit relative to GDP with an underlying assumption of nominal GDP growth for the next five years. It should also indicate as to when the respective targets committed to in the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act 2018, that is, of 40% for debt-GDP ratio and of 3% for fiscal deficit to GDP ratio are likely to be achieved.

It is also useful to note that maintaining an unduly high debt-GDP ratio leads to a high interest payment to revenue receipts ratio. The effective interest rate for central government debt is estimated at 7.12% in 2026-27 (BE). This rate has been rising progressively for the last three years. In fact, as per the 2026-27 (BE), the interest payment to revenue receipts ratio is close to 40%, thereby squeezing the space for the required primary expenditures.

It must be stressed that the limit of fiscal deficit at 3% of GDP has a strong logic behind it. If the Centre and States take 8%-9% of GDP, the investible resources available for the private sector will come down strongly. In this situation, it is difficult to expect private investment to pick up.

A good framework

Taken together, the Budget presents a good road map to achieve the status of a developed country by 2047. It has highlighted the critical areas where the government and country must focus on. Sustained growth needs monetary and fiscal stability. The path of fiscal consolidation requires a relook.

The views expressed are personal

The U.S. trade deal – gains from economic diplomacy

India's trade playbook is working strongly, steadily and at scale. Its new trade architecture resembles a newly built expressway, anchored in strategic trade agreements that will enable faster, more predictable movement for trade. After concluding a major free trade agreement with the European Union (EU), the United Kingdom and other partners, India has now secured a consequential deal with the United States.

The road to this deal was neither short nor simple. Shaped through a demanding and intricate process, the deal stands as a testament to the strength, steadiness and foresight of Indian negotiators. After nearly a year of sustained dialogue, technical negotiations and quiet diplomacy, India and the U.S. agreed upon the lower tariff of 18%. The reduction of U.S. tariffs on Indian goods to this competitive level is a huge boost to Indian exports, providing improved market access, policy certainty and avenues for new strategic partnerships.

A growing network of partnerships
The India-U.S. trade deal represents an important outcome in India's expanding network of international trade partnerships. The trade agreements with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), the U.K., and the EU give India preferential market access to the whole of Europe. Agreements with Australia and New Zealand make India a key partner of the Pacific, trade agreements with Oman and United Arab Emirates provide greater access to West Asia, and the latest deal with the U.S. deepens India's stronghold in America – a clear reflection of India's deep integration with the world.

The U.S. is the largest import market in the world and India's biggest export destination, accounting for almost one-fifth of India's total exports. Indian exports to the U.S. span a wide range of sectors, which includes apparel, gems and jewellery, agricultural products, footwear, leather and several other manufacturing products, supporting both employment and manufacturing value chains in India. With the elevated U.S. tariff levels of 50% last year, several Indian exporters were at a competitive



Anant Goenka

is President, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), and Vice-Chairman, RPG Group

Industry must use the opportunities that the India-U.S. trade deal presents

disadvantage in this critical market. The revised tariff not only provides meaningful relief and improves India's relative position *vis-à-vis* competing suppliers but also provides a constructive basis for advancing discussions under the ongoing India-U.S. Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA). By easing immediate trade frictions, the agreement creates space to address broader issues such as regulatory cooperation, market access and supply chain under the BTA.

The gains and broader implications

The clearest gains from the tariff reduction are likely to accrue to employment-intensive export sectors, particularly apparel. The U.S. is the world's largest apparel import market, and with Indian exports now facing an 18% tariff, lower than key competitors such as Vietnam and Bangladesh, Indian manufacturers regain price competitiveness in several high-volume categories. Similar dynamics apply to gems and jewellery (where margins are highly sensitive to tariff changes and the U.S. remains a critical destination), as well as to marine products, processed foods, footwear and leather (where even modest tariff moderation materially improves landed costs). A lower tariff will enhance export viability across these sectors and support India's positioning in diversified global supply chains, further encouraging these industries to go for capacity expansion.

On the whole, the reduction in U.S. tariffs on Indian goods immediately enhances India's competitive position relative to several major exporting nations that face higher duties, including China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Brazil, South Africa, Pakistan as well as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries. This competitive positioning builds up India's export sectors and supports the country's long-term goal of becoming a global manufacturing hub.

Beyond immediate economic relief, the deal opens pathways for long-term growth and boosts the overall India-U.S. economic relationship. It encourages joint ventures, technology partnerships and investment in high-value sectors, fostering innovation, employment and

skill development.

For India, it consolidates global economic leadership and strengthens the country's capacity to engage in high-value international partnerships. For the U.S., it highlights the advantages of partnering with India to drive innovation, expand markets and reinforce supply chains. Progress on tariffs supports deeper engagement across regulatory co-operation, digital trade, clean energy and innovation-led sectors. The deal creates a mutually beneficial cycle of growth and opportunity, laying the foundation for collaboration that extends beyond commerce.

From a strategic perspective, closer economic ties complement cooperation in wider forums such as the Quad (India, Australia, Japan, the U.S.) where supply-chain resilience and trusted partnerships are central priorities. A stable trade relationship reinforces these objectives.

From tariffs to trust, a strategic reset in ties

This trade deal is more than a temporary adjustment of tariffs. It restores trust, unlocks economic opportunities and shores up a constructive strategic relationship. The India-U.S. partnership is poised to expand in areas which include technology, defence, energy and high-value manufacturing.

The deal demonstrates how thoughtful negotiation and shared priorities can turn complex challenges into lasting opportunities. It reveals how two democracies, when willing to engage thoughtfully, can craft solutions that serve national interests while advancing global stability. The India-U.S. trade deal is not just an economic milestone. It represents a renewed, balanced and strategic partnership, setting the stage for deeper cooperation and mutual prosperity in the decades ahead.

The India-U.S. trade improves access to the most important export destination, strengthens competitiveness across key sectors and supports the next phase of bilateral economic engagement. With policy momentum in place, the focus now shifts to industry to leverage these opportunities through investment, scale and enhanced competitiveness.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

About Parliament

There are serious concerns about parliamentary functioning and democratic accountability, as the ruckus in Parliament shows. While the Treasury benches have cited "unruly conduct" and procedural rules to highlight the conduct of the Opposition, the core issue remains the government's refusal to address sensitive issues. There are matters of national security that deserve a transparent explanation, not procedural avoidance. Further, the finalisation of the India-U.S. trade deal adds urgency to the need for clarity. Parliament is the forum for debate on issues of national importance. Repeated

adjournments and mass suspensions weaken the spirit of deliberation and risk turning the House into a site of confrontation rather than accountability. A vibrant democracy requires confidence in parliamentary scrutiny. Open debate, not suppression, is the true measure of national strength.

Vidyasagar Reddy Kethiri, Warangal, Telangana

Business in Parliament seems to be a fine example of indiscipline and chaos. Such behaviour only makes one hang one's head in shame. The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha seems to be comfortable with unruly behaviour. The Opposition

has a right to voice its grievances but there are protocols to be observed.

Ashok Jayaram, Bengaluru

The fine print matters
It is only after the dust settles on the India-U.S. trade deal and the fine print is read that India can pat itself on the back for having successfully negotiated with someone like U.S. President Donald Trump (Front page, "U.S. deal will not include sensitive sectors: Goyal", February 4). Mr. Trump is someone who drives a hard bargain. Mr. Trump seems to have already decided that India has agreed to halt oil imports from Russia and would instead purchase oil

from the U.S. and Venezuela. It is strange to have the Indian side maintain a stony silence (Inside pages, "No word on India stopping oil purchases, says Kremlin", February 4). Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal may say that sensitive sectors such as agriculture and dairy are outside the deal but there needs to be confirmation of this by the U.S.

C.V. Aravind, Bengaluru

Corrections & Clarifications

In a report, "Indian, U.S. industry bodies and leaders laud tariff deal" ("Business" page, February 4, 2026), the abbreviation IESA was mistakenly expanded as India Energy Storage Alliance. It should have been India Electronics and Semiconductor Association.

The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-2857347/28576300; E-mail: readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

Leading from the front

Without going into the details of the arguments made by the incumbent Chief Minister of West Bengal, Mamata Banerjee, the first for a sitting Chief Minister in India, in the Supreme Court of India, it is hard to look past the optics of it all. Ms. Banerjee has built her politics and brand TMC around a welfare state that cares for its citizens come what may. With elections round the corner, she did not go to court to

win the case on SIR against the Election Commission of India. She went with the singular objective of convincing the electorate of Bengal, who are indeed facing harassment due to various procedural issues, including surname spellings, that she would leave no stone unturned to secure the well-being of Bengalis. Those behind the ill-advised SIR may have just handed Ms. Banerjee a major boost to her election campaign. Elections in India are also about sentiment and Ms. Banerjee may have cleverly used that.

Argha Mallick, Bengaluru

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the postal address.

From Page One

Khemchand sworn in as new Manipur CM

Speaking with journalists before heading for a Cabinet meeting, the Chief Minister said, "Manipur has 36 communities, and, naturally, we have two Deputy Chief Ministers representing two major communities." He said the Prime Minister, Home Minister Amit Shah, and the BJP's national president Nitin Nabi entrusted him with taking the State forward and ensuring lasting peace.

Mr. Dikho said the new government will try to fulfil the responsibilities given by the Centre. "We will reach out to the people. We will ensure inclusivity and transparency," he said.

Reacting to opposition to the government formation from certain quarters, he said it was expected. "It takes time to get things going," he added.

Two Kuki-Zo MLAs of the BJP – former Director-General of Police L.M. Khaute (Churachandpur seat) and Ngursanglur Sanate (Tipaimukh) – were present during the swearing-in ceremony. They reached Imphal from New Delhi earlier in the day, along with the other Manipur BJP leaders and the party's central observers Sambit Patra and Tarun Chugh.

Ms. Kipgen's swearing-in as one of the two Deputy Chief Ministers was significant, as the Kuki-Zo Council (KZC), Kuki Inpi Manipur (KIM), and other bodies had asked the Kuki-Zo MLAs not to be a part of the government. These bodies want a Union Territory-like separate administration as the condition for the Kuki-Zos to participate in governance.

The KZC warned that any Kuki-Zo MLA who chooses to disregard the "collective decision" by joining the government would do so in their individual capacity and would be "held responsible for any consequences".

The KIM stated that no Kuki-Zo MLA should, under any circumstances, associate with or lend legitimacy to a "so-called popular government that stands in complete disregard of the suffering, aspirations, and political will of the Kuki-Zo people." The ethnic violence had left more than 260 people dead and an estimated 62,000 others internally displaced. A large majority of them are still lodged in relief camps.

Denied phone access, 3 minors jump off balcony

The death of the sisters came to light as residents of the apartments woke up to the cries of their parents. "When we went to their residence on the ninth floor, we found the room adjacent to the balcony locked," said the DCP.

After their parents had gone to bed on Tuesday night, the three sisters allegedly went to the balcony and jumped from it. "In the note that they left behind, they had written that they were not being allowed to watch Shingh, Doraemon, TV serials and felt very lonely," said the officer. The children did not have their own phones but used one of their parent's phone to get online, the DCP said.

"Till now, no link of any Korean task-based game has been found, preliminary investigation suggests the girls were addicted to TV series and social media. However, all angles are being investigated," said the officer.

The girls' father, Chetan Kumar, a businessman, is from the capital's Burari area. He has been living in the Sahibabad area for the past three years with his wives Sujata and Heena, who are sisters, and their five children - four girls and a boy aged 10. "Before this, the family lived in Tilla Mode for eight years. The three sisters last attended Green Valley School, where their academic performance was sub-par," said the officer.

Inside the gated society, several neighbours told *The Hindu* that they only knew the family from a distance. (*Those in distress can reach out to Tele MANAS at 14416 to seek help*)

SC orders SIT to probe bank scam linked to Anil Ambani

Krishnadas Rajagopal

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday said even a willingness to pay up may not save those involved in an alleged bank scam linked to the Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group and its promoter Anil Ambani from criminal prosecution, if the CBI and the ED were able to unearth an intention to "siphon off" public funds.

The court directed the ED to constitute a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the scam, while ordering the CBI to conduct a "fair" probe into the "nexxus, connivance, conspiracy, collusion" among bank officials, authorities, and the managements of the companies.

SC asks if govt. can reconsider Sonam Wangchuk's detention

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked whether the Centre could rethink the detention of climate activist Sonam Wangchuk considering his health condition, while pointing out that he has been in confinement since September 2025, for nearly five months now.

A Bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and P.B. Varale observed that Mr. Wangchuk's health report was not good.

"Considering the health condition of the detainee... The report, which we saw earlier, shows that his health is not that good. Is there a possibility for the government to rethink, or even relook?" the Bench asked Additional Solicitor

SIR is a process of deletion, not inclusion, Bengal CM says in SC

Mamata says she moved the court as a citizen after her letters to EC received no reply, slams poll body for hurried exercise and deletion of names; EC will have to find out solution, every genuine person must remain on electoral roll, CJI tells her

Krishnadas Rajagopal

NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, heading a three-judge Supreme Court Bench, assured West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, standing in the front row of his crowded courtroom on Wednesday, that the Election Commission (EC) cannot "run away" from its constitutional commitment to ensure that "every single genuine citizen" is included in the electoral roll during the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) exercise.

The Chief Minister, who insisted on addressing the Bench, said she had only a "humble request". "Sir, save democracy," Ms. Banerjee urged.

In what may be unprecedented in the annals of the top court, a sitting Chief Minister, who filed a writ petition in her own individual capacity, pushed her way to the front of the courtroom and requested the Bench to allow her to speak for "five minutes".

"May I explain, Sir?"
"May I explain, Sir? I belong to that State," Ms. Ba-



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee leaves the Supreme Court premises on Wednesday. PTI

nerjee addressed the Bench. "Is there any doubt about it, Madam?" Chief Justice Kant assented to her request.

Ms. Banerjee said she had moved the court in her individual capacity as a citizen after her letters to the EC, as the Chief Minister had received no reply.

The Chief Minister said nearly 1.4 crore voters in West Bengal were excluded from the electoral roll for "logical discrepancies". About 50% of them were purged due to minor mismatches or spelling variations in their names.

"EC won't run away"
"For every problem there is a solution. We have to look for the solution so

that no innocent citizen is left out. Every single genuine person must remain on the electoral roll... But may be because of the local dialect or due to the pronunciation, genuine voters are being left out. The EC will have to find out the solution. They will not like to run away from that responsibility. Due to these mistakes, genuine voters must not be excluded," Chief Justice Kant said.

Ms. Banerjee recounted how women who had married and not changed their surnames were ousted from the draft electoral rolls.

Minor mismatches in names or surnames like 'Roy' and 'Ray' were enough for deletion. "The

SIR is a process of deletion and not inclusion," she said.

At one point, the Chief Justice suggested having State officials conversant in the local dialect to help the EC with the names.

"But, Sir, what was the hurry to conduct this exercise after nearly 20 years when elections are near?

Why are they targeting only Bengal? Why did they announce this exercise when people were busy with the festival and harvest seasons... Sir, more than 100 people have died, including booth-level officers... Tell me why Bengal has been targeted, why not Assam?" she persisted.

Senior advocate Shyam Divan, representing Ms. Banerjee, along with senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, for the poet-writer Joy Goswami, said there were over a crore hearings still pending ahead of the February 7

deadlines.

"This would mean 15.5 lakh hearings have to be held in a day. Completing more than one crore hearings before February 7 would be virtually impossible, keeping in mind the logistical challenges," Mr. Divan submitted.

Issuing notice on Ms. Banerjee's petition, the court scheduled the next hearing on February 9.

Three unidentified terrorists killed in J&K, says Army

Peerzada Ashiq

JAMMU

Three terrorists were killed in two separate anti-terror operations in Udhampur and Kishtwar districts in Jammu on Wednesday, the Army said.

Two were neutralised in the Jophar forest area of Basantgarh in Udhampur, where an encounter broke out around 4 p.m. on Tuesday after security forces detected terrorists hiding in a natural cave.

"Contact with terrorists was established yesterday [Tuesday], and since then, they were prevented from breaking contact. Following a calibrated and coordinated response, two terrorists have been successfully neutralised," an Army spokesman said.

The Army said the operation, codenamed Operation Kiya, highlighted inter-agency coordination, tactical precision and high standards of professionalism. "The operation has successfully concluded and the area remains under surveillance," he said.

Later in the day, one more terrorist was killed in an ongoing anti-terror operation in the Chenab Valley's Kishtwar district. "One terrorist has been successfully neutralised. The operation is in progress," the Army said.

Trinamool hails Mamata's SC appearance as 'big win'

Shiv Sahay Singh

KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's appearance before the Supreme Court, where she sought to raise objections to the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR), has come as a major shot in the arm for the Trinamool Congress. The ruling party hailed the development as a "BIG WIN for Hon'ble Chief Minister Smt. @MamataOfficial", and said the Supreme Court directed officials to act with sensitivity.

Photos and videos of the Chief Minister appearing before a Division Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Justice Surya Kant were widely circulated by the party on social media. "Inside the Supreme Court, Mamata Banerjee wore the lawyer's coat, argued with facts, and forced

The party claims that the BJP and EC are harassing people in Bengal and trying to delete genuine voters

accountability," the party posted on social media.

"History is written by those who refuse to stay silent. When democracy is under attack, Didi stands up for Bengal with courage and conviction. Today's fight is not about power, it is about the people," the Trinamool Congress said in another social media message.

Several Trinamool Congress leaders lauded the efforts of the party chairperson in arguing against the SIR before the Supreme Court. The Chief Minister has opposed the SIR since the exercise was held ahead of the Assembly election in Bihar last year.

Between November 2025 and January 2026, she wrote six letters to Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar. Her visit to Delhi is being described as the culmination of the protest against the SIR. Apart from parading those who, according to the party, suffered on account of the SIR, she held a meeting with the CEC alleging mistreatment.

SIR as poll plank

While the SIR is aimed at cleansing the electoral rolls in West Bengal, the exercise has become an election issue in the State. For the Trinamool Congress, which is facing anti-incumbency after three terms, the SIR has emerged as a poll plank. The party says the BJP, in collusion with the Election Commission, is harassing people in the State and attempting to remove genuine voters.

Mamata's visit to SC was part of 'scripted drama', says BJP

The Hindu Bureau

KOLKATA/DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) alleged on Wednesday that West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's appearance before the Supreme Court was aimed at disrupting the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in her State.

Describing Ms. Banerjee's visit to the Supreme Court and the Election Commission as a "scripted drama", BJP leaders said it was a "flop show" as she returned "empty-handed".

Leader of Opposition Suvendu Adhikari, speaking from his Nandigram constituency, accused Ms. Banerjee of declaring "war" on the SIR. "Mamata is doing all this to derail the SIR process and influence votes based on the 2024 voter lists... She tried to stop the SIR process but failed miserably," he said, asserting that if the process was disrupted, West Bengal could face President's rule after May 5.

At a press conference in Delhi, the BJP alleged that booth-level officers (BLOs) were "compelled" to upload false documents during the SIR process under Ms. Banerjee's watch.

State BJP president and Rajya Sabha member Samik Bhattacharya, along with Union Minister Sukanta Majumdar, said the pro-



cess was under way in 12 States, with no uproar anywhere else, except in West Bengal.

"The Trinamool Congress's agenda is clear: Bangladeshi infiltrators and Rohingyas should remain on the West Bengal voter list; names of the deceased, fake voters, and people whose addresses are on vacant land should remain," Mr. Bhattacharya said.

The SIR issue is being raised as the Trinamool Congress knows its "days are numbered", he alleged.

Mr. Majumdar termed Ms. Banerjee's visit to the Supreme Court and the EC part of a "scripted drama" and called her submissions in the court a "complete political speech". He also alleged that errors in the voter data were deliberately introduced by State government employees under Trinamool influence.

SC asks if govt. can reconsider Sonam Wangchuk's detention

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked whether the Centre could rethink the detention of climate activist Sonam Wangchuk considering his health condition, while pointing out that he has been in confinement since September 2025, for nearly five months now.

A Bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and P.B. Varale observed that Mr. Wangchuk's health report was not good.

"Considering the health condition of the detainee... The report, which we saw earlier, shows that his health is not that good. Is there a possibility for the government to rethink, or even relook?" the Bench asked Additional Solicitor

group of persons... That is more than sufficient," Mr. Nataraj argued. The law officer contended that the order of Mr. Wangchuk's detention was approved on October 3, 2025, and there was no challenge to the approval order.

Mr. Wangchuk was detained under the National Security Act (NSA) on September 26, 2025, two days after violent protests demanding Statehood and Sixth Schedule status for Ladakh.

The top court was hearing a plea filed by Mr. Wangchuk's wife Gitanjali Angmo against his detention under the stringent NSA. The NSA empowers the Centre and States to detain individuals to prevent them from acting in a manner "prejudicial to the defence of India".

Ladakh leaders press for Statehood; talks with Home Ministry remain inconclusive

Vijaita Singh

NEW DELHI

The talks between the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and Ladakh civil society leaders, being held after over three months, remained inconclusive, said Chering Dorjay Lakruk, co-convenor of the Leh Apex Body (LAB). The October 22, 2025, draft proposal submitted by the group regarding Statehood and inclusion of Ladakh under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, thus giving it a tribal status, was discussed at the meeting.

The leaders also demanded the unconditional release of climate activist Sonam Wangchuk and others who were detained after the September 24, 2025, violence in Leh city, where four persons were killed, and several were injured.

The LAB and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), which have been spearheading the movement for constitutional safeguards in the Union Territory, were called to New Delhi on Wednesday to participate in the meeting and insisted on strengthening the hill councils.

The meeting continued for three hours, but the MHA officials only offered safeguards available under Article 371 of the Constitution and insisted on strengthening the hill councils.

Article 371 deals with "Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions", and exists under Part XXI of the Constitution. It is currently applicable in 12 States.

"The results of the meeting were not satisfactory. We went with a positive outlook but it was not up to our expectations," said Asgar Karbalai, Co-Chairman, KDA.

Mr. Lakruk added that they were hopeful that the MHA would call for another meeting in the next 15-20 days. "The issue of detention of Sonam Wangchuk and others is dear to the people of Ladakh. The cases registered against them are illegal. We forcefully demanded the release of all of them and pressed for the withdrawal of cas-

es," he said.

Additional Solicitor

General

Additional Solicitor

</div

Rahul, Bittu trade barbs over Minister's party exit

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A sharp exchange of words between Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Minister of State for Railways Ravneet Singh Bittu escalated into a row on Wednesday, prompting BJP-led Sikh groups to protest outside the Congress office here.

The confrontation took place near Parliament's "Makar Dwar", where Congress MPs were protesting the suspension of Opposition MPs from the Lok Sabha the previous day.

As Mr. Bittu was walking past the protesting MPs, Mr. Gandhi reportedly said, "Hera is a traitor" – referring to Mr. Bittu's switch from the Congress to the BJP ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Extending his hand for a handshake, Mr. Gandhi said, "Hello brother, my traitor friend. Don't worry, you will come back (to the Congress)." To this, Mr. Bittu responded by calling him "Desh ka dushman" (enemy of the country).

Voces were raised as Mr. Bittu climbed the stairs leading into Parliament. Speaking to presspersons, he alleged that there was an attempt to manhandle him.

Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri later held a press conference, decrying Mr. Gandhi's "traitor" remark. He described it as "a slur on every Sikh".

Congress MLA Sukpal Singh Khaira accused the BJP of conflating the criticism of Mr. Bittu to an insult to the community.

High drama in Lok Sabha; PM's speech delayed amid ruckus

Congress plans to allow Modi to reply only after Rahul gets to speak; party members protest BJP MP's 'disruptive' reading from books making allegations against Nehru, Indira Gandhi; Congress to frame joint strategy with other Opposition parties

Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha had to be adjourned for the day amid high drama on Wednesday as women MPs from Opposition parties walked across the aisle and held up banners in front of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's front-row seat ahead of his customary reply to the debate on the President's Address. They were protesting against a BJP MP's allegations against former Congress PMs.

Mr. Modi was not present but BJP MP Sandhya Rai, who was presiding over the proceedings as the chairperson, adjourned the House.

The Prime Minister had been scheduled to reply around 5 p.m. to the discussion on the Motion thanking President Droupadi Murmu for her Address to the joint sitting of Parliament.

The Congress later hinted that it would allow the Prime Minister to speak only when the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, was permitted to speak.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Gandhi, who had brought a copy of former Army chief Manoj Mukund Naravane's "unreleased memoir" to claim that the Prime Minister had shed responsibility during the India-China conflict in 2020, had dared Mr. Modi



Vocal protests: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with suspended Lok Sabha members and others during a protest outside the Parliament complex on Wednesday. ANI

to come to the House.

"I don't think the Prime Minister would have the guts to come to the Lok Sabha today, because if he comes, I will go physically and hand him this book," Mr. Gandhi told presspersons in the Parliament complex, displaying a copy of the retired General's memoir, *Four Stars of Destiny*.

On Monday, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla had prevented Mr. Gandhi from quoting excerpts from the book on the grounds that it had not been officially published.

'Slanderous allegations' Around 2 p.m. on Wednesday, the House witnessed dramatic scenes when BJP

MP Nishikant Dubey, participating in the debate on the Motion of Thanks, read out from books such as *Edwina and Nehru* and *Mitrokhin Archives* on the floor of the Lok Sabha to make slanderous allegations against former Prime Ministers Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi.

Congress members trooped into the Well and charged towards the BJP even as Krishna Prasad Tenneti, the Telugu Desam Party MP who was presiding over the proceedings, urged Mr. Dubey not to quote from any book.

Mr. Tenneti cited Rule 349 – which bars members from reading from any book, newspaper or letter,

except in connection with the business of the House – in a bid to stop Mr. Dubey but it had little effect. The BJP MP went on for nearly three minutes without his microphone being muted.

'Deliberate disruption' Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, speaking to presspersons outside the House, alleged that whenever the government wanted to disrupt the proceedings, it fielded Mr. Dubey.

"You get to speak during Zero Hour through ballot. While we are waiting for our chance to speak, he gets Zero Hour almost daily. So, when the government wants disruption, he

gets up," Ms. Vadra said. "A rule is cited when the LoP wants to speak but this *maharaj* [Mr. Dubey] could show as many as six books. This is an insult to democracy, Parliament and even the Honourable Speaker."

After the House was adjourned until 5 p.m., Congress members met Mr. Birla in his chamber, questioning the Chair's decision to allow Mr. Dubey and demanding action against him. By late evening, the Speaker's office had expunged many of the objectionable remarks from the House records.

"The LoP's microphone was switched off in 30 seconds, while Nishikant Dubey spoke for nearly five minutes. This is clear double standard by the government," said Congress MP K.C. Venugopal.

In the evening, floor leaders of the Congress met at party president Mallikarjun Kharge's residence and decided to formulate a joint strategy with other Opposition parties at a meeting on Thursday morning.

After the meeting, Congress communications chief Jairam Ramesh cited a precedent from June 10, 2004, when the BJP, then in the Opposition, did not allow then-Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to reply to the Motion of Thanks. He hinted that the current logjam will continue till Mr. Gandhi is allowed to speak.

Will notify questions on caste for Census as per norms: govt.

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry informed the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday that the questions on caste for the Census would be notified before the commencement of the second phase of the Census operation.

The questions, including on caste, for the second phase would be finalised and notified as per established procedure, Minister of State for Home Nitayand Rai said in a written reply.

Responding to a question by Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam member Rajathi



The final questionnaire for caste enumeration is likely only in September. R.V. MOORTHY

conducted in two phases. In the first phase, i.e., the House Listing Operation (HLO), information regarding housing conditions, assets, amenities, etc., of each household is collected.

In the second phase, especially Tamil Nadu, recommending consultations with the States before finalising the guidelines for enumerating castes, the reply stated. The Government of India has notified (on January 22, 2026) the questions for the first phase. Questions for the second phase, including the questions on caste, will be notified before the commencement of the second phase of the Census operation," the reply said.

As reported by *The Hindu*, the final questionnaire for caste enumeration is likely to be known only in September, when the second phase of the population Census 2027 will be carried out in Ladakh and the snow-bound areas of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, ahead of the rest of the country.

Agriculture and dairy sectors protected in India-U.S. trade deal, Goyal tells Parliament

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on Wednesday told Parliament that the government had been successful in protecting the Indian agriculture and dairy sectors in the India-U.S. trade deal.

Making a statement in both Houses of Parliament, Mr. Goyal said the deal would help make India self-reliant, and added that the labour-intensive sectors would receive a major boost in exports following the reduction in tariffs to 18%, which were earlier pegged at 50%.

The tariffs on India are among the lowest compared with its competitor nations, the Union Minis-

QQ The deal [with the U.S.] will help promote initiatives like 'Make in India' and 'Design in India'; and will make India self-reliant... deal will open huge opportunities for skilled Indians and MSMEs

PIYUSH GOYAL
Union Commerce Minister

ter said in the Lok Sabha. "India has been successful in protecting the agricultural and dairy sectors," he said, adding that the deal would help promote initiatives such as "Make in India" and "Design in India", and would make India self-reliant. He said the deal would open huge opportunities for skilled Indians and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

He said both sides were working to complete the technical processes, and it would be announced soon. He added that ensuring energy security for Indians was the top priority of the government.

National interest Observing that India needed goods from sectors such as aviation and nuclear energy, and the U.S. was a

major player in these segments, he said the deal was in the national interest.

Throughout Mr. Goyal's statement in the Lok Sabha, the Opposition continued to protest on the issue of the stand-off with China in 2020 and the unpublished memoir of former Army chief M.M. Naravane. The Minister later posted on social media platform X, "Today in the Lok Sabha, I was scheduled to deliver a statement regarding the India-U.S. Trade Deal. However, when the government came prepared to provide a factual clarification on the subject, the Opposition began creating a ruckus.

Consequently, I am releasing my full statement here for everyone's benefit."

In the Rajya Sabha, soon after he made his statement, the Opposition members sought clarifications. Though Chairman C.P. Radhakrishnan called senior Congress member Jairam Ramesh, he could not speak as other members also stood up.

Later, Mr. Radhakrishnan, citing Rules, said questions cannot be asked considering the sensitivity of the matter.

Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam leader Tiruchi Siva and CPI(M) member John Brittas questioned the decision to disallow clarifications. Mr. Ramesh, however, was not allowed to speak. Mr. Radhakrishnan later said since there was no decorum, Mr. Ramesh could not be called.

Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam leader Tiruchi Siva and CPI(M) member John Brittas questioned the decision to disallow clarifications. Mr. Ramesh, however, was not allowed to speak. Mr. Radhakrishnan later said since there was no decorum, Mr. Ramesh could not be called.

The meetings came two days after a call between U.S. President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, after which they announced a reduction in U.S. tariffs on Indian goods to 18%, and the cancellation of 25% penalty tariffs for the purchase of Russian oil.

The Centre has come under sharp criticism from the Opposition over the lack of transparency and scant details of the India-U.S. trade deal, and in particular the U.S. government's statement that India has agreed to "stop buying" Russian oil, cut tariffs for most U.S. goods to zero, give U.S. agricultural products market access, and commit \$500 billion for investments and purchases of American goods.

In a social media post, Mr. Jaishankar said that the President's Address was silent on social justice, social harmony, attack on constitutional institutions, the economy, the struggles of farmers and labourers, and shortfalls in foreign policy. He said democratic institutions, including Parliament, are being neglected.

Mr. Nadda said the President's Address was not a report card but a road map of developed India.

Jaishankar, Rubio welcome trade deal, discuss critical minerals, Quad cooperation

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Welcoming the trade deal, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent in Washington on Wednesday, where both sides agreed to "formalise" cooperation on critical minerals, and take forward their economic partnership.

The meetings came two days after a call between U.S. President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, after which they announced a reduction in U.S. tariffs on Indian goods to 18%, and the cancellation of 25% penalty tariffs for the purchase of Russian oil.

The Centre has come under sharp criticism from the Opposition over the lack of transparency and scant details of the India-U.S. trade deal, and in particular the U.S. government's statement that India has agreed to "stop buying" Russian oil, cut tariffs for most U.S. goods to zero, give U.S. agricultural products market access, and commit \$500 billion for investments and purchases of American goods.

In a social media post, Mr. Jaishankar said that the President's Address was silent on social justice, social harmony, attack on constitutional institutions, the economy, the struggles of farmers and labourers, and shortfalls in foreign policy. He said democratic institutions, including Parliament, are being neglected.

Mr. Nadda said the President's Address was not a report card but a road map of developed India.

Hand in hand: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Washington. AP

tion in November 2024, is seen as a move to reset ties, and pick up the engagements that were sidelined in 2025, particularly on the Quad and Indo-Pacific cooperation, and critical minerals and semiconductor technology. India is expected to be invited to join the U.S.-led Pax Silica Initiative launched in December 2025, U.S. Ambassador to India Sergio Gor had announced in January.

India will host the Artificial Intelligence Impact Summit later in February, where a high-level U.S. delegation is expected. Meanwhile, the government still hopes to host the Quad summit this year, which it was unable to do in 2025. Mr. Jaishankar discussed Quad cooperation with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who has thus far not visited India.

Secretary Rubio and Minister Jaishankar concluded their meeting by expressing their commitment to expanding bilateral and multilateral cooperation through the Quad. They acknowledged that a prosperous Indo-Pacific region remains vital to advancing our shared interests," the U.S. State Department said.

Minister's statement lacks substance and clarity, says Congress

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday said the statement on the India-U.S. trade agreement made by Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal in Parliament lacked substance and clarity.

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh described it as a "non-statement", arguing that it offered no concrete details as negotiations were still under way. "Piyush Goyal's high-sounding claims go completely contrary to what the U.S. President, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, and the U.S.

Kharge warns Centre of farm protests against deal with U.S.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday warned the Centre of massive farmers' protests against the India-U.S. trade deal, saying it would meet the same fate as the three farm laws that the Centre had to withdraw in 2021.

Speaking on the Motion of Thanks to President Droupadi Murmu for her Address to the joint session of Parliament, Mr. Kharge said the government would be forced to roll back the deal if it went ahead. Leader of the House and Union Minister J.P. Nadda countered the charge, citing

Trade Representative have put out in their names on social media. It is 100% clear that Monday's announcement of the deal at the urging of Prime Minister was for grabbing headlines – nothing more, nothing else," Mr. Ramesh said in a post on X.

His Rajya Sabha colleague Randeep Singh Surjewala said it was "deeply disturbing" that details of the agreement were disclosed by U.S. officials. He also raised concerns over reported commitments to reduce tariffs on agricultural products and to import American goods worth \$500 billion.

that the deal was signed. Quoting U.S. Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins, Mr. Kharge said American farmers would benefit from the deal. "Are you working for the welfare of farmers, or are you against the farmers?" he asked.

Mr. Kharge said that the President's Address was silent on social justice, social harmony, attack on constitutional institutions, the economy, the struggles of farmers and labourers, and shortfalls in foreign policy. He said democratic institutions, including Parliament, are being neglected.

Mr. Nadda said the President's Address was not a report card but a road map of developed India.

In a social media post, Mr. Jaishankar said that he had held a "wide-ranging conversation" with Mr. Rubio, and that discussions included "trade, energy, nuclear, defence, critical minerals and technology". "[We] agreed on the early meetings of various mechanisms to advance our shared interests," he said, though the two leaders did not take any questions from the media.

Mr. Jaishankar's visit to Washington, his seventh since Mr. Trump's re-election, conducted in two phases. In the first phase, i.e., the House Listing Operation (HLO), information regarding housing conditions, assets, amenities, etc., of each household is collected. In the second phase, especially Tamil Nadu, recommending consultations with the States before finalising the guidelines for enumerating castes, the reply stated. The Government of India has notified (on January 22, 2026) the questions for the first phase. Questions for the second phase, including the questions on caste, will be notified before the commencement of the second phase of the Census operation," the reply said.

As reported by *The Hindu*, the final questionnaire for caste enumeration is likely to be known only in September, when the second phase of the population Census 2027 will be carried out in Ladakh and the snow-bound areas of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, ahead of the rest of the country.

conducted in two phases. In the first phase, i.e., the House Listing Operation (HLO), information regarding housing conditions, assets, amenities, etc., of each household is collected.

In the second phase, especially Tamil Nadu, recommending consultations with the States before finalising the guidelines for enumerating castes, the reply stated. The Government of India has notified (on January 22, 2026) the questions for the first phase. Questions for the second phase, including the questions on caste, will be notified before the commencement of the second phase of the Census operation," the reply said.

As reported by *The Hindu*, the final questionnaire for caste enumeration is likely to be known only in September, when the second phase of the population Census 2027 will be carried out in Ladakh and the snow-bound areas of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, ahead of the rest of the country.

IN BRIEF



Turkish Airlines plane makes emergency landing in Kolkata

A Turkish Airlines flight from Kathmandu to Istanbul was forced to divert to Kolkata under emergency conditions after it reported failure of one of its engines. The airline in a statement said the flight landed safely in Kolkata, where it is undergoing necessary inspections. The airline arranged an alternative flight for its passengers. "The flight declared PAN PAN, an international radio distress signal, due to the right engine on fire and requested to divert to Kolkata at 1.38 p.m. with one engine failure," the Civil Aviation Ministry said in a statement.

Modi to discuss ties during two-day visit to Malaysia

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will pay an official visit to Malaysia on February 7 and 8, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Wednesday. The Prime Minister would hold discussions with Anwar Ibrahim, Prime Minister of Malaysia, and representatives of the Indian community in Kuala Lumpur. The upcoming visit would be the third visit of Mr. Modi to Malaysia and the first since bilateral relations were elevated to a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" in August 2024. "India and Malaysia share long-standing bonds of friendship, based on historical, civilisational and cultural connections," the Ministry said. The upcoming visit would cover discussions on trade and investment, defence, security and maritime cooperation, education, and tourism.

Denotified tribes seek constitutional recognition, separate Census entry

Denotified tribes, nomadic tribes, semi-nomadic tribes seek 'separate column' in 2027 caste census, claiming they have been politically misclassified among SC, ST, OBC groups; they want sub-classification to highlight backwardness within grouping

Abhinav Lakshman
NEW DELHI

Denotified tribes, nomadic tribes, and semi-nomadic tribes across the country are coming together to push for a "separate column" for themselves in Census 2027. Their demand is for constitutional recognition of the denotified tribes in a Schedule, on a par with the existing classifications of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/STs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

In February 2027, India will conduct a caste enumeration for the first time since 1931. Five years after that 1931 Census, the origins of the Scheduled Castes list came into being in the form of the Government of India (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1936.

Half a century earlier, in 1871, a colonial law had classified entire communities, particularly nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes, as "criminals". After the law was repealed in 1952, these groups came to be known as "denotified" tribes.

The Social Justice Ministry has now recommended

Count the uncounted

Denotified tribes seek 'separate column' and formal identity after decades of misclassification

Classification & numbers

- They were labelled 'criminal tribes' under the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871
- The Act was repealed in 1952, after which these communities were denotified
- The previous National Commission identified nearly 1,200 communities
- Nearly 267 communities remain outside the SC, ST, and OBC lists
- Estimates suggest up to 7 crore people in Uttar Pradesh alone
- Separate Census column for denotified tribes
- Dedicated Constitutional Schedule
- Sub-classification to reflect graded backwardness within communities



Key demands

- Separate Census column for denotified tribes
- Dedicated Constitutional Schedule
- Sub-classification to reflect graded backwardness within communities

to the Office of the Registrar-General of India that these denotified, nomadic, and semi-nomadic tribes be included in the Census. The Office of the RGI has agreed to include them in next year's caste enumeration exercise, Ministry officials assured community leaders in North India in a virtual meeting on January 30.

'Separate column'

"But we have no idea how they will do this," B.K. Lodhi, a community organiser in Uttar Pradesh who was at the meeting, told *The Hindu*. "If we are not counted in a separate column, a separate code, in

the Census forms, we will be lost once again," said Balak Ram Sansi, 63, a Karna-based organiser with the All India Denotified Nomadic Tribes Development Council.

Even as leaders from denotified, nomadic, and semi-nomadic communities across Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, and other parts of North India are fighting to have their own Schedule, some leaders have started to stress the importance of recognising "graded backwardness" within this grouping as well.

They want the demand for sub-classification to go hand in hand with that for

a separate Schedule. These leaders, like Dr. Lodhi, are drawing their arguments from an August 2024 judgment, in which the Supreme Court paved the way for sub-classification of SCs and STs.

Denotified tribes

The Criminal Tribes Act was first enacted in 1871 and then amended in 1924, before being officially repealed on August 31, 1952. The 1871 Act said it was for the "registration, surveillance and control of certain criminal tribes and eunuchs", describing "criminal tribes" as "tribe, gang, or class of persons" that are "addicted" to committing non-bailable offences. "These communities were among the first to confront the British and sustained the struggle. That is why the colonial government classified us as 'criminal tribes,'" Mr. Sansi said.

The previous National Commission for Denotified Tribes, headed by Bhiku Ramji Idate, identified 1,200 such tribes, most of which have been assimilated in the SC, ST, or OBC classifications over the past seven decades. In its 2017 report, however, the Idate

Commission listed 267 DNT communities that have not been classified as such. Dr. Lodhi, who served as Deputy Secretary and Director (Research) to the Idate Commission, said, "Most of the DNTs have been amalgamated in the SC, ST, OBC lists and they are not able to compete in these categories because of how marginalised they are."

Mr. Sansi said it was "politics" that led to the DNT communities being "misclassified".

No caste certificates

Despite schemes for DNTs run by both the State and the Centre, such as the SEED scheme, only a "minuscule" percentage of people are getting benefits, mainly because governments are not willing to issue DNT certificates, the leaders said.

The Social Justice Ministry has only spent ₹69.3 crore on the SEED scheme in the past five years (as of December 2025), compared to the planned expenditure of ₹200 crore. "The reason for this is that no State is issuing proper DNT community certificates for us despite reminders from the Centre," Dr. Lodhi said.

Cooperative cab service Bharat Taxi's launch today

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Union Minister for Home Affairs and Cooperation Amit Shah will launch India's first cooperative-based ride-hailing platform, Bharat Taxi, on Thursday.

Bharat Taxi has been conceptualised as a transformative initiative in the mobility sector, placing drivers – referred to as *sarathis* (charioteers) – at the centre of ownership, operations, and value creation, thereby freeing them from exploitative aggregator-based models, a statement by the Cooperation Ministry said.

Each honoured *sarathi* will be provided with a personal accident insurance cover of ₹5 lakh and family health insurance cover of ₹5 lakh, reflecting Bharat Taxi's commitment to driver welfare and long-term social security, the Ministry said. On the occasion, nine memoranda of understanding (MoUs) will be exchanged with key public and private stakeholders.

Bharat Taxi aims to expand to all States and cities across the country in the next two years.

A sociologist with rigorous scholarship who laid emphasis on importance of fieldwork

Nistula Hebbal
NEW DELHI

Renowned Indian sociologist and writer Andre Beteille died from age-related illness at his residence in New Delhi on Tuesday. He was 91.

The passing away of Professor Beteille, one of India's foremost scholars, brought forth a rush of tributes from colleagues and former students, amid a realisation that it also marks the passing of a particular way of scholarship and of a practitioner of teaching as a vocation.

Anyone entering the Delhi School of Economics (DSE) for a Master's degree in sociology, for which the institution is justly famous, could not help but be aware of the village of Sripuram in Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu, the site of Professor Beteille's field-



ANDRE BETEILLE (1934-2026)

work for his work *Caste, Class and Power* on agrarian relations and shifting power structures in India. It was a work that perhaps gave many graduate students, hailing from different strands of social classes, a taste of not just the complexity but also the structural nature of social categories and how they interact.

One entered "D'School", as the DSE is referred to, with an aware-

ness of Professor Beteille's rigorous scholarship and his emphasis on the importance of fieldwork; once there, his commitment to teaching – mercifully jargon-free and disciplined – was the next experience with him.

Born in Chandannagar, West Bengal, in 1934 to a French father and Bengali mother, he could read three languages fluently – English, French, and Bengali. The books and papers

that he wrote, including *Inequality and Social Change, Studies in Agrarian Social Structure and Society and Politics in India: Essays in a Comparative Perspective*, attest to his rigorous scholarship.

It is as a teacher, however, that his legions of students remember him. Speaking to *The Hindu*, his former colleague Virginius Xaxa said he too acknowledges Professor Beteille as an "undisclosed mentor" to him, in guiding him, through affable nudges (the two had offices next to each other on the DSE campus) towards the study of tribal societies in India, for which Professor Xaxa is known for. "He was a teacher par excellence, not just in terms of style and canvas of his knowledge, but also as an ethical person in terms of responsibility to students," he said.

His scholarly work is still part of academic curricula in courses on Indian sociology.

While he was accorded the Padma Bhushan in 2005 for his contributions to literature and education, his legions of students give a more lasting account of his career.

Indian cities could see far higher temperature rise than projected, says study

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

Climate models may be underestimating – by anything from half to two degrees – how much hotter India's non-metropolitan cities can get from global warming relative to rural areas, according to a study published on Wednesday.

The researchers, from the University of East Anglia in the United Kingdom, analysed how temperatures would rise in 104 "medium-sized" cities in tropical and sub-tropical regions under a 2 degrees Celsius warming scenario, the emissions path that the globe is currently on. Rather than asking how hot regions become on average, the study asks a different question: how much faster do cities warm than their



Study includes 18 Indian cities, and finds that all of them warm faster than nearby rural areas.

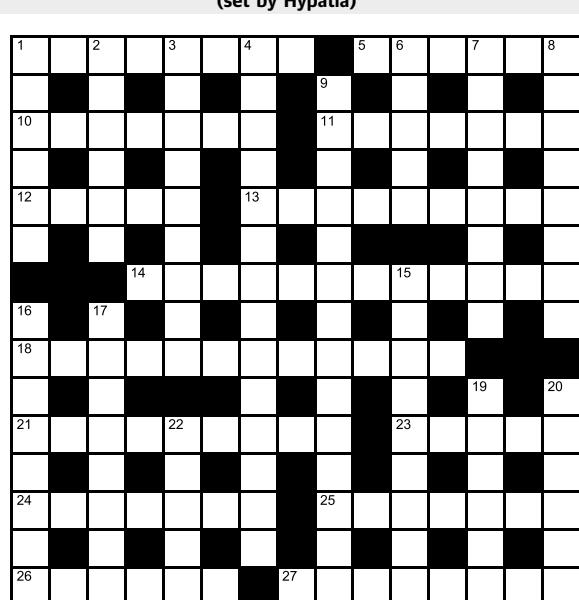
ments predict a 2 degrees Celsius temperature rise in Patiala, the rise would actually be 4 degrees Celsius when urban heat-island effects are accounted for. An extra 2 degrees Celsius rise in temperature can have significant implications for susceptibility to heat strokes, water availability, and public expenditure on cooling.

Urban heat-island effect
The study found that in Patiala, Punjab, land surface temperatures could rise at double the rate of warming projected by global climate models in comparison to its surrounding rural region – an extreme "outlier." This means that if the models used in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's assess-

THE CROSSWORD

14709

(set by Hypatia)



Across

- 1 Bounce back and run moving two steps ahead in one's network? (8)
- 5 Scatters bouquets (6)
- 10 Casually pick American or Japanese fish (3,4)
- 11 Italian dish oddly thrown out from trains to station (7)
- 12 On retirement British Indian owns title (5)

- 22 Think of love and ache (5)

Down

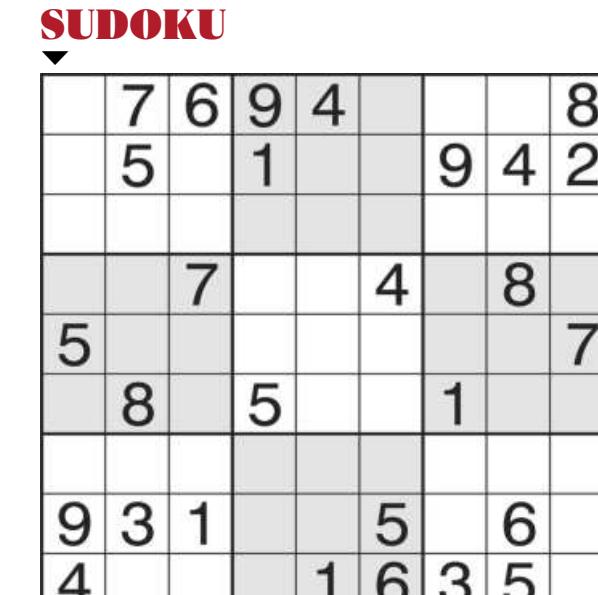
- 1 Sportingly unconventional anorak is heavily hooded (6)
- 2 Saw bag leaving New England initially (6)
- 3 Cold barren ground rarely cleared out for fruit (9)
- 4 Dull as an algebra class having no equations? (14)
- 5 Sitter of a puzzle (5)
- 7 Fine old cat struggling to lift tail up in unexpected disaster (3,2,3)
- 8 Dull student in reasonable fast track? Just the opposite (4,4)
- 9 Having turned, in effect, car crashing and speeding, for instance (7,7)
- 13 Made U-turn right inside secure defence tower (3,6)
- 16 Article of flower put up in holy shrine (8)
- 17 Coaches drop international football official returning to shift (8)
- 19 Basically any nation's traditional hymn expressed musically! (6)
- 20 Registers after time and irritates (6)
- 21 Sporting unconventional anorak is heavily hooded (6)
- 22 Think of love and ache (5)

Solve this puzzle online and access more puzzles at <https://thehindu.com/crosswords>

SCAN TO PLAY

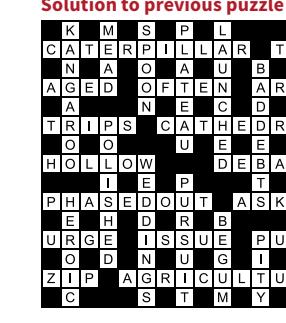


SUDOKU

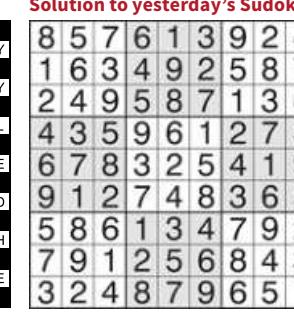


DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku



FAITH

Sikkal Singaravelan

The town of Sikkal is located on the road from Nagapattinam to Thiruvananthapuram. Although everyone refers to the temple here as the Sikkal Murugan temple, it is in fact a Siva temple. It was built by King Kochengottan. Lord Siva here is known as Navaneetheswaran. He is also called Vennai Perumal. Ambal in this temple is known as Vel Nedumkanji. Murugan in this temple goes by the name of Singaravelan, said Desa Mangayarkkarasi in a discourse.

When Murugan was about to leave Kailasa to fight Sooran, He had the following 11 weapons: sword, goad, pestle, vajra, flag, bow, arrow, bell, lotus, staff and axe. The twelfth hand held no weapon. The celestials were afraid that Murugan might assume the *abhaya* or *varada* mudras in this hand. The *abhaya* hasta offers protection. The *varada* hasta gives boons. They were concerned that Murugan might adopt one of these mudras, in which case, He might either pardon the asuras or even go to the extent of giving them boons. But Siva prepared a special weapon for the twelfth hand. He gathered together all the saktis in the world, and made a spear. He then gave this spear (*vel*) to Parvati, and asked Her to bless it and give it to Murugan. Parvati Devi infused the spear with Her sakti, and this, of course, is the main sakti in the spear. She then handed over the *vel* to Murugan. This handing over of the *vel* took place in Sikkal. Even today, the spear giving is celebrated in a grand manner in the Sikkal temple. The idol of Murugan is seen sweating during the handing over of the spear. The priest keeps wiping the sweat that pours from His forehead. Murugan's excitement at going out to fight causes the sweating.

ISLAMABAD

Almost 200 separatists killed after attacks in Pakistan, says official



Pakistan's security forces have killed almost 200 separatists in southwestern Balochistan province since they launched a wave of attacks over the weekend, a security official said on Wednesday, taking the overall death toll past 250. He added that at least 36 civilians and 22 security personnel were also killed. AFP

WASHINGTON

Donald Trump is turning U.S. into an authoritarian state, warns HRW



Human Rights Watch warned on Wednesday that President Donald Trump was turning the United States into an authoritarian state as democracy declines globally to its lowest ebb in four decades. Mr. Trump's return to the White House has intensified a "downward spiral" on human rights, the group said in its annual report. AFP

JOS

Gunmen kill at least 162 people in Nigeria's Kwara state in new attack



Gunmen killed at least 162 people in Nigeria's Kwara state in one of the deadliest attacks in the country in recent months, a Red Cross official said on Wednesday. The attack in the west-central state came after the military recently carried out operations in the area against what it called "terrorist elements". AFP

BEIJING

Xi calls for 'mutual respect' in Trump call, issues Taiwan warning



Chinese leader Xi Jinping called on Wednesday for "mutual respect" in strengthening relations with the United States, warning President Donald Trump in a phone call to use "caution" when selling arms to Taiwan, Beijing's state media reported. Mr. Xi also expressed the hope that bilateral issues could be resolved amicably. AFP

U.S., Iran confirm talks amid flare-up over drone downing

Tehran says it is ready to hold talks with U.S.; White House confirms Steve Witkoff would meet Iranian officials later this week; U.S. military said it shot down an Iranian drone in the Arabian Sea

Stanly Johny

Iran's Foreign Ministry on Wednesday said preparations were completed for holding talks with the U.S. in the coming days, hours after the U.S. military said it had shot down an Iranian drone that approached its aircraft carrier *USS Abraham Lincoln* in the Arabian Sea. U.S. President Donald Trump also said in Washington that his administration is "negotiating" with Tehran.

"Planning [for the talks] has already been carried out and that details on the venue will be announced once finalised," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei said on Wednesday, according to state-owned *Press TV*.

Mr. Trump, while speaking to presspersons at the White House on Tuesday, said: "[The talks] are all over. But they are negotiating. They'd like to do something, and we'll see if something is going to be done... They had a chance to do something a while



An anti-U.S. billboard displayed on a building in Tehran's Valiasr Square on Wednesday. AFP

ago, and it didn't work out, and we did (Operation) Midnight Hammer," he said, referring to the U.S. strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities in June 2025. "I don't think they want that happening again, but they would like to negotiate."

White House spokesperson Karoline Leavitt said Mr. Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff is set to have talks with Iranian officials later this week.

While the U.S., along with threats and troop mobilisation, signalled a readiness for diplomacy, Iran reciprocated with diplomatic

down, said Capt. Tim Hawkins, spokesperson for the U.S. Central Command.

In a separate incident, two Iranian boats, accompanied by a Mohajer surveillance drone, tried to seize a U.S.-flagged tanker near the Strait of Hormuz. A U.S. guided missile destroyer escorted M/V *Stena Imperative* to safety "with defensive air support from the U.S. Air Force," said Capt. Hawkins.

Iran's *Fars* news agency carried a report on Tuesday, saying the primary mission of the drones was "monitoring all military movements in areas adjacent to the Islamic Republic". The Shahed-129 drone was conducting its routine and legal mission of reconnaissance, monitoring, and imaging in international waters. This is considered a standard and lawful procedure," said a report in *Tasnim*, another semi-official news agency. "The drone successfully transmitted its surveillance and reconnaissance footage to the command centre."

Israeli strikes kill 21 in Gaza, including infants

Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH

Israeli strikes pounded Gaza on Wednesday, killing at least 21 Palestinians, including two infants, and further rocking a fragile ceasefire deal, hospital offi-

cials said. Israel said it was responding to a militant attack on Israeli soldiers that seriously wounded one.

Deadly Israeli strikes have repeatedly punctuated the truce since it came into effect on October 10, and the escalating Palesti-

nian toll has made many in Gaza say it feels like the war is continuing unabated. Among the Palestinians killed on Wednesday were five children, seven women and an on-duty paramedic, according to hospital officials.

Israel strongly denies accusations that it is committing genocide in Gaza.

A total of 556 Palestinians have been killed by Israel and 1,500 wounded since the ceasefire went into effect, according to Gaza health officials.

Talks with Russia 'substantive and productive', says Ukraine

Agence France-Presse

ABU DHABI

A first day of talks between Ukraine, Russia and the United States seeking to broker an end to the war in Ukraine concluded on Wednesday in Abu Dhabi with Kyiv describing the negotiations as "substantive and productive".

While there was no apparent breakthrough in the most recent round of discussions, the negotiations were set to carry on into a second day, Kyiv said.

The U.S.-mediated talks are the latest in a flurry of diplomacy that has so far failed to strike a deal to halt the war, unleashed by Russia's February 2022 invasion.

The war has spiralled into Europe's deadliest conflict since the Second World War, with hundreds of thousands killed, millions forced to flee their



Rustem Umerov

homes in Ukraine and much of the eastern and southern part of the country decimated.

The talks were going on Wednesday as stepped-up Russian strikes on Ukraine's power infrastructure left Kyiv residents in darkness and cold, with temperatures dropping as low as -20 degrees Celsius.

But though the massive barrage threatened to overshadow progress, Ukraine's top negotiator Rustem Umerov said the talks the first day were "substan-

tive and productive, focused on concrete steps and practical solutions".

As talks got under way, the Kremlin repeated its hardline demand that Kyiv give in if it wanted the four-year invasion to end.

"Our position is well known," Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told presspersons on Wednesday.

"Until the Kyiv regime makes the appropriate decisions, the special military operation continues," he said.

The main sticking point in settling the conflict is the long-term fate of territory in eastern Ukraine.

Moscow is demanding that Kyiv pull its troops out of swathes of the Donbas, as a precondition of any deal.

It also wants international recognition that land seized in the invasion belongs to Russia.

Board of Secondary Education Rajasthan, Ajmer

Open tender for printing and supply of security based pre-printed computer stationery for Board are invited through e-procurement from the reputed firms. Estimated value Rs. 60 Lakh. Last date of submission of bid is 18/02/2026 till 04.00 pm. Details of tender document is available on www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in and www.sppr.rajasthan.gov.in. UBN: SEB2526WSOB00032

Secretary

Office of Managing Director, Bureau for Facilitating MSMEs of Tamil Nadu (FaMeTN)

MSME Department, Government of Tamil Nadu

1st Floor, SIDCO Corporate Office Building, Thiru Vi Ka Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai-600032

The following tender proposal may be published in an English daily and a Tamil daily.

S. No.	Tendering Authority & Bid Submission Portal, Date of Issue and Bid Due Date (BDD) and time	Subject of Request for Proposal (RFP)
1	General Manager, FaMeTN www.tntender.gov.in / Bid issue Date 05.02.2026 Bid Due Date & Time: 23-02-2026 (5.00 PM)	Appointment of vendor to development of comprehensive platform (web and mobile application) TN MSME ONE for MSMEs and MSME department.

All subsequent communications will be available at the site mentioned above/FaMeTN (www.fametn.com) website. The RFP notifications will also be available at www.tntenders.gov.in. RFPs can be downloaded till BDD and will be opened on the portal

www.tntenders.gov.in on the respective BDD. The processes are meant to be end-to-end electronic and all submissions except presentations for the RFPs will be entirely online to the maximum extent possible. The responses could be used for empanelling firms and experts for similar projects in FaMeTN, at the sole discretion of the Tender Accepting Authority.

Managing Director
Bureau for Facilitating MSMEs of Tamil Nadu

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH AND NEURO SCIENCES

INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

Bengaluru-560 029, India

No.NIMH/Rect/Group B&C/ADVT-3/2025-26

Date: 03.02.2026

NOTIFICATION

NIMHANS invites applications for the following vacant posts through online mode from Indian nationals residing in India and abroad with last date on or before 04.03.2026 upto 04:30 PM.

Sl. No.	Name of the post	No. of vacancy	Category	Pay level as per 7th CPC	Upper Age limit	Group
1	Senior Scientific Assistant (Human Genetics)	1	OCB-1	6	35	B
2	EEG Technician	3	ST-1, OCB-1, EWS-1	6	30	B
3	Library Assistant	3	SC-1, UR-2	6	30	B
4	Artist	1	OCB-1	5	27	C
5	Photographer	2	OCB-1, UR-1	5	27	C
6	Stenographer Grade-II	9	ST-1, OCB-1, EWS-2, UR-5	4	27	C
7	Assistant Instructor (Panchakarma)	4	OCB-1, UR-3	4	27	C
8	Medical Records Technician *	3	OCB-1, EWS-1, UR-1	4	27	C
9	Junior Secretarial Assistant	22	SC-5, EWS-2, UR-15	2	27	C
10	Hospital Assistant (Panchakarma)	2	UR-2	1	27	C
11	Barber	2	UR-2	1	27	C

* The applications received vide previous Notification for this post vide notification No.NIMH/PER(6)/RECT/ADVT-1/2024-25 dated 16.07.2024 will also be considered against the current notification. However, such applicants are informed to send the additional educational qualifications, experience, latest caste certificate and NOC (applicable to in-service applicants) if any, after 17.08.2024 to be sent to the Director, NIMHANS, P.B.No.2900, Hosur Road, Bengaluru – 560 029 by duly mentioning the details of post applied previously without making any payment of application fee. Further, the calculation of cut off age for such applications for all categories will be considered as on 17.08.2024.

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

- NIMHANS reserves the right to introduce Skill Test for any of the post as mentioned above.
- Fill the online application carefully after reading the given instructions.
- All applicant must go through the detailed advertisement, posts and eligibility and ensure that they are eligible in all respect before applying.
- The eligibility of the applicant will be provisional and merely filling the application form and appearing in examination shall not be treated as validity of eligibility and Candidature shall stand cancelled in case any ineligibility detected at any stage of recruitment process including after joining on an offered post.
- Refer NIMHANS Website www.nimhans.ac.in for detailed Notification.

Sd/-, DIRECTOR

Sport

WELCOME DISTRACTION

Was important to refresh before the final, says RCB skipper Smriti



FILE PHOTO: EMMANUEL YOGINI

RCB has had a six-day break going into the WPL final. The players took a three-day trip to Goa to recharge their batteries. "It was better that we were off for the first two or three days. I'm happy that everyone had that sort of a break and enjoyed it with each other and came back being fresh," skipper Smriti Mandhana said.

SUCCESS MANTRA

Putting team above self has taken the pressure off me, says Jemimah



VIJAY SONEJI

Jemimah Rodrigues flicked a switch during India's triumphant ODI World Cup campaign last year, and has now continued in the same vein. She felt captaincy has given a new direction to her game as she has been putting the team above self. "That has taken a lot of pressure off me and helped me not to overthink my game," she said.

HAPPY TO HELP

I'm glad I trusted the process and kept believing in my game: George



GETTY IMAGES

I'm happy I could contribute. I knew I was batting well, so the conversion definitely mattered. I'm glad I trusted the process and kept believing in my game. Everyone played to their full potential, and I'm very happy to see our top-order doing so well. We are looking forward to the big final — Aaron George.

NOT MY CUP OF TEA

Commentary is very difficult, I am not good with stats: Dhoni



FILE PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHKAR

Commentary is very difficult. There is a very fine line between describing the game and, in that process, getting into a zone where you start criticising individuals who are playing the game. It's a very thin line... I'm not good with stats, but there are a lot of people who are very good with stats — M.S. Dhoni.

Will it be fourth time lucky for the Delhi Capitals?

It has reached the summit clash in all three previous editions; Royal Challengers Bengaluru, armed with a slew of match-winners, will be hard to beat as it eyes a second trophy

WPL-4 FINAL

Vivek Krishnan
VADODARA

Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Delhi Capitals aren't in uncharted territory as they gear up for the final of the Women's Premier League on Thursday. Two seasons ago, it was these two teams that battled for the grand prize at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in Delhi. Smriti Mandhana and Co. emerged victorious then, spreading cheer among a fervent fanbase yearning for silverware.

Cut to the present, the circumstances ahead of the final at the Kotambi Stadium differ slightly.

Unlike in 2024, RCB qualified for the summit clash this time directly after topping the league standings.

It has led to a week-long build-up to the big game for the Bengaluru outfit. To allow the players to unwind for a bit before redirecting their energies to the task at hand, the team enjoyed a three-day breather in Goa immediately after its last game.

Capitals, on the other hand, have had to take a more arduous route. Having finished first in the league phase in the previous three seasons only to lose the final, Jemimah Rodrigues' side may not mind



In it to win it: Friendship will be put aside when Jemimah and Smriti eye glory for their respective outfits. VIJAY SONEJI

this scenario. After a feeble beginning to the campaign, the three-time runner-up has found all the pieces of the jigsaw coming together in recent matches.

Besides handling the responsibility of captaincy with poise, Jemimah has exhibited exquisite touch with the willow of late. In a chase of 169 against Gujarat Giants in Tuesday's

Eliminator, the 25-year-old's 23-ball 41 at No. 4 was essential in shutting out the hosts altogether. Lizelle Lee, Shafali Verma and Laura Wolvaardt are also in sparkling form.

For RCB, the fourth edition has been smooth-sailing.

It won its first five games, and suffered a blip in the form of two defeats only after sealing its spot in the playoffs. In addition to

Smriti, Grace Harris, Georgia Voll and Richa Ghosh are fully capable of swaying the outcome in RCB's favour with the bat. For the wickets, RCB will look towards Lauren Bell, Nadine de Klerk and Shreyanka Patil.

Will a repeat of 2024 unfold? Or will Capitals turn the tables? Either way, it will perhaps come down to fine margins.

I've grown a lot in the last 3-4 months: Jemimah

Vivek Krishnan
VADODARA

Smriti Mandhana and Jemimah Rodrigues would have sat beside each other in India's dressing room many times. On the eve of the 2026 Women's Premier League final, the two India stars sat next to each other as captains of Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Delhi Capitals, respectively. The glittering trophy, which is at stake on Thursday, was placed right in the middle.

Smriti has been here before — she led RCB to the title two seasons ago. While Jemimah has played three finals for Capitals, this is her first taste of leadership at the WPL.

For Capitals to enter a fourth straight final seemed out of bounds when they lost three of their first four games. But Jemimah has shown character while steering the ship. "In the last 3-4 months, I think I've grown the most. Especially in the last month as a captain. The best part about captaincy is that I have thought less about myself and more about the team," Jemimah said.

In RCB's run to the final, Smriti has also led by example. The ace opener shared the credit with Malaian Rangarajan, who is the franchise's head coach for the first time.

"Malo is extremely calm and composed. A lot of girls have enjoyed working with him and taken the calmness he brings to the team," she said.



Oozing class: George hit 15 boundaries and two sixes in his match-winning knock. GETTY IMAGES

George's century helps India ace record chase, enter final

U-19 WORLD CUP

Press Trust of India
HARARE

Aaron George's silken hundred seamlessly merged with the explosive fifties from IPL stars Vaibhav Suryavanshi and Ayush Mhatre as India stormed into the ICC under-19 World Cup final with a seven-wicket win over Afghanistan here on Wednesday.

India will face England in the summit clash here on Friday. It will be India's 10th final in the u-19 showpiece, a testimony to BCCI's structured junior cricket programme that unearths serious talent.

India seemed to have a tough task ahead once Afghanistan piled 310 for four, built around hundreds by Faisal Shinwazai (110, 93b, 15x4) and Uzairullah Niazi (101 n.o., 86b,

12x4, 2x6). When India cantered home in 41.0 overs, it was the highest chase in the competition.

George (115, 104b, 15x4, 2x6) led the pursuit with a hundred of impeccable pace and precision placements of his shots.

He received ample backing from Suryavanshi (68, 33b, 9x4, 4x6) and Mhatre (62, 59b, 5x4, 4x6) as India kept its run-rate above seven all the while.

As is his vaunt, Suryavanshi gave a flying start to India's innings with a flurry of boundaries, mainly off off-spinner Wahidullah Zadran. There was a slice of fortune too when Niazi dropped the left-hander on 22 at point off Abdul Aziz.

The opening wicket alliance stopped at 93, but George then combined with Mhatre to add another 114 runs in just over 17 overs to take India past 200 in the 27th over. Mhatre, who has been

struggling for his rhythm in this tournament, made a fifty at the right moment, displaying his full selection of shots.

Once again, George played the anchor's role to perfection as Mhatre took all the risks to keep his side much ahead of the asking rate.

Mhatre's dismissal did not deter George, and he batted on in a composed manner as has been doing in this innings.

Apart from his unflappability and situational awareness, the aesthetics of George's batting was also impressive. Not one shot was hit in anger, as the right-hander, who migrated from Kottayam, Kerala, to Hyderabad, batted with elan.

The scores: Afghanistan 310/4 in 50 overs (Shinwazai 110, Niazi 101 n.o.) lost to India 311/3 in 41.1 overs (George 115, Suryavanshi 68, Mhatre 62).

Toss: Afghanistan; **PoM:** George.

Three contenders make Group D the most exciting

T20 WC COUNTDOWN

N. Sudarshan

For the purists, a World Cup comes only once in four years. It gives the winner adequate time to savour the success while it provides the vanquished enough time to reflect and regroup. Not to be missed is the majestic ring to the words 'quadrennial extravaganza'.

But T20 cricket is no purists' delight. And the associated World Cup comes every two years. In fact, the upcoming edition in India and Sri Lanka will be played within 20 months of the previous tournament in the United States and West Indies.

One team that will not be complaining is South Africa. In the 2024 final against India, the Proteas had victory in sight at 151 for four chasing 177, only to go home empty-handed. Catharsis can come quickly in 2026. It helps that South Africa is more pedigree now, having won the ICC



The buzz: While Markram's South Africa will be aiming for catharsis, Santner's New Zealand and Rashid's Afghanistan have a tussle on their hands for a Super Eight spot. AFP, FILE PHOTOS: AFP & AP

World Test Championship in 2025 and shed the tag of a chronic underachiever.

In terms of personnel, there is no Heinrich Klaasen, but leader Aiden Markram has an equally devastating batter in Dewald Brevis, and superlative cricketers in Quinton de Kock, 36-year-old David Miller — probably playing his last World Cup — and Tristan Stubbs.

In contrast, the bowling seems a tad underwhelming, but Kagiso Rabada, Marco Jansen and Keshav

Maharaj are notable names, and they will be desperate to live up to their reputation.

Bad memories
The Kiwis, too, have some bad memories to erase, like their non-qualification out of the group stage in 2024. But they have a capable squad, with fierce top-order hitters in Finn Allen and Tim Seifert, and middle-order musclemen in Glenn Phillips and Daryl Mitchell. Most recently, Allen smashed a 38-ball 80

against India in Thiruvananthapuram while Seifert was 36-ball 62 in Visakhapatnam.

In skipper Mitchell Santner and Ish Sodhi, New Zealand has two spinners who can cash in if the Chepauk wicket retains its traditionally slow nature. But pace department can be a problem. Adam Milne is out while Lockie Ferguson and Matt Henry are expected to go on paternity leave during the tournament.

The presence of Rashid

The Group D schedule

Date	Teams	Venue	Time
Feb. 8	New Zealand vs. Afghanistan	Chennai	11 a.m.
Feb. 9	South Africa vs. Canada	Ahmedabad	7 p.m.
Feb. 10	New Zealand vs. UAE	Chennai	3 p.m.
Feb. 11	South Africa vs. Afghanistan	Ahmedabad	11 a.m.
Feb. 13	Canada vs. UAE	Delhi	3 p.m.
Feb. 14	New Zealand vs. South Africa	Ahmedabad	7 p.m.
Feb. 16	Afghanistan vs. UAE	Delhi	11 a.m.
Feb. 17	New Zealand vs. Canada	Chennai	11 a.m.
Feb. 18	South Africa vs. UAE	Delhi	11 a.m.
Feb. 19	Afghanistan vs. Canada	Chennai	7 p.m.

Khan's Afghanistan makes Group D the most exciting. The Asian side pipped New Zealand last time around, then beat Bangladesh and Australia to reach the semi-finals. A young squad, with enough resources to revel in spin-friendly sub-continental conditions, will hope for a redux.

Afghanistan has beaten the West Indies 2-1 in the lead-up, but exited last year's Asia Cup in the group-stage, a repeat it would like to avoid at the global level.

Canada and UAE will look to be more than just

Red-hot Kishan makes opener's slot his own

Amol Karhadkar
NAVI MUMBAI

Four days after their last international outing and three days before the start of their T20 World Cup title defence, the Men in Blue took the field on Wednesday for their lone warm-up game. The biggest takeaway from the outing was a strong signal from the team management: Ishan Kishan over Sanju Samson as opener-wicketkeeper.

After Suryakumar Yadav elected to bat at the Dr. D.Y. Patil Stadium against South Africa, Kishan walked out to open alongside Abhisek Sharma. While Abhisek played second fiddle, Kishan picked up right where he had left off in Thiruvananthapuram four nights earlier.

Lungi Ngidi pitched it full in the opening over and was dispatched over the wickets twice with authority.

Anrich Nortje then tested Kishan with short stuff, only for the left-hander to swivel into a stylish, one-

legged pull that sailed over deep fine-leg. The ball kept flying as Kishan tore into the South African attack before being retired out for a blistering 53 (20b, 2x4, 7x6).

That knock may well have slammed the door shut on Samson's hopes of finally getting game-time in a T20 World Cup opener — this time at the Wankhede Stadium on Saturday. The message became even clearer when Tilak Varma, returning from a testicular surgery that had ruled him out of the New Zealand series, was sent in to bat with two balls remaining in the PowerPlay after Kishan's retirement.

Later, Harshit Rana hobbled his way out of the ground after bowling a solitary over. He pulled out of his run-up twice before holding his knee and gently walking off the field.

The scores: India 240/6 in 20 overs (Kishan 53, Tilak 45, Axar 35 n.o.) vs South Africa 210/7 in 20 overs (Ricketton 44, Stubb 45 n.o.). **Toss:** India.

IN BRIEF



Mirabai sets three new National records

Mirabai Chanu set three new National records as she totalled 205kg to win the women's 48kg title on the opening day of the National weightlifting championships at Modinagar on Wednesday. The 31-year-old Mirabai – who dropped down to 48kg following the rejig in weight classes last year – equalled her personal best total which she had achieved in 49kg at 2021 Asian championships.

The results (winners only): Women: Elite: 48kg: Mirabai Chanu (Mani) snatch 89kg, clean and jerk 116kg, total 205kg; **Junior: Vani Puri (Pun)** 78kg, 96kg, 174kg; **Youth: Pungni Tara (SSCB)** 68kg, 90kg, 158kg; **44kg: Youth: Parishmita Gogoi (SSCB)** 63kg, 74kg, 137kg.

Advani finishes runner-up in Asian snooker championship

China's Deng Haohui dethroned Pankaj Advani as the Asian snooker champion, getting the better of the Indian 4-1 in the final in Doha on Wednesday. Deng won 0-126(96), 101(68)-17, 114(106)-8, 65-22, 70(70)-61(60) against the three-time winner.

Contrasting victories for Indian men and women

Indian men overcame Singapore, while the women dominated Myanmar in their opening group stage matches to secure quarterfinal berths in Badminton Asia Team Championships at Qingdao (China) on Wednesday.

The results: Men: India bt Singapore 3-2 (Lakshya Sen lost to Loh Kean Yew 16-21, 21-19, 16-21; Satwiksairaj Rankireddy & Chirag Shetty bt Eng Keat Wesley Koh & Junsuke Kubo 21-10, 21-8; Ayush Shetty bt Jia Heng Jason Teh 21-17, 21-15; Pruthvi Roy & K. Sai Prateek lost to Nge Joo Jie & Donovan Willard Wee 21-8, 21-23, 20-22; K. Srikanth bt Jia Wei Joel Koh 21-15, 21-16). **Women: Group Y: India bt Myanmar 5-0** (Tanvi Sharma bt Thet Htar Thuza 21-13, 21-16; Rakshitha Sree Santhosh Ramraj bt Eainit Chit Phoo 21-12, 21-6; Malvika Bansod bt Lin Lin Htet 21-19, 21-12; Priya Konjengbam & Shruti Mishra bt Su Latt & Thuza 21-15, 21-16; Treesa Jolly & Gayatri Gopi Chand bt Htet & Phoo 21-8, 21-6).

Blue Tigresses notch up third friendly win in Turkiye

The Indian senior women's national team beat Russian side Zvezda-2005 Perm 2-0 in a friendly match in Antalya on Wednesday.

The result: India 2 (Anju Tamang 9, Lynda Kom Serto 89) bt Zvezda-2005 Perm 0.

Hitesh and Preeti power India's good start

Hitesh Gulia (70kg) and Preeti (54kg) registered wins as India opened its campaign in emphatic fashion at the BOXAM Elite International 2026 boxing at La Nucia (Spain).

The results: Men: 60kg: Mohammed Hussam Uddin bt Matias Mehmet Buyukdemir (Den) 4-1, Sachin bt Brandon Alejandro (Esp) 5-0; **65kg:** Aditya Pratap lost to Joe Turner (Eng) 1-4; **65kg:** Abhinash Jamwal bt Qalid Osman (Den) 5-0; **70kg:** Hitesh Gulia bt Finn Bos (Ned) 5-0; **70kg:** Deepak bt Hornel Aytevi (Bel) 4-1; **75kg:** Akash bt Nikita Zakkharchenko (Ukr) 4-1; **80kg:** Ankush bt Malsawmluangha 4-1. **Women: 54kg:** Preeti bt Aliaskar Symbat (Kaz) 5-0; **57kg:** Prachi bt Vanesa Morell Ramirez (Esp) 5-0; **60kg:** Priya bt Alessia Mansuetto (Can) 5-0; **65kg:** Kajal bt Assem Tanatar (Kaz) 4-1.

Milan closes gap on Inter with win over Bologna

AC Milan closed the gap on Inter at the top of Serie A with a 3-0 win at Bologna on Tuesday.

The result: Bologna 0 lost to AC Milan 3 (Lotto-Cheek 20, Nkunku 39-pen, Rabiot 48).

India thrashes Bhutan, to meet Bangladesh in final

India under-17 crushed Bhutan 8-0 in the SAFF u-19 women's football to set up a final against Bangladesh at Pokhara on Wednesday.

The result: India 8 (Alisha Lyngdoh 6, Abhista Basnett 10, Pearl Fernandes 16, 39, 41, Divyani Linda 17, Pritika Barman 25, 90) bt Bhutan 0.

AFC confirms India's bid to host 2031 Asian Cup

The AFC on Wednesday confirmed India's bid to host the 2031 Asian Cup, having listed it among the six bidding nations. India will compete with Australia, Indonesia, Korea, Kuwait and a joint bid from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Anthony pleased to bring happiness to his mother

'Once dad passed away, life was tough for her. I know she's very happy now. She's got a smile on her face to see the two boys playing here in the World Cup'

T20 WORLD CUP

S. Prasanna Venkatesan
CHENNAI

It is hard to measure what Italy's history-making T20 World Cup qualification meant to everyone involved – players, coaches, and supporters scattered across continents. For Anthony Joseph Mosca, though, its weight settled in one simple truth: it made his mother happy. It brought pride to her voice, a smile to her face, and tears to her eyes. In that moment, history felt human.

"At the qualifiers in Holland, mum sent a video through. All the parents had to send videos to the players about how proud they were. And it brought a tear to my mum's eye."

"Once dad passed away, life was tough for her. I know she's very happy now. She's got a smile on her face to see the two boys playing here in the World Cup," said Anthony after Italy's 10-run win over Canada in the warm-up match here on Monday.

Openers Anthony and his brother Justin (left-hander) are from Australia, but their roots remain firmly



Inspiration: Anthony grew up playing grade cricket in Sydney, admiring and wanting to emulate Ponting's pull shot. R. RAGU

Italian. "Our parents and grandparents were born in Italy," he said. "For many of us in this team, our families are from Italy. We have a lot of Italian heritage (in the team). So, Italian was the first language in some of our households."

Cricket, however, came through Australia, where Anthony grew up playing grade cricket in Sydney, admiring and wanting to emulate Ricky Ponting's pull shot and Damien Martyn's cover drive.

He didn't fully grasp the scale of Italian cricket until just before COVID. "The federation contacted Ben Manenti. And Benny passed on my name and my brother's," he recalled. Though the pandemic paused his travel, the commitment remained. "They told us the steps it would take to get to this level and we were prepared to take that on."

That journey has been eased by familiarity. Alongside his brother are the Ma-

nenti brothers, Ben and Harry – friends first, teammates later. "We played cricket together back in Australia. We played at the same grade club in Sydney. For the last 15 years, we've been close mates – brothers, not by blood."

Italy's World Cup debut carries a rare symmetry: two sets of brothers, bound by blood and friendship, turning familiarity into strength, and history into something shared.

bronze. Uzbekistan's Vladimir Svechnikov won gold with an effort of 242.0 while Kazakhstan's Valeriy Rakhimzhan finished a point behind. Samrat's score was 220.3.

India also won the air pistol women's team gold as Esha, Manu Bhaker and Suruchi Singh combined for an effort of 1726, 13 better than the silver-winning Vietnamese. The trio of Samrat, Sharvan Kumar and Varun Tomar won silver in the men's air pistol team event.

Like Esha, Jonathan Gavin Antony also won two gold medals on the day in the 10m air pistol junior men's category. He won the individual contest with a score of 240.9 and combined with Chirag Sharma and Priyanshu Yadav for the team gold.

India, in all, won a total of nine medals on the opening day.



Top of the pile: 10m air pistol women's champ Esha flanked by Cheng and Yu. X@OFFICIALNRAI

Esha wins women's 10m air pistol gold at Asian meet

SHOOTING

Sports Bureau
NEW DELHI

Esha Singh bagged a second individual career gold at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range here on day one of the Asian Rifle / Pistol Championship. She won the 10m air pistol women's event with a score of 239.8 on Wednesday.

The Hyderabad shooter, who had won the event two years back in Jakarta as well, was seventh after the first series of five shots before climbing up the ladder and taking a decisive lead after the 19th shot of the 24-shot final. Two Taiwan shooters, Cheng Yen-Ching and Yu Ai-Wen, claimed silver and bronze respectively.

Reigning World champion Samrat Rana won the men's 10m air pistol

Top seed Semenistaja overcomes Hontama, makes the last-eight stage

MUMBAI OPEN

Tarun Shastry
MUMBAI

Top seed Darja Semenistaja, a champion here in 2024, showcased her ability to stay composed as she edged past Japan's Mai Hontama 6-4, 7-6(3) in a gripping Round-of-16 encounter in the L&T Mumbai Open 125K Series at the Maharashtra State Lawn Tennis Association courts on Wednesday.

Hontama burst out of the blocks with aggression, pinning Semenistaja behind the baseline and forcing a stream of errors with her depth and pace.

The Japanese dictated early rallies, but the Latvian responded with heavy topspin forehands, flat



Cruise mode: Third seed Jeanjean had it easy against Kuramochi.

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

backhand winners, and a strong first serve to claim a tightly contested first set 6-4.

The second set saw momentum swing repeatedly. Semenistaja began to impose herself with a heavier

serve and sharp returns, but Hontama raised her level once again, dragging the left-hander across the court with well-angled volleys to take a 3-1 lead.

Refusing to relent, the 23-year-old Latvian dug deep and unleashed a combination of blistering forehands and well-timed net approaches to reel off three consecutive games and go ahead 4-3.

Amid extended baseline rallies, feathered drop shots and exquisite slices, Hontama briefly seized the initiative to lead 5-4 after winning two tight games.

However, Semenistaja fought back, levelling at 5-5, before surging ahead 6-5 with a series of outstanding forehand winners and a skidding backhand slice; the Japanese, however, held serve to force a tie-

breaker. Semenistaja took control, using controlled aggression and a heavy first serve, to win the tie-break 7-3 and book a place in the quarterfinals.

Later, third seed Leolia Jeanjean made light work of her clash against Japan's Miho Kuramochi.

The French ace, who has a career high ranking of 91, prevailed 6-3, 6-3.

Other results (round-of-16): Mei Yamaguchi (Jpn) bt Yasmine Kabbaj (Mar) 4-6, 6-4, 7-6(5).

Mananchaya Sawangkaew (Tha) bt Misaki Matsuda (Jpn) 6-4, 6-1.

Doubles (quarterfinals): Polina Latcenko (Rus) & Elena Pridinkova (Rus) bt Prarthana Thombare & Albertina Ibragimova (Rus) 6-1, 6-1.

Hiroko Kuwata (Jpn) & Park So-hyun (kor) bt Darja Semenistaja (Lat) & Zuzanna Pawlikowska (Pol) 6-0, 6-4.

SLI's first season postponed

Sports Bureau

NEW DELHI

The inaugural season of the Shooting League of India (SLI) has been rescheduled to a later date this year after the NRAI decided to undertake a strategic realignment of the competition.

The league was originally supposed to launch last November, but was then postponed to February this year. It is now understood that the league may take place only in November 2026. The decision has been taken after detailed consultations with key stakeholders.

LIVE TELECAST

WPL: Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar, 7.30 p.m.

AROUND THE CITY

Siddharth and Pradyun's unbeaten tons highlight PSBB (K.K. Nagar)'s romp

Siddharth Yogesh (100 not out) and Pradyun Badri (101 not out) guided PSBB (K.K. Nagar) to a huge 218-run win over Vidya Mandir 'B' in the Vidya Mandir-Sportstar-Samartha u-14 invitational cricket tournament held here.

The scores: Ramachandra PS 117/7 in 20 overs (Varun Karthik 46) lost to Heartfulness Inter. School 118/3 in 20 overs (Aadil Arsan 44 n.o., I. Jumail Mutlaq 45).

PSBB (K.K. Nagar) 238/2 in 20 overs (Siddharth Yogesh 100 n.o., Pradyun Badri 101 n.o.) bt Vidya Mandir 'B' 20/9 in 18 overs.

Santhome 131/2 in 20 overs (Sai Prasad 25, M. Shyam 57 n.o., S. P. Bhavan Sai 35 n.o.) lost to Vidya Mandir 'A' 132/3 in 17.2 overs (P. Ashwath Narayanan 60, S. Rohan 25, M. Shyam 37).

Nellai Nadar 117/2 in 20 overs (Johan Devadas 29, S. Sri Vishnu 42) lost to Sir Mutha 119/2 in 18 overs (Dhairy Malhotra 45 n.o., D. Lalith 36 n.o.).

Three share lead

Alisher Suleymenov of Kazakhstan defeated India's Mayank Chakraborty (0.5) in the second round of the 1st Chola Chess International Grandmaster Norm closed circuit chess tournament held here on Wednesday. Alisher is in lead with India's Ethan Vaz and Aronyak Ghosh with 1.5 points.

The results (second round):

Harsh Suresh 1 drew with Akshay Bongaonkar 1; Audi Armeya 1 lost to Ethan Vaz 1.5; Aronyak Ghosh 1.5 bt Mahel Boyer (Fra) 0;

Mayank Chakraborty 0.5 lost to Alisher Suleymenov (Kaz) 1.5; Girel Joseph (Fra) 1 drew with Delgado Ramirez Neuris (Par) 1.

Former TN hockey skipper Md. Baddiuddin passes away

Md. Baddiuddin, former Tamil Nadu hockey captain, passed away in Chennai on Tuesday. He was 87 and is survived by wife, two sons and two daughters.

Md. Baddiuddin

Baddiuddin led the team when Madras State was adjudged the joint winner with Railways in the 1966-67 Madurai

Alisher is in lead with India's Ethan Vaz and Aronyak Ghosh with 1.5 points.

The results (second round):

SRIHER 178/6 in 20 overs (S. Srircharan 80 n.o., Mohammed Rayhaan Syed 45, S. Santhosh Kumar 3/16) bt Veltech Multi Tech 90 in 20 overs (A. Srikanth 3/18).

Mar Gregorios 143/8 in 20 overs (D.K. Dinesh Karthick 48 n.o., Sasidhar 3/25) bt Veltech Dr. Sangunthalai IST 126 in 19.1 overs (E. Vishal Reddy 26, Rishitha Davad 35, S. Sanjay Vasan 3/16).

<div data-bbox="5

The SKY is blue again

Suryakumar used the time between the end of the South Africa series and the start of the New Zealand showdown most judiciously, assiduously working to rediscover his mojo



R. Kaushik

What do you do when you hit a trough? When what was once second nature has gone missing, not for a day or a week or a month, but for an entire year? When the runs dry up, when your signature strokes desert you, when the individual failures start to stack up even if, under you, the team is doing magical things?

Go back to the drawing board, for sure, but also work extra hard to keep negativity at bay, to disassociate yourself from the dangerous gremlins of self-doubt, right?

That's easier said than done, of course. Not going back to the drawing board, because that's what professional sportspersons do when they are confronted by rare failure. But how do you maintain the veneer of positivity when you know that you are letting yourself and the team down, no matter how patient and understanding they might be?

Primary vocation

Suryakumar Yadav is nothing if not a proud individual, a proud captain, a proud leader of men. Even as he steered India from one victory to another, including an unbeaten run culminating in the Asia Cup crown in the Emirates in September, he must have hurt badly at not being able to contribute with the bat. His primary vocation is as a batter, which is what earned him the leadership role in the first place. "I don't mind not scoring so long as the team wins," is a very politically correct statement, but Suryakumar was fooling no one. He wanted badly to score, to leave his mark, to turn the clock back and to emerge as a more fearsome version of the marauding self that once ruled the T20 ecosystem.

And therefore, as 2025 segued into 2026, the 35-year-old found the equanimity to take failure in his stride, aware that there was nothing he could do to correct the past but also flush with the realisation that he would not allow the immediate past to define him. A new, exciting challenge awaited him in the new year - the opportunity to emulate Mahendra Singh Dhoni and Rohit Sharma and become only the third Indian captain to lift the T20 World Cup. That he would have the chance to do so on home turf - Dhoni's success came in South Africa in 2007, Rohit's in Barbados in 2024 - was an added fillip.

For the whole of 2025, it was as if someone answering to the name of Suryakumar Yadav, resembling him physically but batting as if he were an impostor, had replaced the original. Shots that once flew off his blade to the stands where the audiences were part excited and part

fearful let him down badly. The patented pick-up shot went AWOL, the drives down the ground disappeared, the first sign of aggression often brought about his downfall. Suryakumar shrugged off those disappointments, maintaining his million-dollar smile and crooning that he was only 'out of runs, not out of form'. But the more he espoused that theory, the more one felt that he was desperately trying to convince himself, more than the outside world, that that was indeed the case.

No doubts, however, were raised about his continued presence in the larger scheme of things because he was doing all other things right. Why, he even started to win tosses, something Indian fans had lost touch with across formats and captains for a long time. He managed to separate the lack of runs from his responsibilities as skipper and leader. The string of successes meant there was no threat to his place at the helm, and rightly so because of what he had achieved in the previous couple of years and because of the knowledge that it was only a matter of time before he hit his straps.

Towards the end of December, at the conclusion of a five-match series against South Africa when his lean patch manifested itself in the form of an eerily unwelcome sequence of 12, 5, 12 and 5, SKY had gone 14 months and 22 innings with a T20I half-century. The argument that especially in this format, where impact is measured by strike-rates more than tall scores, half-centuries are passe didn't cut ice because in each of those 22 outings, he batted at either No. 3 or

No. 4, from where batters usually make merry and

Expect more fireworks from Suryakumar over the next month as India seek to become the first team to successfully defend the T20 World Cup

where their success is measured by both strike-rates and the number of runs scored.

Suryakumar used the time between the end of the South Africa series (on December 19) and the start of the New Zealand showdown (from January 21) most judiciously, assiduously working to rediscover his mojo. That entailed hours of hard labour at the nets because that is almost mandatory, whether in the runs or not, but then again, it isn't as if he had allowed the grass to grow under his feet in 2025. Around his exertions at practice, he spent plenty of time with his young family and let his hair down in the company of close friends who, luckily, are the kind that tell you what you must hear instead of what you want to hear.

Having cleared his mind - sometimes, that is the most difficult thing to do when one is constantly involved in the practice-play-travel routine - and made the mental switch that went from desperation to relaxed confidence, Suryakumar announced himself in the five matches against the Kiwis, India's last engagements before the defence of their World Cup crown, which begins in Mumbai on Saturday against United States. The earliest indications that the Suryakumar of old wasn't too far away from expressing himself came in the opener in Nagpur. Opting to bat, India lost Sanju Samson and the returning Ishan Kishan within the first 17 deliveries when the skipper strode out to join Abhishek Sharma. He watched from the best seat in the VCA Stadium, the non-striker's end, as the left-handed opener tore the Kiwis to shreds, but he wasn't just content to sail in the younger man's wake.

Without fuss, but with the authority that was once his calling card, Suryakumar eased to 32 off 22. He was overshadowed by Abhishek's 35-ball 84 and a furious cameo down the order from Rinku Singh (44 not out off 20) but those who were looking for portents would have taken note of how the trademark strokes came without effort, of how comfortable he looked in the middle, of how the impostor had made way, belatedly but thankfully, for the real deal.

As if to reiterate that one hadn't imagined things, Suryakumar produced a raging unbeaten 82 two nights later in Raipur. For a fair part of his 122-run alliance for the third wicket with Kishan, Suryakumar was content to play second fiddle as India charged towards their target of 209. Kishan, grabbing the unexpected lifeline thrown by a change in mindset of the team management, smashed 76 off just 32 deliveries to dominate the partnership after India had lost their openers with just six on the board, but Suryakumar wasn't to be left behind. At one stage, the captain was 11 off 11; he finally finished 82 not out off 37 deliveries, a smashing

compilation sealed and delivered with nonchalance as the swagger and the strut of the past came rushing to the fore.

They say of champions - and that's what Suryakumar is - that all it takes for them to 'find' themselves is one knock. Despite his sustained bad trot, Suryakumar still averaged in the mid-30s and struck at more than 160 per 100 balls faced at the start of the New Zealand series, a testament to the dizzying heights he had reached previously when he was the No. 1 batter in the world in the 20-format for well-nigh on two years. Having used Nagpur to convince himself that all was well, again, in his batting world, Suryakumar slid into the consistency that not so long back made him the most feared batter in the universe. After Raipur, he unleashed an unbeaten 57 (26b) in Guwahati and rounded off the series with 63 off 30 in Thiruvananthapuram, when India amassed 271 in their allotment.

In five innings, SKY had scaled the dizzying heights (for the rest of us) that were so commonplace for him, finishing with 242 runs at an average of 80.67 and a surreal strike-rate of 196.75. He reeled off 25 fours and 14 sixes; interestingly, or is it coincidentally, the only time he didn't make a score of substance (8 in the sole loss in Visakhapatnam), he batted at No. 3 when Kishan was benched owing to an injury. As many as 234 of his series runs came at No. 4, which is perhaps where he will slot in at the World Cup, once Tilak Varma returns to the playing XI and Kishan moves up to partner Abhishek and replace the horribly misfiring Samson.

Mere formality

The Player-of-the-Series award was a mere formality. Suryakumar didn't need that honour for affirmation. He wouldn't have minded it one bit if it had gone to Kishan, who rounded off his international comeback (after more than two years) celebrations with a spectacular hundred in the final outing. It was the sixth time he was officially crowned the boss of a series, jointly with Sri Lankan Wanindu Hasaranga only behind Virat Kohli (7) for the most Player-of-the-Series awards in T20I cricket.

Timing has always been a Suryakumar forte - unlike with Kishan or Hardik Pandya or Shivam Dube, you don't associate him with muscle and brute force - but the timing of his return to run-making ways couldn't have been more opportune. Despite his outwardly infectious enthusiasm, his inability to pitch in would have rankled him more than he let on. Now that that box also has been ticked, expect more fireworks from Suryakumar - 'The SKY is blue again' - over the next month, when India seek to rewrite history and become the first team to successfully defend the T20 World Cup and the first side to go all the way on home patch.

An inspired choice to succeed Rohit as the 20-over skipper after the older Mumbaikar retired in 2024, Suryakumar has the chance to emulate the man from whom he has learnt so much about so many things. What a fascinating prospect that is.

THE GIST

For the whole of 2025, it was as if someone answering to the name of Suryakumar Yadav, resembling him physically but batting as if he were an impostor, had replaced the original

Despite his sustained bad trot, he still averaged in the mid-30s and struck at more than 160 per 100 balls faced at the start of the New Zealand series

Timing has always been Suryakumar's forte, but the timing of his return to run-making ways couldn't have been more opportune as India look to successfully defend their T20 World Cup



K.R. DEEPAK

Could the near-extinct Asiatic cheetah rewild Saudi Arabia?

Mummified cheetahs unearthed in Saudi Arabia give scientists an opportunity to understand the evolutionary history of the cats; the researchers concluded that cheetahs to 'rewild' the kingdom can be sourced from the closest subspecies of those they found, paving the way for their 'return'

Divya Gandhi
BENGALURU

The cheetah is a spotted beast that can burn through savannas like a bolt of lightning to hunt prey vastly bigger than itself. This big cat is the world's fastest terrestrial mammal, which purrs more than it growls and has been historically tamed and trained by people to hunt game.

Cheetahs once roamed most of Africa and western and southern Asia, from the Arabian Peninsula to India. Today, they have vanished from 91% of its historical global range. In India, it was declared extinct in 1952 from hunting and habitat loss, and over a century ago, it vanished from Saudi Arabia.

Asiatic cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus venaticus*), unlike those in Africa, which that tenuously hold on, are the most critically endangered: just around 50 individual Asiatic cheetahs remain in the wild, a small population in Iran.

Amidst this dire scenario came a "serendipitous discovery" recently in the caves of Saudi Arabia of the "long-term presence" of cheetahs. Scientists discovered seven naturally mummified animals and skeletal remains of 54, reported in the latest edition of *Nature Communications Earth and Environment*.

The remains, unearthed from the Lauga cave network in the Arar area of northern Saudi Arabia, dated back to 4,223 years ago and some to just over a century ago, giving scientists a valuable opportunity to understand the evolutionary history of cheetahs in their former range. They concluded that "rewilding" of cheetahs in Saudi Arabia can be sourced from the closest subspecies of the discovered cheetahs", potentially paving the way for their 'return'.

Treasures from caves

Genomic data of these specimens showed the presence of two subspecies, the Asiatic cheetah (*A. j. venaticus*) and the north-western African cheetah (*A. j. hecki*), neither of which occur in the Arabian Peninsula any more. The many caves in the region could have been used as denning sites for the creatures. The study used palaeo-chronological dating to establish the time period, genomic sequencing to identify subspecies, and radiographic analysis to determine age.

Although records indisputably suggest the historical presence of the species in the areas designated Saudi Arabia, Oman, Yemen, Kuwait, Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine today, some point to the scarcity of evidence to adequately represent the true historical distribution of the cheetah. While the primary reasons for the Arabian Peninsula's vanishing cheetah are poorly documented, they are thought to be habitat loss and fragmentation, prey depletion, human-wildlife conflict, unregulated hunting, and trade in cheetah as pets or game hunting, said the research paper.

Over the past 50 years, Saudi Arabia has significantly changed wildlife management policy and one of its biodiversity goals includes the re-establishment of animals to their former biogeographic ranges.

The kingdom has already successfully restored ungulates to landscapes where they had disappeared or dwindled, e.g.



Cats from the past: Scientists discovered seven naturally mummified cheetahs and skeletal remains of 54 in Saudi Arabia's caves. Here, a researcher examines one of the mummified cheetahs in a lab. AP

Arabian oryx, Arabian gazelles, and the Nubian ibex. As ungulate populations recover here, "it is timely for the reestablishment of extirpated apex carnivores – among them cheetah," said the paper. DNA studies showed that the prehistoric Saudi Arabia cheetahs are genetically closest to the west African subspecies *A. j. hecki*.

The results also highlight the important role that caves play "as repositories of ancient biodiversity informing." Natural mummies can remain well preserved for thousands of years, especially in arid soil caves where desiccation was made possible by dry microclimates where bacterial action is diminished.

Africa's cheetahs are in peril too: 90%



This undated image provided by Communications Earth and Environment shows the claws of a mummified cheetah. AP

Cheetahs once roamed most of Africa and western and southern Asia, from the Arabian Peninsula to India. Today, they have vanished from 91% of its historical global range, with Asiatic cheetahs unlike those in Africa, which that tenuously hold on, being the most critically endangered

of the animals live outside protected areas and on private farmlands, and conflict with people is not infrequent: the cats prey on livestock quite visibly during the day, and farmers, to save their animals, often trap or shoot cheetahs, per the paper. Larger carnivores such as lions, leopards, and hyena also kill cheetahs when competing for prey or territory. As a result, in Saharan Africa, the spotted cats are as few as 0.0002/km.

An adequate habitat? Ravi Chellam, wildlife biologist and CEO, Metrastring Foundation, Bengaluru, has been tracking Project Cheetah in India, as part of which several African cheetahs have been introduced to Madhya Pradesh. *The Hindu* asked him about the prudence of reintroducing cheetahs to Saudi Arabia: "This is a sovereign decision for each country to take. Having said that, from an ecological perspective it is important to ensure that adequate good quality habitats are available before sourcing the cheetahs for the reintroduction effort," he said.

Based on the evidence, at least 1 lakh sq. km. of habitat is required to establish a viable and self-sustaining population of cheetahs in the semi-desert

and desert landscapes of Saudi Arabia. The chosen habitats should support a reasonable density and diversity of prey species and be relatively free of human activities especially road traffic, he added.

As for whether Asian cheetahs should have been introduced to India, Dr. Chellam said that with the highly endangered status of Asiatic cheetahs in Iran, "it is not advisable to remove any cheetahs from this very small population."

For the same reason, cheetahs reintroduced to Saudi Arabia would have to be the northwest African sub-species, *A. j. hecki*. But even this subspecies is endangered in the wild in western and northern Africa. So "the only realistic option are to source the required cheetahs from either *A. j. raineyi* (east Africa) or *A. j. jubatus* (southern Africa)," Dr. Chellam said.

There is little clarity about the funding for India's Project Cheetah but, he added, "it will be one of the most expensive projects" in India's conservation history.

Liz Kierpka, a molecular ecologist who wasn't involved in the Saudi Arabia study, told *ScienceNews* that the discovery is "quite the rarity," outside of permafrost areas where several natural mummies of megafauna from the Ice Age exist. She also said relocating cheetahs from already tiny populations has the potential to cause "new problems for the donor pools."

It requires more data, but Dr. Kierpka said she is curious what shows up in genetic analyses to help select donor cheetahs: "If they really want to pursue rewilding," she said, that could make reintroduction more likely to succeed.

divya.gandhi@thehindu.co.in

THE SCIENCE QUIZ

When setting the time is not easy: a quiz on time zones around the world

Vasudevan Mukunth

QUESTION 1

While most of the world's time zones are offset by one-hour increments, some have a 30-minute offset. The IST is the most famous, with its time's meridian passing exactly through a fort in _____ in Uttar Pradesh. Fill in the blank.

QUESTION 2

There are only two places with a 45-minute offset. One is Nepal, which maintains a time zone of UTC+5:45. Name the other place, which is a territory of New Zealand that maintains its time zone for a

population of just around 600 people.

QUESTION 3

_____ holds the world record for the country with the most time zones -- 12. This is because, even though its mainland is relatively small as countries go, it has overseas territories in at least three oceans.

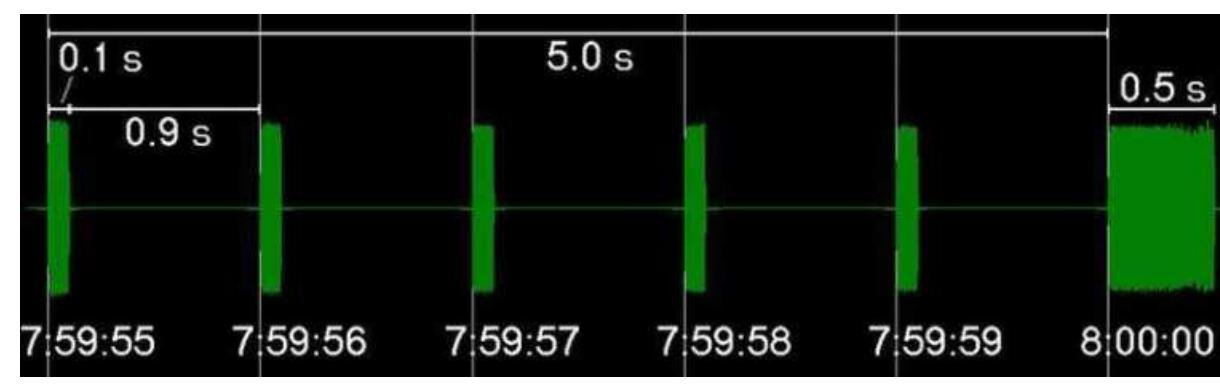
QUESTION 4

The Republic of X once straddled the International Date Line, so its eastern and western islands were on different days. In 1995, X moved the date line thousands of kilometres east so the whole country could be on the same day. This created UTC+14, the earliest time zone on the earth. Name X.

QUESTION 5

Technically speaking, Y has been in the 'wrong' time zone for over 80 years. While the country aligns with the U.K. and Portugal, in 1940 its leader changed it to Central European Time (UTC+1) to align with Nazi Germany, and it never changed back. Name Y.

Visual: This is a graph of the Greenwich Time Signal, which many BBC radio stations broadcast to signal the start of an hour. What's the colloquial name for the signal?



Please send in your answers to science@thehindu.co.in

Answers to January 29 quiz:

1. False claim – Ans: Voyager 1 launched after, not before, Voyager 2

2. No. of years in which solar system's outer planets align – Ans: 175

3. Voyager 2 is only human object to have flown past these bodies – Ans: Uranus, Neptune

4. Instrument that measured properties of interstellar plasma – Ans: Plasma Science

5. Name of phonograph onboard Voyager 2 – Ans: 'The Sounds of Earth' | Visual: Triton

First contact: Tamal Biswas | K.N. Viswanathan | Anmol Agrawal



A full moon is seen shining over NASA's SLS and Orion spacecraft, atop the mobile launcher at the Kennedy Space Centre on February 1. AP

Launch of NASA's mission to moon put off till March

Agence France-Presse

NASA said on Tuesday that it will be delaying until March the launch of its first crewed flyby mission to the moon in more than half a century after encountering leaks during final tests.

The mishaps during a run-through that the U.S. space agency calls a "wet dress rehearsal" dashed hopes that the mission around the moon could launch as soon as February 8. The next possible launch window now opens on March 6.

The two-day test included filling the Space Launch System rocket with propellants, liquid hydrogen, and liquid oxygen.

Teams were initially able to work through some of the hydrogen leaks they encountered, but ultimately the leak worsened as the simulated countdown reached about T-5 minutes, NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman said in a statement.

Operations were stopped, Isaacman said, adding that "we will only launch when we believe we are as ready to undertake this historic mission."

The Artemis programme at large aims to return humans to the moon to establish a sustainable presence and later prepare for future Martian exploration

Hydrogen is particularly energetic and difficult to contain because of its low density, NASA officials said at a briefing on Tuesday.

Along with leakages, teams had to troubleshoot a valve issue related to hatch pressurisation, in addition to dropouts of audio communications, NASA said.

The latest leaks mirror issues that delayed for months the Artemis 1 launch, which was an uncrewed test mission that ultimately circled the moon in 2022.

John Honeycutt, head of the Artemis 2 Mission Management Team, said scientists had been "aggressive" in their testing to understand the Artemis 1 leaks.

But "on the ground, we're pretty limited as to how much realism we can put into the test. We try to test like we fly, but this interface is a very complex interface. This one caught us off guard," he continued.

"To me, the big takeaway was we got a chance for the rocket to talk to us, and it did just that," Honeycutt said.

Mission managers said they are analysing the data collected and making necessary repairs ahead of plans to run another dress rehearsal. For now, officials said those fixes can be performed at the Florida launchpad.

The eventual Artemis 2 moonshot will send a team of four astronauts on a flyby of the earth's satellite. That approximately 10-day mission will lay the groundwork for NASA's next planned Artemis phase, when a crewed mission is intended to actually land on the moon.

U.S. President Donald Trump has made evident that he wants to send astronauts back to the moon as soon as possible, in order to "assert American leadership in space."

The Artemis 2 astronauts had been in quarantine in Houston but were released following the delay.

The Artemis programme at large aims to return humans to the moon to establish a sustainable presence and later prepare for future Martian exploration.

For feedback and suggestions for 'Science', please write to science@thehindu.co.in with the subject 'Daily page'

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Percentage of death sentences upheld by the Supreme Court

8.31 in per cent. A study revealed that the court did not confirm any death sentences in recent years. The trial courts across India awarded 1,310 death sentences between 2016 and 2025. High courts considered 842 of these sentences, but upheld only 70. PTI

Decline in Russian oil imports in Jan./Dec. amid trade talks

9 in per cent. On Monday, U.S. President Donald Trump announced a trade deal with India to cut tariffs to 18% from 50% in exchange for New Delhi halting Russian oil purchases and lowering trade barriers. In January, India imported 1.215 million barrels per day (bpd) of Russian crude. PTI

Number of Himalayan peaks opened up for mountaineering

83 For the 83 notified peaks, Indian mountaineers will no longer have to pay any expedition fees. Previously, these fees were charged by the Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF) and the Forest Department; now the State government will bear these costs. ANI

People killed after separatist attacks in Pakistan

250 More than 250 people have been killed in coordinated attacks launched by separatists across Pakistan's Balochistan province since Saturday, a security official said on Wednesday, with fighting continuing as government forces pursue the militants. AFP

Amount saved from cyber criminals between 2021-25

8,189 in ₹ crore. The government has saved ₹8,189 crore from getting stolen by cyber criminals in more than 23.61 lakh cases reported during the last four years, Rajya Sabha was informed Wednesday. PTI
COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

Follow us facebook.com/thehindu [X.com/the_hindu](https://x.com/the_hindu) [Instagram.com/the_hindu](https://instagram.com/the_hindu)

Issues surrounding UGC regulations

What prompted the Supreme Court to halt the UGC's revised equity framework? Why has the definition of caste-based discrimination triggered opposition from unreserved categories? Why does the court believe certain provisions may be open to misuse?

EXPLAINER

Rangarajan R.

The story so far:

The Supreme Court has stayed the University Grants Commission (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2026 (UGC regulations, 2026), holding that they are ambiguous and can be misused. The court has issued notice to the Centre and has held that the UGC's 2012 regulations on the subject will continue to remain in force for the time being.

What is the background?

In 2012, the UGC framed regulations aimed at promoting equity and preventing discrimination on university campuses.

These regulations defined "discrimination" as any act that nullifies or impairs equality of treatment in education, including denial of access to education, imposition of undignified conditions, or the maintenance of separate educational or social spaces on the basis of caste, creed, religion, language, ethnicity, gender, or disability. They also provided for the setting up of Equal Opportunity Cells and the appointment of an anti-discrimination officer as part of a grievance redressal mechanism.

After the suicide of Rohith Vemula in 2016 and Payal Tadvi in 2019, following allegations of caste discrimination, their mothers had moved the Supreme Court for stricter enforcement of the 2012 regulations.

During the course of the hearing of these petitions, the UGC constituted a committee to review the existing framework. The revised regulations published in 2026 were the culmination of this review.



A protest being held in Lucknow against the new UGC equity guidelines. SANDEEP SAXENA

Why are the 2026 regulations controversial?

The UGC Regulations, 2026 define 'discrimination' as any unfair, differential, or biased treatment against any stakeholder – students, faculty members, or staff – on the grounds of religion, race, caste, gender, place of birth, disability, or any of them.

The main controversy arose because of the definition of 'caste-based discrimination' in the new regulations. It is defined as discrimination solely based on caste or tribe against members of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes (SC, ST, and OBC).

Members of the general or unreserved categories have alleged that this is biased and presumes that they would always be the perpetrators of caste-based discrimination against underprivileged sections. Further, there are no provisions for punishing 'false' or 'motivated' complaints, which can adversely affect stakeholders.

What did the court rule?

In *Mritunjay Tiwari versus Union of India*, the Supreme Court observed that some provisions of the regulations are ambiguous and could be misused. Further, it has framed four 'substantive questions of law' to be addressed in this case, out of which the first two questions are pertinent to the current controversy.

First, whether a separate definition of 'caste-based discrimination' bears a reasonable nexus to the objectives of the regulations, and whether it is necessary, considering that the regulations already define 'discrimination' as including unfair or differential treatment on the grounds of caste. Second, whether this definition of 'caste-based' discrimination will affect the sub-classification of the underprivileged sections.

What constitutional principles are at stake?

Article 14 of the Constitution guarantees equality before the law and equal protection of the law. Article 15 prohibits

discrimination by the State only on the grounds of race, religion, caste, sex, or place of birth. These provisions reflect the concept of 'formal' equality, which is essential in any democratic society. Article 15 also enables the State to make special provisions for OBC, SC, and ST. This reflects the concept of 'substantive' equality, which is based on the belief that formal equality is not sufficient to redress the difference between groups that have enjoyed privileges and those that have been historically underprivileged and discriminated against. This is pertinent not only for affirmative actions aimed at the advancement of backward classes but also for policies aimed at preventing discrimination. Laws like the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, SC and ST (Prevention of atrocities) Act, 1989 are examples of such differential treatment.

It may be a valid argument that the 2026 regulations provide grievance redressal mechanisms against 'discrimination' and that a definition of 'caste-based discrimination' does not serve any additional purpose. However, the government is well within its rights to recognise a specific and serious subset of discrimination within the broader ambit of discrimination. In India, 'caste-based discrimination' is asymmetric and is more detrimental to SC, ST, and OBCs.

Nonetheless, educational campuses are meant to ideally foster the atmosphere of shedding caste identities; any ambiguity that may precipitate it should be avoided. The government may engage with all stakeholders to refine the regulations that would address the issues raised. More importantly, as per the original petition of aggrieved mothers in 2019, the regulations should be strictly enforced to protect the underprivileged from any form of discrimination.

Rangarajan R is a former IAS officer and author of 'Courseware on Polity Simplified.' He currently trains at Officers IAS academy. Views expressed are personal.

THE GIST

▼ The Supreme Court stays the UGC Regulations, 2026, citing ambiguity and possible misuse, and keeps the 2012 regulations in force.

▼ The dispute arises from the definition of 'caste-based discrimination', limited to SC, ST and OBCs, which is alleged to be biased and lacking safeguards against false complaints.

▼ The case raises questions on equality under Articles 14 and 15, and the need for a separate definition of caste-based discrimination in higher education.

Why are Meta and WhatsApp facing a judicial ultimatum?

What concern did the Supreme Court raise about digital literacy and consent?

John Xavier

The story so far:

For years, Meta, the parent company of WhatsApp, has treated user data as the "exhaust" of its messaging engine – a valuable byproduct to be harvested and refined for its advertising machine. But on February 3, India's Supreme Court suggested a different metaphor: theft. In a hearing, a three-judge Bench led by Chief Justice Surya Kant signalled that "consent" in the age of monopolies may be little more than a legal fiction. The court's observations go beyond simple privacy; they strike at the heart of Meta's business model, questioning whether a platform's market dominance renders the "choice" to share data essentially coercive.

When and where did the friction begin?

The friction began in 2021, when WhatsApp issued a "take-it-or-leave-it" update to its privacy policy. The update allowed for increased data sharing between the messaging app and its

parent, Meta. While WhatsApp insisted that end-to-end encryption kept messages private, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) saw the move as an abuse of dominance. It argued that for the average Indian user, "leaving" WhatsApp is not a viable option. The CCI slapped Meta with a ₹213.14 crore (\$25m) penalty – a sum that is pocket change for a trillion-dollar company, but a significant regulatory shot across the bow.

Meta then appealed the decision in the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT), which last year delivered a nuanced, if controversial, verdict. The NCLAT upheld the CCI's finding that Meta had abused its market position. However, it significantly "softened" the regulatory blow.

While it retained the financial penalty, the NCLAT set aside a crucial CCI directive that would have barred Meta from sharing user data with its other entities for advertising purposes for a period of five years. The NCLAT appeared to argue that while the method of obtaining consent was coercive, the act of sharing data across a parent and subsidiary was a standard business practice.

The tribunal likely feared that a total five-year moratorium on data-sharing was a disproportionate "structural remedy" that could break the technical synergy of Meta's platforms. Furthermore, with the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act of 2023 looming on the horizon, the NCLAT seemed content to let privacy-specific legislation handle the nuances of data flows.

Why did Meta appeal to the SC? Unhappy with the penalty and NCLAT's verdict, Meta eventually reached the Supreme Court. However, the apex court seemed in no mood for compromise. Chief Justice Kant's retort to Meta's lawyers – that opting out of WhatsApp in India is akin to "opting out of the country" – captures the "network effect" trap that competition regulators globally are struggling to dismantle.

Yet, the most provocative argument came from Justice Joymalya Bagchi, who shifted the debate from privacy to "value." India's DPDP Act of 2023 focuses primarily on the sanctity of personal information. But Justice Bagchi noted a vacuum in the law regarding the

"rent-sharing" of data. If Meta uses a rural Indian's behavioural trends to sell targeted ads, who owns the profit derived from that data?

This "data-as-property" logic aligns India more closely with the European Union's Digital Services Act than with the more laissez-faire approach of the U.S. By impleading the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, the court forced the government to consider whether privacy is enough, or if the economic "value" of a citizen's digital footprint requires a new form of sovereign protection.

What happens next?

The Solicitor General's remark – that users are "not only consumers, but also products" – reflects a growing fatigue with the "free" internet model.

Meta's defence remains rooted in the "cleverly-crafted" language of terms and conditions. But the Chief Justice's "simple query" regarding whether a domestic helper could navigate such a policy serves as a reminder that in a country with varying levels of digital literacy, transparency is not the same as understanding.

The court has issued an ultimatum: Meta must provide an undertaking to stop sharing personal data, or face the dismissal of its case and "very strict conditions." As the case heads toward interim directions on February 9, the message is clear. In the eyes of the Indian judiciary, a billion "silent consumers" are no longer willing to be the raw material for Meta's bottom line. The era of "decent theft" may be coming to a close.

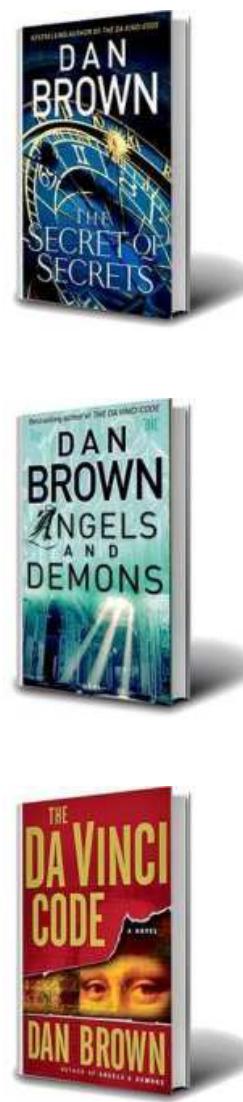
THE GIST

▼ The Supreme Court questions Meta's business model, holds that 'consent' in a monopolistic WhatsApp ecosystem may be coercive, and shifts the debate from privacy to the 'value' and 'rent-sharing' of user data.

▼ The case stems from WhatsApp's 2021 'take-it-or-leave-it' privacy policy, the CCI's finding of abuse of dominance, the NCLAT's partial relief to Meta, and the court's warning of "very strict conditions" unless data-sharing stops.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dan Brown. NYT

**FROM THE ARCHIVES****Know your English****S. Upendran**

“How do you pronounce discreet?”

“The first syllable ‘dis’ rhymes with ‘miss’, ‘kiss’, and ‘hiss’. The ‘ee’ in the second syllable is like the ‘ee’ in ‘feet’, ‘meet’, and ‘sheet’.”

“The stress is on the second syllable ‘creet’, I suppose?”

“That’s right. Do you know what ‘discreet’ means?”

“It means ‘separate’, ‘distinct’, doesn’t it?”

“No. It means tactful. Someone who is discreet is very careful about what he says and how he behaves. Here’s an example. Umesh’s parents have been making discreet enquiries about Preeta.”

“Are they planning on getting Umesh married?”

“Maybe.”

“God help the girl. How about this example? Coming drunk to your father’s office isn’t a discreet thing to do.”

“The detective walked discreetly along the aisles, keeping an eye on the mourners.”

“In many of our movies, we see the hero and heroine maintain a discreet distance when they are in the presence of others.”

“That’s true.”

“I have heard people say that Sailaja is very discreet. What do they mean by that?”

“It means that Sailaja can be trusted to keep your secrets.”

“...you don’t have to worry about her telling anyone.”

“Exactly! Suresh’s new secretary is very discreet.”

“She isn’t very discreet.”

“If you tell her something, you can be pretty sure that she’ll let the cat out of the bag. Secretaries are expected to be very discreet.”

“Are you sure that discreet doesn’t also mean separate?”

“Quite sure. The word that you are thinking of is spelt d.i.s.c.r.e.t.e. It is pronounced the same way as discreet.”

“I see. And ‘discrete’ means separate?”

“Yes. It means separate, having an independent identity. For example, although the twins, Seetha and Geetha, look alike, they have discrete personalities.”

“Most of the supermarkets that are coming up these days have no discrete identity. They all look alike.”

“That’s a good example. Your school, though small, has its own discrete identity.”

“I’m not so sure about that. You see...”

“...while we are on the subject of schools, how did your cousin do in the entrance exam?”

“He failed.”

“That’s hard to swallow.”

“...hard to swallow?”

“...when you say that something is hard to swallow, it means that it is difficult to believe.”

“It’s an informal expression, I suppose?”

“Exactly!”

“The news that Martina Hingis had lost in the first round at Wimbledon was hard to swallow.”

“For many Pakistanis the defeat in the World Cup final was hard to swallow.”

“Yes, it must have been hard to take in.”

“Does it mean the same thing as hard to swallow?”

“Good guess. Let’s get back to your cousin. How have his parents taken it?”

“Like you, they found it hard to swallow. But they are being very discreet about it.”

Published in The Hindu on July 6, 1999

THE DAILY QUIZ

Nuclear weapons are world's most closely guarded objects, yet countries in conflict have not infrequently misplaced weapons-grade material before. A quiz about some of them

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Vasudevan Mukunth**QUESTION 1**

On February 5, 1958, the U.S. Air Force lost a hydrogen bomb named 'Tybee' near Georgia city and never recovered it. What is the U.S. military's term for such accidental events?

QUESTION 2

In 1968, a U.S. B-52 aircraft carrying four thermonuclear bombs crashed onto the sea ice off the coast of _____. Fill in the blank.

QUESTION 3

After the Soviet Union collapsed, a former Russian national security advisor named X said the Russian military had lost track of roughly 100 "suitcase-sized" nuclear devices. Name X.

QUESTION 4

In 1968, a Soviet submarine sank in the Pacific Ocean near Hawaii while carrying three nuclear missiles and two nuclear torpedoes. In 1974, the CIA attempted a secret \$800-million recovery mission called Project Y. They reportedly managed to lift a portion of the submarine before the part containing the missiles allegedly broke off and fell back down. Name Y.

QUESTION 5

In 1965, the CIA and Indian Intelligence tried to install a plutonium-powered monitoring device atop _____. But by spring, they found an avalanche had swept the equipment away, thus leaving 5 kg of plutonium unaccounted for. Fill in the blanks.

**Visual Question:**

Name these islands. During a conflict involving them in 1982, In 2003, one of the countries involved in the conflict admitted that two vessels it had lost in the conflict carried nuclear depth charges.

Question and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. Name the four grand slam tournaments? **Ans: Wimbledon, the French open, the Australian open, and the U.S. Open**

2. What is a golden slam? **Ans: winning the four grand slams and Olympic gold**

3. Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, and Novak Djokovic are considered the 'big three' of tennis. Who among them has not completed the golden slam? **Ans: Roger Federer**

4. Name the first male and female players to complete calendar grand slams in the open era? **Ans: Rod Laver and Margaret Court**

5. Who is the first male player to complete a golden slam? **Ans: Andre Agassi**

Visual: Name this player who is the first ever to win a golden slam and the only one to achieve it in a calendar year? **Ans: Steffi Graf**

Early Birds: Pramod Singh | Vineet Giri | Varghese Joseph | Amit Kumar | Jisha Thakur

Word of the day**Inchoate:**

only partly in existence; imperfectly formed

Synonyms: initial, budding, unorganised**Usage:** The policy was introduced in an inchoate form.**Pronunciation:** newsth.live/inchoatepro**International Phonetic Alphabet:** /ɪn'keəveɪt/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to letters@thehindu.co.in with the subject 'Text & Context'